



Bent's Fort Ledger

Fall/Winter
2010

Greetings, Volunteers!

Well, another great Bent's Old Fort Christmas event has come and gone, so it must be the end of one year and the beginning of a new one already! The past year has seen many accomplishments at Bent's Old Fort, not the least of which was to celebrate 50 years as a national historic site! We had the two highest sales day EVER at the bookstore, increased visitation over last year, and more than 4600 hours of volunteer time! Speaking of accomplishments, we would be remiss not to recognize the distinction bestowed upon John Luzader as a Fellow of the National Association of Interpretation for his lifetime contributions to the profession of interpretation and the living history discipline. Congratulations again, Mr. Luzader! In the new year we are looking forward to new events, developing a strong working relationship with the Bent's Old Fort Historical Association, and mostly, seeing each and every one of you again! In the meantime, BEST WISHES for a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous new year!!

Alexa Roberts, Superintendent

The Third Type of Lie: Statistics

Figures often beguile me, particularly when I have the arranging of them myself; in which case the remark attributed to Disraeli would often apply with justice and force: "There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics." ~Mark Twain, autobiography, 1904

I spent the last week of October number crunching all the interpretive statistics for the park in order to generate the "Annual Service-wide Interpretive Report" or in government

lingo, the park's SIR. This report does generate a few interesting numbers.

Herewith, some of the results:

Most of our numbers were quite similar to last year. Via all media (tours, roving, demos, special events, brochures, park film, off-site programs, etc.) we had a total of 128,274 separate contacts with visitors in Fiscal Year 2010. That is an increase of around 850 over FY 2009 (a 0.7% increase). A visitor contact is defined by the report as one instance of contact with a visitor – so one visitor can have several interpretive contacts per visit. For example, a contact for basic orientation/fee collection, another contact for watching the film, another contact for going on a tour, and another for watching an interpretive demonstration. So that one visitor resulted in 4 interpretive contacts for the park.



Photo courtesy of Sara Holt

Overall, contacts at the fort were down slightly (106,000 down to 103,000) while off-site contacts rose (20,000 up to 24,000).

Much of this gain was due to increased ridership on our Trails and Rails trips aboard Amtrak. We also had 6,600 contacts at the Colorado State Fair this year.

In terms of costs, it is always interesting to look at costs per visitor contact in each area. For instance, it cost around \$11,600 to provide tours to 3,268 visitors this year, so a cost per contact for tours is about \$3.50.



Photo courtesy of Danette Ulloa

For basic visitor orientation (welcome and fee collection) the cost was \$2.30 per contact; for informal contacts (roving), the cost was \$1.60 per contact; while for demonstrations the cost was \$1.40 per contact. School tours ran around \$2.50 per contact and community and off-site programs ran about \$1.40 per contact. By far the costliest items are the park's special events which this year cost \$64,900 for 3,926 contacts or \$16.50 per contact.

Put another way, to recoup the government's cost for providing services, the park would probably need to charge about a \$5 or \$6 per person basic fee for visiting the fort (including the cost of a brochure and watching the film); \$3.50 for a guided tour; \$2.50 for a school group tour; and \$16.50 per person for attending a special event at the park.

The special event cost did rise this year because of the additional expense of the 50th Anniversary Celebration so I did look back at 2008 and 2009 and noted special event costs per contact were \$12.05 and \$12.10 in those years. These events are tremendous for visitors and for publicizing the fort – but they do come at a price.



What we do charge is \$2 for kids ages 6 to 12; \$3 for those 13 and older and \$0 for those 5 and under and people with federal park passes. Still we would be hesitant to raise our fees in this weak economy and with our visitation still well below peak levels of 15 years ago.

As budgets may shrink in the coming years in the name of government fiscal responsibility and debt reduction, the park may rely more than ever on our cadre of volunteers to help provide service to the fort's visitors.

Rick Wallner, Chief of Interpretation



Dennis Chappell works with a group of kids during Kid's Quarters. NPS Photo



Trails and Rails Wrap-Up 2010

This was the ninth year of Trails & Rails trips aboard Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* managed out of Bent's Old Fort NHS. Training for volunteers took place in April. Five new volunteers came aboard this year.

Programs began on May 9 and continued through September 6. Four programs were offered each week: La Junta to Albuquerque each Friday; Albuquerque to La Junta each Saturday; La Junta to Albuquerque each Sunday; and Albuquerque to La Junta each Monday. Four trips in June were cancelled due to a bridge washout along the route.

