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# The Bent Brothers on the Frontier

Ina Wilson Cason

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**BROTHERS**

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THE BENT BROTHERS ON THE FRONTIER

By

Ina Wilson Cason

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

University of New Mexico

1939







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ILLINOIS

1. Charles D. ...
2. William ...
3. ...



## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND

Few appreciate the men who blazed the trail into our West. Although a century or more has passed since that era in American history, comparatively little has yet been written upon the subject. While these pioneers were poorly educated in books, that their influence was far reaching is shown by the records of commerce, army annals, and geographic names. So, from crudely scribbled letters, accounts, diaries, documents, witnesses, and reprints, this narrative is written.

Many nationalities had made paths into this area. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, attempt followed attempt to explore the new country, some successful and some futile. Overland trade to northern Mexico seemed to have had no definite organization, but grew gradually. Fur companies had been organized by French, British, and Americans.

Tall hats were the style in 1823, so thereby hangs the story of trade. Beaver skins were selling at six to eight dollars apiece and were much in demand for the manufacture of those fashionable, tall hats. "Fur may be called the gold of that period, and the news that there was plenty of it in the Rocky Mountains lured many an intrepid spirit of the border."<sup>1</sup> So riding horses trailed by pack animals and car-

*change* <sup>1</sup>Horace Kephart, editor, In the Old West (New York: Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 5. George Ruxton's account written in 1847.







rying beaver traps and meager supplies broke paths into the central West. In 1831 the style of hats changed and the price of beaver skin dropped to a dollar. Then the trappers and traders turned to the buffalo, and wagon trails took the place of horse paths.<sup>2</sup>

The nature of the trade as a business determined that the men following the pursuit should lead a roving, solitary life, roaming the wilds, tracing streams, scaling mountain passes, and exploring unknown regions. This was a life of hardship, thrilling adventure, and sacrifice. Thus, the West became a field of romantic adventure and developed a group of men who loved wandering as a career. This type of life was necessary in the growth of this new country. For sixty years the fur trade was the leading business west of the Mississippi, and almost the only branch of commerce.<sup>3</sup>

The trapper and trader of that day is typified by the life of the Bent brothers. They established a fort on the Arkansas River, which is near the present site of La Junta, Colorado. This post was known as Bent's Old Fort, Fort Bent, or Fort William. For twenty years it was closely associated with trade between St. Louis and Mexico, and for almost for-

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<sup>2</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, The Story of a Western Commonwealth (Denver: The Peerless Publishing Company, 1933), pp. 74-91.

<sup>3</sup> Hiran M. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1902), I, viii-xi, 1-2.



typical of the region. The vegetation is mostly  
of the same kind. The soil is mostly  
of the same kind. The climate is mostly  
of the same kind. The population is mostly  
of the same kind. The language is mostly  
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of the same kind. The planets are mostly  
of the same kind. The galaxies are mostly  
of the same kind. The universe is mostly  
of the same kind.

(Continued on next page)  
Page 1 of 2  
1-2



ty years stood as the only landmark of civilization in southeastern Colorado. The history of the lives of the Bents is written to show the life of the trapper and trader; his effect on the development of the West; and his value to the progress of civilization.

The Bents who came West were George, Robert, Charles, and William. Their family originated in America with Captain Silas Bent, a New-Englander, who commanded the Boston Tea Party of December 16, 1773.<sup>4</sup> This Captain Silas Bent married Mary Carter. They had seven children, and named their oldest son Silas. The Old Bent Family Bible<sup>5</sup> which is now in the possession of the Colorado State Historical Society as a gift from Mrs. Harry Lubers of Denver, a granddaughter of William Bent, records the births of her grandmother and grandfather as follows: Silas Bent, April 4, 1768; Martha Kerr, June 28, 1778. Eleven children were born to this union; Charles, November 11, 1799; Juliannah, July 18, 1801; John, May 31, 1803; Lucy, March 8, 1805; Dorcas, March 12, 1807; William, May 23,

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<sup>4</sup> Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days (New York: The Press of the Pioneers, Inc., 1935), I, 298.

<sup>5</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "The W. M. Boggs Manuscript about Bent's Fort, Kit Carson, the Far West and Life among the Indians," here-after referred to as Boggs Ms., The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 45. This article was written by William Boggs at the request of the Lubers family in 1905. Boggs had access to the records in the Old Bent Family Bible. Hafen changed the Ms. into paragraphs and sentences, and inserted punctuation before publishing in 1930.







1809; Mary, June 25, 1811; George, April 13, 1814; Robert, February 23, 1816; Edward, September 12, 1818; and Silas, October 10, 1820.

The Bent Family in America written by Allen H. Bent<sup>6</sup> states that Silas Bent was born in Rutland, Massachusetts, in 1786, but that is evidently an error, because farther on he mentions that Judge Silas Bent was fifty-nine when he died in 1827, which would make his birth 1768 as proved by the record. Aside from the date of the birth of his wife, Martha Kerr, little is known about her except that she was a Virginian.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes it is said the family was of French-Canadian descent, and that is probable, because of their association with St. Vrain.<sup>8</sup> About 1788 Silas Bent moved to Marietta, Ohio, and then went to Wheeling to study for the bar. Sometime before 1800 he married and went to Charleston, Virginia, now West Virginia, where he opened a store. Here his three eldest children were born - Charles, Juliannah, and John. In western Virginia Silas became Judge of the Court of Common Pleas. In 1805 he was appointed deputy sur-

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<sup>6</sup> Allen H. Bent, The Bent Family in America (Boston: D. Clapp and Son, 1894). This book is now in the British Museum.

<sup>7</sup> William E. Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico and California (reprint; Kansas City, Missouri: Bryant and Douglas Book Company, 1907), p. 179.

<sup>8</sup> Arthur J. Fynn, "Furs and Forts of the Rocky Mountain West, The Colorado Magazine, IX (March, 1932), 51.







veyor for Washington County, Ohio, which was the birthplace of Lucy, his fourth child. Albert Gallatin appointed Silas principal deputy surveyor for the new territory of Louisiana and the family moved to St. Louis, arriving there September 17, 1806. Sometime during the year of William's birth, 1809, the father was named presiding judge in the St. Louis Court of Common Pleas. Lilburn Boggs, a governor of Missouri, knew Judge Bent in St. Louis. The Boggs family record stated that Lilburn married Julia Ann Bent on July 24, 1817.<sup>9</sup> Their two sons were Angus and Henry. Mrs. Boggs died September 1820. Mr. Boggs married Panthea G. Boone July 29, 1823. She was a granddaughter of Daniel Boone of Kentucky fame. Panthea had the care of Julia's two boys and ten children of her own. Her oldest son was Thomas Boggs and is mentioned often in this narrative. The next son, William M., has also given us much information about the Bents.<sup>10</sup> Judge Bent served on the bench of the Supreme Court of the territory of Missouri from 1817 to 1821. His death occurred in St. Louis November 20, 1827.<sup>11</sup>

It seemed that this family was endowed with the true

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<sup>9</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 46.

<sup>10</sup> Loc. cit. Miss Rose Bushnell, granddaughter of Thomas Boggs, gave this information from the family record.

<sup>11</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders (n.p.) (n.d.), p. 1. This book was a loan from Las Animas, Colo., Public Library.







pioneer spirit of adventure. John became a lawyer; Silas joined the navy and traveled over the world for twenty-five years; Charles, William, George, and Robert went west and lived a life of interest, adventure, contrasts, joy, and sadness. George and Robert never enjoyed good health, so Charles and William led a more arduous life. Aside from Julia Ann,<sup>12</sup> little information has been found on the other Bent girls.

Since this is the story of the contribution of the Bent brothers to the winning of the west, Charles and William are of especial importance. The trader and trapper are characteristic of this age and made a large contribution to American development. These typical pioneers were usually illiterate in books, gaunt and spare, browned from exposure, and unkempt. Their queer dress made it difficult to distinguish them from an Indian. Constant peril to life gave them a piercing look. Even their conversation showed dry wit and was accompanied by little hearty laughter, and there was seldom relaxation of countenance. The habit of thrift was practically unknown, and these men were "generous even to a fault." There was a fascination to this life that no trapper could resist, and if he once entered it, he usually remained to the end.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms., The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 68. Julia seems to have been the only one of the Bent sisters definitely mentioned, because, perhaps, she was the one who came west.

<sup>13</sup> Hiram M. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, I, 58-60.







Charles and William first became trappers and then went a step farther, built trading posts, made permanent settlements, and were the first United States citizens in the region known today as Colorado and New Mexico. "They were the explorers, the trail-makers, for western civilization." 14

To these strong, adventurous trail blazers we owe our advance westward.

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14 Horace Kephart, editor, In the Old West, p. 8.



Charles and ...  
went to ...  
testimony ...  
the reason ...  
were the ...  
action."

To ...  
advance ...

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In ...



## CHAPTER II

### THE LESS ILLUSTRIOUS BROTHERS

Aside from the three rather famous Bent brothers, Silas, Charles, and William, there were four others - Edward, John, Robert, and George. Edward was born September 12, 1818,<sup>1</sup> and died at the age of six.<sup>2</sup> John, the <sup>X 2nd son; third child</sup> third son, was born May 31, 1803, at Charleston, Virginia, now in West Virginia.<sup>3</sup> This son was educated for the bar and later became a prominent lawyer in St. Louis, holding the office of district attorney.<sup>4</sup> Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri was acquainted with John in St. Louis.<sup>5</sup> Like his youngest brother Silas, he was never within the borders of Colorado. The date of his death was 1845.<sup>6</sup>

The names of George and Robert Bent are better known because they came west with Charles and William. Diaries, correspondence, and visitors of that day at Fort Bent men-

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<sup>1</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 45.

<sup>2</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1748-1846 (reprint; Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1905), XXVIII, 71.

<sup>5</sup> Hafen, op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> Thwaites, op. cit., p. 71.







tioned their names. They were born in St. Louis, where the Bent family lived after their father was appointed deputy surveyor for the new territory of Louisiana in 1806.<sup>7</sup> George was born April 13, 1814, and Robert February 23, 1815.<sup>8</sup>

There seem to be many arguments and proofs offered as to when George and Robert came West. The Bent Family genealogy states that they were with Charles and William in 1824 during their first expedition to the upper Arkansas, but at that time George was only ten and Robert eight, so that story might be subject to question because of their youth, but it is known that boys of a tender age did go on trading expeditions in those days. Records indicate that the Bents built three stockades, or crude enclosed wooden structures, to transact business with the trappers and Indians. Jacob Fowler, who made a trip to the Rocky Mountain region in 1821 and 1822, mentioned that there was a stockade on the north bank of the Arkansas River, about halfway between the present cities of Pueblo and Canon City, Colorado, and that in 1826 there were three Bents present.<sup>9</sup> In later years young George Bent, son

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<sup>7</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 45.

<sup>9</sup> Elliott Coues, editor, Journal of Jacob Fowler (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1898), p. 47.







of William Bent, said that the Bents and St. Vrain had erected three posts on the Arkansas River, and George and Robert were with their elder brothers during the construction.<sup>10</sup> Porcupine Bull, the oldest man among the southern Cheyenne Indians at the time of his death in 1913, insisted that Yellow Wolf, leader of the southern Cheyennes, made friends with the Bents while encamped at the mouth of the Purgatoire River in 1828. The Cheyennes had been south catching wild horses and were going north to their camp. At this meeting Yellow Wolf named George, "Little Beaver," and Robert, "Blue (or Green) Bird."<sup>11</sup>

A traveler, Thomas J. Farnham, who visited Bent's Fort in 1839, wrote that the fort was owned by three brothers who were there at the time of his visit.<sup>12</sup> In the diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, who stopped at the trading post in 1846 on her way to Santa Fe with her husband Samuel, a Santa Fe merchant, she relates that Charles and William Bent and Ceran St. Vrain were engaged in the fur trade and that later the brothers George and Robert were taken into the firm.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 4. The story was related personally to the author by Porcupine Bull.

<sup>12</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1748-1846, XXVIII, 71.

<sup>13</sup> Stella M. Drumm, Down The Santa Fe Trail (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 192.



of William S. ...  
three ...  
with their ...  
Hull, who ...  
the ...  
leader of the ...  
while ...  
The ...  
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George and Robert do not appear to have been partners in the business, but George was often left in charge of the place.<sup>14</sup>

On July 1, 1844, John Fremont, returning from an exploration party to California, stopped at Bent's Fort and he said:

On the first of July we arrived at Bent's Fort, about seventy miles below the mouth of the Fontaine-qui-bouit. As we emerged into view from the groves on the river, we were saluted with a display of the National flag, and repeated discharges from the guns of the fort, where we were received by Mr. George Bent with a cordial welcome and a friendly hospitality, in the enjoyment of which we spent several very agreeable days.<sup>15</sup>

Thus from accounts related, it appears that Robert and George were always closely associated with the fort trade.

Somewhat similar to the argument about the time of the arrival of the younger boys in the West is a dispute concerning the time of Robert's death. Robert does not seem to have been married. It is usually said that he died at Fort Bent October 20, 1841.<sup>16</sup> Others say he was killed by Comanches in 1841.<sup>17</sup> George, the son of William Bent, wrote on October

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<sup>14</sup> W. J. Ghent, "Charles Bent," Dictionary of American Biography, II, 205.

<sup>15</sup> John C. Fremont, The Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains, Oregon and California (Buffalo, New York: George H. Derby and Company Publishers, 1851), p. 422.

<sup>16</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 24.

<sup>17</sup> Loc. cit.



in the morning, the first of the day  
place.

On July 12, 1914, the first of the day  
place.

On July 13, 1914, the first of the day  
place.

On July 14, 1914, the first of the day  
place.

On July 15, 1914, the first of the day  
place.

On July 16, 1914, the first of the day  
place.

On July 17, 1914, the first of the day  
place.

On July 18, 1914, the first of the day  
place.



15, 1913:

Robert Bent, my father's brother was killed by Comanches near Pawnee Fork. He was with a train going back to Missouri when killed. He went out to shoot a buffalo bull, when Comanches charged on him and killed him.<sup>18</sup>

After Robert's death, which we conclude occurred in 1841, George left the fort and went to Mexico to trade for horses and mules, Tom Boggs<sup>19</sup> and Hatcher<sup>20</sup> accompanied him. On their return they found a ready market for these animals, because the heavily loaded caravan wagons overworked and killed many mules and horses. One Eyed Juan, the celebrated rider, came back with them. Many stories were told of this man whose sole occupation was breaking horses until he was too old to get into a saddle. He would place a Mexican dollar in each of the wooden stirrups, mount the animal, and, no matter what the horse would do, these dollars were always found under the soles of the rider's feet when the horse stopped bucking.<sup>21</sup>

While on this trading trip George married a Mexican

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<sup>18</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 24.

<sup>19</sup> Albert W. Thompson, "Thomas O. Boggs, Early Scout and Plainsman," The Colorado Magazine, VII (July, 1930), 154. Tom Boggs was the son of Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri. Julia Ann Bent, sister of the Bents, was his first wife. He worked for his uncle at Independence, Missouri, and made trips with the Santa Fe caravans, and often stopped at Fort Bent.

<sup>20</sup> Grinnell, op. cit., p. 30. Hatcher was a trader at Fort Bent.

<sup>21</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 33.







girl. To them were born two children, a daughter, and a son named Robert. He was later sent to St. Louis to school. George had a great friend in Frank P. Blair of Missouri,<sup>22</sup> who had come to Fort Bent for his health about the time of Robert's death. Shortly before his death, George showed his esteem for Blair in naming him as guardian for his children.

George made trips into New Mexico and was present at Kit Carson's marriage and signed the register as a witness.<sup>23</sup> Mr. Carson married Josefa Jaramillo, sister of Mrs. Charles Bent, on February 6, 1843,<sup>24</sup> at Taos.

There are several accounts of events in George's life, but the only personal glimpse into his domestic affairs is a story told by Mrs. Magoffin.

Bent's Fort, July 27, 1846. . . . When we came last evening, while they were fixing our room, I sat in the parlor with las senoritas [the ladies], the wife of Mr. George Bent and some others. One of them sat and combed her hair all the while notwithstanding the presence of Mr. Lightendoffer, whose lady [a Mexican] was present. After the combing she paid her devoirs to a crock of oil or greese of some kind, and it is not exaggeration to

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<sup>22</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 24.

<sup>23</sup> Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days, I, 336.

<sup>24</sup> Bible of Charles Bent. On the back page of Charles Bent's old Bible was found this inscription "Kit Carson and Maria Josefa Jaramillo were married on the 6th day of February 1843."







say it almost dripped from her hair to the floor. If I had not seen her at it, I never would have believed it greese, but that she had been washing her head.<sup>25</sup>

According to the Bent genealogy, George died of consumption October 23, 1846.<sup>26</sup>

Both Robert and George were buried in the graveyard just outside Fort Bent. The old Frenchman, who was a tailor at the fort, afterwards planted cacti on George's grave to protect it from wolves and coyotes.<sup>27</sup> Their remains were later removed to the family plot in the cemetery at St. Louis.<sup>28</sup>

Mrs. Magoffin commented that George was greatly esteemed and possessed unbounded influence with the various Indian tribes with which he traded for many years.<sup>29</sup>

No doubt ill health caused both Robert and George to have less interest in trading than their brothers, but they possessed the Bent courage and spirit, and they, true pioneers, carried on under adverse circumstances.

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<sup>25</sup> Stella M. Drumm, Down The Santa Fe Trail, p. 62. Dr. Eugene Leitensdorfer, his brother, and brother-in-law, were engaged in the Santa Fe Trail trade for a great many years. They were of the family of Gerrasio Santuario, an Italian soldier of fortune, who changed his name when a prisoner to Leitensdorfer, and came to Missouri in 1811.

<sup>26</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 24.

<sup>27</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>28</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1748-1846. XXVIII, 71.

<sup>29</sup> Stella M. Drumm, Down The Santa Fe Trail, p. 62.







