

LESSON TITLE: TAOS REBELLION 1847
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AMERICAN HISTORY/GOVERNMENT
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Teaching Traditional American History Program
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Lesson Overview:

This lesson includes a series of eye-witness accounts of the Taos Revolt of 1847 and the resulting trials and executions for treason against the United States Government. The question for students to decide is whether non-citizens in a conquered territory can commit treason against the United States.

Essential Question:

Can the U.S. government try conquered non-citizens for treason?

Objectives:

- To understand the events of the Taos Rebellion of 1847. .
- To decide whether non-citizens can be tried and executed for treason against the United States.
- To understand the use of primary sources in historical inquiry.

Materials:

- Handout 1: Background Information
- Handout 2, Eye-witness Accounts
- Handout 3: Postscript
- Handout 4: Rubric for Evaluation

Class Time:

Two to three class periods

Preparation:

Give each student a copy of Handout 1. Read through the events of the Taos Rebellion together in class.

Procedure:

1. Duplicate a copy of Handout 2, Eye-witness Accounts. Cut along the dotted line.
2. Explain to students the use of primary sources in historical research. Discuss why eye-witness accounts are beneficial to the researcher as well as some of the problems they present, such as bias and inconsistency.
3. Handout 1 contains 18 brief descriptions from eyewitnesses or government documents. Each describes an event during the rebellion of 1847 against the American conquerors of the territory.
4. Explain to the class that treason is the only crime mentioned in the Constitution of the United States. Copy on the board the following from Article III, Section 3, of the U. S. Constitution:
Treason against the United States shall consist only in levying War against them, or in adhering to their Enemies, giving them Aid and Comfort. No Person shall be convicted of Treason unless on the Testimony of two witnesses to the same overt Act, or on Confession in open Court. The Congress shall have Power to declare the Punishment of Treason. ...

Black's Law Dictionary defines treason as "the offense of attempting by overt acts to overthrow the government of the state to which the offender owes allegiance."
5. Discuss the meaning of treason and the acts which are considered treasonable under the Constitution. Ask students to consider the following questions: Can persons who are non-citizens commit treason against the united states? What if those non-citizens live in a territory conquered by the United states? What are those persons have taken an oath of allegiance to the united states?
6. Distribute one of the 18 documents in Handout 1 to each student. If there are not enough documents for everyone in the class, arrange it so that some students work individually and others in pairs. Explain to the students that each has one portion of the story. Tell them that they have the responsibility to translate the document for the class and that in the end each student will share their section of the story with the other students.
7. Instruct the students to read their document. Ask each student to tell the class about his or her document, starting with document #1.

8. Have the students draw pictures for a class mural illustrating the events and resulting trials of the Taos Revolt of 1847.

9. On the board write the question, "Was it proper for the courts (military and civil) to try the rebels for treason against the united states? Draw two columns. Label one "yes" and the other "no." Ask the students to recall facts and opinions given in the documents to support either argument. Record their responses in the appropriate column.

10. Ask the students to make a decision and write an opinion supporting their argument with facts from the case.

11. Distribute copies of Handout 3, Postscript. Read the document with the class.

12. Debrief the lesson by discussing the following questions:

a. In the opinion of the Secretary of War, Mr. Marcy, why was it proper for the rebels to be tried and punished for their acts of murder?

b. In the opinion of Secretary Marcy, why was it not proper to try the rebels for treason?

c. How does the refusal by President Polk to grant a pardon to Antonio Maria Trujillo support the opinion of his secretary of war?

d. Would the secretary's opinion have been different if the revolt had occurred after the signing of the treaty ending the war with Mexico? Why?

HANDOUT 1: BACKGROUND ON THE TAOS REBELLION

Siege Warfare in the Southwest

First published in
Wild West
April 1994

by Michael Antonucci

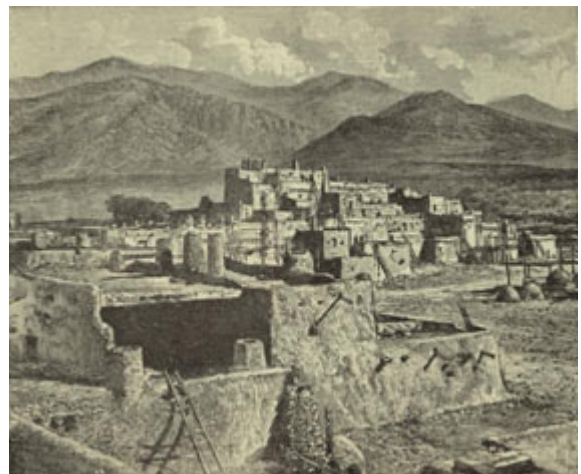
General Stephen Watts Kearny had good reason to be pleased on the morning of August 22, 1846. Three days earlier, his troops had raised the American flag over Santa Fe, the capital of the New Mexico Territory. The Mexican-American War was going well for the United States. "everything is quiet and peaceable," Kearny wrote that morning in a message to Brigadier General John Ellis Wool at Chihuahua, Mexico. "The people now understand the advantages they are to derive from a change in government and are much gratified."

The people to whom Kearny referred were mostly Mexicans, Pueblo Indians and small groups of French Canadians, Delaware Indians and Mormons. The Mexicans, though not enthusiastic about the new government, seemed ready to accept it. The Pueblo were concerned only with continuing their traditional way of life; they were highly civilized and generally peaceful. For centuries, their advanced irrigation system and their relative isolation enabled them to grow a surplus of grain, which they traded to the Apache, Ute, Comanche and Navajo for meat and furs.

