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The History of the Sevilleta Land Grant and in the First Person: Oral Histories from La Joya de Sevilleta "The Jewel of the Sevilleta"

Ramona L. Rand-Caplan

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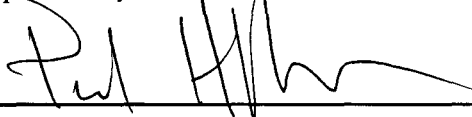
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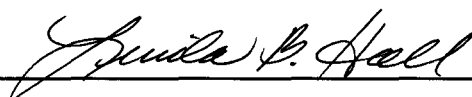
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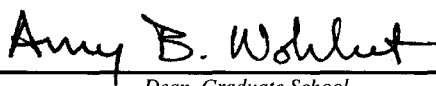


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To all those wonderful people whose life stories enrich this work, I thank you and I dedicate this —

... to Gloria and Paublita, and Eloy and Lucy, and Sam —
for whom I've grown to feel a great fondness.

To Aaron Blecha, my friend and fellow Fellow — your untiring and painstaking dedication in scanning my graphic material, truly enhanced my work — I thank you, Aaron.

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And to those three people who have been vital to my journey from enthusiast to historian — my mentors and cheerleaders, you are my *sine qua non* — and I thank you beyond words —

... to Jim Willert, who set me on the road —

... to Paul Hutton (in him we trust) — who first inspired me with his wisdom as an historian and an educator, and charmed me with his insightful humor as a teller of western tales —
— you remain my foremost inspiration.

... and to that very special lady, Nancy Brown-Martinez,

... my matchless friend,
I offer you my most especial thanks —
for your unfailing support and guidance,
for directing my path and opening magic doors,
for teaching me the skills befitting a good historian,
— your faith makes me stretch to reach new horizons.

“It is through oral history
that the dimensions of life within a community
are illuminated.”

. . . Valerie Raleigh Yow

**THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA LAND GRANT
AND
IN THE FIRST PERSON:
ORAL HISTORIES FROM LA JOYA DE SEVILLETA
"THE JEWEL OF THE SEVILLETA**

BY

**RAMONA L. RAND-CAPLAN
B.A., HISTORY
UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO, 2000**

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

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PREFACE

While traveling north along his route up El Río Grande, don Juan de Oñate, the colonizer of New Mexico, camped at a little pueblo on June 15, 1598. He named it Nueva Sevilla, or Sevilleta, “so named because of its resemblance to Seville, Spain.”¹ It was a Piro pueblo on the east bank of the river about twenty-five miles north of present-day Socorro. There the company took “refuge in the Piro’s houses for protection” against the nomadic Indian raiders who were plaguing the area, and remained there for six days.²

It is at this very place and time that we begin to trace the human history of the Sevilleta, the land that eventually became the Sevilleta Land Grant. Its human history, of course, begins much earlier — with the Ancestral Piro who occupied the area for centuries before Spanish contact. In Spanish Colonial times, the Sevilleta was a mission community until the Pueblo Revolt in 1680. At that time, it was completely deserted by the Spanish and their Piro allies, who fled in a mass exodus to El Paso del Norte. The Sevilleta remained abandoned for over a century.

¹Don Juan de Oñate reached the Piro pueblo on June 15, 1598 and promptly named it “New Seville” because the region reminded the homesick men of Seville, Spain. *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico, Interrogatories de varios Indios*, 1681, folio 125. Microfilm of SANM ms. collection, The Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

²George P. Hammond, and Agapito Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628*, Part I, *Coronado Historical Series V*, Part II, *Coronado Historical Series VI* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 318-319.

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La Joya, “the Jewel of the Sevilleta,” was the founding town of the Sevilleta Land Grant awarded in 1804. La Joya remained a quiet pastoral community throughout the nineteenth century. During the early twentieth century, La Joya evolved into a lively town. In the 1930s, it was the hub of the rural communities in the Rio Abajo area.

The essence of village life in La Joya in the 1930s is captured in the oral histories of people who lived there then. The loss of grant land through tax delinquencies is discussed, and the reasons explored. Residents presently living in La Joya describe the quiet village of today in their oral histories. These oral histories recapture those “dimensions of life” within the community and illuminate the written pages of history.

Other interviews with staff members of the conservation and research institutes that are based on the Sevilleta today, offer an expanded view of the Sevilleta in the twenty-first century — of the successful restoration of its common lands and the purpose they serve as the Sevilleta Wild Life Refuge, and the significant environmental and ecological technologies being developed at the Long Term Ecological Research Institute, who are now La Joya’s neighbors— and of the Sevilleta’s unique position among the land grants of New Mexico.

The oral histories that are the centerpiece of this thesis present the history of La Joya in the 1930s, together with an overview of the history of the Sevilleta. Most significantly, they support the conviction that oral history is invaluable in acquiring a more informed historical record of the past than is offered in our official written archives alone.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The settlement of the United States began years before the English established permanent settlements in Virginia and Maryland.¹ Hispanic colonists led by don Juan de Oñate put down roots in the Rio Grande valley of New Mexico in 1598, nine years before Jamestown was founded in 1607.² Oñate founded the first capital city in Nuevo México on July 9, 1598, and completed building the first church, which was ceremoniously dedicated on September 8, that same year.³ Oñate's colonists had food, clothing and shelter provided by the enforced labor and tribute of the Pueblo Indians. Oñate's company numbered five hundred people — soldiers with their families, servants, and slaves, and ten Franciscan priests. Their survival was totally dependent upon taking

¹St. Augustine, Florida, founded by the Spanish in 1565, is "the oldest continuously occupied European settlement in the continental United States." David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1.

²Founded in 1607, Jamestown was the first permanent English settlement. Between 1584-87, Sir Walter Raleigh made two aborted attempts to colonize Roanoke Island, resulting in failure and disaster. Although the colony was completely abandoned after the first attempt to found it, colonists returned to England with a new potential wealth: tobacco and the common potato. The second attempt two years later resulted in the disappearance of the entire colony, now known as the "Lost Colony." Wilbur F. Gordy, *A History of the United States* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), 29-32.

³Oñate founded the first capital at San Juan de los Caballeros on the east bank of the Rio Grande, eight hundred miles to the north of the silver mining town of Santa Barbara, México, the nearest Spanish settlement. A few months later he moved the capital to San Gabriel on the west bank. "The houses at the pueblo of *Yunque*, or *Yugewinge*, which they called San Gabriel . . ." numbered approximately four hundred. Hammond and Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate*, 17.

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possession of whatever they required from the Indians. In his March 22, 1601, letter to the Viceroy in México, Captain Luis Gasco de Velasco wrote that “the system they employed during this time [the past three years] to feed more than five hundred persons, men, women, and children, has been to send out people every month in various directions to bring maize from the pueblos” — who were themselves starving.⁴ Although poverty stricken, the Indians were required to contribute one blanket or skin per year per household to the Spaniards. “The Spaniards seize their blankets by force, sometimes even when it is snowing,” wrote Velasco, “leaving the poor Indian women stark naked, holding their babies to their breasts.”⁵ Velasco further states that “the Pueblo Indians are the most meek, humble, and timid people ever seen.”⁶ And so began the savage conquest that changed the ownership of the land, and changed these “meek people” forever. The cycles of conquest that have altered mankind’s fate throughout millennia had found a new frontier in Nuevo México.

In 1610, Oñate’s successor don Pedro de Peralta, the first Spanish royal governor of Nuevo México, established a new Spanish capital at Santa Fé, the oldest continuously-existing capital city in the United States. Peralta also began construction circa 1610 on the Palace of the Governors, the oldest continuously-used public building in the United

⁴Captain Velasco to the Viceroy, San Gabriel, March 22, 1601, Hammond & Rey, eds., *Don Juan de Onate*, 609.

⁵Ibid, 610.

⁶Ibid, 615.

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States. Indeed, the oldest enduring network of permanent European communities in the United States is in New Mexico, seeded by the Oñate colonization.

The Spanish Colonial history of New Mexico encompasses a multicultural, multiracial blend of a Hispanic culture, a diverse native culture, and a mixed Euro-indigenous society. Starting with the United State Territorial period, an ever-expanding breadth of American-European sub-cultures has taken root in New Mexico. But its cultural heart and its predominant cultural influences are Hispanic.

The history of the Spanish Colonial land grants and the original heartland settlements created along the Rio Grande are a significant component of the history of the Southwest. That history is documented by voluminous records and has been analyzed by numerous historians. To attain, however, a more informed understanding of the history of a people and the significance of their communities, there is a need to examine more than the documented data and statistics of recorded written history. Collecting oral histories enriches scholarship. Incorporating the oral history narratives of a people achieves a more comprehensive understanding of their past. The voices of the people breathe life into the records, and add new dimensions not revealed through indices and surveys and the census taker's notes. Oral histories are a great legacy that offers a more intimate knowledge of the people's experience, individually and collectively. "It is

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through oral history that the dimensions of life within a community are illuminated,” wrote Valerie Raleigh Yow.⁷

Residents of La Joya, past and present, have recorded their oral history narratives about life in La Joya in the 1930s, the 1940s, and the present. They paint a vivid picture of a thriving Hispanic community. Their personal recollections augment the written records, allowing us a greater depth of perception of the people of that time.

Of all the Spanish Land Grant communities, none presents more symbolic significance than the Sevilleta Land Grant. The Sevilleta common lands have fared far better than has been the fate of most land grant communities. The original lands of the Sevilleta Land Grant survive today almost entirely as they were over four hundred years ago. Although badly over-grazed and abused in the mid-twentieth century, the Sevilleta is restored today to its natural grasslands. The ecological integrity of the land is under the protective care of its federal steward, the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. The Sevilleta’s place on the stage of modern science is represented by the Sevilleta Long Term Ecological Research Facility, which stands at the cutting edge of environmental and ecological research. And the people of the Hispanic community of La Joya still maintain their cultural origins and preserve their traditions in the little village that endures on the banks of the Rio Grande.

⁷Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for Social Scientists* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1994), 14.

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The intent of this work therefore is two-fold. The first is to tell the narrative history of the people of the Sevilleta from prehistoric times to modern times, with a special focus on the history of La Joya when it was a bustling rural community in the 1930s. That narrative is supported by the vivid memories of villagers who lived in La Joya during that time. The consequential task is then to relate those personal histories to the significance of the Sevilleta Land Grant.

The second intent of this paper is to present an oral historian's view of the relevant importance of utilizing oral history research in expanding our understanding in all areas of history. Oral history narratives are thumb prints in time. Personal accounts of history can "impart a genuine taste and feel for an age long gone."⁸ Combining the research of oral history together with historically-recorded data, and analyzing this more complete picture produce a more informed record and a more informed interpretation of history. It is necessary that we examine more than the documented records of written history. Listening to the narrative voices of the people in the first person offers an opportunity to know and understand the people's history, to reach a more comprehensive historical reality, and to inform and interpret written history.

⁸Marc Simmons, "Why History?" *La Junta: The New Mexico Magazine for The Social Studies*, 16 (Fall 1983), 4-5.

CHAPTER TWO A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF BIRTH, BOOM & BUST IN LA JOYA

The small village of La Joya nestles among tall cottonwoods in the hollow of a fertile valley beside the Rio Grande. It is an isolated community in the Rio Abajo region, rooted in the culture of Nuevo México.¹ Its genesis was molded by its Hispanic Colonial heritage. La Joya, “the Jewel of the Sevilleta,” was first settled circa 1804, the founding town of the Sevilleta Spanish Land Grant, according to local historian Francisco Sisneros.² Facundo Melgares, the governor of the province of Spanish New Mexico at the time, awarded the 224,770.18-acre community land grant on May 29, 1819, to sixty-seven grantees. Seventy-four years later, on December 4, 1893, the United States Court of Private Land Claims ruled that the Sevilleta Grant was a valid claim. The final petition confirming their claim and granting legal title was awarded to the grantees and their heirs in 1907.

¹Rio Abajo is a Pre-Revolt term applying specifically to that area previously belonging to the Piro. In 1776 Fray Francisco Antanasio Dominquez divided Nuevo México into two parts, the Rio Arriba and Rio Abajo. The latter area extended from Cochiti to Sabinal. In early Spanish Colonial times, it extended southward to Senecú.

It is a composite land of river, bosque canopy, mesquite thickets, gravel-paved benches, red-stained alluvial terraces, sand dunes, alkali flats, rincon, lomas, escarpments, fertile fields, cholla, black lava flows, and balsaltic buttes. On the east bank near La Joya, high gravel benches and deeply-cut arroyos characterize the terrain. Below the village of La Joya, the river flows through the Lomas Pardas Narrows. Michael P. Marshall and Henry J. Walt, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984).

²Francisco Sisneros, “The Esquibel Families of the Rio Abajo,” *Herencia, The Quarterly Journal of the Hispanic Genealogical Research Center of New Mexico*, 3:1, January 1995.

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The Spanish Colonial settlement of La Joya, like the other Spanish settlements, was dedicated to King and God — intended to enrich the Spanish monarchy and to glorify God. Ostensibly, its premier mission was to spread the religious precepts of “the true faith” — and save souls in Christ’s name.³ Down through the centuries, La Joya’s adherence to the religious precepts of the ancestors has remained steadfast. Religion is still very relevant to the life and social activities of the La Joya community.

During New Mexico’s territorial period, La Joya remained a self-contained rural Hispanic community. It was physically remote from nearby mainstream Anglo-Hispanic communities. Socorro was thirty-six miles to the south; Belen was about twenty-six miles to the north. La Joya remained culturally isolated from them. During the late 1800s and early 1900s, some of the men and boys from La Joya worked at the mines in Kelly, Magdalena, and other mining communities in the area. Some worked for the railroad in Belen. But working outside the community was not intrusive to the traditional culture and the self-sustaining community life of La Joya. These employment opportunities simply served to enhance the economic stability of their families.

La Joya enjoyed its halcyon days in the 1930s. That decade was a golden time, an era of prosperity for La Joya. As a sustainable agricultural community, La Joya was the

³Evidence of the King’s desire that New Mexico provide both a harvest of souls, and a financial benefit to the Crown, is evidenced in the King’s letter to Viceroy Velasco, September 13, 1608, in which he writes that he is considering the suspension of the exploration of New Mexico because of the “scanty harvest of souls” and “the little benefit that the land offers both to my royal treasury and to those who settle there.” Hammond and Rey, eds., *Don Juan de Oñate*, 1065.

thriving hub of the rural agricultural communities in the Rio Abajo region of northeastern Socorro County. Full of fruit trees and vineyards, the village of La Joya was an agricultural oasis. There were numerous merchants, both Anglo and Hispanic, operating successful businesses. There was a *cantina y saloon* with live entertainment, three to four *mercados* (markets) at any one time, a dance hall, a bar, a livery stable, a saddler. Kids from the neighboring communities were bussed into La Joya to attend the two-story La Joya High School with its new modern gymnasium. All the surrounding communities attended La Joya's fiestas, their people coming to town to celebrate feast days at the venerable Nuestra Señora de Dolores, Our Lady of Sorrows Church. There was even a Protestant Church. Campaigning politicians came to La Joya, seeking the rural vote.⁴ It was a day of exuberant celebration for the villagers of La Joya and Ranchos de La Joya. La Joya was a rural community where the power of place held sway.

But the isolated farmland village was founded on sands of time that could not weather the pressures of the modern age. Although the town of La Joya was thriving and active, there were many people who were losing their land for back taxes, often due to a lack of understanding of the complexity of the new real property laws that came with statehood, and frequently due to the tax notices in English that they could not read, or that often never were delivered. "So that's the loss, see, there's the loss," says a grantee descendant, Marian Tafoya Torres Romero, speaking of the issue of land loss through

⁴La Joya is precinct no. 5, and Ranchos de La Joya is precinct no. 36, in Socorro County. U.S. Census, precinct-level statistical reports for Precinct 5, La Joya, and Precinct 36, Ranchos de La Joya, 1930.

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taxation, a too-familiar story among land grant communities. “They bought it for taxes — another land that my dad had there, at the game refuge. But they never sent me letters about that . . .”⁵

Today, seventy years after its heyday in the 1930s, La Joya is a quiet village where its predominantly Hispanic population still embraces its cultural origins and maintains a culturally defined community. Many people are “village exiles” who live and work elsewhere, and still own bottom land in La Joya. They return on holidays and weekends. Many villagers are descendants of original grantees who have retired to the charming bucolic tranquility of their ancestral village, where they enjoy and perpetuate their heritage. There is a cultural adherence shared by those whose ancestral links bind them to the past. The “others” — the non-Hispanic newcomers who are regarded as outsiders — do not have the distinctive cultural identity with the land that the grantee descendants have. Malcolm Ebright, a public advocate and expert in Hispanic land grant law, calls it “that intangible quality that develops between the land and those who live close to it. . . . it is so important to those whose lives are tied to it.”⁶ That dedication and respect for the land still abides in La Joya.

⁵Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and Her Daughter Marian Tafoya Torres Romero, interview by Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, tape recording, 2 November 1997. N.p.

⁶Malcolm Ebright, *Land Grants Land Grants and Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico* (Albuquerque, New Mexico, University of New Mexico Press, 1994), 8.

The ancestral traditions and culture of the old La Joya — the Jewel of the Sevilleta — still influence the character of the village of La Joya today. Despite cycles of socio-economic and environmental changes that stripped away its economic base and molded its metamorphosis, La Joya's heart and identity are manifest in the people's connectedness to the land and to a culture that resides in the shadings of its colonial beginnings.⁷

What remains that attests to La Joya's cultural beginnings? — to its Spanish Colonial origins? What historical and physical events influenced its transformation to the La Joya of the twenty-first century? When, how, why did these changes occur? The answer is that La Joya and its neighboring communities fell heir to the fate of many isolated rural settlements of the Spanish Colonial period — a loss of its sustainable economic base, the lure of wages in surrounding metropolitan areas, the loss of its communal land base to the ravages of taxation, and the ensuing erosion of its Old World culture in the flood waters of Anglo Manifest Destiny.

And what of the bio-dynamic, the environmental and ecological changes to the lands of the Sevilleta Land Grant? — the overgrazing, the abuse of the past? What of the saving grace of its present stewardship, its reconstitution and revitalization, its restoration and preservation, and its hopeful future?

⁷The term "cycles of conquest" is respectfully borrowed from Edward H. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962, 1981.

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What attests to the significance of the old La Joya and La Joya as it exists today? — and the significance of the Sevilleta lands today? What and who attests to their place in today's world? The stories of birth, boom and bust, and restoration are told in these oral history narratives.

THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA GRANT: IN THE FIRST PERSON

THE HUMAN HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA

IN THE FIRST PERSON —

ORAL HISTORIES FROM LA JOYA, “THE JEWEL OF THE SEVILLETA”

CHAPTER THREE IN THE BEGINNING

The Early History of the Native People of Sevilleta:

Archaeologists state that during the Pueblo II phase, estimated to be A.D. 950-1100, an Early Elmendorf population occupied the La Joya area. They lived in a nucleated village of small unit houses closely spaced together but not contiguous, which implies the rise of individual lineage identity and more complex socio-economics. It was one of five village centers with fortified apartment complexes that satisfied their need for security due to unstable social conditions. They were an agrarian people; the majority of the Puebloan economy was derived from farming, followed by trading and herding. The Pueblo II settlements of La Joya appear to have been abandoned around 1100.¹

The region remained unoccupied until the beginning of the fourteenth century during the Late Elmendorf period (1100-1300 A.D.). The Pueblo people of this period were craftsmen: masonry construction was a distinctive attribute of this period, along with cobble-jacal structures. They were also creative artists: carbon-paint and mineral-painted ceramic artifacts are found particularly in the La Joya area. The Late Elmendorf settlements, estimated to be 1000-1500 people, were probably abandoned around 1300 at the end of the Pueblo III period.² The Ancestral Piro Indians inhabited the Rio del Norte

¹Marshall and Walt, *Rio Abajo*, 15, 77.

²Ibid.

area from the fourteenth century until Spanish contact in 1540, providing a historically defined date for the end of the Ancestral Piro phase.³

The Early Spanish Colonial Period

The Piro pueblo of *Seelocú* greeted the entradas of the Spanish Conquistadores from Coronado to Oñaté. Seelocú is the native Indian name of the pueblo that Oñate renamed Nueva Seville.⁴ The 1581-1582 Rodriquez-Chamuscado Entrada described “La Hoya (La Joya)” as having “90 houses, 3 stories.”⁵ There are lengthy descriptions written by entrada chroniclers regarding the crops, the fields and the houses of the Piros, and of their social and religious customs. The Piros’ fields were planted with corn, beans, calabashes, and tobacco (*piciete*) in abundance. With regard to their religious practices, John Hammond and Agapito Rey write that in every pueblo there was a house “to which food is brought for the devil.” The natives worshiped small stone idols “built of stones like

³The earliest Pueblo IV period Piro Pueblos were occupied in the fourteenth century. Michael P. Marshall, *Qualacu, Archeological Investigation of a Piro Pueblo* (Albuquerque: United States Fish & Wildlife Service, University of New Mexico, Office of Contract Archeology, 1987), 78.

⁴Seelocú is identified as site number 56, on the east bank immediately south of the confluence of the Rio Puerco and the Rio Grande, the later site of La Joya. [See Albert H. Schroeder, Fig. 2, “Pueblos abandoned in historic times (numbered) and modern settlements,” *Handbook of North American Indians 9, Southwest*, Alfonso, Ortiz, ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 237, 239.

⁵The records of the 1581-1582 Rodriquez-Chamuscado entrada contain a list of pueblos including “La Hoya (La Joya)” with “90 houses, 3 stories.” Ortiz, *Handbook of North American Indians 9*:239.

governor congregated the people of Sevilleta into the Pueblo of Alamillo, but in 1659 the succeeding governor relocated them again at Sevilleta on the Rio Puerco.¹⁰

The Oppression of the Piro

During the Spanish Colonial phase, when the right of encomienda and the mission system were imposed on the Piro, their population declined significantly. There is a dearth of documents covering this period (they were burned in Santa Fe during the Revolt), but there is a documented accusation, made by the attorney for the Spanish Inquisition, against Governor López [Bernardo López de Mendizábal] for allowing the enslavement of the Piros of Sevilleta, in his self-interest, at the hacienda of Captain don Diego de Guadalajara, their *encomendero*. They were kept in “such oppression” that they were forced to work continuously at securing large quantities of salt from the salt deposits east of the Manzano range. The Piros of Sevilleta complained that they were not even allowed to be ministered to by their priest.¹¹ But salt was needed for the mines of Parral in Mexico. In order to accumulate this goodly supply of salt, López had returned the

was changed later so that it expired with the death of the *encomendero*. It was misused primarily as a vehicle to acquire material gain through enslaved labor.

¹⁰Ortiz, *Handbook of North American Indians* 9:237.

¹¹Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya and Approached Thereto, to 1773*, 3 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923-1937), 206.

Piros to their home pueblo at Sevilleta, the very same Piros who had been relocated to Alamillo a few years before.

The Dark Specter of the Mexican Inquisition

During the Spanish Colonial period, the dark specter of the Mexican Inquisition cast its long shadow across Nuevo México. The Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico City appointed Custos Alonso de Benavides as its first *comisario*, or agent, for New Mexico. The Inquisition was a weapon of the friars, wrote Spanish Colonial historian John L. Kessell in *Kiva, Cross and Crown*.¹² The Edict of the Faith required that “anyone with information regarding thought, word, or deed against the Holy Mother Church must come forward and confess it.”¹³ The local authorities were empowered to investigate any alleged threats to the purity of the Faith, to summon witnesses and take their testimony, and, if they so recommended and received prior approval, to arrest and deport the alleged offender to Mexico City for trial. Kessell writes, “Whether the Inquisition's presence in this rude, superstitious, ingrown frontier society made New Mexico a better place to live or not, it did put a formidable weapon in the hands of the friars.”¹⁴

¹²John L. Kessell, *Kiva, Cross and Crown: The Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840* (Albuquerque : University of New Mexico Press, 1987), Chapter 5.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Ibid.

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Bernardo Gruber, a German trader from Sonora, had been arrested by the authorities of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Mexico, Jurisdiction of Salinas. Gruber was accused of witchcraft, suffered a two-year imprisonment by the frontier, followed by his death in 1670. Gruber was a small-scale trader who traded between New Spain and New Mexico in the late 1660s. The historian Joseph P. Sanchez wrote an article on Gruber, "Bernard Gruber and the New Mexican Inquisition," for *Salinas*, in which he gave a detailed report of the event:

Between 1668 and 1670 the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Mexico investigated its last case in the Jurisdiction of Salinas. Facing charges of superstition, Bernard Gruber, a German trader from Sonora, suffered an ordeal at the hands of frontier Inquisition authorities that cost him his life.¹⁵

Gruber, wrote Sanchez, was held for twenty-five months in a room with a barred window in the house of Captain Francisco de Ortega (owner of the *estancia* [ranch] of San Nicholas in the jurisdiction of Sandia Pueblo) at his ranch. He escaped at midnight on Sunday, June 22, 1670, and followed the Camiño Real south, accompanied by Gruber's Apache servant Atanasio who assisted his escape and accompanied him. "Riding south through the bosques of the Sandia Jurisdiction, the two horsemen followed

¹⁵Joseph P. Sanchez, "Bernard Gruber and the New Mexican Inquisition," *Salinas, Archaeology, History and Prehistory*, David Grant Noble, ed. (Sante Fe, New Mexico: Ancient City Press, 1993), 27-31.

the Camiño Real.” They passed near Senecú, camped at Fray Cristóbal and arrived the next afternoon at Las Peñuelas.¹⁶

Gloria Torres Armijo is a member of the Torres family of La Joya whose oral histories are examined in this thesis. Gloria also researched Gruber in the course of conducting her family genealogy because her ancestor Juan Martín Serrano had assisted in Gruber’s escape. Gruber was held as a prisoner for two years on a private rancho nearby Sevilleta, before Martín rescued him. Gloria, an avid and active member of the Hispanic Genealogical Society of New Mexico, reports that the local people were compassionate to Gruber.¹⁷

Sanchez’ article supports Gloria’s statements about Martín and the locals’ compassion toward Gruber’s situation. Sanchez writes that Juan Martin Serrano, “Gruber’s guard and debtor,” was Gruber’s second accomplice in his escape. Further, Sanchez writes that don Tomé Dominquez de Mendoza, an encomendero of the area, refused to aid in the search for Gruber. Tomé’s son Francisco had seen Gruber during his escape, had agreed not to tell anyone he had seen him, and moreover, had offered Gruber better riding horses to use during his escape. Gruber ultimately died under mysterious circumstances while attempting to escape south through the dreaded Jornada del Muerto, “the journey of death.” The Jornada del Muerto was a 90-mile waterless stretch of desert

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Gloria Torres Armijo, Gloria, Interview by Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, tape recording, Los Lunas, New Mexico, 25 September 1997. N.p.

on the caravan route from Chihuahua, filled with dangerous arroyos. It was the perfect cover for a surprise Indian attack. The place where Gruber died became known as La Cruz del Alemán, the cross of the German, and was well known to nineteenth-century travelers.¹⁸ It was so called when Josiah Gregg passed through in the early nineteenth century. A *paraje* — a resting place, a stopover for travelers — was established at the place where Gruber died.¹⁹

Inspired to escape from the control of the Spanish, approximately one-third of the entire Piro valley population moved to the western foothills near Magdalena. It was “ostensibly a revitalization movement to avoid epidemics, taxation, religious repression” — in short, to distance themselves from the Spanish and prevent any further interaction with them.²⁰

During the Pueblo Indian Revolt of August 10, 1680, the Piros deserted Sevilleta, joining the Spanish colonials in their exodus to El Paso del Norte.²¹ The loyal Piro allies

¹⁸Robert Julyan, *The Place Names of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 12.

¹⁹Gruber is a documented figure in New Mexico history. In Hispanic New Mexican culture, Gruber has been elevated to a mythical heroic figure. In December 1997, Gloria Torres Armijo wrote and presented a pageant about Gruber, which she presented at the Hispanic Genealogical Research Center in Albuquerque.

²⁰Marshall and Walt, *Rio Abajo*, 139.

²¹In 1680, at the time of the driving out of the Spaniards, this was a very small place, and the inhabitants accompanied the Spaniards to El Paso. These Piros were not invited by the northern pueblos to participate in the uprising. *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, folio 125.

At Sevilleta, the natives “abandoned their Pueblo and . . . expressed their

of the Spanish who fled with them to El Paso del Rio del Norte numbered 317 inhabitants in total from the four Piro pueblos of Senecú, Socorro, Alamillo, and Sevilleta.²² Some of the Piros from Sevilleta sought shelter with Pueblos to the north, most notably at Isleta Pueblo. As they abandoned their homes, they left their precious stores of food and pottery in newly-dug subterranean chambers, under the protective care of a clay vessel — a carved toad with an Indian face, “filled with feathers and herbs and other things,” placed on top of the cache as a magic amulet.²³ The following year, Governor Antonio de Otermin explored the abandoned Pueblos and found Sevilleta completely deserted and in ruins.²⁴ The Sevilleta Pueblo still appeared on the N. de Fer map “Cette Carte De California et Du Nouveau Mexique,” made in 1695 following the Vargas entrada in 1692.²⁵

determination to go with them [the Spaniards]” Charles Wilson Hackett and Charmion Clair Shelby, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in 1680* (University of New Mexico, 1942): I: lxxiii.

²²Hackett, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians*, fn. 377.

²³Twitchell, Ralph Emerson, Edited, Compiled & Annotated by, *The Leading Facts of New Mexico History*, 5 (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1917), 24; Ortiz, *Handbook of North American Indians*, 237.

²⁴Earle R. Forrest, *Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1929), 158.

²⁵The N. Fer map is reproduced in the Irving Albert Leonard translation of *The Mercurio Volante*, the official account by Sigüenza y Góngora of the Vargas entrada in 1692. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, trans. and ed., Irving A. Leonard, *The Mercurio Volante of Don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: An Account of the First Expedition of Don Diego de Vargas into New Mexico in 1692* (Los Angeles: The Quivira Society, 1932), 88.

Sigüenza y Góngora, who wrote the *Mercurio Volante*, an account of the Vargas expedition in 1692, wrote that in 1681 some missionaries entered the “Kingdom of New Mexico” and found the pueblos, specifically including Sevilleta Pueblo, “formerly populous, desolate and without people.”

Thus began the slow demise of the Piro language and the Piro culture. In 1923 el barrio del pueblo in Ciudad Juárez, just across the border from El Paso, had a Piro community of “55 Piro descendants with a tribal organization and ceremonies.”²⁶ Today, the Piro language is extinct.

The Resettlement of La Joya de Sevilleta:

Resettlement of the Sevilleta by Hispanic families began at the dawn of the nineteenth century, one hundred twenty years after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The newcomers settled in the hollow of the river valley below the hill where the long-vanished Piro pueblo once stood. Regional historian Francisco Sisneros, well-informed about the local history of Socorro, La Joya and the Sevilleta area, claims there was a garrison of six or nine soldiers at La Joya in the late 1790s, headed by Mariano Tafoya. If so, it is probable that some of those soldiers settled at the Sevilleta. Sisneros further says that the first new settler may actually have arrived as early as 1799-1800 and that the first

²⁶Albert H. Schroeder, “Pueblos Abandoned in Historic Times,” *Handbook of North American Indians*, 9, *Southwest*, Alfonso Ortiz, ed. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 237.

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child was born in La Joya around 1804.²⁷ Sam Padilla, a resident of Contreras, believes that the first settlers came as early as 1801 or 1802, many of the families moving from the north, maybe Santa Cruz and Sabinal. Many of the families who settled in La Joya had moved down from Santa Fe and also from the area of Santa Cruz de la Canada and from San Juan de Los Caballeros. They had responded to the order from Governor Fernando Chacon to re-settle La Joya de Sevilleta, Socorro and Alamillo in what was at the time New Mexico's southern frontier.²⁸

In 1819, the residents the community of La Joya addressed a petition to the governor seeking a land grant award, the first step in the procedure. On June 4, 1819, Miquel Aragon, Chief Alcalde of the jurisdiction of Belen and its precincts and frontiers, officially placed the sixty-seven inhabitants in lawful possession and defined the boundaries, customarily using natural landmarks and placing monuments of stone to designate the boundary lines. It was the duty of the alcalde to conduct the ceremonious ritual of the delivery of possession at an appointed time.²⁹ Completing the act of possession required the alcalde to walk with the grantees over the land "while the

²⁷Francisco Sisneros, interview by Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, Los Lunas, New Mexico, November 1997.

²⁸*Spanish Archives of New Mexico, II, 1621-1821* [microform] (Santa Fe: State of New Mexico Records Center, 1967), 6:627, 636. Twitchell Nos. 1194, 1199. Microfilm of SANM II, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

²⁹The alcalde was a local official in control of a given area, having judicial, executive and police powers within his locality.

grantees plucked up grass, threw some stones to signify their dominion over the land, and shouted 'Long live the King.'"³⁰

The Sevilleta Grant, awarded in 1819, was a type of *merced* (land relinquished by the Crown) called the *ejido*, which was granted to a group of family-settler petitioners and based on communal ownership.³¹ The legal status of *ejido* was not a clearly established legal concept defined by precisely written law or pronouncements. *Ejido* was generally used in reference to lands attached to community grants. As William deBuys writes with regard to the Las Trampas Grant, *ejido* has no marketable title under Spanish law and was reserved for the grantees' descendants.³² Long lots along the Rio Grande were allotted as private property with full ownership rights given to the individual settler-families, the *pobladores*.³³ The balance of the land — the common land, called the *ejido* proper — was held in common by the *pobladores* for their general use to graze their livestock, to harvest communally-held natural resources, and to fish and hunt. The *pobladores*, led by

³⁰Ebright, *Land Grants and Lawsuits*, 24.

³¹Phillip B. Gonzales, "Struggle for Survival: The Hispanic Land Grants of New Mexico, 1848-2001," *Agricultural History* (77, 2), 296.

The May 25, 1819 Petition uses the spelling *Sebilleta*. "... "the Petition to Miguel Aragon, Alcalde, by Carlos Gavaldo [Attorney], a resident of Nuestra Senora de los Dolores de Sebilleta ... "

³²William deBuys, "Fraction of Justice: A Legal and Social History of the Las Trampas Land Grant, New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* (January 1981), 74.

³³Gonzales, "Struggle for Survival, 296-7.

their *poblador principal*, who had formally submitted the land grant petition, bore the responsibility for forming their own local government.³⁴

The *ejido* proper typically composed 90 per cent of the total land grant, and could not be sold. Its ownership vested with the villagers collectively. Under the traditional Hispanic concept of *ejido*, “these lands were to be managed for the benefit of the community,” wrote Malcolm Ebright in *Land Grants and Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico*.³⁵ The common lands were not for sale, they were an essential part of an *ejido* grant, which Ebright holds to be a historically correct view.

Confirmation of the La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant Claim

In 1874, U.S. Surveyor-General James Proudfit approved the claim based on the 1819 Spanish Grant premised upon the discovery of a record of the claim on file in the Mexican Archives at Santa Fe. The Court of Private Land Claims eventually confirmed the La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant on December 4, 1893 to Felipe Peralta (grandson of original grantee Pablo Martinez), and the other grantee heirs. The heirs were represented by attorney Thomas B. Catron, famous for his expertise in land grant cases.³⁶ The

³⁴Ibid, 297.

³⁵Ebright, *Land Grants and Lawsuits*, 219.

³⁶Also see Thomas Benton Catron Collection, MSS 29, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Thomas Catron was a powerful politician in the frontier Territory of New Mexico, and one of the leaders of the infamous “Santa Fe Ring.” As a land speculator, Catron was reputed at one time to be the largest private land holder in the United States. Many of his holdings derived as an exchange for his fee for legal services in land grant cases.

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Confirmation, however, did not specify the exact acreage, “although a preliminary survey of said tract . . . shows an area of 224,779.18 acres, as so surveyed . . .” Instead, the Court found “that the extent and quantity of said land is determined by the total amount of the land embraced in the boundaries . . . of said grant.”³⁷ In 1897, however, the Court of Private Land Claims reviewed the Sevilleta claim once again. Consequently in 1901, the Court reduced the confirmed acreage from 272,193 (per the 1896 survey) down to 261,187 acres, because of an 11,000-acre overlapping-boundary conflict with the Belen Grant, which was decided in favor of Belen. The United States patent, which conveys ultimate legal title to the grant, was approved in 1906 by the Department of the Interior, and eventually signed by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1907. This patent confirmed ownership to the original sixty-seven Hispanic grantees and their heirs.³⁸

Eloy Romero, a La Joya Grantee descendant, and former Secretary of the La Joya Grant Board of Trustees, was not sure but suspected Catron was paid for his defense with Sevilleta land. From conversation, unrecorded, preceding the 27 March 27 2000 oral history interview with Eloy Romero. Eloy Romero, interview by Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, tape recording, La Joya, New Mexico, 27 March 2000.

