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# A Reexamination of the “Bloodless Conquest” of Santa Fe

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CAMERON L. SAFFELL



## Introduction

Historians of New Mexico are familiar with the so-called “bloodless conquest” of Santa Fe in the early months of the U.S.-Mexico War (1846–1848). In August 1846 the last Mexican governor, Manuel Armijo, fled ahead of the quickly advancing U.S. Army of the West led by Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny. Armijo’s decision allowed the force to enter Santa Fe completely unopposed with no shots fired. Those who know more details of the campaign are aware of how James Wiley Magoffin, supposedly the U.S. government’s secret agent who went to Santa Fe ahead of Kearny, convinced—or perhaps bribed—Armijo into abandoning the capital. In fact, some historians have argued that Magoffin was the reason why there was a “bloodless conquest.”

The details of this important historical event have become a colorful account of intrigue, deception, and treachery that could only take place in New Mexico. In its retelling, the story has become almost mythical. The modern interpretation—relatively similar for at least fifty years—has evolved through a couple of major iterations, each based on changing perspective and available materials.

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Yet important questions persist. Is the “bloodless conquest” narrative more fictional than historical? Are the facts—or our best understandings of them—consistent with this version of the story? Or are there irregularities that should be corrected? Was there a bribe? Were Magoffin and Armijo truly related by marriage? Was Armijo really a crook who took a payoff to save his own neck? Or was he a coward struck with fear at the prospect of facing a well-trained military force?

Unlike the famous quote from the fictional movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence* (1962), “When the legend becomes fact, print the legend,” this article reassesses the details of the predominant “bloodless conquest” narrative of the last several decades and offers a more factually balanced account.<sup>1</sup> First, this work reviews the evolution of the prevalent interpretation and examines why it changed. Second, peeling back the layers of secondary accounts to expose the original writings of people who were directly involved and using both American and Mexican military reports, letters, and recollections the article reexamines the timeline of events and activities of the key players. Third, it challenges the veracity of primary accounts and exposes their potential for significant bias. A thorough examination of these materials provides significant insight that reframes the story of the conquest of Santa Fe.<sup>2</sup>

### The Bloodless Conquest Narrative

The origins of the “bloodless conquest” narrative extend back to almost the war itself. During and immediately after the conflict newspapers, a few books, and congressional summaries published various letters and accounts of the U.S.-Mexico War. In 1856, however, a new and important voice added to the dialogue. From 1821 to 1851 Thomas Hart Benton served as Missouri’s first U.S. senator, where he was an ardent supporter of westward expansion, settlement, and trade. He was very interested in exploring and understanding what became the western United States and the trade that emanated from his home state to Mexico along the Santa Fe Trail. For many years he chaired the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, which became critically important during the U.S.-Mexico War and made Benton a crucial advisor to Pres. James K. Polk.<sup>3</sup>

After Benton’s defeat in the senatorial election of 1850, he began working on his memoirs, *Thirty Years’ View; Or, A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850*. Having served over three decades, his views and opinions were—and still are—highly valued observations of early nineteenth-century U.S. government affairs. When it came to the war, however, Benton specifically did not want to write a history of those events, stating that his work “does not write of military events, open to public history,

but only of things less known, and to show how they were done: and in this point of view the easy and *bloodless conquest of New Mexico* [emphasis added], against such formidable obstacles, becomes an exception, and presents a proper problem for intimate historical solution.”<sup>4</sup> With that statement, Benton christened a behind-the-scenes story of Kearny’s capture of Santa Fe. Benton’s subsequent account became the foundational narrative for historians, one rarely questioned for decades.

Benton painted a story around a genuine character: James Wiley Magoffin, a “man of mind, of will, of generous temper, patriotic, and rich” who knew every man in New Mexico and much of the rest of the country. Benton introduced Magoffin to Polk, who engaged Magoffin’s services as a U.S. emissary. Magoffin knew how to manipulate and convince officials, particularly New Mexico’s governor, Armijo, to avoid a fight and concede to the U.S. Army that was advancing on the region. Benton argued that Magoffin engaged in these activities at great personal risk and cost, as he was subsequently arrested and imprisoned in Mexico. After his release and return to Washington, Magoffin requested that he be reimbursed for his expenses and financial losses. Benton championed him and eventually convinced Washington officialdom to pay Magoffin. Benton felt that the bloodless conquest could not have been effected if not for Magoffin.<sup>5</sup>

This story was not just a colorful anecdote in Benton’s memoirs. Several years earlier he had written to historian Benson John Lossing about the campaign:

As you aspire to the character of an informed, as well as a veracious historian, I can put you upon the track to give an inside view of the “bloodless conquest” of New Mexico, so boasted by all the official and semi-official accounts. The fact was that [the] ‘bloodless conquest’ was arranged by Mr. James Magoffin . . . I expect I can get you a copy of all the papers from Magoffin[’s claims], tho [*sic*] he might not wish to have *every* thing [Benton’s emphasis] told which he did, and how he did; but I myself am privy to the whole from the beginning to the ending, and instrumental in the first employment and final payment of Magoffin.<sup>6</sup>

One cannot say for sure whether Benton coined the phrase “bloodless conquest of Santa Fe” (or of New Mexico). Historian John Stillwell Jenkins used the same phrase in one of the first accounts of the war published in 1849, the same year as Benton’s letter.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, it may have been Kearny himself who first suggested the bloodless conquest, although not in those exact words, in his “Proclamation to the Inhabitants of New Mexico.” Issued on 22 August 1846, Kearny stated “Don Manuel Armijo, the late governor of this department, has fled from it: the undersigned [Kearny] has taken possession of it without firing a gun or spilling a drop of blood.”<sup>8</sup> Whatever the origins, Benton certainly capitalized on the

phrase in publicizing his personal efforts, and those of Magoffin, in the successful military campaign.

For many years little information challenged Benton's baseline narrative. The only other direct witness, Capt. Philip St. George Cooke, who took Kearny's message and Magoffin to Armijo, did not publish his account until 1878. Magoffin's documentation regarding his expenses did not come to light until after 1900. Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his history of Arizona and New Mexico published in 1889, relied greatly on Benton's account but acknowledged in a footnote, "There may be no reason to question the general accuracy of Benton's version, or to doubt that Magoffin really obtained these promises . . . . It is probable that there is much exaggeration in the implied opinion that the U.S. relied mainly on, or that Kearny's successes were due mainly to, M[agoffin]'s negotiations at this time. M[agoffin]'s efforts were rather the supplement or conclusion to a long chain of investigations and negotiations by himself and others."<sup>9</sup>

#### Revised Interpretations Surrounding the Bloodless Conquest

When all of Magoffin's claim documents for his time and expenses became available to historians such as W. E. Connelley, Stella Drumm, and Ralph Emerson Twitchell in the 1910s and early 1920s, the narrative of bloodless conquest began to change. Magoffin still played his part as the central character and key reason for success, but historians added some additional details to flesh out the story. In the revised narrative, Magoffin reached Armijo because the governor was related to Magoffin's wife, and Armijo had likely accepted a bribe from Magoffin to flee New Mexico. With accounts published by these historians between the 1910s and the 1930s, the new history of the bloodless conquest became entrenched, and this interpretation is still utilized to this day.<sup>10</sup>

Douglas Comer, in his book published in 1996 about Bent's Fort and the annexation of the Southwest, provides a rather typical and modern description: "Armijo and Magoffin were not strangers. Magoffin had married a high-born New Mexico woman and was Armijo's 'cousin by marriage.' Whether money was given to Armijo as part of the agreement reached is unclear—but certainly Armijo's dealings with the Americans had resulted in personal financial gains for him in the past."<sup>11</sup> Historians in the last twenty years have so frequently (about a dozen times in books alone, not counting numerous articles) repeated the suggestion that Armijo was Maria Gertrudis Valdés Magoffin's cousin that it is commonly taken as fact.<sup>12</sup>

Yet questions remain: Were Magoffin and Armijo actually related and was this really the basis for their relationship? An analysis that compares the genealogies of Manuel Armijo and Maria Gertrudis Valdés Magoffin answers these

questions. Armijo biographer Janet Lecompte drafted a narrative genealogy of his family in the 1970s by utilizing Fray Angélico Chávez's *The Origins of New Mexico Families*. Lecompte had the primary goal of debunking the myth that Armijo came from disreputable parents and did not make his wealth from stealing sheep.<sup>13</sup> Further digging in *Origins of New Mexico Families*, however, permits the construction of a nearly complete five-generation pedigree chart (fig. 1). The only ancestors not identifiable by name are a paternal great-great-grandfather, whom Chávez identifies only as an Indian father, and two maternal great-great-grandmothers. Everyone in the first four generations lived in the Albuquerque or Santa Fe areas, and many of those in the fifth generation were either families displaced by the Pueblo Revolt or individuals born in Zacatecas in the 1600s. Clearly, Armijo's family had strong ties to Nuevo México extending back to the Spanish Reconquest period.<sup>14</sup>

Unfortunately no resource such as *Origins of New Mexico Families* exists to research the genealogy of María Gertrudis Valdés Magoffin. However, Rick Hendricks, Leslie Bergloff, and I have developed a similar five-generation genealogy for Mrs. Magoffin (fig. 2). María Gertrudis de los Santos Valdés was born in 1806 in San Fernando de Bexár (San Antonio). She was indeed related to a Mexican governor, but not Manuel Armijo. Rather, her relative was Juan Martín del Carmen de Veramendi, governor of Coahuila y Tejas in the early 1830s. He was María's half-uncle (they had the same grandmother but different grandfathers). María's maternal line is very well defined, going back to two great-grandparents born in Spain (their respective parents unknown) and two sets of great-great grandparents tied to the Canary Island families who settled San Antonio in the 1730s. Her paternal line is only defined through her grandparents, who appear to have either been from or lived in the Monclova area of Coahuila in the mid-1700s. Likewise, María's mother and her parents (the Amondarains) had strong ties to Monclova or nearby Saltillo. This genealogy shows her family to be well ensconced in the Texas/Coahuila region of New Spain to at least the mid-1700s, with her known relatives traced back to Spain itself in the early 1700s.<sup>15</sup>

Although no firm records exist about the paternal Valdés line prior to 1770, the likelihood is extremely low that Manuel Armijo was related to María Gertrudis Valdés Magoffin. Essentially, there are no early Valdés ancestors who could fall into the Armijo family line because the Armijos were in either New Mexico or late seventeenth-century Zacatecas whereas the Valdés/Amondarains were in either Coahuila or early eighteenth-century Spain. Indeed, if they had a common ancestor they would have been at least third cousins, and in that hypothetical case would have unlikely known anything of each other, having grown up some eight hundred miles apart on different *caminos reales*. Armijo and Valdés were more than likely not related to each other and therefore this "relationship"

