

7-1-1949

## New Mexico in Transition

Arnold L. Rodriguez

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Rodriguez, Arnold L.. "New Mexico in Transition." *New Mexico Historical Review* 24, 3 ().  
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/nmhr/vol24/iss3/3>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in New Mexico Historical Review by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [amywinter@unm.edu](mailto:amywinter@unm.edu), [lsloane@salud.unm.edu](mailto:lsloane@salud.unm.edu), [sarahrk@unm.edu](mailto:sarahrk@unm.edu).

## NEW MEXICO IN TRANSITION

By ARNOLD L. RODRÍGUEZ, O.F.M.\*

### CHAPTER I

#### *The Land and the People*

ON December 4, 1852, the Secretary of War of the United States, Charles M. Conrad, in presenting to Congress a plan for administering the newly-acquired territory of New Mexico, said that the region was “. . . so remote and inaccessible, and holds out so little inducement to emigration, that the struggle between the two races [Indians and Whites] is destined, in all probability, to continue there long after it shall have ceased in every other portion of the continent.”<sup>1</sup> He revealed that the annual upkeep of the army in New Mexico alone amounted to one million dollars, and he felt that this was a waste of money, since Indian depredations continued, in spite of military protection. He stated that the total value of the real estate in that region was estimated at about \$2,700,000 and that to protect the small white population of 61,000

. . . we are compelled to maintain a large military force, at an annual expense nearly equal to half the value of the whole real estate of the Territory. Would it not be better to induce the inhabitants to abandon a country which seems hardly fit for the habitation of civilized man, by remunerating them for their property in money or in lands situated in more favored regions? Even if the Government paid for the property quintuple its value, it would still, merely on the score of economy, be largely the gainer by the transaction, and the troops now stationed in New Mexico would be available for the protection of other portions of our own and of the Mexican territory.<sup>2</sup>

Conrad was led to this expedient by correspondence he had maintained with Colonel Edwin V. Sumner, commander of the New Mexico military department. In a letter dated

---

\* This work was originally done as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the Catholic University of America.

1. *Congressional Globe*, 32 Cong., 2 Sess., Appendix, p. 6.

2. *Ibid.*

May 27, 1852, for instance, Sumner forwarded a report to Conrad containing a scathing criticism of the people of New Mexico and expressing the conviction that there was no hope of ever bettering their condition.<sup>3</sup> The plan of Conrad to give New Mexico back to the Indians might have been well-intentioned, but it evoked protests and severe criticism from various parts of the country. Particularly bitter was the abolitionist newspaper, the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, at the time the only newspaper in the Territory. After refuting the Secretary of War's assertions, one editorial stated: "Mr. Conrad . . . knows almost nothing of our Territory. His . . . policy would not be a bad one for our Territory, provided we did not have to sell out at *his estimate*."<sup>4</sup> Three weeks later the same paper commented:

When the Secretary was advertising us for sale, generosity should have induced him to state the whole truth, in regard to our condition, bad as it may be. If we are worth but little, we have a personal pride in bringing our full value. He ought at least to have told the world that the census returns show the real and personal estate of this people to be \$5,174,471 in value, and that it would be neither just nor gracious, to take our land away and leave our personal property, supported from our lands, on our hands, to starve.<sup>5</sup>

The attitude of Conrad toward New Mexico was typical of the current feeling in the United States at the time. Contemporary American writers manifested a lack of understanding of the people of the newly-acquired Territory and almost a total ignorance of its topography, resources, and extent. Popular conception of that vast land ranged from a paradise where all sorts of plants grew, to a desert land, unfit for agricultural purposes. One reason for these false views was that for some years after the occupation of New Mexico the Washington government failed to undertake a systematic survey of the region. This neglect was bitterly resented by New Mexicans, as is evidenced by the repeated editorials on the subject which appeared in the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*. One editorial said:

. . . One instance of neglect, to mention no more, consists in leaving

3. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, March 5, 1853.

4. *Ibid.*, January 29, 1853.

5. *Ibid.*, February 19, 1853.

our country unexplored. . . . The map of New Mexico is but little more than a map of the Rio Grande, for almost all other parts of the vast region are marked with the words, "unknown" or "unexplored." And whilst this gross neglect of our geographical and geological exploration of the very heart and center of our empire, on the part of the General Government, we find her laboriously and expensively engaged in exploring foreign countries and distant seas. Whilst vast regions of our country remain not only unsettled, but unexplored, we find the Government favoring with the public purse the exploration of the valley of the Amazon, in South America. . . .<sup>6</sup>

As late as 1874 the resources of New Mexico were unknown in the United States, and in a testimony before the Committee on Military Affairs of the House of Representatives, General William T. Sherman said that New Mexico was of no value to the Union. The best thing that could be done with it, he added, would be to "prevail on Mexico to take it back."<sup>7</sup>

Only the few Americans who had lived in New Mexico for some years and had attempted to understand the people, held any hopes for the region. They recognized the value of the Territory for its undeveloped resources of a pastoral and mineral character, and regarded the inhabitants as intelligent and capable of becoming loyal American citizens.<sup>8</sup>

In the period under consideration, namely from 1830 to 1860, New Mexico had an area of about 240,000 square miles and included what we now know as New Mexico, Arizona, and the southeastern part of Colorado. It was a land of contrasts, with a variety of climate, topography, and people. Semi-arid for the most part, the region had high mountains, fertile valleys, and vast deserts. Through it ran the Rio Grande which today serves for 1,250 miles as a boundary between Mexico and the United States, and makes agriculture possible in the lowlands.<sup>9</sup> In certain regions agriculture failed to make progress, not only because of the antiquated methods employed, but also because some bottomlands con-

6. *Ibid.*, February 12, 1853. An account of these explorations may be found in William L. Herndon and Larner Gibbon, *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon* (3 vols., Washington, D. C.: Robert Armstrong, 1854). This work forms part of *House Exec. Docs.*, 33 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 53.

7. *Congressional Record*, 44 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 3825-3828.

8. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, February 12, 1853.

9. A. G. Harper, A. R. Córdoba, and K. Oberg, *Man and Resources in the*

tained alluvial deposits which retarded the growth of plants.<sup>10</sup>

The population also presented contrasts. There were the Pueblo Indians, who led a sedentary life in their well-organized villages and were devoted to agriculture, sheep-grazing, and weaving; the Spanish and mestizo population, which dwelt for the most part in towns, systematically laid out in the more fertile valleys. Beginning in the second decade of the nineteenth century another group started migrating to New Mexico, small in numbers, but with an important role to play in the development of the region, namely the Anglo-Americans from the United States. By the fourth decade of the century their influence began to be felt in social and economic life, and their dominating influence was to bring New Mexico into the current life in the United States, which was then in its formative period of natural development.

Although the peoples of New Mexico lived in peace among themselves, they were harassed until the second half of the nineteenth century by the plains Indians, nomadic and war-like in character, by whom they were practically surrounded. Prominent among them were the Utes, the Apaches, and the fearful Comanches. These plains tribes were the dread of the white population and the Pueblo Indians alike, upon whom they periodically descended, destroying their crops and stealing their women, children, and cattle.

Both nature and the nomadic marauders of the surrounding area conspired against the work of the white man and the Pueblo Indians. As if this were not enough, New Mexico had a third drawback, namely, distance. For over two centuries New Mexico was the northernmost outpost of New Spain, the capital of which was Mexico City. Between the capital and New Mexico lay a tremendous expanse of high mountains, treacherous arroyos, and arid desert, all of which made communication exceedingly difficult. That the

---

*Middle Rio Grande Valley* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1943), pp. 2-7.

10. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

region survived as a colony of New Spain at all in the midst of these disheartening obstacles is a tribute to the courage of the colonizers. That they had made a certain amount of economic and cultural progress, speaks well for the Spaniards' resourcefulness and their abiding faith in God.

Census-taking in nineteenth century New Mexico was a difficult task. The ruggedness of the country and the isolation of communities were but two of the obstacles. As a result, no one knew with any degree of certainty how many whites and Indians inhabited the country when the Americans arrived. In 1844 it was estimated that there were about 99,204 souls in the territory, of whom roughly a third were plains Indians and about 7,000 were Pueblo Indians;<sup>11</sup> the remainder constituted the white and mestizo population. Roughly speaking, then, there were about 60,000 inhabitants of European origin or culture in what we now know as New Mexico when General Stephen W. Kearny took over the region.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it had been the practice of the governors of this northern province of New Spain to make grants of land to individuals and communities for distinguished services to the Spanish Crown, particularly for military services in the campaigns against the plains Indians. Later, when Mexico declared its independence, this practice of land grants was continued with the idea of encouraging agriculture and stock raising.<sup>12</sup> Yet, the tendency of the people, as a protection against the frequent Indian depredations, was to settle in villages and towns.

As early as 1812 Don Pedro Pino, in his report to the Spanish Cortes at Cádiz, mentioned that there were in New Mexico 102 Spanish towns and 22 Indian pueblos.<sup>13</sup> These

11. L. Bradford Prince, *Historical Sketches of New Mexico from the Earliest Records to the American Occupation* (New York: Leggat Brothers, 1883), p. 239; David Y. Thomas, *A History of Military Government in Newly Acquired Territory of the United States*, Vol. XX, *Studies in History, Economics and Public Law* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1904), p. 114.

12. W. F. M. Arny, *Interesting Items Regarding New Mexico: Its Agricultural, Pastoral and Mineral Resources, People, Climate, Soil, Scenery, etc.* (Santa Fe: Manderfield and Tucker, 1873), p. 35.

