

COLONEL ALEXANDER DONIPHAN AND THE 1ST REGIMENT OF THE MISSOURI
MOUNTED VOLUNTEERS IN THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR: A HISTORICAL
CASE STUDY ON THE COMPLEXITIES OF CULTURES AND
CONFLICT IN NEW MEXICO

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Art of War Scholars

by

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ABSTRACT

COLONEL ALEXANDER DONIPHAN AND THE 1ST REGIMENT OF THE MISSOURI VOLUNTEERS IN THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR: A HISTORICAL CASE STUDY ON THE COMPLEXITIES OF CULTURES AND CONFLICT IN NEW MEXICO, by Major Patrick W. Naughton Jr, 173 pages.

As was demonstrated in the contemporary cultural milieus of Iraq and Afghanistan, military leaders are often not aware of the complex societal frameworks and underlying tensions they are functioning in. The actions of Colonel Alexander Doniphan and the 1st Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers in the Mexican-American War in 1846 present an interesting case study in the complexities of conflict. Their experience in the New Mexico region dealing with local Native American groups offers a valuable opportunity to study how military actions influence local populations and cultures, a region's governance, and future policy-making at the international level. The social complexities of conflict and the effect that military actions have on it, is a topic that military professionals should study profusely. It is one characteristic of the nature of war that will never change with time or technology. As such, numerous lessons can be learned from Doniphan's experience, which can be applied to future military endeavors by the American military when it finds itself again operating in a multifaceted Operational Environment.

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ACRONYMS

OE	Operational Environment
US	United States of America

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

You . . . march upon them—bring them to terms—and they sign a treaty with Col. Doniphan, in which they bind themselves to cease their depredations on the Mexicans, and to become friends of the United States. A novel treaty, that! Signed on the western confines of New Mexico, between parties who had hardly ever heard each other's names before, and to give peace and protection to Mexicans, who were hostile to both. This was the meeting . . . with the numerous and savage tribe of the Navaho [Navajo] Indians . . . so long the terror and scourge of Sonora, Sinaloa and New Mexico.¹

— Missouri Senator Thomas Benton, welcoming
home the Missouri Volunteers, 1847

The actions of Colonel Alexander Doniphan and the 1st Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers in the Mexican-American War present an interesting case study in the complexities of conflict. Doniphan and his men left Fort Leavenworth, Kansas in late June 1846 expecting to fight the Mexican army, which they eventually did at the battles of El Brazito and Sacramento River outside of El Paso and Chihuahua, Mexico in 1846 and 1847.² However, what they were not prepared for was the task of campaigning against Native American groups in defense of newly occupied territories.

As near as can be determined, this thesis is the first historical attempt to truly hyper-focus on Doniphan's efforts with various native groups during the Mexican-American War. Doniphan's experience offers a valuable opportunity to study the

¹ Thomas H. Benton, "Return of the Missouri Volunteers: Address of the Honorable Thomas H. Benton and Colonel Doniphan Reply, July 2, 1847," Missouri Historical Society.

² Joseph G. Dawson III, *Doniphan's Epic March: The 1st Missouri Volunteers in the Mexican War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1999), 52, 103, 142.

complexities of conflict and how military actions influence local populations and cultures, a region's governance, and future policy-making at the international level. The former Mexican region of *Santa Fe de Nuevo México*, now New Mexico, was a challenging area in which to conduct military operations. The region contained a treasure-trove of natural resources and financial possibilities due to a major trade route that terminated in Santa Fe. However, the Mexican government was never able to leverage these economic opportunities due to its inability to protect its population from the constant attacks perpetuated by Native Americans in the region.

Doniphan, who faced constant criticism from his regular army counterparts, was tasked by the Army of the West Commander General Stephen Kearny with operating as both a military leader and civilian administrator to bring peace and provide protection to the newly occupied territories of the United States (US). His performance would create a division between the two roles and set precedence for all who followed and attempted to govern in the region. The US wanted New Mexico for its resources—to deliver them, Doniphan had to navigate a complex society in a region where all sides attempted to influence his decisions, where a misunderstood caste system dominated, and where Native American adversaries had no central leaders.

Doniphan's experience also offers an opportunity to better understand stressed social structures and how they react during times of conflict and power shifts. The area surrounding Santa Fe, Mexico in 1846 mirrored the cultural environments that American forces find themselves in presently; namely, populations consisting of various groups engaged in persistent localized conflicts, each with their own desires and agendas. As in the contemporary cultural milieu of Iraq and Afghanistan, military leaders are often not

aware of the complex societal frameworks and underlying tensions they are functioning in.

Anthropologists define culture as “being a complex, largely interconnected whole that consists of the knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, skills, and habits learned from parents and others in a society.” They believe that culture is the primary adaptive mechanism for humans in civilizations.³ American military professionals define this same concept as an operational environment: “a composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.” Like social scientists, military commanders strive to understand the cultures and societies they are operating within as they directly “affect how the commander plans, organizes for, and conducts operations.”⁴ Both definitions are an attempt to conceptualize the complexities of human interactions and how they affect the overall culture and functioning of society within a prescribed area. In this study, the term operational environment (OE) will be used to refer to the culture and society in New Mexico and the human relationships that occur throughout.

It is hard to picture the present-day area surrounding Santa Fe, New Mexico as a war zone. Today, visitors flock to the area for its temperate spring and fall climates, winter activities, and beautiful communities that cater to tourists. However, in the 1840s

³ Palomar College, “Cultural Anthropology Terms,” accessed 23 March 2018, <https://www2.palomar.edu/anthro/tutorials/cglossary.htm>.

⁴ Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 2017), IV-1.

the area was one of persistent conflict between Hispano⁵ communities and Native American groups, consisting of constant raiding bent on plunder and captives that fueled a vigorous slave trade.⁶

Many referred to the area as a desert, not due to its terrain, but rather for its absence of numerous population centers. In 1846, British adventurer and explorer George Ruxton wrote about his encounter with the desolate landscape: “which is designated, par excellence, ‘*los desiertos de la frontera*’ the deserts of the frontier; not so much from its sterility, as on account of its having been abandoned by its inhabitants, from the fear of the perpetual Indian attacks.” He encountered and described numerous abandoned communities throughout his travels in New Mexico:

At the entrance of the village, and scattered along the road, was a perfect forest of crosses, many of them thrown down or mutilated by the Indians. The houses were most of them tumbling to pieces, but some were still entire . . . I entered another house, which, from its size and appearance, had evidently been the abode of the priest or chief personage of the village. The remains of a recent fire were scattered about the floor, on which were strewed several Indian *xuages* or drinking gourds, an arrow, and a human scalp. The Indians had very lately visited the village, and some of them had doubtless taken up their abode in this house, and perhaps, departing before daylight, had left these articles behind them.

Ruxton provides a unique and unbiased perspective on the conflict in the region, declaring, “A dreary stillness reigned over the whole place, unbroken by any sound.”⁷

⁵ The term Hispano references a person descended from Spanish settlers living in the Southwest before it was annexed to the US.

⁶ Mexico itself outlawed slavery, though it was tolerated in its Northern territories due to it being entrenched in the local culture and economic institutions.

⁷ George F. Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains* (London: John Murray, 1848), 117, 127, 129.

The campaigns executed by Doniphan against the Native American groups in 1846 have often been viewed by historians as a sideshow to the main attraction of conventional forces engaged on various battlefields in what was then Mexico. However, Doniphan's experience in the newly occupied territory of New Mexico illustrate the intricate and complex forces that influence societies and how they function. His actions in dealing with the various Hispano and Native American groups have affected policy decisions on the local and international level through to today.

Doniphan, a volunteer officer highly respected by his subordinates, was an accomplished lawyer in his civilian career. This, combined with his performance in the Army of the West writing the new governing code for the conquered territory on behalf of General Stephen Kearny, appeared to make him the ideal leader to arbitrate the local conflict between the Hispano communities and Native American groups. Under Kearny's orders, Doniphan engaged and executed treaties with the Southern Ute, Zuni, and Navajo. In December of 1846, driven by the desire to engage with conventional Mexican forces, he considered his orders successfully fulfilled and marched south toward El Paso and Chihuahua. Within a month of Doniphan's departure, the supposedly pacified region erupted into bloody chaos perpetuated by many he had parlayed with. This violence would continue for decades and grew to define the fate of a region and the trajectory of two nations.

The Mexican-American War: New Mexico Theater

A clash of cultures guided by self-imposed notions of racial and ethnocentric superiority occurred at the crossroads of Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1846. Centuries of Spanish colonization and exploitation culminated in the creation of the nation-state of

Mexico in 1821. Along its northeastern border, the new nation confronted Anglo-Americans at the peak of manifest density and a quest to define themselves. In New Mexico, both Mexican and Americans encountered ancient native civilizations engaged in a bitter war over slavery and the right to self-govern, and who viewed both nations as intruders.

The vicious conflict between Native American groups and the Hispano communities that the Americans encountered in its newly acquired territories contributed directly to the concluding treaty of the war between Mexico and the United States. Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war and ceded 525,000 square miles to the United States, spoke directly to the conflict and attempted to end the slave trade and constant raiding between the various groups.⁸

Within twenty years of the conclusion of the Mexican-American War all sides found themselves in precarious positions. Mexico suffered the loss of all its northern states due to an inability to protect its borders. Part of this loss was as a result of the economic drain of decades of defending against constant native attacks that hobbled their ability to effectively oppose US forces. America would be engaged in a brutal civil war over issues of self-governance, race, and slavery, much like what it encountered in New Mexico. Finally, the various Native American groups found themselves confined to impoverished and tightly monitored reservations.

⁸ Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo [Exchange copy], 2 February 1848, Perfected Treaties, 1778-1945, Record Group 11, General Records of the United States Government, 1778-1992, National Archives.

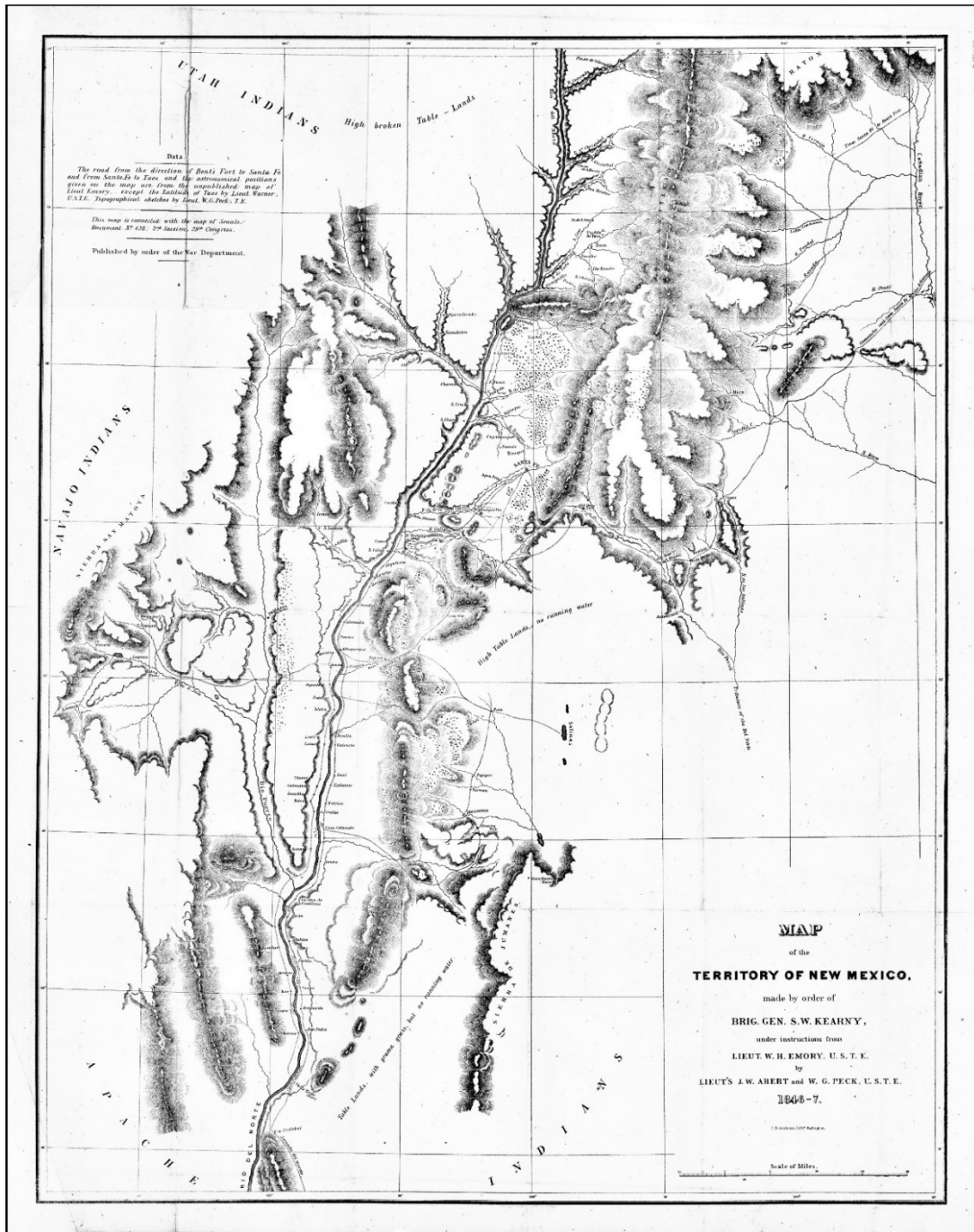
The current self-identity of the Mexican and American nations can be traced back to the Mexican-American War. After the war, Mexico watched its territory be steadily eroded by its northern neighbor. The stream of losses and unsteady governments since 1821 became a self-fulfilling prophecy of constant humiliation and degradation that has only recently begun to be viewed positively. The famous exclamation by former Mexican President Porfirio Díaz: “Poor Mexico! So far from God and so close to the United States!” has started to fade as Mexicans and Americans at the grassroots level begin to realize it is better to work together rather than apart on economic development, immigration issues, and drug violence.⁹ America, on the other hand, viewed its victory over Mexico as God’s validation of its predestined expansion and greatness, which is still at the core of its character. What has been overlooked is how the conquering nation dealt with the various native groups in the region; namely, how America used them as the justification to extend its military might in the region, to access its natural resources and to reshape the continent to its desires.

This narrative has, of course, changed over time—what was once accepted by all parties as an inevitable and heroic accomplishment by the United States is now viewed by many as a shameless land-grab and exploitation of Mexican and Native sovereignty.¹⁰ Mexicans and Native groups remain bitter about their treatment following American occupation, which can be traced back to Doniphan’s initial dealings with them in the

⁹ Renata Keller, *U.S.-Mexican Relations from Independence to the Present* (Oxford Research, American History, 2016), 18.

¹⁰ Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton and Company, 1987), 232.

winter of 1846. Contemplating how this opening contact set the stage for future American policy-making in the region offers a valuable opportunity to study and understand stressed social structures and how the resulting government policies can resonate for generations.



Map 1 Contemporary Map of the Newly Acquired Territory of New Mexico

Source: J. W. Abert, *Report of Lieut. J. W. Abert of his Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847* (Washington, DC: 1848). Created by Topographic Engineer Lieutenant J. W. Abert on the order of General Kearny. NOTE: This was the map that Doniphan and his force operated with. The terrain and Native American layout is superbly accurate.

The Ghost of Okeechobee

In addition to the complexities that existed in the region, the Missouri Volunteers arrived with several of their own self-imposed constraints. When dealing with the various Native American groups in New Mexico, all of Doniphan's decisions during December of 1846 must be viewed through the prism of two key underlying factors: the term of service of his volunteer force and the ghost of Okeechobee. The first was a tangible consideration that had to always be measured, while the second was subliminal but remained ever-present in the mind of every Missourian in the Regiment.

The first key decision driver was Doniphan's soldiers' term of enlistment. Following the authorization of Congress to accept volunteers into service for the war with Mexico, Doniphan's force could only be mandated: "to serve twelve months after they shall have arrived at the place of rendezvous, or to the end of the war, unless sooner discharged, according to the time for which they shall have been mustered into service".¹¹ For the 1st Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers, that place of rendezvous and where the service-clock started was Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

His force needed to stay in service long enough to address his second decision driver—erasing the ghost of Okeechobee. At the height of the crisis known as the Second Seminole War, Missouri Senator Thomas Benton boasted to the President of the United States that men from his state, if allowed, would win the war. The President readily accepted, and Missourians flocked to join the first volunteer force to fight outside of the

¹¹ Captain A. R. Hetzel, *Military Laws of The United States: Including those Related to Army, Marines, Volunteers, Militia* (Washington, DC: George Templeman, 1846), 280.

state.¹² After a patriotic and rousing sendoff in October of 1837, the 1st Regiment of Missouri Volunteers soon found themselves in Florida where, after a succession of desertions and discharges, only 150 men persisted from the original 600.¹³ The remaining men were racked by low morale and chaffed at the negative treatment from their regular army compatriots.

After harsh campaigning through unforgiving swamps, on Christmas Day of 1837 American forces under the command of Colonel Zachary Taylor engaged the Seminoles at the Battle of Lake Okeechobee. Taylor placed the volunteers in a precarious situation: he ordered them to charge the Seminole line as the regulars brought up the rear—the result was a crossfire that decimated the Missourians and caused many to flee or take cover.¹⁴ Eventually, the American force would overrun the Indians in one of the bloodiest battles in terms of percentage lost in US history.

Taylor heaped nothing but scorn on the performance of the Missouri Volunteers at Okeechobee. His report following the battle prompted an official investigation that resulted in a resolution being issued from both the Missouri Senate and House of Representatives. The resolutions unanimously passed by both houses stated that the “conduct of the Missouri Volunteers . . . in the Florida campaign, was only such as could

¹² Philip Thomas Tucker, “A Forgotten Sacrifice: Richard Gentry, Missouri Volunteers, and the Battle of Okeechobee,” *The Florida Historical Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (October 1991): 150.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 156.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 162.

be expected from good soldiers and brave men.”¹⁵ US Senator Benton had bragged that his states’ volunteers would win the war; however, despite the official vindication, the charges of cowardice refused to dissipate and left a permanent stain on the psyche of Missouri manhood.

The time restriction and the desire to push further south into Mexico for the chance to engage with conventional Mexican forces are keys to understanding every decision Doniphan made in December of 1846.

Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 2 will present a detailed understanding of the OE, outlining the different factors that Doniphan had to contend with. Namely, a region dominated by a history of ineffective governance, a strict social caste system, Catholicism, Anglo-American economic exploitation, and the harshness of the terrain. In addition, the history and tensions between US regular and volunteer forces over enlistments and performance expectations will be explored to comprehend the rift that was present throughout the entire campaign. Lastly, the understanding of the OE from the strategic to the tactical levels of war will be scrutinized to understand how Mexico’s past ineffective governance attempts made it necessary for US rule to appear legitimate—which put them on a direct collision course with hostile Native Americans in the region.

Chapter 3 provides a graphic representation of all peoples in the region and discusses the fact that Doniphan and US forces possessed a fundamental

¹⁵ Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri relating to the conduct of the Missouri Volunteers during the Florida Campaigns of 1837-1838, National Archives Microfilm Publication M567, roll 202.

misunderstanding of the Native American Nations and the conflicted relationships they had with each other and the Hispano communities. The Pueblo communities with their history of revolutions, symbiotic relations with the Spanish, and as victims of constant slave raids perpetuated by native nomadic groups is explored. The shrewd and industries Southern Ute—who also created an interdependent existence ruled by slave raiding and racketeering directed against the Santa Fe Trail are analyzed. Considered the scourge by all in the region, the Navajo Nation and its siege mentality shaped by constant attacks from Hispano, Pueblo, and other nomadic natives is examined. Uniting the entire region was the fact that all native peoples were ruled through decentralized leadership processes that were never fully understood by US forces. Lastly, the vicious cycle of the slave trade is dissected to understand it as the underlying defining factor and point of contention for all in the region.

After understanding the OE, US forces, and the different native groups in the area, Chapter 4 scrutinizes the tactical engagements that Doniphan executed in the region and how they connected to the operational and strategic levels of war. Several key narratives are expounded upon to include his use of questionable translators and guides, the continued regular versus volunteer army rift, his men's enlistment time cap, the constant residual effects of Okeechobee, and the protection of merchants on the Santa Fe Trail. Lastly, the chapter concludes with an in-depth discussion of the Treaty of Bear Springs.

Though the actual treaties signed between the US and the natives in the region during 1846 have been lost to the historical record, much can still be gleaned from other primary source documents. Weaved throughout the narrative, the pressure of Doniphan's enlistment timeclock and the desire to move south to engage conventional Mexican

forces and erase the ghost of Okeechobee can be detected. Chapter 5 attempts to piece together from all available sources the general articles agreed to between Doniphan and the Zuni, Southern Ute, and Navajo Nations. From this, the general posture between the native groups, Hispano communities, and the Mexican nation can be determined that sets the stage for all in the region and the resulting outcomes that still resonant to today.

Chapter 6 discusses the aftermath of Doniphan's actions on New Mexico, the Hispano populations, the Zuni, Southern Ute, and the Navajo. It also examines the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and how the hostile native groups influenced its drafting and the effect it had on both nations to the present day. Finally, chapter 7 presents four lessons learned for operating in a complex OE and sums up the effect that military actions under Doniphan and the 1st Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers had on the local populations, cultures, a region's governance, and future policy-making at the local and international levels.

CHAPTER 2

ARMY OF THE WEST IN THE MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR

Understanding the history of the OE that the Army of the West marched into helps to explain the complex cultures and societies that Doniphan was entering. The Army was a complicated force made up of regular and volunteer army forces that reflected the society from which it was drawn. It is essential to comprehend both the OE and the Army prior to the invasion in 1846 to fully appreciate the challenges that faced Doniphan and his force. Understanding of the area at the strategic level did not filter down to the tactical level, which would have disastrous consequences later in the campaign.

The Operational Environment in 1846

New Mexico, although its soil is barren, and its resources limited, unless the gold mines . . . be more extensively developed hereafter, and the culture of the grape enlarged, is, from its position, in a commercial and military aspect, an all-important military possession for the United States.¹⁶

The area surrounding Santa Fe, which was then considered the capital of the Mexican region of *Santa Fe de Nuevo México*, has a long history of conflict and conquerors. Originally settled by sedentary bands of Native Americans, who would later be grouped under a common heading and referred to as the Pueblo people, this society's existence was brutally shattered and forever changed by the arrival of the conquistador

¹⁶ W. H. Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance: From Fort Leavenworth in Missouri to San Diego, in California, Including Parts of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers* (Washington, DC: Wendell and Benthuysen, 1848), 35-36.

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado in 1540.¹⁷ Mineral mining and the spread of Catholicism encouraged Spanish soldiers, explorers, Franciscans, and settlers to occupy the region.¹⁸ Eventually, Spanish rule was violently overthrown and in 1821 the nation of Mexico was born—though this dramatic shift in power was hardly noticed in the remote frontier of Santa Fe.¹⁹ Mexico struggled to exert governance over the region from the onset. A succession of power struggles had left Mexico's economy in ruins, which severely constrained its ability to govern New Mexico. Over the twenty-five-year period from Mexican independence in 1821 to the arrival of the Americans in 1846, a total of nineteen Governors administered New Mexico.²⁰ Each was unable to protect the populace from Native American attacks or effectively exert Mexican governance over the region.

By the time of the arrival of the Americans in 1846, four major population groups shaped the social order in New Mexico. Communities were located in several major centers and small agriculture hamlets huddled along the Rio Grande River. A group that considered themselves to be of Spanish origin and called themselves Spaniards dominated society. They acted and functioned as a form of nobility over the other groups, though how much Spanish blood this class contained was mainly one of self-perception

¹⁷ Ramon A. Gutierrez, *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away: Marriage, Sexuality, and Power in New Mexico, 1500-1846* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 45.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 46.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 337.

²⁰ L. Bradford Prince, *A Concise History of New Mexico* (Cedar Rapids, IA: The Torch Press, 1914), 176-177.

rather than lineage. Members of this group often served as the *alcalde* (magistrate or mayor) for the community.

The second group were Mestizos that called themselves *Españolas*; they were landowners scattered throughout the region who were of mixed Spanish and Native American descent. Lured to the region to colonize New Mexico with promises of land and upward social mobility, they were a staunchly proud group. They muscled their way into the caste system, ensuring their voice would be heard and that they would not be mistaken for Puebloans or slaves.²¹

The third group were called *Genízaros* and served as slaves for the two higher classes. The term originated in Spain where it first described a Spaniard who had European blood, but then later came to mean “one begotten by parents of different nations” or “composed of different species.”²² They consisted of captured and enslaved Native Americans and ostracized Pueblo Indians. The Mexican democratic plan of *Iguala* of 1822 declared that all peoples in New Mexico would now be called *Ciudadanos Mexicanos* (Citizens of Mexico)—essentially outlawing the term and causing *Genízaros* to be absorbed into either Pueblo or Hispano communities, though this social distinction still lingered until well after the arrival of the Americans.²³

²¹ Gutierrez, 150.

²² Fray Angelico Chavez, “Genízaros,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 198.

²³ *Ibid.*, 199.

The last group was the economically and politically independent Pueblo people, survivors of a brutal revolt in 1680 that was viciously extinguished. Because of that experience, they practiced a self-imposed isolation built on self-reliance, which led to them being able to keep their independence, though they worked with the other classes when needed in fighting a shared enemy—that of the nomadic groups of the Navajo and Southern Utes.²⁴

An example of this caste system can be found in archaeological remains, historical Spanish, Mexican government, and church records. A curious example is seen in common household decorative items, namely *Retablos* or *Ex-votos* (Latin derivatives for “behind the altar” and “out of vow” respectively). These art pieces are small paintings on wood, canvas, or tin that depict religious topics or saints. They serve as powerful spiritual reminders found in 19th Century homes across Mexico. While most are religious in nature and are meant to add power to prayer, some seek to teach practical societal lessons. This second type is meant to instruct the viewer on how to escape death, danger, or physical and morale suffering.²⁵ Interestingly, *Ex-votos* have survived that spoke to the dangers of race mixing and served to instruct all in the society to not have relationships amongst the different castes.

Catholicism was a societal force that linked all the classes in New Mexico to varying degrees. Since the arrival of the Spanish, the drive to convert the natives of the

²⁴ Prince, 51.

²⁵ Maria A. Castro-Sethness, “Frida Kahlo’s Spiritual World: The Influence of Mexican Retablo and Ex-voto Paintings on Her Art,” *Women’s Art Journal* 25, no. 2 (Autumn 2004-Winter 2005): 21-22.

land formed the underlying justification for continued colonization. By the 1840s, the Church was a part of every facet in society; from marriage, to politics, to the economy. Catholic churches, and the social life controlled by them, dominated each cluster population center across the territory.²⁶ Anglo outsiders viewing the church's control over the population were often shocked. One traveler, while visiting Mexico in the 1840s, wrote, "The people were in a state of abject slavery to the clergy, who not only absorbed the capital of the county, but required the greatest respect and tokens of superiority from them."²⁷ Though most people followed the tenants of the Church, many still believed in the old spirits, gods, and customs that predominated prior to the arrival of Christianity. This was especially true of the lower classes, Pueblo clusters, and *Genízaros*. Even the ruling elite practiced a hybrid form of Catholicism that blended the new with the old.²⁸

One example of this hybrid mixing of ancient practices with new teachings was the New Mexico celebration known as a *fandango* (dance). These occasions were unconstrained events where revelers could forget harsh frontier living and class barriers, and drink and dance the night away. These parties were a form of rebellion against modern church teachings and occurred well into the 1870s.²⁹ Later, the Americans would discover this event and regularly attend. One wrote, "It is neither waltz nor cotillion, nor

²⁶ Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman L. Johnson, *Colonial Latin America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 110, 115-116.

