



JEWEL OF THE RAILROAD ERA

ALBUQUERQUE'S
ALVARADO
HOTEL

March 8 - June 7, 2009

The Albuquerque Museum of Art and History

RESOURCE GUIDE

About this Exhibition

For almost 110 years, the Alvarado Hotel has been a touchstone for the people of Albuquerque. From the Alvarado's opening in May 1902 to its demolition in February 1970 the hotel's grand opening and historic occasions were reported in newspapers from Los Angeles to Topeka, and the hotel is mentioned in almost every publication on the Harvey House system.

This exhibit will bring together the details of the Alvarado Hotel's architectural history, renovation sequences, and furnishings, and repopulate it with the memories of its employees, residents, celebrities, and guests. Supported by artifacts, photographs and interviews from the history collection and archives of The Albuquerque Museum, we will attempt to re-create the Alvarado Hotel in a way that time and demolition cannot erase.

Using the Guide

The Alvarado Hotel was a destination for Albuquerqueans for nearly seven decades. Its importance beyond these local memories and experiences, however, is largely unknown. The goal of this guide is to provide a basic understanding of the significance of the hotel within the context of national events. Woven into the story of the hotel are events and issues of great importance to our country, such as westward expansion, the industrial revolution, and the role of women in early 20th century.

As the hotel eventually met its demise, there is also an opportunity to engage students with current issues of historic preservation happening in city, state, national, and international fronts. To that end, we have included some lesson ideas and web resources related to historic preservation.

We hope this is a helpful tool for exploring this exhibition with your students. Please do not hesitate to contact me with questions or comments related to this guide.

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*This guide was created by The Albuquerque Museum Education division
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Preserving Our History



**The demolished Alvarado Hotel, February 1970
Gift of Joe McKinney, PA1996.62.902**



**Alvarado Transportation Center, 2008
Photographer: Robin McClannahan**

The 1970 demolition of the Alvarado hotel silenced a place at the center of the community for nearly 70 years. The Alvarado hotel was at once an architectural gem, a record of western expansion, and a place that defined Albuquerque. People from the famous to the ordinary created memories in this hotel. President Roosevelt gave speeches in 1903 and 1906 outside the hotel. World War II correspondent and local resident Ernie Pyle recalled his regular visits to the hotel's Cocina Cantina. And local resident Richard Krause, whose father managed the hotel in the 1940s, created life-long memories of its lavish gardens, grand pianos, and fascinating southwest treasures.

Preserving the history of our community begins with unearthing the long buried stories in your backyard. Exploring the history, cultural context and community stories associated with historic buildings brings to life the richness of Albuquerque's past. An appreciation of our past can spur us into action as the preservationists of tomorrow.

In addition to this guide we have also included a resource list to help you explore historic preservation with your students. Organized by suggested lessons, it provides a number of ways to incorporate the study of historic buildings and preservation in your classroom. Used alone or with the background information in this guide, the resource list will provide a starting point for exploring the history of your community.



Locomotive at the Alvarado, 1925
Photographer: Daphne Cobb
Ward Hicks Collection, Gift of John Airy
PA1982.181.96

The Railroad

In 1887 the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe railroad became the first to provide a direct route from Kansas City to California. The route to the Pacific was the brainchild Cyrus Holliday, a lawyer from Pennsylvania. In 1868, the construction started in Topeka. The backbreaking work began as track was laid through use of picks, shovels, and horse-drawn plows. Holliday's desire to press west was chiefly an economic one: Gold in Colorado, cattle in Texas and other unknown resources to exploit in California.

In December 1882 the first milestone was complete as the railroad reached the border of Colorado. The railroad next set its sights on Raton, New Mexico. Reaching the town was a technical feat for the times due to its challenging 8,000 foot summit, 6% grade, and narrow switchback curves. By 1879 the track reached town, and a tunnel through the mountain was opened several months later.

From Raton it continued south, bypassing Santa Fe because its small size and mountainous terrain. Instead, by 1880 a new railroad stop at Lamy sprang up just outside of Santa Fe. In the same year, the railroad ran through to Albuquerque and in towns to the south. Albuquerque was now situated to become a railroad boomtown.

