TAOS LIGHTNIN'

"188 PROOF: HISTORY WITH A KICK"

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The Slave Trade in New Mexico

Part I: From the Spanish *Entrada* to 1700

Indeed, history is nothing more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes. Voltaire

The capture and enslavement of members of one cultural group by another, or even within a single cultural group, is a practice that is as old as humanity itself. The reasons for slavery are varied and complex, but can range from the inevitable outcome of wars, to economic needs, to sexual subjugation (domination), to acquiring new members for a group whose population base is diminished. In what is now the American Southwest, the roots of this practice are lost in the shadow of time. Regardless of when the practice began in New Mexico, each culture from the indigenous peoples to the Spanish to the Anglo-Americans participated in the capture, exchange and marketing of other humans.

The taking of captives had long been part of native warfare and practice prior to the coming of Europeans. For example, when Hernán Cortéz marched into the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, he found that the Aztecs had enslaved large numbers of the neighboring tribes in central Mexico. The same was true for the great Inca Empire of Peru and the late Mississippian culture of what is now the American Southeast. After being shipwrecked near present day Galveston, Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Estevánico (a Moorish slave) and their companions were captured and enslaved by the Capoques, coastal Indians of Texas, before being able to begin their two year journey to Mexico.

Early Spanish documents further indicate that at the time the Europeans first came into the Pueblo region of the Rio Grande, relationships between the various groups of Apache and the Pueblos frequently involved the exchange of captives—a situation that probably had considerable temporal depth. In 1540, when Coronado's expedition came to the Pueblo of Cicuyé (later to become known as Pecos), Captain Alvarado purchased two captives from "the kingdom of Quivira." These Indian slaves were Ysopete (a young man), and a dark skinned native the Spanish called the "Turk." The Turk was said to be a native of Harahey—a region located east of Quivira. Plains Apache people had probably traded both captives to the Cicuyé. In the spring of 1541, Coronado used these men to guide his expedition through the buffalo plains to the twenty-five, grass hut villages of Quivira, the home of a Caddoan-speaking people—possibly the Wichita. (Quivira is thought to have been located along the Arkansas River in what is now central Kansas.) Coronado was to discover, on reaching Quivira, that the Pecos Indians had specifically told the Turk to get the Spanish lost on the Great Plains where they might starve to death.

Even before Cortéz conquered the Aztec Empire, the Spanish had established plantations and mining operations throughout the Greater Antilles—the major islands of the Caribbean. Initially, these enterprises utilized the forced labor of the local natives. As diseases and abuse decimated the indigenous inhabitants of the islands of Española, Puerto Rico, Cuba and Jamaica, the Spanish were forced to widen their search for new lands in order to secure new sources of slaves. Subsequently, much of the exploration of the eastern and southeastern coasts of the North American continent was prompted by the quest for a fresh supply of native laborers. Spanish slaving expeditions ranged from Florida up into what is now the Carolinas as early as 1514 (Weber 1992:35).

By the mid-1500s, a nearly identical situation was in place along the frontier of northern Mexico and, only slightly later, southern New Mexico. The Spanish began carrying on slave raids throughout the region to acquire the necessary labor force to work the newly discovered mines of Zacatecas, Durango and Santa Barbara.

During this time, missionaries were reporting the cruel mistreatment of native people back to the Crown and church. In an attempt to curtail the abuses, Felipe II, King of Spain (a Hapsburg) enacted the Law of 1573, which made pacification (as opposed to conquest) the goal of future exploration. Additionally, the law prescribed for the humane treatment of all native people and forbid their enslavement. Unfortunately, the humanitarian ideals being debated and enacted in the court of Spain were a far cry from the realities being practiced on the distant frontiers of New Spain. As only those natives captured in a "just war" could be enslaved, Spanish soldiers thought nothing of provoking wars with various native tribes as a means to acquire more slaves—thus circumventing the law.

> *I had to stay with the Capoques more than a year [1529-1530]. Because of the hard work they put me to, and their harsh treatment, I resolved to flee to the people of Charruco in the forest of the main. My life had become unbearable. In addition to much other work, I had to grub roots in the water or from underground in the canebrakes. My fingers got so raw that if a straw touched them they would bleed. The broken canes often slashed my flesh: I had to work amidst them without benefit of clothes.*
> Cabeza de Vaca.

Even the presence of captives purchased by the Spanish from Indians caused increased difficulties between native groups and the Spanish. In the spring of 1583, Espejo had to battle the combined forces of the Querchero (an Apachean people—perhaps Navajo) and Acoma because of two Quechero women, one of whom had been captured by the Hopi and sold to one of Espejo's soldiers. The Querchero wanted their women back while the Spanish were intent on keeping them as well as accumulating more.

