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Alburquerque in 1821: Padre Leyva's Descriptions

Thomas J. Steele S.J.

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THOMAS J. STEELE, S.J.

A set of documents which Mary Taylor recently discovered in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Durango describes the Alburquerque parish in 1821. They were drafted by Padre don José Francisco Leyva y Rosas, pastor of the Alburquerque church, in tardy response to a request of the bishop of Durango, Mexico, Doctor don Juan Francisco de Castañiza, in early March 1820.[1] The following January, the bishop's secretary dropped a gentle reminder in the mail to all the lagging pastors; then in the middle of March, a year after the original command, Bishop Castañiza dropped Padre Leyva a very blunt letter that said in summary, "Make me an inventory of your parish books, sacred vessels, vestments, and so forth, noting the losses and gains since the last report. Keep your original and send me a notarized copy. Send me a census of each plaza or placita of folks with distances, numbers, lineage, states of life, and ages. Review all the decrees of visitation and say if they've been obeyed and if not why not. And while we're at it, how'd you like my letter of early March last year?"[2]

This directive finally got the Alburquerque pastor's attention. Cura Leyva got together with his *mayordomo* (lay administrator) and a notary public to review the parish finances, and he generated a fine set of descriptions of the various aspects and parts of his parish. The cover letter suggested some strategies by which Leyva could get more money from burying the dead. Leyva saw one main problem, that Fray Ambrosio Guerra, the last Franciscan pastor in town who had turned the place over to Leyva in November 1817, had no organized schedule of fees. So Leyva deferentially asked the bishop for a complete listing of suitable charges for different types of weddings, different types of burial, different places of burial, and so forth.[3]

Thomas J. Steele, S.J., is a professor of English at Regis University, Denver, Colorado. He has written extensively about the religious culture of New Mexico.

Leyva's 1821 inventory proper was mainly fashioned from a copy of the notarized 1817 inventory that he and Fray Ambrosio had made when they transferred the Alburquerque parish from Franciscan to Durango–diocesan control.[4] Three and a half years later, Leyva added a few bits of running commentary.

Guerra and Leyva figured the inside length of the 1792–93 church at thirty–five varas, ninety–six feet, underestimating it by five feet. The transept was a feature of the more stylish churches of Santa Fe and Santa Cruz de la Cañada, whereas by contrast the churches in Indian pueblos were mostly single nave. Guerra and Leyva described the towers simply as "two small towers of two stories each," since the French popcorn–Gothic additions were forty–plus years in the future, when Père J.M. Coudert would hire his fellow countryman Francois Falanfont, a skilled carpenter, to alter the façade.[5]

The main altar appears in the 1817–21 document without the two-tier altarscreen of Mexican painted canvas that had been in place from the 1770s until at least 1796. Instead, we find an

> altarscreen of carved wood with five niches and five statues, to wit: one of Our Lady of the Rosary of a vara and a half with her Child, her imperial crown of silver; another statue of San Felipe Neri about a vara with his diadem of metal; another of Our Lady of Bethlehem about a vara; another of Señor Saint Francis [of Assisi] about three–quarters of a vara with his silver diadem; the last of Señor Saint Anthony [of Padua], a half vara with his silver diadem. And a Christ Child.[6]
> (1821 Note: the image of Our Lady of the Rosary mentioned in the previous section is very imperfect, and the same with the Lady of Bethelehem; the others are quite good. The altarscreen is pretty awful.)

Hence a totally carved altarscreen with statues in niches had supplanted the totally painted altarscreen, which had had only the illusion of a third dimension. Since Leyva thought that the new altarscreen was quite awful, it may not have aged well or it may have been in poor taste by Leyva's standards; it could not have been more than twenty–five years old.[7] In addition, the priests named but did not at all describe three oil paintings that seem to have decorated the sanctuary, perhaps above the five statues in their niches, perhaps on the side walls. They also listed a *guion viejo* (an old guide) probably a processional cross without a body of Christ displayed upon it in contrast to the "processional cross with its Christ of tin."

The east transept had little enough in it, just an altar "with some old pictures"; but the west transept would be the wonder of modern Albuquerque if it were still intact:

> THE TRANSEPT ON THE GOSPEL SIDE: An altarscreen painted in tempera with the following images:
> a Holy Buried Body of Christ two varas tall in its coffin of wood painted with tempera, with two matresses, two sheets, four pillows, two black coverlets, and a muslin veil for the face [a later addendum: three nails for the deposition]; a Jesús Nazareno more than a vara tall, with its wooden cross [and, listed later, a noose for capturing Jesus in the Garden of Olives]; a statue of Our Lady of Solitude about a half a vara with its silver halo; a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows a half vara with sword, silver halo, little hoop earrings of false pearl, and a necklace around her neck of false pearl with a catch.

Here, in addition to the previously unknown altarscreen, were all the necessary properties for a New Mexican Passion Play—and the parish still staged the play each Holy Week a half century later, and it still performs part of it each year.[8] Fray Andrés García, a priest and santero who ministered to the parish in the 1770s, may have made the Santo Entierro mentioned here, but the description perfectly fits the one presently in the San Felipe Museum, a nineteenth-century Mexican figure which is exactly sixty-six inches, exactly two varas, from head to heel (it is overall about seventy inches because the feet and toes point down). In a later section of the document, the priests listed the many articles of fine clothing owned by these four Passion-Play statues and the five statues on the main altar, and there probably were fewer than nine people in town better dressed than the nine statues were. In November 1868, when the Jesuits acquired a new French image of Our Lady of Sorrows, they gave the old statue from northern New Spain to the main donor of the new one, Doña Candelaria Griego de (Ambrosio) Armijo, and the old statue has remained in her family down to the present time.[9]

The priests take us next on a little tour down the body of the church from front to back:

> A pulpit with ladder and sounding-board painted in tempera.[10]
> A Christ on the back about a half vara.
> Two open confessionals (now [in 1821, Father Leyva adds] they are closed) with their platforms.
> A large bench and a small one.
> Three benches, each with three seats, with two platforms.
> Two old tables.

