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THE NAVAHO DURING THE SPANISH REGIME IN NEW MEXICO

By DONALD E. WORCESTER *

THE history of the Navaho is in many ways unique among the Indians of North America. Unlike the majority of the other tribes of the present United States, the Navaho were able to adapt European material culture traits which were to aid them remarkably after their confinement to a reservation. They differed from others also in that their reservation coincided with their accustomed homeland, a factor of considerable importance in their growth from seven or eight thousand in the 1860's to upwards of 50,000 at the present time. No other tribe of American Indians has had similar success since commencing reservation life. The reasons for the immense growth of the Navaho are to be found in their relations with Spanish and Pueblo settlements in the 17th and 18th centuries, and in their good fortune in being allowed to remain upon their ancient tribal lands. Other tribes had to make involuntary and sometimes difficult adjustments to new environments and unaccustomed ways of life, as was the case of the Plains Indians after the buffalo had vanished. While other tribes were waging a losing struggle to surmount these obstacles, the Navaho immediately began an unprecedented growth.

The tremendous increase of the Navaho in recent times has seemed the more unusual because of a widespread opinion that the tribe was of late origin and exceedingly small at the time of the conquest of New Mexico. Spanish documents of the 17th century make it patent that this belief is erroneous. Far from being a small, weak tribe largely unknown to the Spaniards, the Navaho were the most troublesome of all the Indians encountered by the newcomers in the Southwest until the advent of the Comanche soon after 1700.

One reason for this confusion regarding the Navaho in the early years of New Mexico's history is to be found in

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Spanish terminology used for designating the wild and war-like tribes. At the time of the conquest the word "apache," from the Zuñi *apachú*—enemy—their appellation for the Navaho, was used by the Spaniards to denote any hostile Indians. Oñate even employed it in reference to the people of the pueblo of Ácoma. Soon it became known to the Spaniards that most of the enemy tribes surrounding New Mexico spoke a common language, and the name thereafter was applied only to the Southern Athabascans. Gradually other designations were given to the various Athabaskan tribes of different regions, and the Navaho became known as the *Apaches del Navajó*. Throughout the 17th century and frequently in later years, however, many Spanish documents referred to them simply as Apache, thus giving an impression at first glance that the Navaho did not figure to any significant degree in the events of that remote era. That this impression is entirely false will be pointed out in the following pages.

Recent archaeological investigations have brought to light much valuable information regarding the Navaho ancestral groups, and the available evidence points to the arrival of these people in the Southwest around the 10th or 11th century by a route from the north by way of the Great Basin rather than the Plains. It is to be hoped that future investigations will define more exactly the wanderings and culture of the founders of the tribe.¹

1. There is an increasing literature on the early Navaho. A few will be cited as examples: Charles Avery Amsden, "Navaho origins," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, VII; Harold S. Colton, "Did the so-called Cliff Dwellers of central Arizona also build hogans," *American Anthropologist*, XXII; Malcolm F. Farmer, "Navaho archaeology of Upper Blanco and Largo Canyons, northern New Mexico," *American Antiquity*, VIII; Edward Twitchell Hall, Jr., "Recent clues to Athapaskan prehistory in the Southwest," *American Anthropologist*, XLIV; J. P. Harrington, "Southern peripheral Athapaskan origins, divisions, and migrations," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, C; Edgar Lee Hewett, "Origins of the name Navaho," *American Anthropologist*, VIII; Frank C. Hibben, "Excavations of the Riana Ruin and Chama valley survey," *Bulletin of the University of New Mexico Anthropological Series*, II; Hibben, "The Gallina phase," *American Antiquity*, IV; Ales Hrdlicka, "Physical and physiological observations on the Navaho," *American Anthropologist*, II; Wesley R. Hurt, Jr., "Eighteenth century Navaho hogans from Canyon de Chelly National Monument," *American Antiquity*, VIII; Betty H. and Harold A. Huscher, "Athapaskan migrations via the Intermontane region," *American Antiquity*, VIII; Dorothy Louise Keur, "Big Bead Mesa, an archaeological study of Navaho acculturation, 1745-1812," *Society for American Archaeology, Memoirs*, No. 1, and "New light on Navaho origins," *New York Academy of Sciences, Transactions*, Sec. 2, II; Roy L. Malcolm, "Archaeological

The Navaho evidently have mixed very considerably with their neighbors, and in physique are more closely related to the ancient and modern Pueblo peoples than to the Apache. In the historical period they have increased their numbers and modified their material culture by wholesale adoptions into the tribe of refugees from various pueblos. Their attitude toward these peoples as well as toward captives taken in warfare has had a significant part in their development. It helps to account not only for their growth in number but for their evolving a culture which was considerably advanced in comparison to the Apache and Ute.

