The Santa Fe Trail

5

Violence on the Trail

COLORADO
KANSAS
MISSOURI
OKLAHOMA
TEXAS
NEW MEXICO
PAWNEE
CHEYENNE
ARAPAHO
KANSA
UTE
JICARILLA
COMANCHE - KIOWA
NAVAJO
PUEBLO
APACHE
FORT LEAVENWORTH
FORT OSAGE
FRANKLIN
ARROW ROCK
INDEPENDENCE
BURLINGAME
COUNCIL GROVE
DIAMOND SPRING
COTTONWOOD CREEK
FORT ZARAH
GREAT BEND
PAWNEE ROCK
FORT LARNED
FORT DODGE
CHOUTEAU'S ISLAND
ARKANSAS RIVER
FORT AUBRY
BIG TIMBERS
BENT'S NEW FORT
FORT LYON
BENT'S OLD FORT
MOUNTAIN ROUTE
TRINIDAD
RATON PASS
MIDDLE SPRING
UPPER SPRING
CIMARRON RIVER
CIMARRON ROUTE
COLD SPRING
CANADIAN CROSSING
FORT UNION
WAGON MOUND
LAS VEGAS
SANTA FE
SAN MIGUEL
PECOS PUEBLO

Here's an invitation to join the Study Group of "Movies of the Age of Napoleon," six Monday afternoons starting on April 3.

Here's a two-minute preview of one of the films.

What does this have to do with the Santa Fe Trail? It's a reminder that events all over the world were interconnected. Some of the survivors of 1812 will have been on the Trail after 1821....and 1821 was the year that one of the main figures in this story died (on the island of St. Helena).

We shouldn't let today's events dominate our views of the past. There have been times in history when Russian nationalism led to good results for the world. 1941 was one such year;

1812 was another.

"We passed a fresh made grave today. The head board states his age to be 21 years. . . . Came to his death by accidentally shooting himself through the head. Many such accidents occur on the plains."
—WILLIS READ, 1850
"No one who has not commanded an expedition of this kind, where everything ahead is dim, uncertain, and unknown, except the dangers, can imagine the anxiety with which I start upon my journey."
—EDWARD F. BEALE, 1857
During the gold rush years Cherokee with gold-mining experience from their former homelands in Georgia helped blaze trails west from Arkansas and Oklahoma.
P L A I N S
INDIAN TERRITORY
TEXAS
Llano
Ash Hollow
Forks of the Platte
LODGEPOLE TRAIL
NEBRASKA CITY CUTOFF
Nebraska City
IOWA
MISSOURI
Ft. Sanders
Ft. D.A. Russell
Sidney Barracks
UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
Ft. Sedgwick
Julesburg
California Hill
Ft. Kearny
OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAIL
Medicine Bow Mts.
Laramie
Front Range
Laporte
Ft. Collins
S. Platte
Ft. Morgan
Ft. St. Vrain
Republican
NEBRASKA
KANSAS
St. Joseph
Atchison
Ft. Leavenworth
Central City
Denver
Solomon
Westport Landing
Independence
Westport
(now part of Kansas City)
Topeka
Lawrence
Ft. Riley
Smoky Hills
CHEROKEE TRAIL
Ft. Wallace
Ft. Hays
SMOKY HILL TRAIL
Ft. Harker
SANTA FE TRAIL
Council Grove
Cheyenne Wells
Smoky Hill
Pikes Peak
14110 ft
4301 m
Colorado City
(Colorado Springs)
Ft. Zarah
Pawnee Rock
Ft. Larned
CHEROKEE TRAIL
Arkansas
Pueblo
Ft. Reynolds
Bent's New Fort
Bent's Old Fort
Ft. Lyon
Ft. Aubry
The Caches
Ft. Atkinson
Ft. Dodge
Wichita
Springf
Sangre de Cristo Mts.
San Luis Valley
Purgatoire
AUBRY CUTOFF (opened 1850)
Red Hills
Lower Spring
CIMARRON ROUTE
KANSAS
OKLAHOMA
Ft. Garland
12683 ft
3866 m
13626 ft
4153 m
Spanish Peaks
Trinidad
Middle Spring
Raton Pass
7834 ft
2388 m
Cimarron
San Juan Mts.
Round Mound
Rabbit Ear Mt.
6058 ft
1846 m
OKLAHOMA
TEXAS
Elizabethtown
Cimarron
Taos
Abiquiu
Antelope Butte
Fort Gibson
Ozark
Wagon Mound
Ft. Union
La Junta (Watrous)
FORT SMITH-SANTA FE TRAIL
(ARKANSAS ROUTE)
(Oklahoma City)
Fort
Ft. Marcy
Santa Fe
Glorieta Pass
Las Vegas
Rock Mary
Ouachi
Galisteo
San Miguel
Canadian
Ft. Bascom
Albuquerque
Anton Chico
Rio Grande
CHIHUAHUA TRAIL
TEXAS ROAD
Fort Washita
Preston
Ft. Towson
Ft. Sumner
Sherman
Socorro
San Antonio
Ft. Craig
San Andres Mts.
Sacramento
Ft. Stanton
Jacksboro
SOUTHERN OVERLAND TRAIL
(BUTTERFIELD ROUTE)
Ft. Belknap
Dallas

Which would be better to pull your heavy wagons?

—Mules are strong, can go faster, but are often tricky to handle. Mules also had tendencies to bolt and become unruly.

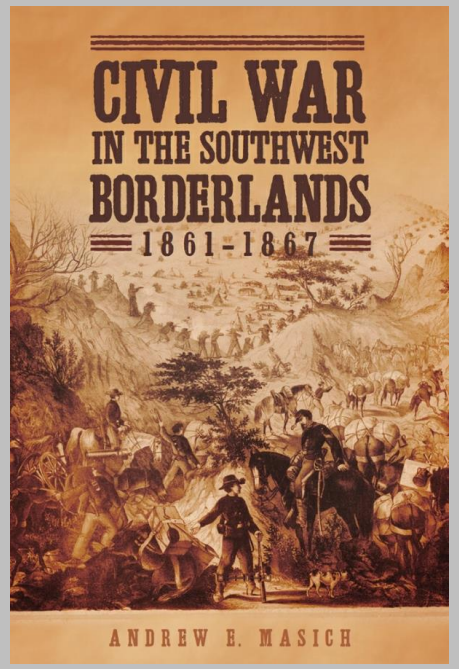
—Oxen are slower, but more reliable and tougher than mules. They will eat poor grass. Oxen were very strong and could haul fully-loaded wagons up ravines or drag them out of mudholes. A large wagon needed at least three pairs of oxen to pull it.

Scholars put the percentage of pioneer wagons pulled by oxen at one-half to three-quarters. The cost of a yoke of oxen during the last half of the 1840s varied from a low of $25 to a high of $65.

In 1651, Thomas Hobbes argued that a powerful ruling state was necessary to prevent mankind from tearing itself to pieces. Without it, he felt, there would be—

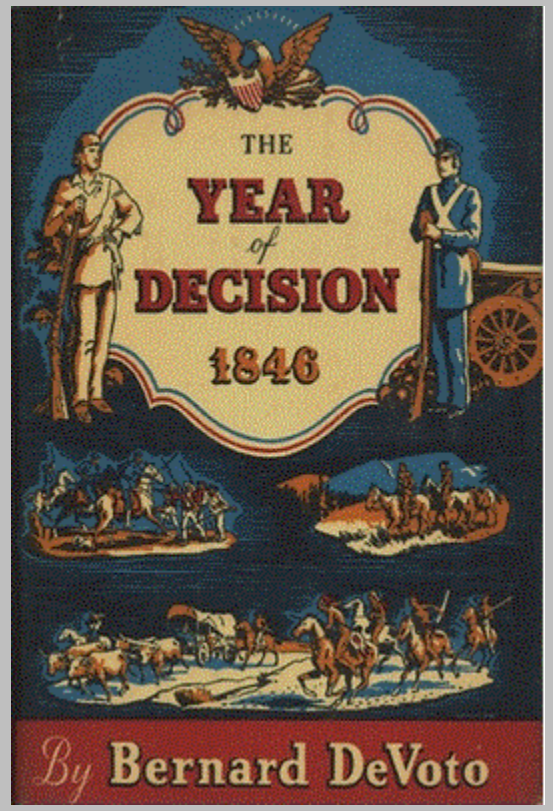
> **"No arts; no letters; no society; and which is worst of all, continual fear, and danger of violent death; and the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."** So said Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan.

Did that condition exist on the Santa Fe Trail, before the U. S. government became Leviathan?



All the peoples of the Southwest understood the concept of conquest by force of arms, yet the rules of war differed for each group, and the strategies and tactics employed varied. The antagonists all adopted elaborate war rituals, costumes, and weaponry designed to achieve tactical advantage and calculated to awe their enemies. All the groups that vied for power and dominance in the borderlands believed in some form of vengeance warfare and practiced some form of captivity and slavery. The peoples who came into conflict in the borderlands of the 1860s all shared a belief in an afterlife and had religious and spiritual traditions that guided their behavior in the corporeal world.

—Andrew Masich, Civil War in the Southwest Borderlands

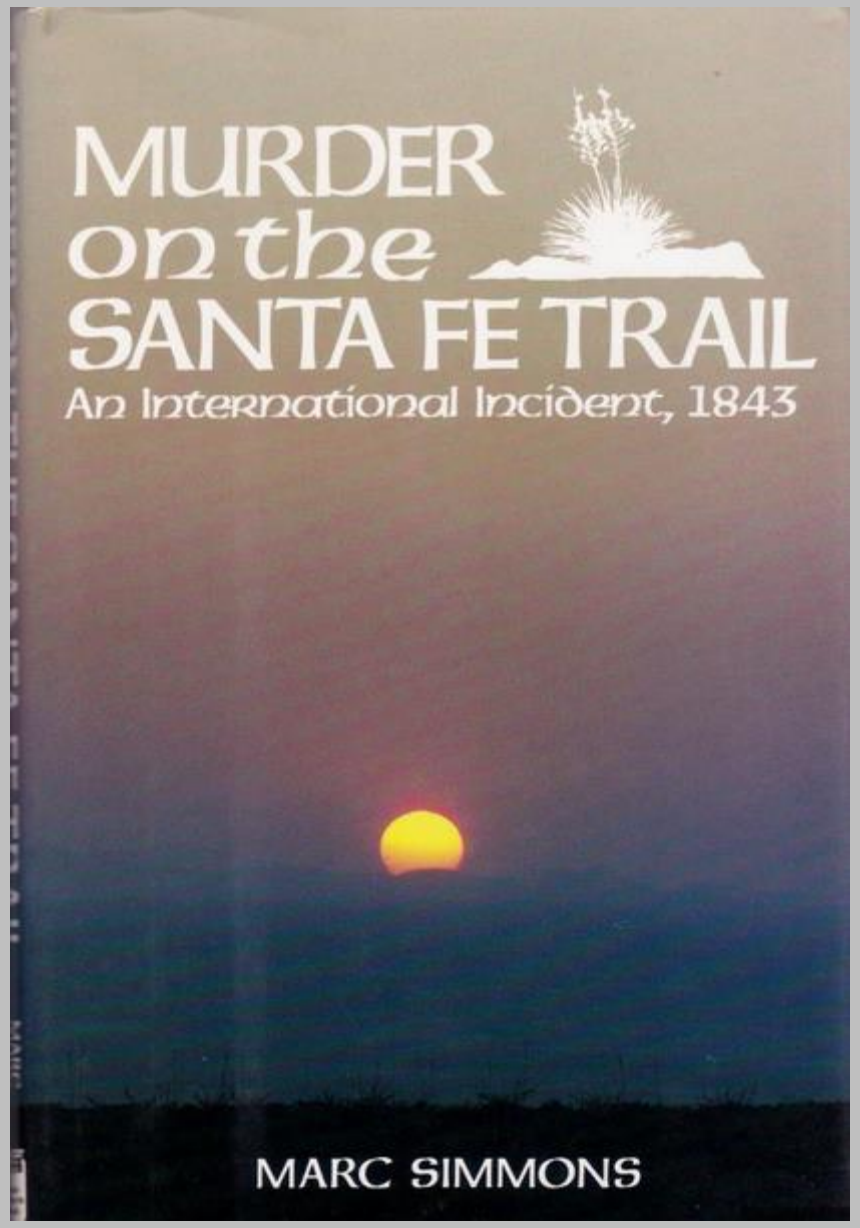


Santa Fe was nearly eight hundred miles out from Independence, or about a hundred and fifty miles farther than Fort Laramie. The journey, however, was much easier. The route was mostly through plains country, there were mountains to cross only in the last stage, and though there were deserts and bad ones, they were on the last leg and (except on the Cimarron Fork) were not so difficult as those the emigrant trail had to cross. Water was not often out of reach, there was abundant grass, and the route was fixed — had even been surveyed — so that there were few detours or cutoffs.

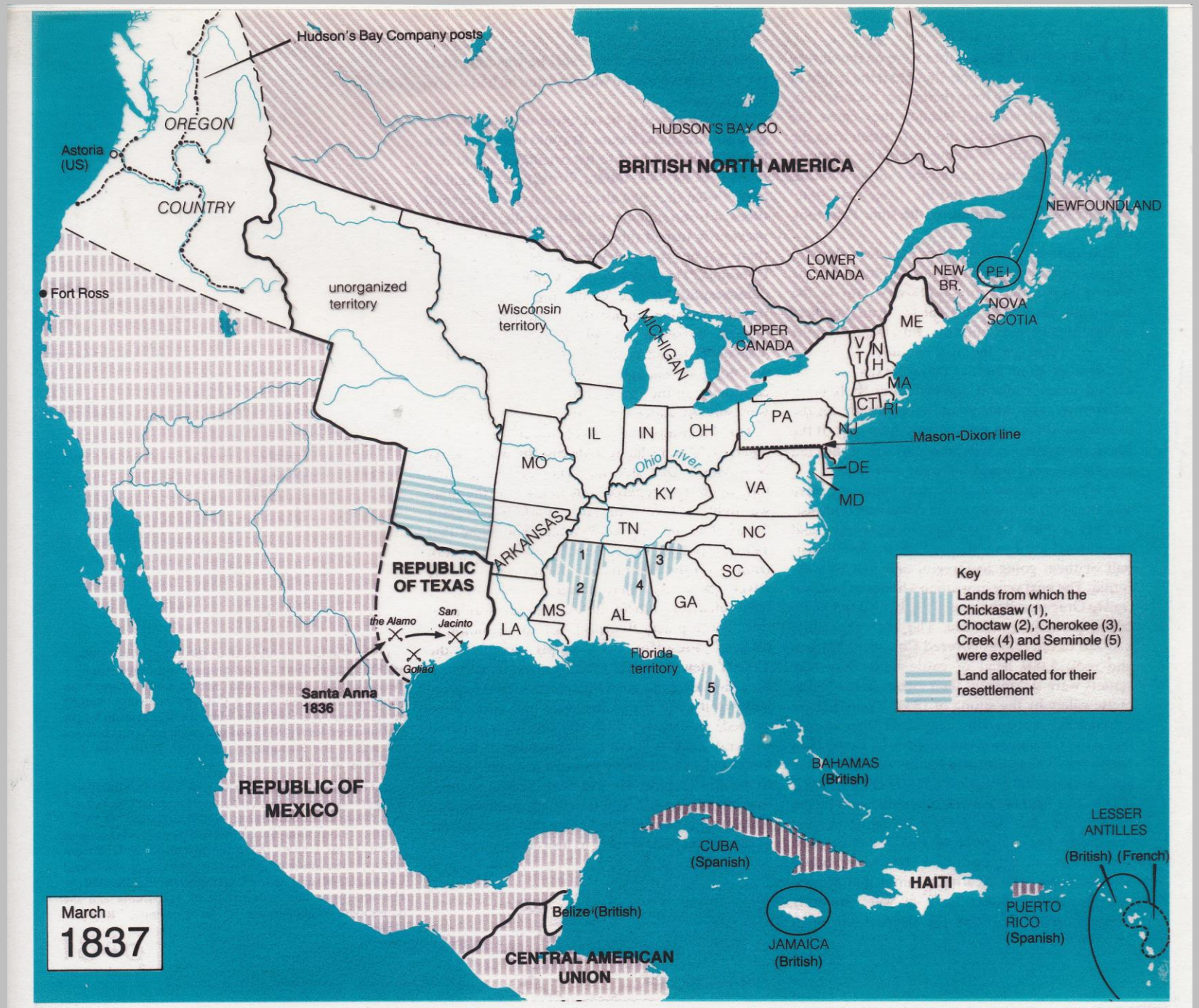
On the other hand, the Santa Fe trail had had blood on it from the beginning. Early in the eighteenth century a Spanish expedition had been massacred on its central marches, and from then on Spaniards, Mexicans, New Mexicans, Frenchmen, Texans, and Americans had regularly perished at one another's hands or those of the Indians. Parts of it had been the disputed frontier between Texas and New Mexico. New Mexicans and the *Comancheros,* whites who traded with the Comanche in stolen Texas horses and stolen Chihuahua and Sonora mules, had plentifully sprinkled it with blood. Guerrillas of both sides raided one another along the trail, freebooters and filibusters fought along it, and all of them fought the Indians.