³⁷Confirmation of the Sevilleta Grant, In the United States Court of Private Land Claims, No. 55, Felipe Peralta and Tomas Cordoba, vs. The United States, December 4, 1893, signed by Joseph P. Reed, Chief Justice of the United States Court of Private Land Claims.

³⁸In 1901 the Court of Private Land Claims approved the 1896 survey of the La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant. The court, however, reduced the previously-confirmed 272,193 acres [stipulated in the 1893 confirmation] to 261,187 acres, granting the disputed 11,000 acres to Belen Grant.

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The United States Court of Private Land Claims

It is a sad reality and an overwhelming injustice that Congress and the courts have validated only about 25 per cent of the 295 Spanish and Mexican land grants in New Mexico identified by the United States General Accounting Office.³⁹ The Court of Private Land Claims confirmed only 155 grants of the 295 claims, and patents were issued for just 142, including the Sevilleta Land Grant.⁴⁰ There are 154 community land grants that comprise approximately 52 per cent of the total 295.⁴¹ The federal courts' treatment of these common lands resulted in a great loss of land to the heirs of the grantees, a loss that impaired the economic stability of Mexican-American farmers and their rural style of life.

The loss of these lands is an injustice because it is highly questionable that the United States upheld its commitment to recognize ownership of property, including ownership of land grants, in the areas Mexico had ceded to the United States in 1848 at the end of the Mexican War. Mexican citizens woke up one morning to find themselves

³⁹The 295 grants were identified in its report GAO-01-330: United States General Accounting Office, *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Definition and List of Community Land Grants in New Mexico*, Exposure Draft (Washington, D.C.: United States General Accounting Office, January 2001), 5.

⁴⁰*Ibid*, 9.

⁴¹United States General Accounting Office, *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Definition and List of Community Land Grants in New Mexico*, Report to Congressional Requesters (Washington, D.C.: United States General Accounting Office, September 2001), 28. GAO-01-330.

“Americans,” living in a territory belonging to the United States, their homes and lands no longer a part of Mexico.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which formally ended the war with Mexico, was originally written with an intention to protect the property ownership of Mexican land grants. Article X of the Treaty was written to include their protection, under judicial mandate. The wording, suggested by Nicholas Trist, the United States’ representative at the treaty negotiations with Mexico, provided that “land grants would be valid to the extent that they were valid under Mexican law.”⁴² The United States Senate, however, complied with President James Polk’s request, expressed in his address to the Senate, and deleted Article X in its entirety from the Treaty before ratifying it. As a result, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo did not define a clear standard to follow in the future adjudication of community land grants.

The Mexican government, in return, requested that the United States sign the Protocol of Querétaro which stated that the United States would recognize land titles that were valid under Mexican law prior to May 13, 1846, the date the Mexican-American War commenced.⁴³ The Protocol stated that grantees could obtain protection for their titles through the United States judicial system. Although President Polk approved the Protocol and sent it to Congress, it was never ratified by Congress.⁴⁴ The United States

⁴²Ebright, *Land Grants and Lawsuits*, 28-29.

⁴³Ibid, 29.

⁴⁴Ibid, 30; Gonzales, 300.

State Department, in fact, refused to accept the Protocol as valid.⁴⁵ The Protocol was merely filed with the Treaty. Consequently, it would be left to Congress and the courts to decide.

The Gadsden Treaty executed in 1853 between Mexico and the United States was even more stringent in the requirements it established for the recognition of valid Mexican land grants. Article 6 of that treaty provided that the United States would only recognize those grants whose documents were recorded in archives. For many land grant claimants, this would prove to be a huge stumbling block in obtaining certification of their claims. In the instance of the Sevilleta Grant, the grant document was located, providentially, in the Mexican archives.

Many experts in the field of land grant law claim that the United States did not protect the property of these former Mexican citizens, nor the property rights of their descendants. Malcolm Ebright writes that the United States looked at the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo “as an enormous real estate deal; it expected to get clear title to most of the land it was paying for regardless of the property rights of Mexicans.”⁴⁶ Ebright clearly indicts the federal government for a lack of integrity in protecting the rights of the Mexican land grant owners. Ebright writes in *Land Grants and Lawsuits* that “The evidence strongly suggests that U.S. courts and Congress did not fairly meet the

⁴⁵Victor Westphall, *Mercedes Reales*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), 75-76.

⁴⁶Ebright, *Land Grants & Lawsuits*,” 30.

obligations assumed by the United States under the Guadalupe Hidalgo treaty.”⁴⁷ As historian Phillip B. Gonzales writes in “Struggle for Survival,” “the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo failed to provide clear-cut procedures for confirming the land grants . . .” and calls the surveyor-general system “a dismal failure.”⁴⁸

In 1897, the Supreme Court of the United States held that the title to all common lands in community land grants issued prior to 1848 was vested in Mexico, not the local community. It further held that, consequently, the ownership of these communal lands had been transferred to and belonged to the United States. That decision, although not retroactive, affected all future claims adjudicated by the Court of Private Land Claims. When the Court concluded its business, it had approved claims that ultimately represented approximately only 6 per cent of the total acreage claimed. The Sevilleta land grant was one of the lucky minority.

In January 2001, the United States General Accounting Office issued a report entitled *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Definition and List of Community Land Grants in New Mexico*, Exposure Draft. It was the first phase of a study requested by New Mexico Senators Jeff Bingaman and Pete Domenici. The Exposure Draft stated that “Most of the lost lands stemmed from community land grants. . . .”⁴⁹ It listed the community land

⁴⁷Ibid, 3.

⁴⁸Gonzales, 300-301.

⁴⁹Ibid, 5.

grants in New Mexico, and enumerated extensive statistical data regarding the status and adjudication of the grants. The Sevilleta Grant is listed as one of 79 community land grants that set aside common lands for the use of the community as part of the original grant, and which was identified by original grant documentation.⁵⁰ The purpose of the community grant, it said, was to establish a new town or a settlement.⁵¹ In a community land grant, settlers also received individual parcels for their dwelling (*solar de casa*) and an irrigable plot for growing food (*suerte*).⁵² The individual parcels could be sold, unlike the common lands which belonged to the entire community.

The objective of the Exposure Draft was to secure commentary and information regarding the land grants involved in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The agency sought public comment and input on the issue of land grant heirs and held a series of five public meetings.⁵³ The public responses to the agency were addressed in its report to Congress in September that year.

The 295 New Mexico grants total more than 10 million acres — “only 2 million acres less than all the federal lands controlled by the Bureau of Land Management in New

⁵⁰Ibid, 7, 14, 16.

⁵¹Ibid, 13.

⁵²Ibid, 10.

⁵³United States General Accounting Office, *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Definition and List of Community Grants in New Mexico*, Exposure Draft (Washington, D.C.: General Accounting Office, January 2001).

Mexico,” observed an article in the *Albuquerque Tribune* on February 5, 2001.⁵⁴ The *Tribune* article gave a full account of the General Accounting Office’s Exposure Draft. The article drew public attention to the controversy surrounding the New Mexico community land grant claims, and served to heighten awareness of this issue.

In September 2001, the United States General Accounting Office issued its report to Congress: the *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: Definition and List of Community Land Grants in New Mexico*, Report to Congressional Requesters. The report identified and defined three different types of community land grants. It recognized the concept of common lands as defining a community land grant and stated that “approximately 52 per cent of all New Mexico land grants may be classified as community land grants.” It evaluated the public comments it received in response to the Exposure Report and their impact on its instant report. The agency had received over 200 oral and written comments, some of which, it said, “included information not readily available from the research sources we used. . . .” It stated that “a significant number of the comments concerned the history of particular community land grants,” information it would review in preparation of its next report. Based on the information it received, the Agency redesignated one grant, the Elena Gallegos grant, previously identified as a community land grant, as an individual grant. Heirs had identified two other grants, the Francisco Montes Vigil and the Cristóbal de la Serna grants, as being community land grants, and

⁵⁴“Agency’s report begins to sort out N.M. land grants,” *Albuquerque Tribune*, (2 February 2001). The quoted material in the *Tribune* article is from the United States General Accounting Office, *Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo* . . . Exposure Draft, 5.

the agency added them to their list of grants containing common lands. The agency also added the Cañada de Santa Clara to the list of Indian Pueblo grants, based upon documentation provided during the comment period. In a subsequent report, the agency will describe the procedures established to implement the treaty, identify concerns about how the treaty was implemented, and what alternatives, if any are needed, may be available to address these concerns.

Since 1848, Mexican Americans have been denied the land ownership rights to which they were entitled by virtue of the promise given them that their property rights would be insured as citizens of the United States. In the words of Malcolm Ebright, “May that promise someday be kept.”⁵⁵

Concerning the Genealogy of Hispanic Heritage:

The genealogy of Hispanics with their roots in New Mexico is a very controversial subject. Hispanic New Mexicans place great significance on Spanish ancestry. This ancestral pride in being identified as Spanish, with notions of *limpieza de sangre* (blood purity), is expressed in an editor’s note in *Herencia*:

New Mexicans are known for their insistence on being called Spanish. Being called Spanish implies a distinction from other Hispanics. It means that their ancestors have been in New Mexico for hundreds of years and racial mixing has

⁵⁵Ebright, *Land Grants and Lawsuits*, 54.

been minimal. It is best to assume that the New Mexican attitude is prejudicial. Actually most old New Mexican families should not be referred to as Spanish nor Mexican but rather as a distinct group called New Mexicans, since neither government [Spanish or Mexican] ever really served the isolated New Mexican colonists. Research has shown that they should be classified between Spanish & Castizo [75% Spanish, 25% Indian].⁵⁶

Family genealogy is of paramount importance to Gloria Torres Armijo. Gloria is an active member of the Hispanic Genealogical Research Center of New Mexico. She is an avid “amateur genealogist whose ancestral roots reach back four centuries into the history of North America.”⁵⁷ She proudly claims an ancestor with the 400-some settlers in the Oñaté expedition, who came with “their families and their possessions on top of their two-wheeled *carretas* and herding their livestock.”⁵⁸ As a genealogist, Gloria is a dedicated researcher, thorough and meticulous about checking her sources. She regularly attends meetings at the Hispanic Genealogical Research Center, and is an active contributor to many of their special group-presentation programs. Regarding her passion for researching her family genealogy, Gloria said in an interview she gave to *The Sentinel*, the local paper in Truth of Consequences:

⁵⁶Jonathan A. Ortega, Editor: *Herencia, The Quarterly Journal of the Hispanic Genealogical Research Center of New Mexico* 3 (January 1995).

⁵⁷“Gloria Torres Armijo Tells Story on Ancestry,” *The Sentinel* (Truth or Consequences, New Mexico), 19 September 1990.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

My convictions by necessity caused me to search for the truth . . . I have learned about my inner self. To learn more about yourself, it is vital to have an understanding of the past. Doing genealogy has forced me to learn about who I am, where I came from and more probably where I'm going. Self-esteem has far reaching effects on our daily life. Tracing my roots has made me feel proud of my Hispanic heritage. I see genealogy as an opportunity to enlighten not just myself but my family, my grandchildren and my community.⁴⁸

In her interview in the *Sentinel*, Gloria also discussed the records of the colonists coming into and going out of Nuevo México, which were maintained by Spanish Colonial authorities:

Starting with the original don Juan de Oñate Colonists in 1598, and the reinforcements that arrived at San Gabriel on Christmas Eve 1600, there is an accurate list. Before each colonist left New Spain, he was required to give full information including his birth, place of origin, parentage, and even an inventory of the personal property ranging from shirts to horseshoes. Of the women who did register, there is a complete list of them with their children and servants, including Indians and Negroes.⁴⁹

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

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Authorities maintained records of refugees going south after the Revolt, called a muster list. They counted the refugees as they went south, and counted them coming back as well at La Mesa del Contadero, now called El Contadero. In her oral history, Gloria said:

Contadero means to count . . . that's where they would count the people going south or the people coming north. They would count the sheep, they would count the cattle. It lists these people, taking their Indians with them, their cattle, and when they're coming back, the same way.⁵⁰

Gloria says her Armijo-family ancestors came in the second colonization with de Vargas. "They stayed twelve years in El Paso del Norte and then came back with the second colonization."⁵¹ Gloria's Torres-family ancestors had come with Oñaté:

Among the Torres people living in New Mexico when the Indians rebelled in 1680, the following adult males are mentioned. Cristobal de Torres passed muster. In 1681 as a native of New Mexico, he's married and he's forty years of age. They even described him. He was described as being "thick set, of medium height, rather fat with a crooked nose, black hair and an awkward gait."⁵²

⁵⁰Gloria Torres Armijo, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid. Gloria is reading from Fray Angelico Chaves, *Origins of New Mexico Families*.

Gloria related stories of the capture by Indians of many colonials as the rest of the colonists were fleeing south to escape from the Revolt. “Some of their loved ones stayed here.”⁵³ An ancestor of Gloria’s husband Willie Armijo “was a Mantano (another Sevilleta Grantee family). She was captured. Twelve years later when they came back, they rescued her.”⁵⁴ Gloria recited another captivity story concerning Cristobal Torres II, and his wife Angela de Leva. Angela had been captured by the Indians, subsequently rescued, and taken to El Paso, where she married Cristobal, one of the soldiers who rescued her.

Gloria’s Tafoya ancestors settled in La Joya about 1821.

La Joya had already been there, a paraje — a little way-station along the way as they went back and forth on the road. It was on the main route. They didn’t resettle Socorro until 1860, but it had been a little village before.⁵⁵

Indeed, the cultural ancestry revered by Gloria Torres Armijo and the other grantee descendants of La Joya is a key element in their personal identity. These descendants honor and preserve the “imagined culture” of La Joya de Sevilleta. They continue the old traditions and preserve their cultural heritage as they celebrate traditional community holidays, observe the religious feast days, and gather together in family reunions.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE TORRES FAMILY ORAL HISTORIES —
LA JOYA IN THE 1930S

The Oral History of Gloria Torres Armijo

Excerpts from Gloria Torres Armijo's oral history portray the flavor and vitality of La Joya in the 1930s and 1940s.¹ Gloria describes La Joya as a busy, thriving town during those days, with many different businesses. [Today, there are none. The only business in town is the pay phone at the entrance to the village.]

Gloria's paternal grandfather Ramon Torres de Garcia owned Ramon Torres' Mercantile, the largest of four *mercados* in La Joya. A smaller store was owned by Vicente Chavez, "the Cordoba's grandfather" (another La Joya Grantee descendant). Vicente's original store had been in San Geronimo, prior to his moving to La Joya. Both San Geronimo and San Francisco were small towns within the La Joya Grant during the 1920s. The latter town was located just southeast of the intersection of Interstate 25 and Highway 60 today, the old road to the Abo ruins.²

When asked, "Do they exist anymore?" Gloria replies, "Little houses in San Francisco, but not San Geronimo any more"

¹All Question and Answer passages that follow between interviewee Gloria Armijo and interviewer Ramona Rand-Caplan are from Gloria Torres Armijo interview recorded 25 September 1997 by Ramona L. Rand-Caplan.

²These towns appear on some of the original maps in Eloy Romero's personal collection of La Joya and the surrounding region in the 1920s-1930s.

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Gloria talks at length about her family history in her oral history narrative.³

Q: Now, your grandma at age eighteen, married your grandfather who was fifty, and this was already a thriving town you told me — three markets, a saloon, a dance hall, and a bar.⁴

A: You want names? . . . because a lot of times you'll say there's a little Indian in that.

[Gloria endeavors to carefully identify any Indian ethnology, resonant of the *Herencia* editorial previously cited.]

A: Vicente Chavez, who is the grandparent of the Cordobas of La Joya, had a business there. A little saloon. And Fred, Federico Romero, had his little store — Eloy's father.

[Eloy Romero's oral history, discussed later in this paper, corroborates these details.]

A: I was born in 1931, and I remember things since I was five. So, I remember when I went to school, preschool, kindergarten.

Q: So, this is the middle 30s? And what year was it your grandfather married your step-grandmother?]

A: About 1932. I didn't attend the wedding. I was just a baby.

³“Q”represents my questions as the interviewer, and “A” represents Gloria's answers. Gloria Torres Armijo, Rand-Caplan Interview.

⁴In later discussions with Nana and Marian, it was established that Paublita was twenty-seven when she married Ramon.

Economy and Agriculture in La Joya

The economic base of La Joya's rural community was premised on subsistence farming, and on cattle and sheep ranching, although a few of the La Joya residents were already traveling outside their community to earn wages. Gloria's recollections evoke a vivid mental image of the old village, depicting its characteristic Catholic lifestyle, its traditions and social rituals, and the benevolent folkways of its Hispanic community. There was the unique presence of a rare Anglo face — and the disturbing presence of a small Methodist faction. The Catholics called them Hallelujahs. They were somewhat frightening to the young impressionable children who were fairly well cloistered from the non-Catholic world. And overall, there was a prevailing spirit of community inherent in the villagers.

Gloria gives a vivid account in her oral history regarding cattle and sheep herding, the villagers' use of the common lands, and the agricultural self-sufficiency of the community.

Q: How did these people sustain themselves? What were they doing, cattle grazing, sheep grazing?

A: They had their little farms, but also there was a lot of these men who were sheep herding and they would leave their families and go up into where the Cisneros are . . .

Q: Is that in the hills, going back to the east, that they would herd their sheep?

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A: Yes, and they would go for months at a time and leave their families and go to work as sheep herders.

Q: And they were doing this on what was the grant land? The Sevilleta Grant?

A: Yes, they lived there and were paying taxes I'm sure, taxes to live there.

Q: But all this activity was happening in the '30s? And within the Sevilleta Land Grant?

A: Um-hum. And then all the Esquibeles had their cattle. I'm not sure they had sheep. And the Bacas, Andro Baca, he had this huge sheep herd.

Q: So, most of these people in La Joya were farmers, sheep herders . . .

A: Sheep herders, cattle. Cattle herders.

Q: Cattle herders. What did they do with their cattle? . . . did they sell the cattle, did they butcher the cattle?

A: Well, sure, they would butcher, my grandfather would butcher. We always had meat. My mother always talked about the fact that we never lacked for meat.

See, the winters were harsher. It was cold. The winters were cold. The winter might have started in fall, September, October. And then October, November, December, January, it was cold! Snow!

And people kept their meat that they had slaughtered, their beef, they hung it into the winter, and cut the piece of meat from their hacienda. And then come October, November, December, they'd butcher the hogs. Everybody had a hog.

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And they would invite each other. Mr. Romero would butcher his hog and all the men would go and help him. And then they would eat and distribute food to people that hadn't been able to come.

And we, as the children, they would send us with the pans, like these big red pans, or trays, full of food with little servings of everything that they had served, and then they'd cover it with a white tablecloth, a white dishtowel, and then we'd go take it to the people. It was like an honor for the families, because we wanted to do that. We'd just deliver them. So they would do all this as a group.

Government Census Statistics, 1920 — Occupations of the 354 Residents of La Joya

In her oral history interview, Gloria says that the villagers were mostly employed within the town itself or at farms within the local community. The official statistics bear this out. La Joya was basically an economically self-contained community. Each villager's occupation is individually listed in the precinct-level statistical report, which indicates that less than 3 per cent worked outside the La Joya community in 1920. The 1920 Fourteenth United States Census Bureau statistical report for La Joya (precinct 5) lists the occupations of its 354 residents, who were predominately farm laborers.⁵ Nine worked for the railroad, ostensibly the only ones who were employed outside the community.

⁵These statistics are reported in the 1920 Fourteenth United States Census Bureau precinct-level statistical report for Socorro County, La Joya [not incorporated], Precinct 5.

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The occupations listed in the 1920 report were:

- one Roman Catholic priest
- one parsonage cook
- two public school teachers
- one dry goods store merchant (*)
- one [dry?] goods store clerk
- two grocery store merchants (*)
- three grocery store clerks
- one cattle raiser (*)
- twenty-two grain farmers (*)
- one grain farmer ("wage worker")
- thirty-nine grain farm laborers
- one washerwoman
- three seamstresses (*)
- one hay farmer (*)
- one hay farmer ("wage worker")
- ten hay farmer laborers
- one machinist (for AT&SF RR)
- one railroad yard carpenter
- one railroad yard master carpenter
- six railroad yard laborers
- two lumbermill laborers
- a blind man
- one rural route mail carrier

* — Listed as "working on own interest" versus the alternate category of "employee or wage worker." This was one of the questions used in the census that year. Each decade, there is a new customized set of questions.

The nine railroad employees constituted 2.6 per cent of the working population.

Government Census Statistics, 1920 — The 79 Households of La Joya

There were 79 heads-of-household. There was one 5-member white Anglo family, and two white Anglo individuals — the Catholic priest (born in Holland) and the female cook at the parsonage (born in Arkansas). One New Mexican-born 9-year-old boy with an Anglo first name and surname was listed as a "friend" living with a literate, English-speaking Hispanic family (all spoke English; the father was the owner of one of the

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grocery stores). All the other residents of La Joya were New-Mexican-born Hispanics with New Mexican-born parents, excepting one 3-member family born in Old Mexico. A very small percentage of the Hispanic population spoke English.

Gloria's grandfather Ramon Torres is enumerated in the 1920 Census. Ramon Torres (the dry-goods-store merchant) is listed as age 53, his wife Felicita as age 42, and their two sons, Calletano, as age 18, and Juan, as age 13. Juan was the same age as Paublita Tafoya who later married Juan's widowed father Ramon. Calletano became the father of Gloria Torres Armijo, and Juan became the father of Louella Torres Pedroncelli. Ramon and his second wife Paublita became the parents of Marion Tafoya Torres Romero.

Regarding Ranchos de La Joya

Precinct 36, Ranchos de La Joya, is the other local precinct in the immediate vicinity. Ranchos de La Joya is the birthplace of Paublita Tafoya, listed as age 13 in the 1920 Census. Per the 1920 statistical report, Paublita could read but not write, and had been attending school "any time since Sept. 1, 1919." Her mother Sofia Tafoya, age 31, was widowed; the head of her household; had three sons and two daughters ages 4½ to 15; and her occupation was "none." Neither Sofia nor her children spoke English.

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Government Census Statistics, 1920 — The 90 Households of Ranchos de La Joya

The 1920 Census report for Precinct 36, Ranchos de La Joya (also not incorporated), lists 345 residents and 90 heads-of-household in the statistical report. Six households were white Anglo (constituting 6.6 per cent of all the households), and all the other residents listed were Hispanic. All the residents were native born. All the Anglos were born outside New Mexico; all Hispanics were born predominately in New Mexico, a few in Texas. The only English-speaking residents were Anglos and a few Hispanics — two Hispanic general farmers, the Hispanic school teachers, a Hispanic railroad worker, and one Hispanic farm laborer.

Government Census Statistics, 1920 — Occupations of the 345 Residents of Ranchos de La Joya

The occupations listed for residents of Ranchos de La Joya were:

- one Anglo grocery-store merchant
- five Anglo merchants and four male Hispanic merchants
- three railroad laborers
- nine stock ranchers (*)
- seventeen stock ranch herders
- four stock ranch laborers
- twenty-six general farmers (*)
- twenty-three farm laborers
- one laundress

* The general farmers and stock ranchers were self-employed — “working on own interest” versus being wage earners. The three railroad employees constituted .8 per cent of the working population.

1930 — U.S. CENSUS STATISTICS.

The following table is based on the 1930 precinct-level statistical reports for these precincts, commonly not generated for towns with populations under 2,500.⁶ Statistical reports are only procurable upon the expiration of a 70-year period of privacy protection.

TABLE 1.

Precinct 5, La Joya

Precinct 36, Ranchos de La Joya

Population	418	male 207	269	male 135
		female 211		female 134
Rural Farm Pop.	344		46	
Whites	19		269	
Native-born	19		269	
Whites				
Distribution of	51	under 5 years	34	under 5 years
Population				
	111	5-14	72	5-14
	88	15-24	52	15-24
	35	25-34	36	25-34
	52	35-44	30	35-44
	57	45-64	35	45-64
	24	65 & over	10	65 & over

⁶The Fifteenth United States Census Bureau Report, 1930, Socorro County, New Mexico, Precinct 6 (La Joya) & Precinct 36 (Ranchos de La Joya) — Precinct-level Statistical Reports. The Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

TABLE 2.

<u>Population Growth</u>			
	<u>1920</u>	<u>1930</u>	<u>1940</u>
La Joya	354	418	382
Ranchos de La Joya	345	269	200

The above table for Population Growth clearly illustrates the pattern of increased growth in La Joya during the 1920s, followed by an approximate 10 per cent decrease in population during the 1930s. However, in 1940, its population still exceeded its 1920 figure. Contrarily, Ranchos de La Joya experienced a steady decrease in population over the same twenty-year period. During the 1920s, it decreased over 20 per cent. The pattern continued through the 1930s; by 1940, its inhabitants numbered less than two-thirds of the 1920 Census figure. Note that in 1930, Ranchos de La Joya was composed 100 per cent of native born whites, with a rural farm population of less than 20 per cent, whereas in La Joya less than 5 per cent were native-born whites, with a rural farm population of more than 80 per cent.

Education in La Joya in the 1930s

The La Joya public school taught kindergarten and all twelve grades through high school in the 1930s. There were five elementary schools at the other towns within the La Joya School District (School District No. 36), but there was only one junior and senior

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high school — La Joya High School, which served the entire school district. We can obtain an overview of the public education system in New Mexico in the 1930s by studying the statistics reported in *The Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Period July 1, 1930 to June 30, 1932*. This report is a compilation of data providing a statistical and financial review of the schools in New Mexico. Georgia L. Lusk, Superintendent of Public Instruction, wrote the Preface — in which she expressed her “hope” that “the people” will use the information “to improve the conditions presented,” which she believed to be in dire need of improvement.⁷ The purpose of *The Biennial Report* was to centralize the compilation and use of factual educational data regarding administration of the public schools, the teachers’ salaries and their qualifications, and other financial data.⁸ Their statistical report broke the financial data down into two categories: Rural Schools, and Municipal and Independent Schools. Additionally, the report provided personnel statistics and pupil statistics (enrollment, attendance, et al). The Director of the Division wrote in his Introduction to the Report,

⁷Georgia L. Lusk, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Preface, *The Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Eleventh Biennium, Period Beginning July 1, 1930 and Ending June 30, 1932*, Santa Fe: Prepared by Division of Information and Statistics; Issued by Mrs. Georgia L. Lusk, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1932, 6.

The new Division of Information and Statistics was created July 1, 1931, by the New Mexico State Board of Education; its purpose was to provide a statistical report on education in the state, which it prepared and disseminated for the first time in 1932.

This was the first biennial report published since the report for the period 1924-1926. La Joya is not listed as a school district in the 1924-1926 report, nor are there any statistics given for La Joya per se.

⁸Additionally, provided “a general survey of public common school education” with detailed information regarding individual school systems.

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“No attempt is made in this report to interpret data.”⁹ The 1930-1932 Report, however, declared there was an urgent educational crisis in the state, “a grim fact in New Mexico.” Superintendent Georgia L. Lusk in her Preface emphasized the need for a more adequate and complete education, and the need for sufficient funding to provide the materials the schools were presently lacking, especially text books for the children.

Information regarding the curriculum and the books used for grade school children is contained in a list of mimeographed material distributed to the teachers for 1931-32.¹⁰ The books included the “Wag and Puff Primer”; “The Little Book”; “Surprise Stories”; “The New Stories”; the “Elson Primer”; “Around the World with the Children” (used for 3rd Grade Geography); and “Evangeline.” The curriculum included Numbers (Grade I), United States History, New Mexico History, Geography (Grade III), Language, Reading, “Citizenship and Character Education,” and Arithmetic. The school also sponsored a Citizenship Club.

There were, however, no free text books. The State Legislature passed a bill in 1931 for rural school aid, which was a step toward providing free textbooks. But the proceeds were insufficient to supply free books for even the first four grades. The Board finally decided that part of the money raised from the taxes should be used to provide a circulating library in every county for use of grade school children. The Board

⁹ *The Biennial Report*, 1930-1932, 7.

¹⁰ Teacher’s Table No. 1, “Mimeographed Material for 1931-32”; *Biennial Report*. The teachers also received monthly “Rural Leaflets,” which were not explained in the report.

recognized, it said in its report, that “it was a real hardship for parents to furnish a few textbooks.”¹¹ Thereafter, the children used a circulating library in lieu of having their own text books.

The course of study at La Joya High School (an accredited four-year high school) included High School Regulations, Science, Social Studies, English, Mathematics, Health and Physical Education, Commercial [*sic*], Foreign Language, Industrial Arts, and Home Economics.

The Biennial Report also stated its objectives regarding a health program:

1. To aid Teachers in bringing about health consciousness in their communities.
2. To make Teachers realize that health is one of the outstanding aims in education.
3. To urge Teachers to assist in establishing health conditions in schools and communities through directing personal hygiene and cleanliness of each child in her care.

Gloria’s recollections add a very personal dimension to the statistical knowledge furnished in the Biennial Reports. It is enlightening, quite interesting and often amusing, to read Gloria’s oral history and share her experiences about school and community life in La Joya. Her statement about the Hallelujahs is particularly charming . . . “they never called them Methodists or Baptists; they’d call them Hallelujahs!

The information Gloria provides in her oral history provides other dimensions of understanding regarding the issue of bi-lingual education. From her interview, it is

¹¹*The Biennial Report*, 1930-1932, 24.

understood that these children spoke Spanish at home and with their friends and neighbors, and were not bi-lingual.¹² *The 1932-1934 Biennial Report* contains a chart of a School Census of ages 5-21 for La Joya. In 1932-1933 the chart shows 200 students enrolled, of which 198 were “Spanish.” In 1933-1934, the numbers were 206 and 203, respectively. The classes in La joya were composed of about 98% Spanish native-speakers. Gloria remembers that her Uncle Johnny, the teacher, did speak English to the students, utilizing a bi-lingual methodology, and was in fact particularly urged to do so by Gloria’s mother.

The following excerpt from Gloria’s oral history regards the La Joya School, the students, and its teachers, and includes a discussion concerning bi-lingual teaching. Note that we also get a clear sense of how limited the students’ sphere of travel was and the surprising extent of their lack of any personal familiarity with or knowledge of the world beyond Socorro. Many never ventured beyond the local area of the neighboring villages. Their immediate world was indeed a cloistered, essentially-rural Hispanic — and a strict, religious Catholic — environment, in which they spoke their native Spanish language almost exclusively.

¹²*The Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Twelfth Biennium, Period Beginning July 1, 1932 and Ending June 30, 1934.* Santa Fe: Prepared by Division of Information and Statistics; Issued by Mrs. Georgia L. Lusk, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1934.

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Continuing the discussion in Gloria's oral history regarding the La Joya School, Gloria recalls the teachers, some of whom commuted apparently, and others, originally from outside the immediate La Joya area, who rented local housing.¹³

Q: And they had a high school at that time? The school went all the way from first grade, elementary school?

A: They had the high school at La Joya. They had kindergarten, and then primary, [from] first grade.

Q: You remember a lot of different teachers, they had quite a staff. A lady from Socorro?

A: Her name was Ms. Gonzales. Mr. Galaz, Alfredo Galaz, was from Mimbres up in Silver City area. Mr. Bernal, George Bernal, was a bachelor, he was from old Mesilla. And he would bring us just fascinating stories about going south into Mesilla and Las Cruces, and we had no idea what was south of Socorro.

Q: Oh, really? Big mystery on the other side of the desert?

A: Uh-huh. And he'd bring maps about going to Mexico and we would just gather around the table when he'd come back from his Sunbelt winter and he'd show us the maps. And Mr. Jaramillo, Adelfio Jaramillo, he was a

¹³Gloria Torres Armijo, Rand-Caplan Interview.

superintendent. And his wife was not Hispanic, she was Mrs. Jaramillo but oh, they loved her. I mean she did wonders for the students in La Joya.¹⁴

Q: Were there very many white people there? Anglo people?

A: Not a one, hardly. And my mother would tell Uncle Johnny, “Why don’t you speak English to these kids? Speak to them in English.” So he would.

[Eloy, who attended school with Gloria, says there were Anglo teachers at La Joya who were not fluent in Spanish, which created a difficult situation for students who were not bi-lingual, especially in view of the fact all their books were written in English. And some teachers, Eloy says, taught only in English, which compounded the problem.]¹⁵

Q: So Spanish was spoken in your home, too?

A: Yes. In fact, the other day when I was in La Joya, I met a lot of these people and we were reminiscing. . . . Mr. Abeyta’s brother, the gentleman that introduced Eloy to you. “Oh,” he said, “Mr. Torres, he was the finest teacher I’ve had in my life.” He said he was even a better teacher than the superintendent was a teacher. He said, “And you know he taught us bi-lingual.” And the word bi-lingual was not even a word in our vocabulary in those days . . . we were being taught bi-lingual without even knowing it . . . they would explain to us in Spanish what we were to learn in English.

¹⁴The 1930-1932 Biennial Report lists T. C. Jaramillo as the Superintendent of the La Joya District, an “Independent District” in Socorro County. *Biennial Report*, 1930 to 1932, 11.

¹⁵Eloy Romero, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

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Superintendent Lusk was entirely correct when she wrote that “Much that is vital to New Mexico education is not, and probably cannot be, revealed by the tabular presentation of school statistics.”¹⁶ Tabulations in the Biennial Reports are indeed cold facts and figures, but they represent real live boys and girls, and real educators. Both Gloria and Eloy’s oral histories present their real-life experience respecting education as it was practiced in La Joya. They broaden our understanding of what education was truly like for students in rural La Joya at that time.

The underlying information culled from Gloria’s oral history informs the written record regarding the students’ social, community, and school environment. La Joya was a protected community, a model of Hispanic heritage from which most villagers, and most especially the children, did not venture forth beyond their neighboring communities. Spanish was the prevailing language at home and in the community, and most students spoke no English. Although the Hispanic teachers were bi-lingual, not all Anglo teachers in La Joya were fluent in Spanish, despite the provision in the New Mexico State Constitution requiring teachers to be proficient in both languages.¹⁷

Teachers who truly taught bi-lingually, like Gloria’s uncle Juan Torres, were immensely popular in La Joya, and are remembered fondly by their former students.

¹⁶Ibid, 6.

¹⁷Section 8, Article XII, requires the legislature to provide training for teachers so they are proficient in Spanish and English and qualified to teach Spanish-speaking pupils.

Regarding the Community, Home-owners and Renters, and the Hallelujahs

In the oral history interview with Gloria, we discussed the old La Joya community, its houses, the home-owners and renters, and the local Methodists — the Hallelujahs.

Gloria said,

A: Right where the Oñaté marker is, the big Camino Real marker, we lived to the right. Our house was there. The old *cochera*, it's still there. The old adobes, the old garages that they call a *cochera*. All that property was my grandfather's.¹⁸

The Historic Marker at the beginning of town declares La Joya to be the southern terminal point, the last settlement in the old Spanish Colony of Nuevo México on El Camino Real before entering the uninhabited area. It was where the trade caravans gathered in the fall, to prepare for the arduous and most dangerous leg of the journey to El Paso del Norte, across the Jornada del Muerto, the journey of death.

Q: So your house was on the street coming into town? Before the marker, on the right.

A: Well, the house isn't there any more, but the house in front is still there, where Mr. Galaz lived. Teachers would rent this house from him.

Across the street from our house on the way to school was a Protestant church, and we'd pass through there. And we were always scared because at that time they

¹⁸Gloria Torres Armijo, Rand-Caplan Interview.

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would say, "The people from Socorro, the Bacas, are coming to have their *oculto*. *Oculto*, it's like a cult now. So to us, it was like something that we weren't even supposed to even turn . . .

Q The devil?

A: Well, not so much the devil, but see, we were Catholic. And these Bacas were Methodists, I believe. But they never called them Methodists or Baptists; they'd call them Hallelujahs! And they'd say, oh, they're going to have an *oculto*, because, you know, how the other religions would clap their hands, or chant or whatever. And we never did that. And now we're doing it!

So, we played in school with the Baca children, the Hallelujahs. We were friends. We were neighborly with these people. But at the time I was going to church, I have no memory of being together with the Baca families because we went to church, we went to catechism. Everything that took place with the church was very active.

We discussed the La Joya fiestas and religious processions (the author had participated in one of the La Joya religious processions earlier that year, walking alongside the musicians). Gloria spoke about the changes that had come to pass in the way religious ceremonies are observed in La Joya now, and the difference in her

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childhood experience when she participated in a religious processional in the old La Joya.¹⁹

Q: The services at the fiesta — I've never seen a service like that. Here we are in a Catholic church, and we have a priest who is giving the service in English because this is how it is done now. A choir that is singing in Spanish! — not in Latin! — accompanied by a guitar! And an accordion! I walked with the procession after the service through town; it was pretty obvious this was a very special ceremony for that fiesta day.