13. Pedro Bautista Pino, *Noticias históricas y estadísticas de la antigua provincia*

communities were located in the central and southern part of the region, in the fertile Rio Grande Valley. Irrigated by this river, the territory offered many opportunities for various types of agriculture, while at the same time the towns, with their military barracks, offered some security from hostile Indians.<sup>14</sup> Gradually some of these settlements developed into important centers of trade, government, and culture, as, for example, Santa Fe, Taos, and Albuquerque. By the middle of the nineteenth century the white population was predominantly urban, although haciendas and small farms dotted the fertile valleys and mountain sides.

A typical New Mexican town, and the most important in the territory, was the old capital, Santa Fe. Situated near the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, it was built in the traditional Spanish way, over an extensive area of land, with a public square or plaza in the center. Facing the plaza were the principal buildings, such as the Palace of the Governors, the military chapel of Our Lady of Light, and the parish church which later became the cathedral. The rest of the square was taken up with stores and shops of various kinds. These business establishments, according to one writer, consisted of a printing office, twenty-five stores, two tailor shops, two shoemakers, two blacksmith shops, an apothecary, and a bakery.<sup>15</sup> Writing in 1851, an American describes the downtown section of Santa Fe in the following words:

The houses are all built of mud brick, called adobe, and only the churches, the Governor's Palace, and one hotel styled the "Exchange" are higher than one story. The main plaza is the center of the city and is the great market place. Here are to be seen vendors of all kinds of marketable stuff. The sunny side of the streets is crowded with ragged men, women, and children, all asking in the most pitiful tones for alms.

---

*del Nuevo-México presentada por su disputado en Cortes, D. Pedro Bautista Pino en Cádiz el año de 1812, adicionadas por el Lic. D. Antonio Barreiro en 1839; y últimamente anotadas por el Lic. Don José Agustín de Escudero para la Comisión de Estadística Militar de la República Mexicana (México: Imprenta de Lara, 1849), p. 6 (note).*

14. Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies, or the Journal of a Santa Fe Trader* (2 vols., 4th ed., Philadelphia: J. W. Moore, 1850), I, 144-145.

15. William W. H. Davis, *El Gringo or New Mexico and Her People* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857), p. 167.

I was surprised to see so many objects of distress of both sexes with scarcely their nakedness covered.<sup>16</sup>

Scattered around this central portion were the humble homes of the people, all one-story high, with but few exceptions, constructed of adobe or mud brick. Adjacent to the towns were the lands cultivated by the inhabitants.<sup>17</sup> Besides the parish church and the military chapel, there were two other small churches where services were occasionally held, the old Church of San Miguel and the chapel of Our Lady of Guádalupe.<sup>18</sup> The population of Santa Fe in 1846 was estimated at between two and four thousand and in 1866 the number was put at about 5,000.<sup>19</sup>

In 1866 the general aspect of the city was still dreary and unattractive. As one traveler wrote:

The houses are . . . flush with the street-naked walls with but one or two openings. Nothing can be more sordid, monotonous, and unarchitectural than the exterior of these buildings. . . . Seen at a distance, they present the general appearance of sliced brick-kilns. Pike's simile is also very good. He says when he first entered Santa Fe, it presented the appearance of a fleet of flat-boats, moored at the foot of the mountain.<sup>20</sup>

He added: "A refreshing feature of Santa Fe is made by the acequias or streams of running water used for irrigation which pleasantly, and in unexpected places, ripple and babble at your feet as you wander through the town."<sup>21</sup> But in the twenty years during which the Americans had been in Santa Fe a slight transformation had taken place in the plaza. Instead of the mud and dust which the American army of occupation found, the square was now enclosed with

16. Clinton E. Brooks and Frank D. Reeve, eds., "James A. Bennett: A Dragoon in New Mexico, 1850-1856," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XXII (January, 1947), 69. This work has also appeared in book form under the title of *Forts and Forays* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1948).

17. Prince, *op. cit.*, pp. 244-245.

18. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

19. W. H. Emory, *Notes of a Military Reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, Including Part of the Arkansas, Del Norte, and Gila Rivers, Made in 1846-1847 with the Advanced Guard of the "Army of the West"*. (Washington, D. C.: Wendell and Van Benthuysen, 1848), p. 34; James F. Meline, *Two Thousand Miles on Horseback* (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1867), p. 151.

20. Meline, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 154.



a railing, planted with grass, and shaded by large cottonwood trees.<sup>22</sup>

As may be expected in a frontier society, New Mexico life was characterized by a certain crudeness and lack of refinement. The hundreds of miles that separated the province from Mexico City, the center of culture, had a depressing effect upon the cultural progress of the New Mexicans. Except among the wealthy, there were few comforts of life because hardly any cultural or commercial bonds existed with the rest of New Spain. Nevertheless, a definite moral and religious program was carried on by the Catholic Church and this was a redeeming point of society, for to the Church was due, in great measure, the stable character of the colony and what little culture it possessed.

Certain evils were inescapable in such an atmosphere. One of these was the vice of gambling. Protected by the laws of the country, this vice was widespread among all classes of people, so much so that even children of ten years of age were often seen playing cards for pennies.<sup>23</sup> A visitor in Santa Fe in 1854 observed that at least \$700,000 were lost and won in half an hour at a gambling place in Santa Fe.<sup>24</sup>

*Chuzza*, a card game, was as common among the women as bridge probably is today.<sup>25</sup> J. W. Abert was shocked at the prevalence of gambling in 1846, but he was impressed with the temperance in food and drink of New Mexicans. He wrote that to call a man a "drunkard" there was considered one of the worst insults.<sup>26</sup> Drunkenness was severely punished by law. For example, the first time a person was found guilty of intoxication he was given two months at hard labor or, in other cases, he might be paroled for five months, during which time he was obliged to work for a private citizen, his wages being used to pay court expenses. If anything remained of his pay it was turned over to his family.<sup>27</sup>

22. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

23. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

24. Brooks and Reeve, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

25. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, November 15, 1856.

26. *House Exec. Docs.*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 41, p. 455.

27. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, February 12, 1853.

Little or nothing was done in the realm of social welfare. A penitentiary, for instance, was unknown until 1882.<sup>28</sup> And even then, if a murderer or robber was convicted and confined to jail, he often found some means of escape.<sup>29</sup>

Orphans and wayward children were always a social problem, for there were no organized agencies to provide for them. Many children of unknown parentage roamed the streets of every town, subsisting on the scanty alms provided by the people. Their number grew to such an alarming proportion that Governor Henry Connelly pleaded with the people in 1863 to help him provide for them, since it was the duty of the entire community, he argued, to provide for the temporal welfare of orphans and other destitute children who lacked parental protection.<sup>30</sup>

In consequence of this state of affairs, much stealing and robbing were perpetrated. Homes, stores, and individuals were victimized. Even American army camps did not escape, for quantities of food and clothing often disappeared from them.<sup>31</sup> Apparently thieves were not respecters of persons, for Bishop John J. Lamy and other ecclesiastics were victimized, as appears from the following item in the *Weekly Gazette*:

Bishop Lamy was robbed of a considerable amount of money a few nights ago. It would seem that the light-fingered gentry are determined to bleed the Bishop pretty freely as this is the second or third time, we believe, that we have heard of his having been lanced since he first came to this Territory. These predatory excursions upon the domains of the Bishop, together with the robbery of the Methodist Chapel, last summer, seem to indicate that gentlemen of the profes-

28. Lansing B. Bloom, "New Mexico under Mexican administration," *Old Santa Fe*, II (January, 1915), 201-205.

29. Arie Poldervaart, "Black-robed Justice in New Mexico, 1846-1912," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XXII (April, 1947), 123-125.

This story has been reprinted in book form by the University of New Mexico Press, 1948.

30. Henry Connelly, *El segundo mensaje anual de S.E.D. Enrique Connelly a la Asamblea Legislativa del Territorio de Nuevo Méjico, pronunciado diciembre de 1863* (Santa Fe: Oficina del "Nuevo Mejicano," 1863), p. 5.

31. Thomas Falconer, *Letters and Notes on the Texas Santa Fe Expedition, 1841-1842* (New York: Dauber and Pine, Inc., 1930), p. 117; Brooks and Reeve, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-175.

sion are not at all particular about the character of their victims. We advise the Bishop and all others to do as we do—keep no money.<sup>32</sup>

Occasionally the tables were turned on the New Mexicans as the Americans emulated some of their thievish tendencies. In such cases it was not unusual for the New Mexicans to take the matter rather stoically and to make the best of it. On one occasion American soldiers despoiled a priest of considerable grain supplies and, instead of protesting, he offered them a drink as they left the house.<sup>33</sup> On another occasion the Americans made a raid on a farm and escaped with a fair supply of beans—a precious staple in that country. The owner caught up with the thieves but he took the matter graciously, for as one witness tells the story:

We had gone but a short distance until we camped and the boys put the beans on the boil. Pretty soon the Mexican came up and we looked for trouble. He sat around and said nothing. When the beans were cooked, we offered him a dish and he ate heartily. We were much delighted to see how he relished his beans.<sup>34</sup>

The condition of women was characteristic of any frontier settlement. Some contemporary writers praise their virtues, while others write of the prevalence of immorality. The custom of keeping indoors and avoiding strangers was characteristic.<sup>35</sup>

Women lived in constant fear of Indian raids, for on those occasions they were often made the prizes of war, being carried into captivity. To ransom them was extremely difficult and costly. These war captives were usually bartered or sold into slavery among the Indians or were retained as concubines. In 1851 one case particularly caused great indignation among the Americans in Santa Fe. The

32. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, January 8, 1853.

