

From Settler to Citizen

*New Mexican Economic Development and
the Creation of Vecino Society, 1750–1820*

Ross Frank

Introduction

This book tells two interwoven stories. The first traces the economy of the Spanish colonial province of New Mexico from the 1750s until just before Mexico won its independence from Spain in 1821. It documents a brief but critical period of intensive economic growth beginning in the 1780s that lasted for about three decades and identifies the major forces and events that brought about this development. The story of economic development places New Mexico squarely within the broader history of the northern provinces of New Spain.

Economic change helped to define the dominant society and culture that emerged from the eighteenth century, the subject of the second story. The struggle for subsistence and cooperative defense against raids by Apache and Comanche bands had brought Pueblo Indians, Spanish settlers, and *Castas** closer together before the 1780s. A decade later, the booming overland trade created the conditions for *Vecinos*† to begin to usurp Pueblo Indian lands, markets, and craft production. Out of this era of economic prosperity, vecinos created the roots of the Hispanic culture that still enriches the region.

The book is organized into an introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction outlines the ethnic geography of New Mexico as it developed from the period of Spanish invasion and first settlement at the end

*Definitions of Spanish terms and other words that appear in italics can be found in the glossary.

†As used here, the Spanish word *Vecino* refers to the non-Indian settlers of New Mexico. The term, literally “neighbor,” took on a meaning that included a sense of belonging to the province in late colonial New Mexican documents. Settlers were commonly referred to by Franciscans or provincial officials as “vecinos” as distinct from “Indios,” the inhabitants of the pueblos, who represented another kind of neighbor.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

Berkeley Los Angeles London

of the sixteenth century to the 1750s. The first three chapters focus on the economic history of New Mexico from 1750 to about 1810 and on the province's place within the larger region of northern New Spain. The cultural and social implications of economic change figure lightly in the early chapters and become increasingly important in chapters 4 and 5.

Chapter 1 begins by laying out the economy of New Mexico in about 1750, with careful attention to the relationships between Pueblo Indian communities on the Río Grande and Spanish settlers and officials. This portion of the chapter explores several questions: How did the Pueblos participate in the Spanish economy of the province? To what extent did the Spanish population use force to take advantage of Indian goods and labor? What effect did the relationship of the Pueblos to the Spanish economy have on Indian livelihoods and Pueblo autonomy? The second part of chapter 1 recounts the tremendous adversity experienced from the 1760s into the 1780s by Pueblo Indian and Spanish settlers alike, first from attacks launched by Apache, Comanche, and Navajo raiding parties and then from a virulent outbreak of smallpox. Underlying this narrative of tragedy, the analysis gauges the effect that warfare and disease had on the population of the province and how each blow affected the growth and structure of the New Mexican economy.

The larger economic, political, and administrative concerns of policymakers who governed New Spain during the late colonial period forms the subject of chapter 2. Reform of economic policy, implemented by a more powerful and efficient bureaucracy, became the hallmark of the Spanish Bourbon kings. Carlos III (1759–1788) and his ministers extended reform to the Spanish possessions in America. Chapter 2 follows the Bourbon Reforms to northern New Spain and locates the central role that New Mexicans played in a new military strategy directed at the Apache and Comanche bands in the region. The resulting Spanish alliance with the Comanche in 1786 protected mining and commercial centers in the north from attack and freed New Mexico from one important obstacle to economic development.

Chapter 3 investigates a series of other obstacles to economic growth and development in New Mexico, identified by Bourbon administrators and New Mexican governors, and their attempts to solve these problems. In each case, the Bourbon response demonstrated an understanding of the serious issues that faced the northern provinces and the willingness and ability to project tremendous power into farthest reaches of New Spain. However, Spanish officials could not always control the effects of their policies or ensure that they provided the intended solution.

