From the end of the 17th century to the mid-19th century, Spain, and later México, made land grants to individuals, groups, and towns to promote development in the frontier lands that today constitute the American Southwest. In New Mexico, land grants were issued to fulfill several purposes: encourage settlement, reward patrons of the Spanish government, and create a buffer zone between Indian tribes and the more populated regions of its northern frontier.

As reflected in the literature and in popular terminology, there were different types of Spanish and Mexican land grants made in New Mexico: community land grants, individual land grants, and pueblo land grants.

Community land grants were typically organized around a central plaza, whereby each settler received an individual allotment for a household and a tract of land to farm, and common land was set aside as part of the grant for use by the entire community. Individual and pueblo land grants, as name suggests, were made in the name of specific individuals, or for each pueblo. All three kinds of grants were given by the governor, who also determined the size and location.

In 1821, after gaining its independence from Spain, México continued to adhere to the land policies adopted by Spain. Manuel Armijo, the last Mexican governor, gave land more lavishly than all the others, awarding vast tracts of lands to New Mexicans and emigrants alike.

In 1845, when Texas achieved statehood as the nation's 28th state, U.S. territorial interests, including a plan to expand settlement to the Pacific Ocean, collided with México's territorial interests. The Mexican-American War broke out over the boundary between Texas and México, bringing an end to a 9-year boundary dispute.

Eventually, U.S. troops occupied Santa Fe, New Mexico; proclaimed New Mexico's annexation; and established U.S. government control over the territory. In 1847, U.S. troops occupied Mexico City and shortly thereafter, México surrendered. The war officially ended with the 1848 ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which promised to protect the property of the people in the newly-annexed lands.
In 1854, Congress established (in the 1854 Act) the Office of the Surveyor General of New Mexico within the Department of the Interior. The Surveyor General was charged with investigating Spanish and Mexican land grant claims and submitting to Congress recommendations on their acceptance or rejection.

The Surveyor General was directed to examine the claims by applying Spanish and Mexican laws, customs, and usages, and to treat the prior existence of a city, town, or village as clear evidence of a grant.

Because of fraud and other difficulties with this process, Congress established the Court of Private Land Claims (CPLC) in 1891, to resolve new and remaining claims in New Mexico. The criteria that Congress established for the CPLC in determining whether a land grant should be confirmed were more stringent than those it had established for both the Surveyor General of New Mexico. The CPLC could confirm grants only where title had been "lawfully and regularly derived" under the laws of Spain or México.

For the most part, New Mexico consisted of a sparsely-populated area of subsistence agricultural communities, and inhabitants were unfamiliar with the English language, the U.S. legal system, and American culture. The Mexican legal system, for example, had consisted largely of laws that were often interpreted according to local custom and usage, and more formal tribunals and courts did not play the same important role in México as they did in the United States in interpreting and deciding issues and cases.

U.S. land tenure and ownership patterns also differed from those then existing in New Mexico. Then as now, the U.S. system viewed the earth's surface as an imaginary grid laid out on a piece of paper, and cartography and surveying were used to identify physical features of a particular parcel. The exact measurements of parcels were identified and located on a map, land ownership was primarily in "fee simple," and land titles were recorded in local government offices. Taken as a whole, this system facilitated the use of land as a commodity that could be bought and sold.

By contrast, the Mexican and Spanish systems were rooted in a rural, community-based system of land holding prevalent in medieval Europe. That system was not based on fee simple ownership; instead, land was viewed more in its relationship to the community, although parcels could be sold to individuals after the land had been used and inhabited for a certain number of years. Land was used primarily to provide sustenance to the local population, rather than as a commodity that could be exchanged or sold in a competitive market. Land boundaries were defined with reference to terrestrial landmarks or the adjoining property, and because these markers were often difficult to locate, Spanish and Mexican land records sometimes lacked the geographic precision of the U.S. system.

The claims that were filed and pursued for the 154 community land grants located in present-day New Mexico during this 50-year period encompassed 9.38 million acres of land. The majority of these land grants-- 105 grants, or over 68 percent-- were confirmed, and the majority of acreage claimed under these confirmed grants-- 5.96 million acres, or 63.5 percent-- were ultimately awarded, although a significant amount (3.42 million acres, or 36.5 percent) were not awarded and became part of the U.S. public domain available for settlement by the general population.

Some of the confirmed grants were awarded less acreage than claimed, and grants that were wholly rejected were awarded no acreage at all. Land grant heirs and scholars commonly refer to acreage that was not awarded during the confirmation process as "lost" acreage, and thus it is said that community land grants "lost" 3.42 million acres during the confirmation process. The circumstances surrounding this perceived loss have been a concern of land grant heirs for more than a century.

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**Links:**

New Mexico Office of the State Historian: New Mexico Land Grants --
http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=22288

GAO report: Community Land Grant Definitions and Lists 2001 (PDF) --

GAO report: Community Land Grand Findings and Proposed Actions 2004 (PDF) --

Center for Land Grant Studies: Land Grants Database --
http://www.southwestbooks.org/grantstypes.htm

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2: La Joya: Unconfirmed Land Grant

1893

The GAO lists the Sevilleta grant as being a community land grant, including the town of La Joya, included under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and confirmed in 1893, although patents were not issued until 1915, which may account for this area being listed as an unconfirmed grant, although boosters were clearly pushing for fast settlement of this area.

Quote: (1883) VALENCIA COUNTY

By Gilbert Scudder, Secretary of the Bureau of Immigration.
At the present time but little is known outside the Territory of the resources and advantages of this, one of the oldest and largest counties of New Mexico. Situated nearly in the center of the Territory, and having the advantage of two trunk railways recently constructed and traversing the county at right angles, it possesses unusual attractions for the farmer, stock raiser and miner. Its mineral resources have as yet received but little attention, but as soon as the prospector and capitalist shall commence their operations in earnest, its future as a mineral and stock raising district will be established. Some mineral claims have been located but no development of any consequence has been done. In the Manzano range there are some prospect holes, mostly dug by the natives, which show undoubted evidence of containing gold, silver, copper and lead, and in paying quantities. The one thing needed being capital to develop it. Only three districts have been prospected to any extent to-wit: The "Ladrones," "Spiegelberg Springs" and "La Joya."

The Ladrones mountains is undoubtedly one of the largest deposits of low grade ore ever discovered in the Territory, and to be worked profitably it must be on a large scale which requires capital. For a steady and reliable profit this camp is well worthy the attention of capitalists. The ores are principally galena, carrying considerable lead and some copper.

Spiegelberg Springs is a young camp, but gives promise, with development, of being one of the best copper producing districts in the Territory.

The La Joya mining district, east of and near the Rio Grande, is situated in the southern part of the county. The ores are principally galena carrying large deposits of silver and gold which can be easily milled, and the work already done on the leads proves its presence in large and paying quantities.

The Atlantic and Pacific railroad, or thirty-fifth parallel road, runs nearly two hundred miles in a westerly direction and centrally through the county, and connects the Santa Fe railway system in the valley of the Rio Grande with Arizona Territory; thus bringing within easy reach its immense coal fields, pastoral ranges and agricultural valleys. These coal fields are already being worked in places with most satisfactory results, and now that the Indian question has been virtually set at rest, considerable herds of cattle and flocks of sheep are being driven upon the public domain, although out little of the latter has been entered at the land office. This county it will be understood also possesses the advantage of having the entire western half free from land grants, and, as it covers an area of over 9000 square miles, there are very large tracts of government land still open to entry and well adapted to stock raising and homesteads, and upon which coal and mineral prospecting may be engaged with profit. [Ritch, William Gillet]

**Overview: La Joya de Sevilleta**

The modern town of La Joya was founded as a frontier outpost for protection of the Camino Real adjacent to the site of a seventeenth-century Piro pueblo, named Nueva Sevilla by Oñate, perhaps because of its resemblance to the Spanish city of Seville. Later Fray Benavides refers to the pueblo, which by 1634 had a convent, as Seelocú, possibly the Piro name for it. The pueblo was deserted in 1680, as the Piro went south to El Paso with the Spanish.

The village of La Joya de Sevilleta marks the lower end of Rio Abajo. For a time it was where caravans would gather and await the rest of the caravan and/or presidial troops who would escort them down the trail. The church and possibly the plaza, along with some ruins of structures, remain of this once-important village. [Long Distance Trails Group—Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

### 3: Belen: Confirmed Land Grant

1858

The Belen grant, totalling nearly 200,000 acres, was confirmed in 1858 and patents were issued to the heirs in 1871.

**Quote:** (1767) GRANTEES Of The BELEN Tract vs. Sale Of Land By PEDRO ITURRIETA to Fernando Chaves. 1767.

Before Don Pedro Ferrin de Mendinueta, Governor.