Violence on the Santa Fe Trail:

Robbery and Murder


MURDER
on the
SANTA FE TRAIL
An International Incident, 1843
MARC SIMMONS

1 Jarvis Creek, the Chavez murder, April 1843


Hudson's Bay Company posts
OREGON
COUNTRY
Astoria (US)
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
NEWFOUNDLAND
LOWER CANADA
NEW BR.
P.E.I.
NOVA SCOTIA
Fort Ross
unorganized territory
Wisconsin territory
MICHIGAN
UPPER CANADA
ME
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
PA
NJ
Mason-Dixon line
IL
IN
OH
Ohio river
DE
MD
MO
KY
VA
TN
NC
ARKANSAS
SC
REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
the Alamo
San Jacinto
Goliad
MS
AL
GA
LA
Florida territory
Santa Anna 1836
Key
Lands from which the Chickasaw (1), Choctaw (2), Cherokee (3), Creek (4) and Seminole (5) were expelled
Land allocated for their resettlement
BAHAMAS (British)
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO
CUBA (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (French)
HAITI
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
JAMAICA (British)
CENTRAL AMERICAN UNION
March
1837

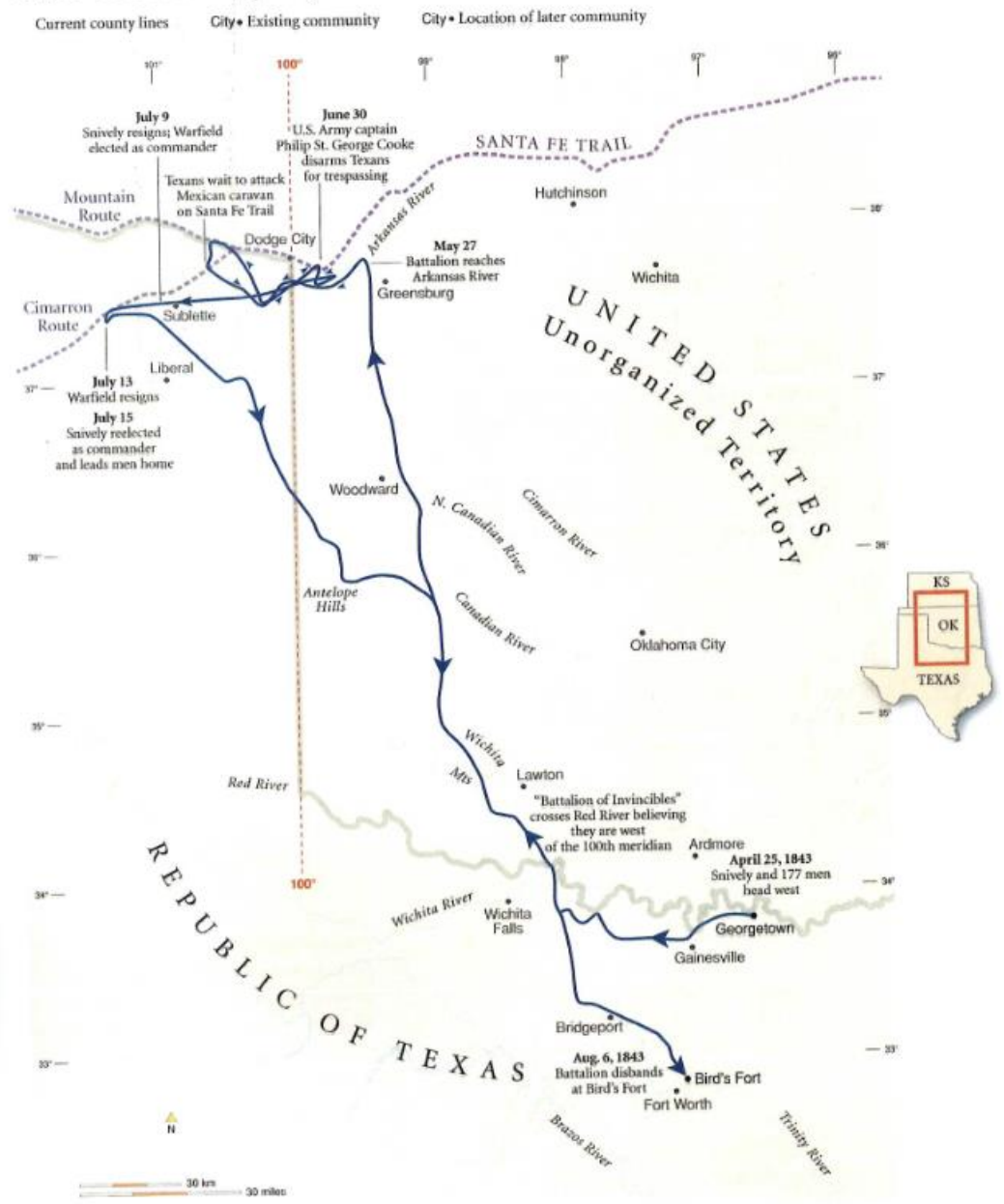
Violence on the Santa Fe Trail:

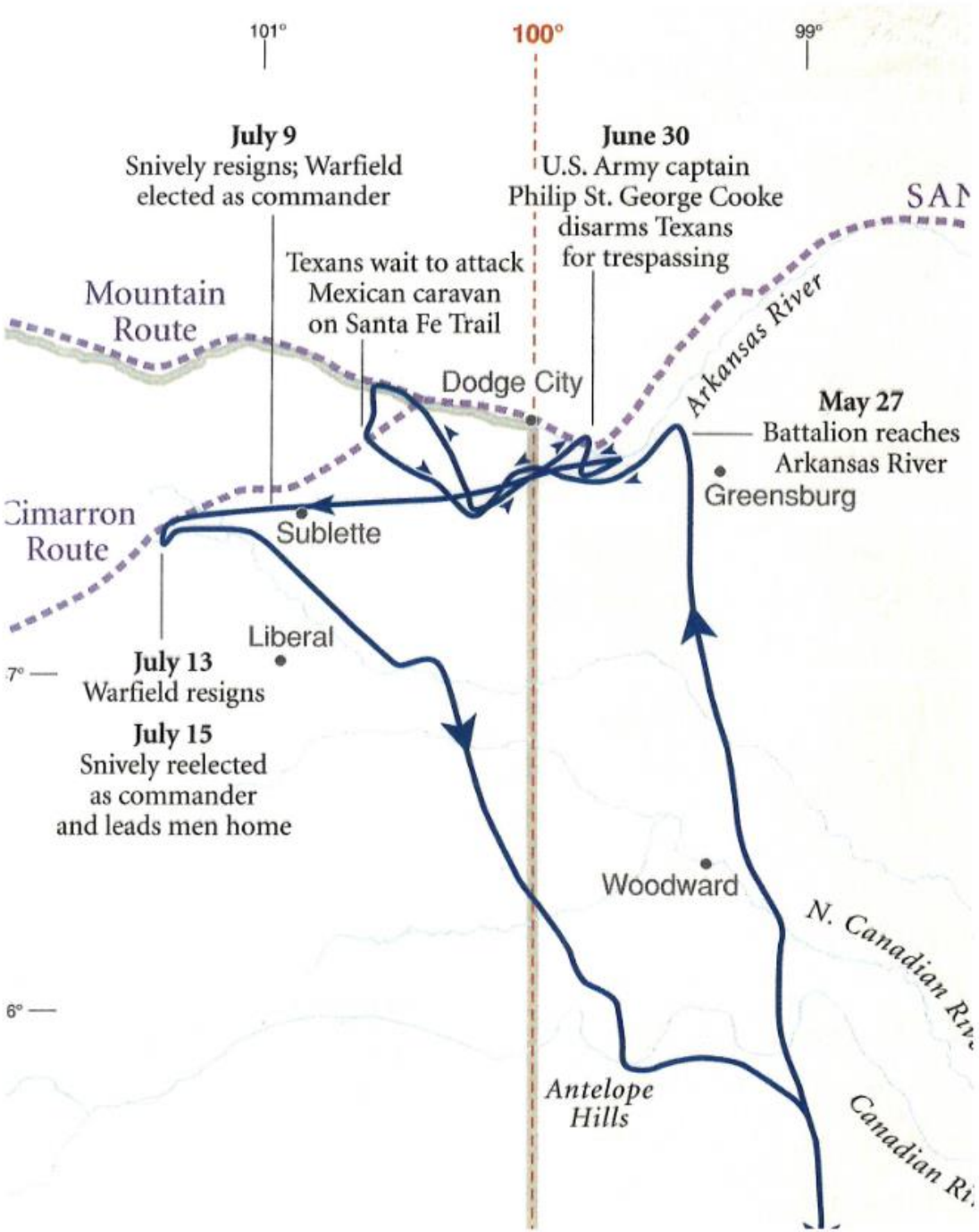
Looting expeditions

An English view of a Texas ranging company. Note the presence of the tejano *ranger riding alongside his Anglo-American comrades. (*Illustrated London News, *1842)*


Los Diablos Tejanos, 1847
1: Captain Ben McCulloch
2: Ranger Sergeant
3: Ranger Lieutenant
4: Mexican Peon

Route of the Snively Expedition




101°
100°
99°
July 9
Snively resigns; Warfield elected as commander
June 30
U.S. Army captain Philip St. George Cooke disarms Texans for trespassing
Texans wait to attack Mexican caravan on Santa Fe Trail
Mountain Route
Dodge City
Arkansas River
May 27
Battalion reaches Arkansas River
Greensburg
Cimarron Route
Sublette
Liberal
July 13
Warfield resigns
July 15
Snively reelected as commander and leads men home
Woodward
N. Canadian Riv
Antelope Hills
Canadian Ri
7°
6°

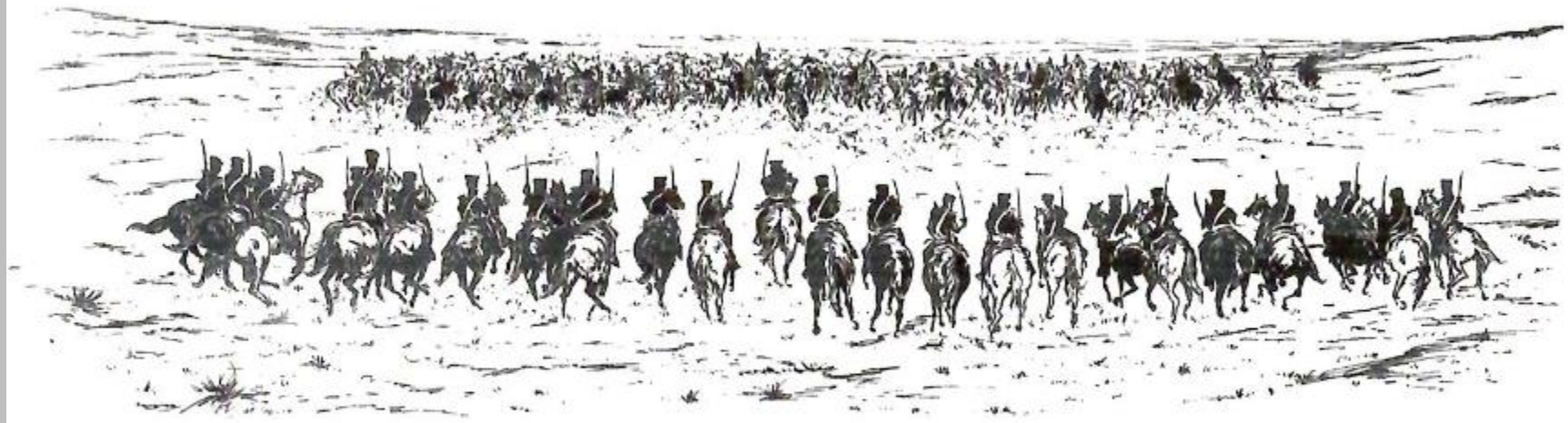
2 Texan Raids, Cooke vs. Snively, June 30 1843

Violence on the Santa Fe Trail:

Battles with Indians

3 Love's Defeat,
June 26, 1847

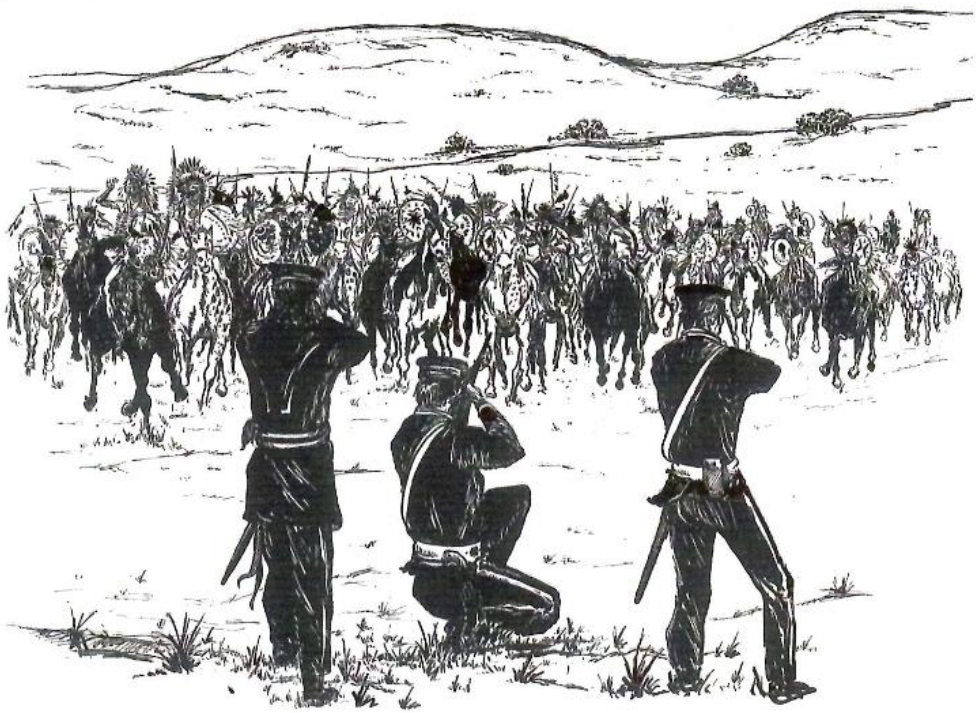
On June 7, 1847, 1st. Lt. John Love led his Company B, First Dragoons, westward from Fort Leavenworth en route to Santa Fe as escort for paymaster Maj. Charles Bodine, his train of twelve wagons, and nearly $350,000 in specie to pay troops in New Mexico. For Love and his men, the journey would lead to a tragic encounter with the Comanches, which became known as "Love's Defeat."



At dawn on June 26, 1847, a large war party of Comanches stampeded the oxen from one of the government trains traveling wi Lieutenant Love and his men. Other warriors menaced the paymaster's train, so Love sent Sgt. Ben Bishop and about twenty-fi troopers to recover the oxen while the remainder defended the paymaster. When within 150 yards of the Comanches, Bishop formed h men into line, then ordered a charge. Away went the brave men, charging ten or twelve times as many Indians.

