First inhabited by the ancestors of Northern New Mexico’s pueblos, Los Alamos is located on the Pajarito Plateau of the Jemez Mountains, formed by eruptions of a super volcano more than a million years ago. Pueblo ancestors and later homesteaders used the plateau for seasonal farming and grazing. In 1917, H.H. Brook’s Los Alamos* Ranch was purchased by Ashley Pond Jr. to start Los Alamos Ranch School, a prep school which combined academics and a physical curriculum. During World War II, the Army Corps of Engineers took over the plateau and sealed it for a secret mission to end the war: the Manhattan Project.

A. Sheep graze contentedly at the H.H. Brook homestead in 1915 on the site of today’s History Museum and Fuller Lodge.

B. A mid-1940’s view (to the east on Central at 20th Street).

C. The Big House, built in 1917 as the dormitory for the Los Alamos Ranch School, was the largest building on the plateau at the time, thus earning the name. It was torn down by the Atomic Energy Commission in 1948 to make way for the Community Center.

* Spanish for cottonwood/poplar/aspen trees.

MESA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Originally located in government surplus buildings and then in a former cafeteria, the library is an important institution in this highly educated community. The 1993 award-winning design is by architect Antoine Predock.

To the west of the library stood Central School, 1943–1965. It was the most elaborate building constructed in Los Alamos during WWII, in spite of the utilitarian and temporary nature of this secret army base. The curriculum was planned by Dr. Walter W. Cook of the University of Minnesota, hired to develop the perfect school for the children of Manhattan Project personnel.

HISTORY MUSEUM

Built as an infirmary in 1918 and later used as the guest cottage for Los Alamos Ranch School, the museum is in the oldest continually occupied structure in town. During the Manhattan Project (1943 – 1945), the cottage continued to serve as guest quarters, notably for General Leslie R. Groves, commander of the Manhattan Engineer District, whose office and residence were in Washington, D.C. Now it serves as an award-winning, comprehensive historical museum which presents our world-changing and varied history. A book and gift shop greets visitors.

HISTORICAL ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS

SCULPTURES OF OPPENHEIMER AND GROVES

Life-sized sculptures of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Gen. Leslie R. Groves are located south of Fuller Lodge. The sculptures were dedicated in 2001.

HISTORICAL ADDITIONAL ATTRACTIONS

MANHATTAN PROJECT NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

The Manhattan Project National Historical Park was created by congress in 2014. It is distributed among three locations, Hanford, WA, Oak Ridge, TN, and Los Alamos. The Los Alamos visitor center is located in the building just east of Ashley Pond.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Los Alamos Visitor Center
109 Central Park Square
(505) 662-8105
visitlosalamos.org
Mon – Fri: 9 – 5
Sat: 9– 4, Sun: 10 – 3

Bradbury Science Museum
1350 Central Avenue
(505) 667-4444
lanl.gov/museum
Sun – Mon: 1 – 5
Tues – Sat: 10 – 5

Los Alamos History Museum
1050 Bathtub Row
(505) 662-6272
losalamoshistory.org
Mon – Fri: 9 – 5
Sat & Sun: 10 – 4

Los Alamos Nature Center/PEEC
2600 Canyon Road
(505) 662-0460
peecnature.org
M,W,F,Sat 10 – 4, Tues 10–8, Th CLOSED, Sun 1 – 4

Manhattan Project National Historical Park
475 20th St
(505) 661-6277
Mon – Sun: 9 – 4
was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1948 on the site of the Ranch School Trading Post. Recently the Post Office and built as part of the Community Center, opened at this location in 14

During WWII, mail to Los Alamos residents was simply addressed to the house at the corner of Bathtub Row and Peach Street. This home is a private residence, and visitors are not allowed.

Today a memorial stands at the site of the Ranch School Ice House. During WWII, the nuclear core of the “Gadget” (the prototype atomic bomb) was assembled here and then transported to Trinity Site.

The chimney, probably made of stone from an Ancestral Pueblo site, shared its one bathroom. This sculpture was erected a year later, commemorating the fire and community re-building.

In 1944, George Kistiakowsky, an explosives expert, and his new bride moved into it. As a joke, his friends carved a half-moon in the door of the attached shed the Army built. It is now used as administrative office space for the National Park Service.

The building housing the diesel generators for the Los Alamos Ranch School was built in the early 1930s. In 1944, George Kistiakowsky, an explosives expert, and his new bride moved into it. As a joke, his friends carved a half-moon in the door of the attached shed the Army built. It is now used as administrative office space for the National Park Service.

Across the street from the Romero Cabin was the site of the original main building for the Los Alamos Ranch School. The Big House design inspired the style of Fuller Lodge and other Ranch School structures. Students slept there year-round on screened porches as part of a physically, as well as academically, challenging education. The Big House contained a library and, during the war years, the non-broadcast radio station, KRS. In 1943, it also housed some of the first scientists who shared its one bathroom.

In 1947, the rose garden was started here by members of the Los Alamos Garden Club. At that time there was no cemetery, so rose bushes were planted in memory of those who died in Los Alamos. The garden club actively maintains the Rose Garden. It also serves as a popular place for weddings and other ceremonies. A Blue Star Memorial Bivay site, and a Los Alamos National Laboratory memorial to those killed in the line of duty are located here.

In 1945, the cabin was moved downtown and rebuilt in 2010. It is open to the public on select days and during guided tours.

This grand building was built in 1932 as the Ranch School dining hall. It also served as nurses, staff, and guest quarters. Named for Edward P. Fuller, a staff member at the Ranch School, it is made of 771 massive pine logs, personally selected by architect John Gaw Meem and Ranch School director A.J. Connell. Fuller Lodge still serves as a public cultural event center.

The house next to the Oppenheimer house, now known as the Hans Bethe House, displays Cold War exhibits as part of the History Museum campus.

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These rocks were part of the fireplace in the homestead cabin of William Mackwood “Mack” Hopper, who settled here in 1908. The chimney, probably made of stone from an Ancestral Pueblo site and put together with a mud/clay mortar, was rebuilt in 2010 for the Los Alamos Historical Society as an Eagle Scout project.

In May 2000, the county and adjacent lands were devastated by the 350,000-acre Cerro Grande wildfire. Nearly 400 Los Alamos homes were destroyed. This sculpture was erected a year later, commemorating the fire and community re-building.

ASHLEY POND

Ashley Pond began as a natural depression in the landscape. The Ranch School ensured its water supply by constructing a pipeline from a dam in Los Alamos Canyon. It was named for Ashley Pond Jr., the founder of the Los Alamos Ranch School, whose students could not resist the geographical pun. The boys used it for summer and winter sports. Blocks of ice were cut from the pond in the winter and stored in the Ice House. Ashley Pond Park contains a number of sculptures that are part of the county art collection curated by the Art in Public Places Board.

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