New Mexico State History, Course 1

c. 10000-9000 B.C. - Clovis People

The people we now call Clovis, were in North America by the end of the last ice age. It has been suggested that they were here between 12,000 and 11,200 years ago though new research and discoveries may move this date back and suggested dates could be as far back as 15,000 years to 24,000 years. Proof that Paleo-Indians had lived in the New World since the late Pleistocene was first provided by the discovery of human artifacts associated with the bones of long-extinct animals at Folsom, New Mexico in 1926-1927. In 1932, 150 miles south of Folsom, a large but extremely well-made stone tool located near a very large animal tooth was found. Excavations were carried out at Blackwater Draw near Clovis, New Mexico.

Blackwater Locality No. 1 is the "Clovis Type Site" for the oldest accepted widespread culture in the New World. Evidence of their "fluted" points (a New World invention), other stone and bone weapons, tools, and processing implements are found at the site. These implements are in association with extinct Pleistocene megafauna such as Columbian mammoth, ancient bison, large horses, and large turtles. Other Pleistocene age animals that visited the site for food and water were tapir, camel, four-prong antelope, tampulama, llama, deer, dire wolf, ground sloth, short-faced bear, saber-tooth cat, shovel-toothed amebeledon, beaver, armadillos, and peccary.

Although the archaeological remains associated with the Clovis site and culture are bones and stones, they represent a living culture at one time present in the geographical area we now call New Mexico. The written history of New Mexico is preceded by thousands of years of human habitation and a legacy that lives on in the archaeological record.

Chaco Canyon

Ancient Chaco' s New History
by Stephen H. Lekson

Chaco is an arid, barren, sandstone canyon in the middle of nowhere. But a millennium ago, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries A.D., ancient peoples not only survived there, they thrived and created an amazing city. Chaco's ruins awe us even today. The people we call the ancestral Pueblo (also "Anasazi") built monumental political and ceremonial buildings that towered, literally and figuratively, above anything previously seen in the Southwest.

The ruins are preserved in Chaco Culture National Historical Park, 175 kilometers (110 miles) west of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Ancient Chaco Canyon was the center of a regional system covering over 100,000 square kilometers (40,000 square miles). The principal excavated ruins are Pueblo Bonito, Chetro Ketl, Pueblo del Arroyo, Pueblo Alto, and Kin Kletso. Hundreds of other buildings, large and small, dot the canyon floor. The largest buildings, called "Great Houses," are usually associated with "Great Kivas"-16-meter-diameter (53-foot) subterranean ceremonial chambers, such as Casa Rinconada.

Pueblo Bonito was the largest Great House. Construction began as early as 850 and continued until about 1125; the D-shaped building stood five stories tall, covered .8 hectares (2.2 acres), and contained over 650 rooms, 45 smaller "kivas," and two Great Kivas. The carefully coursed sandstone masonry walls were up to 80 centimeters (2.6 feet) thick. Over 25,000 pine roof beams were transported from distant forests. Chetro Ketl and the unexcavated ruins of Una Vida and Penasco Blanco were almost as large as Pueblo Bonito and had similar construction histories.

Many thousands of turquoise beads, pendants, and inlays were found at Chaco Canyon sites. The turquoise
came from mines near Santa Fe and elsewhere. Macaws and parrots, copper bells, and sea shells were imported from Mexico, up to 1,000 kilometers (more than 600 miles) to the south. Kitchen pottery and stone for tools were also brought from distant sources. Much of the pottery at Pueblo Alto, for example, was made two days' walk to the west.

Rich burials at Pueblo Bonito suggest to some archaeologists the existence of elite leadership, presumably the lords of the regional system indicated by a network of "roads" and over 150 smaller Great Houses or "outliers." The roads were 9 meters (30 feet) wide, arrow-straight constructions, up to 60 kilometers (36 miles) long—probably landscape monuments rather than transportation corridors.

Chaco Canyon was much like the rest of the ancestral Pueblo area until about 900. What some archaeologists call the "Chaco Phenomenon" began, in the early-tenth century, as a local center in northwest New Mexico, perhaps serving as a food storage and redistribution center in a highly uncertain environment. About 1020, the scale of the Chaco region and Chacoan building expanded, eventually encompassing most of the ancient Pueblo world. Contacts with Mexico intensified after Chaco assumed regional preeminence.

At Chaco's height in the early-twelfth century, between 2,000 and 5,000 people may have lived in the canyon, though some believe even the lower figure is way too high. A drought, beginning about 1130, coincided with the end of monumental building at Chaco Canyon and the beginning of a second major center, 85 kilometers (50 miles) north of Chaco Canyon, at Aztec Ruins National Monument.

From about 1000 to 1150, Chaco was the "capital" of the Pueblo world. Some scholars believe that Chaco was an economic, political, and fundamentally ceremonial center that transformed many slow centuries of Pueblo village life into a coherent regional system. Chacoan buildings, even in ruins, astonish us with their size, complexity, and beauty. At its height, Chaco was a ceremonial city of unprecedented wonder. Its monumental structures housed rooms full of bright imported feathers, shell, and turquoise, all used in ceremonies staged on a ritual landscape of vast geometric symmetry. Surrounding these immense villages were sophisticated irrigation and water control systems that transformed the dry canyon into a tapestry of corn fields, Great Houses, and monuments.

Events in Chaco Canyon had far-reaching effects, both in its time and in all subsequent Pueblo history. Smaller, less formal versions of the Great Houses of Chaco Canyon were erected all over the Colorado Plateau in the eleventh, twelfth, and even the thirteenth centuries. Acoma and many other Pueblos recall Chaco as the seminal "White House" and regard it as a sacred place. Important Hopi clans originated there. Chaco saw dramatic events -recounted in origin stories-which shaped Pueblo life, society, and religion forever after. The many Navajo people, who live all around Chaco today, tell stories of the astonishing things that happened there long ago. There was nothing remotely like Chaco in the eleventh- and twelfth-century Southwest. Chaco was epochal.

So much for the hype. Some archaeologists have more modest readings of Chaco, as we shall see. But Chaco Canyon was special. The hundreds of archaeologists who have flocked to Chaco over the last century attest to Chaco's particular fascination. Chaco was evidently so central to Southwestern prehistory, yet so mysterious in the details of its history, that archaeologists came to call it the "Chaco Phenomenon."

We may never resolve the Chaco Phenomenon. Who built these amazing buildings? How many people lived in this forbidding canyon? How did people survive in Chaco—much less create this astonishing civilization? What effects did Chaco have on the rest of the Southwest? These are only a few of the questions that people who have seen this wonder have asked and tried to answer. Scholars of Southwest archaeology have argued about these issues for decades.

Ancestral Puebloan Culture-1 A.D.
Ancestral Pueblo Culture (Anasazi) are the ancestors of modern Pueblo Indians now living in New Mexico and Arizona. There never was an “Anasazi” tribe, nor did any group of people call themselves by that name. Anasazi is only a descriptive term of Navajo origin. Archaeologists applied the term to villagers who lived and farmed in the Four Corners between the years 1 and 1300 AD. Most of them were probably ancestors of today’s Pueblo people. After 1300, the heartland of this culture shifted southward but the culture never disappeared. The modern Pueblos are about 20 independent tribes living in New Mexico and Arizona.

When the Pueblo culture (Anasazi) began is a matter of definition, because there is no single event or trait which defines it. Archaeologists identify cultures by shared traditions in architecture, crafts etc. At present they see the earliest traces of this culture dating back to at least AD 1, or as early as 1500 BC, through characteristic kinds of basketry, sandals, art, tools, architecture, settlement pattern, and incipient agriculture. According to Pueblo oral traditions, different groups came from different directions and points of origin before joining together to form the clans and communities of today.

The ancestral Puebloan homeland was centered in the Four Corners region of northwest New Mexico and northeast Arizona, and in adjacent areas of Colorado and Utah, where their occupation lasted until 1280 or so. By 1300 AD the population centers had shifted south, to the Rio Grande Valley in north-central New Mexico and the Mogollon Rim in central Arizona, where related people had already been living for a long while.

The Ancestral Puebloan farmers were relatively successful in the Four Corners area for over a thousand years. But by AD 1300 they had left the entire region. Long-term climate changes that reduced crop yield may have been among the reasons that the Anasazi finally moved away from their former homeland. Tree-ring records and other indicators show that persistent drought and/or shortened frost-free seasons affected this region during several prehistoric periods, including the early 900s, the early 1100s, and the late 1200s. Each of these periods corresponds to shifts in settlement pattern. The last period (late 1200s) witnessed the final, widespread Puebloan migrations out of the Four Corners. Other factors responsible for this exodus may have been deforestation or other kinds of environmental degradation, a growing scarcity of land or other resources, and/or political conflicts related to these problems. The Ancestral Pueblos may have reached the limit of the natural resources available to them. When crops consistently failed, the people moved to a better location. Archaeologists also see evidence of social changes over time, changes perhaps related to internal pressures or to outside competition from non-Pueblo groups.

The Rio Grande pueblos and the pueblos of Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni grew in numbers after AD 1300, perhaps including people from this region. The Hopi people of Arizona believe some of their clans came from the north. Evidence exists for sudden population growth around the Homolovi area near Winslow, Arizona.

Archaeological evidence is indirect, and does not usually reveal much about a people's beliefs, religion, political system, or social customs. Sometimes the geographic patterning of settlements in the landscape--or the placement of buildings within a village--are indicators of social relationships. Otherwise, we can only assume that many cultural patterns are the same now as they were a thousand years ago, and the Pueblos tell us they were. For example, in recent times, men were the weavers, and they socialized in the kivas. In archaeological sites, we often find evidence of weaving in kivas. But our understanding of Anasazi rules of property and authority are still too vague to be certain about matriarchy. At least there is nothing that would indicate that roles have been reversed.

Many modern Pueblo people believe their 13th century ancestors were organized into clans, and were governed by clan elders. Some archaeologists doubt that the clan system existed at that time because they see little evidence for it. They theorize that clans were a response to social and geographical dislocations ca. AD 1300 - 1400, and to the need for a new way to define relationships between new neighbors. In this view, clans represent people who previously migrated as a group and then settled with other groups to form a larger community.

Recent research indicates that, as the landscape grew more crowded over time, dispersed settlements
aggregated into larger communities with settlements surrounding central core villages. There is also increasing

evidence of status differences among the Ancestral Puebloans, as seen by differences in architecture and burial

possessions.

**Cabeza de Vaca Reaches Mexico, 1536**

In 1527 Cabeza de Vaca was appointed to be treasurer of a royal expedition, led by Pánfilo de Narváez, to map

and explore the area now known as Florida. In April of 1528 the expedition sailed into Tampa Bay after having

experienced hurricanes and the destruction of several ships. Narváez and 300 men began an overland march to

meet the remaining ships up the coast at a good harbor but hardship and native hostility ended the expedition.

The survivors attempted to reach Mexico in makeshift barges but misfortune and incompetence led the

separation of the groups. Cabeza de Vaca, separated from Narváez, led a small band of survivors to an island,

probably Galveston, where most of them died of starvation and exposure. Cabeza de Vaca was left to his own

devices on the mainland for several years, trading with the Natives. In 1532, he was told by the natives of other

men like him in the area and here he met up with other survivors of the original expedition, Alonso del Castillo

Maldonado, Andrés Dorantes, and Estevanico the Moor, who were being held captive. Cabeza de Vaca himself

was enslaved and the four remained together this way for a year until they escaped and began their journey

across what is now the southwestern United States and northern Mexico.

Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and a small group of other survivors from the Panfilo de Narváez expedition

may have reached present-day New Mexico in 1535. In 1536 they reached a Spanish settlement (Culiacán) on

the Sinalo River in Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca and his companions were the first Europeans to travel the

Southwest and to write reports. Cabeza de Vaca's reports on his journey from 1528-1536 included information

about numerous tribes, flora and fauna. The firsthand observations recorded in Los Naufragios (the

shipwrecked men), is a unique ethnographic picture of this journey, the first anthropological record and

contemporary observation of archaic bands encountered at this early date.

Cabeza de Vaca’s story concerning the cities of Cíbola which caused much excitement in New Spain and the

rush to find gold in Nueva Mexico was precipitated by his statement that the Indians at one point in his journey

(in the upper Sonora Valley) told him that in the mountain country to the north were some “towns with big

houses and many people” with whom they traded parrot feathers for turquoise. These towns were the group of

six Zuni pueblos in western New Mexico. The Indians pointed the way to the pueblos and it was thought at the

time that these pueblos were in the area of the large buffalo herds of which the Spaniards had vague

information.

**The 16th Century Colonization of New Mexico**

By Robert Torrez

For nearly fifty years following the expedition of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, New Mexico was forgotten.

Coronado had found none of the treasures promised by the stories of Cabeza de Vaca and Fray Marcos de

Niza. As the sixteenth century progressed, Spanish settlement advanced slowly but steadily through northern

Mexico.

In present day Chihuahua, Franciscan missionaries found that Indians of the region traded regularly with other

peoples who lived further north. The missionaries heard stories of large villages whose inhabitants farmed

extensive fields. In 1581, Fray Agustín Rodrigues obtained permission to venture north and determine the truth

of these reports. Late that year, Fray Agustin, two fellow Franciscans, Francisco Lopez and Juan de Santa

Maria, several servants, and a small military escort led by Francisco Sanchez Chamuscado left Mexico and

spent nearly a year exploring the same region that Coronado had traversed. The expedition, however, did not
fare well. Fray Juan was killed by Indians, and later, when Chamuscado prepared to return to Mexico, Fathers Agustin and Francisco decided to stay behind and begin the process of bringing Christianity to the Indians of the region. Chamuscado himself became ill and died before they reached home.

In November, 1592, an expedition led by Fray Bernardo Beltran and Antonio de Espejo returned to search for the priests who had stayed behind. They soon learned that the priests had been killed, but, instead of returning with the news, they proceeded to spend several months exploring. Espejo's report is credited with the first official use of the term "La Nueva Mejico" to describe the region we now call New Mexico.

In the meantime, Spanish officials had received reports of the earlier Rodriguez Chamuscado exploration and, encouraged by news of the many potential converts to Christianity, authorized the conquest and colonization of this "new" Mexico.

In 1595, the contract for this ambitious undertaking was awarded to Juan de Onate. Onate came from a distinguished family. His father, Don Cristobal, had helped Cortes conquer Mexico. While Onate's family connections were undoubtedly a factor in being awarded the contract, their wealth was equally important. The colonization of New Mexico was to be a privately financed venture and establishing a colony hundreds of miles from the nearest Spanish settlement was a costly undertaking.

