In 1846, Doctor Wislizenus came from Germany for a taste of western adventure. In the 1830s he explored the Rocky Mountains, and in 1846 joined a caravan of traders in St. Louis. He recorded his travels, wending slowly down the Old Santa Fe Trail, all the way to Chihuahua, in Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico.

This memoir, published the year the Mexican-American war finally ended, provides a snapshot of life before the storm. Wislizenus, with his scientific training, took great interest in his surroundings, and discovered some new species, including the fishhook barrel cactus. [Wislizenus, Adolph]

Two decades of traffic on the Santa Fe Trail had brought some degree of prosperity to San Miguel. Susan Magoffin also comments that San Miguel "is both larger and cleaner than any we have passed; it has a church and public square, neither of which are in the others."

Quote: (27 June 1846) Passed this morning through San Miguel, or the Rio Pecos, The place seems somewhat larger and wealthier than las Vegas. A church, built of adobes, is the most prominent building in town. San Miguel is the most southern point on the Santa Fe road, and from here our mountain road takes a northwestern direction. About three miles beyond San Miguel we halted at noon, and started again in the afternoon for the mountains. [Wislizenus, Adolph]
Overview: San Miguel del Vado

San Miguel del Vado was granted to the fifty-two petitioners from Santa Fe, including thirteen genízaro families, on November 26, 1794. To comply with the terms of the grant, the settlers had to be armed, and construct a fortified plaza.

The church was built by 1812, and the community continued to prosper, especially after the Santa Fe Trail began passing through the lands of the grant. But the American government did not honor the terms of the grant, which included some thousands of acres of common lands, and when the inhabitants were finally granted a patent in 1910, the size of the tract had been reduced from 315,000 acres to 5000 acres.

Quote: . . . it appears that the inhabitants of this said city [Santa Fe] have increased to a great extent . . . [and] there is not land or water sufficient for their support. Neither have they any other occupation . . . excepting agriculture and the raising of stock and whereas in the King’s domains which are unoccupied there are lands which up to this time are uncultivated and which will yield comforts to those who cultivate them . . . [and] from which the further benefit will result that hostile Indians will not travel over them and will serve as a barrier against their entrance to despoil the interior settlements . . . I hereby assign and distribute said site . . .

--Governor Tomas Veléz Cachupin, 1751

Images:

San Miguel Church, 1873
Altar of church in San Miguel del Vado

Links:
Office of the State Historian: 1803 - San Miguel del Vado Granted --
http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=707

3: Santa Fé

1846

As both Wislizenus and Magoffin relate, residents of Santa Fe were more concerned with the threat from surrounding native groups than with the threat of the invading Americans. Magoffin goes on to relate a number of festive fandangos in honor of the American occupiers. New Mexicans, by this point, were comfortable swearing allegiance to new governments, and clearly hoped that the Americans would be more responsive to their troubles.

Quote: (1846) All the houses in Santa Fe are built of adobes, but one story high, with flat roofs; each house in a square form, with a court or open area in the centre. The streets are irregular, narrow, and dusty. The best looking place is the “plaza;” a spacious square, one side of which the so-called palacio, the residence of the Governor, occupies. The palace is a better building than the rest; it has a sort of portico, and exhibits two great curiosities, to wit: windows of glass, and festoons of Indian ears. Glass is a great luxury in Santa Fe; common houses have shutters instead of windows, or quite small windows of selenite (crystallized gypsum).

The festoons of Indian ears were made up of several strings of dried ears of Indians, killed by the hired parties that are occasionally sent out against hostile Indians, and who are paid a certain sum for each head. In Chihuahua, they make a great exhibition with the whole scalps of Indians which they happen to kill by proxy; the refined New Mexicans show but the ears. Among the distinguished buildings in Santa Fe, I have to mention yet two churches with steeples, but of very common construction. [Wislizenus, Adolph]

Quote: (1846) We are having fine protection near us in case of danger; the soldiers have made an encampment on the common just opposite our house, and though we are situated rather “out of town,” we have as much noise about us as those who reside in the center of the city.
We have constant rhumours that Gen. Armijo has raised a large fource of some five or six thousand men, in the South, and is on his march to retake possession of his kingdom. The news has spread a panic among many of his former followers, and whole families are fleeing lest on his return they should be considered as traitors and treated accordingly.