If the Christ painted on the back of the pulpit was in tempera (*al temple*), it was probably the work of one of the New Mexican santeros — perhaps of Juan Gutiérrez, mentioned as an Alburquerque santero in 1818.[11] At the back of the church, perhaps in the west tower and perhaps next to the sacristy on the east side, was the baptistry. In it were:

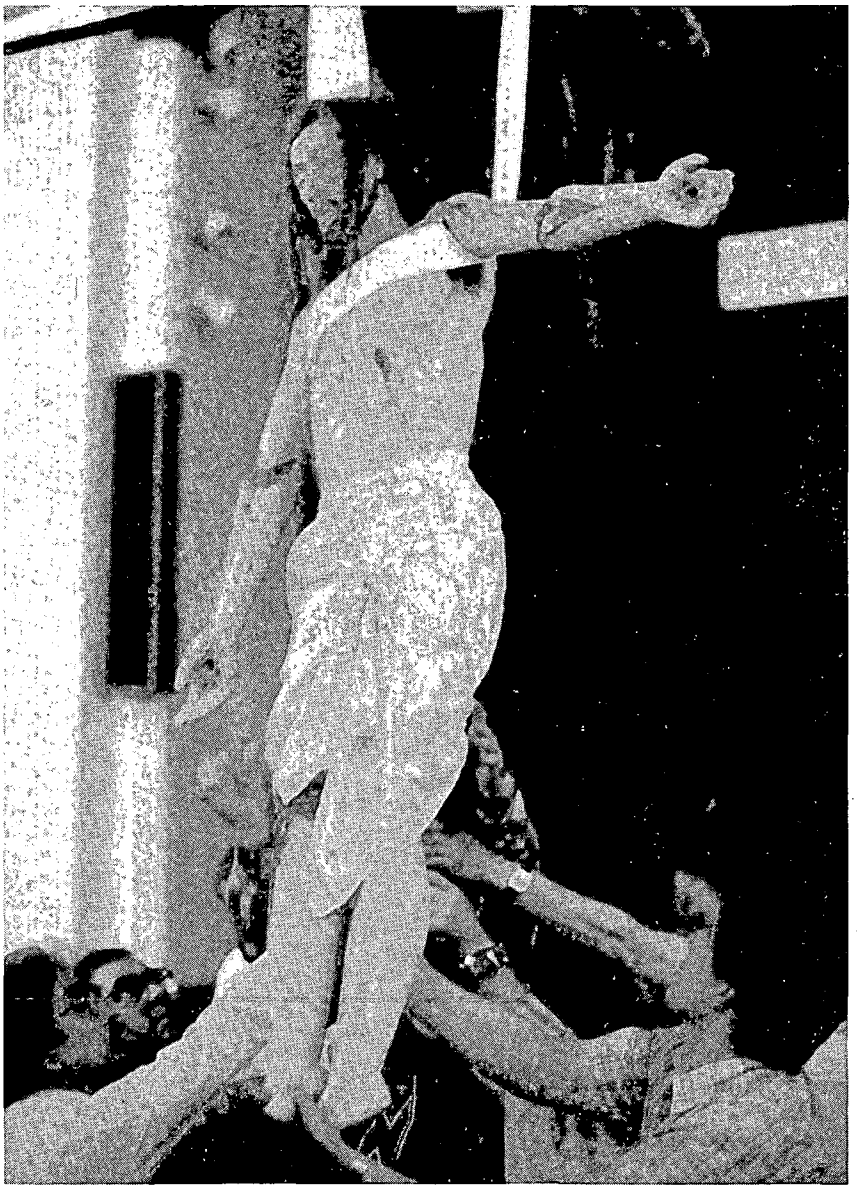
> A large copper basin with a copper cover and a copper drain; a shell of silver.
> An old image of San Francisco Xavier on canvas two varas high.[12]
> Three silver vials to hold the Holy Oils for baptism; they are in a little box with a wooden lid with no key.
> A wooden cross for the same purpose.

And then came the sacristy, which boasted a little more decoration:

> A table with two chests for vestments.
> A large tabernacle painted with tempera with a silver key (now in 1821 it stands on the main altar where the old and unsuitable one used to be), with a curtain of muslin printed with silver.
> Another small tabernacle of tin with a curtain of silver-printed muslin and a silver key.
> A very old painting of Our Lord Jesus Christ on canvas.

This "very old painting" is highly unlikely to be the School-of-Juan-Correa "Crucifixion" presently in the San Felipe Neri Museum.[13]

Also in the 1821 sacristy, of course, were the priest's vestments; there were linens such as albs, amices, cinctures, and a surplice, and there were vestments galore: a dozen chasubles, some of them with stole, maniple, chalice-veil, and burse; a few copes; and various odd items of the sort. In addition, the sacristy held the clothing for the statues — chemises, petticoats, mantles, aprons, earrings, necklaces, and rosaries for Our Lady; tunics, mantles, and a noose for the Jesús Nazareno; three dresses for the Infant Jesus; and three loincloths for the Santo Entierro. And there was silver — a monstrance for visually displaying the Eucharist for public adoration, a ciborium, cruets, a salt-cellar for baptism, a censer, a pyx, and vials for the holy oils. The chalice set, which included a paten and a little spoon for adding a bit of water to the wine, got some interesting 1821 commentary from Father Leyva:

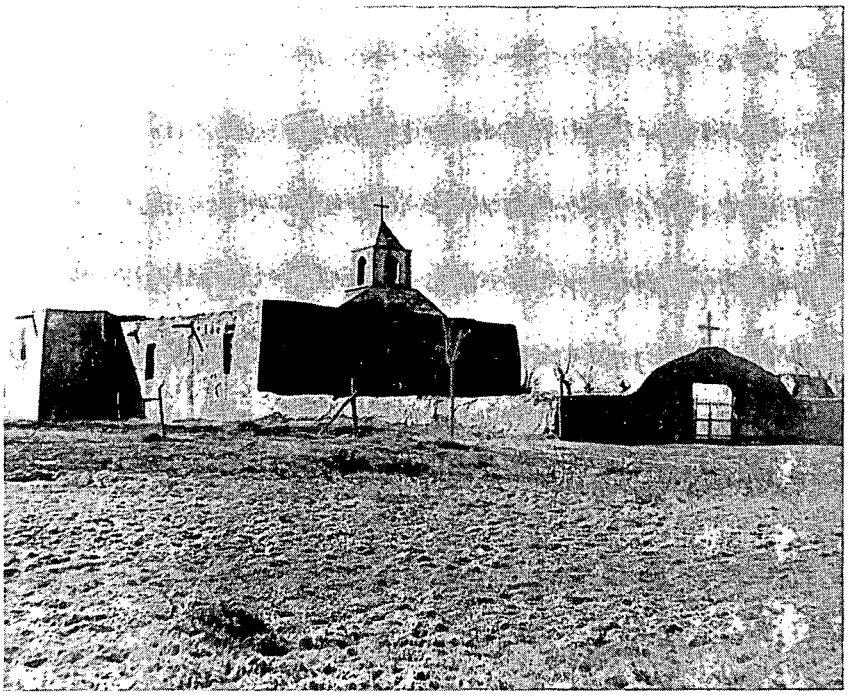


The early-nineteenth-century figure of the dead Jesus descends from the cross into the arms of the men of San Felipe Neri Parish. Author's collection.

