Vecinidad and Hispanidad: using consumer relationships to understand local and regional Hispanic identity in nineteenth century Territorial New Mexico

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**Vecinidad and Hispanidad**: using consumer relationships to understand local and regional Hispanic identity in nineteenth century Territorial New Mexico

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Logo design and graphic design support by Oscar Camorlinga  
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The years 1821–1912 were politically tumultuous and may have been especially important in the development of modern Hispanic identity in New Mexico. After New Mexico was annexed by the United States, one significant impact of incoming American racial discourses was a shift in the perception of Hispanic identity from a localized community identity, to a racial or ethnic identity at a regional or national scale. However, we have little understanding of what this meant in the lives of typical rural New Mexicans. This research addresses this problem through the study the material goods that historic New Mexicans consumed on a daily basis, and the consumer relationships people cultivated to acquire these goods. In frontier New Mexico, consumer relationships reflected important social networks that were both local, to acquire pottery, as well as regional, as New Mexicans imported goods across the Santa Fe Trail.

I conducted archaeological analysis of materials excavated from four Hispanic homes occupied between 1830 and 1920. The homes were located in four regions along the Rio Grande—LA 160 and LA 4968 were located near Pojoaque Pueblo, LA 8671 was located near Placitas, and the Barela-Reynolds house is located on the main plaza in Mesilla. This research closely examined New Mexican historic pottery, manufactured materials imported from the United States and Mexico, and merchant inventories, ledger books, and licenses. Looking at the artifact assemblages and their sources, I constructed consumer profiles showing how site residents situationally prioritized local community relationships or regional social networks. Each site presented unique consumer strategies and, contrary to expectations, it appears that the most remote sites placed the greatest emphasis on regional relationships. This variation highlights important nuances in Hispanic New Mexican experiences and daily relationships at the core of changing Hispanic communities, which are often left out of historic documents.