

PHOENIX ON THE MESA: ÁCOMA PUEBLO
DURING THE SPANISH COLONIAL
PERIOD, 1500-1821

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PREFACE

When Christopher Columbus arrived off the shore of a small Bahamian island in 1492, he initiated contact between the peoples of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. The people of the Western Hemisphere, he termed "Indians." Contact profoundly affected all parties in the exchange. When Spanish explorers and colonists made their way to the valley of the Rio Grande and established an outpost of the sprawling Spanish Empire, their contact with native inhabitants of that region affected those peoples, including the inhabitants of Ácoma Pueblo. This is the story of how Spanish interaction influenced the society of Ácoma Pueblo.

In the historiography of the contact of Spaniard and Pueblo two groups of historians emerged with diametrically opposed views. An earlier school of thought tended to glorify the exploits of the Europeans who came to conquer, colonize and "civilize" a "New World" that was theirs by right of discovery. These historians cast the European

conquistadors, missionaries, trappers, traders, and colonists as the heroes in an epic struggle to civilize a savage land. Native Americans became either the noble yet savage adversaries or the ignorant heathens whom the Europeans were right to subdue. Such a history of the conquest presents the narrative from only one viewpoint, that of the European.¹

A newer school of thought has examined the interactions of European and Native American from an opposite viewpoint. In these narratives, Native Americans are portrayed as treated evilly by the Europeans who sought to eradicate their religions, customs, cultures, economies, and sometimes even the people themselves. In these stories, Native Americans attempted to defend their land, livelihood and lives from the true villains, the European conquerors. While the newer school has attempted to redress the wrongs of the older school, it nevertheless has recreated a biased

¹ See, for example, Ray Allen Billington, America's Frontier Heritage, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), reprint edition; Herbert Eugene Bolton, The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); and Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1920).

view of the story of European-Native American contact.²

Each school of thought is a product of its time. Yet, neither school has truly come to terms with the problems inherent in its presentation. When attempting to paint a heroic portrait of the European conquistadors, the old school left out the oftentimes tragic story of the Native Americans. When presenting the often tragic story of the Native Americans, the new school leaves out the sometimes heroic story of the Europeans. A presentation based on the supposition that the historical narrative exclusively contains neither heroism nor tragedy more accurately presents history.

The Spanish Borderlands is a region of historical research that contains a great deal of primary materials. Luckily, the Spanish were conscientious bureaucrats and kept copious records. These records are currently located at various archives in Spain, Mexico, and the United States,

² See, for example, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Legacy of Conquest: the Unbroken Past of the American West, (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1987); Donald Worster, Under Western Skies: Nature and History in the American West, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner II, and Charles Rankin, editors, Trails Toward a New Western History, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1991).

most notably at the New Mexico State Records Center and Archives in the form of microfilm. Additionally, many of the most important documents in the history of Spanish New Mexico have been translated. Adolph Bandelier, Lansing Bloom, Charles W. Hackett, and most especially Herbert Eugene Bolton, went to great lengths to gather the documents and produce first-rate translations. Most recently, Miguel Encinas, Alfred Rodriguez, and Joseph Sanchez introduced a new translation of Villagr a's *Historia de la Nueva Mexico, 1610*, which includes the original document. Unfortunately, the record is incomplete for some of the period. Many documents have been lost. The Pueblo Indians themselves destroyed some of the earliest written records during the revolt of 1680.³

The Spanish documents are one of two main sources of information used to piece together the history of contact between the Spanish and the Pueblo Indians. But they wrote down what was of interest to them. The Spanish saw what they wanted to see, with little regard for the cultures they

³ J. Manuel Espinosa, The Pueblo Revolt of 1696 and the Franciscan Missions in New Mexico: Letters of the Missionaries and Related Documents. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), p. 36.

were observing. Thus, the historical record is incomplete in another way. The other major source of information is the ethnographic work done by people such as Bandelier, Leslie White, Ruth Benedict, and others during the first half of the twentieth century. The information gathered by these researchers regarding the Spanish Colonial Period must, like the Spanish documents, be understood within their own context.

This dissertation uses both the Spanish and modern ethnographic documents to reach an understanding of the significance of cultural contact between the Spanish in New Mexico and the Pueblo of Ácoma. It is also an attempt to tell a story. It is the story of a people who, despite the attempts of the Spanish to change them in fundamental ways, remained much as they were prior to the first Spanish explorations into New Mexico.

To establish a baseline from which to gauge change at Ácoma, Part I examines Ácoma prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Chapter One presents a general ethnography of Pueblo culture, based on historical documents. Chapter Two examines the origins of the Ácoma, according to both the people of the pueblo themselves and to anthropologists and

archeologists. Chapter Three delves into the lives of the Ácoma people on a daily basis prior to Spanish contact. Diverging slightly from the study of Ácoma, Chapter Four examines the development of Spanish Indian policy. Despite some excellent monographs, including Leslie Simpson's The Encomienda in New Spain and Lewis Hanke's The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of the Americas, no one has succinctly explained the development of Spanish Indian policy as a whole. Such an explanation is necessary because Spanish Indian policy in New Mexico cannot be fully understood without the general background since early New Mexican policy derived directly from policy in Central Mexico.

Part II heralds the arrival of the Spanish in New Mexico. Chapter Five chronicles the contacts between the early Spanish explorers and the Pueblo Indians continuing through colonization of New Mexico by Don Juan de Oñate. Chapter Six examines the first conflict between the new Spanish colony and the Pueblo Indians--the attack by the Ácoma on one of the leaders of the Spanish, Juan de Zaldivar, and the subsequent retaliation by the Spanish on the people of Ácoma. Chapter Seven relates the rebuilding

of the pueblo. It also examines Spanish colonial Indian policy during the seventeenth century--how this policy affected the Ácoma, and how this policy failed and led to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

Part III begins in 1692 with don Diego de Vargas' expedition of reconquest and the return of the Spanish to New Mexico. Chapter Eight addresses the reconquest and the problems the Spanish faced attempting to reforge their ties with the Pueblos and the lack of a coherent policy to do so. Chapter Nine examines Spanish Indian policy in the eighteenth century, noting how this policy reflected the lessons the Spanish learned by their forced removal from New Mexico and also reflected newer external threats to New Mexico. Chapter Ten, like Chapter Three, examines the culture and economy of Ácoma, but at the end of Spanish hegemony in New Mexico.

This is a story--a story of the contact and collision of two cultures, one technologically superior to the other. The people of the technologically superior culture felt themselves culturally, religiously, and socially superior to the other and attempted to mold that culture to their own ideas. The interaction of the Spanish and the Ácoma during

the first two hundred and fifty years of their contact reflects a broader history of the Spanish presence in New Mexico. What the Spanish attempted at Ácoma, they attempted at other pueblos and had tried throughout their possessions in the Western Hemisphere. But the Ácoma retained much of their traditional culture, traditions, and economy despite the efforts of the Spanish. While the pueblo adopted some elements of Spanish material culture, they fit these items within their traditional culture and discarded what they could not use. The Ácoma reacted to Spanish contact on their own terms. This is the story of that contact.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation is an extension of my thesis on agricultural change at Ácoma Pueblo. I realized when I was finishing the thesis that there was much more I could say about change at the pueblo. This work is an attempt to say what I could not say in the thesis. However, as I complete this dissertation I find myself in the same situation as I was in finishing the thesis: there is still much more to say, as in bringing Ácoma's history through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

I would like to thank my original committee--Drs. L. G. Moses (Chair), Michael M. Smith, William Bryans, and Donald Brown--for their encouragement and guidance through the arduous process of completion of this research. Professors Louis Seig of Geography and Paul Bischoff of History have stepped in as replacements for Professor Brown, who is in Korea, and Professor Smith, who is currently on sabbatical. I would also like to thank Dr. Ronald Petrin for his support and encouragement, both of which were invaluable during the final year of work. Additionally, I thank my fellow

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Introduction

Ácoma Pueblo, perched on its mesa-top seventy miles west of Albuquerque, is one of the oldest, continuously inhabited towns in the United States. First built around 1200 C.E.,¹ the pueblo has survived the raids of nomadic tribes, an attempt by Spanish conquistadors to destroy it, then attempts by the Spanish authorities first to subjugate and then to convert to Christianity the inhabitants. Despite the efforts of the Spanish to impose their will on the Ácoma, their culture remained relatively unchanged by the end of the Spanish era.

Of the myriad Native American cultures that have inhabited what is now the United States, only the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Arizona have had such prolonged

¹ Ácoma and the Hopi pueblo of Old Oraibi are in contention for the honor of oldest, continuously inhabited town in what is now the United States. Each pueblo claims to have been founded first. Velma Garcia-Mason, "Acoma Pueblo," in Handbook of North American Indians, vol. 9, William C. Sturtevant, general editor, (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1979), pp. 450-466, p. 452. Reynold J. Ruppe's work postulates that Ácoma was founded by 1200 C.E. Reynold J. Ruppe, The Ácoma Culture Province: An Archeological Concept, (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), originally presented as a PhD dissertation at Harvard in 1953.

contact with European cultures. Since Fray Marcos de Niza's initial foray into New Mexico in 1532, Spaniard and Pueblo came in contact with one another in many different fashions on a continual basis. Such proximity has resulted in the exchange of characteristics between the cultures. Some of these exchanges have resulted in the drastic transformation of lifestyles. Others resulted in the assimilation of basic cultural characteristics. The pueblo of Ácoma provides a case study for the examination of the cultural exchanges that occurred in Pueblo culture during the years of Spain's occupation of the most remote corner of its expansive empire.

Ácoma assumes a larger significance because it exemplifies Spain's policies in the New World during the Spanish Colonial Period, which included the Hispanization of the natives. The Spanish attempted to transform the Ácoma into images of themselves. The Ácoma were to become Catholic, adopt Spanish as their language, and take Iberian forms of government. They were to build, dress, work, and farm as the Spanish, using techniques that the Spanish would teach them.

The Spanish policies to convert and assimilate the

Ácoma utterly failed. The Ácoma rejected Catholicism and incorporated only those aspects of Spanish culture that fit within their own world view. The Spanish attempt to force acculturation during the seventeenth century resulted in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. During the eighteenth century, they used a softer approach that concluded with the Ácoma incorporation of several aspects of Spanish culture. These Spanish cultural traits were of the material variety and mostly agricultural in nature. However, those traits only served to facilitate the strengthening of traditional Ácoma culture, which had an agricultural base.

Unfortunately, histories of the Spanish Borderlands, or histories that incorporate the Pueblos in general, tend to neglect the pueblo of Ácoma. Part of this omission may be due to fewer primary materials on Ácoma than on other pueblos; or it may be because Ácoma was far from the center of Spanish activity in New Mexico and was therefore considered less significant by researchers. Some general works have included a wider approach to the history of contact between Spanish and Pueblo while also examining the

cultural component.² Other works survey the history of the Spanish in the Borderlands, excluding a study of the cultural history of the area.³ Still other works provide ethnographies of specific pueblos or simply survey the Spanish presence in New Mexico while including the Pueblos.⁴ These works, being more general in nature, have tended to neglect Ácoma. When they do mention the pueblo, usually in the context of the Massacre of 1599, they fail to get it right.⁵

The specialized bibliography of the Pueblo of Ácoma is

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- ² See especially Edward Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1962) and Edward Dozier, The Pueblo Indians of North America, (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1970).
- ³ For example, see Herbert Eugene Bolton, The Spanish Borderlands, The Chronicles of the Americas Series, Ed. Allen Johnson, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921); John Francis Bannon, The Spanish Borderlands, Histories of the American Frontier, Ed. Ray Allen Billington, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974).
- ⁴ John Kessell, Kiva, Cross and Crown: the Pecos Indians and New Mexico, 1540-1840, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987); David J. Weber, The Spanish Frontier in North America, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).
- ⁵ The problems in the historiography of the Ácoma Massacre of 1599 are discussed in Chapter Six.

comparatively short, containing seven major works, including dissertations and government documents. The Ácoma bibliography can be divided into three distinct categories of study: archeological, anthropological, and historical. Reynold Ruppe and Alfred Dittert each wrote dissertations based on archeological work done in the Ácoma area. Robert Rands's "Ácoma Land Utilization: An Ethnohistorical Report" and Leslie White's The Ácoma Indians: People of the Sky City are both anthropological. Ward Alan Minge's Ácoma: The Sky Pueblo is strictly historical and covers the history of the pueblo from the pre-Hispanic period to the present. Two other works, J. M. Gunn's Scatchen and Mary Sedgewick's Ácoma, the Sky City, survey the history, but also add some discussion of the social structure and religion of the pueblo.⁶

⁶ Adolph F. Bandelier, Final Report of Investigations Among the Indians of the Southwest US, Papers of the Archeological Institute of America, America Series, vol. IV, (Cambridge: J. Wilson and Sons, 1890); Alfred Edward Dittert, "Culture Change in the Cebolleta Mesa Region, Central Western New Mexico," PhD dissertation, University of Arizona, 1959; J. M. Gunn, Scatchen, (Albuquerque: Albright and Anderson, 1917); Ward Alan Minge, Ácoma: Pueblo in the Sky, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1991, revised edition); Rands, Robert L. "Ácoma Land Utilization: An Ethnohistorical Report," Indian Claims

From 1947 through 1952, two archeology graduate students conducted surveys in the region around Ácoma Pueblo. Alfred E. Dittert and Reynold J. Ruppe produced dissertations as well as several articles, based on data uncovered during those years of study. As both authors note, these studies were the first to do more than a cursory survey of the area. Other archeologists, including Adolph Bandelier, whose findings are in Final Report of Investigations Among the Indians of the Southwest U.S., had previously conducted a few perfunctory site investigations, but no one had expanded on the earlier work.⁷

Commission Case Pueblo de Ácoma vs U. S. A., docket #266; Ruppe, The Ácoma Culture Province; Mary Sedgewick, Ácoma, the Sky City, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926); Leslie A. White, The Ácoma Indians: People of the Sky City, 47th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1932). Of less interest are Alfred E. Dittert and Florence Hawley Ellis, "Anthropological Evidence of Old Ácoma Occupation of Land Claim Area," Indian Claims Commission Case "Pueblo de Ácoma vs U. S. A.," docket #266; Ward Alan Minge, "Historical Treatise in Defense of the Pueblo of Ácoma Land Claim," exhibit #104, Indian Claims Commission Case "Pueblo de Ácoma vs U. S. A., docket #266.

⁷ Dr. Ruppe's dissertation for Harvard University, "The Ácoma Culture Province: An Archeological Concept," (1953) has since been published under the same title in the Evolution of North American Indians series. Alfred E. Dittert examined cultural change in the Ácoma area

During the late 1920s, Leslie White spent time at Ácoma Pueblo doing research for the Bureau of American Ethnology while in the guise of a pottery collector. His findings were subsequently published as The Ácoma Indians, part of the *47th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology*. Because White's interest was as an ethnologist, there is little of an historical nature in The Ácoma Indians that cannot be found in greater detail elsewhere. Because White was the first trained ethnographer to study Ácoma culture, his ethnological findings are useful for the cultural historian studying cultural change over the years. The work does not attempt to interpret Ácoma culture or history; rather, it seeks to summarize and report on it. Unfortunately, White chose informants without much care. Those whom he asked for information were, by and large, on the periphery of pueblo society, either being alcoholics or outcasts.⁸ For this reason, White's information, and hence the usefulness of this information, are suspect.

in his doctoral dissertation "Culture Change in the Cebolleta Mesa Region, Central Western New Mexico." (1959)

⁸ Interview with Dr. Ward Alan Minge, May 9, 1995.

Section I of John M. Gunn's Scatchen (1917) gives a fairly accurate, if cursory, narrative of the history of the Keres pueblos of Ácoma and Laguna as revealed in the writings of the Spanish explorers and colonists. Gunn did not include a bibliography in the work, but considering the brevity of his narrative, it is doubtful that he perused the original documents to discover his information. Section II wanders into the realm of fantasy. Gunn apparently read the Ácoma origin myth and somehow concluded that the inhabitants of the pueblo may be in some way connected to one of the lost tribes of Israel or from the lost continent of Atlantis. Although this section is delightful fiction, it is simply that.

In the preface to her Ácoma, the Sky City (1926), Mary Sedgewick claims that she is no more than a compiler. She has performed this task with remarkable results. Using a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, Sedgewick produced a solid narrative of the history of Ácoma Pueblo. Sedgewick's narrative history is accurate and based on the research of some of the better historians of the Spanish Borderlands, including Frederick Webb Hodge and Herbert Eugene Bolton, as well as the reports of some of the early

American explorers in the region. But she has a relatively inadequate study of Ácoma social organization, traditions, and ceremonies when compared to White's work.⁹

In 1951, the Pueblo of Ácoma initiated a lawsuit through the Indian Claims Commission in order to repossess lands they felt had been wrongfully taken from them by other settlers. By the time the case had been completed in 1970, several expert witnesses had written reports in defense of the Ácoma land claims. These are some of the best short histories of the pueblo.

The most interesting, from an ethnohistorical viewpoint, is Robert L. Rands' "Ácoma Land Utilization: An Ethnohistorical Report." Rands' report contains material found nowhere else. Because of the ethnohistorical nature of his work and his attempt to prove traditional Ácoma use of the surrounding area, Rands compiled reams of information on herding, agriculture, and hunting at Ácoma. Many of his findings are based on the testimony of older Ácoma, most of whom are no longer living. These oral histories are the only ones containing information on daily life and economy

⁹ Sedgewick, Ácoma, the Sky City; White, The Ácoma Indians.

at the pueblo.

Ward Alan Minge's "Historical Treatise in Defense of the Pueblo of Ácoma Land Claim" and "Record of Navajo Activities Affecting the Ácoma-Laguna Area, 1740-1910" by Minge and Myra Ellen Jenkins serve as the basis for Minge's expanded history of the pueblo, Ácoma: Pueblo in the Sky. He published the first edition of this book in 1976, then rewrote it in 1991, adding a new chapter to cover the fourteen years between the two editions. This is the only history of Ácoma written by a trained historian and encompasses the entire history of the pueblo from the era prior to Spanish contact through 1990. Minge had the full cooperation of the government and residents of Ácoma. But once Minge had completed the manuscript, the government of the pueblo edited it to their satisfaction; thus Minge was not at liberty to fully relate what he had discovered in his research on the pueblo.¹⁰

While Minge narrated the history of the pueblo, he did so in mostly a cursory manner. His chapters on the prehistoric and Spanish colonial periods are short and lack

¹⁰ Interview with Dr. Ward Alan Minge, May 9, 1995.

detail. Of even more concern is the lack of interpretation. Minge has provided a history of Ácoma, but has not set this history within a framework or stated a thesis. Minge begins by stating that the history of Ácoma can only be understood when its isolation has been taken into consideration. Minge is correct in this assertion, but he fails to do anything with this statement. The isolation of the pueblo during the Spanish occupation is crucial to an understanding of its relations with the Spanish. The lack of an interpretation is the major drawback of this work, but there are factual errors of significance as well.

Because of the lack of interpretive works on Ácoma, this dissertation will chronicle and explain cultural change and cultural continuity over a three-hundred-year period. It is essentially an historical work, narrating the history of contact between two peoples. This dissertation focuses primarily on the history of cultural change and continuity at a single New Mexican pueblo, but it is also, of necessity, a history of the Spanish presence in that province. To understand the cultural change or the lack of it, one must also understand the reasons and methods by which the Spanish attempted to change the Pueblos into

people whose culture more closely resembled that of Iberia.

Coming to grips with the collision of cultures means tackling the problem in ways different from the methods used in traditional history. One significant difference is the use of sources containing non-documentary evidence. All sources that shed light on cultural change become relevant. This means using ethnographic studies, oral traditions, archeological evidence, other forms of folklore, visual material, myth and legend, as well as traditional historical documentation. This dissertation uses such evidence to determine cultural change and cultural continuity since the entrance of the Spanish into the Pueblo world.

When the Spanish arrived in New Mexico, they found at Ácoma a community with a highly developed social, religious, and political structure. The Ácoma worked at a less complex technological level than the Spanish. For example, they did not work in metal or use the wheel. But they made efficient use of the materials they had to provide a flourishing and culturally dynamic way of life. With agriculture as the economic base, the Ácoma supplied other needs through hunting, gathering, and trade.

From the initial Spanish colonization of New Mexico,

the Spanish and the Ácoma maintained a hostile relationship. The massacre at the pueblo in 1599 and the heavy-handedness of the missionaries after the reconstruction of the community resulted in the eventual participation of Ácoma in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. But during the intervening eighty years, the Ácoma did adopt some Spanish traits. In the economic sphere, the Ácoma adopted livestock and some crops from the Spanish as well as iron tools, supplied by the Franciscan missionaries. While they preserved their traditional social structure, government, and religion, they simply affixed the Spanish form of government as an addition to their own. They kept their religion despite the blandishments of the Franciscan missionaries in their midst. The Spanish Colonial Indian policy of cultural conversion, made through force and oppression, had failed in the seventeenth century.

After their reconquest of New Mexico, the Spanish adopted a more conservative approach towards cultural conversion due to the lessons learned through the Revolt of 1680. The old policy re-emerged temporarily during the administration of Governor Flores Mogollón. But he, like the other governors of the post-Revolt era, found the old

policy of forced assimilation of the pueblos untenable. As resources were diverted to maintain their empire against the encroachment of other imperialistic powers and nomadic raids, Spanish officials in New Mexico found that conversion of the pueblos would have a lower priority than before. In fact, the Spanish could rarely keep a missionary at Ácoma. The Ácoma continued to adopt Spanish cultural traits, mostly new crops and tools; but they obtained these new items through trade rather than through the missionaries. Trade, primarily with the Navajo, Apache, and other Pueblos, had been a major economic enterprise prior to the Spanish arrival. After 1706, however, the Ácoma began to trade heavily with their new Spanish neighbors. The Ácoma and the Spanish lived in peace, but without real friendship. Despite the conciliatory stance of the Spanish, the oppression of the seventeenth century left its mark.

When Mexico declared its independence from Spain in 1821, the pueblo of Ácoma remained very much as it had been prior to the arrival of Don Juan de Oñate and his colonizing party. The Ácoma had added the Spanish form of government to their own and had adopted a veneer of Catholicism, as in the adaption of certain feast days. Despite the decrease in

their population, due to disease, the Ácoma maintained their traditional social traditions. They integrated many Spanish agricultural techniques, crops, livestock, and tools into their main occupation of agriculture, thus providing themselves with a dietary safety net. If one crop failed, it was hoped that at least one other would survive. The increased quantities of crops produced by Ácoma farmers armed with Spanish crops and techniques supplied them with surplus for trade.

On the whole, the Ácoma preserved their culture and political autonomy in the face of Spanish attempts to incorporate them politically and culturally into their empire. The perpetuation of Ácoma culture comes from several sources. First, as Minge has stated, the isolation of Ácoma itself is key to understanding its cultural survival. Most of the Spanish settlements during the entire two-hundred-year period of colonization were located in the Rio Grande Valley, seventy miles east of Ácoma. Ácoma's relative isolation led to fewer contacts and hence fewer opportunities for Spanish domination. Another source of the perpetuation of Ácoma culture is the resistance they employed in the face of Spanish cultural (and physical)

aggression.

This resistance can be categorized as active and passive resistance. Active resistance is characterized by the numerous rebellions initiated by the Ácoma throughout the first hundred years of Spanish rule in New Mexico. Passive resistance has been described by Edward Dozier as "compartmentalization." Compartmentalization was the ability of the Pueblo Indians to absorb aspects of Spanish culture and present these aspects as a facade behind which to preserve their traditional cultural forms, though these two forms remained mutually distinct. To forestall Spanish retribution, "the Pueblo Indians compromised by outwardly appearing to have accepted the Spanish-imposed cultural system. They adopted the externals... but continued to practice their own customs."¹¹ While compartmentalization was certainly practiced at Ácoma, this aspect of resistance

¹¹ Thomas D. Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, 1350-1880, (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), p. 40; Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 24; Edward Dozier, "Rio Grande Pueblos," in Edward H. Spicer, ed., Perspectives in American Indian Cultural Change, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), pp. 94-186, p. 95; Edward Dozier, "Spanish-Indian Acculturation in the Southwest," American Anthropologist, 54 (1954):663-684, pp.-669-670.

was not as important as active resistance and the Spanish reaction to outright rebellion in the continuation of traditional Ácoma culture. During the seventeenth century, the Spanish attempted to impose their will on the Pueblos, Ácoma included. But, as has been stated before, Ácoma was far from the center of Spanish activity in New Mexico and continually posed problems for Spanish authorities in the form of active resistance. This resistance culminated in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and continued at Ácoma until the early eighteenth century. During that century, the Pueblos and the Spanish reached an accommodation. To forestall further Pueblo rebellion, the Spanish relaxed their attempts to convert the Indians and the whole missionary process had deteriorated to the point of almost non-existence by the end of Spanish hegemony in New Mexico. Thus, despite their attempts, the Spanish failed to transform the Ácoma into images of themselves.

Chapter 1

The Pueblos of New Mexico:

A Cultural Survey of the Protohistoric Period

In what is today the American Southwest Native American communities have endured for almost a thousand years. These "pueblos" were first visited by Europeans during Francisco Vasquez de Coronado's exploration of the Southwest. Pedro de Castañeda, the chronicler of the expedition, described Cibola, the Zuñi village of Hawikuh as

a little crowded village, looking as if it had been crumpled all up together. There are ranch houses in New Spain which make a better appearance at a distance. It is a village of about 200 warriors, is three and four stories high, with the houses small and having only a few rooms, and without a courtyard. One yard serves for each section. The people of the whole district had collected here, for there are seven villages in the province, and some of the others are even larger and stronger than Cibola.¹

¹ Pedro de Castañeda of Najara, "Account of the expedition to Cibola which took place in the year 1540, in which all those settlements, their ceremonies & customs, are described," in The Journey of Coronado, translated and edited by George Parker Winship, reprint edition (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1990): 2-78, p. 16.

Though Castañeda was not impressed with Hawikuh, his description of this pueblo is echoed in the descriptions of other pueblos throughout his own narrative and in the narratives of the chroniclers of other Spanish expeditions into New Mexico.

Some of these conquistadors took extensive notes of what they saw when they visited the pueblos, and it is from these documents that the state of Pueblo Indian culture immediately prior to the colonization of New Mexico by the Spanish can be learned. The time frame is important. After colonization, the Spanish began systematically to attempt to change the way the Pueblo Indians conducted their lives. Prior to these records, the history of the pueblos is not recorded in writing, and the archeological record cannot shed light on too many aspects of pueblo culture or give a precise view of this particular period. Therefore, only from the Spanish records comes the data that illuminates the protohistoric period.

What the Spanish chroniclers reported reveals that the pueblos were, in most respects, very similar in general cultural characteristics. Throughout the Pueblo world, the pattern of town living described by Castañeda was repeated.

Each district or group consisted of several towns with a common bond. The towns themselves were made of houses of several stories, ranging from three to five stories in height. It is from this living arrangement that the Pueblo Indians get their name. Though each village or group of villages was politically autonomous and its people had distinct languages, they were unified by many important cultural similarities. They lived in villages or towns, from which these sedentary Indians of New Mexico got their name. The Spanish word for town is "pueblo." Farming was the primary occupation of the pueblos, and the natives provided for most of their daily needs through agricultural endeavors. But their economies were not the only similarities among the pueblos. From the seemingly insignificant cultural aspects such as dress to more significant aspects such as political and social organization to religion, the pueblos shared many common qualities.

Even the Spanish recognized many cultural, as well as physical, similarities among the pueblos. Castañeda, when describing the pueblos along the Rio Grande that the Coronado expedition visited, stated that they "all have the

same habits & customs, although some have some things in particular which the others have not... The people [of Cicuye] & their customs are like those of the other villages."² Most other chroniclers of the early Spanish exploration parties echoed Castañeda's observations.

The early Spanish explorers were certainly not trained ethnographers, but their commentaries are valuable for providing material helpful in gaining an understanding of pueblo culture prior to the Spanish colonization of the Southwest. Sometimes these writings are very insightful. The Spanish were awestruck by the material wealth and sophistication of pueblo culture while they held other aspects of the pueblos in disdain. Nevertheless, each recorded observation reveals a piece of the pattern that forms the pre-Hispanic pueblo cultural quilt.

The most significant difference among the pueblos were the languages spoken by the various villages. The early Spanish explorers noted that the languages changed when they journeyed from village to village. Unfortunately, the Spanish made no observations that would allow modern

² *Ibid*, pp. 53, 56.

linguists to make distinctions among the languages spoken in the villages. Therefore, reaching an understanding of the pre-Hispanic language pattern is almost impossible.

Modern linguistic anthropologists have categorized the languages spoken in the modern pueblos. Whether these languages were spoken in pre-Hispanic times in other areas or even in the villages in which they are now found is open for debate. Languages representing three language families are spoken in the present-day pueblos. Uto-Aztecan, one of the largest language families in the western hemisphere, contains three major language groups: Aztecan, Sonoran, and Shoshonean. The Hopi speak a language of the Shoshonean group. Kiowa-Tanoan is another language family and is represented by a larger number of pueblos. Some linguists have put Kiowa-Tanoan and Uto-Aztecan within a larger linguistic phylum called Aztec-Tanoan. Many of the pueblos along the Rio Grande speak one of the three languages within the Kiowa-Tanoan family; Tiwa, Tewa, and Towa. Towa is spoken only by the people of Jémez Pueblo, although the people of Pecos may have spoken it as well. The inhabitants of San Juan, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Pojoaque and Tesuque speak Tewa. At Picurís, Taos, Sandia, and Isleta,

Tiwa is spoken. Keresan is a linguistically isolated language, meaning that linguists have not determined a relationship between it and any other language. The people of Zia, Santa Ana, San Felipe, Santo Domingo, Cochiti, Ácoma, and Laguna speak Keres. Zuñi is also a linguistic isolate and is only spoken at that pueblo. Each pueblo also speaks a dialect of the major language.³ Thus, the Pueblo Indians speak languages within four distinct language families, each of which is unintelligible to another. The differences in languages suggest that the various pueblos did not arise from a common ancestor, but came from very different origins. But what differences in languages existed in the sixteenth century, when the Spanish began their move into New Mexico, are unknown.

Despite the significant linguistic differences, the pueblos shared many common characteristics. The most obvious of which was, of course, their housing. Unlike the Apaches and Navajos, who lived a semi-nomadic existence in brush hogans, the Pueblo Indians lived in compact towns, reminiscent of the towns of Iberia to which the Spanish were

³ Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, pp. 37-38; Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 37.

accustomed.

The Spanish descriptions of the individual pueblos reveal many similarities among them. Most towns were built around a plaza. These plazas served as the focal point of the community where ceremonies were conducted and gatherings took place. The plazas were also where the *kivas*, the living quarters of the men and centers of ceremonial activity, were located.⁴

Castañeda called the largest town of the Zuñi area Maçaque (Matsaki) and seemed to be particularly intrigued by the town due to the size of the houses. Most houses had three or four stories, but some of the houses in Matsaki had seven stories.⁵ Castañeda described this village at some length.

This is the only village that has houses with seven stories. In this village certain houses are used as fortresses; they are higher than the

⁴ Antonio de Espejo, "Report of Antonio de Espejo," in The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594, translated and edited by George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, vol. III, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966): 213-231, p. 219.

⁵ Castañeda, p. 27.

others and set up above them like towers, and there are embrasures and loopholes in them for defending the roofs of different stories, because, like the other villages, they do not have streets, and the flat roofs are all of a height and are used in common. The roofs have to be reached first, and these upper houses are the means of defending them. It began to snow on us there, and the force took refuge under the wings of the village, which extend out like balconies, with wooden pillars beneath, because they generally use ladders to go up to those balconies, since they do not have any doors below.⁶

Hernán Gallegos, of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition, in his own description of Zuñi, noted that the houses were built of stone, something he considered amazing. The houses were of two or three stories, containing at least eight rooms, with windows and doorways, and were whitewashed on both the inside and outside. Wooden ladders were used to gain access to upper levels.⁷ Gallegos described these wooden ladders in more detail when he discussed the Piro pueblos.⁸

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 27.

⁷ Hernán Gallegos, "Gallegos' Relation of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez Expedition," in Hammond and Rey, The Rediscovery of New Mexico, pp. 67-114, p. 108.

⁸ Gallegos' narrative is so confused at this point that it is unclear to which pueblo he refers. While he may have been describing the Piro, he later mentions

The natives have ladders by means of which they climb to their quarters. These are movable wooden ladders, for when the Indians retire at night, they pull them up to protect themselves against enemies since they are at war with one another.⁹

At the Hopi mesas, Coronado's explorers found seven villages "of the same sort" as at Zuñi.¹⁰ At Tutahaco, (possibly Isleta) they saw villages that were terraced, "like those of Tiguex," which the company had visited several days earlier.¹¹ Castañeda described the village of Cicuye as very strong, with houses of four stories.¹²

Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, in his "Memoria" of his expedition to New Mexico, described the pueblo of Pecos as similar to other pueblos. The houses of Pecos were built joined together and back to back. De Sosa likened them to military barracks. The houses reached four to five stories in height, each floor containing three to four rooms. Each house contained fifteen or sixteen rooms, so they were

pueblos that may have been Tigua or Tiwa.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

¹⁰ Castañeda, p. 21.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 26.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 25.

larger than at the other pueblos described. One other similarity is that each house had an area for grinding corn. The houses were whitewashed. No house had ground-level entrances. Trap doors, used to enter the houses, were located on the upper levels, with access, as Castañeda reported regarding Zuñi, gained by means of movable ladders.¹³

At Tiguex, Castañeda described the process of house-building.

They all work together to build the villages, the women being engaged in making the mixture and the walls, while the men bring the wood and put it in place. They have no lime, but they make a mixture of ashes, coals, and dirt which is almost as good as mortar, for when the house is to have four stories, they do not make the walls more than half a yard thick. They gather a great pile of twigs of thyme and sedge grass and set it afire, and when it is half coals and ashes they throw a quantity of dirt and water on it and mix it all together. They make round balls of this, which they use instead of stones after they are dry, fixing them with the same mixture, which comes to

¹³ Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, "Report on the Exploratory Expedition to New Mexico undertaken on July 27, 1590, by Gaspar Castaño de Sosa while he was Lieutenant Governor and Captain General of New Leon," in Hammond and Rey, The Rediscovery of New Mexico, pp. 245-295, p. 277.

be like a stiff clay.¹⁴

The houses of San Miguel pueblo were built in blocks. The walls were made of mud, but the inside walls were white-washed and decorated with pictures of monsters, animals, and people. At the Tiwa pueblos, the houses were also white-washed inside, but Gallegos added that they were also decorated with many colors and designs.¹⁵

One feature of pueblo towns that have intrigued Europeans since Coronado's day were the *kivas*. These were circular or sometimes D-shaped structures, usually built underground, that served a variety of purposes in the pueblos.

At Zuñi, Castañeda stated that "there are *estufas* or hot-rooms in the villages, which are the courtyards or places where they gather for consultation."¹⁶ The *kivas*, or *estufas* (stoves or ovens) as the Spanish called them, were communally-owned property. Castañeda reported that the young men of the Rio Grande pueblos, before being married,

¹⁴ Castañeda, p. 53.

¹⁵ Gallegos, pp. 82, 83.

¹⁶ Castañeda, p. 52.

slept in the *kivas*. "It is sacrilege for the women to go into the *estufas* to sleep."¹⁷

De Sosa seemed to be quite intrigued by the *kivas* he saw at Pecos. These were built underground and reached through trapdoors, so small that only one person at a time could enter. Ladders reached from the floors of the *kivas* to the trapdoors. Inside, the walls were whitewashed. De Sosa wrote that the inhabitants did not build fires in the *kivas*, but brought in "many braziers banked with ashes, in a manner so ingenious that I find no words to describe it."¹⁸

The *kivas* served as lodging houses for the unmarried men of the pueblos and probably also served as a sort of club house for these men. They were also the centers of ceremonial life in the pueblos, as the section below on pueblo religion reveals.¹⁹

In summation, the pueblos were physically very similar to one another. The villages were constructed around plazas

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 54, 53.

¹⁸ De Sosa, p. 277.

¹⁹ Diego Pérez de Luxàn, "Diego Pérez de Luxàn's Account of the Antonio de Espejo Expedition into New Mexico, 1582," in Hammond and Rey, The Rediscovery of New Mexico, pp. 153-212, p. 175.

with houses that adjoined. The houses themselves were constructed of adobe, sometimes of shaped adobe, while in rare cases the houses were of stone, such as at Zufi. Most houses had two to four stories, while some had up to seven. The stories were terraced, each level set back from the front, creating a patio of the roof of the story below. Most houses could only be entered by doors, sometimes in the form of trapdoors, in the upper levels. The upper floor, main entrances, as well as entrances to the other stories, could only be reached by movable, wooden ladders, thus prohibiting entrance by unwanted visitors. The buildings were usually painted, either with whitewash, or in some cases with other pigmentation and designs.

The Spanish described the exteriors of the houses and the general layout of the pueblos in fair detail, but rarely mentioned the interiors of the houses with the exception of the kitchens and the preparation of food. This observation probably says much about the inadequate state of the food supplies of the explorers while providing modern readers with a view into the domestic life of the pueblos.

Castañeda described the preparation of corn for use in bread at Tiguex. Three women worked together, each having a

metate with which to grind the corn. One woman broke the corn and the others ground the corn, the corn being ground once by each woman. The women ground a lot of corn at one time and then made a wafer-like bread. While the women ground, a man played a flute, or a fife as Castañeda called it, on the doorstep and they sang.²⁰ Espejo, in his description of Piro, noted the methods and materials used by the women to prepare food which were similar to those that Castañeda observed over forty years earlier at Tigüex.

As we crossed this province the inhabitants of each town came out to meet us, took us to their pueblos, and gave us quantities of turkeys, corn, beans, and tortillas, with other kinds of bread, which they make more skillfully than the Mexican people. They grind raw corn on very large stones, five or six women working together in a single mill, and from the flour make many kinds of bread.²¹

By this method, the women were able to produce a fine corn

²⁰ Castañeda, pp. 54-55; see Natalie Curtis, "Two Pueblo Indian Grinding Songs," Craftsman, 7(1904):35-41, for modern versions of the songs pueblo women sing while grinding corn.

²¹ Espejo, p. 219.

meal that they would use to make tortillas.²²

Luxàn saw similar devices at San Miguel. He wrote that at one end of the kitchens were four or five and sometimes up to eight mills placed next to each other. "They are made of whitewashed stones, built low, right on the ground, and resemble metates, with a border one span high and in the center an indented stone like the metate, about half a yard in length and a third wide. The Indians grind with another stone."²³

De Sosa also noted the method of grinding corn and preparing corn-based bread. He described the process as "novel," the "flour being passed from one grinder to another."²⁴ This method of grinding corn is well-documented from the time of the early Spanish explorers to the present day. The use of the grinding stone is also ancient, but continues to the present.

²² The Ácoma continue to use this method of corn meal preparation today. See Elsie Clews Parsons, "Notes on Ácoma and Laguna," American Anthropologist, 20(1918):179; the same methods are also used by women in much of Latin America today.

²³ Luxàn, p. 172.

²⁴ De Sosa, p. 277.

While describing the kitchens of the pueblos in some detail, the Spanish chroniclers were apparently far less concerned with the other rooms in the pueblo house. One exception is a short note by Gallegos in his description of Zuñi. He observed that the people of Zuñi made mats out of straw which they used as mattresses to sleep upon.²⁵

The Spanish were far more helpful in describing the dress of the pueblos. Whether the observers noted the dress of the natives because of admiration or because they considered the dress barbaric depended on the observer. Some, like Castañeda, obviously thought the way the people dressed was fascinating. Others, such as Espejo, could hardly contain their revulsion. Either way, the statements about fashion provide important clues into several aspects of pueblo culture, but most especially the economy. Whether the inhabitants of a pueblo wore cotton blankets or deer skin shirts says much about what could be grown in their area or whether they traded with others who could grow cotton.

In describing the people of Cibola, Castañeda stated

²⁵ Gallegos, p. 108.

that the inhabitants were

very intelligent. They cover their privy parts and all the immodest parts with cloths made like a sort of table napkin, with fringed edges & a tassel at each corner, which they tie over the hips. They wear long robes of feathers and of the skins of hares and cotton blankets. The women wear blankets, which they tie or knot over the left shoulder leaving the right arm out. These serve to cover the body. They wear a neat well-shaped outer garment of skin. They gather their hair over the two ears, making a frame which looks like an old-fashioned headdress.²⁶

Castañeda wrote that the men of Tiguex wore fringed deerskin shirts and threw long robes over the shirts. The women of Tiguex wore clothing only after they were married. Until they married, they young women walked around naked, even in winter. When he asked a resident about this, the man explained to him that the virgins went naked until marriage, but did not explain why. His answer came at Cicuye where the virgins also went naked until they married. He was told they went naked because, were they to do anything wrong, it would be seen in their naked state.²⁷

Gallegos wrote that the people at Tigua wore Campeche-

²⁶ Castañeda, p. 52.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 55, 56.

style cotton blankets.²⁸ At Zia, Luxàn noted that men's clothing consisted of blankets, "some draped like towels to cover their privates and others like knotted cloaks worn shawl fashion, and also leather shoes in the shape of boots."²⁹ At the Piro pueblos, Gallegos described the clothing of the inhabitants since, "for barbarians, it is the best that has been found."³⁰ Some of the men wore a bowl-cut type of hairstyle, cut short all around, but leaving the crown longer so that it formed a skull cap. Other men wore their hair long, down to the shoulders. They wore colored cotton cloth as a loin cloth which measured three-fourths of a vara (approximately one yard) in length and two-thirds of a vara in width. Over this they threw a colored and decorated cotton blanket, tied at the shoulder, which reached to the knees. He also stated that most wore painted and embroidered cotton shirts. The men also wore shoes, but of what type he did not say. The women wore cotton skirts, colored and embroidered like the men, and

²⁸ Gallegos, p. 83.

