



LA FONDA 1919-PRESENT

La Fonda History
Presentation



THE OLDEST LODGING CORNER IN THE U.S.

❖ The corner of San Francisco and Old Santa Fe Trail in Santa Fe, New Mexico is the oldest hotel corner in the United States. Some say the first Fonda was built on this corner in 1609, but there are no records to show that effect. It is known, however, through old Spanish documents, that a Fonda or Inn, or tavern, has stood on this corner for hundreds of years.

THE EXCHANGE HOTEL





THE EXCHANGE HOTEL

1848 The Fonda is named U.S. Hotel

Approximately 1858 becomes The Exchange Hotel

In 1919 The Exchange is torn down to build

La Fonda

EVERYTHING CHANGED

❖ The sleeping frontier capital of Santa Fe transformed abruptly in 1880. The city, already a vibrant mix of cultures, jolted suddenly into the industrial age when it was inundated with hordes of newcomers from the East. The freshly laid tracks of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway provided easy access to the Wild West and changed the city almost overnight.





DEMOLOTION OF THE EXCHANGE HOTEL

- ❖ April 1919 there was a gigantic Victory Bond Rally
- ❖ All shops were closed and citizens congregated on the plaza to hear speeches by local dignitaries and World War 1 Heroes
- ❖ The hit of the rally was a two-man tank called a “Mud Puppy”
- ❖ On the sale of a war bond of \$100 or more, the tank was used to knock down the Exchange Hotel
- ❖ This cleared the path to build the original La Fonda

1919 MUD PUPPY

Exchange Hotel Demolished

❖ Actual photo of a World War I Mud Puppy tank driving into the Exchange Hotel to tear it down to build La Fonda.

1919 Mud Puppy



CITIZENS BUILD LA FONDA

- ❖ In 1919 the Santa Fe Building Corporation was created and 4,000 shares of stock were sold to the citizens of Santa Fe for \$50 each
- ❖ Rapp, Rapp & Hendrickson based in Trinidad Colorado was hired to design and build the original La Fonda
- ❖ A Mud Puppy from WWI was used to demolish the Exchange
- ❖ La Fonda opened December 30, 1922
- ❖ Opened for two years then closed for two years

NOTABLE COMMISSIONS

- Chaves County Courthouse, Roswell, Chaves County, New Mexico, 1911
- La Fonda Hotel, 1921–1922¹⁶¹
- Las Animas County Court House, Trinidad, Las Animas County, Colorado, 1912
- New Mexico Building at the Panama–California Exposition, San Diego, California, 1915
- New Mexico Military Institute (multiple buildings), Roswell, beginning 1907
- New Mexico Museum of Art, 1917
- New Mexico State Building, Saint Louis World's Fair, St. Louis, Missouri, 1904
- New Mexico Territorial Capitol, 1903 (no longer extant, though parts of it can still be found inside the Bataan Building)
- New Mexico Territorial Executive Mansion, 1908 (no longer extant)
- Gross, Kelly, and Company Warehouse, built in 1913, in the Santa Fe Historic District
- First Christian Church of Trinidad, Colorado, 1922
- Fox West Theatre, Trinidad, Las Animas County, Colorado, 1908
- Temple Aaron, Trinidad, Colorado, 1889







LA FONDA SELLS

- ❖ May 1, 1925 La Fonda is sold to the Atchison Topeka Santa Fe Railroad for the sum of \$165,000 for the land and hotel
- ❖ La Fonda is immediately leased to the Fred Harvey Company
- ❖ AT&SF has 40 year relationship with Fred Harvey Company in 1926



LA FONDA 1926

- ❖ La Fonda was quickly overhauled to make it Harvey worthy for the 1926 tourist season
- ❖ New staff was brought in from other Harvey locations
- ❖ Dining rooms got new linens, silver, stemware and paint
- ❖ The only thing kept was the name: La Fonda



PIONEER OF THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

I'm going to take you back in time 170 years

Who created the “Hospitality Industry”?

Who created the first “Brand” before there were even Brands like

“Coke, Mc Donald’s, Ford”

Conrad Hilton??? NO

Walt Disney? NO

Bill Marriott?? NO

Then Who???

FRED HARVEY



HISTORY OF FRED HARVEY

- ❖ Immigrated to U.S from England in 1853 at the age of 17
- ❖ Worked in restaurants in New York
- ❖ He took a job in New York as a pot scrubber and busboy at Smith and McNell's restaurant, a popular New York city restaurant.
- ❖ Harvey quickly worked his way up to busboy, waiter and line cook. This early entry into the world of food service would have large impacts later in his life.