Bourbon economic initiatives did encourage economic growth in late colonial New Mexico. Chapter 4 presents the evidence for a boom beginning during the 1780s, led by a surge in trade with other northern provinces—just the kind of economic activity envisioned by Bourbon policymakers and administrators. Increased exports from New Mexico and expanded food and

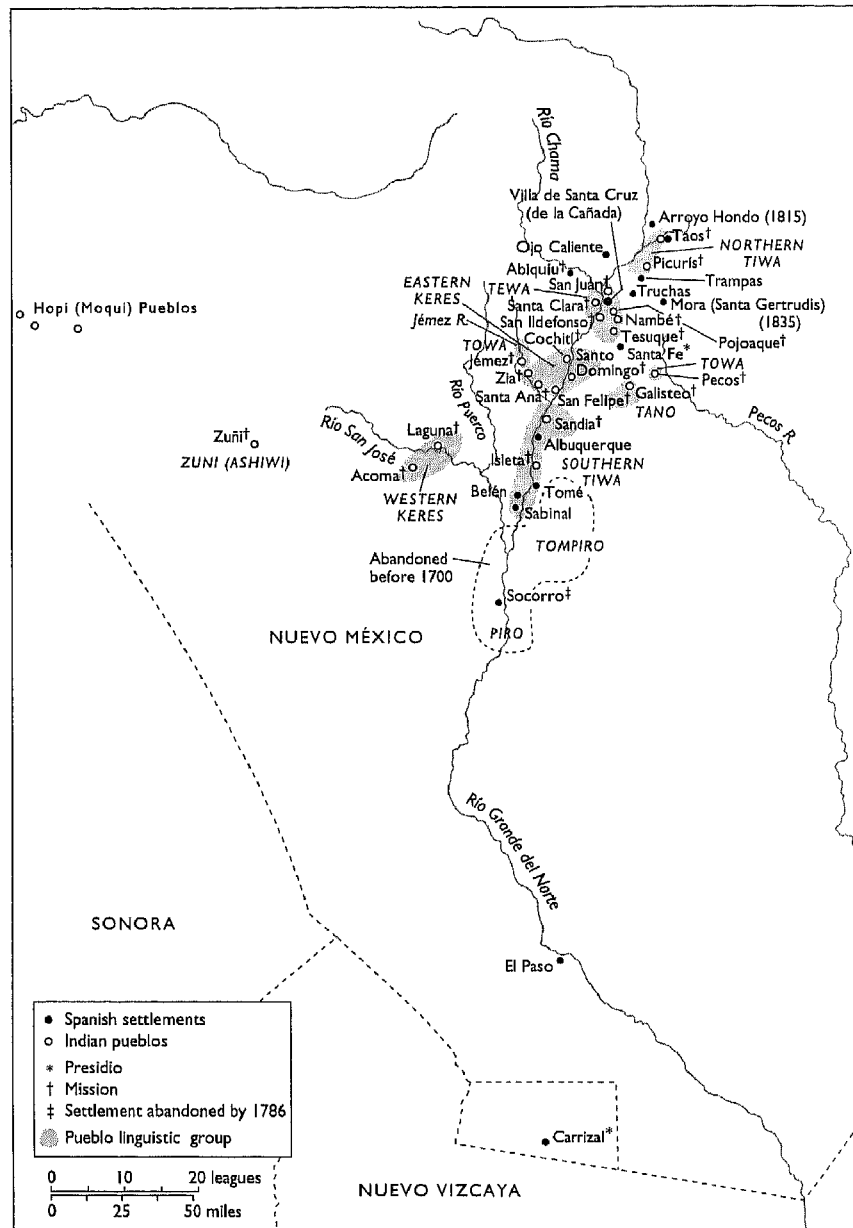
craft production began to integrate New Mexico more closely into a northern interregional economy. The chapter then analyzes how trade and increased productivity altered the internal economy of the province. Vecinos responded to new opportunities for gain by adopting coercive economic relationships to extract goods from Pueblo Indians, and in the process they dramatically changed craft production in both populations.

Chapter 5 explores the social and cultural transformation of Hispanic New Mexicans and connects them directly to the economic changes of the 1780s and 1790s. The incentives created by the economic boom helped to form a vecino society that identified itself in contradistinction to the Pueblo Indians. Encroachment on Indian lands in order to increase agricultural and livestock production paralleled the end of close cooperation in warfare and increasing intermarriages between vecinos and Pueblo Indians. A prosperous vecino population expressed its emerging identity through religious patronage and the creation of New Mexican variants of Spanish and Mexican cultural forms, discernible in *santos* and in furniture. By the end of the eighteenth century, the strength of vecino society had drawn the Franciscan missionaries away from protecting the interests of the Pueblo Indians and provoked new forms of political and cultural resistance in the Río Grande *pueblos*.