Despite the absence of the word "Navaho" in Spanish documents of the 16th century, contact with the tribe probably was made during that time. Coronado, in relating his war with the Zuñi, mentioned that the pueblos and the province were up in arms and that he saw many smoke signals rising at different places.² The experiences of later Spanish forces in the region suggest that the Navaho were involved, for they frequently aided the Pueblo tribes against the Spaniards. In 1582 it is also very likely that Antonio de Espejo encountered Navaho in the Querechos who came to the assistance of Ácoma. The southern periphery of the Navaho country was in this vicinity and it seems probable, in light of Oñate's experiences two decades later, that the Navaho were the ones who aided the Ácomans.

At the time of the conquest of New Mexico, around 1600, it appears that the Navaho were the first of the wild tribes to cause trouble. The first site for a settlement was San Gabriel del Yunque, which was located between the Chama and the Rio Grande, at the entrance to the Navaho country. In-

remains, supposedly Navaho, from Chaco Canyon, New Mexico," *American Antiquity*, V; Paul S. Martin, "Origin of the Navaho," *Field Museum News*, VII, No. 9; H. P. Mera, "Ceramic clues to the prehistory of north central New Mexico," *Laboratory of Anthropological Technology Series*, 1935, and "Some aspects of the Largo cultural phase, northern New Mexico," *American Antiquity*, III; Edward Sapir, "Navaho linguistic evidence," *American Anthropologist*, XXXVIII; and Julian H. Steward, "Native cultures of the Intermontane (Great Basin) area," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, C.

2. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, eds. *Narratives of the Coronado expedition, 1540-1542*. Coronado Cuarto-Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, 1940).

dians called "Apache" immediately made life hazardous for the Spaniards and their Pueblo converts by raids and thefts of livestock. In 1608 Father Lázaro Ximenez wrote to the viceroy that the settlement was constantly harassed by the Apache, and that troops were lacking for defense.³ The viceroy ordered the governor to provide the necessary men and arms.⁴ Spanish colonists, hard pressed by the chronic attacks, petitioned the viceroy to permit them to return to New Spain. In 1609, however, they were ordered to remain,⁵ for New Mexico was the key outpost in the northern defenses. The destructiveness of the Indian raids soon forced them to abandon the settlement and move to a more secure location, where Santa Fe was founded.

Although the Indians who committed the depredations mentioned above were called Apache, the fact that they were Navaho has been established by an account of this period written in 1679, before the archives had been destroyed during the uprising of the Pueblo Indians in the following year. In this document it was clearly stated that the abandonment of San Gabriel and the founding of Santa Fe were owing to the raids of the Navaho.⁶ This statement is amply supported by many others throughout the 17th century, as will be pointed out.

Navaho incursions increased during the remainder of the century. By 1622 the Jémez had been driven from their pueb-

3. Mandamiento para que el governador de la nueva mexico conforme al número de gente y armas que obiere en aquel presidio procure que an de una squadra que acuda al remedio de los daños que hacen los yndios apaches de guerra en los amigos y cavallada de Españoles, 6 março, 1608. MS. A.G.I., 58-3-16. Bancroft Library transcript.

4. Hordenase al governador de la nueva-mexico que conforme al número de gente y armas que Ubiere en aquel Presidio Procure que hacen los yndios apaches de guerra en los amigos y Cavallada de Españoles . . . March 6, 1608. *Ibid.*

5. Auto of Velasco II and the Audiencia of Mexico. September 28, 1609. MS. *Ibid.*

6. Noticias de lo acaecido en la Custodia de la Conversion de San Pablo de la Provincia de el Santo Evangelio de N. S. P. San Francisco en el Nuevo Mèxico sacadas de los Papeles que se guardan en el Archivo de Gobierno de la Villa de Santa Fé, y empiezan desde el año de 1679. MS. Biblioteca Nacional, Mexico. Bancroft Library transcript. "Entre los dos Ríos Norte y Chama, una milla azia el oeste del Pueblo de San Juan de los Caballeros, y poco mas de nueve leguas al Norte de la Villa de Santa Fé puso Real Oñate, fundo la primer Convento uno y otro con el nombre de San Gabriel del Yunque, esta fue algunos años la Capital de la Provincia después acaso por la estrechez del sitio y por ser entonces frontera abierta de los Apaches Navajoes se despobló, y traslado a donde hoy permanece con el nombre de Santa Fé de Granada."

los and scattered throughout the province. In the same period Spanish *encomenderos* and missions were given permission to employ Pueblo converts as herdsmen and teamsters, contrary to the usual prohibition against Indians riding horses. Not long after this there were many complaints that apostates from the pueblos were fleeing to join the heathen Apache. Undoubtedly it was through these refugees that the Navaho and other tribes learned to use horses otherwise than for food.

