

A MARCH WITH KEARNY

by

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A MASTER'S REPORT

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requirements for the degree

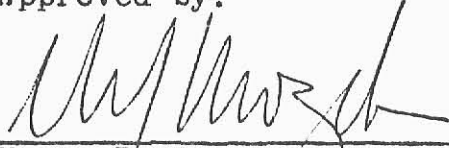
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# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

1846

January	5	Resolution to terminate joint occupation introduced in Senate.
	7-10	Fremont at Sutter's Fort.
	12	Word received of Slidell's rejection by Mexico.
	13	Taylor ordered to the Rio Grande.
February	24-27	Fremont to Monterey.
	3	Taylor receives orders.
	4	Mormons begin crossing the Mississippi.
	13	Polk's interview with Atocha.
	22	Fremont starts for the coast.
March	22	Gillespie embarks at Mazatlan.
	1	First Mormon wagons start across Iowa.
	5-9	Fremont at Gavilan Peak.
	8-11	Taylor starts for Rio Grande.
	20	Slidell notified of Mexico's refusal to negotiate.
	21	Fremont reaches Sutter's Fort.
	28	Taylor reaches the Rio Grande.
April	30	Fremont reaches Lassen's ranch.
	7	Polk learns Slidell will not be received.
	5-11	Fremont to Mt. Shasta and return.
	17	Gillespie reaches Monterey.
	19	Taylor orders the Rio Grande blockaded.
	23	"Termination" passes Congress.
	24	Fremont starts for Oregon.
May	25	First hostilities on the Rio Grande.
	8	Battle of Palo Alto.
	9	Battle of Resaca de la Palma.
	9	News of hostilities reaches Washington.
	9	Gillespie overtakes Fremont.
	13	Polk signs resolution that a state of war exists.
	18	Taylor occupies Matamoros.
June	22	National Fair opens.
	24	Fremont reaches Lassen's ranch on way south.
	10	Bear Flaggers capture Castro's horses.
	11	Susan Magoffin sets out from Independence.
	12	Congress votes to accept 49th parallel.
	14	Attack on Sonoma and birth of the "California Republic."
	14	First Mormons reach the Missouri.
	16-29	ARMY OF THE WEST LEAVES FORT LEAVENWORTH FOR SANTA FE.



	25	Fremont arrives at Sonoma.
July	2	Sloat arrives at Monterey.
	6	Taylor starts up the Rio Grande.
	9	Sonoma taken over by the United States.
	19	Fremont marches into Monterey.
	21-22	Mormon Battalion starts for Fort Leavenworth.
	26	Susan Magoffin reaches Bent's Fort.
	26	Fremont dispatched to San Diego.
	28-30	ARMY OF THE WEST REACHES BENT'S FORT.
	29	Fremont raises flag at San Diego.
	31	Taylor takes Camargo.
August	1	Mormon Battalion reaches Fort Leavenworth.
	1-2	KEARNY LEAVES BENT'S FORT.
	3	Fall of Paredes government.
	8	Fremont starts north from San Diego.
	8	Wilmot Proviso introduced.
	12	Cooke and Magoffin reach Santa Fe.
	13	Mormon Battalion leaves Fort Leavenworth.
	14	Fremont and Stockton occupy Los Angeles.
	16	Santa Anna arrives at Vera Cruz.
	18	KEARNY OCCUPIES SANTA FE.
	19-25	Taylor reaches Cerralvo.
September	5	Carson starts east with Stockton's report.
	17	Remaining Mormons driven from Nauvoo.
	20-24	Battle of Monterrey.
	23-25	Wool leaves San Antonio for Chihuahua.
	25-28	KEARNY LEAVES SANTA FE FOR CALIFORNIA.
October	4	Gillespie evacuates Los Angeles.
	6	KEARNY MEETS KIT CARSON.
	9-12	Mormon Battalion reaches Santa Fe.
	9	Susan Magoffin starts south.
	19	Mormon Battalion leaves Santa Fe.
	27	Stockton reaches San Pedro.
November	13	Mormon Battalion leaves the Rio Grande.
	15	Conner captures Tampico.
	16	Taylor occupies Saltillo.
	17	"Sick detachment" joins the Mississippi Saints at Pueblo.
	18	Scott given command of Vera Cruz expedition.
	20-22	Rendezvous of Doniphan's detachments at Bear Spring.
	22	KEARNY REACHES JUNCTION OF GILA AND COLORADO.
	27	Last refugees from Nauvoo reach Winter Quarters.
December	2	KEARNY REACHES WARNER'S RANCH.
	5	Wool occupies Parras.
	6	BATTLE OF SAN PASCUAL.
	9	Mormon Battalion reaches the San Pedro.
	12	KEARNY REACHES SAN DIEGO.
	12-23	Doniphan's command assembles at Dona Ana.
	16	Mormon Battalion reaches Tucson.
	25	Battle of El Brazito.

Source: Bernard DeVoto, The Year of Decision 1846 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1943), pp. xiii-xvi.

## Chapter 1

### FORMING THE ARMY OF THE WEST

The year 1846 was a year of decision for the United States Government and for an American army officer. During the Mexican War, General Stephen Watts Kearny took possession of nearly the entire southwestern half of the present United States. Yet today few scholars are aware of the struggle, sacrifice, perseverance, and above all, the determination demonstrated by Kearny and his Army of the West. Kearny's Army of the West consisted primarily of volunteers from the state of Missouri. These volunteers quickly acquired the basic soldierly skills in which they received rudimentary instruction at Fort Leavenworth. Frequently during their expedition they reacted to stress in a manner completely unacceptable to military discipline. Overall, however, their performance rated above average for volunteers.

Numerous interpretations endeavor to explain, and at times to justify, the United States' entering into a war with Mexico. Historians of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries asserted that Manifest Destiny,<sup>1</sup> the inevitable westward expansion of the frontier, prompted America's entry into the war. To its believers, the messianic mission of the United States committed the government to occupying the continent. On the other hand,

George Washington and his successors have tended to equate the building of a republic to an empire. Still others insist that American expansion resulted from economic necessity.<sup>2</sup> Religion and racism have also been viewed as instigators of the Mexican War.<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the reasons for which the United States entered into war, the Army of the West played an important part in the history of that war and in the expansion of the United States.

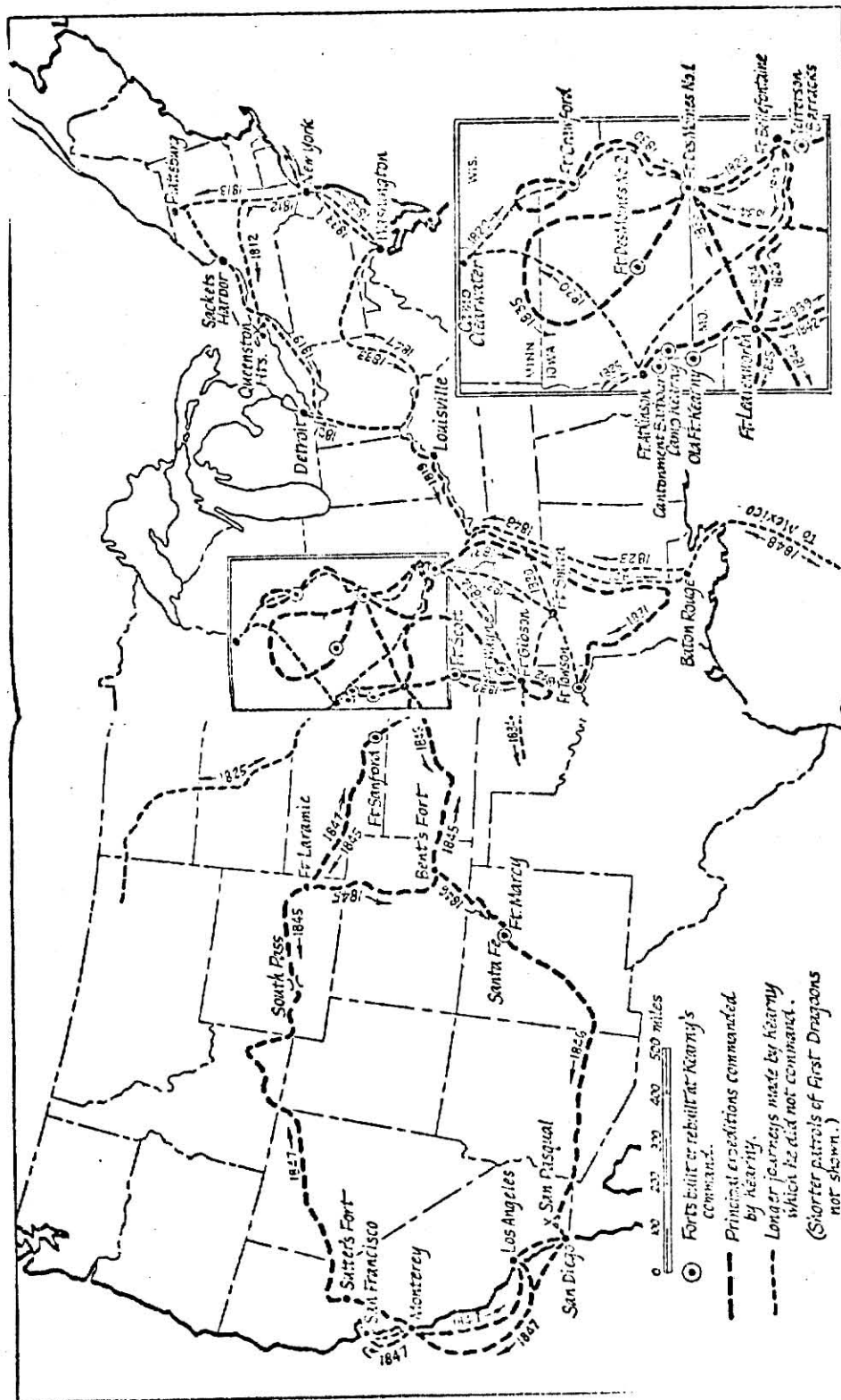
As relations between the two countries became unusually tense, what little diplomacy had existed now came to an end, and the final outcome became predictable. On May 11, 1846, President James K. Polk forwarded his war message to Congress. On May 12, Congress declared a state of war between the United States and Mexico, and preparations began for forming the largest military force the United States had ever sent across the Great Plains.<sup>4</sup>

On the national level, a decision by the President placed Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny, then at Fort Leavenworth, in command of what would soon become known as the Army of the West. Colonel Kearny, a professional soldier whose experience dated from the War of 1812, had demonstrated a unique ability for frontier service. During the 1830's and 40's Kearny had explored and constructed forts along the Missouri River. In 1845 he traveled the Oregon trail to South Pass and returned via the Santa Fe trail from Bent's Fort to Fort Leavenworth.<sup>5</sup> As an experienced soldier and frontiersman, Kearny knew what to expect in leading an army

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Source: Dwight L. Clarke, Stephen Watts Kearny (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 210-211

across the Great Plains. Because of his experience on the frontier, the President selected him to lead an army to conquer New Mexico and California.<sup>6</sup> Kearny, in addition to being a skilled frontiersman, was one of the most dependable officers in the army. He remained above the vaudeville and electioneering which politicians and other general officers of the Mexican War displayed. Kearny clearly stood out as a master of his job.<sup>7</sup>

The war would have profound effect upon Kearny. In an almost superhuman effort to comply with his orders<sup>8</sup> which required him to exercise skills as a military leader, a politician of civil-military relations, and a combat commander, he became involved involuntarily in a political struggle that almost ruined his career (See Appendix A for Colonel Kearny's orders). This however, is beyond the scope of this study which will follow Colonel Kearny from Fort Leavenworth to California. It will show the enormous fortitude required of each individual, and especially of the fifty-two year old colonel, without whose administrative and organizational abilities the expedition might not have succeeded.

Unlike commercial caravans that had travelled the Santa Fe trail successfully in previous years, Kearny faced numerous challenges uncommon to these caravans. Operated primarily as economic concerns, the commercial caravans derived their motivation from financial profit. Moreover, they generally travelled the Santa Fe trail at prearranged periods of time, thus allowing for ample time to purchase or

repair wagons and obtain qualified teamsters. In addition, through experience they learned the best possible route for wagons and the necessary distance to travel in a day to arrive at a specific location. Traders' caravans were economically self-sufficient and, therefore, possessed adequate food for a comfortable journey. Caravans were homogeneous groups without military regimentation and with little personal friction.

Conversely, in approximately sixty days, Kearny organized and equipped, with both military and civilian equipment, the largest military expedition in the United States' history. The expedition operated on a completely different time schedule, travelling eighteen hours some days. For the army, the trip was complicated by lack of qualified teamsters. Moreover, friction between volunteers and regulars often complicated simple matters of procedure. Inexperienced volunteers failed to secure their horses at night. Consequently, a portion of the next morning was spent tracking down horses and other animals. Due to government inefficiency, the soldiers were not paid for ten months, and this fact alone made them resent their service obligations. In addition to a command and control problem that extended about sixty miles along the Santa Fe trail, Kearny simultaneously escorted a trader's caravan to Santa Fe. All these conditions complicated Kearny's efforts at managing an enormous collection of men and equipment. The fact that he accomplished his mission attests to his capability in military



organization and planning.

Strategy worked out in Washington called for an expedition under Colonel Kearny to assemble at Fort Leavenworth.<sup>9</sup> Although Kearny commanded Fort Leavenworth and the First Dragoon Regiment, his command was split and several companies were located at different forts. Complying with his instructions to organize an expedition, he sought the return of his companies. On May 31, in a letter to Brigadier General Brooks, commander of the Third Military Department in St. Louis, Kearny demanded in strong language the return of his two companies<sup>10</sup> commanded by Captains Edwin V. Sumner and Philip St. George Cooke. The Adjutant General, on June 16, directed the officers to proceed with their companies to Fort Leavenworth. Both Cooke and Sumner were "inexpressibly disappointed" because they had hoped to see action in the heart of Mexico and they understood the objective of Kearny's expedition was then only New Mexico.<sup>11</sup> First Lieutenant Abraham K. Johnston was appointed regimental adjutant of the First Dragoons on June 16, 1846.<sup>12</sup> On June 28, twelve days after the instructions were issued for their companies to join Kearny, they departed St. Louis by steamboat for Fort Leavenworth, arriving there on the night of July 3.<sup>13</sup>

Elements of the expedition departed in the latter part of May. Troops and supply trains left the fort by detachments. When approximately twenty-five or thirty wagons had been reassembled and loaded, they were sent on

in advance to Bent's Fort, the intermediate objective of the army, 566 miles from Leavenworth.<sup>14</sup> The orderly departure continued through June and by June 29, the last of the army left Fort Leavenworth, with Kearny and some of the dragoons bringing up the rear. Travelling with them were several supply trains, while back at the fort others were being loaded to follow later in support of the expedition.<sup>15</sup> When the last element of Kearny's expedition cleared the fort in June of 1846, a force of approximately 1500 men were under his command.<sup>16</sup> Captains Sumner and Cooke, en route from St. Louis arrived at Fort Leavenworth on July 3, and "on July 6 the two dragoon companies, with Sumner in command, marched from the post..."<sup>17</sup> to join the forces already making their way south.