During the latter part of the sixteenth century, the governor of Nuevo Leon, Luis de Caravajal de la Cueva, administered a particularly powerful and brutal illicit slave gathering operation along the lower Rio Grande. Viceroy Villamanrique attempted to end the operation by arresting Caravajal, but the Lt. Governor, Gaspar Castaño de Sosa, continued the raiding with his gang of sixty soldiers that the viceroy termed "outlaws, criminals and murderers—who are rebels against God and king" (John 1975:33).

In July of 1590, Castaño de Sosa again violated the viceroy's specific orders and mounted a "colonizing" expedition into New Mexico. Castaño had agreed to repay his financial backers with the slaves that he would gather on route and have sent back to Mexico (John 1975: 34). Angered at learning of Castaño's disobedience, the viceroy sent Captain Juan Morlete and a contingent of soldiers to arrest Castaño and his "colonists" and to free all those native people who had been captured.

When Oñate first came into New Mexico only 13 of the 129 soldiers brought their wives with them and servants accompanied only six soldiers. Those soldiers without either wives or servants quickly captured Indians to serve their needs. With the defeat of Acoma in 1599 (800 killed, 600 placed in bondage), and the raids against the Tompiro pueblos in 1601 (800-900 killed, 400 prisoners taken), Oñate's soldiers enslaved literally hundreds of Indians, primarily women and children. Within a few years, most of those captured in these two "wars" had escaped. Nevertheless, native slaves provided much of the labor force and became an important form of "capital" to the emerging colony of New Mexico.

In 1602, Oñate's nephew, Vicente de Zaldivar made a trip back to Mexico with a large number of Indian men and women to sell. Further, he complained that earlier "sixty of my men and women slaves worth more than 10,000 peso" had escaped his custody (Forbes 1960:103). (Zaldivar's estimate of his losses seems exaggerated, as 167 pesos per slave was nearly four times the amount documented a few years later!)

Throughout the seventeenth century, most of the Governors of New Mexico either purchased their position outright or paid all of their own expenses. Therefore, in an effort to regain their investments they frequently exploited the Pueblo people through forced labor and tribute and increased *slave raiding* of the Apache and other nomadic people. Many captives, especially Apache, were sold to the mining districts of northern Mexico, while others were forced to labor in Santa Fe and pueblo *obrajes*, or workshops, processing and producing woolen and leather goods for the markets in New Spain. Many more natives were sold to the colonist for use as domestic servants, herders and general laborers.

A Church census of Santa Fe in 1630 noted that there were 250 landed citizens being served by 700 *mestizo* and Indian servants and slaves.

> *As early as 1633, Fray Estevan de Perea complained that Indian children were being snatched from their parents "as if they were yearling calfs*[sic] *or colts...and placed in permanent slavery." By 1680 half of all domestic units had at least one Indian slave, and some households counted as many as 30* (Gutiérrez 1991:104).

The increased slave raiding expeditions prompted by the New Mexican governors continued to bring even more disaster and hardship to the Pueblos and Hispanic settlers as each foray prompted a retaliatory raid by the victimized tribes or bands. Native tradition demanded, as a matter of honor, retribution and retaliation for wrongs committed against them. When the Spanish politicos organized their slaving campaigns, they conscripted Pueblo men, particularly from the Tewa villages, and Hispanic settlers to accompany the soldiers. This, in the eyes of the Apache, Navajo, Ute and other nomadic tribes, made the Pueblos and settlers responsible, and therefore, they were all considered the enemy.

Not infrequently, Plains Apache would come to Pecos or even Santa Fe to trade and on departing would be overpowered by the forces of the Spanish governors and taken captive. An incident occurred in the late 1620s when a group of Vaquero Apache visited Santa Fe to observe a statue of the Virgin and professed an interest in the Catholic faith. On their departure, Governor Phelipe Sotelo Ossorio sent a contingent of his Indian allies to capture as many of the visiting Apaches as possible in order to sell them in New Spain. The Vaquero Apache responded by a province wide revolt—declaring war against all Spanish and their Pueblo collaborators (Forbes 1960:120-121). This simply opened up other avenues for the acquisition of additional slaves. The governors under the pretense of retaliatory strikes ordered raids against both hostile and friendly groups alike—frequently targeting essentially innocent tribes.

Two of the most abusive of New Mexico's governors in the seventeenth century were Luís de Rosas (1637-1641) and Bernado Lopez de Mendizábal (1659-1661), who constantly resorted to slave raiding to achieve their desired economic goals. (By 1660, the price for an Indian slave woman was approximately 26 pesos in New Mexico.) The governors' insatiable hunger for profit at the expense of native freedom and lives left New Mexico in a constant state of disruption and armed conflict. To further complicate life in this frontier province, both Rosas and Lopez de Mendizábal were openly hostile to the Franciscan friars and as a result many of the Pueblos and settlers were forced to take sides in the conflict and compelled to fight each other.