Francisco Trebol Navarro; Manuel Garvisu; Manuel Zanez; Manuel Garvisu Zanez.

The petition for the Belen Grant asked for a tract of land which in 1740 was uncultivated and unappropriated. It is described and "bounded on the east by the Sandia Mountains; on the west by the Rio Puerco; on the north on both sides of the river the boundary is the land of Nicolas de Chaves and those of the adjoining settlers of Our Lady of the Concepcion tract of Tome, and on the south the place called Felipe Romero, in a direct line until it intersects the boundary above mentioned, from the east to the west."

The first settlers were: Diego Torres de Salazar; Pedro Bigil; Miguel Salazar; Juana Teresa Romero; Lugarda Romero; Juan Antonio Salazar; Miguel Salazar; Pablo Salazar; Nicolas Salazar; Manuel Antonio Trujillo; Maria Torres; Salvador Torres; Jose Antonio Torres; Ladeo Torres; Cayetano Cristobal Torres; Diego Torres; Barbara Romero; Gabriel Romero; Maria Vigil; Jose Trujillo; Francisco Martin; Nicolas Martiniano; Ygnacio Barrera; Juan Domingo Torres; Jose Romero; Jose Tenorio; Juan Jose de Sandoval; Francisco Trujillo; Francisco Hiron;
The grant was made by Don Gaspar Domingo Mendoza, and possession was given by Don Nicolas de Chaves, alcalde mayor of Alburquerque.

The house of Felipe Romero was a ruin, this hacienda having been destroyed in the revolution of 1680. [Twitchell, Ralph Emerson]

Overview: Belén

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

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

4: Pedro Amendaris Land Grant

Two land grants, totalling nearly 490,000 acres, were confirmed in 1860, and patents issued in 1878. Today this ranch is mostly owned by Ted Turner, as an experimental bison range.

Quote: PEDRO ARMENDARIS, 1846.

Protests against the government granting to other persons lands already granted to him.

Don Pedro Armendaris was a prominent citizen of New Mexico, having been alcalde during a long period. In 1820 he made application to the Spanish government for a grant of land lying on the west bank of the Río Grande, opposite his ranch known as "Valverde." The application was granted and the lands were allotted to him; several years later he was driven from the property by the Navajos. Don Pedro left New Mexico and became a citizen of Chihuahua. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Armendaris made a contract with two American citizens, Hugh N. Smith and Thomas Biggs, whereby, for services rendered in perfecting the title to his grants, Smith and Biggs became the owners of four thousand acres of the land grant, lying opposite the old Armendaris ranch of Valverde-- the present town-site of San Marcial, in Socorro county. This grant was confirmed by Congress in 1860, surveyed in 1877, and patented in 1878.

The grants contained 490,000 acres, a large portion of which are situate on the west side of the Río Grande.

Upon this property the government of the United States is now constructing one of the largest dams and reservoirs for irrigation purposes in the world, the Elephant Butte project. The lands granted to Armendaris are now the property of the Victorio Land and Cattle Company. [Twitchell, Ralph Emerson]

Overview: Fray Cristóbal

Named for a member of the Oñate entrada, the Paraje de Fray Cristóbal remained important throughout the period in which the Camino Real was in use. Oñate's men facetiously remarked that the outline of the ridge of the mountain near present Elephant Butte Reservoir looked like the profile of Fray Cristóbal, saying he was "feisimo" (politely, not very good looking). It was described as a general area rather than a particular point but can be defined by its proximity to both the Río Grande and the Jornada del Muerto. In the nineteenth century, Fray Cristóbal became Fra Cristobal, as a modern local spelling and pronunciation without a y in Fray and without an accent in Cristóbal. [Long Distance Trails Group--Santa Fe, National Park Service, New Mexico State Office, Bureau of Land Management]

Links:
El Camino Real International Heritage Center: Jornada del Muerto --
http://www.caminorealheritage.org/jornada/jornada.htm

5: White Oaks District

1897

Quote: By 1885 White Oaks had assumed the semblance of a a real town. Streets and cross streets had been surveyed and laid out. Store buildings and dwellings were all in line. The early-day boom-town atmosphere, featuring saloons, wide-open gambling, and guns and Bowie knives dangling from belts, had practically disappeared. The majority of the citizens were law-abiding, progressive people, unafraid and confident of the future.

...For those who drank water [as opposed to whiskey], there were wells. A few residents had their own, dug down to water level at thirty-five to forty feet below the surface. The water was "hard," impregnated with
alkaline salts. The public was dependent for its drinking water on a water wagon, a cylindrical wooden tank hauled by a span of horses. Delivery was made to a barrell standing in the yard of each dwelling. The price was fifty cents, later reduced to twenty-five cents, a barrel, forty gallons.

In later years a number of the better houses, those with pitched roofs of sheet iron or shingles, had cisterns for catching rain water, soft water used only for drinking and bathing. To soften the well water, we used the root and core of the amole cactus [agave parryi], abundant in the vicinity. We shredded it, pounded it, and stirred it into the water. This native Mexican stunt later became the basis which produced Amole soap.

...We certainly did not live a life of luxury, but we ate surprisingly well. In addition to the bread from our weekly baking we used a great deal of cornbread, cornmeal mush, and oatmeal, along with hot cakes drenched in molasses or syrup. Our coffee was the well-known Arbuckle's roasted, purchased in one-pound packages at three for a dollar. We ground it at home in a grinder fastened to the kitchen wall.

Fresh vegetables, in season, came from one local farmer, a Frenchman of peculiar character. He spoke but little English and his prices were sometimes confusing: One bunch of onions, ten cents, two for a quarter.

Tom Osborn, a long-range cross-country peddler, provided our main supply of oranges, apples, watermelons, and so forth, and our potatoes, onions, and turnips on occasion. Back and forth he traveled with his team and covered wagon-- from Las Vegas 175 miles north; from Tularosa 45 miles south; from Honda and Ruidoso 60 miles east. He was one of the most popular and welcome tradesmen in our midst. Two, three, or more times each year, he came in loaded and went out empty with his profits, leaving us happy with the much-appreciated luxuries he had provided.

Sugar came in hundred-pound sacks, flour and beans in fifty-pound sacks, rice, salt, and other commodities in smaller sacks. We got our salted mackerel in wooden tubs. Codfish came in slabs, bacon in sides ham and shoulders as the Lord made them. Canned goods-- corn, tomatoes, peas, condensed milk when it became available-- were often purchased in case lots and shipped in with other freight. [Parker, Morris B.]

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**Overview:** White Oaks

The discovery of a rich vein of gold in 1879 drew prospectors, speculators, miners, and settlers to this remote area by the hundreds. Within three years, the dusty streets had been planted with trees, Starr's Opera House was open for business, as well as a school, a town hall, a newspaper office, and the ubiquitous saloons.

Billy the Kid menaced the prosperous merchants and ranchers of White Oaks, and while the town's posse failed to track him down, outrage over his destructive and murderous activities led to Governor Wallace issuing a reward for bringing the Kid to justice.

Several major discoveries did not keep the mines from running out within thirty years, and although the residents of White Oaks lobbied hard for a railroad, Charles Eddy decided instead to route his line through Carrizoza. Before long, White Oaks began to decline, and today only about a dozen residents remain.

Today's visitors can explore the past at the Cedarvale Cemetery, the White Oaks Schoolhouse Museum, the Miner's Home Museum, and the No Scum Allowed Saloon. [Western History/Genealogy Department, Denver Public Library]

**Links:**
White Oaks New Mexico -- http://whiteoaksnewmexico.com

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**6: Eddy**

1889

*Quote:* Eddy County was organized in 1889, the year before I moved there. Charles B. Eddy was the manager and part owner of the Eddy-Bissel Live Stock Company. He took the initiative in the organization of the county and in selecting the county seat, and in its developments. He also took the initiative in building the railroad, and the canal, dams, and reservoirs for irrigation from the Pecos River. He lived in a little rock house across the river in what is known as the La Huerta addition to Eddy, now Carlsbad. The only two places contesting for the county seat was Seven Rivers and Eddy. Eddy had no inhabitants at the time, but through the influence of C.B. Eddy, it was voted the county seat.

In laying out the town of Eddy and in fixing up their titles to the lots, they put a clause in each deed to the lots sold, by which any man who sold intoxicating liquor of any kind, or permitted it to be sold on the lot, forfeited his title, which reverted back to the land company. They left the clause out of the title to one lot and that is why, legally, there is only one place in the original town of Eddy where liquor can be sold today.