3 Love's Defeat,
June 26, 1847

4 Battle of Coon Creek, June 18, 1848



During the evening of June 17, 1848, 1st Lt. William B. Royall and seventy-one recruits from the Santa Fe Battalion, a detachment of artillery from the Indian Battalion, an army paymaster, and two government supply trains, with a herd of beef cattle, camped along the Arkansas River about two miles northeast of present Kinsley, Kansas. At dawn the next morning, this camp was suddenly attacked by between two and three hundred Comanche warriors, with another four hundred observing the attack from the north and south. It was the beginning of the Battle of Coon Creek, the first important fight in which breech-loading carbines were used against the Plains Indians.

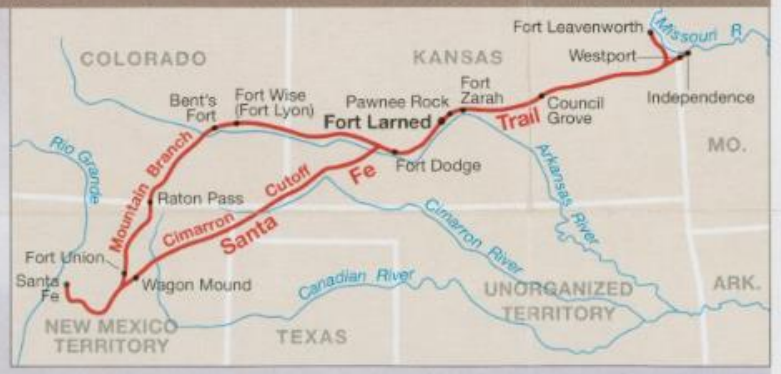
4 Battle of Coon Creek, June 18, 1848

After the Battle of Coon Creek, Lieutenant Royall led thirty-eight men across the Arkansas in an effort to recover stolen livestock. In the sand hills southeast of the river they were surprised and surrounded by more than five hundred Comanche warriors. While the troops were dashing for the highest dune to make a fighting stand, one of the warriors charged Pvt. James Roop with a lance, striking him in the abdomen. Incredibly, the lance struck the trooper's belt buckle and was held fast while Roop shot and killed the warrior.

The Santa Fe Trail

The vital artery of commerce, travel, and communication known to history as the Santa Fe Trail began on the west bank of the Missouri River, first at Franklin, then at Independence, later at Westport. It led west through Council Grove, past Fort Larned to Fort Dodge, where it forked, one route going southwest through the Cimarron Desert and the other continuing west into Colorado, turning south at Bent's Fort. Both branches merged just beyond Fort Union, 75 miles from Santa Fe. Fort Larned, like other outposts scattered along the trail, offered not only protection and refuge for harried travelers but also respite from the rigors of the journey and a chance to replace broken gear and dwindling supplies.

Ribbons of deep-worn ruts from countless ox- or mule-drawn wagons (like the ones in the painting) still mark the route of the Santa Fe Trail. Close by Fort Larned, a portion of the trail has been preserved as part of the historic site. From a viewing platform can be seen a glimpse of nature and history combined. Near the trail furrows a colony of prairie dogs thrives among the mixed prairie grasses. Shallow buffalo wallows dent the otherwise level land where meadowlarks, burrowing owls, hawks, and an occasional eagle may also be seen. Information about the Santa Fe Trail ruts area and how to reach it is available at the visitor center.



Encampment on the Plains by Thomas Worthington Whittredge. Courtesy Autry Museum of Western Heritage, Los Angeles, Calif.

A Guide to Fort Larned

Guardian of the Santa Fe Trail

Fort Larned

Official Map and Guide

Fort Larned National Historic Site
Kansas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Company C, Third U.S. Infantry, in front of barracks at Fort Larned, 1867.
Courtesy Kansas State Historical Society.

Guardian of the Santa Fe Trail

From 1821 to 1880 the Santa Fe Trail was one of America's most important overland routes, carrying annually several million dollars in commercial traffic between Independence, Mo., and Santa Fe. The acquisition of vast new southwestern territories by the United States after the Mexican War, and the gold rushes of 1849 and 1858, gave added impetus to trail traffic. Inevitably, the great influx of merchants, gold seekers, and adventurers disrupted the Indians' way of life. Believing their very existence was in jeopardy, the tribes struck back, attacking the commerce, mail shipments, and travelers on the trail.

To counter these attacks, the army, on October 22, 1859, established a military post west of Lookout Hill (now Jenkins Hill) on the bank of the Pawnee River about five miles from its junction with the Arkansas. The post was initially called "Camp on Pawnee Fork," but the name was soon changed to "Camp Alert." In June 1860 the camp was moved farther west, where a more durable sod-and-adobe fort was constructed and named for Col. Benjamin F. Larned, U.S. Army Paymaster-General (1854-62).

Fort Larned was one in a succession of military posts established for protection and escort duty along the Santa Fe Trail. Among these posts were forts Mann (1847), Atkinson (1850), Union (1851), Wise, later renamed Lyon (1860), Zarah (1864), Dodge (1865), and Aubrey (1865), as well as Camp Nichols (1865). Some of the posts were temporary, lasting only a few months; others, such as Larned, were considered permanent. Fort Larned, as well as forts Union, Lyon, and Dodge, experienced extensive development that lasted for years after the closing of the trail and the removal of any Indian threat in the area. As the military presence grew so did troop movements and government freighting to keep the posts supplied.

As a military center, Fort Larned, for several critical years, was a principal guardian of Santa Fe Trail commerce, its soldiers cooperating with troops from forts Union and Lyon on both the Cimarron and Mountain branches of the route. In 1864, following the Sand Creek Massacre in eastern Colorado and after the War Department forbade travel beyond Fort Larned without armed escort, the post furnished guard detachments for mail stages and wagon trains. It served as a base for Maj. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock's abortive 1867 campaign against the Plains tribes—a campaign that was intended to impress the Indians with the military strength of the United States but which only succeeded in terrorizing them and intensifying hostilities.

Fort Larned was a key post in the Indian wars from 1859 to 1869. In 1868, in violation of the Treaty of Medicine Lodge signed the year before, the Cheyennes attacked several wagon trains along the Santa Fe Trail and raided settlers as far south as the Texas panhandle. These events signaled a general outbreak, and Kiowas, Comanches, and Arapahos also began to pillage and raid from Kansas to Texas. To meet the threat, Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan, commanding the Military Division of the Missouri, obtained permission from Washington to organize a winter campaign and ordered Lt. Col. George A. Custer and the 7th Cavalry to thrust south into Indian Territory. Custer's campaign culminated with an attack on Black Kettle's Cheyennes along the Washita River in the pre-dawn hours of November 27,1868. Black Kettle was among those killed in the fight and the camp of 51 lodges was completely destroyed. This ended organized Indian threat to the area around Fort Larned, although skirmishes and unorganized resistance continued.

Throughout most of the 1860s Fort Larned also served as an agency of the Indian Bureau in its attempts to provide peaceful solutions to the cultural conflict between Indians and whites. The groundwork for such an approach was laid by the 1861 Treaty of Fort Wise and strengthened by the subsequent treaties of the Little Arkansas (1865) and Medicine Lodge (1867). Under these agreements, the U.S. Government promised to pay annuities of clothing and other necessities to the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Kiowas, and Comanches in return for staying on their reservations and keeping the peace. Beginning in 1861 Fort Larned was a distributing point for these annuities. The agency was abolished in 1868 when the tribes were moved to new reservations in Indian Territory.

Fort Larned's last important function was, ironically, to help end the usefulness of the trail it had so long protected. The close of the Civil War released the nation's great industrial energies, foremost of which was the great surge of the railroad across the plains. The railroad promised cheaper and faster transportation and shattered old ideas of distance. Trails of mud and dust could not compete with the trails of steel stretching westward from the Missouri. In the early 1870's, as the Santa Fe Railroad pushed west from Topeka, soldiers from Fort Larned provided protection for construction workers. In July 1878, nearly six years after the completion of the line through Kansas, the fort was abandoned, except for a small guard force of soldiers left to protect the property.

On March 26, 1883, the Fort Larned military reservation was transferred from the War Department to the General Land Office, U.S. Department of the Interior. A year later the buildings and land were sold at public auction. For the next 80 years the property remained in private hands. In August 1964 Fort Larned became a national historic site and a unit of the National Park System.

Indian Bureau Agency, 1861-68

Each autumn during the years Fort Larned served as an agency for the Indian Bureau, post residents watched in fascination as the scattered tribes of Southern Cheyenne, Arapahoes, Kiowas and Comanches assembled at the fort. Pitching their tipis in the nearby prairie, the tribes (like the Cheyennes shown in the painting) settled down to locate friends and kin among their neighbors, to trade, and to await the distribution of their annuities. Noted Indian Bureau agents Edward W. Wynkoop and Jesse Leavenworth were among those who served the tribes from Fort Larned. Annuities provided included staples such as bacon, wheat flour, coffee, sugar, fresh beef, and tobacco. Clothing, beads, blankets, metal tools and cooking utensils, gunpowder, and lead for bullets were also usually provided. The annuity system, established under treaties like the one negotiated at Medicine Lodge in 1867, was designed to pacify and transform roaming tribes of warlike Indians into sedentary, peaceful farmers. Benevolent in theory, the system in practice encouraged indolence on the part of the Indians. And depredations continued, despite sincere efforts by Indian agents like Wynkoop and Leavenworth to treat the tribes honorably.

Indian Camp at Dawn by Jules Tavernier. Courtesy Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, Okla.

Fort Larned's Buildings

When Capt. Henry W. Wessells, 2d Infantry, came to the fort in 1860 to construct a set of buildings, he planned to build them of wood and was disappointed when ordered to use adobe, which he thought would be less durable. Nevertheless, by year's end, an officers' quarters, a combination storehouse and barracks, a guardhouse, two laundresses' quarters, and a hospital had been completed. Later additions included soldiers' quarters and a bakery, dug into the river bank; a small adobe meathouse; and a three-room picket structure housing blacksmith, carpenter, and saddler shops.

For the most part, Fort Larned's buildings at that time were poorly constructed and inadequate to meet the threat of the large-scale Indian war many high-ranking officers were predicting. Appropriations for new construction work were finally made in 1866, and the fort's garrison began an extensive building program. By the winter of 1868 Wessells' "shabby, vermin-breeding" adobe structures were gone and nine new stone and timber buildings stood around the quadrangular parade ground. These are the same buildings you see here today. They are shown on the diagram below and briefly identified at right.

Barracks/Visitor Center

Originally constructed to house two companies of infantry, this barracks has been restored and adapted for use as visitor center and administrative offices. *Museum, audio-visual program, bookstore, and restrooms.*

Barracks/Post Hospital

This building originally housed one company of infantry and one of cavalry, about 150 men. In 1871, the east half was converted into the post hospital, the way it is seen today. The west half has been restored as the barracks for Company C, 3rd Infantry.

Shops Building

Bakery and blacksmith shops occupied the end spaces in this three-room structure. The center's "workshop" area was used for wheelwright, carpentry, tinsmith, paint, and saddlery activities.

New Commissary

This building was constructed to house the overflow of garrison food and subsistence supplies from the Old Commissary. For awhile it served as a hospital annex, and in 1871 the north end was used as a schoolroom for soldiers as well as post children, and as a library.

Old Commissary

This is the oldest surviving stone structure at the fort. From here food was distributed to the garrison. For many years the western part of the building was used as an arsenal and powder magazine. Note the rifle slits in the south and west walls.

Quartermaster Storehouse

This building's large open storeroom was filled with military clothing, bedding, tents, field gear, tools, and other materials needed to carry out frontier military operations. Note the rifle slits in the south wall.

Company Officers' Quarters

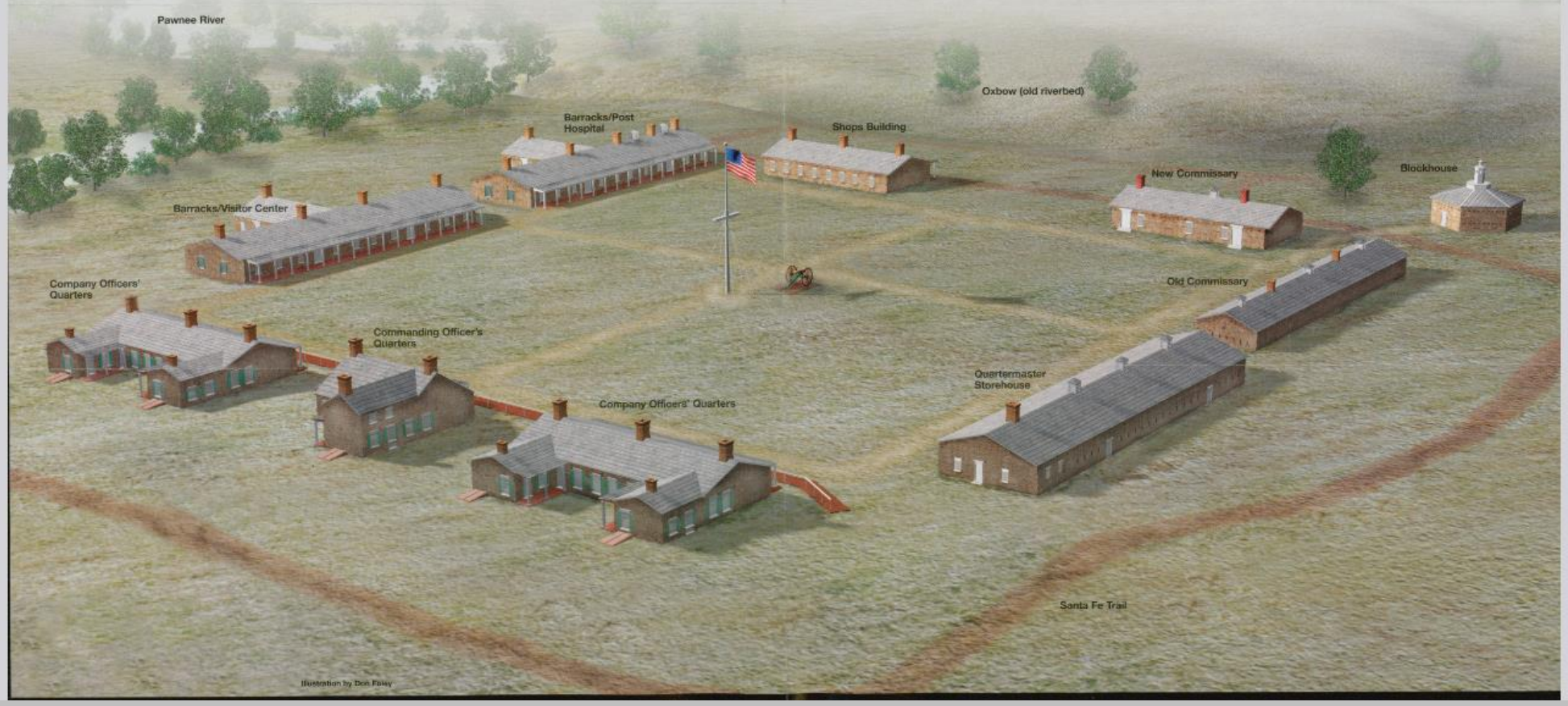
These buildings each accommodated two captains and four lieutenants. The captains' quarters in the ends of the buildings consisted of two rooms, a kitchen, and servant's room. The lieutenants had one room each without kitchens. In 1870 wooden lean-tos were added at the rear of each to provide kitchens and servant space.

