

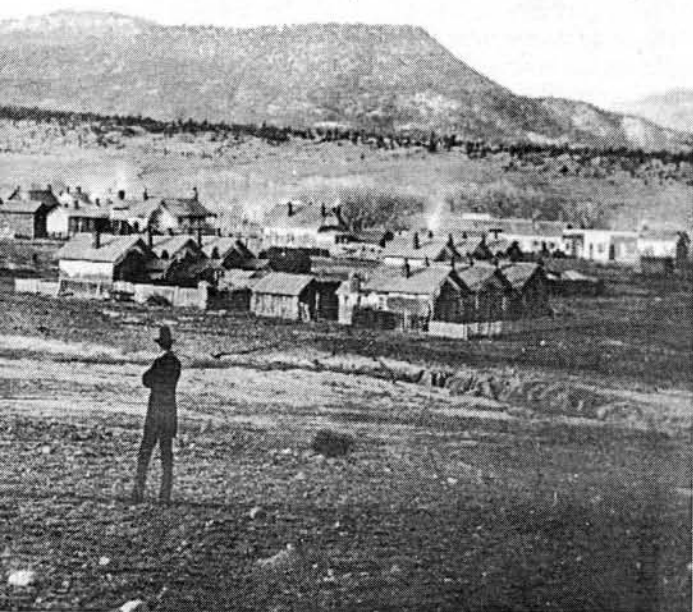


## A Walking Tour of Old Town



Cimarron, New Mexico

in the 1800s



For Lucien Maxwell (1818-1875), maintaining a land grant of 1,714,765 acres meant colonization: dwellings had to be erected and land cultivated. In the spring of 1848, Maxwell chose to live along the Rayado River eleven miles to the south. Despite frequent and often serious Indian attacks, the colony of settlers raised hay and wheat, pastured cattle, sheep and horses, and prospered. Ten years later Maxwell handed over the Rayado land to his brother-in-law Jesus Abreu (1823-1900) and construction was begun on what was called "Maxwell's Ranche" near the banks of the Cimarron



River. By 1858 his Cimarron house had been constructed by John "Uncle Jack" Holland, who had also built the home at Rayado. The west (left) section of the residence contained living quarters with the east section reserved for entertaining visitors, that is, for drinking, dancing and gambling. In January, 1888, a fire destroyed the eastern portion of the house with the remainder burning in 1924. The present home was built in the 1950s.

Charles "Carlos" Beaubien (1800-1864) was a French Canadian who moved to Taos in 1823, opening a dry goods and trapper supply store. He later married Maria Pabla Lobato (1811-1864), the daughter of a prominent local family, and became a Mexican citizen in 1827. By 1840 he had become an influential Taos merchant with many large landholdings. Lucien Maxwell was a fur trapper from Illinois who had traveled to Taos, the fur trading capital of the Southwest, during the winter of 1841-2. There he met Beaubien and the two quickly became friends. An emotional bond soon developed with Beaubien's eldest daughter, Luz (1829-1900), and Lucien and Luz were married in 1844. Luz has been described as "a beautiful woman, with large hazel eyes, dark hair, and complexion like milk and roses." Together the Maxwells had nine children, among them a daughter Verenisa (1860-1864) who is buried here along with her grandmother, Pabla Beaubien.

From late 1821, when William Becknell left Franklin, Missouri, with pack mules weighed down with American goods and headed for the exciting yet dangerous border town of Santa Fe, until 1880, when the first locomotive followed, warehouses and supply stores were much in demand along the Santa Fe Trail. M. R. Whiteman built this house as a freighting depot for the Andres Daws stage line. It was later used by the Dold Brothers (also spelled Dahl), who operated a freight line between Missouri and Las Vegas, New Mexico. In 1861 it became a Trading Post and Indian Agency and served as a commissary for Lucien Maxwell. In 1873 it was a general store run by Henry Miller Porter and Asa F. Middaugh and two years later it had become the office of the new *Cimarron News and Press*. The Lail family has used it as a