In other families there is mourning and lamentations, for friends they may never see again on earth. A day or two before Gen. Kearny arrived, Armijo collected a fource of some three thousand men to go out and meet him, and even assembled them ready for a battle in the canon some twelve miles from town, but suddenly a trembling for his own personal safety seized his mind, and he dispersed his army, which if he had managed it properly could have entirely disabled the Gen's troops by blockading the road &c., and fled himself!

While all these men, the citizens of Santa Fé and the adjacent villages, were assembled in the canon, and their families at home left entirely destitute of protection, the Nevijo [Navaho] Indians came upon them and carried off some twenty families. Since Gen. K. arrived and has been so successful, they have petitioned him to make a treaty with them, which he will not consent to till they return their prisoners, which 'tis probable they will do thro' fear, as they deem the Gen. something almost superhuman since he has walked in so quietly and taken possession of the pallace of the great Armijo, their former fear. [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: Santa Fé

Santa Fe was for centuries the end of the Camino Real, and has almost always been the seat of government in New Mexico. Most of the original town was built between 1610-1612, and centered around the plaza. The barrio of Analco, across the Río de Santa Fé from the plaza, was one of the main genízaro settlements of New Mexico from its founding at least until the late eighteenth century.

The Casas Reales, or the Palace of the Governors, was built in 1610 when Santa Fé was established. People took refuge in it during the Indian siege of August 1680. Subsequently, this seat of government was occupied by the Pueblo rebels, again by the Spanish, by the Mexican Provincial governors, by U.S. General Kearny, the Confederate Army, and a string of American Territorial governors. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

Quote: Every calculation based on experience elsewhere fails in New Mexico...
--Lew Wallace, Governor of Territorial New Mexico, 1878-1881

Images:

House in Santa Fe

San Miguel church, the oldest in America

Links:
Santa Fe- Official Visitor Site -- http://santafe.org/
 Palace of the Governors: Museum of New Mexico -- http://www.palaceofthegovernors.org/

4: Albuquerque

1846

Quote: (27 July 1846) Turning then towards the west, I left the mountains for a plain, at the western end of which, in a distance of 10 miles, Albuquerque and the Rio del Norte lay before me. The plain affords good pasturage, and a great deal of stock was grazing here. The first view of the Rio del Norte was not imposing: it is a flat, shallow river, with bare and sandy banks, and with no mountains towards the west to form a background. Albuquerque is a town as large as Santa Fe, stretched for several miles along the left bank of the Rio del Norte, and if not a handsomer, is at least not a worse looking place than the capital. It is the usual residence of Governor Armijo; whenever he was out of power, he retired hither to work himself into power again.
Having ascertained in Albuquerque that the caravan had not passed yet, I retired to a rancho (small farm) near the town, to await its arrival. For several days I looked in vain for the caravan; but as it had rained in the latter days, I attributed their delay to the impaired roads. My poor but hospitable ranchero in the meanwhile did all in his power to make me comfortable. He picketed my horse to the fattest grass, and provided myself with milk, beans, and "tortillas," ad libitum. Those rancheros or small farmers seemed to me generally to be more honest than the rest of the population. They do not work to excess, because it is anti-Mexican; but at the same time they are so frugal that they raise all they want.