One of the most intriguing aspects of Kearny's command was that it was comprised mostly of volunteers. Secretary of War William Marcy had issued instructions for Kearny to receive as volunteers companies called to duty by the Governor of Missouri. The government and citizens of Missouri responded to the War Department's request for volunteers. By the end of June, thirteen companies of volunteers had arrived at the fort from various parts of the state.<sup>18</sup> More companies arrived than had been authorized by the Governor of Missouri, and Colonel Kearny was hard pressed to persuade the companies which were not authorized by the governor to return home.

An event unique to the volunteer regiment was the

election of its officers. Colonel Kearny, in a letter to Colonel N. G. Minor of the Missouri Militia requested Major General Ward of the Missouri Militia to preside at the election<sup>19</sup> that nominated Alexander Doniphan colonel of the Missouri Mounted Volunteers. This unit would accompany Kearny to Santa Fe.

Additional volunteers were available from the Mormons in Iowa Territory. On June 19, Colonel Kearny directed Captain James Allen to proceed to Mormon camps and enlist four or five companies of volunteers. Each company was to consist of not less than seventy-three men nor more than one hundred and nine. Allen encountered no difficulty in enlisting his quota of volunteers; and on July 21 and 22, the Mormons, led by Captain Allen, departed Council Bluffs for Fort Leavenworth. They arrived at the fort on August 1, the same day Kearny and the main contingent of his army left Bent's Fort.

Although organized, the Missouri volunteers were a long way from being soldiers. Training these recruits to act as a military organization was an extremely difficult task that had to be performed in a relatively short period of time. The dragoon officers drilled the volunteers twice daily in military skills. The volunteers were, on the whole, an undisciplined collection of farmers, merchants, and frontiersmen.<sup>20</sup> They provided a sharp contrast to Kearny's well-disciplined First Dragoon Regiment. The First Dragoons were recognized as being the best unit in the United States

Army in the 1840's. The credit for this recognized achievement rested primarily with Colonel Kearny. When assigned to the dragoons in 1833, they had been an unruly group lacking discipline, and like the volunteers arriving at Fort Leavenworth in 1846, could scarcely be referred to as soldiers.<sup>21</sup> Kearny's dedication, knowledge and professionalism turned a "rag-tag" organization of dragoons into a first-rate military force. This fact was known in Washington and, in part, might explain why President Polk had chosen Kearny for the commander of the overland expedition to Santa Fe.

In addition to training the volunteers, Kearny also had to expand greatly the logistics available at Fort Leavenworth. Although sufficient wagons were on hand to move the first column, other supplies were not, and all those that would follow later still had to be equipped and provided rations<sup>22</sup> before they could leave the fort. In a vain effort to obtain the necessary provisions, Kearny wrote to Brigadier General Jones, the Adjutant General of the Army, on June 16, 1846. Kearny noted:

We are without Tents, Camp Kettles and Mess pans for these Companies, [volunteers] there having been but very few at this post not required for our own [illegible] and we having been disappointed in our expectations in receiving these articles from the Q. M. Dept. in St. Louis.<sup>23</sup>

The orders for supplies which Kearny sent to St. Louis were specific as exemplified by the two letters he had his adjutant send to Captain Bell of the St. Louis Arsenal. On the 25th of June the adjutant wrote:

I am directed by Col. Kearny to request that you will forward to this post with the least possible delay 200 Carbines with 200 rounds of ammunition in cartridges for each, with the proper supply of percussion caps, cartridge boxes and Carbine buckets for same--also 200 Cavalry Sabers, and Belts--All this being in addition to what may have been called for on previous requisiting--P.S. I am directed to ask for 200 Dragoon Pistols with 200 rounds of cartridges for each and 200 pairs of holsters in addition to the above.<sup>24</sup>

Again on the 26th of June he wrote Captain Bell:

I am instructed by Col. Kearny to request that you will cause to be forwarded to this Post without delay, the following articles of Ordnance and stores, being in addition to what you have or will have furnished on previous Requisitions from one, [illegible]--For Col Prices Regt of Miss. Vol. 800 Muskets with Bayonets and accoutre-ments complete, including Slings and 200 rounds of Ammunition in cartridges for each, with the requisite number of flints --200 Carbines with accoutrements complete, including Slings, Straps, Buckets and--200 rounds of ammunition in cartridges for each with the requisite number of Percussion caps --100 Cavalry Sabers with Belts, Plates and complete--100 Dragoon Pistols with the requisite number of flints. 100 Holsters (pairs of) and ammunition for Pistols--....<sup>25</sup>

In addition to the ordnance and stores requested by Kearny for the immediate use of the expedition, staff officers representing the quartermaster and commissary branches were directed to prepare three-month estimates. These amounts of supplies would be carried with the army; additional follow-up supplies would be forwarded as they were readied.<sup>26</sup>

Reacting to the immediate need for obtaining provisions and to the estimates prepared by the different staffs, army agents combed the country to purchase all the mules and cattle they could find.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, in response to

requisitions, supplies began to move from St. Louis by steamboat to Fort Leavenworth. There the Assistant Quartermaster at the fort, Captain McKissack, took charge of the supplies.<sup>28</sup> Logistics of every imaginable description found their way to the fort loaded aboard steamboats. Wagons, of which there existed a critical shortage, thousands of barrels of condiments, uniforms and blankets by the bales, and camping paraphernalia arrived at the docks of the fort.<sup>29</sup>

These supplies aided immeasurably the initial organization of the expedition; however, throughout the entire journey logistical shortages plagued Kearny and his officers. Along with supervision of the expedition's logistics, personnel problems also occupied Kearny's attention. On June 4, 1846, Kearny wrote Anthony Robidoux and accepted his services as interpreter<sup>30</sup> for the expedition. In reply to Secretary of War Marcy on June 15, Kearny indicated that he had "...anticipated the wishes of the Presdt, of the U.S., by sending on the 26 to Bishop Kenrick of St. Louis for a Catholic Priest to accompany [him] to Santa fe."<sup>31</sup> Kearny clearly perceived the magnitude of his undertaking. His numerous years on the frontier, which included many overland expeditions in the midwest, gave him a broad understanding of logistics requirements and an even deeper insight into the human problems confronting individuals of different nationalities. Kearny hoped to improve the internal military organization of his command by offering to Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock the position of inspector

general.<sup>32</sup> Hitchcock, Kearny's old friend, was recognized as a disciplinarian and a tough soldier. One could argue that Kearny anticipated disciplinary problems. Through Hitchcock, he hoped possibly to find a person capable of obtaining the best performance from soldiers with less than the training necessary to function under such conditions. Due to an illness, and hoping to see action in the heart of Mexico, Hitchcock refused Kearny's offer. A significant addition to the force, however, was Lieutenant William Emory and his party of topographic engineers. This group of men not only provided valuable services to the expedition, but contributed to the extant knowledge and understanding of the American Southwest. It is also noteworthy that near the expedition's end, Emory saved Kearny's life.

The expedition, by the end of June, was prepared to begin the conquest of New Mexico and California. Advance elements of the army had preceded the main body of troops and supply trains to Bent's Fort. C and G companies of the First Dragoons, commanded by Captains Benjamin Moore and J. H. K. Burgwin, had been dispatched on June 5th to intercept a caravan loaded with arms and ammunition ordered by Governor Armijo of Santa Fe before the war.<sup>33</sup> On Sunday, June 21, 1846, portions of the Army of the West were making their final preparation for departure. On Monday, this over-anxious group of men packed their belongings and said their final farewells before leaving for war. One volunteer, Marcellus Edwards, reflects in his diary the mood of this



departure in an eloquent manner. He noted:

At length the long-desired day has arrived. Although we admire Fort Leavenworth for its beauty, praise it for its conveniences, and give it credit for its good name, and although our sojourn here has been short, we are heartily glad to leave it, and are glad to give it in exchange for the plains and open air that we are about to enter upon. This morning...we packed our blankets, saddlebags, guns and sabers (which are a source of great annoyance to us) upon our horses, and our cooking utensils and tents into two wagons furnished us for that purpose.<sup>34</sup>

Another volunteer, George Gibson, recalled that:

Only those who have experienced it know the feelings of men leaving their homes and firesides for perhaps the last time and maybe to find a grave upon some bloody field of battle; the tears trickling down some father's cheek as he takes his son by the hand and tells him to do his duty and above all things to have a Spartan's courage and never to come back dishonored or disgraced, as I saw one; the cordial parting of bosom friends and their request to be remembered, as I saw many others; the anxious looks of those to be left; and the resolute mind and lofty determination of those who had engaged in the service of their country.<sup>35</sup>

Wives, brothers and parents from all over Missouri came to Fort Leavenworth to pay a final visit. Large numbers of individuals arrived on the steamboats that were bringing additional war supplies. Delegations of women came to give companies handmade flags and to deliver stirring speeches on duty.<sup>36</sup> Some industrious visitors assisted in loading wagons; others brought supplies from Weston that they thought the soldiers would need.<sup>37</sup> Kearny's Army of the West, by July 1, was moving toward Santa Fe--all, that is, except Sumner's and Cooke's companies of dragoons.

In the years preceding 1846, Kearny led numerous



expeditions, but this was by far the largest he ever commanded. With less than two months to organize and train an army, consisting mostly of volunteers, he had performed a monumental task. As soon as he had received his orders, he had discerned the logistical and personnel complications of his mission and worked tirelessly to overcome these obstacles. He sought every opportunity to bring discipline and order into the ranks of his army, for he clearly understood that an army moving such great distances would need both. Lack of discipline and order would dissipate morale and create havoc within a major element in the war effort against Mexico. Moreover, Kearny knew the importance President Polk placed on his mission. That "...Polk considered New Mexico one of the priority areas for conquest"<sup>38</sup> left no doubts in Kearny's mind of the significance of his undertaking. When he departed Fort Leavenworth, after weeks of military organization, training, and logistical preparation, he had accomplished what no other American military commander had attempted--the organization of an army to cross half the United States and fight a war. Kearny, with his mission foremost in his mind, pushed his army relentlessly toward New Mexico.

## Chapter 2

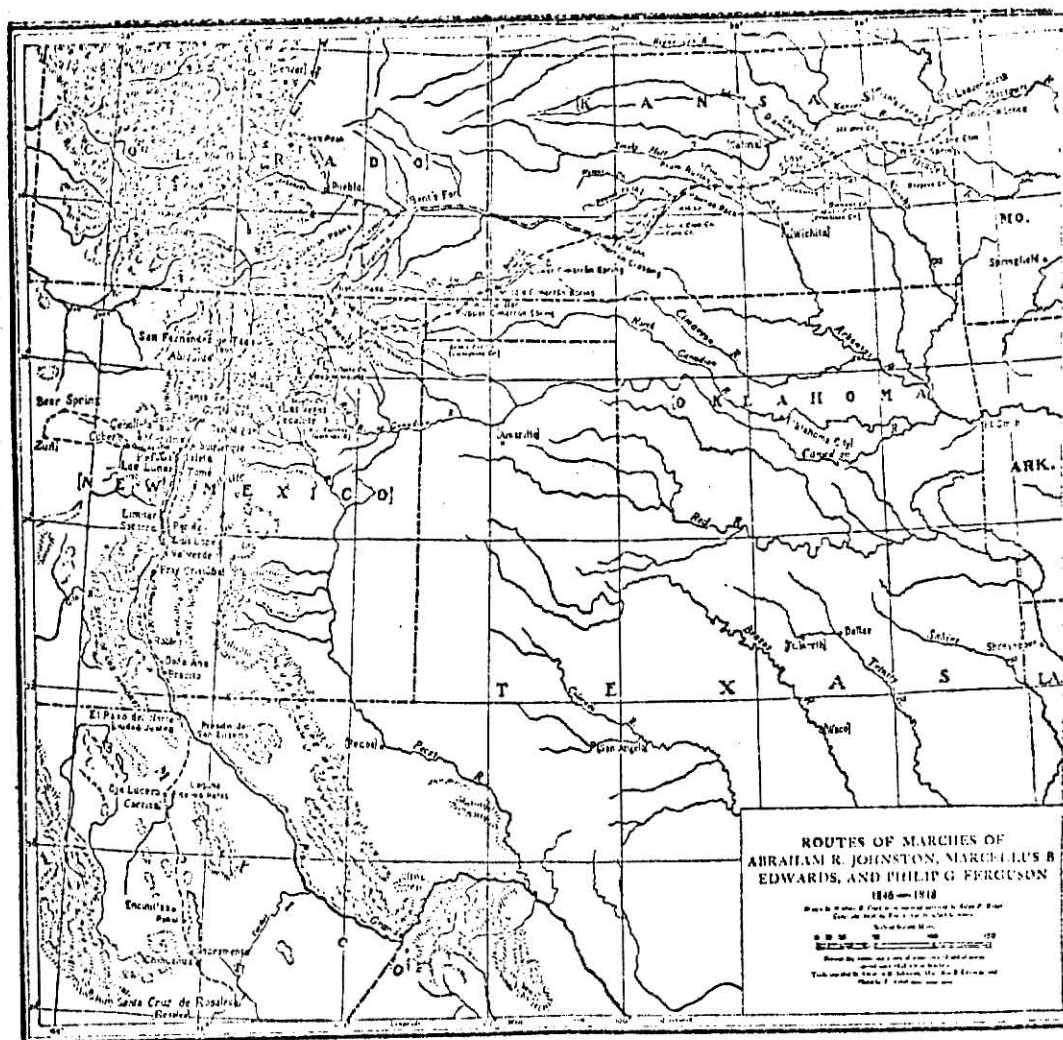
### ACROSS THE GREAT PLAINS TO SANTA FE

The Army of the West left Fort Leavenworth in detachments between May 28 and July 6, 1846, with instructions to rendezvous at Bent's Fort.<sup>39</sup> From there, Kearny anticipated moving the army in a more closed formation to Santa Fe. A tighter formation would enable him to confront any armed resistance expected from the Mexicans. Serving as a depot for supplies and as a temporary recuperation station, the critical position of Bent's Fort on the Santa Fe trail became the decisive factor in Kearny's selecting the longer road to his objective. While a shorter route existed, passing south of Bent's Fort, the probability that a sustained march from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe would succeed appeared remote. In selecting the longer route, Kearny displayed his cunning judgment of frontier travel. His force would undergo periodic shortages of food and water, but had he selected the southern route, which would have required the army to march directly to Santa Fe without a rest, the outcome might have been disastrous. Another factor Kearny understood, and one that eased the grass and water shortage, was the advantage of moving in separate, autonomous columns. Had he moved the army in a single mass formation, the supply of grass and water in the confined

area of a military camp would have been insufficient to cope with the great demand. The war, indeed, furnished Kearny an excellent opportunity to exhibit to the War Department his military skills in organization and planning. Kearny was fortunate, however, that his orders in relation to the route, as well as many other things concerning the expedition, were discretionary.<sup>40</sup>

Slowly, the first column of the army moved away from Fort Leavenworth. The army travelled in columns of approximately three companies each, with varying distances between columns. Each column numbered in excess of three hundred men. The distances permitted an express rider to maintain communication between columns with a ride of several hours. One exception to this line of communication was the force Kearny dispatched early in the month of June to stop the traders' caravans en route to Santa Fe. Several of the individuals on the march kept diaries of their journey, and these records are of enormous value in understanding the hardships and frustrations encountered by the men.

