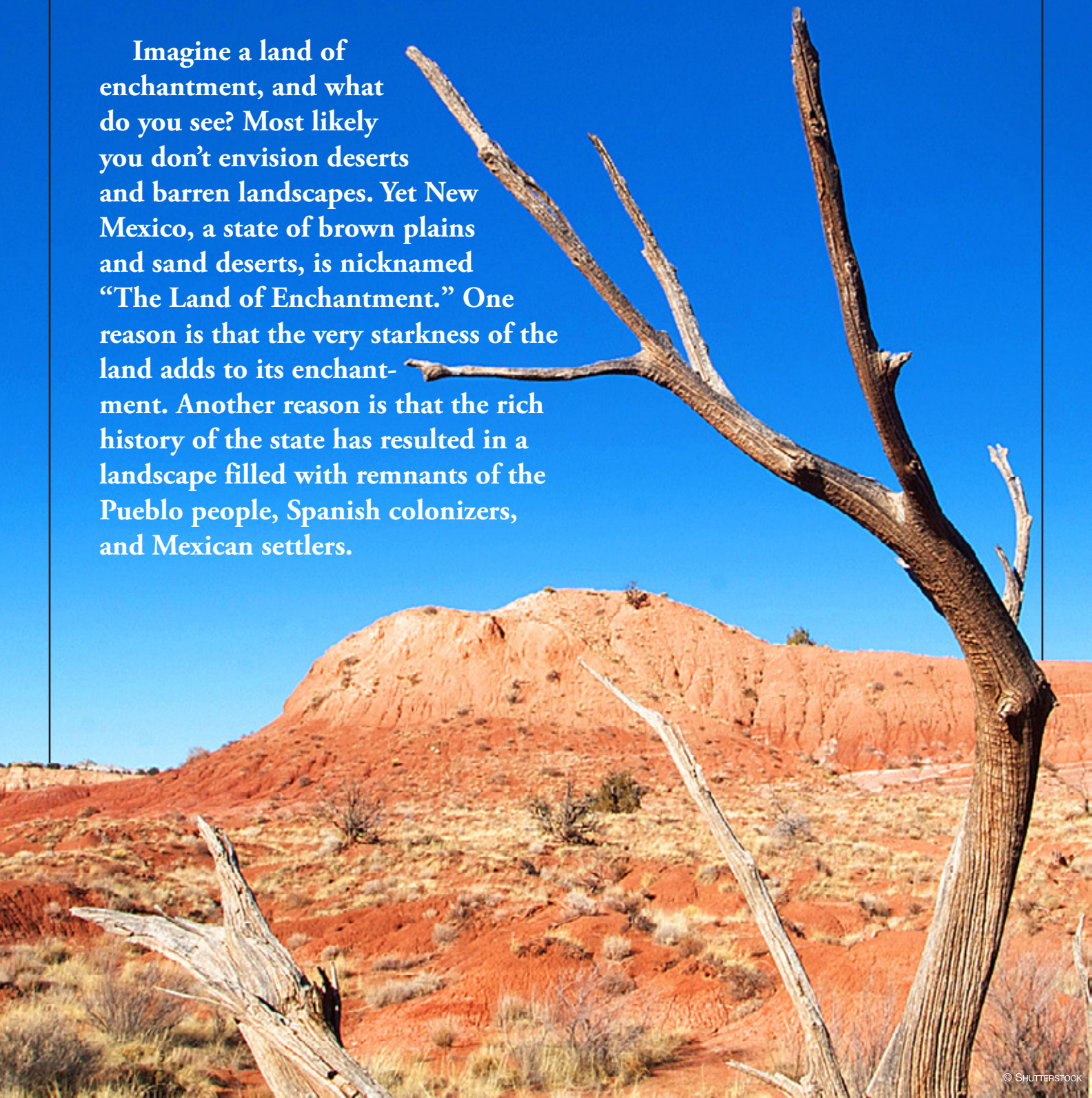


New Mexico

The Land of Enchantment

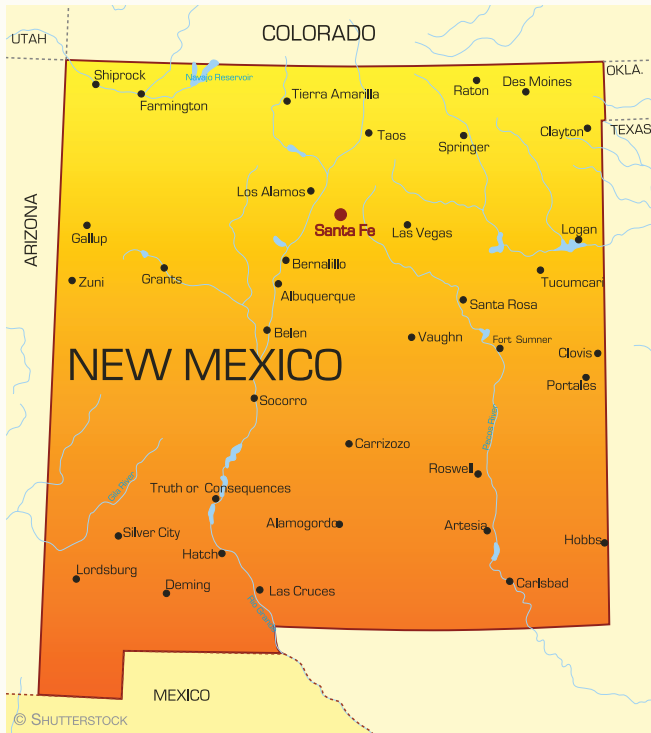
by Sandra McKay

Imagine a land of enchantment, and what do you see? Most likely you don't envision deserts and barren landscapes. Yet New Mexico, a state of brown plains and sand deserts, is nicknamed "The Land of Enchantment." One reason is that the very starkness of the land adds to its enchantment. Another reason is that the rich history of the state has resulted in a landscape filled with remnants of the Pueblo people, Spanish colonizers, and Mexican settlers.



New Mexico

The Land of Enchantment



Geography of New Mexico

Much of New Mexico's landscape was formed by volcanic activity millions of years ago that created the mountain ranges of New Mexico—the Sangre de Cristo Mountains in the north and the Sacramento and Guadalupe Mountains in the southeast. Millions of years ago, shifting faults also split open the earth, creating the Rio Grande Rift, which runs from north to south through New Mexico. Water has flowed through the Rio Grande Rift for over three million years. (However, because of years of drought, New Mexico now has a serious water shortage.)

