The Account of a Trip Made to Bandelier National Monument Vicinity in 1900 (nineteen hundred)
by Harry Field

Through the courtesy of Mr. McConnell, the manager of a large lumber camp, whose guest I became, I was enabled to spend some time right in the very heart of the region at one time most thickly populated by the cave dwellers. Leaving the D. & R.G. [Denver & Rio Grande Railroad] at a small switch station called Buckman, I found before reaching the camp I had a journey before me of about fifteen miles. I was wondering how to get there when a small boy with a rig drove up and asked me if I was Mr. Field. On my replying that such was my name, he informed me that he had been sent to drive me to the lumber camp which was right in the heart of the Santa Fe Range.

As this is the country in which are to be found the cave dwellings, I will ask you to accompany me as we now take this drive. The entire road was made by Mr. Buckman about two years before at a cost of nearly $40,000, being the only means of communication between the railroad and his lumber camp. [This amount of money is most assuredly an exaggeration. — Editor]
Upcoming Lectures and Events

**Thursday, June 17, 2014, 7:30 p.m. at Fuller Lodge:** Terry Foxx, “The 1977 La Mesa Fire: A Wake Up Call?”

**Los Alamos National Bank Lecture Series**

The Los Alamos National Bank-sponsored lecture series will begin again Tuesday, September 9. The theme for 2014-2015 is “Made in New Mexico,” and it will start with a discussion about the history of green chili—and a tasting! Other scheduled subjects include wine making, super computing, and Ernie Pyle. A complete line up will be available on the Historical Society website this summer. As always, the lectures are the second Tuesday of each month, with the exception being November, when the lecture will be Nov. 4 to avoid the Veterans Day holiday. They will be in the Pajarito Room of Fuller Lodge at 7:30 p.m.

**Museum Exhibits**

**June-August:** *Los Alamos Excellence in Education: Past, Present, & Future*

**September-October:** *Ethnographic Photographs by Berlyn Brixner*

**Atomic Film Festival**

**July 17:** *Trinity and Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie,* 7 p.m.

**Downtown Friday Night**

**June 13:** Exhibit opening, *Los Alamos Excellence in Education: Past, Present, & Future*

**June 27:** Fun with Bandelier National Monument

**July 11:** Reading and Book Signing with TaraShea Nesbit, *The Wives of Los Alamos*

**July 25:** National History Day showcase

**August 8:** (tentative) History Happy Hour

**Experience Auction**

The annual Experience Auction, usually held in conjunction with the Annual Meeting in May, is being expanded. Mark your calendar now for Friday, Sept. 5, for a gala event at the Bethe House and at Fuller Lodge. We look forward to seeing you at this exciting event. (See page 11 for more information)

**MISSION**

The Los Alamos Historical Society preserves, promotes, and communicates the remarkable history and inspiring stories of Los Alamos and its people for our community, for the global audience, and for future generations.

**VISION**

Los Alamos Historical Society is respected worldwide as the source and repository for the compelling history of Los Alamos and its people from prehistory to contemporary times.
Leaving the small depot behind, you drive over a sandy waste for about half a mile, coming to the Rio Grande. Here you see the first item of expense in the cost of the road, being no less than a well made bridge; this you cross and at once commence your journey to the lumber camp. The road begins with a most picturesque drive along the base of an immense hill of curious formation. After proceeding about a mile and a half the view becomes very fine; it seems almost as if you were imprisoned in a rocky fortress, the road being quite lost to view except for a few hundred feet or so. After this you strike a very heavy grade and begin to realize the difficulty of road making in this country. The road is in some parts cut out of solid lava; in others it runs right on the top of the lava bed, winding in and out, round and about until eventually you drive right past the actual crater of this extinct volcano, from which at some past period all this immense bed of lava flowed. The scenery now changes and you enter a large cañon, driving along at the bottom for two miles or so until you ascend once more by an almost precipitous route cut zigzag out of the side of the cañon. You eventually reach the top and find yourself on the mesa, and now again, once more a change of scene comes over the landscape. You enter a wide-open country, covered with small pines and other trees, there also being abundance of grass on which you see numerous herds of goats feeding. A wide, level but rather sandy road leads you on; this is very pleasant as you often get shade from the trees around you. Farther on, this road leads you right past an immense cañon in which are to be found many cave dwellings’ and if you pause in your drive, being very near the edge, you can see the caves in the opposite side of the cañon quite distinctly. You also notice on the mesa above on which you are driving, the foundations still left of dwellings, whilst all around you see small blocks of stone; (somewhat the shape of bricks) in tumbled confusion. These were once the homes of the Aztecs, a mighty nation who at one time thickly populated this section of the country. Several miles farther on across open country, and up and down hill, sometimes being completely hidden by fine timber, which you now find growing in heavy clumps all around, you hear the bustle of civilization and soon come to a large open clearing very pleasantly situated. This is the lumber camp of Buckman where I made my home for some little time, taking daily excursions to the most interesting of the cañons and mesas.
Having spent one day in the camp taking a good rest after my journey, my next thought was to procure a horse for the numerous expeditions I intended taking. Having made inquiries and being directed to a small farm, the home of one of the mill men, a Mexican living about three miles from the camp, I started off the next day to get my horse. But somehow I never seemed to have good luck on my hunts after horses.