The dragoons' previous experience on the plains had seasoned them for the hardships which they would encounter. The volunteers lacked sufficient training to enable them to maintain themselves or their equipment on the plains.<sup>41</sup> The two month movement of the army on the trail from Fort Leavenworth to Santa Fe was a test of endurance and discipline for the volunteers, and it was also an intense learning



Source: Abraham Robinson Johnston, Marcellus Ball Edwards, and Philip Gooch Ferguson, Marching With The Army of The West 1846-1848, ed. Ralph P. Bieber (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936).

experience. Eager, enthusiastic, and anxious, the volunteers soon experienced monotony, weariness and physical pain. Their attitudes, initially ones of "vindicating the national honor..."<sup>42</sup> became less dramatic with time and distance, and within the enlisted ranks of the volunteers, there was talk of desertion. In certain instances respect for officers became nonexistent. The volunteers fought among themselves and with the regulars, too. However, for all their outward expressions of dissatisfaction, the majority of the volunteers remained loyal and overall, their performance was satisfactory. Indeed, the volunteers with Kearny represented the United States as well, if not better, than any volunteers had done previously.

As the army departed the fort, trouble began almost immediately. One group of men scarcely outside the limits of the fort took a wrong turn, and had they not recognized their error, would have discovered the road to Oregon somewhat longer than the road to Santa Fe. As previously mentioned, the volunteers possessed an initial overabundance of enthusiasm. This is best illustrated by the artillerymen who, upon leaving the fort, charged hills at full speed with their teams pulling cannons, an unfortunate display of inexperience. Less than thirty-six miles from Fort Leavenworth, Ferguson, a volunteer, received a rattlesnake bite while attempting to extract honey from a bee tree.<sup>43</sup> Subsequently, on the night of June 23, the volunteers hobbled their horses' feet with rope to prevent them from wandering

off during the night. The animals, unaccustomed to such procedures, cut their feet on the ropes<sup>44</sup> and hampered the progress of the army. Dealing with the volunteers the first few weeks required an infinite amount of patience, and Kearny, fortunate not to have to face the enemy, trained and disciplined his army en route, including his dragoons.

Training in camp failed to stimulate the volunteers, however, and as time elapsed on the trail, they became indignant when required to train.

Crossing the Kansas River, the army's first major water obstacle, proved complicated. Sand along the banks of the river made handling the wagons extremely difficult. After negotiating the sand, wagons were placed on the flat-boats and poled across the river. One company had considerable trouble in crossing when their oxen fell from the boat. The ferry operator, a Shawnee Indian named Pascal Fish, operated a lucrative business. Fish's ferry was located near the present town of Eudora, Kansas.<sup>45</sup> A group of men purchased a beef from Pascal for four dollars and indicated "...you can get nothing of them, not even a cup of milk or an onion, without paying them the most extravagant prices."<sup>46</sup> They criticized the Indians for having learned the virtue of avarice from the inhabitants of the frontier.

Required to assist wagons in negotiating steep hills, a task demanding tremendous physical exertion, the volunteers soon realized the fantasy of their visions of campaign duty. Every effort to bypass such locations was made; however, at

times this was impossible, and the heavily laden wagons would require manual assistance to overcome exceptionally steep hills. In some cases, over one hundred men would be required to bring a wagon weighing several tons to the top of a hill, while in other instances, double teaming would suffice.<sup>47</sup> The extreme heat of Kansas during June and July, which at times exceeded 100 degrees, exhausted men and animals. Drained by physical exertion, the men were also psychologically depleted from attempting to maintain the pace established by one of the most expeditious travelers of the frontier, Stephen Kearny. Another officer, Captain William Angney of the Missouri infantry battalion, also demonstrated a unique ability for rapid marching. His battalion established a remarkable reputation for fast marching, arriving at Bent's Fort in advance even of the mounted volunteers. Sore feet frequently complicated their movement, however, and one soldier reported after marching in a torrential downpour that he had to cut his boots off his swollen feet. As the mounted volunteers' horses weakened because of a food and water shortage, their riders dismounted and were welcomed to the infantrymen's world of blistered feet.

The wagons that carried the supplies for the soldiers invariably lagged behind the companies they supported. Throughout the journey, tardy or belated wagons created more havoc than any other problem. Due to the weight of the wagons and to their difficulty in crossing open terrain, they frequently arrived at the day's camp hours after the body of



troops, and sometimes not at all, forcing the soldiers to pass the night under the stars and with empty stomachs. In certain cases, regular officers of the dragoons would be dispatched to supervise the movement of the commissary wagons. The German company of artillery from St. Louis showed signs of mutiny one morning when ordered to march without their baggage, "...but assured of food in advance, they came on."<sup>48</sup> Of all the companies in Kearny's command, the artillery companies exhibited the least military ability. Kearny had to explain to their commanding officers, in detail, the need to care for their animals and to prepare bread at night so as to enable the companies to depart early in the morning. Either exasperated with these companies, or empathetic because of their predicament, Kearny finally assigned two of his own dragoon officers to assist them.<sup>49</sup>

Heat, flies and mosquitoes annoyed the soldiers. Thirst strained men farther than most thought possible. After carrying or pulling all day, horses would end the day with no water, and be required to travel as much as twenty miles the following day before reaching water, which often was not potable. Frequently the first column or portion of a company to arrive at a water hole would be the only ones able to drink. Those that came later found the water ruined because the men and animals "...who had gone in advance of us had tramped it up very much."<sup>50</sup>

On July 8, near Council Grove, Kansas, a herd of buffalo invaded the ranks of the army moving southwest on the



Santa Fe trail. Soldiers fired indiscriminately despite orders to the contrary--yet another example of the soldiers' inexperience. Wasting ammunition in such a haphazard manner could have proven extremely costly if Kearny had encountered the 5,000 Mexicans he calculated might oppose him in or near Santa Fe.<sup>51</sup> The next day Kearny gave the traders travelling with the army permission to advance independently to the vicinity of Bent's Fort<sup>52</sup> with instructions to wait there for his arrival. This decision apparently stemmed from the traders' complaints that the military was taking preference in selecting camp sites.

Rumors reached the advancing army on July 14 from traders going east from Bent's Fort on the Santa Fe trail that the inhabitants of Santa Fe could assemble ten thousand men to oppose the Army of the West.<sup>53</sup> From all reported accounts, the rumors did not seem to frighten either Kearny or his volunteers, who by this time were gaining a true confidence in themselves as opposed to the blustering one under which they enlisted. By the middle of July, water remained in critically short supply. Any mud hole, rut in the road, or buffalo wallow, regardless of how muddy or filthy, served as drinking water. One member of the expedition recorded that "...the men drank it with avidity; they suffered so much from thirst."<sup>54</sup> Sore mouths, complicated by swollen lips and hot winds, infested the ranks. Tongues swelled so much that articulation became difficult. Nevertheless, the dragoons and volunteers pushed on toward their

rendezvous point. On July 21, near the present town of Syracuse, Kansas, Captain Angney's infantry marched past the mounted volunteers. As one might suspect, this event created a genuine spectacle. A member of the infantry company wrote:

On the 21st, we passed the Regiment of mounted men without any difficulty. Our men were in high spirits. They would tantalize them as we passed by telling them "good bye,"--"that they would have to pay a bounty of \$20 to join the Infantry,"--"that if they had any news or letters to send on to Bent's Fort, they would take it," etc., etc.<sup>55</sup>

An express rider from Sumner's command had reached the command group on July 16. He reported the column approximately sixty miles to the rear and delivered letters that he had been carrying since leaving Fort Leavenworth.<sup>56</sup> Ahead of the main body, Captain Moore, following the example of his colonel, trained his men and the attachment of volunteers in dragoon tactics for hours in the suffocating heat. Then after several hours of drill they marched on toward Bent's Fort.<sup>57</sup>

In sharp contrast to the burning heat, occasional thunderstorms created an additional misery. Everything was soaked. Unable to find a dry location, the men were forced to withstand the elements of nature; wrapped in wet blankets they marched and slept. Unable to start a fire, troops went to bed hungry and wet, shivering in their permeable tents.

Following the torrential rains, swollen rivers played havoc with the army. On approaching a swollen

tributary of the Arkansas, Kearny refused to let it slow his advance. Unwilling to wait until the river subsided, as the men undoubtedly would have preferred, he set them in motion felling trees to span the river. Men and supplies from the wagons crossed the river in this manner. Ropes were attached to the empty wagons and they were pulled through the water; animals were compelled to swim. This expedient method allowed the army to advance with minimum delay.

The mission of the Army appeared in jeopardy on July 20 as Colonel Kearny became ill. The malady that struck him appeared severe. Lieutenant Emory's wagon, equipped with springs, was requested for Kearny. The other military wagons lacked springs, and therefore, were extremely uncomfortable.<sup>58</sup> There was consternation within the ranks that because of Kearny's illness, the task of this army might be cancelled, or without Kearny's leadership might fail. Kearny insisted the army and the wagon in which he was riding move forward. The advance elements of the force, under Captain Moore, reached Bent's Fort on July 22, and the remainder arrived by July 31. Moore's soldiers enjoyed the sight of civilization, primitive as it was, and immediately set forth to make up for the hardships they had endured. For example, in one incident, two dragoons managed to buy sufficient liquor at four dollars a gallon to inebriate themselves, although the purchase of liquor was forbidden. After becoming thoroughly drunk, they began to fight. Finally brought under control, they were eventually court-

martialed at Bent's Fort. They were sentenced "...to walk in front of the guard tent every alternate two hours from morning till night, carrying on their backs their saddlebags with forty pounds of sand therein for four or five days according to the nature of their guilt."<sup>59</sup> Punishment as rendered above probably was responsible for the rarity of incidents at Bent's Fort. After allowing the men to rest, Moore quickly resumed training his force. They drilled, rested, and drilled until the arrival of Kearny and the main contingent.

The volunteers, as they neared Bent's Fort, became thoroughly disenchanted with army life and the rapid pace established by Colonel Kearny. On July 27 a Missouri volunteer sergeant observed that men were daily cussing Colonel Doniphan and Lieutenant Colonel C. F. Ruff for their suffering under such a pace. They recognized, however, that these officers were only responding to orders from Colonel Kearny.<sup>60</sup> In any case, volunteers now cussed everyone or anything having to do with their misery. They cussed the quartermaster for not bringing their wagons up at night; they cussed the government for not providing them with beef; they cussed themselves and the army because they expended their coffee ration before reaching Bent's Fort. In short, their disposition had soured. What held them together is difficult to isolate. Perhaps fear of family admonishment, patriotism, or just plain stubbornness held them together. During their stay at Bent's Fort, the army made preparations

to advance to Santa Fe. Captain Moore's men, rested by the time Kearny arrived, were dispatched to improve approximately fifteen miles of bad road. Unless repaired, the road would be impassable for wagons. Meanwhile, the men at the fort repaired wagons and attempted to purchase replacements for their exhausted animals from the ones available at Bent's Fort. One volunteer noted that out of one hundred cannon horses they had started with at Fort Leavenworth, only about forty survived the journey to Bent's Fort. Because of exorbitant prices few animals were purchased. Horses that normally sold for forty dollars in Missouri sold for a hundred dollars, and mules commanded seventy or eighty dollars each. Many of the government wagons unloaded at the fort returned to Fort Leavenworth for additional supplies.

