

OTHER VIEWS

Crossing the world to visit La Junta

Note: Pauline Morrison visited La Junta from her home country of Australia. She made the journey solely to visit Bent's Old Fort.

On the 4th of August, 2009 I arrived in America. I had come to visit Bent's Fort near the city of La Junta, Colorado.

I had read many books on the history of William Bent. Over the years I felt a calling to come and see the fort and district he had lived in.

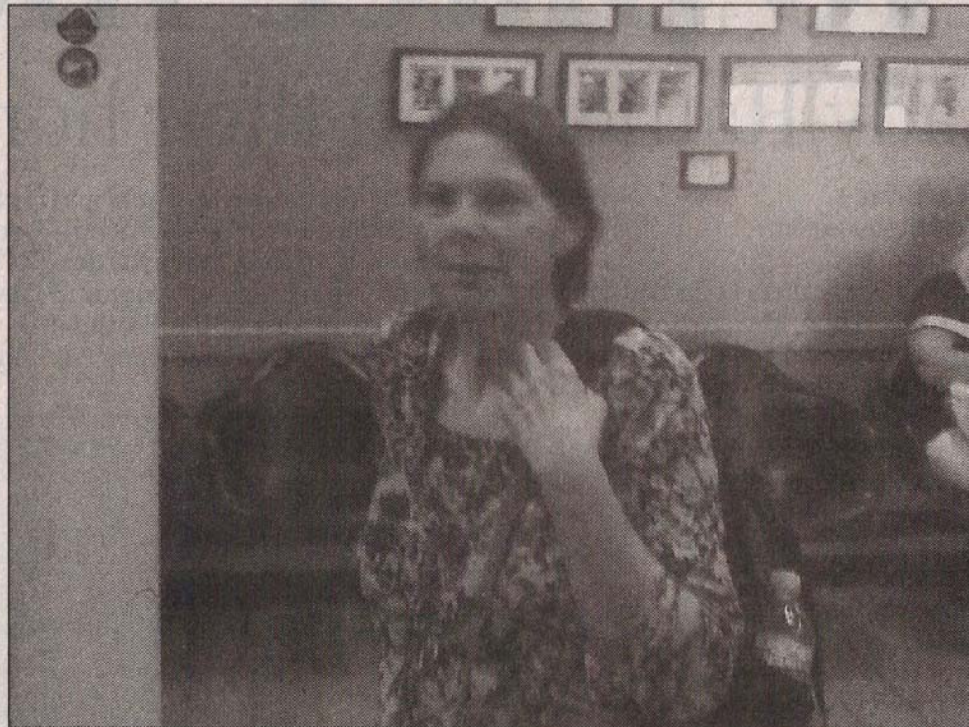
When I arrived at the Denver Airport Hotel I was shocked that no one had ever heard of La Junta. So after finding a map they said it was miles away. Why would I want to go there. I explained to them about Bents Fort which they also had never heard of.

That evening I found there were no trains to La Junta. The greyhound bus only went as far as Pueblo and two small aircraft places did not land there.

Next morning I rang a local bus service in Pueblo. They also did not go to La Junta.

There were no rental cars available near La Junta, due to a hail storm that had damaged all rental cars.

I did not want to hire a car from Denver as I was suffering from jet lag. I did not think it safe to drive



COURTESY PHOTO/DAVID SLAUGHTER

Pauline Morrison visited La Junta from Australia in August.

so far in a way I was unaccustomed to.

The clerk said he knew a long distance driver who could take me. This driver wanted \$800 but came down to \$500. He said it was a long way and would take three hours. I agreed, as there was no alternative.

When I arrived in La Junta I learned there was no public trans-

port. The manager of my motel was kind enough to take me shopping, then to the Chamber of Commerce.

There I met Beth Klob who told me Bent's Fort was eight miles from La Junta. I said I would walk but she said she could loan me a bike.

I will always be grateful to Beth for the loan of her bike. Next morning it took less than an hour to ride

to the fort. I spent a few hours in this remarkable building. It was well worth the journey from Australia.

The journey back to La Junta took nearly three hours as I had a headwind that was very strong.

The next day I was talking to a lady in a cafe. She told me how her relatives would like to come to see the fort and Koshare Museum, but there was no transport. They want to come on the train.

That afternoon I walked to the Koshare Museum. It was a long walk. I met a family who had also had a long walk. Their children were very tired.

I left La Junta by train and found there were people on the train who would have loved to have stopped in La Junta, if there had been transport to see the fort.

I would recommend some sort of shuttle to the fort, also information to be sent to motels in Denver about the history surrounding La Junta.

On the net La Junta is called the big smile people, city. I found everyone very helpful and kind.

I hope one day the fort will be accessible to all people as it is an important part of American History.

Pauline Morrison