> In the inventory there is the entry about the chalice and the paten that belongs to it, and he [Guerra] transferred to me the identical good chalice and paten. But as a result of an interview I had with the people of Alameda in this parish, it became clear that this good chalice and paten really belonged to the chapel, and an old useless one that was up there really belonged here. But the Alameda chalice continues to be used here in the parish church.

The key document in this matter was a letter written by Francisco Miera, grandson of the famous New Mexican santero and map maker Bernardo Miera y Pacheco and nephew of the obscure New Mexican santero Manuel Miera. Francisco Miera, then the civil lieutenant of the Plaza de las Huertas (near Bernalillo) and of San Felipe Pueblo, had written in 1820 a letter that certified that he had been in charge of the Alameda chapel from 1801 to 1808 and that during that period the good Alameda chalice had been switched for the poor Alburquerque chalice because Guerra said mass in Alameda so seldom and in Alburquerque so often. But Miera asserted that he could still identify the chalices. We can imagine that a blue-ribbon delegation probably brought the letter to the pastor and engaged him in a face-to-face interview, but the outcome seems only to have confirmed the status quo, because the Alameda chalice stayed in the Alburquerque church for another six or eight years.[14] At any rate, ten years later, Vicar Juan Rafael Rascón gave Padre don Francisco Ignacio Madariaga his permission to sell a piece of land to buy a new chalice for the Alburquerque church.[15]

A further section of the sacristy inventory details items of copper and iron that the church owned, many of them inexpensive versions of the silver and silver-gilt items noted above but including a wafer-iron, a large hinged arrangement of metal plates and handles for baking altar breads. Among the miscellanea was a catafalque of wood and elkskin (*anta*). And there was a "Note Taken from the Original Inventory" which reads as follows: "The main door of the church with its wickets, small latches, and large latch; the doors to the sacristy, baptistry, and passageway have neither keys nor locks"; I imagine this passageway led into the rectory, which Fathers José Manuel Gallegos and Joseph P. Machebeuf immortalized with an 1850s lawsuit. In 1821, Leyva added the information that there were keys for the two sacristy doors and the door to the baptistry. Before we leave the sacristy and while we're thinking about locks and keys, we ought to reflect that the San Felipe Neri sacristy had been, for a few nights in 1807, U.S. Army Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike's prison when he stopped over in Alburquerque on his way south.



From 1832 until the 1904 flood, this Alameda Chapel of the Immaculate Conception, later renamed Nativity of Mary, stood in the old plaza just north of the intersection of Rio Grande and Alameda Boulevards. Courtesy Museum of New Mexico, Negative #104662.

We finish the Alburquerque inventories with the parish books, the records of baptisms, marriages, burials, accounts, and official letters received (*patentes*). The books listed in the inventory tally with the books presently in the Archives of the Archdiocese except for the books of baptism. In 1817, Guerra and Leyva noted a baptismal book then being used which consisted of 268 pages plus three sets of inserts that brought the total up to 510 pages, and in 1821 Leyva noted a book he had put together and begun to use in 1818 that had 490 pages. There are two San Felipe Neri baptismal books currently in the archdiocesan archives, one from 1776–1802 with 202 original pages and a 46–page insert and another from 1818–28 with 254 pages. The habit of swiping *blank* leaves from books in use was bad enough, but the sixteen–year gap in recorded Alburquerque baptisms leaves a really large hole in local history.

Having detailed the "physical plant" of his parish and its ceremonial contents, Father Leyva then proceeded to let the bishop in on his plans for the future:

> His Illustrious Lordship will note how needy this parish is, especially of the things for the ceremonies that pertain to divine worship, despite the repeated exhortations I have directed to the faithful and the suggestions I made to the meetings of the town council last year; and this so that they might apply appropriate measures and offer some aid toward the adornment of the holy temple in order that if possible the command of His Illustrious Lordship in his pastoral last year on 3 March 1820 might take effect.

But the council turned him down, telling him that that's the way New Mexico does things. In the presence of the constitutional alcalde, Leyva went over the books with the mayordomo of the building for the more than three years he had been pastor there so as to make his report to the bishop, and then he told everybody the particulars at Sunday Mass.[16] But the facts failed to convince them, though the real income of the operation was 140 serapes which in terms of money amounted to only seventy pesos. "I intend," the *cura* went on,

> to go out in person through the whole of this jurisdiction in company with the present alcalde who has offered to go with me to collect the offerings which the devotion of each of the faithful might wish to give, especially when encouraged by the exhortations I might give them.

He planned to take this trip during harvest time, and he hoped that as a result "this church might find itself in a short time regularly adorned."[17] We have no record of how well the plan worked.

The next section of Father Leyva's 1821 document is a description and inventory of the Alameda chapel of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. The focal point of this edifice was the splendid and even exotic statue of La Purísima: a fifty-inch tall wooden statue with face and hands of ivory. The ivory was probably imported into New Spain on a Manila-Acapulco galleon, already having been carved in Southeast Asia or the Philippines. The majority of the *bulto* would have been Mexican *madera estofada* — wood gilded and polychromed to look like rich brocade.[18]

Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez had described the chapel and its contents during his visit in 1776:

> [The chapel in question is] small and faces south, with an ordinary two-leaved door and a good key. It has a little belfry with two small bells. Adequate cemetery. It is adorned by a high altar,

> in the wall of which there is a niche with an old yellow satin curtain on a rod. This holds a middlesized image in the round of Our Lady of the [Immaculate] Conception. Her head and hands are ivory, and her adornment consists of a wig of false hair, a silver crown, gold earrings with pendants of fine crystal, a string of ordinary pearls, a rosary of black glass set in silver, and bracelets of gilded metal.[19]

Forty–five years later, Leyva's recitàl went like this:

> An ivory statue of the Immaculate Conception of Mary Most Holy about a vara and a half tall of a regular beauty, located on the one and only altar.
> A small Christ of bronze which serves for saying Mass.
> An altarscreen painted with tempera with four painted images, painting of this land.
> Two processional candlesticks of wood and a large processional cross of the same.
> Another carved image of the Immaculate Conception about half a vara.