A brief concluding section suggests ways in which this view of late colonial New Mexico alters the general understanding of economic change after 1821, when Mexican independence from Spain opened the border with the United States to overland trade from Missouri.

THE ETHNIC GEOGRAPHY OF NEW MEXICO TO 1750

When Francisco Vázquez de Coronado led the first Spanish conquistadores to New Mexico in 1540, the 60,000 to 80,000 Pueblo Indians (*Indios de pueblo*) lived in as many as 150 distinct villages. Pueblo people had cultivated many of the richest agricultural lands in the Río Grande Valley continually since the fourteenth century.¹ Each group of Pueblos spoke one of three distinct language groups: Tanoan, Keres, or Zuñi. Members of the Tanoan pueblos spoke one of at least six distinct and mutually unintelligible dialects that had developed much earlier from a common ancestral tongue. The geographical distribution of these language groups indicates the complexity of the Pueblo world that faced Spanish colonizers (see Map 1). Tanoan speakers lived on a north-south axis roughly centered on the Río Grande Valley. The northernmost Pueblos of Taos and Picurís spoke Tiwa. Farther south, a group of pueblo-dwellers along the Río Grande and its Río Chama tributary spoke Tewa. Next came the Tano-speaking pueblo-dwellers in the Santa Fe area, including Galisteo Pueblo. Towa speakers flanked this region on both sides: Jémez to the west, and Pecos to the east. Proceeding to the south, the



Map 1. The Province of New Mexico, circa 1790. *Source:* Adapted from Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1982), 315.

large province of Tiguex stretched from just north of present-day Albuquerque to Socorro in the south; its inhabitants spoke a southern version of Tiwa. The pueblos of Sandía and Isleta form the modern representatives of Tiguex. Farther south and east lived groups of Piro and Tompiro villagers, distantly related to the other Tanoan-speaking groups.

In addition to the complex movement of peoples that the distribution of the Tanoan villages suggests, the Keres group of Pueblos settled on an east-west axis that met the Tanoan progression at the Río Grande between present-day Santa Fe and Albuquerque. These people descended from the earlier groups that had built and occupied the sophisticated settlements of Chaco Canyon. Acoma formed the center of the western Keres villages (which later included Laguna Pueblo), and the eastern Keres pueblos included San Felipe, Santa Ana, Zia, Santo Domingo, and Cochiti. To the west of Acoma, the Zuñi villagers (the original “Cities of Cibola”) spoke a language unrelated to any other in the region; they represent another story of migration and resettlement. Still farther west, Shoshone-speaking Hopi people settled in a group of villages in northeastern Arizona.

PUEBLO SOCIAL STRUCTURE, RELIGION, AND WORLDVIEW

The complicated religious and social bonds that knit settlements into vibrant communities mirrored the geographical and linguistic relationships among the Pueblos. Together these socioreligious structures tied the Native American peoples of the Río Grande region loosely together within a “Pueblo worldview.” The internal organization of each pueblo not only reflected a method of ordering social and political relations but also expressed a complex religious system that maintained the harmonious function and balance of natural forces on which the Pueblos relied for their survival.² Today, through the many changes over six centuries, nineteen Río Grande pueblos in New Mexico and the group of Hopi pueblos in northeastern Arizona continue a way of life based on these ancient traditions.

The group of western pueblos, encompassing Acoma, Laguna, Zuñi, and the Hopi villages, had a similar social structure based on matrilineal clans. In western Pueblo households, only persons who came from different clans could marry, and the life of the new family centered primarily around the wife’s relatives. Each clan took its name from an important actor in the religious mythology of the Pueblo. For example, Zuñi Pueblo has Eagle, Badger, Corn, and Crane clans, among others. Moreover, each clan might have its own subgroupings. Some pueblos remained small enough that the members of a clan consisted of a web of families all related to a common female ancestor. Larger pueblos had clans that contained a number of different family lineages. This arrangement emphasized the ways in which the clan system organized Pueblo social relations. In these pueblos, the clan system

incorporated households into a framework of reciprocal relations and also served as a communal repository for ceremonial information.³