Onate's contract with the Spanish government specifies in detail the number of men, livestock, and other provisions and equipment he agreed to provide. In return, Onate was named both Governor and Captain General, which gave him civil and military authority over New Mexico. He also was to be the primary beneficiary of any riches they might discover.

After numerous delays, the expedition finally assembled at Compostela, Mexico, in January 1598, for final muster. One-hundred and twenty-nine soldier colonists, several with wives and families, along with nine Franciscans, answered the roll. Once under way, the enormous caravan advanced slowly towards the Rio Grande. In April 1598, they paused near present day Ciudad Juarez, where Onate took formal possession of the province in the name of King Philip of Spain. As they traveled north along the Rio Grande Valley, Onate carefully stopped at each Indian settlement and obtained the inhabitants' formal allegiance to their new God and King.

On July 11, 1598, an advance party of the expedition arrived at the Tewa villages located where the Rio Grande and Rio Chama meet. The Spanish stopped at Okhe, re named it San Juan de Los Caballeros, and moved in with their hosts (or possibly displaced them). Here they established the first Spanish capital of New Mexico. A few months later, the Spanish moved to the west bank of the Rio Grande to the village of Yunque, which they renamed San Gabriel. San Gabriel served as the Spanish capital until 1610, when Santa Fe was established.

Onate immediately launched scouting parties in various directions to determine the extent and resources of the province. During one of these early forays, the Spanish encountered the first serious challenge to their precarious hold on this remote frontier.

In late fall of 1598, Onate was leading a large expedition westward in search of a route to the Pacific Ocean. In early December, he paused at Zuni to wait for his nephew, Captain Juan de Zaldivar, to arrive with provisions for the expedition. Along the way, however, Zaldivar stopped at Acoma and, leaving several soldiers at the foot of the mesa to tend the horses, proceeded on foot to the hilltop settlement where he demanded food and blankets.

The proud and defiant Acomas refused. Instead, they attacked Zaldivar and his men. Thirteen Spaniards, including the Captain, fell as they fought their way to the cliff's edge. Unable to retreat further, several of them leaped over the edge. Amazingly, three survived the fall and, shaken and dazed, joined their waiting companions and rode off to warn Onate.
Onate immediately returned to San Juan and began preparing for war. In mid January 1599, seventy Spanish
troops led by Vicente Zaldivar, brother of the slain Juan, arrived at Acoma. The Acomas must have laughed at
Zaldivar and his tiny army as he stood at the foot of the imposing mesa and formally demanded their surrender.
Secure atop the walls of their impregnable fortress, they responded with a hail of arrows and stones. But the
Acomas tragically underestimated the Spanish will and ability to wage war. Zaldivar and his men not only
succeeded in reaching the top of mesa but killed hundreds of determined Acoma defenders during three days of
furious combat.

Afterwards, the Spanish went through the formality of trials for the Acomas. The sentences Onate imposed on
them were unquestionably the most barbaric in the annals of New Mexico history. All the Acoma men over
age 25 were sentenced to have one foot cut off and to 20 years of personal servitude (a form of slavery). Males
under 25 and females over 12 were spared the cruelty of a severed foot, but still were sentenced to 20 years
servitude. The Acoma children, although declared innocent of any part in the uprising, were placed with
Spanish families. All the elders of the village were dispersed to the care of various surrounding pueblos. For a
generation, Acoma literally ceased to exist.

Over the next few years, the Spanish colony at San Gabriel barely managed to survive. Despite an infusion of
new colonists in 1600, conditions remained bleak. Internal bickering persisted, relations with the pueblos were
strained, and, for a time, it appeared the colony might be abandoned. Ultimately, however, it was the
missionary work of the Franciscans that saved the colony. The thousands of Indians they had baptized made it
unthinkable that New Mexico would be abandoned. The Spanish were here to stay, at least for a while.

**Founding of Santa Fe-1609-1610**

In late January of 1610, Don Pedro de Peralta reached New Mexico's first capital city, the Villa de San Gabriel,
located on the west bank of the Rio Grande, opposite San Juan Pueblo. His origins remain obscure but he was
appointed by the viceroy to succeed Juan de Oñate, New Mexico's first governor and founder. Peralta carried
instructions to move the provincial capital to a better site. Oñate’s capital of San Gabriel was considered too
far north and too far from the center of the Pueblos scattered along the Rio Grande to the south. The idea had
been raised earlier by Oñate himself, in 1608. At that date, he wrote to Mexico City indicating that he planned
to relocate his settlers in the valley of the Santa Fe River. Peralta’s charge from the viceroy was to lay out a
new municipality for the colonists; to elect a town council, the cabildo, demarcate municipal boundaries,
assign house and garden plots to citizens and select a site for the plaza and government building. Ultimately,
Governor Peralta was to lay claim to this new capital, defend New Mexico and restore respect for Spanish rule,
consolidate the natives if possible, and build for the future.

The new capital, Santa Fe, was close to water, there was ample land for cultivation, the site was more
defensible and there were no Pueblo Indians living in the vicinity. At the old capital, farmlands were scarce
because San Juan had first claim for its needs. The formal and legal founding of Santa Fe was carried out under
the direction of Governor Peralta; he and his surveyor laid out a plan for the new capital with its several
districts, and a public square for the casas reales or government buildings. According to Peralta’s instructions
from the viceroy, the casas reales would contain offices for royal officials, a jail, arsenals, a chapel and the
office and quarters for Peralta as governor.

Under Spanish law, the man founding a new community had the right to name it. But when Peralta came, he
saw that a small settlement existed and was called Santa Fe, possibly named for the town of Santa Fe in
southern Spain. One of the alternate names for New Mexico during its first century was Nueva Granada. So
naming its capital Santa Fe (Holy Faith) in honor of the Spanish city located at Granada might have seemed
perfectly logical.
Pueblo Revolt, 1680 -

According to New Mexico historian Ralph Emerson Twitchell, the Pueblo Indians made ineffectual attempts to free themselves from the yoke of Spanish tyranny for nearly half a century before they were finally successful in 1680. The Spaniards lived in continual fear that their expulsion was imminent, and exercised unceasing vigilance in order to keep a hold on the province. Since the 1598 arrival of Juan de Oñate, Spain assumed authority over Pueblo peoples. Spanish officials forced Pueblos to conform to the economically imbalanced encomienda and repartimiento systems, under which Pueblos were forced to pay tribute to the Spanish government. In addition, the Franciscans set up a series of missions among the Pueblos with the expectation that they would abandon their religious beliefs for Christianity. Pueblos tolerated Spanish presence for generations, but would rebel after as series of factors finally propelled them to act.

In 1540 the first Spanish expedition arrived in the area of present-day New Mexico, led by Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. However, it was not until the arrival of Oñate that a permanent Spanish colony was established. Oñate entered New Mexico hoping to find riches, but his failure to uncover mineral wealth nearly resulted in the abandonment of the settlement. The Franciscans, who had already set up an extensive system of missions among the Pueblos, fought to keep the settlement alive. They argued that they could not abandon those Pueblos that had already converted. In 1608, the Spanish government agreed with the Franciscans and continued to fund the venture with royal coffers.

Despite Franciscan attempts to facilitate conversion by fostering a sense of congruity between the two religious. Spanish Catholicism and Pueblo belief systems remained deeply irreconcilable. On the surface some Pueblos accepted the Catholic religion, however they also kept their traditional beliefs close to the heart. A sense of syncretism did not result from the two belief systems instead the Pueblos learned how to compartmentalize or keep these often-opposing religions separate. In response, the Spanish punished Pueblo individuals that continued to maintain their native religion.

Spanish oppression reached such a height that the Pueblos resolved to take it no longer, and decided by consensus to rid themselves of this tyranny forever. On 10 August 1680, a mostly united Pueblo front launched a surprise attack, forcing the colony of nearly two thousand Spaniards and Indian converts to retreat to the southern most mission of Guadalupe del Paso, present-day Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. Pueblo runners delivered knotted cords to each village. These cords worked as calendars, with each knot representing the number of days until the uprising. The last knot was supposed to be untied on 11 August, but Spanish leaders learned of Pueblo plans when they captured two messengers on 9 August. Despite the uncovering of the plot, the Pueblos still managed to catch the Spanish off guard and laid siege on the capital of Santa Fe, where many Spaniards had fled. Gov. Antonio de Otermín and settlers held out in the city until 21 September, when the Pueblos allowed the group to retreat south. During the revolt, Spanish records estimate that more than four hundred Spanish settlers had been killed, and twenty-one Franciscans had been murdered. Significant numbers of Pueblos died during the uprising as well.

Several factors may have inspired the Pueblos to finally stand up to their oppressors. Drought, famine, and increasing intertribal warfare were exacerbated by the heavy handedness of the Spanish government, which is clearly demonstrated by the implementation of the encomienda and repartimiento systems, and Spanish persecution of Pueblo religion and cultural beliefs. Also at play were tensions created by the melding of cultures in which cognitive dissonance (a psychological phenomenon in which discomfort arises from the discrepancy between what one already knows or believes, and the introduction of new ideas and patterns of learning) further alienated the Pueblos from the Spanish interlopers. Pueblos were forced to accommodate the Spanish belief system and abandon their own embedded ideals, to which many Pueblos remained wholly committed. In this case the Pueblos were destined to resist because accommodation is more difficult than assimilation.

Some historians have also theorized about the impact of charismatic leadership on the Pueblo Revolt’s success, and the identity of this leadership. Popé, a religious leader from the Tewa village of San Juan is generally
accepted by the Pueblo and among some scholars as the leader of the revolt. In 1675 Popé, like other religious
leaders, had been arrested by the Spanish for continuing to practice his Pueblo beliefs. However, historian Fray
Angélico Chávez argues that Domingo Naranjo, a mulatto, masterminded the revolt by presenting himself as
Pohé-yemo, a key figure in Pueblo cosmology. Chávez and others have viewed Pueblo people as incapable of
rising in revolt because of their particular cultural values and organization. Chávez postulated that the Pueblos
could not have revolted without a leader who saw things differently from the Pueblo worldview. As a person of
mixed heritage, Naranjo may have been able to move more fluidly between Pueblo and Spanish worlds.

During the twelve-year absence of the Spanish, the united Pueblo front that had proved so successful during
the Pueblo Revolt fell apart, leaving the Pueblos vulnerable to the reassertion of Spanish power. In 1692,
Diego de Vargas entered the region and restablished a series of Spanish settlements, while the Franciscans
once again implemented missions in Pueblo villages. Despite the return of the Spanish, many modern Pueblo
peoples credit the Pueblo Revolt with preserving their Native beliefs and cultural ways as they continue to
exist even today.

**Popé**

by Matthew Martinez, Ohkay Owingeh

Popé is revered as the leader of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Pueblo scholars refer to him as the one who carried
out the first successful American revolution against a foreign colonial power, Spain. Popé (Ripe Pumpkin) was
from Ohkay Owingeh (known today as San Juan Pueblo) and, as best can be determined, was born around
1630. Little is known about the upbringing of Popé. Though, there is no reason to believe he did not grow up
like any other Pueblo Indian boy of his time who strictly followed the customs of his community. Religion was
inextricably woven into the pattern of pueblo life. Young Pueblo boys were taught the ways of being and
becoming a young man both in a secular sense and through a religious understanding.

Popé’s presence was first recorded in 1675 when he and 47 other Pueblo men were prosecuted and indicted in
Santa Fe for the alleged practice of sorcery. As a result of the trial, four men were sentenced to hanging. The
remaining men were rounded up and publicly condemned to lashings and imprisonment. The Pueblo villages
sent a delegation to Santa Fe to protest this treatment and threaten war. Fearful for his life, Governor Juan
Francisco de Treviño released the prisoners and allowed them to return home. Upon being released, the Pueblo
captives were told to give up their idolatry and iniquitous ways. This was a time of intense hardship for Pueblo
people under the Spanish regime. Popé grew up seeing his people forced into the Spanish repartimiento
system. Under this system Pueblo people served as slave labor and were required to provide food and supplies
to the Spaniards.

Pueblo scholar Joe Sando writes that the Spaniards constantly harassed religious leaders and that a Tewa kiva
was filled with sand so the people could not hold their nightly dances. In Pueblo thought and culture, when
religion is suppressed, the natural order of life is disrupted. Suppression of religion, according to Pueblo
worldview, means a threat to the livelihood of the people.

It was against this background that Popé and other Tewa war captains began discussing what might be done to
rid the country side of the invaders. Several Pueblo leaders gathered in Taos Pueblo to plan the Revolt. Popé
emerged as a key organizer. It is suggested that he was an important individual because he had access to the
inner religious circles of Taos Pueblo. It took a unique individual to orchestrate the Revolt across two dozen
communities who spoke six different languages and were sprawled over a distance of nearly 400 miles - from
Taos at one end to Hopi villages at the other. Pueblo people were prohibited from using horses. Moreover,
during Spanish rule they were not allowed to use guns of any kind.

Pueblo people come from a running culture. It is no surprise that Popé and his followers agreed that runners
would be sent to each of the pueblos. The runners carried a deerskin strip tied with knots. Each knot
represented the number of days remaining before the campaign against the Spanish would begin. Each morning at every pueblo a knot would be untied. When all the knots were untied, the uprising was to begin in all of the pueblos. This plan almost failed because several sympathizers notified the Spanish of the plan. Thus, the revolt began two days early and, on August 10, 1680, the Spanish were caught by surprise. They retreated to Santa Fe and were eventually overpowered by a large number of Pueblo warriors.

On May 21, 2005, after a long struggle, the unveiling of the Popé statue for the National Statutory Hall took place at Ohkay Owingeh (San Juan Pueblo). This unveiling was in remembrance of the event that took place in 1680. Popé was the earliest individual to be honored in the collection of the U.S. Capitol. Cliff Fragua (Jemez Pueblo) was the first American Indian artist to sculpt a statue for the Statutory Hall. Popé joins the figure of the late Senator Dennis Chavez as New Mexico’s two contributions to the U.S. Capitol. The addition of Popé to the National Statutory Hall completes the group of 50 individuals chosen to represent the United States.

In the seven and a half foot marble rendition, Popé holds a knotted cord in his left hand, which was used to determine when the Pueblo revolt would begin. He holds a bear fetish in his right hand which symbolizes the center of the Pueblo world and religion. There is a pot behind Popé, which signifies Pueblo culture. The deerskin he is wearing is a symbol of his status. The shell necklace that he is wearing is a reminder of where life begins. Popé wears Pueblo moccasins and his hair is bound in a traditional Pueblo style. There is a pot behind Popé, which signifies Pueblo culture. The deerskin he is wearing is a symbol of his status. The shell necklace that he is wearing is a reminder of where life begins. Popé wears Pueblo moccasins and his hair is bound in a traditional Pueblo style. Herman Agoyo, San Juan Pueblo, succinctly states the following about the importance of Popé: “To the Pueblo people here, Popé is our hero. Tribes were on the verge of losing their cultural identity when the Pueblo Revolt brought everything back on track for our people.”

