**Albuquerque Trivia**

January 24, 2021, Stacy Sacco

I have always been intrigued by our local history, and thought it would be fun to share some of the books and websites I have found that feature trivia and historical information about our area, including:

**Albuquerque Trivia**

Cynthia and Arthur Romero, Creative Designs, Inc., 1993.

Here is a selection of my favorite questions from a six page list of 25 questions that I picked up at a local tourism conference:

Questions:

3. When did Albuquerque incorporate as a town? As a city?

4. What was Albuquerque’s population at the turn of the century?

6. What were some of the reasons that New Mexico appealed to Easterners as a place to live?

7. Who was the founder of the Rio Grande Zoological Park?

12. By 1900, what were the five most significant industries in Albuquerque?

14. What was the first public transportation in Albuquerque?

17. Why was the name “Sandia” Mountains chosen?

19. After the first building at UNM was completed, what was the cost of tuition for a four-year program?

20. What was the number of graduating class of 1914 at the University of New Mexico?

23. What invigorating and curative resources has lured thousands to Albuquerque?

Answers:

3. In 1885, Albuquerque incorporated as a town, and in 1891 as a city.

4. The 1900 U.S. Censure records that the population of Albuquerque was 6,026 persons (excluding Old Town).

6. Albuquerque Commercial Club, about 1883, issued strong appeals to persons in the East suffering from respiratory illnesses, especially tuberculosis. At first, the claims promised virtually instant recovery from almost any ailment.

Persons with weak lungs, or with a tendency to consumption, may count that they will never fall victim to the dread destroyer if they take up residency here. Bronchitis, chronic pneumonia, chronic malaria, hay fever and general debility are among the diseases that are almost surely cured in this climate.

--- Plain Statements Regarding New Mexico, 1893

Many prominent citizens came to Albuquerque because of respiratory ailments. Clyde Tingley arrived because of his wife’s illness, and Clinton P. Anderson came in on the Santa Fe Railroad expecting to die shortly. Carrie Tingley lived to found a children’s hospital in Hot Springs, now Truth or Consequences, and Anderson became a U.S. Senator and leading businessman.

7. In 1923, the zoo started out with a pair of mountain lions, said to have been captured in either the Sandia or Manzano Mountains, according to the Rio Grande Zoo. (And, according to Albuquerque Museum accounts, some animals had been collected earlier from a circus passing through town and the idea belonged to Clyde Tingley.)

In 1927, the zoo was given a monkey called Friday by Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. This monkey has been in the movie,” Robinson Crusoe.” In 1972, the Zoological Society banquet was held to celebrate the arrival of the rhinos and featured alligator tail hors d’oeuvres, frozen from the previous year’s winter death. A bond issue in 1975, paid for the construction of the Reptile House and the Rain Forest.

14. The first public transportation was the Albuquerque Street Railroad, a horsedrawn line. It operated from 1881 to 1904 and its route was between Old Town and New Albuquerque using Railroad Avenue. Oliver Cromwell, a New York investor, bought the business and paid for its construction. Electric trolleys replaced the horsedrawn cars and operated from 1904 to 1927.

(Visit Albuquerque Trolley, <https://www.tourabq.com/abqtrolley>)

17. Sandia, in Spanish, means watermelon. The name was chosen perhaps because of the resemblance of the mountain range to a slice of watermelon. At sunset, there is a red coloration across the top of the mountain because of the effect of the sun’s rays on the granite exposed on the western face. Near the ridge line at the summit, the green rind of the watermelon is suggested by the Pennsylvania limestone and a cover of dark timber.

