

1. **Abstract and statements of innovation and humanities significance** Provide a one-paragraph (up to one thousand characters) abstract written for a nonspecialist audience, clearly explaining the project's principal activities, and its expected results. This paragraph also may be used in the Project Information field in the Application for Federal Domestic Assistance—Short Organizational form ([see below](#)).

The website “Familiar Strangers: Visits between the United States and Mexico, 1776-1846” will unite, for the first time, primary sources from U.S. and Mexican repositories, as well as interpretation, about visitors between the United States and Mexico between 1776 and 1846. Using an archival database built in Omeka, the site will allow scholars, members of the general public, educators, and students to access both primary source documents--in English and Spanish--and secondary interpretation about individual journeys, people, and places. The trove of primary sources will demonstrate how deteriorating U.S.-Mexican relations during this period manifested themselves for visitors to each country. Users may access the primary sources and interpretation by searching by journey, by person, by place, by time period, or by keyword.

After the abstract, provide the following two brief (no more than five hundred characters) statements:

Statement of Innovation: using the description of innovation found in the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document as a starting point, briefly explain—in terms comprehensible to a general audience—how and why the project is innovative.

“Familiar Strangers” will use Omeka to create a database of interpretation and primary sources related to visits between the United States and Mexico. The innovation comes with the way users can access the site's information: searching by journey, by person, by place, by time period, or by keyword. Thus, the site will be accessible to users at all levels, from students and interested amateurs to scholars.

Statement of Humanities Significance: briefly explain—in terms comprehensible to a general audience—the humanities significance of the proposed project (i.e., what the project will contribute to a particular discipline or field, and what it will contribute to the humanities more generally).

“Familiar Strangers” will unite, for the first time, primary sources and interpretation about visits between the United States and Mexico from 1776 to 1846. Traditionally histories of this period, whether digital or analog, focused on one side of the border, or at least one side's perspective. “Familiar Strangers” will dovetail with more recent historiography that tells both sides of the leadup to the U.S.-Mexican War in a transnational manner.

2. **Narrative** The narrative should not assume specialized knowledge, and it should be free of jargon. It should clearly define technical terms so that they are comprehensible to a nonspecialist audience. Applicants should provide an intellectual justification for the project and a work plan. For Level II Start-Up grants, the narrative should not exceed six single-spaced pages. All pages should have one-inch margins, and the font size should be no smaller than eleven point. The narrative should address the long-term goals of the project as well as the activities that the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant would support. Applicants should keep in mind the criteria (listed below) used to evaluate proposals. Applicants must state whether they are applying for a Level I or Level II grant. Provide a detailed project description that addresses the following topics.

Enhancing the humanities through innovation [thesis statement] Provide a clear and concise explanation—comprehensible to a general audience—of the start-up activities and the ultimate project results, noting their value to scholars, students, and general audiences in the humanities. Describe the scope of the project

activities, the major issues to be addressed, and their significance to the humanities. Show how the project will meet its objectives in innovative ways.

I seek this Level II grant to begin creation of a transnational historical website entitled “Familiar Strangers: Visits between the United States and Mexico, 1776-1846.” The “Familiar Strangers” project will unite, in one place, primary sources and interpretation about visitors between the United States and Mexico from the American Revolution to the U.S.-Mexican War. It will explore the changing relations between the United States and Mexico through the lens of visitors from one country to the other.

The central question of “Familiar Strangers” will be: “How did visitors between the United States and Mexico view each others' countries as the two countries moved toward war?” During this time, U.S.-Mexican relations on a diplomatic and cultural level deteriorated: the popular press in each country increasingly vilified the other, and the two countries' governments marched toward full hostilities. Yet person-to-person contacts between the United States and Mexico proliferated. Merchants, diplomats, adventure travelers, and exiles, among others, visited each other's countries. Their accounts offer glimpses of the changing relationship through time.

The title “Familiar Strangers” neatly summarizes the website's argument: While the people of the United States and Mexico interacted with increasing frequency in the decades leading to the U.S.-Mexican War in 1846, they remained strangers. The extent to which they were familiar, and the extent to which they remained strangers, will be left to the site's users to determine through the primary sources and interpretation.