One of the most valuable accounts of early New Mexico was that of Father Alonso de Benavides, who resided in the province from 1622 to 1629. His report included descriptions of the various Apache tribes and of the Navaho, and although it is obvious that his estimates of their numbers were enormously exaggerated, his appraisals of the tribes are extremely useful. He pointed out that the Navaho, unlike the Apache, cultivated crops, and the name "Navajó" signified great planted fields. His statement "This province is the most warlike of all the Apache nation and where the Spaniards have well shown their valor"⁷ is instructive. He stated further: "and this is the province which has given the most pain and care to New Mexico, as well from their being so warlike and valiant, as from there being in it more than 200,000 souls, by the times that the Spaniards have seen them going to fight."⁸

Several attempts were made by the missionaries to convert the Navaho to Christianity in the time of Benavides, but the results of their efforts were not enduring. Benavides succeeded in bringing about a temporary peace between the Navaho and the pueblo of Santa Clara by sending a delegation of Pueblo Indians into the Navaho country. This peace did not survive for long probably because the Spanish officials of New Mexico forced Pueblo Indians to assist them in slave

7. *The memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630*. Translated by Mrs. E. E. Ayer (Chicago, 1916), 44. See also *Alonso de Benavides' memorial on New Mexico in 1626*. In *Bulletin of New York Public Library*, III, and F. W. Hodge, G. P. Hammond, and Agapito Rey, eds. *Fray Alonso de Benavides' revised memorial of 1634*. Coronado Cuarto-Centennial Publications, 1540-1940 (Albuquerque, 1945).

8. *Ibid.*, 45.

raids against the Navaho. Slave raiding, indeed, was one of the principal reasons for continued Navaho hostility throughout the 17th century. The participation of Pueblo Indians in these campaigns greatly increased the animosity of the Navaho.

From about 1640 conspiracies between the Navaho and Pueblo tribes for the overthrow of the Spaniards became frequent, and on some occasions Pueblo herders surrendered entire horseherds to their allies.⁹ Raids and reprisals increased in intensity. Hundreds of Navaho were sold into slavery in the mining regions of Chihuahua, and thousands of sheep, cattle, and horses were taken from Spanish herds. Navaho hostility made the journey to the distant Zuñi and Hopi pueblos a perilous one, and was an important factor in the failure of the Spaniards to bring those tribes under complete domination.

In the 1660's Navaho depredations still were primarily responsible for the difficulties of the Spaniards in New Mexico. Peace was made between the Spaniards and some of the Apache, and an agreement was reached as to which of the pueblos could be visited for purposes of trade. With regard to the Navaho and certain Apache, however, the pact did not apply, saying: "nor should the enemy of the same nation in the jurisdiction of Casa Fuerte and Navajó come, because it is from there that the whole kingdom receives hurt. . . ."¹⁰

Added to the damages of Navaho and Apache raids in the 1660's was a drouth of three year's duration which greatly reduced the number of Pueblo Indians and caused widespread suffering among the Spaniards. The Navaho took advantage of the weakened condition of the province and by 1672 had driven off many horses and all of the sheep except a few small flocks which had been guarded with great vigilance.¹¹ The loss of horses was especially injurious, for most

9. Charles W. Hackett and Charmion Shelby, eds. *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin's attempted reconquest, 1680-1682. Coronado Cuarto-Centennial Publications, 1540-1940* (2 vols., Albuquerque, 1942), II, 299.

10. Charles Wilson Hackett, ed. *Historical documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and approaches thereto* (3 vols., Washington, D. C., 1923-37), III, 143.

11. *Ibid.*, 302.

of the troops in New Mexico were left without mounts. The damaging raids of this period undermined Spanish defenses and prepared the way for their expulsion from the province.