²⁷ James Hobbs, *Wild Life in the Far West: Personal Adventures of a Border Mountain Man* (Hartford, CT: Wiley, Waterman and Eaton, 1872), 235.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 115-116.

²⁹ Arnoldo De Leon, *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900* (Dallas, TX: Southern Methodist University, 1982), 3-4.

like any of ours [i.e., dances], but seems to be a mixture of all. Beginning like a country dance, it changes to a kind of Indian swing . . . it is said to be of great antiquity and to be in part Indian.”³⁰

The last group of people to exert their influence on New Mexico society entered the Santa Fe area just prior to 1846. These were Anglo traders, miners, adventurers, and eventually settlers. In November of 1821, an Anglo merchant named William Bucknell travelled from Missouri to Santa Fe and sold manufactured goods at an enormous profit.³¹ Word soon travelled back to the US, where lawmakers saw the economic potential of trading with the region. On 3 February 1825, a bill introduced by Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri was passed, titled: “To Authorize the President of the United States to Cause a Road to be Marked out from the Western Frontier of Missouri, to the Confines of New Mexico.”³² The bill approved a road—later known as the Santa Fe Trail—to be marked out that would benefit those wanting to trade with the region. Interestingly, it covered territory that did not belong to the US and stated that it needed consent from the Native American tribes along its path. This trade became a crucial economic mainstay for the US, as evidenced by Benton’s comments to Kearny before his

³⁰ George R. Gibson, *Journal of a Soldier under Kearney and Doniphan, 1846-1847*, ed. Ralph P. Bieber (Cranbury, NJ: Scholars Bookshelf, 2006), 215-216.

³¹ Gutierrez, 337-338.

³² US Congress, House, To Authorize the President of the United States to Cause a Road to be Marked out from the Western Frontier of Missouri, to the Confines of New Mexico, 18th Cong., 2nd sess., 1825, H. Doc. S.23.

departure: “Our first care in this sudden change in our relations with that country [Mexico] was to try and take care of our Santa Fe trade.”³³

In addition to trade, New Mexico was also rich in mineral resources. Lieutenant Emory, the regular army topographic engineer in the Army of the West, wrote in his report to Washington about the mines they encountered, “They are said to be very rich, in both copper and gold, and the specimens obtained sustained this assertion.”³⁴ In 1841, the newly formed Republic of Texas sent an armed expedition, which from their perspective aimed to open economic markets and solidify a border dispute. The Mexican government saw it differently and viewed it as a violation of its sovereignty. The expedition was quickly subdued, and its members taken prisoner for an extended period.³⁵ This venture illustrated the lengths Anglos would go due to the riches that could be made south of the border.

The last influence that will be considered for this research upon the OE was the geography and the environment. New Mexico consisted of vast areas of unforgiving terrain that limited population expansion, governance, and growth, and the American forces experienced this first hand. As one soldier on the expedition wrote:

The American desert, is, perhaps, not less sterile, sandy, parched and destitute of water and every green herb and living thing than the African Sahara. In the course of a long day's march we could scarcely find a pool of water to quench the thirst, a patch of grass to prevent our animals perishing, or an oasis to relieve the weary mind. Dreary, sultry, desolate, boundless solitude reigned as far as the eye could reach, and seemed to bound the distant horizon. We suffered much with the heat,

³³ Roger D. Launius, *Alexander William Doniphan: Portrait of a Missouri Moderate* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1997), 100.

³⁴ Emory, 58.

³⁵ Prince, 156-157.

and thirst, and the driven sand which filled our eyes, and nostrils, and mouths, almost to suffocation.³⁶

The complexity of the OE was understood at the strategic levels of US government. Secretary of War William Marcy, demonstrating remarkable clarity for the time-period, wrote an official letter to General Zachary Taylor, later forwarded to General Kearny in June of 1846, in which he stated:

In a country so divided into races, classes, and parties, as Mexico is, and with so many local divisions among departments, and personal divisions among individuals, there must be great room for operating on the minds and feelings of large portions of the inhabitants . . . Between the Spaniards, who monopolize the wealth and power of the country, and the mixed Indian race, who bear its burdens, there must be jealousy and animosity. The same feelings must exist between the lower and higher orders of the clergy . . . In all this field of division—in all these elements of social, political, personal, and local discord—there must be openings to reach the interests, passions, or principles of some of the parties, and thereby to conciliate their good will, and make them co-operate with us in bringing about an honorable and a speedy peace.³⁷

New Mexico, especially Santa Fe, was a crossroads of numerous cultures and social institutions, each exerting an influence upon society. The OE of New Mexico in 1846 was one that was incompetently governed, dominated by a complex class structure, linked together by a hybrid religion, constantly preyed upon by nomadic Native American bands and ever greedier Anglos wanting to exploit its natural resources. Despite the awareness of the OE at the strategic level of the US government, Doniphan

³⁶ Isaac George, *Heroes and Incidents of the Mexican War Containing Doniphan's Expedition, the Cause of the war with Mexico. A Description of the People and Customs at That Time. A Sketch of the life of Doniphan. Together with Sketches and Portraits of the Heroes of that Struggle*, dictated J. D. Berry A. M. (Greensburg, PA: Review Publishing, 1903), 39.

³⁷ US Congress, House, Extract of a Letter Sent from the Secretary of War to General Taylor, 30th Cong., 1st sess., 1846, H. Doc. No 60, 156-157.

had little knowledge of the rich history of the region or how it influenced the tensions amongst and within the various societies. The results of this limited knowledge would manifest itself when attempting treaties with the various native groups.

Army of the West

It has never been our policy to maintain large standing armies in time of peace. They are contrary to the genius of our free institutions, would impose heavy burdens on the people, and be dangerous to public liberty. Our reliance for protection and defense on the land must be mainly on our citizen soldiers, who will be ever ready, as they ever have been ready in times past, to rush with alacrity, at the call of their country, to her defense.³⁸

Doniphan's command was made up of volunteer soldiers who placed their civilian careers on halt for the promise of adventure and to fight the Mexicans. Recognizable today, the argument over the size of a regular standing fulltime military versus a reserve army was debated just as hotly in the 1840s. Understanding the differences and relationship between these two forces is important as it dictated how operations were conducted during the war and accelerated mission timelines due to restrictions on the length of volunteer service. The Army of the West fell under the command of General Stephen Kearny. Organized in May and June of 1846, it consisted of a mix of volunteers and regular US troops. The Army contained the 1st (commanded by Doniphan) and 2nd Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers, the Missouri Light Artillery, Battalion

³⁸ US Congress, House, President James K. Polk's First Annual Message, 29th Cong., 1st sess., 2 December 1845, 28.

Infantry, Mormon Battalion, Laclede Rangers, and various companies of the 1st US Dragoons.³⁹

The regular army at the start of the Mexican-American War was not prepared for major combat operations. It was woefully understrength and in need of enlisted soldiers. Generally, it was perceived by the American public as being a dumping ground for the lowest elements of society.⁴⁰ The low pay of seven dollars a month plus room and board often attracted those who viewed the army as an escape from unfavorable conditions. In addition, due to the life support and steady pay provided, many recent immigrants to America joined the army—some estimates placed them at almost two-thirds of the force just prior to the war.⁴¹ The enlisted ranks reflected a portion of society at the time that was not respected by many in America.

Not only were there enlisted shortages, but the army was short of field officers as well. Unlike the rank and file, serving as an officer was slightly more respected, though many in society felt that they were being paid to do nothing. A clear majority of lieutenants and captains in the regular army were graduates of the United States Military Academy at West Point, New York. Cemented by this common bond, they formed a group of elitists who often viewed outsiders with distrust and disdain.⁴² Officers

³⁹ Donald S. Frazier, ed., *The United States and Mexico at War: Nineteenth-Century Expansionism and Conflict* (New York: Simon and Schuster Macmillan, 1998), 27.

⁴⁰ Richard B. Winders, *Polk's Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1997), 50-51.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 60.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 54, 64.

maintained complete control through the discipline exercised over their men. Officially, penalties could only be administered via a court martial; however, many ignored this and implemented severe punishments on their own. A common perception was that the rank and file were scum, while the officers were the privileged few who held ultimate power over the men. Due to this, a large gap existed between officer and enlisted ranks which affected morale.

Further impacting morale in the regular army was the promotion system. Both officers and enlisted were affected by a structure that relied on patronage, economic, and political connections. The enlisted men relied on the benefaction of their officers to be promoted, while officers depended on political and economic influence to get ahead. Compounding all of this was a broken retirement system, whereby geriatric and incapable officers held senior positions for decades, blocking the advancement of others.⁴³ Underappreciated by the society they served, sorely understrength, and besieged by morale problems due to elitism, draconian discipline, and an unfair advancement system—these were the issues that defined the regular army prior to the Mexican-American War.

In contrast, the concept of the citizen-soldier called upon in times of need was the archetype for the country. The myth of an effective fighting force pulled from the populace was bolstered by perceptions of successful experiences in the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and fights with Native American groups on the frontier.⁴⁴

⁴³ Winders, 57, 59, 65.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 66.

The genesis of the militia system exercised prior to the Mexican War occurred on 8 May 1792, when the Second US Congress enacted Statute I: “An act more effectually to provide for the National Defence by establishing an Uniform Militia throughout the United States.” It states that: “every free able-bodied white male citizen of the respective states, resident therein, who is or shall be of the age of eighteen years, and under the age of forty-five years (except as is herein after excepted) shall severally and respectively be enrolled in the militia.”⁴⁵ This system forged a common experience for all males across America, where it functioned more as a social club than an actual military unit.

Each state maintained its own militia, under strict civilian control with the governor at its head. Often its officers were elected by the men, though the process differed from state to state. This was the case for Doniphan, whose Record Service Card shows that he was: “Elected Colonel on June 18, 1846 from citizen.”⁴⁶ Electing officers reflected the loose discipline that was exercised within the militia. If an officer was too heavy-handed, they would be voted out of the position. Therefore, leaders in the militia had to govern through consensus and relationship building.⁴⁷ Lastly, many of the officers found in the militia were not adequately trained for the position, though once hostilities

⁴⁵ US Congress, House, An Act More Effectually to Provide for the National Defence by Establishing an Uniform Militia throughout the United States, 2nd Cong., 1st sess., 1792, H. Doc. 271-274.

⁴⁶ Missouri Digital Heritage Collection, 1846, Soldiers Records, Mexican War, Doniphan, Alexander W., Box 22, Reel s00910, Missouri.

⁴⁷ Winders, 81-82.

commenced, many former regular army and West Point officers volunteered and found themselves in these forces, which raised the capabilities of the militias.⁴⁸

The lax discipline and independent spirit of the men in the militias was an issue. However, the main weaknesses were a result of the requirement that militias could only serve within the border of their states. In addition, if called upon to serve outside their borders, they were limited to a short service. In 1797, the Fourth Congress provided more guidance to the states for the militia; namely, if called upon they would not serve longer than three months from the place of rendezvous.⁴⁹ To bypass these constraints, the Fourth Congress stated that: “the President may, if he judges expedient, authorize the executives of the several states, to accept any independent corps of cavalry, artillery or infantry, as part of the detachments aforesaid, provided they shall voluntarily engage as corps in the service.”⁵⁰ These independent entities became known as volunteers and were highly regarded over the militias in terms of training and discipline. Hence, the federal government relied on these volunteer forces in times of crisis. Their ranks could be filled from an already existing militia structure and not be bound by the restrictions of shortened service and geographical boundaries.

Both the militia and volunteer units were viewed with disdain by the regular army. The perceived lack of discipline, better treatment, societal support, and inadequacies of its officers caused a noticeable fissure between the regular army and

⁴⁸ Winders, 73-74.

⁴⁹ US Congress, House, An Act Authorizing a Detachment from the Militia of the United States, 4th Cong., 1st sess., 1797, H. Doc. 522.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

volunteer forces. Regular army officers, led by the West Point graduates, were especially critical of the volunteer units and the officers serving in them. Initially, Kearny was unsure of his volunteer colonel's abilities. However, Doniphan's humility and willingness to learn quickly helped to earn his trust. When asked if he would mind if Kearny were to observe the drilling of the volunteers, Doniphan replied, "I do not suppose you can learn anything new. But I may learn much from your kindly criticism."⁵¹ Doniphan understood that his unit had much to learn from the regulars and acknowledged as such to Kearny. Later, when facing a possible Mexican force, Doniphan requested that his regiment lead the attack, but conceded that if repulsed they "can fall back and rally behind the veteran Dragoons."⁵²

Unfortunately, this same mutual respect did not always extend down to the lowest level. Junior officers and enlisted soldiers from both the regulars and volunteers continued to clash throughout the expedition. As Lieutenant Emory explained in his topographic report, opinions differed amongst the ranks: "The volunteers . . . bore up against fatigue, hunger, and the vicissitudes of a long and tedious march, through unexplored regions, with a zeal, courage, and devotion that would have graced time-worn veterans, and reflect the highest credit on their conduct as soldiers."⁵³ In contrast, Captain Henry Turner, Kearny's adjutant, wrote that Doniphan's soldiers: "complaints are loud and long . . . Col. Doniphan's Regt. to a man is sick and tired of the business . . . but for

⁵¹ Launius, 102.

⁵² Ibid., 105.

⁵³ Emory, 14.

the example set by the regulars . . . the volunteers would not reach Santa Fe.”⁵⁴ Fueled by the normal disdain from the regular army forces, the Missourians also had the legacy of Okeechobee to deal with, which resulted in Doniphan contending with this riff throughout all his operations.

In May of 1846, following increasing tensions and several border skirmishes, the US Congress declared: “by the act of the Republic of Mexico, a state of war exists between that Government and the United States.”⁵⁵ As such, President James Polk was authorized: “to call for and accept the services of any number of volunteers, not exceeding fifty thousand, who may offer their services either as cavalry, artillery, infantry, or riflemen.”⁵⁶ Missouri governor John Edwards, in response to Polk’s call for troops, sought out Doniphan, a colonel in the militia, to assist with recruiting the required 1,200 volunteers from the state. He enthusiastically assumed the position and quickly recruited hundreds of men who would later become part of the 1st Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers, many of whom were former militia members. One of thirty regiments raised across the country during May–July 1846, the Regiment mustered at Fort Leavenworth in June of 1846 to begin training for combat.⁵⁷ It is there that the men of the 1st Missouri Volunteers, under their newly elected colonel, now found themselves as part of the Army of the West under General Kearny.

⁵⁴ Dawson, 62.

⁵⁵ Hetzel, 280.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Dawson, 28-30.

Several themes would be present throughout the entire service of the 1st Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers, first the tension between the regular and volunteer forces, and second, the 12-month cap on the amount of time his volunteer soldiers could serve. Both would drive military decisions made by Doniphan, he desired the unit to prove itself in combat and erase the stigma of Okeechobee; however, they could not do this if they dithered too long in one area and their enlistments ran out.

The Invasion and Occupation of New Mexico

The provinces of New Mexico and the California's are contiguous to the territories of the United States, and if brought under the government of our laws, their resources—mineral, agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial—would soon be developed.⁵⁸

While still at Fort Leavenworth, Kearny received orders from the Secretary of War. Marcy wrote: "It has been decided by the President to be of the greatest importance in the pending war with Mexico to take the earliest possession of Upper California. An expedition with that view is hereby ordered, and you are designated to command it."⁵⁹ The easiest route to the west from Missouri was to travel the already established Santa Fe trail. This would take the Army through the Mexican territory of New Mexico to its capital Santa Fe. Understanding this, Marcy continued: "When you arrive at Santa Fe with the force already called, and shall have taken possession of it, you may find yourself

⁵⁸ US Congress, House, President James K. Polk's Message, 30th Cong., 1st sess., 1847, H. Doc. No 1, 10.

⁵⁹ US Congress, *Messages of the President of the United States, with the Correspondences, Therewith Communicated between the Secretary of War and Other Officers of the Government, on the Subject of the Mexican War* (Washington, DC: Wendell and Van Benthuysen Printers, 1848), 153.

in a condition to garrison it with a small part of your command . . . and with the remainder press forward to California.”⁶⁰

America now found itself in unfamiliar territory, that of taking possession of foreign land and creating a makeshift government. Realizing this, Marcy included the following in the order: “I need not say to you that, in case you conquer Santa Fe, (and with it will be included the department or State of New Mexico,) it will be important to provide for retaining safe possession of it.”⁶¹ The order continues, “Should you take possession of New Mexico . . . you will establish temporary civil governments therein.”⁶² Marcy concluded his line of instruction on governance with this order: “You may assure the people of those provinces that it is the wish and design of the United States to provide for them a free government, with the least possible delay, similar to that which exists in our Territories.”⁶³

Departing Fort Leavenworth in July and after marching over 600 miles down the Santa Fe Trail, Doniphan and his force entered unopposed into the Mexican State of New Mexico. On 14 August 1846, the Army of the West occupied the town of Las Vegas, the first sizable population encountered thus far. After receiving oaths of allegiance from the people, the force moved on to Santa Fe. Kearny soon received intelligence that the New Mexico Governor Manuel Armijo was attempting to lead a force to prevent his

⁶⁰ U.S. Senate, House, President James K. Polk’s Message.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

movements into the city. However, it was soon discovered that this was false. The Mexican army had dissipated, and Armijo was last seen riding south with the last contingent of dedicated soldiers.⁶⁴ On 24 August 1846, Kearny wrote an official communique to the Adjutant General in Washington:

I have to report that on the 18th instant, the army, under my command marched into this city, the capital of New Mexico, having met with no armed resistance; the Mexican troops, numbering about 4,000, which had been collected on the road by Governor Armijo to oppose us, having dispersed on our approaching them, and the governor himself having fled, with a troop of his dragoons, towards Chihuahua. On the 22nd I issued a proclamation, claiming the whole of New Mexico, with its then boundaries, as a territory of the United States of America, and taking it under our protection.⁶⁵

Two days earlier on the 22nd, he wrote a more candid letter to General Jon Wool, “without firing a gun or spilling a drop of blood, I took possession of this city.”⁶⁶

Taking the Secretary of War’s instructions to heart, Kearny included his guidance in the first proclamation to the people of New Mexico, in which he promised a free government with safety for all residents. The same day he wrote about his bloodless victory, Kearny read and distributed an official proclamation to the inhabitants of New Mexico, which he also sent back to Washington. In it, he declared: “It is the wish and intention of the United States to provide for New Mexico a free government, with the least possible delay, similar to those in the United States.”⁶⁷ Kearny continued: “But until this can be done, the laws hitherto in existence will be continued until changed or

⁶⁴ Launius, 104-107.

⁶⁵ Congress, *Messages of the President*, 169..

⁶⁶ Ibid., 171.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 170.

modified by competent authority; and those persons holding office will continue in the same for the present.”⁶⁸ It appears that Kearny was adequately briefed on the OE, as his decree also announced: “The undersigned has instructions from his government to respect the religious institutions of New Mexico—to protect the property of the church—to cause the worship of those belonging to it to be undisturbed.”⁶⁹

Finally, his proclamation declared to the people of New Mexico that the scourge of their society would finally be removed. America was promising to: “protect the persons and property of all quiet and peaceful inhabitants within its boundaries against their enemies, the Eutaws [Utes], the Navajoes [Navajo], and others.”⁷⁰ An officer on the expedition records in his official report a speech by Kearny that differs slightly from the decree sent back to Washington, though it promises the same: “From the Mexican government you have never received protection. The Apaches and the Navajoes [Navajo] come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep, and even your women, whenever they please. My government will correct all this.”⁷¹

Now the task of actual governance commenced, whereby Kearny quickly realized the true value of his volunteer officer. He provided Doniphan a copy of the Secretary of War’s orders and stated: “these will explain themselves—it is fortunate you are a

⁶⁸ Congress, *Messages of the President*, 170.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Emory, 27.

lawyer—or it is more the province of a lawyer than a military officer.”⁷² Doniphan, after much thought, debate, and discussion, provided Kearny with the oath of allegiance that was first utilized in Las Vegas. Now the oath was to be sworn to by the *alcaldes* and other power brokers in Santa Fe. The vow was interesting, as its exploitation of the Catholic religion again illustrates that the Americans were attempting to leverage the OE. It read: “Do you swear in good faith that under all circumstances you will bear allegiance to the laws and government of the United States, and that through good and evil you will demean yourselves as obedient and faithful citizens of the same, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”⁷³ Over the next several days, various *alcaldes*, *Española*’s, and Pueblo leaders from the surrounding communities arrived in Santa Fe to swear the oath.⁷⁴

Doniphan was now tasked by Kearny with two main responsibilities. The first was to build a fort to protect the city; Fort Marcy was swiftly completed successfully via the dual efforts of one volunteer and one regular army engineer.⁷⁵ Secondly, he was tasked with writing a law code for the territory of New Mexico. Doniphan leveraged the experience of several of his volunteers who were lawyers and politicians in their civilian careers. After a month of exhaustive work, what later became known as the Kearny Code was presented for approval on 21 September 1846. The 115-page, double-column, dual

⁷² Launius, 102-103.

⁷³ William Elsey Connelley, *Doniphan’s Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico and California* (Topeka, KS: Self Published, 1907), 202-203.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 245-246.

language document officially went into effect the next day. The code was created: “part from the laws of Mexico . . . a part with such modifications as our laws and constitution made necessary; a part are from the laws of the Missouri territory; a part from the laws of Texas, and also of Texas and Coahuila; a part from the statutes of Missouri; and the remainder from the Livingston code.”⁷⁶ Kearny heaped praise on its creators to the Adjutant General: “I am entirely indebted for these laws to Colonel A.W. Doniphan, of the 1st Regiment of Missouri mounted volunteers, who received much assistance from private Willard P. Hall.”⁷⁷

Kearny was eager to secure New Mexico and establish governance over the territory as soon as possible; for him, the prize was California. His reasons for wanting to quit the region were two-fold; first, his orders from the Secretary of War stated: “it is very desirable that the expedition should reach California this season.”⁷⁸ His second motive is more personal, “the rank of brevet brigadier general will be conferred on you as soon as you commence your movement towards California.”⁷⁹ As long as he remained in Santa Fe he would displease his superiors, hamper the war effort, and most importantly, stall his career. From his proclamation to the people of New Mexico, the only item Kearny had not been able to deliver on was the one that sought to undermine the entire American effort. Like the previous Spanish and Mexican governments, if the US failed to

⁷⁶ Congress, *Messages of the President*, 176.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 154.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 155.

guarantee the safety of the inhabitants, it would delegitimize its authority. The last threat to the region remained the nomadic Native American groups; their constant raiding and attacks had not diminished, despite the US promise of protection.

On 16 September 1846, Kearny, satisfied that no conventional military threat remained in the region, decided to move on to the prize of California. He wrote to the Adjutant General: “There can no longer be apprehended any organized resistance in this territory to our troops; and the commander of them . . . will hereafter have nothing to attend to but to secure the inhabitants from further depredations from the Navajoe [Navajo] and Eutaw [Ute] Indians; and, for this object . . . Orders was this day issued.”⁸⁰ In early September, Kearny, with 700 men, marched into the surrounding territory in an attempt to force and compel the hostile Native American groups to sit down to peace treaties.⁸¹ However, he soon tired of this and set his sights on glory and battle in California. Kearny would leave this task to the volunteer colonel who had yet to let him down.

The orders that Kearny referenced directed Doniphan and the 1st Missouri Regiment of Mounted Volunteers as follows:

Headquarters Army of the West.
Camp on the Rio del Norte near Lajoya, Oct. 2nd, 1846

I. As the chiefs of the Navajos have been invited to Santa Fe by the commanding general, for the purpose of holding a council, and making a peace between them and the inhabitants of New Mexico, (now forming a part and under the protection of the United States,) and as they have promised to come, but have failed doing so, and instead thereof continue killing people and committing depredations upon

⁸⁰ Congress, *Messages of the President*, 174.

⁸¹ Ibid.

their property, it becomes necessary to send a military expedition into the country of these Indians, to secure a peace and better conduct from them in the future.

II. For the reason set forth in the foregoing paragraph, Col. Doniphan, of the 1st regiment Missouri mounted volunteers, previous to complying with paragraph II. of orders No. 30, dated Sept. 23rd, will march with his regiment into the Navajo country. He will cause all the prisoners, and all the property they hold, which may have been stolen from the inhabitants of the territory of New Mexico, to be given up and shall require of them security for their future good conduct, as he may think ample and sufficient, by taking hostages or otherwise.

III. After Col. Doniphan has fully complied with these instructions, he will proceed with his regiment to report to Brigadier-general Wool, as directed in orders No. 30.

By order of Brigadier-General S. W. KEARNEY.
H. S. Turner, Capt. A. A. A. Gen.⁸²

Prior to complying with order No. 30, directing him to “proceed with his regiment to Chihuahua, and report to Brigadier-general Wool for duty,” Doniphan was now tasked with attempting to solve the perpetual and age old Native American problem in the region.⁸³ The amount of time spent achieving this objective did not halt the 12-month mobilization clock of his soldiers. The longer he took to solve this issue meant less time his force would have to march further south and hopefully engage with conventional Mexican forces, erase the stain from Okeechobee, and garner glory for his men and Missouri.

⁸² George, 55-56.

⁸³ John T. Hughes, *Doniphan's Expedition Containing an Account of the Conquest of New Mexico; General Kearney's Overland Expedition to California; Doniphan's Campaign Against the Navajo; His Unparalleled March Upon Chihuahua and Durango; and the Operations of General Price at Santa Fe. With a Sketch of the life of Col. Doniphan* (Cincinnati, OH: U. P. James, 1847), 50.

It appeared from guidance issued from the Secretary of the Army that the complexity of the OE was at least fundamentally understood at the strategic level. The guidance, though sent to Kearny, failed to fully be comprehended by him and Doniphan. Both were driven by pressures exerted to succeed emanating from the regular and volunteer army rift. Kearny, felt he had to make it to California to meet his orders and gain his generalship. Doniphan, haunted by the past performance of the Missouri volunteers in the Seminole Wars felt he had to pacify the Native Americans quickly so his force could push south and win glory to its name. Due to their limited efforts aimed at influencing real change in the region, the complex nature of the OE intensified and exploded once their forces left.

