

NEW MEXICO HISTORY MUSEUM



Harvey Girl at El Ortiz in Lamy, N.M., circa 1912

Riding the Rails ... In Style ***Fred Harvey brought hot meals, grand architecture*** ***and those fabled Harvey Girls to Western travel***

Welcome to the latest installment of our media-release series, "Telling New Mexico: Stories from Then and Now." See the links below for previous releases, along with information about obtaining photographs to accompany your coverage.

Santa Fe – With the completion of the trans-continental railroad in 1869, many Americans set out to discover the "Wild West" for themselves. What they found held a few discouragements. The long, dusty ride across the country had little to offer in the way of lodging, and the food often consisted of little more than rancid meat, cold beans and week-old coffee.

Enter Fred Harvey.

A British-born entrepreneur, Harvey saw the potential in turning Western exploration into a pleasure trip. The New Mexico History Museum, www.nmhistorymuseum.org, is opening May 24, 2009, at 113 Lincoln Avenue on the historic Santa Fe Plaza. The museum explores more than 400 years of the American West, including how the public's romantic notions of "the frontier" were fueled through the cultural tourism led by Fred Harvey and his Harvey Houses.

Harvey, a onetime freight clerk for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, had worked in a number of cafes in New York, and had even owned a restaurant in New Orleans as a young man. He saw the need for quality food and lodging on his many travels with the railroad, and recognized the profit potential of offering a higher standard of dining. The Chicago, Burlington and Quincy ignored his offers, so he turned to the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa



La Fonda, the Harvey Hotel at Santa Fe,
circa 1810



Curio Room in Fred Harvey's Alvarado Hotel,
Albuquerque, circa 1900

Fe Railway, which agreed to partner with him.

Thanks to Harvey's strict standards of quality and service, his first restaurant in Topeka, Kansas, was so successful that the Santa Fe Railway encouraged him to open more. The railway offered Harvey employees free travel, carried the supplies for his restaurants in their refrigerated cars for free, and effectively gave him a blank-check to open as many dining establishments as he was able. In just eleven years, Harvey had opened 24 Harvey Houses between Topeka and San Bernardino, California, creating the first restaurant chain in the United States.

In 1883, during one of his "surprise inspections," Harvey fired every waiter at the Harvey House in Raton, New Mexico, for inadequate service. At the advice of his newly hired manager, Harvey turned to local women to replace his waiters. These new waitresses, "Harvey Girls," became so popular with the local community and passengers that Harvey followed suit in all of his restaurants. Issuing advertisements across the country that, according to some accounts, called for "young women 18 to 30 years of age, of good character, attractive and intelligent," Harvey was able to build a professional and respected workforce that not only set a new standard for equality in the work place, but also branded the Harvey Houses as decent and respectable dining establishments. Tourists began to travel the West in droves, and young women came from other states for the opportunity to see the West while earning a living.

Although the Santa Fe Railway offered Pullman cars for passengers who wanted to sleep, many preferred to stay at the numerous Harvey Hotels that sprung up along the tracks. In 1901, Fred Harvey hired Mary Colter, a graduate of the California School of Design, to work as an interior designer and architect. Colter designed a number of hotels for Harvey, most notably the El Navajo in Gallup, New Mexico, but she is mostly remembered for her incorporation of Indian art and design into the hotels. (Colter is also famed for designing the Phantom Ranch buildings at the bottom of the Grand Canyon, along with Hermit's Rest and Bright Angel Lodge on the rim.)

The Alvarado Hotel in Albuquerque, New Mexico, was home to the Harvey Indian House, a gift shop that sold local Indian crafts like pottery, blankets and jewelry. Native artisans were often present in the Indian House, allowing tourists to watch the craftsmen work. This inclusion of Native American craftsmen marked the first real appearance of cultural tourism in the United States.

In 1911, a writer for the Albuquerque Morning Journal dubbed Harvey "the Napoleon of hotel managers," and wrote:

Some day a book will be devoted to detailed description of the Harvey system, its hotel, dining room and the extraordinary features of a management which allows a traveler to dine on brook trout in the middle of the desert, and on the rarest fruits in vast reaches of country where nothing is raised but cactus and sage brush. The Castañeda at Las Vegas, a great building of dark red brick in the mission style, the Alvarado at Albuquerque, fronted by long colonnades and well proportioned arches; the Cardeñas at Trinidad; the Fray Marcos at Williams; the Escalante at Ash Fork; the El Garces at Needles – all these, and many others are, in their many departments, worthy of the study of the artist, the epicure, the student of Indian life, and of many men in the United States who lay claim to the title "hotel manager." ("The Harvey Girls," Lesley Poling-Kempes, 1989, Da Capo Press)

In 1926, the Harvey Company expanded its involvement in cultural tourism by adding "Indian Detours" to the list of services offered. These two- to three-day tours would frequently start from Gallup, Santa Fe, Albuquerque or Las Vegas, New Mexico, and took tourists to remote pueblos via "Indian Detours" buses. The tours were guided by young, educated women called Couriers, who worked closely with the cowboy-dressed drivers to make sure passengers had an enjoyable trip, despite the often questionable condition of the roads. The tours gave visitors to the Southwest a hands-on opportunity to experience the lives of the Pueblo people native to New Mexico, and greatly increased the trade and popularity of Native American arts and crafts.

(In a similar vein, the New Mexico History Museum's Native American Artisans Program lets visitors to the Palace of the Governors interact with artisans who display and sell their wares under the Palace's outdoor portal – one of the most popular features of the state's 100-year-old museum system.)

Today, Harvey Houses and Hotels are virtually extinct, but the legacy of cultural tourism inaugurated by Fred Harvey continues. Like the Harvey Hotels, the New Mexico History Museum gives modern-day visitors the chance to explore the rich history of the Southwest in comfort and style. Define your own place in history. Get into it! Join us at the New Mexico History Museum's grand opening – and keep coming back for changing exhibits and special events.

New Mexico History Museum

at 113 Lincoln Avenue, just behind the Palace of the Governors on the Santa Fe Plaza

For more information about the New Mexico History Museum, including a selection of user-ready high-resolution photographs, log onto <http://media.museumofnewmexico.org/nmhm>. More than 8,000 additional, high-resolution photographs illustrating the history of New Mexico are available by keyword search at www.palaceofthegovernors.org (click on "Photo Archives" then on "Digitized Collections"). Most requests for scans from this site can be delivered the same day, and usage is free for publicity purposes only.

Previous releases:

Duty, Sacrifice, Honor
(Veteran's Release - Need final link)

[Where ancient artifacts meet cutting-edge art](#)

[Fashioning New Mexico](#)

[The Tiffany Ties that Bind](#)

[The Railroad Wars](#)

[The New Face of History](#)

[The Tales that Made the American West](#)

[New Mexico History Museum's Core Exhibits](#)

[Telling the People's Stories: A Message from the Director](#)

[Creating a Place for Our Past](#), by Dr. Frances Levine, El Palacio, Summer 2006

Other Sites:

[NM History Museum on Twitter](#)

[NM History Museum on Facebook](#)

Media Contacts:

Kate Nelson
New Mexico History Museum
505 476 1141
Kate.Nelson@state.nm.us
www.nmhistorymuseum.org

Rachel Mason
Ballantines PR
Rachel@ballantinespr.com
505 216 0889
www.ballantinespr.com