FRED HARVEY

- ❖ Fred Harvey had a successful career in the railroad industry in the 1860's and 1870's becoming a freight agent
- ❖ Harvey traveled frequently while working for the railroads and found himself deeply dissatisfied with the food one was served while traveling. Most of the time it was inedible, not sufficient time to eat and scraped off the plate for the next brave soul who was a captive patron.

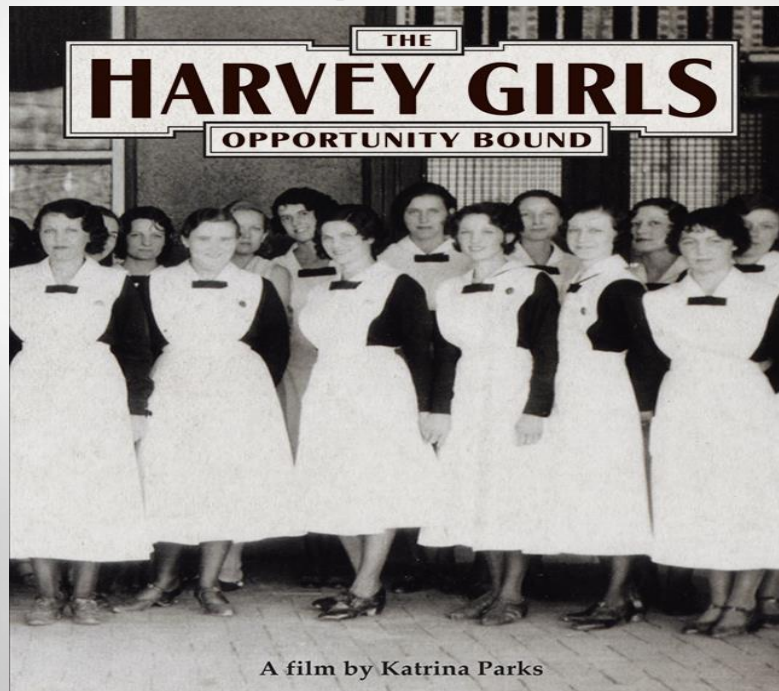
HARVEY HOUSE 1876
TOPEKA KANSAS



FRED HARVEY

- ❖ Harvey company grows very quickly
- ❖ By the late 1880s, there was a Fred Harvey dining facility located every 100 miles along the AT&SF
- ❖ AT&SF agreed to convey fresh meat and produce free-of-charge to any Harvey House via its own private line of refrigerator cars
- ❖ Fred Harvey is credited with creating the first restaurant chain in the U.S. Harvey and his company also became leaders in promoting tourism in the American Southwest in the late 19th century

HARVEY GIRLS



HARVEY GIRLS

- ❖ In 1883, Harvey implemented a policy of employing female only serving staff
- ❖ He sought out single, well-mannered, and educated American ladies, and placed ads in newspapers throughout the east coast and Midwest for single young women, 18-30 years of age, of good character, attractive and intelligent”
- ❖ The ladies were paid \$17.50 a month (approximately \$443 in today's terms) to start, plus room, board, and gratuity, a generous income by the standards of the time
- ❖ Harvey Girls were considered “The First Woman’s Movement”



HARVEY GIRLS

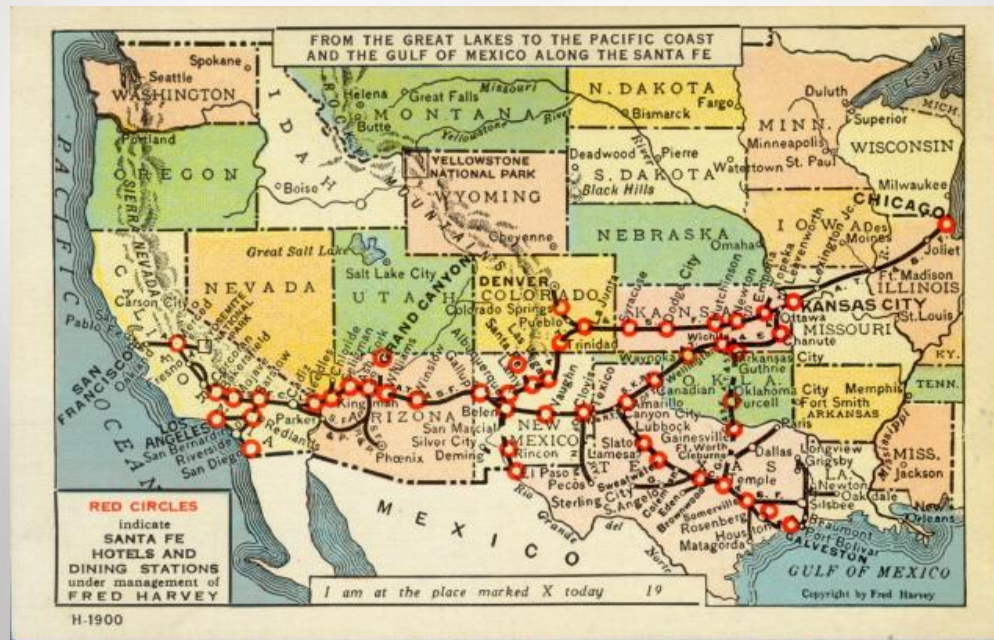
- ❖ There was an estimated 100,000 Harvey Girls between 1883 and 1965
- ❖ Harvey Girls were known to have “Civilized the American Southwest”
- ❖ This legend found its highest expression in *The Harvey Girls*, a 1942 novel by *Samuel Hopkins Adams*, and, more notably, the 1946 MGM musical film of the same name which was inspired by it. The film stars *Judy Garland* and *Angela Landsbury*, and it was directed by *George Sidney*.

