The Civil War

The American Civil War (1861–1865) most notably ended slavery and formed the United States. In New Mexico, two bloody battles at Valverde and Glorieta are attributed to keeping Confederate forces from expanding west. Hundreds more lives were lost when Civil War soldiers forced thousands of Navajo on the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo. Horrific stories of tragedy and loss from this period of time have not faded for the Diné or Navajo people.

History of Conflict

In the southwest, significant and often traumatic events in history have been etched in rocks, burned into hearts, ingrained into minds, and handed down orally, generation-to-generation, for hundreds of years. Starting in the late 1600s through the 1700s, a historical pattern of raiding and friendly trading existed among the Navajo, Spanish, Hispano, Mexican, Apache, Comanche, and Ute.

During the early 1800s, Navajo groups residing along the New Mexico and Arizona border were battling several bands of Indians, Spanish settlers, Anglo settlers, Mexican and U.S. governmental forces over grazing lands. In January 1804, Navajo warriors attacked and raided the town of Cebolleta in an attempt to reclaim grazing land. The following year, Spanish troops retaliated, killing 115 Navajos and enslaving 33 women and children, at Canyon de Chelly. The photo below is a petroglyph panel located in Canyon de Chelly that archaeologists believe is possibly a Navajo depiction of the punitive expedition by the Spanish that occurred in 1805.

Military History New Mexico-Battles: http://drarchaeology.com/culthist/historic/battles.htm

In March 1822, twenty-four Navajo leaders, who had been traveling to meet with the New Mexican government for a peace conference, were killed in a massacre at Jemez Pueblo. Mistrust and hostilities between the groups led to a battle against a Mexican expedition in the Chuska Mountains, where Navajo chief Narbona defeated Captain Blas de Hinojos' expedition in February 1829. This battle is referred to as, The Battle of Copper Pass, or Beesh Lichii'I Bigiizh in the Navajo language, and the site is also known as Narbona Pass.

Indian Policy

Extraction of natural resources (mining) and western expansion for new Anglo populations were factors that led to policy changes within the United States government toward Indians. On May 26, 1830 the

Indian Removal Act was signed into law by President Andrew Jackson; a policy that called for voluntary relocation of Native American tribes living east of the Mississippi River to lands west of the river. The outcome of this policy resulted in the forceful signing of treaties and abrupt relocation of Native American people from traditional homelands to reservation lands.

In 1835, the Treaty of New Echota was signed, which resulted in the removal of the Cherokee people in a historic event known as The Trail of Tears. The Cherokees experienced hunger, disease and exhaustion on the forced march; over 4,000 out of 15,000 died on the journey. Many tribes such as the Seminoles, as well as fugitive slaves, resisted removal and did not leave peacefully from their traditional homelands. From 1835 – 1842, an estimated 3,000 Seminoles and American soldiers were killed as a result of the Indian Removal Act.

By the 1840s, Navajos were living in scattered bands throughout and beyond the traditional Navajo homeland, Dinétah. Their homeland included land within the borders of the four sacred mountains; an expanse that extended from northeastern Arizona through western New Mexico into southern Colorado and Utah. In areas such as Canyon de Chelly, there were many traditional homes, corn fields, fruit orchards and Navajos raised sheep for the purpose of using wool to weave clothing and blankets, and for sustenance. Many of the Navajo were considered wealthy if they possessed a large sheep stock.

Raids and counter-raids of livestock between the Army, the Navajo, and civilian militia greatly intensified during the 1840s, and slave raids were the cause of much of the violence in the Southwest. In 1844, the Martinez Treaty was signed at Jemez Pueblo, which required Navajos to return their slaves, but did not require the same concession from New Mexicans. At the time, an estimated 75 percent of the three to six thousand slaves in New Mexico were Navajo.

Trail of Treaties (1846 – 1863)

The year 1848 marked a turning point in history as the California Gold Rush began, the Mexican-American War (1846–1848) ended with the ratification of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The U.S. now owned 1.36 million km² (525,000 square miles) of areas that were ceded by Mexico, which included parts of present-day Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Nevada, and Utah. According to the treaty, Mexico relinquished all claims to Texas, and recognized the Rio Grande as the southern boundary with the United States. Those residing within the annexed areas had the choice of relocating within Mexico's new boundaries, or receiving American citizenship with full civil rights. Navajo and Apache homelands were also part of the ceded areas; thus U.S. military leaders began peace talks and negotiations with Hispano land grant communities, and Native Americans in an effort to increase commerce and new settlements for Anglo populations.

On August 31, 1849, Navajo leader Narbona, along with several hundred of his warriors, met with a delegation led by Col. John M. Washington to discuss terms for peace. After the peace council ended and members started to depart, a New Mexican officer claimed that a horse, being ridden by one of the Navajo warriors, belonged to him. Col. Washington, now put in the position of backing one of his troopers, demanded that the horse be immediately turned over. When the Navajo warrior refused and the horse and its rider departed, Washington commanded his troops to prepare to fire if the Navajo

refused to return the now claimed stolen horse. After the Navajo warrior again denied the request to return the horse, a cannon and some rifles were fired, which mortally wounded Narbona in the assault. According to eyewitnesses, Narbona was scalped by one of the New Mexico militiamen.

On March 12, 1851 Governor James S. Calhoun issued a proclamation that called for an accurate census or enumeration of all inhabitants (except Indians). According to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, "property of every kind now belonging to Mexicans not established there shall be inviolably respected." Therefore, every resident in New Mexico that was under Mexican rule and chose to stay within the now US boundaries, would have rights to land and property. Pueblo land grants that were given by the Spanish empire, and had been respected under the Mexican government, were also acknowledged by the treaty. Despite Governor Calhoun's proclamation, every resident should have been counted by the census of 1851, as a New Mexico citizen — including Indians.

The Apache and the Navajo were not the only tribes raiding or attacking in New Mexico. Many tribes were mobile and extremely independent; their only political authorities were within small bands and not coordinated under a central unified leadership, therefore the actions and behaviors of some small groups were not a reflection of the entire population. During the 1840s and 1850s, Mexican forces devoted military resources to protecting the eastern part of New Mexico which was under attacks by the Comanche, Kiowa and Kiowa-Apache, and they continued to operate against Apache bands as late as 1915.

