



LOS ALAMOS

Historic Fuller Lodge

visitlosalamos.org

Built in 1928 for the Ranch School, Fuller Lodge continues to serve as a gathering place for residents and visitors.

Then and now, young and old have danced, dined, listened, and learned within the log walls of this historic structure. This space has hosted countless innovative creators from diverse backgrounds and fields for almost 100 years. Come inside and be a part of the story.



The Art of Historic Fuller Lodge
Artwork in the Lodge includes period lighting, furniture, and drapery accents, as well as historical artifacts and original wall art. The work represents a variety of local and regional artisans in a wide range of media. The current selection of artwork is drawn from the collections of Los Alamos County and the Los Alamos Historical Society, as well as commissioned pieces. The Fuller Lodge Art Center, housed in the south and west wings, adds an additional element of art with over 100 local and regional artists and several juried exhibits yearly.

Weavings
Traditional northern New Mexico weavings compliment the vertical architecture of the spacious Pajarito Room. Two additional weavings are located in the stairwell to the gallery above the Pajarito Room and in the second floor Throne Room.



Chimayo rugs hang on display in the Pajarito Room.

The weavings were predominantly commissioned by northern New Mexico artisans specifically for the Lodge during a renovation and redecoration in the 1980s. Northern New Mexico has a deep history in the cultivation and processing of wool, and a strong tradition in the fiber arts. These rugs exemplify the style and skill of some of the best known Chimayo, Tierra Amarilla, and Truchas artisans. The drapes throughout the Lodge were commissioned from the Ortega weavers out of Chimayo.

Variety Over the Years
The variety of work collected throughout the history of Los Alamos gives visitors a glimpse of the land and peoples of the Pajarito Plateau. The artwork spans decades, including original fixtures from the Ranch School era. The collection continues to represent work by local artists from the beginning of the Los Alamos County collection through present exhibitions in the Fuller Lodge Art Center. Several oil paintings from the

Frank Harlow collection are on display throughout the Lodge. An oil landscape by local artist James Messimer is on display in the Reservations Office. Anita Brookins and Joan McConnell, an early Los Alamos art instructor and art advocate, both have masterful ink and watercolor landscapes in the Nambe room, and the entrance way stairwell houses a relief woodcarving by Joseph T. Sanchez depicting the Arts and Craft house, located on Bathtub Row.

Frank Harlow Collection
In 2006, Francis “Frank” Harlow, a long time resident, scientist, and self-taught artist, donated 22 paintings to the Los Alamos County collection. Several pieces can be found in the Lodge, clustered in the Nambe, Zia, and Throne rooms. The paintings in the Lodge range from landscapes and pottery to regional customs and faces, and are painted in oil on gessoed masonite boards. Harlow is well known for his extensive work depicting northern New Mexico Pueblo pottery. His paintings can be found in many collections worldwide, and have been exhibited in a number of regional galleries.



“Rocky Mountain Landscape in Winter,” Frank Harlow.

Plan Your Visit
Stop by the Los Alamos Visitor Center and the Los Alamos History Museum to learn more about the history and experiences of the Pajarito Plateau.

LOS ALAMOS VISITOR CENTER
475 20th St., Suite A, Los Alamos
Hours: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Sunday: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
800-444-0707 | 505-662-8105 | visitlosalamos.org

LOS ALAMOS HISTORY MUSEUM & SHOP
1050 Bathtub Row, Los Alamos
Hours: Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. | Sunday: CLOSED
505-662-4493 | losalamoshistory.org

Historic Sculptures
DR. J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER (1904-1967)
Oppenheimer, a world-class physicist and professor at the University of California at Berkeley and Cal Tech, was selected by General Groves in the fall of 1942 to be the Laboratory Director of Project Y of the Manhattan Project, while Americans were fighting against Fascism in Europe and Imperialism in Asia. The Laboratory Director, through the force of his intellect, persuasion, dedication, and unfettered scientific inquiry, guided the researchers to success.



GENERAL LESLIE R. GROVES (1896-1970)
Groves, of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, after steering the construction of the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., was assigned the biggest Allied secret project of World War II, code name “Manhattan Project.” His unexpected choice of Dr. Oppenheimer, as well as Groves’ direct command of the growth of the town for an ever increasing workforce and its research needs, were crucial to winning the wartime race to build the atomic bomb.



Together these two men selected Los Alamos, the location of the Los Alamos Ranch School in New Mexico, remote for secrecy, but naturally beautiful, to become the home of exceptional physicists, scientists, engineers, and support personnel for the duration of the war. These historic sculptures of Oppenheimer and Groves in their permanent location on the south lawn of Historic Fuller Lodge honor their legacy as they stand in downtown Los Alamos, New Mexico, a town created from their vision and direction.



The Start of the Ranch School

A principal character in the story of Historic Fuller Lodge is Ashley Pond Jr. (1872-1933) who, prior to 1900, moved from Detroit, Michigan, to New Mexico for his health. He had contracted typhoid while serving as a Rough Rider in the Spanish-American War. Pond’s first enterprise in New Mexico was a ranch school for boys near Watrous that was supposed to open in 1904. Just before the first semester, there was a flash flood, and the school project was abandoned.



Top: Ashley Pond Jr. during WWI.
Bottom: Back at the ranch after the war.