33. Frank S. Edwards, *A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan* (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1848), pp. 72-73.

34. James A. Little, *What I Saw on the Santa Fe Trail* (Plainfield: Friends Press, 1904), pp. 50-51.

35. John T. Hughes, *Doniphan's Expedition; Containing an Account of the Conquest of New Mexico; General Kearney's Overland Expedition to California; Doniphan's Campaign against the Navajos; His Unparalleled March upon Chihuahua and Durango; and the Operations of General Price at Santa Fe; with a Sketch of the Life of Col. Doniphan* (Cincinnati: U. P. James, 1847), p. 41; Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 35; *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, June 17, 1854; Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 41; Brooks and Reeve, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

nomad Indians murdered a trader by the name of White in that city, and abducted his wife, child and Negro maid. A group of American soldiers started after the raiders, and reached their camp after several days. Mrs. White was still with the Indians, bedraggled and bruised from the rough treatment she had received. But, just as the Americans reached her, the squaw, in whose custody she was, drew her bow and arrow and pierced Mrs. White through the heart. An eyewitness, describing the tragedy, concludes:

For this act the squaw paid dearly with her own life. Of the Negro girl or the child we found no trace. The Indians were all gone. We searched the scene of action, found 8 bodies lying dead on the ground and at least 3 more were shot in the water after they had sought refuge in the river. . . . Over her corpse we swore vengeance upon her persecutors.<sup>36</sup>

Retaliation was also a standing policy among the Spanish-Americans. They would raid the settlements of the plains Indians and carry away their girls and women. In the marketplace at Santa Fe these captives brought anywhere from \$100 to \$300.<sup>37</sup> Well-to-do families would buy them and keep them as slaves for the rest of their lives. Indian children, captured by the Spanish Americans, were sold into domestic servitude.<sup>38</sup> About twenty-five years after the American occupation of the Territory, this practice was outlawed, and in the decade of the 1870's, as one author observes, "a great many Indians were ordered returned to their families in the Navajo Country. Those that had been reared from childhood and couldn't be identified by their Indian relatives remained with their Spanish-American parents [*sic*]."<sup>39</sup>

As a general rule, New Mexican girls received no formal education during all of the Spanish and part of the Mexican periods. It was only in the second quarter of the nineteenth century that they began to attend school. Nevertheless, they were not ignorant for, prior to that time, they received their training at home. One traveler noted that the women of

36. Brooks and Reeve, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

37. Bloom, *op. cit.*, I (July, 1913), 32.

38. Poldervaart, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

39. B. C. Hernandez, "A Pioneer Story: The Death of Dr. J. M. Whitlock," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XVI (January, 1941), 106.

New Mexico, ". . . as in many parts of the world, appear to be much before the men in refinement, intelligence, and knowledge of the useful arts."<sup>40</sup>

The styles of dress of the higher class were much like those in vogue in the United States, except that instead of a hat the women wore a shawl over the head, and this even in the home.<sup>41</sup> That New Mexican women had a taste for fine clothes is attested by an old Santa Fe merchant who declared that more silk goods were sold in that territory than in any country population in the United States of equal number.<sup>42</sup> Women of the lower classes wore simple clothes, with a *reboso* (large scarf) over their heads and shoulders, and generally they preferred gay colors. Bartlett remarks that much attention was paid to costume and that the *senoritas* fully appreciated the effect of particular colors on their complexion.<sup>43</sup> A century ago in New Mexico the women smoked cigarettes,<sup>44</sup> played cards, and, as a cosmetic, used a preparation made from the *alegría* plant. As one writer put it:

The women had their faces besmeared with the crimson juice of the *alegría* plant, and looked most frightful and disgusting. A thick coating covered the whole face, which gave them the appearance of wearing masks, with the eyes, nose, and mouth uncovered. . . . It is done for the purpose of protecting the skin from the sun, and they will remain in this repulsive condition two or three weeks upon the eve of a grand baile or feast at which they may desire to appear in all their freshness and beauty.<sup>45</sup>

New Mexican women were generally good cooks, and impressed the American soldiers with their finely prepared meals and tasty bread and sponge cake.<sup>46</sup> Even in the poor homes the meals were well prepared.<sup>47</sup>

40. Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Santa Fe *Weekly Gazette*, June 17, 1854.

43. John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora and Chihuahua During 1850-1853* (2 vols., London: George Routledge and Co., 1854), I, 147.

44. Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

45. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 325.

46. Emory, *op. cit.*, pp. 32, 33; *House Exec. Docs.*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 41, p. 455.

47. Regarding table manners among the humble classes, Josiah Gregg writes as follows: "The *rancheros*, and all the humbler classes of people, very seldom use any table for their meals, an inconvenience which is very little felt as the dishes are

Up to the time of Mexican independence, Spanish creoles of Mexico monopolized commerce and held most positions of influence in the Church as well as in the civil government.<sup>48</sup> But by 1846 this condition had disappeared, leaving the native New Mexicans in posts of honor and trust.

One disagreeable feature of society which persisted throughout the entire period was the practice of peonage, a system of servitude in which debtors were bound to work for their creditors until they paid what they owed. In practice, the workers received from three to five dollars a month in wages and out of this they were obliged to purchase their food and clothing in the proprietor's commissary.<sup>49</sup> It was thus simple to keep the workers, and even their families, in virtual slavery all their lives. Some Americans, as well as New Mexicans, engaged in this practice.<sup>50</sup>

Strictly speaking, the system of peonage was regulated by law during the period of Mexican rule, since a statute specified the conditions of the working contract to be signed by both the master and the peon. But for the most part the law was a dead letter, for the odds were against the peon.<sup>51</sup> He sometimes tried to purchase his freedom, but his efforts were invariably thwarted by his master.<sup>52</sup> An American

---

generally served out from the kitchen in courses of a single plate to each guest, who usually takes it upon his knees. Knives and forks are equally dispensed with, the viands being mostly hashed or boiled so very soft as to be eaten with a spoon. This is frequently supplied with the *tortilla*, a piece of which is ingeniously doubled between the fingers, so as to assist in the disposal of anything, be it ever so rare or liquid. Thus it may well be said, as in the story of the Oriental monarch, that these rancheros employ a new spoon for every mouthful; for each fold of the *tortilla* is devoured with the substance it conveys to the mouth. . . . The very singular custom of abstaining from all sorts of beverage during meals, has frequently afforded me a great deal of amusement. Although a large cup of water is set before each guest, it is not customary to drink it off till the repast is finished. Should any one take it up in his hand while in the act of eating, the host is apt to cry out, 'Hold, hold! there is yet more to come.'" (*Commerce of the Prairies*, *op. cit.*, I, 155).

48. John B. Salpointe, *Soldiers of the Cross, Notes on the Ecclesiastical History of New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado* (Banning: St. Boniface Industrial School, 1898), p. 110.

49. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

50. Little, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

51. Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-233.

52. George Wilkins Kendall, *Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition Comprising a Description of a Tour Through Texas, and also the Great Southwestern Prairies, the Comanche and Gaygua Hunting-Grounds, with an Account of the Sufferings from Want of Food, Losses from Hostile Indians, and Final Capture of*

officer, familiar with Negro slavery in the southern States, was of the opinion that in New Mexico "The major portion of the people live not one bit better than the negroes on a plantation in our southern states; and the rico of the village, like the planter, possesses everything; no one else owns a single sheep."<sup>53</sup>

It was in view of these conditions that Hugh N. Smith, New Mexico's delegate to Congress, when asked by Daniel Webster about the practicability of introducing Negro slavery into the Territory, replied on April 9, 1850: "New Mexico . . . is entirely unsuited for slave labor. Labor is exceedingly abundant and cheap. It may be hired for three or four dollars a month, in quantity quite sufficient for carrying on all the agriculture of the territory."<sup>54</sup> Lt. Col. William H. Emory, an American officer in New Mexico in 1846, expressed his opinion on the introduction of Negro slavery in these terms:

The profits of labor are too inadequate for the existence of negro slavery. Slavery, as practiced by the Mexicans, under the form of peonage, which enables their master to get the service of the adult while in the prime of life, without the obligations of rearing him in infancy, supporting him in old age, or maintaining his family, affords no data for estimating the profits of slave labor, as it exists in the United States.<sup>55</sup>

Peonage was abolished by an Act of Congress on March 2, 1867. This Act stated in part:

. . . The voluntary or involuntary service or labor of any persons as peons, in liquidating of any debt or obligation, or otherwise . . . is hereby declared null and void; and any person who shall hold, arrest, or return . . . to a condition of peonage, shall upon conviction, be punished by fine not less than one thousand nor more than five thousand dollars, or by imprisonment not less than one nor more than five years, or both, at the discretion of the court.<sup>56</sup>

---

*the Texans, and their March, as Prisoners, to the City of Mexico* (New York: 2 vols., Harper and Brothers, 1844), II, 113; Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

53. *House Exec. Docs.*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 41, p. 482.

54. Fletcher Webster, ed., *The Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster* (18 vols., Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1903), XII, 223.

55. Emory, *op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

56. George P. Sanger, ed., *Statutes at Large, Treaties and Proclamations of the U. S. A., from December, 1865 to March, 1867* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1868), p. 546.