**Pueblo Runners and the Pueblo Revolt-1680**

by Kim Suina

In the late seventeenth century a brewing revolt orchestrated by the Pueblos to remove the Spanish gripped communities along the Camino Real. Under the primary leadership of Pueblo leader Po’pay, a spiritual head from San Juan Pueblo, Pueblos and Apache allies attempted to expel Spanish settlers and leaders out of New Mexico. The Pueblo resisters managed to push the Spanish south down the Camino Real, to El Paso del Norte.

Those communities who agreed to participate in the revolt did so for various reasons. Prevailing Spanish persecution of Pueblo religion and cultural ways appears to have sparked discontent among many of the pueblos. Many of the revolt leaders, in past years, underwent public punishment by the Spanish for promoting Native religion. Other factors aggravated an already discontent Pueblo population including increased nomadic raids, a recent devastating drought, and forced demands made by the Spanish on Pueblo production and labor.

At the time, approximately twenty-nine hundred Spanish settlers lived primarily along the Camino Real between Isleta Pueblo and Taos Pueblo, next to the lifeline of the region—the Rio Grande, and its tributaries. Thirty-three Franciscans resided among the Pueblos, proselytizing to reportedly twenty-five thousand Pueblo converts.

In 1675 the Spanish publicly flogged forty-three Indians and hanged four men for practicing sorcery and plotting to overthrow the Spanish. Many of the survivors played an active role in the 1680 revolt. After himself enduring physical punishment, Po’pay fled north up the Camino Real from his home village of San Juan to Taos Pueblo. There he remained in hiding for several years, where he resolved to overtake the Spanish.

Under a veil of secrecy Po’pay worked out the details for staging a rebellion. He revealed his secret plans to a few Pueblo spiritual leaders, many of who had been punished in the past by the Spanish. They moved ahead, and attempted to galvanize widespread Pueblo support.
In the late spring of 1680, messengers met in Taos. Po’pay instructed them to take deerskin pictographs to each of the Pueblos, informing the people of an uprising that would occur in August on the first night of the new moon. The runners assembled again in August and Po’pay charged them with a second mission. He gave each of the runners a knotted cord made of maguey fiber, and directed them to deliver the cords to each of the Pueblo villages. The cord acted as a type of calendar, with each knot signifying the number of days before the proposed outbreak of the rebellion. Revolt leaders entrusted runners to safely deliver the message or face the penalty of death if they revealed the secret plot or the significance of the cord to any inappropriate individuals.

According to a summary from an interrogation conducted by the Spanish more than a year after the revolt, a Keres Indian named Pedro Naranjo from San Felipe described how Po’pay’s directions were carried out:

He said that the cord was passed through all the pueblos of the kingdom so that the ones which agreed to it [the rebellion] might untie one knot in sign of obedience, and by the other knots they would know the days which were lacking; and this was done on pain of death to those who refused to agree to it. As a sign of agreement and notice of having concurred in the treason and the perfidy they were to send up smoke signals to that effect in each one of the pueblos singly.

Some disagreement exists on how each community signaled their willingness to participate in the revolt. Some scholars believe that Pueblo leaders sent smoke signals which could be seen by organizers from far away, while other believe that upon receiving the cords village leaders untied the knots signifying their intent to execute Po’pay’s Plan.

The success of the revolt hinged on each of the Pueblo villages receiving notice of the plot so that each would stand in unison on 11 August 1680, the day that Po’pay had marked to overthrow the Spanish. Revolt leaders charged runners with one of the most important tasks—to bring word to Native communities separated by hundred of miles and geographic roadblocks.

The testimony of a Tesuque man named Juan, interrogated on 11 December 1681 detailed how runners carried the cord under strict orders to all the Pueblo villages, as was retold by Spanish officials:

he said that he [Po’pay] took a cord of maguey fiber and tied some knots in it which indicated the number of days until the perpetuation of the treason. He sent it through all the pueblos as far as Isleta, there remaining in the whole kingdom only the nation of Piros who did not receive it; and the order that the said Pope gave when he sent the cord was under strict charge of secrecy, commanding that the war captain take it from pueblo to pueblo.

It was crucial that word of the plot did not reach the Spanish or all hopes of overthrowing them would be lost.

For miles they ran; runners that have been described by the Spanish as “the swiftest youth,” to communities up and down the Camino Real. Other than a short description found in Spanish documents, there is little else to tell us about the identity of these runners and how they may have been organized. However, from Indian myths and contemporary observations of the Pueblos and other Native peoples running has always played an important part of the culture and remains an important part of ritual today.

Runners delivered the rope from end to end of Pueblo country, to every village except for those of the Piros, which Po’pay did not invite to join the revolt. Runners carried Po’pay’s message from the farthest northern pueblo of Taos to the southernmost village of Isleta. The messengers stopped at almost all the Pueblos in the province; at the northern communities of Taos, Picuris, San Ildefonso, Tesuque, Santa Clara, Nambe, and Pojoaque; the Tano villages of Pecos, San Cristóbal, Galisteo, and Sán Lazaro; and the mixed Tano/Keres villages of San Marcos and La Cienega. And further south, they gave word to the Keresan peoples of Santo Domingo, Cochiti, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Zia, and Acoma, and than to the people of Sandia, Jemez, Puaray, and Alameda. Runners even traveled to the distant villages of the Zunis and the Hopis, over 300 miles away.

After two Tesuque runners, Nicolas Catua and Pedro Omtua, had delivered word of the revolt to the Tanos, San Marcos, and La Cienega, leaders from those villages traveled to Santa Fe and notified the Spanish of the planned rebellion. These villages initially refused to take part in the revolt for unknown reasons but later joined after fighting erupted. Once learning of Po’pay’s secret scheme, Gov. Antonio de Otermín immediately sent
the maestro de campo Francisco Gómez Robledo to arrest the two runners. That same day Spanish officials in Santa Fe tortured the Tesuque men, forcing them to divulge details of the impending revolt.

The Spanish had discovered the plot just two days before the proposed uprising, propelling revolt organizers to act immediately before Governor Otermín had the chance to react. All along the Camino Real, villages from Taos to Isleta covering a distance of more than fifty leagues, broke out in rebellion. As word of the arrest of the two men spread, and with some confusion occurring amongst some villages on the date of the planned outbreak, many communities reacted prematurely. The northern communities along the Camino Real, which had been a hotbed for discontent, reacted first with Tesuque springing into action on August 9. That evening the Tesuques, aware of the capture of Catua and Omtua, dispatched runners to notify the pueblos to revolt the next day. On August 10, Pueblo resisters proceeded to kill village missionaries and settlers. Villages removed from the path of the Camino Real, on the outlying edges of the province like Acoma, Zuni, and Hopi had been active in past attempts at revolt and played a significant role in the 1680 revolt, by murdering those missionaries who had been residing in their immediate vicinity at the time.

Indians proceeded to steal Spanish horses, isolating the northern part of the province from the southern part, and block all roads leading to Santa Fe. Native leaders took advantage of the postponed arrival of Spanish caravans traveling from New Spain up the Camino Real—which typically arrived with a replenishment of supplies—attacking the vulnerable settlement and mission in Santa Fe. Refugees from the Santa Cruz Valley and the Cerrillos district entered Santa Fe on August 13, joining others held up in the Palace of the Governors. Natives asked the Spanish to leave and free Indian slaves, but the Spanish refused to surrender; the fight for Santa Fe resumed. Nearly 500 Indian reinforcements from villages up and down the Camino Real descended on the city, in an attempt to overtake nearly 200 armed Spanish settlers.

The villages of the Camino Real, both Indian and Spanish, were left in disarray. After a relentless siege, settlers from Santa Fe managed to escape and headed south to Isleta, where they believed a contingent of Spanish settlers from the Río Abajo area remained held up. Those at Isleta had already fled down the Camino Real, believing that they would meet the annual supply caravan that traveled from Mexico on its way back to Santa Fe. Eventually those settlers who fled from Santa Fe joined the others on September 13, and continued their retreat toward El Paso del Norte. For twelve years, the Spanish stayed away. In 1692, the Spanish led by Diego de Vargas marched up the Camino Real, retaking Santa Fe on September 14.

Modern Pueblos have not forgotten the feats undertaken by Po’pay and other participants in the revolt, including the runners who trekked up and down the Camino Real and beyond. In August 1980, on the tricentennial anniversary of the Pueblo Revolt, Pueblo peoples chose to commemorate the event by running. Pueblo runners from almost all of the remaining 22 Pueblos journeyed more than 375 miles on foot from Taos to Second Mesa in Arizona. Each runner carried a pouch, containing a symbolic piece of knotted rawhide tied with two knots, in remembrance of the Spanish capture of Catua and Omtua.

**Onate, Juan de**

Juan de Oñate was born circa 1550 in the frontier settlement of Zacatecas, Mexico, the son of Cristóbal de Oñate and Catalina de Salazar. His father was a prominent Zacatecas mine owner and encomendero. Juan de Oñate married Isabel de Tolosa Cortés Moctezuma, a descendant of the famous conquistador Hernán Cortés and the Aztec emperor Moctezuma.

By the time he was in his early twenties Juan de Oñate was leading military campaigns against the Chichimec Indians and had begun his early career prospecting for silver. He also aided the establishment of missions in the newly conquered territory of Northern New Spain.

On 21 September 1595, King Philip II of Spain awarded Oñate a contract to settle New Mexico, after receiving reports from the Franciscans about their growing missionary work in the area. Numerous delays held up the
expedition, but in early 1598 Oñate finally departed from Zacatecas. After making a formal declaration of
Spanish possession of New Mexico on 30 April 1598, Oñate continued ahead and forded the Rio Grande at the
famous crossing point of El Paso del Norte in May. By late May he had made contact with the first of many
Pueblos villages in the northern Rio Grande valley. In July 1598 he established the headquarters of the New
Mexico colony near San Juan Pueblo at La Villa de San Gabriel, thus effectively extending the Camino Real
by more than 600 miles. While awaiting the slow-moving main caravan of colonists, Oñate explored the
surrounding area and solidified his position. Some of Oñate’s men explored further east, moving beyond Pecos
pueblo toward the present-day Texas border in search of buffalo; they likely reached the headwaters of the
Canadian River, twenty-five miles northwest of the site of present Amarillo. Oñate visited Acoma Pueblo as
well as the Hopi and Zuni villages far to the west. One party in Oñate’s group even traveled as far as the San
Francisco Mountains in Arizona, where they found silver ore and staked a claim.

The Franciscans also continued their own work, and began the construction of a mission at San Francisco and
at San Juan. However, mutiny, desertion, and dissent plagued the new Spanish colony when the Spanish failed
to find riches. Oñate dealt with these problems with a firm hand.

In December 1598, on their way to Zuni, Capt. Juan de Zaldívar and his soldiers stopped at Acoma for
provisions. While there the Acomas accused one of Zaldívar’s soldiers of stealing, and violating an Acoma
woman. The Acomas proceeded to kill Zaldívar and nearly a dozen of his men, later claiming that the soldiers
had demanded excessive amounts of provisions. A Spanish punitive expedition ascended on Acoma resulting
in a three-day battle. When the fighting ended, several hundred Indians were dead, and hundreds of surviving
Acomas were held prisoner and taken to Santa Domingo Pueblo to stand trial. Oñate severely punished the
people of Acoma. Men over twenty-five had one foot cut off and were sentenced to twenty years of personal
servitude to the Spanish colonists; young men between the ages of twelve and twenty-five received twenty
years of personal servitude; young women over twelve years of age were given twenty years of servitude; sixty
young girls were sent to Mexico City to serve in the convents there, never to see their homeland again; and two
Hopi men caught at the Acoma battle had their right hand cut off and were set free to spread the news of
Spanish retribution.

Spanish prospecting expeditions continued in an attempt to provide wealth and prosperity for the colony. The
Spanish crown provided reinforcements for the colony in late 1600, but hardships continued, including
persistent cold weather and a shortage of food supplies. On 23 June 1601, Oñate set out onto the Great Plains,
to Quivira in search of wealth and an outlet to the sea. He headed northeast, following the Canadian River
across the Texas Panhandle and near the Oklahoma border. In what is now likely the central part of Kansas,
Oñate’s expedition arrived at the first of several Quivira villages. However, the great settlements of Quivira
proved disappointing to the soldiers who had traveled there in search of easy wealth and they soon turned back.
While Oñate was away, conditions deteriorated in the New Mexico colony due to the poor quality of the land,
continued Indian resistance, and failure to unearth silver. The colony was subsequently abandoned except by
some of Oñate’s most devoted followers. Upon their return to New Spain deserters spread news of the colony’s
failing conditions, and the government soon initiated an inquiry into the situation in New Mexico and Oñate’s
treatment of Indians. At the same time Oñate launched his last major expedition, starting from the Zuni
villages down to the Gulf of California.

In 1606 King Philip III summoned Oñate to Mexico City, where he would stay until allegations against him
could be investigated further. Unaware of the order, Oñate resigned as governor in 1607 because of the
condition of the colony and financial problems. He remained in New Mexico to witness the establishment of
the new capital at Santa Fe. King Philip III decided to continue his financial support of the colony, and
appointed a new governor in 1608, and Oñate was once again called back to Mexico City. In 1613 the Spanish
government accused Oñate of several violations including the use of excessive force during the Acoma
rebellion, the hanging of two Indians, the execution of mutineers and deserters, and lastly adultery. He was
fined, banned from Mexico City for four years, and banished from New Mexico forever. Oñate spent much of
the rest of his life trying to clear his name, with some evident success. Eventually he went to Spain, where the
king assigned him to the position of mining inspector. He died in Spain in 1626.
Reconquest of New Mexico-1692

By Robert J. Torrez

Governor Antonio de Otermin and approximately 2000 Spanish refugees spent the winter following their expulsion from New Mexico at what was supposed to be a temporary camp near El Paso de Norte, present day Cuidad Juarez. Here Otermin established his base of operations and made plans for an early reconquest of the rebellious province.

On November 7, 1681, Otermin and 146 soldiers set out on the first attempt to reconquer New Mexico. They were accompanied by over a hundred Indian allies and the usual retinue of servants and priests. There are indications, however, that the expedition was poorly equipped for what was supposed to be a military operation.

Otermin advanced north along the Rio Grande Valley and reached the Pueblo of Isleta in early December. Isleta's surprised inhabitants, thinking they were being raided by Apache, rallied for a defense of their village, but they quickly realized their mistake and laid down their weapons. From here, messengers were dispatched throughout the province to inform the other Pueblos of the Spanish advance and to demand their surrender.