In 1660, Lopez de Mendizábal sold Apache slaves valued at 12,000 pesos in Sonora. At the time, a child of 10 to 12 was worth between 30 and 40 pesos each in Mexico. Fortunately for the young Indians sold in that episode, the *Audiencia* of Guadalajra became aware of the transaction and forced Mendizábal to refund the money to the purchaser and to have the Indians released. The next New Mexican governor, Diego Dionisio de Peñalosa Briceno y Berdugo, said that he had followed the orders of the *audiencia* and freed those slaves sold by the former governors. Regrettably, he also was a slaveholder and simply "gave the Indians as free men to other persons to be indoctrinated, informing them that the Indians were free and not subject to servitude (John1975:89-90)." Peñalosa sent several of these "free men" to Mexico City as gifts to his friends and prominent citizens that he wished to impress.

Other factors contributing to the unrest and increase in slave trading were the acquisition of the horse by native people, the initiation of the system of *rescate* (ransoming) and the impact of epidemic European diseases, drought and famine. All of these elements, coupled with the domino effect of displaced tribes due to the pressure of European presence in the east and south, resulted in drastic changes in traditional lifeways of virtually all native people.

Prior to the horse, many of the nomadic and semi-nomadic Plains tribes had carried on a mixed lifestyle of primarily hunting and gathering, that is, following the buffalo, and infrequently, cultivating crops. Other aspects of their way of life consisted of trading and occasional raiding which was limited by what could be carried on foot or by dogs pulling travois. The horse changed all this, allowing for greater mobility, faster strikes and the ability to move far greater quantities of both people and materials. Mounted Indians soon became a deadly threat to the Spanish. The horse also increased the inequality and enmity among the tribes, so that those without were subject to the depredation of mounted people. The Ute Indians acquired the horse somewhat later than neighboring Apache tribes and out of desperation had resorted to bartering their own children to Spanish households in order to obtain horses. They were simply unable to compete with the other tribes until they also had become part of the horse culture.

Early on in the missionizing efforts in the northern provinces of New Spain, a system of *rescate* or rescuing or ransoming of Indian captives in order to free them was established. Indian children particularly were purchased in an effort to Christianize them. Unfortunately, the practice resulted in actually promoting slave raiding and rescate became subject to many abuses. By openly bartering or trading for Indian captives, the frontier Spanish encouraged the various tribes to exploit each other to the point that a captive woman or child—or a horse or a mule—became the "coins of the realm." The practice exacerbated an already difficult situation and forced native groups to remain hostile to one another. An unending cycle of raiding, retaliation and retribution became escalated, further weakening and depleting the numbers of all the rival tribes.

As contagious diseases indiscriminately decimated the native people, many resorted to capturing women and children from other groups to simply replenish their own numbers as a means of group survival. The droughts and associated widespread famines of the mid-1600s forced some of the Plains Apache people to barter their own slaves and children for food and horses with the Pueblos and the Spanish. By the 1670s, desperate bands of starving Navajo and Apache were raiding throughout the province, stealing whatever food and livestock they could from the impoverished Pueblos and settlers.

Continued Spanish slaving expeditions and retaliatory strikes, during the same time period, further provoked an already devastated native population. Out of desperation, the Pueblos turned away from the mission Catholicism that they felt was at the root of their predicament and reverted to their ancient religions and resumed their traditional ceremonies. This caused the Spanish to react (overreact) with violence against the perceived idolatry and witchcraft. Over 50 religious leaders of the Pueblos were rounded up—at least three were hung and the remainder were publicly humiliated, whipped, jailed and to be sold into slavery. However, a contingent of armed Tewa warriors threatened the life of the governor and all the settlers unless the medicine men were released. Governor Juan Francisco Treviño capitulated, the men were freed, but the damages could not be reconciled.

For the native people of New Mexico this was the final outrage in nearly 150 years of disruptive Spanish presence in New Mexico. The combined effects of slave raiding, exploitation and mistreatment by Spanish politicos, soldiers and clergy combined with the devastation caused by epidemic diseases, periodic droughts and subsequent famines all culminated in August of 1680, with the violent expulsion of the Spanish from New Mexico. The Pueblo Revolt was a province wide rebellion organized and initiated at Taos Pueblo that combined the forces of the Pueblos and some Apachean people in a collaborative attempt to rid the land of the Spanish forever. Factionalism soon split the Pueblo unity of 1680, but for over twelve years, the Spanish were kept out of the northern Rio Grande Valley.