### CHAPTER III

#### SILAS BENT - THE NAVY MAN

The youngest son of the Bents was Silas their eleventh child. He was born in South St. Louis October 10, 1820,<sup>1</sup> and at the age of sixteen became a midshipman, and spent the following twenty-five years in the United States Navy. He was the first cadet to enter the United States Navy from Missouri,<sup>2</sup> and served in the Seminole War.<sup>3</sup> Men-of-war were sent to Florida off and on from 1835 to 1843 during new outbreaks of the Seminole Indians, and this was at the time when Silas first entered the naval service.

In 1849 Silas was with Commander James Glynn when the U. S. brig Preble sailed into the harbor of Nagasaki and demanded the release of eighteen shipwrecked American sailors who had been imprisoned by Japanese authorities. Their release was secured. During the rescue Silas piloted the fleet into Napha in Liu-Kiu Islands and served as United States

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<sup>1</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 45.

<sup>2</sup> Hafen, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> "Seminole War," Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Encyclopedia, XXII, 128.



THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
COURT OF COMMONS

The first matter for consideration was the petition of the  
BANKERS' ASSOCIATION of the City of London, for leave to  
move for an order of mandamus, directing the Registrar of  
Companies to register the Companies of the Bankers' Association  
as limited liability companies, under the Companies Act, 1908.

The Registrar of Companies had refused to register the  
Companies, on the ground that they were not bona fide  
companies, but were merely a device for evading the provisions  
of the Companies Act, 1908. The Bankers' Association  
contended that the Companies were bona fide companies, and  
that the Registrar was bound to register them.

The Registrar of Companies was asked to show that the  
Companies were not bona fide companies, but were merely a  
device for evading the provisions of the Companies Act, 1908.



Commissioner in negotiations for a treaty with the Regent.<sup>4</sup>

After this cruise William Boggs<sup>5</sup> became acquainted with several naval officers in California, and on one occasion met Lieutenant Silas Bent. Later Boggs encountered Silas at Benicia on the Straits of Carquinas<sup>6</sup> and they spent a day and night on board the Preble. The Lieutenant gave William Boggs a number of curios which he had collected while he was with the fleet in Japan. Among these was a Tartar bow and some arrows, which Boggs said did not compare with Cheyenne bows and arrows, but were ornamental and clumsy and looked like the ones used by the ladies at target shooting. They did not have the force or spring of the stiff, straight Cheyenne bows covered with buffalo sinew that would send an arrow through a buffalo.<sup>7</sup>

Silas was next assigned as flag-lieutenant aboard the U. S. S. Mississippi with Commodore Perry's expedition of 1852 to 1854 in Japanese waters. Here hydrographic surveys

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<sup>4</sup>"Silas Bent," Americana Encyclopedia, III, 525.

<sup>5</sup> William Boggs was a son of Governor Lilburn Boggs of Missouri, and brother of Thomas Boggs who married Silas' sister. William spent the winter of 1845-6 at Fort Bent, and in 1846 went to California where he served in the war with Mexico.

<sup>6</sup> Carquinas is a strait near San Francisco, and Benicia is a town to the north of the strait.

<sup>7</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine VII (March, 1930), 65.



Commissioner is requested to investigate the same.

After this engine was repaired, it was

with several more of them in the same

and not less than 200. These were

at Benito on the 21st of the month.

and night on board the ship.

Boys a number of other things were

with the fleet in 1888.

some arrows, which were

boys and arrows, but were

like the ones used by the

did not have the force of

Chevone does covered with

arrow through the

After this was repaired

U. S. A. 2nd

1888 no less than

After this was repaired

of Missouri, and

after. William

in 1888 went to

Mexico.

6. Commission

7. Labor

VII (March, 1888)



were made and the results are in a Government publication of 1857 entitled Sailing Directions and Nautical Remarks: by Officers of the late U. S. Naval Expedition to Japan. As a result of his interest in oceanography, Bent made a study of the great Pacific current known as the Kuro-Siwo, or Gulf Stream of the North Pacific Ocean. This investigation was published in Perry's<sup>8</sup> official report under the title Report on the Kuro-Siwo or Gulf Stream of the North Pacific Ocean.

During Silas Bent's service in the navy he became familiar with the oceanography of the seven seas, since he rounded Cape Horn four times, Cape of Good Hope once, crossed the Atlantic five times, and the Pacific several times.

Although he had earned a lieutenant's commission and had been detailed to the Hydrographic Division of the coast survey, he resigned on April 25, 1861, because "his sympathies were with his native state."<sup>9</sup>

Lieutenant Silas Bent, near the end of his naval career, married Anna Eliza Tyler of Louisville, Kentucky, in 1857. After his resignation from the navy he returned to

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<sup>8</sup> Harry A. Marmer, "Silas Bent," Dictionary of American Biography, II, 206. Perry's Report is in the Senate Executive Document 97, 33rd. Congress, 2nd. Session under the heading Narrative of the Expedition of an American squadron to China Seas and Japan 1856.

<sup>9</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine VII (March, 1930), 65.



was made and the results of the study of the  
of 1955 and the results of the study of 1956  
by the results of the study of 1957 and the results of the study of 1958  
As a result of the study of 1959 and the results of the study of 1960  
study of the results of the study of 1961 and the results of the study of 1962  
or Gulf Stream of the North Atlantic Ocean  
tion was published in the results of the study of 1963 and the results of the study of 1964  
Report on the results of the study of 1965 and the results of the study of 1966

Ocean.

During the study of the results of the study of 1967 and the results of the study of 1968  
familiar with the results of the study of 1969 and the results of the study of 1970  
rounded and the results of the study of 1971 and the results of the study of 1972  
ed the Atlantic Ocean and the results of the study of 1973 and the results of the study of 1974  
Although the results of the study of 1975 and the results of the study of 1976  
had been detailed in the results of the study of 1977 and the results of the study of 1978  
survey, the results of the study of 1979 and the results of the study of 1980  
this was the results of the study of 1981 and the results of the study of 1982  
Investigation of the results of the study of 1983 and the results of the study of 1984  
near, the results of the study of 1985 and the results of the study of 1986  
1987. After the results of the study of 1987 and the results of the study of 1988

Harry A. ...  
Isaac H. ...  
active ...  
the ...



their home in St. Louis and assumed management of the Tyler estate.<sup>10</sup> He was still interested in oceanography and on December 10, 1868, made a speech before the St. Louis Historical Society. The address, entitled "The Thermometric Gateways to the Pole," was printed the next year. Silas delivered another oration before the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association on January 6, 1872, called "Thermal Paths to the Pole, the Currents of the Ocean, and the Influence of the Latter upon the climates of the World."<sup>11</sup>

Both these addresses set forth the theory that an open sea was maintained about the North Pole by the Gulf Stream from the Atlantic and the Kuro-Siwo from the Pacific. Bent's views were not accepted, but there is no doubt that a great deal of interest was created in North Polar explorations in both Europe and the United States, because of his earnest belief in this theory and the publicity given it.

Continuing his interest in the scientific aspects of ocean currents and their far reaching influences, subsequent speeches were delivered by Bent, the navy man. In 1879 he spoke on "Meteorology," and in 1884 on "Climate as Affecting Cattle Breeding."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Harry A. Marmer, "Silas Bent," Dictionary of American Biography, II, 206.

<sup>11</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Loc. cit.







Silas Bent kept up interest and influence in hydrography throughout his life, and he lived beyond the average number of years for that day and age. His death occurred August 26, 1887, at Shelter Island, Long Island, and burial was in Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, again, another Bent has typified a pioneer spirit by an investigation into the field of oceanography and left for mankind his contribution.

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<sup>13</sup> Harry A. Marmer, "Silas Bent," Dictionary of American Biography, II, 206.





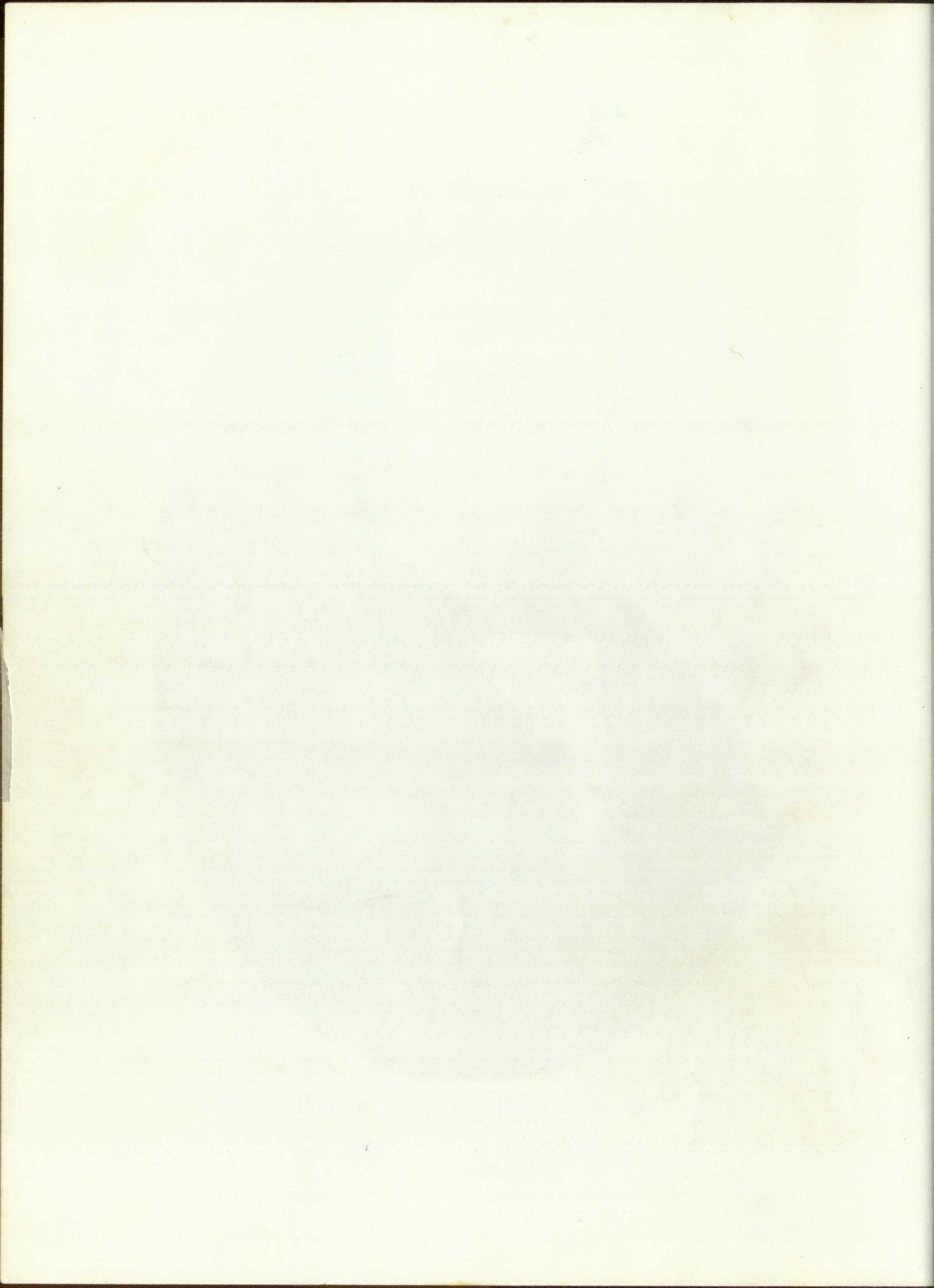




Charles Bent, First Governor of New Mexico.

BY  
RALPH EMERSON TWITCHELL  
Vice-President New Mexico Historical Society







## CHAPTER IV

### CHARLES BENT - THE GOVERNOR

History has left more permanent traces of Charles Bent than of the other members of his family. Perhaps this was due to the fact that he was the first civil governor of New Mexico after occupation by the United States, and as a result the records are of a more reliable nature.

Charles, the eldest of the Bent family, was born November 11, 1799, in Charleston, Virginia, which is now in West Virginia. He and William were closely associated in the fur trade, and it is probable they were in the Sioux country as employes of the American Fur Company in 1823.<sup>1</sup> On account of his keen interest in trade, he and his brother William and Ceran St. Vrain of a St. Louis French Canadian family built a stockade in 1824 near the present city of Pueblo, Colorado.<sup>2</sup>

Charles gained knowledge of trade by experience as a caravan captain. As early as 1829 he was elected captain of a train which consisted of seventy persons and twenty-five wagons. Major Riley of the United States Army had charge

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<sup>1</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> W. J. Ghent, "Charles Bent," Dictionary of American Biography, II, 205.







of the military escort, and they reached Santa Fe safely, although they had trouble with hostile Indians in the territory south of the Arkansas. The return cargo was valued at \$34,000 and reached Franklin, Missouri, early in November.<sup>3</sup> Charles had charge of caravans in 1832 and 1833. The load of the trip from New Mexico in 1832 included \$100,000 in specie and \$90,000 in Mexican goods and mules. The party of 1833 assembled at Diamond Grove on the Missouri frontier, and the one hundred eighty-four men with ninety-three heavily loaded wagons proceeded west. On the return trip they brought back \$100,000 in money and large amount of other property.<sup>4</sup>

In view of the trade increase the Bent, St. Vrain, and Company started construction of a new fort in 1828, and after its completion in 1832 Charles spent most of his time at Taos in charge of the Mexican end of the business.<sup>5</sup> Taos was a fertile valley, seventy-five miles north-east of Santa Fe. The Village of Fernandez was improperly called Taos.<sup>6</sup> This region formed the Mexican boundary for those who

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<sup>3</sup> Hiram M. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, II, 510.

<sup>4</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1748-1846, XVIII, 73.



of the military secret, and they received \$250,000. Although they had trouble with hostile Indians in the early part of the century. The system was valued at \$50,000 and reached \$100,000 in 1850. The loss of the trip from New Mexico in 1850 included \$100,000 in specie and \$50,000 in Mexican goods and money. The party of 1850 assembled at El Paso, Texas on the 15th of January and the one hundred eighty-four men with ninety-three heavily loaded mules, proceeded west. On the return trip they brought back \$10,000 in money and a large amount of other property.

In view of the fact that the party of 1850 and Comstock started a revolution of a new type in 1850, and after the revolution in 1850 the party went to the south at El Paso in 1850 at the Mexican end of the border. There was a terrible valley, seventy-five miles long and thirty miles wide. The village of Terrell was immediately called. This region formed the western boundary for those who

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<sup>5</sup> Walter H. Hittelman, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, ix, 210.  
<sup>6</sup> ibid., 211.  
<sup>7</sup> George B. Grinnell, Boy's Life and the West, 19.  
<sup>8</sup> Richard S. Tedlow, Early Western Expansion, 19.  
1858, XVII, 23.



came up the Arkansas and crossed to New Mexico from the north.

In 1835 Charles married Maria Ignacia Jaramillo at San Fernando de Taos. The Jaramillos were one of the leading families of New Mexico. Mrs. Bent was known for her stately beauty,<sup>7</sup> and had been married before. Unto this union were born three children, Alfred, Estafina, and Terisna or Teresina. At least these Bents did not follow the custom of the other members of the Bent family in giving their children duplicate names. The Bible of the Charles Bent family is in the possession of the New Mexico Historical Society. It is printed in Spanish and the front and back pages are filled with inscriptions and names. The name of Teresina is written on it. The signature of Charles Bent is also in this Bible.

Ceran St. Vrain, friend of Charles, lived in Taos. In 1843 Ceran applied to the governor of the province of New Mexico for a grant of land. It was the custom of the Mexican government, as well as the Spanish rulers before them to make cessions of land to prominent citizens as a reward for meritorious service. St. Vrain had been of invaluable aid to the Mexican frontier in maintaining peace with the Indians, and colonizing and cultivating portions of the tract asked for would be additional guarantee of safety to the border. The grant was made. It included land within Pueblo, Huerfano,

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<sup>7</sup> Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days, I, 300.







Las Animas, and Bent counties in the territory of Colorado, and Colfax County in the territory of New Mexico. Later part of this land was conveyed to various persons and Charles received a share, as shown by the translation of an old deed. The document read as follows:

Deed of conveyance to Charles Bent.

The undersigned owners and possessors of the lands, included from the waters of the Rio de Las Animas and of the Huerfano, within the boundaries designated in the act of possession, for the purpose of effecting and procuring means to settle those lands, for which purpose we have solicited and obtained the concession of the Government; and, of our own free will, we cede to M. Charles Bent, and to his successors, the one-sixth part of the land contained in our possession at said place, to which we hereby renounce all of our rights, hereby obligating ourselves not to prescribe him in that which we hereby grant unto him; it being our voluntary act and deed, it being understood that we are to give to such families as may transport themselves to said place, lands free of charge for settlement, subject to the guarantees and benefits to each party, as may be agreed upon, in order to protect the settlements to be formed; and, by this extrajudicial document, which we execute on this common paper (there being none of the corresponding seal) we, thus, as our entire voluntary act, covenant; and this indenture shall be as valid as if it was duly authenticated; and, by the same, we may be compelled to observe and comply therewith; and, in testimony whereof, we sign this, in Taos, on the 11th day of March, 1844.

signed

Cornelio Vigil  
Ceran St. Vrain.<sup>8</sup>

Charles Bent's connection with the American occupation

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<sup>8</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley (Chicago: O. L. Baskin and Company, Historical Publishers, 1881), p. 838.







of New Mexico begin shortly after General Kearny and his Army of the West had marched from Fort Leavenworth. He wrote:

Head Q<sup>rs</sup> Army of the West  
Fort Leavenworth June 29 '46.

