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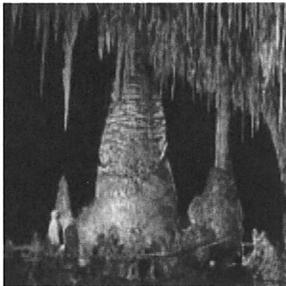
Directions
Operating hours & seasons
Fees & Reservations
Cave Tours
Brochures & Publications
Special Uses/Permits
Night Sky Programs

Main Elevator System Renovation

Sept 13'10-May'11- only smaller elevators to carry visitors in & out of cave. Visitors, allow more time to visit; anticipate wait for elevator, mainly on busy days, i.e. holidays & spring break

Welcome to Carlsbad Caverns National Park!

Rocky slopes and canyons; cactus, grass, thorny shrubs, and the occasional tree, who could guess at the hidden treasures deep underground? Beneath this rugged land are more than 117 known caves - all formed when sulfuric acid dissolved the surrounding limestone.



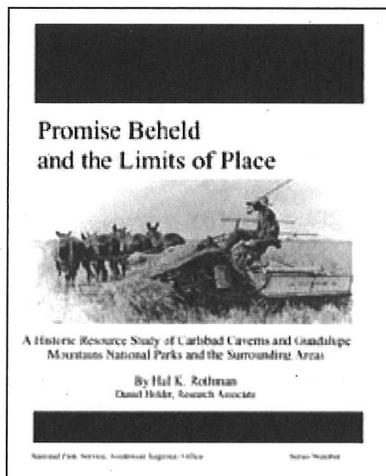
Cave Tours

All visitors to the park should tour the main section of the cave, the Big Room self-guided tour. The 8.2-acre Big Room is partially wheelchair accessible. The Natural Entrance self-guided tour is also very impressive, but it is also more difficult due to the steepness of the trail.

Guided tours of varying difficulties are also available—from the self-guided areas of the Big Room to crawling through narrow passageways in the Hall of the White Giant or in Spider Cave. To reserve tickets for a guided tour, call our reservation service at 1.877.444.6777.

more...

Promise Beheld and the Limits of Place



A Historic Resource Study of Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains National Parks and the Surrounding Areas

by Hal K. Rothman
Daniel Holder, Research Associate

1998

Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Washington, DC

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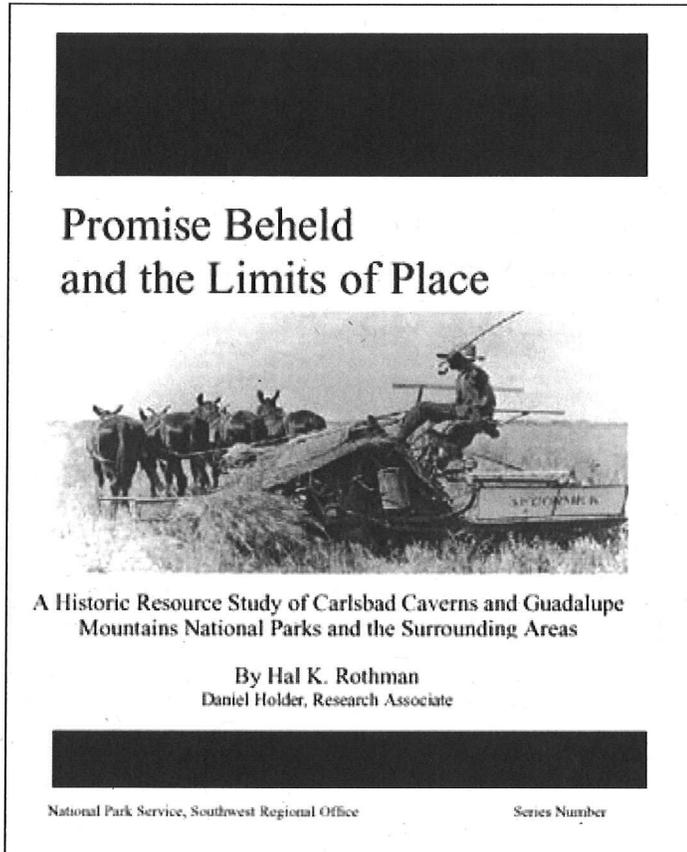
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Sources Consulted

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Continue

Chapter 1: From Prehistory to European Contact

The area that is the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region has not always been the stunning combination of desert, high elevation mountains, mesas, and range country that is pervasive there today. Almost 250 million years ago, during the Permian Period of the Paleozoic Era, which lasted from about 280 million to 225 million years ago, the portion of southeastern New Mexico and trans-Pecos Texas that would later become the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region stood partially under water. It was just off the edge of the supercontinent of Panagea, which began to split into the seven continents of today about 180 million years ago. Part of the vast Permian Sea and located much closer to the equator than today, the region was covered by three basins — the Marfa, Delaware, and Midland — and was connected to the great Permian Ocean by the Hovey Channel, a narrow inlet. The middle of the three arms of water that jutted to the edge of land, the Delaware was a basin about seventy-five miles wide and 150 miles long. A reef emerged along its edge later in the Permian Period. Known as the Capitan Reef, now one of the premier aboveground fossil reefs in the world, it traced the edge of the Delaware Basin for almost 400 miles. The reef is most visible today as what we call the Guadalupe Mountains.¹

Behind this uplift was a formation called a backreef that geologists regard as the completion of the Guadalupe Series. The backreef consisted of a warm shallow lagoon tens of miles wide that served as a vast evaporating pan. The heat of the tropical sun concentrated the minerals as the water evaporated, and gypsum and other materials precipitated on the floor of the lagoon. Closer to the shore, the gypsum mixed with sediment that was eroding off the continent. This combination of mud, silt, sand, and gypsum formed tidal flats that stood about four feet deep at high tide. When the tide receded, channels winding through slippery mud and tidal pools became visible.²

Ocean currents and waves battered the face of the Capitan Reef facing the water, breaking off chunks that slid down the front of the reef. A forereef formed — a talus slope of loose rock and other materials that extended downward into the basin and comprised the debris

¹Robert J. Dunham. *Capitan Reef, New Mexico and Texas: Facts and Questions to aid Interpretation and Group Discussion*. Permian Basin Section. Publication 72-14, Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists. Midland, Texas: May, 1972; for a concise description, see Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900 A.D.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 9.

²David H. Jagnow and Rebecca Rowher Jagnow, *Stories From Stones: The Geology of the Guadalupe Mountains* (Carlsbad, NM: Carlsbad-Guadalupe Mountains Association, 1992), 6-13.

from the reef itself. As a result, the reef grew wider as it expanded on top of its own debris. Inverted and resembling an upside-down pyramid, the reef could not support itself and large boulders, some as big as a modern house, toppled off the reef and rolled down its side to the basin below.

The proximity of the forereef and the main reef created fissures that played an important role much later in the development of the complex of caves that characterize the region. The forereef did not become as solid as the reef from which it fell, and the immense weight of the overlying reef cracked the forereef. The talus, debris that had previously fallen, shifted, and fissures in the reef opened. Marine sediments washed off the continent and became trapped in these cracks. The cracks provided a route for water and hydrogen sulfide gas that migrated upward from oil reservoirs deep beneath the reef, over millions of years initiating and then expanding the cave creation process.³

The oil and natural gas that formed beneath the region also stemmed from these same geological processes. In the nearly one-half mile deep Delaware Basin in front of the reef, the sediments that washed into the water later turned into thin black limestone beds separated by thicker beds of fine sandstone and siltstones. The black limestone contained organic-rich remains of plants and animals that settled deeper in the basin than other materials. As they decomposed, they used up all of the available oxygen, stopping the decomposition process. Most of the organic matter was buried or preserved. Over millions of years, heat and pressure changed this organic matter into oil and gas. These deposits today attract the attention of the industrial world, which craves fossil fuels to power its machinery.⁴

When the growth of the Capitan Reef ended near the end of the Permian Period, it closed a period in the region's geological history. As ocean access became restricted, the Delaware Sea shrank and it began to evaporate more rapidly than it could be replenished, concentrating its dense minerals until the water could no longer hold them. The minerals precipitated out, drifting to the sea floor crystal by crystal and forming thin bands of sediment, which geologists today call the Castile Formation, the gypsum desert area stretching south of Guadalupe Mountains National Park across the Delaware Basin. Thin layers of white gypsum and even finer layers of grey limestone alternated, reflecting seasonal climatic fluctuations in a typical evaporation sequence in the same manner as tree rings mark wet and dry years.⁵

At the very end of the Permian Period, the Delaware Sea had become a very shallow evaporation basin and the geological processes that created the salt and potash that would later be mined accelerated. Two salts, sodium chloride (table salt) and potassium chloride (potash), began to precipitate out. Combined with sediments that eroded from the reef, they formed bands of sandstones, siltstones, and redbed shales. Over millions of years, these became the Rustler and Salado formations,

³Rachel Wood, J.A.D. Dickson and Brenda Kirkland. "New Observations on the Ecology of the Permian Capital Reef, Texas and New Mexico" *Paleontology* Vol. 39, Part 3 (August 1, 1996): 733-762.

⁴ Jagnow and Jagnow, *Stories from Stones*, 14-15.

⁵ Jagnow and Jagnow, *Stories from Stones*, 14.

where much later in time human beings from pre-Columbian people through United States citizens mined salt and potash. The most evident expanse of salt flats — a seventy-mile-long and five- to fifteen-mile-wide area west of today's Guadalupe Mountains National Park — is what geologists call a graben, a downthrown or sunken block filled with sediments from adjacent uplifts. These salt deposits and the accompanying alkali flats — locally called salt lakes — were a crucial resource for generations of people. For a time in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these minerals were crucial to the region's economic identity.

The gypsum plains that stretch east from the Delaware Mountains, southeast of the Guadalupe Mountains, toward the Rustler Hills, also stem from the erosion of the Permian Period's geological features. This more than fifty-mile stretch of gypsum owes its origins to the erosion of the thin bands of the Castile Formation. In it, thicker bands of gypsum alternated with thinner bands of limestone. As the sediments were buried, the water in the minerals was squeezed out and the gypsum changed to anhydrite. Over millions of years, the Castile Formation entirely eroded and the water that reached the anhydrite on the surface turned it back into gypsum, hundreds of feet in thickness. Torrential thunderstorms molded the soft and easily eroded gypsum, creating the sometimes eerie-looking landscape of the gypsum plains. Rugged draws, caves, and asymmetrical formations typify the gypsum plains.

By the time human beings came into the area more than 12,000 years ago, the geological formations begun in the Permian Period had become the region's physical realities. The entire area, and the Southwest, that surrounded it had slowly become hotter and drier, as a long-term post-Pleistocene Era trend made the area more arid and generally warmer, but the full brunt of this climatic change still lay in the future. When humans arrived, the area was more temperate than it is today. Its mountains were covered with vast Pinyon-juniper complex forests and the lowlands sported abundant grassland savannah and some trees. There is some evidence of chipped stone that lacked projectile points that seem to predate Paleo-Indian habitation in the larger region, but scant evidence leaves this prospect as the topic of heated debate among archaeologists. People labeled Paleo-Indians by archaeologists did inhabit the region by about 10000 B.C., hunting bison, mammoths, and other now-extinct large mammals as well as smaller game. Living near water sources at lower elevations, these Paleo-Indian people roamed the high country in search of large mammals for game. They also collected plants in a fashion typical of nomadic groups around the globe.⁶

⁶ Susana R. Katz and Paul Katz, "Pecos Past: The Prehistory and History of the Brantley Project Locality," (unpublished report, Bureau of Reclamation, Southwest Regional office, 1985), 26; Susana R. Katz, "Late Prehistoric Period Environment and Economy of the Southern Guadalupe Mountains, Texas," (Ph.D. diss., University of Kansas, 1978), 14; Susan R. Katz and Paul Katz, "The Prehistory of the Carlsbad Basin, Southeastern New Mexico: Technical Report of Prehistoric Archaeological Investigations in the Brantley Project Locality," (unpublished report, Bureau of Reclamation, Southwest Regional Office, 1985), copy in Artesia Historical Museum, Artesia, New Mexico, 31; Michael S. Foster and J. Charles Kelley, "Archaeological Investigations in the Three-Mile and Sulphur Draw Watershed, Culberson County, Texas," *The Artifact* 27 3 (1989), 9-14; Bob Parvin, "In Search of the First Texans," *Texas Parks and Wildlife*, October 1983, 3-7; Alan H. Simmons, Ann Lucy Weiner Stodder, Douglas D. Dykeman, and Patricia A.

Paleo-Indian people initially found an abundance of big game to hunt. Now-extinct species of mammoths offered a primary target for hunters, along with the ancient bison, two species of now-extinct horse, a rare four-horned antelope, the California condor, dire wolf, brush ox, and some camel-like creatures. They hunted with different kinds of spear points that have since been labeled Clovis, Folsom, and Plano types, suggesting that a variety of cultural groups and subgroups thrived throughout eastern New Mexico and west Texas. Blackwater Draw, to the north and east of the Guadalupe Mountains and the lower Pecos River Valley, contains an important Paleo-Indian site. Burnet Cave, west of Carlsbad, contained vegetal remains, charred logs, fossilized mammals, and spear points, offering a prime example of Paleo-Indian ways of life. In Burnet Cave, archaeologists found a Clovis-fluted projectile point, with extinct animal bones that could be 10,000 years old. Near Hueco Tanks and at sites near Van Horn, Texas, archaeologists uncovered Folsom points that also attest to the presence of slightly later Paleo-Indian peoples. Warm from the heat of their fires and satiated with meat from the kill, these people must have seen the region as a paradise.¹

These Paleo-Indian peoples and generations of their descendants were the first humans to fall into the trap that higher elevations and the areas that surround them could be in the Southwest. To their eyes — as to the eyes of generations of Native Americans, Spaniards, Mexicans, Anglo-Americans, and others who came to the region — the place at which they arrived appeared to offer them more than the necessities their culture demanded. If the region did not always appear abundant, it at least looked as if it could provide subsistence for these Paleo-Indian peoples. Yet the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region was a trap, similar to those waiting elsewhere in the Southwest and West. The land looked abundant, and it was — for a while. But its stock of game, lush upland forests, and high grasses were living relics of an earlier epoch, one that was wetter and cooler. These resources would not replenish easily, and they certainly could not be replaced. While small nomadic groups such as the Paleo-Indians did not face this reality head-on, for each successive generation of descendants the issue became more vexing. They too were in a trap, a difference between what they saw and the ability of the land to provide it over time. They did not know that, even as they arrived in the region, climatic changes were under way that would significantly alter the realities of human life in the region.²

Hicks, "Human Adaptation and Cultural Change in the Greater Southwest," Arkansas Archaeological Survey Research Series no. 32, (Wrightsville, AR: U.S. Army Corp of Engineers Southwestern Division, 1989) 21-29, 35.

¹ Sunny Leigh Brockmoller, "The Identification and Classification of Projectile Points from the Plateau Complex, Van Horn, Texas," *The Artifact* Vol. 25 No. 1 (1987). Dixie L. Dominguez, "Hueco Tanks: A Vital Resource in Southwestern History." *Password* Vol. 31, No. 3 (Fall 1986): 123-136.

² Hal Rothman, "The Perceptual Trap? Climate and Perception in the Nineteenth-Century American West," *Halcyon: A Journal of the Humanities* 17 (1995): 127-144; Robert Caro, *The Years of Lyndon Johnson, Volume I: The Path to Power* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983): 32-60, shows one example of this phenomenon; Martin Rose, in *Donner Pass*, illustrates the perceptual problem in the instance of the Donner Party; Elliott West, *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), brilliantly described this process for both Cheyenne and westward-bound Anglo-

Beginning about the sixth millennium B.C., the region's climate became noticeably drier. With the general lack of water in the area already pronounced, a shift in the nature of available resources took place. Even at high elevations, forests began to shrink, depriving Paleo-Indians of sources of material as well as warmth. Drier xeric plants began to climb in elevation, taking over from the declining woodland trees and shrubs. The game became more scarce, slowly at first, but more rapidly as the animals that remained reproduced more slowly and less efficiently; the environment that sustained them became far less tolerable, and the mobile species that could migrate to more suitable places such as the Plains did so. In a typical example, the ancient bison gave way to a much closer forerunner of the modern American Bison, which was already migrating to become the Plains species that Spaniards found during Vázquez de Coronado's 1542 Plains journey and that the French found in what is now Tennessee and Alabama at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The American Bison spread from the trans-Mississippi into an ecological niche that became open as European disease, brought by the Spanish explorer Hernán de Soto during the 1530s, demolished the elaborate Indian cultures of northern Alabama and southern Tennessee. In the early 1700s, the French came to the Southeast and found it sparsely inhabited, its culture left in mounds. People nearby appeared to possess little of the sophistication and social organization that de Soto witnessed 150 years before. At about the same time, Spaniards saw significant numbers of bison close to the Gulf of Mexico along the Florida panhandle and in southern Georgia and Alabama, a remarkable journey for a species that history typically associates with the Great Plains.

The bison were fine prey for the successors of the Paleo-Indians, the Archaic people, a hunting and gathering adaptation that became evident between about 6000 and 5000 B.C. The people of the Archaic period fashioned their existence around the changing conditions of their time as well as to a different set of cultural imperatives than the Paleo-Indian peoples. The bison became coveted prey for Archaic people; the animals congregated closely together, unlike the mammoth, a relative of the elephant that roamed in smaller groups over a much wider range. Bison became more attractive prey as Archaic people hunted in larger groups. They needed to band together; the shaggy, mobile animals were hard to catch and dangerous because of their size and speed. Life became harder for Archaic people as a result of climatic change, and over time, they became adept at supplementing the plants they gathered with the meat they hunted. In the space of a few thousand years, a mere wink in geologic time, the temperate traits of the region were replaced by a more semiarid to arid ecological regime resembling that of today.³

American settlers in the mid-nineteenth century.

³ Katz and Katz, "Pecos Past," 26, 29; Clifton, "An Archaeological Survey of 26 Miles of the Boundary of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Culbertson and Hudspeth Counties, Texas," 9; Simmons, Stodder, Dykeman, and Hicks, "Human Adaptation and Cultural Change in the Greater Southwest, 39, 69;" see also Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*: 1986), 210-20, for an account of the range of the American Bison at a later date; see also Dan Flores, "Bison Ecology and Bison Diplomacy: The Southern Plains from 1800 to 1850," *Journal of American History* 87 2 (September 1991): 465-85 and Elliott West, *The Way to the West: Essays on the Central Plains* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 51-85, offer

The change to this new regime came rapidly by the standards of geological time. Five thousand years ago, the environment became remarkably similar to that of today; no later than 3,000 years ago, the climate and environment changed so it almost directly mirrored the modern environment. Drier, hotter conditions forced the people who remained in the region to adapt. They had to replace older food sources with new ones that required different strategies than did hunting the large animals of the Paleo-historic era. These Archaic people — whom archaeologists suspect were the forerunners of the Jornada Branch of the much later Mogollon Culture of 1000 A.D. era — increasingly emphasized the hunting of small game over large; large animals became a scarce and unreliable resource in their world. Archaeological evidence indicates that Archaic people adapted rapidly to the new environment. If something moved, Archaic people found it edible. The color green in plant life indicated the same thing to them. Often their diets consisted of rodents and a variety of cacti species. The climate change also altered their patterns of mobility. As resources became more scarce, the mobile hunting parties declined. They had little guarantee of finding game or even of being able to forage for their sustenance as they traveled. Instead, Archaic people stayed in an area that could sustain them and learned it well. Their survival depended on finding sustenance from the area immediately around them, a significant difference between them and both their Archaic ancestors and the Paleo people who preceded them. Archaic people utilized a smaller range to the utmost of their ability. With some exceptions, they did not plant food or keep animals. Instead they knew a small area intimately and used that understanding to fashion a varied diet from what it offered. This tendency to range closely but to maximize the opportunities of the region kept Archaic populations in small areas in which they were comfortable, and some scholars attribute growing population throughout the Archaic Period to this adaptability. As the people of the Archaic narrowed their reach, they considerably extended the depth of their knowledge. They continued to trade among themselves, revealed by the preponderance of similar artifacts at a wide variety of sites. Although they initially did not adopt sedentary ways, they moved closer to the rhythm of settled people.⁴

Archaeologists have divided Archaic life into four distinct phases distinguished by the traits of these peoples. The initial phase, labeled Early Archaic, lasted from roughly 6000 to 3000 B.C. and revealed the rapidly changing environmental conditions and shifting human responses to the new

outstanding analysis of the patterns of mobility, demography, and social and reproduction characteristics of the American Bison; for a general summary of the Archaic Period, see Cordell, *Prehistory of the Southwest*, 153-80.