They started working in 1889, building a railroad from Pecos to Eddy, called the Pecos Valley Railway and nicknamed "The Pea Vine." They finished the railroad in 1890; Eddy was the terminal until 1896. They also started the building of the dams, reservoirs, and canals for the present Carlsbad irrigation project, which was then called the Pecos Irrigation and Improvement Company Project.

A majority of the first county officers elected were crooks and criminals, and especially the sheriff, and that
element controlled the politics in the county. They established a town south on the road to Pecos, about a mile from Eddy, called Phoenix, and one a mile north of Eddy, on the road to Roswell, called the Lone Wolf. These towns were inhabited by gamblers, prostitutes, and saloon men. Phoenix, particularly, was a rendezvous for outlaws and they carried on their vocations there. The two towns together had a population of about fifteen hundred people.

To give you an idea of the kind of place Phoenix was, I will quote S.I. Roberts, a merchant who lived in Eddy. "Phoenix had a population of about nine hundred people. Their chief industry was gambling, liquor, and wild women resorts. It was a hell of a town, a mecca for all the underworld of the Southwest." [Harkey, Dee]

Overview: Carlsbad

The township of Eddy, later Carlsbad, was part of the great vision of rancher Charles B. Eddy, to stimulate growth in southeastern New Mexico through large diversion projects off the Pecos River. Eddy foresaw that large irrigation projects would spur the growth of the area. He platted out a town, planted trees, and sold lots off his Rancho Halagueno for $50 - $400 each.

The town boomed, especially after the arrival of the railroad. Floods in 1893 slowed the runaway growth, and residents renamed the town Carlsbad. The discovery of Carlsbad Caverns in 1901 led to the growth of a tourist industry.

During the twentieth century, Carlsbad became a global leader in potash production, and although that has declined, petroleum development in the area also supports the economy. The Carlsbad Museum is closed Sundays, and has free admission.

Images:

The first permanent building in Eddy, originally the Eddy National Bank and Pecos Valley Railroad and Improvement Company

Links:
City of Carlsbad: History -- http://carlsbadnm.com/mhayes/perrigo.htm

7: Roswell

1879

James Miller had tried to settle in Roswell in 1878, during the fever pitch of the Lincoln County War, but found it too violent for a family man and returned to Colorado. A year later, his brother once again convinced him to return, and he spent the rest of his life in Roswell.

Quote: (1880) When we got to Roswell about September 1, 1879, we found what my brother had written about the change in ownership was true, and what was more to the point, it augured well for the future of what was that whole section. It seems that Marion Turner had found out the houses belonging to Van Smith were on vacant land (land upon which the filing had not been fully completed under the homestead act. ed), and had promptly tried to take advantage of this discovery by filing the 160 acres on which they stood. Shortly afterwards, Colonel Wildy had come from Mississippi and bought Turner's claim, along with the improvements of Van Smith. Colonel Wildy bought up in all about 480 acres, most of which is now in the corporate limits of Roswell.

When Colonel Wildy gave it all to his daughter and her husband, Captain Lea took charge of things; a change for the better certainly took place at once. Captain Lea had no patience with lawlessness, especially mob violence, such as the Lincoln County War had created. As a result, Roswell was being more and more each year transformed into a safe and peaceful abiding place for the Lea family and their friends who might be drawn thither by the opportunities of the undeveloped Pecos Valley. Let me add that as long as Captain Lea held the reins, there were no murders committed in Roswell.
Under the improved state of affairs at Roswell and vicinity, there was no question in my mind about the desirability of settling in that locality. In fact, the country was filling up rather rapidly with settlers, as was shown by the way in which the wealth of water in the three Berrendos, and the two Spring Rivers, North and South, was being appropriated by irrigation ditches. This activity really began in 1878, when the Mexican colony I have mentioned, began to make a canal for the use of the water from North Spring River.

About the same time a Mormon colony started to take out a ditch from the south side of the Spring River. At this juncture, John Chisum, monarch of the Pecos Valley, perceiving his throne to be tottering, took steps to keep intruders out by trying to monopolize the water from Spring River. He got John Chisum, Bot Gilbert, and my brother Bill to join with him and make a ditch on the north side of the river. This ditch, together with the Mormon ditch, would practically control all the water rights and relieve Chisum from being bothered with homesteaders.

--James Miller, Sheep Ranching on the Chisum Cattle Range [Shinkle, James D.]

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**Overview:** Roswell

Although the area where Roswell was to grow was inhabited and claimed between 1869-1871, the discovery of a major aquifer in 1890 contributed to a major growth spurt, which only gained momentum when the railroad was built through town in 1893.

Roswell remains an economic center for surrounding farms and ranches, and serves the booming petroleum industry of eastern New Mexico.

**Images:**

![Abandoned farm near Roswell](image)

**Links:**

**Office of the State Historian: Roswell** -- http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=1321

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**8: Seven Rivers**

**1870-1940**

This passage illustrates the boom and bust that cattle ranching brought to the Pecos River Valley, from herds of cattle stretching over 20 miles, to an abandoned cemetery, in the course of one man's adulthood.

*Quote:* (1880) The settlement of Seven Rivers, established in the 1870's, a mile or so upstream from its confluence with the Pecos, and 3 or 4 miles from the present town of Lakewood, was once an important trading point, vying with Lincoln and White Oaks in population and commercial supremacy. Here, trail outfits moving north from Texas could buy supplies. An abandoned cemetery lying not far from the base of Seven Rivers hills is about all that now marks its site.

About the first of April, as green grass began to shoot forth from winter-swept plains, managers of the great cattle companies bestirred themselves from lethargy. Friendly meetings were held and plans for the coming summer roundup work formulated. A "Caporal," head roundup boss, was elected to superintend working this vast range, over which the million cattle belonging to the Pecos Valley ranch owners might have strayed during the receding fall and winter. Division roundup captains were appointed. Chuck wagons were put in order. Saddle horses of the different companies gathered up from convenient pastures in which they had grazed since the fall before. Cowhands, those not enjoying winter jobs, their sole possessions generally being a pony, saddle, bridle, camp bed and a few clothes, were engaged, roundup cooks placed in charge of chuck wagons, and horse rustlers, often a boy of 14 or 16 years, delegated to handle the remuda-- 150 or 200 horses accompanying each outfit-- for every rider must have a dozen or so ponies in his mount and presently, one by one, roundup crews started from their respective home ranches, to move off for the spring hunt. Word had been sent to the "little fellows"-- smaller owners of cattle-- of the time and place of the
wagons' departure, who with his mount and possibly accompanied by a "neighbor," joined some outfit with which he worked as long as he found it to advantage to do so, in gathering his cattle.

The range over which the Pecos River roundup wagons coursed in the 80's and 90's was broad. It extended form Fort Sumner to the line of Texas, perhaps to the frontier town of Pecos City on the Texas Pacific-recently built— a distance of 250 miles. A writer of those days, who followed the dogies form April to December, thus describes his labors:

"I seem to recall to mind one roundup on both sides of the Pecos from Seven Rivers to the Berrendos just north of Roswell, where there had been a great drift of cattle from as far north as the Canadian. Our outfit was on the west side of the river and was one of the 22 wagons on that work which took about 30 days to complete.

Cattle were largely on out-waters, that is, on surface waters, holes and lakes, and the drive would have to go out each morning 20 miles or more to get round the cattle."

The Pecos Valley ranchmen not only had their many thousands of longhorns to gather, but were also engaged in "cleaning" their ranges of Canadian River stock which had drifted in on them from the far away Tascosa country, the LE's, the LX's, Turkey Tracks, and some bearing Goodnight's brand.

Twenty-two roundup wagons and their crews! Two hundred and fifty cowboys, their different remudas numbering not less than 3,000 saddle horses. Rodeo supreme! Amidst clouds of dust, work went on with undending lack of variety, until the well-managed scheme had drawn within its almost inescapable meshes most of the cattle of the Pecos Valley. [Thompson, Albert W.]

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**Overview: Seven Rivers**

This unexpectedly lush area of eastern New Mexico lay between the Mescalero Apache and Comanche territories. While the Spanish knew about the rich grasslands and abundant game as early as 1722, Europeans did not move into the area until the 1840s, when El Paso ranchers began to send their herds there.

After the Civil War, the Seven Rivers area became a stop on the Goodnight-Loving cattle trail, and two trading posts and a saloon were established to serve the trail drivers in 1867. Anglo ranchers moved to the area in greater numbers, but the community was soon plunged into the Lincoln County war. Seven Rivers was friendly to Texas rancher John Chisum, and took sides with Billy the Kid and the Regulators against the Murphy-Dolan contingent. Many lost their lives in the fighting, including postmaster Bob Beckwith.