The country around Albuquerque appears to be well cultivated. Though the soil is sandy, and apparently not fertile, by irrigation they produce abundant crops, often twice a year. They cultivate mostly maize, wheat, beans, and red pepper (chile colorado). The fields are without fences. A canal, by which water from the river is led into the plain, provides by its ramifications the whole cultivated ground with the means of irrigation. [Wislizenus, Adolph]

Overview: Albuquerque

Albuquerque was founded as a villa in 1706 in a rich agricultural region of New Mexico. Its Old Town plaza was the original town center. Evidently, the decision to settle the "Bosque Grande of Doña Luisa" was made in 1698. A manuscript from February 1706 showed that Governor Cuervo y Valdéz authorized the actual settlement, which took place shortly thereafter. A church, dedicated to Saint Francis Xavier, was later rededicated to San Felipe, in honor of His Majesty the King.

The name was changed to Albuquerque after the United States militarily occupied New Mexico. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

Images:

Albuquerque in 1857, with a view of San Felipe de Neri Church, the plaza, and the Sandia Mountains in the background

Links:
City of Albuquerque website -- http://cabq.gov
Albuquerque Convention and Visitors Bureau -- http://itsatrip.org

5: Susan Shelby Magoffin 1827-1855

1846

Susan Shelby Magoffin spent much of the first year of her marriage traveling down the Santa Fe Trail and the Camino Real to El Paso, where her husband's family were prominent merchants. Her trip coincided with the invasion of New Mexico by the Army of the West, and she chronicles the exciting events of that year in her diary, along with her first impressions of the people and customs of New Mexico.

Links:

6: Mora

1846
Quote: (25 August 1846) Tuesday 25th. Noon. "Mora Creek and Settlement"

And such settlements they are-- Here is a little hovel, a fit match for some of the genteel pig sty's in the States-- it is made of mud, and surrounded by a kind of fence made of sticks; this is the casa grande. Its neighbours are smaller, far more inferior, and to them I have no comparison. They are inhabited by rancheros as they are called, who attend solely to the raising of vacas. Their food consists of a little cheese made of thin milk, a little pan de mais [corn bread]-- and such little fruits and nuts as they can collect in the mountains.

We have sent to all of these ranchos, if possible we may be so fortunate as find dos or tres huevas o un polle, pero no nade [two or three eggs or a chicken, but nothing else]. Such things are seldom seen or heard of here nor any thing else I suspect palitable. But they say my opinion is formed too hastily for within these places of apparent misery there dwells that "peace of mind" and contentment which princes and kings have oft desired but never found! [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: Mora

Santa Gertrudis de lo de Mora was first settled by the Spanish after Governor de Anza brokered a peace with the Comanche. The 76 families of settlers, mostly from Trampas and Picuris, were granted the land by Governor Perez in 1835.

Mora grew in importance thanks to its position on the Santa Fe Trail, but residents remained defensive and suspicious of the "foreigners." They fought off a contingent of Texans in 1843, and participated in the Taos Revolt, in which Americans burned the town and all the surrounding crops.

The establishment of nearby Fort Union brought a new market to the farmers of Mora, and Cerain St. Vrain, of Bent's Fort, built a grist mill here. After the end of travel on the Santa Fe Trail, common lands of the grant were sold to a private company in 1916, and the town began to fade in significance. Today it is a gateway for excursions into the Carson National Forest.

Images:

Large Spanish fruit farm in Mora

Links:
Office of State Historian: Mora County -- http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=683

7: Governor Vigil Surrenders to General Kearny

1846

Quote: (19 August 1846) Do not find it strange if there has been no manifestation of joy and enthusiasm in seeing this city occupied by your military forces. To us the power of the Mexican republic is dead. No matter what her faults, she was our mother. What child will not shed tears at the tomb of his parents? I might indicate some of the causes of her misfortunes, but domestic troubles should not be made public. Today we belong to a great and powerful nation. Its flag, with its stars and stripes, covers the horizon of New Mexico, and its brilliant light shall grow like good seed well cultivated....