Part II: 1700 to 1900 will be in the next issue of *Taos Lightnin'*

Skip Keith Miller
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TAOS LIGHTNIN' 188 PROOF

The Slave Trade in New Mexico

Part II: From 1700 to 1800

Indeed, history is nothing more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes. Voltaire

After the Pueblo Revolt of the summer of 1680, tribes throughout the entire reach of northern New Spain from El Paso south into Sonora and Nueva Vizcaya, inspired and encouraged by the success of New Mexican natives, went on the offensive against Spanish authority. Life became increasingly more difficult for the Spanish everywhere in northern New Spain as former Indian allies became adversaries in their fight to expel the foreign invaders. Even tribes previously hostile toward each other began to cooperate, joining forces against their common oppressor—at least for a brief period of time.

The newly acquired independence of the Pueblo people after August of 1680 was short lived. The traditionally autonomous and independent nature of the linguistically varied Pueblos soon broke the fragile unity established at the time of the rebellion. Factionalism returned and the subsequent lack of solidarity made the Pueblos vulnerable and, therefore, unable to resist Spanish efforts at reconquest.

Imperial rivalry between Spain and France became a new and driving force for the expansion of the slave trade in New Mexico. The politics of war on the North American continent simply reflected the hostilities raging in Europe between France and Spain (the War of the Spanish Succession, 1701-1714). By the end of the seventeenth century, the French were determined to acquire those tenuously held Spanish territories to the south and west of the central Mississippi River area and the Great Plains. French traders commenced to make inroads into the region now known as Illinois and Missouri and by 1706 were within sight of the Rocky Mountains. Eight years later, the Red River area of East Texas also came under French control.

The threat of French intrusions into the former Spanish territory made the reconquest of New Mexico an imperative of the Spanish crown. For the next three decades, concerns over the French challenge for territory figured into all Spanish relationships with the various native people. Spain saw little economic value in their far northern province of New Mexico but its strategic location made it crucial in the defense of the silver mining districts further to the south.

Both the French and the Spanish utilized an Indian policy of "divide and conquer." This policy consisted of pitting one tribe against another; essentially making native peoples pawns in the game of colonial empire building. Simultaneously, the English, French, Spanish and Dutch practiced these same tactics along the eastern seaboard of North America. By encouraging and supporting intertribal warfare, the European powers were slowly advancing their imperial conquest of the North American continent.

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Maintaining the loyalty of a tribe meant the European powers had to prove to the native people that they could be advantageous, consistent and reliable trade partners. Europeans secured native people's loyalty through trade in manufactured goods most desirable to the tribes. For example, guns and munitions, knives, axes, horse tack and metal cookware were essential to the rapidly evolving lifeways of the emerging horse cultures. In exchange for these goods, the various tribes provided furs, hides, dried meats and captives. The French supplied large quantities of guns and munitions to the Plains tribes and encouraged them to raid New Mexico. The French in return would provide a ready market for all the captives acquired in the raids. Ultimately, the French hoped to take over not only New Mexico but also the silver mining areas of northern New Spain. On the other hand, Spain, which prohibited the sale of firearms and ammunition to Indians, limited their potential to acquire allies as most native people recognized the importance of firearms in maintaining a position of power among the other tribes.

The French capitalized on the long standing animosity that many of the Faraone Apache, Pawnee, Wichita, Kansa and Osage people expressed toward the Spanish, Pueblos and some of the Athabascan people of New Mexico. As early as 1682, the Otos or Padoucas had been capturing Apaches and selling them to the newly arrived French. As if relationships between the various tribes were not confused enough, the Faraone Apaches and Navajo also were raiding deep into present-day Kansas and Nebraska. Meanwhile, Spain attempted to attract the support of the Pueblos and various groups of Apache who had previously maintained trade relations with New Mexicans.

In 1688, under the pretense of bringing the Pueblos back under Spanish control New Mexican Governor Reneros, operating out of El Paso, raided the Keresan pueblos of Santa Ana and Zia. This attempt at reconquest resulted in the death of hundreds of native people and the capture and eventual sale of many others from the pueblos. This attack and the ensuing exploitation of the captives did little to convince the other Pueblos that the Spanish could be trusted.

Because Spain recognized New Mexico as an important tactical buffer against the rapidly encroaching French, the appointment of a strong and influential new governor was seen as vital to the reconquest of the province. In 1691, Diego de Vargas Zapata y Luján, a Spanish nobleman, was officially commissioned governor of the province of New Mexico.

On December 29, 1693 de Vargas began the battle to take Santa Fe back from the Tano who had occupied the old Governors Palace since the revolt of 1680. After the Tano resistance was crushed, de Vargas executed 70 native resisters and distributed 400 others as servants to the new colonists. In the fall of 1696, de Vargas campaigned against the still rebellious Pueblos of Taos and Picuris in an attempt to bring them back under Spanish control. De Vargas' troops pursued the Picuris who fled to the plains to join their Apache allies in order to escape Spanish retribution. De Vargas captured 84 prisoners who subsequently were divided among his soldiers. Some of the Picuris did escape and took refuge among the Cuartelejo Apache in what is now west central Kansas, only to be enslaved by their hosts. With de Vargas' defeat of this second Pueblo revolt, he reestablished Spanish control over New Mexico, ending, or at least mitigating for the most part, Pueblo-Spanish animosities.