A decorative border with intricate floral and scrollwork patterns in a light gray color, framing the central text area.

HARVEY COMPANY GROWS

- ❖ The Harvey Company saw strong growth from 1901-1925
- ❖ Fred Harvey dies February 9th, 1901
- ❖ Fred's son Ford continues the legacy
- ❖ By the mid 1920's the Harvey Company had 7,000 employees was running over 84 Harvey Houses, 25 hotels, dining cars, lunchrooms, newsstands and gift shops in over 80 cities along the Santa Fe

HARVEY COMPANY 1920'S



FOOD PURCHASED BY THE FRED HARVEY COMPANY 1903

❖ Every year the Fred Harvey Company was buying and serving the following



- 6,480,000 eggs
- 300,000 pounds of butter
- 1,000,000 pounds of sugar
- 2,000,000 pounds of beef
- 600,000 pounds of chicken
- 500,000 pounds of ham
- 100,000 pounds of bacon
- 150,000 pounds of lard
- 100,000 pounds of turkey
- 60,000 pounds of duck
- 75 train-car loads of flour- about 3,000,000 pounds
- 88 train-car loads of potatoes- about 2,800,000 pounds
- 300,000 pounds of Chase & Sanborn coffee

ROUTE 66 OPENS INDIAN DETOURS LAUNCH 1926



THREE DAYS AND THREE HUNDRED MILES OF BUNSHINE AND MOUNTAIN AIR, IN A LAND OF UNIQUE HUMAN CONTRASTS AND NATURAL GRANDEUR

INDIAN DETOURS

- ❖ Harvey ordered a lavish fleet of cars and busses known as “Harveycars” or “Pullmans on Wheels”
- ❖ Hired all female tour guide staff known as “Couriers” and they became prototypes of a new type of “Harvey Girl”
- ❖ The first group of detourists arrived May 15th, 1926
- ❖ Indian Detours brought an estimated 50,000 visitors a year to the states three major cities- almost as many people as lived in those cities combined

DETOURS-COURIERS





HARVEY CARS



ROUTE 66 OPENS INDIAN DETOURS LAUNCH 1926



MARY COLTER





MARY COLTER

- ❖ Colter used Hopi, Zuni, Navajo, and Mexican motifs
- ❖ She created a series of landmark hotels and commercial lodges through the southwest, including La Posada, Phantom Ranch, Hopi House, Hermit's Rest, Lookout Studio, Desert View Watchtower, Bright Angel Lodge and design work on El Tovar
- ❖ Mary Colter led the La Fonda expansion from 1926-1929 working the entire project with John Gaw Meem

JOHN GAW MEEM



JOHN GAW MEEM 1894-1983

- ❖ Meem is regarded as one of the most important and influential architects to have worked in New Mexico
- ❖ He is best known for his instrumental role in the development and popularization of the Pueblo Revival style
- ❖ Like many other tuberculosis patients of his time, Meem decided to seek the cure in the dry desert climate of New Mexico. He arrived at the Sun Mount Sanatorium in Santa Fe in the spring of 1920.
- ❖ Dr. Frank Mera- owned and directed Sunmount Sanitorium. It was in this setting that Meem began to develop an interest in architecture and historic preservation.



