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UNDER THE EYES OF GOD: THE HUICHOLS AND THE MEXICAN  
STATE, 1810-1910

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UNDER THE EYES OF GOD: THE HUICHOLS AND THE MEXICAN  
STATE, 1810-1910

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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For Tim, for always giving me the strength to soar.

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## Introduction

### "The Huichols: Studying a People Without History"

*"Son indios muy encerrados en sus costumbres y creencias religiosas, y extremadamente reservados..."<sup>1</sup>*

The scenery is breathtaking. Clouds draped the mountains, seemingly touching the ground, bathing everything in a fine mist. Alongside the highway, the land fell away into an alien landscape of twisted yuccas as I traveled along the very western edge of the Huasteca. Small farms dotted the landscape, and occasionally one could see smoke from a field fire drifting up into and melting with the clouds. Cows and horses grazed pasturelands and farmers worked at their minute plots of land. Every once in a while, I passed through a tiny pueblo, replete with its *zócalo* and church.<sup>2</sup> As I neared Wirikuta, doubling back toward the west from where I had come, the landscape changed yet again. The mountains that had once been in the distance now loomed large and the rain

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<sup>1</sup> Carlos Basauri, *La población indígena de México*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (México, DF: Secretaría de Educación Pública, 1940), 67.

<sup>2</sup> A *zócalo* is a central square found in most Mexican towns.

disappeared in the dry, dusty desert. The car climbed higher into the mountains, and the one-lane gravel road weaved precariously through the canyons. Small huts clung to the sides of the mountain, and the air got cooler and thinner. Before entering the tiny town, which used to be a mining haven, I passed under a sign which read "*Bienvenidos a Real de Catorce*," welcome to Real de Catorce, to Wirikuta. I had just entered the realm of peyote, the sacred, deified cactus that is of central importance to Huichol life and religion.

Wirikuta is a precious location for the Huichols not simply because of peyote, but also because it was where the Sun was born in ancient times.<sup>3</sup> One can

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<sup>3</sup> I would like to say a word about language in the following chapters. I use the common, academically-recognizable word 'Huichol.' As an historian, I feel this is appropriate, because this is the term that appears in nearly all records describing the people about whom I write. The Huichols call themselves 'Wixarika' and anthropologists seem divided as to proper etiquette. Some strictly use Wixarika, while others switch back and forth. However, I will usually use Huichol terms for things such as *mara'akame* (shaman), Wirikuta (Real de Catorce) and for the names of deities (although English translations do exist). Finally, I will use the English plural form of the word Huichol-that is Huichols- as opposed to the Spanish Huicholes. This is simply a personal preference.

locate the birthplace of the sun by finding *El Quemado*, the Burned Mountain, also known as '*Unaxa* or *Re'eunar*. I aimed to locate El Quemado on this trip, and eventually did so. Climbing El Quemado was a fairly easy endeavor, and well worth the effort. Across the canyon a ghost town sits silent with beautiful Arabesque arches, and in a distant valley a rather large farm perches high above the valley floor. Higher up, the vista back toward the town of Real de Catorce was simply breathtaking, and the mountains looked as though only the gods could have painted them. When my companion and I reached the top, we sat for awhile, taking in the views. All of a sudden, three Huichols, a man and two women, came bounding over the top of the mountain. I was stunned. They seemed to have appeared out of nowhere. Two anthropologists followed them. I chatted about the weather for a moment, they petted my friend's dog, and down the mountain they went, anthropologists in tow. As it was February, and not peyote hunting season, I surmised that they must live in town and were artists who sold their beautiful jewelry and

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yarn paintings. I had met several Huichol artisans in Puerto Vallarta, Tepic, and Guadalajara who had left their traditional homelands in the Sierra Madre Occidental for better opportunities in the cities. These Huichols may have been no different, and would be a welcome site to their weary brethren at the midway point of the peyote hunting journey.

As I returned to Guadalajara from Wirikuta, I traveled much closer to the center of the Huichol universe, the place that most considered home. Canyons plunged hundreds of feet to verdant valleys below the road, and mountains towered thousands of feet above. Donkeys and cows clung with desperation to the earth, and I grabbed the armrests of the car with every twist and turn of the road. The very rugged Sierra Madre Occidental has provided a measure of refuge for native peoples over the course of the tumultuous history of Mesoamerica. This region is not isolated in the sense that its inhabitants have no contact with outsiders. Instead, Huichols and others who call this area home used the landscape to retreat from danger when necessary, while still actively participating in the history of the area for

a millennia or more. Nevertheless, this has never been an easy place to eke out an existence, and as the twentieth century drew to a close, Mexico grew up around the Huichols, making life in the Sierra increasingly difficult.

In the mountains of western Mexico, spread over the states of Jalisco, Nayarit, and Durango, live a people who call themselves the *Wixaritari*, but whom the world has come to know as the Huichols. They forged no great empire; in fact, Huichol communities have just as often fought among themselves as they have struggled against outside encroachment. Nor have they controlled precious resources. Above all else they treasure a cactus button that western civilization usually condemns as a hallucinogenic drug. And yet it is a fact that the Huichols have staged a successful three-century resistance to aggressive neighbors and an ethnically exclusive state. Put simply, the Huichols are survivors, and among the most tenacious that Mesoamerica has ever produced.

Who are these Huichols and what can the struggles of this small, relatively unknown group

tell us about indigenous peoples in Mexico and elsewhere? A narrative of the Huichols from time immemorial to modern times does indeed reveal some clear patterns in Huichol behavior that typify certain ethnohistories while contradicting others. In their history, the Huichols rarely, if ever, fell under the control of an alien empire. For instance, most Indians who lived on the fringes and outside the control of the Aztecs did not need to make the cultural adaptations required of Aztec tributaries during pre-contact times. In light of their pre-contact and early colonial histories as an independent people, did the Huichols retain the basis of their culture that made them Huichol or did they become more homogenized with the influx of mestizos and North American businessmen who challenged long-standing isolation and independence? If the Huichols simply adapted their culture to fit more neatly in a changing and globalizing Mexico, how did they do so and why? Was it necessity or desire? Did prolonged contact create a new Huichol identity, or did communities turn inward on themselves, viewing themselves as they always had? And how did the

Huichols learn so quickly to combat the Mexican state in order to protect their lands and ensure the survival of future generations? Finally, why were the Huichols able to resist, while simultaneously accepting aspects of the Mexican state, such as the legal system?

I argue that despite the changing political and social contexts around them, most Huichols reacted by vehemently protecting their culture and communities. They did this not through a wholesale rejection of alien peoples and ideas, but instead through an ongoing process of selective appropriation and contestation. By exploring these questions more fully, a picture of a small slice of Mexico emerges, one that has implications for how indigenous groups throughout the world can and do thrive despite an ever-increasing state and international presence in their lives.

### **Chapter Layout**

The Huichols have survived, persisted, and culturally evolved in response to an increasingly powerful state over the course of the Mexican National period. In Chapter One, I sketch out the

interrelated histories of the Mexico and the Huichols, from pre-Columbian times, through the modern era. I include an examination of pertinent literature about Mexican indigenous peoples. It is essential to go back and provide a brief overview of the Huichols at the time of contact, during prolonged colonization, and at the time that the victorious Liberals took over Mexico. Dropping into the Huichol Sierra *in medias res* would serve to do nothing but assume the stagnation of the Huichols, which, of course, defeats the purpose of this study. While the focus is certainly not the colonial period, Spanish weakness in the area is of paramount importance to understanding the resistance of the mid- to late-nineteenth century.

The second chapter of this study thus examines the Huichols of the early contact period and, in particular, places them within the proper framework of the indigenous civilizations that criss-crossed Mesoamerica. This lays the framework for an argument that suggests the Huichols have never been isolated from the larger world, as some have argued, but instead have always been an important part of it.

Understanding how the proto-Huichols developed in western Mesoamerica helps to contextualize the frequently contentious relationships between Huichol towns that prevented a considerable front from emerging against the Spaniards in the eighteenth century. In this way, a more complex dialogue about local identity becomes apparent.<sup>4</sup> Indians, we must not forget, rarely viewed themselves as a coherent race or ethnic group; communal identity dictated one's understanding of him- or herself.

The state of Jalisco, carved out of colonial Nueva Galicia, became guardian of most Huichol peoples after Mexican Independence. Indigenous participants played important roles during the fighting, though the Huichols saw limited action. However, with the end of the war came an influx of outsiders, returning after more than a decade. The

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<sup>4</sup>William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979). Taylor suggests that people constructed their identities based upon their community, not a larger, overarching ethnicity. See also Gabbert, *Becoming Maya*. Gabbert argues that the people known today as the Maya rarely considered themselves an ethnic group, but rather constructed local identities in much the same way that the indigenous peoples in Taylor's study.

return of peace assured Franciscans that they could continue the mission process in the very difficult Sierra Madre Occidental. Tough terrain and reticent Indians made the Franciscans' job difficult, resulting in half-hearted conversions on the part of both parties. However, peace also brought increasing numbers of land-hungry mestizos, who eventually affected Huichol land tenure in ways the Huichols had never had to confront in the past. The relationship between the Huichols, religious figures and the infant Mexican republic is the subject of Chapter Three.

The rise of the Liberal State in the middle of the nineteenth century altered indigenous and campesino communities throughout Mexico. Laws enacted on the local and national levels provided a catalyst for rebellion in Jalisco and elsewhere. The Huichols found themselves in the midst of greedy hacendados, their unscrupulous and/or desperate employees, and by 1857, the Lozada Rebellion engulfed the region. Eventually, state and national officials moved into the Huichol Sierra to attempt to reign in the hinterlands. Chapter Three provides an analysis of

the rebellion and the government's reaction to deeply unhappy indigenous peoples and peasants.

The rise of Díaz brought Mexico City to the hinterlands in order to improve the economic and political stability of Mexico. How did the Huichols learn to confront this increasing presence? Why did they choose to resist, rather than simply allow the state to steamroll them? Were they successful, and if so, how did such a small group of fewer than 10,000 members resist the juggernaut of *porfirismo*? Chapter Five examines the transition from the liberalism of Benito Juárez to that of Porfirio Díaz. The Huichols experienced government intervention, interference and influence on a much more regular basis than ever before as Díaz sought to make Mexico more attractive to foreign corporations. How did the Huichols react to the alien institutions they had to adopt? Did they rally together as a group? The Huichols did not develop a sense of ethnic unity with their neighbors in attempt to brace themselves against the onslaught. To be certain, Huichol identity has always been a local one, though there are overarching characteristics determining who the

Huichols are. They rarely banded together as a conglomerate Huichol nation. Rather, as had been true throughout their history both before and after the conquest of Mexico, local concerns trumped ethnic, regional and national ones.

Ethnographic accounts of the Huichols from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century have proven to be some of the most helpful in understanding Huichol culture. In Chapter Six, I examine the works of Carl Lumholtz, Léon Diguët, Konrad Preuss and Robert Zingg. Their richly detailed sources provide descriptions on religion, marital customs, clothing and material culture, and the historical basis for their belief system. In analyzing these sources in comparison to late twentieth-century anthropological accounts, one can draw interesting conclusions about how the Huichols have transformed themselves. To be sure, the Huichols have been active participants in how their society and culture changes; they actively adapt, so as to prevent the larger Mexican society from subsuming them.

## Chapter One

### Mexico and the Huichol Sierra: History Intertwined

In order to understand the modern Huichols, and to determine how they coped with colonialism, the nascent Mexican state, and the early globalization that occurred during the Porfirian era (1876-1910), it is critical to retrace their origins. Descending from the Loma San Gabriel culture, the Huichols are distantly related to indigenous groups in what is now the U.S. Southwest; specifically, they are part of the Mogollam-Hohokam cultural group that also gave rise to the Pima and Tohono O'odham, among others. The Huichols show cultural and linguistic ties to their indigenous neighbors to the north and west in Mexico, namely the Coras, Tarahumaras, Tepehuanes, and Tepecanos.<sup>1</sup>

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\* The title of the dissertation, "Under the Eyes of God" is a play on the name of a Huichol religious object. When Carl Lumholtz visited the Huichols in the 1890s, he found a four-square cross, wrapped in colorful yarn, with a space in the middle. Sometimes the Huichols put a squash blossom in the space. He called the object an "*ojos de dios*," or an eye of God. The Huichols will hang these objects near sleeping children as a protective talisman, so that the gods might watch over the child. In a way, the *ojos de dios* is symbolic, because the Huichol gods always watch over the people. Throughout their

The cultural forms that created the "Desert Complex," of which the Huichols are a part, emerged at least fifteen centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans. Archaeologists characterize this culture by its plain brown pottery with the serpent motifs, known in Tewa as *avanyu*. Serpent imagery played an important role in Huichol religious practices until at least the dawn of the twentieth century, when traveler and ethnographer Carl Lumholtz described the use of snakes in Huichol religious art.<sup>2</sup> Other anthropologists and ethnographers commented on the similarities between the central religious iconography of the Huichols and the Pueblos of the U.S. Southwest. Robert Zingg noted that the four directional elements important in Huichol religion, the use of "offertory" arrows, and symbolism involving deer, fire, rain, corn growth, and

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history, deities have proven influential in Huichol life, whether it be their indigenous gods, or the Catholic God.

<sup>1</sup> J. Charles Kelley, "Archaeology of the Northern Frontier: Zacatecas and Durango," in *The Handbook of Middle American Indians. Volume 11: Archaeology of Northern Mesoamerica, Part 2* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1971), 800. See also Ruth Underhill, "Intercultural Relations in the Greater Southwest," *American Anthropologist* 56, no. 4 (1954): 649.

<sup>2</sup> This echoes classic Mesoamerican religious iconography.

fertility all illustrate strong convergence between the two distantly related groups.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to probable trade and cultural ties with indigenous groups in the U.S. Southwest, the Huichols' ancestors came into contact with larger, more powerful empires to the southeast. Juan Negrín asserts that the Huichols, though relatively independent during pre-contact times, most likely had to accept some aspects of Toltec imperialism (c. 900-1170 AD) and were part of the Chimalhuacán cultural complex in pre-Hispanic centuries as well.<sup>4</sup> The rugged location of the Huichol homelands would have made sustained forays into the highlands difficult for the Toltecs, who would have been unfamiliar with

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<sup>3</sup> Underhill, "Intercultural Relations in the Greater Southwest," 649. Carl Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico: A Record of Five Years' Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 243-245. See also Robert M. Zingg, *Report of the Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer Expedition for Huichol Ethnography* (New York: Stechert and Company, 1938), xxvi.

<sup>4</sup> Juan Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol* (Guadalajara, Jalisco: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1985), 13. See also Michael West, "Transition from Preclassic to Classic at Teotihuacan," *American Antiquity* 31, no. 2, Part 1 (1965): 194.

the terrain.<sup>5</sup> Negrín and others suggest that the Huichols and their close neighbors, the Coras, did not pay tribute to the Mexica, though no sources exist to prove or disprove this point.<sup>6</sup>

While we do not know nearly enough about the Huichols in either pre-contact or early post-contact years, there are tantalizing clues about them that appear in the judicial and religious documents regarding the central Sierra Madre. The Spanish colonial government initially did not pay much attention to the region; though the conquistador Nuño de Guzmán did contact the Huichols and the Coras in 1531. Still not until 1722 did the Spanish gain firm control of the area.<sup>7</sup> By the turn of the eighteenth century, the Franciscans knew of the presence of the Huichols, and one friar actually mapped the whereabouts of many of the Huichol groups that he

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<sup>5</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 12-14. "Se refugiaron oportunamente en lo más escarpado de las serranías o en las profundidades de los barrancos y evitaron hasta donde fue posible el contacto o la influencia tolteca."

<sup>6</sup> The Mexica are popularly known as the Aztecs.

<sup>7</sup> Joseph E. Grimes and Thomas B. Hinton, "The Huichol and Cora," in *The Handbook of Middle American Indians. Volume 8: Ethnology, Part 2* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 795.

encountered.<sup>8</sup> By 1723 the regional judicial apparatus had successfully coalesced, so much so that some Huichols received communally held titles to their land, an action that probably proved alien, but altogether helpful in the decades and centuries to come.<sup>9</sup>

Colonial Spaniards had remained mostly content to leave indigenous peoples in protected, if inferior states. This was not true of the political elite of independent Mexico, and the Reform era and the Porfiriato cost indigenous peoples dearly in terms of land tenure. The 1850s, the decade in which Liberals gained a toehold in power, was a chaotic one as laws transformed corporate properties into individually

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<sup>8</sup> Beatriz Rojas, *Los Huicholes: documentos históricos* (México, DF: INI, 1992), 31-33. See also pages 195 and 198-199 in Kieran McCarty and Dan S. Matson, "Franciscan Report on the Indians of Nayarit, 1673," *Ethnohistory* 22, no. 3 (1975). A note about Catholic friars in the area: while the documents collected by Rojas illustrate the presence of Franciscans in the area, Anthony Shelton states that the first serious attempts to Christianize the Huichols had been undertaken by the Jesuits, after the conquest of the region in 1722-1723. See Anthony Shelton, "The Recollection of Times Past: Memory and Event in Huichol Narrative," *History and Anthropology*, Vol. 2 (October, 1986).

<sup>9</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 16.

held lands. The Huichols began experiencing increasing pressures from mestizos from all over Mexico, while, simultaneously, Liberal ideology began to change the ways in which all Mexicans accessed lands.<sup>10</sup> These changes, namely the sweeping dissolution of communally held properties in favor of private ownership, led to an influx of outsiders into areas traditionally considered to be indigenous strongholds; wealthy mestizos and corporations bought up vast parcels of lands, and indigenous groups frequently had no recourse with which to protect their steadily shrinking lifeblood.

Once Díaz took control of Mexico in 1876, a strange "peace" fell over the nation. Known as the *pax porfiriana* (Porfirian peace), the years between 1876 and 1911 witnessed an exponential increase in the presence of foreigners, mestizos, and surveying companies throughout rural Mexico, each accompanied by the heavy-handed presence of Díaz's rural police forces. A Liberal in matters of economy, Díaz increased foreign capital investments in agriculture,

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<sup>10</sup> Mestizos are racially mixed, western acculturated people who have come to make up the majority of Mexico's population.

railroads, and mining ventures. He based his economic policies on the consolidation of state power, which required the firm grasp of the Mexican center on the peripheries.<sup>11</sup> In order to accomplish this, haciendas expanded, though not as extensively in Jalisco as in other areas; corporate farming concerns purchased *tierras baldías*, or so-called "empty," "unused" lands, frequently owned in fact if not in law, by indigenous villages.<sup>12</sup> Beginning with the mid-century Reform Laws and continuing with the even more stringent policies that effectively deprived people of their livelihoods, land issues proved a flash point for indigenous and mestizo campesinos.

State-consolidating programs enacted by the administration of Porfirio Díaz sealed the fate of many indigenous groups throughout Mexico. Among the

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<sup>11</sup> Leticia Reina, *Las rebeliones campesinas en México, 1819-1906* (México: Siglo veintiuno, 1980), 25.

<sup>12</sup> Philip E. Coyle, *From Flowers to Ash: Náyarí History, Politics, and Violence* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), 181. See also Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 195. Allan Franz, "Huichol Ethnohistory: The View from Zacatecas," in *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion and Survival*, ed. Stacy B. Schaefer and Peter T. Furst (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 82.

Yaquis, in northwestern Mexico, the government of Sonora waged a widely instituted "genocidal" campaign against the Indians that quieted somewhat upon the outbreak of the Mexican Revolution.<sup>13</sup> With the increasing land pressure placed upon native peoples as a result of hacienda expansion, railroads, and corporate farming initiatives, many indigenous groups in Mexico faced a loss of sufficient habitat to sustain families, and even starvation. But the Huichols, like certain other neighboring Indian groups, were able to avoid both the genocidal campaigns and the complete land attrition that others faced, in part because of the inhospitable terrain.

The Huichols and their mestizo and indigenous campesino neighbors were certainly not unique in their suffering during the last half of the nineteenth century. The Reform Era and the Porfiriato cost campesinos dearly in terms of land tenure. Rebellions erupted throughout the Mexican

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<sup>13</sup> Steven V Lutes, "Yaqui Indian Enclavement Maintenance: The Effects of Experimental Indian Policy in Northwestern Mexico," in *Ejidos and Regions of Refuge in Northwestern Mexico*, ed. N. Ross Crumrine and Phil C. Weigand (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1987), 12.

countryside as people became increasingly unsure of their survival. So not only does a project that emphasizes the story of a small, relatively unknown indigenous group shed light upon a forgotten history, but it also contextualizes the plight of *all* poor Mexicans throughout the nation.

### **Questions of Mexican Indigenism**

These upheavals formed the driving force of nineteenth-century Huichol history. By extension, the Huichol story is not one that stands entirely separate from other indigenous groups. They are unique in that they come to use the Mexican state to protect themselves *from* the state. Any history of the Huichols necessarily forces us to address some important questions about Mexico's indigenous peoples. Because there are so few historical examinations of the Huichols, it is necessary to examine indigenous peoples throughout the country, and across a wider period of time. The meaning of "Indian" in Mexico has changed drastically over the centuries, and has proven variable even within the confines of the post-revolutionary period. From the

colonial *república de indios* (or Republic of Indians, a legally separate sphere) to the post-revolutionary political *indigenismo* of groups like the Zapatistas of the 1990s, Mexicans have struggled to understand where indigenous groups fit into their society.

When Spaniards first arrived in what is now Mexico, they encountered beings that shocked and confused them. Serious intellectual debates raged as to the humanity of these beings, with Bartolomé de las Casas successfully arguing that they were indeed human.<sup>14</sup> Where, then, did they fit into the hierarchy? Indigenous religious practices were nothing like Europeans had ever experienced, and the Spanish deemed them savage. These first contacts began the "500-year attempt to abolish indigenous cultures" by prohibiting "savage" religious practices and forcing the collapse, in some places, of indigenous societies.<sup>15</sup>

As the first tumultuous decades of Spanish

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<sup>14</sup> Fray Bartolomé De las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, ed. Miguel León Portilla (Madrid: Biblioteca EDAF, 2004).

<sup>15</sup> David Maybury-Lewis, ed. *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University 2002), 348.

conquest subsided, and the newcomers developed ways to administer the colonies, they placed Mexico's indigenous peoples into a special category, known as the Indian republics. Indigenous groups were fully human, but legally distinct from the Spanish settlers. Indians died by the millions throughout the Americas, due to disease and warfare, but enough that Spanish master forcibly moved Indians into artificially created communities to serve as sources of unpaid labor.<sup>16</sup> Through coercive labor systems such as *encomienda*, *repartimiento*, and the *mita* (in the Andes) indigenous peoples bore the brunt of building an empire.

The racism that plagued Spanish and Portuguese America, and which placed indigenous peoples near bottom of the social hierarchy, was not the same type that existed in British North America. Miscegenation occurred on a scale in Spanish America unmatched anywhere else in the colonial western hemisphere, creating what José Vasconcelos would later call *la raza cósmica* (the cosmic race, or a blending of all

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<sup>16</sup> David Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2002), 7.

racess).<sup>17</sup> Mexico largely became a nation of mestizos, with indigenous peoples still identified as distinct from the rest of the population. The concept of "Indian" today exists as a result of processes that occurred in the colonial era.<sup>18</sup> "Indian" became the catch-all term for the indigenous peoples of the Americas, and the Spanish term *indio* is a pejorative one imposed upon native groups from the beginning of contact.<sup>19</sup>

Communities that survived the initial pressures of contact often turned inward, preferring to work their lands in peace. The Huichols conformed to this pattern and, to its credit the Spanish Hapsburg government generally left them alone. The Bourbon reforms of the mid-eighteenth century, however, began to change the relationship between colonial authority and its subjects. These reforms aimed to regulate taxation, reduce the powers of the Church, increase military control and loosen trade restrictions, all

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<sup>17</sup> José Vasconcelos, *La raza cósmica, misión de la raza iberoamericana* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1966).

<sup>18</sup>Guillermo Bonfil Batalla, *Identidad y pluralismo cultural en América Latina* (Buenos Aires, R. Argentina: Fondo Editorial del CEHASS, 1992), 42-43.

<sup>19</sup> Maybury-Lewis, *The Politics of Ethnicity*, 348.

part of a campaign to strengthen the Crown's control over the colonies. The tightening of administrative control over the colonies aggravated long-standing tensions between creoles, indigenous groups, and peninsular Spaniards, and the region erupted in wars of independence beginning in 1810.

The bloody Independence struggles of 1810-1821 soon gave way to serious debates concerning the national identity and political philosophy in Mexico. While Conservatives tried to retain the basis of Spanish colonial governance with its emphasis on corporatism, the rival Liberal Party attempted to force Mexico down the path of capitalism. When Mexico entered its Reform period, beginning in earnest in 1855, new laws transformed the relationship among people, government, and land tenure, a fact that directly and drastically impinged upon indigenous peoples throughout the country. Hoping to create a more stable capitalist economy in Mexico, Benito Juárez and other Liberal statesmen introduced laws that abolished corporately held properties, including the communal lands that had been the lifeblood of native peoples. Additionally,

the 1855 Juárez Law made all Mexicans equal citizens before the law, at least in theory. Indigenous peoples, then, became individual citizens, while both in attitude and practice they still occupied the bottom rung of society.<sup>20</sup> The Mexican government bestowed *de jure* citizenship upon indigenous peoples. Though Indians could no longer depend upon a distinct juridical status, Mexicans rarely practiced this idea of equality because the caste system still lived on in their hearts and minds. Of even greater practical importance, the 1856 Lerdo Law abolished practices of communal land tenure that had been the basis of rural life since before the Aztecs.

Collectively, these new land laws transformed the ways in which the government treated native peoples in Mexico. Benefits from the democratic reforms promulgated by Juárez rarely extended to native peoples, and at any rate, they frequently only

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<sup>20</sup> Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*, 14. These ideas deeply entrenched themselves into people's thinking about ethnic groups, as pointed out by Maybury-Lewis, who noted that after the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, countless books argued for a hierarchy of races. This allowed people and governments justify to themselves their actions against people of so-called "inferior" races.

served to reinforce the Mexican oligarchy during the *pax porfiriana*. Indian citizenship meant little to Díaz, under whose reign "living Indians had more or less disappeared from the public sphere" as Alexander Dawson puts it.<sup>21</sup> They did not physically cease to exist, although many hoped that they would; rather, the presence of Indians evaporated in the official discourse of a Mexican government that hoped to enter the twentieth century as a capitalistic, investment-friendly nation.<sup>22</sup>

Striving for progress required that Díaz pay little attention to the interests of native peoples. Mexican Positivism, adapted from the wide ranging theory advanced by French social philosopher Auguste Comte, emphasized science as a tool to improve Mexico's backward nature and propel it into the modern, capitalist world. Díaz's political advisors, known as *científicos*, were technocrats who used this ideology to disregard the plight of Mexico's increasingly marginalized indigenous groups. Because

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<sup>21</sup> Alexander Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>22</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 3.

indigenous peoples in Mexico were "an illiterate mass impeding national progress," men like Francisco Bulnes and Justo Sierra believed that Indians should simply be ignored or coerced so that they no longer stood in the way of Mexico's natural order of things.<sup>23</sup>

The collapse of Díaz's program of twentieth-century modernization should have sounded the death-knell for positivist thinking about indigenous peoples, yet many of the basic tenets of this ideology lingered in the minds of Mexican intellectuals. The Mexican Revolution did not necessarily halt the discourse about Mexico's multiplicity of ethnicities, but war so plagued the nation that between 1910 and 1920 it was no longer a priority. After the violence of the Revolution subsided, and Mexican thinkers tried to find ways to put a shattered nation back together, questions of identity, citizenship, and the indigenous populations reemerged as topics of heated debates.

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<sup>23</sup> Philip Wiener, "Positivism in Latin America," in *Dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1968), 544.

A new generation of Mexicans, known as *indigenistas* "adopted positive neo-Lamarckian eugenics."<sup>24</sup> Whereas in the past experts believed that Indians blocked progress because they clung to so-called traditional values, neo-Lamarckian ideology posited that communities could genetically improve themselves over time through education on "alcoholism, venereal disease, unhealthy motherhood, delinquency and tuberculosis."<sup>25</sup> However, simply learning new cultural characteristics does not mean that they will be inherited by the next generation of indigenous peoples; herein lies the fallacy of using Lamarck to determine the evolution of societies.<sup>26</sup> Indigenistas did not bother themselves about the problems with Lamarck's theories and believed that once properly instructed indigenous peoples could then take their rightful places among the rest of the population as full, productive citizens of Mexico;

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<sup>24</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 18.

<sup>26</sup> Geoffrey M. Hodgson and Thorbjørn Knudsen, "Dismantling Lamarckism: Why descriptions of socio-economic evolution as Lamarckian are misleading," *Journal of Evolutionary Economics* 16, no. 4 (2006): 343-346.

Indians would become citizens through the pedagogical efforts of the revolutionary state.

Thus, after the 1920s being "Indian" was no longer an inescapable fate, a fact which probably heartened some old científicos. The transformation from Indian as a permanent condition to an ethnic label that could be shed was the hope of indigenistas, yet many of these academics also struggled with the merits that indigenous culture held for the larger Mexican nation.<sup>27</sup> The Indians of this period really had little part in the dialogue about their communities and cultures. But the 1920s was a decade more for thoughts about the necessary place of indigenous peoples rather than actions to help alleviate their precarious circumstances throughout the country. Not until Lázaro Cárdenas's presidency (1934-1940) did *indigenismo* emerge as an important ideology among Mexican politicians and academics.

When Cárdenas took office in 1934, he invoked the importance of indigenous peoples to the history and present times of Mexico. He hoped that the

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<sup>27</sup> Bonfil Batalla, *Identidad y pluralism*, 45.

average Mexican, and indeed people outside the country might as Dawson puts it "see the Mexican Indian in a new light," free from the colonial racism that plagued so many mestizos and more "modern" Mexican citizens.<sup>28</sup> But he also required indigenous groups to work in tandem with the government in order to improve their communities, end their isolation, and to shake off the fetters of poverty.<sup>29</sup> In the post-Revolutionary era, indigenistas, many of whom began thinking about these problems in the immediate aftermath of the civil war, claimed a sort of sympathetic understanding of native peoples. They appreciated the indigenous past as an important part of the Mexican national history, but maintained that Indian backwardness prevented Mexico from fully modernizing.<sup>30</sup> This was a direct linkage back to

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<sup>28</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xiv. See also Anne Doremus, "Indigenism, Mestizaje and National Identity in Mexico during the 1940s and 1950s," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 17, no. 2 (2001): 376.

<sup>29</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xiv.

<sup>30</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, xviii. Doremus notes that intellectuals wanted to stimulate interest in the indigenous past, not as a way to "Indianize Mexico but to Mexicanize the Indian." See Doremus, "Indigenism, Mestizaje, and National Identity," 377. This is somewhat opposite

Díaz's científico advisors, but with the significant difference being that indigenists believed native peoples could indeed become active political actors and citizens.<sup>31</sup>

Indigenists during and immediately after the Cárdenas *sexenio* (six-year presidential term) may have had the best interests of Indians at heart, but they remained products of the period in which they lived. They infantilized Indians, yet claimed Indian backwardness stemmed not from some imaginary racial inferiority, but rather from poor economic conditions

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of what occurred in Peru under the guidance of Communist Party founder José Carlos Mariátegui, who felt that Indians did not need to be turned into mestizos. Instead, Peru should tap into the indigenous notion of communal landholdings. See Guillermo De la Peña, "Social and Cultural Policies toward Indigenous Peoples: Perspectives from Latin America," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 34(2005): 725. Cárdenas' ejido program allowed indigenous groups to remain on communal properties, but over the long term this was a stopgap measure and was ill-funded after he left office. The goal was to Mexicanize Indians.

<sup>31</sup> David A. Brading, "Manuel Gamio and Official Indigenismo in Mexico," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 7, no. 1 (1988): 82-83. Gamio illustrated this blending of outdated positivist thinking with the changing beliefs about indigenous peoples. According to Brading, "the degree to which Gamio's positivism controverted his romantic impulse is best demonstrated by his failure to encounter any value in Indian culture other than its artistic production."

and social problems.<sup>32</sup> By the mid-twentieth century, many Mexicans began to view their indigenous countrymen not in racial terms, but instead as products of an economic system that prevented their full participation in Mexican society. New state-led projects were designed to understand how and why indigenous peoples were so economically and socially 'backwards'. One of these programs was a series of surveys created by school teachers who had the most contact with indigenous groups as a result of Cárdenas' rural education programs.

Moisés Sáenz, a Mexican educator, enacted the program of surveying indigenous peoples whereby more "complete" evaluation of rural conditions could take place to determine how far along certain groups were on the road towards progress.<sup>33</sup> According to Dawson, these questionnaires and studies demonstrated to experts that the "Lacandón, Otomí, and Huichol Were...primitives, bewitched by evil spirits and

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<sup>32</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 70, 86.

<sup>33</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 88. Dawson provides a nice explanation of the surveys and their purposes. For an example of the results of the surveys in Huichol country, see Basauri, *La población indígena de México*, 43-81.

often crippled by violent or perverse social and sexual practices," which would need to be overcome.<sup>34</sup> Supposedly inferior in a variety of ways, Sáenz did not consider them Mexican. Still he did not believe that the government should abandon them altogether, and in fact, Sáenz was integral in helping to create the *Departamento Autónomo de Asuntos Indígenas* (DAAI), along with Cárdenas.<sup>35</sup> This organization grew out of Sáenz's research in Michoacán and applied linguistics, education, and anthropology in order to try and improve native communities.<sup>36</sup>

Revolutionary indigenists used programs such as the one enacted by Sáenz and others to understand which Indian groups needed more help than others in the modernization process. Combined with Cárdenas-era land reforms, this did make life easier for *some* indigenous peoples. In 1940, the First Inter-American Conference on Indian Life occurred at

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<sup>34</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 90. He cites a study completed by the Secretaría de Educación Pública in 1940 that provided crime statistics for the Otomí. See Basauri, *La población indígena de México*, 295.

<sup>35</sup> Dawson, *Indian and Nation in Revolutionary Mexico*, 68-69, 88. De la Peña, "Social and Cultural Policies," 726.

<sup>36</sup> De la Peña, "Social and Cultural Policies," 726.

Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, and from that meeting grew the *Instituto Nacional Indigenista* (INI) in 1948. Created by President Miguel Alemán, INI's goal according to Stephen Lewis was to "respect and protect all 'positive' elements of indigenous culture."<sup>37</sup> In practice, however, INI spent most of its first two decades engaged in unabashedly assimilationist projects. It was not until the 1960s and early 1970s that INI began to challenge the government to do more for its native constituents. Instead of trying to force assimilation, which had been policy since its inception, INI began emphasizing education as a way to improve the lives of indigenous peoples. But by the 1980s it had become clear that many groups had been overlooked (such as those in Chiapas) while others, like the Huichols and Yaquis, remained fiercely resistant to government intrusion into their lives.<sup>38</sup> Like other groups, the Huichols developed a strong distaste for

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<sup>37</sup> Stephen E. Lewis, "Mexico's National Indigenist Institute and the Negotiation of Applied Anthropology in Highland Chiapas, 1951-1954," *Ethnohistory* 55, no. 4 (2008): 612. See also Stephen E. Lewis, *The Ambivalent Revolution: Forging State and Nation in Chiapas, 1910-1945* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Lewis, "Mexico's National Indigenist Institute."

outsiders over the course of many centuries, and this only intensified with increased contact with would-be political do-gooders.

The term "indio" did not shake its pejorative stain and rural poor increasingly became synonymous with "Indian."<sup>39</sup> Indians in modern times have not been able to shake the perception that they are backwards and second-class citizens, despite Mexico's declaration that it is a "pluriethnic" nation.<sup>40</sup> There does seem to be two faces to Mexico: the indigenous periphery and the mestizo core, though these demarcated lines frequently overlap.<sup>41</sup> Despite their vast differences, it is difficult to extricate

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<sup>39</sup> Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups, and the State*, 21. This seems to be a constant within the scholarship of identity. See also Jeffrey Sissons, *First Peoples: Indigenous Cultures and Their Futures* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 61. De la Peña notes that during the First Interamerican Indigenist Congress in 1940, "most delegates agreed on the adoption of the terms indígena and indigenismo rather than indio and indianismo." See De la Peña, "Social and Cultural Policies," 727.

<sup>40</sup> Maybury-Lewis, *Indigenous Peoples, Ethnic Groups and the State*, 29.

<sup>41</sup> Jerome M. Levi, "Appropriating the Indigenous, Creating Complicity: The Guatemalan Military and the Sanctioned Maya," in *The Politics of Ethnicity: Indigenous Peoples in Latin American States*, ed. David Maybury-Lewis (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 8.

the indigenous history from the mestizo one, and it is to this shared story that we now turn.

### **Writing the Huichols**

Much of the history of Mexico's indigenous populations has focused upon the better-known, hierarchical groups in the center and southeast of the country. Some advancements have occurred, as scholars increasingly produce English-language histories of the Yaquis, Tarahumaras, and others, writing them into the Mexican national story. The Huichols, however, have garnered little attention from historians in the United States. They, like the Tarahumaras and P'urhépechas in northern and central Mexico, and the Lacandones in the South, have retained much of their indigenous identity, however transformed it may be.<sup>42</sup> The Huichols in particular

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<sup>42</sup> For a discussion of the Tarahumaras, see Robert M. Zingg, *Behind the Mexican Mountains*, ed. Howard Campbell, John Allen Peterson, and David L. Carmichael (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001). However flawed, Zingg's observations are still important. See also William L. Merrill, *Rarámuri Souls: Knowledge and Social Process in Northern Mexico* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988); Helen Perlstein Pollard, *Tariácuri's Legacy: The Prehispanic Tarascan State* (Norman:

adopt modern conveniences only when those things do not pose a threat to "traditional" customs.

Why the dearth of historical treatments on the Huichols, who truly are among a small group of "unique" Mexican indigenous groups? Various factors account for this historical neglect. Perhaps Huichol social structure is partly to blame for the paucity of attention historians have paid to them.

Archaeologists and anthropologists have documented that the Huichols did not create a hierarchical empire. It is uncertain, but unlikely that they practiced the large-scale bloody religious rituals made famous by the large societies in the Valley of Mexico and the southeastern part of the country.<sup>43</sup> Rather than large cities ruled by a state apparatus, characteristics of both the Aztec and Maya societies, the Huichols lived in small *jacales*, or mud-brick,

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University of Oklahoma Press, 1993); Joel W. Palka, *Unconquered Lacandon Maya: Ethnohistory and Archaeology of Indigenous Culture Change* (Gainesville, Fla.: University Press of Florida, 2005).

<sup>43</sup> There is no evidence for blood sacrifice among the Huichols, except that it was a common practice among many indigenous groups in pre-Columbian Mexico. Large-scale bloodletting most likely did not occur, though on a smaller scale, it may have occurred.

thatched roof houses on private *rancherías*, or on communally held familial lands scattered around a *comunidad*.<sup>44</sup> It could simply be that earlier historians found them less interesting in comparison to other groups. However, there are other ways of looking at the matter. With a religion based upon the consumption of peyote, a worldview that places special emphasis on sacred places and phenomenal artistic abilities, the Huichols are anything but mundane. Moreover, for all the limitations of their material culture, groups like the Huichols have ultimately proved more successful than their central and southern Mexican counterparts in resisting assimilation.

The Huichols became more widely known to the world at the turn of the twentieth century when ethnographers such as Carl Lumholtz and Léon Diguët traveled throughout the Huichol Sierra in order to document their culture. Lumholtz made the Huichols more accessible to the outside world through his important *Unknown Mexico: a Record of Five Years' Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra*

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<sup>44</sup> Zingg, *Report*, xxxvi.

*Madre; in the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco; and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, published in 1902 and through his subsequent articles and shorter books. Diguët's travels nearly overlapped with Lumholtz, and provide detailed descriptions of various aspects of Huichol life.<sup>45</sup> Konrad Theodor Preuss, a German ethnologist who worked mostly with the Coras, had contacts among the Huichols between 1906 and 1907 and his writings provide an intriguing look at their religious beliefs.<sup>46</sup> Finally, anthropologist Robert Zingg compiled a number of important works on Huichol mythology and cosmology in the 1930s. In addition to his posthumous *Behind the Mexican Mountains*, a memoir chronicling his time among the Tarahumaras of northwestern Mexico, Zingg

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<sup>45</sup> Léon Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas* (México, DF: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos de la Embajada de Francia en México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1992).

<sup>46</sup> Konrad Theodor Preuss, "Die Hochzeit des Maises und andere Geschichten der Huichol-Indianer," *Globus* 91(1907); Konrad Theodor Preuss, "Ritte durch das Land der Huichol-Indianer in der mexikanischen Sierra Madre," *Globus* 92, no. 10 (1907); Konrad Theodor Preuss, "Die religiösen Gesänge und Mythen einiger Stämme der mexikanischen Sierra Madre," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* II(1908). See all cited in Stacy B. Schaefer and Peter T. Furst, eds., *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion & Survival* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996).

published *Huichol Mythology* and an ethnographic report about the art of the Huichols, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. Henry Pfeiffer, philanthropists from New York City.<sup>47</sup> The early observations made by Lumholtz, Diguët, Preuss, and Zingg helped lay the groundwork for late twentieth-century anthropologists to work more closely with the Huichols using modern academic techniques.

Studies produced by Phil C. Weigand, Jay C. Fikes, Stacy Schaefer, and Peter Furst provide much detailed material for anyone attempting to understand the Huichols in a more provocative and cohesive way.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Zingg, *Report*; Zingg, *Behind the Mexican Mountains*; Robert M. Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, ed. Jay C. Fikes, Phil C. Weigand, and Celia García de Weigand (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004).

<sup>48</sup> Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*; Stacy B. Schaefer, *To Think with a Good Heart: Wixárika Women, Weavers, and Shamans* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2002); Phil C. Weigand, "The Role of the Huichol Indians in the Revolution of Western Mexico," *Proceedings of the Pacific Coast Council on Latin American Studies* 6(1977-1979): 168 ; Phil C. Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar: Entre Coras, Huicholes y Tepehuanos* (México, DF: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos de la Embajada de Francia en México, 1992); Phil C. Weigand and Jay C. Fikes, "Sensacalismo y etnografía: El caso de los huicholes de Jalisco," *Relaciones XXC*(2002). See also Fikes' brand new study of Huichol shamans in Jay C. Fikes, *Unknown Huichol: Shamans and Immortals, Allies against Chaos* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2011).

And in addition to these primary and secondary resources, other historians and anthropologists have undertaken important studies of the Huichols' neighbors. Philip Coyle's recent *From Flowers to Ash: Náyarí History, Politics and Violence* examines the Coras, an indigenous group closely related to the Huichols, and sharing some overlapping territory.<sup>49</sup> W. Dirk Raat has published a photo history of the Tarahumaras; at the same time his essay on the history of ideas and society during the Porfiriato provides a theoretical framework to understand científico beliefs.<sup>50</sup> On matters of race, Susan Deeds examines northwestern Mexican indigenous groups and their colonial era rebellions.<sup>51</sup> Beatriz Rojas's collection of primary sources trace Huichol history to the earliest days of contact with Spaniards, but

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<sup>49</sup> Coyle, *From Flowers to Ash*. The Coras and Huichols are from the same branch of the Uto-Aztecan language family, and their territory overlaps in the Sierra del Nayar.

<sup>50</sup> W. Dirk Raat and George Janecek, *Mexico's Sierra Tarahumara: a photohistory of the people on the edge* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996). See also W. Dirk Raat, "Auguste Comte, Gabino Barreda, and Positivism in Mexico," *Aztlan* 14, no. 2 (1983).

<sup>51</sup> Susan M. Deeds, "First Generation Rebellions in Seventeenth Century Nueva Vizcaya," in *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, ed. Susan M. Schroeder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

provides little analytical framework in which to place the story.<sup>52</sup> There is therefore a growing body of literature on western indigenous groups that frequently fell outside the center of Spanish colonial control and subsequent Mexican administration.

Beginning in the 1980s, and continuing until today, historians of indigenous groups in Latin America have mixed theoretical approaches put forth by cultural anthropologists with the more traditional methodologies used by historians. This has produced the field of ethnohistory, a new way of examining the subaltern past. Ethnohistory has taken hold among historians of Mexico in particular who have begun to construct narratives outside the well-told tales of the Mexican Revolution. Indigenism in the twentieth century became a popular topic for Mexican ethnohistorians, wanting to elevate native peoples to places of prominence in the national story. The cultures of indigenous peoples, in addition to how they experienced events, remain an important aspect in the history of Mexico's Indian populations. In

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<sup>52</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*.

many ways, the blending of anthropology and history has helped scholars recover the stories of indigenous peoples who have been denied their own past in the official documentary record.

These new types of studies have allowed for more complete and accurate historical accounts. The Mayas exemplified this trend. Popularly (though incorrectly) considered to be peaceful mathematicians and astrologers, recent studies of Mayan groups illustrate a much deeper, more hierarchical society plagued by the violence that has afflicted countless ethnic groups. Wolfgang Gabbert, Paul Sullivan, Mathew Restall, Nancy Farriss, Robert Patch, and Terry Rugeley have examined various aspects of Maya culture and history, from the colonial period to more modern times.<sup>53</sup> What these works show us is that the

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<sup>53</sup> For further information, see the following: Robert W. Patch, *Maya Revolt and Revolution in the 18th Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002). Nancy Farriss, *Maya Society Under Colonial Rule: The Collective Enterprise of Survival* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); Matthew Restall, *The Maya World: Yucatec Culture and Society, 1550-1850* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997). Terry Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men: Religion and*

word 'Maya' is a term imposed upon a group of people in much the same way that indio was and still is.<sup>54</sup> We now know that by the nineteenth century Roman Catholicism made inroads among Maya communities, but it never completely erased pre-contact practices that infused religion with common, mundane matters.<sup>55</sup> And finally, by the twentieth century, with the memories of the Caste War still fresh in their minds, Maya communities cautiously controlled their contact with outsiders, lest intruders demand their labor and take even more of their lands.<sup>56</sup> Without the works of these scholars, Mayan history would be incomplete and inaccurate.

While different Mayan communities are among the most frequently studied of Mexico's native peoples,

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*Popular Cultures in Southeast Mexico, 1800-1876* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001).

<sup>54</sup> Wolfgang Gabbert, *Becoming Maya: Ethnicity and Social Inequality in Yucatán Since 1500* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2004), 28-29.

<sup>55</sup> Rugeley, *Of Wonders and Wise Men*, xiii. See also Terry Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry and the Origins of the Caste War* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996).

<sup>56</sup> Paul R Sullivan, *Unfinished Conversations: Mayas and Foreigners Between Two Wars* (New York: Knopf, 1989), see Chapter 3. See also Paul Sullivan, *Xuxub Must Die: The Lost Histories of a Murder on the Yucatán* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

ethnohistorical approaches help academics write histories of groups about whom very little is known. For instance, the Yucatec Maya are quite familiar to historians and anthropologists, but the lesser known Lacandon Maya have not been studied nearly as much. Blending history, archaeology, and anthropology, Joel Palka has produced the most recent scholarly work on these intriguing people. Early twentieth century anthropologists viewed the Lacandon as directly related to the Classical Maya. Tucked away in the Chiapan highlands, they had fiercely resisted colonization simply by abandoning their homes if too many outsiders intruded.<sup>57</sup> They are not, as Palka notes, simply fossils of a great and ancient civilization, but an intricate society that adapted to an environment that changed rather slowly when compared to the Valley of Mexico or the Yucatán Peninsula.