CHAPTER 3

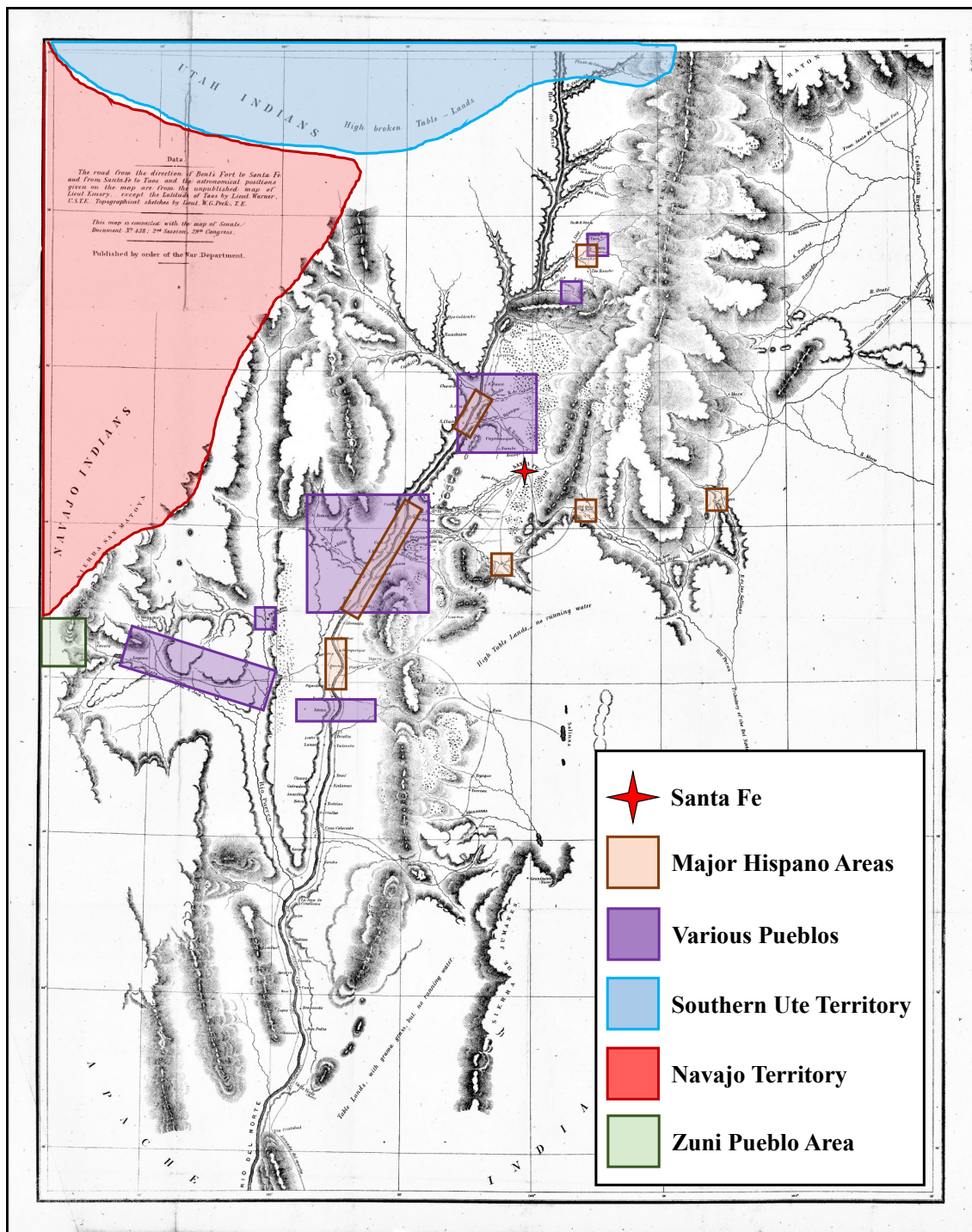
UNDERSTANDING THE NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS IN NEW MEXICO

Though Marcy at the strategic level possessed a basic understanding of the interplay between the various Hispano societies and the Native Americans in the area. He, and all in Washington, had no concept of the different native groups and how deep the conflict was between them and the Hispanos, especially in regard to the slave trade. Understanding the native groups and their relationship between each other and the Hispanos is crucial to understand how Doniphan's efforts impacted the various societies. Though Doniphan was well acquainted with slavery, he had no understanding of its brutal workings in New Mexico and the effects that it had on all in the region. This misunderstanding had a direct influence on later violence in the region and the peace efforts between American and Mexico to end the war.

Graphic Representation of Native Groups in the Area

Using Abert's map from the time-period as the backdrop, illustrated in map 2 are the major Native American groups in the region, which consisted of the Pueblo peoples (Puebloans), the Southern Ute, and the Navajo. Major Hispano population centers are also marked on the map, though note that numerous smaller communities existed mainly along the waterways and in the fertile valleys along the rivers. Often these were the areas that fell victim to native raids and attacks. Later, as Doniphan's forces moved south toward El Paso and Chihuahua, Mexico, he would encounter the various Apache peoples. However, in 1846, Doniphan, operating out of the Santa Fe region, was primarily tasked

with dealing with the Navajo. To further understand the contribution of the native groups to the complexity of the OE, each will be examined, beginning with the Puebloans.



Map 2 Graphic Representation of Native American Groups in the Area

Source: J. W. Abert, *Report of Lieut. J. W. Abert of his Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847* (Washington, DC: 1848).

Pueblo Peoples

We passed through a great number and diversity of languages . . . although we knew six languages, we could not make use of them in all areas because we found more than a thousand differences. Throughout all these lands those who were at war with one another later made friends in order to come to receive us and bring us everything they had . . . They are a people of good disposition and diligent [and] well equipped to follow any course.⁸⁴

The first native group that the Americans encountered were the various Pueblo communities who had a complex and integral relationship with the Hispanos. These people resided in numerous permanent Pueblos or towns across the Colorado Plateau of today's Northern Arizona and New Mexico. Surrounded by ancient ruins, they practiced intensive agriculture in corn, beans, and squash and lived a highly sedentary lifestyle. They consisted of four different linguistic stocks and cultures, which indicates they migrated to the area from different origins.⁸⁵ Their communities and architecture would inspire fascination in European visitors for centuries, as they were unlike any they had encountered before. Pueblo dwellings, called adobe row or block houses, were permanent, defensible, and entered by means of a ladder connecting to rooftop access points.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Narrative of Cabeza de Vaca*, ed. and trans. Rolena Adorno and Patrick Charles Pautz (Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 153-154.

⁸⁵ Fred Eggan, "Pueblos: Introduction," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 224, 226-227.

⁸⁶ Marc Simmons, "History of Pueblo-Spanish Relations to 1821," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 212.

European contact with the Puebloans dates to 1528. Cabeza de Vaca, whose quote above describes this first meeting, was shipwrecked with two other companions in present day Texas. He and his cohorts would trek across the continent for over half a decade, later recording all they encountered. Inspired by de Vaca's reports on the Puebloans' large, built up settlements, which the Spaniards equated to wealth, other expeditions to the region soon followed. This included the infamous Francisco Vázquez de Coronado who arrived in 1540. Much to his disappointment, no gold, silver, or other treasure was found amongst the Pueblos. Lured by Native American tales of riches to the east, Coronado ventured further into the region. Returning disgruntled after finding nothing, violence between the Spaniards and natives soon ensued. This lack of treasure proved to be a positive outcome for the Puebloans. The Spanish never tried to eradicate or completely push the people from the land as they believed nothing of value was present, though this did not halt Spanish incursions. Over the next fifty years, various religious missions occurred in the region; however, by now the Spanish had realized that conversion would not take place amongst native groups instantly. Strategic patience for long term missionary efforts was now the focus. Even with this measured persistence, the following five decades of forced Catholic evangelism shared one common theme—violence.⁸⁷

Juan de Oñate, credited with establishing the colony of New Mexico for Spain, led the first settlement attempt in 1598. What followed over the next 80 years was the systematic erosion and attempted Christianization of Pueblo society. In addition to this

⁸⁷ Simmons, 178-179, 182.

forced change, the Spaniards demand for labor and food stuffs became incessant. This, combined with the constant raids by nomadic Native American groups, disease, and starvation pushed the Puebloans to the edge, resulting in what became known as the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. History remembers what transpires next as one of the most successful revolts of Native Americans in the New World. With a death toll of 21 Franciscan friars and over 400 Spanish settlers killed, the Spanish were literally driven from the land.⁸⁸ However, this reprieve would not last long; by 1692 after a bloody reconquest, the Spanish would reestablish control over most of the Pueblo communities.

By the eighteenth century, the Puebloans' economic, social, and religious cultures became intermingled with the local Hispano communities. Intermarriages between the two peoples contributed to the growth of the *Españolas* and *Genízaros* classes.⁸⁹ Economic and political control, fused with religion, varied by community, from highly theocratic in the west to very centralized in eastern groups. However, for the most part, all communities did communicate and work with each other for the common interest. The different Pueblo groups practiced varying forms of worship that included Catholic influence, though they tended to practice a type of compartmentalization whereby they kept their traditional religion separate from any Catholic beliefs or practices.

Interestingly, in some communities Jesus Christ was adopted as another deity or demigod

⁸⁸ Joe S. Sando, "The Pueblo Revolt," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 194-197.

⁸⁸ Simmons, 178-179.

⁸⁹ Eggan, 226.

of sorts and infused with local beliefs.⁹⁰ Regardless of type, all political control and beliefs had two goals: the production of rain and the safekeeping of the community.⁹¹

Due to their distance from Hispano settlements, many western Pueblo communities escaped the influence of the Spanish and maintained strong traditional and religious practices. One such group were the Zuni, who were the first Pueblo community to engage in violence with the Spanish in 1536. Over the next 300 years, the Spanish and Mexicans were never able to fully control or influence the Zuni. The group at one point occupied and defended against intruders from the tops of mesas. By the early 1700s, the Zuni abandoned their mesa defenses and settled in an area that became known as Zuni or *Cibola*. They continued to remain one of the few hostile Pueblo groups against the nomadic natives, other Pueblos, and some Hispano communities. The Zuni issue would be made known to the Americans, who attempted to deal with it in 1846.⁹²

From the early 1700s through eventual Mexican governance, the relationship between the Pueblo and Hispanic communities became a symbiotic one, though strained at times and with occasional violent skirmishes. The Hispanos relaxed their religious and

⁹⁰ Richard J. Parmentier, "The Mythological Triangle: Poseyemu, Montezuma, and Jesus in the Pueblos," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 609.

⁹¹ Eggan, 227-228, 230.

⁹² Richard B. Woodbury, "Zuni Prehistory and History to 1850," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 469-472.

practical demands, and the Puebloans began to participate in a mutual defense effort, mounting retaliatory raids against the nomadic native groups.⁹³

With the advent of the nation of Mexico in 1821, the relationship changed in two key ways. First, the Mexican government adopted a much more hands-off approach in dictating terms to the Pueblo people and attempted to guarantee their land and water rights. Secondly, and most negatively, the Mexican government attempted to control the nomadic native groups in the area. This resulted in the complete fracturing of a fragile peace agreement between the Pueblos, Ute, and Navajos that had been reached by the early 1800s. The Puebloans began to organize militia companies that would accompany the Mexicans on punitive expeditions against their shared enemy, the nomadic native groups, thereby ushering in a new age of violence between all parties in the OE that had reached a crescendo by the arrival of the Americans.⁹⁴ Puebloans would later assist US forces as guides and translators, their motive being the destruction of the nomadic native groups and protection against raids bent on captives, livestock, and goods.

It was due to this shared defense, sedentary lifestyle, and relatively peaceful coexistence that Doniphan believed the Pueblo people were not a threat. They had risen in revolution before and demonstrated their prowess against the other native groups. During Doniphan's expeditions against the native groups his men twice came upon Pueblo communities conducting war dances after seizing scalps from Navajo raiding

⁹³ Simmons, 224-225.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 189, 206-207.

parties.⁹⁵ Upon Kearny's initial contact with a Pueblo leader trying to determine his intent, the Indian declared "he would go back to his people and encourage them to fight the Americans" if Kearny was not peaceful. In a separate incident, after Kearney's arrival to a Pueblo community they demonstrated their abilities by executing a "sham charge upon the general and performed several evolutions about him; displaying consummate horsemanship, and brandishing their pointed lances, as if to show what they were capable of doing, had their intentions not been peaceable and friendly."⁹⁶ Despite numerous signs and a history that demonstrated the Pueblo people were not satisfied with current Hispano relationships they were considered as a "very good, harmless, lazy sort of people."⁹⁷ This mis-assessment would have drastic consequences for the new American government in 1847.

Southern Ute

They came riding into the city and paraded on the public square, all well mounted on the most elegant horses I had ever seen. The animals were of a very superior breed, with their slender, tapering legs and short, fine hair, like our best blooded racers . . . You are Americans, we are told, and you have come from your country afar off to trade with the Spaniards. We want your trade. Come to our country with your goods. Come and trade with the Utahs. We have horses, mules and sheep, more than we want . . . What can you get from these [the Spanish]. . . .

⁹⁵ Hughes, 151, 162.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 97, 107.

⁹⁷ Edward James Glasgow and William Henry Glasgow, *Brothers on the Santa Fe and Chihuahua Trail, 1846-1848*, ed. Mark L. Gardner (Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado, 1993), 93.

They are poor—too poor for you to trade with. Come among the Utah's if you wish to trade with profit.⁹⁸

The Southern Ute are a part of the Great Basin Native American group, which consists of native peoples that occupied about 400,000 square miles of area between the Sierra Nevada and Rocky Mountains. This area was made of up various societies that possessed different cultures, beliefs and languages that later were collated under the term Great Basin.⁹⁹ From the Spanish period to 1820 very little contact occurred with the people in this geographic area. Various excursions were made in the region, though no permanent settlements were attempted. Spanish early influence on the Great Basin groups occurred through the introduction of the horse and via the slave trade. With the Spanish settlement of New Mexico, the first recorded purchase of slaves from the Utes was in 1813, though historians suspect the trade started as early as the 1770s. The Utes, rather than becoming victims of Hispano raids for slaves, perpetrated this act on other native groups to sell captives to the communities in New Mexico.¹⁰⁰

By the 1830s, several Ute bands, who became known as the Southern Ute, had settled just above the New Mexico area for three reasons: first, to be closer to the Hispanic communities that purchased slaves; secondly, to be near to the other native

⁹⁸ Thomas James, *Three Years Among the Indians and Mexicans* (Saint Louis, MO: Missouri Historical Society, 1916), 145-146.

⁹⁹ Warren L. D'Azevedo, "Introduction," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 11, Great Basin*, ed. Warren L. D'Azevedo (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 1.

¹⁰⁰ Carling I. Malouf and John M. Findlay, "Euro-American Impact Before 1870," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 11, Great Basin*, ed. Warren L. D'Azevedo (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 499-501.

nomadic groups and Puebloans where they could easily plunder them for slaves and goods; and thirdly, so they could also raid the very Hispano communities they were selling slaves to for their sheep, horses, and goods.¹⁰¹ The two Southern Ute groups operating near Santa Fe were the *Muache* and *Capote*. They were a highly nomadic people that lived off horseback, whose communities consisted of the iconic teepee made from different animal hides. Each band consisted of 50 to 100 people that formed 20 to 30 households. Each Southern Ute group practiced a form of deme leadership, meaning the headmen earned his place through competence and not lineage. These mobile bands served as a form of defense as well as the base camp for raids. Though the different bands did communicate amongst the various headmen, alliances were rare.¹⁰²

By the 1840s trade between America and Mexico via the Santa Fe Trail was at its zenith. Unlike the other Native American groups who saw the vulnerable wagon caravans as an easy target for raiding or for extorting protection money, the Southern Ute focused on trading. The Ute quickly realized that American traders had goods they desired and carved out their own trading niche that would often trump anything the Hispano communities could offer. Namely fine horses and goods—often stolen from the Mexicans or other native groups—for American guns. Due to this and by the time of the arrival of the U.S. Army, the Ute had been able to operate with the Santa Fe traders independently,

¹⁰¹ Donald Callaway, Joel Janetski, and Omer C. Stewart, “Ute,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 11, Great Basin*, ed. Warren L. D’Azevedo (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 336, 339, 354.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 348-352.

drawing a source of potential income away from the Mexicans which caused further tension.¹⁰³

The Southern Ute, like the Pueblo people, were dependent on the Hispano communities and later American traders for their existence. However, rather than a symbiotic relationship of relatively peaceful coexistence, theirs was based on a source of easy plunder and the economic benefit of the Santa Fe Trail and the slave trade. Their history demonstrated an uncanny ability to occupy a middle ground between the cultures in the region, which suggested that they were opportunist that would lean towards whatever course benefited them the most. Doniphan misread this about the Southern Ute, which would define how he naively dealt with them. The constant raiding of women, children, and goods from the Pueblos and other native groups with the guns they obtained made them a persistent enemy in the region.

Navajo Groups

You shouldn't sleep! Run out and dash up a hill because our enemies are springing up around us! It is terrible to have enemies. When I was little our enemies were the Utes, the Mexicans, and the Pueblos. Almost everyone was our enemy, when I was raised here. They would come even at night!¹⁰⁴

The Spanish and later the Mexicans considered the largest threat in the region to be the Navajo. Their origin is murky; they migrated to the area in ancient times and appear to be influenced by both the Apache and Puebloans. When the Spanish arrived in

¹⁰³ Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 124-126.

¹⁰⁴ Lawrence D. Sundberg, *Dinetah: An Early History of the Navajo People* (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 1952), 84. Asdza Biwoo' Adini, Navajo grandmother, speaking of 1840s life to her granddaughter.

the region, they called the people west of the Zuni pueblos the *Apaches de Nabajo* due to the territory they lived in. Later, this would be shortened to just Navajo, though they referred to themselves as the *Diné* or *Dine'ë*. The earliest expedition led by Antonio de Espejo in 1583, and several others in subsequent years, referred to the Navajo as a semisedentary culture who practiced agriculture and maintenance hunting. They originally lived in permanent settlements scattered across the region west of the Pueblo clusters. Different groups had differing relationships with the Puebloans who they were near to. Some were friendly and trading partners, while others were in a state of constant conflict.¹⁰⁵

The Navajo were largely a matriarchal society, meaning the head mother controlled the social groups. The term mother had a dual meaning; it referred to the actual senior mother, but it also meant the main support entity for the group. It could reference the group's sheep herd, agriculture field, or customary land-use area. Prior to the arrival of the Americans, the main economic income for the Navajo was sheep. They could provide cash through the selling of wool, though their main value came from their meat, clothing, bedding, weaving, and sinew for bows. Agriculture crops and fruit trees also served as a source of food stuff and income for the Navajo. Regardless of which mother the people focused on, its maintenance and care was a group effort. Despite the existence

¹⁰⁵ David M. Brugge, "Navajo Prehistory and History to 1850," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 10, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1983), 489-491.

of group leaders, no permanently defined social or political organization existed between the various Navajo bands that could dictate terms to all of them.¹⁰⁶

However, in times of crisis like war, the Navajo could activate a far-flung kinship network that would unite and work towards a common goal. When this happened, the Navajo would convene a tribal council called a *naach'id* where common objectives would be determined and plans for action formed.¹⁰⁷ The conducts of these meetings are unknown and only one acknowledged historical source documents the event, though several general consistencies are acknowledged by experts: they were held in winter, involved both political functions and ceremonial procedures to include dancing, and that all if not most members of the tribe were present.¹⁰⁸

As with the other native groups in the area, initial contact with the Spanish was peaceful; however, this quickly degenerated into violence. The Navajo participated in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, though they reacted differently during the Spanish reconquest. Rather than submit to Spanish dominance and settle back into a sedentary lifestyle, they fled into the hinterlands and the isolated valleys of the region. Numerous individual Puebloans who also wanted their independence joined the Navajo, eventually assimilating into the tribe. What resulted from this amalgamation was a new group of Apachean peoples that are recognized today as the Navajo Nation. This fiercely

¹⁰⁶ Gary Witherspoon, "Navajo Social Organization," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 10, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1983), 525-531.

¹⁰⁷ Delay, 166.

¹⁰⁸ David M. Brugge, "Documentary Reference to a Navajo Naach'id in 1840," *Ethnohistory* 10, no. 2 (Spring 1963): 186-187.

independent group would form a society that combined the warlike spirit of the Apache with the deeply ceremonial beliefs of the Puebloans.¹⁰⁹

By the 1770s, the Navajo, through warfare, had carved themselves out a territory that pushed the Hispano communities, Ute, and other Apache groups out. Now recognized as a people of their own, they would live under a constant state of siege for the next century. Conflict with the Spanish occurred intermittently throughout their colonization. The tenacity of the Navajo is credited with the Spanish abandonment of San Gabriel as New Mexico's capital in favor of Santa Fe. Interestingly, the Navajo occasionally joined forces with the Spanish against their enemies the Ute and other Apache groups when it benefited them.

With the birth of the Mexican Nation, a new threat emerged—that of the Hispano thirst for slaves. The first recorded Mexican slave raid conducted by Jose Antonio Vizcarra in 1823 initiated a forty-year period of constant retaliatory raids between the Hispanos, Ute, and Puebloans.¹¹⁰ This conflict ran bitter and deep amongst the combatants. In 1822 the Mexicans lured Navajo leaders to a peace meeting only to slaughter them unawares in cold blood; an example of the atrocities and depth of hatred that existed amongst all sides.¹¹¹ Due to this, one historian declared, “much of the

¹⁰⁹ Brugge, “Documentary Reference to a Navajo Naach'id in 1840,” 491-493.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 495-496.

¹¹¹ Frank McNitt, *Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 66.

northern third of Mexico was transformed into a vast theater of hatred, terror and staggering loss for independent Indians and Mexicans alike.”¹¹²

The ferocity of this conflict was at the forefront of concerns for the new American citizens of New Mexico. As such, the Navajo were deemed the main threat and were specifically mentioned in Kearny’s orders to Doniphan to “secure a peace and better conduct from them in the future.”¹¹³ Virtually all groups detested the Navajo, the Mexicans and Puebloans wanted their raids to stop, the Utes valued them for the captives and livestock they could steal from them, and the Anglos wanted the threat they presented to the Santa Fe Trail removed. Their complex history infused in them a siege mentality, this combined with no overarching societal controls that linked all bands, guaranteed that any peace attempts with them would be difficult.

Slavery and Native Americans in New Mexico

All children . . . would be taken back to New Mexico and then sold, boys fetching on an average \$100, girls from \$150 to \$200. The girls were in demand to bring up for house servants, having the reputation of making better servants than any others. This slave trade gave rise to the cruel wars between the native tribes of this country . . . The Mexicans were as fully established and systematic in this trade as ever were the slavers on the seas and to them it was a very lucrative business.¹¹⁴

One thing that all the cultures in the region had in common, whether as a victim or profiteer, was the slave-trade. Neither Kearny nor Doniphan had any idea how

¹¹² Brian Delay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), xv.

¹¹³ George, 55-56.

¹¹⁴ Daniel W. Jones, *Forty Years Among the Indians* (Salt Lake City, UT: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1890), 50.

contentious and deep-seated this issue was to all in the region. Slavery amongst the Native Americans in the New Mexico region may have been present before the arrival of the Spanish. It is known that during pre-colonial warfare, Native Americans had seized captives that were then adopted and assimilated into the group. Early Spanish accounts recognized and referred to this practice as slavery, though how much it actually reflected their definition—a person who is purchased and completely controlled by another—is unknown.¹¹⁵ Even if the Native American practice was not identical to the Spanish concept, they quickly grew to understand it.

Slaves that would eventually form the *Genízaro* class in New Mexico society were either purchased or taken through raids from the Native American groups. These raids ranged from military expeditions sent to punish Indian transgressions, to actual black-market groups who were bent on profit through the selling of slaves. The military exploits were justified as retaliatory acts against native groups that committed any offense or violent act against the Hispanos. However, often the returns on these raids far outweighed the transgression. In 1838, in a quest to free one captured New Mexican settler, the Mexican army attacked a band of Native Americans, resulting in 76 captives for slavery, 2,060 sheep, and 160 buckskins.¹¹⁶

Though the Spanish Crown had outlawed slavery in the New World, it was still tolerated and supported. The rationalization for slavery came from both the government and the Catholic Church. In 1752, Spanish Governor Velez Cachupin reminded the

¹¹⁵ David M. Brugge, *Navajos in the Catholic Church Records of New Mexico 1694-1875* (Santa Fe, NM: School for Advanced Research Press, 1968), 127.

¹¹⁶ Gutierrez, 152.

people that slavery is tolerated “so that they [Native Americans] can be instructed in Our Holy Catholic Faith and made cognizant of the Divine Precepts, so that they may win their own salvation in honor and glory of God, our Lord.”¹¹⁷ In 1776, Fray Atanasio Dominguez claimed that the New Mexican societies’ slaves were prisoners of war “ransomed from the pagans by our people” who were then rightly “emancipated to work out their account.”¹¹⁸ This practice, which was tacitly encouraged and supported by the Spanish, continued under Mexican rule up until the Americans’ arrival in 1846.

The slave market in New Mexico served both as a lucrative economy for the area and as a defensive measure for the Native Americans. Slaves served at the lowest level of Spanish and Mexican societies, performing the menial tasks and chores of each household they were in. Serving in this capacity made them invaluable to the functioning of the society. Due to the nature of the work, female slaves were preferred over males for several reasons. First, they tended to be less rebellious than males, and secondly, they could serve another base purpose for the men in the household—that of a concubine.¹¹⁹ Operating from a defensive posture, some Native American groups soon figured out that the easiest way they could avoid raids bent on captives was to attack other tribes to secure slaves to sell to the colonists. Even the famed explorer, scout, and soldier, Kit Carson, bought and owned three Navajo slaves obtained from another Indian tribe.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Gutierrez, 185.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 188.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 186-187.

¹²⁰ Hampton Sides, *Blood and Thunder: The Epic Story of Kit Carson and the Conquest of the American West* (New York: Anchor Books, 2006), 349.

Most of the slaves were young children, as assimilating older captives into the society was extremely difficult. Immediately upon entrance into a Hispano household, the slave would be stripped of their former name, baptized, and then given a Christian name. Through church records, the baptismal process offers a way to gauge how much slavery was practiced in New Mexico. Out of 794 households in the early 1800s in the Santa Fe area, 711 had one or more slaves and 83 had three or more, with some having up to 12.¹²¹ The baptismal process concluded with the assignment of Godparents to the slave. This served to bond the slave to the society and offered a sense of kinship. The Godparents were not necessarily the master but were usually close to the household and provided a level of acceptance and encouragement as the slave matured in the society.¹²²

As mentioned earlier, slavery was also practiced by various Native American groups. By the 1820s, various groups were raiding the Hispanic settlements in retaliation and taking slaves of their own. Like the Hispanos, the captives were young, mainly female and were also put through a process of assimilation into the society. For the Native Americans, this meant alliance and acceptance into a clan or family group. Slaves served a period in base servitude, where depending on their performance they could eventually be adopted into a family. Unlike the Hispanos, once the transition from servant to family member was complete, a slave would eventually become a full member of society with an equal status. If they failed to do so, they would be killed or sold.¹²³

¹²¹ Brugge, *Navajos in the Catholic Church*, 122.

¹²² Gutierrez, 182.

¹²³ Brugge, *Navajos in the Catholic Church*, 138.

