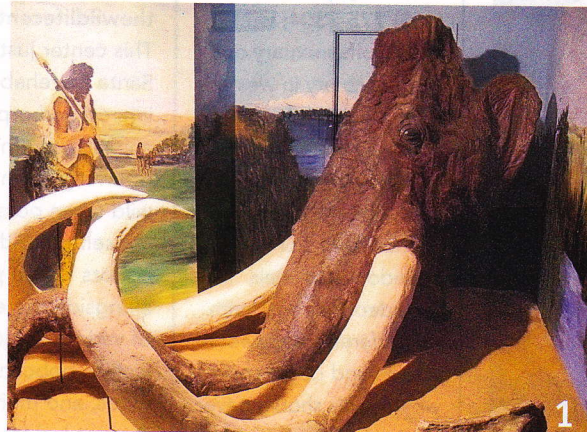


CLOVIS

High Plains Pursuits

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY SALLY MOORE

In 1541, the explorer Francisco Vázquez de Coronado was the first European to ride through the region he came to call the Llano Estacado, or “staked plains.” Encompassing parts of eastern New Mexico and northwestern Texas, the area he described as a “sea of grass” is one of North America’s largest tablelands, with the town of Clovis located on its southeast edge. The agricultural community has its roots in the railroad and today is home to Cannon Air Force Base. But a visit to the area also reveals its import dating to prehistoric times as well as its modern musical legacy. (575) 763-3435; clovisnm.org.



1 Blackwater Draw Archaeological Site and Museum South of Clovis, this site is one of the most important in North America. Early recoveries offer evidence of human occupation in association with Late Pleistocene fauna, such as mammoth. Visitors can view artifacts and current excavations. (575) 562-2202; enmu.edu/services/museums/blackwater-draw.

2 The Norman and Vi Petty Rock & Roll Museum The museum, located in the basement of the Clovis/Curry County Chamber of Commerce, is a tribute to the Pettys’ influence on rock and roll. Norman is credited with making the “Clovis sound” famous, and museum displays include the original mixing board he used to record Buddy Holly. (575) 763-3435.

3 Hillcrest Park Zoo For a community of only 32,667, Clovis has a remarkable 22.5-acre zoo housing 114 species of animals, most of them rescued. There’s Blondy, the 500-pound Siberian tiger; Sere and Geti, a pair of spotted hyenas; and many others. A muster of peacocks patrols the shaded walkways, and numerous waterfowl inhabit a large pond. (575) 769-7873; hillcrestparkzoo.com.

4 Clovis Depot Model Train Museum The ground floor of the old passenger depot for the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway has a gift shop and displays of model and toy trains. Upstairs, there’s a diorama of the Clovis yards as they appeared in the 1950s and more. Visitors can play engineer with nine model layouts. (575) 762-0066; clovisdepot.com.

5 Antiques Shoppers can find everything from a mounted moose head to rare Burmese glass at Clovis’ many antiques emporiums. **Clovis Antiques** (575-763-1740) specializes in smalls, glass, and jewelry. **The Treasure Chest** (575-763-9196) houses about 25 dealers. And **Martin Enterprise** (575-763-0151, pictured), has an encyclopedic collection of Western relics and collectibles.