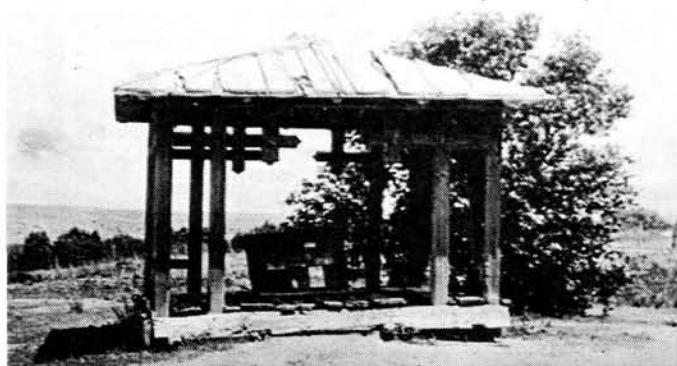
residence since 1908. The original adobe structure, severely damaged by fire in 1939, is mentioned in Zane Grey's book *Fighting Caravans*.

4

#### Plaza & Well

1871

The well was dug in 1871 and used by freighters hauling goods from the Kansas Territory to Fort Union. The gazebo over the well was reconstructed in 1962 based on this picture of the original structure. The branch of the Santa Fe Trail that entered Cimarron from the northeast crossed the river and moved up the bank just east



of the Dold Brothers' Warehouse. The plaza served as an overnight campground for trail-bound wayfarers and a watering place for their horses and oxen until 1880, when the arrival of the railroad in Santa Fe relegated the Trail to history.

5

#### National Hotel

1858

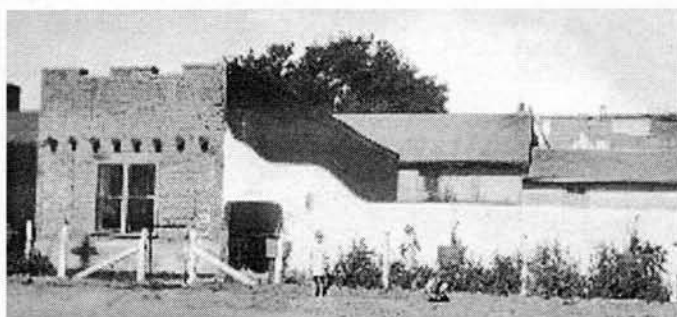
Constructed of adobe in 1858, the original building was remodeled in 1871 for the family of the Secretary-Treasurer of the Maxwell Land Grant & Railway Co., Henry Tinson of London, England. It was later converted for use as a hotel under the management of John McCullough, whose niece Dora married "gunslinger" Clay Allison in 1881. Today the hotel serves as a private residence.

6

#### Carey Hardware & Livery Stable

1872

The Carey Building was built in the 1870s to house a hardware store and livery stable. It has also served as an office for *The Cimarron News and Press* and, since the 1920s, as a residence. The



foundation of a house owned by Dr. R. H. Longwill in 1875 is still visible in the yard. Longwill served as the local Indian Agent prior to his election as probate judge and Cimarron representative for the contemptible Santa Fe Ring. When he was accused in court of conspiring to kill Rev. F. J. Tolby, Clay Allison and a "posse" chased Longwill all the way to Fort Union on horse-back. Reaching the fort just ahead of his pursuers, Longwill found safety and waited until they had left before continuing on to Santa Fe, never to return to Cimarron.

**7 St. James Hotel 1872-80**

Serving as cook for General Grant and President Abraham Lincoln during the Civil War, Henri Lambert (1838-1913) drifted west in 1864 in the hopes of finding gold. Initially settling in Elizabethtown, New Mexico, Lambert moved to Cimarron in 1872 and built this hotel at a cost of \$17,000. Its saloon, restaurant and



43 rooms were witnesses to at least 26 murders during Cimarron's wilder days, most committed in "self defense." Clay Allison, Black Jack Ketchum and Buffalo Bill Cody have all left their mark on the St. James, as attested by the numerous bullet holes in the tin ceiling of the main dining room, where the original entrance can be seen.

**8 Barlow, Sanderson & Company Stage Office 1870**

In July of 1850, the first government-sanctioned mail delivery route was inaugurated between Independence, Missouri, and Santa Fe using the Cimarron Cutoff branch of the Trail. The monthly stage also carried passengers and baggage for a one-way summer fare of \$100 for the three-and-a-half week trip. The letter rate was three cents. Increasing Indian troubles and irregular service led to a change in the route to the Mountain Branch over Raton Pass in 1861, stopping at Maxwell's ranch in Cimarron. In 1866, Barlow, Sanderson & Company obtained the route. The discovery of gold on Baldy Mountain that same year led to the opening of a branch line through the canyon from Cimarron to Virginia City two years later. This building was used as the local stage office from 1870 until the mail route closed in 1880 with the coming of the railroad to Springer, 25 miles to the east. It was then used as a Wells Fargo Office and later converted into a mercantile store in the early 1900s.

