



Adios Nuevo Mexico: The Santa Fe Journal of John Watts in 1859 (Modern Jewish Literature and Culture)

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A teenager's fresh look on pre-Civil War life in territorial Santa Fe

Teenage John Watts came to territorial Santa Fe in 1858 from Bloomington, Indiana. His father believed the clear air of northern New Mexico would be beneficial to John's health. In Santa Fe, they joined John's older brother, J. Howe Watts.

John and Howe are left on their own in Santa Fe much of the time, and John decides to improve his penmanship and foster orderly habits by keeping a daily journal. In a mixture of worldliness and naiveté, maturity and boyish enthusiasm, insightful observations of others, and critical comments on his own behavior, John captures aspects of daily life in Santa Fe that are not of a kind generally found in public documents. Public officials help in educating the Anglo children living in the capital: Governor Rencher teaches French in his office at the Palace of the Governors, Reverend Gorman of the Baptist Church teaches Spanish. Francis Bauer, the army band director, gives music lessons. John voraciously reads the contemporary literary classics and the major American historians of his day

In a Who's Who of territorial New Mexico, *Adios Nuevo Mexico* opens a window into what an American boy in his late teens is reading, thinking, doing, and seeing in 1859 in Santa Fe.

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