²⁹ Luxàn, p. 180.

³⁰ Gallegos, p. 85.

cotton blankets over the torso, also colored and decorated like the men. The women also used tasseled cotton sashes as belts. The women all wore their hair long. Gallegos did not write whether or not the women wore shoes.³¹

Luxàn noted that the men of Zia wore leather, boot-like shoes, and wore loin cloths, with cloaks worn like shawls. The women wore blankets, tied over the shoulder, and cinched at the waist with a sash. Over these blankets, the women wore turkey feather blankets, which Luxàn described as "ugly." The women also cut their bangs, but braided their hair, wearing two braids.³²

The dress of the men of Pecos, according to de Sosa, consisted of elaborately-decorated loin cloths, over which the men threw cotton blankets. In cold weather, their dress was augmented by buffalo skins. The women wore blankets attached over one shoulder, leaving the other side open, and tied at the waist with a sash. Over this they wore a robe made of turkey feathers that was elaborately decorated. De Sosa described the dress of those of the Tewa pueblos as

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

³² Luxàn, p. 180.

being similar to that of Pecos.³³

The men of the Hopi pueblos wore loin clothes, "similar to a hand towel," but decorated. Cotton blankets were worn in cold weather. The women were well-dressed and wore their hair in "puffs."³⁴

While some differentiation in dress is evident from the descriptions of the Spanish explorers, clearly the pueblos had many similarities in fashion. The men wore loin clothes of some sort with blankets thrown over the shoulders to protect them on colder days. These blankets were usually of cotton though deer skin robes were also evident. Women wore skirts with blankets thrown over one shoulder, probably to increase freedom of movement. Both of these items were also made of cotton.

One piece of information that Castañeda passed on concerned the sanitary habits of the peoples of the Rio Grand pueblos.

The villages are free from nuisances, because they go outside to excrete, and they pass their water

³³ De Sosa, pp. 278, 282.

³⁴ Luxàn, p. 192.

into clay vessels, which they empty at a distance from the village.³⁵

In fact, the cleanliness of the pueblos is one cultural habit that the Spanish remarked upon again and again.³⁶

Castañeda's description of the preparation of food at Tiguex exemplifies this desire for cleanliness. He wrote that the women of Tiguex ground the corn in houses that were separate from the other houses, and he noted especially that these houses were kept very clean. The women who did the work shook out their clothes, took off their shoes, put up their hair, and then covered their heads before entering the building where they would grind the corn.³⁷

The economy of the pueblos was based primarily on agriculture. As Gallegos noted when visiting the Tigua, "They sustain themselves on corn, beans, and calabashes [squash]."³⁸ These three crops were the mainstay of the pueblo diet. Because of the lack of rainfall in what could

³⁵ Castañeda, p. 54.

³⁶ Espejo, p. 223;

³⁷ Castañeda, p. 54-55.

³⁸ Gallegos, p. 83.

sometimes be a very dry climate, some pueblos used such sophisticated irrigation techniques to water their crops that even the Spanish approved. To their basic diet, they added food gained through hunting and gathering. Cotton was raised in a number of areas. Hunting also played a role in clothing since deer skins and buffalo robes were not uncommon. Animal husbandry was almost unknown. Trade also figured into the pueblo economy and is currently a matter of much debate among historians and anthropologists.³⁹ Each of these aspects of agriculture and the economy will be discussed at greater length.

Corn was king among the pueblos. The Zuñi cultivated corn which, wrote Castañeda, "...does not grow very high [and is cultivated] in patches. There are three or four large fat ears having each eight hundred grains on every stalk growing upward from the ground."⁴⁰ Of the Rio Grande Pueblos, Castañeda wrote that

³⁹ Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, pp. 43-45, discusses the debate among scholars about the "mesoamerican connection" between the southwest and central America.

⁴⁰ Castañeda, p. 52.

the country is so fertile that they do not have to break up the ground the year round, but only have to sow the seed, which is presently covered by the fall of snow, and the ears come up under the snow. In one year they gather enough for seven.⁴¹

De Sosa's description of the corn and beans the company found at Pecos is most illuminating. He was impressed with the sheer quantity of grain stored in the houses, remarking that each house had two or three rooms full of corn. The corn, as well as the beans he saw, were of different colors, indicating different varieties of each grain. Some houses also contained other foodstuffs, such as chili, squash, and "herbs."⁴²

When Gallegos visited the deserted pueblo of San Miguel, on the Rio Grande, he and his companions "...found many corn-fields," he wrote, "like those of Mexico, and also fields of beans, calabashes (squash), and cotton."⁴³

As Gallegos pointed out, the pueblos also raised a non-food crop--cotton. He also noted large fields of cotton at

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 54.

⁴² De Sosa, p. 278.

⁴³ Gallegos, p. 82

the Tigua pueblos.⁴⁴ The Hopi presented Don Pedro de Tovar, a lieutenant of Coronado's, with skins, corn, pine nuts and birds. They also gave him some cotton cloth, though not a lot.⁴⁵ Castañeda claimed that cotton was not grown at Hopi, though this assertion seems in error.⁴⁶ A later explorer, though he did not visit Hopi himself, heard rumors that the Hopi raised "great quantities of cotton."⁴⁷ Espejo's expedition did visit the Hopi mesas and, though Espejo did not mention any fields planted in cotton, he stated that the natives gave his company over four thousand blankets of cotton.⁴⁸ Because the Spanish were given cotton in such a large quantity, it is reasonable to assume that cotton was grown among the Hopi.

Tobacco was another non-food crop grown by the pueblos before the Spanish arrived in New Mexico. The Spanish did

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 83.

⁴⁵ Castañeda, p. 22.

⁴⁶ Winship, The Journey of Coronado (1990), pt. 1, ch. xi, fn. 4.

⁴⁷ Pedro de Bustamente, "Testimony of Pedro de Bustamente," in Hammond and Rey, Rediscovery of New Mexico, pp. 127-132, p. 131.

⁴⁸ Espejo, p. 226.

not note the existence of tobacco often. Whether the absence of documentation is due to a lack of interest on the part of the Spanish or the lack of tobacco at many of the pueblos is unclear. The most notable mention of tobacco being grown is Espejo's note among the Piros that tobacco was grown in large quantities.⁴⁹

De Sosa noted the existence of irrigated fields at the Tewa pueblos. The fields were irrigated by means of canals, which de Sosa described as "incredible to see." From these fields, the natives harvested corn, beans and "other vegetables" in large quantities.⁵⁰ Espejo also noted that irrigation was in use by some of the pueblos. At Hopi he wrote that some of the fields were irrigated by ditches. Other fields depended on rainfall.⁵¹

The fields were planted in what Espejo called the Mexican fashion. Each field also had a shelter for the farmer. This shelter seems to have been fairly rudimentary, consisting of four pillars supporting the shelter. The

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p. 220.

⁵⁰ De Sosa, p. 282.

⁵¹ Espejo, p. 220.

farmer spent the entire day in the field, having meals brought to him at noon. One interesting point is that Espejo wrote that the custom of spending the entire day in the field, and presumably having meals brought out to him as well, was also the custom in Castile.⁵²

The pueblos did not practice much animal husbandry. They had few species of domesticated livestock. The most important of these was the turkey. Near Tiguex, Castañeda observed large numbers of birds, including ones with "great hanging chins," obviously turkeys.⁵³ According to Gallegos, the pueblos had large numbers of these birds and kept them in corrals. The pueblos also had dogs, which they kept in underground kennels. They were different than those of the Spanish, being small and shaggy-haired.⁵⁴

The natural environment also provided the pueblos with material necessary for their lives. Hunting and gathering were essential elements in the pueblo economy, although the reports of the Spanish explorers suggest that the pueblos

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 220.

⁵³ Castañeda, p. 54.

⁵⁴ Gallegos, p. 83.

relied on these occupations less than on agriculture. Deerskin clothing was reported, and the chroniclers observed wildlife and plants in abundance. Castañeda wrote that the province of the Zuñis had "large numbers of bears...and lions, wild-cats, deer, and otter."⁵⁵ Clearly, hunting provided material with which to make clothes, as the presence of deerskin shirts and robes suggests.

Gathering wild vegetation played a less important role in providing for the pueblo larder than either agriculture or hunting, according to the Spanish sources. The Zuñi collected piñon nuts and stored them for future use.⁵⁶ Along the Rio Grande, the Pueblos also gathered piñon nuts. In fact, Castañeda declared that pine nuts were the only fruit in the region.⁵⁷

Trade also seems to have played an important part in the pueblo economy prior to the arrival of the Spanish. Gallegos noted that some Indians in the Rio Grande valley wore copper ornaments on necklaces. One even had a small

⁵⁵ Castañeda, p. 52.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 52.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p. 55.

copper bell. The Indians told him that the copper came from a place to the west. Other Indians wore ornaments of red and white coral. When asked, the Indians pointed in the direction of the sea, though Gallegos did not mention which direction this was or to what sea the people were referring.⁵⁸ Each pueblo had a commodity that others wanted or needed. The pueblo of Zuñi, seventy miles to the west of Ácoma, had access to salt, while Tano, located slightly east of the Rio Grande, eighty miles from Ácoma, possessed turquoise.⁵⁹

The Pueblo Indians even carried on trade over long distances. They traded for parrot plumes that came from the Sierra Madres in central Mexico. Shells from the Pacific Coast as well as the Gulf of Mexico reached the pueblos through trade.⁶⁰ Among anthropologists, the hypothesis that the Pueblo Indians had trade connections with the empires to the south is gaining credibility. Pueblo Indians traded New Mexican turquoise into the Zacatecs region of Mexico around

⁵⁸ Gallegos, p. 76.

⁵⁹ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 113.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, p. 39.

1000 C.E., while turquoise and New Mexican pottery pieces have been found in Jalisco. The exact nature of pre-Spanish trade is unknown, but clearly the pueblo area maintained trade associations with Mesoamerica.⁶¹

Of the more intangible aspects of pueblo culture, the Spanish wrote less than they did about the material facets of pueblo life. Political organization, social organization, and religion were not facets of pueblo culture that the Spanish either observed in great detail or considered important enough to write down. However, within the narratives of each expedition, the chroniclers did provide some information about each of these features of pueblo culture.

Of the governing bodies of the pueblos, several of the Spanish explorers provided snatches of information. In general, each pueblo was governed by a council of the male elders of the village. An executive also existed in most of the pueblos. This man was referred to as the *cacique* (headman or chief) by the Spanish. How these men gained their offices and for how long they served is unknown.

⁶¹ Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, p. 43.

Espejo noted the governments of the various pueblos, but made a point of stating that all the pueblos he encountered were governed in a similar manner.⁶²

All the pueblos have *caciques*, allotted according to the number of inhabitants. Thus there are principal *caciques*, who in turn have other *caciques* under them, that is to say, their *tequitatos*, the latter functioning like sheriffs to execute the orders of their superiors in the various pueblos, exactly as in the case of the Mexican people. When the Spaniards ask for something from the principal *caciques* of the pueblos, these officials summon the *tequitatos*, who then proclaim the order aloud throughout the pueblo concerned and in a very short time all bring what they may have been asked to provide.⁶³

The Zuñi were governed by a council of the oldest men in the village.⁶⁴ They also had priests, whom the Zuñi called "papas," a term of respect meaning elder. According to Castañeda, the priests climb to the tallest building in the village and preach to the inhabitants each morning during the sunrise while everyone sits and listens in silence. "They tell them how to live, and I believe that

⁶² Espejo, pp. 220, 223, 228.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 220.

⁶⁴ Castañeda, p. 52.

they give certain commandments for them to keep, for there is no drunkenness [sic] among them not sodomy nor sacrifices, neither do they eat human flesh nor steal, but they are usually at work."⁶⁵ Castañeda said, in his description of the Rio Grande pueblos that they, too, had priests and "sodomy is not found among them" either.⁶⁶

At the Hopi mesas, Castañeda described the political organization. "It is governed like Cibola, by an assembly of the oldest men. They have their governors and generals."⁶⁷ Castañeda says of the villages he visited that, in general, "they are governed by the opinions of the elders."⁶⁸

Espejo noted at Zia that the pueblo was governed by three *caciques*, named Quasquito, Quchir, and Quatho. Apparently the pueblo was so large, containing over a thousand houses and four thousand men over fifteen years old, that three *caciques* were needed.⁶⁹ Espejo did not

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, p. 52-53.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, p. 55.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, p. 22.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, p. 53.

⁶⁹ Luxàn. P. 180.

describe the relationship between the three *caciques*.

The social structure of the various pueblos seem to have been very similar. The Spanish observed that the pueblos had some customs that were similar. They also noted similarities in the roles the genders played in the daily life of the pueblos--the different work done by men and women. The ownership of property was one aspect of the pueblo social structure that the Spanish did not note extensively. Their reports give only a few clues into property rights some aspects of which will appear in what follows.

Giving gifts, especially of food, was customary, and it was regarded as an insult if the gift was not accepted. While many of the Spanish explorers and the early colonists simply took what they wanted, most noted that the pueblos were willing to give, at least at first. Gallegos wrote of this custom in his *Relación*.

We took a little (corn and other food), so that they should not think we were greedy not yet receive the impression that we did not want it; among themselves they consider it disparaging if one does not accept what is offered. One must take what they give, but after taking it may throw it away wherever he wishes. Should one throw it to the ground, they will not pick it up, though it

may be something they can utilize. On the contrary, they will sooner let the thing rot where it is discarded.⁷⁰

The Spaniards gave extensive descriptions of pueblo marriage and the marriage ceremony. In order to marry at the Rio Grande Pueblos, a man had to first weave a blanket and "place it before" the object of his desire. If she picked up the blanket and wrapped herself in it, she was then the man's wife.⁷¹

At the pueblo of Malagon, when a couple wanted to marry, their relatives and other interested inhabitants prepared a festival that lasted for three days and included dances and feasting. The couple was given a house to live in, similar to the other houses of the pueblo, being two to four stories in height and containing eight or ten rooms. The house was presented by the parents of the bride. During the ceremony, the couple sat on a bench, flanked by a woman and a man, each next to the person of their own gender. Gallegos interpreted their roles as bridesmaid and groomsman. An elder in colored blankets performed the

⁷⁰ Gallegos, p. 84.

⁷¹ Castañeda, p. 54.

ceremony. The groom covered the bride with her blankets, and the bride did likewise to the groom. The priest then spoke, about what Gallegos was not certain, since he did not understand the language, but he interpreted the gestures to mean that the couple was to love each other. When the ceremony ended, people placed *comales*, pots, a grindstone, drinking cups, and bread-baking pans before the bride and then placed a *metate* in her hand. Gallegos took this part of the ceremony to mean that the woman was to grind and cook the food for her husband, serving him twice a day. Then a bow, spear, war club, and shield were put before the groom, signifying that he was to defend his wife. A crate (*cacoxte*) and leather band were also placed in front of the groom, signifying that he was to carry the burdens. The priest conducting the ceremony then placed a hoe in the hand of the groom "to signify that he is to till and cultivate the soil and gather corn to support his wife and children."⁷² When both bride and groom completed their parts in the ceremony, answering in the affirmative to the questions and sermons of the priest, they were led to their

⁷² Gallegos, p. 102.

home.⁷³

The Pueblo Indian social structure rigidly divided the labor of men and women. As illustrated in Gallegos' account of the marriage in Malagon, the men held responsibility for cultivating the fields, thus providing for their families. Cutting and hauling firewood was also a man's occupation. In addition, they hunted, dressed animal skins, and made their own weapons as well as baskets and blankets. The women's sphere was the home and the family. Their responsibilities included raising the children, cooking the meals, and taking care of the housework. The men built the home itself while the women did the plastering.⁷⁴

Gallegos described the differentiation of gender roles at the Piro pueblos. Gallegos was careful to note that only the men worked in the fields. They went to the fields early in the morning with hoe in hand. He also noted that the men bore the burdens, not the women.⁷⁵ This custom is like that illustrated by the marriage ceremony at Malagon. The men

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 102.

⁷⁴ Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 129.

⁷⁵ Gallegos, p. 85.

also spun thread and wove.⁷⁶ While Castañeda did not mention cotton in his description of Tiguex, this observation suggests that either the Tiguex raised cotton themselves, or traded raw cotton with neighbors who did.

The women raised the children in Tiguex and prepared the food, which they brought to the men in the *kivas*.⁷⁷ The women of the Piro pueblos prepared the food. They also prepared the corn for their bread using millstones that Gallegos noted were similar to those of New Spain (*metates*). Gallegos further noted that if a woman had daughters, she would make the daughters do the grinding.⁷⁸

It was also the woman's role to make the pottery used in cooking and carrying water. *Chicubites* were pottery pans in which the women baked bread. They also made jars for carrying and storing water that Gallegos described as very large, with an earthenware lid. Gallegos was very impressed with the quality of the ceramics of the pueblos. He wrote that the objects "are so excellent and delicate that the

⁷⁶ Castañeda, p. 54.

⁷⁷ *Ibid*, p. 54.

⁷⁸ Gallegos, p. 85.

process of manufacture is worth watching; for they equal or even surpass, the pottery made in Portugal."⁷⁹ He wrote much the same thing of the pottery of San Miguel, noting that the pottery objects, jars, pots and *comales* (flat, frying pan-like cookware) were of better quality than in New Spain and were decorated.⁸⁰

The gender roles among the pueblos appear to have been quite demarcated. The men spent their time in the fields planting and caring for the crops. They also did most of the heavier chores, such as bearing the burdens and, as Castañeda's description of house-building at Tiguex demonstrates, constructing the super-structure of the houses.⁸¹ The women performed domestic duties such as preparing and cooking food, raising the children, and fabricating the utensils used in the household. The major exception to these domestic endeavors is the weaving of the cloth by the men.

The marriage ceremony at Malagon illustrates the

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p. 85.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, p. 82.

⁸¹ Castañeda, p. 53.

Spanish interpretation of the system of Pueblo land tenure and the system of labor, as well as the integral role of agriculture within Pueblo Indian culture. The husband "is given lands in which to plant corn."⁸² Apparently, the pueblo leaders had the authority to distribute land to those who needed it, such as the newly married man. This authority says that the farm land was communally-owned, not owned by an individual.

The same is not true of the houses. At Zuñi, if a man decided to leave his wife, he moved back to the *kiva*. The woman owned the house.⁸³ As at Zuñi, the women of the Rio Grande pueblos were forbidden from sleeping in the *kivas*. They were the province of the men.⁸⁴ The *kivas* seem to have been communal property, but belonging to the men, while the women seemed to have owned the houses individually. The marriage ceremony at Malagon seems to indicate a difference at that pueblo, however. During the ceremony, a house was

⁸² Gallegos, p. 102.

⁸³ Castañeda, p. 54.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, p. 54.

given to the couple, not solely to the woman or the man.⁸⁵ Whether this is due to differences in property ownership customs at that particular pueblo or a misinterpretation of the ceremony by Gallegos is debatable.

Pueblo religion was one facet of pueblo culture with which the Spanish had very little patience. This anxiety became apparent during the Spanish occupation of New Mexico after 1598. Somewhat surprisingly, few of the Spanish explorers paid pueblo religious artifacts and ceremonies much heed. The two who did, Luxàn and Espejo, were vociferous in their condemnation of what they considered to be devil-worshiping. However, it is from these two explorers that the most insight into pueblo religion can be gleaned.

Luxàn's description of a Tompiro pueblo noted the use of the *kivas* as centers of ceremonies. He also pointed out the idols that he found so revolting.

The people are idolatrous, for that pueblo had four caverns [*kivas*] in the plaza where they have their dances and their baths; and these places serve as a community center and lodging place for strangers. In front of each one, outside the

⁸⁵ Gallegos, p. 102.

entrance, is a black stone four fingers in thickness, three spans wide, and one estado above the ground; and on each *kiva* [?] is a badly painted figure of an Indian with a flaming crown. Everyone has these idols in his house.⁸⁶

Espejo noted the existence of *Kachina* masks at one pueblo he visited. He named this place Los Guajolotes, which was about one league from Tiguex. He said that the masks were used in the dances and ceremonies of the natives.⁸⁷

At Hopi, Luxàn described a welcoming ceremony in which the Spaniards were covered with corn meal.

Each [person from the Hopi pueblo] carried his bag and bowl (*jícara*) of pinole, scattering some of it on the road and some over us and on the horses and servants. All this was done as a sign of peace. When we arrived we looked like clowns in carnival time.⁸⁸

Espejo was just as concerned with the pagan nature of the pueblos as was Luxàn. At Hopi, Espejo described idols

⁸⁶ Luxàn. p. 175.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, p. 177.

⁸⁸ Luxàn p. 191. Hammond and Rey point out in footnote 82 on page 191 that the pinole was sacred prayer meal, used in practically all Pueblo ceremonies.

and what he described as roadside shrines.

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 Spaniards 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.⁸⁹

Though Luxàn and Espejo were the most vocal in their condemnation of pueblo religion, Hernàn Gallegos went into great detail when he recorded a ceremony at Malagon.

We learned nothing of the rituals performed by the people of this settlement, except that when someone dies they dance and rejoice, for they say that he goes to the one whom they worship. They bury their dead in cavelike cellars, and every year on designated days they place many things as an offering at the foot of the cellars where the bodies lie.⁹⁰

From this piece of narrative can be gleaned the idea that the pueblos, besides burying their dead in a manner similar to the Europeans, also had a conception of an afterlife, which is also a European religious tradition.

⁸⁹ Espejo, p. 220.

⁹⁰ Gallegos, p. 99.

Despite having said that he did not learn much about the rituals of that pueblo, Gallegos continued his narrative with a lengthy, and fairly detailed, description of a ceremony. The dances, or *mitotes* as both Gallegos and Espejo called them,⁹¹ were performed to bring rain during a dry period. The ceremonies began in December and lasted for four months at intervals of two weeks, with the dances continuing almost around the clock. Everyone in the pueblo attends the dances, but only the men participate. Men dance around an altar on which a man, chosen for the occasion, sat. At certain intervals, six attendants on each side of the man on the altar lashed the "lord," as Gallegos styled him, thirty-six times per pass with willow wands. Although the lashes drew blood, the "lord" did not flinch, but rather talked to a snake that he held in his hand. This snake was probably a rattlesnake since Gallegos wrote that it "coil[ed] up when it is about to talk." Gallegos further wrote that he and his fellows "thought that it might be the devil, who has them enslaved."⁹² After the blood-letting

⁹¹ Espejo, p. 222.

⁹² Gallegos, p. 100.

portion of the dance was completed, two other men entered the dance area with rattlesnakes draped over their bodies. These men offered the snakes to the "lord," who took them, draped them over his own body, then flung them down. The two dancers then picked up the snakes again and, putting the snakes into their mouths, walked out of the arena. Next, two men dressed as coyotes loped through the attending crowds yelling and howling. This concluded the dance except for a dispersal of plumed sticks that the lashed "lord" distributed to the crowd. Gallegos noted that the people took these plumed sticks to the cornfields and to water holes because, as Gallegos was told, they then never lacked water.⁹³

The pueblos, therefore, had a complex religious life. They had a conception of an afterlife and looked to gods to help them in their existence. The narratives of the Spanish explorers indicate that the pueblos asked for help in bringing rain, important for their survival as agriculturalists.

The reports of the Spanish conquistadors thus provide a

⁹³ *Ibid*, pp. 100-101.

general description of pueblo life in the protohistoric period, the period just prior to Spanish colonization. While these descriptions do not provide a complete, detailed description of pueblo culture, they nevertheless answer some questions. The Pueblo Indians lived in compact villages, centered around plazas, whose houses they built of adobe or stone. The people dressed similarly though not identically. They all relied on agriculture to provide their basic needs although hunting and gathering and trade also played a part in their economy. They governed by councils of the elders of the villages, some of whom acted as executives. Men and women each had their own roles to play in the daily life of the pueblo. The pueblos also had a well-developed religious system. In general, the pueblos as seen by the Spanish explorers had very similar cultures. The only major difference between the pueblos was in language.

Chapter 2

Ácoma Origins

How a people arrived at where they live is a question pondered by the people themselves. Each culture has traditions, usually religious in nature, that explain their origins. The Judeo-Christian-Islamic tradition has the Book of Genesis to explain the origins of mankind. A myth may explain much about a people and their traditions.

The Ácoma have traditions that explain their origins, the religion and political system. However, this chapter is primarily concerned with the origins of the town itself. The Origin Myth explains the origins of the Ácoma and the location of their town. Archeologists and anthropologists have also developed theories to explain the origins of the pueblo of Ácoma. Surprisingly, the theories of the archeologists can verify many of the points of the Origin Myth that relate to the migrations of the people of Ácoma and their eventual settlement at Ácoma mesa.

According to the Origin Myth of Ácoma, the father, Ūch'tsiti, created the world, the sun, the sky, and many other things. But the world was not to his satisfaction.

So, he created two female humans at a place called Shipapu. Shipapu was underground, and the children grew slowly, but in the company of Tsichtinako, a spirit sent by Ūch'tsiti. Tsichtinako taught the children to speak and gave them two baskets. But they were still underground and not allowed to go out into the light.¹

When the time came for the women to go out into the light, Tsichtinako told them to plant the seeds of four pine trees taken from one of the baskets. These grew for many years until finally one of them, the lanye pine, reached the earth and pushed a hole through it, letting in a little light. In order to widen the hole so that they could climb out, the sisters were told to take an image from the other basket, which was filled with images of all the animals of

¹ Matthew Stirling, "The Origin Myth of Ácoma and Other Records," U.S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin, 135(1942): pp. 1, 3. The following story draws heavily on the Origin Myth as told to Matthew Stirling in 1928 by members of Ácoma pueblo while visiting Washington, DC. Although others have collected and written versions of the Origin Myth, Stirling's work is the most complete and detailed. C. D. Forde's "A Creation Myth from Ácoma," in Folklore, 41,4(December, 1930):370-387, is taken from the same source as Stirling's, but Forde heavily edited his version and stopped the tale after the creation of the *Kachina*. In retelling this myth, I have tried to capture the style of those who originally told the myth.

the world. The image they brought out was badger, to whom they gave life and told to widen the hole. Badger climbed the pine tree and widened the hole. Next, the sisters brought locust to life, who plastered the hole, making it smooth, but was punished for going out into the light.²

Tsichtinako told the sisters to go out into the light, which they did. They were given their names, Iatiku and Nautsiti.³ Tsichtinako told the sisters about their father, Ūch'tsiti, and taught them how to pray. They were given fire and taught how to cook corn, which they had raised. They gave life to many of the plants and animals in their baskets to populate the world. One of these animals was a snake. The sisters did not want to give life to this particular snake, Pishuni, but it fell out of the basket and came to life under its own power. Soon afterwards, the sisters became jealous of each other as well as selfish.

² Stirling, p. 2.

³ Edward Curtis, "Ácoma," in The North American Indian, vol. 16, reprint edition, (New York: Johnson Reprint Co., 1970):169-240, p. 172. Curtis stated that the older sister was named Notsityi and was the *iatiku*, the mother-creator. Her younger sister was named Utstsiyi. Curtis also relates that the twins, Maseewi and Uyuywi, were underground with the sisters.

Nautsiti wanted companionship other than her sister. So Pishuni told her to go to the rainbow. The rainbow impregnated her, and she gave birth to two sons. Tsichtinako left the two because they had disobeyed their father who, in time, would have provided other human beings to be their companions. Because Nautsiti did not like one of her children, Iatiku took care of him.⁴

When her children grew up, Nautsiti decided to separate from her sister. She asked Iatiku if she wanted some of the animals and plants left in her basket, such as sheep, cattle, wheat and vegetables, but Iatiku felt they would require too much work. Iatiku did not take any of the metals in Nautsiti's basket either. Nautsiti and the son she liked went to the east, telling Iatiku that they would meet again in a long time and that she would have the better of Iatiku.⁵

Iatiku stayed near Shipapu with her sister's other son. When he grew up, she named him Tia'muni and made him her husband. They had many children, and whenever a girl was

⁴ Stirling, pp. 4-12.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 12-13.

born, Iatiku gave the girl a clan name, beginning with Nautsiti, the sun clan. She kept her own clan name, corn clan, herself, but divided it into red, blue, yellow and white corn. Iatiku then gave life to other rulers of the world, the spirits of the seasons and the *Kachina*.⁶ The *Kachina* are spirit rain makers, the deities who provide the water necessary for the nourishment of the crops grown by the Ácoma farmers.⁷

Iatiku taught the people how to call the *Kachina* and named the first man born to the Antelope clan the "father" of the *Kachina* and chief of the people. She taught them how to build a town, laying out the town plan and the plaza. She then had the people build a sacred place for the *Kachina* when they came to the people. This place, the *kiva*, would represent the place of emergence, Shipapu.⁸

Iatiku continued to instruct the people about how to live. She taught them how to hunt and how to pray for the animals they killed. Iatiku felt that the Country Chief was

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 14-16.

⁷ White, *The Ácoma Indians*, p. 81.

⁸ Stirling, pp. 17-20.

taking too much of the burden of the ceremonies upon himself. So she appointed other officers, such as the war chiefs and the cooks, to help him. When disease came to the people, Iatiku appointed a healer from the Oak clan. Oak Man was taught the prayers and songs and given the materials he needed to cure. It was during the fourth day of Oak Man's ceremony to cure the people that Iatiku gave life to Koshari, a crazy type of person who would aid the medicine man.⁹

Iatiku was pleased that her people were happy, but instructed them to spread out and multiply. The people had moved from Shipapu towards the south to a place called *kashkachu* (White House), which was still very close to Shipapu. Iatiku had thought about leaving the people. When some men made up a game in the *kiva*, some of the older men and Iatiku objected to the nature of the game. Because of the game, Iatiku told the people that they would go south until they eventually reached a place called *Ha'ako*. Then Iatiku left with Tiaminu.¹⁰

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 22-33.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 46-47.

When Iatiku left, the people realized they had been wrong. The *Kachina* realized it as well and did not come to the people. Without the *Kachina*, no rains came and the people began to go hungry because there was no food. The Country Chief asked one man, Tsaiaiduit, if he could do anything, since he was a good man. Tsaiaiduit dressed like a *Kachina*, but without a mask and danced. Eventually, Iatiku and the *Kachina* felt sorry for him and sent clouds and a little rain. Though the rains came too late for the crops, wild plants grew and the game returned. The people did not starve, and the *Kachina* began to return to the people.¹¹

But some of the people began to play the game again and the *Kachina* found out. One of the *Kachina* stayed in the village after the rest had gone and saw the men playing the game and also saw them dancing like the *Kachina*, but in a way that mocked the dances. The *Kachina* attacked the people, killing many of them, until the twin sons of the Sun Man began to fight back. They killed a great many *Kachina*, decapitating them with hunting sticks. The *Kachina* leader

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 47-50.

finally saw what was happening and came to the twins to make peace. The *Kachina* leader, the Country Chief, and the twins talked, realizing that mistakes had been made on each side, and everyone apologized to each other. Most of the *Kachina* who were killed were brought back to life, but it was decided that the *Kachina* would not come to the people in person anymore.¹² The people were instructed in the personification of the *Kachina*, making the costumes, the masks, and dancing the ceremonial dances. The men who were to impersonate the *Kachina* were initiated in order to make the ceremonies real.¹³ The men who impersonated the *Kachina* took in the spirits of those they impersonated and in this way represented the *Kachina* in the pueblo.¹⁴

After a long time, a sickness came to White House that no one could cure. Death came to the people for the first time. The Sun twins decided that perhaps this was a sign that the people should move and try to find Ha'ako. After journeying for a while, they came to a beautiful place near

¹² *Ibid*, pp. 50-54.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 54.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 66.

water that they named Washpashuka.¹⁵

The people stayed at Washpashuka a long time. The Sun twins found other *Kachina* living to the west of the village and persuaded them to come to Washpashuka, but as with the other *Kachina*, some of the people mocked them. The mockers were killed in a ceremony, but some of their relatives were upset by this. After the ceremony, Country Chief decided it was time to look for Ha'ako again. The people traveled until they came to a place called Ashthinahawaisha (Tule Lake). Some of the people were tired of traveling. So the people built a new village there. They stayed at Tule Lake a long time.¹⁶

At Tule Lake there was a famine, and the people could not bring rain, though they prayed. The Sun twins stole the staffs of the *Kachina*, the staffs having the power to make snow, hail, thunder, and frost. To punish the twins the *Kachina* created a flood that overran most of the world. The people were forced into the mountains. Water Snake came at the people in the mountains, but the Sun twins killed it

¹⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 66-69.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 69-75.

with special arrows. The rain stopped, and the water receded slowly. The receding waters cut gullies and canyons in the mountains, which were formerly rounded.¹⁷

But the people continued to search for Ha'ako. The people journeyed south and ran across ruins and other humans who were enemies. Eventually, they passed the lake at what is now Laguna pueblo and continued on until they reached a big, white sandstone rock where there were many antelope. They built a new village at this place called DyaptZiam. Some people thought that this was not the right place. These people moved to the top of Katsima, the Enchanted Mesa. They soon returned to live with the other people since there was no water at Katsima. The people lived at DyaptZiam a long time because the game was very good.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 75-78.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 78-79. In another version of the Origin Myth, all the people who would eventually move to Ácoma lived on the top of the Enchanted Mesa, but while most of the people were below in the valley, a storm came that broke off a part of the mesa, leaving the people with no way to get back to the top. Only three old women were left on top of the mesa. One died when she hurled herself over the edge, and the other two died of starvation much later. Charles F. Lummis, Land of Poco Tiempo, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952), pp. 43-44, originally published by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893; Sedgewick, Ácoma, the Sky City,

While the people were at DyaptZiam, the Sun twins traveled all over. On one journey they went south to the place where the spirit of the south direction (Maiyochina) lived. His home was guarded by an old man who challenged the twins to games in order to win the sacred arrows the twins carried. The twins won the gambling games and were told where Ha'ako was located, just southwest of Katsima. However, the old man was angry that he had lost, and he frightened the twins by picking up a stick and hitting a baby's head at them. The head was filled with blood and cried when it fell to the ground. He chased the twins, continually hitting the baby's head, until the twins had dropped all of the things they had won.¹⁹

When the twins returned to the village, they told Country Chief that they had found Ha'ako. The people went there, and the Chief determined that this was the place Iatiku had told them about. He shouted "ha'ako" four times at the rock, and when the echo was returned, they knew this was the place. But the Country Chief had two eggs left over

p. 168; David Roberts, In Search of the Old Ones, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), pp. 87-88.

¹⁹ Stirling, pp. 80-81.

from the basket of Iatiku, which she had given him before she left, and told him to break when the people reached Ha'ako. One was a parrot egg, and the other was a crow egg. Country Chief told the people to choose which was which. When the crow egg cracked, those who thought it was the parrot egg were forced by their decision to journey on south, not to live at Ha'ako. Iatiku had instructed them to take the crow egg to Kuyapukauwak, but since the crow egg had been broken, the losers had to take the parrot egg there. Country Chief appointed officers for this group, and they left, the others not knowing how much farther south they went. The ones who remained constructed a village at the foot of the mesa.²⁰ Many years later, when Kasewat was Country Chief, the older people remembered that they were supposed to live up on top of the mesa. Kasewat went to the top of the mesa and buried his prayer stick where the plaza was to be, and everyone began to help build the new village together.²¹

²⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 82-83; Curtis, "Acoma," p. 177. Curtis wrote that the word the chief shouted was "Ako" and that some of the people thought the answer to the echo was "yoko," which means "go away."

²¹ Stirling, pp. 90-91.

The Origin Myth of Ácoma highlights two general points of importance that relate to the founding of Ácoma pueblo. First, it says that the people of Ácoma migrated from their point of origin over a vast period of time to finally reach Ácoma mesa, building other villages along the way. Secondly, it says that the migrations originated in famine, flood, and warfare. While these points have their basis in myth, they are substantiated by archeological evidence found during investigations into the disappearance of the great culture of the southwest, the Anasazi.

The most famous, or at least the most romanticized, of the pre-European cultures who lived north of the Rio Grande were the Anasazi. Anasazi is a Navajo word that means "enemies of our ancestors." The fascination modern researchers and the general public have with the Anasazi derives from two aspects of that culture. The first is the nature of the Anasazi communities. The Anasazi towns were very large and elaborate, reminiscent to some extent of the Mayan and Aztec ruins in Mesoamerica. Some of these towns, notably those in Mesa Verde National Park, were located in caves underneath cliffs. The beauty and almost mystical nature of such ruins as Cliff Palace and Inscription House

combine with the second reason for the interest in the Anasazi to give a romantic feel to this culture in the minds of modern observers. The second reason for the interest in the Anasazi is their abrupt disappearance from the Four Corners region sometime in the fourteenth century. The grandness of the Anasazi ruins is largely immaterial to the present study, but the disappearance of the people who inhabited such towns as Cliff Palace and Casa Bonita has direct bearing on the foundation of Ácoma pueblo.

The Great Pueblo or Pueblo III Period,²² dating from approximately 1100 C.E. until 1300 C.E., witnessed the Anasazi occupation of Mesa Verde, Pueblo Bonito, and several other sites.²³ The typical communities of this period were large, heavily populated pueblos, many of which were located in sheltered areas such as mesa-tops and cliff shelters. This was a change from earlier periods in which smaller, more distant communities were the norm. Self-defense has been suggested as a reason for this coalescence of

²² See Appendix A for a chronology of the cultural time frames of the Anasazi.

²³ Campbell Grant, Canyon de Chelly: Its People and Rock Art, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1978), p. 53. and Jennings, p. 375.

population. The larger communities were in easily defensible positions, and the pueblos during this period contained defensive works such as holes for shooting arrows and walls that restricted access.²⁴ These defensive structures illustrate the emphasis placed on security.

More important than defensive works, the Anasazi had developed agriculture to a high level of sophistication by this point in their history. Despite their lack of metal tools, they used the resources available to them well, with great technological skill. The large communities required greater productivity from a smaller area than smaller communities with a larger land base.

Originally, the Anasazi depended on dry farming, using only rain to water crops and, later on in their development, flood water farming, planting crops in river flood-plains that retained the moisture from a wet season.²⁵ From 900 C.E. to around 1100/1150 C.E., various water and soil control systems, such as check dams in washes, terraces, and

²⁴ William D. Lipe, "The Southwest," in Ancient Native Americans, edited by Jessie D. Jennings, (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1978):327-402, p. 375.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 367.

stone grids on slopes, began to appear.²⁶ The Anasazi also developed ditch irrigation in late prehistoric times in the Rio Grande area, using water from perennial streams.²⁷ The rise of irrigation technology in the Anasazi communities reveals that they had several problems with which to contend. Climatic change towards drier weather precipitated the development of irrigation as dry farming alone could no longer work to feed the large Anasazi communities. These large, populous pueblos also needed more food than the limited rain-watered fields could provide, thus providing another incentive to irrigate.

The Anasazi communities flourished until the late fourteenth or the early fifteenth century, when their inhabitants abruptly abandoned them. The entire pueblo culture area retracted from the high plateaus of Colorado and the Four-Corners area to the Rio Grande valley and isolated settlements such as Ácoma, Zuñi, and the Hopi villages.²⁸ The diffusion of the great Pueblo cultures from

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 370.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 367.

²⁸ Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 1-3.

their large towns to smaller, less heavily populated sites, ranging over a wide area, represents a change from large-scale social arrangements to much smaller groupings.

Archaeologists have put forth several hypothesis for pueblo relocation, the earliest of which was the "hostile nomad" theory. According to this theory, newly arrived nomads, presumably the Athapaskan Navajo and Apache, as well as the Ute and Paiute, drove the Anasazi from their cliff-side communities. This theory accounts for the construction of defensive features employed by the Great Pueblo Period Anasazi. However, little archeological evidence of nomad-Anasazi interaction has been found.²⁹ Indeed, little evidence supports the hypothesis that Athapaskan nomads even entered the Pueblo area until around 1525, only shortly before the arrival of the Spanish.³⁰

Until recently, the accepted theory for the Anasazi abandonment of their homeland hinged on soil erosion. Larger communities required a more intensive agriculture

²⁹ Lipe, "The Southwest," p. 377.

³⁰ Ramon Gutierrez, When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), p. xxvii.

that depleted the fertility of the soil faster than it could be replenished. Cycles in which fields were left fallow were shortened due to the demands of feeding a larger population. The depletion of the soil resulted in smaller crops, more disease and "heightened social tensions" because of the uncertainty of food.³¹ Climatic changes, possibly droughts, during this period only served to exacerbate the situation.

Responding to these severe, on-going problems, the Anasazi abandoned their large communities in favor of smaller, spread-out villages. These new smaller pueblos could more easily sustain themselves through a more judicious use of the land and its resources. The larger communities could not sustain themselves because of their size and the necessity of feeding larger numbers of people. That the Anasazi moved from the more arid plateaus to the better watered vicinity of the Rio Grande supports this theory.

Recent work by archeologists has challenged the long-held theory of soil erosion as the basis for relocation.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. xxi.