A: See, the La Joya Fiesta used to be in October — it's already colder. I remember the fiestas then when we would go in the Processional and they would build the *luminarias*, the candles in the bags; they were outside. They would build little bundles of firewood along the way to light the way. I remember that we felt welcomed when we came to each *luminaria* — because we would get warm! Our Lady of Sorrows, the Virgin. That's our patron saint.

¹⁹Reference is made to the Annual Fiesta at Nuestra Señora de Dolores, Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church in La Joya, September 13-14, 1997, attended by the author.

Vigilantes — their fear of the vigilantes was one of the reasons the local Hispanic people infrequently went into Socorro. They felt insecure in Socorro because that community was heavily populated with Anglos. The vigilante committee in Socorro was extremely powerful and effective, and frequently targeted Hispanics in dealing out their vigilante justice — which was often rendered immediately on the spot once they had reached their street-side verdict.

There is considerable literature written regarding the vigilantes of Socorro and their infamous Committee of Safety. In 1881 vigilante violence in Socorro was meted out to young Onofre Baca. Texas Ranger James B. Gillett was escorting his prisoner, seventeen-year-old Baca, on a southbound train, when it made its customary stop at Socorro. There, the Socorro Committee of Safety, led by Colonel Ethan W. Eaton, boarded the train and forcibly removed Baca and Gillett at gunpoint. Baca was wanted in Socorro for killing Anthony M. Conklin, editor of the *Socorro Sun*, and the vigilantes promptly hung young Baca.²⁰ The Baca incident is told in great details by Erna Fergusson in *Murder and Mystery in New Mexico*.²¹ Fergusson relates other stories of vigilante victims at the hands of the Socorro vigilantes, including that of Joel Fowler, a white man who was hung by the vigilantes.²² In his book *Socorro: the Oasis*, author F. Stanley

²⁰Bob L'Aloge, *The Incident of New Mexico's Nightriders: A True Account of the Socorro Vigilantes* (Sunnyside, Washington: BJS Brand Books, 1992), 27-38.

²¹Erna Fergusson, *Murder and Mystery in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: Merle Armitage Editions, 1948), 15-28.

²²Ibid, 29-32.

devotes an entire chapter to Fowler.²³ Vigilante violence in Socorro was not only directed at Hispanics, but at Anglo and Indian victims as well.

Experience had taught the Hispanics to be wary of Socorro and its Safety Committee, which the Hispanics called *Los Colgadores*, the hangers.²⁴ Their trips to Socorro were limited, confined mostly to matters related to county business. Socorro, however, was the county seat and they were compelled to go there at times to conduct official business.

Belen, considered by them to be their mother colony, was more receptive. Belen was once a settlement of freed slaves and *genízaros* during the colonial period.²⁵ It had also been a Spanish land grant, and was a community heavily populated with Hispanics. Jarales was also a more popular destination than Socorro to the La Joya community. Gloria said that the La Joya villagers found going to Jarales was much more “attractive” to them than going to Socorro.

Gloria says in her interview:

A: We would come into Jarales a lot. Jarales was more our town than Socorro. Socorro was not our town. We didn't belong. Oh, a lot of people

²³F. Stanley, *Socorro, the Oasis* (Raton, New Mexico: A Raton Historical Society Publication, 1950), 99-113. Chapter Five, “It’s a Cold Night for Angels, Joel.”

²⁴Ibid, 28.

²⁵*Genízaros* were the captives, slaves and orphans that were assimilating into the Spanish culture.

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from La Joya went into Socorro, and being it was Socorro County, that's where they would go to do all their business transactions.

Q: They didn't go to shop?

A: I doubt it because Socorro was the town of the vigilantes. They say that Belen is "the mother colony." After the people went to Santa Fe, then they began to migrate back south and were given the land grant for Belen. They call it the mother colony because from here is where the people began to go to migrate east and west because when the Americans came in, they were controlling the Indian raids.

Q: After 1846?

A: Yes. So that Socorro had its fort. Peralta had a fort.

Then as now, the church was the center of the community. Both social and religious celebrations centered around the church. And the cycle of seasons regulated the activities of the La Joya community. Indeed, religious traditions and celebrations are a potent way of celebrating a past that is distinctly one's own.

Q: That was a big part of your social life, wasn't it? Even as a child?

A: Very, very much. There was a season for everything, like when to harvest, and when to butcher the hogs, and when to dry the meat for the summer and all.

Regarding the church and its activities, Gloria said:

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A: Same thing with your church [regarding a season for everything] and the *Pastoralla*.

And then Lent season. I mean the whole thing, the forty days. You know, abstinence — and no dances, no music — it was very rigid. But I wouldn't feel it because it was what we accepted.

Then came *Sabado de Gloria*, which was Holy Saturday before Easter. Now we buy our dress-up dresses because we're going to attend and sit through the whole midnight mass. And enjoy it. And then sit through the whole high mass of Easter Sunday. Because our *Sabado de Gloria* is rejoicing, and they have the holy water and everybody would go bring their little jars of water that they had blessed with tubs of water in the churches. Everybody would go with their little jars.

Then, Sunday was our Easter Sunday. No picnic! No Easter hunts or nothing.

Gloria describes her father's and grandfather's business. Gloria's father also played a role in the community as a musician, playing at the fiestas and community dances.

Q: How long did you live in La Joya?

A: Well, I was born in '31 in Jarales but I think my grandfather already had his store. I'm not sure what year.

Q: And your father, did your father work for your grandfather?

A: My grandfather didn't seem to drive yet. He had new cars of the year. But my dad would be the one that would drive.

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Q: And he worked in his father's business?

A: I'm sure he did because he would be the one that would come to the land for the stock. To buy from Becker Dallies. He would come and buy the stock, the stock for the grocery store.

But then my dad was a musician so he would play at all these fiestas. We didn't have babysitters. They would take us to the dances and people would sit around on the benches and they'd tuck us underneath. We'd be awake while the music was on and then we'd get sleepy and they'd cover us up if it was winter or whatever, and they'd tuck us under the benches and that's where all these babies would sleep, down there while the daddies and the mothers danced.

And then as we got older — six, seven years old — they let us dance around. We were not to dance in the middle, so we'd only dance around the outside. Then maybe when you're ten, twelve, thirteen, then they begin to let you dance in the middle. The two girls would dance together. We'd never dance with the boys.

The social mores of La Joya limited the contact between the adolescent boys and girls at the dances. They had to maintain the traditional community etiquette, and proper gender respect.

Q: How old did you have to be before you could dance with a boy?

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A: I would say fifteen, fourteen. They would ask you to dance, sitting where you were with your parent, and then you'd go dance and then they dropped you back. You didn't stay up there.

Regarding the Post Office in La Joya, Gloria said:

In the old days post offices were run from the home and they'd have probably a room that would be the post office. But now, I think because of insurance, they're not allowed to have them live in the house so now in all the little villages they're building brand-new post offices.

A new modern post office was built in La Joya five years ago and residents have keys to obtain their mail from the locked boxes inside the building whenever they please; the outer door is not locked. The old building was locked at 3 p.m. when the postmistress went home; if you wanted your mail, you had to arrive before then. Now, says Lucy Romero, La Joya's post office is as modern as any.

In the mid-1880s, after the railroad came through, the mail was delivered to the La Joya Depot on the west bank of the river opposite town. There were boats, Eloy Romero says, that ran back and forth regularly across the river.

Statehood and the Taxation of Real Property and the Loss of Land

The inevitable change wrought by the modern Anglo world of machines and industry pierced the seclusion of La Joya and brought a harsh new reality to the rural

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community. The most damaging and influential component in altering the self-contained status of the old La Joya came with the taxation of real property after New Mexico gained statehood. Real property taxation was a complex Anglo innovation unfamiliar to the community which had never been long on ready cash. They were uninformed and unprepared to protect their property against the demands of tax collectors and real property tax bills that frequently never reached the landowners until it was too late. And those who may have understood the pecuniary intricacies of taxation most usually did not have the money to pay the required taxes anyway.

Q: Somewhere, something made this great change in a thriving town.

A: During this time it was a thriving community.

Q: Thriving in the thirties?

A: Before.

Q: Before! Into and including the thirties, it's thriving. But then people began apparently to lose their property. Taxes. Somehow, the entire land grant of 220,000 acres no longer belonged to the sixty-seven families it originally belonged to.

People were losing their property. What happened?

A: You know, it's strange because my mother would tell us about *La Merced*, the grant. She would say *La Merced*, the land. That's all she would tell us about it, the land. My father and the Torres family — their mind, or their awareness of their history was more with the land.

Regarding Employment in the Local Mines

Asked whether she know whether La Joya men were working in the local mines in Socorro County, Gloria said:

A: Well, you know, Camp Kelly was going on in Magdalena, the Kelly Mines. Maybe some went to work there.

In his oral history, Eloy Romero furnishes additional information about La Joya men working in the local mines around La Joya, discussed later in the paper.

Regarding the Depression's Effect on La Joya

A: The way I see it is that they say that the Depression was going on. But see, again, my grandfather — I have their wedding picture when he married Nana. He's not hurting. They had their dinner at the Harvey Hotel in Belen, in 1931, '32. He's dressed with patent shoes, and she's got her best dress, wedding dress.

Q: So, economically, everything seems to be flourishing in La Joya in 1931?

A: '31, '32, '33, '34, '35, '36.

Despite Gloria's sense of La Joya's economic well-being in the early 1930s, its population decreased during that decade, reflecting the eventual impact of the Depression on La Joya's economy and its affect on the exodus of its residents. Moreover, during this period, there was an increasing incidence of land lost through delinquent tax sales of both privately-owned parcels and eventually of the common lands as well.

Gloria's Parents Were *Mayor Domos*

A: My dad and my mom were the *mayor domos* [of the Church].²⁶ My dad took charge of bringing the musicians to play [for the church fiestas], and we would board them in our house. They would have their meal at the house. Not like now, it's gotten to be really commercial. I think then it was mostly the labor of the men that built the church and kept the church up. Now it's insurances, and too much that they have to work. Well, times have changed, too.

But then the major domos would have their meal in their home and people would come to eat in their home. And then *Pascua* (Easter), and the mass, the High Mass, and the Procession.

Q: Not everybody would come to your home?

A: Well, I would say they were invited because if you left anybody out, it was like when we used to deliver the food to the different people. Maybe the Bacas [the Methodists] were out, or not invited, or whatever. But they were still our *conosidos* [friends]. Not that you shunned them. It's just that they weren't part of our group here.

But like I say, we were still having the fiestas.

²⁶A *mayor domo* was the official caretaker.

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Bussing the Rural School Children Into La Joya

A: All those little towns — La Joyita, San Juan, Las Nutrias — all those kids were going to La Joya School. The buses would come in loaded with kids coming to school.

[The children were bussed in from the other small towns surrounding La Joya to attend the junior and senior high schools at La Joya].

A: Bussing them in. Contreras had just a little school, an elementary school. [Contreras, where Paublita lived next door to her youngest daughter, is a community today of only a handful of homes.]

A: The men that worked for the schools got the wood. That was a job for them, to bring the wood [for the wood-burning stoves]. Mr. Peralta would furnish the school with wood. Then they had the janitors. My sister worked as a janitor.

Q: To help keep it clean?

A: Uh-huh, so then we moved to T or C [Truth or Consequences] for my dad's health — Hot Springs at that time. We moved in '39. First, we went to the hot baths for my dad to see if that was what was going to help him. And she [Gloria's sister Tillie] couldn't go because she was working. She was making, I think, \$18 a month, working.

Q: Your sister? As the janitor for the school? She didn't go with you?

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A: Uh-uh. She didn't go, she stayed. She had her job and Tillie always minded her school work. My sister Tillie became a county clerk. She retired from being the County Clerk in Sierra County.

The Nurturing Community of La Joya

A: I have a picture when I made my first Holy Communion, right there in front of the church and I can point [out] each child that's there, and their father and mother, and their grandfather and their cousins, and we were happy families. If he worked as sheepherder, who cared? I didn't care. We were all happy. And if this one worked in the mines or he worked on waiver, we didn't know. We didn't care. We just knew that we were taken care of, and that we were all doing fine.

Q: The fiesta conveyed this community feeling, this safe, nurturing, warm little town. Everybody was friendly, everyone was family or friends. Probably knew each other's business. In La Joya now, how many people do you think might be there?

A: The Cordobas are there, two brothers Ernest and Frank are there.

Q: Do they commute to work?

A: I think Ernest never left. But some of these people worked in Sandia and Albuquerque and they retired from there. Some of them retained their little homes. They could pay their taxes so they went back. Like Eloy [Romero].

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Swimming in the Rio Grande

A: We used to go by car [to the Rio Grande] just because we had that little truck, but some of the people there walked to the river. It wouldn't take long.

Q: What did you go to the river for?

A: To swim. We'd get in the water and my dad and mother would guide us and we'd play in the edge of the water.

Q: It wasn't deep, was it?

A: I'm sure in places it was. Even now, they warn people about getting into the river. Willie grew up swimming in the Rio Grande. And all the neighborhood kids, that was their swimming pool. And nobody worried about it.

Regarding Gloria's Husband Willie, Gloria said:

A: Willie was from Las Palomas in the T or C area there. He's of the Sierra County people, the Armijo Bacas that went from Socorro on down. But they're a branch of ours.

Q: How did you meet Willie?

A: Oh, when we arrived [in T or C], I was nine and he was eighteen. Then the war came in '41, and he went off to the service. He volunteered. All the boys volunteered. They all left.

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The WPA, CCC Camps, the Coming of World War II

The economy of La Joya in the mid-1930s was no longer tied to the local community. Men were leaving the community, employed at the Civil Conservation Corp camps and for the Work Projects Administration on projects like Elephant Butte. Many of the men worked for the railroad. There were job opportunities in Albuquerque and Belen. For the little village of La Joya, it was the beginning of the end of the lifestyle it had known. With the advent of World War II, the demise of La Joya as a thriving community was imminent.

A: It was a time of need, people have to work. Now, the WPA started, the New Deal — that was going on here now. They're building the Carrie Tingley Hospital [in Albuquerque]. They're building sidewalks. The CC [sic] Camp is there. Civil Conservation. Young boys from La Joya are going to Elephant Butte to build the walls. All that work that's there is from these CC Camps. Boys that went from here. These families now had a son that had gone to the CC Camp and they're sending home money.

La Joya's Economic Decline

Gloria reflects on La Joya's economic decline, calling what happened in La Joya "circumstances." Those circumstances included a drought that caused the cattle to die, and the government's ensuing actions in condemning and killing the community's cattle.

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A: There was a drought in 1939 or the '40s. The cattle were dying. The government was coming in and they were buying the cattle from the people and killing them to distribute food. But they would buy it from them for hardly anything and his dad [Willie's father] chose not to sell his. He kept them and he did the best he could. But what were people going to do if they had a big herd? They called them *las vacas condenadas* because they had been condemned by the government. They had to kill them and I guess they were distributed as food, or what I don't know. So that was happening to my grandfather, plus mis-management.

My dad had to leave [move away from La Joya], because he was sick. My uncle was a schoolteacher, he had his profession, and he was drawing a salary. So then my grandfather got sick and the business began to go down. So, conditions and circumstances.

Q: But other businesses also eventually didn't last — the bar, the saloon, none of those places.

A: No, because remember, too, the families. If it's five acres, and then they start to fight for five acres of land.

Q: Yes, three sons fighting over five acres, something's got to give. They can't all have it. They move on, they move elsewhere.

[Here enters the issue of inheritance, which is a paramount factor in causing many of the young men to move away to earn a living. When there is not enough land to divide

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among all the male heirs, there is no alternate for them but to move and seek opportunity elsewhere.]

Gloria continues:

A: No telling what happened to them, I don't know. A lot of people went to Barstow, California. Remember, Belen is the hub city of the railroad. A lot of these people went to Barstow to work in the railroad. And then White Sands opened, Los Alamos opened. Kirtland, Sandia, so all these places, plus the war. All these young boys went off to war.

So there goes Willie off to war for four years. He was twenty when he left; he volunteered right away. He said he wanted to go and the draft-board person told Willie, "You don't have to go because your dad's a farmer." So he says, "Well, I want to go with the boys." So off he went, for four years.

Q: Where was he?

A: In the Philippines, in Guam.

Here, we were a happy family, happy for what we had. We didn't have much but we were happy.

The New Generation and the La Joya Community Today

Gloria spoke of the new generation of Hispanic sons and daughters, and the progress they are making in the modern world.

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A: But now you look at these people and we've progressed, not only as a people but as a Hispanic people. So now, you see, my daughter is off to Japan, working with the Navy. She's a computer programmer.

Q: In the modern world, doing modern things. And La Joya is not.

A: There you go! If you talk to these people and ask them about their children, they've progressed. So, it's a happy feeling now to look back to these people and you see how they progressed and how their children have progressed and the things they have now and it's a good feeling. They're families that have retired and come back.

Q: So, for the most part, there really isn't a young community there.

A: I don't think so. The Bacas, their children are gone. The Cordobas, their children are gone.

Q: What's going to happen to La Joya?

A: I don't know.

The Oral Histories of Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and Her Daughter Marian

Tafoya Torres

The oral histories of Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and her daughter Marian Tafoya Torres Romero also illuminate the then and the now of La Joya.²⁷

²⁷Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and Her Daughter Marian Tafoya Torres Romero," Interview with Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, tape recorded, Contreras, New Mexico, 2 November 1997.

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Paublita Torres — the matriarch of the family, affectionately called Nana by her children and grandchildren — was ninety-two-years-old when she made her oral statement. She lived alone in a sunny old adobe in Contreras, three miles from La Joya where she was born. Nana passed away in 2004 and is buried in the old cemetery in Contreras. Her tidy little home was a microcosm of old world Hispanic culture. It was her personal shrine brimming with photographs of ancestors and descendants, adorned with myriad *religiosos* including an especially rare old *santo*. Her daughter Marian and husband Vences Romero, a Benavides grantee descendant, lived in the newer house next door. Marian passed away Christmas 2005 and is buried in the Contreras cemetery, close by her mother's grave.

Behind Nana's house stands an old outhouse, held sacrosanct by Nana because her husband Ramon had died in it, behind the old place in La Joya. Nana brought it along when she moved from La Joya and allowed no one to molest it. Nana was a cheerful, pretty lady embodying a sweet Spanish persona. During our interview, she conversed only in Spanish with a sprinkling of English words. [Remember, the 1920 Census statistical record shows that at age 13, Paublita did not speak English.]

As she gave her oral history, Nana kept an apprehensive and ever-watchful eye fixed on the tape recorder. Her step-granddaughter Gloria acted as interpreter, and her daughter Marian sat beside her. We were served iced tea, and later ate a simple family lunch together. It was a warm and comfortable afternoon spent in Nana's home.

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Nana recalled her life in the 1930s as the young new wife of widower Ramon Torres, three decades her senior, an affluent merchant and landowner and highly respected citizen of La Joya. Ramon was director of the schools — “a learned man, a school board member and also *Juez de Pas* [Justice of the peace] in La Joya,” daughter Marian says in her oral history narrative. “He was like the sheriff.”²⁸ Marian recalled the pictures of the La Joya School Board on the walls of the school gym. Her daddy was a member of the school board. Marian was exceedingly proud of that.

Nana’s lengthy oral history, told with step-granddaughter Gloria interpreting, recaptures a poignant and colorful image of old La Joya in the 1930s and 1940s. Nana recalled the little *cantina y saloon*, owned by her *primo* (her first cousin) Vicente Chavez y Torres, near the home of Toribio Garcia. Toribio was married to Nana’s Aunt Beatrice. Clowns and acrobats entertained there at Vicente’s *cantina y saloon*. There was *la musica* — violins, and “nice” community people went there, *toda la gente* [all the people] . . . *para las fiestas*. On one occasion when Paublita was a young woman, she was seated, “getting ready to see a play,” and the actors unexpectedly shot some blanks, which scared her so badly she fell backwards. She was then three months pregnant and she says it was a frightening experience. (Gloria says Porfinio Cordoba also owned a bar there in that location at another time.)

²⁸Ibid.

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In her own separate interview, Gloria had remembered that Nana had gold earrings, *coquetas de oro*. “They were long earrings and they were made of gold. She had some necklaces. But they were gold. Now they’re 40 per cent.”²⁹ Paublita, the young wife of the successful Ramon Torres, had been indeed a privileged member of the upper level of the socio-economic community of old La Joya.

Paublita spoke brightly with great pleasure about going to the dances and the fiestas. And the lucky ones, she said, would go a *los speeshes*, to the speeches, to hear the political candidates campaign. Politics were very important in La Joya — especially so because Socorro County was a vigilante county. The violent history of the vigilantes in Socorro is a central part of that county’s territorial history. The vigilante’s antagonism was too often directed at Hispanics, for whom the Anglos bore a deep-seated ill will that frequently erupted in violence. That extreme feeling of ill will was mutually felt.

Gloria also spoke of local politics in her own oral history interview, and gave a humorous impression of her Uncle Johnny standing on his tippy-toes addressing the crowd and introducing the candidates.

A: The politics were harsh, Democrats and Republicans. The school house is where they would hold *los politicos*. The candidates that were running for office would come and give the political speeches, *los speeshes*. They always

²⁹Gloria Torres Armijo,” Rand-Caplan interview.

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had a translator. Mr. Jaramillo, the school superintendent, was the interpreter all the time.³⁰

[Apparently at least some of the candidates did not speak fluent Spanish, and assumably were not Hispanic.]

Gloria recalls that her Uncle Johnny would stand up on his toes, as he was speaking to the audience.

A: . . . that was his trait when talking to the people, and [he would] say, "*Senoras y caballeros, estamos aqui presentes*" and introduce the speakers. So politics were really important, and also an important social activity.³¹

Playing politics in La Joya could be quite amusing at times, involving trickster games. Paublita says,

A: They wanted the votes. This lady didn't want to vote, she didn't want to be bothered and they hid her, in this oven, this bread oven. They hid her in there . . . they were trying to eliminate a vote. In other words, if I was with the Democratic Party, a Democratic person, I didn't want her to vote the other way so I would hide her because I don't want her to vote.³²

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and Her Daughter Marian, Interview by Rand-Caplan."

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Paublita's life was extremely cloistered. She never even knew about *La Merced de La Joya*, or the La Joya Land Grant Committee. She says there were no Americanos in La Joya, "only Mrs. Jaramillo," wife of the school superintendent. Asked if there was a doctor, Paublita says, "Doña Dolores Garcia was a *curandera* [a healer] who assisted with midwifery in *los treintas*, the thirties." Paublita says doña Jose Ignacio Barela was the postmaster then, and thereafter handed it over to her son Ignacio Barela.³³

Gloria also talked about "Jose Ignacio Barela, the postmaster, [who] had his little grocery store. Federico y Torres and Jose Ignacio, the one that has the post office, he had a little grocery store there."³⁴ It is well known to scholars of New Mexico history that among rural New Mexico communities, there is a high incidence of nepotism regarding the passing on of government jobs to family members. There is a tradition within families especially to retain the post of village postmaster, just as La Joya villagers attest to in these oral histories.

The Loss of Land through Taxation

The issue of land loss through taxation is a familiar story among land grant communities. In 1929 William A. Keleher, a noted lawyer and historian of the

³³Ibid.

³⁴Gloria Torres Armijo, interview by Rand-Caplan.

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Southwest, wrote that the land grants in New Mexico bore a overwhelming tax burden.

Grant land was being lost, wrote Keleher, for non-payment of delinquent taxes.³⁵

Marian provides a concise description of the dilemma confronted by her family when their ancestral properties were taxed. Marian was asked during her oral history, "Where was the land that you bought for taxes that belonged to Grandpa Ramon? Near where San Francisco was? How did it come about?"

Marian related how and what happened. Her detailed description makes so clear the predicament that the people faced in dealing with taxation. They consider to this day that the government stole their property through taxes. Sam Padilla, in his interview, stresses the community's continuing antagonism, especially their resentment concerning the loss of the public lands that constitute the Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge, land that is now no longer available for their personal use. Sam says they have a burning grudge against the government for "taking the land away."³⁴

Marian continues her discussion regarding the loss of her family land because of taxes.

³⁵William A. Keleher, "Law of the New Mexico Land Grant," *New Mexico Historical Review* 4 (October 1929), 361.

³⁴Sam Padilla, Interview with Ramona Rand-Caplan, tape recorded, March 2006 [unpublished].

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A: They sent me a letter because I was a daughter of Ramon Torres, if I wanted to get that land because there was some taxes. I only paid \$18.00.³⁵ My son helped me a lot. If it wouldn't have been for my son, I wouldn't have done it, because he surveyed that and did a lot, my son. I wouldn't have done it myself. I don't even remember how much it was. But I remember that we got about \$6,000 for it.

Q: And you sold it?

A: Yes, but we had to pay a lot. You know how land is, you have to survey it. It's very expensive. By the time you do this, you get less on your money.

My dad used to have a lot of land. I remember Kenneth my son used to tell my brother why didn't he get that land because it was on low taxes. Because at that moment, my brother had a good job and he could have afforded it. Us, we couldn't, because my husband was in a real bad accident when Kenneth was eight months old, and we were very low on income.

They bought it for taxes — another land that my dad had there, at the game refuge. But they never sent me letters about that, just only this one letter they did send me. If they would have sent me letters, maybe I could have gotten it, too. But this letter I got about '72. You know, my father, now he

³⁵Ibid. It is not clear whether this was a fee cost, or the amount of the tax arrearage.

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would be rich, he would have gotten all that land because that belonged to him because that was his dad's.

Q: Who owns that land now?

A: Well, I don't know, they got it for taxes. So that's the loss, see, there's the loss.

Asked if she ever heard of General Campbell, or the Campbell Cattle Company, Marian said:

A: That Campbell business sounds familiar. I remember my uncle working for him. Pedro. Yes, I remember hearing that they would work for that Campbell . . . like fencing and working like in the ranches.

[General Thomas D. Campbell and the Campbell Cattle Company played a crucial role in the history of the Sevilleta in the twentieth century. Under Campbell's ownership, the natural ecology of the land was severely impaired.]

Sam Padilla's mother remembers how devastated the land had become by the 1960s. While driving one day recently with Sam on Interstate 25, going north from Socorro near San Acacia, Sam's mother remarked that it had all looked like sand dunes there in the 1960s and 1970s. Now it abounds with mesquite, salt cedar, and the perennial sagebrush. The Campbell operation, the devastation of the land, and the ultimate restoration of the Sevilleta lands will be discussed at length later in this paper.

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Marian wistfully remembers the La Joya of her youth as a beautiful little town where “the people were so clean.” Over and over, Marian describes the La Joya of the 1930s as “so clean” — the town, the homes, the yards.³⁶ Clean and happy, and unbeset by the changes that were to come.

A: Their little houses weren't new houses . . . just a little house. They didn't have houses like now, where they have like a room for a kid . . . just a little house. They would keep them so clean, and it was a beautiful little place compared to now. Once a person would move away, they would board up the houses . . . it was the thing to do. You boarded up the house. And they would break in and vandalize or steal . . . the people in those years, you know, different of these years now. . . . they had their little houses. They didn't have rich houses or anything like that, it was just a little house . . . they used to have their little house so clean, their yards clean and everything, and that little town was so nice, because it was clean, compared to now. *Pobres* (poor people), but they were happy.

³⁶Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

Ramon Torres' Store and the *Mercados* of La Joya

The following dialogue between Gloria (G), Marion (M), and the author (Q), was recorded during Marion's oral history narrative, and vividly portrays their childhood in La Joya and their memories of Ramon Torres' store and the other *mercados*.³⁷

Q: Is that four? Four different stores! For groceries, or for other things too?

G: Torres, Romero, Jose Ignacio, and Vicente. Well, Federico's was a good grocery store. Ours was the best. I think ours was it.

M: We had gas, shoes, clothes, material . . .

G: And yardage!

M: . . . and you know those kind of shoes, like pointed? That I remember. Like the ones that are coming back now for women. And there was a lot of clothes, a lot of material, a lot of groceries.

G: Display cases, bins.

M: A big bin. And I remember that he [Marian's father] used to — when I was small — just hide me like in there, when people would come in the store. And then I remember, too, in the store that they used to . . . have those big candies like that, and they were wrapped in a foil thing, good candy. . . . I remember like a little girl, me and my neighbor, one day

³⁷Ibid.

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we went with Gloria and we put all the candies in our dresses and we'd go to the other side of the house where Juan lived . . . so my dad didn't find any candy, and he said, "Well, what happened to the candy? I can't sell any candy." Then they were all melted.

G: That was popular, too, those little Jungle Pies. They were wrapped in foil, too, and they called them Jungle Pies, and we would save the foil and . . . make a ball of foil, I remember.

In her oral history Marion tells us how the villagers obtained their water — from cisterns, catching the rainfall, and from the then sweet pure waters of the Rio Grande.

M: The water — they would come with barrels to get the water at Contreras. Most people had *cisternas*, cisterns, and they would save their water from the rainfalls . . . it would be in tanks and *cisternas* They would cart it in from the river. . . . We used to drink water from the river. That's how clean this water was coming in the river.

The Oral History of Louella Torres Pedroncelli

Gloria's *primo*, her first cousin Louella Torres Pedroncelli, also provided her oral history. Louella was born in 1938. Her father Juan Torres was Ramon Torres' son, and Paublita (Nana) Torres was her step-grandmother. Juan Torres taught high school at La Joya — Spanish and History, as Louella recalls — and her mother taught kindergarten there.

Louella speaks of her father with loving pride in her oral history interview.

A: My dad's name was Juan Torres, but he was known as John — John B. Torres. He attached the letter "B" to it so he was John B. Torres. I asked him, "What does the 'B' stand for?" "Nothing," he said. He just thought it looked good. He said, "There may be a lot of Juan Torres, but not Juan B. Torres." He was kind of a romantic. He loved literature.

I remember the school itself. I remember going back with Gloria some years ago. And I thought this was not the La Joya my child's mind remembered. But the church hasn't changed very much. It seemed the same.³⁸

[To Louella, the town seemed to still center around the church when she visited with Gloria, just as it did in the old days of her childhood.]

³⁸Louella Torres Pedroncelli, Interview with Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 29 December 1997.

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A: My mother sang in the choir. I remember being scared, upstairs with her. There was a choir loft and this window there. I remember her warning me not to get close to the window. And that scared me; I was afraid I might fall out. When I went back, that was the first place I wanted to see. One of the wonderful things about all the little towns is the churches. It was the center; everything revolved around the church. Not only the spiritual life, but the social life.

Louella also has vivid recollections of her Grandpa Ramon's store.

A: I remember that store. What it looked like. I remember the high button shoes. I remember when he [Louella's grandfather Ramon Torres] died. I remember going in there with my family and clearing it out. They closed the business then. It wasn't doing so well any more anyway, I think. The only thing I have of my grandfather's is the scale that came from that store.

Ramon was an old guy. Maybe he was in his mid-sixties when he married Paublita. She was only twenty-seven.

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Louella recalls her sentimental journey home to La Joya recently with her husband.

A: My husband and I drove there on a Saturday afternoon about three or four years ago. It looked so different to me; we just drove through looking around. And then we just drove up to the little post office. It's a little tiny place, maybe twelve-by-twelve feet. Barela, the woman who worked in the post office, said, "Can I help you?"

"I'm just looking around. I used to live here."

"Well, who are you? Who was your daddy?"

I told the people there who my daddy was and they got very excited about my daddy. He was the big high school teacher. They remembered him well.

There are sixteen in my family today. None of them live in La Joya.

Although none of her family have returned to La Joya to live, some of Louella's people have gone back to Monticello.

A: It's a romantic place, too, like La Joya. Monticello is a beautiful valley, the land there is good for agriculture.

CHAPTER FIVE

ELOY AND LUCY ROMERO'S ORAL HISTORY

When La Joya Grantee descendant Eloy [Eliosim] Romero retired, he returned with his wife Lucy to live in La Joya, the land of his ancestors.

His new modern home sits on top of a hill southeast of town, with a 360-degree view across the lands of the Sevilleta. The house faces west across the fields below where the old sheep herders of La Joya drove their charges to graze on the lush communal pastures of the river valley community. From Eloy's house, the broad view of the valley and its fields no longer reveals the long-ago image from the past that Eloy remembers of a pasture filled with grazing livestock that once fed the more than five-hundred villagers of "The Jewel of the Sevilleta." To the north toward town, there is a view of the ruins of the foundation of the old school gym. For Eloy, it presents a comparatively dismal comparison to the wonderful bustling days of the La Joya that Eloy remembers when he was a boy, but Eloy is cheered by what does remain of his old hometown.

In Eloy's early youth, La Joya was the core of the area's socio-economic tree, central to the life of this river valley and the surrounding towns. A number of the older homes are nicely refurbished, occupied mostly by an older generation whose adult children generally live their lives and work their careers in the outer world.

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Eloy and the others of his generation pridefully retain their positions as elders of the community. They are staunch and constant members of Nuestra Señora de Dolores, Our Lady of Sorrows Church, and are active in the affairs of the Church. They participate in the local town festivities and annual fiestas that still celebrate the old Cristo-Hispanic cultural traditions.

The first time the author saw Eloy Romero, he was dancing sprightly with his wife Lucy at the Annual La Joya Fiesta in 1997. On this special day, the community comes together on the big cement square that serves as La Joya's plaza, adjacent to the village church, Nuestra Señora de Dolores. Musicians play traditional Hispanic songs of New Mexico as the people dance. Couples stylishly dressed in fiesta finery dance with bright smiles. Generations of extended families gather together on this traditional fiesta day — grown children bring their own youngsters home to La Joya to enjoy the traditional celebration. Little children play all around — and under — the benches that line the perimeter. Neighbors sit around and visit with one another, many from the surrounding communities. Food stalls and vendors with homemade wares of marvelous originality line the side ways. The big kitchen serves steaming foods to the throngs that mill around. As they gather with their families to celebrate the annual La Joya Fiesta, the La Joya villagers — residents and visitors — are connecting to the past. The La Joya people maintain a strong relationship with the past.

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In a group of ladies seated in the shade near the dance floor as they chatted and watched the festivities, the author was properly introduced to Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres, then ninety-two years old, a very elegantly groomed and well-coiffed lady. Here, too, the author first met Gloria Torres Armijo, Paublita's step-granddaughter. Affectionately called "Nana" by her family, Paublita Torres was a very independent elderly lady who lived alone in her old, old house in Contreras.

The Fiesta takes place all around the church area, just to the southwest of the plaza in the center of town. There is a tile fresco over the doorway to the church, in the window as you come in, donated by Eloy and Lucy Romero. It reads "*dedicada a las madricitas de La Joya y la parroquia de Nuestra Señora de Dolores*" — Dedicated to the Mothers of Our Lady of Sorrows. And there is also a memorial fresco by a Santa Fe artist memorializing the Salas family, the matrilineal side of Eloy Romero's heritage. The priest, aided by his housekeeper, have the rectory doors opened wide to receive the people. Old dusty books line the rectory office. Father Vincent is a busy man — he still serves as a circuit pastor for the five mission churches at Sabinal, Veguita, Las Nutrias, Abeytas, and Contreras, and offers Sunday masses alternately at each.¹ Old church records were removed long ago to reside in the Archdiocese Archives in Santa Fe.

¹Father Dennis Dolter has been the new priest at Our Lady of Sorrows in La Joya since 2003, and also serves as the circuit pastor for the other five mission churches on both sides of the Rio Grande.

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Eloy Romero is dedicated to preserving as much as he can of the historical heritage of La Joya. He owns an impressive collection of original maps, documents and books on La Joya and the Sevilleta Grant. Eloy was instrumental in donating the old records of the *La Merced* Board of Trustees to the Center for Southwest Research, the archival library at the University of New Mexico.

The oral history of Eloy Romero and his wife Lucy, recorded in 2000, is a valuable primary document. Eloy and Lucy contribute a considerable amount of colorful information regarding the old lively village of the 1930s and the La Joya of today. Additionally, Eloy's interview provides a wealth of material information regarding General Thomas Campbell, who ultimately bought the Sevilleta Grant common lands in the 1930s, through a tax sale, as a result of delinquent taxes. Eloy was employed as a youth by the Campbell Cattle Company. He knew and liked General Campbell, he says in his interview. In his oral history, Eloy relates pertinent information regarding Campbell's search for oil on the Sevilleta, and his quest for adequate water to irrigate the land and grow wheat, and to water his cattle.

