

1-1-1992

A "Star Will Be Added": Miguel Antonio Otero and the Struggle for Statehood

Cynthia Secor Welsh

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

Recommended Citation

Welsh, Cynthia Secor. "A "Star Will Be Added": Miguel Antonio Otero and the Struggle for Statehood." *New Mexico Historical Review* 67, 1 (1992). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol67/iss1/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New Mexico Historical Review* by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact disc@unm.edu.

A "Star Will Be Added": Miguel Antonio Otero and the Struggle for Statehood

CYNTHIA SECOR WELSH

The Northwest Ordinance, adopted by the Federal Congress in 1789, signified the intention of the United States to expand westward and annex new regions. The legislation created a system of colonial administration to govern unsettled land possessions and to prepare them for admission to the Union. Although some historians hailed the ordinance as "the most successful experiment in the administration of colonies that the modern world" has witnessed, others revealed two of its shortcomings, particularly in its application to New Mexico.¹

First, the founding fathers intended the territorial system, as Earl S. Pomeroy has written, "for a frontier to come rather than for a frontier in being." From the outset, then, the system was unsuitable for New Mexico with its ancient Native American societies and its long colonial history under Spain and Mexico. Second, the territorial system fell

Cynthia Secor Welsh is a public historian who has been researching the Otero family for a decade. She received a master of arts in history from the University of New Mexico in 1984.

1. Clarence Carter, "Colonialism in [the] Continental United States," as quoted in Kenneth N. Owens, "Patterns and Structure in Western Territorial Politics," *Western Historical Quarterly* 1 (October 1970), 374; Earl S. Pomeroy, "The Territory as a Frontier Institution," *Historian* 7 (Autumn 1944), 41; Howard Roberts Lamar, *The Far Southwest, 1846-1912: A Territorial History* (1966; reprint ed. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1970), 8-10; Lamar, *Dakota Territory 1861-1889* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956), 1.

prey to a policy of "absolute control" by the dominant political party in the nation's capital. Congressional leaders subordinated territorial needs to the national political objectives of their party, oftentimes demanding compliance with their policies as a prerequisite for statehood. These flaws, combined with New Mexico's long-standing economic, social, and political problems delayed the territory's admission to the Union for sixty-two years. One man who worked unceasingly to reconcile his native territory's need for statehood with those of his party and the federal government was Miguel Antonio Otero, the only Hispanic governor of territorial New Mexico.²

Otero's roots in New Mexico history and politics ran deep. His grandfather, don Vicente Otero of Valencia served as a judge under the Spanish and Mexican governments before New Mexico became a territory in 1850. Likewise, two uncles, one each from his mother's and father's family, sat as justices on the New Mexico Supreme Court. More important, Otero's own father, don Miguel Antonio Otero, represented New Mexico as a territorial delegate from 1855 until 1861. Although the elder Otero retired from politics while Miguel was still an infant, his "public spirit would not permit him to turn a deaf ear to any appeal . . . coming from his native home, New Mexico."³

Following in the family footsteps, then, the younger Otero, nicknamed Gillie by his family, began his political career in 1883. At the age of twenty-four, he ran for and was elected clerk for the city of Las Vegas. Thereafter, he held several public service jobs (including probate clerk of San Miguel County [1888], county clerk and recorder [1889, 1890], and district court clerk for the Fourth Judicial District [1890-93]) in addition to participating in territorial politics and representing New Mexico as a delegate to the Republican national conventions of 1892 and 1896. In May 1897, Otero traveled to Washington hoping to be chosen marshal of the territory, but President William McKinley unexpectedly appointed him governor of New Mexico Territory instead. In Otero, President McKinley saw not only a man who could please Hispanic and Anglo residents of the territory, but a young and energetic politician who would put New Mexico's interests before his own.⁴

2. Earl S. Pomeroy, *The Territories and the United States, 1861-1890* (1947; reprint ed. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969), 94; Lamar, *Dakota*, 1-27, provides a good synthesis of United States territorial policy, and Lamar, *Far Southwest*, 6-18, includes a slightly revised discussion of the same material.

3. Miguel Antonio Otero, *My Life on the Frontier 1864-1882* (1935; reprint ed., University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 2 (hereafter cited as *My Life I*). For an overview of Otero's life and career, see Cynthia Secor Welsh, "Miguel Antonio Otero, Author and Agent for Change," the introduction to the 1987 reprint of Otero's *My Life I*.

4. For Otero's account of his appointment, see Otero, *My Nine Years as Governor of*

Having a deep-seated loyalty to New Mexico, Otero decided to take a new tack in his approach to governing the territory. From the beginning of his administration, the thirty-seven-year-old governor indicated that, unlike most of his predecessors, he would serve as the territory's advocate in Washington, rather than act as Washington's representative in New Mexico. He also dedicated himself to fighting for statehood, even though he knew that admission to the Union would come only after Americans recognized New Mexico as a progressive, fully American territory, advancing steadily into the twentieth century. To that end, he spent much of his first administration trying to modernize (and Americanize) the territory's economic, social, and political institutions while also campaigning, lobbying, and, sometimes, pleading for statehood.⁵

Although the fight for statehood in New Mexico reached a peak under the guidance of Otero during the early twentieth century, the move to gain statehood began nearly a half century prior to Otero's appointment.⁶ Even before the Compromise of 1850 and the Organic Act officially organized New Mexico as a territory in September of 1850, the southwestern region called for statehood, adopted a constitution, and elected representatives to Congress in June 1850. In 1874, New Mexico's delegate to Congress, Stephen B. Elkins, introduced statehood legislation that seemed promising until Elkins offended southern supporters by greeting a northern senator who had just castigated the South for its treatment of African Americans during Reconstruction. Congress again addressed the issue of statehood for New Mexico in 1889 and 1900, but because some Congressmen believed the territory to be a backward area peopled largely by "illiterate, superstitious, and morally delinquent" citizens, they once more denied New Mexico admission. Overcoming the "prejudice of the East against the West" became so difficult, in fact, that two men who had worked with the Utah statehood effort wrote to Otero and offered their professional services to aid New Mexico "materially in the Statehood agitation."⁷

the Territory of New Mexico, 1897-1906 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 1-5; and Otero, *My Life on the Frontier 1882-1897* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1939), 288-300 (hereafter cited as *My Life II*).

5. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 28.

6. For two brief syntheses, see Marion Dargan, "New Mexico's Fight for Statehood 1895-1912," *New Mexico Historical Review* 14 (January, April 1939), 1-33, 121-42; and Robert W. Larson, "Statehood for New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 37 (July 1962), 176-89. Two other works that concentrate on the last few years of the statehood struggle are Mary J. Masters, "New Mexico's Struggle for Statehood, 1903-1907" (master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1942), and Lamar, *Far Southwest*, 486-504.

7. Larson, "Statehood," 169; James S. Clarkson to Miguel A. Otero, November 14,

Opponents of New Mexico's admission cited several reasons for withholding statehood. The foremost were that the territory was not sufficiently "Americanized"; too many residents still spoke only Spanish; and Hispanic law, their Catholic faith, and familial traditions all hindered development of American customs.⁸ Disputants also pointed to opposition to statehood within the territory as justification for their stance. To counter such arguments, the territorial council called for a constitutional convention in 1889, eight years before Otero became governor. But the refusal of territorial voters to ratify the document weakened national support for the statehood movement. Still, this defeat did not stop statehood enthusiasts nor the growing momentum for statehood within New Mexico. In fact, Miguel A. Otero voiced his vision of New Mexico and its readiness for statehood like no governor before him; he governed and promoted with one goal in mind: statehood.⁹

Otero's position on statehood evolved considerably from the time he entered politics in 1883 until he completed his second term as governor in 1906. Indeed, in the course of the twenty-three-year period, he reversed his stance; he moved from opposing statehood to becoming a strong, active supporter of the movement. During the 1880s, Otero believed that statehood could only hinder the region. He thought that taxes would be much too heavy for the citizens to carry and that the lack of a public school system "would prove unsatisfactory to the people, generally throughout the United States." Nor was Gillie alone in this belief; many businessmen in New Mexico at this time were also convinced that dependency on the government would be best for the territory, not to mention their own businesses.¹⁰

Otero modified his position, however, before President William McKinley appointed him governor in 1897. Just as conditions in New Mexico in the late 1880s influenced Gillie's opinion on statehood, so

1901, Miguel A. Otero Papers (OP), box 1, folder 12, Special Collections Department, General Library, University of New Mexico (hereafter SCD-UNM), Albuquerque, New Mexico.

8. Larson, *New Mexico's Quest for Statehood 1846-1912* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), 215, 303-4. For a visual and verbal account of the biased perceptions Americans held of New Mexico, see Richard Melzer, "New Mexico in Caricature: Images of the Territory on the Eve of Statehood," *New Mexico Historical Review* 62 (October 1987), 335-60.

9. Larson, *Quest*, 202. For Otero's account of his role in the statehood fight, see Chapter 15, "My Part in the Movement for Statehood" in Otero, *My Nine Years, 199-222*.

10. Otero, *My Life II*, 222-23. For more information on territorial opposition to statehood, see Archie M. McDowell, "The Opposition to Statehood within the Territory of New Mexico, 1888-1903" (master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1939).

too did positive developments in the territory help explain Otero's advocacy of admission. Although New Mexico's school system was still inadequate, and higher taxes would be burdensome, the territory had nearly recovered by 1897 from the depression of the early 1890s. As of 1901 the territory had progressed sufficiently (primarily because of Governor Otero's business-like administration) to invalidate many of the long-standing eastern criticisms. Indeed, the improvements inspired a renewed optimism among citizens and seemed a "good omen for statehood."¹¹

Although some claimed Otero adopted a new view on statehood for political reasons alone, a speech he made in his hometown of Las Vegas prior to his inauguration foreshadowed his active support for the movement. After claiming that "statehood for New Mexico [was] in sight," Otero urged citizens to strive for further improvement of territorial conditions and to avoid letting "clouds and storms of local discord and disorder" delay statehood.¹² Later that month, in a letter to the Honorable E. V. Chaves of Las Vegas, Otero pledged his "every effort to promote New Mexico and [to] show Easterners that we are capable of administering our own affairs." He also called for the assistance of his fellow native New Mexicans in his endeavors to have New Mexico admitted to the Union.¹³

From the beginning of his administration, then, the governor deserved to be called a "statehood enthusiast." Yet even though early pronouncements clarified Otero's stance on statehood, his rivals accused him of opposing statehood because he did not discuss his intention to work for admission in his inaugural speech of June 14, 1897. Otero later explained that his failure to mention statehood came from

11. Larson, *Quest*, 203; "Governor's Message [to the New Mexico Legislative Assembly] 16 January 1899" in Otero, *My Nine Years*, 359-66; Inaugural Speech of June 22, 1901, OP, box 1, folder 11, SCD-UNM; *Albuquerque Journal Democrat*, October 8, 1901, as quoted in Dargan, "New Mexico's Fight," 9. For a summary of Otero's achievements in office, see Cynthia Secor-Welsh, "Governor Miguel Antonio Otero, 1897-1906: Agent for Change" (master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1984), 40-73.

12. Pre-inaugural speech of June 12, 1897, OP, box 4, folder 7, SCD-UNM; Dargan, "New Mexico's Fight," 24-25. Because of Otero's early position on statehood, his political enemies were not always so sure that the governor had really changed. Catron argued that territorial officials "would throw it overboard in order to hold their offices." Although the *Albuquerque Weekly News* recognized Otero as a statehood enthusiast, it did not fail to comment that "unfortunately, our governors with some notable exceptions heretofore have been for statehood when their terms expired, but showed no disposition to do anything that might cut short their tenure in office."

