Santa Fe Trail at Journey's End

Occupation of the Pecos Valley extends as far back as 12,000 years ago as evidenced by nomadic hunters and gatherers. Archaeologists date the establishment of permanent settlements around 750 A.D with extensive farming throughout the area by 1450. The Pecos pueblo, or Towa pueblo of Cicuye, was the principal trade center between the Rio Grande Pueblos and Great Plains Indians for centuries before the arrival of the Spanish.

Historical records note that Capitan Hernando de Alvarado was gifted with bison robes during a visit to the Pecos pueblo, in autumn 1540. Other trade goods included obsidian, turquoise, shell jewelry, ceramics, pipes, and Plains people (traded as slaves). When Francisco Vázquez de Coronado visited in the spring of 1541, one of his men reported that the Querchos (Apaches) and Tyas (Jumanos) of the Plains traded with bison and deer skins, as well as dried meat from these animals in exchange for corn and blankets. Coronado also noted Plains people living as slaves among the pueblos at Cicuye. From Pecos, Coronado gathered a fleet of 1,500 individuals, which included Europeans (Castilians, Portuguese, Italians, French, German and Scottish), Africans, 800 Mexican Indians (Tarascans, Mixicans, Tlatelolcans, Tlaxcalans) and Tiquex slaves which included women, for an expedition led by two pueblo scouts to the territory of the Quivera (Kansas, northern Texas and Oklahoma).

By 1625, Fray Andres Juarez completed a mission church built by Pueblo labor. According to the accounts of Fray Estevan de Perea, every autumn, trade fairs occurred at Cicuye. During the 1630s, Governor Francisco de la Mora y Ceballos issued permits authorizing the seizures of Indian boys and girls, "as if they were calves and colts," to be placed in "perpetual slavery". In 1698, Juan de Oñate also visited Cicuye and may have participated in the trade of goods and slaves.

The route that would become the Santa Fe Trail had been traveled for many centuries by Native American groups exchanging goods, ideas, stories and culture with each other. Under Spanish rule, trade between Native Americans and others outside of New Mexico was outlawed; those that traveled to Santa Fe attempting to trade were quickly detained then sent home. Prior to 1821, trade between the Great Plains Indians and early settlers of the Texas panhandle was common.

In 1845, the United States voted to annex Texas, which included parts of present-day New Mexico, then declared war on Mexico in 1846. General Stephen Watts Kearney was sent from Kansas to conquer New Mexico and California. Kearney along with 1,600 men traveled the Santa Fe Trail's Mountain Route, hoping the less traversed and more hazardous terrain would offer protection from Mexican troops. Along the route, Kearney stopped at the town of Las Vegas, Tecolote, and San Miguel giving speeches from the rooftops of houses. He promised protection of life, property, and religion by the United States government to those who would submit, and threatened death to those that remained in allegiance to Governor Manuel Armijo and Mexico. When Kearny arrived in Santa Fe on August 18, 1846, he encountered no resistance; New Mexico Governor Manuel Armijo had vacated along with his troops to Chihuahua.

Conflicts over land were fought by Native American tribes who engaged in friendly trade activities, trail guide assistance, and at times gunfire exchange – when they felt their land was being encroached upon by settlers. Biological pathogens brought by foreigners crisscrossing the trail and adversely impacted Native American groups who did not have immunity.

During the 1800s, travelers of the Santa Fe Trail labeled Native American groups as, “savage” or “indios barbaros”, and “hostile”. Assumptions that one particular group was to blame for burning wagons and missing livestock, led to further conflicts between Native groups, and a distrust in the military as well as the new settlers. Many tribes were mobile and extremely independent; their only political authorities were within small bands and not coordinated under a central unified leadership. The actions and behaviors of some small groups were not a reflection of the entire population.

During the Mexican and Apache conflicts, 1831-1850, the government of Sonora put a bounty on the Apache starting in 1835; paying 100 pesos for each scalp of a male 14 years or older. Chihuahua also offered the same bounty for the scalps of males, with 50 pesos for the capture of adult females and 25 pesos for a child under 14, and were allowed to keep any Apache property they captured.

