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Bent's Old Fort

Colorado National Parks

Looking Back Down the River of Time

N/A

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LOOKING BACK

DOWN THE RIVER OF TIME . . .

DO YOU KNOW . . .

*Fort Bent + 5
11-23-42
Tribune-Democrat*

That there are some curious things about the story of the blowing up of Bent's Fort, about six miles east of La Junta, and many of the old time cattlemen and early settlers who came in after Bent moved out ever believed it. The fort, it is said, was still standing when they came and was used for many years as a stage station until the arrival of the railroad. One report is that Bent wanted to destroy any powder remaining at the fort, whether his own or stored there by the government, to keep it out of the way of Indians and Mexicans. It is probable that Bent set a fuse afire to touch it off and an explosion followed, but the damage was small, being confined to the four walls of the magazine. It is known by some that the fort stood after being abandoned by Bent for 20 years or more with but little change. When finally abandoned by a stage line, the elements soon wrought havoc with the structure and it went down very fast. Nothing but a monument is left there, yet the old fort still lives in picture and story. Some day, perhaps, through a turn of fortune's wheel, it may be restored again, as a shrine in which to keep alive the memory of frontier days in the Arkansas Valley of Colorado.