Place Names of New Mexico, authored by Robert Julyan, further describes the history of the Sandia name as, “One explanation attributes this name to watermelons, or at least watermelon-resembling gourds, growing in canyons here. Another attributes it to being transferred from El Corazon de la Sandia, a mountain in the Spanish Sierra Nevada resembling the heart of a watermelon. The most popular explanation is that the Sandia Mountains, especially when viewed from the NW in the evening, resemble a sliced watermelon, the granite pink with alpenglow, capped by a white limestone layer and covered with dark-green vegetation resembling a rind. But the most likely explanation is the one believed by the Sandia Indians: the Spaniards, when they encountered the pueblo in 1540, called it Sandia, because the squash growing there were watermelons, and the name Sandia was transferred to the mountains east of the pueblo. And indeed, several mountain groups have taken their names from nearby pueblos: the Taos Range, the Jemez Mountains, the Picuris Mountains, and the Zuni Mountains. The Tiwas call the Sandia complex Bien Muir, “big mountain.” The Tewas call it Oku Pin, “turtle mountain,” for its shape. The Navajo name for the Sandia Mountains means “revolving (in a horizontal plane) mountain.” The Sandias figure in the mythology of many local Indian groups.

Interestingly, as a youth in Albuquerque, I was always told that the Manzano Mountains to the South of the Sandia were so named since “manzano” means apple in Spanish and this range also exhibits a red glow at sunset. Author, Robert Julyan, further explains that the Manzano Mountains acquired their name from the village on its eastern foothills, and from apples grown in two ancient orchards there. They are believed to be planted by Franciscan friars in the 17th century when the Salinas pueblos were active there. Remnants of the orchids still survive and the name they inspired ha spread throughout the region. 3 miles SE of the village is the tiny satellite community of East Manzano and nearby Manzano lake. Interestingly, the Tiwa name for the range means “closed fist mountains.”

19. Tuition was free, but there was a $3 dollar matriculation fee for the support of the library.

20. 18 graduates. A little over 100 students were enrolled at the time. Today, the number is upwards of 24,000.

23. Sunlight, which is abundant here. There are only five days a year, on average, in which the sky is completely overcast and the sun does not shine, and one hundred days every year, on average, are virtually cloudless. During one record stretch (between December 1961 and February 1964) the sun shone, at least briefly, for 779 consecutive days.

**Duke City Facts**

Albuquerque Monthly, July 1995

This article included two pages of interesting facts. Some of my favorites include:

* Albuquerque was founded in 1706. It is one of the oldest inland communities in the United States. The city was named for Don Francisco Fernandez de la Cueva Enriquez, Duke of Alburquerque, Viceroy of New Spain.
* Albuquerque’s elevation is 5,314 feet – the highest metropolitan city in the American mainland (higher in elevation than Denver at 5,280 feet).
* Albuquerque is the Hot-Air Balloon Capital of the U.S. The city hosts the annual International Balloon Fiesta – the largest international hot-air balloon competition in the world. The first Fiesta took place in 1972 in the parking lot of the Coronado shopping center; 13 balloons participated. Today, the event lasts 10 days and features more than 600 balloons and 900 pilots every year (19% of the total number of known balloons worldwide), and draws crowds of more than 1.6 million people. (Visit <https://balloonfiesta.com/>)
* Cochiti Dam, 45 miles northwest of Albuquerque, is the second-largest dam west of the Mississippi. (Visit <https://www.cochitilake.org/>)
* The aerial tramway, just east of Tramway Boulevard in Albuquerque stretches 2.7 miles up into the Sandia Mountains. It starts at an elevation of 6,600 feet and climbs to the summit of 10,378 feet. It has the longest span of any tram in North America and the third longest of any in the world, and it is the longest single-span tram on Earth. The tram takes about 20 minutes to complete each leg of its journey. (Visit [https://sandiapeak.com/\](https://sandiapeak.com/%5C))
* New Mexico was admitted to the union on January 6, 1912, the 47th state. It is the fifth largest state in the U.S., 121,510 square miles in area. 45.8% of the state’s land is under private ownership, 34.1% under federal, 11.8% under state, and 8.3% under Indian Trust arrangements. The highest point in the state is Wheeler Peak (13, 161 feet) in Taos County, the lowest is Red Bluff Reservoir (2,817 feet) in Eddy County. In addition to containing approximately 1,000 miles of interstate highway, New Mexico also contains the oldest capital city in the U.S. (Santa Fe), the oldest continuously occupied city in the U.S. (Acoma’s Sky City), and the largest known caves in the world (Carlsbad Caverns). (Visit: <https://www.newmexico.org/> and [https://www.go-newmexico.com/#](https://www.go-newmexico.com/))