On March 18, 1851 Governor Calhoun's second proclamation, "authorized the attack on any hostile tribe of Indians that may have entered settlements for the purpose of plunder and depredation…and directed or ordered residents to capture the property from any hostile tribe of Indians". Pueblo leaders, Hispanos, and Anglo settlers demanded protection by the United States from Navajo and Apache raiding. In response, the U.S. government established military forts within the traditional Navajo homelands, erecting Fort Defiance and Fort Wingate in August 1851.

By the mid-1850's, the 'Gold Boom' of the California Gold Rush was in decline. Prospectors turned their eyes to new mining camps near army posts in Arizona, with farmers and ranchers shortly following suit. Tensions between miners and the Apache in southern Arizona and New Mexico surmounted. Many peaceful bands of the Apache were attacked by the Mesilla Guard; a militia unit organized to fight the Mescalero and Chiricahua Apache, as well as other Indian bands thought to be raiding along the Rio Grande.

Most of the men that comprised the volunteer military militias were from the Pueblos of Santo Domingo, Zuni, Oribe, and Santa Clara. Spanish and Hispano descendants who lived in settlements, established by Spain during the 17th century in northern New Mexico, also enlisted in militias. Some of the reasons why men deserted from military campaigns during this time were that they needed to tend their fields, help harvest crops, or return to help their family. Men found guilty of crimes were hung in public squares; many hung in the plaza of Santa Fe after court proceedings. Most hangings were for crimes such as theft of mules to travel, stealing, and killing livestock for food.

By the late 1850s, the U.S. government began to supply rations and annual annuities for three Apache tribes, Navajos, and Utes. Despite issues with ration tickets that often led to heated quarrels, treaties with Apache bands were pursued by the U.S. government. John Greiner, Act. Supt. Indian Affairs, New Mexico along with Capitan Vuelta, Cuentas Azules, Blancito Negrito, Capitan Simon, and Mangus Coloradas, Leader of the Tchihende Apache band, signed a treaty on July 1, 1852.

In 1855, President Franklin Pierce appointed Governor David Meriwether as special commissioner to make treaties with Indians of New Mexico — though the Senate failed to ratify any of Meriwether's treaties. Prior to the start of the Civil War, Navajo leaders signed the Bonneville Treaty in 1858, which reduced the extent of Navajo land. During this time, many clans of the Navajo and bands of the Apache had become reliant upon government rations. When the Army did not bring feed for their animals during the treaty signing, hostility and resentment toward the military resulted.

Slavery

Hostilities were felt by all groups within the Southwest as they engaged in a vicious cycle of capture, trade, and steal-back of slaves and livestock. In 1859, New Mexico adopted a slave code to keep black slavery from being instituted and continue the practice of forced labor or peonage. The code restricted travel, limited the rights of slaves to bear arms, and prohibited slaves from testifying in court.

On January 29, 1861 Thaddeus Stevens, state representative of Pennsylvania, remarked on New Mexico's admittance into the federal union of states:

"They offer to admit as a State about two hundred and fifty thousand square miles of volcanic desert, with less than a thousand white Anglo-Saxon inhabitants, some forty or fifty thousand Indians, Mustees and Mexicans, who do not ask for admission, and who have shown their capacity for self government by the infamous slave code which they have passed, which establishes the most cruel kind of black and white slavery (peonage)."

Abraham Lincoln's inclusion of "involuntary servitude" in the language of the Emancipation Proclamation Act of 1863 was specifically intended to address slavery in New Mexico. In 1866, Special Indian Agent Graves visited New Mexico and found that slavery was still being practiced across most of the state with 400 indentured slaves in Santa Fe alone. In response to these findings, Congress passed the Peonage Abolition Act in 1867, to abolish peonage in the New Mexico Territory, which meant any kind of "involuntary labor" was forbidden even if debts were owed.

Slavery continued from 1821 until 1880, with almost all genízaros in New Mexico being Navajo or Diné (Brugge, 1968). Genízaros were Native Americans who were captured in the Southwest region through war or payment, and taken into Hispano and Puebloan villages as indentured servants, shepherds, general laborers, and household servants.

Comanche and other bands of Indians in Texas, and along the eastern border of New Mexico, aided Confederate troops during the invasion (Civil War) in the 1860s. In December 1860, thirty miners conducted a surprise attack on a group of Tchihende Chiricahua east of Piños Altos, killing four, and capturing 13 others.

During the early 1860s, General Crook introduced a system of "tagging" Indians using symbols and letters accompanying numbers to identify each Apache band. General Crook believed the system of "tagging" was "for the better protection of the Indians, as well as to enable the commanding officers to tell at a moment's notice just where each and every one of the males capable of bearing arms was to be found. These tags were of various shapes, but all small and convenient in size; there were crosses, crescents, circles, diamonds, squares, triangles, etc.; each specifying a particular band, and each with the number of its owner punched upon it." (Captain John Gregory Bourke, Third U. S. Calvary, Staff Member, General George Crook, Commander, Department of Arizona. In On the Border with Crook 1962:219).

As many as 2,000 men, women, and children of various Apache people residing at San Carlos, were marked by the "tagging" system with tannin ink tattoos on the forehead, until the military issued metal tags to replace tattooing. Only one hundred Apaches are known to have been marked with a "W," standing for "warrior"; the infamous "Apache Kid" being one of few (Hurst, James W. "The Apache Kid"). Story of "Apache Kid" is an example of the Apache being blamed for any rape of white settler women or raiding of farms and ranches.

During the 1860s, Navajo and Apache groups occupied diverse regions of New Mexico and Arizona, and were widely scattered. Many were wealthy in large quantities of sheep, with other occupations including farming, tending orchards, hunting, and gathering wild plants. In the summer of 1862, after recovering from a bullet wound in the chest, Mangas Coloradas met with an intermediary to call for peace. A meeting with Brigadier General Joseph Rodman West, an officer of the California militia, and Mangas took place in January, 1863.

Immediately upon arrival, Mangas was taken into custody by armed soldiers. West allegedly gave the following execution order to the sentries stating, "Men, that old murderer has gotten away from every soldier command and has left a trail of blood for 500 miles on the old stage line. I want him dead or alive tomorrow morning, do you understand? I want him dead" (Ball, Eve; Henn, Nora; Sanchez, Lynda A. (1988). *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey (reprint)*. University of Oklahoma Press).

That night, Mangas was bound, tortured with hot pokers, shot, and killed for allegedly trying to escape. The following day, U.S. soldiers cut off his head, boiled it, and sent the skull to Orson Squire Fowler, a phrenologist in New York City. Phrenological analysis of the skull and a sketch of the skull appears in Fowler's book. (Fowler, O.S. 1873. Human Science or Phrenology. p.1193).