The Harvey Houses

The completion of the Santa Fe line was a boon to the transportation of not only freight but passengers as well. People began to ride the rails for business and for pleasure. The relatively low cost and the promise of adventure and opportunity encouraged many to undertake the cross-country journey.

Railroad travel, however, was still in its infancy. Food service was limited and facilities were often unsanitary. Remote western towns that had sprung up along the tracks consisted of saloons and boarding houses with little access to fresh food. Travel was considered risky and uncomfortable for the average traveler.

Fred Harvey began working for the railroads after a number of years in the restaurant business. His job had him riding the rails where he witnessed the poor service available to travelers at the time. From those experiences he came up with a plan to improve the quality of food and service for railroad travelers.

Harvey's initial agreement with the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe provided him with a small depot restaurant in Topeka and free rail transportation of supplies in return for managing the restaurant and providing equipment for its operation. This arrangement later developed in an exclusive right for Harvey to manage and operate the eating houses, lunch stands, and hotel facilities along the AT& SF line.



AT & SF Depot Topeka, Kansas, 1880
Courtesy of the Kansas State Historical Society.

BIOGRAPHY

Railroad Restaurateur: Fred Harvey

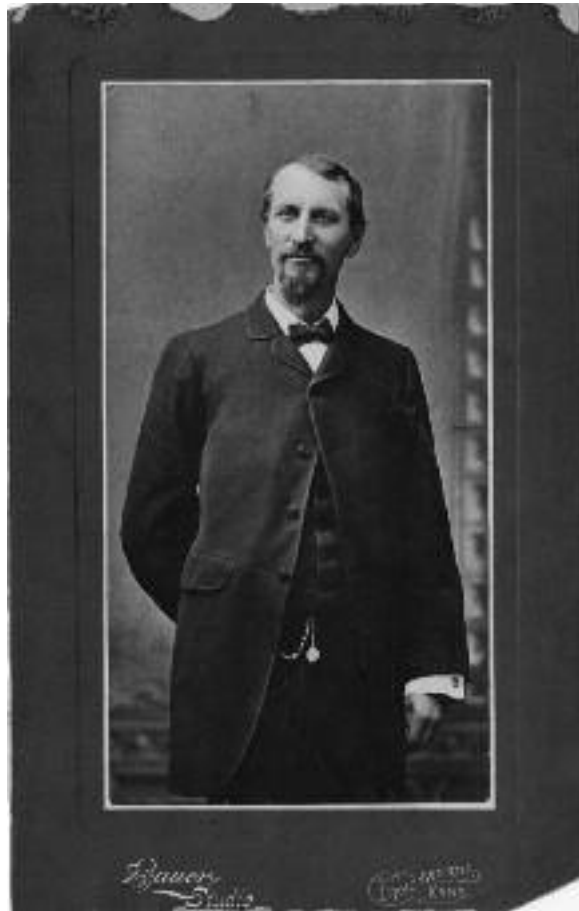
Born in England in 1835, Fred Harvey immigrated to the United States at the age of fifteen. He arrived in New York City where he took a job as a dishwasher. The dream of running his own restaurant took hold and in 1850 he moved to St. Louis where he opened a restaurant. The Civil War years caused many restaurants to fold and Harvey's was no exception. His next move would be the railroad.

After twenty years of service for the Burlington Railroad that often included extensive travel on the trains, Harvey was tired of the inedible, overpriced food and bad service provided for rail travelers. He proposed to the Burlington Railroad to open a quality service depot restaurant that served fresh, delicious, inexpensive food. They turned down his offer. Harvey then took his idea to the new and thriving Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad Company. A deal was struck, and in 1876 Harvey opened a restaurant at the Topeka, Kansas railroad depot.

The restaurant was an immediate success and in 1877 Harvey opened his first hotel and within a year assumed management of the Santa Fe Railroad dining cars. The Santa Fe Railroad continued to provide the buildings for Harvey to open restaurants and hotels along the rail line. "Meals by Fred Harvey" became their advertising slogan.