When relations with neighboring tribes were strained, the Pueblo Indians would withdraw into the multistoried adobe structures that are forever associated with their name - pueblos. With walls more than two feet thick, the pueblos were formidable defensive positions. At the approach of enemies, the ladders were withdrawn into the pueblos, just as drawbridges used to be raised at medieval castles. The pueblo's first story had no doors, gates or windows facing outside. Storerooms and corrals were contained within the walls, and the entire structure had projected angles for flanking fire.

The Pueblo Indians were not easily subjugated. In 1680, they rose up against their Spanish conquerors, slaughtering more than 20 Catholic missionaries and 400 colonists. It took the conquistadors 12 years to reestablish themselves in Pueblo territory. Although the Indians adjusted to the new situation, their devotion to independence remained strong.

The roots of the Pueblo Uprising of 1847 (also called the Taos Revolt) can be traced to a secret American diplomatic mission in August 1846. James Wiley Magoffin, a former resident of Chihuahua and a trader throughout the New Mexico Territory, was sent by Kearny to Santa Fe to negotiate with Governor Manuel Armijo, the highest-ranking Mexican official in the territory. Armijo had gathered a force of at least 4,000 men at Apache Pass. They were fairly well-armed and deployed six pieces of artillery. They were also firmly entrenched and could not be outflanked.



Taos Pueblo in 1893

Despite the favorable military situation, Magoffin persuaded Armijo not to attempt to resist Kearny's advance. Many historians have since claimed that Magoffin bribed Armijo, but there is no documentary evidence to support it. In an event, Armijo decided to flee to Albuquerque, despite urgings from his second-in-command, Colonel Diego Archuleta, to defend the territory to the last man. Archuleta could have been a problem, but Magoffin met with him, too. He told Archuleta that Kearny intended to remain east of the Rio Grande. With Armijo out of the picture, Magoffin suggested, Archuleta could issue a *pronunciamiento* and seize all the territory west of the river. Rather than risk battle against the Americans, Archuleta agreed to this deal. Armijo fled, Archuleta dispersed the troops, and the Americans marched through Apache Pass unopposed. Kearny entered Santa Fe at sundown on August 18. New Mexico had been seized without a shot being fired.

Charles Bent, who along with his brother William had built the famous Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, was named the first American governor of the territory. Bent was one of the pioneers of the Santa Fe trade and had wide

experience on the frontier. He settled in the town of Taos. On August 25, Kearny left Santa Fe for California. Two days later, Colonel Sterling Price arrived in Santa Fe with 1,200 mounted volunteers from Missouri and a battalion of 500 Mormons. When the war began, Price had resigned his seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in order to raise this regiment. A strict disciplinarian and a gifted leader, Price was respected by his men, who called him "Old Pap" Price.

Magoffin had not known that Kearny had no plans to stop at the Rio Grande. When Kearny proclaimed U.S. jurisdiction over the entire New Mexico Territory, Colonel Archuleta quite naturally felt he had been double-crossed. A clever and ambitious man, Archuleta began meeting with other disenfranchised Mexican officials, the most prominent among these being Tomas Ortiz, the former *alcalde* of Santa Fe. Others began to join the budding conspiracy. The Pueblo Indians, led by the war chief Tomasito, were persuaded by Archuleta and Ortiz that the Americans were weak. They were promised great plunder and greater autonomy.

An uprising was planned for December 19. Church bells would ring, and the Pueblo braves and Mexicans would seize the artillery in the plaza and turn it on the American soldiers. This attack would be the signal for a general revolt throughout northern New Mexico. But communications to outlying areas were slow. Archuleta and Ortiz decided to postpone the rebellion until Christmas Eve.

Fortunately for the Americans, a woman of shady reputation went to Colonel Price on the 21st with the details of the uprising she had overheard. An officer recorded Price's speedy moves to quash the rebellion: "Sentinels had been placed in every direction, all the field pieces and heavy guns had been parked in the plaza, everything was in a state of preparation and everybody in a state of vigilance." Several ringleaders were arrested, but Archuleta and Ortiz fled to Mexico. The Americans felt that the Mexicans had taken their last, best shot, but they overlooked one very important group: Pueblo conspirators continued to meet without the two Mexicans.

On January 14, 1847, despite rumors of unrest, Governor Bent decided to travel to his home in Taos. All though the night of January 18, Taos was in an uproar. People swarmed into the saloons and plazas, where they were harangued into a frenzy by the conspirators. Alcohol flowed freely while Tomasito and Mexican General Pablo Montoya, the self-styled "Santa Ana of the North," worked the crowd.

Early on the morning of January 19, Sheriff Stephen Lee arrested three Indians for stealing and placed them in the city jail. Still together after a night of festivities, a mob of Pueblo headed for the jail, confronted Sheriff Lee and demanded that their friends be set free. Lee, with a large and angry crowd in front of him, quickly moved to comply. Unfortunately, city prefect Cornelio Vigil happened by. Whatever his motivation, Vigil displayed extraordinarily poor judgment by first berating the sheriff for backing down, and then by shouting racial insults at the Indians. The Pueblo were in an unforgiving mood, and they cut Vigil to pieces.

While the Indians freed their three compatriots, Lee fled to his house and tried to hide on his roof, but the crowd spotted him and shot him to death. Next they turned on James Leal, the territory's circuit attorney. The crowd cornered him, pushed arrows into his body, tied him up and used him for target practice, scalped him alive and left him lying in the street. Remarkably, Leal survived the assault, but hours later, another group of Pueblo killed him with more arrows.