Scorched Earth Policy

In a handwritten letter about the Navajo Expedition near Fort Fauntleroy in 1860, Capitan Lafayette McLaws write a letter to Lieutenant Lucius L. Rich on December 16, 1860:

"I have the honor to report that Capi.[?], 5th Infantry, with one company of the 5th and one of the 7th Infantry, returned to this post at the Agua Azul, and was found and followed to a cannon in the Zuni mountains 45 miles southeast of this place. The camp of the Navajoes at this place had been attacked, probably by the Zuni Indians, two or three days before the arrival of the troops The bodies of three Navajos was [sic?] found on the ground and the appearances in the neighborhood of the camp indicated that a portion of the stock in their possession had been captured. Navajos have been starving and many are ready to surrender."

On April 30, 1860, when the Army confiscated some of the best grazing land, not covered by their recent treaty, Navajo leaders Manuelito and Barboncito launched an attack on Fort Defiance. A new treaty was signed February 15, 1861, which brought another short period of peace, however two of four sacred mountains and one-third of Dinétah was lost, which created more hostilities between the Army and the Dine'.

On January 27, 1861, the infamous Bascom Affair occurred in which the great Chokonen Chief Cochise and members of his family were captured at Apache Pass in the Chiricahua Mountains under duplicitous circumstances by Lt. George Bascom and a large force of U.S. Infantry. Cochise escaped, but in subsequent days Cochise's brother and two nephews were hanged by Bascom's forces. This event triggered Cochise's War which lasted 12 years.

The War Between the States

During the presidential election of 1860, Abraham Lincoln and the Republican Party campaigned against the expansion of slavery beyond the states in which slavery already existed. Seven of Eleven Southern states declared their secession from "the Union" before Lincoln took office on March 4, 1861, effectively forming the Confederate States of America also known as, "the Confederacy". Jefferson Davis led Confederate troops into battle against the "the Union," which was supported by the remaining free states including five border states: Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, and West Virginia, which bordered a free state and were aligned with the Union.

The American Civil War, also known as The War Between the States, officially began on April 12, 1861 when Confederate forces attacked a U.S. military installation at Fort Sumter in South Carolina. President Lincoln responded by calling for a volunteer army from each state. Railroads, steamships, mass-produced weapons, and various other military devices were employed during the war, which profoundly impacted social, political, economic, and racial issues in the United States. The result was a change in land use, a new wage economy, and domination by military strength over indigenous people.

Some historical accounts about New Mexico's involvement in the Civil War focus on Jefferson Davis, whose war efforts were to capture the western territory as the new empire of the South; an area which included portions of Arizona, New Mexico and part of Nevada. Other historians note General Sibley's larger plan to direct Confederate troops up to Denver and then march to the Pacific, effectively splitting the Union off from the western territories the United States had taken from Mexico in 1848.

Battles between Union and Confederate troops in New Mexico were brief. New Mexico, still a territory, waged two small-scale battles during the Civil War; one at Valverde, about 29 miles south of Socorro, and the other at Glorieta, 20 miles east of Santa Fe. These battles were important in preserving the Union because they ended the attempt by the Confederacy to create a corridor through New Mexico to Arizona, California, and Colorado which would have given the Confederacy access to vast resources — possibly changing the outcome of the war.

Colonel Edward Richard Sprigg Canby assumed command of New Mexican troops in May, 1861. He quickly culminated military forces in southern New Mexico concentrating troops at Forts Fillmore, Craig, and Stanton. Colonel Canby called for volunteers and militia units that had already been assembled, and

who were voluntarily fighting battles against Indians in New Mexico. Canby ordered troops to move supplies from Albuquerque and Fort Union, to reinforce defenses at Fort Craig.

Battle at Valverde (February 20-21, 1862)
According to the National Parks Service and Library of Congress, events of the Battle at Valverde are as follows:

> "Brig. General Henry H. Sibley led his force of 2,500 men across the Rio Grande River and up the east side of the river to the ford at Valverde, north of Fort Craig, New Mexico, hoping to cut Federal communications between the fort and military headquarters in Santa Fe.
>
> Union Col. E.R.S. Canby left Fort Craig with more than 3,000 men to prevent the Confederates from crossing the river. When he was opposite them, across the river, Canby opened fire and sent Union cavalry over, forcing the Rebels back. The Confederates halted their retirement at the Old Rio Grande riverbed, which served as an excellent position.
>
> After crossing all his men, Canby decided that a frontal assault would fail and deployed his force to assault and turn the Confederate left flank. Before he could do so, though, the Rebels attacked. Federals rebuffed a cavalry charge, but the main Confederate force made a frontal attack, capturing six artillery pieces and forcing the Union battle line to break and many of the men to flee.
>
> Canby ordered a retreat. Confederate reinforcements arrived and Sibley was about to order another attack when Canby asked for a truce, by a white flag, to remove the bodies of the dead and wounded. Left in possession of the battlefield, the Confederates claimed victory but had suffered heavy casualties."

The Battle of Glorieta Pass
Colorado volunteers and New Mexican militia met with Confederate troops from Texas at Glorieta. Confederate forces were trying to reach the primary Union supply depot that would supply Southwest troops at Fort Union, located 70 miles north of Glorieta. A battle took place in a 300-acre area that had been cleared for farmland and located in forest along the Santa Fe Trail at Glorieta Pass. An estimated 2,000 soldiers were involved in a battle that spanned the duration of a day and consisted of an intense firearm exchange.

Historically, Glorieta Pass was the most direct route of the Santa Fe Trail between Santa Fe and the High Plains. At the center of the battlefield is the only structure from the Civil War period still in existence — the Pigeon Ranch house. This three-room adobe structure is situated on the northeast bank of the Glorieta Creek, adjacent State Highway 50, about twenty miles from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Records from 1815 show the land was claimed to be part of a Spanish land grant, and the adobe building had been built prior to it being owned by Alexander Pigeon, or Alexander Valle, a trader along the Santa Fe Trail during the 1830s. Records also show that one of Alexander's former employers accused him of thievery but never brought him to court for due process. It is thought that Alexander may have taken

the Hispano last name “Valle” to hide his identity. During the 1850s, Pigeon’s Ranch sold liquor and was known as a saloon and brothel, which functioned as an inn offering respite for those nearing journey's end on the Santa Fe Trail. The Pigeon complex included a residence for the Pigeon family, and a 23 room “house for entertainment” that could accommodate 30 to 40 guests, granaries to feed animals, a farm, water wells, and a livestock corral.