Altogether then, 66 programs were presented with 15,976 passengers contacted. There were 34 active volunteers in the program this summer and they contributed 1,762 hours of service to the NPS (which works out to over \$36,000 in donated labor!)

The program was again extremely well received by passengers and we had great support and assistance from Amtrak staff. The portable PA system continued to be effective. Lodging this year was at the Plaza Inn, with things go smoothly.

A volunteer banquet was held in early October to thank the volunteers. Each of them received a certificate and an NPS Volunteer water bottle in appreciation of their work. Garvin O'Hare and Robert Newsom were again particularly helpful in managing the program and providing training. In summary, it was another successful season carrying the NPS message to many who would

otherwise be missed, and all look forward to continuing the work next year.

Seasonal training for any new volunteers interested in joining the program will take place in April 2011. Anyone interested in becoming involved can contact Program Coordinator Rick Wallner at (719) 383-5024 or rick_wallner@nps.gov.

2011 Calendar of Events

May 8 – September 5: Trails and Rails Trips

Volunteers give narrated excursions aboard Amtrak's *Southwest Chief* depart La Junta, Colorado on Mondays and Fridays for overnight trips to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

June 1 – 5: Living History Encampment

A training event for new fort volunteers, teachers and historians which includes classroom instruction as well as hands-on living history work at the fort. June 1st will be dedicated to Bents Fort history. **Application enclosed.**

July 9: Kids' Quarters

Volunteers work with seven to eleven year-old children who are invited to "step back in time" and experience the life of a trapper, trader, laborer, craftsman, Indian, soldier or other roles. Volunteers teach kids 19th century skills for a half of a day.

September 17 – 18: Santa Fe Trail Encampment

The park's main living history event again takes place in the fall, and will include historic interpretations of Santa Fe Trail traders, U.S. Army soldiers and Plains Indians. Camps, set up near the fort, will be open for touring.

December 2 – 3: Holiday Celebration

Volunteers provide candlelight tours and period demonstrations with wagon rides, games, toy making and other holiday festivities. The event begins Friday evening December 2 with candlelight tours of the fort and continues all through Saturday, December 3 culminating with another evening of candlelight tours.

Bent's Fort on German TV – and viewable over the Internet

A couple of weeks ago we received the following message from Karl Teuschl, who filmed a documentary at the fort last year about the Santa Fe Trail to air on German television. The video is still up on the Internet as of this writing (Nov. 5) so check it out. It is an interesting mix of old and new along the Trail (from astronauts to oxen). The Bent's Fort segment starts around minute 19. Greg Holt, John Carson, Don Troyer, Bethany Taylor and Dave Newell all make appearances. It also features a shot of our FULL gun rack in the trade room, which can serve to make you sad, angry or both.

“Hello everybody,

Finally I get around to letting you know about the outcome of our filming of the Santa Fe Trail last year. All went really well and the 45-minute version of the film aired at Christmas last year. And just last week on Sunday an abbreviated 30-minute version of the film aired.

This film will actually be on the internet for this week and maybe a little longer. If you get a chance – have a look at the following link and you can watch the film:

<http://www.ardmediathek.de/ard/servlet/content/3517136?documentId=5577526>

Some of you might even see yourself in it....

Thanks again for all your help

Karl Teuschl”

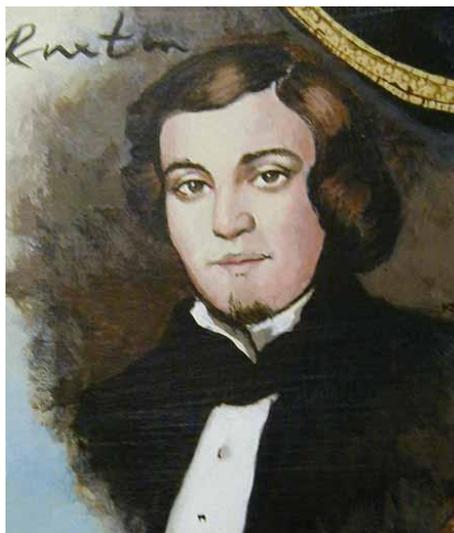
Ruxton in the Rockies- Colorado's First Travel Writer by Cathleen Norman

The following article was written by Cathleen Norman and published in the April 20-26 edition of the magazine, “Colorado Gambler”. She has allowed us to reprint it in this newsletter.