⁴ Katz, "Late Prehistoric Period Environment and Economy of the Southern Guadalupe Mountains, Texas," 14; Clifton, "An Archaeological Survey of 26 Miles of the Boundary of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Culbertson and Hudspeth Counties, Texas, 9;" Katz and Katz, "The Prehistory of the Carlsbad Basin, Southeastern New Mexico," 31-32; Michael E. Whalen, "Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest," *American Antiquity* 59, No. 4 (Oct., 1994): 627, offers a different view of the larger trends in this period. Whalen persuasively conflates the Terminal Archaic and Late Prehistoric periods, arguing for a localized interpretation that suggests that the Terminal Archaic phase lasts far longer in the deserts of the Southwest.

situation. The Middle Archaic period, also known as the Avalon Phase, began in around 3000 B.C. and lasted about 2,000 years. During this phase, Avalon people adapted to their new circumstances in a changing environment. Some became semi-sedentary, locating their camping places along major watercourses; the increasing use of river shellfish demonstrated the broader range of food-gathering strategies in which they engaged. The subsequent era, the Late Archaic, also known as the McMillan Phase, lasted from approximately 1000 B.C. to A.D. 100. It remains difficult to differentiate it from the predecessor Avalon Phase. Most practices and locations seem very similar, but a range of more specialized features, especially tools and structures, testify to a small but significant cultural distinction between the two eras.⁵

Cultural materials from a range of caves within the Guadalupe Mountains have offered much insight to Archaic life before 1 A.D. Dark Canyon Cave, Honest Injun Cave, Burnet Cave, Cremation Cave, Hermit's Cave, Williams Cave, Goat Cave, Anderson Canyon Cave, Wild Horse Cave North Three Forks Cave, Burial Cave, and Pratt Cave have yielded chipped stone tools including large corner-notched projectile points, various styles of scrapers, drills, choppers, and cores. Wooden fire drills, digging sticks, atlatls, darts, combs, storage tubes and wands, bone awls, basin metates and one-hand manos, woven articles of high quality such as yucca mats, coiled and twined basketry in differing colors, woven bags, fiber cordage, cloth netting, braided hair rope, woven sandals of at least four different kinds, jewelry made from shell beads, shell seeds, reed and bone segment beads, fresh water mussel shell — almost certainly from the Pecos River — turtle or tortoise shell, and bracelets made from *glycimeris* shell, originating in the Gulf of California. Structures include storage cisterns, some unlined, others constructed with stone grass, bark, twigs or some combination of these materials. This broad complement of materials offers a full picture of Archaic life.⁶

The final phase identified by archaeologists, the Terminal Archaic, shows how completely these peoples adapted to their surroundings in the course of the previous 5,000 years. In this era, the differences between the Guadalupe Mountains and the riverine environments along the Pecos River created different chronologies of inhabitation within a very small geographic area. Called the Hueco Phase in the Guadalupe Mountains, where it ended by about 200 A.D. and the Brantley Phase on the Pecos River, where it lasted until about 750 A.D., this era revealed that by this time, population had begun to grow in size and become even more localized. Pithouses flourished on the region's peripheries; archaeological evidence from the area around El Paso shows both pithouses, depressions that housed prehistoric structures, and plain brownware ceramics being used by the very end of the period.⁷

⁵ Whalen, "Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest," 622-38; Katz and Katz, "Pecos Past," 35-41; for the best summary of this era in prehistory, see Cordell, *Prehistory of the Southwest*, 181-244.

⁶ James E. Bradford, *Upper Dog Canyon Archaeology: Guadalupe Mountains National Park* (Santa Fe: National Park Service, Southwest Cultural Resources Center, 1980), 6-7.

⁷ Whalen, "Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest," 624-28; Katz and Katz, "Pecos Past," 41-42; Clifton, "An Archaeological survey of 26 Miles of the Boundary of Guadalupe

In the subsequent time period, labeled the Mesilla Phase by archaeologists, the patterns of the Terminal Archaic period become the dominant ways of living in southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas. Mesilla Phase sites closely resembled their Terminal Archaic predecessors, except that they grew in size and became more complex. The first appearance of burned rock rings, often called ring middens or mescal pits in the archaeological record, occurred in this era. The rings functioned as ovens for roasting plants, sometimes repeatedly, suggesting, repeated seasonal use of the same locale, a ceremonial sequence, and perhaps longer stays in numerous places. As new rocks were added to a rock ring to replace rocks that no longer held heat, the ring middens grew larger. When discovered by archaeologists, some middens were as tall as six feet. Typically, Mesilla Phase people roasted the three indigenous types of agave as well as datil and sotol in their middens. After mature agave plants, the most pleasing and nutritious ones, were harvested in late spring and early summer, the roasting took place. The people dug pits and started fires within them, then placing the agave close to the coals. The roasting area was filled with vegetation, rocks, and other materials to hold the heat, while not extinguishing the coals. When the agave was thoroughly cooked — which sometimes took days — it was taken from the pit and ground into a flour. This was a prime source of nourishment for the Jornada people, whom most archaeologists describe as the Late Prehistoric people of the Mesilla Phase.⁸

Despite the addition of foods such as agave to their regime, these late prehistoric Jornada people followed the patterns of most southwestern prehistoric peoples as they moved from preceramic hunting and gathering to agriculture. Like their predecessors in earlier phases of Archaic life, they lived along the rivers and the flood plains, even though agave was a higher-elevation plant that required that they leave the river valleys to seek. Yet compared with their predecessors, the late prehistoric Jornada appear to have chosen sedentary living — with all the intensification of economic strategies that it required — over the mobility that meant relying on hunting and gathering. They undertook a greater number of activities at a significantly larger number of locations on an evidently more consistent and recurrent basis.⁹

The Archaic people of southeastern New Mexico and trans-Pecos Texas did not acquire agriculture, which had swept north from what is now Mexico in most places by 1 A.D., until much later than others in surrounding areas. Since the end of Paleo era, the region had not looked promising for agriculture, and only specific circumstances could have propelled Archaic people to this new strategy. Some scholars believe that agriculture became a significant addition to the lifestyle of these people only around 900 A.D., when environmental circumstances in the region matched a long-standing need of its

Mountains National Park, Culbertson and Hudspeth Counties, Texas,” 9.

⁸ Whalen, “Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest,” 624-28; Katz and Katz, “Pecos Past,” 41-42; Clifton, “An Archaeological survey of 26 Miles of the Boundary of Guadalupe Mountains National Park, Culbertson and Hudspeth Counties, Texas,” 9.

⁹ Whalen, “Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest,” 625; Katz and Katz, “Pecos Past,” 42-43.

people. Declining options made agriculture a necessity. The late adaptation to agriculture underscored the marginality of the east side of Guadalupe Mountains and the Pecos River region.¹⁰

The greatest difference between the peoples of the Mesilla Phase and their predecessors was the way they responded to winter's demands. The Mesilla Phase winter sites show a wider variety and a far greater number of tools and accouterments; its structures are larger and sunk deeper into the ground than prior sites. As the population grew throughout the early stages of the Mesilla Phase, the need for more substantive provisioning forced groups to plan for the longer term. The pattern of intensive occupation that the Mesilla Phase sites display revealed their adaptation to the needs of a greater number of people. By 500 A.D., the people of the lowlands show the traits archaeologists ascribe to the Jornada as well as significantly increased quantities of materials they stored. Using camps built during the spring and summer, the best times of the year for hunting and gathering, they stored some of their bounty within individual dwellings and even more in larger storage pits outside. The increased storage suggested that they had more mouths to feed and for longer durations.¹¹

Between about A.D. 750 and 1150, during an extended period of great and rapid cultural transformation, the cultural characteristics of the people of southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas continued to follow the regional pattern. Population grew considerably, although no estimate of actual growth has yet been made. Before 750 A.D., the people of the region acquired a number of new strategies that had an important impact on the way they lived. After 900 A.D., people whom archaeologists clearly identify as Jornada Mogollon, a Late Prehistoric Mogollon culture, flourished in the area, using their characteristic brownware pottery on this very extreme eastern end of the range of Mogollon culture, which stretched into southern Arizona. Their outstanding variety and quantity of stone tools, many of which paradoxically were poorly fashioned in the rough Cochise tradition — an earlier and more basic southwestern prehistoric culture — attested to their technical sophistication in relationship to other groups of the same time. Agriculture became much more intensive; the use of cultivated plants increased as did the number of plants farmed; the large outside storage pits became more common; and the winter sites had more provisions than ever. Pithouses and pueblos, aboveground multiple dwellings, appeared within the larger region, especially to the west near the Rio Grande in what is now El Paso, providing evidence of a trend that led to sedentary living and river-basin agriculture. The bow and arrow, an acquired weapon, became part of the Jornada arsenal. Trade goods, especially ceramics such as brownware, entered the area. Some were made locally, but more typically they originated in the El Paso and Pecos areas, following a pattern of trade and cultural blending that accompanied pottery north from its origins in what is now Mexico. The pottery suggested more than local ties as well as a possibility of links to greater trade networks emerging in the Southwest and Mexico. Living on the periphery of the Mogollon realm, the Jornada people participated in this

¹⁰ Simmons, Stodder, Dykeman, and Hicks, "Human Adaptation and Cultural Change in the Greater Southwest," 69-70; Whalen, "Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest," 627.

¹¹ Whalen, "Moving Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest," 633.

exchange, refreshing cultural ties that could become slack with distance and acquiring new goods, rituals and traits, and sometimes food. The trade in brownware ceramics expanded until about 1150 A.D., and soon encompassed exchange with areas such as Sierra Blanca to the northeast and the Roswell area to the north. Trade relationships, nearly absent during even the last phases of the Archaic period, grew in importance as goods helped make regional life easier, qualitatively better, and culturally more consistent.¹²

Social changes accompanied these more intensive Jornada regimes that increased their ability to provide for a growing population. The creation of social structures that divided the world into people entitled to the bounty and people who were not, the figurative “us” and “them,” became typical of such transformations from Australia to the Great Basin of the intermountain American West. Scholars anticipate that a formalization of rules characterized this transformation, and the discovery of communal structures as well as the rising population and the increased intensity of agriculture offers strong supporting evidence. By the end of this phase, about 1100 A.D., population pressure, more intensive subsistence activity, and more highly organized social forms and possibly decision-making processes suggested that winter camps verged on becoming semi-permanent. After more than two thousand years of wandering in southeast New Mexico and far west Texas, the Jornada people began to settle in specific places. These settlements became the precursors of the region’s Pueblo Period communities.¹³

Trade and cultural interaction with the Anasazi to the north had an important impact on Mogollon culture. As they adapted to the mountainous areas they came to prefer, Mogollon people became woven into a larger network of peoples in the Southwest through trade, ritual, and other formal and semiformal relationships. These relationships accelerated their transformation from hunting and gathering roots to the agricultural base common among other southwestern prehistoric peoples and came to sustain the Jornada. It also gave them an advantage in the range of cultural and territorial disputes that cropped up with hunting and gathering peoples. While the hunters and gatherers depended almost completely on their foraging, the semi-sedentary Jornada could rely on their store of crops and their trade relationships to sustain them through crises. The realities suggested a longevity for Jornada people that hunting and gathering classes could not hope to match.¹⁴

Better equipped and better fed, Jornada people could experiment with new strategies of existence. As their interest grew in agriculture, particularly in the Pecos River and Rio Grande drainages and to a considerably lesser degree in the smaller river basins, it created a steady if sometimes meager bounty that could be used to support adventures aimed at new, more diverse, and even better sources

¹² Katz, “Pecos Past,” 46-47; Martin, “Prehistory: Mogollon,” 61-66; Whalen, “Moving out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest,” 633-34.

¹³ R. L. Hunter-Anderson, *Prehistoric Adaptation in the American Southwest*, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 43; Whalen, “Moving out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest,” 635.

¹⁴ Martin, “Prehistory: Mogollon,” 71-74.

of food. The Jornada Mogollon peoples also ventured to the uplands for their dwellings as had the Paleo people of more than 6,000 years before, favoring ridges, high mesas, and bluffs that were far from main travel routes. Leaving the rivers and the flood plains, they initiated occupation of higher elevation sites at a much more rapid pace than any of their predecessors since the end of the Paleo-Indian period. Many of the upland sites where archaeologists have discovered initial habitation date from the Mogollon era; only rarely do such places show evidence of prior occupation.¹⁵

Agriculture offered the greatest change in patterns of living adopted by the Jornada Mogollon. As they gained knowledge, farmers exerted much greater control over their environment than could the roaming hunters who preceded them. In response to population growth and environmental conditions, by about 1100 A.D., most of the Jornada people became agriculturalists; the rest remained hunters and gatherers. The practice of semi-sedentary agriculture also may have created conflict over resources with hunting and gathering groups, even when the peoples who practiced these two different styles were closely related. Over just a very few generations, systems of living took precedence over rapidly diminishing blood or kinship ties. Agriculturalists limited the opportunities of hunters by growing crops in river valleys and by aggressive pursuit of game in localized areas, and made gathering more difficult. The river valleys favored by sedentary people were prime locations for nomads in search of plant life in a semiarid region. Simultaneously, agriculturalists engaged in forays against hunters and gatherers, presumably to protect their resources. It was a new form of the earlier division between “us” and “them.” Hunters struck back, raiding the granaries and other stores of food that soon became the most heavily guarded and hardily constructed structures that the sedentary Jornada Mogollon possessed. But the agriculturalists enjoyed a distinct advantage that resulted from their crops; the ability to store food for extended periods allowed greater attention to other activities. Over time, hunting and gathering groups faced a dramatic choice: either become farmers, remain hunters and gatherers and leave the areas where sedentary people dominated the resource base, or stay and risk extinction.¹⁶

Agriculture came late to this periphery of the pre-Columbian world. In the Southwest, the transformation to agriculture began before 2000 B.C., and developed first throughout the core areas of the three main culture groups — the Anasazi, Hohokam, and Mogollon. Agriculture on the peripheries of these cultural groups, in places such as southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas, developed more slowly and much later in time. The Gila and Salt river basins to the west showed the earliest examples of significant reliance on agriculture, dating from as early as 300 A.D. At least one community

¹⁵ Katz and Katz, “Pecos Past,” 47; Katz, “Late Prehistoric Period Environment and Economy of the Southern Guadalupe Mountains, Texas,” 16-17.

¹⁶ Martin, “Prehistory: Mogollon,” 61-66; Whalen, “Moving out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest,” 635; Simmons, Stodder, Dykeman, and Hicks, “Human Adaptation and Cultural Change in the Greater Southwest,” 70; for a more general discussion, see Katherine A. Spielman, “Coercion or Cooperation? Plains-Pueblo Interaction in the Protohistoric Period,” in Katherine A. Spielman, ed., *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists: Interaction Between the Southwest and the Southern Plains* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1991), 36-50.

from that era, Snaketown, about twenty-five miles from what is now Phoenix, Arizona, revealed occupation throughout the year instead of seasonally. After 500 A.D., the role of agriculture throughout the region rapidly grew in significance, transforming the lives of the people with whom it came in contact. The southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas area lagged behind these regional developments by as much as 200 years.¹⁷

Despite the great changes that took place, the people of this time of new technologies and strategies continued to share many characteristics with those who had preceded them. Agave remained a staple of their diet and the use of rock rings continued. An increasing quantity and diversity of projectile points illustrated the ongoing importance of hunting and perhaps point to a diversity of weapons such as spears used in pursuit of game. While cultural, social, and economic changes affected life, a significant number of factors in the lives of the Jornada remained constant. People from earlier eras would have recognized the lives of these Mogollon people and might very well have envied them the abundance of agriculture, trade, and hunting techniques.

By 1150 A.D., the appearance of painted ceramics, categorized by archaeologists as the El Paso Polychrome and Three Rivers Red-on-Terracotta, suggested a more integrated but also predominantly localized network of trade for the region's Jornada people. Elsewhere in the Southwest, painted ceramics were part of a growing trade network that became central to the future of the region; at Mesa Verde, Chaco Canyon and throughout northern New Mexico, an array of painted pottery representing various cultures and points of origin became common. In the far reaches of Jornada Mogollon culture, near the Guadalupe Mountains, painted pottery mixed with the traditional brownware of the region, suggesting that the people of the region had little to offer in trade in comparison with the Mogollon culture's core areas.¹⁸

The realities of the region have encouraged archaeologists to speculate that Archaic-style culture endured much later in this peripheral southeastern New Mexico and trans-Pecos area — perhaps until European contact. Advocates of this idea point to the common features of late Archaic life, the ways in which the practices of people in the region did not change. Those who argue against this premise point to the new adaptations of the period — agriculture, trade and local production of ceramics, and other features that suggest broader commonality with the sedentary world along the Rio Grande and in western New Mexico. Current evidence supports both perspectives, and the safest supposition is that throughout southeastern New Mexico agriculture existed in close proximity with hunting and gathering.¹⁹

¹⁷ Woodbury and Zubrow, "Agricultural Beginnings: 2,000 B.C.-500 A.D.," ; Simmons, Stodder, Dykeman, and Hicks, "Human Adaptation and Cultural Change in the Greater Southwest," 69; David E. Stuart and Rory P. Gauthier, *Prehistoric New Mexico: Background for Survey* 2nd ed., (Albuquerque: New Mexico Archaeological Council, 1984), 268.

¹⁸ Martin, "Prehistory: Mogollon," 61-62; Katz and Katz, "Pecos Past," 47-48; Susan Marjorie Applegarth, "Prehistoric Utilization of the Environment of the Eastern Slope of the Guadalupe Mountains, Southeastern New Mexico." Ph.D. diss, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1976.

¹⁹ Simmons, Stodder, Dykeman, and Hicks, "Human Adaptation and Cultural Change in the Greater

Despite its peripheral status, the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region shared many traits with the rest of the pre-Columbian world. By 1350 A.D., the people of this remote region enjoyed cultural, economic, and technological ties with the core Mogollon world, and through it, to the Anasazi, Hohokam, and increasingly the hybrid Chichimecan cultural tradition that rose in northern Mexico. Yet in the region between the Pecos River and the Guadalupe Mountains, the ties were not as strong as along the Rio Grande or elsewhere within the main currents of prehistoric influence and trade. Southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas remained more isolated than other places with the Mogollon world, far from the dominant vectors of the era. Despite the appearance of many cultural adaptations, the persistence of brownware pottery offers insight into the situation. The painted pottery was more aesthetically pleasing than the plain brownware, but the imported colorful pots were either hard to obtain or beyond the economic reach of the region's inhabitants. Compared with other areas in the Southwest, the continued brownware production along the Pecos River and toward the Guadalupe Mountains illustrated both its ties to the south and how marginal the region that produced it remained.²⁰

This remote region was also susceptible to the same forces that affected the core cultures that helped sustain it. The Jornada hold on survival was more tenuous in the Guadalupe Mountains than along the Rio Grande, and the complex of social organization, structures, and other features of life in the region during this phase shows considerably less diversity in the mountains than along the rivers. As a result of its peripheral status — of weaker trade ties, less desirable land and economic opportunity, and a far more scattered and loosely linked population — impact on the core areas of their culture necessarily affected the people of the periphery much more heavily than it did closer to the central institutions and locations of Mogollon culture. In the Guadalupe Mountains and along the Pecos River, the cultural ties played a significant role in defining the people as part of a larger group. The Jornada Mogollon east of the Rio Grande and away from El Paso found themselves on a weak limb of the Mogollon world. They had the ability to stave off disaster from local sources, for they could depend on the core of Mogollon culture to help. But they had little defense against problems that emanated outward from the heart of their culture.

Toward the end of this era, the relationships that sustained the region showed signs of fraying. The dual pattern of agriculturalists and hunter-gatherers began to break down around 1300 and was certainly complete by 1350. Some archaeologists suggest that this change resulted from a period of deteriorating environmental conditions such as the periodic droughts that affected other parts of the Southwest. Others believe it resulted from the decline of bison in southeastern New Mexico and trans-Pecos Texas, and their greater availability, along with other game animals, elsewhere. Archaeologists think that the greatest opportunities to hunt bison between the Pecos River and the Guadalupe Mountains occurred in two separate eras: the period between about 1250 and 1300, and the period

Southwest,” 112-14; Stuart and Gauthier, *Prehistoric New Mexico*, 259.

²⁰Charles C. DiPeso, “Prehistory: Southern Periphery,” 152-56; Katz and Katz, “Pecos Past,” 47, indicates that painted pottery “may represent a purely aesthetic change.”

beginning in about 1450 and continuing for a century. A major bison kill site, a place where prehistoric people successfully killed numerous bison, at Garnsey in the vicinity of Roswell dates from about 1450; instead of the bison cows that were the targets of such efforts on the northern plains, bulls were the focus of this endeavor. The kill occurred in the spring, the time of year when hunter-gatherers struggled to survive the end of winter and find new sources of food. The higher-fat content bulls reflect a seasonal need for more fat in the diet. The Garnsey site also suggests increasingly availability of this animal; the hunters were selective about the animals they butchered, likely an indicative that they were not worried about future sources of meat. In this later time, the three-century-long Little Ice Age had begun to cool the planet, making the once hotter climate of the southern plains more attractive to the powerful animal and its human predators.