Commanding Officer's Quarters

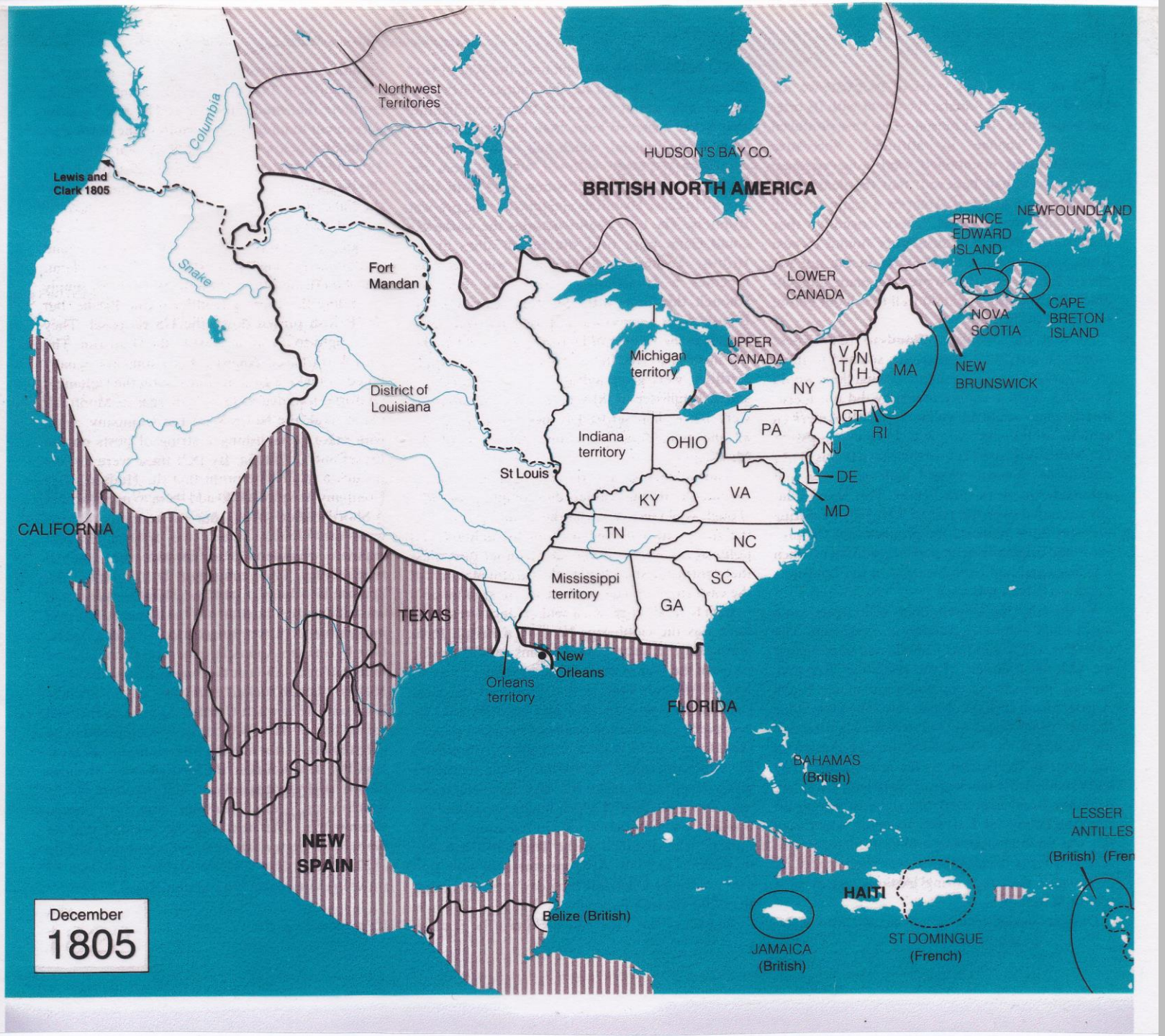
This two-story structure, the only single-family residence on the post, housed the fort's highest ranking officer. It contained four large rooms separated by a central hallway, a kitchen, and upstairs servants' quarters. Maj. Meredith Kidd and his family were the first occupants of the house.

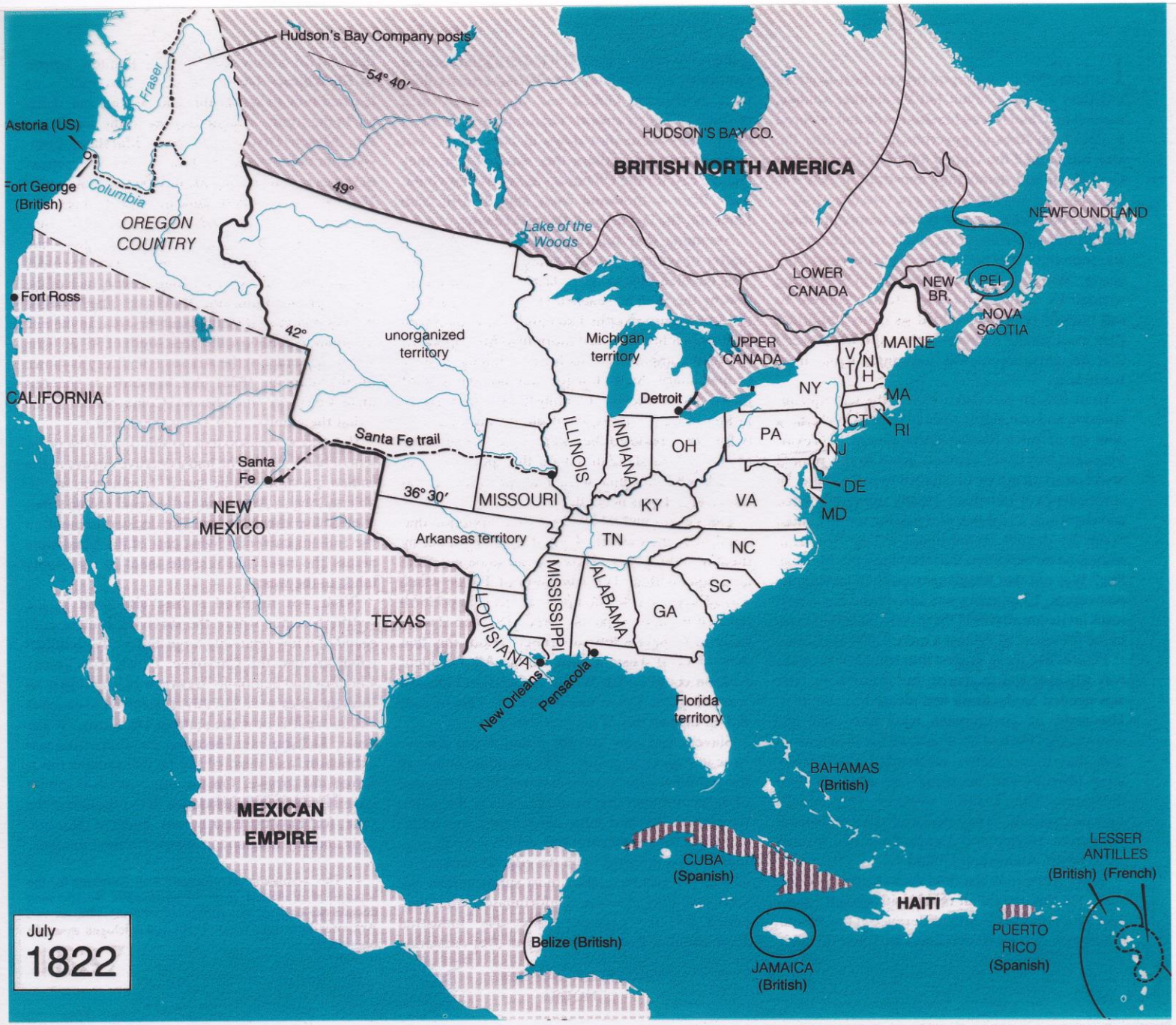
Blockhouse (reconstruction)

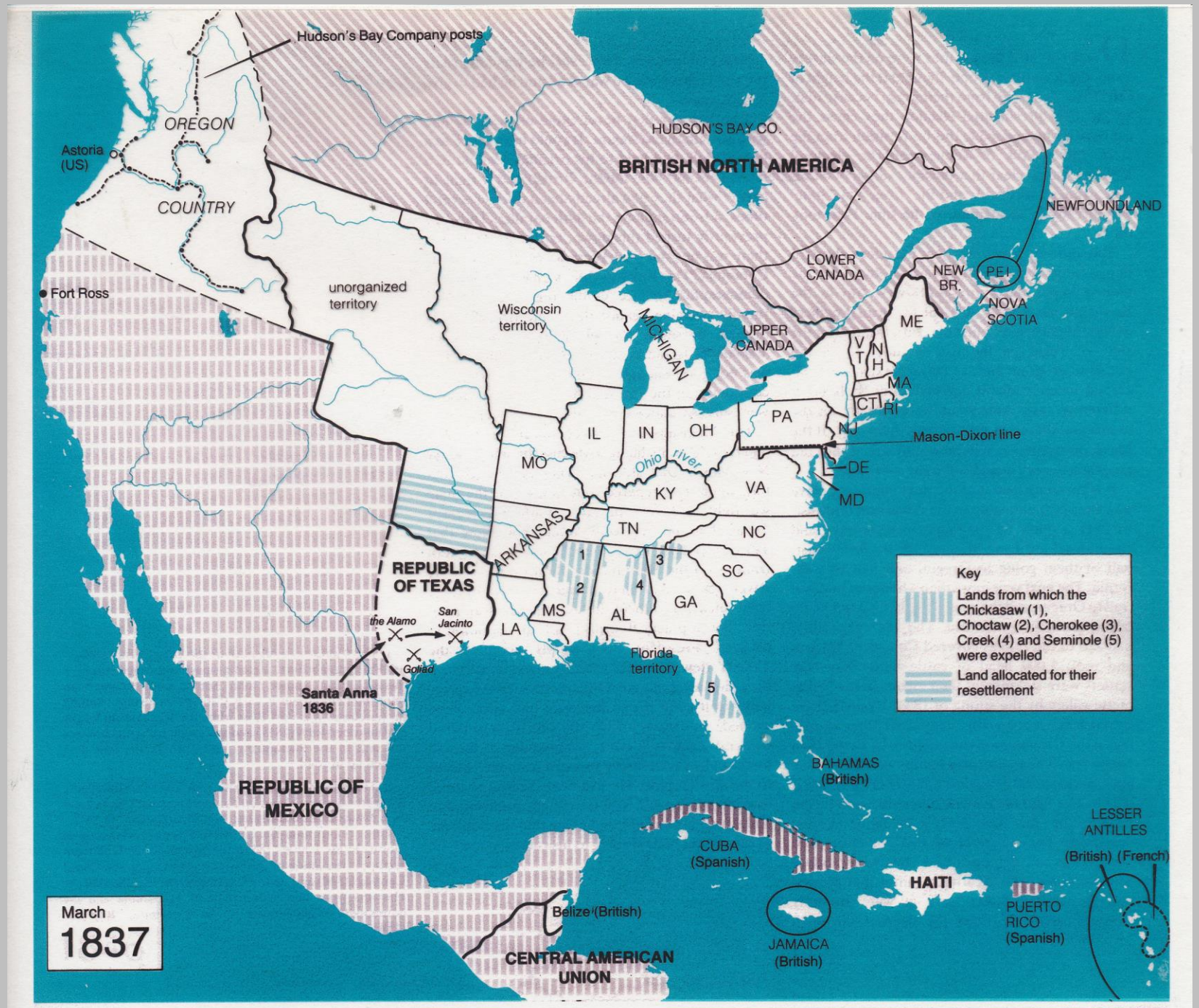
Built in the winter of 1864-65 to strengthen the fort's defenses, this hexagonal stone building contained a powder magazine, two levels of rifle slits or "loopholes," an underground passageway, and a well. Not needed for defense, it was converted in 1867 into a guardhouse. The original structure was dismantled around 1900 by civilian owners who used its sandstone blocks in other buildings.

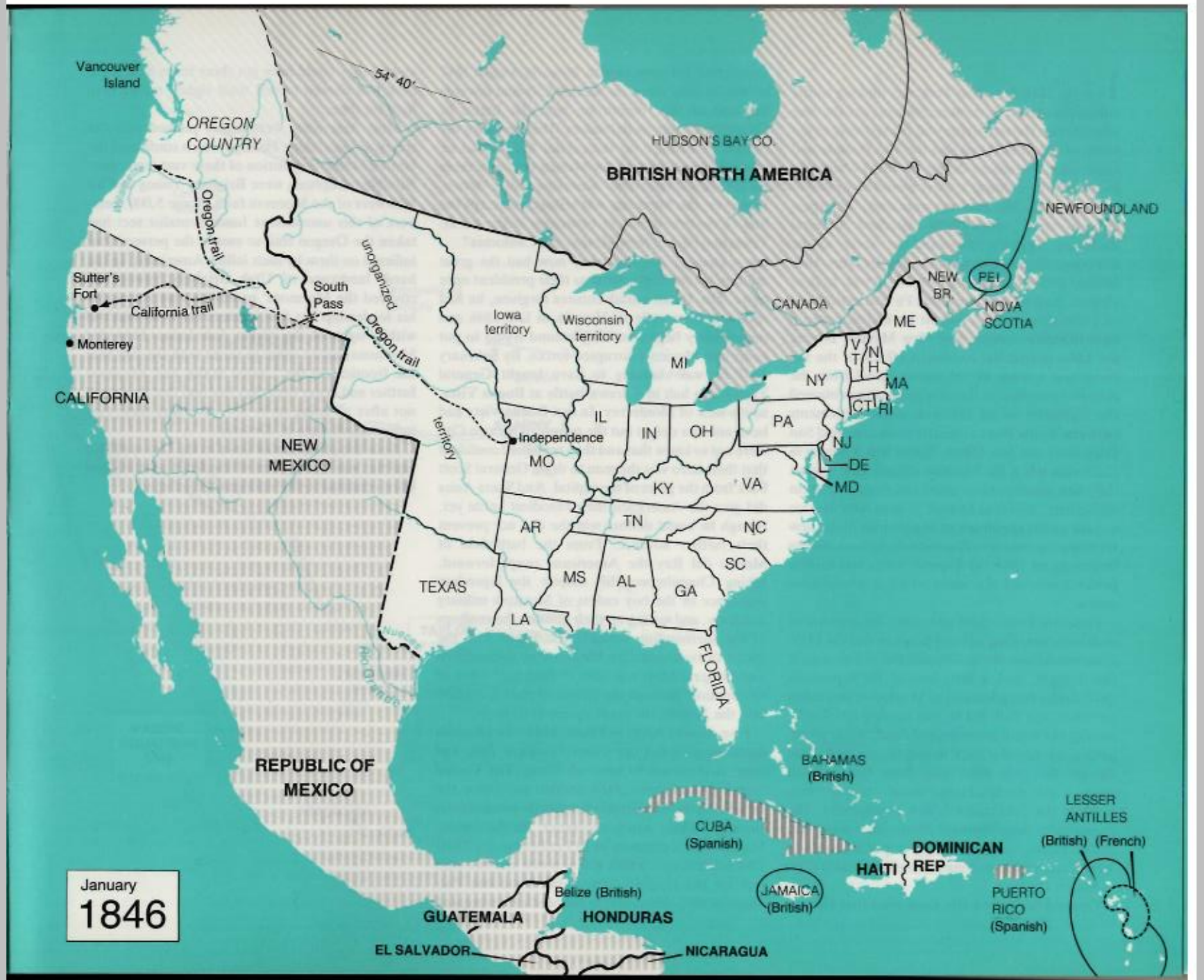


5 Fort Larned KS


Northwest Territories
Columbia
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
Lewis and Clark 1805
Snake
Fort Mandan
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
NEWFOUNDLAND
LOWER CANADA
NOVA SCOTIA
CAPE BRETON ISLAND
UPPER CANADA
Michigan territory
V T
N H
MA
NEW BRUNSWICK
NY
CT
RI
District of Louisiana
Indiana territory
OHIO
PA
NJ
DE
St Louis
KY
VA
MD
CALIFORNIA
TN
NC
Mississippi territory
SC
GA
TEXAS
New Orleans
Orleans territory
FLORIDA
BAHAMAS (British)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (Fren
NEW SPAIN
HAITI
Belize (British)
JAMAICA (British)
ST DOMINGUE (French)
December
1805


Hudson's Bay Company posts
54° 40′
Fraser
Astoria (US)
Columbia
Fort George (British)
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
49°
OREGON COUNTRY
Lake of the Woods
NEWFOUNDLAND
LOWER CANADA
NEW BR.
P.E.I.
NOVA SCOTIA
Fort Ross
42°
unorganized territory
Michigan territory
UPPER CANADA
MAINE
VT
NH
NY
MA
CALIFORNIA
Detroit
CT
RI
Santa Fe trail
ILLINOIS
INDIANA
OH
PA
NJ
Santa Fe
36° 30′
MISSOURI
KY
VA
DE
MD
NEW MEXICO
Arkansas territory
TN
NC
MISSISSIPPI
ALABAMA
SC
GA
LOUISIANA
TEXAS
New Orleans
Pensacola
Florida territory
BAHAMAS (British)
MEXICAN EMPIRE
CUBA (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES (British) (French)
HAITI
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
JAMAICA (British)
July
1822


Hudson's Bay Company posts
OREGON
COUNTRY
Astoria (US)
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
NEWFOUNDLAND
LOWER CANADA
NEW BR.
P.E.I.
NOVA SCOTIA
Fort Ross
unorganized territory
Wisconsin territory
MICHIGAN
UPPER CANADA
ME
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
PA
NJ
Mason-Dixon line
IL
IN
OH
Ohio river
DE
MD
MO
KY
VA
TN
NC
ARKANSAS
SC
REPUBLIC OF TEXAS
the Alamo
San Jacinto
Goliad
MS
AL
GA
LA
Florida territory
Santa Anna 1836
Key
Lands from which the Chickasaw (1), Choctaw (2), Cherokee (3), Creek (4) and Seminole (5) were expelled
Land allocated for their resettlement
BAHAMAS (British)
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO
CUBA (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (French)
HAITI
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
JAMAICA (British)
CENTRAL AMERICAN UNION
March
1837


Vancouver Island
OREGON COUNTRY
54° 40'
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
NEWFOUNDLAND
Oregon trail
Sutter's Fort
California trail
South Pass
unorganized
Oregon trail
Iowa territory
Wisconsin territory
CANADA
NEW BR.
PEI
NOVA SCOTIA
ME
Monterey
CALIFORNIA
MI
NY
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
NEW MEXICO
territory
Independence
IL
IN
OH
PA
NJ
DE
MD
MO
KY
VA
TN
NC
AR
SC
MS
AL
GA
TEXAS
LA
FLORIDA
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO
BAHAMAS (British)
CUBA (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (French)
DOMINICAN REP
HAITI
JAMAICA (British)
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
January
1846

1845-49

Term of Expansion

"Who is James K. Polk?" asked Whigs derisively when Democrats unexpectedly presented the former Tennessee governor as their nominee for President in 1844. But it was Polk's embrace of Manifest Destiny—a term coined by magazine editor John O'Sullivan in 1845—that completed the broad outlines of America's geography. During his single term as President, the United States pushed its boundaries to the Pacific—wrestling California and the Southwest from Mexico, admitting Texas to the Union, and crowding Britain out of the Pacific Northwest.