13. Otero to E. V. Chaves, June 21, 1897, Marion Dargan Papers, SCD-UNM (hereafter cited as Dargan Papers).

the surprise of being appointed governor and his inclination to celebrate rather than to "think out policies to be pursued during my administration."¹⁴ More important, before Otero left office in January 1906, he managed to reorient the debate on statehood. No longer were residents and Congress wondering if the territory should be admitted; rather they were contemplating how and when New Mexico Territory would become a state.

Otero realized that many doubts of Easterners about New Mexico came from their "persistent misunderstanding" of conditions in the territory. Tourists were more attracted, he observed, to the "novel and abnormal" and therefore eager to photograph or "press the button upon every burro" they met and to "catch the features of a worthless old Indian [!]" than to understand society and culture in New Mexico.¹⁵ Consequently, visitors returned to their homes convinced that they knew the territory and that it was indeed unfit for statehood; but their impressions were misleading. To correct these misperceptions, Governor Otero decided to educate the public by presenting a clear picture—and his version—of New Mexico in his annual reports to the secretary of the interior.

Although all territorial governors were required to submit annual reports, Otero's became known for their comprehensiveness and detail. Aside from making a plea for statehood in each annual report, Gillie gave a graphic description of the resources, institutions, and prospects of the territory.¹⁶ He gathered information by writing to public officials and business representatives and requested specific information on topics with which his correspondents were familiar. For example, for his report of 1901, Otero wrote forty-four individuals, asking them to discuss one of seventeen topics for the county in which they resided or worked. The governor then compiled the information into reports ranging from 300 to 500 pages. Otero believed these reports to be of such importance that he even asked the legislative assembly to penalize those officials who were delinquent in filing their responses.¹⁷

14. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 200.

15. Arizona Statehood Convention Speech, October 1901, OP, box 4, folder 11, SCD-UNM; Otero, *My Nine Years*, 391–93.

16. Dargan, "New Mexico's Fight," 25; Otero, *Governor's Report of New Mexico to the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897–1905). These reports are also included in the microfilm edition of the Territorial Archives of New Mexico (TANM), reels 148, 149. Copies of the microfilm TANM are located at SCD-UNM and the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives (NMSRCA), Santa Fe, New Mexico; Otero, *My Nine Years*, 199–200.

17. Otero Correspondence Sent, 1901, TANM, reel 142, frames 500–544; "Message

As a result, the government printing office commented that Otero's reports were the best ever submitted. Eastern papers often quoted from the publications, usually citing the governor's pleas for statehood. Territorial papers also complimented Otero for his efforts since they realized the reports, widely distributed by the New Mexico Bureau of Immigration, would help statehood efforts by dispelling erroneous notions Easterners held about New Mexico.¹⁸ These reports, then, became an important component of Otero's fight for statehood.

The governor also fought for admission in his speeches and private conversations. A charming man and well accepted in Washington society, Otero used his connections there to further New Mexico's cause.¹⁹ Gillie gave interviews, made appearances before congressional committees, and conversed with congressmen and other officials on the importance of giving New Mexico statehood.²⁰ For example, in December 1899, Otero and Governor N. O. Murphy of Arizona convinced four Washington politicians, including Senator George L. Shoup of Idaho, chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories, to make an impromptu tour of the two territories. Such an inspection, Otero hoped, would allow them to witness firsthand the social and economic advances made in New Mexico and Arizona.

Despite the unofficial nature of the congressmen's investigation, the press hailed the visit as a major accomplishment on Otero's part. Never before had a committee come to New Mexico to confer with its citizens about statehood. The *Albuquerque Citizen* also commented that even if admission were delayed for another year or two, "credit will nevertheless be due to Governor Otero, for he has made the way smoother for succeeding efforts to have the territory admitted as a state."²¹

One year later, Otero continued his campaign to publicize New

of Miguel A. Otero, Governor of the Territory of New Mexico to the 36th Legislative Assembly," January 16, 1905 (Santa Fe: New Mexican Printing Co., 1905), 201. Otero's messages to the Legislative Assemblies are also found in the microfilm edition of TANM, reel 150.

18. *Dona Ana County Republican*, February 5, 1900, as quoted in Otero, *My Nine Years*, 199.

19. *Albuquerque Citizen*, December 25, 1899; Charles Edgar Maddox, "The Statehood Policy of Albert J. Beveridge; 1901-1911" (master's thesis, University of New Mexico, 1938), 28. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 286-303. Chapter 21, entitled "I Visit the States," details several instances when the governor campaigned for New Mexico and statehood. Otero also took the opportunity to inform readers about the extent of his popularity in the East.

20. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, January 17, 1902.

21. *Albuquerque Citizen*, December 25, 1899.

Mexico's right to become a state. While serving as a delegate to the Republican National Convention at Philadelphia, Otero and the territorial delegation "talked and entertained for New Mexico." They hoped their efforts would bring about an endorsement for statehood in the party platform, and, fortunately, they achieved their purpose.²²

When New Mexico showed itself to be a solidly Republican territory in the landslide election of November 1900, Otero again carried his demands for admission to Washington. In a speech presented at the White House in December 1900, the governor asserted that because New Mexico had "loyally borne the burdens and sufferings of war in [the Union's] behalf, and because of the territory's rapid progress, she could "confidently ask Congress to admit us as a sovereign state . . . with a right to share in its glories and triumphs."²³ Otero's demands could have undermined his gubernatorial career at this point, for President McKinley did not openly favor admission, despite his election on a statehood plank. Reckoning New Mexico's devotion to Republican policies would appeal to Congress, however, Otero risked his good relations with McKinley and demonstrated his support for the statehood struggle.