We know that we belong to the republic which owes its origin to the immortal Washington, whom all civilized nations admire and respect. How different would be our situation had we been invaded by European nations? --Don Baustista Vigil, acting governor of New Mexico (after Armijo), in his response to Kearny's announcement, "You are no longer Mexican subjects, you have become American citizens. I am your governor; henceforth look to me for protection." [Hammond, George Parker]
8: El Rancho de Delgado

1846

Susan Magoffin may have confided to her diary far more critical views of New Mexico than she was willing to share publicly; certainly she tried to have an open mind about her new home, but she could not resist unfavorably comparing New Mexico to Kentucky. Colonel Manuel S. Delgado had bought the Los Cerrillos grant, which included the already historic Rancho de las Golondrinas, a prosperous ranch and well-defended stop on El Camino Real. El Rancho de Las Golondrinas remains a working farm, and is open to visitors April - October.


Lo, we are camping again! and after all it is quite as good as staying in Santa Fé. I was impatient to leave. Gabriel [Valdez] and William [Magoffin] are with us now. The wagons are all on ahead, and we'll not reach them yet for some days. Left Santa Fé about 12 o'k. came on fifteen miles to this place-- a little farm, called a rancho-- rather a poor place, only a little corn, beans, and an abundance of chile verde, a few goats, sheep and jacks-- the beast of all work-- they pack wood on them, ride them, take all their little "fixings" to market in baskets or bags swung on the long-eared animals back &c &c. We camped pretty near the house and of course the peepers are not a few.

The women stand around with their faces awfully painted, some with red which shines like greese, and others are daubed over with flour-paste. The men stand off with crossed arms, and all look with as much wonder as if they were not people themselves. [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: La Cienega

As the closest paraje, or camping ground, to Santa Fe, the springs at La Cienega refreshed travelers on the next-to-last stop on a long, weary journey.

La Ciénega was a seventeenth-century pueblo that was resettled by Spaniards in the early eighteenth century. It has been inhabited nearly continuously since before the arrival of the Spanish.

It was also called El Guicú, San José del Guicú, and La Cañada del Guicú in the eighteenth century.

Modern visitors to La Cienega can visit El Rancho de las Golondrinas, a Spanish Colonial Living HIstory Museum.

Links:
El Rancho de las Golondrinas -- http://www.golondrinas.org/
Vitior (La Cienega 1810) -- http://atlas.nmhum.org/atlas.php?gmap=11&glat=35.5757&glng=-106.1100&gzoom=8&g=496
El Rancho de Delgado (La Cienega 1846) -- http://atlas.nmhum.org/atlas.php?gmap=18&glat=34.5246&glng=-107.4243&gzoom=8&g=734
Sieneguilla (La Cienega 1867) -- http://atlas.nmhum.org/atlas.php?gmap=26&glat=35.5121&glng=-106.3806&gzoom=9&g=393

9: Sandia Pueblo
Disturnell picked up most of Pike's inaccurate names, including San Dies for Sandia.

Quote: (10 October 1846) In passing through a little town this A.M. called Sandia, my Indian friend-- the one who called to see me once in Santa Fé-- who lives there, the big man-- head chief among the tribe, stoped the carriage and pressed us to get out and go into his house-- he had been expecting and preparing for us. We had no time for this though-- and only accepted some grapes at the carriage-- he with his family, squaw & children saw us eat them, with pleased faces, and after a little compensation we left them.

Report comes to us that Brother James has been robbed of all his things, carriage, mules, trunk, clothes, &c. by the Apache Indians and escaped with his life only-- how he escaped is a miracle to us. In robbing, they always want the scalps, the principal part of the business.

I hope it is all a falsehood-- though every person we meet confirms it. The last we heard he was in the little town at the Pass of the Del Norte-- without a hat.

We have fine grulla sandhill crane today-- our hunters have better luck today. They are tender and nice after being boiled nearly all night-- the meat is black as pea fowls. [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: Sandia Pueblo

Sandia pueblo was deserted after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The earliest known reference to that name is 1611. The Spanish resettled the pueblo in the middle of the eighteenth century, bringing back Puebloans who had been living with the Hopi. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

Images:

Sandia Mountains, the Rio Grande near Bernalillo, foreground, ruins of Tur-jui-ai

10: Los Chávez

1846

Again, Disturnell compound the inaccuracies of the Pike map. There was a community called San Fernandez, inhabited by members of the Chávez family, but that town was farther south, and was later absorbed by Tome (marked as Fonclara on this map). Los Chávez, just south of Albuquerque is still a named community, but is mostly absorbed by Belen.