Being quite a little distance, and having to go through a good deal of timber, I took my gun along for a chance shot on the way. Well, I tramped along for three or four miles, and then not having come across any cottage or signs of habitation, concluded I had lost my way. However, I stuck to it and, after walking another mile or so, came across a large clearing in which stood three small houses some few hundred yards or so apart. I went to the first one and knocked at the door; a Mexican woman appeared, accompanied by three or four vicious looking dogs. These ugly brutes no sooner caught sight of me than they immediately came straight for me making an infernal din with their barking. Well, I had a lively time for about five minutes; reinforcements kept arriving every half minute in the shape of numerous other ill looking curs from the two neighboring cottages until I was the center of about eight or ten of the meanest looking dogs I have ever set eyes on. It is a wonder to me I am not there yet. How I got out of my dilemma, I scarcely know, but eventually by backing out more or less gracefully, I did succeed in leaving my troublesome companions behind. I found later on during my stay that not having heard of my arrival in the camp, these good people had set the dogs on to me on purpose, taking me I suppose for a hold-up.

On the following day I was much more fortunate and succeeded in making a bargain with one of the Mexicans in camp, which placed a passably good horse at my disposal for the remainder of my stay.

About a week later I made one of my most interesting trips, and as this is typical of the rest, I will remain content in describing this particular one to you. Making an early start, I soon found myself about six miles from camp at the mouth of an immense cañon, and by the time the sun was well up in the heavens, I had arrived at my destination for the day. Had a passer-by chanced to have looked from the mesa down into the cañon below, he would have seen a lone horseman wending his way along the bottom of the cañon.
A Trip Made to Bandelier National Monument

The figure on horseback was not altogether an inviting one. He was clad in a pair of coarse blue serge trousers and wore a flannel shirt open at the throat, with sleeves rolled up to the elbow. A very dilapidated felt hat covered his head, whilst about a ten days growth covered his chin. On one side of the saddle was strapped a long shovel, whilst on the other was a rifle. A coil of rope hung from the pommel of the saddle, and a gunnysack tied in a knot across his back from shoulder to waist completed his appearance. In this figure I beg to present to you a picture of your humble servant who is at this moment before you.

Let me complete the picture of the scene as I see it now, as I saw it then, at the bottom of that mighty cañon in the Santa Fe range in the heart of New Mexico.

Rich flowers of many hues all around, trees of bright green foliage on every side, birds of almost tropical plumage flitting from bough to bough, and on either side the massive stone walls of the cañon rising up to the rugged edge of the mesa far above me.

And above all a cloudless sky so blue that each leaf and bough, each flower and fern between me and the heavens seemed as a thing of beauty, as a fine piece of filigree work of wondrous workmanship, in a priceless setting of turquoise of the deepest hue.

In just such a place as this, in fact right in that identical spot, are to be found the homes (long deserted) of that lost tribe of people known to us as the cave dwellers.

