



# Fort Union *PostReturn*

## Superintendent's Welcome

by Charles Strickfaden Superintendent

Welcome friends and neighbors to the first edition of our newsletter, the Fort Union Post Return. You are invited to discover the role Fort Union played in shaping the culture and society of the American Southwest. It is my hope that this newsletter will expand your view of our many Fort Union stories, and help make your visit an enjoyable and recurring event!

It is a great honor to manage a dedicated and highly skilled staff in preserving the historic remnants of Fort Union for future generations, and educating the public of today about its amazing stories. At Fort Union National Monument community members and visitors like you have an opportunity to take a glimpse into the past, and reflect on the lives of the people and communities that lived in Northeast New Mexico. We follow in the footsteps of thousands of years of inhabitation by Native Americans, followed by exploration and settlement by Spanish Conquistadors, the farmers and ranchers of Nuevo Mexico, Civil War soldiers, and the communities of the New Mexico Territory.

Their stories, lives, hardships, and interactions with each other, as well as their contributions to the diverse culture and history of the American

Southwest are the stories we tell at Fort Union.

As Superintendent of one of over 400 units of the National Park System the staff of Fort Union recognizes that there are difficult stories from the past that must be, and should be, told. We are dedicated to sharing these stories in a fair and respectful manner.

The preservation of this important place is a joint venture between the National Park Service, our communities, and our visitors. We are all stewards of these irreplaceable places and resources so we can share them with our children, and their children. . .

I hope you will join us as a volunteer during one of our special events, or in our educational outreach, as we plan for and carry out the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service in 2016. We hope you will join us during this exciting time, and we look forward to your visit soon!



Junior Ranger Camp

Photo credit: Lorenzo Vigil

## Education Corner

Beginning in the Fall of 2013, Fort Union National Monument introduced curriculum-based programs that have educated and challenged hundreds of school children throughout northern New Mexico. The ranger-led lessons highlight the unique historical development of New Mexico and the pivotal role that Fort Union played in the American Southwest during the 1800s. These ranger-led education programs introduce students to the rich history of the Santa Fe Trail, Fort Union's role in the Indian Wars and Civil War, and what life was like for a variety of people during this time period including women, children, and Hispanic and African-American soldiers.

Many of the programs focus on the intimate connections Fort Union has with the local surrounding communities.

For more information on or to organize an educational ranger led activity either at the fort or in the classroom, contact Education Specialist Amy Jewell at:  
Phone: (505) 425-8025 Ext 221  
Email: Amy\_Jewell@nps.gov



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

### Fort Union National Monument

From 1851-1891, Fort Union was the largest frontier military post and supply center of the Southwest. The National Park Service preserves and protects the historic Fort Union and ruts of the Santa Fe Trail.

**Superintendent** Charles Strickfaden

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**Website** [www.nps.gov/foun](http://www.nps.gov/foun)

**Join the Conversation**

Find us on Facebook  
[www.facebook.com/FortUnionNM](http://www.facebook.com/FortUnionNM)



**Phone** 505-425-8025, Ext 0

**E-mail** [FOUN\\_interp@nps.gov](mailto:FOUN_interp@nps.gov)

To learn more about Fort Union visit our WNPAA Park store at the Fort or online.

**Park Store** [www.wnpsa.org](http://www.wnpsa.org)

## Nature Corner

During your visit with us you may regularly see a herd of 20 or more North American Pronghorn grazing the prairie in and around the fort. As the fastest free roaming distance land mammal in North America it can average sustained speeds of 35 mph for up to four miles.

Surprisingly, its closest living relative is the giraffe, and it shares a convergent evolutionary path with the antelope.



Kiowa ledger of Buffalo Wallow battle

Photo courtesy Texas Memorial Museum

# Red River War

by Ron Harvey  
Lead Interpretive Ranger

In late August of 1874, over 40 military wagons laden with supplies, left Fort Union and headed east towards Texas. Over 200 soldiers under the command of Major William R. Price (8th US Cavalry) escorted the wagon train and its contents. They monitored the 60,000 rounds of ammunition and 80,000 pounds of black powder that had been carefully packed in the wagons. Within weeks, these men and their cargo would become heavily involved in what historians would eventually coin the “Red River War”.

Lasting between 1874-1875, the “Red River War” began as members of the Southern Cheyenne, Arapahoe, Kiowa, and Comanche nations retaliated against buffalo hunters who had violated numerous treaties and carried out the wholesale slaughter of buffalo on tribal lands. In response, the United States military was called forth to stop the “insurrection” of the tribes. Fort Union, being the supply center and main arsenal for the US military in the Southwest, was tasked to provide not only men, but also the essential military ordnance (i.e.

weapons, ammunition, powder) to end the hostilities. With the assistance of soldiers from four forts located in Texas and Oklahoma, a series of multi-pronged attacks ensued against these tribes, resulting in the eventual and permanent relocation of the tribes onto reservations.

In commemoration of the “Indian Wars” period and the role that Fort Union played, the park is focusing its 2015 interpretive programming and special events to reflect the lives affected by this violent period and the events and actions the fort conducted to see the war’s end.

The complete schedule of events for 2015 can be found on page 4 of this publication. For additional information visit our web site.

If you would like more information on Fort Union and the Red River War please contact us at: (505) 425-8025 Ext 0.

