

Fort Craig
National Historic Site



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NEWS RELEASE

US DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR ■ BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NEW MEXICO STATE OFFICE ■ 1474 RODEO RD ■ SANTA FE NM 87505

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BLM Hosts 150th Anniversary of Territorial Fort

Socorro, New Mexico – When modern travelers pass north and south on Interstate 25 between Albuquerque, New Mexico and El Paso, Texas, the steep-sided Mesa Contradero juts out of the desert floor east of the Rio Grande at San Marcial. It may not be noticed at all or maybe just receive a passing glance as a minor change of scenery. However, to earlier travelers the mesa and surrounding landscape signaled a major event in a difficult and dangerous journey—Jornada del Muerto—that took weeks or even months to complete.

However, for several days in November the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the city of Socorro and other partners welcome you to take a far less dangerous journey and far more enjoyable. When you travel I-25 this November, you will “exit the present and enter the past” as the BLM hosts the 150th anniversary of Fort Craig, a BLM-administered territorial fort 32 miles south of Socorro. The diversity of New Mexico culture and history will be celebrated as the fort is brought alive from November 5th through 7th.

“Fort Craig stands as a testament to our diverse New Mexican heritage,” said Linda S.C. Rundell, BLM New Mexico State Director. “I’m truly excited that we have this opportunity to host a great event for all New Mexicans,” said Rundell.

This year, 2004, marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of Fort Craig. The BLM, with its many partners, will help commemorate this occasion with a multi-day event. Commissioned in 1854, Fort Craig was one of the largest frontier forts in the West. Located on the Camino Real, the fort was established to protect travelers and settlers, primarily from Navajo and Apache raiding. Military excursions from the Fort pursued such notable Apache leaders as Geronimo, Victorio and Nana.

“New Mexico has a long history—Native Americans, explorers, Spanish settlers, rebels and yanks, Buffalo soldiers—they all came through this area,” said Ravi Bhasker, city of Socorro’s mayor. “This commemoration will be a wonderful multi-cultural celebration that recognizes the African American, Anglo, Mexican, Native American, and Spanish contributions to our state.”

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The 3-day living history event is free to the public and will consist of many period happenings. There will be commemorative and vintage period replica items available for purchase. Mule drawn wagons, blacksmiths, an evening Fandango (dance), Apache Crown Dance around the camp bonfire, Buffalo soldiers on horseback performing military drills, a living history camp, NM Territorial Brass Band, Civil War reenactments, southwest and Native American cuisine and night lantern tours through the fort are just a few events planned. The event ends with a Fort Craig conference where research papers will be submitted addressing a variety of subjects: pre-Civil War history, Civil War in NM, the time period referred to as the Indian Wars, with emphasis on Native American and Buffalo Soldier aspect, and New Mexico Volunteers. This wonderful opportunity will give you a chance to learn from the past but embrace the future.

So as you travel I-25 this November, remember to exit the present, enter the past—and watch Fort Craig come alive. For more information and directions to the site, please call the BLM Socorro Field Office at 505.835.0412 or check us out online at www.nm.blm.gov.

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Editor's Note: The following schedule is tentative and subject to change.



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Schedule of Events for Fort Craig 150th Anniversary Living History Event

Friday, 11/5/04, Living History

- 9:00 AM Reenactor units raise Colors
- 10:00AM Mesa Contradero (Black Mesa) Tour
- 12:30 PM School groups arrive at Fort Craig
- 1:00 PM Reenacting Military units present to students.
- 2:00 PM Schools groups depart
- 4:00 PM 19th Century Music
- 5:00 PM Retreat - Strike Colors
- 7:30 PM Fandango
- 9:30 PM Close for the day

Saturday, 11/6/04 Living History

- 9:00 AM Event Opens - Indian Market, Vendors, and Sutlers
- 9:30 AM Infantry Drill until 10:00 AM
- 10:00 AM Presentation of Colors, Opening ceremony, VIP Speakers.
- 11:00 AM 19th-Century Fashion Show until 12:00 PM
- 11:30 AM Artillery Drill until 12:15 PM
- 12:15 AM First Person Talks - Paddy Graydon's Exploits & Lydia Lane until 12:45 PM
- 12:50 PM New Mexico Territorial Brass Band
- 1:30 PM Cavalry Drill by Buffalo Soldiers until 2:25 PM
- 2:30 PM February 16-20, 1862 skirmishes performed northwest of fort until 4:00 PM
- 4:00 PM Apache War Dance to 4:30 PM
- 4:30 PM Native American Gourd Dance
- 5:00 PM Retreat/Strike the Colors Combined Battalion
- 7:00 PM Lantern Tours until 9:00 PM
- 7:00 PM Bonfire at living history camp, Apache Crown Dance until 9:00 PM
- 9:30 PM Close for the day



Sunday, 11/7/04 – Living History

- 9:00 AM Event Opens - Raise Colors, Combined Battalion in formation, Artillery & Field Musics
- 9:30 AM Cavalry Drill until 10:00 AM
- 10:00 AM Interdenominational Church Service
- 11:00 AM 19th-Century Ladies Tea Social/Fashion show
- 11:00 AM Soldier/Public 1-Mile Campaign Walk (½-Mile Out/½-Mile In) until 5:00 PM
- 11:30 AM Artillery Drill, all available artillery, with Field Musics until 12:30 PM
- 12:30 PM Soldier Entertainment
- 1:00 PM Native American Gourd Dance until 2:00 PM
- 2:00 PM New Mexico Territorial Brass Band
- 2:30 PM Infantry Drill until 3:00 PM
- 2:45 PM Artillery Drill with Field Musics to 12:30 PM
- 3:15 PM Spy Company Commander's Exploits
- 5:00 PM Close Event - Retreat - Strike Colors

Second Fort Craig Conference Socorro Holiday Inn

Monday, 11/8/04

- 8:00 AM Conference Registration
- 8:30 AM Conference, Morning Session
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 1:30 PM Conference, Afternoon Session
- 5:00 PM Conference adjourns for the day
- 6:30 PM Conference Banquet

Tuesday, 11/9/04

- 8:30 AM Conference, Morning Session
- 12:00 PM Lunch
- 1:30 PM Conference, Afternoon Session
- 5:00 PM Conference adjourns for the day

Wednesday, 11/10/04

- 8:30 AM Conference, Morning Session
- 12:00 PM Conference Ends
- 1:00 PM Field Trip, TBA

