

**PROCLAMATION OF  
BRIGADIER GENERAL STEPHEN W. KEARNY,  
TO THE PEOPLE OF LAS VEGAS**

**AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup> 1846**

Mr. Alcalde, and people of New Mexico: I have come amongst you by the orders of my government, to take possession of your country, and extend over it the law of the United States, we consider it, and have done so for some time, a part of the territory of the United States. We come amongst you as friends- not as enemies; as protectors not as conquerors, We come among you for your benefit- not for your injury, "Henceforth I absolve you from all allegiance to the Mexican government, and from all obedience to General Armijo. He is no longer your governor (great sensation) I am your governor. I shall not expect you to take up arms and follow me to fight your own people, who may oppose me; but I now tell you, that those who remain peaceably at home, attending to their crops and their herds, shall be protected by me, in their property, their persons, and their religion; not a pepper nor an onion, shall be disturbed or taken by my troops without pay, or by the consent of the owner. But listen! He who promises to be quiet, and is found in arms against me, I will hang. From the Mexican government you have never received protection. The Apaches and Navajoes come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep, and even your women, whenever they please. My government will correct all this. It will keep off the Indians, protect you and your persons and property; and I repeat again, will protect you in your religion. I know you are all great Catholics; that some of your priests have told you all sorts of stories- that we should ill-treat your women, and brand them on the cheek as you do your mules on the hip. It is all false. My government respects your religion as much as the Protestant religion, and allows each man to worship his Creator as his heart tells him best. The laws protect the Catholic as well as the Protestant the weak as well as the strong; the poor as well as the rich. I am not a Catholic myself- I was not brought up in that faith; but at least one-third of my army are Catholics and I respect a good Catholic as much as a good Protestant. There goes my army- you see but a small portion of it; there are many more behind- resistance is useless "Mr. Alcalde, and you two captains of militia, the laws of my country require that all men who hold office under me shall take the oath of allegiance I do not wish, for the present, until affairs become more settled, to disturb your form of government If you are prepared to take oaths of allegiance, I shall continue you in office, and support your authority.