The bloodless skirmish at Isleta was to be the only battle of Otermin's attempt to reconquer New Mexico. However, the seeds of subsequent problems for Otermin's expedition were quickly sown. One of their first actions was to force Isleta to gather and burn all its native religious objects. Otermin had learned nothing about why the Pueblos had risen in revolt the previous year.

From Isleta, Governor Otermin sent Juan Diego de Mendoza with 70 men to scout and gather information about the northern Pueblos. As Mendoza marched north, he discovered that every village along the route had been abandoned. Finally, outside of Cochiti on December 14, Mendoza met with a large group of Pueblo warriors who agreed to begin peace talks. An agreement appeared to be within reach, but Mendoza learned the negotiations were merely a delaying tactic designed to allow the Pueblos time to gather their forces. Mendoza was only a few miles from Santa Fe, but he realized his small army was ill equipped to proceed and decided to withdraw in the face of a clearly superior force.

On December 18, Mendoza joined Otermin at his main camp near the Pueblo of Sandia. After assessing their situation, they all returned to Isleta, and on January 2, 1682, began their retreat from New Mexico. As they retreated, the Spanish burned the Pueblo of Isleta and took with them nearly 400 of its inhabitants who were resettled at what is today known as Isleta del Sur near El Paso.

Otermin's attempt at reconquest was a total failure. He approached the task thinking the Pueblos would be penitent for having revolted and, tired of Apache raids, would welcome the Spanish back. Their reception at Isleta and subsequent peace talks by Mendoza at Cochiti had given them some hope they would meet no resistance, but, by the time the expedition trudged backed to El Paso, the Pueblos had made it clear they would not easily give up their newfound freedom. When they reached El Paso, the Spanish settled down, planted crops, and took steps to maintain themselves indefinitely. Their stay at El Paso would not be temporary.

In 1690, Diego de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon was appointed Governor of New Mexico. When he assumed office at El Paso the following year, his assignment for the reconquest of New Mexico consisted of two parts. First, he was to make a preliminary entry to determine the condition of the province and obtain the surrender of the rebellious pueblos. He was to accomplish this peacefully, if possible, but by force if necessary. He was also to verify reports of quick silver deposits in the Sierra Azul of eastern Arizona. Only after this was accomplished, was he to colonize New Mexico's abandoned settlements and reestablish the destroyed missions.

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Diego de Vargas began his task with fifty soldiers and three friars. Fifty additional troops were to reinforce the expedition at a later date. The small army left El Paso on August 17, 1692, and began an uneventful expedition north along the Rio Grande. In early September, de Vargas arrived at Santa Fe where he found the old Spanish capital fortified and its inhabitants defiant. De Vargas, however, soon obtained their surrender utilizing a masterful mix of diplomacy and a not so subtle threat of a siege.

On September 14, 1692, de Vargas proclaimed a formal act of possession. A few days later, the expected reinforcements arrived from El Paso, and by the end of 1692 most of New Mexico's Pueblos had been restored to the Spanish empire without a shot being fired or any blood shed. This is the peaceful reconquest which is observed annually at the famous Fiesta de Santa Fe.

The second portion of the reconquest, however, was far from peaceful. In 1693, de Vargas returned to El Paso and by October was on his way back with 70 families, 18 Franciscan friars, and a number of Tlaxlacan allies to begin the recolonization of New Mexico. But by this time, the Pueblos had experienced second thoughts, and when the colonists arrived at Santa Fe in December they found the city once again fortified.

For two weeks, the Spanish colonists camped outside the city while de Vargas attempted to persuade the Indians to surrender. Finally, after several of the new colonists died of exposure, a decision was reached to take the capital by force. Santa Fe was recaptured after a fierce battle that lasted two days. Afterwards, seventy Pueblo defenders were executed and several hundred captured men, women, and children sentenced to ten years servitude with the Spanish colonists.

During this time, a few of the Pueblos remained true to the initial promise of peace they had made to de Vargas in 1692. But most of them continued to resist, and for the next several years New Mexico suffered terribly from almost continual warfare. During this period, many pueblos were abandoned and their populations dispersed as their inhabitants sought refuge in the mountains and among the Navajo and Apache.

In June, 1694, 66 additional Spanish families arrived at Santa Fe. These reinforcements clearly strengthened the Spanish position, but they also placed a tremendous strain on the colony's ability to feed itself, further antagonizing relations with the Pueblos.

By the summer of 1696, the situation deteriorated into a general rebellion which is often called the Second Pueblo Revolt. But it was a futile effort. The Pueblos had become too dispersed and weakened by the past three years of warfare. As winter approached, they finally submitted permanently. Soon, the missions were securely established, Spanish settlements grew, and the Pueblos repopulated. A new era of New Mexico history—the real reconquest—could now begin.

de Vargas, Diego

Diego de Vargas (1644-1704)

by Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint

Diego José de Vargas Zapata Luján Ponce de León y Contreras was born in Madrid in 1643 to Alonso de Vargas and María Margarita Contreras y Arráiz. His was an illustrious family, though not among the monarch's inner circle. Each of his ancestors in the Vargas line, for four generations before him, had been knights of the prestigious Order of Santiago. The family's monetary fortunes, while not pinched by any means, were also not spectacularly lavish, and his father had incurred considerable debt.
In an effort to extinguish that debt, Alonso de Vargas sailed for the Americas in 1650, following the death of his wife, Diego's mother, to take an imperial post in Guatemala. Alonso re-married and was able to move up in the colonial administration, but he died at age 43, having never returned to Spain.

A year earlier, Diego had married Beatriz Pimentel de Prado Vélez de Olazábal, almost exactly his age, the daughter of neighbors of the Vargas estate at Torrelaguna, north of Madrid. Together, the couple had five children in quick succession before 1670. As Vargas's household grew, so did his burden of debt. Neither his interest nor his talents seemed suited to managing an estate.

The mounting pressure of debt and a powerful desire for social and political prominence guided his career. He determined to leave his young family in Spain and pursue royal preferment in the Americas. In 1673, like his father before him, don Diego embarked for New Spain. On the recommendation of the Spanish queen, the viceroy in Mexico City appointed Vargas, shortly after his arrival, to the post of justicia mayor, or chief judge, in the jurisdiction of Teutila in what is now the Mexican state of Oaxaca.

As historian John Kessell has written, "He was about to begin duty in the Indies, an adventure he thought would make him a richer man, and, soon enough, see him bound again for Madrid. Instead, it lasted a lifetime." Just a year later, at home in Spain, young doña Beatriz unexpectedly died. Vargas's brother-in-law assumed guardianship of the children, only one of whom would Vargas ever see again.

In 1679, six years after his arrival in New Spain, don Diego was promoted to justicia mayor of Tlalpujahua, a declining mining area northwest of Mexico City, in what is now the Mexican state of Michoacán. By this time he had started a family outside matrimony with Nicolasa Rincón and was maintaining a home in Mexico City, on the Plazuela de las Gayas. In 1683, Vargas was promoted again, this time still at Tlalpujahua, but now to the office of alcalde mayor, or royal administrator.

During his tenure at Tlalpujahua, don Diego was able to dramatically increase royal receipts from the silver mines there. His abilities as administrator were repeatedly recognized within the viceregal court. The viceroy Conde de Paredes recommended him for even higher office. By the middle 1680s, Vargas was actively pursuing appointments in Guatemala, Peru, and New Mexico.

It was the governorship of New Mexico that he succeeded in obtaining, in 1688. Bureaucratic machinations, though, delayed his actual accession to the office until 1691. Don Diego left behind in Mexico City, Nicolasa and three children. Since 1680, when a massive Pueblo uprising had succeeded in expelling Spanish colonists, New Mexico's capital in exile had been El Paso. After 11 years of exile, the population of El Paso was only a hundred or so vecinos, or politically eligible residents, and their households, plus a small presidial garrison and settlements of Christianized Pueblo Indians. Vargas pledged, in his application for the governorship, to restore the Rio Grande Pueblo world to Spanish dominion.

Spain's rivalry with other European powers, especially France, for control of the Americas raised the reconquest of New Mexico to a very high priority in the early 1690s. Successful reestablishment of Spanish sovereignty would also mean handsome rewards, both financial and social, for the new governor. That success, however, was far from a foregone conclusion. Three previous attempts to reoccupy the Pueblo world had ended in failure.

Nevertheless, in August 1692, just 18 months after his arrival at El Paso, Vargas led a modest force of less than 200 soldiers, vecinos, and Indian allies north. Following the Rio Grande, don Diego and his expedition found the southern pueblos abandoned, their people having sought refuge in mountainous terrain in anticipation of his arrival. In mid-September, the hopeful reconquerors reached Santa Fe, the former Spanish capital. There, at least 1,000 Pueblo people awaited them.

After a perfunctory refusal to submit to Spanish rule by the native inhabitants of Santa Fe, Vargas threatened to
cut off their water supply. There followed hours of verbal exchange, during which the Pueblos demanded that certain specific settlers not be allowed to return to New Mexico, and the governor consented. Finally, don Diego issued an ultimatum: either submit and be pardoned or undergo an attack by Vargas’ forces. In response, two unarmed Pueblo men left the fortified town to offer peace. They were followed by others, until by nightfall a tense calm existed between the two groups.

The following day, September 14, 1692, Vargas, the friars who were with him and the returning former residents of Spanish Santa Fe performed a formal ceremony of submission and absolution in the Indian plaza. The next day, mass was celebrated in Santa Fe and the friars baptized 122 Pueblo children born during the period of Spanish exile. Over the next month, don Diego and his force toured 12 other pueblos of northern New Mexico, conducting the same rituals at each. Before returning south to El Paso the “reconquerors” visited Acoma and the Zuni and Hopi pueblos, as well as those farther south along the Rio Grande that had been found vacant on the trip north.

Even ignoring Vargas's self-congratulation in the surviving Spanish documentary record of the ritual repossession of 1692, these were remarkable events. They required risk and restraint on both sides. Kessell has credited don Diego with “recogniz[ing] the effectiveness of diplomacy and personal relations with the Pueblo Indian peoples. His willingness to deal personally with the natives of New Mexico seems to represent a gradual change in attitude on his part during long service in the Indies.” Though there was a reached accommodation, there was also a degree of deceit and subterfuge on both sides.

Calm did not last in New Mexico. In 1693, Vargas returned to Santa Fe, bringing soldiers and settlers. This time they had to fight their way into Santa Fe. Warriors from four of the pueblos sided with the colonists, but most opposed them. When the capital had been taken, don Diego ordered some 70 of the Pueblo men killed. Women and children were distributed as servants to the colonists.

Similar bloody fighting occurred at many of the other pueblos before the governor felt that the native people had truly submitted to his and the king's authority. The end of widespread hostilities did not mean an end to Pueblo resentment over continued heavy-handed treatment by the colonists. The plundering of Pueblo stocks of corn and other supplies, to sustain the struggling colony, was a periodic occurrence that inflamed animosity.

Nearly 250 additional colonists arrived in New Mexico by the middle of 1694, and another group of almost 150 came the next year. To accommodate many of these additional Hispanos, Governor Vargas authorized the establishment of a second settlement in the province, at Santa Cruz de la Cañada, north of Santa Fe along the Santa Cruz River. This new settlement displaced Tano Pueblo Indians, who had settled there after the uprising of 1680.

During 1695 and early 1696 there were repeated rumors that another Pueblo uprising was imminent. It was later charged that Vargas failed to take those warnings seriously enough. The colonists struggled unsuccessfully to support themselves agriculturally. Disease swept through the Hispanic populous, laying the governor low and carrying him to the brink of death. But Vargas recovered and by March 1696 petitioned the viceroy to increase the number of colonists from 276 families to 500, the minimum number, he claimed, to assure New Mexico's safety.

Viceregal action on the request was not forthcoming and in June 1696, all but five of the pueblos took up arms against the colonists. From then until November, don Diego was on a military campaign almost without pause. He and his council of war followed a familiar Spanish strategy of exploiting Pueblo rivalries and methodically subduing each insurgent Indian town in turn. Exhaustion and the coming of winter weather finally brought an enforced peace, although many Pueblos had fled the province, some permanently. The fighting that year marked the end of concerted, violent resistance by the Pueblos to Spanish political control in New Mexico.

Vargas wrote proudly to the king and viceroy of having succeeded in reconquering the province. He asked for the rewards he thought of as his due: a noble title and a comfortable annuity. Instead, he was shocked and
angered to be replaced in the governorship by Pedro Rodríguez Cubero, who had arranged years before to accede to the office. It was doubly galling that, upon arrival in New Mexico, Rodríguez Cubero initiated the standard procedure of residencia, or administrative review, of Vargas's term.

The residencia process brought forward a list of charges against the former governor by the Santa Fe cabildo, or city council. Those charges included misuse of royal funds, fomenting the Pueblo uprising, and playing favorites among the colonists. Rodríguez Cubero had Vargas placed under house arrest, where he was to remain from 1697 until 1700, fuming over this poor reward. During his period of house arrest came word that the king had conferred on don Diego the title Marqués de la Nava de Barcinas and an annuity of 4,000 pesos, to be collected as tribute from the Indians of New Mexico.

The charges against Vargas remained unresolved and in 1700 he was called to Mexico City to face investigation of many of the complaints before the Tribunal of Accounts. When he reached the viceregal capital, don Diego found there his son Juan Manuel, who had recently arrived from Spain and whom Vargas had not seen in 27 years. In 1702, the Tribunal rendered a decision in favor of the former governor and cleared the way for him to serve a second term. That good news was offset by the death of his son Juan Manuel on his return route to Spain.

In June 1703, the Marqués de la Nava de Barcinas, as Vargas now always signed himself, left Mexico City to reassume the governorship of New Mexico. With him he took his two natural sons by Nicolasa Rincón. They reached Santa Fe in November and don Diego reestablished himself at the Palace of the Governors. Colonists and Pueblos alike were complaining of repeated raids by parties of Apaches. Thus, as soon as winter loosened its grip, Vargas mounted a campaign against the raiders.

As the punitive expedition proceeded down the Rio Grande Valley, illness struck the party, forcing several members to be sent back to Santa Fe. Then, on April 1, 1704, the governor himself fell desperately ill. He was taken to the home of Fernando Durán de Cháves at Bernalillo, where he prepared his last will. The marques died on April eighth, at the age of 60. "Once Diego de Vargas had made the break with [Spain] the land of his birth," wrote Kessell, "the forces drawing him homeward were never strong enough to turn the tide of events, feelings, and relationships that compelled him to remain in the New World. He said he would return, but he never did."