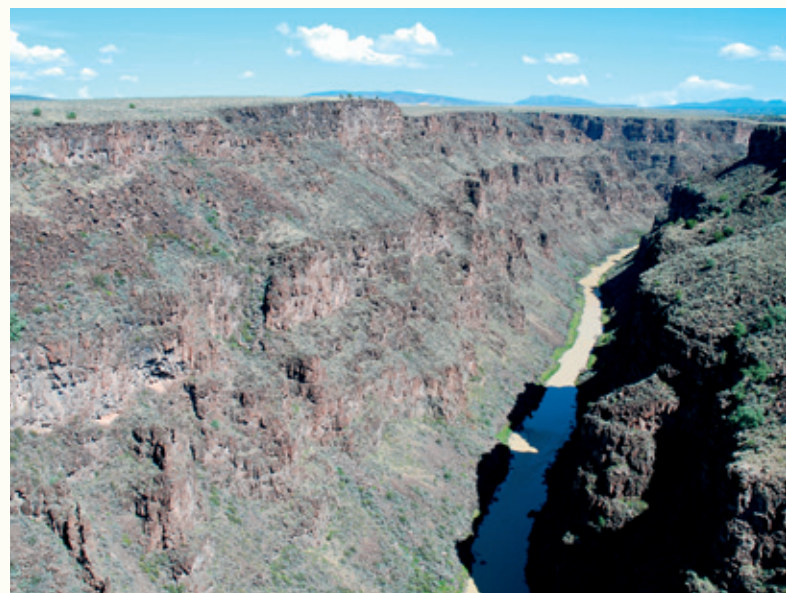
New Mexico is rectangular in shape. With an area of more than 121,000 square miles, it is the fifth largest U.S. state. A little north of the center of the state is Albuquerque, the largest city in New Mexico. The city has a beautiful setting, lying between dormant volcanoes and Sandia Peak, the highest peak of the Sandia Mountains. Sixty-two miles northeast of Albuquerque is Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico. Located on a plateau at an elevation of 7,000 feet in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Santa Fe is surrounded by remnants of the Pueblo people and

Spanish and Mexican rule. Ten miles south of Santa Fe is the Bandelier National Monument, a canyon filled with ruins of the Pueblo Indians. Northeast of Santa Fe is Taos, a small town adjacent to ancient pueblos and set on a mesa at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The spectacular desert views of the area have attracted people here for hundreds of years.

