

THE TERRITORY OF NEW MEXICO  
AND  
THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA,  
AS PARTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA.

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EXPLORATION OF THE FAR WEST—LONG, NICOLLET, FRÉMONT—  
SANTA FÉ TRADE—FIRST ADVENTURERS—CARAVANS—NEW  
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CAL STRUCTURE OF NEW MEXICO—THE RIO GRANDE—ITS  
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—MINES—GOLD—SILVER—COPPER—IRON—GYPSUM—SALT  
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SANTA FÉ—ALBUQUERQUE—VALLEY OF TOAS—STATISTICS OF  
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It was not until a few years ago that the people of the United States generally began to turn their attention to the development of those vast regions lying in the far west and along the shores of the Pacific Ocean. An occasional adventurer or foreign traveller returned from the Rocky Mountains after a pleasant but wild sojourn among the trappers and Indians, and told his romantic stories to eager listeners. At length, Major Long penetrated their recesses,—Nicollet sought the sources of the Mississippi,—and Frémont not only pushed his way beyond them, but traversed the majestic snow-buried summits of the Sierra Nevada and explored the genial lands lying at their feet in California.

Meanwhile a trade had grown up, midway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, between our western cities and the northern States of Mexico. But this, too, was an intercourse of mingled adventure, romance and commerce. Its objects and results were not generally known or recounted in the gazettes. Its hardy pursuers who were

equally ready for a bargain or a battle, did not commonly amuse themselves either with correspondence or authorship, and accordingly, "The Santa Fé Trade" remained as much a matter of mystery to the mass of Americans as the marches of those great caravans which in the east annually traverse the desert towards the tomb of the Prophet.

The origin of this trade is not definitely known. A certain James Pursely, who wandered in the lonely regions west of the Mississippi about the year 1805, and learned something respecting the settlements in New Mexico from Indians near the sources of the Platte river, is supposed to have been the first *American* who visited Santa Fé in this direction; though, in the previous year, a *French Creole*, named La Lande, had been despatched by Mr. Morrison, a merchant of Kaskaskia, with orders if possible to reach Santa Fé. It is known that this person arrived at his destination, but was so delighted with the country and so well entertained, that he never returned, and probably established himself in successful trade upon the capital of his confiding employer.

From this period, and after the Southern Expedition of Captain Pike, very little is heard of this distant region until a caravan was fitted out under the auspices of Messrs. Knight, Beard, Chambers, and about eight other persons, in the year 1812. They reached Santa Fé in an unlucky hour. The revolutionary movements which had been disturbing Mexico were just then checked by the successes of the royalists, and the traders were siezed as spies, their goods confiscated, and themselves confined in the prisons of Chihuahua for nine years, when McKnight and his comrades were finally released. As soon as these luckless adventurers reached the United States, their return, their narratives and the probable settlement of the Mexican revolution by the successes of Iturbidé, induced others to fit out expeditions at once. A merchant of Ohio, named Glenn, and Captain Becknell, of Missouri, set out forthwith; and in 1824, about eighty traders, accompanied by several intelligent and cultivated Missourians, departed not only with pack-mules, which had hitherto served for the transportation of goods, but with twenty-five wheeled vehicles of which one or two were stout road *wagons*, the whole conveying a freight of near thirty thousand dollars in merchandise. The caravan crossed the desert-plains after an eventful journey; and some years after—as the early adventurers had experienced no serious molestations from the Indians,—a wealthier class of traders, availed themselves of the

opened commerce of the Prairies and finally established the annual caravans which within recent years have departed from the neighborhood of Independence, laden with most valuable freights for the markets of Santa Fé, Chihuahua, and even the distant Fair of San Juan de los Lagos.

In time, however, the caravans, the period of their passage, and their value, became known to the savages through whose lonely territory they passed, and so many cruel attacks were made, that the United States resolved to protect them and established military convoys for the most dangerous part of the route. But these were not always of sufficient size, nor did they cover the road adequately; for the escort which accompanied the caravan of 1829, and another composed of sixty dragoons under Captain Wharton in 1834, constituted the only government protection until the year 1843, when large escorts under Captain Cook attended two different caravans as far as the Arkansas river. Since that period, the war has slightly interfered with the trade; but the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, having given New Mexico to the United States, and a territorial government having been formed for it during the first session of the thirty-first Congress, a new and progressive era is about to dawn upon the whole of the hitherto lonely waste between the western settlements of Texas and the shores of the Pacific.