The end of the Lincoln County war did not end the lawlessness of Seven Rivers. Gangs continued to murder and rob, using Seven Rivers as their base, while Eddy residents, who were not allowed to drink, gamble, or indulge in other vices within Eddy, frequented Seven Rivers instead. The town built a school in 1890, and three years later constructed a dam, which formed Lake McMillian. Despite these improvements, residents eventually deserted the area for Eddy (Carlsbad). The post office was closed in 1895, the last lawman was murdered in 1898, and by 1910, the community had been entirely abandoned.

Today visitors can enjoy the waters of Brantley Lake State Park near Seven Rivers.

After [Stanley, F. W]

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**9: Cooney Mining District**

*1880*

*Quote: (1880) The Alms Massacre*

Our family left Sherman, Texas Sept. 22, 1879 for Arizona, where one of my uncles was supposed to be living. We came by Deming where we were warned that the Indians were out and we had better not go by Cooke's Peak, one of the Indians' favorite places of attack. My father never having had any dealing with any Indians, was not afraid of the Indians and came on by the Peak: luck was apparently with us for a big snow storm came up, and we never saw an Indian.

When we got to Silver City the weather was so disagreeable that father got a place for us to stay. While in Silver City we heard that my uncle was in the Frisco Valley, area up in the hills mining. Father took us to the Frisco Valley and settled. We made the third family in the valley.

...In the later part of April 1880 the Indians under their chief, Victorio, attacked at the Cooney mine up in the hills. The attack was made just as the men were quitting work for the day. Three of the men from the mine were killed, another, Mr. Taylor was shot in the leg the shot breaking his leg. Mr. Taylor hid out in a near by cave. The rest of the men scattered into the hills.

Mother and we children slept in the wagon; as the only house that we had was a lean to. When I went out to the wagon to go to bed I heard a strange noise up in the hills. I ran into the house and said, "There is something up in the hills". The entire family came out to listen, when they didn't hear anything they tried to make me believe that it was the frogs down in the swamp. I had been raised in town, and any unusual noise attracted my attention, and I knew the noise I heard was up in the hills, and wasn't a noise usually heard at
night. After the family had gone to bed I could not sleep, because I kept thinking about the noise in the hills. I got up and sat on a big trunk in the front of the wagon....

A man rode around the house and asked "Where is your father?"

I replied: "In the house asleep".

"Go wake him, and tell him that the Apaches are out, that he had better get all of his stock in the corral at once and get ready for an attack. I haven't the time to awaken him as I must go warn others."

I thanked the man, and ran to the house to awaken father. The family soon was busy, father put the stock in the corral and went after my brother and uncle that slept in the store across the creek. When the men came back my uncle and oldest brother stayed at the corral to guard the stock. Mother and I started to moulding bullets for our old 44 Winchester.

...My father thought that we should fortify our place as our house was on a plain and the Roberts house was at the foot of a hill, and the Indians could shoot down the hill. Mother insisted that we go on over to the Roberts Ranch. My brother said that he would stay with the stock at the corral. We finally got the two white mules to the wagon and started for the ranch.

We saw some cattle standing on a hill, the cattle were watching something. Mother said "Paw drive faster the Indians are coming the cattle are watching them."

"Oh mother, there is a plenty of time those cattle are watching us, the Indians aren't near yet."

Paw just would not hurry, and mother would urge him to drive faster. Paw would just tease her and never drive any faster. We were leisure driving along when we came to the top of the hill, and the cattle started to run, and our salute was a bullet. The Indians were coming toward us. I grabbed the old Springfield, which was a old model being the 1865 model. Paw called: "It isn't loaded. The shells are in my belt." The belt was a new belt and very stiff. I tugged but could not get any of the shells out; paw was driving very fast. And I was pointing the gun at the Indians in hopes that they would stay back if they saw a gun. If I had been able to load the gun I could never hit the Indians as was the shooting around so; as father was really making a race for the Roberts ranch now.

I screamed to the family to lie down in the wagon so the Indians couldn't hit them easily. Bullets were whizzing all around us. The Indians were getting nearer all the time. My brother was standing at the corral watching the attack, but could not help us, as his gun was not a long range gun. The men at the Roberts Ranch saw the trouble that we were in and six of the men rode out to help us; thereby risking their lives; the party of men rode between us and the Indians. The Indians began to shoot at the men on the horses; therefore giving us a chance to get to the ranch. We were traveling at quite a speed by the time we reached the ranch. We had to pass by the house, and pulled up behind a old log shed. Just as we halted one of the white mules fell dead, the first shot of the Apaches to take effect for they were sure shooting wild.

We got out of the wagon down by the wall. My sister said: "I haven't seen any Indians." She had been lying down in the wagon. She decided to peep around the corner to see an Indian, a shot missed her head about an inch. To get to the house we were going to have to leap a ditch, the men told us soon as there was a slack in the firing to make for the house. The firing ceased, and we knew the Indians were surrounding the place. We made a dash for the house, the children made it across all right, but we were afraid mother would be unable to make the leap across the ditch as she was short and weighed about one hundred and sixty-five pounds. When mother came to the ditch she leaped across that ditch as spry as a deer. She said it was time to get in a hurry.

The house was a long house made of logs with a door at each end. The beds were placed around the wall of the room, and the women and children put in the center of the room for protection. There were thirty-one men in the house besides the six members of the Colter family, five in the Roberts family and six in the Mender family.

My brother couldn't stand the suspense of not knowing what happened to us, made a ride for the ranch, and arrived without a scratch. Luck was surely with us for bullets has hit all around us, and not a one was unjured. The Indians were able to keep up a constant fire as fifteen warriors would drive up and fire; then drop back to reload their guns and another fifteen would take their place thereby keep up a a constant fire as they were always moving in a circle. There were two hundred thirteen warriors counted.

The Indians surrounded the house some shooting down the hill many of the shots lodged on the dirt roof, others knocked holes in the wall making it unsafe to move about as the Indians could see any movement in the house through the cracks.

...Mr. Foster understood the Apache language and signs, he told the boys that Victorio was trying to get his warriors to rush down to the house, as our ammunition was low he cautioned the boys to never shoot unless they were sure of the shot. For if the Apaches ever did get to the house it would be all off with the settlers, as the warriors could soon capture the place as they had plenty ammunition. The Indians always had ammunition, a Indian scout would always go out with a lot of ammunition when he returned he never had any, he would tell his commanding officer that he shot at rabbits and birds, but he was storing it away for future use as he knew he would probably be back with the tribe the next year, many times he sent his ammunition to his tribe. The warriors made several rushes for the house, but the boys made it too hot to get too close.

The Apaches are superstitious about fighting after night, and when dark came the Indians made camp at the
present site of Alamo. The yelling and whooping really came off. They danced and made merry for they had
the white settlers penned.

...We figured that we were in for a siege, and had better fill everything with water. If the Indians were to cut
the ditch we would probably have to give up the fight from thirst.

Two men volunteered to try to get through to Silver City for help and ammunitions. To go to Silver they must
by the Indian camp. The men came around and told us all good-bye, they never expected to come back,
and I don't suppose anyone in the room ever expected to see them again, but God was merciful for they went
by the camp safely. At the ranches along the road they were able to secure fresh mounts. The men arrived in
Silver City early the next day and gave the alarm, and rushed over to the fort.

Captain Madden had been out on an Indian scouting trip, and was just returning to the post with thirty-five of
his troops and scouts he ordered his men to turn and march to the Frisco Valley. The men marched by Silver
City where seventy-five citizens joined the troops. The men were tired but they never let this hinder them in
their rush to the settlers.

The morning after the battle we were surprised that we weren't fired on, but Mr. Indian had decided that the
white settlers weren't to be taken so easily, and had sent a runner over to the San Carlos Reservation for
warriors. The men decided as the Indians weren't bothering to try to bury Mr. Wilcox. They constructed
a crude wooden coffin and decided to bury him on the hill behind the house. If the Indians were seen coming
a shot was to be fired from a pistol.

The men were carrying the coffin up the hill when a shot was heard. The men hastily placed the body under a
tree and made a run for the house. When the men had gathered at the house it was discovered that one of
the men had accidentally dropped his gun, and made it go off. Many days later we were able to laugh about the
incident, but it sure wasn't funny then.

There was seventeen head of stock in the Roberts corral when the fight started, but they were all killed. Our
old white mule stood by the old log house all day, and was never hit.

The second morning after the fight Captain Madden came in sight of the ranch. As soon as he could see the
ranch with his field glasses he tried to see the condition of the ranch he cried: "We are early enough for I see
white men." The cry of rejoicing went up from that group could be heard for many miles.

