

## SAN MARCIAL



Remnants of San Marcial near Black Mesa

*Not much is left of San Marcial. It was completely destroyed by a flood in 1929. Still, it attracts hundreds of visitors every year to see the town that is no more.*

**GPS:** 33°42'12"N 106°59'02"W Elev. 4,500 ft.

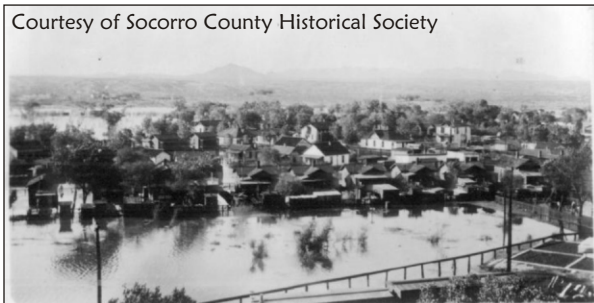
**Directions from Socorro:** Take I-25 south, exit at San Marcial, Exit 124. Drive east 1 mile to junction of Highway 1. Note Confederate Monument. Continue east on dirt road about 2 miles to rock water tank, buried ranch house, a grave, and other remnants.

**Travel:** Year-round; most of travel on paved highways. Last 2 miles on well maintained dirt road.

**Advisories:** The town site is a combination of Bureau of Reclamation property, the Armendaris Ranch, and other private land. No digging or treasure hunting allowed.

**History:** San Marcial was established shortly after the Civil War and quickly became a center for banking, mining and the AT&SF railroad. Population was about 2,500. San Marcial was completely inundated by a flood in 1929. The nearby towns of Valverde, La Mesa, Plaza Viejo and Geronimo were destroyed by a flood in 1937. These towns, including the Valverde battlefield, now lie under several feet of silt.

Courtesy of Socorro County Historical Society



San Marcial as it appeared three months following the 1929 flood.

## Other Socorro County Historical Sites

There are many ghost towns and historical sites in Socorro County from the pre-historic Piro Pueblo culture, the early Spanish colonization period (1598–1846), and others from the Territorial days (1846–1912 statehood).

Most of these sites are inaccessible due to the terrain, very poor roads (or lack of roads) – leading to hazardous travel. Many sites are virtually impossible to find without a guide. Some sites are located on restricted federal lands, closed private land, or protected because of their high historic or cultural significance.

For your safety, visiting historic sites not listed in this brochure is not recommended.

### Visiting Socorro County Ghost Towns and Historical places

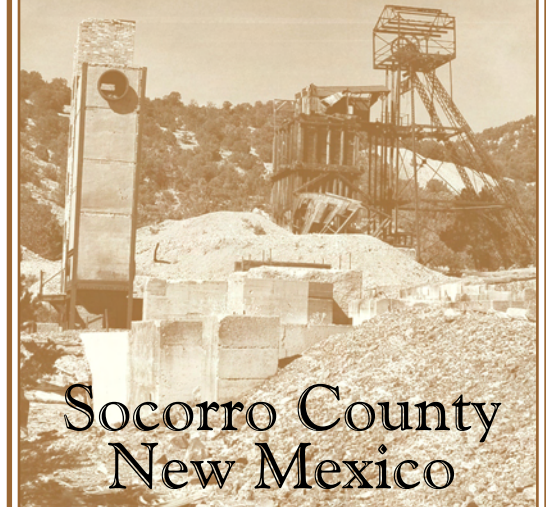
1. **Preservation.** Please respect Socorro County's ghost towns and historic or cultural sites for our future generations. Remember ...

**TAKE only photos**

**LEAVE only footprints**

2. **Respect private property.** Close cattle gates; no firearms (don't shoot at buildings, signs, or water tanks); drive slowly around livestock.
3. **Remoteness.** Once you leave the paved highways in Socorro County, you are entering very remote country on dirt roads seldom traveled. Be safe and be prepared.
4. **Water.** In summer months, temperatures can exceed 100°F with single-digit humidity. Take plenty of water to avoid dehydration.
5. **Rattle snakes.** Yes, we have rattle snakes.
6. **Cell phone** coverage is unreliable in most rural areas.
7. **Arroyos.** Many dirt roads cross arroyos or dry stream beds. During thunderstorms, arroyos are prone to flash flooding. Crossing an arroyo with a swift water flow can be deadly.
8. **Notify.** Let someone know where you are going (friends, family, motel clerk, etc.) in the event you experience problems and are delayed reaching your destination.
9. **Location.** Know where you're at and what road you are on in case you need to seek help.
10. **Travel at your own risk.** Roads are generally suitable for most automobiles – **but not recommended for RVs.** Conditions can change. Ask for current local conditions.