Violence on the Santa Fe Trail:

The Mexican War

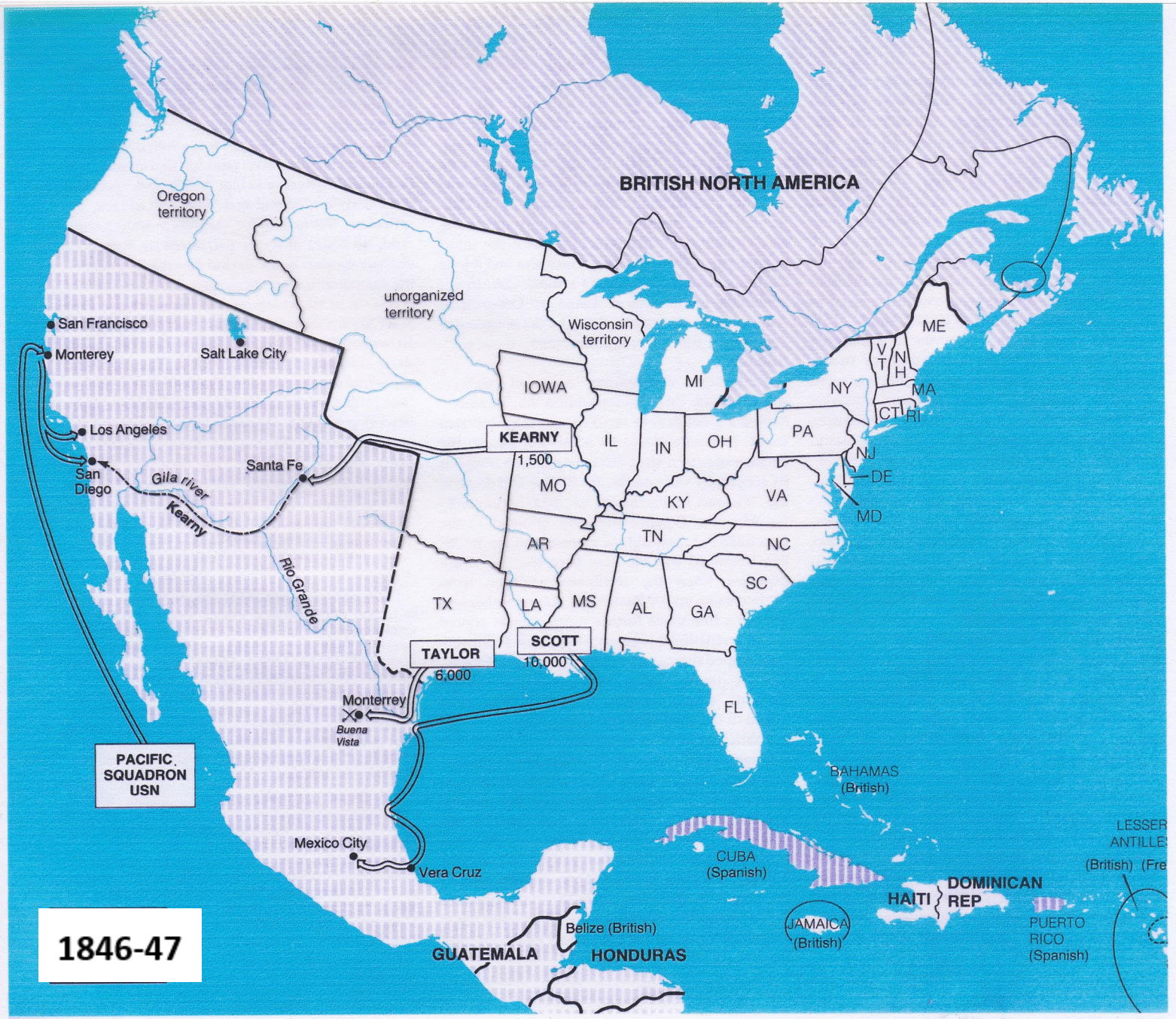
Mexican–American War

Clockwise from top: Battle of Resaca de la Palma, U.S. victory at Churubusco outside of Mexico City, Marines storming Chapultepec castle under a large U.S. flag, Battle of Cerro Gordo

Date	April 25, 1846 – February 2, 1848 (1 year, 9 months, 1 week and 1 day)
Location	Texas, New Mexico, California; Northern, Central, and Eastern Mexico; Mexico City
Result	American victory • Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo • Mexican recognition of U.S. sovereignty over Texas (among other territories) • End of the conflict between Mexico and Texas
Territorial changes	Mexican Cession

Belligerents

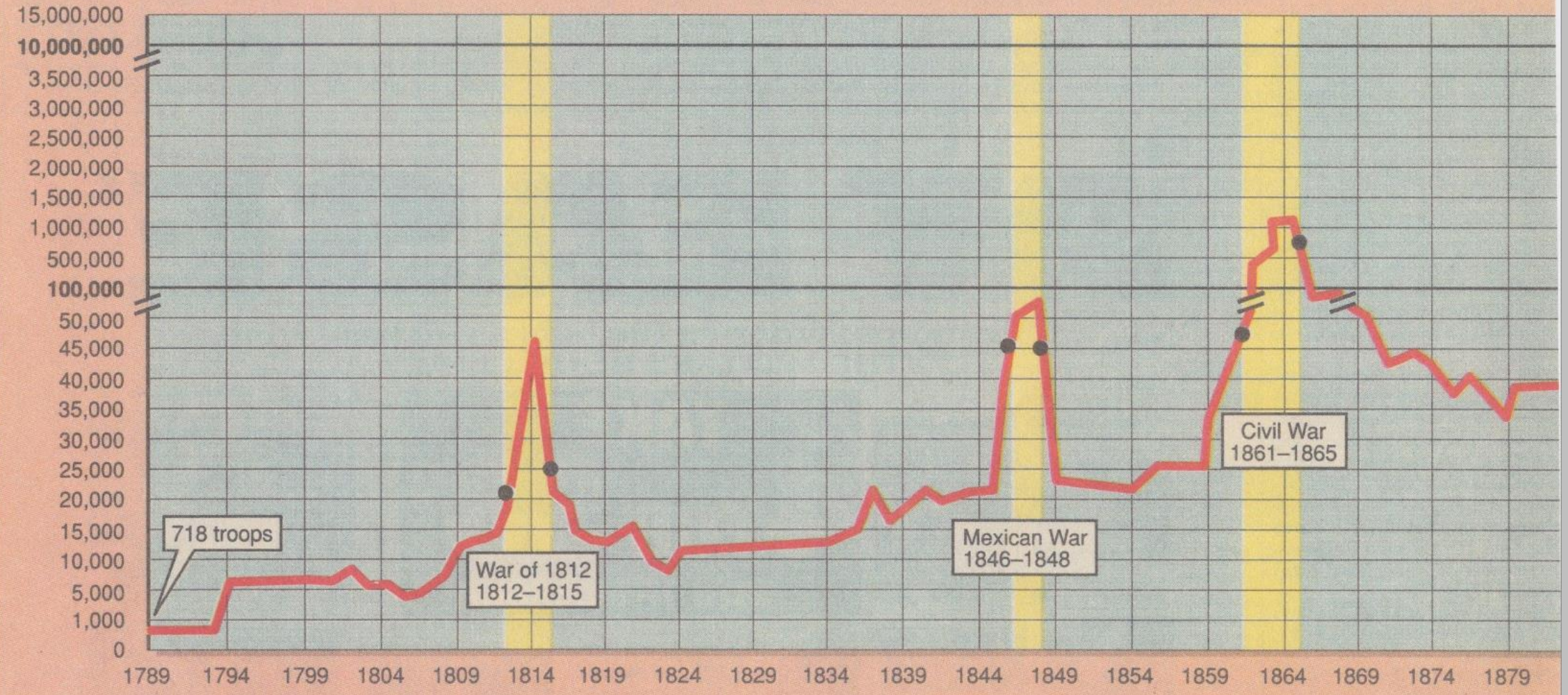
United States California Republic	Mexico


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
Oregon territory
unorganized territory
Wisconsin territory
San Francisco
Monterey
Salt Lake City
Los Angeles
San Diego
Gila river
Kearny
Santa Fe
Rio Grande
IOWA
MI
NY
ME
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
KEARNY
1,500
IL
IN
OH
PA
NJ
DE
MD
MO
KY
VA
AR
TN
NC
SC
TX
LA
MS
AL
GA
FL
SCOTT
10,000
TAYLOR
6,000
Monterrey
Buena Vista
PACIFIC SQUADRON USN
BAHAMAS (British)
Mexico City
Vera Cruz
CUBA (Spanish)
HAITI
DOMINICAN REP
JAMAICA (British)
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (Fre
Belize (British)
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
1846-47

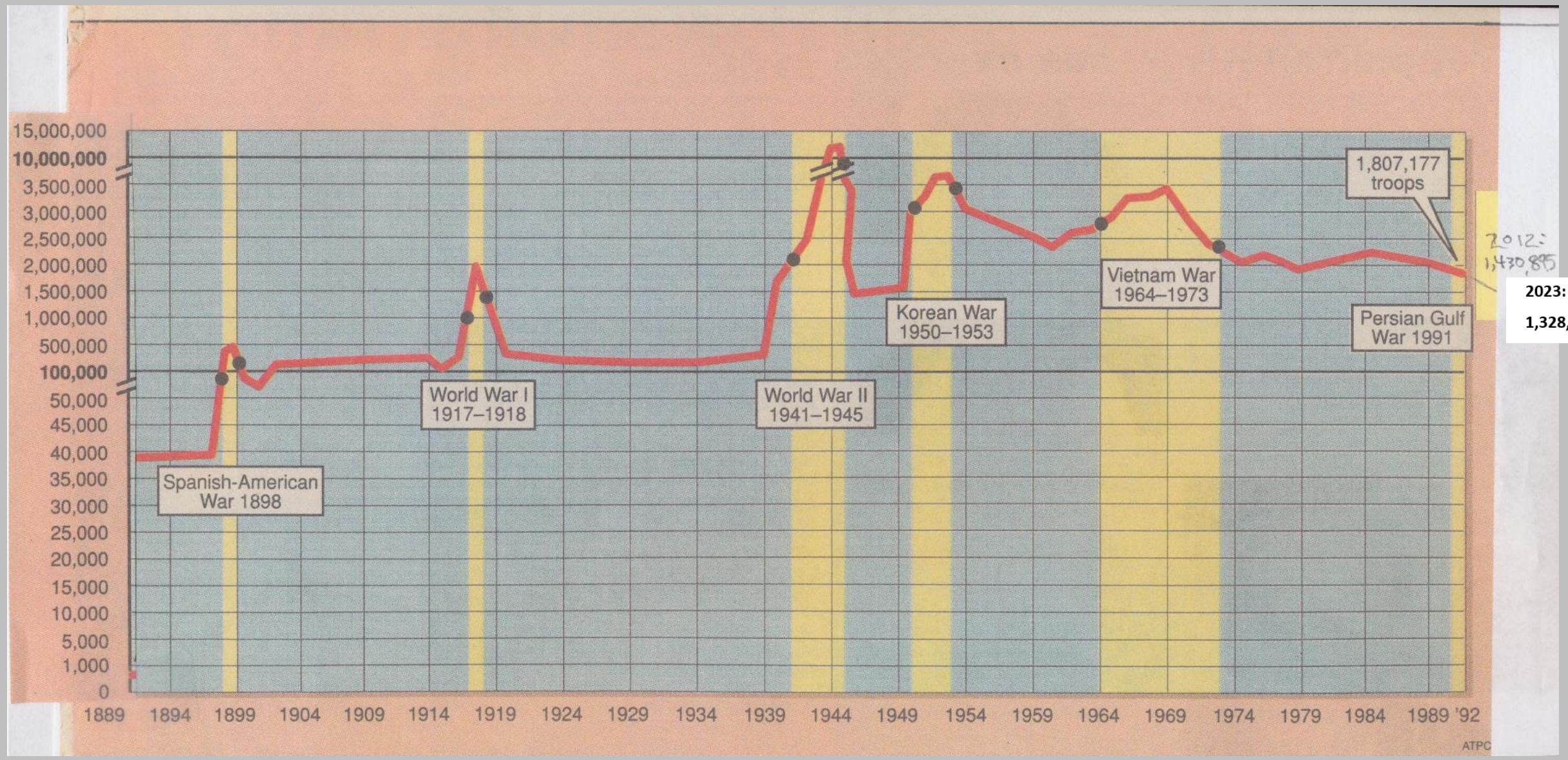

unorganized territory
Wisconsin territory
San Francisco
Monterey
Salt Lake City
Los Angeles
San Diego
Santa Fe
Gila river
Kearny
Rio Grande
IOWA
MI
ME
VT
NH
NY
MA
CT
RI
KEARNY
1,500
IL
IN
OH
PA
NJ
DE
MD
MO
KY
VA
AR
TN
NC
SC
TX
LA
MS
AL
GA
SCOTT
10,000
TAYLOR
6,000
FL
Monterrey
Buena Vista
PACIFIC SQUADRON USN
BAHAMAS (British)
Mexico City
Vera Cruz
CUBA (Spanish)
1846-47

Troop strength trends over 203 years

Before each major war, the U.S. armed forces have been built up, followed by a drastic drop immediately after the confilct.