Regardless of which people a slave served, the experience and transformation were similar. Due to their young age and the societal acceptance measures that were exercised, slaves often found themselves forgetting their old culture and being completely assimilated into the new one. An event in 1865, though after the period being examined, offers an example of this. Out of 148 confirmed Native American captives located by the U.S. Army in the region, only 10 stated that they wanted to return to their people, while 138 wanted to continue to live amongst their Hispano masters.¹²⁴ This trend was also present amongst those being held by the Native Americans. In the American treaty of 1849 with the Navajo, a narrative was written for each returned Mexican captive. It was determined that most of the prisoners had no complaints about their captivity and that several desired to be returned. Of the captives taken when they were young, their statements are all markedly similar: one young man declared “he prefers most decidedly to remain with the Navajo,” while another caption reads “he was stolen by the Navajos seventeen years ago . . . he did not wish to be restored.”¹²⁵

In the three decades before the arrival of the Americans in 1846, slavery and retaliatory raids on both sides skyrocketed. Between 1820 and the beginning of 1840, an estimated 179 non-Indians were killed, and an estimated 529 Native American slaves were baptized—though these numbers are probably much higher due to non-baptisms or missing records.¹²⁶ The atrocities conducted in the name of the slave-trade were deep-

¹²⁴ Brugge, *Navajos in the Catholic Church*, 124.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 134-135.

¹²⁶ Gutierrez, 154.

seated in the historical memory and psyche of all in the region. Doniphan's inability to appreciate this history would lead him to assume that peace could be reached easily, which dictated how he approached his treaty attempts.

American Misunderstanding of the Native American Nations

Retaliatory raids and captives taken for slavery represent the key point of contention in the Hispano and Native American relationship prior to the Arrival of the Army of the West. This conflict defined the relationship surrounding these groups in New Mexico and is one that the Americans were not aware of and did not comprehend. The misunderstanding and misrepresentation of this conflict by local parties underlined all future decisions the Americans made regarding the peoples of the region.

The Pueblos, though closely aligned socially, politically, and economically with the Hispano communities, were not Mexicans. If they felt threatened or saw an opportunity for independence, they could conduct highly coordinated and violent revolts, as had been demonstrated in 1680. The Southern Ute also relied heavily on the Mexicans, albeit for different reasons. The constant raiding of the Hispanos, Pueblos, and other native groups had turned the regions outside of population centers into no-man zones. The Ute ability to play all sides for its benefit was not understood. Lastly, the Navajo, with their siege and victim mentality, combined with their competent warriors, were a formidable foe. The Americans did not understand the Navajo matriarchal society, nor did they comprehend that all the native groups in the area could not be controlled by any one headmen or political organization.

Doniphan should have realized the fractured control native leaders exerted over their people. While serving as the senior commander in Santa Fe after Kearny's

departure, numerous groups of natives “were constantly coming in to hold a ‘Big Talk’ or ‘Gran Council’” with him.¹²⁷ His past experiences with natives in the Indian Territory near the Kansas, Missouri border region exposed him to their splintered nature of leadership. The varied groups seeking words with him in Santa Fe all discussing the same topic and pledging to different terms, should have made it obvious to Doniphan that no single leader controlled them all.

This combination of incessant Native American warfare, a highly structured and stressed Hispanic caste system, combined with a history of demonstrated inability by governments to protect the populace which fueled frustration, resulted in an extremely complex OE that was a virtual powder keg waiting to explode. Historian Brian Delay, University of California at Berkeley, describes it best: “By the eve of the U.S. invasion these varied conflicts spanned all or parts of tens states. They had claimed thousands of Mexican and Indian lives, made tens of thousands more painful and often wretched, ruined northern Mexico’s economy, stalled its demographic growth, and depopulated much of the countryside.”¹²⁸ Doniphan needed to solve this situation quickly before the 12-month term of enlistees expired and they had the chance to engage Mexican forces and erase the memories of Okeechobee.

¹²⁷ Hughes, 142.

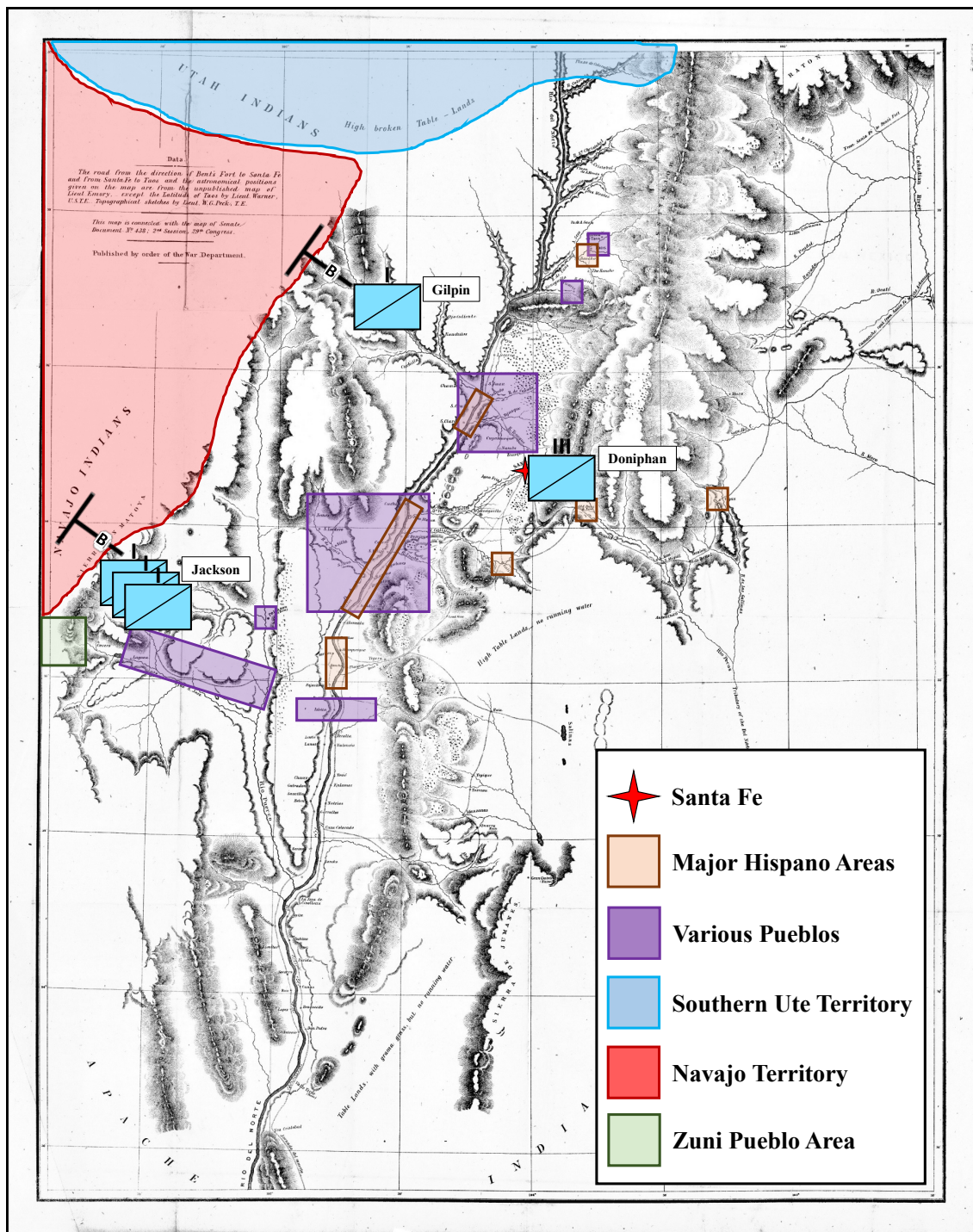
¹²⁸ Delay, xv.

CHAPTER 4

EXPEDITION AGAINST THE NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS

Functioning at the operational level of war, Kearny, prior to leaving for California, decided to stage units in the hostile territories as both to provide security for the Hispano community and to restrict Native American freedom of movement: “Colonel Doniphan will select three companies of his Regiment . . . with orders to proceed to the neighborhood of *Cebolleta*, and there establish himself and remain until further orders.” Lieutenant Colonel Congreve Jackson commanded these units in *Cebolleta*, which lay directly in the heart of Navajo and Zuni territory. To counter the Southern Ute, Major William Gilpin, another subordinate of Doniphan, was ordered “to proceed to the neighborhood of *Abiquiu*, there to remain until further directed.” Gilpin was staged on the border of the area where the Navajo and Southern Ute met (see map 3). Regardless of where they were located, “The object in these Troops to the grounds designated is to give protection to the inhabitants of New Mexico from the Navajoes [Navajo] and Eutaws [Ute]; and the officers in command will exert themselves to accomplish it.”¹²⁹ This show of force was important in maintaining American legitimacy. If they could not protect the populace they would be seen to be just as weak as the previous Mexican government.

¹²⁹ General Stephen Kearny, Orders Number 23, Headquarters, Army of the West, 15 September 1846, National Archives Microfilm Publication M567, roll 319.



Map 3 Staged for Expedition Against the Native Americans

Source: J. W. Abert, *Report of Lieut. J. W. Abert of his Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847* (Washington, DC: 1848).

Preparation for the Expedition

The inhabitants of this country must be protected from the Indians and for that purpose several companies of mounted volunteers must be kept near the frontier. If the Indians after agreeing to peace, will not keep it, a large force (sufficient to insure entire and complete success) should be marched into their country for their punishment.¹³⁰

The areas of *Cebolleta* and *Abiquiu* were not randomly chosen: both locations dominated and controlled the valleys that were used to approach the major Hispano river settlements. Kearny and Doniphan obtained advice from local Mexicans, Puebloans, and Anglos on where to place their units as a blocking force and how to deal with the native groups. Mexicans, along with several Americans who had been living in the area since the 1820s, assisted US forces; men like Santiago Conklin, T. Caldwell, and John Thomas acted as guides and translators. Very little is known about these men except that they were influential, owned land, and had a vested interest in seeing the native groups destroyed.¹³¹ In addition to the Mexicans and Anglos, some native men assisted as well. Sandoval, a Navajo leader from the *Dine Ana'aa*, a band peacefully aligned with the Hispano communities, was a shady figure in the region who was considered a: “man who played any three sides against a shifting middle. He was an informer for the whites but occasionally, with a surprising loyalty—unless again, the information was paid for—for the Navajos. Wherever trouble occurred, Sandoval was likely to be found . . . whose services, for almost any murky or evil purpose, were for hire.”¹³² He too had a vested

¹³⁰ General Stephen Kearny, Orders Number 30, Headquarters, Army of the West, 23 September 1846, National Archives Microfilm Publication M567, roll 319.

¹³¹ McNitt, 98, 113, 117.

¹³² Ibid., 71-72.

interest in seeing the nomadic native groups destroyed, as it further aligned his people to the Hispanic communities and guaranteed their safety.

Accepting the advice and services of these men with ulterior motives resulted in their objectives influencing all dealings with the Native Americans. Despite whose advice was sought, each one who offered it was considered to the most civilized of their group by the US; inferring that whiteness, money or social standing made them reliable sources. In reality, many of these men were infamous and had a poisonous relationship with the native groups. For example, regarding Sandoval, nomadic Navajo groups were “extremely desirous of taking his scalp.” The trend of US forces and governments relying on locals who had their own self-interests in dealing with the local native groups continued well into the 1870s, with disastrous consequences. It all began with Doniphan, who set a precedent that all others followed.¹³³

The placement of Gilpin had immediate results with the Ute, upon sending 85 men into their territory he enticed a large party of them to travel to Santa Fe to enter peace talks with Doniphan. Ever the opportunists, rather than fighting the Americans, the Utes decided to accompany Gilpin. After a meeting with Doniphan, they promised to be “peaceable, orderly, to respect the lives and property of the Mexicans, and to be obedient to the laws of the United States.” Doniphan naively praised Gilpin’s ability to preserve the “utmost tranquility amongst the Mexicans, Pueblos and Yutas [Utes].”¹³⁴ While Gilpin’s efforts at *Abiquiu* appeared to be successful, they remain the perfect example of

¹³³ McNitt, 98, 178.

¹³⁴ Hughes, 127, 176.

the Ute manipulating all sides for their best interests. The US mistook the Utes cooperation as compliance, where in reality by appearing peaceful and amicable, they gained time to determine American commitment in the region and maintained their current lucrative Santa Fe and slave-trades.

Despite these troops being stationed in key locations in New Mexico, they fully intended their stay to be brief. Per Kearny, upon the arrival of Colonel Sterling Price of the 2nd Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers they would assume this blocking mission and be replaced at each garrison, at which time they were to all push further south to invade Mexico. Price arrived in Santa Fe on the 28th of September, three days after Kearny left for California. With the arrival of the second Regiment, Santa Fe was quickly overwhelmed with soldiers. To reduce overcrowding, Doniphan decided to reinforce his positions at *Abiquiu* and *Cebolleta*, still fully expecting to be relieved by Price once his Regiment recovered from its march. During this entire time-period, the upcoming campaign to EL Paso and Chihuahua to join General Wool still loomed; in preparation Doniphan steadily stockpiled supplies, repaired wagons, and rested his animals.¹³⁵ On the 11th of October Doniphan received the order that changed all this:

Col. Doniphan, of the 1st regiment Missouri mounted volunteers . . . will march with his regiment into the Navajo country. He will cause all the prisoners, and all the property they hold, which may have been stolen from the inhabitants of the territory of New Mexico, to be given up and shall require of them security for their future good conduct, as he may think ample and sufficient, by taking hostages or otherwise.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Hughes, 130, 137, 139.

¹³⁶ George, 55-56.

The decision by Kearny to redirect Doniphan and the 1st Missouri Regiment was driven by the Navajo he encountered as he progressed toward California. Passing settlements along the march, as he did in Santa Fe, he promised to protect the populace against native raids. As soon as American forces moved on, Navajo bands attacked these communities, killing men, capturing women and children, and stealing livestock.¹³⁷ Frustrated by the incessant actions of the native groups, Kearny ordered Doniphan to take action and, going one step further, he issued a proclamation that he would “hereby authorize all the Inhabitants [Mexican and Pueblos] living in the said District of Country...to form war parties, to march into the country of their enemies, the Navajoes [Navajo], to recover their Property, to make reprisals and obtain redress for the many insults received from them.”¹³⁸ Rather than calming the situation, Kearny further exacerbated tensions in the region by encouraging more independent war parties. Kearny could not stand for the constant native attacks; if America was to establish governance over the region it must deliver on its promises. Thus, he ordered the one officer who had proved himself adept at the rule of law to complete the task.

Doniphan quickly applied his Regiment to the mission. In addition to the time constraints on his enlistments and the desire to erase the stigma of Okeechobee, he now had to contend with the upcoming winter—all of which drove him toward a desired swift campaign. His men also felt the same, one writing in his diary that this delay would produce the result of “thereby robbing them of their share of the honor” resulting from

¹³⁷ Hughes, 144.

¹³⁸ General Stephen Kearny, Proclamation, Headquarters, 5 October 1846, National Archives Microfilm Publication M567, roll 319.

battle in Mexico.¹³⁹ Doniphan quickly developed a three-pronged plan of attack which he spelled out to Kearny via dispatch after the campaign: “We invaded the country by three routes. Major Gilpin, with 200 men, marched by the northern route. . . . The remaining portion of the regiment left the Del Norte at Albuquerque, and passed up the valley of the *Puevea* of the west . . . Captain Reid marched with a detachment through the center of the country . . . and the remaining portion of the regiment further south.”¹⁴⁰

No matter which route the men marched, they all shared one common experience—the harshness of the terrain and weather. One soldier in describing the ordeal of those who marched, wrote:

The snow was now deep and the weather excessively cold. The fierce winds whistled along the ragged granites hills and peaks. The prospect was horrid. Half of the animals had given out, and were abandoned. Thus were the men situated – half of them on foot, carrying their arms, stinted in provisions, destitute of shoes and clothing, and their way barricaded by eternal rocks and snow. Sometimes when they lay down at night, wrapt in their blankets and the skins of wild beasts, before morning they would be completely enveloped in a new crop of snow, and they would rise at day-dawn with benumbed limbs and bristling icicles frozen to their hair and long whiskers.¹⁴¹

The nature of the country during the campaigns was such that it was, “impracticable for artillery, baggage or provision wagons, or even the lightest carriages; so steep and abrupt are the rocks, hills, and mountains” to be brought along. Most of the men left behind their tents and other heavy clothing to traverse the terrain faster; the weather also became increasingly harsh.

¹³⁹ Hughes, 146.

¹⁴⁰ US Congress, President James K. Polk’s Message.

¹⁴¹ Hughes, 146, 180.

Colonel Doniphan's Southern Route

Our first care in this sudden change in our relations with that country [Mexico] was to try and take care of our Santa Fe trade. For this purpose it will be proposed to the people of New Mexico, Chihuahua, and other internal provinces, that they remain quiet and continue trading with us as usual, upon which they shall be protected in all their rights and treated as friends.¹⁴²

With Price now in command in Santa Fe, Doniphan left on the 30th of October with the main body of support troops and supplies from the Regiment, and marched south through Albuquerque and Cuvarro, eventually staging his headquarters at an excellent pasturage range called Valverde (see map 4). As he marched south he first sent ahead three companies “to protect the Caravan of Traders who, apprehending an attack from the Mexicans below, had corralled themselves near the Ruins of Valverde to defend their property.”¹⁴³ Made clear by Senator Benton, these merchants and the economic potential they represented had operational and strategic connections back to Washington, DC. Due to this consolidated civilian caravan of wagons, Valverde would now serve as the staging area for his quartermaster and as the link up point after the campaign against the Native Americans was completed.¹⁴⁴

Interestingly, it was the main body at Valverde that would suffer the most at the hands of the Navajo. A total of seventeen mules, over eight hundred sheep, and numerous horses and cattle would be stolen from them. Two soldiers from the Regiment carelessly pursued the stolen sheep and were “cruelly put to death. One of them was pierced by

¹⁴² Gibson, 26-27.

¹⁴³ John Hughes to Liberty Editor Robert H. Miller, January 4, 1847, Robert H. Miller Papers, Missouri History Museum Archives, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁴⁴ Hughes, 154.

thirteen arrows and the other by nine; after which their heads were mashed and their bodies bruised with rocks in a most shocking manner.”¹⁴⁵

The rift between the regular and volunteer forces manifested itself again upon Doniphan being tasked with this mission. Several regular army officers felt that Doniphan and his men were not up to the task of operating independently against a shrewd enemy. One regular army officer wrote to General Thomas Jesup:

Col. Doniphan has received ordered to proceed against the Navahoe [Navajo] Indians, who have been at war with the Mexicans for years & refuse to make peace . . . Since our arrival in the country they have committed many depredations & will require severe punishment before they cease to molest the Inhabitants; but I fear another Florida War if the Indians desire to protract it; as they live in the mountains impracticable for roads & can only be pursued slowly with pack mules for transporting stress, etc.¹⁴⁶

Jesup, a veteran commander from the Second Seminole War, knew exactly what this officer was alluding to. Many regular army officers felt the expedition would be a repeat of Okeechobee by the Missourians, placing further pressure on Doniphan to succeed as he embarked against the Native Americans.

With winter in full swing Doniphan incurred yet another burden, that of civilian traders who staged their wagon trains full of goods at Valverde. One wagon master wrote home that they “look for Col Doniphan’s regiment here in a week at farthest as they were at last accounts about 60 miles above us, awaiting arrival of the Col who had gone out with 2 company’s to make a treaty with the Nabahoes [Navajo].” He goes on to describe

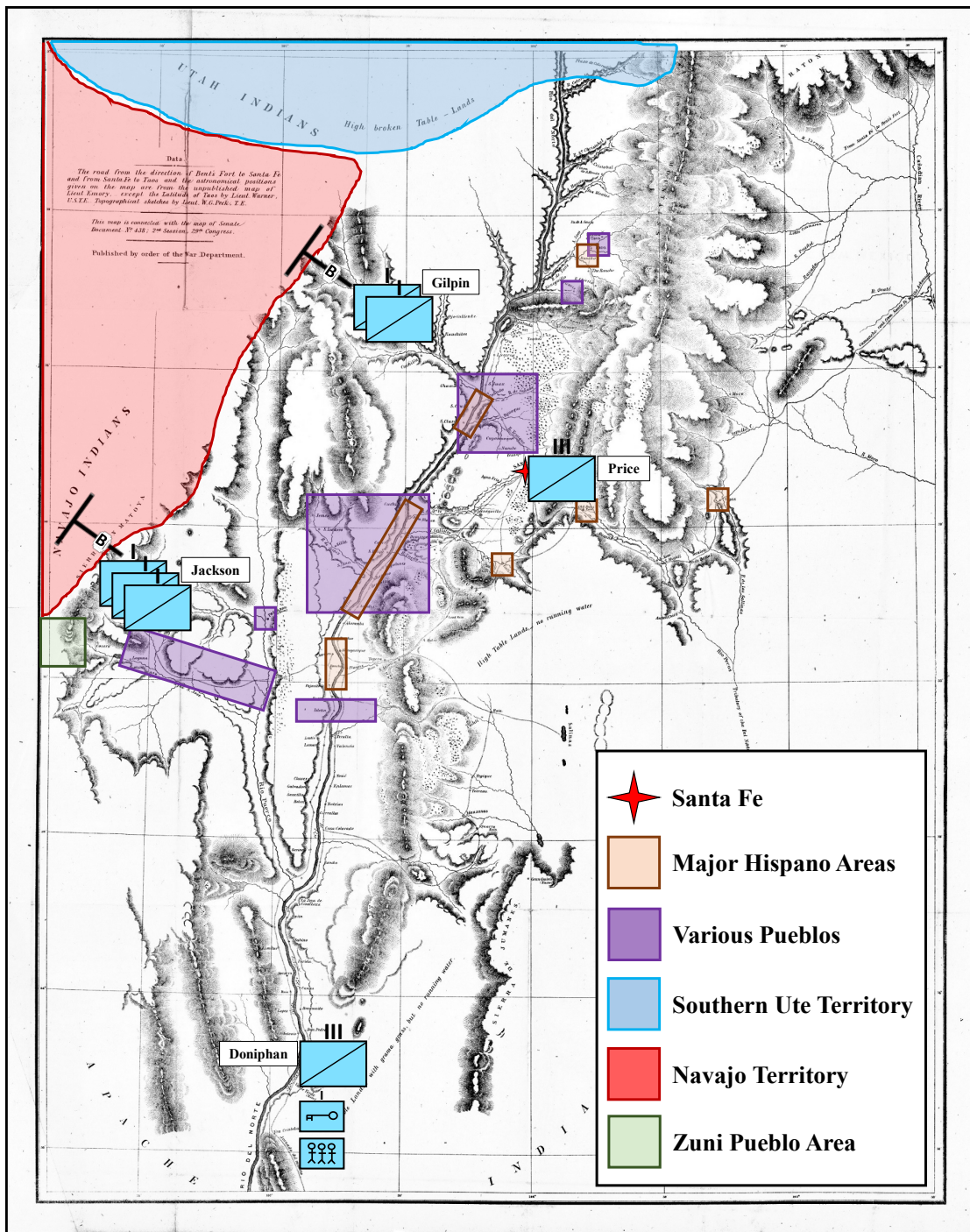
¹⁴⁵ Hughes, 156, 159.

¹⁴⁶ Captain William M. D. McKissack to Major General Thomas S. Jesup, 6 October 1846, Records of the Army Commands, Office of the Quartermaster General, Consolidated Correspondence, file 1794-1915, Box 987, RG 92, National Archives.

his 200-idle wagon loads but remained optimistic: “we are not yet discouraged however and hope in the end to be paid for our trouble.”¹⁴⁷ Another vendor was not so positive, “The prospect for the traders are gloomy. Their expense have been so enormous, that it must eat up all their profits, and at present there is no Knowing when those expenses will cease.”¹⁴⁸ The wagon trains intended to be protected by US forces against Mexicans and the Native Americans and would follow Doniphan’s force as it moved south. The longer the wagons sat, the more it affected the financial bottom line, which stretched back all the way to big money backers in the US. As Senator Benton strategically declared, the Santa Fe trail must be protected and operational, adding another reason for Doniphan to accomplish his mission swiftly.

¹⁴⁷ Glasgow, 100-101.

¹⁴⁸ Gibson, 263.



Map 4 Colonel Doniphan's Southern Route

Source: J. W. Abert, *Report of Lieut. J. W. Abert of his Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847* (Washington, DC: 1848).

Captain Reid's Center Route

So we danced with the Purbelos [Pueblos] over the scalps of the Nebajos [Navajos] and with the Nebajos over the Purbelos.¹⁴⁹

Lieutenant Colonel Jackson, still staged at *Cebolleta*, complied with orders directing him to “dispatch runners to the Navajoe [Navajo] country with instructions to invite 10 or 12 of their principal men to come to this city [Santa Fe] for the purpose of holding a Council . . . and should they determine to do so, you will promise & give them protection while on the Route.”¹⁵⁰ After a number of forays into the area, Company Commander Captain John Reid encountered a party of about 40 Navajo warriors. Through the notorious interpreter Sandoval, Reid was able to learn that a large gathering of Navajo was congregated thirty miles away, where they desired to see the Americans. The Navajo were not willing to come to Jackson due to trickery from Mexicans and Puebloans in the past, meaning Jackson went to them. After a peaceful meeting with this large group of 500-plus Navajo, Jackson was unable to entice them to travel anywhere near Mexican communities to complete a treaty. They requested a large American escort to guarantee their safety if they were to travel to any major Hispano area, which Jackson was unable to provide at this time due to his troop strength.¹⁵¹

Jackson's first attempt would not be his last. Sandoval soon reported that a massive gathering of Navajo was occurring 200 miles away near the Chuska Mountains.

¹⁴⁹ Jacob S. Robinson, *A Journal of the Santa Fe Expedition under Colonel Doniphan*, ed. Carl L. Cannon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1932), 44.

¹⁵⁰ Connelley, 250.

¹⁵¹ Hughes, 160-165.

In a bold and risky move, Reid convinced Jackson to allow him to take thirty hand-picked men, guided by Sandoval, to parlay with them. Jackson allowed the expedition and after a week of rough travel Reid arrived and met with the Navajo.¹⁵² Along the march, Reid was approached by a large party of hundreds of armed Puebloans who desired to join him to attack the Navajo—a request which was quickly refused and further demonstrated the volatility of the conflict in the region.

Historians and anthropologists believe that only one primary source example of the Navajo *naach'id*, or large tribal council mentioned earlier, exists.¹⁵³ However, Doniphan's force in fact encountered two *naach'ids* in progress and documented them extensively in their diaries. The two large meetings that Reid attended fit the description of a *naach'id*: executed in winter, a majority of the tribe present, highly ceremonial with dancing and decision-making events. This is a perfect example of how military narratives can fill historical and anthropological gaps.

Initially the second meeting got off to a rocky start when Reid delivered Doniphan's invite to the Navajo chieftain Narbona. A brief crisis ensued when Narbona's wife attempted to spur the Navajo to action. She harangued the warriors and challenged them to kill Reid and his soldiers and run the Americans from their land. From the thousand or more present they could have easily overwhelmed the meager thirty-man party. From her speech, many warriors loudly voiced their consent and began to prepare for action. Luckily, Narbona, having heard of the might of the Americans at Santa Fe

¹⁵² Connelley, 294.

¹⁵³ Brugge, "Documentary Reference to a Navajo," 187.

through covert reconnaissance, calmed the warriors.¹⁵⁴ Later, US forces would grow to understand the effective intelligence gathering skills the Navajo possessed.¹⁵⁵

The Americans, unaware of the freedom women had in the Navajo culture, were shocked by the wife of Narbona and her outburst; they would never understand the voice females had within the bands. Private Jacob Robinson observed this firsthand and wrote in his diary, “The women are treated by the men as their equals; and they are undoubtedly the most enlightened tribe of wild Indians inhabiting this continent.”¹⁵⁶ For decades to come, senior US military leader and policy makers would struggle with this concept, though it was noted by several on the expedition.

