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Bent's Old Fort

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Bents Old Fort

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BENTS OLD FORT



Denver Tribune-Democrat, 1-25-68.



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A series by William Featherstone, superintendent

Forts. Bent's fort

REPORT FOR 1967

For those of our readers who have not been to this national historic site for a couple of years, we want to summarize the improvements made in 1967.

Surely the most important announcement that was made was the Director's decision to rebuild the Fort. As many of you know this was the original plan back in 1963, but for over two years there had been a suspension of that plan while various other alternatives were studied. Along with the decision to rebuild the fort went the companion proposal to build a visitor center adjacent to Highway 194

which would house an audio-visual room, an exhibit area with museum and the administrative offices.

Last year we made the visitor's stay a little more pleasant by installing a refrigerated water cooler, by constructing a covered extension to the contact station where one could view the exhibits out of the sun, and by providing a bench where folks might wait in the shade while others took the tour. We made their stay more meaningful by displaying some artifacts at the exhibit shelter, by installing a literature rack and producing a pamphlet about other attractions in this area, by extending a trail along the river and producing another leaflet to accompany the visitor on that walk, by conducting two evening programs at which attendance was overwhelming and by having for sale several books about the Fort and the Rocky Mountain region.

Our visitation was 11.4 per cent less than in 1966 with most of this loss occurring in the first half of the year.

Other improvements were a harder surfaced entrance road, better road and parking area striping and landscaping around the Fort and the headquarter trailer and the production of a "new look" in the bend of the river by the complete eradication of amarisck plants, suppression of weeds and encouragement of native grasses. One hundred acres were sown with blue grama, sideoats grama and western wheat.

Until the planned final construction can get under way (probably early 70s) we shall continue to improve the grounds and the manner in which we explain the significance of Bent's Fort to the visitor. Come out to see us sometime!