Other sites of interest include:

**10 Interesting Things You Probably Didn’t Know about the City of Albuquerque**

Katie Lawrence, August 15, 2016

[10 Facts About Albuquerque That You Didn't Know (onlyinyourstate.com)](https://www.onlyinyourstate.com/new-mexico/albuquerque/fun-facts-about-albuquerque/)

**18 Fun Facts About Albuquerque, New Mexico**

Traveling With The Jones, Sharing Travel Discoveries, February 13, 2015

<http://travelingwiththejones.com/2015/02/13/18-fun-facts-about-albuquerque-new-mexico/>

**Legends of America: Albuquerque, New Mexico – 300 Year Old Duke City**

<https://www.legendsofamerica.com/nm-albuquerque/>

**Albuquerque Trivia** (paperback), Arthur Romer and Cynthia Romero, 2007

**Albuquerque Facts**, First National Bank of Albuquerque, 1953

**New Mexico Fun Facts and Trivia**

<https://www.legendsofamerica.com/nm-funfacts/>

**Movies That Were Filmed in New Mexico**

New Mexico has been home to a long list of movies and television programs since the first movie, Indian Day School, was filmed in the Isleta Pueblo area in 1897 (by Thomas Edison, one minute, black & white). Of course Breaking Bad gets us a lot of attention in the media, but there are several noteworthy movies that were filmed here too. For more information, visit: the New Mexico Film Office, <https://nmfilm.com/>.

* 1969, Easy Rider
* 1969, Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid
* 1970, The Cheyenne Social Club
* 1972, The Cowboys
* 1976, The Man Who Fell to Earth
* 1978, Superman
* 1979, The Muppet Movie
* 1981, The Legend of the Lone Ranger
* 1983, Silkwood
* 1985, Silverado
* 1988, The Milagro Beanfield War
* 1988, Twins
* 1988, Young Guns
* 1989, Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade
* 1991, Terminator 2: Judgement Day
* 1996, Independence Day
* 1997, Contact
* 1999, Wild Wild West
* 2000, The Tao of Steve
* 2001, Ghost of Mars
* 2005, Brokeback Mountain
* 2007, Wild Hogs
* 2007, No Country for Old Men
* 2007, Transformers
* 2009, Terminator Salvation
* 2009, Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen
* 2010, The Book of Eli
* 2010, Legion
* 2010, True Grit
* 2011, Cowboys & Aliens
* 2012, The Avengers
* 2014, The Signal
* 2014, Transcendence
* 2017, The Space Between Us
* 2020, Half Brothers
* 2021 News of the World

**Recommended Readings**

For further reading, I’d recommend the following books:

