

A Mountain Excursion



With the railroad, came people searching for respite in the cool, clean air of the mountains.

“It surely was a great climb, and many times I feared the little narrow gauge* engine would be unable to make the grade, but we finally reached Cloudcroft on the summit of the Sacramento Mountains.”

- Governor Otero, 1899

* The A&SMR was actually standard gauge.

Since the opening of the Alamogordo and Sacramento Mountain Railroad (A&SMR), pleasure tourists have poured across the trestle to Cloudcroft. Trains arrived daily at 12:00 and 4:00, blowing their steam whistle as they crossed the trestle to let people know they were 15 minutes away. Greeting the visitors at the depot was a daily festivity for residents of Cloudcroft, and guests enjoyed the company of locals after their breathtaking, and sometimes frightening, train ride.

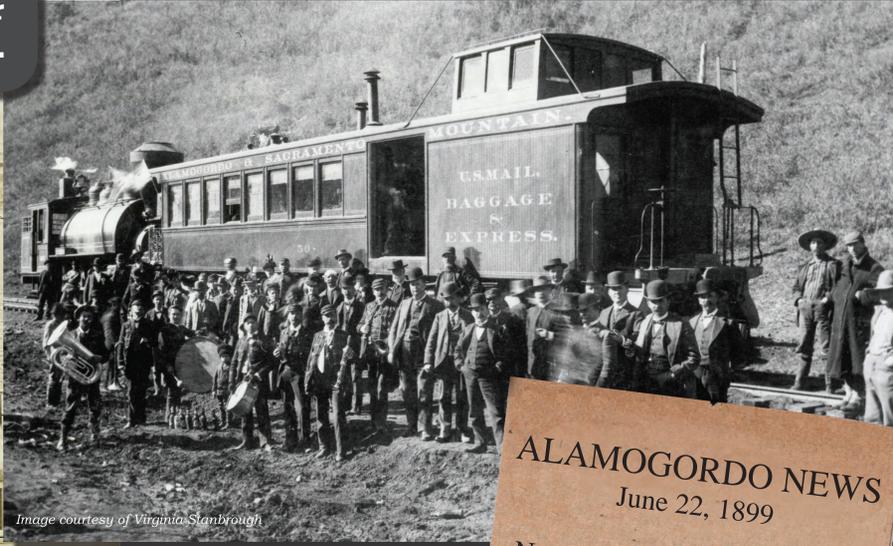
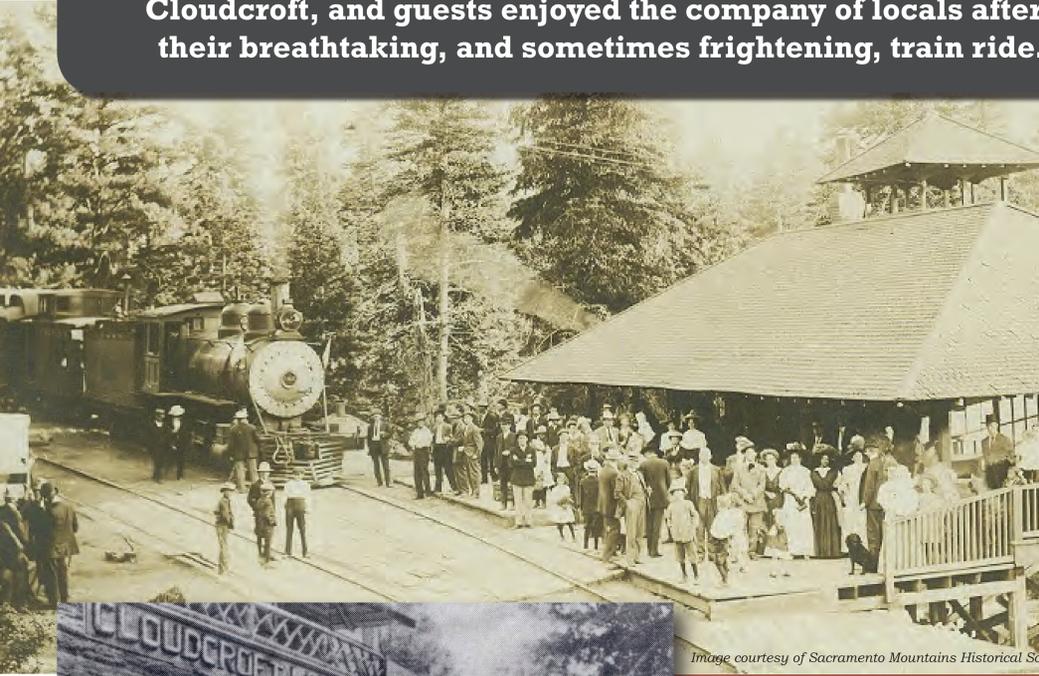


Image courtesy of Virginia Stanbrough



Image courtesy of Sacramento Mountains Historical Society

ALAMOGORDO NEWS
June 22, 1899

New Summer Resort Formally
Opened to the Public last Friday
Morning.

HAVEN OF REST FOR ALL

The great southwest now has a summer resort where the heat and dust of the plains can be escaped, where the comforts of home are provided, where nature has furnished all things necessary for the enjoyment and recreation of the tired and where the ailing can find health and strength without traveling thousands of miles, and that resort is located on the summit of the Sacramento Mountains, 20 miles east of Alamogordo.

A more delightful place in which to spend the heated months cannot be found, and at Cloudcroft has been established a haven of rest for the worn and weary, a refuge of hope and recovery for the sick.

The climate and elevation of the Sacramento Mountains attracted people who were ailing from various maladies, including tuberculosis. In 1911, a baby sanitorium opened its doors to sick children, many of whom lived in El Paso and needed to escape the summer heat. Nicknamed the Baby San, many generous donors provided assistance to those who could not afford the expense on their own. After treating hundreds of sick children, the Baby San closed in the 1940s when the tuberculosis epidemic began to wane.



Image courtesy of Virginia Stanbrough