As you look up, you can see them all over the side of the cañon, but you notice that the caves are to be found only on that side of the cañon, which faces the south. The caves are of a beehive shape inside, and you see the black openings to them all along the side of the cañon and also one above the other, dotted here and there almost to the mesa above. Cunning steps leading from one cave to another are cut out of the solid rock. Let me tell you, these old cave dwellers had an eye both to safety and comfort when they fashioned their homes in the sides of the cañons, much like the birds of the air and the beasts of the fields.

I might say that I have a special right to know, as I slept soundly and safely for nearly two hours through the heat of the day in one of them. It was just as they left it, a fine layer of soft sand being my couch and the cool bare rock around and above me giving protection from the intense rays of the sun. From the mouth of the cave as I lay there, the scene was delightful, and as I thought of the bricks and mortar which meet one's gaze in a civilized community, I absolutely envied this primitive race of men the glories and beauty of their surroundings.

From my researches, I believe that two distinct races of men inhabited these cave dwellings. In this particular cañon I took the measurements of some six or eight of the caves and found them all about the same size, being seven to eight feet in diameter by five feet six inches to six feet six inches in height, whilst in caves of the next cañon farther north,
no one but a race of dwarfs could possibly have lived, as they all, without exception, measured only four feet by four.

Also, I believe that each cañon held a separate clan or tribe, having a headman or chief over them from the fact that one of the dwellings in each cañon is composed of three separate caves communicating one with the other. This I believe to have been the home of the headman or chief.

In some of the better caves I was fortunate enough to find some crude drawings on the walls in an excellent state of preservation. At night and in the cold weather these cave dwellers hung mats across the mouth of the caves on rungs of wood, put in holes drilled in the rock round the front of the cave; then they built a fire inside, leaving one small hole uncovered from which the smoke could escape.

As I stood there that sunny fine day, among the homes of a dead nation, I fancied myself back in the past. The dry creek bed I saw full of clear water; I saw the cave dwellers back in life again, sitting at the entrances to their caves; I saw the little ones playing amongst the stones of the creek and leaning over the bank looking into the clear water below. I saw the old arrow maker, chipping his obsidian and agate, fashioning the arrow and spearheads, whilst by his side sat his daughter binding them on to the wooden arrows with thongs of fiber and gut.

In my wanderings, much of the poetry of life has been in bringing the past back into the present and in putting on the scenes once more the actors who have lived and left a name and have passed forevermore, bringing them out once more, and reviewing them before me on the stage of imagination.
Let us enter a typical cave and look around us. We choose one of the largest as being a good specimen and go in.

The opening through which we enter is round, and over the top of this opening we see numerous small round holes. These as I previously stated were for wooden rungs from which they hung their mats.

Once inside, your eyes having become accustomed to the semi-gloom, you look around and you notice how very compact these little homes must have been. Immediately opposite the entrance is a fireplace hollowed out of the side of the cave, the whole interior of the cave being still blackened from the effects of the smoke, which must have circled about in the cave before finding its way out of the hole in the roof, which you see left for that purpose. The floor of the cave is fine soft sand, whilst in the walls you see little shelves or pockets hollowed out of the solid rock. Abundances of broken pottery is scattered about; even to this day, you see it both in and about these curious homes and also in larger quantities round the Aztec ruins on the mesa above.

There are several theories about these other ruins, which you find on the mesas. Some say that the cave dwellers were only cave dwellers from necessity; that is to say, they used the caves as places of refuge, whilst their ordinary homes were on the mesa above.

These ruins on the mesas show a considerable knowledge of architecture and of building. Some of the better preserved of these mesa dwellings show houses of no mean dimensions. I myself saw one building in which I counted no less than forty or fifty rooms. Then again many of them are built with only three or four rooms. The walls, as nearly as I can recollect, were about six feet high, and the windows and doorways were very small and narrow. I did not come across any of these buildings with a roof on, and I think that they probably used a kind of thatch supported by cross beams, the rooms being very small.

Much more might be said about the land of the Pueblos, the Aztecs, and the Cave Dwellers, but I feel that I have already taken up too much time with this somewhat rambling paper on the antiquity of the past and also of the present. Let me advise you all, when you have the opportunity, to grasp it and to pay a visit yourself to this interesting country of which tonight I have given you but a passing glimpse.