Unfortunately, de Vargas made enemies of his own colonist when he insisted that those native Pueblo people captured during the reconquest could no longer be held in servitude and he prohibited the continued use of forced Pueblo labor. This opposition cost de Vargas three years of imprisonment until the Viceroy of New Spain finally exonerated and released him.

Relations continued to improve between the Spanish and Pueblos as they were forced to ally themselves against the common threat of the Ute, Navajo, Faraone Apache, and after 1706, the Comanche.

Some of the Plains Apache groups, who had maintained long-standing trade affiliations with the eastern Pueblos, found the reoccupation of New Mexico by the Spanish to be beneficial. Now they would have a ready market for the captives they were acquiring from Plains—especially from the land of Quivira (present day central Kansas). For many years, the Navajo and Apache had raided the Pawnee and other tribes in the Kansas and Nebraska area. The Pueblos also had hunted and raided among the tribes of Quivira. In return, the Faraone Apache had made a habit of stealing horses, women and children from the Taos, Picuris and Pecos Pueblos. Relationships oscillated between hostilities and alliances among the native people of northern Mexico, New Mexico and Texas as the French and Spanish courted the various tribes in an attempt to gain their allegiance.

The Indian captives frequently became bargaining pieces between the Indian captors and the Europeans as the French and Spanish attempted to garner support from the different tribes. Repeatedly, this tactic proved tragic for the captives. For example in 1694, the governor of New Mexico turned down an Apache offer to sell several Pawnee so the Apache immediately killed the captives. The reluctance of the Spanish to buy captives was short lived, and virtually all future captives were immediately purchased or "ransomed" in order to protect and maintain relationships with the trading "partners."

In 1706, those natives of Picuris, who had escaped de Vargas in 1696, petitioned the New Mexican governor to send troops to rescue and return them to their homeland. Governor Cuervo sent Gen. Juan de Ulibarri with a contingent of soldiers to recover the 62 Picuris. At Cuartelejo he learned from the Apache that the Pawnee and Jumanos (which referred to the Wichita people) frequently raided the Apache for women and children which they sold to the French. Similarly, the Cuartelejo Apache traded Pawnee captives to the New Mexicans.

The early part of the eighteenth century saw the Spanish and Pueblos defending themselves against attack from all sides by various groups of Ute, Apache and Navajo. Livestock, especially horses, and captives were still the principle objectives of most raids. For example, throughout the year 1708, the Navajo raided the Tewa pueblos of San Juan, San Ildefonso and Santa Clara, stealing horses and carrying off many women and children. At about the same time, a new and formidable player, the Comanche, joined the fray. Due to the rapid acquisition the horse, the Comanche changed in less than a generation from a hunter/gatherer society to a warrior horse culture. By the late 1720s, the Comanche and their linguistically and culturally related allies, the Ute, began to wreak havoc among the northern and eastern Pueblos.

Just as New Mexican governors of the seventeenth century had resorted to slave raiding to advance their personal wealth, so did many political leaders of New Mexico in the eighteenth century. For example, in retaliation for raids by the Faraone Apaches on Taos Pueblo, Governor Mogollon (1712-1715) gave orders to his troops to find and kill all those Faraone Apaches men responsible. However, the Governor ordered the women and children to be taken alive as his personal property. As was often the case, the Faraone Apache were never located and Governor Mogollon's men returned empty handed.

In 1716, a contingent of soldiers, settlers and Tewa under orders of Governor Martinez, led by Captain Cristobal de la Serna (original owner of the Serna Land Grant in Ranchos de Taos) attacked a group of Comanche and Ute near San Antonio Mountain. Several natives were killed and many more were captured and taken immediately to Nueva Vizcaya to be sold by Governor Martinez' brother. The truly unfortunate aspect of this incidence was that this particular band of Ute had actually petitioned for peace prior to Serna's attack. Infuriated by the Governor's cruel action, the residents of New Mexico found him guilty of inhumane conduct and ordered him to buy back the natives he had sold and return them to New Mexico. Adding to the tragedy, by the time the order went into effect, many of the captives already had succumbed to smallpox

With their rapidly evolving new lifestyle, the Comanche soon become the scourge of both New Mexico and the Plains. In 1723, the Comanche attacked a large Plains rancheria of the Jicarilla Apache, killing many of the men and taking captive a large number of the women and children. Governor Juan Domingo de Bustamante tried in vain to have New Spain establish a presidio among the Plains Jicarilla in order to thwart any future Comanche attacks and to create a permanent Spanish presence on the Plains. Unable to secure the badly needed protection, the Jicarilla were forced to abandon their homes and move east of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. They eventually sought protection among their allies the Navajo and at Taos Pueblo. By 1733, a band of the Jicarilla were settled in the village of Las Trampas de Taos (now Ranchos de Taos) where a mission had been established for them by Spanish authorities.