After much discussion and several days of ceremonial dancing, the Navajo agreed to meet with Doniphan in Santa Fe if escorted by the Americans. They were to link up with Jackson’s reinforced command and march to the capital together. Reid, satisfied with this, headed back to *Cebolleta* early to inform his commander and Doniphan. The Navajo begun travelling to keep their planned rendezvous; however, for whatever reason—possibly Sandoval’s doing—they again grew suspicious of American intent and turned back. Reid, unaware of this reversal, arrived in *Cebolleta* after being gone for twenty days. Demonstrating the split nature and uncoordinated command structure of the Navajo, while Reid was confirming peace with one band, another had raided Jackson’s

¹⁵⁴ Connelley, 295.

¹⁵⁵ McNitt, 96.

¹⁵⁶ Robinson, 49.

camp, stealing most of his sheep, horses, and mules.¹⁵⁷ Captain Mosby Parsons with sixty men was sent to retrieve the stolen animals, but was only able to recover 27 horses and saw no Navajo (see map 5).¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ Hughes, 171-174.

¹⁵⁸ Robinson, 57.

Major Gilpin's Northern Route

About fifty Ute Indians came in and held a council with Colonel Doniphan. They were brought by Major Gilpin, who has been in their country with his command . . . They entered into a treaty and peace now exists between them and New Mexico.¹⁵⁹

Gilpin, still staged north of Santa Fe in *Abiquiu*, had already enjoyed self-perceived success with the Southern Ute. He was now tasked by Doniphan to try his luck with the Navajo. Receiving the same orders as Jackson, he attempted to locate native leaders to invite them to parlay with Doniphan at Santa Fe. His force included 65 Mexicans and Pueblo Indians who acted as guides into the country and the Mexican Santiago Conklin who translated. Facing the same severe terrain and weather as the rest of Doniphan's units, Gilpin attempted to make contact. Unlike Jackson and Reid's instant interactions, after marching for over a week he was only able to visually observe various native groups from afar, who fled each time the Americans came close. Finally, Gilpin enticed one group to speak with him, whereupon they explained that peace with the US had already been made.¹⁶⁰

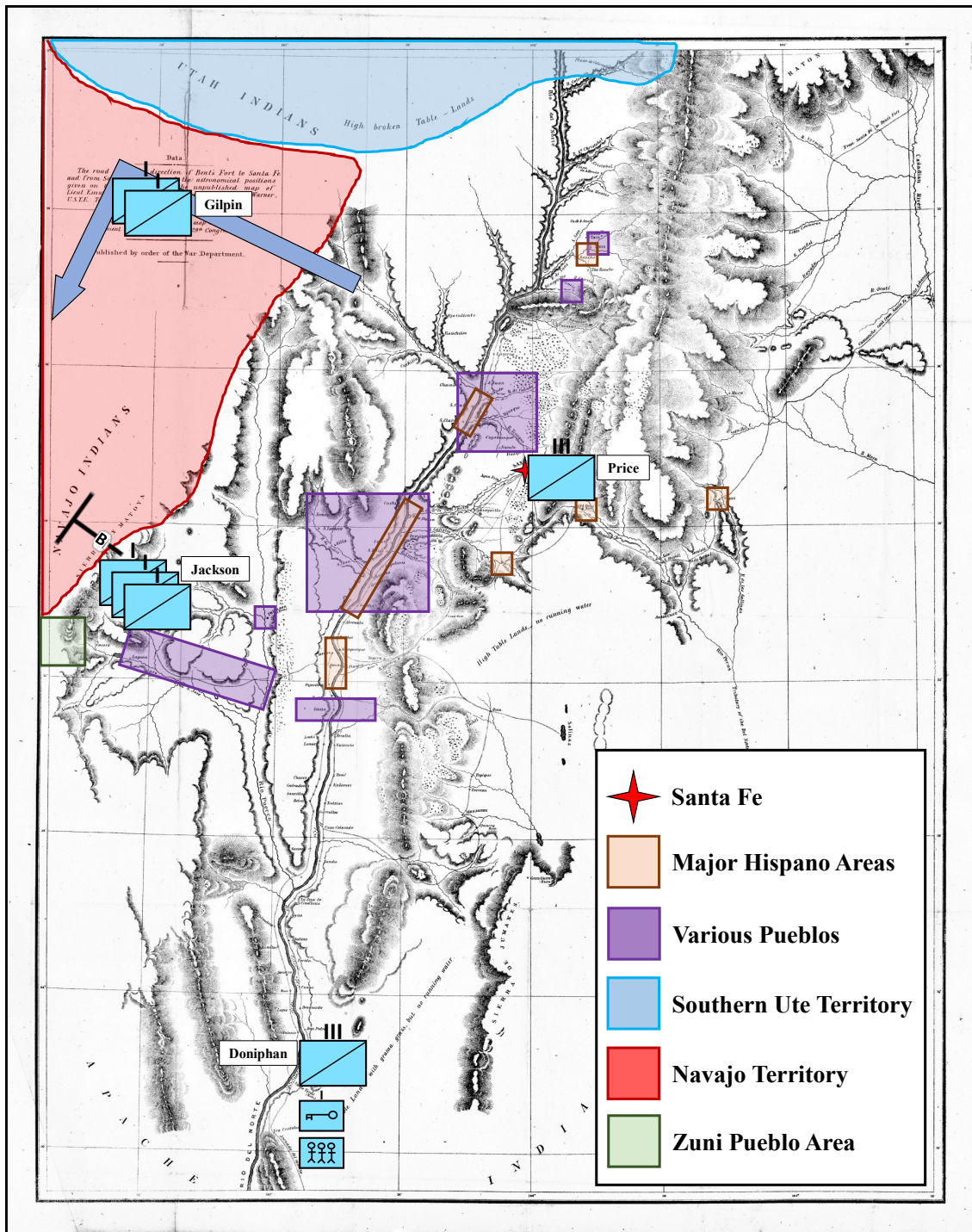
Confused by this statement, Gilpin sent a runner to Doniphan to learn the truth. After bivouacking for a period in hostile territory, Gilpin received a reply, which stated there was no treaty and to ask them to meet him at a place called *Ojo del Oso* or Bear Springs. Gilpin relayed Doniphan's message to every native group he encountered. The first natives Gilpin met had to have been present or been aware of Reid's meeting with Narbona, where the Navajo originally had agreed to meet with Doniphan at Santa Fe and

¹⁵⁹ Gibson, 252-253.

¹⁶⁰ Hughes, 176-178.

later turned back. Either they purposely set out to deceive Gilpin, or erroneously believed that peace had indeed been struck at the earlier assembly. Gilpin's anticlimactic campaign ended with the delivery of the message and he decided to head for Bear Springs to meet with Doniphan; he arrived first at the location on 20th of November (see map 6).¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ Hughes, 179, 181.



Map 6 Major Gilpin's Northern Route

Source: J. W. Abert, *Report of Lieut. J. W. Abert of his Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847* (Washington, DC: 1848).

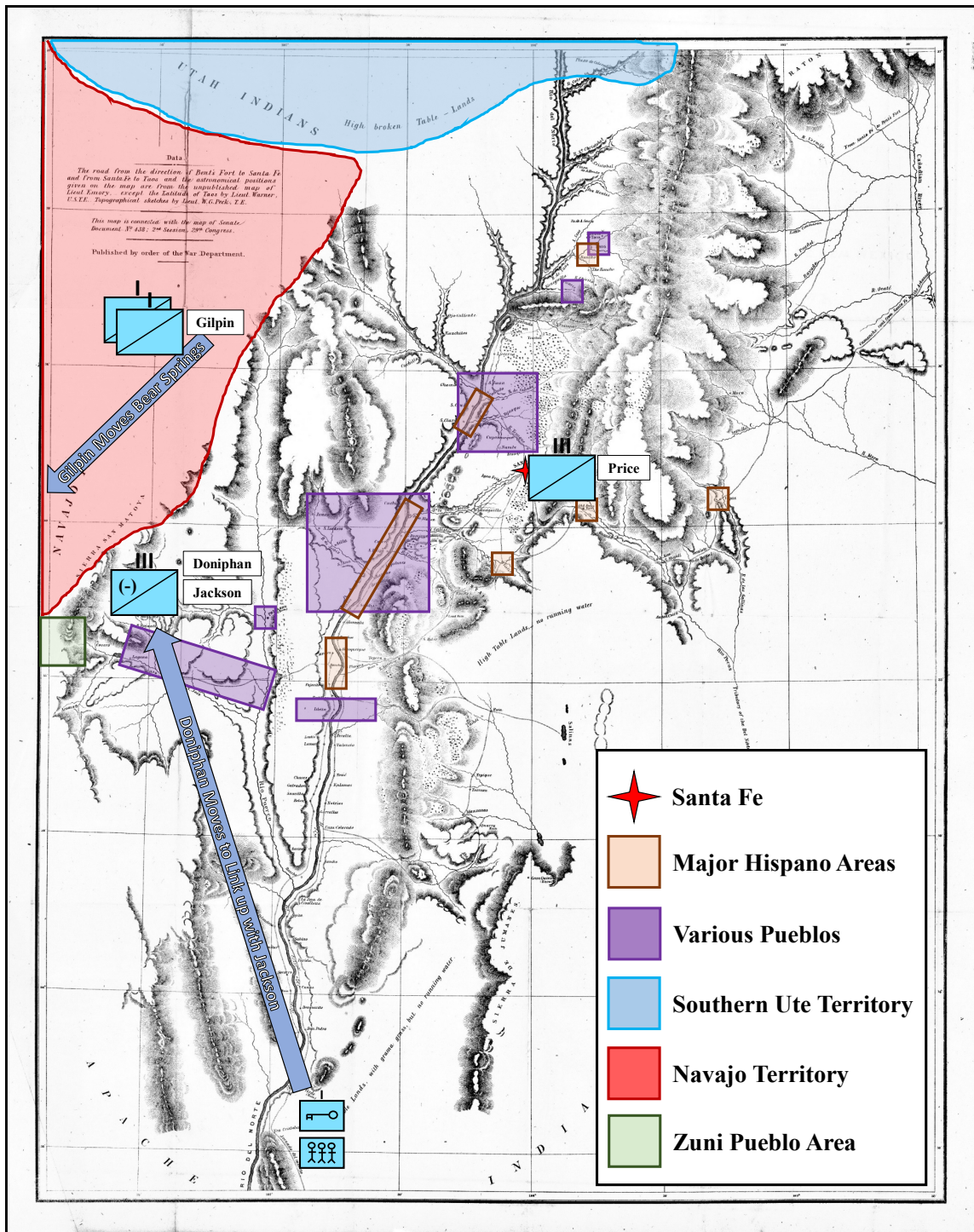
Rendezvous at Bear Springs

Ojo del Oso, (Spanish, “spring of the bear”), a translation of its Navajo name. Navajos tell that a bear once frequented the spring, and a warrior on a war party, hoping to gain success, cast offerings into the spring for the bear. The raid was successful, and in gratitude the warrior names the spring.¹⁶²

Doniphan left Valverde on the 5th of November with a small detachment to link up with Jackson at *Cebolleta*. Arriving just as Reid returned from his effective foray with the Navajo, he was greeted with good news: the Navajo were coming to him. However, he soon realized that the Navajo would not appear in *Cebolleta* to be escorted into Santa Fe as promised. While he waited, he received the dispatch from Gilpin that described his encounter with the natives. Realizing he would be unable to entice the Navajo anywhere near the settled Hispano communities, he chose a new meeting location in hostile territory, one that was significant and spoke to the Navajo—Bear Springs. It is unknown how he came to this valid conclusion and whether it was due to his own assessment of the situation or to the advice of a local expert. With the new rendezvous point determined, natives and Americans alike quickly coalesced at the springs (see map 7). On the 22nd of November, over 300 Americans and roughly 500 Navajo conducted the first peace treaty between the US and the natives of New Mexico.¹⁶³

¹⁶² Robert Julyan, *The Place Names of New Mexico* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 137.

¹⁶³ Hughes, 181-186.



Map 7 Rendezvous at Bear Springs

Source: J. W. Abert, *Report of Lieut. J. W. Abert of his Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847* (Washington, DC: 1848).

The dialogue of the first encounter between the Navajo Nation and the Americans is remarkable; it was recorded in several diaries by soldier's present. It is reprinted here in full and speaks to a missed opportunity between the two powers. At the commencement of the meeting at Bear Springs on 22 November 1846, Doniphan declared:

That the United States had taken military possession of New Mexico; that her laws were now extended over that territory, that the New Mexicans would be protected against violence and invasion; and that their rights would be amply preserved to them; that the United States was also anxious to enter into a treaty of peace and lasting friendship with her red children, the Navajos; that the same protection would be given them against encroachments, and usurpation of their rights, as had been guaranteed the New Mexicans; that the United States claimed all the country by the right of conquest, and both they and the New Mexicans were now become equally her children; that he had come with ample powers to negotiate a permanent peace between the Navajos, the Americans, and New Mexicans; and that if they refused to treat on terms honorable to both parties, he was instructed to prosecute a war against them.¹⁶⁴

Doniphan ends his statement with the assertion that America “first offered the olive branch, and, if that were rejected, then powder, bullet, and the steel.”¹⁶⁵

The Navajo were confused by the contradictory message coming from the Americans. They too viewed the Mexicans as an enemy and could not understand what quarrel the US had with them. A leading Chieftain, Zarcillos Largos took center stage and loudly answered:

Americans! you have a strange cause of war against the Navajos. We have waged war against the New Mexicans for several years. We have plundered their villages and killed many of their people, and made many prisoners. We had just cause for all this. You have lately commenced a war against the same people. You are powerful. You have great guns and many brave soldiers. You have therefore conquered them, the very thing we have been attempting to do for so many years.

¹⁶⁴ Hughes, 71.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

You now turn upon us for attempting to do what you have done yourselves. We cannot see why you have cause of quarrel with us for fighting the New Mexicans on the west, while you do the same thing on the east. Look how matters stand. This is our war. We have more right to complain of you for interfering in our war, than you have to quarrel with us for continuing a war we had begun long before you got here. If you will act justly, you will allow us to settle our own differences.¹⁶⁶

Doniphan, being a man of intelligence, an experienced politician and an educated lawyer, had to have seen the logic and understand the confusion felt by the Navajo.

However, he had orders and desired to meet them. He responded and explained to

Largos:

That the New Mexicans had surrendered; that they desired no more fighting; that it was

a custom with the Americans when a people gave up, to treat them as friends thence forward; that we now had full possession of New Mexico, and had attached it to our government; that the whole country and everything in it had become ours by conquest; and that when they now stole property from the New Mexicans, they were stealing from us; and when they killed them, they were killing our people, for they had now become ours; that this could not be suffered any longer; that it would be greatly to their advantage for the Americans to settle in New Mexico, and that they then could open a valuable trade with us, by which means they could obtain everything they needed to eat and wear in exchange for their furs and peltries.¹⁶⁷

The Navajo, seemingly content with this response, conceded: "If New Mexico be really in your possession, and it be the intention of your government to hold it, we will cease our depredations, and refrain from future wars upon that people; for we have no cause of quarrel with you, and do not desire to have any war with so powerful a nation. Let there

¹⁶⁶ Hughes, 71.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

be peace between us.”¹⁶⁸ Thus ended the first US-Navajo peace attempt and what would become known as the Treaty of Bear Springs.

The expedition into the hostile countryside was concluded. Doniphan, accepting short term compliance for permanent stability felt his mission was accomplished. This mis-assessment was due partially to his misunderstanding of the complex OE and his desire to push south to engage with conventional Mexican forces. The results of this treaty and the subsequent foray into the Zuni Pueblo will be discussed in detail in chapter 5. Doniphan declared to Kearny: “Every portion of their country [hostile natives] was thus visited, and large numbers of them, perhaps three-fourths of their tribe, collected at the *Ojo Oso*, where we made a permanent treaty with them.”¹⁶⁹ Doniphan, promising the Secretary of War Marcy at the beginning of the campaign to “bring the war to a close in 30 days,” declared mission success and regrouped his units with the quartermaster at Valverde.¹⁷⁰ Not everyone in Doniphan’s command was as convinced that peace had been obtained. In his diary, soldier Marcelles Edwards opined that a meager and ill-supplied volunteer force who briefly met with the natives was not enough to forge peace. He believed, “If the government has to bring them [Native Americans] to terms of peace

¹⁶⁸ Hughes, 71.

¹⁶⁹ US Congress, President James K. Polk’s Message.

¹⁷⁰ Alexander Doniphan to William Marcy, 20 October 1846, Records of the Army Commands, Office of the Adjutant General, Letters Received, RG 94, National Archives.

by force, she must employ men for that purpose who must come prepared to undergo the greatest hardships before they can dislodge them from their mountain retreats.”¹⁷¹

Doniphan, who believed he had brought peace to the region in a timely manner, decided to leave the supervision of it to Price who was now the senior commander in Santa Fe. Doniphan and his men grew restless the longer they stayed in New Mexico, “All of the volunteers have expressed the greatest anxiety to get out of the country, and each one is trying to devise some plan to be ordered south, which is regarded as tantamount to it. Without any warfare except Indian . . . they naturally begin to be very anxious to change their condition.”¹⁷² Through these tactical maneuvers that were treated as a distraction, Doniphan made the erroneous assumption that peace was secured. He also believed that he connected his efforts to the operational and strategic levels of war by escorting and protecting the wagon trains on the Santa Fe Trail as directed by Senator Benton, thereby achieving success at all levels. Doniphan, whose men still had adequate time left on their enlistments; following Kearny’s orders, marched his force south to link up with General Wool and hopefully battle to erase the ghost of Okeechobee.

¹⁷¹ Abraham Robinson Johnston, Marcellus Ball Edwards, and Philip Gooch Ferguson, *Marching with the Army of the West: Journal of A. R. Johnson, 1846, Journal of M. B. Edwards, 1846-47, Diary of P. G. Ferguson, 1847-48*, ed. Ralph P. Bieber, Southwest Historical Series, vol. 4 (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), 186-188.

¹⁷² Gibson, 263.

CHAPTER 5

TREATIES WITH NATIVE AMERICAN NATIONS

Doniphan claimed to have entered into treaties with three native groups in the region: the Zuni, Southern Ute, and the Navajo. These accords are mentioned by Doniphan in official dispatches to his superiors, the War Department, and are also mentioned in various diaries from soldiers on the expedition; lending credence to the fact that these parleys occurred. However, even with these chronicles, no original copies of the treaties survive. The only written record of the Navajo agreement is contained in the diary of a soldier on the expedition, John Hughes. Despite these missing records, much can be gleaned from primary sources on what occurred and the precedence it set for all future American dealings with the various native groups in the region.

At the conclusion of Doniphan's foray into hostile native territory, he believed that they had pacified the region and left it with a set of binding treaties that solved centuries of hostilities. Their misunderstanding of the OE and the history of the conflict effected the way they initially approached the Zuni, Southern Ute, and the Navajo. Provided no guidance from political US leaders as to what the desired end state was for the hostile natives in the region, Doniphan entered the talks with the belief that any item agreed to would be wholeheartedly supported and enforced by his government. His idealized treaty making efforts set the original context in which the native groups viewed the new American government and defined the way in which each group was treated from that point on.

Zuni Pueblo

Some of Colonel Doniphan's command visited the people of Zuni, and succeeded in establishing peace between them and the Navajoes [Navajo].¹⁷³

The Zuni people were an anomaly amongst the Pueblo communities. Since the Pueblo Revolt in 1680, they alone managed to avoid serious assimilation or intrusion into their culture from the Spanish or Mexicans. This fact was remarked upon by soldiers on the expedition "the Zunians have, since the Spaniards left the country, refused to have any intercourse with the modern Mexicans, looking upon them as an inferior people."¹⁷⁴ Due to their location and distance from major population centers, they remained aloof, though friendly, toward most of the Hispano communities. They were, however, engaged in constant warfare with the Navajo over territory and slaves. Both their standing in the region and relationships were confusing to the Americans; one man on the expedition commented in his diary that the "Zunians and Nebajos [Navajo] claim to be brothers, although their methods of living are so very different."¹⁷⁵ Other Americans, including Doniphan, understood the relationship between the two native groups to be a violent one.

Interestingly, during negotiations with the Navajo at Bear Springs, the natives raised concerns over the nearby Zuni people and the decades old war that raged between them. The Navajo, in declaring their aim to be peaceful, declared that they could not do so if other groups attacked and raided them. As a show of good faith, Doniphan decided

¹⁷³ J. W. Abert, *Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-1847*, 30th Cong., 1st sess., Executive No. 23, 1848, 95.

¹⁷⁴ Hughes, 196.

¹⁷⁵ Robinson, 54.

to send a detachment of men to negotiate peace between the Zuni and the Navajo. Upon conclusion of his dealings with the Navajo at Bear Springs, Doniphan, Jackson, and a small company of men under the command of Gilpin, accompanied by three Navajo leaders, set out for the Pueblo of Zuni, while the rest of his command returned to Valverde (see map 8). After arriving and camping near the Pueblo, a large hostile group of Zuni warriors surrounded the Americans and demanded to kill the Navajo present. Doniphan, protecting the men, declared “that is was his intention . . . to endeavor to bring them to a friendly understanding with the Navajos, their implacable enemies.”¹⁷⁶

As cooler heads prevailed, the native groups began a dialogue. Hughes diary again recorded the discussion between the two in great detail. The debate that ensued cut to the heart of the nature of the conflict in the region. The Navajo opened the interchange with:

The cause of your present dissatisfaction is just this. The war between us has been waged for plunder. You kill and drive off our flocks and herds, and subsist your people upon them, and use them for your own advantage. To resent this, we have plundered your villages—taken your women and children captives, and made slaves of them. Lately you have been unsuccessful. We have out stolen you, and therefore you are mad and dissatisfied about it. But there is one thing you can not accuse the Navajos of doing, and that is killing women and children. You know, not many years past, when our women and children went into the mountains to gather pinons, your warriors fell upon, and killed about forty of them This cowardly act was perpetrated when there were no Navajo warriors to afford them succor.¹⁷⁷

The Zuni denied all charges and threatened to secure the Navajo chiefs as bargaining chips to trade for Zuni captives held by the Navajo. The Navajo reply is interesting, as it

¹⁷⁶ Hughes, 192-193.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 193-194.

was either invented by the American recorder or demonstrated the uncanny ability of the Navajo to play multiple sides off each other:

The Zunians may rest assured that we did not come over here relying on their generosity, magnanimity, or good faith: but being invited by Col. Doniphan, we have come to see if we can make a peace with you, Zunians, which will be both honorable and advantageous to us. We rely alone on the integrity of the Americans, and their ability to protect us. We have not the slightest fear of any injury you may attempt to offer us, for we trust ourselves with a more honorable people.¹⁷⁸

This ended the first brief encounter between the Zuni people and the US. As Doniphan later stated in an interview: “While a portion of the force returned direct to Valverde . . . with a portion of the command, [Doniphan] took in the Zuni pueblo . . . here effecting a treaty between the latter and the Navajos . . . the good effect of which is apparent among the Zuni Indians to this day. The latter have ever remained friendly.”¹⁷⁹

Though no record exists of the actual articles decided, it appears that the initial negotiations may have only been verbally agreed to. Regardless of the terms, this initial contact is still valuable as it described the constant warfare and raiding that occurred between all parties and the effect it had on those in the region. More importantly, as demonstrated in the next chapter, this opening contact between the Zuni and the Americans set the foundation for all future dealings between the two groups.

¹⁷⁸ Hughes, 194.

¹⁷⁹ Connelley, 588.

Southern Ute

I am pleased to inform the department that, on the 15th Inst. We closed the war with the Eutaws [Ute] by a treaty which I doubt not will be lasting.¹⁸⁰

Spearheaded by Gilpin, Doniphan informed the Secretary of War that a treaty had been concluded with the Southern Ute in an official dispatch; however, what became known as the unratified Treaty of Santa Fe no longer exists.¹⁸¹ Like the Zuni, the initial contact between the Southern Ute and the Americans can only be gleaned from the words of the men present. Prior to actively campaigning against the Navajo, the Americans believed that the Ute had pledged peace and were no longer a threat.

The Ute appeared to understand that remaining neutral ensured their continued autonomy, which furthered their economy of trade, slave raids, and their taxing of merchants travelling via the Santa Fe Trail.¹⁸² Indeed, this ability to maintain their independence was a staple of the Southern Ute way of life. Englishman George Ruxton observed why the Ute allowed Hispano settlements in their territory, claiming that the Ute:

tolerate their presence in their country for the sole purpose of having at their command a stock of grain and a herd of mules and horses, which they make no scruple of helping themselves to, whenever they require a remount or a supply of farinaceous food. Moreover, when a war expedition against a hostile tribe has failed, and no scalps have been secured to ensure the returning warriors a welcome to their village, the Rio Colorado is a kind of game-preserve, where the Yutas have a certainty of filling their bag if their other covers draw blank. Here they can always depend upon procuring a few brace of Mexican scalps, when

¹⁸⁰ Gibson, 253.

¹⁸¹ Richard O. Clemmer and Omer C. Stewart, "Treaties, Reservations, and Claims," in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 11, Great Basin*, ed. Warren L. D'Azevedo (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 526.

¹⁸² Blackhawk, 192.

such trophies are required for a war-dance or other festivity, without danger to themselves, and merely for the trouble of fetching them.¹⁸³

It appeared to the US that the Ute were a peaceful band of natives who desired no conflict, though they in fact had an extremely violent past with the local Hispano communities that had reached a crescendo just prior to the arrival of American forces. In September of 1844, motivated by anger over a recent strike by the Mexican army against a Ute community where several men were killed and children taken captive, 100 warriors descended on the Governor's palace in Santa Fe and demanded redress. Accounts of what transpired vary; however, what eventually ensued was a brawl in the Governor's office followed by a running gunfight in the streets. Following this event, Ute raids against Hispano settlements along the Rio Grande increased.¹⁸⁴ Doniphan of course had no knowledge of the history between the Ute and the Hispano populace.

Due to the peace treaty between the Southern Ute and Doniphan's forces, they were not included in the campaign to subdue hostile native forces as ordered by Kearny. The Americans believed that they had achieved a long-lasting peace with the Southern Ute. Though the actual articles of the treaty do not survive, Hughes recorded in his diary that "On their part they [the Ute] promised to be peaceable, orderly, to respect the lives and property of the Mexicans, and to be obedient to the laws of the United States which were now extended to the territory of New Mexico."¹⁸⁵ Gilpin himself declared in 1847, "With them [Ute] was formed a treaty of peace, since faithfully observed by those

¹⁸³ Ruxton, 209.

¹⁸⁴ Blackhawk, 131.

¹⁸⁵ Hughes, 50.

Indians. This restored many thousand families of Mexicans to their farms and firesides, and gave quiet to the northern frontier.”¹⁸⁶ The US did not understand the desire of the Ute to remain neutral due to self-interests and misunderstood their pledge for peace to be binding; this belief would define the narrative between the two peoples for the foreseeable future.