...The families that were in the valley never did receive anything for their loss, as the government agent said
that the Indians weren't at war with the government. A negro detachment was sent into the valley but they
were useless. Father was talking to one of them once and he said; "We daren't shoot at an Indian. We are just
out here to bury the dead."

--Mrs. Agnes Mender Snyder. Dec. 3, 1937 [WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection.]

10: Lake Valley

1881

Quote: (1881) I left Tennessee in in 1880 and came to New Mexico in 1881 arriving at Old Town for my first
stop in Grant county. Senor Peña was running the store there at the time. I will never forget the fact that he
served buttermilk with our meal, and I thought that it was the best milk that I ever drink. I settled in the
Perche and Mimbres district living on the Membres most of the time.

I was living on the Membres when a Mr Hayes was killed over near Lake Valley in Sierras County by the
Indians. Mr Moore my nearest neighbor wished to go over to his place at Lake Valley and wanted me to go
with him after Mr. Hayes was killed. We were nearing Mule Springs when I noticed a track. I said "Look there
are tracks".

Mr Moore replied "Oh they probably belong to some Mexican."

I soon cried "LOOK! Look the large tracks of the Indian". Moore said "Let's go. Jesus Christ is that fellow in
this part of the country?" He began to kick and spur his horse and we were really leaving that part of the
country. In all of the recent raids there was an unusually large track and when this track was seen it was
generally known that some cruelty and destruction had been done in the vicinity and everyone had a horror of
meeting the warrior and wanted to get away from the place that he was likely to be round around. We soon
cought up with a Chink and told him that the Indians were behind us and he said "Me no see Indians" but he
soon had his horse in a run also when we told him of the large track.

We went on home and near night a follow came by and told us the Indians were near and we were to go the
Brown place. We went over to the place and spent the night and the next morning returned home to find that
the Indians had taken a large stone and thrown threw the door and had gone into the house and taken all of
the best blankets and we had a long handled frying pan which they took and left us a short handled one. They
took our violin and laid it tin the floor with the bow across the center.

The Indians were never as bad as they were pictured, but I will admit there was times that none of us wished
to see them Nana, Geronimo or any of the others, but as a rule the uprising started over some mistreatment
that the Indians received.
Overview: Lake Valley

Quote: Lake Valley was first settled by ranchers, but the discovery of promising silver-bearing deposits enticed workers and speculators to the area, but danger from the Chiricahua Apaches prevented much serious development until 1881. Despite the president of the Sierra Grande Silver company being killed by Nana's warriors, the discovery of rich, pure silver in the Bridal Chamber Mine made Lake Valley irresistible. A railroad spur was put in to haul out the rich ore more effectively.

The Bridal Chamber hit its peak within a year, and profits quickly dwindled, although mining operations continued until silver prices crashed in 1893. For a while Lake Valley became the center of cattle rustling operations in southern New Mexico. The population continued to dwindle through the 1930s, when the railroad closed, and everyone left the valley save a few dozen people.

The last resident of Lake Valley, a former miner named Pedro Martinez, moved to Deming with his wife in 1994. Today the abandoned town is managed as a historic site by the BLM. Visitors can take a self-guided tour around the desolate streets, and visit the historic schoolhouse, which serves as the Lake Valley museum.

Images:

Lake Valley

Links:
A Brief History of Lake Valley -- http://americanfrontiers.net/lakevalley/

11: Fort Bayard

1885

Quote: (1885) The Apaches soon stopped their raids for a few months and weren't seen any more of until October when they were heard of in the Cliff country. Some soldiers were sent under Overton, from Fort Bayard, to stop the driving off of the cattle and horses, and as always before there wasn't anything done but loafing. Overton said it was only the word of children and old women that the cattle were being driven off and would not move from camp.

...The women of the district were all as brave as the men they took the Indians as something to be expected. There was one woman that was a woman from the mountain country that met the stage and said to Al Lauderbaugh on one morning "Al, I reckon that you are going into town." and handed him a ten dollar bill. She told him to buy her three little children a hat a piece. The Indian signs and post offices were all around, but Mrs Bush didn't seem to be the least worried, her husband was up in the hill hunting the cattle.

Mr Lauderbaugh was fired upon his return trip with the hats, but luckily he escaped uninjured. The Indians fired upon him at Little Dry and all the way across the mesa, he for many years wore as a watch charm a bullet he took out of the stage after the fight was ever.

It wasn't uncommon then to hear each day of some one being killed, their cattle driven off, and their cabin burned, but the end came with the killing at Soldier Hill, about one mile south of the Old Meadow Ranch on Big Dry. J.

McKinney, was serving as guide for Lieutenant Cabel, told how they were ambushed there. When they were crossing Catons Plato, so called from the many catons, they found the bodies, being Clark and Kinney. These men had been hauling ore concentrates. The men were killed and their ore sacks ripped open and the contents scattered all over the ground. They followed the Indians on and at the eight miles from Mogollon Creek where two men named Lillian and Pryer had started a ranch they found their bodies and also the Indians which they fired upon, killing nine of the Apache. The soldiers were low on supplies and decided to return to Alma for
supplies.

While at Alma a courier came through with a message and we started on going south with ten additional Navajo scouts and camped at the Siggins ranch the first night out. The next morning when starting out met a Navajo, was in sight. The courier went on back to Fort Bayard and the men started around Soldier Hill the men singing "Good-by My Lover Good-by" when we were fired upon. My horse was killed. The doctor was killed and several others, and several injured. Every since this kill has been called Soldiers Hill. The Navajo scouts appeared soon after the fight was over.

This fight seemed to be all the Indians were waiting for to return to the San Carlos reservation. They returned to the reservation to be fed by the people and rest after causing the settlers so much trouble.

--W. Weatherby, Incidents of the Early '80's. Transcript of interview July 1938. [WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection.]

**Overview: Fort Bayard**

General Carlton established Fort Bayard to protect miners, settlers, and travelers from the Apache threat. The first troops to be stationed there were Company B of the 125th U.S. Colored Infantry, and the "buffalo soldiers" continued to be important, operating from the fort against the Apache.

After Geronimo's surrender in 1886, the fort was being prepared for abandonment, but around 1899 found new life as a tuberculosis sanitarium. Today Fort Bayard continues to operate as a state-run health care facility.

**Quote:** I have established only one new post on the Apache frontier, and that is located near the head of the Mimbres River, about one hundred and fifty miles west of the Rio Grande River. This post, with Fort Cummings at Cooke's Spring, Fort Selden on the Rio Grande, and Fort Stanton on the Bonito River between the Rio Grande and the Pecos, form a line of posts covering the southern frontier of New Mexico from the Apache Indians.

---Major General John Pope, Commanding Officer of the Military Division of Missouri

**Images:**

Panoramic photograph of Fort Bayard sanitorium, 1909

**Links:**
Fort Bayard -- http://fortbayard.org

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12: Silver City

1887

**Quote:** (1887) We left Pecos Texas in February 1887, for Silver City New Mexico.

My Mother's father, A. F. Bell, and her mother and five brothers lived on a cattle ranch there. There were eight wagons in this immigrant train, some going to New Mexico and some to Arizona. Mr. Henderson, the man who had lost his family from smallpox, and his little four year old boy traveled with us in this train. He stopped at Lordsburg New Mexico. The trip from Pecos to El Paso Texas was an awfully hard one on us as my Mother felt so badly and it was such cold weather. We stopped in El Paso Texas for several days and camped where Washington Park is now located. I saw my first adobe houses in El Paso and we ate our first frijole beans.

The immigrant train split up at Lordsburg New Mexico, most of them going on into Arizona. My father was anxious to go to Arizona too but my mother was feeling so bad that she wanted to go to Silver City where her people were so that she could be near her mother. We stayed in Lordsburg until June and then started for Silver City by way of the Burro Mountains.

We children were anxious to see the place where Geronimo had killed Judge Gomez and his wife and had
taken their five year old son away with them. The soldiers from Fort Bayard New Mexico and the Scouts went after Geronimo and his band of Indians. They trailed them to the line of Old Mexico where they met a band of squaws who told the soldiers and scouts that the little boy’s brains had been dashed out against a tree.

Mr. Cravens, the man I afterwards married, was one of the Scouts who trailed Geronimo then. Mr. Cravens ran a livery stable in Silver City at that time and Judge Gomez and his wife and small son were on their way to Lordsburg, in a buggy rented from Mr. Cravens, when they were attacked by Geronimo and his band of Indians. They shot one of the horses to stop the buggy and took the other horse away with them. After I was married to Mr. Cravens we were down in Mexico in 1902 and we were told that the Gomez boy had not been killed, that he was the chief of a band of Indians. After we got to Silver City the people there told us such horrible things about what the Indians did to the white people around there.