History of New Mexico

New Mexico has a long and colorful history in the development of North America. Archaeological evidence has established that people were residing in the area more than 12,000 years ago. Scientists have discovered the remains of mammoth bones in places such as the Sandia Caves located just outside of Albuquerque. It appears that hunter-gatherers lived off the land eating the giant animals until the Ice Age caused them to disappear in about 8000 BC.

Around 3000 BC, hunter-gatherers began to develop agriculture, a skill they learned from their neighbors further south in Mexico. Bat Cave in western New Mexico provided archaeologists with the earliest known maize (corn) discovered to date. While the growing of corn was minimal because of



The Rio Grande Rift cuts across New Mexico from north to south. The segment pictured here is near Taos.



These ruins of a Pueblo community feature a well-preserved kiva, an underground pit often used for religious ceremonies.

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the general conditions of the land and lack of water, it changed the nature of hunting and gathering; once indigenous people started growing corn, they wandered shorter distances so they could come back to plant and tend their crops. The increasing reliance on agriculture changed the nature of the culture and led to the development of the community of the Pueblo people, who have left an indelible mark on New Mexico.

The Pueblo People

The Pueblo people are individual clans and groups of Native Americans that lived in pueblos, or communities of adobe-constructed housing. The earliest group of Pueblo people, the Mogollons, lived in pit houses—rooms carved into the earth and covered with logs. Pit house structures eventually gave way to aboveground buildings constructed of clay and sticks. Today the original underground pit houses, called *kivas*, are often used for sacred and religious purposes.

When the Spanish arrived in the 16th century, they encountered the Pueblo people living in terraced dwellings five and six stories high, the most



In the 16th century, the Spanish found the Pueblo people living in terraced dwellings five and six stories high. Remnants of such dwellings are shown here.

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New Mexico *The Land of Enchantment*

advanced social arrangements the Spanish had seen in North America. While the Spanish recognized that the different groups of people living in these dwellings did not speak the same language, the Spanish nevertheless called all of them “Pueblos,” which in Spanish refers to “townsmen.” Today few of the stepped, multi-story adobe dwellings remain except in a few locations, such as in Taos.

Although communities of Pueblo people were independent of one another, they shared many common beliefs and social practices, including trading among themselves and with other nearby peoples. Religion was a central part of the culture, and the primary religious belief for the early Pueblo people was the continuity and harmony people have in relationship to nature.

Today’s rituals and ceremonies are virtually identical to those held in ancient times, mainly because the observances are rather carefully memorized prayerful requests for rain, good crops, plentiful game, pleasant days, and protection from violence. Non-Indians are not allowed to see religious ceremonial dances in the pueblos, and no photographing or sketching of these ceremonies is permitted. This is in part because of the Pueblo people’s fear of attempts to change or suppress their religious beliefs.

For a number of the Pueblo people, certain geographical areas have great religious significance. For example, for the people of Taos, the area called Blue Lake is considered the most sacred land in New Mexico and the mystic, primordial home of the Taos people. It is the place where the Taos people came into the world and the place where they return after death to enter into the spirit world and eternal life. Blue Lake is so significant to the Taos people that they seldom speak of it to people outside the societies of the Taos pueblo.

The Spaniards

New Mexico was first visited by Spaniards in the 16th century after rumors of Seven Cities made out of gold in the New Mexico area had begun to circulate among the Spanish people living in Mexico. The

viceroys from Spain in Mexico became enthusiastic about the possibility of finding the Seven Cities, so he organized a reconnaissance party to go and find the cities. However, the party was ultimately attacked by Pueblo people and returned to Mexico.

Subsequent invasions by Spaniards from Mexico were more successful, and the first major Spanish settlement in New Mexico was established in January 1598. Spain continued to move colonialists into New Mexico, which led to constant struggles among Spanish officials over their individual authority and prerogatives. In 1680 a San Juan Indian named Popé, who was living in Taos, led a rebellion that for the first time in the history of the Pueblo people united them in an effort to oust the Spanish invaders. They succeeded in keeping out the Spanish until 1691, when the Spanish re-colonized the New Mexico area.