**Editor’s note:** Some punctuation and grammar in this account have been modified for clarity.
Harry Field

Harry Field was born July 28, 1873, in Buckinghamshire, England. He came to the United States in 1899 at approximately age 25, and he visited the Southwest. He spent time at the Buckman Lumber Camp in the mountains above the Pajarito Plateau in 1900. Harry married his wife, Minnie, ca. 1902, and they settled in Denver, CO, where he became a real estate agent, eventually owning his real estate business. He and Minnie raised four sons. Harry Field died in 1961 in Denver, CO. By all indications, he came to the United States and lived the American Dream.

Atomic Film Festival Continues

Thursday, July 17, at 7 p.m. in Fuller Lodge with Trinity & Beyond: The Atomic Bomb Movie.

This 1995 documentary is the visually compelling history of the design, production, and testing of hydrogen bombs. It is directed by renowned special effects filmmaker Peter Kuran (Star Wars, Star Trek II & V, Robocop). Narrated by William Shatner, Trinity and Beyond features rare film segments from top-secret government archives and startling footage of nuclear bomb tests conducted by Great Britain and China, plus the largest atomic explosion ever created by the Soviet Union. Whether exploded under the ocean, suspended by a balloon, shot from a cannon, or detonated in space, the quality of these images is as startling as it is remarkable. Trinity & Beyond features an original score performed by the Moscow Symphony Orchestra.
The Historical Society of New Mexico’s (HSNM) Annual Conference in Las Vegas last month drew record crowds with a wide variety of educational sessions, fascinating tours of some of the town’s 900 historic buildings, and meals in such extraordinary sites as the recently refurbished Plaza Hotel and the Montezuma Castle at United World College.

The Los Alamos Historical Society sponsored a session called “Los Alamos Through World War II,” which featured Georgia Strickfaden presenting new research on “The Girls from Las Vegas at the Manhattan Project”; Judith Machen sharing the differences between the Pajarito Plateau homesteaders and those in other areas in “Homesteading on the Pajarito Plateau, 1887-1942”; and author Sharon Snyder shedding light on “Ashley Pond in New Mexico, 1898-1933.” The session was well received by the standing-room-only audience.

In visiting with several Los Alamos women who have lived in town since the Manhattan Project, Strickfaden discovered that a number of them came from Las Vegas, NM. Further research showed they were recruited from Camp Luna, an army camp near Las Vegas that was shutting down its operations, to work at the wartime laboratory. Strickfaden interviewed several of the women for her presentation and shared their stories. She said what struck her most was how much fun all the young ladies said they had when they arrived in Los Alamos.

Machen, co-author with Ellen McGehee and Dorothy Hoard of the award-winning Homesteading on the Pajarito Plateau, 1887-1942, a Los Alamos National Laboratory publication, showed how homesteading on the plateau was quite different from the traditional homesteads elsewhere. The Hispanic farmers from the valley used the plateau only seasonally and were able to survive in the arid landscape because of nearby support systems. Another difference, of course, was the abrupt fashion in which Pajarito Plateau homesteaders lost their property to the Manhattan Project in 1943.

Snyder, author of the award-winning biography of Peggy Pond Church, At Home on the Slopes of Mountains, told of how Ashley Pond first came to New Mexico, his dream of starting a boys’ school, and his later roles in Santa Fe as a volunteer firefighter and airport proponent. In fact, Santa Fe’s first airport was named for Pond, who earned his pilot’s license at age 60 and performed a flyover of the Los Alamos Ranch School.

Each of the presenters will be asked to share their information again in the “On Tap Series” the first Thursday of each month at the Manhattan Project restaurant. (See next page for On Tap Series information)

Los Alamos Historical Society docent and board member John Ruminer presented his original research on the 400-year history of 109 East Palace Avenue as part of a session entitled “New Mexico in Transition: The Occupation Period.” Delving into records from the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods, Ruminer has traced the ownership history of the property that served as

(Continued on Page 10)
Los Alamos is rich in history, art, nature, and science, and the organizations that work in these areas have started a new program to share discoveries and fun facts in each field.