The crowd now headed for Governor Bent's house, where he was holed up with his family and Mrs. Kit Carson. Bent's 10-year-old son grabbed a shotgun and said, "Papa, let us fight them." But Bent did not want to endanger his family. He told his wife, "At present, my death is all these people want." A group of Mexicans and Indians led by Chief Tomasito chopped a hole in Bent's roof and dropped into his bedroom. Mrs. Carson, Mrs. Bent and children were allowed to leave. Bent confronted Tomasito's band, reminding them that he had tried to take care of their interests. At this they howled with laughter and drove three arrows into his body. As he fell he was shot once. Tomasito then stood over Bent's scalp and nailed it to a flat board with brass tacks. The mob then went off, carrying the scalp like a battle standard.

Many other Americans were killed as the violence spread. Two mountain men were murdered and mutilated on the Rio Colorado by a rebel band that had disarmed them with promises of safe conduct. Eight Santa Fe traders were ambushed, captured and murdered near the town of Mora. The revolt spread quickly through the towns in northern New Mexico, save Tecolote and Las Vegas.

Twelve miles north of Taos, out on the Arroyo Hondo, stood a mill owned by a longtime resident named Simon Turley. On January 19, Turley had been entertaining eight trapper friends when one of his workers returned hurriedly from an errand in town with news of the massacre of the Americans. Turley was highly regarded by the local

population, so he doubted that his home was in danger. Nevertheless, the mountain men began to inspect their rifles, while Turley barred the gates.

Soon the rebels approached the mill under a white flag. Turley went out to speak with them. A Mexican told him: "As a friend of the Indians and the *Nuevo Mexicanos*, we don't want to shed your blood, but all other Americans in the valley must die. Give up the men and you'll be spared." Turley was not one for oratory. He simply replied: "I'll never surrender my house nor my men. You want 'em, you come and get 'em!"

Turley barely got back to cover before shots began to ricochet around him. The trappers, barricaded behind sacks of grain and stacks of firewood, returned fire with discipline, making every shot count. The besiegers took up positions behind boulders and trees and peppered the house with bullets. The crowd outside soon grew to 500. Despite all the gunfire, night fell with no casualties.

During the night, eight Indians crept to a shed near the stables and attempted unsuccessfully to break down the door. When dawn came, they were caught in an exposed position, and a Pueblo chief fell dead. Turley's men began to chalk up a deadly toll as brave after brave was shot dead trying to retrieve the body of the chief.

Infuriated, the Pueblo loosed a massive volley against the house, and two trappers fell, mortally wounded. Several Indians managed to set fire to the building, but the trappers put it out. With the mob beginning to burn other ranch structures, Turley and the mountain men decided their best hope was to make a breakout attempt in the dark.

Details of the breakout are sketchy. A trapper named John Albert and one other man charged out the postern gate, guns blazing. Albert dove to the ground and hid under a fence, to watch in horror as his companion was knocked down and knifed to death. Albert crept away at daybreak and made his way to safety. Two other trappers also escaped, and Turley himself eluded capture and headed for the mountains. Spotting a Mexican friend of long standing on the trail, Turley offered him his watch in exchange for his friend's horse. Turning down the deal, the man said he would ride for help. Instead, he set out for the mill, which was still being looted, and told the Pueblo where Turley could be found. They returned to Turley's hiding place and brutally murdered him.

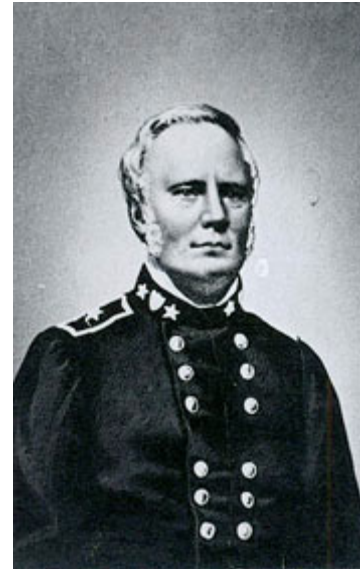
The news of Governor Bent's death spread, reaching the ears of Captain Isaac Hendley, who was in command of a grazing detachment on the Pecos River. Told that the insurgents were gathering an army at Las Vegas, he scraped together some 200 men and set off immediately. Meanwhile, on the evening of January 20, the insurgents read a message in the Las Vegas plaza announcing a general uprising and urging the inhabitants to join the rebel forces. The courageous *alcalde* of Las Vegas, Juan de Dios Maes, immediately declared against the revolt. He persuaded the citizens not to join the insurgency, and Hendley's troops entered the town on the 21st and occupied it.

Leaving the greater part of his force in Las Vegas, Hendley headed for the town of Mora with 80 men on January 24. Near Mora, Hendley's force spotted a small detachment of Mexican cavalry riding down from the hills and tried to cut them off. As Hendley drew near the cavalry detachment, the main Mexican force sallied out from Mora to attack the Americans. In the brisk melee that ensued, Hendley's troopers gained the upper hand. The Mexicans retreated to town, regrouping at an old fort inside Mora. Hendley's men charged the fort and seized an adjoining building. As the troopers gathered brush to set the fort ablaze, a rifle shot pierced the wall, killing Hendley instantly. Unprepared for a room-to-room battle, his men retreated, suffering three more wounded. Mexican casualties totaled 25 killed and 17 taken prisoner. The retreat of Hendley's detachment was the high-water mark for the rebels.

Upon receiving word of the Taos uprising and the murder of Governor Bent on January 20, Price reacted instantly. He sent orders to Major Edmonson at Albuquerque to bring his regiment to garrison Santa Fe. He ordered Captain J.H.K. Burgwin of the 1st Dragoons to dispatch one company to Santa Fe and to join Price in the field with the rest of his men. "Old Pap" then began to gather together all the troops at hand his task force.