Navajo Nation

It suffices, that the Colonel succeeded in collecting the whole Navajo nation into a Grand Council, & formed a Treaty with Narbona, the Grand Sachem which he believes will be observed faithfully by that powerful Tribe, numbering not less than 2000 warriors.¹⁸⁷

Unlike the Zuni and the Southern Ute, numerous treaties were attempted with the Navajo by both the Spanish and Mexicans. Many of these accords still exist as primary sources and are helpful for understanding the mindset of the Navajo as they entered negotiations with the newly arrived Americans. The first recorded treaty with the Navajo Nation dates to 1805 under the Spanish. Between Spanish and Mexican rule, ten separate treaty attempts were conducted with the Navajo.¹⁸⁸ Examining the two treaties just before the arrival of the Americans illuminates the frustrated efforts of the government of Mexico to live peacefully side by side with the Navajo.

¹⁸⁶ Connelley, 593.

¹⁸⁷ Hughes to Miller, 4 January 1847, Robert H. Miller Papers, Missouri History Museum Archives, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁸⁸ David M. Brugge and Lee J. Correll, *The Story of The Navajo Treaties* (Window Rock, AZ: Navajo Historical Publications, 1971), 43-44.

In 1841, an attempt to reach another agreement was made, declaring, “the principle basis of the treaty is to end the horrors of the war and return to a stable and durable peace.” Its tone was consolatory and contains several items of note. Firstly, “the Navajo Chieftains will try by all means within their power to prevent Indians of their Nation from committing murders among our citizens, remaining obligated, when it is proven, to hand over the killer or killers so that they may be punished in conformance with our laws.” Secondly, “the Navajos have been obligated to hand over all of our captives that might be among them without demanding equal recompense”; however, the Mexican government would not return any Navajo slaves taken in raids. However, they concede: “If some captives of the Navajos that might be among us succeed in escaping, fleeing from the houses of their masters . . . the government will not take action to reclaim them.”¹⁸⁹ Finally, the treaty promises gratification and gifts from the government to any leaders who sign. Much to the surprise of the Mexicans, this treaty was hotly rejected by the Navajo. In a letter to the Mexican governor, the main disagreement with the accord is explained: “that your Excellency does not wish to hand over to them any of their captives . . . for they say that some ten times they have handed over our captives and none have been handed over to them.”¹⁹⁰

Three years later in 1844, the Mexican government attempted another treaty with the Navajo. This time, the tone is much less amicable. It declares definitively that the

¹⁸⁹ Governor of Mexico Manuel Armijo, Treaty Between Navajo 6 April and 8 May 1841, Navajo Nation Library System, Correll Collection, Land Claims Collection.

¹⁹⁰ Letter from Francisco Sandoval to Governor of Mexico Manuel Armijo, 14 March 1841, Navajo Nation Library System, Correll Collection, Land Claims Collection.

Navajo: “will hand over all of the captives found within it.” Mexico would still not voluntarily hand over any slaves possessed, unless they succeeded in escaping on their own. Furthermore, all present: were “obligated to hand over any of their tribe that might perpetrate some robbery or murder.” The demands went from “try by all means” to turning over anyone who just “might” perpetrate attacks. The treaty’s overall tenor cannot be mistaken, as it concludes with: “The Navajo Chieftains understand that if they again raid the Department . . . even when they afterwards request peace, it will not be accorded to them and war will be made continually upon them.”¹⁹¹

The Americans, with no knowledge of previous treaties by the Mexicans and little understanding of the contested relationship, attempted the first US effort to coexist with the Navajo Nation at Bear Springs in 1846. The resulting treaty is as short as it is idealistic. It is reprinted here in full:

ART. 1. A firm and lasting peace and amity shall henceforth exist between the American people and the Navajo tribe of Indians.

ART. 2. The people of New Mexico and the Pueblo tribe of Indians are included in the term American people.

ART. 3. A mutual trade, as between people of the same nation, shall be carried on between these several parties; the Americans, Mexicans and Pueblos being free to visit all portions of the Navajo country, and the Navajos all portions of the American country without molestation, and full protection shall be mutually given.

ART. 4. There shall be a mutual restoration of all prisoners, the several parties being pledged to redeem by purchase such as may not be exchanged each for each.

¹⁹¹ Brugge and Correll, 65-66.

ART. 5. All property taken by either party from the other, since the 18th day of August last, shall be restored.¹⁹²

This accord, which became known as the Treaty of Bear Springs, was met with surprise by the Navajo delegation. It conceded several long-standing points of contention on behalf of the Navajo: the free travel between all in the region, the mutual return of all prisoners, and property returned from both sides based on a set date. What the above dialogue and treaty demonstrated was the Americans' complete lack of understanding of the OE and historical relationships between the New Mexicans, Puebloans, and nomadic Native American groups. The Navajo, after having survived the societal upheavals of the Spanish and Mexican governments, now struggled to understand the intent of the Americans. They conceded and signed just to appease them. Doniphan, in an attempt to meet his commander's intent of securing peace, produced an idealized treaty that could not be realistically executed, enforced, or implemented. However, it would allow him to declare mission success and move on to what he and the men of his regiment had signed up for—to encounter and defeat the Mexican army. With a more thorough understanding of the OE, greater patience, and continued communication, the initial meeting between these two nations could have begun on a more realistic foundation.

Hughes in his diary declared that “the success of the celebrated Navajo Treaty” was partly due “to the skill and diplomacy of Col. Doniphan, who brought the negotiations to so happy an issue.”¹⁹³ Isaac George called it a “unparalleled exertion” and claimed that the Americans “stepped in and accommodated their differences by a triple

¹⁹² Brugge and Correll, 66-67.

¹⁹³ Hughes, 201.

league, which secured peace.”¹⁹⁴ The self-congratulatory euphoria was not limited to the tactical level, Senator Benton lauding it “A novel treaty, that!”¹⁹⁵ President Polk, in his opening speech to Congress in 1847, continues this misunderstanding where he exclaimed, “Pacific relations continue to exist with the various Indian tribes, and most of them manifest a strong friendship for the United States.”¹⁹⁶

The Americans believed that they had solved centuries of hostilities in a matter of weeks. Their misunderstanding of the OE and the conflict skewed their view as to how they entered peace talks with each belligerent and what they defined as success. This initial contact between the US and each native group defined how the latter would be treated by America in the years to come.

¹⁹⁴ George, 61.

¹⁹⁵ Benton.

¹⁹⁶ US Congress, President James K. Polk’s Message.

CHAPTER 6

THE FUTURE OF NEW MEXICO

Doniphan and his force pushed south in December of 1846, believing that they had complied with Kearny's orders, solved all Native American issues, and brought peace to the region. Left behind was Colonel Sterling Price, Commander of the 2nd Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers and military governor of New Mexico. Price would be left to deal with the repercussions of Doniphan's military efforts and the effects they had on the various cultures and the region's stability. More importantly, Price's actions, following many of the precedents set by Doniphan, would have an impact on future policy making in New Mexico for decades to come.

New Mexico's vast array of resources was waiting to be reaped; however, before this could happen the region had to be pacified. Price, with his military force, was to partner with the recently appointed civilian government apparatus to achieve this end state. As previously mentioned, in September of 1846, General Kearny issued to the newly acquired region the Organic Law for the Territory of New Mexico, later dubbed the Kearny Code. Since this extremely detailed set of civilian laws was issued by a military general at the head of an occupying force, it initiated a rift between civilian and military leaders that continued to persist in the region until the turn of the century. With the publication of the Code, Kearny appointed men into several key civilian positions, including governor, secretary of the territory, marshal, district attorney, treasurer, and superior court judges.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ US Congress, *Messages of the President*, 176.

Aftermath of Col Doniphan's Efforts

It appeared to be the object of the insurrectionists to put to death every American and Mexican who had accepted office under the American government.¹⁹⁸

The rich landowners and those who held the most wealth in the region were the ones who would benefit the most from American rule in the region. Consequently, since Kearny's arrival as the senior military commander, this group had willingly offered their support and guidance. It was from amongst these men that he chose to fill key positions in the newly formed civilian government.

Kearny's choice of men to fill these positions was criticized by several contemporaries present in the region. Commenting on the local feelings toward the new Governor Charles Bent, one wrote: "The appointment of Governor, so far as I can judge, seems to have produced a great deal of dissatisfaction. I have heard many of them say (and some of them intelligent men) that he has been the instigator of those rebellions among the Indians . . . This seems to be a very common impression among them."¹⁹⁹ The idea that Bent, a wealthy Anglo merchant, conspired to ferment native uprisings to depose Mexican rule for what he viewed as a more favorable government is not farfetched. Bent himself displayed a contemptuous view toward the populace he had lived amongst and was now tasked to lead. As he wrote to friends in the US, "they [Mexicans] have no opinion of their own, they are entirely governed by the powers that

¹⁹⁸ James K. Polk, United States War Department, Department of State, Navy Department, Post Office Department, US Congress, Senate, *Message from the President of the United States, to the Two Houses of Congress: At the Commencement of the First Session of the Thirtieth Congress* (Washington, DC: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, 1847), 13.

¹⁹⁹ Gibson, 242.

be, they are without exception the most servile people that can be imagined . . . The Mexican character is made up of stupidity, obstinacy, ignorance, duplicity and vanity.”²⁰⁰

Criticism was not limited to Bent. In discussing the new state of legal affairs in the territory, a Lieutenant on the expedition wrote “I need only mention that all the judges of the Superior Court together do not possess the legal knowledge of a justice of the peace in St. Louis.” He continued mockingly, “However, the matter has its good side. The laws we have here are in English; and since the President of the court . . . knows no English, and the Solicitor General . . . no Spanish, the arguments and ‘opinions of the court,’ if ever published will never give rise to complications.”²⁰¹ As Doniphan had relied on men with questionable motives to guide his force in the field, so Kearny had also when choosing his civilian government. Both men mistakenly believed that self-interested men of wealth and influence had the overall wellbeing of the community as the driving factor behind their willingness to serve.

Per the Kearny Code, Bent, tasked as both the Governor and “*ex officio* superintendent of Indian affairs,” now had to contend with the hostile native groups.²⁰² In this role, the disconnect between civil and military efforts manifested itself again. Doniphan, following Kearny’s orders, embarked on his expedition to forge peace with the hostile natives in the area; however, he did this without consulting Bent, the local civilian Governor. Bent later learned about the Treaty of Bear Springs not from Doniphan, but

²⁰⁰ Frank D. Reeve, ed., “The Charles Bent Papers,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 29, no. 2 (April 1954): 109.

²⁰¹ Gibson, 242.

²⁰² US Congress, *Messages of the President*, 177.

from an outside source. In a letter to then Secretary of State James Buchanan, Bent declared, “I have been informed indirectly that Col. A. W. Doniphan . . . has made a treaty of peace with them [Navajo]. Not having been officially notified of this treaty, I am not able to state the terms, upon which it has been concluded, but so far as I have been able to learn, I have but little ground to hope that it will be permanent.”²⁰³

Doniphan, assured in his success of a secured peace, rode further south into Mexico—left behind to govern the territory, Bent was not as confident. He wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs: “I deem it highly necessary to establish stockade Forts in Yuta [Ute] and Nabajo [Navajo] countries with sufficient troops to keep these in check, and . . . for the purpose of protecting travelers, between this Territory and Missouri.”²⁰⁴ In a blunt letter to Senator Benton, Bent insisted that a large military force was needed “to bring into subjection” the hostile natives who had destroyed New Mexico’s economy.²⁰⁵

Governor Bent’s assessment of a hostile region proved accurate, though the hostilities came from an unlikely source. The Puebloans, once considered by US forces as “our fast friends now and forever,” in partnership with various Hispano communities, mounted a revolution against American governance.²⁰⁶ A witness later commented, “It

²⁰³ McNitt, 123.

²⁰⁴ Annie Heloise Abel, *The Official Correspondence of James S Calhoun While Indian Agent at Santa Fe and Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1915), 8.

²⁰⁵ McNitt, 278.

²⁰⁶ Emory, 33.

was afterward seen that designing men—artful and learned natives—were busily, insidiously sowing the seeds of discontent among the more ignorant class of the community, more especially the Pueblo Indians.”²⁰⁷ In mid-December of 1846, the commander of the army in New Mexico, Colonel Price, received intelligence that a coup was brewing—led by a Puebloan called Thomas (or *Tomasito*) Ortiz and a Mexican named Diego Archaea. Upon assuming command in Santa Fe, Price’s forces had garrisoned the blocking positions against the hostile Navajo and Ute that Doniphan once manned, consequently he was unable to mount an effective offense to counter this upheaval. In response to his troop shortage, Price ordered that Santa Fe be fortified and all key government officials remain within the city. As one officer commented: “Sentinels had been placed in every direction . . . everything was in a state of preparation and everybody in a state of vigilance.”²⁰⁸

Governor Bent, snubbing Price’s guidance, left on the 14th of January 1847 to spend time with his family at one of his homes in the Pueblo of Taos. The exact progress and details of the uprising are contested; however, what transpired on the 19th of January is not in doubt. Fifteen men in positions of influence or holding US public offices were brutally murdered in three different Pueblo and Hispano communities. The victims included Governor Bent, one sheriff, a circuit attorney, and a prefect. Stories circulated

²⁰⁷ Lewis H. Garrard, *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail* (Cincinnati, OH: H. W. Derby and Co., 1850), 212.

²⁰⁸ Abert, 95.

amongst the Americans as to the torturous and brutal ways in which Bent and the others were dispatched.²⁰⁹

News quickly spread of a growing army of Indians and Hispanos who were marching south toward Santa Fe, determined to overthrow the Americans. Price recalled his force and was eventually able to muster a total of 479 men, which consisted of his 2nd Missouri Volunteers, one company of regular army Dragoons, and 65 Santa Fe militia volunteers who later claimed “we were tiger-like in our craving for revenge.”²¹⁰ Facing an enemy of 1,500 to 2,000, US forces fought five pitched battles at *Santa Cruz de la Cañada*, *Embudo* Pass, the First and Second Battles of *Mora*, and then at the final siege and assault of Taos itself, where: “The mingled noise of bursting shells, firearms, the yells of the Americans, and the shrieks of the wounded was most appalling.”²¹¹ At the end of these engagements, a total of ten Americans lay dead, with 52 wounded. From the Puebloans and Hispanos, it is unknown how many died, though estimates are in the hundreds.²¹²

With the death of Bent, Price took military and civilian control of the region and proceeded with a campaign which many viewed as akin to revenge rather than justice. From the prisoners taken at Taos, one ringleader was immediately hanged the next day without a trial and another was soon summarily executed by a guard. Pueblo Indians and

²⁰⁹ Abel, 520.

²¹⁰ Michael McNierney, ed., *Taos 1847: The Revolt in Contemporary Accounts* (Boulder, CO: Johnson Publishing, 1990), 58.

²¹¹ Garrard, 214.

²¹² Abel, 521-526.

Mexicans were later tried in a mock civilian court that was controlled by the military through volunteer privates acting as defense lawyers who were “on furlough for the occasion.”²¹³ All defendants were sentenced to be hanged for murder and high treason, even though many of the perpetrators had little understanding of the political situation going on around them. The court itself was presided over by the friends and relatives of Bent and the other Americans murdered—by the end of the trials, 28 men were hanged. One who witnessed the proceedings exclaimed, “Treason, indeed! What did the poor devil know about his new allegiance?” He continued, “When the concluding words ‘*muerto, muerto, muerto*’ . . . were pronounced . . . I left the room sick at heart. Justice! Out upon the word, when its distorted meaning is the warrant for murdering those who defend to the last their country and their homes.”²¹⁴ Another remarked, “there are black spots on the beautiful and bright form” of America due to its kangaroo courts after the uprising.²¹⁵

Though major combat operations involving the insurrection ended in New Mexico with the taking of the Pueblo of Taos, the insurgency briefly continued in various parts of the region until it was fully stamped out. Due to the military wrath of Price and his subsequent court mockery, the Puebloan and Hispano communities, “their grain and cattle gone, their church in ruins, the flower of the nation slain, or under sentence of death, and the rest—with the exception of those in prison—refugees, starving in the

²¹³ Garrard, 197.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 198.

²¹⁵ William B. Drescher, *Reminiscences* (Saint Louis, MO: Missouri Historical Society, 1847), 57.

mountains” settled back into a peaceful coexistence in the region.²¹⁶ The relationship between the Pueblo People and the US changed so quickly that by July 1849 the new Indian Agent James Calhoun wrote to Washington, “The Pueblo Indians, it [is] believed are entitled to the early, and especial consideration of the government of the United States. They are the only tribe in perfect amity with the government, and are an industrious, agricultural, and pastoral people.”²¹⁷ Calhoun concluded: “Indeed, the citizens of this Pueblo, it is believed, are, in every sense of the word, excellent people, and ought to be immediately protected.”²¹⁸

Soon the Puebloans and Hispano communities again beseeched US forces for protection from their old nemesis—the nomadic native groups whose raiding and attacks had not ceased. In fact, during the insurrection, Price received numerous troubling reports from his subordinates about opportunistic hostile groups of Navajo, Ute, and Apache who had joined in the fight.²¹⁹ Calhoun also viewed the Puebloans as an asset, declaring, “If properly cared for and instructed, in all Indian wars, these Pueblos would be very important auxiliaries.”²²⁰ More importantly, “These people can raise immense quantities

²¹⁶ Garrard, 216.

²¹⁷ Abel, 18.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 38.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 532.

²²⁰ Ibid., 36.

of corn and wheat and have large herds of sheep and goats” all of which would be very helpful in feeding an army engaged against hostile natives.²²¹

Regardless of the ability of the Puebloans to revolt and fight, as demonstrated in the past, US forces misread their current posture, even with the numerous reports pouring in that the “whole country seemed rife and ready to tear down the glorious stars and stripes.”²²² The three main causes of the insurrection are evident. First, the civilian territorial leaders chosen by Kearny and later supported by Doniphan were highly contentious—more importantly, their personal business self-interests motivated their public service. Second, no unity of effort or information operations messaging campaign existed between US civilian and military leaders in the region. With Doniphan setting this precedent, local Pueblo and Hispano communities truly had no idea what the Americans had in store for the area. Lastly, due a lack of clear intent being communicated to the populace, historians believe that behind the scenes local Catholic leaders secretly encouraged the rebellion.²²³ The US presence was primarily Protestant and church leaders feared their power base would be removed.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Numerous bands of fierce and warlike savages wander over it, and upon its borders . . . If New Mexico were held and governed by the United States, we

²²¹ Abel, 40.

²²² Abert, 95.

²²³ No primary source documentation exists to support this claim, though it is the leading theory amongst contemporary historians.

could effectually prevent these tribes from committing such outrages, and compel them to release these captives, and restore them to their families and friends.²²⁴

The vicious conflict between Native American groups and the Hispano communities that the Americans encountered in the newly acquired territories contributed directly to the concluding treaty on the war between Mexico and the United States.

Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the war and ceded 525,000 square miles to the United States, declared,

Considering that a great part of the territories, which, by the present treaty, are to be comprehended for the future within the limits of the United States, is now occupied by savage tribes, who will hereafter be under the exclusive control of the Government of the United States, and whose incursions within the territory of Mexico would be prejudicial in the extreme, it is solemnly agreed that all such incursions shall be forcibly restrained by the Government of the United States whensoever this may be necessary; and that when they cannot be prevented, they shall be punished by the said Government.²²⁵

Article XI also attempted to curb the slave trade and the constant raiding between the various groups: “It shall not be lawful . . . for any inhabitant of the United States to purchase or acquire any Mexican, or any foreigner residing in Mexico, who may have been captured by Indians inhabiting the territory of either of the two republics; nor to purchase or acquire horses, mules, cattle, or property of any kind, stolen within Mexican territory by such Indians.”²²⁶

²²⁴ US Congress, President James K. Polk’s First Annual Message.

²²⁵ Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo [Exchange copy], 2 February 1848, Perfected Treaties, 1778-1945, Record Group 11, General Records of the United States Government, 1778-1992, National Archives.

²²⁶ Ibid.

In addition to this clause, Mexico also desired assurances that hostile native groups could not use areas north of the border as a sanctuary zone from which to conduct raids. Some in Mexico even accused the US of fomenting native uprisings during the war to force the nation to sue for peace.²²⁷ One Mexican politician went so far as to declare that Article XI was “the only advantage” in the overall treaty.²²⁸ From the Mexican perspective, Article XI was a win as it would remove the native threat that had been the scourge of its northern boundary for generations and quash the violence. Regardless of how either side viewed the treaty, between 1848 and 1853 native raids—many originating in the US—increased on both sides of the border with no end in sight.²²⁹

Attempts to curb the attacks and live up to the terms of Article XI were attempted by both nations on each side of the border. Sent by the US Department of the Interior to be the new Indian Agent at Santa Fe in 1849, James S. Calhoun’s initial instructions included the declaration that “So little is known here of the condition and situation of the Indians in that region that no specific instructions, relative to them can be given at present.” Consequently, he was tasked with furnishing “statistical and other information as will give a just and full understanding of every particular relating to them.”²³⁰

²²⁷ Richard Griswold Del Castillo, *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), 117-118.

²²⁸ Delay, xiii.

²²⁹ Oscar J. Martinez, *Troublesome Border* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press), 53.

²³⁰ Abel, 3.

Calhoun, upon assuming his post in July of 1849, wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs:

At present it is the opinion of . . . the Military commander of this division, that any attempt to conciliate the tribes who have caused the recent and present troubles in this territory, would have a very injurious tendency. The Indians presuming upon their knowledge of safe retreats in the mountains, and our entire ignorance of all avenues . . . not to be subjected to just restraints until they are properly chastised. When they shall feel themselves so chastised, they will sue for peace and it is respectfully suggested, that the government of the United States ought to be prepared to meet them without delay.”²³¹

Calhoun’s optimistic and aggressive assessment was quickly tempered once he realized the full scale of the conflict occurring in the region. One month later he offered a more grounded appraisal, “The Indians, generally, are in bad temper—the number of Troops are not sufficient here to keep upon them a proper check.”²³² This second assessment became the new norm for Calhoun; over the next several years he constantly requested additional forces that would never arrive. He finally conceded that “Without an additional force, not a single interest of the country can be fully protected.”²³³

In addition to attempting to subdue hostilities in the region, Calhoun also struggled to fulfill another stipulation in Article XI—the return of captives to the Hispano communities. Upon reporting to his post, he was allotted \$300 by the Office of Indian Affairs: “For the release of such Mexican captives as may be found among the Indians

²³¹ Abel, 19.

²³² Ibid., 20.

²³³ Ibid., 35.

and for which demand may be made on the government of the United States.”²³⁴ By October of 1849, Calhoun had successfully negotiated for and returned five captives back to their respective Hispano communities. However, as a reflection of the complicated nature of the region, of the five captives, one voluntarily returned to the Navajo, three no longer had any language or cultural similarities with the societies they left, and only one was desirous to return home.²³⁵

On the Mexican side of the border, efforts to curb native hostilities were also attempted. A long chain of military colonies manned by soldier-settlers, to include cavalry, was established along the border. The northern states in Mexico also formed defensive community-based coalitions that executed numerous campaigns against native groups for several years. Lastly, some Mexican states approved scalp bounty laws, which was the practice of purchasing Indian scalps and captives, thereby creating a peculiar market exploited by nefarious men on both sides of the border who attacked hostile and peaceful natives alike to obtain scalps to sell.²³⁶ Despite attempts on both sides of the border, little progress was made to stem the continued attacks.

Due to Article XI in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Mexico believed that the US was not doing enough to live up to its side of the agreement. Because of this, by the 1850s, Mexico had submitted millions of dollars’ worth of claims to the US State Department. Their argument hinged on the belief that most native raids originated on the

²³⁴ Abel, 4.

²³⁵ Ibid., 29-30.

²³⁶ Martinez, 53.

US side of the border; therefore, the US must pay for Mexico's losses due to promises made in Article XI to restrain native attacks or punish the violators. By 1853, this hotly contested issue between the two nations manifested itself in another round of treaty negotiations.

US diplomat and American minister to Mexico, James Gadsden, was tasked with negotiating a possible continental railroad across several areas that were still disputed by Mexico. During the attempt to resolve this border disagreement, the US saw the perfect opportunity to absolve itself of its Article XI responsibilities. In 1853, in what became known as the Gadsden Treaty or Purchase, Article II abrogated that, "The government of Mexico hereby releases the United States from all liability on account of the obligations contained in the eleventh article of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo."²³⁷ Article II of the Gadsden Treaty thereby removed any formal agreement and avenue for Mexico to seek monetary relief from the US government, though the argument over financial compensation would drag on until it was fully arbitrated in the 1870s.

First demonstrated by Doniphan in the region, the Treaty of Hidalgo Guadalupe had become the ultimate archetype of the civilian military disconnect present in New Mexico. American civilian leaders had negotiated a treaty that had promised certain protections without applying the proper military resources to support it. By 1852 the situation had become so dire that it spurred the Superintendent of Indian Affairs to write to the Commissioner:

²³⁷ Gadsden Purchase Treaty, 30 December 1853, Perfected Treaties, 1778-1945, Record Group 46, General Records of the United States Government, 1778-1992, National Archives.

The latest intelligence from New Mexico . . . is truly discouraging, and strengthens my anxious solicitude to resume my official duties in the Territory—You have of course seen that the Governor . . . is entirely without the means essential to carry on the Government, that the Secretary has resigned and left the Territory—that the military on that station are also destitute of the resources, necessary to enable them to protect the inhabitants, against the daily incursions & depredations of the Indians—& that the people themselves are almost in a state of civil revolution. All these circumstances present to the Department a very serious & alarming state of affairs & strongly appeal to Congress, to take such immediate action, as may in their judgment be necessary for the peace & protection of the people of New Mexico.²³⁸

Despite treaty negotiations between the two nations and insufficiently supported military efforts, hostilities perpetrated on behalf of the Native Americans in the region had not relented. Something needed to be done to halt the native attacks that disrupted the lucrative Santa Fe Trail and to secure New Mexico's abundance of resources. As President Polk declared to the Senate and House of Representatives in 1847: "The provinces of New Mexico . . . are contiguous to the territories of the United States, and if brought under the government of our laws, their resources—mineral, agricultural, manufacturing, and commercial—would soon be developed."²³⁹

Future Zuni—United States Interactions

The Pueblo of Zunia contains, in my opinion, more than 500, Indians, a hardy, well fed and well clothed race . . . [they] are subjected to various annoyances from Navajoes . . . But what is shockingly discreditable to the American name, emigrants commit the grossest wrongs against these excellent Indians by taking, in the name of the United States, such horses, mules, and sheep, and grain as they desire, carefully concealing their true name, but assuming official authority and bearing.²⁴⁰

²³⁸ Abel, 538.

²³⁹ Polk et al., 10.

²⁴⁰ Abel, 30.