“Familiar Strangers” will allow a broad range of users--specifically scholars, interested members of the general public on both sides of the Rio Grande, educators, and students--to understand the countries' deteriorating relationship as it played out “on the ground.” The documents to be digitized and transcribed as part of this project are in scattered archives around the United States, Mexico, and beyond. The project's long-term goal is to unite these documents in one place, and interpret them, and the wider context, for scholars, educators, students, and the general public.

The Level II Startup Grant will fund the creation of the site's infrastructure using Omeka (see “rationale,” below) and the beginning stages of digitization of primary sources. The following is a description of the infrastructure that will be created, and explanation of the primary sources that will be selected for digitization.

Users will enter the site through a splash page (see appendix page 2). This page will offer a short explanation on the subject, akin to an introductory panel in a museum exhibition. The goal of forcing users to start here is to provide context for the primary sources.

After clicking “Enter,” users will encounter the home page (see appendix page 3). This page allows allowing them to access the primary sources and interpretation through five paths:

- Journey
- Place
- Person
- Time Period
- Keyword search

The journey, person, place, and time categories will all contain drop-down menus. Each drop-down menu will list each journey, place, or person in the site; those same lists will also be available on particular pages for journeys, places, and people. The time portion will allow users to choose a date range, and the site will

then pull all relevant primary sources, journeys, people, and places within that range. The search section of the home page, meanwhile, will have a box allowing users to search the site for particular terms.

From the home page, users may select a particular journey, or may click on the “Search by Journey” part to access a listing of all of the journeys (see appendix page 4). When users select a particular journey, they are directed to a page about that particular journey (see appendix page 7). Each journey page will show a map of that journey’s route. It will contain a paragraph or two providing a brief overview. Then, it will provide links to associated primary sources, people, and places. Users may then click on the places, people, and primary sources to learn more. This feature will be useful for a researcher investigating a particular journey, or a student or interested member of the general public. Users can see all of the people and places associated with the journey in one place, and can dig deeper to learn more.

Users may also select a particular place as a way to begin in the database, or may click on the “Search by Place” part of the home page to access a listing (see appendix page 4 for the similar “Journeys” page). Users are directed to a page about that particular place (see appendix page 8). Each page will highlight the place’s location on a map. It will contain a paragraph or two, with a brief overview of its history but, more importantly, its relation to visitors from the other country. Each place will have links to journeys that visited there, people associated with journeys through that place, and primary sources about or written from that place. This feature will be useful to researchers interested in the interactions of a particular place with the other country, and also educators, students, and members of the general public interested in that place’s history. Users can see all of the people, journeys, and primary sources associated with this place, and can dig deeper to learn more.

Similarly, users may search by person. The home page will contain a listing of the site’s people in a drop-down menu, and also users may click the “Search by Person” link on the home page for a listing on a separate page (see appendix page 4 for the similar “Journeys” page). When users select a person, they are directed to a page about that person (see appendix page 9). The page will include, if possible, a picture. It will also include a one or two paragraph biography, emphasizing the person’s experiences with the other country. Each person page will have links to the places in the other country the person visited, the journeys he or she undertook, and the site’s primary source documents about or by the person. This feature will be useful to, for example, biographers investigating a particular person--the relevant information will be in one place. It will be useful to genealogists investigating their ancestors. It will be useful to students, educators, and members of the general public who may be interested in learning more about a particular person.

Users also have the option of searching the site by time period. The home page presents drop-down menus that offer date ranges, or users may click on “Search by Time.” Either means of accessing this feature will direct users to one page (see appendix page 5). This page will list, and give links to, all the primary sources, journeys, people, and places within the date range. This feature will be useful for researchers seeking to learn about U.S.-Mexican relations during a particular time period, as they will have instant access to all of the relevant information on the site for that period. It also provides a scope for comparison by time period. Students, educators, and members of the general public may be interested in only a particular time period; this feature will allow them to engage that interest.

Finally, users will have the option to search the site by keyword. This feature will allow users to search the journeys, places, people, and/or primary sources for particular terms (see appendix page 6 for a sample search result page). An advanced search feature will allow users to search keywords in tags, journey, place, person, or full text, and to exclude certain types of results. This feature will be useful for scholars studying, for example, the use of certain terms in descriptions of the United States or Mexico by people from the other country. That scholar could then find all of the documents using that particular term. It will also

allow students, educators, and members of the general public to find subjects that interest them in a relatively fast, straightforward manner.