Ever since the first known Anglo-Americans arrived in Santa Fe, about the year 1805, friendly relations existed between them and the people of New Mexico.<sup>57</sup> In due time a small number of Americans engaged in trade with the region, some of whom became prominent residents. To these newcomers the New Mexicans showed themselves hospitable and kind.<sup>58</sup> Some of these American merchants settled in New Mexico and married local women.<sup>59</sup> By the time the American army entered the country, many of these settlers had been there twenty or more years, living harmoniously with the native people. Some of them had become wealthy through land grants obtained from the Spanish government, as Ceran St. Vrain, who owned a track of land one hundred square miles.<sup>60</sup> By 1866 one of these Americans, Lucien B. Maxwell, had developed the largest farm in New Mexico, employing over 500 workers on his ten square miles of property near the Cimarron River.<sup>61</sup> Other permanent settlers of note were the subsequent Governor of the Territory, Charles Bent, Thomas Bridger, and Kit Carson. By the second half of the nineteenth century Santa Fe alone counted about twenty-five American families.<sup>62</sup>

But the arrival of the "Army of West" in 1846 injected a discordant note into the complacent life of New Mexico. Conquerors of a weak people, the soldiers and officers often assumed an air of superiority and disdain toward the New Mexicans, as they regarded themselves "citizens of a model Republic."<sup>63</sup> This attitude was naturally resented by the natives. Furthermore, being transients, many of the soldiers and American visitors made no attempt to understand

57. One of the first Americans in Santa Fe was James Pursley, a trapper from Kentucky. Having heard of the Spanish settlement to the south, he set out in search of it, reaching the capital of New Mexico in 1805. There he spent the remainder of his life. William G. Ritch, *Azlan, the History, Resources and Attractions of New Mexico* (6th ed., Boston: D. Lothrop and Co., 1885), p. 245.

58. Little, *op. cit.*, p. 51; Archer B. Hulbert, ed., *Southwest on the Turquoise Trail, Vol. II of Overland to the Pacific* (Denver: Stewart Commission of Colorado College and Denver Public Library, 1933), 85-86.

59. Thomas, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116; Emory, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 31; *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, March 5, 1853.

60. Meline, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-108.

61. *Ibid.*; p. 161.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 151.

63. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 69.



the New Mexicans, with the result that relations between the two nationalities became strained and antipathy soon manifested itself on both sides. Each was critical of the other and apparently with good reasons. Some Americans were not entirely innocent; an English observer described them as "the dirtiest, roughest [*sic*] crew I have ever seen collected together."<sup>64</sup> The political revolt of 1847 and other acts of violence only served to deepen the gulf between the two parties. On one occasion, for instance, the New Mexicans maliciously destroyed an American flag that belonged to the governor.<sup>65</sup> In view of these events, it is easy to understand why some Americans became alarmed and gave expression to their concern in letters to the editor of the *Weekly Gazette*. One of them was particularly pessimistic in tone. It read in part:

I have been for many years a close and careful observer of men and things around me; and I have watched the mental oscillations of my Mexican neighbors with the greatest anxiety, knowing as I did that many of them entertained a hostile feeling to the Americans.<sup>66</sup>

Other Americans held more hope for better relations and hastened to assure the public that the previous "impenetrable barrier between the two races, is perceptibly crumbling into decay, and upon those ruins a more favorable edifice will ere long be raised."<sup>67</sup> How true these reassuring words proved to be may be gleaned from the statement of another American twenty years later. The people of New Mexico, he said, "both native and emigrants . . . are well disposed, patriotic and liberty-loving."<sup>68</sup>

As to the relations of the Americans with the Catholic clergy, in general they seem to have been cordial from the very beginning. The priests were regarded as courteous and the most intelligent persons in the country. Whenever American officers entered a town, they made it a point to visit the priest first. Undoubtedly this was a diplomatic ges-

---

64. George F. Ruxton, *Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains* (London: John Murray, 1847), p. 189.

65. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, February 19, 1853.

66. *Ibid.*, April 23, 1853.

67. *Ibid.*

68. Ritch, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

ture. The priests, on their part, welcomed them and made their visit enjoyable, often sharing with them a little of their treasured wines and liquor.<sup>69</sup> Some of the rectories were described as neat and often elegantly furnished. One writer said that the priests were "the best-to-do in the world, and when the good people wish to put their best foot foremost, the padre's wines, bed, and couches have to suffer."<sup>70</sup> Except in a few instances, resentment of the clergy at the presence of a foreign army of occupation seems to have been slight. Without protest they accepted the new form of government. The pastor at Santo Domingo, not without forethought, delighted in showing the Americans through his well-appointed rectory where the window drapes were stamped with the pictures of all the Presidents of the United States.<sup>71</sup>

Occasionally scathing criticism of the Catholic clergy appeared in contemporary writings. This was not altogether without foundation, for some of the clergy were not true to their religious calling. This was particularly true in the first years of the American occupation. A Catholic historian who spent many years in the region, following the American occupation, wrote that when Bishop Lamy entered the Territory there were but fifteen Catholic priests, of whom ". . . six are worn out by age and have no energy. The others have not a spark of zeal, and their lives are scandalous beyond description."<sup>72</sup> Contemporary writers rarely failed to contrast the status and character of the clergy before and after the American occupation. One author, writing in 1866, after alluding to the laxity of some of the former Mexican priests, added that "with the advent of *los Americanos* came a changed state of things in the Church. . . . Irregularities have disappeared, and the New Mexicans now have a learned, pious, laborious and edifying priesthood."<sup>73</sup>

Yankee impressions of Roman Catholic customs and

---

69. Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 38; *House Exec. Docs.*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 41, p. 465.

70. Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

71. *Ibid.*

72. W. J. Howlett, *Life of the Right Reverend Joseph P. Machebeuf, D.D.* (Pueblo: Franklin Press, 1908), p. 164.

73. Meline, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-190.

religious services generally revealed the traditional Protestant view toward things Catholic. Most of the writers of that period attach the word "superstitious" to almost all religious ceremonies, and many revealed that they had never before been aware of what took place during Mass in Catholic churches in the States. For example, of the veneration of saints one author stated:

They have an abiding faith in saints and images, and with the mass of the inhabitants their worship appears no more than a blind adoration of these insensible objects. Some of the most intelligent of the better class look upon these bits of wood as all-powerful in every emergency; and upon the occasion of a fire in Santa Fe a few years ago, a prominent Mexican gentleman was anxious that one of the wooden saints should be brought from the church to quench the flames.<sup>74</sup>

Of religious processions Lieutenant-Colonel Emory wrote in 1846:

A strange sight presented itself. In a sedan chair, borne by four men, was seated a wax figure nearly as large as life, extravagantly dressed; following immediately were three or four priests, with long tallow candles, a full yard in length. Some American officers followed, each holding a candle. Unfortunately I emerged just as this group was passing; there was no escape, and the moment I joined a grave Mexican (apparently a man in authority) thrust a candle into my hand. I thought of my only coat, the coat which was on my back, and which must take me to California, and back again into the interior of Mexico! Suddenly there was a halt without any word of command, and in the confusion we jostled against each other and distributed the tallow in great profusion.<sup>75</sup>

After attending high Mass in the parish church of Santa Fe, this same writer observed that the priest did not preach from the pulpit, but

kept his back to the congregation the whole time, repeating prayers and incantations. The band, the identical one used at the fandango, and strumming the same tunes, played without intermission. . . . When a favorite air was struck up, the young women, whom we recognized as having figured at the fandango, counted their beads, tossed their heads, and crossed themselves to the time of the music.<sup>76</sup>

74. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

75. Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

76. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Twenty years later, in 1866, referring to the above statement of Emory, Meline, after attending Mass in the same church, wrote as follows:

A sermon was so far from wanting that we had one an hour long, in which the preacher, in the best Castilian, talked to the people in what we called at home "plain English," and made them "walk Spanish" on the subject of temptation and sin. Fandango music was not there; none, in fact, but the severest plain chant, in whose intonations the Church Gallican was plainly perceptible. . . . I saw at church a very different style of female physiognomy. . . . The women sit, or kneel, to the right; the men, to the left. . . . A few pews in the upper part of the church had the appearance of a concession to American custom, and I remarked some three or four of the few American ladies in the places who appeared to be members of the congregation.<sup>77</sup>

The arrival, in the summer of 1851, of the first resident bishop, John B. Lamy, Vicar Apostolic of New Mexico, marked the beginning of a new era in the moral and spiritual life of New Mexico. With a zeal and energy that were difficult to match, this pioneer bishop rallied all the forces at his command and succeeded, in a short time, to improve the lot of the people. His influence in the Territory forms part of a later chapter.

## CHAPTER II

### *Economic Life*

ONE of the most acute economic problems which confronted the first Americans in New Mexico was the sad state of agriculture. In the eighteenth century the Spaniards had utilized to good advantage the fertile lands of the country and engaged in agriculture and sheep grazing. They had even developed a small tobacco industry, but the officials put an end to it by forbidding the planting of tobacco in the province.<sup>1</sup> Not content with curtailing production, the Spanish government also discouraged trade with all provinces, except Sonora to the south. Trade with Louisiana and

<sup>77</sup>. Meline, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

1. Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of Mexico* (3 vols., San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1883), III, 613.