Source: Washington Headquarters Service-Directorate for Information Operations and Reports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1,000,000
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100,000
50,000
45,000
40,000
35,000
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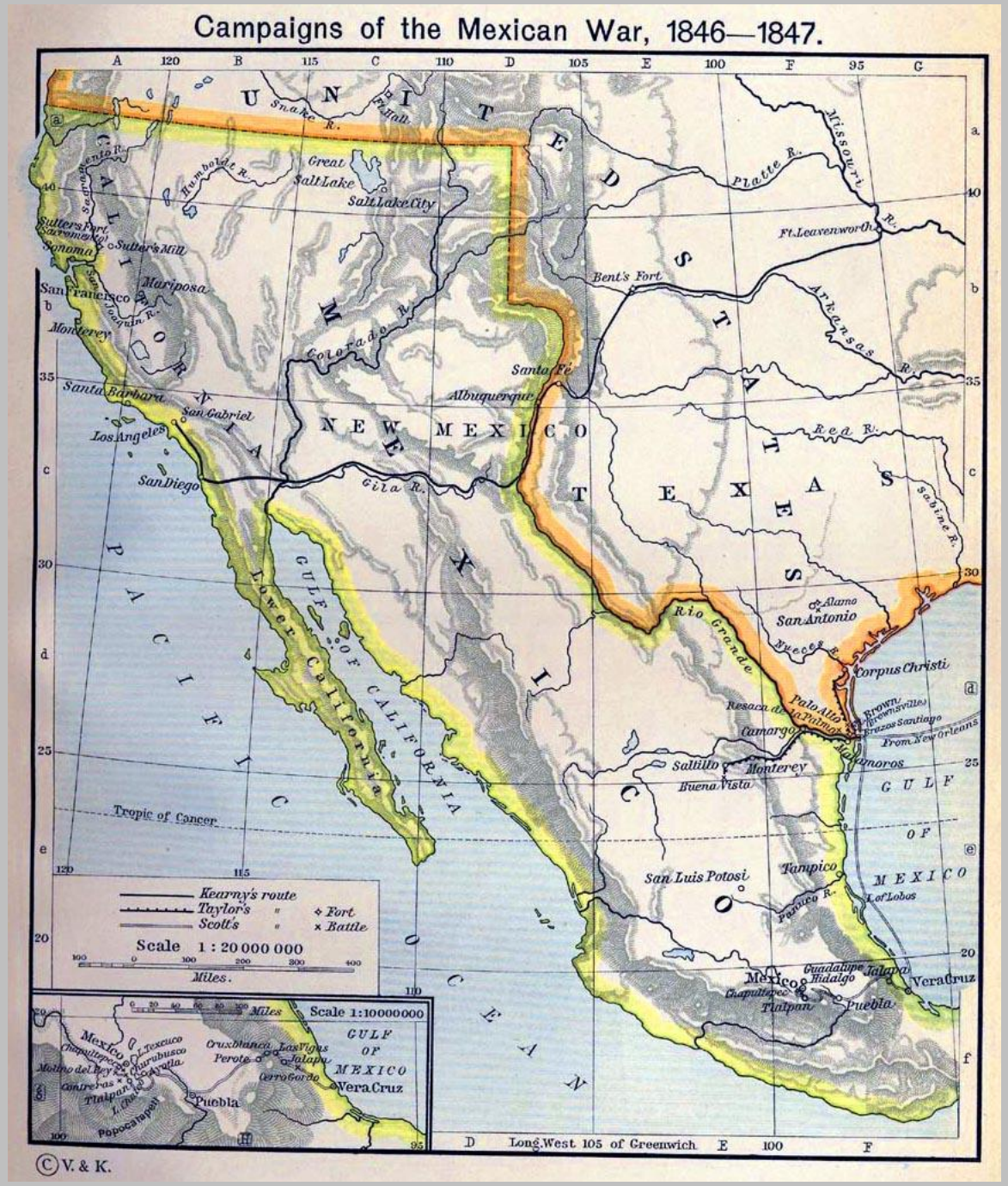
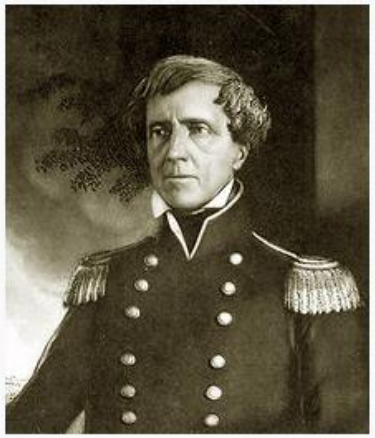
25,000
20,000
15,000
10,000
5,000
1,000
0
1889
1894
1899
1904
1909
1914
1919
1924
1929
1934
1939
1944
1949
1954
1959
1964
1969
1974
1979
1984
1989
'92
Spanish-American War 1898
World War I 1917–1918
World War II 1941–1945
Korean War 1950–1953
Vietnam War 1964–1973
Persian Gulf War 1991
1,807,177 troops
2012: 1,430,895
2023: 1,328,000
ATPC

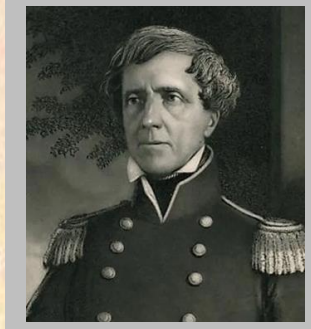

MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR, 1846–1848
CANADA
OREGON COUNTRY
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
MINNESOTA TERRITORY
WIS. TERR.
MICH.
UNITED STATES
IOWA (1846)
ILL.
IND.
MISSOURI
KY.
TENN.
ARK.
MISS.
ALA.
LA
TEXAS
Disputed Territory
NEW MEXICO
CALIF.
MEXICO
PACIFIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico
Columbia R.
Snake R.
Missouri R.
L. Superior
L. Michigan
Mississippi R.
Arkansas R.
Red R.
Rio Grande
Colorado R.
Gila R.
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
Omaha
Ft. Leavenworth
Santa Fe (occupied Aug. 16, 1846)
San Francisco (occupied July 10, 1846)
Monterey (occupied July 7, 1846)
Bear Flag Revolt (June 14, 1846)
San Gabriel (Jan. 8, 1847)
San Pasqual (Dec. 6, 1846)
Los Angeles
San Diego
Sacramento River (Feb. 27, 1847)
Chihuahua
Mazatlán (occupied Nov. 11, 1847)
Monterrey (Sept. 21–24, 1846)
Buena Vista (Feb. 22–23, 1847)
Tampico (occupied Nov. 14, 1846)
Mexico City (Sept. 13–14, 1847)
Veracruz (Mar. 29, 1847)
Palo Alto (May 8, 1846)
Corpus Christi
Matamoros
New Orleans
STOCKTON
KEARNY
DONIPHAN
WOOL
SCOTT
SANTA ANNA
N
40°
30°
20°
110°
100°
U.S. troop movements
Mexican troop movements
U.S. victory
Mexican victory
Territory ceded by Mexico, 1848
0 200 400 mi
0 200 400 km
1
2
3
4
A
B
C
D
E
F
G

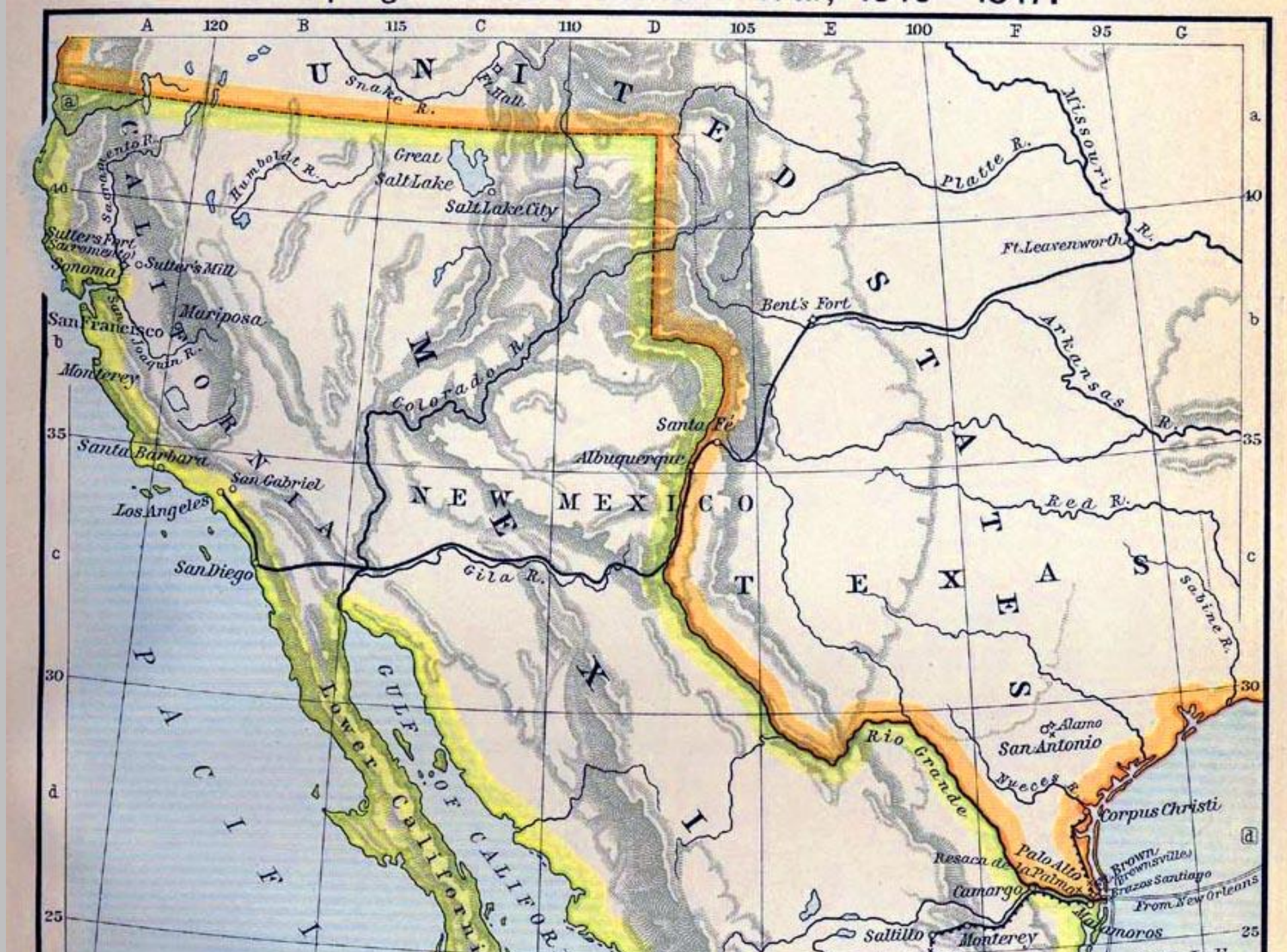


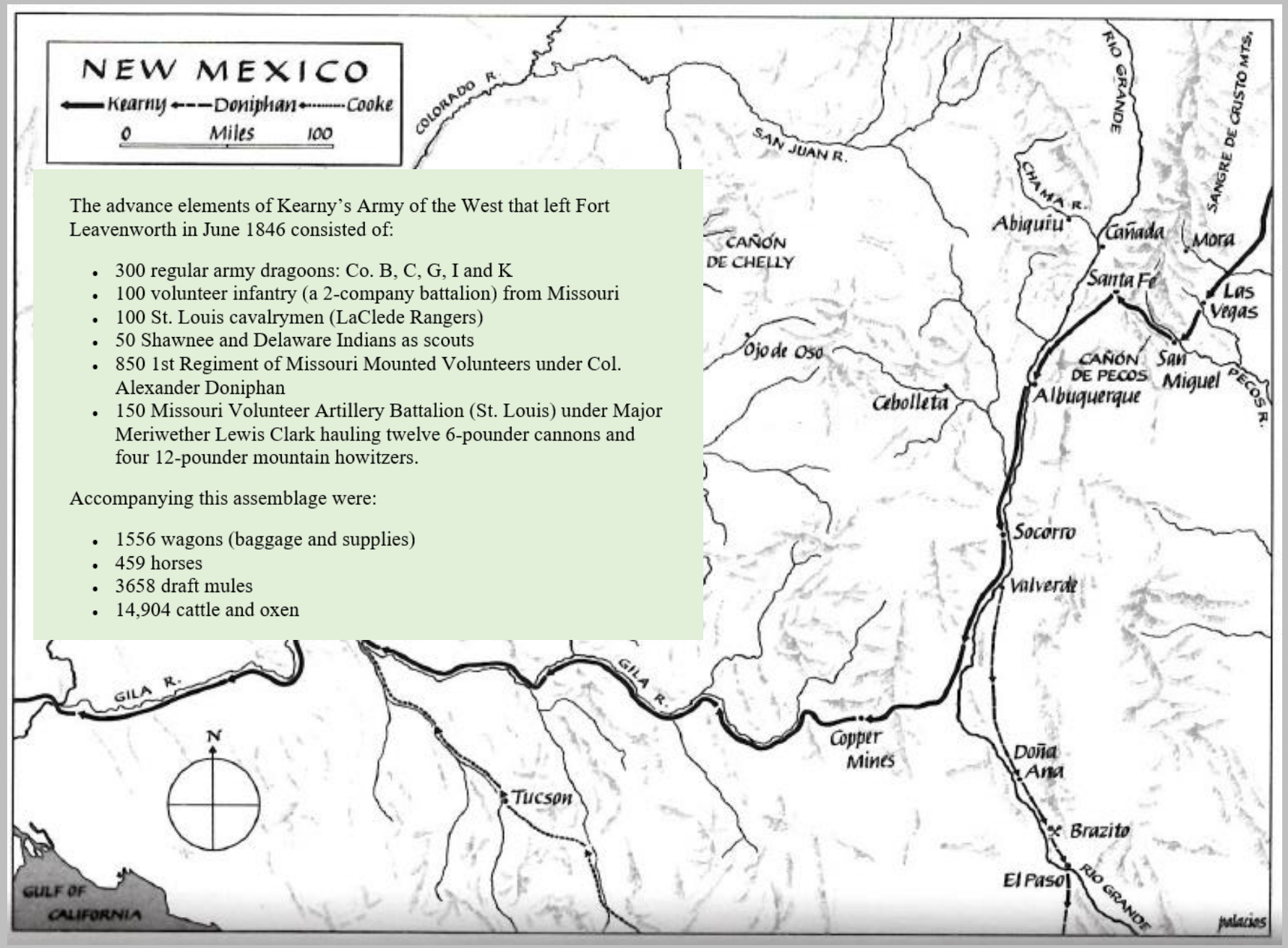
Stephen W. Kearny



Military Governor of New Mexico	
In office	August 1846 – September 1846
Preceded by	Juan Bautista Vigil y Alarid
Succeeded by	Sterling Price
4th Military Governor of California	
In office	February 23, 1847 – May 31, 1847
Preceded by	Robert F. Stockton
Succeeded by	Richard Barnes Mason
Personal details	
Born	Stephen Watts Kearny August 30, 1794 Newark, New Jersey, U.S.
Died	October 31, 1848 (aged 54) St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.
Profession	Soldier




A 120 B 115 C 110 D 105 E 100 F 95 G
UNITED STATES
CALIFORNIA
NEW MEXICO
TEXAS
MEXICO
PACIFIC
Snake R.
Ft Hall
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
Humboldt R.
Sacramento R.
Sutters Fort
Sacramento
Sonoma
Sutter's Mill
Mariposa
San Francisco
San Joaquin R.
Monterey
Santa Barbara
San Gabriel
Los Angeles
San Diego
Colorado R.
Gila R.
Santa Fé
Albuquerque
Bent's Fort
Missouri R.
Platte R.
Ft. Leavenworth
Arkansas R.
Red R.
Sabine R.
Lower California
Gulf of California
Alamo
San Antonio
Nueces R.
Rio Grande
Corpus Christi
Resaca de la Palma
Palo Alto
Brownsville
Brazos Santiago
From New Orleans
Camargo
Matamoros
Saltillo
Monterey