Archeologists have reopened the investigation into the Anasazi disappearance. Environmental concerns were certainly part of the problem at the time of the dispersal, but are not sufficient by themselves. Other possibilities being considered include inter-community warfare, due to increasing populations. Yet had one group emerged victorious, one would assume that the winner would have stayed in the area. But the Anasazi areas were abandoned. The rise of a new religion is currently being explored as the cause of mass-relocation south. Some researchers have posited the Kachina religion as this new religion that pulled the Anasazi south as warfare and drought pushed them from their homelands. The severe droughts, which alone were not enough to cause abandonment, served as an incentive for the Anasazi to cast off their old religion, which had failed to provide rainfall, in favor of one with more promise.³²

The debate currently under way in the archeological

³² George Johnson, "Social Strife May Have Exiled Ancient Indians," *The New York Times*, (August 20 1996), C1, C6; Stephen H. Lekson, "Pueblos of the Mesa Verde: Southwestern Canyon Country Yields Clues to the Settlement Patterns and Eventual Exodus of the Anasazi," (*Archeology* 48,5(Sept. - Oct. 1995):54-57), 56-57.

community will undoubtedly continue for many years, but should provide a watershed for ground-breaking new research.

As their origin myth states, the Ácoma themselves maintain a tradition of great movement at some time in the distant past. The archaeologists Reynold J. Ruppe and Alfred E. Dittert, while conducting their field work at Ácoma in the early 1950s, were told that the "Old People" wandered from site to site in search of water--which was and is the limiting factor in agriculture and human habitation of the Southwest--and a place that received adequate rainfall for farming.³³

According to the early twentieth-century historian of Ácoma, J. M. Gunn, the Ácoma maintained that they came to Ácoma Mesa from a valley twelve miles to the north to escape the depredations of the Navajo and Apache. This happened some 300 years before the Spanish *entrada*.³⁴ This story runs into the same problem as the general theory for the presence of defensive works at Anasazi sites, namely the chronology of the Athapaskan advance into the Southwest.

³³ Ruppe, "The Ácoma Culture Province," p. 228.

³⁴ Gunn, Scatchen, p. 16.

However, Gunn's story recalls another portion of the origin myth--migration due to warfare.

Through the use of dendrochronological (tree ring) dating and the comparison of pottery and other artifacts, archaeologists have determined that Ácoma has been occupied since approximately 1200 C.E.³⁵ Other archeological evidence, however, shows Cebolleta Mesa, very near Ácoma Mesa, to have been occupied by ancestors of the present-day Ácoma since the Late Basketmaker III Period (1 C.E. to 450 C.E.).³⁶

The Ácoma consider themselves descendants of the Chaco area.³⁷ But Reynold Ruppe stated, quite categorically, that while the Chaco people may have been the ancestors of the Eastern Keresans, they were not the ancestors of the Ácoma. He cites the absence of Chaco pattern relics in the region around Ácoma that he and fellow archeologist Albert Dittert call the "Ácoma Culture Province." The "cultural

³⁵ Dittert and Ellis, "Anthropological Evidence," p. 137, 314, cited by Robert L. Rands in "Ácoma Land Utilization," p. 6.

³⁶ Ruppe and Dittert, "The Archeology of Cebolleta Mesa and Ácoma Pueblo," El Palacio 59 (July, 1952), p. 204.

³⁷ Tour of Ácoma guided by Enrico. May 6, 1995.

manifestations," to use Dittert's term, within the boundaries of this region conform to a general pattern.³⁸

On the basis of archeological evidence, the Ácoma are descended from groups who met and mixed within the Ácoma Culture Province during various times over a thousand year period, each group bringing different cultural traits to form the culture. During the Kiatuthlanna phase,³⁹ Basketmaker III peoples migrating from the north mixed with nomadic hunters. This coalescence of peoples resulted in more stable villages and agriculture. At the end of the Red Mesa phase and the beginning of the Cebollita phase, another migration of people, this time from the south or southwest, entered the area. This group eventually blended with the previous inhabitants resulting in cultural growth. The population of the area rose and multi-storied dwellings appeared. This second group, though coming from the south, displayed general characteristics of an Anasazi-Mogollon blend. A third large-scale migration into the area began in

³⁸ Dittert, "Culture Change," pp. 592-593; Ruppe, The Ácoma Culture Province, p. 5.

³⁹ See Appendix B for a chronology of the cultural phases of the Ácoma Culture Province.

the early Kowina phase and continued through the early Ácoma phase. These migrants were probably displaced Puebloans. They again increased the regional population and added cultural features such as the square *kiva* and probably introduced cotton and irrigation to the area.⁴⁰ Pre-Hispanic Ácoma Pueblo was influenced by the Anasazi culture, but received some influences from the more western pueblos during the late pre-contact or Kowina Phase as well as influences even earlier from contemporaries of the Anasazi from the south called the Mogollon.⁴¹ Thus, sixteenth century Ácoma Pueblo was the result of local cultural conditions of "borrowing" and "diffusion" from other cultural groups.⁴²

Within the Ácoma Culture Province are a number of ruins connected culturally to the general pattern of the region. Ruppe and Dittert surveyed twenty-two of these sites, but others exist. Some of these sites are very large. Sites L.P.2:24-D and L.P.4:8-A contain 367 and 200 rooms

⁴⁰ Ruppe, The Ácoma Culture Province, pp. 265, 270-271.

⁴¹ Ruppe, "The Ácoma Culture Province," PhD. dissertation, p. 271.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 271.

respectively while another site the two did not visit contains approximately 300 rooms.⁴³ Clearly the Ácoma did not all live on Ácoma Mesa at one time, though they did when the Spanish arrived. The Zuñi have a tradition that they conquered some small villages, occupied by Keresans, shortly before the arrival of Fray Marcos de Niza in 1532.⁴⁴ Hernando de Alvarado, journeying from Zuñi to Ácoma, passed by the ruins of four large towns, one of which he described as

an ancient city, very large, entirely destroyed, although a large part of the wall was standing, which was six times as tall as a man, the wall well made of good worked stone, with gates and gutters like a city in Castille.⁴⁵

The ruins viewed by Alvarado could certainly be those studied by Ruppe and Dittert, since they too are in a direct line from Zuñi to Ácoma. At what point in time the inhabitants of these and other sites in the area moved to the top of Ácoma Mesa, or moved to other unknown areas, is

⁴³ Ruppe, "The Ácoma Culture Province," PhD. dissertation, p. 107.

⁴⁴ Sedgewick, Acoma, the Sky City, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Hernando de Alvarado, "Report of Hernando de Alvarado," in The Journey of Coronado, p. 129.

open for speculation.

The question of whether or not the Enchanted Mesa or *Katsima* was ever inhabited by the Ácoma is one that has little relevance to the present discussion, but does illustrate how well oral tradition and archeology can sometimes work together. According to the Origin Myth, either some of the Ácoma or all of the Ácoma lived at the top of *Katsima* prior to the founding of the village on Ácoma Mesa.⁴⁶ Few people have ever reached the summit of the mesa to conduct archeological research, but one who did was Frederick Weber Hodge in 1895. Using a combination of rickety ladders and half-inch ropes, Hodge ascended the mesa with two companions and performed a two day-long investigation that yielded pottery fragments, an arrow point, and ax fragments. An obviously artificially constructed pile of stones was deemed a monument of some type by Hodge. Evidence of houses was not found, but the elements could very well have obliterated any trace of adobe construction.⁴⁷ While the meager evidence Hodge found on

⁴⁶ See footnote number 18.

⁴⁷ F. W. Hodge, "The Enchanted Mesa," (National Geographic Magazine, 8,10 (October, 1897):273-284), pp. 275, 282.

his reconnaissance scarcely proves that the Ácoma made their homes on the top of the Enchanted Mesa, the relics he did find suggest that it was in use at one time. This use may have been as a dwelling place or perhaps a place of ceremonial significance. But *Katsima* was certainly part of Ácoma heritage.

Whether one takes a religious or scientific view of life and the origins thereof, pieces of each view of the beginnings of Ácoma pueblo meld together very well. Each tradition tells of the journeying of the people until they finally reached Ácoma mesa. The theory of a wandering time is supported by the Ácoma Origin Myth and by archeological investigation. Each tradition states that the reasons for the wanderings were environmental. The Origin Myth tells of drought as do the theories of the archeologists. Both traditions also point to warfare as a reason for migration. The more recent archeological work hypothesizes warfare between groups as a cause for migration, while the Origin Myth tells of warfare between the people and the *Kachina*. They even both support the theory that *Katsima*, the mesa slightly northwest of Ácoma itself, had inhabitants at one time. While the Origin Myth would never be accepted as fact

by the scientific community, the theories of the scientists would also not be accepted by the Ácoma. Still, there are parts of each tradition that are accepted by both parties.

Chapter 3

Ácoma Before the Spanish: an Ethnography

When Don Juan de Oñate arrived in New Mexico in 1598 to establish New Spain's northernmost colony he found at Ácoma Pueblo a complex agricultural society sophisticated enough to survive and thrive in an inhospitable environment. Ácoma was one of many small, agriculturally-based communities in New Mexico. A picture of Ácoma society, economy, and culture as it appeared at the time of the Spanish Conquest in the last decade of the sixteenth century can be achieved through ethnographic examination. A review of Ácoma material culture, economy, political system, social structure, and religious structure at the time of the Spanish *entrada* provides a basis from which to gauge the changes that occurred at the pueblo after Spanish colonization.

Chapter One examined the cultures of the Pueblo Indians in general at the time of the Spanish entrance into New Mexico and found that, based on the observations of the

Spanish, the pueblos had generally very similar cultures. This chapter examines Ácoma specifically. Based, again, on the reports of the Spanish explorers, along with data collected by the few archaeologists who have worked at Ácoma, the conclusion is that the premise of Chapter One holds true for Ácoma as well. Ácoma had much in common with the other pueblos of the Southwest in the proto-historic period.

The Ácoma, past and present, are primarily farmers and, as such, dependent on environmental conditions for their survival. The members of this society derived all the materials they used from local sources and then shaped these materials into usable forms. Soil, climate and geography are important to the Ácoma in their role as farmers since these conditions directly influence the types of crops that can be grown in the area, as well as the potential of the harvest. This area, which archeologist Reynold Ruppe calls the "Ácoma Culture Province,"¹ contains the arable areas that have determined the survival of the people of Ácoma.

› The land around Ácoma is semiarid. The low valley

¹ Ruppe, The Ácoma Culture Province, p. 7.

floor ends abruptly and climbs sharply to heights several hundred feet above the level plains. These are the mesas, the table lands. The mesa of Ácoma, sixty miles west of the Rio Grande and the city of Albuquerque, and fifty miles east of Zuñi, towers above the plain.² On this mesa the Ácoma built their pueblo around 1200 C. E.³

Present-day visitors to Ácoma drive from Albuquerque along Interstate 40 and turn towards the pueblo at either Paraje or McCartys. From Paraje one approaches Ácoma from the east along a valley bordered by craggy mesas and hills. The vegetation is sparse and gray-green, consisting primarily of small pines, clumps of grasses, and brush. Upon advancing on Ácoma, one sees first *Katzimo*, the Enchanted Mesa, rearing out of the flat land. Ácoma Mesa shoulders its way up from the valley a mile to the west. From the north, arriving by way of McCartys, Ácoma cannot be

² Sedgewick, Ácoma, The Sky City, pp. 1-16.; Lt. James H. Simpson, Navaho Expedition; Journal of A Military Reconnaissance From Santa Fe, New Mexico to the Navaho Country Made in 1849, Frank McNitt, ed., (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 144-145.

³ Reynold Ruppe and Alfred E. Dittert, "Ácoma Archeology: A Preliminary Report of the Final Season in the Cebolleta Mesa Region, New Mexico," El Palacio, 60 (July 1953):272.

seen until one is within two miles of it. Abruptly, the hills give way and from the top of the last one, Ácoma Mesa looms a short distance away.

The Ácoma Culture Province is bounded on all sides by smaller mesas and mountains and drained by the willow-lined Rio San Josè. The Cebolleta Mountains, dominated by Mount Taylor, rise to the north. To the west are the Zuñi Mountains and to the south is Cebolleta Mesa. Cut within the smaller mesas are numerous arroyos and canyons, the major ones containing springs that have never been known to go dry. The Ácoma have planted within the arroyos and canyons off and on during the course of their occupation of the region. The canyon springs and the Rio San Jose, as well as the Rio Cubero, located slightly north of the San Josè, are important to the Ácoma as a source of water for their fields.⁴

In the Southwest, the availability of water is the limiting factor in the exploitation of the environment.

⁴ Fray Juan Agustin de Morfi, "Geographical Description of New Mexico. Year 1782," in Alfred Barnaby Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico, 1777-1787, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), p. 105.

Western New Mexico experiences dry seasons in late spring and fall and a rainy season in summer and winter. However, even the wettest areas may endure years of drought. Precipitation may vary considerably from month to month as well. The average annual precipitation in the area around Ácoma is 308.75 mm or 12.155 inches.⁵

Seasonal temperatures do not vary as much in Western New Mexico as in other parts of the country, though extremes are not unknown. The average January temperature around Ácoma is -1.3C° (30.34F°), and the average July temperature is 21.3C° (70.34F°). Average maximum temperature is 38.4C° (101.12F°), and the average minimum is -29.6C° (21.28F°). The average growing season in the area ranges from 122 to 175 days per year.⁶

The semiarid soil of the area, rich in minerals, formed primarily of sand, so that it is well-drained and able to warm more quickly than heavier soils. These sandy, semi-arid soils, rich in nutrients, are amazingly productive in a year with normal rainfall. Even in a drought year, enough water

⁵ Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, p. 20-21.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 20-21.

is stored underground in the subsoil to produce a good crop, although only slightly more than half of a normal crop.⁷

In sum, the climate of the Ácoma Culture Province is arid, almost a desert, but contains rich soils and enough water to sustain agriculture. Despite the obstacles present in such an inhospitable environment, humans have lived in the area for at least several thousand years. With the advent of occupation, the people of the area developed social traditions based in and on the area in which they lived.

The pueblo of Ácoma itself stands on a small mesa. The reason the inhabitants built their town on such an inaccessible spot is unclear. Diego Pérez de Luxàn, a soldier who kept a journal on his accompaniment of the Espejo expedition of 1580, thought the Ácoma built on the mesa for defensive purposes.

Because of the war this pueblo has with the Querechos [Navajo] Indians, who are like the Chichimecas, it is built on a high rocky cliff. It has four ascents made of steps carved into the very rock and up which one person at a time can climb on foot. The doors of the houses are like

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 25.

trap-doors. They keep watch day and night.⁸

However, the evidence is that the pueblo was built before the entrance into the southwest of the southern Athabaskan, the Navajos and their Apache relatives. The precise date of their arrival in the Southwest is unknown. The evidence of linguistic differentiation, as well as the transitional state of tribal affiliations and ethnic groupings, points to a late arrival of the *Querechos* in the pueblo area. The Navajos, Apaches, and other southern Athabaskan may have entered the area only shortly before the Spanish.⁹

In 1540, a small group of Coronado's men, under the command of Captain Hernando de Alvarado, visited Ácoma. Alvarado wrote little about the place or the people, only reporting that they were friendly and lived in houses three

⁸ Diego Pèrez de Luxàn, Expedition into New Mexico made by Antonio de Espejo, 1582-1583: As Revealed in the Journal of Diego Pèrez de Luxàn, a Member of the Party, translated and edited by George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, (Los Angeles: Quivira Society, 1929), pp. 86-87.

⁹ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 210; Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, p. 38; Gutierrez, When Jesus Came, p. xxvii.

and four stories high.¹⁰ But, Pedro de Castañeda, when writing of Alvarado's trip, said that the Ácoma were feared throughout the area as robbers and taunted the Spanish expeditionary party as they tried to meet the inhabitants. The situation did not escalate as the Ácoma eventually made peace when they discovered that otherwise they would have to fight.¹¹ The discrepancy between the reports of Castañeda and Alvarado are probably due to the brevity of the latter's report, consisting of but a few pages. Hernán Gallegos, of the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition of 1581, recorded only that Ácoma had five hundred houses of three and four stories.¹²

Ruth Underhill described the Pueblo Indians as the "First Penthouse Dwellers" in her book of the same name. The analogy is somewhat misleading since pueblo buildings were more like townhouses than apartments. Archeological investigations at Ácoma suggest that the houses shared

¹⁰ Herbert Eugene Bolton, Coronado: Knight of Pueblos and Plains, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1949), p. 183.

¹¹ Castañeda, p. 24,

¹² Gallegos, p. 107.

common walls; they were built flush with one another. The ground floor contained several rooms, while the next stories, whether there were two or three more, contained progressively fewer.¹³

The inhabitants built their homes of a mixture of packed adobe and masonry blocks of sandstone laid out in a linear fashion. Some of these blocks they fashioned by flaking or pecking with stone. To keep the blocks of sandstone level, the masons used spalls, smaller stones chinked between the larger ones. Once the builders had finished the walls, they then plastered and painted them using red and white pigment. Walls were laid on bedrock and then irregularities in the floor were filled in with adobe, which was packed down solidly. Some rooms contained fire-pits, each with its own ash basin.¹⁴ The Ácoma constructed their roofs of *vigas*, which were large wooden beams.¹⁵ These large beams supported the *latillas*, smaller beams laid cross-ways on the *vigas*, which in turn supported layers of

¹³ Ruppe, p. 216 (map).

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 218.

¹⁵ William J. Robinson, "Tree-Ring Studies of the Pueblo de Ácoma," Historical Archeology, 24(3):102.

grass and twigs. They then covered the grass and twigs with a layer of adobe.¹⁶ This top layer provided the foundation for the next story.

Ácoma of 1598 probably looked quite a bit like the Ácoma of today. Multi-storied houses, constructed of masonry and adobe are packed closely together in three distinct housing blocks along three streets. Several plazas, simply widenings of the streets, are situated at strategic locations, most notably in front of the *kivas*, which are identified by their lack of windows and wooden ladders reaching from the street level to the roofs. While modern-day Ácoma have added conveniences such as glass-paned windows and wooden doors, one can easily image the pueblo as it appeared four hundred years ago. This is especially true since electricity has never been brought to the top of the mesa, hence there are no electrical lines to mar the view.

Excavations of Pueblo IV Period¹⁷ rooms of Ácoma yielded numerous artifacts used in cooking. Among these

¹⁶ Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, p. 222

¹⁷ The Pueblo IV Period lasted from approximately 1300 C. E. until The Spanish conquest of the Southwest in 1598. Lipe, "The Southwest," p. 345.

objects were bone spatulas, *manos* and *metates*, and sandstone griddles. The sandstone griddles first appear, in the Cebolleta Mesa area, in the early Pueblo IV Period.¹⁸ The testimony of the Spanish explorers of the methods of food preparation and the existence of the same types of implements at Ácoma at other pueblos suggest that the women of Ácoma prepared their food in the same manner. They ground the meal for bread using grinding stones.

Excavations of Room 2 revealed two rectangular-shaped fire-pits, each with its own ash basin dug into the floor. Rooms 6 and 7 yielded rectangular, slab-lined fire-pits. The fire-pits in all rooms excavated were centrally located. The fire-pit in Room 6 had a holding device consisting of two sandstone slabs at right angles in one corner while the Room 7 fire-pit contained one holding device made of clay. The holding devices in both fire-pits were installed after the fire-pits had been in use for some time.¹⁹ These devices held griddle stones. Stoves, in the strict sense of the word, were unknown, but Ácoma women proficiently

¹⁸ Ruppe and Dittert, "Ácoma Archeology," pp. 262-270.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 262-270.

prepared meals over small fires on griddles supported by devices specifically constructed to hold them.

Because of the nature of the materials used in the fabrication of clothing, organic materials that decayed after the passage of time, archeological investigations have yielded little to further knowledge in this area. Therefore, the brief descriptions by Spanish explorers provide what little knowledge is available about what the Ácoma people wore.

Before 1600, the mode of dress consisted of cotton sheets tied around the neck or shoulders, or made into sleeveless jackets.²⁰ Luxàn described the dress of Ácoma women when he visited the pueblo in 1582. The women wore "Mexican [-style] blankets, very elegant with colors, feathers, and other trappings."²¹

The Ácoma men most likely wore clothing similar to that of the men of other pueblos, but none of the Spanish mentioned the dress of the men. Archeological investigation revealed sandstone lasts, used to make footwear, as well as

²⁰ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 157.

²¹ Luxàn in Rediscovery p. 182.

sandals woven of plant fibers.²²

The economy of Ácoma was based, primarily, on horticulture. Hunting and gathering also seem to have been a major economic activity, but less so than agriculture. The Ácoma also employed animal husbandry in the form of turkey-raising, but this seems a minor endeavor. Further additions to the economy resulted from trade with other Pueblos, the nomads of the area, and quite possibly, groups as far away as the Central Mexican Valley. Despite the augmentation of the Ácoma economy through hunting and gathering, livestock and trade, the Ácoma were an agricultural people.

Prior to the Spanish movement into New Mexico, the Ácoma cultivated a small number of plant species. They planted only three main food crops; corn, beans, and squash. Almost all groups in the pre-Hispanic Southwest grew these three crops.²³ Corn was the staple in the Ácoma diet, principally because it could be grown almost anywhere, even on high plateaus thousands of feet above water courses.

²² Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, pp. 220-221.

²³ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 37.

It can grow simply with summer rains and winter snows.²⁴ Even if these rains did not come, the Ácoma irrigation system provided the water.

What the Ácoma lacked in species of cultivated crops, they made up in varieties of those crops. They raised five varieties of maize, each of a different color, as well as nine varieties of beans.²⁵ Modern informants at Ácoma maintain that they and their ancestors have grown sweet corn, a mutation of hard-kerneled corn, since before the Spanish arrived. However, some researchers maintain that Southwestern Indians did not widely cultivate sweet corn in the pre-Colonial Period.²⁶

Additionally, Ácoma farmers grew several non-food crops. The presence of elbow-shaped, pottery pipes in archeological sites at Ácoma suggests either the cultivation

²⁴ *Ibid*, p. 156.

²⁵ Joseph Charles Winter, "Aboriginal Agriculture in the Southwest and Great Basin," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Utah, 1974, p. 27.

²⁶ Edward F. Castetter and Willis H. Bell, Pima and Papago Agriculture, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), p. 87.

of tobacco or harvesting of non-domesticated tobacco.²⁷ The Ácoma also grew several varieties of gourds.²⁸ They probably used dried gourds as containers to haul and store water, grain, and other items.

Cotton provided the fiber the Ácoma used to weave cloth for clothing and blankets. They apparently raised a hardy variety of this plant since the region is normally too cold and has too short a growing season for most types of cotton.

²⁷ Ruppe and Dittert, "Ácoma Archeology," p. 270. According to Leslie White, "no evidence whatever points to a prehistoric cultivation of tobacco." Coronado's men probably did not smoke and make no mention of Pueblo use of tobacco. Spanish colonists, however, both raised and smoked tobacco by 1625. Leslie A. White, "Punche: Tobacco in New Mexico History," New Mexico Historical Review, 18(4):386,388. Additionally, Adolph Bandelier stated that the Pueblo Indians did not know of tobacco until after Spanish colonization. More southerly tribes, such as the Yaquis, Pimas and Mayos, did use tobacco. Bandelier, p. 37.; But, Winter states that the Ácoma did indeed grow a variety of *Nicotina rustica*. Winter, p. 27. The Ácoma Origin Tradition maintains that tobacco was the second plant grown by the first mothers of the people. However, this tradition has incorporated aspects of Christianity and information since the arrival of the Spanish. Therefore, despite its location in the oral tradition as the second cultivated plant, tobacco could have been introduced into the origin tradition after the Spanish Conquest. Stirling, "Origin Myth of Ácoma," p. 6.

²⁸ Winter, "Aboriginal Agriculture," p. 27.

It requires a long growing season, as well as irrigation.²⁹

The Ácoma irrigated their fields. But the Spanish explorers left few records detailing agricultural technology. Luxàn recorded a small, but interesting piece of information about Ácoma corn fields, located four leagues (about twelve miles) from the pueblo. Of the fields Luxàn wrote, "We found many irrigated corn-fields with canals and dams, built as if by Spaniards."³⁰ Luxàn expressed amazement that the Ácoma used irrigation technology. However, the Indians of the Southwest irrigated with canals for hundreds of years before the Spanish *entrada* and continue to do so.³¹

The sixteenth-century Ácoma employed the technique of river irrigation on their fields. This method required the construction and maintenance of dams, ditches, and reservoirs.³² Espejo noted that "These people have their fields two leagues distant from the pueblo, near a medium-

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 27; Gunn, Scatchen, p. 25; Bandelier, Final Report, pp. 37, 157.

³⁰ Luxàn, in Rediscovery, p. 182.

³¹ Lipe, "The Southwest," p. 358.

³² Winter, "Aboriginal Agriculture," p. 139.

sized river, and irrigate their farms by little streams of water diverted from a marsh near the Rio San Jose."³³

Archaeologists have found evidence of water-diverting dams from the pre-Hispanic period in the area. Irrigation was important for Pueblo Indian agriculture since squash and beans, two of the mainstays of their diet, require more water than could be provided solely by rain in the desert Southwest.³⁴

The Spanish did not mention either the tools used to cultivate or the methods by which the Pueblos cultivated. Archaeologists have uncovered tools used by the Ácoma for cultivation during the course of investigations in the Cebolleta and Ácoma Mesa regions. Their findings provide the majority of the evidence for the pre-Hispanic Ácoma tool chest. The primary tools they used to cultivate their fields were the hoe and the digging stick.

The Ácoma flaked their oval or rectangular hoe-heads from a variety of minerals including basalt and sandstone. Hoe-heads ranged in size from almost three inches to almost

³³ Espejo, p. 213.

³⁴ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 156.

six inches long by two and a half to almost four inches wide. They then lashed these stone heads to wooden shafts, as in the case of the later Ácoma phase axes. These axes were notched on either side, thus permitting a greater ease of hafting. Earlier axes and sometimes even the later variety were simply held in the hand.³⁵

The farmers made digging and planting sticks of small lengths of split juniper ground to a rounded point at one end with both ends being worked smooth. The small ends of the digging sticks helped the Ácoma to poke holes in the earth, providing a space for the seeds.³⁶

Further excavations at Ácoma revealed numerous stone tools such as axes of ground stone and flaked stone choppers and knives.³⁷ The Ácoma could have used the axes in clearing fields, while the choppers and knives have a multitude of agricultural applications. Stone knives were also used to plant.³⁸ Wooden shovels and baskets woven of

³⁵ Dittert, "Culture Change," pp. 335-6, pp. 495-496.

³⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 335-6, pp. 495-496.

³⁷ Ruppe and Dittert, "Ácoma Archeology," p. 270.

³⁸ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 162.

fibers helped the farmers to haul dirt.³⁹

When Alvarado visited Ácoma, he noted that they "...have abundant supplies of maize, beans, and turkeys like those of New Spain."⁴⁰ Castañeda added that the people of Ácoma "made a present [to them] of a large number of [turkey] cocks with very large wattles, much bread, tanned deerskins, pine nuts, flour [corn meal], and corn."⁴¹

Just as in the other pueblos, Alvarado's observations of turkeys at Ácoma reveal that very little animal husbandry existed there until after Spanish colonization. Like many other American Indian groups, the Ácoma kept dogs, mostly as protection against animals and intruders.⁴² The Ácoma also raised large flocks of turkeys, which they herded like sheep. However, some researchers have asserted that not only the other pueblos, but the Ácoma in particular raised the turkeys mainly for their feathers, which were used in

³⁹ Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 127.

⁴⁰ Alvarado, p. 129.

⁴¹ Castañeda, p. 40.

⁴² A. F. Bandelier and Edgar L. Hewitt, Indians of the Rio Grande Valley, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1937), p. 36.

making blankets, rather than for their meat.⁴³ At Ácoma, Luxàn found women who wore blankets made of turkey feathers.⁴⁴ Archeological evidence, nevertheless, suggests that the Ácoma did raise turkeys to eat as well as to produce feathers⁴⁵ and that the raising and herding of turkeys comprised the only form of animal husbandry.

Hunting and gathering also figured into the economy of Ácoma prior to Spanish contact. To what degree the Ácoma depended on hunting and gathering is unknown. The data does not provide enough insight to evaluate. Whether or not they used the turkeys for their feathers rather than for their meat, the Ácoma probably obtained additional meat from other animals. The narrative of Alvarado states that the Ácoma gave the Spanish tanned deerskins.⁴⁶ The leather shoes, described by Luxàn, were probably also made of deerskin.⁴⁷ It seems reasonable to assume that the meat of the deer was

⁴³ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 156; Gunn, Scatchen, p. 26.

⁴⁴ Luxàn, in Rediscovery, p. 180.

⁴⁵ Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, p. 178.

⁴⁶ Alvarado, p. 129.

⁴⁷ Luxàn, in Rediscovery, p. 180.

eaten, while the skin was used in clothing.

The weaponry the Ácoma used provided them with sufficient power to bring down game. Ruppe found projectile points at Ácoma Pueblo during the course of his investigations.⁴⁸ Clearly, the Ácoma used either spears or, more likely, bows and arrows to hunt their game. Luxàn states that the Ácoma used arrows to attack the Espejo expedition after an altercation with the Spanish.⁴⁹ But the Ácoma may have had other methods of killing their quarry such as rabbit sticks, snares or other traps.

Plant gathering also provided food for the Ácoma diet. What plants were gathered, however, is not well known. The Spanish explorers mention the use of pine nuts, gathered from the cones of the piñon pine.⁵⁰ Other than charred corn and materials used to make baskets and footwear, Ruppe and Dittert did not find any plant material during their excavations.⁵¹ Ruppe compiled a list of the wild plants,

⁴⁸ Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, p. 224.

⁴⁹ Luxàn, in Rediscovery, p. 112.

⁵⁰ Castañeda, p. 40.

⁵¹ See the writings of Ruppe and Dittert on the subject of their excavations in region of Ácoma Pueblo.

such as sunflower, tomatillo, wild pea and piñon, used by the Ácoma as food, but this list is from modern sources.⁵² While the Ácoma probably did use these plants four hundred years ago, it is not a certainty without further archeological investigation.

Trade played an important role in the sixteenth-century economy of Ácoma. Cotton was an important trade item because it was not grown, or could not be grown, everywhere.⁵³ The Ácoma grew cotton and found trading partners in the Navajos and Apaches, with whom they engaged in the exchange of agricultural and hunting products. Espejo wrote that the Navajos and Apaches, grouped by the Spanish under the general term *Querechos*, would trade salt, game, and dressed skins with the Ácoma in exchange for cotton blankets and other goods.⁵⁴ Although the Pueblo Indians traded with Navajos, they did not trust them.⁵⁵ The Navajo and the other Athapaskan groups in the Southwest

⁵² Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, Appendix B, p. 289.

⁵³ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 37.

⁵⁴ Espejo, p. 224.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, p. 164.

bartered game for farm products, but often they simply raided and took what they wanted.⁵⁶

Like the other southwestern Indians, the Ácoma may even have traded with the Aztecs of central Mexico. Fray Geronimo de Zárate Salmerón was told by a soldier about paintings in an Ácoma kiva that resembled Aztecs.

...the first time he [Captain Geronimo Marquez] was on the great cliff of Ácoma, he entered an estufa [kiva] and [saw] in it some pictured Indians [painted on the wall]. And as he recognized them for Mexicans [Aztecs] by their dress, he asked the [Ácoma] Indians who were those that were there painted; and they replied that it was a few years since some Indians of that dress had come there...⁵⁷

This one piece of evidence certainly does not conclusively prove the trade connection between Ácoma and Mesoamerica. But, considering the evidence of trade with the far south from other pueblos, Ácoma may well have been part of this trade network.

The reports of the Spanish conquistadors, combined with the archeological evidence, make the agricultural basis of

⁵⁶ Gutierrez, When Jesus Came, p. xxvii.

⁵⁷ Fray Geronimo de Zárate Salmerón, "Relaciòn, 1538-1626," translated by C. F. Lummis, Land of Sunshine, 11:336-346, 12:39-48, 104-113, 180-187, p. 182.

Ácoma Pueblo abundantly clear. While the Ácoma did provide the Spanish with non-food items, and goods procured through hunting and gathering, most of the items they provided the Spanish were agricultural products. The Ácoma were proficient farmers. They made use of the natural resources of the area to provide them with the material and elements to produce the food necessary for their survival. They planted several varieties of crops and grew them with the help of an irrigation system that impressed the Spanish. Despite their lack of metal technology, the Ácoma made suitable use of stone and wood to construct their agricultural implements.

The structures of the Ácoma political and social organization prior to Spanish colonization can only be inferred. The Spanish records provide only the briefest of glimpses into political and social life at Ácoma. Nevertheless, the scant evidence provided by the Spanish record for Ácoma, combined with the evidence from other pueblos, offers some insight into the political and social structures of Ácoma. The general similarities between the pueblos have already been documented, and those similarities may also apply to the political and social at Ácoma.

Exactly what type of political organization existed at Ácoma before the Spanish *entrada* is obscured by the lack of sources. Castañeda, when commenting on the Rio Grande pueblos, stated that "they govern themselves by the resolutions of the oldest men."⁵⁸ The Spanish explorers described the general pueblo political structure as one based on a council of elders, with a chief or *cacique*, who acted as the executive. The similarity of the Ácoma political structure to that of the other pueblos can be inferred from the few comments by the Spanish about Ácoma in particular. Espejo noted, while at Ácoma, that the "form of government and other characteristics were the same as in the rest of the provinces."⁵⁹ Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà, in his epic poem on the early history of the colony, described one of the principal chiefs of Ácoma, a man named Chumpo, as being a "venerable chieftain" and "noble elder" who was over one hundred and thirty years old. Chumpo, declared Villagrà, was "highly respected in the councils of his

⁵⁸ Castañeda, p. 52.

⁵⁹ Espejo, p. 224-225.

people."⁶⁰

Some scholars have insisted that the traditional political structure of Ácoma remains intact. Speaking generally about Pueblo Indian political organization, anthropologist Edward Dozier states that "the kinds of social structures found among the Pueblos today appear to be extremely old....It is not out of order, therefore, to suggest that probably all of the [social] structures now found in the Pueblos existed in prehistoric times."⁶¹ This system did not separate religious from political spheres of influence. Presently, though there is a more distinct separation of church and state, the religious hierarchy retains a large political role.⁶²

Leslie White notes that the officers exercising political control at Ácoma in the present day belong to two traditions. One is clearly of Spanish origin, and the natural inference is that the other is of pre-Spanish,

⁶⁰ Gaspar Pérez de Villagrà, Historia de la Nueva México, 1610, translated and edited by Gilberto Espinosa and F. W. Hodge, (Los Angeles: the Quivira Society, 1933), p. 165

⁶¹ Cited in Hall, Social Change, p. 40.

⁶² Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p.20.

indigenous origin.

The *cacique*, various lesser chiefs, the warrior society, the *Koshare* or ceremonial society, and medicine societies are the main components in the indigenous tradition. The *cacique* was the principal leader of the pueblo. According to White, "the chiefs are priests and their power is sanctioned by, if not derived from the deities." Thus, the government of Ácoma could be described as theocratic.⁶³

Though the chiefs do not function as administrators most of the time, they wield a great deal of political influence within the pueblo. Indeed, the officers have agricultural, ceremonial, and ethical functions, as well as political.⁶⁴

The officers of the pueblo are elected, either by a clan or the pueblo generally. The Antelope clan elects the *cacique*, who serves for life as do the *principales* who are his aides. The lesser chiefs, such as the war chiefs, are chosen annually. The war society no longer exists at Ácoma,

⁶³ White, The Ácoma Indians, p. 41; Ward Alan Minge, conversation with the author, May 9, 1995.

⁶⁴ White, The Ácoma Indians, pp. 40-41.

but the *Koshare* and medicine societies each hold a great deal of political power. The medicine societies especially wield much political influence, being the moral guides of the pueblo and holding a veto power over the *cacique*.⁶⁵ One source stated that, in the traditional, pre-Hispanic form of government, the principal clan appointed the *cacique* for a term of one year.⁶⁶

The Ácoma are an agricultural people, and so, consequently, many of their own traditions and ceremonies reflect this view. As farmers, the people of Ácoma are concerned, primarily, with water and the rain in the arid, inhospitable environment of the Southwest.⁶⁷ As a result of this anxiety over water, many of the ceremonies of Ácoma concern the bringing of rain.

This preoccupation with water is illustrated in the office of Field Captain at Ácoma. Flaming Arrow relates the tragic story of his grandfather, once elected field chief of Ácoma.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 41-52

⁶⁶ Tour of Ácoma pueblo guided by Enrico. May 6, 1995.

⁶⁷ Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 151-152.

The water supply of a village is its most important concern, and Ácoma, being many hundred feet in the air, is greatly dependent upon the water holes on the top of the mesa. There are three large reservoirs and several smaller ones. No one may wash in these places but must carry the rainwater to several smaller depressions in the rocks. Baths were taken in big pottery vessels in the homes.

There was one especial water-hole known as the water-gauge and was a place used in their ceremonial. It is on the north cliff of Ácoma, between two large reservoirs. It is about eight feet deep, six feet across the top, and nearly round in shape.

During the year's period of office for the field chief, if the rains are heavy enough to keep this water-gauge full in the dry moon,-- the last half of June and the first half of July,--then the watching community automatically re-elects the field chief for life. This is a terrible thing for the field chief, as it practically separates him from his wife and family, but he is judged to have such a power over the rain that the village cannot afford to lose his powers as field chief.

Unfortunately for my grandfather, a very heavy rainy season came in his year of office. The rain started early in June and it rained often until the last part of September. Grandfather took his partners to the pool at night and dipped the water out, trying to keep it low, but the rains came in torrents to fill it up. So his appointment for life was sealed.⁶⁸

Since the office of field captain seems to hold more ceremonial than administrative significance, this office may

⁶⁸ James Paytiamo, Flaming Arrow's People, (New York: Duffield and Green, 1932), p. 145-6.

be of pre-Spanish origin.

Of the social structure of Ácoma, the Spanish explorers left no record. Therefore, any discussion of the social structure is conjecture; but reasonable conjectures can be made based on what is known of the other pueblos. If many of the aspects of general pueblo culture as seen by the Spanish also apply to Ácoma, then the presumption is that the social structure of the former also applies to the latter.

The gender roles of Ácoma were probably quite similar to those of the other pueblos. The men worked out in the fields and did the heavier chores, including building the houses. They also did the weaving of the cloth. The men participated in the ceremonies, while the women were excluded from the important ones. The men spent much of their time in the *kivas*, especially before they married.

The women cooked the food and raised the children. It was their duty to carry the meals to their husbands or sons out in the fields or in the *kivas*. They also constructed the pottery vessels used in cooking and food storage. Additionally, the women were the ones who plastered the houses.

The women also owned the houses. As Castañeda's report of the Rio Grande pueblos states, the men were the ones who had to leave the house, returning to the *kivas*, relinquishing the house to the wife, when they got divorced.⁶⁹ This indicates that the house belonged to the women, not the men. Who owned the fields, or whether the fields were communal property is unclear. Based on the marriage ceremony at Malagon, the men had control of the fields.

As with the social and political organization of Ácoma, the Spanish left little record of the religious structure of the pueblo. Luxàn wrote that the Ácoma "performed a very impressive dance after the Mexican fashion, in which the women took part."⁷⁰ Compared to Gallegos's description of the ceremony at Malagon, Luxàn's account is inadequate. One significant difference between the ceremony at Malagon and the dance witnessed by Luxàn is that the women took part in the dance. Two possibilities arise from the inclusion of women. First, the dance that Luxàn saw could have been one

⁶⁹ Castañeda, p. 54.

⁷⁰ Luxàn, in Rediscovery, p. 182.

with different ceremonial significance than the one at Malagon. Second, the Ácoma could have done things differently than at the other pueblos.

But Espejo described the same dance a bit differently than Luxàn. He did not record the inclusion of women in the dance. He also described it as a solemn ceremony. "They held a solemn ceremonial dance for us, in which the people dressed very gaily and performed juggling tricks, including one with live snakes that were quite elaborate."⁷¹ The reference to live snakes again recalls Gallegos's description of the rain ceremony at Malagon. However, Espejo wrote that the Ácoma performed the dance for the Spaniards, indicating that this was not a standard religious ceremony, but one designed to impress or welcome visitors. If this was the case, it might explain why women participated in the dance.

While the dance observed by Luxàn and Espejo may or may not have been of religious significance, the fact that it shares some qualities in common with the obviously religious ceremonial dance at Malagon indicates a pattern of religious

⁷¹ Espejo, p. 225.

worship similar to the other pueblos. The Hopi of Arizona continue to perform a dance involving snakes. This dance generated a great deal of interest in the nineteenth century, resulting in the dance becoming a tourist attraction.⁷² Additionally, Ácoma shared other aspects of religious life with the other pueblos

Like the other pueblos, Ácoma had *kivas*. Archeological work done in the Ácoma area resulted in the discovery of D-shaped and circular *kivas*.⁷³ The Spanish also observed the existence of *kivas* at the pueblo, as the reports of Zárate Salmerón and others make clear.⁷⁴ The ceremonial significance of the *kivas* is clear when examining the reports on the other pueblos, and one can reasonably infer that the same significance existed at Ácoma.

Thus, prior to Spanish colonization of New Mexico, the

⁷² Richard O. Clemmer, Roads in the Sky: The Hopi Indians in a Century of Change, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995), p. 99.

