

Fort Stanton Live! — The fort's annual celebration of living history, hosted by Fort Stanton, Inc./Fort Stanton Foundation, is 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday, **Aug. 6-8**, at Fort Stanton, 20 miles northeast of Ruidoso on Hwy 220. The event features a Wild West Show, Civil War reenactments, Buffalo Soldiers, Mountain Men, food, vendors and live entertainment. No pets or alcohol allowed. Admission is free; donations accepted. Information: (575) 354-0341 or fortstanton.com.

Fort Stanton was established and built in 1855 by troopers of the 1st Dragoon Regiment to serve as a base of operations against the Mescalero Apache Indians. The site served various purposes through 1995.

Concordia Ghost Tours — Concordia Heritage Association and Paso Del Norte Paranormal Society host a ghost tour 8 to 10 p.m. Saturday, **Aug. 7**, at historic Concordia Cemetery. The walking tour begins at the Yandell entrance, and is of the haunted sites where people have reported seeing a Lady in White, and other ghostly apparitions. Bring recording equipment, cameras, extra batteries, flashlight, comfortable walking (closed toe) shoes, and be a ghost hunter as well. Reservations required. Cost: \$10; All ages welcome Reservations/information: 1-877-GHOST-10 or elpasoghosttours.com.

A special midnight Ghost Tour is midnight to 3 a.m. Saturday, **Aug. 21**. Age 13 and older welcome; age 17 and under must be accompanied by adult. Bring cameras and flashlights. Cost: \$10, plus tax.

Other ghost tours:

- Learn about the paranormal and hauntings at Cohen Stadium Friday, **Aug. 13**, after the Diablos game at 7:05 p.m. Cost: \$20 (includes reserved seating in the Hard Ball Cafe).
- A Downtown Ghost Tour is 8 to 10 p.m. Saturday, **Aug. 14**. Walk on top of a confederate cemetery, see where John Wesley Hardin died, and investigate one of downtown's haunted hotels. Cost: \$10.

Patrons can win ghost tour tickets by visiting the society's booth 8 to 10 p.m. every Friday in August during Alfresco Fridays in Arts Festival Plaza.

History Notes — The monthly program is 1 to 2 p.m. the second Thursday of each month at the Branigan Cultural Center, 501 N. Main, north end of the Downtown Mall in Las Cruces. Admission is free. Information: (575) 541-2154 or las-cruces.org/museums

The programs are informal discussions on local and regional history led by staff and volunteers. The Thursday, **Aug. 12**, topic is 'Early Schools in Las Cruces.'

John Wesley Hardin's Demise — The Concordia Heritage Association's John Wesley Hardin "Secret Society" annual commemoration is 7 p.m. Thursday, **Aug. 19**, at Concordia Cemetery. The event marks the infamous gunslinger's 1895 fatal shooting with a special gravesite ceremony and reenactment by Six Guns and Shady Ladies and historians. There will also be the annual "Toast to John Wesley," at the hour of his demise 104 years ago. Raffle prizes and entertainment also offered. Bring folding chair, flashlight and closed-toe shoes. Admission: \$5; \$2 military, students and seniors; free for children under 12.

The historic Central El Paso cemetery is between Yandell and Gateway West east of Copia. Proceeds from the event benefit the preservation and restoration of the cemetery. Information: 581-7920 or concordiacemetery.org.

Hardin moved to El Paso in 1895 after his release from prison. He was shot to death in Aug. 19, 1895, by Constable John Selman. Hardin was 42, and claimed to have killed 30 men.

Fort Bayard Birthday — Fort Bayard Historic Preservation Society celebrates the fort's 143rd birthday beginning with a walking tour of the Commanding Officer's home at 11 a.m. Sunday, **Aug. 22** in historic Fort Bayard, N.M. (6 miles east of Silver City off Highway 180). This year's theme is "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" and features a game played with vintage equipment at 2 p.m. Information: (575) 956-3294 or (307) 640-3012.

Lunch available for a nominal fee 11 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., followed by the presentation "1920s Baseball in the Southwest" by Dr. Lynn Bevilla at 1 p.m. Children's games also featured.

Fort Selden State Monument — The monument, in Radium Springs 13 miles north of Las Cruces, is open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Monday (closed Tuesday). Admission is \$3; (ages 16 and under free). Information: (575) 526-8911 or nmmonuments.org.