Ceran St. Vrain had been a resident of New Mexico for many years prior to the American occupation. He was one of the men who controlled the fur trade along the Santa Fe Trail. Outraged by the death of Governor Bent, he decided to gather together a company of horsemen. Merchants, clerks, mountaineers, teamsters, assorted other Americans and friendly Mexicans joined St. Vrain's force, and Price had the 65-man cavalry unit sworn in on January 23. St. Vrain gave them an appropriate name: the Avengers.

In three days Price mustered a force of 353 men: five companies of the 2nd Missouri, a battalion of infantry under Captain William Angney, a company of citizen volunteers from Santa Fe, and St. Vrain's Avengers. Artillery support consisted of four 12-pound mountain howitzers under Lieutenant Alexander Dyer. Price's plan was simple but audacious: he would fight his way 70 miles up the Rio Grande, destroy any hostile Pueblo-Mexican forces he met, and recapture Taos. On January, the tiny army set out north for Taos.



Sterling Price

Before 24 hours had passed, Price's force was challenged by a rebel army of more than 1,000 Pueblo warriors and Mexicans under General Pablo Montoya. Montoya and his subordinates, Jesus de Tafoya and Pablo Chaves, had their force dug in along the rims of the canyon in which sat the town of Santa Cruz de la Cañada. Since the heights flanked the road, Price would have to dislodge the Pueblo-Mexican force to continue to Taos.

Price commenced battle with a cannonade, but Montoya's men were well-entrenched. Seeing that Price's powder wagons were still more than a mile away, Montoya detached a company of cavalry to cut off the wagon train. Price saw the danger and sent the Avengers to head them off. St. Vrain's volunteers charged with such ferocity that Montoya's cavalry turned and fled.

While the wagons were being brought up, the rest of Price's army hunkered down. Lieutenant Dyer described in a letter how the battle proceeded: "For an hour and a half my battery was exposed to a heavy fire of small arms from two houses and surrounding walls at 180 to 200 yards distance and during that time I had six men wounded out of command of 20 and several others shot through the clothes. After the wagons were brought up, a charge was ordered."

Price sent Angney's company of infantry up the hill to dislodge the enemy from the houses opposite the American right flank. Sniping at the Americans from the safety of the heights was good sport for Montoya's men, but faced with the disciplined ranks coming steadily toward them, they lost some of their nerve, fired once and fled. Angney took the hill without sustaining any casualties.

From the behavior of the insurgent troops, Price judged that they were unwilling to engage in a set-piece battle. He therefore ordered an advance all along the line, with the Avengers circling to the rear to cut off retreat. Despite a 3-to-1 advantage in men, possession of the higher ground and a sound tactician in Montoya, the Pueblo-Mexican force was quickly beaten back. Tafoya warned Montoya of the Avengers' circling tactics, and a retreat was ordered. The broken ground made pursuit extremely difficult, and most of Montoya's force escaped, though the Avengers thoroughly bloodied the rebel rearguard. By sundown, the Americans had full possession of Santa Cruz de la Cañada and quartered there for the night. Their losses were two killed and eight wounded. The insurgents' losses were 36 killed and 45 taken prisoner.

On January 27, Price and his soldiers resumed their march, stopping for the night at the town of Los Luceros. The next morning, Captain Burgwin arrived with a company of the U.S. Army 1st Dragoons, another company of the 2nd Regiment under Lieutenant Boone, and a single 6-pounder gun. Their arrival swelled the task force to 479 men and five guns. When the army reached the town of La Joya on January 29, scouts informed Price that some 80 rebels were entrenched on both slopes of the canyon south of Embudo. Price halted his column and ordered Burgwin, St. Vrain and 180 men to clear the way. Dismounted, St. Vrain and his men moved up the left slopes while Burgwin and his dragoons moved up the right. St. Vrain discovered that he faced not a small blocking force of 80, but a large contingent of 700 to 800 rebels. Rather than retreat, St. Vrain and Burgwin charged the rebel positions in open order, firing rapidly. Once again, the enemy broke and retreated north. The insurgents suffered 20 killed and 60 wounded;

the Americans lost one man killed and one wounded.

On January 30, Burgwin and St. Vrain reached La Trampas and secured it while Price brought up the artillery. Then the weather deteriorated. On February 1, Price's reunited army continued toward Taos. On the same day, miles away, Captain Morin and 200 men marched into Mora, scene of the death of Isaac Hendley, and, finding the village deserted, proceeded to burn it to the ground. The end of the insurrection was near. All that remained was the final, decisive battle.

The march from La Trampas was an arduous one, as the American troops had to trudge through 2 feet of newly fallen snow up Taos Mountain and down into the valley beyond. Frostbite was rife, and two officers contracted fevers that later killed them. Still, the stoic band grimly marched on.

On the evening of February 3, Price reached the foot of the Taos Valley, but he did not pause in his march. He sent a reconnaissance force directly to the Taos Pueblo, wherein waited some 650 Pueblo Indians and Mexicans. In the northeastern and southern corners of the stronghold were two lodges, seven and eight stories high, with Taos Creek flowing between them. In the northwestern corner was a large adobe church, the Mission Church of San Gerónimo, with a corral behind it. Throughout the pueblo the ladders had been drawn in, and the windows were manned by riflemen. Price immediately deployed his guns and had Lieutenant Dyer commence firing. For two and a half hours, the howitzers battered at the three-foot-thick adobe walls, but to no effect. As the sun went down, Price withdrew his tired, frozen men into the town of San Fernando de Taos, while the pueblo's defenders taunted and jeered.