Captain Henry S. Turner noted in his journal on July 30 that Captain Moore discovered several Mexicans in the vicinity of the army's camp. He concluded that they undoubtedly were spies sent by Governor Armijo of Santa Fe to ascertain the size and composition of the American army.<sup>61</sup> Kearny viewed the capture of these men as an opportunity to awe the Mexicans with his strength. He allowed these Mexicans to move about his camp, and after they had viewed the area, he instructed them to return to Armijo and tell him all that they had seen. He anticipated that they would exaggerate the size of his force. Moreover, he sent by the Mexicans, on July 31, a proclamation of his entry into New Mexico and informed the citizens to be peaceful and

remain at home. If they followed these instructions, his army would not interfere with them and would respect their civil and religious rights.<sup>62</sup> On the same day, James Magoffin, an experienced Santa Fe trader and a friend of both Don Armijo and Senator Thomas Hart Benton, arrived at Bent's Fort from Washington. He brought with him letters for Colonel Kearny from the Secretary of War (See Appendix B for Magoffin's letter of introduction from the Secretary of War). On August 1, Kearny drafted a letter to Armijo informing him that the American army, sent by its government to take possession of New Mexico, was a strong force and should not be opposed. He called upon Armijo "...for the sake of humanity...to submit to fate...."<sup>63</sup>

Captain Cooke, who only the day before had arrived from Fort Leavenworth, was directed to select twelve men and deliver the letter to Santa Fe. Cooke again experienced inexpressible disappointment. Had he been offered a choice, he would have much preferred to have led the army into Santa Fe at a full charge than to deliver a letter basically pacific in content. Cooke longed for the day when he could participate in a glorious battle. Kearny appeared to place great confidence in Cooke's ability as a soldier and trusted him implicitly. An experienced officer, Cooke had some twenty years of military service by the time of the Mexican War. As Cooke departed Bent's Fort on August 2, James Magoffin and his companion, Gonzales, left with him. Magoffin was probably under directions of President Polk to

attempt negotiations with Armijo. Before leaving Bent's Fort, Kearny wrote to General Jones, the Adjutant General of the Army, informing him that he was doing all in his "...power to obtain possession of the Country quietly and peaceably and...[that he hoped]...to succeed in it...."<sup>64</sup> Kearny's attitude at this leg of his journey remained one of a steadfast soldier desirous of completing his mission. In his correspondence with officials in Washington, other field commanders and Mexican authorities, Kearny dealt strictly with military matters and avoided any pretext of seeking political recognition. He simply wanted to complete successfully the mission entrusted to him.

Leaving behind the sick, some seventy-five men, the Army of the West departed Bent's Fort on August 1 and 2, still suffering from the hardships of the previous month.<sup>65</sup> As the long column of the army passed the fort, Cooke noted a large number of stragglers abounded, including officers. After a punishing journey of over five hundred fifty miles in approximately thirty days of continuous travel, the men were having difficulty leaving this haven of civilization and resuming a march that promised misery. Some, who had come for a patriotic summer and great adventure, had already perished in agony and been buried in shallow graves to keep the wolves away.<sup>66</sup> The success of the campaign, one could argue, now rested on survival of the army and, therefore, on Kearny's ability to maintain a viable force. Issuing verbal orders to tighten discipline, Kearny directed his army



toward Santa Fe, its first major objective. William Bent and six of his men now travelled with the army. They would assist the army in its movement to Santa Fe acting as guides and, when possible, as spies.<sup>67</sup>

The heat continued to plague the men and animals. The sun between nine o'clock and four o'clock produced such intense heat that men complained that it was hard to move about. Anything metal became so hot they could not handle it and sand burned their feet through their boots. Several days on the trail and animals were already beginning to die from the heat. The march on August 4 made for a difficult day. The dust, according to Emory, was overpowering. After marching thirteen miles, the army located a water hole forty feet in diameter. The volunteers soon destroyed it by rushing into the water. The temperature on this day reached 120 degrees, excessively hot even for the plains. These conditions prompted many volunteers to question going any farther, but rather deserting and returning to Missouri.<sup>68</sup> While some of the volunteers' morale was low, others were of a strong character and could compete with the best of the regulars. The condition of the horses worried most regular officers more than the morale of some volunteers. Wolves were already following the horses pulling the commissary trains.<sup>69</sup> The Raton Mountain range, which separates the waters of the Arkansas from those of the Canadian, was a dreaded sight. From the relatively level land of the Great Plains the mountains reached heights of 7,500 feet. The road

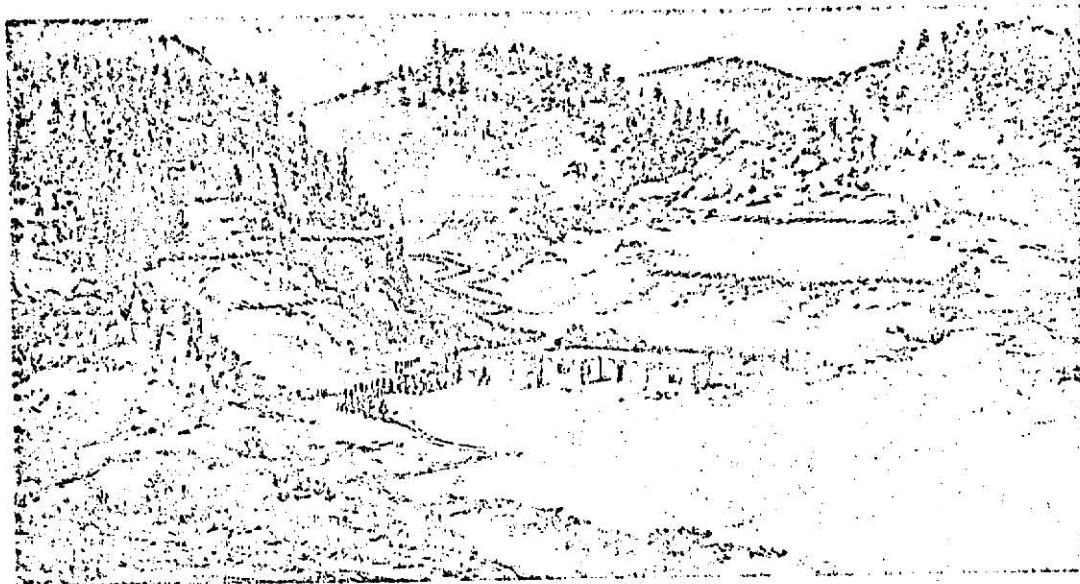


through the mountains was difficult, especially for the baggage trains. Horses, already exhausted, lacked adequate strength to pull the weight up the steep grades and required assistance. Because of the poor road construction infantrymen had to clear the way for the heavier traffic. At times, this necessitated constructing roads for the artillery and trains.<sup>70</sup> On August 7, the army encountered such steep slopes that wagons had to be let down by ropes.<sup>71</sup> The mountains took their toll of the wagons. Some broke wheels; most had loose wheels that needed repairing. Only by removing the wheels and submerging them in water could they be tightened.

As Kearny approached Santa Fe, the number of troops rumored assembling to oppose him increased from two to twelve thousand.<sup>72</sup> Kearny continued to march forward, taking the necessary precautions of closing the intervals between his columns and posting scouts. Bent's spies reported to Kearny that Armijo was fortifying the pass in Apache Canyon. Kearny notified Colonel Doniphan on August 11, that they could expect to meet Mexican opposition within the next two days, and that he wanted every effort made to conserve ammunition. The volunteers viewed this information in an unfavorable way. Due to government inefficiency, they argued, the army had already existed on one-third rations since August 9, which consisted of half a pint of flour a day, a small portion of pork, probably less than three-eighths of a pound, and an extremely small amount of

coffee, sugar, salt and rice. To inform them they could no longer shoot game infuriated the volunteers. Doniphan, however, insisted they comply with the order.

At the Sapello River, an American named Spry, who had come from Santa Fe, warned Kearny about the Mexican forces at Apache Canyon. He also informed him that the pass was being fortified, and advised Kearny to go around the canyon.<sup>73</sup> In preparation for what he anticipated would be a battle, Kearny ordered Colonel Doniphan, on August 13 near the present town of Mora, New Mexico, to bring his regiment forward on the next day to join the dragoons. Undaunted by intelligence of a superior Mexican force in a fortified position only a few days march ahead, Kearny ordered the Army of the West forward. Major Thomas Swords and a certain Lieutenant Gilmer overtook the column on August 15 in the vicinity of Las Vegas, New Mexico, and presented Kearny with orders for his commission to Brigadier General.<sup>74</sup> As the army approached the enemy's position, approximately ten rounds of ammunition apiece were distributed to the troops. Kearny established the plan of attack, and after the banners and guidons were unfurled the army advanced.<sup>75</sup> Preceded by the advance guard, the dragoons rode into the steep-sided canyon. General Kearny exercised bad judgment at this point along the march. Riding into the canyon as Kearny did could have spelled disaster for the Army of the West. Fortunately, luck rested with Kearny. The pass, previously occupied by Governor Armijo, now remained empty.<sup>76</sup> In his journal,



The Army at Apache Pass.

Source: Ralph Emerson Twitchell, The History of the Military Occupation of the Territory of New Mexico From 1846 to 1851 (Chicago: Rio Grande Press Inc., 1963), p. 51.

Jacob Robinson recalled that near disastrous day. He noted, "we all felt very well satisfied to pass without being attacked. We had all felt very brave before; but we now saw how difficult it would have been to have forced the pass, and were glad to be beyond it."<sup>77</sup>

For whatever reason--political or personal confrontation, lack of fortitude, bribery--the road to Santa Fe lay open before the Army of the West. On August 16, the army passed San Miguel, the next day they passed Pecos; and on a rainy August 18th, at three in the afternoon, General Kearny and his staff observed their first view of Santa Fe.<sup>78</sup> Exhausted and half-starved, the American army entered Santa Fe later the same day--the first element of the United States Army to enter a conquered foreign capital.

Kearny immediately set out to organize and establish a civil law for the inhabitants of Santa Fe and the "Territory of New Mexico." To accomplish this task he called upon Colonel Doniphan, a civilian lawyer in peacetime. Doniphan, along with Francis P. Blair, Jr., Captain David Waldo, John T. Hughes, and Willard P. Hall, all volunteers, wrote and translated into Spanish the Kearny Code.<sup>79</sup> The relative efficiency of the code has survived to the present day: what he specified in the code showed great tact and understanding for the New Mexican people. Specifically, the code provided for a separation of church and state, expanded civil rights, levied reasonable taxes as opposed to previous taxes that were exorbitant. Moreover, it provided

for tax collectors, a standing paid militia, and a system of secular public schools. This type of political constitution was completely new to a primitive culture of peasants. In a matter of weeks, Kearny brought to the citizens of New Mexico more political freedom than centuries of Spanish rule had done. Theodore Grivas argues that Kearny "...either misinterpreted his orders or deliberately exceeded them"<sup>80</sup> by declaring New Mexico a territory of the United States, preceding the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo by approximately two years. This argument appears invalid considering the purpose of the expedition and the implied intentions of President Polk in the instructions Kearny received from the War Department.

The soldiers of the army, after months of toil and suffering, maintained their military bearing among the citizens of Santa Fe with only a few exceptions,<sup>81</sup> an incredible achievement for soldiers who had not been paid, and would not be paid for months, and who obtained their money from selling their clothes. Doniphan established strict measures of accountability for his soldiers, and likewise General Kearny held the reins on the dragoons. With the exception of measles the troops had brought with them to Santa Fe, Kearny had control of the situation in New Mexico. In a letter to General John Wool at Chihuahua on August 22, Kearny recounted his bloodless victory of Santa Fe and informed Wool, among other things, that he intended to depart for Upper California in the "...course of a few

weeks."<sup>82</sup> While consolidating his gains in New Mexico, Kearny prepared for the continuation of his journey. He desperately desired to be in Upper California before the end of the year. If he intended to meet this goal and please the President, Kearny felt he must depart New Mexico no later than the end of September.

After travelling almost nine hundred miles, averaging twenty miles a day, suffering from the follies of inexperienced volunteers, heat, burning winds, blowing dust, shortage of grass, food, and water, and the agony of the unknown, Kearny had a thousand miles yet to go.

## Chapter 3

### THE TRIUMPH OF DETERMINATION

General Kearny divided his army at Santa Fe.

Leaving the volunteers to safeguard the territory of New Mexico against Indian depredation and civil disorders, he proceeded to California with three hundred dragoons under Major Sumner and a small party of topographical engineers. Upon their arrival in Santa Fe, Colonel Sterling Price's regiment would reinforce the army remaining there. Travelling behind his force was the Mormon Battalion, who would follow Kearny to California.

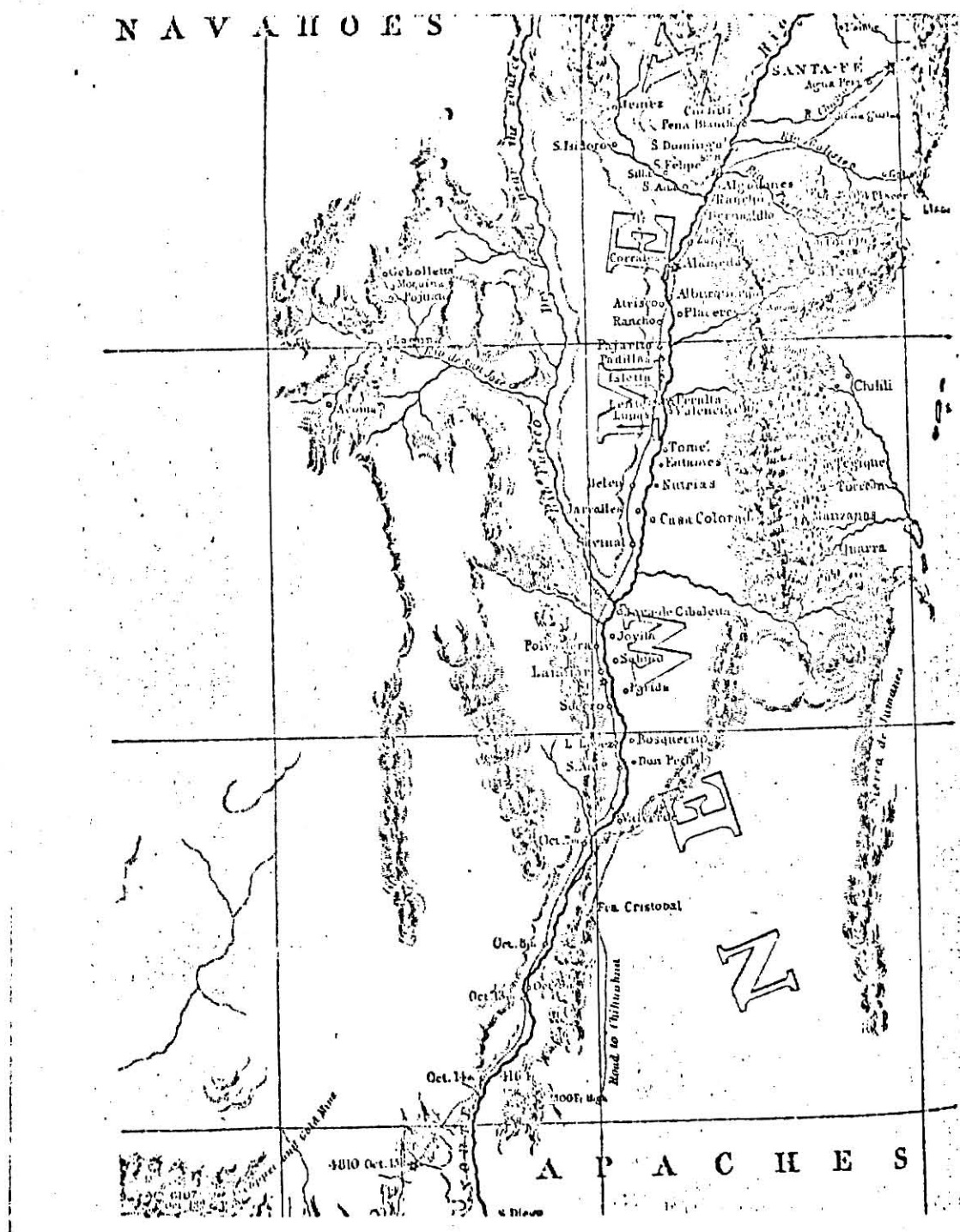
Departing on September 25, Kearny directed his column south along the eastern side of the Rio Grande. The second leg of Kearny's expedition to California proved physically more demanding than the first. The Santa Fe trail, adequately marked, consisted primarily of rolling plains, whereas the route to California lacked any markings and contained rugged mountainous terrain. Moreover, no maps existed to aid navigation, forcing Kearny to travel existing, though ill-defined Indian trails, or else to maintain a magnetic heading suffering the consequences of unknown terrain. Few accounts of the expedition's march from New Mexico to California survive. Of the extant ones, Henry Turner's journal provides the most complete story, with an interesting human

touch. The journal contains passages Turner wrote to his wife, reflecting the loneliness and the boredom of campaign duty, which prompted him to complain and become indignant about his misfortune.