Accounts from soldiers at the Battle at Glorieta Pass describe the Pigeon Ranch house as first used by Confederate troops who arrived on March 25, 1862. After the battle of Apache Canyon, an estimated 400 retreating Union troops established a hasty field hospital in the Pigeon Ranch building around 9 p.m. Then on the 26th; some of the wounded died in the building during the night while Union troops stayed in and around the building, with some soldiers taking corn, hay, and other supplies from Pigeon’s granaries.

Around 900 Union troops arrived at the field hospital at Pigeon’s Ranch house around 10 a.m. on the morning of the 28th. During the Battle at Pigeon’s Ranch, Union artillery were lined up in front of the building, Union troops used the adobe fence wall of the compound as cover, cavalry was located in the ranch or its rear until moved. Union troops were located from behind the compound up to and on Sharpshooter’s Ridge. Confederate forces camped in and around the building the night of the 28th until the morning of the 30th. On the 29th and in the days after the battle, Union and Confederate soldiers that died from wounds and sickness were buried near the buildings, along fences, and in “open fields.” The building continued to be used as a field hospital by Union stewards from March until May, 1862.

Other historical records indicate that on March 26, 1862, Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Chavez, first New Mexican Volunteers, led a 6-hour battle at Apache Canyon against Confederate forces commanded by Colonel John P. Slough. The battle was bloody; each side sustained 130 killed, wounded, or captured in the first day alone. Bodies of both forces were buried in trenches alongside the battle field. Major John M. Chivington and his troops, who had approached Glorieta from the east, stumbled upon a Confederate supply train of 80 wagons, burned it and killed the horses by slitting their throats. Colonel Scurry, realizing that he had lost one-third of his troops and supplies, marched his Confederate troops back to Texas — essentially conceding the war.

The battlefield site remained a homestead and ranch with a small cattle operation at the turn of the century, then operated as a grocery store until wagons stopped passing along the route of the Santa Fe Trail, and the national highway system was established during the 1910s-20s. By the late 1920s, the Greer family who was in ownership of the property, had moved out of the adobe building into a new home across the road, and the Pigeon’s Ranch structure was used solely as a museum and curio shop. People paid 25 cents to visit the “Old Hospital” (a remnant of the original building), the “old cave,” “old post office,” “old walls,” “old Spanish fort,” all parts of or remnants of the original Pigeons Ranch compound. The Greer family also operated a gas station and garage nearby, where they sold water from the “oldest well” across the road from Pigeons Ranch.

In 1939, the Daughters of the Confederacy erected a marble slab on a large boulder to commemorate the Battle at Glorieta and the site became a state monument. During the late 1950s, the new

construction of a “super highway” over Glorieta Pass caused the demolition of Johnson’s ranch, which was occupied as a Confederate camp, regrading of the landscape through Apache Canyon and destruction of other battle sites. In 1959, in response to constituents’ concerns over the historical preservation of the area, New Mexico U. S. Senator Dennis Chavez asked the National Park Service to evaluate the site of the Battle of Glorieta and consider it for National Monument status. The National Park Service sent historians to do a study of Glorieta battlefield’s historic significance. A National Historic Marker was installed along the road in 1961.

During the summer of 1986, the homeowner across the street from Pigeon Ranch was adding a garage to the property, and while digging, came across thirty-one bodies in a mass grave. According to Helmuth Naumer, director of New Mexico's Office of Cultural Affairs in 1987, the bodies belonged to Confederate soldiers age 15 to 42 who died during battle at Glorieta Pass. “The soldiers had been buried with their boots on and personal belongings intact. Some wore Union belt buckles upside down,” Naumer stated. The soldiers were from several Texas regiments commanded by Gen. Henry Hopkins Sibley; one of the men was a commanding officer found buried in his own grave.

The State of New Mexico conducted the excavation of the remains of the dead and forensic analysis was done at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. Regents of the Museum of New Mexico contacted relatives of the dead that could be identified, and turned over their remains at the request of the family. The majority of the dead were reinterred in the National Cemetery in Santa Fe; both Union and Confederates that died during and after the battle. Many of the Union soldiers at the cemetery are in graves with “Unknown” on the headstone.

In June 1987, a re-enactment of the battle at Glorieta drew 4,000 spectators with interest from historical societies in Texas about the confederate soldiers’ mass grave that was discovered. In a newspaper article dated November 29, 1987, the condition of the battlefield site was described as having boulders surrounding the monument covered with graffiti, the ground was littered with trash, and vandals had used the battle site historical marker for gun target practice.

The National Park Service signed a lease agreement with the Conservation Fund on September 21, 1990, and eventually acquired Pigeon’s Ranch, December 4, 1992. The site remains undeveloped, with the integrity of the historic structure as well as the security of the site from vandalism — maintained by the National Park Service.

On March 26, 2018, a metal plaque was installed and dedicated by the Friends and Donors of Pecos National Historic Park, it reads (in English and Spanish): “In memory and honor of a contingent of New Mexico Volunteers who fought alongside Union Regulars and Colorado Volunteers and spearheaded a Union flanking movement at the Battle of Gorieta Pass that ultimately caused the Confederate forces to retreat to Texas, thereby giving up on their effort to annex the entire West and parts of northern Mexico to the South.”

Indian Wars 1860s -1900

With Confederate troops moving into southern New Mexico, Col. Canby sent Agent John Ward into Navajo lands to persuade, “any who might be friendly,” to move to a central encampment near the

village of Cubero where they would be offered the protection of the government. Ward was also instructed to warn all Navajos, who refused to come in, that they would be treated as enemies. Captain Evans was overseeing the abandonment of Ft. Lyon, and had been told that the new policy would be that the Navajo had to colonize in settlements, similar to the Pueblos, in an area located in the region of the Little Colorado River, west of Zuni.

On Dec. 1, 1861 Colonel Edward R. S. Canby of the Army's 19th Infantry, headquartered at Ft. Marcy in Santa Fe, wrote to his superior in St. Louis, "There is no choice between their absolute extermination or their removal and colonization at points so remote as to isolate them entirely from the inhabitants of the Territory." (McNitt, pp. 414–429).

