

Chapter 183 – Texas Immediately Tests The New President’s Backbone



Dates:
July-August, 1850

Sections:

- Texas Wants To Extend Its Borders Into New Mexico

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Texas Wants To Extend Its Borders Into New Mexico



Map Showing Santa Fe Which Texans Attempt To Claim As Their Land

Within a few days of taking office and dismissing Taylor’s cabinet, Texas decides to challenge the new President.

They do so by a demand from Governor Peter Bell to extend the boundary of his state west to the city of Santa Fe in the New Mexico Territory.

Given that Texas is a designated “Slave State,” this would extend the institution even further to the west.

This demand is not new.

Former President Taylor’s response to it has been unequivocal -- including a promise to personally lead U.S. troops against any Texas incursions, and, if they occur, to call for the immediate admission of New Mexico as a Free State.

Fillmore’s response is to vacillate.

At first he orders 750 more soldiers to the border as an apparent show of strength. From there he backpedals, evidently for fear of losing support in the South.

He begins by blocking the attempt by New Mexico to apply immediately for statehood, knowing that the settlers there are signaling their intention to become a “Free State.”

He then supports a bill to set up a commission to study the boundary lines – rather than act upon them as proposed in Clay’s Omnibus Bill.

With every hesitation here aimed at appeasing the Texans and the South, Fillmore contributes to the steady unraveling of Clay’s attempted compromise.