In 1677 Father Francisco de Ayeta, one of the Spaniards who most clearly foresaw the impending ruin of the province if the Navaho and Apache raids were unchecked, brought to New Mexico a wagon train of supplies for the Franciscan missions and a herd of one thousand horses for the troops.¹² In 1679 he was again in Mexico City petitioning for more men and horses for the relief of the beleaguered province. A year later, as he was approaching the Rio Grande with another wagon train of supplies, he met the Spaniards fleeing from Santa Fe, and learned that the Navaho and Apache had joined the Pueblo Indians in a concerted uprising.

While the Pueblo Revolt was in progress and during the absence of the Spaniards from New Mexico, the Navaho seem to have waged successful war against the Havasupai, whose lands lay to the west. According to the report of Fray Alonso Posadas in 1686, the Cosninas (Havasupai) had been subdued by the Navaho.¹³ This war between the Navaho and Havasupai, which is supported by legends of the latter, is of significance in determining the western limits of Navaholand, for few Spaniards had an opportunity to visit it. Some writers have suggested that the Navaho did not occupy modern Arizona before the 18th century; the *informe* of Posadas indicates their presence in the region during an earlier era. It was not until 1692 that the Spaniards made a successful re-entry into New Mexico. For the remainder of the century they were engaged in combatting conspiracies and revolts of the Navaho and Jémez, and occasionally other Pueblo tribes.

Despite the intermittent conflict between the Navaho and Spaniards, members of the tribe came annually to a fair held for them in the province. They exchanged deerskins and woolen cloth for Spanish livestock, and "ransomed" their

12. Letter of Fray Francisco de Ayeta. MS. In New Mexico Documents (3 vols., in Bancroft Library), I, 299.

13. *Informe* of Fray Alonso Posadas. *Ibid.*, 221.

prisoners taken in warfare. Thus they became suppliers of Indian slaves to New Mexico, a fact which seems to have relieved them of slave raids by the Spaniards. It was stated at this time that the Navaho made annual raids against the Pawnee and Jumano (Wichita?) of the Arkansas river region for the purpose of acquiring captives to be traded in New Mexico.¹⁴ According to Father Juan Amando Niel, four or five thousand Navaho came each year to the fair, and on occasion large numbers of them aided the governor of New Mexico in wars against rebellious pueblos.¹⁵

In 1706 Governor Francisco Cuervo y Valdéz wrote a detailed account of the Navaho which is suggestive regarding their progress and change during the 17th century. The frontier of their lands lay, he wrote, along El Peñasco de las Huellas, the San Antonio, Jara, and Culebra rivers, the old pueblo of Chama, Embudo de la Piedra, Buenaventura de Cochití, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Cía, the jurisdictions of the Valle de la Cañada, Chimayo, Picurías, Taos, the post of San Francisco del Bernalillo, the new villa of Albuquerque, San Diego y San Juan de los Jémez, Río Puerco, Cebolleta, San Jose de la Laguna, El Peñol de San Estevan de Ácoma, the places of Santa Ana, El Nacimiento, and El Morro, and the extended provinces of Zuñi and Hopi. His description of the Navaho merits inclusion.

In all this distance there live innumerable Indians of the same [Navajo] nation, though without the knowledge which those living nearer receive from us, dwelling as they do, in the territory extending from those frontiers to the banks and valleys of the said large river [Colorado], maintaining themselves from their fields. They cultivate the soil with great industry, sowing corn, beans, squash, and other seeds, such as those of *chile*, which they use having found them in the towns of our Christian Indians of this kingdom. Yet this is nothing new among these Apaches, for whenever they are sedentary they do the same things. They make their clothes of wool and cotton, sowing the latter and obtaining the former from the flocks which they raise. Although these things are true, the adversary of mankind . . . has perturbed the spirits of these Navajo Apaches on many occasions, as

14. Apuntamientos que a las memorias del Padre Fray Gerónimo de Zárate hizo el Padre Juan Amando Niel de la Compañía de Jesus. In *Documentos para la historia de Mexico* (4 series, 19 vols., Mexico, 1853-57) 3d series, pt. 2, 108.

