MEXICAN NEW MEXICO

1837-1846

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PREFACE

The following pages supply a new appraisal of the last years of Mexican New Mexico. Mexican sources during this period show that problems of foreign encroachment, Indian affairs, and financial instability caused the New Mexican government to stagnate in its responsibilities both to its inhabitants and to the central government in Mexico City. Governors Manuel Armijo and Mariano Martínez were not bumbling despots but men caught between the ambitions of the United States, the Republic of Texas, Mexico, and numerous hostile Indians while simultaneously serving the people of New Mexico. These governors managed to save the department of New Mexico for Mexico for nine years despite these conflicting powers. It is for this accomplishment that Armijo and Martínez should be remembered.

The major sources used in writing this paper consisted of microfilm copies of the governor's papers, legislative reports, judicial cases, and military reports from the New Mexico State Archives and Records Center. These reports were in manuscript form except some proclamations issued by authorities in Mexico City. Educated officials such as Governor Martínez and Mexican officials used many archaic writing forms. They combined words, used many abbreviations, and employed a double "r" for an initial "r." In addition, they interchanged "b" and "v," "i" and "y," and "s" and "c" before consonants. Lesser officials, who could barely write, would scribble their messages in order to hide their ignorance of writing techniques. Because of these factors many

of the translations were difficult. Nonetheless, the translations that appear on the following pages are mine, and I assume full responsibility for their content.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to my major thesis advisor, Dr. Odie B. Faulk, who directed my attention to these reels of microfilm and their wealth of information. His assistance in organizing a plan of study, encouraging my work with Mexican sources, and reading this thesis was invaluable. Further gratitude is owed to Dr. Michael Smith and Jack Obregón who gave much assistance in translating the more difficult passages of these documents. A special note of thanks goes to the Oklahoma State University Library Staff, especially Vicki Withers, who located and obtained many important sources for this study. Finally, I wish to acknowledge the many sacrifices that my wife, Vicky, had to endure while this thesis was being written.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

From 1837 to 1846 New Mexican officials were given the impossible task of keeping order in an area which was out of touch with Mexico, rampaged by Indians, and under constant threat of foreign invasion. National policies were not designed for frontier situations such as New Mexico; the very real fear of Indian attacks and depredations to New Mexicans was but a statistic to officials in Mexico City. Real and imagined threats by the Texans and Americans were largely ignored by the federal government until the situation was out of hand. In addition to these problems, the chronic shortage of money forced the New Mexican government to pursue a policy of hopeful waiting in which funds received through taxation of goods entering New Mexico by Santa Fe traders provided the mainstay of departmental finance. The combination of these conditions forecasted the ruin of the department no matter how effective and forceful New Mexican officials were. Try as they might, the Indians were unbeatable, the Americans unstoppable, and the treasury unfillable.

In 1837 conditions were ripe for revoltuion in New Mexico. The people were poor, Indians harassed the countryside, and foreign intervention was always imminent. To make matters worse, the newly organized central government in Mexico had radically altered the governmental structure of the nation with a new constitution. While politicians in

Mexico grappled with the organization of a new government, New Mexicans generally looked after their own affairs as they always had done in the past. Local government was controlled by the ricos from Rio Abajo, and gubernatorial appointments were usually given to the Bacas, Chávezes, and Armijos. Although the people had always been poor, there was a traditional acknowledgement of leadership to these ricos who at least were products of New Mexican environment.[1]

These conditions were changed with the Constitution of 1836. This centralist constitution provided that Mexico should be divided into departments, governors be appointed by the president, and departmental councils be organized. Further, a direct tax was enacted to support the departments and their many responsibilities. Hereafter, each department would be expected to pay the salaries of all its governmental officials and military officers and soldiers, expenses incurred in the defense of its borders, and civil projects for the people. The first governor of New Mexico under this system was Colonel Albino Pérez, an army officer. Unfortunately, he was not a resident of the territory.

Pérez came to New Mexico with high hopes. In many instances he attempted to improve conditions within the department. His decrees for establishment of a public school system exemplify this desire to help New Mexicans. However well intentioned were his policies, he failed to recognize that he was dealing with a two-class society: the many ignorant poor, and the few politically dominant ricos. In pursuing his policies of direct taxation and independent government,

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[1] L. Bradford Prince, Historical Sketches of New Mexico (New York: Leggat Brothers, 1883), p. 285.

Pérez alienated both sections of society.[2]

In 1836 charges were made against certain disbursing officials in New Mexico for alleged embezzlement. The men were found guilty but before sentence could be passed, Governor Pérez removed the men from court and eventually allowed them to go free. While these officials were being tried, Manuel Armijo discharged the duties of these officials. After the trial, Pérez restored the original officials to their posts causing Armijo to lose his position. Not only angering an influential rico, Pérez also enraged the lower class. These people were well aware of the cupidity and corruption in parts of their government and did not need an official investigation to prove it. But to see an official convicted of embezzlement and then set free only increased their scorn for the new administration.[3]

Discontent was further aggravated when a decree from the Mexican government, issued April 17, 1837, became known. Under this decree the governor of each department was charged with collecting taxes for both the national and departmental treasuries. Pérez was ordered to witness the examination of all drafts and monthly cash statements and to appoint inspectors to insure efficiency and honesty.[4] Before long, rumors circulated through the department saying that a husband would be compelled to pay a tax for the privilege of sleeping with his own

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[2]Lansing B. Bloom, "New Mexico Under Mexican Administration," Old Santa Fe, Vol. II (July, 1914), 4.

[3]W. W. H. Davis, El Gringo (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1857), p. 86.

[4]Decree of April 17, 1837, in Ralph Emerson Twitchell, Leading Facts of New Mexican History, Vol. II (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1912), pp. 56-7.

wife. False reports such as this were believed by the people, who were too ignorant to inquire into the truth of the matter.[5]

The entire affair came to a head in August when an alcalde at Taos was imprisoned by Ramón Abreu, prefect and close associate of Pérez. The Indians in the Northern districts became a mob and in short order effected the release of the alcalde. Shortly thereafter, the mob obtained arms and received support from other Mexicans, gathering at Santa Cruz, some twenty-five miles north of Santa Fe. On the third of August, a plan of government and declaration of principles was written.

> Long live God and the nation and the faith of Jesus Christ, for the following principles which we defend:
> 1. To be with God and nation and the faith of Jesus Christ.
> 2. To defend our country until we spill every drop of blood to obtain the desired victory.
> 3. Not to accept the departmental plan.
> 4. Not to accept any tax.
> 5. Not to accept the disorder by those who are attempting to effect it.[6]

While some historians have accused Manuel Armijo of organizing this revolution, it appears rather that the Indian pueblos of Northern New Mexico were the instigators. Pueblos such as San Juan took an active part in the revolt, while only the pueblo of Taos remained uninvolved.[7] Josiah Gregg, an American Trader in Santa Fe at the time of the revolution, wrote that the pueblos had always been ripe for insurrec-

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[5]Davis, El Gringo, p. 87.

[6]Revolutionary Plan of August 3, 1837, Santa Cruz, Mexican Archives of New Mexico, 1821-1846; (Santa Fe: New Mexico State Library and Archives. Available on microfilm). Hereafter cited as MANM.

[7]Myra Ellen Jenkins, "Taos Pueblo and Its Neighbors," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XLI (April, 1966), 107.

tion.[8] Nonetheless, the revolutionaries had become a formidable army and Governor Pérez was forced to disband it.

Pérez was able to assemble only one hundred and fifty men, mostly Indian auxiliaries. At La Cañada his forces were attacked by the revolutionaries resulting in the capture of twenty-five governmental troops, the death of six more, and the escape of Pérez to Santa Fe. The prisoners were tied and left in the jail at Santa Cruz while the revolutionaries followed the governor to the capital.[9] Pérez was captured the next day and he, along with eleven other officials, was brutally mutilated before being executed.

On the ninth, the insurgents, some two thousand strong, made camp around the capital. Traders such as Gregg were uneasy lest the rabble plunder the city and take vengeance against foreign merchants. But to the surprise of the Americans and other traders, the mob remained outside the city and dispersed after electing José Gonzales of Taos as governor, who as Gregg wrote, was a good buffalo hunter but a very ignorant man. The revolutionaries denied their allegiance to Mexico, and even proposed sending a message to Texas asking for protection. At this point, Manuel Armijo apparently began to form a counter-revolution to preserve the department for the Mexican government.[10]

The early background of Manuel Armijo is clouded in mystery. Some say he was raised of a good family, but as the legend goes, was

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[8]Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Praires (Dallas: Southwest Press, 1933), p. 81.

[9]Investigation of the Conduct of Sargeant Donaciano Vigil During the Revolt of August, 1837, Santa Fe, January 2, 1838, MANM.

[10]Gregg, Commerce, pp. 81-5.

left without an inheritance because his father had hidden the family treasure. Because Armijo was forced to begin life in very moderate circumstances, he most often was regarded as a self-made man who taught himself to read and write and worked up to positions in government because of perserverence.[11] Others claim that Armijo married well by taking a Chávez as a bride and thus, never felt the need for money. With this financial backing, Armijo entered the prosperous Santa Fe trade and lived in the style of a rico in Río Abajo.[12] Armijo served one term as governor from 1827-1829, while New Mexico had territorial status, along with other lesser positions. By September, 1837, whether for reasons of patriotism or personal gain, he began organizing against the government of José Gonzales.

After the victory of the revolutionaries, the leaders summoned a Junta Popular (people's assembly) for August 27, 1837. Invitations were sent to all classes of New Mexicans with the hope of organizing a new government on a popular base. Gonzales wanted to align himself with the ricos, for included on the list were Manuel Armijo, Padre José Antonio Martínez, and Juan Esquibel. These three men were named as a commission to give assurances of the loyalty of the new government to officials in Mexico. The commission never presented the rebel case to the Mexican government because Armijo took matters into his own hands.[13]

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[11]William A. Keleher, Turmoil in New Mexico (Santa Fe: The Rydal Press, 1964), p. 115.

[12]Erna Fergusson, New Mexico: A Pageant of Three Peoples, 2nd ed.; (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 250.

[13]Phillip Reno, "Rebellion in New Mexico--1837," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XL (July, 1965), 205.

Events in Santa Fe had been moving rapidly. On September 6, José Caballero was recognized as commandant principal by the remaining officers that had previously served under Pérez. These men were loyal to the centralist government in Mexico and wished to end the suffering throughout the department.[14] Two days later at Tomé, Armijo issued a proclamation declaring that the measures taken by the revolutionaries threatened to destroy peace and property. Therefore Armijo said he would command the army until the supreme government in Mexico decided on the proper action to be taken. The next day, September 9, Caballero offered the services of the militia in order to restore peace. By the fourteenth, Armijo was accepted by the military as "chief of the liberating army"; all pledged allegiance to the centralist government.[15]

Gonzáles was left with little choice but retreat. This genízaro,[16] or Mexican-Indian halfbreed, fled Santa Fe for the northern pueblos early that September. Upon entering Santa Fe, Armijo wrote a letter to the Mexican authorities containing a full account of affairs in New Mexico and stressing the importance of his own accomplishments in restoring the department to Mexican authority. On October 13, the minister of war advised Armijo that he had received the appointment of governor of New Mexico by order of the president.[17] Recognized

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[14]Recognition of José Caballero etc., Santa Fe, September 6, 1837, MANM.

[15]Proclamation by Jose Caballero et al., Santa Fe, September 14, 1837, MANM.

[16]Angélico Chávez, "Jose Gonzales, Genízaro Governor," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXX (July, 1955), 190-4.

[17]Minister of war to Armijo, Mexico, October 13, 1837, MANM.

only in Río Abajo as governor, Armijo extended his authority to Río Arriba by appointing local officials. By December, his control was assured except for remnants of the revolutionists under Gonzales in the north.[18]

While Armijo was unifying his control over local officials, the Mexican government took steps to aid Armijo and crush the rebellion by sending four hundred additional troops from Chihuahua. These soldiers were in Santa Fe by January as evidenced by a proclamation issued by Armijo warning the citizens not to increase prices of goods to be sold to the troops or to buy arms and ammunition from them.[19] With these troops Armijo led his own auxiliaries to La Cañada where he defeated the rebels and took Gonzales prisoner. The rebel leader, when brought before Armijo, boldly asked for guarantees against implementation of the tax. If such assurances were given, Gonzales said, peace again would be restored in the pueblos. Armijo answered by ordering Padre José Antonio Martínez to provide confession for Gonzales in order that he could be shot.[20]

Armijo's methods for gaining control of the department at times were harsh, but a weak man would not have been able to unify the country. New Mexico was in the throes of civil war and revolution; had such a strongman not appeared, New Mexico might well have been lost to the Mexican government. Once in office, Armijo returned to proper legal methods in operating the department. Estates of former

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[18]Reno, "Rebellion in New Mexico--1837," 209.

[19]Proclamation of Armijo, Santa Fe, January 12, 1838, MANM.

[20]Prince, Historical Sketches, p. 289.

governmental officials were inventoried, with a description made of goods along with an evaluation of these goods. Evidence of confiscation by Armijo is not supported by any documents. Rather the opposite, as in the auctioning of the estate of Albino Pérez to meet treasury expenses, was the rule.[21]

Armijo's reward for restoring peace to the Department of New Mexico was his appointment as its governor. Although the office was considered a prize by most, it became a burden for Armijo, and eventually caused his resignation in 1844. As head of the Department of New Mexico, Armijo faced the same problems that plagued Pérez. He broadly interpreted his powers as governor, however, and modified the unsuitable policies of the Mexican government; only thus could he survive as governor. He became more than a governor, and because of his different roles as trader, judge, lawmaker, and soldier, he was able to remain in charge of the department. People who were useful to Armijo in fulfilling one or more of his roles were rewarded and promoted; those who stood in his path were dealth with by arbitrary justice. Only through the efforts of Manuel Armijo, and for a time Mariano Martínez, did New Mexico enjoy some degree of stability. The remainder of Mexico suffered recurring revolutions. That Armijo remained governor for eight years is a testament to his pragmatic approach towards government.

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[21]Proceedings of the Settlement of the Estate of Albino Perez, Santa Fe, March 5, 1838, MANM.

CHAPTER II

NEW MEXICAN LIFE

Maintaining a stable government in New Mexico was a chore for the departmental governors owing to the erratic nature of the federal government in Mexico. Mexicans regarded Antonio López de Santa Anna with suspicion and distrust after his Texas fiasco in 1836. The centralist government expressed this suspicion in the Constitution of 1836 by creating an inner clique of five members called the Poder Conservador, which was designed to dominate congress and newly elected President Anastasio Bustamente. In 1838 Santa Anna regained prominence during the French "Pastry War," and in 1841 lead a coup which forced the resignation of Bustamente. Santa Anna instituted rule by decree, and maintained his position until a similar coup led by Mariano Parades in late 1844 replaced him with José Joaquín Herrera as chief executive. These struggles between conservatives and liberals, federalists and centralists, only increased dissention in New Mexico.

Because the Mexican government was usually in turmoil, New Mexicans largely were forgotten and their problems ignored. The citizens were well aware of conditions in Mexico and looked to their own officials for leadership. Donaciano Vigil, a leading citizen of Santa Fe and member of the militia, expressed these views. Expecting protection from the supreme government was a vain hope, especially due to the different factions that were constantly being formed, usually

for personal gains and not patriotic aspirations. "Therefore," he wrote, "I believe that for our interests and security we should not rely upon more protection and resources than what New Mexico itself can furnish."[1] It was this independent attitude of New Mexicans that would dominate governmental affairs.

Before the adoption of the centralist constitution, the province of New Mexico was controlled by territorial government. Executive leadership was in the hands of the Jefe Político, or political chief, and legislative matters were handled by the Diputación Provincial, or provincial assembly. After 1837 New Mexico received departmental status with a governor and departmental junta. Executive powers of the governor immediately dominated the legislative junta, because the junta met only twice during the governorship of Armijo. With the arrival of Mariano Martínez as governor in 1844, the legislature became more prominent in assisting the governor in departmental matters.[2]

In addition, lesser officials such as alcaldes, prefectos, and jueces formed the link between law and enforcement. The alcalde, or mayor, was responsible not only for political affairs in his district, but also was charged with defending it against Indians and foreigners. In many instances it appears that the alcaldes also had judicial powers. In everyday life the alcalde would hold court, and upon hearing evidence on the matter under consideration would give an immediate verbal decision. His judgment was law, and appeals of the

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[1]Speech of Donaciano Vigil to Departmental Assembly, Santa Fe, May 16, 1846, William G. Ritch Collection, Microfilm Copy (Pasadena: Huntington Library).

[2]Gregg, Commerce, p. 147.

decision would have to be taken to Chihuahua or Durango. The prefecto was a combined county commissioner and probate judge. His duties, and those of other local officials such as the juez, mixed together to such an extent as to make any clear definition of powers impossible.[3]

While political affairs were controlled by the governor, military affairs were under the jurisdiction of the commandant general. Although created as separate offices, these posts ultimately were discharged by the same person. When Armijo became governor in 1837, military jurisdiction over his department was exercised by the commandant general in Chihuahua. By a decree of April 22, 1839, the minister of war changed this procedure by establishing a commandancy generalship in New Mexico which no longer would be subject to control by Chihuahua. Henceforth, reports would be sent directly to the minister of war.[4] Armijo was immediately appointed commandant general. He received the position because of his distinct and meritous service to the Mexican government. He was congratulated for his attempts to preserve peace in New Mexico, and was charged with the duty of defending the rights of all Mexicans.[5]

Thus, after June 1839, Armijo had both political and military authority in New Mexico. By the end of 1843 Armijo had been forced by illness--he said--to resign the governorship. After the second Texan invasion in 1843 his powers as commandant general also were

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[3]Twitchell, Leading Facts, Vol. II, pp. 9-15.

[4]Decree of minister of war, Mexico, April 22, 1839, MANM.

[5]Appointment of Armijo as commandant general, Mexico, June 24, 1839, MANM.

removed in order that Mariano Martínez of Chihuahua could reorganize the military in New Mexico. While governor and commandant general, Armijo channelled departmental matters through the minister of war with little reverence to form or ceremony. Administrative details were often delayed or neglected because he had little money with which to convene the assembly regularly. Reports concerning administrative actions were casually forwarded to the central government, if they were sent at all.[6]

A number of reasons combined to cause Armijo's resignation as governor in 1843. Mexican authorities became concerned that Armijo was losing control of his department after the Texan forces, commanded by Jacob Snively, appeared on the Santa Fe Trail and successfully defeated the Mexicans at Mora. Armijo was expected to capture the invaders as he had done in 1841; this time, Armijo lost face by allowing the American Dragoons to save the New Mexicans by disarming the Texans. To the central government this meant that Armijo had lost control of the frontier and the defense of the department. In addition, reports had been received by the Mexican government that there was widespread corruption in the customs houses, allowing the entry of contraband goods into the nation. To regain control of the situation, Santa Anna closed the northern ports to foreign commerce and allowed the appointment of Mariano Martínez as governor and commandant general to become effective. With the arrival of Martínez in New Mexico, the department experienced a true renaissance in governmental administration.

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[6]Bloom, "New Mexico Under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 130-2.

Mariano Martínez first was appointed as commandant general in October 1843, and then in April 1844 became governor. During the interim of four months between Armijo's resignation in January, 1844, and Martínez' appointment, affairs of state were conducted by Mariano Chávez. Once in office, Martínez took immediate steps to improve conditions in the department, one of which was the improvement of internal defenses and the limitation of Indian depredations; this called for a reorganization of the department into sections of defense.