Fig. 1 Six-generation pedigree genealogy of Manuel Armijo

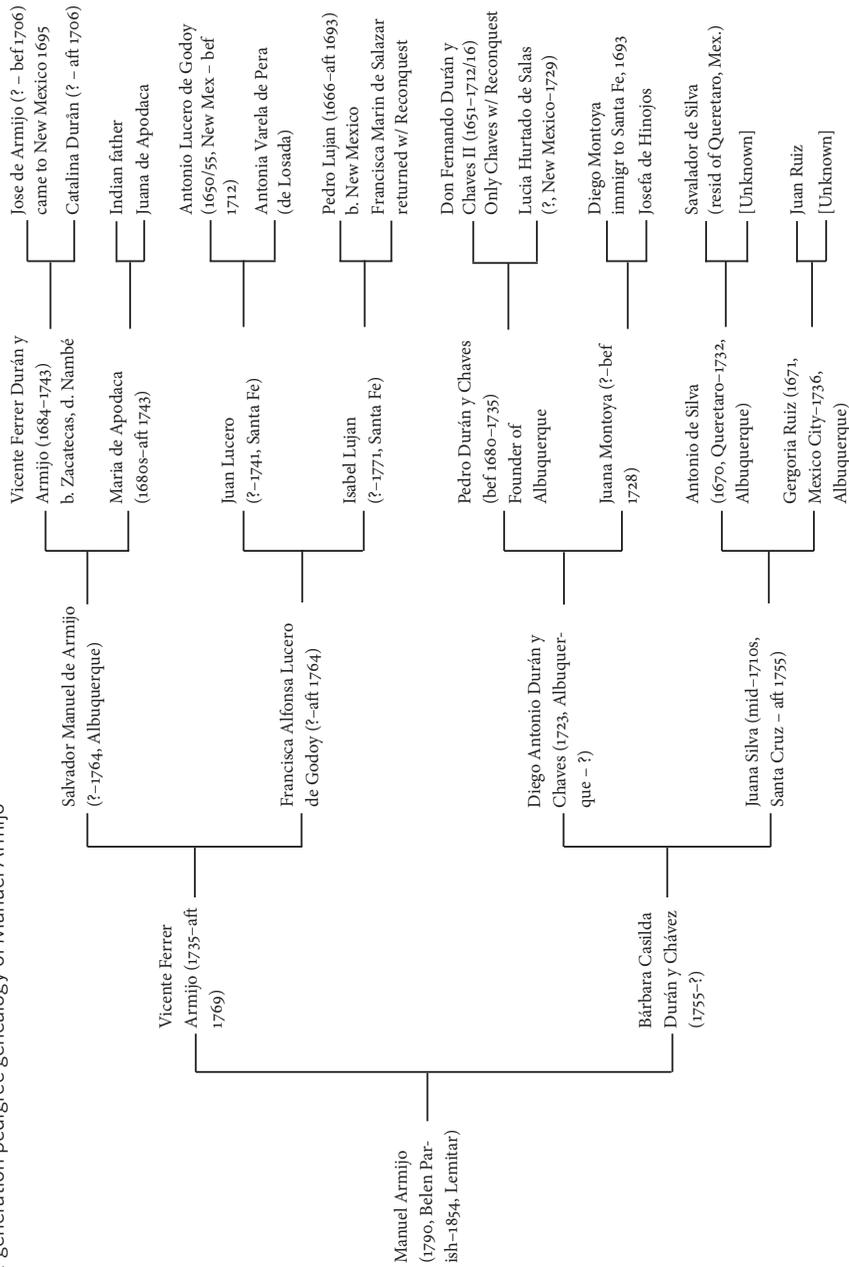
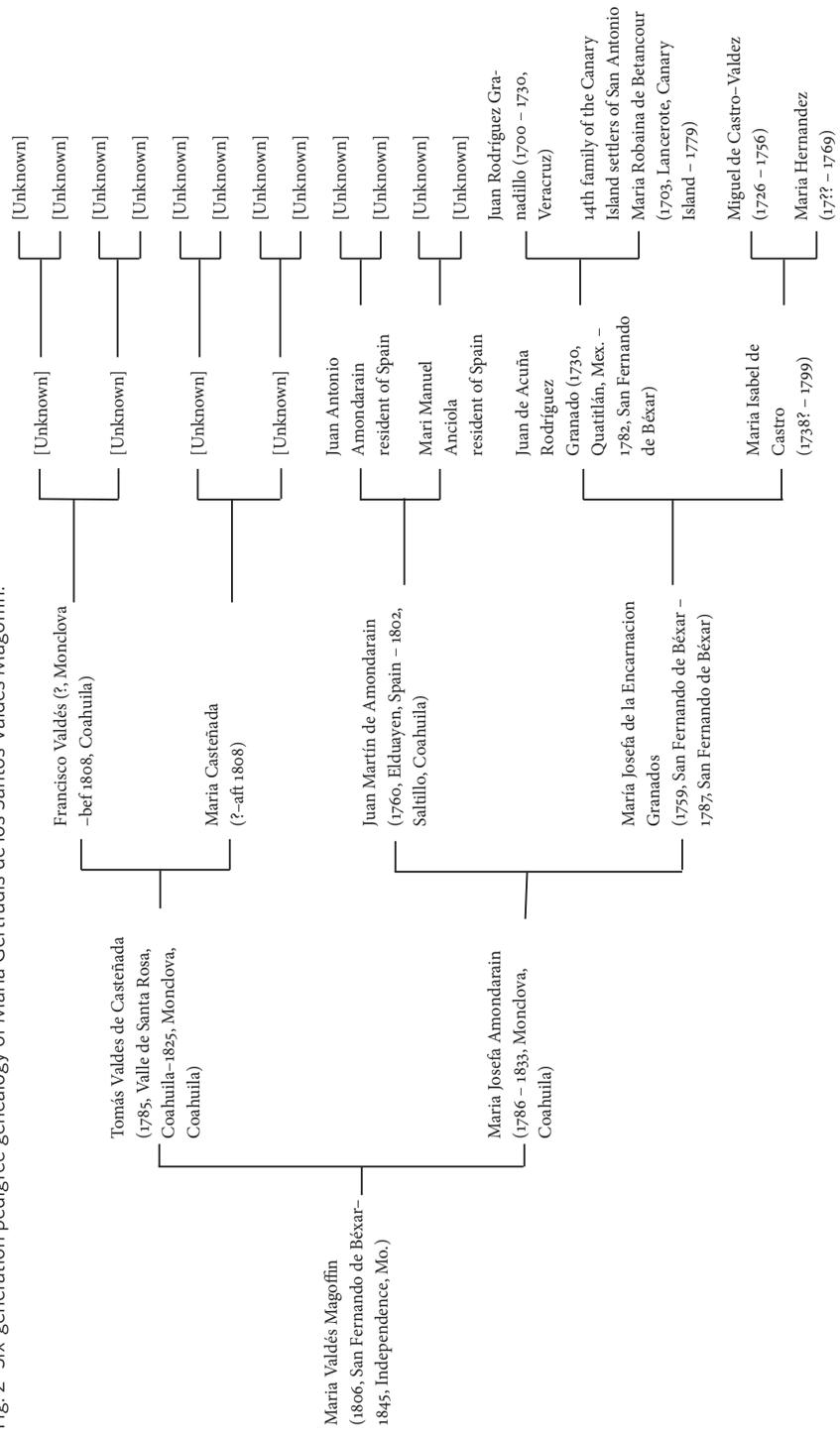


Fig. 2 Six-generation pedigree genealogy of Maria Gertrudis de los Santos Valdés Magoffin.



could not have been the basis for the familial connection between James Wiley Magoffin and Armijo suggested by some historians of the U.S.-Mexico War.

What then has made this error so pervasive? The suggestion that Armijo and Valdés were related can be traced back to a letter written by Robert B. McAfee to the secretary of war, William Marcy, while Magoffin was still imprisoned in Chihuahua. With the death a few years prior of former Kentucky governor Isaac Shelby (grandfather of the diarist Susan Magoffin) McAfee was the most-prominent politician of the greater Magoffin-Shelby-McAfee families of Mercer County, Kentucky. McAfee, who was first cousin to James Wiley Magoffin's mother, had served as a general in the War of 1812 and Andrew Jackson later appointed him as *Chargé d'affaires* to New Granada (Colombia) in the 1830s.<sup>16</sup>

McAfee's letter of June 1847 sought assistance from U.S. government officials to direct Gen. Zachary Taylor to intervene for Magoffin's safety and release. McAfee described his understanding of the situation: "He was taken prisoner near Chihuahua last fall and condemned to be shot as a Mexican traitor having lived in that place as a merchant and was returning to Chihuahua to look after his affairs from Santa Fe, having been of essential service to General Kearny in advance of him on his march to California. His sentence was suspended at the request of Governor Armijo, *his wife being his relation* [emphasis added]."<sup>17</sup> No obvious reason exists for why McAfee believed María Gertrudis Valdés to be a relative of Armijo. In fact she had died in 1845, just a couple of months after coming from Chihuahua to Missouri with James Wiley Magoffin and their family. Thus, it is all but certain that McAfee never met her, and McAfee's contact with Magoffin would have been limited to Magoffin's infrequent visits or correspondence with his family in Mercer County.<sup>18</sup> McAfee offered the statement nonetheless, perhaps to justify Armijo's intervention in Magoffin's case.

Likewise, what or even how McAfee knew about Magoffin's imprisonment remains unclear. He did not glean the information from Samuel and Susan Magoffin, who did not return from Mexico (via ship) until late 1847, and it is unclear when or how brother William Magoffin, who also was part of the same trading trip, got home to Kentucky. Although family correspondence provides a possible source for McAfee's information, McAfee could possibly have been reacting to newspaper accounts, although none have been located that mention Armijo's intervention.<sup>19</sup>

McAfee's letter was among documents published by W. E. Connelley and R. E. Twitchell in 1918 and 1923, respectively, and it became the basis for the fundamental shift in the narrative that Magoffin and Armijo had a familial connection. That said, McAfee clearly did not describe how Armijo and Valdés were related—just that they were. The question then becomes: What is the source of that particular detail?

