NEWS CLOSEUP

OUTPOST RECLAIMED

Civil War "Gibraltar" Begins Restoration

Among the most remote national parks, Dry Tortugas is a speck in the sea 68 miles west of the Florida Keys. Visitors have to go out of their way to get here, making the trek by ferry or seaplane. One would think the place a virtual unknown in the 19th century, but the tiny archipelago loomed large in the minds of American strategic thinkers.

It is the site of one of the largest Civil War-era coastal forts in the United States, built in 1846 to protect the southern approaches to the coast. Known as "the Gibraltar of the Gulf," Fort Jefferson was a military marvel. It boasted 16 million bricks, covering 23 acres, with a parade ground the size of Yankee Stadium. But 150 years of exposure have taken their toll, and the National Park Service has embarked on the first phase of a six-year, $18-million restoration.

"Deterioration is exponential out here," says Ross Hunt, an exhibit specialist with the park. "There are tens of thousands of square feet of repointing that need to be done."

According to a report by the historic architecture firm Lord, Aeck & Sargent, hired to draw up a restoration strategy, Fort Jefferson was "a physical manifestation of the United States' response to the geopolitical atmosphere of the mid-19th century." Fraying relations with Mexico and a strong French, British, and Spanish presence in the Caribbean prompted the fort's construction. The location was critical, since whoever controlled the archipelago controlled shipping lanes to the mouth of the Mississippi River, through the Gulf of Mexico and the Florida Straits.

UNDER THE DIRECTION OF GENERAL JOSEPH TOTTEN, CHIEF OF THE ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, THE SIX-SIDED FORTRESS SHOWCASED THE LATEST IN MASONRY TECHNOLOGY AND FORTIFICATION-BUILDING. MARY CATHERINE MARTIN, A PRESERVATION ARCHITECT WITH LORD, AECK & SARGENT, DESCRIBES TOTTEN AS "A MORTAR FIEND" WHO FOUND THE ULTIMATE OUTLET FOR HIS PASSION—MASONRY CONSTRUCTION.

Under the direction of General Joseph Totten, chief of the Army Corps of Engineers, the six-sided fortress showcased the latest in masonry technology and fortification-building. Mary Catherine Martin, a preservation architect with Lord, Aeck & Sargent, describes Totten as "a mortar fiend" who found the ultimate outlet for his passion—masonry construction. "The lengths to which the American military went to develop these technologies was really extraordinary," she says.

Much of the deterioration stems from a Totten invention: large, cast-iron shutters intended to blow open when the guns fired, then slam shut again. Rusting iron, says Hunt, "can expand anywhere from six to ten times [its] original size." As the ironwork supporting the shutters corrodes and expands, it destroys the surrounding brick.

Last summer, says Hunt, Lord, Aeck & Sargent took a section of the fort walls as a preservation test case, to "learn all the problems we might encounter in stabilization." As a result, the firm recommended mortar with a traditional cement called Rosendale to stabilize the wall.

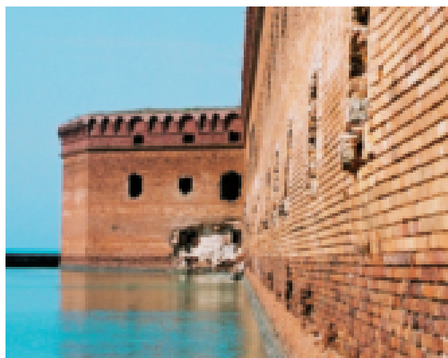
Rosendale was practically out of use by the 1930s, replaced by stronger, faster-curing varieties. It's perfect here because it sets up in wet conditions. Most of the original mortar has held up remarkably well, aside from the damage around the shutters and the inevitable erosion.

For many years, the outpost awaited an invasion that never came. The advent of the rifled cannon, which could pierce its walls, eventually put the fort out of business. A prison during the Civil War, the place was used sporadically into the early 20th century until it was abandoned about 1916.