## GHOST TOWN GUIDE



## Socorro County New Mexico

**A Guide to some of  
Socorro County's Ghost Towns**  
Including  
**Socorro County Ghost Town Map**  
by Paul Harden

**With specific travel directions to:**  
Ghost town of Riley (Santa Rita)  
Mining ghost town of Kelly  
Rosedale Mining District  
The Graphic Mill  
San Marcial  
Fort Craig

Compliments of —

*Socorro County*  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



CITY OF SOCORRO





## RILEY (Santa Rita)



The school house at Riley, in use until 1953

*Riley is one of New Mexico's classic ghost towns, located north of Magdalena, N.M. The church and school mark the center of Riley, with remnants of stores and houses scattered about.*

**GPS:** 32°24'50"N 107°013'41"W Elev. 5,500 ft.

**Directions from Socorro:** Take U.S. 60 west to Magdalena; turn north on Main Street (at old Bank building), follow signs to Riley on County Road 354 (dirt). Immediately after crossing Rio Salado arroyo, take right (east) road; drive ¼ mile to Riley.

**Directions from I-25:** Exit off I-25 at Bernardo, Exit 175 (25 mi. north of Socorro); drive west past RV park and cell phone tower. After crossing historic Rio Puerco bridge, turn right onto Socorro County Road 12 (dirt); road leads directly to Riley – follow the signs.

**Travel:** Year-round; 2-wheel drive. Roads can be hazardous during heavy rains or snow.

**Advisories:** Avoid travel during thunderstorms. From Magdalena, **don't cross Rio Salado if flow is heavy.**

**History:** Riley was settled in 1882 by Pedro Aragon from Polvadera. The small valley and springs at the foot of Ladron Peak proved to be good farm land. The Aragons were soon joined by other family and friends from Polvadera. They named the town Santa Rita, changed it to Riley in 1892 when they applied

**Ruins of the Pedro Aragon home, built in 1882. The Aragons were the first family to settle at Santa Rita.**



for a post office (there was already a Santa Rita at the copper mines near Silver City). Riley soon became known for it's pinto beans, peaches and pears. Orchards were located between Riley and the banks of the Rio Salado.

The village of Riley, and nearby Puertocito, were popular stops for travelers along the Rio Salado – the main road from the Rio Grande to eastern Arizona.

The water table and springs began to dry up during the 1930s "dust bowl" years, causing some of the residents to move to greener pastures. The post office was closed in 1931; residents reverted to calling the town Santa Rita.

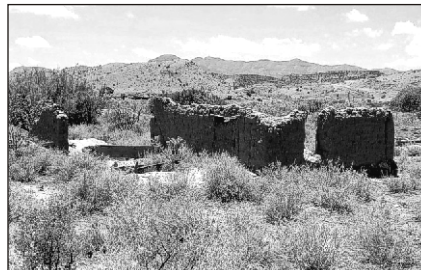
In the 1940s, many of the men left to serve in World War II, which further depleted the town of ranchers and farmers. The school was closed when the Rural School Administration was abolished in 1953. This forced the remaining residents to move to either Magdalena or Belen for schooling, where most of the former residents live today. The Aragon, Romero, and Bustamante families still live nearby.

The Santa Rita church remains an active mission church to San Miguel parish in Socorro. A traditional Spanish Mass is held once a year during the Santa Rita fiestas on Memorial Day weekend. The fiesta serves as a town reunion for former residents and their descendants.

Many remains of Santa Rita go unnoticed by most visitors. They are located along the road running east from the church. This becomes a rough road and use of a high clearance vehicle is advised. There are several structures along this road, including the old general store, several homes and the small Protestant cemetery.

Riley is a ghost town, but the former residents keeps its spirit alive and well today by keeping the old church, built in the 1880s, in pristine condition and their annual reunion and fiesta. Please respect the private ownership and posted areas.

