Oil and the Federal Presence in New Mexico

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On Your Own

Introduction

If you are interested in exploring some of the topics discussed in the entries, you can access useful information on the internet as well as in books. Some entry points for each resource are discussed below.

The World Wide Web

New Mexicans’ experiences in the statehood period can be researched through the University of New Mexico’s University Libraries electronic Rocky Mountain Online Archive at http://rmoa.unm.edu.

For voice recordings of many U.S. presidents, including from Teddy Roosevelt through Calvin Coolidge (1900-1928), go to www.lib.msu.edu/vincent. For other audio and video recordings from this period as well as a gateway to other presidential materials, including State of the Union Addresses, see www.presidentsusa.net.

The Library of Congress has a portion of its sizable collection online. Go to http://memory.loc.gov and pick from among the eighteen categories listed. For example, under the entry “Environment, Conservation” is an outstanding collection of materials organized chronologically tracing “The Evolution of the Conservation Movement.” Three sections cover the years 1901-1920. Or click on “Government and Law” to view very good materials on the years 1918-1920 under the entry “World War I and 1920 Election.” Also in this section is a particularly rich set of entries on the “Coolidge Era.” Each of the eighteen topical entries has some information for the period 1900-1930.
Also at the Library of Congress’s website is a large photographic collection. Twenty photographs of Hobbs, taken in 1940 by Russell Lee for the Farm Security Administration, are found at www.loc.gov/rr/print/html, then click on “Search the Catalog” and type in the key words “Hobbs, New Mexico.” Although Lee visited Hobbs a dozen years after its first major oil strike, these photographs are the most complete visual record available of this early New Mexico “oil boom town.”

Tenement housing attracted much attention from Progressive era reformers. To view a tenement house and trace its history from the 1860s to the 1930s and see the impact legislation had in forcing improvements, go to www.tenement.org. A peek at popular culture through the earliest movies is provided at www.hfmgv.org. Click on “Explore and Learn,” then “Online Exhibits,” then “Your Place in Time: 20th Century America,” and click on “The Progressive Generation” and finally click on “The Nickelodeon” to view very early movies.

A selection of Jack London’s fiction and nonfiction, including essays on socialism, can be read online at www.london.somoma.edu/Writings.

Visit the very complete website of the American Oil and Gas Historical Society at www.aoghs.org for a portal to a number of important historical and contemporary topics. Click on “Museum Links” to go to a list of petroleum museums in America. Under New Mexico, you will find information about the exhibit “From Dinosaurs to Drill Bites” at the Farmington Museum. You can also see a photograph of the Navajo Nation’s Rattlesnake Derrick. Under the entries for Pennsylvania, go to “Oil 150” to see the official website of the upcoming 150th commemoration of oil’s discovery. To read an account published by National Geographic in 1920 about the history and future prospects of oil, go to www.hubbertpeak.com/history/ng20feb.htm. For an example of turn-of-the-
century “boosterism” in Los Angeles with an ad promoting oil as an investment, see www.ulwaf.com/LA-1900s/index04.html and click on February 1900.

An invaluable legal overview of the Teapot Dome scandal is found at www.brookings.edu/gs/ic/teapotdome/teapotdome.htm [yes, teapotdome appears twice]. For a concise, one-minute summary of the Senate investigation that has intriguing details see www.senate.gov and then click on “Art and History” and click on “Historical Minute Essays,” and under 1921-1940 select “Senate Investigates the Teapot Dome Scandal.” Senator Walsh published a brief account of his views on the investigation in Forum Magazine in July 1924. It can read at www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAwalshTJ.htm.

Bibliographic Essay


Two authors’ books proved particularly helpful as I wrestled with how to place New Mexico’s economic development in the wider context of the origin of the welfare state and


Information on New Mexico’s economic development from 1848 to 1920 is drawn from many accounts, but particularly useful were the following seven books: José A. Rivera, *Acequia Culture: Water, Land, and Community in the Southwest* (University of New Mexico Press, 1998); Robert W. Frazer, *Forts and Supplies: The Role of the Army in the Economy of the Southwest, 1846-1861* (University of New Mexico Press, 1983); David F. Myrick, *New Mexico’s Railroads: A Historical Survey* (revised edition; University of New Mexico Press, 1990); Victor Westphal, *Thomas Benton Catron* (University of Arizona Press, 1973); David L. Caffey, *Frank Springer and New Mexico: From the Colfax County War to the Emergence of Modern Santa Fe* (Texas A&M University Press, 2006); Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (Norton, 1987); Richard White, “It’s Your Misfortune and None of My Own”: *A History of the American West* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991);


The “Age of the Automobile” has attracted much interest, but my main sources were these two books: James J. Flick, *The Car Culture* (The MIT Press, 1975) and Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (reprint edition; University of New Mexico Press, 1992).