15. *Ibid.*

has been seen in the continuous wars which they waged from the conquest of this kingdom up to the time of the general revolt of the fatal year 1680. These wars they have continued from the year 1693 until last year, 1705, when they were halted by the war which I waged vigorously against them because of their great crimes, their audacity, and their reckless depredations upon the frontiers and pueblos of this kingdom. . . . Their good faith is attested by the confidence with which they continue to barter and trade on our said frontiers and in our pueblos.¹⁶

In the 18th century relations between the Navaho and Spaniards changed remarkably. Although the Navaho were hostile during the early years of the century, and although many punitive expeditions were sent into their lands, by 1720 raids and reprisals had ceased and the Navaho no longer were numbered among the enemies of the province. This favorable situation was not caused by Spanish success in winning the friendship of the tribe, but for other and more impelling reasons. After 1700 the hostility of the Ute toward the Navaho had become particularly intense, and Ute incursions cost the Navaho large numbers of their livestock. In the same period, furthermore, a new and much more dreaded foe appeared—the Comanche. Comanche raids were carried deep into Navaho territory with impunity, for the tribe was formidable and enterprising in war. Between the invasions of the Ute and Comanche the Navaho, who were now people of considerable property, found themselves in much the same situation as the Spaniards. The herds and flocks which they owned made attacks upon them profitable for their enemies, and they were forced to assume the defensive. They soon realized that friendship with the Spaniards was necessary, and peaceful overtures were made.

Because of the peace with the Navaho, Spanish missionaries revived hope of converting the tribe to Christianity. In 1744 two Franciscan priests, Fray Carlos Delgado and Fray José Yrigoyen, entered the Navaho country from Isleta. The friendly reception which was given them and the willingness of the Navaho to listen to their exhortations pleased the padres immensely, and aroused even greater expectations. They

16. Hackett, *op. cit.*, III, 381, 382.

hastened back to New Mexico and dispatched enthusiastic and optimistic reports to the superiors of their order.

As evidence of their sincerity the Navaho sent a delegation to Santa Fe, where it was addressed in a cordial manner by the governor.¹⁷ Delgado and his equally zealous companion declared that on their brief visit they had converted 5,000 Navaho.¹⁸ They must have made only a generous estimate, however, for it is doubtful that there were more than 4,000 in the tribe at the time. When word of the "marvelous conversion" of the Navaho reached the ear of the king, he commanded the viceroy to continue the campaign. The viceroy forwarded similar instructions to the governor of New Mexico, Joachin Codallos y Rabal, who assembled a dozen men known to be familiar with the Navaho country, and recorded their testimony. They were in general agreement that the Navaho were people worthy of becoming subjects of the king, and that they raised many sheep and horses. They described the customary dwellings, the excellent woolen and cotton cloth, and the baskets which the Navaho made. They placed the number of Navaho at between three and four thousand, large and small. In 1743 a Navaho had told the Spaniards of a silver deposit in his country and had offered to lead them to it. Governor Codallos accompanied the party which went in search, but no mine was found. The Navaho had received their visitors in a friendly fashion, and had furnished guides. Owing to his knowledge of the Navaho, the governor considered their conversion especially desirable.¹⁹

Four missions were authorized for the Navaho country and a garrison of thirty soldiers for their protection. The shortage of troops prevented the plan from being carried out completely, but in 1749 missions were established at Cebolleta and Encinal.²⁰ Many Navaho were persuaded to move

17. Carta del Reverendo Padre Fray Carlos Delgado, June 18, 1744. MS. In New Mexico Documents, *loc. cit.*, II, 692-701.

18. Carta del Padre Fray José Yrigoyen, June 21, 1744. *Ibid.*, 701-704. Translated in Hackett, *op. cit.*, III, 413, 414.

19. Letter of Governor Joachin Codallos y Rabal. MS. New Mexico Archives.

20. Joachin Codallos y Rabal. Año de 1745. Testimonio á la letra de los Autos que originales. . . Sobre La Reducción de los Indios gentiles de la Provincia de Navajó . . . MS. Bancroft Library. Translated in *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, C, 395-417.

their families to these two locations. Their willingness to make the change was the result of Ute and Comanche forays rather than desire to accept Christianity or village life, although this fact seems to have escaped the ardent missionaries. By 1750 there was evidence that the Navaho were not satisfied with only the spiritual rewards of Christianity, and when those of Encinal were refused permission to move to Cubero they abandoned the project.²¹ Those of Cebolleta also decided suddenly to retire.

The unexpected withdrawal of the Navaho came as a rude blow to missionaries as well as certain officials of New Mexico. Upon investigation they learned that the principal cause of complaint was the failure of the missionaries to fulfill their promises to provide livestock, seeds, and tools to the supposed converts. The fact that the Navaho had an opportunity to observe closely the condition of the Pueblo Indians under Spanish control also had caused them to weigh more carefully the tangible benefits of their new life, and made them yearn for their old freedom. They did not immediately renew hostilities against New Mexico, however, and Spanish officials remained confident that Ute and Comanche attentions would force them to return.