Quote: (13 October 1846) Monday 12th.

...We camp tonight in a large piece of woodland belonging to some of the Chavez's-- the ricos of New Mexico. The trees are all cotton-woods, which I suppose from the sterility of the soil, are much stinted and from the manner of their situation they resemble an apple orchard-- and especially from a distant sight.

Tuesday 13th. Noon. This morning we called to see the widow of Don Mariano Chaviz [acting governor of New Mexico in 1835], who was one of the chief men in New Mexico till his death, about a year since. His wealth was immense, and his lands (for Mexico) were improved accordingly. The house is very large-- the sala measuring some __ feet. This is well furnished with handsome Brussles carpet, crimson worsted curtains, with gilded rings and cornice, white marble slab pier tables-- hair and crimson worsted chairs, chandelebras. And all the Mexicans have the greatest passion for framed pictures and looking-glasses. In this room of Chavez's house are eight or ten gilt-framed mirrors all around the wall. Around the patio are chambers, store-room, kitchen and others. All is exceedingly neat and clean.

La Senora met us and opened the great door, she was very polite, friendly, and invited us to spend sometime with her. All was with true hospitality, and I truly regret we were not able to do so.
We hear that California has been taken by Com. Stockton [Commodore Robert Stockton claimed California for the US July 23, 1846], and that Gen. Kearny will send all his men back, save one hundred dragoons as his body-guard principally. A vague rumor also comes that Gen. Wool has taken Chihuahua [actually Doniphan would do this on March 1, 1847]. [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: Belén

Belén was constructed on the west bank of the Río Grande. Colonial travelers saw it from their camps across the river while later users of the west bank road stopped within the town.

Given that most colonial traffic passed along the east bank of the Río Grande, the most used caravan paraje would have been opposite the town of Belén. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

11: Fonclara

1846

Susan Magoffin does not name the town near where she is camped, but does notice that her acquaintance is "half Indian," the case for most of the genizaro residents of Tomé.

Tomé was called Fuencleta for a brief time in the early 1800s, but was nearly always known as Tomé.

Quote: (23 October 1846) Friday 23rd. Moved camp today three miles-- the road is entirely of sand and exceedingly hard pulling and as we are in but a very little hurry only, we are moving very slowly. Mr. Harmony has crossed the river with the wagons and we are alone now, at least for a few days at least.

I've made the good graces of another old comadre this morning-- an old half Indian, half Mexican-- she came in soon after we stretched the tent, and sat a good long half hour or more. We talked of all family concerns from the children down to the dogs. She asked if I had a mother, father, &c and said I had run off from them "just for a husband," but I laughed and said, "peres es mejor no" [Well is it not better], and with a hearty laugh she assented to both this and my other little question "el marido es todo del mundo a las mujeres" [the husband is the whole world to women]. She thinks though I am young, I am old enough. [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: El Cerro Tomé

Tomé Hill, a natural landmark, served all travelers from prehistoric times into the historic period. A seventeenth-century road ran to the east of the hill. After the river changed its course in the early eighteenth century and the town was founded (in 1740), the main road shifted to go along the valley and by the plaza. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

12: Las Nutrias (San Gabriel)

1846

South of Albuquerque, Susan Magoffin fell ill, and her husband rented a home in San Gabriel de las Nutrias for a month, as they awaited news of the progress of the war.

Quote: (18 November 1846) Wednesday 18th. This is the first day I have dined at table for two whole weeks. I found my way out as dinner came in, and sat down to table. Our dinner of chily with carne de camero [mutton], stewed chicken with cibollas [cebollas or onions], and a dessert made of bread and grapes, a kind of pudding I suppose, was furnished by our landlord and lady. This is a great feast day with the good people of the village, and they have been preparing their dainties for a week. This morning Don José, the owner of our house, came and told us to cook no dinner, and as we obeyed his command, at noon he brought us the repast just named.