Investigating footnotes, the source of the cousin relationship appears to be Howard R. Lamar. In 1962 he wrote a foreword to a new Yale Western Americana Paperbound reprint of Susan Shelby Magoffin's diary, *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico*, which Stella Drumm originally edited and published in 1926. The foreword provides the larger context of Kearny's Santa Fe campaign and the prominent role played by James Wiley Magoffin in which to understand Susan's perspectives in her diary. Susan herself had no direct knowledge of these events, as she and Samuel arrived in Santa Fe almost two weeks after Kearny.<sup>20</sup> Lamar offered details in two parts of the foreword, the first describing the Magoffin-Valdés marriage: "In 1830 James further entrenched himself in the economic and social life of the northern provinces by marrying Dona Maria Gertrudes Valdez de Beremende, who came from a prominent Chihuahua family. Her brother, Gabriel Valdez, was also a Mexican trader on the Santa Fe Trail, and *her cousin*, Manuel Armijo, was a rich, self-made merchant from Albuquerque who was soon to be governor of New Mexico [emphasis added]."<sup>21</sup> Lamar repeated this suggestion of the family connection a few pages later in describing the advance work by Magoffin and Cooke:

There [at Bent's Fort], after consultation, Kearny appears to have fallen in with Magoffin's plans, for on August 1 he detailed Captain Philip St. George Cook[e] to take twelve men to accompany Magoffin to Santa Fe under a flag of truce and to negotiate with the Governor, General Manuel Armijo. When the small party arrived in the enemy capital twelve days later, Magoffin acted as if he were merely a merchant riding under Cooke's protection. But long after the guards and officials had gone to bed and left the Palace of the Governors in darkness, Magoffin brought Armijo, *who was his cousin by marriage*, to Cooke's chambers for secret conferences [emphasis added].<sup>22</sup>

Texas Western College historian Rex Strickland promptly pointed out this "cousin relative" error. In his review of the book for *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, Strickland writes, "Lamar has fallen into the tired, old error concerning the identity of James Magoffin's wife." Although Strickland mainly criticizes the reference to Valdés being a Veramendi from Chihuahua (the link to her half-uncle who was governor of Coahuila y Tejas), Strickland's explanation makes Valdés's Texas roots clear and, by implication, the lack of a connection to Armijo or New Mexico.<sup>23</sup>

Accepting a family connection—an interpretation that itself only dates back to the 1920s—as the primary reason why Magoffin could have so easily reached Armijo bypasses the more reasonable and direct explanation: the two men had already known each other for years. Re-reading Lamar's statement, he identifies

this more-probable explanation: “Manuel Armijo, was a rich, *self-made merchant from Albuquerque* who was soon to be governor of New Mexico” [emphasis added]. In fact, Armijo’s brothers had wagons in the trade caravan following the U.S. Army. Armijo was himself a merchant by the late 1820s, and involved in the Santa Fe and Chihuahua Trails trade. By 1832 Magoffin had shifted his operations to the same routes.<sup>24</sup> In addition, during his three terms as governor Armijo had oversight of collecting customs duties from traders when they arrived in New Mexico. Not only did Armijo and Magoffin know each other, they also were probably friends.<sup>25</sup>

### Portrayals of Manuel Armijo

Almost all accounts depict New Mexico’s governor Manuel Armijo as a heartless despot who fled danger to protect himself and his wealth. Historians Daniel Tyler, Janet Lecompte, and most recently Paul Kraemer have demonstrated that Armijo’s reputation is largely based on two factors: the written descriptions of Armijo by George Kendall of the *New Orleans* (La.) *Picayune* newspaper after the Texas-Santa Fe Expedition in 1841; and Armijo’s abandonment of Santa Fe in the late hours of 14 August 1846, which led a *señora* (lady) who visited Susan Magoffin a few days later to call Armijo a *ladrón* (thief) and a coward. As Kraemer’s article title of 2011 denotes, Armijo’s reputation needs major rehabilitation.<sup>26</sup>

A reassessment of Armijo—and by extension the role Magoffin played in the “bloodless conquest”—first requires an examination of the contemporary Mexican records. Several months after these events, Armijo was tried in Mexico City on charges related to cowardice and desertion.<sup>27</sup> Several files in Mexico’s Archivo Histórico Militar hold depositions and information about the trial. Only in a couple of instances have historians consulted these documents, much less compared them to U.S. accounts to improve the historical understanding of the events.<sup>28</sup>

The Mexican military’s summary folder regarding Armijo and his withdrawal from Santa Fe includes accounts of what transpired from three Mexican men. Pío Sambrano, a merchant from Chihuahua who had arrived in Santa Fe at the beginning of August, offered some general information. The Santa Fe presidial captain, Ignacio Muñoz, and one of his lieutenants, Manuel García de Lara, gave further details. Their information is very consistent with the only American eyewitness account, provided by Philip St. George Cooke in his autobiographical account published in 1878.<sup>29</sup>

On 2 August, Cooke, twelve men handpicked from his unit, and merchants James Wiley Magoffin and Juan González set out from near Bent’s Fort for Santa

Fe. Kearny had made Cooke aware of Magoffin's role as dictated by Marcy, and Kearny sent with Cooke a letter to Armijo. The journey took ten days. Cooke, who suffered food poisoning from a turtle soup prepared the evening of 10 August by Magoffin's cook, was temporarily separated from the merchants and his men, so Magoffin and González entered Santa Fe the next day ahead of Cooke. Muñoz and García de Lara both stated that Magoffin went directly to Armijo's home for what became the first of several meetings over the next couple of days.<sup>30</sup>

Cooke's arrival on 12 August merited great attention from the community. The cries of alarm caused him enough concern to stop and affix a white handkerchief to his sword as a flag of truce. He was immediately directed to the Palace of the Governors, where he dismounted and was shown inside. Though Cooke does not mention it, Muñoz says that Magoffin was at the Palace to greet him and made the formal introduction of Cooke to Governor Armijo. Speaking in "very formal book-Spanish," Cooke told Armijo of his mission and offered to present the letter from Kearny, but Cooke and Muñoz both stated that Armijo stopped him and instead invited Cooke to settle into the quarters that had been prepared for him. Cooke wrote that almost immediately U.S. merchants bearing chocolate, cake, and whiskey visited him at his room.<sup>31</sup>

From there the accounts differ in detail but agree in general context. Cooke saw Armijo, Magoffin, and others on at least two more occasions during the afternoon and evening, later writing that Armijo asked many questions about Kearny and his rank and the speed with which the Army had marched, which Cooke thought was proffered to judge the strength of the force. Cooke suggests that in the evening a large dinner took place at the Palace, although Muñoz's account has the dinner taking place at the home of José González Ortega. At whichever location, a grand meal was served, although Cooke, who was still suffering from the food poisoning two evenings prior, generally abstained from the meal. Muñoz indicated that American merchant Henry Connelly and the Spanish-born U.S. consul Manuel Alvarez were among those at the dinner. Cooke offers no details of what was said, but Muñoz stated that a lengthy conversation took place, all in Spanish until someone entered who did not know the language. A short time later, according to Muñoz, many of the group left for Armijo's house.<sup>32</sup>

Cooke said that at about 10 p.m. Armijo approached him with Magoffin, but it is unclear where this took place. Armijo told Cooke he had decided to send a commissioner back with Cooke to carry Armijo's response to Kearny and that they should leave the next morning (Thursday 13 August). Armijo also promised that he would be marching the next day with a force of six thousand.<sup>33</sup>

Muñoz and García de Lara were not privy to these details, but they suggested

that Magoffin and Connelly secretly met with Armijo as many as five times. García de Lara reported that Magoffin had said the Mexican residents would be happy with the United States because their property would be respected, their homes would be worth more, and that the system of government would be much improved. García de Lara also recounted that he later spoke with Armijo, who confirmed to García de Lara that Magoffin had been commissioned a colonel and that Magoffin had made similar comments to Armijo about wealth and prosperity.<sup>34</sup>

Magoffin himself reported on one of these meetings without Cooke, a story independently confirmed by Pío Sambrano. Magoffin and Armijo met with the governor's second-in-command, Diego Archuleta. In this meeting Magoffin suggested that the United States was only interested in the eastern side of the Rio Grande and that Archuleta could remain to oversee the western part of Nuevo México as a continuing Mexican state. Sambrano said that it was Armijo who suggested that they not offer any resistance. Both Magoffin and Sambrano wrote that Archuleta was initially enthusiastic about this plan, although Sambrano said he later became indifferent and Magoffin suggested that Archuleta changed his mind in favor of resistance.<sup>35</sup>

On the morning of Thursday 13 August, Cooke recalled that he met with Armijo for a final time (either at the Palace of the Governors or at Armijo's private residence) and was treated to an array of chocolate, cake, and bread "such as only Mexicans or Spaniards can make." He was soon joined by Armijo's commissioner, who turned out to be Connelly. Muñoz offered a different take on this day's events. He indicated that Cooke, Connelly, Magoffin, and two other men left Santa Fe, but not before a large picnic hosted by several foreigners, as well as Chihuahua trader and Magoffin's friend José Cordero. Toasts were given to a prosperous future, which Muñoz and other observers found to be highly suspicious. Cooke said that his parting words, spoken from the saddle as a general statement offered in English, were "I'll call again in a week." On Saturday 15 August Cooke rejoined Kearny and the U.S. Army, but offered no observations about the general's reaction to Connelly or Armijo's letter.<sup>36</sup>

### Was a Bribe Paid?

None of the primary accounts, including those of the key players involved, mention any kind of bribery. Nevertheless, secondary historical accounts often include the suggestion that Armijo took a bribe to abandon Santa Fe—most often expressed as one that Magoffin paid. Yet there is virtually no basis for this interpretation. Some historians point to Magoffin's itemized summary of his expenses that he submitted to Sec. of War George Crawford in April 1849

as their source. However, upon closer examination Magoffin specified the bribes involved. The first was \$3,800 paid “in order to extricate from the military judge, Gen. Kearny’s written statement of my services in Santafe [*sic*], New Mexico, directed to the Secretary of War, Washington.” He then listed two items, not explicitly stated as bribes but taken that way by Crawford: \$1,100 paid to the auditor of war for Durango, Mexico, for his release from prison; and an additional \$500 paid to a Mexican friend to make the arrangements with the auditor.<sup>37</sup> Magoffin makes no mention of any payment to Armijo, either in his itemized expenses or in his initial letter to Marcy written ten days after the U.S. Army arrived in Santa Fe. Likewise, Cooke includes no reference to any gold or a bribe in his autobiographical account.<sup>38</sup>

Is there any other evidence to suggest a bribe was paid, and was Magoffin involved? The answer is yes and no. The testimony of Donaciano Vigil, who was said to have evidence proving Armijo sold New Mexico to the United States, helps answer these questions. The materials from the Archivo de Defensa Nacional on “*Formación de causa al General Manuel Armijo*” (For the Prosecution of General Manuel Armijo) contain a letter, written in June 1847, from José María Árlegui to Ángel Trías, the Chihuahua governor who faced off with Col. Alexander Doniphan in the Battle of Sacramento in February 1847. This source has Vigil stating that an El Paso laborer testified that a man named “Espayer” delivered 24,000 pesos in cash money to Armijo, followed later by “five hundred ounces of gold brought by Captain Lisa with eleven men assisting who entered before the forces.”<sup>39</sup> Vigil would likely have been in a position to know of what he spoke. He had served as Armijo’s provincial secretary in the past, and Kearny designated him the first secretary for the Territorial government under Gov. Charles Bent. Vigil became acting governor when Bent was killed in the Taos Rebellion in December 1846.<sup>40</sup> Another version of this testimony attributes the gold delivery to “Capitan Cuco.” With an average market price during that period of \$18.93 per ounce and an official U.S. government price of \$20.67 per troy ounce, the gold alone would have been valued around \$10,000; with an approximate one peso-to-the-dollar currency exchange, the total “bribe” would be the equivalent of about \$900,000 in today’s money.<sup>41</sup>

Whatever evidence Vigil refers to has never surfaced, although as Armijo’s territorial secretary he would likely have been in a position to know whether any money changed hands. “Espayer” refers to Albert Speyer, a merchant-trader who frequently partnered with Armijo. In fact in 1846 Speyer and a second group of wagons owned by Armijo left for Santa Fe well ahead of the usual summer caravan. Both groups carried arms and ammunition, Armijo’s for his use and Speyer’s for the governor of Chihuahua. Hearing of these reports, Kearny had sent an army unit to chase down the Speyer/Armijo wagons in June, but

the group quickly made it to Santa Fe without the army overtaking them. Once there, and learning of the pending advance of U.S. troops down the Santa Fe Trail, Armijo decided to sell his goods to Speyer. Thus, Speyer did indeed pay Armijo some amount of money—but apparently it was a legal business transaction.<sup>42</sup>

The conflicting references from the two copies of the testimony on who delivered the gold adds a different wrinkle to the story. Neither the *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.*, nor the index of soldiers documented in the Mexican War service records include a “Lisa,” “Leisa,” “Lesa,” “Leesa,” or any other close variants.<sup>43</sup> Name aside, the description of the captain assisted by eleven men almost exactly matches Cooke and his twelve dragoons (omitting Magoffin and Gonzales). Arguably “Captain Cuco” is a rendering of Captain Cooke.