Sir I have started from here on the Santa Fe Trail.  
... Majs Charles Bent and St. Vrain have this day been with me - They left Taos on the 3rd Inst and Santa Fe on the 27th ulto while at the latter place they were much with Gov. Armijo of New Mexico who told them he was expecting Genl Urrea with from 3,000 to 5,000 troops from the Province of Sonora, Zacatecas and Durango. Gov A added that he had understood that the Provinces of Sonora, Durango ... North California and Nuevo Leon had revolted from the Government of Parades and had sent companies to him soliciting that he would join in forming a Northern Confederacy - Mr Bent is of the opinion that there can be no good feeling between Urrea and Armijo and that if I can get there in time, the services of the latter may be made available against the former.

Maj Genl R Jones  
Adj Genl USA

Very Respectfully yours  
1st Lieut S W Kearny

According to General Kearny's letter of August 1, 1846,<sup>9</sup> the army reached camp near Bent's Fort July 29 and expected to go on to Santa Fe as soon as possible. On August 18 Kearny entered Santa Fe and occupied it without firing a shot.<sup>10</sup> As the sun was setting, the American flag was raised over the governor's palace and a salute of thirteen guns was fired. Kearny visited some of the Indian pueblos and satisfied himself that the country was peaceful. Then he

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<sup>9</sup> Letter, S. W. Kearny to Major General R. Jones, Adjutant General of United States Army August 1, 1846; in the possession of the Missouri State Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>10</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 49.



of New Mexico... at the last...

Sir, I have... been with... from the... A... of the...

I... have... raised over... was... attached...

I... to... etc.



made plans for a civil government, by issuing this proclamation:

Being duly authorized by the President of the United States of America, I hereby make the following appointments for the Govt of New Mexico a Territory of the U. States - The officers thus appointed will be obeyed and respected accordingly -

Charles Bent ... to be ... Governor. ... Santa Fe the capital of the Terr of New Mexico this 22<sup>d</sup> day of Sept. 1846 and in 71st yr of the independence of the United States.

S W Kearny  
Bring Genl U S A [sic]

Perhaps this military appointment as Provisional Governor of New Mexico was due to Charles' influence with the people of New Mexico. Twitchell says President Polk did not approve of Kearny's establishment of a government which had the appearance of permanency and gave rights to the people that were enjoyed only by United States citizens.<sup>11</sup> Before leaving for California September 25, 1846, the General told an Apache chief when talking of Governor Bent that he was one "who will do justice to his red children. I leave Mr. Bent as your Governor - obey him."<sup>12</sup> For protection Kearny stationed troops in Santa Fe under Doniphan, who was to go to Chihuahua after the arrival of Colonel Sterling Price.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Ralph E. Twitchell, The History of The Military Occupation of the Territory of New Mexico 1846 to 1851 (Denver: Smith-Brooks Company, Publishers, 1909), p. 91

<sup>12</sup> William E. Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition, p. 73.

<sup>13</sup> W. H. Emory, Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth in Missouri to San Diego in California (Washington: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, Printers, 1848), p. 45.







Two days later Price and his staff reached Santa Fe and plans were made for Doniphan's transfer.

Soon after Bent became governor, dissatisfaction increased. Bent's own letters indicate that he knew there was discontent before American intervention.

Rio Ariba 24th January 1845

Mr. Alvaras:

Sir

I am in possession of your two letters of the 18th and 21st. I am much obliged to you for the nuse you communicate, all except the election of Polk, I am truly sorry you could not insert with propriety that of Clay, I am fearfule that this election will cause difficulty between this and our country.

I had letters from St. Vrain dated the 5th ins in which he sazes that a war party of Chyeans report a large boddy of men on the Arkansas ... he says thare is no doubt of the truth of this . . . The Zautaws have been killing some of the inhabitants of Ojo Calienta. Beaubin and myself leave in the morning for Taos as we can do nothing until the Criminal Trial of Montano is concluded which will last some time, he has been proved guilty of the charges. . . .

Yours respectfully  
Charles Bent.<sup>14</sup>

By December, 1846, the "honeymoon" of the period of conquest was over. The Pueblo Indians had become restless. For some time there had been rumors that the new governor intended to take from them and the Mexicans the fertile land in the Taos valley that had always been theirs. This information had been brought to Bent, but he paid little atten-

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<sup>14</sup> Charles Bent, Letter. This letter is in the Benjamin Read Collection of the New Mexico Historical Society at Santa Fe. It is listed as letter No. 65.







tion to it because he overestimated their friendship and his influence. A secret meeting had been held and a plot made to massacre all Americans. The time set for the revolt was midnight of December 19. The leaders were Diego Archuleta, Tomas Ortiz, Domingo D. Baca, Pablo Dominguez, Miguel Pino, and the churchmen Ortiz and Antonio Martinez. Ortiz was to be the governor and Archuleta to have the next highest position. The sound of the church bell was to be the signal. Since the plan was not well organized, the revolt was postponed until Christmas eve, at which time they would be more likely to catch the American troops off guard.<sup>15</sup> One of the wives of the conspirators, wishing to avoid bloodshed, informed Colonel Price of the plot.<sup>16</sup> For a time peace and quiet followed, but the conspirators preparations continued secretly. Governor Bent was informed on the 17th of December by a friendly Mexican that there was a plot to expel the United States troops and civil authorities from the territory. At once an attempt was made to find the leaders and punish them. The leaders were said to have come from the four northern counties of the territory. Realizing the

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<sup>15</sup> E. Bennett Burton, "The Taos Rebellion," Old Santa Fe (Magazine), I (October, 1913), 178-80.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.



tion to it because he overestimated their friendship and his influence. A secret meeting had been held and a plan made to massacre all Americans. The time set for the revolt was midnight of December 19. The leaders were Diego Aranda, Tomas Ortiz, Domingo D. Paez, Pablo Dominguez, Miguel Pino, and the chaplains Ortiz and Antonio Martinez. Ortiz was to be the reverend and Aranda to have the next highest position. The sound of the church bell was to be the signal. Since the plan was not well organized, the revolt was postponed until Christmas eve, at which time they would be more likely to catch the American troops off guard. One of the wives of the conspirators, wishing to join also, asked, informed Colonel Price of the plot. For a time she and Ortiz followed, but the conspirators' preparations soon failed. Governor Paez was informed on the 14th of December by a friendly Mexican that there was a plot to expel the United States troops and divide territories from the territory. At once an attempt was made to find the leaders and punish them. The leaders were said to have come from the four northern counties of the territory. Realizing the

18 E. Bennett Burton, "The Texas Rebellion," Old Santa Fe (Newspaper), 1 (October, 1912), 178-83.

18 Loc. cit.



seriousness of the unrest, Governor Bent on January 5, 1847, issued this proclamation:

After obtaining the necessary information to designate and secure the persons of the participators in the conspiracy, I thought it advisable to turn them over to the military authorities in order that these persons might be dealt with more summarily and expeditiously than they could have been by civil authorities.

The occurrence of this conspiracy at this early period of the occupation of the territory will, I think, conclusively convince our government of the necessity of maintaining here, for several years to come, a sufficient military force.

C. Bent.<sup>17</sup>

Thinking all danger was past, the governor left the capital on the fourteenth of January accompanied by an escort of five, among whom were the sheriff, circuit attorney, and prefect.<sup>18</sup> The purpose of this trip was to move his family from Taos to Santa Fe. On his arrival the Pueblo Indians requested him to release two prisoners of their race, and the governor told them they would have to await the ordinary process of law.<sup>19</sup>

Early in the morning of January 19, 1847, a mob of drunken Indians went into San Fernando and demanded release of the two Indians held as prisoners for stealing. The sheriff refused this demand and was killed. Vigil, who was the

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<sup>17</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 50.

<sup>18</sup> William E. Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition, p. 51

<sup>19</sup> Loc. cit.



responsibility of the matter, Governor Davis in January, 1902.

issued this proclamation:

After obtaining the names of the persons who were  
and receive the persons of the same in the same  
manner, I thought it advisable to have the same  
military authorities in order that these persons might  
be dealt with more humanely and speedily than they  
could have been by civil authorities.  
The occurrence of this conspiracy at this early period  
of the occupation of the territory will, I think, demon-  
strately confirm our Government of the necessity of main-  
taining here, for several years to come, a sufficient  
military force.

L. Davis.

Nothing all danger was met, the Governor felt the

as it on the fourteenth of January was reported by an as-

sault of five, among them the sheriff, through a person,

and posted. The names of this list were to have his list

list from the 10th to 15th. On the 15th the sheriff had

requested him to release the prisoners of this town, and

the Governor told them they would have to wait the ordinary

process of law.

Early in the morning of January 15, 1902, a mob of

drunken Indians went into San Fernando and burned the

of the two Indians held as prisoners for stealing. The

list returned this day and was killed. When the

17 George W. Gilman, and his son and

18

19 William H. Donnelly, and his son and

20



prefect of the town, infuriated the leaders by calling them thieves, and they chopped his body into small pieces. By that time a number of Mexicans had joined the group and they all proceeded to the governor's house under the direction of Montoya and Tomasito.

Hearing the noise, Governor Bent quickly arose, dressed, and armed himself. He soon saw resistance was useless, so he tried to use persuasion by reminding them of his many kindnesses during his twenty years residence among them. Their answer was yells and attacks upon the house. Some of the band climbed upon the roof and dug a hole in it. Mrs. Bent begged him to use his pistols, but he refused because he thought the mob would then kill the whole household, which included his wife and children, Mrs. Kit Carson, Mrs. Tom Boggs, and a Mexican woman servant. Mrs. Boggs was Mrs. Bent's daughter by a former marriage. Her version of the murder as an eyewitness is found in the "Boggs Manuscript"<sup>20</sup> and an old newspaper clipping.<sup>21</sup> The two stories are almost identical. Mrs. Boggs was fourteen at this time and had been married about a year.

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<sup>20</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine VII (March, 1930), 59-60.

<sup>21</sup> Clipping from an undated and unidentified newspaper in the Ralph Twitchell Collection in the possession of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe. This is an account written by A. W. Thompson of an interview with Mrs. Boggs or Rumalda Boggs who was then living.







Boggs was away in government service as a messenger from Army headquarters at Santa Fe to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Kit Carson was guiding Kearny in California. The women thought that if Kit had been here he could have prevented the death of his friend.<sup>22</sup>

After removing the sod covering of the roof and the supporting timbers, arrows began to fly through the opening. Six struck Mr. Bent but, while injuring him seriously, did not mortally wound him. As his wife was removing the arrows one struck her and rendered her helpless. In the meantime a French-Canadian family by the name of Lobato, cut a hole through an adobe wall and the women and children escaped into an adjoining house. At first the governor refused to go, but in the meantime a shot had been fired through the window, which was more than Governor Bent could endure. Rumalda, or Mrs. Boggs, then dragged him into the next room, and as he was dying "he spoke to his weeping wife and trembling children . . . and taking paper from his pocket endeavored to write, but, fast losing strength, he commended them to God and his brothers and fell pierced by a Pueblo's ball."<sup>23</sup> The Indians

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<sup>22</sup> R. L. Duffus, Santa Fe Trail (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1930), p. 216.

<sup>23</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 51.



Bojko was away in government service as a member of the  
headquarters at Santa Fe. He was a member of the  
Garrison was guiding Bojko in the trial. The witness  
stated that he had seen Bojko in Santa Fe and that he  
of his friend.

After returning from the trial, the witness  
reporting witness, statement was made to the witness  
Six states that he was not, but that he was not  
not certainly found him. He was not found in the  
own state and was not found in the state of  
a French-Japanese family in the state of Texas, but a  
through an agent and the agent was not found in the  
an editing house. At that time, the witness was in  
in the morning and was not found in the state of Texas,  
was not found in the state of Texas and was not found  
Mrs. Bojko, then a single woman, was not found in the  
was dying in the state of Texas and was not found in the  
then... and stating that the witness was not found in the  
but, last looking through the witness, was not found in the  
prostate and fell through the witness and was not found in the

23. J. L. Bojko, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was not found in the  
Garrison and Bojko, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was not found in the  
24. George A. Bojko, Santa Fe, New Mexico, was not found in the  
one, p. 51.



quickly followed into the room, lifted the body and threw it upon the hard floor, and proceeded to scalp it. Tomas, the leader, stretched the scalp on a board with brass-headed tacks and paraded it through the town that night.<sup>24</sup> After this the family was hurried into another room.

For several days bands of Indians continued to surround the house. Mrs. Bent and the family were compelled to remain in the house with the dead body for a day and night. The next night about midnight the Governor was buried in a common box placed in a cemetery near the house. They were careful to keep it secret from the mob. On February 13, 1847, the funeral of Governor Bent was held in Santa Fe and burial was made in the National cemetery.<sup>25</sup>

Meanwhile messengers were sent secretly to Santa Fe to report the terrible massacre. Two weeks later part of General Price's army under the command of Captain Ceran St. Vrain arrived in Taos to put down the rebellion. The army was nearly frozen and famished from their forced march through snow waist deep.<sup>26</sup> On the way this regiment shot many Indians, and the rebels who escaped went back to Taos. The enemy sought shelter in the old church in the Taos Pueblo and barricaded themselves. By this time most of the Mexicans who had participated in the

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<sup>24</sup> Clipping mentioned in footnote 21.

<sup>25</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Loc. cit.







uprising had gone home and only the Indians remained. The church consisted of two buildings five stories high, irregularly pyramided so that each story was smaller than the one below. Between the two buildings ran a small creek called Taos Creek and to the west of the northerly building stood the church with walls three to seven and a half feet thick. These buildings were enclosed by an adobe wall. This structure was considered impregnable before the use of cannon.

Wishing to give the enemy no time to strengthen their forces, the weary troops attacked at once, and, after two hours of cannon fire with no apparent results, they retired to Taos for much needed rest.<sup>27</sup> Early the next morning St. Vrain renewed the attack with more elaborate plans; deploying his forces by assigning one group two hundred and sixty yards from the west wall of the church, detailing the mounted forces to the opposite side of town to keep the fugitives from escaping, and stationing the others about three hundred yards from the north wall. Two howitzers and a six pounder were placed at the last position. By this plan a cross fire could be maintained. The batteries opened upon the town at nine o'clock, and by eleven, being unable to breach the walls

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<sup>27</sup> Henry Inman, The Old Santa Fe Trail (New York: Macmillan Company, 1898), p. 127.







a command was given to storm the building. Several small holes were cut in the roof and explosive shells were thrown in by hand, then the attacking squad entered the church under cover of the six pounder and took possession without opposition. If the interior had not been filled with smoke, the government troops might have suffered a great loss. Immediately the enemy abandoned this side of town; some took refuge in the large houses on the east side, and others tried to escape to the mountains, but St. Vrain's forces pursued, killing fifty-one and letting only two or three escape. Next morning the rebels sued for peace, and it was granted on condition that Tomas be surrendered to them. The army suffered little loss of life, but the Indians had many wounded and one hundred and fifty killed. This ended the main attempt to expel the Americans from the territory and the insurgent leader, Montoya, was tried, court-martialed, convicted, and executed February 7, 1847, in the presence of the army.<sup>28</sup>

During the storming of the pueblo Charlie Autabee<sup>29</sup> took the news of the murder of Governor Charles Bent to Bent's Fort. It created great excitement and anger, and the

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<sup>28</sup> Clipping mentioned in footnote 21.

<sup>29</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, pp. 38-9. Atobe was a beaver trapper and later was employed at Bent's Fort. He was a Frenchman and married a Mexican wife and lived in New Mexico after 1846. His name is sometimes spelled Ortebee.







Cheyennes proposed to send a large war party to Taos, but William Bent would not give his consent. Instead he collected a group of personal friends and set out for Taos, and on the way they met a messenger who informed him that the army had taken the pueblo and put down the rebellion.<sup>30</sup>

Rumalda Boggs, stepdaughter of Charles Bent, gave an interesting description of the treatment of the offenders by the soldiers. She said that although the revenge was just, it was heartrending to see the little Indian children with flags of truce and crosses in their hands, kneeling and begging the commander not to blow up the buildings and throw boulders through them. The troops would harness six Indians to an army ambulance, and at a signal put them on a run from the pueblo to Taos. On their arrival they would be exhausted and blood would be streaming from their back and legs, caused by these whippings administered on the way. After this ordeal they were hanged.<sup>31</sup>

Along with this treatment of some of the natives, the leaders were tried and punished as an example to prevent further trouble. At the first trial "after an absence of a few minutes the jury returned with a verdict of guilty in

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<sup>30</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 52.

<sup>31</sup> Clipping mentioned in footnote 21.







the first degree."<sup>32</sup> Five were convicted of murder and one of treason, and since the jail was crowded they were sentenced to be hanged on Friday, the following day.<sup>33</sup> During the second session court nine others were brought to trial. At this time Mrs. Bent, Mrs. Carson, and Mrs. Boggs were present and gave evidence as eyewitnesses. The prisoners faced the judges and the three witnesses, and when Mrs. Bent gave her testimony the eyes of the culprits were fixed sternly upon her. When she pointed out the Indian who had killed the governor not a muscle of his face moved, although he knew her evidence settled his fate. They were all found guilty and sentenced to be hanged on April 30.

On this jury was Baptiste Brown, a French New-Englander, who in his early life had sympathized with the Indians, but changed because of an experience with them. During his travels, a party of Indians pursued him across a ravine, his horse was killed in the jump and he himself suffered two broken legs. After twenty-four hours he was found by his companions and for three months was carried on a litter. As a juror at this trial he was asleep most of the time and heard little of the evidence. When they were trying the

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<sup>32</sup> Henry Inman, The Old Santa Fe Trail, p. 132.

<sup>33</sup> Loc. cit.







last of the nine he cried out, "Hang im, hang im, sacre enfans des garces, dey dam gran rascals!" Another juror suggested they look at the evidence and he replied, "Hang de Indian anyhow; he may not be guilty now mais he vare soon will be. Hang em all, parceque dey kill monsieur Charles; dey takes on top knot, vot you call im - scalp. Hang im, hang em - sa-a-cre-e!"<sup>34</sup>

It was a great assumption on the part of Americans to conquer a new country and arraign the revolting inhabitants for treason. The judges were American, the jury was American, and American soldiers guarded the hall.<sup>35</sup> Americans would probably be offended if it were termed American justice.