Unable to obtain accurate information on a route or an adequate description of the terrain, Kearny departed Santa Fe with wagons, each drawn by eight mules. He reviewed sketchy information on two routes. The northern route, referred to as the "trader's trail," although shorter, covered great stretches of desert without grass or water. The longer southern route, following the Gila River, provided a good water supply. In consequence of the critical water shortage on his recently completed journey to Santa Fe, and taking into consideration the advanced season of the year, Kearny elected to take the southern route.<sup>83</sup> According to Dr. Griffin, assistant surgeon for the Army of the West, the men all possessed high spirits in anticipation of their trip.<sup>84</sup> Apparently recuperated from their previous journey, the dragoons displayed an eagerness for adventure to compensate for their current idleness.

Barely two days out of Santa Fe, the mules appeared exhausted. The sandy conditions along the Rio Grande, which the force had been paralleling since crossing one of its tributaries, required the animals to exert more energy to pull the wagons. As a consequence, the officers frequently paid visits to the Mexican and Indian villages along the way to trade for replacement animals. In these efforts the





Source: John S. Griffin, "A Doctor Comes to California, The Diary of John S. Griffin, Assistant Surgeon with Kearny's Dragoons, 1846-47," ed. George Walcott Ames, Jr., California Historical Society Quarterly, XXI, No. 3, (1942).

officers usually encountered individuals whose trading ability far exceeded theirs. The army, a force of slightly more than three hundred men, found that they had to give considerably more for each animal than they felt reasonable. Griffin objected to the Mexicans' lack of conscience in mule trading. Moreover, he criticised the manner in which Kearny dealt with the "conquered people." Travelling down the river valley, the starving horses and mules often ate corn from the nearby fields. Kearny held a regular board every morning to assess damages, and Griffin alleges that Kearny charged to the individuals responsible for the mules twice what had actually been sustained.<sup>85</sup>

On September 29, the army crossed to the western side of the Rio Grande just south of Albuquerque and continued to parallel the river. Warm weather and dust created by the movement of the column continued to annoy the soldiers. In contrast to the plains where "buffalo chips" could replace wood as fuel for cooking, the environment along the Rio Grande possessed neither wood nor "buffalo chips." This forced individual groups of soldiers to pool what little wood they had for cooking meals. Cooke and Griffin both indicated that they had paid as high as twenty-five cents for a mere stick of wood obtained from the Indians and Mexicans.<sup>86</sup>

An express from Santa Fe reached Kearny on October 3, telling him that Colonel Price and the 2nd Regiment of Missouri Mounted Volunteers had arrived at Santa Fe. The soldiers expressed great disappointment when they learned

from the messenger that Price did not bring any mail from the "states." Kearny learned also that Captain James Allen had died of an illness, and that the Mormon battalion was continuing southwest to Santa Fe under the guidance of Lieutenant Andrew J. Smith. Kearny realized immediately the need for a more mature and experienced officer to command the Mormons. He dispatched Captain Cooke to take charge of this organization with instructions to bring them to California. The army continued to move south, however, and the difficulty moving the wagons became worse. Sandy hills would take hours to cross, especially with unbroken Mexican teams. Often the wagons would sink so deep in the sand that to extricate them required the assistance of half a dozen men.

Moving slowly down the Rio Grande Del Norte valley on October 6, approximately three miles south of Socorro, the advance guard of the dragoons could see a cloud of dust from which there soon emerged a group of horsemen, rapidly approaching and yelling wildly. The dragoons deployed, but seriously doubted the possibility of any hostile action, as they recognized this mode of greeting as common among frontiersmen. Fortune had played into the hands of Kearny and his men. Kit Carson and a small group of men, on an express run for Commodore Robert F. Stockton in California to President Polk in Washington, by a stroke of luck had bumped into Kearny. Carson told the General that Commodore Stockton and Lieutenant Colonel John C. Fremont had possession of California, and that Stockton had sent him to

inform Washington. At this point of the expedition, the burden of the baggage wagons can best be shown. Kearny's column, eleven days out of Santa Fe, had covered one hundred fifty miles, averaging about thirteen and a half miles a day. On the other hand, Carson, twenty-six days out of Los Angeles, had traversed eight hundred sixty miles, averaging just over thirty miles a day.<sup>87</sup>

The news Carson conveyed to Kearny caused Kearny to change his plans. He directed Major Sumner and three companies of dragoons to return to Santa Fe. Kearny felt that since California was already in the possession of the United States he would need only a small escort to continue with him to San Diego. The dragoons under Major Sumner would assist the volunteer forces currently at Santa Fe in maintaining peace and order in the territory of New Mexico. With only C and K Companies Kearny continued his journey. He also requested the services of Carson to assist him in reaching California. Kearny promised Carson that Thomas Fitzpatrick, his present guide, would take Carson's mission to Washington. Initially reluctant, Carson finally agreed once again to cross the treacherous terrain and guide the dragoons to California, an exceptional gesture by a man who had been absent from his home for months and lacked only several days to be reunited with his family.<sup>88</sup> The entire command greeted the addition of Carson as guide with enthusiasm. Carson had traversed the route between Santa Fe and San Diego several times since 1829, and warned Kearny that

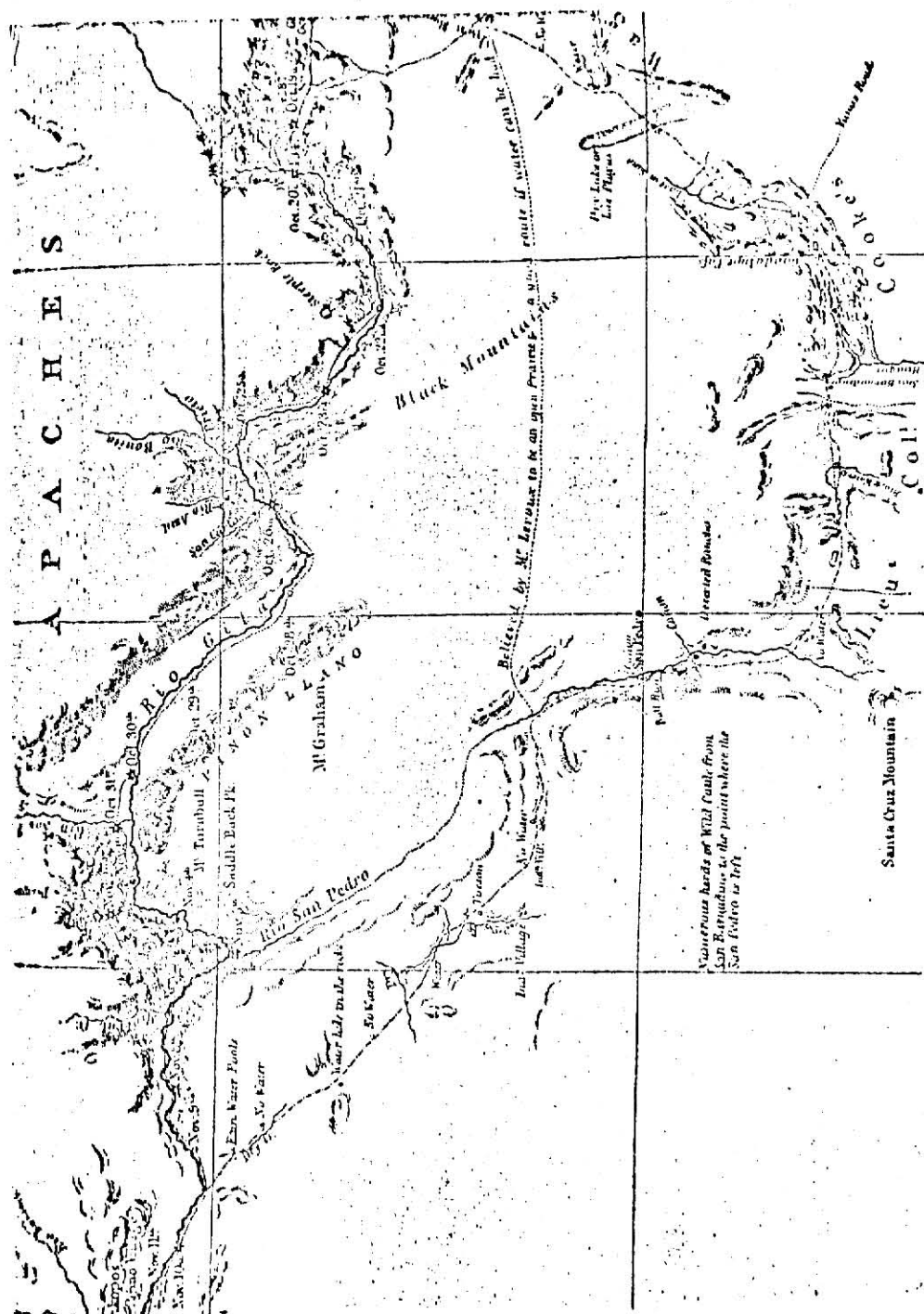
the existing trail remained ill-defined and difficult. Moreover, hostile Indians dominated the country. In reorganizing his dragoons, Kearny directed that each company continuing to California retain three wagons, and that the remainder of the regiment furnish the best outfits to C and K companies. Abraham Johnston noted that this decision "...went hard with some of the company commanders to part with their fine teams...."<sup>89</sup>

Blowing dust and trails that were impassable for wagons continued to annoy and delay the progress of the dragoons. At one location on October 8, the guides spent two hours trying to locate a route around a hill. Carson complained to Kearny that if he insisted on keeping the wagons the column would not reach California for four months. Moreover, Carson doubted that the wagons could be moved over portions of the Gila Trail.<sup>90</sup> Convinced of the fruitlessness of trying to reach California with wagons over this particular trail, Kearny halted and sent word to Major Sumner to return the pack saddles. Several members of the command expressed concern about pack animals. They feared that the animals, weak as they were, could not endure the hardships of packing to California. Others expressed concern about their own inexperience in handling pack mules. While the column awaited the return of the pack saddles, Turner's thoughts drifted toward Missouri and his family. "This life is short and uncertain at its best, then why leave dear friends and a comfortable home, above all, why abandon a

fond wife and sweet children to roam through a wilderness?"<sup>91</sup>  
As time passed, Turner reached the decision that if he survived this expedition and returned safely to civilization, he would resign from the army.

For three days the army remained idle waiting for the arrival of the pack saddles. Finally on the morning of October 13, Lieutenant Rufus Ingalls returned with the saddles and, to everyone's surprise, a large supply of mail, the first mail received in several weeks. That night, as the men camped near the present town of Truth or Consequences, New Mexico, warming fires of burning tar kept the cool air away. Frost formed now in the early morning hours. Everyone in the command except Lieutenant Emory expressed relief in finally being rid of the wagons. Emory did not want to see his scientific instruments placed on pack mules. He felt that placing the instruments in the mules' packs would invite disaster. Fortunately, these instruments were not destroyed; but after transferring the viameter, an instrument used for measuring distances, from his wagon to a wheel of one of the howitzers, it was brushed off and lost in thick bushes.

On October 18, Turner received a severe rebuke from General Kearny for riding several miles from the column and examining an old copper mine near Santa Rita, New Mexico. Quite upset over the incident because he could find no fault with what he had done, Turner officially applied for removal from Kearny's staff.<sup>92</sup> Evidence indicates that Kearny ignored Turner's request. Turner fumed about the incident



Source: John S. Griffin, "A Doctor Comes to California, The Diary of John S. Griffin, Assistant Surgeon with Kearny's Dragoons, 1846-47," ed. George Walcott Ames, Jr., California Historical Society Quarterly, XXI, No. 3, (1942).



for weeks, and several times he recorded in his journal that General Kearny had not given him a reply. Undoubtedly preoccupied with more important matters, Kearny failed to give the matter a second thought.

Continuing their westward course away from the Rio Grande, the small collection of soldiers intercepted the headwaters of the Rio Gila on October 20. Having crossed the Mimbres Mountains and the continental divide<sup>93</sup> the men would now follow the Rio Gila for approximately four hundred and fifty miles. The route along the Gila and subsequent stretch of desert drained the remaining energy from these soldiers. The deep gullies, precipitous cliffs, rocky paths, and rebelling animals pushed everyone to the maximum limit of their physical endurance. They were fortunate in having few sick soldiers to complicate matters. Dr. Griffin records few instances of illness, alleviating the burden of caring for and transporting patients. Carson, in a casual conversation with Dr. Griffin about their current plight, remarked that though this route was difficult, it was a turnpike compared to the other route.<sup>94</sup> Dr. Griffin recorded no reply!

