



Bent's Fort Ledger

Winter
2007

Traditional Holiday Celebration Provided Simple Pleasures

By Greg Holt

Happy faces could be seen everywhere during the Traditional Holiday Celebration December 1 and 2. Visitors, volunteers, and fort staff alike had a wonderful time conjuring up the spirit of the 1840's. Volunteers took their places and delved out holiday traditions foreign to most people these days. The simple pleasures of a taffy pull, wagon ride, piñata break, toy making, games, Yule log hunt, and



storytelling made the past special. One visitor commented that we were doing things he and his wife hadn't seen since 1960's. Many of us remember it as a time when people played and experimented without the confines and distractions we experience today.

Candlelight Tours "opened the door" to a variety of ways frontiersmen and women celebrated the holiday season. Trade routine turned into a gift exchange. Candle making and cooking went from being fire side chore to a way of producing a holiday creation. Letters from home and storytelling became a way to escape from hardship and loneliness. Las Abuelos became a way to get the children to mind their parents. Recreation became recreation, a way to stimulate the soul and stir excitement during some boring times. However, frontier celebrations sometime got

out of hand as that experienced by Dave Crow and his overcharging the cannon with the doctor the one to see when things did get out of hand. Fremont demonstrated what he thought was complete control over his men in the winter of 1848 at Bent's Fort, but later succumbed to nature's deep snows.

The volunteers are to be congratulated for a job well done. The park received over 700 visits with many visitors staying for hours. A leader of a special "Explorer Group", a special group of needy school children, said that her children were having so much fun visiting with the people, "they forgot about the toy making in the carpenter shop!" I think many of the adults were surprised at seeing kids playing simple games and having an extremely good time doing it. We made a wonderful impression on many impressionable minds.



Controlled Burn Blackens Fort Territory

For those of you who weren't able to be at the December Holiday Event and didn't get to see the results (black wetland) of our November prescribed burn, this photo will give you an idea of what an "event" the prescribed burn was for the park. After months of planning the 300 acre prescribed burn was scheduled for Monday, November 13th. Our Fire Management

Officer (FMO), Lake Meredith NRA came to the park the week before to get his “feet on the



ground” and look at conditions. Fire crew started coming in on Saturday. The crews “prepped for the burn” using weed whackers to cut grass around living cottonwood trees in the oxbow south and east of the fort. The weather conditions did not meet prescription until Wednesday. On Wednesday morning there were 35 fire crew members from Lake Meredith NRA, Bandelier NM, US Forest Service - Comanche and Cimarron National Grasslands (Colorado & Kansas), Colorado State Forest Service, and the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribal Crew from Oklahoma. Both sides of the river were burned on the same day. The fire smoke plume could be seen for 50 miles.



The full benefits of this burn may not be seen for several years, but already the park staff have been able to document a decrease in the sites fire fuel load and a decrease in exotic plant bio-mass. By the Spring of 2007, we expect to see an increase in new cottonwood seedlings and a increase in overall native plant densities.

The next burn (The island between the fort and the visitor parking and the field south of the administration building) is scheduled for the Spring of 2007.

Chief's (and Acting Superintendent's) Update

Let me start by saying another big “Thank You” to all who assisted with and participated in the Holiday Celebration in December. The bit of snow we had added to the holiday feel. Thank goodness our big storm waited until the end of the month!

La Junta recorded just short of 40 inches of snow with the storm of December 28-31. That came on top of 11 inches that hadn't melted yet from a storm the week before. Obviously, digging out has been the main concern of everyone in this area for the last ten days. Though the main highways are all cleared, many of the residential streets in town are still only barely passable. Mountains of snow are being piled up in vacant lots all over town. And cleanup costs are running into the millions.



At the park, things are cleared and we are open. We have a lot more room to push or dump the snow! The site was closed from December 29 to January 5. Since reopening visitation has been, to say the least, light. As I write this on the 11th, we've had less than a dozen visitors so far this month.

With the low visitation we have been working hard on submitting projects for the Park Service budget call due next week. Some of our top requests include volunteer operating funds (which now have to be requested

annually), money to develop our historic weapons program, assistance listening devices for our video room (mandated by Washington to be in place by January 2008), rehabilitation of the well room (where moisture has rotted out the support beams) and adobe repairs.

All edits on the park's new orientation film have now been completed and work on captions and audio description is underway. We are looking at a premiere date during the last week of March at the Koshare Kiva in La Junta. We will mail out invites as soon as we peg down the exact date.

