
Annotated Bibliography of Santa Fe Trail Classics

The works in this group are the generally acclaimed classics on the Santa Fe Trail, plus those contemporary and modern works that are basic to the study of the subject. Listed here is the core library for the serious student. This list is also presented on the Association website at www.santafetrail.org

Abert, James William. Report of Lt. J. W. Abert on His Examination of New Mexico in the Years 1846-47. 30 Cong., 1 sess., House Exec. Doc. No. 31. Washington, 1848. Excellent impressions of the trail during the Mexican War.

Atherton, Lewis E. "Business Techniques in the Santa Fe Trade." *Missouri Historical Review*, 34 (1940): 335-41. Detailed account of merchant-trader business techniques.

Becknell, Thomas. "The Journals of Captain Thomas Becknell from Boon's Lick to Santa Fe," *Missouri Historical Review*, 4 (1910): 65-84. The original account of the pioneering expeditions to Santa Fe.

Bieber, Ralph P. "Some Aspects of the Santa Fe Trade." *Missouri Historical Review*, 18 (1924): 158-66. Best brief synthesis of the period 1848-80.

Brayer, Garnet M., ed. *Land of Enchantment, "Memoirs of Marian Russell Along the Santa Fe Trail."* Evanston, 1954. A beautiful and sensitive account of trail experiences, with excellent descriptions of Santa Fe, Fort Union, and Camp Nichols in the fifties and sixties.

Chittenden, Hiram Martin. *The American Fur Trade of the Far West*. 2 vols. Stanford, 1954. Academic Reprints edition. Chapters 27 through 31, vol. 2, provide a very good summary of the early history and international trade periods of the trail.

Davis, W. W. H. *El Gringo, or New Mexico and Her People*. Santa Fe, 1938. The best source for a typical Victorian American's reaction to New Mexico. Good description of a trail journey.

DeVoto, Bernard. *The Year of Decision 1846*. Boston, 1943. Brilliant interpretation of Mexican War period and the march of the Army of the West.

Drumm, Stella M., ed. *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico; The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-47*. New Haven, 1962. Paperback reissue. Among the three or four great classics of the trail; a sensitive young girl's account of a journey across the plains during the Mexican War.

Duffus, R. L. *The Santa Fe Trail*. New York, 1930. Still the best popular history of the trail. Beautifully written.

Emory, William H. *Notes of a Military Reconnaissance from Fort Leavenworth, Missouri, to San Diego, in California*. 30 Cong., 1 sess., Senate Exec. Doc. No. 7. Washington, 1847. The basic contemporary account of the march of the Army of the West.

Garrard, Lewis H. *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail*. Norman, 1955. A young adventurer's experiences on the trail and in New Mexico.

Gregg, Josiah. *Commerce of the Prairies*. Edited by Max. L. Moorhead. Norman, 1954. If only one book could be read on the Santa Fe Trail, this would be it. The bible for the student of the trail.

Hughes, John T. *Doniphan's Expedition*. Cincinnati, 1848. A Missouri Volunteer recounts the march of the Army of the West and the expedition to Chihuahua.

Hulbert, Archer Butler, ed. *Southwest on the Turquoise Trail*. Denver, 1933. A mine of source materials on the Santa Fe Trail, including early journals and the statement of Augustus Storrs on the condition of the trade in 1824.

Hyslop, Steven. *Bound for Santa Fe: The Road to New Mexico and the American Conquest, 1806-1848*. Norman, 2002. Hyslop's book is a highly-respected modern work on the history of the Trail, beginning with accounts of western travelers and explorers prior to the start of the Santa Fe Trail. He then explores the traders and their lives on the Trail. He finishes with a discussion of how the Mexican-American War, 1846-1848, impacted the Trail.

Lavender, David. *Bent's Fort*. New York, 1954. Not only the best thing available on Bent's Fort, but a far-ranging account that covers many aspects of the Santa Fe trade.

Majors, Alexander. *Seventy Years on the Frontier*. Denver, 1893. The classic contemporary account of freighting on the Santa Fe Trail.

Moorhead, Max L. *New Mexico's Royal Road, Trade and Travel on the Chihuahua Trail*. Norman, 1958. Despite the deceptive title, this book ranks second only to *Commerce of the Prairies* as a basic source on the Santa Fe Trail.

Sampson, F. A., ed. "The Santa Fe Trail: M. M. Marmaduke Journal." *Missouri Historical Review*, 6 (1911): 1-10. Best description of the notable 1824 expedition.

Stephens, F. F., ed. "Major Alphonso Wetmore's Diary of a Journey to Santa Fe, 1828." *Missouri Historical Review*, 8 (1914): 177-97. Another of the classic early diaries during the trailbreaking phase of the trail's history. "Missouri and the Santa Fe Trade." *Missouri Historical Review*, 10 (1916): 233-62; 11(1917): 289-312. The first serious attempt to analyze the mechanics of the Santa Fe trade and the early role of the National Government in encouraging it. All later writers have relied heavily on these two pioneering articles.

Sunder, John E., ed. *Matt Field on the Santa Fe Trail*. Norman, 1960. Travels on the trail in 1839-40 as recounted by a newspaper reporter. Very good descriptions of landmarks and trail routine.

Utley, Robert M. "Fort Union and the Santa Fe Trail." *New Mexico Historical Review*, 36 (1961): 36-48. The best thing extant on the theme of military protection on the Santa Fe Trail in the 1850s and 1860s.

Webb, James Josiah. *Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 1844- 47*. Edited by Ralph P. Bieber. Glendale, 1931. Among the four finest books on the trail. Webb's long experience in Santa Fe made him a better commentator than most on the details of New Mexican life.

Wislizenus, Adolph. Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico Connected with Col. Doniphan's Expedition, in 1846 and 1847. 30 Cong., 1 sess., Senate Misc. Doc. No. 26. Washington, 1848. This German scientist marched with the Army of the West. His observations are precise and very helpful to the trail tracer.

Wyman, Walker E. "Freighting: A Big Business on the Santa Fe Trail." *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 1 (1931): 17-27. "The Military Phase of Santa Fe Freighting, 1846-1865." *Kansas Historical Quarterly*, 1 (1932): 415-28. The best modern studies of freighting on the Santa Fe Trail.

Young, Otis E. *The First Military Escort on the Santa Fe Trail, 1829*. Glendale, 1952. A microscopic examination of the events leading up to the 1829 escort, the march and adventures of the caravan and escort, and the aftermath.

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Some of these books are available through the Last Chance Store. A link to the store is on the homepage of our website, [www.santafetrail.org](http://www.santafetrail.org) You may also contact Leo Oliva, The Last Chance Store, 2985 C Rd PO Box 3, Woodston, KS 67675. Phone: 888-321-7341. Email: [lcs@santafetrail.org](mailto:lcs@santafetrail.org)

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