To the northwest of Chiapas lies the state of Oaxaca, the traditional homelands of the Zapotec and other peoples. Howard Campbell, in his 1994 study *Zapotec Renaissance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural*

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<sup>57</sup> Palka, *Unconquered Lacandón*, 211-212.

*Revivalism in Southern Mexico* provides an expansive historical examination Zapotec resistance. Covering pre-conquest times up to the recent past, he shows that many Zapotecs have remained ethnically vibrant and have become politically active as a result of contact with non-Zapotec groups. Culturally related to the Aztecs and speaking a Nahuatl language, the Zapotecs faced waves of colonization at the hands of the Spanish and then non-indigenous Mexicans. Unlike other societies that place preference upon "purely" indigenous people, the Zapotecs did not; community identity took precedence over purity of blood.<sup>58</sup> Campbell illustrates how an indigenous group in almost continual contact with outsiders since the sixteenth century could remain a coherent community: by the middle of the twentieth century, a class of politically savvy Zapotec intellectuals emerged, reacting against the racist ideologies of the past. Campbell, an anthropologist, illustrates how ethnohistory can be used to understand both the distant past and relatively modern events.

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<sup>58</sup> Howard Campbell, *Zapotec Renaissance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural Revivalism in Southern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1994), 71.

At the opposite end of Mexico from Yucatán, Oaxaca and Chiapas lies the Yaqui stronghold in what is now the state of Sonora. Neighboring the Tarahumaras, and living further to the north of the Huichols, the Yaquis have struggled continually against the incursions of outsiders from the mid-eighteenth century through the present. While often violently confronting the enemy, the Yaquis managed to forestall subjugation despite the best attempts of the Spanish and then Mexican governments. Evelyn Hu-DeHart's "Peasant Rebellion in the Northwest: The Yaqui Indians of Sonora, 1740-1976" and *Yaqui Resistance and Survival* detail the history of a proud people who refused to assimilate. In the eighteenth century, labor demands from local hacendados combined with Jesuit missionaries and the presence of the Spanish military to ignite the Yaquis to rebel.<sup>59</sup> Later, near the end of the nineteenth century, as pressure from the Mexican government under Díaz

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<sup>59</sup> Evelyn Hu-DeHart, "Peasant Rebellion in the Northwest: The Yaqui Indians of Sonora, 1740-1976," in *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. Friedrich Katz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 144-145.

mounted, the Yaquis launched guerrilla campaigns.<sup>60</sup> Through decades of contact and conflict with outsiders, the Yaquis have adapted, maintaining a distinct ethnic identity. Hu-DeHart examines the Yaquis' transformation but is only able to do so using both anthropological and historical sources. Without both, the only story that could emerge would be based upon sources from Spanish and Mexican authors, thus skewing the perception of Yaqui history.

This brief survey of some recent, important ethnohistorical works demonstrates the importance of the field. Historians must employ an interdisciplinary approach if we are to appreciate indigenous peoples' pasts, particularly those academics who study the pre-contact and early colonial eras. But even for historians who explore the national period, it is frequently difficult to

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<sup>60</sup> Hu-DeHart, "Peasant Rebellion in the Northwest," 165. See also Evelyn Hu-DeHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival: The Struggle for Land and Autonomy, 1821-1910* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984). For another exciting analysis on Yaqui life and culture see Kirstin Erickson, *Yaqui Homeland and Homeplace: the Everyday Production of Ethnic Identity* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008).

find native voices in a sea of government documents. Rather than tell only a partial history, one devoid of culture and society, ethnohistory is a viable and necessary source for exploration.

Nevertheless, documentary research is what historians do best and its value cannot and must not be discounted. Researching the history of the Huichols requires diligence and a fair knowledge of the geography of northern Jalisco's towns and districts (known as a *cantónes*). I quickly discovered in the *Archivo Histórico del Estado de Jalisco* that Mexican politicians rarely used the name 'Huichol,' instead calling them *indígenas*. This is true for native peoples in many areas during the Porfirian era. In some ways, this was a homogenizing denial of indigenous identity and ethnicity. Recovering lost stories is critically important and there is a wealth of sources for the perceptive researcher interested in the Huichols besides what exists in the state archives. In the Guadalajara suburb of Zapopán, for instance, the Basílica de Zapopán has a wealth of religious sources on the Huichols next door to a quaint little museum about

the group, staffed by volunteers and organized by a mestizo man who travels between the Guadalajara metropolitan area and the Huichol Sierra. The clergy at the Basílica in Zapopán kept particularly meticulous records, especially after they returned to the area in the 1840s.<sup>61</sup> In addition to the sources in Zapopán, the Catedral Central in the colonial district of Guadalajara has a sizeable archive in its basement, which reports on things such as religious practices of the region's inhabitants. Finally, the *Archivo General de la Nación* in Mexico provides some key religious documents from the period just before the Reform Wars tore Mexico apart.

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<sup>61</sup>Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 139. See this section in Rojas for a list of sources kept by the Franciscans currently held at the *Archivo Histórico de Zapopán*.

## Chapter Two

### From the Chichimecas to *Niños con barbas*: Ancient West Mexico and Colonial Nueva Galicia

In ancient times, before the Huichols came to live in their sacred lands just to the northwest of Guadalajara, Jalisco, strange and wondrous beings competed for supremacy in the mountains and deserts. The region around Real de Catorce, known as Rhaitomuany (Wirikuta) to the Huichols, was infused with mystical power and drew people from far and wide on sacred pilgrimages. This was the land of Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí, the Deer God. Long ago, a Huichol ancestor named Kauyaumari made a journey to Wirikuta to fulfill religious obligations.<sup>1</sup> Upon coming into

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<sup>1</sup> There is a discrepancy between names, here. Léon Diguet called the ancestor Maxa Kwaxí, but Barbara Myerhoff suggested that the deity is actually called Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí, and that Kauyaumari alone was a semidivine figure, with possible roots in historical fact. The name together Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí Kauyaumari Wawatsari means Elder Brother Deer Tail, and is the merging of an actual *mara'akame* (singer, shaman) and the deity Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí. Separated out, Kauyaumari is a trickster, cultural hero figure and is not divine. See Barbara G. Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt: the Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 85. Myerhoff acknowledged that this concept of Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí Kwaxí Kauyaumari is incredibly complicated to non-Huichols, which is probably why Diguet

contact with some unnamed "enemies" in the area, Kauyaumari described to them his beliefs and his purpose, perhaps with the hope that he would not be molested on his trip. Unmoved, his enemies attacked, and Kauyaumari and his followers suffered terribly; forced to flee into the desert, the pilgrims, who had left all of their cooking utensils and drinking gourds behind, were helpless in the harsh terrain. Their enemies destroyed the goods and Kauyaumari and his people had no means to cook for themselves, or to collect water to survive the dry climate. The gods, especially Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí, took pity upon the pious travelers, and turned the remains of their destroyed utensils into peyote cacti; then, the gods taught the people what to do with the cactus. They discovered that they could consume the cactus and magically survive hunger and thirst for days at a time.<sup>2</sup>

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misinterpreted it. See also Guillermo De la Peña, *Culturas indígenas de Jalisco* (Guadalajara, Jalisco, México: Secretaría de Cultura, Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, 2006), 63. Diguét, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas*.

<sup>2</sup> Diguét, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas*, 145.

This story, the legacy of the primordial peyote hunt, is an important cultural tool for historians for a number of reasons. The Huichol homeland centers around a complex ritual universe that extends in the four cardinal directions, and that encompasses a wide variety of terrains and meanings; physical locations within this space are important because the Huichols have imbued them with religious significance.<sup>3</sup> In the longer version of the peyote story, ethnographer Léon Diguët lists fourteen or fifteen towns that nineteenth-century Huichols passed through en route to Real de Catorce. In each town, the Huichols made offerings to one deity or another who needed supplication. The story of Kauyaumari and Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí, then, provides a spiritual roadmap to Real de Catorce, in addition to sketching out

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<sup>3</sup> For a brief article on the subject of sacred geography, see Rachel Corr, "Ritual Knowledge and the Politics of Identity in Andean Festivities," *Ethnology* 42, no. 1 (2003). Huichol views on sacred geography can be compared to Andean beliefs. For example, in her work on Andean religion, Sabine MacCormack commented that "In Huamachuco, as everywhere in the Andes, the plains and the mountains, the sky and the waters were both the theatre and dramatis personae of divine action." See Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision and Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 146.

symbolic locations over the vast and rugged landscape.

The Huichols have very deep roots in western Mexico, although how long they lived in one place or another is unclear. Their imprint has been on the landscape since long before Europeans arrived, helping outsiders understand just why they refuse to leave the land they love so much. And a final feature of this primeval peyote tale is that it firmly establishes the Huichols in the regions surrounding Real de Catorce. No one knows with certainty from where Kauyaumari and his followers began their journey, or where they ended; it is evident that they traveled to Wirikuta and that the trip was rather arduous. It is this religious journey, undertaken with love that is important. Kauyaumari's devotion to his gods signals a clue to Huichol religious beliefs. Proper behavior attracts beneficent treatment from the spiritual realm, as illustrated by Kauyaumari's actions and the gods' reactions. And this vast west Mexican landscape that the Huichols consider their home and Holy Land helps explain the relationship

between the Huichols and the wider world surrounding them.<sup>4</sup>

### **Civilizations in Ancient West Mexico**

Indigenous societies, like all other human groups, link their lives in the present to historical events and shared remembrances of the past. Thus, while this story focuses on the Huichols and their relationship with the Mexican government throughout the nineteenth century, I take a broad approach by initially exploring the ancient history of western Mexico through an historical analysis of the archaeology of the region. Scholars will perhaps never know from which pre-contact civilizations the Huichols and their neighbors came, and it is not my intention join the fray. Examining the region as a whole provides a picture of the past that can, and should be tied to the post-Independence era. Where more concrete information is available, such as in the writings of intrepid Franciscan friars, a much

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<sup>4</sup> Fernando Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote, Texas* Pan American series; (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), xxiii.

more complete, and less uncertain portrait of Huichol history begins to emerge.

The Huichols live in the mountains to the north and west of the city of Guadalajara, and as far as anyone can ascertain, they have lived in the Sierra Madre Occidental for hundreds of years (see map 1.1). The region is extremely mountainous and traversed by deep canyons, narrow valleys, and swift rivers. The few major roads that do exist are tortuous, two-lane arteries that connect the city of Zacatecas to Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosí and Guadalajara; otherwise, roads into the region are scarce, and in some cases, impassable during the summer rainy season. It is important to bear in mind that although traveling throughout the Sierra Madre has historically been difficult, one should not view the area as isolated.<sup>5</sup> The mountains, canyons, and rivers around which the Huichols made their homes was, and still is, a region of refuge, while maintaining deep connections to the outside world.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Antonio Tello, *Crónica miscelánea de la Sancta Provincia de Xalisco. Libro III*. (Guadalajara: Editorial Font, 1942), 650.

<sup>6</sup>Weigand and Fikes, "Sensacialismo y etnografía," 54.

Western Mexico has a rich and complex archaeological history. La Quemada, Alta Vista, and Teuchitlán, three important and very different centers of ancient civilization, provide some evidence as to the cultures that called these places home more than a thousand years ago. Scholars have come to refer to the "Greater Southwest," an enormous cultural and geographical complex in which certain characteristics, such as pottery styles, existed over a large swath of space and time. The Greater Southwest encompassed a large portion Mesoamerica, including what is now the southwestern United States, and exhibits broad cultural and social exchange that occurred over centuries.<sup>7</sup> The Huichols, or at the

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<sup>7</sup>Betty Bell, ed. *The Archaeology of West Mexico* (Ajijic, Jalisco, Mexico, West Mexican Society for Advanced Study, 1974). In Bell, see J. Charles Kelley's chapter titled "Speculations on the Culture History of Northwestern Mexico", 19-20. See also J. Charles Kelley, "Mesoamerica and the Southwestern United States," in *Handbook of Middle American Indians, Volume 4: Archaeological Connections and External Frontiers*, ed. Robert Wauchope (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968), 97-99. On page 97, Kelley notes that R.L. Beals coined the concept in 1944. See also Edward H. Spicer, *Cycles of Conquest: The Impact of Spain, Mexico, and the United States on the Indians of the Southwest, 1533-1960* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), viii.

very least their predecessors, developed their culture in relation to regional norms.

It is difficult to trace modern-day indigenous peoples to one ancient group or another. Archaeologists and anthropologists have tried to do this in western Mexico, and particularly with the Huichols, the result has been a divergence of opinions. One school of thought posits that the Huichols originated in the northern deserts around the modern-day Mexican states of San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas. Other scholars suggest that the Huichols came from groups that had existed in the states of Jalisco and Nayarit more than a millennia ago. Neither interpretation definitively traces Huichol history further back than the fifteenth century. But finding the mother culture of the Huichols is not the goal; rather, an analysis of the archaeological history, as it relates to the broader region, sheds light on the places that the Huichols and their neighbors have called home for centuries.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Biloine W. Young and Melvin Leo Fowler, *Cahokia, The Great Native American Metropolis* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 144. As Young and Fowler so correctly noted, archaeology is a way to make contacts with peoples in the distant past, though

What do we know about the ancient peoples of west Mexico? To begin with, complexes like Chalchihuites, Malpaso, Loma San Gabriel and Teuchitlán existed for centuries and were varied, intricate, and intrinsically connected to larger Mesoamerica. These four civilizations were roughly contemporaneous, produced offshoots, and were the largest and most coherent organizational groups in their respective areas. Each culture enveloped the areas now considered the Huichol homelands, in the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains; thus, societal norms present in indigenous peoples of the recent past most likely came from these much more ancient civilizations, diffused by space and over long periods of time.<sup>9</sup>

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they admit that archaeological sites from more than three centuries ago are incredibly difficult to connect to modern peoples. The disruption of contact, even prior to actual meetings between Indians and Europeans, fragmented indigenous peoples and forced the creation of new groups; archaeology, then, paints a picture of the past, even though that picture might be obscured. This is the mantra I, as a historian, have ascribed to when attempting to explore the ancient Huichol past. It is not as important to find out which ancient groups made up the Huichols as much as *what* created the Huichols and *how* that occurred.

<sup>9</sup> With the exception of migratory indigenous groups.

Yet, all of these traditions differed considerably from one another. Chalchihuites, the most widespread cultural institution (in terms of area and derivative groups), also had profound influence over western and northern Mexico for the longest amount of time. Chalchihuites sites emerged out of the mists of the early Pre-Classic period, around 200 AD; their complex spread from western Zacatecas, along the spine of the Sierra Madre Occidental through Durango and into the northwestern fringes of Mesoamerica. Its pinnacle "city," now called Alta Vista de Chalchihuites, located in the modern state of Durango, is one of the more important archaeological sites in northern Mexico. Alta Vista flourished between 400 and 800 AD, and during its height, the population ranged anywhere from 8,000 to 12,000 individuals.<sup>10</sup> Alta Vista prospered from mining and trade; turquoise was one of the primary

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<sup>10</sup>Phil C. Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes y su relación con la guerra de los nayaritas: una hipótesis* (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1995), 23. Evans and Webster suggest that people inhabited Alta Vista between 350 and 950 ad, while Weigand argues that Alta Vista's decline began around 800 ad and was rather rapid. See Susan Toby Evans and David L. Webster, eds., *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001), 16.

stones extracted from the earth, and this fact provided the Chalchihuites tradition with its name.<sup>11</sup>

Riches from both trade and mining helped create a highly stratified society in Alta Vista, complete with priestly classes and perhaps even a small group of nobles. One can safely assume that like many other Mesoamerican societies, Alta Vista possessed a theocratic form of government. Hallmarks of Teotihuacán's influence, including the architectural designs of certain ceremonial sites, indicate the possibility of ties between the two civilizations.<sup>12</sup> Teotihuacán, a large city of roughly 150,000 at its height, had extensive trade and cultural ties throughout much of Mesoamerica. At some point in Alta Vista's history, human sacrifice may have played a role in the center's religious and political life, a fact evidenced by the presence of long-bone skull racks, known as *tzompantli*. Alta Vista began a precipitous decline around 750, then slightly

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<sup>11</sup> Chalchihuites comes from the Nahuatl word "chalchihuitl", referring to a greenish stone known to Nahuas as "jade".

<sup>12</sup> Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 21. For a more extensive discussion of the potential links between Alta Vista de Chalchihuites and Teotihuacán, see Evans and Webster, *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America*, 16.

reversed course. Archaeological remains point to "ritualized warfare" and "...excessive human sacrifice," evidenced by defleshed bones and disarticulated skeletons.<sup>13</sup> Whatever the reason, residents abandoned Alta Vista by about 950 (at the latest), taking their cultural practices with them to new and varied places.

The southern reaches of modern Huichol country borders on lands that were once part of the Teuchitlán tradition. Marked by circular, earthen pyramids known as *Guachimontones*, the Teuchitlán tradition expanded throughout Jalisco, centering around the Volcán de Tequila and stretching up to the Sierra Madre Occidental foothills. Though the culture became most complex during the late Classic period, it actually arose in the early Classic era. Teuchitlán towns featured a relatively hierarchical social structure, the ever-present ball courts that dot the Mesoamerican landscape, with shaft tombs often found underneath the circular pyramids.<sup>14</sup> For

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<sup>13</sup> Evans and Webster, *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America*, 17, 531.

<sup>14</sup> Susan Toby Evans, *Ancient Mexico and Central America: Archaeology and Culture History*, 2nd. ed. (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2008), 361. Evans

five centuries, the elite lived off the backs of commoners who worked the fields surrounding towns like Teuchitlán and Huitzilapa. Architecture changed over time, a fact that can be attributed to increasing populations; indeed, tombs and buildings became much grander in scale toward the end of the tradition's lifespan.<sup>15</sup> Upon the collapse of Teuchitlán, some settlers moved into what is now Guadalajara and continued the practice of pyramid building with decidedly mixed success. Others perhaps moved into the mountains or to the coast to rebuild their lives.<sup>16</sup>

Existing almost simultaneously with Chalchihuites and Teuchitlán was the widespread Loma San Gabriel culture.<sup>17</sup> Rising among small farming groups deep in the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains

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writes that "ball-courts served to strengthen ties among members of the tradition's elite class."

<sup>15</sup> Evans, *Ancient Mexico & Central America*, 248.

<sup>16</sup> Evans, *Ancient Mexico & Central America*, 248; Peter T. Furst, *Rock Crystals & Peyote Dreams: Explorations in the Huichol Universe* (University of Utah Press, 2006), 148.

<sup>17</sup> Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 24. Wiegand and others have noted that Loma San Gabriel was an extant culture during the rise and fall of Chalchihuites sites; Loma San Gabriel simply gained prominence after the ultimate decline of Chalchihuites.

early in the first millennium AD, Loma San Gabriel was the avenue by which different aspects of Mesoamerican society spread from south to north over time. Pottery styles, ceremonial activities, and trade goods gradually moved into what is now the Desert Southwest, tying the remote northern deserts with central Mesoamerica into the aforementioned "Greater Southwest."<sup>18</sup>

To the southeast of Alta Vista de Chalchihuites lies another key to the puzzle of the Huichol history, the fortress of La Quemada (also known as Chicomoztoc or Tuitlán).<sup>19</sup> The site is impressive: it is high on a mountain, overlooking the entire Malpaso Valley, in southern Zacatecas. Key features include oddly shaped pyramids, massive stone staircases and the remnants of a hall filled with gigantic columns. Humans built La Quemada between sometime between 700

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<sup>18</sup> Bell, ed. *The Archaeology of West Mexico*, 95, 97. As previously mentioned, R.L. Beals coined the phrase, which encompassed cultural traits of both the US southwest and Mesoamerica.

<sup>19</sup> Chicomoztoc is also known as the place of the seven caves, from which the Aztecs emerged just prior to leaving Aztlán. It is unclear who bestowed the name Chicomoztoc upon La Quemada, but this is likely not the place from which the Aztecs began their quest.

and 900 AD.<sup>20</sup> Different in nearly every way from Alta Vista, La Quemada shows signs of having been a highly militarized society, likely exhibiting late Classic, or early Post-Classic characteristics. The population of the site was never very high, perhaps only around 500 inhabitants, while the valley population numbered a few thousand; however, La Quemada proved to be a very powerful and defensible fortress.<sup>21</sup>

While Chalchihuites cultures emphasized material wealth based upon mining, La Quemada (and the Malpaso cultures more generally) focused upon military strength and the firm hand of their leaders in order to become a wealthy and stratified society. The ruling elite in La Quemada dominated the population in such a way as to clearly illustrate a culture based on regional hegemony established and maintained through force, not mineral wealth.<sup>22</sup> Alta Vista's

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<sup>20</sup> Evans and Webster, *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America*; Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*.

<sup>21</sup> Evans, *Ancient Mexico & Central America*, 361.

<sup>22</sup> Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*.; Phil C. Weigand, "Possible References to La Quemada in Huichol Mythology," *Ethnohistory* 22, no. 1 (1975).; Evans and Webster, *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America*, 531.

leaders practiced human sacrifice as a method of control only, it appears, when the society experienced decline. Despite their participation in the turquoise trade, Alta Vista's population did not create impressive road networks; La Quemada's inhabitants used roads, which had probably been in place for centuries, as a means to move armies around. There have been a number of theories about this intriguing location: some suggest that it is a northern outpost of Teotihuacán; others maintain that the site was a Toltec development; while still others more fancifully argue that La Quemada is the mythical Chicomoztoc, the land of seven caves from which the Aztecs migrated.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of who built La Quemada, its collapse around 1200 surely had important repercussions around the region, because of the city's military prominence in the area.

Certain extant Huichol legends appear to reflect both the presence of La Quemada and their own participation in a regional trade network. In one

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<sup>23</sup> Baudelina García, "La Quemada o el mítico Chicomoztoc (Zacatecas)," [http://www.mexicodesconocido.com.mx/notas/4447-La-Quemada-o-el-mítico-Chicomoztoc-\(Zacatecas\)](http://www.mexicodesconocido.com.mx/notas/4447-La-Quemada-o-el-mítico-Chicomoztoc-(Zacatecas)). As stated above in the footnotes, this is highly suspect.

particular tale, an evil priest living "several valleys to the East" of the Huichol homelands made constant demands of peyote from the travelers, lest they be killed by the priest's jaguars and eagles.<sup>24</sup> Even if they tried to avoid this evil priest and his animal minions, many still died and their peyote would be taken away from them. Eventually the gods became angry at the lack of peyote and:

...said that there must be a great ceremony with the five great singers of the valley to the east [Bolaños] so that the corn would not wilt, so that peyote could come back, so that the salt could come back, so that feathers could come back, so that shells could come back...Each singer sang for four nights until the gods told them to leave and go to the east. When they came to the evil priest's great rock, the jaguars met them and many people were killed. But the sun god burned the jaguars and the evil priest tried to turn day to night to stop the heat. The heat lasted twenty days...and the evil priest was gone. Now the corn returned to life, now the Huichols could bring peyote, now the Huichols could bring salt, now the Huichols could bring feathers, now the Huichols could bring shells. But the gods told them never to go back to the great rock, because the evil remains.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Weigand, "Possible References," 16.

<sup>25</sup> Weigand, "Possible References," 16-17.

Because of the lack of any other large, fortified sites with buildings anywhere near either the Huichol homeland or the peyote trail through Zacatecas into San Luis Potosí, it has been argued that this myth has its basis in the area's regional dominance by La Quemada. Thus, the city's ties to Huichol sacred mythology are strong. Incidentally, modern Huichol peyote trails "loops to the north of La Quemada, as if to avoid it."<sup>26</sup>

Upon its eventual destruction, the people living in La Quemada dispersed throughout the Malpaso Valley, taking their cultural norms of war and sacrifice with them to new locations. Many scholars have wondered about the remnants of this military society in the middle of what is now southern Zacatecas and extreme northern Jalisco. The different Chalchihuites cultures had dissolved, occasionally re-emerged elsewhere or blended with extant complexes (i.e., Loma San Gabriel); some

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<sup>26</sup> Weigand, "Possible References," 18. I think this is an intriguing suggestion. Weigand's analysis requires him to take academic leaps for which there may never be evidence; nevertheless, the suggestions he poses (including the fact that La Quemada was destroyed by "burning", and that this area was intrinsically tied into the rest of Mesoamerica) are plausible.

archaeologists have even argued that after relative depopulation of Zacatecas around 1250, new groups, in the form of the Tepehuanes and Huichols, moved into the Sierra Madre Occidental to make their homes.<sup>27</sup>

Western Mexico remained in a state of flux during the last few centuries prior to the invasion of the Spanish. Populations declined in what are now the states of Jalisco, Zacatecas and Nayarit, although there were a few remaining centers, near the modern towns of Ahalulco and Etzatlán.<sup>28</sup> These two "urban" areas were perhaps offshoots of the Teuchitlán tradition, as the people who lived there built guachimontones, or circular, stepped pyramids that resemble the structures found in the area at older archaeological sites. The interior of Jalisco also seemed to be a part of an extensive trade network that stretched along the Pacific coast of western Mexico, from further south in central Mexico

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<sup>27</sup> Bell, ed. *The Archaeology of West Mexico*, 20. Kelley, "Mesoamerica and the Southwestern United States," 99. Evans and Webster propose that the people of La Quemada emerged as Caxcans around the modern towns of Teúl and Nochistlán, while further to the west, the Guachichiles and Zacatecos were composed of the remnants of the Chalchihuites peoples.

<sup>28</sup> De la Peña, *Culturas indígenas de Jalisco*, 36.

far to the northern regions. According to some archaeologists, elements of Mixtec art appeared in western Mexico, leading some to believe that colonization may have occurred during the post-Classic period. The Aztatlán trade network connected the north with the center of Mesoamerica and helped regenerate the Sierra Madre Occidental region, which had been in decline since the early post-Classic era.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the generalized decline in population that occurred throughout the post-Classic period, indigenous groups still existed in the region, albeit in smaller communities than in centuries past. These villages existed within the sphere of influence of Mesoamerican empires to the south, though the degrees of hegemony varied greatly depending upon geography. The Toltec, P'urhépecha, and Aztec domains all bordered the areas to the immediate south of the Sierra Madre Occidental, but none of these three imperial powers was able to gain firm grasp on extreme western Mexico. Ancient oral traditions hold that the Toltecs passed through the Sierra on their

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<sup>29</sup> Evans, *Ancient Mexico & Central America*, 410.

way to their eventual capital at Tollán; their journey began in the north, near Culiacán and Acaponeta, and then they migrated through what is now typically considered Huichol, Cora, and Tepehuan country.<sup>30</sup> To be sure, the Huichols and Coras had established themselves in the mountains by at least the 1200s. It is therefore likely, that the Huichols experienced some effects of Toltec imperialism; early on the Toltecs managed to gain footholds in the Sierra, perhaps because of their migration through the mountains. Although their presence there was limited, nevertheless anyone living in the mountains would have had to accede to periodic Toltec demands.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas*, 67. "La primera de ellas considerada como tolteca y después de haberse establecido por un tiempo en Culiacán y Acaponeta, cruzó el río Santiago, según la tradición narrada por Pentecatli, y emprendió la conquista de la región edificando aquí y allá ciudades y pueblos." In this section, Diguët asserts that the *only* indigenous group whose history we can be sure of begins with the Toltecs, the first of the Nahuatl groups. According to Diguët, we cannot know any history prior to the Toltec empire because there is simply not enough evidence.

<sup>31</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 13-14. "Es probable que los Huichols, establecidos al este de la Sierra Madre Occidental antes de las migraciones nahuatl, sufrieron el impacto del imperio tolteca que impuso su hegemonía al sur, al oeste y al este, alrededor de la sierra donde se

Perhaps as a result of the presence of the Toltecs to the southeast, a generalized "confederation" emerged during the post-Classic period known as the Chimalhuacán. Various groups in the Sierra Madre Occidental region composed the Chimalhuacán, and these peoples loosely allied themselves with each other when the need arose.<sup>32</sup>

Native groups in the Sierra Madre, and its surrounding foothills practiced agriculture and lived in settled towns, but in the late pre-conquest era, there was little ethnic unity. When not in alliance with one another, ethnic groups like the Huichols, Coras, Tepehuanes, and Caxcans could have warred intermittently. Despite alliances and occasional enmities, the Huichols and their neighbors almost certainly belonged to the Chimalhuacán confederation as the region became more volatile throughout the

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*refugiaron los Huichols y los Coras (después del siglo VIII D. C.)."*

<sup>32</sup> Buce G. Trigger, ed. *The Cambridge History of the Natives Peoples of the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 142. The Chimalhuacán covered a vast geographical area, including the modern states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Colima, Aguascalientes and Zacatecas. See also Eric Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico: The Rural Economy of the Guadalajara Region, 1675-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 17.

post-Classic period.<sup>33</sup> Developments to the south and east necessitated the protection that the Chimalhuacán offered, because as the Toltec empire collapsed in the thirteenth century, other powerful states emerged to take its place.

Further to the east of the Chimalhuacán, the P'urhépechas began expanding their territories around their capital at Tzintzuntzan. Centered around Lake Pátzcuaro, the P'urhépecha population boomed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, at almost the same time that the Aztecs forged their state. Like the Aztecs, the P'urhépechas arrived rather late to their home territories and built up a similarly aggressive, expansionist state. Fortunately for the P'urhépecha, their homeland existed in an area rich in copper; unfortunately, their domain was also dangerously close to the northern reaches of the Aztec Empire, and the two states came to blows throughout the 1470s.<sup>34</sup> The Aztecs, who wanted to

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<sup>33</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Evans and Webster, *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America*, 602. The presence of metals in the area of the Pátzcuaro basin almost certainly helped the Purhépecha fend off continued Aztec incursions.

increase their lands and force the P'urhépecha to become tributaries and guardians of the northern frontier, underestimated their adversaries. In 1478, the P'urhépecha won a decisive battle, leading to the creation of a frontier of empty lands, in order to prevent the two empires from continuing their ruinous wars. From that point on, the P'urhépecha and Aztecs maintained an uneasy truce, as long distance Aztec traders, known as *pochteca*, crisscrossed the frontier in their forays to extreme northern Mexico. While battles between the Aztecs and Purhépecha did not necessarily involve the Chimalhuacán tribes, the Purhépechas' demand for obsidian directly affected the peoples living around Eztatlán. During the five decades prior to the arrival of the Spanish, the Purhépechas undertook nearly constant raids into Jalisco to try to defeat Eztatlán and take over the obsidian mines which the latter controlled.<sup>35</sup> In this project the mighty Michoacán empire was unsuccessful.

For centuries, then, the native peoples of the Sierra Madre Occidental, its foothills and the plains to the south dealt with the presence of powerful

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<sup>35</sup> Evans and Webster, *Archaeology of Ancient Mexico and Central America*, 603, 249.

empires that frequently surrounded them. By the post-Classic period the Huichols were but one of many indigenous groups in the region. They certainly knew about the Aztecs, their warlike neighbors to the south; indeed, it is almost certain that the Aztecs knew at least something of the Huichols and their curious religious practices. Stories in the Florentine Codex, written shortly after the Conquest of Mexico, describe certain religious practices of mountain and desert peoples that depict peyote ceremonies with startling accuracy. While the authors of the Codex do not use the name "Huichol" specifically, they do describe in some detail the landscape in which these so-called "Chichimec" peoples lived. They wrote,

...the real Chichimeca, that is to say, those who lived on the grassy plains, in the forests-these were the ones who lived far away; they lived in the forests, the grassy plains, the deserts, among the crags...where night came upon them, there they sought a cave, a craggy place, there they slept...they knew the qualities, the essence, of herbs, of roots, the so-called peyote was their discovery. These, when they ate peyote, esteemed it above wine or mushrooms. They assembled together somewhere in the desert; they came together; there they danced, they sang all night, all day...And on the morrow, once more they

assembled together. They wept, they wept  
exceedingly...thus they cleansed their eyes.<sup>36</sup>

While not using the word 'Huichol,' the Aztecs described what sounds like a modern peyote ceremony, carried out by modern Huichols. Geographically and culturally, the Aztec description makes sense and illustrates a few key points. First, Mesoamerica was truly an interconnected space, within which a multitude of groups interacted. Second, the Huichols were not isolated, despite the inability of other larger, stronger groups to subsume them (like the Aztecs or the P'urhépechas). Finally, despite their small size, Huichol cultural norms made enough of an impact upon someone in the Aztec world that he commented on peyotism in the written record. Even deep in the Sierra Madre Occidental, and seemingly removed from the larger problems of competing empires, the Huichols participated in the larger Mesoamerican world.

The last century and a half prior to the Spanish arrival saw the Chimalhuacán protecting itself on two

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<sup>36</sup> Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: General History of Things of New Spain, Book X, The People*, ed. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1961), 171-172, 173.

fronts: to the east and to the south. The Aztecs did not affect the Huichols to any large degree, probably because the latter learned to make their homeland a bulwark against enemy invaders; to be certain, all Mesoamericans in this area shared similar language traits, but there is no reason to suggest that Aztecs and Huichols ever met. This region of refuge protected mountainous tribes, from Aztec expansion; there is no evidence whatever that any groups in the Chimalhuacán, within which the Huichols lived, ever became tributaries of the Aztecs.<sup>37</sup> The Aztecs, for whatever reason, never gained control of the mountains to the north. Huichol oral history confirms their independence throughout the last centuries prior to contact with the Spanish.

### **Nuño de Guzmán, Spanish Gangster**

While these final centuries were often chaotic and violent, they were nothing compared to what loomed on the horizon. Indeed, no amount of war between indigenous groups in western Mexico could

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<sup>37</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 14. Here, Negrín argues that Chimalhuacán rulers were never tributaries of the Aztecs.

possibly have prepared people for the arrival of the Spanish. While it is true that the Spaniards were better equipped militarily, guns alone did not bring down the Aztecs and P'urhépechas; rather, centuries of particular cultural practices and beliefs, combined with devastating diseases helped to decimate Mexican natives. Specifically, full-time, professional militaries did not exist. Instead, farmers became soldiers only during periods of limited agricultural activity. Disgust toward Aztec imperial practices provided the Spanish with ready-made allies. Added to these factors, mytho-historical views towards certain years combined to weaken native defenses against a better-armed but significantly smaller Spanish military. The Aztec defeat in 1521 sent reverberations far and wide throughout Mexico. It allowed the Spanish to establish a new empire in the heart of a well-established state, and from there, to expand outward.

Nine years after Cortés's victory over the Aztecs, Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán began a quest for his own slice of New Spain. At the end of 1529, Guzmán, originally from Guadalajara, Spain, began his march

north with an assortment of Spanish and Tlaxcallan allies and P'urhépecha slaves.<sup>38</sup> In early 1530, Guzmán headed northwest of the P'urhépecha capital of Tzintzuntzan, in the hope of defeating the warlike Caxcans and securing access on the northwestern coast.<sup>39</sup> Guzmán and his army first fell upon the town of Tonalá, defeating the native peoples there and launching his bloody conquest of the west from this indigenous village, famous now for its beautiful pottery.

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<sup>38</sup> Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), 42. It is widely suggested that Tangáxuan II, the "king" of the Purhépecha, immediately sought peace with the Spanish upon learning of the Aztec defeat and an approaching Spanish force; this occurred despite a massive Purhépecha military. When Guzmán arrived in the area, en route to the west, he had Tangáxuan executed and enslaved hundreds, perhaps thousands of Purhépechas. See Helen Perlstein Pollard's *Tariacuri's Legacy*. Finally, Altman does not call Guzmán's Indian recruits slaves, instead referring to them as auxiliaries, which can imply a variety of meanings. See Ida Altman, *The War for Mexico's West: Indians and Spaniards in New Galicia, 1524-1550* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010), 22.

<sup>39</sup> Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 72-74. Gerhard suggests that a principal Caxcan town, Tetitlán, probably had a strong ethnic Caxcan nobility, supported by Huichol commoners; he makes this argument in part because of the proximity of Huichol and Caxcan towns, and the fact that the Caxcans were much more warlike than the Huichols.

As he moved from Tonalá northwest, over the Sierra, Guzmán marched on a small Indian village named Teúl in search of the powerful Caxcan nation. The Caxcans, apparently ruled by a female warrior "queen," could count among their occasional allies most of the mountainous tribes of the Sierra, and were a formidable opponent that the Spaniards needed to subjugate.<sup>40</sup> Centered around the modern towns of Teul de González Ortega, Nochistlán and Juchipila, the Caxcans were the lords of the Sierra at the time of the conquest; Guzmán probably miscalculated Caxcan power, because prior to invading the Caxcan lands, he had sent part of his army across the Sierra, toward the modern-day town of Tepic.

Violent and bloody, the Spaniards completed their conquest of the Caxcans by June of 1530. Or did they? Though the Caxcans certainly seemed vanquished, in reality the powerful indigenous group had simply gone underground. The area was reasonably secure, so much so that the Spaniards founded the

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<sup>40</sup>J.H. Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia in the Sixteenth Century: A Study in Spanish Colonial Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 21.

city of Guadalajara, paying homage to Guzmán's roots across the ocean. The Spaniards intended their stay to be permanent which angered native peoples still simmering from their defeat; at last, the latter rebelled, expelling the Spanish settlers from the first Guadalajara, and forcing the city's initial removal in 1531 (because of native resentment, and poor placement, the city was subsequently moved three more times).<sup>41</sup> Guzmán, "a natural gangster," headed northwest, toward the coast, leaving behind a legacy of brutality: his practices terrorized "the natives with often unprovoked killing, torture and enslavement...the army left a path of corpses and destroyed houses and crops impressing surviving males into service and leaving women and children to starve."<sup>42</sup> In his place, conquistadors who had served

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<sup>41</sup> Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 25. Weigand writes that Guadalajara was first moved from what is now Nochistlán, Zacatecas, in 1530. See Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 72-74. Parry suggested 1531 in his work. See also Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 19.

<sup>42</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 42-43. The Spanish Crown eventually recalled Guzmán, because of his tactics, which horrified even his own countrymen. Guillermo de la Peña, a noted Mexican anthropologist, put it succinctly: "Guzmán tiene peor fama," as a result of the violence. See De la Peña, *Culturas Indígenas de Jalisco*, 37. Parry called Guzmán "a

under him either remained in the area, or, in the case of Pedro Almíndez Chirinos, surveyed parts of the countryside before rejoining Guzmán. Chirinos "...passed through and nominally subjugated the Sierras of Tepeque, Xora, Cora, Huianamota, and perhaps Huazamota, on the periphery of Huichol-Tecual territory."<sup>43</sup> The Caxcans, and other peoples in the area fled the violence by taking refuge among friendly groups in the mountains. From there, they took stock of their losses and waited, seething at their treatment at the hands of Guzmán.

For more than a decade indigenous peoples in the Sierra Madre region of Nueva Galicia plotted their revenge. The Caxcans, Tecuexes, Zacatecos, and Guachichiles, among others, launched raids on Spanish settlements that strayed too close to the mountains.<sup>44</sup>

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natural gangster," remarking that "such men flourish in times of violence..." See Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 42-71; Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*, 66. Gerhard also points out that Chirinos spent time in Bolaños, a place that would become an important silver mining area during the early colonial period.

<sup>44</sup> Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 59. The mention of the Guachichiles by Weigand is significant, because this is one of the names by

These native peoples did not see themselves as subject to Spanish authority, and certainly did not understand themselves as "conquered" in any meaningful sense. Transgressions carried out by the Spanish, including enslavement, were injurious and could be met with serious responses. By 1540 the pressure upon Nueva Galicia's indigenous groups gave way to a rebellion known as the Mixtón War. It began with the murder of *encomendero* Juan de Arce by Guaynamota Indians contracted through a grant of *encomienda* to work for him (encomenderos were Spaniards who received a grant of unpaid Indian labor- or encomienda- in exchange for their service to the Crown in some capacity).<sup>45</sup> The Guaynamotecos most likely did not plan to launch a large scale rebellion; rather, the surviving Caxcans probably contacted allies throughout the Sierra and coordinated the attacks.<sup>46</sup> Land pressures undoubtedly

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which the Huichols were known during the early colonial period.

<sup>45</sup> Altman, *The War for Mexico's West*, 125. Altman provides an excellent analysis of the Mixtón War in Chapter Five.

<sup>46</sup> Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 27.

prompted many to join the Caxcans and Guaynamotecos.<sup>47</sup> Centered around the highlands of the Sierra Madre Occidental, thousands of Indians took up arms against the Spanish. Led by the Caxcans and Zacatecos, other groups joined in the rebellion from Teul and Nochistlán (in present-day Zacatecas) to Tepic (in present-day Nayarit). Records are unclear as to the participation of the Huichols and Coras, but the scope of the rebellion suggests they might have taken part or at least offered some support.<sup>48</sup> This rebellion can be viewed as a nativist one, in which various groups rose up in hopes of returning the region to its indigenous owners.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Arturo Gutiérrez del Angel, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta: el gran rito de paso de los Huicholes* (México, DF: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, Universidad de Guadalajara, 2002), 23.

<sup>48</sup> Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 27. De la Peña, *Culturas indígenas de Jalisco*, 37. "Encabezada por los cazcanes y zacatecos, a ella se unieron coras y Huichols." But when reading Weigand's *Los orígenes*, it is unclear as to the participation of the Huichols during the Mixtón rebellion. See Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 81-82.

<sup>49</sup> Peña, *Culturas Indígenas De Jalisco*, 37. He writes, "Puede caracterizarse como un movimiento nativista: los rebeldes decían obedecer al llamado de los dioses, que los convocaban a expulsar a los invasores, con el fin de regresar a la organización social y religiosa nativa y de esa manera recobrar una vida de gran prosperidad y diversión."

The Mixtón War ended in late 1541 in most areas, while lasting much longer in far-flung regions like the Huichol Sierra. A defensive force surrounded the thrice-moved Guadalajara on orders from *gobernador* Cristóbal de Oñate and soldiers from Mexico City marched on the region in hopes of quashing the revolts. With the help of Pedro Alvarado, fresh from his campaigns in Guatemala, the Spanish forces managed to end the Mixtón War in the lowlands. It continued to rage among "...the savage Chichimecas, the hunting tribes of the Sierras...."<sup>50</sup> In the end, thousands of Indians lay dead as a result of the violence and virulent epidemics. The Spanish sold scores of surviving women and children into slavery on plantations and haciendas far from home and untold others were deported out of their home regions.<sup>51</sup> The Sierra Madre Occidental, untamed by the Spanish, did not remain immune to violence. However, it did serve as a refugee zone for those fleeing the harsh violence and repressive measures that the Spanish

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<sup>50</sup> Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 28.

<sup>51</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 49. De la Peña, *Culturas indígenas de Jalisco*, 38.

used to keep the indigenous peoples under control.<sup>52</sup> Thus, although the Huichols may not have physically participated in the uprisings, they most certainly dealt with the survivors and knew well that the actions of the Spaniards had serious consequences for their neighbors.

### **Colonization in the West**

Once the violence subsided in Nueva Galicia, the Spanish began the process of colonization. This was easier in some places than in others, as the Sierra Madre Occidental seethed with tension and conflict for decades after the end of the Mixtón War, yet political leaders aimed at pacifying even the most hostile areas. Spanish administrators assured a steady supply of labor for colonists in the region by requiring Indians without regular employment to present themselves for work (meaning that nearly

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<sup>52</sup> Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*, 81-82. "...la zona nayarita sirvió como escondite para esclavos prófugos, renegados buscados por las autoridades; así como para desaptados, revolucionarios y refugiados...delimitó gran parte del Occidente con un carácter de frontera que duró hasta mucho después de que hubiera sido eliminado en muchas otras regiones de las colonias centralmente localizadas."

every Indian could be forced to labor for Spaniards). For native populations living in what had recently been the Aztec Empire, providing labor tribute may not have been terribly problematic. Forced labor was not an idea brought with Spaniards and foisted upon Indian communities; in fact, throughout the Americas unpaid labor systems had existed for centuries, such as the Andean *mita* which ensured a steady stream of workers for the Sapa Inca. All subjugated towns and villages paid tribute to the Aztec emperor in Tenochtitlán, through either goods or services (or both). The lack of Aztec or P'urhépecha domination over the Sierra Madre Occidental during the pre-contact era virtually assured that groups like the Caxcans and Zacatecos would fiercely resist any sort of coerced labor.

Deeply disturbed by the brutal and immoral treatment of Indians by Spanish conquistadors, Bartolomé de las Casas, a Dominican priest, came to their defense. In the decades since he had arrived in the colonies, Las Casas had witnessed the torture and horrific murder of often defenseless men, women

and children, prompting him to create the New Laws.<sup>53</sup> These laws, "drafted suddenly in 1542-43, were expressed...in terms of the humanitarian policy toward native peoples..." that Las Casas so strongly favored.<sup>54</sup> The encomienda granted unpaid indigenous labor to Spanish conquistadors, and only a few Indians (such as the Tlaxcalans) could avoid such obligations. Las Casas' New Laws abolished the granting of new encomiendas, and prevented an encomendero from passing on his rights to his heirs.

This reform infuriated Spaniards in the colonies, particularly those in the Andes and in New Spain.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, certain officials, such as Lebrón de Quiñones, hoped to enforce the laws set forth by Las Casas.<sup>56</sup> Not only did Nueva Galicia become a tinderbox of Indian resentment, but Quiñones's attempts to implement the New Laws incensed Spanish colonists, who saw nothing to gain by paying Indians for their toil. In 1549, Quiñones

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<sup>53</sup> De las Casas, *Brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias*, 104.

<sup>54</sup> Charles Gibson, *Spain in America* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1966), 58.

<sup>55</sup> Gibson, *Spain in America*, 59.

<sup>56</sup> Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 63-64.

proposed that:

Indians illegally enslaved were to be freed, and encomiendas held without proper title to be nullified... penalties placed upon encomenderos who demanded illegal service; or overtaxed their Indians...Idle Indians were to be set to work-the clergy using their powers of persuasion-and proper wages paid: 12 maravedises a day to labourers, 24 to native officials. The mountain Indians were to be induced to settle in villages and till the land 'like reasonable people;' Spanish stock farms were to be kept away from the cultivated land of the Indians...<sup>57</sup>

The Mixtón War remained firmly implanted in the minds of all Spaniards living in the region, and officials such as the *oidor* Quiñones knew that antagonizing the Indians, many of whom had little to lose, would only serve to bring disaster. Still, forays into the Sierra were brief and fraught with danger, and so rarely took place until the middle of the seventeenth century.

Throughout the seventeenth century, but particularly in the 1620s and again in the 1640s, the Crown made serious attempts to reach out to native peoples living in the Sierra. In the wake of the 1617 Tepehuan rebellion, two Franciscan priests,

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<sup>57</sup> Parry, *The Audiencia of New Galicia*, 68.

Francisco Barrios and Pedro Gutiérrez, tried to usher in peace by Christianizing the "*huisare*" Indians of Huainamota (Guaynamota). Barrios and Gutiérrez were somewhat successful in convincing some "*huisare*" Indians, who lived in the rugged Sierra de Nayarit, to receive baptism and learn the catechism. Though the Huisares (Huichols) burned down a newly-built chapel twice, around Guaynamota, native peoples accepted a limited degree of religious instruction.<sup>58</sup> By the middle of the 1600s travelers began documenting the languages of the native persons in earnest: "Tepehuan at Chimaltitán, Tepecano in the surrounding villages, Huichol and Caxcan nearby..."<sup>59</sup>

At this time, the ethnic diversity of the Sierra Madre Occidental became much more apparent, as did the ambiguous relationships between Franciscans and natives. Added to the mix of *serrano* tribes were native peoples from central Mexico, such as the

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<sup>58</sup> Fray Francisco Mariano de Torres, *Crónica de la Sancta Provincia de Xalisco*, ed. Luis del Refugio de Palacio (Guadalajara: Instituto Jalisciense de Antropología e Historia, 1965), 93. It is unclear as to whether the Huichols participated in the 1617 rebellion. Little evidence exists either for or against their support for the Tepehuanes.

