

AREA HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS:

The first written records of the region were made by the Spanish Conquistadors, who encountered Native American Pueblos when they explored the area in the 16th century. Since that time, the Spanish Empire, Mexico, and the United States (since 1948) have claimed control of the area.

THE SALINAS PUEBLOS MISSION: The area, which is now a national monument including three mission churches (Quarai, Abo, and Gran Quivira), was once a thriving Native American trade community. The Pueblos had a developed economic based civilization, and had superior architecture, agriculture, hunting, and crafts skills. When the Spanish arrived in the area in the early 1600s, they found the remote frontier area ripe for their missionary efforts, and the people valuable for their skilled labor. The three communities would grow for the next few decades to reach 10,000 residents. By the late 1600s, in large part due to epidemics brought by the Spanish, the population was decimated. The remaining Pueblos and Spanish abandoned the communities to never return.

The Gran Quivira Mission is by far the best known of the Salinas pueblos, and is one of the most celebrated ruins in all of the Southwest. It is the largest ruin of any Christian temple that exists in the United States; and there has been the glamor of mystery which adds to its legend. How and when it first received its title of "Gran Quivira" is not known. There are many theories and imaginings to that end. From the days of Coronado's explorations, the name of "Quivira" had been associated with the idea of a great unknown city of wealth and splendor, situated somewhere on the Eastern Plains. It's not at all unlikely that an exploration party, in search of game or gold, traversed the area, and was suddenly amazed by the apparition of an austere ghost city bearing evidence of a large population with great architectural skill and abundant resources. It would have been natural to associate it with childhood stories of the mythical lost city of riches and power, and named the wonder The Gran Quivira – or so one theory goes.

THE BOOM OF PINTO BEANS: In the early 1900s, the central New Mexico area was "The Pinto Bean Capital of the World," with hundreds of homesteaders, employees and workers. It came to a halt during the historical Dust Bowl and drought years of the 30s and 40s. The industry reached its final days by 1950.

CATTLE RANCHING: With the demise of the Pinto Bean era, ranching would become a sustainable, main industry in the area. It took hold after the Civil War, the era of cattle drives, the decline of the open range, and the rise of trains. Southwest ranches would become large, fenced livestock farms, safe from the barbed wire fences that came with westward expansion. The industry has flourished in the region ever since.

AREA HIGHLIGHTS

Welcome to small town life, New Mexico... where the land per capita ratio can't be beat, the pace is tangibly slower, and there's a certain respect for tradition and history. Yet, you'll also find a refreshing blend of progress and diverse options, with plenty of activities, events, and things to do...

There are mountains to climb, ancient sites to explore, local farmers markets, and towns full of hidden treasures. You'll see plenty of ranchers in cowboy hats and working clothes, and discover artful town murals, galleries, museums, and libraries. There are delicious cafes, helpful hardware stores, and eclectic shops with things you didn't know you needed. Plus, you'll find recreation and art centers, yoga classes, unique community events, and a few rodeos. And we can't forget the local ice cream fountain, complete with the swirling stools. It's hard to resist giving one a whirl.

Any place you go, one thing is evident, there's a sense of good-hearted community. People wave, say hello, and look you in the eye. Neighbors are friends, and no one's treated like a stranger. It's easy to feel like you are home, whether you visit for a day, a few years, or longer...

CLIMATE: At an are altitude of 6,200 feet, the climate consists of cool summer nights and easy, breezy summer days. Winter snows are mild and last only in the mountain areas. With the dry, mild climate, you can enjoy the great outdoors year-round.

A look at the typical highs and lows:

January: High 50 / Low 23. **July:** High 90 / Low 58

LOCATION: Almost smack dab in the center of NM, there are a few small towns, and major cities in reach. The ranch is 7 miles north of Claunch township, 20 miles northwest of Corona, 31 miles from Mountainair. It's 120 miles southeast of Albuquerque, and an equal distance to Sante Fe or Roswell.

AREA COMMUNITIES: Mountainair, Corona, and Claunch

Mountainair: An old-town feel with new influences, art, and events

Known as "The Gateway to Ancient Cities," Mountainair has maintained many of its elements from pre-colonization through the railroad days.

Although the town has intentionally kept its Western small town flavor, the community embraces new influences as evident in the murals and displays of art through the town.

Here's a glimpse of what this unique town and area has to offer:

The Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument

The 3 mission churches, Quarai, Abo, and Gran Quivira, offer a look into a unique time in history. Built in the early 1600s, for hundreds of years they have stood as testaments to the Spanish and Pueblo people's early encounters. Today the missions attract many tourists every year. The main park visitor center is located in Mountainair.

Three area properties on the National Registrar of Historic Places

The Dr. Robert J Saul Recreation Center built in 1934 is a beautiful building made of local materials including quarried sandstone and tree-trunk pillars and beams from the nearby mountains. The other property is the Shaffer Hotel on Main Street, and a third is the Rancho Bonito property.

The Manzano Mountain Art Council & Center

Established by a group of artists in 1995. They purchased the historic Mountainair Trading Company and converted the building into a flourishing art center for classes, studios, exhibits, lectures, yoga classes, after-school programs, and musical events.

The most popular event is the Sunflower Festival (or maybe it's the classic car parade...)

The festival features over 100 artists and far more visitors. There's also live music, walking tours, a hat competition, and the town's famous sunflowers. And yes, the parade of classic cars draws a big crowd of attendees *and* cars every year!

Recreational Activities nearby:

Cibola National Forest: Four Forest Districts total 1.6 million acres, plus 2 grasslands districts. Areas are designated for hiking, camping, and day-use picnicking.

Manzano Mountains State Park: Located in the wooded foothills of the Manzanos, 16 miles north of Mountainair. Great for hiking and camping. Attracts visitors from all over.

Salt Lakes: Once mined by a Pueblo group inhabiting Abo and Gran Quivira, the lakes are now usable fishing and swimming areas.

Corona: 20 miles from the Ranch, this small town has all the necessities, and more... You'll find schools, churches, cafes, USPS and local government offices, shops, plus a handful of unique things to do. Here are a few of our favorites:

The Corona Museum & Park: A park with vintage buildings, city heritage displays, gardens, and an arts colony, classes, and event space.

Sloan-Simpson Community Park: A popular town fishing hole and park.

White Oaks Ghost Town (50 miles south): Before it became a ghost town, it was a wild west town with a "reputation," until gold was discovered and it was suddenly put on the map. Eventually the gold went dry, and so did the town. Today, visitors may explore several historic buildings, including the No Scum Allowed Saloon, recently named one of the "Best Cowboy Bars in the West."

Claunch: A township 7 miles away from the ranch, worth mentioning for the town hub – the friendly Post Office/Library/Town Meeting Place, complete with coffee and a sitting area. You can still see remnants from the Pinto Bean glory days, like the "Pinto Bean Elevator and Museum" – which is no longer operational or open.