JOHN GAW MEEM

- ❖ In 1932 the Society for the Preservation and Restoration of New Mexico Mission Churches (CPRNMMC) was created in order to solicit funds with which to build a chapel to be attached to the St. Francis Cathedral
- ❖ In 1933 he was selected as the official architect of the University of New Mexico, a position he would hold until his retirement
- ❖ Meem was head of the Historic American Buildings Survey in New Mexico from 1934 until 1955
- ❖ Meem's influence on the city of Santa Fe was manifold. Not only did he design a large number of the city's most memorable buildings, he also headed the committee which authored the 1957 Historical Zoning Ordinance
- ❖ Meem's office completed a total of 654 commissions, though some of these were not built and others, such as the commission for UNM, included dozens of individual buildings.

LA FONDA EXPANSION





THE DEPRESSION

- ❖ 1929 Stock Market crashes
- ❖ Throughout the depression the Grand Canyon remained crowded
- ❖ Throughout the 1930's many Harvey operations were abandoned
- ❖ Hundreds of Harvey employees were displaced
- ❖ La Fonda remained stable and open through the 1930's

HARVEY GIRLS 1940'S LA FONDA



Palace of the Governors Photo Archives

1940'S

- ❖ World War II began in Europe in September 1939
- ❖ U.S. was still watching and waiting, however, it was like an antidepressant for the U.S. Economy
- ❖ This was especially true for the railroads, which were rediscovered as the only dependable way to transport large numbers of troops and munitions long distances.
- ❖ This was a major resurrection for the Harvey Company

109 EAST PALACE

❖ Oppenheimer and his wife arrived by train on March 15th, 1943 staying temporarily at La Fonda. His secretary, Priscilla Greene, had followed a few days later, accompanied by the Oppenheimer's two-year-old son, Peter and his nurse. A few other members of the team were also staying in town at La Fonda.

❖ Dorothy McKibbin had come to the hotel La Fonda on the afternoon of March 26, 1943 in search of employment. Standing a few feet away in the lobby of La Fonda, Oppenheimer's 23 year old secretary Priscilla Greene watched him work his magic on Dorothy McKibbin. The meeting could not have lasted more than a few minutes, but she had no doubt of the outcome.

❖ When Dorothy McKibbin reported to work at 109 East Palace Avenue on March 27, 1943, the morning after the meeting in the lobby of La Fonda, Oppenheimer was waiting for her on the other side of a shabby screen door. She had sensed from the beginning that this was going to be no ordinary job.




THE SPIES AT LA FONDA

❖ The Manhattan Project had an office at 109 E. Palace Ave. When Oppenheimer and his family first came to town, they stayed at La Fonda and ate all of their meals there, starting a pattern that continued through the project. For this reason, the government immediately infiltrated the hotel staff, and many of the bartenders and cocktail waitresses in La Cantina were undercover agents. So were several of the front desk clerks and various other hotel staff.

1940'S





1950'S

- ❖ This era started a decline for the Fred Harvey Company
- ❖ Increased competition in the restaurant and hotel industry including Howard Johnson Hotels and restaurants
- ❖ Increased government subsidization for air travel and other means of public transportation

1960'S

- ❖ The Fred Harvey Company continues to struggle and further decline
- ❖ The Interstate system opens creating further business decline for the railroad industry and the Harvey Company
- ❖ In 1968 the senior leadership of the Fred Harvey Company sells the company to a large Hawaii based conglomerate called AMFAC
- ❖ La Fonda was not part of this sale, along with many other Harvey businesses

1968 LA FONDA SELLS

- ❖ La Fonda was scheduled to be torn down and turned into a parking lot
- ❖ Sam and Ethel Ballen purchase La Fonda in 1968, rescuing La Fonda financially, just as the Fred Harvey Company did in the 1920's, 1930's and 1940's
- ❖ The next 40 years would be an ongoing rebuilding phase in one of the most iconic historical hotels in the U.S.

WHERE ART & HISTORY MEET





ART OF LA FONDA

- ❖ The art collection of La Fonda on the Plaza began at the hotel's inception and has grown considerably since Sam and Ethel Ballen bought the property in 1968
- ❖ Not only does original art hang in every room, but all of it has a connection to the people who designed, built, and owned the hotel—a collaboration that has made La Fonda a sought-after destination for more than 100 years



FRED HARVEY LEGACY

HOW WAS THE WEST WON???

WITH HOSPITALITY

FRED HARVEY INTRODUCED

AMERICA TO AMERICANS

1930'S MEETING



Rocky Mt. Section
American Water Works Assn.
Santa Fe, N. Mex. Sept. 10-12, 1937.