When the entire Southwest experienced a localized series of droughts about 1300, the people of the region's peripheries experienced a tremendous impact. Agriculturalists retained great power as long as their crops continued to produce, but without a consistent yield they too were subject to the forces of the hunting and gathering world. This dislocating change in economic and most likely cultural relationships put great pressure on agriculturalists. Some certainly returned to hunting and gathering, possibly even joining extant bands of long-lost relatives, who at the time were probably venturing farther and farther to find the game that sustained them. Others withdrew back toward the core of the culture, much as had the people of the great southwestern prehistoric sites of Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon as their world declined merely 200 years before. Climatic change may have caused this departure, but the limits of the attributes of the physical environment and of trade ties made it a reality always on the horizon. The periphery of any culture remained difficult to sustain even into the twentieth century.

While the agriculturalists departed for better land much closer to water as higher levels of rainfall ended, hunter-gatherer groups, including some recently sedentary Jornada people, responded by becoming highly nomadic hunters, living off larger and increasingly easy to find expanding buffalo herds to the north and east, acquiring greater mobility as a result of using dogs as beasts of burden, and establishing a wider range of living. In effect, environmental change and the problems it created compelled the division of the Jornada people into two groups. One presaged the nomadic Plains peoples, later given range and strength by the horses that arrived with the Spanish. The other more closely mirrored the Pueblo peoples of the Rio Grande spine and of the northern Pecos River in its sedentary living and dependence on cultivated crops. Some linguists point to this split as an explanation of the perplexing similarity of the Pueblo Towa dialect and the Plains Kiowa language. This varied form of development revealed the marginal status of the periphery of the Mogollon sphere even in the prehistoric world. Agriculture in the region simply could not sustain the number of people who inhabited it. On the margins, in the worst locations for agriculture, hunting and gathering persisted and adapted to both the growing population and long-standing trends toward a warmer, drier climate.²¹

²¹ Lynne Sebastian and Signe Larralde, "Living on the Land: 11,000 Years of Human Habitation in Southeastern New Mexico," (Roswell, NM: Bureau of Land Management, 1989) Cultural Resources Series No. 6, 93-94; for the question of who hunted bison and who traded for their meat and skin, see Spielman, "Coercion or Cooperation?" 42-48. Nancy P. Hickerson, "Jumano: The Missing Link in South Plains

Agriculture as a way of life was also doomed in this peripheral region. The crops on which sedentary Jornada groups depended thrived in river valleys; there were few of these east of El Paso across the Salt Flats and in the Guadalupe Mountains, and most river valleys were too high in elevation to offer a suitable growing season. The Pecos River was the largest valley in the area and it could sustain a sizable population. Elsewhere, successful agriculture was contingent on favorable weather conditions and available water. Agriculture, even in the river basins, became a dangerous strategy as technological innovation and other changes helped foster an expanding population. With scarce resources and more people clamoring for them, the bounty of agriculture, increasingly fragile, had to be divided more and more ways. The result was greater pressure on agriculturalists and the land they used, on game animals, on water and on every other available resource in the immediate vicinity.²²

Outside pressure also came to bear on this periphery, severing or curtailing ties to other parts of the prehistoric world. Between about 1000 and 1350, most of the Southwest experienced severe environmental change that disrupted existing communities. At Chaco Canyon during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, one form of Anasazi culture reached an apogee. A rapid decline, likely a result of changing environmental conditions, overuse of available resources such as timber, and perhaps the collapse of other locations to the north and even to the south that were tied both through trade and ceremonial relationships, followed. By 1200, the Chaco Complex was abandoned. Mesa Verde was also abandoned during the subsequent 100 years, as were many other Pueblo locations. These people retreated from these desertifying outposts and migrated closer to sources of sustenance. Some scholars attribute the development of the western pueblos and those along the Rio Grande to this retreat.

The peripheral status of southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas exacerbated the problems prehistoric people experienced in other places in the Southwest. As life became much harder on this periphery, pre-Apachean peoples about whom archaeologists know little descended the western part of the Great Plains and arrived in the region; on their heels were the Athapaskan peoples, the forerunners of the Apaches who had driven their predecessors from the plains. Archaeological evidence indicates that Rattlesnake Springs, near the mouth of Rattlesnake Canyon in the Guadalupe Mountains, served as a camping site for Apachean or at least Athapaskan peoples, and Slaughter Canyon and its pictographs show evidence of an Apache presence. Experts disagree on when the collapse of agriculture occurred in southeast New Mexico and far west Texas, but all are certain that by 1300, the agriculturalists were in hasty retreat from this area as the environment deteriorated for agriculture, as hunters and gatherers pursued proliferating buffalo onto the plains, and as other peoples pushed into the area. What the land once promised it could no longer deliver to Jornada people, and subsistence

History," *Journal of the West* Vol. 29 No. 4 (October 1990): 5-12.

²² Michael S. Foster and J. Charles Kelley, "An Archeological Overview of the Western Trans-Pecos, Texas, With Reference to the Archeology of the Salt Basin Area," in "Archeological Investigations in the Three-Mile And Sulpher Draw Watershed, Culberson County, Texas," *The Artifact* Vol. 27 No. 3 (1989).

cultures contended with a recurring problem: finding a new place that could give them what they needed.²³

Throughout southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas, signs of Jornada use declined after about 1150. Regional variation among peoples became more acute, as different groups sought out strategies for survival. Fewer artifacts in a smaller number of places suggest a decline in population, and the level of technological sophistication diminished. Although many of the same physical features remained, the increasing sparseness of settlement strongly suggested that the Jornada peoples were leaving the area. Trade continued with other places within the region, especially the Sierra Blanca area, closer to the Rio Grande, but it became more limited than before. All indications affirm that Jornada use of this region peaked at or before 1150, and subsequent Jornada life was part of an extended retreat from this marginal region. After 1450, almost no signs of habitation persist in formerly resource-laden areas, and the Jornada people, both agriculturalist and hunters and gatherers, canvassed elsewhere in search of new and more promising living accommodations.

After about 1450, the remnants of the sedentary Jornada people clustered around waterways and eked out their subsistence from the Pecos River and its offerings. Their range had shrunk considerably; their ability to provide declined as well. They needed the river even more than ever, looking to it as a source of food as well as sustenance. Freshwater mussels found in the river became a dietary staple. Small groups of people — most probably families or kinship networks made up of groups of families — gathered food and other necessities. A smaller population helped make survival possible, but the prospects were not very good. A tipi ring, the circle of stones typically found in locations where Native Americans erected their cone-shaped, hide-wrapped structures, found near the location of the modern Brantley Reservoir offered an anomalous piece of evidence. Difficult to date accurately, the tipi ring may demonstrate the arrival of plains nomads, cultural exchange or accretion between Jornada people and incoming plains peoples, or evidence of the changing culture of the hunter-gatherer branch of the Jornada. The tipi shows one fact of life for certain: the Jornadas were losing control of the region that sustained them.

As their departure turned into demise, greater geographic divisions existed in the region's patterns of life. Jumano people, typically understood as an outgrowth of the Jornada people or as people who "became" Jornada through close cultural links and diffusion, rose to prominence in the region. Most accounts closely link the Jumano to the Cochise group, a strain of what can be described as a generic prehistoric desert culture that existed from as early as 7,000 B.C. to as late 750 A.D., and flourished around 3000 B.C.; Jumano language was either a Tanoan dialect, similar to those of Taos, San Juan, Isleta, Jemez, and Pecos pueblos, or Caddoan, of a piece with the language of the Caddo people to the east across the Trinity River in eastern Texas whose range extended into Arkansas and

²³ Sebastian and Larralde, "Living on the Land," 95; Katz and Katz, "Pecos Past," 45-47; Katz, "Late Prehistoric Period Environment and Economy of the Southern Guadalupe Mountains, Texas," 52-53. M. Jean Tweedie "Notes on the History and Adaptation of the Apache Tribes." *American Anthropologist* 70, No. 6 (December 1968): 1132-1142.

possibly Kansas and Missouri. Each scenario projects a different origin for these pivotal but obscure people. When the Spanish made contact in the early 1540s, the Tanoan language dominated much of the Rio Grande and was spoken as far south as the confluence of the Rio Grande and the Rio Concho and on into the deserts of Chihuahua; Caddoan languages extended across the plains from the Texas area toward the Pecos River, the Guadalupe Mountains, and beyond to the Rio Grande.

From whichever direction they emerged, the Jumanos first become identifiable during this era. Limits on the early Jumanos probably came from surrounding groups with different cultural traditions and languages, but over time the relations between Jumano peoples and other groups became more peaceful. The shared sense that the South Plains was open and large enough for many helped maintain the calm. In southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas, trade became the nomadic Jumano forte, as they brought bison hides and meat to the settled Tanoan villages near the Rio Grande and goods back to the plains that the Jumanos distributed among the hunters who entrusted them with hides. Material evidence of trading ties such as pottery, sandals, fabrics, weapons and projectile points, and baskets substantiates the importance of trade. Along the Canadian River in modern Oklahoma, Plains village agriculturists, perhaps Tanoan from the west or Caddoan from the east and southeast, settled, while hunters and gatherers roamed the *Llano Estacado*, the staked plains of what is now west Texas. By the time of the Spanish *entrada* in 1540, the Jumanos had become a recognized force in the pre-contact world.²⁴

On the plains east of the Rio Grande, other peoples fiercely contested Jumano dominance. Athapaskan peoples, the Apachean groups, splintered and became a series of distinctive regional bands on both sides of the Rio Grande. East of the river, they battled Jumano peoples for control of trade, for access to resources, and for territory. Their cousins to the west, the “Apaches du Navaho” or the Navajos of today, headed south along the western edge of the Colorado Plateau. The Apachean encroachment in the eastern Southwest started slowly from the north, in part driven by simple population expansion, in part by the appearance on the South Plains of the people who became known as the Comanches. A sequence of successive conquests began, with the Athabaskan Apachean peoples expanding southward from the central plains to the southern plains, attracted by the seemingly wealth of the region and the trade network of the Jumanos. The Comanches followed close behind. By the time the Spanish arrived, the Jumanos found their horizons challenged, at least at the northern end of the vast range they regarded as their own.²⁵

²⁴ Nancy P. Hickerson, “Jumano: The Missing Link in South Plains History,” *Journal of the West*, 29 4 (October 1990): 5-7; Whalen, “Out of the Archaic on the Edge of the Southwest,” 634-36; Sebastian and Larralde, “Living on the Land,” 97.

²⁵ Hickerson, “Jumano: The Missing Link in South Plains History,” 10-12; scholars vary widely on the question of who the Jumanos were. Some, such as Hickerson and Elizabeth A. H. John, indicate Tano roots; others perceive them as a break-off from the Caddo people. Increasingly evidence suggest Jornada Mogollon roots, and a split in the late-Archaic-proto-historic period that made some Jumano hunters and gatherers, nomads on the plains, and others agriculturalists at places such as Salinas, New Mexico. Others suggest that the Tompiro Pueblos were actually Jumano. At the moment, there is no overwhelming

Jumano contact stretched far and wide, and numerous native peoples might have had contact with those who inhabited the Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains region. Pueblo people such as the Hopis to the north, Zunis in what is now west-central New Mexico, the Keresan-speaking people of Rio Grande Valley, the people of Zia Pueblo, the Manso and Suma of the El Paso area, and the Piro of the fringes of the Rio Grande Valley, Kiowas from the plains, Tiguas, nomadic Apache bands who arrived in the area after Vázquez de Coronado came north, and finally the nemesis of the Apaches, the Comanches, who arrived after the Apaches. On the periphery of this region, Plains-style villages existed and interacted with the southwestern world. The southernmost known expression of this culture occurred at Antelope Creek in what is now the Texas Panhandle, where people who evinced the traits of Plains culture lived beginning about 1200 A.D., and remaining until early in the sixteenth century. Toward the end of this period, consistent and heavy trade between the people of Antelope Village and the pueblos developed, in the aftermath of the collapse of the trade center of Casas Grande in northern Mexico and as the arrival of the people of the Four Corners region along the Rio Grande spine disrupted trade networks to the north. As a result, more comprehensive patterns of trade developed—including Plains people, Jumanos, and Pueblo people. The most mobile of the groups, the Jumanos, played a valuable role in this process. Scarce resources and the Jumano trade networks drew other peoples to their regions to trade at the *rancherías*, the small homestead-like base that the Jumanos inhabited.²⁶

Before the arrival of the Spanish, a complex Native world existed that sometimes occupied the Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains region. For Paleo and early Archaic peoples, the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region was largely bereft of the natural resources that led to levels of organization found elsewhere in the Southwest. Culture, climate, and resources offered the best measures of the way in which native peoples used their world, and their successes, measured by longevity, depended on their ability to adapt. As the more than 10,000-year trend toward a more arid and warmer climate continued, life became more difficult for people throughout the Southwest and the Southern Plains. Agriculture both solved and exacerbated existing problems; agriculture provided the constant supply food that promoted population growth, which in turn made continued survival more difficult. In the estimation of many archaeologists and anthropologists, the apex of pre-Columbian habitation of southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas occurred between about 700 A.D. and about 1200 A.D., just before a dramatic climatic change in the form of drought and the first arrival of Athapaskan peoples began. For the Jornada people, who most regard as the forerunners of the Jumanos and some of the Tanoan-speaking southern pueblos, these twin changes forced difficult tactical decisions on which their very survival hinged.

preponderance of evidence; the author is most persuaded by the Jornada Mogollon to hunter-gatherer and agriculturalist argument, which accounts for the predisposition here to regard the Jumanos as Tanoan.

²⁶ Christopher Lintz, "Texas Panhandle-Pueblo Interactions from the Thirteenth Through the Sixteenth Century," in Spielman, ed., *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists*, 89-105.

The relationship of the region's people with northern Mexico remains unclear for most of the time period, and becomes especially murky after 1150, more than 300 years before the first written chronicles appear, when on-the-ground evidence diminishes greatly. Many scholars find entirely plausible the notion that before the coming of Apachean peoples, the subregion was a northern offshoot of the core areas of Mexico rather than an adjunct to the plains or northern pueblo people. The southern spread of the Tano language and its reach into Mexico as well as the power of the Chichimeca cultural tradition to the south in what is now central and northern Mexico suggest that no less than firm trading ties existed between Tanoan speakers and their southern and more powerful neighbors. Although most of the evidence in the Guadalupe Mountains region reveals more local patterns of trading, some cultural influences such as painted pottery typical of Casas Grande and the Chichimeca world show how pervasive the influence of northern Mexico had become on the Mogollon Tano-speakers.

The departure of agriculturalists from the region remains the subject of a great deal of speculation. Some scholars suggest that the region was an edge area between competing cultural groups as late as the tenth century; the competition among culture groups for the resources in the area and the prospect of war would likely mean that hunting in such places was less thorough, leaving a greater bounty for any group that eventually established control there. Yet like most semiarid edge areas, the region was fragile, its apparent bounty the result not of consistent use, but of under use. The edge-area scenario also links the region more closely to the rest of the Pueblo world. If accurate, the demolishing of the edge areas would have contributed to the end of agriculture in the region in a time frame that may also coincide with the abandonment of more famous locations such as Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde. Clearly, changing climate, growing population, and the use of resources that did not easily replenish contributed to the near abandonment of southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas.

One result is indisputable. By 1540, when Vázquez de Coronado arrived, hunter-gatherers had returned to dominance in the region. Except for small settlements in river valleys such as the Pecos, people moved through the region in search of game and other food. Unlike in the Archaic era, when the vectors of living moved people toward sedentary agriculture, after about 1300, the peoples who passed through southeastern New Mexico and trans-Pecos Texas increasingly saw the region as a location for seasonal use. Their life comprised the many resources they gathered and for which they traded. By this time, Native Americans routinely traversed the region, deriving sustenance from it as they passed through but rarely stopping to develop any sedentary pattern of settlement. As Europeans approached, the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region was on the periphery of the Meso-American and the prehistoric southwestern world, a place people tried to settle but over time found inadequate to their needs.

Chapter 2: The Spanish and Mexican Era

When Christopher Columbus landed on the island of San Salvador in the Bahamas chain in October 1492, he set off a more than 500-year-long process of demographic, cultural, biological, and ecological changes that continue in the New World. Following his lead, and in search of the riches Columbus felt certain he found, Spanish and Portuguese explorers came to the Americas. It was a land divided by Pope Alexander I in the Inter Caetera issued May 3, 1493; the split was codified in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, with one section to the west ceded to the Portuguese and the rest — which turned out to be most of North America, all of Central America, and a large section of South America — given to Spain. The New World inhabitants and their claims to land were not taken into consideration. The Spanish avidly pursued conquest in search of souls for Christ and gold for their coffers. Their quest was an extension of the *reconquista*, the retaking of Spain from the Moors completed in 1492— what they saw as a moral quest to spread the power, beauty, and faith of Spanish culture and Catholicism to those who had not yet experienced its glories. Spanish territorial expansion occurred rapidly; Juan Ponce de León first arrived in what is now Florida in 1513; Hernán Cortés claimed Mexico in 1521, Francisco Pizarro conquered the Inca empire between 1531 and 1533, and Hernán de Soto explored the interior of what is now the southeastern United States from 1539-1543. Spanish zeal, the power of diseases that emanated from the crossroads of Europe, Africa, and Asia, and military power gave this proud European nation much more than a toehold in the Americas.¹

When Francisco Vázquez de Coronado marched into the interior of New Spain to search for Cibola and the remaining seven cities of gold at the beginnings of the 1540s, he followed the Spanish tradition in the New World. He departed with one of the most elaborate European expeditions sent to the interior of North America, including more than 300 Spaniards, among them several women, six Franciscan priests, and more than 1,000 native allies. In July 1540 they seized Cibola, today's village of Zuni in west-central New Mexico. The 100-family village was not at all what the Spaniards expected — none of the gold, none of the impressive structures they believed characterized Cibola, was anywhere to be found.

Vázquez de Coronado's men began a program of conversion and conquest while the Spaniards searched for additional souls to convert. Following the Rio Grande, they camped along

¹ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992, 30-45; Adolph Bandelier and Fanny Bandelier, *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*; Francis Jennings, *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest* (NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1975): 2-6.

its banks during the winter of 1540-1541. A series of encounters, mostly fractious and sometimes bloody, with Pueblo people followed. By the spring of 1541, the Spaniards destroyed at least thirteen Pueblo villages.

Vázquez de Coronado left the western pueblos and pushed north along the Rio Grande to Pecos Pueblo. Deceived by a native of the so-called land of Quivira whom the Spanish called the Turk, the Spanish left Pecos and followed his guidance to the supposed wealth of this new kingdom somewhere on the plains beyond Pueblo country. They followed a circuitous route, seemingly leading everywhere and nowhere at the same time. Vázquez de Coronado followed the beguiling Turk, past the location of present-day Roswell, New Mexico, north of the Guadalupe Mountains-Carlsbad Caverns region, onto the plains of west Texas near Lubbock.² From there, the expedition marched across the panhandles of Texas and Oklahoma to a frustrating end of the journey, at the Wichita Indian villages on the Arkansas River near present-day Lyons, Kansas. There the Turk's deception became known to the men he led to this faraway place. After discovering that the people of Pecos Pueblo asked the Turk to lead the Spanish somewhere far from the Pueblo homeland, where the foreigners and their horses would starve to death, the Spanish garroted the Turk, leaving themselves without guides or allies in a sea of grass. Soon after they headed back to the Rio Grande pueblos. After a riding injury in December, Vázquez de Coronado returned to Mexico by the route he came, leaving only bad memories for the pueblos. He also left some of his native allies, a few stragglers, and two priests, soon to become martyrs, in New Mexico.³

Vázquez de Coronado's adventure summarized the European approach to the arid Southwest. They stayed close to the major watercourses except for specific purposes, such as the ill-founded search for Quivira, and despite being from the Iberia peninsula, which shared much with the places they found, they looked past remote desert lands in search of gold, water, and produce. In this context, the way in which Vázquez de Coronado skirted southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas is hardly surprising. The Roswell area through which he passed showed year-round streams and creeks as well as a river; the region to the south appeared parched. Vázquez de Coronado could not imagine that the gold he sought could be there, and his deceptive guide told him that the riches he craved were elsewhere. Without first-hand geographic knowledge, blinded by the prospect of gold, and sharing the predispositions about value that Europeans brought along from the Old World, Vázquez de Coronado had neither intellectual nor economic reasons to explore southeastern New Mexico or far west Texas.⁴

Vázquez de Coronado's response characterized the Spanish and Mexican governments, which

² Archeological evidence indicates that Vázquez de Coronado may have traveled southwest of Lubbock, suggesting he may have passed by the present site of Carlsbad.

³ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 45-49.

