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Bent's Old Fort

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Historical Group Gets More Data on Fort Bent, None on Santa Fe

La Junta Tribune Democrat

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Fort

Historical Group Gets More Data On Fort Bent, None On Santa Fe

Another reply to the Otero County Historical society's questions on Fort Bent has been received but no one has ventured an answer on the last question, "How much capital did the organizer of the Santa Fe railroad have?"

The questions are being asked by the historical society in issues of the Tribune-Democrat as a means to gather historical information and increase interest in the new organization. Winners of the contest will win charter memberships with dues for one year paid.

Lester Gwyn of North La Junta brought in an old newspaper clipping, describing Fort Bent, today.

The clipping read:

"Bent's Fort, 12 miles west of the present Las Animas, was started in 1828 and completed in 1832 by Charles, William, Robert and George Bent and Ceran St. Vrain, French Canadian hunters and trappers with the American Fur company.

"It was the first improvement made by the white man in Colorado, the first fort, and the first large and successful business organization. The fort commanded buffalo robe trade of the plains and the fur trade of the mountains.

"On the Arkansas river and old Santa Fe trail, it was visited by Fremont, Kit Carson and other famous explorers and scouts. It was the center of what social and cultural life there was in a wide area, as well as, a trading post and refuge from Indians. Built of adobe walls four feet thick and 15 feet high, the fort enclosed 135 by 180 feet.

"For his conquest of New Mexico, General Stephen W. Kearney in 1846 made Bents' Fort a military base and hospital and later the federal government offered \$12,000 for the fort. When U. S. agents could not meet the \$16,000 price set by Colonel William Bent, he removed all goods in 1852 and burned and blew up the fort.

"The next year the Bents built another fort 40 miles westward. Their first stockade was built in 1826, midway between Pueblo and Canon City."

The next questions in the historical contest should be easily answered.

What and where was the JJ ranch? Who owned it?

All answers to questions are

to be mailed or brought in to the Tribune-Democrat. The answers will be judged by a committee of judges to be selected by the historical society.

Results of the judging will not be announced until after the contest is finished. Decisions of the judges will be final.