Fort Jefferson remains open so intrepid visitors can witness the work.

For more information, contact Rick Cook, Everglades National Park, Public Affairs Office, 40001 State Road 9336, Homestead, FL 33034, (305) 242-7714, email rick_cook @nps.gov, www.nps.gov/drto.

ALL PHOTOS LORD, AECK & SARGENT



Above: **Views of Fort Jefferson and technicians assessing its condition.**

RED LIGHT RETROSPECTIVE

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF SEWARD'S VICE AND VIRTUE

It was the end of the line in more ways than one. Seward, Alaska, at the close of the 19th century was a remote, rough-around-the-edges seaport freshly hewn from the wilderness. When Congress authorized a new railroad in 1914, Seward was the terminus. As a tide of merchants, sailors, railroad men, soldiers, and miners came and went, the unpaved streets and wooden sidewalks teemed with commerce of all kinds.

Above left: **Seward's "Millionaire's Row," an upper and middle class neighborhood.** **Above:** **Irene Nussbaum, former lady of the evening, around 1953.** **Right:** **Houses along a Seward creek.**

Now a study by the National Park Service—which sheds light on activities in a waterfront alley known as the Line—offers a fascinating portrait of morality on the frontier. The research was prompted by a plan for a visitor center where a cluster of tiny houses once served as Seward's red light district from 1914 to 1954. Today, the city is the gateway to the popular tourist destinations of Kenai Fjords National Park and Chugach National Forest.

Constructing the center—a joint National Park Service-U.S. Forest Service project—meant examining the site's history in accordance with federal preservation law. While the archeologists and historians did their part, a team of ethnographers went out into the community and, in the words of anthropologist Rachel Mason of the National Park Service, "tapped the collective memory."

A PICTURE EMERGED OF AN AMBIVALENT COEXISTENCE between vice and virtue. Prostitution, though frowned on in principle, was tolerated—even thought practical—in reality. At a time when many American cities were trying to close their red light districts, Seward took a different path. Prostitution, though technically illegal, was restricted to the houses along the waterfront, and informally regulated. The town collected modest "fines," essentially a business tax on the madams.

A relationship evolved between the prostitutes and "respectable" society. The women of the Line, voluntarily segregated, restricted their trips to town to certain hours. But they were as much a part of the community as the other institutions. One Seward resident doubts that there were any businesses without financial ties to the women. "They were where you went to get money when the banks [wouldn't loan it]. A big share of the old madams all dabbled in real estate . . . [Prostitution] didn't have the dirty name it's got now."

AT A TIME WHEN MANY AMERICAN CITIES WERE TRYING TO CLOSE THEIR RED LIGHT DISTRICTS, SEWARD TOOK A DIFFERENT PATH. PROSTITUTION, THOUGH TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL, WAS RESTRICTED TO THE HOUSES ALONG THE WATERFRONT, AND INFORMALLY REGULATED.

RESEARCHERS FOUND THAT THE SOCIAL BARRIER between the women and the town was not a rigid one. Prostitutes were not allowed in bars, but for many years, the Line was the only place to get a drink after one in the morning. They did business with the locals, were punctual about their bills, and—often sporting the latest New York styles—gave local

Above: **A panoramic view of Seward in 1915, about the time of the arrival of the railroad.** Right: **Hauling lumber by dog sled. Seward's red light district thrived thanks to the flood of workers brought in by rail.**

women makeup tips. Accountants did their taxes; shopkeepers delivered their groceries. Some opened roadhouses and cafes; others invested in fishing boats.

It remained, however, a relationship of convenience. There was money to be had here, which allowed the Line to stay in business and reap the added benefit of sparing local women the advances of sailors and railroad workers.

