

*Meet Albert (AE) Reynolds*



*Real People! Real Stories!*

*Santa Fe Trail Hall of Fame*

**Albert (AE) Reynolds**  
(1840 – 1921)

- Merchant
- Sutler, Trader, Landowner
- Large operator in Mining Industry of Colorado
- Trustee, University of Denver
- Philanthropist
- Impetus to preserve the site of Bent's Fort

*Real People! Real Stories!*

**Albert (AE) Reynolds** was born in Newfane, NY, on February 13, 1840. His father was a merchant and AE followed in the family business. By 1865, the lure of the west captured him and he and his brother went west to seek their fortunes, setting up mercantile businesses in Junction City, KS, and Richmond, MO. In 1867, AE was awarded the position of Sutler at Old Fort Lyon near the site of Bent's New Fort. When New Fort Lyon was constructed in 1868, Mr. Reynolds was appointed the Sutler there as well. During the next decade, he and various partners were awarded Sutler positions at several southwestern military sites. He also engaged in trade with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians, was a horse trader, dealt in buffalo hides, and bought thousands of acres of land in the Arkansas River Valley near present day La Junta.

That land included the site of Bent's Old Fort. By the early 1900's, when Mr. Reynolds was a wealthy man living in Denver, he often spoke of the "good old days" when he lived and worked in the Arkansas River Valley, when William Bent was still alive, when the Plains Indians were still free, and when the Santa Fe Trail still ran through the valley. When the Daughters of the American Revolution began marking the Mountain Branch of Santa Fe Trail in 1908, Mr. Reynolds paid for the first granite marker which was placed in Lamar. In 1912, Mr. Reynolds not only made land available for the DAR to place its final Colorado marker at the site of the old fort...he also paid for it. He also permitted the DAR to erect a large stone gate at the entrance to the fort.

By 1920, just a year before he died, Mr. Reynolds made known his intention to preserve the site of Bent's Old Fort and turn it into a park that travelers along the Trail might visit to honor the historical place. He found the perfect partner in the La Junta Chapter of the DAR and deeded to them the 4.5 acres of land that included the site. The Chapter preserved and protected the site until 1954 when it was deeded to the State of Colorado which eventually deeded it to the United States which resulted in the reconstruction of the fort to its original size and function