Tonight the Priestly portion of the community followed by a crowd, has paraded the patron St. of San Gabriel, with the cross bourn before it, around the plazo, which was illuminated by many small heaps of burning wood and torches bourn by the procession. As I could not go out, I saw from our door the whole proceeding; the music I believe consisted of a kind of drum, violins, and I suppose the ever constant accompaniament of the triangle, though I could not distinguish it at that distance. The procession is broken up now, and all have gone off to the bayle, monte, &c.

It is rather odd to see the women coming from other towns in ox-carts, alias, Río Baja steamboats. The whole family, wife, children, servants, dogs, and all get, or rather pile themselves, up in the vehicle of all work and the dueno de todos [their lord and master] with his long pole gets his horned animals under way, and off they
start squeaking, squealing, barking an other noises accompaning such crowds. Once into town they begin to
jump out, or pulled out, turned and tumbled out, and a happier set never got together. [Magoffin, Susan
Shelby]

Overview: Las Nutrias
The name Las Nutrias appears in the seventeenth century. It was later the center of an attempt to found a
land grant community and remains attached to a modern community. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe,
National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

🌟 13: Taos

1847

The Magoffin party, slowed due to sickness and reluctant to move forward as Doniphan's regiment was
fighting less than 100 miles in front of them, was clearly panicked by the news of the Taos Revolt. The rest of
New Mexico did not join the rebellion, as feared, and the insurgency was quelled after two brutal battles and a
siege. The casualties did not include "every American citizen," but quite a few, both in Taos and in Mora. The
details however, including the scalping of Governor Bent were much more gruesome than Susan knew.

Quote: (28 January 1847) Thursday 28th.

...Again on the road, and with what forboadings. for three days I have been trying to find time to write but
failed. Dctr. Richardson of the army arrived in haste at our house in Bosquecito, with his wagon of medicines
and an escort of five men beside wis waggoner. He brought news that started us from the village in haste or as
soon as we could be ready, which took us till Wednesday noon.

The news is that the Taos people have risen, and murdered every American citizen in Taos including the Gov.
(then on a visit there). That all the troops from Albaquerque (the regulars) have been ordered to Santa Fé
leaving this portion of the territory at the mercy of the mob. It is a perfect revolution there; they are mounting
the cannon on the fort-- the citizens have all deserted the place, and Col. Price is in readiness to subdue the
rebels, and has perhaps before this time will have done some fighting. [Magoffin, Susan Shelby]

Overview: Ranchos de Taos
For centuries, regular fairs in the Taos Valley attracted many merchants. New Mexican traders met with
Comanches, Apaches, Utes, Navajos, and others who brought buffalo hides, deerskins, blankets, and captives
to be sold or exchanged as slaves. They bartered horses, knives, guns, ammunition, blankets, aguardiente
(alcohol), and small trinkets.

In the early 19th century, Taos drew French, English, and Anglo- American traders and trappers who initiated
immigration from and trade with the United States.

Throughout colonial and territorial history, Taos was periodically a hotbed of rebellion. Taoseño rebel leaders
overthrew the government three times: the Spanish government in 1680, the Mexican government in 1837,
and the American government in 1847.

Images:

Links:
Office of the State Historian: 1847 Treason Trials -- http://newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?
fileID=245
After Texas admission to the Union, President Polk sent Zachary Taylor to occupy the disputed boundary between Mexico and Texas. Mexico claimed the Nueces River as the boundary, Texans and the U.S. claimed the lower Rio Grande. After Mexican troops attacked and captured Americans in the disputed area, Polk and the Congress declared war, May 13, 1846.

