

Things to Do In and Around Cimarron

History abounds in the Cimarron Territory. When you are in the Philmont backcountry you will be introduced to the spirit of the pioneers - the homesteaders, the miners, the loggers, the adventurers, the cattlemen, the outlaws, the ranchers, the lawmen, ... oh, so much history. But also at Base Camp (Camping Headquarters) there is much to do and see. Yes you must allocate time to spend in the biggest BSA Trading Post you ever saw, the Tooth of Time Traders, but don't miss the other outstanding possibilities.

Near Camping Headquarters - Villa Philmonte, Seton Library and National Scouting Museum

In Base Camp, take advantage of every spare moment. Don't miss the opportunity to take the outstanding tour of Villa Philmonte, the Phillips family's summer home. The Villa tour, about an hour long, is about all you can expect to do on the trailbound end of your trek. Should you not be able to squeeze this in on your first two days, it is a must when you are back in Base Camp and homebound. Check with your Ranger on Day One about making Villa reservations for your crew the afternoon of Day 1, the morning of Day Two (if you have an afternoon bus) or the afternoon of Day 12 after you come off the trail. You can also make the reservation yourself for your crew at the Philmont Museum across the road from the Camping Headquarters Welcome Center. It would be a real shame if all did not get to see and hear the story of our benefactors, Mr. Waite Phillips and his family.

On the way to the Villa, visit the National Scouting Museum (recently moved from Irving, Texas, and a long time moved from New Jersey) and Seton Library with its trading post/jewelry shop, the western wagon display, and walk through the Philmont Training Center. Here thousands of Scouters are trained each year on the beautiful grounds of the Phillips home. We think all will be very impressed. Look sharp, be polite, and we can guarantee an outstanding experience. There is no charge. Check out this YouTube [PhilCast](#) highlighting the three museums near Base Camp (the Villa Philmonte, the Philmont Museum / Seton Library, and the Kit Carson Museum / Rayado).

A short bus ride - Rayado, Kit Carson Museum, Maxwell Home, and Abreu Chapel

Rayado was an outpost on the Santa Fe Trail. It is a National Historic Landmark, a living museum, and it is part of Philmont. Located in the southeastern corner of the Ranch, it is a seven mile, 15-minute, bus ride (free last summer!) from Camping Headquarters. Register for the bus ride at Logistics. You can register for the ride on check in day. If your trek ends in the morning, this is a very good way to spend a few hours of your last afternoon at Philmont.

At Rayado, you can take the tour of the Kit Carson Museum and visit the old time Santa Fe Trail Trading Post. And ask about the schedule for an afternoon musical performance. There is no charge. Rayado was once the home of Kit Carson and Lucien Maxwell. Maxwell, the founder of Rayado and an early owner of the Philmont property, employed Carson to oversee the operations of the outpost. Boy Scouts in the early 1950's built the Kit Carson Museum.

In fact, Old Chief Watchu was one of those scouts. Although you can't go into the Maxwell home, don't miss it. Large sums of money are now being used to stabilize and enhance this New Mexico landmark, one of New Mexico's most important historic buildings. Also, check out the Abreu Cemetery and the Abreu Chapel. Even though the cemetery is on Philmont property it still belongs to the Abreu family and is used to this day.

Note: Several treks begin or end at Rayado, with the opportunity to tour the museum before hitting the trail or while waiting for the bus back to Camping Headquarters after completing a trek.

Also nearby is the Chase Ranch. The main house and some outbuildings are now open as a museum. Like Rayado, some treks begin or end there. As this is a new addition to the Philmont museums, exact details are not available - if your crew visits, let Chief Watchu know what you did.

In town - St. James Hotel, Old Aztec Mill, and Schwenk's Gambling Hall

If you decide to go into Cimarron, tours of the St. James Hotel and the Old Mill are recommended. The St. James is one of the remaining relics of the Old West, and was closed the spring of 2009 for a complete and extensive renovation. In the dining room you will find a ceiling punctured with bullet holes; evidence of the many gun fights that erupted in the hotel. The hallway leading to the gift shop has pictures of the famous and infamous hotel visitors. These folks were part of Cimarron's wild and woolly days. You will recognize many of them.

Across the street and down the road from the hotel is the Old (Aztec) Mill. You guessed it - Maxwell built the Aztec Mill, in 1864, the tallest building in Cimarron then (and still today). Now known as The Old Mill, it is important for a number of reasons. First, it is now a museum focusing on the history of ranching in Northeastern New Mexico; especially the history of the famous CS (for Charles Springer) Ranch. There are also exhibits devoted to scouting. Can you find any Morris-Sussex, Minsi Trails, Watchung, or Patriots' Path patches? They are there, including some very rare Schiff Reservation (Mendham, NJ) patches. Finally, this building is featured in a famous photograph by Ansel Adams, who took many photos in the vicinity of Cimarron and on the Philmont property. Do you recognize it? There is a modest charge for the Old Mill. However, if you are wearing your uniform, the curator, may reduce it further. The Mill is operated by the Cimarron Historical Society

The Chamber of Commerce's [Walking Tour of Old Town](#) describes these and other sites, such as the long low building across from the hotel and a few paces toward Philmont which was Schwenk's Gambling Hall. Maxwell's home in Cimarron burned down, but there is an excellent scale model of it in the Old Mill, built by Roy Tozier in 1906. You may know that Billy the Kid was shot and killed in Fort Sumner, New Mexico, by Sheriff Pat Garrett. But did you know that the shooting took place in Maxwell's Fort Sumner home?

Blue Sky Adventures will again be running the buses between the Philmont Welcome center and Cimarron - the ride is about ten minutes and there is a slight fee, \$5.00 per person

roundtrip (our friend Rob is always there when we need him.) The bus schedule will be posted outside the Welcome Center. Look to the west on your way to Cimarron. You are on the Santa Fe Trail ([click here](#) for an article about the recent dedication of a four mile section of the trail between Philmont and Cimarron) and you will pass Philmont's buffalo pasture and may see the buffalo. This pasture and the buffalo were featured in the television presentation of the Larry McMurry book, *Lonesome Dove*. You heard music from *Lonesome Dove* at the Watchu Mountain Adventure, and chances are you will hear that music again before leaving Philmont.

Suggestion: You won't have time to see it all! Let the Scouts pick out their favorite tour, but remember the Villa Philmonte is a must.

Reminder: Your Crew Reporter(s) will work with "Philmont News and Photo Service" to tell your story to the folks back home. Remember the great Patriots' Path contingent newspaper stories we gave you at each Briefing? How about getting your crew into the hometown newspaper? And then don't forget to send [Chief Watchu](#) a copy to share it with future crews on the [Crew Reports](#) page. See the notes from the [Watchu Crew Reporter Briefing](#) for a sample of how to change the Philmont-supplied press release template into the story of your trek. And don't forget the offer for a free tour of the CBS Broadcast Center in New York City for Crew Reporters who have an article on their crew's Philmont experience published to a local newspaper.

Helpful Hint: All gear, personal and crew, should be marked in indelible ink with your name and full crew number.

Phil Fact: Fred Lambert was born in Room 31 of his father's St. James Hotel. Taught how to use a gun by his godfather, "Buffalo Bill" Cody, he was the youngest Territorial Marshal in New Mexico at age 16 and later a town marshal in Cimarron. He restored the Aztec (Old) Mill and opened it as a museum.

Walking the streets of Cimarron,

Fred Lambert

Cimarron, New Mexico