Advertisements were placed in newspapers across the nation offering paid bounties for the scalping of Indians. In the mid-1880s, New Mexico’s Grant County Commission, located in Silver City, declared a $250 bounty per Apache scalp. Ranchers near Las Cruces offered a private bounty of $500 for Geronimo’s scalp. The last known record of scalp bounties is from the Sierra County advocate newspaper, published on January 22, 1909, which publicized the Kingston Commissioner proceedings and stated, “35 individuals received a total of $707.00, with Charles Shinn receiving a scalp bounty of $232.00.”

In an excerpt from the Diary of Christopher Carson’s Navajo campaign he states, “Navajos tried to attack the soldiers, steal their horses, some Navajos captured, prisoners, one was a squaw, perhaps a spy, women, some killed, casualties, some were scalped, and some sheep, cattle recovered. Officer commented that Navajos did not scalp their enemies but this was a practice tolerated among Federal troops.”

During the Civil War, trade posts along the Santa Fe Trail were converted into hospitals, barracks, and supply stations. The Mountain Trail became a commercial highway again for both the Union and Confederate Armies. Military forts were erected along the Santa Fe Trail to ensure safe passage for travelers, due to a fear of attacks by Native American groups such as the Osage, Kiowa, Jicarilla Apache, Comanche, Pecos Pueblo, Ute, Pawnee, and Paiute, whose land the trail trespassed through.

The route was primarily used as a trade route, and also for emigration during the California Gold Rush, and the Pike’s Peak Gold Rush in Colorado. The route was also used for stagecoach travel tourism and the Pony Express mail delivery until the arrival of the railroad. On February 9, 1880 the Union Pacific Railroad connected to the Santa Fe railroad depot.

New railroad transportation routes realigned to favor Albuquerque and Las Vegas, expediting passengers more quickly than the Santa Fe Trail. The rail system also hauled heavy loads of freight and animals more efficiently to the west coast. New building materials and manufactured goods were brought by rail to Santa Fe, which changed the City’s architectural style and increased its population. These changes had a profound impact on Santa Fe’s lifestyle, culture, industry, and the environment.

The rapid population increase brought disputes over Spanish Land Grant claims across the state. In 1891, the United States government established the Court of Private Land Claims to adjudicate land claims in New Mexico and other states, because the Office of the Surveyor General was not successful in confirming the validity of New Mexican land grants.

According to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, “property of every kind now belonging to Mexicans not established there shall be inviolably respected.” Those who chose to stay within the now US boundaries would have their right to land and property. The treaty also acknowledged pueblo land grants that were given by the Spanish empire, which had been respected under the Mexican government.

As part of the treaty agreement, 100,000 Mexican nationals living within its territories were granted citizenship. Of the 154 communities in New Mexico, to whom the U.S. government guaranteed land, only 35 communities remain along with pueblo tribes who were given Spanish land grants. To validate these land claims, the United States government established the office of the Surveyor General. The mission of this office was to determine, “the origin, nature, character, and extent to all claims to lands under the laws, usages, and customs of Spain and Mexico.”

The New Mexico Office of the State Historian has 10 original Spanish land grants that have been digitally archived and are available online; each comes with a synopsis of land grants recognized by the New Mexico Legislature’s Land Grant Committee in 2008. The information available, shows for example, that the original petition of the Carnuel or San Miguel de Laredo Land Grant, was made by Manuel Armijo and 18 families on February 12, 1763. The grant was approved by Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin for an estimated 90,000 acres. The U.S. government heard proceedings for this grant before the office of the Surveyor General and the Court of Private Land Claims, and made a decision to reduce the land grant acreage to 2,000 acres.