The Mexicans

In August 1821, Mexico obtained its independence from Spain, and New Mexico became part of the Mexican nation (until 1846, when New Mexico was acquired by the United States). A major benefit of Mexican rule was the fact that Mexico encouraged foreigners to visit and trade with residents of New Mexico. One trader, William Becknell, set out from Franklin, Missouri, with a load of trade goods and arrived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in January of 1822. The residents of Santa Fe welcomed Becknell and purchased all of his goods, giving him a significant profit. When he returned to Missouri, he led a second expedition to Santa Fe and, again, was very successful in selling his goods. This success led to subsequent caravans of goods coming into New Mexico and the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail that linked New Mexico with the United States.

The Santa Fe Trail extends 780 miles (1,060 kilometers) from Independence, Missouri, to Santa Fe, New Mexico. The trail has been used for so long by so many people that even now the tracks of the wheels of old wooden wagons that traversed the trail are visible from the air. At the time when horses were used to pull those wagons, it took 40 to 60 days to



The piñon tree, the state tree of New Mexico, is the source of piñon nuts, a crop that the Pueblo people were harvesting as long ago as the early sixteenth century.

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go from Independence to Santa Fe. Ultimately, the route was used as a road for stagecoaches and later was used by the Santa Fe Railroad as the pathway for tracks. Some of the more colorful episodes of western history are associated with the Santa Fe Trail.

The United States

When the United States attempted to purchase New Mexico and California from Mexico in 1845, the Mexican government resisted. This resistance led to Mexican troops crossing into the lower Rio Grande Valley and engaging American troops on land claimed by the United States. This resulted in the war of 1846, also known as the Mexican War. As a result of this war, New Mexico was taken by the United States as a territory in 1850.

Between 1860 and 1900, the New Mexico territory became famous for cattle raising and sheep herding. Conflict between those who raised sheep

and those who raised cattle developed over how to best use the grazing land. This was also a time when cattle rustlers became notorious. Many of the western movies made in the 20th century deal with the conflicts in the New Mexico territory.

The New Mexico territory attempted to become a state for many years. One thing that delayed statehood was conflict about where to draw the boundaries for the state of New Mexico. Finally, in 1912, New Mexico was admitted to the union as the 47th state.

New Mexicans at Work

Because irrigation of land is not feasible in many areas, and because most of the arable land is given over to grazing, New Mexico has many large ranches with cattle and sheep on the open range year-round. In the areas where dry farming (use of techniques for growing crops with little water) is possible, the major crops include hay and sorghum grasses. Onions,



New Mexico is the largest grower of chile peppers in the United States, and chiles are a crucial ingredient in New Mexican cooking.

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New Mexico



Colorful Indian pottery is displayed in an outdoor market in Santa Fe. (Below) Turquoise, the gemstone of New Mexico, is mined locally and is usually paired with silver to make jewelry.

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potatoes, and dairy products are also important. Piñon nuts, pinto beans, and chiles are also raised and form a significant part of the diet of New Mexicans. However, most of the state's income is derived from its considerable mineral wealth.

New Mexico is the leading producer of uranium ore, manganese ore, potash, saltpeter, copper ore, beryllium, and tin concentrates. In addition to these minerals, New Mexico also produces natural gas, petroleum, and coal. Silver and turquoise, also found in New Mexico, have been used for hundreds of years to make jewelry. One of the hallmarks of New Mexican Indian pueblos is the silver and turquoise jewelry they produce, along with rugs and pottery.

The federal government is the largest employer in the state, accounting for over one quarter of the jobs in New Mexico. Many of these jobs are associated with the Los Alamos National Laboratory and the Sandia National Laboratory, which conduct nuclear research. New Mexico has been attempting to attract other industries, including high technology manufacturing, much of which is related to the defense industry.



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Tourist Attractions

Millions of acres of wild and beautiful country in New Mexico are under the control of the U.S. government. New Mexico has 13 national monuments and parks and five national forests (as well as more than 30 state parks). These include Carlsbad Caverns National Park and Aztec Ruins National Monument.

Carlsbad Caverns is located 320 miles southeast of Albuquerque in the Chihuahuan Desert. Inside the caverns are various chambers with dazzling rock formations made from limestone deposited on the cave ceiling that eventually grew into great hanging stalactites. Water dripping from these stalactites onto the floor produced massive stalagmites in intriguing formations. These formations have names like the Hall of the White Giant, the Devils Den, and Iceberg Rock.