By an act approved on the 9th of September, 1850, it is provided: "That all that portion of the territory of the United States bounded as follows: beginning at a point in the Colorado river, where the boundary line with the Republic of Mexico crosses the same; thence eastwardly with the said boundary line to the Rio Grande; thence following the main channel of said river to the parallel of the thirty-second degree of north latitude; thence east with said degree to its intersection with the one hundred and third degree of longitude west of Greenwich; thence north with said degree of longitude to the parallel of the thirty-eighth degree of north latitude; thence west with said parallel to the summit of the Sierra Madre; thence south with the crest of said mountains to the thirty-seventh parallel of north latitude; thence west with said parallel to its intersection with the boundary line of the State of California; thence with said boundary line to the place of beginning,—be and the same is hereby erected into a temporary government, by the name of the TERRITORY OF NEW MEXICO: *Provided*, That nothing in this act contained shall be construed to inhibit the Government of the United States from dividing said Territory into two or more Territories, in such manner and at such times as Congress shall

deem convenient and proper, or from attaching any portion thereof to any other Territory or State: *And provided, further,* That, when admitted as a State, the said Territory, or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission."

Under the old Spanish and Mexican governments, the boundaries of New Mexico were exceedingly indefinite; but this act forever fixes the territorial limits, and also settles the long vexed question of the boundary of Texas.

"New Mexico," says Dr. Wislizenus, in his excellent memoir on the northern part of the Republic; "is a very mountainous country, with a large valley in the middle, running from north to south, and formed by the Rio del Norte or Rio Grande. The valley is generally about twenty miles wide, and bordered on the east and west by mountain chains, continuations of the Rocky Mountains, which have received different names, such as La Sierra Blanca; Los Organos, and Oscura, on the eastern side of the stream; and the Sierra de las Grullas, De Acha, and De los Mimbres, towards the west. The height of these mountains south of Santa Fé, may be averaged between six and eight thousand feet, while near Santa Fé and the more northern regions, some snow covered peaks are seen rising probably ten or twelve thousand feet above the sea. The mountains are principally composed of igneous rocks, as granite, sienite, diorite, and basalt. On the higher mountains excellent pine timber grows; on the lower, cedars and sometimes oak, and in the valley of the Rio Grande, principally mezquite.

The main artery of New Mexico is the Rio del Norte or Rio Grande, the longest and largest river ever possessed by Mexico. Its head waters were explored in 1807 by Captain Pike, between 37° and 38° north latitude; but its highest sources are supposed to be about two degrees further north in the Rocky Mountains, near the head waters of the Arkansas and the Rio Grande or Colorado of the west. Following a general southern direction, it runs through New Mexico — where its principal affluent is the Rio Chamas from the west — and then winds its way in a south-eastern direction, through the States of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, and Texas, to the Gulf of Mexico in 25° 56' north latitude. Its tributaries in the latter States are the Pecos, from the north; the Conchos, Salado, Alamo, and San Juan, from the south. The whole course of the river, in a straight line, would be near twelve hundred miles; but from the meandering of its lower half, it runs at least about two thousand miles from the region of eternal snow to the almost tropical

climate of the Gulf. The elevation of the stream above the sea at Albuquerque, in New Mexico, is about forty-eight hundred feet; at El Paso del Norte, about thirty-eight hundred; and at Reynosa, —between three and four hundred miles from its mouth—about one hundred and seventy feet. The fall of its water between Albuquerque and El Paso, appears to be from two to three feet in a mile, and below Reynosa, one foot in two miles. This fall of the river is seldom used as motive power, except for some flour mills, which are oftener worked by mules than water. The principal advantage at present derived from it is for agriculture, by a well conducted system of irrigation. As to its navigation, it is very doubtful if even canoes could be used in *New Mexico*, except, perhaps, during May and June, when the stream, from the melting of the snow in the mountains, is at its highest stage. It is entirely too shallow and interrupted by too many sand bars, to promise any thing for transportation; yet, on the southern portion, the recent exploration by Captain Sterling, in the United States steamer Major Brown, has proved that steamboats may ascend for a distance of seven hundred miles between the Gulf and Laredo. This steamer, however, did not draw over two feet of water, but the explorers are of opinion that by spending one hundred thousand dollars in a proper improvement of the Rio Grande above the town of Mier, boats drawing four feet could readily ply between the mouth of the river and Laredo.

The soil in the valley of the Rio Grande, in New Mexico, is generally sandy and appears to be poor; yet, by irrigation, it is made to produce abundant crops. Though agriculture has been hitherto carried on in a very primitive way, either with the hoe alone, or with a very rough plough made entirely of wood, nevertheless the inhabitants raise large quantities of the staple productions — such as Indian corn, wheat, beans, onions, red peppers, and some fruits. The most fertile part of the valley, begins below Santa Fé along the river, and is called the 'Rio abajo,' or Country down the Stream. In that region it is not uncommon to gather two annual harvests. The general dryness of the climate and aridity of the soil will always confine agriculture to the valleys of water courses, which rarely contain running water during the whole year. But on several occasions it was remarked, in the high table land from Santa Fé south, that at a certain depth layers of clay are found, that may form reservoirs for the sunken water courses from the eastern and western mountain chain, and consequently, by the improved method of boring, or by Artesian wells, they might easily be made to yield their water to the surface. If experiments to that effect

should prove successful, the progress of agriculture in New Mexico would be more rapid, and, even many of the dreaded 'Jornadas' might be changed from waterless deserts into cultivated plains.

