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Review of *Dangerous Passage: The Santa Fe Trail and the Mexican War* By William Y. Chalfant

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ing, if sometimes overly detailed account. Chalfant's research is outstanding; there is hardly a person or event he does not identify and explain. The volume includes a fine collection of maps, drawings, and photographs to help the story come alive. Embodying, as it does, a first rate comprehension of the trail and its role in history, the book should serve as a reference point for this span of the Santa Fe Trail's history.

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Dangerous Passage: The Santa Fe Trail and the Mexican War. By William Y. Chalfant. Foreword by Marc Simmons. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994. Foreword, prologue, maps, photographs, illustrations, epilogue, notes, bibliography, index. xx + 325 pp. \$29.95.

One of the great romantic episodes in western history is the saga of the Santa Fe Trail. For over three decades it served as a vital wagon trail from Missouri to New Mexico; across it travelled the famous and infamous and a lot of ordinary people going about their work. For a long while ignored, it is now receiving just notice.

William Chalfant, long time western historian and Hutchinson, Kansas, attorney, focuses on one period in the trail's history, the Mexican War phase of American "Manifest Destiny." His is the story of the military as it protects the trail and uses it as the invasion corridor to march to Santa Fe. The main story details the "troubled and often violent Indian-White relations that plagued the trail during the war years" (p.xiii). Marc Simmons's foreword sets the scene and takes the reader into the narrative.

A wide variety of people will enjoy this study—those interested in military, Indian, transportation, and southwestern history in general, for example. Its focus is narrow in time and place, its significance broad to the history of the West and the United States.

Although its pace sometimes slows to that of the wagons, *Dangerous Passage* is a fascinat-