Another source suggests a bribe was paid and corroborates the assertion attributed to Vigil. Philip St. George Cooke III, writing in the preface to a reprint in 1964 of his great-grandfather’s book, states that Cooke did not write “that he was the only officer on the frontier that the government would trust with the large sum of gold used to bribe Armijo to leave Santa Fe and New Mexico without fighting the forces of the United States Army.” Cooke III provides no source for the information, and it is the only time in the many books by or about the Cooke family that this suggestion is offered—probably it is family folklore.<sup>44</sup>

Several conclusions result from investigating these sources for proof of a bribe. First, no evidence exists that Magoffin offered or paid a bribe. No primary sources attribute anything of this nature to him. Second, the accounts by Vigil and Cooke III provide a weak and murky suggestion that the U.S. military—by way of Captain Cooke—carried bribe money. This premise seems highly unlikely, however, and Cooke himself never mentions such a transaction in any of his writing. None of the military orders from the War Department to Kearny and in turn from Kearny to Cooke reference gold or any other account of a payoff. No accounts by rank-and-file members of the Kearny forces published at the time or in years since mention a large cache of gold carried by the column, and someone likely would have noted 500 ounces of gold in his letters home or in personal diary entries. Thus, sources do not substantiate the case that Armijo was paid a bribe.

### Accounts of Armijo’s Withdrawal from Santa Fe

After Cooke departed to return to Kearny and the Army of the West, Armijo feverishly prepared to defend Santa Fe. According to both Armijo’s and local residents’ accounts, men continued to gather in the village in response to Armijo’s

appeal of 8 August 1846. By 14 August approximately eighteen hundred men had gathered in Santa Fe. Armijo also took a few minutes to write a new will—actions suggesting that he intended to lead his troops in battle in the near future.<sup>45</sup> The next day he ordered these men, assembled as auxiliary units, to march from Santa Fe and begin taking up a position in Cañon del Apache (called Cañon de Pecos in some accounts) just west of modern-day Glorieta, New Mexico. Armijo went out to join them on 16 August with his regular troops, a group of about two hundred men. He later reported to the *Ministro de Guerra y Marina* (Minister of War and the Navy) that although he had a significant number of men formed in regular and auxiliary companies, only a few of the citizens were armed and everyone lacked munitions.<sup>46</sup>

The person lost in all these accounts is the story's original hero: James Wiley Magoffin. From the time Cooke left Santa Fe on 13 August until his sister-in-law Susan Magoffin arrived on 30 August, hardly any source mentions him or describes his actions. Perhaps he continued to meet with Armijo, Archuleta, or others in attempts to dissuade the Mexicans from resisting the U.S. forces. The only time Magoffin appears in his own letter to Marcy dated 26 August. Providing only a few details, Magoffin simply writes that Armijo's second-in-command, Archuleta, had assured Magoffin that he would not oppose Kearny's arrival. Magoffin added that on the day before the withdrawal, Armijo had issued orders to fortify the road through the mountain pass with what Magoffin thought was three thousand men.<sup>47</sup>

After Armijo reached Apache Canyon on the afternoon of 16 August he convened one or more meetings of the military leaders and some individuals from Santa Fe, perhaps even including members of the legislative assembly. Up to this point, all the Mexican accounts of Armijo's actions generally correspond. What happened in those meetings, however, is a key point of dispute.

Armijo later said that he initiated the meeting of officers and influential citizens and attempted to rally the troops, appealing to their Mexican patriotism. He stated he already knew that the auxiliaries lacked the desire to fight, an opinion affirmed by their captains. Lacking provisions and munitions they did not want to pointlessly sacrifice themselves. After the meeting, Armijo reported that the auxiliary units left, leaving him behind with his regular force of two hundred men. The presidial officers decided that the best course was to withdraw south to join the forces of Col. Maurice Ugarte, thought to be moving north from Chihuahua. Overnight, according to Armijo, most of the regulars deserted.<sup>48</sup>

One independent account supports Armijo, a note attributed to Aniceto Abeytia by historian Benjamin Read. *Guerra Mexico-Americana* (1910) contains an author's footnote saying that "*en honor á la verdad*" (in all honesty) after Read had finished writing about Armijo as a traitor that Read had spoken with Abey-

tia, who told him that after a careful discussion of the officers Armijo withdrew because of the lack of men and ammunition, thus avoiding unnecessary bloodshed. Abeytia, then fifteen years old and later a lieutenant with the New Mexico Infantry in the American Civil War, told Read he was present at the meeting.<sup>49</sup>

The citizens of Santa Fe tell a different story. A group of one-hundred-and-five men submitted their account of events to the "President of Mexico," Antonio López de Santa Anna, on 26 September 1846. According to the citizens, a group of four thousand Mexican men (all mounted, armed, and carrying as much ammunition as they could acquire on their own) arrived in Santa Fe to defend New Mexico. When Armijo and the dragoons arrived in Apache Canyon on 16 August and he met with the militia officers, only one man spoke. That man stated that the militia had been gathered to fight and that it was their wish and desire to do so. "His Excellency [Armijo] then replied that he would not risk facing battle with people lacking military training, and that he would do whatever seemed fitting to him and with his [regular] troops. After that he ordered them [the militia and civilians] to return to their homes." Then, in a meeting with the regular soldiers, Armijo reportedly told the men that they would advance from their position to battle the U.S. Army. The troops responded enthusiastically, "but as soon as the citizenry retired, instead of advancing he and the dragoons and artillery retreated."<sup>50</sup>

The citizenry's version of events has some secondhand support. Don Nicolas Pino told historian Ralph E. Twitchell that at the officers' meeting Archuleta wanted to stand and fight, and several officers openly suggested that Armijo should be assassinated. Later, feeling cheated by Magoffin's promise that Mexico would retain the lands west of the Rio Grande, Archuleta later participated in Mexican efforts to overthrow Gen. Sterling Price at Santa Fe and in the killing of Gov. Charles Bent during the Taos Rebellion.<sup>51</sup>

Rafael Chacón provides another account. Then a thirteen-year-old at the military school, Armijo ordered the cadet into service to command a light artillery unit. When Chacón wrote his memoirs in 1906 he did not recall any meeting occurring. All he remembered was that "all of a sudden Armijo ordered all the men to go back to their homes, saying that he would go to the front with the regular companies and the squadron of Vera Cruz." That night, Chacón was led back to Santa Fe by his father (a judge and possibly the leader of the Santa Fe militia) and sent to stay with an aunt in Chamisal. Thus, he was unaware of what became of Armijo and the regulars.<sup>52</sup>

Colonel Ugarte, coming north from Chihuahua with additional Mexican troops to support Armijo, gave a more diplomatic description of the events. He described the meeting between the chiefs of the auxiliary forces and Armijo as a dispute over various opinions about the defense, stating "The result was the

forces were disbanded to their homes, and the general retired with the soldiers and artillerymen to Galisteo. The presidial soldiers abandoned him, and after spiking seven artillery pieces, [Armijo] entered the Sierra del Manzano with only sixty men from the 2nd and 3rd Permanent Cavalry.”<sup>53</sup>

For his part, Magoffin—who likely was not present for any of these events—told Marcy that at the meeting Armijo’s officers were not prepared “to defend the territory” and were willing to accept Kearny’s word that all would be protected. “Armijo, *apparently* [Magoffin’s emphasis], appeared very much exasperated” and ordered the militia to disperse. He left for Chihuahua with about one hundred dragoons, “maltreating all good citizens on his route.” One might infer from reading the full letter that Magoffin was as surprised as anyone that Armijo gave up.<sup>54</sup>

At some point during the day, after his arrival in the canyon, Armijo again wrote to Kearny. In the three-page letter, perhaps laying out an argument for his superiors more so than for Kearny, Armijo briefly wrote about the lengths he had gone to defend Nuevo México: “We all know that we should defend our country and we want to defend it, but we cannot because our central government is hundreds of leagues away, and it is impossible for me to receive the necessary assistance to do so in time.”<sup>55</sup> He pronounced his intention to withdraw to the west bank of the Rio Grande, a location that if Magoffin’s assertions were true, would not be claimed by the United States. Armijo explained, “I am not handing over the Department to you [Kearny], and I only have begun a military withdrawal until I receive orders from my government, to whom I am reporting everything that has happened.” According to novelist Paul Horgan, Armijo gave the letter to his second-in-command for delivery. No American accounts mention whether this final letter was ever received by Kearny.<sup>56</sup>

By the morning of 17 August, Armijo found himself with sixty dragoons, three artillery pieces, a howitzer, and very little in the way of supplies. Writing to Ugarte from Manzano, Armijo said these men “were the only troops of this department of New Mexico who have been willing to follow me until we meet with troops of the supreme government.”<sup>57</sup> He withdrew south via the Manzano Mountains and the Plain of Las Gallinas, burying the artillery pieces between Galisteo and Cerrillos because dragging them along was only slowing their march. Although no one documented it, presumably Armijo crossed the pass south of the Manzano Mountains and forded the Rio Grande somewhere near Socorro on his way to El Paso del Norte in hopes of locating Ugarte.<sup>58</sup>

Did Armijo Abandon His Post? Was He a Coward?