The present system of irrigation is effected by damming the streams, and throwing the water into larger and smaller ditches or *acequias* surrounding and intersecting the whole cultivated land. The inhabitants of towns and villages locate their farms together, and allot to each the use of a part of the water at certain definite periods. These common fields are generally left without fences, for the grazing cattle are always guarded by *vaqueros* or herdsmen. The finest cultivated fields are generally seen on the *haciendas*, or large estates belonging to the rich proprietors. These *haciendas* are a remnant of the old Spanish system by which large tracts, with the appurtenances of Indian inhabitants or serfs were granted by the crown to its vassals. The great number of human beings attached to such estates, are, in fact, nothing more than slaves; they receive from their masters only food, lodging, and raiment, or, perhaps a mere nominal pay, and are kept constantly in debt and dependance on their landlords; so that if ancient custom and natural indolence did not compel them to remain permanently with their hereditary masters, the enforcement of Mexican laws against debtors would be sufficient to prolong their servitude from generation to generation.

Besides agriculture, the New Mexicans pay a great deal of attention to the raising of cattle. Their stock is all of a small size, raised from unimproved or exhausted breeds; but it increases rapidly, and as no stable feeding is needed in winter, it exacts but little care from its owners. There are large tracts of land in New Mexico, either too mountainous or too distant from water to be cultivated, which, nevertheless, afford excellent pasturage for innumerable herds during the whole year; but, unfortunately, here as well as in the State of Chihuahua, cattle raising has been crippled by the incursions of hostile Indians, who consider themselves 'secret partners' in the business, and annually carry off their share from the unprotected *vaqueros*.

A third much neglected branch of industry in New Mexico, is that of mining. Numerous deserted mining places in this region prove that it was pursued with much greater zeal in Spanish times than at present. This may be accounted for by the actual want of capital and knowledge of mining, but, especially, by the unsettled state of the country and the arbitrary conduct of its rulers. The mountainous parts of New Mexico are considered extremely rich in gold, copper, iron, and some silver. Gold seems to be found to a

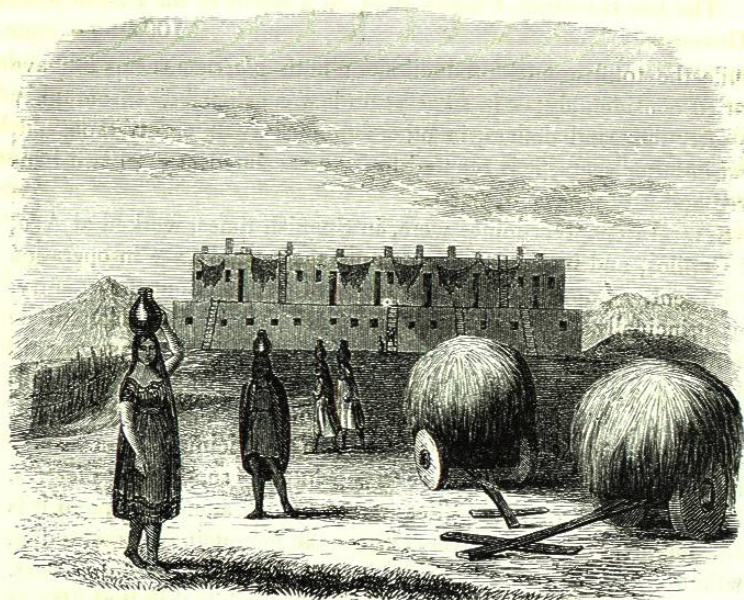
large extent in all the mountains near Santa Fé; south of it, at a distance of about one hundred miles as far as "Gran Quivara," and north for about one hundred and twenty miles up to the river Sangre de Christo. Throughout the whole of this region gold dust has been abundantly found by the poorer classes of Mexicans, who occupy themselves with washing it from the mountain streams. At present the Old and New *Placeres*, or places where gold is obtained near Santa Fé, have attracted most attention, and not only *gold washes* but *gold mines*, also, are worked there. Yet they are probably the *only* gold mines at present wrought in the territory. The *wash gold* when examined was found to contain:

Native Gold, . . . . .	92.5
Silver, . . . . .	3.5
Iron and Silex, . . . . .	4.0
	<hr/>
	100.0;—

while the total annual production of both *placeres* seems to have varied considerably;—in some years it was estimated at from thirty to forty thousand dollars, in others from sixty to eighty thousand, and in latter years, it is reputed to have ascended to even two hundred and fifty thousand.