Pond and his family, including his young daughter, renowned New Mexico poet and author Peggy Pond Church (1903-1986), relocated to the Pajarito Plateau. In 1914, Pond and four backers from Detroit opened a Sportsmans’ Club (The Pajarito Club) located a few miles south of the Lodge in Pajarito Canyon (now on Los Alamos National Laboratory property). Pond ran the club until 1916, when he hired H. H. Brook as manager. Determined to establish a ranch school for boys, Pond bought the H. H. Brook homestead, the Los Alamos Ranch (translated in English: cottonwoods or poplars), located where the Lodge now stands. On this property Pond founded the Los Alamos Ranch School in 1917. He hired A. J. Connell, a young Santa Fe National Forest ranger, as the school director. Soon thereafter, Connell hired Fayette Curtis as the school’s first instructor and headmaster.



Ranch School boys watering their horses, 1919.

A Vigorous, Outdoor Life

Less than a year after announcing the school’s opening, Ashley Pond departed to drive an ambulance for the American Red Cross in WWI, leaving Connell and Curtis to chart the direction of the new Ranch School. Incorporating the structure of the Boy Scout movement and by adding rigorous academic standards, the Los Alamos Ranch School fused Pond’s and Connell’s ideal “outdoor life” with the “vigorous life” being advocated by

Theodore Roosevelt. Students of the boarding school, 12 to 18 in age, became members of Boy Scout Troop #22 (the first mounted troop in the United States). In addition to academic instruction, the school program included horseback riding, camping, skiing, and hiking. Students slept on screened porches year-round except when camping. Enrollment at the school peaked at 47 students. The staff and students were accommodated in a growing inventory of buildings, several of which remain.

Building the Lodge

The Lodge was constructed as a memorial to Edward P. Fuller, a Ranch School staff member who died in 1923. His father, wealthy Michigan lumberman Philo C. Fuller, paid for the construction of the Lodge and donated it to the Ranch School (as well as



Lodge under construction, 1927.

refinancing the Ranch School mortgage). Built in 1928, the Lodge was designed by Santa Fe architect John Gaw Meem, who, along with Ranch School Director A. J. Connell, personally selected the 771 massive pine trees used in the predominantly vertical-log structure. Meem designed the hanging lanterns still seen in the Lodge, incorporating the Ranch School logo, designed by woodcut artist Gustave Baumann. The Lodge housed the school dining hall, kitchen, rooms for guests, staff, and the nurse. It was also where social events for the boys and graduation ceremonies were held.

Living in the Lodge

The main interior feature of the ground floor is a two-story dining hall (the Pajarito Room). The 19-foot ceiling, highlighted by exposed, non-structural trusses, is a Meem trademark. Because of the two-story dining hall, the second story proved more of a mezzanine than a “floor”, which is lined with nine rooms and decorated with Navajo rugs.

On the mezzanine level, Connell included a small suite for the matron on the south end. Next was Headmaster Lawrence Hitchcock’s suite. On the other side of the stairway leading to the third floor, a small suite served as the nurse’s quarters. The infirmary sat above the main lobby at the north part of the building. When the Army arrived in 1942, it used the Lodge as housing for visiting scientists, the cafeteria post, and technical personnel.



Los Alamos Ranch School final graduation ceremony, held January 28, 1943, on the east patio of the Lodge.

Purpose in a Time of War

The Ranch School, still being run by A. J. Connell, held its final graduation ceremony on January 28, 1943, after an abbreviated semester. The School and surrounding homesteads had been purchased by the U.S. Army Manhattan Engineer District for a secret WWII Laboratory site.

Starting in February 1943, the Lodge was managed as a hotel by H. M. Archer as a contractor with the Army Corps of Engineers. The Pajarito Room served as a cafeteria, and bachelor staff members and distinguished visitors were housed in rooms of the Lodge.

A number of the other Ranch School buildings were turned into housing for the leaders of the project who came to work in Los Alamos, including J. Robert Oppenheimer. These elite homes were the only ones in wartime Los Alamos with bathtubs. Now private residences and museum attractions, these homes can be viewed from Bathtub Row, the street running north from the Lodge.

The role of Historic Fuller Lodge in WWII was symbolically brought to a close when the U.S. Army and Navy presented an Award of Excellence to Project Y participants on its eastern patio on October 16, 1945. The ceremony’s date was chosen to coincide with J. Robert Oppenheimer’s last day as Laboratory Director.



U.S. Army and Navy Award of Excellence Ceremony, held October 16, 1945, on the east patio of the Lodge.

Center of a New Community

Operations of the Los Alamos townsite and the Laboratory were transferred to the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) in 1947. The AEC quickly added three two-story wings extending north, south, and west from the main Lodge so it could function as a hotel for official visitors. Los Alamos remained a closed city until 1957, when the use of the gates and guard towers were determined to no longer be necessary. This decline in secrecy began a lengthy process of transferring land and structures to private and municipal ownership. Through all these phases the Lodge has continued to serve as the social center of the community, witnessing generations of weddings, funerals, parties, concerts, town meetings, receptions, conferences, and other social events.

Preserving our Past

The Lodge has received a series of sensitive upgrades and careful, but partial, restorations since being acquired from the AEC by Los Alamos County in 1974. These projects have always been well supported by the public. The tender loving care given the Lodge includes the restoration of the windows, logs, lighting, curtains, and more. In January 2017, Los Alamos County celebrated the completion of a \$2.4 million renovation of the Lodge and Historical Museum. The project included



Historic Fuller Lodge hosts countless community celebrations and distinguished visitors, including President Truman’s grandson, Clifton Truman Daniel, seen here speaking at the Grand Reopening Celebration of the Los Alamos History Museum in December 2016.

installing a new elevator, renovating the first and second floor restrooms, second floor entry to the elevator, reservation office and west entryway, and remodeling the patio. During the project, the original stone stairs on the east patio were found and lovingly restored for visitors to enjoy today. Historic Fuller Lodge is listed on the United States National Register of Historic Places and registered as a New Mexico Cultural Property.