In this reorganization of the department, three districts were created. The central district would have its capital in Santa Fe and would be composed of three sub divisions. The district of the north included Río Arriba and Taos, although the capital would be at Los Luceros. The southwest district contained two further districts with the capital at Valencia.[7] Next, Martínez realigned the judicial districts to correspond with the new plan. In explaining this reorganization, the governor pointed out that no careful dispension of justice could be made in the department under previously prevailing conditions. Furthermore, some jurisdictions had areas of nine square leagues while others had less than two. In accomplishing this reorganization, not only was a better judicial system provided but also new appointees owed their allegiance to Martínez.[8]

In attempting to revamp New Mexico, Martinez found that little could be accomplished without the support of the populace. He re-

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[7]Martínez to the inhabitants of New Mexico, Santa Fe, June 17, 1844, William G. Ritch Collection. Translation in Twitchell, Leading Facts, Vol. II, p. 15n.

[8]Martínez to President of Departmental Assembly, Santa Fe, June 29, 1844, MANM.

sorted to many announcements and encouraging promises to the people, by which, he hoped, morale would improve:

> New Mexicans: In order to obtain objects so important, I count on the cooperation of your respected governor, on assistance from the Supreme Government, which neither distance nor obstacles of any form are insurmountable when concerned with our well-being. But principally, I rely on your patriotism, virtues, and courage, as exemplified at Antón Chico and always remaining true to to these ideals. Always you will be able to rely on your friend and fellow citizen, Mariano Martínez.[9]

Although it is doubtful that New Mexicans were moved by his phrases about loyalty and responsibility to the federal government, some probably were impressed with the governor's attempts to beautify Santa Fe.

Martínez' first goal was to improve the plaza where no trees or vegetation existed. Trees were brought to Santa Fe from the mountains, planted around the plaza in symmetrical arrangement, and shortly thereafter were irrigated. In addition, the first park was created on the northwest side of the city. After irrigating the area, flowers and trees grew and made a striking scene. Demetrio Pérez, son of Governor Albino Pérez, wrote that none of the citizens could remember all that Governor Martínez had done for them. Funds for many projects came out of Martínez' personal account, while the reforms made in civil and military administration were to the benefit of all New Mexicans.[10]

Unfortunately for New Mexicans, the administration of Martínez proved to be a short one. The governor became involved in the coup of

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[9]Commandant general of New Mexico to its Inhabitants, Santa Fe, December, 1843, MANM.

[10]Demetrio Pérez, "In Santa Fe During the Mexican Regime," ed. by L. Bradford Prince, New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. II (January, 1927), 92.

1844 to displace Santa Anna. In a letter to Armijo, Martínez sought a declaration from the ex-governor as to his loyalties. The astute Armijo refused to sign any declaration of loyalty and scolded Martínez by writing that such gestures on the part of New Mexicans could result in bloodshed throughout the department and might make the department appear in a bad light.[11] Once the new government of Herrera was established, Martínez was caught in the embarrassing position of supporting the wrong revolutionary. By February, Martínez had been removed as commandant general. His duties were assumed by Armijo on May 1, 1845.[12] From January through May, 1845, New Mexico was virtually adrift politically. Martínez returned to Chihuahua, and the departmental assembly elected Mariano Chávez as governor--but he died May 16. His replacement was Jose Chávez, who was approved by President Herrera in the summer.[13]

Meanwhile, Commandant General Armijo attempted to restore his good name by writing certain Mexican officials. Armijo explained that he had been unjustly disgraced by his previous removal as commandant general in 1843; and he offered his services as an experienced leader to Mexico and the president. After the New Mexican Departmental Assembly nominated Armijo for the position of governor, reports from Mexican officials announced that Armijo once again was governor. Thus from November 16, 1845, until the American capture of Santa Fe in August of 1846, Armijo discharged the duties of both governor and commandant

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[11]Martínez to Armijo, Santa Fe, January 17, 1845, MANM.

[12]Bloom, "New Mexico Under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 234n.

[13]Circular of minister of Foreign Affairs, Mexico, August 25, 1845, MANM.

general.[14] During Armijo's final term he governed New Mexico even more independently than in previous years owing to the worsened circumstances in the department because of the Indians and the growing threat of an American invasion.

Both governors mainly used the army to control affairs in the department. In reality, the military forces in New Mexico comprised two different units, the regular army and the rurales, or militia. For the most part, the troops were used to ward off Indian attacks and to keep communication open with the interior provinces. The department was expected to pay and care for these troops, an impossible task owing to the scarcity of revenue. Nor were the citizens in New Mexico impressed with the few troops that did defend the province. The supreme government, constantly engaged and occupied with more general interests, was not able to give New Mexicans the protection and attention that they required. Donaciano Vigil wrote that the few troops in the department were employed in the capital, which was the theater of party strife, and were used for sustaining the authorities and preserving order among the inhabitants. Because of their small number, their destitute condition, and their want of nearly every necessity, they could defend only the point at which they were stationed. In the opinion of Vigil, New Mexico alone needed thousands of well-disciplined and equipped troops to protect its frontiers.[15]

Armijo's military policies were shaped by conditions such as those outlined by Vigil. Because of the departmental system inaugurated in

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[14]Armijo to minister of treasury, Santa Fe, November 16, 1845, MANM.

[15]Vigil, May 16, 1846, Ritch Collection.

1837, the national government continued to place increasing responsibility for the military defense of New Mexico on Armijo. After 1839, customs collections were unreliable because of their seasonal nature; these were collected only in the summer and fall. With no money for supplies and salaries during the winter and spring, it was difficult to keep an effective fighting force in the department. Other problems, such as officers living in Chihuahua while commanding troops in New Mexico, habitual sickness, and an advanced average age of the troops also plagued the commandant general.[16]

By 1841, conditions had degenerated just as the likelihood of a Texan invasion increased. Armijo was forced to rely on volunteer service of New Mexican residents, of whom he believed some 1,500 would serve without pay if help did not arrive.[17] The makeshift remedies that the national government provided did little to aid the situation; plans were made to have the armies from neighboring departments give assistance, but supplies for New Mexico never arrived. By October, 1841, after the Texan invasion had been stopped and while Armijo enjoyed great popularity, he threatened to resign if the department was not supported with supplies and troops.[18]

Perhaps because of Armijo's incessent pleas for aid, Santa Anna in 1842 ordered a complete reorganization of the volunteer militia. Companies of calvary from outlying _haciendas_ and all companies of _rurales_ from the major villages were to be established and placed

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[16]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, May 29, 1839, MANM.

[17]Ibid., March 17 and May 7, 1841.

[18]Ibid., October 22, 1841.

under the direct command and inspection of the governor. However, this had little direct effect on New Mexico because Armijo already controlled these companies by virtue of his combined office of governor and commandant general. The crux of the problem, finances and supplies, was handled most effectively by the government. Responsibility for arms, ammunitions, and supplies for the volunteers would be placed on the governor, who was to use departmental funds for such expenses. Owners of haciendas would also be expected to assume the cost of maintaining the calvalry as well as designating officers.[19]

In another decree designed to improve the military, the national government sought to make army careers more attractive. Officers wishing to advance in grade could attend military academies in Chihuahua. Each cadet would receive two years' instruction under approved military masters. One year would be given to academic training and drilling on foot, and another would emphasize calvalry tactics and techniques of administration. Only two recruits could be sent by each department, but all expenses were to be borne by the national government.[20]

President Santa Anna also authorized special considerations and honors for valiant military service. For Armijo's triumph over the Texans in 1841, he was awarded the Cross of Honor. Governors of the individual departments were authorized to give distinctive emblems to troops who were deserving of such honor. Finally, Santa Anna emphasized that military efficiency and good morale required that all salaries be paid as they came due. For New Mexico this was virtually

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[19]Decree of Santa Anna, Mexico, January 18, 1842, MANM.

[20]General treasurer of the Nation to treasurer of New Mexico, Mexico, July 6, 1842, MANM.

impossible, as Armijo so noted on the decree.[21]

When Martínez assumed control of the department in 1843, he inherited the same problems that had plagued Armijo. The regular troops numbered only two hundred in Santa Fe and approximately six hundred in the entire department. However, many of these numbers included troops who were on temporary leave either from Chihuahua or Vera Cruz. According to documents for the year 1844, most of the enlistees were illiterate men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. It was with these forces that Governor Martínez was expected to stop foreign invasion, fight hostile Indians, and maintain law and order in the department.[22]

Life in the army was somewhat monotonous. Discipline was usually maintained, for the conflicts that occasionally occurred were more the result of personal disagreement than of insubordination. For example, Private Aldava was standing guard with his dog when Lieutenant Manuel Flores passed him with his own dog; the animals started to fight, whereupon the lieutenant drew his sword and killed Aldava's dog. Aldava then threatened Flores with his pistol but did not fire. Charges of insubordination were pressed against the private, but Commandant General Martínez freed Aldava. Few cases of insubordination, of any type, come to light during this period.[23]

Financing the department became almost impossible for Martínez

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[21]General treasurer of the Nation to Armijo, Mexico, October 12, 1842, MANM.

[22]Military and Company Records for 1844, MANM.

[23]Court martial of Encarnación Aldava, Santa Fe, July 11, 1844, MANM.

by March, 1844, because it had been cut off from its usual source of revenue. Prior to September, 1843, departments were expected to pay their individual expenses and maintenance from the customs revenues and the extraordinary taxes laid on embargoes and manufacturing. Yet the national government closed New Mexico's ports of entry to all trade from September 1843 to March 31, 1844. The decree reopening the customs houses did not reach Santa Fe until July 1, 1844, however, and thereby increased the financial crisis.

Although few troops were stationed in New Mexico, a military organization did exist and did cost money to support. The average monthly expense for maintaining troops in New Mexico was almost ten thousand pesos (see Table I). As H. H. Bancroft noted, "the truth seems to be that here [New Mexico], as in California during the larger part of Mexican rule, the military organization hardly existed except on paper,"[24] but the expenses had to be paid. If they were not, morale reached extremely low levels. It appears that this level was reached by 1845 when citizens began reporting to Armijo that soldiers arbitrarily took animals and other supplies because none had been requisitioned for them.[25]

From the beginning of Armijo's term as governor in 1837, he was plagued by a shortage of funds to support his administration. Money never seemed to accumulate in adequate reserves, and the central government was unable to bolster Armijo's depleted treasury. Directives from the national government announced measures which were

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[24]Bancroft, History of New Mexico and Arizona (San Francisco: Ghe History Company, 1887), p. 313.

[25]Armijo to Sena, Santa Fe, October 13, 1845, MANM.

TABLE I

MONTHLY MILITARY EXPENSES IN NEW MEXICO[26]

Expenditure	Cost (Pesos)
Salary of the commandant general	314
Permanent artillery	502
Salary of secretary	56
Salary of doctor	17
Cavalry regiment no. 2	1,243
Cavalry regiment no. 3	363
Salary for active calvary in Albuquerque	40
Presidial Cavalry from Chihuahua	2,783
Permanent New Mexican companies of calvalry	3,654
Other official salaries	138
Total	9,110

intended both to provide funds for the nation and to encourage the departments to become more self-sufficient. In fulfillment of these ends, a decree of February 1, 1842, made the commandant general inspector of the departmental treasury, which in effect gave Armijo dual control over these finances.[27] Anti-Mexicans, such as Waddy Thompson (the American ambassador), failed to recognize this arrangement between national and departmental governments. He wrote that "General Armijo, the Governor of that Department, kept all the revenues himself and paid nothing to the government,"[28] apparently

[26]Report on expenses of permanent troops in New Mexico, Santa Fe, July 11, 1844, MANM.

[27]Decree of Santa Anna, Mexico, February 1, 1842, MANM.

[28]Waddy Thompson, Recollections of Mexico (New York and London: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), pp. 229-30.

unaware that this was the designated method for financing the department--especially as New Mexicans were exempt from many national taxes.

Because of a decree in 1838, New Mexicans enjoyed a period of grace until 1845. During this time they did not have to return any revenue to the central treasury. This exemption was intended to compensate New Mexicans for the sacrifices they made in financing campaigns against the Indians.[29] Additional provisions passed by the Mexican government also gave further privileges to New Mexicans. To reward them for defeating the Texans in 1841, the president ordered a monthly payment of five thousand pesos, from both the customs at Mazatlán and the tobacco taxes in Chihuahua, to the New Mexican government. Unfortunately for New Mexicans, these payments appear never to have been paid by the customs at Mazatlán, and only infrequently by the customs operating the tobacco monopoly in Chihuahua.[30] Another example of New Mexico's privilege was the measure relating to forced loans. In the instance of meeting Mexico's debt to the United States, the minister of the treasury assigned all departments a specific amount to be raised--except California, Yucatán, and New Mexico. These frontier departments were exempted from the burden.[31]

Because funds from Chihuahua and Mazatlán seldom were delivered, Armijo was forced more and more to rely on trade with the United States, although small amounts of revenue were collected by local

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[29]Decree establishing uniform rates in all departments, Mexico, July 11, 1843, MANM.

[30]Decree of President Santa Anna, Mexico, February 1, 1842, MANM.

[31]Decree to establish payment of debt to the United States, Mexico, April 20, 1843, MANM.

officials. Justices and alcaldes probably derived revenue from fines and the sale of public goods claimed from estates of deceased citizens. Money administered through the municipality of Santa Fe also appears to have originated from fines, and a few direct taxes on the casas de comercio, or dry goods stores. In most cases this scanty revenue was used for salaries, repair of public buildings, and in some instances, policing a pueblo. On the departmental level, funds were derived mainly from customs, special loans from the central government, forced loans from New Mexicans, and, rarely, direct taxes.[32]

The tax structure and collecting agencies in New Mexico came under revision in 1842, when new laws were passed. Rulings concerning excise taxes on internal and external commerce were strengthened when all matters of finance were brought under control of the commandant general. In New Mexico, Governor Armijo appointed his brother, Ambrosio, to the positions of inspector and secretary of the treasury. During the days of the second Texan invasion in 1843, Ambrosio was removed by the governor. In 1843, taxes were imposed on paper, sugar, liquor, and numerous luxury items. In addition, taxes on certain professions, such as carpenters and silversmiths, also were levied. Direct taxes such as these usually were not enforced in New Mexico, although Armijo did collect taxes from distilleries in 1845.[33]

The most drastic renovation came in July 1843 with a decree establishing uniform rates of taxes in the department. For the most part, this decree concerned the alcabala, or tax on goods traveling

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[32]Armijo to Departmental Treasurer, Santa Fe, January 23, 1841, MANM.

[33]Decree of Acting President Bravo, Mexico, April 5, 1843, MANM.

between departments. Many items under the heading of produce were allowed to pass duty free, while goods made of wood, rope, and bathtubs were taxed at 2.5 percent. Foodstuffs generally were categorized under a five-per-cent tax, except for liquor which were taxed at 12.5 percent. However fruitful these taxes might have been for the treasury in New Mexico, Armijo apparently still had a strong memory of the Revolution in 1837, which had originated from opposition to direct taxes; thus many of the taxes ordered into effect in 1843 were not collected.[34]

When conditions in the department reached the crisis stage, envoys were sent to Chihuahua to beg for the monthly five-thousand-peso allotment for New Mexico. After this failed, the last step taken was a forced loan. In January 1845, Governor Martínez was faced with such a situation and asked the departmental assembly for a loan of twelve thousand pesos. The assembly decided that the best recourse would be to make individual assessments on leading citizens to provide the funds.[35] In spite of the financial crisis, no one paid the assessments. The greatest shock to the governor came when Armijo, the commandant general, refused to pay his one thousand pesos.[36] When news of the forced loan reached Taos, Charles Bent wrote Manuel Alvarez that Martínez had lost face because of the episode. He added that New Mexicans would pay their assessments only if Armijo returned

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[34]Decree establishing uniform rates in all departments, Mexico, July 11, 1843, MANM.

[35]Decree of departmental assembly, Santa Fe, February 14, 1845, MANM.

[36]Martínez to Armijo, Santa Fe, March 11, 1845, MANM.

to office as governor, for the citizens had confidence in him.[37] And when Armijo did return to the office of governor, conditions eased because of the arrival of trade caravans.

While matters of finance and military defense had special concern for governmental officials, the majority of citizens in New Mexico were preoccupied with daily life. For these New Mexicans, farming, livestock, and irrigation were their main concerns. Because of the arid climate, water control had special meaning for farmers. The main source of this life-preserving liquid came from Río del Norte, or Río Grande, which was the artery of New Mexican life. The mother ditches from the river were under the supervision of the alcaldes, who were charged with their repair and maintenance. Only through this well-designed system of irrigation could crops be grown.[38]

In addition to caring for the mother ditch, other natural resources were the common responsibility of the people. One of these was the village well, where water would be used for cooking and drinking by all the inhabitants. Citizens were warned to guard these wells from bathers, or "other filthy practices which are harmful to their health." Those who ignored the law were to be fined four reales (half a peso). Community care of the roads was another responsibility of the people. Men were assigned by the alcaldes to do their share of work in maintaining these supply lines and could be fined for failure

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[37]Bent to Alvarez, Taos, March 30, 1845, "The Charles Bent Papers," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXX (October, 1955), 340.

[38]Gregg, Commerce, pp. 96-7.

to do so.[39]

The farms in New Mexico always were grouped together and never isolated because of the ever-present danger of Indian attack. Houses were built so that they resembled a small one-story fort with but few windows to the front. Larger houses, called haciendas, were built in a square with a large courtyard in the center. In the interior, stables were arranged to protect stock against Indians and thieves. These haciendas sat on huge tracts of land which were worked by poor Indians or Mexicans, who in reality were little more than feudal serfs. They received from the hacendado food, lodging, and clothing which they had to pay for when possible. Because they never were able to accumulate enough money to do this, the system resulted in debt peonage.[40]

The major crops produced in the department were corn and wheat, the former a staple in the daily meals which invariably included tortillas. Although the climate was suitable for cotton and tobacco, little was grown. According to Gregg, the governmental monopoly on tobacco, which made it illegal to transport the leaf through the republic under pain of confiscation, discouraged its growth. Some vineyards were productive in the valley of the Río del Norte, but orchards of apples, peaches, and apricots were of inferior quality and

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[39]Lynn I. Perrigo, "New Mexico in the Mexican Period, as Revealed in the Torres Documents," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXIX (January, 1954), 31-2.

[40]Ford Dixon, ed., "Cayton Erhard's Reminiscences of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition, 1841," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. LXVI (January, 1963), 453; A. Wislizenus, "Memoir of a Tour to Northern Mexico, United States Senate Documents 18, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 511, pp. 23-4.

eaten only as a last resort.[41]

Besides agriculture, New Mexicans paid much attention to stock-raising, especially of horses, mules, cattle, sheep, and goats. In 1846, however, Adolph Wislizenus wrote that little care was taken in maintaining a good breed, which resulted in small physical size of sheep but which increased the flocks to large proportions. Because of the large tracts of available grazing land, and the good climate, the flocks could be turned out for grazing the entire year.[42]

> But by far, the most important indigenous product of the soil of New Mexico is its pasturage. . . . They are remarkably destitute of the gay flowering plants for which the former [the United States] are so celebrated, being mostly clothed with different species of a highly nutritious grass called grama, which is of a very short and curly quality. . , being rarely nipt by the frost until the rains are over, it cures upon the ground and remains excellent hay.[43]

Although the prairie provided high quality pasturage for livestock, it simultaneously afforded little protection from wandering tribes of hostile Indians who reasoned that as the land belonged to them so must the sheep, and a never-ending battle over the question resulted.