* 100 Things to do on Route 66 Before you die, Jim Hinckley, Reedy Press, 2017.
* 101 Things to do in Albuquerque Before you die, Ashley M. Biggers, Reedy Press, 2015.
* A History Lover’s Guide to Albuquerque, Roger M. Zimmerman, The History Press, 2019.
* A Spy’s Guide to Santa Fe and Albuquerque, E.B. Held, University of New Mexico Press, 2011.
* Albuquerque Remembered, Howard Bryan, University of New Mexico Press, 2006.
* Albuquerque Then and Now, Mo Palmer, Thunder Bay Press, 2006.
* An Underground Guide to Albuquerque (Select editions), Eric Bodwell, Founder; Destructible Heart Press, 2005-2011.
* Ghosts of Old Town Albuquerque, Cody Polston, Haunted America, a Division of the History Press, 2012.
* Historic Movie Theatres of New Mexico, Jeff Berg, History Press Library Editions, 2018.
* Images of America: Forgotten Albuquerque, Ty Bannerman, Arcadia Publishing, 2008.
* Legendary Locals of Albuquerque, Richard Melzer, Arcadia Publishing, 2015.
* New Mexico Beer: A History of Brewing in the Land of Enchantment, Jon C. Scott, 2014.
* New Mexico Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities & Other Offbeat Stuff, Sam Lowe, Morris Book Publishing, LLC, 2009.
* The Basic New Mexico Bucket List: 100 Things to Do in New Mexico Before you Die, Barbe Awalt, Rio Grande Books, 2015.
* The Place Names of New Mexico, Robert Julyan,
* The Ultimate Hot Air Balloon Bucket List: 100 Ballooning Things to Do Before You Die, Barbe Awalt, Rio Grande Books, 2015.
* Walking Albuquerque, Stephen Ausherman, Wilderness Press, 2015.

I’ve included a longer list of books in my companion paper “ABQ Remote: Why Albuquerque?”

**Albuquerque Earns Top Rankings**

Many local economic development agencies regularly report our favorable rankings as part of their promotional efforts on behalf of the city and state. When I used to write a bi-weekly business column for the Albuquerque Tribune in 2011, I found that Albuquerque Economic Development did one of the better jobs of posting this kind of information, and at that time, collected together the following list:

2010 – Albuquerque Named #6 Leanest City - Men's Health

2010 – Albuquerque Named Among Bike Friendly Cities - Bicycling Magazine

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked #1 City to Live, Work and Make Movies, MovieMake

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked #15 Among Top Sustainable Cities - Site Selection

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked #3 Best City for Affordable Homes - U.S. News

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked #7 for Increase in Gross Metro Product, Brookings Institute

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked 7th Among "Surprising Food Cities" - Livability.com

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked 8th Among Clean Air Cities - American Lung Association

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked a Low-Cost Destination for Business Travel - Business Travel

2010 – Albuquerque Ranked Among Top 10 Recovery Cities – Relocate America

2010 – Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Taos Named Top Arts Cities – American Style

2010 – Albuquerque's Exports Ranked 20th in the U.S. - Brookings Institution

2010 – Four New Mexico Colleges Ranked Among Forbes' Best – Forbes

2010 – New Mexico High Schools Ranked Among Best - U.S. News Magazine

2010 – Rio Rancho Ranked Among Best Small Cities – Money Magazine

2010 – TLC Ranks Albuquerque #4 Best City for Families - The Learning Channel

2011 – ABQ Ranked 7th for Transit Coverage - Brookings Institution

2011 – Albuquerque Named 5th Among Sustainable Cities - Our Green Cities (Tufts University)

2011 – Albuquerque Ranked #15 Among Best Cities – BusinessWeek

2011 – Albuquerque Ranked Among Best Places to Live - Relocate America

2011 – Albuquerque Ranked Among Best Retirement Places - CNN Money

2011 – Albuquerque Ranked Among Recovering Metros - Brookings Institution

2011 – Forbes Ranks Albuquerque Among Best Retirement Places – Forbes

2011 – New Mexico Cities Ranked Among Best for Clean Air - World Health Organization

2011 – New Mexico Ranked 7th for Clean Energy Leadership - Clean Edge

2011 – New Mexico Ranked Best Domestic Travel Destination - Global Traveler

2011 – New Mexico Recognized for Innovation - U.S. Chamber

2011 – NM Ranked 10th Among States for Lowest Tax Burden - Tax Foundation

2011 – NM Ranked 10th for Sustainability - Site Selection

2011 – NM Ranked a Top State for Manufacturing - American Institute for Economic Research

2011 – UNM Anderson School Ranked Among World's Top 100 - Aspen Institute