When asked later in life, Doniphan mentioned the successful treaty he enacted between the Navajo and the Zuni, claiming, “The latter have ever remained friendly.”²⁴¹ This statement is partially correct; though the Zuni remained friendly toward the US, to include not participating in the Taos Revolt, they certainly did not keep peace with the Navajo. In 1850, Santa Fe Indian Agent Calhoun wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs “It is understood, that the Pueblo of Zuni and the Navajos are at war with each other . . . This war, you will remember, is a violation of our treaties with these Indians.”²⁴² The constant warfare between the Navajo and Zuni that Doniphan witnessed continued and did not fully subside until the removal of the Navajo to *Bosque Redondo* from 1864-1868 and the building of Fort Wingate in the 1870s.²⁴³

After their initial contact with Doniphan, only three main events affected their relationship with the US. The first was the California Gold Rush and the building of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroads that followed it, which established the present-day town of Gallup, New Mexico, near Zunia. These events brought transient prospectors and settlers who forcefully seized subsistence from the Zuni on numerous occasions, which caused them to question US intentions.²⁴⁴ Second, with the establishment of permanent Anglo settlements and railroads through their territory, the Zuni shifted from an agrarian society

²⁴¹ Connelley, 588.

²⁴² Abel, 260.

²⁴³ Fred Eggan and T. N. Pandey, “Zuni History, 1850-1970,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 9, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 474.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

to one of sheep, cattle, and eventually tourist souvenirs to obtain revenue.²⁴⁵ Lastly, World War II saw over 200 Zuni men serve overseas, with numerous others working in war-related positions. These returning veterans were the driving force behind Zuni development well into the 20th Century.²⁴⁶

As mentioned, though no hostilities occurred, the Zuni did question US intentions in the decades after the departure of the Army of the West. In another letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Calhoun began with the patronizing line “In order that you may have a correct understanding of the feelings of the Pueblo of Zuni,” continuing, “the Governor of Zuni, inveighed, in very emphatic terms, against the disappointments, (he meant deceits) to which he, and others, had been subjected to since Genl. Kearney entered the country, and pledged to them the protection of the Government of the United States.” Calhoun then forwarded the Zuni leaders’ question, “He enquired, how does it happen that at the very moment the Navajos are commencing a war against the him . . . the American troops are withdrawn from Cibolletta? He answered, I suppose to give the Navajos a fair chance against us—who were promised protection.” The Indian Agent concludes his letter with, “These [troop] movements are not understood by the Pueblo Indians, and will not increase their affection and confidence for the Government of the United States.”²⁴⁷ Doniphan promised protection, an accord that Indian Agents in the region had constantly to honor until the Navajo threat was removed by the late 1870s.

²⁴⁵ Eggan and Pandey, 476, 479.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 478-479.

²⁴⁷ Abel, 250.

The precedent that Doniphan set between the Zuni and the US has remained unusually constant when considered against the larger backdrop of US-Native American relationships. Over the years the Zuni have managed to keep their fierce independence despite an ever-growing global society. A reprieve from the constant raiding of the Navajo was also ended through US efforts. This freedom and peace was initially promised by Doniphan and then upheld by successive Indian Agents in the region and the American government.

As part of Doniphan's command, in 1846 John Hughes wrote in his diary a statement that has remained consistently true until today:

It is a remarkable fact, that the Zunians have, since the Spaniards left the country, refused to have any intercourse with the modern Mexicans, looking upon them as an inferior people. They have also driven from among them . . . the priests and other dignitaries, who formerly had power over them, and resumed habits and manners of their own; their great chief, or governor, being the civil and religious head.²⁴⁸

Over the years various religious and other groups, to include Catholics, Protestants, Mormons, merchants, and Anglo politicians, have attempted to convert or influence the Zuni; all have had little success.²⁴⁹ The Zuni have ever remained remarkably independent and able to maintain their traditional tribal councils, beliefs, and practices—which has always been their initial desire, as conveyed to Doniphan in 1846.

²⁴⁸ Hughes, 74.

²⁴⁹ Eggan, 474-475.

Future Southern Ute—United States Interactions

The agreement an Indian makes to a United States treaty is like the agreement a buffalo makes with his hunters when pierced with arrows. All he can do is lie down and give in.²⁵⁰

After the departure of Doniphan in 1846, the Southern Ute *Muache* and *Capote* bands who had “promised to be peaceable, orderly, to respect the lives and property of the Mexicans, and to be obedient to the laws of the United States” had a different experience when compared to the relatively successful relationship between the Zuni and the US.²⁵¹ Governor Bent, before he was murdered, recorded his thoughts on the Ute, whom he called: “a hardy, warlike people, subsisting by the chase . . . several bands of them have been carrying on a predatory war with the New Mexicans for the last two years and killed and taken prisoner many of the people and driven off large amounts of stock.”²⁵² Bent’s description was forwarded to the newly appointed Indian Agent James Calhoun; it was the only knowledge he had on the Ute when he arrived in 1849.

Calhoun immediately relayed a message to the Ute to meet him at *Abiquiu* on the 20th of December “if they are honestly disposed to submit, fully, and unconditionally, to the Constituted Authorities of the United States” and form a “firm and lasting treaty of peace.”²⁵³ Possibly motivated by what they had witnessed during the Taos Revolt and the

²⁵⁰ Dee Brown, *Bury my Heart at Wounded Knee: An Indian History of the American West* (New York: Bantam Book, 1970), 350.

²⁵¹ Hughes, 50.

²⁵² Abel, 7.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 90.

US heavy-handed reaction, they agreed to meet.²⁵⁴ On the 30th of December, various leaders from the two bands met with Calhoun and entered into what has become known as the Treaty of *Abiquiu*, which was later ratified by the US Congress.²⁵⁵ The treaty highlighted three key areas of concern for the US, only the first of which was mentioned by Doniphan. (1) “hostilities between the contracting parties shall cease, and perpetual peace and amity shall exist,” (2) “All American and Mexican Captives, and others taken from persons or powers at peace with the said States, shall be restored and delivered” no later than March 1850, and (3) the “preservation of peace with the various tribes of Indians” also in the region will occur.²⁵⁶

The peace attempted in this treaty did not last two weeks. As Calhoun noted, “[We] made a treaty with the Utahs [Ute] on the 30th of last month and since then it is said they have killed seven Mexicans and drove off a large quantity of Stock.” They were also accused of taking one female captive and during the fight one Ute was killed.²⁵⁷ Later Calhoun discovered, “From the various conflicting statements afloat, I have come to the conclusion, the Indians were less to blame, (if blamable at all,) than the Mexicans.”²⁵⁸ As it turns out, the Ute victim was murdered first and his friends reacted in defense.

²⁵⁴ Blackhawk, 203.

²⁵⁵ Clemmer, 526.

²⁵⁶ Abel, 127-132.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 99-100, 142-143.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 125.

It was quite common to place the blame for all hostilities in the region with the various native groups. However, at times, the Ute—when beneficial to them—did ally together for combat against the Anglos, Puebloans, and even with their traditional enemy the Navajo.²⁵⁹ The Ute were also held responsible for setting forest fires, a narrative that was perpetuated by Denver newspaper editor-politician William B. Vickers. Due to his hatred for the Ute, Vickers embarked on a national smear campaign; in a piece published in 1879 he declared, “I am satisfied there is an organized effort on the part of the Indians to destroy the timber of Colorado.”²⁶⁰ This accusatory environment made it extremely difficult to determine who the actual aggressors were in the region.

Another undesirable influence that impacted peace attempts between the US and Southern Ute were, “The constant and unrestrained intercourse of traders with the Indians of this territory” considered by many “the greatest curse upon it.” Not present when Doniphan campaigned in the region, it was through these nefarious traders “that arms and ammunition are supplied to the Indians who refuse submission to our authority.”²⁶¹ Liquor was another commodity they trafficked in whereby “their fondness for it occasioned much trouble.”²⁶²

It was in this area that the civilian military disconnect manifested itself once again. Civilian authorities passed laws that restricted unlicensed traders from operating;

²⁵⁹ McNitt, 49, 315-316.

²⁶⁰ Brown, 357.

²⁶¹ Abel, 51, 105.

²⁶² Ibid., 529.

however, many of these same men profited from the sale of these illicit items to the native groups. Trading weapons and liquor for stolen goods and horses from the Ute was big business; if it resulted in increased hostilities all the better. An increased military presence in the region meant government contracts for animals and feed and even more money for the men who controlled both trades. On an arrest warrant from 1852, issued for “selling Liquor in the Indian Country and for purchasing & receiving stolen property of the United States,” ten out of the ten names listed are Anglo, not Hispanic.²⁶³ An army Major who served in the region put it best when he wrote about the “peculiar position of the Army in this country”:

while the officers and men are blamed for affording protection to the inhabitants from the incursions of the Indians. The inhabitants themselves are in league with those Indians countenancing their presence and furnishing them with Liquor and other contraband articles which renders them more troublesome than they otherwise would be; thus the Army has a double duty to perform, not only to give protection from internal dissensions, to protect one class of the inhabitants from the other, but from Indian Depredations from without.²⁶⁴

Due to the continued hostilities in the region between the Southern Ute and Hispano communities, and over US interests, many in the region felt containment was the only policy for dealing with the Ute. Calhoun wrote to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in Washington, DC and recommended: “Adhering to, and urging the adoption of, my recommendations in reference to confining the Utahs . . . and others within fixed limits.”²⁶⁵ Newspapermen Vickers started a propaganda crusade that enflamed the

²⁶³ Abel, 545.

²⁶⁴ Ibid., 359.

²⁶⁵ Ibid., 81.

country against the Ute and their purported aggressions, his efforts resulting in “The Utes Must Go!” mantra that became the public’s rallying cry for dealing with the group.²⁶⁶ This would become the common suggested narrative moving forward between the Southern Ute and the US.

In his speech to the Senate and House of Representatives in 1847, President Polk described the resources that were present in the New Mexico region as one of the main reasons why the area must be tamed.²⁶⁷ For the Southern Ute, if they remained they were a barrier to the timber and gold desired by the US. In an official statement for publication regarding the conflict with the Ute, the Governor of Colorado, Fredrick Pitkin, encapsulated the common mood of most Americans, “My idea is that, unless removed by the government, they must necessarily be exterminated . . . The advantages that would accrue from the throwing open of 12,000,000 acres of land to miners and settlers would more than compensate all the expenses incurred.”²⁶⁸

Between 1846 and 1888, seven treaties with the Southern Ute bands *Capote* and *Muache*, resulted in their removal—through military efforts and monetary bribes—from their traditional lands to what is today known as the Southern Ute Indian Reservation in Southwest Colorado, covering roughly 1,064 square miles.²⁶⁹ One common theme initiated by Doniphan, which was relayed to Washington and then adopted by all Indian

²⁶⁶ Brown, 356-357.

²⁶⁷ US Congress, President James K. Polk’s First Annual Message, 10.

²⁶⁸ Brown, 366.

²⁶⁹ Clemmer, 526-527.

Agents and civilian authorities thereafter, was the misunderstanding of the fractured nature of leadership within the Ute. This was aptly demonstrated by the 1863 treaty attempt that the *Capote* and *Muache* bands refused to sign; however, the White River Ute agreed to its terms. The Ute ability to manipulate all sides for their best interests, first displayed to Major Gilpin in 1846, revealed itself once again. The White River Ute signed an agreement that preserved their ancestral territories while ceding all the land belonging to the non-present *Capote* and *Muache* bands.²⁷⁰ The US, with little comprehension of the leadership structure of the Ute, once again mistook cooperation for compliance, which resulted in prolonged warfare in the region for much longer than desired.

The entrepreneurial Southern Ute economy of slave raids, trade, and racketeering encountered by Doniphan in 1846 has changed considerably. Their ability to navigate between cultures and play all sides against each other, which motivated a smear campaign against them, combined with the US misunderstanding of Ute leadership structures, had disastrous consequences. It resulted in them being forcibly removed from their ancestral lands and being placed on reservations. However, the ever industrious and clever nature of the Southern Ute first demonstrated to the Americans in 1846 is still present. They have replaced their old economies with several profitable casinos and now control their own rich natural resources. In the end, the Southern Ute have fulfilled their promise to Doniphan to be peaceful, respect lives and property, and be obedient to the laws of the United States.

²⁷⁰ Clemmer, 355.

Future Navajo—United States Interactions

They [the Navajo] have openly proclaimed that not a [wagon] train shall cross the river, and it is their intention to cut off all communication with Santa Fe and the States.²⁷¹

Upon the arrival of the Army of the West in 1846, the Navajo were immediately painted as the primary nuisance and enemy by all sides in the region. The Hispano, Pueblo, Zuni, and Southern Ute accused them of being behind all hostilities and as the primary inhibitor to a peaceful coexistence. Like the Ute, Navajo country was coveted for its potential resources and could not be “surpassed by richness by any other part of New Mex. and the mines all about here, are very rich in Gold, Silver, Copper, [and] Led.”²⁷² Bent’s assessment, as with his description of the Ute, was forwarded to the incoming Indian Agent James Calhoun prior to him assuming his position. Bent wrote, “The Navajoes are an industrious intelligent and warlike tribe of Indians . . . They have in their possession many prisoners, men women and children taken from the settlements of this Territory whom they hold and treat as slaves.”²⁷³

When examining the primary source documents relating to the conflict in the region, it quickly becomes obvious that the Navajo were seen differently than the other native groups. Each exchange is hostile and accusatory in its context; the first territorial Governor after Bent, “frankly stated to them that his purpose was to chastise them for their bad conduct, in committing murders, and stealing horses, sheep, and everything else

²⁷¹ Unknown Author to Liberty Editor Robert H. Miller, 27 June 1846, Robert H. Miller Papers, Missouri History Museum Archives, St. Louis, MO.

²⁷² Abel, 420.

²⁷³ Ibid., 6-7.

they could put their hands upon.”²⁷⁴ The common perception of all in the regions was that the Navajo “commit their wrongs from a pure love of rapine and plunder” and that they “rob, and murder, and seize captives, because it is a business of life in which they delight.”²⁷⁵ Even though all groups in the region were guilty of the exact same crimes, it was the Navajo who became the scapegoat for all ills in the area. This perception drove Calhoun to believe that the Navajo “of this country have been so much more successful in their robberies since Genl Kearney took possession of the country, they do not believe we have the power to chastise them. Is it not time to enlighten them upon this subject, and to put an end to their ceaseless depredations.”²⁷⁶

Doniphan and Kearny, upon the advice of nefarious men who had their own economic self-interests at heart, were the ones responsible for the initial branding of the Navajo as evil culprits. At the behest of the Hispano communities and local leaders, it was the Navajo that Doniphan was strictly ordered to strike a peace with by Kearny, even though the Southern Ute, some Pueblos, and numerous Hispano groups were just as guilty of raiding for slaves and plunder. In addition, from the beginning, the US failed to grasp the concept that not all Navajo groups were the same. Each band was ruled by a different leader and not all were conducting raids and attacks; many lived peacefully side by side with other Pueblo and Hispano communities. Unfortunately, Doniphan and Kearny chose to depend on unreliable advisors that portrayed the Navajo as one united

²⁷⁴ Abel, 27.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 32, 55.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 32.

collection bent on hostilities—this would have drastic consequences for the Navajo people. This was soon demonstrated by the notorious Navajo-cum-US informer Sandoval, first utilized by Doniphan, who soon clamored to assist the new Indian Agent and Governor in 1849.

On 31 August 1849, Calhoun and the new civilian and military territory Governor Colonel John Washington, guided by Sandoval, met with hundreds of Navajo from different bands with the intent of striking a new treaty. All was diplomatic and productive, and after “The Several points of the proposed treaty having been explained to the chiefs to their satisfaction” all parties began to leave peacefully.²⁷⁷ A soldier present later wrote that before this could occur, “Sandoval harangued some two or three hundred Navajos . . . the object, as it occurred to me, being to explain to them the views and purpose of the government of the United States.”²⁷⁸ Calhoun later wrote, “The acting’s and doings of the parties were duly explained to them by a long and noisy harangue from a Navajo [Sandoval].”²⁷⁹ Not understanding the Navajo language, the officers present at first viewed this as a helpful act by Sandoval, but soon realized that he was stoking a fight and that “there was likely to be some more serious work than mere talking.”²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ James H. Simpson, *Journal of a Military Reconnaissance from Santa Fe New Mexico to the Navajo Country Made with the Troops Under Command of Brevet Lieutenant Colonel John M. Washington, Chief of Ninth Military Department, and Governor of New Mexico* (Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott, Grambo and Co., 1852), 55.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 55.

²⁷⁹ Abel, 27.

²⁸⁰ Simpson, 55-56.

Sandoval, who wanted dominance over all Navajo bands and their land, saw peace as a threat to his interests. He agitated the Navajo into a frenzy and accused one of them of stealing a horse. The Navajo warriors formed their mounts into a defensive perimeter and the “Governor ordered the guard to fire” and soon the “Senior Chief, *Narbona*, was left lifeless upon the ground, and several others were found dead in the vicinity.”²⁸¹ *Narbona*, who first met with Doniphan in 1846 and who only desired the safety and well being of his people, lay dead—murdered and then scalped by a US trophy hunter.²⁸² Ever naïve of the OE, US leaders laid this event at the feet of the Navajo and did not understand that it had been initiated by one supposedly aligned with their interests. The takeaway from this event—no doubt with input from Sandoval—was that as a whole “These people evidently gave signs of being tricky and unreliable, and probably never will be chastened into perfect subjection until troops are stationed immediately among them.”²⁸³

The resulting accord, called the Treaty of 9 September 1849, was ratified by the US Senate and proclaimed by the President in September of 1850; it was nothing like the idealized and hope-filled agreement presented to them by Doniphan. It began with a direct link to Article XI of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, “The said Indians do hereby acknowledge that, by virtue of a treaty entered into by the United States of America and the United Mexican States . . . the said tribe was lawfully placed under the exclusive

²⁸¹ Abel, 28.

²⁸² McNitt, 145.

²⁸³ Simpson, 56.

jurisdiction and protection of the Government.”²⁸⁴ This new treaty, when compared to Doniphan’s attempt, is less naïve and shows a better, though biased, understanding of the OE. No longer amicable to unrestricted Navajo movement and an even trade of captives between all sides, the Indians had now to deliver all captives and stolen property to the “military authority of the United States in New Mexico.”²⁸⁵ This treaty, completed under duress and after witnessing the murder of one of their revered headman, had a short shelf life. This fact was remarked upon through later military dispatches, “They have not complied with the terms of that treaty which the Colonel intends exacting from them before entering into a new one.”²⁸⁶

What transpired over the next twenty years was aptly described by an Anglo witness in the region: “A war of extermination was declared . . . troops were sent into their [Navajo] country. Their ranches, farms, and stock were destroyed, and many of them were killed. The remainder were stripped of everything. They were taken prisoners and put upon a reservation in the eastern portion of New Mexico. Here they remained in poverty for some years.”²⁸⁷

The Navajo would suffer numerous attacks and outright massacres before a new military commander in New Mexico, Brigadier General James Carleton, issued General Order Number 15. This order declared that the army would now “prosecute a vigorous

²⁸⁴ Brugge and Correll, 68.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 69.

²⁸⁶ Abel, 25.

²⁸⁷ Jones, 369.

war upon the men of this tribe until it is considered at these Head Quarters that they have been effectually punished for their long continued atrocities.”²⁸⁸ By now the conflict had become serious enough that the US Secretary of War had declared “that none other than the regular troops . . . will be used. No volunteers will be employed.”²⁸⁹ This measure was adopted because it soon became obvious that local New Mexico volunteers “prefer to carry on wars in their own way,” meaning their goal was Navajo plunder and slaves, not their pacification.²⁹⁰

By 1863, Carleton was conducting unrestricted warfare against all the Navajo, regardless if they were peaceful or not, and forcibly resettled them on a reservation called *Bosque Redondo*, near Fort Sumner. His message to the Navajo was harsh, “Go to the Bosque Redondo, or we will pursue and destroy you . . . You have deceived us too often and robbed and murdered our people too long—to trust you again at large in your own country. This war will be pursued against you . . . until you cease to exist or move.”²⁹¹ A standing order was issued to his leaders in the field, “There is to be no council held with the Indians, nor any talks. The men are to be slain whenever and wherever they can be found. The women and children may be taken as prisoners, but, of course, they are not to

²⁸⁸ Robert A. Roessel, “Navajo History, 1850-1923,” in *Handbook of North American Indians: Volume 10, Southwest*, ed. Alfonso Ortiz (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1983), 511.

²⁸⁹ McNitt, 384.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 385.

²⁹¹ Roessel, 511.

be killed.”²⁹² Those Navajo forced by the military to the reservation via draconian forced marches—now remembered as the Long Walk—found themselves in horrid conditions in an area designed to hold 5,000 that at its peak contained over 9,000 Navajo.²⁹³

The Navajo remained at *Bosque Redondo* from 1863 to 1868, during which time Carleton sung its praises to Washington and described “a fine reservation” where the Navajo will be “the most happy and prosperous and well-provided-for Indians in the United States”; he ended his note with a more realistic statement: “at all events . . . we can feed them cheaper than we can fight them.”²⁹⁴ Eventually news of the horrid conditions of the reservation, combined with critics of Carleton’s practices, resulted in the Navajo being allowed to move back to New Mexico and his removal from his position as military governor of the territory.

The civil military split, first demonstrated by Doniphan, was again seen in Carleton. His critiques loudly and publicly cried, “you declared war against the Apaches and Navajos . . . In this, you exceeded your powers and usurped those belonging to others. The constitution has given this authority to Congress . . . It does not follow . . . that every Brigadier General is vested with it.” They further professed, “Peaceful Navajos . . . surrendered themselves, and you have taken them to the *Bosque*, as prisoners of war . . . persons who have voluntarily come in for their protection and food, are treated

²⁹² Brown, 20-21.

²⁹³ Roessel, 513.

²⁹⁴ Brown, 30.

in the same manner as those taken with arms in their hands.”²⁹⁵ This clamor reached such a pitch that the last treaty to be conducted between the Navajo and the US was ratified and proclaimed in August of 1868. From then on, the Navajo would be considered a united sovereign nation and would occupy a swath of their ancestral territory, which included Bear Springs, and would no longer be forced to reside at *Bosque Redondo*.²⁹⁶

After 1868, the Navajo were no longer a threat to the region and the ever-present slave trade that was primarily perpetuated against them from all sides had all but disappeared. Even with the return of the Navajo to a portion of their traditional homeland, transgressions against them did not cease. They continued to find themselves besieged by US policies aimed at stripping their identity and forcing their assimilation into Hispano and US culture. Trading posts manned by unscrupulous individuals were established in their territory and their children were shipped off to boarding schools to make them Anglo. Ever resistant against these incursions, today the Navajo have again taken control of their people and control the rights to rich mineral and oil resources found on their land. In addition, they are world-renowned for their silver, turquoise jewelry, and hand-woven rugs. Every year, thousands of tourists strengthen their economy with visits to Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly, Chaco Canyon, Hubbell's Trading Post, and Shiprock.

The Navajo and their siege mentality that began with the arrival of the Spanish defined the way they reacted to those around them for the next two centuries. From their initial arrival in the region, Doniphan and Kearny heeded the advice of individuals who

²⁹⁵ Roessel, 515.

²⁹⁶ Brugge and Correll, 89.

had it in their best self-interest to paint the Navajo as being united and the primary aggressors in the area. This belief, perpetuated by such individuals, set a precedent that became the dominant narrative in all US dealings with the Navajo until the start of the 20th century.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The social complexities of conflict and the effect that military actions have on local governance, populations, and cultures, is a topic that military professionals should study profusely. It is one characteristic of the nature of war that will never change with time or technology.

Lessons for Operating in a Complex Operational Environment

The actions of Colonel Alexander Doniphan and the 1st Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers in the Mexican-American War offer four key lessons for operating in a complex OE. First, when entering a new OE, work to comprehend what the previous power brokers attempted to implement in the region. Second, carefully choose who to take advice from amongst the local populace. Third, create a unity of effort and guiding strategy between all civilian and military entities. Finally, understand the limits and proper utilization of reserve forces.

US military leaders immediately discounted any previous attempts that the Mexican government had made toward security and peace in its northern states—this is an example of the first lesson that can be gleaned from Doniphan operating in New Mexico in 1846. Kearny naively announced that, “From the Mexican government you have never received protection . . . My government will correct all this.”²⁹⁷ The Mexicans had tried numerous peace attempts with the local native groups; however, they were

²⁹⁷ Emory, 27.

unable to enforce any of them due to a lack of troops assigned to the region. The US would repeat this same mistake for over twenty years before applying the proper military resources to enforce security in New Mexico.

As early as 1847, this troop discrepancy was realized at the lowest level. Private H.L. Routt wrote, “In the first place it was the very height of folly and nonsense to send Infantry . . . to chastise Indians . . . President Polk certainly knows very little about Indian character, and their physical capabilities if he expects infantry to overtake and chastise them.”²⁹⁸ Calhoun, in his updates to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, wrote about his constant treaty attempts that failed due to the lack of troops present to enforce their terms, following the same trend that the Mexican government had since 1821. A simple understanding of past Mexican attempts and the main flaw in their strategy would have avoided twenty more years of conflict.

Utilizing local individuals as translators and as subject matter experts on the region is a common practice and the second lesson that can be learned. This practice makes sense and is a valid course of action when operating in a foreign environment. However, choosing who to utilize from the local populace is key in this process. Most of those who choose to work with a foreign military on their soil do it for money or for some other form of self-interest. Doniphan, and subsequent US leaders, never understood the motives of those who helped them in New Mexico. The Anglos, Hispanos, and natives who assisted US forces did it for their own interests and not for the good of the region. Disregarding anyone who wants to assist or offer information is not

²⁹⁸ H. L. Routt to Liberty Editor Robert H. Miller, 6 December 1847, Robert H. Miller Papers, Missouri History Museum Archives, St. Louis, MO.

recommended; rather, first simply understanding what that person's self-interest is and how to manipulate it to your advantage is a key lesson from these events.

Retired Lieutenant General James Dubik, in his book *Just War Reconsidered*, discusses the third lesson and the link between the civilian and military entities during war. He writes:

Poor war aims, strategies, and policies, badly thought-through campaigns and major operations, and inefficient and ineffective civil-military dialogue and execution can join to prolong a war unnecessarily, decreasing the probability of success, and, thereby, increasing the probability of risking the lives of the innocent and the life of the political community unnecessarily as well as wasting the lives of soldiers and national treasure on a scale much larger than that of the fighting itself.²⁹⁹

Though he was not writing about New Mexico in the second half of the 19th Century, his assessment fits perfectly with what occurred there. Kearny's Code created an opportunity for a rift to develop between civil-military efforts in the region. By not informing Governor Bent about the execution and results of his expedition against the Navajo, Doniphan widened this gap and set a precedence that all others in the region followed for decades. From 1846 to the turn of the 19th Century, no coherent strategy supported by a well-resourced military existed. By not combining US civil-military efforts toward a guiding strategy in the region, hostilities were prolonged, atrocities committed, and resources were wasted chasing an ever-elusive peace.

The final lesson is to understand the limits and proper utilization of reserve forces. As President Polk declared in 1845, "Our reliance for protection and defense on the land must be mainly on our citizen soldiers, who will be ever ready, as they ever have been

²⁹⁹ James M. Dubik, *Just War Reconsidered: Strategy, Ethics, and Theory* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 35.

ready in times past, to rush with alacrity, at the call of their country, to her defense.”³⁰⁰

The same is still very true today; though currently the defense of the nation does not fall primarily on reserve forces, they still play a critical role: “The Army National Guard and Army Reserve provide over half of the Army’s total capacity . . . The Army National Guard and Army Reserve play both an operational and strategic role, providing operational capabilities and strategic depth across the full range of military operations.”³⁰¹

To put it frankly, today’s American army cannot fight or sustain itself without its reserve forces. As Doniphan told a welcoming crowd upon his return to Missouri, which still holds true for the recent conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq, “We have shown to the astonishment of the world, that volunteer troops can be depended upon—that private citizens can be transformed into good soldiers.”³⁰² As such, understanding how to properly train, equip, and employ reserve forces is important. The 12-month service time limit on Doniphan and Price’s volunteer regiments was ever present and drove them to make rash and hasty decisions. The realization that their force would disappear after a certain time figured into every decision that they made. Military leaders today must fully

³⁰⁰ US Congress, President James K. Polk’s First Annual Message.