Just as the clan performed the central task of social organization among the western pueblos, the eastern pueblos divided into halves, or moieties, that served to pattern social and ceremonial relations. For the Tewa pueblos (San Juan, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Nambé, Tesuque, and Pojoaque) and the Tiwa pueblos (Taos and Picurís in the north, and Sandía and Isleta in the south), the moieties represented Summer People and Winter People. Within these divisions, households participated in the social-religious life of the pueblo through *kiva* societies, associations dedicated to performing the ceremonial functions centered around special structures, called kivas, in which religious instruction and observance took place. In the Tiwa and Tewa pueblos, families traced their lineage through the relatives of both the mother and the father.

Each of the Tanoan-speaking and northeastern Keres pueblos borrowed some traits from its neighbors over centuries of coexistence. The Tewa and Tiwa pueblos have social structures that some anthropologists have labeled clans, but these do not serve to regulate marriage or organize households into groups connected by kinship. The Tanoan clanlike groupings probably grew out of the influence of their Keresan neighbors. Similarly, the eastern Keres pueblos have borrowed moieties from the Tewa. Turquoise and Squash (or Pumpkin) People correspond to the Winter and Summer divisions within the Tanoan pueblos. The eastern Keres have matrilineal clans and have also incorporated other religious associations, such as Medicine societies. The relationship between close proximity and cultural borrowing becomes equally clear in the development of the Towa-speaking Jémez people, who organize kinship within exogamous, matrilineal clans clearly borrowed from the Keres.

Overlaying the social organization of each of the pueblos, the kachina cult provided the religious focus for the Pueblo world. Kachinas (or katsinas) are supernatural beings who can bless the Pueblos and humankind with rain, fertile crops, good hunting, and general well-being. Religious ceremonies and public dances provide the Pueblo people with opportunities to call on the kachinas to continue the natural cycle of life. A number of Pueblo myths identify kachinas with the Anasazi people, the Pueblo ancestors who occupied the great cities built into cliffs, like Mesa Verde in southwestern Colorado, one of the most famous surviving examples. In essence, the Pueblos made gods out of ancestral spirits. From the evidence of mural paintings on the interior kiva walls of pueblos occupied before the Spanish conquest, the kachina cult reached the Río Grande in the early to mid-fourteenth century. The early Spanish chroniclers described kivas as well as the masked dancers (also called kachinas) in colorful costumes who impersonated the kachinas in dance ceremonies. Specialists disagree about the exact path the kachina

ceremonial complex took before spreading across the Pueblo area, but the masked gods and rites of impersonation clearly link the southwestern kachina cult to religious practices in central and western Mexico.⁴ Perhaps the arrival of the new religious cult during a period of migration into the Pueblo region facilitated the connection between the Anasazi and the kachina.

Depending on the historical development of a particular pueblo, either the clans or the kiva societies organized by moiety held the esoteric ceremonial information required for participation in the inner workings of the kachina cult and other religious associations. In the case of the western pueblos (Zuñi, Acoma, and Laguna), and to a lesser extent the eastern Keres pueblos and Jémez, clans connected (and still connect) religious ceremony to kinship networks, and in this manner they served to organize the social and cultural fabric of whole villages. In the other pueblos of Tanoan descent, the dual division of the pueblos provided by the moiety system alongside the kiva societies expressed a network of relationships animated by the kachina religion. The kachina cult not only connected and ordered complex webs of kinship, family, and other social groupings within pueblos but also engaged all of the peoples in the region in a conscious religious observance in common that kept the world in balance and in a productive relationship with humankind.⁵

For the Río Grande Pueblos, the seventeenth century brought the Spanish and disaster. Epidemic diseases contributed to a dramatic population decline, from 60,000–80,000 to about 17,000 just before the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Smallpox killed up to one-third of the Pueblo population in 1636, and another epidemic struck four years later. By the 1630s other factors made the Pueblo people even more susceptible to disease. Attacks of the Apache on the Zuñi, Piro, and Tompiro Pueblos limited the land that the Indians could cultivate. By the 1670s the Tompiro had abandoned their pueblos south and east of present-day Albuquerque because of population loss from disease, prolonged drought, and the inability to prevent Apache raids.⁶

During the eighteenth century, Franciscan missionaries attacked Pueblo institutions in order to convert the Indians to Christianity and force them to conform to Spanish patterns of social behavior. Spanish officials and colonists also demanded labor and tribute from the pueblos through the ownership of *encomiendas*. All told, Spanish coercion represented the deciding factor in the decline of the Pueblo population by 70 to 80 percent during the first century of Spanish occupation and settlement.

