

# Towns of the Sandia Mountains (NM) (Images of America)

Mike Smith



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Despite their seemingly impenetrable western facade, the Sandia Mountains of central New Mexico have been home to humankind for millennia. Ancient cultures ventured into these peaks for the creeks, game, and shelter. The Spanish established protective outposts along the canyons and intermarried with local tribes. Civil War soldiers passed through en route to their infamous battle at Glorieta Pass. Navajos marched around the mountains' southern end after the confinement that ended their Long Walk. Anglo settlers cleared the hilly land and built cabins. And tuberculosis patients moved up into primitive resorts, hoping that the mountains' abundant sunshine and fresh air would help them heal. Today the tiny resorts and traditional hamlets of the Sandias are established villages and communities—Carnuel, Tijeras, San Antonio, Cedar Crest, Sandia Park, San Antonito, Placitas, and others—and the rough dirt roads that once saw the passing of ox carts are highways and even an interstate. The area's history lives on, however, in crumbling adobe walls, bits of rust, fading memories, and in this photographic retrospective.

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