<sup>59</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 71.

Tlaxcalans, who served as bulwarks against frontier Indians like the Huichols and Tecuexes, who farmed scattered *rancherías* (small farms) and occasionally raided other Indians and the Spanish. The Huichols lived around Huejuquilla el Alto by 1649 "and had towns nearby in Nostic, Colotlán, Mamatla and Ostoc;" further west, however, the Chapalagana River valley, a treacherous part of the mountains, had not been surveyed by Spaniards in any meaningful way.<sup>60</sup> Where there were few Spaniards, peace came easily. But in other places, where miners and ranchers grazed cattle, violence erupted from time to time.<sup>61</sup> For a time, while many Huichols had been in contact with Spaniards, particularly in the aforementioned towns, still others remained just outside of the sustainable reach of the Crown.

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<sup>60</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 76.

<sup>61</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 49, 76-79. A rebellion, probably led by Huichols, Tepehuanes and Tepecanos occurred in 1592; evidence regarding the rebellion is spotty. Loggers in particular were the bane of many indigenous peoples' existences. Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 14. "...centenares de indigenes tlaxcaltecas para reducir a los indigenes de la sierra. Se fueron cercando y minando los límites del territorio huichol, notablemente con la consolidación de la frontera en Huejuquilla, Tenzompa, Mezquitic y Huajiimic a principios del siglo XVII; su flanco al noroeste lo formaban los indomables coras."

During the seventeenth century, indigenous peoples increasingly came into contact with another type of Spaniard altogether unfamiliar to them: the missionary. While a "state" religion certainly existed among the Aztecs, native peoples in the Sierra Madre Occidental more than likely had little experience with such a thing. The Franciscans were the most numerous of the regular orders working in western Mexico, though Jesuits did practice here and there. The earliest of the convents established in Huichol territory was at San Juan Baptista de Mezquitic in 1613, with the sole function of administering twelve towns in the area. The friars had their work cut out for them, noting that the Indians there were barbaric.<sup>62</sup> Like elsewhere in the Americas, missionaries faced initial difficulties as they struggled to understand the myriad indigenous languages, and Indians certainly did not understand Spanish at first. In August of 1653, Juan Ruíz de Colmenero, the Bishop of Guadalajara, inquired as to the best language with which to instruct the Indians.

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<sup>62</sup> José de Arlegui, *Crónica de la Provincia de NSPS Francisco de Zacatecas* (México, DF: J. Bernardo de Hoyal, 1737), 89. Father Arlegui said that the Indians were "*tan barbaros*."

It is clear that by this point, some native peoples could be taught catechism in Spanish, while others, like the Huichols and Coras, needed to receive their lessons in "Mexicano," probably a reference to Nahuatl. Though some Huichols may have spoken Spanish, as Colmenero noted, certainly most did not and those who could read Spanish may not have read it well.<sup>63</sup> A few years later, a traveling friar named Padre Antonio Arias delineated indigenous areas according to the groups who lived there; he divided the Sierra into four provinces, one of which belonged to the "xamuca," or "hueitzolme." Xamuca and Hueitzolme are two other words for Huichols; Arias named the other groups living in the area as "Chora," "Tzaname," "Tepeguanes," "Caponetas," "Xamucas," and "Totorames."<sup>64</sup> It is no surprise that missionaries had troubles understanding the native peoples, considering the nuances in languages between each distinct nation.

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<sup>63</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 31-32.

<sup>64</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 32-33. Gerhard noted that the Huichols lived around Huejuquilla (extreme northern Jalisco) by 1649; Huejuquilla is located in the Huichol region that Arias described. See Gerhard, 76. For a more complete description of what Arias Saavedra wrote, see McCarty and Matson, "Franciscan Report," 194-198.

By the early 1650s, the Huichols had been in regular contact with Spanish missionaries, who corrupted their name in Church reports. For this reason, it is difficult to get a sense of exactly when it is that the word "Huichol" appeared in the documentary record. Hueitzolme is the closest distortion, and a priest recorded that in 1653; but earlier, in 1607, Fray Pedro Gutiérrez worked among the *vitzurita* nation (see map 1.1).<sup>65</sup> Vitzurita is another name for the Huichol, and is, in fact, a corruption of the word that the Huichols call themselves: *wixárika* (pl. *Wixaritari*). The word does not translate into Spanish, but it is the preferred term among the Huichols themselves. According to Gutiérrez, the term Huichol is the name given to them by their oppressors.<sup>66</sup> Even into the eighteenth century, Franciscans and Jesuits used Huichol (and its myriad spellings) and Vitzurita interchangeably when attempting to minister to their reticent flock.

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<sup>65</sup> Tello, *Crónica miscelánea*, 757.

<sup>66</sup> Gutiérrez del Angel, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta*, 17. "Por lo general ellos prefieren que se les domine así y no con el término Huichols, con el cual los conocen los mestizos, quienes en muchas ocasiones hacen uso de ese nombre de manera peyorativa."

Regardless of the variations of language and labels, missionary efforts were well underway by the end of the seventeenth century throughout the Sierra Madre Occidental. Friars gathered willing indigenous peoples into villages in a process known as reduction.<sup>67</sup> Typically assisted by Spanish soldiers, the friars desired a living arrangement for Indians that would facilitate conversion to Catholicism, while at the same time allowing for careful observation of the native peoples. In areas immediately surrounding the *municipio* (municipality) of Colotlán, reduction occurred rather quickly; the town, which had been established in 1591, served "to administer activities necessary for pacifying and colonizing the Tepecanos, Huichols and eventually,

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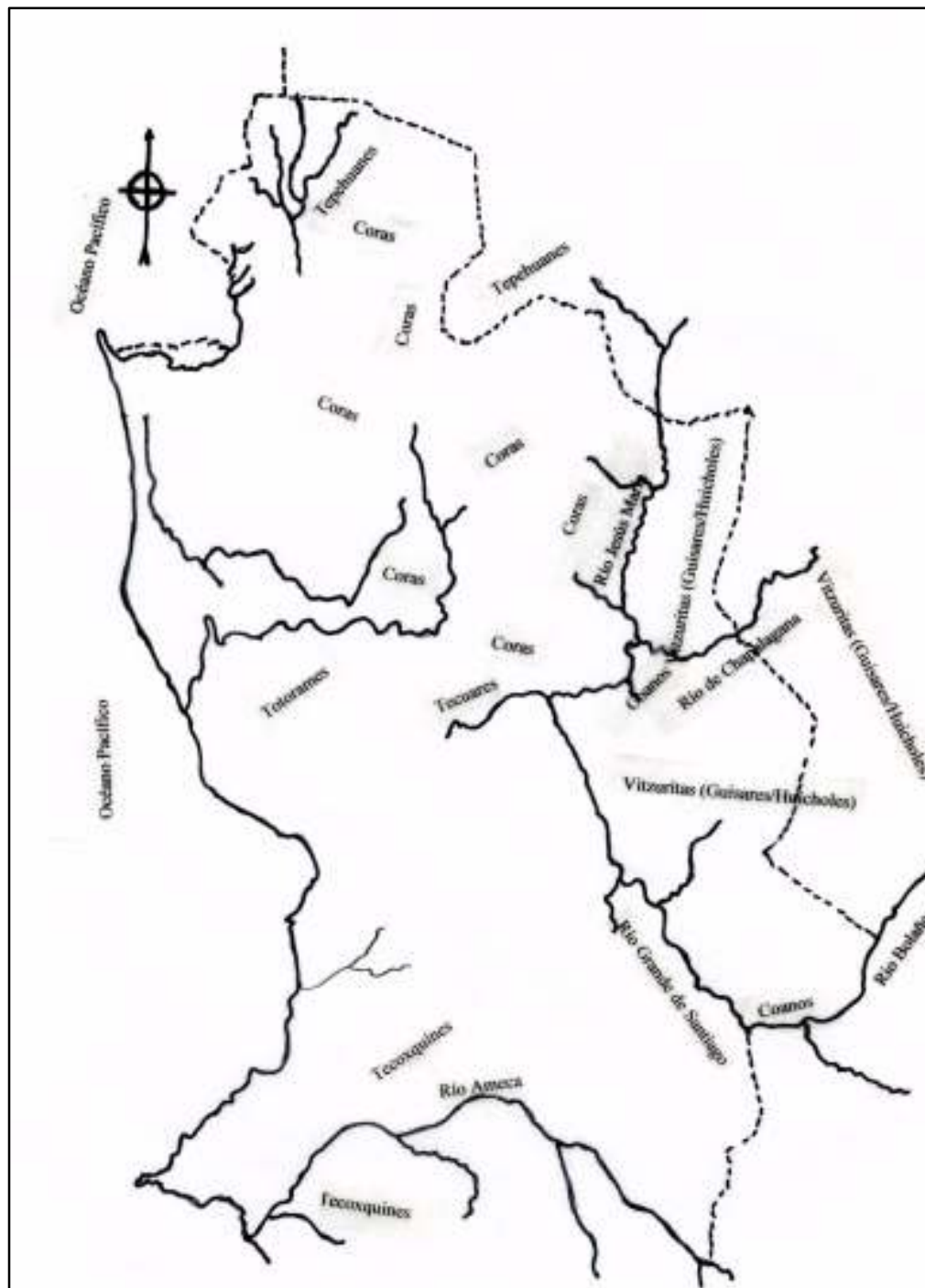
<sup>67</sup> Eventually, this would produce the *comunidad* (community) system that the Huichols would come to favor, in which some people lived in small towns during part of the year, and returned to rancherías to farm the rest of the year. During the Lozada rebellion, Manuel Lozada would stress to the Huichols and Coras that the loss of Church power meant that Indian towns could become subsumed by outsiders seeking lands. In this way, Lozada tried to retain indigenous support for the Franciscans (and thus, Conservative political elements), over the Liberal party. Initially, however, the idea of being moved into towns was abhorrent to Huichols. See Chapter Four for the Lozada Rebellion.

Coras."<sup>68</sup> The friars had rather lofty goals, because though relatively few in number (if compared to the valley of Mexico), the Huichols and their neighbors remained steadfast in their religious beliefs throughout the seventeenth century.

One of the more important aspects of the missionization process was to the effort to rid the native populations of their problematic religious practices. In 1621 Franciscan friar and traveler Domingo Lázaro de Arregui remarked on an unusual Huichol custom that had probably never been discussed before with a Spaniard, although it certainly had much more ancient roots. Arregui described the use of

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<sup>68</sup> Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*. See also Thomas B. Hinton, Phil C. Weigand, and N. Ross Crumrine, *Themes of Indigenous Acculturation in Northwest Mexico* (University of Arizona Press, 1981), 12.



Map 1.1 Shows Approximate geographical locations of indigenous groups around the time of conquest, according to Fray Antonio Tello. Adapted from Marina Anguiano Nayarit: costa y altiplanicie en el momento del contacto.

a tiny, peculiar cactus, peyote, and its importance to his native informants. The Huichols that Arregui spoke to explained that peyote not only helped alleviate physical stress, but that it also helped them divine the future.<sup>69</sup> While it is impossible to determine Arregui's actual understanding of the native practice, his matter-of-fact narrative neither approves nor condemns the use of peyote as others would eventually do.

Worse than peyote use, perhaps, was the ancestor cult that seemed to pervade the Sierra Madre Occidental. In the 1600s Fray Miguel Díaz discovered the peoples living around Huejuquilla to be worshipping a cadaver in what appears to be a *caligüey*, or a circular, thatched-roof temple used for Huichol religious ceremonies.<sup>70</sup> Mummy and ancestor worship was, and still is an important component of Huichol (and Cora) belief systems. The idolatry that Díaz and others discovered among the peoples of the Sierra Madre was a practice that the

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<sup>69</sup> Domingo Lázaro de Arregui, *Descripción de la Nueva Galicia*, ed. François Chevalier (Sevilla: Talleres Imprenta y Encuadernación, 1946), 51-52.

<sup>70</sup> Arregui, *Crónica de la Provincia*, 169-171.

Franciscans felt was imperative to address and eradicate. However, the isolated nature of indigenous communities in the mountains required more than simply lone Franciscan travelers; the Huichols, Coras, and their neighbors had proven to be resistant to change and reticent towards outsiders. The Crown knew that in order to finally subdue the "barbarous" natives, the military needed to play a significant role.

Such proximity to outsiders wholly different from the Huichols themselves began to transform some aspects of Huichol social life, such as religion, by the early 1700s. Jesuit missionaries who had begun work among the Coras, for instance, realized that in order to make any headway with them, they needed to erase their sacred, spiritual geography.<sup>71</sup> Land pressures had forced some groups of native peoples off of their original homelands while others, not wishing to convert to Catholicism or work for the Spanish, fled into the wilderness. The Nayarita

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<sup>71</sup> José Antonio Bugarín, *Visita de las misiones del Nayarit 1768-1769*, ed. Jean A. Meyer (México, DF: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos : Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1993), 17. 17. Bugarín stated "...sea borrar su geografía religiosa..."

zone, a region of refuge since ancient times, had been serving as a getaway location for indigenous peoples who, for whatever reason, chose not to accept friars in their villages or soldiers in their midst.<sup>72</sup> In 1695, Indians who had once lived around Tonalisco (now Atonalisco) appealed to the Spanish authorities for the return of their rightful lands, since the inhabitants had fled to live with the *paganos* in the mountains. This illustrates three things in particular: one, that the native peoples who went to see Don Alona Ceballo Villa Gutiérrez had submitted to, or at least acknowledged Spanish authorities; second, that the Indians had been pushed off lands surrounding San Juan Baptista (Bautista) Tonalisco, and felt a rightful claim to the land; and finally, that the Indians filing the claim were sufficiently Christianized to refer to the prior inhabitants as pagans.<sup>73</sup> While missionaries like José Antonio Bugarín (a Jesuit) had made some successful

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<sup>72</sup> Bugarín, *Visita De Las Misiones Del Nayarit*, 19. See also Phil C. Weigand and Acelia García de Weigand, "Huichol Society Before the Arrival of the Spanish," *Journal of the Southwest* 42(2000): 22.

<sup>73</sup> Jean A. Meyer, *Atonalisco, Nayarit: una historia documental, 1695-1935* (México, D.F. : Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos : Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1994), 11.

incursions among the native peoples of western Nueva Galicia, it was painfully apparent to Spanish authorities, both ecclesiastical and secular, that the mountains remained a haven for un-Christianized, unreduced and generally unruly Indians. Thus, the Crown needed to come up with a plan to force the Huichols, Tepehuanos, and Coras to submit to the Spain and to God.

Violence ushered in the eighteenth century in the Sierra Madre Occidental, when, in the district of Colotlán, a rebellion broke out. As increasing numbers of Spaniards moved onto and subsequently expropriated Indian lands, Indian peoples began to starve; the Huichols and Tepecanos stole Spanish cattle in an attempt to save their families. Tensions increased when a force of nearly fifteen hundred Huichol and Tepecano warriors killed a local leader, Capitán Mateo de Silva, because de Silva failed to help them protect their lands from voracious Spaniards.<sup>74</sup> What this uprising

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<sup>74</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 43-44; Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, xix. Rojas does not go into great detail regarding this rebellion, but notes that some Huichol villages did have their lands measured the following

illustrates is a clear disdain on the part of the Huichols and Tepecanos for their increasingly numerous Spanish neighbors. It is striking that as early as 1700, though not fully under Spanish control, inhabitants of the Sierra Madre Occidental began to feel squeezed by Spanish landholders. Indian retaliation by stealing cattle seems typical in a region where native villages had constantly battled their neighbors for scarce resources, since long prior to the Spanish presence in the region.

This early rebellion also portended centuries of Huichol resistance to the encroachment of their neighbors and a keen awareness of their homelands. In the following decades, Huichol leaders in Nostic and Huajimic secured titles to their lands (Santa Catarina and San Sebastián would do so later).<sup>75</sup> While the rebellion was short-lived, and ended once the Huichols and Tepecanos promised not to rebel again, the Spanish could not help but acknowledge the simmering anger of the mountain peoples. The Sierra

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year; unfortunately, those documents have never been found.

<sup>75</sup> *Archivo de Instrumentos Públicos Jalisco, Tierras y Aguas*, Lib 25, Exp 16, 19-50. (AIPJ hereafter)

continued to be the dangerous tinderbox that it had been since the days of the Mixtón Rebellion and authorities in Colotlán, Guadalajara and farther afield realized that pacification had to occur with greater fervor.

In the eyes of the Spanish, idolatry ran as rampant throughout the Sierra as rivers that cut the rugged landscape, making the reduction of the Indians much harder to achieve. Friars who had chronicled life in the Sierra Madre Occidental beginning in the early seventeenth century noted such idolatry; by the eighteenth century, it became obvious that earlier attempts to Christianize the Sierra had largely failed. In a joint effort conducted by friars and military forces, the Spaniards moved into the Sierra to launch a campaign aimed at moving the Indians to specific sites in order to control them; the Spaniards also expected to destroy indigenous idols and change the sacred landscape.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Bugarín, *Visita de las misiones del Nayarit 1768-1769*, 20. Erasing their sacred, religious geography ("*sea borror su geografía religiosa*") involved at first realizing that the landscape was important to the Sierra's native peoples, and removing them from

Initially, the *Tonati* (king, or "*cacique de la mesa*") of the Coras traveled to Mexico City, pledging his acceptance of Spanish authorities in his region, and promising peaceful relations between Indians and Spaniards on the Mesa del Nayar. This region, which straddles the modern states of Jalisco and Nayarit, was important to the Spaniards as a gateway from the mountains to the coast, and had long been a problematic place. The Mesa was home to some Huichols (who lived above the town of San Juan Peyotán), and mostly Coras, for whom the *Tonati* theoretically spoke. In reality, the *Tonati* had no intention of remaining on friendly terms with the numerous Spaniards, who could be found on the plateau in increasing numbers.<sup>77</sup> In 1721, under the leadership of don Juan de la Torre, in addition to some "faithful Indians" from around Zacatecas, the Spanish undertook a violent crusade aimed at the destruction of the Cora "idols" in order to force Christianity upon the skeleton-worshipping Coras.<sup>78</sup>

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the elements of their religion that emphasized the importance of place.

<sup>77</sup> Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, 113.

<sup>78</sup> Jean A. Meyer, *El Gran Nayar*, Colección de documentos para la historia de Nayarit (Guadalajara,

Religious authorities had commented on this practice since at least Fray Miguel Díaz's visit to a Huichol *caligüey* during the early 1600s. The worship of the desiccated bodies appalled and shocked religious and secular authorities. In many ways, the worship of the dead among indigenous groups in the Sierra Madre Occidental is analogous to practices among the ancient Andeans. The presence of dead leaders provided guidance to living ones; it also threatened Catholicism in a fundamental way, and needed to be eliminated.

Thus, in January of 1721, Spanish soldiers sacked the Mesa del Nayar, and destroyed the *Nayarita* ancestors whom the Coras venerated. By 1725, after quashing some small skirmishes that resulted in several Church conflagrations, the Sierra de Nayarit had been mostly pacified; Indians in Guazamota, a Cora town, had been assured that the Church would protect them and that they could maintain their

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Jalisco: Universidad de Guadalajara 1989), 28-29. Fray José Antonio Alcocer, *Bosquejo de la historia del Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe y sus misiones: Año de 1788.*, ed. Fray Rafael Cervantes (México, DF: Editorial Porrúa, 1958), 106-107. Alcocer provides a brief history of late seventeenth century attempts to rid the Coras of the mummies.

lands, so long as they obeyed the will of the Crown.<sup>79</sup> It is unclear as to the identities of all of the "indios fieles" (faithful Indians), but at least some appeared to be from the Huichol towns of Santa Catarina (under the command of a certain Phelipe) and San Andrés (led by a man named Melchor).<sup>80</sup> Though the Huichols and Coras had allied in the past, it is important to emphasize that, like in other parts of Mexico, all politics is local. In this instance, Melchor's and Phelipe's peoples had much to lose and nothing to gain by allying with the Coras.

Political relationships in western Mexico were not necessarily predatory, but instead seem to have been based upon self-preservation. Even among the different Huichol towns, unity could not always be guaranteed; the Huichols most likely did not see themselves as a unified "nation" in the twentieth century sense of the term. Different villages can and did do as they pleased, without any sense of loyalty toward their Huichol-speaking neighbors. In

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<sup>79</sup> Meyer, *El Gran Nayar*, 41-43. Alcocer, *Bosquejo de la historia*, 106-108.

<sup>80</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 62. Unfortunately, as this document is in Spain, I have only Rojas's transcription of it, which is most likely incomplete.

terms of "inter-tribal" relations, serrano peoples made and broke alliances as the situations warranted. The fact that the Huichols may have allied themselves with the Tepecanos in 1702 was no guarantee that the alliance would be maintained over any length of time. Huichols frequently fought with their own brethren over scarce resources (this is particularly true in later centuries). Native leaders in the Sierra Madre Occidental had no qualms about turning their backs on their indigenous neighbors, particularly if one town stood to gain over another. The destruction of the idols at the hands of Spaniards and Indian mercenaries initially provoked a violent and forceful reaction, but by 1722 the collapse of a fundamental aspect of Cora religion demoralized them to the point that they could be reduced and Christianized.<sup>81</sup>

But all was not peaceful in the Sierra with the subjugation of the Coras, and the start of land surveying for the more fortunate Huichols. By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, all of the principal Huichol towns had been measured and delimited by the *oidor* (civil judge) don Juan de Somoza. Somoza had visited

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<sup>81</sup> Meyer, *El Gran Nayar*, 67.

the Huichol homelands in 1703, and while some of the towns were able to present titles when asked, others were unable to do so. Somoza had, most likely, marked out the boundaries between Huichol towns and their Spanish *hacendado* neighbors, and then let the situation rest. It was only after the Spanish *entradas* into Cora lands, which opened up the western mountains for settlers that the Huichols realized their lands were still in danger.

In a memo dated 22 October 1733, to an unknown Spanish authority, Antonio de Escobedo discussed a petition from Huichol leaders in Santa Catarina and San Sebastián. The towns of Santa Catarina (known as Cuescomatitán) and San Sebastian wanted legal title to their lands, just as their neighbors in the town of Nostic had received a few years earlier. Escobedo visited Santa Catarina and San Sebastián, located in an area of extremely rough terrain, and discovered that, while the two towns had been conquered some decades before, three years had passed since the Huichols had received any religious services.<sup>82</sup> This document illustrates three things. First, the

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<sup>82</sup> AIPJ, Tierras y Aguas, Exp 21-1.

Huichols of both towns felt sufficiently threatened by some Spaniards' increasing presence that they hoped to commit their land boundaries to paper. They also may have become sufficiently comfortable with the legal system. Second, both towns had remained loyal to the Crown since their conquest, some seventy or eighty years previous (according to Escobedo). Finally, despite having been conquered, the Huichols rarely had contact with religious authorities. While this petition did not solidify boundaries, owing to the difficult terrain that "*sólo ángeles pueden atravesar*," Escobedo at least appeared to have the best interest of the two peaceful towns in mind.<sup>83</sup>

Five decades after Escobedo presented the two petitions, Huichol leaders in San Sebastián had not resolved their land issues. In a series of letters between authorities in Colotlán (which was the *municipio*, or municipality of the region) and the Audiencia in Guadalajara, one Miguel Maximiliano de Santiago tried to establish rights to a certain portion of San Sebastián's lands. Santiago received

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<sup>83</sup> AIPJ, Tierras y Aguas, Exp 21-1. "...were only angels can tread."

about twenty-five parcels of pasturelands from the Huichol town, which provoked a heated response from indigenous authorities. Juan Sebastián, the Indian governor of the town, complained that don Santiago had illegally grazed his livestock on lands belonging to the town, in addition to using lands from the Huichol village of Ratontita. Don Sebastián acknowledged a lack of written title to the lands, but pleaded with the court that his grandparents and great-grandparents had lived there since time immemorial: this meant that the lands belong to the Huichol village, by way of "*título de justa prescripción*," a fair usage title.<sup>84</sup> The Audiencia ruled in San Sebastián's favor, and don Santiago had to remove his possessions from the Huichol lands.

By the end of the colonial period, Spanish incursions into the Sierra became problematic for the Huichols and indigenous leaders quickly learned how to petition royal authorities. Towns such as Santa Catarina and San Sebastián remained mostly far-removed from the centers of Spanish civilization, in

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<sup>84</sup> AIPJ, Tierras y Aguas, Lib142, Exp17.

Guadalajara and Zacatecas, yet the Huichols felt squeezed by unscrupulous Spanish landholders. The experiences that native leaders gained over the course of the colonial era served both to frustrate and educate: increased contact with Spaniards eroded traditional social and cultural mores, while thrusting serrano populations into a convoluted Spanish legal system that at least on some occasions worked in their favor. By the time independence came to New Spain, the Huichols were well aware of their foreign neighbors' propensity to fudge borders and disobey royal authorities. The Huichols had watched as violence swirled and occasionally swept them up, threatening their very existence. However, by the end of the colonial period, the Huichols gained experience with outsiders that would benefit them as Mexico transformed from a vaunted royal colony to a troubled infant republic.

### Chapter Three

#### **Huichols in the Early Republic: The State Arrives in the Sierra Madre Occidental, 1810-1840**

*"Casi todas las rebeliones de la sierra se debieron al mismo factor: la usurpación de sus tierras. La guerra de Independencia no fue la excepción."*<sup>1</sup>

*"They scarcely understood even a word of Spanish, but fully comprehended what I wanted and were very quiet and good-natured."*<sup>2</sup>

From ancient times, peyote and deer were bound together in Huichol cosmology, as it was Elder Brother Deer Tail who gave the primordial Huichols peyote in order to survive their ordeal in the desert. The relationship between Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí and Kauyaumari became sacred, inextricably intertwined between the hunting of the cactus and the worship of the deer. Deer and peyote veneration, then, became one and the same: a person hunted and revered deer and peyote. In order to obtain peyote

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<sup>1</sup> Gutiérrez del Angel, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta*, 23. "Almost all of Sierra rebellions were due to the same factor: the usurpation of their lands. The War of Independence was no exception."

<sup>2</sup> G. F. Lyon, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the Republic of Mexico in the Year 1826 With Some Account of the Mines of That Country* (London: J. Murray, 1828), 296.

properly, however, Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxí passed on explicit instructions to Kauyaumari and his sisters. If followed exactly, these commands would ensure Huichol survival.

In modern times, before Huichol pilgrims undertake their journey, a series of important ceremonies must occur in order to guarantee the protection of the people participating both at home and on the road. After choosing a leader, or group of leaders, who almost immediately become responsible for the spiritual and physical protection of their charges, all individuals traveling to Real de Catorce begin a series of ritually prescribed tasks in order to secure the blessings of the gods.<sup>3</sup> First and foremost, Tatewarí, Our Grandfather Fire, *must* be fed and he must remain nourished throughout the journey. Prior to leaving for Wirikuta (as Rhaitomuany is more commonly known), participants pay homage to Tatewarí at his primary temple site near Santa Catarina.<sup>4</sup> Failure to maintain the fire at home can result in

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<sup>3</sup> Typically, males lead the rest of the peyoteros, though if a mara'akame's wife participated in the journey, she may take a secondary leadership role. See Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*.

<sup>4</sup> Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 14.

disaster.<sup>5</sup> Next, all individuals, from the youngest to the oldest, must confess their sins. This helps to bind the Huichols together as a group, and guarantee that there are no secrets among them. Huichols have a very different concept of sin than westerners do: there is little in the way of gluttony, envy, or wrath among the Huichols. Instead, most sins confessed are of a sexual nature (i.e. "I, Fernando, slept with María").<sup>6</sup> The ceremony is typically light-hearted, as sins are knotted into a rope and burned in the fire. The oldest participants are praised, in a manner of speaking, for their lifetime of prowess, while youngsters are teased for their lack of experience.

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<sup>5</sup> Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt*, 122. When Myerhoff undertook the hunt with Ramón Medina in the late 1960s, some acculturated Huichols who remained behind "...could not be trusted with the sole responsibility for keeping the fire lit and observing the rituals necessary for the well-being of the pilgrims."

<sup>6</sup> Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 17, 19. See also Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt*, 132-136. Both Benítez and Myerhoff discuss the confession of sins of a sexual nature at length, for their non-Huichol audience. The explanation is as follows: essentially, harboring jealousies or secrets about one's sexual partners can create "terrifying visions and even insanity in Wirikuta," according to Myerhoff, 133. These relationships are forgiven in the context of the ceremony, which Myerhoff acknowledges is not truly a "confession" in an English (or Christian) sense of the word.

The seriousness with which the Huichols take their pilgrimage is displayed through their rigorous abstentions, which also begin as soon as the decision is made to participate. Pilgrims do not eat salt and "they are pledged to abstinence..." lest they endanger their fellow travelers and the entire undertaking.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, during the time immediately preceding the departure of the group for Wirikuta, pilgrims may not sleep, and must fast. During the journey itself, pilgrims fast at specific times, and only eat ritually prepared foods.<sup>8</sup> These rules recreate the suffering that Kauyaumari and his followers underwent in ancient times, helping to connect Huichols in the modern age to their ancestors and gods.<sup>9</sup>

### **Independence in Jalisco**

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<sup>7</sup> Carl Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," *The Geographical Journal* 21, no. 2 (1903): 138-139.

<sup>8</sup> Mariana Fresán Jiménez, *Nierika, una ventana al mundo de los antepasados* (México, DF: CONACULTA-FONCA, 2002), 40. See also Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 25.

<sup>9</sup> Frésan Jiménez, *Nierika*, 39. See also Diguét, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas*, 144-146.

The transition from Spanish colonial to Mexican national government had little immediate effect upon the Huichols. Initially, the Huichols probably would have viewed the new leadership similar to the old, but no records survive to document their sentiments. The Huichols have always concerned themselves more with local issues, as opposed to the political jockeying of a faraway city; so long as the Spanish left the Huichols alone, what affected other indigenous populations, and what laws derived from Mexico City or Spain, were matters of little consequence. However, in the wake of Independence, as the politicians searched for Mexico's national identity, and while the provinces were often left to their own devices, the Huichols had to become more attuned to national politics. It is difficult to believe that they looked toward Guadalajara or Mexico City for guidance. What is certain, however, is that the transforming Mexican political landscape affected the far-flung Huichols. Changes in land tenure and the expansion of the hacienda seriously threatened the very existence of the Huichols as a distinct ethnic group. But despite laws aimed at

incorporating indigenous populations into the national fabric, and in the face of ever-growing haciendas, the Huichols refused to become Mexicanized. Between the end of Independence and the beginning of the Reform era, in which Mexico's native populations would face full frontal assaults in the legal arena, the Huichols struggled to retain their cultural identity against pressure from mestizo neighbors.

By the end of 1810, Mexico's Independence War against Spain exploded throughout the central Mexican countryside. A number of issues led to the *Grito de Dolores* made by Father Miguel Hidalgo. Droughts in the Bajío region crippled farmers, leading to a dramatic increase in the price of corn.<sup>10</sup> Political turmoil in both Spain and Mexico City led to a fracturing of elite solidarity, and questions emerged regarding the future of New Spain.<sup>11</sup> Hidalgo's swarms

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<sup>10</sup> John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 119-126.

<sup>11</sup> Christon I. Archer, ed. *The Birth of Modern Mexico, 1780-1824* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, 2003). See Introduction. See also Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico*, 109-119.

of rebels, mostly poor workers from the Bajío, wrought havoc on rural and urban areas with only a faint understanding of Hidalgo's aims. He did not propose sweeping social reform; on the contrary, Hidalgo hoped to court elite support, and social transformations would squash that alliance.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, he was unsuccessful and his movement ended rather briefly. Despite Hidalgo's failures, others in Mexico like José María Morelos and Vicente Guerrero picked up where Hidalgo left off, and injected the independence movement with new life and concrete reform ideas. Mexico received its independence in 1821, and indigenous peoples theoretically became citizens of Mexico, instead of Spanish subjects.

It is unclear but rather unlikely that the Huichols participated to any great degree in the Independence movement that freed Mexico from Spanish rule. The Spanish only gained firm control over the Sierra Madre Occidental during the 1720s, and so long as the foreigners maintained their distance, many

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<sup>12</sup> Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico*, 135.

Huichols seemed rather indifferent toward them. While some Huichols had been reduced into towns and had regular contact with Spanish settlers and Franciscan missionaries, most continued to live in dispersed settlements deep in the mountains, and beyond the reach of Spanish officials. By the mid-eighteenth century, Spanish landholders began eroding territorial holdings; but by and large, the Huichols would have had little motivation to fight for some abstract entity known as Mexico.<sup>13</sup> It is necessary to take a broad approach, and briefly examine indigenous participation during the Independence period in Jalisco: in this way, the world that the Huichols emerged into *after* 1821 becomes apparent.

Jalisco had begun to change in the decades immediately prior to 1810, and some of these transformations directly affected the region's native populations. First and foremost, throughout the course of the late eighteenth century, the population

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<sup>13</sup>Jean A. Meyer, *Breve historia de Nayarit* (México, DF: Colegio de México, 1997), 113. Any documentation of lands lost between 1750 and 1800 can only be found in the *Archivo General de las Indias*, Seville. Meyer asserts that when Manuel Lozada began his rebellion, it was in part to recover lands lost between 1750 and 1860.

of Guadalajara reached the rather large size of almost 35,000 by the turn of the century. This had important implications for indigenous peoples in the area, whose numbers had begun to rebound after the devastating waves of diseases, and whose land base was now smaller.<sup>14</sup> Those individual Spaniards who moved to Guadalajara included a wealthy class of merchants who owned a significant amount of the lands outside of the city; by the beginning of the nineteenth century, merchant/hacendados controlled the land and trade in much of Guadalajara and its environs.<sup>15</sup> They primarily traded in wheat, corn, and cattle, with cattle becoming less important in the first decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The Catholic Church also owned parcels of land, which typically passed into institutional hands through inheritances. Whereas merchants owned lands in order to generate agricultural goods, the Church in Jalisco

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<sup>14</sup> Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 29-31.

<sup>15</sup> Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 150.

<sup>16</sup> Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 49-50.

was not a leading farm producer.<sup>17</sup> That individual Spanish merchant families and the Catholic Church were large landholders at the turn of the century meant that indigenous villages around Guadalajara had to have experienced significant attrition. By the eve of Independence, indigenous peoples living near Guadalajara felt sufficiently squeezed.

As independence movements engulfed Nueva Galicia in often horrific orgies of violence, native people throughout the region became involved. Throughout the course of the colonial era, Indians living in Nueva Galicia rebelled for one particular reason: lost lands. Uprisings like the Mixtón Rebellion (1540s) and the Chichimeca War (1560s-1590s) occurred because of indigenous hostility over their shrinking territories.<sup>18</sup> The Huichols living in remote mountain passes would undoubtedly have heard about nearby

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<sup>17</sup> Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 169. Van Young comments that Jalisco Church land use stood in marked contrast to the Oaxaqueño sort, in which Church fathers were leading agriculturalists.

<sup>18</sup> Gutiérrez del Angel, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta*, 23. Gutiérrez suggests that indigenous peoples participated in all wars since the conquest because of land loss. This is probably an oversimplification, though there is without a doubt a certain degree of truth to his assertion.

battles and military activities swirling around them through lines of communication with other villages or while in towns and cities to conduct business. But by and large, the colonial experiences of the Huichols and those of indigenous groups in what is now central Jalisco were decidedly different from each other. Indians who lived near the provincial capital of Guadalajara comprised part of Father Hidalgo's army, and had important motivations to do so. In the decades leading up to the outbreak of violence against Spain, the rise of commercial agriculture that resulted in the increased development of new haciendas not only eroded village land bases, but simultaneously depressed cultural knowledge and ties.<sup>19</sup> Though land may not have

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<sup>19</sup> Eric Van Young, "Moving toward Revolt: Agrarian Origins of the Hidalgo Rebellion in the Guadalajara Region," in *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. Friedrich Katz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 182. Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth-Century Mexico*, 182. Van Young clearly states that most haciendas did not grow much in size during the eighteenth century, and that the large ones were already in existence at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Indians, nevertheless, lost land at the expense of smaller properties, though it is unclear whether Van Young would agree with that, since he is not charting indigenous land attrition in his works.

motivated all Indians (or peasants, as it were) to fight for independence, it can still explain why the Huichols mostly sat out the war: unlike native villages in central Jalisco, which undoubtedly had much greater contact with Spaniards, Huichol villages and ranchos did not experience the same degree of land loss and contact over the course of the colonial period.<sup>20</sup>

Like the rise of commercial agriculture, proximity to the large colonial city of Guadalajara increasingly affected native cultural ties. For people whose land bases gradually shrank as the years passed, large towns and cities such as Tepic or Guadalajara provided means for survival.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, however, moving away from one's native community severed bonds, and particularly among the Huichols, meant exclusion from the communities. And large cities like Guadalajara also served as breeding grounds for a certain criminal element that, prior to

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<sup>20</sup> Van Young, "Moving Toward Revolt," 183.

<sup>21</sup> William B. Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection: Rural Unrest in Central Jalisco, 1790-1816," in *Riot, Rebellion and Revolution: Rural Social Conflict in Mexico*, ed. Friedrich Katz (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 210.

Father Hidalgo's movement in 1810, fomented unrest for indigenous villages and Spanish townspeople alike.<sup>22</sup>

Though chroniclers and commentators frequently overstated indigenous support for Hidalgo and other Independence leaders, in part to stoke fears of ethnic conflict, some war captains did count central Jalisco's natives among their troops.<sup>23</sup> For instance, José Antonio Torres, an ally of Hidalgo, marched toward Guadalajara at the end of 1810 and with him were Indian allies armed with little more than clubs, lances, and slings.<sup>24</sup> Torres's troops fought valiantly near Zacoalco (about fifty miles to the south/southeast of Guadalajara), defeating the Spanish army. Their support for Torres emerged because of long-standing disdain for Spanish

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<sup>22</sup> Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection," 210-211.

<sup>23</sup> Van Young mentions "royalist propaganda" stoking fears of Hidalgo's "dark armies." See Van Young, "Moving Toward Revolt," 181.

<sup>24</sup> Luis Pérez Verdía, *Apuntes históricos sobre la Guerra de Independencia en Jalisco* (Guadalajara: Ediciones del Instituto Tecnológico, 1953). Pérez Verdía wrote that the troops were "*compuesta en su mayor parte de indígenas de Zamora, Zacoalco, Sayula, Colima y otros pueblos, sin más armas que hondas, lanzas y palos...*" See page 18. Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection," 216.

merchants and landholders in the area.<sup>25</sup> Perhaps the most famous Indian action in Jalisco occurred at the end of 1811, when native peoples from the shores of Lake Chapala holed up on a small island on the lake. The barricading of Isla de Mezcala occurred after Spanish forces attempted to eradicate native villages that had provided support for Torres in his march on Guadalajara. Led by "Encarnación Rosas, the Indian captain from Tlachichilco," villagers from the pueblo of Mezcala fought valiantly against their attackers.<sup>26</sup> By December 1811 Rosas had been successful in a number of attacks on royalist forces, but felt squeezed by the continuing Spanish onslaught. He and several hundred supporters fled to the Isla de Mezcala, a tiny island in the middle of Lake Chapala. Aided by a sympathetic priest, Rosas shared authority with an hacendado and a variety of other allies of unknown ethnicity. The Indians from Chapala's shores

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<sup>25</sup> Pérez Verdía, *Apuntes históricos*, 18. Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection," 217. According to sources, Indians from Zacoalco persistently insulted their Spanish foes and "nine merchants from Sayula, one from Zacoalco and one from Tapalpa were killed during the violence of Torres's march on Guadalajara."

<sup>26</sup> Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection," 221-22. Pérez Verdía, *Apuntes históricos*, 105, 109.

held out against Spain's military until the end of 1816, when the Crown offered concessions and pardons.<sup>27</sup> What initially began as a statement of long-standing grievances against Spain, including taxation and land theft, ended in a struggle in opposition to the "terrifying despotism" of royalist threats.<sup>28</sup>

Not all native peoples wanted to fight either for or against the Spanish between 1810 and 1821. In Tlajomulco, a small farming village just outside of Guadalajara, "a few rebel bands did operate in the mountains...", which obviously frightened local officials; by and large, Indians here did not fight one way or the other, instead choosing, like the Huichols, to concern themselves with their own affairs.<sup>29</sup> One final example of the ambivalence that some of central Jalisco's Indians felt about Independence comes from Tonalá then, as now, one of

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<sup>27</sup> Pérez Verdía, *Apuntes históricos*, 124.

<sup>28</sup> Christon I. Archer, "The Indian Insurgents of Mezcala Island on the Lake Chapala Front, 1812-1816," in *Native Resistance and the Pax Colonial in New Spain*, ed. Susan M. Schroeder (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 84.

<sup>29</sup> Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection," 239. These "local" affairs were typically land disputes.

the pottery-producing capitals of Mexico. Both Tonalá and Tlajomulco were relatively well-off areas, and for that reason their Indians had little motivation to fight. It is a bit ironic that Tonalá's native peoples remained so indifferent, considering that the town was the site of the largest battles during the conquest of western Mexico. During the colonial period, grievances with Spaniards typically found redress in the courts. This does not mean that Tonalá was peaceful during the Independence era, but Tonaltecos, like the people of Tlajomulco, found no attraction in protracted warfare with Spanish forces following the Grito de Dolores.<sup>30</sup>

Few documents exist to explain how the Huichols experienced independence, though there are some that provide an overall sense of the period in the Sierra Madre Occidental. The Huichols themselves have not shared any memories of participation, or at the very least, by the time twentieth century anthropologists visited their villages, nobody could recall fighting

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<sup>30</sup> Taylor, "Banditry and Insurrection," 241-242.

that early on.<sup>31</sup> Whereas during the colonial era, the Huichols could frequently go about their lives, only occasionally experiencing the wider world, changes began to occur on a much more rapid pace after Mexico became a republic. It was the Huichols' fierce determination to remain distinct, and distant, that helped ease the transition from being members of the Republic of Indians to members of the Mexican nation.

Despite the lack of sources, a few tantalizing clues as to indigenous activities during the beginning of the war do exist. As was the case during the colonial period, Franciscan friars and lay clergy frequently provided the best evidence from the Sierra. During independence, some of the few audacious friars who remained served almost as war correspondents, while others led militias and armies. One such friar was a peninsular Franciscan named

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<sup>31</sup> Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 121. Weigand notes that the Huichols said they participated in the Lozada Rebellion, the Revolution, the Cristero rebellion and the "Levantamiento" of 1951. This illustrates a long historical memory, as the Lozada rebellion began in the 1850s and ended in the 1870s; based upon the rich tradition of oral history that the Huichols have, it is not inconceivable that reminiscences of Independence fighting could have been recalled by some Huichol individuals. Thus far, none has been recorded.

Rudesindo Angles, who labored as the commissioner of the ten missions in the Sierra del Nayarit.<sup>32</sup> The Sierra bordered the Huichol homelands, and the Huichols would cross the mountains when sojourning to sacred spaces along the Pacific Coast, or on trade journeys to Tepic. Angles's observations fail to identify specific indigenous peoples with whom he came in contact, but based upon his location it is likely that he spent time with the Huichols.

Angles traveled throughout the Sierra del Nayarit not only to save indigenous souls, but also to recruit them in defense of the Crown. He marched alongside Don Francisco Minjares east from the Cora towns of Jesús María and Peyotán (now in Nayarit), across the mountains and canyons to Huejuquilla el Alto, in extreme northern Jalisco (see Map 2.1). The distance is not far, but the geographic difficulty and cultural boundaries can be quite vast. The Jesuits and Franciscans successfully reduced the Coras during the middle of the colonial period, and traveling Spaniards could count on Cora men to serve as guides through the mountains. Though Jesús María

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<sup>32</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 111.

is relatively close to Huichols towns like San Andrés, Angles and Minjares must have experienced great difficulty traveling, and great danger once they entered Huichol territory. Angles and Minjares' goals were to reassure and organize the nervous Indians in some of the pueblos and ranchos scattered throughout the Sierra.<sup>33</sup> By the end of the colonial era, some Huichols lived within the boundaries of the towns of Huejuquilla el Alto, Soledad, and Tenzompa, all of which belonged to the *municipio* of Mezquitic, and Angles would have worked with some Huichol leaders during this time. Importantly, Father Angles also noted that in December 1811, when he traveled through the Sierra Madre, he and Minjares worked with indigenous peoples living on (or near) Hacienda San Antonio and surrounding ranches.<sup>34</sup> To Angles it seemed that the Indians he encountered in and around

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<sup>33</sup> Eucario López, *Algunos documentos de Nayarit: los publica El Padre Eucario López* (Guadalajara: Librería Font, 1978), 60.

<sup>34</sup> López, *Algunos Documentos De Nayarit*, 60. This is a remarkable piece of information, because as will become evident by 1848, the Huichols had significant difficulties with the Hacienda de San Antonio de Padua, and its hacendado, Don Benito del Hoyo. Because of this simple mention of Hacienda San Antonio, in conjunction with the other towns named, it is easy to suggest that Minjares and Angles met with Huichols between December 1811 and January 1812.

Huejuquilla remained either relatively peaceful or marginally on the side of the Spanish during the first year of the war.

While some Indians in the northwestern reaches of Jalisco maintained harmonious relations with the Spanish, the same can not be said for inhabitants in other parts of the Sierra. According to chroniclers living in near Colotlán, further to the southeast of Huejuquilla, several insurgents operated with relative impunity, counting hundreds, or even thousands of indigenous allies. For instance, one rebel leader, a priest named José María Calvillo, led between eight and ten thousand Indian archers from the Colotlán's militias. Again, it is unclear whether these native bowmen were Huichols, but simple geography suggests that they were; Colotlán, both a *cantón* (almost like a county) and a *municipio*, is part of the extreme southeastern reaches of Huichol territory.<sup>35</sup> Regardless of their indigenous identity, Calvillo and his allies fought at Puente de

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<sup>35</sup> López, *Algunos documentos de Nayarit*, 60. Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 111. Colotlán is a very large *cantón*, or county. Most documents in the state historical



Map 2.1 Map illustrating important rivers in the Huichol Sierra, plus the proximity of Huichol and Cora towns. Adapted from Eucario López Algunos documentos de Nayarit: los publica el padre Eucario López.

Calderón, the momentous battle that sealed Father Hidalgo's fate, in January 1811. Other unnamed Indians in the area had fought for Spain valiantly

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archive pertaining to the Huichols come from the 8<sup>th</sup> canton.

(but experienced defeat), and Angles noted that clashes had occurred in the Sierra Huichol at some point in 1812.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, Angles was not more specific in describing the peoples that he met and the precise roles that they played in Mexican independence.

A second report, written by the José Norberto Pérez, a priest from Teúl, points more directly to Huichol participation with insurgent leaders during the first half of 1813. This document is in fact the only one that definitively names the Huichols as active participants.<sup>37</sup> Teúl lies not far from the old Spanish mining town of Bolaños and during 1813, townspeople in and around Bolaños and Totatiche survived skirmishes and general lawless banditry at the hands of an insurgent named "Indio" Cañas.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Luis Sandoval Godoy, *Un Rincón De La Suave Patria: El Teúl, Zacatecas* (Zacateca, Zac.: [s.n.], 1980), 313. Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 111-112.