Although New Mexico was always a frontier area, civilization continually made progress into its backward state. In the field of education, Armijo complained to the minister of interior affairs that New Mexico could not afford schools, which, as a consequence, caused citizens to be illiterate, thereby making it difficult to find qualified people to fill judicial vacancies. The cause for this unhappy state of affairs could not be placed altogether on the central

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[41]Gregg, Commerce, pp. 100-1.

[42]Wislizenus, "Memoir," p. 24.

[43]Gregg, Commerce, p. 103.

government, however.[44]

As early as April 1838, the minister of the interior provided for an inspection of all branches of public education in the republic, during which the inspectors would report all information directly to the minister for action. He added that the improvement of education was important in order to maintain the high level of public intelligence of the nation.[45] Positive steps toward accomplishing this goal were taken by President Santa Anna in 1842. He decreed that in order to remedy the poor state of public education, every departmental capital was to establish a primary school for each ten thousand inhabitants.[46] However, no mention was made of funds to support such a program, and apparently no schools were built in Santa Fe, however, the proprietary class continued to receive brief and rudimentary education through private schools run by Manuel Alvarez and Guadalupe Miranda.[47]

While Padre José Antonio Martínez of Taos usually is credited with introducing the first printing press to New Mexico, it appears rather that the Abreú brothers brought the first one in 1835. After their death at the hands of the revolutionaries in 1837, Martínez came into possession of the press, which he used rather infrequently for printing religious matters and occasionally political proclamations.

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[44]Armijo to minister of interior and foreign affairs, Santa Fe, April 27, 1841, MANM.

[45]Decree of minister of the interior and foreign affairs, Mexico, April 9, 1838.

[46]Decree of Santa Anna, Mexico, October 26, 1842, MANM.

[47]Bloom, "New Mexico Under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 135.

Not until 1844 was a newspaper titled La Verdad begun in the department. This paper was but another outgrowth of Governor Martínez' policy of starting a renaissance in New Mexico. The paper was to be printed each Thursday, (but most usually was not) and to be sold at one real. Unfortunately, only two copies of La Verdad survive.[48]

Within the social and religious realm, the Catholic Church was dominant, making it difficult to judge exactly where civil authority ended and church authority began. When assuming office, civil authorities were expected to instruct the people in the rudiments of the Catholic faith in their particular district, "guarding carefully likewise the greatest glory of God and punishing severely the public and scandalous sinners."[49] The civil official, usually the alcalde, also was charged with the responsibility for the collection of tithes. To carry out this duty, he was expected to keep detailed records of the property, animals, and crops of each citizen in his district; from these records he would compute the amount of the tithe expected from each person. Citizens were admonished not to work on Sundays or during church festivals. But on other days of the week, Santa Fe and Taos were marketing centers, probably with ample business in both the stores and the cantinas.[50]

Primitive and remote as it was, New Mexico was unattractive to most foreigners, and even at times to its own inhabitants. The first

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[48]Douglas C. McMurtrie, "The History of Early Printing in New Mexico," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. IV (October, 1929), 373-82.

[49]Perrigo, "New Mexico in the Mexican Period, as Revealed in the Torres Documents," 37.

[50]Armijo to the city council, Santa Fe, August 17, 1843, MANM.

impression of James Webb, an American trader, was that there was nothing in Santa Fe to induce him to become a resident or to continue in the trade except as an adventurer.[51] Contributing to the remoteness was the lack of a newspaper--until 1844--which increased dependency on proclamations, rumors, and the irregular mail service for news. Wagon trains and traders traveled to the main plaza, while Indian tribes camped in vacant yards or near the edge of town. Horses and livestock were allowed to graze in the street until March 1843 when Armijo notified the city council that roving hogs and large dogs had become a public nuisance in the plaza; he demanded an ordinance to prohibit such action in the future.[52]

Removing the animals from the streets of Santa Fe was much easier for Armijo to accomplish than ridding the department of many of its frontier characteristics. Life for the New Mexicans was hard, and it was not greatly improved by the departmental government. Financial crises marked departmental policy to such lengths that its effects were felt in every area of administration. The army and rurales could not be supplied, their weapons repaired, or their mounts maintained. Auxiliary squadrons that came to New Mexico expected to be paid and supplied by Armijo; this caused constant worry for the government. By 1845 Armijo requested that the central government send only troops that were fully equipped and supplied or to send none at

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[51] James Josiah Webb, Adventures in the Santa Fe Trade, 1844-1847, ed. by Ralph P. Bieber (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1931), p. 91.

[52] Armijo to the city council, Santa Fe, March 24, 1843, MANM.

all.[53] As payment of salaries to officials was spasmodic at best, many used their office only as a means of self-preservation. Vigil wrote that most officials had abandoned the true interests of the country and endeavored only to live from their offices at the expense of the nation regardless of their capacity to fill them.[54] Yet it was on this poorly equipped and underpaid army and militia and on these self-serving officials that Armijo and Martínez found themselves increasingly dependent in protecting the department against the attacks of barbarous Indian and foreign invaders.

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[53]Armijo to minister of foreign affairs, Santa Fe, May 16, 1845, MANM.

[54]Vigil, May 16, 1846, Ritch Collection.

CHAPTER III

THE TEXAN INVASIONS

In 1841, New Mexico was a frontier department plagued by foreign encorachments, Indian depradations, and unpatriotic citizens. At least this was the situation as seen by Governor and Commandant General Manuel Armijo. The Santa Fe Trail had brought not only substantial profits to New Mexico but also many foreigners who were constant trouble for the governor. The Navajos, Apaches, Comanches, and Utes were virtually unchecked along the frontier, causing widespread killing and huge property loss. Worse, there was the fear that many Mexicans were sympathetic to Texan and American schemes of annexation. In this maze of problems, Armijo in 1840 heard reports of an impending invasion by the rebellious Texans. As governor of New Mexico, Armijo had the responsibility to defend the department and preserve this frontier department for Mexico; he accomplished both goals quite satisfactorily.

Little attempt at secrecy was made by President Mirabeau B. Lamar of Texas concerning the expedition; newspapers in Austin and St. Louis carried accounts of the proposed journey. After months of hesitation, the expedition left Texas on June 20, 1841,[1] for the purpose of extending control over Texan domain as defined by the Treaty

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[1]Noel M. Loomis, The Texan Santa Fe Pioneers (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 18.

of Velasco (1836), and also--paradoxically--establishing peaceful commercial relations with the Mexicans. In preparing the expedition, Lamar previously had sent Williams Dryden to Santa Fe in 1840 to further Texan interests. On March 10, 1841, Dryden reported:

> . . . every American, and more than two thirds of the Mexicans, and all of the Pueblo Indians are with us heart and soul; and whenever they have heard of your sending troops, there had been rejoicing; and indeed I have talked many times with the governor, and he says he would be glad to see the day of your arrival in this country, as he feels well-assured that no aid will be sent from below. . . .[2]

If the purpose of the expedition was one of establishing commercial relations,[3] it is interesting to note the emphasis placed on the sending of troops and not of merchants. Dryden's statement that he had conferred many times with the governor is not substantiated by the governor's papers during these years. While there was talk of this sort on the part of New Mexicans, it was not to the extent that Dryden reported.[4]

Nonetheless, with false information such as this and with prospects of territorial and economic profit, this legally unauthorized expedition of 320 men under the command of Colonel Hugh McLeod departed

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[2]Dryden to Lamar, Santa Fe, March 10, 1841, in A. K. Christian, "Mirabeau Buonepart Lamar," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXIV (October, 1920), 111.

[3]Houston to Santa Anna, 1842, in Twitchell, Leading Facts, Vol. II, p. 71. Also see George Wilkins Kendall, Narrative of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition (Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1929), p. 5.

[4]Governor's Papers, 1840-1841, MANM. See also William Binkley, New Mexico and the Texan Santa Fe Expedition," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, XXVII (October, 1923), pp. 89-90.

for Santa Fe.[5] The actual journey was one of poor leadership and extreme hardship. The personal accounts of the trek thoroughly discuss the starvation, Indian raids, and undisciplined troops. The men in the expedition had little knowledge of the desert they were about to cross. The originally intended five hundred miles to Santa Fe became more than one thousand after backtracking and misdirection. The expedition left too late in the year to find grass and water and thus had little help along the route. This merchant caravan, as the newspapers termed the expedition, included 270 troops and approximately fifty merchant, along with one brass howitzer. The group had more men than necessary to fend off the Indians, yet too few to attack a foreign nation.[6]

Although New Mexico was removed from the main communication lines of the country, news of the invasion filtered in to Armijo. In March 1840, Armijo was informed that approximately five hundred Texans were on the way to Taos.[7] While this report proved to be false, it does show that the governor had the necessary time to prepare the department for an invasion. In his correspondence to the minister of war, Armijo gave an accurate account of the events leading to the actual arrival of the Texans in September and October of 1841.

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[5]Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of North Mexican States and Texas (San Francisco: The History Company, 1889), Vol. II, p. 333. Also see Loomis, Pioneers, p. 9.

[6]Thomas Falconer, Letters and Notes on the Texan Santa Fe Expedition 1841-1842 (Chicago: Rio Grande Press, 1963); Franklin Combs, "Combs' Narrative of the Santa Fe Expedition in 1841," New Mexico Historical Review, V (July, 1930), 305-314; Erhard, "Cayton Erhard's Reminiscences of the Texan Santa Fe Expedition, 1841," 424-456; and Kendall, Narrative.

[7]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, March 17, 1840, MANM.

His concern over the expected invasion is clearly evident in his correspondence. By June 1840, Armijo had become alarmed over the attitude of some New Mexicans: "Many of the people expect better conditions from the Texans and thus refuse to help defend this land."[8] Perhaps he overstated his position in order to receive aid from the central government, but he did have definite cause for concern. Because New Mexico was so great a distance from Mexico City, the inhabitants had few economic or political ties with the national government. Indeed, since the opening of trade with the United States in 1821, the people had looked to the north for goods and supplies, not to the south.[9]

The constant theme running through Armijo's letters to the minister of war was the need for more troops. When it became apparent that troops would not be sent simply for a threatened Texan invasion, Armijo resorted to forwarding reports of revolutionaries in the department and of Indian attacks in the surrounding areas. In July 1840, Armijo reported that he had just concluded an unfavorable treaty with the Navajos because he could not make war against them with so few troops.[10] In another letter, dated July 12, Armijo reported that only the priests could be trusted to be patriotic.[11] Although there doubtless was dissatisfaction in New Mexico during this time, Armijo's contention that the populace was ready to rebel is not substantiated by other documents for that year. A better explanation might be that

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[8]Ibid., June 12, 1840.

[9]Gregg, Commerce, p. 322.

[10]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, July 31, 1840, MANM.

[11]Ibid., July 12, 1840.

the governor needed troops and was using all possible methods for obtaining them. At worst the inhabitants were apathetic about the situation, not rebellious.

In reality, the troops under Armijo's command were not in good condition. The main presidio in Santa Fe could list but 107 men in March 1840, and the militia was in worse shape. Records show that many men who on paper were in the militia actually did not serve. Within the jurisdiction of Santa Fe, the muster rolls show 526 men as part of the militia. Of this number only thirty-four were categorized as con armas en mano (with arms in hand). This condition was the rule for other jurisdictions such as San Juan, Rio Abajo, Albuquerque, and Cochiti. Although the army appeared quite powerful on paper, it had little actual strength.[12]

Contributing to the poor condition of the military was the paucity of supplies and poor equipment. After Mexican independence, the Spanish system for supplying the troops had been maintained. With payment of troops one month to one year behind schedule, scant financial assistance from Mexico City, and inadequate training of the soldiers, it was a wonder that the troops performed as well as they did.[13] Complicating effective armament of the troops was the arrangement by which the soldiers had to maintain their equipment at their own expense. Armijo tried to maintain good armament through frequent inspections, but the condition of the troops was not improved.[14] A

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[12]Military and Company records for 1840, Santa Fe, MANM.

[13]Sidney B. Brinckerhoff, and Odie B. Faulk, Lancers for the King (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965).

[14]Military Orders of Armijo, Santa Fe, July 14, 1841, MANM.

typical reply from the minister of war to Armijo concerning payment of troops was that sufficient funds had been provided, and he was to fight the barbarians and to make do with what he had.[15] The minister of war must have become somewhat piqued at Armijo's constant requests, for the following day he wrote that if Armijo initiated less correspondence, thus saving paper, it would be a considerable financial saving to the government.[16]

Losing hope of receiving assistance from Mexico City, yet continually obtaining reports concerning the Texan invasion, Armijo was forced to rally his people to the defense of the country. In a proclamation on July 16, 1840, the governor warned the citizens of an approaching invasion by Texan rebels. He asked if the people were willing to be reduced to slaves, if they would allow the destruction of the religion, and if they would fight for their beloved country. In order to preserve the peace he issued the following orders:

1. Any man over sixteen years of age, upon hearing news of an attack on the departmental frontiers is immediately ordered to report to the nearest political ormilitary authority with his arms.
2. No person will leave the department for the area held by the enemy for any reason whatsoever.
3. No person is to supply the enemy with articles of war or give any form of aid to them.
4. Foreigners that are naturalized citizens have the same obligations as the Mexicans of natural birth. Foreigners not naturalized will observe complete neutrality.
5. Those persons that fail to observe these declared ordinances of the law will be punished unpardonably to the full extent of the law.[17]

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[15]Minister of war to Armijo, Mexico, October 30, 1839, MANM.

[16]Ibid., October 31, 1839.

[17]Proclamation of Armijo, Santa Fe, July 16, 1840, MANM.

The governor's tone in this proclamation was both patriotic and forceful. He could not fight a war without support from his countrymen, and it was his duty as governor and commandant general to rally the people to the defense of New Mexico.

With the passing of September 1840, Armijo realized that the Texans would not arrive that year, yet he became more convinced that Texan conspirators were already in New Mexico. During October 1840, a plot to assassinate Armijo was discovered in Santa Fe. Nothing of substance was proved in the trial of Julián García and Tomás Valencia except that they strongly disliked the policies of Armijo and wanted to kill him. Judging from the questions that the civil authorities asked these two men, however, it appears that the court thought the men were in the service of Texas. Yet nothing was proved except their guilt.[18]

In the early months of 1841, Armijo continued his efforts to strengthen his troops and to organize the militia in the department. Recent reports from the Comanche Indians, which told of having seen the Texans, indicated that the tejanos would arrive in Santa Fe that fall. These reports caused great alarm to Armijo, who feared that the Texans would make an alliance with the Comanches against the Mexicans. On June 3, Armijo notified the minister of war that he needed troops and ammunition, hinting that the chance of a Comanche-Texan alliance was now a definite possibility.[19] By this time the minister of war had received similar reports of a Texan invasion from

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[18]Preceedings against Julián García and Tomás Valencia, Santa Fe, October 17, 1840, MANM.

[19]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, June 3, 1841, MANM.

other sources, and he promised help to Armijo.

Orders came from Mexico City telling Armijo not to abandon New Mexico, but to defend it at all costs. More important, troops and money would be sent to the governor to be used as he saw fit. Finally, a well-organized plan of defense against the Texans was established between Armijo, the minister of war, and García Conde, Governor of Chihuahua.[20] Armijo would maintain his forces along the Eastern frontier, guarding against Indian unrest and advance parties from Texas. Conde would bring fresh troops and ammunition as soon as possible. The minister of war finished his letter by writing that it would be best to meet the Texans before they entered any populated areas inasmuch as the patriotism of the people was still unknown. Above all, Armijo was not to enter into any relations or agreements with the Texan rebels but was to obtain their immediate surrender.[21]

While authorities organized policy outside the department, Armijo was not idle in establishing a plan within New Mexico. Trusted friends and officials were given specific duties: Antonio Sandoval was to watch for Indian trouble in the North, Vicar Juan Ortiz was to arouse public spirit in support of the government, Mariano Chávez was ordered to command the militia in Santa Fe, and scouting parties under Damasio Salazar and Santiago Ulivarri were to guard the Eastern frontier. In addition, one hundred pesos were offered to any person supplying definite information about the location of the Texans.[22]

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[20]Santa Anna to Armijo, Mexico, July 12, 1841, MANM.

[21]Minister of war to Armijo, Mexico, July 12, 1841, MANM.

[22]Armijo to Conde, Santa Fe, September 22, 1841, MANM.

Further complications developed when reports came to Armijo impugning the loyalty of two of the governor's most trusted militia captains, Juan Andrés Archuleta and Felipe Seña. On August 5, these two men were investigated for having knowledge of the enemy. The episode was quite distressing for Armijo because Archuleta was second in command of the departmental armies. Nonetheless, the proceedings were conducted, with both defendants denying having any connection with the Texans or knowledge of their location. Archuleta and Seña were exonerated from the charge, and Archuleta was sent to Taos to command the militia.[23]

Many foreigners in Santa Fe were concerned for their lives and property in the event of an actual battle. Manuel Alvarez, consul for the United States, was the acknowledged spokesman for these interests. In a letter to the governor dated September 14, Alvarez demanded that foreigners in New Mexico be treated as neutrals and that their property be respected.[24] Armijo replied, "Citizens of countries friendly to Mexico will be protected and respected conforming to treaties in effect."[25] However, when Armijo left the capital to fight the Texans on September 16, some irate Mexicans entered the Alvarez home and gave him a severe beating. Upon hearing of this disturbance, the secretary to the governor, Guadalupe Miranda, dispersed the rabble--which only six months previously had been termed by Dryden as strongly pro-

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[23]Proceedings against Juan Andrés Archuleta and Felipe Seña, Santa Fe, August 5, 1841, MANM.

[24]Alvarez to Armijo, Santa Fe, September 12, 1841, MANM.

[25]Armijo to Alvarez, Santa Fe, September 12, 1841, MANM.

American--and apologized to Alvarez.[26]

By September 1841, Armijo was ready for the arrival of the Texans. Citizens and spies were on constant watch for the invaders, the militia had been organized in Taos under Juan Archuleta, and on September 16 Antonio Sandoval was called to Santa Fe to act as head of state while Armijo led his forces to San Miguel. While Armijo was well-prepared for battle, the Texans were not as they approached Santa Fe. Half-starved, ragged, and weak, the Texans were in no shape to fight a war.

Due to the weak condition of many of the men in the expedition, Colonel McLeod decided on August 30 at Camp Resolution to divide the command:

> However impolitic it may be considered to divide a command, in this instance such a course could not be avoided. We were completely lost, and without power of moving forward; our provisions. . . were now almost entirely exhausted, with only poor beef enough each day to support nature; and in addition we were surrounded by a large and powerful tribe of well-mounted Indians.[27]

Captain William Cooke, with approximately one hundred men, was to march ahead to San Miguel with the best animals and strongest men, carrying provisions only for five days. Colonel McLeod would remain behind with the remainder of the command and would continue as best he could. The five-day journey to San Miguel was in reality a two-week battle against starvation and Indians for Captain Cooke.

On September 16, an advance party of five Texans, including Kendall, were captured by Captain Damasio Salazar and his command of sixty-eight men. Salazar later reported that upon meeting the Texans

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[26]Miranda to Alvarez, Santa Fe, September 17, 1841, MANM.

[27]Kendall, Narrative, p. 279.

he told them that they could not enter the department without first removing their arms. After some consultation the Texans complied. Two of the captives, probably George Kendall and William Lewis, demanded to see the governor, but Salazar informed them that this could not presently be arranged. After conferring with his officers, Salazar decided that the Texans were spies and as such should be executed. Had not Gregorio Vigil interceded and said that only Governor Armijo had the authority to execute prisoners, all five Texans undoubtedly would have been shot.[28] Kendall's version of this incident is similar once the personal slurs are removed.[29] He does exaggerate the strength of Salazar's force, which he places at over one hundred, and he also wrote that Salazar was unable to read.[30] This was impossible, for Salazar wrote reports concerning the affair to Armijo. Both men do agree, however, that the five Texans were sent to San Miguel as captives.