The Diaspora from Northern New Mexico

by Samuel Sisneros

Twelve years after the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, half of the refugees in El Paso del Norte returned to northern New Mexico. Those who stayed either remained in the refugee colonies or migrated further into Chihuahua and established new communities along the Camino Real. They opened and registered mines, settled large haciendas and strengthened trade connections that existed between New Mexico and southern Chihuahua especially with merchants in the southern most village of Parral. Migrations into central Chihuahua transplanted the legacies of several old stock New Mexican families including Chávez, Domínguez de Mendoza, Padilla, Ortega, Lucero, Gómez, Herrera, and others. These families became prominent in northern and central Chihuahua. Ironically, today many of their descendants are likely migrating from Chihuahua to New Mexico, reconnecting to their ancestral and historical roots. This recent immigration together with past migrations into and out of New Mexico demonstrates that the Camino Real had continuous movement as a result of the push and pull of war, famine, political loyalties, economic opportunities and family ties.

Indigenous migrations and Spanish expeditions previous to the Pueblo Revolt established the Camino Real as a road of migration and commerce. Communities in Chihuahua are at the nexus of travel between Meso-America and the greater Southwest. Native American groups including Apache, Chichimeca, Suma, Jocome, Humano, Manso and Ancestral Pueblo peoples traversed the northern Chihuahua and El Paso del Norte area prior to the
arrival of Spanish. Centers of trade including Paquimé in present day Casas Grandes, Chihuahua were aligned with northern counterparts like Chaco Canyon and in the south with the great civilizations in and around Mexico City. Indigenous groups, both north and south were inevitably destined to encounter Spanish Conquistadores and missionaries. Early excursions in the area by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca (1534), Fray Marcos de Niza (1539) and Francisco Vásquez de Coronado (1540) opened the area to exploration and conquest. The quest for gold and silver lead to the establishment of mines in Santa Barbara, and other settlements in the southern region of Chihuahua such as Hidalgo de Parral in 1567. Hidalgo de Parral experienced its own silver mining boom in 1631. After expansion and settlement in southern Chihuahua a small party of Spanish soldiers and Franciscan missionaries (Rodríguez-Chamusco expedition), was sent from Santa Barbara in 1581 to explore lands to the north, becoming the first Spanish explorers to visit the El Paso del Norte area and interact with the native people. The Rodríguez-Chamusco expedition and the Espejo expedition party of 1582, stimulated an interest in mining and missionary possibilities, which cleared the way for future Spanish/Mexican migration and settlement.

Nearly two decades later, the Viceroy of New Spain found a suitable candidate to colonize New Mexico for the crown. In 1595, Juan de Oñate from an elite family in Zacatecas, was given the contract for exploration and colonization. His father was a wealthy miner and his mother was the grand-daughter of Hernán Córtez and the great-grand-daughter of Moctezuma. In 1598 Juan de Oñate entered New Mexico near what would later become El Paso del Norte on the west side of the Rio Grande. Here he formally took possession of New Mexico. The Oñate colonizers, who were mostly from Mexico City, moved up river into northern New Mexico in search of gold for the crown and the souls for the church. El Paso del Norte remained a way station or paraje on the Camino Real for several years until Franciscan missionaries Fray Alonzo Benavidez and Juan Cabal gathered the surrounding Mansos Indians and built a small church in 1656. The parishioners of the church became the first inhabitants of El Paso del Norte now Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico. From these humble beginnings, the mission church of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe was completed on January 15, 1668. El Paso del Norte was the midpoint between southern Chihuahua and Santa Fe and more importantly it was the river crossing and point of entry between north and south on a long established trade route. The El Paso area also became a refuge for the Piro Indians who abandoned the Salinas Pueblos of Quaray, Gran Quivira and Abó, in the Manzano Mountain because of drought and Apache raids. The Piro moved south first to the Socorro, New Mexico area and then to Senecú near El Paso del Norte.

While El Paso del Norte was having its slow beginning, the Spanish/Mexican/Mestizos that colonized northern New Mexico flourished for nearly one hundred years. Even though cultural and religious hybridization took place to various degrees with the native Pueblos and their Spanish/Mexican/Mestizo residents, especially the concept of compadrazco (deep extended ties through baptismal sponsorship) discord and conflict among the various tribes and pueblos eventually proved to be a strong deterrent to a harmonious coexistence. The Spanish crown's heavy-handed rule over its subjects especially towards the Pueblos escalated and propelled the Pueblo revolt of 1680. As a result of this conflict a significant number of Spanish/Mexican/Mestizo settlers were murdered causing those remaining along with Isleta Pueblo and other Indian allies to take flight down the Camino Real to the El Paso area.

The population of El Paso del Norte drastically increased by the mass exodus of refugees from New Mexico and resulting in the founding of the towns of Socorro del Sur, Ysleta, San Lorenzo, and Senecú. Many arrived with only the clothes on their back and most endured hardships including famine and drought. Some never recuperated from this dislocation and yet, twelve years later, half of them decided to return and try their luck again in New Mexico. This "return migration" or reconquista as it is called was headed by Don Diego de Vargas Zapata de Luján Ponce de León in 1692. Newly recruited colonists from Zacatecas, some of whom were Mulatos, together with Native New Mexicans, returned to northern New Mexico. Those that remained in El Paso del Norte eventually contributed to the establishment of viable colonies along the Rio Grande and south along the Camino Real into central Chihuahua.

Some of the refugees had no intention to return to New Mexico because of the acquired elite status and economic mobility they had found in the El Paso area. The earliest New Mexican refugees to move out of El
Paso del Norte and migrate further south were the Domínguez de Mendoza and Duran y Chávez families. Pedro Duran y Chávez II did not wait for the re-conquest of New Mexico but instead established a large hacienda in Tobaloapa (today Ciudad Guerrero, Chihuahua) by 1684. In the same year El Maestro del Campo, Tomé Domínguez de Mendoza II had a house at the Hacienda de los Sauces. Tomé Domínguez de Mendoza II and Pedro Duran y Chávez II, progenitors of many families in New Mexico, were related through marriage. Their extended Río Abajo families were among the elite in central New Mexico where they lived on large estancias in the area between Sandía and Isleta Pueblos. Even though Domínguez de Mendoza was accused of dissembling the refugee colony in 1682, he, along with Pedro Duran y Chávez later attained permission to migrate farther into the interior of Nueva España. Other members of these families continued to receive permission to migrate south. Mateo Domínguez de Mendoza became the owner of the Hacienda de Basuchi south of Chihuahua City (San Francisco de Cuellar) as it was originally called.

Giving credence to some New Mexicans’ growing social status in Mexico, almost all documents list the Chávez and Domínguez de Mendoza clans as Españoles. They were not necessarily from Spain but rather they were the elite who achieved this racial/social status of Spanish through military or political service or economic positioning. In 1709 Cristóval Chávez and his wife Juana Cortez baptized their child Matea Gertrudes (Española) in the church of San Felipe de Cuellar (Chihuahua City). And in 1716 Andrea Gertrudes, was baptized also in the same church. She was listed as Española, daughter of Don Pedro Ortiz de Escudero and Doña María Páez Hurtado. Doña María was the daughter of the famed Juan Páez Hurtado. The godparent of the wedding was Doña Magdalena Páez Hurtado, another daughter of Juan Páez Hurtado.

Juan Páez Hurtado was the expedition leader in 1695 that provided colonists from Zacatecas for the resettlement efforts of Diego de Vargas. Páez Hurtado became the Lieutenant Governor of New Mexico under the De Vargas administration. In Santa Fe, it later surfaced that Páez Hurtado was involved in fraud back in Zacatecas where he enlisted colonizers under assumed names and collected payments for absent colonizers.

The elites and their children entered into both old and new kinship networks in Chihuahua through marriage contracts, which reflected the social and economic status of both bride and groom. Various marriages took place throughout Chihuahua from Casas Grandes, Janos, Cusihuiriachi, the village of Chihuahua, Santa Eulalia, and as far south as Hidalgo del Parral. The records reveal that prior to and after the Pueblo Revolt there were marriages of New Mexicans in Parral and other Chihuahua towns not only among the elite but also between other castes. At Parral in 1678 Pedro Ortiz, a Mestizo (half Spanish/half Indian) from New Mexico, married Andrea Hernandez, a native Mulata (half Spanish/half African) from Parral. Other individuals who were either deserters of the refugee colonies or were not willing to wait in El Paso del Norte for the organized return to New Mexico also appeared in church records in Chihuahua. In 1681 Juan de Santiago, Indian of New Mexico and resident of San Bartolomé, Chihuahua married Lucia, a local Indian woman. And in 1683 Pedro de Isaguirre, Indian from New Mexico also married an Indian from New Mexico named Antonia de la Cruz.

As demonstrated in the above marriage contracts, those who remained and settled in Chihuahua represented the ethnic diversity that existed in New Mexico previous to the revolt. This pattern also continued during and after the settlement of the refugee colonies. The pattern is revealed by the appearance of New Mexicans in marriage books from the parish of San Antonio de Cusihuiriachic (central Chihuahua district). Capitán Francisco de Archuleta a resident of Casas Grandes is listed as a Spanish native of New Mexico. He married Antonia Ramirez Acheros in 1683. Other New Mexicans listed from this social/racial class were Don. Joseph de Alvisu, son of Don Felipe de Alvisu and María Abendaño. A native of New Mexico, Joseph de Alvisu married María Campusano, also a native of New Mexico. The couple resided in Papigochic, Chihuahua at the time of the marriage in 1684. Also in the same year, at Casas Grandes, the son and daughter of prominent head officials from New Mexico married. They were Juan de Salazar, and María de Trujillo. Juan’s father was Bartolomé de Salazar, past mayor of Zuñí Pueblo and his mother was María de Inojos, an Indian from the same Pueblo. María de Trujillo was the daughter of Diego de Trujillo, also a past mayor of Zuñí pueblo. Her mother was known simply as María and was most likely Zuñí Indian. Another marriage between New Mexican elites took place in Papigochic in the year 1685. Sebastián de Herrera the son of Sargento Mayor Sebastián de Herrera, and Doña Juana de Aragón, married Doña Antonia Chávez daughter of Pedro Duran y Chávez II and
Doña Elena Domínguez de Mendoza. These New Mexico elites were refugees who migrated throughout Chihuahua and became members of the local communities through marriage.

Native Indian persons were also among New Mexicans recorded in the Cusihuiriachi church marriage registries. In 1689, Marcela de Carbajal, an Apache women from New Mexico, married a local Indian man. A marriage between two New Mexican Apaches, Diego de la Cruz, servant of Capitán Diego Arias de Rivera and Margarita de la Cruz, servant of Gregorio Váldez was officially recorded. In 1691 a marriage took place between Miguel Cristóval, a Tigua Indian and Antonia Márquez, the Indian servant of Sargento Mayor Bernabe Márquez, a native Spanish New Mexican. The above mentioned names are a small sampling of sacramental records throughout the Chihuahua area that document the lives of New Mexicans during the entire eighteenth century. The village of Chihuahua was officially founded in 1712, at which time was recorded the marriage of Pedro Gómez, native of New Mexico and servant of Francisco Luján. He married María Martín Barba, resident of the village of Chihuahua and daughter of Juan de Dios Martín Barba (treated later in this essay) and Polonia Brito. Also one year latter in 1713 Antonio Padilla, native of New Mexico married María Rosa Luján, resident of Chihuahua. The documents recorded that New Mexicans participated in social functions as demonstrated in marriage and baptismal church records. Other archives give testimony that New Mexicans established themselves economically in the region.

Some New Mexico refugees sought riches and their place in society through mining activities and other commercial ventures. Juan Domínguez de Mendoza, son of Tomé Domínez de Mendoza was successful as a miner at San José del Parral. He also found and registered mines in Cusihuiriachi and lived in Santa Eulalia until his death in 1733. Other New Mexicans registered some of the first mines at San Francisco del Cuellar and surrounding areas. In 1716 Tomás de Chávez, son of Pedro Duran y Chávez, Sebastián Herrera along with Juan Domínguez de Mendoza were listed as owning mines in San Francisco del Cuellar. Earlier in 1712 it is noted that Don Tomás de Chávez was also a merchant and slave owner attesting to his adaptation and exploitation of mining society. Juana María de los Dolores was baptized in 1719 and listed as a Mulata slave of Don Tomás de Chávez. Also early documents reveal that other New Mexicans like Luis José Duran y Chávez and Cristóval Luján registered mines in Santa Eulalia in 1713.

Cristóval Luján and Juan de Dios Martín Barba not only settled and registered mines in Santa Eulalia and the town of Chihuahua but their story continues as local legend. Rubén Beltrán Acosta, Chihuahua historian and poet, expressed this in El Parto de la Montaña when he eloquently wrote: (original Spanish followed by author’s English translation)

En el año del Señor de Mil Setecientos Cuatro,
yoraba en la Montaña de plata
un indio “de razón”
Que había llegado de la Nueva Mexico;
era Juan de Dios Martín Barba,
y con el, muy cerca de su alma,
un medio hijo suyo
llamado Cristobal Luján.
Estos, quizá por el instinto
o tal vez por el color de su corazón,
eran muy bien queridos
por todos los naturales
de la region inhospita
y por eso,
en un dia como este, les llevaron
por el ampio camino de una manana
para que vieran con sus ojos
las muchas flores de plata que
prodigas brotaban de la tierra
como buenos indios, que lo eran,
In the year of the Lord 1704,  
lived in the mountain of silver  
an Indian of reason  
who had come from New Mexico;  
He was Juan de Dios Martín Barba  
and very close to his heart,  
was a stepson of his  
named Cristóval Luján.  
Perhaps by instinct or maybe  
because of the color of their hearts,  
they were very much adored  
by all the natives  
of this inhospitable region  
and because of this they took them  
on a road one morning  
so that they can see with their own eyes  
the many silver buttons  
which came out of the earth.  
Like the good Indians that they were  
and like good Christians, being that they  
no longer remember their dark skin gods,  
they notified the authorities  
from the Nombre de Dios Mission church  
and christened their mine, San Francisco,  
because even though this mine hadn’t produced much silver  
its holy name was sufficient enough  
that the earth would open up to offer generous,  
and ample riches without impurities  
to the two poor souls  
who alone were the true discoverers.