Before Colorado was Colorado, the vast unsettled region of mountains, canyons, plateaus and plains was visited by European

fur trappers, exploration parties and a handful of rugged adventurers. One of the region's first tourists and travel writers was Englishman George Frederick Ruxton, who arrived in winter 1846-1847 to explore and hunt the vast wild territory.

Ruxton was born in England on July 14, 1821, the third son of Scottish-Irish parents. His father was an army surgeon, and the family resided on an English estate. Young George delighted in reading the *Leatherstocking Tales* by American author James Fenimore Cooper, stories depicting Native Americans on the American frontier. Sent to military college, George was expelled at age 16. At age 17, he served as a Lieutenant in Her Majesty's 89th regiment in Spain. Described as a “quite good-looking man with a handsome moustache,” Ruxton embarked on global journeying. He travelled twice through Africa and served as a soldier in Ireland and Canada, before visiting the American West.



George Ruxton, painting by Kathy Barnes, Colorado Springs School District 11 website.

The Rocky Mountains became his favorite locale and inspired travel articles and two books. Ruxton had unending admiration for free trappers and traders, the mountain man “on his own hook” embraced the “life of endless wandering and extreme hazard.” Flavored by his fascination for the “wild mountain-life,” Ruxton's historicized fiction *Life in the Far*

West relates colorful stories embroidered from Ruxton's adventures - lively tales of two outdoorsmen, Killbuck and La Bonte, who consort with an assortment of western scouts, explorers and desperadoes.

Ruxton entered present-day Colorado from the south, in late 1846, after first travelling through northern Mexico. Jogging on patient mule and accompanied by his servant-scout, the Englishman trekked through *Tierra Caliente*, the arid barren Mexican desert. "Our day's travel [*journada*] was usually 20 or 30 miles," he wrote, "for the days were very short and we were obliged to be in camp an hour before sunset in order to gather wood procure wood and water the animals. We unpacked horses and mules and immediately watered them, then let them feed at will until dark."

Ruxton and his servant-scout followed the Rio Grande north passing through "the Land of the Pueblos." Approaching the region along the Arkansas River route, he was elated to finally see the "stupendous mass of mountains well called "Rocky."



The traveler-writer arrived at the close of the fur trapping era: the "valuable fur-bearing beavers" had been trapped to near extinction. "Depreciation in the value of beaver skins has thrown a great body of trappers out of employment," he observed. He encountered grizzled trappers at various forts and trading posts, "living entirely on game," and subsisting by hunting buffalo to meet a brisk demand for buffalo-ropes back east. His imagination stirred

by ex-trappers' stories, the Englishman conjured up tales of beaver-abundant valleys, skirmishes between Native tribes and rollicking annual rendezvous.

The travel writer -tourist arrived at Pueblo - "a small, square fort of adobe" - located where the *Fontaine-qui-bouille* (Fountain Creek) flows into the Arkansa [sic] River. Here he found Indian traders, *coureurs des bois* (independent French traders)-and mountain men occupying the crumbling fort.



Ruxton departed Pueblo for *Bayou Salado* (South Park) on a solitary hunting trip, bagging bear, antelopes, buffalo and fowl, as well as observing Utes and Arapahoes camping and hunting buffalo. The adventurer's keen eye and vivacious writing created a fascinating portrait of Native peoples and frontier wild life. He described the appearance, habits and habitat of the beaver in page after page of detail. He called the coyote a "small prairie wolf."

In late March, 1848, he returned to the Front Range, following a "very good lodgepole trail" used by the Utes. He camped for several days at present-day Manitou Springs, mesmerized by the bubbling waters and the nomadic Natives.

"The Indians," he wrote, "regard with awe the 'medicine' waters of these fountains, as being the abode of a spirit who breathes through the transparent water, and thus, by his exhalations, causes the perturbation of the surface. The Arapahoes especially attribute to this water god the power of ordaining the success or miscarriage of their war expeditions...."

bestowing offerings upon the 'water sprite' as they travel up to the Salt Valley *Bayou Salado*."

Ruxton marveled at how "The basin of the spring was filled with beads and wampum, and pieces of red cloth and knives, whilst the surrounding trees were hung with strips of deer skin, cloth and moccasins." And he observed: "Never was there such a paradise for hunters than at this lonely and solitary spot. The shelving prairie, at the bottom of which the springs are situated is entirely surrounded by rugged mountains."