In the 1940 book, “Forgotten People: A Study of New Mexicans,” scholar George I. Sanchez toured northern New Mexico documenting the descendants of the original Hispanic families during the Great Depression. Sanchez found that local and federal governments did little to protect many of the land grants in New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado and California. White settlers began to encroach on Hispanic lands, and courts routinely turned away, and complaints made by displaced Hispanic families were struggling with poverty after land seizures, and were not able to participate in judicial proceedings that were conducted in English only.

During the 1960w Texas-born activist, Reies Lopez Tijerina began organizing heirs of Spanish and Mexico land grants, demanding the return of stolen land. On June 5, 1967 Tijerina and a group of armed men raided a courthouse, shot and wounded a state police officer and jailer, beat a deputy, and took the sheriff and a reporter hostage. Tijerina was arrested in Tierra Amarilla, and ultimately acquitted of charges directly related to the raid.

Since the infamous “Tijerina Raid of 1967,” newly energized land grant heirs have sued the federal government and private companies to recapture land grant holdings that were illegally taken over the years. Heirs in Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado also have formed nonprofit organizations to help oversee land grants for ranching families who continue to raise beef on the same lands as their families did for centuries prior.

In 2018, more than 160 years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Republican Congressman Steve Pearce of New Mexico introduced a bill aimed at giving Hispanic families stronger measures to review claims of “lost land” under the treaty agreement. Land grant heirs continue to organize around their historic land grants; fighting for water rights, mining, toxic polluters, dairy industry

and large ranching, urban sprawl, industrial development, and advocating for the right to continue traditional acequia farming.

In 1987, the Santa Fe Trail became a National Historic Trail and is still a popular tourist destination. Metal signs mark the trail route, and wagon ruts are evident at several points along the Santa Fe Trail route; one such point is located at the Santa Fe Botanical Garden where the wagon ruts are highlighted by a map and markers noting the trail route.

From January 2020 – August 2022, the Spanish Colonial Museum featured the exhibition, "Trails, Rails, and Highways: How Trade Transformed the Art of Spanish New Mexico", curated by the Society's Curator Emerita Robin Farwell Gavin.

The following information was presented by the curators for the exhibit:

> Since prehistoric times, trails have traversed the broad landscape of New Mexico. Native American trails of the 12th century and earlier connected Chaco Canyon to Casas Grandes (Mexico) and Cahokia Mounds (Illinois). In 1680 trails connected the Rio Grande pueblos and enabled their runners to carry secret codes coordinating the Pueblo Revolt. From 1598 to 1821, goods from Spain's vast empire traveled over the *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* (Royal Road to the Interior) from central Mexico to the remote northern frontier.
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> Starting in 1821 the Santa Fe Trail brought American and Mexican merchants face to face, while French fur traders and trappers roamed trails from Canada and Louisiana through New Mexico into Mexico. The Spanish Trail was forged in 1829, establishing the road from Santa Fe to the Pacific. In 1880, the railroad opened the door to tourists, health-seekers, anthropologists, artists, and writers. And with the completion of Route 66 in 1926, automobile tourism began to flourish. Today, 'cyber' trails bring the world to our fingertips.
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> The Native Trails section is displayed in the hallway *nicho* at the beginning of the tour. For millennia, Native peoples of the Southwest traveled trails from Mexico, the Pacific coast, and the Plains. As Puebloan cultures became established between 800 and 1100 AD, they traded turquoise, salt and pottery for more exotic items such as conch shells, parrot and macaw feathers, copper bells, chocolate and buffalo hides. After their arrival in the 16th century, Spanish immigrants relied on the Pueblos to supply them with cooking pots, textiles, and produce, while Pueblo peoples sought iron tools, livestock, and clothing. Trade and travel along the Native trails were essential to survival.
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> The *Camino Real* section is displayed in the Wells Gallery and adjacent hallway. The *Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* from Mexico City to Santa Fe officially opened in 1598 when Don Juan de Oñate and 129 soldiers, their families and native servants, forged their way north, using Native trails, to establish the first Spanish-speaking settlement in New Mexico. From 1598 to 1821, the *Camino Real* was the main route of communication between the colonial province of New Mexico and the Viceregal government in Mexico City. Over this route came people and goods from all of Spain's vast empire–from Mexico and South America, Europe and Asia. After Mexico's independence in 1821, the *Camino* continued in use but became known as the Chihuahua Trail.