Thus, the first governor of New Mexico, by military appointment died a martyr. News traveled slowly in those days, as shown by the publication of the notice of Governor Charles Bent's assassination at Taos, New Mexico, on January 19, 1847, in the Daily Union<sup>36</sup> of March 17, 1847, a newspaper in Washington, D. C. This paper gave credit to St. Louis papers for the information. The Indians and Mexicans later expressed sorrow at the act and realized that they had killed their

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<sup>34</sup> Henry Inman, The Old Santa Fe Trail, pp. 136-7.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>36</sup> News item in the Daily [Washington City] Union, March 17, 1847. This newspaper is in the possession of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe.







best friend. Kit Carson valued him as a friend, and Lieutenant Abert of Kearny's army said he was "one in a thousand." His counsel was ever missed by William Bent. One feels that he could have been of much more service to the government and his friends in this new territory. "Thus, in his prime, beloved and honored, Don Carlos Bent passed from trail and home and state,"<sup>37</sup> at the age of forty-eight.

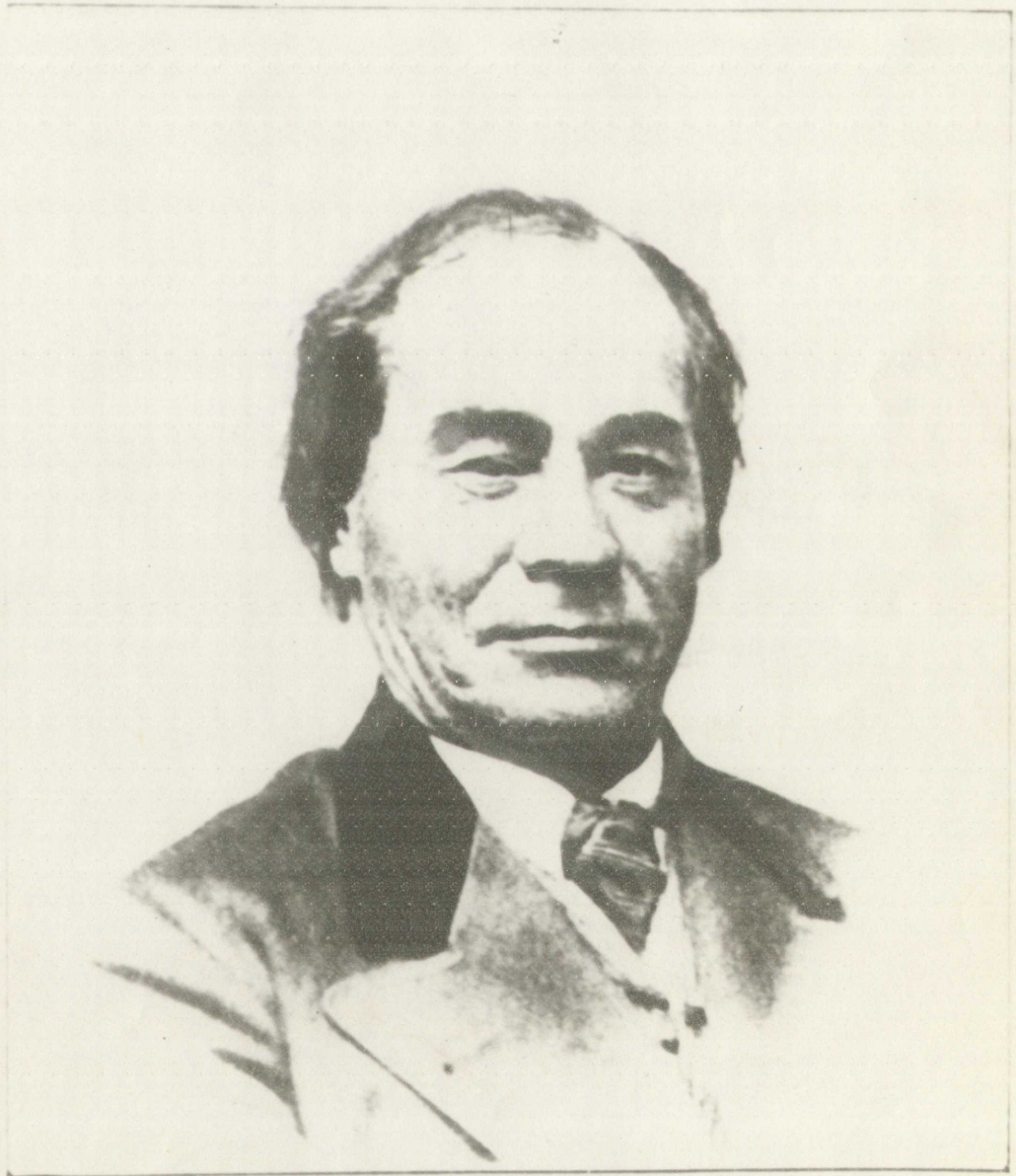
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<sup>37</sup>Edwin Sabin, Kit Carson Days, I, 301.





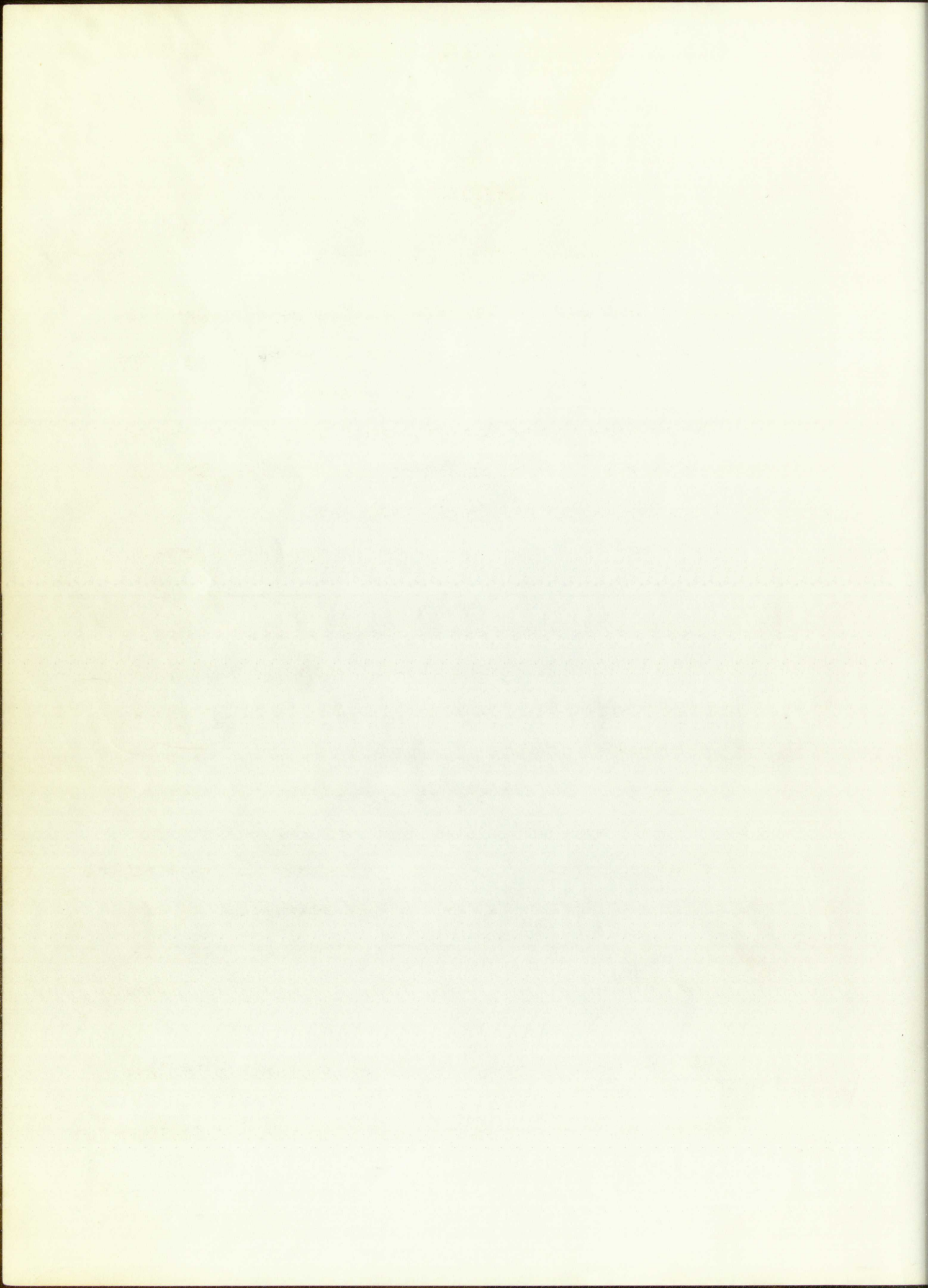




WILLIAM W. BENT OF BENT'S FORT

From a rare original photograph presented to the State Historical Society  
of Colorado by Mrs. H. L. Lubers of Denver.







## CHAPTER V

### WILLIAM BENT - THE PIONEER

William Bent and his brother Charles were closely associated with the life of the West, and it seems William was the typical trader, fort manager, and pioneer of the Bent family. And we know he was hunter, trail blazer, freighter, peacemaker with the Indians, business man, settler, citizen, and last survivor of his immediate family.

All sources that were available to the writer agree that William was born May 23, 1809, at St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>1</sup> This same year Bent's father was appointed presiding judge of the St. Louis Court of Common Pleas. Although no information was found about William's early life, it is known he came from a prominent family.

Early in life Charles and William became interested in trapping, and were employed by the American Fur Company in the Sioux Country. When inquiry was made about Indian troubles in 1865, William testified before a joint commission of congress that he first came to the upper Arkansas in 1824.<sup>2</sup> It is very probable that he was there then, for a boy of fifteen

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<sup>1</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 45.

<sup>2</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 2.



William, who has been associated with the life of the typical American family. He is known for his possession of the land and last owner of the family.

All of these things are part of the life of the typical American family. This is the life of the typical American family. It is the life of the typical American family. It is the life of the typical American family.

It is the life of the typical American family. It is the life of the typical American family. It is the life of the typical American family. It is the life of the typical American family.



was considered mature in pioneer days. Evidently the West appealed to them and they remained to earn a living. They built a fort in 1826 near the present site of Pueblo, Colorado,<sup>3</sup> later moved down the Arkansas River, and then, in 1828, started work on a more pretentious trading post which was finished in 1832.

During these early trading days the Indians may not have been on the upper Arkansas, or the boys may have avoided them, but war parties were always coming through the Santa Fe Trail country.<sup>4</sup> George, the son of William Bent, said that his father told him that the first Cheyennes and Arapahoes came about 1826. In 1835 Colonel Henry Dodge of the United States Dragoons<sup>5</sup> stopped at Bent's Fort on return from an expedition to encourage friendship between the government and the Indians, and in his Report on Indian affairs stated that the Indians came down the Arkansas in 1824.<sup>6</sup> Major Riley,

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<sup>3</sup> Elliott Coues, editor, Journal of Jacob Fowler, p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Dragoons was a term formerly used by the United States Army meaning heavily equipped cavalry soldiers.

<sup>6</sup> Wilbur F. Stone, editor, History of Colorado (Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918), 1, 78-80. This information was obtained from Colonel Henry Dodge's Report of 1835 in Executive Document, No. 181, 24th. Congress, 1st Session, IV.



was considered as a matter in common law. Evidently the fact  
appealed to them and they continued to work on it. They  
built a fort in 1828 near the present site of Indian, Iowa  
radio, later moved down the Arkansas River, and then in  
1828, started work on a more permanent one. The first one  
was finished in 1828.

During these early findings that the Indians may not  
have been on the upper Arkansas, or the lower Arkansas, or  
ed them, but war parties were always coming in and  
to their country. George, the son of William, said  
that his father told him that the first Indians who  
had come about 1824. In 1825 Colonel Henry H. Rensselaer  
with States-Bayson, moved to Fort in Arkansas  
an expedition to secure a friendly relation between  
and the Indians, and in his report on Indian affairs  
that the Indians came down the Arkansas in 1824.

<sup>3</sup> Elliott Jones, editor, Journal of the Arkansas River, 1824.

<sup>4</sup> George B. Grinnell, Red Cloud's Boy, 1876, p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Grinnell was a man formerly with the United States  
Army, having been a member of the 7th Cavalry.

<sup>6</sup> William F. Stone, editor, Arkansas River, 1824.  
(Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1824, p. 4.)  
This information was obtained from George Henry Rensselaer,  
Report of 1823 in Executive Documents, 20: 111, 112, 113.  
at Session, IV.



United States Army officer, was ordered to take four companies as a military escort for a Santa Fe trade caravan in 1829, and reported an attack on his men and the train.<sup>7</sup> Porcupine Bull, an old Cheyenne Indian, said his tribe, the Arapahoes, and some of the Blackfeet Indians moved south in 1826 and began making raids on the Kiowas and Comanches who lived south of the Arkansas river.<sup>8</sup>

Although the Indians were warlike at times, the Bents made friends with the Cheyennes while encamped at the mouth of the Purgatoire and they gave William the name of Little White Man, thus indicating that he was not mature. He was later called Gray Beard by the same Indians and the famous Cheyenne Gray Beard was named after him.<sup>9</sup>

One of the factors in William Bent's agreeable relations with the Indians, especially the Cheyennes, was his marriage about 1835 with Owl Woman, daughter of White Thunder.<sup>10</sup> White Thunder was an important man among the Cheyennes. He was the keeper of the sacred bundle of the medicine ar-

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<sup>7</sup> Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming (San Francisco: History Company Publishers, 1890), XXV, 352.

<sup>8</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 19







rows until he was killed in 1840. The Cheyennes often made visits to the valley of the Arkansas and finally three-fourths of the tribe moved to that region. From that time on there were two divisions of the Cheyennes, the North and South.<sup>11</sup> William Bent's opinions were always highly respected by most of the Indian tribes with whom he associated.

The family of William Bent consisted of five children. There is a difference of opinion as to whether Owl Woman's fourth child was Charles or Julia. Mr. H. L. Lubers of Denver, whose wife is the granddaughter of William Bent, stated in an article published in The Colorado Magazine for January, 1936, that the family relationships were as follows: Mary born January 22, 1838; Robert born in the year 1841; George born July, 1843; and the birth of Charles was not recorded. Owl Woman died shortly after the birth of Charles, then William married her sister, Yellow Woman. Julia Bent, the daughter of Yellow Woman, was born in 1847. Mary, Bob, George, and Charles all attended school in St. Louis. There they lived with their Aunt Carr and were under her direction.<sup>11</sup> Apparently Bent blood ran chiefly in Indian veins.

In 1867 William married a third time. This wife was Adalina Harvey, a half-breed. Her father was a member of the Missouri Fur Company and her mother was a Blackfoot Indian.

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<sup>11</sup> H. L. Lubers, "William Bent's Family and the Indians of the Plains," The Colorado Magazine, XIII (January, 1936). 19.



rows until he was killed in 1904. He was buried in the  
valley to the right of the river. The river was  
fourth of the tribe moved to the right. There were  
on there were two rivers of the tribe. The river  
South. It was the river of the tribe. The river  
ed by most of the tribe. The river was  
The family of the tribe. The river was  
There is a little river of the tribe. The river  
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whose wife is the daughter of the tribe. The river  
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that the family of the tribe. The river was  
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1905; and the river of the tribe was not reported. The river  
died shortly after the river of the tribe. The river  
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Woman, was born in 1907. The river was in the tribe. The river  
attended school in the tribe. The river was in the tribe. The river  
that the river was in the tribe. The river was in the tribe. The river  
blood ran chiefly in the tribe. The river was in the tribe. The river  
In 1907 the river was in the tribe. The river was in the tribe. The river  
Adeline Harvey, a girl of the tribe. The river was in the tribe. The river  
Missant the river was in the tribe. The river was in the tribe. The river



After this last marriage the Bents made their home at a ranch on the Purgatory.<sup>13</sup>

When William's children were small the family often spent their summers among the Indian camps, moving from place to place. Lewis Garrard, a traveler at the age of seventeen, joined a caravan of the Bents under the leadership of Ceran St. Vrain and visited Bent's Fort in 1846. While in this vicinity Garrard related his meeting with Owl Woman in an interesting account. He said:-<sup>14</sup>

At 12 o'clock next day (Nov. 10th) we came to three Indian lodges, where we found William Bent's squaw and her mother on their way to the fort. We were invited to the back part of the lodge, where dried, pounded cherries, mixed with buffalo marrow, and a root, eaten raw, and resembling in taste and appearance the Jerusalem artichoke, were set before us. After whiffing the long pipe with the clever inmates, we remounted.

After the death of Owl Woman, Yellow Woman, William's second wife, took the Bent children on a visit to the Kiowas in the summer of 1849. The Cheyennes were going to join a gathering of Indians who planned to hold a medicine lodge on Bluff Creek, south of the present Dodge City, Kansas. There were Kiowas, Comanches, Prairie Apaches, Cheyennes, Arapahoes, and a large number of Osages. The Kiowas and Osages had

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<sup>13</sup> Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days, I, 299.

<sup>14</sup> Walter S. Campbell, editor, Wah-To-Yah and The Taos Trail (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma: Harlow Publishing Company, 1927), p. 47.







but recently made peace. There is still in the possession of young George Bent's family a small iron kettle which his stepmother, Yellow Woman, got from the Osages on this occasion.<sup>15</sup>

William was away from his family much of the time, and although he had charge of the fort for twenty years and directed the Indian trade at all times, business forced him to make trips to Missouri and trading journeys to the Platte and Canadian river regions. It was his custom to set out with an outfit of pack mules to the Indian villages during the winter and exchange blankets, paints, trinkets, beads, cloth, sugar, and coffee for furs and robes.<sup>16</sup>

The travels of William Bent are told about in the files of the St. Louis Reveille.<sup>17</sup>

St. Louis Reveille, June 6, 1844. We feel pleasure in welcoming again to the city, William Bent, the well known and enterprising Spanish and Indian trader. He arrived

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<sup>15</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 20.