Beltrán Acosta’s poem continues with a description of how Martín Barba and Luján registered additional mines in the area. Apparently the only extant primary source for this story is from a 1753 report by Antonio Gutiérrez Noriega to the King of Spain. This report is believed to be the most reliable source relating to the discovery of mines in the Chihuahua city area. It is difficult to reconstruct the lives of Juan de Dios Martín Barba and Cristóval Luján in New Mexico prior to the Pueblo Revolt. But it is certain that individuals with these names appear in pre-revolt New Mexico. The documents also reveal that the Lujan family from northern New Mexico was indeed of Mestizo and Indian ancestry.
A Miguel Luján, was among the De Vargas returnees and served as the tower guard in Santa Fe just after its retaking. He barely escaped with a son Cristóval, perhaps the same Cristóval who was sent to live with Juan de Díos Martín Barba and Polonia Brito in Chihuahua. Given this information, it is possible that Polonia was first married to a member of the Luján family before Juan de Díos Martín Barba took her as his wife and her son or nephew Cristóval Luján as his step-son as he was called in early accounts. The Britos of New Mexico were also of the same Indian/Mestizo class as the Lujáns. The Britos apparently were among the Indians from Análco, a Tlaxcala colony of Santa Fe, who were brought from Mexico with the Oñate colonization. The aforementioned offers the only conclusion that can be made of the identities of Juan de Díos Martín Barba and Cristóval Luján given the scant documentation that existed prior to the Pueblo Revolt. In addition to documentary evidence to support the legend of Martín Barba and Luján, additional sacramental records and municipal accounts reveal that many New Mexicans established themselves in Chihuahua permanently. New Mexicans as well as other groups who have lived along the Camino Real in New Spain prior to, during, and after the 17th and 18th are emblematic of the diversity and cultural interplay that is attracted to arteries of trade and commerce. The Camino Real was the conduit for cultural hybridity that included early native indigenous groups of the Americas, Tlaxcala Indians, Spanish conquistadores and missionaries, Mestizos and cultures of every type looking for land, trade goods, gold, and opportunities of every kind. These seekers included those from New Mexico who escaped with their lives in 1680 to found new colonies in the El Paso del Norte valley only to return again to New Mexico after a decade in exile. From the Spanish/Mestizo elite to the Indian allies and Mulato slaves, native New Mexicans of all classes traveled south by foot, horse or wagon on the royal road where they expanded into central and southern Chihuahua. There they settled and continued old family ties and also started new kinships and commercial networks, registered mines and established large haciendas. These are the displaced people of 1680 who took part in the New Mexican diaspora. Their story is one among many in a long history of people who continue to cross borders on the ancient throughway, the Camino Real, into and out of New Mexico.

New Mexico in the 18th Century
by Robert Torrez

The 1700s was a period of extraordinary change for New Mexico. From the time New Mexico was settled by the Spanish in 1598, the colony was essentially a government-subsidized Franciscan mission for the Pueblo Indians. Following the Pueblo Revolt and Reconquest, the authority of the Church was reduced substantially. Because of the expanding influence of the French, English, and Russians in North America, New Mexico developed into a defensive zone against these enemies of the Spanish Crown.

One of the most significant modifications of Spanish policy occurred as a direct result of the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. On that fateful August morning, the Pueblos were on the verge of losing their cultural identity due to the suppression and exploitation they had endured almost since the day New Mexico was colonized by the Spanish. While the revolt succeeded only in temporarily expelling the Spanish from New Mexico, it did force the Spanish government to reassess the manner in which they conducted relations with the region's native peoples. The ultimate success of the revolt lay in the resulting changes in Spanish attitudes that enabled the Pueblo to maintain their language and ancient religious practices.

During the 18th century, it became Spanish practice, if not official policy, to be more tolerant of Pueblo religious and cultural ceremonies. This was partially the result of the hard lessons learned from the Pueblo Revolt, but there were other practical reasons. After the reconquest of 1692-93, the Spanish realized they would have to cooperate with their Pueblo neighbors in order to defend the colony against the various tribes that besieged them from all directions.

The 18th century was an incessant cycle of raids on Spanish settlements and Pueblos by the various nomadic Indian groups that inhabited New Spain's northern frontier followed by Spanish retaliatory campaigns. To fully understand the scope of this problem, it is necessary to realize that New Mexico was quite literally surrounded by hostile tribes. Along New Mexico's northern and eastern frontier were the Comanche and Jicarilla Apache.
Also to the north and northwest were the Utes, who constantly fought with the Comanche but who also frequently raided the Spanish towns and Pueblos of the upper Rio Grande. To the northwest was Navajo territory, and to the southwest, south, and southeast, the various Apache tribes. With this in mind, it is not difficult to see why Indian relations dominated New Mexico during this period.

While each of these tribes presented New Mexico with problems at various times during the century, the Comanche, who are mentioned in Spanish chronicles as early as 1705, posed the greatest threat to the colony's survival. By 1750, this tribe had extended its power throughout much of what is now eastern Colorado, northeast New Mexico, and western Texas. Spanish archives tell of Comanche attacks on many Rio Grande communities throughout the century, including Taos, Picuris, Pecos, and Albuquerque.

In the 1770s, the Spanish government developed an aggressive policy designed to defeat the various unfriendly Indian tribes in northern New Spain and obtain peace treaties with them. Implementation of this policy in New Mexico fell to Juan Bautista de Anza, who was appointed Governor in 1777. Governor de Anza decided that to establish peace with the many hostile tribes that threatened New Mexico's frontier, he first had to break the power of the Comanche. To accomplish this, he needed to deal decisively with Cuerno Verde (Green Horn), the most influential Comanche chief of the time.

In 1779, de Anza managed to surprise Cuerno Verde south of present day Pueblo, Colorado. In the ensuing battle, Cuerno Verde was killed and his tribe decisively beaten. Despite the defeat, Comanche raiding on New Mexico did not stop immediately. Ironically, the effort to follow up and force the Comanche into peace negotiations was hindered by the subsequent diversion of Spanish resources to support the American colonies' rebellion against England.

Governor de Anza finally entered into a formal peace treaty with the Comanche in 1786. This treaty not only ended their raids on New Mexico's settlements but gained the Spanish a valuable ally against the Apache. It was an agreement the Comanche honored for several decades, and one that allowed a beleaguered New Mexico to divert attention and resources to other matters.

Despite constant raids by and campaigns against the Comanche, Utes, Navajo, and Apache, New Mexico managed to expand its settlements during the 18th century. In 1695, a new villa, or seat of government, was established at Santa Cruz de La Canada, north of the capital at Santa Fe. In 1706, the villa of San Felipe de Albuquerque (present-day old town in Albuquerque) was established to accommodate the expanding population along the middle Rio Grande. As the colony's population grew, there was an urgent need to establish communities further from the Rio Grande Valley and out into New Mexico's irrigable mountain valleys. Much of this expansion was made possible through a system of land grants that awarded tracts of land to individuals and groups who agreed to establish settlements and cultivate land along the frontier. Santa Rosa de Lima to the north, San Miguel del Vado to the east, and Tomé to the south are examples of communities that were established along New Mexico's frontier during this period. This system of land distribution differed greatly from the form of encomienda, which characterized land tenure in New Mexico prior to the Pueblo Revolt.

Prominent among those who shouldered the burden of frontier settlement and defense, was the growing mestizo, or mixed blood, population of the province. Among the least recognized of these groups are the genízaro. The genízaros were Indians from many tribes who had, for a variety of reasons, lost their tribal identity. Many of them had been captive children who were raised in Spanish households, had been baptized, assumed Spanish surnames, and eventually became Hispanicized. Genízaro settlements, such as those established at Abiquiu and Tomé, bore a significant portion of New Mexico's frontier defense well into the 19th century. Despite many struggles, these communities grew and made possible the subsequent development and expansion of New Mexico.
Navajo Nation

From Prehistory to the Twentieth Century

The exact moment of the arrival of the Navajo people in the Southwest remains the subject of dispute. The standard view of archeologists and anthropologists suggests that when the Spanish arrived from the south in the 1540s, the Navajo were in the process of migrating into the region from the north. An Athapascan people, they had come from the area around what is now the Canadian border, gradually moving south over a period of hundreds of years. Estimates from this school of thought for the beginning of Navajo influx into the Southwest suggest a time between 1400 and 1525 A.D. Clearly the process was ongoing when the Spanish arrived. [1] In this sense, the point of contact between the two cultures was the meeting point between two different migrant groups, each with different cosmologies, values, and technologies, one slightly ahead of the other in chronological appearance. Both strangers to the region, they arrived nearly simultaneously. The subsequent three hundred years involved working out the nature and extent of the relationship between the two groups.

Navajo oral tradition and tree-ring dating suggest an earlier arrival than does much of modern archeology and anthropology. According to this view, at least some Navajo people or their forerunners were in the region at the same time as the Pueblos. Tree-ring dates from western Colorado show the construction of hogan-type dwellings in the 1100s A.D. that show Navajo-like characteristics and a Navajo homestead south of Gallup, New Mexico, has been dated to approximately 1380 A.D. In addition, a Navajo legend places the arrival of the Dinè, as the Navajo refer to themselves, in the vicinity of Chaco Canyon between roughly 900 and 1130 A.D. Nevertheless when the Spanish arrived, the Navajo were already well ensconced on the Colorado Plateau and their numbers were growing. [2]

The arrival of the Spanish produced a classic confrontation between denizens of the new and old worlds. The Spaniards possessed technology, biological characteristics, and domesticated animals with which the Navajo had no previous experience. The Navajo were better adapted to life in the harsh environment that was and is the Southwest. They knew its edible plants and hidden water sources and had adjusted to life in an unforgiving environment. Until the coming of the Americans, the collision was a stalemate.[3] The first Spaniards to record contact with the Navajo were not typical explorers in search of gold. Antonio de Espejo, a fugitive fleeing a murder charge who financed an expedition to find two missing priests and thereby redeem his name, led a small group of men that traveled widely across the Southwest. Early in the spring of 1583, the party set off from Zia Pueblo towards Zuñi Pueblo. As they circumvented Mount Taylor, one of the sacred mountains of the Navajo, they met what they called "Indios Serranos," mountain Indians, who were most likely Navajos. These people were peaceful and later engaged in trade with the Spaniards.

But any positive feelings engendered by the initial meeting did not last. Subsequent events set a far less optimistic tone for Navajo-Spanish relations. In 1598, don Juan de Oñate set out from New Spain to colonize New Mexico. Persuading Indians to accept Christian missionaries was an important component of his plan of colonization. While some of the Pueblos reconciled themselves at least temporarily to new forms of worship, others were not so accepting. On December 4, 1598, Acoma Pueblo, the Sky City, revolted against the Spanish.[4] Acoma was no stranger to warfare with the Spanish. The pueblo had previously fought a pitched battle with Espejo's men, winning decisively. After an incident caused by a lack of cross-cultural communication, the Acomas seized eighteen Spaniards including one of Oñate's nephews, who were in the Sky City to requisition supplies. The nephew and ten other Spaniards were killed, along with a number of Indian servants. Four other Spaniards jumped off the 375-foot mesa into sand dunes below and escaped to carry the news to Oñate. [5]

Retribution was swift and furious, establishing the tone of relations for the next 250 years. Oñate sent a force of seventy men, headed by the slain nephew's brother, to exact revenge and show the strength of the Spanish. In a two-day battle, the Spanish scaled the mesa and burned the Pueblo. Indian casualties in battle were estimated at 800. Another 500 women and children and seventy or eighty warriors were captured. Many of the captives were cut to pieces and thrown from the mesa. The rest were tried and sentenced to punishments of servitude of various lengths. Adult males also had one foot chopped off. Two Hopi Indians involved in the
revolt had their right hands chopped off and were sent back to their people as an example. The word spread quickly through the region. In one intense moment, the Navajo and the Spaniards had learned to intensely dislike each other. [6]

From then on, Spanish-Navajo relations were strained. Unlike the smaller, less mobile Pueblos, the Navajo were not easily subdued. Regarding themselves as bearers of civilization, the Spanish found their desire to hegemonize thwarted. They could not bring these independent Indians under their control, but could capture a sufficient number of Navajo to compel a similar response. Despite a seemingly endless series of treaties and arrangements, the Spanish and the Navajos regarded each other as enemies. Initially conflict was military; later it became economic. But one feature of the conflict was consistent: Europeans and their descendants sought to regulate the Navajo way of life, the lands available to the Navajo, and to a lesser degree, their trade with the outside world. They also sought to convert any and all captive Navajos to Christianity and the Spanish way of life.

The acquisition and mastery of the horse by the Navajo compounded the problems of the Spanish. By 1610, the Navajos could use horses to further their objectives. Horses offered them a mobility that made them more lethal opponents of the Spanish, a range that made no part of New Mexico safe, and a cultural identity that accentuated Navajo autonomy. By the end of the reconquest of New Mexico in the 1690s, the Spanish recognized that the Navajo were and would remain beyond their reach. [7]

By 1820, the Navajos became the most feared enemy of the colony. The horse transformed the Navajos into a powerful adversary almost equal to the Spanish. Along with Utes and Comanches, Navajos incessantly raided the colony in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, forcing the weak, often debilitated, and contentious leadership of Spanish New Mexico to become enmeshed in a cumbersome and poorly followed set of treaty arrangements. The Spanish formed uncomfortable alliances with all the tribes in the region, at various times finding themselves using the Navajo in campaigns against other Indians and conversely fighting alongside other Indians against the Navajo. Animosity between different groups of Indians also contributed to an already complex situation. Spanish slave raids, particularly one that resulted in the massacre of hundreds of Navajo women and children in Canyon del Muerto in 1805, heightened existing tensions, and the Navajos became raiders on a large scale. [8]

Yet the Spanish colony of New Mexico remained weak. The Spaniards lacked the resources and the wherewithal to establish a powerful entity at the northern tip of their empire in the Americas. Their religious, cultural, and economic mission never achieved success with the Navajo. The only effort to establish a mission to Christianize the Navajo lasted merely two years. Nor was New Mexico as economically profitable for the Spanish as were other parts of their empire in the New World. As a result, administration of the colony was half-hearted throughout the eighteenth century, leaving it open to challenges to Spanish authority. By 1800, the Spanish empire had crumbled. Fewer and fewer of its resources were allocated for the New Mexico colony. The abundance of complex and repeated agreements between the Navajos and the Spanish colony of New Mexico attested to the precariousness of the position of the Spanish. They lacked the numbers and power to enforce their will on the Navajo. Clearly fear was a major element in the Spanish view of Navajos; the establishment of the genizaro—detrivialized Indian—community at Abiquiu as a buffer between the "Indios Barbaros" and the colony revealed the vulnerability of Spanish New Mexico.

Despite its limitations, the Spanish empire in northern New Spain persisted into the nineteenth century. Although the periphery was seldom strong, it did hold for an extended period. New Mexico, at least along the Rio Grande, remained a part of the Spanish empire and Spanish culture and religion melded with that of the Pueblos. But extending hegemony beyond the river valley proved too much. The Navajos played an important role in denying further Spanish expansion.