About half a century later, the Jesuits regularly recorded the annual early summer processions of the Virgin of Alburquerque northward to rendezvous at Ranchos de Alburquerque with the splendid Virgin of Alameda. The Alameda statue very likely perished in the great flood of 1904, when the Alameda chapel was washed away, to be replaced by the present Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Church on North Fourth, built by Jesuit Father Ferdinand Troy (Trojaneck) and his parishioners.[20]

In addition to the celebrated statue with its ivory face and hands, the Alameda chapel in 1817 owned a small bronze crucifix placed above the altar to fulfill the requirement that the priest be able to glance at an image of Christ on the cross when he came to the consecration of the Mass. The relatively new altarscreen must have been painted and installed after 1776 and before 1817, and it was doubtless designed with the vara–and–a–half nicho to showcase the Virgin's statue. And since it was made for a chapel that was administered from 1801 to 1808 by Francisco Miera, a nephew of Manuel Miera (active as a santero from about 1765 until his death in 1815), it is impossible not to speculate about a small Manuel Miera altarscreen in Alameda.[21]

The Alameda chapel had a fair supply of the minimum necessities for saying mass, plus some luxury items:

> A white curtain of new gauze used to cover the niche where the large Immaculate Conception image is. Two silver reliquaries to be carried at the breast and two more of jet... A good chalice, that same that is referred to in the parish inventory [as having been "borrowed" by the Alburquerque church]... In the belltower there are two middle-sized bells, one new and the other broken, both without clappers.

In June of the previous year, Leyva had written the vicar general in Durango to inform him that he and the Alameda parishioners were going to presume permission to rebuild their chapel because it was too small and "because it threatens to collapse some feast day and cause a disaster;" but nothing seems to have come of the plan, for in the 1821 documents Leyva noted again that "the chapel is very neglected and threatens to fall down," and so he begged the bishop to grant permission to rebuild it either on the present site or someplace nearby so that the people of the vicinity would have a geographical center for their community of faith. "As for the construction," he adds, "these very poor settlers are very willing to contribute their work and what few means they possess." Shortly thereafter, indeed, the chapel either fell down of its own age and decrepitude or it was torn down, for by 1829 a new Alameda chapel facing east had replaced it.[22]

And then Father Leyva dropped a teasing little item: "I ought also mention to Your Illustrious Lordship that this chapel, or rather its Patroness the Immaculate Conception, owns some five hundred sheep on a partido contract, the particulars of which I will give Your Illustrious Lordship an accounting of in my next letter."

That "next letter" we do not presently possess, but we do have plenty of particulars, among them the eighteen-page docket of a lawsuit. After dragging along for over a year, the case had ended in early July 1821, less than two weeks before the pastor of Alburquerque created the collection of documents for Bishop Castañiza. Leyva had sued Juan Gonzales, the great-grandson of Captain Juan Gonzales-Bas (c. 1669–1743), who had been one of the founders of Alburquerque, the sole owner of the Alameda Grant, and the builder and donor of the Alameda chapel. He had also donated the original five hundred ewes as the endowment for the Virgin of the Alameda chapel, which was to be supported by the chapel's share of the increase, ninety head annually of a year old (18 percent over and above suitable replacement of the older ewes with younger ovejas). Old Juan had left the chapel to his son Alejandro (1718–66), who left it to his son Gaspar (1735–87, the father of the Juan Gonzales of Leyva's day), who in turn left it not to any one of his various sons but to a *primo*, Andrés Facundo Gonzales (1734–1816).

When this gentleman died and left the chapel and the sheep in the care of his appointed executors, his nephew Juan Gonzales somehow got his hands on the chapel's sheep and five years later suffered the loss of them all![23]

How the sheep perished is never said, but there was many a manner of its happening in those days: fraud, snowstorm, Navajos, and disease come quickly to mind. The sheep were in the care of a *partidaro* — a shepherd who promised Juan Gonzales that he would return the principal and that predetermined eighteen percent interest. But the point of the lawsuit was that Juan Gonzales had given a receipt for the sheep to his uncle's heirs and assigns and then failed to return either the five-hundred–ewe "principal" or the ninety annual "interest" sheep for each year from 1816 to 1820 inclusive.

Father Leyva approached Gonzales to demand the 950 sheep, for though he was not an heir, as the Alburquerque pastor in charge of the Alameda chapel he had a right and even a duty to get his hands on the income. Gonzales responded by offering twenty brood mares and two parcels of land, thereby in effect admitting some responsibility, and he also offered the richest man in New Mexico, don Francisco Xavier Chaves of Los Padillas in Alburquerque's South Valley, as his surety. When Father Leyva unwisely rejected that deal, Gonzales asserted that he had not signed the partido contract as owner or lessor of the sheep but had only approved it as a judge approving a legal document in which he was otherwise disinterested.[24]

Luckily for Gonzales, the signed receipt had been lost; but luckily for Cura Leyva, a witness to it testified under oath that he recalled the contents. Other witnesses told of the casual manner in which Gonzales mixed the Virgin's sheep into his own flocks so that men who took *partido* contracts with him found several ownership marks mingled in every flock they received.[25]

Then came the time for delaying tactics, until finally the attorney general of the territory, *Procurador Síndico* Fernando Aragon, told everyone to get a move on (whereupon nothing at all happened for ten weeks). But when a decision in Leyva's favor was handed down in late May 1821, the cura asked Judge José Miguel Aragon to confiscate many of Juan Gonzales's possessions so he would have to make good on the summary judgment; but Gonzales replied that he was in hock to Chaves for 1000 pesos and that all his earthly possessions were pledged to cover that debt. A panel of judges ultimately decided that since Chaves had a dated, signed, legally valid receipt, he had first call on all of Gonzales's possessions. Thus the Virgin of Alameda was out of luck, as was the cura of Alburquerque.