<sup>37</sup> Gutiérrez del Angel, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta*, 23 "... pero hasta la fecha citada por Rojas no se menciona a los Huichols como participantes activos." As I have illustrated, all Huichol participation in Independence battles is speculative, and based on geography.

<sup>38</sup> Gutiérrez del Angel, *La Peregrinación a Wirikuta*, 23. It is unclear if "Indio" is the man's first name, but unlikely.

Cañas' identity is unknown, and it is unclear whether he was an indigenous leader from the region or a bandit of obscure origins. Whatever the case, initially some Huichols supported Cañas, but they did not remain with him for long. According to Pérez the Huichols switched sides on account of Cañas's evil demeanor and actions. At this point, the Huichols worked under the command of the Bolaños *comandante* (commander) in pursuit of Cañas.<sup>39</sup> Cañas soon died at the hands of the Huichols, who then returned to their pueblos and refused to fight for the insurgents any longer. In fact, by 1815, the three principle Huichol villages, San Andrés, Santa Catarina and San Sebastián, all declared support for the Spanish.<sup>40</sup> Why the Huichols left Cañas is unknown. Pérez remarked that Cañas was evil. Perhaps this is true, and the Huichols simply wanted no part of what appeared to be reckless behavior. Unfortunately, Pérez was somewhat vague in his account of Cañas to

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<sup>39</sup> Sandoval Godoy, *Un rincón de la suave patria*, 313. Apparently, Cañas was a particularly bad seed, though Pérez does not offer much insight into his behavior. He simply calls him "*del perverso cabecilla*."

<sup>40</sup> Sandoval Godoy, *Un rincón de la suave patria*, 313. Gutiérrez del Angel, *La peregrinación a Wirikuta*, 23

Juan Cruz Ruíz de Cabañas, the Bishop of Guadalajara during the entirety of the Independence movement.

Regardless of whom the Huichols supported, two problems were perfectly clear by the middle of the Independence wars: desperate poverty and disease. The cura of Bolaños wrote a detailed account to the Bishop of Guadalajara, Don Juan Cruz Ruiz de Cabañas, in 1814, chronicling the effects of the war on the Huichols. Antonio Norberto Sánchez Martínez, the chaplain in Bolaños, was deeply concerned about an unnamed epidemic that scourged the Huichols. Because there were so few priests in the area, what bothered Sánchez Martínez the most was that the Huichols died without spiritual guidance.<sup>41</sup> He despaired that so many Indians were ignorant of Catholicism, and that drunkenness and lust were so common. Sánchez Martínez suspected that many Huichol marriages were illegitimate in the eyes of the Church.<sup>42</sup> The level

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<sup>41</sup> López, *Algunos documentos de Nayarit*, 67.

<sup>42</sup> López, *Algunos documentos de Nayarit*, 67. See also *Archivo de la Mitra del Arzobispado de Guadalajara* (AMG hereafter). Bolaños, C/1, Expediente 3, 1827-1838. Here, Fray Buenaventura complained bitterly that when Huichol husbands wanted a younger, prettier wife, they went out and got a new one, or traded her for some cows. It is important to keep in mind that

of crime, evil and depravity, combined with epidemic disease, horrified the padre.

In order to rectify this abysmal situation, Sánchez Martínez implored the bishop to send priests and friars from Huejuquilla to assist the Indians. The towns of Camotlán and Huajimic needed aid to rebuild, as the places had been destroyed and the churches there were in disrepair. With money raised throughout the previous year, Sánchez Martínez hoped to erect new curates, repair churches and save Huichol souls. Part of the problem, he admitted, was that distance compounded all expenses: curates and villages located deep in the mountain were hard to reach and transportation was difficult, if not impossible at times.<sup>43</sup> It pained Sánchez Martínez to see the Huichols in such a desperate state, and while he does not directly blame the war, in his mind the Independence uprisings in the region had disrupted the normal flow of daily life. Whether the public sale of women, drunkenness and lust were truly part

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these are the observations of priests, and it is unclear if this actually ever occurred. See Buenaventura section, this chapter.

<sup>43</sup> López, *Algunos documentos de Nayarit*, 69-70.

of the Huichols' daily life is unknown, but likely partly fabricated.<sup>44</sup> Catholicism had not established deep roots during the colonial period, and it is doubtful that sea changes had occurred within Huichol communities by the time of 1810.

Governmental transformations in Jalisco following independence ushered in a period of

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<sup>44</sup> Huichol attitudes toward marriage are lax by western standards. Based upon the observations of ethnographers during the nineteenth and twentieth century, men in certain communities can certainly have multiple wives, so long as they can afford the expense of their care. For instance, Fray Arias y Saavedra noted that during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, men in the province of Chimaltiteco practiced sororal polygamy, in which all daughters might be given to one Indian man. In nearby Xahuanica province, men commonly had two wives. See McCarty and Matson, "Franciscan Report," 207. Grimes and Hinton suggest that some polygyny is practiced. See Joseph E. Grimes and Thomas B. Hinton, "The Huichol and Cora", in *The Handbook of Middle American Indians, Ethnology, Part 2*, ed. Evon Z. Vogt (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), 803. Finally, Ramón Mata Torres argues that only in Santa Catarina may a man have multiple wives; he also provides an elaborate description of the marriage ceremony, in which the Catholic Church has no part, by and large. Two youngsters, enamored with each other, agree to marry and get their parents' permission. If all parties accept the proposal, the wedding date is set and occurs with little pomp. Problems arise when priests marry young people, without the consent of their parents. See Chapter Six and the Conclusion for further discussion of Huichol cultural practices such as marriage, and see Ramón Mata Torres, *Matrimonio huichol: integración y cultura* (Guadalajara, Jalisco, México: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1982), 11, 13, 92-93.

heartache for indigenous peoples. The Huichols retreated to the mountains, emerging only occasionally to trade in nearby villages and towns, or sometimes to visit priests in the area. The best explanation for the Huichols' reticence and unwillingness to leave their safe havens was the absence of Franciscans. Though the Indians frequently had tumultuous relations with the friars since the beginning of their contacts with Spain, it appears that having them nearby provided a few links to the outside world while still guaranteeing a measure of protection. The Franciscans' departure, combined with laws that had the dual effect of protecting some Indians while antagonizing others, assured that the Huichols would emerge from the extremely violent mid-nineteenth century with most of their lands and religion intact.<sup>45</sup>

After the carnage of independence subsided, visitors trickled back into western Mexico, looking to explore the relatively unknown Sierra Madre Occidental. The Huichols were familiar with foreign expeditions, as Franciscan and Jesuit missionaries

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<sup>45</sup> Rojas, *Los Huichols*, 115.

criss-crossed the mountains, collecting information for Spain as early as the mid-sixteenth century. However, in the 1820s a new breed of traveler began exploring western Mexico, aiming to describe the cultural and social intricacies of the resident indigenous populations. Up to this point, Spain's relationship with Mexico kept the colony mostly closed off from outsiders. As a newly independent republic, Mexico could now receive foreign travelers and observers, intent on discovering its treasures. Two men in particular had some contact with the Huichols during the early to mid-1820s, and their travel accounts provide historians with clues as to the state of affairs in western Mexico.

Unlike the late nineteenth century visitors whose expeditions were scientific in nature, travelers such as Basil Hall and George Lyon were military men. Basil Hall traveled along the Pacific Coast of South and Central America, as well as Mexico, during his time as a member of the British Royal Navy. Originally from Scotland, Hall kept meticulous notes that provide commentary on a variety of topics. While traveling throughout the Nayarit

countryside, he discusses at length the process of beekeeping, in addition to the current fashions and dances of the elite in Tepic. Hall analyzed what he saw in comparison to "Chili," (Chile) a place in which he spent much time during his travels up the Pacific Coast of the Americas.<sup>46</sup> Most importantly, Hall had a chance meeting in the city of Tepic with "a party of native Mexican Indians, who had come from the interior to purchase maize and other articles." Hall would certainly not have known the name "Huichol," but his description of the "native Mexicans" provides clues as to their true identity. While illustrating their costumes, Hall noted that "the most striking circumstance, however, was, that all these Indians wore feathers round their heads...some had tied round their straw hats a circle of red flowers, so much resembling feathers, that it was not easy to distinguish between the two." The Huichols are famed for brightly colored hats and other adornments on their heads, typically part of

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<sup>46</sup> Captain Basil Hall, *Extracts from A Journal Written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru and Mexico, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh; London: Archibald Constable and Co.; Hurst, Robinson and Co., 1824), 221-222, 224.

ritual clothing. Additionally, Hall noted that the men carried "bows and arrows...suited to their strength, being more like those of school boys than arms of men who had their country to defend."<sup>47</sup> The bows and arrows that Hall saw were more than likely not used for defense, but were instead ceremonial tools that many Huichol men carried with them most of the time. These arrows serve as implements to carry prayers and offerings to the gods; Huichols traveling away from home will typically carry them, and all mara'akate have them on their person to use in curing rituals.<sup>48</sup> Hall also apparently met some sort of shaman who traveled with the party; from the Scotsman's account, the man carried a staff and wore a feathered bird skin. Hall suspected the man was "chief of the village" because of his accoutrements,

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<sup>47</sup> Hall, *Extracts from A Journal Written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru and Mexico, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822*, 221-223.

<sup>48</sup> Frésan Jiménez, *Nierika*, 59-61. Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt*, 111. Mara'akate is the plural form of the work mara'akame.

but in reality, the elder was likely a mara'akame, and not necessarily a chief.<sup>49</sup>

The April 1822 meeting between Hall and the "native Mexican Indians" highlights some key Huichol characteristics that the Scotsman's account verified. The native people that Hall met did not speak or understand Spanish, a fact that stymied his attempts to communicate with them. Catholic documents from the colonial era occasionally remarked on the Huichols' inability to comprehend Spanish, having to be ministered in "Mexican."<sup>50</sup> When an interpreter came to assist Hall, the Indians seemed to relax a bit, but a female member of the party separated herself from the inquisitive outsiders, and the rest seemed quite frightened at all of the attention Hall and his companions paid. This is understandable for a people who tended to shun outsiders, often at any cost. When Hall attempted to obtain some of the Indians' goods from them for his personal collection, the people were obviously appalled: Hall remarked that

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<sup>49</sup> Hall, *Extracts from A Journal Written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru and Mexico, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822*, 222-223.

<sup>50</sup> See Chapter Two.

"the old man could not be prevailed upon to part with his rod of authority, nor his official bird; neither could we induce them to sell, at any price, that part of their dress to which the inventory of their goods and chattels was appended."<sup>51</sup> Hall and his friends settled for the Indians' bows and arrows, plus the feathered head adornments, but only after great convincing. Finally, that the people Hall met were Huichols in Tepic is fairly obvious: the region around Tepic has long been a trade destination for the Huichols, and is not far from the westernmost reaches of their sacred landscape, the home of Tatei Haramara, or Our Mother Sea.<sup>52</sup>

Still other evidence attests to the idea that the Huichols emerged from the wars mostly intact, in terms of cultural practices and traditional norms. A few short years after Hall's visit to Tepic, his countryman, George Francis Lyon, traveled throughout Mexico to assess some of the country's mines. Lyon, too, served in the Royal British Navy; but where Hall

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<sup>51</sup> Hall, *Extracts from A Journal Written on the Coasts of Chili, Peru and Mexico, in the Years 1820, 1821, 1822.*, 223.

<sup>52</sup> Frésan Jiménez, *Nierika*, 25.

was a scientist of sorts, Lyon was an adventurer and a mine inspector. Born in Chichester, England in 1795, Lyon's expeditions brought him to Saharan Africa and the Arctic, in addition to his travels in Mexico and South America.<sup>53</sup> In his short life (d. 1832), Lyon became an accomplished author and watercolor artist, producing beautiful paintings of the landscapes and peoples he visited. Lyon's trip to the Bajío region of central Mexico, to examine the mines, allowed him to travel rather widely and observe area inhabitants. Like Hall, Lyon met with indigenous peoples; fortunately, Lyon had much more experience with and an aptitude for working among native populations and he reported the names of those he met. In the small mining town of Bolaños, Lyon encountered "Guichola Indians," and heard the stories of Hall's encounter four years prior.<sup>54</sup> Whereas Hall

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<sup>53</sup> <http://www.jonathandore.com/enc-arts/Lyon.html>

Unfortunately, there is no biography of Lyon. Lyon was an accomplished watercolor artist, painting beautiful scenes of Inuit villages on his expeditions to the Arctic, which occurred just before his death in 1832.

<sup>54</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 293. Curiously, Lyon states that "...Guichola Indians (of the same race as those seen by Captain Basil Hall at Tepic)..." How Lyon knows that Hall met Huichols is unknown, because Hall did not write this in his journal, nor did Hall ever

made general observations about the "native Mexicans," Lyon provided a glimpse into early nineteenth century Huichol life outside of the rancho, but still within the Sierra Madre Occidental.

Lyon's observations of the Huichols in Bolaños provide an enduring picture of Huichol material culture during the 1820s. The Huichols that he met "scarcely understood even a word of Spanish, but fully comprehended what I wanted and were very quiet and good-natured." Lyon particularly wanted a pair of "thongs" that each member of the Huichol party wore attached to their clothing, and which contained purchased items, food, or a "register of his cows, and bulls, and calves." Nobody wanted to part with their items, but Lyon did manage to buy one set.<sup>55</sup> The Huichols that Lyon met carried their obligatory, offertory arrows (along with regular arrows used for hunting); their dress consisted of a woolen-type homespun fabric, colored blue or brown and some wore deerskin short pants. A young girl that Lyon happened upon (perhaps the daughter of some

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mention that the Huichols were in Tepic to sell or obtain salt.

<sup>55</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 296, 294.

individuals he sketched) wore elaborate bead and shell jewelry, paired with a plain woolen cloak and skirt. Finally, the lack of shoes allowed Lyon to observe Huichol feet and he remarked that "the great-toes of all these people were much more separated from the others than is the case with Europeans." In addition to clothing, Lyon noted that Huichol men carried "several large woolen bags, woven into neat and very ornamental patterns."<sup>56</sup> Even today, most Huichol men who have left their villages and dress in western-style clothing still carry these bags; this fact makes Huichol men fairly easy to spot in busy Guadalajara or Tepic markets.

Lyon was an intensely curious observer, and while certainly not an anthropologist, he was keenly interested in native cultures. Upon discovering young people who did not wear any adornments upon their heads, Lyon learned who could wear head coverings and who could not. He noted:

All married men wore straw hats of a very peculiar form, with wide turned-up rims and high-pointed crowns, which near their tops

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<sup>56</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 296, 294-295.

are bound with a narrow garter-shaped band of prettily woven woollen, of various colours, and having long pendant tassels.

...I was informed that no unmarried man or woman may wear a hat, or bind the fillet round the head; and as we saw some young people who had neither of these ornaments, it may, in all probability, be the case.

There were two young married females of the party, each wearing a hat similar to those of the men...<sup>57</sup>

The difference in ornamentation between married and unmarried individuals allowed Lyon to identify marital practices typical for the era. What Lyon learned was that the Huichols practiced trial marriages, in which a man and woman could live together as a married couple; if, after a period of time (Lyon does not provide specifics), the man was unhappy with his potential bride, she returned to her parents' home. Even if the woman was pregnant, she suffered no shame by returning to her parents, and might marry another in the future if she so chooses.

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<sup>57</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 295.

If the match was good, though, "they are married by a priest or a friar, who once a year goes round to perform this ceremony, and to christen the offspring of newly married couples."<sup>58</sup> Some Huichol couples did not have their marriages sanctified by the church, but those who received Church weddings typically did so in January or February, when it was dry and Huichol farming obligations were minimal.<sup>59</sup>

Most importantly, Lyon realized that the Huichols were unique, at least within the realm of the Bolaños mining region. He attributed their distinctive nature to the fact that the mountains between the town of Bolaños and the Pacific Ocean were not well known by outsiders and Spaniards or Mexicans had not traveled as widely in this region as they had in other areas of Mexico.<sup>60</sup> Lyon remarked that "The Guicholes are in fact the only neighbouring people who still live entirely distinct from those around them, cherishing their own language, and

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<sup>58</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 297.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Fray Felipe de Jesús María Muñoz to M.R.P Comisario Fr. Bernardino de V. Pérez, 15 Diciembre 1848. *Archivo Municipal de Zapopán* (AMZ hereafter). Here, he conducted weddings and baptisms during the first two months of the year.

<sup>60</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 322.

studiously resisting all endeavors to draw them over to the customs of their conquerors." It was impossible to determine which Indians belonged to which ethnic group, particularly around Bolaños. But Lyon knew that the Huichols were certainly different from others.<sup>61</sup> Unique in relation to their indigenous neighbors, some of whom spoke Spanish and readily accepted Catholicism, the Huichols were not immune to transformations that began occurring in rapid fashion, during the 1820s and beyond.

Among these transformations was the reconfiguration of the religious landscape. Absent from the Sierra throughout almost the entire war, religious authorities either gradually returned to the Sierra, or attempted to ensure that the Huichol souls would be cared for during the late 1820s and 1830s. José María Castillo Portugal, a member of the "first Constituent Congress of Jalisco," inquired as to the state of the Nayarit missions.<sup>62</sup> He wanted to make sure that someone could administer sacraments to

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<sup>61</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 321.

<sup>62</sup> Nettie Lee Benson, *The Provincial Deputation in Mexico: Harbinger of Provincial Autonomy, Independence and Federalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), 188.

the inhabitants of San Andrés, San Sebastián and Santa María de la frontera de Colotlán; he also begged for any news from the region, asserting it was important to the community.<sup>63</sup> It was not at all unusual for secular authorities to be concerned for the salvation of indigenous villages. In November of 1824, the vicegovernor of Jalisco working through ecclesiastical authorities, authorized an annual salary of forty pesos for two priests to travel to San Andrés, San Sebastián, and Santa Catarina and administer the required sacraments.<sup>64</sup> Some of the smaller missions were so far from the curates that regular visits did not occur; the town of San Sebastián was one such place. Too far from the curate in Bolaños, Huichols who desired religious

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<sup>63</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 118. Rojas's citations are notoriously poor. An exhaustive search for a book by this title came up short; conversely, when I read both the *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos...* by Aguirre Loreto and the published book of laws by the Jalisco government, this particular document did not exist on the page Rojas cited. It is entirely possible that she looked at a book that has never been catalogued on the internet, nor could it be located in the AHJ. Also, it is unclear as to which community Castillo Portugal referred when he wrote: "*y yo como presidente de ella suplico a vuestro padre se sirva darme todas las noticias que pueda, sobre un asunto tan importante a la comunidad.*"

<sup>64</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 118.

instruction and sanctified marriages went without. The priest from Bolaños worked with both the Bishop in Guadalajara, and religious authorities in other areas in order to ensure that Huichol souls would not be forsaken.<sup>65</sup>

By the end of the 1830s, friars who returned to the Huichol Sierra found a state of disarray among the inhabitants of San Andrés. It is likely that such religious chaos existed in Santa Catarina and San Sebastián as well. When Fray Vicente Buenaventura-Cardenas visited San Andrés in 1839, he discovered that the Huichols had abandoned any trappings of Catholicism that they had adopted during the previous century of contact with the Spanish. Huichols living in San Andrés "violated" the church by practicing their traditional religion, considered idolatry by Catholic leaders.<sup>66</sup> Fray Buenaventura traveled throughout the region, looking for Huichol idols and upon discovering them, destroyed what he found. Typically, the Huichols made these idols out of wood or stone, and there was often a human element

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<sup>65</sup> *Archivo de la Mitra del Arzobispado de Guadalajara*, Guadalajara, 1839. (AMG hereafter).

<sup>66</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839.

to them. Buenaventura knew where to find them, searching in caves and crevices in order to uncover the cursed stones and smash or burn them, to the great distress of the Huichols.<sup>67</sup> It was apparent that Huichols still worshipped traditional indigenous deities, like the sun and peyote, adopting Catholic saints when necessary, to use in rituals.<sup>68</sup> Fray Buenaventura felt that the "Guicholes" simply did not believe in God because the Devil had tricked them and led them astray.<sup>69</sup> Clearly, the absence of religious leaders was a detriment to Huichol spirituality, at least according to Buenaventura and his colleagues.

Buenaventura's report is a valuable document because it not only provides a glimpse (albeit one-sided) into the Huichols' religion, but also because it sheds light on their larger culture. Peyote played a significant role in Huichol religious life,

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<sup>67</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839.

<sup>68</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839. Buenaventura wrote: *"en este presente año buscando yo por los cerros y por las cuevas sus ídolos los hallé y se los quemé."* Occasionally, a friar would call an idol a "mono." I have been assured that they are not, in fact, referring to a monkey, but instead to a stone or wood idol which has some humanoid features. Personal communication with Bruno Calgaro Sandi, November, 2008.

<sup>69</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839.

and Buenaventura noted that Huichols worshipped it, along with snakes, serpents, the sun and two deities named Séautara and Juana Móa.<sup>70</sup> Buenaventura lamented that the Huichols did not know how to pray, never confessed their sins, and could occasionally be found fornicating in the church. Not surprisingly, the Franciscan viewed all this as an abomination. Customary marital practices disgusted him: if a man got tired of his wife, who might be old or ugly, he would simply trade her in for a new, younger woman. Men frequently traded wine and cows for women.<sup>71</sup> The level of depravity bothered Buenaventura so much that he determined to change the Huichols, even if it killed him. He wondered why the Huichols could not be more like the Coras, to whom Buenaventura also ministered.<sup>72</sup> Over the coming years, Franciscan

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<sup>70</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839. Buenaventura does not elaborate on who Séautara and Juana Móa actually were. The names are not reminiscent of any known Huichol deities. Juana Móa, however, implies that the Huichols experienced some transculturation.

<sup>71</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839. The good friar lamented: *"cuando las mujeres cuando ya están viejas o feas por otras más mozas, dado de ribete a otros maridos una o dos vacas, y hasta por dos votijas de vino y otras cosas de este especie y con decirle a Va. S. Yllma que hasta dentro de la iglesia han fornicado no puede ser más."*

<sup>72</sup> AMG, Bolaños, expediente 3, 1827-1839.

friars would gradually return to the Huichol Sierra, providing the religious guidance that Buenaventura felt the Huichols desperately needed. The Huichols, it seemed, had no use for Catholicism and simply paid the friars lip service in exchange for being left alone.

### **Land Laws and Concerns**

More troublesome was the problem of meddlesome mestizos who increasingly encroached upon Huichol lands. Land laws in Jalisco and elsewhere began changing long before the Mexican Liberals passed the national Reform laws in the 1850s. These laws summarily ended corporate identity, and in theory abolished corporate land ownership for groups like Indians and the Church. In Jalisco, "efforts to partition and individualize village lands" began in years immediately following Independence.<sup>73</sup> The few

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<sup>73</sup> Robert J. Knowlton, "Dealing in Real Estate in Mid-Nineteenth Century Jalisco: The Guadalajara Region," in *Liberals, the Church and Indian Peasants: Corporate Lands and the Challenge of Reform in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America*, ed. Robert H. Jackson (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 13.

land documents that do exist from this period in the early Republic are mostly legal codes, aimed to settle disputes between indigenous villagers and their mestizo, Mexican neighbors. Mestizo elites gained power in early republican Mexico, particularly in the provinces, as more international ports opened up and money could be made trading commodities on the open market. This frequently resulted in an influx of outsiders into regions that had been sparsely populated, meaning that Indians could control when and how they contacted non-indigenous individuals. This was especially true in western Jalisco, where the port of San Blas (northwest of Tepic) became an international trading hub during the nineteenth century. Regional capitals such as Guadalajara grew in population and in prestige, and the city's expansion undoubtedly pressed indigenous peoples in the surrounding countryside. Meanwhile, the political climate of the early Republic was often hotly contentious, with ambitious people jockeying for position, occasionally at the expense of indigenous people.<sup>74</sup> During the mid-nineteenth

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<sup>74</sup> Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico*,

century, power came from land ownership and the ability to control the population; this was a power to which millions of poor people, including all Huichols, had no access.<sup>75</sup> Though many features of Huichol life during the 1820s and 1830s remain obscure, general observations can, and should be made based upon legal codes passed and two surviving religious documents.

During the first years of the Republic, local and provincial governments necessarily had to address Indian land concerns, but not necessarily for benevolent reasons. The government in Jalisco passed scores of laws aimed at preventing conflict between Indian villagers and *vecinos*, which in the legal code of the day meant town inhabitants.<sup>76</sup> A decree dated 28 June 1822 addressed communal lands in the cantón

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220, 221.

<sup>75</sup> Reina, *Las rebeliones campesinas*, 15-16. See also Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel C. Nugent, "Popular Culture and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel C. Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 18.

<sup>76</sup> *Vecinos* technically means neighbors; however, in legal documents pertaining to land in nineteenth century Jalisco, *vecinos* meant town inhabitants (that were likely not indigenous); and finally, according to the Huichols, a *vecino* was a mestizo outsider.

of Colotlán: simply put, it stated that Indians might lease out any of their lands (*solares*) that it did not need to other townspeople.<sup>77</sup> While this may not have affected the Huichols directly, particularly for those inhabitants of western Jalisco it set an important and dangerous precedent among indigenous villagers in the 8<sup>th</sup> cantón. In a reversal of the colonial ejido laws, Indians could now lease out lands that they were not using.<sup>78</sup> Taken at face value, the June 1822 decree appeared to give Indians more control over their own lands; however, in reality, it merely opened the door for serious exploitation at the hands of greedy mestizos.

In December, 1822, the state of Jalisco passed another statute, designed to prevent outsiders from agitating indigenous villagers. It provided surplus lands to those Indians who did not have any of their own. The motivations for the December decree remain

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<sup>77</sup> Ignacio Aguirre Loreto, ed. *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco* (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 1993), 9.

<sup>78</sup> Other restrictions on the fundo legal were as follows: indigenous villages could not parcel out, sell or rent the lands granted to them by the King (during the colonial period).

ambiguous, because legal documents such as this are frequently extremely vague, and lack supporting documentation. Data analyzing the outcome of such legal codes is difficult to uncover. Thus, it is unclear whether these "surplus lands" came from Indian villages or unused town properties. It is equally uncertain to whom lands could be given or why.<sup>79</sup> Finally, because there was no town listed, one should assume that this law applied to indigenous villages state-wide.

A decree, administered by the Constitutional Congress of Jalisco, a little over two years later seemed to clarify the vagaries of the December, 1822 proclamation. The so-called Decree Two declared that rightful owners of a particular plot of land could sell it, without contradicting the strictures of the ejidos. Decree Two provided Indians the ability to do what they wished with their property, with a few (unnamed) exceptions. They did not even have to have

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<sup>79</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco.*, 6 vols., vol. 1 (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1849 ), vi.

officially stamped paper if they could not afford it!<sup>80</sup>

While Decree Two may have seemed like a benevolent law passed to assist Indians, in reality it was designed to undermine indigenous territorial holdings by certain unscrupulous individuals in the government. Hoping to stave off massive indigenous revolutions, quick-thinking authorities in Guadalajara soon passed Decree 79, which declared that anyone who obtained Indian lands (by any means) without express indigenous consent could no longer retain title to those lands.<sup>81</sup> This law attempted to close a loophole that might have defrauded native villages out of their rightful properties.

Decrees Two and 79 illustrated interesting transformations toward Indian land policy in Mexico, during the 1820s and early 1830s. The two laws were broad in scope, meaning that they addressed Indian

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<sup>80</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 1), vi.

<sup>81</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 1), "Por el decreto número 79 se prohibió a los particulares que hubiesen comprado algunos terrenos de los indígenas, la venta o enajenación que a éstos no se les concedía," vi.

land concerns that existed throughout the state of Jalisco, and not simply issues in the Sierra de Huichol. Collectively they suggest that indigenous peoples around Guadalajara experienced increasing pressures as Mexico struggled to define its laws and politics. Evidence suggests that indigenous villages in the center of Jalisco needed protection from land-hungry Jaliscienses during the 1820s.<sup>82</sup> The Constitutional Convention of Jalisco created the decrees to protect Indians, even though many individuals still managed to frustrate the spirit of the law.<sup>83</sup> Yet while republican state governments, like Jalisco's, designed legal codes to assist Indian villages, the long-term goal was to break up community ejidos. This would force indigenous peoples to privatize communal lands and become small farmers and, while never stated, non-Indians would ultimately legal purchase lands which might had been held by Indians for centuries.

The Sierra Madre Occidental did not remain closed to encroaching settlers for long, and by the

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<sup>82</sup> Knowlton, "Dealing in Real Estate," 23.

<sup>83</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 1), 47.

end of 1825, local authorities began receiving complaints from Indians against unscrupulous settlers and citizens. In order to settle issues between indigenous peoples and Mexican citizens (or occasionally, between two groups of Indians), the Mexican government appointed attorneys for native villages. In September of 1825, Indians (probably Huichols) living around Huejuquilla el Alto voiced their grievances against one José María Ledesma. Ledesma fomented conflict among various unnamed Indians and their mestizo neighbors. The most serious problem, on the part of Huejuquilla's authorities, was that Ledesma was a lawyer for the Indians! Ledesma's lack of concern for his Indian clients created hostile situations and all parties suffered for it. Not only did Ledesma create discord, but he also brought about expensive and frivolous lawsuits for which native villages had to pay; additionally, he impeded land transfers and his clients accused him of a variety of other crimes. To control the potentially explosive situation, the author suggested that a tribunal be called immediately, for the benefit of public order and

peace.<sup>84</sup> In this, as in so many other instances, the legal and political framework of the early Mexican republic proved a double-edged sword for indigenous communities, simultaneously protecting and exploiting them.

By the beginning of the 1830s, the government of Jalisco realized that Decree Two, at least in its original form, no longer offered Indians the limited protection that some benevolent individuals had intended.<sup>85</sup> While allowing Indians to divide and sell their communal holdings, it became clear that Decree Two had too many loopholes for fraudulent behavior on the part of mestizos. Conflicts between indigenous communities and haciendas emerged, a fact which required a rethinking of land laws. In February of 1830, the government revised the decree, by adding

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<sup>84</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 6 vols., vol. 2 (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1868), 46-49.

<sup>85</sup> Florencia E. Mallon, "Reflections of the Ruins: Everyday Forms of State Formation in 19th Century Mexico," in *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico*, ed. Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel C. Nugent (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994), 76.

leyes 151 and 381. These two laws stated that products of community lands leased by the municipalities would be given to indigenous families; and that the provisions of Law 151 existed upon any lands that were purchased through fair, legal means.<sup>86</sup> Laws 151 and 381 were rather vague, not unlike much of the legal codes governing Indian lands. Law 151 provided some economic protection to Indian families on a municipal level, but it is unclear why this occurred. At any rate, as mestizos continued to flood into Jalisco, and as the demand for land increased, indigenous communities sometimes felt compelled to part with some or all of their holdings. To prevent strife and violence, politicians in Jalisco attempted to head off problems through legal means. It is obvious that their attempts were unsuccessful across the board, including in the Huichol Sierra.

By the mid-1830s, town officials throughout the Sierra felt pressed by mestizos unwilling to acknowledge indigenous land rights, and native villagers who were weary of unscrupulous outsiders.

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<sup>86</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 1), vi.

The governments of the municipalities of Mezquitic and Totatiche found themselves at odds with one another, in a feud over lands that had little to do with Indians per se. However, the arguments by the two towns concerned *terrenos baldíos*, and the implications for indigenous towns were problematic. Mestizos in the area, technically residents of the municipio of Mezquitic, had moved onto "vacant lands" that Totatiche claimed. Mezquitic's political leaders contested this claim, yet it is unclear how officials rectified the situation.<sup>87</sup> But this small piece of seemingly insignificant legal news illustrates that mestizos were willing to occupy lands not belonging to them, and refuse orders of town magistrates, to the point where politicians in both towns became involved.

Throughout the 1830s, it became increasingly clear that indigenous communities needed to have clear legal title to their lands, lest someone deem the properties vacant. In November 1833 the district chief of Colotlán discovered that many indigenous

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<sup>87</sup> Aguirre Loreto, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos*, 62.

peoples living around Huejuquilla had made land claims; instead of charging mestizos with stealing their land, these unnamed indigenous villagers (again, possibly Huichols or perhaps Tepehuanes) complained that properties they should have received via Decree 2 and Law 151 had never been distributed. The anonymous complainant, likely a legal advisor or lawyer for the Indian community, needed to seek the advice of the council charged with partitioning and handing out territories.<sup>88</sup> While this case too lacks a clear resolution, it appears as though some political leaders in the 8<sup>th</sup> Cantón tried to keep peace within Indian communities, and between Indians and non-Indian Mexicans. By mid-century this became a far more difficult task.

By the first years of the 1840s, the Huichols had emerged from independence and the first two decades of the early republic relatively intact in a religious and cultural sense. While indigenous villages in the more populous central region of

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<sup>88</sup> Aguirre Loreto, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos*, 66.

Jalisco lost their lands, the Huichols had only just begun to experience the pressures of land attrition. The state government, based in Guadalajara, kept a close eye on indigenous land affairs, periodically ruling in favor of native communities; they also issued legal protections for Indians. These measures, such as Decrees Two and 79, provided an avenue by which Indians could attempt to safeguard their communal land holdings. As the population in Jalisco increased over time, the "Indian problem" became more apparent, and the government took more draconian measures against Indians statewide.

While a complete picture of Huichol history between 1800 and 1840 is probably impossible, a few observations are evident. First, some Huichols undoubtedly participated in the independence movements that swept Jalisco between 1810 and 1821. Because the Huichols need to be viewed in very local terms, one can surmise that unity behind an insurgent leader or Spanish commander never occurred. Though all Huichols shared language and cultural traits, no clear sense of ethnic identity (in a modern sense)

existed among the nineteenth century Huichols.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, it is folly to believe that disparate villages would unite together against a common foe.

The second fact about the Huichols during this "blank" period in their history is that they clung fervently to their traditional belief system. While the specifics of their belief system are frequently difficult to grasp, because of the prejudices of the Catholic clergy who wrote about them, their pantheon and peyote worship did not suffer drastic effects under the Spanish. In the 1830s, the Huichols still worshipped the sun, consumed peyote, and used Catholic icons in indigenous rituals. A century of sustained contact with Spaniards, and then Mexicans, had done little to dislodge the fundamental parts of Huichol religion from the Sierra Madre Occidental. Huichol disdain for Catholicism frustrated authorities like Friar Buenaventura and Bishop

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<sup>89</sup> Gabbert, *Becoming Maya*, xi-xiii. Gabbert argues that the term "Maya" is an overarching ethnic term that they would not comprehend as relating to identity. The Mayas, like the Huichols, identify themselves in a local sense, not as a nation or ethnic group.

Aranda. It also concerned secular authorities in the state capital.

A third fact concerns evolving relationships with the outside world. Though the Huichols remained isolated from the centers of population to the south and west, the first decade and a half of the infant Mexican Republic forced the Huichols to make small adjustments. They learned to expect outsiders, though the frequency was nothing compared to what was to come. Although the Huichols did not lose much land during the period between Independence and 1848, they gained some experience with encroaching Mexicans, unscrupulous attorneys and the tortuous Mexican legal system. And finally, most Huichols realized that Catholic clergy would not leave them in peace for long. Yet, the small changes that the Huichols made did little to transform their overarching culture, language or religion. The Huichols simply absorbed elements of Catholicism if they chose, but they did not adopt it entirely. They learned to seek assistance from Mexican political leaders when outsiders impinged upon their lands, or came too close for comfort. These small changes,

which Huichols made on their own terms, served them well.

By the mid-1840s, lessons learned from two decades of dealing with Mexicans, and seventy years of Spanish rule before that, hardened Huichol leaders. As haciendas expanded throughout Mexico, and especially in northern Jalisco, the Huichols had to fight to protect their lands. Initially this fight was less about weapons, and more about words and petitions. But as the Reform laws of the 1850s affected the Church, and threatened the livelihoods of thousands of Indian villagers, local and state governments proved useless at protecting Huichol lands. In the heat of politically charged violence between Liberals and Conservatives, one individual emerged on the scene to bring irritated Indians together in a fifteen year rebellion.

## Chapter Four

### Land, Lozada and the Wars of the Worlds

*"¿Qué protección debe darse á la clase indígena?"<sup>1</sup>*

*"...la tenencia de la tierra pudiera generar una lealtad tan profunda y fanática."<sup>2</sup>*

After a long and arduous trek, the goal is almost within their grasp and the Huichol pilgrims begin last-minute preparations before they enter the realm of Wirikuta. The mara'akate and other leaders at the front of the line continue reciting prayers, while keeping the instructions passed down from Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxi close to heart. At five days out, pilgrims must begin their fast, and nobody may consume food or water until the danger subsides.<sup>3</sup> The fasting reminds each participant of the suffering that Kauyaumari endured in ancient times, and the pilgrims accept their anguish as a tribute to their deities. Once placated through the proper rituals, Elder Brother Deer Tail might reveal his precious

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<sup>1</sup> *La Prensa*, 8 de marzo de 1867.

<sup>2</sup> Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 123.

<sup>3</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas*, 146.

gifts to his Huichol supplicants, and then the hunt may proceed.

Quietly and without fanfare, each member of the hunting party stares meticulously at the ground in anticipation. They move eastward, toward Re'eunar, or " 'Unaxa, the 'Burnt Mountain Where the Sun Was Born'" and slow their movements when they approached the mountains, "for peyote was more likely to be found" near there.<sup>4</sup> Upon locating some peyote, that sprung from the tracks that Elder Brother Deer Tail left behind, the mara'akame or other leader will hunt it, just as older men hunt deer before the planting season begins. The mara'akame shoots the peyote with his ceremonial arrows, speaking quietly to it and ensuring that it cannot escape.<sup>5</sup> He is careful not to

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<sup>4</sup> Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt: the Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*, 152-153.

<sup>5</sup> Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt: the Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*, 153. Here, Myerhoff noted that the mara'akame's arrow pierced the flesh of the cactus in two spots, so that it could not escape. She wrote that this contradicted the reports of Carl Lumholtz, who said that the peyote must be taken alive, and therefore should not be wounded. See Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 133. See also De la Peña, *Culturas indígenas de Jalisco*, 65.

remove the bones/roots, so that next year, Huichols might be blessed with the life-giving cactus.<sup>6</sup> After paying proper homage and consuming a bit of peyote, the pilgrims leave to hunt peyote on their own, having "at last become one with the landscape...they had become the gods whose names they bore."<sup>7</sup> The Huichol homeland and their peyote hunting grounds are the dwelling-places of the gods. These places are sacred. When mestizo ranchers stole that land to graze their cattle, they robbed the Huichols' of religion. For centuries Huichol leaders defended their lands from their Spanish and Mexican neighbors by moving, assimilating aspects of alien cultures as they saw fit, and vehemently defying the desires of priests, friars and politicians. Protecting their lands and culture meant retaining their religious beliefs, including peyotism, and that was of paramount importance.

### **Mounting Tensions in the Sierra Madre Occidental**

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<sup>6</sup> Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt: The Sacred Journey of the Huichol Indians*, 155.

<sup>7</sup> Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 51.

However troubling the events of the previous decades, they were merely a prelude to the traumas that plagued the Huichols during the second half of the nineteenth century. Land attrition was the biggest cause for concern, but periodic interference on the part of the Church also irritated indigenous peoples in the Sierra. The ascension of the Liberals to power in Mexico by the middle to late 1850s had the potential to infuriate Indians throughout the country, and Jalisco was no exception. Though the Ley Lerdo, a mid-century legislation, did not immediately result in widespread land loss for the Huichols, the mere idea of it caused consternation in indigenous towns and among village leaders.

Land attrition in the 1850s and 1860s was not a new problem for Jalisco's indigenous population, as legal documents from earlier decades illustrate.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See previous chapter. Jean Meyer points out that it was not the Reform Laws alone that sparked the Lozada rebellion, because indigenous communities had experienced legal problems over land since the 1820s. Dawn Fogle Deaton, "The Decade of Revolt: Peasant Rebellion in Jalisco, Mexico, 1855-1864," in *Liberals, Church, and Indian Peasants: Corporate Lands and the Challenge of Reform in Nineteenth-Century Spanish America*, ed. Robert H. Jackson

Occasionally, local governments would find in favor of Indian communities, particularly if they had occupied the land in question for a long time without incident. At that point, a magistrate or *jefe político* would typically call on a surveyor to demarcate land boundaries and send the Indians, who believed that they held the land legally, on their way.<sup>9</sup> A few months later, though, the Indians had to be informed as to exactly how the lands would be marked, and by which governmental decree. Land distribution and the setting of firm boundaries may have seemed like a good idea to the government, and indeed, to some Indians. However these good intentions often had unintended and confusing consequences for Jalisco's native populations.<sup>10</sup> Aggressive and acquisitive ranchers cared little for

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(Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 46.

<sup>9</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 2), 170-172. Such was the case in Mezquitic during November and December of 1850.

<sup>10</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 2), 187-90 and 227-28.

Jalisco's legal niceties and did everything possible to take advantage of Mexico's deepening changes.<sup>11</sup>

Evidence of the tensions generated by land encroachment came in the form of episodes of violence. Don Benito del Hoyo, proprietor of the Hacienda San Antonio de Padua, ended up on the wrong side of a machete blade.<sup>12</sup> Since the late 1810s, and in fact even prior to Mexico's independence, Del Hoyo had been a thorn in the sides of area Indians, particularly the Huichols, because his workers continually strayed across the hacienda boundary and onto native properties. The ruthless Del Hoyo treated the Indians as willful children best suited to serve as his personal workforce.<sup>13</sup> Persistent land grabs by the hacendado even led to a decades-long border dispute between the states of Zacatecas and Jalisco, owing to the close proximity of the property to the

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<sup>11</sup> Jean A. Meyer, *Esperando a Lozada* (México, DF: CONACYT, 1984), 131.

<sup>12</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 189. Here, Rojas cites a document from the Colotlán expediente in the *Archivo de la Secretaría de la Defensa Nacional* (or ASDN hereafter). ASDN Colotlán 5001.

<sup>13</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 189.

border to both states.<sup>14</sup> Tensions between Del Hoyo and Huichols living near the towns of Huejuquilla and Tensompa had boiled over as early as 1848. In one instance, an Indian house had been burned to the ground in Tensompa, arguably by a worker or workers from San Antonio de Padua.<sup>15</sup> During another particularly aggravating episode, cattle trampled Huichol milpas. Finally, some Huichols in Tensompa faced a harsh jail sentence because they had built houses on properties that had been theirs without question since time immemorial. Del Hoyo's ranch-hands burned the houses down and accused the Indians of illegally squatting.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps it did not surprise anyone when del Hoyo and three of his sons found themselves surrounded by angry Indians set on revenge.

It is unclear who actually murdered the Del Hoyo family, but in October of 1854, Lieutenant Colonel

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<sup>14</sup> AHJ, G-5-851, JAL/3651. Gobierno Político y Soberano del Estado. Expedientes 1851-1899. Expedientes VI y XXII (18a pieza).

<sup>15</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 189.

<sup>16</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 189. Apparently, this last issue seems to have been a tit-for-tat retaliation, as Indians during the previous year had burned some buildings that del Hoyo had constructed on this very same land.

Félix Llera captured a Huichol bandit near Rancho Rosales, not far from del Hoyo's hacienda. Llera had been led through the area by several workers from the rancho; upon seizing the Huichol man, Llera ordered his execution. But the unnamed man had an ace up his sleeve. He volunteered to guide Llera and his men through the Sierra, in an attempt to spare his own life. Upon leading the army to Rancho Carrizales, the Huichol scout and Llera's men happened upon four more bandits and the wife of the leader.<sup>17</sup> Were these the very Indians who had murdered Del Hoyo? Perhaps, though nobody was ever brought to justice.<sup>18</sup> What this anecdote does suggest is that by the 1850s, encroaching outsiders pushed some Huichols to their limits.

### **Franciscan Work in the 1850s**

Interestingly enough, the eruption of pre-Reform violence coincided with a renewed missionary campaign in the Huichol Sierra. Though many Huichols found

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<sup>17</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 190. Citing ASDN, Colotlán 5001.

<sup>18</sup> No records of any sort of murder trial exist in the AHJ. It is possible that Del Hoyo's family, upon suspecting an individual of the murders, took care of the "assailant" using frontier justice.

reason to be angry with their Mexican neighbors, others opted for a path of restraint, accepting limited contact with missionaries. Following the Mexican-American War, which had little direct effect upon the Huichol Sierra, Franciscan ministers renewed their work among the Huichols with vigor. On a scouting trip through the Sierra del Nayar, Comandante Francisco Pavón found not bloodthirsty bandits, but Huichols content to behave themselves under the watchful eyes of Franciscan friars from the Colegio de Guadalupe, in Zacatecas.<sup>19</sup> The Huichols had helped the army pursue fugitives, and were not particularly warlike.<sup>20</sup>

The Church redoubled its efforts in the Sierra at the end of the 1840s and during the first few years of the 1850s not only to shepherd Huichol souls toward salvation, but to spread the gospel of the evil nature of the Liberal government. Though most

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<sup>19</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 190. Citing ASDN, Colotlán 5001. Recall that over the past century, missionaries from the Colegio had been instrumental in attempting to convert the Huichols. They were mostly unsuccessful in their quest for true conversion. See Chapter Three.

<sup>20</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 190. See also Meyer, *Esperando a Lozada*, 75.

Huichols tolerated their presence, it was far easier for the Franciscans to write about Huichol religious and cultural practices than to actually make changes. The Huichols likely understood some aspects of the Franciscans' political messages, such as the wicked nature of Liberals. The friars walked a fine line with their very presence in the Sierra, and while they were unsuccessful in their conversion attempts, they were nonetheless intolerant in their treatment of Huichol beliefs.

Diego de Aranda y Carpinteiro, the Bishop of Guadalajara between 1836 and 1853, made a point toward the end of his life to ensure that the Indians of his bishopric received proper spiritual care. To this end, he lobbied on behalf of area friars in order to obtain money for ministerial works. From December 1849 to January of 1850, Aranda y Carpinteiro managed to gather small sums of money from the *Secretaría de Hacienda* (akin to the US Department of Treasury), to ameliorate the Huichols' misery and ignorance.<sup>21</sup> The Catholic Church had

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<sup>21</sup> *Archivo General de la Nación* (AGN hereafter), GD 120, Justicia Eclesiástica, Vol. 156.

failed in the past to maintain a presence in the Huichol Sierra, partly because of the reticence of the Indians, who frequently refused to pay for the friars' upkeep, and partly because the main Church body rarely supplied the funds.<sup>22</sup> But at the beginning of 1850, Castañeda, secretary to the Minister of Hacienda and writing on his behalf, offered three hundred pesos for the establishment and upkeep of a mission in Nayarit; Castañeda noted that the Church should match those funds and was grateful for their work among the native peoples.<sup>23</sup> In fact, the President of Mexico himself authorized the expenditure, owing to the importance of the Church's mission.<sup>24</sup>

The Church plunged into their work with the Huichols, and by 1852 it was obvious to Franciscan

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<sup>22</sup> AGN, GD 120, Justicia Eclisiástica, Vol. 156.

<sup>23</sup> AGN, GD 120, Justicia Eclisiástica, Vol. 156.