<sup>16</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 828.

<sup>17</sup> "Letters and Notes From or About Bent's Fort, 1844-1845," The Colorado Magazine, XI (November, 1934), 223. These Letters were copied from the St. Louis Reveille through the Newberry Library of Chicago as an inter-library loan.



but recently made known that he had been in the  
of young George Washington's house, and that he had  
atmosphere. Yell's house, of which he had been a  
also.

William was very kind in the family which he had  
although he had been in the house for many years  
needed the location of the house. He had been in  
make time to go to the house and see the house  
and the house was very good. He had been in the  
an effort to make the house as the house was  
water and the house was very good. He had been in  
sugar, and coffee for the house. He had been in  
The house was very good. He had been in the  
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St. Louis, Missouri, 1840. The house was very  
well known and the house was very good. He had been in  
and the house was very good. He had been in the

1840. The house was very good. He had been in the  
and the house was very good. He had been in the  
1840. The house was very good. He had been in the

1840. The house was very good. He had been in the  
and the house was very good. He had been in the  
1840. The house was very good. He had been in the



yesterday on board the John Aull, accompanied by Messrs. Simpson, Glasgow and other gentlemen, from Chihuahua and Santa Fe. A native child of the mountains called, in English 'slim face' of the Cheyenne tribe, comes with this party.

"The sum of \$28,000 in specie was brought in by this party. They left Chihuahua on the 10th of March, and Santa Fe on the 10th of April. They came by Bent's Fort, where all things were in proper order and condition. The company had in some instance, to pay an export duty on the specie which they have brought away, or from 4 and half to 6 per cent. Some came off without paying any duty. The large caravan from Santa Fe and from Bent's Fort, will be here in 12 or 15 days. There was no snow on the mountains, but the water courses were very high, owing to frequent rains."

St. Louis Reveille, June 22, 1844. "A party of Santa Fe traders arrived yesterday on the steamer Balloon. They report the main body to have reached no further than Walnut Creek, in consequence of the impassable condition of that stream, and, in fact, the whole country occasioned by the flood" The water in the Mo. was reported to be the highest since 1785.

St. Louis Reveille, May 11, 1845 "Mr. Bent, and a party of gentlemen from Fort William on the Arkansas River arrived here yesterday on the steamer Hibernian."

St. Louis Reveille, May 27, 1845 "Several traders from the headwaters of the Arkansas River arrived here on Sunday last May 25 with 160 packages of robes, furs and skins."

St. Louis Reveille, Sept, 16, 1845 "From Fort William. The Independence Expositor contains a letter from Fort William, on the Arkansas, dated July 27th. The writer says: The present company for Santa Fe have chosen this route in preference to that of the Cimaron, in consequence of the extreme dryness of the season, and supposed scarcity of water on the other route - it is also said that the whole Comanche nation are on the western route.

"The New Mexicans, we are told here, are still amicably disposed to our people. Whether there is really a declaration of war on the part of the Mexicans, these northern people are equally in the dark with ourselves. I do not anticipate any trouble with them in any event.

"The stopping at the Fort is a most delightful interlude in our journey. Nothing can exceed the kind and







hospitable treatment of the Messrs. Bent and St. Vrain, and the traders and clerks in their employ."

From the beginning the trading firm of Bent and Company established direct communication with the East and made annual trips by wagons to Independence Landing in Missouri. There they received supplies shipped by steamboat from St. Louis and in return they sent to St. Louis their robes and peltries. While freighting took place into New Mexico from 1821, it was really after the peace of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 that it became regular and valuable. William Bent began hauling annuity goods, supplies sent out yearly by the government to the Indians, in 1849, and from then on made two trips a year.<sup>18</sup>

Kit Carson told the following story of William Bent's daring during this time. The Pawnees had come to Fort Bent and stolen some horses. Bent, Kit Carson, and a Mexican started after them at ten o'clock next morning and rode eighty miles before dark. By evening it was snowing. That night they noticed a light in a log hut and the stolen horses picketed close by. Waiting till ten or eleven o'clock they approached near enough to see the Indians lying around the fire. They then crawled quietly in the direction of the animals and cut the lariats of the stolen horses. By throwing

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<sup>18</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 828.







sonw in the faces of the horses, they caused them to stampede. "Quickly mounting their own, they followed and drove the herd into the Fort next morning, having ridden over one hundred and fifty miles"<sup>19</sup> in less than two days.

William Bent and his friend, William Boggs, spent most of the winter of 1844 and 1845 in a Cheyenne village seventy or eighty miles below the fort at Big Timbers<sup>20</sup> trading for buffalo robes. The winter trade had been successful, the buffalo were plenty and fat. William and his wife, the full-blooded Cheyenne Yellow Woman and a "most excellent good woman" lived in a tepee that winter.<sup>21</sup> Her mother was also living in this village and had great influence among her tribe who were at war at that time with their old enemies, the Pawnees. The Cheyennes took eighty scalps that winter. And as a result many war dances and scalp dances were held. Boggs stayed in the tent where the company kept their goods. The old chief Cinemo had the largest tepee and gave the use of half of it to William Bent to store the goods he had brought and the buffalo robes he received. The Arapahoes

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<sup>19</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 836.

<sup>20</sup> Lewis H. Garrard, Ralph H. Bieher, editor, Wah-To-Yah and The Taos Trail (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1938), p. 51, footnote 1. The Big Timbers of the Arkansas was a grove of gigantic cottonwoods formerly extending from Big Sandy Creek up to Caddo Creek, a distance of thirty miles.

<sup>21</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 48.







were also invited to come for the winter to kill buffalo and dress the robes for the trade at the fort.<sup>22</sup>

The Indians engaged in buffalo hunting regularly, but it was not until the coming of the white man that the animals began to disappear, because the tribes always kept in mind conservation of the buffalo by their methods of hunting. Most of the Indians hunted buffalo in the following manner: they would send forty or fifty or maybe one hundred braves out on the plains mounted on their best hunting horses, out a large herd of buffalo from the main herd, and surround and kill all that they had enclosed. After the slaying they would ride back to the village, and the old men and squaws with a number of ponies would go out, skin, and pack in the robes. They would also bring in enough meat to last for several weeks. Their rules of hunting and killing buffalo were strictly observed and enforced. The buffalo were never hunted or killed in the spring, unless they killed a bull now and then. The bull's hide was not merchantable; they only dressed them for the men to wear. A single large bull robe, breech clout, and leggins and moccasins was a full dress for an Indian warrior. Cows were killed in the fall and winter when they were fat, and their hides were sleek and fine. The superior robes

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<sup>22</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 51.



were also invited to come to the village and see the

house the house for the first time.

The Indians engaged in some of the

it was not until the morning of the 10th that the

begin to disappear, because the Indians were in

conservation of the Indians in the village of

of the Indians hunted for the first time

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in the morning, which was the first time

of the Indians was not engaged in the first time

the man to see, which was the first time

loggia and necessary for the first time

have were killed in the first time

and their places were taken by the first time



were known as silk robes among the traders. These were fine haired and had a shine like satin, and sold for double the common robe. Usually the Indians would skip a space of two or three weeks before staging another buffalo hunt or surround.<sup>23</sup>

Angus Boggs, brother of William Boggs, was in charge of a farm owned by the Bents near the Missouri state line close to Westport, Missouri. The trading company had some cattle there and a few head of buffalo calves raised with the tame cattle. When the two Williams went to the States in the spring of 1845, Boggs went ahead and informed his brother that William Bent would be there the next day.<sup>24</sup> Here the William Bent family had a large house which the children often called the Bent "mansion," where they lived part of the time.<sup>25</sup> This was before Bent's third marriage to Adalina Harvey, for in his later years their home was on the Purgatory.

During the winter of 1844 and 45, when the two Williams were at the Cheyenne camp at Big Timbers, William Bent became ill, and Boggs told the following story about Bent's operation. William Bent had contracted a severe cold and sore throat which in those days was called putrid sore throat.

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<sup>23</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 66.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>25</sup> Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days, I, 299.



There was a small room at the rear of the building which had been used as a storeroom for the various tools and equipment used in the construction of the dam. This room was also used for the storage of the various tools and equipment used in the construction of the dam.

Large blocks of stone were used in the construction of the dam. These blocks were quarried from the surrounding area and were transported to the construction site by means of a system of rollers and pulleys. The blocks were then laid in place and were held together by a system of mortar and concrete. The construction of the dam was completed in the year 1900.

During the construction of the dam, the various tools and equipment used in the construction of the dam were stored in the small room at the rear of the building. This room was also used for the storage of the various tools and equipment used in the construction of the dam.

Large blocks of stone were used in the construction of the dam. These blocks were quarried from the surrounding area and were transported to the construction site by means of a system of rollers and pulleys. The blocks were then laid in place and were held together by a system of mortar and concrete. The construction of the dam was completed in the year 1900.



Finally William became so ill he was unable to swallow food, and could only talk in a whisper. Before his throat closed, his wife fed him broth by taking a mouthful and squirting it through a quill which she had forced down his throat. Boggs called on him and William wrote on a piece of slate that if he did not get relief in a very short time he would die, and that he had sent for an Indian doctor called "Lawyer."

The Indian doctor came during the visit and proceeded to examine Bent's throat by pressing the handle of a large spoon on his tongue. He looked at William's throat, shook his head, and went out of the lodge. Soon the Indian doctor returned with a handfull of small sandburrs about the size of large marrowfat peas.<sup>26</sup> These had barbs all round as sharp as fish hooks and all turned one way. Then the doctor called for a piece of sinew and a lump of marrow grease. He made five or six threads of sinew and tied a knot in one end of each; took an awl and pierced a hole through each burr and ran the sinew down to the knot, then rubbed the burr in the marrow grease until it was completely covered over the barbs of the burr. Then he took a small flat stick about like a "China chop-stick," cut a notch in one end of the stick, and wrapped the sinew around his finger. He placed the burr in the notch on the stick and inserted the burr down Bent's throat and with-

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<sup>26</sup> These peas are a tall growing, late variety, with large, rich flavored seeds.







drew it by pulling on the sinew. This operation was repeated three or four times, drawing out all the dry and corrupt matter each time. Thus, the throat passage was opened. In a day or two Bent was well enough to eat solid food. He afterward told Boggs that this operation saved his life.<sup>27</sup>

As there was not always a surgeon at the fort, William usually did his own doctoring. He had a large medicine chest which he refilled on his Eastern trips. This was done by Scott & Boggs of Westport, Missouri. The Doctor Boggs of the drug company of Scott and Boggs was a distant relative of William Boggs. There were a number of medical books at the fort and these with practical experience made William Bent reasonably skillful.<sup>28</sup>

How William Bent came to be called Colonel seems to be confused. The title was said by some to be an honorary one conferred as a reward for guiding Price's Missouri Regiment across the plains in the wake of Kearny's Army in 1846. But he really won the title by leading Kearny's Advance upon Santa Fe, as shown in Lieutenant Emory's Journal of March.<sup>29</sup> This journal is a day by day account of the Kearny expedition written by

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<sup>27</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "Boggs Ms.," The Colorado Magazine, VII (March, 1930), 68.

<sup>28</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 39.

<sup>29</sup> W. H. Emory, Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri to San Diego, in California. p.18.



grow if by building the dam...  
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between each time...  
day or two...  
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Lieutenant Emory of the Topographical Engineers under the direction of Colonel J. J. Abert, Chief of the Corps, which was a part of the Army of the West.

George Fredrick Ruxton, an Englishman who came to the United States because he was tired of army service, explored the continent of North America from Canada to Mexico and from the Mississippi to the Pacific. He Associated with Kit Carson, the Bents, St. Vrain, and Fitzpatrick- all Western adventurers. Ruxton died in St. Louis in October, 1848, at the age of twenty-eight from injuries received in the Rockies when he was thrown from a mule.<sup>30</sup> On his return from California in 1847, he stopped at Bent's Fort. His party left the mission of San Fernando, California, in 1846, and planned to strike the Spanish Trail. They had a large number of horses and mules which they intended to trade at Fort Bent. Here there was always a ready sale for caballada,<sup>31</sup> because they were much in demand on the frontier. On this trip they met Bill Williams, an old trader, whom they had formerly believed to be dead. Bill was going to the fort, too, to sell his pelts and enjoy a good carousal on Tacos whiskey and then return in the spring to follow his solitary life.<sup>32</sup> Ruxton and

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<sup>30</sup> Horace Kephart, editor, In the Old West, p. 21.

<sup>31</sup> Caballada is a Spanish term for a herd of horses and mules, and some times called cavy or cavayard.

<sup>32</sup> George F. Ruxton, Life in the Far West (2nd edition; London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1851), p. 228.



different kind of...  
...of Colonel...  
...was a part of the...  
...George...  
...United States...  
...the continent of...  
...from the...  
...Gordon, the...  
...adventures...  
...eye of...  
...when he was...  
...found in 1867...  
...the mission of...  
...and to...  
...houses and...  
...have there...  
...they were...  
...and Bill...  
...lived to be...  
...his...  
...remain in the...

30 George...  
31...  
and...  
32 George...  
London: William...



Williams built a camp at Fontaine-qui-bouille about sixty miles above Bent's Old Fort. After breaking camp in the spring they proceeded to the fort and disposed of their herd of horses and mules, which had dwindled to about half its original number because of the long trip and hard winter. Ruxton enjoyed the hospitality of the post, but did not find the Bents at home.

Colonel Bent made many friends among the traders of the early days through his associations at the fort. He also numbered among his friends in later years many young men who came as settlers into south-eastern Colorado. Among these was a young man named John Prowers, who was born near Westport, Missouri, in Jackson County, January 29, 1838.<sup>33</sup> At the age of eighteen John Prowers crossed the plains to Bent's New Fort with Robert Miller, the Indian agent for the upper Arkansas. Large stores of annuity goods were brought out for the tribes, and Prowers was employed as clerk. The distribution of these goods took place at New Fort Bent. It took two months to pass the goods out. Mr. Prowers at this time entered the service of Colonel Bent, who was Indian trader at the post. For seven years he worked for Bent. During this time he made ten trips across the plains, in charge of the wagon trains bringing

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<sup>33</sup> Personal interview with John Prowers' daughter, Mrs. Mary Prowers Hudnall of Las Animas, Colorado, December 19, 1938.







supplies from the Missouri River to this trading post. Later Prowers had charge of a store at Old Fort Lyon, Colorado. From 1865 to 1871 he was engaged in freighting government supplies from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Union, New Mexico. Then he entered the cattle business, starting with two hundred thirty-four dollars and one black steer. Nineteen years later his herd consisted of ten thousand head. Prowers enclosed eighty thousand acres, introduced Hereford stock, and became the first cattle man in southeastern Colorado.

In 1861 Mr. Prowers married Amy, daughter of Chief Ochinee of the Cheyenne tribe. Their oldest daughter, Mrs. Mary Prowers Hudnall, is now living in Las Animas, Colorado. She said that as a child she had a faint recollection of William Bent. She remembers that he had several wives and thought that they were all Indians but one, and she was French. Her acquaintance also included Tom Boggs and Kit Carson. She said at that time there was plenty of wild game and wild fruit in the country, but the caravans from Kansas City usually brought dried fruits, canned goods, and dry-goods. It was a custom to dress in "cowboy pants" if the early settlers could get them. Their chief amusement was gambling.<sup>34</sup>

Recognition of William Bent's influence among the

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<sup>34</sup> Personal interview, Mrs. Mary Prowers Hudnall of Las Animas, Colorado, December 13, 1938.







Indians was shown by his appointment in 1859 as Indian agent of the Cheyennes, Comanches, and Kiowas. He resigned after one year to enter the more profitable business of freighting. In Bent's report as Indian agent<sup>35</sup> he remarked that the Kiowas and Comanches were being driven out of Texas and for two years had appeared in large numbers and for long periods on the Arkansas. They were permanently occupying the country between the Canadian and the Arkansas rivers with twenty-five hundred warriors. As soon as the troops were withdrawn from Fort Riley, Kansas, they assumed a threatening attitude; consequently, he thought it necessary to have two permanent military posts, one at the mouth of the Pawnee Fork and one at Big Timbers, both on the Arkansas. This would give protection to the travelers using that route after the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858-59. This arrangement would also furnish protection to the Indians who were being gradually surrounded on all sides. If they were assigned reservations, they could learn to support themselves by agriculture and stock-raising.<sup>36</sup>

At various other times William Bent was asked by the government to act as mediator with the Indians, since he

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<sup>35</sup> Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming, XXV, 574.

<sup>36</sup> Loc. cit.



...known as ...  
...of the ...  
...one year to ...  
...In ...  
...and ...  
...years had ...  
...the ...  
...known ...  
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...lay ...  
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...British ...  
...surrounded ...  
...they could ...  
...stock ...

...at various ...  
...government ...  
...35 ...  
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could speak several Indian languages fluently. The Civil War was the beginning of serious Indian trouble. These Red skins could not understand the struggle between the North and the South. Their idea was that if "the tribes of the north and south" destroyed each other, the plains would belong to them. As a result the Indians were restless and staged attacks and massacres. There had been a reign of terror and Governor Evans of Colorado was greatly alarmed. In September, 1864, an attempt was made at a peace conference. Five chieftains went to Denver: Black Kettle; his brother, White Antelope; Bull Bear, a Cheyenne; Neva and Bosse, Arapahoes. They blamed the outrages on the younger men. Governor Evans and Colonel Chivington, of the United States Army stationed at Denver, warned them. But in the fall Indian activities were resumed.<sup>37</sup>

After the council in Denver, Black Kettle and his four companions returned to the Smoky Hill rendezvous in southeastern Colorado. The Arapahoes, to which band Neva and Bosse belonged, went to Fort Lyon in October and surrendered much of the plunder which they had taken previously. The Commander kept them at the fort a few days and then advised the warriors to go to an encampment near Sand Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas. The Arapahoes proceeded to a point forty miles

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<sup>37</sup> Wilbur F. Stone, editor, History of Colorado, I, 87-92.







west of the Fort, where they were joined by Black Kettle and his Cheyennes. The whole band formed a village of eight hundred men. The real purpose of the Indians was not certain. Maybe they thought themselves under the protection of Fort Lyon, or perhaps they were just taking a breathing spell before going on the war path.