⁴ Felix D. Almaraz, Jr. "An Uninviting Wilderness: The Plains of West Texas, 1534-1821" (*Great Plains Quarterly* 12 (Summer 1992): 169-180.

had nominal and frequently interrupted control of the region from the early seventeenth century into the middle of the nineteenth century. In their view, there was little of value on the plains and in the mountains east of El Paso. The Guadalupe Mountains provided a landmark to the east of the area of their greatest interest that also harbored, in the Spanish view, uncooperative and sometimes hostile people. The Rio Grande, winding north through the Mesilla Valley and onto Albuquerque and the Rio Arriba beyond it, defined the range of Spanish interest and control. Even into the nineteenth century, Spanish and Mexican presence in the province of Tejas y Coahuila was typically confined to central Texas, in particular the area around San Fernando de Bexar, today's San Antonio. The area between central Texas and El Paso remained largely devoid of Spanish and Mexican influence.⁵

Lost Spaniards such as the shipwrecked Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca traveled through northern Mexico in the 1530s and had contact with the southernmost of the Jumano people near the mouth of the Río Conchos. Later, Fray Augustín Rodríguez in 1581 and Don Antonio de Espejo in 1583 passed through the region; but none of the three initiated any form of settlement. Even the famed *Jornada del Muerto*, the more than 100-mile waterless trek labeled the Journey of Death, passed to the west of the Carlsbad-Guadalupe region. In the 1720s, Spanish explorer and map-maker Francisco Alvarez y Barreiro ceded the region southeast of El Paso to the "Apaches del Natage" and the area to the northeast to the "Apaches Pharaones," both probably forerunners of the people recognized today as Mescalero Apaches. Alvarez y Barreiro's maps show that the Spanish felt they had little control over the region as late as the middle of the eighteenth century. Although at the end of that century the Spanish had become more interested in the area, by that time their New World empire was crumbling and they lacked the resources and initiative to explore the region. In 1821, New Spain declared its independence and the Mexican nation was born.

The Mexican government, which controlled the former colony of New Spain beginning in 1821, and the Republic of Texas, which seized Texas and the Trans-Pecos region in 1835, also had little time to devote to development of this periphery. Both fought to establish primacy in their central areas, battles that often occurred to the detriment of remote regions. Only after the annexation of Texas by the United States in 1845 did forces with the ability to transform the Carlsbad-Guadalupe Mountains region begin to focus upon it.

Spanish exploration in the area began as it did throughout the New World. First came reports of advantages that remote places offered, then military and religious expeditions, often combined but with very different purposes, and then finally the codification of Spanish control that resulted from conflict, negotiation, or settlement. Vázquez de Coronado initiated the colonial process in New Mexico. A lost wanderer such as Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca — who by some accounts crossed the Pecos River after approaching from the east in 1535 and headed south along it, skirting the very edge of the southeastern New Mexico and far west Texas region — was anomalous. He provided perhaps a

⁵ Gladys Collins, "Spanish West Texas, 1535-1759," (*West Texas Historical Association Year Book VII* (1931): 95-99.

source of information, but was hardly part of a pattern of conquest and subsequent colonization.

The first expedition to the north after Vázquez de Coronado in 1540 had conversion as its goal. The aftermath of a mining boom in Chihuahua, Mexico, which spawned towns such as Santa Bárbara along the Río Conchos, also fed a desire for the riches of the north. Some of the many rumors about the supposed riches of these lands reached the heart of the mining district, and many who came to mine thought of quicker and easier ways to acquire their fortune. Spanish leaders were less than pleased with such aspirations. Under a royal decree called the “Order for New Discoveries,” the Spanish Crown in 1773 forbade unauthorized expeditions beyond official boundaries, threatened violators with the “pain of death and loss of all their property” for infractions, outlawed the use of the term “conquest” to describe the “pacification” such advances entailed, and appointed missionaries as the primary agents of exploration and so-labeled pacification. This policy slowed commercial intensity, but opened the way for ecumenical advances. Officials regarded the clerical efforts of Catholic priests as the highest form of cultural transmission. In this context, the speed with which Fray Augustín Rodríguez received royal permission for him and two other Franciscans to travel north along the Río Concho affirmed the feelings of the Spanish Crown and New Spain authorities toward gallivanting adventurers. After almost 100 years of Spanish colonizing efforts in the Americas, the Crown placed much more faith in its ecumenical representatives than its civic ones.

In 1581, Rodríguez, the other two friars, and an escort of seven soldiers commanded by Capt. Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado headed up the Conchos to the Rio Grande, to northern New Mexico. Some accounts place them east of the El Paso region; others indicate that they stayed within the confines of the Rio Grande Valley. After a sojourn in New Mexico, most of the expedition headed back to Mexico along the same Rio Grande path, leaving Rodríguez and a companion behind to convert Pueblo peoples to Catholicism. Sánchez Chamuscado died during the return trip, but his men reported to the viceroy’s notaries. Although the report was circumspect and mentioned little of potential riches in the north, the specter of priests alone among the native peoples, even priests who volunteered to stay such as these, attracted the attention of Spanish leadership. There were hidden motives as well; many sought to make the area and its presumed riches their own under the guise of a rescue mission. Soon, an expedition formed to go after them and bring them safely back to New Spain.⁶

Personal motives abounded in this new endeavor. Although many rushed forward to save the lost padres, the rumors of great mineral wealth moved most of the rescuers. Among them was Don Antonio de Espejo, who had come to New Spain in 1571 with the Inquisition as one of its agents and remained to become a wealthy cattle rancher. After a dispute that ended in a death and a trial, Espejo fled to the north and used the pretense of rescuing the priests as a way to escape judgement in New Spain. Supporting Espejo was Father Bernardino Beltrán, who believed it his duty to go north to help

⁶ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 76-79; Joseph P. Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier 1540-1692: A History of Early Colonial New Mexico* (Albuquerque: Albuquerque History Museum, 1987), 28-31; Hackett, ed., Bandelier and Bandelier, *Historical Documents Relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, 193-94.

Rodríguez. The new expedition received royal authorization and on November 10, 1582, the group left for the north.⁷

Espejo followed the Rio Grande north. At Puaray, the expedition found that the priests were dead, negating the mission that Fray Beltrán thought was important. Espejo took a different view and continued to explore central New Mexico. At Zuñi, the Spaniards found a book and a small trunk that the Vázquez de Coronado expedition left behind in the 1540s; among the people of the Pueblo were a significant number of Mexican Indians who had come north with Vázquez de Coronado more than forty years before. Some still retained the Spanish words they learned from Vázquez de Coronado's men. While at Zuñi, Espejo and Fray Beltrán argued over control of the expedition. The priest and his faction returned to New Spain along the Rio Grande. Espejo and eight men remained, soon finding themselves in a skirmish with the people of Puaray. Memories of Vázquez de Coronado made subsequent Spaniards unwelcome at best among the Pueblos. The Spaniards fled toward Cicúye, the pueblo at Pecos, fearing the pursuit of Puaray warriors. When they arrived near Cicúye, they avoided the pueblo with its commanding view of the plains.⁸

The Spanish experienced a new emotion in their sojourn to New Mexico: fear. On the run, weakened, trapped between the warriors they thought followed them and the ones they knew awaited them at Cicúye, the Spaniards stayed away from the cities. Instead, they marched south along the Pecos River, which Espejo renamed El Rio de Los Vacas, the River of the Buffalo, after the buffalo they saw near it. The two-month journey back to Mexico was as much a retreat as a march, but following the Pecos River south helped solidify the Spanish perception that two routes — one up the Rio Conchos to the junction with the Pecos River, and the second up the Rio Grande, to New Mexico — offered viable ways to reach this quixotic, if not yet obviously economically valuable, addition to their holdings.⁹

On the way back, Espejo's expedition experienced the first recorded encounter with the people of the southeastern New Mexico and Trans-Pecos region. On August 7, 1583, near the great eastern bend of the Pecos River, probably north of the modern town of Pecos, Texas, but somewhere south of Carlsbad, New Mexico, Espejo encountered three Jumano men, who guided the Spanish to Jumano *rancherías*, most likely near modern Carlsbad, Rocky Arroyo, and the Delaware River. The Jumanos

⁷ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 78-79; Joseph P. Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier 1540-1692: A History of Early Colonial New Mexico* (Albuquerque: Albuquerque History Museum, 1987), 35-37; George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594: The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castano de Sosa, Morlete, and Leyva de Bonilla and Humana*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966: 11-22.

⁸ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 79; Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier 1540-1692*, 37-39.

⁹ Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier 1540-1692*, 39; J. Charles Kelley "The Route of Antonio de Espejo Down the Pecos River and Across the Texas Trans-Pecos Region in 1583: Its Relation to West Texas Archeology. (*Sul Ross State Teachers College Bulletin* No. 7, West Texas Historical and Scientific Society Issue No. 7, December 1937: 8-24.

informed the Spanish that they were about twelve days journey from the mouth of the Río Conchos, and offered to guide the Spaniards to the river. The Jumanas then offered hospitality to their guests, and at their *ranchería* prepared a feast that included catfish, sardines, and mojarra, a small tropical fish.

By the time the Jumanos encountered the Spanish, their *rancherías* were semipermanent or sedentary, sporting gardens and sometimes inhabited by some members of the group throughout the year. They served as trading bases for the Jumanos, and as were always the case in southeastern New Mexico and Trans-Pecos Texas, the *rancherías* were outliers tied to core areas along the Brazos, Red, and Little Colorado rivers far to the east. As in the core areas, the Jumano *rancherías* were nestled in sheltered stream valleys, located where conditions mirrored the environments that the Jumanos favored elsewhere. The Jumanos guided Espejo and his men to a number of *rancherías*, where the Jumanos generously fed their guests, and then took the Europeans to the Rio Grande, which the Spaniards followed south into Mexico.¹⁰

Espejo's travels added knowledge of the area south of Pecos Pueblo, but did little to resolve the considerable tension that still existed on the northern frontier of New Spain. Prompted by ongoing unsubstantiated rumors of riches to be found, unauthorized expeditions headed into the north, some of which met their end as a result of their own failings. Others, such as the Gaspar Castaño de Sosa expedition, were halted by the application of the "Orders of New Discoveries." In 1590, Castaño de Sosa, the lieutenant governor of Nuevo León, the most northeastern province of New Spain, led more than 170 men, women, and children north to pueblo country. Castaño de Sosa's group, with two-wheeled carts called *carretas*, oxen, goats, dogs, and horses, crossed the Rio Grande near present-day Del Rio, Texas, and headed north up the Pecos River. Passing through the southeastern New Mexico and the Trans-Pecos region in the fall and early winter, Castaño de Sosa and the Spaniards faced the land's harsh privations. The area offered little to these people accustomed to the semiarid Iberian Peninsula.¹¹

Along the way, this renegade band of colonists carefully observed southeastern New Mexico and the Trans-Pecos region. Following Espejo's route to the north, they encountered nomads who used dogs for transportation along the Pecos River in Texas. These clearly were not the same people who inhabited the *rancherías* Espejo visited. They found a cache of shelled corn in an *olla*, a pot, near the location of present-day Carlsbad, New Mexico. As they marched north toward Pecos Pueblo, they saw no signs of human habitation and met no one; either the people who used the region were

¹⁰ Hickerson, "Jumano," 10; W. H. Balgemann, Sr., "New Mexico's Guadalupe Mountain Area Noted Years 1535-1977: A Brief Historical Resume of Area," (unpublished mss., 1979), Carlsbad Caverns Library, Carlsbad Caverns National Park; Sebastian and Larralde, "Living on the Land," 96; J. Charles Kelley, "The Route of Antonio de Espejo Down the Pecos River and Across the Texas Trans-Pecos Region in 1583; Its Relation to West Texas Archeology," 16-17.

¹¹ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 79-80; Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier 1540-1692*, 40-43.

elsewhere during the early winter, gathering the plants that would help sustain them through the cold season ahead, had already migrated to warmer places, or perhaps they had learned to avoid these men wearing metal breastplates, sitting astride large animals, and carrying noisy sticks that left painful wounds. The first fifty years of interaction between Spaniards and natives north of the Rio Grande taught the Pueblos — and possibly through trade networks, other people — to be wary of the white-skinned people who approached from the south.

Castaño de Sosa's men experienced the well-formed Pueblo distaste for Spanish invaders, but upon their arrival, this group initially behaved in a manner different from earlier expeditions: they came to Cicúye in need. Closing in on Pecos Pueblo, the Spaniards and the warriors of the Pueblo skirmished, but weakened by their trek and a lack of food, Castaño de Sosa's men were less belligerent than their predecessors. By the time they reached Cicúye in December 1590, the thin bearded Spaniards only sought food; they lacked the inclination or energy to fight. The hard trip up the Pecos River deprived them of their strength and for the moment any ideas of asserting power. That soon changed, as Castaño de Sosa and his men assaulted the pueblo. After fierce fighting, Pecos Pueblo surrendered. Its fall marked an important moment in Spanish-Pueblo relations. The Indians perceived Cicúye as the most powerful of the pueblos, and after the surrender there, the Pueblo world capitulated to the newcomers. Castaño de Sosa hardly benefitted from the inroads he made. Expecting forgiveness for violating the "Order of New Discoveries" as a result of his success, Castaño de Sosa was surprised to find Juan Morlete, the Crown's Protector of Indians, in New Spain to arrest the explorer. Castaño de Sosa was taken in leg irons to Mexico City, where he was convicted of invading the lands of "peaceable Indians" and sentenced to six years exile in the Philippines.¹²

Spanish expeditions became more frequent. After Don Juan de Oñate's *entrada* in 1598, New Mexico became the northernmost frontier of New Spain. Spanish institutions such as the mission, a structure inhabited by priests who used work and other social structures to bring local people to the Catholic faith, developed; Spanish civil and ecumenical rule prevailed, at least formally, even while church and civil authorities grappled for control. Catholicism was introduced, often with coercion and sometimes through violence. Spanish customs superimposed a grid upon Pueblo life, creating a complicated form of cultural fusion that melded Pueblo and Catholic rituals. Between Oñate's expedition and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, the area surrounding the Rio Grande spine remained contested cultural terrain as the Spanish sought to translate their military advantage into social power.

The Spanish also considerably influenced inter-Indian trade networks that existed in the region, trading both with the pueblos and with Plains peoples while restricting pueblo goods and trade. In effect, the Spaniards interceded in trade, superimposing themselves atop the existing structure, curtailing the role of the pueblos, and in some instances, venturing onto the Plains themselves.¹³ In general, during the

¹² Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 79-80; Sánchez, *The Rio Abajo Frontier 1540-1692*, 40-43.

¹³ Timothy G. Baugh, "Ecology and Exchange: The Dynamics of Plains-Pueblo Interaction," in Spielman, ed., *Farmers, Hunters, and Colonists*, 107-26.

seventeenth and eighteenth centuries when the Spanish dominated the pueblos, they also determined the nature of Pueblo trade; when ecumenical and civil leaders grappled, when the Inquisition disrupted Spanish life in New Mexico, and at other times when Spanish institutions were weak, preoccupied, or absent, the Spanish role in trade diminished and Pueblos and Plains peoples returned to longer-standing terms of interaction.

Although the introduction of the Catholic religion proved a powerful force within the mountains that walled off the Rio Grande Valley, little of that influence became manifest in southeastern New Mexico and Trans-Pecos Texas. Spanish dominion extended neither far nor deep, and loosely settled areas of nomads such as the Trans-Pecos fell under a different Spanish classification than did the sedentary people of the Rio Grande Valley and the surrounding Pueblos. Southeastern New Mexico and the Trans-Pecos showed little tangible evidence of Spanish voyages through it. Only the river courses revealed the Spanish passage, and most of the little that remained came from explorers' accounts of their journeys. The encounter of people — the mixing of Hispanic and Indian cultures that characterized contact along the Rio Grande — was largely absent in the Carlsbad-Guadalupe region.

Spanish influence appeared in other, more indirect ways. The Spanish offered goods that Indian people coveted, and the Pueblos of the Rio Grande Valley served as intermediaries between the Spanish and the nomadic and sometimes semi-sedentary people outside the valleys. Trade became a crucial part of cultural accretion, of achieving Spanish ecumenical objectives such as conversion as well as attempting to, in the ongoing phrase of the Spanish after 1573, “pacify” unconverted and sporadically hostile people.

Almost all of the Native American peoples of the greater Southwest experienced changes in their ways of life because of the Spanish presence. The combination of Spanish technology and authority impressed its values atop Pueblo life; the sedentary people of the Rio Grande region found themselves with less autonomy and a system that they neither wholly understood nor in which they cared to participate. Yet the choices they faced changed, in part because of Spanish authority, in part because of the range of goods and other accouterments the Spanish brought, and in part because when faced with inexorable change, Pueblo peoples understood the seemingly advantages of the Spanish ways as a magic that was absent in their own beliefs and practices. Pueblo resistance took many forms, but so did acquiescence born of the material advantages of trade.

From the pueblos, Spanish influence extended in concentric rings; the farther away from the Rio Grande, the less the Spanish could assert control or even influence over native peoples. The Plains peoples particularly vexed the Spanish, for the power the European newcomers could assert was muted by the distances of the southern Plains and the intimate familiarity of native peoples with its micro-environments. On the Plains, the Spanish were as much supplicants as conquerors, as much in need of cooperation as able to compel it.

The acquisition of the horse by Native Americans was the single catalyst that empowered many Plains peoples to resist the Spanish and simultaneously trade more effectively with them. The horse greatly changed transportation and mobility for anyone who acquired one; it transformed the Navajos into a pastoral society. For most other Apachean peoples, horses helped to expand their range and

make more resources of different kinds available to them, assuring greater success. The Apaches could dominate where previously they fought to keep their position; they could move more frequently and go farther when they did, taking their bounty and their captives with them and creating a different cultural view of material possessions and wealth, capturing greater bounty, and becoming by their own standards more wealthy. The horse became so important to Apachean peoples that they treasured it as a gift of their gods, not an accidental acquisition that resulted from the inability of the Spanish to manage their animals.¹⁴

The horse became a medium of exchange between Spaniards and nomadic native peoples. It enabled the Spanish to exercise a modicum of control and to assert their diplomatic objectives as it offered nomadic native people the opportunity to extend the reaches of their domain, find new arrays of resources to trade and to sustain them. Horses gave Native Americans new access both to the peoples of northern New Spain and to those of the more humid climates on the eastern edge of the Plains, in what is now Arkansas, river-basin parts of Kansas, and possibly southwestern Missouri. With the ability to move as much as forty miles in a day instead of four, Indian life became more cosmopolitan. Most groups interacted with a significantly larger number of other cultures after they acquired horses than they did before that time.

One branch of the Jumanos, a hunting and gathering group whose origins remain in dispute, became the most significant representatives of this new order. Most likely descended from the Jornada Mogollon people who became hunters and gathers at the end of the proto-historic era, this group came across the Guadalupe Mountains and the Pecos River and headed for the Plains. Between 1540 and 1700, they emerged as the leading social and economic intermediaries across a large area. Their geographical reach was vast, stretching from the Little Colorado River in modern Texas north at least to the Canadian and Red rivers and west to the Rio Grande. These Jumanos established *rancherías* similar to the ones Espejo found in the 1580s along the Pecos throughout their range, and these small centers revealed their presence. The Jumanos took a strong interest in the area east of the Guadalupe Mountains. A prominent settlement and a number of smaller ones were along the lower Pecos River.¹⁵

Whoever they were, the Jumanos served as the primary traders and communicators of cultural variation between Spanish arrival and the *reconquista* of New Mexico by Don Diego de Vargas in the 1690s. The expedition led by the governor of New Mexico in 1692 traveled across the salt flats east of

¹⁴ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 59.

¹⁵ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 155-95, map of the range of various groups on 200-01; Hickerson, "Jumano," 9-10; Sebastian and Larralde, "Living on the Land," 100. Hickerson classes the Jumanos as Tanoan people; Sebastian and Larralde describe them as Caddoan. Sebastian and Larralde also note that another group called Jumano were known near the Roswell area. These people were agriculturalists, offering either an enormous coincidence of nomenclature or support for the idea that both groups of Jumanos were the descendants of the Jornada Mogollon; others, including noted ethnobotanist and Southwestern intellectual jack-of-all-trades Dan Scurlock, concur.

El Paso and explored Guadalupe Canyon, at the base of Guadalupe Peak.¹⁶ The Jumanos' range exceeded that of the Spanish and they could communicate with a wide range of peoples. The Jumanos carried goods such as turquoise and textiles from the pueblos of New Mexico to the many peoples of the Plains, roaming as far as the Caddo world beyond the Trinity River in modern east Texas. They took buffalo meat and hides from their own hunts to both the pueblos and the Caddos. The Jumanos also assisted the Spanish in a range of diplomatic activities and expressed interest in Catholicism, at the same time occasionally presenting a threat to Spanish dominance and authority. Yet they managed to maintain their position; they had little enough direct contact with the Spanish population to provoke animosity from either side, but they remained close enough through their long-standing ties to the Tompiro Pueblo peoples in what is now south-central New Mexico, who themselves may have been Jumano agriculturalists, to acquire the horses and metal goods offered by the Spanish. Between about 1630 and 1680, the Jumanos expanded their traditional role as intermediaries and found an enviable position in the post-contact world. They filled the trade niche left vacant by the collapse of the Casas Grande culture of northern Mexico, gained wealth, power, and status, and enjoyed the fruits of their niche — trade goods, ample food, good horses, and even firearms.¹⁷

The Jumanos found a niche for a moment in time. When it shrank, it diminished rapidly. The Jumanos had been a force on the Plains; their trade contacts and goods, mobility, and political and diplomatic savvy created a wide intermediary role that made them valuable to almost every group between New Mexico and the east side of the Trinity River. As long as that balance of power persisted, the Jumanos remained in a position of control. By the 1680s, parts of their network collapsed. Apachean people — Sierra Blancas and Siete Ríos — attacked Tompiro in 1653. In 1667, the Tompiro Pueblos planned a revolt against the Spanish during an extended drought that began in 1666; it was modeled on a similar plot in 1650, in which the people were to drive all the horses to the Sierra Blancas on Holy Thursday and then kill the horseless Spanish. This revolt also failed. The Tompiro leader, Don Esteban Clemente, was hung for his efforts. With his death, the pueblo became leaderless. Intensive Athapaskan attacks during the following decade decimated the pueblos and even the trading center of Humanas, the largest Tompiro Pueblo, became impossible to defend. Drought, disease, famine and attacks, primarily by the Siete Ríos Apaches, further decimated the pueblo. The remaining Jumano pueblo people drifted away to the missions at El Paso or to other, more secure pueblos, and Spanish control of the *jornada*, the waterless trek east of the Rio Grande from New Mexico to New Spain

¹⁶ John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks, eds. *By Force of Arms: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, New Mexico 1691-93* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992).