These accounts raise the question of whether or not Armijo was struck by cowardice. Many contemporary descriptions certainly depicted Armijo as

a coward. English adventurer George Ruxton wrote in his diary of Armijo's "shameful cowardice in surrendering Santa Fé to the Americans without a show of resistance." John Hughes, traveling with Col. Alexander Doniphan a couple of weeks later, told of an encounter with a resident of Algodones (about forty miles southwest of Santa Fe), who labeled Armijo a damned rascal who had "gone to the devil." U.S. soldier George Gibson wrote that "Armijo gets curses on all sides for cowardice and his tyranny" from the locals as they entered Santa Fe.<sup>59</sup> The citizens of Santa Fe made very harsh comments about Armijo in their letter to President Santa Anna:

On retiring from the field on orders from Sr. Armijo, [the people] were publicly insulted with the epithet of cowards by this same gentleman after they had rallied to him in compliance with their duty and desire. . . . He ignored the good and constant services of these old troops of the Mexican Republic who had given no cause for being treated in such a manner. He then abandoned the artillery and took with him about thirty or forty dragoons . . . apparently those whom he deemed necessary for an escort through the deserted terrain which he crossed in his shameless flight.<sup>60</sup>

They went on to state that a military withdrawal might have been more proper: "It would have saved his military reputation and in some measure covered his responsibility." Although the citizens did not know if the Mexicans could have been victorious, "at least we would have had the honor of having tried. Nothing, absolutely nothing was done. And Sr. Armijo can say full well: I have lost everything, including honor."<sup>61</sup>

Other evidence of Santa Fe citizens' opinion exists. Lt. William H. Emory wrote in his notes that Armijo "has long been suspected of wishing an excuse to fly. It is well known he has been averse to a battle, but some of his people threatened his life if he refused to fight. . . . It is quite evident he fears the penalty of his long misgovernment."<sup>62</sup> Another soldier wrote later that, "It is clear the Mexicans here are very much discontented, and the further south you go, the more this will become apparent."<sup>63</sup> These sources make evident the prevalence of this opinion, particularly south of El Paso towards Chihuahua. It was a judgment that Armijo himself could not escape. On 12 October, Ruxton encountered Armijo on the road from Chihuahua to Durango. In their long discussion, Armijo asked what Ruxton had heard from central Mexico about the happenings in Santa Fe. Ruxton recorded: "I told him that there was but one opinion respecting it expressed all over the country—that General Armijo and the New Mexicans were a pack of arrant cowards."<sup>64</sup>

Armijo spoke in his own defense on a couple of occasions. In his first report to Ugarte on 21 August, he again blamed the cowardice of his troops: "All the

other soldiers have turned against me under the pretext which I will make known to you when I see you.” He went on to state that the people of New Mexico were generally pro-U.S. These reasons contributed to his having to retreat from Santa Fe.<sup>65</sup> When he encountered Ruxton on 12 October Armijo justified his decision on the basis that he did not have the men and munitions to mount a proper defense: “They don’t know that I had but 75 men to fight 3000. What could I do?”<sup>66</sup> Rafael Chacón, looking back with sixty years of experience, was also generous in his assessment: “What could Armijo do with an undisciplined army without any military training, without commissary resources, and without leaders to direct the men? He was a dwarf against a giant. Armijo was the imaginary hero of that epoch. Had he rashly rushed to give battle, it would have been equivalent to offer his troops as victims to the invading army; the result would have been a useless effusion of blood, offering himself unnecessarily to death.”<sup>67</sup> A few weeks after the withdrawal from Apache Canyon, Armijo rhetorically asked the Minister of War and the Navy, “How could I have justified sacrificing uselessly the sixty valiant men who accompanied me? They could come to this frontier . . . to swell the ranks of their brothers and sacrifice themselves if necessary but with the honor and glory of the nation. These are the feelings in my heart, proven by these facts: I abandoned my family and my interests, and I refused with the dignity that my post demands the offenses of my enemies.”<sup>68</sup>

Armijo’s decision can hardly be faulted from a military perspective. It would be hard to believe that he negligently abandoned his post. Rather, he appears to have made a tactically prudent military decision. At the end of the day and whatever the cause, he had to face a U.S. force that he believed numbered around three thousand.<sup>69</sup> As noted in the variety of sources above, the number of Mexican men Armijo actually commanded in his detachment and the militia is unclear. Prior to Armijo’s arrival in Apache Canyon, estimates range from eighteen hundred to ten thousand men, with most sources indicating it was perhaps two to four thousand in strength. However, his regular dragoons (i.e., the actual Mexican military detachment) with which Armijo withdrew to the south numbered no more than a couple hundred, possibly as few as sixty men according to Armijo, although it benefits his own argument to say he had no soldiers with which to fight.<sup>70</sup>

Outnumbered, Armijo’s only advantage would have been his position. One unnamed military official’s diary recorded, “The position they chose was near the lower end [of the canyon], and it was one of great strength. The passage was not more than forty feet wide. . . . It was thought by us that their position was equal to 5000 men.”<sup>71</sup> U.S. soldier Abraham Robinson Johnston reported, “Had Armijo’s heart been as stout as the walls of rock which nature gave him to aid in defense of his country, we might have sought in vain to force this passage.”<sup>72</sup> Emory was somewhat less generous in his analysis, suggesting that the placement

would have briefly exposed U.S. Army soldiers to Mexican fire but they would otherwise have easily overtaken it.<sup>73</sup>

Later events indicate this geographic position's military power on the one hand, and its weakness on the other hand. The Battle of Glorieta Pass in 1862 found the Confederate Army of New Mexico under Gen. H. H. Sibley occupying an area that included Armijo's cannon position of 1846, with (coincidentally) U.S. military forces advancing into the canyon from the east. Although the fighting was steady and the Confederates eventually carried the field of battle, the position's weakness was exposed when Union troops led by Maj. John Chivington circled around Glorieta Mesa and destroyed the Confederate supply train. Had Armijo stayed and fought, a similar outcome might have occurred. Holding out in the canyon, Emory suggested that Kearny likely would have sent some of his troops, as the Union did, around south to circle back to Santa Fe via Galisteo. Either way, Armijo could have found himself cut off, just like the Confederates sixteen years later.<sup>74</sup>

Withdrawing south to unite with the thousands of Mexican troops that Armijo had been promised were coming from Chihuahua appears to be a very rational decision. The place of battle would have been better chosen, and the numbers more even. Armijo likely had no way of knowing that Ugarte himself only had a few hundred men, so the confrontation that Armijo thought would take place in central New Mexico never occurred. The evidence, however, suggests to military historians that Armijo probably made a strategic withdrawal and would not have been guilty of "abandoning a post." As for the possibility of Armijo fleeing in the face of danger, it would be improper to apply today's standards of conduct. Historians should also question the impartiality of most contemporary U.S. accounts about Armijo and his actions. It is clear that Mexicans from Chihuahua southward believed Armijo was a coward. If *nuevomexicanos* were of the same opinion, they did not hold it against him in the long run. After the war Armijo returned to New Mexico, eventually settling on his family's lands near Lemitar. If the locals had any anger toward him, they could easily have made life unsuitable for Armijo and caused him to leave; instead his neighbors left him in peace. Although there were subsequent investigations in Chihuahua of his conduct in 1849 and 1854, neither produced an indictment. Armijo lived out his final years quietly as a farmer and small livestock producer, dying in December 1853.<sup>75</sup>

## Conclusions

Providing a thorough examination of several aspects of the bloodless conquest of Santa Fe, this work does not represent a final judgment. Although Magoffin's

role has been overstated for many decades, the actual extent of his influence remains unclear. A firm conclusion as to the character and conduct of Manuel Armijo also requires further investigation. Perhaps yet-to-be-utilized resources in Mexico, most likely from the trial documents of Manuel Armijo or the deposition and trial of James Wiley Magoffin, may yet yield further details and alter historiographical interpretations of these events.<sup>76</sup> Until those materials surface, this article's revised interpretation helps to better understand a critical moment in New Mexico's history.

This reexamination of the events of late summer 1846 in New Mexico makes four major conclusions. First, much of the details and revised interpretation initially offered in the early twentieth century by Twitchell, Connelley, Drumm, and others misconstrued the "newly discovered" documents. Aside from McAfee's letter, those sources make no mention of Armijo and Magoffin somehow being related. McAfee's misstatement sent historians down a wrong path and fundamentally changed the historical understanding of these men's relationship. Furthermore, Magoffin's request to be reimbursed for bribes he paid led some historians to assume that if he bribed authorities in Chihuahua, he must have done so in Santa Fe. That assumption, coupled with Armijo's poor historical reputation, reinforced the conclusion that Armijo was a coward paid off by the United States to avoid a fight. These early twentieth-century interpretive errors occurred naturally in some respects, but deeper scholarly digging undermines many of their conclusions.

Second, Senator Benton's memoirs were very powerful in setting the original narrative. Despite his direct connections to the key players, Benton's account is inconsistent with the interpretations of later historians. Benton likely would have known if Armijo had been paid a bribe (by either Magoffin or the U.S. Army), or that Magoffin was related by marriage to Armijo. He did not mention either of these details. That said, few historians have checked, questioned, or contradicted Benton's account of events. As mentioned above, Hubert Howe Bancroft suggested in a footnote that the story was exaggerated, but he nevertheless utilized it as factual. Prior to the surfacing of Magoffin's reimbursement claims documents, Twitchell also used the Benton account verbatim.<sup>77</sup> Only Lansing Bloom, in an account in 1915 also published before the Magoffin claim documents became widely available, declares the whole story as fabrication:

The present writer does not find tenable the generally accepted view that Captain Cooke's real mission to Santa Fe was to escort a secret agent of the United States. H. H. Bancroft first elaborated this point, hinting very broadly that both Armijo and his second in command, Juan Andrés Archuleta, were bribed into not putting up any genuine resistance. There is no denying that Bancroft gave color to his account by weaving James

Magoffin into it; but, as he himself admits, his sole basis for so doing was the reminiscences of Senator Benton. . . . It seems nearer the truth to say that the plausible Irishman blarneyed the United States Government out of \$30,000 for his losses sustained later in Chihuahua than that he prevailed on Armijo not to defend his Department.<sup>78</sup>

Only one other historian questioned the Benton rendering, calling attention to the potential for bias on Benton's part. William Connelley, who in 1907 published an account about Col. William Doniphan's expedition and its role in the U.S.-Mexico War, was one of the first historians who tried to track down additional documentation, including the Magoffin claims. Connelley corresponded with James Wiley Magoffin's son Joseph on several points and included Joseph's brief profile of his father in a footnote. Joseph's comments that his father had been a "secret agent" led Connelley to put enough stock in Benton's account to merit its inclusion, but he hoped that documents held by the War Department or Kearny's descendants would confirm the account.<sup>79</sup>

Connelley points out, however, that Benton was heavily prejudiced against Kearny: "No more uncompromising man ever lived than Benton. No man ever in American public life was more intolerant, and often he was, despite his greatness, rash and unreasonable." Additionally Connelley writes that Benton's son-in-law was Lt. Col. John C. Frémont. In January 1847, U.S. Navy Commodore Robert Stockton had appointed Frémont military governor of California, a post that he refused to relinquish when Kearny arrived from Santa Fe with written orders from President Polk and Secretary Marcy that Kearny would serve as governor of California. Frémont was eventually court-martialed and convicted of mutiny, disobedience of a superior officer, and military misconduct. Benton fiercely defended Frémont and openly declared his hostility toward Kearny, leading to a thirteen-day fight against Kearny's promotion as brevet major general in September 1848. There was no way that Benton was going to give Kearny any credit in the New Mexico campaign, and Connelley agreed with several of his correspondents that Benton's bitterness toward Kearny had to be acknowledged.<sup>80</sup>

Connelley hoped that the War Department documents, which he did not obtain until several years later, would more definitively establish whether Magoffin deserved the honors that Benton ascribed to him: "Should it prove to be true, even then the services of General Kearny can never be considered the less efficient and valuable." Thus, Connelley's conclusion in 1907 that Magoffin's role may have been significant, should not be to the detriment of the work done by Kearny, whom Connelley stated "acted in the conquest of New Mexico with promptness, energy, firmness, and intelligence."<sup>81</sup>

Connelley's cautions provide a strong basis to question, if not discredit, the veracity of the "bloodless conquest" of Santa Fe interpretations based on Benton's memoir, which influences this analysis's third conclusion about what the other primary documents reveal. As outlined above, it seems at best that Magoffin only planted seeds of doubt in Armijo's mind. He was not solely responsible for the bloodless conquest of Santa Fe, regardless of anyone's interpretation of his actions after the war. It is critical to remember that in order to secure reimbursement for his claims, Magoffin had to demonstrate that he played a highly significant role.

