

A Trip to Santa Fe on the Rail Runner

We are off to visit Santa Fe on the Rail Runner. This has been a trip I have wanted to do for a number of years and we just have had not had time to make this trip due to working on multiple houses. Now that we only have one house we have more free time to travel to point's of interest in New Mexico.

For those who do not know the Rail Runner is a commuter rail between Belen and Santa Fe. It uses some of the same tracks that the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF) uses for their cross country rail system.

When I was young our family took the train from Albuquerque to Topeka Kansas many times. The rail system always took us through Lamy, NM and not through Santa Fe so this is my first time on a train to Santa Fe. Lamy was named for Archbishop Jean-Baptiste Lamy, and lies within the Bishop John Lamy Spanish Land Grant, which dates back to the eighteenth century.

So my question is why is the railroad is called Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway but never passes through Santa Fe?

The Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway was chartered on February 11, 1859, to join Atchison and Topeka, Kansas with Santa Fe, New Mexico. In its early years, the railroad opened Kansas to settlement. Much of its revenue came from wheat grown there and from cattle driven north from Texas to Wichita and Dodge City by September 1872.

Rather than turn its survey southward at Dodge City, AT&SF headed southwest over Raton Pass because of coal deposits near Trinidad, Colorado and Raton, New Mexico. At the same time the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG) was also aiming at Raton Pass, but AT&SF crews arose early one morning in 1878 and were hard at work with picks and shovels when the D&RG crews showed up for breakfast. At the same time the two railroads had a series of skirmishes over occupancy of the Royal Gorge west of Canon City, Colorado; physical confrontations led to two years of armed conflict that became known as the Royal Gorge Railroad War. Federal intervention prompted an out-of-court settlement on February 2, 1880, in the form of the so-called "Treaty of Boston", wherein D&RG was allowed to complete its line and lease it for use by Santa Fe. D&RG paid an estimated \$1.4 million to Santa Fe for its work within the Gorge and agreed not to extend its line to Santa Fe, while Santa Fe agreed to forego its

planned routes to Denver and Leadville.

The AT&SF reached Albuquerque in 1880; Santa Fe, the original destination of the railroad, found itself on a short branch from Lamy, New Mexico. In March 1881 AT&SF connected with the Southern Pacific (SP) at Deming, New Mexico, forming the second transcontinental rail route.

OK this is enough of the history of the rail system. Diana and I met our good friend Jackie (our guide for today) at the Sandia Pueblo Rail Runner station. This station is new as we have flown over the area in Breezy Rider many times and I have never seen the rail station. While standing there many memories of my days working in Wash, DC and using the Metro came flooding back. The metro was my main means on getting to places within the DC area. Diana also talked about using the BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) as she had spent a number of years working in Livermore, CA.

We boarded the train and took our seats and watched the landscape pass us by. The Kewa Station (Santo Domingo Pueblo Trading Post) is located near the ancient Cerrillos turquoise mines. As a youngster this iconic landmark was the most recognized building on the Native American landscape during the 1950's and 1960's. The Trading Post provided local artisans a venue to display their arts and crafts. In the future, pueblo leaders plan to return the Trading Post to its original splendor. As we neared Santa Fe the rail system ran between the north and southbound lanes of I-25.



We disembarked the train at the Santa Fe Depot (end of the Rail Runner system).

We headed for the plaza which was a good mile from the train station. One of our main goals was to see the staircase at the Loretto chapel.