Colonel Canby enlisted Christopher “Kit” Carson into the First New Mexico Volunteers. Carson served as an Indian agent in New Mexico from 1851- 1861, where he was assigned the position of Colonel of New Mexican Volunteers. Carson was in command over a third of five columns of troops; totaling close to 500 men, which were divided into two battalions, each made up of four companies. Colonel Canby had little or no confidence in the hastily recruited, untrained New Mexico volunteers, "who would not obey orders or obeyed them too late to be of any service”.

By the time Union forces, composed of 2,300 men, led by Brigadier General James Henry Carlton, reached New Mexico from California, Colonel Canby had been transferred back east. James H. Carleton was ordered to relieve Canby and became Commander for the New Mexico Military Department, September 1862. Without Confederate soldiers to fight, Carlton turned his attention to establishing federal rule in New Mexico. Carleton believed that if Indians were not put on reservations, adopting a pastoral way of life, they would be exterminated by federal policy.

Union forces pushed Confederates out of New Mexico into Texas, and down the Rio Grande into Mexico. Determined to eliminate Indian raiding in New Mexico, the United States government turned Civil War forces from fighting Confederate forces, to fighting what was deemed as “hostile” Indians, meaning the Navajo and the Apache.

On October 31, 1862 Congress authorized the construction of Fort Sumner. The fort was named for General Edwin Vose Sumner, who had died on March 21, 1863, while still in service. The purpose and function of the fort was to afford protection to settlers in the Pecos River valley from the Mescalero Apache, Kiowa, and Comanche, and to house captured Mescalero Apache. Despite warnings that the site was unsuitability for a large human occupation, Carleton created a 40-square-mile (100 km2) reservation area, known as Bosque Redondo, for the purpose of teaching the Mescalero Apache and the Navajo how to be self-sufficient modern farmers. “Bosque Redondo” means "round grove of trees," and likely referred to the location containing many cottonwood trees near the Pecos River in Fort Sumner, NM.

When Fall 1862 arrived and Navajos failed to surrender, “Kit” Carson approving of the U.S. Army’s “scorched earth policy,” sent forces from Fort Defiance to burn Navajos’ crops, destroy their food caches, raze their hogans, poison their water supply, and shoot their horses and sheep. As the first

snows fell, Carson dispatched patrols to harass Navajo bands, preventing them from hunting game or gathering wild food plants.

Upon learning that Carleton intended for him to pursue the Navajos in an effort to relocate them to the Bosque Redondo reservation, Carson tendered a letter of resignation, dated February 3, 1863. Carleton refused his resignation and ordered Carson to a battle with the Chiricahua Apache band in the Gila Mountains of southwest New Mexico. Again, in the summer of 1863, Carson's troops destroyed Navajo crops, livestock, and homes. Thousands of Navajo were living in fear, stricken by starvation; many children and elderly died from exposure to the cold. Hundreds were lured by promises of protection from slave raiding, clothing, blankets, food and livestock and surrendered to the military at Fort Defiance and Fort Wingate.

General Carleton's Order No. 15 which allowed Kit Carson to strike Navajos:

"For a long time past the Navajoe Indians have murdered and robbed the people of New Mexico. Last winter when eighteen of their chiefs came to Santa Fe to have a talk, they were warned, -- and were told to inform their people, -- that for these murders and robberies the tribe must be punished, unless some binding guarantees should be given that in [the] future these outrages should cease. No such guarantees have yet been given: But on the contrary, additional murders, and additional robberies have been perpetrated upon the persons and property of unoffending citizens. It is therefore ordered that Colonel CHRISTOPHER ["KIT"] CARSON, with a proper military force proceed without delay to a point in the Navajoe country known as Pueblo Colorado [now Ganado, Arizona], and there establish a defensible Depot for his supplies and Hospital; and thence to prosecute a vigorous war upon the men of this tribe until it is considered at these Head Quarters that they have been effectually punished for their long continued atrocities."

Brigadier General, James H. Carleton,
General Order No. 15, June 15th 1863,
published in L. C. Kelly's book Navajo Roundup

On July 20, 1863 General Carlton ordered all Navajos to surrender, after that date, every Navajo would be treated as hostile and dealt with accordingly. Carlton immediately enacted a "shoot-to-kill" policy; all Mescalero men, wherever and whenever found, were to be shot, with women and children taken as prisoners. As a result of Carlton's policy, Navajos and Mescalero Apaches who refused to surrender unconditionally were instantly killed.

In a letter (printed in L. C. Kelley's book, Navajo Roundup) to Adjutant General of the Army, dated February 27, 1864, Brigadier General Lorenzo Thomas reported, "What with the Navajos I have captured and those who have surrendered, we have now over three thousand, and will, without doubt soon have the whole tribe. I do not believe they number now much over five thousand all told."

Not all Navajos surrendered, many evaded the U. S. Army by hiding in small groups near Navajo Mountain, the Grand Canyon, in the territory of the Chiricahua Apache, and in parts of Utah and Colorado. General Carlton urged Victorio's band to surrender, but the leader declared that he'd rather die fighting rather than relocate. Believing many more Navajos would surrender if Navajo leader Manuelito agreed to relocate, Carson sent a company into Canyon de Chelly, January 1864, in search of Manuelito. Captain John Thompson cut down Navajo peach orchards during July- August 1864 (New Mexican Lives, pg.187).

The Long Walk

For the bands of Navajos that surrendered, many entire families of several generations, the Long Walk to Bosque Redondo began in March 1864. Navajos called this period of time, “Hwéél̨di.” which translates to “pushed aside.” During the Long Walk, the U.S. military marched Navajo men, women, and children between 250 to 450 miles to Bosque Redondo, depending on the route the military took with some forced marches of Navajos going through the heart of Santa Fe on the path to Fort Sumner.

According to Navajo historical accounts, many people drowned while crossing the Rio Grande; not knowing how to swim, small children and adults were swept away by the river’s strong current. Young girls were raped and children were molested by soldiers. An unknown number of people died of starvation and dehydration while in route. Many pregnant women and elders, unable to keep up with the march, were taken out of the group and shot along the trail. The sick, lame, and malnourished collapsed and were left to die where they fell. Navajos did not know how long or how far they would travel, so by the time they reached Fort Sumner many did not have adequate clothing, blankets, and their shoes were falling apart. Comanches raided the Mescalero and Navajo frequently at Bosque Redondo, taking women and children for slave trade.