<sup>24</sup> AGN, GD 120, Justicia Eclisiástica, Vol. 156. The only evidence that President José Joaquín de Herrera authorized this comes from a note written by Castañeda in May of 1850. At another point, Aranda y Carpinteiro acknowledges that the President undertook the important work of considering the missionaries; by the date of the letter (April of 1851) and owing to the extreme political tension of the early 1850s, de Herrera was no longer President. The matter had passed to Mariano Arista. See AGN, GD 120, Justicia Eclisiástica, Vol. 167.

leaders that the Indians needed much spiritual improvement in their lives. The absence of Franciscans during the previous decades had led to backsliding among the Huichols, a situation that Aranda y Carpinteiro hoped to remedy through renewed evangelical efforts. Though the primary motivation was to teach Catholicism to the "ignorant" Indians, this was difficult and potentially dangerous. The Huichols would not give up their religious "idolatry," which included the consumption of peyote, but normally, the Indians paid little attention to the Franciscans. The reports that the friars compiled helped to justify the continued presence of the Church in places like the Sierra del Nayar, while simultaneously providing detailed information to others on everything from the type of climate a town had, to what language a group spoke, to the history of missionization in the area. The friars remained there, traveling to outlying pueblos like San Sebastián and its satellites Santa Catarina and San Andrés when the need arose.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> AMZ. "Datos sobre la misión de San Sebastián," 1852.

Huichol territory was difficult to navigate, a fact to which countless friars in the past could attest. Villages ranged across many hundreds of square miles, from hot lowlands between mountain passes, to the remote redoubts on high mountains. This made travel quite difficult, led to extreme variations in temperature and more than likely caused sickness among non-Huichol travelers.<sup>26</sup> The geographic distribution of Huichol villages produced dialects, yet all Huichols could understand one another; the friars, however, could not learn the language because there appeared to be distinct lack of rules and the pronunciation was quite difficult.<sup>27</sup> Thus, as had been the case during the previous two centuries, language proved an often insurmountable barrier to Franciscan progress among the Huichols.

Linguistic troubles were not the only hurdle facing the Franciscans. The Huichols might seem timid and docile, but experience proves this observation to be grossly incorrect. The inhabitants

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<sup>26</sup> AMZ. "Datos sobre la misión de San Sebastián," 1852.

<sup>27</sup> AMZ. "Datos sobre la misión de San Sebastián," 1852.

in San Sebastián had never truly shaken off what Franciscans considered the bonds of savagery, even though by the 1850s, more than a century had passed since their final suppression at the hands of the Spanish. According to missionaries, the Huichols were terribly capricious, they drank to excess, they stole, and they lived in a generally obscene state. Huichol couples refused to marry in the Catholic way, and occasionally, they even fornicated in the church.<sup>28</sup> They desperately needed the light of Catholicism, because in less than a decade since their last congress with Franciscans, the Huichols declined dramatically. Instead of peace, the Franciscans found murder and suicide, the stubborn refusal to stop worshipping idols in the many hidden caves and canyons throughout the region, and the failure to believe in God.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> AMZ. He wrote that *"El carácter de los Huichols, muchos los tienen por dóciles y apacible, porque aparecen apacibles y tímidos, pero en mi concepto, es terribles, caprichoso y tenas, pues aun no olvidan a pesar de la serie prolongada de años que hace desde su conquista muchas ideas de barbarie."* "Datos sobre la misión de San Sebastián," 1852.

<sup>29</sup> AMZ. The anonymous author does not actually detail crimes he, or anyone else, witnessed. Much of what he wrote was hearsay; yet he believed that all of the

As different missionaries rotated in and out of San Sebastián, Santa Catarina, and San Andrés, they tended to emphasize different aspects of Huichol life in their ecclesiastical reports. For instance, instead of emphasizing the idol-worshipping aspects of Huichol life, one particularly observant friar documented the extreme variety of the trees in the Huichol Sierra, and what one might do with the wood from such trees. The 1853 mission report explained that the Huichols were blessed with many fruit trees and countless wild plants, all of which they knew and used.<sup>30</sup> Farming techniques were rather poor and

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terrible stories about the Huichols had a basis in fact. In one sense, he was right: the Huichols *did* worship idols, and the drunkenness of which he spoke might have been a peyote ritual. However, from the tone of the document, it is clear that the man did want the Huichols to receive some "help." "Datos sobre la misión de San Sebastián," 1852.

<sup>30</sup> AMZ. "Sobre las misiones que hay por San Sebastián, 1853." *"Con respecto a las producciones de estos terrenos son varias, abundan las maderas de todas clases, desde la Encina roble, con sus clases de encino blanco y colorado, el pino real, el alazan, el pinito, el Pinavete, el Cedro... en la clase de maderas finas, a la que se juntan, nogal blanco y el colorado de aroma, el Brazil, en aglunas barrancas el tampinuran, y la caoba, el granadillos, el Tepezapote, el T. Tepe Mezquite, el Tepehuaje se haya en abundancia y zapote blanco. Entre los árboles frutales, el Zapote el huallavo, el durazno mezquite, el huamuchil, los limoneros y algunos naranjos, otros árboles que son indígenas de estos puntos y que so se*

backward according to the report, but the Huichols managed to grow a variety of crops including chile, corn, and squash. San Sebastián, as the principal mission town, had a government similar to any other small town that had been established during colonial times: there was a governor and a mayor, a war captain, and some minor ministers. Corruption was a problem but because the Huichols were so "apathetic" about everything, impropriety in civil affairs did not appear to be a problem.<sup>31</sup> The mining industries nearby did not bother the Huichols, as long as no one imposed work requirements on them. Finally, our unnamed friar remarked that the state of religious

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*conocen sino es por los habitantes de ellos. Las plantas silvestres son muchísimas en siendo que solo un botánico dará una descripción exacta de ella. La infinidad de flores no se ni como se llama, pues son tantas de todo el año, se haya el lirio morado y el blanco, el cocomite, la tempranilla, el cardo, el siloche, el corpus, flor cuyo aroma es tan activo que no se puede tener en la habitación porque lastima la cabeza, flor parásita de la encina en una palabra son tantas que no se les conoce nombre entre estos y son tan variadas en sus colores y aromas. En la temperatura caliente varían las maderas, flores, frutas, en esta están arrayanas, Plátanos, zapote, la anona, el Tecuistle blanco y encarnado, la Pitaya de varias clases, la Higuera silvestre of Zolase todas estas forman parte de los alimentos de estos miserables."*

<sup>31</sup> AMZ. "Sobre las misiones que hay por San Sebastián," 1853.

affairs was problematic, and the Indians seemed content to remain outside of God's loving grace. This was less a character flaw and more a reflection of the fact that geography made all things difficult, including doing the work of the Lord. What this friar failed to understand was that the Huichols were not incapable of spirituality, but that the trees, fruits and plants he described were part of a religious culture that usually eluded non-Huichols.

The Franciscan reports compiled between 1843 and 1855 point to some interesting developments between Huichol towns. While the exact population of each town frequently remains unclear, by 1853 the region certainly had enough demand for priests to warrant the creation of a new mission in San Andrés.<sup>32</sup> Whereas San Sebastián initially commanded much of the attention of the church, as the main village in the region, San Andrés surpassed its neighbor in terms of need. During the years between 1843 and 1853, San

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<sup>32</sup> It is unclear exactly who demanded the services, though one could make a valid argument that Huichols did not consider the sacraments of marriage or baptism to pose a threat to their indigenous customs. See AMZ. "Sobre las misiones que hay por San Sebastián," 1853.

Sebastián suffered a marked stagnation in inhabitants seeking the Church sacraments of baptism, marriage and Christian burial. Occasionally, the one or two priests working in the area would experience an increase in adults seeking marriage, or baptism for their children, but by and large, San Sebastián and Santa Catarina tended to reject the presence of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the inhabitants of San Andrés, when compared to their counterparts in other areas, overwhelmingly married under the auspices of the Church and baptized their babies. In 1853 demand for Church services was so great in San Andrés that Catholic leaders created a new mission to serve that town, and its satellite, Guadalupe Ocotán; this mission became known as Nueva Señora de Guadalupe Ocotán.<sup>33</sup> It cannot be determined from the documents why some Huichols desired Catholic education while others did not. Nevertheless, this should come as no surprise, because since contact with Spaniards began, the Huichols rarely approached any problem in a unified way. Though the inhabitants of San Andrés and Guadalupe Ocotán indicated a

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<sup>33</sup> AMZ. "Sobre las misiones que hay por San Sebastián," 1853.

willingness at least to marginally accept the presence of friars, and the ceremonialism that came with the Catholic Church, other Huichol villagers did not.

Though many Indians might blend some aspects of native religion with acceptable Catholic beliefs and ceremonies, Huichol religion continued to be a vexing problem for mid-nineteenth<sup>th</sup> century officials like Father Miguel de Jesús María Guzmán, and "Padre Presidente Vázquez."<sup>34</sup> Every festival, even those with secular purposes, contained elements of what these men considered idolatry. Upon witnessing the festival known as "*cambia de varas*" in San Sebastián, in which secular officials are elected for new terms in office, the friars noted that the Huichols had not rid themselves of bad customs and behaviors. Marquez insisted that the Huichols cease their evil ways, in honor of the Virgin of Guadalupe, and that this

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<sup>34</sup> AMZ. "Sobre las misiones que hay por San Sebastián, 1853" and "Reportes de los padres franciscanos sobre el número de sus feligreses (1855 y 1856)." It appears as though Friars J. Guadalupe de Jesús Vázquez and Miguel de Jesús María Guzmán compiled the reports from the works of other Franciscans in the area, which included the data on baptisms and marriages, etc.

included destroying their sacred caligüeyes.<sup>35</sup> When Marquez and Vergara destroyed sacred objects, including a stone idol displayed prominently in the temple, the Huichols demanded to know who sent the priests, why they were there, and what their ultimate motives were. The friars managed to avoid a catastrophe at the hands of angry Indians, but Huichol aggravation with the intruders continued to fester.<sup>36</sup> During their travels throughout the Sierra, Franciscans frequently discovered that, despite the fact that some Huichols might attend church, their religious conversion was far from complete. While the friars were in the area, some Huichols carried on unnamed religious ceremonies that had little to do with Catholicism. Priests found troves of idols and other objects, like sacred arrows and offerings of chocolate and feathers to strange statues.<sup>37</sup> To Guzmán and Márquez, the dream of extirpating superstition seemed as far away as ever.

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<sup>35</sup> AMZ. "Reportes de los padres franciscanos sobre el número de sus feligreses (1855 y 1856)."

<sup>36</sup> AMZ. "Reportes de los padres franciscanos sobre el número de sus feligreses (1855 y 1856)."

<sup>37</sup> AMZ. "Reportes de los padres franciscanos sobre el número de sus feligreses (1855 y 1856)."

### **The Rise of Liberal Politics**

Unfortunately for the Franciscans, they never really got another opportunity to realize their goals. By the time the friars finished their annual reports on the souls of Huichol in the principal towns in 1856, political activity around the country assured that the Church would have little power to save more Indians. The Liberal political movement, which began with the ouster of Antonio López de Santa Anna in 1854, charged ahead under the direction of Benito Juárez and Ignacio Comonfort. The nineteenth-century Liberals had little use for what they considered the trappings and superstitions of the Catholic Church; on a more practical note, Liberals resented Church control of financial capital. Finally, they also believed that individual ownership of small plots of land would improve Mexico.<sup>38</sup> The Reform laws enacted by Juárez and other Liberals consequently stripped all economic power of the

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<sup>38</sup> This idea was similar to that proposed by Thomas Jefferson in the early years of the 1800s, in which yeoman farmers would be the building blocks of the United States.

Church, while at the same time outlawing corporate ownership of lands.<sup>39</sup>

For the Huichols, this was particularly problematic. On the one hand, those Indians not interested in conversion would no longer have to concern themselves with meddling churchmen after the mid-1850s. On the other hand, though, the Reform laws affected the Franciscan-created community (comunidad) system that had been in place among the Huichols for more than a century. In effect, the Reforms ended the protection that the Franciscans offered, thus opening up Huichol lands to acquisitive settlers and ranchers.<sup>40</sup> Though the Lerdo law did not

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<sup>39</sup> The Ley Lerdo, promulgated in 1856, effectively canceled the ejido, a legal protection of Indian village lands that had existed almost as long as Spain ruled in the Americas.

<sup>40</sup> Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 122. Weigand wrote: "*medida que afectaría el sistema franciscano entre los Huichols y pondría fin al sistema de comunidades establecido por la corona española, exponiendo aún más las tierras comunales Huichols a los colonos y ganaderos vecinos.*" For a brief discussion on the technicalities of ley Lerdo, see Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico*, 260-262. See also E. Bradford Burns, *The Poverty of Progress: Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 5-17. Burns suggests that the Liberal constitutions of the mid-nineteenth century turned land into "...a commodity to be bought and sold."

immediately strip Indians of communal landholdings, the very threat of such action sparked unrest in the Sierra Madre Occidental.

Liberal legislation emerged as part of a long-standing debate concerning people like the Huichols. The question of what to do with Mexico's indigenous populations had weighed for years on the minds of government officials and intellectuals alike. Though not nearly the object of pseudo-scientific dogma it would become during the positivist-dominated late Porfiriato, Indians proved to be a topic of impassioned debate during the 1850s and 1860s. Concerns about the supposedly negative influence of Indians upon larger Mexican appeared in editorials and in scholarly writings by the 1850s. Editorials decried the misery of the lower classes, though more out of concern for the rich in Mexico and their progress, than out of true care about the plight of the poor. In *La voz de alianza*, the official organ of the Liberal party in Mexico, one editorial suggested that efforts among the rich to aid the poor would prove fruitless, if Indians (and non-indigenous

peasants) chose to remain ignorant.<sup>41</sup> Like *La voz de alianza*, other newspapers asserted that cultural backwardness and communal lands helped the Indians resist civilization.<sup>42</sup> A decade later, Mexican philologist Francisco Pimentel argued that Indians were "an 'enemy' of the other inhabitants of Mexico and suggested European immigration and racial mixing as an answer to the problem of the indigenous peoples."<sup>43</sup> While Pimentel may have held an extreme view of Indians during the 1860s, he had a cadre of like-minded men during the 1870s, including,

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<sup>41</sup> Horacio Hernández Casillas and Erika Vázquez Flores, *Racismo y poder: La negación del indio en la prensa del siglo XIX* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2007), 104. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five.

<sup>42</sup> Hernández Casillas and Vázquez Flores, *Racismo y poder: La negación del indio en la prensa del siglo XIX*, 99.

<sup>43</sup> T.G. Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals and the Indian Question, 1876-1911," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 48, no. 1 (1968): 21. Hernández Casillas and Vázquez Flores, *Racismo y poder: La negación del indio en la prensa del siglo XIX*, 98. Pimentel wrote "Para conseguir la transformación de los indios lo lograremos con la inmigración europea; cosa también que tiene dificultades que vencer; pero definitivamente menores que la civilización de la raza indígena. La raza mixta sería una raza de transición; después de poco tiempo todos llegarían a ser blancos. Por otra parte no es cierto que los mestizos hereden los vicios de las dos razas si no es cuando son mal educados; pero cuando tienen buena educación sucede lo contrario, es decir, hereden las virtudes de las dos razas."

eventually President Porfirio Díaz.<sup>44</sup> The "Indian problem" necessitated influence from the government, which made irritated Indians all the more concerned.<sup>45</sup> Most indigenous people were perhaps ignorant of the debates about their existence because they had more pressing issues at hand, particularly in western Mexico. In an environment of uncertainty, fear, anger, and chaos, the time was ripe for armed resistance.

### ***The Tigre de Alica and his Rebellion***

By the middle of the 1850s indigenous groups in western Mexico, furious over the expansions of haciendas and tired of ineffective government help, thought that they had found their savior. Born in 1828, near the pueblo of San Luís (now San Luís de Lozada) Nayarit, Manuel Lozada was a man of rather humble origins. He was likely a mestizo, though legend has held him to be Cora. Whatever the case of

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<sup>44</sup> Powell, "Mexican Intellectuals," 21.

<sup>45</sup> Burns, *The Poverty of Progress*, 30.

his ethnicity, it is evident that he had strong ties to indigenous communities in western Jalisco. It appears that Lozada's parents died while he was still a child and thus orphaned, the young boy eventually adopted his uncle's surname. Lozada followed relatives to the Hacienda San José de Mojarra, whereby he became a peón laborer. At some point he absconded with the love of his life, the daughter of his *patrón*, and once captured, Lozada spent some time in jail in Tepic.<sup>46</sup> This legend, whether true or not, created the aura of an outlaw that followed him for the rest of his life. More importantly, Lozada demonstrated his ability to supersede his lowly status and who, when wronged, sought revenge.

Lozada drew the attention of authorities in Jalisco in 1853, when he filed a lawsuit against the Hacienda de Mojarra, his former employer. Lozada's claim against the hacienda surely related to land and work, owing to his status as a peón but this early action provides insight into his motivations for war. Lozada resented the ever-expanding, unchecked power

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<sup>46</sup> Zachary Brittsan, "In Faith or Fear: Fighting With Lozada" (PhD Dissertation University of California, San Diego, 2010), 28.

of the great estates in western Mexico. Not only did he hate the landowners as an indebted laborer, Lozada also experienced the loss of land deeply as a person with strong connections to the Coras. That Indian communities lost land, and at astonishing rates, angered him. Lozada, and other men of mixed descent like him such as José María Leyva of Sonora and José María Barrera in the Yucatán, realized that the government provided no redress against the avarice of encroaching mestizos. In some ways, these leaders understood the problems of both worlds and worked to address them effectively.<sup>47</sup> Lozada certainly did not have to look far to find exploited Indians, nor did he have to stray outside of the Sierra del Nayar in order to discover indigenous populations willing to fight back. Both the Coras and some Huichols were ready to rebel in the name of indigenous land rights. Officials attempted to address the rumblings of discontent throughout much of the mountainous areas

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<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of José María Leyva Pérez see Hu-DeHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival*. See also Burns, *The Poverty of Progress*, 110-111. For a discussion of José María Barrera see Nelson Reed, *The Caste War of Yucatán* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964).

in Jalisco. The situation near the Cora town of Jesús María, just west of some Huichols villages, was tense; indigenous communities close to Zapotlán, Pochotitlán (just outside of Tepic) and San Luis provided more manpower for Lozada's movement (see map 3.1).<sup>48</sup> Invasions by bands of thieves and troublemakers concerned leaders throughout Jalisco.<sup>49</sup> Various jefes políticos received word from Guadalajara that the violence in the region needed to be halted immediately.<sup>50</sup> Indians incensed at the overreach of area hacendados invaded and squatted on territories that they believed were rightfully theirs. Such activity resulted in waves of hacendados and their employees arming themselves and invading the disputed territories. The emerging

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<sup>48</sup> Meyer, *Esperando a Lozada*, 131-132. See also Mario A. Aldana Rendón, *Manuel Lozada y las comunidades indígenas* (México: Centro de Estudios Históricos del Agrarismo en México, 1983), 21. At first, Lozada's movement consisted of about 6 men, though support from these towns added about 25 or so. It is unclear whether Zapotán, or one of the many Zapotláns is the town referred to by Aldana Rendón. San Luis de Lozada is a tiny pueblo outside of Tepic, in the Alica region of the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains. Jesús María is a Cora town not far from the Huichol homelands in what is now eastern Nayarit.

<sup>49</sup> Aldana Rendón, *Manuel Lozada*, 21-22.

<sup>50</sup> AHJ, G-9-856 JAL/3565. Jalisco. Gobierno del Estado. Circular. 1856 febrero 7.

cycle of violence in the highlands of Jalisco frightened citizens and government alike.<sup>51</sup>

The governor's office issued a proclamation aimed at stemming the mayhem. The decree asserted that anyone in possession of disputed lands for a year and a day could remain upon them until such time as the courts could determine actual ownership; that if there was a dispute over property rights, the parties involved had to go through the appropriate channels; and that political authorities could *not* proceed without consulting judges in such cases. The point of the circular was to make political authorities proactive in preventing violence. Authorities in Colotlán, which was the municipio in which many Huichols lived, vowed to abide by the governor's request and circulated it among the jefes políticos in the area.<sup>52</sup> Not long after the creation of such legal stipulations, Ignacio Herrera y Cairo and Miguel Contreras Medellín appointed an unnamed

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<sup>51</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-856 JAL/3565. Jalisco. Gobierno del Estado. Circular. 1856 febrero 7.

<sup>52</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-856 JAL/3565. Jalisco. Gobierno del Estado. Circular. 1856 febrero 7.

attorney to help protect the Indians in civil cases and to help prevent their mistreatment.<sup>53</sup>

The central government in Jalisco treated Tepic as a special case, and it was partly because of this that Lozada and his allies fought. In February of 1858 political leaders drafted a commission with the express goal of surveying lands around the cantón.<sup>54</sup> The state government allowed for land surveying, theoretically preventing excesses against Indians; but this likely had the reverse effect. Both village leaders and Lozada realized that the government paid the surveying companies, and that said companies had no real incentive to find in favor

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<sup>53</sup>Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 6 vols., vol. 3 (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1868), 28-29. It is unclear who Ignacio Herrera y Cairo and Miguel Contreras Medellín actually are, but it is likely they are secretaries to the Governor of Jalisco. The unnamed attorney was appointed by this commission in June of 1856.

<sup>54</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 3), 28-29. The commission was set up according to decree on February 4, 1858.

of native communities.<sup>55</sup> In fact, an aspect of the Liberal state that was increasingly important was the measuring of land and the determination of one legal owner.<sup>56</sup> Outsiders in the government, not the indigenous leaders themselves, had the final say over property boundaries in Tepic. Though the commission attempted to be impartial, allowing both Indians and non-indigenous entities to agree to border lines, the decree passed in February of 1858 also required Indian villages to produce titles to the lands in question.<sup>57</sup> This always proved to be too expensive, onerous, and time-consuming for most indigenous villages.

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<sup>55</sup> Raymond B. Craib, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 145-146. Craib quipped that "Both landowners and campesinos were particularly wary of the sight of military engineers with land-measuring instruments, accompanied by a military escort...."

<sup>56</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 36.

<sup>57</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos* (Vol. 3), 103-104. During the Porfirian era, municipal governments in Veracruz required all municipalities to "furnish detailed information on, and legal evidence of, their boundaries to the agency." See also Craib, *Cartographic Mexico*, 176.

Lozada's first violent message to the government was his assault on the Hacienda de Mojarra, north of Tepic, on September 20, 1857. He liberated land and cattle from the hacienda, and divided the spoils among his men, in much the same way that Pancho Villa would do in Chihuahua during the Revolution. Two days later, he led about ninety men from the towns of San Luis, Pochotitlán and Tequepexpan against the Hacienda de Puga, shouting "¡viva la religión!" The only defense against Lozada and his men were two German immigrant workers.<sup>58</sup> Lozada's attack came about seven months after the signing of the 1857 Constitution, and it is likely that its tenets sparked a peasant fury that Lozada then harnessed. In an attempt to contain the violence, Mexican General Juan Rocha declared that the towns of San Luis and Pochotitlán consisted of little more than bandits who should be exterminated, because they spread death and destruction wherever they went.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Aldana Rendón, *Manuel Lozada*, 24.

<sup>59</sup> Aldana Rendón, *Manuel Lozada*, 25. Rocha issued his directive to the central government in Guadalajara on 29 October 1857. For a discussion of banditry in Mexico, see Paul J. Vanderwood, *Disorder and*

Lozada captured the attention of the state government, which did not have the resources or the time to fight him or accede to his demands. The rebel leader was a savvy political observer and used the turmoil between Liberals and Conservatives to his advantage. While Lozada boiled with rage over the treatment of peasants and indigenous villagers, supporters of the two principal political ideologies slaughtered each other during the Reform Wars as each attempted to seize control of Mexico.

The Reform Wars consumed Mexico after 1857 and pitted Liberal and Conservative factions. The Liberals, who sought to modernize Mexico through a series of land, religious, and citizenship laws, had fled Mexico City for the safety of Veracruz, home of the Mexican customs house. Here, Juárez took control of the Liberal party and ruled from exile, while Conservatives commanded the country from Mexico City. A full-scale civil war engulfed Mexico City, when Liberals regained power, however weak, in 1860.

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*Progress: Bandits, Police, and Mexican Development*  
(Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981).

Initially, Lozada had lent his support more or less behind Conservative forces and proved to be a thorn in the side of Liberals. He espoused Conservative ideals because they guaranteed corporate property ownership, which meant that indigenous villages could continue to own communal lands. In October of 1858 "Lozada attacked and defeated Coronado, in Tepic...the killed and wounded, on both sides, amounted to about 800 men."<sup>60</sup> A frustrated Pedro Ogazón, called for the capture and execution of Lozada and his principal officers. Like General Rocha, he believed that San Luis and Pochotitlán ought to receive harsh punishment.<sup>61</sup>

To what degree was this an Indian rebellion? Huichol participation in Lozada's early movement was minimal, partly because Lozada lacked a strong base in northern Jalisco until the 1860s. Moreover, the Huichols likely rejected outside interference in their affairs and taking up arms in a concerted, coordinated effort against intrusion felt alien to

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<sup>60</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin* (Published as the *Daily Evening Bulletin*), November 26, 1858. Coronado was a general for the Liberal forces.

<sup>61</sup> Aldana Redón, *Manuel Lozada*, 25.

them.<sup>62</sup> But by 1860 there was no avoiding the tides of rebellion that swept through the Sierra and while some Huichols undoubtedly chose not to participate, owing to their lack of unified "national" identity, others joined up with Lozada to fight against land attrition and to defend communal land rights. The new Reform Laws, while not the only trigger for Huichol support, sufficiently threatened their livelihoods; Lozada's followers hoped to change a system that oppressed them, and saw the rebellion as a tool to that end.<sup>63</sup> The following year, Carlos Rivas, a trusted Lozadista general, attacked and seized Colotlán, the municipio that contained most Huichol towns. Comprising his forces were Indians from Bolaños, Jesús Maria, San Lucas and Chimaltitán; the Indians from Bolaños were almost certainly

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<sup>62</sup> *Comisión Nacional para el Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas* (CDI hereafter, formerly known as INI). *Cora, Huichol, Tepehuano en Jalisco, Nayarit, Durango*. Biblioteca Juan Rulfo, FD 18/12. Author and date unknown, written some time after the 1970 Mexican census. "Los Huicholes siempre se han opuesto a todo lo que les es extraño."

<sup>63</sup> Aldana Rendón, *Manuel Lozada*, 25. "Como consecuencia de su deseo de independencia grupos Huichols lucharon de 1860 a 1877 al lado de los insurrectos de Manuel Lozada, combatiendo contra las leyes de desamortización y por la reivindicación de las tierras comunales indígenas." See also Reina, *Las rebeliones campesinas*, 15; Weigand, *Ensayos*, 123.

Huichol, those from Jesús María, Cora, and the rest may have been Tepehuanos. Though armed only with lances, bows, and arrows, the Indians under Rivas's command successfully overran the small town on the Jalisco-Zacatecas border.<sup>64</sup> In nearby Huejuquilla, indigenous rebellion ultimately proved unsuccessful: a priest just across the border, in Tepetongo, Zacatecas, heard rumors of the rebellion and informed the town's military commander.<sup>65</sup> Riots broke out near Mezquitic, where rebels either associated with Lozada, or under his direct command had occupied the town; once the occupation occurred, townsfolk rose against the local authorities.<sup>66</sup> In order to try to end this surge in violence, Benito Juárez placed bounties upon the heads of Lozada and Rivas, and the Conservative leaders Félix Zuloaga, Leonardo Márquez, and Tomás Mejía.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 190.

<sup>65</sup> AHJ, G-15-861, HUA/2253. Colotlán. Gobierno Político. Oficio, 1861 abril 26.

<sup>66</sup> AHJ, G-15-861, MEZ/1336. Colotlán. Gobierno Político. Oficio, 1861 septiembre 2.

<sup>67</sup> CARSO (formerly Condumex). Memo, 18 de junio de 1861. CARSO stands for Carlos Slim Helú (Mexican business tycoon) and Soumaya Domit de Slim (his late wife), and it is an archive in Mexico City established by Slim. The memo promulgates a 5 June

Liberal victory in early 1860 failed to settle the matter of national direction. Defected Conservatives fled to Europe for help and they received assistance from Napoleon III.<sup>68</sup> The French Imperial Army arrived in the port city of Veracruz in December 1861, taking control of the country in relatively short order. Despite the presence of the French, Liberals and Conservatives continued their war in the face of the French Intervention. As a Conservative ally, Lozada bided his time, watching events unfold elsewhere in Mexico. However, the French were not a factor in the affairs of western Mexico until at least the spring of 1864, when a few of Lozada's closest advisors eventually met with General Félix Douay at Tequila. Lozada agreed to support the French, so long as the latter would not maintain any kind of military presence in the

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1861 decree by Juárez that proclaimed the above-mentioned men to be bandits. The reward for their deaths was \$10,000 and if the killer happened to be wanted for a crime, he would be pardoned. See also Salvador Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas y autonomía de Nayarit: fueron del ideal de Lozada* (Compostela, Nayarit: 1954), 10-11. José María Cobos, Juan Vicario and Lindoro Casiga, all Conservatives leaders, also had bounties on their heads in the same proclamation.

<sup>68</sup> Friedrich Katz, *Nuevos ensayos mexicanos* (México, DF: Edición Era 2006), 96.

district of Tepic; the French, for their part, gained a valuable, if at times pesky ally.<sup>69</sup> Throughout other parts of Jalisco, Lozada's movement spread like wildfire, causing much consternation to the central government in Guadalajara. Reports of Lozada's rebellions filled the pages of newspapers throughout Mexico, and even into the United States. Mexico not only had a problem with the French, it also had a serious problem with indigenous rebellions, one that, in ten years, had only gotten much worse.

In mid-1864, Napoleon III installed Archduke Maximilian Ferdinand of Austria upon the throne in Mexico City. Lozada's indigenous supporters liked the promises of land and support that came from Maximilian late in his tenure as Emperor.<sup>70</sup> According to an 1866 decree reprinted in *El Imperio*, land became available for distribution, based upon wealth

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<sup>69</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 19, 1864. "Letter from Acapulco." See also Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas*, 11. Meyer also notes that Lozada and the French formed an alliance. See Meyer, *Breve historia de Nayarit*, 107. Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 123.

<sup>70</sup> Deaton, "The Decade of Revolt," 51.

(from poorest to richest) and marital status.<sup>71</sup> This endeared indigenous peoples to the failing French cause while simultaneously infuriating Liberal reformers, whose own laws theoretically stripped Indians of land rights across the board. The idea of this land redistribution had implications that would become important later in the decade.

Most outsiders maintained that the decade of war had not made the situation in Tepic better for Indians. An anonymous editorial, written in 1865 at the height of the French occupation suggested that the revolutions decimated everyone.<sup>72</sup> Tepic provided a case in point. It seemed doomed because of its uncivilized past; yet at the same time, the area displayed a rich archaeological record attesting to the fact that at some point, an ancient society thrived. Unfortunately, this long-dead past and its ties to Indians during the nineteenth century held a grasp on the people that prevented their advancement

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<sup>71</sup> Hernández Casillas and Vázquez Flores, *Racismo y poder: La negación del indio en la prensa del siglo XIX*. From *El Imperio*, 7 de julio de 1866.

<sup>72</sup> Hernández Casillas and Vázquez Flores, *Racismo y poder: La negación del indio en la prensa del siglo XIX*. From *El Imperio*, 7 de octubre de 1865.

towards civilization. Tepic, the disgraceful mess of a province, was unable to shake its problems because of its inhabitants and their histories and cultures.<sup>73</sup> The "*Tigre de Alica*," as Lozada came to be called, made Tepic's situation even worse and the government needed to bring him under control.

### **Rebellion in Defense of Indian Communities**

The eventual Liberal triumph failed to alter the situation in the Gran Nayar. On the contrary, after 1866, the Mexican Republican forces plunged headlong into conflict with their rebellious citizen, bolstered by Napoleon III's previous announcements that French troops would leave Mexico.<sup>74</sup> Once the Liberals succeeded in driving out the French from western Mexico, Lozada toyed with the idea of neutrality. However, political leaders in Guadalajara believed that Lozada could not be trusted and without the problem of the French army, which had

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<sup>73</sup> Juan Panadero, 8 de diciembre de 1872.

<sup>74</sup> Robert Ryal Miller, "Arms across the Border: United States Aid to Juárez during the French Intervention in Mexico," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 63, no. 6 (1973): 7.

long since fled the country, the Mexican military could focus their attention upon the rebel district of Nayarit.<sup>75</sup>

Branding him a traitor to his nation, the government of Jalisco hunted down Lozada with a fury beginning in July of 1867.<sup>76</sup> Generals Ramón Corona and Amado Guadarrama marched on Lozada and his allies, who had been entrenched in the Sierra de Alica. No doubt the Huichols living in towns near Lozada's hideouts experienced severe tension at the proximity of the federal army, with its nearly ten thousand soldiers and cavalry.<sup>77</sup> It is unclear precisely what occurred between the massive army and Lozada's forces, but the rebels proved more tenacious than anticipated. By early September, Lozada and his closest general, Carlos Rivas, received entreaties from Lerdo de Tejada to "appear before the Supreme Government, promising them that their lives shall be

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<sup>75</sup> Miller, "Arms across the Border," 8.

<sup>76</sup> Genaro García Collection, Intervención francesa. Correspondencia Miscelánea, 1846-1867. Benson Latin America Collection, The University of Texas at Austin Libraries. See also *The Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, "Mexico," July 26, 1867.

<sup>77</sup> *New York Times*, "Executions Under the Empire-Liberal Generals Resigning-Expedition Against Lozada...", August 2, 1867.

spared and their obedience taken into consideration."<sup>78</sup> But the proposed solution would not solve the problems faced by Indians, so instead of surrendering, Lozada and Rivas simply retreated into the background for a brief period.

Indigenous villages clung to the prospect of measured land reform that Maximilian promised prior to his execution, though his entreaties held little sway with victorious Liberals. In northern Jalisco, particularly near Huichol villages, indigenous towns requested land distribution and protection for lands they already held, as the decade drew to a close. In Tuxpan, one 1868 request suggests that the government enforce laws by ensuring the prompt return of their property, of which they had been divested by unknown forces.<sup>79</sup> Unfortunately for Huichols around Mezquitic, the government chose not to distribute lands that the people felt were rightly theirs. So the native peoples of Jalisco once again felt

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<sup>78</sup> *New York Times*, "Affairs in Mexico," September 4, 1867.

<sup>79</sup> Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 314-315.

squeezed by unscrupulous government officials.

Lozada and his generals were likely aware of the problems faced by the Huichols, but did not act right away. Instead, he maintained a low profile in the west.

Despite Lozada's claims of neutrality, the government quickly realized that he still posed many problems. He commanded the loyalty of many indigenous communities. Moreover, he had become fond of seizing the assets of commercial trading companies.<sup>80</sup> A favorite target of Lozada and his forces was Casa Barrón y Forbes, a trading house in San Blas, Nayarit, established by former British consul Alexander Forbes. Lozada replenished supplies

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<sup>80</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin* (published as the *Daily Evening Bulletin*), "Letter from Mexico...", August 21, 1868. See also Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 123. Weigand suggests that control over the indigenous villages still made him dangerous, in addition to his affinity for the Franciscans, who would preserve the comunidad structure of Indian towns. This was especially true of the Huichol towns, whose very existence had been threatened by the decline in Franciscan power. Lozada used such an idea to coerce Indians into accepting Franciscan help when necessary. See Aldana Rendón, *Manuel Lozada*, 25. He remarks that Lozada's two favorite targets were Casas Barrón-Forbes and Castaños-Fletes. Juárez had created the military district of Tepic in August of 1867. See Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas*, 25.

by raiding these portside trading posts, and at the same time, his loyal forces remained at the ready.

Less than a month after complaints that Lozada seized goods without taking proper measures, the insurgent provoked Guadalajara by declaring that all thieves and robbers imprisoned in the newly formed military district of Tepic should be freed. There were two caveats to this startling declaration: first, so long as they behaved themselves, the former criminals could remain in the region and; second, if they caused a problem, they would be immediately shot without trial. Perhaps the rebel general needed soldiers. Whatever his motives, Lozada, "desirous of not dying a natural death," received word that officials demanded that he "prevent execution of the decree," which was set to begin on July 1, 1868.<sup>81</sup> Six months later, he and his men returned to a "war footing."<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin* (published as the *Daily Evening Bulletin*), "From the Mexican Coast." September 21, 1868.

<sup>82</sup> *New York Times*, "Mexico: Stagnation in Business-Lozada Hiring Indians...", March 20, 1869. See also *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Letter from Colima," April 6, 1869.

In 1869 Lozada upped the ante in his defense of indigenous communal properties. Between July and November of 1869, he procured weapons from General Plácido Vega and enacted a "war of races" based upon Lozada's purported "hatred of whites."<sup>83</sup> His neutrality effectively over, the rebel's sentiments frightened Tapatío hacendados, who only needed to look southeast, to the Yucatán Peninsula, to fully understand the capabilities of angry and oppressed Indians. He then demanded that all landowners produce titles to their lands for inspection, if indigenous villages disputed the land in question. If an hacendado could not produce a title, or if the title was in fact fraudulent, the Indians would be the beneficiaries of said land.<sup>84</sup> To observers this smacked of a Mexican Robin Hood: "Lozada continues

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<sup>83</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Letter from Mexico," July 6, 1869. Plácido Vega y Daza was a career politician and military leader. He had served as Governor of Sinaloa, his native state, during the 1860s. He came from a wealthy family, yet did not support oppression of the poor. In February of 1870, he and the governor of Zacatecas, Trinidad García de la Cadena, attempted to overthrow Benito Juárez. This made him very valuable to another general who would overthrow Juárez: Díaz. Vega appears to have helped Lozada, though when and exactly how is extremely obscure.

<sup>84</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Letter from Mexico," August 5, 1869. See also Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas*, 19.

his communistic principle, taking from the rich landowners for the benefit of his Indian vassals."<sup>85</sup>

Lozada's men launched all-out assaults against large landholders at the end of 1869 and during the first months of 1870. The Indians were "boisterous" and blinded by "the communistic principles taught by...Lozada."<sup>86</sup> He even went so far as to declare Tepic independent on January 1, 1870, though the proclamation was retroactive to Lozada's visit to San Luís on November 22 of the previous year. Of great importance to Lozada was the establishment of schools for children on haciendas and in pueblos; the protection of and support for orphans; and the guarantee of security through the proper administration of justice. Lozada's goal was to ensure that indigenous (and perhaps mestizo) people could "live as one great family of true friends and loyal companions."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Letter from Mazatlán," August 31, 1869.

<sup>86</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Later from Mexico," November 9, 1869.

<sup>87</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Later from Mexico. Unsettled Condition of the Country-Revolution in Pueblo (sic)-Other Letters," January 17, 1870. See

Admittedly, not all Indians opted for rebellion. The old colonial approach of redress through the law remained a viable option; however slow and frustrating, it was at least safer. Proof of this point comes from the community of Colotlán. In May of 1869, Marcelino Ramos and Ursino Rodriguez charged a nearby *vecino*, named Diego Cortés, with stealing several parcels of land, and some money. They sought prompt and complete justice from the courts, and more than nine hundred of them banded together to assure that the government would properly survey and demarcate their lands.<sup>88</sup> Though progress, when it did occur, was slow, it was clear that by the end of the 1860s, some Indians chose to fight the government with guns, other chose legal means in order to address their concerns.

Lozada's supporters spent much of 1870 attempting to realize their indigenous dreams in the

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also *New York Times*, "Mexico: A Declaration of Independence by Northwestern States-Lozada and Vega the Leaders," February 26, 1870.

<sup>88</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 6 vols., vol. 4 (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1879), 89, 101.

Sierra. Few of the hacendados in the region could produce titles to their land, and thus Indians moved to reclaim what they saw as rightfully theirs, but they did so through the justice system. A court ruled favorably for the Indians in one instance whereby the hacienda title bore a date of 1530 and the signature of a man not known to have lived in Mexico.<sup>89</sup> For a few months thereafter, Lozada and his supporters kept to themselves, rarely straying out into the wider area to antagonize the Federal Army. He warned that Nayarit should not be used as a launch point for Vega's almost constant invasions of Sinaloa, yet Lozada's peaceful exterior belied a

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<sup>89</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, Later from Mexico," January 18, 1870. I could not find any documents pertaining to these land claims in any archive, though they very well may exist in a small municipal archive somewhere. As evidence for this, some Indians, including those living around Huejucar (who were more than likely Huichol) sought government assistance in resolving their land questions. Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 6 vols., vol. 5 (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1880), 182-183.

stormy interior, as he was busy gathering arms and supplies for a new attack on the government.<sup>90</sup>

Early 1871 once again found Mexico in the state of political turmoil that had been brewing since the expulsion of the French. Liberal supporters of Benito Juárez and Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada faced a challenge from a faction led by General Porfirio Díaz. Lozada merely bided his time, observing the political implosion among Tapatíos in Guadalajara, and further afield in the nation's capital. He readied himself so that when the time came, he could once again insert himself squarely in the middle of national political mayhem. On a state level, the Liberal schism pitted Ignacio Vallarta and General Ramón Corona against supporters of Juárez and Lerdo.<sup>91</sup> These disagreements in reality did not matter to Lozada who, by March of 1871, was in "open rebellion against the Federal Government" once more.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Later from Mexico," November 14, 1870.

<sup>91</sup> Vallarta had been a member of Juárez's cabinet, but did not get along with Lerdo de Tejada.

<sup>92</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Mexico," March 21, 1871.

Perhaps Lozada should have paid more attention to events in Guadalajara, because by July, Vallarta had been elected governor of Jalisco and had the full support of the military under the command of Corona. Factional violence as a result of the split in the Liberal party erupted around Lozada, including attempted coups from the state of Zacatecas, led by supporters of Porfirio Díaz. Díaz himself had no small amount of military support, including troops under the command of Plácido Vega and Sóstenes Rocha, men who occasionally allied with Lozada. After failing to overthrow the government during the La Noria Revolt (1871-1872), launched from Díaz's home state of Oaxaca, Díaz sought refuge in the breakaway province of Tepic.<sup>93</sup> Lozada apparently also offered

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<sup>93</sup> Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Mexico, Volume 6: 1861-1887* (San Francisco: The History Company, 1888), 382. This is a crucial point, and one which is decidedly uncertain. See also Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas*, 12-13. Contreras cites a biography of Díaz, written by Don Nemesio Garía Naranjo, which states that "'El General Díaz se vio obligado a salir de Oaxaca, para ir a refugiarse a Tepic y luego a peregrinar obscuramente por el Estado de Chihuahua.'" Alberto María Carreño, who edited and published documents from the *Archivo Porfirio Díaz* does not know what to make of the documents. See Alberto María Carreño, ed. *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz: Memorias y Documentos*, vol. 10 (México, DF: Editorial "Elede" S.A., 1951), 26.

asylum to Vega and De la Cadena, among others.<sup>94</sup> Díaz offered the generals protection, and at the same time, received the assistance of soldiers who were not particularly fond of the Juárez-Lerdo faction and their regional allies.

Lozada and Díaz apparently met in mid-1872, as the latter sought to flee to the safety, and money, of the United States. One story suggests that Díaz and Lozada went on a little field trip to the Santiago River, whereby Díaz bathed and Lozada fished with dynamite. So close was their relationship, according to the narrator, that when the dynamite blew up too early, and injured Lozada, Díaz was the first to provide medical care.<sup>95</sup> While some of these details may represent historical embroidery, the meeting and the alliance had a basis in fact. Díaz may not have agreed with Lozada's policy towards

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<sup>94</sup> Bancroft, *History of Mexico*, 399.

<sup>95</sup> Carreño, *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz*, 27. This story might not be true, but it is comical nonetheless. It comes from Everardo Peña Navarro's *Breve Monografía de Lozada*, and he wrote, "'Cierto día Lozada y el General Porfirio Díaz se encontraban a la orilla del río de Santiago; mientras don Porfirio tomaba un baño, Lozada se dedicó a pescar con dinamita. Uno de los cartuchos explotó antes de tiempo, por lo que perdió un ojo. Don Porfirio le hizo la primera curación.'"

Indians, or even his fighting methods, but he was a political opportunist who saw in Lozada a ready-made support base. Lozada saw the general as a potent military ally who was no friend to Tepic's oppressors in Guadalajara. Díaz thus cozied up to Lozada in order to garner his allegiance. One clue that supports the idea that the two met comes in the form of a letter written by Justo Benítez, Díaz's secretary, in November of 1871. The first article of this deposition claims that Díaz would recognize and declare Nayarit as a state.<sup>96</sup> This entreaty would certainly have received Lozada's attention. Several months later, in April of 1872, Díaz again contacted Lozada. In this letter, Díaz acknowledged the respect and sympathies that Lozada had accrued in neighboring states, and Díaz sought the rebel as an ally who would help secure the best interests of the nation.<sup>97</sup> The best interests of the nation could only be secured if Díaz had material support; Lozada provided that, according to the *Diario Oficial*, in September of 1872. Lozada apparently gave Díaz

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<sup>96</sup> *Archivo Porfirio Díaz* (APD hereafter). Letter from Díaz to Lozada, 10 de noviembre de 1871.

<sup>97</sup> APD. Letter from Díaz to Lozada, 25 de abril de 1872.

fifteen hundred rifles, fourteen thousand pesos in cash and twenty-four boxes of ammunition to secure the campaign in Sinaloa.<sup>98</sup>

Contact between Díaz and Lozada was brief, lasting only a year or so. Once Díaz reached safe haven in Texas, he had greater problems to worry about than a willful rebel in the backwater of western Mexico. This did not mean, however, that other political and military leaders took their focus off the "Tigre de Alica." Lozada took up arms with a fury in September 1872, and the situation in Tepic became grave.<sup>99</sup> Tepiqueños feared that Lozada and his Indian allies sought the destruction of all decent and good people.<sup>100</sup> Anyone with property to lose had much to fear, as it became clear to the government that Lozada meant to die fighting, and could not be reined in by overtures of peace. Nayarit was ablaze, and commercial houses like Barrón-Forbes again came

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<sup>98</sup> Carreño, *Archivo del General Porfirio Díaz*, 24.

<sup>99</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Tepic," 8 de septiembre de 1872. Native peoples in Tepic wanted to create a city council comprised primarily (or solely) of Indians, and they vowed to destroy any non-Indians who would vote against this.

<sup>100</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Tepic," 8 de septiembre de 1872.

under attack in the last days of 1872.<sup>101</sup> The biggest problem with Lozada and his movement was that the man did not respect typical rules of war, and this greatly frightened an increasingly tense population and government. He could also be indecisive and was frequently at odds with his close generals, who wanted him to end his neutrality. Rumors flew in the media that Lozada had died, or that his Indian allies rose against him and joined with the government.<sup>102</sup> On January 13, 1873, Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada, Mexico's new president resigned himself to an all-out war with Lozada, who had precious few allies left.<sup>103</sup>

Lozada's final push came in late January. With a large force of more than 6,000 Lozada marched toward Guadalajara and first captured Tequila on the 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>104</sup> He spent a brief period there, redoubling

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<sup>101</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Tepic," 8 de diciembre de 1872 and 12 de diciembre de 1872.

<sup>102</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Indian Revolt in Mexico: Generals Placide de Yega (sic) and Lozada Killed," December 4, 1872.

<sup>103</sup> It is important to noted that Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada assumed the Presidency of Mexico upon the death of Benito Juárez, on July 18, 1872. *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Mexico," January 13, 1873 and January 30, 1873.