Otero found another reason to promote statehood in 1901: it helped him lobby for his reappointment as governor. In fact, one territorial newspaper argued that Otero deserved reappointment because his policies and efforts had placed New Mexico "on the home stretch toward the statehood wire."²⁴ After McKinley offered Otero a second four-year commission, the governor devoted much of his energy to the question, beginning with his inauguration speech of June 22, 1901. A quick study, Otero avoided the mistakes of his first inaugural address and stressed the importance of continued progress for the territory. His speech, a mixture of purple prose and flag-waving rhetoric, became almost ominous when he concluded:

I firmly believe that my term will be ended by our admission as a sovereign state of the grand union and that another white star will be added to that glorious constellation that floats on the azure field above us, whose luster will not be dimmed nor its glory diminished by any of those which have been placed there before, for New

22. Dargan, "New Mexico's Fight," 26-27.

23. Speeches delivered by Miguel A. Otero at the White House, Washington, D.C., December 1900, and Las Vegas, New Mexico, December 1900, both in OP, box 4, folder 10, SCD-UNM.

24. *Chama Tribune* as quoted in Spring 1901 edition of the *San Marcial Bee*, LeBaron Bradford Prince Papers (PP), box 1, folder 8, NMSRCA, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Mexico has always been progressive, aggressive and more than loyal to the United States and its flag under whose protecting folds it came fifty-one years ago.²⁵

Shortly before his reappointment, Otero welcomed to his ranks a valuable ally in the fight for admission, Bernard S. ("Statehood") Rodey. Chosen by voters in the local elections of 1900 to replace Pedro Perea as territorial delegate to Congress, Rodey was an Irishman who came to New Mexico in 1881 as a private secretary to the general manager of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad Company. After his arrival, he studied law, was admitted to the bar, and became a successful lawyer. Although Rodey began his political career in Bernalillo County, he soon became popular throughout the territory because of his strong stance on statehood. Thus, an idealistic Rodey and a realistic Otero, much like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, set out with zeal and confidence in their mission to win statehood for New Mexico. As Robert Larson noted in his definitive history of New Mexico's statehood fight, Otero and Rodey "began a tremendous effort which literally whipped the [local] opposition into submission."²⁶

From 1901 on, Otero stumped vigorously for statehood inside and outside New Mexico. He not only aimed his remarks at Washington, but at complacent territorial residents as well, intent on spurring them into active support for the statehood drive. He first imbued them with an optimism about New Mexico's future by citing constantly the improvements in the territory's economic, social, and political conditions. As examples he pointed to increased funding for education, retirement of the territorial deficit, an increase in newspaper production, a decrease in illiteracy, an influx of mining and industrial companies, better administration of public lands, and the creation of regulatory agencies such as a Territorial Board of Medicine and a Territorial Board of Education. With a subtle change in his own rhetoric, the governor then inspired New Mexicans to fight for sovereignty, instead of just asking for statehood. Otero claimed that the United States Constitution and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo *guaranteed* New Mexico's right to

25. Second Inaugural Speech, June 22, 1901, Santa Fe, New Mexico, OP, box 4, folder 11, SCD-UNM; Otero, *My Nine Years*, 385-87.

26. Ralph E. Twitchell, *Leading Facts of New Mexican History*, 5 vols. (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Torch Press, 1912), 2:543, n. 454; Larson, *Quest*, 198-99; *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 14, 1900, and Otero, *My Nine Years*, 135-41. Of all the sources, Larson provides the best treatment of Rodey, his actions, and his significance.

become a state, a right the territory acquired as a result of General Stephen Watts Kearny's conquest of New Mexico in 1846.²⁷

On another occasion, the governor asked New Mexicans to voice their enthusiasm for statehood. Gillie reminisced in his autobiography that he and Governor Murphy of Arizona decided in January 1901 to organize conventions in their respective territories to promote and publicize the statehood movement. They agreed to hold the meetings in October, one following the other, so that each governor could speak at both conventions. The New Mexico assembly convened in Albuquerque on October 15, 1901, in conjunction with the territorial fair. Otero's speech, the *Santa Fe New Mexican* reported, was forceful and impressive. The governor "fearlessly told the delegates from every county . . . where the trouble was located and called on them to do their duty." Otero also asserted, according to the newspaper, that those people afraid of the added expenses and responsibilities statehood would bring were "unworthy of American manhood."²⁸

Four days later, Gillie traveled to Arizona to make the same appeal to citizens there. His speeches at Ash Fork, Prescott, and Phoenix received warm welcomes from residents and newspapers alike. Otero later recalled that Arizonans' enthusiasm brought tears to his eyes, gave him a touch of "buck fever," and made him wish for "three fingers of good brandy."²⁹ In general the governor concentrated on the improvements in both territories, but he also spoke against those who degraded New Mexico's Hispanic residents. Realizing Arizona's Anglo-dominated and sometimes nativistic population might not have been willing to work with New Mexico's Hispanics, Otero hoped his remarks would prevent dissension.³⁰ In short, the governor sought to solidify the organization and cohesiveness New Mexico and Arizona would need to push their claims through Congress.

Despite what might have been a delicate situation, Otero's statements and character made him very popular with Arizona's inhabitants, especially those whom a reporter called "society buds." The ladies' interest in Otero prompted a press correspondent from Phoenix to suggest to Otero that he "move to Arizona and advocate suffrage for the fair ones." Although such information does little to illustrate

27. Post-inaugural speech, June 1901, East Las Vegas, New Mexico, OP, box 4, folder 11, SCD-UNM; Speech, "Placing the Kearney Stone," August 1901, Santa Fe, New Mexico, OP, box 4, folder 11, SCD-UNM.

28. Larson, *Quest*, 203, recounts the statehood convention and Rodey's contributions to the meeting. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 205-7.

29. *Ibid.*, 207-11.