Together, Harvey and the Santa Fe Railroad worked to create a new tourist destination in the Southwest that offered not only adventure, but also comfort and luxury. In 1883, Harvey replaced his all male staff with the famous Harvey Girls. He had found the men of the West to be as wild and unpredictable as their cowboy stereotype, so he decided to attract hard-working, polite women to come work in his establishments.

Although a large part of the history of the Fred Harvey Company took place under the manage-



Cabinet card, Fred Harvey, 1870s–1880s
Courtesy The Heard Museum, Library and Archives, Phoenix, Arizona, RC2 (3)

ment of his sons, Fred Harvey, himself, has had an enormous influence on the hotel and restaurant industry in the United States. In order to allow the trains to keep their tight schedules, he implemented a system of pre-ordering for the arriving passengers. This marked the beginnings of fast food. Harvey was also driven by quality service. He took advantage of the railway that could provide him with fresh produce, seafood, and meat daily as it ran its course. He even used it to transport laundry. Fred's motto was "maintenance of service, regardless of cost." For tourists and travelers this encouraged trust in the Harvey chain of businesses. This successful business tactic was adopted by almost all chain businesses in the following years and continues today.

Harvey Girls

In 1883 when the Harvey Girls joined the Harvey Empire, he had already established a reputation for fine food. "Meals by Harvey" could mean fresh whitefish from the Great Lakes served in the deserts of Arizona, sea turtles from the Gulf served at the Montezuma Hotel in Las Vegas, New Mexico or homemade pie made with the freshest of fruits from California. The partnership with the AT&SF allowed Harvey access to finest foods from every region of the county.

Harvey Girls were the second component of Harvey's plan; good service. Reportedly unhappy with the service by male waiters, Harvey devised a solution to recruit young women as waitresses in locations throughout the west. He believed the women would provide a "civilizing" influence to a region with more men than manners. Harvey advertised in newspapers and women's magazines throughout the Midwest and East for women ages 18-30, attractive, of good character and intelligence to answer the call to go west for work.

Women who responded came predominately from small town America. Rural communities in the

1900s offered limited opportunities for women. Schooling was rarely offered past eight grade. Women's choices included work on the family farm, raising siblings or moving to larger cities to pursue education or jobs to supplement the family income.

Harvey Girls were key to turning food service into a profession. Those accepted were given an assignment in any number of Harvey Houses in the west. The women were subjected to rigorous training and a strict moral code designed to provide support and discipline in lieu of parental guidance. Harvey Girls were also required to have an immaculate appearance which included a starched and pressed uniform, hair pulled back and no jewelry or makeup.

In return, they were provided with an income and benefits that far exceeded those of men and women of their social class. Their challenging jobs, far from home provided them with self-esteem, independence, and new experiences.

The Harvey Company continued to employ Harvey Girls into the 1950s.



Syracuse Kansas Harvey Girls, ca 1920. Courtesy of Kansas State Historical Society.

BIOGRAPHY

Harvey Girl: Neva Davis

Neva Davis moved to Albuquerque in 1923 to work at the Alvarado Hotel on the advice of her sister. Her memories of those experiences are captured in an interview of which excerpts are included below.

Harvey Girls, often young women away from home for the first time, were required to live in employee housing. They often worked 10-hour days so the convenience of onsite housing proved invaluable. Neva recalls of her lodging at the Alvarado: "We stayed two to a room at the Alvarado. It was a plain room, really, just two single beds and a dresser. There was hardly space for my old trunk."

In addition to a salary, fringe benefits for Harvey Girls included uniforms, free laundering, meals, lodging and tips. The benefits allowed the women to save most of the salary which they sent home to help parents and younger siblings. Neva remembers, "Nobody got any overtime. In the early days, everybody tipped a dime. There were little pockets in your uniform to put the tips. Once Bob Hope came in alone and ordered a sirloin steak. Tipped me 50 cents. That was generous. People didn't pay attention to the percentage thing, though. They tipped you whatever they had."