That same year, John Disturnell used the plates from the earlier 1828 White, Gallaher, and White map and reissued it with minor additions, in his own name. Due to its timely appearance Disturnell's map was quite popular and became regarded as the geographic authority for the region. Nicholas Trist used this map during negotiation of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, incorporating many of the map's significant errors into the actual treaty text.

TIMELINE: SHIFTING ALLEGIANCES

1800

In 1800, Napoleon signed the secret Treaty of Ildefonso with Spain, stipulating that France should provide Spain with a kingdom if Spain would return Louisiana to France. Napoleon's plan for dominating North America collapsed when the revolt in the French colony of Saint-Domingue succeeded, forcing French troops to return defeated to France. As Napoleon's New World empire disintegrated, the loss of Haiti made Louisiana unnecessary.

Nov 1801

Philip Nolan, a surveyor who worked for Louisiana Trader James Wilkinson, and (who had established trade into Texas and had a wife & child in San Antonio de Bexos) left Louisiana to invade Texas with 30 countrymen, was killed en route by Spanish forces under Pedro de Nava. Nolan is sometimes credited with being the first to map Texas for the American frontiersmen, but his map has never been found. Nonetheless, his observations were passed on to General James Wilkinson, who used them to produce his map of the Texas-Louisiana frontier in 1804.

1803

On November 30, 1803, Spain's representatives officially transferred Louisiana to France. Although the French representative was instructed to transfer Louisiana to the United States the next day, twenty days actually separated the transfers, during which time Laussat became governor of Louisiana and created a new town council. During this time he is issued secret instructions in which France lays claim to the Rio Grande from the mouth (Rio de las Palmas on the Gulf) to the 30th parallel. "The line of demarcation stops after reaching this point... the farther we go northward, the more undecided is the boundary."

This becomes the basis for the Texian claim to eastern New Mexico.

On December 20, 1803, the French officially gave lower Louisiana to the United States. The United States took formal possession of the full territory of Louisiana, although its boundaries were vaguely defined, in St. Louis three months later, when France handed over the rights to upper Louisiana.

1804

Jean Baptiste La Lande stole a wagon team and expatriated to New Mexico, becoming the first American to move there.

1805

Admiral Lord Nelson defeats the Spanish navy at Trafalgar, precipitating the end of Spanish military force.

James Pursley arrives in New Mexico trying to drum up trade with the Plains tribes, and stays in Santa Fe as a carpenter.

1806

Expedition headed by General Wilkinson and Lieutenant Zebulon Pike travels west with secret instructions to scout out the northern Spanish territories. Dr. John Robinson joins the expedition at the last minute, but becomes a valued member of the party.
1807
Robinson meets Don Nemesio Salcedo, Captain General of Internal Provinces.
Salcedo refuses his attempt to defect.

1812
Robinson meets with Secretary of State James Monroe, who is concerned that filibustering activity might provoke war with Spain; appoints Robinson to the post of envoy to Nemesio Salcedo.

Robinson goes from Natchitoches through Texas, meeting Bernardo Gutierrez de Lara and Augustus Magee. He also meets with Salcedo, who suspects him once again of spying, and refuses to enter negotiations.

1813
Robinson publishes inflammatory epistles in favor of Mexican revolution (see Liberty Showering Her Blessings), is dismissed by the State department.

Texas declares independence in April.

Royal forces reclaim it in September.

King Joseph Bonaparte (Napoleon's brother) flees Wellington, Ferdinand VII returns to the throne.

1814
Robinson disputes with Toledo about leadership of the revolutionary force.

Moves to New Orleans, offers support to Governor Claiborne, is refused, takes a post in the militia, in a hospital near New Orleans

1815
Robinson sails for Veracruz to help the revolution. He writes for support to President Madison, including a copy of the new Mexican constitution, and remains with the Republican Army for 18 months (through the end of 1816).