⁷³ Ruppe, pp. 256-258.

⁷⁴ Zárate Salmerón, p. 182; Captain Luis Gasco de Velasco to the Viceroy on Conditions in New Mexico, March 22, 1601," in George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 2. Vols. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953, p. 614.

Ácoma maintained a society based on agriculture. They relied on only a few crops--on corn, squash and beans--for their sustenance, while also cultivating cotton and gourds. Water diverted from the local rivers and flood waters irrigated their crops. Their only domesticated animals were the dog and the turkey, the latter perhaps raised more for feathers than for meat. They cultivated their crops using hoes, planting sticks, and other implements made of wood and stone. The men worked in the fields. Ácoma women worked in the home. The material culture, economy, and social structure of Ácoma Pueblo at the time of the Spanish *entrada* reflects a society based on strong ties to the land.

Chapter 4

The Development of Spanish Colonial Indian Policy:

The First Hundred Years in the Americas

When Christopher Columbus landed on an island in the Caribbean in 1492, he had no idea that beyond lay a vast new land comprising two continents and many islands. Though he had sought Asia, Columbus claimed this land in the name of Queen Isabel, who financed his journey. But millions of people inhabited these new lands. Not only did Spain have a large amount of land to administer, but it also had the problem of determining what to do with all these people. This question dominated the interactions between the Spanish and the Native Americans. Spain tried many solutions; but during the first fifty years, it essentially muddled through an Indian policy that shifted to accommodate the outcry from humanitarians and the wishes of the conquistadors. By the mid-sixteenth century, Spain had developed a more coherent Indian policy, under which further conquests and Spanish-Indian relations in these conquered territories would take

place.

When Spain first colonized the Western Hemisphere, it did not possess a policy to regulate the interchanges between her colonists and the natives of the new empire. The lack of a policy was one factor that resulted in the decimation of many natives in the Caribbean. The dramatic decline in the native population resulted in an outcry from those who saw the natives as human beings who should be treated with compassion. Through constant protest against the outrages perpetrated against the natives and petitioning of the Spanish Crown for regulations protecting the natives, these few men eventually persuaded the Catholic kings to live up to the obligations placed on them by Pope Alexander VI in 1493.

The papal bull issued by Alexander VI on May 4, 1493 divided the world into spheres of influence to be dominated by Spain and Portugal.¹ The Papacy gave the Spanish Crown exclusive title over the new lands. However, the Pope obligated the Spanish crown to convert the aboriginal

¹ Lesley Byrd Simpson, The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish America, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966, p. 1.

population, but gave it the right to collect tribute.²

Thus, for the entirety of Spain's control of her New World colonies the conversion of the aboriginal population was declared to be the most important aim of colonial enterprise, and the Crown expended large sums on the support of missions, the building of churches, and the endowment of ecclesiastical foundations.³

But during the early years of the Spanish presence in the Western Hemisphere, the Crown had to balance the wishes of the conquistadors and its own requirements with the obligations imposed upon it by the Church. As Lesley Simpson stated,

On one hand the Crown undertook to protect and evangelize the native populations; on the other it was bound to favor the numbers of Spaniards who had conquered the Indies at their own expense and who might reasonably expect some material reward, while the fiscal needs of the Crown itself could not be lost sight of.⁴

² France V. Scholes, "Church and State in New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, 11(1):11.

³ *Ibid*, p. 10.

⁴ Simpson, The Encomienda, p. 1.

The debate on the future of the natives of the Western Hemisphere most often revolved around the diametrically opposed needs of the Spanish conquistadors for reward and the obligation of the crown to convert the natives.

Few Spanish migrated to the New World, especially in the early years. Most of those who did make the journey were ill-equipped to provide for their own means. Many were noblemen who had lost their fortunes. Others were unskilled in the agricultural arts. All came to the Caribbean expecting to gain significant wealth in the form of gold and other precious metals. But since those Spanish who came over were unprepared or unwilling to mine for the gold themselves or to grow the food they would need to survive, the Spanish in the Caribbean needed a labor force. For the Spanish colonists, the natives seemed to be the ideal solution to the labor problem.⁵

Between 1492 and 1503, the Spanish in the Caribbean tried several approaches to ensure that the natives would be

⁵ Mark A. Burkholder and Lyman A. Johnson, Colonial Latin America, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 27-28.

their labor force. The most obvious solution was slavery.⁶ The tradition of slavery among the various native populations facilitated the system of slavery established by the Spanish. Early in the colonial period, the Spanish gained slaves through several means. They raided other islands in the Caribbean for slaves. They also bought slaves from other native groups who had captured them in raids. Sometimes, the Spanish forced *caciques* to enslave their own people. Depopulation of native groups combined with increasingly vigorous attacks by the crown on the mistreatment of the natives slowed and eventually stopped slave-trading in most of the Spanish New World by the mid-sixteenth century.⁷

Columbus attempted to implement a different solution in 1499 when he established the *encomienda* system in the Caribbean after failing to impose a system of tribute on the Indians of Hispaniola. Like the *encomienda* in Castille, the *encomienda* of Columbus was to be a temporary grant (by Columbus) of a particular area, usually a town or city. The

⁶ Simpson, The Encomienda, p. 6.

⁷ Burkholder and Johnson, Colonial Latin America, pp. 114-115.

Encomendero received with his grant the powers of government, with the right to part of the revenue and services of the people in the area under *encomienda*.⁸ But Columbus' *encomienda* system never really got off the ground. After hearing that the admiral had assigned three hundred Indians in *encomienda*, Queen Isabel asked, "By what authority does the Admiral give my vassals away?"⁹ Isabel's wrath effectively ended this initial experiment with the *encomienda*. The Spanish still had no reliable labor force for their mines and farms in the Caribbean.

Columbus proved to be an ineffective governor of Spain's ocean empire. Seeking to counter the chaos left by Columbus' administration, Isabel appointed Fr. Nicolas de Ovando as royal governor of the territories. Like Columbus, Ovando had to contend with the problems of Indian labor. In a decree early in his governorship, Ovando stated that the use of Indian labor would be permitted. But Ovando required that the natives be paid for their labor. This decree

⁸ Simpson, The Encomienda, p. 176, note #25.

⁹ Quoted in Lewis Hanke, The Spanish Struggle for Justice in the Conquest of America, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949), p. 20.

became the basis of the *mita* and *repartimiento* system.¹⁰

Though the *repartimiento* system would have a long career in the New World, compulsory service of the Indians was limited primarily to mining, road-making, maize cultivation, cattle-raising, and similar, heavy labor occupations.¹¹

Ovando then asked Queen Isabel if he could transfer the *encomienda* system over to the New World. Isabel replied with a *cedula*, a royal order, issued on December 20, 1503. It stated that the Indians were free, not servile. However, the natives were subject to tribute and could be forced to work for and with the Spaniards in order to pay for this tribute. Indians who were "free" could be used by the Spanish on *encomiendas*. Since they would work with the Spanish, the Indians would be drawn towards Christianity through forced association. In essence, Isabel gave Ovando permission to institute the *encomienda* system in the New World.¹²

¹⁰ Simpson, The Encomienda, pp. 9-10.

¹¹ Wilhelm Roscher, The Spanish Colonial System, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1904), p. 6.

¹² Simpson, The Encomienda, pp. 12-13; Charles Gibson, Spain in America, (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), p. 52.

The *encomienda* system solved several of Spain's colonial problems. The Spanish desperately needed a labor force to work their mines and plantations. The *encomienda* allowed the Spanish to exploit native labor while avoiding the penalties involved in slavery.¹³ The *encomendero* could make use of the native labor force and exact tribute. But he also had obligations to the Indians. His purpose, to which he swore, was to protect the Indians in his care and provide for their political and religious conversion to Christianity and Spanish ideas of civilization.¹⁴

The legalization of the *encomienda* did not end the debate over the treatment of the natives. After the death of Queen Isabel, King Ferdinand, apparently less concerned with the humane treatment of the natives than his wife, indulged the *encomenderos* and enlarged his own coffers in the process.¹⁵ The Dominicans on Hispaniola were appalled by the conditions of the natives and protested the abuses

¹³ Simpson, The Encomienda, p. 6.

¹⁴ Roscher, The Spanish Colonial System, pp. 4-5.

¹⁵ Gibson, Spain in America, p. 53.

heaped upon them by the Spanish.¹⁶ On the Sunday before Christmas, 1511, Dominican friar Antonio de Montesino harangued the Spanish living on Hispaniola for their treatment of the natives, thus opening the debate on the correct and Christian treatment of the Indians.¹⁷

Tell me by what right or justice do you hold these Indians in such cruel and horrible slavery? By what right do you wage such detestable wars on these people who lived idly and peacefully in their own lands, where you have consumed infinite numbers of them with unheard-of murders and desolations?¹⁸

Between 1511 and 1513, Spaniards began questioning the treatment of the Indians of the New World.¹⁹ Indians on Hispaniola were distributed to the colonists and used in placer mining, agriculture, and stock-raising. What little teaching of Christianity there was consisted simply of baptisms en masse. The natives were overworked, underfed, mistreated, abused, bought, and sold. They were slaves in

¹⁶ Burkholder and Johnson, Colonial Latin America, p. 29.

¹⁷ Hanke, Spanish Struggle, p. 17.

¹⁸ Bernal Diaz de Castillo, quoted in Burkholder and Johnson, Colonial Latin America, p. 29.

¹⁹ Hanke, Spanish Struggle, p. 36.

fact if not in name. Those who tried to escape from this miserable situation were condemned to slavery in name as well. The Dominicans in the New World were shocked by this treatment. Montesino himself petitioned King Ferdinand, whose attention was thereby brought back to the ethical treatment of the Indians. Ferdinand then summoned a council to frame a complete code of laws for the treatment of the Indians. These laws, brought forth on December 27, 1512, were the Laws of Burgos.²⁰

The laws established by Ferdinand expressed the first official position of the Crown on the question of the *encomienda*. The Laws of Burgos sanctioned the *encomienda*, but also established safeguards for the decent and humane treatment and Christianization of the natives. For example, Article 24 forbid the beating or verbal abuse of the Indians. The *encomenderos* were required under Articles 3 through 10 to provide for the instruction and maintenance of the Indians in their charge in Christianity. The laws also directed the *encomenderos* to build churches, to bring their Indians to church, and even to perform baptisms if a priest

²⁰ Simpson, The Encomienda, p. 31; Gibson, Spain in America, pp. 52-53.

was not available. Furthermore, the laws prohibited the enslavement of *encomienda* Indians and, much to the annoyance of the *encomenderos*, limited the size of *encomiendas*.

The Laws of Burgos really did not change the situation of the Indians on or off the *encomiendas* because they went largely unenforced. The *encomenderos* did not modify their behavior towards their charges. Thus, the Laws of Burgos, the first attempt at making the conquest of the Americas more ethical and humanitarian, proved ineffective.²¹ Meanwhile, those in Spain and the Americas who were concerned with the treatment of the natives at the hands of their countrymen continued to push their agenda.

In 1513, King Ferdinand ordered a committee of theologians to study the problem of conquest, postponing the departure of the armada of Pedro Arias de Avila. This committee issued a mandate to conquerors: they must read a statement to the Indians called the Requirement. During the debates over the Requirement, a member of Pedrarias' armada, Martín Fernández de Enciso, adopted a biblical approach to the conquest of the New World. He stated that God had given

²¹ Simpson, The Encomienda, p. 31-35; Gibson, Spain in America, p. 53.

the New World to the Spanish much like He had given Israel to the Jews. Therefore, the Spanish had the divine right to do with the New World what they wished. Enciso further stated that the Spanish had the God-given right to conquer, kill, and enslave the Indians if they resisted the will of Spain. He justified this by stating that the natives were idolatrous heathens and Spain was obligated to Christianize them. Enciso stated,

the king might justly send men to require those idolatrous Indians to hand over their land to him, for it was given him by the pope. If the Indians would not do this, he might justly wage war against them, kill them and enslave those captured in wars, precisely as Joshua treated the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.²²

The master theologians of Ferdinand's council accepted Enciso's arguments with the proviso that those Indians who accepted the Requirement would be able to live peacefully as vassals of the King.²³ This argument once more impressed upon the conquistadors that the Indians were vassals of the

²² Hanke, Spanish Struggle, p. 32.

²³ *Ibid*, p. 32.

Crown, since all new lands were property of the king.²⁴

The Requirement, carried by every conquistador, was to be announced to the Indians via an interpreter before hostilities could legally commence.²⁵ This document required the Indians to acknowledge "the Church as the Ruler and Supervisor of the whole world and the high priest called the Pope, and in his name the King and Queen Juana in his stead as superiors, lords and kings of these islands and the Tierra Firme by virtue of said donation." The Requirement also compelled the Indians to allow the Catholic faith to be taught to them. If the Indians did not accept the Requirement, the Spanish conquistadors would be allowed to wage a just war.²⁶ The Requirement itself graphically described to the Indians what would happen to them should they refuse the offer of the Spanish Crown.

We shall take you and your wives and your children, and shall make slaves of them, and as such shall sell and dispose of them as their Highnesses may command; and we shall take away your goods, and shall do all the harm and damage

²⁴ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, p. 4.

²⁵ Hanke, Spanish Struggle, p. 33.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 33; Gibson, Spain in America, pp. 38-39.

that we can, as to vassals who do not obey, and refuse to receive their lord and resist and contradict him; and we protest that the deaths and losses which shall accrue from this are your fault, and not that of their Highnesses, or ours, nor of these cavaliers who come with us. And that we have said this to you and made this Requirement, we request the notary here present to give us his testimony in writing, and we ask the rest who are present that they should be witnesses of this Requirement.²⁷

The reading of the Requirement prior to commencing battle was meant to absolve the conquistadors from guilt and give them free reign to wage an aggressive war, and place captured Indians in slavery, while squarely placing the blame for the battle on the heads of the natives.²⁸

While the Requirement may have satisfied the Christian conscience of the Catholic King, in practice those whom it was meant to control did not always follow its intended use. The first recorded instance of the use of the Requirement occurred on June 14, 1514, after the arrival of Pedrarias' long-delayed armada. It was read to an empty village whose name and location were not recorded. Such occurrences

²⁷ Quoted from *Documentos Ineditos de Ultramar*, XX, 311-314, in Hanke, The Spanish Struggle, p. 33.

²⁸ Gibson, Spain in America, p. 39.

became commonplace during the years of Spanish conquest in the Americas. Conquistadors would read the Requirement from their ships while still miles away from the villages that were the objects of their ambitions. The Requirement would be read to rocks, trees, or to other Spaniards. The conquistadors would read it to Indians after their villages had been ransacked and the Indians were in chains. Having satisfied the letter of the law, if not the spirit, the Spanish would attack villages, killing and enslaving the Indians, to the traditional Spanish warcry of "Santiago," Saint James, the patron saint of Spain.²⁹ Despite these problems with the Requirement, the conquistadors continued to use the document throughout the process of subjugating the natives of the Western Hemisphere.

The ineffectiveness of the Laws of Burgos, the continuing abuses of the *encomiendas*, the absurd application of the Requirement, and other abuses by the Spanish conquistadors convinced humanitarians in Spain to continue their fight for the rights of the natives. One of these Spaniards with a conscience was Bartolomé de las Casas. Las

²⁹ Hanke, Spanish Struggle, p. 34-35.

Casas was a former *encomendero* turned cleric who pushed for reform in the Western Hemisphere. He was convinced that the *encomienda* system as well as much of Spain's Indian policy in the New World was wrong.³⁰ The *encomenderos* wanted to establish an aristocracy in the Western Hemisphere, a development about which the Crown was very leery and wanted to suppress at all costs. For this reason, the protests of those excluded from the *encomiendas* in the New World fell on very receptive royal ears.³¹ Pushed by las Casas, other members of the clergy, and those with a grudge against the *encomenderos*, the Spanish Crown enacted a new series of legislative measures designed to improve the treatment of the natives of Spain's New World colonies and attack the *encomiendas*.

The "New Laws of and Ordinances for the Government of the Indies," established in 1543, were far less ambiguous and far more ambitious than the Laws of Burgos. While Ferdinand was less concerned with the ethical treatment of the Indians, Charles V was persuaded by the influential

³⁰ Simpson, The Encomienda, pp. 36-37.

³¹ Burkholder and Johnson, Colonial Latin America, p. 111.

humanitarians in his court.³² The New Laws made the Indians direct vassals of the Spanish Crown and therefore under the direct control of the king.³³ The New Laws forbid enslavement of the Indians, even as punishment and provided for no compulsory labor or personal servitude.³⁴ Tribute also came under scrutiny. Tributes taken from the Indians were to be at a fixed rate and regulated and not to be exorbitant.³⁵ Much of what the New Laws stated could be found in earlier laws, but the New Laws reiterated such statements. Unlike earlier laws, however, the New Laws had teeth. *Encomenderos* could be removed from their offices. Those who harmed the natives would be punished. Indeed the principal duty of the *audiencias*, the ruling councils, in the New World was the inquisition and punishment of atrocities against the natives.³⁶

³² Gibson, Spain in America, p. 59.

³³ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 192; Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, p. 5.

³⁴ Gibson, Spain in America, p. 59; Bandelier, Final Report, p. 192; Burkholder and Johnson, Colonial Latin America, p. 111.

³⁵ Gibson, Spain in America, p. 59.

³⁶ Simpson, The Encomienda, pp. 129-130.

The New Laws of the Indies were not the last laws concerning the treatment of the Indians. But their enactment helped form a coherent body of law on the ethical treatment of the Indians. The first fifty years of Spanish experiences in the Western Hemisphere provided the establishment of laws governing Indian-Spanish relations and prepared the methods for the fulfillment of Spain's obligations to the Indians.

As the proprietor of a large and far-flung empire, Spain had peculiar difficulties with which to contend. She possessed few people and could not spare many of them for the purposes of colonization. Therefore, the Crown sought to colonize her new territories with the native inhabitants. To do so, the Spanish first needed to subjugate and control the Indians. Second, they needed to acculturate them to Spanish societal norms. In order to realize these goals, Spain's colonial legislation attempted to safeguard the Indians and to raise them to some degree of citizenship within the Spanish Empire.³⁷

³⁷ Herbert Eugene Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish American Colonies," American Historical Review, Oct. 1917, 23(1):52.

The Catholic kings had three overriding objectives concerning the Indians - to convert them, to civilize them, and to exploit them. By order of the Pope, the crown was obligated to convert the Indians, and to civilize them.³⁸ Through the enactment of special secular legislation the Crown tried to help the progress of the Indians toward "civilization." The New Laws of 1543 gave the Indians some legal rights and made them direct vassals of the Crown. The Indians, however, never achieved the status of full citizenship in the Spanish Empire. As vassals of the Crown, the Indians were considered "wards" of the king. The Spanish treated them as children who still needed to be taught the niceties of civilized life. Until they learned and acquired the trappings of civilization, the Indians could not be thought of as adults; hence they could not enjoy full citizenship.³⁹ The Crown, therefore, helped to ensure that the natives would become full citizens after they were incorporated into Christian and European

³⁸ Bolton, "The Mission," p. 43.

³⁹ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, pp. 281-283; Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 50, 72; Bandelier, Final Report, pp. 192, 197-8.

civilization.⁴⁰ Several agencies became the means through which this conversion would take place.

The first of these agencies was the *encomienda*. The *encomiendas* were not so much landed estates, as the *encomenderos* had hoped to have when they settled them. Instead they were public offices, dependent on the will of the King. The King regularly granted the right to hold an *encomienda* for two generations. This stipulation was sometimes extended to three or even four generations in New Spain. As a law proclaimed in 1552, the express purpose of an *encomienda* was to provide the Indians in the *encomienda* with military protection.⁴¹ But the object of the *encomienda* system was to Christianize the Indians within the system through the efforts of the *encomendero*. The *encomenderos* were required by several laws, including ones in 1509, 1554, and 1580, to Christianize the Indians in their charge as well as promote their political conversion.⁴² It was also his duty to "civilize them by

⁴⁰ Hanke, Spanish Struggle, p. 175.

⁴¹ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, pp. 4-5.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 4

encouraging orderly habits of industry."⁴³ Thus the *encomienda*, having previously been an object of hatred by those who saw it as tantamount to slavery, became a more humane institution, at least in theory.

That is not to say that the *encomenderos* did not reap a profit from their *encomiendas*. Direct vassals of the King paid three-fourths of their taxes directly to the Crown's treasury. However, those attached to *encomiendas* paid three-fourths of their taxes to the *encomendero*. But woe be to those *encomenderos* who mistook their grant for a feudal landed estate complete with serfs. Those *encomenderos* who neglected to perform their obligations to the natives lost their *encomienda*. The Indians in an *encomienda* could not be sold by the *encomendero* since they were free. In addition, according to laws of 1609 and 1619, the *encomendero* could not own a house in the village of his *encomienda* or even stay there one night. Though not perfect and certainly not even humane in the early stages of Spanish conquest, the *encomienda* system sought to combine the desire of the conquistador for some reward for his troubles in conquering

⁴³ Gibson, Spain in America, p. 52.

and settling the New World with the obligations of the Crown to Christianize and bring the natives within the fold of European civilization. The *encomienda* served its function until Charles III abolished the system in the mid-eighteenth century.⁴⁴

Missionaries, however, would play a more important role within Spain's colonial program than the *encomendero*. The principal work of the missionaries was the conversion of the "heathen" Indians to Catholicism. The spreading of the faith was their primary task, "first, last, and always." Since the Spanish Crown acknowledged that it had a duty to spread Catholicism to the Indians, from the point of view of both the Church and the State, the first task of the missionary was to extend that faith.⁴⁵

In Herbert E. Bolton's view of Spanish-Indian policy, "if the Indian were to become either a worthy Christian or a desirable subject, he must be disciplined in the rudiments of civilized life." The task of indoctrinating the Indians in European civilization primarily became the responsibility

⁴⁴ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, pp. 4-5.

⁴⁵ Bolton, "The Mission," p. 47.

of the missionaries. As Bolton stated:

...the missionaries were not alone religious agents. Designedly in part, and incidentally in part, they were political and civilizing agents of a very positive sort, and as such they constituted a vital feature of Spain's pioneering system.⁴⁶

To spread the Christian word to the Indians, the Spanish colonial program included the founding of missions. The missions of California and Paraguay, for example, were great estates. In New Mexico, the padres acted as parish priests: they conducted mass, administered the sacraments, and taught the scriptures.⁴⁷

Missionary activities did not really succeed until the mid-seventeenth century, after the period of conquest.⁴⁸ To segregate the natives from the Europeans and make their own work more efficient, the missionaries gathered together the scattered and disparate natives of a region into a

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 46-47.

⁴⁷ Henry H. Kelly, "Franciscan Missions of New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, 15(4): 364.

⁴⁸ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, p. 12.

village.⁴⁹ Within these mission villages, all adults were allowed to perform the necessary labor on their own land. In addition, they were required to work on communal land for one hour every morning and one hour every evening. The produce of this labor was used to supply the church and the missionary. Once the requirements of these institutions were fulfilled, a proportion of the produce was applied to the needs of the natives.⁵⁰

The Spanish protected the natives on their own land from merciless exploitation through a series of laws. Whites and other non-Indians were prohibited from settling among the Indians by a law of 1536.⁵¹ The communal system of land tenure, long enjoyed by the natives, became legally established for settled tribes due to land grants that were inalienable except by the consent of the entire tribe and Spanish authorities. The group retained title to four square leagues of land that had been invested by the

⁴⁹ Burkholder and Johnson, Colonial Latin America, p. 85. In fact, the natives were obliged to live together in villages by laws such as one proclaimed in 1551.

⁵⁰ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, pp. 6, 12.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 6.

Crown.⁵² Spanish law also declared the natives to be legal minors for life.⁵³ While such laws as this one seemed harmful to the interest of the native, they actually protected the native from unscrupulous Spanish. As minors, natives could not make or sign a legally binding contract, such as the sale of land.

The development of a coherent policy by the Spanish Crown to deal with the inhabitants of her new lands was slow and hesitant. On one hand the Crown needed to take heed of the demands of the conquistadors and line its own pockets. But the Papacy had confirmed and the crown had accepted the duty of converting the natives of this new land to Christianity.⁵⁴ The Church wanted to convert the natives to Catholicism. The Crown wanted both to exploit and convert the natives. The conquistadors wanted simply to exploit them. Therefore, the Crown ended up acting as a go-between to curb the more heinous exploitations of the conquistadors while also making exploitation more humane. As Roscher

⁵² Bandelier, Final Report, pp. 201, 271.

⁵³ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, p. 7.

⁵⁴ Gibson, Spain in America, p.38.

states, "during the conquest the government could do little more than gradually develop its system, and, in contest with the unrestrained assertions of independence on the part of the conquistadors, to put into effect step by step [an Indian policy]." ⁵⁵

Thus, over time, the Spanish Crown developed a policy that allowed the *encomenderos* and other Spanish colonists to exploit the Indians while also bowing to the obligation placed on it by the Church. This policy would Christianize and Europeanize the natives of the Western Hemisphere through three mediums. The *encomienda* allowed for the exploitation of the natives and introduced them to European civilization and Catholicism. The mission was intended to be a humane endeavor, with conversion being the sole reason for its existence. However, this does not mean that the missionaries did not benefit from the Indians in their charge. The final agency for the conversion of the natives to European ways was simple contact. Being in contact on a day-to-day basis with Spaniards gradually assimilated Indians into Spanish culture. These institutions and

⁵⁵ Roscher, Spanish Colonial System, pp. 4, 2.

methods of conversion would follow the Spanish as they expanded the boundaries of their ever-increasing empire.

The First Conquistadors

The hostility felt by the Pueblos towards the Spanish and the record of Spanish mismanagement of the Pueblos began, not with the colonization of New Mexico in 1598, but with the first exploratory party in 1532. The small expedition of Fray Marcos de Niza generated violence, a theme that carried over to the first concerted effort at exploration in 1540 by Francisco Vasquez de Coronado. Later exploring parties continued the tradition of bad relations.

The journey of Fray Marcos de Niza has been a topic of scholarly debate for many years. This debate has centered on the veracity of Fray de Niza's report, which he wrote when he returned to New Spain. According to the priest's account, he traveled north through the wilderness of Mexico to reach a kingdom of legend called Cibola. But Fray Marcos probably never reached any city that anyone could mistake for the kingdom of legend, despite his protestations to the contrary. Nevertheless, his descriptions of what he called Cibola, the pueblos of the Zuni, and the wealth that it

contained fueled interest in New Mexico and led to further Spanish explorations into New Mexico.

Don Antonio de Mendoza, viceroy of New Spain, instructed Fray Marcos to go to San Miguel de Culiacán in the province of New Galicia to tell the natives that they were free, would not be made slaves or taken from their lands, and would be treated well by the Spanish. Fray Marcos was also instructed to note how the new governor of the province, Francisco Vásquez de Coronado, managed the town and treated the natives. Furthermore, Mendoza instructed Fray Marcos to explore the country beyond New Galicia, determine if a route could be found, and make note of the people and physical description of the land.¹

Taking his instructions to heart, Fray Marcos proceeded north from San Miguel with the slave Estévan de Dorantes, Fray Honoratus, and Indians from the province of New Galicia and from Petatlán on March 7, 1539. He was forced to abandon Fray Honoratus at Petatlán because his fellow friar

¹ Antonio de Mendoza, "Instructions of Viceroy Mendoza," in The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza, edited and translated by Cleve Hallenbeck, (Dallas: University Press in Dallas, 1949), pp. 9-10.

became ill.² Fray Marcos journeyed north along the coast until he reached the town of Vacapa. Here he stayed and sent Estévan ahead of him, telling the slave to report back if he found anything of interest. Estévan sent a message, by way of an Indian, to Fray Marcos four days after set out. This Indian told Fray Marcos that there was a kingdom composed of seven cities, ruled by one lord, thirty *jornados*, thirty day's travel, from the place where he had left Estévan. One of the cities of this kingdom was called Cibola, and the people of the region were well clothed and had much turquoise.³

On his way to rejoin Estévan, Fray Marcos encountered other Indians who gave him much the same report as the Indian Estévan had sent, describing Cibola as a rich, wondrous city. He even met a native of Cibola, who had fled the kingdom. This man gave Fray Marcos a wondrous account of the area, telling him that the main city was called Ahacus, but that there was a very large, but independent

² Fray Marcos de Niza, "Narrative of Fray Marcos," in The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza, pp. 15-16.

³ *Ibid*, pp. 18-19.

kingdom near Cibola called Ácus.⁴ This was the first mention of Ácoma in the records of the Spanish.

Fray Marcos followed after Estévan, who kept several days journey ahead of the friar, reporting back to him with news of the country he was encountering. On the twenty-first of May, Fray Marcos received word that Estévan had reached Cibola. Estévan had journeyed there with three hundred Indians, but was told by the people of Cibola that he and his companions could not enter the city or they would be killed. According to the messenger, the son of a chief among those who went with Estévan, the slave proceeded to Cibola anyway. At the city, the people captured Estévan and took everything from him, including trade goods and turquoise he had received from other Indians during his journey. Estévan and the Indians who were with him on his travels attempted to escape, but were hunted down and killed.⁵

Fray Marcos resolved to continue his journey to Cibola despite the welcome Estévan had received. Along the way, he

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 20-26.

⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.

met other Indians who had been with Estévan and had escaped. They told him a story similar to that of the son of the chief.⁶

Having left most of the Indians behind, Fray Marcos proceeded towards Cibola and came within sight of the town. He described it as a beautiful city built of stone, much bigger than the city of Mexico. Having seen the city in the distance, Fray Marcos decided that caution was called for and did not actually go into Cibola. He erected a pile of stones, topped by a cross, and claimed the entire province of the seven cities, the kingdom of Ácus, and other kingdoms in the area he had heard of, for Spain.⁷ Fray Marcos returned to Mexico City where he wrote his narrative and presented it to Viceroy Mendoza on the second of September, 1539.⁸

The report of Fray Marcos generated much excitement in New Spain. Viceroy Mendoza immediately began to organize a large-scale military expedition to Cibola. This expedition

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 31-32.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 33-34.

⁸ "Legalization of de Niza's Report," in The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza, p. 37.

would be under the command of the governor of New Galicia and Mendoza's protégé Don Francisco Vasquez de Coronado. But the reports of Coronado's expedition called into question the truthfulness of Fray Marcos's narrative. Even before this major undertaking got underway, a smaller campaign, under the command of Melchior Díaz, *alcalde* of Culiacán, went north to find Cibola. Díaz and his group made it as far as the Gila River, but were forced to return to New Spain due to bad weather. However, he came into contact with Indians who knew of Cibola and gave him a truthful account of the nature of the city, one that was entirely unlike the account of Fray Marcos. This report was concealed from Coronado and his men.⁹ But Coronado was able to find out for himself that Fray Marcos had embellished his narrative.

Coronado, like Cortés and Pizarro before him, was a conquistador. His expedition into New Mexico was not an effort at colonization, but one of conquest. He was, however, disappointed in his endeavors because of the lack of gold and silver in the region. Although his search for

⁹ Hallenbeck, "Analysis of the Narrative," in The Journey of Fray Marcos de Niza, p. 39.

the Seven Cities of Cibola and Gran Quivira did not result in his enrichment, it nevertheless paved the way for further Spanish colonization and the eventual rocky relationship between the Spanish settlers and the Pueblos.

Coronado's expedition, consisting of about three hundred Spaniards, six Franciscans (among whom was Fray Marcos), and over one thousand Indian allies, journeyed to New Mexico in the first, well-organized exploration into the interior in 1540.¹⁰ Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza promised the members of the expedition estates in the territory to which they journeyed, a promise that seemed lucrative since, according to reports, "there was a mountain of silver and other mines" in that country.¹¹

The Coronado expedition reached Cibola and found the city to be entirely different than the one described by Fray Marcos. Castañeda portrayed it as "a crowded little village, looking as if it had been crumpled all up together." Capt. Juan Jaramillo, another member of the expedition, expressed sentiments similar to those of

¹⁰ Weber, The Spanish Frontier, p. 46.

¹¹ Bolton, Coronado, p. 52.

Castañeda.¹² The Spanish were disappointed, and Fray Marcos took the brunt of this frustration. Castañeda described the reaction to the first view the Spanish had of the fabled Cibola. "The next day they entered the settled country in good order, and when they saw the first village, which was Cibola, such were the curses that some hurled at Friar Marcos that I pray God may protect him from them." Such was the animosity expressed towards Fray Marcos that he was ordered to return to New Spain with a small group of soldiers since Coronado did not think it was safe for the friar to remain with the expedition.¹³

The Indians of the region, whom the Spanish named "Pueblos," regarded Coronado's group as unwelcome guests in their land. With the irreverence for human life characteristic of the conquistador mentality, the expedition ran rough-shod through Pueblo lands.

The conquistadors took Cibola by force when the inhabitants refused to make peace with the Spanish.¹⁴ A

¹² Castañeda, p. 16; Capt. Juan Jaramillo, "Account," in The Journey of Coronado, Winship, ed., p. 121.

¹³ Castañeda, p. 16-17.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 16.

smaller expedition under the command of Don Pedro de Tovar went west to examine the Hopi pueblos. As at Cibola, the small Spanish force was confronted by a group of natives who drew lines in the sand, stating that the Spanish should not cross them. According to the narrative, one native struck a horse across a cheek with a club, whereupon the Spaniards cried the Santiago and attacked, quickly subduing the pueblo.¹⁵

At one of the Tiguex villages, a Spaniard was accused of raping, or attempting to rape, the wife of one of the inhabitants, and the entire pueblo rose up against the Spanish. A part of the expeditionary force went to Tiguex and subdued the village. The leader of this force, don Garcia Lopez de Cardenas, had been ordered by Coronado not to leave any of the men alive, as an example to the other Indians. Since most had surrendered, don Garcia ordered that the men be burned at the stake. While some were roasting, the others tried to break free, knowing that their turn was next, but they were killed by the Spanish.¹⁶

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 21.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 29-30.

With such a large force to feed and supply, Coronado pressed the Pueblos he encountered for food, supplies, and even clothing to stave off the effects of the winter. These demands created hardship for the Pueblos, and they therefore attacked Coronado's expedition. By the end of the winter of 1540-41, Coronado and his men had destroyed as many as thirteen pueblos.¹⁷

Ácoma was spared for the time being. One of Coronado's lieutenants, Hernando Alvarado, made a side-journey to the pueblo and remarked that it was "one of the strongest places we have seen."¹⁸ The encounter between Alvarado and the Ácoma might have turned out like other encounters during the expedition but despite having drawn a line in the sand as the inhabitants of Cibola and Hopi had done and looking to the Spanish as if they were ready to fight, the Ácoma offered to make peace. The Spaniards received food, supplies, and some goods such as skins, cotton cloth and turquoise from the Ácoma.¹⁹

¹⁷ Weber, The Spanish Frontier, p. 47-48.

¹⁸ Alvarado, p. 129.

¹⁹ Castañeda, p. 24.

Coronado's expedition returned to Mexico City in 1542,²⁰ but left in its wake destruction and great antipathy towards Spaniards by the Pueblos. With the exception of two missionaries who remained when Coronado's expedition left but who were soon killed by the Indians,²¹ the province of New Mexico remained free of Spanish footsteps for the next forty years.

In 1581, the Spanish again turned their eyes northwards. In that year, a small expedition under the combined leadership of a clergyman, Fray Agustin Rodriguez, and a soldier, Francisco Sanchez, who was commonly called Chamuscado, journeyed to New Mexico. An Indian captive's description of a land where people raised cotton, wove clothes, raised abundant food, and lived in sizable settlements peaked the interest of Fray Rodriguez. Upon receiving permission from the viceroy, Rodriguez left for New Mexico with two other clergymen, Fr. Francisco Lopez and Fr. Juan de Santa Maria. They were accompanied by nine

²⁰ Bolton, Coronado, p. 183, 334.

²¹ Weber, Spanish Frontier, p. 49; Captain Juan Jaramillo, "Account of the Journey which he made to the New Country, on which Francisco Vazquez de Coronado was the General," in Castañeda, et al., p. 127.

soldiers and sixteen Indian servants. Among the soldiers was one Hernan Gallegos, who left a chronicle of the expedition's adventures.²²

Gallegos's narrative of the expedition gives detailed accounts of the land and the people of New Mexico and also tells that the people of the region were, by and large, peaceful towards the Spanish. The Pueblos were peaceful just as long as the Spanish did not provoke them or attempt to gain any of their goods. Peace changed to disturbances when the Spanish, having run out of supplies, demanded that the people of Piedrahita give them food. Having fired their harquebuses into the air and told the natives they were children of the sun, the Spanish intimidated the people into giving them flour, a little from each house. Apparently, the natives then informed other pueblos of what the Spanish needed because they received the same amount of flour at other pueblos they visited.²³

One of the friars, Fray Juan de Santa Maria, decided to

²² Herbert Eugene Bolton, ed., Spanish Explorations in the Southwest, 1542-1706, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916), p. 137-139.

²³ Gallegos, pp. 93-94; Peidrahita was probably the pueblo of San Cristobal, according to Hammond, fn 2, p. 94.

return to New Spain to report on what the expedition had learned. Despite the attempts by the others of the party to convince him to remain, Fray Juan departed alone. When the Indians of Piedrahita saw him leave, they apparently thought he was going to bring more Spaniards. So they killed him after he had been on the road for two days. When the rest of the expedition learned of Fray Juan's death, they retreated from Piedrahita to the pueblo of Malpartida.²⁴

While at Malpartida, some Indians from Malagón killed three of the Spanish horses. On going to Malagón to seek justice for the crime, the Spanish tried to intimidate the inhabitants by the same method they used at Piedrahita, but to no effect. They captured some of the natives when they stormed the pueblo and put on a charade that they hoped would convince the Indians of the friendliness of the friars. The soldiers planned to behead some of their captives, but planned for the friars to spare the Indians at the last moment. The plan was carried out and succeeded. However, the Spanish thought the natives wanted to kill them and decided to attack and burn the village anyway, killing

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 95-96.

the natives. The friars had decided to remain in New Mexico and warned against this action.²⁵ Two of the remaining friars, Fathers Rodriguez and Lopez, stayed at the pueblo of Pauray, against the wishes of the rest of the party, in order to preach to and convert the natives.²⁶ They were killed later by the inhabitants of Pauray.

Though the expedition was small, the reports of Gallegos and Pedro de Bustamente, another soldier of the expedition, received the attentions of the viceroy. An advisor to the viceroy, Rodrigo del Rio de Losa, lieutenant-captain-general of Nueva Galicia, recommended a further expedition of three hundred men to colonize New Mexico. These men were to be rewarded with titles of nobility, *encomiendas*, haciendas, and tax exemption.²⁷ Such was the interest in New Mexico.

Such a large-scale undertaking did not materialize right away. An officially sanctioned colonial expedition

²⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 96-99.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 99; Hernán Gallegos, "Father López and Rodríguez remain at Pauray, February 13, 1582," in Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 125.

²⁷ Bolton, Spanish Explorations, p. 137-139.

awaited the endeavors of Juan de Oñate in 1598. This is not to say that others did not launch unofficial explorations.

Fearing for the safety of the Franciscan friars left in New Mexico in 1581, Fray Bernaldino Beltran volunteered to lead a rescue party. Word had come that Father López had been killed three months before.²⁸ With money and equipment supplied by Antonio de Espejo, a wealthy Mexican citizen, Beltran left San Bartolomé in Nueva Vizcaya on November 10, 1582 with fourteen or fifteen soldiers, several servants and a few other people. Espejo served as leader of the soldiers.²⁹ Although officially a rescue mission, Espejo was probably as eager to explore this new territory of which he had lately heard so much.

Not unlike the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition, the Espejo expedition came into conflict with the inhabitants of some of the pueblos it met in New Mexico. One of these pueblos was Ácoma. The Espejo expedition visited Ácoma twice. The first visit was peaceful. Diego Pérez de Luxàn's account provides historians with most of the

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 163, 164.

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 163.

eyewitness information about life at Ácoma prior to the Spanish Conquest. Luxàn mentioned the irrigated fields of the village and noted that the Ácoma gave the Spaniards many gifts of maize, turkeys and deerskins.³⁰ The next encounter with the Ácoma, made by the Espejo expedition on their way back east towards the Rio Grande, was less peaceful.

Because the Ácoma had stolen from and then later killed a run-away Indian servant of Luxàn, the Spanish sought to teach a lesson to the Ácoma and their allied Querechos, the nomadic Indians of New Mexico. After several attempts at peace, and thwarted by some trickery on the side of the Indians, the Spanish left and continued on towards the Rio Grande.³¹

At Pauray, where Fr. Lopez had been killed a year earlier, the expedition asked for food, but were "mocked" by some Indians who watched the Spaniards' progress from the tops of the houses. At this taunting, the Spanish captured several Indians and put them in a kiva and set fire to it. They then executed another sixteen. After finishing their

³⁰ Luxán, in Expedition into New Mexico, p. 87.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 110-114.

work at Pauray, the expedition continued on, coming across other pueblos which provided them with food. At the Keres pueblos of Catiste, Gigue, Tipolti, Cochita, and Sierharan, the Spanish had no trouble obtaining supplies. As Luxàn stated, "The news of the punishment [of Pauray] spread and all the provinces trembled and received [the Spanish] well."³² It may hardly be surprising to find that the natives may well have become very helpful towards men who fought and killed at the slightest provocation.