**9 Schwenk's Hall 1854**

Originally built in 1854 as a brewery, Henry Schwenk bought the property in 1875 and turned it into a gambling house and saloon. It soon rivaled Maxwell's house as the best place to win - or lose - a fortune overnight. Just to the south of Schwenk's Hall was the Canyon Lunch, managed by Fred Lambert, town marshal and son of St. James Hotel owner Henry Lambert. These buildings have seen a variety of uses, serving as a community meeting place, mercantile store, gas station and garage, and tourist court. Presently the complex is used as a residence.



**10** **Colfax County Courthouse** **1872**

The discovery of gold on the slopes of Baldy Mountain in 1867 led to rapid growth in Moreno Valley and the distance from the county seat at Mora prompted the state legislature to organize a new county. On January 25, 1869, the County of Colfax, named for Schuyler Colfax, Vice-President of the United States from 1869-1873, was established with the county seat at Elizabethtown. A year later "E-town" became the first incorporated town in New Mexico but when there proved to be less gold, and people, than originally anticipated, the county seat was moved in 1872 to Cimarron, which had recently become a stop on the Barlow, Sanderson & Company stage line. This building was built in 1872 and used as the Colfax County Courthouse for several years, followed by a drafting office, school, residence and, presently, the Masonic Lodge. In 1882, the county seat was moved again, this time to the railroad town of Springer. Raton, the largest community in Colfax County, became the final destination of the county seat in 1897.

**11** **Aztec Grist Mill** **1860-4**

In 1861, the Indian Agency previously located in Taos was moved to Cimarron. Nearby, twelve hundred acres of grant land were "reserved" for 1500 local Utes and Jicarilla Apaches. Originally built to provide wheat and corn flour for local residents and soldiers, the Aztec Mill now served as a staging ground for dispensing blankets, meat, flour, grain and other rations to Indians and local citizens. Built at a cost of \$48,000, by 1864 the mill was producing 44 barrels of flour daily. However, the 1867 gold rush on Baldy led to a large influx of people and the treatment of Indians suffered. Maxwell's sale of the Grant to an English company in 1870 further aggravated the problem. Troubles came to a head in 1875 when a small skirmish occurred between the Indian Agent and a band of rowdy Indians. Shots were exchanged as agency employees quickly ducked inside the Mill. The Indian Agent and several Indians were wounded and the one Indian arrested was later killed in a scuffle in the town jail. Government troops quickly defused the situation but in 1876 the Cimarron agency was closed and the Indians moved onto reservations in northwestern New Mexico and Colorado. Particularly unusual for the time is the waterwheel located inside on the ground floor, which allowed the mill to operate year-round.

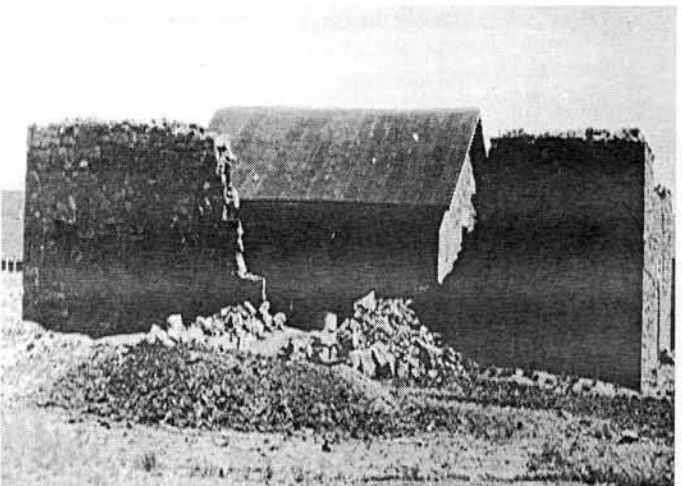


The Immaculate Conception Church was built in 1864 as a gift from Lucien and Luz Maxwell in memory of their deceased children, Julian and Verenisa (who is buried near the plaza). Dedicated by the first Bishop of Santa Fe, Jean Baptiste Lamy, the church was a mission attached to the parish of La Junta (Watrous). By 1873, the church was made a parish with Elizabethtown and Fort Union as missions placed under its care. When Father Antonio Fourchegu, who first lived in the Abreu home at Rayado and moved to Cimarron when the town outgrew Rayado, was transferred away in 1875, the church again became a mission, this time under the parish of St. Joseph's Church in Springer. In 1879 the church once more became a parish responsible for missions from the south at Ocate to the Colorado line. At this time a new building was built and Archbishop Lamy was given a deed to the property by The Maxwell Land Grant & Railway Company for one dollar.



