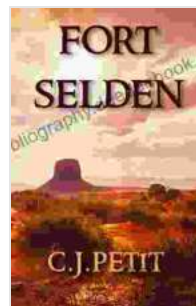


# Fort Selden: A Historic Bastion in the New Mexico Desert

Nestled amidst the rugged foothills of the San Andres Mountains in southern New Mexico, Fort Selden stands as a testament to the turbulent history of the American Southwest. This abandoned military outpost, now a National Historic Site, offers a glimpse into the lives of soldiers, settlers, and Native Americans who shaped the region during the 19th century.

## Establishment and Purpose

Fort Selden was established in 1865 as a U.S. Army post to protect settlers and travelers from Apache and Navajo raids. The fort was strategically located near the El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, a vital trade route connecting Mexico City and Santa Fe.



### Fort Selden by C.J. Petit

★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 2569 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 297 pages
Lending	: Enabled

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The fort's mission also included suppressing Native American resistance to U.S. expansionism. In 1872, the U.S. government forcibly relocated the Mescalero Apache tribe to the Fort Stanton reservation, sparking a series of skirmishes with the Army.

## **Life at the Fort**

Fort Selden housed up to 600 soldiers, who lived in barracks consisting of adobe buildings with wooden roofs. The fort also boasted a hospital, commissary, officers' quarters, and a parade ground.

Daily life at the fort revolved around military drills, guard duty, and routine chores. Soldiers also found time for recreation, including baseball, billiards, and dances.

## **Architectural Heritage**

The buildings at Fort Selden are a unique blend of military and civilian architecture. The adobe walls, heavy wooden beams, and thick-walled hogans (Native American dwellings) reflect the cultural influences of the region.

The fort's most notable structure is the "Officer's Row," a row of four identical houses built for senior military officers. These houses feature large porches, high ceilings, and ornate fireplaces.

## **Abandoned and Preserved**

Fort Selden was decommissioned in 1891 as the Apache threat diminished. The buildings were abandoned and gradually fell into ruin.

In the 1930s, the fort was designated a National Historic Site and underwent extensive restoration. Today, the site is open to the public and offers guided tours, exhibits, and historical reenactments.

## Exploring Fort Selden

Visitors to Fort Selden can immerse themselves in the history of the American Southwest. The fort offers a variety of ways to explore:

- **Guided Tours:** Learn about the fort's history, architecture, and role in the region from knowledgeable park rangers.
- **Living History Programs:** Witness historical reenactments and demonstrations by costumed interpreters who portray soldiers, settlers, and Native Americans.
- **Exhibits:** Discover the fort's past through artifacts, photographs, and interactive displays in the visitor center.
- **Self-Guided Tours:** Explore the fort's buildings, parade ground, and surrounding landscape at your own pace.

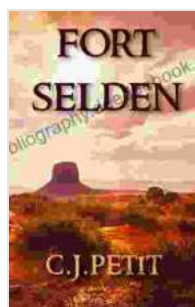
Fort Selden is a fascinating destination for history buffs, outdoor enthusiasts, and anyone interested in the rich cultural heritage of the American Southwest.

## Tips for Visiting

- **Plan Ahead:** The fort is open daily from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, but some areas may be closed for special events or maintenance.
- **Wear Comfortable Shoes:** The fort is spread out over a large area, so be prepared for some walking.

- **Bring Water and Sunscreen:** The fort offers limited shade, so it's important to stay hydrated and protected from the sun.
- **Allow Ample Time:** Give yourself at least two hours to fully explore the fort and its exhibits.
- **Respect the Site:** The fort is a protected historical site, so please do not touch or damage any structures or artifacts.

Fort Selden is a captivating glimpse into the past that brings the history of the American Southwest to life. Whether you're a seasoned historian or simply curious about the region, this National Historic Site is an unforgettable destination.



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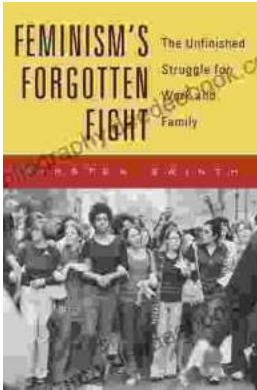
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