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General Thomas D. Campbell

General Thomas D. Campbell is a significant player in the saga of the Sevilleta and La Joya. By the end of the 1930s, Campbell had acquired ownership of all but a small fraction of the Sevilleta Grant common lands, predominantly at tax sales for delinquent property taxes. Campbell, who was known as the Montana Wheat King, bought the Sevilleta intending to expand his wheat-growing empire, and to raise cattle. But both ventures were unsuccessful and Campbell eventually ceased his operations, returned to California, and leased out the land for others to operate and manage. The Sevilleta was harshly over-grazed during Campbell's absentee ownership. Following Campbell's death in 1966, his granddaughter Phoebe Knapp became aware of the Sevilleta's precarious ecological condition, and decided to donate the land to the brand-new Nature Conservancy, created that very same year. Ultimately, the process of the rehabilitation of the Sevilleta began under the stewardship of the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, an agency of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

Eloy Romero had a great deal to say in his oral history about Thomas D. Campbell and the Campbell Cattle Ranch. When asked about Campbell and his purchase of various different grant lands in New Mexico, Eloy answered:

The Campbell? — Thomas D. Campbell? He's the one that bought the grants here. He bought the La Joya Land Grant, the Sevilleta

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Land Grant, the Belen Grant, the Casa Colorado Grant, [the] Tomé Grant, all the grants, all around.²

There was considerable notoriety associated with Campbell's acquisition of a number of land grants in New Mexico. One headline article appeared in the *Valencia County Review*, October 15, 1937. The article, "San Pedro Grant Deeded Campbell," reports that the deed to the 31,594-acre San Pedro Land Grant had been transferred to Thomas D. Campbell, "Montana 'wheat king'" on October 9, 1937, for a bid of \$15,000 at the bankruptcy sale held by the New York trustee of the San Pedro grant. The article also states that "Campbell, who is associated with John J. Raskob, recently concluded the transfer of the La Joya grant and is now holding an optional sale contract on the 70,000 acre Belen grant."³ The bottom line is that Campbell paid between 30 to 35 cents an acre for the La Joya grant.

The same issue of the *Valencia County Review* carries another front-page article, "New Grant Board Opposes Campbell," which gives details concerning the efforts by the land owners of the Belen grant to repudiate legally an existing optional contract to sell the land to Campbell.⁴ The article states that the present Belen Board of Trustees intended to

²Eloy Romero, Interview by Rand-Caplan

³"San Pedro Grant Deeded Campbell," *Valencia County Review* (15 October 1937).

⁴"New Grant Board Opposes Campbell," *Valencia County Review* (15 October 1937).

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test the validity of the optional contract because the contract was granted by a former Board of Trustees, which the present Board contended it had no authority to enter into. The Board planned to bring action in the Valencia County Court in an effort to have the optional contract repudiated. The Board of Trustees voted to repudiate the optional contract after it offered to pay Campbell \$5,555 for a mortgage he held, which offer Campbell refused. The Board had executed a \$5,555 mortgage for 70,000 acres to Campbell on December 3, 1936, when Belen's taxes were in arrears. The optional contract gave Campbell the right to buy the 70,000 acres at 50 cents an acre, which included a first mortgage for 40,000 acres held by the estate of New Mexico Senator Bronson M. Cutting. On October 4, 1937, however, Campbell purchased the 40,000-acre Cutting mortgage directly, for only 30 to 35 cents an acre, and served notice on the Board that he intended to exercise his option.

Eloy continues:

A: He [Campbell] bought the [Sevilleta] common lands. Naturally, he took over everything that was not deeded out to individuals. He actually respected all the deeds that were made out by the Board [*La Merced* Board of Trustees] for sites in the community. The original land grant was for, I think, 276,000 acres. And Campbell wound up with, I think, over 220,000. It was [bought] for back taxes.⁵

⁵Eloy Romero, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

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Campbell had indeed bought the property for back taxes. Public notices had been published in Socorro County, stating the urgent necessity for real property owners to pay the arrearage for their real property taxes in order to protect their property. On November 4, 1937, in the *Socorro Chieftain*, the Socorro County Treasurer published a "Notice of Sale of Real Property on which Taxes are Delinquent," for the tax year of 1936 (and any prior years) to be held December 6, 1937.⁶ Subsequently, a public Tax Notice, regarding real property tax, appeared in *The Socorro Chieftain* on November 18, 1937, published by the Socorro County Treasurer and the New Mexico State Tax Commission.⁷ The Notice instructed real property owners, "If your taxes for 1936 are not paid by the first Monday in December [December 6], 1937, your property will be 'sold for taxes' . . ." and "deeded to the holder of the tax sale certificate."

Asked who had held title to the common lands that Campbell bought, Eloy said,

A: All the people from the communities of Contreras, La Joya, San Francisco, and Alamillo and San Acacia. It was common land and it wasn't deeded to anybody. They would elect new Board members – they would have an election every year, I guess."⁸

⁶State of New Mexico, County of Socorro, Notice of Sale of Real Property on which Taxes are Delinquent to Satisfy the Lien for Taxes, Penalties, Interest and Costs Due, *The Socorro Chieftain* (4 November 1937).

⁷Tax Notice, *The Socorro Chieftain* (18 November 1937).

⁸Eloy Romero, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

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Campbell bought the La Joya Grant at the December 1937 tax sale. An article, "La Joya Grant Funds Ordered Disbursed," appeared in *The Socorro Chieftain*, on February 3, 1938, listed the detailed disbursements paid from the La Joya Grant Sale to pay the claims filed against it, including back taxes, and school warrants and school certificates of indebtedness.⁹

Drilling for Oil and Water on the Campbell Ranch

Eloy himself had worked for the Campbell operation, drilling water wells for over a year. Eloy talked about Campbell's unsuccessful attempts to find oil, his numerous thwarted attempts to drill productive water wells, and his aborted effort to find an underground reservoir which would have given him a reliable, sufficient production of water to irrigate the Sevilleta.

A: I met him, you know. He was a tall man, a very tall man. And he was very nice. I did know him. I remember him quite well.

Matter of fact, I worked for him for a while. Well, actually I worked for one of the managers, Mr. Russell, if I remember correctly, that came with him from Montana.

⁹"La Joya Grant Funds Ordered Disbursed," *The Socorro Chieftain*, (3, February 1938).

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When Mr. Campbell first bought the grant, he brought in some geological experts to see if there was any oil. And they checked all of that. And they drilled a bunch of water wells all over the grant. I worked on one of them, one of the wells, Sepatura Canyon. I don't know if you read about it — up around Golden, there was a huge underground reservoir that could irrigate most of the whole grant. It came out recently in the paper. The same thing was supposed to have been over here in the Sepatura well that we were drilling. We were drilling in solid rock actually. We worked there for about a year on that well. I don't remember how deep we went on it. We got lots of water but not what they expected to get. There was a lot of water.

You know Mr. Campbell's expectations were that you could water most of the grant from that well. Because he was known as the Montana Wheat King. [Campbell wanted to grow wheat on the Sevilleta.] That well didn't work really. They got a lot of water but not what he had been told that he was going to get.

And he drilled another well over here in the La Joyita, de Valle de La Joyita. He also got a lot of water in that well, and he actually farmed some wheat — maybe a hundred acres. And he was watering from that well but it didn't work out.

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When all of that failed, then he leased it out to Mr. Weldon Burris. For cattle grazing. And Mr. Weldon had it for quite a few years. He had a lot of cattle. And Mr. Weldon hired some ranch help from the community. Not a lot of them but a few. Fences, you know, and branding, and moving cattle. I think he had over two thousand head of cattle when he moved out. He moved out after Mr. Campbell died, I think.¹⁰

Thomas Campbell died March 18, 1966, at age eighty-four, in Pasadena, California.

A Profile of Thomas Donald Campbell (1882-1966) and the Campbell Cattle Company

Thomas Campbell began buying land in New Mexico in the 1930s in partnership with New York industrialist John J. Raskob. Together, they bought the La Joya (Sevilleta) Land Grant and other New Mexico land grants. At one time or another, Campbell owned all or parts of the La Joya (the Sevilleta) Grant, the Belen Grant, the San Pedro Grant, and the Tomé Grant. After Campbell bought the Sevilleta Grant through a tax sale, he created the Campbell Farming Corporation and the Campbell Cattle

¹⁰Eloy Romero, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

Weldon Burris was the son of the celebrated pioneer, New Mexico cattle rancher L. Frank Burris. Weldon Burris grazed his own herd on the Sevilleta, and it appears he sub-leased grazing land to other cattlemen as well.

Company. By 1949, Campbell-Raskob owned approximately 400,000 acres in New Mexico.¹¹

Campbell began his career in large scale agriculture in 1918. During the scarcity of a war economy, Campbell came up with the idea that previously untilled American tribal lands could be successfully converted to food production. With two million dollars secured through New York banks and the aid of financier J.P. Morgan, Campbell leased 95,000 acres from the Crow and Fort Peck reservations in Montana, created the Montana Farming Corporation, and began the seminal American agri-industrial experiment. In 1922, the Montana Farming Corporation became the Campbell Farming Corporation, and continued to farm on land leased from Native Americans in Montana.¹²

Campbell was an internationally-acknowledged expert in dryland farming and industrial farming techniques. Campbell served as an advisor to the Soviet-Russian government in the early 1930s. He also was an agricultural advisor in England, Tunisia, South Africa, and Australia. In 1932, Longmans, Green and Company published Thomas D. Campbell's book, *Russia: Market or Menace?*¹³

¹¹Thomas D. Campbell Papers, 1874-1987, MSS 566 BC, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; Campbell Farming Corporation Records, The Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, Montana.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

Campbell had attempted to operate the Sevilleta as a cattle ranch and dry-land wheat farm, but without success, albeit he was an expert in dryland farming techniques. Campbell's insurmountable problem was finding adequate water for his enterprise, as previously discussed by Eloy Romero in this paper. Eventually, Campbell leased the Sevilleta to Weldon Burris, member of the well-known Burris cattle family of New Mexico, and thereafter relinquished the management of the Sevilleta to Burris. It was during this period, in Campbell's absence, that extensive overgrazing took place under Burris' management.

Eloy Remembers the La Joya School and the Businesses in 1930s La Joya

Eloy retains strong, clear images of the La Joya School in the 1930s. He remembers the students who were bussed in from the nearby communities to attend junior and high school in La Joya.

A: They would bring children from Contreras, Las Nutrias, Fajita, Bosque on the other side, Sabinal, Abeytas, San Francisco. I mean, for the high school. They had elementary school up to the eighth grade in Barrallos.¹⁴

¹⁴Eloy Romero, Rand-Caplan Interview, 2000.

Eloy reminisced about the various businesses in La Joya in the 1930s, including the grocery store and filling station owned by his dad Federico Romero, although Eloy was quite young then. Eloy's father was a prominent member of the La Joya community. He had also been Secretary of the La Joya Grant Board of Trustees.

A: Ramon Torres had a general store. And there was also another store. But this was before my time though. Vicente Chavez had another store. But I really don't remember that one.

And then after that, my dad had a grocery store, and a filling station. He was a member — I think he was the last Secretary — of the La Joya Land Grant, I think when it was lost. I still have a bunch of the records of the La Joya Land Grant. The deeds that were issued — not copies, the originals!

Eloy has many valuable original documents in his possession, including the original Sevilleta Land Grant Patent that was the Sevilleta Land Grant Board's copy, which he brought out to show during the interview.

A: That is the original. That was just for the Board — the Land Grant Board's copy of the patent. This is when the United States of America recognized it. But the original [grant] that was issued by the King of Spain, I don't know. And, President Theodore Roosevelt . . .

[Eloy pointed to Roosevelt's original signature on the Patent].

The small village of San Francisco was located on the west side of the river, Eloy said.

A: The tracks are right by the freeway there, very close.

Lucy added:

A: There are still families there.

[But apparently there are only a very few.]

A: And there used to be a mission chapel there as well.

Changes in the Village Names through Time

Eloy informed us that over time, the village names have changed. La Joya was known as Sevilleta before the 1800s. Ranchos de La Joya was formerly called Contreras, and Los Ranchitos de La Joya was a little village between La Joya and Contreras. "There's some ruins there," said Eloy.¹⁵

In addition to La Joya and Ranchos de La Joya, there also was La Joyita, further south, shown on one of Eloy's old maps. Sometimes it was spelled Jollita and even Hoya. The latter was used in some of the earlier census reports. There is also an old

¹⁵Ibid.

highway photograph, that Eloy has, which shows the old railway station right across the river on the west bank.

Although conventionally interpreted as the “Jewel (*joya*) of the Sevilleta,” another possible identification is with *hoya*, “valley, river basin” or the “hollow” in a river basin. Historian Francisco Sisneros, another descendant of Sevilleta grantees, points out that the community of Velarde on the northern Rio Grande, which is also located in a hollow of a river basin valley, was first named La Jolla, a misspelling of La Joya.¹⁶

The Civilian Conservation Corp Camp in La Joya

Eloy said the Work Projects Administration (the WPA) built a camp building on the other side of the river, which burned down later. Lucy’s father called it the “Camel House.” Eloy said they built some dikes on the arroyo there. The author was unable to find any WPA records pertaining to La Joya or the Sevilleta, however, but further research disclosed that the Civilian Conservation Corp had built a camp nearby La Joya. Undoubtedly, Eloy had worked not for the Work Projects Administration, but rather, had worked for the Civilian Conservation Corp.

¹⁶Pearce, T.M., edited by, *New Mexico Place Names* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1965), 82, 176.

Regarding Mining in La Joya

Eloy discussed mining in the old days.

A: There used to be little mines in the grant here. They had several lead mines in the cañoncitos area here, and coal, and manganese — there used to be a lot of diggings there. And my dad used to say that somebody was even mining for gold. That's where all the mines were, in that area, except for the coal mine.

There was a coal mine in the Valle de La Joya. My dad had that mine cleaned out and it was real interesting, you know. They had railroad tracks.

Eloy said the lead mined around La Joya was shipped to the New Orleans and La Joya Smelting Company. The New Orleans and La Joya Smelting Company was erected in 1881. "... in its peak year, 1887, nearly \$500,000 worth of bullion was produced." It was located next door to the Socorro Mining and Milling Company and its stamp mill.¹⁷

¹⁷Bruce Ashcroft, *The Territorial History of Socorro, New Mexico* (El Paso: Texas, Western Press, University of Texas at El Paso, Southwestern Studies Series 85, 1988), 16.

Regarding Cattle and Sheep Ranching in La Joya

Government records show that during 1882 to 1885 there were four million acres of grazing land in Socorro County. In 1882, there were only nine thousand head of cattle in the county; by 1885, there were seventy thousand head. There was a cattle and sheep holding pen adjacent to the La Joya railroad depot. The records also show that the sheep industry declined during that time. Regarding sheep ranching in La Joya, Eloy said:

A: The Esquibel family had a bunch of sheep. And the Contreras family from Contreras had a bunch of them. Matias Contreras had the most. Of cattle and sheep, both. My dad used to work for Matias Contreras at one time. He said that when he sold sheep or cattle that he wouldn't take nothing but gold. He demanded he be paid in gold.¹⁸

I asked Eloy about how La Joya, the town, was faring now. Eloy said,

A: Well, La Joya now, there isn't really that much. I guess about thirty families, I imagine.

But Lucy corrected him:

¹⁸Eloy Romero, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

A: Oh, but parishioners that go to church, I think there are only twenty-five.¹⁹

Parishioners and non-parishioners are still regarded differently in La Joya. That regard for distinction has not changed among the "Spanish heirs" of La Joya. Sam Padilla says that although he was born and raised in San Antonio, just south of Las Joya, he feels he is very much thought of as an "outsider" himself. It is an exclusive club one must be born into. And Sam is "San Antonio people."

Eloy said there weren't any children here now.

A: . . . not really. There's some young people, not that many though.

Lucy estimated there were about two hundred registered parishioners all together, about twenty-three, twenty-four in La Joya. Eloy says:

A: But there's a lot of other families. They're Mexican people.

Again, the designated distinction. Over all, Eloy estimated there were about thirty, thirty-five families living in La Joya then.

Eloy sums up La Joya of today, calling it just a little farming community.

¹⁹Ibid.

THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA GRANT: IN THE FIRST PERSON

A: It is no way the community it was in 1930. It's just a little farming community, really. I would say there's about, oh, around 1,200 acres, I guess, of farm land that's being farmed now.

San Padilla is a present resident of Cotacachi and former resident of San Antonio where he was born and raised. Because he was not born and raised there in La Joya, he says he is treated as an "outsider" by the La Joya community. San says, however, he is better treated and more accepted than the Anglos are.

San's family moved to Socorro from Belen in 1815. San still attends the church in Socorro, which causes him much trouble with the priest in La Joya, who would prefer that San were attending services at Nuestra Señora de Dolores in La Joya.

San Padilla is a devoted student of local history, and he furnished countless invaluable details concerning the exodus of the young from all the communities of the Sevilleta. San's father moved away to California immediately after he graduated high school in 1936. He left together with his two brothers and his sister. One sister had already previously moved to California and had been living there a while. Everyone went away, said San, to look for jobs, particularly in Barrow, California (the big railroad terminal was there), and in Los Angeles. As a result, the population was decimated over time. "Tons of people left," says San, "tons of people."

Padilla, interview, Sand-Caplan.

CHAPTER SIX

THE ORAL HISTORY OF SAM PADILLA

Sam Padilla is a present resident of Contreras and former resident of San Antonio where he was born and raised. Because he was not born and reared there in La Joya, he says he is treated as an “outsider” by the La Joya community. Sam says, however, he is better treated and more accepted than the Anglos are.

Sam’s family moved to Socorro from Belen in 1815. Sam still attends the church in Socorro, which causes him much trouble with the priest in La Joya, who would prefer that Sam were attending services at Nuestra Señora de Dolores in La Joya.

Sam Padilla is a devoted student of local history, and he furnished countless invaluable details concerning the exodus of the young from all the communities of the Sevilleta. Sam’s father moved away to California immediately after he graduated high school in 1956. He left together with his two brothers and his sister. One sister had already previously moved to California and had been living there a while. Everyone went away, said Sam, to look for jobs, particularly in Barstow, California (the big railroad terminus was there), and in Los Angeles. As a result, the population was decimated over time. “Tons of people left,” says Sam, “tons of people.”¹

¹Padilla, Interview, Rand-Caplan.

Eventually, the resulting lack of population forced the closing of the entire La Joya School District. The District lost its funding because the population was too small; by state standards, it did not warrant a school. In 1967, the kids at the La Joya School were bussed to Belen. All five elementary schools were closed; in fact, the elementary school in Contreras had closed earlier. And so, in 1967, La Joya School District No. 36 ceased to exist.

[The present Superintendent of the Socorro School District, Frank Jarmillo, is the nephew of the last Superintendent of the old La Joya School District.]

The new school, which had been built to replace the original school, had been built with inferior construction, Sam says. And it deteriorated rapidly after it was abandoned. Only the foundation of the gymnasium remains. It had been part of the old school, which closed in the 1950s, and had been built to much better standards, Sam declares.

Sam was a volunteer for the La Joya Community Library for some time until fairly recently. The library is staffed by five volunteers. Martha Carangelo serves as the Librarian. The library occupies what used to be the cafeteria of the old La Joya School, which formerly had been a private residence. Sam estimates they have better than 5,000 books in their little community non-profit library, housed in two rooms and a middle hallway. Martha's husband John is the present *mayor domo* of the La Joya acequia, the

irrigation channel from the Rio Grande River. It opened on time this year as usual on March 1st.

Sam furnished additional current information on La Joya today. The old La Joya Senior Citizen Center moved out of La Joya years ago in 1998; the new senior center is located now in Las Nutrias. There is a private game preserve up on the hill overlooking La Joya, complete with clay pigeons and scheduled shooting events.² Sam says there are maybe nine or ten people still farming just outside of La Joya, growing alfalfa, and there are two alfalfa farmers in Contreras, where Sam lives now. In La Joya itself, there is at least one person who still keeps goats and ducks, and maintains a little vegetable garden.

During the season of the migrating cranes, they flood the area near Highway 60, near the railroad crossing. Sam noticed this year that after the water evaporated, a thick deposit remained. The top coating of white stuff was so thick, you could not even see the dirt beneath it. It was alkaline-looking to Sam. Sam worries about the white deposit, and the effect it may have on the land, and the farms in the area. And he worries now about the water. It is no longer pure. As a consequence, Sam relies solely on his well water.

²The Rancho de La Joya Game Preserve is a commercial enterprise open to the public, offering seasonal game and bird hunting, scheduled sporting shoots, and professional instruction, advertised as the "Southwest's Finest Sporting Clays Course and Pheasant Hunting Preserve" (www.ranchodelajoya.com).

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE ORAL HISTORY OF MARY ARMSTRONG AND PHOEBE KNAPP WARREN

Thomas Campbell's longtime secretary Mary Armstrong worked for General Campbell for twenty years. In an interview conducted at the Albuquerque home of Mary Armstrong in 1997, Mary was mike-shy, and actually contributed very little. She kept repeating that General Campbell was "a very nice man." In order to induce Mary to talk more freely, the mike was eventually turned off to make her comfortable. Consequently, the greater portion of this interview was not taped. At that point, the author and interviewer took handwritten notes. Mary's husband, however, contributed a bit of new information not found in any of the official records. He recalled that he used to "come down there and fish," and that there were "big, big fish then in the river by La Joya," in the 1940s.¹

Campbell's granddaughter Phoebe Knapp Warren participated in the interview and contributed a great deal of evocative information about her grandfather, who she called "Granddaddy."

¹Phoebe Knapp Warren & Mary Armstrong, Interview by Ramona Rand-Caplan, 22 November 1997.

THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA GRANT: IN THE FIRST PERSON

Mary: He was a dynamic individual. I worked for General Campbell 1962 to 1982. [Phoebe supplied the 1982 date.] I ran the office by myself.

I always called him General Campbell, referred to him as "the General."

Some people who knew him well called him Tom . . . kings, presidents, and people of that kind. Others called him General Campbell, Mr.

Campbell, "the General."

Phoebe: Granddaddy helped to set up the collective farms in the USSR . . . the basis of that system is still in operation.

The following material is taken from the field notes the author recorded at the interview.

Phoebe said that Campbell was "sent by the President of the United States" to Russia in the 1930s. "Heads of the collective farms came to visit the Campbell farm in Montana." Then Phoebe said, "Stalin got annoyed with Campbell who was personally blackballed by Stalin."

Earlier in the century, Campbell had proposed to President Wilson and Secretary Lane that he [Campbell] lease some Crow land. It was then that Campbell became involved with J.P. Morgan. The sizable figure of \$2.5 million was the amount of Morgan's investment, plus there were a couple of other investors . . . this being in terms of 1918 money.

By 1922, Campbell's operation "became Campbell Farming Corp." Campbell, Phoebe continued, "moved from North Dakota to Southern California — Pasadena — for Beth's TB-related problems. He " . . . laid out the town of Torrence, California."

Mary spoke up, saying, "Did I tell you he was a dynamic individual?"

Campbell, Phoebe said, received "the Legion of Honor for his work in North Africa, for developing farming methods in North Africa."

Regarding the Sevilleta and Weldon Burris, Phoebe said that "The entire Sevilleta Grant was leased to Welden Burris . . . he over grazed it in the '40s, the '50s, and the early '60s. His widow is still alive [and] lives down there. A frontier character. They ran cattle."

It was a short, but very informative interview, giving a whole new prospectus to Campbell. Campbell made contributions to improving worldwide dryland farming techniques, and his widespread influence was felt throughout the world, for which he received international acclaim.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A LAND IN REFUGE: THE ECOSYSTEMS OF THE SEVILLETA

The ecosystems of the Sevilleta have endured wide-ranging change. In addition to the changes in the human habitation of the Sevilleta lands, there

also have been dramatic changes in the natural environment. The significance of the Sevilleta lies in the contrast between the land and the wildlife of the original Sevilleta Grant. Once it was a lush landscape on a meandering river alive with fish and wildlife, with cottonwood groves and grazing pastures, and foothills where cowboys spent their summers herding livestock. Later, during the mid-twentieth century, it was over-grazed for decades and the ecological environment was impaired.

In 1970, the Campbell Family donated the Sevilleta to The Nature Conservancy, which in turn passed it on to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service the very same day. The appraised value of the property in the early 1970s was in excess of \$10 million.¹ Robert Quayle, Thomas Campbell's grandson, calls it "the largest-ever private land donation in United States history — 320,000 acres now known as the Sevilleta National

¹The Nature Conservancy provided a grant of \$300,000 from the Mary Flagler Carrin Trust Foundation in New York, to the Campbell Family as compensation for the donation. The \$300,000 fund was used for the legal expenses involved in the donation transaction, and for obligations undertaken by the Campbell Family Trust for university scholarships. One of these scholarships is located in North Dakota, and one is funded at the University of New Mexico.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A LAND IN REFUGE: THE ECOSYSTEMS OF THE SEVILLETA

The ecosystems of the Sevilleta have endured wide-ranging change. In addition to the changes in the human habitation of the Sevilleta lands, there also have been dramatic environmental changes to the physical Sevilleta, to the common lands and the wildlife of the original Sevilleta Grant. Once it was a lush *bosque* on a meandering river alive with fish and wildlife, with fertile river valleys and grazing pastures, and foothills where townsmen spent their summers herding livestock. Later, during the mid-twentieth century, it was over-grazed for decades and the ecological environment was impaired.

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Wildlife Refuge (NWR).⁴ The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge is one of the largest refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and one of the foremost environmental research sites worldwide. Four major biomes intersect on the Sevilleta Refuge, making it unique.⁵ The *bosque* of the Rio Grande provides a riparian oasis, a vital element for the mixed ecosystems. The mission of the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge is to provide “basic resource preservation, the provision of opportunities for research, and [for] allowing natural restoration processes to occur.”⁶ Additionally, proven scientific tools encourage the healing processes which are enhancing the habitat and wildlife resources on the Refuge. The Refuge serves as an area of natural habitat for native species of the Southwest. One of its primary goals (Goal II) is “to restore and maintain the natural diversity of plants and wildlife as it occurred historically on the Sevilleta.”⁷ The Sevilleta National Wildlife Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan states in its Vision: “The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge truly plays a unique and special role within the whole of the National Wildlife Refuge System.”⁸

⁴Kimberly King-Wrenn, Interview by Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, Tape recording, Acacia, New Mexico, National Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge, 11 July 2004. N.p.

⁵A biome is defined as a major ecological community type, such as grasslands. A biotic community, such as the Sevilleta, is defined as an assemblage of interrelated plants and animals that together inhabit a defined location. *Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Final Comprehensive Conservation Plan*, 87.

⁶*The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan*, July 2000, 1.

⁷*Ibid*, Executive Summary, v.

⁸*Ibid*, 2-3. *Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan*, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

The Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge is also the host facility for the management of the captive Mexican gray wolf. Additionally, it is vitally involved in a holistic approach to coordinating activities with watershed landowners/stewards. It is truly, as it claims, a powerhouse in wildlife and natural resource management.

The Refuge is also a surprisingly good friend to their neighbors in La Joya. When the Annual Open House is held at the sparkling new Visitors Center & Administrative Complex, the delicious refreshments that are provided for sale are made by the community of La Joya, and the proceeds go to support the La Joya Community Development Association. The Association was organized and is maintained by volunteer members of the community, both Hispanic and non-Hispanic, longtime residents and new. It is a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-organizational endeavor, and one that Ranger Kimberly King-Wrenn says gives her great personal satisfaction as the head of Visitors Services at the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge.⁹

⁹King-Wrenn, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

CHAPTER NINE

POISED ON THE CUTTING EDGE OF ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH

The old common lands of the Sevilleta are now the home of one of the nation's premier long-term ecological research facilities. Since 1988, the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge has hosted the Sevilleta Long-Term Ecological Research Project, a state-of-the-art facility located on the west side of the river. The Sevilleta Field Research Station and the Sevilleta Research and Education Center are maintained and operated by the Biology Department of the University of New Mexico. The Sevilleta Research facility is the only one of twenty-one long-term ecological research facilities in the United States that is situated on a national wildlife refuge. It is the ideal setting to research climate variability and change acting together to affect ecosystem dynamics at transition zones.

Dr. Robert R. Parmenter was the original Station Director and Senior Program Manager for the Sevilleta's Long-Term Ecological Research Project, heading up the facility from its start in 1989.¹ The staff had been housed in tents and trailers from 1989 to 1991. Dr. Parmenter says it was "Great fun!" The field station opened with new laboratories and residences in November 1991. The station cost about \$2 million in mid-

¹Dr. Robert R. Parmenter is now the Chief Scientist at the recently created Valles Caldera National Preserve in Los Alamos, New Mexico.

1990s dollars, and has eight houses for guests, plus a caretaker's house (a total of forty-eight guest beds). A new larger laboratory building is presently under construction.

In 2005 the United States House of Representatives awarded a \$3 million grant to the Sevilleta Research and Education Center for a major ecological research project regarding the causes of long term climate change.² What drives the long term weather? The Center will integrate the research and study of these environmental questions by the New Mexico Research Consortium, which is composed of the University of New Mexico, New Mexico State University, New Mexico Technical University, the Sandia National Laboratory, and the Los Alamos National Laboratory.

Staffed by the University of New Mexico's Biology Department faculty and students, this remarkable outdoor laboratory also plays host to national and international research scientists and educators in its eight modern houses adjacent to the main facility. Its research projects are on the cutting edge of ecological research as they engage in the task of preserving our worldwide environment, and in the preservation of our natural resources. The partnership between the Sevilleta Long-Term Ecological Research facility and the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge "has created a symbiotic relationship in which the research community is provided a unique outside laboratory, and the refuge benefits from the wealth of knowledge provided by the research."³

²"Sevilleta Research and Education Center receives \$3 million," *Campus News*." (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, March 14, 2005), 8.

³Ibid, 1.

CHAPTER TEN

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, AND ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH

Answers to many questions about the past are found in oral history research.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORAL HISTORY

Known as the oldest methods of collecting historical information, the value of oral histories has been recognized for millennia; "it is the oldest form of historical research."¹ The Greeks were the first historians who wrote history. They interviewed witnesses to current events to gain evidence for their written histories.²

The first oral history archives at Columbia University were created in 1948 by the political journalist-historian Allan Nevins. Nevins directed the first organized oral history project. The second oldest oral history program is the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California at Berkeley, which was created in 1954. It was soon followed by the University of California Los Angeles' oral history program in 1958.

¹Thucydides was the first oral historian; the interviews he sought among the people informed his [then] eight-volume *History of the Peloponnesian War*. The 1840 Oxford edition of the *History of the Peloponnesian War* is published in three volumes. Other editions vary in number of volumes.

²Samuel Johnson wrote that "all history was at first oral" and noted that Voltaire had prepared his histories of the French kings by using oral histories.

Quotation is from Valerie Raleigh Dow, *Recording Oral History* (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc., 1994), 3.

³Herodotus, the father of history, questioned participants in the Persian Wars in the fifth century B.C. and thereby created a [then] nine-volume history of the wars between Greece and Persia.

CHAPTER TEN

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS, AND ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH

Answers to many questions about the past are found in oral history research. Knowledge transmitted by word of mouth is one of the oldest methods of collecting historical information. The value of oral histories has been recognized for millennia; “it is the oldest form of historical research.”¹ The Greeks were the first historians who wrote history. They interviewed witnesses to current events to gain evidence for their written histories.²

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Oral history interviews uncover the past. The combined art of a skilled interviewer and a responsive interviewee together preserve the past for future generations to understand and remember. It is the combined authorship of both participants that creates the historical document. The methodologically-oriented oral historian prepares his research, maintains aim and focus, elicits questions of depth and sophistication to evoke compelling answers, and always allows the interviewee to tell freely the substance of his story. "An oral history is a joint product, shaped by both parties," wrote Donald Ritchie, the current historian of the United States Senate.³ The historian Michael Frisch calls it "a shared authority."⁴

Since the 1960s, an appreciation of the value of oral history research has grown among academics worldwide. The interest of modern historians in broadening the scope of recorded memories has grown to include the use of oral history as a tool to record the history of our great leaders as well. Presidential library oral-history programs are now commonplace. The first presidential library was the Harry S. Truman Library created in 1960.⁵ The Spring 2005 *Oral History Association Newsletter* announced that Senator Edward M. Kennedy's long political career will be the focus of a new oral history project

³Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 2003), 30.

⁴"It is a shared authority" — See Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral History and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

⁵Presidential library oral history programs, "now commonplace," began with the Harry S. Truman Library in 1960. Valerie Raleigh Dow, *Recording Oral History*, 3.

at The Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia. The six-year project is part of the Miller Center's Presidential Oral History Program, a systematic effort to collect comprehensive, spoken accounts of the presidencies of Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. The Kennedy Project aims to "shed light for scholars" not only on Kennedy's career, but also on "the evolution of the Senate and the changing nature of political leadership in America." The Center's goal, it says, is "to preserve for the historical record the voices of key actors within each administration."⁶

Oral history is a form of bottom-up history, a New Western Historian's delight. It is a record of the memories and experiences of the people that do not make it into the public record. It does more than supplement the written record. It, in fact, enlightens and helps define public records. In example, the Center for Land Grant Studies in New Mexico utilized oral history as part of the courtroom testimony in fighting for the ownership rights of Native American and Hispanic Americans who had no traditional documentation to support their claims.

Quantitative data does not offer the same clarity, subtleties and detailed explanation that is produced by the inductive, observable, interactive research of qualitative methodology. The in-depth oral history interview is a qualitative research method, "a specific research method within the general designation of qualitative

⁶*The Oral History Association Newsletter* (Spring 2005), 8.

methodology.”⁷ Qualitative methodology is subject to strict principles and standards for procedure and evaluation, and the same care and critical responsibility demanded of other historical disciplines.

The oral history interviews conducted by the author with the La Joya villagers, both past and present residents, are first-person observations of the events that affected the community of La Joya in the 1930s and 1940s. These events also affected the motivations and objectives of its people individually on a very personal level. These interviews are “episodic interviews” that focus on members of a group in a particular community, and on their interrelation with the history of La Joya and the Sevellita. They give insight to the community-identity. As “personal commentaries of historical significance,” oral histories are “mines of raw data from which historical evidence can be extracted.”⁸ Recording and preserving the neglected aspects of the past is gratifying.

The 1930s was a significant boom period in the protracted history of La Joya. The oral history interviews the author recorded with villagers who lived in La Joya during that period present an insightful narrative history of the village in those years. These oral histories give us an in-depth view of its culture, and a true sense of its social, religious, political and economic life.

⁷Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History*, 8.

⁸Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 19, 37-38.

THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA GRANT: IN THE FIRST PERSON

The Torres family group of three succeeding generations of La Joya women entwine together many different grantee families including *las familias de Torres, Tafoya, Moya, Salas, et Romero*. The narrative histories of the Torres family women portray a clear pattern of the events that affected their family's prosperity and altered the economic foundation of the community of La Joya, endangering its economic stability. La Joya emerged from its heyday in the 1930s into the wartime 1940s and the pivotal changes wrought by World War II. The jewel was beginning to fade, and would be changed forever.

Descendants of the Grantees & Original Settlers

In 1821 Jose de Jesus Tafoya and Maria Guadalupe Padilla and their children moved from Santa Fe to settle in La Joya.

*Their descendant, 97-year-old **Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres** resided in Contreras, three miles from La Joya, where she was born. Paublita passed away in 2004. I interviewed Paublita Torres, Paublita's step-granddaughter **Gloria Torres Armijo** (and Gloria's husband Willie) and Paublita's daughter **Marian Tafoya Torres Romero** in late 1997. Marian passed away Christmas 2005. I recorded **Louella Torres Pedroncelli's** oral history separately in December 1997. Louella is Paublita's step-granddaughter, and the granddaughter of Ramon Torres, Paublita's husband. Passages from their recorded oral histories are quoted in this paper.*

On October 29, 1826, Petra Mascarenes, the daughter of Andres Mascarenes (an original 1819 grantee) and Rosa Romero, was born in La Joya. Andres is reputed to have been a Spanish dragoon, whose brother is said to have lived with the local Indians.

*Descendant **Eloy [Eliosim] Romero** is retired and lives once more in La Joya. Eloy and his wife Lucy donated a memorial, wrought in tile, to Eloy's parents, which presides over the entrance to the venerable Nuestra Senora de Dolores, Our Lady of Sorrows Church in La Joya. I recorded Eloy and Lucy's oral history in March 2000. Passages from Eloy and Lucy's recorded oral history are quoted in this paper.*

On September 12, 1833, Maria Concepcion, daughter of Refugio Esquibel and Maria Dolores Lopez, was born in La Joya.

Twentieth century descendants of the Esquibel union are also discussed in the oral histories quoted in this paper.

On April 4, 1841, Jose Ramon married Maria Concepcion Benavides, daughter of original 1819 grantee Diego Benavides and Maria Manuela Silva.