**Ruins of the Nuñez home. The Nuñez sisters operated a small general store from this adobe building for many years.**



**Grave of Deputy Sheriff Daniel Bustamante, killed by train robber Broncho Bill Walters.**

## ROSEDALE



Remnants of the Rosedale Mine and mill

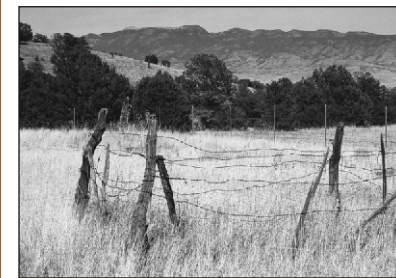
*Rosedale was a mining town. Remains of the mine, foundations of the mill, a cemetery, and scant signs of the town can still be seen.*

**GPS:** 33°48'29"N 107°24'18"W Elev. 7,150 ft.

**Directions from Socorro:** Take U.S. 60 west to Magdalena then south on NM 107 about 24 miles to Forest Road 330 (marked "Grassy Lookout"). Turn right (west) on FR 330; cemetery is 5.3 miles up the canyon; Rosedale Mine, and remnants of the mill, are another 1/2 mile to the west.

**Travel:** NM 107 is a well maintained dirt road; FR 330 is not and can be difficult with washouts following rain storms. A high clearance vehicle is advised.

**Advisories:** Avoid travel during thunderstorms or in snow.

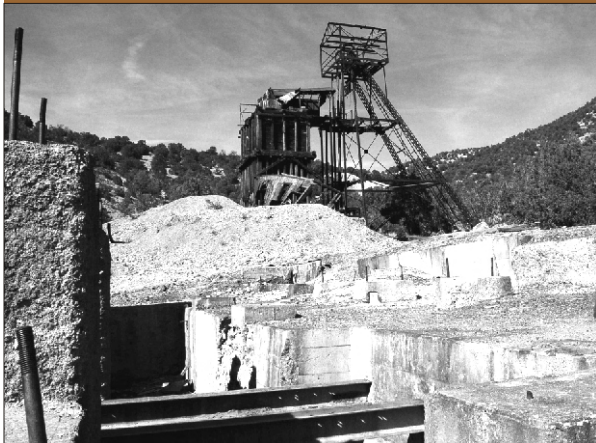


**Cemetery includes the grave of a Fort Craig soldier killed by Nana's Apaches in 1886.**

**History:** Gold and silver were discovered in 1882 when Nana's band of Apaches still roamed the San Mateos. A mining town quickly began. The Rosedale Post Office operated from 1891-1928, thereafter served by San Marcial. Rosedale was a major gold and silver producer until the mine played out in the 1930s. Buildings were dismantled during the Great Depression and abandoned by 1937. Much of the mine and foundations of the mill remain.



## KELLY



**Taylor headframe and Tri-Bullion smelter at Kelly**

*Kelly is another one of New Mexico's best ghost towns. Located just 3½ miles from Magdalena, it is also very convenient to visit. Mines, head frames, tailings, and remnants of mills and smelters, remain of this once bustling mining town.*

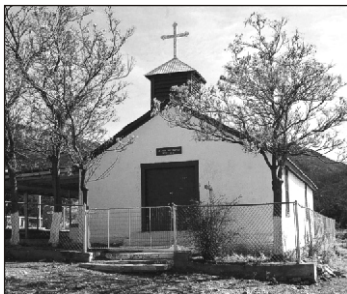
**GPS:** 34°05'00"N 107°012'08"W Elev. 7,265 ft.

**Directions from Socorro:** Take U.S. 60 west 26 miles to Magdalena; turn south on the Kelly Road at the U. S. Forest Service Office. Drive south 2 miles to a fork in the road. At the fork are the ruins of the Graphic Mill. Take left-hand fork; Kelly is 1.5 miles ahead.

**Travel:** Year-round; road is steep and sometimes rough and rocky, but suitable for most high clearance 2WD cars (take it slow and easy – it only takes a few minutes to arrive).