Navajo Accounts of the Long Walk

"On the journey to Hwéél̨di … the people had to walk. There were a few wagons to haul some personal belongings, but the trip was made on foot. People were shot down on the spot if they complained about being tired or sick, and if they stopped to help someone. If a woman became in labor with a baby, she was killed. There was absolutely no mercy."
Curly Tso, Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

"After several years at Fort Sumner, life became very hard for the Navajos. There was no wood for fires; there weren’t enough seeds to grow their crops, which would hardly grow in the poor ground, anyway; and insects ate what did come up."
Howard Gorman, Sr., Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

"If a rat was killed, the meat, with the bones and intestines, would be chopped into pieces, and twelve persons would share the meat, bones and intestines of one rat."
Mose Denejolie, Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

"Some boys would wander off to where the mules and horses were corralled. There they would poke around in the manure to take undigested corn out of it. Then they would roast the corn in hot ashes to be eaten."
Howard W. Gorman, Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

"Our people had to dig trenches and holes in the ground to be used as shelters. Some cows were slaughtered, and the hides were used for shade and windbreaks. After the bushes and small trees had been cut and burned, the people had to dig [mesquite roots] for firewood."
Akinabh Burbank, Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

"A lot of people got lice at Fort Sumner, especially in their hair. The men’s hair, like the women’s, was pretty long in those days."
D. T. Begay, Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

"Wolves also were one of the worst enemies. People couldn't go outside their huts after dark. A few goats that were kept nearby gradually were killed off by the wolves during the nights until finally only four or five were left."
Rita Wheeler, Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period

Military Reports of "The Long Walk"

In a report (published by Kelly) to Carleton's Assistant Adjutant General, Captain Joseph Berney, who escorted refugees to Fort Sumner during the early months of 1864, reported that during the march from Fort Defiance to Los Pinos, "the Indians suffered intensely from the want of clothing, four were entirely frozen to death…" and during the march from Los Pinos to Fort Sumner, "I lost fifteen Indians on the road, principally boys, three of which were stolen, two strayed from my camp on the Rio Pecos, and ten died from the effects of the cold…"

In the University of New Mexico's Center for Southwest Research archives, William G. Ritch Papers Collection, is the Diary of Christopher Carson's Navajo campaign (Part I), the following statement from the period of the Long Walk was recorded: "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."

In perhaps the most detailed report (also published by Kelly) by the military, Captain Francis McCabe, who led a punishing march to Fort Sumner in the spring of 1864, said that he left Fort Defiance "with eight hundred Navajo prisoners…The main body of the Indians traveled between the advance Guard and the train [of wagons], and in advance of my company… On the second days march a very severe snow storm set in which lasted for four days with unusual severity, and occasioned great suffering amongst the Indians, many of whom were nearly naked and of course unable to withstand such a storm."

During the journey, McCabe lost more than 150 of his prisoners. Nearly 50 escaped. More than 100 died. Kit Carson, hearing of the loss of Navajo life, notified Carleton that the deaths were attributable to, "want of a sufficiency to eat. I respectfully suggest to you the propriety and good policy of giving the Indians…while en route to Basque Redondo, sufficiency to eat. With their bare hands, they grubbed mesquite shrubs to open fields, where their crops would fail under successive sieges by insects. In the absence of building materials, they tried to raise shelters of sticks and worn hides and cloth, which offered little protection from the fierce winds of a prairie winter storm. Unable to grow sufficient crops for food, they tried to survive on military rations of rancid bacon and weevil-infested grains. They quarreled with the Mescaleros, long-time enemies whom Carleton imprisoned at the same camp. They suffered raids by the Comanches and Kiowas, from the plains to the east."

Disputes Among the People

Both the Mescalero Apache and the Navajo were uprooted from their traditional homelands and forced into confinement at the Bosque Redondo internment camp. Internment is defined as the imprisonment of people, commonly in large groups, without charges in a camp used for the confinement "of enemy citizens in wartime or of terrorism suspects." In a report in 1863, General Carlton said his troops had brought 415 Mescalero prisoners to the Bosque Redondo, prior to the arrival of the Navajo. The Mescalero Apache and the Navajo had a long tradition of raiding each other and consequently, the two tribes had many disputes during their captivity.

General Carlton envisioned the Bosque Redondo holding a capacity of 5,000 people. By the spring of 1865, approximately 9,022 individuals had been forcibly imprisoned in the area that was approximately 40 square miles (104 km²). Overcrowding surpassed the carrying capacity for the area and the natural

resources of the region had not been properly assessed by the government. Few trees within the short grass prairie ecosystem meant limited building materials, and not enough wood for cooking and heat during winter. The only water source available was the Pecos River, which was too alkaline for drinking and caused dysentery. This river water, laden with salt, was used to irrigate corn fields; it weakened the soil and caused crops to fail.

Many illnesses and loss of life occurred for both the Navajo and the Apache. Men were given passes to hunt, though little wildlife or game was available. No knowledge of how to prepare ration food (green coffee beans, flour, and rancid bacon), compounded by the incompetent management of Army supplies and criminal activities, resulted in the death of hundreds; many died of starvation, malnutrition, and dysentery. Clothing, shoes and blankets were not provided for the incarcerated. Over the course of the years held in confinement, clothing and blankets of the imprisoned became thin with holes.

Trees quickly became scarce therefore, firewood was minimal, and with no tents or enough wood available to construct housing, families lived in tattered tepees or dug holes in the ground to protect themselves from the elements. The soldiers on guard allowed the Navajo and the Apache to bury their dead. Navajos that died in the pit houses that were dug into the ground remained there; the family abandoned the hole and filled it with dirt. During the winter of 1863-64, the ground was too frozen to bury the dead, so bodies of those that died were thrown into the Pecos River in an effort to keep sickness and disease from the camp. Infectious diseases such as smallpox further devastated the population with an estimated 1,500 individuals perishing during the period of incarceration.

On November 3, 1865 the Mescalero Apache slipped away in the night scattering in all directions; some joined in a war against the United States until President Grant established a reservation on Sierra Blanca in 1873. Geronimo and his Chiricahua were the last band to surrender to the military in 1886; they endured 27 years of captivity in Oklahoma.

The Treaty of Bosque Redondo

In 1868, the Bosque Redondo Project, which had been proclaimed as the first Indian reservation west of Plains Indian Territory by the federal government, was declared a failure. On June 1, 1868 the Treaty of Bosque Redondo was signed; it is one of the few instances where the U.S. government relocated a tribe back to their traditional homelands. The Navajos were granted 3.5 million acres (14,000 km²) of land inside their four sacred mountains, which increased the size of their reservation to over 16 million acres (70,000 km²), making it the largest reservation in the United States.