*Benavides descendant **Vences Romero** was married to Paublita Torres's daughter Marian. Vences also participated in the recording of Marian's oral history.*

Collectively, these oral history testimonies offer a variety of detail broad in scope and content. They document strong family and community networks. They create a window to see into the lives of this community. And there is a special meaning in these oral histories for the actual members of the community themselves. These narrative histories provide an opportunity for other members of the community to see a reflection of their own lives, their ancestral journeys, and the life of the community, then and now. These documents are primary documents of historical significance to the history of La Joya and the Sevilleta Grant. Told in the first person by witnesses to the events, they are intrinsic to understanding its cultural, political, social, ethnic, economic and religious history. They are material to community, regional, state and national history. They document gender, race and class history. They present an informed, revealing picture of La Joya de Sevilleta, "The Jewel of the Sevilleta," and the Sevilleta in the early twenty-first century. That contemporary image of the sleepy little village of today, still replete with its Hispanic traditions intact, is a dramatic contrast set against the background of historical La Joya. Here then is a portrait of the cyclical saga of a Hispanic town in New Mexico, and of the land grant drama that still permeate the Southwest. There are many answers in these oral histories to many of the questions about the history of the village of La Joya.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

The loss of the Sevilleta Grant common lands economically depressed the community of La Joya. The changes in the community land base and its economic stability reflect a common thread in the land grant drama dilemma that affected so many Spanish and Mexican land grants. Although the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo guaranteed the protection of the land grant rights of Mexicans who elected to remain in New Mexico as American citizens, their heirs were ultimately denuded of the vast majority of those grants. The United States has validated about 25 per cent of the 295 Spanish and Mexican land grants in New Mexico, which constitute approximately 10 million acres. The lost acreage totals approximately 2 million acres.

Land grant communities became victims of taxation, economic distress, exploitation by land grabbers and unscrupulous Anglo lawyers, and the unjust and inequitable disposition of their claims by the United States courts. The communal land had belonged to the collective village community. It had bound the people of the Sevilleta together, the mother protector of their subsistence pastoralism. Its loss was devastating to their physical and psychological world.

William deBuys wrote in *Enchantment and Exploitation* that as the worldliness of a village people increases, the spirit of community service decreases. The “imagined

culture” of the community is shed as the men leave their villages to earn wages working in mines, on railroad crews, as soldiers. They “came to identify with the forward-looking spirit of the national culture and to drift away from the traditional attitude that had sustained” them.¹ Accepting Anglo ways fostered disconnection. It was a process that eroded their sense of authenticity and their connectedness with place and deep historical tradition.²

In the small village of La Joya de Sevilleta today, the heritage of Hispanic culture still abounds. There is “a deeply-rooted sense of place, its *querencia*.”³ Understanding La Joya’s Hispanic past contributes to a more comprehensive overview of our nation’s past which, as historian Herbert Eugene Bolton contested nearly a hundred years ago, must include an understanding of our Hispanic origins, not just our early Anglo-Franco American heritage. In La Joya, respect for the cultural heritage of Old Nuevo México is kept alive by a community of villagers and their families, many of whom are descendants of the original grantees. Many former residents of La Joya have migrated and spread throughout the Southwest, and beyond. But they return regularly for religious

¹See William deBuys’ discussion in *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexican Mountain Range* regarding the “imagined culture” of a village community. William deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation, The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexican Mountain Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 132.

²Ibid

³*Querencia* is a phrase respectfully borrowed from Enrique R. Lamadrid in *Hermanitos Comanchitos: Indio-Hispano Rituals of Captivity and Redemption* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), xiii.

celebrations and feast days, annual pilgrimages, fiestas, and family reunions. The former common lands of *La Merced* are healthy, thriving, and protected from future abuse by man, albeit the heirs of the Sevilleta Grant no longer own them in common. They are now part of the United States national commons.

In between the windows of time and space within the history of La Joya lies a historical narrative of social, economic, political, bio-dynamic, ecological and cultural change. That record of change is illuminated and documented by these villagers' oral histories. Their historical content and context richly endow and augment our comprehensive understanding of public records and statistical data, enabling the historian or the researcher to gain a more informed point of view in recording history, and in interpreting and analyzing the past. Interviews with present day witnesses also inform us in surprising ways. Often, events significant to a community are not part of the official record — like the partnership between the Sevilleta Refuge and the La Joya Community Development Association.

The village of La Joya still stands on its ancestral grounds on the east river bank, opposite the modern ecological institutes on the west bank, out of sight among the low hillocks that blend invisibly into the natural southwest landscape. Those institutions minister to the ecological welfare of the world. And as caretakers of the Sevilleta lands, they have fulfilled their mission to restore the Sevilleta — and maintain and protect the natural diversity of plants and wildlife as it occurred historically on the Sevilleta.

Undoubtedly, the fate of the Sevilleta Land Grant is unique among the colonial land grants of the United States.

Regarding the significance of oral histories, it is apparent that this old tool of recording history continues to be an effective methodology that should be used as an integral part of the process of interpreting and accumulating knowledge in support of the historical writing of history. Wedding oral histories to the public records achieves a more informed understanding that serves well the interpretation and writing of history.

Eliciting informative narrative interviews, and then interpolating the documented written history that they validate — or perhaps re-construct — is the work of the oral historian. Utilizing those oral history narratives — these stories told by witnesses that are “thumb prints in time” — and applying their significance to the historical past and their relation to the present, is the work of all historians.

Arguably, the Sevilleta Land Grant is unique among land grants at many levels. From its prehistoric past to its colonial beginnings and its vitality as a booming town in the 1930s, the Sevilleta has reached a new plateau in this century. Its significance is both manifold and dichotomous. La Joya is rich with Hispanic Cultural heritage. Yet, the heirs of the La Joya grantees have lost the ownership of their common lands.

La Joya is a historical treasure. The State's Official Scenic Historic Marker at the entrance to town declares that "During the eighteenth century, this was the southernmost settlement along the Camino Real before travelers entered the *despoblado*, or uninhabited area, between here and El Paso del Norte. Every fall, caravans assembled here in preparation for this portion of the journey." Yet, there is nothing written on the marker memorializing the people of the village who have endured here for centuries. The few historical buildings, mostly remnants, do not indicate the presence of the glorious past of "The Jewel of the Sevilleta."

But the land, despite past abuse, is environmentally sound once again — and protected and preserved for posterity. Nor do subdivisions mar its natural beauty, and no strip-malls line its roads. The original vastness of the Sevilleta Grant is reassembled, almost entirely intact, and its preservation guaranteed. It offers shelter to wildlife. It is the home of a facility dedicated to the advancement of worldwide environmental science. The common lands of no other land grant have come through "the cycles of conquest" to arrive at such a glorious rejuvenation, and become a major world-class tool of research and influence, dedicated to the advancement of environmental science.

The history of the Sevilleta Grant embodies a unique spectrum of events characteristic of the history of the American West — with elements of loss, survival and renewal.

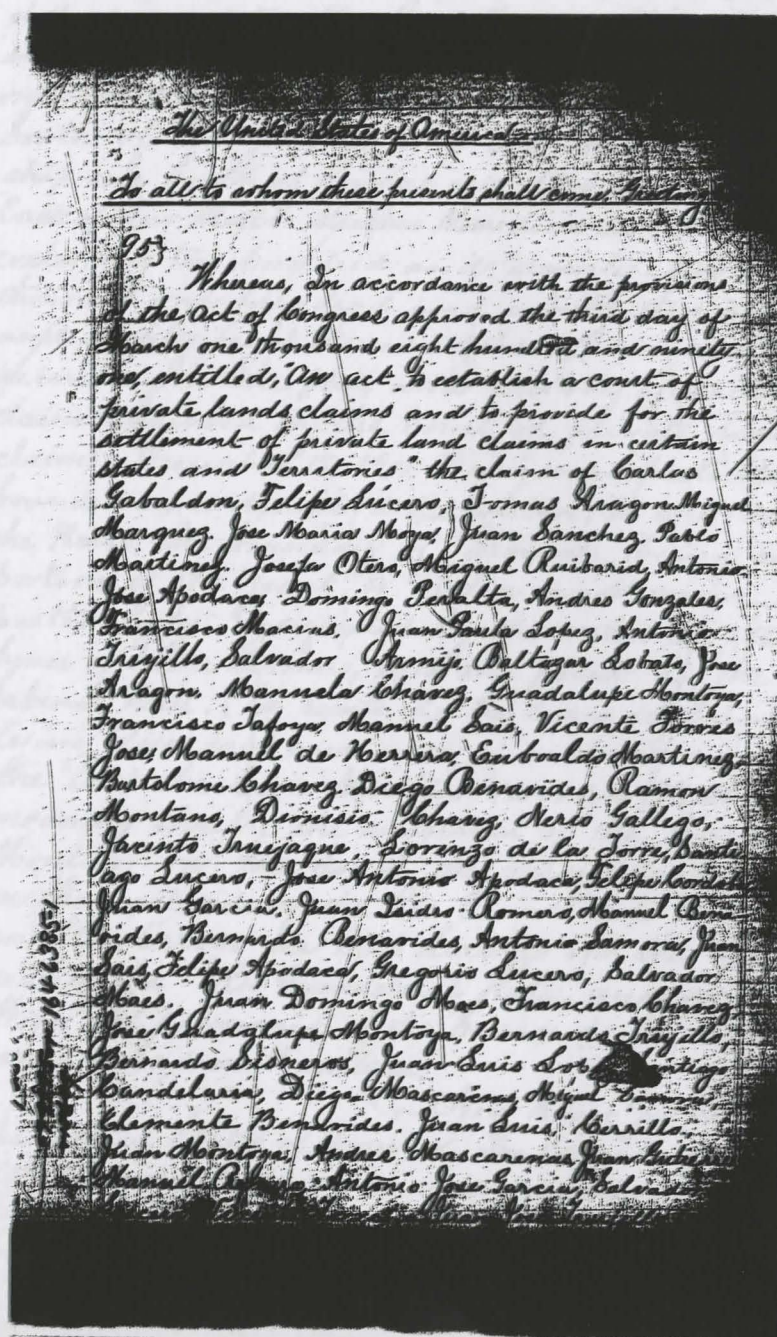
THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA GRANT: IN THE FIRST PERSON

The Papers for the Sevilleta Land Grant, February 2, 1902 (page 1) by "Francisco J. Rosendo" (J. Rosendo), Modesto Family Research Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico

FIGURES

Exhibits: Documents

The Patent for the Sevilleta Land Grant, February 8, 1907 [signed by "President T. Roosevelt"]. Microfilm. Mormon Family Research Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico.



Juan Francisco Hounis, Francisco Bismarck, Juan
 Lorenzo Sanchez and Juan Cruz Trujillo
 have been duly established to private land grant
 known as the Serilleta grant, situated in Town-
 ship one and two North, of Ranges one and two
 west, Township one and two North of Ranges
 one, two, three and four East, Township one
 South, of Ranges one and two West and Town-
 ship one South of Ranges one, two and three
 East of New Mexico Meridian in New Mexico,
 containing two hundred and seventy-two
 thousand one hundred and ninety-three acres
 and eighty-eight hundredths of an acre,
 according to the plat and survey of said
 claim approved by the Court of private land
 claims December 12, 1901. Being more particularly
 bounded and described as follows, to wit: on
 the North the boundary of Sabinal, being a
 portion of the grant to Belen and more
 particularly designated by the ruins of the
 house of Felipe Romero, and the point of the
 Sabinal Hill. (la punta de la loma del Sabinal)
 lying due east and west of each other; on
 the East the Cerro Montoso (wooden Hill)
 meaning thereby the summit of the Cerro
 Montoso; on the South the arroyo de Alamillo,
 on the east side of the Rio Grande del Norte,
 and the Arroyo de San Lorenzo on the West
 side of the Rio Grande del Norte, and on the
 West the summit of the Sierra de los Lad-
 rones, or Ladron Mountain.

Now Know Ye, That
 the United States of America, in consideration
 of the premises, have given and granted, and by
 these presents do give and grant unto the said
 Juan Francisco Hounis, Francisco Bismarck, Juan
 Lorenzo Sanchez, Juan Cruz Trujillo, Tomas Aragon,
 Manuel Marquez, Juan Manuel Noya, Juan Sanchez

Pablo Martinez, Jose Otero, Miguel Quintana,
 Antonio Jose Apodaca, Domingo Beralta, Andres
 Gonzales, Francisco Macias, Juan Paula Lopez,
 Antonio Trujillo, Salvador Armijo, Baltazar
 Lobato, Jose Aragon, Manuela Loharay,
 Guadalupe Montoya, Francisco Tefora, Manuel
 Bais, Vincente Torolo, Jose Manuel de Herrera,
 Eutroaldo Martinez, Bartolome Loharay, Diego
 Benarides, Ramon Montano, Dionisio Loharay,
 Neri Gallego, Jacinto Truejaque, Lorenzo de la
 Torre, Santiago Lucero, Jose Antonio Apodaca,
 Felipe Cordoba, Juan Garcia, Juan Isidro Roman,
 Manuel Benarides, Bernardo Benarides, Antonio
 Samora, Juan Bais, Felipe Apodaca, Gregorio
 Lucero, Salvador Maes, Juan Domingo Maes,
 Francisco Loharay, Jose Guadalupe Montoya,
 Bernardo Trujillo, Bernardo Bisorens, Juan Luis
 Lopez, Santiago Candelaria, Diego Mascareñas,
 Miguel Samra, Clemente Benarides, Juan
 Corral, Juan Montoya, Andres Mascareñas,
 Juan Gutierrez, Manuel Romero, Antonio Jose Garcia,
 Salvador Lucero, Vicente Torres, Juan Jose Trujillo,
 Juan Francisco Monto, Francisco Bisorens, Juan
 Sanchez, and Juan Laruz Trujillo and to their
 heirs, the lands above described: To Have and
 To Hold the same, together with all the rights,
 privileges, immunities and appurtenances of
 what ever nature thereunto belonging, and
 to their heirs and assigns forever. Provided that
 this grant shall not confer any right or title
 to any gold, silver, or quicksilver mines or
 minerals of the same: but all such mines
 and minerals shall remain the property
 of the United States, with the right of working
 the same, as in that land grant is more fully

Said Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
In testimony whereof I, Theodore Roosevelt,
President of the United States of America,
caused these letters to be made patent, and the
Seal of the General Land Office to be thereunto
affixed.

Given under my hand at the City of
Washington the eighth day of February,
the year of our Lord one thousand nine
hundred and seven and of the Inde-
pendence of the United States the one
hundred and thirty first.

By the President T. Roosevelt

By F. M. McKim, Secretary

L. H. Busch
Recorder of the General Land Office.

List of 1907 Patentees [alphabetical]. Typescript copy of microfilm. Mormon Family Research Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

1907 PATENTEES

Antonio Jose Apodaca	Felipe Apodaca	Jose Antonio Apodaca
Jose Aragon	Tomas Aragon	Salvador Armijo
Bernardo Benavides	Clemente Benavides	Diego Benavides
Manuel Benavides	Santiago Candelaria	Juan Luis Cerrillo
Bartolome Chavez	Dionisio Chavez	Francisco Chavez
Manuela Chavez	Felipe Cordoba	Carlos Gabaldon
Nerio Gallego	Antonio Jose Garcia	Juan Garcia
Andres Gonzales	Juan Gutierrez	Jose Manuel de Herrera
Baltazar Lobato	Juan Luis Lopez	Juan Paula Lopez
Felipe Lucero	Gregorio Lucero	Salvador Lucero
Santiago Lucero	Francisco Macias	Juan Domingo Maes
Salvador Maes	Miguel Marquez	Euboaldo Martinez
Pablo Martinez	Andres Mascarenas	Diego Mascarenas
Ramon Montano	Guadalupe Montoya	Jose Guadalupe Montoya
Juan Montoya	Jose Maria Moya	Juan Francisco Munis
Josefa Otero	Domingo Peralta	Juan Isidro Romero
Manuel Romero	Miguel Ruibarid	Juan Sais
Manuel Sais	Antonio Samora	Miguel Samora
Jose Lorenzo Sanchez	Juan Sanchez	Bernardo Sisneros
Francisco Sisneros	Francisco Tafoya	Lorrenzo de la Torre
Vicente Torres	Vicente Torres (*)	Jacinto Truejaque
Antonio Trujillo	Bernardo Trujillo	Juan Cruz Trujillo
Juan Jose Trujillo		

(*) Note: The name of Vicente Torres is listed twice on the original Patent.

New Grant Board Opposes Campbell

4-H CLUB ACTIVITIES

IN VALENCIA COUNTY

The 4-H club Typica orchestra of Valencia county has made arrangements to play at a program and dance during achievement day for the Lemitar 4-H clubs in Socorro county. The playing ability of these club members has been recognized by all 4-H clubs in New Mexico since they took the outstanding part in programs at the annual New Mexico club camp at State College last month.

The following Saturday, October 23, this orchestra will play at Tabet's hall in Belen, where all 4-H clubs in the valley will be represented. The proceeds of this dance and program will be used for the benefit of the 4-H clubs with the highest percentage of project completions.

Ernest Lyckman of State College will present a moving picture and marionette show at this program, and other numbers are being planned, it is said, as an attraction besides the dance.

FARM BUREAU MEETING

WAS WELL ATTENDED

A large number of Valencia county farm bureau members and others interested visitors attended a meeting held in the Belen city hall auditorium Wednesday night, October 13, in connection with the proposed setup of the AAA for 1938.

M. Meerschmidt of the AAA division was present, and talked on the new activities and the changes from last year's program that will probably come to the next year's program, and to the extent that they might be applicable in this area.

He cited the fact that congress has been called into special session and that in all probability these major farm problems would be among the first to receive consideration.

In the case of agricultural lands, it was apparent that certain allowances would be provided for the planting of crops, especially legumes, which would tend to rebuild soils depleted through continuous planting of grains and non-fertilization.

Mrs. E. F. Schaele entertained the members of the T. H. E. contract club on Friday afternoon.

INCOMPATIBLE

Him—Why did you divorce your husband?

He — Incompatibility. He always woke up about 2 a. m. and wanted to go home.

DEATHS

On October 4, 1937, Mrs. Ascension Silva died at the home of Herman Silva of this city at the age of 75. She is survived by one son, Trufo Silva, and two daughters, Margarita S. Beldondo and Maria S. Cordova; three grandchild-

New Land Grant Board Tries to Repudiate Contract Made by Their Predecessors in Office

According to the Journal, land owners of the 70,000 acre Belen grant have repudiated an optional contract to sell the land to Thomas W. Campbell, Montana wheat raiser, and will take the case to court to test the validity of the contract granted by a former board of trustees. At least, this is the version of Gilbert Espinosa, attorney for the holders.

Espinosa and Stanley W. Miller have been retained, the paper states, by the present board. The decision to repudiate the optional contract, which would sell 70,000 acres at 50 cents an acre to Campbell, was made last Friday at a meeting of 100 land owners, the attorney states.

Mr. Campbell holds a \$5555 mortgage on 30,000 acres of the land and also has purchased a first mortgage held on 40,000 acres by the Bronson A. Cutting estate, it was stated.

"Present board members hold that the previous board had no authority to enter into a contract which waived their right of redemption," Mr. Espinosa is quoted as stating.

"Owners of the grant Friday were prepared to pay off the \$5555 mortgage but Mr. Campbell would not accept. He asked that terms of his optional contract be complied with."

Mr. Campbell and his attorney, Clarence Bronson, attended Friday's meeting of the land owners.

A first mortgage on 40,000 acres was granted to the late Bronson M. Cutting for \$15,000 in 1928, Espinosa stated.

On December 3, 1936, with their taxes in arrears and the payments due on that date, the board executed a mortgage for \$5555 to Mr. Campbell. This constituted a first mortgage on 30,000 acres and a second mortgage on the 40,000 acres on which Bronson Cutting had granted his loan.

"At that time the board also agreed, in case Mr. Campbell purchased the Cutting mortgage," Espinosa claims, "to allow him to turn it in at \$14,000 on the purchase price. It also permitted him to turn in his own mortgage at \$5555 plus interest."

"On October 4, Mr. Campbell purchased the Cutting mortgage and served notice on the board that he wanted to exercise his option."

If the contract was fulfilled it would allow Mr. Campbell to purchase the land for between 30 and 35 cents an acre, according to Espinosa.

"The board is prepared to save at least 20,000 acres of the land and will go to the highest court in the land to do so," according to the lawyer.

Rafael Sanchez is president of the new board. David S. Sanchez was president of the old board.

The Belen grant is in Valencia and

Notice of Sale of Real Property on which Taxes are Delinquent to Satisfy the Lien for Taxes, Penalties, Interest and Costs Due, by State of New Mexico, County of Socorro. *The Socorro Chieftain* [Socorro, New Mexico] (November 4, 1937).

**STATE OF NEW MEXICO
COUNTY OF SOCORRO
NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL
PROPERTY ON WHICH TAXES
ARE DELINQUENT TO SATIS-
FY THE LIEN FOR TAXES,
PENALTIES, INTEREST AND
COSTS DUE.
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:**

Notice is hereby given that on the first Monday in December, being the 6th day of said month, 1937, at the front door of the courthouse in Socorro County, New Mexico, commencing at the hour of 10:00 a. m. and continuing from day to day for five days, unless all property delinquent for taxes shall sooner be sold, the undersigned County Treasurer, by virtue of the power in me vested by law, will offer for sale and sell at public vendue to the highest bidder for cash the lands and lots or parts of lots on which taxes are delinquent for the year 1936, and prior years, if any, as shown by the tax rolls of said county for said year and prior years, or so much thereof as may be necessary to realize the amount of taxes, penalties, interest and costs, unless same be paid before the sale.

Witness my hand this 4th day of November, 1937.

Florence Fortune
County Treasurer,
Socorro County, New Mexico
1st pub. 11-4—last pub. 11-11-37

Darnell Rents Space

Pete Rigas, proprietor of the Plaza Cafe, has leased the store space next door to J. H. Darnell from Hot Springs. As far as can be determined the space will be occupied by a variety store.

NOTICE [to present claims, to be paid from the proceeds of the La Joya Grant sale, on or before May 15, 1938]. NOTICE [to present claims, questioned by the claims committee, at the court hearing March 21, 1938]. NOTICE [dates and hours to present claims for payment at County Treasurer's Office]. Published by La Joya Grant Claims Committee. *The Socorro Chieftain* [Socorro, New Mexico] (November 18, 1937).

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James D. Gonzales of Moun-
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and \$150 damages to an automo-
bile when he was tried in the J.
P. Court on the charge of reckless
driving. Insurance companies
have a claim of \$500 against
him.
Ernesto Gallegos was fined
\$100 and costs and 30 days in
jail on the charge of reckless and
drunken driving.
Drivers' licenses of both were
revoked.

the Fowler house which is on the
northwest corner of Sixth and
Abeytia streets across from the
Browns' home.

NOTICE
All claims against Socorro
County, to be paid out of the
proceeds of the La Joya Grant
sale, must be presented on or be-
fore May 15th, 1938, otherwise,
the same will be barred.
**LA JOYA LAND GRANT
CLAIMS COMMITTEE**

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NOTICE
All claims against Socorro County to be paid out of the pro-
ceeds of the La Joya Grant sale, questioned by the claims com-
mittee, may be presented before the court at a hearing to be
held on March 21st, 1938.
LA JOYA LAND GRANT CLAIMS COMMITTEE

NOTICE
Claims may be presented for payment from Feb. 15th, 1938, to
May 15th, 1938, at the County Treasurer's Office. Hours from
9:00 A. M. to 12:00 noon from 1:00 P. M. to 4:00 P. M. on week
days. From 9:00 A. M. to 12:00 noon on Saturdays.
LA JOYA LAND GRANT CLAIMS COMMITTEE

“La Joya Grant Funds Ordered Disbursed.” *The Socorro Chieftain* [Socorro, New Mexico] (February 3, 1938).

The Socorro Ch

OFFICIAL PAPER, SOCORRO COUNTY

Vol. 56

SOCORRO, NEW MEXICO, THURSDAY FEBRUARY 3, 1938

About

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Douglas Appointed Committeeman

To Serve on Advisory Committee
of Educational Association

Announcement has been made
by Irvin P. Murphy, president of
the Southwestern New Mexico
Educational Association, that
Earl H. Douglas, superintendent
of schools at Socorro, has been
appointed to serve on the Advi-
sory Committee of the Association.

Work of the committee will
center around preparation for
the next annual convention to
be held in Hot Springs next Oc-
tober. Elaborate plans are be-
ing made by Hot Springs to en-
tertain the five hundred teachers
who are expected to be present.

Garden Club Elects Officers at Meeting

The Garden Club held a spe-
cial meeting Monday evening at
the Val Verde Hotel. New offi-
cers were elected for the coming
year. Mrs. H. O. Bursum is
president, Mrs. Harold Olsen vice
president, Mrs. George Hirsch-
feld corresponding secretary, Mrs.
Kenneth Edwards recording sec-
retary and W. B. Farrar treasurer.
The February meeting will be
on the second Monday, which is
February 14th.

Peoples' Ticket Wins In La Joya Election

La Joya Grant Funds Ordered Disbursed

Amount to Be Paid Listed By
Years

At a hearing last week at the
Socorro County Court House
Judge Eugene D. Lujan ordered
the following claims paid from
the proceeds of the La Joya
Grant sale. Lack of space pre-
vents listing the individual
names and amounts from being
published here. However, in
part, the amounts are as fol-
lows:

1928 and prior	\$11,960.61
1928-1929	5,206.22
1929-30	18.60
1930-31	1,305.88
1931-32	195.26
1932-33	588.73
1933-34	154.70

Warrants issued and retained
by the County Clerk and can-
celled by order of the County
Commissioners were ordered paid
in the amount of \$2634.21 for
the years from 1928 through the
fiscal year 1932-33 by the Court.

School certificates of indebt-
edness were ordered paid as fol-
lows:

1923-24, S. D. No. 12	\$2644.56
1924-25, S. D. No. 12	2,736.67
1926-27, S. D. No. 12	4,200.00
1923-24, Rural Schools	3,717.03
1924-25, Rural Schools	2,504.90
1927-28, S. D. No. 1	508.37
1930-31, S. D. No. 7	450.00

School warrants were ordered
paid as follows:
S. D. No. 12 \$2,532.84
County Schools 15,362.34

Record Crowd Turns Out for Ball

Record Crowd Attends Dance At
Armory Saturday Night

This year's President's Birth-
day Ball was better attended
than any other year. With the
assistance of Mr. Mundy's broad-
casting outfit everyone present
early in the evening was enabled
to hear the President's greet-
ings and the mike was used
throughout the evening when
dance numbers were interspersed
with speech making and an-
nouncements of numbers on the
program. Mayor Gallagos, Mr. A.
C. Torres, Mr. Epigenio Ra-
mirez, Mr. Garnett Burks and a
few others were heard.

A huge birthday cake was raf-
fled by the Committee and won
by Mr. Damian Padilla who turn-
ed it back for raffling. It was
drawn by Mr. W. B. Farrar who
also turned it back with Mrs.
Genevieve Dunlavy drawing it
and, upon being urged to take
it, agreed to with the intention
of feeding it "to the boys."

The Wilton twins entertained
the crowd with the Jarabe in
costume accompanied by Mrs.
Henry Morris at the piano. Mr.
Pete Romero and a companion
gave some guitar and accordi-
on numbers which were well re-
ceived by the crowd, most of
which remained to dance the
"Goodnight, Sweetheart" num-
at one o'clock.

Albert Howes Killed In Fall from Wagon

At accidental fall from a wag-

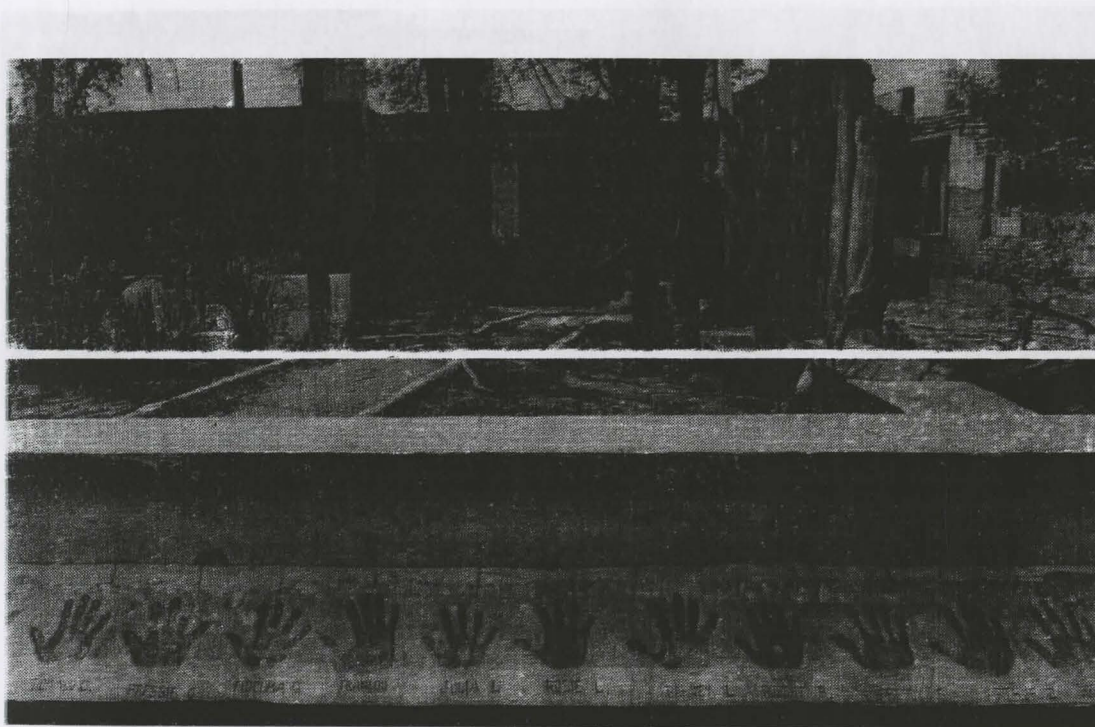
"Peoples' Ticket Wins in La Joya Election." *The Socorro Chieftain* [Socorro, New Mexico] (February 3, 1938). *High School*. From Arturo Sanchez, "La Joya Villagers Have a Big Fight," *Albuquerque Journal* [Albuquerque, New Mexico] (October 18, 1951): A-8.

Peoples' Ticket Wins In La Joya Election

The People's ticket was swept into office in the election in the La Joya School District race on February 2nd, by a margin of from three to seven votes. Vote tabulation follows:

Juan Jose Griego (P)—127
E. E. Esquivel (C)—122
Gregorio Cordova (P)—127
F. M. Romero (C)—122
Ignacio Trujillo (P)—126
Lupe S. Peralta (C)—123
Emiliana Barela (P)—128
Willie B. Baca (C)—121
Juan C. Padilla (P)—128
Cresencio Garcia (C)—121

Photo, "Handprints of a Long-Forgotten Class Remind La Joya Villagers of the Time When They Had Their Own High School." From Arturo Sandoval, "La Joya Villagers Have a Big Dream." *Albuquerque Journal* [Albuquerque, New Mexico] (October 18, 1981): A-6.



Photo, "State Road 47 Dribbles Away to Gravel in La Joya." From Arturo Sandoval, "La Joya Villagers Have a Big Dream." *Albuquerque Journal* [Albuquerque, New Mexico] (October 18, 1981): A-6.



State Road 47 Dribbles Away to Gravel in La Joya

“Sevilleta Research and Education Center receives \$3 million.” *Campus News*, University of New Mexico [Albuquerque, New Mexico] (March 14, 2005).

Sevilleta Research and Education Center receives \$3 million

Congresswoman Heather Wilson, joined by UNM President Louis Caldera, recently announced \$3 million in federal funding for a major ecological research project in the New Mexico desert.

The Sevilleta Research and Education Center, located approximately 50 miles south of Albuquerque, is located in and around the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge.

“UNM biologists and others do amazing work at the Sevilleta Refuge,” Wilson said. “Trying to understand our climate and our ecology is something we do at the most basic level when we turn the mighty news on to watch the weather. This project focuses on learning more about what drives our long-term climate. I’m proud to support this research and the work that UNM biologists do in this great outdoor laboratory.”

The refuge, managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and its surroundings, are positioned at the intersection of several major biotic zones.

Because of the confluence of these major zones, the Sevilleta presents an ideal setting to investigate how climate variability and climate change act together to affect ecosystem dynamics at biotic transition zones. Additionally,

the rapid growth and expansion of the City of Albuquerque and suburbs to the north increasingly will have an impact on ecosystem processes at the Sevilleta. These urban forces will interact with climatic variation to catalyze change in the aridland region.

The U.S. House approved the \$3 million investment last summer in the Interior Appropriations bill. The final amount was included in the consolidated appropriations legislation signed by the President last December.

According to Terry Yates, vice president for Research and Economic Development, “Sevilleta is one of the nation’s premier long-term ecological teaching and research sites. We will now be able to conduct near real-time, on site analysis in a state-of-the-art facility in ways that

weren’t before possible.”

The Sevilleta Research and Education Center will complement the current Sevilleta Field Research Station.

Once available, the center will streamline integrated research efforts of the New Mexico Research Consortium benefiting UNM, NMNSL, New Mexico Tech, and Sandia and Los Alamos National Labs. Set in a national wildlife refuge, the facility will be used by scientists and educators from New Mexico and the southwest. “The Sevilleta Research and Education Center builds on New Mexico’s strengths by promoting research and sharing knowledge among the universities and national laboratories,” said Wilson. “I’m pleased that we’re making this investment. I believe it will yield benefits in preserving our environment and natural resources.”



From left, UNM President Louis Caldera, Congresswoman Heather Wilson, and Reed Dusenbruck, recently named interim provost.

Illustrations, Charts, and Maps:

"Pueblos Abandoned in Historic Times." Figure 2, map. Albert H. Schroeder. "Pueblos Abandoned in Historic Times," *Handbook of North American Indians* 9. Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute, 1979: 239.

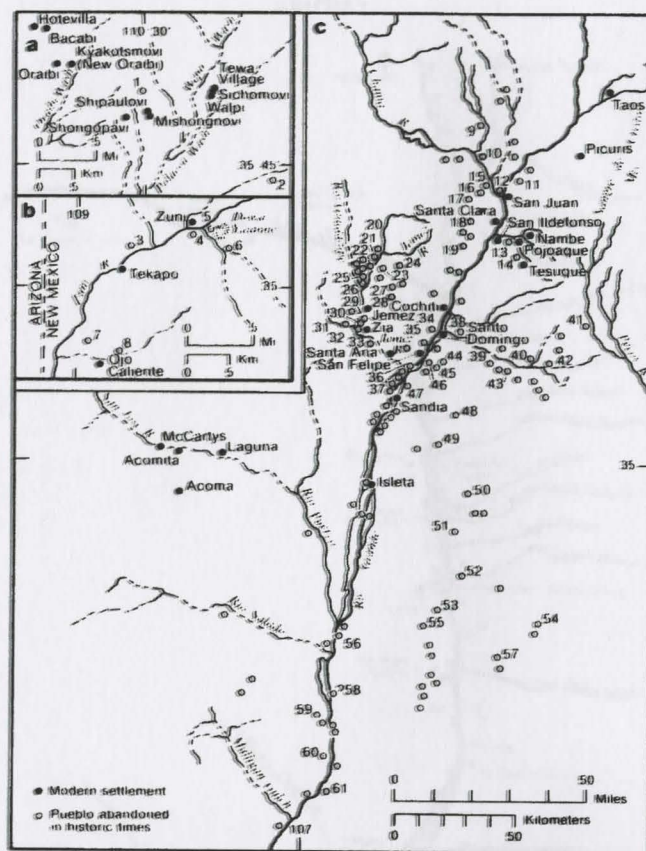


Fig. 2. Pueblos abandoned in historic times (numbered) and modern settlements. 1, Payupki; 2, Awatovi; 3, Kwakina; 4, Halona; 5, Matsaki; 6, Kiakima; 7, Hawikuh; 8, Kianawa (Kechipauan); 9, Sapawe; 10, Tsama; 11, Pioge; 12, Yunque; 13, Jacona; 14, Cuyamungue; 15, Teewi; 16, Ku-Owinge; 17, Pesere; 18, Puye; 19, Tsirege; 20, Unshagi; 21, Nonyishagi; 22, Amushungwa; 23, Giusewa; 24, Seshiuqua; 25, Astialakwa; 26, Patoqua; 27, Kiatsukwa; 28, Quiashidshi?; 29, LA 499; 30, LA 241; 31, LA 924; 32, Old Zia (LA 384); 33, LA 374; 34, LA 922; 35, Old Santa Ana; 36, LA 2049; 37, Kuaua; 38, Gipuy; 39, San Marcos; 40, Galisteo; 41, Pecos; 42, San Cristóbal; 43, San Lázaro; 44, Tunque; 45, LA 1779; 46, Old San Felipe; 47, Puaray; 48, Paako; 49, Portezuelo; 50, Chilili; 51, Tajique; 52, Quarái; 53, Abó; 54, Tabirá; 55, Tenabó; 56, Seelocú; 57, Gran Quivira (Humanas); 58, Alamillo; 59, Pilabó; 60, Senecú; 61, Qualacu. The names of the abandoned Pueblos are in some cases those recorded in the early Spanish period and in other cases renderings of names applied to Pueblo ruins by Indians in the modern period. Some ruins occupied in historic times and probably noted by the Spaniards are indicated by the number assigned to them by the Laboratory of Anthropology, the Museum of New Mexico, Santa Fe.