Several rich silver mines were, in Spanish times, worked at Avo, at Cerillos, and in the Nambe mountains, but none are in operation at present. Copper is found in *abundance* throughout the country, but principally at Las Tijeras, Jemas, Abiquia, and Gudalupita de Mora, but until a recent period only one copper mine was wrought south of the *placeres*. Iron, though also existing in very large quantities, has been entirely overlooked. Coal is found in different localities—as in the Raton mountains; in the vicinity of the village of Jimenez, south-west of Santa Fé; and in spots south of the *placeres*. Gypsum, common and selenite, are discovered abundantly, and it is said that most extensive layers exist in the mountains near Algodon, on the Rio Grande, and in the neighborhood of the celebrated *Salinas*. It is used as common lime for white-washing, while the crystalline or selenite is employed instead of window glass. About one hundred miles, south south-east of Santa Fé, on the high table land between the Rio Grande and Pecos, are some extensive *salinas* or salt lakes, from which all the salt used in New Mexico is procured. Large caravans from Santa Fé visit this place every year during the dry season, and return heavily laden with the precious deposits. They either sell it for one and sometimes two dollars per bushel, or exchange a bushel of salt for a bushel of Indian corn.

The climate of New Mexico differs of course in the higher mountainous parts from the lower valley of the Rio Grande; but, generally, it is temperate, constant and healthy. The summer heat in the valley of the river sometimes rises to near 100° Fahrenheit; yet the nights are always cool, pleasant, and refreshing. The winters are longer and severer than in Chihuahua, for the higher mountains are always covered with snow, while ice and snow are common in Santa Fé, though the Rio Grande is never sufficiently frozen to admit the passage of horses and vehicles. The sky is generally clear and the atmosphere dry. Between July and October rain falls; but the wet season is not so constant or regular as in the Southern States of the Mexican Republic. Disease seems to be very little known except in the form of inflammations and typhoid fevers during the winter.



INDIAN PUEBLO, OR VILLAGE.

Between the Indians and the whites,—except perhaps on the haciendas—there still continues the same old rancorous feeling which generated the general insurrection narrated in the historical part of this work. The PUEBLO Indians live always isolated in their villages, cultivate the soil, raise some stock, and are generally poor, frugal, and sober. These various tribes, of which a large number still exist, are reduced to probably about seven thousand souls.

They speak different dialects and sometimes broken Spanish. For the government of their communities they select a *Cacique* and a council, and in war are led by a Capitan. In religious rites they mingle Catholicism and Paganism. Their villages are very regularly built; though sometimes, there is but one large house of several stories, with a vast number of small rooms, in which all the inhabitants of the *pueblo* are quartered! Instead of doors in front, traps are made on the roofs of their dwellings to which they ascend by a ladder that is withdrawn during the night so as to secure them from surprise or attack. Their dress consists of moccasins, short breeches and a woollen jacket or blanket; their black hair is usually worn long, while bows and arrows together with a lance and sometimes a gun compose their weapons.<sup>1</sup>

The late Governor, Charles Bent, in a report to the United States Government from Santa Fé in 1846, presents the following statement of the tribes and numbers of the WILD INDIANS, who reside or roam in the regions which were then supposed to be comprised in New Mexico. Bent's perfect familiarity with a district in which he had so long dwelt or traded, renders his enumeration of these savages an important historical fact in the history of the newly acquired Territory.

Apaches or Jicarillas,	100 lodges comprising	500 souls.
Apaches proper,	800 or 900 “ “	5,500 “
Utahs, Grande Unita rivers,	600 “ “	3,000 “
Utahs, Southern,	200 “ “	1,400 “
Navajos,	1,000 families “	7,000 “
Moques,	350 “ “	2,450 “
Comanches,	2,500 lodges “	12,000 “
Cayugas,	400 “ “	2,000 “
Cheyennes,	300 “ “	1,500 “
Arapahoes,	400 “ “	1,600 “

TOTAL, . . . . . 36,950 “

According to a report made in October, 1849, by Mr. James S. Calhoun, Indian Agent at Santa Fé, the following summary of the *Pueblos*, and *Pueblo Indians* of New Mexico, is based on a census

<sup>1</sup> We have used the full account given by Dr. Wislizenus, with but slight alterations of his language, because it is the most complete, consistent and satisfactory that we have encountered in our researches. We could neither improve its method or condense its matter. He is a close observer; an accurate thinker; an industrious traveller, and relates always from his personal observation