Researchers discovered a simple hierarchy among the denizens of the Line—madams and the women who worked for them. Pimps were not tolerated. The red light district was a group of businesses run by women. Status among prostitutes reflected Alaska's class structure at the time in that divisions were not binding. A woman could move up by marrying and moving on, or leave prostitution altogether by way of a successful business venture.

IN ADDITION TO INTERVIEWS, RESEARCHERS SOUGHT OUT court records, city ordinances, newspapers, and other documents. *The Orderly Disorderly House,* an autobiography by Carol Erwin—who had a long career running brothels, including one in Seward—offered telling details, as did *Seward, Alaska: The Sinful Town on Resurrection Bay,* an account of bootlegging and prostitution by local John Paulsteiner. Residents weren't pleased with his exposure of Seward's indiscretions. Nevertheless, *The Sinful Town* captures the "practical, relaxed quality" of life on the street, researchers say. For the researchers, the most vivid pictures of the Line came from seemingly mundane details that interviewees recalled from long ago: bicycling past the alley, walking one of the madam's dogs, or the fancy pastries the women had delivered from the bakery.

Business on the Line boomed with the military's arrival in World War II, but it was the beginning of the end. With an outbreak of venereal disease in 1944, the Army demanded a shutdown, which fired public protest. There are varying accounts of what ultimately brought the Line to an end. Some residents believed that Alaska was

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required to close its red light districts as a condition of statehood. Yet as late as 1950, a Boy Scout troop picking up trash was warned not to go down the alley. Most residents remember that by the mid-'50s the Line had closed for good.

Mason describes the era of Seward's red light district as one of "hardboiled innocence." Though the community did not approve of the women, it nonetheless developed customs to accommodate their presence.

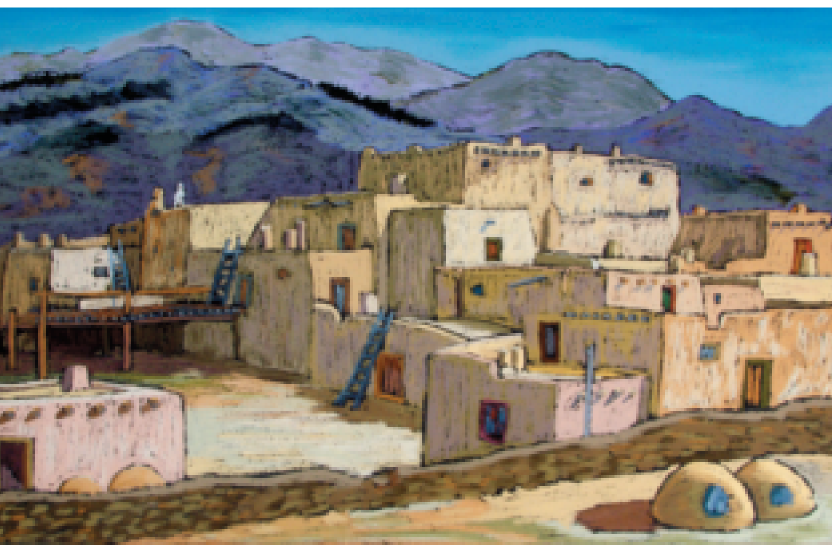
The days of the waterfront alley may be long gone, but the study provides a picture of a place and time that might otherwise have been lost to history.

For more information, contact Rachel Mason, National Park Service, Alaska Region, 240 West 5th Avenue, Room 114, Anchorage, AK 99501, (907) 644-3472, email rachel_mason@nps.gov

IMAGINING BANDELIER

WEB EXHIBIT ILLUSTRATES TRANSFORMATION FROM PLACE TO SYMBOL AND LEGEND

The ancestral Pueblo people left this canyon retreat over 400 years ago. Today, with its crumbled walls and remains of empty villages, Bandelier is one of the Southwest's most powerful reminders of native America. The New Mexico monument, established in 1916 to preserve the ancient dwellings, may strike some as a profound expression of antiquity and absence. In spite of the centuries, however, Bandelier's legacy remains very much alive, embraced by the modern Pueblo people.



BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Proclaimed an archeological wonder when first seen by outsiders, the monument found expression in the arts as well, and its meaning continues to evolve. Bandelier's collections illustrate the transformation from place to symbol and legend.

To celebrate this heritage, the Museum Management Program of the National Park Service has produced an online exhibit featuring archeological artifacts, work by modern-day Pueblo artists, paintings, tinwork, and woodwork. With these objects as the feature's highlight, the exhibit looks at the past, present, and future of a national treasure—and a people.

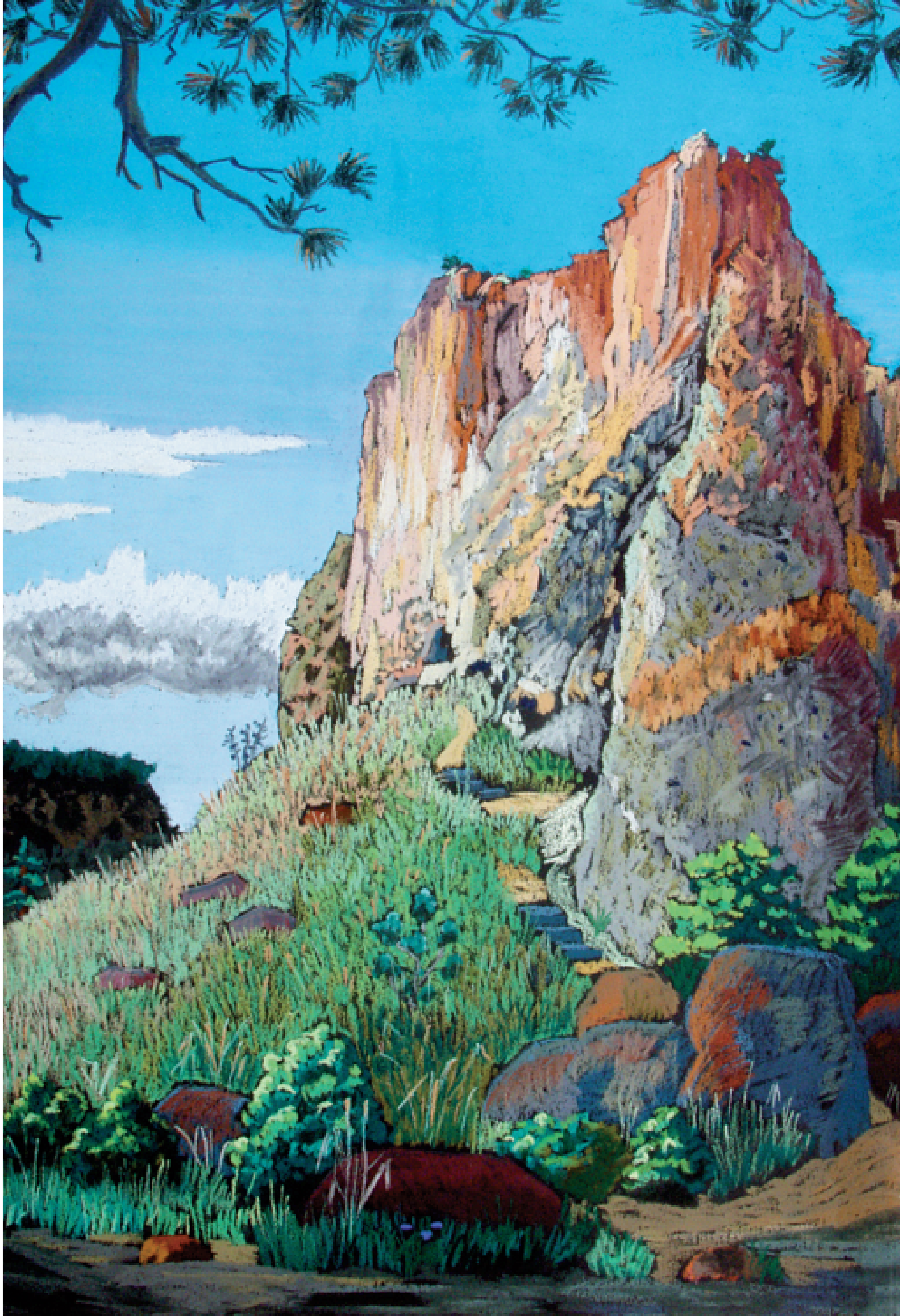
"The grandest thing I ever saw," anthropologist Adolph Bandelier said when he arrived in 1880. The place has fascinated scholars ever since. With perhaps the highest density of archeological sites in the National Park System, Bandelier's 33,727 acres are rich with research potential.