In 1726, the Cuartelejo Apache exchanged a number of Comanche captives to the New Mexicans. Taken in raids supported by the French, these captives provided a clear example of tribes switching alliances to ensure their survival. Prior to this time, the Cuartelejo had maintained an allegiance, albeit tenuous, with the Spanish. The Comanche retaliated and soundly defeated the Cuartelejo Apache. Despite French support, the Cuartelejo Apache were forced to relinquish their Plains home forever. In 1752 they were reported to be living near their long time trade partner, Pecos Pueblo, where they joined forces against their common enemy, the Comanche.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Taos, Picuris and Pecos Pueblos functioned as centers for the Indian trade, with Taos Pueblo serving as the primary rendezvous for the slave trade.

> There, according to one eye-witness [Fray Serrano], the Spanish Politicos gathered everything possible for trade and barter with the Apaches and southward-drifting Comanches—"in exchange for deer and buffalo hides, and what is saddest—in exchange for Indian slaves, men and women, small and large, a great multitude of both sexes...[which are]...the richest treasure for the governors, who gorge themselves first with the largest mouthfuls from the tables..." (Bailey 1966:25-26).

Despite the fact that the Faraone Apache and Comanche were New Mexico's most violent and menacing adversaries during this period, these tribes remained significant trade partners as they provided a large percentage of the goods exchanged in the province. Much of the remainder of the trade for the Spanish came from the various other Plains Apache tribes, who for the most part maintained peaceful relations with New Mexico.

Through the first half of the eighteenth century, the Comanche were bartering buffalo meat, hides and captives for ironware (knives, axes, awls, etc.), foodstuff and horses. However, within a few years the numerous bands of Comanche were the principle suppliers of horses. They even traded French and English guns and ammunition, obtained from the Jumano Indians, to the Spanish who generally could not acquire sufficient arms and munitions from Mexico.

The Comanche raided Pecos and Galisteo Pueblos unmercifully during the 1740s because of the perceived alliance between those pueblos and the Plains Apache—the perennial enemy of the Comanche. For a short time starting in 1746, the Comanche formed an alliance with the French and Wichita people as the Spanish governor attempted to prohibit them from trading with New Mexicans—particularly with the Taoseños!

The constant shifting of allegiances among the various tribes and between the Spanish and the French escalated a deadly cycle of retaliation and retribution. Life on the frontier of New Mexico was one of perpetual conflict, warfare and death. The taking of captives and the number of violent deaths among the Spanish and Pueblo are a direct correlation. Ramon Gutierrez (1991:153) notes that

> Between 1700 and 1849, nomadic Indians killed 820 whites, and 3,294 nomadic Indians were baptized. As the number of Indian captives rose, so did the number of Spanish deaths. The strength of this pattern increased over time. A positive statistical association exists between the decade in which white deaths occurred and the number of Indian baptisms.

Despite the fact that slaves were the "gold and silver" of the province, the process of acquiring them made life extremely difficult for settlers, Pueblos and nomadic Indians alike. Considered coin of the realm, women and children from all groups, including the Spanish, were fair game. In 1760 the Comanche captured fifty-six Hispanic and *coyote* women and children in a single raid. While the Spanish government was able to ransom back some of the captives, the Comanche sold others to the Pawnee. Eventually, some of the Taos captives became the property of Frenchmen and Americans, ending up in Saint Louis.

Throughout the last half of the eighteenth century, the Ute were raiding and capturing Navajo whom they sold to New Mexicans traders in Taos. The Navajo, in retaliation, struck Spanish and Pueblo settlements, stealing livestock and women and children whenever possible. In order for the matriarchal and matrilineal Navajo to incorporate captive women and children or the offspring of these captives into the tribe, new clans had to be established to fit within the worldview of the Diné.

Spanish documents record the sale of Mexican citizens, stolen in Comanche raids, to Hispanic families in northern New Mexico. In 1778, the Taovaya (also known as the Jumano) held ten Spanish captives that they had acquired from the Comanche, who had probably traded them for English guns. (The Taovaya had become important suppliers of guns for the Comanche in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Taovaya were acquiring guns from English traders located east of the Mississippi River during this same period.)

In late winter of 1786, after nearly eight years of continual warfare with the Comanche, the brilliant military strategist and governor, Juan Bautista de Anza negotiated a lasting peace with them. The peace treaty ended Comanche forays into New Mexico and established Pecos as their only trade location in the province. For the first time since the reconquest, New Mexico experienced a time of relative peace and prosperity.