In resisting the Ute the Navaho occasionally employed shrewd and resourceful methods, especially when flight to a precipitous mesa did not suffice for their safety. One group which was about to be destroyed by a war-party of Ute hastily made a crude wooden cross and held above it an almanac given them by the priests. They hailed their adversaries and informed them that the Spaniards had sent the letter and cross and commanded them to be friends. The ruse worked, and the governor of New Mexico, upon learning of it from the Ute, did not disclose the Navaho's secret in order to make the tribe indebted to him.²²

One of the most serious problems of New Mexico officials

21. Communication regarding the missions of Cebolleta and Encinal, and the occurrences in the year 1750. In *New Mexico Documents*, *loc. cit.*, II, 1090-95. Translated in Hackett, *op. cit.*, III, 424, 425.

22. Alfred Barnaby Thomas. *The Plains Indians and New Mexico, 1751-1778*. *Colorado Cuarto-Centennial Publications, 1540-1940* (Albuquerque, 1940), 117, 118.

in the 18th century was conducting the annual fairs for the Navaho, Ute, and Comanche without allowing hostilities to break out among them. Jealousy among these powerful tribes was strong, and the governors were in the delicate position of having to favor the more dangerous Comanche without actually appearing to do so. Another no less important and difficult task was preventing these tribes from becoming friendly enough with one another to permit them to forget mutual grievances and make common cause against the province.

The continued peaceful relations with the Navaho permitted the Spaniards to penetrate into lands formerly unsafe. In the 1760's a number of them settled on lands beyond the customary frontier. The Navaho were still hard pressed by the Ute and Comanche, and Spanish friendship and protection were valuable to them. The friendship of the Navaho was jeopardized, however, by the growing bonds between the Spaniards on the one hand and the Comanche and Ute on the other. In the 1770's the Navaho resentfully resumed their raids on New Mexico after a half century of peaceful relations. A few families, nevertheless, remained at Encinal and Cebolleta.²³

The renewal of Navaho attacks combined with the uneasy peace of the Ute and Comanche threw New Mexico once more into a condition similar to that which had prevailed a century earlier. Chronic raiding again depleted the supply of livestock, so that once more it was necessary to send horseherds to New Mexico for the defense of the province.²⁴

Attacks on the Navaho by Spaniards and Ute led some members of the tribe to seek peace in New Mexico. Since there was no tribal authority which all members of the tribe obeyed, however, peace was an individual matter. Some Navaho remained friendly and continued trading with the Spaniards even when others were carrying on raids. Navaho as-

23. [Order of] Don Pedro Fermín de Mendinueta del Orden de Santiago . . . Gobernador y Capitan General de este Reino del Nuevo Mexico. 25 de Abril, 1771. MS. Bancroft Library.

24. Al Comandante Inspector de Presidios, 1 de Noviembre, 1775. MS. Provincias Internas, tomo 65. Bancroft Library transcript.

saults on the Hopi in this period virtually forced that tribe to accept Spanish protection, after resisting Spanish overtures for nearly a century.²⁵

In 1777 the Navaho further complicated the problems of Spanish colonial officials by joining the Gileño Apache (Chiricahua) in their forays. This action, which was instigated by certain belligerent Navaho, was not popular with the whole tribe. A basic part of Spanish Indian policy in the northern provinces now was to separate the Navaho and Gileños, and to induce the former to wage war against the latter. In this period the Spaniards resolved to carry on unceasing warfare against the Apache until they were completely destroyed, since they harassed towns along the entire northern frontier.²⁶ Apache-Navaho attacks were directed, in the 1780's, against the settlements south and west of New Mexico, Tucson, Janos, and Arispe especially being the targets of their raids. Observers declared that as many as five hundred Navaho participated in some of these forays.²⁷ The number probably was greatly exaggerated, as it would have involved half of the men capable of bearing arms.

One of the Navaho chiefs identified as participating in the raid on Janos in 1783 was Antonio El Pinto. Thereafter Antonio was regarded with suspicion by the Spanish officials of New Mexico and Chihuahua. Even after 1784, when Governor Juan Bautista de Anza persuaded the Navaho to abandon their alliance with the Gileños, Antonio was thought to be resentful and unfriendly. Anza, one of the most astute Indian agents in the Southwest at any time, succeeded in winning the friendship of the Comanche as well as the Navaho, and during his regime New Mexico was more fortunate in her relations with the warlike tribes than at any other time.

