
HUBBELL

TRADING POST





Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site, Arizona was established in 1965 and covers a 160 acre (64 hectares) homestead site.

Description of trail

Length - a few hundred yards
Time required - 20-30 minutes
Terrain - level and at times muddy

Rules

Please don't litter.

Warnings

Sidewalks have drop-offs and in the winter may be icy and muddy. Please watch your step. At certain areas along the trail particles of glass are working through the soil. Shoes must be worn for your protection.

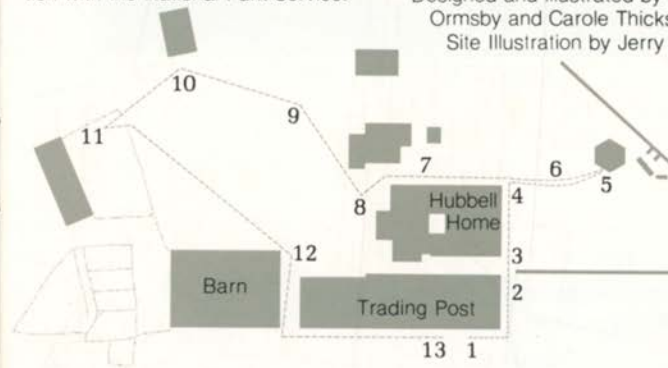
How to use this guide

Numbered stops on the map correspond to numbers in the trail guide.

Hubbell Trading Post remains an active trading post, which is now administered by the National Park Service and is operated by Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, a non-profit organization. The primary function of SPMA is to assist in the interpretation of the Hubbell Trading Post National Historic Site and Navajo rug weaving and silversmithing. Authentic arts and crafts sold at the post are from the Navajo, Hopi and Zuni tribes.

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Hubbell Trading Post, 1904.

Here is a meeting ground of two cultures,
the Diné (Navajo),
and the people who settled in the Southwest
in the late 1800s. This second group of people
came from both Mexico and the United States.

In this short walk around the grounds of
Hubbell Trading Post, among the
stone and adobe buildings,
are two worlds with two viewpoints.
People who lived and live here, at the trading post
and in the surrounding hills and mesas,
exchange ideas as well as materials.
Their different ways of looking at things
shape what happens here.
It is an encounter that began in the hot sun
a century ago, and continues today.



ONE

Heavy stones from this land itself were lifted up in 1883
to begin this solid building.

Life at Hubbell Trading Post centered around it.

The idea of trading was not new to the Navajos.
Indian tribes in the Southwest had traded
among themselves for many years.

When the Anglos came to trade with the Navajos
the difference was in the products exchanged,
and in the changes brought about by the exchange.

In the late 1800s the Navajos were troubled by
an economic and spiritual depression
caused by the Long Walk.

The Long Walk was the terrible time from 1864 to 1868
when the United States soldiers
removed many Navajos from their homeland.

When they came back in 1868,
they found their herds decimated, their fields destroyed.

Their lifeway had been ripped,
and things could never be as they had been before.

Trade with whites became increasingly important.

The trader was in contact with the world
outside the reservation,
a world which could supply the Navajos with food
(flour, sugar, coffee, baking powder, canned goods),
tobacco, tools, and cloth.

In exchange for the trader's goods
the Navajos gave wool, sheep, and later on,
rugs and jewelry.

It was years before cash was used
between trader and Navajo.

Photo courtesy of Huntington Library in San Marino, CA



TWO



The initials on the gate stand for John Lorenzo Hubbell.
Hubbell's father was Anglo, his mother Spanish.

He was raised in Pajarito, a small village
close to Albuquerque, New Mexico.

He came to this area in 1876, less than ten years
after the Long Walk. In 1878 he bought a couple of
small buildings from a man named William Leonard,
and started business.