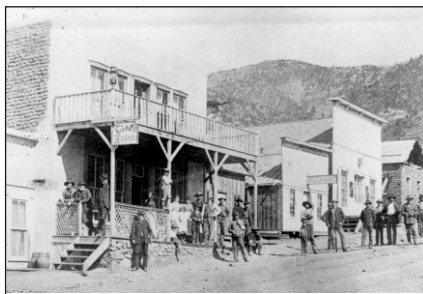
**Advisories:** Do not attempt road in winter with snow. Snow can be deceptively deep and hazardous to turn around. Mines are still privately owned – no digging, treasure hunting, or scavaging for minerals without permission. Kelly Mine issues mineral permits at very reasonable fees. **Do not enter mine shafts!**

**The Kelly Church is an active mission church to San Miguel parish in Socorro. Dedicated to Juan Bautista (John the Baptist), it is still used for Mass, weddings, funerals and the annual fiesta.**



**History:** Minerals were found in the area by John Hutchinson in 1866. His claims were producing by the 1870s and spawned a small town at Pueblo Springs, now called Magdalena. The post office was established in 1875. More lucrative claims were discovered farther “up the mountain” and formed several mining camps. The main camp was named after Hutchinson’s friend, Andy Kelley, but misspelled “Kelly” when registered at the Socorro County Courthouse in 1879. The district exploded in the 1880s with many silver and lead mines.

The Kelly Post Office opened in 1883; the AT&SF railroad arrived at Magdalena in 1885 and a daily stage coach serviced Kelly. The grade was too steep to continue the rail line to the Kelly mines. By the 1890s, the population ranged between 1,500 and 2,000 residents. The main ore mined was silver, lead, and zinc.



**Kelly's Main Street in the 1890s. Photo courtesy of Carlos Tafoya, whose father and grandfather worked in the Kelly mines.**

In 1896, a railroad spur was extended to the foot of the mountain when the Graphic Mill was built. The Sherwin Williams Paint Company purchased the Kelly mine and the Graphic Mill in 1904. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1916, and rebuilt the following year to process zinc and lead from the Kelly and Waldo mines for paints.

The mines continued into the 1930s, when depleted ore veins and the Great Depression took their tolls. A swell of activity during World War II temporarily revived the town.

The Kelly Post Office was closed in 1945, and the last of the residents moved to Magdalena or Socorro by the early 1950s. The abandoned town was dismantled for the wood and bricks, which left only the mines and a few buildings. An annual fiesta, held at the Juan Bautista church, reunites the town's residents.



**Remnants of the Graphic Mill. The old concrete structures once supported the ball mills, crushers, and other heavy machinery for the mill.**

## FORT CRAIG



**Old Glory still flies from the old parade grounds**

*Fort Craig was built in 1854 to protect travelers along El Camino Real from attacking Apaches. It was a major fort in New Mexico during the Civil War and the Indian Wars. Interpretive signs describe the fort and surviving structures.*

**GPS:** 33°38'00"N 107°01'07"W Elev. 4,520 ft.

**Directions from Socorro:** Take I-25 south to San Marcial, Exit 124; follow signs. Drive east 1 mile. Note Confederate Monument. Turn right (south) on paved Highway 1, then south 6.2 miles. Turn left (east) onto dirt road at sign for Fort Craig (at microwave tower). Fort Craig is 4.5 miles further ahead.

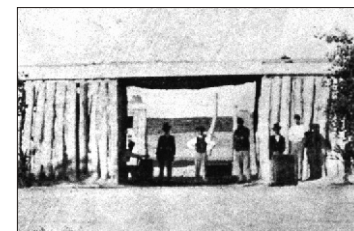
**Travel:** Year-round; most of travel on paved highways. Last 4.5 miles on well maintained dirt road.

**Advisories:** Call Socorro B.L.M. field office at 575-835-0412 for additional information. No artifact collection, digging, or treasure hunting.

**History.** The first army fort in the region was Fort Conrad, built in 1851 north of San Marcial (see map). It was abandoned in 1854 to build Fort Craig.