Texas was not known until the year 1800.<sup>2</sup> Trading *ferias* took place with various Indian tribes and among the Spanish themselves, but this brought little prosperity to the colony.<sup>3</sup> In general the personal initiative of the people had been stifled and it was difficult for the American government to arouse enthusiasm for farming. Twelve years before the American occupation a Spanish official in New Mexico expressed great concern for the state of agriculture in these words: "Agriculture is completely neglected. The inhabitants of this country do not engage in large-scale farming, from which they would doubtless derive much profit. They plant what they consider barely sufficient to support themselves part of the year, leaving themselves victims of the greatest misery the rest of the year."<sup>4</sup>

Some sections of the region were well adapted to agriculture and stock raising, but for various reasons full advantage was never taken of nature's liberality. First of all, the Spanish methods of agriculture were obsolete and crop rotation was hardly thought of.<sup>5</sup> Farming implements were primitive and ill adapted to large-scale production. The principal tool was a clumsy hoe and the few ploughs in use were rudely constructed. One writer described such a plough as

. . . a monumental affair, with woodwork enough in it to furnish the rafters of a small house, and worthily and ponderously matches the Mexican cart. Before they pass away—there is no hurry though, you will have time enough, for your Mexican has not yet begun to move rapidly—a specimen of each should be preserved, and handed down to posterity, duly certified by credible witnesses. Their agricultural use and employment might otherwise be disputed by coming generations.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, since the cultivated plots were not enclosed with fences, they were always subject to devastation by large

---

2. Hubert H. Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico, 1590-1888*, Vol. XIII of *History of the Pacific States of North America* (San Francisco: The History Co., 1888), 277.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 302-303.

4. Antonio Barreiro, *Ojeada sobre Nuevo Méjico que da una idea de sus producciones naturales, y de algunas otras cosas que se consideran oportunas para mejorar su estado, e ir proporcionando su futura felicidad* (Puebla: Imprenta de José María Campos, 1832), pp. 22-23.

5. Army, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

6. Meline, *op. cit.*, pp. 122-123.

flocks of roaming sheep or goats. Adobe or rail fences were extremely rare.<sup>7</sup> A final factor that discouraged agriculture was Indian raids. Oftentimes what the Spaniards sowed the Indians reaped. Tired of seeing their crops harvested by the Indians, the Spaniards often preferred to let their fertile lands lie idle.<sup>8</sup> These obstacles were gradually overcome with American aid.

In one respect it may be said that the coming of the American made the lot of the New Mexican farmer more difficult, for the Americans began to acquire riparian rights in the principal streams and left many farmers without irrigation.<sup>9</sup> In general, however, the Americans made a considerable contribution to agriculture. They introduced new methods and implements of farming, and thus improved the quantity and quality of such products as vegetables and fruits.<sup>10</sup> In lectures and in the press they constantly fought against the prevalent notion that farming was a degrading profession, and they called the attention of the people to its nobility, its importance and its absolute necessity for the economic structure of New Mexico.<sup>11</sup> Newspaper editorials repeatedly emphasized the need of introducing new farm equipment as a means for greater production, and they even encouraged the formation of an agricultural society where the farmers could pool their knowledge and resources.<sup>12</sup> That much good came out of these efforts is apparent from the editorial comments of the *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*. It remarked, in part:

... Where formerly the New Mexican farmer used a rude stick to scratch his fields, we find that many of them now, since they have visited the States, have introduced, and now use the American plow, altho' they require a land transportation of a thousand miles. What better spirit, what more could be expected of a farmer of any nation?<sup>13</sup>

7. Gregg, *op. cit.*, I, 150.

8. Barreiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

9. Stephen B. Weeks, "The Spaniards in the South and Southwest," *Publications of the Southern Historical Association*, VI (May, 1902), 244.

10. Charles P. Clever, *New Mexico: Her Resources, Her Necessities for Railroad Communication with the Atlantic and Pacific states; Her Great Future* (Washington, D. C.: McGill and Witherow, 1868), pp. 6-7.

11. Army, *op. cit.*, p. 109; *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, March 17, 1855; *Ibid.*, November 3, 1855.

12. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, March 17, 1855; *Ibid.*, March 15, 1856.

13. *Ibid.*, March 12, 1853.

Nevertheless, agriculture, though improved, still left much to be desired. The Pueblo Indians, who continued to cultivate extensive fields of maize and to raise most of the fruit of the region, and who owned large herds of sheep, were affected very little by these developments.<sup>14</sup> Governor William Carr Lane deplored this situation in his address to the territorial legislature in December, 1852. He said: "Agriculture and stock raising, the two great interests of the Territory, are depressed for want of a certain market for the produce of the soil and for the want of protection for flocks and herds."<sup>15</sup>

An interesting chapter in the history of agriculture of that epoch was the hope of developing a large-scale grape industry in New Mexico. In many parts of that land, we are told, soil and climate were suitable for grape vines. This was true especially of places like Socorro, Isleta, Albuquerque, and Bernalillo, where, as a result, extensive vineyards were cultivated.<sup>16</sup> In some places the average annual yield of a healthy vine was from three to four bushels of grapes. Since an acre of land contained about 272 vines, the annual yield per acre of land was not inconsiderable.<sup>17</sup> During the grape harvest countless burros would be seen along the narrow, dusty roads of the countryside, loaded high with crates of grapes, on their way to market.<sup>18</sup> One contemporary writer stated that the wine produced in New Mexico compared favorably with French wines. He added: "The time is rapidly approaching when the wines of New Mexico will be recognized in the wine catalogues of the country. In no section of the United States does the vine attain a greater degree of perfection, California not excepted."<sup>19</sup> So profuse were the vineyards, that another writer styled the Rio Grande Valley the "Rhine of America," predicting;

---

14. Falconer, *op. cit.*, p. 117; *House Exec. Docs.*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 41, p. 460.

15. *Journal of the Honorable Council of the Territory of New Mexico*, 1 Legislative Assembly, 2 Sess., December 6, 1852, p. 79. This publication is often referred to as the *New Mexico Council Journal*.

16. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, November 19, 1853; Edwards, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

17. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, November 26, 1853.

18. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1853.

19. Ritch, *op. cit.*, p. 223.

though rashly, that some day the area would be an immense wine producing community.<sup>20</sup>

Manufacturing in New Mexico was equally primitive and undeveloped. From the day the first colonists arrived in the sixteenth century, every settler had to be an artisan through sheer necessity. Forced by frontier life to make their own articles of household and farm use, the Spaniards developed an artisanship along certain lines that was, indeed, admirable. The majority of household goods manufactured were made out of wood. Carved doors, chests, and other furniture were the work of local artisans. Wood was indispensable even for such objects as hoes, spades and other tools. Their *carretas*, indispensable vehicles of transportation, were also entirely of wood, with wheels that were made out of one solid piece. Yet, all the lumber was sawed by hand. Sawmills, even the most primitive, were unknown up to the time of the American occupation.<sup>21</sup> Other materials used in domestic manufacturing were hides, pelts, tin, copper, and wool. From wool came serapes (blankets) and a kind of rug called *gerga*. An American living in Santa Fe in the mid-nineteenth century remarked in regard to weaving:

The few articles that are made are of a coarse texture and are manufactured in families. The leading fabric is a coarse woolen blanket called *serape*, which is made to some extent for domestic use and sale. At times a considerable trade is carried on in it with the neighboring Mexican States and Indian tribes. It forms an important article of clothing among the peasantry, and many of the better classes use it instead of cloaks and overcoats. A few of finer texture, in imitation of the *serape saltillero*, are also manufactured, some of which sell for forty and fifty dollars each.<sup>22</sup>

The *gerga* was a coarse woolen blanket of a checked pattern. It was cheaply made, sold at about twenty-five to forty cents a yard, and was generally used for carpets, although for some it constituted the only article of clothing, together with buckskin; until the trade with the United States brought fabrics within reach of the poor.<sup>23</sup> Some cotton goods were

20. Arny, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

21. Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 211-212.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 213.

23. Gregg, *op. cit.*, I, 210; Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 214.



manufactured at home on a crude spinning apparatus commonly known as the *huso* or *malacate*. Gregg admired this spindle, and says that "the dexterity with which the female spins with this simple apparatus is truly astonishing."<sup>24</sup> However, it was difficult then for the New Mexicans to make their own clothing and still more difficult, in their poverty, to purchase imported goods at the exorbitant prices demanded by merchants from Chihuahua during the Mexican period and from the United States after 1846.<sup>25</sup> As late as 1857 Governor Abraham Rencher, referring to this problem, said that it was true that "we are too remote from commerce . . . but surely we should not continue to buy of them [the United States] at five times the price for which we could manufacture a better article at home."<sup>26</sup>

As in the case of tobacco and other crops, domestic manufacturing had been discouraged by the Spanish government in many ways. One means was by imposing high custom duties on various articles. Custom-houses were located at the entrance to every province of Mexico to exact payment for all goods imported. Upon certain items higher duties were imposed in order to maintain their monopoly.<sup>27</sup> The natural consequence of this regimentation of industry was a rapid decline in home manufacturing, so that it practically died out in the first decades of the nineteenth century. In 1812, for instance, Pedro Pino, the first delegate of New Mexico to the Spanish Cortes, reported in Cádiz that industry had reached its lowest level. "There is no manufacturing in the province," he said, "other than that of wool and cotton. Necessity has compelled the people to weave baize, serge, blankets, quilts, zarapes . . . sackcloth, coarse frieze, cotton hose."<sup>28</sup> The situation reached such a perilous stage that it seems to have engaged the interest of the home government in Spain in sending an artisan to instruct the inhab-

24. Gregg, *op. cit.*, I, 210.

25. Bloom, *op. cit.*, I (July, 1913), 40.

26. Santa Fe *Weekly Gazette*, December 12, 1857.

27. Lawrence Kinnaird, "The Spanish Tobacco Monopoly in New Mexico, 1766-1767," *NEW MEXICO HISTORICAL REVIEW*, XXI (October, 1946), 328-331; Bancroft, *History of Arizona and New Mexico*, p. 302.

