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## **New Mexico**

New Mexico is located in the American Southwest, surrounded by the states of Colorado to the north; the tip of the Oklahoma Panhandle and Texas to the east; Texas and the country of Mexico to the south; and Arizona to the west. The northwest tip of New Mexico also touches the southeast corner of Utah in an area called the Four Corners region.

### **Early History**

This Four Corners region was once the home of the Anasazi people. Around 850 CE, the Anasazi built pueblos at Chaco Canyon located in this area. Pueblos are villages of homes made from stone and adobe; adobe bricks were fashioned by the Anasazi from a mix of sand and clay. By 1100 CE, historians estimate that there were 5,000 Anasazi living in Chaco Canyon. They established well-traveled trade routes with other settlements in the region and as far away as Mexico. It's known that they even traded their goods for parrots.

Meanwhile, around 1000 CE, Apache and Navajo people were migrating south from Canada. The Navajo settled near the Anasazi and adopted many of the Anasazi ways. The Apache remained nomadic and traveled throughout the area of New Mexico; the Apache were considered to be fierce warriors by the other peoples.

The Anasazi abandoned Chaco Canyon by 1300 CE. Historians conjecture that bad weather causing crop failure, disease or invaders caused the people to move on. After moving further south and east they established new towns closer to the Rio Grande River. The Anasazi people eventually formed new nations such as the Hopi and Zuni people of the Southwest. Native Americans who are related to the Anasazi are generally called Pueblos.

The first known outsider to explore the Southwest was Estevanico, a man of African descent who had been a slave in the Caribbean. He had joined an expedition in the early 1500s to search for gold in Florida. The survivors of the group wandered the southern portion of the United States and eventually ended up in Mexico City in 1538. Estevanico told the Spanish viceroy Mendoza of the fabled Seven Cities of Gold called Cibola. In spite of Spanish expeditions in search of gold, Cibola was never found.

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In the 1590s, Juan de Onate led a group of soldiers and families northward from Mexico to form a new colony. He treated the native Pueblo people harshly and the Acoma people of the area attacked the Spanish settlers. Onate then launched a brutal retaliation. Many of the original settlers left his colony and founded Santa Fe. Nearly one hundred years later, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 successfully removed Spanish rule from the New Mexico area. However, by 1692 the area was peacefully returned to Spanish rule.

### **Towards Statehood**

During the Revolutionary War that was fought about 2,000 miles away, the American colonies achieved independence and formed a new country, the United States. In 1803 the U.S. doubled in size when lands west of the Mississippi River, including the northeast corner of present-day New Mexico, were bought from France in the Louisiana Purchase. In 1821 Mexico achieved independence from Spain and the remainder of present-day New Mexico then belonged to Mexico.

Americans began trading and settling in New Mexico; Texas became a state in 1845; and President Zachary Taylor wanted to add California to the United States. The only problem with his plan was that California and most of the southwest belonged to Mexico. The United States declared war on Mexico in May 1846 and U.S. troops invaded New Mexico. The war ended two years later and Mexico surrendered the land that the United States wanted.

In 1850, Congress established the New Mexico Territory which encompassed present-day New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Nevada and Colorado. Later, the U.S. negotiated the Gadsden Purchase with Mexico which gave New Mexico its current southern border.

During the Civil War New Mexico did not get involved with secession because it wasn't a state. However, citizens in northern New Mexico sided with the Union while the citizens of southern New Mexico had ties to Texas. Texas had joined the Confederacy. Union and Confederate troops clashed at the Battle of Valverde in 1862. This was a Union victory and Confederate troops abandoned New Mexico.

After the Civil War, the next series of conflicts was between the federal government and the Native Americans in New Mexico. The government first targeted the Apache and Navajo people and placed them on reservations. Next, the

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U.S. army fought the Kiowas and the Comanches as well as any remaining Apaches. In 1890, the conflicts with Native Americans were over. Congress finally decided that the Wild West days of New Mexico were subdued and granted New Mexico statehood in 1912.

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Circle True or False after analyzing each of the following statements.

1. True False The Four Corners region of New Mexico refers to the fact that four states meet there: New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and Colorado.
2. True False Chaco Canyon was the home of the Anasazi People who lived in stone and adobe homes and were the forerunners of the Pueblo peoples.
3. True False The Navajo and Apache people migrated from Florida and Louisiana before settling the area of present-day New Mexico.
4. True False Estevanico was the Spanish explorer who was sent by the Queen of Spain to search for the famed Seven Cities of Gold.
5. True False The land in present-day New Mexico became part of the United States due to the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.
6. True False President Zachary Taylor wanted to add California to the United States; the only problem with his plan was that California belonged to Mexico.
7. True False The Gadsden Purchase between the United States and Mexico gave New Mexico its current western border.
8. True False Since New Mexico was a territory and not a state, it was unaffected by the Civil War.
9. True False After the Civil War the U.S. government focused on resolving conflicts with Native Americans in New Mexico.
10. True False New Mexico did not become a state until the twentieth century.

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### Answers

1. True
2. True
3. False
4. False
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. True