

Executive Summary

Pigeon's Ranch is one of two sub-units of the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park. The other sub-unit is Canoncito, to the west. The Glorieta Unit was added to Pecos National Historical Park on November 8, 1990 with the Congressional intent "to preserve and interpret the Battle of Glorieta and to enhance visitor understanding of the Civil War and the Far West by establishing a new unit of Pecos NHP" (Public Law 101-536). The park General Management Plan (1996) calls for the interpretation and preservation of the battlefield and stabilization of the Pigeon's Ranch structure. The building has additional significance for its association with the Santa Fe National Historic Trail and the Route 66 National Corridor. Under National Park Service management policies the nationally significant Pigeon's Ranch house is under category A, must be preserved and maintained.

According to Director's Order 28, a historic structure report is "the primary guide to treatment and use of a historic structure." It includes two principal parts: Part I, which provides a developmental history and description of the building, and Part II, which describes the proposed treatment of the building.

This document provides a historic narrative (Part I) of the Pigeon's Ranch house complex from the 1850s, through the time of the Civil War, and up to the establishment of the Glorieta Unit of Pecos National Historical Park, November 8, 1990. Much of the research focus was on the Civil War era, how the building looked at that time, how it was used, and the events directly associated with the building during the battle at Pigeon's Ranch. Later alterations are chronicled, especially the evolution or, more correctly, the devolution to the present three room adobe house.

The building's treatment and use (Part II) is prescribed in the park's 1996 General Management Plan. Until the resolution of the State Route 50 location, the Pigeon's Ranch structure will be stabilized, with the exterior used as backdrop to interpret the Battle of Glorieta. Stabilization treatment suggestions are in the recommendations of the report by Tony Crosby (2002).

Proposals for preservation and interpretation are included here. The adobe exterior, window and door finishes, porch, and roof of the structure should be preserved to support the interpretation of the historic scene, ca. 1862. The interior finishes, including the later Route 66 era (1920s-1930s) inscriptions, should be preserved where feasible.

The interior space should be used for interpreting, through visitor tours, the scale of the Civil War period structure as well as the events of the battle. The interpretive or exhibit space needs upgrading of environmental and security systems, structural integrity, and finishes to meet security as well historical compatibility standards. The former walls of the larger Pigeon Ranch house complex need to be defined and interpreted, after a thorough archeological effort, in order to interpret the events of the battle and the use of the structure during the war time period.

Pigeon's Ranch HSR

The report includes descriptions of earlier stabilization efforts, which have been reactive to crisis, such as the 1983 collapse of a portion of the rear wall.

The major issue for the work at Pigeon's Ranch is the proximity to the State Route 50. The structure lies within the right of way. At this time (2008), entrance to the building is blocked by the road's guard rail, less than a foot from the east doorway. Because of the road, there is no on-site interpretation and the building and grounds are closed to the public. Future preservation and interpretation depends greatly on the relocation of Route 50 away from the building, both to protect the structure and for visitor safety. If the road is relocated away from the battlefield, the park can be more pro-active in its restoration of the building. For example, the historic porch, if rebuilt now, would be in the modern highway's west-bound lane tarmac.

On June 1, 2006, Pecos National Historical Park provided funds for a history of the Glorieta region. The report was prepared by Brigida R. Blasi, a graduate student at New Mexico State University under the direction of Prof. Marsha Weisiger. Her report, "Glorieta Pass, Gateway to the Past," was completed in June 2007. During the preparation of the report, with a change in park staff, the park requested a more narrowly focused study, a historic structure report, historical and architectural data sections on the Pigeon's Ranch structure, to aid with future preservation efforts and compliance requirements. Robert Spude, historian with the Cultural Resources Management Program, Intermountain Region, was requested to complete this, the study in hand.

The preparation of this report was greatly assisted by park staff, especially Judy Reed, former park archeologist (retired), Jeff Brown, chief of maintenance, Heather Young, park curator, and superintendent Kathy Billings. The work of the previous NPS contract historians or NPS seasonal Bart Barbour, Andrew Young, and Brigida R. Blasi is noted and appreciated here; see their entries in the bibliography. Thanks to Michael Gonzales, NPS librarian, for his inter-library loan assistance. Marc Simmons and Jack Wilson helped by opening their files and sharing their recollections. The various archivists, archives and repositories noted in the bibliography were of great help, especially Tomas Jahn of the Museum of New Mexico. Thanks to Charles Haecker, NPS historical archeologist, for his insights on the battle; NPS preservation specialist Jake Barrow, NPS historian Jake Ivey, and special thanks to NPS term employee Todd Delyea for his preparation of the Historic American Building Survey plans, his field notes, and the detailed description of the building.