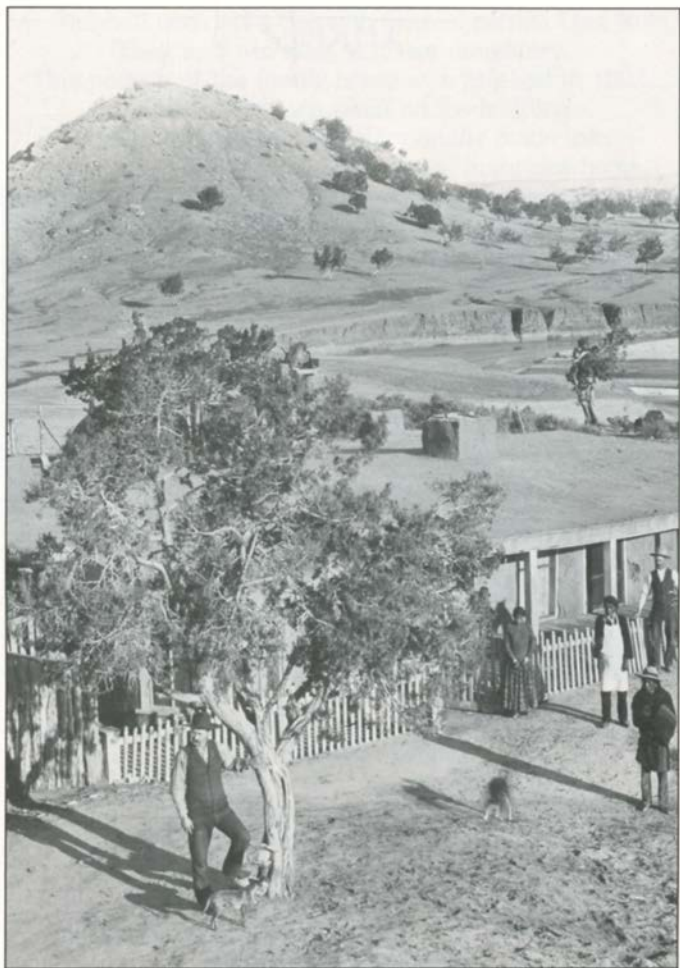
The Leonard buildings stood to your right
at the corner of the stone wall.

It was a remarkable position for a young man
just starting out on a path filled with unseen turns.

He was twenty-three years old, single,
and he was trying to make a living among the Navajos,
people he did not know very well.

He had to find a niche in a new culture,
to learn its ways, including
a difficult language.

He probably learned "trader Navajo" very quickly.



These buildings were constructed by William Leonard about 1874 and used by Hubbell until 1900. Photo taken about 1895.

THREE



Interior of the Hubbell home, 1904. These baskets are now secured to the ceiling.

Mr. Hubbell married a Spanish woman named Lina Rubi.

They had two sons and two daughters.

This portion of the family home was finished in 1902.

It started out as a plain adobe building
which the Hubbell family gradually made into
this comfortable, and in some ways, luxurious home.
Paintings and Indian artifacts like those in the trading post,
and many large Navajo rugs,
decorate the interior. Unlike some of the other traders
who left their families "back home," all of the Hubbells
spent most of the year here in Ganado.

Members of the family lived in the house until 1967.

Walk onto the screened porch
and peek through the windows into the Hubbell home.

In the summertime Virginia creeper grew around the porch,
keeping it cool and shady. A small patch of lawn
like this was a luxury and needed constant care.

Flowers, both native and exotic, were planted in the yard:
native wild roses and yucca along the wall;
yellow roses and lilacs in the center.

The gray-green Russian olive trees beyond the far wall
mark the line of the wash (creek) bed.

In some sections of this valley the wash is spring-fed
and runs year round.

Heavy summer rains and melting snows
sometimes cause it to flood.

In the Southwest a good source of water
has always attracted people. The Anasazi
(a Navajo word for the Ancient Ones)
lived in small villages up and down this valley
hundreds of years ago.

The Navajos came later,
and then the traders.

FOUR

The cone-shaped hill beyond the stone hogan is Hubbell Hill. The family cemetery is at the top.