While these five Texans were being marched to San Miguel, Armijo passed them going in the opposite direction. He paused long enough to express his need for an interpreter. At this point William Lewis stepped forward and proceeded with Armijo to meet the Texans. On September 17, Salazar and Lewis located the remainder of the Cooke party at Anton Chico. Lewis told Captain Cooke that it would be futile to fight because Armijo was only twelve hours distant with three thousand men. After Lewis pledged his Masonic word of honor that the men would not be taken as prisoners, that they would receive food, and

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[28]Diary of Damasio Salazar, September 11-15, 1841 (Pasadena: The William G. Ritch Collection, The Huntington Library).

[29]Kendall, Narrative, p. 377.

[30]Ibid., p. 379.

that the Texans would be well-treated, Cooke ordered his men to lay down their arms. The Texans were immediately tied up and their property confiscated. The next morning Armijo arrived with fifteen hundred men and held a council of war to decide the fate of the invaders. Franklin Combs, one of the captives, later stated that only by the vote of one member of the council was it decided not to execute the prisoners. Within the next week the Cooke portion of the expedition had begun its long, tedious march to Mexico City.[31]

After the capture of this first party of Texans, Armijo made his headquarters at Las Vegas and organized his strategy for the capture of the McLeod party, still out on the prairie. Colonel Juan Andrés Archuleta was sent to search for the Texans, who were encountered on October 4 at Laguna Colorada. Archuleta demanded their immediate surrender; McLeod replied that he would give his answer at 9:00 the next day. Archuleta was well entrenched around the Texans, and during the night he was reinforced with sixty rurales, bringing his total strength to 233. The new troops were sent behind the Texans, thus surrounding them completely. With little choice, McLeod therefore surrendered his command of 175 weak, starved, and scurvy-ridden men. On October 6, Archuleta took the cannon and arms of the captives, and on the seventh these Texans likewise began their long march to Mexico City.[32]

The capture of the Texans gave great prestige to Governor Armijo.

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[31]Combs, "Combs' Narrative of the Santa Fe Expedition in 1841," 307-9.

[32]Diary of Juan Andres Archuleta, September 30-October 9, 1841, MANM.

In public celebrations throughout New Mexico, proclamations carried by the Texans offering annexation to the New Mexicans were burned. In a proclamation to the inhabitants of the department, Armijo saluted and congratulated them for their success in defeating the Texan bandits:

> You hesitated not one moment in taking arms when the country called you to its defense. . . . The enemies of our national integrity, that today by some mistake occupy the fertile territory of Texas, and that tried to extend from there the limits of that territory. . . , have met with the intrepid and bellicose nature of the New Mexicans. Be assured that with the perserverance and valor that you have given our nation, no enemy will accomplish such depraved plots as this. . . .[33]

While the Texans were being marched some two thousand miles to Mexico City, there to endure severe hardships in prison,[34] Armijo was receiving the praise of the federal government for a job well done.

Manuel Armijo viewed the Texans as enemies of the Mexican nation and responded accordingly. To conclude that the Mexican government had any other policy toward Texas at this time is unrealistic. During this period, circulars were issued by the Mexican government to the diplomatic corps in Mexico City reminding them that a state of war was in existence between Texas and Mexico, thereby showing that Texan independence was not recognized.[35] While apologists for the Texan Santa Fe expedition argue that New Mexico was part of Texas because of the

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[33]Proclamation of Armijo, Santa Fe, November 10, 1841, MANM.

[34]For diplomatic correspondence concerning the Texan prisoners while in Mexico see United States Senate Document No. 325, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess., Serial No. 398.

[35]Circular to diplomatic Corps from Mexican minister of foreign affairs, in Waddy Thompson, Recollections of Mexico (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1846), pp. 285-6.

Treaty of Velasco, no such belief was entertained by the Mexicans. The policy of Mexico toward Texas was one of war. Thus, Armijo considered the Texans as an invading army and dealt with them as such.

The complete failure of the Santa Fe expedition in 1841 did not end further talk in the Lone Star Republic of expansionistic expeditions. Once the captives of the expedition began returning to Texas in 1842, plans immediately were initiated to retaliate against the Mexicans. The so-called treachery of Armijo, Salazar, and Lewis demanded action by the Texans. On January 28, 1843, Jacob Snively petitioned the Texan government for permission to organize an expedition to plunder Mexican traders from Santa Fe. His commission was granted on February 16, and read in part:

> Your communication of the 28th ulto. soliciting permission from the government to organize and fit out an expedition for the purpose of intercepting and capturing the property of the Mexican traders who may pass through the territory of the Republic to and from Santa Fe, &c. has been received and laid before his excellency, the President: and he, after a careful consideration of the subject, directs that such authority be granted you upon the terms and conditions therein expressed--.

These conditions were: the force should not exceed three hundred men, the republic would receive one half of all spoils, and the force was to operate only within the territory of Texas--as defined by the Treaty of Velasco.[36] As with the expedition of 1841, no attempt at secrecy was made, and travelers and newspapers carried news of the planned attack to New Mexico.

Fear of another Texan invasion was evident in New Mexico during

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[36]Commission of Jacob Snively, February 16, 1843, in William E. Connelley, ed., "A Journal of the Santa Fe Trail," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XII (September, 1925), 228-9.

1842-1843. Exaggerated accounts of Texans coming across the prairie, as early as 1842, increased this fear. With the approach of the winter of 1842 and no appearance of Texans, Armijo suspected that the expedition would not arrive during that year. Nonetheless, troops were held in readiness, and the commandant general in Chihuahua, Francisco Cordero, informed Armijo that three hundred troops could be sent to New Mexico at the governor's request.[37] During December 1842, Armijo received information that the Comanches had attacked and turned back some Texans on the Eastern frontier.[38] Further information came to Armijo from his brother, Ambrosio, then in New York City, who wrote that Texans had recruited men and obtained arms to send yet another expedition against New Mexico; the enemy plan would be to rob the merchants and possibly to invade Santa Fe.[39]

By the spring of 1843, New Mexicans were thoroughly alarmed. In March, Armijo reported to the higher authorities that eight hundred Texans would attack from the southeast and the same number of Americans would reinforce the Texans by attacking from the north. Merchants in Santa Fe also were alarmed over the possibility of a Texan attack, and asked Armijo for protection of their goods along the trade routes. The information that Armijo received from the merchants was that 290 Texans, located along the Arkansas River, were prepared to attack. In addition, Armijo was alarmed over the possibility of Indian uprisings at the same time. The Mexican pueblo auxiliaries, militia, and

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[37]Cordero to Armijo, Chihuahua, October 31, 1842, MANM.

[38]Armijo to Cordero, Santa Fe, December 6, 1842, MANM.

[39]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, December 27, 1842, MANM.

permanent troops were readied to meet the invasion, while spies were sent to the frontier to gain additional information.[40]

The murder and robbery of José Antonio Chávez by John McDaniel and a party of Missouri raiders increased the anxiety of the merchants in Santa Fe. Chávez, a wealthy Mexican trader, left Santa Fe in February of 1843, with two wagons, fifty-five mules, and ten thousand dollars in gold bullion. On April 10 he reached the Little Arkansas River, well inside the territory of the United States. At this point he was met by McDaniel and fifteen other men professing to be Texans. The band had left Missouri planning to join Colonel Charles Warfield, also supposedly in the employ of the Texan republic. Chávez was brutally murdered, his goods stolen, and his mules slaughtered. When news of this massacre reached Santa Fe, Armijo became concerned lest the next caravan be attacked by Texans.[41]

Without the entry of goods into the department, revenue would not be collected. With no revenue, Armijo could not pay his troops or carry on the government. That the financial situation was critical is evidenced by the actions of the treasurer, Ambrosio Armijo, who had to resort to forced loans from Río Abajo to supply the treasury. But by June 1843 only three thousand pesos had been collected.[42] Because of this financial crisis in the department, Governor Armijo led an expedition to the Arkansas River to guard the traders arriving from the United States from attacks by the Texans. If the trade caravan

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[40]Ibid., March 24, 1843.

[41]Ambrosio Armijo to Miranda, Santa Fe, June 21, 1843, MANM.

[42]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, July 10, 1843, MANM.

was attacked and robbed, as was Chávez', Armijo's major source of government revenue would be lost.

Armijo charged Colonel Archuleta with the duties of acting-governor and departed for the Arkansas River. His command included 100 regular troops with 250 auxiliaries.[43] On May 10, Colonel Warfield with twenty-five Texans attacked the village of Mora, killing some citizens and stealing over one hundred horses. The following day, militia from Taos recovered these horses along with those of the Texans, forcing the invaders to retreat on foot to Snively's command. Once united, the Texans headed toward the Arkansas River with plans of defeating Armijo's army and capturing the trade caravan on its way to Santa Fe.[44]

On June 20, the combined forces of Snively and Warfield--some 180 men--attacked the advance party of Armijo's army, which was led by Buenaventura Lovato. His one hundred ill-equipped auxiliaries were soundly defeated by the Texans. Lovato and seventeen others were killed, and eighty more were taken prisoner.[45] Meanwhile Armijo was certain that a large attack was impending, and his fears were augmented when two Mexicans, recently arrived from the north, stated that four hundred men at Bent's Fort were about to attack. Not only were these men to attack the caravan, but also they were to attack Santa Fe.[46]

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[43]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, July 10, 1843, MANM.

[44]Bancroft, History, pp. 327-8.

[45]H. Bailey Carroll, "Steward A. Miller and the Snively Expedition of 1843," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. LIV (January, 1951), 281-2.

[46]Records of Alcalde Primero, Antonio Sena, Santa Fe, May 19, 1843, MANM.

While Armijo worried over false reports such as this, the Texans encountered problems of their own. Hugh Young, a member of the expedition, recorded that on June 28, Captain William Chandler reported to Snively that many of the men desired to return to Texas. Snively ordered Chandler to make a list of the malcontents and to take them home. "Seventy men left us. We now numbered one hundred four," he wrote. Two days later Captain Philip St. George Cooke of the United States Army crossed into Texan territory and disarmed the Texans, although he did allow them to return to Independence with his command. Thirty Texans joined Captain Cooke while the remainder of the Texans under Warfield and Snively eventually returned to Austin after some skirmishing between the two for command. Although the Texan threat was now ended, Armijo had no knowledge of these actions.[47]

Through the months of June and July, Armijo still feared a Texan attack. By July 4, the governor had returned to Santa Fe abandoning the expected caravan for fear of attacks on Santa Fe. Conditions in Santa Fe were not improving, the army was two months in salary arrears, and morale was extremely low.[48] Armijo wrote the authorities at Mexico City to ask for ten thousand pesos in addition to supplies of ammunition and food. Further assistance was requested of members of Armijo's family in the form of loans, but little income resulted.[49] In this atmosphere of pressing financial need, the first group of

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[47]Stephan B. Oates, ed., "Hugh F. Young's Account of the Snively Expedition As Told to John S. Ford," Southwestern Historical Quarterly, Vol. LXX (July, 1966), 71-92.

[48]Archuleta to Armijo, Santa Fe, July 13, 1843, MANM.

[49]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, July 10, 1843, MANM.

traders arrived in Santa Fe on July 27. On August 9, troops under the command of General Monterde, recently promoted to commander of all troops in the northern sector, arrived in Santa Fe. This promotion placed Armijo second in command. However, the troops stayed only one day, then returned to El Paso.[50]

By August Armijo was certain that the Texan danger had passed. Caravans continued into Santa Fe, bringing with them news that the Texans had been disarmed by Cooke and that the trail was safe. The second Texan expedition did accomplish part of its purpose, however, After the arrival of General Monterde, many complaints were lodged against Armijo for failing adequately to defend the department. In October 1843, General Monterde removed Armijo from the position of commandant general, replacing him with Colonel Mariano Martínez of Chihuahua. Then in January 1844, Armijo gave control of the departmental government to Mariano Chávez. Armijo stated at that time that his position had become unbearable because he had been ill for the preceding two months: "It is impossible [for me] to continue in charge of the government in this department."[51]

Acting Governor Chávez resigned on April 10, 1844, to be succeeded by Commandant General Mariano Martínez, who now headed both offices of governor and commandant general. With arrival of Martínez came vigorous policies for the Department of New Mexico. Throughout 1844 a plan for a military expedition against the Texans was being formulated by leaders in Mexico City. Instead of defending the department,

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[50]Minister of war to Armijo, Mexico, July 19, 1843, MANM.

[51]Armijo to minister of foreign affairs, Santa Fe, January 15, 1844, MANM.

the citizens would mount a full offensive campaign against the Texans. Mexican President Valentín Canalizo had strong hopes of restoring the Department of Texas to Mexico, and by May of 1844 he had begun to organize an army by soliciting troops from the various departments.[52]

After the inauguration of Santa Anna as president on June 10, 1844, General Canalizo was made chief of staff of the army yet to be raised. Although New Mexico was exempted from the draft calls because of its burden of frontier defense, Martínez was enthusiastic about the proposed Texan campaign. He acknowledged to Canalizo that the Department of New Mexico was ideally situated to launch an attack, and sent information concerning the area and probable troop strength of the Texans to the general.[53] Foreigners believed that such an attack would be unlikely, however, and true enough the entire campaign began to bog down in Mexico because of internal squabbles and a shortage of money to finance such an undertaking.[54]

While political problems plagued the government in Mexico, daily problems such as Indian depradations caused Martínez to reconsider his role in this military campaign against Texas. During the late summer and early fall of 1844, the Utes in New Mexico once again broke the peace treaties by raiding into Abiquiu. While Martínez was fighting the Utes, new instructions came to him calling for launching the Texan campaign in the spring of 1845. Martínez was asked to raise and equip

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[52]Decree of Canalizo, Mexico, May 13, 1844, MANM.

[53]Martínez to Chief of Staff, August 5, 1844, Santa Fe, MANM.

[54]George Lockhart Rives, The United States and Mexico, 1821-1848, Vol. I (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 660-3.

two hundred troops for the expedition, using only the best troops, mounts, and equipment.[55]

By November 15, Martínez was forced to write the commanding general of the Mexican Army that owing to the recent Indian wars in the department of New Mexico, he would be unable to participate in the Texan campaign. He stated that there scarcely were enough troops and equipment to defend his own frontier, let along supply two hundred men to fight for the Mexican Army.[56] In reality, Martínez' withdrawal from the campaign had little effect. In December, Santa Anna was banished from Mexico, and a new administration under President Joaquín de Herrera was formed. With this change of government came the collapse of the proposed Texan campaign, and while the politicians fought among themselves in Mexico City, Martínez attempted to control the Indians.[57]

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[55]General Urrea of the Mexican Army to Martinez, Hermosilla, September 9, 1844, MANM.

[56]Martínez to Urrea, Santa Fe, November 15, 1844, MANM.

[57]Rives, The United States and Mexico, Vol. I, pp. 673-8.

CHAPTER IV

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Indian problems for Martínez were, for the most part, similar to those encountered by Armijo. Both governors attempted to induce the Indians to live peacefully by two basic methods: war and conciliation. These policies were doomed from the start, however, because neither effective warfare nor adequate conciliation could be financed. Letters from the governors to central authorities pleaded for more funds and stressed the fact that they were surrounded by more than thirty hostile Indian tribes, outnumbered two to one, and had few supplies to maintain an effective fighting force.[1] To suppose that only Armijo and Martínez had ideas concerning the best way to handle the hostile Indians is incorrect; it appears rather that there was no shortage of ideas on this subject.

Until the creation of the commandancy generalship in New Mexico, the department was under the authority of Chihuahua. This situation had some benefits for the departments. Generally, both Chihuahua and New Mexico were faced with similar problems, if not identical tribes of enemies. Combined campaigns would be organized between the two departments that were more effective in dealing with the hostile Indians. Once this policy was changed in 1839, each department went its

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[1] Armijo to minister of foreign affairs, Santa Fe, May 16, 1845, MANM.

own way, causing greater confusion for all concerned. New Mexicans enjoyed a quasi-peace with the Comanches and were allowed to trade with them, supposedly under governmental regulations. After obtaining goods and weapons from the New Mexicans, the Comanches would proceed down their war trails to Chihuahua, burning homes, stealing livestock, and murdering farmers. This situation was a bitter pill for the Chihuahuans to swallow, and it explains their lackadaisical attitude in sending help to New Mexicans when they, in turn, were being rampaged by other tribes. In 1844 a large Comanche war party gathered around Santa Fe to wait for trade to begin. Martínez was placed in a ticklish situation; either he traded or he would be attacked. Moral problems of this sort do not appear to have bothered Armijo, but Martínez sent a letter to Chihuahua after concluding the trade informing Chihuahuan officials that the Comanches would be leaving with the next full moon. Situations such as this did little to improve interdepartmental harmony.[2]

The central government had suggestions for the frontier departments regarding ways to improve local conditions. Similar to most policies of the government at this time, these suggestions placed less responsibility for the departmental unkeep on the national authorities while increasing that of the department. Indian problems could be lessened if the departments of Chihuahua and New Mexico would reach an agreement for combining policies and sharing the expenses, said officials in Mexico City. In this way, matters could be channeled directly between them, leaving the central government free to solve

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[2]Martinez to commandant general of Chihuahua, Santa Fe, July 31, 1844, MANM.

other more important problems. Predictably, the departments failed to come to any agreement.[3] In addition, Mexican authorities advised the commandants general to try different tactics to subdue the hostile Indians. Because of increased colonization of the provinces, Indians had less room to fish and hunt, causing them to scorn civilization even more. Because the Indians would not learn of their own volition the ways of civilization, departmental soldiers should show the Indians how to work and reside peacefully within society; prisoners that were taken were to be taught how to read and write. The plan looked good on paper, but it did not fit conditions in New Mexico.[4]

All were in agreement that the Indians must be civilized. The outspoken Padre José Antonio Martínez wrote from Taos in 1843 that it was a true and notorious fact that the hostile Indians of New Mexico and neighboring departments lived by robbery and theivery; the result was that fields were uncultivated and huge tracts of land previously under irrigation were now deserted. The time that the Indians employed in raids was necessarily lost to labor, causing the uncultivated fields not to produce enough food for their maintenance. In addition, various species of deer and other game, which formerly roamed the province in great quantity, had diminished. Buffalo had almost disappeared throughout the department where at first they were thought to be inexhaustible. This condition forced the Indians to travel for two months to get meat which was generally of bad taste and quality. With a shortage of buffalo the Indians were obliged to

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[3]Ibid., December 16, 1844.