The items left by the ancestral Pueblo people—who lived here from about A.D. 1150 to 1550—are at the core of the collection. Pottery was both an indispensable tool and highly developed craft. Over time, the fired clay took on elaborate forms, "read" today according to design, shape, and composition, traits that trace a timeline of ancestral Pueblo life. Simple, gray-hued shapes gave way to smooth, polished, sometimes finely rendered bowls, animal figurines, and the like. Still used for cooking, carrying water, and storing grain, the objects began to transcend function, as groups forged signature styles.

Above left: Pueblo scene by Helmuth Naumer, Sr. Above: Park administration buildings, circa 1935. Right: Naumer's rendition of Bandelier's Frijoles Canyon.

Everyday items—ancient corncobs, projectile points—flesh out the picture of a thriving desert community, evidence of how people moved through the region trading goods and interacting.

Viewers can take side tours of the archeology, delve into the history of the pottery, or follow links to information on Pueblo style architecture and rock art. The exhibit also looks at how the pottery was made, a process largely unchanged in 2,000 years. An archeological timeline explores settlement and cultural patterns.



ALL PHOTOS KHALED BASSIM/NPS MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM/BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT EXCEPT AS NOTED

BANDELIER'S RESIDENTS LEFT THE CANYON TO SETTLE ALONG THE RIO GRANDE. Yet today, many aspects of the culture—notably pottery—continue to thrive among their descendants, most of whom live within 80 miles of the monument. Pottery making had fallen into decline by the early 1900s, but around that time, tourists and artists began flocking here by rail. Before long, the craft was revived.

The exhibit spotlights the work of 20th-century artists such as Maria Martinez, a potter from nearby San Ildefonso Pueblo whose pieces were featured at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis. Four years later, archeologist Edgar Lee Hewett, excavating at Bandelier, asked Maria to reproduce some pottery he'd found. An admirer of her sensibilities, Hewett helped to sell the work.

Maria, working with her husband Julian, developed a distinctive pottery known as blackware by smothering the fire used to make the vessels and reducing the oxygen in the process. The final product bore a matte-on-black finish, a style that is more popular than ever today.

Maria and Julian invigorated the revival, creating opportunities for other native artisans, some who also drew acclaim, and the tradition is still strong. Maria passed away in 1980, one of the great modern Pueblo potters, her work seen in museums and galleries around the world.

DURING THE DEPRESSION, A FORMATIVE CHAPTER IN BANDELIER'S HISTORY, the government hired two painters to depict Pueblo life and Bandelier's landscape. Pablita Velarde, a native of Santa Clara Pueblo, illustrated contemporary customs, ceremonies, and details. From 1937 to 1943, she produced more than 70 paintings. Of the work Pablita said, "I figure I've learned more about my own people . . . and I appreciate what the old ones have tried to pass on."

Pablita's Bandelier paintings are casein—a material derived from milk—applied to Masonite and glass. Later in her career, she made paints of ground soil and rocks to make earth tones. Though her people told her that art wasn't a suitable job for women, Pablita persevered, opening the possibilities for other Pueblo artists.