Mr. Hubbell, his wife, three of his children, and a Navajo man named Many Horses are buried there.

Many Horses was the local headman.

He and Mr. Hubbell were close friends for many years.

Mr. Hubbell maintained friendship with many of his customers.

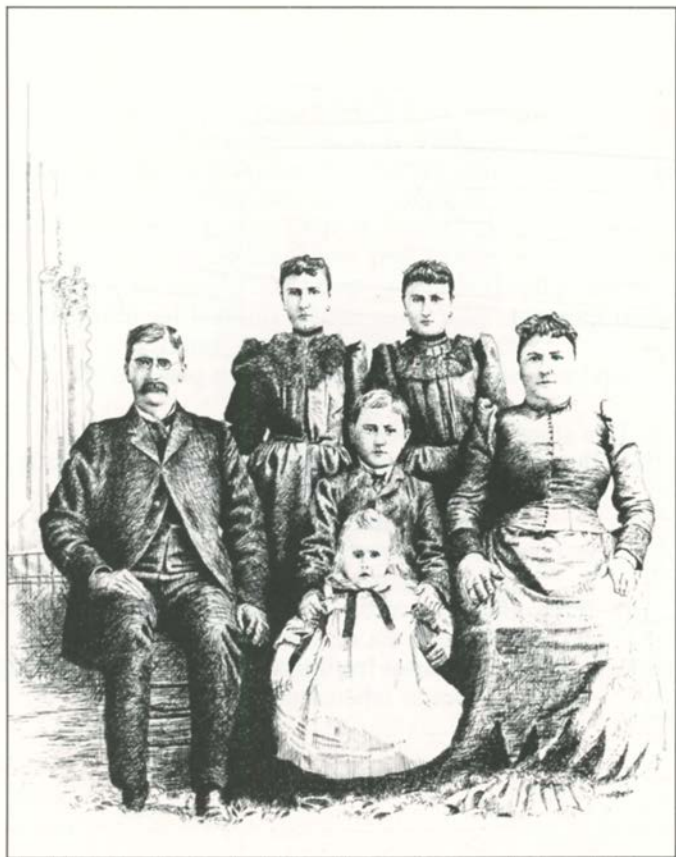
Mr. Hubbell died in 1930.

Then his younger son, Roman (Ro-mán), operated the business.

When Roman died in 1957 his wife Dorothy managed the store

for another ten years, until 1967,

when the National Park Service bought it.



The Hubbell family, standing left to right are daughters Adele and Barbara; seated are John Lorenzo, son Lorenzo Jr. and wife Lina Rubi; son Roman is in dress.

FIVE

For a traveler in the Southwest many years ago,
after a long day of riding over rough roads—
Imagine his thoughts as the buildings of Hubbell Trading Post
gradually came into view.

Visitors stayed in the Hubbell home,
and they were many...
artists interested in the colors and shapes of the land,
anthropologists who came to Mr. Hubbell for information,
statesmen, friends of the family,
and ordinary travelers in need of a place to stay.

This stone hogan became the Hubbell guest house.
Dorothy and Roman Hubbell built it in the early 1930s
as a memorial to Mr. Hubbell.

Hogan means home in Navajo;
you have seen others across the reservation.

Most hogans are built of logs.
They always face the sunrise, like this one,
and usually have six or sometimes eight sides.
The Hubbells built several traditional hogans on the grounds
for the Navajos who came long distances.



Dorothy Hubbell, Roman's wife, carved the inner wooden door.
This place used to be called Pueblo Colorado
(the inscription over the door)
but often it was confused with the town of Pueblo, Colorado.
There was an important Navajo leader named Tótsohnii Hastiin
(Man of the Big Water Clan). He was also called
Ganado Mucho (Many Cattle)
and Mr. Hubbell re-named this place Ganado for him.
Ganado Mucho was the father of Many Horses.



Trading Post buildings from Hubbell Hill, 1904.



Hubbell in the corn field

SIX

Corn, squash, peaches, beans—
these are traditional Navajo crops.