PUEBLO INDIANS AND FRANCISCANS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Spanish secular and religious institutions changed dramatically in New Mexico after the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the permanent reconquest of New

Mexico in 1692 by Diego de Vargas. The *encomienda* system of tribute ended with the rebellion of 1680, and the *repartimiento*, which had extracted Pueblo labor for Spanish farms and haciendas, continued after the reconquest as a much looser form of rotational labor draft, limited to the benefit of Spanish governors and *alcaldes mayores*.⁷ As a result, the Pueblos retained much of their communal agricultural land, despite encroachments by vecinos and provincial officials during the eighteenth century.

The Franciscan missionaries continued to reside in their missions inside the pueblos, acting as the spiritual leaders of a nominally converted, Christian Indian congregation. As a result of the revolt, the Franciscans lost the means to effect any further fundamental change in the underlying religion of the Pueblos or to advocate social behavior that might lead to the adoption of Spanish cultural values.⁸

The religious reports concerning the spiritual condition of the Pueblo Indians demonstrate the weak position of the missionary in New Mexico. In 1760 Bishop Pedro Tamarón y Romeral made serious charges about the level of spiritual care given the Pueblo Indians in the report he wrote after his official visitation of the New Mexican missions: "I soon observed that those Indians were not indoctrinated. They do recite the catechism in Spanish, following their *fiscal*, but since they do not know this language, they do not understand what they are saying. The missionaries do not know the languages of the Indians, and as a result the latter do not confess except at the point of death, and then with the aid of an interpreter."⁹ After repeated admonitions about the necessity of learning the native languages in order to impart the faith, the *custos* responded in no uncertain terms that the friars held no interest in study, "nor . . . would they do anything about it even if further precepts were applied."¹⁰ Tamarón's appraisal of the state of Pueblo Indian Catholicism seems mild compared with that of the next visitor. Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez, who visited the province in 1776 on behalf of the Franciscan provincial, found a general lack of commitment to the Catholic faith and placed most of the blame on the Indians themselves, rather than on lack of effort by the missionaries: "Their repugnance and resistance to most Christian acts is evident, for they perform the duties pertaining to the Church under compulsion, and there are usually many omissions."¹¹

The two visitors grasped to some degree both the relationship between the continued observance of traditional Native ceremonies and the perfunctory nature of the Pueblo Indian conversion to Christianity, as well as the helplessness of the missionaries in the face of Native opposition to change. Tamarón expressed his concern that the Indians had retained idolatrous practices, especially in relation to the kiva. In these underground chambers, religious meetings, dances, and ceremonies continued in secrecy, uninterrupted by Spanish interference. After an inspection in which he could not "find proof of anything evil," Tamarón ordered the missionaries to watch

carefully in the future. The friars in turn "argued the difficulty of depriving them [the Indians] of that dark and strange receptacle, which is also a temptation to evil."¹²

Domínguez described the Pueblos' "scalp dance," held to celebrate victory in battle over their Plains Indian enemies, and objected to the attention paid to the gory trophies and to the glorification of the warrior who took the scalp—practices that he said "are tainted by the idea of vengeance." He credited the friars with trying to stop the scalp dance but added that "they have only received rebuffs, and so the fathers are unable to abolish this custom and many others." In response to this type of resistance, the New Mexican missionaries rationalized that the Pueblo Indians remained neophytes and deserved special tolerance. Domínguez noted, "Under such pretexts they will always be neophytes and minors with the result that our Holy Faith will not take root and their malice will increase."¹³

The Franciscans in New Mexico faced a sophisticated system of cultural resistance among the Pueblos that allowed them to absorb foreign elements and yet not integrate them into the Indian worldview. According to anthropologists, Pueblo societies "compartmentalized" non-Pueblo elements, such as the body of Catholic teachings, and in this manner prevented the teachings from influencing traditional Indian patterns of belief.¹⁴

The Pueblo adaptation to Spanish political control also illustrates the process of compartmentalization. A royal decree of 1620 called for the establishment of Spanish secular officials in each Indian community, chosen within the pueblo without any outside supervision. The secular administration comprised a governor, *alcaldes* to assist him in governing within the pueblo, *fiscales* responsible for the affairs of the community lands and irrigation ditches, and *sacristanes* who staffed and maintained the mission church.¹⁵ The Spanish Crown assumed that secular government would further the process of civilizing and Christianizing the Indians.