<sup>104</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Ultimas noticias," 26 de enero de 1873. "Tequila ha caído en poder de los indios..."

his efforts and steeling his troops' mettle against the coming battles.<sup>105</sup> On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, Corona left Guadalajara, to meet Lozada at the Mohonera, a ranch just outside of Zapopán, then a small hamlet to the northwest of Jalisco's capital. By eight o'clock in the morning on the 28<sup>th</sup>, Corona and his force of more than twenty-two hundred arrived at Rancho Mohonera, and scouts advised them of an enemy presence nearby.<sup>106</sup> Lozada and his Cora and Huichol allies attacked from the west, and at the outset sustained heavy losses from artillery and rifle fire; by noon, Lozada had regrouped and tried again. He lost all of his artillery, along with scores of men, in his attempts to dislodge Corona from his fortified

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<sup>105</sup> Ignacio L. Vallarta Papers. Box 3 Folder 14. Benson Latin American Collection, the University of Texas at Austin Libraries. Corona wrote that "*el enemigo se ha reconcentrado*" at La Venta. The letter from Corona to Vallarta was dated 28 de enero de 1873. He asked Vallarta, now the governor of Jalisco, to cable the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Zapopán, on the outskirts of Guadalajara. Corona gives the estimate at more than 6000, and notes that Plácido Vega marched in support of Lozada. See Ramón Corona, "*Parte detallada de la Batalla de la Mohonera*," in *Memoria que el C. General de División Ignacio Mejía Ministro de Guerra y Marina presenta al 7º Congreso Constitucional*, ed. Imprento del Gobierno (México: Imprento del Gobierno, 1873).

<sup>106</sup> Corona, "*Parte Detallada De La Batalla De La Mohonera*."

position. By the next day, Corona turned his forces away from Lozada's decimated troops, and back to Guadalajara. Lozada had to retire to his stronghold, in the Sierra de Alica.<sup>107</sup>

By early February it was painfully obvious that Lozada's days were numbered. His second-in-command, Domingo Nava, rebelled against him and chose to support General Corona and the Federal Army against the lost cause.<sup>108</sup> Praxedis Núñez, another close ally, had fled to Corona's forces the previous August with roughly a thousand soldiers.<sup>109</sup> Deprived of some of his men, who undoubtedly fled with Nava, Lozada could only watch with despair when General Ceballos (or Cevallos) attacked and defeated Lozadistas at Tepic. His capital at Tepic fell, and though he was heavily

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<sup>107</sup> Corona, "Parte Detallada De La Batalla De La Mohonera." For a detailed description of the invasion from start to finish, including analysis, see *Juan Panadero*, 23 de enero, 26 de enero and 31 de enero de 1873.

<sup>108</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Mexico," December 16, 1872.

<sup>109</sup> Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas*, 19.

fortified in the Huichol Sierra, near Huaynamota, he could do little about the loss of the city.<sup>110</sup>

The months of March through May must have been desperate times for Manuel Lozada and his Huichol and Cora allies. Not only had Nava and Núñez fled, but a rumor also circulated that another close ally, Dionisio Gerónimo, defected to the side of the government. This was a particularly heavy loss, as Gerónimo was purported to be the chief of all of the Coras. Though perhaps an exaggeration, the loss of any experienced general and men dealt quite a blow.<sup>111</sup> Lozada's forces numbered roughly four thousand, but the Mexican Army had many more soldiers at their disposal. In late April, General Ceballos marched on the Sierra, hoping to wrest control from Lozada and end the rebellion once and for all. Lozada managed

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<sup>110</sup> *San Francisco Bulletin*, "Matters in Mexico...", March 28, 1873. Remarks that Lozada had to flee to the Sierra and that Ceballos took Tepic, effectively severing Lozada's supply line. Corona also wrote to Vallarta informing him that the war progressed nicely, despite Lozada's fortification in Huaynamota. See Ignacio L. Vallarta Papers, Box 3 Folder 14. Benson Collection.

<sup>111</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Noticias de Tepic," 9 de marzo de 1873. See also *San Francisco Bulletin*, April 25, 1873, in which the reporter stated that "Lozada is losing his ranks."

to fend them off for awhile, and perhaps felt slight vindication when his former ally turned enemy Colonel Domingo Nava, fell severely wounded. Ceballos finally captured San Luís, effectively ending the indigenous movement in the west.<sup>112</sup> By May 8, some Cora and Huichol support for Lozada ended, facing the realization that the movement was lost. Though Lozada still remained fortified in the Sierra de Alica, he no longer had any base to assist him.<sup>113</sup>

Lozada likely spent his final days with his remaining allies. He probably realized that the government would not let him rest. Vallarta sent four expeditionary columns to Tepic to hunt for Lozada; under the commands of Colonel Doroteo López, Lieutenant Colonel José Urrutia, Praxedis Núñez and Andrés Rosales, the goal was to exterminate any Lozadistas who remained loyal to the failed rebel

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<sup>112</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Tepic," 20 de abril de 1873. Ironically, a *San Francisco Bulletin* article published on May 2, 1873 stated that "it is believed that it will take at least two years to quell the insurrection..."

<sup>113</sup> *Juan Panadero*, "Gacetilla. Ultimas noticias de Tepic," 8 de mayo de 1873. The reporter wrote that "*los indios de la mesa del Nayar, es decir, los coras y los Huichols se han sometido al gobierno. Estos eran los únicoq que pudieran haberle prestado bastantes auxilios á Lozada.*"

leader.<sup>114</sup> With only roughly four hundred indigenous allies left, Lozada was doomed and on June 17, Ceballos (or Rosales) captured Lozada.<sup>115</sup> He was summarily executed on June 19, at 6:45 a.m.<sup>116</sup> Defiant until the very end, his last words were that he had never committed a crime and that everything he did was for the happiness of the people.<sup>117</sup>

For all its ostensible failure, the Lozada uprising cast a long and influential shadow.

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<sup>114</sup> Juan Panadero, "Ultimas noticias de Tepic," 5 de junio de 1873. Núñez was a former ally of Lozada as well.

<sup>115</sup> *New York Times*, "A Band of Revolutionists Suppressed-Capture of Notorious Lozada," July 24, 1873.

<sup>116</sup> Ignacio L. Vallarta Papers, Box 3 Folder 14. Benson Latin America Collection. Corona wrote a brief note mentioning the death of Lozada. He wrote: "*El feroz bandido murió con entereza y ferocidad, pues ya en momentos de ser ejecutado, dijo que no se arrepentía de lo que había hecho en este Distrito.*" Lozada died either the morning of the 19<sup>th</sup> or that of the 20<sup>th</sup>, documents disagree. Corona noted the execution on the 20<sup>th</sup>, but two newspapers reported the death as having occurred on the 19<sup>th</sup>. See Juan Panadero "Más sobre Lozada," 24 de junio de 1873. This gives a report of the death sentence.

<sup>117</sup> Ignacio L. Vallarta Papers, Box 3 Folder 14. Benson Latin America Collection. Lozada said, "*...nunca cometido un crimen, que todo lo que había hecho era por la felicidad de los pueblos y que algún día conocerían la falta que hacía para el progreso de México.*"

Throughout his life, the Tigre de Alica infuriated the government in both Guadalajara and Mexico City. For much of that time, he garnered massive support from downtrodden indigenous communities that, during the 1860s and 1870s, often used the mere threat of violence to avoid the losses of their lands. To be certain, not every Cora or Huichol fought on the side of Lozada. The very idea that there was a champion of indigenous rights frequently kept haciendas from expanding; possibly this explains the decided lack of land documents during the late 1860s and early 1870s. Lozada was a man of many faults, and with scant education, but he showed firmness of principle in defense of Native peoples.<sup>118</sup> His actions strengthened Mexico City's concern over the district of Tepic, leading to the latter's acceptance as a Federal District in the late 1880s. The Lozada rebellion sparked border wars between states, and led to the alliance between a Mexican dictator and a lowly mestizo. For all these reasons, the Tigre de Alica's influence lived on. And though some of Lozada's allies abandoned him in his final days,

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<sup>118</sup> Gutierrez Contreras, *Tierras para los indígenas*, 24.

others kept his memory alive through small-scale rebellions and riots. If the government in Guadalajara thought that they had rid themselves of indigenous and peasant uprisings with the death of Lozada, they made a serious miscalculation.

## Chapter Five

### Díaz, Deslindadoras and Divisions: The Huichols in the Early Porfirian Era

*"En la segunda parte del siglo XIX los mestizos invadieron partes de la zona de San Sebastián y Santa Catarina llegó a ser reconocida como hacienda de la familia Torres..."<sup>1</sup>*

Traveling to and from Wirikuta, the land of Elder Brother Deer Tail, requires an alternate understanding of the universe and time. Upon commencing the journey to Real de Catorce, Huichol participants receive "new" identities that demonstrate their place within the reality they are about to enter. Their new names often begin with the Huichol word *tutú*, meaning flower, which is a symbol for the peyote cactus, and then contain other floral references.<sup>2</sup> After each person receives their new name, specific objects also take on new significance

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<sup>1</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 13. By the second half of the nineteenth century, hacienda expansion in northern Jalisco/southern Zacatecas had occurred to the point that certain areas of Huichol "towns" had been subsumed by individual family landholdings.

<sup>2</sup> Fernando Benítez, *En la Tierra Mágica del Peyote* (México, DF: Ediciones Era, 1968), 33. When Benítez observed the peyote hunt, the mara'akame took the name Baja la Rosa, which means nothing. The names are not really supposed to symbolize anything.

to pay homage to the sacred nature of place and purpose; for example, huaraches become bicycles, stones are frogs, trees become fish, the sun becomes Vicente Fox, Wirikuta is New York City, and the participants become *gringos*.<sup>3</sup> Wirikuta and peyote are sacred, yet mundane at the same time, and the ceremony surrounding both the preparations before, during, and after the pilgrimage indicate the Huichols' deep, complex understanding of their place in time and space.

Before taking leave of their beloved religious spot, the Huichol holy land, *jicareros* or *xukurikate* (peyote gatherers) gathered enough of their tiny gods to ensure a steady supply for personal and family use, and more to sell or trade. Though other groups might use peyote for one reason or another, the pilgrimage, the very act of obtaining the sacred cactus where it grows is integral to Huichol

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<sup>3</sup> Frésan Jiménez, *Nierika*, 41. "Por ejemplo, el sol es llamado Vicente Fox, los peregrinos son los gringos, Wirikuta es Nueva York, al ocote le llaman velas, el hi'ikuri es la manzana..." See also Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 25. Though the purpose is serious, the renaming ceremony occurs to hysterical fits of laughter, according to Benítez.

religion, and indeed, to their very existence.<sup>4</sup> It is not a reaction against Spaniards, but rather existed long before Europeans ever conceived of the Americas.<sup>5</sup> The worship of the cactus ties Huichols to the beginning of time, giving them rights to specific places in the modern Mexican landscape. Because little in the Huichol world has mundane purposes alone, including geography, loss of their lands and their access to their peyote-centered religion would mean that the Huichols would cease to exist. The Huichols had experienced the effects of alien

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<sup>4</sup> Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt*, 161. Peyote use is important to the Coras, but they do not make the journey, and it is unclear a pilgrimage akin to that which the Huichols undertake was ever part of their cosmology. Myerhoff explains that the journey is integral, and that the Huichols view peyote as something to be revered, whereas the Coras and the Tarahumaras (who also consume peyote) fear the power of the visions that peyote produces. For the other two indigenous groups, peyote has a negative power, whereas for the Huichols, peyote is all positive.

<sup>5</sup> Benítez writes that the Huichol peyote tradition has retained most of its basic components, unlike the Christianized Native American church in the US. He suggests that the difference is that Native American peyotism in the US is a reaction against white triumph and dominations, whereas "the worship of the deer-peyote-corn trinity has served to maintain a way of life in the face of expulsion, segregation and genocide that began with the Spanish conquest." See Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 150. My goal is not to compare the two, but it is an important distinction for some.

cultures in the past and had managed to adapt to their changing surroundings. However, in the late nineteenth century, as land pressures became an increasing concern, the Huichols faced the possibility of not only the end of their existence in the Sierra, but also the loss of their cultural identity.

### **Continued Hostilities in the Sierra**

The death of Lozada should have ended the strife and violence in the Sierra Madre Occidental, yet by the end of 1873, there was little evidence that rebels deep in the mountains intended to lay down their arms. Indeed, Lozada's memory continued to inspire some Coras and Huichols throughout the Sierra to engage in small-scale attacks in defense of their territory for the next three years. Like their slain hero, they hoped to create a new Mexico and return lands to their rightful, indigenous owners.<sup>6</sup> To the dismay of the Mexican military and the government of

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<sup>6</sup> Daniel Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México: el porfiriato, la vida social* (México: Editorial Hermes, 1957), 241-242.

Jalisco, the region surrounding Tepic was more neglected now than it ever had been.<sup>7</sup> Many of Lozada's closest advisors had either been jailed or killed (by the Mexican government, or by Lozada himself, for betraying the cause), so it proved particularly disturbing that small groups of bandits managed to terrorize the Sierra, robbing villages and causing general unrest.<sup>8</sup> The problem was that Huichols and Coras faced the growing threat of land-hungry mestizos spurred on by the economic growth of the Mexican state. The Huichols in particular felt squeezed by haciendas, which had been expanding since the 1850s. The ascension of Porfirio Díaz did nothing to ameliorate the situation in the highlands of Jalisco; in fact, his Liberal policies of increased national consolidation, expansion of state control over far-flung peripheries, improved transportation, and an influx of foreign capital only made the situation drastically worse for the Huichols. Fortunately the previous sixty years had given these same peoples a keen awareness of their

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<sup>7</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 2 de agosto 1874, "Tepic."

<sup>8</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 26 de febrero 1874, "Noticias de Tepic."

Mexican neighbors and a better understanding of how to wage literal and figurative war to preserve their lands. This preparation served to ensure their survival during the Díaz onslaught.

The problems that had led Lozada to take up arms throughout the 1860s and early 1870s did not disappear. Rather, western Jalisco, including the Sierra Madre Occidental, periodically experienced medium-sized uprisings in the months immediately following Lozada's death. In April of 1874, for instance, a band of more than one hundred men attacked a squadron of auxiliary soldiers from Tepic.<sup>9</sup> The following month, troops in the area began protecting ranch owners and mestizo landholders.<sup>10</sup> Newspapers throughout the area reported on the pitiful state of affairs in Tepic, which seemed beset by the activities of unhappy Indians; thefts and general banditry plagued Mexican property owners throughout western Jalisco. Reporters for one *jalisciense* newspaper, *Juan Panadero*, took keen

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<sup>9</sup> Jean A. Meyer, *Colección de documentos para la historia de Nayarit: de cantón de Tepic a estado de Nayarit, 1810-1940* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 1990), 140.

<sup>10</sup> Meyer, *Colección de documentos*, 140

interest in the military activities of the Federal Territory of Nayarit. Indeed, one journalist noted that Tepic and its larger region appeared doomed to suffer countless atrocities and even perpetual servitude.<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of the government in Jalisco, the problem was that the core leadership of Lozada's followers had not yet been defeated or killed; though Praxedis Nuñez had been sentenced to jail, and Manual Guerra condemned to death by firing squad, the irregularity of military tribunals made administering justice a problematic affair.<sup>12</sup>

Violence surged in Tepic during the first half of 1876. In May of that year, former Lozada allies Juan Lerma, and José Alfaro seized the city of Tepic

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<sup>11</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 26 de febrero 1874 and 2 de agosto de 1874. It is unclear what the reporter meant by his use of the word servitude. I would venture a guess and suggest that he was not referring to the miserable state of local indigenous peoples, but rather, lamented the fear under which Tepic's mestizo population lived on a daily basis.

<sup>12</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 2 de agosto 1874. Vallejano Galaviz was another staunch Lozadista whose whereabouts were a mystery as of August of 1874. Galaviz counted a significant number of supporters, according to newspaper reports. Nuñez had, at one point, been a close ally of Lozada. In August of 1872, he turned against Lozada and brought nearly a thousand men to the side of General Ramón Corona. However, by 1874, the government accused Nuñez of plotting rebellion.

in the name of the rebellious indigenous pueblos.<sup>13</sup> It is unclear which towns in particular were rebellious, but Lerma and Alfaro probably had some Cora and Huichol allies.<sup>14</sup> Their occupation of Tepic was short-lived, however. Only a month after the Lozadistas took Tepic, General Carbó and his government forces marched calmly and resolutely into the city.<sup>15</sup> Most of the rebels fled, though some remained. Eventually, the leadership of both the entrenched revolutionary forces and the Federal Army tried to negotiate an end to the fighting, but they failed to reach an agreement. Though the Federal Army captured the city by the end of June, 1876, the rebellion did not yet come to an end. It simply moved from Tepic out into the countryside.<sup>16</sup> In the mountains and rural areas of western Jalisco, bandits ran wild and hostilities simmered, periodically erupting through the end of the 1870s. Meetings with

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<sup>13</sup> Meyer, *Breve historia de Nayarit*, 116. See also Meyer, *Colección de documentos*, 141.

<sup>14</sup> With Lerma and Alfaro was Marcelino Rentería, the commander of Huajimic's forces. Huajimic is a small pueblo right on the border of Cora and Huichol territories. See Meyer, *Colección de documentos*, 142.

<sup>15</sup> Juan Panadero, 18 de junio de 1876, "Lo de Tepic."

<sup>16</sup> Juan Panadero, 29 de junio de 1879, "Editorial. Los sucesos de Tepic." See also Meyer, *Colección de documentos*, 142-3.

the rebels in 1879 failed to reach peaceful resolutions: rebel leaders demanded too much and the government gave too little. By June of 1879, war erupted again with "*salvaje furor*."<sup>17</sup>

Observers watching developments in Nayarit at the beginning of the 1880s placed much of the blame for the Federal District controversy squarely on the shoulders of indigenous villagers. The Mexican government never managed Nayarit as a federal district until the late 1870s, it became the responsibility of General Leopoldo Romano to do so. Most believed he could do some good in the region which was not so much a "*distrito militar*" [as a] "*colonias de bandidos*."<sup>18</sup> Twenty-seven years of intermittent warfare, rough terrain, and Tepic's distance from both Guadalajara and Mexico City created problems in governance. Additionally, most outsiders felt that the people in the area only knew vandalism and hatred for the government.<sup>19</sup> Newspaper

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<sup>17</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 5 de junio de 1879, "Noticias de Tepic." *Juan Panadero*, 8 de junio de 1879.

<sup>18</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 7 de marzo de 1880, "Tepic."

<sup>19</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 7 de marzo de 1880, "Tepic." In reality, Lozada did not begin his rebellion until 1858. For a brief discussion of the history of

reports and editorials placed blame for the strife squarely upon the shoulders of the Huichols, Coras, and Tepehuans in the area. While most reporters did not necessarily suggest that Indians were the sole cause of the destruction, they argued that because the Indians were essentially unable (or unwilling) to think for themselves, due to their state of savagery and barbarism, they were more likely to be swept up by the likes of Lozada. Another writer offered history as a reason for the continued violence: Nayarit had been a place of chaos since the time of colonial rule. In his telling, Nayarit was geographically too distinct and too distant to be successfully ruled by Jalisco (or Mexico City for that matter) and decades of military violence between

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Nayarit as a federal district, see José María Muriá, *Breve Historia De Jalisco* (México City: Colegio de México, Fideicomiso Historia de las Américas, 1994), 120-123. It was only in the 1880s when the district of Nayarit came under more tight control, when General Francisco Tolentino became governor. He knew of the importance of keeping watch over the region as a pretext for preventing the seemingly unending series of rebellions. This section also provides a nice overview of the challenges of the early Porfirian state, which was beset by sectarian strife between porfiristas and vallartistas (supporters of Governor Ignacio Vallarta, who had been an ardent advocate of Juárez and Lerdo de Tejada).

the state, indigenous groups, and glory-seeking individuals clearly illustrated his viewpoint.<sup>20</sup>

The last gasp of Lozada's movement in northern Jalisco occurred under the leadership of one Marcelino Rentería, a follower of the executed caudillo. Rentería effectively declared war on the government of Jalisco early in 1884, and throughout the year, made good on his promises to invade towns and outposts in the sierra. Throughout 1884 and into 1885, towns throughout the Huichol Sierra came under attack by small groups of Rentería supporters. Rentería gathered his relatively small number of followers in a sort of indigenous "national guard" which helped organize and train inexperienced fighters. The presence of reasonably disciplined Indian combatants was enough to frighten local mestizos and create a general sense of unrest in the Sierra Madre.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Juan Panadero, 17 de abril de 1881, "El cantón de Tepic."

<sup>21</sup> For information on the indigenous national guard created by Rentería, see Meyer, *Colección de documentos*, 148.

By the first of June, 1884, a serious firefight around the pueblos of Asqueltán and Huilacatán proved the danger of Rentería's well-trained forces.<sup>22</sup> One of the principal fighters, a certain Miguel Casillas, eventually succumbed to his injuries. Small-scale assaults such as these suggested careful planning, and government officials in the Sierra were well aware of the activities of Rentería and his men; spies in the area had caught wind of some sort of meeting held at Rancho las Monas, and it was here that the planning for a new uprising took place.<sup>23</sup> Some of Rentería's supporters hailed from the small town of Asqueltán (sometimes spelled Azqueltán, see map 4.1). Local leaders discovered the clandestine activities and expressed shock at the rebellious nature of locals in the region.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> AHJ, G-9-884 CON/ 3784. Colotlán. Jefatura Política del 8° cantón. Oficio. 1884 mayo 20.

<sup>23</sup> AHJ, G-9-884 CON/3784. Colotlán. Jefatura Política del 8° cantón. Oficio. 1884 mayo 20. It is rather unclear exactly which barrio in Bolaños was attacked by Rentería's supporters.

<sup>24</sup> Asqueltan and another town mentioned in the documents, Huilacatán, are typically considered to be Tepecano towns, according to Lumholtz and others. See Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos*

Nevertheless, in the Huichol Sierra, indigenous support for Rentería remained high throughout 1884 and 1885 when the government, in a series of devastating blows, quashed the last vestiges of indigenous aggression in defense of their traditional and/or ancestral homelands.<sup>25</sup> The success of the national guard experiment, and the continuation of the fallen Lozada's movement had been short-lived. By the end of 1885, rebels took one hit after another at the hands of the Federal Army, and one by one, the rebellion's leadership fell to the gun or the jail cell. Peace finally arrived in 1886, enforced by a national leader who had grown tired of aggravating indigenous rebellions and sought stability at all costs.

The underlying problem that plagued relationships between the Huichols and their Mexican neighbors continued to be territorial, including boundary and occasionally property disputes, all conflicts that sometimes ended up in the documentary

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*of Michoacan*, 123. Regardless of the ethnicity, there is considerably overlap in indigenous towns in the region. See map 4.1

<sup>25</sup> Meyer, *Colección de documentos*, 148.

record. Some cases span decades, while others (more often than not), resolved themselves with the help of jefes políticos in the span of weeks or months. One such case that took decades to resolve centered upon the question of "Indianness," identity, and what constituted being "Huichol" in the context of land inheritance rights. This particular case plagued the Huichols long before Manuel Lozada first raised his voice in protest.

A simple land transaction made in 1853 sparked a longstanding community rift when a man by the name of Gregorio Saldaña transferred a piece of property in the town of Soledad, to his heirs: his wife, Señora Lugarda de Saldaña and a nephew, Don Pedro Muro. In February of the following year, Señora Saldaña removed herself (for some unknown reason) from the will, thus passing on the property rights to the aforementioned Don Pedro Muro, and his brother, Gumecindo Muro.<sup>26</sup> Initially nobody found the

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<sup>26</sup> Gobierno del Estado de Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 6 vols., vol. 6 (Guadalajara: Gobierno del Estado, 1882), 182-183.

documentation problematic, because it was assumed that Saldaña was in fact an Indian member of the municipio of Colotlán, and he had owned the land for roughly sixty years. However, when the Muro brothers received title to the property, indigenous residents of Soledad called Gregorio Saldaña's ethnicity into question, triggering a court fight that subsequently took decades to resolve.

In March of 1876, with tensions between indigenous peoples, mestizo vecinos, and the government still running high throughout Jalisco, an attorney representing Huichols from Soledad, took up the case. Don Diego Cortés approached the Courts in Guadalajara to put an end to twenty years of foot-dragging on the part of Colotlán's officials. Cortés declared that Saldaña's heirs (who were probably quite old at that point) had no legal claims to the lands in Soledad because the *original* owner, Gregorio Saldaña, "*no era indio*" (was not Indian).<sup>27</sup> It did not matter, Cortés argued, how long he or his heirs

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<sup>27</sup> Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 182.

had occupied the lands: if Saldaña was not an Indian, he had no right to own land in an indigenous town. The problem stemmed from his acquisition of the land in the immediate aftermath of Decree Number 2, passed in 1822, which allowed rightful owners of property to sell their lands as they saw fit.<sup>28</sup> Although the decrees had evolved slightly over time, theoretically to protect indigenous peoples, it appeared as though Saldaña purchased lands in the 1820s and perhaps knowingly posed as an Indian in order to keep them. Despite the length of time that the Saldaña family had owned the sixteen *caballerías* of land in Soledad, the magistrate ruled that the assumption of being Indian did not make one an Indian and the land should remain in the hands of the town council (who had taken control of the land upon the onset of the dispute).<sup>29</sup> Though the natives of Soledad did not receive their land back, they at least managed to

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<sup>28</sup> See Chapter Three

<sup>29</sup> Jalisco, *Colección de acuerdos, órdenes y decretos sobre tierras, casas y solares de los indígenas, bienes de sus comunidades y fundos legales de los pueblos del estado de Jalisco*, 237-238. This was quite a ruling, considering that Saldaña was head of several *cofradías* while living, as well as serving the town in other, unnamed capacities.

prevent non-indigenous vecinos from owning property within town limits.

### **The Rise of Porfirio Díaz**

While this constituted a minor victory, Porfirio Díaz's presidency in Mexico City bade ill for the Huichols. Díaz took the presidency of Mexico in November of 1876 with the promise of returning lands to peasant communities, but it quickly became apparent that he had little intention of upholding that pact.<sup>30</sup> As an ardent Liberal on economic matters, Díaz believed that outdated ideas like communal landownership held back both indigenous villages and the nation as a whole.<sup>31</sup> His overtures towards peasants were smokescreens.

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<sup>30</sup> Reina, *Las rebeliones campesinas*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Garner, *Porfirio Díaz* (Harlow, England: Pearson, 2001), 42, 187-188. Garner suggests that Díaz was a great deal more sensitive to the issue of pueblo land privatization than he has previously been given credit for. Garner's work provides another view of Díaz, but one that unfortunately rarely takes into account the effects that Porfirian land policies had on indigenous villages outside of Díaz's home state of Oaxaca.

A mere seven years into the Díaz government, the Mexican government passed the 1883 Land Surveying Law, which accomplished several things.<sup>32</sup> First, it authorized the *deslindadoras* (surveyors) to examine lands, determine which lands were being used and which were *terrenos baldíos* (vacant lands); then, the government partitioned the land into thirds, with the surveying company receiving a portion.<sup>33</sup> This resulted in the removal of indigenous communal lands on a vast scale, doing exponentially more damage than the Ley Lerdo had ever done. In nine years, companies "surveyed" 38,249, 373 hectares.<sup>34</sup> These developments boded ill for community land rights.

Instead of giving up, they used their centuries of experiences with outsiders in order to ensure their survival, working within the confines of Mexican law, not against it, in order to secure their land. As a result of the national land law, indigenous villagers throughout the Sierra Madre and

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<sup>32</sup> Between 1880 and 1884, Manuel González, a puppet replacement for Díaz, took the helm of Mexico. Díaz thus allowed someone else to do the dirty work of enacting this land law.

<sup>33</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 187-188.

<sup>34</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 188.

elsewhere began to feel pressure on a greater scale from outsiders who tried to benefit from "vacant lands."

Between 1887 and 1888, Huichols in the town of Guadalupe Ocotán, part of the municipality of San Andrés, confronted members of the Navarrete family because of their consistent abuse of land boundaries. In August of 1887, officials from Guadalupe Ocotán and Tepic met with principal members of the pueblo.<sup>35</sup> Vecinos from the town of Huajimic, in the 7<sup>th</sup> cantón (Tepic) consistently encroached upon Huichol land. What occurred over the course of the next year was a series of meetings and correspondence between the jefes políticos of Tepic and Colotlán, the state government in Jalisco and representatives of the indigenous government of San Andrés Cohamiata. Initially, the Huichols in Guadalupe Ocotán sought the original land documents for their town, which

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<sup>35</sup> AHJ, G-9-887, CON/3455. Colotlán, Jefatura Política del 8° cantón, Expediente, 1887-1888. All of the Huichol towns fall under the jurisdiction of either Colotlán (most frequently) or Mezquitic (less so). The jefe político of Tepic (for whom Señor Fuentes was presumably a secretary) got involved because the bothersome party of vecinos lived in the town of Huajimic, part of the 7<sup>th</sup> cantón.

they hoped would lay out exactly which space belonged to them, and what territory around them was open or unclaimed.<sup>36</sup> Guadalupe Ocotán's representative, Catalino Arriaga Albáñez knew that resolving the matter could be difficult because of the proximity of the Huichol town to the District of Tepic, and this would require the cooperation of both state and territorial officials.<sup>37</sup>

The experiences faced by the Huichol leaders in Guadalupe Ocotán illustrated the many problems that the Huichols had not only with their non-Indian neighbors, but also with Mexican officials. Since time immemorial Guadalupe Ocotán had belonged to Colotlán, not Tepic, and Albáñez implored someone to save the Huichols from the predatory behavior of the Navarrete family. By February of 1888, the Navarrete family, including one Candelario (a judge in Huajimic) learned that they would be punished if they

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<sup>36</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-887, CON/3455.

<sup>37</sup> Catalino Arriaga Albáñez was a representative for the Huichol Governor, Brigido Aguilar. Indeed, as was patently obvious during the final phase of the Lozada conflicts, resolving any issues between Jalisco and Tepic was fraught with problems.

continued to antagonize Guadalupe Ocotán's citizens.<sup>38</sup> Though the final outcome of this case remains obscure, what it suggests is that the Huichols successfully negotiated the realm of regional governments in order to defend their own territory.

A few months later, another land dispute came to the attention of jalisco officials, partly because of the Porfirian land policies. Don Vicente Medrano, from the small municipio of Mezquitic, coveted lands surrounding the Huichol pueblo of Nostic, considering the lands vacant. The jefe político in Mezquitic, Enrique Pérez Rubio, sent the case to his superiors in the capital, arguing that such matters needed to be handled by federal authorities.<sup>39</sup> The political boss had no jurisdiction to supervise such an important case, particularly because it called attention to recent federal legislation. Officials in Guadalajara, however, felt that they could work through the legal system, and

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<sup>38</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-887, CON/3455. Letter from the jefe político of Colotlán to Brigido Aguilar.

<sup>39</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-888, MEZ/1787. Jalisco, Secretaría del Supremo Gobierno del Estado. Carta, 1888 abril 9. I assume that because Medrano declared the lands "terrenos baldíos" the case was no longer within the jurisdiction of the local authorities.

come to an agreeable conclusion. So, instead of further delaying the matter, authorities determined that Medrano might receive some of the territory in question. Whether Medrano ever resolved his case against the pueblo of Nostic is unknown, nor is it possible to determine how much land, if any, he received. What is certain is that lawsuits such as these drew the attention of jefes políticos on a somewhat regular basis, illustrating the heated atmosphere that enveloped the Sierra in the late 1880s.

Not every instance of disputed lands in the Huichol Sierra pitted Indians against mestizo outsiders. The Huichols have never considered themselves to be a coherent ethnic group, choosing instead to emphasize local identity. This is why it is difficult to speak of overarching Huichol support for Lozada in the 1860s and 1870s, or universal disdain for the Catholic Church since the beginning of the colonial era. Tensions erupted periodically during the mid-1870s, as for example, when a bandit named Zenón Hernández, assisted by men from Soledad Tensompa and San Nicolás, murdered five Huichols and

stole thirteen mules.<sup>40</sup> Without definitive ethnic markers, it appears as though Huichols killed other Huichols in this instance, as Soledad Tensompa had traditionally been considered a Huichol town.

The lack of ethnic solidarity became even more apparent, however, during the Díaz regime when land pressures began to affect inter-town relationships.<sup>41</sup> Porfirio Guevara, a trader from the Huichol pueblo of San Sebastián, complained to government officials that other Huichols living in San Andrés and Santa Catarina constantly invaded San Sebastián's lands, and that this was causing unrest between the three towns.<sup>42</sup> The jefe político of Colotlán called the leaders of each town in, so that they could find a solution. The town borders had to be addressed in a satisfactory manner, because attacks resulting from intracommunity disagreements were proving too

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<sup>40</sup> AHJ, G-15-876, CON/1078. Colotlán, Jefatura Política del 8° cantón, 1876. "*...varios indígenas de los pueblos de la Soledad Tensompa y San Nicolás...*"

<sup>41</sup> Franz, "Huichol Ethnohistory," 82. Franz notes that increasing development in other areas meant that pressure from outsiders increased too, including from other Huichol towns.

<sup>42</sup> AHJ, G-9-888, CON/1803. Jalisco, Secretaría del Supremo Gobierno del Estado. Carta, 1888, mayo 28.

disruptive.<sup>43</sup> Unfortunately, it was unlikely that any one government official would be able to stop the cycles of violence. The Huichols of Santa Catarina had been committing abuses against those of San Sebastián for a while, including stealing lands in the previous year. In response, by the end of May, 1888, the Mezquitic's jefe político pacified the Huichols in the aforementioned towns by agreeing to determine town boundaries.<sup>44</sup> Additionally, San Sebastián would receive a school that Guevara would run, as thanks for his service.

What peace had been established between the three principle Huichol towns seldom lasted, in part because of tensions between the towns themselves and between the towns and their longstanding enemy, the hacienda San Antonio de Padua. Serious friction typically flared and then died down in a matter of days or weeks. In October of 1888, at least 45 men from Tensompa signed a petition begging the government to delineate firm boundaries between the

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<sup>43</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-888, CON/1803. It actually seemed as though the government wanted to help in this instance.

<sup>44</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-888, CON/1803.

Huichol towns and nearby haciendas. Since time immemorial they had respected the boundaries between their town and the hacienda San Antonio de Padua, but time and again, the hacendado, don Benigno Soto, extended his property over the boundaries.<sup>45</sup> Land grabs such as these had triggered the Lozada rebellion and the poverty that resulted from land attrition. They knew how to use the memory of the Lozada rebellion to their own benefit. When haciendas expanded onto Indian lands, Huichol towns in turn frequently usurped the lands of their neighbors. This subsequently created strife between San Andrés and Santa Catarina.

Though the situation between the Huichols and hacienda San Antonio de Padua would not be handled to the Indians' satisfaction, their inter-pueblo hostilities drew the attention of the individual responsible for land measurement. In November of 1888, the governor of Jalisco, General Ramón Corona, sent Rosendo Corona from Mezquitic to the Huichol

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<sup>45</sup> *AHJ*, G-5-888, HUA/798. "Cruz, Rosalio de la, et al. Ocurso, 1888 octubre 20: "Le dispone que el Ingeniero Rosendo Corona arregle las diferencias sobre límites entre los indígenas de Santa Catarina y San Andrés."

Sierra in order to survey their lands. The state engineer did not intend to demarcate the San Andrés/Santa Catarina boundaries in order to auction the lands; instead, both Coronas hoped to settle the discord.<sup>46</sup> Rosendo Corona also wanted to ensure that Huichol lands would be respected, and not simply be declared vacant.

The Corona brothers oversaw a state in turmoil, not only because indigenous groups fought among themselves and with outsiders, but also because the state of Jalisco experienced much growth over the course of the early Porfirian period. What Rosendo Corona saw after about a month in the Sierra led him to believe that serious change needed to be implemented. Corona had some sympathy for native communities and there were those in local and state office who, while perhaps not sharing his sensitivities, certainly did not want a state of war

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<sup>46</sup> AHJ, G-5-888, HUA/798. During the Porfirian era, mapping lands and demarcating boundaries was believed to be an effective way of pacifying unhappy Indians. Díaz "...viewed both operations- forced settlement and the land division- as essential components to the pacification and civilizing of the Yaqui." The same can be surmised for the Huichols in Jalisco. See Craib, *Cartographic Mexico*, 166.

erupting in Jalisco between jealous Indian villagers. The surveyors' presence generated considerable anxiety since indigenous towns now knew they needed the legal protection of a title to safeguard their territory.<sup>47</sup> Having titles would also help the pueblos guarantee protection against encroaching haciendas, though Corona was decidedly less concerned about this, so long as the hacienda property was in Jalisco and not Zacatecas.<sup>48</sup> Nostic, Tensompa, and unnamed pueblos belonging to Mezquitic did, in fact, have land titles on record and this helped in two ways. First, it assisted Corona in setting boundary limitations; second, a local Land Commission that had been set up in the early 1870s to protect indigenous resources near Huejucar could finally exert some authority in the region. The Land Commission ensured that timber and firewood would be defended from theft by non-indigenous parties, and officials could determine where the timber existed based upon extant

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<sup>47</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-888, HUR/3458

<sup>48</sup> The Hacienda San Antonio de Padua was located in Zacatecas, but another troublesome property, the Hacienda Hipazote, was in Jalisco. Border problems had plagued relations between Jalisco and Zacatecas since the 1860s.

documentation.<sup>49</sup> The jefe político of the 8<sup>th</sup> cantón named several men to the position of "*guardamonte*," assigning them to protect the mountain and grasslands and only allowing firewood to be cut by authorized individuals. This helped maintain some civility between the Huichol towns, though relations with haciendas remained testy at best.

Regardless of finite boundaries established by state authorities, the Huichols still faced problems with neighboring haciendas, which expanded with impunity throughout the Porfiriato. Unfortunately for the Huichols, the government of Jalisco was much more interested in arbitrating problems between Huichol towns, instead of defending Indians from overzealous hacendados. The owners of haciendas San Antonio de Padua, Hipazote and San Juan Capistrano periodically antagonized Huichol villagers by establishing ranchos on Indian lands, stealing supplies, and generally harassing people with no

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<sup>49</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-888, HUR/3458. The Reglamento por los Indígenas de Tlajomulco was established on 2 October 1871 to protect native resources, though I could not find any more information on the matter. The Comisión Repartidora de terrenos de indígenas de Huejucar implemented the Reglamento in order to guard their forest reserves.

regard for established town boundaries.<sup>50</sup> Time and again, Huichol *principales* (indigenous town leaders) begged the state to send someone out on their behalf, but those same authorities had little incentive to side with Indians. Rather than physically fight battles, which Huichols knew from bitter experience did them little good, they now sought legal means to resolve their troubles. In 1889 Huichol leaders from San Andrés asked F. Castillo Ramos and Salvador Correa y Chacon to intercede with state officials, because Don Benigno Soto, proprietor of San Antonio de Padua in Zacatecas, built a rancho within the boundaries of their town.<sup>51</sup> It is unlikely that Don Benigno Soto or any other hacendado was ever seriously bothered by the state for encroaching upon Indian lands. This was particularly true of haciendas that fell completely within the boundaries of Jalisco; Soto's hacienda required negotiations with Zacatecas that nobody appeared to want to take up.

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<sup>50</sup> AHJ, G-9-889, CON/1959. Colotlán. Jefatura Política del 8° cantón. Oficio. 1889, marzo 30.

<sup>51</sup> AHJ, G-9-889, CON/1959.

By the end of the 1880s, the three principal Huichol towns fought among themselves and with their Mexican neighbors on bordering haciendas. But oddly enough, they rarely experienced troubles with other indigenous groups, despite the fact that the Coras lived quite close to their western limits. The Huichols and Coras occasionally banded together against perceived mutual threats, as was the case when some Huichol fighters joined with the Cora Lozada; at other times, the fickle and divided Huichols could not be counted on. As land pressures squeezed Indians throughout northern and western Jalisco, even former allies could end up enemies, and such enmity could last decades. A Cora elder remarked that the Huichols brought their problems upon themselves because "the Huichol is like a guacamayo, a parrot with brilliant plumage who makes a loud squawk and attracts the attention of all," while the Cora "is like a little sparrow hawk, with dull feathers and little sound and is seldom noticed."<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Thomas B. Hinton, "Cultural Visibility and the Cora," in Hinton, Weigand, and Crumrine, *Themes of*

In December of 1889 a tenuous peace between Huichols in San Andrés and Coras in San Juan Peyotán broke down, at which the jefe político of Tepic and the justice of the peace of San Juan Peyotán petitioned Jalisco's governor to intervene on their behalf. Rather than working with the Huichols directly, the governor of Jalisco implored the jefe político of Colotlán to bring San Andrés in line.<sup>53</sup> Both towns asserted their rights to the property, and each claimed to have older titles to the land (though neither actually produced anything of worth). The jefes políticos of both Tepic and Colotlán feared violence. The presence of increasing numbers of outsiders began to pressure Indians throughout the Sierra. Díaz had sent soldiers to the region, which only heightened tensions.<sup>54</sup> And officials in Guadalajara had little patience for marauding, agitated Indians at the end of 1889. Tapatío leaders

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*Indigenous Acculturation in Northwest Mexico*, 37. It is unclear how the Cora elder meant this comment, though I suspect he made it in a disparaging manner. However, the Huichols "squawking" brought attention to themselves, and thus they retained a significant amount of their land.

<sup>53</sup> AHJ G-9-889, CON/3456. Jefatura Política del Territorio de Tepic. Oficio, 1889 diciembre 4.

<sup>54</sup> Phil C. Weigand, "The Role of the Huichol Indians," 168.

had their own political problems when on November 11, 1889 a "demented" and disgraced former soldier murdered the Governor of the state, General Corona.<sup>55</sup> Corona attended a show that night with his American-born wife and as they exited, a former soldier named Primitivo Roma, attacked the General. His wife received injuries trying to defend her husband, but despite his her efforts, Corona died the next day.<sup>56</sup> This attacked stunned Guadalajara, leaving the state government in turmoil. Ultimately, the jefes políticos of both Colotlán and Tepic reached an agreement that fixed the boundaries between San Andrés and San Juan Peyotán, but unfortunately, the Coras ended up as losers in the deal. However, such rumblings in the Sierra caught the attention not only

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<sup>55</sup> "Assassinated by a Madman: The Governor of Jalisco Killed at the Entrance to the Theatre," *New York Times*, November 12, 1889. Corona died on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. Prior to becoming governor, Corona served as Minister to Spain, an office he took after subduing Lozada. He had little time, while governor, for warring Indians. Corona's murderer was a man named Primitivo Roma, who served in the military and had been dismissed. Corona's administration was widely viewed as unpopular in the state. See also "General Corona: The Sad Story of His Assassination by a Madman," *Dallas Morning News*, 13 November 1889.

<sup>56</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, "General Corona: The Sad Story of His Assassination by a Madman," 13 November 1889.

of state officials in Guadalajara yet again, but also of President Díaz in Mexico City.

Normally, by the time Díaz learned of problems in the rural areas of Mexico, the situation had escalated out of control, and such was the case of the Huichols in November of 1889. Díaz normally paid little attention to the plight of indigenous peoples, because it was his very land law that caused most of the strife. Additionally, politicians and administrators only reported bad news to the President when things became unmanageable at the local level. Occasionally, though, Díaz would intervene on behalf of peasant villages or indigenous towns when land issues became explosive. In November 1889 he urged the director of Mezquitic, Antonio de la Cruz, to listen to the aggrieved parties and bring the troubles to a happy conclusion. The government of Mezquitic had the full support of the Federal Government, according to the memo; each Huichol town should have its lands measured, and originals were to be forwarded to the National Magistrate in Mexico City. This, Díaz hoped, would quell the troubles

with the aggravated Indians, and bring the matter to a close.<sup>57</sup>

Díaz was inconsistent in his treatment of native peoples. Indians were a negligible factor politically, socially, and economically, and positivist ideology taught that they blocked.<sup>58</sup> Just as he demanded that authorities in Colotlán and Mezquitic settle disputes between native villages, he ignored the plight of the Indian town versus the hacienda, a much more common problem in northern Jalisco. Though the 1880s had ended on a more hopeful note, the Huichols of San Andrés faced troubles with the San Juan Capistrano hacienda as the new decade dawned. Máximo Villa, the commander of public safety in San Andrés, complained that his townsfolk could not plant their fields without being harassed by both the administrators and workers of

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<sup>57</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 219-222. I searched and searched for this document in the Archives, and found only a portion, G-9-889, CON/3456, most of which was barely legible. Rojas cited some other document, but the archivist in Guadalajara could not understand her citation, and thus was unable to find the file.

<sup>58</sup> For more information on the ideas of positivism, as they pertained to Mexican Indians, see Charles A. Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism in Late Nineteenth-Century Mexico* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), Chapter 7.

San Juan Capistrano. The political director of Mezquitic hoped that Señor Castillo Ramos, the jefe político of Colotlán, could provide him with some advice; little was forthcoming.<sup>59</sup>

Two years later, in 1892, a new jefe político in Mezquitic took matters into his own hands. Tired of the constant fighting in his own district, and in neighboring Colotlán, Sóstenes Rodríguez sought the support of the governor of Tuxpan in quelling the violence. Rodríguez firmly believed that the indigenous leaders of Santa Catarina, San Andrés, San Sebastián, Tuxpan and Guadalupe Ocotán *must* take responsibility for the public safety in their respective towns. Any crimes committed in their domains should be the responsibility of the governor, and he must apprehend the suspects and submit the perpetrator for further justice.<sup>60</sup> Native leaders could count on the full support of the state in pursuing criminals, in order to keep the peace. For a significant amount of time, the newfound powers of the Huichol village authorities actually seemed to

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<sup>59</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 222.

<sup>60</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 226.

cut down on violence, strife and intercommunity tension. By the early 1890s, then, Rodríguez's solution to local problems appeared to have pacified the 8<sup>th</sup> canton.

### **Solving the Mexican Indian Question**

While violence still ruled western Mexico in the mid-1870s, politicians and intellectuals continued questioning what to do with a population of angry and rebellious Indians. An editorial originally printed in the *Correo de Jalisco* and reprinted in *Juan Panadero* provided a solution to the "Indian problem" that the 7<sup>th</sup> Cantón experienced. Looking north toward the United States, the anonymous author suggested that missionaries work in earnest with the "*diablos colorados*" (red devils) of the 7<sup>th</sup> Cantón, because the missionary program in the US had met with some success.<sup>61</sup> It was a common belief in Mexico that without the guiding principles of priests, Indians

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<sup>61</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 13 de agosto 1874. Incidentally, the author acknowledged that the religious institutions seemed to be succeeding, but those methodologies were only tried *after* the US grew tired of exterminating the Indians.

would quickly revert to savagery.<sup>62</sup> Like so many of the Guadalajara elite, the author could not understand why Tepic's Indians caused so many problems for the Mexican population there, considering that the Indians of the Sierra are the same as those found around the capital city.<sup>63</sup> Of course, the idea of sending missionaries to ease the souls of the "savage" Indians was not new: during the 1850s, correspondences between the Governor of Jalisco and the Archbishop of Guadalajara lamented the lack of missionaries willing and able to help "forgotten" groups like the Huichols.<sup>64</sup> In reality,

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<sup>62</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 273. "De no ser por los curas, concluía, ya habrían vuelto al salvajismo..."

<sup>63</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 273. The Indians of the Sierra were not in any way similar to those of Zapotlán, Tonalá or Tuxpan (a town south of Lake Chapala--there are a few Tuxpans in Jalisco), which are locations that the anonymous author mentioned. It is unlikely that any comparison could logically be made, because the center of indigenous population in Jalisco was not near Guadalajara, but was, instead, closer to Los Altos, in the northeastern part of the state; and the Sierra Madre Occidental, the very area about which the author is referring.