By early April, it was time for Ruxton to begin his journey home to England. He followed the Arkansas downriver, east to civilization, again noting all that he saw on the way. He imagined "many hundreds of years ago when the big cottonwoods beside the Big River were no wider than an arrow." He describes how *bouse de vaches* –buffalo chips –are used to fuel a prairie campfire. And he sees spring gradually descend on the prairie. "Across the grand prairie 15th of April and not a green blade of grass had yet appeared.... Towards the latter half of April green grass began showing itself on the bottoms."



He encountered another dwindling fort on the Arkansas River about 60 miles below Pueblo. "Bent's Fort is a square building of adobe, flanked by circular bastions loopholed for musketry and entered by a large gateway leading into the corral or the yard." The journey continued downriver on the Arkansas: "Our next camping place was the 'Big Timbers,' a grove of cottonwoods on the left bank of the river, and a

favourite wintering place of the Cheyennes." In St. Louis, Ruxton marveled at the musical entertainment at the Mountain House hotel, where he heard a lively fiddle and banjo twanging accompanying Native Americans chanting and dancing.



Once again back in England, Ruxton quickly rewrote his travel journals into articles published in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* and then combined into a semi-autobiography, *Ruxton of the Rockies*. To fund further travels, Ruxton sold the royalty rights to *Life in the Far West*. Seduced again by wanderlust, the Englishman set out, again, in 1848 for the American West, planning a sojourn at Salt Lake City to cure his weak constitution. His health had suffered severely after a spinal injury he received falling off a mule, during his first visit to the Rockies. Unfortunately, Ruxton's journey West halted at St. Louis, a place that he called "the emporium of the fur-trade and the metropolis for the fast-rising precocious settlements of the West." The young adventurer died of dysentery in St. Louis on August 29, 1848.

Goerge Ruxton was not forgotten. A century after his death, esteemed historian LeRoy R. Hafen organized reprint of *Life in the Far West* and praised Ruxton as "One of the picked company of born explorers, who knew not only how to observe but how to fare in wild regions, and endure." Ruxton's books continue to be reprinted, and Manitou Springs' Ruxton Avenue winds up Ruxton Canyon to the Cog Railway depot, namesake for the early adventurer.

The Great Monarch Migration Mystery: or The Santa Fe Trail is a Piker Compared to the Monarch Trail

For thousands of years monarch butterflies by the hundreds of millions have migrated from Canada and the United States to central Mexico for the winter. The monarchs flying south have never been to Mexico before, but they find their way back to the same fir-tree forests where their ancestors have wintered for centuries.



Natural Resource staff at Sand Creek Massacre NHS and Bent's Old Fort NHS noticed several years ago that there were hundreds of monarchs migrating through both parks during the spring and the fall migrations. A little research showed that monarch populations, like many native species are suffering from habitat loss and fragmentation. National Parks with their native plant communities can serve as important habitat for many native animal species. *Our Bent's Fort, much like the original fort, can serve as a refueling stop for the travelers on their long journey south in the fall.* We know, from having collected plants for our herbarium for over 25 years, that Bent's Fort has three species of milkweed. When we GPS'ed the weeds we've treated, we also GPS'ed milkweed patches to find out how much habitat we have in the park. Danette Ulloa, maintenance seasonal/ biotech, as a sideline of her seed collecting for our restoration

projects has taken many beautiful photographs of monarch butterflies (as well as bugs, dragonflies, damselflies, flowers, and other slithery, crawling creatures).

In a joint effort with Mrs. Gallegos's non-major biology class from OJC we tagged and released over 50 Monarch butterflies this September. For most of the young adults in the class it was the first time they had been to the fort and the first time they had ever caught or held a butterfly of any kind. After a tentative start and some fear of the "wild", their enthusiasm grew as butterflies were caught. After only one hour of running through the sunflowers around the edges of the wetland, the class had to return to campus. The class was thrilled with their experience; several students asked if they could come back again to volunteer. They were invited to attend the Hispanic Heritage Celebration and the Santa Fe Trail encampment this fall. Hopefully this collaboration will continue.

If you would like to bring your kids to help us tag and release monarchs next summer contact Fran Pannebaker, Chief of Resources, 719-383-5016.

