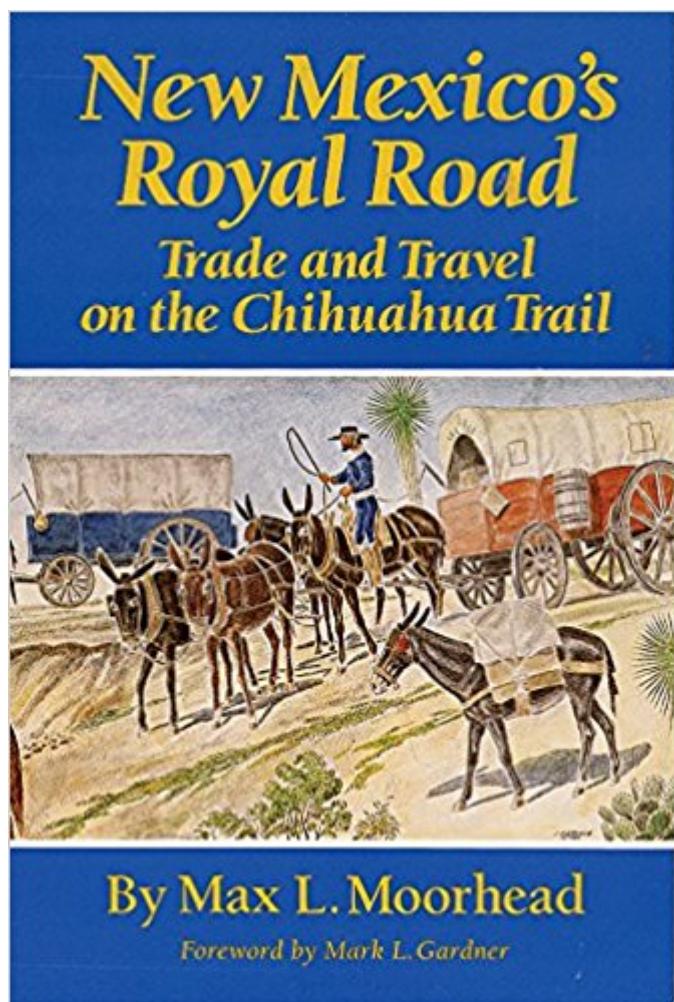


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New Mexico's Royal Road: Trade And Travel On The Chihuahua Trail



Synopsis

The arrival of Missourian William Becknell's party at Santa Fe in 1821 ushered in the era of the annual "Santa Fe trade" between the United States and the Mexican settlements to the south and opened the famous route known as the Santa Fe Trail. Of even greater significance, but largely overlooked today, is the fact that it also opened a road from the United States connecting with a major Mexican high way, for Santa Fe was the terminus of the 1,600-mile Camino Real, the "King's Highway," stretching southward to Chihuahua and the interior cities of Mexico. Over this Royal Road between Santa Fe and Chihuahua lumbered the caravans of the Santa Fe traders, who exchanged American dry goods and hardware for Mexican silver and mules. Over it, too, traveled Colonel Doniphan's Missouri Volunteers, bent on establishing the boundary of Texas at the Rio Grande. Indeed, without this main artery of travel, the history of both the United States and Mexico might have been vastly different. This book tells the exciting story of the Chihuahua Trail, of the volume and value of the frontier commerce, its peculiar trade practices, the risks of the road, and the government controls exercised by both countries. But, more than that, it tells of the traders themselves and their influence on the government and citizenry of New Mexico, an influence strong enough to destroy that province's will to resist when the Mexican War broke out in 1846, and of their role in the war and their importance in making New Mexico into an American territory. A

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"Moorhead's book is concerned with a good deal more than trade and travel on the Chihuahua Trail....An almost equal amount of attention is given to the Santa Fe Trail, and adjuncts to trade and

travel along both routes are well developed....Should be read by any student of the American southwest."

Max Moorehead was David Ross Boyd professor emeritus of history at the University of Oklahoma. He was the author of *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* and editor of *Josiah Gregg's Commerce of the Prairies*, both published by the University of Oklahoma Press.

As an amateur History Buff, this added much dimension to my learning about our early history. Amazing people in those times. And Conestoga Wagons, quite an SUV...

Well researched. Informative. Well written. A clear picture of Spanish Mexican American trade.

This book enlightens the reader to major economic forces influencing the history of New Mexico while telling the story of the development of the Camino Real through New Mexico and into the United States.

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