Lieutenant John Davidson, in charge of the two howitzers, the only remaining wheeled vehicles in the command, had an especially difficult time keeping pace with the other dragoons. Not infrequently, he was hours late in arriving at daily camp because of the difficulties in traversing the treacherous mountain trails. The complete exhaustion of his



mules often prevented him from reaching camp at all. Davidson, stranded, would have to dispatch a messenger to the main body to obtain replacement mules. Near the end of October, all animals were suffering. The pack mules with sore backs, horses and beef cattle with feet so sore they could hardly walk presented a bleak picture of a conquering army. Many mules fell by the wayside and others simply refused to move. On October 27, Dr. Griffin wrote a vivid description of the problems they were having with the mules. He noted:

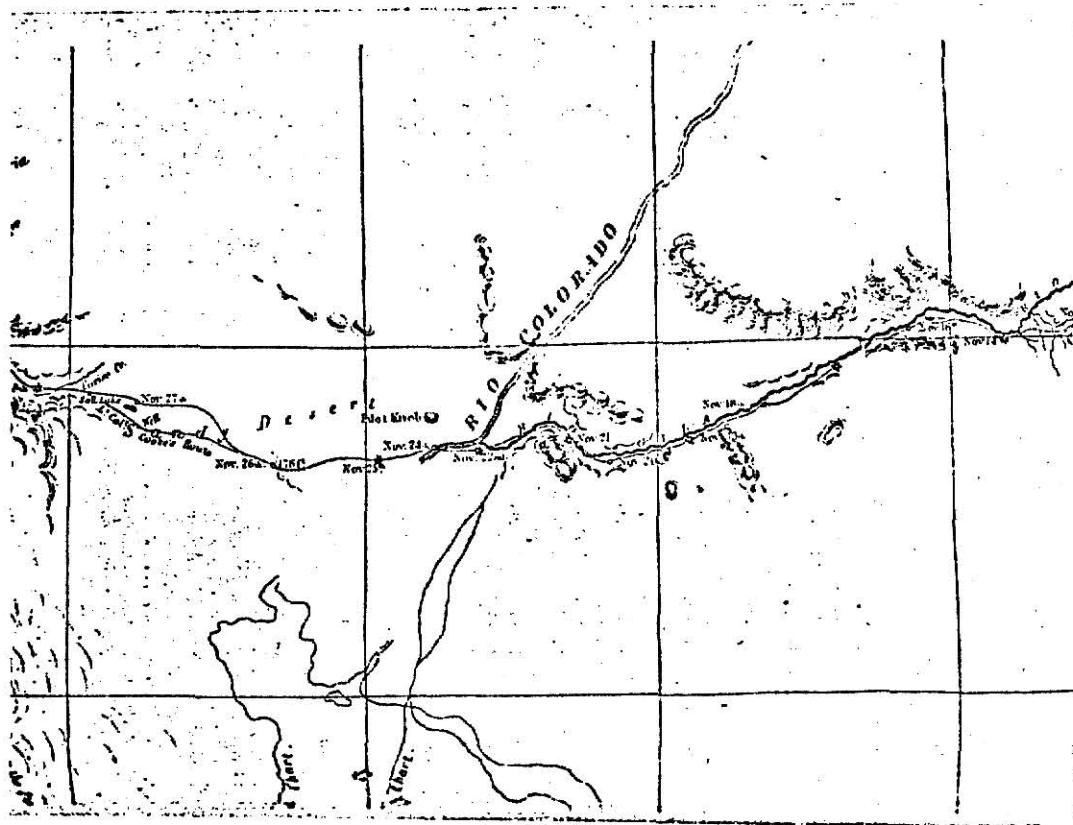
Some ten or twelve [mules] utterly gave up-- the men were coming in last night till one oclock, and five or six had to lay out in the mountains, one poor fellow lost the way and following a ravine our campfires being in sight, tumbled over a bluff thirty feet high--but fortunately did not get hurt much. There is a mule now on the mountain opposite to us that can be driven neither up or down. The Howitzers did not get in.<sup>95</sup>

The army travelled seventeen miles on November 1, nine of which were uphill. Carson informed his party that the mountains they were now approaching were not completely familiar to him. He felt that once they entered these mountains it might be as much as three days before they located water. Each man reconciled himself to the fact that he would have approximately one quart of water for these three days. The animals were to receive no water at all. Luck again accompanied Kearny's command when at the end of the first day in the mountains they found water in a small ravine.

Carson and Kearny's interpreter Anthony Robidoux, left camp to meet with the Indians. After explaining the

mission's purpose to the Indians, the Indians agreed to provide guides to show the location of water. They also agreed to trade for mules they owned. Moreover, the Indians indicated that they would provide guides for the Mormon Battalion when they arrived. In this respect, the Mormons received valuable assistance from the Indians. The Indians willingly exchanged a mule for blankets, domestic, rings and glasses. Throughout the next several days, Kearny's force encountered scattered Indian villages and the soldiers continued to trade for food and replacement mules. Dr. Griffin made an interesting observation while in these villages. He observed that the Indians all appeared in good health in contrast to the Plains Indians who appeared, according to Griffin, to have numerous cases of deformity and mental diseases.<sup>96</sup>

As the command approached the Rio Colorado, grass became more difficult to locate. Mules, starved to the bone, somehow managed to continue, their numbers depleting as they proceeded. Toward the last of November the weather became colder, with temperatures dropping below freezing at night. This further complicated the situation with the mules. Many soldiers were concerned about the animals and doubted that they could survive much longer. They argued that the portion of the command still mounted would soon be forced to dismount and continue to California on foot. By the time the force reached the confluence of the Colorado and Gila on November 21, some dragoons had marched between four and five



Source: John S. Griffin, "A Doctor Comes to California, The Diary of John S. Griffin, Assistant Surgeon with Kearny's Dragoons, 1846-47," ed. George Walcott Ames, Jr., California Historical Society Quarterly, XXI, No. 3, (1942).

hundred miles on foot. Approaching the Rio Colorado, the army discovered a large trail of fresh horse tracks. Concerned that this might be a force sent from Sonora to intercept them, Kearny ordered a reconnaissance party to locate the source of these tracks. Finding it to be a band of Mexican horse and mule traders, the party returned at eleven o'clock on the night of November 22.

Griffin asserted that Kearny, after issuing orders to locate whatever force made the tracks, remarked: "find them Carson and we will fight them tonight."<sup>97</sup> Kearny implied that if the men discovered Mexican soldiers, he intended to attack. Kearny's judgment, as in the Apache Canyon incident, appears to have lacked a thorough understanding of the capabilities of his force. At Apache Canyon, Kearny disregarded intelligence about the size of the force he would face and deliberately marched a numerically inferior, exhausted army into a canyon with steep walls, completely ignoring Spry's information concerning an alternate route around the canyon. Kearny was fortunate in not being caught between the walls of Apache Canyon. Now, near the Rio Colorado, he appeared willing to commit his weary, half barefooted dragoons, some on starved, worn-out mules, against a force of unknown size or composition.

On the following day, Kearny received information from the Mexican traders that Mexico had regained possession of portions of California. He undoubtedly reflected on the day he reorganized his force and sent Major Sumner back to

Santa Fe with two-thirds of his dragoons and wished that they were with him now. However, in light of the message Carson carried, and knowing the difficult and sparse terrain that lay ahead, his decision seemed logical.

Crossing the Colorado River into what is today California, the little army began the most severe phase of the entire expedition. On November 25, Carson informed the men that they were about to cross a desert of ninety miles. From point to point there existed no water or grass, and it would take three days and nights to cross. Therefore, each man should collect as much river grass as possible and tie it onto the mules' pack saddles.<sup>98</sup> Turner noted in his journal for November 25, that the command travelled sixteen miles. They saw no grass, and were fortunate to find water "... by digging in a dry ravine... and obtained sufficient water for ourselves and may succeed in getting enough for our animals."<sup>99</sup> Marching about twenty-four miles the next day, the men obtained enough water for themselves and their animals by digging two wells, each fifteen feet deep, in a dry gulley.<sup>100</sup> Collecting their strength, in a desperate attempt to get out of the desert, they marched thirty-two miles on November 27. Numerous animals succumbed to fatigue and exhaustion that day, and a few more miles of marching would be required before they cleared the desert.

Ascending from the desert and into the mountains, Dr. Griffin reported that the weather was cold and that snow accumulated at higher elevations. Men, feet and legs almost

bare, and animals starved, exhausted, and cold, found their way to Warner's Ranch on December 2. This ranch represented the eastern extreme of civilized California. After resting, General Kearny wrote to Commodore Stockton,<sup>101</sup> opening communications between his small band of worn-out dragoons and the United States Navy Pacific Squadron in San Diego. Kearny requested that a party be sent to meet him and inform him of the situation in California. Departing Warner's Ranch, the general moved cautiously forward, unsure of enemy locations. On December 5, Captain Archibald Gillespie, U.S.M.C., and a contingent of thirty-eight men met Kearny forty-five miles from San Diego.<sup>102</sup> From Gillespie, Kearny learned that a group of armed Californians were located near the Indian village of San Pasqual. That night during the rain and fog, Kearny dispatched Lieutenant Thomas Hammond, Sergeant Richard Williams, and a party of ten men to reconnoiter the Indian village.<sup>103</sup> The Lieutenant's party was discovered and alarmed Andres Pico's camp of armed Californians as to the presence of an enemy force. Heretofore, Pico was unaware of any armed enemy force in the vicinity of San Pasqual. At first, then, Kearny had had available the option of by-passing Pico's forces without engaging them. Although Kearny's column had been reinforced by Gillespie's men, for all practical purposes the dragoons were ineffective combatants because of their physical condition. Out of one hundred and sixty men, only thirty-nine truly constituted a fighting force. Hubert Bancroft noted that Abraham Johnston



estimated the enemy force at eighty men.<sup>104</sup> Kearny's reasons for attacking an armed force of this size with his caravan of vagabonds remain unknown.

Alerting his men early on the morning of December 6, General Kearny directed the column down the valley toward San Pasqual. A misinterpreted signal resulted in the advance guard charging Pico's force, thus opening a tremendous gap between the advance guard and the main body. Problems multiplied, and the entire calamity lasted only briefly. The Californians, expert horsemen riding fine mounts, rode circles around the dragoons on skeletons that resembled mules. Armed with nine-foot lances, Pico's force rapidly defeated Kearny's men, who had to resort to using swords and carbines for clubs after discovering that their powder was wet and the guns would not fire.

Electing to leave the battlefield, Pico and his men moved down the valley to occupy a new position. Wounded by lances and perhaps saved by the quick action of Lieutenant Emory in staving off his attacker, Kearny reorganized and consolidated his force. The fight had cost nineteen dead and fifteen wounded. Subsequently, two men died of wounds (See Appendix C for the roster of casualties at San Pasqual).<sup>105</sup> Pico's casualties have never been accurately established, however, they are believed to have been extremely light. Unable to continue in command, Kearny appointed Captain Turner as acting commander. Dr. Griffin worked feverishly on the multiple wounds most casualties



received, and it was late on the evening of December 6 before he completed dressing all the wounds. Remaining near the battlefield that night, those that were able buried the dead and prepared the camp for night defense. Realizing their situation was precarious, Captain Turner sent Lieutenant Alex Godey and three others to San Diego for help.<sup>106</sup>

During the night, Kearny regained strength and resumed command the next day. On December 7 Kearny's decimated army attempted to escape by moving down the San Bernardo Valley toward San Diego. Upon seeing the advantage, Pico's men attacked the rear of Kearny's column compelling him to establish some semblance of a defense.

Organizing a defense only a short distance from where the Californians attacked the rear of his column, Kearny saw the seriousness of his situation. By December 9, when the message dispatched with Godey had still brought no relief, Kearny held a council of officers who elected to remain in their defensive position while Lieutenant Beale, Kit Carson, and an unidentified Indian were dispatched to make a desperate attempt to obtain relief from San Diego.<sup>107</sup> Patiently, but anxiously, the men with Kearny waited after the volunteers stole out of camp on December 9. The Indian reached San Diego first, followed by Lieutenant Beale and Kit Carson.<sup>108</sup> Commodore Stockton placed the relief force under the command of his aide-de-camp, a certain Lieutenant Gray, with orders to proceed directly to the camp of General Kearny.<sup>109</sup> The relief column arrived in the early morning

hours of December 11. Departing the same day, General Kearny and all the reinforcements arrived in San Diego at about four in the afternoon. The famous battle of San Pasqual was over, the most deadly in California history.<sup>110</sup> Kearny's arrival in San Diego marked the conclusion of his expedition from Fort Leavenworth to Upper California.

Since the receipt of his orders to lead the expedition to California, Kearny had used all the experience he had gained throughout his years of frontier service to organize an army capable of travelling such long distances. He immediately attempted to gather the minimum necessary equipment. The dispatching of supplies in advance of the army to Bent's Fort demonstrated his foresight in phasing his logistical support to insure continuous availability of supplies. Kearny's concept of "living off the land" took considerable pressure off the commissary officer in supplying meat to the army. Although this created hardships on the men, he knew the value of this concept after his 1845 venture across the Great Plains.

In personnel matters he showed a remarkable ability in selecting the correct man for the right job. Thomas Fitzpatrick, Anthony Robidoux, William Bent and other civilians all performed their jobs to Kearny's satisfaction. He also selected his own officers for a particular mission in a discretionary manner. Cooke's mission to Santa Fe best exemplified his philosophy of the "right man for the right job." Handling personnel matters the way he did

reduced friction and allowed him to concentrate on completing his mission.

Numerous years spent among different Indian nations negotiating peace settlements, clearly prepared Kearny for his job as military governor of New Mexico. As one of the first military governors for the United States, he performed with great ability. Empathy for an oppressed people allowed him to extend and expand civil rights. Kearny and his select band of administrators, brought to New Mexico in several weeks what centuries of Spanish rule had failed to do.

Even in the difficult-to-define realm of leadership, he demonstrated an understanding of the human factors involved in motivating a group of men to perform their duty. Fifty-two years old when the expedition began, his physical endurance must have astounded most of the soldiers, including the regulars by the time they reached California (See Appendix D for a roster of those individuals who completed the march). Much credit belongs to Kearny for setting the example he desired his soldiers to follow. Only with the bare essentials of military equipment, poorly fed, and working for months without being paid, Kearny held his soldiers steadfast to their mission through his discipline, understanding, and professionalism.