Náádáá (Indian corn) is grown in this field.
It is planted in hills, with seven or eight stalks to a cluster.

This helps to conserve moisture
and also makes watering with a bucket much easier.

You can cook the corn in several different ways;
cornmeal mush, cornbread, cake, roasted on the cob,
or ntsidigo'i (kneel-down bread).

Ntsidigo'i is made of fresh moist corn.

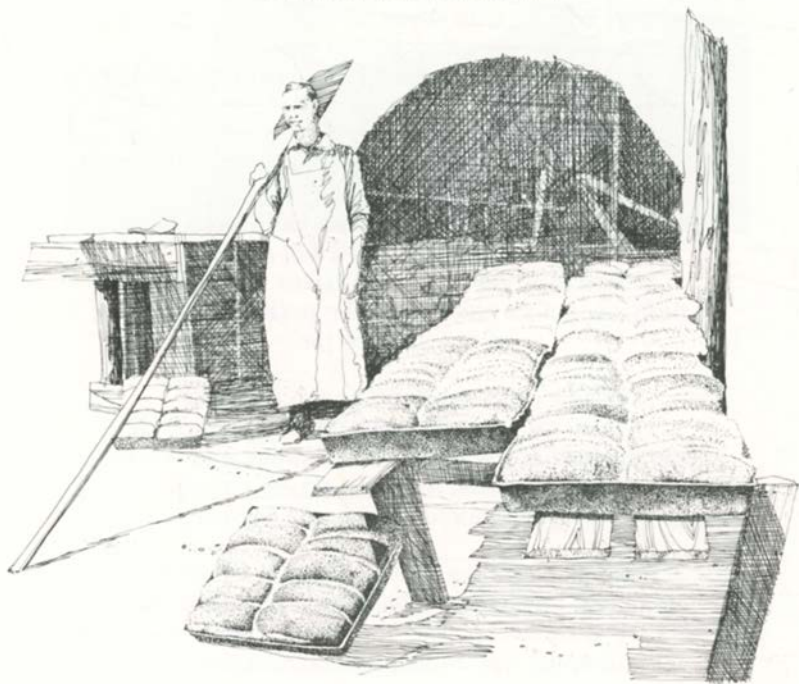
The cook grinds it on a flat stone,
wraps it in the husks and bakes it in a pit.
It probably got its name from the position of kneeling
to put it in the pit.

A gardener employed by the Hubbells
grew all kinds of fruit and vegetables,
supplying most of the needs of the family and workers:
apples, peaches, apricots, pears, melons,
turnips, potatoes, beans and squash.

Running a trading post involved much more
than just buying and selling goods in the store.
Besides the gardener, people with other jobs worked here,
keeping the trading post in business.

SEVEN

This was the bread oven.
It took a full-time baker
to keep the store and the family supplied.
He baked nearly four hundred loaves of bread a week.
The smell of fresh bread
drifted in the clear air....





EIGHT

On a hot day,
men were irrigating the hay fields,
or loading wool onto freight wagons,
while the blacksmith shod a mule.

The sound of this dinner bell
signalled a rest from work.

For many years a Navajo man named Hastiin Néz was the cook.

His name means Tall Man.

He cooked meals for all the workers
as well as for the family.

The menu often was chili beans.

The workers' dining room was in the big house.

NINE



This is the center of the barnyard.
All around are man-made things —
buildings, machinery, fences.
Beyond them is the land —
rocks, trees, hills, and the blue sky.

In comparison to other greener parts of the world
this land may not seem colorful.

But once you are accustomed
to the absence of green vegetation,
you can see all of the subtler colors
made by light, distance, and the hills themselves.

All the familiar noises
of our 20th century culture — traffic, jets — were absent.

Instead, on a hot afternoon, there was
the clatter of farm machinery. The blacksmith's hammer.

The creak of horse, harness, and wagon.

A child practicing the piano inside the house.
Laughter of two Navajo boys hired to herd sheep.
Conversations in Navajo (still to be heard today).