On the morning of February 4, Price deployed his troops as he later described in his detailed report to Congress: "Posting the dragoons under Captain Burgwin about two hundred and sixty yards from the western flank of the church, I ordered the mounted men under Captains St. Vrain and Slack to a position on the opposite side of the town, whence they could discover and intercept any fugitives who might attempt to escape toward the mountains or in the direction of San Fernando. The residue of the troops took ground about three hundred yards from the north wall. Here, too, Lieutenant Dyer established himself with the 6-pounder and two howitzers, while Lieutenant Hassendaubel, of Major Clark's battalion, light artillery, remained with Captain Burgwin, in command of two howitzers. By this arrangement a crossfire was obtained, sweeping the front and eastern flank of the church. All these arrangements being made, the batteries opened upon the town at nine o'clock a.m."

Lieutenant Dyer's guns fired steadily for two hours, but when the dust and smoke cleared, the adobe walls were undamaged. Price had seen enough. At his signal, Captains Burgwin and McMillen, opposite the west wall, and Captains Angney and Barber and Lieutenant Boone, opposite the north wall, dressed their ranks and signaled the charge.

American infantry companies and dismounted dragoons approached in order, flags waving, drums and fifes marking the tempo, with officers leading the way, drawn swords gesturing overhead. But if the defenders of the pueblo felt any awe, they quickly overcame it and fired away at the advancing ranks. Dyer's artillerymen raised sights and began spraying the roofs with grapeshot. That artillery support diminished the return fire, and Burgwin's company made it to the west wall of the church without losing a man. The Pueblo on that side attempted to drive them back with rifle fire, but Burgwin's men pressed themselves up against the wall.

The dragoons then began to hack away at the wall with pickaxes, while Burgwin looked for an easier way into the church. He gathered three other officers, and they climbed over the corral behind the church and attempted to batter in the door. But the door was barred, and Burgwin was now exposed to fire from adjoining buildings. A Delaware Indian fired, and the captain fell dead. As his companions scrambled for safety, the dragoons tried to provide covering fire, but five more were shot down by the Indians.

With the enemy kept away by Lieutenant Dyer's artillery, the dragoons cut several small holes in the church wall. Dyer then brought them some explosive charges, which they lit by hand and tossed into the church. The explosions rocked the church and decimated the defenders.

Price ordered Dyer to run the 6-pounder up to 60 yards and breach the wall. Dyer fired 10 rounds of solid shot into a small hole and made it wide enough for five or six men to enter abreast. He then ran the gun to within 10 yards and fired three charges of grape and one shell into the breach. The blasts thundered through the church. Price ordered the assault, and Dyer joined the storming party.

Most of the Pueblo who had survived the assault on the church escaped to the lodges on the east side. But 54 Mexicans and Indians left Taos Pueblo altogether and fled to the mountains beyond. Price had anticipated this, and St. Vrain's Avengers were waiting. Thoughts of their murdered friends fed their rage as they closed in on the fleeing rebels. Any inclination for mercy was discarded when St. Vrain spotted Jesus de Tafoya, one of the leaders of the rebellion, wearing Governor Bent's coat and shirt. St. Vrain shot him down. Seeing that no quarter would be given, the rebels fought desperately. But the Avengers' blood was up, and they killed 51 of the 54 escapees.



The Battle of Taos, depicting the death of Captain Burgwin

St. Vrain had just dismounted when a Pueblo who had been playing possum jumped up and attacked him with a lance. St. Vrain grappled with him and was about to be overpowered when an Avenger brained the Indian with a tomahawk. St. Vrain's savior was famed mountain man "Uncle Dick" Wootten.

Back in the pueblo, Price decided to quarter his troops inside the church. He had planned to start early the next day and assault the eastern buildings. Price submitted this report on what happened as dawn arrived: "On the next morning the enemy sued for peace and, thinking the severe loss they had sustained would prove a salutary lesson, I granted their supplication on the condition they should deliver up to me Tomas[ito], one of their principal men, who had instigated and been actively engaged in the murder of Governor Bent and others. The number of the enemy at the battle of Pueblo de Taos was between six and seven hundred, and of these one hundred and fifty were killed, wounded not known. Our own loss was seven killed and forty-five wounded; many of the wounded have since died."

With the capture of Taos Pueblo, the uprising effectively came to an end. The trials of the surviving conspirators were not shining examples of the fairness of the American justice system. Judge Carlos Beaubien presided, even though his son had been killed in the massacre. A juror by the name of Baptiste Brown slept throughout the proceedings, but in the jury room he declared, "Hang them all! They may not be guilty now, but they soon will be." Pablo Montoya and 13 others were convicted of treason and hanged. Tomasito was shot "trying to escape" from his death sentence.

The American chroniclers of the uprising, Sterling Price and Alexander Dyer, went on to distinguished military careers - Price as a major general in the Confederate Army and Dyer as chief of ordnance in the Union Army. But on February 4, 1847, they had conducted and won the closest thing to a medieval siege the American Southwest would ever see. The American response to the Pueblo Uprising was brutal but effective. As one historian pointedly put it, "Never again did the Pueblo Indians deviate from the strict path of peace and loyalty to the United States government."

HANDOUT 2: EYE WITNESS ACCOUNTS

DOCUMENT #1

Dick Wooten's Account

In August of the year 1846, General Kearney had gone into Santa Fe, ...and had taken possession of the capital of New Mexico, as well as other towns through which he had passed on his way to that point, without opposition.