While the inhabitants of New Mexico may not have been pleased with the visit of Antonio de Espejo, the leader of this latest Spanish expedition into New Mexico seemed to be quite pleased with New Mexico himself. Espejo returned to Spanish territory, the town of Santa Barbara in Nueva Vizcaya, on September 20, 1583. The following year he submitted a proposal for the Spanish colonization of New Mexico. This large group, consisting of 400 men, one hundred of whom were to be married and bring their families, and twenty-four Franciscan missionaries, was to be led by Espejo. In a very short statement, Espejo listed the

³² *Ibid*, p. 116.

material that would be needed, the livestock necessary, and the number of people appropriate for a colonization effort. He suggested that, since he knew the land, he himself would be best suited to subdue and pacify New Mexico in the name of God and King.³³ Espejo never got the chance to lead his expedition of colonization.

On July 20, 1590, an unauthorized expedition into New Mexico left the town of Almadén in the province of Nuevo León under the command of Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, Lieutenant Governor and Captain General of that province. According to Castaño's report, he had authorization from the governor of the province and was acting under his authorization.³⁴ Such authorization was not sufficient, as Castaño would discover. He would later be arrested and convicted of invading the lands of peaceable Indians and invading the lands of New Mexico.³⁵ But, like previous exploratory parties, Castaño was interested in what New Mexico had to offer and thus set

³³ Luxán, in Rediscovery of New Mexico, pp. 238-239.

³⁴ Castaño de Sosa, "Memoria," in Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 245

³⁵ "The Sentence Imposed on Castaño de Sosa," in Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 317.

about to discover this for himself. Also like previous expeditions, the Castaño expedition incited the animosity of Pueblo Indians.

After the lengthy journey to New Mexico, the expedition came into contact with Pecos pueblo. They found it in a state of great excitement due to their arrival. Pecos was fortified by bulwarks, trenches and barricades for the defense of the pueblo against other groups with whom they were at war. However, some of the newer defenses had been erected in defense against the Spanish. While Castaño wanted to meet with the Indians peacefully, or so he wrote in his report, they were dressed in full battle array and had stockpiled stones on the terraces of the houses. Castaño attempted to calm the inhabitants of Pecos, but was greeted with jeers. When he and the soldiers with him circled the pueblo, trying to calm the situation with words and gifts, the armed inhabitants on the rooftops threw stones and shot arrows. This situation lasted for five hours.³⁶

Eventually, the Spaniards grew tired of trying to

³⁶ Castaño de Sosa, pp. 270-271.

subdue the pueblo through kindness. Their leader asked his men what they should do, and they replied that they should pacify the pueblo by force. The Spanish were able to defeat the townspeople with, seemingly, very little bloodshed. The report states that Spanish soldiers shot down two Indians with their harquebuses, but did not use the two field pieces they had brought along. After the Spanish took a key position, the Indians withdrew to other areas of the pueblo. Castaño then entered the pueblo and, through discussions with one of the chiefs, made peace.³⁷ The day after this incident, the Spaniards woke to find the pueblo deserted, the people apparently thinking that the Spanish would do them harm. The men of the expedition, on the orders of their leader, took a little food from each house to supply their needs, but Castaño ordered that nothing else should be taken.³⁸

Although the conflict at Pecos was the only such incident that involved violence, the Spanish encountered many pueblos where they had to make many overtures of peace

³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 272-275.

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 279.

before the inhabitants would accept them. Several days after leaving Pecos, they came across another pueblo from which its inhabitants were fleeing because the Spanish were arriving. After dispatching several men to round up the refugees, Castaño was able to persuade them that the Spanish meant no harm.³⁹ This situation was replayed at other pueblos. Castaño and his men had to cajole the people with gifts and kind words to convince them of the peaceful intents of the party. At one pueblo, possibly San Juan, the sight of the Spanish induced the women to cry.⁴⁰ Clearly, news had traveled throughout the pueblo region that the Spaniards were journeying in the area and that they had come into conflict with the inhabitants of Pecos. Because of this conflict and their previous encounters with other Spanish expeditions, the Pueblo Indians were alarmed by the approach of this new Spanish expedition.

The Spanish journeys into New Mexico were rife with bloodshed instigated by the Spanish themselves or through misunderstandings that the Spanish exacerbated. While

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 282.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 283.

Luxàn's account of the friendliness of the Indians after the killings at Pauray demonstrates that the Pueblos were eager to please such savage newcomers, it also makes one wonder how eager the Pueblos would be to receive further visits from these new neighbors to the south. The brutality of the Coronado and all subsequent expeditions towards the pueblos would have been in the forefront of the minds of the Pueblos when a new expedition arrived in New Mexico. This expedition was not an exploratory party like the Chamuscado-Rodriguez expedition, nor a rescue expedition like the Espejo expedition; this company, under the command of Don Juan de Oñate, meant to stay.

Having been granted a contract for the discovery and colonization of New Mexico by Viceroy Don Luis de Velasco on September 21, 1595,⁴¹ Oñate assembled his colonizing party and moved northward. Delayed by political intrigues, Oñate and his group left Rio de Conchos on February 7, 1598. The convoy consisted of over four hundred men, of whom one hundred-thirty brought their families. Additionally, the

⁴¹ "Contract of don Juan de Oñate for the Discovery and Conquest of New Mexico," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan De Oñate, p. 42.

colonizing party brought eighty-three wagons and carts to carry supplies. More than seven thousand head of stock followed.⁴²

Although the Oñate expedition was one of colonization, converting the natives to Catholicism and changing them into productive members of the Spanish empire assumed priority status for those who granted Oñate the charter to colonize. Indeed, in his instructions to Oñate, the viceroy stated,

Your main purpose shall be the service of God our Lord, the spreading of His holy Catholic faith, and the reduction and pacification of the natives of the said provinces. You shall bend all your energies to this object, without any other human interest interfering with this aim.⁴³

But the Spanish colonial program also consisted of the conversion of the natives to Spanish modes of life. In regard to this portion of the program, the viceroy instructed Oñate to "charge the Spaniards to teach the Indians how they may assist and become useful in the colonization of the land and the preservation of the Spanish

⁴² Bolton, Spanish Exploration, p. 202.

⁴³ "Instructions to don Juan de Oñate," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 65.

organization."⁴⁴ Perhaps the most telling part of the instruction involved the use of the Indians by the Spanish and the necessity of obtaining and maintaining their good will while at the same time teaching them the rudiments of Spanish civilization.

Since, according to information available, those provinces are densely populated, it is assumed that the Spaniards will attract the Indians, by good treatment and pay, to their homes to help with the indispensable tasks. The natives must not be compelled to serve against their will, as they resent very much the imposition of personal service. From the very beginning you must endeavor, by all the means that seem most suitable to you, to induce the Indians to live in the homes of the Spaniards in order that they may learn trades and help in the necessary labors, both on the farm and in other occupations of the Spaniards. In this manner the Indians will be benefitted and will be able to use this knowledge for themselves in farming and building construction, as the Indians in New Spain have learned to do and by which they support themselves and their homes.⁴⁵

Thus, the colonization of New Mexico by don Juan de Oñate was to conform to the stated objectives of Spanish colonization everywhere--the conversion of the Indians to

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 65, 67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 68.

Catholicism and Spanish way of life. As has been previously stated, Spain had been given most of the Americas on the condition that it endeavor to convert the inhabitants. The colonization of New Mexico sought to fulfill this obligation.

When the colonists arrived in New Mexico, they established their headquarters at a Tewa pueblo along the Rio Grande that they called San Juan. Oñate had taken formal possession of New Mexico shortly before the company had crossed the Rio Grande just short of the later site of the town of El Paso in late April 1598.⁴⁶ Thus began the Spanish occupation of New Mexico, an occupation that lasted, with a twelve-year hiatus, until 1821. But the Spaniards were few in number in a country where the inhabitants had reason to distrust them. Conflict started almost immediately.

⁴⁶ Weber, The Spanish Frontier, p. 77.

Chapter 6

The Ácoma Massacre

As many scholars have recently reminded the American people, the story of the collision between European and Indian was oftentimes not a happy one.¹ Pestilence, slavery, cultural annihilation, and the occasional mass slaughter wreaked havoc on native populations. Tales of the butchery of innocent native peoples began soon after the conquest of New Spain. But bloodbaths were not limited to the conquests of the great empires of the Aztecs or the Incas. In the province of New Mexico, the Spanish colonists recorded one of the more horrendous episodes of bloody conquest in their official documents and celebrated it even in verse.

However, those accounts are not entirely accurate. The colonial leaders did themselves and their king a disservice

¹ For example, see Kirkpatrick Sale, The Conquest of Paradise, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990); Hugh Thomas, Conquest: Montezuma, Cortés, and the Fall of Old Mexico, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993); and Patricia Nelson Limerick, The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1987).

in their reports on the incident. The Spanish more than likely inflated the population figures of the pueblo as well as the number of deaths in the massacre. Several colonial leaders, including the governor-general of the settlement, paid for their documentary exuberance with their careers.

In the autumn of 1598, Oñate, the leader of the colonists and governor-general of this newest of Spanish provinces, began to obtain the obedience of the native residents. On October 27, 1598, Oñate and his chief priest, Fray Alonso Martinez, performed the Act of Obedience and Vassalage at Ácoma Pueblo, receiving the same from the inhabitants with "spontaneous signs of pleasure." Oñate told the Ácoma that by performing the act they came under the obligation of the king, through his governor, and "if they failed to observe [the laws] they would be punished as transgressors."² The Act of Obedience and Vassalage had by this time been employed for almost one hundred years by Spanish conquistadors in the Western Hemisphere. Though it had been born in 1513 as the Requirement, the Act of

² "Act of Obedience and Vassalage by the Indians of Ácoma," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, pp. 354-356.

Obedience and Vassalage was meant to obtain the cooperation of the natives in the endeavors of the Spanish to conquer, subdue, colonize, and convert the Indians.

Continuing his expedition to the west of the Spanish settlement on the Rio Grande, Oñate decided to survey his new domain. He undertook this mission to pacify the Indians in the west and investigate reports of a source of salt, but decided, since he had already journeyed part of the way, to continue on to the south sea to investigate possible harbors. He had thirty-four soldiers with him as well as the chief prelate of the colony, Fray Alonso Martínez. Apparently deciding he needed more soldiers, Oñate sent for Juan de Zaldivar, his nephew and *maese de campo* (controller of stores), ordering him to proceed from the main settlement with thirty soldiers so that he might overtake and join the main expedition.³ Juan de Zaldivar proceeded from the Spanish headquarters at the pueblo of San Juan Bautista with thirty-one soldiers on the eighteenth of November, 1598.

Arriving at Ácoma on December first, Zaldivar asked for provisions in exchange for hatchets and other trade items.

³ "Trial of the Ácoma Indians, 1598," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 428.

The Ácoma promised to give the Spaniards what they had asked for, but Zaldivar believed they were delaying. So he sent six soldiers under the command of Captain Gerónimo Márquez to the pueblo to make sure the provisions were forthcoming. At that point, the Ácoma seemed very unwilling to give the Spanish the corn and tortillas they had asked for. Márquez was informed that there was no flour at hand though that was an item the Spanish much needed.

Zaldivar withdrew to a location two leagues away from the mesa where there was water, returning to the pueblo on the fourth of December. The Ácoma apparently accepted the small company of eighteen peacefully at first, accepting hatchets and other items, but then attacked without warning or provocation. The Ácoma killed Zaldivar, two captains, eight soldiers and two servants.⁴ According to Gaspar Perez de Villagr a's account, Zuta-Kapan, the main instigator of the  coma revolt, slew Zaldivar with a club.⁵ Five soldiers leaped from the mesa-top and escaped with serious injuries

⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 428-9.

⁵ Gaspar P rez de Villagr a, A History of New Mexico: Gaspar P rez de Villagr a, Alcal a - 1610, Gilberto Espinosa, ed., (Chicago: the Rio Grande Press, 1962), reprint edition, p. 197.

to give Oñate word of the attack.⁶ To add insult to injury, the Ácoma followed the escaping soldiers as they ran off, taunting them with insults, shooting at them with arrows which killed and wounded some of the horses, and threatening them with further injury if they were to come back to the pueblo.⁷

According to historian Ward Alan Minge, the inhabitants of present-day Ácoma are puzzled by this seemingly unprovoked attack.⁸ However, since they had contributed to the supplying of Oñate's company only a month before, the Ácoma were probably disinclined to further deplete their own stores.⁹ Additionally, the presence of these foreigners, with their overbearing attitudes and predilection for taking what they wanted, probably grated on the collective nerve of the Ácoma people.

But other accounts point to a Spanish instigation of

⁶ "Trial of the Ácoma Indians, 1598," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, pp. 428-9.

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 430.

⁸ Minge, Acoma, fn. 5, ch. 2 p. 207.

⁹ Jack D. Forbes, Apache, Navaho and Spaniard, The Civilization of the American Indian Series, vol. 115, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 87.

hostilities. In the investigation made by Don Francisco de Valverde by order of the viceroy in late 1601, witnesses attested that Zaldivar became too high-handed with the Ácoma.

...the maese de campo, Captain Escalante, Diego Nuñez and other men turned back [to Ácoma] to ask again for provisions, fowl, and blankets, and even to take them by force. When the Indians saw this, they began to defend themselves. This witness was told that the Spaniards had killed one or two Indians. Then the Indians killed the maese de campo and Diego Nuñez and the others with rocks and slabs of stone.¹⁰

Two Ácoma Indians, interrogated during the trial after the destruction of their pueblo, also blamed the Spanish for beginning the hostilities. One Ácoma, Xunusta, said that Zaldivar's troops killed an Indian first and that was the reason the Ácoma then turned on the Spanish. Another Ácoma, Caucachi, told the inquiry that the Spanish had wounded an Ácoma and then the other Ácoma turned on the Spanish.¹¹

¹⁰ "Investigation Made by Don Francisco de Valverde by Order of the Viceroy, Count of Monterrey, Regarding Conditions in New Mexico, July, 1601," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 649.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 466, 467.

But Oñate and the other Spaniards involved in the investigation attempted to put the blame for the attack squarely on the shoulders of the Ácoma. In his testimony, Captain Márquez stated that while on their way towards Ácoma, Zaldivar and his company treated the Indians of all the pueblos they encountered well, giving them trinkets and kind words. At Ácoma itself, the captain thought it wise to detain several Ácoma leaders to assure the prompt supplying of the provisions.¹² According to Márquez, Zaldivar

replied that all he wanted was to assure the Indians that they would not be harmed or abused in any way. He thought that in this manner, as the Indians gained confidence in us, they would furnish the provisions more willingly. So he let the chiefs go.¹³

The Spanish leadership in New Mexico knew that they would be held accountable for their actions. Any report that insinuated a Spanish origin to this episode would be frowned upon. Oñate needed to punish the Ácoma while at the same time relieving himself and his captains of responsibility for the massacre of Zaldivar. That meant blaming the Ácoma.

¹² *Ibid*, p. 431.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 431.

On December 28, 1598, in the temporary colonial headquarters at the pueblo of San Juan Bautista, Oñate initiated an investigation of the revolt and the death of his nephew and lieutenant. Oñate heard the testimony of the men who escaped from the carnage and the recommendations of Fray Martinez regarding a just war. Martinez stated that the Spanish authorities in New Mexico were justified in waging war on Ácoma for two reasons: first, to punish the Indians as transgressors of the law; second, to preserve the peace. Because Ácoma had broken the law by rebelling and killing Spaniards, the Spanish were justified in waging war and seizing their goods and persons. Further war was possible if the Ácoma were not subdued and punished.¹⁴ One of the participants in Juan de Zaldivar's ill-fated mission, Captain Márquez, stated that he was

sure that if this pueblo is not leveled and its inhabitants punished, there will be no security in all of New Mexico, nor could it be settled, as the natives of the pueblos are watching what we do at Ácoma and whether we punish them. This witness learned from the Indians themselves that if their crime is punished and they are not allowed to reoccupy the pueblo, it is certain that the whole land will be overawed and it could then be settled

¹⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 428, 451-453.

without further difficulty.¹⁵

Oñate made sure that the Ácoma and the rest of the territory would be overawed.

Oñate felt compelled to punish Ácoma for the killing of his men and for their disobedience. They had broken their word to the governor-general, rebelling against both his authority and the authority of the King, to whom they had sworn their loyalty. Therefore, Oñate directed Vicente de Zaldivar, Juan's brother, to proceed to Ácoma. Once there Vicente would request the surrender of the Ácoma and compel the Indians to leave the pueblo and make their homes in the valley. After they had done this, and returned the bodies of Juan de Zaldivar and his comrades, Vicente would burn the pueblo to the ground. Oñate further instructed Vicente not to engage in the storming of the pueblo if there was the danger of losing much of his army. Oñate realized the seriousness of his situation. If he did not punish the intransigent pueblo, the other pueblos would see this failure as a lack of strength on the part of the Spanish.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 433.

This weakness might encourage them to attack, driving the recent immigrants from New Mexico.¹⁶ A statement made during the Inquiry of Vicente de Zaldivar before the Audiencia in 1602 illustrates that the Spanish in New Mexico realized how perilously close they had come to outright warfare with the pueblos.

The victory [over the Ácoma] brought peace to this kingdom and explains why no other Indians have rebelled until now, although it was well known that the natives of the entire land were watching developments at Ácoma before rising against the Spaniards.¹⁷

Zaldivar and his company of seventy men arrived at Ácoma on January 21, 1599. Three attempts to persuade the mesa's inhabitants to surrender peaceably met with failure; the warriors answered the Spanish interpreter with arrows, spears, and stones, none of which did any harm. They also had dug pits around the base of the mesa, then covered them in order to trap the Spanish on their horses. Despite warning about these traps, some soldiers were caught. The

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 456-458.

¹⁷ "Inquiry of Vicente de Zaldivar before the Audiencia, April, 1602," in *Ibid*, p. 821.

Ácoma continued to provoke the Spanish by taunting them with insults, calling them scoundrels and whoremongers, while brandishing the swords, chain mail, and other equipment taken from the Spanish they had killed.¹⁸

The battle began on the twenty-second of January, 1599. The Ácoma had spent the previous night dancing and continuing to challenge the Spaniards waiting in the valley below the mesa. While leading their horses to water, the Spanish were set upon by a group of Ácoma waiting in a gully. The Indians killed two of the Spaniard's horses whereupon Zaldivar, seeing that the Ácoma were determined to engage his troops, "ordered his men to give battle without quarter."¹⁹

The battle began at around three in the afternoon and continued until nightfall when the Spanish besieged the mesa. The Spanish stayed awake all night, fully prepared for battle. The battle resumed early the next morning, despite attempts by Zaldivar, through his Indian interpreter Don Tomás, to persuade the Ácoma to lay down their arms.

¹⁸ "Trial of the Ácoma Indians, 1598," in *Ibid*, pp. 460-461.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 461.

The battle ended at five in the afternoon when the Ácoma, seeing that they were defeated and that their town was already partially in flames, surrendered.

After he had obtained the surrender of the pueblo, Zaldivar sought to question the chiefs as to why they had killed his brother. To facilitate this inquiry, he had the chiefs and other men placed in a *kiva*. But the Ácoma broke free of the *kivas* through the use of passages leading from the *kivas* to the houses. The Indian men then raced around the pueblo killing all the other people they could find, including the women and children. Seeing that the Ácoma meant for none of their people to be taken alive, Zaldivar resumed the battle, ordering his troops to capture all the women and children and setting fire to the rest of the pueblo. The troops captured about five hundred women, children, and old men, sending them on to Oñate who was waiting at the pueblo of Santo Domingo. The battle for the Sky City had ended.²⁰

Poet and historian Villagr a, himself a participant in the massacre, chronicled the event with many Homeric

²⁰ *Ibid*, p. 462.

embellishments. In 1610, Villagr set down the events of the Spanish colonization of New Mexico as an epic poem. Much of this epic consists of the episode at coma. According to Villagr, towards the end of the battle an elderly coma chief named Chumpo petitioned Zaldivar for surrender. Zaldivar accepted and Chumpo gave up with what was left of the population of the pueblo: women, children, and the elderly, as well as approximately seventy warriors, the whole totaling about six hundred people.²¹

But Captain Luis Gasco de Velasco, no friend of Oate, gave a different story. According to Velasco, the Indians surrendered after a short fight, but their surrender was refused by Zaldivar. Although they gave the Spanish corn, fowls, and blankets, the *sargento mayor* ordered his men to put some of the villagers in *estufas* (*kivas*) and then brought out one at a time. When these unfortunate few were brought out, they were impaled on swords and then thrown off the cliff by the soldiers. After some were hurled from the cliffs, the rest of the villagers sought refuge in the *estufas* rather than fall into the hands of the Spanish.

²¹ Villagr, History of New Mexico, p. 263.

Zaldivar had the *estufas* and dwellings torched. Many of the Ácoma were burned alive or suffocated by the smoke. All of the goods of the pueblo were burned, except those plundered by the soldiers.²² Ácoma casualties were estimated by some at between six and eight hundred dead.²³ Oñate gave the casualty figures as eight hundred dead, five hundred captured, and eighty others executed.²⁴

In a letter to the viceroy in Mexico, Oñate briefly described the attack and its aftermath.

[the Ácoma] are a people whom I have compelled to render obedience to His Majesty... [B]ecause my *maese de campo* was not as cautious as he should have been, they killed him with twelve companions in a great pueblo and fortress called Ácoma, which must contain about three thousand Indians. As punishment for its crime and its treason against his Majesty, to whom it had already rendered submission by a public instrument, and as a warning to the rest, I razed and burned it

²² "Captain Luis Gasco de Velasco to the Viceroy on Conditions in New Mexico, March 22, 1601," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 614.

²³ "The Ulloa Inspections," in *Ibid*, p. 120.

²⁴ Juan de Montoya, New Mexico in 1602: Juan de Montoya's Relation of the Discovery of New Mexico, translated by George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1938), p. 94.

completely.²⁵

The destruction of the pueblo was, however, only the first part of the Spanish sentence on the Ácoma.

Because Ácoma had sworn obedience to the King, the Spanish could try the Indians as Spanish subjects who had committed treason.²⁶ In February of 1599, Oñate presided over a hearing to determine the seriousness of the crimes committed by the Ácoma and to ascertain their guilt. Guilt was established and Oñate passed sentence, one which, to modern eyes, was particularly cruel. He sentenced all men and women over twelve years of age to twenty years of servitude. Those men over twenty-five were to have half of one foot cut off. Children under twelve and old people were declared free, but the old people were put into the care of the Indians of the province of the Querechos. Fray Alonso Martinez gained custodianship of the girls, sixty of whom he may have subsequently sent to convents in Mexico. Vicente

²⁵ "Don Juan de Oñate to the Viceroy, the Count of Monterey, March 2, 1599," in Bolton, Spanish Explorations, p. 218.

²⁶ Espinosa, The Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1696, p. 8.

de Zaldivar acquired custody of the boys.²⁷

This is the version of the events at Ácoma that was written down by the Spanish in their chronicles of the early years of the New Mexican colony and copied by most historians of the period. According to those historians, the captured Ácoma were the only survivors. This account leaves one with the impression that Ácoma, like so many other pueblos during the Spanish colonial period, had ceased to exist. Yet it presently exists and existed in 1620 (plus or minus a few years) when, according to most historians, Father Zárate-Salmerón is said to have "pacified" the pueblo.²⁸ But writers have moved directly from the massacre to Zárate-Salmerón's pacification without a blink. The question, therefore, is how could the pueblo of Ácoma have been in existence in 1620, when all of its people had reportedly been slain or enslaved and the pueblo burned to the ground in 1599.

The two questions that need to be answered are how the pueblo was repopulated and when it was repopulated. Through

²⁷ "Trial of the Ácoma Indians, 1598," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, pp. 477-478.

²⁸ White, The Ácoma Indians, p. 27.

an examination of the early documents, it is clear that the pueblo was rebuilt very shortly after the massacre. The Valverde Investigation gives evidence that the Ácoma returned to their mesa fairly early on.

[Valverde] was told that most of the slaves [from Ácoma] had run away, that they had tried to reestablish the pueblo, and that the governor neither authorized nor prevented this, but dissimulated, although this witness heard that he wanted to send someone or go himself to see the said pueblo.²⁹

It seems likely that the pueblo was being rebuilt and repopulated by 1601. Such stubbornness and resilience on the part of the Ácoma typified their reaction to their treatment at the hands of the Spanish throughout the Spanish Colonial Period. But the fact that escaping Ácoma returned to their pueblo does not account for the increase in population.

There is in addition some question about the sources of those Pueblos who repopulated Ácoma. The Valverde investigation says that the source was runaway slaves--the original Ácoma returning home. But, some historians have

²⁹ "Investigation Made by Don Francisco de Valverde," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, pp. 649-650.

maintained that upon the aged Chumpo's surrender, Zaldivar allowed him and six hundred Ácoma to settle upon the floor of the valley surrounding the mesa. It would be expected that, within several years, the Ácoma would have migrated back to the mesa-top.³⁰ By this hypothesis, Ácoma was resettled by those who had settled in the valley and not by any runaway slaves. This source for the repopulation of Ácoma is unlikely to account for the increase in population to two thousand recorded in 1630 by Fray Alonso de Benavides.³¹ But even it could account for the increase in population, the hypothesis that Zaldivar allowed the Ácoma to settle in the valley has several problems.

Only six hundred Ácoma survived the massacre if the Spanish sources are to be believed. According to Oñate and the transcripts of the trial, the entire six hundred were punished with slavery for the crimes of the pueblo. Edward Spicer contends that one group of Ácoma, consisting of about six hundred Ácoma under the leadership of Chumpo, settled in

³⁰ Gunn, Scatchen, p. 36; Sedgewick, Acoma, the Sky City, p. 84.

³¹ Mrs. Edward E. Ayer, The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630, (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1965), p. 27.

the valley below the mesa and maintained a more-or-less friendly attitude towards the Spanish. Spicer also contended that another group persisted in a hostile attitude towards the Spanish and rebuilt the pueblo on the mesa.³² Spicer's argument is highly unlikely if there were only six hundred Ácoma remaining after the battle and, as the transcripts of the trial says, they were all sentenced to slavery. None were left, it would seem, who were allowed to settle. If Spicer's argument was to be accepted, we would need evidence that there were more than six hundred survivors.

Unfortunately, the historians who subscribe to the idea that the Spanish destroyed the pueblo and allowed the remaining Ácoma to settle on the plains did not adequately cite their sources. Mary Sedgewick gave passing mention of Villagrá's history which had appeared only as an incomplete translation when she wrote her book in 1926.³³ Yet, Villagrá did not say that Vicente de Zaldivar allowed Chumpo and his band to settle on the plains. Indeed, Villagrá did

³² Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 157.

³³ Sedgewick, Acoma, the Sky City, p. 85, fn.

not even say what happened to Chumpo after his surrender.³⁴ It is possible that Sedgewick obtained this information from Ralph Emerson Twitchell's Leading Facts of New Mexican History, published in 1914, since he made the same claim and she listed this work in her bibliography. Twitchell, in turn, listed George Bancroft's History of Arizona and New Mexico in his bibliography.³⁵ Bancroft also retold this same story in his work.³⁶ But where Bancroft acquired his information is a mystery. Quite possibly he and others who have subscribed to this theory used Oñate's instructions to Vicente de Zaldívar from the transcripts of the trial of the Ácoma advising him to let the conquered people settle on the plains. But these writers jumped from that section of the transcript in which the advice was given, but then never followed because of the circumstance of the battle, to the end, where the chronology of the events and the sentence imposed on the Ácoma are given. The works of these writers

³⁴ Villagrà, History of New Mexico, pp. 265-6

³⁵ Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Leading Facts in New Mexican History, vol. 1, (Cedar Rapids: Torch Press, 1917), p. 328.

³⁶ H. H. Bancroft, History of Arizona and New Mexico, (San Francisco: the History Company, 1890), p. 145.

illustrate how errors can be perpetuated.

Gunn has even suggested that Ácoma was never destroyed. As evidence for this theory, he asserted that there is no indication of Ácoma ever having been demolished. Referring to the story that Chumpo led a following of Ácoma to the mesa floor, Gunn stated that there is also no evidence that any settlement had been made in the valley beneath the mesa. Additionally, he pointed out that the Ácoma "have no tradition of this particular fight or that the town was ever destroyed." Gunn suggests that the actual pueblo the Spanish leveled was located near Ácoma and that the Spanish mistook that pueblo for Ácoma. He points out that "within a radius of 15 to 20 miles are the ruins of several different pueblos, some of these like Ácoma and similarly located, one in particular, about 16 miles west of the pueblo.... The ruins appear as though the village had been destroyed by some other force than the slow disintegration that time produces."³⁷

Archeological evidence supports Gunn's claim that a nearby pueblo had been destroyed by fire sometime in the

³⁷ Gunn, Scatchen, p. 37.

distant past. But there is sufficient evidence to counter Gunn's claim that Ácoma itself was never destroyed. The Spanish documents consistently refer to Ácoma as the pueblo destroyed by Zaldivar. For Gunn's claim to work, the Spanish would have to have been consistently wrong in their assertion that the pueblo they destroyed was in fact Ácoma. Given the size and prominence of Ácoma at the time, this seems highly unlikely. There were also Indians who identified themselves as Ácoma at the trial. It seems unreasonable that they would identify themselves as Ácoma if they were not or that the Spanish would conspire to identify them as Ácoma if they were not. But if the Spanish sources are not to be trusted at all, there is independent evidence that Ácoma was destroyed by fire. Excavations of one pre-Spanish room at Ácoma indicated that the room had suffered burning because the remains of the roof were charred. The building in which this room was a part was located near the church, suggesting that the building had been destroyed before the construction of the church in the 1630s.³⁸ Further archeological investigation at the pueblo would help

³⁸ Ruppe, The Acoma Culture Province, p. 221, 215.

to determine whether or not more of the pueblo was destroyed by fire, thus providing more physical support to the hypothesis that the pueblo of Ácoma was destroyed by Zaldivar and not simply one room. But even without that further physical evidence, there is good evidence, especially from the Spanish themselves, the Vicente de Zaldivar did destroy Ácoma.

The question still remains of how the population of Ácoma could have reached two thousand by the year 1630. The Spanish could have been mistaken in their estimates of the population of the pueblo. The early documents state that between six and eight hundred Indians died on the mesa and that the Spanish captured between five and six hundred. Therefore, prior to the massacre, Ácoma had a population of between eleven and fourteen hundred. This figure is a far cry from Oñate's estimate of three thousand. That estimate appears exaggerated because a number of other estimates at the time of the massacre put the population at between twelve hundred and two thousand.³⁹ The documents account for a maximum of only fourteen hundred. So if the estimates

³⁹ Rands, "Ácoma Land Utilization," p. 171.

of fourteen hundred are accurate, perhaps four to six hundred people are unaccounted for. Possibly, many of the Ácoma escaped from the carnage through flight, or escaped because they were working in the fields, twelve miles from the pueblo. These Ácoma, combined with those who escaped from servitude, could have constituted a sufficient number to resettle Ácoma, but not enough to reach the numbers recorded in 1630.

Yet another discrepancy in the Spanish colonial record exists. The transcript of the Ácoma trial stated that the defendants were found guilty and sentenced and that the sentence was carried out as ordered. However, three years later, Captain Velasco stated that of the six hundred captives, only twenty-four had half a foot cut off rather than all the men over twenty-five years of age. There is some evidence that the trial transcripts cannot be presumed to be accurate on their face. For instance, according to the transcripts, all those over twelve years of age were put into servitude. Velasco's version of the events does agree with the trial transcripts that all those Ácoma over twenty years of age were taken away as servants. But those under the age of twenty were only put under surveillance for

twenty years.⁴⁰ Of those six hundred Ácoma prisoners, the documents do not state exactly how many had reached twenty years of age. The difference in numbers between the group of only those under twelve and the group including thirteen to twenty-year-olds could have been substantial. So here is another source of Ácoma to resettle the mesa. These youths could have returned to the mesa in the absence of their parents.

On the other hand, it is possible that after their years of servitude came to an end, the Ácoma people regrouped at their former home and rebuilt the village. Yet this explanation seems unlikely. Undoubtedly many died during their years of servitude. The youngest among them would have been thirty-two, hardly a young age during the seventeenth century, and so it seems unlikely that enough who were in servitude would have survived to make a significant contribution in repopulating the mesa.

This explanation also fails by itself to take into account the population estimate of two thousand given by Fray Alonso de Benavides in 1630. From a base population of

⁴⁰ "Captain Velasco to the Viceroy, March 22, 1601," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 615.

no more than six hundred, the Ácoma could not have repopulated their village to its pre-massacre numbers in a matter of ten years solely with their own people.

The most likely hypothesis for the increase in population is that the population of Ácoma returned to its former strength through four different sources; 1) escaped slaves; 2) Ácoma who escaped the massacre and were never captured; 3) the youth who were never enslaved; 4) and an influx of refugees from other pueblos. Unhappy with the conditions imposed on them by the Spanish, many residents of the pueblos along the Rio Grande, within close proximity of the Spanish headquarters, moved to Ácoma and the Zuñi pueblos, out of range of the Spanish reach. The Spanish imposed heavy tribute on the Rio Grande pueblos, the tribute sometimes being collected with force, which caused much suffering in the region.⁴¹ They also began to suppress traditional pueblo religious practices, notably the *Kachina* ceremonies.⁴² Even punishment that would seem minor to

⁴¹ "Valverde Investigation," in *Ibid*, p. 630, 650-651, 653.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 637; Dozier, Pueblo Indians of North America, p. 114.

later peoples caused the Indians of the Rio Grande pueblos to escape to Ácoma. In the orders to the new *Custodio* of New Mexico, Fray Esteban de Perea, the Spanish authorities in New Spain noted that to escape the punishment of having one's hair cut, the Indians fled to Ácoma, where the traditional religion was still practiced.⁴³ To escape these depredations, many Indians from the Rio Grande moved. The prelate of New Mexico, Fray Isidro Ordóñez, heard on September 11, 1613, that the inhabitants of Zia had abandoned their own pueblo and removed to Ácoma, which was characterized as the "pueblo of the infidels." Despite their defeat at the hands of Vicente de Zaldivar, the Ácoma continued to resist Spanish rule and encouraged other pueblos to resist as well.⁴⁴

The sixteenth century was one for the exploration and conquest of New Mexico for the Spanish. For the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico, especially the Ácoma, it was a

⁴³ The Royal Order of 1620: To Custodio Fray Esteban de Perea," translated by Lansing B. Bloom, New Mexico Historical Review, 5:3(July, 1930):288-298, p. 297.

⁴⁴ Joseph P. Sanchez, Pueblos, Plains and Province: The New Mexico Frontier, 1598-1692, unpublished manuscript, p. 42.

century of pain and suffering. The attitudes and actions of the Spanish during the period typified the Spanish conquistador spirit and illustrated the Indian policies developed during that century. The use of the Act of Obedience and Vassalage, as the Requirement was called at this time, and the waging of a just war against the Ácoma illustrate the continuation of a policy developed during the first century of the Spanish presence in the Western Hemisphere. The Spanish in New Mexico continued to use proven policies throughout the next century of the occupation of their new territory.

Chapter 7

Spanish Colonial Indian Policy, 1598-1680:

Forcing Acculturation, Resisting Change

When the flurry of activity following Don Juan de Oñate's conquest of New Mexico settled down, the Spanish colonial government introduced the standard Spanish policy developed in New Spain during the previous hundred years. The *Adelantado* (captain-general) had already achieved the formal obedience of the Pueblo Indians through the reading of the Requirement. He had also suppressed the first attempted rebellion by the Ácoma against Spanish authority, thus lessening the likelihood of other uprisings. As in their settlements to the south and in the Caribbean, the Spanish in New Mexico sought to transform the inhabitants of this new region into productive members of the Spanish Empire.

The Pueblo Indians seemed ideally situated for such a conversion. The small, compact communities meant that the Spanish would not have to gather and settle the Indians. This arrangement also provided ready-made mission sites for

the Franciscan friars. All they would have to do would be to construct their mission buildings and start gathering souls. The Pueblos also provided a convenient source of labor for the *encomenderos*. Additionally, since most pueblos lay along the course of the Rio Grande, close to where the Spanish had first settled at San Juan Bautista and later built their town of Santa Fe, the Indians would come in frequent contact with the Spanish. Such intimate and continual contact would help push them toward adopting the traits of Spanish civilization. With high hopes and a method for conversion, the Spanish set about their task.

Yet, for all their previous experiences in Old Mexico and the Caribbean, and despite a coherent, fully-developed program of conversion, the Spanish policy failed in New Mexico. Harsh reprisals for failure to act according to Spanish dictates and the collections of tribute provoked the Pueblo Indians to action numerous times during the first century of the Spanish colonial enterprise in New Mexico. These actions came to a head with the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the driving of the Spanish from their northern colony.

Ácoma, for its part, felt the hand of Spanish policy and its failings in New Mexico. The Spanish governor gave

the inhabitants of Ácoma in *encomienda* while Franciscan friars established a mission at the pueblo, thus beginning implementation of two institutions of the policy. Although the pueblo lay seventy miles from the hub of Spanish activity, thus receiving less attention than the Eastern Pueblos, Ácoma found Spanish demands intolerable and participated in Pueblo hostility towards the Spanish throughout the first century of colonization.

Don Juan de Oñate had been politically scarred by his treatment of the Ácoma. Some of his own followers considered the punishment of the Ácoma to be too severe and their enslavement unjust.¹ The *Adelantado's* resignation was accepted on February 27, 1608,² and in 1614, Oñate was convicted of being too harsh in his reprisals towards Ácoma.³

Juan Martínez de Montoya was appointed the new governor

¹ "Investigation Made by Don Francisco de Valverde by Order of the Viceroy, Count of Monterrey, Regarding Conditions in New Mexico, July, 1601," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 650.

² "Oñate's Resignation Accepted, " in *Ibid*, pp. 1048-1049.

³ "Conviction of Oñate and His Captains," in *Ibid*, p. 1111.

the same day Oñate resigned.⁴ But Montoya's administration did not last long. On March 30, 1609, by order of the viceroy, Martín López de Guana, Don Pedro de Peralta replaced Montoya as governor of New Mexico.⁵ Peralta's instructions contain much that pertains to the treatment and conversion of the Indians of New Mexico. However, only a few months earlier, Spain had all but given up on that province. Citing the difficulties in settling the territory and the "scanty harvest of Indian souls," the king ordered viceroy Celasco to abandon the colony, in a royal cedula dated September 13, 1608.⁶ Spanish authorities had already debated the wisdom of keeping a colony so far from the main area of colonization.⁷ But the king changed his mind when

⁴ "Appointment of Juan Martinez de Montoya as Governor," in *Ibid*, pp. 1051-1053.

⁵ "Appointment of Don Pedro de Peralta as Governor of New Mexico," in *Ibid*, p. 1084.

⁶ "The King to Viceroy Velasco," in *Ibid*, p. 1065.

⁷ Numerous letters, for example, "Opinion of the Audiencia of Mexico as to the Continuation of the Conquest and Discovery of New Mexico," pp. 895-896; "The King to the Viceroy, June 17, 1606," pp. 1036-1038; "The Council of the Indies to the King Concerning the Desirability of Stopping the Discovery of New Mexico, July 2, 1608," pp. 1061-1064, in *Ibid*.

informed by members of the clergy and the Audiencia that the Indians wished the conversions to continue. Abandonment of the colony would leave the numerous converted Indians to the mercies of the heathens.⁸ Thus the entire basis for the continuation of the colony became the conversion of the Indians and the saving of those already converted.

Since the main objective of the colony at the start was to indoctrinate the Indians, the Spanish began the process of assigning spiritual guides to the neophytes almost immediately upon arrival in New Mexico. On September 9, 1598, Fray Alonso Martinez made the first mission assignments in New Mexico to his fellow padres. Fray Andres Corchado received the mission territory of Zia, Hopi, Zuñi, and Ácoma. Corchado may have visited his assigned mission area in the Autumn of 1598, but no record of his activities remains. He may have died prior to March of 1601.⁹

Some modern writers have stated that Father Geronimo de

⁸ "Royal Cedula of November 1, 1609," in *Ibid*, pp. 1104-1105.

⁹ France V. Scholes and Lansing B. Bloom, "Friar Personnel, and Mission Chronology, 1598-1629" New Mexico Historical Review, 19(4):319-336, 20(1):58-82, pp. 327-328.

Zárate-Salmerón "pacified" the pueblo around 1620 and may have even worked there as a missionary during the period 1623-1626.¹⁰ In his "Relación" the father mentioned Ácoma, but did not state that he had resided there as its priest or had even visited the pueblo.¹¹ What evidence these writers used for their assumptions is unclear, and thus their assumptions are suspect. It seems that for at least the first twenty years of the Spanish presence in New Mexico, and quite possibly for the first thirty years, the Franciscans left Ácoma alone.

In 1629, Ácoma received a full-time priest in the person of Fray Juan Ramirez. It is unclear how long Fray Ramirez stayed at Ácoma, but tradition has it that he stayed there for a long time, possibly leaving in the 1640s.¹² The

¹⁰ Minge, Ácoma, p. 93.

¹¹ Zárate-Salmerón, "Relacion," p. 182.