28. Pino, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

itants in the use of more modern methods. As Pino subsequently wrote:

Within recent years we have witnessed the introduction of fine looms for cotton by an expert sent there by the government. He has given instruction to many people in a remarkable short time. . . . But the production of these articles, together with wine, hardly furnishes a favorable balance for the province, barely exceeding sixty thousand duros annually.<sup>29</sup>

James Ohio Pattie, who for four years (1824-1828) traveled within the area of the present State of New Mexico, wrote that in Santa Fe "the principal articles of commerce are sheep, blankets, buffalo hides and sometimes their meat and tallow, peltry, salt and the common productions of agriculture, as corn, wheat, beans, onions, etc."<sup>30</sup> In the census of 1827 it was found that the entire Province of New Mexico had a total of 1,237 artisans for a white population of about 43,439.<sup>31</sup> A quarter of a century later another writer spoke of the condition of the trades in these words:

The state of mechanic arts among New Mexicans is very low and apparently without improvement since the earliest times. There are few carpenters, blacksmiths and jewelers among the natives, but if ever so well skilled it would be impossible for them to accomplish much with the rough tools they use. The gold and silver smiths excel all the other workmen and some of their specimens, in point of ingenuity and skill, would do credit to the craft in any part of the world.<sup>32</sup>

In treating of manufacturing under American rule, it is enlightening to read the reports of various governors to the legislative assemblies. For example, Governor Henry Connelly, in a speech delivered in December, 1861, declared that

New Mexico depends entirely on foreign markets for the purchase of all manufactured goods, iron, nails, steel, leather, woolen fabrics, everything indeed, is brought away from home and transported over the Plains. . . . Thousands of hides are yearly thrown away as worthless because there is no market for them. Our people depend upon the States for leather. . . . The wool is almost inexhaustible in quantity

29. *Ibid.*

30. James O. Pattie, *The Personal Narrative*, ed. Timothy Flint (Cincinnati: E. H. Flint, 1833), p. 275.

31. Bloom, *op. cit.*, I (July, 1913), 36.

32. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

and could be bought for a nominal price. Tens of thousands of sheep are now left to get clear of their woolly coats as best they can because their owners can obtain no compensation for clipping it from their backs.<sup>33</sup>

Three years later Governor Connelly, in an effort, no doubt, to encourage local industry, told the legislature that the day was not too distant when all the citizens of the Territory would be able to purchase products of domestic manufacture, such as clothing and household goods. "Even our horses," he promised, "will be shod with iron from our mines."<sup>34</sup>

There was, however, one form of manufacturing of the period under consideration that is worthy of special notice. That was the *santos* industry. To supply the Catholic population that was deeply religious in spirit, with images, largely for private devotions, a class of artisans called *santeros* arose. To these craftsmen the making of religious pictures, statues, and tryptics was a profitable trade. As in the case of other forms of home-manufacturing in New Mexico, the craft of the *santero* was greatly determined by the environment. In a land where priests and physicians were few, if any, the *santos* gave the people a sense of security that was otherwise lacking. Often a *santo* was the only decoration that enhanced the adobe walls of a peasant's home.<sup>35</sup>

The *santero* knew the kinds of *santos* his customers wanted and he made them. During the winter he would sit at home and make his statues and paintings. Early in the spring, as soon as the roads were clear, he would set out for the mountains and valleys with a large supply of his wares.<sup>36</sup> The materials he used included wood, such as pine and cottonwood, which abounded in the country; gypsum or *yeso* mixed with glue. The completed work was finally given a coat of paint made from vegetable dyes.<sup>37</sup> The artistic work

33. Henry Connelly, *The First Annual Message Delivered before the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of New Mexico, December 4, 1861* (Santa Fe: Gazette Office, 1861), pp. 9-10.

34. Henry Connelly, *El segundo mensaje anual, op. cit.*, p. 9.

35. James McMillan, *Fifteen New Mexico Santos* (Santa Fe: Rydal Press, 1941), introd., n. p.

36. *Ibid.*

37. Charles D. Carroll, "Miguel Aragón, a Great Santero," *El Palacio*, L (March, 1943), 55.

of the *santero* included large altar panels, called *reredos*, some of which still exist and may be seen in various parts of New Mexico, as at Chimayó; smaller paintings of saints on wood, called *retablos*; and individual or group statues styled *bultos*.

Undoubtedly the carving of religious statues and the painting of religious pictures goes back to the early days of Franciscan missionary activity in New Mexico. It was traditional in all Franciscan missions to teach religion to the natives by means of illustrations and pictures. Isolated as they were in New Mexico from the usual centers of trade and supply, the friars taught the people to produce their own religious art. Under the guidance of the Franciscans were produced the early religious paintings on hide which were used to decorate the remote mission churches.<sup>38</sup> Most of the early works of religious art produced in New Mexico are believed to have been destroyed in the Pueblo Indian Rebellion of 1680, but the tradition did not die out. In the period from 1700 to 1835 the work of at least thirty professional *santeros* can be identified.<sup>39</sup> The craft of the *santero* received an impetus in the latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth centuries. As peace between the Spanish and the Indians was consolidated, and New Mexicans sought means of livelihood in the country, they moved from the towns to the valleys where land was more abundant and more fertile. In moving away from centers of settlement they separated themselves from their parish churches and their few priests. Partly to make up for this loss, they set up their own chapels and shrines where Mass could be occasionally celebrated and where people could gather daily for prayers. It was the duty of the *santero* to decorate the rough adobe walls of these shrines and to supply the religious statues.

Unfortunately, the religious folk art of New Mexico did not survive the American occupation. By the middle of the nineteenth century the craft of the *santero* had all but disappeared. Of the many factors that contributed to its

38. *Ibid.*, p. 56.

39. McMillan, *op. cit.*, introd., n. p.

decline, one was commerce with the United States. When the first oxcarts arrived in Santa Fe from the East, the work of the *santero* was doomed. Another factor in the decline of this art was the arrival of French missionaries. These found little that appealed in the grim features of the locally-produced *santos*, and they gave little or no encouragement. The market was soon flooded with lithographed images which immediately appealed to the people. Among the first to sense this demand for religious prints, and to profit from it, were the enterprising Currier and Ives.<sup>40</sup>

If New Mexico was not a manufacturing region, it was at least endowed by nature with fine lands for grazing and agriculture. Under the Spanish regime this frontier colony had been able to export its surplus cattle and wool. The annual caravans which brought supplies to Santa Fe would make the return trip to Mexico City loaded with pelts, furs, wool and blankets.<sup>41</sup> New Mexicans also bartered with the plains Indians and held annual fairs for this purpose, especially in Santa Fe and Taos. But this trade was so strictly regulated by the Spanish government that it brought New Mexico little financial benefit. In 1788, for instance, the total exports of the province were estimated at \$30,000, and in 1804 at \$60,000, while in this same year the imports amounted to \$112,000.<sup>42</sup> Referring to the limitations on trade as applied to the entire vice-royalty of New Spain, Herbert I. Priestley states:

Through exclusive control of the import and export trade at the southern ports, and through central regulation by the government, the vice-royalty was held firmly in the grip of the mother country; but the centralization of commerce caused extremely high rates for overland freight, to which were added regional sales taxes increasing in amount in direct ratio with the distance, so that trade was always backward.<sup>43</sup>

Except for this trade with the provinces to the south, there was little or no trade with other regions, as Spanish policy

---

40. Mitchell A. Wilder, *Santos, the Religious Folk Art of New Mexico* (Colorado Springs: Taylor Museum of the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center, 1943), pp. 23, 31.

41. Herbert I. Priestley, *The Coming of the White Man, 1492-1848*, Vol. I of *A History of American Life* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1930), 58.

42. Bancroft, *Arizona and New Mexico*, pp. 277, 302.

43. Priestley, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

discouraged and even forbade business contacts with Louisiana, Texas, and the American colonies. In 1805, William Morrison, an enterprising merchant from Kaskaskia, Illinois, made an effort to establish trade with Santa Fe. He outfitted a Frenchman, Baptiste Lalande, with a stock of merchandise and sent him off by boat and pack train. Morrison lost out on the deal, for Lalande sold the goods and settled in Taos as a successful merchant, without ever reimbursing him. Thus this early American attempt to open the markets of New Mexico to American goods failed.<sup>44</sup>

The declaration of Mexican independence in 1821 opened New Mexico to American trade, and from 1824, when Bartolomé Baca first engaged in prairie commerce, there was a steady increase in business with the Anglo-American frontier towns. At first this trade was mostly in the hands of American and French traders, but gradually New Mexicans entered the field and by 1843 they had all but monopolized it.<sup>45</sup>

The importance of trade with New Mexico and the possibilities for its growth were first envisioned in 1824 by Senator Thomas Hart Benton, of Missouri. In the United States Senate he often prophesied the great future of the West, and he urged the President to appoint a commission to survey a road from Missouri to New Mexico.<sup>46</sup> That same year a group of Missourians, eight in number, set out for New Mexico with merchandise loaded on pack mules and on twenty-five wagons. This marked a new era in the commerce with the Southwest, for it was the first time that vehicles were used to transport goods across the plains. As the roads were improved, wagons proved a boon to the growing American-Mexican commerce.<sup>47</sup> At first clumsy carts were used, but in a short time lighter wagons were introduced. Soon even stage coaches followed the trail to Santa Fe. The trip from Independence, Missouri, to Santa

44. Ritch, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

45. Prince, *op. cit.*, pp. 277-278; Hiram Martin Chittenden, *The American Fur Trade of the Far West* (3 vols., New York: Francis P. Harper, 1902), II, 509 ff.