The Mexicans had taken the oath of allegiance to the government of the United States, and New Mexico was looked upon as a conquered and subjugated province. General Kearney then proceeded on his way to California, leaving Colonel Stirling [sic] Price. ..at Santa Fe.

For a time both the Mexicans and Indians professed to be very friendly, and the Americans got along well in New Mexico. By and by, however, it was noticed that a considerable number of the Mexicans were for some reason becoming dissatisfied with the condition of affairs, and Colonel Price. ..found it necessary to keep a close watch on their movements.

DOCUMENT #2 Colonel Sterling Price's Report--Santa Fe, 15 February, 1847.

About the 15th of December last I received information of an attempt to excite the people of this territory against the American government. This rebellion was headed by Thomas Ortiz and Diego Archuleta. An officer, formerly in the Mexican service, was seized, and on his person was found a list of all the disbanded Mexican soldiers in the vicinity of Santa Fe. Many other persons were arrested, and a full investigation proved that many of the influential persons in the northern part of this territory were engaged in the rebellion. After the arrest[s], the rebellion appeared -to be suppressed; but this appearance was deceptive.

DOCUMENT #3 U. S. Government Proclamation--Santa Fe, 15 February, 1847.

On the 13th of January, 1847, Charles Bent, governor of the Territory of New Mexico, left Santa Fe" the seat of the government, for Taos, his place of residence. While there the friends of two Pueblo Indians who were confined in the prison at that place requested him to release them, to which he replied. . .that it was out of his power to release anyone confined by law until they were tried. They then resolved to release the prisoners by force and murder all the Americans in Taos, together with those Mexicans who had either accepted office under the American Government or were favorable to Americans.

DOCUMENT #4

Dick Wootton's Account

There were not more than fifteen white persons. .living in the town of Taos, and several of these happened to be absent from their homes on the memorable 19th of January, 1847. Those who were at home, when they got up in the morning, found the town surrounded by as merciless a band of savages as ever went on the war path. ..and they quickly caused it to be understood, that their intention was to kill every white man, woman and child in the place.

Charles Bent['s] residence was one of the first places attacked, and he was butchered in is own doorway. [James Blair, Stephen Lee, Pablo Armijo, and Cornelio Vigil were killed at about the same time. Narcisso Beaubien, son of Judge Beaubien was also killed.]

The bodies of some of those killed were horribly mutilated. All of the victims were scalped, and Governor Bent's head was cut off and carried about the town.

The district attorney, [J. W.] Liel, was scalped alive and dragged through the streets, his relentless persecutors pricking him with lances. After hours of acute suffering, he was thrown to one side in the inclement weather. He entreated, implored them earnestly to kill him--to end his misery. A compassionate Mexican at last closed the tragic scene by shooting him.

I was only five years old at the time, but I well remember every circumstance as if it was but yesterday. It was early in the morning and we were all in bed. We were awakened by the noise of many people, crowding into the placita. Hearing the noise [my father] went to the door and tried to pacify the crowd yelling outside.

While my father was parleying with the mob, Mrs. Carson and Mrs. Boggs, aided by an Indian woman who was a slave (peon), dug a hole through the adobe wall which separated our house from the next. They did it with only a poker and an old iron spoon: I have still the poker that they used. We children were first pushed through the hole and then the women crawled through after us. My mother kept calling to my father to come also, but for quite a while he would not. When he did try to escape he was already wounded and had been scalped alive. He crawled through the hole, holding his hand on the top of his bleeding head. But it was too late. Some of the men came after him through the hole and others come over the roof of the house and down into the yard. They broke down the doors and rushed upon my father. He was shot many times and fell dead at our feet.

On receiving this alarming information, I lost no time in repairing to the headquarters of General Price. General Price immediately adopted the most effective measures. He assembled his officers, and instructed them to set a close watch upon the house of every Mexican in the city [Santa Fe] Before morning several of the most influential Mexican citizens were placed under arrest. In searching them, important conspiracies were brought to light. Correspondence, implicating the most considerable residents, was read, and a plot was detected of subjecting Santa Fe to the same as the Bartholomew massacre had just been visited upon Taos. The city was placed under martial law, and every American that could shoulder a musket was called into immediate service.

DOCUMENT #7 Proclamation by Provisional Governor Donaciano Vigil Santa Fe, January 22, 1847

Today or tomorrow a respectable body of troops will commence their march for the purpose of quelling the disorders of Pablo Montoya, in Taos. The Government is determined to pursue energetic measures toward all the refractory until they are reduced to order, as well as to take care of and protect homes and discreet men; and I pray you. ..will keep yourselves quiet and engaged in your private affairs. The term of my administration is purely transitory. .I will devote myself exclusively to endeavoring to secure you all the prosperity so much desired by your fellow citizen and friend.

DOCUMENT #8 Proclamation by Donaciano Vigil Santa Fe, January 25, 1847

The gang of Pablo Montoya and Cortez ...yesterday encountered in the vicinity of La Canada [today Santa Cruz] the forces of the Government. ..and in that place their triumph ended; for they were routed with the loss of many killed and 44 prisoners upon whom the judgment of the law will fall. The Government has the information, and congratulates itself that within ten days the inquietude caused you by the cry of alarm raised in Taos will cease, and peace. ..will return to take her seat on the altar of concord and reciprocal confidence.

DOCUMENT #9

U. S. Government Circular

Santa Fe, 15 February, 1847

He [Colonel Price] took with him 340 men. .On the evening of the 24th Colonel Price encountered the enemy at Canada, numbering about 2,000 men, under the command of Generals. Jesus Tafoya, Pablo Chavez, and Pablo Montoya. The enemy was posed on the hills commanding each side of the road. About 2 o'clock p.m. a brisk fire from the artillery. ..was opened upon them. .. A charge was made by the three companies, resulting in the total rout of the Mexicans and Indians. The battle lasted about half an hour, but the pursuit was kept up for two hours.