25. Alfred Barnaby Thomas. *Forgotten frontiers* (Norman, Okla., 1932), 237.

26. Bernardo de Gálvez. Instrucción formada en virtud de real órden de su Magestad, que se dirige al Señor Comandante General de Provincias Internas Don Jacobo Ugarte y Loyola para gobierno y puntual observancia de este superior gefe y de sus inmediatos subalternos. 1786.

27. Nuevo-Mexico. Años de 1787, y 88. Copia de Oficio del gobernador del Nuevo-Mexico sobre la prision del Capitan Navajó llamado Antonio, Alias el Pinto. . . Oficio Número 13, Santa Fé de Nuevo-Mexico, 10 de Noviembre de 1787. Fernando de la Concha. MS. Provincias Internas, tomo 65. Bancroft Library transcript.

By the exercise of tact, patience, and embargoing trade with the Navaho, Anza finally obtained their assistance against the Gileños. Another of his accomplishments of no less significance was persuading the Navaho to accept the authority of a head chief.²⁸ An interpreter was placed among them, partially as a spy, and in part to absolve them of unfounded suspicions. With the head chief the interpreter visited all of the Navaho *rancherías* in 1786, and reported that the tribe consisted of about 700 families of four to five persons each, and that it was divided into five divisions: San Mateo, Cebolleta, Cañon, Chusca, and Chelly. There were 1,000 men capable of bearing arms in the tribe. They possessed upwards of 1,000 horses, a smaller number of sheep, and a few cows. These animals were cared for with considerable attention for their increase.²⁹ Very probably their herds and flocks had been depleted by the Comanche and Ute raids, and it is also likely that not all of the sheep were seen.

The reliance of the Navaho upon trade with New Mexico had been emphasized when it was cut off by Anza's order. Many Navaho protested that the lack of supplies caused suffering among them, and pleaded that it be restored. As soon as they had given evidence of their sincerity in severing the alliance with the Gileños, Anza re-opened the traffic.

Antonio El Pinto, who has been mentioned previously, visited Anza in Santa Fe in 1785, confessed his past wrongdoings, and promised to remain faithful in the future. His allegiance still was questioned, and on a number of occasions the interpreter was sent to check on him with regard to his possible participation in recent raids. No evidence against him was discovered; nevertheless he was not considered trustworthy. In October, 1787, Antonio and some of his kinsmen went to Isleta to trade. He was seized by the alcalde and taken to Santa Fe, where he was held pending orders from the Commanding General of the Provincias Internas. The head chief of the Navaho, as well as many others of the

28. Thomas, *Forgotten frontiers*, 345.

29. Extracto de ocurrencias sobre la division introducida entre Navajos y Gileños. 1786. MS. Provincias Internas, tomo 65. Bancroft Library transcript. Translated in Thomas, *Ibid.*, 345-351.

tribe, hastened to Santa Fe to plead with the governor, Fernando de la Concha, for his release. In July of 1788 Antonio was freed, for Concha had become convinced of his innocence and of his value as a friend to the Spanish cause. An escort of an officer, Vicente Troncoso, and four soldiers was provided the chief on his return trip to the Navaho country.

Troncoso's visit to Antonio's *ranchería* was one of the high points of the friendly relations between the Navaho and Spaniards. Troncoso declared that the Navaho men wore clothing similar to that of the Spaniards. He described their woolen mantas and commented on their baskets, which he asserted were the most esteemed not only in the northern provinces but in Mexico as well. He proposed to the Navaho that they concentrate upon the weaving of serapes for trade, and recommended that they purchase in New Mexico wool dyed in good colors to be used in their weaving.³⁰ Whether the Navaho accepted this advice or not is difficult to ascertain. They did weave serapes for trade, and there is evidence of their acquiring dyes and even yarns from the Spaniards. The *bayeta* yarn which the Navaho made was composed of ravelings from English red flannel or baize.

The peace established with the Navaho at this time endured for two decades more. Toward the end of the century sporadic raiding was resumed, for the Navaho had become strong enough to protect themselves against their enemies. In 1796 some of them broke the peace by renewing their former alliance with the Gileños. The governor of New Mexico sent expeditions against them, and by 1800 he was able to report that they had been pacified once more.³¹ Friendly relations were not re-established, however, for the Navaho continued to join the Gileños, and the Pueblos of Jémez and Laguna again were subjected to their attacks. In 1804 some Navaho requested permission to settle at Cebolleta, but the settlement had been strengthened against

30. Nuevo-Mexico. Año de 1788. Número 5. Vizente Troncoso to Fernando de la Concha. MS. Provincias Internas, tomo 65. Bancroft Library transcript.