30. Larson, *Quest*, 244.

Gillie's efforts in behalf of the statehood fight, it attests to the governor's popularity, a quality that probably helped New Mexico's statehood efforts as much as his actions.³¹

A more important outcome of the gatherings was the conventioners' request that the governor appoint a statehood delegation to present to Congress the series of resolutions drawn up at the New Mexico convention. In January 1902, Otero, Rodey, and part of the statehood delegation traveled to Washington to appear before the House Committee on Territories. Admittedly, Otero's priority in Washington was to seek Senate confirmation of Theodore Roosevelt's reappointment of himself as governor. At the same time, however, the territorial leader hoped to press the delegation's claims "in as strong a manner as possible." When a larger statehood delegation from New Mexico went to Washington in February, Otero wanted the Committee on Territories to listen carefully to the delegation's presentation and requests.³²

Although Otero (and Rodey) led statehood efforts in 1901 and 1902, they also received help from Dr. Nathan E. Boyd. A major investor in the Rio Grande Dam and Irrigation Company, Boyd feared New Mexico's territorial status would hinder her claim to the water resources of the Rio Grande. Texas, Mexico, and New Mexico all were disputing division of those resources in the Elephant Butte Dam controversy then raging in Congress. Boyd and his allies spoke before the House Committee on Territories on February 8, 1902, urging statehood so that the territory could protect itself from outside powers. In his speech, Boyd reminded the committee of Governor Otero's pleas for statehood in his annual report of 1901 and in a presentation Gillie made before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Boyd even published his appeal to end "the handicaps caused by territorial government" so that Rio Grande water rights and agricultural interests might be protected and New Mexico could advance the cause of statehood.³³

31. Lloyd Damron to Otero, November 3, 1901, OP, box 1, folder 12, SCD-UNM.

32. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, January 17, 1902. McKinley had reappointed Otero in June 1901, but the president was assassinated before his appointments had been confirmed in Congress. As a consequence, Theodore Roosevelt had to resubmit the appointments when he took office. Otero's political enemies leapt at this second opportunity to have him removed from office. First, they filed complaints with the president, and then they launched a smear campaign to block Senate confirmation. For more information on Otero's reappointment battles, see Secor-Welsh, "Miguel Antonio Otero" (thesis), 113-27.

33. Nathan E. Boyd, *Statehood for New Mexico, Arguments on Behalf of New Mexico's Admission into the Union and in Defense of the Territory's Inherent Right to the Waters of Her Streams* (Washington, D.C.: Judd and Detweiler Printers, 1902), 4, 12, 13. See Otero, *My Nine Years*, 28-34, for his description of the water fight.

By 1902, then, the demands of New Mexicans had become so strong that Congress again seriously debated admittance for the territory. On May 7, 1902, the House began consideration of the Knox Bill, a bill presented by William S. Knox of Massachusetts, chairman of the House Committee on Territories. Knox's proposed legislation was an omnibus bill that provided for the admission of New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma all at once. After only two days of debate, the House passed the measure and sent it on to the Senate.³⁴

The Senate's debate on the Knox Bill soon crushed New Mexico's jubilation over the House's decision. In particular, Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana threatened the success of the omnibus bill, eventually filibustering it to prevent action upon the bill. Beveridge used many methods to delay the bill, but his most famous ploy was his investigative visit to the territories in 1902.³⁵

Beveridge arrived in New Mexico on November 12, 1902, and began what turned out to be a very biased and brief investigation. Of course, Otero participated in the senator's "flying trip" because of the governor's official duties, but Beveridge excluded Otero from any of the discussions or interviews. Luckily, most New Mexico citizens voiced their support of statehood, but Beveridge encouraged those opposed to the movement and expressed doubt that native New Mexicans could govern themselves. Beveridge obviously opposed statehood for New Mexico, and had before he arrived, because of his nativistic outlook and also because he feared the growing political and economic power of the West. On his return to Congress, Beveridge argued New Mexico was still too "Mexican" to be given the privilege of self-government. In the mind of the powerful and imperialistic Senator Beveridge, New Mexico was no more ready for statehood than Puerto Rico or the Philippines, the two colonial possessions of the United States. When the Senate later defeated the bill, an angered but determined Otero "took to the stump again" (within and outside the territory) to keep alive the desire for statehood.³⁶

Between 1902 and 1905 Otero spoke on behalf of statehood at most of his public appearances. In Washington he argued for New Mexico's constitutional right to statehood, and at home he exhorted represen-

34. Larson, *Quest*, 205-7; Masters, "New Mexico's Struggle," 7.

35. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 215, 321; Larson, "Statehood," 181-82; Masters, "New Mexico's Struggle," 7-8; Maddox, "Statehood Policy of Beveridge," 39-48. Maddox's thesis presents a balanced view of Beveridge and tries to place the senator in the context of his times.

36. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 212-15; Maddox, "Statehood Policy of Beveridge," 6-7, 10-11, 35, 48-56; Lamar, *Far Southwest*, 490-92; Larson, *Quest*, 207-12, 215-24.

tatives of the territorial legislative assembly to write legislation illustrating New Mexico's loyalty and readiness for self-government.³⁷ At the same time, Governor Otero sought a broader audience for his message. He decided that the St. Louis World's Fair of 1904 would be just the sort of platform from which to advertise New Mexico. In particular, Otero resolved to mount an informative and impressive exhibit to counter the "evidence" Beveridge's "slumming expedition" (as Otero called the congressional visit) had presented to Congress and the nation.

Also known as the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, the St. Louis World's Fair, like other such fairs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, served as a vehicle for establishing a national culture. Initially organized to boost the economic development of the Louisiana Purchase region, the international exposition also "provided manufacturing and commercial interests with opportunities to promote the mass consumption of their products"; the ice cream cone and the hot dog were two items introduced at the St. Louis Fair. Even more important, fair directors intended the exhibits they organized to be the "university of the masses." Through entertaining and provocative displays, they wanted to exhibit and promote (what they perceived to be) the progress made in all aspects of American society. To advance the cause of imperialism, they contrasted the American displays with those from less-developed nations or regions to better focus the "vision of America's racial and material progress." Fair organizers, concluded one historian, also encouraged a cultural hegemony that exalted progress through change, industrial capitalism, and, most of all, Americanism. Perceiving the importance of the fair early on, Otero believed chances for statehood might increase dramatically if New Mexico could prove to the nation how American it had become.³⁸

37. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 24, 1902; *Message of Governor Miguel A. Otero to the 34th Legislative Assembly (Message to 34th LA)*, January 21, 1901 (Albuquerque: Democrat Publishing Co., 1901), 13; *Message to the 35th LA*, January 19, 1903, 60; *Message to the 36th LA*, January 16, 1905, 36. Speech delivered by Miguel A. Otero at opening of 23rd Annual Territorial Fair, October 13, 1903, Albuquerque, New Mexico, OP, box 4, folder 13, SCD-UNM; Otero, *My Nine Years*, 323-24.