¹² Minge, Acoma, p. 20; Robinson, "Tree Ring Studies of the Pueblo de Acoma," p. 101; Sedgewick, Acoma, the Sky City, p. 104; Forrest, Earle R., Missions and Pueblos of the Old Southwest, (Cleveland: the Arthur H. Clarke Co., 1929), pp. 162, 164. Fray Alonso de Benavides stated in his "Memorial of 1634," that Ramirez saved the life of a child, who had been bewitched by a sorcerer. He persuaded the mother to let him baptize the child so that "she might enjoy paradise." "Scarcely had she received the waters of holy baptism

period of Ramirez's tenure at the pueblo or shortly after its end (depending on when Ramirez left) was marked by a building boom. Fred Eggan, the noted anthropologist, called this era the "seventeenth-century HUD project," such was the scope of the building.¹³

The major construction within the pueblo was the building of the mission church of San Esteban Rey (Saint Stephen the King). Ácoma lore maintains that the labor used by Ramirez to build the church was forced, as it probably was. The beams for the roof were brought the forty miles from Mount Taylor, carried by Ácoma men, without letting the wood touch the ground.¹⁴ While the precise date of the construction of the cemetery (called the campo santo) outside the church is unknown, it may have been constructed

when she became well and healthy...This incident confirmed all those Indians of the truth of holy baptism, which they now believed and which was being preached to them." F. W. Hodge, George Hammond, and Agapito Rey, eds., Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised Memorial of 1634, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, vol. 4, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1945), pp. 72-73.

¹³ Conversation with Dr. Curtis Schaafsma, Museum of New Mexico, May 12, 1995.

¹⁴ Tour of Ácoma Pueblo, by Enrico, May 6, 1995; Roberts, In Search of the Old Ones, pp. 90-91.

shortly after the completion of the church.

The stone retaining wall surrounding the cemetery measures thirty-five meters long on the east side and nine meters in height. This area was filled with dirt and rubble, necessarily brought up to the top of the mesa by hand. Restoration of the campo santo wall, conducted in 1975, involved 2,400 hours of labor.¹⁵ The amount of labor required to build the original, without the use of power tools or easy access to the mesa-top, would be hard to imagine.

When the church and convent associated with it were completed, the Ácoma turned to their own houses. Archeological investigations conducted in the mid-1980s, prior to a recent Department of Housing and Urban Development project, found that a great many of the older homes of the pueblo were constructed during a short period of time. From 1646 through 1650, give or take a few years, the Ácoma rebuilt their pueblo.¹⁶ Much of this new

¹⁵ Michael Marshall, "Acoma Pueblo: An Archeological Evaluation," unpublished manuscript in the Museum of New Mexico, dated October, 1979, p. 24.

¹⁶ William J. Robinson, "Tree-Ring Studies of the Pueblo de Acoma: A Preliminary Report," Laboratory of Tree-

construction used a technology new to the pueblos--adobe block.¹⁷ These blocks were of a different variety than those in use today at the pueblo. Archeologists can tell at a glance when a particular building was constructed because of the type of adobe block used. Seventeenth century adobe blocks were long, wide, and thin as opposed to the shorter, thicker bricks used later.¹⁸ By the beginning of the second half of the seventeenth century, the reconstruction of Ácoma was complete.

Ramirez's arrival and stay at Ácoma began a long relationship between the Ácoma and the Spanish missionaries. Little is known about the history of the pueblo and its missionaries between the arrival of Ramirez and the construction of the church, on the one hand, and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, on the other. The records of the period have been lost due, more than likely, to the Revolt. What

Ring Research, The University of Arizona, unpublished manuscript, 1987. Reports of tree-ring samples taken from the *vigas* of a survey of homes and the dates of the samples are located at the end of Robinson's work. These pages are un-numbered; Robinson, "Tree-Ring Studies," in Historical Archeology, table 2, p. 103.

¹⁷ Minge, Acoma, p. 20.

¹⁸ Conversation with Dr. Curtis Schaafsma, May 12, 1995.

happened at Ácoma is therefore shrouded in mist, but was probably very much like the general situation of all the New Mexican pueblos during the seventeenth century.

This period was one of intense activity on the part of the Spanish and especially on the part of the missionaries. It was also a period of pain for the pueblo Indians. Much of this pain stemmed from the activities of the missionaries and their role in the colonization of New Mexico.

The missionaries, such as Fray Ramirez, established themselves at a pueblo and, almost immediately upon arrival, attempted to convert their charges. To indoctrinate the Pueblos, the missionaries conducted classes in Catholicism, teaching the gospel and leading prayer. The conversion to Catholicism also included baptism, usually the first taste of Christianity the natives had. But the missionaries also tried to transform the natives through negative examples. The Franciscans attempted to suppress native beliefs, substituting Catholicism, through the destruction of *kivas*, banning *Kachina* dances and masks, and punishing those who persisted in following the traditional religion.¹⁹

¹⁹ Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 50; Weber, The Spanish Frontier, p. 114.

In addition to Christianity, the missionaries attempted to teach the Indians the more basic elements of Spanish civilization. As Herbert Bolton stated, "discipline and the elements of European civilization were imparted at the missions through religious instruction, through industrial training, and, among more advanced natives, by means of rudimentary teaching in arts and letters."²⁰ Not only did the Franciscans hope to convert the natives to Catholicism, but convert their entire way of life to one comparable to the Spanish.

One industry taught by the missionaries, the most important in the long run for the Pueblos, was Spanish agriculture. Agricultural teaching was a part of the conversion program; it was a method through which the priests were able to interact with the Indians. The Franciscans, by teaching Spanish agriculture to the Pueblos, sought to Europeanize them.

The Pueblos received crop seeds, tools and livestock as gifts from the missionaries in their attempts to persuade the Indians of the benefits of becoming Christians and good

²⁰ Bolton, "The Mission," p. 55.

Spanish citizens. The Franciscans used demonstration as a teaching method throughout all the Pueblos. The missionaries also instructed the Pueblos in the use of the tools they introduced and the care of the introduced livestock species.²¹ Through demonstration projects the missionaries and their assistants imparted their knowledge of Spanish agriculture to the Indians.²²

Many of the materials used by the Franciscans in their missions in New Mexico had to be obtained from the Spanish colonies in central Mexico. In order to transport these materials to New Mexico, the Spanish Crown inaugurated a supply service in 1609. This service sent caravans of goods from Mexico to the New Mexican missions once every three years. The reality of the situation meant that the missions did not receive supplies very regularly. A list of the supplies the missionaries were supposed to receive, drawn up by Minister-Provincial Fray Francisco de Velasco, contained a wide variety of goods, ranging from those necessary for the conduct of religious services to new clothes for the

²¹ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 217.

²² Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, pp. 326-327.

priests. The list contained many agricultural items as well, including three adzes, and ten hoes, one mule, ten heifers and ten sheep for each friar.²³ The friars used these tools and crops to demonstrate to the Indians how to farm in the Spanish style. But they also insured the provision of their own table by allotting plots of Pueblo land to support themselves. So in teaching the Indians agriculture, they nicely provided for themselves in the process.²⁴

While the Spanish Crown held title to the New Mexico province and the governor administered in the name of the king, the local governments of the pueblos rested in the hands of the Indians themselves. When a friar established a mission, thereby bringing the pueblo within the fold of Spanish authority, the governor of New Mexico organized the pueblo into a self-governing political body based on the Spanish model and appointed officers from the natives.²⁵

²³ France V. Scholes, "The Supply Service of the New Mexican Missions in the Seventeenth Century," New Mexico Historical Review, 5(1):93-115, 5(2):186-210, 5(4):386-404, pp. 93-96, 100-105.

²⁴ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 217.

²⁵ Bolton, "The Mission," p. 60.

The establishment of a Spanish governmental organization was to assist in administration and conversion. Officers included a governor, lieutenant governor, sheriff, *sacristan*, *mayordomo*, and *fiscales*, or church wardens.²⁶ The Indians continued to elect their own officials, and neither the missionaries nor the *encomenderos* could intrude in the election of these officials or countermand the prerogative of the Pueblos to live under their own governmental body.²⁷

This is not to say that some Spaniards did not try to influence the Pueblo governments through pressure on their leaders. In a petition to the king, Fray Alonso de Benavides, *custodio* of New Mexico from 1623 to 1629, asked that the governors be forbidden from deposing a pueblo chief or governor since "the Indians greatly resent seeing their

²⁶ Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 189; Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 187. The *sacristan* aided the priests, the *mayordomo* or ditch boss, supervised the irrigation system, and the *fiscales* maintained discipline within the church.

²⁷ H. Allen Anderson, "The Encomienda in New Mexico, 1598-1680," New Mexico Historical Review, 60(4):362.

leaders and chieftains mistreated."²⁸

At the same time the local pueblo government based on the Spanish model was established, the colonial government gave title to a four-league tract of land around each pueblo.²⁹ In many areas, *encomenderos* ignored the law prohibiting them from living within this area owned by the Indians.³⁰ Since most colonists lived within a fifty to eighty mile radius around Santa Fe, most of the Spanish depredations occurred within this limited area.³¹ Ácoma, located over seventy miles from the center of Spanish influence, did not suffer the same encroachment on their lands.

With determination, zeal, and an irregular supply of materials, the Franciscan friars hoped to accomplish their lofty goals. These goals were to Christianize the Indians,

²⁸ Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, Benavides' Revised Memorial, pp. 2, 4, 172. The chief clergyman of the Custody of New Mexico was called the *custodio*.

²⁹ Bolton, "The Mission," p. 60; one league equals approximately 2.6 miles.

³⁰ Anderson, "The Encomienda," p. 362.

³¹ Espinosa, The Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 11, 28; Hall, Social Change, pp. 96-97.

change the governmental structure of the pueblo to conform to the Spanish model, and teach the pueblo Indians the rudiments of Spanish civilization. Essentially, the Franciscans sought to change the very nature of pueblo Indian culture. But their charges sometimes had other ideas.

If the neophytes became intransigent, the missionaries did not hesitate to punish them. Individual punishment meted out by the missionaries attempted to eradicate native religious beliefs. Some of the penalties included whippings and beatings.³² A decree of 1621 illustrated one example of punishment inflicted on the Indians while, at the same time, forbidding it.

And since it has been understood that, in some cases in which you have proceeded, you and your Religious, against the Indians for errors and light faults, you have had their hair sheared, a punishment from which they suffer very great affliction because it is for them the greatest affront that there is...³³

³² Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 324; Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 50.

³³ Paraphrased in Scholes, "Church and State in New Mexico," p. 155; Bloom, ed., "The Royal Order of 1620," p. 297.

The friars were not the only agency to carry out the conversion of the Pueblos to Hispanic life and Christianity. As in the earlier colonies in the Caribbean and Old Mexico, the governors of New Mexico were allowed to reward their followers with grants of land and Indians in *encomienda*. Oñate was given permission to grant *encomiendas*, although no record remains of how many he granted, nor their locations. Peralta was also instructed by the Audiencia

to grant Indians in *encomienda*, as many as he thinks are suitable, to persons who have served and who are living in the province, provided they do not interfere with those granted by Oñate, since those must be preserved.

The *encomiendas* granted by the governor were to hold until the king had been informed as to their dispositions and agreed with the suitability of the grants.³⁴ Spanish governors granted thirty-two *encomiendas* during the seventeenth century. In 1662, Gomez Robledo held title to all of Pecos, except for twenty-four houses that were held

³⁴ "Peralta's Instructions," in Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 1088.

by another *encomendero*, one-half of Shongopovi, parts of Taos, and one-half of Ácoma, with the exception of twenty houses.³⁵

But the *encomenderos* sometimes took advantage of their situation as the instructions to Peralta illustrate.

Inasmuch as it had been reported that the tribute levied on the natives is excessive, and that it is collected with much vexation and trouble to them, we charge the governor to take suitable measures in this matter, proceeding in such a way as to relieve and satisfy the royal conscience.³⁶

The instructions probably also include other Spanish than just the *encomenderos*, such as the provincial government, but the *encomenderos* were known for infringing on Indian liberties.

Oftentimes, the goals of the missionaries clashed with those of the Spanish settlers and governors. Each saw the land and its inhabitants in a different light. The missionaries looked upon the Indians as children to be taught. The colonists, on the other hand, saw the Indians

³⁵ Weber, The Spanish Frontier, p. 124.

³⁶ "Peralta's Instructions," Hammond and Rey, Don Juan de Oñate, p. 1089.

as field laborers or household servants. Sometimes the land itself proved to be more important in the settlers' minds than the labor to till it.³⁷

Because the colonists needed both land and labor, many yielded to the temptation of exploiting the Indians to work their fields, some of which the Spanish appropriated from the Indians themselves.³⁸ In the early years of the colony, the Spanish had a very small population, only 750 in 1630 and 1500 in 1697.³⁹ They thus needed the Indians to labor for them. Land was plentiful, but because of the arid environment, most of it could not then be farmed and the Spanish coveted Pueblo land because it was both arable and close to water.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Governor Thomas Velez Cachupin remarked that the province of New Mexico was the

³⁷ For an in-depth analysis of the conflict between the clergy and the government in seventeenth century New Mexico, see the articles by France V. Scholes, "Church and State in New Mexico," and "Troublous Times in New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, 12(2):134-174, 12(4):380-452, 13(1):63-84, 15(3):249-268, 15(4):369-417, 16(1):15-40, 16(2):184-205, 16(3):313-327.

³⁸ Scholes, "Church and State," p. 165.

³⁹ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 11, 58; Anderson, "The Encomienda," p. 176.

most fertile in all of New Spain. However, the Spanish did not own the richest soil. The Pueblo Indians did.⁴⁰

These Pueblo towns are located on the most fertile and richest soil of New Mexico with much land for cultivation and raising of all types of livestock. And the lands that each possessed before the Spaniards knew about them have not been altered.⁴¹

At times, the Spanish settlers attempted to wrest control of land away from the Indians by making secret grants. Benavides petitioned the crown to force the governors to issue these grants in public, with warning to the Indians who owned the land adjacent to the grant.

These grants are made in secret so that when the poor Indians want to return to their lands the Spaniards are already in possession of them, and from there they expand and add to their lands more than was given them. They force the Indians, by evil treatment and by losses to their cattle, to abandon their lands and to leave their possessions to the Spaniards.⁴²

⁴⁰ Marc Simmons, "New Mexico's Colonial Agriculture," Palacio, 89(1):6.

⁴¹ Robert Ryal Miller, ed. and trans., "New Mexico in Mid-Eighteenth Century: A Report Based on Governor Velez Capuchin's Inspection," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, 1975/76, 79(2):175.

⁴² Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, Benavides Revised Memorial, p. 72.

Inevitably, conflicts arose between the clergy and the Spanish colonists. In their efforts to alleviate the problems caused by the two opposing factions, the Crown dispensed a large amount of confusing and conflicting legislation, ostensibly designed to protect the natives. The result reduced the Indians to the "status of [a] permanent legal minority."⁴³

Because of the conflicts between the clergy and the secular government in New Mexico, the viceroy in Mexico issued a series of decrees advising each party to keep to its own sphere of work and not to interfere in the affairs of the other. The priests had complained that secular officials had attempted to influence the outcome of those elections of native officials. Thus, neither the clergy nor members of the provincial government could remain in pueblos during election days. The Spanish were forbidden to graze their flocks within three leagues of pueblos to avoid the destruction of pueblo crops while the missionaries were forbidden to interfere in the collection of tribute from

⁴³ Scholes, "Church and State," p. 20.

those pueblos already subject to payment of tribute.⁴⁴

The colonists had levied tribute from the Pueblos since the first days of their arrival in New Mexico. At first, the collections insured the survival of the colony. Oñate distributed the articles taken from the Indians to the colonists. Food comprised most of the tribute taken from the Indians; the Spanish collected five to six thousand *fanegas* of maize and beans as well as meat.⁴⁵

The collecting of tribute continued throughout the Spanish period. Early in the colonial era, certain clergymen fought to curtail the gathering of tribute from certain segments of the Indian population. Benavides was one of the foremost among these reform-minded clerics. In a letter to the king, Benavides stated some of the problems with the system and solutions to those problems:

It is requested that all the *caciques*, chief captains, governors, alcaldes, and fiscales of the churches, on account of the big tasks they perform for the republic and the service of your Majesty, be exempt from tribute and personal service while they hold their offices. They are so busy in

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 154-155.

⁴⁵ Anderson, "The Encomienda," p. 357; a *fanega* is a grain measurement equal to 55.5 liters or 1.57 U.S. bushels.

their offices that even their fields are cared for by others, as they are unable to do it themselves. The native lords and chieftains resent very much that they are compelled to pay tribute.⁴⁶

Benavides also asked the King to advise the governors that newly converted Indians not be asked for tribute or to render personal service for ten years after that tribe had been baptized.⁴⁷ He stated:

...the main and general answer given to us by those pagans for not becoming Christians is that when they do become Christians they are at once compelled to pay tribute and render personal service.⁴⁸

The collection of tribute was only one factor in the continuing hostilities between the Pueblos and the Spanish. The missionaries sought to extinguish Pueblo culture and replace it with their own through the imposition of Catholicism, Spanish governmental structures, and Spanish ways of life. The *encomenderos*, while charged with bringing Spanish culture to the Pueblos, sometimes forsook their

⁴⁶ Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, Benavides Revised Memorial, p. 170.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 176.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, p. 176.

duties for their own gain. The Spanish colonial government in New Mexico, like the Spanish Crown a century earlier, found itself caught in the middle between the missionaries, who sought to convert the natives, and the settlers, who would exploit them. For their part, the Pueblos found the whole situation intolerable.

The Pueblos revolted several times throughout the seventeenth century. The Ácoma themselves revolted in 1629 and in 1645. They came close to rebellion again in 1650. The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 forced the Spanish out of New Mexico for 12 years.⁴⁹ The Spanish could not regain at least titular control of Ácoma until 1699 when New Mexican Governor Cubero was finally able to perform the Act of Obedience.⁵⁰

The Pueblos had revolted under the repressive yoke of Spanish colonial rule which, despite the assurances of the New Laws and Ordinances of 1543, and many subsequent laws, treated the Pueblos with little respect. The well-meaning Franciscans share in the blame for stirring unrest. Their

⁴⁹ Gunn, Scatchen, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁰ Minge, Acoma, p. 32.

role as strict disciplinarians, often using corporal punishment to chastise errant Indians, did little to endear them to their wards.⁵¹ In the 1650s, one Franciscan missionary among the Hopi was convicted of applying hot turpentine to an Indian accused of idolatry. The Hopi died, and the court removed the missionary from his office.⁵²

Since the beginning of missionary activity, Pueblo religious leaders had been at odds with the Franciscans for their opposition to traditional religious authority and ceremonies.⁵³ Franciscans were "horrified" by Kachina masks and smashed them at every opportunity, thus causing native religious leaders much anguish.⁵⁴

As has already been mentioned, excessive tribute was another factor in the hostilities the Pueblos had for the Spaniards.⁵⁵ For close to one hundred years, the Spanish had forced the Indians to give them food and other items.

⁵¹ Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, pp. 54-55; Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 326.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 325.

⁵³ Minge, Acoma, p. 23.

⁵⁴ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 326.

⁵⁵ Anderson, "The Encomienda," p. 372.

But circumstances aggravated an already frustrating situation for the Indians. In the late seventeenth century, just prior to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, New Mexico experienced several years of intense drought that caused many hardships to the Indians.⁵⁶ Not only did they have to feed themselves from a land in the throes of a severe drought, but they had almost three thousand free-loading Spanish living near them who wanted their food as well.

The continuing Church-State dispute was also a major factor in the Revolt. Constant bickering between governors and missionaries emboldened the Pueblos to kill friars, as in the case of Taos Indians in the 1640s. The feud caused the Spanish population to divide into two factions, thus presenting a splendid opportunity for the Pueblo Indians to force their unwanted guests out of their territory.⁵⁷

A Tewan named Popé fomented and led the rebellion from Taos, where he had taken refuge after prosecution by the Spanish authorities for various crimes, including

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 369; Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 31.

⁵⁷ Anderson, "The Encomienda," p. 372; Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 29-32; Hall, Social Change, pp. 86-88.

witchcraft. Popé's plan called for a concerted effort by all of the pueblos to drive the Spanish from New Mexico on the eighteenth of August, 1680. The Spanish discovered the plot on the ninth, whereby the Pueblos immediately set about their task of destroying or driving out the Spanish.⁵⁸ The Spanish had a population of approximately twenty-nine hundred, mostly living along the course of the Rio Grande, whereas the Pueblo war chiefs commanded around six thousand warriors, many of whom were excellent horsemen. In addition, thirty-three Franciscan friars lived at missions in the pueblos, including Ácoma.⁵⁹

At Ácoma, when the inhabitants learned that the rebellion had begun and that the Pueblos were killing missionaries, they seized their own friars, as well as an old mestizo (mixed blood) woman. The Ácoma stripped these three of their clothing and dragged them around the pueblo by a rope, beating them all the while. Eventually, the Ácoma took them to the convent, stoned them to death,

⁵⁸ Fray Silvestre Velez de Escalante, letter written April 2, 1778, anonymous translator, Land of Sunshine, 12(1900):247-250, 309-314, p. 249; Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 33-34.

⁵⁹ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 33.

pierced them with lances, and then threw their bodies in a deep pit.⁶⁰ This was the only part the Ácoma could play in the Revolt since they were so far from the other pueblos and from the majority of Spanish colonists.⁶¹ That the Ácoma killed their missionaries after humiliating and torturing them, then defiled their bodies, dramatically illustrates the anger towards the Spanish that had built up over the years since at least 1599.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 35-36.

⁶¹ Minge, *Acoma*, p. 24.

The Spanish Return

The Pueblo Revolt forced the Spanish out of New Mexico for twelve years, but they eventually returned to reclaim their northern province. Diego de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon, then governor of New Mexico, organized and carried out the Reconquest and Recolonization of New Mexico in 1692. In that year, de Vargas succeeded in persuading twenty-three pueblos to rejoin Spain's empire. By 1694, the settlers had reoccupied Santa Fe after a quickly-crushed attempt by the Tewa and Tano to rebel and drive the Spanish once more from the area.¹ But de Vargas's problems with rebellion were not yet over. Pueblo-Spanish hostilities continued through the early eighteenth century. Ácoma played a greater role in this period of unrest than during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

Between 1680 and 1692, the Pueblos ruled New Mexico without the interference of the Spanish. It seemed to be a

¹ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 39, 44, 43.

return to the old days before the Spanish arrived. But the cooperation that the Pueblos shared during the Pueblo Revolt did not last. Within a short time, pan-Pueblo solidarity broke down into factionalism and civil strife.

After the Pueblos forced the Spanish from New Mexico, the victors went on a rampage of destruction. Spanish houses were looted and destroyed. Livestock was taken and added to native herds. Churches were burned, the ornaments and sacred relics taken and defiled. The Pueblo leadership also sought to undo all the cultural changes that the Spanish had attempted to force on the Pueblos. Couples who had been joined in Christian marriages were ordered to dissolve those ties and take whomever they wished as their spouses. The Spanish language was no longer to be used. Traditional ceremonies were restored and Christian ceremonies cast off. In short order, the Pueblos tried to return to traditional ways, as if the Spanish had never been in New Mexico.²

But the pre-Spanish political structure of New Mexico consisted of autonomous pueblos. The pueblos had banded

² *Ibid*, p. 36.

together in a joint effort to expel the Spanish during the Revolt, but tradition dies hard. The traditionally autonomous nature of Pueblo politics, together with the domineering nature of Popé's rule, split the pueblos into warring factions. The Keres pueblos of Zia, Cochiti, Santa Ana, San Felipe, and Santo Domingo joined with Jémez, Taos, and Pecos to fight the Tewas, Tanos, and Picurís. They dethroned Popé and elected don Luis Tupatú to take his place. Tupatú governed the Tewas and Tanos until 1688 when Popé was reelected. Popé ruled until his death and then Tupatú was reinstalled. The leader of the Keres pueblos, Catiti, died during Tupatú's second reign and the pueblos reverted to autonomous rule.³ At Ácoma, factionalism split the pueblo itself. One group remained on the peñol while another moved several miles away. The factions battled each other,⁴ which ultimately may have led to the foundation of Laguna Pueblo, located several miles to the east of Ácoma.

Governor Antonio de Otermín led an attempt to reconquer the rebellious pueblos in 1681-2. This expedition managed

³ *Ibid*, p. 38.

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 38.

to retake Isleta pueblo, but could not make any headway to the north. After burning ten abandoned pueblos to the south of Cochiti, Otermín returned to the capital of Spanish New Mexico in exile of El Paso.⁵ The governor of New Mexico in exile from 1686 to 1689, Pedro Reneros de Posada, also led an expedition north. In 1688, Reneros got as far as Zia, raided Santa Ana, but had little success. Twice governor Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate (1683-1686 and 1689-1691) launched an attempt at reconquest in 1689. This expedition resulted in the bloodiest battle of the initial, unsuccessful attempts to subdue the Pueblos. At Zia, Petriz and his forces staged a battle with the native defenders in which many of the inhabitants were killed, four leaders executed in the square, and seventy other Zia captured and taken back to El Paso in the custody of the governor. Despite the bloody nature of this expedition, it failed to achieve any lasting impact. New Mexico was still firmly in the hands of its native population.⁶ Two other expeditions for the recovery of New Mexico were proposed before 1691.

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 37; Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 60.

⁶ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 37; Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 60.

However, neither the expedition of Captain Toribio de la Huerta nor a second attempt by Cruzate developed.⁷ The Spanish reconquest of New Mexico would have to wait until the appearance of the next governor of New Mexico--Diego de Vargas Zapata Lujan Ponce de Leon.

De Vargas came from a prominent and influential family in Spain. Appointed governor and captain-general of New Mexico in mid-1688, he assumed the position in February of 1691. Although his original intention was to immediately undertake the reconquest of New Mexico, economic conditions in El Paso and hostilities between the Spanish and tribes in north New Spain prevented his departure until 1692. De Vargas planned two separate expeditions. The first one was to be a reconnaissance of New Mexico while the second was to be the recolonization and actual reestablishment of Spanish hegemony in the region.⁸

The first expedition, in the estimation of the Spanish, was an unequivocal success. During the four months of the expedition's reconnoitering, de Vargas succeeded in

⁷ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 37.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 39.

obtaining the loyalty of twenty-three pueblos.⁹ One of these pueblos was Ácoma. On November 2, 1692, de Vargas and his troops arrived at the mesa.

It was an incomparable fortress. I tell your majesty that the adelantado, don Juan de Oñate (whose triumph is of record to you, as is the loss of his brother, the maestre de campo, don Antonio, and 80 soldiers of the 260 he brought) did not succeed in this in twenty-one years. Even I, taking only 89 soldiers, might have hesitated at such a great undertaking.¹⁰

Despite rumors circulated by the Apaches that de Vargas sought to kill the Ácoma men and carry their women and children back to El Paso, de Vargas made peace with the Ácoma. This diplomatic effort took several days of negotiations during which de Vargas used Indian intermediaries, one of whom was an Ácoma captive de Vargas released in order to facilitate the acceptance of the Spaniards' good-will. The governor was not blind to the

⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 39-40; Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 60.

¹⁰ "Diego de Vargas to the King, Zacatecas, 16 May 1693," in John Kessell, Rick Hendricks and Meredith Dodge, editors, To the Royal Crown Restored: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, New Mexico, 1692-1694, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 203.

problems of keeping the good-will of the Ácoma. He noted that the pueblo was strongly situated and that the people had sufficient supplies with them on the mesa. "I repeat to your royal and sovereign majesty that only miraculously can you hold this securely."¹¹ Those were prophetic words. In December of 1692, de Vargas granted the repossession of the missions of Zuñi, Hopi, and Ácoma to the Franciscan representative accompanying the expedition, Fray Francisco Corbera.¹² This action proved premature.

The expedition was not without hostility. At Santa Fe, Jémez, and the Hopi pueblos, the governor's forces had to contend with aggressive native forces who outnumbered the Spaniards by a factor of ten to one. While the Indians seemed eager to fight the Spanish, de Vargas's diplomacy prevailed, and bloodshed was avoided. Apparently, the reconquest of New Mexico was achieved without the spilling of any Spanish or Pueblo blood. The only conflicts came between the Spanish and Apache raiders. De Vargas then

¹¹ *Ibid*, pp. 204-205.

¹² "Governor Vargas Grants Repossession of Religious Authority Over the Missions of Acoma, Zuñi, and Moqui to the Franciscans, Site of Doñana, December 18, 1692," in Espinosa, Pueblos Revolt of 1696, p. 66.

returned to El Paso to begin preparations for the recolonization of New Mexico. For the next year, New Mexico continued to remain in the hands of its native inhabitants since de Vargas did not leave any of his expedition in the territory. The reconquest was only a formality at this point.¹³

Pulling together a recolonizing expedition of one hundred soldiers, seventy families, and eighteen Franciscan friars, along with some Indian allies, de Vargas left El Paso for Santa Fe on October 4, 1693. In addition to the personnel, several thousand horses and mules and almost a thousand head of livestock followed the main force of the expedition. Six wagons and eighty mules hauled supplies, including three cannon.¹⁴

Despite the relatively peaceful nature of de Vargas's preliminary expedition and the submission of the twenty-three pueblos, the Spanish recolonization force found resistance when they arrived in New Mexico. Of the twenty-three pueblos that had given assurances of friendship, only

¹³ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 39-40.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 41.

four, Pecos, Santa Ana, Zia, and San Felipe, did not rise up against the Spanish. The governor of Pecos, Juan de Ye, rode out to meet de Vargas before the governor reached Santa Fe to warn him that most of the province was preparing for a fight.¹⁵

When de Vargas arrived at Santa Fe, he found Tewas and Tanos gathered in the plaza. The governor spoke with these Indians, who had met him unarmed, and decided not to precipitate any possible antagonism by pitching camp outside the walls of the villa. The Spaniards camped outside Santa Fe for two weeks in the cold. Twenty-three of them died of exposure while rumors of treachery on the part of the Pueblos ran wild. The missionaries petitioned de Vargas not to send them out to refound the missions immediately, as was his plan, due to the reports of unrest. Finally, an open town meeting of the Spanish concluded that the Indians remaining in Santa Fe should be returned to their pueblo of Galisteo and that the Spanish should enter the town and reoccupy it. These objectives would be accomplished by force if necessary. The Indians situated in Santa Fe could

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 41.

clearly see and hear the proceedings of the meeting and proceeded to plan a resistance.¹⁶

Early in the morning on the twenty-eighth of December, de Vargas was aroused by a messenger who warned of an imminent attack by the native forces in Santa Fe. The governor of Pecos was sent to his pueblo for reinforcements while a squadron of Spanish soldiers approached the walls of the villa to find them manned by a force of armed warriors. Those on the walls threw stones and insults at the Spaniards. Meanwhile another force of Indians had arrived to aid the native defenders of Santa Fe, but did not yet participate. De Vargas moved his camp to a flat, open field a shot away from the walls for better protection. With most of the soldiers, de Vargas then proceeded to the walls and attempted a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The leader of the Indians, Antonio Bolsas, agreed to discuss the situation with his people and give an answer to de Vargas by evening. By early the next morning, a group of 140 reinforcements of friendly Indians had arrived from Pecos but an answer to the governor's diplomacy had not. De

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 42.

Vargas began to move towards the villa and those on the walls began to shout that the whole province was against the Spanish and would kill them all, except for the friars, who would become slaves. Arrows and stones followed the insults and de Vargas cried the Santiago, urging his men into battle. The battle lasted until early the next morning--the Spanish being the victors. Women and children came out of the town to receive pardon, and fifty-four men were driven out of hiding later on.¹⁷

When the capture of Santa Fe was complete, de Vargas then divided the stores of corn, beans, and other foodstuffs among the Spanish families, and the colonists then occupied the houses vacated by the defeated natives. The fifty-four captured in the battle and fifteen others later discovered were publically executed on charges of destruction of a cross, destruction of a statue of the Virgin Mary, and treason against God and the crown. Antonio Bolsas was one of those executed. Approximately four hundred other Indians who had surrendered were sentenced to ten years of servitude and divided among the Spaniards. If, during those ten

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 43.

years, they had become Christians, they would then be allowed to return to a pueblo of their own choosing. Eighty-one natives died in the capture of Santa Fe. Only nine died in the actual battle, two committed suicide, and seventy were executed. Only one Spaniard died.¹⁸ De Vargas had succeeded in capturing the main city of New Mexico, the old Spanish capital, and gained a solid foundation for the eventual reestablishment of Spanish hegemony over the entire region. But, as de Vargas discovered, this would prove no easy task.

Santa Fe, at the beginning of 1694, was the lone outpost of Spanish civilization in New Mexico. Only four pueblos had sided with the Spanish--Santa Ana, San Felipe, Zia, and Pecos. Between April and September of 1694, de Vargas launched campaigns against those pueblos along the Rio Grande who still had not submitted to Spanish rule. De Vargas assaulted these pueblos primarily to obtain food, not to force the submission of the inhabitants. Continual battles between the Spanish and the natives kept the Spaniards in Santa Fe from planting crops. Starvation was a

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 44.

real possibility. The arrival of two hundred and thirty additional colonists in June simply exacerbated the situation. De Vargas attacked the pueblos to gain their stores but in doing so also forced their capitulation. By January of the following year, de Vargas could claim that most of the Rio Grande valley was under the domination of the Spanish. The refounded colony began to grow as more colonists arrived from Mexico. Two new villas, Santa Cruz and Bernalillo were founded. Eleven missions had been reestablished once the missionaries felt secure enough to be assigned to the pueblos. The only major pueblos along the Rio Grande that lacked missionaries were Picurís and Taos but de Vargas hoped to place friars there soon. However, the western pueblos of Ácoma and Zuñi as well as the Hopi pueblos were areas in which the new Spanish hegemony in New Mexico was still unrecognized.¹⁹ In a letter to the *custodio* dated December 22, 1694, Fray Francisco de Vargas, the missionary of Tesuque, Fray José Díez, reported that he had heard that the western pueblos, Ácoma, Zuñi, and Hopi,

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 45-47; "Governor Vargas to the Viceroy, Letter of Transmission, Santa Fe, January 10, 1695," in *Ibid*, pp. 146-151.

wanted to fight the Spanish.²⁰

Even in the pueblos that had accepted Spanish rule hostilities began to emerge. In mid-year, 1695, the Franciscan friars were alone at their missions, and the soldiers of de Vargas were dispersed. The harsh winter of 1695-96 put material burdens on the Spanish settlers who still could not adequately feed their own. Hostile Pueblo leaders perceived that this was a propitious time for a rebellion like that fifteen years earlier.²¹

As early as July, 1695, the missionaries began to fear that the Pueblos were planning another uprising. In December, these fears reached greater proportions and the *custodio*, Fray Francisco de Vargas, held a meeting to ascertain the extent of the possible insurrection. The friars petitioned the governor to post soldiers at the pueblos for protection and evaluation of the fears of the clergy. Governor de Vargas decided not to send troops to the pueblos because of his concern that such an action would incite hostilities among more loyal Indians. Despite the

²⁰ "Letter of Fray José Diez, Tesuque, December 22, 1694," in *Ibid*, pp. 115-117.

²¹ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 47.

fears of the Franciscans, a revolt did not occur in December, 1695, though their tasks at the pueblos became increasingly difficult and the actions of the Pueblos became increasingly hostile.²²

In March, 1696, the missionaries again pleaded with de Vargas for military protection as rumors of war increased. The priest of San Cristóbal, Fray José Arbizu, wrote of the situation in his pueblo.

When on his visit His Lordship ordered them to go to Galisteo, having promised them earlier the said lands of Chimayó, they believed that this was the greatest evidence that His Lordship planned to kill them, which is the reason why they left...and ascended the sierra of Chimayó, where they had, and still have, all of their food supplies and weapons of war and have set up stockades to make themselves invincible.²³

Arbizu was left alone at San Cristóbal. From San Juan, Fray Gerónimo Prieto wrote that natives of various pueblos, including the Hopi pueblos, Zuñi, and Ácoma, were on their way to San Juan to meet with rebel leaders there under the

²² *Ibid*, p. 47-48.

²³ "Letter of Fray José Arbizu, San Cristobal, March 10, 1696," in *Ibid*, p. 177.

cover of coming to trade. The tone of the fathers' letters is one of panic. On the fifteenth of March, de Vargas responded to the request of the *custodio* to place soldiers at some of the pueblos. By this time, however, the missionaries had abandoned their posts in favor of the safety of the Spanish settlements.²⁴

De Vargas was not unaware of the possibility of an uprising. In a letter written during the same month as the request from the *custodio*, he noted that the governor of Santa Ana, Bartolomé de Ojeda, reported that a meeting was taking place at Ácoma between various bands of Apache, the Zuñi, and Hopi.²⁵

After eleven months of persistent rumors, increasing unrest among the Pueblos, and actions taken by the Pueblos in apparent preparation for a general uprising, rebellion broke out on June 4, 1696. Five missionaries and twenty-one other Spaniards were killed. Hostile Pueblo forces burned

²⁴ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 48-49; "Letter of Fray José Arbizu, San Cristobal, March 10, 1696," in *Ibid*, p. 177; "Letter of Fray Gerónimo Prieto, San Juan, March 10, 1696," in *Ibid*, pp. 180.

²⁵ "Auto of Governor Vargas, Santa Fe, March 8, 1696," in *Ibid*, p. 167.

the missions, and the people of the pueblos in revolt fled into the mountains. Only Tesuque, Pecos, San Felipe, Santa Ana and Zia did not participate.²⁶

Unlike the Revolt of 1680, this rebellion was poorly planned, and the rebels divided into several distinct factions. The Jémez combined with the Ácoma, but as of early June, were still waiting for allies from Zuñi, the Hopi pueblos and the Utes.²⁷

A pitched battle between a small force of Spanish soldiers and some Indian allies from Zia and a combined force of Jémez, Ácoma, Zuñi, and Apaches occurred in late June at the pueblo of San Juan and resulted in the deaths of thirty-five Ácoma and five Jémez. Two Jémez were captured, one of whom escaped and the other of whom was questioned and then shot. The Spanish soldiers had originally been sent by the governor to examine tracks leading to Jémez from Ácoma and found the Indians on a mesa near the pueblo of San Diego. When the battle ended, the Spanish appropriated food

²⁶ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 50.

²⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 50-51; "Letter of Governor Vargas to Fray Francisco de Vargas, Santa Fe, June 9, 1696," in *Ibid*, p. 239; "Letter of Governor Vargas to Fray Francisco de Vargas, Santa Fe, July 31, 1696," in *Ibid*, p. 265.

from the pueblo.²⁸

One powerful faction was under the command of a Cochiti named Lucas Naranjo. In late July, de Vargas left Santa Fe with Spanish soldiers and native troops from Pecos in search of Naranjo and his group, finding them hidden in the slopes of a canyon awaiting the arrival of the Spanish. During the battle, Naranjo was killed by a harquebus shot to the Adam's apple by a Spanish soldier who then beheaded him.²⁹

It gave me great pleasure to see the said rebel apostate dog in that condition. A pistol shot that was fired into his right temple had blown out his brains leaving the said head hollow.³⁰

The remaining rebels fled and the allies from Pecos were given Naranjo's severed head as a trophy of war.³¹

After the fall of Naranjo, the rebellion began to collapse. The most active rebels in the central Rio Grande

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 271.

²⁹ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 51-52; "Letter of Governor Vargas to the Viceroy, Santa Fe, July 31, 1696," in *Ibid*, pp. 277-278.

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 279.

³¹ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 51-52; "Letter of Governor Vargas to the Viceroy, Santa Fe, July 31, 1696," in *Ibid*, pp. 277-278.

valley were destroyed. Those who had fled their pueblos to the mountains were leaderless and in desperate circumstance. The Spanish had appropriated stores of food after each victory, and the people remaining in the mountains faced the choice of either returning to their pueblos and accepting Spanish governance or starving.³²

Although de Vargas succeeded in subduing the rebels closest to the center of Spanish power in New Mexico, the pueblo fringe was still unrepentant. Picurís, Taos, and of course the western pueblos of Ácoma, Zúñi and the Hopi were outside the reach of de Vargas, his troops and Indian allies.³³ In August of 1696, de Vargas mounted an expedition against the recalcitrant pueblo of Ácoma. He learned from captured Cochiti who had been living at the pueblo that eighty other people from their pueblo had come to the mesa to live. Additionally, others from Jémez and Santo Domingo had sought refuge among the Ácoma. Having come to the mesa, de Vargas and his troops could not mount an assault, but proceeded to gather the sheep the Ácoma had

³² Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, pp. 52-53

³³ *Ibid*, p. 52.

left at the base of the mesa. Ácoma coming down to reclaim their animals were attacked and fled. After waiting below the mesa for several days and issuing threats and ultimatums, de Vargas instructed his men to burn the Ácoma fields and then departed to the east. The Ácoma remained on their mesa.³⁴

In September, the governor moved against the northern pueblos still in rebellion. The people of Taos were talked down from the mountains after the peaceful capitulation of the pueblo's leaders. At Picurís, de Vargas found no one. The Spanish set out after the inhabitants of the pueblo who, in the company of some Tewas, Tanos, and Apaches, were fleeing eastward. In late October, de Vargas caught up to the retreating Indians and, in a short battle, captured around eighty of them. The rest continued to flee eastward and were captured by another band of Apaches in western Kansas. Those who had been captured were distributed to the victors to be held as hostages until the remaining Picurís returned to their pueblo.³⁵

³⁴ Minge, Acoma, pp. 30-31; Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 54.

³⁵ *Ibid*, pp. 54-55.