Four years later Cimarron is listed as a mission of the Springer parish. The church was enlarged in 1909 and the new bell and belltower were dedicated the following year, with restoration performed in 2004. Cimarron finally became a parish again in 1954 and has remained so ever since, serving both the churches in Eagle Nest and Black Lake as well as the Chapel of the Sacred Heart in Rayado. The Rayado Chapel was built around 1902 by Jesus Abreu's wife, Petra Beaubien, and dedicated two years later.

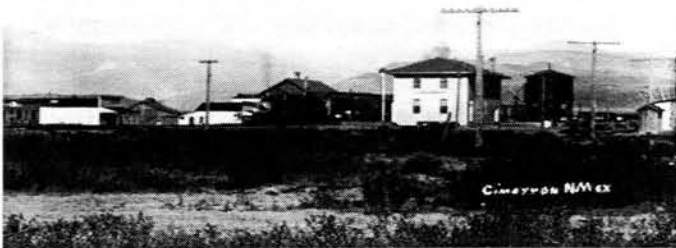
*The Cimarron News and Press* of Sept. 14, 1872, reported that the contract for the construction of a new jail was given to Msrs. Donoghue and White for masonry and carpentry work. Surrounding the jail was an outer stone wall 10 feet high and 4 feet thick, the foundation of which can still be seen. A jailbreak in the early 1900s resulted in the dynamiting of a huge gap in the outer wall. The southeast corner of the building is believed to have been the sheriff's office. The jail was in use until the early 1960s and was renovated in 1998.



In 1870, wealthy yet tired of the burden involved in running his vast ranch, Maxwell sold the Grant to a group of English capitalists for \$1,350,000. The English constructed four sets of three buildings to house company personnel using adobe brought up from Rayado. This house was used by the foreman. When the English company took over the Grant, they were confronted with two concerns: how to attract enough investors to pay for the taxes, and how to get rid of the numerous settlers and Indians who had been squatting on the land. The means used in the evictions led to the Colfax County War of 1875. These troubles, and a failure to pay territorial taxes, forced the company to reorganize in 1880, this time around Dutch stockholders with the hope of attracting a railroad line to Cimarron. Further speculation in cattle, lumber and coal forced a second reorganization under the name of The Maxwell Land Grant Company in 1888. Eventually all debts were paid either through income from the Aztec gold mine on Baldy or by selling off part of the holdings.



Cimarron did receive a railroad line in 1906 with an extension to Ute Park completed the following year (the station is shown below). Expecting the railroad to go all the way to Taos, a tunnel was blasted through rock south of Eagle Nest Dam. The line was never finished and by 1941 all rail operations in the area had ceased with the track and locomotives sold for scrap.



Today, five private ranches comprise the bulk of the former Maxwell Land Grant: the Chase, CS, Vermejo Park (or WS), UU Bar, and Philmont Scout Ranches, with additional parts (the Barker and Colin Neblett Wildlife Areas and the Valle Vidal Unit) managed by the BLM or National Forest Service.

After completing the Walking Tour of Old Town, visit the nearby Cimarron Cemetery as well as the historic site of Rayado, eleven miles south on Highway 21. Rayado is operated by the Philmont Scout Ranch and is open as an interpretive camp to the public daily during the summer months. For a more detailed historical account, please refer to the accompanying pamphlet "A Brief History of the Village of Cimarron." Additional information including pictures and historical papers on the Cimarron area is available for download on our website: [www.cimarronnm.com](http://www.cimarronnm.com).

The Walking Tour of Old Town was sponsored by the State of New Mexico Historic Preservation Division and the New Mexico State Highway and Transportation Department.

Cimarron Chamber of Commerce  
P. O. Box 604, Cimarron, NM 87714  
(575)376-2417

©2008 Gene Lamm and The Cimarron Historical Society