There are several non-profit groups working to save Monarch habitat. A little internet research will "net" you lots of good information.





**Bent's Old Fort Volunteers
Reach a New High**

One Hundred and forty-one volunteers donated 4,654 hours of work time with the Trails and Rails program, living history programs and Bookstore sales. This is the largest number of volunteers we had working in one year. Below are the volunteer hours for fiscal year 2010 (October 1, 2009 to September 30, 2010). Please let Greg Holt know of any changes or missing hours. Names of volunteers and hours are in alphabetical order.

	<u>2010</u>	<u>Total</u>
Alvarez, Gabe	34	46
Alvarez, Sophi	34	46
Atwater, Merrill	8	8
Bailey, Bill	48	80
Beckman, G.	46	431
Bent, Faith	76	511
Berry, Mark	36	542
Blanco, Betty	52	571
Blasi, Ed	36	309
Boy Scouts	140	340
Brittain, Lloyd	24	250
Brown, Judi	32	160
Carillo, Richard	13	11
Carlock, Laurel	8	28
Carrica, Denise	76	76
Chappell, Dennis	18	811
Convery, William	8	40
Couch, Dub	18	184
Cranson, Kathy	2	2
Crawdford, Jim	18	260

Crawford, Henry	28	270
Cynova, Kay	12	86
Dack, Randy	12	68
Dack, Sarah	12	68
Darcy, Virginia	12	12
Davis, L	85	5327
Dekray, Romona	108	712
Dickie, Chuck	18	230
Duncan, Dena	8	128
Duncan, Ed	45	395
Duncan, Sammy	8	155
Ebert, Bernhart	10	10
Eller, Bruce	44	74
Erickson, Don	56	936
Erickson, Lara	20	459
Elsloo, Bob	20	532
Frausto, Cora	3	9
Frausto, Elijah	4	10
Frausto, Joe	26	413
Freed, John	38	113
Gimeno, Emil	10	18
Gingerich, Jenny	24	707
Gingerich, Tanner	18	56
Goegel, Ron	4	4
Goodwin, Keith	9	9
Grogan, Wayne	36	36
Gwaltney, Bill	32	396
Harsh, Jim	54	456
Headlee, Don	32	1108
Hensley, Judy	180	755
Henwood, Bill	32	293
Henwood, Karen	32	677
Hickey, Quinten	20	80
Hickey, Shelby	20	80
Holt, Sara	87	327
Holt, Trevor	20	192
Imhof, Paul	32	156
Ingles, Barbara	16	564
Jacobs, Julie	16	54
Jepsen, Eva	8	53
Jones, Delbert	3	3
Kanuta, Karen	20	121
Karnuta, Aaron	24	125
Karnuta, Tom	48	304
Keas, Don	12	332
Keas, Phylis	32	623

Kelley, Phyllis	40	146
Kelly, Bob	18	68
Keyser, Lee	32	134
Kinney, Holly	10	10
KnifeChief, Martin	46	442
Larison, Bob	38	726
Larison, Cindy	6	28
Lindahl, Kevin	66	268
Lohsen, Richard	32	133
Lopez, Lexi	52	60
Lovisone, Barb	48	48
Lovisone, Bob	48	48
Luzader, John	48	1045
Martin, Kent	12	125
Martinez, Deborah	8	12
Mathews, Stephen	12	16
Mc Clure Helen	36	116
Mc Clure, Donald	36	477
Mc Grath, Allen	4	438
McFarren, Bette	36	102
McIntyre, Elaine	66	66
Medina, Mario	6	35
Moore, Michael	28	226
Newsom, Robert	86	1252
O'Hare, G.	13	1118
Oyen, Karen	72	502
Petramala, Eunice	36	72
Piscotta, Sam	79	649
Plunkey, Ken	5	5
Prack, Charlotte	36	36
Prack, Kimberly	42	252
Prack, Nathaniel	36	36
Prack,. Charles	28	28
Ramsey, Blake	6	16
Ramsey, Tel	6	6
Reddy, Kevin	16	370
Richardson, Bruce	16	307
Rideout, Rex	12	248
Rivera, Carol	8	43
Roberts, Ty	28	63
Rufenacht, Dwayne	58	398
Rundstrom, Pat	8	16
Rundstrom, Ron	8	16
Russell, John	16	152
Schaubs, Michael	41	148
Sebastian, Ana	48	83