After the council at Denver Colonel Chivington began preparations to punish the Indians before winter. As General Curtis, at Fort Leavenworth, advocated harsh punishment, Chivington felt secure in whatever he might do. Soon plans were developed to attack the Cheyennes and Arapahoes at Sand Creek. To carry out this plan, the third Colorado cavalry, several units of the first cavalry, two field pieces of light artillery, and wagons with provisions were gathered, and the soldiers advanced on this mission. They first went to Fort Lyon, arriving November 28, 1864, and after a few hours rest they departed with an addition of one hundred twenty five men and two cannon. Chivington had kept his intentions secret till he reached Fort Lyon. There he gave definite orders - "no quarter!" They came upon the Indians at sunrise the next morning. The hour of the attack was early and many of the Indians had not come from their lodges. The artillery and musketry fire met them as they ran wildly about, trying to organize for defense. Their horses were stampeded by some of the soldiers. Many of the Indians, thinking they had been







mistaken for a war party, ran toward the troops with their hands raised as a token of peace. They were shot down without consideration. A hundred warriors fought desperately but the odds were against them. The women and children crowded together for safety and they, too, were killed. Neither were the wounded spared. White men scalped and mutilated bodies, as though they were savages. Black Kettle and two hundred followers escaped about noon. By two o'clock in the afternoon the soldiers stopped fighting, since there were no more Indians to kill.<sup>38</sup>

The raid was praised in Denver and Chivington was regarded as a hero. There was so much talk about the massacre that Congress launched an investigation into the affair. William Bent was on the Congressional Commission which met in October, 1865. The Commission decided to repudiate the action of the Colorado Cavalry and restore the property captured or its equivalent. Each chief was to hold in his own right three hundred twenty acres of land, and the widows and orphans of this massacre were to receive one hundred sixty acres of land, besides allowing them all the money and annuities forfeited by going to war. The amount appropriated was \$39,050. A treaty was made with the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanches whereby the President would select a reservation where they

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<sup>38</sup> Wilbur Fisk Stone, editor, History of Colorado, I, 93-106.



mistaken for a new arrival, and the  
hands united as a body of men  
out consideration. A number of  
the other were seated at the  
together for a few minutes, and  
the women seated. It was  
as though they were waiting  
followers, except for a few  
near the entrance to the hall.  
Indiana 22, 1885.

The wife of the man who  
caused as a hero. The man who  
that Congress had passed a law  
line had on the 15th of  
October, 1885. The Congress  
of the colored people, and  
the organization. The  
hundred twenty years of  
this nation was in the  
besides allowing the  
by going to war. The  
was made with the  
where the President



would not be in contact with the whites. Later the Indians were removed to the Indian Territory.<sup>39</sup>

Colonel Van Horn of the Kansas City Journal of Commerce was a close friend of William Bent. This friendship was shown in an account of Mary Bent's wedding in April, 1860, published in the Kansas City Journal of Commerce.<sup>40</sup>

It was such a wedding as could only be given on the western frontier of Missouri, and at the mansion of Colonel Bent. . . .

For the first time in years, the host was surrounded by a party of his old companions and sharers of the toils and dangers of mountain life, and, to bring back the reminiscences of early years, they met in solemn Indian council, and, passing around the pipe of friendship, renewed once more the common perils, and cemented again the bonds of long life friendships.

Mary Bent married R. M. Moore. He was a descendant of Sir John Moore of Glasgow, Scotland. New Haven, Ohio, was his birth place. At the age of fourteen he was a clerk in a country store at Fredericktown, Ohio. In 1853 he went to Cleveland and graduated from the Cleveland Commercial College. Two years later Moore entered the employment of the Great Western Indian Company at Niagara Falls. Tiring of life as a clerk, he went to Hastings, Minnesota, and in three years acquired a small fortune for that day and age by land spec-

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<sup>39</sup> Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming, XXV, 468.

<sup>40</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 875.



would not be in error in this regard. The  
were reserved for the use of the  
Colonel Van Horn, the father of the

General was a distinguished soldier and  
ship was shown in the history of the  
1850, published in the history of the

It was such a long time ago that  
General Van Horn, the father of the  
Colonel Van Horn, the father of the  
For the first time in the history of  
by a party of soldiers and officers  
and a number of soldiers and officers  
remained in the city for a long time  
and, and, and, and, and, and, and,  
remained in the city for a long time  
The bones of the father of the

Many bones were found in the

Sir John Moore of the

birth place. At the age of

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Grove and was given

Two years later, after

Western Union Company

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the history of the

and the history of the

to Charles



ulation. Mr. Moore planned to visit Oregon in 1858, but circumstances prevented this trip. Instead he spent the next two years in business in Kansas City.<sup>41</sup> After their marriage Mrs. Moore lived part of the time with her father near Fort Lyon, Colorado. During the Civil War the Bent home in Jackson County, Missouri, was raided, and they lost their horses, mules, and jewelry. In August, 1862, Mr. Moore and his family, which consisted of his wife and two children, the youngest only three weeks old, made the trip to Fort Lyon in an ambulance and remained there until the end of the war.<sup>42</sup> The Moores returned to their home near Kansas City, but after the end of the Civil War came again to the plains, where Mr. Moore directed improvements at the ranch on the Purgatory River while William Bent was away trading.

Trade had declined in the fifties, for the days of profit in the fur and Indian trade had passed. William wished to sell his new fort to the Government for a military post. The representatives of the Federal Government offered him \$12,000, but his price was \$16,000.<sup>43</sup> Colonel Bent felt that since he had always been liberal in his dealings with the government, they should meet his price. He had permitted the War Department to use the fort for storage, headquarters, and,

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<sup>41</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 875.

<sup>42</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Bowman, op. cit., p. 830.







during war times, as a supply depot. Even the sick and wounded soldiers were cared for here. Because of his disappointment in failing to receive his price, William destroyed the fort in 1852.

The family was camped at this time at the mouth of Horse Creek, which is only a few miles from the fort. They continued to live there until the spring of 1853 and then Bent commenced a new fort forty miles down the river and finished it in 1854. Trading with the Indians was carried on as before. This new fort was successfully leased to the United States Government in 1859.<sup>44</sup>

Since trade was not so profitable as formerly, William Bent hauled the yearly Indian supplies for the United States Government after 1852. This freighting was lucrative, and Bent said one trip for the government cleared enough to purchase Indian goods for a whole year's trade.<sup>45</sup>

After the Sand Creek massacre of 1864 life in the West changed. The Redskins were sent to Indian Territory and William in his last days was separated from his companions of forty years. But he was not without friends, however. Kit Carson moved back to Colorado in 1868.<sup>46</sup> Mary and her husband

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<sup>44</sup> News item in The Fort Lyon [Colorado] News, February 24, 1922.

<sup>45</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 59.

<sup>46</sup> Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days, II, 792.



...in 1933.

The last...

...in his last...

24, 1933.  
George Washington...  
27, p. 28.  
28



were living on a ranch near-by. Although the Old Trader was up in years he still led an active life, but while enroute from New Mexico to the States he became ill and stopped at his son-in-law's house. Here he grew worse, pneumonia developed, and, in spite of skilled medical attention from Fort Lyon, after an illness of seven or eight days he died, May 18, 1869.<sup>47</sup> William Bent was buried near-by, and to-day his grave may be seen on a ranch six miles north-east of La Junta, Colorado, not far from the marker of "Bent's Old Fort" erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1910.<sup>48</sup>

The children of William Bent were a part of the life characteristic of the West. They loved freedom, adventure, and outdoor life. Charles, leader of a band of Indian outlaws, died among the Indians on the Kansas border in 1868. Mary, or Mrs. Moore, died May 6, 1878, at her home in Colorado. Robert married a Cheyenne girl and died in Indian Territory in April, 1889. George died among the Cheyennes May 19, 1919. Julia married Edmund Guerrier and was living among the Cheyennes in 1923.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Harry A. Marmer, "William Bent," Dictionary of American Biography, II, 206.

<sup>48</sup> Glen D. Bradley, "Famous Landmarks Along the Trail," Santa Fe Employes' Magazine, VI (September, 1912), 29.

<sup>49</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 20.



were living on ...  
up in ...  
from New Mexico ...  
his son-in-law ...  
opened, and ...  
from, after an ...  
1893 ...  
may be seen on ...  
into, and the ...  
the ...  
The ...  
characteristic of ...  
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face, also among ...  
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kitchen in ...  
is, 1919 ...  
the ...

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from ...  
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George B. ...  
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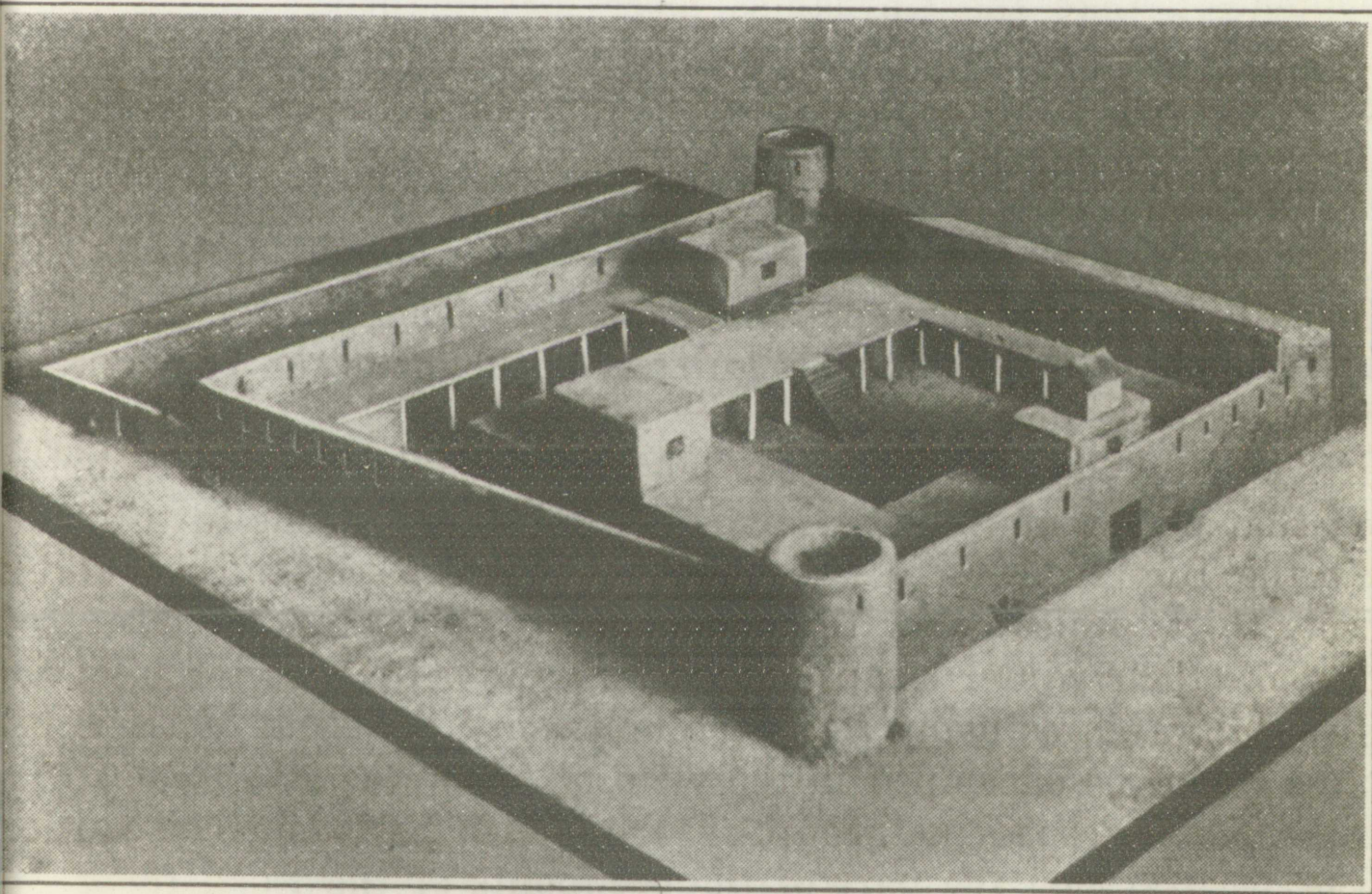


After the death of William, one of the last survivors of the old Indian trapping days was gone. The era of the stage was coming, and before long the whistle of the railroad would bring civilization.



After the heavy rain of the night of the 1st of  
one of the old Indian legends, the story of  
the stage was coming, and the old Indian of  
railroad would bring the story.

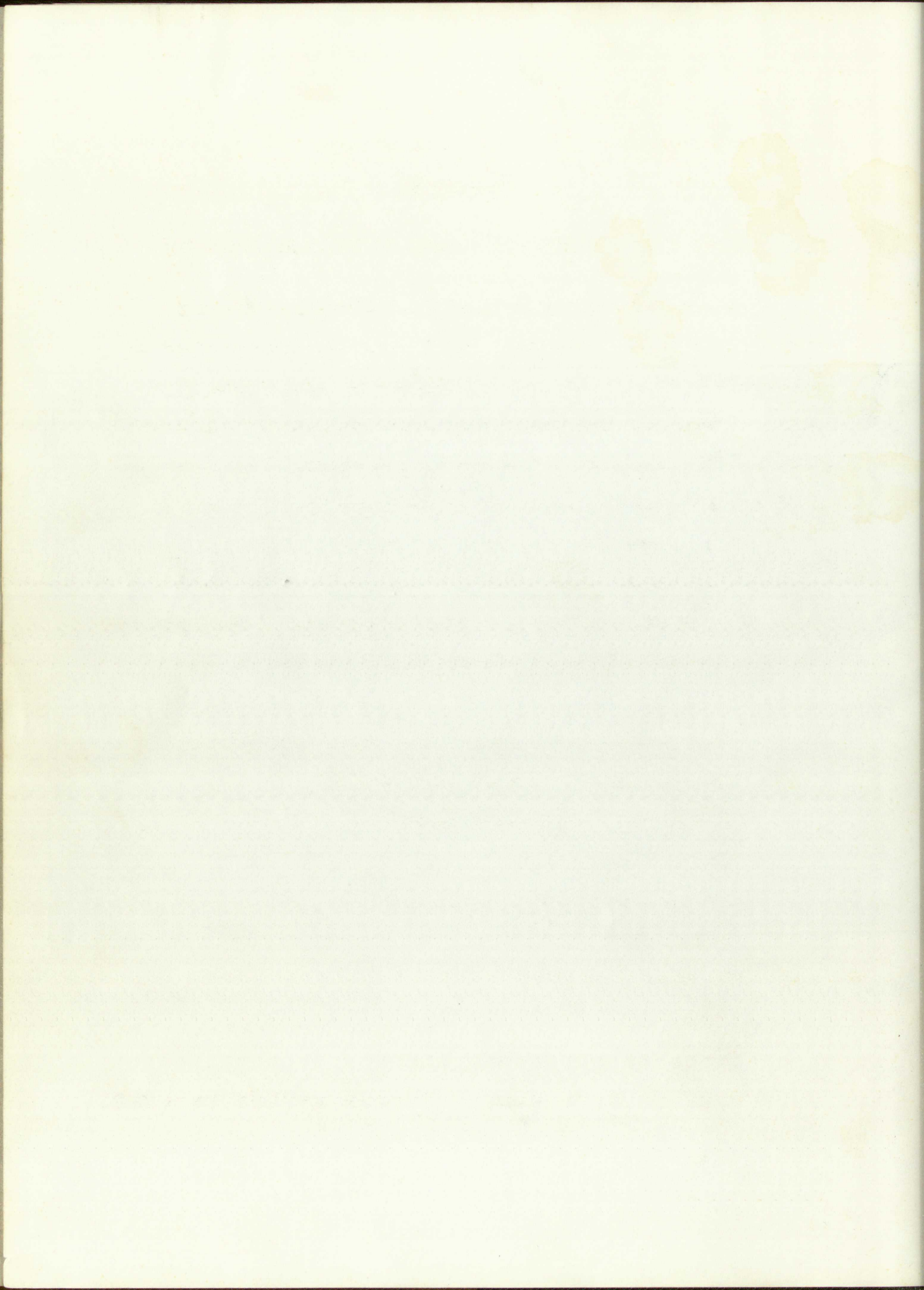




**A REPLICA OF BENT'S FORT**

Owned by the State Historical Society and on exhibition among its collections  
in the State Museum, Denver)







## CHAPTER VI

### FORT BENT - THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE BENT BROTHERS

Since Charles and William Bent displayed bravery, honesty, fairness, courtesy, and tolerance, they exerted an important influence in the development of trade from Missouri to Mexico. But their real contribution was the erection of Fort Bent, which served as a landmark from 1828 to 1852 and bridged the gap from exploration to settlement.

The reason for this fort was trade. After fur trapping was no longer profitable and the price of beaver had dropped, commerce took on a different aspect. A conversation in Ruxton's book, Life in the Far West illustrates this point.

"Whar's them mules from? They look like Californy."

"Mexican country - away down south."

"H - ! Whar's yourself from?"

"There a way, too."

"What's beaver worth in Taos?"

"Dollar."

"In Saint Louiy?"

"Same."

"H - ! Any call for buckskin?"

"A Heap! The soldiers in Santa Fe are half froze for leather; and moccasins fetch \$ easy."



THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

Since Charles and William were the first to  
honesty, fairness, and integrity, and  
important influence in the development of the  
country to Mexico. But their work was not  
that of Fort Bent, which was a  
1858 and bridged the gap between the  
The reason for this was that  
there was no longer a frontier and the  
dropped, commerce took on a new  
in Huxton's book, Life in the West,  
point.