46. Henry Inman, *The Old Santa Fe Trail, the Story of a Great Highway* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1897), p. 44.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 51

Fe was usually made in seventy days, and the return trip, with comparatively lighter loads (one thousand to two thousand pounds per wagon), took about forty days.<sup>48</sup>

It must be noted that this early commerce with New Mexico was always a private enterprise. Usually a group of small businessmen formed a group, each providing his own wagons, horses, and equipment, the whole investment amounting to perhaps one thousand dollars a partner. One historian remarks that "frequently the traders took with them all that they possessed. Often they would secure credits by mortgages upon their property until their return in the fall."<sup>49</sup> It was customary to place the entire caravan of wagons under the supreme command of one man who knew the roads and was capable of handling men. The other members of the caravan were obliged to follow his orders and to observe strict discipline from the time they left their starting point (usually Independence, Missouri), until they reached their destination.<sup>50</sup>

Excitement prevailed whenever a caravan arrived in Santa Fe. Merchandise booths were prepared on the plaza, and rented to traders; dance halls were readied for the fandangos. That the caravans were important in the life of Santa Feans may be gathered from a description left by one of the merchants:

The arrival produced a great deal of bustle and excitement among the natives. "Los Americanos!—Los carros!—La entrada de la caravana," were to be heard in every direction; and crowds of women and

48. Prince, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

49. Bloom, *op. cit.*, II (October, 1914), 122. A letter from Ceran St. Vrain, one of the traders who later became prominent in New Mexico, reveals the plight of the merchants if unable to sell their goods at market price. The letter was written at San Fernando del Taos, September 14, 1830, and was addressed to B. Pratte and Co.:

"Gentlemen: It is with pleasure that I inform you of my last arrival at Santafe [sic] which was the 4th of August. we [sic] were met at Red river [sic] by General Biscusa [Viscarra] the custom house officer and a few soldiers. the [sic] object in coming out so far to meet us was to prevent smuggling and it had the desired effect [sic], there was a guard placed around our wagons until we entered Santafe [sic], we had to pay dutys [sic] which amounts to about 60% on cost. I was the first that put goods in the Custom house and I opened immediately, but goods sold very slow, so slow that it was discouraging. I found that it was impossible to meet my payments if I continued retailing. I therefore thought it best to hole Saile [sic] and I have done so . . . ." Bloom, *op. cit.*, II (January, 1914), 275-6.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 251; *Ibid.*, II (October, 1914), 122.

boys flocked around to see the newcomers; while crowds of *leperos* hung about as usual to see what they could pilfer. The wagoners were by no means free from excitement on this occasion. Informed of the 'ordeal' they had to pass, they had spent the previous morning in 'rubbing up'; and now they were prepared, with clean faces, sleek combed hair, and their choicest Sunday suit, to meet the 'fair eyes' of glistening clack that were sure to stare at them as they passed. There was yet another preparation to be made in order to 'show off' to advantage. Each wagoner must tie a brand new 'cracker' to the lack of his whip; for, on driving through the streets and the *plaza publica*, every one strived to outvie his comrades in the dexterity with which he flourished this favorite badge of his authority. . . . The arrival of a caravan at Santa Fe changes the aspect of the place at once. Instead of the idleness and stagnation which its streets exhibited before, one now sees everywhere the bustle, noise and activity of a lively market town.<sup>51</sup>

Another trader said that the people were very kind to the Americans and could not do enough for them:

When a train was expected, they would arrange to have a great fandango in token of respect to Americans. . . . Fandangos seemed to be free, no door fee. Waltzes seemed to be the popular style of dancing. There was a great mixture in the dancing-soldiers, Mexicans and negroes. The negroes were more popular with the Mexican and Spanish ladies than the Mexicans. Some of our boys took part, but it was a little tough on our Missourians to waltz with negroes, but they had to comply with the custom of the country."<sup>52</sup>

The caravans transported articles of every description to New Mexico, including household goods, wearing apparel, and groceries. In the 1840's the net profit on these goods averaged about forty per cent.<sup>53</sup> Governor Rencher repeatedly reminded the people of this unnecessary drain upon the financial resources of the region.<sup>54</sup> Common calicoes and plain cotton goods sold at from two to three dollars a yard;<sup>55</sup> potatoes sold for five dollars a bushel, sugar for as much as seventy-five cents a pound.<sup>56</sup> Twenty years after the American occupation food was still high, with butter selling at a dollar a pound, milk at twenty-five cents a quart and eggs at

51. Gregg, *op. cit.*, I, 67-69.

52. Little, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

53. Chittenden, *op. cit.*, II, 519.

54. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, December 12, 1857.

55. Prince, *op. cit.*, p. 271.

56. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, December 26, 1857.



from seventy-five cents to a dollar a dozen.<sup>57</sup> Under Mexican rule, when it was customary to charge an import duty of \$500 on each wagon, regardless of its contents,<sup>58</sup> this high cost of commodities was understandable, but, as Colonel Emory suggested in 1846, "a great reduction must take place now in the price of dry goods and groceries, twenty per cent at least, for this was about the rate of duty charged by Armijo, which is now, of course, taken off."<sup>59</sup>

While it is true that Yankee ingenuity occasionally circumvented this excessive custom duty by transferring, near the first port of entry, the freight of two or three wagons into one and burning the empty carriages,<sup>60</sup> the fact remains that, according to Gregg who was no friend of the Mexican officials, between fifty and eighty thousand dollars were collected as duty during the first year of the trade.<sup>61</sup>

The growth and profit of the caravan trade may be gauged from the following figures:

Year	Value of Merchandise Carried
1822 -----	\$15,000
1823 -----	12,000
1843 -----	450,000
1846 -----	1,750,000 <sup>62</sup>
1876 -----	2,108,000 <sup>63</sup>

Available data for the year 1844 show that New Mexico exports amounted to \$400,000 *in specie*, and that other exports, consisting mostly of buffalo robes, furs, etc., amounted to \$50,000. In that year the value of merchandise sent to Santa Fe was estimated at \$300,000.<sup>64</sup>

As the caravans we have just described were wending their way across the prairies weighed down with valuable merchandise, another no less enterprising group of Americans were penetrating the remote mountains of New Mexico.

57. Meline, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-156.

58. Inman, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

59. Emory, *op. cit.*, p. 35.

60. Inman, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

61. Gregg, *op. cit.*, II, 165.

62. Bloom, *op. cit.*, II (October, 1914), 121.

63. Ritch, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

64. Bloom, *op. cit.*, II (October, 1914), 124; Freeman Hunt, *Merchants' Magazine and Commercial Review*, XI (November, 1844), 475.

These men were the fur traders, and they also influenced the economy of the region. Concerned particularly with beaver hunting, early in the nineteenth century they penetrated as far as the Gila and Colorado Rivers, and even beyond to California.<sup>65</sup> While the caravan trade to Santa Fe was financed for the most part by individuals with limited capital, the fur trade was in the hands of wealthy companies.<sup>66</sup> The profits accruing to these companies were tremendous, for the hunters themselves received a mere pittance for their hard labor and the exporting of furs was not taxed by the Mexican government. Barreiro, writing his *Ojeada* in 1832, stated that

Since exports of beaver are not taxed by the national government, American merchants try to take back on their return trip, instead of money, beaver skins. Thus they gain two advantages: that of not having to pay duty on the export of money, and that of taking back to their country an article which is of great value there, and on which there is no duty in Mexico.<sup>67</sup>

On April 14, 1831, a complaint was sent in to the secretary of state in Mexico City with the hope of limiting the number of hunting licenses being issued in Santa Fe. The letter said, in part:

The Anglo-Americans, well provided with arms and hunting apparatus, especially that for beaver-trapping, buy from citizens of Santa Fe the license which they take out from the *Gefe* of that Capital, allowing them to hunt for a certain time in certain places designated by the *Gefe*, many leagues distant in the mountains and plains bathed by the Rio Bravo. With the subterfuge of such license, the Anglo-Americans attack the species without limit or consideration, and secure enormous quantities of skins, many times without paying even an eighth of the duties to the treasury.<sup>68</sup>

In a few years the fur-bearing animals were virtually exterminated. Although the fur traders added little to the finances of the Territory, their penetration into Mexican

65. Eleanor Lawrence, "Mexican Trade Between Santa Fe and Los Angeles, 1830-1848," *California Historical Society Quarterly*, X (March, 1931), 27; James J. Hill, "Old Spanish Trails," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, IV (August, 1921), 464.

66. Inman, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-45.

67. Barreiro, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

68. Bloom, *op. cit.*, I (January, 1914), 260.

domain constitutes an important chapter in the economic and political history of the Southwest.