In New Mexico, before the revolt the Pueblos elected these officials under the close supervision of the resident friar, but afterward the Franciscans had no power to affect Native elections. Religious officials inside the pueblos appointed and controlled secular officials and used them in an executive capacity to deal with people or problems outside the Pueblo social and cultural system. In the Tewa pueblos, each of the two internal ceremonial organizations (moieties) had a full complement of secular officials, from governor to deputy *fiscales*, appointed by some combination of *cacique*, war captain, and other religious clan or kiva leaders. The *cacique* generally appointed officers to the secular positions in the Keresan pueblos.¹⁶

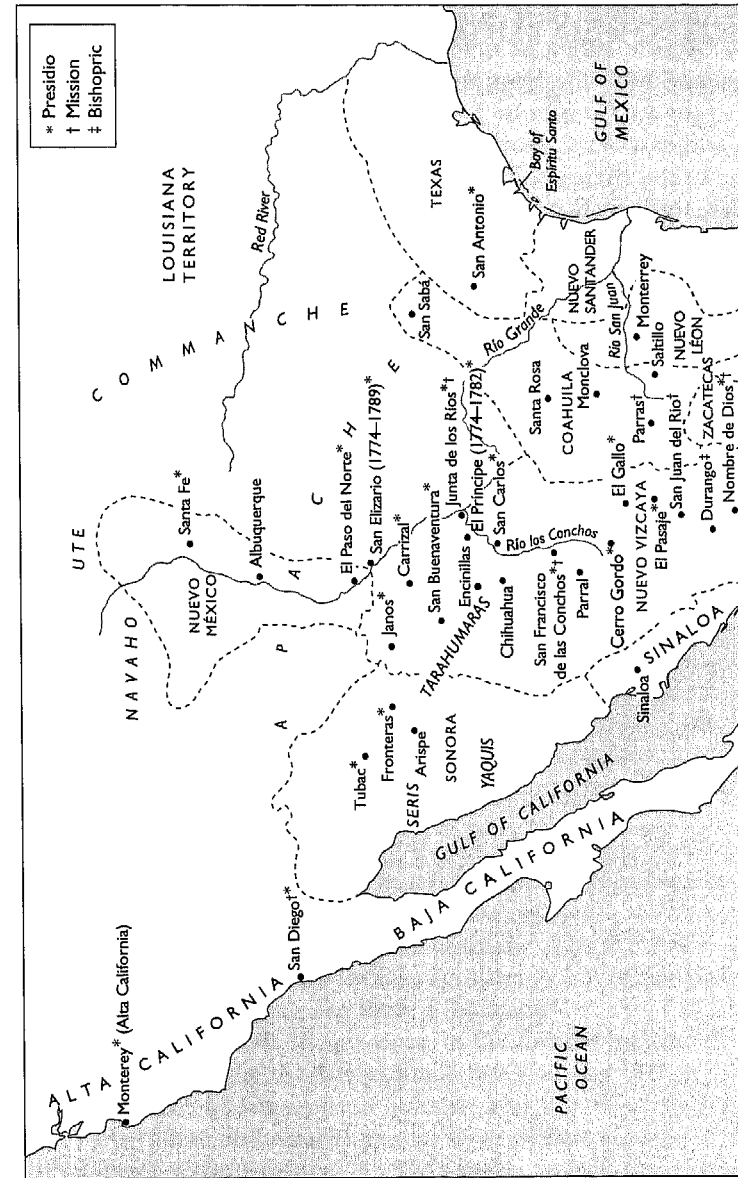
At Taos Pueblo, the traditional war leader handled part of the outside business. A council of leaders, made up of previous holders of the important Native religious and secular offices, advised the *cacique*, rather than the person holding the position of governor, which the Spanish had imposed on the

pueblo. The secular officials made no fundamental policy decision on any issue, as the council resolved and directed matters of importance from behind the scenes. Nor did the cacique take active control of the council; he simply represented the stable repository of power.¹⁷ In practice, the secular government imposed by the Spanish ensured that no person directly involved in the important social and religious affairs of Pueblo life became accountable to any outside authority.