<sup>64</sup> See Chapter Four. Colonization projects had occurred in other regions of Latin America. For a discussion on the Tipú of Belize, see Grant D. Jones, *Maya Resistance to Spanish Rule: Time and History on a Colonial Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

however, the anonymous author of the editorial "*La cuestión de Tepic*" (the question of Tepic) did not have the interests of Tepic's indigenous populations in mind: instead, he sought to soothe relations between Mexican in the 7<sup>th</sup> Cantón and the state government based in Jalisco. Marauding, unhappy Indians simply provided one more thorn in the sides of already antagonized Tepiqueños.

Throughout Mexico, in the wake of the Reform period of Benito Juárez, the "Indian Question" had become an important point of debate in learned circles. It was an issue that deserved some careful scrutiny, considering that more than 3.7 million Mexicans, or about 38% of the population, considered themselves, or more likely were assumed to be Indian.<sup>65</sup> Some critics believed that Mexico would never progress because of the Indians, and thought they should simply be wiped out, a policy implemented in Sonora against the Yaquis. This point of view

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<sup>65</sup> *Juan Panadero*, 29 de abril de 1883, "Censo de la República Mexicana." See also Hale, *The Transformation of Liberalism*, 220. Hale quotes Justo Sierra's data here, which gives a figure of 3.97 million, or 38.02% of the population in 1889.

gained some backing.<sup>66</sup> Many in Mexico blamed the backwardness of the Indians upon communal landholdings, calling the practice a cancer that held back national advancement.<sup>67</sup> Others suggested giving Indians land and tutoring, which would push them toward abandoning their ancient customs. Education, however, won out, and throughout Mexico, schools opened on haciendas for adults, and in towns and cities for children.<sup>68</sup> Still, the Porfirian education system met with limited success among indigenous peoples, because of underfunding, poor administration and teaching, and ultimately, racism towards native pupils.

The dismal outlook for Indians in Nayarit and northern Jalisco bothered the clergy in the early years of the 1880s, and no doubt, national discourse about the Indian condition alarmed the Church as well. The Archbishop of Guadalajara, Pedro José de Jesús Loza y Pardavé, wanted to establish

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<sup>66</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 273.

<sup>67</sup> Horacio Hernández Casillas and Erika Julieta Vázquez Flores, *Racismo y poder: La negación del indio en la prensa del siglo XIX* (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 2007), 99.

<sup>68</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 273.

scholarships in order to train young teachers to educate Indians. Such programs died a predictable death, but the very fact that Archbishop Loza y Pardavé tried to initiate Catholic education in western Jalisco illustrates the mood of the Church towards indigenous youths.<sup>69</sup> Decades of warfare and little to no care from secular or religious authorities had taken its toll. One priest wrote that only thirty years before (that is, before the outbreak of the Lozada Rebellion), the Coras were well on their way to civilization. They had proper villages, wore clothing, sent their children to village schools and married according to the laws of the Church. Thirty more years, and the author felt that the Coras might have been completely civilized.<sup>70</sup> Most Huichol communities had never entirely accepted Catholicism and their level of prosperity could hardly have surpassed that of the Coras during this era. While the Huichols probably would not have had anything approaching a society as orderly as that just described, the Church found the situation in the

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<sup>69</sup> *La Voz de la Patria*, 15 de enero de 1882, "Misiones de los indios," 332-333.

<sup>70</sup> *La Voz de la patria*, 16 de julio de 1882, "Los indios coras bajo la dirección de los jesuitas," 337.

Sierra deplorable and thought that its guiding presence would ameliorate terrible situations.

The indigenous people of Mexico had few defenders at the end of the nineteenth century, but one editorial expressed what some in the country had long believed: that surveying companies took advantage of native communities. Unchecked, these *compañías deslindadoras* invaded tiny parcels of land that were barely large enough to sustain their owners. Indians became chained to communal properties and therein lay the immorality.<sup>71</sup> Surveying companies determined whether or not Indians used the land, resulting in wicked despoilment of territory. Rather than ignoring indigenous complaints, the government needed to listen to its native citizenry; such neglect lay at the root of some of the violence and animosity that Native communities levied at the larger nation.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> *El Diario de Jalisco*, 31 de enero de 1890. "Los indígenas de Jalisco." The author wrote "*pero que las compañías deslindadoras invadan miserables pedazos de terrenos que apenas sustentas con sus productos anuales a sus dueños...*"409

<sup>72</sup> *El Diario de Jalisco*, 31 de enero de 1890, 409. See also Coyle, *From Flowers to Ash*, 180. Both the

The fact that land issues fade from the spotlight for about eight years allows for an examination of social changes that occurred among the Huichols. Earlier in the Porfiriato, Catholic clergy lamented that Jalisco's Indians were in a terrible state of affairs, and that significant changes needed to be made. Education had become the preferred way to "civilize" Mexican Indians. During his tenure as governor, Ramón Corona, and his successor, Miguel Ahumada, designed a predictably stillborn program to bring indigenous youths in, educate them, and send them back to teach their people Spanish. The desired effects were threefold: first, Indians would learn Spanish; second, some Indians would receive beneficial jobs; and finally, having indigenous people speaking Spanish would cut down on abuses by translators.<sup>73</sup> Some observers realized that Native peoples had real aptitudes for education and could learn to read and write, if only the teachers took the proper care to learn at least some Native

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Coras and the Huichols were uncomfortable at the activities of the surveying companies, who worked entirely too closely with mestizo vecinos to try and take Indian lands.

<sup>73</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 597.

language; if the students failed, it was the fault of the instructors.<sup>74</sup>

Religious leaders and other reformers made other attempts to "improve" the lives of Indians. For instance, in Colotlán in 1888, a town law required that Huichols dress properly. Requiring Indians to wear clothing that exhibited their status must have been problematic for a people not used to mestizo intervention in their lives. Not wearing the proper clothing could result in arrest and fines until the person rectified the situation by finding the proper pants.<sup>75</sup> There is no evidence, however, of some sartorial revolution, or that any Huichols received fines for not wearing the proper attire. All indigenous people, regardless of how they felt about their neighbors, had to abide by new laws created by the ruling mestizos if they wanted to trade in town. Huichol men typically *did* wear pants, but occasionally their outfits consisted only of a long

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<sup>74</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia Moderna De México*, 599.

<sup>75</sup> AHJ G-9-888 CON/1803. This law stated that Huichols "*usarán pantalones conforme a sus circunstancias pecunarias.*" It also forced the Huichols to wear underwear, but it is unclear how officials enforced this aspect of the law, and *who* did the enforcing.

tunic with a belt at the waist. Forcing Huichols to dress like mestizos was an attempt to eliminate traditional forms of clothing intrinsically linked to Huichol culture. Reformers argued that these were necessary measures to preserve sanitation, something not lost on non-indigenous Mexicans, particularly in the wake of a typhus outbreak in 1892. Four years later, it became a fundamental part of national Indian policy to "*empantalonar*" indigenous peoples throughout Mexico. Non-indigenous Mexicans became almost frenzied in their obsession about Indian clothing; others, however, felt that it was improper to fine such poverty-stricken people for simply wearing their traditional clothing.<sup>76</sup>

The dawn of the twentieth century did not bring new hope for the Huichols, rather it only highlighted problems that had not gone away. Once again, leaders

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<sup>76</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia moderna de México*, 396. Carl Lumholtz remarked that fining a person who made between 31 and 37 centavos per day, for wearing traditional clothing, was unjust. The clothing, he noted, was hygienic and decent and Lumholtz saw no need to try and force the Indians into western clothing in some vain attempt at feigned civilization.

of San Andrés desperately sought land titles in order to protect their land from marauding vecinos and unscrupulous surveying companies. A visit from the Bishop of Zacatecas, however, belied the misery of the Sierra. He observed that the economic system of the frontier zone between Zacatecas and Jalisco was improving all the time and that the Indians should begin to see benefits from the assistance of teachers, money and improved farming techniques.<sup>77</sup> Yet it is doubtful that despite schools and cash, San Andrés's Huichol wished to accept surveyors stealing their lands. The leadership in San Andrés wrote to officials in Guadalajara, asking for a copy of their land title, which they knew (or at least believed) could be located in the *Archivo General de la Nación*.<sup>78</sup> The Huichols in San Andrés and elsewhere feared that left unchecked, surveying companies and haciendas would turn their towns into private property, in much the same way that they had with Santa Catarina. A school for children was only

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<sup>77</sup> Cosío Villegas, *Historia Moderna De México*, 491

<sup>78</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 231. I have no idea whether this is actually true or not.

beneficial if the children could return home to sacred lands that were *not* part of an hacienda.<sup>79</sup>

While serious uprisings were rare throughout the Porfiriato, the inhabitants of Jalisco and Zacatecas battled each other over land and dealt with the problems that any other society faces from time to time. Disease and economic ebbs and flows affected indigenous person and mestizo alike. Disease killed many Huichols in Guadalupe Ocotán in the aforementioned typhoid epidemic of 1892; those who survived the epidemic were frequently too ill to farm. Thus, starvation also took its toll upon Indian survivors. Corn, not available in Guadalupe Ocotán, could be purchased in Tepic, Nayarit, but at prohibitive prices; survivors were often too weak to make what is normally considered to be a mundane journey to the Huichols. To make matters worse, a

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<sup>79</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 19. Negrín, and others, note that parts of San Sebastián and Santa Catarina became part of the Hacienda la familia Torres by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though San Andrés had a school, this did not make leaders there comfortable or content, because they truly feared what the future brought. See Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 230-232.

temple burned down, and many thought that the suffering they experienced came directly from God.<sup>80</sup> Fewer than ten years later, soil exhaustion also brought about starvation; mestizo town leaders blamed the Huichols, who did not make the necessary land contributions and improvements. Despite periodic epidemics and episodes of starvation, the early twentieth century saw a marked improvement in the economy, which benefited all of Jalisco's residents, Indian and mestizo.<sup>81</sup>

The Porfiriato can be characterized as an unsettling era for the Huichols. Prior to Díaz's ascension to power in 1876, the Huichols had been left to their own devices and did not have to deal with mestizos on a regular basis. They lived their lives in conflict and at peace with their Huichol kin, practicing their syncretic religion, speaking their native language and avoiding mestizos unless it was necessary to seek them out. The Porfiriato changed this, but not in such a way that the Huichols themselves became "hispanicized." They did not.

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<sup>80</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 223.

<sup>81</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 228-229.

Land issues fragmented intercommunity ties, but created new ones at the same time. The Huichols learned how to function within the confines of the Mexican justice system when demanding titles to their land to protect them from deslindadores. And the indigenous peoples of Jalisco lived their lives as they had for many centuries before, albeit with new stresses.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Rojas, *Los Huicholes*, 230-232, 234-237. See also Franz, "Huichol Ethnohistory," 84.

## Chapter Six

### The World Comes for the Huichols: Ethnographic Encounters with Europe

"Mestizo does not live like us. He Says *Paternoster*, *Ave Maria*, prayers for dead and amen. That's all.

Huichol religion is hard work."<sup>1</sup> -Huichol elder

More than two decades after the end of the Lozada Rebellion, in which the Huichols played an important, though supporting role, two important figures entered the Sierra Madre Occidental and transformed our understanding of indigenous people there forever. American reporters had already become familiar with Jalisco's native populations, even if the Huichols managed to avoid much of the spotlight over the course of the long Lozada conflicts; but by the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the international community had begun creeping into their mountainous refuge. Both journalists covering the conflicts and international business concerns became increasingly prevalent in western Mexico and, though tangentially, in the lives of the Huichols. However,

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<sup>1</sup> Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 170.

beginning in the early 1890s, the search for "wild" Indians in Mexico drew academic explorers to western Mexico. By the end of the nineteenth century, Native North American peoples had been removed to out-of-the-way reservations and the so-called Indian wars had ended. Though academics could still find viable topics of study among Native Americans in the United States, many scholars interested in aboriginal life looked elsewhere to Mexico and beyond to find "tribal peoples."<sup>2</sup> Prompted by the publications produced by such outsiders, audiences in the United States and Europe "discovered" the Huichols, along with their intriguing religion and astonishing works of art.

Two prominent researchers, one a Norwegian and the other a Frenchman, were among the first foreign scholars to make sustained contact with the Huichols. Carl Lumholtz, a botanist by trade, visited the Huichols on two separate occasions, in 1895-1896, and then again in 1898. His observations and collections

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<sup>2</sup> James McLaughlin's *My Friend the Indian* and Charles Alexander Eastman's *Old Indian Days* are but two examples of early twentieth century works on Native Americans. Neither was a scientist in the vein of Diguët or Lumholtz, but both books illustrate the viability of scholarly assessment-however flawed in McLaughlin's case- of United States Indians.

provide modern-day scholars with unique insights into many aspects of Huichol life, culture, and history. Lumholtz's contemporary, Léon Diguët, traveled extensively in western and northwestern Mexico; though he published his observations in 1898, while Lumholtz was still in Huichol country, the two apparently never met. It seems as though their expeditions never overlapped.<sup>3</sup> Regardless, that two scholars studied the Huichols at nearly the same time provides historians today with a variety of sources from which to draw different viewpoints. Both men benefitted the academic communities by shedding light upon the Huichols, but what do the Europeans' stories tell us about Huichol history? Although not primarily interested in thorough examinations of the past, Lumholtz and Diguët's collections provide tantalizing clues about the evolution of one of Mexico's most resilient peoples and have forever changed our perceptions of western Uto-Aztecan peoples. As a result of Lumholtz and Diguët initially, and Konrad Theodor Preuss a bit later, we

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<sup>3</sup> Léon Diguët, *Fotografías del Nayar y de California, 1893-1900* (México, DF: Centro de Estudios Mexicanos y Centroamericanos de la Embajada de Francia en México: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1991), 9.

now know that the Huichols created complex and intricate societies that had existed for centuries.

### **Lumholtz's Travels in Unknown Mexico**

Carl Sofus Lumholtz almost missed his calling as scientist. Born in Norway in 1851, Lumholtz's father was a career military man who wanted his son to enter the ministry.<sup>4</sup> Lumholtz began his theological studies at the University of Christiana, but a nervous breakdown in 1876 forced him to quit school temporarily; he recovered by collecting small animals and plants.<sup>5</sup> His love of nature blossomed and he returned to the university to complete a Master of Arts degree, though the exact discipline and date of his graduation is a matter of speculation.<sup>6</sup> Upon completing his degree, Lumholtz traveled to the United States, giving lectures upon a variety of

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Bowden, "Learning Nothing, Forgetting Nothing: On the Trail of Carl Lumholtz," *Journal of the Southwest* 49, no. 4 (2007): 361.

<sup>5</sup> Ann Christine Eek, "The Secret of the Cigar Box: Carl Lumholtz and the Photographs from his Sonoran Desert Expedition, 1909-1910," *Journal of the Southwest* 49, no. 4 (2007): 369.

<sup>6</sup> What few sources exist chronicling the early life of Lumholtz do not provide a graduation date or precise field of study, though it seems apparent that he studied botany.

subjects related to natural history.<sup>7</sup> After spending a brief period in the United States, Lumholtz ventured to Australia in 1880 to learn about its aboriginal peoples; from these travels, Lumholtz published *Among the Cannibals: An Account of Four Years' Travels in Australia and of Camp Life with the Aborigines of Queensland* in 1889. Upon the end of his travails in Australia, Lumholtz returned to the United States in preparation for an extended trip to Mexico.

Lumholtz entered Mexico for the first time in September of 1890, accompanied by porters and scientists, searching for people who "are living today as they were before the coming of the Spaniards."<sup>8</sup> Lumholtz's candid observation reflected the belief then widely current in academic circles that Mexico contained unacculturated Indian groups. The lure of this belief proved irresistible for ambitious and inquisitive scholars. Throughout 1893, he had the good fortune to watch Tarahumara and Tepehuan festivals, including a Holy Week fiesta

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<sup>7</sup> Eek, "The Secret of the Cigar Box," 371.

<sup>8</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 388.

which included the famed Tarahumara running races. Doubting that these people were actually Christians, he remarked that many Tarahumaras and Tepehuanes existed "in a very primitive state of culture, living in remote arroyos without knowledge of Spanish."<sup>9</sup> Lumholtz expressed a sense of subdued shock upon realizing that, among many indigenous groups in northern Mexico, but particularly the Tarahumara, "...Christian and pagan ceremonies survive side by side."<sup>10</sup> Indian and mestizo villagers whom Lumholtz met frequently mistook the European scientist for a doctor, requesting medical attention and trinkets; he noted that no matter where he went in the desert, his presence caused great curiosity and occasionally, consternation.<sup>11</sup> From these initial forays into the Chihuahuan mountains and desert, Lumholtz provided

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<sup>9</sup> Carl Lumholtz, "Letter from Mr. Carl Lumholtz, in Northern Mexico," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 25(1893): 313. Lumholtz used the term arroyos, which technically means streams. He may have meant barrancas, or canyons.

<sup>10</sup> Saint Paul (MN) Dispatch, 20 June 1894. *American Museum of Natural History* (AMNH hereafter), Department of Anthropology Archives, Accession Number 1894-14, Catalog Numbers 65/13584-919

<sup>11</sup> Carl Lumholtz, "Report on Explorations in Northern Mexico," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* 23(1891): 391.

the modern scholar with descriptions of archaeological ruins near the Piedras Verdes River, perched high in the mountains: "caves contain groups of houses or small villages...and show that the inhabitants had obtained a comparatively high level of culture...remains of a long ago vanished race of people, of whom history yet knows nothing...."<sup>12</sup> While the Chihuahuan desert proved more fruitful, in terms of archaeological evidence of ancient civilizations, the physical difficulties of travel in the region served to prepare Lumholtz for his ventures further south. The suffering Lumholtz and his party members experienced must have been tremendous; Chihuahua, like Jalisco, is pitted with treacherous canyons and towering mountains, and as Lumholtz discovered, temperatures vary dramatically depending upon the elevation.

Lumholtz visited the Huichols, in addition to the Coras, Tepehuanes, and P'urhépechas under the auspices of the American Museum of Natural History, in New York City, which had also funded his research

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<sup>12</sup> Lumholtz, "Report on Explorations in Northern Mexico." 398, 396.

in Chihuahua. By the time he reached Guadalajara in 1894, which would serve as his *entrepôt* to the Sierra Madre Occidental, Lumholtz had enjoyed the company of President Porfirio Díaz; experienced the sweltering heat of the town of Morelos, in the Chihuahuan desert; and lived among the "Tarahumari."<sup>13</sup> He was thus quite familiar with the peculiarities of the Mexican landscape, and he also knew how to negotiate the political landscape. Lumholtz wrote that he "succeeded in getting an audience with President Porfirio Díaz, who as usual was very kind to me. He gave me not only introductions to all the governors of the states...but also a circular letter to the prefects..."<sup>14</sup> Lumholtz's meeting with Díaz in theory would provide safe passage while traveling (though his trip from Mexico City to Guadalajara began poorly when the scientist's luggage was stolen from his

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<sup>13</sup> Letter to Morris K. Jesup, 11 June 1894. *AMNH*, Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163. Jesup was the President of the Museum during this period. See also Lumholtz, "Mr. Carl Lumholtz in Northern Mexico," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, Volume 25 (1893), 424.

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Morris K. Jesup, 11 June 1894. *AMNH*, Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163.

train).<sup>15</sup> Additionally, Lumholtz used his diplomatic contacts to secure a letter of support from the Archbishop of Mexico before trekking from the capital to Guadalajara and beyond in his quest for the Huichol people.

Once Lumholtz bid farewell to the modern Porfirian comforts that the city of Guadalajara offered, he entered a world as thoroughly alien and unfriendly as one could imagine. Part of Lumholtz's job as a traveling scientist for the Museum of Natural History in New York was to collect specimens for both public and academic interest; it seems as though he spent much of 1894 and early 1895 doing just that. While the vases and "Aztek" pottery that Lumholtz procured were of interest to John Winser, Secretary of the American Museum of Natural History, it was the desire for photographs and human remains that both helped and hurt Lumholtz in the long run.<sup>16</sup> Museum curators in the United States implored him to

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<sup>15</sup>Letter to Morris K. Jesup, 3 July 1894. AMNH, Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163.

<sup>16</sup>Letter to Morris K. Jesup 3 July 1894. Letter from John Winser 6 November 1894. Letter from John Winser 16 November 1894. AMNH Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163.

"get into as many caves as possible and dig thoroughly" for skulls and skeletons; unfortunately for Lumholtz, the Huichols strongly discouraged digging expeditions, as they still worshipped their ancestors, some of whom had been mummified.<sup>17</sup>

Lumholtz was in a bind with his superiors. A scant sixty years had passed since Samuel George Morton had begun measuring Native American skulls in order to prove theories about racial hierarchy; he believed that his calculations demonstrated "the inaptitude

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<sup>17</sup> Letter from F.W. Putnam (Peabody Museum of Anthropology) 23 January 1895. *AMNH* Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163. On some of his expeditions, Lumholtz was accompanied by Aleš Hrdlička, a young Czech anthropologist. Hrdlička commented that "the principal motive of my search was the physical remains of the prehistoric people..." suggesting that gathering skulls and skeletons was an exercise "to save it from destruction, or, what is but little better, dispersion." See Aleš Hrdlička, "The Region of the Ancient "Chichimecs," with notes on the Tepecanos and the Ruin of La Quemada, Mexico," *American Anthropologist* 5, no. 3 (1903): 386. Reginald Horsman suggests that the obsession with skulls among American and European scholars stemmed from a long-standing nineteenth century belief that by examining skulls, the racial inferiority of American Indians and Africans could be assessed. See Reginald Horsman, "Scientific Racism and the American Indian in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," *American Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (1975).

of the Indian for civilization.'"<sup>18</sup> It was not until Franz Boas illustrated the variances in brain sizes among adults in 1899 that the practice began to decline in popularity.<sup>19</sup> Up to that point, much early anthropological study depended on the collecting and measuring of skulls. However, once craniometry began to fall out of fashion, the measuring of entire human bodies took precedence, in an attempt to fulfill the same role that skull measurements had: to determine the biological inferiority of non-white individuals and white women.<sup>20</sup> Thus, during most of Lumholtz's time among the Huichols, digging up indigenous remains was valid anthropological work. Lumholtz's patrons at the Museum of Natural History demanded skeletons to improve their scientific collections which, in theory, would contribute to the understanding of racial difference. But he risked alienating his indigenous subjects. Digging among the dead would have been highly taboo. In fact, Huichols near Mezquitic had warned Lumholtz "not to

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<sup>18</sup> Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Revised ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 89.

<sup>19</sup> Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 140.

<sup>20</sup> Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, 144.

have anything to do with their dead."<sup>21</sup> At any rate, instead of skeletons, Lumholtz took extensive photographs and collected cultural artifacts to satisfy his bosses in New York.

In the spring of 1895, Lumholtz's bad luck began to change. In that year, he explored the mountains surrounding Tepic with some earnest, endearing himself with the indigenous peoples in the region, including the Coras and Tepehuanes. The Coras, related to the Huichols and occasionally their allies, presented intriguing problems for Lumholtz

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<sup>21</sup> Letter from F.W. Putnam, 23 January 1895; Letter to F.W. Putnam, 27 September 1895. AMNH Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65-i-163. In 1896, Lumholtz's own words betray the warning that the Indians had given him: while digging, he found a "decayed skeleton...with it, many gold objects." Letter to Morris K. Jesup, 22 March 1896. AMNH, Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1896-11, Cat#s 65/164-583. Later in his expedition, Lumholtz witnessed either a serious evolution among the Huichols in a very short period, or the Huichols had little fear of the dead and had only made idle threats: upon his departure from the area at a later (undated) period, some Huichols gave him a gift of skulls to take with him on his travels. Perhaps there is a third scenario, that Lumholtz took the skulls without the knowledge of the Huichols? Considering the violent rebellion that the Huichols and Coras fought over the destruction of ancestral mummies in the 1720s, his story is highly suspect. See Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 285.

that helped familiarize him with the reticent mountain peoples. He noted in a letter that the Coras were "an intelligent race who was not reduced by the Spaniards until 1722...who won't allow whites onto their lands and who don't like strangers."<sup>22</sup> The Coras, fiercely protective of their territory, had almost fully supported Manuel Lozada during his attempts to free the city Tepic from Jalisco, effectively forcing the government to create a federal district. For this reason, Lumholtz surmised that the Coras were a warrior people, in comparison to other indigenous groups he would encounter (namely, the Huichols).<sup>23</sup> Linguistically, the Coras and Huichols are related; however, during times of strife, conflict could break out between different Huichol and Cora villages. The Coras complained to Lumholtz "that the Huichol tried to keep clouds from reaching the Cora country by placing small back shields on the roads...to frighten clouds back and

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<sup>22</sup> Letter 3 May 1895, from Jesús María, Jalisco. AMNH Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163.

<sup>23</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 83.

prevent them from leaving the Huichol territory."<sup>24</sup>

In spite of stories of occasional infighting, intermixed with peaceful relations (as was the case in the 1890s), perhaps the most valuable assets Lumholtz gained from his time among the Coras were porters who served as guides to Huichol lands further to the east.

Lumholtz arrived in the Huichol homelands near Mezquitic in June of 1895 with four Mexican guides and at least one Cora porter. There he discovered that most of the Indians thought him dangerous and "three civilized Indians had even been planning to kill" him.<sup>25</sup> The situation alarmed Lumholtz's

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<sup>24</sup> Carl Lumholtz, "The Huichol Indians of Mexico," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 35, no. 1 (1903): 89. Back shields are not used for war, but are instead a small circular shield used in religious ceremonies, or as talismans to protect one's home, or person. They are frequently decorated with frightening beasts, such as mountain lions in the aforementioned case, to frighten away a being of some kind.

<sup>25</sup> Letter to Morris K. Jesup 27 September 1895. *AMNH* Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1895-8, Cat#s 65/i-163. See also "The Huichol Indians of Mexico," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 35, no. 1 (1903): 80. Lumholtz does not divulge how he knew the Indians were "civilized", or why they planned to kill him. "The Artist Savages of Mexico" Professor Lumholtz' Story of the Huichol, or Vi-ra-ri-ka Indians..." *Dallas Morning News* 6 December

traveling party, particularly the mestizos. One declared "the Huichols were bad; they were assassins and would kill us all."<sup>26</sup> A few days prior to his arrival, Lumholtz had the presence of mind to send Cora runners to meet with Huichol principales from Santa Catarina. He assumed that if the Coras went ahead to vouch for his goodwill, the Huichols would trust him around their families. Lumholtz misjudged his subjects, who always treated outsiders with a great deal of suspicion. As he approached, the Huichols abandoned their homes and fled into the nearby woods.<sup>27</sup> Eventually, the Huichols warmed up to the mysterious stranger and allowed him to approach their villages and homes with an aloof caution. It was only then that he learned why they feared him so much. Rumors circulated throughout the Sierra Madre Occidental that a strange man traveled in the area, eating women and children, whom he "killed by the

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1903. Apparently, the alcalde of Santa Catarina warned Lumholtz that if he proceeded, he did so at great risk.

<sup>26</sup> Lumholtz, "The Huichol Indians of Mexico," 81. It is unclear if one of Lumholtz's Mexican porters or Cora guides made this comment, though it is more likely, given the circumstances, that a Mexican made the comment.

<sup>27</sup> Lumholtz, "The Huichol Indians of Mexico," 81.

camera."<sup>28</sup> Another story told to the Huichols by a "stupid and superstitious Mexican trader" was that Lumholtz "was fattening people in order to kill and eat them" and that he "used the blood for dying cotton cloth."<sup>29</sup> It was fairly common for stories such as these to spread, and typically their originators were local merchants who wanted to frighten indigenous people. In this way, native peoples would stay away from men like Lumholtz, who might have goods to sell, thus threatening a merchants' bottom line. Considering the poverty in which Mezquitic merchants must have lived, this is likely the case. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the terrifying stories that swirled around Lumholtz, it is no wonder that the Huichols ran away when he approached and only slowly and begrudgingly accepted his presence.

By the time Lumholtz reached the highlands north of Jalisco in 1895, indigenous peoples in the area

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<sup>28</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 127.

<sup>29</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 127. See also Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 2.

already suffered through nearly two decades under the Porfirian regime. Though Lumholtz did not typically comment on activities of a political nature, as this would have put his expedition in diplomatic jeopardy, occasionally the Huichols might call his attention to one event or another. For instance, during his stay, two "neighbors" overestimated the boundaries of their ranchos and "encroached upon Huichol territory," resulting in their capture. "The native authorities commanded them to give up the land they had usurped, but the captives refused to do so and were promptly put into prison. Here they lingered for several days without receiving, officially, any food."<sup>30</sup> The Mexicans eventually relented and agreed to move their ranch and Lumholtz happily commented that "it is gratifying to see the Indians get the best of their 'neighbors' once in a while."<sup>31</sup> In another incident

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<sup>30</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 61.

<sup>31</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 61. Oddly, there is no record of this in either the *AHJ* or the *AMZ*. The matter appears to have been settled out of the municipio courts in Mezquitic or Colotlán, which is perhaps the reason for the lack

in Santa Catarina, some unidentified individuals illegally entered the forests and cut down timber belonging to the Huichols. Lumholtz again was rather vague with regard to the ethnicity of the offenders.<sup>32</sup> Land concerns continued to pose threats to the stability of the Sierra Madre Occidental, and while they did occasionally bother Lumholtz, his employers had greater plans in mind for the naturalist's expedition.

Instead of primitive simplicity, Lumholtz discovered a world of considerable complexity.<sup>33</sup> At the time, four towns dominated the Huichol zone: Santa Catarina, San Andrés, San Sebastián and

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of archival documentation. Regardless, this is one of the last recorded land complaints found in any major source or archive until well after the end of the Revolution.

<sup>32</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 152. It is entirely possible that Lumholtz referred here to a case that occurred in 1888 between Santa Catarina, San Sebastián and San Andrés, in which town boundary problems became such an issue that the *jefe politico* of Colotlán got involved. Discussed in greater detail in the previous chapter. Conversely, Lumholtz may be referring to unnamed hacendados who essentially "owned" much of Santa Catarina in the wake of the Porfirio Díaz's modernization regimes. See Weigand, Phil C. "The Role of the Huichol Indians."

<sup>33</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 136.

Guadalupe Ocotán, though many Huichols lived in countless tiny pueblos in the immediate environs.<sup>34</sup> Lumholtz remarked that since the colonial times, Huichol politics mixed religion and secular rule, though theoretically "this condition of affairs" was "contrary to the laws of the republic" at the time that he visited the Huichols; each Huichol town had an *alcalde*, a *gobernador*, a captain, and messengers, in addition to *alguaciles*, and *mayordomos*.<sup>35</sup> At some point in the past, women held prestigious political offices, although Lumholtz failed to elaborate; the only community jobs that women could hold at the end of the nineteenth century were as *tenanches*, or women who kept the church clean and kept it up.<sup>36</sup> The Mexican courts handled serious crimes, such as murder. Huichol judges adjudicated minor land quibbles and according to Lumholtz, typically had

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<sup>34</sup> Nowadays, other towns, including Tuxpan de Bolaños and Pochotita have a heavy Huichol presence.

<sup>35</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 245-246.

<sup>36</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 245-246. See Conclusion for more information.

little to do except take the occasional bribe from a community member who wanted one thing or another. If land troubles became more serious, they often drew the attention of the jefe político in Colotlán or Mezquitic.<sup>37</sup>

During the time that Lumholtz spent with the Huichols, he discovered that slight cultural variations occurred in each town and that the Huichols did not live as one coherent ethnic group. What was true of the people in and around San Andrés might not necessarily be so in Santa Catarina or San Sebastián, for instance. Rivalries and ethnic and minor linguistic variations existed during Lumholtz's day and continue to the present. Men who might have held some sway over affairs in San Sebastián, for instance, "had no influence in San Andrés," as was the case with a man named Maximino whom Lumholtz had hired.<sup>38</sup> Lumholtz was able to learn the most from his subjects in San Andrés, who were considerably more

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<sup>37</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico, Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madres: In the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, 246-249.

<sup>38</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 59.

approachable than their neighbors in Santa Catarina.<sup>39</sup> However, regardless of their moderate acceptance of Lumholtz, and his seemingly unending questions, he remarked that the Huichol governor attached to San Andrés "was a true Indian, conservative in his customs and religious beliefs."<sup>40</sup> It seems that despite the willingness to work with Lumholtz displayed by the inhabitants of San Andrés, secular leaders in the region remained steadfastly indigenous in terms of their identity.

This identity, that made one simultaneously Huichol but also primarily a member of a particular town led to the "clannish" behavior that Lumholtz had commented on. Like Yucatec Maya speakers who rejected overarching ethnic labels, the Huichols that Lumholtz met tended to prefer local identities, only banding together with other Huichols when absolutely necessary.<sup>41</sup> This fierce sense of local identity often caused boundary disputes, particularly between the towns of San Andrés and Santa Catarina. Lumholtz

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<sup>39</sup> Curiously, anthropologists who study the Huichols today find this to be the case.

<sup>40</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 19.

<sup>41</sup> Gabbert, *Becoming Maya*, xi-xii.

attributed these problems to village personalities that prevented ethnic unity on a daily basis. In fact, inter-community animosity could become so hostile that Lumholtz remarked "it is not too much to say that no one district would much care if the 'neighbours' [non-indigenous Mexicans] were to gobble up all the rest of the tribe's domain so long as its own particular district remained intact."<sup>42</sup> However, at other times, as documentary evidence illustrates, Lumholtz did not always experience the times of ethnic harmony that did exist among the Huichols.

Lumholtz's initial arrival among the Huichols coincided with festivals aimed at ensuring bountiful rain, ensuring that he would become thoroughly familiar with the intrinsic relationship between Huichol and religion. However interested he may have been in the cosmology of this particular indigenous group, Lumholtz's initial writings reveal a man thoroughly dismayed upon the realization that this festival sought more rain; upon arrival, a horrific thunderstorm and torrential downpour welcomed him. His meager hut offered little protection from the

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<sup>42</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 263.

elements, yet it was not so far from the villagers' huts that he felt like an outcast. From his new "home" he clearly heard the shamans' singing, which lasted all night and day, imploring the gods to continue the beneficial rains. Lumholtz's first forty-eight hours among the Huichols, while tense and probably rather disturbing, provided him a glimpse into a precarious world in which Catholicism played little part and humans lived at the mercy of mercurial deities who must be appeased.<sup>43</sup> As Lumholtz would discover, after gaining their guarded trust, all Huichols, young child and old shaman alike, dwelled in a realm that blended spiritual and secular.

Huichol religion greatly intrigued Lumholtz. When he first arrived among the Huichols, Lumholtz was surprised to discover that they did not know what Protestants were (Lumholtz was not Catholic), and that it was very uncommon for priests to visit the area, on account of the difficult terrain.<sup>44</sup> By the

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<sup>43</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 6-9.

<sup>44</sup> Letter to Morris K. Jesup 27 September 1895. AMNH Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1865-8,

middle of the 1890s, the Catholic Church's efforts among the Huichols during the 1840s and 1850s had fallen by the wayside: church buildings had fallen into ruin and "the impress made on their religion was exceedingly slight and probably they are the most primitive tribe in Mexico."<sup>45</sup> The Huichols did observe certain Catholic feasts, such as Holy Week and Christmas, but by and large, their traditional religious practices were much more common and important. Lumholtz, assessing the situation, made the comment not on the state of Huichol material culture, but instead on the lack of Catholic resources available in the Sierra Madre Occidental at such a late date. Rather than belaboring the point, Lumholtz took great care to emphasize the importance of the more "traditional" beliefs that consumed Huichol daily life.

Quipping that the Huichols were more religious than any people he had ever met, Lumholtz asserted that "practically their whole life being one of

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Cat#s 65/i-163. Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 136.

<sup>45</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 136.

devotion to their gods.'<sup>46</sup> Santa Catarina, though somewhat less hospitable than San Andrés, proved to be a boon for Lumholtz in terms of his education on the subject of Huichol spirituality. Surrounded by mountains, gorges, and the vast Chapalagana River, Santa Catarina is home to the Huichol god of Fire, Teakata; the largest and most important temple dedicated to him is there, and from this location, *peyoteros* pay homage before beginning their annual pilgrimage. Lumholtz learned from his Huichol subjects that Santa Catarina, or more specifically the temple of the God of Fire, "is in the middle of the Huichol country, or from the Huichol point of view, in the middle of the world."<sup>47</sup> Parents bathe their newborn infants in springs near caves in Santa Catarina, and the temple nearby contains a small volcanic-rock idol which Lumholtz had the good fortune to see. While visiting Santa Catarina, and specifically Teakata, a Huichol informed Lumholtz

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<sup>46</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 137.

<sup>47</sup> Carl Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico; a Record of Five Years' Exploration Among the Tribes of the Western Sierra Madre; in the Tierra Caliente of Tepic and Jalisco; and Among the Tarascos of Michoacan*, by Carl Lumholtz (New York, C. Scribner's sons, 1902: C. Scribner's sons, 1902), 148.

that many gods of fire exist, "just as with the saints," and all other Huichol deities.<sup>48</sup>

Lumholtz's time among the Huichols led him to believe that they were a "nation of shamans," and that even though one might not be a religious authority, the most mundane goods and activities were full of spiritual power. He reasoned that the name "Huichol" was a corruption of the words *vīshālika* or *vīrārika*, meaning either doctor or healer; anyone who wishes might take up the training to become a shaman.<sup>49</sup> Religion permeated women's daily tasks, Lumholtz noted, and they never failed to seek divine guidance before undertaking their work.<sup>50</sup> Huichol religion is a personal, rather than institutional affair, thus the amount of religiosity Lumholtz experienced when observing everyday life was possible; the Huichols have temples and god houses,

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<sup>48</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 171.

<sup>49</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 21; Carl Lumholtz, *A Nation of Shamans: Symbolism of the Huichol Indians* (Oakland, CA: Bruce Finson, 1989), 6. Wixarika can also mean cultivator, according to some. The Huichols do not adhere to either translation. See the following

<http://wixarika.mediapark.net/en/assets/pdf/THEHUICHOL-Wixarika.pdf>

<sup>50</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 209.

for instance, but do not need lavish ceremonies to please their deities. The act of creating a sacred arrow, or naming a child after a sacred event, for instance, was steeped in religious symbolism, sufficed as an act of communion with the gods.<sup>51</sup>

Despite the mundane nature of Huichol religion, Lumholtz learned that peyote use superseded most other practices in importance and veneration. The consumption of peyote, and especially its relation to deer and corn, provided a glimpse into a world that very few non-Huichols understood. Though peyote had drawn the attention of Spanish and Mexican authorities since the early seventeenth century, they misjudged the cactus and its intrinsic value to the Huichols.

Lumholtz eventually gained the rare privilege of witnessing several parts of the ritual calendrical cycle that comprise the Huichol year. Most components have to do with the sacred deer-maize-peyote complex. While Lumholtz typically focused on common usages for the peyote plant, his counterpart Diguét paid

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<sup>51</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 99, 203.

critical attention to the deification of the plant and its place in Huichol history and cosmology. Taken together, the Europeans' accounts provide a complex, and rather complete picture of the value of peyote to the Huichols. Besides soothing the effects of malaria, and having somewhat hallucinogenic properties, Lumholtz remarked that "when taken it [peyote] exhilarates the human system and allays all feeling of hunger and thirst...it is wonderfully refreshing when one has been exposed to great fatigue."<sup>52</sup> The plant's curative aspects, including healing scorpion stings, are but one part of its importance to the Huichols. It is an object of worship, which promotes a sense of well-being among the community, through the process of procurement that occurs once a year in conjunction with the agricultural and hunting cycles.

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<sup>52</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 138. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 177-179. Lumholtz caught malaria sometime in early 1896. Letter to Morris K. Jesup 22 March 1896. AMNH Department of Anthropology Archives, Acc# 1896-11, Cat#s 65/164-583. In this letter, Lumholtz complained about having malaria, the terrible food among the Indians, and begged the developers not to mix up his negatives and descriptive envelopes.

While Lumholtz did not have an opportunity to travel to experience the pilgrimage by traveling to Wirikuta, he nevertheless made some important descriptions about preparations before and after the journey. Lumholtz noted that the trip lasted roughly forty-three days and began in October or November. "Delegations are sent from each of the main temples," he wrote, and one "singer" who represented Grandfather Fire, led the peyoteros. "Grandfather Fire" was the only person permitted to light fires along the trail, as it was he who carried with him the sacred flame from the temple in Santa Catarina. Tobacco pouches and squirrel tails were important parts of the ritual dress. While in camp, Huichol leaders who had not traveled with the peyoteros kept a record of the journey on pieces of knotted fiber; in this way, the rest of the villagers would be able to know when to begin preparations to mark the returning party. Finally, women whose husbands sought peyote had to observe similar restrictive behavior: "until the feast of *hikuli* is given, which may be four months [from the time of initial departure], neither party washes except on certain

occasions and then only with water from hikuli country [i.e., Real de Catorce]. They also fast much and eat no salt and are bound to observe strict continence [abstinence]."<sup>53</sup> Once the peyote seekers returned, and they were easily spotted "by the happy smile on their faces and the peculiar glare in their eyes," a welcoming festival commenced in which the villagers treated the peyoteros like gods and sang and danced throughout the night.<sup>54</sup> Lumholtz may not have understood the reasoning behind such behaviors, such as abstinence, fasting and refusal to bathe, but there were spiritual explanations for them that his counterpart, Léon Diguët managed to reveal.

### **Diguët's Expedition through *Tierras Occidentales***

Léon Diguët was born in Le Havre, France, in 1859.<sup>55</sup> Like Lumholtz, Diguët did not begin his academic career intending to study native peoples. Trained as an industrial chemist, he arrived in

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<sup>53</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 126-129.

<sup>54</sup> Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 130, 156.

<sup>55</sup> Olivier Debrouse, *Mexican Suite: A History of Photography in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 126.

Mexico in 1889 to work at the El Boleo copper mine, owned by the Rothschild Company.<sup>56</sup> However, as a younger man, Diguët received an education at the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris, which must have exposed him to the burgeoning fields of ethnography and anthropology.<sup>57</sup> Diguët and Lumholtz shared an affinity for the natural world and while in Mexico, the Frenchman began collecting "geological, botanical, and archaeological material" which he took back to France in 1892.<sup>58</sup> His career as a chemist effectively over, the Musée sent Diguët back to Mexico on a number of occasions to explore and collect. His expeditions in the territory of Tepic and in Jalisco brought him into contact with the Coras and Huichols, roughly around the same time that Lumholtz was in the area.<sup>59</sup> From these extensive expeditions, Diguët published *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas, Les cactacées*

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<sup>56</sup> J. Andrew Darling, "Review: Diguët's Studies of West Mexico," *Journal of the Southwest* 42, no. 1 (2000): 181. See also Debroise, *Mexican Suite*, 126.

<sup>57</sup> Debroise, *Mexican Suite*, 126.

<sup>58</sup> Darling, "Review: Diguët's Studies of West Mexico," 181. See also Paul Rivet, "Léon Diguët," *Journal de la Société des Américanistes* 19(1927): 379.

<sup>59</sup> Darling, "Review: Diguët's Studies of West Mexico," 181-182. See also Debroise, *Mexican Suite*, 126-127.

*utiles du Mexique, Collections Huichol, La sierra du Nayarit et ses indigènes* and *Idiome huichol:*

*Contribution à l'étude des langues mexicaines.*<sup>60</sup>

Because much of his work remains untranslated, either from French into Spanish, or from French into English, Diguët is less well-studied than Lumholtz. Nevertheless, his work has provided important observations of late nineteenth-century Huichol society and culture for modern anthropologists and historians.

Diguët uncovered a more nuanced explanation for Huichol behavior in relation to peyote: in order to obtain the small cactus, an arduous pilgrimage must first take place, which recreates an important event that occurred in the distant past.<sup>61</sup> Long ago Kauyaumari, the first mara'akame and one of the principal Huichol ancestors, and his followers came under the attack of neighboring, warlike peoples.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> In addition to his written works, Diguët also took countless photographs, some of which are published in Diguët, *Fotografías del Nayar y de California* and Campbell Grant, *Rock Art of Baja California* (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1974).

<sup>61</sup> Frésan Jiménez, *Nierika*, 39

<sup>62</sup> Recall part of this story opens Chapter Two. Diguët called the deity Majakuagy, a corruption of

During the fray, these unnamed peoples destroyed all of the goods used to prepare food and store water. Because Kauyaumari had faith, the gods took pity on him and his people, providing a special medicine that would slake their thirst and dampen their hunger: it was peyote. The gods instructed these proto-Huichols that in times of need, peyote would keep them from starvation. In reverence, the Huichols re-enact the sacred journey to Wirikuta, where Kauyaumari obtained peyote for the very first time.<sup>63</sup> His religious

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the Huichol name currently spelled Maxa Kwaxi. There is no mention of Kauyaumari. As Myerhoff explains the concept of semi-divine/divine transformation may have escaped the Frenchman, as it is a difficult concept for foreigners to comprehend. Instead of repeating Diguët's mistakes, I will substitute Kauyaumari as the individual whose conflicts with unnamed enemies left him stricken in the desert. Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxi was the deer deity who took pity on the mara'akame and his people, providing them with peyote. See Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt*, 85.

Incidentally, Konrad Theodor Preuss recognized Kauyaumari as a semi-divine trickster. See Preuss, "Die Hochzeit des Maises." As cited in Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*, 99.

<sup>63</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 144-145, 147. "...cuando Majakuagy expuso sus doctrinas, sufrió toda clase de persecuciones por parte de sus enemigos; él y sus discípulos tuvieron que huir; los encargados de perseguirlos los desvalijaron y les destruyeron los utensilios que les servían para alimentarse en un lugar llamado Rhaitomuany. Los dioses compadecidos de su desgracia, convirtieron los residuos de los utensilios en peyote, proveyéndolos de esto modo, de una planta con propiedades

convictions determined the behaviors by which all subsequent mara'akate adhered to when making pilgrimages. Diguët's observations help to contextualize the importance of the hunt: it is not nearly enough to obtain the peyote from a third party. Instead, as Diguët's subjects pointed out, Huichol men lovingly carried out the pilgrimage as part and parcel of sacred obligations to the deities, who included corn and deer gods.

The placement of deer, peyote, and corn within a symbolic cyclical calendar was an idea that Diguët touched upon, but did not develop as fully as future generations of scholars would. He remarked that the Huichols treated corn and peyote similarly, because corn nourished the body as peyote sustained the soul.<sup>64</sup> The peyote hunt may only commence once the October corn festival ends. This festival marks the "end" of the dry season (though rains may continue

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*sobrenaturales, que tiene la virtud de defenderlos del hambre y de la sed durante un tiempo considerable.*" Because Diguët's native language was French, he spelled Huichol words like Maxa Kwaxi as "Majakuajy". I use the spelling regulated by 20<sup>th</sup> century anthropologists such as Peter Furst, who worked extensively with Diguët's sources.

<sup>64</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 144-145.

intermittently), and roughly coincides with the harvest. As harvesting activities occur, those preparing to undertake the pilgrimage began to prepare for their arduous task.<sup>65</sup> While Diguet acknowledged the relevance of deer to corn and peyote, he did not emphasize the so-called trinity that is critically important to the Huichol cosmology. Chances are he may not have recognized it as such. He briefly noted that Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxi, a powerful deer deity, gave detailed instructions to Kauyaumari as to how to carry out the annual pilgrimage, including locations in the Huichol sacred landscape that pilgrims *must* visit.<sup>66</sup> Diguet did list the towns that the devotees passed through and their relevance to Huichol mytho-history. The journey to Real de Catorce took between ten and twelve days at the turn of the century, and the Huichol shamans typically led the rest of the group, singing songs and praying along the way. In each town or rancho, the peyoteros would stop and offer prayers, because all of these places were (and still are) either

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<sup>65</sup> Diguet, *Por tierras occidentales*, 145.