The Treaty of 1868 also ended incarceration at Bosque Redondo, and carried restrictions on raiding, mandates on education for children, and also provided a supply of seeds, agricultural tools and other provisions. Most importantly, the treaty declared the rights and lands of the Navajos to be protected by the federal government. Future planning was included in the Treaty; plans called for the establishment of railroads and forts, compensation to tribal members, and arrangements for the safe passage and return of Navajos to the reservation that was established. The U.S. government also promised to make annual deliveries of things the Navajos could not make for themselves for the succeeding 10 years after the treaty was signed.

Three years after the ending of the Civil War, the long journey back to Dinétah began for the Navajo on June 18, 1868. Just as the Navajo were beginning to stabilize their families and find resources to rebuild homes and crops again, New Mexico Governor Mitchell issued a proclamation, dated August 2, 1869 and September 1869, which declared Navajo and Gila Apache Indian tribes, “outlaws”, and authorized citizens to kill and take the property of their enemies.

Aftermath of War

Native American groups fought for their ancestral homelands and ultimately were forced to endure policies of assimilation, and relocate to reservations that were located on lands deemed unsuitable for white settlers. In Arizona, the Gila River water was cut off during the 1870s and 1880s by construction of upstream diversion structures and dams by non-Native farmers, which resulted in the loss of farming of indigenous communities within the region. From 1880 to the 1920s, these native communities experienced mass famine and starvation.

The federal government began to supply commodity canned and processed food to tribes. The change from a traditional diet led to extremely high rates of obesity and diabetes —a condition that plagues these communities today. Job scarcity on reservations further impoverished the population. Alcoholism became rampant during the trading store era, and forced education in BIA schools led to the loss of language, connections to family, oral histories, as well as many specific cultural, spiritual and artistic expressions and traditions. By the mid-1880s, bison were hunted to the brink of extinction by frontier whites. The Comanche and Plains tribes were being forced into mountainous terrain of New Mexico and off the Plains, as western expansion uprooted people from traditional homelands and lifeways.

Through the Indian Civilization Act Fund of March 3, 1819 and the Peace Policy of 1869, the United States initiated an Indian Boarding School Policy that supported a system designed to assimilate American Indian and Alaska Native children to white customs at boarding schools across the nation during the 19th and 20th centuries. Indian children either volunteered or were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to an Indian Boarding school outside their community hundreds of miles away. Many suffered physical and sexual abuse, neglect, in many cases torture for speaking their Native languages. Cultural genocide would be achieved by prohibiting children from wearing traditional clothing, hair styles, personal belongings and behaviors reflective of their native culture. Assimilation into the dominant society would be achieved through reprogramming consisting of western religion, language and knowledge.

In New Mexico, there were two boarding schools: the Albuquerque Indian School, which was opened in 1881 and in 1890, and the Santa Fe Indian School, established to educate the Native American children from the tribes throughout the southwest. In the mid-1880s, the Ramona Industrial School for Indian Girls, located close to Santa Fe’s historic plaza, housed mostly Apache students whose parents were being held prisoner by the U.S. Army at Fort Union.

Bosque Redondo Memorial

In 2005, the New Mexico State Monuments Division and the Museum of New Mexico, with cultural resource leaders from the Navajo Nation and Mescalero tribe, created the Bosque Redondo Memorial.

> "It stands today to acknowledge the events of the 1860s and to allow those affected by the history to have a voice to tell their history. Designed by Navajo architect David Sloan in the shape of a hogan and a tepee, the museum and an interpretive trail provide an exhibit and educational programs to all who seek it." — New Mexico Historic Sites

In 2018, the Navajo Nation issued a proclamation recognizing the 150th year anniversary of the signing of Naalstoos Sání (The Treaty of 1868), it reads:

> "Whereas, we have the strength as a people to maintain these ties throughout the Hwéél̨di, the forced removal of Diné in the Long Walk, when our people were rounded up and forced to walk three hundred miles to be interned at Bosque Redondo. Many were tortured, raped, and killed, including women in childbirth and children. Still, we persevered. Our ceremonies persevered the Dine as a people and a culture, until the signing of Naalstoos Sání created recognition of our Sovereignty by the United States."

Mescalero Apache

"Today the Mescalero Apache tribe is involved in the development of recreational facilities on the reservation for the tourist industry. The tribe has staked its future on attracting tourists and sportsmen to the reservation and providing facilities for them. In addition to developing economic, health care, and community services, the Mescalero, now numbering about 4,000, are maintaining their cultural heritage with school curriculum including Apache culture, language and heritage." — The Friends of the Bosque Redondo Memorial

Sources:

1. New Mexico Heritage website: http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/archives/gencat_cover.htm
2. Military History New Mexico-Battles: http://drarchaeology.com/culthist/historic/battles.htm
3. Captain John Gregory Bourke, Third U. S. Calvary, Staff Member, General George Crook, Commander, Department of Arizona. In On the Border with Crook 1962:219.
4. (Hurst, James W. "The Apache Kid.")
5. Indian Removal Act, American Civil War- Wikipedia.
6. (McNitt, pp. 414–429)
7. (Ball, Eve; Henn, Nora; Sanchez, Lynda A. (1988). *Indeh: An Apache Odyssey (reprint)*. University of Oklahoma Press)
8. *Brigadier General, James H. Carleton, General Order No. 15, June 15th 1863, published in L. C. Kelly's book Navajo Roundup*
9. New Mexico Office of the State Historian: "Navajo Long Walk".
10. Stevens, Oliver James. New Mexico in the Civil War: Valverde (February 21, 1862); Glorieta-- 28 March, 1862. New Mexico Genological society: http://www.nmgs.org/artcw.htm