[4]Circular to commandant generals in New Mexico, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Sonora, and Nuevo Leon, Mexico, November 25, 1844, MANM.

resort to pillage and robbery. Martínez concluded by writing that there was no other way for peace to come to the department except to induce the Indian tribes to live in civilized society by cultivating the land, undertaking various industries, and raising cattle. Although the padre's goals were excellent, the means he suggested for accomplishing them were vague and unclear.[5]

While the debate concerning the proper method to pursue in civilizing the Indians continued, citizens were attempting to defend their homes from Indian attacks. Vigil wrote that the greater portion of New Mexicans, particularly those most exposed to the attack of the savages, were armed only with bows and arrows because of the scarcity of firearms and ammunition. Yet the introduction of arms and ammunition into New Mexico was prohibited by the Mexican government. The result was that only a few of the wealthier citizens had such equipment. Vigil stated that if arms and ammunition could be supplied to New Mexicans, there would be fewer problems with the Indians.[6]

Not all the Indians in New Mexico were hostile, however. On the contrary, many peaceful Indian pueblos dotted the New Mexican landscape. The number of inhabited pueblos in the department was approximately twenty-five. Some of the better known pueblos were San Juan, Taos, Santa Clara, Isleta, Cochiti, Jemez, Acoma, and Laguna. In addition to these settlements, located mainly along the Río Arriba, there were some Moqui (Hopi) pueblos in the extreme western portion of the department. When the Indians in these pueblos became inde-

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[5]J. A. Martínez to Santa Anna, Taos, 1843, in Keleher, Turmoil, pp. 68-71.

[6]Vigil, May 16, 1846, Ritch Collection.

pendent, their life continued without perceptible change; they continued to raise stock, farm, and hunt in order to meet their daily requirements. Although officially listed as Mexican citizens, most of the pueblo inhabitants were too ignorant and poverty ridden to understand the meaning of the word citizen.[7]

The way of life in the Indian pueblos undoubtedly exemplified the policies that Armijo and Martínez hoped to apply to all Indians. In 1837 the departmental assembly reorganized the department into two districts of pueblos. The first district included the alcaldías of Santa Fe, Cañada, Abiquiu, San Juan, and Taos. Within the second district were placed Cochiti, Jemez, Isleta, Laguna, and Socorro. Each district had further subdivisions, but in practice the alcalde of each village was the nominal head of governmental affairs. The alcalde supervised all civil and military matters within his given area, with but little assistant from the juez, or justice. Thus, as in Mexican villages, the alcaldes and jueces, both of whom were appointed by the governor, were responsible for law and order. While these officials were appointed to serve the government, documents show that their positions in the pueblos were seen largely by their occupants as a means of making money at the pueblo's expense.[8]

Because the Indians living in the pueblos were citizens of New Mexico, they were expected to support the military expeditions against hostile Indians. In order to insure that all possible Indians might serve, they were required to join militia units organized throughout

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[7]Bloom, "New Mexico under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 25.

[8]Minutes of the departmental assembly, Santa Fe, May 22, 1837, MANM.

the department. The local justices were charged with locating as many men as necessary to defend the village or to go on expeditions against warring tribes. The usual result was that all men above the age of sixteen were listed as the town militia regardless of their capacity to serve.[9] For the most part, the pueblos were very aggressive in helping the authorities against hostile Indians or foreign invaders although the pueblos of Acoma, Laguna, and Zuni on at least one occasion refused to support the Mexicans against the Navajos.[10]

Armijo attempted to keep peace in the pueblos by compensating the inhabitants for losses incurred by hostile Indians. He was well aware that if the pueblos revolted and joined forces with the hostile Indians, New Mexicans would have little chance of defending themselves. One popular method used by Armijo was to give clothing to replace animals that had been stolen from pueblo Indians. In 1839 an Indian from Jémez received thirty-six yards of cotton for a mule that had been stolen, and two Indians from Laguna received twenty-nine yards of cotton and a bag of sugar for a horse that was captured by the Navajos.[11] Interaction between the government and the outlying pueblos was limited usually to expeditions against unfriendly Indians when troops were out on the frontier. When these outlying Indians did come to Santa Fe, Armijo usually made an effort to give them gifts and food.[12]

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[9]Military survey, Santa Fe, March, 1839, MANM.

[10]Julián Tenorio to the governor, Albuquerque, September 3, 1837, MANM.

[11]Sargeant Antonio Seña, Cuaderno Manual, Entry for October, 1839, MANM.

[12]Ibid., October, 1840.

Governor Martínez also attempted to keep good relations with the pueblos. His attitude toward these Indians was very different than that usually expressed by other departmental officials. In 1844 the governor received a report from the alcalde at Cochiti that the Indians were conducting pagan dances that were sinful to all decent New Mexicans. In addition, the alcalde told Martínez that a strange object had been found, one that appeared to be some form of graven image.[13] Martínez replied that the alcalde should respect the customs of the Indians and not insult their religion. Only through friendship and understanding would the Indians be made civilized, not by force.[14]

Not all Mexican officials were as open-minded as Martínez, however, and more important not all Indians were of a similar, peaceful temperament. When hostile Indians went on the warpath, the New Mexican government would mount expeditions to regain the plunder and attack the renegades, but for the most part, their policy was one of retaliation. Armijo was raised in this environment of attack and counter-attack, so it was not without grounds that he sometimes disagreed with authorities in Mexico City on Indian policy. During his administration of 1837-1843 he was acknowledged by the central government as the region's foremost leader in Indian affairs by a promotion to brigadier general.[15] Throughout these years four tribes were most bothersome to New Mexicans: Apaches, Comanches, Navajos, and Utes.

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[13] Alcalde of Cochiti to Martínez, Cochiti, June 1, 1844, MANM.

[14] Martínez to alcalde of Cochiti, Santa Fe, June 1, 1844, MANM.

[15] Appointment of Armijo to brigadier general by President Bustamente, Mexico, October 1, 1840, MANM.

TABLE II

POPULATION OF HOSTILE INDIANS IN NEW MEXICO[16]

Tribe	Families or Lodges	Population
Jicarilla Apaches	100	500
Apaches, proper	800 or 900	5,500
Utahs, Grande Unita Rivers	600	3,000
Utahs, Southern	200	1,400
Navajos	1,000	7,000
Moques	350	2,450
Comanches	2,500	12,000
Cayugas	400	2,000
Cheyennes	300	1,500
Arapahoes	400	1,600
	Total	36,950

The Comanches enjoyed a privileged status in the Department of New Mexico. Except for occasional raids that were ignored by officials, they generally remained at peace in New Mexico although they carried on an incessant war against residents of Chihuahua, Durango, and Coahuila, from whom they captured large herds of horses and enslaved large numbers of whites. Regarding the Comanches, Armijo was at complete odds with the central government, which wanted their maraudings stopped and which criticized Armijo for not making war on the savages. Matters worsened for Armijo in 1841 when he was ordered to engage the Comanches in battle throughout New Mexico, while Chihuahuan officials

[16]Bent to Medill, Santa Fe, November 10, 1846, in United States Senate Documents No. 18, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 557.

conducted an expedition against them from the south.[17]

Armijo was caught once again between actual frontier conditions and the policies set forth by the central government. He explained his position to the minister of war in a letter on March 31, 1841. He wrote that the department had a peace treaty with the Comanches which had endured for many years, and to break it would mean instant ruin; yet the order from the government stood. Not trusting his own judgment in a matter of such great importance as this, Armijo consulted with all the respected and knowledgable officials in the department. This council declined to wage war against the Comanches. Armijo justified this position by adding that New Mexicans conducted constant war against the barbarians that plagued them; thus, they were already in active service. Furthermore, if war began against the Comanches, the department would be devastated, people killed, and livestock stolen. New Mexicans could not afford to fight these terrible warriors when they were at this moment losing battles to the Apaches, Navajos, and Utes.[18]

While Armijo waited for a response to this letter, licenses were issued to New Mexicans to trade with the Comanches. Armijo understood this trade to be limited to wheat, biscuits, bridles, blankets, sugar, and foodstuffs in exchange for animals, buffalo, and deer. Despite the uneasiness in the department created by the refusal of the New Mexicans to make war on the Comanches, affairs with these Indians continued as always. Not until 1842 was there an official reply to

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[17]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, March 31, 1841, MANM.

[18]Ibid.

the governor; it stated that Armijo's policies were understood and that if help was needed in refuting either Indians or Texans, assistance would be given.[19] Other portions of Mexico continued to be attacked by the Comanches, but Armijo remained certain that a policy of conciliation would be best for his department. In 1845 Armijo gave gifts to the Comanches, permitted the citizens to trade with them, and even returned some of their prisoners to them.[20] For New Mexicans, conciliation was most effective concerning the Comanches; unfortunately, the other Indians were not so easily handled.

Only the Comanches were somewhat controlled by New Mexicans. The Apaches also were warlike, and, according to Charles Bent, lived principally by robbing New Mexicans and by plundering the settlements and carrying off incredible amounts of stock. He reported that approximately six thousand Apaches were located in New Mexico mainly between the Río del Norte and the Gila.[21] Armijo believed that the best method for controlling these Indians would be by regulating commerce with them, hopefully making them dependent on the New Mexican government for survival. Apparently he was unable to control commerce, for by May of 1839 complete trade restrictions against the Apaches were instituted. New Mexicans were threatened with a fine of fifty pesos if caught trading with them. Contributing to the Apache

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[19]General of the Northern Army to Armijo, Matamoros, July 4, 1842, MANM.

[20]Armijo to prefect of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, October 30, 1845, MANM.

[21]Bent to Medill, Santa Fe, November 10, 1846, in United States Senate Documents, No. 18, 31st Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 557.

problem during this period were several bands of renegade Apaches, such as the Mescaleros and Lipans. As with some other tribes, there was no one chief of all Apaches.[22]

Armijo believed that by disallowing trade with the Apaches they would be forced to make peace with the government. By June 1842 the Mescaleros initiated efforts for peace ceremonies when two Indian chiefs approached Captain Salazar. Armijo signed treaties with these Indians and then sent the two on to Chihuahua where more treaties would be made.[23] Although the provisions of these agreements were advantageous for New Mexico, it was improbable that they would be honored. The mescaleros were to receive five thousand pesos annually from the central government, captives would be exchanged, and information as to movement of hostile Indians against New Mexico was to be given to officials immediately. Treaties such as this usually were the result of one or two smaller tribes that expected to receive immediate funds for signing, while the officials making them liked to believe that the treaty covered all tribes of Apaches.[24]

In reality, these two tribes, the Apaches and Comanches, were only minor irritants for New Mexican officials. In later years the Utes would be of concern for Governor Martínez, but during the governorship of Armijo from 1837 to 1843, the Navajos provided the most constant difficulties. Although the Navajos were not the most

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[22]Armijo to prefects of the first and second districts, Santa Fe, May 3, 1839, MANM.

[23]Armijo to commandant general of Chihuahua, Santa Fe, March 1, 1842, MANM.

[24]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, July 12 (?), 1842, MANM.

numerous, they were the most harsh in their dealings with New Mexicans. They did cultivate fields and also had extensive herds of horses, mules, cattle, and sheep. Their most famous product was the close-knit blankets that were produced in their villages. These blankets were demanded by both Mexicans and Americans alike because of their warmth and resistance to water.[25] Gregg wrote that these blankets were so highly praised by New Mexicans for their fine workmanship and protection against the elements of nature that some sold for as high as fifty or sixty dollars each.[26] While their blankets were in great demand by New Mexicans, there seems to be few compliments given the Navajos for their depradations throughout the department.

While Armijo was governor, at least four expeditions were launched against these savages. His successes were small; two treaties resulted, but both were short-lived. In the fall of 1838 Armijo began to organize troops to attack these Indians. Two trusted officials, Mariano Chávez and Juan Andrés Archuleta, were charged with the duty of readying and inspecting the troops for the campaign. Armijo left the pueblo of Jémez and met some Navajos near Tres Lagunas. At this battle the governor killed eighteen of the enemy, captured fifty-four prisoners, and confiscated large quantities of grain and sheep.[27] After this successful expedition Armijo offered promises of peace to those Navajos so desiring, telling them to come to Jémez to make a treaty.

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[25]Leroy R. Hafen, ed., "The W. M. Boggs Manuscript," The Colorado Magazine, Vol. VII (March, 1930), 50.

[26]Gregg, Commerce, p. 189.

[27]Armijo to , Santa Fe, December 25, 1838, MANM.

A treaty was signed there on July 15, 1839, and contained most of the conditions that Armijo desired. Both sides gave promises of their good faith and agreed to the following conditions; first, peace and commerce would be restored between the Navajos and the Departments of New Mexico and Chihuahua, as well as with all citizens of the Mexican nation; second, any captives held by either the Navajos or New Mexicans were to be returned to their homes; third, the Navajos promised not to disturb the order and laws of the department in any way; fourth, trade was resumed between the Mexicans and Navajos on the same basis on which it existed before the war; fifth, if a Navajo killed a Mexican, the tribe was to give up the murderer to the government, and if a Mexican killed a Navajo thirty sheep were to be paid as a debt to his family; sixth, the Mexican government would not return escaped slaves to the Navajos; seventh, the Navajos were to report any news of impending invasions by any other Indian tribe.[28] In addition, Armijo naturalized all Navajos making them Mexican citizens, and appointed Antonio Sandoval to govern them.[29]

By September of 1839, the treaty no longer was in effect as Armijo ordered the militia to organize for another expedition against the Navajos. Citizens were informed that because of recent raids against settled areas, the Navajos must be beaten once and for all.[30] The new campaign against the savages involved expeditions under the command of Mariano Chávez and Juan Andrés Archuleta. Chávez was to lead the

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[28]Treaty of Jemez, Jemez, July 15, 1839, MANM.

[29]Armijo to Sandoval, Santa Fe, August 9, 1839, MANM.

[30]Armijo to Archuleta, Santa Fe, September 24, 1839, MANM.

southern expedition to Chelly, where he would unite his command with Archuleta.

Archuleta recorded the events of his expedition in a daily log. The expedition left Santa Fe on October 13, and did not sight the enemy until November 1. These Navajos promised the Mexicans that they were friends and still honored the Treaty of Jémez. Upon approaching Chelly on November 20, Archuleta's troops finally encountered the Navajos. The battle lasted the major portion of that day, and was made most difficult because the Indians controlled a mesa which was impossible to capture. The next day Archuleta retreated from the mesa and returned to Abiquiu on December 10.[31]

Armijo must have been dissatisfied with the results of the campaign because another was launched in 1840. In September two companies, each consisting of five hundred men, were raised by José Salazar from Río Abajo and Francisco Vigil of Río Arriba. The expedition lasted five weeks and must have been successful judging from the amount of booty taken. The most significant prize of the expedition was the capture of Chief Largo. In addition, thirty-three Indians were killed, blankets valued at one thousand pesos were captured, and two hundred containers of grain were confiscated. Armijo reported that Vigil led his troops up a high mesa without being discovered by the Navajos until it was too late. Both Vigil and Salazar were commended for a job well done.[32]

Because of these Mexican victories, the Navajos again sued for

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[31]Military log of Juan Andres Archuleta's campaign against the Navajos, October-November, 1839, MANM.

[32]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, October 3, 1840, MANM.

peace, resulting in the Treaty of Santo Domingo on March 10, 1841. The treaty was very similar to the one concluded at Jemez in 1839, providing for return of captives, reinstatement of commerce, and pledges of good faith by both parties. However, in some provisions this treaty promised more benefits to the Navajos than had previous treaties. Mexican officials promised to pay five hundred sheep to the family of any murdered Navajo, plus the gift of small allotments of money to certain chiefs. The most interesting provision stated that because Navajos were Mexican citizens, they were entitled to legal protection by Mexican officials. Armijo obviously believed that through better terms in the treaty a deeper alliance might be formed. Provisions within the treaty also suggested that if the Navajos organized a political system within their tribe it would be recognized by the Mexicans. After 1843, the Navajos ceased as the main disruptive force in the department; they were then superceeded by the Utes.[33]

The first real problem encountered with the Utes involved prisoners who had been captured from other Plains tribes and then sold to Mexicans as slaves. In 1841 and 1842 Arapahos and Kiowas were involved. Charles Bent wrote Manuel Alvarez to warn Armijo that the Arapahos had made threats to recover their people held in captivity by the Mexicans. He suggested that it would be well for the Mexicans to conciliate the Indians before hostilities commenced. In addition, the Arapahos were inducing the Cheyenne and Sioux to join them against the Mexicans. Two renegade Mexicans were to be used as guides by the Indians.[34] Nonetheless, the New Mexicans decided not to return the

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[33]Treaty of Santo Domingo, March 10, 1841, MANM.

[34]Bent to Alvarez, Taos, January 16, 1841, "The Bent Papers," Vol. XXIX, 311-2.

captives for two reasons: first, to return them would show that the Mexicans feared the Indians; and second, to return them would create resentment and possible attacks from the Utes.[35]

One of the best illustrations of the daily Indian menace is seen in 1844 while Governor Martínez was attempting to organize a special ceremony to be held on September 16 to commemorate Mexican independence. In order to have all preparations and buildings completed by that time, the governor appointed a patriotic council composed of the leading New Mexicans in the department to organize the celebration.[36] On August 3 the council met, and established a program. On independence eve all the religious buildings would be illuminated and at 11:00 p.m., bells would ring, artillery would be fired, and fireworks would explode announcing "the glorious moment when national independence was proclaimed by the saint, Hidalgo, at the village of Dolores." On the morning of the sixteenth the national flag would be raised on all public buildings. Vicar Juan Ortiz would celebrate mass, which would be attended by the governor. After mass the governor and president of the assembly would commemorate the day with speeches; this would be followed by a march to the plaza. During the afternoon, musicians and a circus would perform, ending in a dance for the public that evening. During the day following the ceremony bullfights would be held.[37]

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[35]Archuleta to Armijo, San Juan, April 1, 1841, MANM.

[36]Act establishing patriotism etc., Santa Fe, August 1, 1844, MANM.

[37]Minutes of the patriotic council, Santa Fe, August 3, 1844, MANM.

While preparations were being made in Santa Fe, the Utes in Río Arriba were becoming troublesome. Archuleta reported that large numbers of Utes were uniting near Abiquiu. The chief had told Archuleta that during the past winter a group of Mexican rurales had killed three of his sons, mistaking them for Navajos. Later, these same Mexicans killed seven more Utes and stole their horses. At this point the chief demanded that in return for the ten Utes killed, the Mexicans must release four Ute Indian boys held captive along with ten horses. If the Mexicans paid this to the chief, all claims would be forgotten. He warned, however, that he would wait only two days for a reply. In forwarding the chief's message, Archuleta reminded Martínez that he had few troops with which to withstand an attack.[38]

Meanwhile, the patriotic council continued with the organization of the dance, having problems enlisting enough musicians to provide a band. On September 4, Martínez notified the justice at Abiquiu to take all necessary steps to stop the Utes from reaching Santa Fe. The justice wrote Martínez that the Utes were in an extremely bad temper and that Archuleta was unable to pacify them. In addition, he wrote the Indians were planning to march on the capital the next day, September fifth.[39]

On September 5, with buildings yet to be completed, platforms yet to be built, and decorations yet to be made, over one hundred Utes entered Santa Fe mounted on good horses and well armed with lances, bows, and axes. On entering the town they demanded a place to spend

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[38]Archuleta to Martínez, Río Arriba, September 1, 1844, MANM.

[39]Martínez to justice of Abiquiu, Santa Fe, September 4, 1844, MANM.

the night and were assigned a vacant lot on the outskirts of town. During the night they kept the citizens in constant alarm with their warlike songs and noise. The next morning six of the chiefs saddled their horses and went to visit Governor Martínez.[40]

Once the chiefs met with the governor, they complained that they had not been given the things that they had demanded. Martínez agreed to give them, yet the Indians remained unsatisfied. At this point Martínez lost his patience with the chiefs and ordered them out of his office; but instead of calming the Utes as he had hoped, the Indians became angrier and made obscene gestures at the governor and insulted him verbally. One chief approached Martínez and demanded redress for his Indians that had been killed. Martínez pushed him to the door. At that moment Martínez was attacked by all six Indians. One came at the governor with an axe in hand, but Martínez hit him with the chair that he had been sitting in. About this time some Mexican officials heard the noise and rushed into the room to help.[41]

Martínez' wife, Doña Teresita next rushed in and gave the governor his sword so he could defend himself. While the battle was being won in the governor's office, the remainder of the Indians attempted to get into the brawl by entering the window, but shortly thereafter some of the townspeople attacked them. When the chaos ended, the principal chief, Panesiyah, had been killed along with four others; the remainder of the Indians escaped, while only three Mexicans were wounded. The Indians were then pursued through the streets as they destroyed as

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[40]Pérez, "In Santa Fe During the Mexican Regime," 96.

