# General Information

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# Description

The Gadsden Purchase from Mexico completes the continental United States from coast to coast.

# Keywords

James Gadsden, Transcontinental Railroad, Mexican American War, Mexico, United States, Guadalupe Hidalgo Treaty, Territorial Acquisition, El Paso, Los Angeles

# Citation

MLA
The Gadsden Purchase

NARRATOR: The treaty that ended the Mexican-American War in 1848 gave the United States some 500,000 square miles of new territory from Texas to the Pacific coast. But it was the Gadsden Purchase that actually completed the continental United States.

Professor MARIA MONTOYA (New York University): The Gadsden Purchase is the wonderful, tiny little piece of land that gets purchased about nine years after the treaty, but it’s a very significant piece of land.

NARRATOR: When the federal government began laying track for the Transcontinental Railroad, it discovered a critical piece of territory was still owned by Mexico.

Professor MONTOYA: It discovers that it needs that last little piece of the Gadsden Purchase to create the southern route that will go from El Paso to Los Angeles and link up not only the southern part of the United States, but central Mexico as well to El Paso and out to these ports in Los Angeles.

NARRATOR: Railroad executive James Gadsden was dispatched to broker a deal with Mexico for the property, which is now southwestern New Mexico and southern Arizona. The United States paid ten million dollars for the Gadsden Purchase.

Professor MONTOYA: So, it’s purchased very quickly, very quietly, and for quite a large sum of money, actually, from the Mexican government to obtain that last piece of property. And that’s the last piece that finally makes the United States a coast-to-coast nation, and gives us the geography that we all know today.