If Magoffin's letter to Marcy on 26 August 1846 is any indication, he may have successfully dissuaded Colonel Archuleta from opposing the United States' annexation east of the Rio Grande, but it is unclear that he convinced Armijo of anything. He may have been an influential voice, but Armijo obviously continued to prepare a defense at Apache Canyon as late as thirty-six hours before Kearny's advance troops arrived. Even in his own account, Magoffin claimed no direct credit for any result.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, had Magoffin's letter been available to Connelley for his book in 1907, he would have found that Magoffin himself gave broad credit to Kearny: "Genl. Kearny by his mild and persuasive manners has induced the good people of New Mexico to believe that they now belong to the greatest nation on earth, and that the stars and stripes which are now so gallantly waiving over the capitol of this City will always give them ample protection from foreign foes."<sup>83</sup> This statement leads to this article's fourth conclusion: Kearny is not given as much credit by historians for the successful conquest as he may be due.<sup>84</sup>

Many events in history are as complex as this story, but rarely do they get the in-depth scrutiny that may be required. This reexamination demonstrates how failures in primary source criticism and the casual acceptance of previous secondary accounts can perpetuate incorrect interpretations of historical events. Scholarly rigor applied to the primary sources in this case provides a better historiographical accounting of the intrigue surrounding the events of August 1846 in New Mexico. When the legend fails to accord to fact, print accurate factual analysis.

## Notes

1. In the movie from 1962, after telling his story to newspaperman Maxwell Scott, Sen. Ransom Stoddard inquires, "You're not going to use the story, Mr. Scott?" Scott responds, "No sir. This is the West, sir. When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valence*, directed by John Ford (Hollywood, Calif.: Paramount Pictures, 1962).

2. This article results from my research work for the Magoffin Home State Historic Site in El Paso. Our main points of interest were to clarify whether Magoffin was actually

related to Armijo and exactly what role he played in these events. Conclusively answering those questions required looking at every detail and source—including seeking Mexican records of Magoffin’s subsequent imprisonment and trial for cooperating with the Americans. This process naturally led us to question whether Armijo’s actions were reasonable and responsible and made us confront the questions of his cowardice.

3. As a rule, Benton preferred peace to conflict, so he initially argued for further negotiations with Mexico rather than launching a military campaign. Once President Polk decided to go to war, Benton quickly shifted gears to suggest plans for the quickest and most effective means to execute the campaign. William Nisbet Chambers, *Old Bullion Benton: Senator From the West* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1956), 305–12.

4. Thomas Hart Benton, *Thirty Years’ View; Or, A History of the Working of the American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1854), 2:683. Benton has been profiled in three major biographies: Chambers, *Old Bullion Benton*; William M. Meigs, *The Life of Thomas Hart Benton* (1904; repr., New York: De Capo Press, 1970); and Elbert H. Smith, *Magnificent Missourian: The Life of Thomas Hart Benton* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1958). Of these works, only Chambers briefly discusses the New Mexico campaign and Smith mentions Magoffin in passing; none include Benton’s account of Magoffin or any significant details about Armijo or New Mexico.

5. Benton, *Thirty Years’ View*, 2:683–84. After the Santa Fe campaign, Magoffin was arrested as he and a small party traveled south to Chihuahua to perform similar services to aid in a “bloodless conquest” of that state for Gen. John Wool. Although direct documents have not been found, at least one contemporary source said that Magoffin was charged with treason because he was carrying U.S. military correspondence. He was subsequently held or detained in Chihuahua and Durango until late 1847, thus missing most of the active war. Wilbert H. Timmons, *James Wiley Magoffin: Don Santiago—El Paso Pioneer* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1999), 39–42; and “Army of the North,” *Niles’ National Register* 72 (6 March 1847): 7.

6. Thomas Hart Benton to Lossing, 6 May 1849, Edward E. Ayer Manuscript Collection, Newberry Library, Chicago, Ill.

7. John S. Jenkins, *History of the War between the United States and Mexico, from the Commencement of Hostilities to the Ratification of the Treaty of Peace* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby, Miller and Company, 1849), 139.

8. U.S. House of Representatives, *Occupation of Mexican Territory*, 29th Cong., 2d session, 1846, Ex. Doc. No. 19. Kearny used this same phrase in his letter the same day sent to General Wool, whom was expected to have already reached Chihuahua with the Central Division of the U.S. Army of Occupation.

9. Philip St. George Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California: An Historical and Personal Narrative* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1878); and *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft*, vol. 17: *History of Arizona and New Mexico, 1530–1888* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1889), 413.

10. “The Magoffin Papers” were first published in full by William E. Connelley, who said the documents “tell a thrilling story, and a story of great importance to the history of the country.” See his *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1918), 123–35. The documents were subsequently republished by Ralph Emerson Twitchell under the section title, “The Magoffin Papers,” in *The Story of the*

*Conquest of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and the Building of Old Fort Marcy, A.D. 1846*, Historical Society of New Mexico No. 24 (Santa Fe: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1923), 42–63. Historian and editor Stella Drumm assembled a lengthy introductory narrative using the Magoffin Papers and the Connelley and Twitchell books in *Down the Santa Fé Trail and into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846–1847* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1926).

11. Douglas Comer, *Ritual Ground: Bent's Old Fort* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 162.

12. The “cousin” assertion is mentioned (among others) in James Dunkerley, *Americana: The Americas in the World, around 1850 (or ‘Seeing the Elephant’ as a Theme for an Imaginary Western)* (New York: Verso, 2000); Robert Frazer, *Forts and Supplies: The Role of the Army in the Economy of the Southwest, 1846–1861* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983); Pamela Herr and Mary Lee Spence, eds., *The Letters of Jessie Benton Fremont* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Harlan Hague, *The Road to California: The Search for a Southern Overland Route to California, 1540–1848* (Glendale, Calif.: A. H. Clark Company, 1978); Donna Koepp, ed., *Exploration and Mapping of the American West: Selected Essays* (Chicago: Speculum Orbis Press, 1986); Roger D. Launius, *Alexander William Doniphan: Portrait of a Missouri Moderate* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997); Jill Mocho, *Murder & Justice in Frontier New Mexico, 1821–1846* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997); Mark Joseph Stegmaier, *Texas, New Mexico, and the Compromise of 1850: Boundary Dispute & Sectional Crisis* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1996); Linda Thompson, *The Santa Fe Trail* (Vero Beach, Fla.: Rourke Publishing, 2004); Hans von Sachsen-Altenberg and Laura Gabiger, *Winning the West: General Stephen Watts Kearny's Letter Book, 1846–1847* (Boonville, Miss.: Pekitanoui Publications, 1998); and John William Theodore Youngs, *American Realities: Historical Episodes*, 4th ed. (New York: Longman, 1997), 2 vols.

13. Janet Lecompte, “Manuel Armijo’s Family History,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 58 (July 1973): 251–58. The myth about Armijo’s less-than-stellar background traces back to George Wilkins Kendall, newspaper writer for the *New Orleans* (La.) *Picayune* and participant and author of a history of the Republic of Texas’s ill-fated Santa Fe Expedition of 1841 written in 1844. Kendall wrote a page and a half about how Armijo, coming from bad parents, built a wealthy life as a child by stealing and gambling. According to Lecompte, the myth’s “nonsense must have been so patent that no contemporary native of New Mexico, even Armijo, bothered to refute it” (p. 251), but the account was one of the first English descriptions of Armijo and was reprinted and taken as factual for over a century.

14. Genealogy chart of Manuel Armijo (fig. 1) compiled from references in Fray Angélico Chávez, *Origins of New Mexico Families in the Spanish Colonial Period* (Santa Fe: Historical Society of New Mexico, 1954), 20, 49, 60–61, 136–37, 160–62, 209, 212, 236, 288–89, 318–19.

15. Rick Hendricks, Cameron L. Saffell, and Leslie Bergloff, “The Amondarain/Valdés Family,” Magoffin Home State Historic Site Family History Narratives (2011), 1–8.

16. “The Writings of Robert B. McAfee” and “Genealogy,” on “The McAfees: Kentucky Pioneers” website, [http://jtenlen.drizzlehosting.com/Register/RR\\_TOC.HTML](http://jtenlen.drizzlehosting.com/Register/RR_TOC.HTML), accessed 15 January 2013.

17. Robert B. McAfee to the President [James K. Polk], 22 June 1847, as printed in the “Magoffin Papers” by Twitchell, *Story of the Conquest*, 58.

18. Timmons, *James Wiley Magoffin*, 29.

19. Howard R. Lamar, foreword to *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico*, by Susan Shelby Magoffin, ed. Stella M. Drumm (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962), xxxii. The *St. Louis (Mo.) Republic*, for example, had information dated December 1846 that Magoffin was on trial and it was hoped that the governor of Chihuahua would refer a guilty verdict to Mexican president Santa Anna to spare Magoffin's life. Reprinted in (*Plattsville, Wisconsin Terr.*) *Independent American and General Advertiser*, 12 March 1847. Similarly, the *St. Louis (Mo.) Reveille* reported that Magoffin had been "condemned to death as a traitor." Reprinted in "Santa Fe and Chihuahua," *Niles' National Register* 72 (15 May 1847): 174.

20. Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail*, 102–3. James Wiley Magoffin greeted his brother and sister-in-law late on the evening of 30 August with oysters and champagne, about forty-eight hours or so before James headed south to start the American transition in the Rio Abajo communities and thence on to El Paso and Chihuahua. Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail*, 104, 108.

21. Lamar, "Foreword," xix–xx.

22. *Ibid.*, xxv.

23. Rex Strickland, Review of *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico* (1962), in *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 66 (April 1963): 607. Strickland also criticizes Lamar for misidentifying Joseph Magoffin as the first, rather than the fourth, mayor of El Paso.