Kearny did have his faults, however, and one of these lay in an area most crucial to his position as a military officer. He lacked understanding of the fundamental

employment of armed forces. Although he clearly understood the theory of tactics, he did not exercise sound judgment in actual situations. Apache Canyon, the encounter with the traders at the confluence of the Colorado and Gila Rivers, and, primarily, San Pasqual, as this situation actually was an armed encounter, all revealed his shortcomings in military confrontations. At this point, one feels compelled to argue that Kearny disregarded or failed to properly consider the consequences of his reckless actions because he sought a substantial victory in combat, an event he had not accomplished in his military career.

In addition, one must be critical of the manner in which Kearny neglected to instruct his subordinates about water conservation. In numerous instances, more potable water would have been available if selected individuals had been charged with the responsibility of controlling access to water points. Moreover, additional beef could have been provided the soldiers if Kearny had sent a few commissary wagons in advance of the main body of troops. This would have alleviated the shortage of meat, especially between Fort Leavenworth and Bent's Fort. These circumstances could have been crucial to the outcome of his expedition, however, events occurred favorably to Kearny.

In his selection of a commander for this segment of the war effort, President Polk selected a man well suited for the job. Stephen Watts Kearny, soldier, frontiersman, and diplomat, merged all his abilities to comply with the

mission assigned him by Washington. In a period of time in American military history when there existed widespread political maneuvering to advance one's fame, Kearny remained a professional soldier, dedicated to complying with orders. One could argue that given the nature of the assignment, with its complicated civil-military aspects, there were few men who could have accomplished what Kearny did in 1846. Truly, for General Stephen Watts Kearny, 1846 was his year of decision.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Otis E. Young, The West of Philip St. George Cooke 1809-1895, (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1955), p. 173.

<sup>2</sup>For an interesting insight into the perpetual idea of America as an Empire, consult Richard Van Alstyne's The Rising American Empire, New York, 1960; Norman A. Graebner's Empire on the Pacific, New York, 1955, presents a vivid explanation of expansion as an economic philosophy.

<sup>3</sup>Gene M. Brack, "Mexican Opinion, American Racism, and the War of 1846," Western Historical Quarterly, I, (1970), pp. 171, 174.

<sup>4</sup>Raymond W. and Mary Lund Settle, War Drums and Wagon Wheels (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>Bernard DeVoto, The Year of Decision 1846 (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1943), p. 234.

<sup>6</sup>William A. Kelcher, "The Year of Decision," New Mexico Historical Review, XXII, (1947), p. 12; J. K. Bauer, The Mexican War 1846-1848 (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1974), p. 129, asserts, "Kearny was one of the ablest officers in the Army but a Whig who owed his appointment largely to the influence of his fellow St. Louisian, Senator Benton. It is one of the ironies of the war that Benton would become Kearny's implacable enemy as a result of the latter's collision with Benton's son-in-law, John C. Fremont."

<sup>7</sup>DeVoto, p. 234.

<sup>8</sup>Dwight L. Clarke, Stephen Watts Kearny (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 394-397; Appendix A.

<sup>9</sup>Settle, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>Letter Book of Brigadier General S. W. Kearny, letter to Brigadier General Brooke, Commander, 3rd Military Department, St. Louis, Fort Leavenworth, May 31, 1846. Missouri Historical Society. Letter Book hereafter cited as "Kearny."

<sup>11</sup>Abraham Robinson Johnston, Marcellus Ball Edwards, and Philip Gooch Ferguson, Marching With The Army of The West 1846-1848, ed. Ralph P. Bieber (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), p. 20. Hereafter cited as Johnston's Journal or Edwards' Journal, respectively; Philip St. George Cooke, The Conquest of New Mexico and California in 1846-1848 (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1964), p. 3.

<sup>12</sup>Johnston's Journal, p. 20.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>Settle, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>16</sup>Kearny, letter to Brigadier General Jones, AG, Washington, Fort Leavenworth, June 29, 1846.

<sup>17</sup>Philip St. George Cooke, William Henry Chase Whiting, and Francis Xavier Autry, Exploring Southwestern Trails, ed. Ralph P. Bieber (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1938), p. 21.

<sup>18</sup>Leo E. Oliva, Soldiers on the Santa Fe Trail (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1967), p. 61. "Although the pay was not outstanding, more recruits volunteered than were needed to fill the companies. The monthly pay for volunteers in the infantry was as follows:

Colonel	\$75	Sergeant Major	\$17
Lieutenant Colonel	60	First Sergeant	16
Major	50	Sergeant	13
Captain	40	Corporal	9
First Lieutenant	30	Musician	8
Second Lieutenant	25	Private	7

In addition, all received \$2.50 per month for clothing, and commanding officers received an extra \$10 per month for arms and clothing. The pay for mounted volunteers was the same, except they were allowed an additional forty cents per day for the use of their horses, which they had to furnish. Ray A. Billington, Far Western Frontier 1830-1860 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 178.

<sup>19</sup>Kearny, letter to Colonel N. G. Minor, ADC, to Commander in Chief, Missouri Militia, Fort Leavenworth, June 17, 1846.

<sup>20</sup>Oliva, pp. 62-63.

<sup>21</sup>An opposite view is presented by Billington, p. 178. Briefly, he argues most volunteers were so skilled "...that regular army officers could teach them nothing."



<sup>22</sup>Erna Risch, Quartermaster Support of the Army A History of the Corps (Office of the Quartermaster General: Washington, D. C., 1962), p. 278.

<sup>23</sup>Kearny, letter to Brigadier General Jones, AG, Washington, Fort Leavenworth, June 16, 1846.

<sup>24</sup>Kearny, letter from AAAG H. S. Turner to Capt. W. N. Bell, Ord. Corps, St. Louis, Fort Leavenworth, June 25, 1846.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., June 26, 1846.

<sup>26</sup>Settle, p. 18.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>28</sup>Risch, p. 278.

<sup>29</sup>Settle, p. 19; Frank S. Edwards, A Campaign in New Mexico (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1966), pp. 21-22, discusses the equipment the volunteers brought with them and what they purchased to make their journey more bearable. "Each soldier was to furnish himself with a good horse, saddle, clothing--in short, everything except arms... we all provided ourselves with tin canteens holding half a gallon:--these, covered with a piece of blanket, kept wet to cool the water...."

<sup>30</sup>Kearny, letter to Anthony Robidoux, Saint Joseph, Missouri, Fort Leavenworth, June 4, 1846; Edwards, p. 59, tells of Robidoux's previous twenty years among the plains and mountain Indian tribes.

<sup>31</sup>Kearny, letter to Secretary of War Marcy, Washington, D. C., Fort Leavenworth, June 15, 1846.

<sup>32</sup>Ethan Allen Hitchcock, Fifty Years in Camp and Field, Diary of Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U.S.A., ed. W. A. Croffert (New York: G. P. Putman's Sons, 1909), p. 225. On a previous occasion when called upon to organize a regiment of dragoons, Kearny nominated Hitchcock to be the major. He noted in his diary, "Colonel Kearney [sic] made an attempt to have me appointed Major and his efforts was [sic] warmly seconded by the distinguished Commander-in-chief, but there was an opponet [sic] much more formidable: President Jackson did not forget my protest in favor of discipline, and he refused to appoint me."

<sup>33</sup>Kearny, letter to Brigadier General Jones, AG, Washington, D. C., Fort Leavenworth, June 5, 1846; Josiah Gregg, Diary and Letters of Josiah Gregg 1840-1847, ed. Maurice Garland Fulton (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), p. 197n. Noted here is the attempt by Albert Speyer to evade the dragoons dispatched on June 5, 1846. "Albert



Speyer, a Prussian Jew, was a prominent Santa Fe trader from 1843 to 1848. On this particular trip he created considerable excitement because he happened to be carrying two wagonloads of arms and ammunition that the governor of Chihuahua had ordered in 1845. Speyer travelled rapidly in order to escape United States cavalry trying to intercept him, as well as reach New Mexico early enough to obtain a certificate from the custom house before the United States took it over."

<sup>34</sup>Edwards' Journal, p. 115.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>John Edward Weems, To Conquer A Peace (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1974), p. 155.

<sup>37</sup>Kearny, letter from H. S. Turner, AAAG, to Major O. Mackay, St. Louis Arsenal, Fort Leavenworth, June 28, 1846.

<sup>38</sup>Bauer, p. 128.

<sup>39</sup>Oliva, p. 66.

<sup>40</sup>N. C. Brooks, A Complete History of the Mexican War 1846-1848 (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1965), p. 226.

<sup>41</sup>Oliva, p. 68.

<sup>42</sup>John T. Hughes, Doniphan's Expedition (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1962), pp. 35-36.

<sup>43</sup>Jacob S. Robinson, A Journal of the Santa Fe Expedition Under Colonel Doniphan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 2. Hereafter cited as Robinson's Journal.

<sup>44</sup>Edwards' Journal, p. 117.

<sup>45</sup>George Rutledge Gibson, Journal of a Soldier Under Kearny and Doniphan 1846-1847, ed. Ralph P. Bieber (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1935), p. 129. Hereafter cited as Gibson's Journal; George A. Root, "Ferries in Kansas," Kansas Historical Quarterly, II, No. 3, (1933), pp. 276-277.

<sup>46</sup>Robinson's Journal, pp. 3-4.

<sup>47</sup>Hughes, pp. 33-34; Gibson's Journal, p. 128.

<sup>48</sup>Johnston's Journal, p. 75.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., pp. 77-78.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>51</sup>Kearny, letter to Brigadier General Jones, AG, Washington, D. C., Fort Leavenworth, June 16, 1846; letter to Governor Edwards, Jefferson City Missouri, Fort Leavenworth, June 16, 1846.

<sup>52</sup>Susan Shelby Magoffin, Down The Santa Fe Trail And Into Mexico, ed. Stella M. Drumm (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 45.

<sup>53</sup>Edwards' Journal, p. 133.

<sup>54</sup>Gibson's Journal, p. 146.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>56</sup>Henry Smith Turner, The Original Journals of Henry Smith Turner, ed. Dwight L. Clarke (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), p. 63. Hereafter cited as Turner's Journal.

<sup>57</sup>Edwards' Journal, pp. 134-135.

<sup>58</sup>U.S. House Executive Document. No. 41, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 403-404; Turner's Journal, pp. 63-64; Brooks, p. 228, indicates the doctor's lists already exceeded one hundred men.

<sup>59</sup>Edwards' Journal, p. 140; Robinson's Journal, pp. 17-18, differs slightly as to the day of the event, number of participants and the exact charges for the court-martial.

<sup>60</sup>Gibson's Journal, p. 159n.

<sup>61</sup>Turner's Journal, p. 66.

<sup>62</sup>Kearny, Proclamation of Colonel Kearny to the citizens of New Mexico, Bent's Fort, July 31, 1846.

<sup>63</sup>Kearny, letter to Don Armijo, Commanding General, Santa Fe, Bent's Fort, August 1, 1846.

<sup>64</sup>Kearny, letter to Brigadier General Jones, AG, Washington, D. C., Bent's Fort, August 1, 1846.

<sup>65</sup>DeVoto, p. 271.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 255.

<sup>67</sup>Turner's Journal, p. 67.

<sup>68</sup>Oliva, p. 73.

<sup>69</sup>U.S. House Executive Document. No. 41, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 18.

<sup>70</sup>Turner's Journal, p. 184.

<sup>71</sup>Edwards' Journal, p. 147.

<sup>72</sup>DeVoto, p. 273.

<sup>73</sup>Ralph Emerson Twitchell, The History of the Military Occupation of the Territory of New Mexico From 1846 to 1851 (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, Inc., 1963), p. 48.

<sup>74</sup>Turner's Journal, pp. 71-72.

<sup>75</sup>Brooks, pp. 234-235.

<sup>76</sup>Hughes, pp. 77-78, asserted "...one thing is certain, that an army of near seven thousand Mexicans, with six pieces of cannon, and vastly the advantage of ground, permitted Gen. Kearney [sic] with less than two thousand Americans to pass through the narrow defile and march right on to the capital of the State." Bauer, p. 128, reminds one not to neglect the contribution of Magoffin in Santa Fe as possibly being the reason Armijo failed to defend the pass.

<sup>77</sup>Robinson's Journal, p. 25; Edwards, p. 45, felt "...five hundred resolute men could have defended the pass against twice our force."

<sup>78</sup>Clarke, Stephen Watts Kearny, p. 142.

<sup>79</sup>DeVoto, p. 335; Arie Poldervaart, "The New Mexico Statutes: Observations in Connection With Their Most Recent Compilation," New Mexico Historical Review, XVIII, No. 1, (1943), p. 52, discusses the longevity of the Kearny Code.

<sup>80</sup>Theodore Grivas, Military Governments in California 1846-1850 (Glendale, Calif.: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1963), p. 36.

<sup>81</sup>Hughes, p. 85.

<sup>82</sup>Kearny, letter to Brigadier General J. E. Wool, Chihuahua, Santa Fe, August 22, 1846.

<sup>83</sup>U.S. House Executive Documents. No. 1, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 226.

<sup>84</sup>John S. Griffin, "A Doctor Comes to California, The Diary of John S. Griffin, Assistant Surgeon with Kearny's Dragoons, 1846-47," ed. George Walcott Ames, Jr., California Historical Society Quarterly, XXI, No. 3, (1942), p. 196. Hereafter cited as Griffin's Journal.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Cooke, The Conquest of New Mexico and California in 1846-48, p. 76; Griffin's Journal, p. 198.

<sup>87</sup>Edwin L. Sabin, Kit Carson Days (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Co., 1914), p. 272.

<sup>88</sup>George Ruhlen, "Kearny's Route From The Rio Grande To The Gila River," New Mexico Historical Review, XXXII, No. 3, (1957), p. 216; Billington, p. 182, would have one to believe that Carson, leading Kearny west from the Rio Grande, did not encounter any hardships or difficulties. This can only be viewed as a complete fabrication.

<sup>89</sup>U.S. House Executive Document. No. 41, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 572.

<sup>90</sup>Ruhlen, "Kearny's Route From The Rio Grande To The Gila River," p. 217.

<sup>91</sup>Turner's Journal, p. 81.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

<sup>93</sup>Ruhlen, "Kearny's Route From The Rio Grande To The Gila River," p. 230.

<sup>94</sup>Griffin's Journal, p. 204.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 205.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., pp. 212-213.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid., p. 215.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 217; Brooks, p. 250; Bauer, p. 138.