So in the final analysis, Cura Leyva won the case and still got nothing for the support of the tumbledown Alameda chapel. Hence, it was a good thing that the parishioners were willing to rebuild it themselves.[26]

TABLE 1: CENSUS SHOWING THE NUMBER OF PERSONS IN THIS VILLA WITH NOTATION OF AGES, SEXES, MARITAL STATES, AND SOCIAL CLASSES

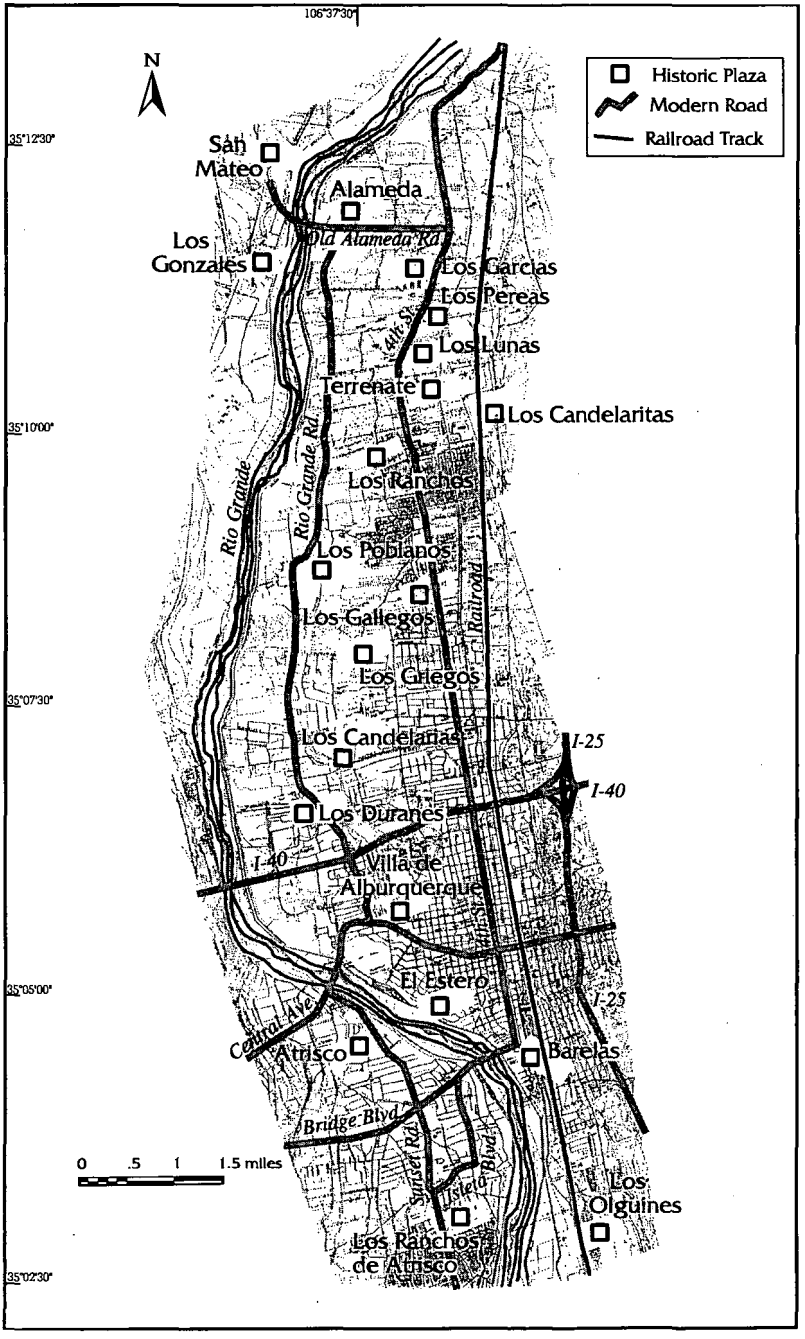
AGES	BOYS	GIRLS	SINGLE MEN	SINGLE WOMEN	MARRIED MEN	MARRIED WOMEN	WIDOWERS	WIDOWS	SPANISH CLASS	OTHER CLASSES
1 to 7 years	498	633							377	754
7 to 18			491	524					329	686
18 to 40			248	312	398	382	7	4	456	895
40 to 60			26	23	175	172	36	22	253	301
60 & over			5		24	43	49	3	46	78
GENERAL SUMMARY	498	633	770	859	597	597	92	29	1361	2714

I attest that the four thousand seventy-five persons enumerated in this census have complied in the present year with the precepts of annual confession and communion, at least all those capable of doing so; and attesting to the fact I sign my name in the Villa of San Felipe Neri in Alburquerque, 15 July 1821. – José Francisco Leyva

The penultimate item in Cura Leyva's collection of documents for the bishop is a one-page parish census (see table 1). There were doubtless many young married women and a few men who were eighteen years old and under, but they were probably counted with the "18 to 40" year-old groups. To get the same number of married men and women, Leyva may have counted some men as present who were in fact absent on lengthy business such as sheepherding. The number of girls and unmarried women exceeded the number of boys and unmarried men by a ratio of five to four — an extraordinary number, indeed.[27]

And finally, there is the most intriguing item in the whole set, an armchair tour of the parish under the expert guidance of Cura Leyva:

> Survey of the Parish of the Villa of San Felipe Neri in Alburquerque, with a statement of the plazas that lie on one side or the other of the river called the Rio del Norte, which runs from north to south.
> Principal plaza or center of population, the county seat, the Villa of Alburquerque. Then to the north there lies the Plaza of Los Duranes, half a league from the county seat and lying to the east of the river; and in the same direction the following are to be found: the Plaza of Los Candelarias, a quarter of a league away from Los Duranes; the Plaza of Los Griegos, upwards of a quarter league from Los Candelarias; the Plaza of Los Gallegos a quarter of a league away from Los Griegos; the Plaza of Los Poblanos toward the west less than a quarter league away from Los Gallegos; the Plaza of Los Ranchos less than a quarter league away from Los Poblanos; and joined to it about a quarter league away is the Placita of Los Candelaritas, together with some houses scattered in between.
> From Los Candelaritas to Alameda is about three-quarters of a league, in the middle of which are some other gatherings of settlers such as Terranate, somewhat to the west; and then in a straight line to the north are Los Lunas, Los Pereas, and Los Garcías. The Plaza of Alameda, which is quite lovely, is about half a league from the lands of the Indians of the Mission of Sandia, with a distance from the boundary line to the mission of some two leagues.
> In the part of the parish west of the Rio Grande lies the settlement called Los Corrales, from whose main cluster it is to Los Gonzales de Alameda a little more than half a league.[28] This pretty area is about three hundred paces from the jurisdiction of Sandia, and it is more than one league from the pueblo. This settlement runs from north to south with its dwellings scattered



Alburquerque as Father Leyva described it in 1821, superimposed on a map of contemporary Albuquerque. Courtesy of Nancy Hanks.

as far as the place called San Mateo; and from there in the same direction [south] that side of the Rio Grande is unpopulated as far as the outskirts of Atrisco, a distance of more than a league. Atrisco is made up of two placitas separated the one from the other with a few houses scattered in the small interval, and it is about three–quarters of a league from Alburquerque where the Rio Grande separates them. On the west side of the river about a half a league from Atrisco is the plaza named Los Ranchos de Atrisco toward the southeast [sic]; it lies south of Alburquerque.[29] This is the last plaza on that side of the river in this jurisdiction, and it is about three leagues from the Mission of Isleta, which lies to the south, and I do not know the other boundaries.