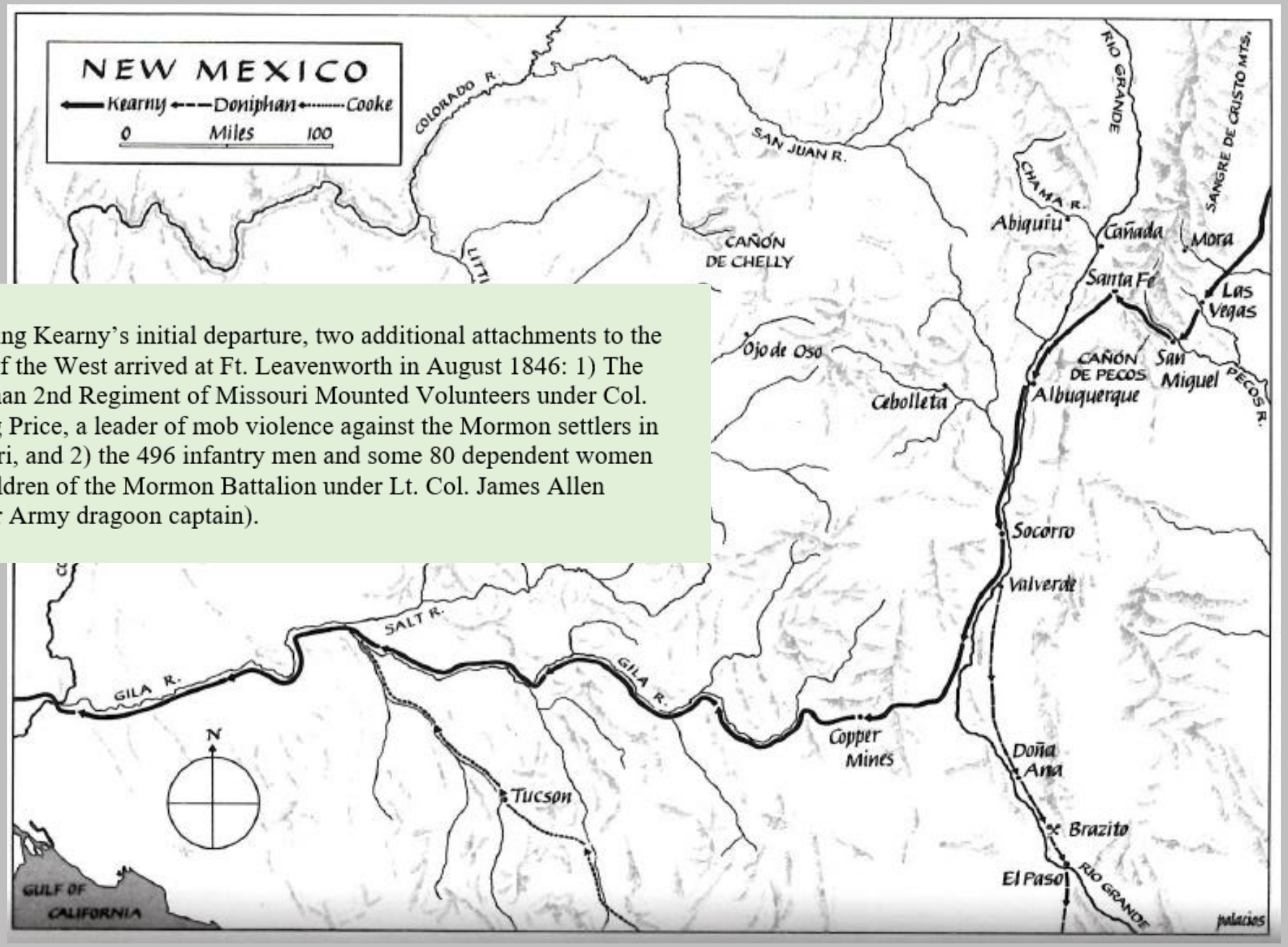


The advance elements of Kearny's Army of the West that left Fort Leavenworth in June 1846 consisted of:

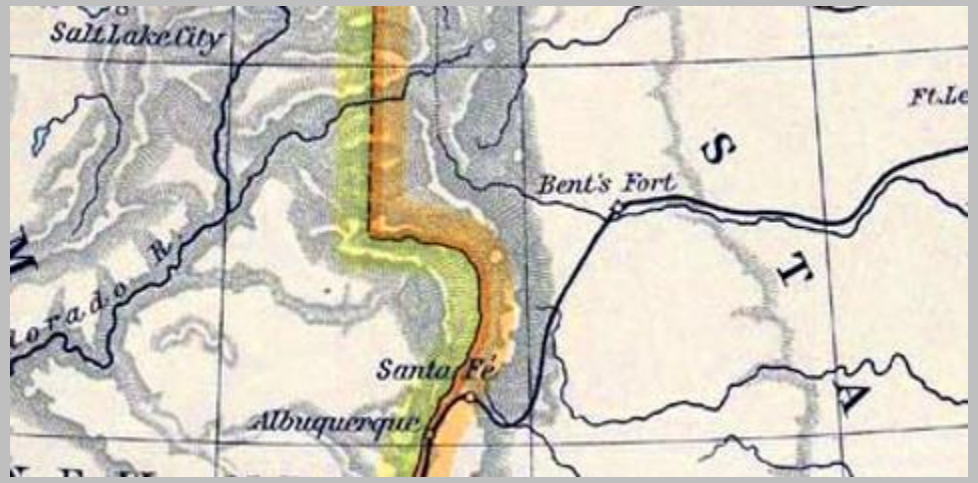
- 300 regular army dragoons: Co. B, C, G, I and K
- 100 volunteer infantry (a 2-company battalion) from Missouri
- 100 St. Louis cavalrymen (LaClede Rangers)
- 50 Shawnee and Delaware Indians as scouts
- 850 1st Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers under Col. Alexander Doniphan
- 150 Missouri Volunteer Artillery Battalion (St. Louis) under Major Meriwether Lewis Clark hauling twelve 6-pounder cannons and four 12-pounder mountain howitzers.

Accompanying this assemblage were:

- 1556 wagons (baggage and supplies)
- 459 horses
- 3658 draft mules
- 14,904 cattle and oxen



Following Kearny's initial departure, two additional attachments to the Army of the West arrived at Ft. Leavenworth in August 1846: 1) The ~500-man 2nd Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers under Col. Sterling Price, a leader of mob violence against the Mormon settlers in Missouri, and 2) the 496 infantry men and some 80 dependent women and children of the Mormon Battalion under Lt. Col. James Allen (regular Army dragoon captain).



The traders followed, and, army and traders, it was a formidable caravan. One census makes it 1556 wagons and nearly twenty thousand stock all told, oxen, beeves, horses, mules.[5] A long column moving through the most intense heat yet encountered and the worst desert of the trail. For four days there was almost no grass for the horses and little grass for anyone. Lieutenant Emory's thermometers showed 120° and the sirocco never died across the sand. The troops tied handkerchiefs over their mouths, to no avail. They got nosebleeds from the altitude and dysentery from the alkali. The wagons laboring behind, rations had to be cut. They could not be controlled at water holes, where the first ones spoiled the drinking for the rest. The horses were even worse; Captain Johnston observed that when the water was scarcest they were most apt to urinate in it. Private Marcellus Edwards of Doniphan's Company D said of one small pool they passed on August 4 that it was "so bad that one who drank it would have to shut both eyes and hold his breath until the nauseating dose was swallowed. Notwithstanding its scarcity, some men allowed their horses to tramp through it, which soon stirred it up to a thick mud; and to give it a still greater flavor, a dead snake with the flesh just dropping from his bones."

—Bernard DeVoto, Year of Decision 1846

Prince Park

Santa Fe National Historic Trail
National Park Service

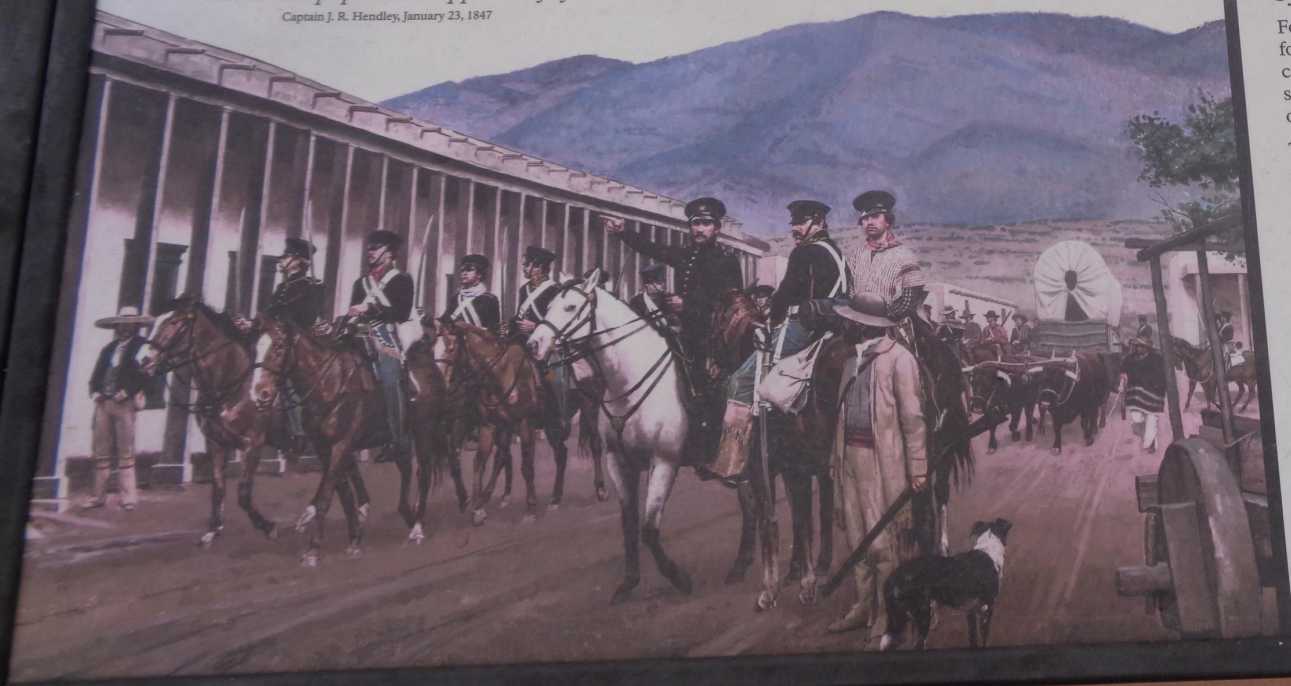
City of Santa Fe
State Historic Preservation Division

Invasion of Santa Fe

U.S. President James K. Polk assigned the invasion of New Mexico and California to General Stephen Watts Kearny, who marched the Army of the West into Santa Fe on August 18, 1846. Governor and Commanding General Manuel Armijo had publicly demanded resistance to U.S. invasion, but he and his troops retreated in the face of Kearny's 1,500-man army.

Soon New Mexicans took up arms. They were afraid that the Americans would take away their land, culture, and religion. Some incidents, such as a skirmish between a U.S. military patrol and New Mexicans southeast of Las Vegas, left men dead. An uprising in Taos by New Mexicans and Pueblo Indian men resulted in the death of the appointed governor, Charles Bent.

"The whole population appears rife for the insurrection."
Captain J. R. Hendley, January 23, 1847



This 1846 illustration of La Parroquia, the parish church which became St. Francis Cathedral Basilica, shows Fort Marcy in the background. This is one of the few images of the fort.
Courtesy of the Yale Collection of Western Americana, image no. 2c54 848uoja

Symbolism of the Fort

Fort Marcy was never intended to be a permanent fortification. If needed, it was a place where troops could retreat, but its larger goal was to serve as a symbol of American military control. From the fort on the hill, all of Santa Fe was within gunshot.

The American military post and U.S. flag were constant reminders to the New Mexicans of a foreign military presence, but the center of military activity was at the Post of Santa Fe. Located between the fort and the Palace of the Governors, it included the hospital, gardens, storehouses, and headquarters.

Abandonment of the Fort

In November 1847, the artillery from Fort Marcy was moved to Army buildings closer to the plaza. In 1856, a traveler noted "the ruins of old Fort Marcy."

August 18, 1846

Late in the afternoon the conquerors were ready. Two sub-officials had come out to profess submission and, sending his artillery to a hill that commanded the town, Kearny rode back with them and his staff, the army following in column. Bridles jingled and scabbards clanked in the little, twisting, dirty streets, between the brown adobe houses. There was a low wailing behind shuttered windows where women cowered in terror of the rape and branding which the priests had told them the Americans meant to inflict. Soldiers filed into the Plaza of the Constitution, which has always been the center of the town's life. The infantry stood at parade rest, the tired horses drooped, in the silence one heard the rustle of cottonwoods and the silver music of the creek. The ranks stiffened and the muskets came to present arms, Kearny and his staff raised their sabers, the bugles blared down those empty streets, and the flag went up. As it touched the top of the staff, the artillery on the hill-top boomed its salute, and for the first time in history the Americans had conquered a foreign capital. And they had done exactly what Mr. Polk had instructed them to do: they had taken New Mexico without firing a shot.

—Bernard DeVoto, Year of Decision 1846

Invasion of Santa Fe

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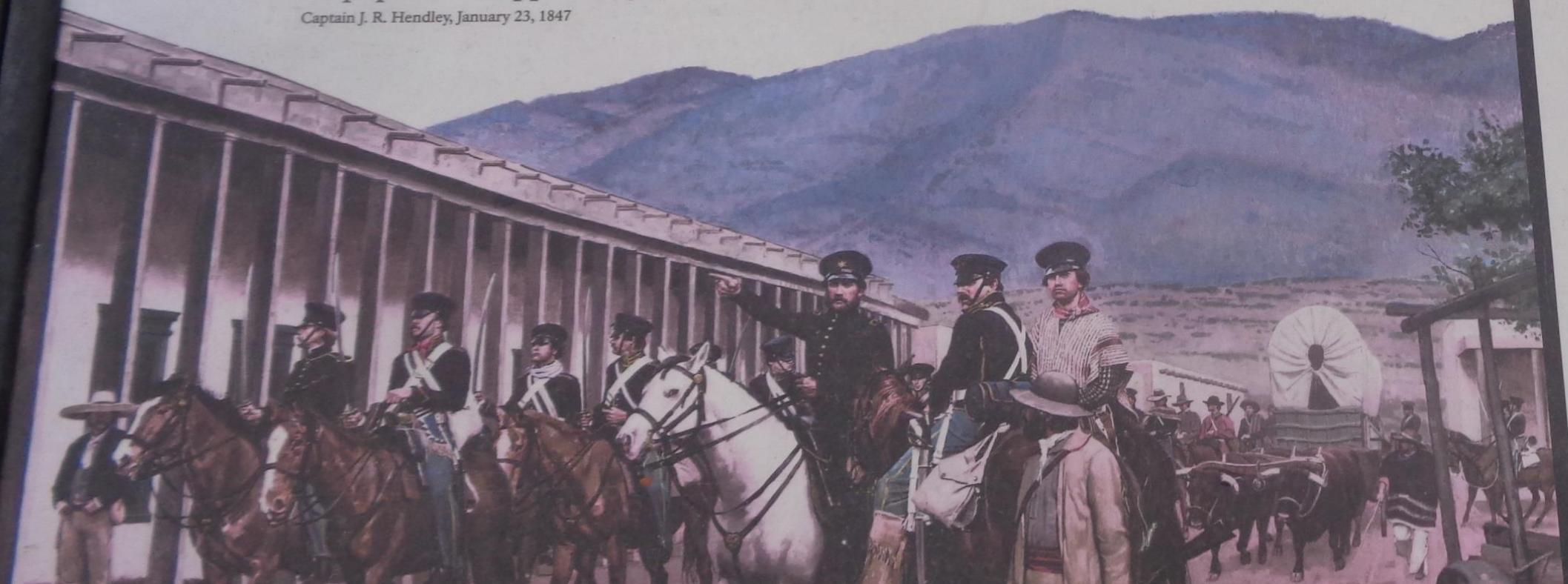
"The whole population appears rife for the insurrection."