The Spaniards faced many problems in their efforts to deal with the Navajos. Among the most important was identifying individuals who could speak for the Navajo people. In one such effort, a colonial governor offered to provide four silver-tipped canes and medals to Navajos who were willing and able to assume that role. In
addition, the Spanish often paid Navajos to fight with them against other Indians, arbitrarily designating the
leaders of these accommodationists as the leaders of the Navajo people. [9]

But unlike the effort made with the Pueblos, the Spanish made few attempts to offer the Navajo the “benefits”
of their society. When compared to the town-dwelling, agricultural Pueblos, by Spanish standards, the Navajos
seemed backward. The Navajos were not subject to comprehensive missionary efforts as were the Pueblos, nor
were there efforts to rid the Navajo of their culture and make them Spanish. Only Navajo captives were
brought into the realm of Spanish culture and life. The Spanish simply could not subject the Navajo to their
cultural will.

As a result, the Navajo retained autonomy and remained largely beyond Spanish control. As the letters of
governors of the colony show, the Spaniards spent a lot of time worrying about what the Navajos would do
next. The Spanish empire in the New World crumbled in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and
the problems of one of the most remote outposts of New Spain attracted little attention. Spanish authorities had
more important problems to address, and without support, officials in New Mexico could do little to change or
stop the Navajo. They lacked the resources and the power. An adversarial view became codified in the
perspective of the Spanish. Navajos became the feared adversary—the enemy.

If anything, the Mexican territory of New Mexico was even weaker than the Spanish colony. From its founding
in 1821, Mexico lacked the economic resources to sustain its northern frontier. Texas in particular and to a
lesser degree New Mexico were invaded by U.S. economic interests almost from the moment of Mexican
independence. The Mexican government could do little to stop the Navajos, who preyed on the weakened and
nearly defenseless territory. The Navajos relentlessly attacked New Mexico, appropriating crops, stealing
livestock, and taking captives. The situation became so dire that in 1845, Governor Manuel Armijo wrote: “the
war with the Navajo is slowly consuming us.” When Brig. Gen. Stephen Watts Kearny arrived in Santa Fe in
1846 to proclaim the beginning of the American era, the best thing he had to offer the people of New Mexico
was protection from Navajo raids, “The Navajos come down from the mountains and carry off your sheep and
your women whenever they please,” he told Santa Feans on August 22, 1846. “My government will correct all
this.” [10]

It was a promise the U.S. military intended to keep, particularly after a band of Navajo stole a flock of
American army horses. The Navajos had almost free run of New Mexico; the great chief Narbona exercised his
curiosity about the Americans by viewing the American troops at Fort Marcy near Santa Fe from a secret
vantage point in the nearby mountains. But Kearny made a promise. By treaty or war, the Americans sought to
bring a measure of order to New Mexican-Navajo relations that had never before existed.

Although the Navajo and the Americans signed a treaty at the end of 1846, it proved insufficient to maintain
peace. The Taos Rebellion of 1847 complicated cross-cultural relations in New Mexico, and by the summer of
1847, the treaty had become a bad memory. The Navajos had lost respect for American soldiers, while
Spanish-speaking New Mexicans incessantly reminded the Americans of General Kearny's promise in 1846.
The result was more than a decade of war designed to compel Navajo submission. [11]

This effort culminated in the efforts of Brig. Gen. James H. Carleton, who attacked the Navajos in their own
land and removed them to a “reservation” in eastern New Mexico. Smitten with gold fever and using the Civil
War as an excuse, Carleton proceeded against the Navajo. In the summer of 1863, he hailed against the Navajo
to his superiors, brought Christopher (Kit) Carson from Taos to lead 1,000 men to the Dinehtah, the Navajo
homeland, and gave the Navajo until July 20, 1863, to surrender. A war with no quarter began, in which
Carson and his men destroyed Navajo livestock and crops. The scorched earth policy succeeded. By the middle
of February of 1864, more than 1,200 Navajo had surrendered. The Americans had kept their promise to the
people of New Mexico, albeit at the expense of the Navajo. [12]

Some of the Navajo escaped capture and fled west, to the Navajo Mountain and Shonto Plateau areas. Many
settled in the area, forming an independent and uncowed group of Navajo, committed to their pre-reservation
style of life. Not exposed to Anglo culture and the degrading removal to the Bosque Redondo near Fort
Sumner in the Pecos Valley and subsequent attempts to anglicize the Navajo and make them dependent, these Navajos retained an autonomy that helped sustain traditional culture. After the Navajos returned from the Bosque Redondo in 1868, the people of the western reservation were distinguished by their independence and fidelity to traditional Navajo ways. Settled as an evasive maneuver from a conqueror, the western reservation became a bastion of cultural conservatism, the home of the most traditional Navajos. These "longhairs" had a different set of experiences than those who were sent away, and it shaped their outlook. They survived the conflict with the Americans, suffering only geographic relocation as a price. Their freedom, cultural autonomy, and economy were not taken from them.

Nor did they face much encroachment from Arizona Territory. The little development in the middle and late nineteenth century centered on the south-central part of the territory. The area around Navajo Mountain offered grazing and mining opportunities, but because of the Navajo influx, it had the reputation of being hostile territory. In the late nineteenth century, a number of Anglo-Americans explored the area, but they did so carefully. They recognized that they were in the homeland of people who took a dim view of their presence.

After the "Long Walk" to Fort Sumner and the subsequent four-year stay at the Bosque Redondo, the threat of the Navajo as a physical adversary ended. But the military defeat of the Navajo did not mean that efforts to integrate them into the society of the New Mexico Territory began. The Treaty of Bosque Redondo, which allowed the Navajos to return home, cemented a new order. While the Navajos were compelled to give up raiding and other predatory practices as part of the agreement to return to the Dinehtah, the only concession to their need to develop a self-sufficient economy was the assignment of 160-acre parcels of the newly created reservation to heads of families and 80-acre tracts for single people, as well as $100 worth of seed and implements the first year, $25 the following two years, and $10 per year for the subsequent ten years for Navajos engaged in farming. The Navajo young were required to attend school, and informal provisions for the return of Navajos held by New Mexicans were established. The Navajo were home, but needed to find a viable way to reconstitute their culture and livelihood. [13]

On their return to their homeland, the Navajo had to adapt to the new order imposed by the Americans. Much of their historic economy and way of living had been eliminated. Raiding the settlements protected by the Americans was out of the question. It was this practice that inspired the wrath of the American military, and the memory of exile in the Bosque Redondo loomed large in Navajo consciousness. Navajos instead built an economy based less on agriculture and much more on livestock and crafts such as jewelry- and rug-making. Even the people of the Shonto Plateau and the Navajo Mountain area experienced these changes, although their distance from Indian agencies and other institutions of American government and society limited the impact. [14]

Always important in the Navajo economy, sheep became the basis of sustenance for many in the post-Bosque Redondo era. Adaptable and innovative, the Navajo responded to their new situation by developing a livestock-based economy. In the 1880s, the livestock economy flourished, making the Navajo prosperous by their own standards. But this attempt at self-sufficiency also put many of the Navajo in conflict with some of the most powerful interests in the New Mexico Territory. [15]

After 1846, the Territory of New Mexico was transformed. A loosely knit cabal often referred to as the "Santa Fe Ring" dominated both the political and economic affairs of the territory. Many of its members, such as Thomas Benton Catron, later U.S. senator from New Mexico and the person for whom Catron County is named, made great fortunes and wielded vast influence. Even those who were sometimes supportive of Hispano and Indian interests, such as territorial governor and judge L. Bradford Prince, were far more sympathetic toward the Pueblos than the Navajo. Almost all of the leaders of the ring were involved in the livestock industry and most had some ties to the various railroads that sought to traverse New Mexico in the 1870s and 1880s. The result was that the most powerful forces in the territory had needs that came in direct conflict with the growing and increasingly prosperous Navajo livestock economy.

In the resolution of the so-called "Checkerboard lands" dispute between 1885 and 1910, powerful territorial interests and the Navajos developed a pattern of economic competition to replace the military adversity of the pre-Bosque Redondo era. The attitude of the Americans toward the Navajo had not changed; despite the fact
that Navajos resided in the jurisdiction of the U.S., they were still regarded as opponents. The checkerboard resulted from the overlap of the alternating sections of land given to the railroads with executive order additions to the Navajo reservation and public domain lands. Compounding the problem were historical patterns of use. Navajos settled in the contested areas after their return from the Bosque Redondo and grazed animals in the area. The Indians sought to make the area an executive order addition to the reservation, but the discovery of Artesian water made the status of the lands worth contesting. Efforts by leading members of the territory helped assure delays, and the situation was never clearly adjudicated. [16]

In Arizona, the Navajos faced a similar situation. Encroaching grazing interests pushed farther north in the state, threatening Navajo sheep range along the southern rim of the reservation. Pressure increased as the network of trading posts spread across the reservation, embroiling Navajos in the cash economy and subtly encouraging more emphasis on craft-making. Little of this reached the Navajo Mountain area, located in the heart of the western reservation. No trading posts were located in the area before 1900, and the contested public domain areas that skirted the reservation protected the people of its heartland from outside grazing pressures. In the vicinity of Navajo Mountain, Navajos retained a historic pattern of living. [17]

At the turn of the twentieth century, the Navajos were people in transition, saved by their adaptability. They had survived the Bosque Redondo and developed new strategies to replace what they had lost. The livestock industry initially flourished, but the period of relative prosperity came to a halt in early 1890s as a result of an extended drought. The Navajo population continued to grow. This led to increasing pressure on the resources of the region and economy of the Navajo people.

Yet there were splits within the Navajo community. Those who experienced the Bosque Redondo had a different outlook than those who fled to the area around Navajo Mountain. The people of the area that would become Navajo National Monument remained largely unaffected by the Anglo world. Apart from it geographically, their cultural independence was protected by difficult terrain and the lack of Anglo institutions in northeastern Arizona. This area was one of the last places to be surveyed and mapped, much of which did not occur until after 1910. In the early twentieth century, few Anglos dared traverse the area.

The Navajos were also a culture recently exposed to the curiosity of the American mainstream. Beginning in the 1890s, Americans recognized that their continent had limits, geographic and otherwise. Without a frontier into which to expand, Americans perceived their future as different from their past. An effort to save remnants of the cultural and historical past was closely tied to emergence of the idea of utilitarian conservation, best described as the greatest good for the greatest number of people from each resource. Railroads began to promote the historic and prehistoric Southwest, miners and others began to explore the remote regions of the reservation, and anthropologists and archeologists visited the Southwest.

**1864 - Navajo Long Walk to Bosque Redondo**

by William H. Wroth

In 1855 New Mexico territorial governor David Meriwether made treaties with, among other tribes, both the Mescalero Apaches and the Navajos. Although the U. S. Congress did not ratify these treaties, they served to inaugurate a brief period of peaceable relations between the United States and these tribes. By 1858 relations between the Navajos and the government became tense again as the Navajos were increasingly disturbed by the buildup of military forces at Fort Defiance which had been established within their territory. Regular Army patrols through Navajo lands increased the tension in 1859 and 1860, and soon a large faction of Navajos under the leadership of Manuelito began harassing the patrols and quartermaster supply trains, culminating in a bold and nearly successful raid on Fort Defiance itself in May 1860. In response the Army ordered troops to New Mexico, including five companies of dragoons commanded by Major Edward R.S. Canby. Canby’s series of raids were not particularly effective and only served to further inflame the Navajos against the Americans. James L. Collins, Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico in his 1860 annual report called for an end
to the futile campaign and recommended that the Army create a reservation for the Navajo as the best way to control them.

With the advent of the Civil War the attention of the U. S. Army in New Mexico shifted from Indian affairs to the task of repelling the invading Confederates, with the result that both Navajo and Mescalero Apache raiding increased over a large portion of the territory. Finally in August 1862 General James H. Carleton was placed in charge of the Army in New Mexico, replacing Canby. Following ideas first proposed by Canby, Carleton’s solution to the immediate Indian problem was first to send the New Mexico Volunteers under the leadership of Kit Carson to Fort Stanton in Mescalero Apache territory. Carson quickly convinced most of the Mescaleros to surrender, and their leaders were sent to Santa Fe to negotiate with Carleton.

At this time Carleton was establishing a new fort in a remote location in east central New Mexico at Bosque Redondo, to be named Fort Sumner, 165 miles southeast of Santa Fe and far from any other settlements. He told the Apache leaders that all the Mescaleros had to go to Fort Sumner where a new peace treaty would soon allow them to return to their former territory. Soon after the Mescaleros were settled in Fort Sumner, Carleton reversed his promised plan to return them to their homelands, saying that incoming gold and silver seekers in southern New Mexico and Arizona would be in danger of conflict with the Mescaleros if they were allowed return to their homes. Carleton had a strong belief that the future development of New Mexico lay in the exploitation of mineral resources, especially gold and silver mines which he expected would be found in both the Apache and Navajo territories. Carleton quickly put the 400 Mescalero Apaches incarcerated at Fort Sumner to work, transforming it from simply an Army fort to an Indian reservation. He provided them with some seeds and tools and had them begin to dig a two-mile long irrigation ditch to bring water to Fort Sumner from the Pecos River.

With the Apaches pacified at Fort Sumner, in the spring of 1863 Carleton turned his attention to the Navajos. First he established a new fort, Fort Wingate, on the eastern border of their territory. Then, meeting with Navajo leaders in April he demanded that all the Navajo tribe voluntarily relocate to Bosque Redondo; otherwise the Army would move without mercy against them. Carleton was asking them to completely uproot the entire tribe from their traditional homelands and move to an unknown isolated and quite barren “reservation” 400 miles away on the eastern plains, and to live in close proximity with one of their enemies, the Apaches. The Navajo leaders rejected his proposal.

Under General Carleton’s orders in June 1863 Kit Carson with more than 700 men under him began the next phase of the war with the Navajos by first establishing yet another fort, Fort Canby, in Navajo country. Then in July he began a campaign of harassment against them. This time, according to Carleton’s directive, it was to be done systematically and in Indian style, for “an Indian is a more watchful and a more wary animal than a deer. He must be hunted with skill…..” (Bailey, p. 160). Carleton’s use of the word “animal” here is a sorry indication of his inhumanity towards the Indians, as was borne out in his subsequent actions. Carson’s men had orders to shoot to kill any Navajo men who did not turn themselves in and to take all women and children into captivity. Although there is no evidence that they wantonly killed any Navajos, they began a systematic campaign to destroy Navajo crops and kill or capture their livestock. Carleton even authorized a bounty to be paid to soldiers for each horse, mule, and sheep they captured from the Navajos.