...When we got to Silver City father took up a claim west of the town on the Gila river. We had some cattle and a small farm. Mother died in the fall of 1887. That was the first year of the Cattle Men’s war in Grant County.

--Mrs. Florence Cravens. Carrizozo, N.M. Transcript of interview April 1938. [WPA Federal Writers’ Project Collection.]

Overview: Silver City

Silver City was originally an Apache camp, but a strike by prospector John Bullard in 1870 led to a boom of American miners. During the 1870s, it was a wild and wooly town, with a high crime rate. By 1893, the community had grown enough to open the Normal School, which was later renamed to Western New Mexico University.

In 1895, a severe flash flood wiped out Main Street, turning it into a 55-foot ditch. Visitors today can walk through the historic downtown, visit Big Ditch Park, and tour the sights of the Silver City Museum.

Images:

New Mexico miners

Links:
Silver City Museum -- http://www.silvercitymuseum.org

13: Las Cruces

1888

Quote: (1888) I was born in the family home where my father, W.C.P. Geck was born before me, and where my grandfather Geck lived a life time. I say a life time because he came to this country so very long ago. He came to America from Germany almost ninety year ago. Our house is one of the oldest houses in the town of Dona Ana; it is in good condition and occupied by my Aunt, Mrs. W.C. Weir.

Grandfather Geck was a trader and a merchant. In the early days, when a shipment of merchandise was ordered, the merchants never know when they were going to receive it, if at all, for the Indians would ambush the pack trains and wagons, murder the drivers, rob the caravan and burn the wagons. My grandfather told me many an exciting tale of the early days. I sometimes thought that he knew everything; that he was the wisest man in the whole world. No matter what I wished to know he could tell me something about it.

My parents craved new scenes. So they piled their household goods in the old covered wagon and headed for Las Cruces. That was in 1888. Las Cruces was a mere village. Then my parents left Las Cruces and went to La Union. The reason people moved up and down the valley in the old days was because the Rio Grande wouldn’t let them remain in one place; it was like a mad dog at their heels. They would no sooner get settled then it would rise and flood them out.

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Overview: Las Cruces

14: Ruidoso

1876-1887

Quote: (1887) I met my husband, Frank Lesnnett, in Chicago, Illinois, when I was sixteen years old. He was born in the State of Ohio. He joined the regular army at Fort Seldon Ohio, in 1870, for a period of five years and was sent to Fort Stanton, New Mexico, to serve his enlistment, fighting the Indians. He was discharged in 1875 at Fort Stanton.

He came back to Chicago Illinois, and we were married July 19, 1876. We lived in Chicago for awhile but Frank was never satisfied, for he loved the west and wanted to come back to Lincoln County New Mexico, so he left me in Chicago with my people and he came back to Ruidoso New Mexico, and bought a half interest in the Dowlin's Mill. This mill was owned by Paul and Will Dowlin at the time. Frank stayed here and sent for me and our baby son. I came by train from Chicago to La Junta Colorado, and from La Junta to Fort Stanton New Mexico on Raymond's stage coach, drawn by four horses.

Raymond and his bride, who was from St. Louis Missouri, were passengers on the stage with me. I do not remember any of the places that we stopped except Jerry Hoeradle's place, where we stayed all night and changed teams. We had a very pleasant trip, no scares from Indians or desperadoes, although I was very much afraid of the Indians. My husband had told me so much about them and how they would go on the war path, but at that time they were supposed to stay on the Mescalero Reservation.

My husband met me at Fort Stanton. He was driving two big bay horses to a Studebaker. The horses were named "Bill Johnson, and "Bill Dowlin". How happy I was when my husband met me and we drove up the beautiful canyon toward the White mountains. It was in May 1877. We went by way of the Pat Garrett Ranch, which was located on Little Creek, and on by Alto and down Gavelan Canyon to the Ruidoso. When we arrived at Dowlin's Mill I saw some blood in the front yard. Frank told me that a man named Jerry Dalton had shot and killed Paul Dowlin the day before. Dalton left the country and was never heard of again.

My new home was a four room log house, with a big fireplace in the front room, which we called the parlor. We used kerosene lamps and candles for lights. A man by the name of Johnnie Patton cooked for us. We boarded several of the men who worked in the mills and helped on the farms. We raised hogs and sold them to Fort Stanton. We raised our own feed to fatten the hogs and in the fall of the year the farm hands would butcher about a hundred hogs at a time. I would get some of the neighbor women to come and help render out the lard. We used a big iron pot and rendered up the lard out in the yard. I raised lots of turkeys and chickens and sold them at Fort Stanton.

...The Mescalero Indians from the Mescalero Reservation used to come to our place end trade. My husband had a small store and was post master at Ruidoso. I saw four buck Indians have a fight in front of our store one time. They pulled each other's hair out and fought with quirts. They fought for about an hour. I was in the store and was afraid to go to our house, although the Indians never did bother us. I was awfully afraid of them, especially when I first came to the Ruidoso. I was always good to the Indians. I gave them doughnuts and cookies when they came to the Mill and it was not long until all the Indians were my friends. Geronomo used to come to our place quite often. Once he brought me a big wild turkey and another time he gave me a nice Indian basket. I gave the basket to Mrs. Hiram Dow and she still has it.

...In 1882 my husband bought out the interest of the Dowlin Brothers and he was sole owner of the Mill. We then moved into the two story building which still stands, with the old water wheel, about two miles from the town of Ruidoso. At that time we had a grist mill and a saw mill. All the surrounding country brought their grain to our mill to be ground. We used oxen to haul our logs for the saw mill.

In 1887 we sold our ranch and cattle on the Ruidoso to the Crees, who owned the "V V" outfit. We moved to Lincoln New Mexico, where we could have better schools for our children. We lived on the Ruidoso all during the Lincoln County War but my husband never took sides with either faction. I did give Billy the Kid several meals when he would come to our place, but my husband never knew anything about it, for he had warned us not to feed any of the men from either side, but I did it anyway as I felt so sorry for them when they said they were hungry.

Lincoln County was a wild country when I first came here and at first I used to get so homesick for my people in Chicago, but after I had been here a few years I liked it and never cared to go back to Chicago to live.

--Mrs. Annie E. Lesnitt, transcript of interview September 7, 1938. [WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection.]

Overview: Ruidoso

Paul Dowlin, post trader for Fort Stanton, moved his mill along the Ruidoso River, in order to minimize conflicts arising from his sale of liquor. He prospered in this new location, and a settlement grew up slowly around the businesses he established on his 760-acre homestead. Dowlin was murdered by a former employee in 1877,
Today, Ruidoso attracts visitors from New Mexico and Texas, with its lush, cool forests, skiing, arts, and horse racing. The new River Museum explores the indigenous and American history of the area, and also houses an eclectic collection of items from celebrities, the Titanic, and other curiosities.

**Images:**

![Dowlins Mill, Ruidoso.](image)

**Links:**
- [Ruidoso History](http://ruidosohistory.com)
- [Ruidoso River Museum](http://ruidosorivermuseum.com)

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15: Lincoln

1878

*Quote:* (1878) Lincoln became an armed battle ground after the killing of Ollinger and Bell (the Kid’s guards) when he made his escape from the Lincoln jail where he had been confined since his capture after the slaying of Brady and Hindman.

On the Sunday evening before the terrible days that ended the Lincoln County War Mother said: “Ella this is the week that will end all this bloodshed and fighting and, I thank God your father is away and won't be mixed up in the shooting, but I an afraid to stay here with you children unprotected.”

So that night after supper she took us to stay with the Ellis family, in their house which was built with all the rooms in one long row. About ten o'clock we heard someone with spurs on, come clattering down the whole length of the house. The door where we sat opened and there was Billy the Kid! He was followed by fourteen men who took possession of the house.

We went back to our home but Mother was afraid to stay there after she thought our water supply would perhaps be cut off, so we went to Juan Patron's house and about midnight that house was taken over by some of the fighters. We then went to Montonna's store where we went to bed and when we got up the next morning about twenty men had taken possession there, but we stayed there from Sunday evening, until the next Friday morning. Mother got up and after we saw men fired on and one killed, she said 'I am going to take you children out of this danger.

So she took us two miles out of town where there were some tall poplar trees - they are still there - and about noon we saw heavy smoke. It was the McSween store that had been set afire by the Murphy men to burn out the McSween men (one of them was the Kid) who were surrounded, so they couldn't escape. When the fire was under way Mr. McSween calmly walked to the door as if surrendering and was shot down. Then, two others that followed were riddled with bullets. George Coe Henry Brown and Charlie Bowdre were among the crowd that escaped.