Every primary source digitized in the website will be accessible on its own page (see appendix page 10). This page will contain metadata about the document, using Omeka's Dublin Core metadata fields (see "rationale," below, for further explanation of the use of Omeka). As each primary source is digitized, at a minimum metadata for the title, journey, persons, places, dates, and descriptions will be filled in. As the site is built, each document will be transcribed in its original language and translated into Spanish and/or English, allowing for full-text searching.

The primary sources to be included in "Familiar Strangers" are scattered in archives throughout the United States, Mexico, and beyond. By uniting them in one place, and adding a layer of interpretation, this site aims to provide a "repository" for both researchers and casual users on both sides of the border. Using the power of the Internet, users will be able to skim from the surface (mainly through the interpretation provided) or dig in-depth.

Applicants should provide a rationale for the compatibility of their methodology with the intellectual goals of the project and the expectations of those who would make use of the grant product. NEH views the use of open-source software as a key component in the broad distribution of exemplary digital scholarship in the humanities. If either the start-up project or the long-term project is not predicated on generally accessible open-source software, explain why and also explain how NEH's dissemination goals will still be satisfied by the project.

"Familiar Strangers" will be built using Omeka, produced by the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University. Omeka's organization of items, collections, and exhibitions provides both the database and online exhibition framework that "Familiar Strangers" will use. The item and exhibition features of Omeka will be particularly useful.

As each primary source is inputted into the database, as much metadata as is available will be entered into Omeka's Dublin Core fields. Each primary source will be linked to particular journeys, particular travelers, particular places, and the date in which it was produced. This will allow site users to follow journeys, travelers, locations, or time periods. The archival database features of Omeka will also allow users to search the full text of each item in their own ways.

Omeka's exhibition features are also useful for the "Familiar Strangers" website. Each journey, traveler, and place will be its own "exhibition," linking the primary source documents together.

Another reason to use Omeka is its Scripto plugin, which allows for crowdsourcing of transcription and translation. This feature will prove valuable for "Familiar Strangers," as it will allow for greater efficiency in both tasks.

Omeka is a free, open-source product produced by the Center for History and New Media. This site will take advantage of Omeka's OMI-PMH Repository plugin to make the data available to anyone.

Environmental scan [Mills Kelly: webography] *Provide a clear and concise summary of an environmental scan of the relevant field. The goal of an environmental scan is to take a careful look at similar work being done in the applicant's area of study. For example, if you are developing software to solve a particular humanities problem, please discuss similar software developed for other projects and explain how the*

proposed solution differs. If there are existing software products that could be adapted and re-used for the proposed project, please identify them and discuss the pros and cons of taking that approach. If there are existing humanities projects that are similar in nature to your project, please describe them and discuss how they relate to the proposed project. The environmental scan should make it clear that you are aware of similar work being done and should explain how your proposed project contributes to and advances the field.

A large number of websites--from both scholars and interested amateurs--offer documentation and interpretation about this period, but none have the same completeness or specific subject area as the proposed "Familiar Strangers." Particularly, few websites take the transnational approach that this site will take. Some relevant categories and examples of websites include:

- Websites about the Texas Revolution, such as the Sons of the DeWitt Colony (<http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/dewitt.htm>), an excellent, albeit dated, website that provides a mixture of primary sources and interpretation about Spanish and Mexican Texas, the Texas Revolution, and the Texas Republic. Other similar sites focus specifically on Texas and on the Texas Revolution. "Familiar Strangers" would complement these sites by adding a greater transnational dimension, and extend the timeframe of them.
- U.S.-Mexican War websites, such as the Aztec Club of 1847 (<http://www.aztecclub.com/>), an organization of descendants of U.S.-Mexican War veterans. Provides some context about the war, primarily from the U.S. side. This site focuses largely on the war, rather than the leadup to it. This is similar to other sites about military aspects of the U.S.-Mexican War, which often neglect the political and social dimensions. "Familiar Strangers" would fill that void, providing social and political context for the leadup to the war.
- Parallel Histories: Spain, the United States, and the American Frontier (<http://international.loc.gov/intldl/eshtml/>), in English and Spanish. Produced by the U.S. Library of Congress, National Library of Spain, and the Biblioteca Colombina y Capicular of Seville, this site assembles primary sources about the intersections between the present-day United States and Spain from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. It remains a work in progress; only the "Exploration and Early Settlement" portion is completed. Among the portions pending is "Mutual Perceptions," which would dovetail with "Familiar Strangers." However, this site will presumably end with Mexican independence in 1821, while "Familiar Strangers" will continue beyond Mexican independence to the war with the United States. It will also include primary sources from a wider range of repositories.