¹⁷ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 169-70; for Vargas, see J. Manuel Espinosa, ed., *First Expedition of Vargas into New Mexico, 1692* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1940) and John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks, eds., *By Force of Arms: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, 1691-1693* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992); J. Manuel Espinosa, trans. *First Expedition of Vargas into New Mexico, 1692*: 50-160.

became unsteady. By the 1680s, this important Jumano trade conduit was no more, forcing the Jumanos to refocus their trade on other pueblos.¹⁸

The Pueblo Revolt of 1680 also threatened Jumano preeminence. During the revolt, pueblo peoples expelled the Spanish from New Mexico, dramatically in cases such as Pecos Pueblo. There, the pueblo attackers killed the priests, destroyed the church, and sunk a kiva within it to lay their religious symbols and structures atop those of the Spanish symbolically. The Pueblos and their Apachean allies killed 380 Spaniards including seventy-three soldiers — almost half the military presence in the province — and twenty-one priests. They drove the remaining Spaniards and some Christianized native people from the north. Among the Spanish communities in New Mexico, only El Paso survived. In one brief triumphant moment, the Spanish presence in the north became marginal. When that happened, major Jumano markets and sources of goods ceased to exist.¹⁹

At the same time, Northern Athapaskans who likely became the eastern Apaches spilled into the Jumano heartland, most probably from the front range of the Rocky Mountains, threatening all travel across the Jumano trades routes. Numerous and powerful, these Apachean people raided the Jumanos, impinging especially on east-west travel, and invaded their hunting grounds. The Apachean groups became so powerful so quickly that they demolished many smaller groups on the peripheries of the territory they reached. The Apaches reached into central Texas, harassing the small Coahuiltecan groups who depended on the San Antonio River and its environs and the Balcones Escarpment — a geological uplift that runs north-south through modern Austin, stretches to the west and leads into the Texas Hill Country — for their intensive, hunting and gathering subsistence. Mounted Apachean people descended upon the Coahuiltecan, worsening existing tensions among them. In the 1660s and 1670s, the Coahuiltecan turned to the Spanish missions and later the Spanish civil authorities in northern New Spain for protection. They were the first of many groups to seek non-Indian protection in the face of Athapaskan expansion.

By 1683, Jumano dominance of even the Guadalupe Mountains and Trans-Pecos area was in jeopardy. Apachean attacks drove the Jumanos from positions of comfort and power and penned them between the Rio Grande and the seemingly endless advance of Apachean peoples. The proud Jumanos, formerly peers of all peoples they encountered, were reduced to supplicants. Apachean attacks forced them to the weakened Spanish in El Paso. Juan Sabeata, the leader of the Jumanos and a man of consummate political and diplomatic skill, tried to save the Jumano position in regional affairs. For as much as a decade, he maneuvered to revive Jumano fortune and position and save their prerogatives. In

¹⁸ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 93, 170-71; Albert H. Schroeder, "Pueblos Abandoned in Historic Times," in Alphonso Ortiz, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 9: Southwest* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1979), 237-39; for a more detailed account, see Jack D. Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), 163-69.

¹⁹ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 98-102; Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, 177-224; see also Andrew Knaut, *The Pueblo Revolt*, ;

his most bold effort, Sabeata sought the assistance of the Spanish by telling missionaries of a great cross that appeared in the sky during a battle and secured a bloodless victory. This was a ruse to garner a Spanish escort across the now dangerous buffalo plains the Jumanos once ruled. Sabeata also duped Spanish military and civil authorities with tales of the Tejas kingdom, where there was supposedly so much grain that the animals ate it as well as the humans, and near it, the fabled Gran Quivira. “Spaniards” in vessels, he said, built wooden houses along the shore there. To the Spanish, this could only mean their French colonial rivals. In 1684, the governor of New Mexico sent an expedition out on the Plains, which the Jumanos quickly turned into a foray against the Apachean peoples. Missionaries expressed pleasure at the number of Christianized Indians they met and the responsiveness of other peoples along the way. The French were far away, if present at all, and the expedition acquired new goals. Captain Juan Domínguez de Mendoza, who led this excursion, soon ferreted out Sabeata’s real goal, but the buffalo hunting was excellent and Jumanos and Spanish alike hunted their share. When the Spanish returned to El Paso, they promised to return the following year to continue proselytizing and renew what must have seemed like a promising relationship. Although the Jumanos expected to see the Spanish every year, with the Spanish presence in New Mexico gone and northern New Spain in disarray, Mendoza did not appear the following year. The missionaries returned the following year in 1688, but the two-year lapse diminished their worth, and with it, the Indians’ prime reason for acceptance of a new faith. The missionaries were not military men, who the people facing the Apachean onslaught really needed, and the two-year gap in Spanish presence hurt their credibility as well as the position of everyone but the Apacheans in the Trans-Pecos region.²⁰

Sabeata also cultivated other colonial powers. The Spanish assisted his efforts to maintain some control over trade, but internal strife, revolts, and general reticence prevented them from contributing to the extent that Sabeata desired. In an entirely coincidental meeting in 1686 among the Hasinai, one of the main Caddo groups, Sabeata encountered Sieur de René Robert Cavelier La Salle, the French explorer mistakenly credited with discovering the Mississippi River. In 1685, after an unsuccessful attempt to locate the mouth of the Mississippi, La Salle built a small installation called Fort St. Louis on Garcitas Creek near the San Antonio River on the Texas Gulf coast. La Salle’s men traveled all over the Southwest and even reached the Rio Grande, making friends with native peoples, and asking questions about the location of Spanish mining facilities and the strength of the Spaniards. On one of these ventures, he and Sabeata met, and the Jumano leader sought to enlist the French in his increasingly futile attempt to resist the Apachean peoples. La Salle declined, leaving the Jumanos disheartened and vulnerable.²¹

By the early 1690s, the Jumano dominance of the Plains and trade networks had ended. The

²⁰ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds*, 175-81; Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, 195-98; 213-15.

²¹ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men’s Worlds*, 181; Weber, *the Spanish Frontier in North America*, 149-53; Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, 211-13.

Athapaskan peoples from the north demolished the structure of the Jumanos world, leaving the Jumanos fragmented, weak, and separated. Sabeata continued to seek colonial protection — telling the Spanish that the French tried to turn native groups against them, while telling the French of the aggressive posture of their seemingly common enemy, the Spanish, and suggesting that the Jumanos would help in a war against these newest European intruders. Playing both sides against the middle could not last, and when it ended the Jumanos were shattered, powerless, and destitute. Sabeata had his final contact with the Spanish colonial authorities in 1692, when he arrived at Julime Pueblo on the Río Conchos. He delivered a letter from two Franciscans, reported he was in the midst of a great war, and disappeared from the pages of recorded history. Sabeata's convoluted endeavors were not enough to invigorate the Spanish and bring them to his support nor did they stall the onrushing Apaches, who soon swept the Jumanos from the prominence they enjoyed. Within one century, the Jumanos followed Sabeata into the unrecovered past. They no longer existed independently, with some scholars seeing them as vanished and others arguing that the Jumanos merged into the Lipan Apache and subsequently lost any remaining cultural distinctiveness.

The experience of the Jumanos reflected a pattern evident in colonial processes throughout the world. When colonial powers enter a new area, its officials find pre-existing tensions, rivalries, and relationships that determine the local balance of power before the arrival of outsiders. From Africa and India, to the Americas and Australia, weaker local groups sought out powerful newcomers as protection from indigenous enemies, and in some cases allied with them against aggressive neighbors. Juan Sabeata was hardly unique; he only erred in choosing a patron power not sufficiently strong or enthusiastic to offer broad protection over a wide area. However, Sabeata had few options. The Spanish were the clear power, and one with whom Apachean peoples had at least some, if little, contact. The French were few in number in Sabeata's area, and were less inclined than the Spanish to help. After both colonial powers declined his request, Sabeata ran out of options.

Sabeata's conundrum was typical of an aspect of indigenous experiences around the globe that lasted into the twentieth century. Outsiders were not always bad in the eyes of indigenous peoples; they could be used for local purposes too. In the best-known American version of this tale, Absaroka or Crow scouts led General George A. Custer to the immense Lakota and Cheyenne camp on the banks of the Greasy Grass in the summer of 1876. For more than a generation, Lakota people had pushed the Crows and the Pawnees off the lands they held until mounted Lakotas brought a half-century of terror. The Lakota expansion contributed to the geopolitical situation on the Plains, to turning other Indian people against them and providing knowledgeable and cooperative scouts for the Americans. The battle at the Little Big Horn occurred well outside any area the Lakota people could claim as their own before 1850; the community nearest to the modern Little Big Horn National Battlefield today is called Crow Agency, Montana, not Sioux City, or some other name. In this light, Crow and Pawnee assistance to the incoming Americans acquires a different meaning; it was part of an effort of these tribes to keep their lands and people from feared enemies. To them, as to Sabeata, the newcomers seemed valuable allies; the Pawnees and the Crows erred only in thinking the Americans would fight their battles and then go

away, restoring Crow and Pawnee lands.²²

In the aftermath of the end of the Jumano network, Apaches dominated the Guadalupe Mountains-Trans-Pecos subregion and the Plains so completely that the entire area became known as the *Gran Apachería*. Scholars debate the date of the Apaches' arrival on the Plains; the majority indicate within a decade either way of 1525 as the most plausible date. By the early seventeenth century Apachean peoples were evident, and in fact were regarded as threats along the fringes of the Jumano trading world. Apachean peoples became a powerful force on the Plains by the late seventeenth century. By the 1680s, as Sabeata tried to find a middle ground for the Jumano, Apaches had become powerful enough to endanger Spanish New Mexico; the Siete del Ríos Apaches consistently threatened Salinas and Tompiro Pueblo, waiting for the vigilant sedentary people there to drop their guard. Nor were these powerful newcomers frightened of the Spanish. Mescalero Apaches, who had come to inhabit the Organ, Davis, and Guadalupe mountains, harried the Spanish retreating down the Rio Grande after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. By the 1690s, a new and powerful force asserted itself across a wide area.

The Mescaleros who made the Guadalupe Mountains and the Trans-Pecos their own were typical of the Athapaskan Apachean peoples who came down from the north. The land they inhabited was abundant for their purposes; with a small population and a wide range of resources at different elevations, the women could gather resources widely. After they acquired the horse, the men could hunt a broader territory inhabited by a larger number of species — especially the buffalo — that made hunting more attractive as a source of subsistence. The Mescaleros lived in thrown-together brush shelter wickiups, a structure formed by placing leafy branches over an oval-shaped framework. The dwellings were flimsy because they were temporary; wickiups did not travel from place to place with these mobile people. For Plains hunting, they used tipi-style dwellings, probably acquired as a result of interaction with peoples of the Plains. Frequent movement prevented the spread of filth-born diseases among the Mescaleros, with historic accounts noting the premium placed on cleanliness among them.²³

As did the Mesilla Phase people before them, the Mescaleros used agave as a major source of sustenance. In May or June, after the red flower stalks that designated mature agave plants pushed up, Apache women took hatchets and four-foot-long sharpened Pinyon sticks and searched for an agave field close to wood and water. The women cut the big leaves as close to the heart of the plant as possible, and used the Pinyon stick to chisel the roots of the plant out of the ground. This work produced an ivory-white bulb as much as two or three feet in circumference. The Mescaleros then cooked their agave in largely the same manner as had the Mesilla Phase people. The syrupy result became a feast, and the leftovers were spread into thin sheets, dried on flat rocks, and taken along.

²² Urs Bitterli, *Cultures in Conflict* brilliantly explicates this idea; see also Evan Connell, *Son of the Morningstar* for the gritty details of the Custer situation in an other-than-chronological fashion.

²³ C. L. Sonnichsen, *The Mescalero Apache* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1960), 16-18; Opler, "Mescalero Apache," 429-30.

With this seemingly endless supply of agave and other resources, the Mescaleros could survive in their new homeland independent of the outside world.

These Mescalero people left comparatively little cultural remains of their presence. Their nomadic lifestyle and the temporary structures they built assured that archaeologists would puzzle over their presence. In some places, they left tantalizing clues to the nature of their life. In West Slaughter Canyon, almost seventy feet above a dry stream bed, a wide low cave contains several hundred multi-colored pictographs, painted in a variety of natural colors. Called the Painted Grotto, the cave seems to have had consistent ceremonial use. This cave and the main entrance to Carlsbad Caverns appear in the Mescalero oral tradition, strengthening archaeological explanations.²⁴

Spaniards perceived the Mescaleros and other Apaches as a threat to their weakened control both during and after the Pueblo Revolt. In 1682, Governor Antonio de Otermín invaded the Mescalero stronghold of the Organ Mountains from El Paso, in part out of frustrations that stemmed from the success of the revolt. He also sought to reassert the Spanish presence and to punish the Mescalero for their practice of raiding sedentary communities. The 1684 excursion Sabeata persuaded Captain Juan Domínguez de Mendoza to undertake also helped show a Spanish presence in the Apachean world, even if it failed to accomplish Sabeata's goals. Traveling across the Pecos River to the vicinity of modern San Angelo, Texas, a distance of more than 350 miles, spoke volumes about the limits of Apachean power and remaining presence of the Spanish. Yet this Spanish assertiveness was as much for show as for any purpose. As the Apaches ascended, the Spanish, who were limited to the stronghold of El Paso until the 1690s, could do little to slow Apache power or its expansion.²⁵

Even after the successful reconquest of New Mexico by Don Diego de Vargas, the Spanish presence in New Mexico remained too weak to assert dominance over anything but the valleys between the mountains along the Rio Grande. To the north and west of the Spanish colonies lay the lands of the *Indios Bárbaros*: the western Apaches, the Navajos, the Utes, and a new and increasingly threatening group who descended from the plains to the east, the Comanches.²⁶ All these groups frequently raided

²⁴ Jack R. Willams, *Indians of the Guadalupes* (Florissant, CO: Carlsbad Caverns Natural History Association) 2d ed., 26-28.

²⁵ Kenner, *A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations*, 19; John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 95-110; Weber, *the Spanish Frontier in North America*, 135-40; Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, 173-90.

²⁶ The etymologies for the various Apachean groups are quite complex. Morris E. Opler, "The Apachean Culture Pattern and Its Origins," in Alfonso Ortiz, ed., *The Handbook of North American Indians: 10 Southwest* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1983), 368-92, provides the most comprehensive analysis. Opler identifies seven southern Apachean groups, Chiricahua, Jicarilla, Kiowa-Apache, Lipan, Mescalero, and Western Apache. All except the Kiowa-Apache speak a closely related language, the Kiowa-Apache most likely having diverged before the Apachean peoples entered the Southwest. Mescaleros appear to be named from their practice of, relying on the Mescal or Agave plant. Other groups have been named by their relationship to specific places; the Sierra Blanca Apaches turn to have three distinct historical provenances: the first group are the linear descendants of the Apaches del Perillo, first reported in 1653, and who became known as the Apaches de Faraones after the Pueblo

the poorly defended colonies, carrying off horses, livestock, and in some cases women and children. From the east came the Lipan and Jicarilla Apaches, who both traded with New Mexicans and sometimes preyed upon them. Even more vulnerable were the outlying pueblos such as Zuñi, Ácoma, Laguna, Jémez, Pecos, Picurís, Taos, Santa Clara, and La Alameda. After the death of de Vargas, who took ill while chasing Faraón Apaches in the Sandia Mountains in 1704 and died soon after, these pueblos were besieged by the *bárbaros*. Defending property and life became an ongoing chore for the Spanish — its success proof of their value to the pueblos, its failure a sorry reminder of pueblo weakness. As a last resort, the Spanish gave common grants to Spanish *vecinos*, citizens who had served their king and country, and encouraged them to settle the Sangre de Cristo and Jemez mountains that border the northern Rio Grande Valley. These poorly protected and easily accessible communities were targets of Indian raiding parties. The Spanish also formed buffer communities to bear these raids; one community, Abiquiu, was founded in the 1730s and peopled by *genizaros*, detribalized Indians who had accepted Spanish ways by choice or force. They were deemed expendable and placed on a vulnerable edge of the Spanish-controlled area. In the southeast, around the Guadalupe Mountains, the Natagè and Faraón Apaches, most likely branches of the Mescaleros, encroached on the Spanish in the Rio Grande Valley. The Faraón were deemed the most ferocious and the least amenable to Spanish entreaties. These people's ability to deter the Spanish from the peripheral area beyond El Paso was so great that as late as the 1720s Spanish mapmakers showed the Guadalupe Mountains and the Trans-Pecos as the territory of the hostile Natagè and Faraón Apaches.²⁷

A fierce Spanish campaign slowed raiding; by 1706, the Spanish could claim success in stopping the attacks on the pueblos from the *bárbaros* and could begin to think of establishing new settlements. However, the Apache dominance central to the Spanish peace was short-lived. Despite all efforts, northern New Mexico remained a drain on Spanish resources. The colony continued to cost the royal treasury large sums each year, and little profit other than trade and the possible collection of souls for Christ seemed forthcoming. After the *reconquista*, Spanish leadership ranged from outstanding to pathetic. The best leaders, such as de Vargas, consolidated the Spanish position and earned respect for the Crown. The worst undermined all positive efforts. As the Spanish struggled and the Mescalero, Natagè, and Faraón Apaches consolidated their realm in the south, the northern and eastern areas of the

Rebellion of 1680. The second are the ones also known as Carlanas, who lived north of the Raton River in what is now southern Colorado. The final group of Sierra Blanca Apaches are the ones known today as the White Mountain Apaches. Other confusing situations result.

²⁷ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 226; Espinosa, *First Expedition of Vargas into New Mexico, 1692*: 161-208; Charles L. Kenner, *A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations* (Norman: University of Oklahoma 1969), 23; Forbes, *Apache, Navaho, and Spaniard*, 264-67; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 204-05; Morris Opler, "Mescalero Apache," in Alfonso Ortiz, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians Volume 10: Southwest*, 420-21; see also William deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1986) and Hal K. Rothman, *On Rims and Ridges: The Los Alamos Area Since 1880* (University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

Gran Apachería came under attack from a new force, the Comanches sweeping down the Plains.

Southern Shoshonean people who roamed a wide area northwest of the Wichita lodges on the plains of Kansas, the Comanche became a fierce foe of Apachean peoples, and later of the Spanish, Mexicans, Texicans of the Texas Republic, and the onrushing Americans. Comanches first appeared in the Spanish world view in 1706, when General Juan de Ulibarri took forty Spanish soldiers and 100 Pueblo warriors to Cuartelejo, in modern Scott County, Kansas, where a number of people from Picurís Pueblo fled as a result of the Spanish reconquest of New Mexico, built a pueblo, and found themselves doing the bidding of the Cuartelejo Apaches, one of the many small groups of Apachean peoples on the plains. On the way, Ulibarri found Taos bracing for a Ute and Comanche attack with a fear that the Spanish previously had not seen. The year before, the Comanches had come to the Taos trade fair with their allies, the Utes, and liking what they saw, returned prepared to take it. For a Spaniard leading a sizeable number of soldiers away from the colony, the prospect was as terrifying as it was to the Taoseños. At Cuartelejo, Ulibarri found two other developments that he knew would upset the New Mexico leadership: more fear of a Ute-Comanche raid and a French-made gun that the Apache people there took from attacking Pawnees. The geopolitical concerns of the Spanish expanded once again.²⁸

The problem was larger than Ulibarri and the Spanish imagined in 1706. On the way back to Santa Fe, Ulibarri found that Utes and Comanches raided *rancherías* of the Carlanas, the Sierra Blancas and the Penxaye Apaches. After Ulibarri's departure from Cuartelejo, the Utes and Comanches attacked the Apaches throughout what is now the western tier of counties in Kansas. A new and dangerous alliance had formed on the Plains, linking the Utes and Comanches against the more widely distributed Apachean peoples and the Navajos. By the first decade of the eighteenth century, no Apachean community, *ranchería*, or stronghold within the reach of the Utes and Comanches was safe from attack. Assaults continued to increase in frequency and intensity. In 1719, the Comanches engaged in a destructive raid against Taos. In its aftermath, the Spanish learned of the impact of the Comanches on the *Apachería*. There were depopulated *rancherías* throughout the eastern Apache realm, and the palpable fear of the destruction of many more settlements in the near future permeated Apache life.²⁹

The balance of power was changing, and the Comanches and their Ute allies were in ascendance. The Spanish were neither sufficiently strong nor numerous to intervene regularly. Left to their own resources in isolated valley communities, the Apaches could not readily withstand Comanche assaults. The death of thirty-two of the almost 100 Spanish soldiers assigned to New Mexico in the slaughter of the Pedro de Villasur expedition far out on the Plains in 1720 further diminished Spanish military power. The Comanches and Utes swept the Apachean peoples from the Plains, with fortunate

²⁸ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 226-31; Kenner, *A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relation*, 26-31; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 187-88.