Billy the Kid was the last one left in the building. During the excitement of the roof crashing in, he rushed out with two pistols blazing. Bob Beckwith whose shot had killed McSween was killed by one flying bullet and two others were wounded. The Kid, with bullets whizzing all around him, made his escape.

After this battle that took place in July, 1878 everything quieted down, and my mother took us home. Mrs. McSween whose home was burned, stayed with us all night, and the next morning she asked me to go with her to see the ruins of her house. We found only the springs and other wires of her piano that was the pride of her life. She raked in the ashes where her bureau had stood and found her locket.

That was the most destructive battle of the Lincoln County War. We were terribly upset with all the fighting and killings. My sister Amelia had more than she could stand so my mother sent her to a ranch until things could settle down.
Overview: Lincoln

Lincoln is a tiny, unincorporated community today, but from 1876-1879, it was the center of the Lincoln County War, and sometime home to notorious outlaw Billy the Kid.

Most of historic Lincoln is part of New Mexico's Lincoln State Monument, offering the modern visitor a taste of life and death during the turbulent and bloody days of the 1870s.

Visitors to Lincoln also enjoy the annual pageant of "The Last Escape of Billy the Kid" during the first weekend of August. Re-enactments are scheduled on Friday and Saturday evening, and on Sunday afternoon, the weekend of the pageant.

Images:

Lincoln Annual Pageant: The Last Escape of Billy the Kid

Links:
New Mexico State Parks: Lincoln State Monument -- http://www.nmmonuments.org/inst.php?inst=7

16: Fort Stanton

1874

Quote: (1874) We lived in Fort Sumner New Mexico until 1874. Father had a blacksmith shop there too. His herd of cattle increased to about two hundred and seventy five head. In the early spring of 1874 he decided to move to Fort Stanton, New Mexico.

We loaded up in the two covered wagons, drawn by six oxen to a wagon, and started for Fort Stanton, which was a military post at that time.

We crossed the Pecos River at Fort Sumner, New Mexico, and had no trouble crossing the cattle. We grazed the cattle along and took our time and made the trip for Fort Stanton in about two weeks. We lived there for about three years. My brother, Adolpho, was born there and lived only a short time. He died and was buried there at Fort Stanton. My father was blacksmith for the fort.

My father rented a small piece of land from A. N. Blazer, who owned and ran the Blazer Mill, which was situated on the Mescalier Indian Reservation. I do not remember just when we moved to this place on the Indian Reservation. The place had a two roomed log house on it, where we lived. My father still had his cattle and he had them on Fernando Herrera's place...

Father set up a blacksmith shop, planted a garden and about twenty acres in corn. He made a good crop and when he gathered it in the fall he sent word for me to come home. I had been staying with my uncle, Pat Carrillo, who lived not very far away on the Reservation. When I got home my father said; "Son, here is my crop and my blacksmith shop, you can sell them. Take care of your mother, I am going away and you will not see me anymore." He left that day on horseback. He went by Dowlin's Mill and sold his cattle to Paul and Will Dowlin, took the money and left the country.

Soon after my father went away I went to work for the Murphy Dolan Company, punching cows. I was about seventeen years old. The head quarter ranch house was on the Carrizo Flats, at what is now the Bar W ranch. After my father left my mother moved to the Solado flats, about one mile west of where the town of Capitan now stands.

When my father had been gone for about four years I got a letter from him one day. He was over on the Rio Grande river, at a place called Casa Colorado, about eighteen miles south of Belen, New Mexico. He wanted me
to come over there to see him, so I saddled up my black pony and started. I took me two days to make the trip. When I arrived, I found my father in his blacksmith shop. He said; "Hello son, I am glad you came. I want you to have a black stallion I have here, and you can also have this blacksmith shop. I am leaving this time and you will never see me again." He turned and started walking toward the river. I never did see or hear of him from that day to this, nor ever found any body else that ever saw him after that day. My father was always a very queer man and brooded a lot.

--Abran Miller, transcript of a September 30, 1938 interview. [WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection.]

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**Overview: Fort Stanton**

The U.S military established Fort Stanton in 1855 to protect settlements along the Rio Bonito during the Apache wars. Later, it became the first tuberculosis hospital in the country. Today Fort Stanton is a New Mexico State Monument.

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**17: Town of Cubero Land Grant**

1853

The Town of Cubero Land Grant was petitioned by Juan Chavez and others in 1833. Located in Valencia County, the original grant was 47,743 acres. Following proceedings at the office of the Surveyor General and the Court of Private Land Claims the grant was approved by the U.S. government in 1892 for 16,490 acres, and the patent issued in 1900.

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**Overview: Cubero**

Quote: Governor Pedro Rodríguez Cubero, who came after Don Diego de Vargas, traveled this way in 1697, and it's possible the name of the community comes from this era. Bernardo Miera y Pacheco includes it on his 1776 map of the Dominguez-Escalante expedition, as Cubera. Other maps variously have it as Covero, Cabero, and Cuvero.

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**Links:**

Office of the State Historian: New Mexico Land Grants --
http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=22288

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**18: La Mesilla**

1870

What may be the first example of New Mexican Spanglish is quoted here, an example of the mingling of Anglo and Spanish cultures.

Quote: (1870) There is a current story in Old Mesilla about a certain Yankee of the early days who had a habit of serenading dark-eyed senoritas. There is still considerable doubt as to how he mixed his drinks, but none whatever regarding the way he chili-con-carned his English and Spanish. For this gallant Yank's favorite ditty accompanied by the strum, strum, of an old guitar, went something like this:

Te quiero, te quiero because you are the dream angel of mi vida,
Y mi amor that you control
Makes my very timid soul
Sing with highest joy, mi querida;
Ah! when I see your star-lit eyes,
Beaming with mucho "come hither,"
Mi corazon muy furioso beats,
And performs many romantic feats
For you, for you only, mi querida.

--Cruz Richards Alvarez, La Mesilla old timer. Transcript from WPA interview. [WPA Federal Writers' Project Collection.]

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**Overview: Mesilla**
According to Walter Noble Burns it was this Jose Chavez y Chavez who was responsible for the friendship.

"Jose Chavez y Chavez", he corrected me. "No, senora, he had left the country at that time."

"Did they try to get Jose Chavez to go with the posse after Billy?" I asked.

"Jose Chavez y Chavez", he corrected me. "No, senora, he had left the country at that time."

According to Walter Noble Burns it was this Jose Chavez y Chavez who was responsible for the friendship.
between Billy The Kid and the wealthy Maxwells. Billy The Kid had ridden over to Fort Sumner from Lincoln with several of his men, among whom was Jose Chavez y Chavez. The fiance of one of the Maxwell girls was drunk and met Jose Chavez y Chavez on the street back of the Maxwell House. The two men quarreled and Jose Chavez pulled his gun. Mrs. Maxwell ran out of the house and tried to pull her future son-in-law away, begging Chavez not to shoot him as he was drunk and didn't know what he was doing. Chavez replied that drunk or sober he was going to kill him, and he was going to do it immediately. Just then a young man walked rapidly across the road, touched his sombrero to Mrs. Maxwell, said something in Spanish to Chavez and led him away. It was the Kid. From that time until his death, he made Fort Sumner his headquarters, and was a frequent visitor at the Maxwell home. It was in Pete Maxwell's room that Pat Garrett shot him.

Mr. Garcia asked me if there were any books in Spanish about Billy The Kid. "My wife," he said, "she taught me to read. I didn't know the letters when I married her. She didn't know the words but she knew the letters and she taught me. I taught myself how the words went, but I never could teach her to read, ni con carinones ni alebanzes - neither by coaxing nor praising - she never could learn anything more than the letters."

Mrs. Garcia shook her head. "Nunca, nunca, nunca," she said. Never had she been able to learn more than the letters.

---Jose Garcia y Trujillo, resident of the Santa Rosa area in the 1880s. Interviewed by Janet Smith. [WPA Federal Writers’ Project Collection.]

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Overview: Santa Rosa

Founded as a rancho at the confluence of the Rio Agua Negra and the Rio Pecos, it gained its name around 1890, after a chapel built by the landowner to honor Santa Rosa de Lima, the first saint of the New World.

In 1901, the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad acquired the route of the Eddy brothers’ El Paso and Northeastern Railroad, and the Golden State Train began steaming through Santa Rosa daily. The Midland Hotel, a Fred Harvey Company enterprise, was among the first of scores of businesses in Santa Rosa catering to the weary and ravenous traveler.

Route 66, now a National Byway, continued to route transcontinental traffic through Santa Rosa. Today, tourists flock to the both the "Bottomless Lakes" and to the reservoir at the center of Santa Rosa Lake State Park.