Harvey Girls, being mostly young unmarried



Neva Davis, 1928
Gift of Lucinda Woodward, PC1994.35.6

women, created their own culture based on freedom and self sufficiency. Despite doing a typical job for women in their times, Harvey Girls often traveled up to a thousand miles away from families for the opportunity. "What I loved about being a Harvey girl was the comradeship. We had so much fun living in the dormitory—me and Effie Jenks, Edith Haselton and the rest. Gladys Bronson was studying ballet and she would try to teach it to everybody up there."

Neva's story mirrors many of those told by Harvey Girls. While not all women enjoyed their stints as Harvey Girls, for many it was the turning point in their lives. They never looked back.

The Alvarado Hotel



Alvarado Hotel, trackage facade, 1920
Photograph of drawing by M. D. Jenkins for Fred Harvey
Ward Hicks Collection, PA1982.180.243

Architecture

The Alvarado Hotel, Fred Harvey's flagship hotel on the Santa Fe line, must have been an impressive sight to the early residents of Albuquerque. Stretching the length of two blocks on First Street just south of Central Avenue, this massive structure was constructed to impress. The design of the hotel reflected key architectural elements of the day while also embracing aspects that were truly New Mexican.

In 1890, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad adopted Mission Revival style architecture for all its depots and hotels. The movement, popularized in the late 19th century, sought to emulate the exteriors of California missions. Today, a number of public and private buildings throughout the West

reflect this style.

Santa Fe Railway architect, Charles Whittlesley incorporated a number of Mission elements into the exterior of the Alvarado. The massive walls were finished in a gray stucco, topped with a red clay tile that must have stood out among the predominately wood-frame buildings of the downtown.

The exterior also included some of the most recognizable elements of the Mission Style. *Companarios*, facades used for hanging church bells, and *espanadas*, four sided bell towers with open arches, were main features of the Alvarado (see picture above).

Interior Design

The interiors also reflected the trends of the day. The Arts and Crafts movement, popular in Britain, Canada, and the United States, stressed the importance of authentic, hand-crafted designs. A direct reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the movement sought to revive traditional crafts. In the United States, the movement extended to architecture, interior design, and decorative arts (furniture, etc). One of its most well known disciples was architect Frank Lloyd Wright.

In the 1920s architect Mary Colter was hired to re-decorate the lobbies and lunchrooms of the Al-

varado. Colter, schooled in the latest styles, incorporated both prevailing and native styles into the design of the Alvarado. Navajo rugs and Pueblo pots were interspersed with heavy wood Craftsman benches. In the lunchroom Mexican tile and copper pots were side by side with Art Deco inspired barstools of cast bronze with leather seats. (See next page.)

Not merely a hotel, the Alvarado became the unique destination son Ford Harvey envisioned "To the man who can spare a few hours out of four days the twenty-minute stops may be a pleasant relaxation with a glimpse at the country and the people."

BIOGRAPHY

Architect: Mary Colter

Mary Colter was an innovative, creative, and hard-working architect at the beginning of the 20th century. Through mutual acquaintances, Fred Harvey hired Mary Colter to design the interior of the Indian Building at the Alvarado Hotel. The rest was history. Harvey was so impressed with her design, he hired her as the chief decorator and architect for the Harvey properties.

Mary Colter was born in Pittsburgh in 1869. When her father died, Mary, her mother, and her sister were left to provide for themselves. Mary decided to pursue a career in order to help her family. She went to the California School of Design in San Francisco. After interning at a San Francisco architecture firm, Mary returned to St. Paul and taught mechanical drawing at a high school. Soon after, she was hired by the Fred Harvey Company. While working for Fred Harvey, Colter designed some of her most famous works, including four National Historic Landmark buildings.

Colter was an influential architect and designer. Her intention was to create a cohesive unity among interior, exterior, and landscape. She often used locally indigenous materials. This



Mary Colter at age 50
Mary Larkin Smith Collection, 16951,
Courtesy Grand Canyon National Park

blending of the natural landscape with architecture was influential not only to consequent national park architecture, but also to many architects and this concept continues to this day. She was also known for incorporating Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Mexican designs in her work in order to promote reverence for uniquely American forms. Rather than simply copy existing buildings and designs, Colter strived to "recreate."