The ground still is packed down from many years of use.
The small adobe building with two doors is the chicken coop.

Chicken, guinea hens, turkeys, even peacocks
roamed the barnyard.

The Hubbells also kept a few dairy cows.

The machine in the barnyard is a hay baler.

During the summer men worked
in the alfalfa fields beyond the fence harvesting the hay,
and then used this machine to press it into bales.
Can you tell from the pieces that are left how it worked?

A horse walking in circles
around the machine provided power.

TEN



...It is morning. You are a young field hand
at Hubbell Trading Post.

You hear chickens and the sound of the dinner bell.

It is cool outside, even on summer mornings,
and it is good to have a cup of hot coffee
in the big house. The thought of coffee
reminds you of your own hogan and your family
because there's always a big pot of coffee on the fire there.
It is Saturday. Tomorrow you will go home.
But for another day, you go to work in the fields.

Maybe you would choose to be someone different:

A freight wagon driver
(you would have stayed in this bunkhouse),
or a son or daughter of Mr. Hubbell?

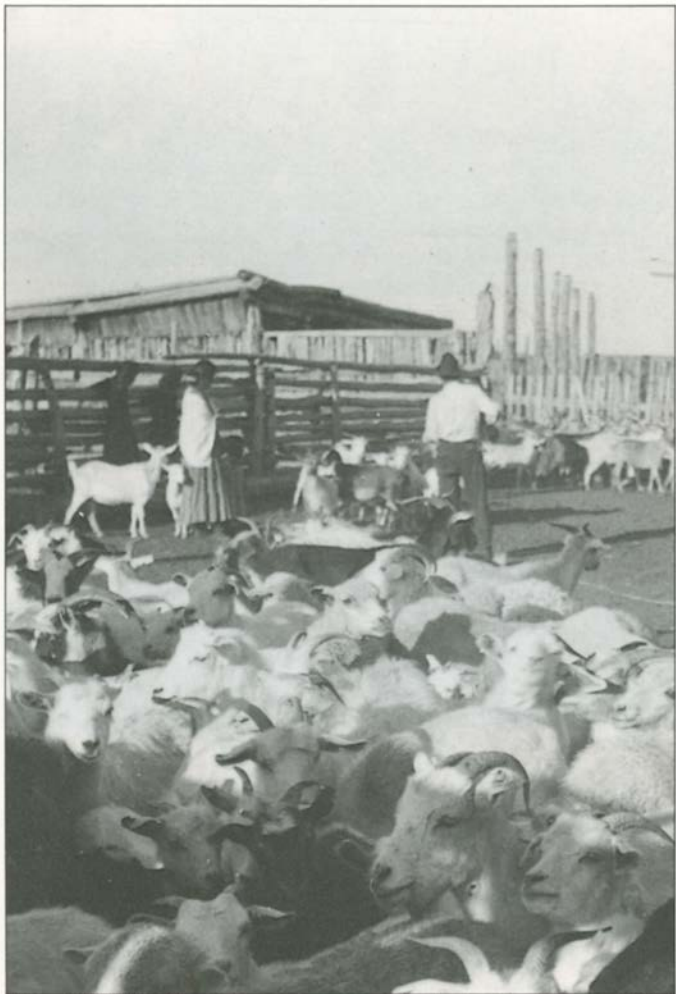
A weaver bringing her rug into the store?
You would have been welcome as you are,
as a visitor to Hubbell's, bringing news from "the outside"
or greetings from a friend.

ELEVEN

The corrals were built with juniper logs
stuck upright in the ground.
Navajo stockmen sold lambs and sheep to Mr. Hubbell,
and the flocks stayed in this complex of corrals
until they could be herded to the railroad.
From time to time Mr. Hubbell kept beef cattle as well.

Mr. Hubbell homesteaded 160 acres
before they were part of the reservation.
When the reservation expanded
it surrounded the Hubbell property.
Through an act of Congress
Mr. Hubbell got permission to keep his homestead.