NONSEDENTARY INDIAN GROUPS

A complicated series of historical factors acted upon the ethnic geography of New Mexico by the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁸ The various groups that made up the Apache peoples surrounded the province (see Map 2). The Spanish reconquest of the Pueblo Indians had left New Mexico largely at peace with its nomadic Indian neighbors. Attacks from the south, coupled with drought during the 1660s, forced the abandonment in the 1670s of the Tompiro pueblos, located between Socorro and the later Spanish town of Albuquerque. The Gila (Gileño) Apache established themselves southwest of the Río Grande and the Navajo to the northwest, all with links to a number of groups of Apache who lived in a large area extending from the Southern Plains in what is now the United States to the northern portions of Sonora and Nueva Vizcaya. Close cooperation and coordination between the Apache groups and the Pueblo Indians made possible the great Pueblo Revolt of 1680, which drove the Spanish soldiers, missionaries, and settlers, and the more hispanicized Piro Indians, completely out of the province. Although such alliances rarely proved permanent, a group of Tano and Tewa Indians stayed with the Hopi pueblos. The Tewa-Hopi returned with Fray Miguel de Menchero in 1744 to repopulate Sandía and other pueblos in the Río Grande Valley. The Tano remained with the Hopi, having founded the present-day First Mesa village of Hano. By the early eighteenth century only the Faraone Apache, based in the central portion of the province, to the east of the Sangre de Cristo mountains, remained hostile to the Spanish.

New Mexican officials described Comanche trade visits to the Río Grande villages beginning in 1705, intermixed with reports of their attacks against the eastern Apache and also of the occasional raids carried out on provincial settlements. During the 1720s the Comanche and their Ute allies destroyed the Faraone and Carlana Apache groups and pushed their remnants south and west. The Jicarilla Apache—once trade partners with the northern pueblos and always a threat as raiders from the Southern Plains and Texas Panhandle—settled in the 1740s in the mountains between the Taos and Pecos pueblos. Constant Comanche and Ute attacks reduced them to a fraction of their former strength. The Cuartelejo Apache endured on the Plains longer, but by 1752 they had settled near Pecos, allied with the pueblo



Map 2. The Provincias Internas, circa 1785. Source: Adapted from Marc Simmons, *Spanish Government in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1968), xvi.

against the Comanche.¹⁹ The Navajo, an Apache group distinguished by the 1720s in part because they adopted farming, weaving, and sheep raising, began to fight with the Ute over territory. During the 1750s the Ute attacks forced the Navajo from their strongholds near the Río San Juan, northwest of the Río Grande Valley, to new lands in Canyon de Chelly, the Chuska Mountains, and near the Hopi pueblos as far east as Cebolleta Mountain.

By the 1740s the Comanche had begun raiding New Mexico from *rancherías* north and east of the province. The Comanche had become more dangerous due to the firearms, iron axes, and arrowheads they obtained from the French in trade for Spanish horses. During the next decade the Ute broke with the Comanche, forming an alliance with the Jicarilla Apache.²⁰ Over the next forty years, the Comanche became a threat to the livelihood of every group in the region—Apache, Ute, Navajo, Pueblo, and Spanish settler alike.

European contact with Native Americans brought great changes to the location and livelihood of tribal groups in North America. Complex forces exerted on a huge area—from the French and Anglo-American Old Northwest (the Great Lakes), across the Great Plains, to the Rocky Mountains and the Spanish Southwest—brought about the elaboration of Indian cultures on the High Plains beginning in the eighteenth century. As chapter 1 shows, the historical effect of these cultural changes also altered interethnic social and economic relations within New Mexico.

From Settler to Citizen

*New Mexican Economic Development and
the Creation of Vecino Society, 1750–1820*

Ross Frank

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley Los Angeles London