³⁰¹ National Commission on the Future of the Army, *Report to the President and the Congress of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, January 2016), 60-61.

³⁰² Alexander Doniphan, “Return of the Missouri Volunteers: Address of the Honorable Thomas H. Benton and Colonel Doniphan Reply, July 2, 1847,” Missouri Historical Society.

understand the forces assigned and their limitations and capabilities to avoid this same thinking trap.

Comprehending previous attempts undertaken toward peace and stability in a region, the careful consideration of local advisors, creating a civilian-military unity of effort, and understanding the limits and proper utilization of reserve forces are the four key lessons learned from Doniphan's experience in New Mexico in 1846.

Conclusion

Though Doniphan made several errors when dealing with the Native Americans surrounding Santa Fe in 1846, there is no mistaking that he and his men achieved an amazing feat that still ranks amongst the longest military expeditions in history. Missouri Senator Benton welcomed them home, acknowledging their efforts:

You have, indeed, marched far, and done much, and suffered much, and well entitled yourselves to the applauses of your fellow-citizens, as well as to the rewards and thanks of your government. A year ago you left home. Going out from the western border of your State, you reenter it on the east, having made a circuit equal to the fourth of the circumference of the globe, providing for yourselves as you went, and returning with trophies taken from fields, the names of which were unknown to yourselves and your country, until revealed by your enterprise, illustrated by your valor, and immortalized by your deeds. History has but few such expeditions to record . . . Nobly and manfully you have made one of the most remarkable expeditions in history, worthy to be studied by statesmen, and showing what citizen volunteers can do for the crowning characteristic is that you were all citizens all volunteers not a regular bred.³⁰³

Doniphan and his men travelled over 5,000 miles across unforgiving terrain, occupied and governed three cities, dealt with numerous native groups along the route, and fought two conventional battles against Mexican forces, soundly defeating the enemy both

³⁰³ Benton.

times.³⁰⁴ Indeed, his military exploits are a clear demonstration of what American reserve forces can accomplish and are worthy of study.

In addition to their measurable achievements, Doniphan and his men were able to erase the ghost of Okeechobee forever. After the Battle of Sacramento, John Hughes wrote to the editor of the Liberty Times in Missouri, “If there ever was any stain resting upon the arms of Missouri it is now completely & forever wiped out by the glorious & memorable Victory of the 28th.”³⁰⁵ If any doubt remains that erasing this blemish was ever on Doniphan’s mind throughout the Mexican War, note his public response to Senator Benton’s congratulatory remarks upon his units return after the war. At the conclusion of his speech, Doniphan’s very last sentence to the crowd gathered declared, “Fellow-citizens, I have not the time to say anything about the battle of O-ka-cho-be; but it is sufficient to say that whatever annoyance it has been to you, however our fair fame may seem to have been tarnished, we all remember that the battle of O-ka-cho-be, and the battle of Bracito, were both fought on Christmas day.”³⁰⁶ To Doniphan, winning the Battle of Brazito on the same day that the Battle of Okeechobee was lost years earlier, finally confirmed Missouri’s rightful place as the home of brave Americans.

History has cast the Mexican-American War in a negative light, especially when viewed from the Mexican perspective. From their standpoint, it appears to be the shameful result of Manifest Destiny and an aggressive attack on Mexican sovereignty

³⁰⁴ Edwards, 180.

³⁰⁵ John Hughes to Liberty Editor Robert H. Miller, 4 March 1847, Robert H. Miller Papers, Missouri History Museum Archives, St. Louis, MO.

³⁰⁶ Doniphan.

with the outright goal of acquiring more land.³⁰⁷ In 1845 John O’Sullivan, editor of the *Democratic Review*, coined the term Manifest Destiny, expounding that it was America’s “destiny to overspread the whole North American continent with an immense democratic population”³⁰⁸—though what denoted the boundary of the North American continent was subject to interpretation and varied with what the land was determined to be worth.

Once awareness of the rich natural resources in the area grew, as early as 1829 some Americans were calling everything south of the Rio Grande worthless and “in short they are entirely calculated for a lazy, pastoral, mining people like the Mexicans.”³⁰⁹ Well known supposed experts on the region such as Texan Sam Houston had no qualms about seizing land north of the Rio Grande from Mexico, claiming that it was frequently done to Native Americans and since Mexicans were no better “I see no reason why we should not go on the same course, now, and take their land.”³¹⁰ With numerous primary source documents in existence that demonstrate the common negative perspective and domineering attitude toward Mexico, it is no wonder they view the results of the war negatively.

This criticism is not limited to the present day. Several contemporaries heavily criticized the war, concerned that the captured territory would create more slave states, strengthening their political pull, and that the acquisition of a large nonwhite population

³⁰⁷ Limerick, 232.

³⁰⁸ Albert K. Weinberg, *Manifest Destiny: A Study of Nationalist Expansionism in American History* (Chicago, IL: Quadrangle Books, 1935), 121.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 90.

would encourage African Americans to strive for freedom.³¹¹ Some even claimed that many who served did it for personal gain, joining the army “in hopes of political preferment on their return home” and thereby “proclaiming to his hero-worshipping constituents how he ‘fought, bled, and died’ for his country's liberties—a recapitulation of all the bravado with which many of the military leaders of the discreditable Mexican war have been gulling the ‘sovereign people,’ since.”³¹² However, it is often forgotten that before the war in 1845 numerous foreign observers publicly commented on the superiority and supremacy of Mexican forces—with the British declaring that the Mexican army was “superior to those of the United States.”³¹³ Whatever source used, there is no doubt that the Mexican-American War is and will forever be a controversial topic between the two nations.

The perception that America used its superior military, economic, and industrial power to dictate unfavorable terms in 1848 dominates the Mexican perspective. Many even point to this seminal event as being the reason why Mexico remained an underdeveloped country well into the twentieth century and how the US—through the acquiring of rich natural resources and fertile land in its captured regions—accelerated its industrial growth and path to become a world power.³¹⁴ Today, as in 1846, New Mexico has a social, cultural, and economic connection that transcends national boundaries that

³¹¹ Del Castillo, 5.

³¹² Garrard, 197.

³¹³ Del Castillo, 6.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 108, 122.

some call overlapping territoriality. As historian and regional expert Oscar Martinez put it, “Demographically, economically, linguistically, and culturally, the US border area is, functionally, an extension of Mexico, and, in a similar fashion, the Mexican border zone is an extension of economic, social, and cultural influences from the United States.”³¹⁵

Within and throughout this overlapping territory still lie the same Native American groups that Doniphan met in 1846. There, the contested history with both nations has instilled a sense of suspicion of intent when dealing with issues that may affect their people. As one tribal historian for the Southern Ute put it, “after centuries of error and mishandling . . . the Indian community . . . had become suspicious of any type of study.”³¹⁶ The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo has continued to fuel claims of social and economic wrongdoings toward native groups up to the present day, even resulting in Article XI of the treaty being introduced to the United Nations in the 1980s to motivate the US to address their concerns.³¹⁷

The current self-identity of the Mexican and American nations can be traced back to the Mexican-American War. Contemplation of how this opening contact set the stage for future American policy-making in the region offers a valuable opportunity to observe how military actions influence government policies that resonate for generations. The relationship between the US and Mexico has recently come to the forefront of international diplomacy again. Discussions over sovereignty, borders, immigration, and

³¹⁵ Martinez, 150-151.

³¹⁶ Limerick, 219.

³¹⁷ Del Castillo, 148.

national identities is part of this conversation. Understanding the history between the two nations regarding the resources, border disputes, and the self-identities of Anglos, Hispanics, and Native Americans aides with this diplomacy. It is in both countries' interests to be partners and not belligerents—when viewing diplomatic attempts between the two nations, it is crucial to understand the Mexican perspective of the US consistently trying to dictate terms from a position of economic or military strength.

As the US reflects on its experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, the actions of Colonel Alexander Doniphan and the 1st Regiment of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers in the Mexican-American War present an interesting opportunity to study the complexities of conflict. Doniphan's experience demonstrates how military actions influence local populations, cultures, a region's governance, and future policy-making at the local and international levels. In addition, his performance illustrates the danger of not taking a whole of government approach set toward building a unity of effort when operating in complex OEs. Doniphan's experience also offers an opportunity to better understand stressed social structures and how they react during times of conflict and power shifts. His actions in dealing with the various Hispano and Native American groups offer an extremely valuable case study for understanding the multifaceted OEs, consisting of numerous different peoples and cultures. Reviewing this becomes ever-more important as the US shifts its focus from counterinsurgency to large scale combat operations where soldiers will once again find themselves conducting stability tasks with foreign and complicated societies in the newly termed consolidation areas.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Alexander W. Doniphan (1845-1847)

Source: Courtesy of the Kansas Historical Artist John T. Hughes, Item Number: 208526, Identifier: 208526.

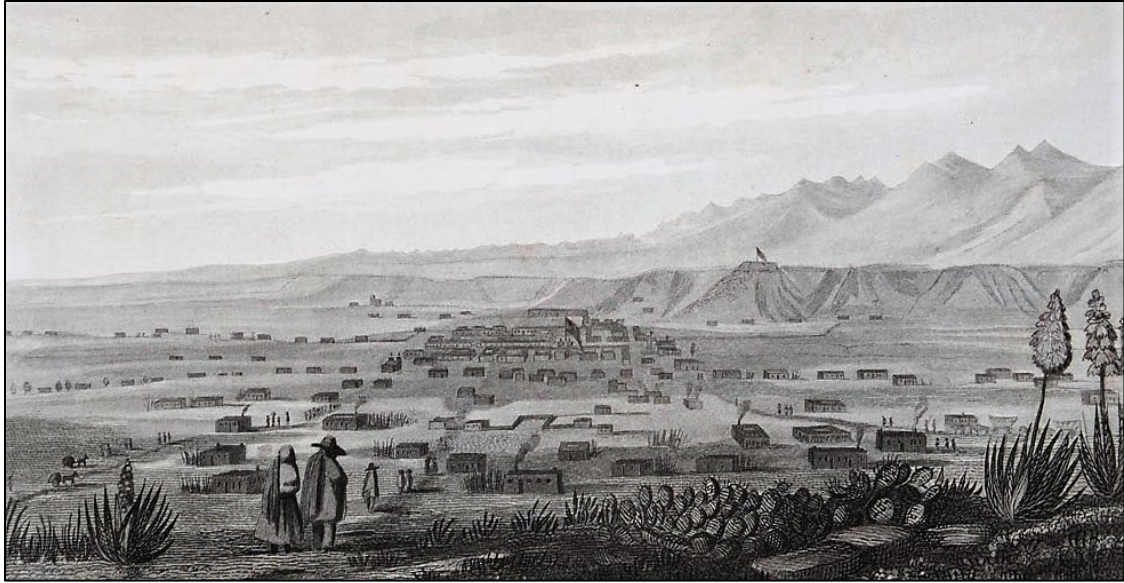


Figure 2. Santa Fe (1848)

Source: Artist James Abert, Intaglio print, Accession Number: 1975.65.1, Courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, accessed 15 February 2018, www.cartermuseum.org/imu/acm/#details=ecatalogue.57156.

NOTE: Americans would find themselves in the capital of New Mexico, consisting of a complex caste society surrounded by a landscape laid to waste by constant conflict.

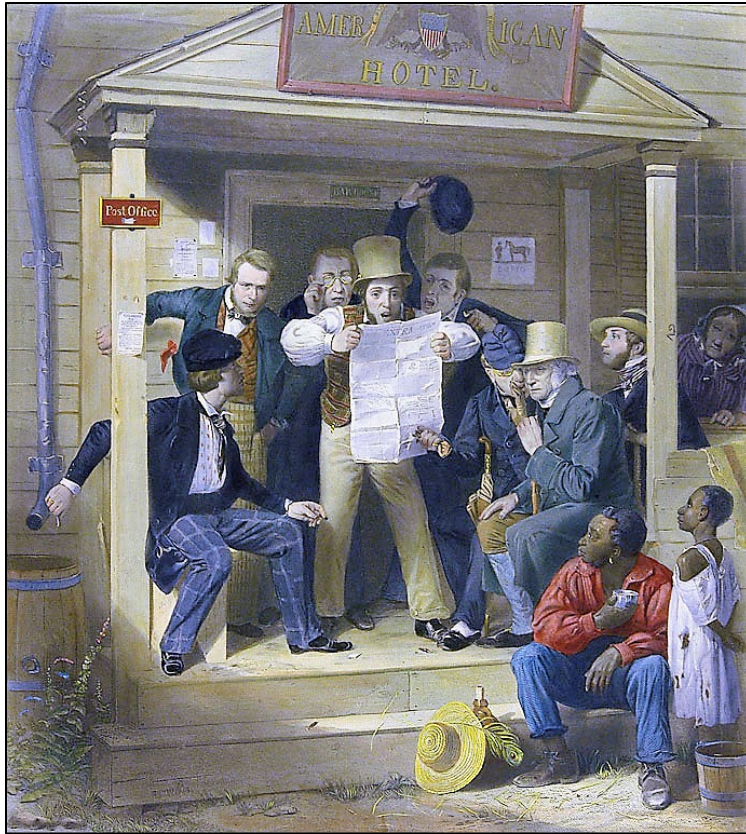


Figure 3. Mexican News (1853)

Source: Artist Richard Woodville, Intaglio print, Accession Number: 1972.3, Courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, accessed 18 February 2018, www.cartermuseum.org/imu/acm/#details=ecatalogue.57156.

NOTE: Americans followed news of the war with great interest and political hubris. Men flocked to recruiting centers and their states' volunteer forces, afraid the war would be over before they could get into action. This was especially true in Missouri, where Doniphan's actions were regularly depicted. No one wanted a repeat of Okeechobee, which is why many men in his unit wrote directly to newspaper editors back home telling their side of the campaign. This picture also depicts American slavery, a condition Doniphan's forces would encounter in New Mexico and one which Americans would shortly fight over themselves. Decisive victory after victory led many Americans to believe the war was just and confirmed the idea that they were destined to be a great nation. This was a popular narrative, which still survives to this day.



Figure 4. Mexican Costumes

Source: John Frost, *Pictorial History of Mexico and the Mexican War* (Philadelphia, PA: Claxton, Remsen and Heffelfinger, 1848), 563.

NOTE: Depicts the Spanish ruling class in the society.



Figure 5. Mexican Family

Source: Artist Unknown, Daguerreotype, Accession Number: P1981.65.18, Courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, accessed 18 February 2018, www.cartermuseum.org/imu/acm/#details=ecatalogue.57156.

NOTE: Members of the *Española* class are seen here. Their mixed Native American and Spanish blood is evident, their clothes is indicative of their middle-class status.



Figure 6. Our Lady of Cocharcas - Virgin with Indian Worshipers (1752)

Source: Courtesy of Brooklyn Museum, accessed 20 February 2018,
<https://archive.org/details/brooklynmuseum-o52953-our-lady-of-cocharcas-virgin>.

NOTE: Religious *Retablo* illustrating the mix of Catholic and Native beliefs.

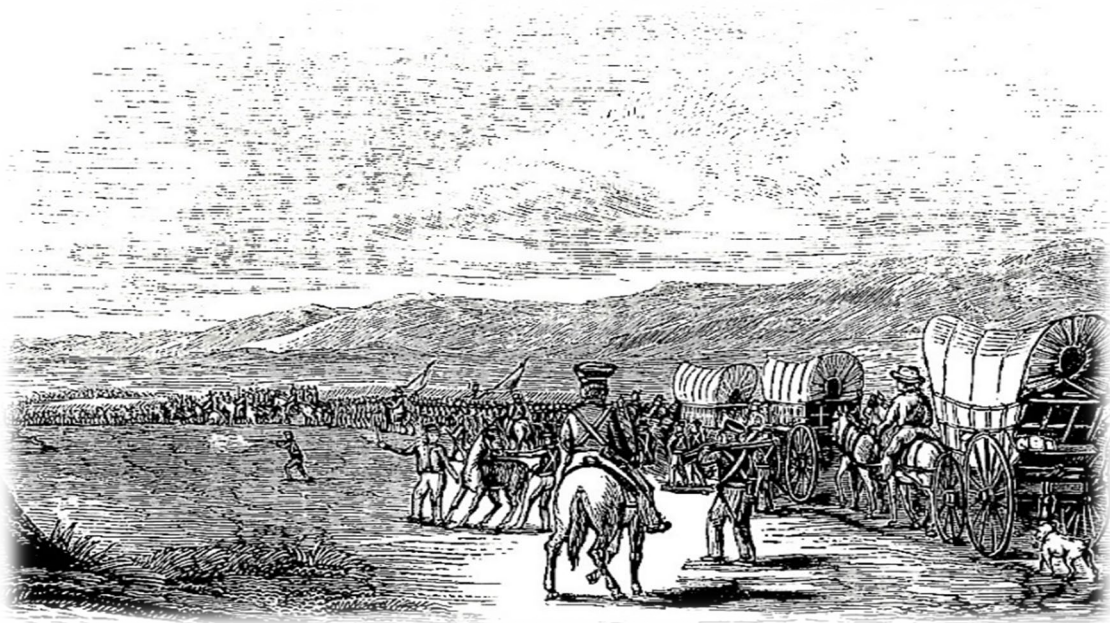


Figure 7. Marching Through a Jornada

Source: William Richardson, Journal of William H. Richardson, a Private Soldier in the Campaign of New and Old Mexico, Under the Command of Col. Doniphan, of Missouri (New York: Self Published, 1848), 1.

NOTE: Reflects the harsh terrain the soldiers campaigned in.

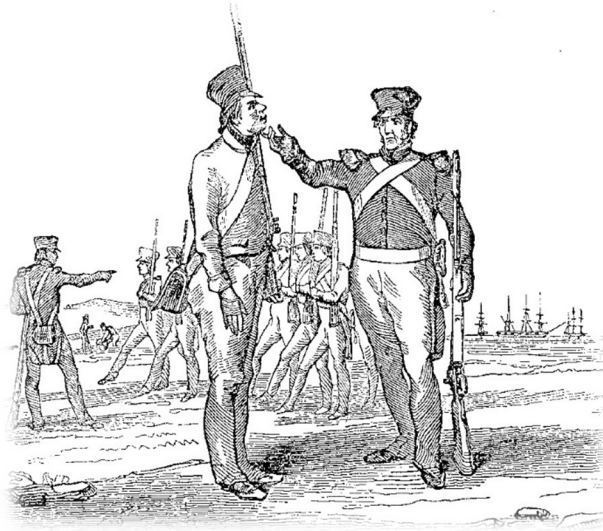


Figure 8. Drilling New Recruits

Source: John Frost, *Pictorial History of Mexico and the Mexican War* (Philadelphia, PA: Claxton, Remsen and Heffelfinger, 1848), 188.

NOTE: Example of the discipline found in the regular army.

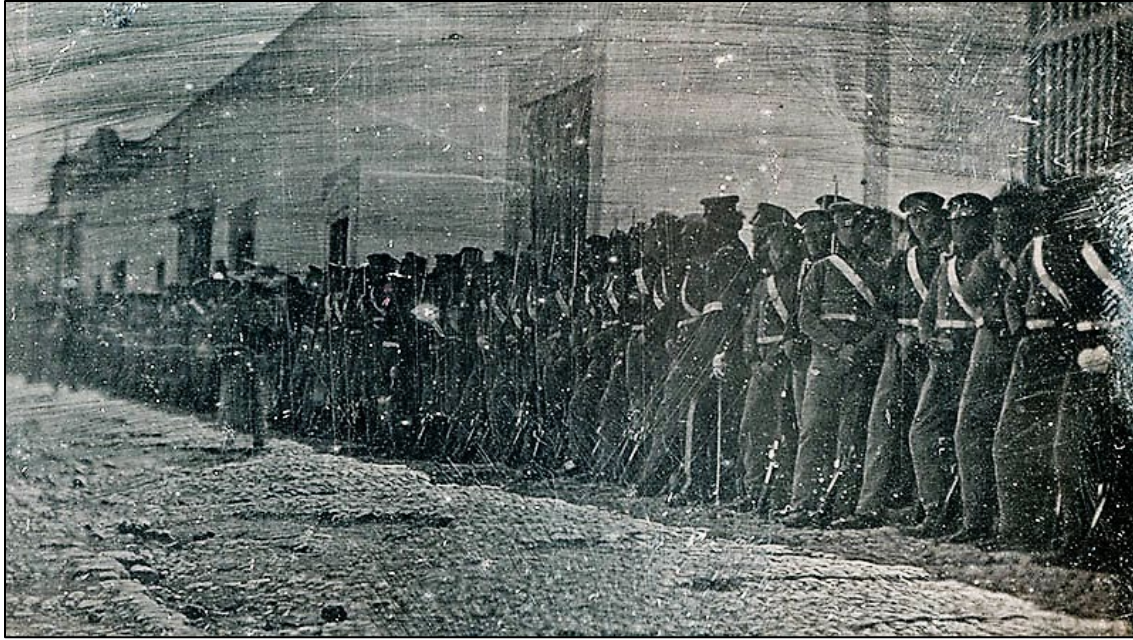


Figure 9. American Volunteer Infantry Standing
along a Street in Saltillo, Mexico (1847)

Source: Artist unknown, Daguerreotype, Accession Number: P1981.65.25, Courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, accessed 20 February 2018, www.cartermuseum.org/imu/acm/#details=ecatalogue.61723.

Note: Fascinating photograph depicting a volunteer force in the war under General Wool. By 1847 this unit was as well-equipped as its regular army counterparts. This photo is considered among the first of what is to become known as combat photography in the world.



Figure 10. The Volunteer

Source: John Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition Containing an Account of the Conquest of New Mexico; General Kearney's Overland Expedition to California; Doniphan's Campaign Against the Navajo; His Unparalleled March Upon Chihuahua and Durango; and the Operations of General Price at Santa Fe. With a Sketch of the life of Col. Doniphan (Cincinnati, OH: U.P. James, 1847), 4.

NOTE: Militia and volunteers were provided uniforms, however, due to the harsh terrain and lack of resupply, Doniphan's expedition took on the look of "Rocky Mountain life."



Figure 11. View Overlooking a Plaza with Zuni men

Source: Artist John K. Hillers, Albumen print, Catalog Number: P00071, National Museum of the American Indian, accessed 15 February 2018, http://collections.si.edu/search/detail/edanmdm:NMAI_325539?q=P00071&record=1&hlterm=P00071.

NOTE: Unmistakable Pueblo dwellings as would have been seen in 1846.



Figure 12. Ute Braves (1871-74)

Source: Artist Timothy O'Sullivan, Albumen silver print, Accession Number: P1989.2.40, Courtesy of the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, accessed 16 February 2018, www.cartermuseum.org/imu/acm/#details=ecatalogue.150766.

NOTE: Though taken slightly after Doniphan's time-period, the photo is still indicative of the strength and poise of the Ute Braves encountered.

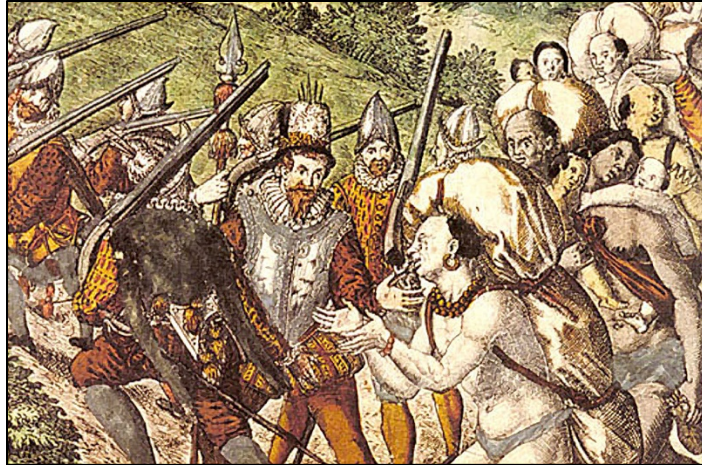


Figure 13. Spanish with Indian Slaves

Source: Courtesy of University of Georgia, Georgia Studies Images, accessed 16 February 2018, <http://georgiainfo.galileo.usg.edu/gastudiesimages/Spanish%20with%20Indian%20Slaves%201.htm>



Figure 14. Indian Atrocities in New Mexico

Source: John Frost, *Pictorial History of Mexico and the Mexican War* (Philadelphia, PA: Claxton, Remsen and Heffelfinger, 1848), 460.

NOTE: Highly stylized Anglo version of native attacks.



Figure 15. Colonel Doniphan Treating with the Navajo Indians

Source: Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Military Occupation of New Mexico 1846-1851* (Denver, CO: Smith-Brooks Company, 1909), 101.

NOTE: Stylized view of this first encounter.



Figure 16. Alexander Doniphan Later in Life, Estimated 1860

Source: Artist Matthew Brady, Daguerreotype, Reproduction Number: LC-USZ62-109945, Call Number: DAG no. 124. Library of Congress, accessed 20 April 2018, <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2004663929/>.

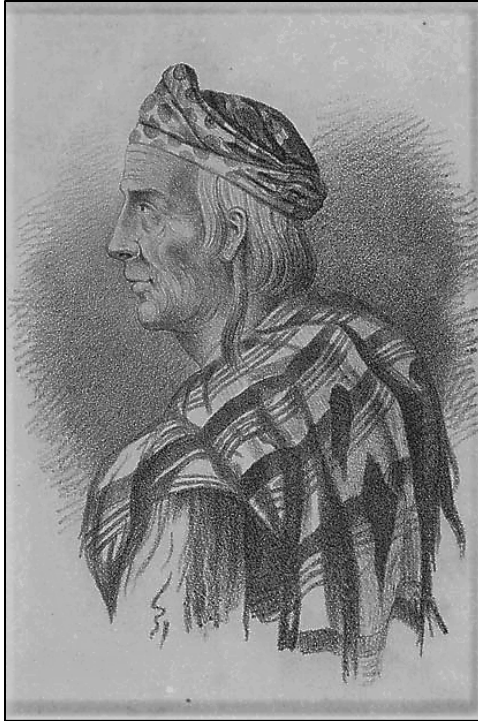


Figure 17. Narbona, Head Chief of the Navajos” (1852)

Source: Artist Edward M. Kern, Planographic prints, Accession Number: 1975.68.39.
Amon Carter Museum of American Art, accessed 15 February 2018,
<http://www.cartermuseum.org/imu/acm/#details=ecatalogue.29780>.

NOTE: Sketch completed after viewing his remains.



Figure 18. Mexican Volunteer Association, Columbia, MO (1902)

Source: Artist Unknown, Daguerreotype, Courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society.

NOTE: Picture of veterans from Doniphan's expedition during the Mexica-American War, names unidentified.

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