"But I don't think that  
"Mexican country - the  
"H - I don't think  
"There's a way, too.  
"What's better than  
"Police."  
"In the West  
"There's  
"H - I don't think  
"A Henry, the  
"There's a way, too."



"Wagh! How's trade on Arkansas, and what's doin' to the Fort."

"Shians at Big Timber, and Bent's poeple trading smart."

...

"How's powder goin'?"

"Two dollars a pint."

"Baca?"

"A plew a plug." <sup>1</sup>

Trade in buffalo hides grew as the price of beaver skins declined and wagons pulled by mules and oxen were carrying merchandise on the Santa Fe Trail as early as 1822. As business of the trappers and traders increased roads were necessary for transportation. The Santa Fe route was first called Benton's Road, because Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri sponsored it. After his election to the United States Congress in 1821 he personally went West to get first hand information about the road. He interviewed many traders and had reports made about the "origin, present state, and future prospects of trade and intercourse between Missouri and the Internal Provinces of Mexico."<sup>2</sup> Benton then returned to Washington to propose a bill for a road from Fort Osage, Missouri, to the Arkansas River, which touched the southern boundary of the United States and the northern part of the region of the

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<sup>1</sup> George F. Ruxton, Life in the Far West p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> R. L. Duffus, Santa Fe Trail, p. 85.







*Smith*

Republic of Mexico. This bill passed both houses of Congress and became a law in 1824,<sup>3</sup> but the road was to extend only to the Arkansas in United States territory. Thirty thousand dollars was appropriated, ten thousand dollars to mark the trail and twenty thousand dollars to buy the right of way from the Indians. John Quincy Adams appointed a committee to supervise the work. This committee was composed of Benjamin Reeves of Missouri, George C. Sibley, a fur trader, and Thomas Mather.<sup>4</sup> Pierre Menard, a fur trader of Illinois, was first appointed but as he could not serve, Mather took his place.<sup>5</sup> Joseph C. Brown was the surveyor.<sup>6</sup> They left Franklin, Missouri, July 4, 1825. A week later the survey line was run at Fort Osage, and two months later they reached the Arkansas and had to wait for permission from Mexico to work on the other side of the river. It was 1826 before the survey was carried into Taos. The trail was never exact. The Federal Government seemed to encourage Western trade, but Surveyor Brown's labors had few results. No road was made across the

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<sup>3</sup> U. S. Govt., Annals of the Congress of the United States, 18th. Congress, First Session (Washington: Printed and Published by Gales and Seaton, 1856), pp. 571 and 1470.

<sup>4</sup> Hiram M. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, II, 509.

<sup>5</sup> R. L. Duffus, Santa Fe Trail, p. 89.

<sup>6</sup> Loc. cit.



Republic of Mexico. This...  
and became a law in 1881...  
the Arkansas in United States...  
dollars was authorized...  
trail and twenty thousand...  
the Indians. John...  
prevail the work. The...  
Beaver of Missouri, George...  
Mother, Pierre...  
agitated but he...  
Joseph B. Brown...  
agent, July 4, 1888. A...  
Fort Gage, and two...  
and had to wait...  
other side of the river...  
navigable into town. The...  
Government seemed to...  
Brown's labor had...

U. S. Govt., Bureau of Land...  
General Land...  
and...  
William A. Carter...  
for work...  
A. A. Carter...  
C. A. Carter...



plains and the mounds which marked the line were soon destroyed or blown away. There were many branches and short cuts to the route. One was the mountain road which went up the Arkansas River to Bent's Fort located on the north bank of the river below the present site of La Junta, Colorado, and fourteen miles above the "Picketwire."<sup>7</sup>

Dr. Josiah Gregg who went West for his health and, after regaining it, was engaged in the caravan trade for nine years, wrote an account of the towns which were the starting places of the Santa Fe Trail.

The town of Franklin on the Missouri river ... seems truly to have been the cradle of our trade. Franklin, the first town of importance in western Missouri was in the part known as Boone's Lick, now washed into the river and on the opposite shore is Boonville. Franklin was two hundred and fifty miles by river above the mouth of the Missouri and one hundred and eighty-seven below the mouth of the Kansas. In 1827 Independence began to be the outfitting point. In the next six years the Missouri river destroyed the steam boat landing and boats had to go up farther to a more convenient and permanent bank. Here arose Westport, and by 1831 Franklin lost its hold.<sup>8</sup>

*Begin* - Thus Independence, Missouri, was called the beginning of the Santa Fe trail. The route went either from Independence by way of Bent's Fort and the Raton mountains or farther south by way of the Cimarron and Wagon Mound and the Old Pecos Mission into Santa Fe. Another road was by pack

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<sup>7</sup> "Picketwire" is a localism used in south eastern Colorado. The river was first called El Rio de las Animas Perdidas en Purgatoire (the river of the Lost Souls in Purgatory). Then, the name was shortened to Purgatory, and because it was difficult to pronounce, changed to Picketwire.

<sup>8</sup> Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies (reprint; Dallas, Texas: Southwest Press, 1933), p. 12.



Again and the house was built on the same site.

It was built on the same site as the old house.

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trail from Bent's Fort through and over the mountains by the Sangre de Cristo pass and the Spanish Peaks to Taos. After the discovery of gold in California in 1849, the southern route was crowded with travelers and supplies were sold along the route at trading stations.

The goods taken to Santa Fe were dry goods, silk, hardwares, calicoes, velvets, drillings, shirting. Domestic cotton was half the cargo. From New Mexico were taken Mexican horses and mules, furs from Colorado. The most important item in the return cargo was specie, both gold, and silver. From 1822 to 1843 inclusive the average of trade was \$130,000 a year, or over \$3,000,000 for the whole period. Often one hundred per cent profit was made upon the first cost, but when the expenses and losses were deducted the net profit rarely exceeded forty per cent.<sup>9</sup>

Later this freighting route was used as a military road. The army posts caused freighting to flourish, for the government paid well for supplies furnished it. With the coming of the railroad in the seventies, civilization overcame pioneer conditions and the Old West was no longer a thing apart from the States.

On a now unmarked spot of this trail, stood Bent's

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<sup>9</sup> Hiram M. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, II, 518-20.







Fort, a fort which made much of the history of the West from 1832 to 1852. The Arkansas valley was the doorway to the West. The prairies were restless with herds of buffalo and roving bands of Arapahoes and Cheyennes. As a part of the expansion of the United States, fur companies built trading posts, and later individual groups built forts. Such an organization was Fort Bent. It had three locations. The first two structures were temporary. These early posts or stockades were known as picket forts, because the rude buildings were surrounded by a fence of pointed stakes or pickets for protection against the weather or the Indians. In 1826 the first picket fort was built above Pueblo, Colorado, on the north bank of the Arkansas River near the mouth of Fountain Creek, "as a place of defense and headquarters preparatory to opening trade with the Indians."<sup>10</sup> Either business increased or the post was too far up the river from the Indian hunting regions, as the Bents moved down the river and built a second stockade near the mouth of the Purgatory, which at that time had a different course from the present channel. It could be possible that this second post was used only during the construction of "Bent's Old Fort." Then, in 1828 Bent, St. Vrain and

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<sup>10</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 327.



For a further description of the site, see the report of the

1938 to 1940. The site was first discovered in 1938.

West. The site was first discovered in 1938.

Having been of the same type as the other sites, it was

excavated at the same time as the other sites.

and the results of the excavation are given in the report.

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the site was found to be of the same type as the other sites.



Company started erection of a third fort farther down the river about halfway between the present towns of La Junta and Las Animas, Colorado.

Porcupine Bull, the old Cheyenne Indian, gave a reasonable explanation for the changing of locations of Fort Bent. He said that the Bents and the Cheyennes first met at the mouth of the Purgatoire, soon after the Indians began to move south of the Platte about 1828. The Bents were encamped at the mouth of the Picketwire at their stockade and a party of Cheyennes who had been south catching wild horses were returning north to their camp and came to this post. The leaders of the Indian party were Yellow Wolf, Little Wolf, and Wolf Chief, and at this meeting Yellow Wolf made friends with the Bents and gave them Indian names. The question of trade was discussed, and Yellow Wolf told them their fort was too far from the buffalo range for the Indians to frequent it and suggested they build a post nearer and agreed that if they would he would bring his bands there to trade. Charles Bent at once accepted the chief's proposal and Porcupine Bull said "that this was how Bent's Fort came to be built."<sup>11</sup>

Colonel J. T. Hughes, historian of Doniphan's expedition, gave the exact location of the third post - "Fort Bent

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<sup>11</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> William H. Stoddard, Doniphan's Expedition, p. 128.







is situated on the north bank of the Arkansas, 640 miles west of Fort Leavenworth, in latitude  $38^{\circ} 2'$  north, and longitude  $103^{\circ} 3'$  west from Greenwich.<sup>12</sup>

Four years seemed a long time for building such a post, but there were reasons for the delay. The main one was Charles' determination that the fort should be built of adobes instead of common logs. He knew the adobes were fire-proof, more durable, and, also, cooler in summer and warmer in winter. Charles sent a number of Mexican workmen to the Arkansas from Taos or Santa Fe to make and lay adobe, and they brought some wagon loads of Mexican wool to mix with the clay in order to lengthen the life of the adobe. Another cause for delay was that shortly after the arrival of the workmen small-pox broke out and the work was stopped for a time. Many died and after the others recovered all infected material was burned. More Mexican bricklayers were sent and the work went forward. Kit Carson said that at one time one hundred fifty Mexicans were busy on the walls and a number of Americans were engaged in the more skilled labor.<sup>13</sup>

There are many and varied descriptions of "Bent's Old Fort" or Fort William, as it was sometimes called. Although the accounts of the dimensions differ on certain points, all the descriptions agree that the fort was made of gray adobe

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<sup>12</sup> William E. Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition, p. 178.

<sup>13</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 6.



is situated on the north bank of the river, and is  
of the same height, in fact it is the same  
1892, and from the same place.  
Four years passed a long time for the  
post, but there were persons for the day. The same one  
was Charles, a white man, but the first time he had a  
black instead of a white man. He had the same position  
stock, more doubled, and, after a while in the same position in  
winter. Charles had a number of horses, and was  
African from the time of the first war, and was  
brought some negro loads of horses, and he was  
in order to keep the line of the river. Another man  
died, and that about the time the river of the river was  
fox broke out and the work was stopped for a time. The river  
and about the same time the river was stopped for a time.  
broke. More horses were brought, and the river was  
forward. The river was stopped for a time, and the river  
Horses were only on the river and a number of horses  
engaged in the same place.

There are many other things, but the river is  
Port, on the river, as it is a small river. The  
the river of the river, and the river is stopped for a time.  
the river is stopped for a time, and the river is stopped for a time.



set square with points of the compass, and on the north bank of the Arkansas river. Hughes, of Doniphan's expedition, said: "The exterior walls whose figure is that of an oblong square are fifteen feet high and four feet thick. It is one hundred and eighty feet long and one hundred and thirty five feet wide and divided into various compartments."<sup>14</sup>

Ruxton, an early traveler in the West and a visitor at Fort Bent, gave the same description of the post and added that the two corners were circular towers of adobe. These bastions were thirty feet high and ten feet in diameter. They were provided with loopholes for musketry and cannon. The entrance was by a large gateway into the square. The gateway was in the middle of the east wall fitted with two great heavy plank doors plated with sheet iron and studded with nails so they could not be burned.<sup>15</sup>

Over the gateway was a square watchtower capped with a belfry and a flagstaff. The watchtower had only one room with windows all around. It was furnished with a chair and bed. Here mounted on a pivot was an old fashioned long telescope or spyglass. In this room a constant guard was kept. If anything unusual appeared, such as a cloud of dust rising

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<sup>14</sup> William E. Connelley, Doniphan's Expedition, p. 178.

<sup>15</sup> George F. Ruxton, Life in the Far West, p. 229.







over the prairies or a suspicious party of Indians were seen approaching, the watchman signalled the herder by a looking glass to bring in the horses to the corral, which was always guarded.

In the belfry under a little roof which arose above the watchtower hung the bell which sounded the hours for meals. At the back and west side of the fort was a gate that opened into the corral. Over this was a second-story room which rose high above the walls as the watchtower did in front.

Within the fort were rows of low rooms backed against the outer wall and having doors which entered into the central court. These rooms were used for warehouses, living room, kitchen, and quarters for post attachés. They received light and air through doors and windows opening into the courtyard. The court was bare and level, the ground was covered with gravel to keep it from being muddy when it rained. The floors of the rooms were of beaten earth as was commonly found in the houses in New Mexico and the roofs were made in the same fashion.<sup>16</sup>

There was an adobe wall around the place, six feet thick at the base and seventeen to eighteen feet high. On the west side, outside the main walls, was a horse corral, and the walls of this were of adobe eight feet high and three feet thick at

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<sup>16</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 12.







the top. A gate was in the south wall facing the river and similar to the main gate. To prevent anyone scaling the wall at night, the top was thickly planted with cacti of a large variety closely set with many sharp thorns.

Through the main west wall was a large door leading into the corral by which men could get the horses without going outside, and if the corral were in danger the horses could be run into the fort courtyard.<sup>17</sup>

About two hundred yards south-west of the building and near the river bank on a little mound was an ice house made of adobes. In winter when the river was frozen the house was filled with ice and in summer the surplus fresh meat was kept there.<sup>18</sup>

When Susan Shelby Magoffin stopped at the trading post she wrote a description of the fort in her diary.

Monday, July 27, 1846 - It exactly fills my idea of an ancient castle, built of adobes, unburnt brick and Mexican style. Walls are very high and very thick with rounding corners. One entrance rather to the east. Inside is a large space ninety or one hundred feet square and all around this and next the wall are rooms, twenty five in number. The dirt floors are sprinkled with water several times a day to prevent dust.<sup>19</sup>

Dr. F. A. Wislizenus of St. Louis, a German, made a

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<sup>17</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 12.

<sup>18</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup> Stella M. Drum, Down the Santa Fe Trail (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 60.







journey to the Columbia River in 1839 and on his return stopped at a fort which he called "Penn's and Savory's." <sup>20</sup>

His report was published in a little volume printed in German. <sup>21</sup> It was translated in 1911 by Mr. Alfred Patek for the Colorado Historical Society. <sup>22</sup> Wislizenus said that this fort was the finest and largest in the West, the first adobe one built in the whole mountain region, and "served as a model" for all later trading and military posts. <sup>23</sup>

Life at the fort was really a colorful pageant representing different civilizations. There were bronzed faced hunters and bearded trappers in fringed buckskin suits. The Indian women were dressed in deerskin wrappers decorated in beads and porcupine quills. They glided about the place with moccasined feet. Naked children played in the shadow of the outside wall and showed but slight trace of their white blood through the darker hues of their mother's race. Mexican mestizos and French Canadians furnished additional features for the scene, and when trading parties of Arapahoes and Cheyennes came in the dull fortress really presented a gay appearance. The Bents, when around the fort, wore garbs like

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<sup>20</sup> Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 12.

<sup>21</sup> Hiram M. Chittenden, The American Fur Trade of the Far West, II, 639.

× <sup>22</sup> Wilbur F. Stone, editor, History of Colorado, I, 128.

<sup>23</sup> George B. Grinnell, op. cit., p. 14.



[illegible]



Indian chiefs. Most of the trappers and traders were American, French, and Eastern Indians, particularly Delawares and Shawnees. The teamsters were Americans, with a few French from Missouri. Usually the herders and common laborers were Mexicans. There was a French tailor from New Orleans and he used one room here to make and repair clothing for the men. It required skill to dress buckskin and tailor it, too. Then, to complete the picture, two or three negroes were to be seen about the place. The two negro men servants were Andrew and Dick Green. And Charlotte, or Chipita, which is a common term of endearment for any woman, was housekeeper and principal woman at the fort.<sup>24</sup> Ruxton in 1847 mentioned Charlotte as a fair lady of color, presiding over the culinary department and celebrated from Longs Peak to the Cumbres Espanolas for slap jacks and pumpkin pies. He said that Charlotte loved to speak of herself as "de onlie lady in de dam Injun country."<sup>25</sup> Most of the men had Indian wives, so with their families the population of the post was quite large.

Another part of the life at the fort was the blacksmiths and carpenters who were very busy in winter getting ready for the trips of the spring. Summer was a quiet season.

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<sup>24</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 34.

<sup>25</sup> George F. Ruxton, Life in the Far West, p. 229.







In April the Indians set out on buffalo hunts and the wagon trains started for Missouri with furs collected during the winter. The caravan was always under the personal conduct of one of the firm and that often was William. The journey usually lasted six months. Six yoke of oxen drew the heavy wagons. The teams could make from ten to twelve miles a day. On the trip east the wagons were loaded with bales of buffalo robes and on the westward trip with trade goods and supplies.

Mrs. Lubers, granddaughter of William Bent, related this account of a trip she made. She remembered that her mother used to accompany these ox trains in one of her grandfather's ambulances to which mules were hitched. On one trip her mother signaled with a looking glass and she asked why and what she was doing. Mary Bent Moore answered that she had seen Indians on the hill, and if they were Cheyennes or Arapahoes, or any other tribes except Comanches, they would understand her signals, which meant that this was a Bent train.<sup>26</sup>

In winter the population of the fort was very large. Traders were constantly going and coming from their business transactions at the Indian camps. There were also many visitors, hunters, and trappers from the mountains. Indians also

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<sup>26</sup> H. L. Lubers, "William Bent's Family and the Indians of the Plains," The Colorado Magazine, XIII (January, 1936), 19-22.







came in with their wives and children to purchase supplies and some luxuries procurable at the post, which included butter crackers, Bent's water crackers, candies, and preserved ginger. This spice was supposed to have been imported from China and was considered a rare delicacy. All visitors were welcome and it was understood they could stay as long as they pleased. In winter there were many amusements. The teamsters and laborers spent most of their evenings playing cards and checkers by candle light. Then, there were hunting parties and dances. One could always find a Frenchman or two who could play the guitar. On holidays balls were often held in which all took part. A candy pull was one form of entertainment enjoyed by all. Once in a while Chipita organized one of these frolics. During the afternoon black New Orleans molasses was boiled and after supper all eagerly gathered in one of the rooms and pulled the candy.<sup>27</sup> Later a billiard room<sup>28</sup> was made and still later a bar, but William Bent always dispensed liquor with a sparing hand.