With Picurís no longer a threat, the general peril to the Spanish of New Mexico was erased. Slowly, Indians remaining in the mountains descended to their pueblos. Some leaders of small rebel bands voluntarily surrendered while others were tracked down with the help of friendly Indian allies. Still other Indians did not return to their pueblos along the Rio Grande, but continued to hide with the Apache and the Navajos and at the pueblos of Ácoma, Zuñi, and Hopi. Although the pueblos were re-occupied, the native population of the pueblos along the Rio Grande declined.³⁶

In 1697, some of those who had sought refuge at Ácoma during the previous year moved from the pueblo several miles to the east to found the pueblo of Laguna. The people of this new pueblo were primarily Keres from Ácoma and Zia, but others came originally from Zuñi and still others came from various other pueblos. The people of Laguna, therefore, were a mixture of Keres and other ethnic and language groups. It was not a homogeneous population. It became a *visita* of the mission of Ácoma.³⁷

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 55.

³⁷ Minge, Acoma, p. 31; Sedgewick, Acoma, the Sky City, p. 129.

The Pueblo Revolt of 1696 was over by the end of the year. With the exception of the western pueblos, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico had once more submitted to Spanish authority. Within the area around the main Spanish settlements, life returned to normal.³⁸ On July 6, 1699, the new governor of New Mexico, Pedro Rodriguez Cubero, performed the Act of Obedience at Ácoma, thus bringing the pueblo back within the fold of the Spanish kingdom.³⁹

Early in the eighteenth century, the relationship between the Spanish and Pueblos remained fragile. The Pueblos remembered their treatment at the hands of the Spanish during the previous century. Occasionally, individual pueblos would revolt if Spanish pressure became too great. An anti-Spanish faction at Pecos met its demise in 1700 at the hands of a pro-Spanish Pecos leader. Other Indians from Jémez, Santo Domingo, and especially Tano had fled to Hopi lands. In 1716, Governor Martinez attempted to recall these "apostates" by force but could not do so. He successfully led one hundred and thirteen Indians from

³⁸ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 55.

³⁹ Minge, Acoma, p. 32.

Jémez, a few others from Santo Domingo, and some Tewa. Martinez was not, however, able to persuade the Tanos who had settled near the Hopi pueblo of Walpi to return to the Rio Grande.⁴⁰

According to Juan de Urribarri, a Spaniard stationed at Zuñi, Acoma and Zuñi threatened revolt in 1702. In a letter to the governor, Urribarri stated that he had discovered a conspiracy to drive the Spanish from western New Mexico.⁴¹ Urribarri and other Spaniards had previously conducted an investigation into rumors of unrest, interrogating the residents of the two pueblos and Laguna as well.⁴² The Spanish fears came to naught.

The seventeenth century was not a pleasant one for either the Spanish or the Pueblos. Using harsh tactics, the Spanish attempted to incorporate the Pueblos within their empire. Missionaries tried to convert their charges and

⁴⁰ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 165.

⁴¹ "Juan de Urribarri, Zuñi to governor re alleged conspiracy of Indians of Zuñi and Acoma," Spanish Archives of New Mexico, (hereafter cited as SANM), Series II, roll 3, frames 760-762.

⁴² "Indians of Laguna, Acoma and Zuñi interrogations as to unrest," SANM, II, roll 3, frames 748-759.

punished them ruthlessly when the neophytes resisted. The government exacted excessive tribute from the Pueblos and reacted violently when things did not turn out as they had expected. The *encomenderos* encroached on Indian lands, took heavy tribute, and illegally employed Indians in their houses and fields. The pueblos rebelled several times throughout the century until the great rebellion of 1680 drove the Spanish from New Mexico. When Diego de Vargas reconquered New Mexico he still had to contend with rebellious Pueblos. Rebellions occurred off and on throughout the first twenty years of the Spanish reoccupation of New Mexico. However, relations between the Spanish and the Pueblos eventually stabilized in the early eighteenth century. This change was principally due to the changing nature of the relationship between the Spanish and the Pueblos in New Mexico.

Chapter 9

Searching for a Common Ground

The impetus behind the Reconquest directly affected the nature of Spanish-Pueblo relations from the Reconquest to the end of Spanish sovereignty in New Mexico. Although the Spanish stated a concern for the welfare of the Christianized Indians during their absence, wounded Spanish pride and the growing threat of French encroachment pushed the Spanish to regain their lost territory.¹

The French threat and Indian problems devolving from the French intrusion into Spanish-claimed territory dominated Spanish governmental policy in New Mexico during the eighteenth century. This threat put an end to the church-state conflict that pervaded the previous century. Church discourse became less important than the need for a strong provincial government. While missionary activity continued, religious conversion became secondary to political expediency. As a result, the missionaries could not call on Spanish troops to end traditional religious

¹ Hall, Social Change, pp. 92, 105.

practices.

The threats posed by nomadic raiders affected both Spaniard and Pueblo. The Spanish population of New Mexico grew and spread, becoming easier targets of Apache and Navajo raiding parties which increased their activity during the eighteenth century. By 1705, the Comanche had entered New Mexico and begun to raid as well.² These groups had also begun attacking the Pueblos more frequently. Pueblo and Spaniard joined together to counter this threat. The association of Pueblo auxiliaries and Spanish militia on the battlefield embodied an era when the Spanish and Pueblos, so recently enemies, worked more closely together. Spanish policy promoted peace between the groups, exemplified in legal documentation. The Spanish issued land grants to preserve the sanctity of Pueblo lands. The Pueblos began to make use of the Spanish legal system in order to resolve legal conflicts on their own behalf. The proximity of Spanish towns to Pueblos increased as more settlements formed, thus increasing contact and trade between the

² Joseph H. Cash and Gerald W. Wolff, The Comanche People, (Phoenix: Indian Tribal Series, 1974), p. 3; Hall, p. 94.

groups.³ The Spanish and Pueblos realized that they needed each other. Because of the nomadic threat, they formed a symbiotic relationship⁴ in military matters which produced a closer relationship in economic and political matters. The church, however, did not benefit from this closer relationship.

To mitigate Pueblo Indian uncertainty, the Spanish authorities eagerly sought to ally with the Indians. This sincerity is illustrated by the appointment of a "protector general" of the Indians,⁵ or *Protector de Indios*. In 1704, during a meeting with influential Pueblo Indian leaders, governor Francisco Cuervo y Valdez introduced them to the first man to take that post in New Mexico, Captain Alfonso Rael de Aguilar.⁶ The *Protector de Indios* acted as a legal counsel for the Pueblo Indians in their dealings with the Spanish government. His obligation was to "aid and defend"

³ The trade relations between the Spanish and the Ácoma will be discussed in Chapter 10.

⁴ Hall, *Social Change*, p. 107.

⁵ Dozier, *Pueblo Indians*, p. 72.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 72: Charles R. Cutter, *The Protector de Indios in Colonial New Mexico, 1659-1821*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986), p. 47.

the Indians through the use of the Spanish legal system.⁷ During the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth, the Pueblo Indians increasingly used the Spanish legal system to preserve their rights according to Spanish law.⁸ In late 1733 and early 1734, the inhabitants of Ácoma and Laguna used the legal system to issue complaints against their Spanish *alcalde mayor*, Bernabe Baca, for delinquency of duty. Apparently, Baca made use of horses that were not his, ate food without paying for it, and used bad words. There was also so much discord between the priest and Baca, presumably on account of the language the *alcalde* used, that the pueblo's inhabitants could not adequately receive the service of their priest.⁹

Another example of Spanish willingness to maintain peaceful relations with the Pueblo Indians was the authorization of land grants. The Spanish Kings gave grants of land to the Pueblo Indians because they were wards of the

⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁸ *Ibid*, p. 45.

⁹ "Complaint of Indians of Acoma and Laguna against Alcalde Mayor Bernabe Baca," *SANM*, Series II, roll 7, frames 219, 221, 229-230.

Spanish Crown. The viceroy, the governor, and the captain-general were the only ones legally able to make grants to the Pueblo Indians in the name of the king. Non-Indian residents of New Mexico were forbidden to live on these grants. The Pueblo Indians received their land, not as individuals, but in common, the title for the land being in the name of the pueblo. That the crown gave land grants to the pueblos as common land and not to individuals indicates that the Spanish were less concerned with transforming individual Indians into property owners than protecting the sanctity of Pueblo lands. Turning each Indian into a freeholder, with his own acreage, would have done much towards transforming the Pueblos into Spanish-style farmers. That was the premise of the Dawes Severalty Act of 1889, passed by the United States government. Under the Dawes Act reservations, which were communal tribal property, were dissolved in favor of individual plots of land. But the Dawes Act, rather than create a class of Indian farmers, provided the opportunity for whites to buy Indian land at below-value prices or otherwise displace the Indians to whom the land belonged. So precluding this from happening is perhaps the reason the Crown gave grants in common and not

individually. The purpose of the grants was to protect Indian land from exploitation by non-Indians, thereby protecting the Indians. Giving grants in common would ensure that Pueblo lands remained in Pueblo hands while providing a legal basis to punish those who encroached on Pueblo territory.

In 1684, Governor Domingo Jironza Petriz de Cruzate was the first governor to be given the authority to make grants of land to the Pueblo Indians. On September 20, 1689, three years before the reconquest of New Mexico by the Spanish, Ácoma received its grant along with other pueblos, including Jémez, San Juan, Picurís, San Felipe, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, and possibly Pecos, though the original grant document is missing. These grants incorporated four square leagues of territory, as measured one league in each direction from the pueblo. Ácoma, however, received a grant that placed the pueblo itself on the southern boundary of the grant. That feature is not referred to in the grant, and why the pueblo of Ácoma served as the southern boundary of the grant, and was not placed in the center like the other pueblos, is unknown. The other boundaries were marked by Prieto Mountain to the north, Cubero Mountain to the

east, and *Ojo de Gallo*, or Chicken Spring, to the west.¹⁰

While the Pueblo Indians gained grants for the protection of their own land, the Spanish lost the earlier version of their own land grants. When the Spanish left New Mexico in 1680, the *encomienda* system left with them, never to return. The demise of the *encomienda* was primarily due to the abuses of the *encomenderos* during the previous century, a major reason for the 1680 Revolt. Though Governor de Vargas petitioned for an *encomienda*, it never materialized. His heirs converted it into a pension. The Pueblo Indians, after the Reconquest, would not have to pay tribute to or work for semi-feudal lords.¹¹

The two bases for this new willingness on the part of the Spanish to befriend the Pueblo Indians were to eliminate the internal threat posed by the Pueblos and to protect themselves against an increase in external threats. Spain, like many colonial powers throughout history, allied itself

¹⁰ Joe S. Sando, *The Pueblo Indians*, (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1976), p. 82; Minge, *Ácoma*, p. 25; "Grant to Pueblo Indians, Pueblo of Acoma," *SANM*, series I, roll #7, frames 20-22. The grants of the other pueblos are also listed in roll #7 of *SANM* series 1.

¹¹ Anderson, "The Encomienda," pp. 367, 372.

with native groups to subdue and control the area over which they sought to establish hegemony. During the eighteenth century, the Spanish colonial government of the New Mexican colony utilized Pueblo Indian auxiliaries in their efforts to subjugate the nomadic tribes of the region. Pueblo auxiliaries, with their Spanish militia counterparts, waged campaigns against the Navajos, Apaches, and Comanches. But these military alliances were not formed solely for the benefit of the Spanish. The enemies of the Spanish were also the enemies of the Pueblo Indians.

An increase in the quantity and intensity of nomadic attacks pushed these former enemies together. Ácoma, as well as other Pueblos, joined with the Spanish against a mutual enemy, the nomadic tribes of the Southwest. They fought alongside the Spanish not because of a great love or friendship, but because the Spanish had ceased to be the greater threat to their own welfare.

The horse, brought by the Spanish, had spread from the Southwest to the Plains in the seventeenth century. The French, who by the early eighteenth century had become a threat to the Spanish possessions in the Western Hemisphere, traded firearms to the Plains tribes, such as the Comanches.

The French guns were superior to the guns used in New Mexico. The Comanches were able to trade captives taken in raids for French guns, either directly or through middlemen such as the Pawnees.¹² When firearms and horses mixed on the Plains, the result was devastating.

In the early eighteenth century, shortly after acquiring the horse, the Comanches moved into New Mexico, pushing aside the Apaches, who had previously been the predominant raiders. During the eighteenth century, the Comanches became the bane of New Mexico. The Apaches had mastered the horse earlier than the Comanches and had increased their raids on the pueblos during the latter part of the seventeenth century, with the raids becoming more frequent during the eighteenth century. However, especially in the northeast sections of New Mexico, the Comanches became the dominant raiding tribe. Comanches were frequent visitors at the trading fairs of Taos.¹³

For Ácoma and the Spanish living in the area around the

¹² Hall, Social Change, pp. 94-95.

¹³ Oakah L. Jones, Pueblo Warriors and Spanish Conquest, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), p. 23; Hall, Social Change, pp. 94-95.

pueblo, the Navajos and western bands of the Apaches posed the more serious threat to their lives and livelihood, not the Comanches. Migrating south from their sub-Arctic homeland in northern Canada, the Athapaskan Navajo ancestors reached the Four-Corners region sometime between 1200 and the invasion of the Spanish from the south. They were a semi-nomadic people who grew some crops and hunted. After Spanish colonization, they adopted shepherding. To this economy, the Navajos added additional material possessions gained by way of raiding.¹⁴ Because the Pueblo Indians were easy targets, they suffered greatly at the hands of Navajo marauders.

From their arrival in the Southwest, the Navajos had continually raided the sedentary pueblos. During one of the first Spanish expeditions to the Rio Grande region, Pedro de Luxàn had erroneously concluded that the Ácoma had moved to their mesa-top home to escape Navajo depredations. No large force could take the stronghold without the knowledge of the Ácoma. Attackers could only reach the village by way of four ascents, none of which permitted more than one man at a

¹⁴ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 210; Hall, Social Change, p. 38.

time to reach the top.¹⁵ But, as was noted in Chapter 3, the Ácoma built their pueblo on top of the mesa prior to the arrival of nomadic raiders in their area, who appeared only shortly before the Spanish.¹⁶

However, the *Apaches de Navajo*, as the Spanish called them, did not attack any of the pueblos in force, even those which were in less defensible positions than Ácoma. Rather, they preferred to attack solitary hunters and farmers or small groups.¹⁷ By these means, the raiders did not have to assail impregnable Ácoma, or make a major raid on other pueblos, but still obtained some reward for their endeavors. Presumably, the nomads ate what foodstuff they acquired through raids. But the Navajo especially had become herders of sheep. While some of their herds may have been acquired through trade, certainly the Navajo increased their herd size by adding sheep gained through raids.

For their part, the Ácoma could do little against such

¹⁵ Luxán, in Hammond and Rey, Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 182.

¹⁶ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 210; Hall, Social Change, p. 38; Gutierrez, When Jesus Came, p. xxvii.

¹⁷ Gunn, Scatchen, p. 59.

raids. They kept a watch over the village, a necessary precaution despite its inaccessibility. But the Ácoma were farmers and most of their fields lay in the valley of the Rio San Josè, approximately twelve miles to the north of the village proper. The river and surrounding area provided little protection against marauders.¹⁸ In fact, Fray Juan Agustín de Morfi reported in 1782 that the Ácoma farmers had to abandon their fields around Cubero, which were the best fields they had, due to Gila Apache raiders who killed some people and stole their animals.¹⁹ Again in 1792, Gila Apaches attacked the cattle corral of the Ácoma and stole some of the steers. The Ácoma responded with a armed expedition of one hundred and fifty men. Along with the Ácoma went a party of similar size under the command of Spanish Captain don Miguel Cañuelas.²⁰

The Ácoma took bows, and later guns, out to the fields

¹⁸ White, The Acoma Indians, p. 29.

¹⁹ Minge, Acoma, p. 37; Fray Juan Agustín de Morfi, "Geographical Description of New Mexico, 1782," in Thomas, ed., Forgotten Frontiers, p. 105.

²⁰ Revilla Gigorda, "Re an Apache attack on Ácoma, Sept. 4, 1792," SANM II, reel #13, frames 126-127.

with them and traveled in groups when possible.²¹ Rarely did the Ácoma farmers spend the night near their fields, despite the long daily walk from the pueblo to the banks of the Río San José. Some Pueblo Indians built small towers from which they could oversee the fields, and Ácoma farmers probably did the same. Older men, who could work in the fields only with difficulty, contributed to the safety of the villagers by acting as lookouts.²² But Ácoma did not have sufficient strength to establish a permanent presence at the fields, nor did they have the numbers to do more than launch punitive retaliatory strikes against their enemies. By 1821, the population of Ácoma had fallen to 477.²³ Alone, the Ácoma were not effective in countering the Navajo attacks.

However, Ácoma could weaken the Navajo position and stop the raiding, at least temporarily, by forming alliances with other groups. Not only did the Pueblo Indians suffer at the hands of the Navajos, so did the Spanish colonists of

²¹ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 314.

²² Bandelier and Hewitt, Indians of the Rio Grande, p. 39.

²³ Census Report in Mexican Archives of New Mexico, (hereafter cited as MANM), reel #1, frame #480.

New Mexico. The Spanish population in New Mexico was never very large. Only 9,742 Spanish lived in New Mexico in 1776, one hundred and fifty years after colonization.²⁴ Like their Pueblo Indian neighbors, the Spanish had livestock, crops, and other goods that the Navajos coveted and found easier to acquire through raiding than by other means. In 1849, even after the United States gained control of the region, the Navajos continued to attack Mexican settlements for sheep.²⁵

Ácoma and other pueblos joined with the Spanish, and later the Mexicans, to control Navajo incursions. During the mid-eighteenth century, the toll of Navajo raiding increased. The Spanish colonial government of New Mexico strove to control nomadic raiding through a series of counter-offensives in which the Pueblo Indians, including the Ácoma, took part.²⁶ These alliances were never formal,

²⁴ Espinosa, Pueblo Revolt of 1696, p. 58.

²⁵ Congress, House, "Examinations of New Mexico in the Years 1846-47," made by Lt. J.W. Emory, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., 1847-48. vol. 4, Serial 517, p. 47.

²⁶ Ward Allen Minge and Myra Ellen Jenkins, "Record of Navajo Activity Affecting the Acoma-Laguna Area, 1746-1910." Acoma-Laguna Exhibit #530 in Docket #229, Pueblo de Acoma v. U.S.A., 1961, p. 11.

written agreements between the Spanish and the governments of the pueblos. They were temporary associations between war parties during specific times of conflict.²⁷

One such expedition against the Navajos occurred in late 1774. Auxiliaries from the Ácoma-Laguna area, as well as from the Albuquerque district, attacked a band of Navajos, killing twenty-one and capturing forty-six. Four died and thirty-one were wounded on the Pueblo Indian-Spanish side. This attack resulted from increasing Navajo raiding in the Ácoma area in 1774.²⁸ Even with an alliance of the forces of the pueblos and the colonial militia, the Spanish could no more control the Navajos than the Pueblo Indians had been able to by themselves. Attempts to Christianize and subdue the Navajos through missionary activity met with failure. The Navajo bands did not remain in an area long or recognize the authority of the Franciscan friars.²⁹

²⁷ See Jones, Pueblo Warriors, especially Chapter 3; Oakah Jones, "Pueblo Indian Auxiliaries in New Mexico, 1763-1821," New Mexico Historical Review, 37,2 (April, 1962):81-109.

²⁸ Minge and Jenkins, "Record of Navajo Activity," p. 8.

²⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 34-35.

The depredations of the nomads diverted the attention of the Spanish colonial authorities away from the pueblos, thus shifting the emphasis of the Spanish away from missionary activity towards the defense of the frontier.³⁰ This shift resulted in the demise of the large-scale mission-building program enacted during the first century of Spanish rule in New Mexico. The Spanish did not re-inaugurate this program after the reconquest.³¹ The Franciscan missionaries could not regain the fervor they had exhibited in the seventeenth century, and they almost abandoned Ácoma Pueblo, as well as the other western pueblos, due to continued hostilities on the part of those Indians. On the Hopi Mesas of Arizona, the missionaries were never able to reestablish a mission. Franciscans did reestablish a mission at Ácoma, but keeping a padre in residence proved to be quite a chore.

Throughout the eighteenth century, the number of missionaries in New Mexico declined. In the mid-seventeenth century, sixty-six friars conducted their work in the

³⁰ Hall, Social Change, p. 92; Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 78.

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 71.

province. One century later, only thirty missionaries lived in the territory, and sixteen years later, that number had dropped to twenty-four. These few friars also had to minister to an increasing Spanish population, not solely to the Pueblo Indian population.³² The friars still had as their goal replacing traditional Pueblo Indian religions with Catholicism, but they were not successful in achieving that goal.

During the seventeenth century, the Pueblo Indians performed the acts required of them by the missionaries. They went to church, baptized their children, and so forth. But the Indians performed such external obedience under compulsion, and it is highly unlikely that many natives believed in the rituals or really understood them. In fact, anthropologist Edward Dozier maintains that the coercive methods of the missionaries and their efforts to suppress the indigenous religious beliefs of the Indians actually drove the neophytes deeper into their traditional beliefs.³³

After the Reconquest, the missionaries took a milder

³² *Ibid*, p. 76.

³³ *Ibid*, p. 70.

approach towards the conversion of the Pueblo Indians. Though the friars still punished their charges for intransigence or apparent disregard for Christianity, such punishment was rare. The Pueblo Indians encountered less hostility towards their traditional ceremonies than they had in the previous century. The missionaries made no serious attempt to suppress dances, and no record exists of the destruction of ritual paraphernalia such as *Kachina* masks. Records of the late eighteenth century describe a rich ceremonial life among the Pueblo Indians, due to the relaxation of hostilities toward native religion by the missionaries.³⁴

Some of the slackening of religious suppression was due to the increasing secrecy of many ceremonial practices by the Pueblo Indians. This secrecy was due, in turn, to the pressure put on them by the missionaries.³⁵ The Pueblo Indians performed those rituals that the missionaries found objectionable, which were the most sacred ceremonies, behind closed doors or at night. Night-time or secret ceremonies

³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 72.

³⁵ Hall, Social Change, p. 107.

kept the rituals away from the prying eyes of the Franciscans or other outsiders. Of note is the lack of mention of either *kiva* or medicine society ceremonies during the eighteenth century. The Indians continued to perform those ceremonies that were not objectionable out in the open.³⁶ At Ácoma many ceremonial dances are currently performed for the public, but at least two are carried out away from the public's eyes.³⁷

The Pueblo Indians were able to separate the elements of Catholicism and their traditional religion. Descriptions of dances made during the eighteenth century reveal no Catholic elements while Catholic rituals contained no element of traditional religion. The Pueblo Indians made very certain not to contaminate their own rituals with those from Catholicism.³⁸

Although the Pueblo Indians sought to simulate a façade of Catholicism, they also sought to maintain their traditional values. At Ácoma, church records reveal a

³⁶ Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 75.

³⁷ Minge, Acoma, p. x.

³⁸ Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 75.

steady stream of baptisms, marriages, confirmations and so forth. But when Fray Juan Alvarez visited the pueblo in 1705, he found the inventory of the church to be meager and the missionary stationed at the mesa, Fray Antonio Miranda, repairing the church alone. This was odd, considering that the pueblo contained seven hundred and sixty Christians.³⁹ Apparently, the Christian Indians of Ácoma were not so thoroughly converted that they would help their missionary rebuild the church.

This veneer of Catholicism was apparent to some of those who visited the region. In 1776, Fray Anatasio Domingues noted that

even at the end of so many years since their reconquest, the specious title or name of neophyte still applies to them. This is the reason their condition is almost the same as it was in the beginning, for generally speaking they have preserved some very indecent, and perhaps superstitious, customs...⁴⁰

³⁹ Minge, Acoma, p. 32.

⁴⁰ Fray Anatasio Dominguez quoted in Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 72.

Several years later, Bishop Tamaron understood that, after almost two hundred years of contact and missionary activity, the Pueblo Indians were Christian in only a superficial manner.⁴¹ By the 1780's, Ácoma had become nothing more than a *visita* of Laguna, a mission site not large enough or important enough to warrant a missionary of its own.⁴² On February 13, 1784, Governor Juan Bautista de Anza repositioned the missionaries of Santa Anna, Zia, Jémez, San Felipe, Cochiti, and Santo Domingo, and combined the missions of Laguna and Ácoma, to conserve manpower and position missionaries where they would be most useful, especially if a mission was in close proximity to Spanish settlers as well as Indians.⁴³

The one period that proves the exception to the rule of less interference by the Spanish in the religious life of the Pueblos during the era following the Reconquest is the tenure of Juan Ignacio Flores Mogollón as governor of New

⁴¹ Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 76.

⁴² Minge, Acoma, p. 36.

⁴³ Juan Bautista de Anza, "Consolidation of Ácoma and Laguna, 1784," Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, reel #52, frame 727.

Mexico from 1712 through November 23, 1715. Mogollón was apparently a believer in the older style of Spanish religious activity and took exception to any conduct by the Pueblos that did not conform to his strict Catholic beliefs.

In a meeting of the War Council, held in Santa Fe in July of 1714, Flores Mogollón and most of the settlers sought to forbid Pueblo Indians from wearing face paint and feathers during joint maneuvers with the Spanish military against non-Pueblo Indian raiders and when entering a church. One reason is that the Pueblos were Christian, and Christians do not wear feathers in church and do not wear face paint. Also, wearing face paint added to suspicions that the Pueblos themselves were responsible for committing the crimes that were blamed on the Apaches, Comanches, and Navajos. Opposition to this measure came from an unlikely source--the *custodio* of New Mexico, Fray Juan de Tagle. Fray de Tagle noted that the Pueblos were recent converts to Catholicism and could not be held to the same standards as the Spanish since the proposed measures were above their understanding. The Pueblos did not paint their faces to hide any crimes, and, he argued, such expressions were in any case really no different than those practiced by the

Spanish who also painted their faces and wore feathers in their hats. Most of the religious leaders, including the priests from several of the pueblos, supported their superior's view. Flores Mogollón issued his decree and enforced it despite the views of the friars, but referred it to the Viceroy who later overturned Flores Mogollón's decision.⁴⁴

Flores Mogollón also wrote a notice ordering married couples to live together. It had come to his attention that couples who had been married in the church were living, not with each other as Catholic couples ought, but with their individual parents. Flores Mogollón ordered the various *alcaldes* of the Pueblos to see to it that the couples practicing this "bad custom" with "the worst consequences" would in the future live together as husband and wife, authorizing the *alcaldes* to fine those who persisted in living separately.⁴⁵

During the tenure of Flores Mogollón, the inhabitants of the pueblos of both Laguna and Ácoma threatened their

⁴⁴ Jones, Pueblo Warriors, pp. 88-90.

⁴⁵ "Bando ordering couples in Indians pueblos to live together," SANM, series II, reel #4, frames 1014-1015.

priest with his life in 1713 because he interfered in the rituals of the pueblos.⁴⁶ Although there are no extant records that confirm a direct link between the priest's actions and any directives by the governor, the coincidence is striking.

The decline of missionary activity at Ácoma was an indication of the decline of missionary activity throughout New Mexico after the Reconquest. The goals of the missionaries had not changed; they still sought to incorporate the Pueblo Indians into Spanish society and religion. But, in the eighteenth century, they lacked the means by which to implement changes. The church no longer had the undivided support of the colonial government. Missionary work took second place to the more pressing concerns of the Spanish colonial government. These concerns revolved around the increase in raiding activity by nomadic tribes in New Mexico. The increase in raids, in turn, derived from the increase in the activity of the French as opponents of the Spanish in empire-building. The French threat led to the establishment of New Mexico as a defensive

⁴⁶ Sedgewick, Acoma, the Sky City, p. 127.

buffer between French encroachment and the productive silver mines of northern Mexico. The problem in this buffer was the nomadic raiders. Because the nomads attacked both Indian pueblo and Spanish town, the two former enemies joined together to fight this common foe. Thus, the Spanish colonial government sought to endear itself to the Pueblo Indians by providing legal safeguards for Indian lands and autonomy. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Spanish and the Pueblo Indians had reached a "common ground."

Economy and Society at Ácoma
at the Beginning of the American Occupation

From the entrance of the Spanish into New Mexico in 1598 to the beginning of American rule of the Southwest, the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico experienced a number of changes in the way they lived. The Spanish introduced new crops and livestock. They also expanded the indigenous tool chest. The Ácoma adopted some of these new items, but rejected others. Additionally, the Spanish attempted to introduce a Spanish form of government to Ácoma. However, the Ácoma simply grafted the Spanish governmental structure onto their existing, traditional political structure. This retention of the traditional political structure helped to maintain the traditional social structure which, in turn, helped to maintain the traditional ways in which the Ácoma lived.

Lt. J. W. Abert left the most complete description of the pueblo during the period in question. While on reconnaissance in New Mexico in 1846 and 1847, he visited

Ácoma and went to the top of the mesa. There he found

a large church, and several continuous blocks of buildings, containing 60 or 70 houses in each block, (the wall at the side that faced outwards was unbroken, and had no windows until near the top: the houses were three stories high). In front each story retreated back as it ascended, so as to leave a platform along the whole front of the story: these platforms are guarded by parapet walls about three feet high. In order to gain admittance, you ascend to the second story by means of ladders; the next story is gained by the same means, but to reach the "azotia," or roof, the partition walls on the platform that separates the quarters of different families, have been formed into steps. This makes quite a narrow stair-case, as the walls are not more than one foot in width.¹

From Abert's description, it appears that little had changed in the physical setting of the pueblo. The pueblo still consisted of blocks of houses joined together like townhouses. Access to the house was gained through the upper stories, reached by way of ladders. Abert continued his narrative saying that the families lived in the upper stories of the houses, while the bottom floor was used for storage,² exactly as the inhabitants two hundred and fifty

¹ Congress, House, "Examinations of New Mexico in the Years 1846-47," report by Lt. J. W. Abert, 30th Cong., 1st. Sess., 1847-48. Vol. 4, p. 471.

² *Ibid*, p. 471.

years before had lived.

Charles Lummmis documented life in Ácoma during his journey to New Mexico in the late nineteenth century. In the living rooms of Ácoma houses Lummmis noted that the inhabitants hung *tasajos* (twists) of dried musk melons, bags of dried peaches, jerked mutton, and jerked venison from the communal hunt, and parched chili. "In the corner is always the row of sloping lava slabs, neatly boxed about, whereon the blue corn is rubbed to meal with a smaller slab....In one corner is a wee but effective adobe fireplace, with chimney of un-bottomed earthen jars."³

These corner fireplaces, called *fogon*, were gradually adopted from the Spanish. The Pueblos added flues to release the smoke. The *fogon* replaced the traditional firepits, located in the center of the room. The pueblos improvised suspended smoke hoods over a raised fire area which still allowed them to fit the pre-Spanish stone griddles over the fire.⁴

³ Lummmis, Land of Poco Tiempo, p. 70.

⁴ Peter Nabakov and Robert Easton, Native American Architecture, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 366.

A visitor to Ácoma in 1911 described the preparations for a burial feast during which sheep were slaughtered to feed the guests and cooking was done in the beehive oven on the terrace. One elderly woman made wafer bread on the stone griddle in the fireplace while a drink of cedar twigs brewed there also.⁵

This wafer bread, known as *guayaves* in Ácoma,⁶ was also eaten in other pueblos. As in Ácoma, it was the everyday bread in the Hopi menu, where it was known as piki bread. The stone griddle was heated and well-greased, and then a thin layer of corn batter was applied to the stone where it baked to a crisp instantly. The bread was then peeled off the stone and stored in a large tray until the next sheet was baked. It was then placed on top of the sheet being baked and folded.⁷ Lt. Abert recorded being served guayave,

⁵ Parsons, "Notes on Ácoma and Laguna," p. 179.

⁶ Leslie A. White, "New Material from Ácoma," U. S. Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin no. 136, (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1943), p. 338.

⁷ Pearle Beaglehole, "Foods and Their Preparation," ed. Ernest Beaglehole, Notes on Hopi Economic Life, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, no. 15 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1937), pp. 63-64.

which he described as being a corn bread "bear[ing] a striking resemblance to a hornet's nest."⁸

Beehive-shaped outdoor ovens were standard on the roof terraces or the streets near the houses of most of the pueblos. The ovens were stuffed with burning juniper and held heat long enough to roast game and to bake yeast bread, pastries, and un-husked corn.⁹

House plans drawn up by the Historic American Buildings Survey in 1934 of unit 3, block number 1 show that the second floor of the house is used for food production. It contains two storage rooms, a grinding room with three grinding bins, a living room with a *fogon* fireplace and a terrace with a beehive oven.¹⁰ Edward Dozier states that Gaspar Castano de Sosa's journal mentions these beehive ovens. "These ovens, prominent features of pueblo architecture, have been thought to have been introduced by the Spanish. Architectural introductions, therefore, do not

⁸ Lt. Abert, p. 471.

⁹ Nabakov and Easton, Native American Architecture, p. 366.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pp. 392-393.

seem to have been...impressive."¹¹ No reference to anything remotely resembling a beehive oven could be found in Sosa's journal. If the oven was of Pueblo origin archeological evidence or early descriptions of the pueblos should show that to be the case. The earliest evidence of the beehive oven in the Southwest is from a photograph of Taos Pueblo, dating from 1875, which shows beehive ovens scattered throughout the pueblo.¹² The beehive oven was also in use in Spain,¹³ which is in keeping with the traditional theory of its Spanish origins.

Sometime during the Spanish Colonial period the centrally-placed hearth was replaced by the *fogon*, the Spanish-style corner fireplace. The level of the fire was also raised during this time from below floor level to a raised hearth. The Pueblo Indians added a flue, the suspended smoke hood, and the chimney pot. They also adopted the beehive oven.

Lt. Abert reported Ácoma dress as consisting of Navajo

¹¹ Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 65.

¹² Grant, Canyon de Chelly, p. 75.

¹³ James A. Michener, Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections, (New York: Random House, 1968), p. 83.

blankets with broad, alternating stripes of black and white. The men wore wide, baggy pants, pinched just below the knee and worn with long stockings, much like knickers. Sometimes buckskin leggings were worn. The women, Abert noted, put wool in their leggings, presumably for warmth, "which make their ancles [sic] look like the legs of elephants."¹⁴ G. Butler, in a tour of the Southwest around 1872, described the clothing worn by the men and women. The men, wrote Butler, wore large blankets, probably of wool, while the women wore "dark woollen robe[s], made of two pieces, above five feet long and three broad, sewed together at one of the narrow ends." The men wove the wool into material used to make clothes. Butler found four sitting in an *estufa*, clad only in loin cloths, "each with a loom in front of him weaving a blanket."¹⁵

Ácoma contact with the Spanish through trade and, especially, through interaction with the missionaries stationed within the community itself brought about changes in the economy of the pueblo. The Ácoma continued to plant

¹⁴ Lt. Abert, p. 471.

¹⁵ G. Butler, "Acoma and the Acoma Indians," Catholic World, vol. 16, pp. 708-9, 711-12.

and harvest their traditional crops, but incorporated, to a greater or lesser extent, those crops introduced by the Franciscan friars. They also became a pastoral people; they began to raise the wide variety of livestock the friars brought and gave to them. New and different tools increased productivity, thereby providing a surplus that the Ácoma traded with their traditional partners of exchange, the Navajos and Apaches, as well as in the new market of the Spanish colonists. The Ácoma incorporated those elements of Spanish material culture that they wanted and for which they had a use, and they made them their own.

When the Franciscan fathers came to Ácoma, they brought with them new crops. The introduction of new crops had several effects. New crops intensified agricultural productivity. They also expanded the need for arable land. Additionally, a wider variety of crops provided relief from the failure of the crops the Ácoma raised before Spanish colonization. Finally, the introduction of additional crops helped to diversify the diet of the Ácoma.¹⁶

These crops came not only from the friars' native

¹⁶ Marc Simmons, "New Mexico's Colonial Agriculture," Palacio, 89(1):3-10, p. 5.

Spain, but from the Spanish possessions in Mexico as well. The missionaries introduced wheat, barley, oats, watermelons, muskmelons, peaches, apricots, apples, pears, grapes, peas and other vegetables.¹⁷ All these crops came from Spain. But during the one hundred years that Spain controlled the Caribbean and Old Mexico, prior to the colonization of New Mexico, Spaniards learned how to cultivate a wide variety of plants native to the New World. The friars brought several of these with them to New Mexico. The Spanish introduced chiles, tomatoes, new types of corn and Mexican varieties of beans as well as tobacco. One variety of Mexican corn, Cristolina de Chihuahua, is thought to have rapidly cross-pollinated with varieties native to the Southwest, thus producing a hybrid that increased crop yields. Later on in the colonial period, the Spanish introduced the many-rowed Mexican Dent corn variety. This variety had a major impact on native corn, much like the Cristolina variety, and is the ancestor of the widely-used,

¹⁷ Douglas Hurt, Indian Agriculture in America, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1987), p. 43; Bandelier, p. 210.

modern Corn-belt Dent variety.¹⁸

Corn continued to be a major food item in the Ácoma pantry. Prepared corn came in many different forms at Ácoma, each with its own name. *Kashaish* is white corn meal while *hati* is made of corn soaked in pots until it sprouts, takes in water and sweetens. The corn is then sun-dried and ground, yielding a sweet, yellowish flour. *Skekaiouisa hati* is sweet corn roasted in earth, then ground.¹⁹

The Ácoma continued to plant the American Triad (corn, squash, and beans) after the establishment of the mission at Ácoma. They continued to consume much beans and squash. However, other crops, introduced during the Spanish period, gained more and more favor in the Ácoma diet. To their traditional crops the Ácoma added those crops introduced by the missionaries and in time were incorporated into their origin stories. Some of these crops became minor supplemental items in the Ácoma diet while others, notably peaches, became important to the diet and to the economy of the pueblo as an item of trade. Exactly when the mission

¹⁸ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ White, "New Material from Acoma," pp. 349, 338.

fathers introduced these crops to their wards is unclear. Yet reports made after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 indicate that the Ácoma did not accept some crops, especially wheat, wholeheartedly. Even as late as the early twentieth century, wheat was still a little-used crop.

In 1933, the journal El Palacio of the Museum of New Mexico published an article by Frank Beckworth depicting a day he spent in Ácoma. In the following excerpt, Beckworth described the lunch he ate in one of the houses.

In the center of the table was a milk pan with yellow corn meal in it, in which were mixed small bits of meat; you broke off a slab of bread, and with that as a scoop or ladle, got your portion upon it, and ate ladle, contents and all. Butter was on the table; and nice white man's bread--to my inquiry Mrs. Johnson told me they had a white nurse come into the homes and teach them how to cook yeast bread.

Coffee again and the delicious peaches.²⁰

This meal was the second in rapid succession. The peaches in the first meal of Beckworth's narrative were grown by the family in their own small orchard and sun-dried on the roof of the house and then boiled just before they were to be

²⁰ Frank Beckworth, "A Day in Acoma," El Palacio 35 (Dec. 1933):207-208.

eaten.²¹

That a non-Indian nurse had to teach the women how to use wheat indicates that this crop was not in favor with the Ácoma. White, on one of his visits to Ácoma, interviewed an old man who told him that "when I was very small my mother's father and mother went to Laguna to sell some pottery and buy some things. They brought back some wheat. That was the first time I ever saw it."²² The old man could possibly have not seen wheat because of his young age at the time of the story; yet he treated this occurrence as unusual. Wheat had been grown at Ácoma since, most likely, the seventeenth century when it was introduced by the Franciscan friars. In a report written in 1754, Fray Manuel San Juan Nepomuceno y Trigo stated that the Ácoma planted three *fanegas* of wheat for the use of the resident priest.²³ The stories above imply that the Ácoma did not use wheat themselves until very

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 206.

²² White, "New Material from Acoma," p. 328.

²³ "Fr. Trigo to Procurador General Fr. José Miguel de los Rios, July 23, 1754," in Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, collected by Adolph F. Bandelier, (Washington: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1937), p. 462.

late. They probably either gave it to the priest or traded it.

Even before the official cession of New Mexico in 1848, the United States government sent several military reconnaissance missions into these new territories. The reports of some of these missions help to document the status of agriculture at Ácoma at the end of the Spanish and Mexican Periods but before the intervention of Anglo-American culture and agricultural practices.

Lieutenant J. W. Abert commanded the first of these missions. Abert reported that on his way up Ácoma mesa to the pueblo, he and his companion, Lt. Peck, "...were constantly meeting and passing Indians, who had their 'burros' laden with peaches." In addition to the Indians, he passed several Mexicans leading burros burdened by peaches. Upon reaching the mesa summit, he noted that large quantities of peaches, cut in half and drying in the sun, covered the roofs of the houses. In the lowest floor of the houses the Ácoma stored corn, melons, pumpkins and other foodstuffs. "The fronts of their houses are covered with festoons of bright red peppers, and strings of pumpkins and muskmelons, that have been cut into ropes, and twisted into

bunches to dry for winter use."²⁴

The Ácoma grew the peaches mentioned in Abert's report, as well as in Beckworth's narrative, in the *cañadas* surrounding Ácoma Mesa. Solomon Bibo, a trader living near the Ácoma Reservation, testified that the Ácoma maintained extensive peach orchards in cañons two to three miles west of the pueblo. One of these cañons went by the name of Peach Cañon Arroyo. Paradise Cañon, Cañada de la Cruz, the San Jose Valley, Cebolla Cañon and Seven Cedars also contained peach groves. The Ácoma raised apricots in the Juan Tafoya Cañon, which was near Marquez,²⁵ west of Ácoma Mesa.