The march was resumed on the next day and met with no opposition until the evening of the 3rd of February, at which time they arrived at the Pueblo de Taos, where they found the Mexicans and Indians strongly fortified.

We marched on until we arrived at Taos, and the barbarities we witnessed there exceeded in brutality all my previous experience with the Indians. Bodies of our murdered fellow-countrymen lying about the streets, mutilated and disfigured in every possible way, and the hogs and dogs were making a repast upon the remains.

Such scenes of unexampled barbarity filled our soldier's breasts with abhorrence: they became tiger-like in their craving for revenge. Our general directed the desecrated remains to be gathered together, and a guard to be placed over them, while he marched on with his army in pursuit of the barbarians.

Late in the afternoon we arrived at [Taos] Pueblo, where we found the enemy. Some of the enemy fired upon us. .and while looking about, we discovered a few of the enemy hidden away in the brush. One of them, an Indian, ran toward us, exclaiming, "Bueno! Bueno! me like Americanos." One of our party said, "If you like the Americans, take this sword, and return to the brush, and kill all the men you find there."

He took the proffered sword, and was busy in the brush for a few minutes, and then returned with his sword-blade dripping with gore, saying, "I have killed them."

"Then you ought to die for killing your own people," said the American, and he shot the Indian dead.

The battle lasted through the whole day [three days in all]. Toward night several white flags were raised by the enemy, but were immediately shot down by the Americans, who had determined to show no quarter. On the third morning all the women issued from the fort, each bearing a white flag, and kneeled before the general to supplicate for the lives of their surviving friends. The general was prevailed upon, and gave orders to cease firing.

Pablo Montoya and El Tomacito were both captured. El Tomacito, the Indian leader, was placed under guard, and we proposed to give him, along with the rest, a formal trial, but a dragoon by the name of Fitzgerald saved us the trouble. Fitzgerald was allowed to go into the room where the Indian was confined, along with others who wanted to take a look at him. The soldier looked at the savage a few minutes, and then quick as a flash, drew a pistol and shot him in the head, killing him instantly. Fitzgerald then made his escape. ...

Pablo Montoya was tried and hanged, and twelve others were disposed of in the same way. I acted as marshal in making arrests under the military authority, and was kept very busy for some days. The only law we had was military law, but that was just what we wanted, and it was not long before order was restored and the rebellion experiment has never been tried there since.

Court assembled at nine o'clock. On entering the room, Judges Beaubien and Houghton were occupying their official stations. After many dry preliminaries, six prisoners were brought in--ill-favored, half-scared, sullen fellows; and the jury of Mexicans and Americans--Chadwick, foreman--being empanelled, the trial commenced.

It certainly did appear to be a great assumption on the part of the Americans to conquer a country and then arraign the revolting inhabitants for treason. American judges sat on the bench, New Mexicans and Americans filled the jury box, and an American soldiery guarded the halls. Verily, a strange mixture of violence and justice--a strange middle ground between martial law and common law.

After an absence of a few minutes, the jury returned with a verdict of "guilty in the first degree"-- five for murder, one for treason. Treason indeed! What did the poor devil know about his new allegiance? But so it was; and, as the jail was overstocked with others awaiting trial, it was deemed expedient to hasten the execution, and the culprits were sentenced to be hung on the following Friday--hangman's day. When the concluding words "muerto, muerto, muerto"--"dead, dead, dead"--were pronounced by Judge Beaubien* in his solemn and impressive manner, the painful stillness that reigned in the courtroom and the subdued grief manifested by a few bystanders were noticed not without an inward sympathy. I left the room, sick at heart. Justice! Out upon the word, when its distorted meaning is the warrant for murdering those who defend to the last their country and their homes. Other accounts report that Judge Beaubien disqualified himself from conducting the trial. Sentence was pronounced by Judge Houghton.

Court was in daily session; five more Indians and four Mexicans were sentenced to be hung on the 30th April; but, exciting as were the court proceedings, very few of us spent much time in the room; we wanted to be moving about.

A remarkable circumstance was that whenever Chadwick was on the jury as foreman, the prisoners were returned "guilty in the first degree."

One little Frenchman, Baptiste---by name, with not two ideas above eating and drinking, was duly empanelled as a juror, to try the first six subsequently sentenced. On going into the consulting room, Baptiste went to Chad and asked--"Monsieur Chadwick! vot sall I say?" "Keep still man, until we talk awhile to the rest about it," rejoined Chad, "don't be in such a hurry."

"Oui! oui! eh bien! Mais Monsieur, vot sall ve do avec sacre prisonniers?"

"Baptiste! man, keep still; why hang them, of course; what did you come in here for?" angrily replied he, much annoyed, "wait till I am done with these Mexicans [part of the jury], and I will tell you what you must do."

1847

Antonio Maria Trujillo--A jury of twelve citizens, after a patient and careful investigation, pending which all the safeguards of the law, .have been afforded you, have found you guilty of the high crime of treason.

Not content with the peace and security in which you have lived under the present government, you gave your name and influence to measures intended to effect universal murder and pilage [sic], the overthrow of the government and wide-spread bloodshed in the land. For such foul crimes an enlightened and liberal jury has been compelled, .to finds you guilty of treason against the government under which you are a citizen. And there only now remains to the court the painful duty of passing upon you the sentence of the law, which is that you be taken from hence to prison, there to remain until Friday, the 16th of April next, and that at 2 o'clock in the afternoon of that day you be taken thence to the place of execution, and there to be hanged by the neck till you are dead! dead! dead! and may the Almighty God have mercy on your soul.