38. John Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions* (London: Studio Vista, 1977), 110-14, gives an overview of the St. Louis World's Fair. Much more detailed and scholarly is Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876-1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 2-8, 178, 182. The chapter devoted to the Louisiana Purchase Exposition (154-83) not only provides a physical description of the fairgrounds, but thoroughly discusses the Philippine exhibit there and its significance. In short, the exhibit paralleled New Mexico's in that it "hinged on the contrast between 'savagery' and 'civilization'" and the "grades of culture" in between.

The New Mexico Board of Managers of the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, appointed by Otero in 1903, "labored untiringly" to gather a display of the territory's resources and achievements that would be a credit to New Mexico and the "great Exposition." "With an eye single to the purpose of displaying 'New Mexico of Today,' instead of featuring the territory as a land of relics and curios," the board organized educational, mineral, horticultural, and agricultural exhibits in addition to supervising the construction of a New Mexico building. The mineral exhibit received some of the most positive reviews because New Mexicans reproduced a working turquoise mine; while the agricultural and horticultural displays illustrated the advances made possible with irrigation.³⁹

At the New Mexico building, territorial residents rested, entertained visitors, and, most importantly, distributed copies of *The Land of Sunshine, A Handbook of the Resources, Products, Industries and Climate of New Mexico*. Ironically, the Board of Managers chose the California Mission style of architecture for their building, afraid, no doubt, that the native Pueblo style would seem too unrefined to fairgoers. (Visitors to New Mexico often expressed dislike for its "mud houses.") In short, the "New Mexico exhibit was designed essentially for the purpose of . . . [attracting] people to a section rich in undeveloped resources, . . . and mak[ing] for themselves and their descendants a home in the everlasting sunshine and the pure, life-giving air of the Rocky mountain plateau."⁴⁰

Although New Mexico's exhibits focused on advances made in the territory, its rich cultural heritage was not ignored. The Board of Managers also oversaw an extensive collection of ethnographic materials placed in the Anthropological Building at the fair. New Mexico's display of these artifacts filled an entire thirty-two by forty-five-foot room and attracted the attention of scientists and anthropologists from all parts of the world. Nevertheless, these artifacts, like the many Pueblo, Apache, and Navajo Indians who went to St. Louis to demonstrate their cultures and life-styles, were exhibited as examples of the old New Mexico, one untouched by modernization. Territorial citizens could point to this aspect of their history, they believed, because they had progressed beyond that stage. As a result, New Mexicans, like anthropologists at

39. Otero, *Governor's Report of New Mexico to the Secretary of the Interior, 1904* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905), 281-85, or reel 149, frames 854-56, TANM, SCD-UNM.

40. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 18, 19, 1904; *Governor's Report, 1904*, 282-83.

the time, began to romanticize the Native American way of life; Indians became a "valued part of a fading, rustic landscape."⁴¹

New Mexico's exhibit at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition culminated in New Mexico Day at the fair on November 18, 1904. Otero, his family, and a number of prominent citizens from the territory traveled to St. Louis to take part in the festivities. The governor presented one of his strongest speeches yet on New Mexico's right to statehood and began his eight-page discourse by tracing the history of the territory and its political and economic links to the Louisiana Purchase. In addition, Otero focused on the advances New Mexico had made, and because of this progress, he argued, admission could not be prevented on the grounds that the territory was still backward. In a rather bitter attack, he declared that New Mexico, Arizona, Oklahoma, and the Indian Territory were the "sole remnants of feudal dependencies, and the ancient un-American theory of Territories. . . ." He reminded his audience of New Mexico's loyalty to the United States during the Civil and Spanish American Wars, and at the same time pointed to the injustice of Spanish-speaking New Mexicans teaching Filipinos "the theory of government which they have been denied to exercise at home." Otero concluded by appealing to the states created from the Louisiana Purchase area for their help in promoting statehood for the remaining territories "who invoke it as a political right to participate actively in the Government 'of the people, by the people, and for the people.'"⁴²

Equally important, from Otero's perspective, was the last campaign he mounted for statehood before the end of his administration. Ironically, this campaign found Otero fighting against a congressional bill to admit New Mexico to the Union. He opposed the "jointure bill," as it was known, because it provided for New Mexico's admission by combining it with Arizona to form one state, possibly under the name Montezuma. Originally introduced by the Honorable Jesse Overstreet of Indiana, the bill was at first rejected but later reintroduced and supported by New Mexico's statehood foe, Albert J. Beveridge.⁴³ Whereas

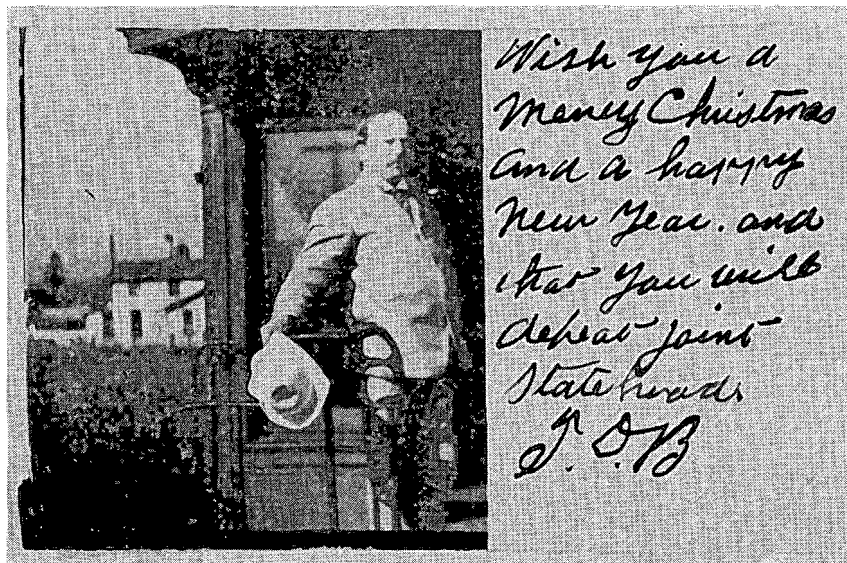
41. *Governor's Report*, 1904, 285; Robert A. Trennert, "Fairs, Expositions, and the Changing Image of Southwestern Indians, 1876-1904," *New Mexico Historical Review* 62 (April 1987), 150.

42. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 19, 1904; Louisiana Purchase Exposition Speech, November 18, 1904, St. Louis, Missouri, OP, box 4, folder 13, SCD-UNM.

43. Larson, "Statehood for New Mexico," 178-86; Larson, *Quest*, 207-16. Beveridge was, unsurprisingly, an unpopular figure in New Mexico. His cursory survey of the territory in November 1902 and his subsequent derogatory committee report brought him criticism from not only New Mexico and Arizona, but from the newspaper of his



Hand-addressed post card from T. D. Burns to Governor Miguel A. Otero at the New Willard Hotel in Washington, D.C., postmarked December 26, 1904. Burns, a considerable political force in northern New Mexico, shared Otero's enthusiasm for single statehood.



Burns' message to Otero mentions the desire of both men to defeat the "joint statehood" issue. Document courtesy of the Center for Southwestern Research, General Library, University of New Mexico.

some Senate and House leaders favored this proposal because it would maintain a balance of power in Congress, New Mexicans and Arizonans disliked the idea for a number of reasons. They agreed that the major centers of population were too far from one another to be governed by one capital (Santa Fe) and, more important, that Arizona's tradition of common law and Anglo citizens would conflict with New Mexico's tradition of civil law and Hispanic inhabitants.⁴⁴ Otero further countered that jointure was "unfair" and "unwise" and that single statehood would come if people would only be patient.

Yet patience was not a virtue most New Mexicans valued. In fact, the *Albuquerque Citizen* called Otero and his supporters "the fossils of Santa Fe" and alleged that "having knocked out statehood the fossils at Santa Fe will doze another three hundred years." Nevertheless, Otero continued his vigil against jointure, which became a very lonely endeavor before the end of his administration. His efforts to fight joint statehood included speaking against the bill in the national capital, sympathizing with Arizona's declarations against the proposal and one (unsuccessful) effort to dissuade President Roosevelt from supporting jointure. In any case, joint statehood bills were introduced in Congress in 1904 and 1905, causing Otero to intensify his attacks against jointure. Finding himself increasingly in the minority, however, Otero hoped that the Foraker Amendment to the 1904 and 1905 bills (that allowed each territory to hold a referendum on the issue) would prevent the consolidation of New Mexico and Arizona.⁴⁵

The repeated refusals of the Congress to act positively on single statehood for New Mexico led disillusioned and anxious New Mexicans to reconsider jointure. Because territorial policy required territories to be in line with national republican policy, some territorial residents started advocating jointure to prove their loyalty to Congress. Aware of the strong opposition to the proposal in Arizona, supporters in New Mexico correctly believed their neighboring territory would reject the bill in their referendum and thus prevent jointure. (In November 1906, Arizonans voted against jointure by a margin of more than four to one.) These advocates felt confident Congress might admit New Mexico anyway for her fealty to the measure and to Congress. Much to Otero's

home state as well. The *Indianapolis Sentinel* "editorially attacked the logic of his report," as Larson presents in *Quest*, 216. For a thorough synthesis of the jointure movement, see *ibid.*, chapter 14, "The Jointure Movement," 226-52.

44. Larson, *Quest*, 244.

45. Larson, "Statehood," 182; Otero, *My Nine Years*, 215-22. For details on Otero's relationship with Theodore Roosevelt, see Chapter 23, "TR As I Knew Him," 314-31.

chagrin, delegate Bernard Rodey became the strongest proponent of joint-statehood in 1904 for just this reason; Rodey believed that the risk of becoming part of a state was better than continuing as a dissenting territory. Consequently, the harmony that had existed between Otero and Rodey was gone, and a feud raged in its place.⁴⁶

The split between the two men could not be isolated, and division soon racked the Republican party in New Mexico as the election for territorial delegate in 1904 demonstrated. In order to consolidate his power in the face of a political feud, Otero switched his support from Rodey to William H. "Bull" Andrews for territorial delegate. A former state senator from Pennsylvania, Andrews won Otero's confidence because he supported single statehood and because of his strong political ties with anti-jointure senators such as Matthew Quay and Boies Penrose of Pennsylvania and Orville Platt of New York. The governor chose to ignore Andrews' shady political past and led such an extensive campaign tour that Andrews won the election.⁴⁷

Although Andrews' win appeared to be a vote for Otero's leadership and his stance on single statehood, the governor's support of the new delegate proved to be political suicide. The governor's switch to Andrews caused such extensive factionalism within the Republican party in New Mexico that members of the national Republican party, President Roosevelt in particular, became very disgruntled with Otero's administration. As a result, Roosevelt used the feuding as one reason for not reappointing Otero to a third term as governor. Thus, Miguel Otero completed his administration on January 22, 1906, with the jointure question still undecided and the battle for statehood incomplete.⁴⁸

Otero's nine years of work for statehood were not in vain, however. The governor succeeded in quieting opposition to statehood from within the territory, and, as New Mexico's best public relations officer, he greatly improved the territory's image throughout the nation. In opposing joint statehood, he roused sentiment against jointure in other states and enlisted the help of powerful figures such as Colorado Senator Henry M. Teller, also known as the "Defender of the West." And although corrupt business dealings marked Andrews' term as delegate, his political ties immeasurably furthered the statehood cause. Indeed, with the aid of Andrews' allies, New Mexico succeeded in having

46. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 218; Larson, *Quest*, 230, 232; Jay J. Wagoner, *Arizona Territory, 1863-1912: A Political History* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980), 439.