On the east side of the river less than a half league south of Alburquerque there is a little plaza called El Estero, and from here a quarter league away follows Los Barelas reaching as far as Los Olguines, which is all a scattered neighborhood, and that is the last thing the sun shines on in that direction in this jurisdiction.[30] From there to the Tomé Grant it is eight leagues, uninhabited for about five, as far as Peralta, all of which pertained a few years since to the Alburquerque Parish, and the licenses for the chapel still remain in the archive in my charge.

From Alburquerque toward the east at a distance of five leagues, the new settlement of Carnué lies in the mountains, and two leagues from there follows the equally new San Antonio, settlements useless to the inhabitants, with many droughts and very narrow fields, exposed to hostile Indians and to wild beasts in the summer, and very awkwardly situated for administering the sacraments.[31] The inhabitants, since they live there without the accommodations for the communal exercise (in this land) of labor, the bank of the Rio del Norte supplies them; they never hear Mass during the greater part of the year, and they would seem more Christian if, coming forth from that wilderness which is so useless and rejected by most of the inhabitants along the river, they would comply with the obligation to hear Mass and [to perform] the other Christian obligations. They fail to do so to the detriment of their children, who grow up without the nourishment of the Word of God, never hearing it from their pastor.[32] I state all this to put my conscience at rest.

Villa of Alburquerque, 15 July 1821.
José Francisco Leyva

This careful, detailed, complete set of documents gives us a sense of the church and parish of Alburquerque at the moment of two major transitions. First, the two and a quarter centuries of Spanish sway in New Mexico was coming to an end, and the quarter century of the Mexican Empire and Republic was beginning, and Father Leyva's account of his relationships with the Alburquerque *ayuntamiento* sheds valuable light on the church–state interactions of the period at the level of *parroquia* and *villa*. Second, Leyva revised the inventory of the church and its contents, by far the longest single document of the seven in the set, from a draft he and Fray Ambrosio García composed in 1817, when the last of two dozen Franciscan friars, who had governed the Alburquerque parish for more than a hundred years, handed the parish over to Cura don José Francisco Leyva, the first Durango diocesan to remain for more than a year.[33] This set of descriptions fills a large gap, for it falls midway between the painstaking 1776 description by Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and the two complementary 1872 descriptions by Jesuit Fathers Donato M. Gasparri and Vito Tromby.[34]

Furthermore, Leyva's 1821 documents also give us unique information about the Alameda chapel, its remarkable statue of the Virgin with its ivory face and hands, and the lawsuit over its endowment of sheep. His little census expands our knowledge of Alburquerque demographics, and the wonderful geographic sketch of the parish adds immensely to our knowledge of that important dimension of the area where New Mexico's primary metropolis now lies. Hence this material significantly solidifies our sense of the "curve of development" of the people of Alburquerque as they moved out of the Spanish Colonial Era and into the Mexican Territorial Period.

NOTES

1. Father José Francisco Leyva was the first priest Bishop John B. Lamy disciplined after arriving in New Mexico. He was suspended temporarily in early 1852 for drunkenness; Lamy, letter to Archbishop Purcell, 1 February 1852. Paul Horgan, *Lamy of Santa Fe: His Life and Times* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975), 148, 150, 152. Paul Horgan's version of Leyva's Life is excessive on various points: he calls him a gambler and an adulterer, but Lamy's only remark on those subjects is "not to speak of his morals, nor of his passion for gambling." Horgan calls Leyva an alcoholic, but Lamy's argument that Providence made Leyva's horse become frightened, throw him off, and break his leg because he was drunk is poor logic (not to mention poor theology), so nothing can be proven from his conclusion. Leyva's 1841 Manifesto on Pecos Valley conditions led to the founding of Las Vegas. He died in November 1853 and is buried in San Miguel del Bado Church.

2. There are several references to a letter of 3 March 1820 — sometimes given as 2 March — from Bishop Juan Francisco de Castañiza in Durango, but it is neither in any surviving New Mexico patente book nor in the available microfilms of the

Durango Archives, Durango, Mexico, (DA). The 15 January 1821 letter from Antonio Avila, the bishop's secretary, is in Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe (AASF), Patente book X: roll 47, frame 643–44, but it does not turn up in the Alburquerque book of the time, Patentes X. The 28 March 1821 letter from the bishop to Leyva is in the Durango microfilms, roll 16, frame 317, DA.

3. Fray Ambrosio Guerra served at Acoma in 1779–80 and in Alburquerque for the next thirty-seven years; then he finished his career at Sandia, which he had cared for intermittently during his many years in Alburquerque.

4. There are two notations of the transfer in the parish books: Marriage book 1776–1818, 78r–v, roll 26, frames 382–83 and Burial book 1776–1819, 82 v, roll 34, frame 408, both at AASF.

5. Francois Falanfont (often spelled in the past as Folanfant, as it appeared in the 1870 census) was born in France in 1833, married a New Mexican Hispanic woman, Juliana, in 1862, was living in Precinct Seven of Belen (Los Lunas Post Office) in 1870, and had a son Pablo (born c. 1862) who later worked as a carpenter. Viviana Nigro Holmes, "Architectural Woodwork of Colonial and Territorial New Mexico," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1979), 84–87, quoted in Nancy Nell Hanks, "Not of This Earth: An Historical Geography of French Secular Clergy in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1850–1912," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1993), 199–200; 1870 Census, Valencia County, 782.

6. The Christ Child may have belonged to the Nuestra Señora de Belen or to the San Antonio, but it seems to have been a separate item.

7. "El colateral está bastante indecente" is the precise phrasing.

8. Thomas J. Steele, S.J., "The Spanish Passion Play in New Mexico and Colorado," *New Mexico Historical Review* 52 (July 1978), 239–40, 255–56; Steele, *Works and Days*, 47–48, 53–54 notes; and see especially William Wroth, *Images of Penance, Images of Mercy: Southwestern Santos in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 21–23; Julie Shean and Kelly Donahue, "Catalogue of the Museum of San Felipe Neri Church, Old Town Albuquerque," (unpublished manuscript, 1993) in author's possession.