While these and other websites offer areas of overlap with "Familiar Strangers," no website provides as comprehensive of an archive as "Familiar Strangers" proposes. Also, few websites take on the transnational, bilingual perspective that "Familiar Strangers" will.

This project will not only expand the digital work being done in the field of U.S.-Mexican relations, but the overall field. Traditionally histories of this period, whether digital or analog, focused on one side of the border, or at least one side's perspective. "Familiar Strangers" will dovetail with more recent historiography that attempts to tell both sides of the U.S.-Mexican War, and the leadup to it, in a transnational manner.

History and duration of the project *Provide a concise history of the project, including information about preliminary research or planning, previous related work, previous financial support, publications produced, and resources or research facilities available. It is anticipated that work on projects initiated during the term of a Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant will continue after the period of the grant. The applicant should describe plans for that work and probable sources of support for subsequent phases of the project.*

In 2009, I began research into the journey of Antonio López de Santa Anna to Washington in 1836-37. Originally, he planned the product of the research to be an essay in the journal *Washington History*, published by the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. Thus, I initially primarily focused the research on

Washington, looking at how Santa Anna and his fellow traveler/translator, Mexican Army Colonel and future Regent Juan Almonte, were perceived, and what their reception said about ethnic perceptions in the U.S. capital in 1837. As the project progressed, the scope changed to include the entire journey. I looked for primary sources in repositories including the Library of Congress, Historical Society of Washington, D.C., the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, and published primary source collections, as well as secondary research using biographies of Santa Anna, works about the Texas Revolution and U.S.-Mexican War, and about U.S.-Mexican relations during this period. As I researched, I noticed that journeys like Santa Anna's were not infrequent during this period, and that much of the scholarship addressed U.S. and Mexican perceptions of each other on a broad scale, but not the experiences of visitors--including diplomats, travelers, exiles, and merchants--in each country as the diplomatic and cultural relationship deteriorated. As such, I planned this expanded topic as my dissertation when I applied, and was accepted to, the history Ph.D. program at George Mason University. The "Familiar Strangers" project is planned as a major component of that dissertation.

Work plan *[month-to-month calendar]*

Describe the specific tasks that will be accomplished during the grant period. Include a schedule of important tasks and milestones for the duration of the project. Describe each task in some detail, noting which team members will be involved.

Months 1-2: Initial team meetings, survey of gathered research by Advisory Committee.

Months 3-6: Concept design of site, creation of search engine, modification of CMS for site purposes.

Months 7-10: Input of first primary sources into database, first translations, writing of accompanying informational paragraphs on first journeys, people, and places.

Months 11-12: Alpha testing of site. First users will be selected scholars, educators, students, and interested members of the general public.

Months 13-14: Modifications of site based on feedback from alpha testing. Continued input of primary sources and translations.

Months 15-16: Beta testing of site. Site will be opened to the general public.

Months 17-18: Final tweaks of site based on feedback from beta testing. Launch of full infrastructure, with some primary sources in place. Opening of crowdsourcing tools.

Describe plans for evaluating the results of the start-up activities. This evaluation should both look back on what the Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant accomplished and look forward to how the long-term project goals will be achieved.

Alpha testing (months 11-12): Selected users, based on feedback from advisory committee and those who have indicated interest after solicitation via academic listservs and websites for enthusiasts, will be given access to an alpha version of the website. Those users will interact closely with the project developers via email and chat sessions as they have issues with the site. Near the end of the alpha testing, all users will be given a short online survey, which will help guide tweaks to the site for beta testing.

Beta testing (months 15-16): The site will be opened to the public at this time, with the understanding that it is for beta testing. All users will be asked to fill out surveys of their experiences. Feedback will be considered for the final version of the site.