Captain J. R. Hendley, January 23, 1847



This 1846 illustration of La Parroqui
Basilica, shows Fort Marcy in the b
Courtesy of the Yale Collection of Western America

Symbolism of th

Fort Marcy was ne
fortification. If nee
could retreat, but i
symbol of America
on the hill, all of S

The American mi
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military presence
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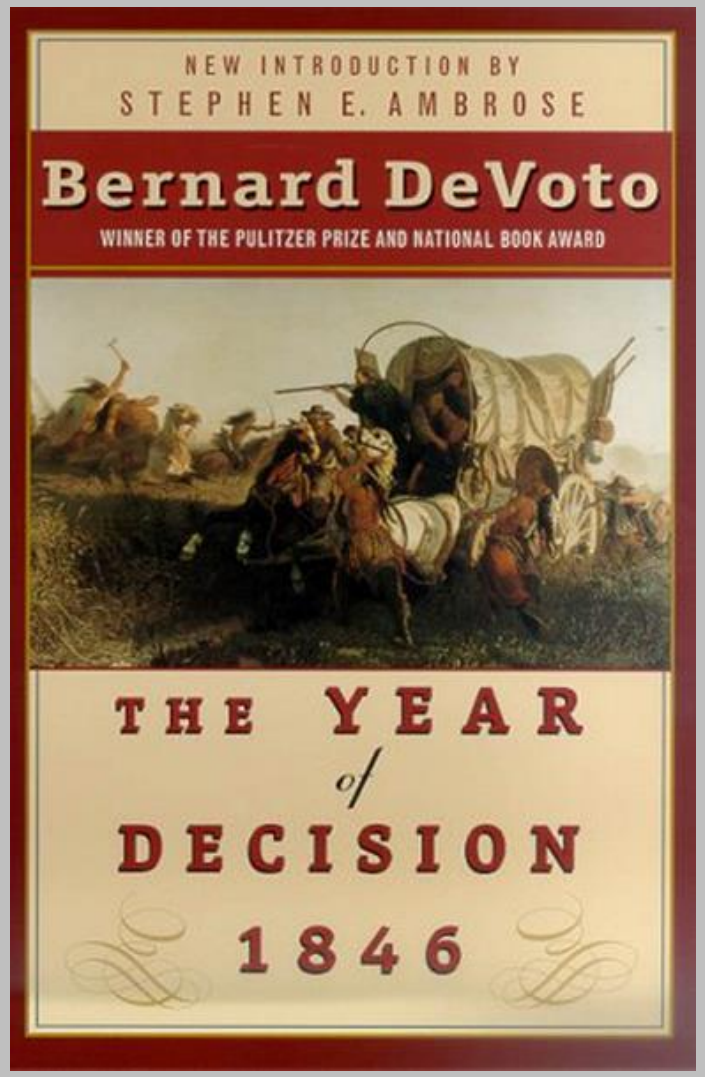
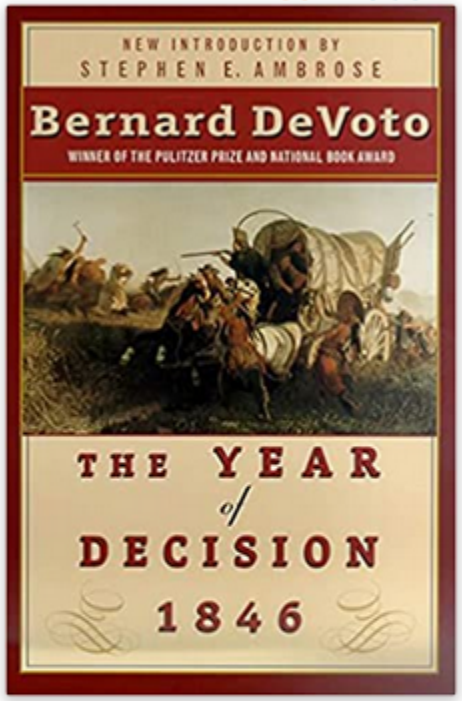
fort and the Pala
hospital, garden

Abandonme

In November
was moved to
1856, a travele



Year of Decision 1846 tells many fascinating stories of the U.S. explorers who began the western march from the Mississippi to the Pacific, from Canada to the annexation of Texas, California, and the southwest lands from Mexico. It is the penultimate book of a trilogy which includes *Across the Wide Missouri* (for which DeVoto won both the Pulitzer and Bancroft prizes) and *The Course of Empire*. DeVoto's narrative covers the expanding Western frontier, the Mormons, the Donner party, Fremont's exploration, the Army of the West, and takes readers into Native American tribal life.





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ACROSS THE WIDE MISSOURI

WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE


MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR, 1846–1848
CANADA
OREGON COUNTRY
UNORGANIZED TERRITORY
MINNESOTA TERRITORY
WIS. TERR.
MICH.
UNITED STATES
IOWA (1846)
ILL.
IND.
MISSOURI
KY.
TENN.
ARK.
MISS.
ALA.
LA
TEXAS
Disputed Territory
NEW MEXICO
CALIF.
MEXICO
PACIFIC OCEAN
Gulf of Mexico
Columbia R.
Snake R.
Missouri R.
L. Superior
L. Michigan
Mississippi R.
Arkansas R.
Red R.
Rio Grande
Colorado R.
Gila R.
Great Salt Lake
Salt Lake City
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Santa Fe (occupied Aug. 16, 1846)
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Corpus Christi
Matamoros
New Orleans
STOCKTON
KEARNY
DONIPHAN
WOOL
SCOTT
SANTA ANNA
N
40°
30°
20°
110°
100°
U.S. troop movements
Mexican troop movements
U.S. victory
Mexican victory
Territory ceded by Mexico, 1848
0 200 400 mi
0 200 400 km
1
2
3
4
A
B
C
D
E
F
G


Vancouver Island
54° 40'
OREGON COUNTRY
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
NEWFOUNDLAND
Oregon trail
Sutter's Fort
California trail
South Pass
Unorganized
Oregon trail
Iowa territory
Wisconsin territory
CANADA
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Monterey
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NH
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CALIFORNIA
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IN
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NEW MEXICO
territory
Independence
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KY
VA
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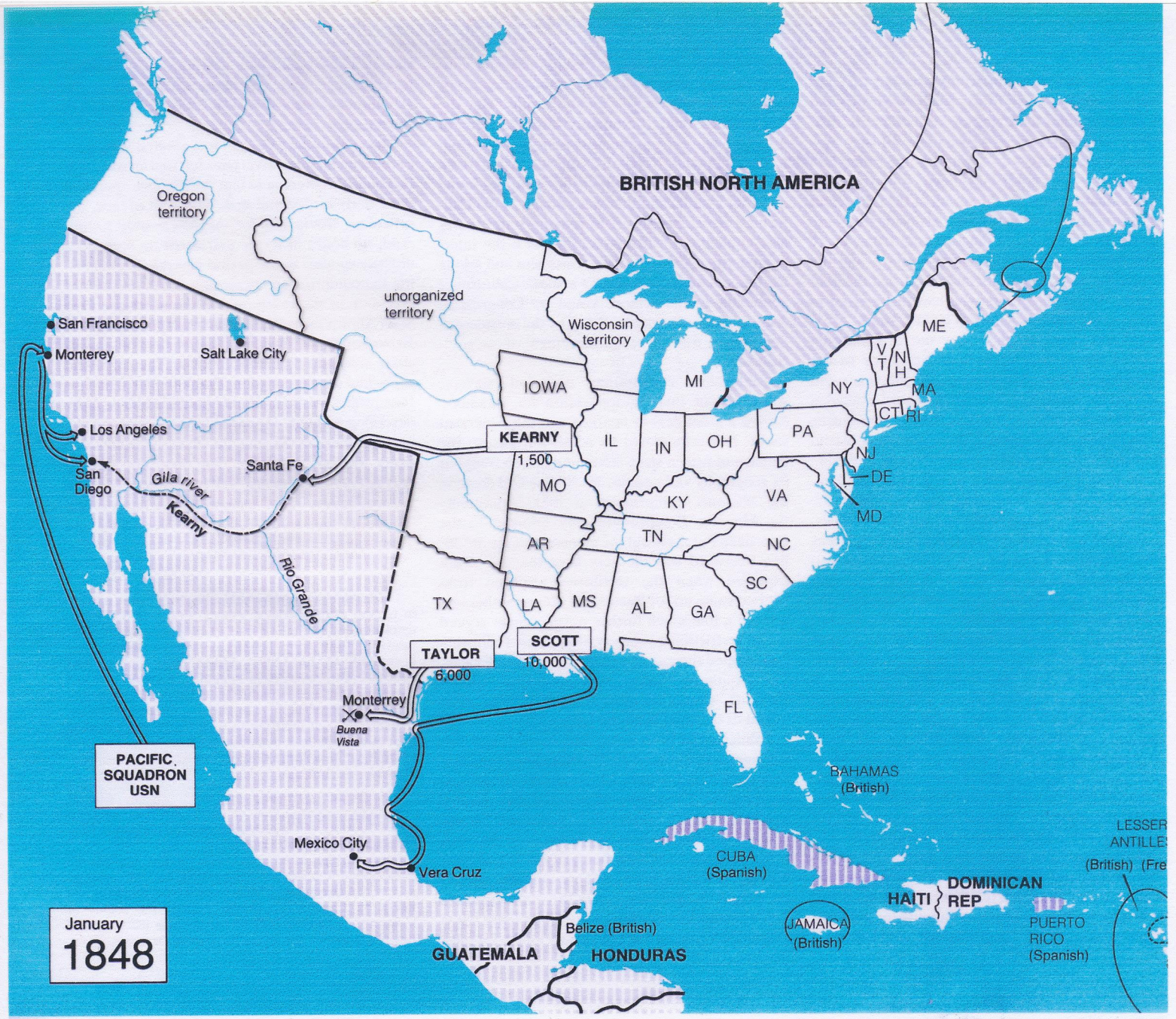
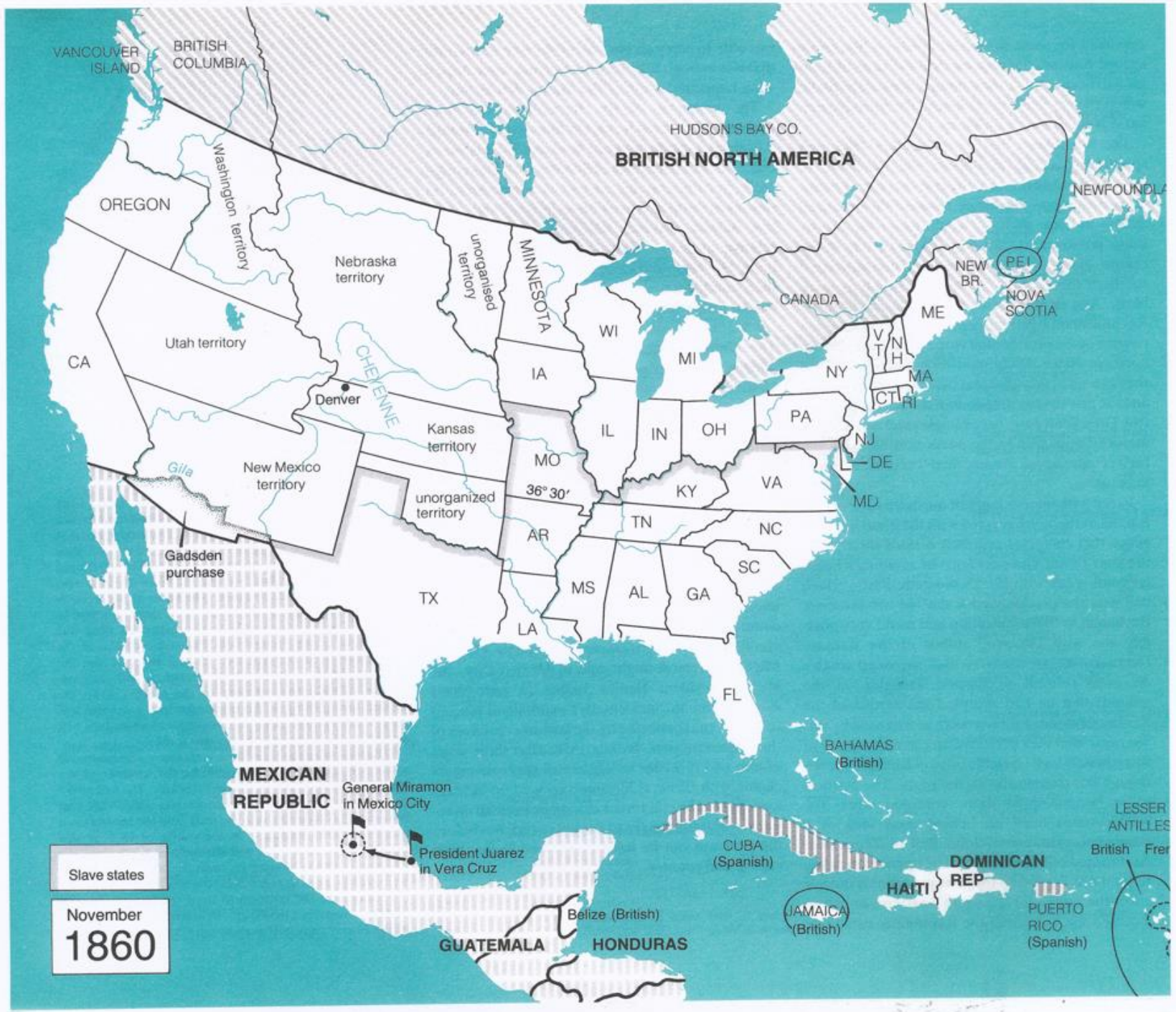
NC
SC
TEXAS
MS
AL
GA
LA
FLORIDA
REPUBLIC OF MEXICO
BAHAMAS (British)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (French)
CUBA (Spanish)
DOMINICAN REP
HAITI
JAMAICA (British)
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
EL SALVADOR
NICARAGUA
January
1846


BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
Oregon territory
unorganized territory
Wisconsin territory
San Francisco
Monterey
Salt Lake City
Los Angeles
San Diego
Gila river
Kearny
Santa Fe
Rio Grande
IOWA
MI
NY
ME
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
KEARNY
1,500
IL
IN
OH
PA
NJ
DE
MD
MO
KY
VA
AR
TN
NC
SC
TX
LA
MS
AL
GA
FL
SCOTT
10,000
TAYLOR
6,000
Monterrey
Buena Vista
PACIFIC SQUADRON USN
BAHAMAS (British)
Mexico City
Vera Cruz
CUBA (Spanish)
HAITI
DOMINICAN REP
JAMAICA (British)
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (Fre
Belize (British)
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
January
1848


VANCOUVER ISLAND
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
Oregon territory
Sacramento river
CROW
SIOUX (DAKOTA)
Minnesota territory
Sutter's mill
San Francisco
Sierra Nevada
42°
Utah territory
Ft Laramie
WISCONSIN
ME
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
NY
MI
IA
San Joaquin river
ARAPAHO and CHEYENNE
CALIFORNIA
39° 30'
IL
IN
OH
PA
NJ
DE
MD
San Diego
New Mexico territory
KIOWA
MO
KY
VA
TN
NC
AR
COMANCHE
SC
MS
AL
GA
TX
LA
FL
BAHAMAS (British)
MEXICAN REPUBLIC
CUBA (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
(British) (French)
DOMINICAN REP
HAITI
JAMAICA (British)
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
November
1852


VANCOUVER ISLAND
BRITISH COLUMBIA
HUDSON'S BAY CO.
BRITISH NORTH AMERICA
NEWFOUNDLA
OREGON
Washington territory
Nebraska territory
unorganised territory
MINNESOTA
CANADA
NEW BR.
PEI
NOVA SCOTIA
ME
Utah territory
CA
CHEYENNE
Denver
WI
MI
IA
NY
VT
NH
MA
CT
RI
Kansas territory
IL
IN
OH
PA
NJ
DE
MD
MO
36° 30′
KY
VA
TN
NC
Gila
New Mexico territory
unorganized territory
AR
SC
Gadsden purchase
MS
AL
GA
TX
LA
FL
BAHAMAS (British)
MEXICAN REPUBLIC
General Miramon in Mexico City
President Juarez in Vera Cruz
CUBA (Spanish)
LESSER ANTILLES
British
DOMINICAN REP
HAITI
JAMAICA (British)
PUERTO RICO (Spanish)
Belize (British)
GUATEMALA
HONDURAS
Slave states
November
1860

ACROSS THE WIDE MISSOURI

Oh, Shennydore, I long to hear you.
Away, you rolling river!
Oh, Shennydore, I can't get near you.
Away, away, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri.

'Tis seven long years since first I seed 'ee.
Away, you rolling river!
'Tis seven long years since first I seed 'ee.
Away, away, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri.

Oh, Shennydore, I love your daughter.
Away, you rolling river!
I'll take her across the yellow water.
Away, away, I'm bound away
Across the wide Missouri.