²⁹ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 231-32; Kenner, *A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations*, 28-32; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 166-71.

survivors fleeing to New Mexico and finding refuge in pueblos. The Comanches impressed the French, who by 1750 supplied the Comanche with arms and encouraged their hostility against the pueblos and the Spanish. The Comanches seemed ever more powerful as the Apaches weakened. By 1766, Apache dominance ended throughout the Plains. Even east of the Pecos River, the plains of West Texas had become Comanche territory.³⁰

Only in far southern area of the Plains did Apachean peoples retain their control, and there only after fighting off serious threats. In the Trans-Pecos region near the Guadalupe Mountains, the Mescalero Apaches tenuously remained in control. Comanche raids destroyed the structure of some groups; the once vaunted Faraon Apaches were defeated and in decline built a *ranchería* along the Rio Grande before the 1750s, where they traded for the buffalo meat they used to hunt. The Comanches drove other Apache groups into the arms of the Spanish; one settled outside the village of San Elizario, about twenty miles from El Paso, and another found the Hueco Tanks a safe refuge. Even the Mescaleros suffered greatly, finding their territory limited, their sovereignty challenged. With so many prizes for the Comanches to find, they soon left the Trans-Pecos region, driving even farther east to the Spanish settlements in south-central Texas such as San Antonio. The people there were wealthier and the prizes greater than could be expected from the mobile Mescalero bands. The Mescalero bands, which included the Sierra Blanca, the Siete Ríos, other groups, and a number of Apache refugees from the north who assimilated with the Mescaleros, retained a more secure position than most.³¹

Despite an all-out war between the Mescaleros and the presidio, the Spanish garrison, at El Paso during the 1770s and 1780s, a kind of appeasement led the way to a period of relative peace for the first twenty-five years of the nineteenth century. Teodoro de Croix, commander-general of New Spain, led the most effective attacks on the Mescaleros, penetrating the Sacramento, Guadalupe, and Organ mountains as well as the Sierra Blanca range in efforts to dislodge them. A tactical strategist, de Croix also fractured the long-standing alliance between the Lipan and Mescalero groups. When de Croix's successor, Bernardo de Gálvez, took charge of the *Provincias Internas*, the internal provinces of New Spain, in 1786, he inaugurated a policy of plying Indians with liquor and offering them inferior firearms that would not stand up to those of the Spanish. He reasoned that when hungry, Indian people were dangerous to his colony; when full and a little drunk, they might be more pliable and less inclined to concerted aggression. The success of this program surprised other Spaniards. The rations and goods worked as planned, and prolonged strife between the Mescalero Apaches and the Navajos further eased the fears of the Spanish. With other Indian groups pacified and yearning for a truce and the Mescaleros distracted, a period of calm began.³²

³⁰ John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds*, 232-57; Kenner, *A History of New Mexican-Plains Indian Relations*, 32-36; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 196-98.

³¹ Sonnichsen, *The Mescalero Apaches*, 43-49.

³² Sonnichsen, *The Mescalero Apaches*, 47-52; Kenner, *A History of New Mexico-Plains Indian Relations*, 55-60; Opler, "Mescalero Apaches," 420-21.

The Mescaleros were among the many beneficiaries of the new situation. The Spanish offered them goods and amenities to keep the peace, and the Mescaleros willingly took these offerings. With the Comanche menace to these last Apachean peoples in the east diminishing as New Mexico and Comanche interests elsewhere converged, Spanish generosity looked like a promising prospect. In 1793, a large group of Mescaleros agreed to stay on tracts along the Rio Grande near modern Belen, New Mexico, a step toward a mutual relationship that probably had the added advantages of protecting Mescaleros from the Comanches, who made an alliance with the Spanish in 1786. Comanche-Spanish joint raids on the Apaches became common; in 1797, a combination of Spanish soldiers and settlers, Comanches, and pueblo Indians attacked more than 400 Mescaleros in the sand hills of southeastern New Mexico. With such physical coaxing, the Mescalero-Spanish relationship worked well. When U.S. Army Lieutenant Zebulon Pike visited San Elizario in 1807, he reported peaceful relations between the Spanish and the many Apaches in the vicinity. In 1810, the Spanish formally acknowledged the Mescaleros with a treaty that granted rations and the right to occupy a sizable area that ranged from the Sacramento Mountains to Chihuahua and from El Paso onto the Plains. The document was a testament to the harmonious relations that changed the tenor of the Guadalupe Mountains-Trans-Pecos region.

The harmony was short-lived, disrupted by the tumultuous affairs of Spain and its colonies. Turmoil in Europe resulted from Napoleon Bonaparte's attempt to install his brother as king of Spain in 1808. Not only did Fernando VII, the son of the deposed king, return to the throne in 1814, the New World colonies acquired freedoms they did not want to give up when the rightful king returned. Added to his troubles at home, which culminated in a new constitution in 1820, Fernando VII found the weakened grasp of Spain on Mexico to have become limp. With tacit American approval and modest financial aid, Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, commander of a Mexican army rebelling against Spain in the early 1800s, invaded Texas. The Americans captured the port of Mobile, Alabama, from the Spanish during the War of 1812, ostensibly to keep the British away from it; after the war, they refused to return it to Spain. Americans also pressed their claims to Florida and the western boundary of Louisiana, culminating in the Adams-Onís Treaty of 1819, in which the United States acquired Florida and the two nations drew a boundary line along the Sabine, Red, and Arkansas rivers that extended west to the Pacific Ocean along the 42nd Parallel. This extinguished American claims to Texas, which the Spanish feared, and also left a large area, dominated by the Comanches and other Plains groups, between Santa Fe and the growing American migration west.³³

Spanish problems in North America were only beginning. The weakened king could do little to stop the attrition of his holdings. While the Adams-Onís treaty made promises — American subjects, especially in Florida, along the Gulf of Mexico, and in Louisiana — continued to agitate for removal of the Spanish. When a Mexican-born military officer, Augustín de Iturbide, launched a drive for Mexican independence from Spain, the last vestiges of the Spanish empire in North America crumbled. The people of New Spain became the people of Mexico, and in the streets of San Antonio and Santa Fe,

³³ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 297-99.

shouts of *viva la independencia!* replaced *viva el rey!* Mexico became an independent nation, inheriting all the problems of Spain in North America, in particular the expansionism of the United States that would become known as Manifest Destiny, and few of the fallen empire's worldwide resources.³⁴

From its inception, the Mexican state was feeble and largely unable to exercise even the limited power that the Spanish developed in the far north. El Paso remained a crucial juncture, but on the periphery — and often even in its core — the constantly changing Mexican regimes were barely able to sustain governance of their important northern regions, New Mexico and Texas. Internal political turmoil, economic scarcity, and weak institutions contributed both to the end of the Indian-Spanish harmony that bribery had brought and to a growing lack of control and subsequent lack of respect for the Mexican government that might have been the only sentiment shared by Comanches, Mescaleros, and even the Anglo-Americans who encroached upon Texas, New Mexico, and California.³⁵

The encroachment of Anglo-Americans illustrated the weakness of the Mexican north. *Empresario* grants to faux Catholics such as Moses and Stephen F. Austin in Texas, unauthorized trade along the Santa Fe Trail from St. Louis to Santa Fe, and the Russians and Americans who arrived in California and hungrily eyed the province provided ample evidence of desire. The Texas Revolution of 1835 became the first genuine proof of the intentions of the expansion of English-speakers, but even the Alamo was only a prelude to the gradual diminishment of Mexican power in its north and the rise of its increasingly aggressive northern neighbor.

Its fundamental weakness compelled the Mexican government to maintain existing friendly ties with peoples such as the Mescaleros — a clear acknowledgment of the weakness of the Mexican periphery and the strength of the Mescaleros in their land. The Mexicans had neither the energy nor the capability to fight the Mescaleros; throughout the 1820s and 1830s, the northern control crumbled and Mexican governments succeeded one another with stunning rapidity. For the Mescaleros, this meant that the status quo persisted in the Guadalupe Mountains and Trans-Pecos region and they could raid with impunity beyond it. In those two decades, no travelers on the *Jornada del Muerto* or going to Chihuahua were safe. Even as the raids increased and nearly all of the livestock in El Paso disappeared, in 1832 the Mexican government reaffirmed the 1810 agreement. Although Mexican soldiers dealt the Mescaleros a stunning defeat in a surprise attack at the Hueco Tanks near the end of the 1830s, the Mescaleros clearly controlled the Guadalupe Mountains and its environs. As late as 1842, Mexican officials engaged in negotiations with the Mescaleros in the hope of avoiding internal problems at a time when their external situation seemed grim. This negotiating highlighted the problems of the Mexican government. Too weak to address the genuine threats to its sovereignty, it did what it could to maintain the status quo for as long as possible.

The Mescaleros had one other advantage, one more reason to be left alone as tumult swirled

³⁴ Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 300-01.

³⁵ David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier 1821-1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 1-14.

around them along the Rio Grande, in Chihuahua, and in Texas. The Guadalupe Mountains-Trans-Pecos region remained fundamentally apart from the conflicts of the time. Its resources were not what the Americans and Mexicans grappled over. It remained too remote to be of interest to the weak core areas of Mexico and the nascent Texas republic. Only a few settlements, such as the land grant village of Santa Rosa to the north of the region settled in 1822, existed, and these had little to offer the burgeoning international trade markets. Nor were these little communities guaranteed to survive in the rugged physical and social environment of the times. In 1824, Pablo Montoya received a large grant in the area, Santa Rosa but pressure from the Comanches, raids, theft of stock, intermittent attacks, and the constant fear these endeavors created, forced its abandonment by about 1840. The Mexican government could sign agreements, but it could not protect its citizens from attacks from beyond its borders.

This was the paradox of the Spanish and Mexicans, not only in a rim area such as the Guadalupe Mountains and the Trans-Pecos but also in the core areas of the northern provinces of New Spain and the northernmost states of the Republic of Mexico. The Spanish and Mexicans claimed these lands and exerted varying degrees of influence over the events that occurred there, but they never established firm control. Their institutions existed, but never genuinely coalesced. Their numbers remained small and a range of factors, from the distances necessary to supply these places to externalities such as the waves of Apachean and Comanche peoples who descended upon the region, prevented the establishment of a core colony or a solid Mexican state. The remote north was within the reach, but beyond the grasp of the Spanish and the Mexicans, assuring that the American arrival — with its attendant sources of capital, better trade goods, and easier access to markets — would be first appealing, next a threat, and finally an irresistible force.

The Guadalupe Mountains and Trans-Pecos region remained marginal throughout the Spanish and Mexican period. Its desert-like conditions and especially the lack of water made it unattractive except as a place to pass through on the way to the sedentary pueblos of northern New Mexico. The people who lived there were hard for the few Spanish to control for any stretch of time and even more difficult to compel cooperation. When the region appeared in Spanish consciousness at all, it was a hostile place populated by hostile people, varieties of Apaches culminating in the Mescaleros. It could not even be harnessed as an area of peripheral defense of the interests of New Spain in the manner of northern New Mexican communities such as Abiquiu, created in the eighteenth century and populated with *genizaros*, detribalized Indians, as a target to satiate Ute, Comanche, and Navajo raiders before they reached the core of colonial New Mexico. Nor could the Mexicans bring anything more to bear on the region. The Mexican government practiced a kind of appeasement inherited from late in the Spanish era; instead of the gifts of the Spanish, the Mescaleros and others received the reaffirmation of treaties, likely fully aware that Mexican officials had little choice in the matter. The Mexican government lacked the resources to change realities and had no incentives to address problems beyond the spine that led north to Santa Fe and the Rio Arriba. The harsh deserts and forbidding mountains east of El Paso were sufficient protection for the denizens of a weak core state.

By the end of Mexican era, the Guadalupe Mountains and the Trans-Pecos region had become

the staging ground that they would remain until industrial technologies such as the railroad and irrigation systems entered the region. The vectors of Spanish, Mexican, and Texican expansion avoided or bypassed the region; it had little to offer people who judged the value of land by the depth of its grasses, the height of its trees, and its access to water. After they ascertained that Northern New Spain lacked significant material advantages, the only interest the Spanish had in the region was as a buffer zone. The sparse desert and waterless flats served to protect a core that governments could not afford to guard with soldiers. Pre-industrial core areas barely attempted and could not sustain the development of the region without the surpluses of industrialization and its technological accouterments.

Before 1845, all kinds of people passed through the region, most stopping only temporarily. Since near the end of the Archaic period, the constellation of people, their practices and the environment had not lined up to make any but the river valleys suitable for sedentary habitation. The people of the area remained what they had been throughout most of human history: nomads who depended on a seasonal bounty from an array of places to survive, thrive, and continue. With its attributes invisible to pre-industrial Europeans and their New World counterparts, the region remained what it had been for most of human history: a place through which to pass, where the people who traversed it were fortunate to find water, game or other foodstuffs. The Guadalupe Mountains, the Trans-Pecos, and their surroundings remained a periphery.

Chapter 3: The American Appearance

As the United States envisioned its future, the complicated mosaic of European and Latin American claims and Native American presence west of the Mississippi River attracted the attention of the new and powerful republic to the north and east of the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos region. This new nation, possessors by purchase of everything north of the Adams-Onís treaty line along the Red, Sabine, and Arkansas rivers, had to find a way to hold this vast land it had barely begun to explore. Mexican independence in 1821 quashed Spanish claims, and the French had become a mere memory in the aftermath of the 1803 sale of Louisiana. Among European powers, only the British remained to contest American expansionist desires. Mexico, the successor to New Spain, lacked the resources to hold its northern possessions against the encroachment of American citizens acting in loose concert with their government's desires. Slowly, Tejanos and Nuevo Mexicanos — the Spanish-speaking peoples of Texas and New Mexico — were seduced by first the trade goods and then the ideas of this republic that promised liberty and prosperity resulting from individual efforts. After the Texas Revolution in 1835 and the Republic of Texas' annexation by the United States ten years later, Americans enjoyed much more than an intellectual and commercial toehold in the former New Spain. Expansionist ideology under the concept of Manifest Destiny — the widely held idea by Euro-Americans that the North American continent belonged to the United States and should be conquered as soon as possible — insisted on more. In a war begun in 1846 on a pretext and to which a broad range of luminaries objected, including Illinois state legislator Abraham Lincoln and the writer Henry David Thoreau, the United States seized an enormous portion of northern Mexico. The Mexican War and its aftermath filled out the physical limits of the southern boundaries of the United States. America then began efforts to eliminate the last European power, the British, still entrenched in the Pacific Northwest, out of its self-defined area of interest. The young nation invented a mission for itself and intended to carry it out, no matter what other countries believed or tried to do to stop this young expansionist upstart.¹

¹ Robert W. Johansen, *From the Halls of Montezuma*, ; Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America*, 271-301, insightfully describes this process in the Spanish departure from Florida and the American Southeast; William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), 231-64, describes the causes and consequences of the Mexican War.

After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, when Mexico formally ceded its holdings north of El Paso and the Rio Grande to the United States, American officials contemplated the lands the war bestowed upon them. The so-called bloodless conquest of New Mexico in 1846 — when Brigadier General Stephen Watts Kearny boldly promised the people of Santa Fe that he would keep at bay the Navajos, who long preyed on the weak colony and province — had given way to violence in the Taos Revolt of 1847. There Gov. Charles Bent and a number of Anglos died at the hands of a combined Pueblo Indian and Hispano force. Despite the commerce on the Santa Fe Trail that linked St. Louis and Santa Fe with the Mexican city of Chihuahua and promoted international trade, American national interests in New Mexico were a great deal more ideological than economic. While California offered the prospect of wealth even before the 1848 gold strike at Sutter's Mill, New Mexico was as peripheral to the American republic as it was to New Spain or Mexico. Kearny saw himself as a liberator, and the Hispano elite, the *ricos*, concurred. For more than a generation, the Santa Fe Trail trade enriched them and they were loath to give up wealth and their connections with the north to support the idea of Mexican nationalism and the weak governments that Mexico spawned.² Although the Americans had no obvious economic need for New Mexico beyond existing trade in 1848, its acquisition fit the American pattern begun with the Louisiana Purchase: acquire lands and then discern what purpose they might have.

New Mexico was a periphery in the United States; the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos area were the peripheries of a periphery, a place that few Americans considered when they forced Mexico to sign over much of its northern lands. This was no surprise; neither Mexico nor the Republic of Texas had any use for this remote region. This desert never figured in Mexican or Texican plans, except when Mescaleros or other peoples in the vicinity threatened order in the region's core areas. Nor did Americans see any obvious use for the region except to pass through it. El Capitan, the visible peak of Guadalupe Mountains, served as a place people could use to find their geographic bearings, but in any practical sense the region lacked importance. Insufficient water, barely arable soil even in the river valleys, tremendous heat and aridity, and the lack of known minerals — excepting salt, which enjoyed only little market value — left the region neglected in the most classical of colonial forms.

Significant American interest in the region began in the middle of the nineteenth century. After the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, a parade of U.S. Army expeditions, railroad surveys, and boundary surveys began. These efforts were of a piece with the earlier surveys of John C. Frémont and U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, which beginning in the 1830s searched for railroad routes through the West, including areas claimed but not settled by Mexico. Official American representatives, whose task it was to assess information, define boundaries, and otherwise locate the areas in question within the world view of the expanding United States, comprised a vanguard. As did Lewis and Clark and every other American explorer who preceded them, these Southwest explorers fully expected to

² Andrés Réseñdez, "Caught Between Profit and Ritual: (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1997); Douglas C. Comer, *Ritual Ground: Bent's Old Fort, World Formation, and the Annexation of the Southwest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996).

open the way for settlement of the new territories acquired by the United States.

The U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers led the way in the process. From its beginnings in 1838, this division enjoyed a mission all its own, the obligation to record accurately as many of the features of the American West, within and outside the boundaries of the United States at that moment, as its officers could and to provide the documentation to support settlement and even military endeavors. This included well-traveled roads and trails, mountain peaks, river-basin valleys, and anything else that the contingent of no more than thirty-six men at any one time observed. Compared with the rest of the U.S. Army and even its Corps of Engineers, this mission was unique. Of all the branches of the service, the Topographical Engineers shared a great deal more with espionage units than did other military forces. As if they were spies, the Topographical Engineers specialized in reconnaissance and the knowledge that stemmed from it.³ Scientist and explorer both, these engineers epitomized the spirit of the intellectual transformation from Romanticism to Empiricism that joined with western expansion and eventually crested late in the nineteenth century and in the first five decades of the twentieth century. Most experienced awe at the sublime and romantic features they recorded just as they began to measure and quantify them, to know them in the terms of emerging empirical science.

Throughout the late 1840s and 1850s, Americans sought to determine what they had won from Mexico in the recent war, a process made imperative by the California Gold Rush. Their military explorers defined the land around them in largely utilitarian terms. Potential routes for a railroad to the California coast stood first among their objectives, followed by the need for overland routes for migrants to California and the Pacific Coast. A number of the important possible paths passed through the trans-Pecos region. These surveyors collected a corpus of knowledge that informed future American decisions in an area that only an ideology such as Manifest Destiny could make valuable to nineteenth-century people. In an age when most people depended on wood for their shelters and heat and even regarded trees as an indicator of the fertility of land, this region was terribly lacking.⁴ The problems that beset the Spanish and the Mexicans — lack of water, limited arable lands, and the inability to transform these fundamental qualities — also hampered the Americans. They too regarded the area as only a place through which to pass.

They acquired that knowledge from experience, from a range of travelers and surveys, from officials and individuals, and from the reports of military officers who traversed the region. Most familiar with the new acquisitions from Mexico knew the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos were a semiarid to arid plain, cut by occasional rivers and equally few streams; these observers lacked any specific knowledge of mineral resources or other potential bounty. They knew that the Spanish and Mexicans had never successfully explored for anything of economic consequence. Transportation routes

³ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West*, 4-5.

⁴ John Perlin, *A Forest Journey*: (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990, ; Hal Rothman, "The Indians, Deer, and Wolves Seem Here to Have Things Their Own Way: Settlement and Environment in McLean County, Illinois, 1820-1850," (unpublished paper, possession of the author).

provided the one genuine purpose for exploring the area; to link the heart of Texas with the nation's new western territories required roads or railbeds through as much as one thousand miles of open land, large areas of which remained under Comanche Indian control well into the 1870s. Explorers took great personal risk, even when they traveled with armed military escort, and such considerations for survival affected their thinking when they discussed any options they perceived.