Aztec Ruins National Monument, located near Farmington in northwest New Mexico, contains evacuated ruins of the Aztec Indians. These ruins appear to be only part of a much larger city. The West Ruin has over 400 rooms, some of which tourists can enter. It also has a fully reconstructed kiva, a submerged room that is 40 feet across, where the whole community gathered for meetings and ceremonies.

The largest city in New Mexico is Albuquerque, with a population of about 385,000. It is the commercial, industrial, and transportation center for the timber, livestock, and farming areas of the state. Because of the dry air of Albuquerque, the city is a popular health resort with many hospitals. In the old town area of Albuquerque, there are a number of interesting and well-known museums such as the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, which houses the largest collection of Spanish-colonial artifacts in the United States; the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, which contains the particular art and crafts of each of New Mexico's 19 pueblos; and the Science Center and Children's Museum of Albuquerque.

Because of Albuquerque's high altitude, mild climate, and strong winds, it is well known for ballooning. Hot air balloons are operated by licensed pilots who take tourists for spectacular rides above



Massive stalagmites in intriguing formations rise from the floors of caves in Carlsbad Caverns National Park, a popular tourist destination.

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the Rio Grande Valley. Many tourists who take such rides claim that this experience was the highlight of their stay in Albuquerque.

New Mexico's second largest city is Santa Fe, the state capital. In addition to housing the State Capitol and the offices associated with state government, Santa Fe is one of the major art centers of the United States. Its office of tourism maintains that Santa Fe ranks behind only New York and Los Angeles in the art market. With over 200 art galleries, many of them containing museum-quality art, Santa Fe can easily make this claim. Most of the best galleries in Santa Fe are located near the central plaza. Some well-known galleries are the Monroe Gallery, which

features acclaimed black and white photographers of the 20th century; the Gerald Peters Gallery with American and European art from the 19th century to the present; and the Nedra Matteucci Galleries, showcasing work from masters of American Impressionism and Modernism as well as Indian antiquities.

Santa Fe is a maze of narrow streets that can be confusing, but at every turn there are art museums, art galleries, and restaurants. The city has five state museums: the Palace of the Governors, the Museum of Fine Arts, the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, the Museum of International Folk Art, and the Museum of Spanish Colonial Art. In the summer, the Santa Fe opera performs in its modern indoor-outdoor amphitheater. Carved into a hillside, the structure provides spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and mesas.

Some of the best restaurants in New Mexico are located in Santa Fe. New Mexico has a unique cuisine based on its use of chile peppers. Although many of its dishes appear similar to Mexican cooking, New Mexican cooking is different in that it uses fresh green or red chile peppers rather than chile powders. Because New Mexico is the largest grower of chiles in the United States, New Mexicans use chiles liberally in their cooking. Typical New Mexican dishes include green chile stew, made of small chunks of pork stewed with onions, potatoes, garlic, and green chiles; posole, a stew that contains dried corn called "posole," which is soaked overnight and then combined with pork, onions, garlic, oregano, and chiles; and sopaillas, dough fritters that are deep-fried.

About 200 miles southeast of Albuquerque is Roswell, a small community of 50,000 people. The town is noted for the Roswell crash reported in a local newspaper on July 8, 1947. According to the newspaper, officers at the Roswell Army Air Field announced that they had retrieved the wreckage of an unidentified flying object (UFO). The next day Army officials rescinded their original statement and said that what they had recovered was a weather balloon. Since then, many have claimed that there had

New Mexico *The Land of Enchantment*



Hundreds of colorful hot air balloons rise from the launch field during the annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta.

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The State Capitol in Santa Fe is built in New Mexico Territorial style, which features elements of Pueblo adobe architecture. A stone carving of the state seal hangs above the entrance.

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indeed been a landing of aliens from another planet but that the military, for some reason, wanted to cover it up. What actually crashed that night may never be known, but it has made Roswell a center for the examination of UFOs.