11. Nabokov, Vladimir. Lolita. New York: Putnam, 1955. Print
12. On the Border with Crook.
13. New Mexican Lives: Profiles and Historical Stories. Edited by Richard W. Etulain. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2002.
14. James Carleton to Thompson, September 19, 1863, in *Navajo Roundup: Selected Correspondence of Kit Carson's Expedition against the Navajo*, 1863–1865, ed. Lawrence C. Kelly (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing, 1970), 56–57.
15. Simmons, Marc. Kit Carson and His Three Wives: A Family History. University of New Mexico Press, May, 2011.
16. Letter, Captain Lafayette McLaws to Lieutenant Lucius L. Rich, December 16, 1860 | Western Waters Digital Library | J. Willard Marriott Digital Library (utah.edu)
17. Taylor, James. Bloody Valverde: A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, February 21, 1862. University of New Mexico Press, March, 1999.
18. New Mexico Civil War Battle Valverde American Civil War
19. Diary of Christopher Carson's Navajo Campaign, first part - UNM CSWR William G. Ritch Papers Collection - CONTENTdm Title
20. Carleton's quote on Mescalero Apache. Eigen's Political and Historical Quotations.
21. Internment Definition & Meaning | Dictionary.com
22. Near Extinction of the Great Plains Bison 1820–1900 | Environment & Society Portal (environmentandsociety.org)
23. Texas and New Mexico Battle Over Remains of Fallen Confederate Soldiers - The New York Times (nytimes.com)
24. Pigeon Ranch, Glorieta NM. Microsoft Word - PigeonsHSR08.ZentireHSRtext.doc (nps.gov)
25. Fort Sumner Historic Site/Bosque Redondo Memorial » New Mexico Historic Sites (nmhistoricsites.org)
26. John Chivington | American Battlefield Trust (battlefields.org)
27. John P. Slough | American Battlefield Trust (battlefields.org)
28. Death of Slough at La Fonda: Hotel La Fonda History | Historic Hotels In Santa Fe, New Mexico
29. Daughters of the Confederacy: 'The lost cause': the women's group fighting for Confederate monuments | North Carolina | The Guardian
30. United Daughters of the Confederacy | History & Textbooks | Britannica

Pueblo Involvement in the Long Walk

1. Brooks, J.F. (2002). *Captives & Cousins*. Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Press.
2. Dozier, E.P.(1983). *The Pueblo Indians of North America*. Long Grove: Waveland Press.
3. Dunlay, T. (2000). *Kit Carson & the Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
4. Hart, e. (2003). Pedro Pino: Governor of the Zuni Pueblo, 1830-1878. Logan, Utah: Utah State University Press.
5. Hornsby, S. & McPherson, R.S. (2009). 'Enemies like a road covered with ice': The Utah Navajo' experience during the Long Walk period, 1858-1868. American Indian Center and Research Journal, 33(2), 1-22.

6. Jones, O.L. (1964). Pueblo Indian Auxiliaries and the Defense of New Mexico, 1692-1794. Doctoral Dissertation: University of Oklahoma.
7. Sando, J.S. (1998). Pueblo Nations: Eight Centuries of Pueblo Indian History. Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers.
8. Simmons, M. (9179). History of the Pueblos since 1821. In A. Ortiz (ed.) Handbook of North American Indians, Volume 9: Southwest (pp.206-223). Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian.

Navajo perspectives on the Long Walk:

1. Denetdale, Jennifer Nez. Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita 3rd ed. Edition. University of Arizona Press; 3rd ed. edition (June 1, 2007).
2. Johnson, Broderick H. ed., Navajo Stories of the Long Walk Period (Tsaile, AZ: Diné Press, 1973), 274.
3. Lake Valley Navajo School, Title VII Bilingual Staff. Oral history stories of the Long Walk = Hwéeldi Baa Hané. Crownpoint, N.M.: Lake Valley Navajo School, 1991.
4. Bighorse. Tiana. Bighorse the Warrior. University of Arizona Press; Reissue edition (May 1, 1994).
5. History » New Mexico Historic Sites (nmhistoricsites.org)
6. 150 Years After the Long Walk (newmexicomagazine.org)
7. The_Navajo_Nation_Treaty_Proclamation.pdf (navajonationcouncil.org)
8. Fort Sumner Historic Site/Bosque Redondo Memorial » New Mexico Historic Sites (nmhistoricsites.org)
9. NK360 - Navajo Treaty of 1868 - Why Was the Navajo Journey Home So Remarkable? - Map (si.edu)

Learn more about the culture and history of the Mescalero Apache

1. Our Culture - Official Website of the Mescalero Apache Tribe
2. Navajo Nation: History (navajo-nsn.gov)

Map of the route pursued in 1849 by the U.S. Troops - New Mexico Waters - CONTENTdm Title (unm.edu)

Map of the route pursued in 1849 by the U.S. Troops under the command of Bvt. Lieut. Col. JNO. M. Washington, Governor of New Mexico in an expedition against the Navajos [sic] Indians, by James H. Simpson, 1st Lieut. T. Engrs., assisted by Mr. Edward M. Kern, constructed under the general orders of Col. J. J. Abert. Chief Topl. Engrs. Kern, Edward M. (drawn by, Santa Fe, N.M.); P.S. Duval's Steam Lith. Press, Philadelphia; Shoemaker, J. G. (engr.), Senate Ex. Doc. 1st Sess. 31st. Cong. No. 64, 1849.

Archival Resources:

The New Mexico State Archives is the central repository for the state government records and the custodian of numerous private papers and manuscript collections, housing records from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, including documents dating from New Mexico's Spanish (1621-1821), Mexican (1821-1846), and territorial (1846-1912) periods of history.

The New Mexico State Records Center holds the collection of records of the New Mexico Adjutant General. In 1852, a legislative act granted the Governor of New Mexico authority to call into service a militia and appoint a temporary Adjutant General who reported to the Governor and was responsible for the supervision of both the National Guard and the Office of Military Affairs. The duties of the Adjutant General included recruiting, equipping, and drilling of the militia; composed of volunteers who devote a portion of their time to the service of the military.

Other materials housed as archives at the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives include: general accounting records, service records, pension documents, personal correspondence, reports, legislative laws, donated photo collections, Adjutant General correspondence, annual reports, general orders, records books, a register of commissioned officers, and muster rolls. Musters are written records containing the names of soldiers mustered into service, discharged, or deserted from the Army. During the Civil War, muster rolls were made of cotton machine-made paper with black letter press printing to which notations were scrolled in iron gall manuscript ink. Many musters are becoming brittle and faded due to age and are in need of preservation.

The muster roll series at the New Mexico State Records and Archives includes muster rolls for the Mexican and Indian Wars (1847-1862), the Civil War (1861-1867), the New Mexico Militia (1869-1896), the New Mexican Volunteer Militia War (1883-1886), and the New Mexico Militia and National Guard (1861-1918). Associated papers pertaining to the civil war period of time are also held at the New Mexico State Records & Archives Division of the State library. Holdings include documents, photographs, motion picture film, maps, sound recordings, and bound materials. Digital images of the muster rolls are now available on the state's Heritage website:
http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/archives/gencat_cover.htm