[41]Proclamation to the Inhabitants of New Mexico from Martínez, Santa Fe, September 8, 1844, MANM.

much as possible on their way out of town. Martínez then sent word to Archuleta advising him to defend Abiquiu and the frontier as best he could.[42]

For the remainder of the fall an overriding fear of a Ute invasion settled over the New Mexicans. Reports placed the number of Ute warriors ready to attack at three thousand and growing. Troops were sent to Abiquiu, along with three artillery pieces and 120 muskets.[43] On September 10 the governor shipped fifteen guns, fifteen pistols, and fifty rounds of extra ammunition to Taos.[44] Meanwhile, the patriotic council tried to salvage its plans for the ceremonies. They blamed the city council of Santa Fe for a lack of cooperation, for refusing to keep animals out of the Plaza, and, worst of all for allowing the bodies of the dead Utes to lie unburied in the streets.[45]

The Utes that had previously surrounded Abiquiu had dispersed, but rumors persisted in the department that an attack could be expected at any moment. On September 26, the citizens of Taos suggested that the governor send arms and supplies to them so that they could defend the frontier. If the Utes could be stopped from plundering the villages in the north, they could be starved into submission as it was too late in the year to hunt buffalo.[46] Not until December

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[42]Ibid., and Pérez, "In Santa Fe During the Mexican Regime," 96-7.

[43]Martínez to Archuleta, Santa Fe, September 9, 1844, MANM.

[44]Ibid., September 10, 1844.

[45]Minutes of the patriotic council, Santa Fe, September 12, 1844, MANM.

[46]Citizens of Taos to Archuleta, September 26, 1844, MANM.

was the affair calmed, however. During this month Martínez gave goods worth more than one thousand pesos to the Indians.[47] As for the outcome of the patriotic ceremonies, it was probably a let-down compared to the Utes attacking Santa Fe, for little was said of it after the Ute crisis appeared.

One common Indian problem for the New Mexican government was that of enforcing trade restrictions with the Indians. Among the most daring of New Mexicans who traded with the Comanches were the Comancheros. At first considered harmless, these Mexicans later were strongly criticized for dealing with the Comanches. In 1845 these traders were described by Lieutenant J. J. Abert as poor and shabby with "conical-crowned sombrerors, jackets with stripes running transversely, large bag breeches extending to the knee, long stockings and moccasins."[48] Criticism mounted only when these traders began to substitute liquor for blankets and repeating rifles for grain. For the most part the Comancheros were not as bothersome to Armijo and Martínez as were American traders.[49]

Many slurs were made against the Americans by Padre José Antonio Martínez. He wrote that when New Mexico was under Spanish administration, American forts were not allowed to be built. But because of the liberal Mexican laws, Americans had infested the area.

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[47]Records of departmental treasury, Santa Fe, December 1844, MANM.

[48]Lieutenant J. J. Abert, Report on the Upper Arkansas and the Country of the Comanche Indians, United States Senate Document No. 438, 29th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 477.

[49]Charles L. Kenner, A History of New Mexican-Plains Indians Relations (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1969), pp. 78-97.

The traders sold liquor to the Indians, resulting in these nations becoming extremely demoralized. Because of their desire for more liquor the Indians were prompted to devastate the buffalo herds in order to supply pelts for the purchase of drink. These forts encouraged the Indians to raid the department in order to obtain the booty which could be sold for large profits.[50]

Donaciano Vigil wrote that while the surrounding Indians were continuously improving their condition, that of the Mexicans was declining. American traders on the Arkansas and Red rivers had supplied the Indians with everything required to carry on warfare against the Mexicans in exchange for pelts. Vigil believed that this situation caused the Indians to lose all respect formerly shown to the Mexicans.[51] The same basic opinion was held by Armijo, who wrote his central government that foreigners were the cause of many of the problems prevalent in the department. He reported that most of the trouble centered around Taos where there was evidence of uncontrolled contraband trading. This could not be tolerated, he wrote, because the entrance of contraband into the department cut off badly needed revenue and encouraged renegade parties to raid caravans bound for Santa Fe.[52]

The gap between policy and practice was far from small, however, and Armijo found that stopping contraband goods and illicit trade was not easy. In April of 1841 Damasio Salazar was sent to treat with the Mescalero Apaches for peace terms. Armijo was chagrined to learn that

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[50]J. A. Martínez to Santa Anna in Keleher, Turmoil, p. 67.

[51]Vigil, May 16, 1846, Ritch Collection.

[52]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, April 25, 1841, MANM.

Salazar's party had been unable to make terms with the Apaches, but nonetheless had illegally traded with them. For this action Salazar received a severe tongue-lashing from Armijo.[53] Trade restriction was one of the policies employed by the department, but little could be accomplished to force the Apaches into submission while trade continued. Fines also were imposed, but Armijo pessimisticly wrote the minister of war that it would take at least one thousand soldiers to watch all the department in order to control the contraband trade. Without a show of military strength the Indians would not respect the laws.[54]

One of the department's biggest fears concerning Indian affairs was a mass attack by different tribes working under some alliance. In 1841 these fears became reality. During the year the Navajos had been placed under constant pressure by Armijo's military campaigns. Some of the chiefs found that many of their warriors were ending hostilities on their own account. In order to continue the war the Navajos made overtures to some Utes, and by March 26, 1841, these combined forces were devastating the frontier at Jémez. Once the Utes had promised to help the Navajos, peace offerings from Armijo were ignored. The situation had degenerated to such an extent that the governor was forced to order troops to guard the citizens of Abiquiu and Ojo Caliente when they went to the fields for the spring planting.[55] The peaceful Navajos who had settled down and also had begun their spring planting

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[53]Armijo to Salazar, Santa Fe, April 23, 1841, MANM.

[54]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, September 7, 1840, MANM.

[55]Armijo to commandant of the frontier of Jémez, Santa Fe, March 26, 1841, MANM.

were rewarded with gifts from Armijo. But within a few weeks the peaceful Navajos were back on the warpath because the Utes and hostile Navajos had burned their villages.[56]

Armijo wrote that the most barbarous tribes plaguing New Mexicans were the Navajos, Utes, Timpanagos, Jicarilla and Mescalero Apaches, Kiowas, Comanches, and Blackfeet. All these tribes were of the most volatile nature and caused great discomfort to the department, inhibiting settlement, trade, and ranching. Interestingly, Armijo believed that the Indian depradations would continue until another era when the Indians might lose interest in robbing the frontier. Nonetheless, at least one thousand troops would be needed to protect the communities already in existence.[57]

For both Armijo and Martínez, Indian policies were shaped around the department's poor financial and military condition. The pessimistic attitude of the officials was best verbalized by Padre José Antonio Martínez who wrote that the "Indians of New Mexico have neither honor, decency, nor conscience, and only consider as superior those that are the bravest and most skillful to kill--their enemies as well as others."[58] Although New Mexicans were not without their share of courage, it was foolhardy to expect an ill-equipped group of part-time soldiers to compete with some of the most ruthless and experienced calvalry units of the period, such as the Comanches and Apaches.

While the governors had their doubts of ever being able truly to

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[56]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, May 8, 1841, MANM.

[57]Ibid., September 7, 1840.

[58]J. A. Martínez to Santa Anna in Keleher, Turmoil, p. 70.

control their Indian inhabitants, they did have some clear strategy to combat them. The first method was that of conciliation. Armijo used this to good result in dealing with the Comanches, but found few permanent results through its application with other tribes. Second, both governors attempted to make peace treaties with the Indians, but idealistic terms and provisions usually rendered them inoperative within a short time. The rural militia was an important element of the plan to control the Indians. Their success was limited to few victories and fewer captives. They did provide an advance guard to hold the Indians in check until the regulars could be sent to the area. Fourth, the military expeditions were successful to the extent that they stopped that one immediate threat to the frontier, but long-term gains were few indeed. Finally, the government tried to control the Indians by overseeing their commerce. This strategy could have been useful for the department had the government possessed the means to enforce its trade regulations. For the most part, however, the results were inconclusive except in the respect that the New Mexicans lost no ground to the Indians and continued at least to hold them in check. Because of the severe pressures that the Indians exerted on New Mexico, it is little wonder that the governors looked with disfavor on American traders, who, they were sure, provided the Indians with both the means and the motive for their depradations.

CHAPTER V

AMERICAN ANTAGONISTS

The leading American trader in New Mexico undoubtedly was Charles Bent. He and his brother, William, built the Old Fort (Bent's Fort) on the Arkansas during 1833 and 1834. By 1840 Charles Bent had become as influential in the area of politics as in commerce in New Mexico, and felt that the consul for the United States, Manuel Alvarez, deserved his knowledgeable help. After 1837 Bent spent increasingly more time in New Mexico and shortly thereafter supervised the Bent, St. Vrain & Company store in Taos. Having married a Mexican woman, Bent qualified for Mexican citizenship; with this wedge into New Mexican affairs, he became a continual interference into the process of departmental government. He, and others like him, were seen as adventurers by New Mexican officials; these men were insensitive to Mexican customs and became concerned about affairs in the department only when these directly effected their purses. The relationship between Americans and New Mexicans was usually uncordial and frequently strained.

Armijo always was concerned about the activities at Bent's Fort, but he respected Bent as a man who, like himself, had allowed little to block his path to success. Armijo had little doubt that Bent was in collusion with the Texans and had given information to the invaders, that Bent allowed American fugitives from Mexican justice to hide in his fort, and that Bent sold firearms to unfriendly Indians and thereby

increasing hostilities for New Mexicans. In 1840 Armijo wrote that the dangers suffered by New Mexicans was caused by various forts, the nearest of which was Bent's. If the president did not remedy this situation, New Mexico would suffer total ruin. In reality, little could be done by the Mexicans because the fort clearly sat inside the United States.[1]

In dealing with the New Mexicans, Bent usually followed three different strategies, depending on the authority and power of the New Mexican involved. Bent's relations with Armijo best exemplify his attempts at conciliation. Only rarely would he confront Armijo directly, but his opinions were made known. In communicating with the governor, Bent usually followed proper channels; that is, he would send word through Manuel Alvarez to be relayed to the governor. Bent's position was typical of early Americans in New Mexico; nothing could proceed correctly unless he had a hand in it. Lack of modesty on Bent's part did not mean lack of intelligence, however. Bent expended considerable effort to please the governor. In February 1841, for example, he supplied Armijo with one keg of gunpowder and ten pounds of coffee, both of which were extremely difficult to obtain in New Mexico.[2]

With the governor, however, Bent was not afraid to use the stick as well as the carrot. In March 1841, Bent was under attack by Mexican officials for causing Indian hostilities. During the Ute slave-trading episode Armijo believed that Bent had the intent of profiting

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[1]David Lavender, Bent's Fort (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1954), p. 194.

[2]Bent to Alvarez, Taos, February 26, 1841, "The Charles Bent Papers." Vol. XXX, 154.

through warfare, and refused to take the trader's advice concerning the incident. Bent wrote that in the future he would keep his opinions to himself. He explained to Alvarez, who would pass the information on to Armijo, that if the Indians robbed a wagon train of eighty to one hundred thousand dollars worth of goods, he could get the whole amount from them for fifteen to twenty thousand dollars of trinkets. This would be much to his interest, as would any form of Mexican-Indian hostilities, for the Indians would then be forced to trade with Bent. Although Bent assured Alvarez that he had no such intentions, the warning was clear.[3]

Of the second group of Mexicans with whom Bent dealt, Padre José Antonio Martínez best exemplifies his strategy. Martínez was a good friend of Armijo and had the governor's ear on many affairs. Yet, the padre was staunchly anti-foreign in general and anti-American in particular. The two had a mutual dislike for the other, yet the battle was one of words rather than of violence. Martínez had come from a rich family and owned considerable tracts of land in northern New Mexico; these fine grazing lands also were desired by Bent. Fortunately the pair never came to blows, but if words could kill Martínez surely would have died.

In one of his better descriptions of Martínez, Bent wrote that the Father, in January of 1841, had recently returned from visiting the Bishop and had been "constantly employed since he got home detailing to his greedy admirers, and hearers, the great respect and attention that was bestowed on him in his last trip to Durango."

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[3]Ibid., March 29, 1841, 158.

The padre told how all considered him as one of the greatest men of the age, as a writer, ecclesiastic, jurist, and philanthropist. This was possible, wrote Bent, because the father was a master at studying nature in her "nudist" guise. Bent concluded, "He is a prodigy, and his great name deserves to be written in letters of gold in all high places that this gaping and ignorant multitude might fall down and worship it. . . ." Sarcastic remarks such as this by Bent were common. He knew that Martínez was most likely saying the same about him to the governor. Wisely, however, Bent refrained from open attacks, realizing that a man who conferred with the governor and who controlled the parish faithful could deeply hurt him.[4]

When conciliation and verbal assault failed to satisfy a man's honor, there was always physical recourse. In early 1841, a certain Juan Vigil brought claims against Bent and William Workman. The content of these claims is unknown, but probably included reports that Workman and Bent were involved in the Texan invasion. It was during this episode that Bent promised the gunpowder and coffee to Armijo, perhaps to improve the atmosphere. Nonetheless, on February 19, Bent and Workman presented Vigil with a copy of these "false representations," and after he had read them and was asked if they were the ones forwarded to the governor, Vigil said that they were. Thereupon Workman struck Vigil with his whip and then beat him with his fists until Bent pulled him off the Mexican. Vigil then "ran for his life,"--probably straight to the alcalde, for Bent and Workman were arrested.[5]

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[4]Ibid., January 30, 1841, Vol. XXIX, 313-5.

[5]Ibid., February 19, 1841, 315.

The suit was never brought to court, however, and Bent causticly remarked to Alvarez, "I had rather have the satisfaction of whipping a man that has wronged me than to have him punished by law. . .; [only] cowards and women take this satisfaction."[6]

Vigil had armed himself with a bowie knife and had sworn revenge on Bent and Workman, assuring them that both heretics would shortly be with the devil. With insults hurled back and forth between them, it was presumably a mere coincidence that accounted for an attack on Vigil.[7] Four men approached Vigil's home at night, but barking dogs warned him of trouble and he "fled nearly naked and crossed the prairie to Del Norte and laid there all day." Bent later remarked, "I think Juan Vigil will be heartily tired of the Valley of Taos if he is scared once or twice more."[8] In pursuing this form of strategy, the Americans made few friends among the Mexicans.

If Workman was incensed because Vigil had accused him of Texan sympathies, he had little defense. This American, along with John Rowland, were commissioners working with William Dryden to extend the Texan domain. Little is known of these two men and their background. Workman and Rowland were early Santa Fe traders and possibly naturalized Mexican citizens. Workman had previously trapped with the Patties to the Gila and later made his home in Taos. Rowland came to New Mexico from Pennsylvania and engaged in beaver trapping and also settled in Taos where he built a flour mill, distillery, and store. In 1841,

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[6]Ibid., no date (probably between February 20 and 25) 1841, 315.

[7]Lavender, Bent's Fort, p. 198.

[8]Bent to Alvarez, Taos, March 22, 1841, "The Charles Bent Papers," Vol. XXX, 157.

when anti-American sentiment reached a high pitch in the department, these two men decided to leave New Mexico in search of better land and opportunities in California.[9]

Benjamin D. Wilson, a Tennesseean who joined the Workman-Rowland party, lived in New Mexico for seven years prior to 1841. He described conditions facing foreigners in New Mexico at this time, and wrote that Workman and Rowland were in correspondence with prominent parties in Texas in the belief that the Texan expedition would succeed. Word leaked out that these men were allied with the Texans. After Armijo had exhorted the citizens to meet the Texan invasion, a mob approached some foreigners with designs of killing and robbing them, but were halted by Armijo. Owing to this unhealthy climate, Workman, Rowland, and twenty others concluded that it was not safe to remain any longer in New Mexico.[10]

Both Workman and Rowland were acquainted with California through the reports of traders, and possibly had visited the country previously. The annual caravan to California already had been granted permission to leave New Mexico on August 6, 1841 by Armijo. Tensions were mounting in Santa Fe during the following month; then on September 11, Consul Alvarez was attacked by a mob of Mexicans. It was during this week that the Workman-Rowland party left Santa Fe, staying close to the trade caravan route for protection. By September 22, the party had clearly departed Santa Fe, for Armijo wrote the minister

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[9] LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, The Old Spanish Trail: Santa Fe to Los Angeles (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1954), p. 205.

[10] B. D. Wilson as quoted in Hafen, Old Spanish Trail, p. 204.

of war that the naturalized foreigners Rowland and Workman had left for California to seduce and confuse its inhabitants. He suggested that they be captured and punished, as this would be the only method of preventing the further evils that they planned to commit in California.[11]

While some Americans left New Mexico for better conditions, one who was attracted to the Mexican Southwest for its poor conditions became famous, or rather infamous, for hunting Indians in order to receive the bounty paid by the Department of Chihuahua. James Kirker, scalphunter, arrived in New Mexico with a party of Americans in the fall of 1839. His stay in the department evidently caused Armijo much consternation. Unfortunately for the governor, his policy of commercial restrictions against the Apaches was having little effect, and fear was expressed that the Indians would shortly leave their villages for the warpath. At this point Kirker's party began their operations in the department by stealing animals from peaceful Apaches who had recently concluded a peace treaty with Armijo. When he was confronted with evidence of taking these animals, Kirker stated that the mounts had been stolen originally from him. Nonetheless, Armijo returned the horses to the Indians and told Kirker that proof of stolen goods must be obtained from the local government. This episode was only the start.[12]

At midnight on September 26, Kirker and his men crashed a dance held by Francesca Caballero, resulting in the death of Jose Guerrero,

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[11]Armijo to minister of war, Santa Fe, September 22, 1841, in Hafen, Old Spanish Trail, pp. 206-11.

[12]Armijo to Archuleta, Santa Fe, September 11, 1839, MANM.

a friend of the hostess. The testimony of the Americans and that of the Mexicans was very different in content. Robert Beal, the accused murderer, said that the Americans had been invited to the gathering, but that upon arriving a quarrel resulted, although he knew not who started it. In the ensuing fight Beal stated that he was forced to defend himself. This caused the death of Guerrero. Mexicans at the dance testified that the Americans demanded food and drink after forcing an entry into the house. When the Mexicans refused, the Americans started shooting at them. Because firearms were outlawed in Santa Fe, the Mexicans defended themselves with sticks and rocks but could do little until authorities arrived on the scene. Beal spent less than a week in the jail but eventually was released because of the license that Kirker had as "soldiers of fortune" from Chihuahua. Although Beal escaped Mexican justice he was unable to avoid court fees, which totaled more than thirteen pesos.[13]

Through the months of September and October, tension mounted for the New Mexicans while this scalphunter and his men stayed in Santa Fe. Little could be done by Armijo because Kirker was duly authorized by the central government and the Department of Chihuahua to hunt enemy Indians throughout the Northern departments. By November Kirker headed south, but there was no end to his mischief until he was completely out of the department. While passing through Socorro he seized some horses and cows from local residents. Concerning the complaints that followed Kirker as he left the department, Governor Cordero of Chihuahua assured Armijo that he had a special fund for such cases and that

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[13]Preceedings against Robert Beal, Santa Fe, September 26, 1839, MANM.

all damages caused by this volatile American would be paid in full by the Department of Chihuahua.[14]

While Mexicans fumed over the unwanted scalphunters, Americans also had their problems in dealing with the Mexicans. A typical charge brought against Armijo was that he was lax toward criminals who committed crimes against Americans. Such was the case when Joseph Pulsiphur, an American, was killed at Mora on November 9, 1840. Americans charged that nothing was being done by New Mexican authorities to catch the murderer, Juan Cristóbal Armijo. Tempers rose over the incident, and Bent wrote that every American was interested in capturing the accused as it was the fourth murder that had been committed on American citizens in the last few years. He believed that even if twenty people were involved in the murder, all should be put to death: "It is the duty of the authorities to have the murderers punished with death, and all expenses should be defrayed by the government." Bent told Alvarez that as consul, it was his duty to find any relatives of the deceased and to make a full statement to the minister in Mexico.[15] Although Bent and many others were naturalized Mexican citizens, they usually relied on their American citizenship to provide better treatment and faster results when conditions became troubled.