Symbols of New Mexico

Any state that has the yucca flower and the piñon tree as its state flower and state tree might appear to be an uninviting place to visit since these plants are associated with a barren terrain. And the roadrunner, the state bird of New Mexico, is a signature bird of the desert southwest that feeds on snakes, scorpions, lizards, and mice. Above the New Mexico landscape, skies the color of turquoise, the state's stone, are magnificent and contribute to a stark desert beauty. When visitors to New Mexico stay for a while, they begin to understand why the state motto, *crescit eundo*, meaning "it grows as it goes," is appropriate for this state. For many, the



The Palace of the Governors, built in 1609, was previously the capitol building but is now the state history museum and a Registered National Historic Landmark.

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New Mexico The Land of Enchantment

beauty and tranquility of the environment grows and grows the longer they are there. Many artists have understood this, finding New Mexico an inspiring environment. In the end, the more time one spends in New Mexico, the more it truly becomes “The Land of Enchantment.”

Websites of Interest

Georgia O’Keeffe

www.okeeffemuseum.org

Official website of the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum and Research Center in Santa Fe, this site provides information on O’Keeffe’s life, art, and houses as well as many photos of her paintings.

Indian Pueblo Culture

www.indianpueblo.org

Operated by the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, this website presents videos and information about the history and culture of the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico.

National Parks and Tourist Attractions

www.americansouthwest.net/new_mexico/index.shtml

With a collection of useful links, this website provides information on national parks and other scenic spots in New Mexico, including the striking desert landscape of the Bisti Badlands and the Living Desert State Park, a zoo and gardens near Carlsbad.



The roadrunner, New Mexico’s state bird, is a ground bird that prefers walking or running to flying.

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Overview of New Mexico

www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0108250.html

This website provides a brief history of New Mexico and descriptions of its current industries and tourist attractions. The site also lists state symbols and provides links to many additional references on New Mexico.

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New Mexico’s state flower, the soaptree yucca, is a desert plant that produces flower stalks up to ten feet tall.

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Georgia O'Keeffe

(1887–1986)

Georgia O'Keeffe, one of the most significant American artists of the 20th century, lived in New Mexico from 1949 until her death in 1986. O'Keeffe is best known for her organic forms inspired by southwest motifs such as bleached animal bones, leaves, rocks, barren rolling hills, clouds, and desert blooms. Typically she depicted these abstract designs in strong, clear colors. Many of her works are displayed in the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum in Santa Fe, which is both a museum and research center.

From a young age, O'Keeffe showed great artistic skill. However, in her early twenties she became discouraged with her art and found work as a commercial artist in Chicago. About four years later, she began to study art again. In 1914 and 1915, she studied under A. W. Dow, a teacher at Columbia University Teachers College in New York City, and learned the principles of abstract art.

O'Keeffe decided that the abstractions she saw in her mind should form the basis for her paintings. About 1916, she turned some of these abstract designs into charcoal drawings that she sent to a friend in New York (O'Keeffe was teaching in South Carolina at the time), who showed them to Alfred Stieglitz, a famous photographer and advocate of modern art in America. Stieglitz was impressed by the drawings and began a correspondence with O'Keeffe. O'Keeffe returned to New York to study, and in May 1916 Stieglitz showed ten of her charcoal drawings in his gallery. Stieglitz and O'Keeffe developed a close relationship and were married in 1924. They lived and worked in New York, and, partly because Stieglitz continued to promote her work, O'Keeffe's reputation grew.

In 1929 O'Keeffe began spending summers painting in New Mexico, where she collected and painted animal bones. In 1934 she visited Ghost Ranch, about 120 miles north of Albuquerque, and decided to buy the ranch as a summer home. In 1936 she completed *Summer Days*, one of her most famous works, a painting of a cattle skull and wild flowers set against a desert background.

In 1949, three years after Stieglitz died, O'Keeffe left New York and made Ghost Ranch her home. There she began to produce a series of paintings featuring architectural forms, patio walls, and the doors of her adobe house in Abiquiu.

In the 1960s and 1970s, O'Keeffe began painting cloudscapes, paintings inspired by the view from an airplane window. One of these paintings, *Sky Above Clouds IV*, is a well-known example of this series. Because her eyesight was failing, O'Keeffe stopped painting with oils in the mid-1970s, but she continued to work in pencil watercolor and clay until she retired in 1984. She eventually moved to Santa Fe, where she died in March 1986 at the age of 98.



This adobe house at Ghost Ranch, New Mexico, was the permanent home of artist Georgia O'Keeffe from 1949 until the mid-1980s.

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