1816
Robinson retires from his commission as Brigadier General in the Mexican Revolutionary Army.

1817
Robinson condemned by Spanish envoy Onís, engages in verbal battle in papers, settles in Natchez.

1819
John Quincy Adams, President Monroe's Secretary of State, negotiates a treaty with Luis de Onís to define the boundary of Texas (the Adams-Onís Treaty Line). Under the Florida Treaty, Spain cedes Florida and Texas west to Sabine River.

1821
Texas becomes a province of Mexico following the revolution.

Mexico combines Texas & Coahuila, opens immigration to large numbers of Americans into Texas.

William Becknell takes wagons across what will become the Santa Fe Trail.

1822
Regular route established along Santa Fe Trail "led directly to the San Miguel by way of the Cimarron River instead of following the Arkansas to the mountains direct to San Miguel instead of by way of Taos."

(Chittenden)

Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri petitions the Senate, to make the Santa Fe Trail a permanent road "to draw from the bosom of the wilderness an immense wealth which now must be left to grow and perish where it grows or be gathered by the citizens of some other government to the great loss of Missouri."

Commissioners mark out a road from Missouri to the Mexican boundary. Sibley surveys a new, longer road.

1824
Mexican constitution establishes Texas and Coahuila as sister states, as with New Mexico and Chihuahua.

1835-1836
Texans revolt against Mexico, and fight for independence, claiming all land to the Rio Grande.

Texas rebels capture General Santa Anna at the Battle of San Jacinto, and win a surrender with the Treaty of
Velasco, which stipulates that the "limits of Texas would not extend past the Rio Grande." However, Mexico never ratifies this treaty.

1837

United States grants formal recognition to the Republic of Texas.

New Mexicans overthrow centralist governor Albino Perez, Manuel Armijo rises to power in 1838.

The government offers large land grants to both native citizens and to American merchants such as St. Vrain, Maxwell, and Mirabeau.

1841

Texas expedition led by Brigadier General Hugh McLeod, and accompanied by journalist George Wilkins Kendall, travels across the Llano Estacado to ask New Mexicans to join Texas in independence or to open trade. Governor Armijo has the Texans captured, brutally mistreated, and forced to march in chains to Mexico City, where they remained imprisoned for several years.

1843

Texas sends two raiding parties to New Mexico in retribution for the mistreatment of the Texas-Santa Fe Expedition.

Taos gets closed as a port of entry.

1844

Question of Texas central to United States presidential election, and popular support of annexation sweeps James K. Polk into office.

1845

Annexation of Texas; formally admitted as a state December 29, 1845.

State constitution supports Texas' claims to all lands extending to the Rio Grande.

1846

Polk declares war with Mexico, and General Zachary Taylor invades Mexico along the Rio Grande in Texas.

United States forces led by General Stephen Kearny seize New Mexico, and Governor Armijo is persuaded to surrender without a battle.

Colonel Alexander Doniphan writes the code for governing the Territory of New Mexico.

New Mexico is designated the Ninth Military Department of the United States.

1847

Rebels in Taos lead an uprising against the American government, and kill Governor Charles Bent.

1848

Mexico signs the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which cedes lands in California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico to the United States. The boundary of New Mexico is described in relation to Disturnell's map, which showed erroneous distances.

1848 Fort Bliss established.

1849

The Department of Interior established. Interior would manage most of the lands in New Mexico for some time to come.

1850

The Texas boundary compromise required Texas to release claims to lands in eastern New Mexico, in exchange for a settlement of debts. As part of the Compromise of 1850, New Mexico was finally admitted as a territory, with the issue of slavery to be decided by New Mexicans.

1851-1853

Fort Bliss abandoned for Fort Fillmore

1852-1860

Cantonment Burgwin established to control Taos rebels. The fort was decommissioned in 1860 and the soldiers moved to Fort Garland or Fort Union.
1852 Boundary Survey

1st international boundary commission established in accordance with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. This survey runs into difficulties establishing the boundary line, and the Americans realize that the line as surveyed does not give them a transcontinental railway route.

1853

Gadsden Purchase from Mexico expands New Mexico territory.

1854

Fort Bliss moved to Magoffinsville.

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