Fort Selden was a 19th-century adobe fort established to protect early settlers from Indian raids. The monument seeks to preserve the remaining ruins and has a visitors center with exhibits of military life at the post. From Las Cruces, take I-25 north to Exit 19.

Apache kidnapping of ranch boy part of NM western lore

One of the most fascinating tales of Western Native American lore deals with Geronimo's capture of Jimmy "Santiago" McKinn Sept. 11, 1885. The young boy — around age 11 at the time — lived in the Mimbres Valley with his hardscrabble rancher family.

Taking such young captives, male or female, was an "Indian regular act." Native Americans, being overly practical, used these young as servants and family companions. In the ensuing months of his capture and indoctrination into the Apache and war style, Jimmy adapted very well.

Local newspapers, area historian Jerry Eagan and other Western writers have researched and covered this fascinating tale of a young Irish-American boy who became thoroughly indoctrinated into the Apache way of life.

According to the Silver City Enterprise, Apache signal fires in the Florida Mountains were reported in Deming, indicating Apache attacks. In Georgetown, two Mexican workmen were killed.

Original reports said that both sons of John McKinn, including Martin, age 17, had been killed by Apaches. But it turned out that Santiago was missing, with no evidence of his death.

In March 1886, Gen. George Crook accepted Geronimo's surrender in Sonora, Mexico. Among the handful of warriors, women and children was a mysterious boy.

This was the first hint that the abducted McKinn boy had possibly been found. Capt. John Bourke, an aide to Gen. Crook, reported that he'd seen a lad he learned was "Santiago" McKinn. The place was Canyon de los Embudos, Sonora, Mexico. We know what happened next thanks to reports from Bourke, reporter Fletcher Lummis of the L.A. Times, and C.S. Fly, a photographer from Tombstone, Arizona Territory. Fly had accompanied Crook into Mexico in hopes of photographing the famous Geronimo. Others in the group later escaped, but somehow Crook managed to hold on to the young captive.

Lummis reported: "Santiago McKinn, the 11-year-old white boy, the Apaches' prisoner taken with Geronimo's band, will be sent home tomorrow. It is learned that his parents were not killed, but reside at Hot Springs, at Hunter's, N.M., near the railroad from Deming to Silver City. During his half-year of captivity, the lad had grown fully Indianized. He joins their sports, and will have nothing to do with the whites. He understands English and Spanish, but can hardly be induced to speak in either. He has learned the Apache language and talks it exclusively."

Lummis later filed this dispatch: "Santiago McKinn, their 11-year-old white captive, was sent home to-day. He would not leave the camp with a white man, and had to be brought into the fort

Racking Up History

by Bill Rakocy



Jimmy "Santiago" McKinn reportedly wanted to stay with his Apache captors

by Chiricahuas. He bawled badly when told that he was to be taken back to his parents, and said he always wanted to stay with the Indians."

The Silver City Enterprise later reported on April 9, 1886:

- John McKinn went to Deming to meet his boy.
- His son appeared in deplorable condition.
- Though very poor, the father had to pay the train fare for his son's return.
- A local clothing store took the boy in and outfitted him in new clothes.
- Jimmy was overjoyed to see his dad, whom he recognized.
- The boy, the "Lion of the Hour," was greeted by a large crowd.
- He answered questions in Spanish and reply "no sabe" to English questions.
- He answered every question.
- After capturing him, the Indians traveled two days and nights without rest.
- When asked how he liked to eat horse-flesh (cooked) he responded, "It is good when you are hungry."

For a fuller story of Jimmy McKinn, read Jerry Eagan's account at http://www.desertexposure.com/200611/200611_apacheria_mckinn_captive.html.

A similar tale of abduction

The abduction of red-haired, blue-eyed Charlie McComas, then 6, by Apaches March 28, 1883, following the murder of his parents, remains one of the unsolved mysteries of the days when Fort Bayard troopers guarded the Butterfield Trail against hostile Native Americans, who lurked in the Black Range and Mogollon mountains to pounce on unwary settlers and miners moving westward after the Civil War.

In May 1938, members of an archaeological expedition into Mexico discovered a tribe of Apaches believed to have escaped from the United States after the surrender of Geronimo. The leader of the "lost" tribe was a red-haired, blue-eyed white man approaching his 60s, whom they believed to be Charlie McComas. Whether or not their suspicion was correct could not be proved. The leader of the tribe recalled nothing of any prior life, recalling only the way of the Native American, ever fleeing from the wrath of the white man.

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