Post-launch evaluation: Random users will be asked to fill out a survey as they use the site. This feedback will guide further creation of the site. Additionally, the site team will convene a focus group after the Start-Up Grant is completed to evaluate the project. The focus group will consist of members of the Advisory

Board, other scholars, educators, students, and members of the general public who participated in the alpha testing.

Staff Briefly identify the project director and collaborators who would work on the project during the proposed grant period and describe their responsibilities. Project directors must devote a significant portion of their time to their projects. All persons directly involved in the conduct of the proposed project—whether or not their salaries are paid from grant funds—should be listed, their anticipated commitments of time should be indicated, and the reasons for and nature of their collaboration should be explained.

Project Director and Lead Scholar: David McKenzie. David will direct this project and carry out the main research to create the content. Additionally, he will write the interpretive texts about each journey, person, and place. 100% time.

Research Assistant: Will assist in the finding of primary sources and the creation and input of metadata for each primary source. 50% time.

Web Developers (2): Responsible for customization of Omeka for site. Will work with research assistant to input primary sources. 60% time.

Web Designer: Will work with web developers on aesthetics of site. 40% time.

If the project has an advisory board, provide a statement of its function and a list of board members in the biographies section of the application, which is discussed below. [“Dream Team” advisory board]

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board for “Familiar Strangers” will offer advice on the execution of the academic and educational goals of the website.

- Dr. Richard Bruce Winders, Historian and Curator, The Alamo; expert in early 19th-century U.S.-Mexican relations and U.S.-Mexican War
- Dr. John Tutino, Professor of History, Georgetown University; expert in 18th- and 19th-century Mexico
- Dr. Joan Cameron Bristol, Associate Professor of History, George Mason University; expert in 18th- and 19th-century Mexico
- Dr. D. Michael Bottoms, Assistant Professor of History, George Mason University; expert in 19th-century U.S. West, borderlands, race
- Dr. Adam Rothman, Associate Professor of History, Georgetown University; expert in 19th-century U.S. South
- Dr. Kelly Schrum, Associate Professor of History, George Mason University, director of TeachingHistory.org; expert in use of the Web for education
- Dr. Alex Stein, former director, Teaching American History program, U.S. Department of Education; expert on innovative educational techniques

Final product and dissemination Describe the plans to disseminate the project results through various media (electronic media, presentations at meetings, journal articles or books). Applicants should also discuss how the project’s ultimate product is likely to be disseminated and what provisions will be made for the long-term maintenance of the product.

Projects developing new software are encouraged to make the software free in every sense of the term, including the use, copying, distribution, and modification of the software. Open-source software or source code should preferably be made publicly available through an online repository such as SourceForge. Applicants should discuss how their white paper will detail the activities of the project and how it could be useful to the field. [chance to share lessons learned]