Work continues on other interpretive projects such as planning for the interpretive/orientation plaza at the visitor parking lot; production of a new Junior Ranger booklet in cooperation with Western National Parks Association; seeking further grant monies for an interpretive trail at the park; potential podcasts; and upgrades to the park website. And we are, of course, planning for this year's schedule of events.

Cindy is slated to return to the park March 5. In the meantime, I will continue to sign as...

Your acting superintendent,
Rick

Bent's Fort Sailed the Seas Too

By Rick Wallner



As some of you are already aware, there was actually a ship built during World War II christened "Bent's Fort." This was a T-2 tanker built by the Kaiser Company at the Swan Island Yard in Portland, Oregon in 1945. T-2 tankers were the workhorses of the tanker fleet built to carry liquid cargo: gasoline, oil, etc. During World War II, American tankers

made 6,500 voyages to carry 65 million tons of oil and gasoline from the U.S. and the Caribbean to the war zones and to our Allies. They supplied 80% of the fuel used by bombers, tanks, jeeps and ships during the War.

Four hundred and eighty-one T-2 tankers were built and were named after monuments, national parks, forts, battles, historic settlements, trails, lakes and swamps. For instance, there was a "Fort Clatsop," an "Oregon Trail," and a "Mesa Verde." For the "Bent's Fort," the keel was laid on July 31, 1945 and the ship was launched October 25, 1945. It was delivered into service November 21. It was sold to the Cities Service Oil Company in 1948, and wasn't scrapped until 1970.

The photo shows the "Bent's Fort" at an unknown location sometime between December 1946 and January 1948.

Of course, this ship wasn't the Bent family's only connection to the sea. Charles and William's youngest sibling, Silas, Jr. was a famous mariner and oceanographer. He was flag lieutenant on Commodore Perry's flagship during his expedition to Japan. Silas Bent's pioneering work on the understanding of ocean currents and their impact on continental climates was controversial for its time, but is accepted fact today, as El Nino impacts are felt across our nation right now.

The Navy recognized the contributions of Silas by christening the first Navy ship built specifically for geophysical and oceanographic survey the "Silas Bent." This ship was built in Lorain, Ohio and delivered to the Navy in July 1965. In fact, "Silas Bent" became the name of a whole class of oceanographic survey ships. She served until 1999 when she was deactivated in Singapore and became Turkey's TCG "Sesme." Under her new name she continues her oceanographic work in the waters of Turkey.

From the dry plains of Colorado to the seas of Japan and Turkey, it is always interesting to see where all the interwoven threads lead as we examine the quilt of history!

**2007 Events
(Make plans now!)**

April 21: Spring Training for Trails and Rails Volunteers

Training for new Trails and Rails volunteers and emergency refresher training for current volunteers. Anyone wishing to attend this training to be certified as a new T&R volunteer should contact Rick at (719) 383- 5024.

May 7 – September 4: Trails and Rails Trips

Narrated excursions aboard Amtrak's Southwest Chief depart La Junta, Colorado on Mondays and Fridays for overnight trips to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Follow the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail up and over Raton Pass while learning the stories of people, plants and animals along the way. For more information, call (719) 383- 5024.

June 7 – 10: Living History Encampment

Visit the 1840s with teachers, students and living history volunteers and staff perfecting their 19th century skills. The encampment, which begins June 7, trains participants in presenting living history to the public.

The event is open for public to view ongoing demonstrations on Saturday and Sunday, June 9 – 10. Pre- registration is required for the full encampment (participation is limited). For information, call Greg at (719) 383- 5023.

July 14: Kids' Quarters

Seven to eleven year- old children are invited to "step back in time" and experience the life of a trapper, trader, laborer, craftsman, Indian or soldier. Kids learn and practice 19th century skills and experience living history for themselves. Registration is required; for application materials call (719) 383- 5026.

October 5 – 7: Santa Fe Trail Encampment

The park's main living history event again takes place in the fall, and this year celebrates the traders, tribes and travelers associated with the Santa Fe Trail. Their camps, set up near the fort, will be open for touring. All together over

60 living history volunteers bring the post back to life during this major event!

For more information, call (719) 383- 5023.

December 7 – 8: Holiday Celebration

Witness for yourself the joys, pleasures and pastimes of the 1840s at an isolated trading post. The spirit of the season comes alive with wagon rides, games, toy making and other holiday festivities. The event begins Friday evening December 7 with candlelight tours of the fort and continues all through Saturday, December 8 culminating with another evening of candlelight tours. For reservations for the evening tours, phone (719)383- 5026 after October 16, 2007.