<sup>66</sup> See note 1, Chapter Two. I have corrected Diguet's apparent mistake, based upon Myerhoff's observations and work.

significant stops on the original peyote trail, or hold some importance to the Huichol sacred landscape.<sup>67</sup> About halfway through the trip, within five days from reaching the sacred mountain Re'unar (or El Quemado, in San Luis Potosi), all participants began a rigorous fast; the pilgrims could eat nothing. The peyoteros dedicated these five days to Kauyaumari, to commemorate his suffering in the

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<sup>67</sup> Diguét, *Por tierras occidentales*, 155-156; Fréscan Jiménez, *Nierika*, 39. Diguét listed 15 towns, villages or localities that peyoteros, in theory, had to visit on the trail: 1) *Huhiuripa*, *eminencia de las estribaciones de la sierra de Nayarit*, llamada *Chonacata*; 2) *Mekitzata*, *pueblo de Mezquitic*; 3) *Haquikoni*, *es una localidad de la sierra de Monte Escobedo*; 4) *Hukumayehue*, *localidad de la sierra de la Laguna Grande*; 5) *Jurahue-muyaka*, *Hacienda de los Cuervos*; 6) *Arahuirá*, *Ciudad de Jerez*; 7) *Rhurahuarita*, *pueblo de Sieneguitos (sic)*; 8) *Urjata*, *es la ciudad de Zacatecas, cuyo nombre de Zacatzutla hoy deformado, tenía misma significación en náhuatl*; 9) *Nirkamamona* (*nierka son emblemas religioso*), *pueblo de Troncoso*; 10) *Aikatzica* o *Rhamokahione*, *localidad llamada Tierras Coloradas*; 11) *Ramaya*, *nombre español huicholizado de la Hacienda de Ramos; las paradas en este punto son escasas y, por lo demás, no evoca ningún recuerdo histórico*; 12) *Tateimatinieri*, *Hacienda de la Hedeonda (sic)*; 13) *Ikitzarumahi*, *pueblo de San Juan del Sal (sic)*; 14) *Huakurikiteni*, *Hacienda de la Puerta de San Rafael*; 15) *Huirikata*. Esta última localidad, donde termina el viaje, significa en huichol "atrás de la diosa del peyote"; ya dije que la localidad se conoce ahora como *La Mojonera*. Ahí terminan los ayunos y las privaciones impuestos; los peregrinos se dispersan y se dedican todo el día a cosechar la valiosa planta; luego, el retorno se realiza siguiendo el mismo itinerario.

ancient past and to prepare themselves for the consumption of their sacred deity.

Diguet understood much of the symbolism that drove the Huichols to adhere strictly to the ancient guidelines passed down by Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxi and Kauyaumari, even though he did not grasp every aspect of the sacred complex of deer, corn and peyote. It was not a cult, or even a trinity, as Lumholtz called it, though he too acknowledged the connections between the three parts.<sup>68</sup> The two early ethnographers were, however, quite keen on two critical aspects of Huichol spirituality: first, that everything was sacred to the Huichols and that mundane items had supernatural purposes; and second, that peyote as a deity held deep religious meaning for the Huichols that helped keep them intrinsically tied to their ancient ways. In fact, Lumholtz strongly believed that patriotism continually

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<sup>68</sup> Barbara G. Myerhoff, "The Deer-Maize-Peyote Symbol Complex among the Huichol Indians of Mexico," *Anthropological Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (1970): 68. Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 138-139.

motivated the Huichols to make the difficult pilgrimage.<sup>69</sup>

Diguet, like Lumholtz, focused parts of his excursion among the Huichols on daily life. Social practices, such as marriage, drew his interest and Diguet made comparisons between what he witnessed in the 1890s, and what occurred in the past. For instance, he remarked that polygamy had been a common practice among the Huichols in the past. Some men were able to support multiple wives, but this became less and less widespread as social disorganization occurred.<sup>70</sup> Women and men worked side-by-side, with their children, in the fields and in the home and often accompanied men on business away from the community. Lumholtz either did not witness this, or simply failed to comment on what appears to be a rather significant example of egalitarian gendered work relations. Additionally, women cooked, made

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<sup>69</sup> Furst, *Rock Crystals and Peyote Dreams*, 64. Lumholtz noted that peyote promoted group health. Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 138.

<sup>70</sup> Diguet, *Por tierras occidentales*, 128-129. Diguet does not elaborate on what social disorganization actually meant; however, by the 1890s, Díaz's modernization practices had disrupted Huichol land use practices, resulting in the migration of some people to cities like Tepic and Guadalajara.

clothing, raised children and frequently tended to small household gardens.<sup>71</sup> And finally, like Lumholtz, Diguët remarked upon the political composition of Huichol villages, but provided more details: villagers "elected" officials for periods of five years. Civil-religious authorities, who were the only people to wield authority prior to the arrival of the Spanish, simply existed to maintain order at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> Finally, and curiously, Diguët mentioned that the Huichols were a hierarchical people, with *la nobleza* (nobility) and *el pueblo* (the people).<sup>73</sup> Like nearly every other aspect of Huichol life, there is a mythological reason behind the dual nature of society: Tamatsi Maxa Kwaxi determined that there should be a nobility according to Diguët, who received the names of certain gods and who were then responsible for electing civil-religious authorities every five

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<sup>71</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 124

<sup>72</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 129.

<sup>73</sup> It is entirely possible that there was a hierarchy of sorts, but not a nobility to speak of. Those individuals who held religious or secular office might have been held in higher esteem, and mara'akate were (and still are) incredibly important members of society.

years. Once chosen, elders "elected" the new authorities.<sup>74</sup>

Because Lumholtz and Diguët visited the Huichols during roughly the same time, similar types of events drew their attention. Diguët, like Lumholtz, briefly remarked on land tenure problems that the Huichols experienced. For example, that the Huichols constantly refused to allow the Mexican government to demarcate their lands did not escape Diguët's notice. Huichols worked the land communally and violence was rare during both Diguët's and Lumholtz's travels, owing to the heavy hand of the Porfirian state. Curiously, he also noted that firearms were uncommon in the region, and that what land disputes did occur were typically handled by arbitration.<sup>75</sup>

For an ethnic group so focused on local ethnic identity, Diguët's brief observations on the three principal Huichol towns are important. To be sure, both Europeans acknowledged that a Huichol from San Andrés may have no love for his neighbor in San Sebastián, but Diguët went a just a bit further. He suggested that many Huichols may relate with their

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<sup>74</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 129.

<sup>75</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 138-139.

neighbors only during certain times of the year to practice their religion. Over time, this led to differences in the customs and even to a certain degree languages between the districts and languages. Additionally, prolonged contact between Huichols and Spaniards/Mexicans created degrees of changes, depending upon one's location. For instance, the inhabitants San Andres were more open to the Spanish and to missionizing by Christians.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, residents of Santa Catarina developed a reputation for reticence, according to both Lumholtz and Diguët (as well as modern-day observers).<sup>77</sup> Diguët suggested that Huichols from Santa Catarina were quite proud of the fact that they retained much

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<sup>76</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales*, 168. "*El carácter de los indígenas también llegó a cambiar. Aquellos que vivían en el distrito de San Andrés eran más abiertos y más accesibles a las ideas traídas por los españoles; al contact con los misioneros, abandonaron con bastante facilidad sus antiguas costumbres; actualmente los cristianos son más numerosos entre ellos.*" Huicholes in San Andrés may not have been more Christianized necessarily, but proximity to the Spanish/Mexicans certainly made them more easily approached, as evidenced by Lumholtz as well.

<sup>77</sup> Juan Negrín, Personal Communication, 3 November 2008. Owing to a rise in tourism "the Community of Santa Catarina worried that the government is going to try to force road improvement down its throat again, in order to further its 'eco-touristic' program in the area."

of their ancient customs, and even though they would adopt some new ideas, Santa Catarina did not embrace outsiders in the same way that San Andrés did. Lastly, Diguët noted that San Sebastián, was the least intelligent and most backward of all of the Huichol towns.<sup>78</sup>

### **Pruess and Huichol Religiosity**

The observations, reports, and collections made by men like Lumholtz and Diguët had almost immediate effects upon others interested in the lives and cultures of so-called primitive Mexicans. In the first years of the twentieth century, the German ethnographer and linguist Konrad Theodor Preuss, became fascinated with the works of Lumholtz. Born in Prussia in 1869, Preuss originally intended on completing an education in the seminary; though he never finished his religious studies, his experiences

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<sup>78</sup> Diguët, *Por tierras occidentales entre sierras y barrancas*, 163-164. Regarding Santa Catarina: "*En el distrito de Santa Catalina, se enorgullecen de ser los que mejor conservaron las antiguas tradiciones, los indios, aunque bastante abiertos al progreso, no abandonan fácilmente sus antiguas costumbres.*" And San Sebastián "*Finalmente los indios del distrito de San Sebastián siempre se manifestaron como los menos inteligentes y los más atrasados de toda la población huichol.*" I am thoroughly unclear as to how Diguët came to this conclusion.

influenced his work later in life.<sup>79</sup> He left for Paris in 1905, where he met Léon Diguët and discussed the Frenchman's work among the Huichols and Coras. From there he set sail for the United States, and then on to Veracruz, traveling to the Sierra Madre Occidental by train.<sup>80</sup> Once in the Sierra, his interests turned toward trying to find links between modern indigenous religious practices and the beliefs and customs of the ancient Aztecs.<sup>81</sup> Preuss wrote and recorded numerous songs, and made detailed observations about the inhabitants of the Sierra, especially the Huichols and Coras. Unfortunately, much of his work was destroyed during the fire-bombing of Berlin during World War II.<sup>82</sup> Additionally, much of Preuss's surviving work has either yet to be translated into English, or has only recently been translated into Spanish, leaving his insightful observations virtually unknown to historians.

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<sup>79</sup> Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*, 88.

<sup>80</sup> Konrad Theodor Preuss, "Fiesta, literatura y magia en el Nayarit: ensayos sobre coras, huicholes y mexicanos de Konrad Theodor Preuss," ed Jesús Jáuregui and Johannes Neurath. (México, DF: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1998).

<sup>81</sup> Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*, 89.

<sup>82</sup> Schaefer and Furst, *People of the Peyote*, xi.

Preuss's interest in religion led him to many a Huichol ceremony and there he listened to and recorded a number of sacred songs and incantations to a variety of gods. He discovered that Huichol religious songs could be quite lengthy, and instead of the repetitious choruses common to Cora songs, Huichol chants continued "all through the night, and another the whole following day, if the ceremony lasts that long...to understand the meaning always requires the complete text. In this way the chants become truly monstrous in length."<sup>83</sup> He discovered that certain gods or divine beings figured prominently in Huichol songs, including the Fire God Tatewarí and Kauyaumari. Preuss realized fairly quickly that the Huichols placed religion squarely at the center of their lives: "objects speak, and their deeds are recounted, the feathers of birds, arrows and other ceremonial objects-in short, it is a magical universe that to this day is alive in Huichol ideology."<sup>84</sup>

During Preuss's time among the Huichols, which spanned about nine months, he chronicled the three

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<sup>83</sup> Preuss, "Die Hochzeit des Maises," 99.

<sup>84</sup> Preuss, "Die Hochzeit des Maises," 99.

fundamental aspects of their religion: the deer, maize, and peyote complex. Though he wrote about the importance of corn in its ritual and mundane senses separately, he understood the fact that all three aspects were part and parcel of Huichol symbolism. For instance, while observing the pre-pilgrimage rituals, Preuss illuminated that

it is the sacred deer hunt of the gods that is here reenacted on the peyote hunt, and this deer hunt in the land of peyote, the place where the sun comes up [Wirikuta], is repeated again in different forms during the ritual of the toasting of the maize in March, and again in June during the Haxári kuáixa ritual, the eating of the coarse maize. People representing deer are chased into noose traps...or the Sun god Tayáu, Our Father, and a variation of the fire god Tatusí Maxa Kwaxí, Great-Grandfather Deer Tail, track the deer impersonator to Pariyakutsiyé, the place of the rising Sun...<sup>85</sup>

Ceremonies such as this amazed Preuss and led him to the conclusion that little had changed within the Huichol religious mythology, despite contact with Spaniards (and especially Jesuits) since the 1720s.<sup>86</sup> While his belief is an overstatement, it is obvious that Huichol religious practices were remarkably strong and constant, considering Lumholtz's and

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<sup>85</sup> Preuss, "Die religiösen Gesänge," 129.

<sup>86</sup> Preuss, "Die religiösen Gesänge," 121.

Diguet's fieldwork verified different components of the same stories. Like his European counterparts had in the past decades, Preuss noted that the Huichols only grudgingly accepted Catholic priests in their environs. Two priests lived in the region at the beginning of the twentieth century, "one in San Andrés and one in San Sebastián," and according to Preuss the Catholic missionaries had little effect on their Huichol charges.<sup>87</sup> The priests frequently complained that they treated churches like they did their temples, a common grievance levied against the Huichols in centuries and decades past. The Huichols "devote a truly enormous part of their lives to them [their gods], and they take great pride in this relationship."<sup>88</sup> The focal point of Huichol life was their religion, the sacred, inextricably interwoven into the mundane activities of daily life, which Preuss witnessed through ceremony.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, many people in the United States probably had heard about the Huichols from a few newspaper articles published,

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<sup>87</sup> Preuss, "Ritte durch das Land," 120

<sup>88</sup> Preuss, "Ritte durch das Land," 120.

based upon Lumholtz's accounts. Because Diguët wrote only in Spanish or French, and Preuss in German, their observations were not accessible to an American audience. But Lumholtz's expeditions caught the attention of papers such as the *Dallas Morning News*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Biloxi Daily Herald*. Readers learned about the beautiful artwork created by the Huichols and discovered certain elements of their religion. However, some of what people read was fundamentally flawed, either because of early twentieth-century racism, or because Lumholtz simply made errors. For instance, while Lumholtz correctly asserted that Huichol art was a representation of their prayers, he incorrectly suggested that somehow, Arabian influences infiltrated their styles.<sup>89</sup> In another article, an unnamed *Los Angeles Times* reporter writing on the Huichol primordial deluge story commented that the Biblical story of Noah "is all a fake." "Noah wasn't a Jew...and the flood was not merely a forty-days: go-as-you-please. It lasted five years. They do things thoroughly, these

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<sup>89</sup> "Art of a Strange People," *New York Times*, 4 November 1903.

savages."<sup>90</sup> This author deemed it impossible that primitive Indians could challenge Western religious thought and ridiculed the Huichol primordial flood myth which provides the basis for pilgrimages to Lake Chapala, near Guadalajara. Finally, historical facts in newspapers were often simply incorrect, as evidenced by the *Dallas Morning News*. A reporter asserted that the Spanish conquered the Huichols some time before 1722, when the Coras finally succumbed to the invaders. The reporter asserted this to be true because the Huichols "...are such cowards."<sup>91</sup> In the waning days of Victorian sensibilities, reports like these served to prop up white American racial superiority over the vastly inferior, primordial, and primitive savages of Mexico. But in the long run they were losing ground to the important work that Lumholtz, Diguët and Preuss accomplished.

Besides training the academic mind toward the importance of Mexico's lesser-known indigenous peoples, men like Lumholtz, Diguët and Preuss paved the way for future generations of scholars. In the

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<sup>90</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, "Ark Landed in Mexico," 28 October 1903.

<sup>91</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, "The Artist Savages of Mexico...A Nation of Liars," 6 December 1903.

1930s, Robert M. Zingg, an American anthropologist, worked extensively among the Huichols and Tarahumaras. His two important works, *Huichol Mythology* and the posthumous memoir, *Behind the Mexican Mountains* examine two indigenous groups that Lumholtz worked with, but forty years later. Important comparisons can be made in order to trace how quickly modern society enveloped the Huichols in the immediate aftermaths of the Mexican Revolution and Cristero Rebellions, in which the Huichols played minor roles. As Mexico continued to improve its infrastructure, particularly in relation to rural areas, Zingg's work was important in illustrating how drastically, if at all, Huichols changed.

The early European ethnographers provide key pieces of evidence for more long-range comparisons, as a new generation of anthropologists emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. Emphasizing the importance of peyote as a focal point in Huichol religion, scholars like Barbara Myerhoff and Peter T. Furst used the works of Diguet, Lumholtz, and Preuss in order to understand the genesis of Huichol religion. Myerhoff finally explained what earlier scholars could not

quite understand: the somewhat elusive "trinity" or symbolic complex of peyote, corn and deer, and its paramount importance to Huichol religion. This complex ties the Huichols to their location in time and space, as Myerhoff pointed out in her studies. Thus it is religion, linked intimately with geography that intricately binds the Huichols to their specific place in the Sierra Madre Occidental. Lumholtz, Diguët, Pruess, and later Zingg laid the foundation for modern scholars to understand this sacred geography. This is precisely why the Huichols refuse to give up their land, and why their religion, while certainly infused with Catholicism, is still Huichol at its core.

**Conclusion**  
**The Huichols and the Twentieth Century:**  
**Examining a People With History**

*"From his birth to his death his actions are governed by the belief in his native deities..."<sup>1</sup>*

Huichol life between 1810 and 1910 was different than it had been even one hundred years before. Over the course of the century since Independence from Spain, non-indigenous Mexicans and international travelers flooded previously uncolonized areas of the countryside on a grand scale. In some cases, exemplified by both Basil Hall and George Lyon, contact between the Huichols and outsiders was peaceful. The observations recorded by Hall and Lyon provide historians with cultural descriptions of Huichol customs that can be linked with studies carried out by Lumholtz and others. Hall's and Lyon's writings also provide temporal context: we know the Huichols spent time near Tepic at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and we know that they were there to trade for and purchase goods.

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<sup>1</sup> Lumholtz, "The Huichol Indians of Mexico," 84.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the Huichols had experienced more than a century of sustained contact with foreigners, and yet their cultural traits changed very little. We can discern these minor transformations from reports made by Franciscan friars across space and time. At varying points between the late sixteenth- and mid-nineteenth centuries, Franciscan travelers made some progress introducing Catholic doctrine to the Huichols, and the priests simultaneously reported on indigenous beliefs, the flora and fauna in the area, and the eventual blending of Catholic and native.

Mid-nineteenth century political turmoil affected Huichols more drastically than in previous decades. The Ley Lerdo, passed in 1856 by Liberal reformers in Mexico City, threatened the very center of Huichol society and culture. For the Huichols, land was not simply a place upon which food grew or animals grazed. Rather, their lands fit centrally in a complex religious worldview that placed significance upon location. The Sierra Madre Occidental mountains were sacred and the Huichols viewed their place in the world as important in the

scheme of their religion. When mestizo outsiders flooded into northwestern Jalisco and encroached upon Huichol lands, many indigenous peoples dealt with this affront with violence. For this reason, some Huichols chose to fight alongside their Cora neighbors under the banner of Manuel Lozada, who rebelled against local, state, and eventually federal authorities in defense of indigenous land rights.<sup>2</sup> His execution in 1873 led to a gradual end in organized violence, but not to indigenous defiance over the encroachment of mestizos.

Liberal transformations accelerated in the wake of Lozada's death. Díaz's centralization policies, together with the railroads that linked outlying areas to the center, made it much easier in 1890 to move around the country. This had catastrophic results for some indigenous groups, who, by the late 1890s, had simply disappeared from history. Others, like the Huichols, became adept at negotiating their

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<sup>2</sup> Mexico was not the only nation wracked by violence as a result of Liberal land policies. See, for example, Aldo A. Lauria-Santiago, "Land, Community, and Revolt in Late-Nineteenth-Century Indian Izalco, El Salvador," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 79, no. 3 (1999): 495.

transformed world. Some took up the offers of officials like Miguel Ahumada and Ramón Corona and became educators for their people, while others simply refused to allow unscrupulous outsiders to steal land that did not belong to them.

The hundred years following independence shaped how the Huichols lived, but they also changed how outsiders saw and thought of the Huichols. By the turn of the twentieth century, Mexico's indigenous peoples could no longer escape the scrutiny of foreign scholars, who had taken a keen interest in them and their intriguing ways. Though Lumholtz believed that Mexico would ultimately subsume the Huichols (and other indigenous peoples) by undermining their culture, he did not feel that this would necessarily have a wholly negative impact upon their lives. Much like the early indigenista thinkers of the post-revolutionary era, Lumholtz surmised that such melding together of Mexican and Indian would be beneficial on the whole, because Indians would be treated "well by those in power" and

would reap the benefits of citizenship.<sup>3</sup> He may have anticipated the future, but Lumholtz was no keen observer of the political sentiments of the time. Positivist thinkers and non-indigenous Mexicans mostly had little desire to include their indigenous brethren in the larger Mexican nation, and there is little reason to think that the Porfirian order, if left to its own devices, would have adopted policies of ethnic tolerance.

Díaz may have brushed off grievances from a faraway Indian group, but the twentieth century brought challenges not so easily dismissed. While the Huichols had little direct knowledge of the larger nation, their land troubles echoed concerns that Mexicans from Baja California to the Yucatán peninsula had with an oligarchy that ruled with such profound insensitivity. Huichols living in Santa Catarina faced the indignity of having their lands stripped from them; this effectively allowed the Torres family to operate an hacienda with impunity, forcing Santa Catarina residents to pay rents on

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<sup>3</sup> Lumholtz, "Explorations in Mexico," 139.

territory that they had claimed for centuries.<sup>4</sup>

Turmoil brewed in rural areas, adding to the general sense of unrest that pervaded Mexico as a whole. By 1910 even Díaz could not contain the frustrations of his countrymen. Land hunger, coupled with severe economic downturn and a growing class of ambitious but politically excluded elites plunged Mexico into a revolution that is now the stuff of legend.

Much of what is known about the Huichols during the Revolutionary era suggests at best tangential participation. This is not to say that they did not take part in the struggle to some degree, but it is unclear why some Huichols chose to fight while others did not. Some Huichols and Coras supported the Revolutionary cause in the west, under the command of Rafael Buelna, a Sinaloan general and supporter of

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<sup>4</sup> Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 123. See also Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 19. Finally, I found a curious document in the AHJ that described the hardships the Huichols of Santa Catarina faced because they could not come up with rent payments. It was never evident to whom they paid the rent, but their plight is clear from the letter they wrote in 1901, asking to be relieved of rent payments. The government paid little attention, and the matter apparently received no further review. AHJ G-9-901 MEZ/3566. Mezquitic. Receptoría de Rentas, 1901-1905.

Pancho Villa.<sup>5</sup> Buelna understood the "social and economic woes that led people to take up arms" in western Mexico, and drew much support from Tepic.<sup>6</sup> Others, particularly Huichols living in San Andrés, "remained loyal to the government."<sup>7</sup> Indians and mestizos in the region often fled the violence and either never returned, or did so only after peace had been restored to the Sierra Madre; the indigenous town of Santa Catarina used the violence of the Revolution "to expel the Torres family and other Mexican settlers who had recently invaded their land."<sup>8</sup>

The revolutionary dynamics in the Gran Nayar thus kept faith with several important trends in Huichol history. First, Huichols continued to react

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<sup>5</sup> Coyle, *From Flowers to Ash*, 183. See also Grimes and Hinton, "The Huichol and Cora," 795. Weigand, *Ensayos sobre el Gran Nayar*, 121.

<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Katz, *The Life and Times of Pancho Villa* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 442.

<sup>7</sup> Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, xxvi.

<sup>8</sup> Negrín, *Acercamiento histórico y subjetivo al huichol*, 19. See also Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, xxvi. Weigand, "The Role of the Huichol Indians," 168. Jean A. Meyer, "La revolución en occidente: el caso especial de los huicholes," in *Los Huicholes: documentos históricos*, ed. Beatriz Rojas (México, DF: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, 1992), 262.

to internal or external stressors without any clear sense of ethnic unity, occasionally battling against each other over land or during war. Though they may speak the same language, albeit with regional variations, it is still difficult to speak or write of one overarching Huichol history. Huichol response to the Revolution remained opportunistic. Santa Catarina's residents, ignored and abandoned by the government, used the mestizos' fear of violence to regain control of their lands. Perhaps this was simply an opportunistic gesture, but they had stopped petitioning the government sometime before 1905, with the realization that the oligarchy would do little to assist them. For whatever reasons, San Andrés chose to support a government that mostly scorned the idea of indigenous rights. And San Sebastián, which had long been an outpost for Franciscan missionaries, became virulently anti-government over the course of the early twentieth century.<sup>9</sup>

However, a second trend emerged in the wake of the Revolution. Towns that had once been on opposing sides of an issue at times put their differences

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<sup>9</sup> Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, xxvi.

behind them to work for solutions that would benefit all Huichols. After the Revolution ended, some Huichol towns that had lost lands and people fought to get them back. In 1921, the Huichols who lived in San Andrés received titles to their lands to protect them from future thefts at the hands of outsiders and they even worked with their occasional enemies, the Huichols of Santa Catarina, to secure their territory.<sup>10</sup> Many Huichol towns received titles to their lands in the post-Revolutionary period, securing their borders and providing inhabitants with a modicum of comfort against future encroachment. Thus, the Huichols, as keen observers of both local and regional issues, used the Revolution to rectify some of the wrongs levied against them in the thirty-four years of Díaz's reign.

Though an uneasy peace descended over much of Mexico in the immediate aftermath of the Revolution, such sentiments did not last long. Despite the

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<sup>10</sup> *AHJ*, G-9-914, C-1633, Exp. 2210. In the midst of the Revolution, leaders from San Andrés sought title to their town lands. Later, in the early 1920s, they sought to get all of their lands back from the San Juan Capistrano hacienda. See *AHJ* G-9-920, C-518. For the collaboration between the San Andrés' and Santa Catarina's citizens, see *AHJ*, G-9-920, C-518.

positive gains achieved by many Huichols after 1920, periods of profound violence continued to disrupt indigenous families in the Sierra Madre Occidental. The Cristero Rebellion brought much instability and unrest to the area, forcing many Indians, including the Huichols, to flee their homelands yet again. This war, which began in 1926, grew mostly from mestizo ranchers' resentment over the increasingly aggressive presence of the secular, anti-clerical state.<sup>11</sup> But it impacted Huichol communities as cristeros and agraristas killed Indians indiscriminately and broke up whatever solidarity that existed immediately after the Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Several excellent studies of the Cristero Rebellion exist, including a seminal, three-volume work by Jean Meyer. See Jean A. Meyer, *La cristiada*, 3 vols. (México, DF: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 2005). See also Matthew Butler, *Popular Piety and Political Identity in Mexico's Cristero Rebellion: Michoacán, 1927-1929* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jennie Purnell, *Popular Movements and State Formation in Revolutionary Mexico: The Agraristas and Cristeros of Michoacán* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

<sup>12</sup> Weigand, "The Role of the Huichol Indians," 170-171. Stacy B. Schaefer, "The Cosmos Contained: The Temple Where Sun and Moon Meet," in *People of the Peyote: Huichol Indian History, Religion, and Survival*, ed. Stacy B. Schaefer and Peter T. Furst (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996). Some Huichols who lived in Tuxpan fled to the mestizo settlement of Bolaños to escape the fighting, Zingg,

Because the rebellion centered around the Los Altos region of Jalisco, somewhat east of the Huichols' stronghold, only Huichols from San Sebastián fought against the government, continuing their Revolutionary animosity. Intercommunity cooperation failed to provide a groundswell of support for either position during the Cristero War.<sup>13</sup>

Interest in Mexico's native population dramatically expanded in the 1930s and 1940s, thanks in part to President Lázaro Cárdenas's belief that Mexicans needed to understand the importance of indigenous groups to the larger national history. The old racism that plagued relationships between Indians and the larger population needed to be abandoned, and Cárdenas hoped that native peoples

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*Huichol Mythology*, xlvi. See also Shelton, "The Recollections of Times Past," 357.

<sup>13</sup> Weigand, "The Role of the Huichol Indians," 170. He asserts that Huichols only fought for other Huichols when "all comunidades were equally threatened." For a brief discussion of San Sebastián, see Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, xxvi. Jim Tuck, *The Holy War in Los Altos: A Regional Analysis of Mexico's Rebellion* (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1982), 14. David C. Bailey, *Viva Cristo Rey: The Cristero Rebellion and the Church-State Conflict in Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1974), 112.

would work to improve their communities.<sup>14</sup> Though no official government organizations working specifically with Indian groups existed under Cárdenas, this new way of viewing the large indigenous population helped spur the creation of programs designed to educate Indians.

By the 1940s, scholars in Mexico began looking at new ways to improve indigenous communities. The formation of a new governmental organization, the Instituto Nacional Indigenista or INI, was a top-down effort to bring native peoples' plights to the fore. Founded during the Alemán administration, INI's overtly assimilationist policies aimed to include Indians in the Mexican nation. While it would take decades for INI to have any real impact upon natives' lives, it proved particularly difficult for the organization to work among the Huichols. Government projects brought outsiders into the Huichol countryside and schools often made them feel trapped and uncomfortable. Huichol children who attended INI boarding schools hated the stifling, aggressive nature of mestizo society as compared to their native

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<sup>14</sup> Doremus, "Indigenism, Mestisaje, and National Identity," 376-377.

Huichol lifestyle.<sup>15</sup> Despite efforts to modernize, particularly during the 1920s and 1930s, the Huichols chose to retain their old lifeways, and rarely, if ever, took part in purportedly civilizing projects. Their resistance to unwanted government incursions could be violent, or merely vocal, depending upon how they perceived the threats.<sup>16</sup>

As the violence dissipated over the course of the twentieth century, academics following the writings Lumholtz and to a lesser extent, Diguët and Preuss, made contact with the Huichols. Robert Zingg, an American ethnographer, conducted intensive examinations into Huichol religious life during the 1930s. He primarily worked among Huichols in Tuxpan de Bolaños, who had recently returned from "exile" as a result of the violence.<sup>17</sup> Zingg's observations

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<sup>15</sup> Zingg, *Report*, 727. Regarding the fact that no boarding schools existed in Huichol centers, see Grimes and Hinton, "The Huichol and Cora," 806. The authors also mention that the Huichols particularly hated the public health and census agencies. For a discussion on Huichol reaction to mestizo "interpersonal relations" see Myerhoff, *Peyote Hunt*, 75.

<sup>16</sup> Juan Negrín, Personal communication, 3 November 2008, regarding tourism and government projects near Santa Catarina.

<sup>17</sup> Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, xxvii, xxxi.

harken back to studies by the three European ethnographers in that there is a noticeable emphasis on the importance of maize in Huichol cosmology. The cultural hero Kauyaumari figured prominently in a number of stories that Zingg's informant reported; here, Kauyaumari was a much more richly developed figure than in Diguët's reports.<sup>18</sup> Unlike Lumholtz and his contemporaries, Zingg spent much more time living in individual communities, as opposed to trekking from place to place. As such, his studies display more nuance and deeper understanding than the somewhat superficial examinations of the Europeans.

Zingg's sudden death of a heart attack in 1957 created a brief void in Huichol studies. Beginning in 1970, a new generation of academics began observing and examining the Huichols in earnest. Anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff had the good fortune of accompanying several Huichols on their annual peyote hunt. As a result of her time with the Huichols, we have a much clearer understanding of the roles that deer, maize, and peyote play within the context of Huichol daily life. Myerhoff built upon

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<sup>18</sup> Zingg, *Huichol Mythology*, 52-67.

the studies of peyote conducted by Lumholtz, Diguët, and to a lesser degree, Zingg, developing important themes in their works, such as the deification of seemingly mundane objects. Peyote's hallucinogenic properties allow common people to commune with their gods, which accounts for why the cactus is critically important to the Huichols. Maize, the "mundane" aspect of Huichol life, according to Myerhoff, is perhaps the most important: it feeds the people through the year, and linked women to the ceremonial calendar during times when they did not hunt peyote.<sup>19</sup> Finally, deer, once abundant in the western Sierra Madre Occidental, are now relatively scarce, a fact true for much of the nation. In fact, in Huichol ceremonies in which deer blood normally anointed corn plants, now bull's blood is a common and acceptable substitute.<sup>20</sup> The deer-maize-peyote cultural complex, first noted by Diguët and Lumholtz, has changed little in a century, although it is an excellent

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<sup>19</sup> Myerhoff, "The Deer-Maize-Peyote Symbol," 68-72.

<sup>20</sup> This demonstrates the adaptability of the Huichols, who seem to realize that the deer habitat has dramatically changed. They have begun to transform some artwork to include the bull's presence in their life: while the bull is an acceptable substitute, he does not supersede the deer's importance. See Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, 47.

demonstration of the Huichols' ability to adapt to outside circumstances in the modern era.

Myerhoff's contemporary, Peter Furst, worked almost exclusively with Diguët's materials, drawing conclusions between Huichol activities in the 1970s, and those recorded by the Frenchman during the previous century. What is significant about anthropological works from the 1970s and beyond is that historians may use the materials to chart change over time, in addition to understanding the historical significance of cultural activities. For instance, Furst noted that the peyote pilgrimage changed very little in the eighty years since Diguët first recorded it, while the same held true for the mytho-historical meaning behind the hunt.<sup>21</sup> Blending ethnographies and anthropological fieldwork has helped both anthropologists and historians understand western Mexico and the Huichols more fully.

Phil C. Weigand, a contemporary of both the late Myerhoff and Furst, has been a prolific scholar on Huichol ethnohistory and the archaeology of western

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<sup>21</sup> Benítez, *In the Magic Land of Peyote*, xi. See also Furst, *Rock Crystals and Peyote Dreams*, 1.

Mexico. While academics disagree on some of Weigand's assertions, particularly those that propound an alternative origin for the Huichols, his analyses emphasize the importance of using new historical frameworks to understand peoples for whom documents do not exist.<sup>22</sup> Though some of Weigand's work is speculative because of a dearth of sources, we admittedly know much more about the region as a whole because of the different layers of data that an archaeological, anthropological, and historical methodology uncovers. Finally, an intriguing bit of mytho-history that Weigand collected, concerning the peyote hunt and the ancient site at La Quemada, helps to place the Huichols squarely within a geographical region, lending credence to their own religious ideas about sacred space.<sup>23</sup>

Americans were not the only ones intrigued by the Huichols and their religious beliefs. Scholars working under the auspices of INI, such as Alfonso Fabila, conducted research trips to the Huichol

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter Two. See also Weigand and Weigand, "Huichol Society." Weigand, *Los orígenes de los caxcanes*.

<sup>23</sup> Weigand, "Possible References."

Sierra in the late 1950s in order to gather information about the reticent peoples. The Huichols probably harbored a certain distrust of the Mexican observers, because INI employees and academics had an agenda that most Americans and Europeans did not. Fabila's account, titled "Situación de los Huicholes de Jalisco," chronicled the geographic features of the Huichol territory in Jalisco; lamented the poor quality of the available lands; and discussed such cultural aspects as marriage, dress, and vices.<sup>24</sup> During the period in which Fabila conducted his research, men typically married between fifteen and twenty years of age and women between thirteen and eighteen. Though at times mechanical, Fabila's work among the Huichols introduced this little-understood group to the Mexican bureaucracy and INI subsequently published the report in 1959.

There also exists an undated, anonymous INI report that briefly describes the Coras, Huichols,

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<sup>24</sup> Alfonso Fabila, "Situación de los Huicholes de Jalisco," (México, DF: Instituto Nacional Indigenista, Biblioteca Juan Rulfo, 1958), 1, 8, 65-69, 80-86, 89-90. Fabila originally worked among the Yaquis. See De la Peña, "Social and Cultural Policies," 726.

and Tepehuanos living in Jalisco, Nayarit, and Durango. In similar form to Fabila's work, this account explores the geographical distribution of the three indigenous groups in western Mexico, in addition to explaining the climate, flora, and fauna.<sup>25</sup> This report, produced at some point after 1974, explained that the population density in the region is quite low and that Huichol ranchos are normally located near water sources.<sup>26</sup> The similarities between the anonymous pamphlet and Fabila's account are numerous, and point to INI's continuing interest in relatively mundane and material facts about the Huichol Sierra and the people living in the region.

The work of INI may not have brought about the desired assimilation, but it did foster a whole new body of anthropological works in the 1980s and 1990s. Mexican anthropologists discovered constants and variables within Huichol culture. For instance, during the nineteenth century, Huichol men and women

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<sup>25</sup> Anónimo, "Cora, Huichol, Tepehuano en Jalisco, Nayarit, Durango," ed. Biblioteca Juan Rulfo CDI (México, DF: CDI, sin fecha), 1-2.

<sup>26</sup> Anónimo, "Cora, Huichol, Tepehuano en Jalisco, Nayarit, Durango," 4, 7.

engaged in "trial marriages," in which a man would take a woman for a prescribed period of time. If the match was not a happy one, the woman returned to her family and could marry another, even if she was pregnant.<sup>27</sup> By the end of the twentieth century, when Ramón Mata Torres examined Huichol marriage in detail, there was little mention of this practice, though having multiple wives was still fairly common in certain Huichol towns.<sup>28</sup> Juan Negrín wrote a small study of Huichol history and culture, and then moved on to establish a website dedicated to the preservation of Huichol art, history, and culture.<sup>29</sup> Using the internet to illuminate the strife in the Sierra has helped American scholars better understand the reality of daily life in Jalisco and Negrín's work among the Huichols has helped to shed light on

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<sup>27</sup> Lyon, *Journal of a Residence*, 297.

<sup>28</sup> Mata Torres, *Matrimonio huichol*, 11, 13. Mata Torres has an interesting, brief discussion about mixed marriage taboos and other marital practices within Huichols communities. Otto Klineberg, "Notes on the Huichol," *American Anthropologist* 36, no. 3 (1934): 455. Klineberg notes that girls having no choice over their partners, but Mata Torres contradicts this assertion in his recent examinations.

<sup>29</sup> Juan Negrín, "Wixarika: An online archive of Huichol Art, History, and Culture," <http://wixarika.mediapark.net/en/index.html>.

modern problems like deforestation, mining in Wirikuta, and government projects in the region. In the future these recent developments in the Huichol Sierra will surely warrant more intensive examinations.

Several larger conclusions emerge from the Huichols' century-long struggle to confront the challenge of the Mexican state. The first of these concerns the matter of indigenous unity, or lack thereof. At no point in the course of these hundred years did Huichol villages function as a single people with a single purpose, despite the fact that they shared an extensive spectrum of cultural attributes. Instead of consolidating their ethnic identity as "Huichols," villages typically chose disunity in times of desperation. For example, throughout the 1840s, when Huichols bordering the hacienda San Antonio de Padua came under attack, there was no full frontal assault on the part of the "Huichol nation" as a whole. No such union existed, and thus no massive indigenous response that might

very well have provoked a harsh response from the Mexican government. Likewise, during the Lozada rebellion in the 1860s and early 1870s, Huichol villages carefully weighed their options: many chose to fight, and it is unlikely that we will ever have a true sense of the ethnic and intertribal unity that occurred. However, just as many Huichols chose peaceful measures to protect their land, in opposition to their more bellicose brethren. It is safe to say, then, that in Huichol disunity they found strength. This may never have been their intention, but in the end it worked for them, and protected their interests: measured responses to the terrible situations of the late nineteenth century meant that the Huichols rarely experienced extreme retaliation on the part of the Mexican state.

The Huichol case thus calls attention to a second point regarding nineteenth-century Mexican ethnohistory, that being the often vacillating and inconsistent state approach to indigenous peoples. The state, either in its local or federal incarnation, hardly served as benefactor to the native peoples of the Gran Nayar. To his credit,

though, Porfirio Díaz never adopted any strict "Indian policy" relative to the region during his thirty-five year tenure, and this helped the Huichols weather the storm. Other groups certainly experienced worse treatment. Campaigns of outright genocide occurred among the Yaquis, whom the government forcibly removed to the henequen plantations of the Yucatán peninsula.<sup>30</sup> That latter region also had a long history of violence, as agitated Mayas struggled against specific policies and practices during the decades-long Caste War.<sup>31</sup> Across the isthmus, in the Mexican southwest, an area with a heavy concentration of indigenous peoples, the economy languished, and the government essentially turned its back on the population. Chiapas and its residents are among the poorest in the country. Like the Huichols, indigenous groups in Chiapas who Mexican politicians largely ignored retained a significant amount of their cultural mores. The inconsistent ways in which the government treated indigenous peoples in the nineteenth century is an

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<sup>30</sup> See Hu-DeHart, *Yaqui Resistance and Survival* and Erickson, *Yaqui Homeland and Homeplace*.

<sup>31</sup> Rugeley, *Yucatán's Maya Peasantry*.

intriguing subject that warrants more thorough investigation. State inconsistency toward indigenous peoples owed to many factors, chief among them being a given region's pressure for land commercialization. While a full picture of nineteenth-century state-indigenous relations has yet to be written, it is safe to say that Huichol and Cora experiences did not fall on the harsher end of the spectrum.

A third point here concerns the extraordinary longevity of certain religious-material complexes found among pre-industrial peoples. The question of what came first- the cold facts of subsistence or the cosmological meanings that came to be invested in places, goods, and animals- will probably never be resolved to universal satisfaction. But the Huichol case does illustrate how tenaciously the interweaving of material culture and religious belief can be. Any attempts to commercialize and privatize land usage in the Gran Nayar has constituted an assault on a carefully balanced human relationship with the triad of corn, deer, and peyote, and for that reason has met with stiff-necked resistance. Much like the Yucatec Mayas' organization around seasonal rail,

milpa farming, and cyclical land usage, the Huichol method of doing and believing survived the assaults of mestizo-ranchero culture and continues, albeit in modified form, in the present day.

A fourth and final point concerns the evolving dialogue among indigenous peoples, state power, and anthropological knowledge. Pre-1890 writings on the Huichols, much like analogous writings on virtually any indigenous peoples in Mesoamerica, typically manifested tendentious aims and haphazard method; this description certainly applies to the case of the letters of Franciscan missionaries and early foreign travelers. Their unsystematic and often impressionistic nature bore a more than passing relationship with state weakness. Indeed, a great part of that weakness consisted in poor knowledge of subject peoples and little means to enforce state dictates upon them. More disciplined and more highly refined ethnographic knowledge in the form of pre-Boazian anthropology entered the scene as the Porfirian state matured, and in part for the obvious reason: the latter needed the former. For that reason, professional ethnographers like Lumholtz and

Diguet had no problem obtaining permissions and support at the highest levels of national power. However, anthropological knowledge carried a latent potential of which Don Porfirio would almost certainly have disapproved. Carried to a sufficient degree, understanding of people like the Huichols and Coras had the potential for vindicating their way of life by demonstrating how human culture had successfully adapted to its environment. Early encounters in the Gran Nayar thus set the stage of twentieth-century dramas, in which state-sponsored development projects often conflict directly with indigenous cultures now defended by anthropological theory and principles.

Throughout all these changes, the Huichols were not ignorant savages, despite what their Mexican neighbors thought; instead, they were keen observers and participants in their daily existence. Rather than viewing the Porfiriato as negatively affecting the Huichols, a view which strips them of their ability to interact with the larger world, we must

understand how the Huichols negotiated a system that stacked the decks against them. The Lozada movement attested to the fact that the Huichols were unwilling to be passive and to submit to the government and to hacendados; their worldview and religious cosmology dictates that they live in certain places, because that sacred geography has existed since time immemorial. Though with each passing decade, the modern world inches closer, the Huichols still maintain a vibrant presence in their mountain homelands, paying homage to their gods, and to peyote, whose celebrations ensure that life will continue in all Huichol towns.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Spoken by Leonardo Carrillo Gonzalez, an elder peyote-gatherer, or jícarero, from the Huichol town of Pochotita. Excerpt taken from "El puente sobre el río Chapalagana", *Pueblos de México*, a documentary series produced by UNAM. For more information, see <http://www.nacionmulticultural.unam.mx/Portal/Derecho/MULTIMEDIA/ppm.html>

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## Appendix A

### Glossary of Huichol and Spanish Terms

- Arroyo:** (Sp.) a wash or dry creek bed
- Avanyu:** (Huichol) a serpent deity
- Cacique:** (Arawak/Sp.) originally, an indigenous chief
- Caligüey:** (Hu.) circular, thatched roof temples used by the Huichols for religious ceremonies
- Cantón:** (Sp.) an administrative unit in Mexico, comparable to a county
- Científico:** (Sp.) technocratic supporters of Porfirio Díaz who were typically proponents of Auguste Comte's iteration of positivism
- Comandante:** (Sp.) commander
- Comunidad:** (Sp.) community
- Ejido:** (Sp.) units of land owned and worked communally by indigenous or peasant villagers in rural Mexico
- Encomienda:** (Sp.) a grant of indigenous labor to a Spaniard during the colonial period
- Fundo legal:** (Sp.) a legal grant of land to an Indian village from the King of Spain
- Gordita:** (Sp.) a thick corn tortilla which is deep fried and can be stuffed with meat, beans or cheese, or is can also be sweetened and eaten plain.
- Guachimontones:** (Nahuatl hybrid) earthen, circular pyramids typical of the Teuchitlán tradition in Classic period Jalisco.
- Indígenas:** (Sp.) proper Spanish term for indigenous peoples
- Indio:** (Sp.) pejorative term for indigenous peoples

**Jacal:** (Sp.) mud-brick, thatched-roofed houses that Huichols typically lived in

**Jefe político:** (Sp.) local political boss in Mexico

**Kauyaumari:** (Hu.) a trickster, semi-divine figure important in Huichol mytho-history

**Ley Lerdo:** (Sp.) law enacted in 1856 by Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, then the Mexican Finance Minister under Benito Juárez. This law required corporate entitities

**Mara'akame:** (Hu. sing./Pl.= mara'akate) shaman-singer

**Mita:** (Quechua/Sp.) labor system used by the Incan Empire, and subsequently adopted by the Spanish, by which a percentage of male villagers provided unpaid labor to imperial or colonial projects

**Municipio:** (Sp.) municipality

**Muwieri:** (Hu.) feathered arrows used for both sacred and mundane purposes by Huichol shamans

**Oidor:** (Sp.) a judge under in the Spanish colonial legal system

**Ojo de Dios:** (Sp.) literally "eye of God," a religious object made by Huichols and used as a protective talisman

**Pax Porfiriana:** (Sp.) the so-called Porfirian peace between 1876 and 1911, named as such because of the remarkable stability that

**Principales:** (Sp.) principle men, particularly used to describe indigenous leaders

**Ranchería:** (Sp.) a term typically used to describe indigenous settlements

**Repartimiento:** (Sp.) a system of forced labor that the Spanish exacted upon Indian peoples during the colonial period

**República de Indios: (Sp.)** the separate sphere created by Spanish Crown law used to keep indigenous peoples distinct, both geographically and physically.

**Rurales: (Sp.)** a force of mounted police created by Benito Juárez used to guard rural areas of Mexico

**Secretaría de Hacienda: (Sp.)** the Mexican equivalent to the American Secretary of the Treasury

**Serrano: (Sp.)** of or from the mountains or mountainous areas

**Sexenio: (Sp.)** six-year presidential term in Mexico enforced in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution

**Tapatío: (Sp.)** idiomatic expression for people from Guadalajara

**Tierras baldías/terrenos baldíos: (Sp.)** empty or unused lands

**Tzompantli: (Nahuatl)** racks which displayed skulls of sacrificed victims

**Vestido de manta: (Sp.)** Country dress, or Indian dress

**Wirikuta: (Hu.)** Real de Catorce, located in northern San Luis Potosí

**Zócalo: (Sp.)** term used in some parts of Mexico to refer to the main square in a town