By late fall, in spite of these efforts, Carson’s campaign had not achieved success. The Navajos were still raiding and only 180 of them had surrendered voluntarily. At this point Carleton ordered Carson to strike at the Navajo homeland of Cañon de Chelly where Carson’s troops destroyed their crops and orchards, as well destroying or taking their livestock and food caches and burning down their homes. With the onset of winter the Navajos were severely weakened by the loss of so much of their means of sustenance, and the ravaging of Cañon de Chelly finally broke their spirit. By February 1864 nearly 3000 Navajos had surrendered. They were incarcerated at Forts Canby and Wingate where in little over one week 126 of them died from dysentery and exposure, while over 2000 began the infamous forced march known as the “Long Walk” across New Mexico to Fort Sumner, in which many more perished. In April another 2400 Navajo men, women and children began their forced march to Bosque Redondo in the midst of heavy snow falls and blizzards which blocked the roads,
and many more perished. Soon over 6000 Navajos as well as the 400 Apaches were camped at Bosque Redondo, and Carleton quickly realized that the new arrivals were in danger of starvation. He was able to get enough emergency supplies from Colorado to tide them over the winter on a strictly rationed diet. Near-starvation conditions prevailed for many of them.

Carleton’s goals were twofold: to defeat the Navajos and make New Mexico safe for further settlement and exploitation of mineral resources and to civilize and Christianize both the Navajos and the Apaches — to transform them into sedentary farmers. However he vastly misjudged both the large size of the Navajo population (reaching over 9000 captives) and the agricultural potential of the land. In October 1863 John A. Clark, Surveyor General of New Mexico wrote to Dr. Michael Steck, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, that he estimated there were only 4000 acres of arable land in the Bosque Redondo reserve. Although the estimate was later increased to 6000 acres, it was far less than would be needed to support the large Navajo population and the Mescalero Apaches. Steck, an initial supporter of Carleton’s plan, became an opponent, arguing that the Navajos should have a reservation in their own homelands in western New Mexico, that it was completely impractical to resettle them in Apache territory on inadequate lands.

Carleton’s plan to make the Indians into instant agriculturalists appeared at first to be succeeding. By summer of 1864 they had nearly 3000 acres of land under cultivation with corn and wheat. But suddenly an infestation of cutworm destroyed most of the corn crop, and at the same time the wheat was destroyed by a series of severe storms. Again rations for the Indians had to be cut to twelve ounces of breadstuffs and eight ounces of meat per day, to ward off the threat of famine. As Steck and others had predicted, it was a mistake to expect the Navajos and Apaches to live together peacefully. Friction between the two tribes continued to grow, compounded by the almost total lack of interest among the traditionally nomadic Mescaleros in learning the art of agriculture. Finally the resentment of the Apaches came to a head and 335 of them, virtually the entire tribe, left the reservation in November 1865 returning to their homelands in southern New Mexico.

In the spring of 1865 almost 6000 acres were placed under cultivation through the hard labor of the Navajos, and Carleton over-optimistically expected a harvest of nine million pounds which would have eliminated the need for the government to supply food (the cost of feeding the Navajos then running at $62,000 a month). But again the results were disastrously low. The corn was again hit by cutworm and the total harvest of all crops amounted to less than 500,000 pounds. With the severe conditions prevailing, it was not surprising that Navajos were also starting to abandon the Bosque Redondo, in spite of Army efforts to prevent them from doing so. The Army could not effectively patrol the 40-square mile reserve. It was estimated that by April about 900 Navajos had gone missing and many more continued to abandon the Bosque, in spite of Carleton’s threat in August that “I will caused to be killed every Indian I find off the reservation without a passport.” (Bailey, p. 216).

The hardships of the Navajos increased in 1866 as the harvest was again a failure producing only 3000 bushels of corn and thus requiring the government to expend more than $582,000 for a nine-month period. The harvest of 1867 was equally disastrous thanks to a serious drought followed by devastating hail storms. Adding to the difficulties of the Navajos was the lack of fuel wood in the high prairie environment surrounding Bosque Redondo. Navajos had to travel as far as twenty miles to find cedar and mesquite root for fuel. Any foraging beyond the confines of the Bosque placed them in danger of another of their enemies, the Comanches, who considered the Bosque Redondo to be in their territory. By 1866 public opinion in New Mexico was turning against Carleton and his “experiment” to subjugate the Navajos. In January of that year the Territorial Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor of a memorial sent to President Johnson asking that Carleton be removed, and in September he was replaced by General G. W. Getty.

The suffering of the Navajos at Bosque Redondo continued through bureaucratic wrangling and delays until May 1868 when finally a treaty was signed with them at Fort Sumner and they were allowed to return to their homelands. Their pathetic impoverished condition moved the peace commissioners, General William T. Sherman and Colonel Samuel F. Tappan to allot them $150,000 for rehabilitation, plus 15,000 sheep and goats and 500 head of cattle, as well as token payments to each tribal member. Clearly this was a small but symbolic
acknowledgment by the government that the Navajos had been severely mistreated through the forced march and incarceration at Fort Sumner. In June 1868 the Navajos left the Bosque Redondo forever and returned to their homelands in western New Mexico and eastern Arizona.

**Jicarilla Apache**

by William H. Wroth

Before reaching New Mexico, the Jicarilla Apache Indians are thought to have lived on the plains in today’s western Nebraska and Kansas and eastern Colorado. Linguistically they are closer to the Lipan Apaches than to the Navajo, Chiracahua, Mescalero, and Western Apache. It is likely that the Jicarilla and Lipan came to New Mexico somewhat later than the other Apachean groups. The Lipan migrated to the southeastern plains of New Mexico and west Texas, probably separating about 1300 A.D. from the Jicarilla who stayed on the northeastern plains of New Mexico and southeastern Colorado. Later some bands moved west into the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and across the Rio Grande into north central New Mexico. Those Jicarilla bands living in the mountains became known as the Olleros (pottery makers), while those still living on the plains were the Llaneros (plains dwellers).

By 1700 if not earlier the two groups became known to the Spanish authorities in New Mexico as the Jicarilla Apache in reference to a small peak in their territory known as Cerro de la Xicarilla. The Jicarillas incorporated influences from three distinct cultures due to their geographic location. They were first Athapaskan by language and origin, sharing these and other traits with the other southern Apachean groups; they acquired additional traits from the Plains and Shoshonean tribes, for instance warfare and raiding patterns, the horse culture, and use of the tipi; and finally from the Pueblo Indians they acquired more sedentary traits such as agriculture and formation of small villages (rancherías).

In the eighteenth century the Jicarilla maintained a good relationship with the Spanish authorities in New Mexico because they both shared a common threat from the Comanches and other raiding tribes. The Spanish attempted with little success to convert the Jicarillas to Christianity. They encouraged some of them to settle near Pueblo villages and enlisted them in military actions against the Comanche. Periodic warfare with the Comanches continued until 1779 when Governor Juan Bautista de Anza and his troops, re-enforced with at least 200 Jicarilla, Ute, and Pueblo, defeated the Comanche under their leader Cuerno Verde in today’s southern Colorado. After the Comanche finally made peace in 1786, the Jicarilla continued to live in relative peace in the mountains and eastern plains. During the Mexican period the increasing Hispanic population and the opening of trade with the United States brought new tensions in Jicarilla life. These were further exacerbated by the awarding of land grants to entrepreneurs by the Mexican government. In 1841 the awarding of the Beaubien-Miranda (later Maxwell) land grant in northeast New Mexico brought new settlements and resource development to traditional Jicarilla territory, but both the original grantees and later owner Lucien Maxwell made no effort to inhibit Jicarilla use of the land.

After the American occupation of 1846, New Mexico fell under United States sovereignty and pressure on Jicarilla territory lands increased with the influx of American settlers. General Kearny in his first proclamation in Santa Fe stated that his forces would protect the people from marauding tribes. Although he did not specifically name the Jicarillas, the American attitude towards this tribe was soon spelled out in a report by newly-appointed Governor Charles Bent who held a disparaging view of both Indian and Hispanic New Mexicans. Bent noted in November 1846: “The Jicarillas have no permanent residence, but roam through the northern settlements of New Mexico. They are an indolent and cowardly people, living principally by theft…..” Bent’s view was contradicted by Kit Carson who served as Jicarilla and Ute agent and knew the Indians well. Carson characterized the Jicarilla as brave warriors, having used them as auxiliary troops in battles against the Comanche and Kiowa. However, Bent’s view prevailed and it colored all later United States policy toward the Jicarilla Apache.
The government’s treatment of the Jicarilla was among the most unjust in New Mexico. In spite of repeated efforts to make peace with the Americans and acquire their own land, they were not given a reservation for over 40 years. After 1846 the government assumed the Jicarilla to be belligerent and began a policy of engaging them in warfare. They began pursuing them in the mountains and attacking and destroying their rancherías. In May 1849 a Jicarilla village near Abiquiú was destroyed by soldiers and twenty residents were killed. In August a peaceful band of Jicarilla camping near Las Vegas for trading purposes was attacked and scattered by Army troops and six of them were taken prisoner. Later one of these captives, the daughter of chief Lobo was shot and killed by soldiers while trying to escape. In retaliation, some Jicarilla bands, often allied with Ute bands, began to raid both settlements and wagon trains.

In 1851 they attempted to make peace with the Americans, signing a treaty which acknowledged their submission to the United States government, agreeing to territorial limits and agreeing to cease raiding and take up farming. The government in return agreed to furnish them with foodstuffs, tools and equipment. Although the Jicarilla tried to honor their side of the treaty, they received few rations or other support from the government, and no effort was made to give them reservation lands. At the same time they were well aware that other tribes in New Mexico were receiving both annuities and lands from the government.

In 1852 the new territorial governor William Carr Lane attempted to take the initiative and settle the Jicarilla on lands of their choosing west of the Rio Grande. While some leaders were skeptical of his intentions, one band led by Chacón settled near Abiquiú and cleared 100 acres of land for farming. However, the Commissioner of Indian affairs in Washington ordered Lane to cease all efforts to settle the Jicarilla, claiming that there were not enough funds allotted for the program and that the Indians would soon abandon the lands and go back to raiding. In his unsuccessful defense of his actions Lane noted: “I was simply carrying out the long established and benevolent policy of the United States in relation to the Indians.”

Unfortunately, the “benevolent policy” still did not provide the Jicarilla with any rations, and they took to raiding again, stealing cattle to avoid starvation. Although an estimated two-thirds of the Jicarilla desired peace with the United States, the government made little effort to treat with them, or assist them in any way, and the Army vigorously pursued and harassed raiding parties. In March 1854 a combined force of 100 Jicarilla and Ute warriors attacked the troops of Lieutenant John W. Davidson who was in pursuit of them, near Embudo south of Taos. They killed 22 dragoons and wounded 36, also taking 22 horses. In response, Acting Governor William S. Messervy declared war on the entire Jicarilla tribe, noting “the best interest of this territory and the highest dictates of humanity demanded their extinction.” After over one year of relentless pursuit the Jicarilla were seldom engaged in battle and remained free, but both they and the Ute tribes had grown tired of the unending harassment. In August 1855 they began negotiations with Governor David Meriwether and in September signed a treaty at Abiquiú which guaranteed the Jicarilla their reservation in today’s Rio Arriba County and annual annuities to provision the tribe. However, almost immediately American settlers claimed the proposed reservation land, and the treaty was not ratified by Congress. By 1855 Indian agencies had been established at Abiquiú and Taos to finally provide rations for the Jicarilla and Ute tribes, which helped to reduce raiding. In 1861 the Taos agency was moved to Cimarron to be closer to the Jicarilla and Ute still living on the plains and eastern slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains.

The treaty, although un-ratified, was honored by the Jicarilla and peace prevailed. In the next twenty years the government established reservations for all the New Mexican tribes except the Jicarilla. Several reservation ideas were proposed for the Jicarilla but were never acted upon until 1874 when by executive order the government established a Jicarilla reservation at the headwaters of the San Juan River, but in 1876 this order was abrogated because again the land was sought by American settlers. The government next proposed that the Jicarilla all be removed to the Mescalero Apache reservation in southern New Mexico, and by 1883 they had all been moved there. At the same time, yet another reservation was proposed in north central New Mexico. The Jicarilla, not happy on the Mescalero reservation, successfully petitioned to occupy the northern lands, and in February 1887 another executive order was signed in Washington, making the northern reservation permanent. The Jicarilla, after more than 40 years, finally had a home land.
Any joy at this turn of events was short-lived, for the Jicarilla continued to suffer on their new reservation. Under the terms establishing the reservation, American settlers within its boundaries were allowed to keep their homesteads which were the best farming lands, leaving the Jicarilla with dry land unsuitable for agriculture. Although government agents recommended that the settlers be bought out and the farm lands turned over to the Indians, the government refused to do this, leaving the Jicarilla even more dependent on inadequate rations. Finally in 1907 a large piece of land was added to the southern boundary of the reservation which was suitable for cattle and sheep ranching, but no funds were allotted for individual tribal members to purchase livestock. Instead a small tribal herd managed by the agency was purchased, and most of the southern addition was leased to outside cattle ranchers who badly overgrazed it. The government further compounded the misery of the Jicarilla by placing all the proceeds of timber and livestock sales on the reservation in a non-interest bearing trust fund which could not be used by the Jicarilla, yet at this time they were suffering from serious malnourishment and the ravages of diseases such as tuberculosis. With an over 30% drop in population from 1896 to 1920, the government finally began to take the problems of the Jicarilla seriously, and a slow improvement of their conditions began and has continued until the present day as the Jicarilla have gradually taken full control of the resources and administration of their reservation.

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2. Ibid; Travis, "Draft Survey."


5. Locke, Book of the Navajo, 157-58; John, Storms Brewed in Other Men's World, 47-50.

6. Ibid.


10. Locke, Book of the Navajo, 196, 202-204.


12. Ibid; Locke, Book of the Navajo, 199-361. The Long Walk, as the policy of forced removal of Navajos to eastern New Mexico was known to the Dinè, was the pivotal moment in Navajo history. Many define time in terms the exile: events happened before or after the Bosque Redondo. As a result, Navajos ceased to be a military enemy of New Mexico Territory and instead began the long process of finding their place within a hostile socio-cultural structure. Aptly referred as the last Navajo war, the events that led up to the removal reflected the policies of the era: Indians had to become civilized or be threatened with extinction. While the reservations established for Indians were ostensibly designed to teach agriculture, practices there revealed a concerted effort to make Indians accept white ways of living. This removed any threat of Indian depredation of western communities, freed their land for use by settlers and others, and showed the power and force of the American military. Assimilation was not yet a goal of Indian policy. Keeping Indians away from settlers, ranchers, and communities was. See Lynn R. Bailey, The Long Walk: A History of the Navajo Wars, 1848-68 (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1964); Frank McNitt, Navajo Wars: Military Campaigns, Slave Raids, and Reprisals (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1972); and Bill P. Acrey, Navajo History: The Land and the People (Shiprock, NM: Department of Curriculum Materials Development, 1988), for more.


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