The Loretto Chapel spiral staircase

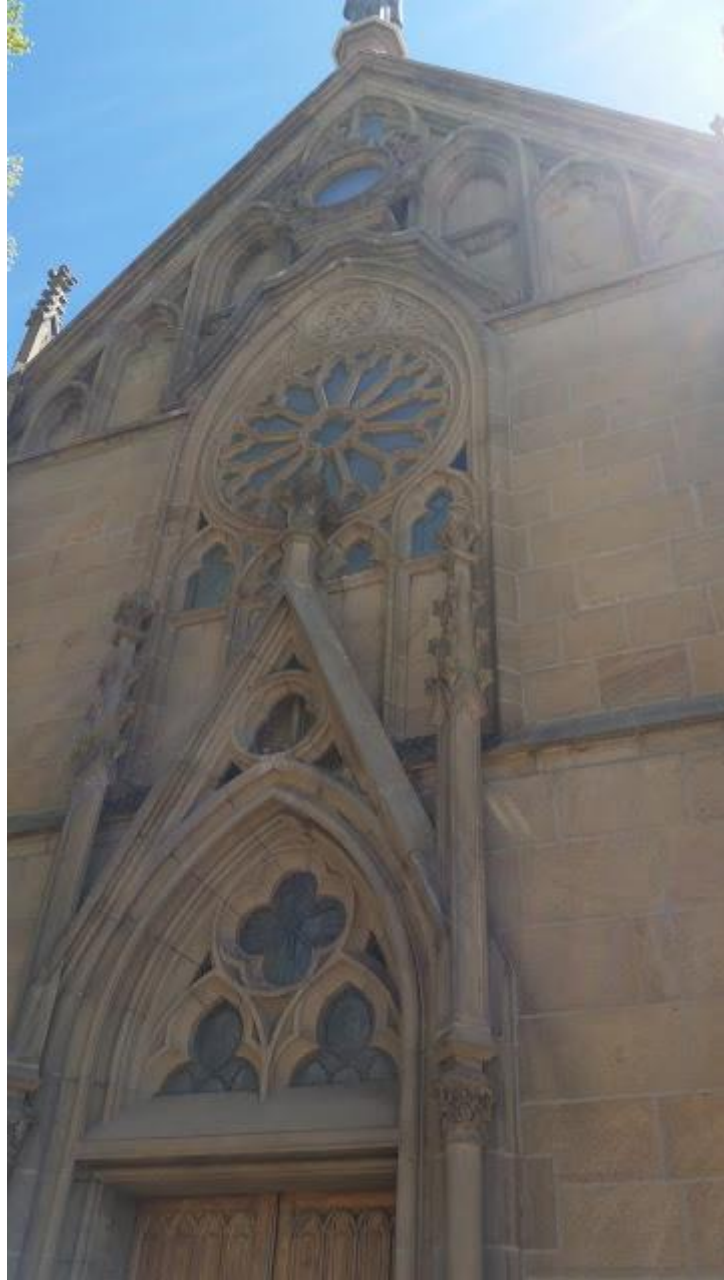
In 1872 Jean-Baptiste Lamy, the Bishop of the Santa Fe Archdiocese, commissioned the building of a convent chapel to be named *Our Lady of Light Chapel*, which would be in the care of the Sisters of Loretto. The chapel was designed by French architect Antoine Mouly in the Gothic Revival style, complete with spires, buttresses and stained glass windows imported from France. Although it was built on a much smaller scale, the chapel bears an obvious resemblance to the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris.

The architect died suddenly and it was only after much of the chapel was constructed that the builders realized it was lacking any type of stairway to the choir loft. Due to the chapel's small size, a standard staircase would have been too large.

Historians have also noted that earlier churches of the period had ladders rather than stairs to the choir loft, but the Sisters did not feel comfortable with that prospect because of the long habits that they wore.



Outside the church



The front of the Chapel



The Sisters of Loretto relate the story as follows: Needing a way to get up to the choir loft the nuns prayed for St. Joseph's intercession for nine straight days. On the day after their novena ended a shabby-looking stranger appeared at their door. He told the nuns he would build them a staircase but that he needed total privacy and locked

himself in the chapel for three months. He used a small number of primitive tools including a square, a saw and some warm water and constructed a spiral staircase entirely of non-native wood. The identity of the carpenter is not known for as soon as the staircase was finally finished he was gone. Many witnesses, upon seeing the staircase, feel it was constructed by St. Joseph himself, as a miraculous occurrence.

The resulting staircase is an impressive work of carpentry. It ascends twenty feet, making two complete revolutions up to the choir loft without the use of nails or apparent center support. It has been surmised that the central spiral of the staircase is narrow enough to serve as a central beam. Nonetheless there was no attachment unto any wall or pole in the original stairway, although in 1887—10 years after it was built—a railing was added and the outer spiral was fastened to an adjacent pillar. Instead of metal nails, the staircase was constructed using dowels or wooden pegs.

Master carpenter Christopher Francis Ocean explains that, "A simple staircase has two beams, called stringers, and the treads of the staircase rest on these beams or are connected to them...the weight of the staircase is transferred to where the two stringers touch the floor. The only difference with the staircase at the Loretto Chapel is these beams or stringers have been twisted into a helix. However, Carter does view the staircase as a magnificent work of art, and a feat to create using modern tools, let alone with crude hand tools and no electricity.