The Santa Fe Trail section is displayed in the Brown Gallery and adjacent hallway.
News of Mexico's hard-fought independence from Spain in 1821 traveled quickly up the *Camino Real*. Trade was no longer restricted by Spain, and the first Missouri traders made their way across the Santa Fe Trail. Santa Fe became 'an inland port', where traders, trappers and merchants from Mexico, California, Missouri, Louisiana and Canada met and bartered with New Mexican merchants and Plains and Pueblo Indians in a truly international market. No longer under the thumb of Spain, and with the dissolution of the Mexican guilds and new sources for tools, materials, paints and prints, local *nuevomexicano* artists began to work in a style much more expressive of their unique experience. "

The Railroad section is displayed in the Allred Gallery. The first trains reached Lamy (Santa Fe's station is twenty miles east of town) in 1880. Replacing the Santa Fe Trail, goods now arrived on a daily basis, including new items that had not been available before, sheet tin for roofs, cast iron lintels and building parts, glass for mirrors and windows, and more. *Nuevomexicanos* could also now order from Sears, Roebuck & Co. and Montgomery Ward as well as from manufacturers of religious items, effectively putting many traditional artists out of work.

The Route 66 section is displayed in the Besser Gallery.
The completion of Route 66 in 1926 signaled a new era in tourism. Touted as The Mother Road, auto travel brought unprecedented numbers of tourists to New Mexico. Coupled with Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, tourism helped many New Mexicans through the worst times of the Great Depression. New Deal programs provided jobs building public works, recording the country's artistic heritage, and painting murals in public buildings. Rt. 66 tourism brought new markets for struggling artists, while enterprising individuals established schools to teach the traditional arts and created markets where the work could be sold. One such market, Santa Fe's Spanish Market, was established in 1926 and still takes place today.

The New Mexican Art Today section is displayed in the Seybold, Healy, and Vedder Galleries.
After centuries of change, *nuevomexicanos* continue to renew and revitalize their art, while holding fast to core values and beliefs. Trails are now translated into social media, and information, both historic and contemporary, is at our fingertips. While some artists choose to remain more traditional in their imagery, others choose to use their medium as commentary on social and political themes, reflecting both their respect for the past and their concern for the future. Today, new trails are being forged at the speed of light, and new generations of artists continue to redefine 'traditional' art.

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14. Pecos Pueblo & the Santa Fe Trail (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)
15. Official Santa Fe Trail Association
16. Book entitled, "The Story of New Mexico: Its History and Government," by George P. Hammond and Thomas C. Donnelly, copyright 1941. Second printing, 1945. Online link: Story of New Mexico - UNM CSWR Books - CONTENTdm Title
17. Current Exhibitions | Spanish Colonial Arts Society
18. santafetrailmaplarge.jpg (1000×514) (legendsofamerica.com)
19. View Santa Fe Trail Ruts (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)
20. Maps - El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail (U.S. National Park Service) (nps.gov)

Archival photos:

1. Pecos Mission Church ruin, New Mexico - Palace of the Governors Photo Archives Collection - CONTENTdm Title (unm.edu)
2. 1930 photo: Bridge at Canoncito said to be oldest bridge on the Santa Fe Trail, built circa 1835, Apache Canyon, New Mexico - Palace of the Governors Photo Archives Collection - CONTENTdm Title (unm.edu)
3. 1880-1882 photo: Prospectors on the trail, New Mexico - Palace of the Governors Photo Archives Collection - CONTENTdm Title (unm.edu)
4. Documentary [Reies Lopez Tijerina]: Pragda - They Called Me King Tiger: A Biography of the Chicano Malcolm X