24. Susan Calafate Boyle, *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants and the Santa Fe Trade* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 56–59, 66, 94–95. Magoffin and Valdés apparently met in Coahuila while he was still involved in trade from New Orleans to Matamoros and Coahuila in the 1820s. The year 1832 is the date of the earliest known evidence that he was shifting his trade activities to Chihuahua. Timmons, *James Wiley Magoffin*, 13–18, 96–97.

25. Stephan Garrison Hyslop, *Bound for Santa Fe: The Road to New Mexico and the American Conquest, 1806–1848* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 258–60. As it turns out Governor Armijo himself was expecting a delivery from Magoffin. In March 1846 the New Mexico Departmental Assembly had ordered a new printing press with accessories, which Magoffin was to deliver on the return of the merchant caravan later that summer. Fed. L. O., *Legislative Minutes*, 28 March 1946, as cited by Lansing B. Bloom, "New Mexico under Mexican Administration—VIII," *Old Santa Fe* 2 (April 1915): 354.

26. Daniel Tyler, "Gringo Views of Governor Manuel Armijo," *New Mexico Historical Review* 45 (January 1970): 23–46; Janet Lecompte, "Manuel Armijo and the Americans," *Journal of the West* 19 (July 1980): 51–63; Janet Lecompte, "Manuel Armijo, George Wilkins Kendall, and the Baca-Caballero Conspiracy," *New Mexico Historical Review* 59: 49–65; Paul Kraemer, "The Rehabilitation of Governor Manuel Armijo," *La Crónica de Nuevo México* 89 (October 2011): 1–3; and Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail*, 109.

27. Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The History of the Military Occupation of the Territory of New Mexico* (Denver, Colo.: Smith-Brooks Company, 1909), 240. It is unclear what this proceeding was or what (if any) charges were offered. The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University possesses a letter from Antonio López de Santa Anna to Sr. Gral. Manuel Armijo, dated 22 January 1847, which orders Armijo to appear before a Board of Inquiry to examine and review his case. In it Santa Anna assures Armijo that the outcome will be favorable and will not jeopardize Armijo's reputation.

28. Materials in the Archivo Histórico Militar [hereafter AHM] pertaining either to the military defense of New Mexico or specifically to Armijo's conduct and trial (with several duplicated documents) are scattered across several folios, including: Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, 2199/481.3/Expediente XI; Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, 2237/481.3/Expediente XI; Partes de las Comandancias Generales de Chihuahua, Sinaloa y Alta California, Dando Cuenta de las Operaciones Efectuadas Con Motivo de la Invasión Norteamericana, 2244/481.3/Expediente XI; Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, 2245/481.3/Expediente XI; Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, 2248/481.3/Expediente XI; Formación de Causa al General Manuel Armijo, 1846–47, 2255/481.3/Expediente XI; Asuntos Diversos de las Comandancias Generales de Chiapas, Nuevo México, Guajuato, Chihuahua, Zacatecas, Michoacán, Sinaloa, Querétaro, Puebla, Sonora, Veracruz y Oaxaca, 1847, 2713/481.3/Expediente XI; Operaciones Militares, Año de 1849, 3092/481.3/Expediente XI; and “Incidentes Relativos a la Acusación Presentada en Contra del Gral. Manuel Armijo, Por Abandono del Mando Político y Militar de Nuevo México, Durante la Invasión Norteamericana,” Operaciones Militares, Año de 1854, 4433/481.3/Expediente XI. There may be other pertinent documents in other parts of the Mexican National Archives, such as the “Report of the Citizens of New Mexico to the President of Mexico, 28 September 1846,” located by American Philosophical Society in the Archivo de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores that was translated and published in “Notes and Documents,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 26 (January 1951): 68–76. Several contemporary Mexican newspapers, including *Diario Oficial*, *El Monitor Republicano*, *El Durango*, and *El Republicano* published some of these government or military correspondence. Among the few historians to cite directly from the military files are Justin H. Smith, *The War With Mexico* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1919); Daniel Tyler, “Governor Armijo's Moment of Truth,” *Journal of the West* 11 (April 1972): 307–16; Tyler, “Gringo Views of Governor Manuel Armijo”; Lecompte, “Manuel Armijo and the Americans”; and Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 250–52. Ralph P. Bieber utilized military correspondence republished by Mexican newspapers in his lengthy introduction and editing of George Rutledge Gibson's diary, *Journal of a Soldier under Kearny and Doniphan, 1846–1847*, Southwest Historical Series No. 3 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1935).

29. José María Árlégui to Ángel Trías, Durango, 18 June 1847, Formación de causa al General Manuel Armijo, 1846–47, f. 00003r–00008v, Fraccion 1/a, Legajo 9, 1946, AHM; and Philip St. George Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California in 1846–1848*, 1878 reprint ed. (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1964), 26–34.

30. Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico*, 6, 26; and Árlégui to Trías, 18 June 1847.

31. Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico*, 26–29; and Árlégui to Trías, 18 June 1847. Muñoz or one of the witnesses referred to Cooke as “Captain Quoro.”

32. Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico*, 29–31; and Árlégui to Trías, 18 June 1847.

33. Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico*, 31.

34. Árlégui to Trías, 18 June 1847.

35. J. W. Magoffin to Sec. W. L. Marcy, 22 August 1846, reprinted in Twitchell, *Story of the Conquest*, 43–44; and Árlégui to Trías, 18 June 1847.

36. Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico*, 31–34; and Árlégui to Trías, 18 June 1847. It may well be that Armijo's response letter actually was delivered by four sharply dressed

Mexican soldiers, who encountered Kearny's main body on Friday 14 August. Lieutenant Emory's description of that date and his understanding of the letter approximately matches the known Armijo-to-Kearny letter. Emory, "General Kearney [sic] and the Army of the West," *Niles' National Register* 71 (31 October 1846): 149.

37. Twitchell, *Story of the Conquest*, 47–52. A letter to the editor from "Un Durangueno" (a resident of Durango) to the editors of *El Monitor Republicano*, published on 31 May 1847, independently verifies that Magoffin paid his way out of jail, though this may have been bail; the [*Mexico City*] *Daily American Star* reported in its edition of 28 October 1847 that Magoffin had recently been acquitted of all charges. Magoffin's documentation was pursuant to a \$50,000 appropriation in the last days of the 30th Congress in 1849 for "secret services" provided by Mexicans to the U.S. government. Sen. Jefferson Davis, in one of the only written statements about these services, told his colleagues that the nature of the services could not be described but the "Mexicans who rendered services to the American army" are now destitute and not provided for, but they should be reimbursed for their "equitable claims." U.S. Congress, *Cong. Globe*, 30th Cong., 2d Sess., 1849, 638. It is clear from the documentation in *Story of the Conquest* that this appropriation was specifically for Magoffin, but Whig Sec. of War Crawford, who had replaced Democrat William Marcy when President Polk's term ended in March 1849, forced Magoffin to document his claims and subsequently only awarded him \$30,000.

38. Magoffin to Marcy, 26 August 1846; and Cooke, *Conquest of New Mexico*, 1–54.

39. Original Spanish: *quinientos onzas del oro que le trajo el Capitan Lisa con once hombres antes que entraron las fuerzas*. Árlegui to Trias, 18 June 1847. The Vigil claim was not made by him directly; it was offered by 1st Lieut. Antonio José Apodaca. Daniel Tyler described this in "Armijo's Moment of Truth," 313, using the same testimony as filed in Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, f. 941–42 and 963–66, 2199/481.3/Expediente XI, AHM.

40. William A. Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico* (1952; repr. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 116; and Twitchell, *Story of the Conquest*, 15. Vigil also served as the witness to Armijo's will written on 14 August; and Bloom, "New Mexico under Mexican Administration—VIII," 371.

41. Based on \$24,000 in cash and \$10,000 in gold, adjusted for inflation, using the Inflation Calculator, website, <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>.

42. Hyslop, *Bound for Santa Fe*, 317; and James Josiah Webb, *Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 1844–1847*, ed. Ralph P. Bieber, Bison Book edition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 186–87. Other sources corroborate this information, saying Speyer had bought small lots from several other traders and went on ahead to Chihuahua in early July. "Santa Fe and the Gen. Kearney [sic] Division," *Niles' National Register* 70 (29 August 1846): 402; and A. Wislizenus, *Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico* (1848; repr. ed., Glorieta, N.Mex.: Rio Grande Press, 1969), 29. Armijo caught up with Speyer again at a trade fair in San Juan de los Lagos, Jalisco, in late 1846, telling readers of *El Republicano* that he had left New Mexico in haste and incurred numerous expenses, so Armijo needed to collect on notes owed him by Speyer to cover future expenses. "El General Armijo, A Sus Compatriotas," *Suplemento to El Republicano*, 13 January 1847.

43. George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.* (New York: J. F. Trow, 1850); and *Index to Compiled*

*Service Records of Volunteer Soldiers Who Served During the Mexican War*, M616, National Archives and Records Service Microfilm Publication (1965).

44. Philip St. George Cooke III, preface to Philip St. George Cooke, *The Conquest of New Mexico and California* (Albuquerque, N.Mex.: Horn and Wallace, 1964), iii. The elder Cooke wrote several books about his experiences in the West, and several more have been written about him and some of his children. Cooke III himself was a writer, publisher, and editor of the *Press of the Territorian*, which produced fourteen booklets on New Mexico history in the 1960s.

45. Benjamin M. Read, *Illustrated History of New Mexico* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Printing Company, 1912), 418–20; and English translation of the will document in Twitchell, *Story of the Conquest*, 15. The original will is now in Series 10, Folder 222, Ralph Emerson Twitchell Collection, New Mexico State Archives, Santa Fe, N.Mex.

46. “Report of the Citizens of New Mexico,” 72–73; “Amplia relacion de la ocupacion de Nuevo-México por los anglo-americanos,” in Carlos Maria de Bustamante, *El Nuevo Bernal Díaz del Castillo: ó sea, Historia de la Invasión de los Anglo-Americanos en México* (Mexico: Imprenta de Vicente García Torres, 1847), 2:103–05; and Manuel Armijo to Ministro de Guerra y Marina, Chihuahua, 8 de Septiembre de 1846, Formación de causa al General Manuel Armijo, 1846–47, f. 00051r, Fraccion 1/a, Legajo 9, 1846, AHM. A translation of this document, attributed as “Armijo to the Minister of Foreign Relations, Interior and Police,” appears in “Notes and Documents,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 26 (January 1951): 76–78.