After a lunch at Subway we walked to the Cathedral Basilica of Saint Francis of Assisi, commonly known as Saint Francis Cathedral, and is a Roman Catholic cathedral in Santa Fe.



The altar screen, a reredos, was created for the 100th anniversary of the Cathedral in 1986. In the center is an 18th-century statue of St. Francis. He is surrounded by painted images of saints of the New World.



The altar screen



Tom & Diana



The back of the cathedral

The cathedral was built by Archbishop Jean Baptiste Lamy between 1869 and 1886 on the site of an older adobe church, La Parroquia (built in 1714–1717). An older church on the same site, built in 1626, was destroyed in the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. The new cathedral was built around La Parroquia, which was dismantled once the new construction was complete. A small chapel on the north side of the cathedral was kept from the old church. Influenced by the French-born Archbishop Lamy and in dramatic contrast to the surrounding adobe structures, Saint Francis Cathedral was designed in the Romanesque Revival style. As such, the cathedral features characteristic round arches separated by Corinthian columns and truncated square towers. The large rose window in front and those of the Twelve Apostles in the lateral nave windows were imported from Clermont-Ferrand in France. *My question about the steeples: The towers were originally planned to be topped with dramatic 160-foot steeples, but due to lack of funds, these were never built.*

The left tower is a single row of bricks taller than the right tower. The cathedral was built from yellow limestone blocks quarried near the present site of Lamy. A 2005 addition to the upper facade of the cathedral is a small, round window featuring a dove, the symbol of the Holy Spirit. It is a stained glass replica of the translucent alabaster window designed in the 17th century by the Italian artist Bernini for St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City.



The fifteenth station of the cross showing the resurrection of Jesus.



Our Tour Guide and good Friend Jackie...



Next to the Cathedral was a grass/tree lined park called Don Diego Jose de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon. Leon was born in Madrid Spain and served the crown as governor of New Mexico from 1691-1697 and 1703-1704. Vargas was a devout Christian with a strong devotion to "Our Lady of Peace".

On the Plaque is the following "Recognized for his contemporary and talent as a royal official, his arrival in February 1691 at El Paso del Norte as Governor marked the beginning of a critical episode of New Mexico's restoration, resulting in a remarkable reconciliation with Pueblo Indian leaders such as Luis Tapatu, Domingo Tuguaque, Juan de Ye and Bartolome de Ojeda. Together these men forged a lasting peace that has endured more than three hundred years. Vergas' accomplishments will long be remembered by all generations that follow".



A statue representing the padre, the spanish conquistadors and families in the area.

We begin the clock watch as the train to ABQ leaves at 4:14 PM. We start heading toward the depot but find many interesting places to stop and browse.



As we headed for the train station we were walking along Palace St. we came upon a Southwestern kitsch right next to "Rainbow Man" shop. Here was the secret portal where man and women entered and the town folks never saw them come out. They were whisked away out the back and transported to Los Alamos--The world was forever changed. The townspeople came up with all kinds of stories as to where these people were disappearing to, but no one really had a clue as to the secret city of Los Alamos and its atomic mission to end World War II.

Next we entered a gallery as it had pictures very similar to the picture we have hanging in our entry way by BC Nowlin. The pictures were awesome. One technique offered by the dealer is they will Photoshop a painting that you

might want to purchase into a photograph of the wall where a buyer might want to hang it. A cool idea.



In this gallery they showed us a pair of statues that is a recasting of an originally casted Frank Lloyd Wright statue in 1947 and recasted in 1977. It was titled

"Cherokee". Beautiful pieces that might go very well in our home as our home has a Frank Lloyd Wright theme.

As we continued our walk Diana and Jackie were talking about heading for the Burro. Not being a part of the conversation I was not sure what I was getting myself into but I followed.





Seems to be a lot of bull around here



We crossed over the Sante Fe river. As a kid my parents and us kids would stop by the river and walk over the river on a bridge that was one long plank.. No hand rails or anything. Crazy !!!





On another building we found this plaque with referred to a Stone Warehouse. From the front not much to see but looking at the side of the building it indeed was made of stone.





An interesting building near the train station was a serpent breaking out of the wall. Wow !!!





Interesting murals on the side of the building.

As we arrived at the train station we picked up some water and waited for the train to arrive.



The five car RoadRunner just before we boarded the trusty steed.

Next visit to Santa Fe we plan to make it a museum day. As this first ride on the RoadRunner was a special "free for seniors" it was a wonderful way ride