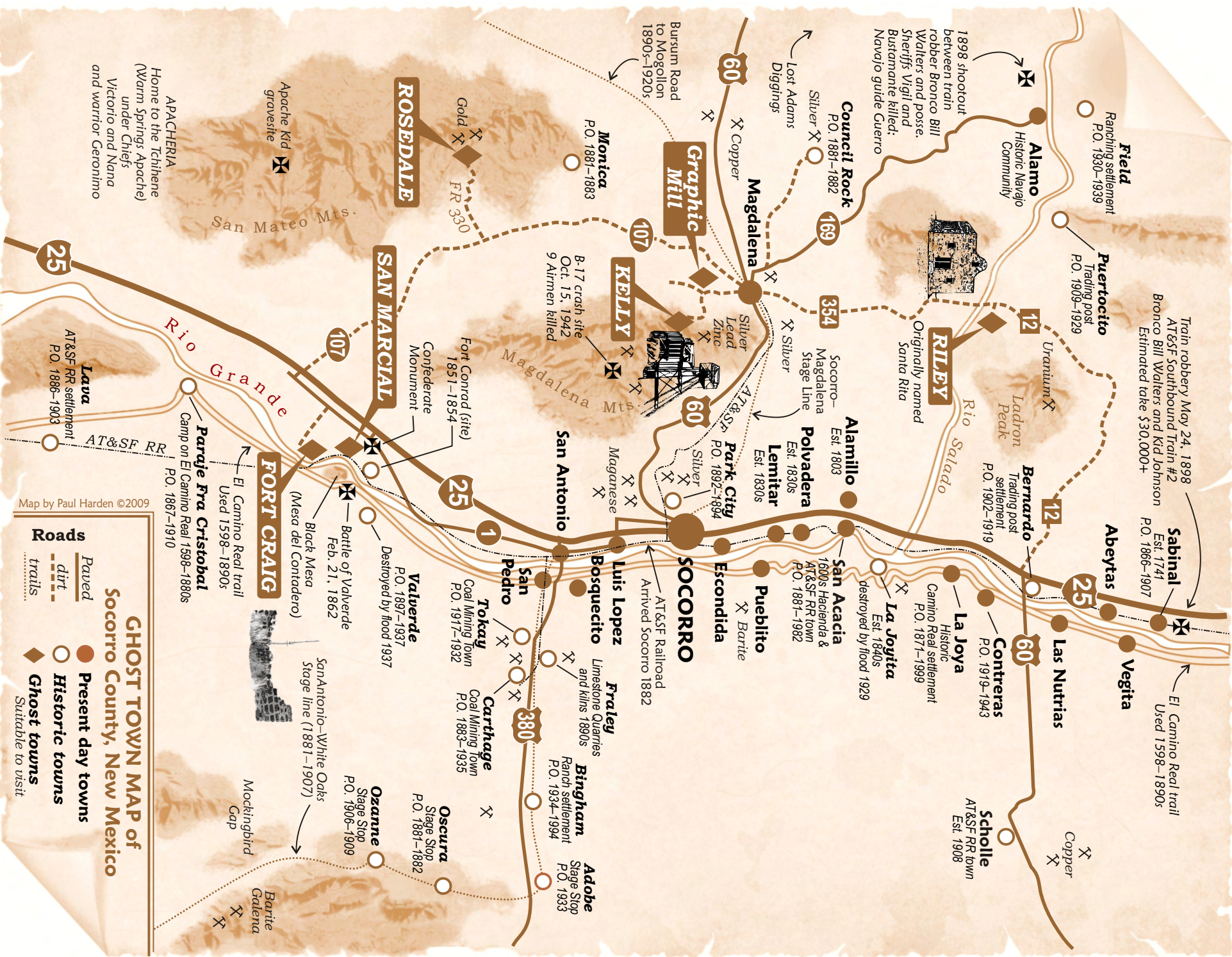
Ft. Craig became a major frontier fort. It served as the Department of New Mexico during the Civil War. Historically, it is well known for its involvement in the nearby Battle of Valverde, fought February 21, 1862, north of Black Mesa.

Today, Ft. Craig is a National Historic Site, administered by the Bureau of Land Management. The visitors area has restrooms and drinking water. The fort is a self-guided tour and interpretive signs.



**The Ft. Craig sally port, or entrance, during better days.**





APACHERIA  
Home to the Tchiene  
(Warm Springs Apache)  
under Chiefs  
Victorio and Nana  
and warrior Geronimo

Apache Kid  
grave site

San Mateo Mts.

Magdalena Mts.

Rio Salado

Rio Grande

# GHOST TOWN MAP of Socorro County, New Mexico

- Roads**
  - Paved
  - dirt
  - trails
- Towns**
  - Present day towns
  - Historic towns
  - Ghost towns
  - Suitable to visit

Map by Paul Harden ©2009