CHAPTER 9

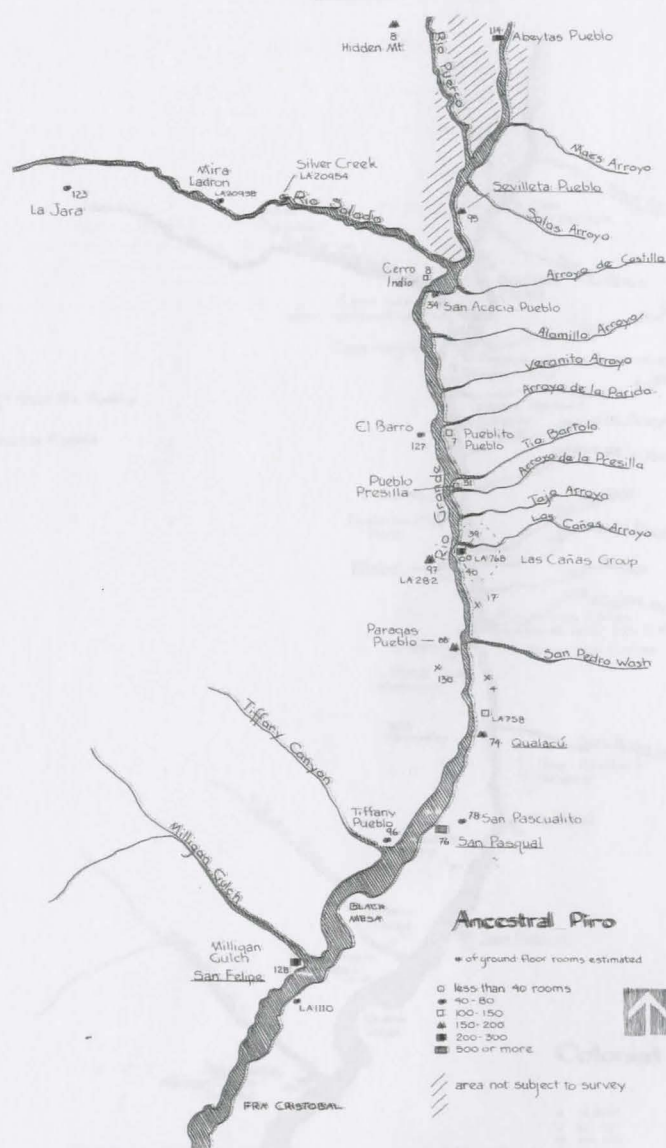


FIGURE 9.1. Distribution of Ancestral Fire-phase sites. Illustration—Caren Walt

“Distribution of Colonial Piro phase sites.” Figure 9.3, illustration. Michael P. Marshall, and Henry J. Walt. *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province*. Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984: 140.

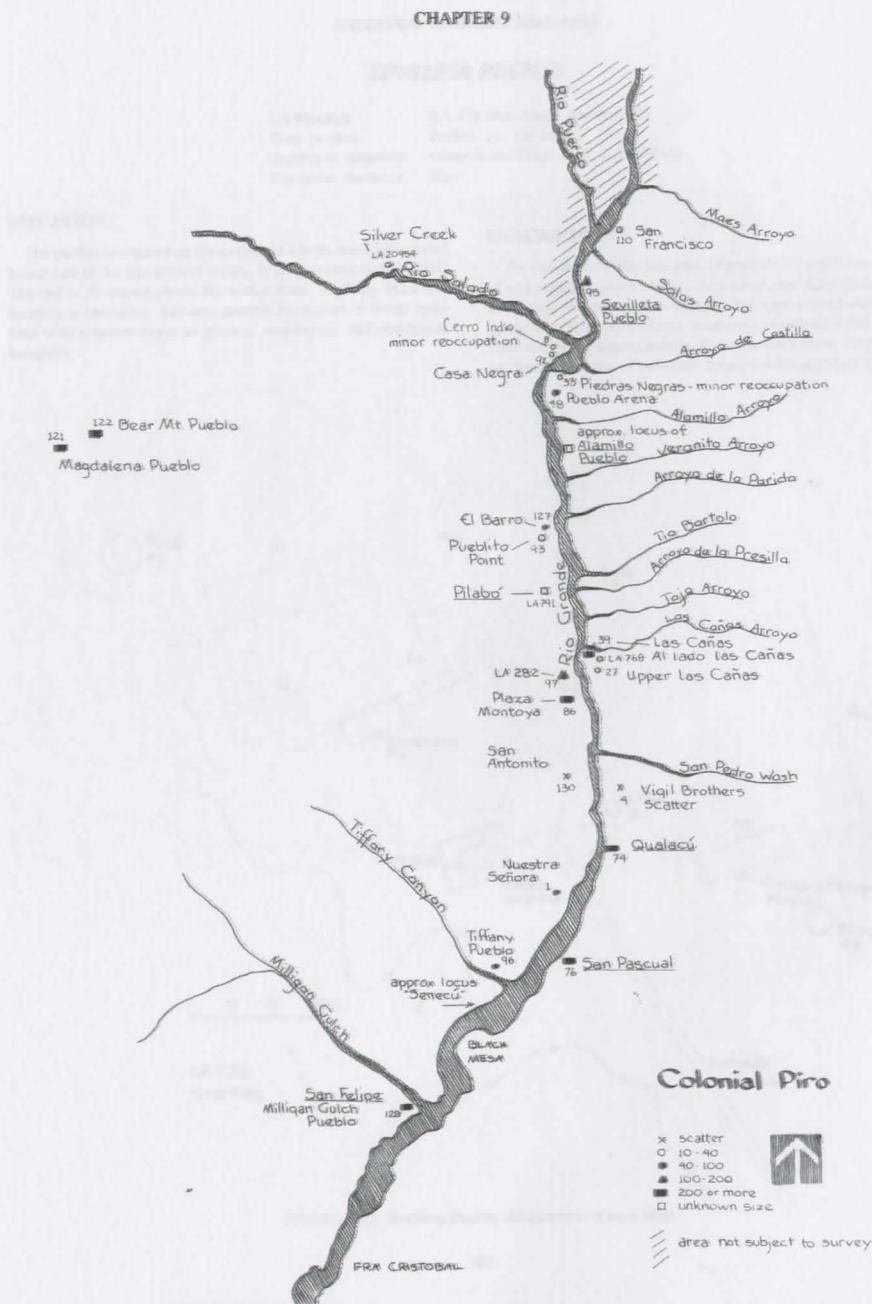


FIGURE 9.3. Distribution of Colonial Piro phase sites. Illustration—Caren Walt

“Sevilleta Pueblo.” Figure 9.73, illustration. Michael P. Marshall, and Henry J. Walt. *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province*. Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984: 203.

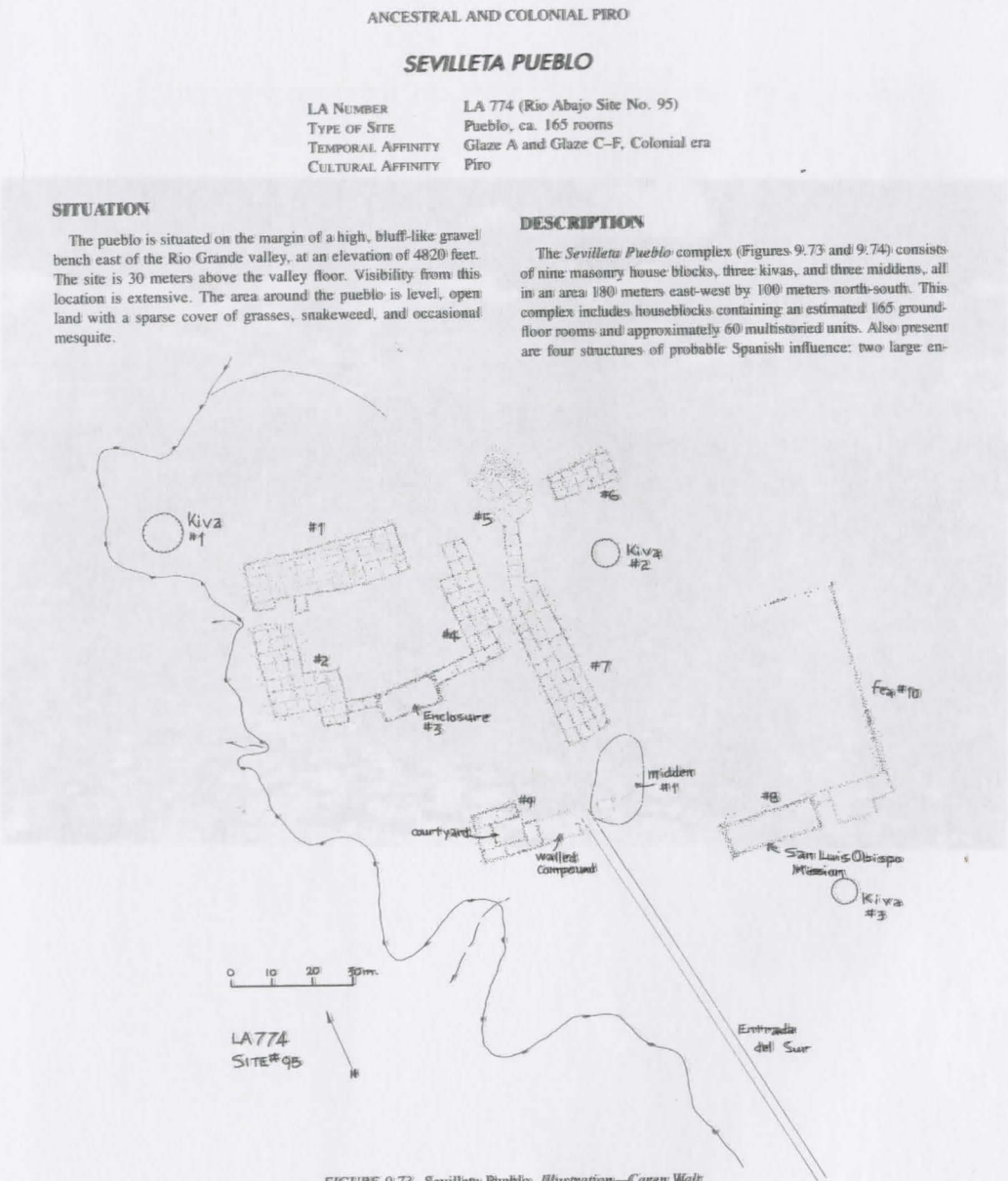
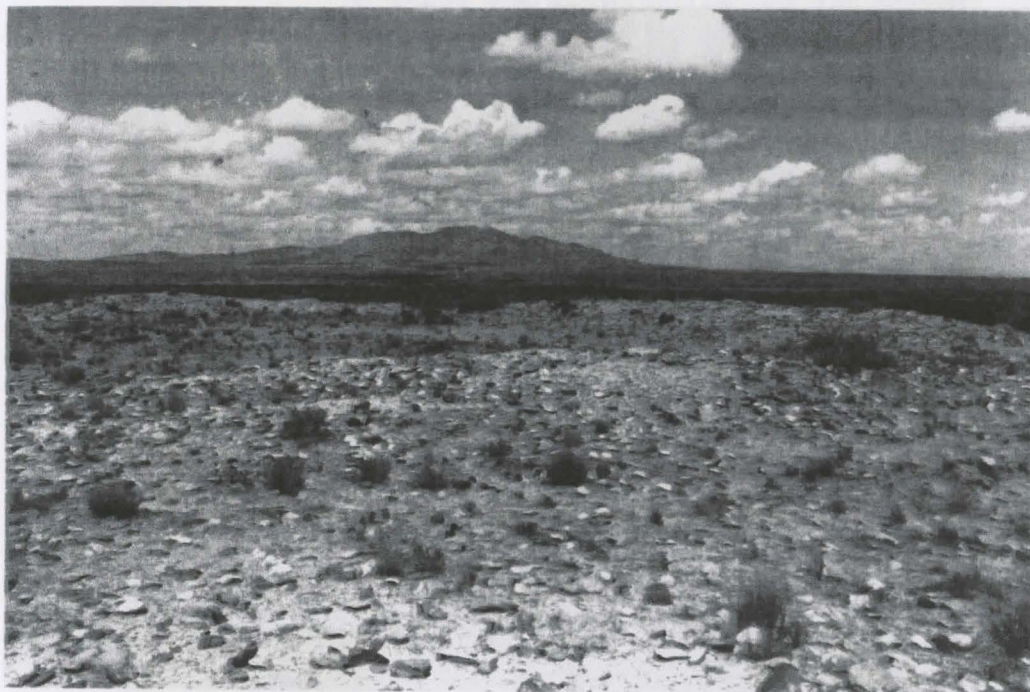
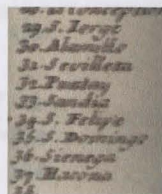


FIGURE 9.73. Sevilleta Pueblo. Illustration—Caren Walt

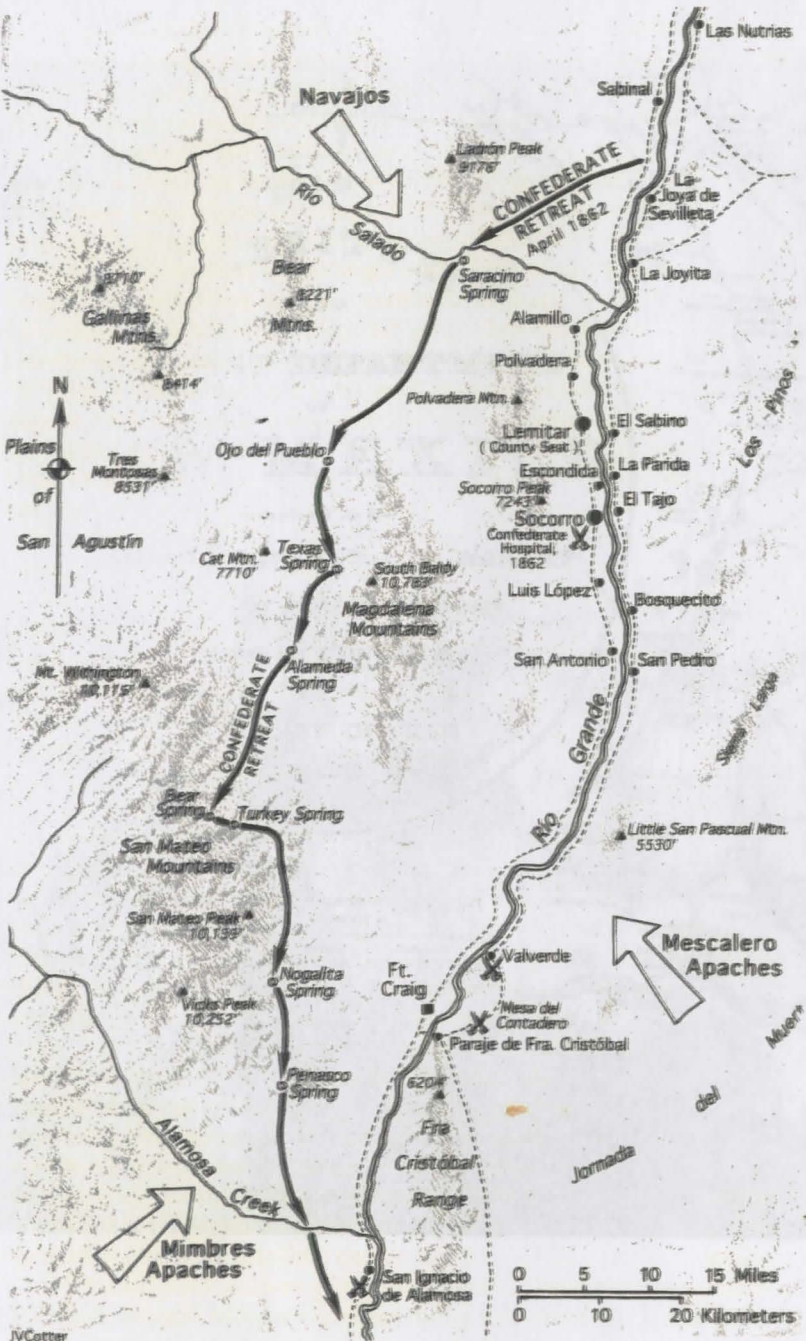
"Housemounds at Sevilleta Pueblo." Figure 9.74, photo. Michael P. Marshall, and Henry J. Walt. *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province*. Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984: 204.



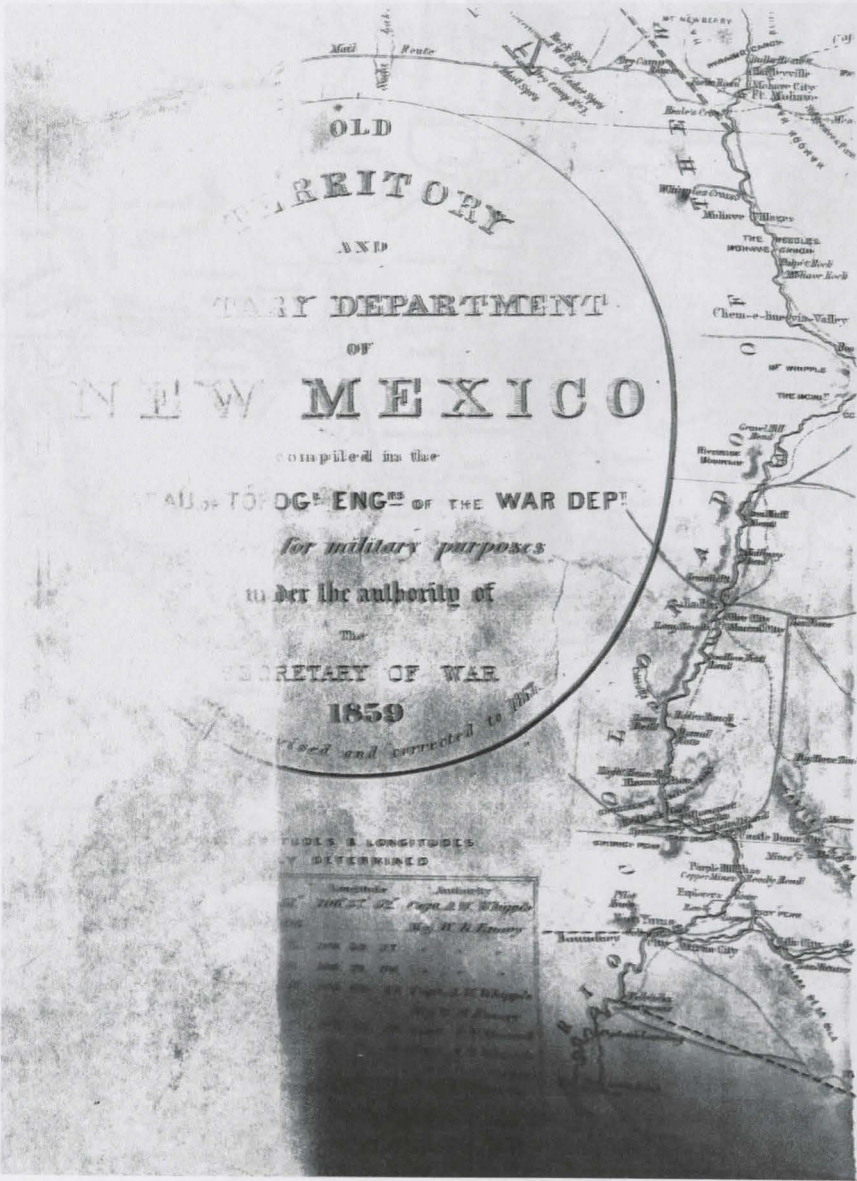
“Map of California and New Mexico from L’Atlas Curieux of N. de Fer Map, 1700.”
Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora. *The Mercurio Volante of don Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora: An Account of the First Expedition of don Diego de Vargas into New Mexico in 1692.* Irving A. Leonard, trans. and ed. Los Angeles: The Quivira Society, 1932: 88.



“Central New Mexico, 1861-1865.” Map by John V. Cotter, from Jerry Thompson, “Gloom Over Our Fair Land: Socorro County During the Civil War.” *New Mexico Historical Review* 73 (April 1998): 104.



“Map of Old Territory and Military Department of New Mexico, 1859, Revised and Corrected to 1867.” Section of map. Bureau of Topographical Engineers of the War Department.

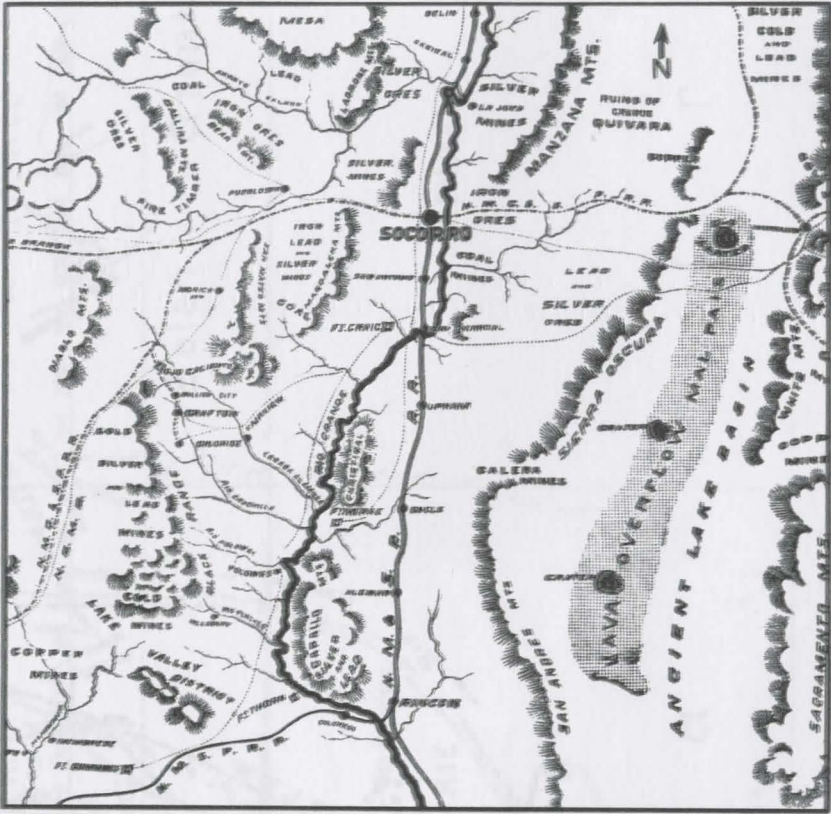


“Map of Old Territory and Military Department of New Mexico, 1859, Revised and Corrected to 1867.” Section of map. Bureau of Topographical Engineers of the War Department.

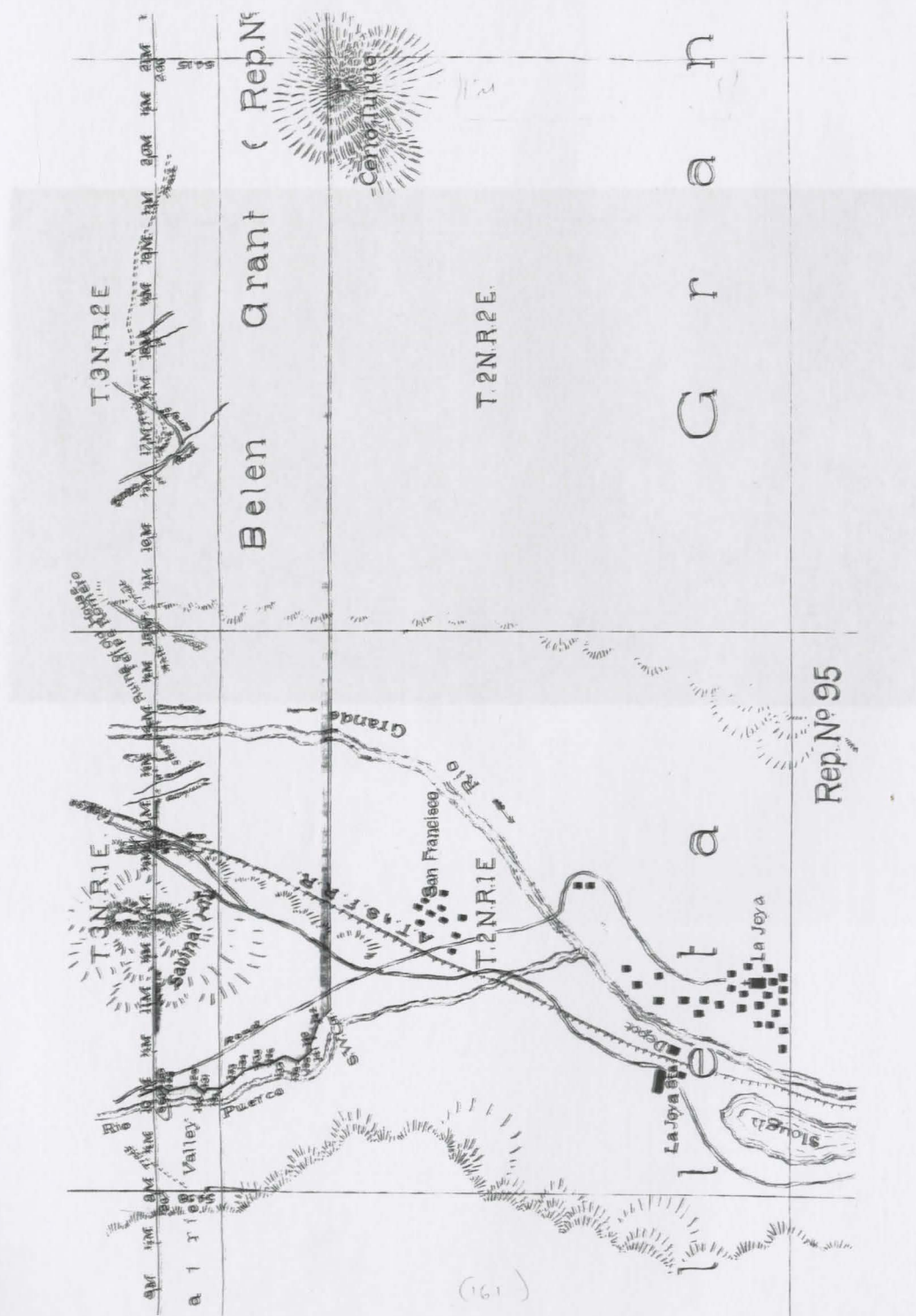


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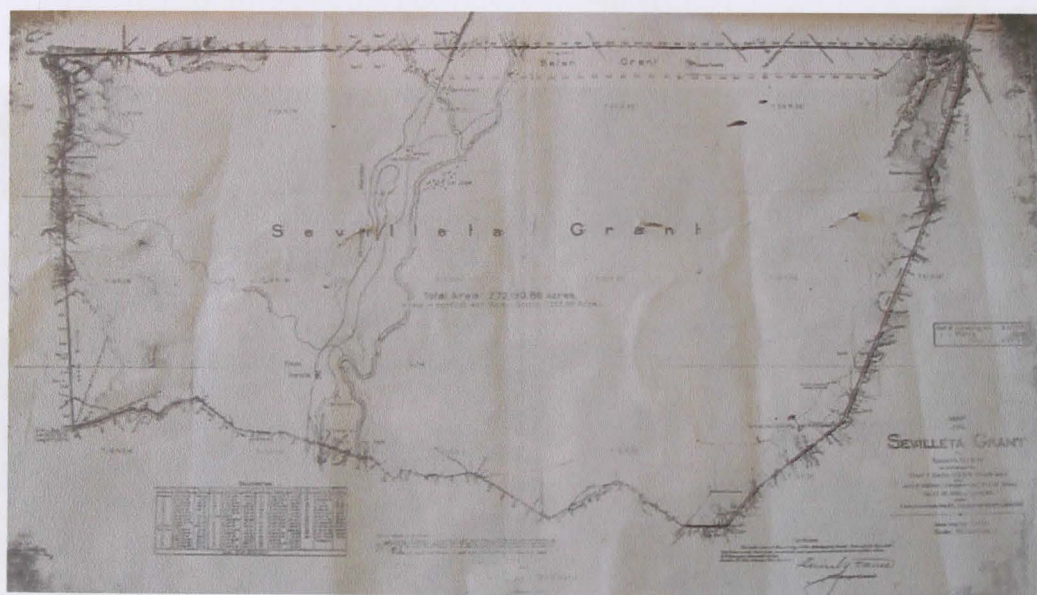


"Map of the Santa Fe and Socorro Counties, 1894." [Section of map.] Catron MSS 29, Land Title Records, Series 301 U.S. Court of Private Land Claims, Santa Fe District. Case Records 1891-1903. Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.



"Map of The Sevilleta Grant, Socorro County, 1896." Survey of the La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant by Albert F. Easley, U.S.D.S. [surveyor], 272,193 acres.

August La Joya Fiesta, La Joya, New Mexico, 1997. Photo (caption) (Left to right) by author, Lilly McMahon, Gloria Torres Arreaga, and Pascuala Talaya Moya Torres. (Author's collection)



Photographs

Annual La Joya Fiesta, La Joya, New Mexico, 1997. Photo [candid]: (Left to right) the author, Lally McMahan, Gloria Torres Armijo, and Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres. (Author's collection)





Genealogy Display

Annual La Joya Fiesta, La Joya, New Mexico, 1997.



In front of Nuestra Señora de Dolores, Our Lady of Sorrows Church

Annual La Joya Fiesta, La Joya, New Mexico, 1997.



Dancers on the Plaza
Annual La Joya Fiesta, La Joya, New Mexico, 1997.

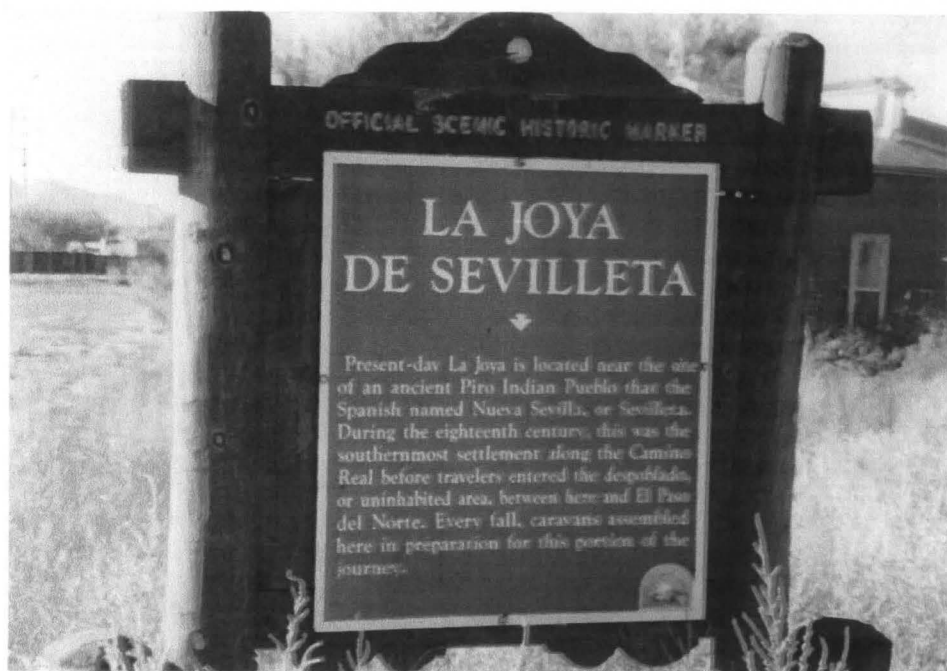


Vendor

Photo [candid], Contreras, New Mexico, 1997. Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and her daughter Marian. (Author's collection)



Photo [candid], La Joya de Sevilleta, State Historical Marker, 1997. (Author's collection)



APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

Bibliographical Finding Guide to the Study of the Human Habitation of the La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant

April 2006

by

Ramona L. Rand-Caplan

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APPENDIX B.

**ANNOTATED TIME LINE:
HISTORY OF THE HUMAN HABITATION
OF THE LA JOYA DE SEVILLETA LAND GRANT**

**Spanish Colonial Land Grant
Rio Abajo Province/Socorro County
Nuevo México/New Mexico**

April 2006

by

Ramona L. Rand-Caplan

PART I

**PIRO-TO-SPANISH COLONIAL CONTINUUM
IN THE RIO ABAJO PROVINCE**

1000 A.D. —

In the middle Rio Grande Valley, hunters, hunter-gatherers and nomadic hunters were succeeded by the farmer. There are 28 Piro/Piro-Hispanic or Ancestral Piro Sites on the Sevilleta and Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuges.

“With agriculture came a sedentary life style and villages dotted the middle Rio Grande Valley by 1000 A.D. The scattered potsherds, arrowheads, and stone implements attest to the widespread occupation of the Socorro district.”⁴

⁴Bruce Ashcroft, *The Territorial History of Socorro*, 1.

"Here, on opposite banks of the Rio Grande, are the ruins of the agricultural villages of the prehistoric pueblo Indians, tangible proof that lands now reserved for wildlife at one time were flourishing locales of human habitation."⁵

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service lands at Sevilleta and Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuges are well situated with respect to primary Piro settlements. The Rio Abajo survey had identified 28 sites with either definite Piro and Piro-Hispanic affinity, or tentative classification as ancestral Piro, on these two refuges. In terms of sheer size, several of these sites are among the most noteworthy in the Piro culture area. In actuality, most of the principal Piro pueblos at Sevilleta and Bosque del Apache had been recorded previously, but it remained for the Rio Abajo project to produce detailed evaluations of these properties, including the physical conditions of each."⁶

Trade with the Plains Indians

"It is evident that the Piro Pueblos had traditionally maintained considerable commerce with the Plains tribes as indicated by the frequent reference to buffalo products in the early historic records. (Hammond and Rey)."⁷ "This commerce appears to have involved visitation of the Piro Pueblos by Plains tribes and exchange of buffalo products (meat, hides and tallow) for agricultural products and woven goods. . . . there is little doubt that Plains commerce was an important aspect of the village [Senecu] economy probably throughout its occupation."⁸

⁵Michael P. Marshall, Foreword, *Qualacu, Archeological Investigation of a Piro Pueblo* (Albuquerque: United States Fish & Wildlife Service, University of New Mexico, Office of Contract Archeology, 1987), 7.

⁶Ibid.

⁷George P. Hammond, and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico: 1580-1594: The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castano de Sosa, Morlete, and Leyva de Bonilla and Humana* (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 82,172,220 and 221.

⁸*Qualacu*, 125.

“Plains commerce and Piro-Athapaskan interaction was maintained throughout the Piro Colonial era but with increased incidence of Apache raiding and predation, which appears to have been operative in the early 17th Century . . . it is probable that early Athapaskan-Pueblo relationships were but infrequently hostile.”⁹

1540-1542 — Coronado Entrada [Francisco Vásquez de Coronado]

“While in Zuni in 1540 Coronado learned of a province of eight Pueblos, which he reached in eight days. This was Tutahaco, where the terraced Pueblos and the people’s dress were like those of Tiguex (Southern Tiwa), which lay up the Rio Grande. Later, four more Pueblos were found downstream.”¹⁰ [The Sevilleta site, unnamed, was reported.]

1581-1582 — Rodriquez-Chamuscado Entrada [Agustín Rodriquez and Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado].

The expedition documents the Piro’s agriculture, architecture, pottery, clothing, and domesticated animals in the sixteenth century, and specifically describes “La Hoya [La Joya].”

⁹Hammond and Rey, 1966, 83, in *Qualacu*, 93.

¹⁰George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, [edited and translated by], *Narratives of the Coronado expedition, 1540-1542* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 220, 245, 259, in Albert H. Schroeder, “Pueblos Abandoned in Historic Times,” Alfonso Ortiz, Ed., *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), 236.

Gallegos Relacion, 1581, of the Rodriquez-Chamuscado Expedition

“... we did find in the valley many cornfields like those of Mexico, and also fields of beans, calabashes and cotton”¹¹

“We found the houses very well planned and built in blocks with mud walls, white-washed inside and well decorated with monsters, other animals, and human figures.”¹²

“The inhabitants have a great deal of crockery, such as pots (ollas), large earthen jars (tinajas), and flat pans (comales), all decorated in the pottery of New Spain.”¹³

“The people sustain themselves on corn, beans, and calabashes. They make tortillas and corn-flour gruel (atole), have buffalo meat and turkeys — they [*sic*] have large numbers of the latter. There is not an Indian who does not have a corral for his turkeys, each of which holds a flock of one hundred birds.”