An investigation into the affair was launched, but little was learned except that Pulsiphur was traveling to Taos when he was attacked at the Sapello River near Mora. Juan Armijo seemed to be the leader of three men who, after attacking him, divided Pulsiphur's

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[14]Cordero to Armijo, Chihuahua, June 28, 1840, MANM.

[15]Bent to Alvarez, Taos, December 1, 1841, "The Charles Bent Papers," Vol. XXIX, 338-9.

goods among themselves, and then fled from the site of the crime. Juan Armijo and his gang were not caught by the authorities, and the matter remained unresolved--much to the disgust of Charles Bent and Manuel Alvarez.[16]

A lesser conflict also proved to the Americans that they were being discriminated against. In 1841 Alvarez informed the governor that Americans were being forced to pay a thirty peso surcharge for the marriage ceremony. Alvarez petitioned the governor for an explanation, writing that Vicar Ortiz was treating Americans unfairly and illegally.[17] Authorities in Santa Fe replied that ecclesiastical jurisdiction was independent of civil authorities and that the fee would continue to be charged until the bishop of Durango could give a decision. Meanwhile, Armijo refused to interfere in any way with the vicar.[18]

The vicar was unquestionably anti-foreign, and most probably did not correspond at all about the matter to the bishop in Durango. Despite Alvarez' threats and pleas, little was accomplished due to the strong anti-American sentiment running through New Mexico because of reports of an impending Texan invasion. The vicar explained that according to a law of May 22, 1819, such a fee was to be charged to all foreigners desiring a marriage ceremony. That the law was passed under Spanish authority made little difference to Ortiz. In a strongly

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[16]Proceedings concerning the death of Joseph Pulsiphur, Santa Fe, February 3, 1841, MANM. This writer has been unable to establish any relation between Juan Armijo and the governor. This is not to say that the two were unrelated however.

[17]Alvarez to Miranda, Santa Fe, May 24, 1841, MANM.

[18]Armijo to Alvarez, Santa Fe, May 24, 1841, MANM.

worded letter Ortiz wrote that Mexicans must preserve their national heritage and resist enemy advancements in every form. Obviously, the vicar was doing his part to save New Mexico in the battle against the Anglos by charging this fee.[19]

Situations such as this appear to have been the major concern for the consul of the United States. Although four consuls were given the position at Santa Fe, none were recognized by the Mexican government, and only Alvarez truly attempted to carry out American state department orders and send reports. Ceran St. Vrain, a Missourian and one time partner of Charles Bent, was appointed in 1834 to the post but never assumed the duties. Alvarez took the position on March 21, 1839 and reached Santa Fe in July of that year.[20] Throughout his tenure as consul--until 1844--his position became more a personal rivalry with Armijo than one of diplomatic pacification. Both men were engaged in the Santa Fe trade and thus were commercial rivals as well as political contestants. While Alvarez was a most important source of strength for Americans in New Mexico, it is plain that Armijo used the consul as a sounding board in order to gauge the response of Americans to daily issues. When Alvarez became too demanding on the government, he was reminded that his recognition as consul was only a courtesy because of the friendly relations between the two governments, but because he did not have an exequatur, a certificate of legal diplomatic status, from the Mexican government,

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[19]Ortiz to Miranda, La Blanca, August 2, 1841, MANM.

[20]Max L. Moorhead, New Mexico's Royal Road (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), pp. 123-4n.

he could not legitimately exercise his functions as consul.[21]

The Americans were further frustrated by what they considered unfair trade restrictions. During 1837-1843 Armijo followed little precedent in establishing taxes, providing rather a single direct tax on all goods entering the department. To some degree this policy contributed to his resignation in 1843. James Webb pointed out that the only reason for importing goods through Santa Fe instead of Chihuahua or another port of entry was the liberal tax relaxations made by Armijo. However practical this policy was in encouraging the trade in New Mexico, it evidently did not meet with official approval. Webb quoted Governor Martínez as telling Armijo that Santa Anna wanted a change in the department because of the exceedingly corrupt administration. Armijo admitted stealing but added that he had something to show for it; Martínez, he knew, also stole, but had nothing to show for it. While Webb's relation of this conversation may be somewhat exaggerated, it does show that new financial plans were to be put into effect in New Mexico and that Martínez would be the one to see that they were enforced.[22]

Communications from the central government in 1843 outlined new plans which they hoped would bolster the departmental economy. The guiding light behind these proposals was Lucas Alamán, general director of national industry. Much could be done to liberate the department from financial worries through a new program, but the closing of the

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[21]Miranda to Alvarez, Santa Fe, October 11, 1841, MANM.

[22]Webb, Santa Fe Trade, p. 84.

Northern frontier to commerce in 1843[23] was the key to the remainder of the policies. Although some members of the central government recommended encouraging commerce and industry, official proclamations more often laid down restrictions that impeded rather than fostered the national economy. Alamán encouraged each department to form councils to work toward improving the general welfare of the Republic. Martínez informed him that although there was no industry or manufacturing in New Mexico, attempts would be made to promote commerce.[24]

For New Mexicans it was difficult to understand how the government expected the department to increase commerce when their only port of entry had been closed. Because the citizens conducted campaigns against the department's enemies at their own risk and expense, decrees calling for tax contributions were not enforced in New Mexico. Consequently the only source of income was the customs house which was presently closed. Although New Mexicans did not learn of it until July 1, 1844, the trade officially was re-opened on March 11, 1844.

> Know Ye: The national congress and executives have declared the following:
> Article one: Declared open to foreign trade are the customs of Taos in the department of New Mexico and of El Paso del Norte and Presidio del Norte of the Department of Chihuahua.
> Article two: Merchandise, fruits, and goods which may be introduced through said customs remain subject to the payment of importation taxes and existing laws.[25]

In reality, the closing of the New Mexican customs from August 7, 1843, to March 11, 1844 had little direct effect on New Mexicans because it

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[23]Decree of August 7, 1843, Mexico, MANM.

[24]Martínez to director general of national industry, Santa Fe, May 11, 1844, MANM.

[25]Decree of March 11, 1844, Mexico, MANM.

was the off-season of the trade. The customs were open for the first trade caravans of 1844 and provided needed revenue for the debt-ridden department.

One of the first traders to reach New Mexico after the customs had re-opened was James Webb, who complained that Governor Martínez demanded 750 dollars entry tax per wagon. He accused both Governors Martínez and Armijo of stealing, claiming that Armijo was more clever at it than Martinez because he had money to pay his troops while Martínez did not. Webb and his party experienced difficulties, delays, and expense in entering their goods. Frustrating them further was an additional assessment of one percent which had been recently imposed on foreign goods by the departmental assembly in order to meet an immediate financial crisis. Because the Americans were not allowed to retail in Santa Fe, they traveled for three weeks in southern New Mexico, stopping at local villages but selling only 400 dollars worth of merchandise. On March 3, 1845, Webb sold his remaining stock to Mexican traders and returned to St. Louis to prepare for another journey.[26]

Owing to the floundering economy of the nation, exact procedures were sent from the central government to regulate trade. After 1844 Martínez put into practice many of the laws that had been on the record books but had never been enforced. Martínez made each trader and passenger secure a guía or permit, as required by law, and kept careful records of traders and goods passing through New Mexico.

Further laws were placed in force by a decree of December 28,

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[26]Webb, Santa Fe Trade, pp. 81-88.

1843. This decree shows the fondness of the Mexicans for keeping an account of the minutest details of the trade. Accordingly, the trader had to meet basic requirements before he could trade. If his merchandise did not exceed one hundred pesos in value, he had to secure a travel permit; if his merchandise was valued at more than one hundred pesos, he was expected to secure a travel permit and also a trade permit. Each wagon was to be carefully inventoried showing its total value, for a tax of one percent would be collected whenever the wagon left one department and entered another. A complicated provision also provided that the trader must carry sufficient money to pay all taxes levied along his route. Eighty pesos for each ten mules for every one hundred leagues was considered adequate. In the event of robbery while on the road, the trader was immediately to report the affair to the nearest alcalde.

Traders would not be allowed to clear customs until all their credentials were in order. Not complying with any one of five different provisions would make his goods liable to immediate confiscation. First, the trader was to have all documents concerning the caravan and his goods with him at all times. Second, the information on these documents must conform exactly with the cargo in the caravan. Third, the documents could not be mutilated in any way. Fourth, the caravan was to follow only those routes specifically designated by the authorities. Fifth, the trader must report, without fail, to every custom house along his route.

All foreign imports that were prohibited by law were to be confiscated, and fines were to be levied equal to the value of the merchandise. Traders were held responsible for knowing which goods

were prohibited and which goods were controlled by national monopoly. Some of the goods controlled by national monopoly were tobacco, gunpowder, fireworks, sulphur, and paper. According to this decree, if the trader could not pay the fine for importing these goods, he would serve from two to eight years in textile factories called obrajes or in private homes.

Goods that were confiscated by officials were to be returned to the customs to await a judicial decision. Invariably such goods were declared contraband. The trader would be charged with payment of court fees, including the salaries of the judge, scribe, and treasury official. If the defendant did not appear, five percent of the goods would be taken to meet these costs. Animals engaged in transporting contraband also were to be termed confiscated and were to be included in the total evaluation of all goods. Of the remaining amount, after the five percent for court fees, a three-way division was to be made among whoever apprehended the goods the accuser, and the fiscal (or administrator of taxes). The central government hoped that these laws would discourage the contraband trade and simplify taxation procedures.[27]

Other legalities also restricted the trade for Americans. Another imposition was the carta de seguridad (or safe conduct pass); every foreigner had to obtain this permit in order to travel or reside within the Republic. If the foreigner did not have this pass on his person at all times, he could be imprisoned. It cost only three dollars and could be obtained from the central authorities through the

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[27]Decree to regulate interior commerce of the Republic, Mexico, December 28, 1843, MANM.

consul at Mexico City, who was to certify the foreigner's national citizenship. However, the pass was valid only for one year, and there was considerable inconvenience in obtaining it because it was risky to send money through the mails and few of the foreigners had established credit in Mexico City.[28] In reality, the trade restrictions were such a mass of overlapping and unclear provisions that officials in New Mexico paid little attention to the national policy. But there were attempts to limit the amount of contraband and to stop Americans from cheating the customs. Mexican authorities would dispatch a company of Mexican soldiers to meet the merchants under the pretense of guarding them from Indian attack. "But their real object," wrote William Boggs, "was to see that no goods or wagons were smuggled into the country to escape the heavy duties."[29] Another reason for sending out troops was to stop the traders from loading all their goods on as few wagons as possible because the governor usually charged a flat rate per wagon instead of individual taxes on goods.

Webb admitted to this practice of loading the wagons to great weights in order to have as few as possible,[30] and Bent once wrote Alvarez in 1844 that his brother George was coming to Santa Fe with eight wagons but would have only five by the time he reached the capital. Bent warned Alvarez that it would be best to say nothing of his arrival for fear that an escort might be sent out before he left

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[28]Moorhead, Royal Road, pp. 144-5.

[29]Hafen, "The W. M. Boggs Manuscript," 58.

[30]Webb, Santa Fe Trade, p. 86.

the three wagons behind.[31] Richard L. Wilson also wrote that in anticipation of the arrival of his party at Santa Fe, five loads were compressed into four wagons, and contraband goods were sent by a different route by pack horse to the interior.[32] The system was productive at both ends. The Mexican tradition of officials earning their livelihood through graft from public office was overlooked in the poverty-ridden department, and despite the "heavey and exorbitant" rates of taxes placed on each wagon--ranging from 500 to 750 dollars--they were far less than the average legal duties would have amounted to. These legal duties have been estimated by recent historians to be anywhere from one thousand to two thousand dollars per wagon.[33]

The nature of the trade can be reconstructed from the ledgers of Manuel Alvarez, who, when not defending American interests, participated in this trade. All traders bought their goods from stores in the east, but by 1840 most of the traders had eliminated the middleman in the operation by buying directly from the wholesalers. Alvarez made three trips to the eastern markets in the winters of 1838-1839, 1841-1842, and 1843-1844. Generally he bought his goods from New York and Philadelphia, although there is evidence that he traveled to London in 1844. Alvarez and his partner, Damasio López, sold goods wholesale as far north as Abiquiu and Taos, and as far south as Chihuahua in addition to their retail business. The many

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[31]Bent to Alvarez, Taos, November 12, 1844, "The Charles Bent Papers," Vol. XXX, 166-7.

[32]Richard L. Wilson, Short Ravelings from a Long Yarn (Santa Anna, California: Fine Arts Press, 1936), p. 130.

[33]Moorhead, Royal Road, p. 127.

beads and other trinkets that Alvarez bought shows that his trade with the Indians was very important. Although supplying New Mexicans with many goods that were unobtainable from Mexico, these traders also provided a rudimentary form of banking, giving credit and cashing notes.[34]

The conflicts between the Mexicans and Americans over the Santa Fe trade continued to provoke quarrels between the participants throughout both governor's terms. Another area, that of mining, also gave rise to arguments. The mines of Cerrillos, some twenty-five miles south of Santa Fe, were known for their productivity, especially one in the area known as El Placer. The value of gold extracted from the mines between the years 1832 and 1835 was estimated at between sixty and eighty thousand dollars per year. The dust and grains obtained at these mines were virgin gold and of very fine quality. Once the presence of gold was verified, the central government prohibited all persons except natives from working the mines.[35]

While a desire to keep the foreigners out of the mining business undoubtedly motivated the department to provide a system of law enforcement at the camps, Mexican officials also were attempting to end the smuggling of gold out of the department and into the United States. Precious metals were forbidden to leave the country, but evidently much escaped; Josiah Gregg, for example, provided exact figures of the worth of the gold after it was processed by the United States mint.[36]

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[34]Lansing B. Bloom, "Ledgers of a Santa Fe Trader," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXI (April, 1946), 135-9.

[35]Gregg, Commerce, pp. 109-10.

[36]Ibid., p. 108.

Although foreigners were lawfully banned from participating in mining, Wislizenus wrote that he had conferred with a Mr. Watrous from New England, a Mr. Tournier from France, and a Mr. Campbell from the United States; by taking a Mexican as a partner, they were able to engage in the business and at the same time obviate the law. In consequence of such actions, the authorities would eject an owner and confiscate his property from time to time.[37]

Perhaps owing to these conflicts and the poor conditions at the camps, attempts were made by officials in New Mexico to establish a clear code of ordinances organizing civil authority in the camps in 1844. Provisions were drafted by Manuel Delgado and provided the following: first, a public school and jail were to be established; second, criminals would be forced to work on public projects, but for this work would receive a wage that would be divided for their own use; and third, criminals would be provided a complete set of tools to work the placer; fourth, women also knew how to commit crimes, and jails were to be built to correct these women who could make the meals for the other criminals; fifth, a military force of twelve to fifteen men would be established at the mines; sixth, treasury accounts were to be checked at least once every month; seventh, debts owed by deceased individuals could not be collected from relatives.

Eighth, money could be loaned at an interest rate of one real per peso per week; ninth, each citizen had to work his claim within fifteen days, and if he failed to do so the claim would revert to the government; tenth, if a citizen did not appear in court after being

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[37]Wislizenus, "Memoirs," p. 32.

called he could be fined two reales; eleventh, criminals had to work for their subsistence while serving their term; twelfth, because robberies of merchants were committed owing to the needs of the thieves, criminals would be fined only the value of that which they stole, and thirteenth, all goods introduced by merchants were to be inspected, for poor-quality merchandise lessened the ability of those who worked. Some of these ordinances, specifically the seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth, clearly showed an anti-American sentiment. Evidently these ordinances provided the means for restoring order in the mining camps, however, for little further correspondence concerning them comes to light.[38]

Another area of conflict between Americans and Mexican officials was that of land grants. Many foreigners in New Mexico had become Mexican citizens and wished to apply for tracts of land within the department. Under a presidential decree of March 1842, all land grants in frontier departments had first to be approved by the central government. However, some grants had previously been made, and a legal battle over many of the claims would continue until American occupation. One of the best known Mexican land grants, the Beaubien-Miranda grant, showed the difference of opinions not only between the foreigners and Mexicans, but also between the Mexicans themselves.

The original petition was made to Armijo in January of 1841 by Charles Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda. Beaubien was a prosperous merchant in Taos who had fled Canada in 1800 because he realized that the priesthood--for which he was being trained--would never suit him.

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[38]Ordinances prepared by Manuel Delgado, Tuerto, March 17, 1844, MANM.

In 1827 he married a New Mexican woman after trapping for some time in that area, and by 1829 had become a naturalized citizen of Mexico. Beaubien became wealthy and politically dominant in the close-knit foreign colony of Taos.[39] Miranda was a native-born Mexican who had discharged the duties as departmental secretary, collector of customs, and as the private secretary to Manuel Armijo. He was a very patriotic Mexican and quite loyal to Armijo.[40]

In their petition, Beaubien and Miranda wrote that New Mexico was one of the most backward departments in Mexico because of the paucity of industry and manufactures. Yet all the physical conditions of New Mexico favored expansion and exploitation. By granting undeveloped tracts of land to private individuals, the idle people of the department, who constituted a financial burden to all. could be located on these lands to make them productive. Both also added that they had large families to support and needed more land for farming.[41] The wisdom of Beaubien's diplomatic maneuver of having Miranda as a partner was seen by Armijo's almost immediate granting of the land three days later. Armijo agreed that the petitioners were in conformity with the law and granted them the land "in order that they make the proper use of it which the law allows."[42]

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[39]Lavender, Bent's Fort, p. 164.

[40]Jim Berry Pearson, The Maxwell Land Grant (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 4.

[41]Petition of Miranda and Beaubien, Santa Fe, January 8, 1841, in Ralph Emerson Twitchell, The Spanish Archives of New Mexico (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1914), Vol. I, pp. 63-5.

[42]William A. Keleher, Maxwell Land Grant: A New Mexican Item (Santa Fe: The Rydal Press, 1942), p. 15.