Under the auspices of the Los Alamos Creative District, the Los Alamos Historical Society, along with the Fuller Lodge Art Center, the Pajarito Environmental Education Center, and the Bradbury Science Museum are conducting History on Tap, Art on Tap, Science on Tap, and Nature on Tap every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the Manhattan Project restaurant. A facilitator, either staff or volunteer from the organization or an invited guest, gives a short presentation and leads a discussion over a libation. Presentations last no more than 15 minutes, but the discussion can continue as long as those gathered wish to talk.

The schedule for each month:

- 1st Thursday is history, hosted by Los Alamos Historical Society
- 2nd Thursday is art, hosted by Fuller Lodge Art Center
- 3rd Thursday is science, hosted by Bradbury Science Museum
- 4th Thursday is nature, hosted by Pajarito Environmental Education Center
- 5th Thursday, when needed, is a wild card. Hosts include Bandelier National Monument and Mesa Public Library, among others

The “On Tap” series is an effort to increase programming and economic development in the Los Alamos Creative District. The state-designated Art and Cultural District, is a joint effort between Economic Development Department’s MainStreet Program, the Department of Cultural Affairs divisions of New Mexico Arts and Historic Preservation, and the Department of Tourism’s Scenic Byways Program as well as private entities. The Arts and Cultural Districts program goal is to promote the exceptional art and history of New Mexico while assisting communities in developing their cultural and artistic resources to create dynamic and economically vibrant districts. Forming Arts and Cultural Districts helps communities provide support to cultural entrepreneurs and institutions while capitalizing on the potential economic opportunity for the district as well as the town.

Board and staff from the Historical Society serve on the Creative District Advisory Board, a group appointed by the County Council to advise that body on economic revitalization of downtown through the preservation, support, and promotion of the community’s arts, culture, and science and technology assets and attractions.
Experience Auction to Become Fall Gala

The Los Alamos Historical Society’s major fundraiser, the Experience Auction, is changing. The time of year, the format, and even the name are all new.

In the past, the auction was held during the Annual Meeting in May, cutting into the “social time” of the ice cream social and forcing a hurried auction.

This year, the auction, now the “Los Alamos Historical Society Fall Gala,” is scheduled for Friday, Sept. 5, at Fuller Lodge. It will be a gala affair (black tie optional!), with cocktails, dinner, and dancing to the Los Alamos Big Band. Wonderful experiences, such as behind-the-scenes tours at regional museums, a trip to Ashley Pond’s first Ranch School, and rides on the Cumbres & Toltec railroad, will still be auctioned, as will silent auction items that offer experiences such as a picnic in Bandelier.

Also new this year will be the presentation of the first-ever Los Alamos History Award, an honor that will go to the person who has contributed the most to the preservation, promotion, and communication of Los Alamos history in the last year. Nominations for the award will be accepted this summer. Look for more information on the website and in your e-mail inbox soon.

Additional information on the Fall Gala will be coming your way this summer, including ticket prices and the types of experiences that will be auctioned. We look forward to a wonderful evening under the stars with you!

History Adventures at Fuller Lodge

The Los Alamos Historical Society is proud to present History Adventures at Fuller Lodge. Each Tuesday during the months of June and July at 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. we will host an activity and program related to history for young children. The Historical Society has teamed up with nearby organizations to present these programs:

- June 3  Santa Fe Tin Works
- June 10 Los Alamos Historical Society
- June 17 Bradbury Science Museum
- June 24 YMCA
- July 1 Cornerstones
- July 8 Valles Caldera
  (*Only one program at 10)
- July 15 Los Alamos Co-op
- July 22 To be announced
- July 29 Spanish Aparejo Burro Packing

We hope to see you there! For questions, please contact Natalia Ronquillo y DePaula at educator@losalamoshistory.org or at 505-695-5251.
The Los Alamos Historical Society and Museum

Open free of charge every day except New Year’s Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

May 1-Oct. 15, Weekdays, 9:30-4:30
Weekends, 11-4

Oct. 16-April 30, Weekdays 10-4
Weekends, 11-4

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