“They raise many shaggy dogs — which, however, are not like those owned by the Spaniard — and build underground huts in which they keep these animals.”¹⁴

“The natives wear Campeche-type cotton blankets, for they have large cotton fields.”¹⁵

¹¹Hammond and Rey 1966:82 in *Qualacu*, 109.

¹²Ibid in *Qualacu*, 25.

¹³Ibid in *Qualacu*, 65.

¹⁴Ibid, 83, in *Qualacu*, 93.

¹⁵Ibid in *Qualacu*, 109.

“A variety of glazeware temper types [ceramic] occur suggesting possible regional and temporal Piro glazeware expressions.” Called “a typical Piro Pueblo assemblage.”¹⁶

“White ware ceramic vessels appear to have been manufactured in the Piro Pueblos throughout the PIV continuum up until about the time of the Spanish conquest. The incidence of manufacture however exhibits a consistent decline throughout the continuum. In the earliest PIV Piro pueblos occupied in the 14th Century white ware ceramic production exceeded glazeware manufacture.”¹⁷

“... probably deposited in the early 1400's, white ware and glazeware vessels appeared to have been manufactured with equal frequency. There is evident . . . at Qualacu a consistent decline in the frequencies of white ware material with a corresponding increment in glazeware production. This consistent pattern of decline parallels that evident in the production of textured utility ware materials.”¹⁸

The records of the 1581-1582 Rodriquez-Chamuscado Entrada contain a list of pueblos they visited “on the east side of the Sierra Morena (Manzanos), 14 leagues from Puaray (of the Southern Tiwas), probably by way of Tijeras Canyon,” including “La Hoya [La Joya]” with “90 houses, 3 stories.”¹⁹

1582-1583 — Antonio de Espejo Entrada

The records of this expedition describe in infinite detail the native architecture and agriculture, as well as the decorative artistry of their clothing, their weaponry, food preparation and storage, community activities including dancing and games, their extreme

¹⁶Qualacu, 67.

¹⁷Ibid, 78.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹La Hoya (La Joya) is the name bestowed by the Spaniards. Schroeder, *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9:239.

personal hygiene and cleanliness, cultural practices, tribal organization and leadership, and religious practices.

1582 Report of Antonio de Espejo — “Antonio de Espejo noted twelve Indian villages (pueblos) in the central Rio Grande Valley between San Marcial and Sevilleta.”²⁰

“On reaching the said pueblos, we proceeded upstream for two days and found ten inhabited pueblos on both sides of the river and close to its banks in addition to others which seemed to be off the beaten track. Passing through these settlements, we estimated that they contained more than twelve thousand people, including men, women, and children.”²¹

“In this province some of the natives are clad in cotton blankets, buffalo hides, or dressed chamois skins. They wear their blankets like the Mexicans, except that over their privy parts they have small pieces of colored cotton cloth; and some of them wear shirts. The women have cotton skirts, often embroidered with colored thread, and over the shoulders a blanket like that worn by the Mexican Indians, fastened at the waist by a strip of embroidered material, with tassels, resembling a towel. The skirts are worn like slips, next to the skin, the lower portion loose and swishing. Each woman displays such an outfit to the best of her ability; and everyone, man or woman, wears shoes or boots with soles of buffalo hide and uppers of dressed deerskin. The women arrange their hair neatly and prettily, winding it with care around moulds [*sic*] at each side of the head. They do not wear any head covering.”²²

“They have found fields planted with corn, beans, calabashes, and tobacco (piciete) in abundance. These crops are seasonal, dependent on rainfall, or they are irrigated by means of good ditches. They are cultivated in Mexican fashion, and in each planted field the worker has a

²⁰J. Lloyd Mechem, “Antonio de Espejo and His Journey to New Mexico,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 30 (October 1926), 124-25.

²¹Hammond and Rey 1966:219, in *Qualacu*, 9.

²²*Ibid*, 220, in *Qualacu*, 123.

shelter, supported by four pillars, where they found [*sic*] is carried to him at noon and he spends the siesta; for usually the workers stay in their fields from morning until night just as do the people of Castile. . . . on both sides of the river there are sandy stretches extending for more than a league, naturally adapted for the production of abundant corn crops."²³

"The weapons used by the natives are bows and arrows, flint-edged wooden clubs (*macanas*), and shields (*chimales*). Their arrows are made of fire-hardened shafts with sharp-edged flint tips which can easily pierce leather armor. The shields are made of buffalo hide, oval in shape; the battle clubs — half a yard long and very heavy at one end — are used as defensive weapons by persons inside their own houses. We did not hear that these Indians were at war with any other province. They respect each other's boundaries. Here we were told of another province with similar characteristics farther up the same river."²⁴

"Their houses are two, three, or four stories high, each house being partitioned into a number of rooms; and in many of the houses there are *estufas* for the winter weather. In the *pueblos* each plaza has two *estufas*, which are houses built underground, well sheltered and tightly closed, with benches inside to sit on. At the entrance to each *estufa* there is a ladder for going down into it, so that strangers may find shelter there, and a large stack of wood."²⁵

"In every one of these *pueblos* there is a house to which food is brought for the devil. The natives have small stone idols which they worship; and also, just as the Spanish have crosses along the roads, these people set up, midway between *pueblos*, their artificial hillocks (*cuecillos*) built of stones like wayside shrines, where they place painted sticks and feathers, saying that the devil will stop there to rest and talk to them."²⁶

²³Ibid, 221, in *Qualacu*, 109.

²⁴Ibid, 221, in *Qualacu*, 83.

²⁵Ibid, 221, in *Qualacu*, 25.

²⁶Ibid, 221, in *Qualacu*, 127.

"From the above entry the impression is given that these small stone idols were housed in a special room and were ritually fed."²⁷

From Luxan's 1582 Account of the Espejo Expedition

"... they wear their hair in the shape of a queue. Most of the men cover their privy parts with small pieces of cotton cloth; others leave them uncovered, tied near the prepuce with a cord of maguey fiber. Some wear tanned deerskin jackets and other tanned deerskins tied to their bodies. Most of them have, especially for sleeping, quilts made of turkey feathers, because they raise cocks and hens in quantities. The women wear their hair tied up on their heads, and cover their privy parts and bodies with cotton blankets and tanned deerskins, and on top of these, feather quilts in place of cloaks. They wear shoes of tanned buffalo leather and tanned deerskins fashioned like boots."²⁸

"They are industrious people who plant and gather very fine corn, beans and calabashes in abundance. Thus the entire river is bordered with sown fields; we found thus full of stubble, which was the salvation of our horses."²⁹

"They are clean and tidy, and do not smell, as is the case with other Indian nations. Their houses are of mud, built by hand, the walls like small adobes half a yard wide. They contain upper and lower floors and have bedrooms. The people climb to the upper floors by means of moveable hand ladders; and in the lower part they have their granaries, pantries, and kitchens."³⁰

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid, 173, in *Qualacu*, 123.

²⁹Ibid, 172, in *Qualacu*, 123.

³⁰Ibid, 172, in *Qualacu*, 25.

"The rooms are small and whitewashed. The doors are shaped like a "U" so as to allow only one person to go through at a time."³¹

"In each pueblo, in the center of the plaza, are some very large cellars two and one-half estados deep, with an entrance in the shape of a trap door and with a stepladder. They are all whitewashed and provided with stone benches all around. Here the people perform their games and dances. One side are their Temascales where they bathe."³²

"... they have mills where they grind the corn, as for the making of tortillas. They grind it raw or toasted and knead it with hot water; they make very fine tortillas. Their mills are of the following type; four or five and even eight mills are placed together, depending on the capacity of the house. They are a yard long and two-thirds wide. They are made of white-washed stones, built low, right on the ground, and resemble metates, with a border one span high and in the center as indented stone like the metate, about half a yard in length and a third wide. The Indians grind with another stone."³³

"The records of the entradas of 1581-1582 and 1582-1583 say this southernmost province, which can be identified as those of the Piros, had mud-walled houses, square with square windows, tau-shaped doorways and whitewashed interiors decorated with painted monsters, animals, and human figures. Their settlements [12 according to Obregón in Hammond and Rey 1928:290] were on both banks and away from the river, built two to four stories high with many rooms in each house. Walls were one-half vara (16 inches wide), and moveable ladders provided access. The lower part contained kitchens, pantries and granaries, the last having four to eight mills (metates and manos) at one end of the room in a bin enclosed with whitewashed stones. In the center of the plaza, with ladders in the hatchways, were two large kivas, two one-half estados (4.6 yards), with whitewashed walls and a stone bench encircling the interior. Games and dances took place there, and visitors gathered in them. Sweatbaths stood to one side. Each Pueblo had a house containing small stone

³¹Ibid, 172, in *Qualacu*, 25.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid, in *Qualacu*, 83.

idols to which food was carried. Small shrines of stone were located between Pueblos in which they placed painted sticks and feathers.”³⁴

“These people raised corn, beans, squash and cotton, in fields either dependent on rain or irrigated with good diversion ditches. The farmers, all day in the fields, ate food brought to them in a ramada where they also took siestas. They made tortillas and atoles (corn flour gruel), had buffalo and turkey meat, used picietes (medicinal herbs), and drank pinole (made from toasted ground maize). They had decorated jars, pots, and griddles, and water jars held in earthen stands.”³⁵

“Cotton and campeche-type cotton blankets and buffalo hides, dressed deerskins, and mantas tied around the waist with a sash like those of Mexican Indians provided warmth. Men wore colored cotton loincloths or went naked, with the prepuce tied with a cord, and used deerskin jackets. Women, whose hair was put up in ‘moulds,’ one on each side, had color-embroidered cotton skirts and shoes or boots with buffalo-hide soles and deerskin uppers. They used cotton blankets, tanned deerskins, and feather-quilt cloaks, which also were used for sleeping. Domesticated turkeys, kept in pens that would hold 100 birds, provided feathers. Small shaggy dogs were kept in underground huts.”³⁶

“Each Pueblo had its cacique, the number varying according to the Pueblo’s size, as well as tequitatos, under-caciques, who performed like alguaciles and executed the cacique’s orders by crying them out to the people. These people were at war with the nation upstream (identifiable as the Southern Tiwa), and for weapons used a few poor Turkish-style bows, arrows with fire-hardened shafts and flint points, wooden clubs like a mace (macanas) 16 inches long with thick heads and stones strapped on,

³⁴Gallegos Lamero 1927:262-263, 348-350; P’erez de Luxán 1929:69-74; Espejo 1916:176-179, in Schroeder, *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9, 236-237.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

buffalo-hide shields, clubs, and bludgeons. They respected their boundaries.”³⁷

1590-1591 — Entrada of [Gaspar] Castaño de Sosa

1598 — Entrada of don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico

Traveling north up El Río Grande, don Juan de Oñate camped at a little pueblo on June 15, 1598. Seelocú is the native Indian name of the pueblo that Oñate renamed Nueva Seville, New Seville. He named it Nueva Sevilla, or Sevilleta, “because of its resemblance to Seville, Spain.” The Piro pueblo on the east bank of the river was about twenty-five miles north of present-day Socorro. There the company took “refuge in the Piro’s houses for protection” against the nomadic Indian raiders that were plaguing the area, and remained there for six days.³⁸

— “The only details added by the colonizing venture of 1598 were the mention of gods of water, mountain, hunt, and crops and that unmarried young women had the status of common property but were faithful after marriage.”³⁹

The Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians 9 contains the following figures.

Fig. 1. Maps of “Pueblo language groups or ‘provinces’ as reported by Spanish entradas,” gives the number of pueblos in and population figures for each group of pueblos, as identified by each entrada. Each group is named and/or gives population and/or number of pueblos in the group. Each pueblo is identified by language group. Each individual entrada map indicates a pueblo at the same site as the site identified on Fig. 2 as Seelocú, the name given to Sevilleta. The group which includes the Sevilleta/Seelocú site (identified as a Piro linguistic/ethnic group) extends from just south

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸*The Spanish Archives of New Mexico, Interrogatories de varios Indios*, 1681, folio 125. The region reminded the homesick men of Seville, Spain.

³⁹Gaspar de Villagrà 1933:140-141, in Schroeder, *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9, 237.

of the confluence of the Rio Puerto and the Rio Grande south along the Rio Grande to just south of Mulligan Gulch, and is identified as follows:

Coronado 1540-1542	Tutahaco, 12 pueblos
Rodriquez-Chamuscado 1581-1582	"not named," 20 pueblos
Espejo, 1582-1583	"not named," 10 pueblos, population 12,000
Castañón de Sosa, 1590-1591	Groups are not named, and the southernmost pueblos are not shaded as a group. The same unnamed pueblo site appears at the Sevilleta/Seelocú location. No pueblo-count nor population figures are given.
Oñate, Gobernador y Capitan General de Nuevo Mexico, 1598	Atzigues or Tziguis, 45 pueblos. ⁴⁰

Fig. 2. Map of "Pueblos abandoned in historic times (numbered) . . ."
Number 56 is Seelocú.⁴¹

Table 2. Native Names for Piro Pueblos, 1598. This table lists the Piro Pueblos by their native names, in order from north to south, on the West and East sides of the Rio Grande, taken from the records of the Oñate entrada, including *Tzelaqui* on the east side north of Qualacu.⁴² [Note: Tzelaqui could be a cognate of Seelocú.]

⁴⁰Schroeder, *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9, Maps (Fig.1 & Fig. 2), 238-239; Table 2, 241

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

1598

"The first active missionary work among the Piro was conducted by Fray Juan de Claros, who went to New Mexico with Oñate in 1598 and ministered to Qualacú and Teypama as well as to some Tiwa and other villages."⁴³

1598-1626: " . . . the burned and abandoned village of Sevilleta destroyed sometime between 1598 and 1626 . . . "⁴⁴

1601-1609 — Instructions to Governor Pedro de Peralta to Resettle the Piros:

" . . . Governor Pedro de Peralta was instructed in 1609 that, 'as some of the pueblos and nations are on the frontiers of the Apaches . . . it is desirable to congregate the dispersed and move those who are poorly situated to more appropriate and peaceful locations, which will promote the welfare of these Indians and facilitate their administration' (Hammond and Rey 1953: II:1089-1090). . . . The refounding of Sevilleta by Benavides is one of only a few examples in which mobile Indians were settled into pueblos."⁴⁵

⁴³Amy Claire Earls, "*The Organization of Piro Pueblo Subsistence, AD 1300 to 1860*," M.A. Dissertation (University of New Mexico, December 1985), 94.

⁴⁴Ayer, Mrs. Edward E., translator, *The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630* (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace). Reprinted 1965:17, Chicago: by the author, 1916.

⁴⁵*Ibid*, 97.

PART II
THE MISSION PERIOD

1620-1680

Decline in Piro Population —

There was a dramatic decline in the Piro population following contact in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; its principal cause is considered generally to be epidemic smallpox, and Apache raids.

“Archeological survey data for the Piro Province indicates a substantial decline in Piro populations following contact, evident in the reduction of village size and the total estimated number of occupied rooms.”⁴⁶

“There is a question among the New Mexico pueblos as to whether epidemics, primarily smallpox, occurred following the initial contact in the middle to late 16th Century or during the mission period of the 17th Century. Amy Earls presents a rather convincing argument that most epidemics in New Mexico occur during the 17th and 18th Centuries and that during the early 16th Century pueblos in New Mexico ‘. . . witnessed few smallpox epidemics and experienced relatively moderate disease depopulation.’”⁴⁷

“It is clear that depopulation due to smallpox epidemics and Apache predation decimated the Piro populations in the mission period of ca.1620-1680 A.D. but the abandonment of many Piro Pueblos and in the reduction in size of others during the 16th Century as indicated in the archeological record (Marshall and Walt 1984:141, Marshall 1986:70)

⁴⁶Michael P. Marshall, and Henry J. Walt, *Rio Abajo: Prehistory and History of a Rio Grande Province* (Santa Fe: New Mexico Historic Preservation Program, 1984),141.

⁴⁷Earls 1985:153-166.

suggests that depopulation due to disease was probably also operative in the early contact period.”⁴⁸

Food Products

There is extensive evidence of the fertile soil and their abundant crops. Evidence suggests that the Piro were not carnivorous pre-contact. Surprisingly, their diet did not include piñon nuts.

“The total absence of identified carnivores in the Qualacu collection is also curious in light of the large sample size. This may reflect certain restrictions against the use of carnivores for food products among the Piro”⁴⁹

“Most of the rodent bones [samples from Qualacu] are unburned and do not exhibit butchering marks which suggests they were inhabitants of the site area rather than subsistence remains.”⁵⁰

“All of the present evidence indicates that European stock was not available to the Piro populations in the early contact period. European livestock, in particular, sheep, cattle, goats, horses, pigs, burros, and fowl, were maintained by Hispanic populations in the region and may have been available to the Piro Indians.”⁵¹

“It is interesting to note that pinyon nuts are conspicuously absent from Piro collections. . . . This is most curious and indicates that upland pinyon products were not an important aspect of Piro subsistence. This may be due to the relative distance to the Pinyon stands and the ready availability of local mesquite and cactus products or perhaps, at least in the

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹*Qualacu*, 126.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

16th and 17th Centuries, to the presence of Apache populations in upland areas and the fear of trespass.”⁵²

1620s — The Refounding of Sevilleta.

By 1620, there were only 14 remaining Piro pueblos with 6,000 inhabitants. The mission San Luis Obispo de Sevilleta at Seelocú was refounded in 1680, and Fray Alonso de Benavides reported that all the Piros became good, baptized Christians. He also recorded that the region was rich with mineral wealth.

“The Spanish program of *congregación* (aggregation of native populations in towns) was less important among the Pueblos than for many native groups in Nueva Vizcaya since the Pueblos already lived in large towns for at least part of the year. The Spaniards (Benavides, in particular) did resettle some pueblos, such as Jemez and Sevilleta, whose inhabitants had been mobile, but much of the reduction of Pueblo settlements may have been a result of Pueblo deaths, native attempts to concentrate the remaining labor force, and the protection from nomadic raiding afforded by proximity to the Spaniards.”⁵³

“By the 1620s the Piros, under pressures by other Indians (Apaches de Perrillos), had been reduced to 14 Pueblos of 6,000 people. The church established three missions — San Luis Obispo de Sevilleta at Seelocú, Nuestra Sonora de Socorro at Pilabó, and San Antonio at Senecú, the southernmost Pueblo in 1680. Seelocú, along with others burned during Apache raids, was refounded, and another mission was set up at Alamillo, about 12 miles north of Pilabó.”⁵⁴

1626 — Establishment of the Missions; Beginning of the Conversion of the Piro

Fray Alonso de Benavides, supervisor of the missions in New Mexico, wrote that the land near Socorro was very fertile and that deer, rabbit and fish supplemented the local diet. The Piros, he said, were “a people clothed and of

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Earls, 93.

⁵⁴Benavides 1945; Siguenza y Góngora 1932:87; Hackett 1942, 1:62.

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republican [government]" and "all became baptized and [were] very good Christians." Benavides also recorded that the Socorro region was rich in minerals and remarked that the king was losing a great deal of wealth for the lack of someone to develop mines.⁵⁵

"The establishment of missions among the Piros in 1626 involved further intensification of contact with Europeans."⁵⁶

"The date of the beginning of the conversation of the Piro is given definitely by Benavides as 1626, but he does not state positively that the churches were erected in that year."⁵⁷

1629 — Actual Building of the Church at San Luis Obispo de Sevilleta

"As there is no doubt that Benavides spent some time in New Mexico after Perea's arrival in the spring of 1629, 'we may reasonably assume that the actual building of the churches and [conventos] at San Antonio de Senecú, Nuestra Señora del Socorro de Pilabó, and San Luis Obispo de Sevilleta, which Benevides describes, was done by the missionaries whom Perea brought.'"⁵⁸ Following abandonment sometime after 1598, Sevilleta was resettled by Benavides in the 1620s and occupied until 1680 . . ."⁵⁹

⁵⁵Ashcroft, 2.

⁵⁶Earls, 107.

⁵⁷Ibid, 94.

⁵⁸Ayer 1916:214.

⁵⁹Earls, 94.

1630 — The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630

The pueblo of Sevilleta was destroyed in wars with other tribes, according to Fr. Benavides.⁶⁰ It was re-settled in 1626, and a church was built, dedicated to San Luis Obispo. This was the headquarters of a mission and was the most northerly at that time of the Piro settlements. In 1680, at the time of the driving out of the Spaniards, this was a very small place, and the inhabitants accompanied the Spaniards to El Paso. Vetancourt says of the place: "*Y le habitan tres familias, hoy está asolado*" [three families lived there; it was very isolated].⁶¹

Benavides considered the refounding of the "pueblo of Seelocú, which the Spaniards named Sevilleta," a success.

"In 1630, Benavides (Hodge et al. 1945:64) counted as one of his successes the refounding of the Piro pueblo of Sevilleta after its destruction, apparently by Apaches. 'The people of this pueblo of Seelocú, which the Spaniards named Sevilleta, had for several years been at war with some other Indians, their enemies, who had burned their pueblo and killed many of them.' (Hodge, et al 1945:81, 85)"⁶²

"This province of the Piro extends along up the Rio del Norte, from the first pueblo of San Antonio de Senecu [sic] up to the last, San Luis de Sevilleta, fifteen leagues, where there are fourteen pueblos, on one side and the other of the river, in which must be (aura) six thousand souls, all baptized; with three monasteries, as has been said, in which the Religious besides the teaching and indoctrination of our Holy Catholic Father, teach (them) to sing, read, and write, and all the trades and to live in civilized fashion (*politicamente*) in their schools."⁶³

⁶⁰*Memorial*, 16.

⁶¹Vetancourt, Agustín de, *Crónica de la Provincia del Santo Evangelio de México* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1982), Edition 2. ed. facsimilar, 310.

⁶²Earls, 110.

⁶³Benavides, 1630, in Ayer 1965:19.

“Arriving at this river, (there) begin the first settlements, by the Piro province and nation, with many pueblos, and houses of adobe, of one and two stories, with their corridors to the plazas.”⁶⁴

Mid-1600s — The Mission Caravans, a Supply Service for the Mines of New Spain

“In the mid-seventeenth century the governors of New Mexico used the return trip of the missions’ supply service for shipping salt, hides and cotton cloth to the mining centers of New Spain (Ayer 1916:67) . . . the products of New Mexico, which could be exported profitably were a few staples, consisting mostly of hides, piñon, salt and mantas. The chief difficulty in developing this primitive commerce was the lack of transport, so that it was inevitable that the mission caravans should have become an important element in this phase of provincial life.” (Scholes 1930:115). The Pueblos formed the labor pool for this work.⁶⁵

1656-1659 — Relocation of the Piros from the Sevilleta to Alamillo and Back Again to the Sevilleta

There is a documented accusation, made by the attorney for the Spanish Inquisition, against Governor López [Bernardo López de Mendizábal] for allowing the enslavement of the Piros of Sevilleta, in his self-interest, at the hacienda of Captain don Diego de Guadalajara, their *encomendero*. They were kept in “such oppression” that they were forced to work continuously at securing large quantities of salt from the salt deposits east of the Manzano range. The Piros of Sevilleta complained that they were not even allowed to be ministered to by their priest.⁶⁶ But salt was needed for the mines of Parral in Mexico. In order to accumulate this goodly supply of salt, López had returned the Piros to their home pueblo at Sevilleta, the very same Piros who had been relocated to Alamillo a few years before.

⁶⁴Ayer 1965: 16.

⁶⁵Earls, 97.

⁶⁶Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya and Approached Thereto, to 1773*, vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1923-1937), 206.

"The governor in 1659 moved the people of Sevilleta, whom the previous governor of 1656 congregated into the Pueblo of Alamillo, to their former location where they took up their rituals on the nearby Rio Puerco."⁶⁷

"The Pueblos of the Piro-Tompiro area were forced to bring large quantities of salt from the salt deposits east of the Manzano range. To facilitate the accumulation of a sufficient supply, López [Bernardo López de Mendizábal] returned a number of Alamillo occupants to Sevilleta, where they had previously lived."⁶⁸

1661 — Encomiendas

"Later in the century secular settlers occupied the area, with encomiendas at Sevilleta and Senecú dating to 1661 (Tainter and Levine 1982). Exposure to disease and demands for Piro labor and tribute were at their greatest following missionization and colonization of the Piro province."⁶⁹

1668-1670 — The Spanish Inquisition and the Arrest of Bernard Gruber,
"El Alemán, the German, December 25, 1668 " —
Quarai Pueblo

"Between 1668 and 1670 the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Mexico investigated its last case in the Jurisdiction of Salinas. Facing charges of superstition, Bernard Gruber, a German trader from Sonora, suffered an ordeal at the hands of frontier Inquisition authorities that cost him his life."⁷⁰

⁶⁷Schroeder, *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9, 237.

⁶⁸Scholes 1930, 188.

⁶⁹Earls, 107.

⁷⁰Sanchez, "Bernard Gruber."

According to historian Joseph Sanchez, Gruber was held for twenty-five months, without trial, and held captive in a room with a barred window in the house of Captain Francisco de Ortega (owner of the *estancia* of San Nicholas in the jurisdiction of Sandia Pueblo) at his ranch. He escaped at midnight on Sunday, June 22, 1670, and followed the Camiño Real south, accompanied by Gruber's Apache servant Atanasio who assisted his escape and accompanied him. "Riding south through the bosques of the Sandia Jurisdiction, the two horsemen followed the Camiño Real." They passed near Senecú, camped at Fray Cristóbal and arrived the next afternoon at Las Peñuelas.⁷¹ Gruber's escape route would have passed through Sevilleta along the Camiño Real from Sandia Pueblo to Senecú.

Sanchez writes that Gruber had a second accomplice in his escape, Juan Martin [Martín] Serrano, "Gruber's guard and debtor." He writes that don Tomé Dominquez de Mendoza, an *encomendero* of the area, refused to aid in the search for Gruber. Tomé's son Francisco had seen Gruber during his escape, but had agreed not to tell anyone he had seen him, and moreover, Francisco offered Gruber better riding horses to use during his escape.

Sanchez co-wrote another article with John P. Wilson, "Quarai, A Turbulent History," which states that a few months after Gruber escaped, his bones were found at a camping place, thereafter known as [El] Aleman (the German), along the ninety-mile stretch of the *Jornada del Muerto*, the Dead Man's Route.⁷²

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²John P. Wilson and Joseph P. Sanchez, "Quarai, A Turbulent History," *Salinas*, Ed. David Grant Noble (Sante Fe, NM: Ancient City Press, 1993), School of American Research, Santa Fe.

PART III

Pueblo Indian Revolt

August 10, 1680 — The Pueblo Indian Revolt Excludes the Piro Pueblos of the Rio Abajo

The Piros were not invited by the northern pueblos to participate in the uprising (see *Interrogatories de varios Indios*).⁷³ Inasmuch as the Piros were intentionally excluded from the Revolt by the organizers and participants in the Revolt, and inasmuch as the Piros had demonstrated and were recognized for their loyalty to the Spaniards, they were obviously not in a position of safety, and apparently sensed no alternative other than to flee with the Spanish to the security of the border at El Paso.

“On August 10, 1680, the Pueblo Indians from the northern Rio Grande Pueblos to the Hopi mesas rebelled . . . the Piro Pueblos to the south did not become actively involved in the revolt. During the uprising, over 2,000 Spanish colonists congregated at two locations for shelter and defense. . . . The Spanish settlers in the southern district, known as the Rio Abajo, organized under the leadership of Alonzo Garcia, lieutenant-governor and captain-general, and received temporary asylum at Isleta Pueblo. However, on August 14, the 1,500 Rio Abajo refugees were forced to abandon Isleta when their ‘hosts’ became hostile. They received a similar reception at Socorro Pueblo and retreated southward to Fray Cristóbal, about 60 leagues from El Paso. . . . At Isleta, Sevilleta, and Socorro, Garcia’s [sic] division was augmented by 317 Indians composed of Tiwas from Isleta and Piros from Sevilleta, Socorro, Alamillo, and Senecú.”⁷⁴

⁷³*Interrogatories de varios Indios*, 1681, folio 125. “*Que cogio un mecate de palmilla, y marando en el unos nudos, que significaban los días que faltaban, para la egecucion de la tracion, lo despacho por todos el reyno, mas que el de la nacion de los Piros.*”

⁷⁴Hughes, 1914:315, in Nicholas P. Houser, “Tigua Pueblo,” *Smithsonian Handbook of North American Indians* 9, 338.

“The Piros did not participate in the Pueblo Revolt and were threatened by the Apaches [sic] for that reason. At Sevilleta, the first Piro Pueblo passed during Lieutenant Governor Alonso García’s retreat to Fray Cristóbal, ‘the natives were found quiet and peaceably disposed toward the Spaniards, as is shown by the fact that they abandoned their Pueblo and moved on with the refugees into the interior of the Piros [sic] nation’ (Hackett and Shelby 1942, I:lxxi). The inhabitants of Socorro were also found to be quiet and still friendly toward the Spaniards. ‘When it was learned that the latter were abandoning the province, the natives of Socorro and Sevilleta expressed their determination to go with them, being afraid, since they had not been invited to join the revolt, that the northern tribes would attack and destroy them (Hackett and Shelby 1942, I:lxxiii).”⁷⁵

1681 — Governor Antonio de Otermín’s Exploratory Probe to the Pueblos

Governor Antonio de Otermín, upon his re-entry into Nuevo México, found the pueblo of Sevillita totally abandoned. Any Piros who had remained behind, fled at Otermín’s approach.

“When Gov. Antonio de Otermín made an exploratory probe into Pueblo country in 1681, he noted that of the Piros who had remained behind, those of Senecú had planted crops but fled to the high mountains on his approach (Hackett 1923-1937, 3:398).”⁷⁶

“Senecú, Pilabó, and Alamillo, all located on a plain of the river, had been attacked by Apaches who set fire to parts of these towns.

“Those of Sevilleta had joined other Pueblos to the north, and at their abandoned town a new underground kiva and deep subterranean chambers “in four parts” contained spoiled maize, calabashes, and pottery. On top was a clay vessel with a toad carved on it having the face of an Indian. Inside it were powdered herbs, feathers, two pieces of human flesh, and other things that had been offered to protect the maize.”⁷⁷

⁷⁵Earls, 100.

⁷⁶Hackett, *Historical Documents*, 398.

⁷⁷Hackett and Shelby, 2:203-207, 243, 329, 339.

1692 — Re-conquest of Province of Nuevo México by don Diego de Vargas

1695 — The N. de Fer map of 1695

On the N. de Fer map of 1695, the original Socorro and Senecú are shown on the west bank, and Alamillo and Sevilleta [abandoned] are shown on the east.⁷⁸

Eighteenth Century —

Sevilleta remained abandoned throughout the eighteenth century.

The late 1790s —

Regional historian Francisco Sisneros claims there was a garrison of six or nine soldiers at La Joya in the late 1790s, headed by Mariano Tafoya.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹

PART IV
NINETEENTH CENTURY

RESETTLEMENT OF THE SEVILLETA

“Many of the original families who settled in La Joya were from Santa Fe and from the area of Santa Cruz de la Canada and San Juan de Los Caballeros and had responded to Governor Fernando Chacon’s order to re-settle La Joya de Sevilleta, Socorro and Alamillo in what at the time was New Mexico’s southern frontier.”⁸⁰

1799-1804 — The First Settlers Return to the Sevilleta

Historian Francisco Sisneros says the first new settler may actually have arrived as early as 1799-1800, and that the first child was born in La Joya around 1804.⁸¹

Based on his research [no sources provided], Sam Padilla, a resident of Contreras [located within the Sevilleta Grant], believes that the first settlers came as early as 1801 or 1802. However, there appears to be no documentation in the archival records to substantiate that fact. Padilla says many of the families moved from up north, “maybe from Santa Cruz and Sabinal.”⁸²

1808 — “Francisco Amangual made a trip in September 1808 from Sevilleta . . in pursuit of Apache Indians who had raided his party’s stock.”⁸³

November 4, 1816 — Dolores Lopez, daughter of Jose del Carmen Lopez and María de los Santos Maes, is born in La Joya.

⁸⁰*Spanish Archives of New Mexico, II, 1621-1821.* Sisneros, “The Esquibel Families of the Rio Abajo,” 1.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Padilla, Rand-Caplan Interview.

⁸³Brodie Crouch, *Jornado del Muerto* (Spokane, Washington: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1989).

★ 1819 — LA JOYA DE SEVILLETA SPANISH LAND GRANT,
“LA MERCED”

The 220,000 acre Sevilleta Spanish Land Grant is given in the name of the King of Spain to sixty-seven La Joya grantees.⁸⁴

May 25, 1819 — Carlos Gavaldon [Attorney], “a resident of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de Sebilleta in the name and at the request of all the residents of that place” petitioned Miguel Aragon, Chief Alcalde of the jurisdiction of Belen, for a land grant.

May 29, 1819 — Governor Facundo Melgares, acting under the authority of the King of Spain [Charles the Fourth], made the grant and directed the alcalde to place the parties in possession, designate their boundaries and return the completed documents for recordation.

June 4, 1819 — Miquel Aragon, Chief Alcalde of the jurisdiction of Belen and its precincts and frontiers, placed the sixty-seven inhabitants in lawful possession and defined the boundaries.

⁸⁴Per *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* II, “with an area of 224,770 acres.”

THE ORIGINAL 1819 GRANTEES

The May 25, 1819, Petition to Miguel Aragon, Alcalde, by "Carlos Gavaldo [Attorney], a resident of Nuestra Senora de los Dolores de Sebilleta in the name of all the residents . . . resettled upon this frontier under a grant King Charles the Fourth [made]," lists the following grantees:

Antonio Jose Apodaca	Felipe Apodaca	Jose Antonio Apodaca
Jose Aragon	Tomas Aragon	Salvador Armijo
Bernardo Benavides	Clementa Benavides	Diego Benavides
Manuel Benavides	Santiago Candelaria	Juan Luis Carrillo
Bartelome Chaves	Dionicio Chaves	Francisco Chaves
Manuel Chaves	Felipe Cordova	Jose Manuel de Herrera
Lorenzo de la Torre	Nerio Gallego	Antonio Jose Garcia
Juan Garcia	Charles Gavaldon	Andres Gonzales
Juan Gutierrez	Juan Luis Lopez	Juana Paula Lopez
Baltazar Lovato	Felipe Lucero	Gregorio Lucero
Salvador Lucero	Santiago Lucero	Juan Domingo Maes
Salvador Maes	Miguel Marquez	Eubaldo Martinez
Pablo Martinez	Andres Mascarenas	Diego Mascarenas
Francisca Masias	Ramon Montano	Guadalupe Montoya
Juan Montoya	Jose Guadalupe Montoya	
Jose Maria Moya	Juan Francisco Munis	
Josefa Otero	Domingo Peralta	Juan Ysidro Romero
Manuel Romero	Juan Sais	Manuel Sais
Antonio Samora	Miguel Samora	Jose Lorenzo Sanches
Juana Sanchez	Bernardo Sisneros	Francisco Sisneros
Francisco Tafoya	Vicente Torres	Vicente Torres ⁸⁵
Jacinto Trujeque	Antonio Trujillo	Bernardo Trujillo
Juan Cruz Trujillo	Juan Jose Trujillo	Miguel Ulibarri

⁸⁵ The name "Vicente Torres" is listed twice in the original document.

The Petition was witnessed by Miguel Aragon; Attending Witness was Jose Lorenzo de la Torre. The document concluded: "I have received fifty cents for this sheet of paper authenticated by His Excellency the Governor, this 29th day of May 1819, [signed by] Jose Ygnacio Ortiz."

1821 —

Mexico adopts an "open door" policy and the Santa Fe Trail opens to commerce. The first Americans legally enter New Mexico.

Circa 1821 —

Jose de Jesus Tafoya and Maria Guadalupe Padilla and children move from Santa Fe and settle in La Joya de Sevilleta.

December 2, 1824 —

Fur trader James O. Pattie, on four-year trek throughout the American West, visits Socorro and vicinity.

October 29, 1826 —

Petra Mascarenes, daughter of Andres Mascarenes (original 1819 grantee) and Rosa Romero, born in La Joya (AASF Baptisms, October 29, 1826).⁸⁶

1830s-1840s —

Continued Indian attacks throughout area.

⁸⁶Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, Socorro Baptisms, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

September 12, 1833 —

Maria Concepcion, daughter of Refugio Esquibel and Maria Dolores Lopez, born in La Joya.⁸⁷

January 29, 1836 —

Maria Paula born in La Joya.⁸⁸

April 4, 1841 —

Jose Ramon married Maria Concepcion Benavides, daughter of original 1819 grantee Diego Benavides and Maria Manuela Silva.