**Volunteer Hours F.Y. 2006 (10/1/05 - 9/30/06)
*Bent's Old Fort NHS***

Alphabetical Order:

	<u>2006</u>	<u>Total</u>
Anderson, Andy	40	65
Aragon, Ed Jr.	3	3
Bartel, Gladwin	146	1111 (18 th)
Beckman Gayle	16	16
Bent, Faith	17	383
Bergstrom, Robert	40	40
Berry, Mark	20	422(50 th)
Blanco, Betty	21	931(19 th)
Blasi, Ed	17	88
Boy Scouts	287	335
Burgess, Tamara	6	129
Burns, Paige	58	58
Carpenter, Diane	18	192
Chappell, Dennis	126	652(30 th)
Crawford, Henry	40	163
Crawford, Jim	69	160
Davis, Leon	10	5060(1 st)
Dekray, Romona	76	385
Duncan, Dena	20	64
Duncan, Ed	20	199
Duncan, Sam	20	115
Duncan, Shelly	20	64
Emmons, Joe	85	233
Erickson, Don	60	669(29 th)
Erickson, Lara	20	280
Esloo, Bob	60	395
Espanosa, Debra	4	8
Fenter, Jeanie	4	4
Foremond, Charles	75	75
Frausto, Elijah	6	36
Frausto, Joe	50	305
Frausto, Lucas	6	6
Frauasto, Cora	6	6

Frausto, Phoebe	6	6
Frausto, Sarah	6	78
Gingerich, Cambry	6	6
Gingerich, Jenny	16	627(32 nd)
Gingerich, Tanner	20	30
Grinstead, Lane	17	63
Guder, Bonnie	17	131
Gwaltney, Bill	40	258
Gwaltney, Will	40	40
Hall, Dray	10	10
Hall, Tina	10	426(48 th)
Hallmark, Tommy	72	115
Harsh, Jim	64	211
Headlee, Don	18	894(22 nd)
Headley, Mark	8	708(28 th)
Hensley, Judy	68	262
Henwood, Bill	6	137
Henwood, Karen	6	521(40 th)
Hess, Dexter	8	62
Hoff, Daniel	18	121
Holt, Sara	37	71
Holt, Trevor	12	117
Ingles, Barbara	20	344
Johnson, Loren	118	1348(13 th)
Karnuta, Aaron	20	20
Karnuta, Karen	20	20
Karnuta, Tom	60	60
Keas, Don	20	260
Keas, Phylis	20	431
Kewilley, b	85	85
Kisthart, Bob	9	9
KnifeChief, Martin	16	41
Kralicek, Christine	44	44
Larison, Bob	34	618(33 rd)
Larison, Brent	26	301
Leonard, Sandy	14	14
Likes, John	40	40
Lindahl, Kevin	26	202
Lohsen, Richard	40	40
Losey, Mary Jane	17	63
Luzader, John	60	801(25 th)
Lyons, Mark	40	40
Manna, John	40	40
Martin, Kent	17	92
Martin, Nancy	17	92
McClure, Donald	85	306
McGrath, Al	80	365(60 th)
McPherson, Ralph	4	20
Miller, Larry	26	190
Miller, Les	69	69
Monhollon, E.	102	102
Monhollon, J.	102	102
Moore, Denise	18	52
Moore, Mike	18	78
Moore, Sam	28	124
Moore, Sharon	34	130

Newell, Dave	10	502(41 st)
Newsom, Robert	119	750
O'Hare, Gavin	127	605(34 th)
Oyen, Karen	51	268
Painter, Amber	6	6
Pickerel, Carol	5	5
Pisciotta, Sam	60	495(42 nd)
Ramsey, Black	10	10
Reddy, Kevin	40	247
Richardson, Bruce	40	164
Rideout, Ben	20	149
Rideout, Dan	20	129
Rideout, Rex	20	155
Robinson, James	40	40
Salas, Alisha	3	3
Schaubs, Michael	40	40
Sebastion, Jim	66	324(66 th)
Shasteen, Jimmie	8	159
Sinclair, Bill	68	182
Sinclair, Phyllis	51	165
Spellman, Jerri	64	330(65 th)
Synder, Wayne	4	4
Tatman, Hal	51	245
Thompson, JR	6	102
Troyer, Don	10	214
Thruston, Sheila	60	827(23 rd)
Villyard, Briana	60	60
Wallner, Abby	8	17
Wallner, Vicky	72	286
Warren, Peggy	40	40
Wood, Park	66	489(44 th)

4386 hours is over 2 years of work!