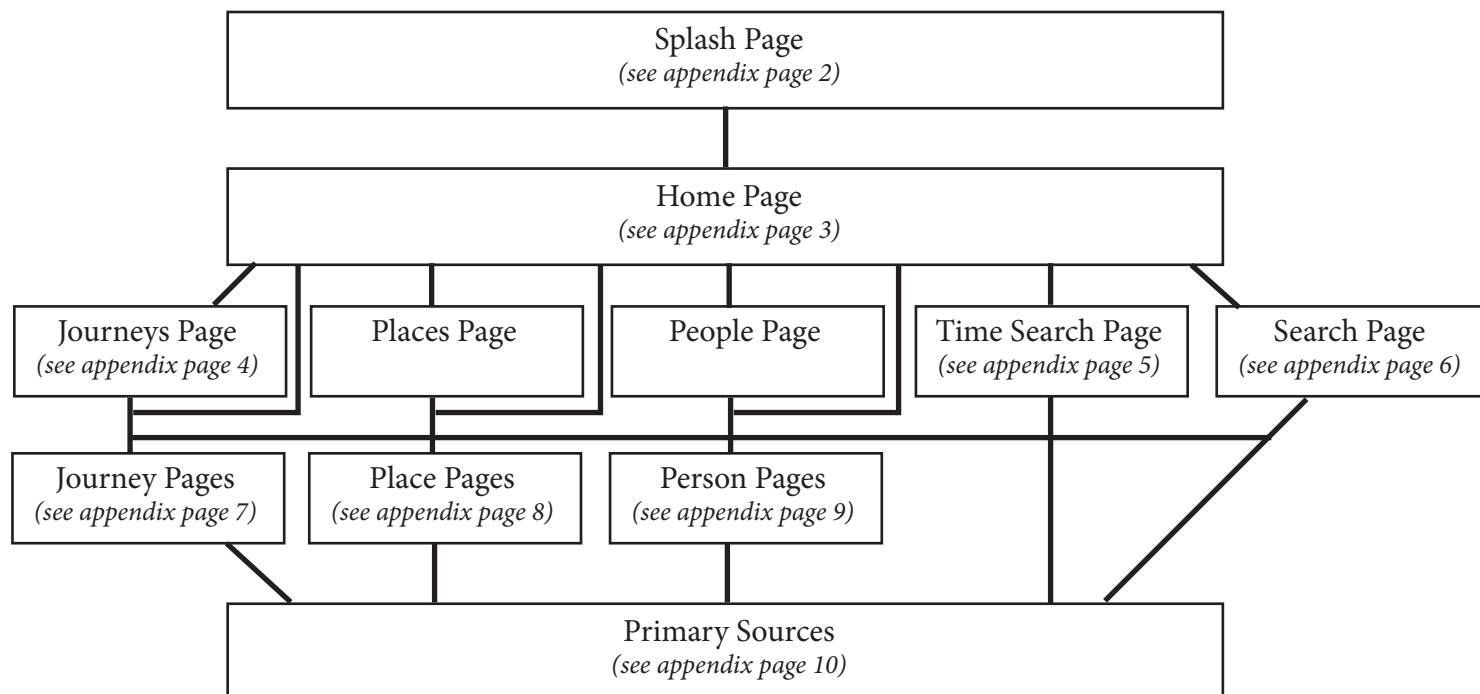
When “Familiar Strangers” is complete, the creators will launch a publicity campaign to attract users. We will post notices on H-Net listservs, including H-South, H-SHEAR, H-Borderlands, H-LatAm, and H-Mexico. Additionally, we will post on online forums for enthusiasts. Also, we will purchase advertising space in the American Historical Association’s *Perspectives on History* and with the magazines of specialist organizations like the Organization of American Historians and the Council of Latin American Studies. We will seek to publish journal articles about the site, and also journal articles that make use of the site. Finally, we will present at conferences such as those of the aforementioned organizations.

The Project Director and Lead Scholar will maintain the website as he completes his dissertation. He, with the help of the project team, will complete a white paper, to be presented at conferences and published, after the project is complete.

3. **Data management plan** Applicants should prepare a data management plan for their project. The plan should describe how the project team will manage and disseminate data generated or collected by the project. For example, projects in this category may generate data such as software code, algorithms, digital tools, reports, articles, research notes, or websites. Include as an attachment (not to exceed one page) a description of the project data management. For further guidance on the content of this plan, please see [*Data Management Plans for NEH Office of Digital Humanities Proposals and Awards*](#). [on hold until after presentations]
 4. **Appendices** If applicable, include wireframes, screen shots, or other project schematics. Materials in this section may not exceed ten pages.
- See attached.

Site Map

All visitors enter through the Splash Page, then proceed to the Home Page. From there they can proceed directly to pages about journeys, people, or places, or the time search and search pages. They can also proceed to pages with listings of journeys, people, or places.



Sample page: Splash page

This page provides a concise introduction to the site. It is the first page that users encounter.



Sample page: Home Page

This page allows users to access the documents and interpretation of the site by journey, person, place, time, or through a general search. The “Home” link in the menu bar on all pages links to this one.



Familiar Strangers

U.S. and Mexican Visitors to Each Others' Countries, 1776-1846



[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Journeys](#) | [People](#) | [Places](#) | [Time](#) | [Search](#)



Search by Journey

Learn more about the journeys that people from the United States and Mexico undertook.

1836-37: Santa Anna to Washington 

Search by Person

Learn about the people who journeyed.

Almonte, Juan 

Search by Place

Learn how various places interacted with people from the other country.