Helmuth Naumer, Sr., a German native, was lured to the Southwest by the cowboy novels he'd read as a child. His luminous pastels capture "the fleeting effects of [New Mexico's] sky and water . . . for there are hundreds of different colors and shades." Naumer's renderings depict the mountains, mesas, and windswept spaces of the monument and surrounding areas.

PABLITA VELARDE, A NATIVE OF SANTA CLARA PUEBLO, ILLUSTRATED CONTEMPORARY CUSTOMS, CEREMONIES, AND DETAILS. FROM 1937 TO 1943, SHE PRODUCED MORE THAN 70 PAINTINGS. OF THE WORK PABLITA SAID, "I FIGURE I'VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT MY OWN PEOPLE . . . AND I APPRECIATE WHAT THE OLD ONES HAVE TRIED TO PASS ON."

Left: Pueblo artist Pablita Velarde's depiction of traditional basket making.

Bowl made by ancestral Pueblo people featuring rare image of human hands.

A vessel bearing the characteristics of Cochiti Pueblo, made sometime in the first part of the 20th century.

Pueblo blackware, part of the crafts resurgence in the early 1900s.

AROUND THIS SAME TIME, BANDELIER SWELLED WITH THE RANKS OF THE NEWLY FORMED CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS. Much of the Corps' work—planting trees and building roads, dams, and trails—was in the national parks.

Hundreds of workers came to toil for a dollar a day. "They did all the conservation work in the archeological sites," says Bandelier archeologist Rory Gauthier. "They also constructed a remarkable complex of buildings, later recognized as perhaps the premier monument to the CCC."

Room, board, and training were a big draw. Workers opened access to Frijoles Canyon, previously reachable only by horse or on foot. At the base of the canyon, they built the visitor center, lodge, and other buildings, renowned today as some of the best examples of a style called Pueblo Revival. Lyle Bennett—a National Park Service architect who sought to harmonize the complex with the mesas and cliff dwellings—used local stone to provide visual unity. Plastered portals and flagstone walkways contribute to the effect.

To give the feel of an old New Mexico village, Bennett included round beams projecting from exterior walls, heavy wooden doors, hewn timber lintels, and plaster with an aged patina. The 31 well-preserved specimens are among the finest of the time—astonishing in that they are federal buildings in a remote canyon. The complex is a national historic landmark.

The exhibit examines a wealth of items made by the young CCC enrollees, who were taught on site by older, skilled craftsmen. The tinwork looked back to a New Mexico tradition that reached its peak in the 1850s, an incidental effect of the Army's presence at the time, the military's discarded cans providing a wealth of previously scarce raw material for local artisans. The tinwork was revived in chandeliers, wall sconces, and mirror frames, intricate attractions in and of themselves.

Designs were sketched on paper first, for use as a blueprint by carpenters, tinsmiths, and others. Southwestern motifs adorned woodwork, bed frames, dressers, stools, and moldings—alive with sunbursts, curves, rosettes, and other regional details. The CCC handiwork, which enlivened the visitor center, lodge, and other buildings, is still visible to the public today.

Bringing this remarkable story to the web showcases the little-known riches of a place known mostly for its beautiful landscapes and ancestral Pueblo sites.

The exhibit is at www.cr.nps.gov/museum/exhibits. For more on the Bandelier collection, contact Gary Roybal, Museum Technician, Bandelier National Monument, HCR1, Box 1, Suite 15, Los Alamos, NM 87544, (505) 672-3861, ext. 544, email gary_roybal@nps.gov, or go to the park on the web at www.nps.gov/band.

BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

Above: **Pueblo Revival park buildings and a collection of lamps displaying the ornate tinwork of CCC artisans.**

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Right: **One of the more elaborate pieces from the CCC era at Bandelier, a hanging lamp with pierced and stamped tinwork.**