Images:

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Links:
Santa Rosa Visitors Guide -- http://www.santarosanm.org/

About this Map

Rand, McNally & Co.’s business atlas map of New Mexico. : 1897

The Homestead Act, passed by Abraham Lincoln (see below) opened up the possibility of free, or nearly free land to the teeming masses coming over from Europe. The American military had subdued the native residents, both Hispanic and indigenous, and the railroads had connected remote New Mexico to the rest of the nation.

The final piece of the puzzle to draw American homesteaders to New Mexico was an assessment of what land, after millennia of occupation, and centuries of colonization, was still open for homesteaders.

George Montague Wheeler led an ambitious project to survey New Mexico at a scale of 1:8, and to establish a
meridian (a north-south line) and baselines (east-west lines) in order to plat the state into sections (one square mile, or 640 acres) and townships (36 sections). Homesteaders willing to settle in the arid west could claim an entire section under the Desert Lands Act of 1877. Anyone who could prove that the land was irrigated within three years of filing paid the government $1.25 per acre.

The dividing of the lands that went so easily in other states was more complicated in New Mexico. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo promised to honor the grants given under Spanish or Mexican law, but finding the boundaries of those grants was another problem entirely. The boundary descriptions were based on current ownership (Don Luis' corrals) and familiar landmarks (where the cattle come to the river to drink). Even when measurements were specified, they were in variably-determined Spanish leagues, not easily convertible to miles.

Many land grants had no more documentation than the testimony of the occupants, and most included common lands for grazing, timber, and water access, which were mostly discounted as part of the title, and the ownership claimed by the U.S. government.

This map rather paints a rather more optimistic picture of available lands and mineral resources in New Mexico than was the case, even in 1888, when this map was actually created.

Many of the "undecided" land grant cases on this map had actually been confirmed by the time of publication, and it does not include any of the Pueblo grants, which had all been confirmed by that time.

This map appeared in an indexed atlas of the world, compiled with historical, descriptive, and statistical materials for each country and civil division.

Atlas Citation: [Eidenbach, Peter]
Map Credits: Image No: 3565144 Rumsey Collection

TIMELINE: AGE OF TECHNOLOGY

1846
President Polk declares war with Mexico; US forces led by General Stephen Kearny seize New Mexico, which surrenders without a shot being fired. Colonel Doniphan writes code for governing the Territory of New Mexico. New Mexico designated Ninth Military Department.

1847
Philip St. George Cooke blazed the first wagon road from New Mexico to the West Coast.

New Mexico formally annexed; slavery issues had prevented formal annexation until this point.

1848
Mexico signs the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which cedes lands in California, Nevada, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico to the United States (Statute 922 App I). The international boundary designated as the intersection of 32º N and the Rio Grande to intersection of Choctaw Creek with Red River.

1849
Simpson made a map previously shows town of Rito- Rito is a ruin by the time Whipple arrives because the upstream people took all the water. He traveled through Albuquerque to Pueblo de la Laguna and passed Covero (Cubero), Mount Taylor (named by Simpson in 1849 for Zachary Taylor), and Agua Fria, the last spring before the Continental Divide. Whipple used Sitgreaves' 1851 map as a reference also Walker's 1851 map.

1850
New territories admitted, including New Mexico (including modern Arizona), purchase of additional lands from Texas, boundaries adjusted. El Paso becomes part of Texas.

1851
Sitgreaves' official report, Report of an Expedition Down the Zuni and Colorado Rivers in 1851, was published in 1853. The report explored possibility of using this route for military transport.

1852 Survey
1st international boundary commission established in accordance with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Emory is the designated astronomer. The survey run into difficulties, which are resolved with the purchase of more land from Mexico.

Initial point on the Rio Grande (determined by Commissioners Condé and Bartlett according to the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo) proves to be in the wrong place. Surveyor AB Gray says 32º 22' is wrong, 31º 52' is right. Commissioners Emory and Salazar (astronomers from the first Boundary Commission) later determine the starting point of the line at 32º47'.
New Mexico legislature passed a single act creating two new counties, redefining five of the original counties to extend across the limits of the territory, and eliminating all non-county area.

Gadsden Purchase from Mexico resolves boundary issues, and give the U.S. the land necessary to build a southern transcontinental railroad. (GP Statute 1031 App II).

1855 Survey

US Commissioner: William H. Emory
Mexican Commissioner: José Salazar y Larregui

Emory and Salazar survey the entire Mexican-American border, including the new area included by the Gadsden Purchase.

The Americans made nearly a dozen monuments along the border to mark the sites, but many were destroyed by surrounding tribes, so the Mexicans rebuilt many and added some. Later surveys added over two hundred more, and rebuilt them as more permanent monuments.

1855 railroad surveys

The U.S. Government commissioned a number of surveys, spaced along parallels, to determine the best route for a transcontinental railroad.

Emory & Parke: 32nd parallel
Whipple & Ives: 35th parallel
Beckwith & Gunnison: 38th-39 parallel

1857 and 1858
Ives' Report upon the Colorado River of the West

1859
Marcy publishes The Prairie Traveler

1861
Colorado territory established; New Mexico's northern boundary reduced.

Residents of the Mesilla Valley declared their allegiance with the Confederacy and separated from the Union. They hoped the Confederacy would recognize them as the state of Arizona, which they imagined would reach to the Colorado River.

Civil War starts. Confederate troops gather at Fort Bliss and take Fort Fillmore. The plan is to seize New Mexico, and then march on to take the gold fields of Colorado or California. Indian raids on settlements step up as U.S. Army soldiers turn their attention to other matters.

1862
Homestead Act: free 160 acres offered after 5 years cultivation. Later modified to offer 320 acres, and the Desert Lands Act offered 640 acres.

Henry H. Sibley, commander of a brigade of mounted regiments from Texas, marched from Fort Bliss near El Paso up the Rio Grande: taking Fort Fillmore, defeating Union troops at Fort Craig, taking Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and finally defeating the Union troops at Glorieta Pass, near Pecos. By this time, the Confederate troops were starving and without clothes or ammunition, so they retreated back to Fort Bliss.

1862-1871
Railroad Land grants: the Federal government gives away 128 million acres of land to the railroad companies, as an incentive to build railway lines all over the country. The railroad companies sold many of these parcels to homesteaders.

1863
Arizona Territory created by the United States from the western portion of New Mexico Territory and a part of present Nevada. Present New Mexico-Arizona boundary established.

1864-1866
"Long Walk"- Navajo and Mescalero Apache forcibly relocated to Bosque Redondo reservation; The Apache
escaped, and the Navajo signed a treaty of nonagression and returned to their homeland in 1868.

1864-1890
Indian Wars throughout the West. Destruction of the bison herds.

1867
Hayden, King, Wheeler, Powell Surveys map the west comprehensively, while cataloguing flora, fauna, and geology.

1868
Navajo chief Barboncito, along with numerous other leaders, sign a treaty with General William T. Sherman, agreeing to peace with the Americans in exchange for rights to return from Bosque Redondo to their new reservation: a small area within their traditional homeland.

1869
Fort Bliss renamed Fort Bliss.

Cochise and Apache guerrillas active 1871-1879.
The war to save the buffalo 1874-1880.

1878-1879
Fort Bliss permanently established in current location.

1878
The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe (AT&SF) railroad crosses the Raton Pass into New Mexico, reaching Las Vegas, its first destination in New Mexico, in 1879.

1879
USGS established.

1880
The Southern transcontinental railroad traversed the region.

Geronimo & Chiricahua Apaches active in southern New Mexico and northern Mexico, 1880-1886.

1884
New boundary treaty: the boundary, where marked by the Rio Grande, adheres to the center of original channel as surveyed in 1852 even if the course of the river changes. Boundaries on international bridges at center point.

1886
Geronimo surrenders to General Crook in southern New Mexico. The remaining members of the Chiricahua and Mimbres bands are removed first to Florida, and finally to Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

1889
US/Texas/New Mexico/Mexico border resurveyed; discovered bancos or alluvial deposits changing land mass on either side of the border.

1891
Forest Reserve Law, designating forest preserves; forerunner of current National Forests.

1905
National Forest service created.

1906
Antiquities Act. Allows a president to protect areas of public land by executive order.

New treaty with Mexico on water rights for irrigation

1912
New Mexico becomes the forty-seventh state of the Union.

1916
National Park Service created.
1924
Gila Wilderness established.

1925
U.S. Supreme Court decision in New Mexico v. Colorado dismisses New Mexico's claims and establishes current boundaries between the states.

Visit Atlas of Historic NM Maps online at atlas.nmhum.org.

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