<sup>99</sup>Turner's Journal, p. 118.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 119; Griffin's Journal, p. 217.

<sup>101</sup>Kearny, letter to Commodore R. F. Stockton, Pacific Squadron, San Diego, Warner's Ranch, December 2, 1846.

<sup>102</sup>U.S. House Executive Document. No. 1, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1049; Brooks, p. 251.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid., p. 107; Hubert Howe Bancroft, The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft, Vol. XXII, History of California 1846-1848, Vol. V (San Francisco: The History Co., 1886), p. 341n.

<sup>104</sup>Bancroft, p. 343.

<sup>105</sup>Dwight Clarke and George Ruhlen, "The Final Roster of the Army of The West, 1846-1847," California Historical Society Quarterly, XLIII, (1964), p. 42; Owen C. Coy, The Battle of San Pasqual (Sacramento: California State Printing Office, 1921), p. 8.

<sup>106</sup>Coy, p. 8.

<sup>107</sup>George Walcott Ames, Jr., "Gillespie And The Conquest of California," California Historical Society Quarterly, XVII, No. 4, (1938), p. 344.

<sup>108</sup>Sabin, p. 292.

<sup>109</sup>U.S. House Executive Document, No. 1, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1049.

<sup>110</sup>Bancroft, pp. 346, 352.

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Appendix A

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE WAR DEPARTMENT

TO COLONEL S. W. KEARNY:

(Confidential)

War Department,

Washington, June 3, 1846.

Sir: I herewith send you a copy of my letter to the governor of Missouri for an additional force of one thousand mounted men.

The object of thus adding to the force under your command is not, as you will perceive, fully set forth in that letter, for the reason that it is deemed prudent that it should not, at this time, become a matter of public notoriety; but to you it is proper and necessary that it should be stated.

It has been decided by the President to be of the greatest importance, in the pending War with Mexico, to take the earliest possession of Upper California. An expedition with that view is hereby ordered, and you are designated to command it. To enable you to be in sufficient force to conduct it successfully, this additional force of a thousand mounted men has been provided, to follow you in the direction of Santa Fe, to be under your orders, or the officer you may leave in command at Santa Fe.

It cannot be determined how far this additional force will be behind that designed for the Santa Fe expedition, but it will not probably be more than a few weeks. When you arrive at Santa Fe with the force already called, and shall have taken possession of it, you may find yourself in a condition to garrison it with a small part of your command, (as the additional force will soon be at that place,) and with the remainder press forward to California. In that case you will make such arrangements, as to being followed by the reinforcements before mentioned as in your judgment may be deemed safe and prudent. I need not say to you that in case you conquer Santa Fe, (and with it will be included the department or State of New Mexico,) it will be important to provide for retaining safe possession of it. Should you deem it prudent to have still more troops for the accomplishment of the object herein designated, you will lose no time in communicating your opinion on that point, and all others connected with the enterprise, to this department. Indeed,

you are hereby authorized to make a direct requisition for it upon the governor of Missouri.

It is known that a large body of Mormon emigrants are enroute to California for the purpose of settling in that country. You are desired to use all proper means to have a good understanding with them, to the end that the United States may have their cooperation in taking possession of, and holding that country. It has been suggested here, that many of these Mormons would willingly enter into the service of the United States, and aid us in our expedition against California. You are hereby authorized to muster into service such as can be induced to volunteer; not, however, to a number exceeding one-third of your entire force. Should they enter the service, they will be paid as other volunteers, and you can allow them to designate, so far as it can be properly done, the persons to act as officers thereof. It is understood that a considerable number of American citizens are now settled on the Sacramento river, near Suter's establishment, called Nueva Helvetica, who are well disposed towards the United States. Should you, on your arrival in the country, find this to be the true state of things there, you are authorized to organize and receive into the service of the United States, such portion of these citizens as you may think useful to aid you to hold the possession of the country. You will in that case allow them, so far as you shall judge proper, to select their own officers. A large discretionary power is invested in you in regard to these matters, as well as to all others in relation to the expeditions confided to your command.

The choice of routes by which you will enter California will be left to your better knowledge and ample means of getting accurate information. We are assured that a southern route (called the caravan route, by which the wild horses are brought from that country into New Mexico) is practicable; and it is suggested as not improbable, that it can be passed over in the winter months, or, at least, late in autumn. It is hoped that this information may prove to be correct.

In regard to the routes, the practicability of procuring needful supplies for men and animals, and transporting baggage, is a point to be well considered. Should the President be disappointed in his cherished hope that you will be able to reach the interior of Upper California before winter, you are then desired to make the best arrangement you can for sustaining your forces during the winter and for an early movement in the spring. Though it is very desirable that the expedition should reach California this season, (and the President does not doubt you will make every possible effort to accomplish this object,) yet if, in your judgment, it cannot be undertaken with a reasonable prospect of success, you will defer it, as above suggested, until spring. You are left unembarrassed by any specific directions in this matter.

It is expected that the naval forces of the United States

which are now, or will soon be in the Pacific, will be in possession of all the towns on the sea coast, and will co-operate with you in the conquest of California. Arms, ordnance, munitions of war, and provisions, to be used in that country, will be sent by sea to our squadron in the Pacific for the use of the land forces.

Should you conquer and take possession of New Mexico and Upper California, or considerable places in either, you will establish temporary civil governments therein; abolishing all arbitrary restrictions that may exist, so far as it may be done with safety. In performing this duty, it would be wise and prudent to continue in their employment all such of the existing officers as are known to be friendly to the United States, and will take the oath of allegiance to them. The duties at the custom-houses ought at once to be reduced to such a rate as may be barely sufficient to maintain the necessary officers, without yielding any revenue to the government.

You may assure the people of those provinces that it is the wish and design of the United States to provide for them a free government, with the least possible delay, similar to that which exists in our territories. They will then be called on to exercise the rights of freemen in electing their own representatives to the territorial legislature. It is foreseen that what relates to the civil government will be a difficult and unpleasant part of your duty, and much must necessarily be left to your own discretion.

In your whole conduct you will act in such a manner as best to conciliate the inhabitants, and render them friendly to the United States.

It is desirable that the usual trade between the citizens of the United States and the Mexican provinces should be continued, as far as practicable, under the changed condition of things between the two countries. In consequence of extending your expedition into California, it may be proper that you should increase your supply for goods to be distributed as presents to the Indians. The United States Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis will aid you in procuring these goods. You will be furnished with a proclamation in the Spanish language, to be issued by you, and circulated among the Mexican people, on your entering into or approaching their country.

You will use your utmost endeavors to have the pledges and promises therein contained carried out to the utmost extent.

I am directed by the President to say, that the rank of Brevet Brigadier General will be conferred on you as soon as you commence your movement towards California, and sent round to you by sea, or over the country, or to the care of the commandant of our squadron in the Pacific. In that way cannon, arms, ammunition and supplies for the land forces will be sent to you.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

W. L. Marcy,  
Secretary of War.

Colonel S. W. Kearny,  
Fort Leavenworth, Missouri

Source: Dwight L. Clarke, Stephen Watts Kearny (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), pp. 394-397.



Appendix B

LETTER FROM SECRETARY OF WAR INTRODUCING JAMES MAGOFFIN

War Department,

Washington, June 18, 1846.

Sir:--

At the request of the President I commend to your favorable consideration the bearer hereof, Colonel James W. Magoffin. Mr. M. is now and has been for some years a resident of Chihuahua and extensively engaged in trade in that and other settlements of Mexico. He is well acquainted with the people of Chihuahua, Santa Fe and intermediate country. He was introduced to the President by Col. Benton as a gentleman of intelligence and most respectable character. The President has had several interviews with him and is favorably impressed with his character, intelligence and disposition to the cause of the United States. His knowledge of the country and the people is such as induces the President to believe he may render important services to you in regard to your military movements in New Mexico. He will leave here for Santa Fe immediately and will probably overtake you before you arrive at that place. Considering his intelligence, his credit with the people and his business capacity, it is believed he will give important information and make arrangements to furnish your troops abundant supplies in New Mexico. Should you apprehend difficulties of this nature it is recommended to you to avail yourself in this respect and others of his services for which he will as a matter of course be entitled to a fair consideration.

Very respectfully,

Your obt. serv.

(Signed) W. L. Marcy,  
Secretary of War

Colonel S. W. Kearny.

Source: Susan Shelby Magoffin, Down The Santa Fe Trail And Into Mexico, ed. Stella M. Drumm (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), pp. 263-264.

## Appendix C

### SAN PASQUAL BATTLE CASUALTIES

#### Officers of the 1st United States Dragoons:

Captain Abraham Johnston  
Captain Benjamin Moore  
Lieutenant Thomas Hammond

#### 1st United States Dragoons:

##### Company C

Sergeant John Cox  
Corporal William C. West  
Private George Ashmead  
Private Joseph T. Campbell  
Private William Dalton  
Private John Dunlap  
Private Joseph B. Kennedy  
Private William B. Leckey  
Private Samuel T. Repose

##### California Volunteer

Henry Baker

##### Company K

1st Sergeant Otis L. Moore  
Sergeant William Whitress  
Corporal George Ramsdale  
Farrier David W. Johnson  
Private William H. Fiel  
Private William C. Gholston  
Private Robert S. Gregory

##### Topographical Engineer Detachment

Francois Menard

Source: Dwight L. Clarke and George Ruhlen, "The Final Roster of the Army of the West, 1846-1847," California Historical Society Quarterly, XLIII, (1964), p. 40.



## Appendix D

### ROSTER OF THE MEN WHO MARCHED FROM FORT LEAVENWORTH TO SAN DIEGO INCLUDING CASUALTIES OF SAN PASQUAL

#### General Kearny's Staff:

Major Thomas Swords, Quartermaster  
Captain Henry Smith Turner, Adjutant  
Lieutenant William Hemsley Emory, Engineer  
Lieutenant W. H. Warner, Engineer  
Norman Bestor, Assistant to Engineer  
Dr. John Strother Griffin, Assistant Surgeon  
John Mix Stanley, Artist  
Antoine\* Robidoux, Interpreter and Guide

#### Members of Companies C and K, 1st Dragoons

Company C, 1st Regiment of Dragoons  
Captain Benjamin Daviess Moore, Commanding Company

1st Sergeant	Privates	Privates
Richard J. Falls	Zarah Bobo	John Murty
	John Brown	George F. Myers
Sergeants	George S. Bryan	Ferdinand Nicholas
Richard Williams	George Coffelt	James Osbourne
John O'Brien	Edward Curran	Amasa Palmer
John Cox	Michael Curran	George Pearce
	Mark D. Childs	James Pinkerton
Corporals	Joseph T. Campbell	Henry Purcell
Paul D. Wood	Jeremiah Crabb	Isaac N. Randolph
John W. Cassin	Carolus B. Callahan	Samuel T. Repose
Edward Heinrichs	Thomas A. Douglass	James Repeto
Oliver C. Wilson	John Dunlap	David Streeter
William C. West	A. C. Donaldson	John Stokely
	William Dalton	Michael A. Tubb
Buglers	Peter Forney	William Tubb
Michael Halpin	Erasmus D. French	Christian Teinchman
James R. McKee	Thomas Grady	Paul Vanaken
	John Hemerle	John Vyer
Farrier	Joseph B. Kennedy	Jaocb Westfall
John S. Roody	Matthew Lauber	George N. Williams
	William C. Leckey	John White
Privates	Jacob Mauser	
George Ashmead	John McNeilly	(1 officer, 59
Stephen A. Bishop	James Murphy	enlisted men)

Company K, 1st Regiment of Dragoons  
2d Lieutenant Thomas C. Hammond, Commanding Company

1st Sergeant	Privates	Privates
Otis L. Moore	Samuel E. Cooper	David H. Nickerson
	John Chambers	Godfrey Newmayer
Sergeants	Andrew J. Courtner	Francis O'Rourke
Theodore Heathcote	John Cutler	Gilbert Powell
William Whitress	William B. Dunn	William Pierce
	Valentine Ernest	John Palmer
Corporals	John Fetzner	William Raynor
Joseph Clapin	William H. Fiel	Thomas Robeson
George W. Whitehorn	William C. Gholston	Charles Shaw
George Ramsdale	Michael Green	John Smith
	Robert S. Gregory	Louis Steingrandt
Farrier	Conrad Humbkey	Mathew Totten
David W. Johnson	Jeremiah Kelliher	Hilary Twist
	Minard J. Lefever	Israel C. Tindall
Privates	Hugh McElroy	F. L. Venmenmon
Hiram Andrew	Hugh McCaffrey	Jacob Wilber
Asa M. Bowen	Robert Moore	
Thomas W. Beale		(1 officer, 44
John Brestler		enlisted men)

Source: Dwight L. Clarke and George Ruhlen, "The Final Roster of the Army of the West, 1846-1847," California Historical Society Quarterly, XLIII, (1964), p. 40.

\*Spelling differs from that used throughout this text.

A MARCH WITH KEARNEY

by

JERRY D. FORESTER

B. B. A., Angelo State University, 1971

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1976

During the Mexican War in 1846, General Stephen Watts Kearny led one of the United States' longest overland military marches, from Fort Leavenworth to San Diego. Due to his previous frontier travels and experiences no better person could have been selected.

In a period of time in American military history when there existed widespread political maneuvering to advance one's fame, Kearny remained a professional soldier, dedicated to complying with orders assigned him. On receipt of his orders to organize an army to occupy New Mexico and California, Kearny demonstrated a unique ability in organizational and administrative matters. Within weeks of notification, he had collected and partially trained approximately one thousand volunteers. Augmenting his force of the elite, disciplined 1st Regiment of Dragoons, this composite force made one of the most difficult military marches in the history of the United States. Suffering from heat, insects, critical shortages of grass and potable water, occasional torrential rains, and no pay, Kearny held this force together and succeeded in crossing half the present United States.

Moreover, as one of the first military governors of the United States, Kearny displayed understanding, empathy and legislative skill in establishing the "Kearny Code" for the Territory of New Mexico at Santa Fe in August, 1846.

Portions of that code exist today, clearly demonstrating that President James K. Polk, had indeed, selected the correct man to gain peaceful possession of New Mexico.

Given the nature of the unique and complicated mission entrusted to him by the President, it is doubtful that any other officer in the army could have carried it to its successful conclusion except General Kearny, frontiersman, diplomat and soldier.