47. Magoffin to Marcy, 26 August 1846.

48. Armijo to Ministro de Guerra y Marina, 8 September 1846.

49. Benjamin M. Read, *Guerra Mexico-Americana* (Santa Fe, N.Mex.: Compania Impresora del Nuevo Mexicano, 1910), 229; and “Lieut. Aniseto de Jesus Abeytia,” Find a Grave website, accessed 14 December 2015, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=252212>. Interestingly, Read chose not to include this information in his English-language *Illustrated History of New Mexico* (1912), leaving a muted, neutral impression of Armijo’s actions. At least one historian (Ralph Bieber, in “Introduction,” *Marching with the Army of the West*, Southwest Historical Series No. 4 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936, 102–3) has pointed to an Armijo letter collected by Benjamin Read, interpreting one statement as an admission of his cowardice: “*En el próximo Mayo me retiro á mi patria la republica Mexicana; no quienes que se me cuente en les hijos que le son ingratos, pues después de haberse sido cobardes siquiera estamos agradecidos.*” (Next May I retire to my homeland, the Mexican Republic; I do not want those to tell me that their sons are ungrateful, because after having been cowards at least we will be grateful.) A handwritten note on the cover says “wherein he admits to have been a coward,” but a later interpreter writes, “This is apparently an incorrect translation. I think he is calling Alvarez a coward.” The phrasing and translation is open to some interpretation—in mine suggesting Armijo is calling all Mexico’s sons the cowards and not specifically himself. Manuel Armijo to Manuel Alvarez, 6 April 1849, Folder 24, Benjamin M. Read Collection, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.Mex.

50. “Report of the Citizens of New Mexico,” 72–73.

51. Twitchell, *History of the Military Occupation*, 243–44.

52. Read, *Illustrated History*, 431–33.

53. *De todo resultó que las fuerzas fueron disueltas para sus casas, y el general se retiró con los militares y artilleros para Galisteo. Lo abandonaron las compañías presidales, y éste clavando siete piezas se introdujo en la Sierra del Manzano con solo sesenta hombres del 2 y 3 de Caballería Permanentes.* Mauricio Ugarte to the Secretaria de la Comandancia General de Chihuahua, 26 de Agosto de 1846, Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, f. 96, 2245/481.3/Expediente XI, AHM. This letter was published by *Diario Oficial*, 10 September 1846, and subsequently cited (as Ugarte to Gavino Cuiltly) in Gibson, *Journal of a Soldier*, 204. It also was reprinted by Carlos María de Bustamante as the bulk of his description of the campaign in “Amplia relacion de la ocupación de Nuevo-México.”

54. Magoffin to Marcy, 26 August 1846.

55. *Todos conocemos que debemos defender nuestro país y queremos defenderlo pero no podemos hacerlo, porque distante nuestro gobierno general centenares de leguas me es imposible recibir con oportunidad los necesarios auxilios para verificarlo.* Manuel Armijo to S. W. Kearney [sic], 16 de Agosto de 1846, in W. G. Ritch, “Ritch Papers Concerning the History of New Mexico, 1839–ca. 1885,” Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery microfilm, Reel 2, Document 232.

56. *Yo no entrego á V. S. el Departamento, y si que [he] empezado una retirada militar, ínterin recibo órdenes de mi Gobierno a quien doy cierta de todo lo ocurrido.* Armijo to Kearney [sic], 16 de Agosto de 1846; and Paul Horgan, *Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1954), 727–28. Armijo concludes his letter saying he has charged Colonel Archuleta with personally delivering the letter, but it is unclear if it ever got into Kearny’s hands. This was possibly Armijo’s third letter to Kearny. In addition to the letter of 12 August that was purportedly carried by Connelly with Cooke, several Americans (including Emory), noted the arrival at the U.S. camp of four sharply dressed Mexican soldiers on 14 August; if this represents Armijo’s second letter, it is unknown what it said.

57. . . . *estos son los únicas de todos los militares de este Departamento de Nuevo-México, que me han querido seguir hasta presentarnos donde encontremos tropas del supremo gobierno.* Armijo to Ministro de Guerra y Marina, 8 de Septiembre de 1846.

58. Manuel Armijo to Sr. Comandante General del Departamento de Chihuahua, D. Mauricio Ugarte [hereafter cited as Armijo to Ugarte], 20 de Agosto de 1846, f. 20–21, Operaciones Militares, Año de 1846, 2237/481.3/Expediente XI, AHM; and Ugarte to Secretaria de la Comandancia General de Chihuahua, 26 de Agosto de 1846. The Armijo to Ugarte letter was republished in *El Diario*, 10 September 1846, and *El Republicano*, 11 September 1846.

59. George F. Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains* (1847; repr. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1848), 110; John T. Hughes, *Doniphan’s Expedition* (Cincinnati, Ohio: U. P. James, 1847), 44; and Gibson, *Journal of a Soldier*, 201.

60. “Report of the Citizens of New Mexico,” 73.

61. *Ibid.*, 74–75.

62. William Emory, “General Kearney [sic] and the Army of the West,” *Niles’ National Register* 71 (7 November 1846): 158.

63. “Army of the North,” 8.

64. Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico*, 119.

65. *Todos los demas militares se me han vuelto, con pretexto que á nuestra vista haré ver á V.S.* Armijo to Ugarte, 21 August 1846.

66. Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico*, 119.

67. Read, *Illustrated History of New Mexico*, 432.

68. ¿Por qué con que justicia podría volverme á sacrificar este vilmente a los sesenta valientes que me acompañaban? Cuando podían vienen á esta frontera . . . á engrosar las filas de sus hermanos y sacrificarse si fuese necesario, pero con honor y gloria de la nación. Estos son los sentimientos de mí corazón, comprobados con los hechos: yo abandoné mi familia y mi intereses y reusé con la dignidad que exigía mi puesto las ofensas de mi enemigo. Armijo to Ministro de Guerra y Marina, 8 September 1846.

69. Armijo told Ugarte (21 August 1846) and the Ministro de Guerra y Marina (8 September 1846) that the U.S. forces numbered between two thousand five hundred and three thousand. Armijo repeated the same three thousand figure to Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico*, 110. The *Santa Fé* (N.Mex.) *Republican* recounted that on 6 August a courier to Armijo estimated the group to be more than five thousand. 3 May 1848, as cited by Bieber, "Introduction," 67–68, in Gibson, *Journal of a Soldier*. The "Report of the Citizens of New Mexico" told President Santa Anna the opposing army was fifteen hundred men (p. 71), which was closer to the truth. Kearney's Army of the West as it left Fort Leavenworth consisted of seventeen hundred men, supplemented after the initial New Mexico campaign by units of the Second Missouri Mounted Volunteer Regiment under Col. Sterling Price and the Mormon Battalion. Bieber, "Introduction," 40, in Gibson, *Journal of a Soldier*.

70. Armijo consistently estimated low numbers—sixty in separate messages to Ugarte (21 August 1846) and the Ministro de Guerra y Marina (8 September 1846) or seventy-five (to Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico*, 110). Writing in the early 1900s Chacón (Read, *Illustrated History*, 433) thought there was ten thousand militia men, but figures of four thousand ("Report of the Citizens of New Mexico," 72), three thousand (Magoffin to Marcy, 21 August 1846), two thousand (Ugarte as cited by Bustamante, "Amplia relación de la ocupacion de Nuevo-México"), and six hundred (Lt. Emory as cited by Read, *Illustrated History*, 427–29) suggests the actual gathering was from a few hundred to a couple thousand men. Magoffin said Armijo withdrew with one hundred dragoons (letter to Marcy), while Ugarte told the Secretaria de la Comandancia General de Chihuahua—presumably based on who arrived with Armijo at his camp—the unit numbered two hundred sixty.

71. James Madison Cutts, *The Conquest of California and New Mexico* (1847; repr. ed. Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1965), 52.

72. "Journal of Abraham Robinson Johnston," in *Marching with the Army of the West*, Southwest Historical Series No. 4 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1936), 103.

73. [Emory,] "General Kearney and the Army of the West" [31 October 1846], 158.

74. Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico*, 177–81; and [Emory,] "General Kearney and the Army of the West" [31 October 1846], 158. A detailed discussion of the events of 1862 is found in Thomas S. Edrington and John Taylor, *The Battle of Glorieta Pass: A Gettysburg in the West, March 26–28, 1862* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000).

75. Lecompte, "Manuel Armijo and the Americans," 60–61; and Ralph Emerson Twitchell, *The Leading Facts of New Mexico History* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1912), 2:208. Armijo was jailed in Chihuahua for three months during the investigation of 1849, although neither investigation's records have any substantive or new information. "Incidentes relacionados con la sumaría formada al General Armijo . . . 1846,"

Operaciones Militares, Año de 1849, 3092/481.3/Expediente XI, AHM; and “Incidentes relativos a la acusación presentada en contra del General Manuel Armijo . . . 1854,” Operaciones Militares, Año de 1854, 4433/481.3/Expediente XI, AHM. Armijo refers to the 1850 grand jury granting him unconditional freedom in a letter to Donaciano Vigil, 15 December 1849, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, N.Mex., Donaciano Vigil Collection, Box 5, Folder 245.

76. References to depositions in *Formación de causa al General Manuel Armijo* and the reported acquittal of Magoffin in the (*Mexico City*) *Daily American Star* (28 October 1847) clearly suggest there was additional documents specific to charges against Magoffin, but to date none of these materials have been found in the Archivo Histórico Militar or official state newspapers; perhaps the records are available in the municipal archives of Chihuahua or Durango or in contemporary local newspapers.

77. Twitchell, *History of the Military Occupation*, 41–80, 239–44, 376–79; and Twitchell, *Leading Facts of New Mexico History*, 2:202–11.

78. Bloom, “New Mexico under Mexican Administration—VIII,” 369. Bloom’s strongly held conclusion is bolstered by citing the statement of Lt. J. W. Abert, who reports that “Mr. McGoffin” arrived at Bent’s Fort on 2 September (Bloom mistakenly wrote this date as 9 September). Bloom, however, assumes that this was James Wiley Magoffin, not one of his brothers. Cross-checking Abert’s account with Susan Magoffin’s diary, one concludes that in fact Abert was speaking of William Magoffin, who arrived in Santa Fe on 12 September. Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail*, 124.

79. William Elsey Connelley, *Doniphan’s Expedition and the Conquest of New Mexico and California* (Topeka, Kans.: The Author, 1907), 196–97, 636–37. For his part Joseph Magoffin referred Connelley to Benton’s book “and other works on the history of those times” for more details, perhaps indicating his own acceptance of the Benton version.

80. Connelley, *Doniphan’s Expedition*, 637; Winston Groom, *Kearny’s March: The Epic Creation of the American West, 1846–1847* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 248–64; and Dwight Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny: Soldier of the West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), viii.

81. Connelley, *Doniphan’s Expedition*, 637. Kearny’s biographer Dwight Clarke also points out the bias and power of Benton’s comments in influencing subsequent writers and the numerous pro-Frémont books published in the years immediately after Kearny’s death. *Stephen Watts Kearny*, viii, 139.

82. Magoffin to Marcy, 26 August 1846.

83. *Ibid.*

84. This theme plays a key role in historian Dwight Clarke’s biography of Kearny from 1961. Clarke demonstrates how Benton deliberately omitted anything about the War Department orders sent to Kearny in order to completely discredit and dishonor him. Clarke, *Stephen Watts Kearny*, viii.