1844 —

“Joya de Cibiletta” is shown on Josiah Gregg’s 1844 *Map of the Indian Territory — Northern Texas and New Mexico*. Although placed at the right location on the Rio Grande, the names *Cibiletta* and *Cevilleta* were often confused with *Sevilleta*.⁸⁹

April 24, 1846 —

American and Mexican troops engage north of the Rio Grande near present-day Brownsville, Texas, and war with Mexico follows.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹The name *Cevilleta* is used by Victor Westphall in *Mercedes Reales*, 277.

August 1846 —

Colonel Stephen W. Kearney's Army of the West enters New Mexico.

Kearney proclaims New Mexico's independence from Mexico and appoints Charles Bent as the acting civilian governor. Colonel Alexander Doniphan, the military commander of New Mexico, in route to invade Mexico, marches down the Rio Grande with 500 mounted soldiers, and 300 teamsters and merchants passing through Socorro to Valverde, twenty-five miles south. British Army officer Lieutenant George Ruxton said of Doniphan's troops, "No one would have imagined this to be a military encampment

The men, unwashed and unshaven, were ragged and dirty, without uniforms. . . . The most total lack of discipline was apparent in everything" to the proper British officer.⁹⁰

1847 —

United States troops are stationed at Socorro to provide Indian defense, remaining there until 1851.⁹¹

1848 — THE TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO

A principle of international law requires a successor sovereign to recognize pre-existing valid land titles/grants within an area obtained from a foreign sovereign. The Treaty provided that property rights of Mexicans who remained in the ceded territory were to be protected to the same extent as United States citizens.

March 10 —

The United States Senate ratifies the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

⁹⁰Ashcroft, 4-5.

⁹¹Ashcroft, 9.

July 26 —

A supplemental document to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, called the Protocol of Querétaro, is made —

“which, for all interests and purposes became a part of the treaty. The United States Commissioners agreed that ‘these grants [private land claims in the ceded territory] . . . preserve the legal value which they may possess, and the grantees may cause their legitimate titles to be acknowledged before the American tribunals.’”⁹²

1849-1850 — Earthquakes

From December 11, 1849 to February 8, 1850, army surgeon John Fox Hammond (stationed at Socorro) “recorded twenty-two shocks. The earthquakes were usually accompanied by a rumbling noise and sometimes the temperature of the springs at Socorro Peak increased.”⁹³

Regarding the literacy of the Hispanic New Mexican in general, Hammond wrote that “there are no books among the people, scarcely any at all are taught to read, and fewer still are taught to write.”⁹⁴

⁹²J. J. Bowden, *Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in the Chihuahuan Acquisition* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, University of Texas, 1971), xii-xiii.

⁹³Ashcroft, 7.

⁹⁴Ibid.

Local Diseases —

Hammond wrote that “the diseases which prevail in this vicinity are syphilis, scrofula, gonorrhea, diarrhoea, dysentery, rheumatism, intermittent fever, pleurisy, pneumonia, and rarely typhoid fever. Small-pox, measles, scarlatina, erysipelas, and whooping-cough have made their visitations.”⁹⁵

Baths in the hot springs were used as a treatment for all diseases and local herbs were taken or applied, according to tradition. Hammond was surprised that the people were not vaccinated against smallpox, which had “left its mark on every face.”⁹⁶

September 1850 — The Territory of New Mexico is created.

Socorro County was created in 1851 and “The village of Socorro was named county seat even though its 1850 population was only 543, including 100 military men who would shortly be moved to Valverde.”⁹⁷

1851 — Fort Conrad is established at Valverde.

Reverend H. W. Reed, while on a missionary tour in New Mexico, wrote in his Journal January 13, 1851, “Passed some small villages and reached La Jolla, (La Hoyah, — The Hole) at sundown. Put up with a Mexican, there being no American in town.”⁹⁸ The Reverend spent the evening and the next day reading the Bible with local villagers.

⁹⁵Ashcroft, 7-8.

⁹⁶Ashcroft, 8.

⁹⁷Ashcroft, 6.

⁹⁸Lansing B. Bloom, “The Rev. Hiram Walter Read, Baptist Missionary,” *New Mexico Historical Review*, 17 (April 1942), 134.

1853 — The Gadsden Purchase and Treaty.

Under the provisions of the Gadsden Treaty signed December 30, 1853, the United States purchased 29,142,400 acres of land from Mexico within present-day New Mexico and Arizona, for \$10 million. The Treaty was ratified June 29, 1854, by President Pierce. Article VI of the Gadsden Treaty provided that "No grants within the territory . . . will be considered valid . . . which have not been located and duly recorded in the archives of Mexico."⁹⁹

1854 — The Office of the Surveyor General for New Mexico Is Created.

In 1854, the United States Congress created the Office of the Surveyor General for New Mexico in order to survey public lands, and to investigate Spanish and Mexican land claims. The Surveyor General was given the right of legal process to inquire into and report to the United States Congress his recommendations to either approve or reject land grant claims. The Surveyor General Act of 1854 failed to provide for a judicial commission, such as that created in the California Act, and consequently land grant matters were not being adjudicated and a backlog was building up.

Fort Craig is built to help defend central New Mexico against Indian raids.

1861-1864 — THE CIVIL WAR

July 1861 — Confederate forces enter New Mexico.

February 1862 — General Henry Sibley wins Confederate victory at Valverde and marches toward Santa Fe, reaching Socorro February 26th.

⁹⁹Bowden, xiii.

March 1862 — The Sibley Brigade, Confederate States Army, Invades New Mexico

The Sibley Brigade of the Confederate States Army, under command of Brigadier General Henry Hopkins Sibley, in route to the Battle of Glorieta Pass (Friday, March 28, 1862), camped across the Rio Grande from the village of La Jolla [sic].¹⁰⁰

Saturday, March 1, 1862:

“We are camped in a very strong position tonight; a semicircular bank closes in the camp towards the river, and the whole valley is on a level with the top of the bank, save the little hollow where we are camped. The battery is on the level of the valley, while the whole camp is protected from any fire in this side of the river by the aforesaid bank.”¹⁰¹

Sunday, March 2, 1862:

“We laid in camp till noon today and then traveled 5 or 6 miles and camped near a little town, the name of which I did not learn [fn. 24]. We were furnished wood from town, and our camp was just below a ditch on the hillside from which the town and valley is irrigated. We passed several ranches on the way. This part of New Mexico is more desirable than any I have yet seen. The valley is very wide and fertile and is thickly settled. Some of the churches are very neatly built, and the houses, inside, are very well furnished. Some of them are papered and some of them neatly whitewashed, and they are perfectly air-tight.”¹⁰²

Tuesday, March 4, 1862:

“We traveled in all about ten miles today and camped in a cottonwood grove where we were not so much troubled about wood as we have been [fn. 26]. About 12 o'clock I got very hungry and dropped out of ranks to see if I could not make a raise of something to eat at some of the numerous Mexican houses that were scattered all along the way. I asked

¹⁰⁰Don E. Alberts, *Rebels on the Rio Grande, The Civil War Journal of A. B. Peticolas* (Albuquerque: Merit Press, 1993).

¹⁰¹Ibid, footnote 23, 57: Howell Journal, entry for 1 March 1862.

¹⁰²Ibid, footnote 24, 57: Smith Journal, 136; Giesecke Diary, entry for 2 March 1862.

in Spanish at the first place where I saw any of the inhabitants, for a little bread. . . the man of the house was recounting his trials with the Federals when they tried to force him into the service. They knocked him down, and he showed us a bayonet where they stabbed him trying to force him along anyhow. He told us that there was many a man sick that they had forced into the service, but that no one was allowed to stop or rest on that account, but was forced along by the federals.”¹⁰³

1863 — “Palomita Year” or “Year of the Doves”

“1863 brought hordes of unusual, dove-shaped insects to Socorro. The ravenous bugs stripped everything green and, for an agricultural community, that spelled potential disaster. The territorial government rushed to the aid of the stricken village, collecting supplies . . . over five thousand pounds of flour, nine tons of wheat, and \$1,200 to buy provisions were sent to Socorro . . .”¹⁰⁴

1866 — “Col. John S. Hutchason, ‘Old Hutch’ . . . and Pete Kinsinger found the rich mineral deposits in the Magdalena Mountains . . .”¹⁰⁵

1871 — The La Joya Post Office is established June 21, 1871

Charles Friebliff is the first Postmaster. The La Joya Post Office was subsequently discontinued. See 1883 re petition to re-establish the post office.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³Ibid, Footnote 26.

¹⁰⁴Ashcroft, 10.

¹⁰⁵Ashcroft, 10.

¹⁰⁶Per Gloria Torres Armijo, local Hispanic genealogist; source unknown.

1874 — The Sevilleta Land Grant is approved by Surveyor General Proudfit.

The Grant is confirmed to Felipe Peralta, and the sixty-six other grantees, and their heirs, by the Court of Private Land Claims. Fortunately for the heirs, the title was on file in the Mexican Archives at Santa Fe.

1879 — Fort Craig is deactivated.

1880 — Fort Craig is reoccupied “when Apaches led by Victorio raided along the Mexican border into Arizona, Texas and New Mexico.”¹⁰⁷

August 12, 1880 — The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe RR Arrives in Socorro.

1881-1884 — Vigilante Power

The vigilantes “committee of safety” was the “principle law enforcement agency in Socorro,” organized as a result of the 1880 Christmas Eve murder of the *Socorro Sun* editor Anthony M. Conklin by three Hispanics. Anglos held Sheriff Juan Maria Garcia and his family hostage for not taking action against the Hispanic suspects and their local Hispanic protectors. “. . .all the Americans are in fear of their lives tonight” (telegram sent to the Las Vegas *Optic*). The suspects were captured, one was killed in an escape attempt, the second was lynched and the third acquitted.

“For three years, Col. Ethan Eaton, assisted by an executive committee, presided over the organization [of vigilantes] to dispense a frontier brand of justice.”¹⁰⁸ The de facto government administered brutal whippings (“from twenty to one hundred lashes”) and hangings. “Notices appeared in the Socorro newspapers stating matter-of-factly that any violation of the law would be followed by ‘speedy and sure punishment.’”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷Ashcroft, 8-9.

¹⁰⁸Ashcroft, 25.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

1881 — The Socorro County Mining Boom

In one six-month period, 3,000 mining claims were filed in Socorro County. Minerals mined included gold, silver, copper, iron, lead, coal, zinc, manganese, and antimony.¹¹⁰

The New Orleans and La Joya Smelting Company was erected in 1881.

“ . . . in its peak year, 1887, nearly \$500,000 worth of bullion was produced.” It was located next door to the Socorro Mining and Milling Company and its stamp mill.¹¹¹

Gregorio Baca accepted the appointment as Postmaster, and re-opened the Post Office in 1881.¹¹²

1882 — Socorro is the mining center of New Mexico — A map of the Socorro mining district shows La Joya in the midst of silver mines between the Rio Grande and the Monzana Mountains.¹¹³

1882-1885 — Stock-raising in Socorro County (4 million acres of grazing land)

In 1882 there were only nine thousand head of cattle in Socorro County. However, by 1885, that figure increased to seventy thousand. During this same period, the sheep industry declined from 300,000 head to 100,000. Although ranchers claimed the low price of wool was responsible for the decrease, but the “Americanization” of American food habits, even in Socorro and New Mexico, included a preference for beef.¹¹⁴

1883 — Petition is filed again to re-establish the post office.

¹¹⁰Ashcroft, 13.

¹¹¹Ibid, 16.

¹¹²Armijo, Rand-Caplan Interview.

¹¹³Ashcroft, 14.

¹¹⁴Ashcroft, 19.

Mail was received daily at the La Joya station, from the Railway Post Office car on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. The station closed in 1887, and residents then picked up mail at the San Acacia Post Office.¹¹⁵

1884 — Fort Craig is closed permanently in September, “except for a small contingent left there until June 1885.”¹¹⁶

November 1884 — Sixty carloads of bullion from Socorro smelters are shipped on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.

“The 1880 Boom Years” — Industries thrive in Socorro/Socorro County:

... “wineries, flour mills, and a brewery flourished. Farmers could grow just about anything in the Rio Grande Valley. Cotton, tobacco, alfalfa, oats, rye, barley, cabbages, beets, onions, peppers, potatoes, and many more crops were raised near Socorro, with wheat and corn the principal ones. Orchards yielded apples, pears, peaches, plums, apricots, and quinces, and grapes were the pride of the valley.”¹¹⁷

1891 — Congress establishes the Court of Private Land Claims (1891-1904)

The Court of Private Land Claims consisted of five judges, one acting as chief justice, and was created to adjudicate land grant titles in New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona. The Court heard cases for 248 grants but confirmed only 88 grants. Any person or corporation claiming an imperfect grant could file a claim with the Court, if not previously acted upon by Congress.

1893 — **The La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant Claim Is Confirmed by the Court of Private Land Claims.**

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Ibid, 9.

¹¹⁷Ibid, 18.

On December 4, 1893, the Court of Private Land Claims confirms the La Joya de Sevilleta Land Grant to Felipe Peralta (grandson of 1819 grantee Pablo Martinez), and the other grantee heirs. The heirs are represented by attorney Thomas B. Catron, famous for his expertise in land grant cases.¹¹⁸

The Confirmation, however, does not specify the exact acreage, “although a preliminary survey of said tract . . . shows an area of 224,779.18 acres, as so surveyed . . .” Instead, the Court finds “that the extent and quantity of said land is determined by the total amount of the land embraced in the boundaries . . . of said grant.”¹¹⁹

1895 — Postmaster Baca resigns. When Tomas Cordova is appointed, the town is spelled Lajoya.¹²⁰

1896 — Survey Map of the Sevilleta Grant Survey conducted February 22-26, 1896 by Albert F. Easley, U.S.D.S., shows a total area of 272,193.88 acres. A large notation in the center of the Map reads, “Area in conflict with Belen Grant: 11005.98 Acres.”

1897 — **The Court of Private Land Claims Reviews the 1893 Confirmation of the La Joya de Sevilleta Grant**

The Court of Private Land Claims reconsiders the Sevilleta claim because of conflicting challenges regarding the overlapping boundaries with the Socorro, Antonio Chavez, and the Belen Land Grants (the later was already confirmed and patented). The government files an objection to the survey and Confirmation of the Sevilleta Grant, leading to the 1897 review.

¹¹⁸Catron was also a powerful politician in the frontier Territory of New Mexico, and one of the leaders of the infamous “Santa Fe Ring.” As a land speculator (many of his holdings derived as an exchange for his fee for legal services), Catron was reputed at one time to be the largest private land holder in the United States.

¹¹⁹Confirmation of the Sevilleta Grant, In the United States Court of Private Land Claims, No. 55, Felipe Peralta and Tomas Cordoba, vs. The United States, December 4, 1893, signed by Joseph P. Reed, Chief Justice of the United States Court of Private Land Claims.

¹²⁰Per Gloria Torres Armijo; source unknown.

PART V
TWENTIETH CENTURY

1901 — The Court of Private Land Claims reduces the confirmed acreage of the Sevilleta.

The Court of Private Land Claims reduces the confirmed acreage from 272,193 (per the 1896 survey) down to 261,187 acres, because of an 11,000-acre overlapping-boundary conflict with the Belen Grant. The Belen grant had been confirmed and patented, and the boundary conflict was awarded in favor of Belen.

1906 — The United States Patent, conveying legal title to the Sevilleta Grant, is approved in 1906.

1907 — The United States Patent for the Sevilleta Grant is confirmed.

The United States Patent is confirmed to the original sixty-seven grantees and their heirs, signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, and recorded February 8, 1907, by the General Land Office.

1920 — Fourteenth United States Census, Socorro County, New Mexico — Statistical Reports:

Precinct 5, La Joya (not incorporated)

354 residents and 79 heads-of-household are listed. There was one 5-member white Anglo family, and two white Anglo individuals — the Catholic priest (born in Holland) and the female cook at the parsonage (born in Arkansas). One New Mexican-born 9-year old boy with Anglo given/surnames was listed as a “friend” living with a literate, English-speaking Hispanic family (all spoke English, the father was the owner of a grocery store). All other residents listed were New-Mexican-born Hispanics (with New Mexican-born parents), excepting one 3-member family born in Old Mexico. A very small percentage of the Hispanic population spoke English.

The oral histories of 92-year-old Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and her daughter Marion were recorded November 2, 1997 by Ramona Rand-Caplan. The oral histories of Gloria Torres Armijo and Louella Torres Pedroncelli were recorded September 25, 1997 and December 29, 1997, respectively, also by Rand-Caplan.

Precinct 36, Ranchos de La Joya (not incorporated):

Ranchos de La Joya is the birthplace of Paublita Tafoya, listed as age 13 in the 1920 Census. Paublita could read but not write, and had attended school "any time since Sept. 1, 1919." Her mother Sofia Tafoya, age 31, was widowed, head of household, had three sons and two daughters ages 4½ to 15, occupation "none." Neither Sofia nor her children spoke English.

345 residents and 90 heads-of-household are listed. Six households were white Anglo; all other residents listed were Hispanic. All residents were native born (all Anglos were born outside New Mexico; all Hispanics were born predominately in NM, a few in Texas). The only English-speaking residents were Anglos, two Hispanic general farmers, the Hispanic school teachers, a railroad worker, and one Hispanic farm laborer.

1922 — Abran Barela is appointed Postmaster, together with his son Jose Barela.¹²¹

¹²¹Ibid.

1927 — Thomas B. Campbell holds Trust Deed for acreage in Sevilleta Land Grant.

New Mexico Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Property Map, Socorro County, Sevilleta Grant, bears notation "Thomas D. Campbell — T.D. — 3---,--- acres" [amount undecipherable].¹²²

1930s —

Gloria Torres Armijo's early childhood in 1930s La Joya (*oral history recorded 9/25/97*): Ms. Torres says during this period La Joya had a dance hall, a saloon/bar, three merchant stores, a large school (through high school) attended by children commuting from neighboring communities, and was a thriving community.¹²³

Paublita Moya Torres' married life in 1930s La Joya (*oral history recorded 11/2/97*): 92-year-old Paublita, step-grandmother of Gloria Armijo was the 25-year-old bride of Ramon Torres, a 50-year-old widower with children (Gloria's grandfather), who was one of five successful merchants in La Joya.¹²⁴

¹²²The town of San Francisco was located on the east bank of the Rio Grande just southeast of present-day Interstate 26 and US 60. State of New Mexico Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District Property Map, Socorro County, 7/15/1927, Revised to 1940. From Eloy Romero Private Collection.

¹²³Armijo, Rand-Caplan Interview,.

¹²⁴Paublita Torres, Rand-Caplan Interview.

1930 — UNITED STATES CENSUS STATISTICS

(See Table 1 and Table 2, Ramona L. Rand-Caplan, *The History of the Sevilleta Land Grant*.) Table 2, Population Growth, clearly illustrates the pattern of increased growth in La Joya during the 1920s, followed by an approximate 10 per cent decrease in population during the 1930s. However, in 1940, its population still exceeded its 1920 figure. Contrarily, Ranchos de La Joya experienced a steady decrease in population over the same twenty-year period. During the 1920s, it decreased over 20 per cent. The pattern continued through the 1930s; by 1940, its inhabitants numbered less than two-thirds of the 1920 Census figure.

PART VI

THOMAS DONALD CAMPBELL and THE CAMPBELL CATTLE RANCH (1938-1966)

Late 1930s — General Thomas Donald Campbell begins buying up the Sevilleta Grant, concurrently also buying other New Mexico grant lands.

- **From: The Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena, Montana — Campbell Farming Corporation Records:**

“Thomas D. Campbell was born in 1882, the son of Thomas D. and Almira Catherine (Richards) Campbell, early homesteaders in the Red River Valley of North Dakota. After graduating from high school in Grand Forks, he took over management of the family farm while attending the University of North Dakota. In 1906, Tom married Bess McBride Bull.¹²⁵ The couple had one son who died in early childhood, and three daughters. After the death of his father, Tom moved his family to California, where he worked as an engineer and invested in real estate.

“During World War I, Campbell decided to produce food on a large scale for the war effort. With the financial backing of J.P. Morgan, he leased land on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation in northeastern Montana. A year later he moved his primary operation to the Crow Indian Reservation in southeastern Montana. He leased approximately 95,000 acres from Indian allotment owners, and purchased additional land. On this land he grew wheat and other grains on an industrial basis, pioneering the extensive use of mechanization. In the early 1920s Campbell’s New York financial backers withdrew. He reduced the acreage of leased land, but nevertheless continued farming on an extensive scale. Campbell retired to Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the late 1950s, and Floyd Slattery took over management of the Montana farm.

¹²⁵In an interview with the author, Campbell’s granddaughter Phoebe Knapp Warren said Campbell’s wife’s name was Beth.

"In the late 1930s Campbell, with [his] partner John J. Raskob, bought the La Joya Land Grant and other land grants in New Mexico. They operated the grants as a cattle ranch and dry-land wheat farm. The family sold the New Mexico properties in 1970.

"As an expert in dryland farming and industrial farming techniques, Campbell served as an advisor to the Soviet-Russian government in the early 1930s. He also was an agricultural advisor in England, Tunisia, South Africa, and Australia. During World War II, he served in the Army as an advisor on mechanization of military transportation. Thomas D. Campbell died March 18, 1966, in Pasadena, California.

"The collection consists of records of the Campbell Farming Corporation for 1918-1976 and several other business ventures. The Campbell Farming Corporation records include a Correspondence file (1918-1919, 1924-1973) for general correspondence; a Manager's File (1919-1924, 1948-1968) for Tom Campbell's correspondence with his various farm managers; a Machinery File (1918-1937, 1951-1957) for correspondence about the purchase and maintenance of equipment; Tom Campbell's Personal File (1918-1927), which was continued by the Miscellaneous File (1928-1974), a topically-based subject/correspondence file; Employment Records (1919-1973); Financial Records (1919-1975); Legal Documents (1918-1972), including allotment and lease records, many of which are lists, not actual legal documents; Maps; minor Organizational Records (1918-1959); Production Records (1920-1973); a Subject File (1970s); and miscellaneous records.

"The collection has been only preliminarily processed. The Campbell Farming Corporation suffered two office fires and many of the files were damaged, creating some confusion as to the original filing system. To the extent possible this original filing system has been maintained, but it was impossible to determine the original series in some cases. Files have been re-folded, with the worst of the burned files trimmed or photocopied. Aggressive trimming was done by the Company in 1943; the Company also retyped some burned files. Contents of individual folders have not been sorted.

"The collection was donated by the Campbell Farming Corporation, through Tom Campbell's granddaughter, Phoebe Knapp Warren, in August 1991.

Ms. Warren also donated the funds for the fellowship [Thomas D. Campbell Fellowship].”

- **From: The Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico , Albuquerque, Manuscript Collections — Thomas D. Campbell Papers, 1874-1984, Collection No. MSS 566 BC:**

“Thomas D. Campbell was born to wheat farming parents on February 19, 1882 in Grand Forks, ND. He earned a B.A., an M.E. and an LL.D. from the University of North Dakota (1903, 1904 and 1929, respectively). Campbell did post-graduate work at Cornell University in 1904-1905, and earned a doctoral degree in Engineering from the University of Southern California in 1929. In 1932, Longmans, Green and Company published Thomas D. Campbell’s book *Russia: Market or Menace?*

“Campbell served as special investigator of Native American lands for the U.S. Department of Interior during World War I. He was a colonel in the U.S. Army Corps from 1942 until 1946. During World War I, Campbell also served as transportation and equipment specialist on the General’s staff overseas, and was elevated to the office of Brigadier General in 1946. Campbell remained connected with the Air Force throughout his life, and was a general of the Air Force Reserves until his death.

“By the time he was seventeen, Thomas Campbell was managing his family’s 4,000 acre farm in Grand Forks, ND. Campbell was involved in some agricultural ventures before World War I, but it was in 1918 that his career in large scale agriculture began. During the scarcity of a war economy, Campbell came up with the idea that previously untilled American tribal lands could be successfully converted to food production. With two million dollars secured through New York banks and the aid of financier J.P. Morgan, Campbell leased 95,000 acres from the Crow and Fort Peck reservations in Montana, created the Montana Farming Corporation, and began the seminal American agro-industrial experiment. In 1922, the Montana Farming Corporation became the Campbell Farming Corporation, and continued to farm on land leased from Native Americans in Montana.

“In partnership with New York industrialist John J. Raskob, Campbell began buying land in New Mexico in the 1930’s. By 1949 Campbell-Raskob

owned some 400,000 acres in New Mexico (at different times Campbell owned parts of the La Joya, Belen, San Pedro, Sevilleta and Tome Land Grants). Campbell maintained an active interest in New Mexico throughout the rest of his life. As an active Republican, he advised the U.S. Government on southwestern land potential, traveled to Alaska to report on its strategic potential for the U.S. Secretary of Defense, and was an agricultural advisor to the governments of Russia, Britain, the United States, and France. Thomas Campbell died in March of 1966 at the age of 84."

"Related Corporations:

La Joya Development Company

U.S. Land Corporation

Ascott Land Company"

- **Phoebe Knapp Warren, Granddaughter of Thomas D. Campbell, Interview** (recorded November 22, 1997):¹²⁶

"Granddaddy helped to set up the collective farms in the USSR . . . the basis of that system is still in operation. [*in 1930s, sent by U.S. president*] . . . Heads of the collective farms came to visit the Campbell farm in Montana. . . . Stalin got annoyed with Granddaddy who was *personally* blackballed by Stalin."

Ms. Warren reports that General Campbell received "the Legion of Honor for his work in North Africa for developing farming methods in North Africa."

Ms. Warren states that "Granddaddy proposed to President Wilson and Secretary Lane that he lease Crow land" and that Campbell subsequently secured investors in the Campbell farm in Montana: "J.P. Morgan (\$2.5 million), plus a couple of other investors in 1918. . . . by 1922 it became the Campbell Farming Corp."

¹²⁶Warren, Interview by Rand-Caplan.

Ms. Warren observes that General Campbell “moved from North Dakota to Southern California . . . Pasadena . . . for Beth’s [Campbell’s wife] TB-related problems, and that he “laid out the town of Torrence California.”

Regarding the Sevilleta, Ms. Warren says:

“The entire Sevilleta Grant was leased to Welden Burris. . . . he over grazed it in the ’40s-’50s and early ’60s . . . they ran cattle. His widow is still alive and lives down there. A frontier character with nefarious schemes.”

- **Mary Armstrong, Secretary to Thomas D. Campbell, Interview** (recorded November 22, 1997).¹²⁷

He was a dynamic individual. I worked for General Campbell from 1962 to 1982. I ran the office [in Albuquerque] by myself. I always called him General Campbell, and referred to him as “the General.” Some people who knew him well called him Tom — kings, presidents, and people of that kind. Others called him General Campbell, Mr. Campbell, “the General.”

1937 — Campbell Buys San Pedro 31,594-acre Land Grant (inclusive of the 261 acre Cañon del Aqua grant).

- *Valencia County Review* (Belen, New Mexico), 15 October 1937.¹²⁸

San Pedro Grant Deeded Campbell - Montanan Will Own
Entire State of New Mexico, If He Keeps on Buying at This Speed ----

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸“San Pedro Grant Deeded Campbell,” *Valencia County Review* (Belen, New Mexico), 15 October 1937.

Deed to the 31,594 acre San Pedro land grant was transferred last Saturday to Thomas D. Campbell, Montana "wheat king" in the Bernallio county clerk's office. . . . The grant was purchased from Roswell L. Gilpatric, 15 Broad Street, New York, who was trustee in the bankrupt Santa Fe Gold and Copper Mining company. The amount as given was \$15,000 bid for the land. . . . Included in the transaction are 261 acres which comprise the Canon [sic] del Aqua grant. The transfer also stipulates that Mr. Campbell shall pay all taxes, including those of 1936; Julian Kent, \$1,000 for services; Charles M. Grossman, \$500 for services; Harry A. Wilson and J. Mell, \$400 each in addition to \$200 each already paid, and Reid and Iden, attorneys, \$1,000. . . . Campbell, who is associated with John J. Raskon, recently concluded the transfer of the La Joya grant and is now holding an optional sale contract on the 70,000 acre Belen grant. In the latter case it was said Saturday, according to the Journal, that the optional contract will be brought into the Valencia county court in an effort to have it repudiated. The county board of trustees voted to repudiate it after offering to pay Campbell \$5555 on a mortgage held by him.

● *Valencia County Review* (Belen, New Mexico), 15 October 1937:¹²⁹

New Grant Board Opposes Campbell — New Grant Board Tries
to Repudiate Contract Made By Their Predecessors in Office . . .

According to the Journal, land owners of the 70,000 acre Belen grant have repudiated an optional contract to sell the land to Thomas D. Campbell, Montana wheat raiser, and will take the case to court to test the validity of the contract granted by a former board of trustees. At least, this is the version of Gilbert Espinosa, attorney for the holders.

The decision to repudiate the optional contract, which would sell 70,000 acres at 50 cents an acre to Campbell, was made last Friday at a meeting of 100 land owners.

¹²⁹"New Grant Board Opposes Campbell," *Valencia County Review* (Belen, New Mexico), 15 October 1937.

Mr. Campbell holds a \$5555 mortgage on 30,000 acres of the land and also has purchased a first mortgage held on 40,000 acres by the Bronson Cutting estate, it was stated.

“Owners of the grant Friday were prepared to pay off the \$5555 mortgage but Mr. Campbell would not accept. He asked that terms of his optional contract be complied with.” [per Espinosa]

“A first mortgage on 40,000 acres was granted to the late Bronson M. Cutting for \$15,000 in 1928,” Espinosa stated.

On December 3, 1936, with their taxes in arrears and the payments due on that date, the board executed a mortgage for \$5555 to Mr. Campbell. This constituted a first mortgage on 30,000 acres and a second mortgage on the 40,000 acres on which Senator Cutting had granted his loan.

“If the contract was fulfilled it would allow Mr. Campbell to purchase the land for between 30 and 35 cents an acre,” according to Espinosa.

“The board is prepared to save at least 30,000 acres of the land and will go to the highest court in the land to do so,” according to the lawyer.

The Belen grant is in Valencia and Socorro counties, and adjoins the La Joya grant, recently purchased by Mr. Campbell at a tax sale for slightly more than 30 cents an acre.”

1938 — Small Property Owners in Socorro County Lose Property for Unpaid Taxes.

- “In The Lion’s Den,” *The Socorro Chieftain* (Socorro, New Mexico), 27 January 1938.

The 60-day tax moratorium is rapidly drawing to a close. The extension, granted to permit putting into operation of a program to save the delinquent property owners, has failed, because a couple of years ago someone forgot to lay the groundwork for an intelligent tax-relief program for the small property holder. . . . fruitless tax moratoriums.

- *The Socorro Chieftain* (Socorro, New Mexico), 3 February 1938:

Funds from the La Joya Grant Sale are ordered disbursed to pay claims.

- *The Socorro Chieftain* (Socorro, New Mexico), 17 February 1938:

La Joya Land Grant Claims Committee runs legal notices with May 15, 1938, deadline to file claims to be paid out of proceeds of the La Joya Land Grant sale

1940 — Population — La Joya and Ranchos La Joya

Precinct 5, La Joya: 382 people. Precinct 36, Ranchos de La Joya: 200 people.

Gloria Torres Armijo says, "The La Joya Post Office served about 500 residents." The "Lajoya P.O." is shown on the 1937 General Highway Map of Socorro County.

1949 — By 1949 Campbell-Raskob owns some 400,000 acres in New Mexico (at different times Campbell owned parts of the La Joya, Belen, San Pedro, Sevilleta and Tomé Land Grants)¹³⁰

¹³⁰Thomas D. Campbell Papers, 1874-1984, Collection No. MSS 566 BC, The Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque..

THE HISTORY OF THE SEVILLETA GRANT: IN THE FIRST PERSON

1949 — Weldon Burris and his wife Elizabeth leased the La Joya Land Grant.

1966 — Thomas Campbell dies March 18, 1966.

PART VII

1970 — THE SEVILLETA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Campbell Family donates Sevilleta to Nature Conservancy; given to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to serve as stewards of the site.

In 1970, the Campbell Family donated the Sevilleta to The Nature Conservancy, who gave ownership to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The Nature Conservancy provided a \$500,000 grant (Mary Flagler Carrie Trust Foundation, New York) to the Campbell Family as compensation; funds were used for legal expenses involved, and for university scholarships. (North Dakota, and the University of New Mexico). The appraised value of the property in the early 1970s was in excess of \$10 million.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal agency through which the Federal Government carries out its responsibilities to conserve, protect, and enhance the nation's fish and wildlife and their habitats.

"In recent years, and largely as a result of new legislation, federal agencies like the Fish and Wildlife Service have realized a heightened role to play in the national historic preservation effort. The confirmed evidence of prehistoric habitation on refuges invites speculation. . . .

In general, new responsibilities in this area call for increased awareness, identification, and preservation of archeological and historic sites and objects on the part of the agency."

. . . Michael J. Spear, Regional Director,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 2, Albuquerque

1973-74 — Livestock is removed from the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge (100,00 sq ac).

The mission of the Refuge is to restore the Sevilleta — and maintain and protect the natural diversity of plants and wildlife as it occurred historically on the Sevilleta.

1989 — **LONG TERM ECOLOGICAL RESEARCH FACILITY**

Sevilleta Long-Term Ecological Research Project is Initiated October 1989.

The National Science Foundation funded the Sevilleta Long Term Ecological Research Program as part of a coordinated network of eighteen Long Term Ecological Research Facility sites in North America. The Sevilleta facility concentrates its research efforts on the Ro Grande Basin in central New Mexico. Studies range from genetics and physiology at the organismal level to the dynamics of biome transition zones. The dominant theme of the Sevilleta's program is to examine long-term changes in ecosystem attributes (e.g., population dynamics of plants and animals, nutrient cycling, hydrology, productivity, species diversity) as a result of both natural and manmade disturbances.

1997 —

- “La Joya .. the oldest working acequia (aqueduct)” . . .¹³¹
- Oral histories are recorded of Gloria Torres Armijo (September 25, 1997); Paublita Tafoya Moya Torres and her daughter Marian Tafoya Torres (November 2, 1997); Phoebe Knapp Warren, granddaughter of General Campbell, and Mary Armstrong, former secretary of General Campbell (November 22, 1997); and Louella Torres Pedroncelli (12/29/97).

¹³¹*Socorro County 1997 Visitors & Relocation Guide* (Socorro, New Mexico: *El Defensor Chieftain*, 1997).

- San Acacia townspeople are perplexed about the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge. A resident artist says (August 1997), "Nobody knows what they are doing up there. It's a big mystery."
- The United States Postal Service tentatively considered permanently closing the La Joya Post Office following the retirement of longtime Postmistress Ernestine Barela, because it was "not profitable." There were not enough people in the communities serviced by the La Joya Post Office. The La Joya Community Development Association met with the United States Postal Service Director of Operations and presented a petition with over seventy signatures protesting the closing of the La Joya Post Office. With a copy in hand of the Federal legislation stating "no Post Office in a rural area shall be closed for financial reasons," the La Joya Community Development Association argued that their population was increasing. As a result, the United States Postal Service committed to continuing the La Joya Post Office.
- The La Joya Community Development Association revised its By-Laws/Articles to qualify as a 501(c)3 Non-Profit Corporation and began applying for community-projects grants. Rural Conservation and Development addressed the community regarding renovation and upgrading of the La Joya playground and park.

1998 — From the La Joya Community Development Association Annual Newsletter:¹³²

In 1998 La Joya Celebrates Its 400th Year As A Village!!!! The La Joya Day festival will be held May 24th . . .

The La Joya Community Development Association proposes to divide its building into a Library/Community Center and a new La Joya Post Office. The building was used for many years by the Socorro City/County Senior Citizens Program in Northern Socorro County." [The new expanded facility is now located on Hwy. 304.]

¹³²*La Joya Community Development Association Annual Newsletter, 1998* (La Joya, New Mexico, 1998). Author's Collection.

The La Joya Community Development Association planned to operate a new Center with a volunteer staff and provide tutoring and homework assistance, and a computer facility with Internet access.

2000 — The oral history of Elosium 'Eloy' Romero, Grantee descendant, is recorded March 27, 2000, in La Joya.

2005 — Annual Open House — Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center.

At its annual Open House, the Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge offers refreshments for sale at the Visitors Center. The food is provided by the La Joya Community Development Association, which in turn receives the revenue from the food sales. The multi-organizational endeavor is coordinated by Ranger Kimberly King-Wrenn, head of Visitors Services.

2006 — **La Joya Community Library**

La Joya Community Library continues to operate with a collection of over 5,000 books, housed in the building that was formerly the old La Joya School cafeteria. Staff consists of five volunteers.

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