DOCUMENT #17 Donaciano Vigil to James Buchanan, Secretary of state Santa Fe, March,

1847

Since my letter of the 16th February a number of persons engaged in the late rebellion have been brought to trial. ...Antonio Maria Trujillo was found guilty of treason, and received the sentence of the court.

A petition was immediately laid before me, ...praying that the execution of the court be suspended until a petition could be laid before the President of the united States for the pardon of the prisoner, on the ground of his age and infirmity. The prisoner is about 75 years of age, necessarily infirm, and evidently near the end of his days; ...I can not but consider him a proper subject for the mercy of the Government.

The United States district court is still in session at this capital, having under trial three indictments for treason against three prominent persons in the late rebellion. Twenty-four prisoners have been discharged for want of testimony to indict them for treason. ...

I am informed that there are upward of forty prisoners confined in the northern district [Taos] awaiting their trial at the coming term of the United States district court for that district.

With rifles grounded, we awaited the consummation of the fearful tragedy. No crowd was around to disturb; a death-like stillness reigned. The spectators on the azoteas [roof tops] seemed scarcely to move--their eyes directed to the painful sight of the doomed wretches, with harsh halters now circling their necks. The sheriff and assistant sat down; and succeeding a few moments of intense expectation, the heart-wrung victims said a few words to their people.

The one sentenced for treason [name unknown, it was not Antonio Maria Trujillo] showed a spirit of martyrdom worthy of the cause for which he died--the liberty of his country; .his speech was firm asseverations of his own innocence, the unjustness of his trial, and the arbitrary conduct of his murderers. with a scowl, as the cap was pulled over his face, the last words he uttered between his gritting teeth were, "Caraho, los Americanos!" The atrocity of the act of hanging that man for treason is most damnable; with the execution of those for murder no fault should be found.

Biding each other "adios," with a hope of meeting in Heaven, at word from the sheriff the mules were started, and the wagon drawn from under the tree. The bodies swayed back and forth, and coming in contact with each other, convulsive shudders shook their frames; the muscles, contracting, would relax, and again contract, and the bodies writhed most horribly.

While thus swinging, the hands of two came together, which they held with a firm grasp till the muscles loosened in death.

HANDOUT 3 : POSTSCRIPT

From Charles E. Magoon's Report to the Secretary of War

Of the insurgent prisoners 15 or 20, perhaps more, were tried by court-martial, sentenced to death, and executed. The others were turned over. ..for trial in the civil courts. The 4 indicted were charged with treason against the United States Government. One was tried by a jury and convicted. The prisoner challenged the jurisdiction of the civil court. .on the ground that he was not a citizen of the United States, nor bound to yield allegiance to that Government. Strong pressure was brought to bear. and the district attorney, Mr. Blair, referred the matter to Washington for instruction. Mr. Marcy, Secretary of War, advised the president as follows:

On the 26th of June, 1847, I wrote to the commanding officer of Santa Fe a letter. It is therein stated that "the territory conquered by our arms does not become, by the mere act of conquest, a permanent part of the united States, and the inhabitants of such territory are not, ...citizens of the United States. It is beyond dispute that on the establishment of a temporary civil government in a conquered country the inhabitants owe obedience to it and are bound by the laws which may be adopted. They may be tried and punished for offenses. Those in New Mexico who .were guilty of murder, ...were liable to be punished for these acts, either by the civil or military authority, but [it] is not the proper use of legal terms to say that their offenses were treason committed against the United States; for to the Government of the united States--it would not be correct to say that they owed allegiance.

It appears by the letter of Mr. Blair, ...that those engaged in the insurrection have been proceeded against as traitors to the united States. In this respect I think there was error Their offense was against the temporary civil government of New Mexico and the laws that provide for it. ... For this reason the President declined to exercise the power to pardon vested in him as the chief civil magistrate of the United States, but, as commander in chief of the Army, authorized the military governor to use his discretion in the matter, and the prisoner [Antonio Maria Trujillo] was pardoned by the governor.

HANDOUT 4 : SCORING GUIDE

	Proficient 3	Apprentice 2	Novice 1	Incorrect or no attempt 0	Score
Objective 1: To understand the events of the Taos Revolt of 1847. Handout 2	Student will describe orally three of the events from eye witness accounts. (18 documents are broken into individual or paired for reading).	Student will describe orally two of the events from eye witness accounts. (18 documents are broken into individual or paired for reading).	Student will describe orally one of the events from eye witness accounts, (18 documents are broken into individual or paired for reading)...	Student makes no attempt or answers incorrectly for eye witness accounts. (18 documents are broken into individual or paired for reading).	
Objective 2: To decide whether non-citizens can be tried and executed for treason against the United States. See Procedure	Role play for the question, using number nine procedure with yes or no – recording answers on the board. Student gives orally six answers.	Role play for the question, using number nine procedure with yes or no – recording answers on the board. Student gives orally four answers.	Role play for the question using number nine procedure with yes or no – recording answers on the board. Student gives orally two answers.	Student makes no attempt for role playing or answering orally yes or no questions.	
Objective 3: To understand the use of primary sources in historical inquiry. Handout 3	Student will give orally or written three examples of how you would use historical inquiry accounts for future history. See Procedure	Student will give orally or written two examples of how you would use historical inquiry accounts for future history. See Procedure	Student will give orally or written one example of how you would use historical inquiry accounts for future history See Procedure	Student makes no attempt orally or written to answer.	