The first American expedition across the area closely followed the signing of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. In 1848, Maj. Robert S. Neighbors, the federal Indian agent in Texas who had served in the same office for the Republic of Texas, and Colonel John S. "Rip" Ford, a former physician and politician who became a Texas Ranger hero during the Mexican War, headed a semi-official expedition that sought a route to El Paso from central Texas. They paralleled the route of an early 1849 Topographical Engineers' survey from Central Texas to the El Paso region, which traveled west well south of the Guadalupe Mountains and just north of the Davis Mountains. Neighbors and Ford followed a more northerly route. They left Austin, followed the Upper Colorado River, and crossed over to Brady's Creek, a tributary of the San Saba River. From there they continued west along the Concho River to its mouth, cut across the Pecos River through Horsehead Crossing and went straight west to the Rio Grande at El Paso. On their return, they crossed through the Guadalupe Mountains to the Pecos and retraced the route back to Austin from there. The party discovered a possible railroad route to accompany the road they sought on the way back; the railroad route they found viable passed within miles of the limestone Carlsbad formation.⁵

The most surprising aspect about the Neighbors and Ford survey in the fiercely individualistic state of Texas was the cooperation it inspired between local, state, and federal authorities. Although no representative of the Corps of Topographical Engineers accompanied Neighbors and Ford, the information from the survey enjoyed wide currency, and at least in exploration, developed a spirit of cooperation that joined disparate entities more typically at odds. In effect, Texans looked at the information as the basis of a road route, while federal officials saw in the same reports the start of a southern transcontinental railroad, but neither found the situation objectionable. In 1850, with the ideology of Manifest Destiny and federal resources behind it, Lieutenant F.T. Bryan of the Corps of Topographical Engineers resurveyed both the Neighbors-Ford route and the more southerly one previously explored.⁶

The early surveys piqued greater curiosity about the ways to reach this new part of the United

⁵ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West*, 229-31; T. R. Fehrenbach, *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (NY: McMillan, 1968), 375-77; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 273; for an interesting look at the indirect consequences of the Neighbors expedition, see Thomas S. Edrington, "Military Influence on the Texas-New Mexico Boundary settlement," *New Mexico Historical Review*, 59 4 (October 1984), 371-94.

⁶ Max Meisel, *A Bibliography of American Natural History* (NY: The Premier Publishing Co., 1924-1929); Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 231-34; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 273; United States, *Reports of Explorations and Surveys, to Ascertain the Most Practicable and Economical Route for a Railroad from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Ocean* (Washington: A.O.P. Nicholson, Printer, 1855-1860).

States. Mexico's great failing in its northern lands had been a failure to establish reliable communication and transportation to and from its outposts. The Americans had no intention of repeating this dramatic Mexican shortcoming. They moved quickly to initiate and secure their own routes, rapidly binding the newly acquired territories more tightly to the American core than they had ever experienced with its Mexican predecessor. This process had a twofold effect: it illustrated the power of the Americans, while at the same time it inspired resentment in the people of New Mexico at the transformation of nationality, language, and power that followed the end of the Mexican War.

The first major military expedition through the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos region solidified these contradictory sentiments as it mapped with more detail possible routes across the southern plains. Dispatched in 1849 by Colonel John James Abert, the head of the Corps of Topographical Engineers and a vaunted explorer in his own right, Captain Randolph Barnes Marcy headed a force comprising two companies of his Fifth Infantry regiment, one company of the First Dragoons, and Lieutenant James Hervey Simpson of the Topographical Engineers. Just beginning a distinguished career in exploration, Marcy sought a pathway for a transcontinental railroad as well as an overland migration route. In 1849, he began a journey that left Fort Smith, Arkansas, and followed the merchant Josiah Gregg's Canadian River Trail of 1839 into New Mexico. There the expedition turned toward Santa Fe. Simpson's command remained to explore areas to the west of the Rio Grande as Marcy headed back to Fort Smith. The return took him south from Santa Fe, along the Rio Grande to El Paso. Marcy then turned east, traversed the Guadalupe Mountains, and headed down the Pecos River on his way to Big Spring, a favorite stopping point for the Comanche, located in modern Texas. From there, the expedition continued east to Fort Washita on the Red River. The work of Marcy and Simpson confirmed the viability both of an overland road to El Paso and an accompanying rail route. Despite an encounter with the Kiowa Indians in which one of his men was killed and the continued presence of the Comanches, Marcy himself favored his return route through the Guadalupes and across the edge of the *llano* to Big Spring as the easiest southern way to El Paso as well as the best possible rail route to California.⁷

As Marcy surveyed the region, commissioners from the United States and Mexico debated the question of the new, post-Mexican War boundary between the two countries. Complicated by the Gold Rush in California and national political machinations, the effort proceeded slowly, but in 1850 work on the east end of boundary began in earnest. For this endeavor, a new boundary commissioner, John Russell Bartlett of Providence, Rhode Island, was selected. A bookstore owner with an armchair interest in exploration, Bartlett was a political appointee who lacked the skills and experience necessary for surveying. His most important qualification for the task had little to do with exploration; for years he had been a partner in a bookstore in the Astor Hotel in New York, frequented by such luminaries as an

⁷ Robert Royal Russel, *Improvements of Communication with the Pacific Coast as an Issue in American Politics, 1783-1864* (NY: Torch Press, 1948): 8-25; Edward Wallace, *The Great Reconnaissance: Soldiers, Artists, and Scientists on the Frontier, 1848-1862* (Boston: Little-Brown, 1955); Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 213-17; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 271-72.

aged Albert Gallatin, the Swiss-born American financier and statesman; John Lloyd Stephens, an attorney with a passion for antiquities who revealed the Maya to the modern world; Henry Schoolcraft, an early proto-ethnologist of Native Americans; and the journalist and proto-archaeologist Ephraim G. Squier. With Gallatin, Bartlett founded the American Ethnological Society, similar in its goals to the American Antiquarian Society. The bookshop in the Astor Hotel held a certain cachet among mid-nineteenth-century intellectuals. Edgar Allan Poe was even known to visit the shop, for the company was excellent and the opportunity for stimulating conversation and new ideas unmatched.⁸

Bartlett believed the knowledge this experience provided prepared him for the work of a boundary commissioner, but talking about ethnology and crossing 1,000 miles of desert were entirely different endeavors. Bartlett set out for Texas in spring 1850 with a large, well-equipped contingent that included a detachment of Topographical Engineers, a number of civilian surveyors, fifty mechanics, field scientists sponsored by various professional societies, personal friends and relatives, and a small navy to transport the troops. Numerous calamities befell the expedition from the moment it left New York Harbor. Murders occurred along the way; consistent episodes of drunkenness by officials as well as civilian teamsters almost destroyed the mission; at least one near-mutiny occurred; and insubordination became rife. On August 3, 1850, the main contingent left on the steamer *Galveston*; Bartlett and the accompanying dignitaries departed more than one week later on a different ship. Before they reached the Lone Star State, the men on the *Galveston* engaged in behavior any gentleman such as Bartlett would have scorned. Stopping at Key West, Lieutenant Isaac G. Strain, the naval officer who accompanied the expedition, led the men ashore with predictable results. When they returned to the ship, Strain felt compelled to have two men bound and locked in their cabins and a third thrown overboard. Only the intervention of the chief Topographical Engineer, Brevet Lieutenant Colonel John McClellan, saved the men from severe discipline. When the *Galveston* docked in New Orleans, tension grew. By the time the party started for San Antonio, little discipline remained. A little more than one month later, the party arrived in San Antonio. The trouble continued; a teamster killed a San Antonio resident and Bartlett paid the family a one-hundred dollar indemnity. One teamster murdered another and fled. The trouble continued on the way to El Paso. Bartlett left ahead of the main group by the Upper Road in an effort to reach El Paso to meet the Mexican commissioner on the appointed day. The main contingent followed, but soon one of McClellan's officers shot the wagon master, who subsequently died of his wounds. While a jury deliberated the officer's fate, the man committed suicide; soon after, the jury acquitted him on the grounds of self-defense. Strain, himself known for drunkenness, left the expedition to return to Washington, D.C., to file charges against McClellan. Bartlett concurred, asking McClellan to resign; The colonel responded by demanding a court martial and charging that Bartlett's brother, George, transported illegal goods with the expedition and then sold them to the military at exorbitant prices. McClellan also charged the quartermaster for the expedition with engaging

⁸ Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 271-72; C. W. Ceram, *The First American: A Story of the North American Archaeology* (NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971), 201-03; C. W. Ceram, *Gods, Graves, and Scholars: The Story of Archaeology* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1951), 337-53.

in the same activities. As a result, McClellan followed Strain, neither returning to the expedition.⁹

Bartlett clearly could not lead as diverse and contentious a group as the boundary survey expedition. His choices of compatriots for the trip, mostly friends, relatives, and hangers-on, initiated many of the problems. They often behaved frivolously, neither showing nor inspiring respect, and by example undermining the discipline that military officers sought to maintain among their troops. Bartlett's unwillingness to travel with the men and behave as their leader certainly created a vacuum that every officer on the expedition tried to fill. Nor was there any sense of purpose among the members of the expedition; Bartlett's own dilatory leadership style assured that. Combined with the difficult conditions of such work and an entirely ordinary contingent of soldiers and civilians, the situation showed all the traits of a disaster waiting to happen. Problems continued even after the expedition reached El Paso. Bartlett fired a number of teamsters, some of whom went on a drunken rampage and killed Edward Clarke, the son of Bartlett's political sponsor, U.S. Senator John Clarke of Rhode Island. Bartlett's commission dispensed military justice, hanging four of the men, but the expedition remained disorganized, unruly, demoralized, and inefficient.¹⁰

As Bartlett traversed west Texas on his way to El Paso to meet with the Mexican boundary commissioner, the region's topography tantalized his literary side. When Bartlett first approached the Guadalupe Mountains, he saw before him "the bold head" of "this most remarkable landmark, rising as it does far above all other objects, and terminating abruptly about three thousand feet above the surrounding plain." After almost 1,000 miles of desert and scrub land, the Guadalupe Mountains seemed majestic in comparison, of a piece with the Romantic spirit of the age and somehow divorced from the empiricism beginning to take shape in American science and literature. "No sunrise at sea or from a mountain's summit could equal the grandeur that which we now beheld," Bartlett admiringly wrote in his journal, "when the first rays struck the snow-clad mountain which reared its lofty head before us. The projecting cliffs of white and orange stood out in bold relief against the azure sky, while the crevices and gorges, filled with snow, showed their inequalities with a wonderful distinctness. At the same time the beams of sun playing on the snow produced the most brilliant and ever-changing iris hues. No painter's art could reproduce, or colors imitate, these gorgeous prismatic tints."¹¹ Bartlett's first view of the Guadalupe Mountains defined it for Americans. His colorful descriptions set the tone for the subsequent understanding of this great uplifted reef.

The new commissioner also managed to botch the political ramifications of the complicated negotiations with the Mexican boundary representative, General Pedro García Condé. Under orders to

⁹ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 169-73; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 257-62.

¹⁰ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 172-73; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 271.

¹¹ John Russell Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua* V 1 (NY: D. Appleton & Company, 1854), 117-18.

be conciliatory toward the Mexican government, Bartlett did not push the American advantage in any determined way. He noted the map used by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo commissioners was inaccurate, locating the Rio Grande two degrees of longitude west of its actual location and placing El Paso, the crucial point in the 1847 map, about thirty miles too far to the north of its actual location. Following this map left both the Mesilla Valley in southern New Mexico and the Santa Rita area in western New Mexico under Mexican control. Professional and personal disputes continued to flourish; A.B. Gray, the surveyor, refused to accept the longitude-latitude line to which Bartlett and Condé agreed, arguing instead for a measurement from the “town of Paso” as designated in the treaty instead of the inaccurate longitude and latitude measures that Bartlett accepted. Gray’s interpretation placed the U.S.-Mexico border farther to the south than the Bartlett-Condé line. In subsequent years, the question of the boundary line escalated into a major political dispute in the United States that placed expansionist southern Democrats on one side and the crumbling Whig party on the other. Only the signing of the Gadsden Treaty on December 30, 1853, resolved the problem. Under its terms, the United States agreed to purchase the disputed territory, a rectangular-shaped tract of more than 29,640 square miles in southern Arizona and New Mexico. Many regarded the Gadsden Purchase as a poorly disguised effort to keep the option of a southern transcontinental railway open.¹²

The question of the southern rail line melded closely into the dominant issue of the 1850s, the crisis over slavery that eventually redefined the nation as a union instead of a loosely affiliated collection of states. Beginning with the Missouri Compromise of 1820, slavery had been forbidden in territories north and west of the northern boundary of Missouri. This compromise salved the conscience of slavery opponents who could say they had begun to halt the expansion of the peculiar institution. At the same time it gave advocates room for hope; they added new territory into which to expand to maintain relative parity in congressional representation. The fragile arrangement held until the Mexican War, which brought a number of new territories into the nation. Nor could the fiction of parity in the admission of free and slave states be maintained after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Abolitionists who believed that the Missouri Compromise of 1820 doomed slavery to eventual death were horrified to assess the prospects for slavery in the new territories; from a southern perspective, the territories seemed rife for slavery. In 1846, U.S. Representative David Wilmot, a first-term congressman from Pennsylvania, added an amendment to appropriation legislation that barred slavery from any of the territories conquered from Mexico. The House passed the bill with the proviso attached, exacerbating tensions between North and South; the U.S. Senate failed to act on it. In the Senate, John C. Calhoun, the patriarch of southern politicians, crafted an eloquent constitutional defense of slavery as a property rights issue, but Wilmot’s effort energized the north and accelerated the polarization that dominated national politics.

It also created the context in which a southern political revival took place in the making of law

¹² Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 173-97; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 261-64.

and in its implementation in the courts. The Compromise of 1850, another in the long chain of political waffling designed to keep the issues concerning slavery from destroying the nation, made concessions to free-state ideology. It offered the settlers in any territory the right to decide if the resulting state would accept slavery or repudiate it, an idea called “popular sovereignty” that had gained considerable credence since it attracted national attention in 1847-48, as Lewis Cass, a possible presidential candidate, conceived the idea, and the Free Soil Party formed to support it. This encouraged southerners, for it meant that any territory west of the Mississippi River, not just those south of the northern boundary of Missouri, might be enticed into accepting slavery.

The Missouri Compromise effectively assured parallel admission of slave and free states, guaranteeing that well into the 1850s the South remained powerful in Congress. Southerners had a long history of national leadership. From George Washington and Thomas Jefferson to Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun, this region enjoyed effective spokesmen who wielded great power in the nation’s capital. When Manifest Destiny became the era’s dominant ideological current, southerners poised themselves to take advantage of the opportunity presented them. Jefferson Davis, President Franklin K. Pierce’s Secretary of War from 1853-1857 who later went on to the presidency of the Confederate States of America, played an instrumental role in assuring that southern routes for a transcontinental railroad were explored as thoroughly as northern options. From Davis’s prescient perspective, it was a rare opportunity to use technology to extend and enhance the paternalistic, cruel, and anachronistic system of cash-crop slavery that prevailed along the southern and southeastern coasts.

Davis’s astute maneuvering guaranteed that the Corps of Topographical Engineers surveys would include the exploration of both northern and southern routes. Among the primary purposes for most military exploration in the West was the location of a rail route to the Pacific Ocean. The topography to the south was flatter than to the north, making a southern route an easier engineering feat. The entire path, from the *llano* of west Texas to the coastal mountains outside San Diego, had to be carefully surveyed to assess its suitability. The siting of any route across the West spoke volumes about the nation’s future; a political rationale for such a decision clearly could not suffice in the polarized climate of the 1850s. Neither the Abolitionists nor southerners enjoyed a clear advantage. Northern businessmen also had a stake in the situation. A northern rail route offered them greater potential profits than a southern counterpart. In the face of what North or South perceived as economic injustice, either Abolitionists or southerners could disrupt the workings of the nation in their own section of the country. Whatever decision resulted required greater authority than politics could grant it; it had to be regarded as a nonpartisan and even moral decision. The stakes for Topographical Engineers and other explorers, regardless of their political views, were enormous.

Within this complicated national context, in 1854 another military officer, the erratic Brevet Captain John Pope of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, led a survey along the southern route. Pope had been the most unprofessional and least distinguished member of the Topographical Engineers. In 1838, he reported on a reconnaissance of Minnesota; a superior noted that Pope’s map was the same as that of Joseph N. Nicollet, a French scientist who immigrated to the United States, and sponsored by Pierre Chouteau of the American Fur Company, surveyed the upper Mississippi River in

1838. Pope also received a reprimand for his conduct on the Northeastern Boundary Survey. Senior officers, such as Lieutenant Colonel Joseph E. Johnston, declined the pleasure of Pope's company in their commands. Yet the captain had a flare; once he appeared in St. Louis after last being seen in Santa Fe, inaccurately claiming to have discovered a new Santa Fe Trail. Pope became something of a pariah within the Corps, but the prevailing view of him in the military seemed not to disturb him in the least.¹³

The grandiose and vain Pope served as a perfect foil for Jefferson Davis's strategy. The Secretary of War — a southerner who identified strongly with the culture of the South and the idea of state's rights and who felt the need to support the region's expansion but opposed secession — had to rely on the Corps of Topographical Engineers for survey work. Only two members of the corps, Pope and Davis's lifelong friend and West Point classmate, Major William H. Emory, came from slave-holding states. Subject to charges of political maneuvering in favor of the peculiar institution of slavery, Davis tried to seem impartial in his selection of officers. His 1853 and 1854 decisions appeared unbiased, but the choice of the unreliable Pope belied the question of impartiality. Any northern observer could assess Davis's choices and accuse the secretary of favoring a southern route not only as because of the regional affiliation of the officers who carried out his orders, but also by the omission of any survey in search of a more central railroad pass through the Rocky Mountains.¹⁴

Davis held power firmly and wielded it carefully; usually he succeeded with finesse. In the case of the Pope survey, Davis kept control by his choice of officer. In October 1853, the Secretary of War ordered Pope to survey a route that began at Doña Ana, New Mexico, and continued east across the *Llano Estacado* to Preston on the Red River. This route followed the Thirty-second Parallel, the southernmost alternative rail route considered by the federal government, and it clearly best suited the goals of the South. At the same time, Davis ignored the requests of northerners and expansionists for survey work on northern routes, and instead commissioned another survey east from San Diego to demonstrate the transcontinental viability of the southern route. Pope and a large party left Doña Ana early in February 1854 with two objectives: to find a pass through the Guadalupe Mountains and to explore the *llano*. Previous work made both objectives easily attainable. Marcy had the needs of a railroad in mind when he followed the Neighbors and Ford route along the Thirty-second Parallel, as did Lieutenant Nathaniel Michler of the Corps of Topographical Engineers in 1849 and 1850, when he followed part of Marcy's return path. Pope easily found a route through the Guadalupe Mountains, discovering several caves, attempted to sink wells near the Pecos River, and continued to the *llano*.¹⁵ In a fashion typical of his career, Pope never ventured far onto the unfamiliar *llano*, but enthusiastically

¹³ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 69-73, 129, 246-47; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 274; Brevet Captain John Pope, *Report of Exploration for Route for the Pacific Railroad near the Thirty-Second Parallel of North Latitude from the Red River to the Rio Grande* (Washington, DC: 1854).

¹⁴ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 277-79; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 291-92.

¹⁵ Pope, *Report of Exploration*.

attested to its suitability afterwards. He found the region desirable for a rail route, ticking off its numerous advantages; sinking artesian wells in the *llano* as a source of water ranked prominently among Pope's assertions. He even announced that a southern rail route could capture most of the trade in northern Mexico for the United States. Pope also described the voyage through the Guadalupe Mountains as an "easy passage," although in need of clearing and roadwork in some places; Bartlett opined differently in 1850 when he saw the narrow pass through the mountains, part of it "on a bare rocky shelf not wide enough for two wagons to pass." Pope put out the kind of effort Davis had every reason to expect and reported in the fallacious manner entirely consistent with his previous behavior. The Secretary of War added another weapon to his arsenal — a vain, disingenuous and easily manipulated officer.¹⁶

Sectional issues and the route of a transcontinental railroad remained intertwined until the secession of the southern states in 1861 dashed any chance of railroad construction along the Thirty-second Parallel. The question of exploration and national goals had become charged by the insistence on regional, state, and local prerogatives that ultimately brought the nation to civil war. Against this backdrop, the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos region remained inconsequential. The great schemes of the moment and the textured complications of the 1850s all viewed the region as a path to somewhere else. Where Indians adapted their cultures to survive in the region, an entire generation of Euro-American visionaries and officers, explicating the dominant and interconnected ideas of their time — exploration and sectional crisis — thought little of the trans-Pecos area as they passed through it, seeing it only as avenue to other places and goals. As did most of their predecessors, surveyors left only their intentions in the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos region and marks on a map to denote where they crossed.

