

Black Mountain Camp Profile

Name of Camp: Black Mountain

Time Period: 1866

Camp Theme: Post Civil War Outpost, Mountain Living

Significance in American and Local History:

The time after any war leaves many people displaced and at loose ends, not the least of these are often the soldiers. When the Civil War was over, the volunteers went home and the army reorganized to a smaller "regular" army and demoted many of the higher ranks that had been bestowed during the battle years. Salaries were slashed and many regulars took this opportunity to leave. Those who did not have strong family ties or who liked it where they had last served stayed on or wandered or just took some time out to regroup themselves and their lives for whatever was next.

Fort Union, which is located on the Old Santa Fe Trail about 75 miles away between Las Vegas and Watrous, New Mexico, was a principle supply station for forts in the Southwest as well as a base for companies who engaged in combat with the Plains Indians. After 1865 many men who had served at Fort Union were found in this area of New Mexico. A number were in the Elizabethtown area seeking their fortunes in gold. Others became citizens of the surrounding communities. Most had come to New Mexico as members of the regular army before the war and some stayed for a few months, years, or even lifetimes after.

Characters.

Former soldiers who were discharged from the Union army when it downsized after the Civil War. They got to know each while serving together at Fort Union. They have various backgrounds in terms of where they are from and why they are here that can be adapted to your experience so long as you are sure to be accurate historically and geographically.

Captain. He was not really a captain. He was a lieutenant. He really wanted to attain the higher rank, but opportunities for advancement at Fort Union were few since it was not located near the principle battle areas of the Civil War. He plays the part of a captain though and the other men go along with it.

Corporal. He arrived at Fort Union with General Carleton and the California Column, too late for the Battle at Glorieta. Instead he saw action between Union troops and the Kiowa and Comanche who repeatedly raided supply routes during the war. When he had a chance to learn blacksmithing at the fort, he apprenticed and now he excels at it.

Private. He was always being busted for some infringement of the rules. Not a bad guy, in fact a lot of fun ... maybe too much fun, and always in trouble with the Fort Union authorities. He thought he'd head for the gold fields around Elizabethtown after he was discharged, but showed up one day at Black Mountain and stayed on.

General Surgeon "Doc". He had volunteered to serve in the field hospitals during the war but never expected to be sent to New Mexico Territory. He grew to like it though, especially in the mountains. He has had enough of dressing wounds, setting broken legs, and nursing soldiers back to health, not to mention the several amputations that he made during the battle of Glorieta Pass in 1862.

Quick-Step. You figure out how he got that nick name. A sight to behold marching on the parade ground or in the garrison's band? Running the other way in a skirmish, hiking up the mountain trails, jumping out of range from a snake, or maybe with the ladies on the dance floor?? Or, it could change from day to day.

Historical Background of Camp.

This part of Philmont was at one time part of a large and famous land grant in New Mexico that was originally the Beaubien-Miranda Grant. It was granted to a French Canadian immigrant from Taos named Charles (or Carlos) Beaubien and a partner Guadalupe Miranda by the governor of New Mexico during the time that New Mexico was a colony of Mexico. Beaubien was a resident of Taos where he was a supplier for the fur business and had married Maria Paula Lobato (or Lovato). When the United States claimed New Mexico in 1846, Senor Miranda moved to Mexico because he was not in sympathy with the American occupation. Mr. Beaubien however stayed and continued to prosper as a result. One of his daughters Petra married Jesus Abreu, Sr., and they settled at Rayado settlement in 1858 or 1859, after Lucien Maxwell and his wife, Petra's sister Luz, moved from there to Cimarron. Maxwell bought out Miranda's half of the land grant and eventually acquired Beaubien's half by purchase. It was known then as the Maxwell Land Grant.

Relevant Dates and Events.

1000-1700 -- Ponil People inhabit the area where the Plains meet the mountains, now Philmont. They are followed by the Jicarillo Apache, Moache Ute, and, the Kiowa, Cheyenne and Comanche peoples who hunt, camp and use the land seasonally into the mid-1800's.

1598 -- Don Juan Onate brought the first settlers to New Mexico from Mexico, then a colony of Spain.

1821--- Mexico became independent of Spain – New Mexicans became citizens of Mexico. Trade with the United States began on the Santa Fe Trail from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico.

1846 --- General Steven Kearny and troops arrived in Las Vegas, New Mexico, and from a rooftop facing the plaza there claimed New Mexico as a territory of the United States.

1847 -- Rebellion against American occupation in Taos results in the assassination of the newly appointed governor Charles Bent and many of his family and friends among them

Ramon Abreu's uncle.

1848 -- The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo transfers New Mexico to United States and guarantees that the United States will honor Spanish and Mexico land grants. Lucien Maxwell begins Rayado settlement.

1851 -- Fort Union established on Santa Fe Trail; it was a major supply center for the US Army in the SW and became a large factor in the economics of the area. Forage for animals, food for soldiers, drivers and tenders of stock, etc. created jobs and market for agricultural goods.

1857 -- Maxwell moves to Cimarron River settlement. Jesus and Petra Abreu move to the Rayado settlement.

1861-1867 -- US Indian Agency established and maintained near Cimarron for the Utes and Jicarillo Apaches. It closed due to increased settlement and influx of gold seekers

Present Time at Black Mountain.

The location is part of the Maxwell Land Grant -- huge body of land in Northeastern New Mexico that was controlled by Lucien B. Maxwell who lives in Cimarron north of the present St. James Hotel. Jesus Abreu and his wife the Petra Beaubien (sister to Luz Beaubien Maxwell, Lucien's wife) run a ranch and Santa Fe Trail way-station from Rayado. Gold has recently been discovered on the west side of Baldy Mountain and a boom town named Elizabethtown has sprung up to accommodate all the gold seekers.

Future Developments.

In 1871 Maxwell sold his entire holdings to a group of foreign investors. Anyone living on the land, even if they had had Maxwell's permission before, were now considered "squatters" and told they must pay the Maxwell Land Company for the land or leave. Conflicts about ownership and its rights went on into the 20th century.

Characters' Clothing and Appearance.

Remnants and partial left over clothing from their Union uniforms mixed in with other practical backcountry clothing of the era. Long sleeve, collarless shirts in white, light blue, and beige. Henley undershirts or white long johns. Vests and coats .. mostly from old uniforms. Pull on boots, both tall and shorter, and brogans. Hats: Some uniform type, some broad brimmed and slouchy brim... wool or straw. Work gloves. Neckerchiefs and handkerchiefs. Heavy white or light colored socks.

Language. Appropriate to the area of the United States from which each character has come. Avoid "hillbilly" accents. Each character is a distinct individual. Your normal speech, without modern references or 21st century slang, is the most believable choice. The language of that era was generally more formal and flowery than ours today.

Props. Pocket watches; pastime tools, ie. wood whittling, musical instruments; program equipment and tools.

Activities for Campers. Black powder rifles, blacksmithing, mountain living, informal and occasional sing alongs, drill.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities as Historical Interpreters.

Greeting crews -- In character, first person interp

Check-in -- Out of character, third person interp

Activity Leaders -- In character as much as is feasible.

Campers' Roles.

People passing through the area who stumbled onto the camp.

Positive Values to the Depicted at Black Mountain.

- Skillful adaptation to life in a wilderness setting
- Cooperation within the group
- Importance of safety and clear thinking in the outdoors
- Good humor
- Ability to be content with one's own company, thoughts and skills

References and Research.

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