Because of the strong anti-American feeling in New Mexico at this time giving to the Texan invasions, little was done with the land until 1843. One of the most interesting aspects of this land grant was the role of silent partners. In March of 1843, agreements were made with both Manuel Armijo and Charles Bent, independent of each other, giving them one fourth interest in the grant. Earlier, Miranda and Beaubien went through the ceremony of taking possession of the land by pulling weeds and tossing dirt.[43] Up to this point the land grant was in accordance with Armijo's policy of allowing foreigners to colonize vast expanses of empty lands with the expectation that they would defend them against an invading army or marauding Indians. This official policy changed when Mariano Chávez became acting governor.[44]

Governor Chávez, brother of the murdered José,[45] had no love for foreigners, and at the urging of Padre José Antonio Martínez suspended the grant on February 27, 1844. The padre charged that Beaubien's ownership meant the grant was secretly controlled by foreigners--which it was--and that common grazing lands had been removed from Indian pueblos. When Chávez resigned because of illness, the president of departmental assembly, Felipe Seña, ordered that the land be returned to Beaubien and Miranda. With this news, colonization schemes were begun by the Canadian.[46]

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[43]Lawrence R. Murphy, "The Beaubien and Miranda Land Grant, 1841-1846," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XLII (January, 1967), 31-2.

[44]Lavender, Bent's Fort, p. 403.

[45]See page 46 above.

[46]Murphy, "The Beaubien and Miranda Land Grant, 1841-1846," 33.

When Mariano Martínez became governor in April, the conflict was renewed. Martínez was adamant about keeping foreigners from acquiring property or starting colonies, perhaps with visions of Texan history fresh in his mind. Therefore, Beaubien once again was prohibited from starting his colony at El Ponil. Beaubien was advised that he and his companions could remain at El Ponil only until they had harvested their current crops.[47] Beaubien was not alone, however, in his fight for land. An American trader, John Scolly, and other foreigners were denied petitions for land grants also in Northern New Mexico.[48]

Once Armijo returned as governor, the winds of fortune shifted once again for Beaubien and Bent, the latter having replaced Miranda as an active participant in the grant. With war scares rumored daily, the promoters continued their plans to settle the land near El Ponil. The efforts were interrupted by the American capture of New Mexico in 1846 and the revolt in 1847 which resulted in the death of Charles Bent. Eventually the son-in-law of Beaubien, Lucien B. Maxwell, inherited the Miranda-Beaubien grant after years of litigation.[49]

In relations between the Americans and the Mexicans at this time, both apparently felt they were wronged by the other, and both tried to exploit the other as much as possible. Armijo realized that the department depended on the revenues received through the entrance of goods from the United States and knew that he could not place too many restrictions on the Americans and foreigners without endangering this

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[47]Martínez to Archuleta, Santa Fe, June 8, 1844, MANM.

[48]Martínez to naturalized foreigners, Santa Fe, January 4, 1845, MANM.

[49]Murphy, "The Beaubien and Miranda Land Grant, 1841-1846," 40.

source of revenue. Martínez made several attempts to enforce the collection of legal duties. When he did, he was violently criticized for his policy and accused of stealing the revenues collected. During his second term in office, Armijo reverted to the traditional arrangement which allowed the officials to be bribed into reducing the taxes. Not only was he likewise accused of pocketing the funds from the customs but also the Mexican officials were shocked by his toleration of such occurrences. Americans, on the other hand, attempted to make as much profit from the trade as possible with as little personal expense to themselves. In truth they accomplished both of these goals: profits were large, and taxes were low--or not paid at all. Clearly, the departmental government was caught between Mexican parochialism and American expansionism. These problems of the New Mexican government would not be solved until they were eliminated by the Americans in 1846.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The growing conflict between Americans and New Mexicans increased with the annexation of Texas. By July of 1845, the news had reached Santa Fe that the United States Congress had approved this annexation, and departmental officials became resigned to the prospect that an invasion from the north would be simply a matter of time. Although removed from the centers of governmental intrigue, the New Mexicans realized that diplomatic relations were worsening between the United States and Mexico, and that by right of inheritance the Texan question was now an American problem. As war had existed between Mexico and Texas before annexation, they had little doubt that war would soon exist between Mexico and the United States after annexation. Once again, Armijo would be called upon to defend his department. His role in the American capture of Santa Fe has been disputed by many historians, but his actions were only a logical continuation of his previous pragmatic administrations. Circumstances over which the governor had no control would combine to form an impossible dilemma for Armijo.[1]

Events during 1845 forecasted the nature of the conflict. To the north of the Arkansas newspapers carried stories of how the "glorious spirit of annexation is spreading like a prairie fire up the Río del

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[1]Armijo to minister of foreign affairs, Santa Fe, July 28, 1845, MANM.

Norte, and rattling the dried bones in New Mexico."[2] There was little doubt that New Mexico was ready for the benefits of democracy and the American tradition of freedom. New Mexicans, however, were not convinced of these blessings. Articles in the newspaper from Santa Fe condemned the thieves of the north who had stolen part of their country by annexing Texas; New Mexicans could not understand how a nation that called itself Christian could do such a thing.[3] The never-ending battle over Mexico's refusal to pay what it believed to be inflated claims, the location of the boundary between the two countries, and the unstable Mexican government caused both the Mexicans and the Americans to feel that war was iminent.

Unfortunately for New Mexicans, the department during 1845 was hampered by resignations and appointments within, and jurisdictional and territorial changes from without. Not until November of 1845 was Armijo formally appointed as governor after Martínez' resignation in April. Under orders from President Herrera, patriotic councils were to be established in the departments. The governors were to appoint members to the council, whose purpose would be to coordinate matters of defense and initiate patriotism in the department.[4] In addition, another decree joined New Mexico, Durango, and Chihuahua as one commandancy generaliship, thus ending Armijo's role as military commander. Juan Andrés Archuleta was appointed principal commandant for New

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[2]St. Louis Missouri Reporter, May 16, 1845.

[3]Santa Fe El Payo de Nuevo Mejico, August 7, 1845, MANM.

[4]Armijo to minister of the treasury, Santa Fe, November 28, 1845, MANM.

Mexico under jurisdiction of the commandant general in Durango.[5] Further complications arose in December of 1845 when Mariano Paredes led a successful revolution against the government of Herrera and came to power in January 1846. Parades apparently restored Armijo to the position of commandant general by March of 1846 and did away with the combined form of departmental defense. These upsets within the central Mexican government undoubtedly caused much grief for Armijo at a time when Anglo invasion was most immediate, and assistance and stability were greatly needed by the governor. Correspondence to the governor from Mexican authorities became rare, and the last letter that Armijo received before the American arrival told him only that diplomatic relations had been broken between the United States and Mexico--not that war existed.[6]

The early months of 1846 found the department of New Mexico in its usual state of financial crisis. The departmental assembly became a main center of political activity in the province. Donaciano Vigil, a member of the assembly who had risen from the military ranks to some prominence, provided needed leadership during these last few months. Vigil moved that the assembly allow all munitions to come into the department duty free, and also moved that an inventory of the year's expenses still in arrears might be made so that some of the outstanding bills might be paid with the revenues expected from

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[5]The exact date of Archuleta's appointment to this position is unknown. After December 4, 1845, correspondence from Archuleta is prefaced with this title.

[6]Minister of war to Armijo, Mexico, June 4, 1846, MANM.

the first trade caravans. This measure passed in May of 1846.[7]

The news of the caravan's approach was followed closely, for with its arrival the officials hoped to receive information concerning the Americans along with badly needed revenue. On June 26, the caravan arrived and the traders confirmed the rumors of war between the two countries. One of these traders, Adolfo Speyers, the partner of Armijo in the trade, reported that American troops were approaching New Mexico. With this news Armijo sold his share of the business to Speyers and readied New Mexicans for battle.[8] New Mexicans cheered the inflammatory speeches of officials trying to arouse patriotism, but when the crowds became mob-like, troops were called in to protect the property of Americans and foreigners still in the department.[9] On June 30, Wislizenus arrived in Santa Fe and dispelled the rumors of immediate attack. He wrote that Armijo was alarmed over reports of war, although the citizens were indifferent. Wislizenus told the governor that no troops were ready when he left Bent's Fort and that if they started at all they could hardly reach New Mexico in less than two months.[10] With this information Armijo advised the militia, which he previously had called to Santa Fe, to return to their homes as there was no immediate danger of an attack by the Americans.[11]

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[7]Bloom, "New Mexico Under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 354-6.

[8]Susan Shelby Magoffin, Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico: The Diary of Susan Shelby Magoffin, 1846-1847 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), pp. 96-7n.

[9]Lavender, Bent's Fort, p. 225.

[10]Wislizenus, "Memoirs," p. 20.

[11]Armijo to prefect of the north, Santa Fe, June 30, 1846, MANM.

By early July Armijo had definite information of an impending invasion, which he believed would come at the end of August. In order to unite the department he appealed to the departmental assembly, through Tomás Ortiz, to give the governor dictatorial powers and to declare martial law throughout New Mexico. The assembly could not reach a decision, however, resulting in these requests not being granted.[12] In addition to these actions, Armijo ordered Gregorio Vigil at the presidio of Bado to send six men with a trusted commander on a reconnaissance mission. They were to scout the area of the Arkansas River and report any sign of an American army.[13]

The revenues that the department received from the caravan at the end of June evidently did not provide the necessary funds for the departments, for the possibility of a forced loan was discussed on July 18. Agreement was reached that time was running short for New Mexicans and that conscription should begin immediately. All men over age sixteen and under age fifty-nine were to be readied for war.[14] In order to solve the financial and military crisis, Armijo called for a meeting of the most influential men in the department. He wrote that it was positively known that forces of the United States were coming to attack New Mexico. An immediate solution was needed for the welfare of the department, or its existence would end.[15]

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[12]Session of the departmental assembly, Santa Fe, July 13, 1846, in Bloom, "New Mexico Under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 357-8.

[13]Armijo to Vigil, Santa Fe, July 12, 1846, MANM.

[14]Armijo to prefect of the north, Santa Fe, July 18, 1846, MANM.

[15]Armijo to Pascual Martínez, Santa Fe, July 11, 1846, in Keleher, Turmoil, p. 9.

During the first weeks of August attention again centered on the assembly as officials and citizens argued about the fate of the government. On August 6, Serafín Ramírez reported that the departmental treasury was empty and, furthermore, that salaries and other obligations for the preceding two months were in arrears. Because of this lack of funds, Armijo once again was moved to ask for a forced loan. If revenue could not be obtained, the governor said he would have to rely only on volunteers to defend the department. The assembly decided that too much time would be wasted in attempting to collect a forced loan. Therefore, General Armijo could take all necessary measures for the sustenance of military forces in New Mexico.[16]

With this new vote of confidence Armijo issued a proclamation to the citizens of New Mexico. In it he reviewed the conflicting claims to Texas between the United States and Mexico, writing that because Texas had been usurped by the United States it was necessary to suspend relations between the two nations. "At this very moment," he wrote, "forces of the United States are now advancing on the department." He concluded the proclamation by saying "Let us be ready for war since we are provoked to it. Let us not look at the strength of our enemies, nor at the size of the obstacles we have to overcome.... Your governor is dependent upon your pecuniary resources, upon your decision, and upon your conviction."[17]

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[16]Sessions of the departmental assembly, Santa Fe, August 6-8, 1846, in Bloom, "New Mexico under Mexican Administration," Vol. II, 360-2.

[17]Proclamation of Armijo, Santa Fe, August 8, 1846, in Ralph Emerson Twitchell, The Military Occupation of New Mexico 1846-1851 (Denver: The Smith-Brooks Company, 1909), pp. 60-3.

While these provisions were being made in New Mexico, Colonel Stephen Watts Kearny was approaching Santa Fe from Bent's Fort. On July 31, 1846, he issued a proclamation while at the fort in which he declared that he was entering New Mexico with a great military force, but that he sought only to seek union and amelioration for the citizens of New Mexico. He recommended that the inhabitants of New Mexico remain peaceful and assured them that the United States Army would not molest them. On the contrary, they would be respected and protected in all their rights, both civil and religious. However, those who refused his conditions and took up arms against the United States would be looked upon as enemies.[18] The conquest of New Mexico had begun.

In pursuing his policy of a bloodless conquest, Kearny sent Captain Philip St. George Cooke ahead of the army to Santa Fe; Cooke later wrote, "The general [colonel at the time] greatly surprised me by a proposition that I should set out in advance, with a flag of truce to Santa Fe."[19] Cooke carried a letter to Armijo from Kearny in which he advised the governor that he intended to take possession of New Mexico, for the land rightfully was owned by the United States owing to the annexation of Texas. Kearny pledged to respect New Mexican life, basically under the same conditions that had been given in his proclamation. Kearny ended by saying he wished to avoid any bloodshed, and that if Armijo resisted then he would be responsible

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[18]Proclamation of Kearny, Bent's Fort, July 31, 1846, in Keleher, Turmoil, p. 7.

[19]Philip St. George Cooke, The Conquest of New Mexico and California (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1964), p. 6.

for the sufferings, miseries, and bloodshed that would result for New Mexico.[20] Cooke and his companion James Magoffin were to present this letter to the governor and entreat him to turn the department over to the Americans.

While Cooke went on ahead to Santa Fe, the American troops continued towards the capital also. On the tenth of August five Mexicans who had been sent to reconnoiter the American forces, were captured. They rode on very small jackasses and met with the laughter of the Americans when they were captured. Information from these men and also from Taos stated that Armijo had called all citizens to arms. He was reported as having about 2,000 pueblo Indians, 300 regulars, and 1,200 Mexican militia. The troops were anxious for a fight and although half the Indians were indifferent on the subject they would be forced to fight.[21]

Exactly what happened during the meetings of Cooke and Magoffin with the Mexicans will probably never be known. Kearny, at first, claimed only the east bank of the Río del Norte, and in his letter to Armijo on August 1 asserted ownership only of the eastern portion of New Mexico. However, his orders gave him permission to continue to California at his own discretion. Magoffin, having recently arrived from discussions with President James K. Polk, knew only of the plans to establish control over the eastern portion of New Mexico as claimed by Texas. Possibly while Cooke met with Armijo and was told only that

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[20]Kearny to Armijo, August 1, 1846, in Turmoil, pp. 7-8.

[21]W. H. Emory, Notes of a Military Reconnoissance from Fort Leavenworth, in Missouri, to San Diego, in California, United States House of Representatives Executive Document, No. 41, 30th Cong., 1st Sess., Serial No. 517, p. 28.

the governor would set out on August 13 with six thousand men (an exaggeration), Magoffin was doing the dirty work.[22]

Perhaps the best theory is that Magoffin, after arriving in Santa Fe, met with Juan Andrés Archuleta who was second in command of the army. He apparently suggested to Archuleta that Mexico could retain the territory west of Río del Norte since all the Americans claimed was the land to the east of the river. All Archuleta need do was to abandon Armijo and then, with the silent consent of the United States, make himself governor of the land west of Río del Norte.[23] The only definite facts concerning this incident are contained in Armijo's reply to Kearny of August 12. Armijo wrote that he could not agree to relinquish any Mexican territory, that he also did not want bloodshed, and that perhaps a meeting between the two could be arranged if Kearny did not cross the Sapello River.[24]

This theory of Archuleta deserting Armijo is substantiated by events prior to August 17 and the American entrance into Santa Fe. In a letter dated September 8, 1846, Armijo reported to his national government the circumstances that caused him to flee the department. On August 15 he gave orders for his 1,800 troops to march out of Santa Fe the twenty-five miles north to Apache Canyon. There, he said, he would meet them the next day with two hundred regulars. On the sixteenth he joined forces but did not continue the march because the

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[22]Cooke, Conquest, p. 28.

[23]Lavender, Bent's Fort, pp. 262-3.

[24]Armijo to Kearny, Santa Fe, August 12, 1846, in Max Moorhead, ed., "Notes and Documents," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XXVI (January, 1951), 81-2.

auxiliary companies were not disposed to fight.[25]

Armijo convoked a junta of officers on the night of August 16. He tried to arouse their patriotism but to no avail. The officers of the auxiliary units--of which Archuleta was one--refused to fight although Apache Canyon was a very strategic position. After these officers refused to fight, they retreated, leaving Armijo with the two hundred troops from Santa Fe. During the night more troops deserted, and the only companies that remained were those commanded by Ortiz, Martínez, and Sena. This left Armijo with seventy dragoons.[26] This information is substantiated by Lieutenant W. H. Emory of Kearny's command who wrote that two thousand Mexicans were reported in the canyon to oppose the Americans but due to quarrels between their commanders they fled to the south.[27] While Armijo departed for Chihuahua, he passed English trader George Ruxton, who wrote that Armijo was anxious to know what New Mexicans were saying of him. Ruxton told Armijo that the prevailing opinion was that he and his Mexicans were a pack of cowards. Armijo replied, "Adios, they don't know I had but seventy-five men to fight three thousand. What could I do?"[28]

One member of the governor's army later wrote that Armijo could do little because of the undisciplined army and paucity of good

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[25]Armijo to minister of foreign relations, Chihuahua, September 8, 1846, in Moorhead, "Notes and Documents." 76-8.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Emory, Reconnoissance, p. 29.

[28]George Frederick Ruxton, Adventures in Mexico and the Rocky Mountains (New York: Harpers, 1848), p. 118.

leaders: "He was a dwarf against a giant. He had rashly rushed to give battle; it would have been equivalent to offer his troops as victims to the invading army."[29] Captain Cooke also wrote that Armijo was much superior to those about him, but even so, "he is unequal to the trying circumstances of his present situation." The patriotic spirit that he developed by his proclamation forced Armijo to lead and direct the enthusiasm of the people to some weak and disgraceful conclusion.[30] Although it was possible that Armijo had sold out the department to the Americans, the above evidence suggests rather that Armijo was unable to rally his troops to defend New Mexico at a most critical time because many of his officers refused to fight. Armijo did the only thing that he could: retreat.

During Armijo's term as governor and down through the years, the vivid picture of the cowardly New Mexicans led by their cowardly governor has served American self-interest in explaining this period. During the 1840's a mood of expansionism covered the land, and it was far more comforting to hear that New Mexico was backward, and its governor a tyrant who needed to be overthrown in order to regenerate the people, than to hear the true situation of the province.[31] In addition, the early sources of information that came to Americans were from expansionist-minded intellectuals like George Wilkins Kendall and Josiah Gregg in extremely prejudiced accounts of New Mexicans and their

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[29]Rafael Chacon in Read, Illustrated History of New Mexico (Santa Fe: New Mexican Printing Company, 1912), pp. 391-2.

[30]Cooke, Conquest, p. 33.

[31]Daniel Tyler, "Gringo Views of Governor Armijo," New Mexico Historical Review, Vol. XLV (January, 1970), 42.

barbarism. Another source of information came from uneducated adventurers in the trade, muleskinners and packers, whose dealings with the New Mexicans were limited to making a profit and having a good time, both at the expense of the local citizens.[32]

New Mexico during 1837-1846 has been somewhat romanticized because of the Santa Fe Trail and the American involvement in 1846. That the United States conquered the department easily was not so much a tribute to Yankee ingenuity as it was to the incapacity of Mexico to deal effectively with frontier circumstances that were beyond the understanding of the central government. Governors Armijo and Martínez were faced with the inability of the national Mexican government to provide realistic legislation for the frontier department; a poorly equipped and trained army and militia; a departmental treasury that almost always was empty if not in arrears; widescale Indians depradations; foreign traders who gave both the means and the motives to these Indians to continue their savage way of life; periodic armed invasions either from Texans or Americans; and finally, lesser officials, who owing either to their poverty or their ambitions, could not be trusted. In view of these circumstances, it is a wonder that Manuel Armijo and Mariano Martínez were able to provide as much stability and effective government as they did. Their impossible task of governing New Mexico under these circumstances ended on August 18, 1846, when Kearny raised the American flag over Santa Fe.

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[32]For sketches of some of these traders and participants see Henry Pickering Walker, The Wagonmasters (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966).

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