# Adobe Structures:

## Early Stabilization & Maintenance

by Roger Portillo Chief of Facilities

*“The building is one story high - adobe walls, 18 inches thick, stone foundation, tin roof, a battlement or cornice of brick (to protect adobes from action of water) 18 inches in height, 18 inches thick, portal of wood in front.”*

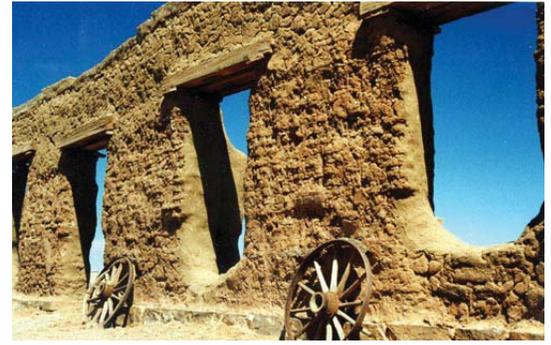
Fort Union-1866

Since its inception as a national monument the adobe remnants have undergone both periodic stabilization projects and continuous maintenance. From 1956 to August 1958, archaeologist George Cattanach lead the preservation crew in clearing rubble and debris from the base of the walls to return the grade to its historic level. Efforts were largely confined to excavation and structural stabilization of the walls.

Work under Rex Wilson (September 1958 - August 1961) included excavation but also consisted of capping walls

with soil-cement adobes, grouting both plaster and cracks in adobe walls with a soil-cement mixture, and spraying walls with a silicone water-repellent. Literally thousands of traditional and soil-cement adobes (all produced on-site) were used in the initial rehabilitation of Fort Union. Resurfacing of adobe walls with a soil-cement shelter coat is not mentioned until about 1963, after the departure of Rex Wilson.

Stabilization and maintenance from 1962-1972 proceeded under the daily direction of Martin Archuleta, who had worked with Rex Wilson. Treatments were a continuation of those established in the early years, and included bracing walls, capping with soil-cement adobes, and spraying with a silicone water repellent. The silicone created a thin, whitish film which was easily damaged by hail, and was regarded as unsatisfactory. The search for



Fort Union Adobe Structures Photo credit: Richard Gonzales

more reliable methods of stabilization and preservation was later renewed after the collapse of several walls due to high winds.

In 1973 a special eight-week project was undertaken in which Navajo masons under the direction of archaeologist George Chambers, of the Arizona Archaeological Center, reset and re-laid five of the nine stone foundations in the officers quarters. In subsequent years through 1987 stabilization work continued following earlier practices.

Future releases of the *Post Return* will detail the continued early preservation techniques that Fort Union undertook to ensure the adobe remnants would remain standing.

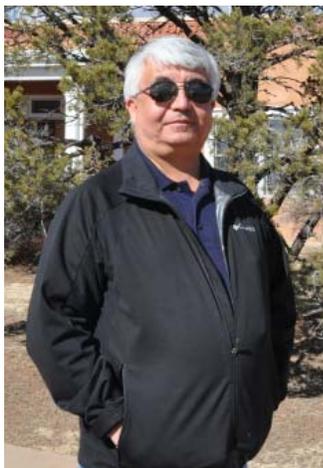
## Volunteer Spotlight

Richard Gonzalez

by Amy Jewell  
Education Specialist

Richard Gonzales has been a steadfast figure at Fort Union National Monument for over eight years. During his tenure here he has incorporated his love of history, photography, and videography into his volunteerism.

In addition to photographing and videotaping special events and



Richard Gonzales  
Photo credit: Amy Jewell

presentations at the fort, Richard has provided invaluable assistance to the fort's library and research staff. Richard has taken the lead in scanning historical photographs of the fort along with creating digital records of the documents pertaining to the men and women who served in the New Mexican regiments during the time of the Civil War. To date, Richard has

assisted in the preservation and storage of over 90,000 documents and images.

Richard is a New Mexico native currently working at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. He also enjoys participating with the 352nd Fighter Group Association and El Rancho de las Golondrinas Living History Museum in Santa Fe, NM.

We depend on volunteers like Richard! To find out more about volunteer opportunities at Fort Union, contact us at (505) 425-8025 Ext 0.



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Fort Union National Monument**  
P.O. Box 127  
Watrous, New Mexico 87753

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Fort Union is located off of Interstate 25 near Watrous; exit 366, then proceed west 8 miles on NM-161.

## Schedule of Events 2015

**Glimpses of the Past** 7:00 PM Third Thursday of each month from March to October

Each presentation encompasses the bountiful natural, cultural, and historical resources of the Southwest. Presentations are given at the CCHP/Santa Fe Trail Interpretive Center on 116 Bridge Street, Las Vegas, NM.

**Camp of Instruction** May 9<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup>

Step back into history and witness the training of Company "A" of the 3<sup>rd</sup> New Mexico Volunteer Infantry, one of the many Union Hispanic Regiments organized at Fort Union that served throughout New Mexico during the Civil War. This is a great opportunity to participate in costumed living history. Volunteers and new members are always welcome!

**Fort Union Days** June 20<sup>st</sup> - 21<sup>nd</sup>

Venture into Fort Union's history in a two-day event filled with guest speakers, living history encampments, cannon and musket firing demonstrations, and guided tours that encompass the diversity of natural, cultural, and military resources of the fort and the surrounding area.

**Junior Ranger Camp** 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM - July 9 (ages 7-9) | July 10 (ages 10-12)

Bring your kids and enjoy an all-day exploration of Fort Union's unique cultural, natural, and military aspects. As this is a free camp, each is limited to 30 participants – please call to make a reservation. Enrollment begins June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

**Candlelight Tours** August 8<sup>th</sup> - Tour times to be announced

Step under the stars and back into history to witness historical-based skits which bring to life the stories of Fort Union's past. This is a highly popular event so please make your reservations in advance. Reservation dates to be announced.

**First Fort & Arsenal Tours** September 19<sup>th</sup> - Tour times to be announced

Journey back into history to the beginning of Fort Union at the First Fort & Arsenal site on this ranger guided tour. Open to public access only once per year, this 45 minute tour offers the unique opportunity to walk the grounds where Fort Union's story began in 1851.