These are the machines that worked this land.
Some of them we recognize:
hay baler, potato digger, planter, plow.
But farming techniques have changed,
and we do not know what some of these were for.
(If you do, we would welcome your help.)
The spokes and shadows of the old wheels in the corner
suggest an interesting black and white picture now,
but eighty years ago those wheels meant miles of rough travel,
while spoke shadows turned on the red earth.
Freight wagons brought supplies 56 miles to the store
from the little railroad town of Gallup, New Mexico.
If you came from there today it probably took you an hour.
It used to take from two to four days
in good weather.
Going back to town the freight wagons hauled
huge sacks of wool.
After 1913 the freighters began using cars and trucks.



Every fall Hubbell bought as many as 10,000 lambs. Photo, early 1900s.

TWELVE

Construction of this barn began in 1897.
The builders, local people, made the walls of local sandstone
and the roofs like those of Anasazi dwellings;
ponderosa pine beams, aspen poles, juniper bark, cornstalks,
and dirt make up layers, each at right angles
to the one below it.

Mules and pulleys lifted the beams into place.
The timbers came from about twelve miles east of Ganado
where it is high enough for ponderosa to grow.

The aspen poles probably came from farther away
in the Chuska Mountains to the north.

The barn was finished about 1900.



The barn and corrals, 1909.

Like any other barn, this one was used
by the Hubbell grandchildren
as a playhouse, a castle, a ship.

The hayloft was a favorite place.

Below, there was room for about fifteen horses or mules.



Freight wagons, loaded with sacks of wool and hides, in front of the wholesale warehouse Hubbell owned in Gallup, New Mexico.

Four and sometimes six mules pulled
each of the big freight wagons.

In order to keep up with the shoeing
Mr. Hubbell hired a blacksmith.

A Mexican man named Joe Borrego
worked here for many years.

Besides shoeing, he mended wagon and machine parts
and bent iron into shapes for branding irons.

There are brand marks in the wooden door
of the blacksmith's shop on the north side of the barn.

Borrego also made the iron gate you came through
at the beginning of this walk.

Later on, when cars came,
a mechanic took the place of the blacksmith
and the shop became a garage.

Changes, changes took place while the Hubbells were here:
paved roads...an electric generator...telephone...

A place long familiar to the Navajos, their home,
was changing;

A place new to the traders was becoming familiar.

THIRTEEN

You have seen behind the scene.
All this activity was support for the main trading room
where the work of a hundred hogans,
and of factories in distant cities,
finally came together.

Walk in the front door:
notice the creak of wooden floors, the musty smell,
the high wooden counters. You are a Navajo in 1890.

How do you react to the trader?

Around you, on the shelves,
are things you have never seen before.
Mr. Hubbell, standing behind the counter,
explains what they are used for.

You make up names for unfamiliar things.
For example, the Navajos at first called pears
“bilasáanaa bitsee-i hólónígí yadiizín biigi.”

The literal translation is

“apples-with-tails-on-them-in-a-can.”

(Nowdays it has been shortened to “bilasáana bitsee'i.”)

Maybe after you came several times
to bring wool or pinyon nuts
you began to know Mr. Hubbell,
and invited him to your ceremonies,
or taught him new words in Navajo,
or told him stories about your family.

This cultural exchange still happens at Hubbell Trading Post.

People who come today to buy groceries
may be the grandsons and granddaughters

of Mr. Hubbell's customers and employees.
Stories still are told in both English and Navajo. For both,
it is the story that is changing.

For this is a meeting ground of two cultures,
which developed separately, met,
and began inevitable exchange.
Even people who imagine themselves onlookers
are party to the change that goes on today.
All that passed was not just to bring us to today.
Rather today is merely the phase
when wagons became pickups,
barter became cash,
and visitors became more numerous.
We are all the connection
between what was here fifty years ago,
and what will be here in fifty more.



Hubbell and Navajo men, early 1900s.

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