Another phase of economic life in New Mexico was the trade with California. The medium of exchange in this case was sheep. In the first decades of the nineteenth century there was such an abundance of sheep in the land that it was not unusual to export as many as a half-million head a year, principally to markets south of New Mexico.<sup>69</sup> Encouraged by Governor José Antonio Chávez, New Mexicans first engaged in trade with California in 1829. "On November 8, 1829," as Chávez informed the Minister of the Interior in Mexico City, "sixteen men left for California to trade the products of New Mexico for mules. Indians are no obstacle. The traders use no maps or compasses. The Supreme Government should promote this commerce."<sup>70</sup> For a time this trade proved very profitable for the New Mexicans. In exchange for their sheep and woolen products they received horses and mules, valuable in eastern markets for the caravan trade. But, unrestrained as some of the traders were, they began to perpetrate crimes and robberies and to lead the California mission Indians astray, especially by selling them liquor. In 1832 the friars of the missions complained to the Mexican authorities against this lawlessness, and two years later Fray Ramón Abella asked that a law be passed permitting these traders to remain but three days in California, except in case of illness. After this law was passed New Mexicans were carefully watched in California and they were virtually regarded as foreigners. To discourage their trade an attempt was made in 1834 to collect duty on all goods which they sold in California. They were also required to have a passport and a testimonial of good conduct before they were permitted to enter the province. Despite these barriers, however, the trade proved highly profitable for New Mexicans.<sup>71</sup>

The gold rush to California increased the demand for New Mexico cattle and sheep, and prices were raised tre-

---

69. Gregg, *op. cit.*, I, 189.

70. Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

71. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30, 39.

mendously. In 1853, for example, sheep were sold in California for \$8 to \$16 a head, bringing the ranchers a profit of from 400 to 800 per cent.<sup>72</sup> This trade proved so lucrative that New Mexico was almost depleted of its flocks. The *Weekly Gazette* said that "the enormous demand for sheep in California has drained New Mexico already very greatly, without, however, meeting the demand to any appreciable extent."<sup>73</sup>

The trails of the packmules from the United States to Santa Fe and from Santa Fe to California gradually gave way to wagon roads, over which Americans began to travel, heading for Santa Fe and the west coast. American trade with New Mexico affected the fortunes of the region in another and more subtle way. Through trade the winning of the West was being accomplished by the Anglo-Americans. Naturally, the shifting of the balance of trade from Mexico to the United States was viewed with alarm by the home government in Mexico. But little did it realize that in the not too distant future the pendulum of political power would also swing from the south to the north and that commerce was inevitably paving the way for this change.

For the greater part of the nineteenth century poor communications constituted one of the perplexing problems of New Mexico, and it was one of the contributing factors toward isolation and illiteracy. Barreiro, writing in 1832, observed that for the most part the few roads in New Mexico were adequate.<sup>74</sup> But however good the roads might have been, communication with the Mexican capital and with the United States left much to be desired. Mail service was particularly slow, even during the period of American occupation. It usually took at least thirty-five days for a letter to reach Santa Fe from Mexico City by the fastest means, which was twice the speed of ordinary travel.<sup>75</sup> In 1852 Governor Lane, in his message to the legislative assembly in Santa Fe, expressed the hope that the monthly mail to Missouri would soon be bi-monthly and that mail service to

72. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, March 26, 1853.

73. *Ibid.*

74. Barreiro, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11, 29.

75. Bloom, *op. cit.*, I (July, 1914), 15-16; Gregg, *op. cit.*, II, 67.

Texas and Utah would also be established.<sup>76</sup> Three years later, Acting Governor William W. H. Davis bitterly complained that in the most pressing emergency three months were required before a reply could be received from Washington.<sup>77</sup> In view of these conditions, it is not surprising that Governor Lane advocated so strongly the introduction of the railroad into New Mexico. In his mind, it was the only way in which the Territory could advance culturally and economically. In a message to the legislative assembly in 1852 he said: "From public and private necessity, the continent must soon be crossed, from east to west, by railroads and telegraphic lines, and in all probability, one or more of these railroads and telegraphic lines will traverse New Mexico. And when they do, what a mighty change will be the result!"<sup>78</sup>

As may be surmised, the development of new avenues of trade and commerce did little to improve the financial status of the common people. In 1860 there still existed, as in 1830, a society composed for the most part of two classes only, the wealthy and the poor; a middle class still undeveloped. The lot of the poor was hard, for while prices rose, wages remained extremely low. In 1846 common laborers received three *reales* (about thirty-seven cents) for a day's work, a sum hardly sufficient to sustain a family, even on the poorest fare. In 1853 the wages of miners were fifty cents a day and more skilled workers, such as smelters and refiners, received \$1.50.<sup>79</sup> It was little wonder that in the first year of the occupation an American officer should write that "the major portion of the people live not one bit better than the negroes on a plantation in our southern States and the rico of the village, like the planter, possesses everything; no one else owns a single sheep."<sup>80</sup>

Contemporary writings indicate that a program of relief to aid the New Mexicans was started in the early years

76. *Journal of the Hon. Council of the Territory of New Mexico, op. cit.*, p. 84.

77. W. W. H. Davis, *Message to the Legislative Assembly, December 3, 1855* (Santa Fe: Santa Fe Weekly Gazette, 1855), p. 7.

78. *Journal of the Hon. Council of the Territory of New Mexico, 1852*, p. 81.

79. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, July 16, 1853.

80. *House Exec. Docs.*, 30 Cong., 1 Sess., no. 41, p. 482.

of the occupation. Colonel Edwin V. Sumner, the commanding officer in New Mexico, insinuated this, in his customary caustic way, in a report to Secretary of War Charles Conrad. "Before we took the country," he wrote, "a considerable part of the population earned a scanty livelihood at the mines; but this work was abandoned directly when the Government money was scattered broadcast among them."<sup>81</sup> In the same report he added that "as a conquered people, they feel a natural dislike toward us; but so long as we kept them supplied with money, and they had nothing to do but revel in their vices, they were content to stifle their patriotism."<sup>82</sup>

The Territory's treasury seems to have been virtually bankrupt most of the time. For example, during the fiscal year 1854-1855 the net income amounted to \$8,735.34 while the expenditures were \$11,668.75.<sup>83</sup> In his message to the legislature in 1854, Acting Governor Davis revealed the plight of the treasury in these terms:

The treasury is without funds and the credit of the Territory is nearly bankrupt. The officers of the Government are many months in arrears, in their salaries, and no present prospect of their being paid. New warrants are issued from time to time, which the holders hawk about for sale, and many are willing to sell them at almost any price, rather than wait the uncertainty of their being paid from the territorial treasury. It is often the case, for a considerable length of time, that there is not a dollar in the treasury, and the officers are obliged to ask credit for the necessary office expenses.<sup>84</sup>

Bad as were the finances of New Mexico in the late 1850's, they did not compare unfavorably with those of the United States, then in the grips of a depression. While the panic of 1857 brought untold misery to the rest of the country, New Mexico, having neither banks nor great investments, suffered little in consequence of the panic. The *Weekly Gazette* commented on this editorially:

We have no other currency than gold and silver. A bank note is never seen in this part of the country. The good old democratic doc-

81. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, March 5, 1853.

82. *Ibid.*

83. Davis, *Message*, p. 11.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

trine of specie currency is practiced by this people, and hence we are beyond the reach of the panics created by the suspension and failure of insolvent and irresponsible manufactories of shiplaster and wild cat money. Let the states and Territories of the Union follow the example of New Mexico in this respect and we will hear no more of pecuniary panics.<sup>85</sup>

Willy-nilly, New Mexico was undergoing economic changes that would leave a lasting imprint on its character. In a gradual way this transformation had begun with the declaration of Mexican independence, when the people were given more freedom to participate in industry and trade. But more important were the changes that took place under the American form of government. The Americans introduced a broader concept of social democracy into New Mexico, which was accompanied by untold economic advantages. New roads were opened over which rolled not only trade caravans from Missouri, bringing needed supplies and new comforts of life, but also stage coaches with tourists from the East, who admired the natural beauty of the Southwest, now open to them for the first time.<sup>86</sup> Monthly mail to and from the States gradually gave way to bi-monthly and later weekly service.<sup>87</sup> The new postal law of September 30, 1851, reduced the postage on newspapers threefold to one cent an ounce up to 3,000 miles. This obviously expedited the exchange of ideas and the transaction of business with the States.<sup>88</sup>

New Mexico was clearly passing through a period of transition. Great changes had taken place, and still more were to come with the introduction of the railroad. Reflecting the happy mood of the people who looked forward with eager anticipation to the day when a train would pull into New Mexico from the East, a local enthusiast penned the following lines:

We're a peculiar people; we  
Don't change with every wind;

---

85. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, November 5, 1857.

86. The fare from St. Louis, Missouri, to Santa Fe was \$125 in the summer and \$150 in the winter, with forty pounds of personal baggage. *Ibid.*, November 6, 1852.

87. *Journal of the Hon. Council of the Territory of New Mexico*, 1852, p. 84.

88. *Santa Fe Weekly Gazette*, November 20, 1852.

We don't run after Kossuth; we  
Don't worship Jenny Lind.  
We don't "blow up" in steamboats; we  
Don't *fillibustering* go;  
The Railroad cars are coming humming  
Through New Mexico.

Then go it Progress, go it boots,  
And Young America,  
And rush the cars of destiny  
To Cal-i-for-ni-a.  
We'll sacrifice our hat, we will—  
Four dollar hat, bran new—  
The Railroad cars are coming humming  
Through New Mexico.<sup>89</sup>

---

89. *Ibid.*, April 30, 1853.

(To be continued)