Many well known characters came to the fort from all parts of the world. Ruxton, Wislizenus, Magoffins, and

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<sup>27</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, pp. 34-5.

<sup>28</sup> Stella M. Drumm, Down the Santa Fe Trail, p. 61. In Susan's Diary she said: "Here in the Fort, and who could have supposed such a thing, they have a regularly established billiard room!"







Hughes have already been mentioned. Farnham, the author of the book Travels in the Great Western Prairies, was a visitor in 1839. He said:

The owners, clerks, and traders were seen smoking the long native pipe around a rude table spread with coffee or tea, jerked buffalo meat and bread of unbolted wheaten meal from Taos; or after eating laid upon pallets of straw and Spanish blankets dreaming of adventures on the Hudson, Columbia, or Mackenzie.

Garrard and Parkman, well known writers, were visitors here, too. Blair, the Boggs brothers, Kit Carson, and many other Missourians often stopped at the trading post. Fremont, the great explorer, also visited here. The fort was headquarters for the Army of the West. General Kearny made frequent mention of Bent's Fort. For instance, in his letter of August 1, 1846, he said:

Head Q<sup>s</sup> Army of the West  
Camp near Bent's Fort on  
the Arkansas  
August 1, 1846

Sir: I reached here with the volunteers on the 29th ulto. where I found Capt. Prince of my Regt with his command.

...

Very resp yr 1st Lieut  
S. W. Kearny  
Col 1st Drag.

Kit Carson was perhaps the best known character at

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<sup>29</sup> Reuben G. Thwaites, Early Western Travels 1748-1846, XXVIII (Cleveland: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1906), 172. This is a reprint of Farnham's Travels.

<sup>30</sup> Letter, S. W. Kearny to Major General R. Jones, Adjutant General of United States Army, August 1, 1846, in the possession of the Missouri State Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.







the post. He came there in 1831 and was employed as a hunter until he joined the Fremont expedition in 1842 or 1843.<sup>31</sup>

In 1848 he made Taos his home, but was called to serve in the Indian department of the United States government. He was given a commission in the Civil War. After the war he returned to live near Bent's fort, where he died in August, 1868.<sup>32</sup>

The Indians were another very important part of the life at the trading post. William Bent always enjoyed friendly relations with the Cheyennes, because of his marriages into the tribe. This also aided him to maintain friendship with all other Indians. They admired him greatly for his kindness and fairness. In 1840 the Indians met on the Arkansas below the fort and agreed to a peace. The Indians signing were Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Prairie Apaches, and Comanches. This was a lasting peace. After this Fort Bent was more than ever the gathering point for the tribes of the southern plains. In 1849 James Calhoun was Indian agent for New Mexico and made the post his headquarters.<sup>33</sup> The first serious trouble with the

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<sup>31</sup> John C. Fremont, Fremont's Exploring Expedition (Buffalo; George H. Derby and Company Publishers, 1851), p. 141.

<sup>32</sup> Hubert H. Bancroft, History of Nevada, Colorado and Wyoming 1540-1888, XXV, 468.

<sup>33</sup> Annie H. Abel, editor, The Official Correspondence of James S. Calhoun (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1915), p. 34.



the post. He came there in 1831 and was employed as a hunter until he joined the Fremont expedition in 1842 or 1843. In 1848 he made back his home, but was called to serve in the Indian department of the United States government. He was given a commission in the Civil War. After the war he returned to live near Fort Bent's Fort, where he died in August, 1868.

The Indians were another very important part of the life of the trading post. William Bent of the Bent family by relations with the Cheyennes, band of his marriage into the tribe. This also aided him to maintain relations with all other Indians. They looked him as a fatherly kindness and fairness. In 1840 the Indians met on the plains before the fort and agreed to a peace. The Indians of many were Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, Pawnees, Apaches, and Comanches. This was a lasting peace. After this Bent was more than ever the gathering point for the tribes of the plains. In 1849 James Catron was sent agent for New Mexico and made the post his headquarters. The first serious trouble with the

21 John O. Fremont, Fremont's Exploring Expedition (Boston: George H. Derby and Company, 1845), p. 141.  
22 Robert H. Lowie, History of New Mexico, 1906.  
23 Wooten 1840-1868, XXV, 487.  
24 Anna E. Abel, The Official Correspondence of James B. Catron (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 24.



Indians was in 1857. Colonel Sumner of the United States army made a campaign against them. While Sumner was on their trail the agent arrived and wanted to store the annuity goods, but William refused because he feared the Indians would attempt to seize the goods. He and Miller, who was Indian agent from 1856 to 1858, sat up all night and talked over the question of storage and Bent proposed to move out and turn his new fort over to the agent, who could then store the annuities,<sup>34</sup> but this plan was not adopted. From this time on the Indians caused continual trouble until the Government placed them on reservations.

In 1852 Colonel Bent blew up "Bent's Old Fort." One morning he loaded all his goods upon his twenty large wagons and moved down the river to Short Timber Creek, a tributary of the Arkansas. The next morning he rode up to the fort alone and soon the noise of an explosion was heard. There are several reasons given for this rash act. William and the Government had failed to agree on a price for the fort. On the day Bent destroyed the place he told his wife, Yellow Woman, that he could not live at the fort any longer, because his brothers, Robert and George, and his wife Owl Woman, had died at the post, and the memories and sight of the old rooms

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<sup>34</sup> Annuities are yearly supplies allowed the Indians.







saddened him.<sup>35</sup> It is said, too, that he was on a spree at that time.<sup>36</sup>

Bent's New Fort was finished in 1854. It was built of stone and was not so large as the old one. The location was near the present county line of Bent and Otero Counties in south-eastern Colorado.<sup>37</sup>

*Encl*

This new fort was leased to the government in 1859 and renamed Fort Wise after the Governor of Virginia. After the secession of Virginia in 1861, the name was changed to Fort Lyon in honor of General Nathaniel Lyon, who was killed in the battle of Wilson's Creek near Springfield, Missouri. In the spring of 1867 rain began in the plains region and continued for a month. The Arkansas was out of its banks, and water was two feet deep on the level in Fort Lyon and the troops had to evacuate the post. This evacuation proved permanent and Fort Lyon was moved twenty five miles west to the present site of Fort Lyon, Colorado. After 1887 the government no longer felt the need of keeping troops there and it was turned over to a caretaker until 1906, when it was transferred to the Navy Department as a hospital for the treat-

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<sup>35</sup> George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and Its Builders, p. 55, footnote 94.

<sup>36</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 830.

<sup>37</sup> News item in The Fort Lyon [Colorado] News, February 24, 1922.



35 It is said, too, that it was on a hillside  
36 that time.

Bent's New Fort was finished in 1854. It was built of  
stone and was not so large as the old one. The fort was  
near the present county line of Bent and Grant counties in  
south-eastern Colorado. 37

This new fort was issued to the government in 1855  
and renamed Fort Wise after the Governor of Virginia. After  
the secession of Virginia in 1861, the name was changed to  
Fort Lyon in honor of General Nathaniel Lyon. It was  
in the battle of Wilson's Creek near Springfield, Missouri,  
in the spring of 1862 that began in the first battle and  
continued for a month. The fort was not hit by  
and after was too lost on the level in front of  
the troops had to evacuate the fort. This event occurred  
between Fort Lyon and Fort Wise was never fought again until  
the present site of Fort Lyon, Colorado. After 1862 the  
government no longer felt the need of having troops there  
and it was turned over to a caretaker until 1892, when it was  
transferred to the War Department as a national monument.

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38 George B. Grinnell, Bent's Old Fort and the Indians,  
p. 55, footnote 24.  
39 Charles W. Henshaw, History of the Colorado Territory,  
p. 250.  
40 Here was in the fort the [unclear] [unclear]  
41 1922.



ment of pulmonary tuberculosis,<sup>38</sup> On March 1, 1922,<sup>39</sup> it was taken over by the Veteran's Bureau as a tubercular hospital, and in 1935 changed to a psychopathic hospital.

At the end of the Civil War the old life at Bent's Fort came to an end and its glory lived only in the past.

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<sup>38</sup> News item in the Fort Lyon [Colorado] News, February 24, 1922.

<sup>39</sup> Loc. cit.



ment of ordinary laboratory  
was taken over by the Veterans  
and in 1945 changed to a hospital  
at the end of the year the  
first came to an end and the

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New line in the  
84, 1933  
1933



## CONCLUSION

"The Bent Brothers on The Frontier" emphasizes the importance of the trader and the trapper, his part in the expansion of the United States into the regions of Colorado and New Mexico, and the growth of trade on the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis to Mexico. The Bent brothers as pioneers were typical of this Westward expansion.

This historical account presents evidence found in books of contemporary writers, documents, old newspapers, present day research volumes, unpublished letters, and first-hand information from Mrs. Mary Prowers Hudnall of Las Animas, Colorado, eldest daughter of John Prowers, who was a clerk for William Bent. There are minor discrepancies in the accounts found which may be attributed to lack of ability of the men of those days to set down their adventures, little knowledge of how to keep records, slight appreciation of the value of old papers, and the destruction of information by the Mexican insurrection of 1847 and the razing of "Bent's Old Fort" in 1852. Using the threads of the various sources, a connected story of the Bents and their life is told.

While it is true that the Bents were typical of their day, it took iron will and courage to set forth into a new country, make friends with the Indians, earn a livelihood, and adjust oneself to a new environment.







As a tribute to these pioneers, society later acknowledged the debt it owed to them. Colorado, in 1870, surveyed a strip of land in the vicinity of Bent's Fort which is at the thirty-fifth parallel west and intersects the one hundred second degree of longitude, and runs sixty miles north, twenty-four miles south, and one hundred and ten miles west, and named this region Bent County.<sup>1</sup> The Daughters of the American Revolution erected a monument in 1910 on the site of "Bent's Old Fort" which bears this inscription:<sup>2</sup>

1822 - The Santa Fe Trail - 1875. This stone marks the point on the trail where the brothers, Charles and Colonel William Bent, erected Bent's Fort...The most famous stopping place on the trail.

New Mexico has talked of creating a county by the name of Bent but the plan has never been carried out. The state, however, has shown honor to the Bent name by placing a full-length oil painting of Governor Charles Bent in the senate room of the capitol.

The age of the trapper and trader brought the expansion of the United States from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from Canada to Mexico. The railroad replaced the trade caravans as the glory of the pioneer adventurer faded; --one age passed away as another was born.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles W. Bowman, History of the Arkansas Valley, p. 825.

<sup>2</sup> Glen D. Bradley, "Famous Landmarks Along the Trail," Santa Fe Employees' Magazine, VI (September, 1912), 29.



As a tribute to these soldiers, society is now...  
edged the spot is over to them. Colonel, in 1890, surveyed  
a strip of land in the vicinity of Bent's Fort which is now  
the thirty-five parallel west and included a the one-half  
dred section, degree of longitude, and two sixty miles north,  
twenty-four miles south, and one hundred and ten miles west,  
and named this region Bent County. The portion of the  
American Revolution erected a monument in 1910 on the site of  
"Bent's Old Fort" which bears this inscription:

1822 - The Santa Fe Trail - 1822. This name was given the  
point on the trail where the first fort, Bent's and others  
not within Bent, erected Bent's Fort. The most famous  
stopping place on the trail.

New Mexico has talked of erecting a colony by the name  
of Bent but the plan has never been carried out. The name  
however, has shown honor to the Bent name by placing a trail  
length all remains of Governor Charles Bent in the center  
room of the building.

The age of the monument and the place of the monument  
of the United States from the attention to the Bent name from  
Canada to Mexico. The railroad reached the Santa Fe  
as the story of the oldest settlement of Bent's Fort - one who  
passed away as another was born.

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1. Charles W. Benson, History of the Santa Fe Trail,  
p. 233.  
2. Dick C. Bradley, "Santa Fe's Bent's Fort,"  
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1. History of the United States  
2. Geography of the United States  
3. Political Science

4. International Law  
5. Constitutional Law

6. Administrative Law  
7. Legal History

8. Legal Philosophy  
9. Legal Literature

10. Legal Education  
11. Legal Practice

12. Legal Research  
13. Legal Writing

14. Legal Ethics  
15. Legal Economics

16. Legal Sociology  
17. Legal Anthropology

18. Legal Linguistics  
19. Legal Psychology

20. Legal Medicine  
21. Legal Art

22. Legal Music  
23. Legal Dance

Notes

This is a list of subjects related to the study of law. It includes a wide range of topics from the history and philosophy of law to the practical aspects of legal education and practice. The list is organized in a numbered format, making it easy to reference specific areas of interest.

The following subjects are included in the list:

1. History of the United States  
2. Geography of the United States  
3. Political Science  
4. International Law  
5. Constitutional Law  
6. Administrative Law  
7. Legal History  
8. Legal Philosophy  
9. Legal Literature  
10. Legal Education  
11. Legal Practice  
12. Legal Research  
13. Legal Writing  
14. Legal Ethics  
15. Legal Economics  
16. Legal Sociology  
17. Legal Anthropology  
18. Legal Linguistics  
19. Legal Psychology  
20. Legal Medicine  
21. Legal Art  
22. Legal Music  
23. Legal Dance



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Calvin, J. ...  
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Connelly, William E. ...  
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In the Old West is really a reprint of Life in the Far West with an excellent introduction by Kephart.

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#### E. INTERVIEWS

Hudnall, Mrs. Mary Prowers, Las Animas, Colorado, December 20, 1938.

Mrs. Hudnall is the eldest daughter of John Prowers, clerk of William Bent's. As a child she had a faint memory of William Bent and Kit Carson. First hand information from her gave a personal touch to this account.

#### F. UNPUBLISHED MATERIALS

Bent, Charles, to Manuel Alvarez, American Consul at Santa Fe, New Mexico, January 24, 1845.

\_\_\_\_\_, December 17, 1845.

\_\_\_\_\_, December 29, 1845.

\_\_\_\_\_, January 18, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, February 4, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, February 16, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, February 24, 1846.



Marion, Mary A., 11, 100

Charles, 11, 100

"Kit Carson," 11, 100

"Kit Carson," 11, 100

Charles, 11, 100

William, 11, 100

Richard, 11, 100

"Kit Carson," 11, 100

Richard, 11, 100

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The letters of Charles Bent to Manuel Alvarez, American Consul residing at Santa Fe, are in the Benjamin Read Collection which is in the possession of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe.

Boggs, Lilburn, to William H. Russell of Lexington, Kentucky, December 28, 1841.

This letter is also in the Benjamin Read Collection in the possession of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe.

Gibson, George, to Committee on claims in the House of Representatives of the United States Congress, May 28, 1844.

Gibson's letter is in the Ralph E. Twitchell Collection of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe. It concerns a claim of Bent, St. Vrain and Company for supplies ordered for the Army of the West, and never called for, because the army took a different route.

Kearny, S. W., to W. S. Marcy, Secretary of War, May 28, 1844.

\_\_\_\_\_, to John C. Edwards, Governor of Missouri, June 16, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, to Major General R. Jones, Adjutant General of the United States Army, June 29, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, to the citizens of New Mexico, a Proclamation, July 31, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, to Major General R. Jones, Adjutant General of the United States Army, August 1, 1846.

\_\_\_\_\_, September 24, 1846.

The Kearny letters are in the possession of the Missouri State Historical Society at St. Louis. They were obtained from a photostatic copy.

Lee, R. B., to Brigadier General George Gibson, Commissary General of Subsistence, United States Army, Washington, D.C., January 11, 1848.

This letter is in the Ralph E. Twitchell Collection of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe. It, too, concerns the Bent, St. Vrain and Company claim for supplies furnished the Army of the West.



The history of the...  
Columbia...  
State Historical Society...

Boyle, Richard, Jr. ...  
December 20, 1921

This letter is ...  
the ...  
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Gibson, ...  
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Gibson's ...  
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## G. NEWSPAPERS

The Bent County (Colorado) Democrat, October 28, 1938. Published at Las Animas, Colorado.

\_\_\_\_\_, February 3, 1939.

\_\_\_\_\_, March 3, 1939.

\_\_\_\_\_, March 17, 1939.

\_\_\_\_\_, April 7, 1939.

\_\_\_\_\_, April 14, 1939.

The Denver Post, March 12, 1939.

Newspaper clipping, undated and unidentified, in the Ralph E. Twitchell Collection in possession of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe.

The Fort Lyon (Colorado) News, February 24, 1922. Published in the office of the Bent County Democrat, Las Animas, Colorado.

The Las Vegas (New Mexico) Daily Optic, March 27, 1890.

The Daily (Washington City) Union, March 17, 1847.

\_\_\_\_\_, March 18, 1847.

The Washington, D. C., Daily Union newspapers are in the Ralph E. Twitchell Collection which is in the possession of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe.



## D. NEWSPAPERS

The Bent County (Colorado) Democrat, October 28, 1938. Pub-  
lished at Las Animas, Colorado.

February 5, 1939.

March 3, 1939.

March 17, 1939.

April 7, 1939.

April 14, 1939.

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State Historical Society at Santa Fe.

The Fort Lyon (Colorado) News, February 24, 1939. Published  
in the office of the Bent County Democrat, Las Animas,  
Colorado.

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The Daily (Washington City) Union, March 17, 1947.

March 18, 1947.

The Washington, D. C., Daily Union newspapers are in the  
Ralph E. Twitchell Collection which is in the possession  
of the New Mexico State Historical Society at Santa Fe.















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