Lunchroom with Harvey Girls, ca. 1925
Ward Hicks Collection, Gift of John Airy,
PA1982.180.278

The Indian Department

In New Mexico, the Fred Harvey Company saw the potential to create a destination experience for their travelers. Harvey travelers tended to be middle or upper class, well-educated city dwellers from the Midwest and East. Rural New Mexico, with its striking natural landscape and Hispanic and Native American traditions was a welcome escape from their urban environment.

The Indian and Mexican buildings were located on the southern end of the Alvarado Hotel. Known as the "Harvey museum," it primarily housed a collection of contemporary Native American and archaeological materials. Native American artisans also lined both sides of the entrance to sell and demonstrate their work.

The works of a number of celebrated artists were sold at in the salesroom, including those by Hopi-Tewa potter Nampeyo, and Maria and Julian Martinez of Santo Domingo Pueblo. The Indian Building included a demonstration room with looms for



Vendors in front of the Indian Building, ca. 1930
Ward Hicks Collection, Gift of John Airy,
PA1982.180.217

Navajo weavers and a table for silversmiths to work.

Tom and Elle of Ganado were regular demonstrators at the Alvarado, spending several months at a time in Albuquerque. Elle, *Asdzaatichi* in Diné, was a renowned Navajo weaver who produced special weavings for Presidents Roosevelt and Taft on their visits to Albuquerque.

Indian Detours

In the effort to gain more tourist time and dollars the Harvey Company developed automobile sightseeing tours. The Indian Detours program, as it was known, brought tourists to nearby pueblos, archaeology sites, and natural landscapes. Originally headquartered at the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, the program included a female tour guide, known as a courier, and a driver who escorted tourists to their destinations.

Erna Fergusson, a historian of local repute, initially held the role of chief courier, training and recruiting couriers. Winifred Shuler, later the wife of Taos painter Oscar Berninghaus, took over the role, instituting a new outfit for couriers that reflected a southwest chic. Navajo style velveteen blouses, skirts, concha belts and Navajo or Zuni necklaces were paired with comfortable boots or shoes and outing hats. The Indian Detours experience you brought home to your friends and family was one of a unique and exotic place.

The promotion of Native American and to a lesser



Indian Detours luggage decal, late 1920s
Gift of Nancy Tucker,
PC2006.57.2

extent Hispanic, tourism had mixed results for the local population. By all accounts, Fred Harvey paid well for high quality traditional art, injecting cash into cash poor communities. The success of his tourism business, however, relied on a stereotypical view of the people and their surroundings. The vision he created of the Southwest is so powerful that we still see it today in merchandise and magazines geared to tourists.

BIOGRAPHY

Artist and Demonstrator: Asdzaatichi (Elle of Ganado)

Elle worked for the Fred Harvey Company for over 20 years. She demonstrated weaving at the Alvarado Hotel, the Hopi House at the Grand Canyon and fairs in San Francisco and Chicago. She was always accompanied by her husband Tom (*Naaltsous Neiheye*) who served as an interpreter for her. He was fluent in English, Spanish, Diné, and Hopi languages.

Navajo sources suggest Elle participated in the Long Walk and spent time in captivity at the Bosque Redondo. Research into Elle's family background points to her father being of either Anglo or Mexican descent.

Over her twenty years with the Harvey Company thousands of tourists watched as she carded, spun and wove Navajo blankets. Elle created natural dyes for the blankets made from plants gathered on the reservation. Designs were often woven in black, white, gray, brown, and red yarns.

Her image was the most advertised of any person associated with the Fred Harvey Company. She passed away sometime in late 1923 or early 1924.



Elle of Ganado, c. 1906
Courtesy Library of Congress

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COMING NEXT

Experimental Geography

June 28-September 20, 2009

The Albuquerque Museum OF ART AND HISTORY

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The Albuquerque Museum is a Division
of the Cultural Services Department of
the City of Albuquerque.
Martin J. Chávez, Mayor



Cover Image: Locomotive at the Alvarado, 1925
Photographer: Daphne Cobb
Ward Hicks Collection, Gift of John Airy
PA1982.181.96