(to be continued)

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TAOS LIGHTNIN'
188 PROOF

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"188 PROOF: HISTORY WITH A KICK"

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The Slave Trade in New Mexico

Part III: From 1800 to 1900

Indeed, history is nothing more than a tableau of crimes and misfortunes. Voltaire

Commerce in slaves proceeded uninterrupted into the nineteenth century in both northern Mexico and New Mexico. The Spanish policy of divide and conquer continued and forced numerous Indian groups to war with one another, resulting in the eventual destruction of entire bands of native people. After the Spanish made peace with the Comanche, the Plains Apache and the Comanche pursued their warfare on the buffalo hunting grounds. In 1797, the Comanche supported a large contingent of Spanish and Pueblos against the Mescalero Apache. At this point in time, the Plains Apache, formerly Spanish allies, became the enemy. This forced the Ute and Jicarilla, all one-time adversaries of the Comanche, to ally together with the Hispanic and Pueblo New Mexicans. Despite the continued peace with New Mexico, the Comanche appeared to have no qualms about ruthlessly raiding and plundering other Spanish territories in Chihuahua, Durango, and Coahuila, Mexico.

By the end of the eighteenth century on New Mexico's western front, Spanish settlers began encroaching on Navajo territory. This sparked a long series of retaliatory raids by the Navajo already incensed at the New Mexican complicity with Ute Indian slave raiders. The Spanish met this renewed hostility with a major campaign beginning in the late summer of 1804 and lasting into the winter of 1805. A combined force of New Mexicans and Spanish troops and Ópata auxiliaries from Sonora Mexico, attacked a large group of Navajo in Cañon de Chelly, killing 115 and capturing thirty-three women and children. Of the captives apportioned to the various soldiers and Indian allies—twenty-three were removed to Mexico. By the early years of the Mexican Republic, the value of Navajo children ranged between 75 and 150 pesos each—making the slave trade a far more profitable enterprise for New Mexicans than farming or ranching!

The American acquisition of the Louisiana Territory in 1803, sparked a new imperial rivalry. Once again, the loyalty of the Plains Indians would play a vital role as to which nation, Spain or the United States, would control the vast expanse of land between the Mississippi River and New Mexico. As Spain could not adequately provide for the trade demands of the Indians, many tribes courted the Americans who appeared to have a limitless supply of desirable trade goods. In 1821, Mexican Independence further weakened any hold New Mexico had over its Indian allies. The newly established Republic of Mexico had neither funds nor goods to adequately administer an Indian policy in New Mexico.

Another important group of players, the Comancheros, emerged immediately after the Comanche peace. Unnamed in the historic record until 1843, the term "Comanchero" first appeared in Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies*. This group of Hispanic and Pueblo traders, who acquired a rather unsavory reputation, conducted a thriving business on the Plains, acting as middlemen in the Comanche and New Mexican trade. The Comanche still provided an unending source of captives along with mules, horses and buffalo hides, while the Comancheros furnished the Indians with manufactured goods, corn meal, flour, bread, a variety of other foodstuffs, and Taos Lightnin'. After Americans became active traders in New Mexico, guns and ammunition, lances and metal arrowheads became important items of exchange, albeit in limited amounts. The Comancheros ranged over an immense area of the plains, trading with tribes from Oklahoma to northern Mexico.

With the American take over of New Mexico, the practice of "ransoming" captives continued. By the 1850s, however, in addition to the Indian women and children offered for ransom, numerous Anglo-American and Mexican women and children acquired through Comanche and Apache raids into Texas and Mexico also became available for "sale" in New Mexico.

> Some traders, it was charged, profited greatly from buying highborn captives from the Comanche and holding them for an "adequate" reward. A group of traders from Mora returned from Indian country in March 1850, with four newly ransomed captives for whom they paid exorbitant amounts. To free a twelve-year-old boy cost four knives, one plug of tobacco, two *fanegas* of corn, four blankets, and six yards of red Indian cloth. Another boy of the same age had cost one mare, one rifle, one shirt, one pair of drawers, thirty small packages of powder, some bullets, and one buffalo robe. And a young woman had required two striped blankets, ten yards of blue cotton drilling, ten yards of calico, ten yards of cotton shirting, two handkerchiefs, four plugs of tobacco, one bag of corn and one knife (Kenner 1969:93-94).

The trade in captives became a consuming issue of debate for the new American Territory of New Mexico. The articles of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo specified that America was responsible not only for controlling the actions of the Indians living in the territory but for rescuing and ransoming any Mexican captives and releasing them back to their own country at American expense. Enforcing this article of the treaty proved to be far more difficult than Congress had expected. Neither the military nor the territorial politicians truly comprehended the nature of dealing with their native adversaries or the rugged frontier they occupied. Although the American Congress enacted strict regulations controlling trade with the Indians, particularly the Apache and Comanche, the more wily slave traders continued to evade the American authorities.