9. M. Lilliana Owens, S.L., *Jesuit Beginnings in New Mexico, 1867–1882* (El Paso, Texas: Revista Catolica Press, 1950), 117; Thomas J. Steele, S.J., *Santos and Saints: The Religious Folk Art of Hispanic New Mexico* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Ancient City Press, 1994), 33; Steele, *Works and Days*, 104. The present owner measures the bulto as 20.5 inches tall and 14 inches wide at the base; it does not seem to have a place in the breast for a sword to sit.

10. Connie Cortazar, "The Santa Visita of Agustín Fernández de San Vicente to New Mexico, 1826," *New Mexico Historical Review* 59 (January 1984), 37. Cortazar uses her imagination in describing it as "a *rickety old* ladder."

11. He appears as "Juan Butiérrez" in loose document (l.d.) 1816, number 18, p. 16r (53:666r), AASF. My two best guesses as to who he might have been: Juan Antonio Gutiérrez, born 1795 in Bernalillo, son of Teniente don Juan Miguel Gutiérrez, married 19 July 1818 at Alburquerque to María Rosalía Anaya; or Juan José Pascula Domingo Gutiérrez, born 1 August 1793 at Sandia, married 20 January 1818 at Alburquerque to María Manuela Gallego of Los Poblanos y Los Ranchos; he died 22 May 1839 in Alburquerque. Information from Donald S. Dreesen, "Pioneers of Albuquerque," microfiche, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research (CSWR) Albuquerque, New Mexico.

12. Saint Francis Xavier was the seventeenth-century patron of the area and the original patron of the town and the church; he was thought to be so even after Saint Philip Neri had replaced him several months after the town had been founded, but in 1776 Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez set everybody straight, ordering the Xavier painting off the altar and replacing it with a Felipe Neri; see Francisco Atanasio Domínguez, *The Missions of New Mexico, 1776: A Description*, ed. Eleanor B. Adams and Fray Angélico Chávez (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1956), 146.

13. See Julie Shean and Kelly Donahue, "Catalogue," who note that folksay dates San Felipe Neri Church's acquisition of the School-of-Correa "Crucifixion" to the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

14. See l.d. 1820 number 7 and l.d. 1830 number 18, roll 55 frame 77, AASF.

15. Patentes LXX, Rascon's log, 10 June 1831, roll 48 frame 289. As we will see later, at this time the Alameda chapel had been rebuilt, and the people probably — appropriately — demanded their chalice back; and Juan Rafael Rascon himself had noted in the Libro de Fabrica for 29 August 1829 that the Alburquerque chalice was *agujereado* — pierced or perforated — and in need of repair to seal the holes, Accounts LXVIII. Both at AASF.

16. The Constitution in question was the Spanish Constitution of 1812 that was restored in 1819. It was a fairly liberal document against which the conservative entities of New Spain — military, landowners, church — revolted in order to establish the shortlived Iturbide Empire. A document of 9 June 1821 referred to the Alburquerque plaza as "La Plaza de la Constitución"; 2:2984, r. 20 f. 692, Spanish Archives of New Mexico (SANM).

For the audit session, see the 7 June 1821 document (45:663 Accounts XXII — Libro de Fábrica — 1818-61, no pagination). Diego Antonio Sánchez had come on board as mayordomo about three years before, on 5 July 1818; see l.d. 1816 no. 18 (fragment of the Libro de Fábrica of Alburquerque, 1818-61), 18v-19r, r. 53 f. 969. Both at AASF.

17. "*Con adorno regular*" is reminiscent of Samuel Johnson's remark in his *Lives of the Poets* about Edmund Smith, who "became first regular and then pious." This is a term of highest praise, for it expresses the neo-classical ideal common to Johnson, Leyva, and the next bishop, José Antonio Zubiría; Leyva will repeat the term in describing the wood-and-ivory Virgin statue in the Alameda chapel. By contrast, the 1821 bishop, Castañiza, probably still preferred the baroque.

18. Ibero-Oriental work in ivory, both the Indo-Portuguese and the Chino-Hispanic, had a fresh and energetic purity of line and a clear emotional appeal. Chino-Hispanic styles were strongly influenced by Andalusian Spain plus some artificially archaic late-gothic traits and later some Flemish baroque traits. Early work showed the Catholic religious subjects with decidedly oriental features, but by the eighteenth century models taken from Acapulco in New Spain to Manila and other points east caused the work to seem more western. The Immaculate Conception was the most often represented title of Mary.

Most statues were altogether of ivory to which were added at most bits of paint, glass eyes, and a few small attributes of metal or some other material. There were two ways of creating the statue when only the face and hands (and sometimes feet) were ivory and the rest was wood. The first was to fashion a *bulto a vestir*, a statue that needed to be clothed with specially made clothing of the correct size and usually of great luxury; in 1821, there were such statues at San Felipe Neri on the Alburquerque Plaza, but they did not have any parts of ivory. See Beatriz Sánchez Navarro de Pintado, *Marfiles Cristianos del Oriente en México* (Mexico City: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1986), 100 (figure 62), which shows a seventeenth-century Virgin 127 centimeters tall — exactly the size of the Alameda Virgin; but there are no clothes inventoried as pertaining to the latter statue, only "two bracelets of yellow metal the Virgin is wearing."

The way to make the second sort of statue was to insert the ivory parts into a wooden *bulto* that was so elegantly gilded and polychromed so as not to need fabric clothing; see ibid., 101 (figure 96), which illustrates an eighteenth-century Purísima Concepción 62 centimeters tall, approximately half the size of the Alameda Purísima. See also ibid., 63, 93, and 97.

19. Domínguez, 152. Domínguez' Spanish reads: "La tal capilla es corta, mira al Sur, con puerta regular de manos, y buena llave. Su campanilito con dos campanas chicas. Cementerio competente. Su adorno es altar mayor, en cuya pared está un nicho con cortina vieja de raso amarillo embarillada, y adentro está de vulto mediano

Nuestra Señora de la Concepción cuya cabeza, y manos son de marfil, y su adorno cabellera postiza; corona de plata; aretes de oro con pendientes de cristal fino; soguilla de perlas ordinarias; rosario de vidrio negro engastado en plata; tumbagones de metal dorado." Photostat of Biblioteca Nacional México, Legajo 10, Part 2, 4277–78 at CSWR. Juan Candelaria, age 84, stated in 1776 that "El año de 1712 se fundó por don Juan González Baz vecino de dicho Puesto la Capilla que hoy existe en dicho Pueblo de la Alameda — In the year 1712, don Juan Gonzáles Bas, an inhabitant of that place, established the chapel that still stands in the aforesaid town of Alameda"; "Noticias Que Da Juan Candelaria," *New Mexico Historical Review* 4 (1929), 276–78. The supposed survival of the eighteenth-century chapel and its identification with the Longhurst home (now Casa Vieja) in Corrales would best be forgotten.