Sebastian, James	48	487
Senty, Ruth	36	36
Sinclair, Bill	72	478
Sinclair, Phyllis	72	416
Smith, Cathy	16	152
Spellman, Jerri	32	538
Stafford, Clara Lee	62	210
Stafford, Ed	96	210
Stroot, Wayne	12	24
Tatman, Hal	54	454
Thomeczek, Judy	66	66
Thompson JR	42	175
Thompson, Laura	9	19
Thruston, Shela	45	1054
Trotter, Jenise	27	65
Troyer, Don	24	289
Troyer, Mary	3	27
Trujillo, Rose	48	114
Ulloa, Addica	24	56
Ulloa, Dannett	18	94
Vigil, Virginia	8	8
Wallner, Abby	24	92
Wallner, Ammy	24	86
Wallner, Vicki	12	452
Warren, Charles	8	24
Warren, Peggy	40	393
Webb, Kim	24	142
Weber, Ken	58	
Wood, Park	20	606



Volunteers assisting with presentations at the governor's residence.

Living History Encampment June 1-5, 2011



Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site will host an instructional "Living History Encampment" June 1 -5, 2011. This popular living history event will provide participants the unique opportunity to learn about 1840s life by living it! You will be immersed in the role of trader, trapper-hunter, laborer, blacksmith, carpenter, Army Topographical Engineer or domestic cook. You will gain a much deeper understanding of the realities of fur trade era life in the American West.



Participants will be provided study materials and lectures on history, living history, and interpretive skills. Living historians will teach and direct participants in use of 19th century work techniques and social skills. Orientation, tours and talks will be given on site about Bent's Fort history during the afternoon on June 1st with participants responsible for their own food and accommodations that day and night. Lectures will take place during the second day with an overnight on the Santa Fe Trail that evening. On Friday, those who are to work for Bent, St.Vrain and Company will travel to the fort and sign in with the company. From that moment on, you are living a 19th century life 24 hours a day. The Army and trappers will spend most of their time working out of their camps along the Arkansas River.

There will be a participant fee of \$300 for this 5-day, 4-night event. The fee includes instruction, necessary equipment, and food and accommodations (Thursday night through noon Sunday). Two hours graduate level credit will be available and college tuition fees apply. There are a limited number of spaces in each role. The park staff will make selections based on the information you provide in your application. Applications must be mailed to: Greg Holt, Bent's Old Fort NHS, 35110 Highway 194 East, La Junta, Colorado 81050. Contact Greg at (719) 383-5023 for more information.

Bent's Old Fort NHS
2011 Living History Encampment Application
Wednesday, June 1 – Sunday, June 5, 2011

Please type or print clearly.

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____
Phone: _____
Email Address: _____

Role Desired: (Mark 1,2,3 as first, second and third choice) _____ Trader
_____ Carpenter _____ Blacksmith _____ Mexican Laborer _____ Domestic
(cook) _____ Trapper/Hunter _____ Topographical Engineer
Application for college credit desired? Yes _____ No _____

What is your previous experience with living history?

Why are you interested in this education experience?

What are some ways you plan to apply the knowledge, skills and abilities you gain from this experience?

Do you have an interest in volunteering at Bent's Fort? If so, when would you be available?

THE FINE PRINT: We reserve the right to cancel this workshop if minimum registration is not reached at least 14 days before the start of the workshop. In this case, we will refund your entire fee. If not selected, you will receive a refund. Registrants who cancel on or before 21 days before the first day of the workshop will be refunded their registration fee minus a \$50 processing fee. No refunds will be issued for registrants who cancel within 21 days of the first day of the workshop, though you may send another person in your place. Make the fee payment of \$300 payable to the "National Park Service". Mail this application to:

Greg Holt
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
35110 Highway 194 East
La Junta, CO 81050

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

Bent's Fort Volunteer Newsletter is a non-profit publication free to any active Bent's Old Fort volunteer. All rights are not reserved.

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**Join Bent's Old Fort Historical
Association to Help Promote and Support
the Fort!**

You are invited to join the Bent's Old Fort Historical Association and help promote, protect and honor the natural and cultural heritage the fort represents by increasing public awareness and attracting supplemental financial assistance.

Membership benefits include:

- Free admission to the fort.
- A quarterly newsletter
- Membership card acknowledging your interest in history

Through your support, you will be helping to preserve a vital part of America's past.
Call Lee Keyser at 719-598-5990 for more information!