While the Americans seemed to be concerned about the welfare of Mexican captives, they blatantly disregarded the Navajo, whose women and children were the constant prey of the New Mexicans and the Ute Indians. In 1851, former Indian Agent and then Governor, James Calhoun, invoked a militia law that actually encouraged slave raiding as a form of payment to those New Mexicans who volunteered to fight against hostile natives (i.e., the Navajo). In fact, the Americans encouraged the Ute, Apache and Hispanic New Mexicans, armed with modern rifles and ammunition frequently provided by the Indian agents, to make war on the Navajo. Nearly every time the Navajo sued for peace with the Americans, New Mexicans would initiate a new series of raids against them, forcing the Navajo to retaliate. On February 15, 1861, the Navajo signed a treaty with Colonel R.E.S. Canby:

> The ink on Canby's Treaty had scarcely dried before a party of thirty-one New Mexicans from Taos were apprehended by military patrols—with six bound squaws in their possession. These slave raiders proudly admitted killing one man and six women and children before obtaining their captives. But most important of all, was the fact that this party demonstrated the feeling prevalent in New Mexico settlements, when they *"openly avowed their intentions to disregard the treaty...,and on their return home, to organize a new expedition to capture Navajo and sell them [on the Rio Grande]."* (Bailey1966:109)

With the outbreak of the Civil War, the Indians increased their raiding and hostilities. New Mexico came under steady attack by Navajo and Mescalero Apache. To deal with this situation, Colonel James H. Carleton appointed Kit Carson to command the New Mexico Volunteers. He ordered Carson to roundup the Mescalero Apache, then the Navajo, and remove them to the Bosque Redondo. Carson used Ute trackers in his campaign against the Navajo, and even permitted them to keep the women and children they recovered as a reward—a situation that Carleton would soon stop.

> The "Rope Thrower," as the Indians called Kit, was firmly convinced that the captives disposed of in this manner would be better off than at the Bosque Redondo, as Utes would sell them to Mexican families who would care for them—thus they *"would cease to require any further attention on the part of the government."* He also advocated distributing captive Navajo to New Mexican families in order to breakup *"that collectiveness of interest as a tribe which they will retain if kept together"* at Bosque Redondo [Bailey 1966:115].

Throughout the nearly eighteen months that Carson spent arranging the ultimate surrender of the tribes, other New Mexicans, as well as Ute Indians, were still raiding and taking captive as many Navajo as they could locate. They took scores of Navajo women and children by force from their bands in the small towns they passed through on their way to surrender at Forts Wingate and Canby. In an attempt to stop the civilian attacks on the Navajo, Governor Henry Connelly issued a territorial proclamation forbidding the taking and selling of any native people. Like many preceding similar treaties and proclamations, this one had little effect on the New Mexicans, who simply continued their malicious, generations old practice. In fact, shortly after the posting of the proclamation, a group of eighty New Mexicans illegally invaded the Indian lands of Arizona territory. Unable to find any Navajo, they attacked the Hopi village of Oraibi, capturing eleven Hopi children and a large herd of livestock. The captives were eventually found and released, but no charges could be brought against the slavers.

By the 1880s, most of the other surviving tribes had surrendered and been placed on reservations. Each treaty typically required the return of any captives, whether Indian, Mexican or Anglo, to their families or cultural group. Unfortunately, for many of the families, the captives preferred to remain with their captors. Innumerable young Indian children, raised within New Mexican households, had no knowledge of their family of origin. Adopted at a young age, they no longer spoke anything but Spanish and knew little or nothing of their birth culture. Therefore, decisions were often reached which allowed children to stay and grow up within the Hispanic culture. Similarly, New Mexican or Mexican children who had been with tribes since infancy were better left with their adoptive families. More often than not if they were returned to their culture of birth, they would escape and return to their former "captors." Many captives, whether Native, Hispanic or Anglo, if returned to the culture of origin, would frequently remain outsiders. Considered tainted by their captors, they were no longer acceptable within their own society.

Slave raiding, possibly the single greatest factor instigating and prolonging the numerous Indian wars and hostilities, wreaked havoc and spread chaos in the West for nearly 300 years. Yet, within the constantly evolving frontier lifestyle of New Mexico the whole issue of the slave trade soon became lost, for the most part, to cultural memory. By the beginning of the twentieth century, former captives and certainly their descendents, had become fully integrated into the various cultural groups, whether Hispanic or native. Ultimately, the infusion of new stock into the tribal and Spanish gene pools helped secure a healthy and vital legacy for future generations. The very cultures themselves were forever changed and enhanced by the absorption, addition and blending of new people, ideas and lifeways. The price in human lives enacted in the wars of dominance in what is now New Mexico, whether by indigenous people or the succeeding waves of Europeans and Americans, paid for our need today to extend a high degree of tolerance for and admiration of all of the living cultures of New Mexico.

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