U.S.: Lexington, Kentucky 

Search by Time

Learn how experiences changed over time.

1830  to 1835 

General Search

Search the database for words.

gringo 

[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Journeys](#) | [People](#) | [Places](#) | [Time](#) | [Search](#)
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This page lists the journeys chronologically, allowing users to browse among them. The site will include similar pages for people and places.

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Sample page: Time Search

This page lists the people, journeys, places, and primary sources that fit within a set date range.



Familiar Strangers

U.S. and Mexican Visitors to Each Others' Countries, 1776-1846



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Years

1830 to 1835

Primary Sources

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Sample page: Search

This page allows users to search the database for primary sources, people, journeys, and places containing certain terms.



Familiar Strangers

U.S. and Mexican Visitors to Each Others' Countries, 1776-1846



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Search term: “gringo”

Primary Sources

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People	Journeys	Places
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[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Journeys](#) | [People](#) | [Places](#) | [Time](#) | [Search](#)
Proudly powered by [Omeka](#)

Sample page: Journey: Santa Anna to Washington, 1836-37

This page presents a brief overview of Antonio López de Santa Anna's journey from Texas to Washington in 1836-37, with a listing of people, places, and primary sources related to this journey. It also inclues a map.

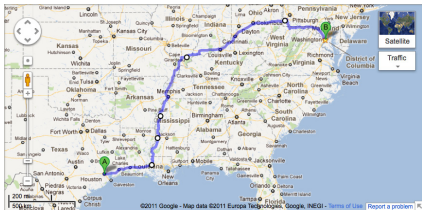


Familiar Strangers

U.S. and Mexican Visitors to Each Others' Countries, 1776-1846



[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Journeys](#) | [People](#) | [Places](#) | [Time](#) | [Search](#)



Santa Anna to Washington 1836-37

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Places

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People

- [Almonte, Juan](#)
- [Bee, Barnard](#)
- [Hockley, George W.](#)
- [Patton, John](#)
- [Santa Anna, Antonio López de](#)

Primary Sources

- [Letter, Antonio López de Santa Anna to Andrew Jackson](#)
- [Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet](#)
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David Patrick McKenzie | Sample NEH-ODH Level II Startup Grant: “Familiar Strangers” | Appendix page 7

Sample page: Place: Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A.

This page gives a brief description of one locality, emphasizing its interactions with Mexico and Mexicans during the relevant time. It then links to people, journeys, and primary sources related to the place.

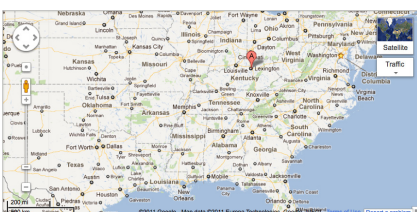


Familiar Strangers

U.S. and Mexican Visitors to Each Others' Countries, 1776-1846



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Lexington, Kentucky, U.S.A.

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People

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Sample page: Person: Juan Almonte

This page provides a biographical overview of the life of Juan Almonte, then provides links to the places, journeys, and primary source documents in which he is tagged in the site.



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Almonte, Juan

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Places

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Sample page: Letter, Antonio López de Santa Anna to Andrew Jackson

This page shows an individual primary source, including image and metadata. It links to all the journeys, people, and places tagged, and provides a transcription, allowing it to be retrieved through a search.

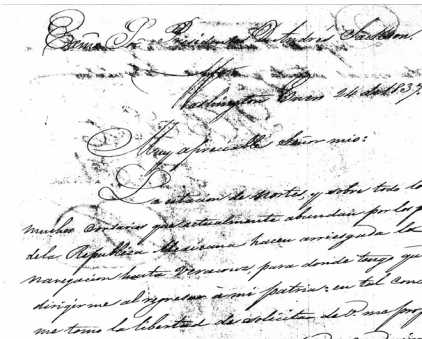


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Title

Letter, Antonio López de Santa Anna to Andrew Jackson

Journey

[Santa Anna to Washington, 1836-37](#)

Person(s)

[Almonte, Juan](#)
[Bee, Barnard](#)
[Hockley, George W.](#)
[Patton, John](#)
[Santa Anna, Antonio López de](#)

Places

[U.S.: Washington, D.C.](#)

Date(s)

1-24-1837

Text

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