



Fort Stanton Administration and Museum Building Restoration

For more than 150 years, Fort Stanton has been the "heart" of Lincoln County, providing work, care, and protection for all of her inhabitants. It is one of the best preserved of frontier forts and is a beautifully constructed and unique piece of western Americana. The importance of Fort Stanton in frontier military history in Territorial New Mexico and the American West is reflected in the architectural resources on the site. The buildings have, however, suffered from decades of benign neglect and unfortunate modifications.

Fort Stanton was established as part of a subjugation scheme against the Mescalero Apache and was considered essential to settlement of the region. During the Civil War the fort was partially burned by the Union to prevent it falling into Confederate hands. At the end of the war, it was re-established under the command of Kit Carson.

Fort Stanton became a U.S. Marine Hospital in 1899, designed specifically to serve tuberculosis patients. In 1953 the hospital failed to receive federal funding and was ultimately transferred to the State of New Mexico. Between 1955 and 1966 the New Mexico Department of Public Welfare operated the facility. From then until 1995 the state operated the facility as a branch of the Los Lunas Hospital. In the ensuing years, the administration building sustained extensive termite damage and the veranda/porch was near collapse.

In 2007 Fort Stanton became a resource under the direction of New Mexico State Monuments. Fort Stanton is listed in both the State and National Registers.

Over \$1.4 million in funding was secured from the New Mexico State Legislature and Governor Richardson in 2005 and 2007, augmenting a grant from Save America's Treasures awarded to Fort Stanton, Inc. The funding was used to address the stabilization and restoration of an "anchor" structure, the original Administration Building at the southeast corner of the parade grounds. New Mexico Property Control Division chose to use the Competitive Sealed Proposal procurement method at Fort Stanton, whereby contractor qualifications were heavily weighted. This approach helped assure a project meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, and a result that was not merely acceptable, but exceptional.

The rehabilitation of the building, architecturally modeled after Newport, Rhode Island "cottages", included structural repairs to the stone footings and *in situ* reinforcement of original structural wooden elements; complete replacement of the floor; re-plastering of walls and ceilings; roof repairs, lime-washing of the exterior stone and the full restoration of the veranda facing the parade grounds. All of the windows, doors and transoms were removed, fully restored and re-installed. Mechanical, electrical and security systems were introduced with minimal impact on the historic fabric.

The former Administration Building now shines on the Parade Ground and once again reflects the respectful care that all of the historic resources at Fort Stanton deserve. In its new role as the Fort Stanton Museum, the building will serve to attract attention and funding for the preservation of other structures at the fort. It will also pay homage to the importance of the site that was, over its history, associated with General "Black Jack" Pershing, Kit Carson, the Buffalo Soldiers, and Billy the Kid. Regionally, the new Museum joins Lincoln State Monument and Smokey Bear State Park in interpreting the rich history of the area.

The Fort Stanton Administration and Museum building project has been a long time coming and is, ultimately, the victory of many committed community groups and individuals, among them the BLM, Lincoln County Historical Society, Fort Stanton, Inc., The Mescalero Apache Tribe, the Ruidoso Chamber of Commerce, the Hubbard Museum, veterans, and just plain folks that love the place. Particular mention must be made of Lynda Sánchez and Jim McBride for their faithful promotion of Fort Stanton.

The restoration work was completed ahead of schedule and within budget by Crocker Ltd, a Santa Fe architectural conservation contractor. General oversight for the project came from Martha Perrins-Dallman of the New Mexico State Property Control Division. Richard Reycraft, Cultural Resource Manager for State Monuments, DeAnn Kessler and Murray Arrowsmith also with Monuments, Edie Cherry of Cherry/See/Reames Architects. Dr. Walter E. Pittman and Clinton Smith of Fort Stanton, Inc. rounded out the compliance team that brought the project to a successful conclusion. Architectural services were provided by Huitt-Zollars of Albuquerque, John Jarrard Project Architect and Manager.