The cultivation of these peaches at Ácoma is centuries old. Archeological work at the pueblo revealed peach and apricot pits in the floor layers dating from before 1651.²⁶ Although the presence of peach pits in pre-1651 floors does not prove that the Ácoma cultivated the crop, sufficient

²⁴ Lt. J. W. Abert, p. 471.

²⁵ Rands, "Acoma Land Utilization," pp. 80-83.

²⁶ Earls, et al, "Results of Data Recovery at Seven Units," p. 69; Curtis Schaafsma, conversation with the author, May 16, 1995.

time had elapsed since the entrance of the Spanish to warrant speculation that they already had orchards at that time.

First Lieutenant James Harvey Simpson of the Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, passing through in 1849, also left a description of Pueblo Indian life in the Southwest. While Simpson and his company marched along the Rio San Jose near Ácoma he noticed that maize and melons were widely cultivated, "the luxuriance of their growth attesting the good quality of the soil." In fact, muskmelons were in such great abundance the people of Ácoma and Laguna gave many to the soldiers. The people preserved the melons for winter by peeling, de-seeding and hanging them to dry in the sun. Simpson described one old, dry cedar tree as being covered with drying muskmelons.²⁷

The Pueblo Indians have always preserved and stored part of a good year's harvest for those years when crops failed or when other disasters left the village without the

²⁷ James Harvey Simpson, Navaho Expedition: Journal of a Military Reconnaissance from Santa Fe, New Mexico, to the Navaho Country Made in 1849, edited by Frank McNitt, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 145.

means to feed itself. By incorporating the crops given them by the priests, the Ácoma increased the number of species of plants at their disposal. If a catastrophe occurred that destroyed their corn crop, an important part of the Ácoma diet, the harvest of the other crops would make up the difference, thus helping to reduce the threat of starvation. However, if an introduced crop would benefit the pueblo in ways a traditional crop would not, the Ácoma stopped cultivating the traditional crop in favor of the imported one. One such traditional crop was cotton. When the Spanish first arrived in New Mexico, the Ácoma cultivated cotton for use in clothing. Antonio de Espejo, in 1583, was the last to mention the presence of cotton products at Ácoma.²⁸ The Ácoma substituted the use of cotton in clothing for a Spanish introduction, wool from sheep.

The Ácoma continued to use, throughout the Spanish colonial period, the irrigation technology they had long employed because they could not rely wholly on rainfall to provide adequate water. When the Spanish arrived in New Mexico, one of their first endeavors was to construct, with

²⁸ Espejo, "Report of October, 1583," in The Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 213.

the use of Indian labor, irrigation systems for the new land that they farmed.²⁹

At different times, various visitors to Ácoma remarked on the Ácoma irrigation systems employed in the fields. The Ácoma maintained fields in two locations, both along rivers, the Rio Cubero and the Rio San Jose. In 1749, Fray Andres Varo reported that Ácoma farmers traveled seven leagues from the pueblo to irrigate fields along the Rio Cubero, located approximately twelve miles north of the pueblo. Fray Manuel de Trigo stated in 1754 that the fields of the Ácoma lay four leagues from the pueblo, on the Rio San Jose, but all the fields depended on rain since there was no irrigation system "or other lands for cultivation."³⁰ De Trigo probably did not mention that the fields used irrigation simply because he traveled along the wrong path and could not see them.

Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez's description of the Ácoma fields in 1776 provides a look at the locations of those fields as well as which fields were irrigated.

²⁹ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 4.

³⁰ Rands, "Acoma Land Utilization," p. 29.

The Indians have lands wherever the cañadas [canyons] in the south, east, north, and northwest...provide arable level ground. All are completely dependent on rain, for although there are two small springs, they only suffice as drinking water for some small livestock. They have made a low bank of earth around them for this purpose. When it rains the *milpas* [fields] do well, but if rain is completely lacking, there are hardships, as has been the case for three years now, when there has been great drought.

Three leagues up the cañada from Laguna and 5 or 6 northeast of Acoma...there is a place called Cubero in a cañada which runs between mesas from south to north. It is about a league long from south to north and about half a league wide from east to west. The Indians sow all they can in it on both sides of the river [the Rio Cubero] that flows to Laguna; they irrigate with it and harvest very reasonable crops. In this very place they plant for the convent wherever the father chooses, usually harvesting 40 fanegas of wheat, the same amount of maize, and a little of each kind of green vegetable.³¹

In 1782, Fray Agustin de Morfi reported on the extent of the Ácoma fields and their irrigation practices.

At the bottom of the penol itself a plain is formed surrounded by mesas...The plain abounds in pasture lands where the Indians of the pueblo have their cultivated fields....

These Indians have another large cultivated field

³¹ Eleanor B. Adams and Fray Angelico Chavez, The Missions of New Mexico, 1776: A Description by Fray Atanasio Dominguez, and Other Contemporary Documents, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1956), p. 194.

of two short leagues wide from east to west and a half a league long from north to south in the spot which they call De Cuero, five leagues to the west of La Laguna [probably along the Rio San Jose]. It is the best which they possess, as much because of the good quality of the land as because they utilize the irrigation which the spring of El Gallo makes easy for them. Notwithstanding they do not till these fields because invasions of the Gila Apaches have killed in them many of their people and run off many herds.³²

The irrigation systems used by the pueblos could be described in much the same terminology as the circulation system of the human body without the circulatory element. The main artery, the *acequia madre*, drew from the source and ran the length of the irrigated fields. This main canal could be fourteen or fifteen feet wide and two to four feet deep. Secondary canals or *sangria* (bleeders) led from the *acequia madre* into the irrigated fields. Flood gates erected at each end of the secondary canals controlled water flow.³³ An additional benefit of irrigation, besides providing water for the crops, was a renewal of the soil. As water from the irrigation canals flowed across the

³² Agustin de Morfi, "Geographical Description of New Mexico," in Forgotten Frontiers, p. 105.

³³ Alvin R. Sunseri, "Agricultural Techniques in New Mexico at the Time of the Anglo-American Conquest," Agricultural History 47(4):331.

fields, it could deposit up to one quarter inch of silt, thus replenishing the fertility of the soil.³⁴

Early Spanish ordinances defined responsibility for the regulation and distribution of water used for irrigation. In the Spanish towns, the ditch chief or *mayordomo* held responsibility for the construction and maintenance of canals used to carry water from the source as well as distribution of that water. The Pueblo Indians also used the Spanish water management procedures. However, they divided the responsibilities held by a single Spanish official into two positions. The ditch chief supervised construction and maintenance of the canals while the *cacique* controlled dispensation of the water. The construction and maintenance of the canals, especially the main irrigation canal, the *acequia madre*, were of a communal nature. Everyone suspended their regular duties and work at mid-morning to construct or repair the irrigation system.³⁵

The Ácoma continued to use the Spanish system of water control through the second quarter of the twentieth century.

³⁴ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 6.

³⁵ Sunseri, "Agricultural Techniques," pp. 330-331.

The governor organized the pueblo residents for service in the repair and maintainance of the irrigation ditches although he sometimes relegated this responsibility to the ditch boss.³⁶ The four *mayordomos* who held that position in the middle years of this century were elected to care for the irrigation canals. They controlled ditch maintainance and "regulate[d] the water supply after the water is flowing."³⁷

Clearly, irrigation practices at Ácoma remained undeviating from their pre-Spanish norms throughout the Spanish colonial period. The Ácoma had practiced irrigation prior to the entrance of the Spanish into New Mexico and continued to do so after the Mexicans had relinquished their claim to the territory. They did learn better water-use management from the Spanish, but this represents only an improvement in management rather than a radical change in techniques.

The Franciscan missionaries who went to Ácoma to teach

³⁶ S. D. Aberle, "The Pueblo Indians of New Mexico: Their Land, Economy and Civil Organization," American Anthropologist, October, 1948, No. 4, Part 2, p. 33.

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 43.

Christianity taught them Spanish farming methods, but brought in Spanish tools to facilitate their agricultural endeavors. The tools the Spanish introduced to Ácoma, tools such as the plow, as well as improvements on implements with which the natives were already familiar, enhanced the Ácoma tool chest. The Pueblo Indians already used hoes of stone and wood, but the durable metal tools introduced by the Spanish, as well as new tools, greatly helped the Indian farmers. These new tools, and improvements on old ones, helped Ácoma farmers by increasing productivity and decreasing the amount of manual labor necessary to cultivate a field while possibly helping to stimulate an increase in the amount of land that could be feasibly cultivated.

The most important tool Spanish settlers used and the missionaries introduced to the Pueblo Indians was the plow. Because of the scarcity of metal, many Spaniards during the colonial period built plows that were nothing more than the crotches of trees, with one branch for the body and the other for the handle.³⁸ Sometimes the Spanish fashioned plows out of two sticks, the one that was used as the body

³⁸ Sunseri, "Agricultural Techniques," pp. 334-335.

shod with a metal tip called a *reja*.³⁹ However, these metal tips were frequently not used because of the expense. The farmers fastened a beam, resembling a wagon tongue, to the plow and harnessed that to a team of oxen. One man guided the oxen team and another tended the plow. One disadvantage with this plow was that it made a very shallow furrow, frequently no more than six inches deep.⁴⁰

In 1885 and 1886, Capt. John Gregory Bourke, while on special assignment, journeyed through New Mexico in search of ethnological material.⁴¹ A short way from Ácoma he saw Indians "plowing with the rude wooden instruments of this country." The plow was fastened to the horns of a pair of small oxen, driven by one of the Indians and led by the other.⁴² With the plow, the Ácoma farmers could cultivate a greater amount in less time than with only their old hoes and digging stick. The Ácoma still used these two ancient tools late in the nineteenth century, however, as

³⁹ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 9; Sunseri, "Agricultural Techniques," pp. 334-335.

⁴¹ Bloom, "Bourke on the Southwest," 8(1):6, 8.

⁴² *Ibid*, 11(1):106.

illustrated by James's account and by photographs.⁴³

Other tools introduced by the Spanish were even simpler than their plow. One such tool consisted simply of a heavy log roller pulled by an ox that served to compact the soil and level the field. The harrow was a similar instrument that the farmers used to break up clods of dirt and cover seeds in their furrows. It was merely a squared beam with wood or iron teeth pulled by an ox.⁴⁴

One tool that the Spanish brought with them was the coa, consisting of an iron blade, forty centimeters in length, shaped somewhat like a wide, short sickle with a long wooden handle mounted in a socket. The coa is an all-purpose tilling tool used in much the same fashion as a hoe. The Spanish used the coa to "hill" corn, in other words, to mound earth around the base of a corn stalk, thus providing extra support for the plant against the wind.⁴⁵

The introduction of the plow and other Spanish tools

⁴³ Charles Lummis, "Acoma Farmer," photograph, 1892, as reproduced in M. K. Keegan, Enduring Cultures: A Century of Photography of the Southwest Indians, (Santa Fe: Clearlight Publishers, 1990), plate 43.

⁴⁴ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 9.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 8-9.

played an integral part in the transformation of Ácoma agriculture. However, the use of metal tools began slowly and only accelerated as access to those tools became easier and more reliable. Metal tools did not become important to Ácoma farmers until the 1800s, and they continued to use many stone and wooden tools well into the twentieth century.⁴⁶

One example of the continued use of pre-Spanish technology is the digging stick. George Wharton James saw digging sticks in use similar to those used by the Ácoma before the Spanish Conquest.

To see a man planting corn with his rude stick shovel-- a smoothed-off bough from a tree, with the lower end broad and sharpened so that it can be thrust into the ground--is to wonder how results can be produced with such primitive appliances.⁴⁷

The introduction of new tools to the Ácoma by the Spanish produced limited changes in Ácoma agriculture. They had only limited access to metal tools, the most important innovation in the tool chest, until the nineteenth century.

⁴⁶ Dittert, "Culture Change," p. 570.

⁴⁷ George Wharton James, Land of the Delight Makers, (Boston: the Page Company, 1920), p. 188.

The Spanish themselves had only limited access to metal tools. Both of these groups received metal tools in greater quantities only after the opening of the Santa Fe Trail in the 1821. That opening provided them with an avenue to American manufactured merchandise, including, beginning in the 1840's, two-handed plows with a steel moldboard.⁴⁸

The introduction of livestock to the Pueblo Indians by the Spanish resulted in some significant changes in Pueblo Indian economies. Sheep became a very important species for the Pueblos for consumption, clothing, and trade. Horses, mules, and burros facilitated trade although the horse did not have as a significant an impact on the Pueblos as it did on the nomadic plains tribes. Other species of livestock, though represented by fewer numbers, also contributed to the growth of a new facet of Pueblo Indian agriculture.

The introduction of sheep helps to explain the demise of cotton. Wool is a warm and durable fiber, more so than cotton.⁴⁹ Sheep herding is also less work than raising cotton. Unlike cotton, a sheep population is self-

⁴⁸ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 9; Sunseri, "Agricultural Techniques," pp. 334-335.

⁴⁹ Hurt, Indian Agriculture, p. 43

perpetuating. To raise cotton the farmer must plow the field and plant it year after year. To reap a substantial amount of fiber, the farmer must plant a large field. It is much easier to watch over a herd of sheep, a job that could be given to a young boy, than to spend days in the field breaking one's back. Also, cotton bolls must be picked one at a time and then, prior to the development of the cotton gin in the 1790s, each seed must be removed by hand. While shearing sheep is not the easiest of tasks, it is much easier than transforming cotton on the plant into cloth. Not the least of sheep's assets is that they provide two crops. One may shear a sheep for its wool and then eat it or its young.

By the late nineteenth century, the Ácoma clothed themselves in wool rather than cotton cloth. G. Butler's description of the clothing worn by the Ácoma shows that the transition from cotton cloth to wool cloth had already occurred by the mid to late nineteenth century. The introduction of American products from 1822 could also account for the change in clothing materials. Much of what American traders carried on their trips to Santa Fe from the

United States was clothing.⁵⁰

Clearly, the introduction of sheep by the Spanish had a noticable impact upon Ácoma agriculture, clothing, food, and labor. But the Spanish introduced other animals to the Ácoma as well. Among these new, domestic animals were draught and pack animals such as horses, mules, burros, and oxen.⁵¹

Fray Francisco Anatasio Dominguez, who, during a tour of the missions, visited Ácoma on December 17, 1776, left a good account of the church and the pueblo as well as a short account of the agriculture of Ácoma. In this passage, Dominguez referred to the agricultural produce given to the Franciscan missionaries by the Ácoma. Included in this list were references to the various species of animals introduced by the missionaries and raised by the Ácoma.

The father of this mission [Laguna] does not have as much trouble as those mentioned before, because here (the same is true of Acoma and Zuñi) the father is given a sheep a week, and *frijoles* [beans], broad

⁵⁰ David J. Weber, The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), p. 128.

⁵¹ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 210; Hurt, Indian Agriculture, p. 43.

beans, eggs, lard, salt, flour, a tallow candle, and milk in the summer every day. The fiscal for the week collects all this from the pueblo...⁵²

The mission father apparently ate fairly well off his charges. This excerpt reveals that the Ácoma raised the ever-present sheep, as well as chickens, from which they collected the eggs; pigs, from whose fat the Ácoma made lard; and cattle which produced milk. The Ácoma raised fewer of these animals than sheep. They evidently did not particularly care for hogs. Even in 1883, the Ácoma Reservation contained only thirty pigs compared to over ten thousand sheep, or even twelve hundred cattle.⁵³

As Lt. Abert noted in his report, both Hispanics and Indians used burros to haul produce to and from markets. The introduction of pack animals stimulated trade in two ways. Burros, mules, and horses made market trips easier for the Indians by allowing them to haul larger amounts of produce. The introduction of pack animals also increased

⁵² Adams and Chavez, The Missions of New Mexico, p. 186.

⁵³ Pedro Sanchez, Indian Agent, "Statement of Number of Animals Owned by Pueblos of New Mexico, 1883," microfilm copy in Record Groups 75, microform #1070, roll #41.

the value of the corn crop since the animals needed the grain for food. If a bad year hit the area and the Spanish did not raise enough to feed themselves, let alone their animals, they would have to go to the Pueblo Indians and buy grain to keep themselves and their animals alive.⁵⁴ Pack animals became important in trade with the neighboring Spaniards.

The Ácoma had maintained trade relations with neighboring tribes long before the Spanish entrance into the Southwest. Antonio de Espejo reported that the Navajos,

...came down to serve the people in the towns, mingling and trading with them, bringing them salt, game (such as deer, rabbits and hares), dresses, chamois skins, and other goods in exchange for cotton blankets and various articles accepted in payment.⁵⁵

While documentary evidence is sketchy, the Ácoma probably continued to trade their produce to Navajos and also traded with the new Spanish and Mexican markets. Lt. Abert noticed trade between Mexicans and the Ácoma in the

⁵⁴ Hurt, Indian Agriculture, p. 64.

⁵⁵ Espejo, in Hammond and Rey, Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 213.

mid-nineteenth century. The Mexicans traded for peaches. The Ácoma could have traded for cloth. It is much easier to plant peach orchards once than plant cotton fields every year. Once the young trees had taken hold in the soil, they needed less maintenance over the course of the year than a field of cotton. The peaches could be harvested easily and sold right away, or traded, while the cotton had to be harvested, then processed and woven. It makes more economic sense to plant peaches and trade them for cloth whose production required many more hours of work.

The well-stocked Pueblo Indian granaries had long attracted Hispanic buyers. Not only did the presidential quartermaster in Santa Fe buy Pueblo Indian grain to feed the troops, but civilians went to the pueblos in times of crop failures. The distances between the Spanish population centers in New Mexico and the trade centers in old Mexico kept the Hispanics of the northern province from producing surpluses. Because of the distance, there was little incentive to provide a surplus for trade in commercial agricultural produce. Because the Spanish-Mexicans grew for subsistence and produced little or no surplus, they sometimes found themselves without enough to eat during

years of a bad harvest. During these times of trouble, the Hispanics of New Mexico traded with the Pueblo Indians, who kept with their tradition of over-production of crops and laying them away for years when not enough food could be grown. Because of a bad harvest, due to low water and bad snows, the Spanish made arrangements to trade with the Pueblos for food according to a report of economic conditions in New Mexico, written in 1802.⁵⁶

While most of the Spanish settled near the Rio Grande, some founded towns along Rio San Jose or Rio Cubero near Ácoma. Spanish settlers established three towns in the vicinity of Ácoma prior to the middle of the eighteenth century. Encinal, Cebollita and San Antonio were located just north of the Rio San José and between the Rio Cubero. Other settlements existed near Zuñi, less than seventy miles west of Ácoma, and other were located about twenty miles to the east of Laguna.⁵⁷ The Ácoma could reach all of these Spanish towns to trade in relatively little time.

⁵⁶ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 8; "Report of Economic Conditions in New Mexico, 1802," SANM II, reel #15, frames 84-91.

⁵⁷ Map of New Mexico by Don Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, 1779, in Thomas, Forgotten Frontiers, p. 87.

The Ácoma also traded for tools. The first metal tools used by Ácoma farmers came, at no expense, from the Franciscan missionaries.⁵⁸ Later, the Ácoma had to obtain these now necessary agricultural implements on their own. Whether the Ácoma traded with Hispanics who, in turn, traded with the Americans, or whether they traded directly with the American merchants is unknown. However, what is known is that the Americans brought tools and took home wool, which was a staple commodity of the Pueblo Indian farmers in general and those of Ácoma in particular.⁵⁹

In New Mexico during the Spanish colonial period, the Ácoma increasingly farmed for profit. Because they had the best land, access to water, and the tradition of intensive farming for production of surpluses, they could sell crops to their Spanish neighbors or trade for items that they needed but could not make themselves, such as metal implements.⁶⁰ Additionally, the Ácoma dropped the

⁵⁸ Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, p. 326.

⁵⁹ Warren A. Beck, New Mexico: A History of Four Centuries, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 118; Weber, The Mexican Frontier, p. 128.

⁶⁰ Hurt, Indian Agriculture, p. 64.

production of certain agricultural commodities in favor of more profitable items.⁶¹

In summary, the economy of Ácoma continued to be agricultural. Prior to Spanish contact, the Ácoma cultivated several species of plants and raised one species of livestock, the turkey.⁶² When the Spanish arrived, especially the Spanish Franciscan missionaries, the Ácoma gained access to a wider variety of plant cultigens, as well as other species of livestock including sheep, horses, burros, pigs, and cattle. Additionally, the Friars gave new tools to their charges and instructions on the cultivation of the introduced crops.⁶³ The Ácoma did not adopt these new technologies overnight; rather, technological adoption continued throughout the period.

The government of Ácoma did undergo some changes. While the traditional governmental structure of the *cacique*, *principales*, and so forth remained in place with their original functions intact, the Spanish initiated another

⁶¹ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 210-211.

⁶² Bandelier, Final Report, p. 156; Gunn, Scatchen, p. 26.

⁶³ Hurt, Indian Agriculture, p. 43; Bandelier, Final Report, p. 210.

governmental structure that overlay the original structure. The post-Spanish set of officers performed two functions. The first was to represent the pueblo in its relations with non-Indians. The second function was to mask the existence and real political power of the *cacique* and its set of officers. The existence of an annually elected governor, lieutenant governor, *fiscales* and ditch boss may have turned the attention of outsiders away from the politically powerful religious officers, but those officers retained the real political power in the pueblo. Although the increase in activity between the Pueblo Indians and non-Indians resulted in an increase in the power of the Spanish-origin officers, the religious officers found such activity to be beneath the dignity of their offices and were content to leave those affairs to the non-religious officers.⁶⁴

George Wharton James stated in 1920 that both the men and women tended the fields, and, remarked James, "the women are as proficient farmers as the men." However, the hunting of animals fell to the men, a "duty and privilege" that James

⁶⁴ White, The Acoma Indians, pp. 52-53; Sando, Pueblo Nations, p. 14; Spicer, Cycles of Conquest, pp 384-386.

believed the men did not mind.⁶⁵ Regardless of age or gender, everyone helped work the fields. Men, women, and children old enough to do so, worked. "The men do most of the heavy field work," stated White, "but women often perform the same tasks at planting and harvesting. The women do most of the garden work, although the men share in this, too."⁶⁶

Ordinary farming activities in the fields were performed individually, each farmer bearing responsibility for his own plot of land.⁶⁷ However, it was customary among the Pueblo Indians in general for everyone to help prepare, plant, hoe, irrigate, and harvest the *cacique's* fields, which, in reality, was a community field. The people performed this duty for ritualistic reasons.⁶⁸ They also did this because the *cacique* busied himself with the affairs of the pueblo. The people took care of his fields out of respect for his endeavors on their behalf so that he would

⁶⁵ James, the Delight Makers, p. 137.

⁶⁶ White, The Acoma Indians, p. 33.

⁶⁷ Bandelier and Hewett, Indians of the Rio Grande, p. 39.

⁶⁸ Castetter and Bell, Pima and Papago Agriculture, p. 229.

not have to worry about his land.

That the women began to work in the fields represents a change in the labor system of Ácoma. Prior to Spanish colonization, the men had tenure of the field. By the time of White's observations, women had begun to gain some access to the fields. That may be due, in part, to the changing role of women in the system of labor. In pre-Hispanic times, the women did not work in the fields; that was the domain of their husbands. With the introduction of sheep and the need of the man to guard and care for his flock, the woman became more involved in the production of crops. This involvement led, over time, to women gaining tenure of the fields where they worked.

One facet of the Ácoma social structure that underwent little change after Spanish colonization was the division of the usable and arable land among the inhabitants of the community. Prior to Spanish colonization, each pueblo claimed an area of land around the village although this area was usually not well-defined. This situation did not change. Within each pueblo's tract, the men were at liberty to till a field and thereby gain control of that field. When the occupier of the field died, the land passed to his

son or sons, although strict rules of inheritance did not exist. The holder of the field could also exchange or barter the control of the field, but only to other members of the village, or sometimes even only to other members of his clan.⁶⁹

According to more modern sources, the village owned the land and individuals used the land with the consent of the *cacique*. The individual farmers could continue to cultivate the land as long as they needed and as long as they continued to undertake their community duties.⁷⁰

Leslie White's description of Ácoma property rights and land tenure, observed during the late nineteen-twenties and early thirties, is particularly illuminating.

Theoretically, all land is communally owned, but each farm, however, is said to "belong" to some particular family. This means that they are using it and that they have the right to continue to use it, but should they neglect the land and allow it to lie idle someone else may ask the *cacique* [the chief person of authority in the pueblo] to allot the land to him. And the *cacique* has the authority to do this.

⁶⁹ Bandelier, Final Report, p. 161.

⁷⁰ Bandelier and Hewitt, Indians of the Rio Grande, p. 43.

Usually, the land stayed within the family, to be divided among the children upon the death of the father.⁷¹

As Gallegos witnessed at the pueblo of Malagon, the *cacique* controlled access to the field. He then gave control of the field to those men who needed it, especially newlyweds.⁷² The control of the productive land by the *cacique* did not change.

The religious situation at Ácoma at the beginning of the American occupation of New Mexico is not well known. Few records tell anything about Ácoma religion. Fray Anatasio Dominguez noted in 1776 that the Ácoma retained many customs of their traditional religion, while absorbing very little in the way of Catholic training.⁷³ Seventy-one years later, Lieutenant Abert noted that the Ácoma exhibited a "smattering" of Catholicism, but that their houses were

⁷¹ White, The Acoma Indians, p. 34.

⁷² Gallegos, in Hammond and Rey, The Rediscovery of New Mexico, p. 102.

⁷³ Fray Anatasio Dominguez quoted in Dozier, Pueblo Indians, p. 72.

crowded with crosses.⁷⁴ While the houses of the Ácoma may have contained a great number of crosses, their church and its contents lends credence to the belief that they were not willing to invest much time and capital in maintainance of holy equipment. An inventory of Ácoma mission conducted in 1810 showed a large number of artifacts, but they were almost universally in poor condition.⁷⁵

The Franciscan missionaries were primarily responsible for the changes brought about at Ácoma after Spanish colonization. The Franciscans taught the methods used to grow the new crops as well as the care of the new species of livestock. The effects of these changes in agriculture go beyond simply the changes in crops, methodology and tools. The introduction of new crops led to greater trade. The added Spanish population also meant new markets. The introduction of livestock, especially sheep, meant new goods to sell. The introduction of sheep also led to changes in

⁷⁴ Lt. Abert, p. 472.

⁷⁵ Inventory of Ácoma Mission, May 10, 1810 by Fray Jose Pedro Rubi. Original in possession of family of Martin Pino, Acomita, New Mexico. Microfilmed in May, 1953, copy located in "Ácoma Records," reel #3, Center for Southwest Research, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico.

the system of labor, and wool replaced cotton as the material of choice for clothing. The use of horses, burros, and oxen to plow the fields, process crops, and carry burdens caused further changes in the types of crops grown. While the integration of Spanish material culture progressed slowly, even with the pressure of the missionaries, the Ácoma took what was given them and incorporated these items into their way of life. Despite these material changes, the underlying structure of the pueblo, their land-use customs, social organization, and division of labor, remained relatively unchanged. Forced by the Spanish to adopt a European governmental structure, the Ácoma simply grafted this structure onto their existing one. The two forms of government developed as distinct, separate entities. However, the traditional political structure remained the most politically powerful, controlling the ceremonial life as well as the economic life of the pueblo.

Conclusions:

Change on Their Own Terms

In 1598, Don Juan de Oñate claimed possession of New Mexico as part of the Spanish empire. In 1821, Mexico declared its independence from Spain, taking New Mexico with it out of Spain's sphere of political influence. So ended the two hundred and twenty-odd years of Spanish hegemony and Spain's colonial Indian policy in New Mexico. During its years in New Mexico, Spain implemented an Indian policy based on the supposition that in order to maintain political control of its colonial possessions, fulfill its obligation to the Pope, and effectively populate its colonies, the natives of the colonies must be culturally transformed into Spaniards. This transformation would include the conversion of the traditional pueblo political structure into one based on the Spanish model, of the traditional pueblo social structure into the Spanish social structure, and even of the lifestyle of the Pueblos into the Spanish lifestyle. But most importantly, the Spanish believed that in order to truly transform the Pueblos, before the political, social,

and lifestyle changes could really take effect, the Pueblos must become Catholic. Despite their attempts, the Spanish in New Mexico failed in their endeavors to recast the Pueblos in their own mold. The Spanish treatment of the pueblo of Ácoma exemplifies the Spanish attempts and failures at conversion. While on the surface some changes occurred, all the fundamental structures of Ácoma remained as they were in their traditional state.

The Spanish in New Mexico used various methods to institute the alterations in Ácoma society. Some were more successful than others. The Spanish hoped that simply having contact with what they thought was their own superior civilization would affect the Pueblos. The hope was that the Pueblos would absorb Spanish culture through osmosis, realize its inherent superiority, and adopt it. But Ácoma lay too far from the center of Spanish settlement to be influenced by the colonists. The Spanish also instituted the practice of the *encomienda* to directly institute cultural change, obtaining cheap labor while requiring the *encomendero* to educate the natives. However, despite Ácoma incorporation in an *encomienda* during the first century of Spanish rule, no evidence suggests that the *encomendero*

acted on his traditional prerogatives to obtain labor or acted on his traditional obligations to educate.

Regardless, the *encomienda* system in New Mexico died with the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. But the hopes of the Spanish for their colonial Indian policy weighed most heavily upon the mission. The Franciscan missionaries were to be the main instigators of cultural change: teaching, proselytizing, and converting. Of these various means of conversion, only the missionaries had any real success. But these minor successes did not translate into major triumphs.

The traditional economy of Ácoma was agricultural, with hunting and gathering and trade supplementing the needs of the pueblo. The agricultural economy did not change during the Spanish colonial period. In fact, the Spanish did not attempt to change the economy since agriculture fit into the feudal economy of the Spanish. The Spanish attempted to incorporate the Ácoma economy within their own economic system. To do so did not necessarily entail changing the economy of the Ácoma. But what the Spanish did attempt to change were the other aspects of Ácoma society: the ways of life, the political structure, and, most importantly, the religion. But the Spanish did not succeed in altering any

of these facets of Ácoma society.

The Spanish colonial period was an era of significant change in what the Ácoma produced. The Spanish introduced many new crops, new species of livestock, and new tools to the Ácoma. Yet these changes served only to reinforce the traditional Ácoma economy, which was agricultural. After the establishment of the mission on Ácoma mesa, the Franciscan missionaries taught the Ácoma the cultivation of crops brought by them from Spain or from Spanish possessions in Old Mexico. The friars introduced plants such as peaches, tomatoes, chilies, vegetable crops, wheat, and melons. The missionaries were relatively new to the cultivation of maize, squash, and beans while the Ácoma had cultivated these three plants for millennia. Although the American Triad continued to be the major component in the Ácoma diet, Spanish influence was important because of the imported crops, despite their being somewhat less significant in the Ácoma diet than the traditional ones.

Perhaps even more important than the incorporation of Spanish crops was the assimilation of livestock introduced by the Spanish. When the conquistadors first arrived in New Mexico, the Ácoma had only two domesticated animals, the

turkey and the dog. The turkey, however, was used more for its feathers than for its meat. The Spanish introduced cattle, horses, burros, and especially sheep. The Ácoma continued to raise turkeys, but raised the imported livestock in great numbers. Indeed, the Ácoma horse herd exceeded that of many Spanish communities by the mid-eighteenth century. The extension of the livestock aspect of Ácoma agriculture had important consequences.

While the Spanish introduction of crops and livestock increased the number of species raised by the Ácoma, Spanish introductions also expanded the means by which the Ácoma produced these crops. Prior to Spanish colonization, Ácoma farmers primarily used two tools, the digging stick and the stone-headed hoe, to work their fields. The missionaries introduced Spanish farming implements during their conversion efforts. These tools, such as the coa and especially the plow, helped the Ácoma to become more productive farmers. Yet the digging stick and the hoe continued to be their primary agricultural implements though the Ácoma replaced their stone hoes with metal ones. The incorporation of Spanish tools resulted in the better production of all crops, both traditional and imported.

One particular, and very important, aspect of Ácoma agriculture remained the same. The water used by the Ácoma remained in Ácoma hands, and the technology employed to utilize the water did not change. The Ácoma used irrigation technology to water their crops prior to the Spanish conquest and continued to use irrigation, without new technology from the Spanish, throughout the Spanish period. The Ácoma continued to irrigate their crops because, in their arid environment, they could not rely on rainfall alone to provide adequate water. The Spanish did not interfere with the irrigation. Rather, the Spanish adopted Pueblo irrigation practices, though they modified them somewhat.¹

Between 1598 and 1821, the Ácoma modified the ways in which men and women divided the labor necessary in their agricultural economy, but how extensively they modified it by 1821 is unclear due to the lack of evidence. But by the early twentieth century, women had begun to control land and do some work in the fields. However, these changes kept within the traditional Ácoma framework of labor divisions

¹ Simmons, "Colonial Agriculture," p. 4.

and have more to do with changes in what livestock was raised, the introduction of sheep, for instance, than to any attempt by the Spanish to change the nature of Ácoma society directly.

Control and distribution of agricultural resources remained as they were prior to Spanish colonization. Before the Spanish arrived in New Mexico, the *cacique* controlled access to the land. He divided the land among the farmers according to need. At the end of Spanish hegemony, the *cacique* continued to control access to the land. The *cacique's* continued control of land illustrates the continued power of the traditional political structure of the pueblo as opposed to the one introduced by the Spanish. While the post-Spanish governmental structure dealt with the external intrusion of non-Indians for the pueblo, the traditional structure endured as the wielder of most power within the pueblo.

To maintain an agricultural subsistence pattern, agricultural societies require access to arable land and water. The Ácoma continued to live and farm the same land that they had farmed since, at least, the thirteenth century. Neither the Spanish nor the Americans after them

took possession of this land. On the contrary, the Spanish Crown granted Ácoma the title to the land on which they lived and farmed. After the American takeover of New Mexico, the United States congress confirmed the Spanish grant.² Within the bounds of this grant runs the Rio San Jose. It is from this river that the Ácoma divert water to irrigate their main fields twelve miles from Ácoma Mesa. Neither the Spanish nor the Americans took control of the land or water necessary for agricultural production from the pueblo; rather they reinforced the control of these resources by the pueblo.

Regardless of the changes in what crops and livestock the Ácoma raised or the tools that they used to raise them, the Ácoma economy remained intact. In order to purchase the metal tools the Ácoma now found necessary to farm with, they were increasingly forced to participate in trade networks that included both the Spanish and, late in the Spanish Period, Americans. However, such trade constituted less of a dramatic shift in the Ácoma economy than simply the addition of other groups with whom the Ácoma traded. Trade

² Minge, Ácoma, p. 59.

had been an important part of the Ácoma economy since very early in the pueblo's history.

Overall, the fundamental basis of life at Ácoma remained consistent with their traditional society, despite the efforts of the Spanish to change them. Documenting and explaining change is much simpler than documenting and explaining the lack of change. Yet, at Ácoma, the reasons for the persistence and continuity of traditional life are clear. The conservative nature of the Ácoma and their ability to incorporate aspects of Spanish culture while resisting great change, and their isolation from the centers of Spanish civilization in the Americas, allowed them to maintain their traditions.

The Ácoma were able to incorporate aspects of Spanish culture into their own while keeping those aspects distinct. This compartmentalization allowed them to maintain their own political structure and religion while presenting a front that could be viewed by the Spanish as evidence of adoption of Spanish cultural traits. When Spanish insistence on adoption of Spanish ways became overwhelming, the Ácoma rebelled against Spanish authority, resulting in the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the years of discord produced by the

Spanish attempting to reestablish authority. Once authority was reinstated, the threat of further rebellion, combined with new external threats, resulted in a decrease in attempts by the Spanish to convert the Ácoma to the Spanish model.

Another factor in the continuance of traditional culture is the isolation of Ácoma from the main settlements of the Spanish. Since most of the Spanish settlements lay along the banks of the Rio Grande, seventy miles east of the pueblo, the Ácoma had few contacts with the Spanish other than the missionaries and the occasional visitor. As historian Ward Alan Minge has correctly asserted, "The resultant isolation of Ácoma is basic to understanding the land and its people throughout their history."³ Just as New Mexico was one of the provinces farthest from the center of Spanish civilization, so too Ácoma was one of the farthest points from the center of Spanish civilization in New Mexico.

The pueblo of Ácoma has existed in its current site since 1200 C.E. This early date of settlement makes Ácoma

³ *Ibid*, pp. 13-14.

the oldest continuously inhabited town in the United States. From the founding of their town to the end of Spanish domination of New Mexico, the Ácoma have maintained their traditional culture. The Ácoma defended their culture in the face of a determined adversary. The Spanish attempted to make over the people to their own liking. They attacked the Ácoma religion, the political structure, and the ways of life of the people. The Spanish even attempted to destroy the pueblo entirely. They did not succeed. Ácoma pueblo rose from the ashes of its attempted destruction to continue the ways of life its inhabitants had practiced for hundreds of years, albeit with some modifications. This continuation in the face of adversity is why Ácoma is the phoenix on the mesa.

Appendix A
Chronology of Anasazi Cultural Types*

Dates	Period (Pecos Classificat ion)	Characteristics
1600- Present	Pueblo V	Large, plaza-oriented pueblos; <i>Kachina</i> phenomenon with some Roman Catholic adaptation; introduction of livestock
1350- 1600	Pueblo IV	Large, plaza-oriented pueblos; <i>Kachina</i> phenomenon widespread; plain pottery using poly-chrome rather than black-on-white glaze
1150- 1350	Pueblo III	Large pueblos; cliff dwellings; corrugated gray and black-on-white pottery; abandonments of Four Corners region by 1300
900- 1150	Pueblo II	Chacoan florescence; "Great Houses," great kivas; unit pueblos; corrugated black-on-white pottery
750-900	Pueblo I	Large villages in some areas; unit pueblos of "proto-kiva;" great kivas; plain and neck-banded gray pottery, some black-on-white and red ware
500-750	Basketmaker III	Deep pithouses; plain gray pottery; beans added to cultigens
50-500	Basketmaker II	Shallow pithouses; no pottery; corn and squash cultivation

* Lipe, "The Southwest," in Ancient Native Americans, pp. 345, 366-377; Roberts, the Old Ones, p. 243.

1200 BC - 50 CE	Basketmaker II (early)	long-term, seasonal use of caves; no pottery; corn and squash cultivation
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Appendix B

Chronology of Ácoma Culture Province Cultural Types **

Date	Period (Ácoma Type Phases)	Characteristics
1600- present	Ácoma	Modern Ácoma traits.
1400-1600	Cubero	Large, fortified, storied pueblos though masonry declines relative to Kowina phase; D-shaped kivas, possible introduction of square kivas; northern gray corrugated, gray-brown indented, St. Johns polychrome, Zuíi and Ácoma glazes.
1200-1400	Kowina	Large, fortified pueblos with regular, coursed masonry; D-shaped kivas; northern gray corrugated, gray indented, polychromes, Zuíi glazes and red-ware towards end of period.
1050-1200	Pilares	Storied, contiguous room pueblos of coursed and uncoursed masonry; round and D-shaped (?) kivas; northern gray corrugated, variations of black-on-white, St. Johns polychrome, few brown-ware ceramics.

** Ruppe, Ácoma Culture Province, table 18, pp. 242-246.

950-1050	Cebollita	Contiguous room pueblos of coursed and uncoursed masonry; kivas presumed present; exuberant corrugated, northern gray, variations of black-on-white, black-on-red, brown-ware pottery.
870-950	Red Mesa	Pithouse, jacal, contiguous surface house using coursed masonry, brush and mud walls on masonry bases; pit structure kiva; Kana-a gray, exuberant corrugated, variations of black-on-white, some brown-ware pottery.
800-870	Kiathuthlanna	Pithouse, jacal, contiguous-room surface houses built of coursed sandstone masonry bases; kivas derived from pithouses; Lino gray, Kana-a gray, variations of black-on-white pottery.
700-800	White Mound	Pithouses, shallow firepits; Lino gray, black-on-white pottery.
500-700	Lobo	No architecture; Basketmaker III and Pueblo I ceramics.
	Late San Jose	-
1800 BC - 300 CE	San Jose	-

Appendix C
 Ácoma Population

Date	Population	Observer	Source
1599	3000	Juan de Oñate	Bolton, <u>Spanish Exploration in the Southwest</u> , p. 218
1599	1200	Capt. Velasco	"Velasco to Viceroy," in Hammond and Rey, <u>Don Juan de Oñate</u> , p. 614.
1629	2000	Fr. Benavides	Ayer, <u>Memorial of Benavides</u> , p. 27.
1680	1500	none given	Gunn, <u>Scatchen</u> , p. 59.
1760	1052	Bishop Tamaron	Adams and Chavez, <u>Bishop Tamaron's Visitation</u> , p. 69.
1776	530	Dominguez	Minge, <u>Acoma</u> , p. 186.
1821	477	Census Report	<u>MANM</u> , roll #1, frame #480.

Appendix D



Map compiled from maps in Dozier, The Pueblo Indians, p. 41; "New Mexico in 1602," based on the Enrico Martinez map of 1602 in Hammond and Rey, Rediscovery of New Mexico, frontispiece; maps of pueblos in Albert H. Schroeder, "Pueblos Abandoned in Historic Times," in Handbook of North American Indians, pp. 236-154, pp. 238-239.

Appendix E



Map compiled from maps in Dozier, *The Pueblo Indians*, p. 41; "New Mexico in 1602," based on the Enrico Martinez map of 1602 in Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery of New Mexico*, frontispiece; Don Bernardo de Miera y Pacheco, "Map of New Mexico, 1779," in Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers*, mid-section.

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