Placement for FY 2006 Hours

	<u>2006</u>	<u>Total</u>
Boy Scouts	287	335
Bartel, Gladwin	146	1111
Gavin O'Hare	127	605
Dennis Chappell	126	652
Newsom, Robert	119	750
Loren Johnson	118	1348
E. Monhollon	102	102
J. Monhollon	102	102
Joe Emmons	85	85
B. Kewilley	85	85
Donald McClure	85	306
Al McGrath	80	365
Romona Dekrey	76	385
Tommy Hallmark	72	115
Vicki Wallner	72	284
Jim Crawford	69	160
Les Miller	69	69
Judy Hensley	68	262
Bill Sinclair	68	182
Jim Sebastion	66	324
Park Wood	66	489

Jim Harsh	64		211
Jerri Spellman	64		330
Don Erickson	60		669
Bob Elsloo	60		395
Tom Karnuta	60		
John Luzader	60		801
Sam Pisciotta	60		495
Sheila Thruston	60		827
Briana Villyard	60		60
Paige Burns	60		60
Jim Crawford	51		87
Karen Oyen	51		268
Phyllis Sinclair	51		165
Hal Tatman	51		245
Joe Frausto	50		305
Christine Kralicek	44		44
Andy Anderson	40		65
Robert Bergstrom	40		40
Betty Blanco	40		891
Henry Crawford	40		163
Bill Gwaltney	40		258
Will Gwaltney	40		40
John Likes	40		40
Richard Lohsen	40		40
Mark Lyons	40		40
John Manna	40		40
Kevin Reddy	40		247
Bruce Richardson	40	164	
James Robinson	40		40
Michael Schuabs	40		40
Peggy Warren	40		40
Sara Holt	37	45	
Faith Bent	34		366
Bob Larison	34		618
Sharon Moore	28		130
Sam Moore	28		124
Brent Larison	26		44
Kevin Lindahl	26		202
Larry Miller	26		190
Jimmie Shasteen	24		159
Mark Berry	20		422
Lara Erickson	20		669
Tanner Gingerich	20	30	
Barbara Ingles	20		344
Aaron Karnuta	20		20
Karen Karnuta	20		20
Don Keas	20		260
Phyllis Keas	20		431
Ben Rideout	20		149
Dan Rideout	20		129
Rex Rideout	20		155
Diane Carpenter	18		192
Jim Crawford	18		87
Don Headlee	18		894
Dan Hoff	18	121	
Denise Moore	18		85

Michael Moore	18		78
Ed Blasi	17		88
Lane Grinstead	17		63
Bonnie Guder	17		131
Mary Jane Losey	17		63
Kent Martin	17		92
Namcy Matin	17		92
Gayle Beckman	16		16
Jenny Gingerich	16		627
Martin Knife Chief	16		41
Sandy Leonard	14		14
Trevor Holt	12		117
Leon Davis	10		5060
Tina Hall	10		426
Dray Hall	10		10
Dave Newell	10		502
Blake Ramsey	10		10
Don Troyer	10		224
Bob Kisthart	9		9
Mark Headlee	8		708
Dexter Hess	8		62
Abby Wallner	8		17
Tamara Burgess	6		128
Cora Frausto	6		6
Elijah Frausto	6		6
Lucas Frausto	6		6
Phoebe Frausto	6		6
Sarah Frausto	6		78
Cambry Gingerich	6	6	
Bill Henwood	6		137
Karen Henwood	6		521
Amber Painter	6		6
J.R., Thompson	6		102
Carol Pickerel	5		5
Ralph Mc Pherson	4	20	
Ed Aragon	3		3
Alisha Salas	3		3



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
35110 Hwy 194 E
La Junta, CO 81050

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

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Editors

Greg Holt
Dennis Chappell

Chief of Interpretation

Rick Wallner

Superintendent

Cindy Ott-Jones

Contributors

Greg Holt
Rick Wallner
Fran Panabaker
Dennis Chappell

NPS Photographers

Greg Holt
Rick Wallner
Dennis Chappell

Suggestions? Comments?Articles?

Write to :

Greg Holt
Bent's Old Fort NHS
402 Santa Fe Ave.
La Junta, CO 81050
Email: greg_holt@nps.gov
719 383-5023
OR: Dennis Chappell
Email: chappell719@comcast.net
719 561 0899