During the contentious 1850s, the best way to preserve a free-state or slave-state advantage became to create on-the-ground realities in the disputed territories. With the doctrine of popular sovereignty determining the expansion of slavery even more comprehensively after the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 enshrined the idea of local choice, the concepts of Manifest Destiny and individual advantage from national expansion drew ever closer. Anglo-American settlement of the region, based on the expansionist doctrine of Manifest Destiny, the vast numbers of Americans and their growing economic power, and the technological systems of a nascent industrial society, followed the surveyors, initiating a range of changes that allowed for the development of communities in the region. Reverberations from the activities of the people who passed through the Guadalupe Mountains and the trans-Pecos region characterized this transformation process. Roads and trails first defined the area for Americans; emigrants to the California Gold Rush followed Marcy's return route as they headed west and a generation of migrants followed.

In the general headiness about expansion, civilian entrepreneurs also capitalized on the efforts of

¹⁶ Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863*, 233-37, 291-93; Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 289-90; Pope, *Report of Exploration*, 7; Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua* V 1, 120-21.

federal explorers to provide services to the burgeoning nation. The Gold Rush that began in 1848 prompted a wave of settlement, and the United States became a nation with two widely separated coasts. The connections between both coasts remained tenuous; supplies, goods, mail, and people had to travel from the eastern United States around the Cape of Good Hope at South America's southern tip before they completed the long and arduous trip to San Francisco. If they were bold and foolhardy travelers could cross the fever-ridden Isthmus of Panama instead, risking fatal fever and other maladies in an effort to shorten the typically six-month trip around the Cape of Good Hope. The truly brave could attempt a cross-country ordeal, but this last choice was favored by migrants rather than commercial shippers. Anyone who made the trip from St. Louis across the plains and over the Sierra or Cascade mountains was likely to prefer another way to return. No matter what route anyone chose to California, the journey remained an ordeal until the 1870s.

After California's statehood, delivery of the U.S. mail by a system organized during the 1840s became a priority. Statehood meant an entire range of official mail had to reach the new state in a timely manner; the six-month voyage around South America assured that news and necessary documents were outdated long before they arrived in San Francisco or Sacramento. With everything from land claims, new legislation, court decisions and news about the sectional crisis essential to the development of legal, social, and economic practices in the new state, federal officials sought a better means to send important documents to the most distant part of the nation. One of the most certain ways to facilitate this goal was to let a contract for overland delivery of the U.S. mail.

A fifty-six-year-old eastern entrepreneur named John Butterfield responded to this offer with an ambitious plan to follow the route of the military surveys from Missouri to San Diego. Certain he would secure the bid, Butterfield built a network of people and secured almost unlimited financing before receiving the contract. He promised a chain of stations within the first year of operation, and with this pledge, on September 16, 1857 he won the federal contract for the semiweekly cross-continental mail delivery at the astronomical sum of \$600,000 per year for six years. *The New York Times* thundered at what it saw as squandering of the taxpayer's money, but President James Buchanan wired his congratulations to Butterfield, calling the contract a "glorious triumph for civilization." Buchanan understood the implications of the overland mail service as a means to facilitate the nation's growth.¹⁷

For Butterfield, acquiring the contract was the easiest of the many tasks he faced; building the route and all necessary facilities proved far more difficult. By 1858, crews had begun the construction of stations along the survey route, and the entrepreneur's planned Butterfield Overland Mail Trail took shape. From Tipton, Missouri, near St. Louis, to San Francisco — an almost 3,000-mile journey — Butterfield's stages were scheduled to make the trip in twenty-three days and twenty-three hours; an excellent run could reach the coast in a little more than twenty-two days. El Paso was the halfway point; one visitor remarked on being forty-three minutes behind the coach running the opposite direction at the

¹⁷ Robert N. Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1983) Southwestern Studies Monograph No. 71, 31-33.

one-square-block Butterfield station in Franklin, near El Paso. With speed at a premium, the arduous trips taxed the spirits of drivers, animals, and the occasional passengers.¹⁸

Visitors did not find the options for food, sleeping, or other accommodations much to their liking. Meals cost a dollar, but all that anyone typically received for that sum was pork, crackers, and coffee without milk or sugar. “Breakfast was served on the bottom of a candle box,” one visitor noted, “and such as sat down were perched on inverted pails or nature’s chair.” Tin cups held the coffee they drank. Breakfasts consisting of, in the words of one traveler, “coffee, tough beef, and butterless shortcake,” were typical.¹⁹ Sleeping accommodations were as bad and facilities for washing simply did not exist. These intrepid passengers could make the trip, but the experience would rarely be described as pleasant.

The Butterfield Overland Stage was a fragile operation from its inception, entirely dependant on a seemingly never-ending line of stations. Spaced no more than 113 miles apart anywhere in the country — the longest distance being that between the Pecos River and the first stop to its west — stations held supplies and replacement men and animals. More than 250 leather-braced swaying coaches, called “celerity wagons” by their makers and ordered especially for the Butterfield company; traveled the route. These coaches had smaller wheels for a lower center of gravity so they would be less likely to overturn on rugged western roads and trails. Canvas replaced wood on the tops and sides to reduce the weight of the Butterfield coaches. More than 800 workers — stagecoach drivers to cooks — tended the line. Passengers paid the exorbitant fare of two hundred dollars going westward; because the mass of passengers were headed in that direction, travelers paid less coming back east. The fare equaled nearly the annual salary of a schoolteacher. Most travelers found the journey excruciating. In 1858, newspaperman Waterman L. Ormsby II of the *New York Herald*, who regarded the opening of Butterfield’s mail route as one of the greatest events of the age, found the *Llano Estacado*, the staked plains, the most grueling portion of the trip. “As far as the eye could see,” he wrote, “there were decayed and decaying bones of animals and sometimes men.” Nor did the Guadalupe Mountains impress Ormsby. “Guadalupe Peak loomed up before us all day in the most aggravating manner,” the journalist noted. “It fairly seemed to be further off the more we traveled, so that I almost gave up in despair of hopes of reaching it.” Ormsby’s sentiment echoed that of John Russell Bartlett nearly a decade before. Bartlett and his party “expected to reach it within a couple of hours of leaving camp,” the commissioner wrote in 1850. “But hour after hour, we drove directly towards it without seeming to approach nearer; and finally after journeying ten hours, the mountain seemed to be as distant as it was in the morning.” Fortunately for Butterfield, the mountain’s curious visual qualities posed little problem for his stage line. Passengers were an afterthought for the Butterfield Overland Mail; the primary objective

¹⁸ Robert Hine, *The American West: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1973), 140-41; Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest*, 32.

¹⁹ Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest*, 35; quotes from Walter Lang, ed., *The First Overland Mail, Butterfield Trail, St. Louis to San Francisco, 1858-1861* (East Aurora, NY: no publisher, 1940).

was to carry the mail.²⁰

The Overland Stage Company built a series of stations from east to west in the trans-Pecos following the southern route along the Thirty-second Parallel after reaching the Pecos River at Horsehead Crossing to southeast of the Guadalupe Mountains. The first of these, 113 miles to the west and called Pope's Crossing after the obstreperous officer, was located almost exactly on the modern Texas-New Mexico border at the Pecos River. Farther west were the Delaware Springs and Independence Springs stops. The stagecoaches then began the difficult climb up the escarpment that led to the Guadalupe Mountains. At the base of El Capitan, along the route surveyed first by Neighbors and Ford and then by Marcy, the company established a "home station," a small stop where coaches changed drivers and passengers could lay over, at the Pinery in Pine Spring Canyon.²¹

The Pinery station was typical of these intermediate stops on the stage line. They were designed to allow the stage to replace tired horse or mule teams with fresh animals; at the more important of these stops, veterinarians, wheelwrights, and blacksmiths were sometimes stationed. When the route was threatened by Indian people who resented its passage through their land, armed guards deployed to the stations. The siting of such stations stemmed from utilitarian objectives. Water, especially in the dry Southwest, timber, and pasture determined location. The Pinery station offered a characteristic example of a stop; it sat adjacent to an acequia, an irrigation canal, from nearby Pine Spring, and a rock-walled corral for stock surrounded it. The Pinery featured a fifty-seven-foot long by forty-one wide stone fort with walls that reached eleven feet in height, the fourth of ten such structures that the company built west of the head of the Concho River in Texas. The meadows around it provided forage for stock. Three rooms, a blacksmith's shop, and a water tank graced the interior of the fort, assuring that the people there had a place to sleep, the necessary facilities for essential repairs and water. When Ormsby arrived on September 28, 1858, only the corral had been constructed; station master Henry Ramstein and his crew lived in tents. By November, the station was completed. While it was not a place of plenty, people who stopped there could survive. Ormsby received only venison pie and baked beans to eat when he arrived, but as the station became established, a wider variety of food became available. For between forty cents and a dollar, shortcakes, antelope, biscuits, "jerked" beef, and coffee were available. The nearby mountains abounded with game, and the people who stayed there made some small efforts at agriculture. Generally, the station depended almost exclusively on the passing stagecoaches for news, supplies, and other necessities for the survival. The only other consistent Anglo-American presence in the region remained the military, which like the Mescalero peoples, often came to utilize the springs in the limestone formations at the base of the mountains, graze their animals in its vicinity, and hunt the

²⁰ Lyle H. Wright and Josephine M. Bynum, eds., L. Waterman Ormsby, *The Butterfield Overland Mail* (San Marino, CA: The Henry Huntington Library, 1954); Mrs. Charles Gregory, "Old Tales Told by Intrepid Writer," *El Paso Times* September 27, 1958, 11; Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest*, 33; Bartlett, *Personal Narrative of Explorations and Incidents in Texas, New Mexico, California, Sonora, and Chihuahua* V 1, 118.

²¹ Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest*, 37.

natural life that depended on these sources of water in an otherwise arid part of the world.²²

The Pinery Station was a short-lived affair. Despite plotting a route that went west from the Pinery to stations at Crow Springs, Cornudas Tanks, Alamo Springs, and the ever-essential Hueco Tanks, a source of water that drew all kinds of people, within a year of the opening of the Pinery the company decided to use a different route across the trans-Pecos region. The distance between sources of water — especially west of the Pinery, where more than 100 miles of barren land, in places replete with salt or gypsum and rarely showing any evidence of water, made the trek difficult under the best of conditions — prompted the decision. The altitude of the Pinery also contributed to the decision; tired animals near the end of a more than fifty-mile trek became exhausted during the 2,000-foot climb to the Pinery. With the U.S. Postmaster General's approval, the company replaced the route with one that went south from Horsehead Crossing along a more southerly route guarded by Fort Stockton and Fort Davis soldiers.²³

Although the Butterfield company ceased to use the Pinery Station, it remained a useful stopover in the vicinity of the Guadalupe Mountains. Soldiers continued to use the station as a rest stop, and nearby dugout shelter houses that served as accommodations testified to this continued role. Others used the site — travelers through the region, squatters, freighters and drovers, and occasional renegades escaping pursuers; all stayed there intermittently.²⁴

The Butterfield Overland Mail fared only marginally better than its Pinery Station. The Thirty-second Parallel route was a southern concoction, a product of the nimble Jefferson Davis's political maneuvering. When Isaac Stevens, Washington Territory governor, promoted a far northern railway across the upper tier of American states and territories that appeared foolhardy in comparison with the already viable southern route, Davis seemed a certain victor. After Abraham Lincoln won the presidency in 1860 and South Carolina led the southern states into secession, all that maneuvering, and all the dreams based on it, collapsed. The possible southern rail route passed through what would become the Confederacy, and ceased to be viable as a way to transport freight. Nor did northern politicians care to accommodate southern desires in the aftermath of secession. The clouding secession question compromised Butterfield's position, and a combination of financial setbacks and a power play by rivals removed him from the presidency of the company he founded in 1859. He resigned rather than sit on the board of directors of the company he founded, and in 1860, experienced a physical breakdown followed by a devastating stroke. Subsequent company leadership was neither as supple nor as determined as the founder, and the firm's prospects faded. A central route to the California,

²² Roscoe P. Conkling and Margaret B. Conkling, *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869* V 1 (Glendale, CA: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1947), 390-92; Dava McGahee Davy, "The Pinery Station," (Carlsbad, New Mexico: Carlsbad Caverns Natural History Association, no date), 1.

²³ Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest*, 41; Hine, *The American West*, 140.

²⁴ Conkling and Conkling, *The Butterfield Overland Mail, 1857-1869*, 1 393.

already organized by another freighting company — Russell, Majors, and Waddell, and a faster mail service called the Pony Express became the focuses of cross-country shipping. A move by Butterfield's successor to establish a parallel central route did little to elevate the company's fortunes. During the Civil War, the Butterfield operation transferred to the central route, where it made arrangements with the American Express Company and the United States Express Company, both of which initially operated as subcontractors to the Central Overland Mail Company, as the Butterfield operation was renamed. The Central Overland Mail Company found itself in financial difficulty in 1862, and its contract was transferred to Ben Holladay. After the war, the Wells Fargo Express Company took over the operation and became a success.²⁵

Within a very few years of the first runs on the Butterfield line, other Anglos came to the trans-Pecos area, where they developed economic endeavors. Of these, the cattle industry became most significant, creating not only an economy but a mythology in the immediate post-Civil War era that indelibly stamped an imprint on American society. Both the mythos and the cows that supported the cattle industry emanated from Texas, from which cattle had been driven to market before the Civil War. New Orleans and Memphis were typical destinations; Sedalia, Missouri, became the terminus of a major cattle drive during the Civil War. After the war, as the railroads slowly made their way west, Kansas towns such as Abilene, Newton, Wichita, and Dodge City made their names as the places where railroad track met the cattle trails, where the lean beef that came from west Texas met the conveyance that would bring it to dinner tables of industrial America. Texas offered a logical location to increase a herd. Typically mild winters made the region an outstanding place to breed cattle, with mothers delivering as many as twelve calves in a lifetime; the dry climate and sparse flora worked against Texas as a pasture. Forage became increasingly scarce as more and more animals grazed the same open western landscapes — the ones with the best grass that were closest to water.²⁶

As the Texas plains, the *llano*, became first crowded and then packed with cattle, the most savvy and seasoned of the cattlemen anticipated the problems and sought other pastures. Among them were cattle entrepreneurs Charles Goodnight and his friend, Oliver Loving, easily the most experienced cattlemen in Texas. They drove cattle as far as Chicago before the war, took a one-thousand head herd to the goldfields outside Denver in 1860, and after the Civil War broke out, retained their allegiance to Texas by supplying the Confederacy with beef throughout the conflict. After the Civil War, the two took their herds west and north, away from the Indian territory (present-day Oklahoma) and railheads in Kansas, toward Colorado and eventually Wyoming and Montana. During the summer season, the grasses in the north grew tall and cattle feasted. Following the Butterfield trail through Texas to the Pecos River, the Goodnight-Loving herds turned north and followed the water into New Mexico and to Fort Sumner, constructed in 1862 in the southeastern part of the state. Initially the pair then took their

²⁵ Mullin, *Stagecoach Pioneers of the Southwest*, 42; Hide, *The American West*, 141.

²⁶ Frederick Merk, *History of the Westward Movement* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978), 457-61; Mari Sandoz, *The Cattlemen: From the Rio Grande Across the Far Marias* (NY: Hastings House, 1958), 85-95.

cattle around the Raton Mountains and up the plains at the base of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains to the mining boomtown of Denver. There, in the fast-growing city, Loving sold this first herd to John W. Iliff, who supplied the Union Pacific Railroad construction crews with beef as he built a massive ranch in northeastern Colorado. Goodnight returned to Texas and brought another 1,200 head. When he made winter camp about forty miles from Fort Sumner, Loving joined him and the two began to sell cattle to government contractors at the fort and in Santa Fe, New Mexico. During the following years they went farther north, along the Bozeman Trail into Wyoming and Montana. Loving died at Fort Sumner as a result of a battle with Comanches along the Pecos River in 1867, but the following year, Iliff purchased \$40,000 worth of cattle from Goodnight at a ranch the Texan founded in Colorado. Goodnight and his partner pioneered a new cattle route, one that avoided the tensions between cattle drovers and Indians in the Indian Territory and the drovers and farmers in Kansas and brought beef to the transport cars of the Union Pacific that took the cattle to Chicago for slaughter.²⁷

The Goodnight-Loving Trail, as most knew this developing route to the north, became one of the most famous of the cattle trails. The trail followed the eastern rim of the trans-Pecos region. During the late 1860s and 1870s, the wide paths of marks left by cattle hooves became a common sight throughout much of the area as the animals headed north. Again, the dominant currents of the time passed by the Guadalupe Mountains and trans-Pecos region, resulting in no permanent settlement to add to the few who already lived along the Pecos. The area offered too little to people who sought home and profit elsewhere, who looked across the Pecos River and saw wasteland. Their interests left only millions of hoofprints along the trail, only the empty and sometimes fouled water holes from which the cattle drank and the torn flora and absent fauna that denoted the passage of large herds of animals not native to the area.

Loving's death at the hands of the Comanches highlighted another of the situations that endangered cattlemen, cross-country travelers, and the few settlers alike. East of El Paso remained Mescalero Apache country into the 1850s, while Comanches dominated the *llano* and large areas of central Texas. Settlers left the core areas of Texas at their own risk well into the 1860s; Comanches were so powerful and dominant that the advance of the Anglo-Americans into west Texas cost, in an unusual kind of tabulation, an average of seventeen Anglo-American lives per mile, a total that worked out to more than 200 people per year who were killed or captured by Comanches over a thirty-five-year period. Texas author laureate John Graves characterized the meeting between Comanches and Texans as a situation in which "each breed found the other rough, acquisitive, and treacherous," and nothing in their mutual experience altered the opinion of either. Others have regarded the Comanche-Texan conflict as reflecting opposite sides of a similar cultural attitude. Both were proud, arrogant, vain, and persuaded they were moral and correct as they tried to eliminate the other. Only one had the American Army on its side.²⁸

²⁷ Merk, *History of the Westward Movement*, 457-61; Sandoz, *The Cattlemen*, 95-99; David Dary, *Cowboy Culture: A Saga of Five Centuries* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 122-26.

²⁸ John Graves, *Goodbye to a River* (NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 49-50; Fehrenbach, *Lone Star*, 529-30.

The westward expansion of Texans required protection, and the U.S. Army entered the region to play its typically prominent role in such endeavors. The surveys of the early 1850s noted the conditions in the region; directly or indirectly, all pointed out the need to address the question of the Comanches, and in the trans-Pecos, the Mescaleros. Both Indian peoples regarded the contested areas as their homeland and resented the intrusion of Anglo-American soldiers, settlers, and travelers. Accustomed to the mobile life of hunters and gatherers, experienced at raiding sedentary peoples of any race, the Mescaleros and the Comanches held their ground. In the construction of the world of Manifest Destiny, and in the terms of nineteenth-century Anglo-America, both stood in the way of “progress” and “civilization.”

By the early 1860s, the impact of an American presence became obvious in the trans-Pecos. It initiated a process that changed the existing balance of power in a way that Mescaleros and other southern plains and mountain peoples, accustomed to dealing with the Spanish and Mexicans, did not anticipate. American commerce traversed the region, leaving a few people in the region who possessed specific goals that related to the larger national economy. Americans shaped the vectors of a different future, one in which Mescaleros and other Indian peoples played a diminishing role and American settlers, still largely missing from the scene at the end of the 1850s, grew in importance. The catalyst of that transformation was the U.S. Army, directed from Washington, D.C., and unlike its Mexican and Spanish predecessors, capable of executing the orders given it. The Army was assigned several basic missions. First came securing the passage of Americans through the area, a goal intermittently achieved by the beginning of the Civil War. Following that objective, the military was supposed to prevent Indian raiding into Mexico, and finally, clear away Indian peoples in the region, both to terminate the incessant raiding that continued unabated and to make way for settlement. At the time, few considered the region as any great prize. Its resources seemed too sparse, its climate too hot and dry for most preindustrial Americans.

By the early 1860s, the Americans could claim more than a decade of experience in this border region, but still had little to show for it. While the stagecoaches went through and El Paso and other communities along the Rio Grande benefitted from the American ascension to power, the control the United States could establish was only as wide as the wagon tracks across the *llano* and through the mountains that its soldiers could defend; many times dominance was even more narrow. Despite Manifest Destiny, despite an ethos of conquest by settlement, initial American vectors in the region mirrored those of previous inhabitants. Even these newest conquerors passed through, following the easiest routes to the places they deemed more hospitable — those with water for crops and deep grasses for grazing. These sojourners had little initial impact on the region, adding little but expansion or widening of existing trails and a few forlorn and often withering homesteads and forts. Americans generally followed older trails and water courses in the trans-Pecos, a testament to the harsh and forbidding character of the region and the difficulty of securing it without the direct connections of railroads to the core of industrial America. Without trains, the American advantage, usually so pronounced in the post-Civil War West, was muted.

The appearance of the Americans and the surveys they initiated accomplished other tasks. They

made the nation conscious of the trans-Pecos region, as much for its qualities as a conquered place as for any mineral, agricultural, or ranching attributes it might have. Manifest Destiny and a need for cross-continental links explained American interest in the trans-Pecos region, and the surveys marked an American zone along the Rio Grande and out onto the *Llano Estacado* of west Texas. Establishing on-the-ground control of this region became a complicated endeavor that encompassed the better part of the twenty years that followed the beginning of the Civil War.