20. Owens, *Jesuit Beginnings*, 111–12; Steele, *Works and Days*, 51–52, 104.

21. Just as I was working on this section, I was shown a panel a vara and a half tall, possibly from an altarscreen, most likely by Manuel Miera y Pacheco (d.c. 1815). It is taller and narrower than one would expect, so it may have been designed to be placed on one side or the other of a niche. The panel has many stylistic traits in common with known Bernardo Miera y Pacheco panels, but at the same time there are many definite stylistic differences. The original frame, still firmly in place, seems influenced both by Miera y Pacheco (d. 1789) and by the independent and slightly later Laguna and Gesso-Relief traditions. The nearly simultaneous public appearance of that panel and this document may be thought of as providential — or fortuitous, for the less churchly: was that panel part of the Alameda altarscreen?

22. Leyva to Vicente Simón Gonzales de Cossio of 16 June, Varios 1820, AD, courtesy of Tim Blevins of the Durango microfilm project; Lorenzo Sandoval, gift of land at Old Alameda Plaza for a new chapel, 20 October 1826, title search information courtesy of Ezequiel L. Ortiz; loose document 1832 No. 5 r. 55 f. 224–25, AASF.

23. Domínguez, *Missions*, 253–54; l.d. 1820 #30, AASF.

24. John O. Baxter, *Las Carneradas: Sheep Trade in New Mexico, 1700–1860* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 75–77, notes that Chaves "offered" a fifth of New Mexico's "donation" to help fight the Hidalgo Revolution of 1810. See also Fray Angélico Chávez, *Chávez: A Distinctive American Clan of New Mexico* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: William Gannon, 1989), 95–97.

25. Floyd Trujillo of Abiquiú, who shared some of his expertise with me on 4 July 1993, defined all these earmarks, including the principal one, Nuestra Señora's mark:

dos moscas encontradas —
two flies facing each other

26. As we might expect, clerical frustration made these sheep a subject of many further documents, continuing even down to the time of Bishop Zubiría's 1833 visitation a dozen years later.

To appreciate the vast difference between this marginal Alameda operation and the immensely wealthy confraternities of the cities to the south or even the fairly wealthy ones of the rural areas around, the reader should see Asunción Lavrin, "Diversity and Disparity: Rural and Urban Confraternities in Eighteenth-Century Mexico," in ed. A. Meyers and D.E. Hopkins, *Manipulating the Saints: Religious Brotherhoods and Social Interaction in Post Conquest Latin America* (Hamburg, Germany: Wayasbah, 1988), 67–100.

27. The Ritch Papers (number 40) contain a September 1789 census of Alburquerque, almost exactly a third of a century previous, with a format something like the census of 1821. Astonishingly, the local population more than tripled during the thirty-two years from 1789 to 1821 — from 1347 persons to 4075.

The pattern Leyva used had been mandated by don Juan Bautista Ladron de Guevara, Visitor, in a letter of 30 March 1818, Patentes XI, Alburquerque, 1818–51, 2r–v roll 49 frames 144–45, AASF.

28. Probably from some branch of the Gonzales Bas family of the region. There is a Gonzales Drain east of the present river and south of Corrales Road. The Spanish is badly copied and difficult to read.

29. "Medio quarto" might mean an eighth of a league, but three quarters of a league seems to make far better geographical sense as the distance from the Alburquerque Plaza to the closest Atrisco plazuela. Ranchos de Atrisco is southeast of Atrisco because the Rio Grande swings toward the east at that point; so Ranchos de Atrisco is actually south of the Alburquerque Plaza.

30. San José de los Barelas was a straggle of houses along the present Barelas Road running as far southeast as the present San José Church. When the railroad arrived in 1880, it chopped the settlement in two, leaving the name "Barelas" with the part west of the tracks and the name "San José" and the chapel on the east side. The irrigation system was completely destroyed, so the area had to abandon its agricultural past and look to the new commercial town for survival. My thanks to Cecile Turrietta for this information.

31. At the beginning of the sentence, the manuscript says "poniente—west," plainly a mistake for "oriente—east."

32. Two useful items here are Robert Archibald, "Cañon de Carnué: Settlement of a Grant," *New Mexico Historical Review* 51 (October 1976), 320–25; and Frances Quintana and David Kayser, "The Development of Tijeras Canyon Hispanic Communities," pp. 45–50 in Linda Cordell, ed., *Tijeras Canyon: Analyses of the Past* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1980), 45–50. The area was granted and settled in 1762–63, but the Indians chased the settlers back to Alburquerque in 1771, and the same lands were granted again in 1818–19. The two towns Leyva referred to were San Miguel de Laredo de Carnué and San Antonio de Padua, and by November 1819 they contained fifty-seven farm families spread along three miles of stream. The San Antonio Chapel, built in the 1830s, was the sole or main chapel of the Tijeras region until almost the end of the nineteenth century.

33. Cura don Juan José de Sida received the parish from Guerra on 22 May 1802 and left for Durango in early March 1803, nine and a half months later; Guerra returned several weeks later. Leyva was the first of a line of Durango diocesans that ended with José Manuel Gallegos, the subject of fray Angélico Chávez' *Très Macho — He Said: Padre Gallegos of Albuquerque, New Mexico's First Congressman* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: William Gannon, 1985) and Thomas J. Steele, S.J., "Padre Gallegos, Père Machebeuf, and the Albuquerque Rectory," in *Folk and Church in Nineteenth-Century New Mexico* (Colorado Springs: Hulbert Center for Southwest Studies of the Colorado College, 1993), 58–73.

34. For Domínguez, see ed. Adams and Chávez, *The Missions of New Mexico*; for Donato M. Gasparri, see Gerald McKevitt, S.J., "Italian Jesuits in New Mexico: A Report by Donato M. Gasparri, 1867–1869," *New Mexico Historical Review* 67 (October 1992), 357–92; and for Tromby, see Steele, *Works and Days*, 121–34.