47. Otero, *My Nine Years*, 223-39; Larson, *Quest*, 230-31.

48. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 24, 1905, Otero to W. Scott Smith, November 25, 1905, OP, box 2, volume 9, SCD-UNM; Otero, *My Nine Years*, 335.

Congress pass an enabling act, which President Taft signed on June 20, 1910.⁴⁹

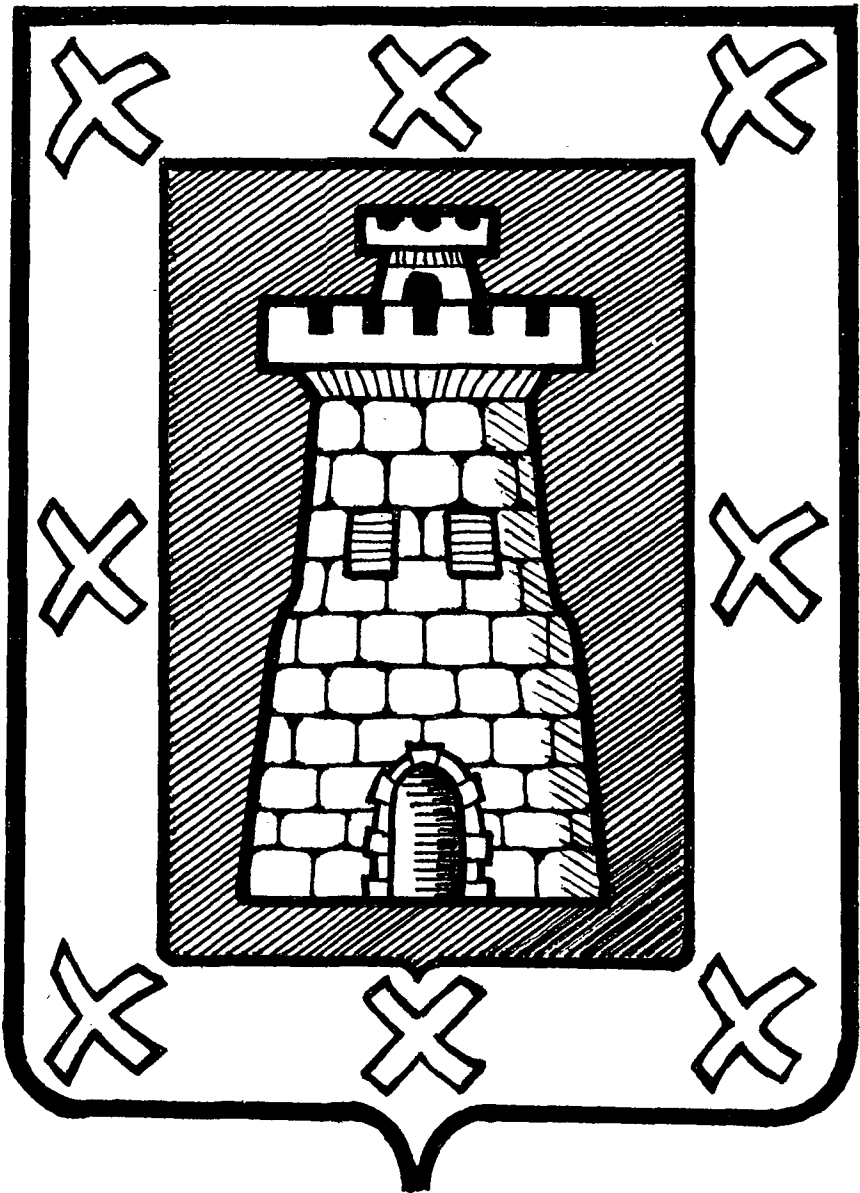
Fourteen months later, Otero's prediction that "a star would be added" came true. On August 21, 1911 (ten years later than he forecasted), a flag with forty-eight stars, the forty-seventh representing New Mexico, flew for the first time over the capitol in Santa Fe. Hoisted in place by twelve-year-old Madeline Mills, the flag was a gift from Otero to William J. Mills, the last territorial governor of New Mexico. Meanwhile, the whistle at the *Santa Fe New Mexican* signaled that President Taft had signed a bill that approved New Mexico's constitution and called for an election of state officials.⁵⁰

That evening at a celebration on the plaza, Otero and his former colleagues reveled in New Mexico's victory. When he spoke to the crowd gathered there, he extended thanks to the president, the Congress, and Delegate Andrews. Ever the promoter (although now of himself), he then "sketched briefly the efforts that had been made to get statehood during his administration and of the numerous promises that had been made in Washington." As the night ended, perhaps Otero felt some regret that statehood had not come during his administration; that his days as New Mexico's "knight errant" had not produced immediate results. More likely, however, he rejoiced in the knowledge that his constant boosting and campaigning contributed to a different (if not altogether accurate) vision of New Mexico that allowed it to become a single state, at long last free to be itself.⁵¹

49. Otero to Henry M. Teller, August 1, 1906, OP, box 2, folder 2; Larson, *Quest*, 253-71. Also, George Curry and H. B. Henning, eds., *George Curry, 1861-1947, An Autobiography* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1958), 189-91.

50. *Santa Fe New Mexican*, August 21, 1911.

51. *Ibid.*, August 22, 1911.



Coat of Arms of the Otero family, as represented in Alberto y Arturo Garcia Carraffa, *Diccionario Heraldico y Genealogico de Apellidos Espanoles y Americanos* (Madrid: Nueva Imprenta Radio, S. A., 1956). Drawing by William R. Rector.