31. Fernando Chacón, July, 1796, and June 21, 1800. MS. New Mexico Archives.

them, and the petition was refused. The Navaho resentfully increased their raids, and it was again necessary for Spanish expeditions to seek retribution in the Navaho country by the devastation of cornfields and the removal of sheep and horses. The Navaho replied by an attack upon Cebolleta.

Among the several campaigns against the Navaho in 1804 only the last one, conducted by Lieutenant Narbona late in December, achieved success. Narbona, despite the inclemency of the weather, marched deep into Navaho country and attacked the stronghold of Cañon de Chelly, where the Navaho considered themselves secure. An overwhelming victory was won by the Spaniards. Ninety men and twenty-five women fell before their gunfire, and thirty-six captives were taken. Thirty horses and nearly one thousand sheep also were seized by the victors.

The extraordinary triumph of Narbona enabled Governor Chacón to dictate severe terms in the peace treaty with the Navaho in March of 1805. The tribe gave up its claims to Cebolleta and to livestock in the possession of the Spaniards, and agreed not to graze its herds east of the canyon of Juan Tafoya, the Río del Oso, and San Mateo. When they came to Santa Fe in the future they were to expect no gifts, and further robberies on their part were to be punished severely. Equally bitter for the Navaho to accept was the demand that they return 4,000 sheep, 150 cattle, and sixty horses which had been stolen recently.³²

For the remainder of 1805 the Navaho, still suffering from their defeat, preserved the peace. Toward the end of the year, however, the alcalde of Laguna recommended that Cebolleta be abandoned because of Navaho encroachments on the horse pastures of the settlement.³³ Other indications of dissatisfaction on the part of the Navaho were observed, although they were careful to avoid the outbreak of hostilities.

After the insurrection under Hidalgo began in Mexico, Spanish defenses against the Indians suffered from neglect

32. Fernando Chacón, March 27, 1805. MS. New Mexico Archives.

33. Aragón, alcalde mayor of Laguna, December 6, 1805. MS. New Mexico Archives.

by the government. The Navaho took advantage of Spanish preoccupation elsewhere, and began stealing livestock. In 1815 they attacked Zúñi but were persuaded to abandon the warpath. Severe raids by the Comanche were blamed on the Spaniards, and Navaho attacks occurred with greater frequency, although not all members of the tribe were unfriendly. Many of them, in order not to have their trade interrupted, presented themselves before the *alcaldes* of various pueblos to demonstrate their loyalty. In 1818 raids by the Navaho caused the removal of herds from the frontier of their country. Similar conditions prevailed for the few remaining years of Spanish rule in New Mexico. In August of 1821 Agustín Iturbide declared Mexico independent of Spain, and New Mexico became a remote and relatively unimportant province of the chaotic Empire and later Republic of Mexico.

By the end of the period of Spanish rule in New Mexico the Navaho had evolved the material culture which they have preserved fairly intact into the present century. An examination of Spanish documents of the 17th and 18th centuries has revealed that many current ideas concerning the Navaho are erroneous. The belief that the tribe was small and insignificant in the early 17th century must be completely revised. Actually, as was stated on many occasions by Spanish officials of that epoch, the Navaho were the most troublesome of the New Mexican tribes. Spanish accounts also make patent the fact that by 1700 the Navaho were weaving cotton and wool, both of which they produced themselves. The fact that the Navaho were not known to raise cotton in later eras has led to the opinion that they did not grow it at any time. Similarly, their lack of basketry in more recent periods has caused a conviction that basketry was not one of the accomplishments in the years since the conquest of New Mexico. Not only were their baskets mentioned in numerous accounts but in the late 18th century they were declared to be well known even in Mexico. In the 17th century the Navaho not only acquired herds and flocks but increased their number considerably by accepting into the tribe refugees from the

pueblos. During the following century they completed the adoption of Spanish and Pueblo culture traits and the development of their characteristic way of life. A statement by Governor Fernando de Chacón concerning the Navaho in 1795 is a particularly appropriate conclusion:

These Gentiles are not in a state of coveting herds [of sheep], as their own are innumerable. They have increased their horse herds considerably; they sow much on good fields; they work their wool with more delicacy and taste than the Spaniards. Men as well as women go decently clothed; and their Captains are rarely seen without silver jewelry; they are more adept in speaking Castilian than any other Gentile nation; so that they really seem "town" Indians much more than those who have been reduced.³⁴

34. Lansing Bartlett Bloom. "Early weaving in New Mexico." *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, II, 233.