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A CONTEXTUAL HISTORY OF JICARILLA APACHE CATTLE RANCH, 1846 – 1900

A THESIS APPROVED FOR THE

DEPARTMENT OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

BY THE COMMITTEE CONSISTING OF

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Abstract

This thesis examines the history of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching from 1846 to 1900, analyzing how it served as a tool for tribal sovereignty, community resilience, and economic adaptation amid shifting political and economic pressures. U.S. policies and settler encroachment threatened Jicarilla Apache autonomy, cattle ranching emerged not as a passive imposition but as a strategic assertion of territorial control, economic self-sufficiency and agency.

Grounded in archival research – including treaties, agency reports, and historical records – this study situates Jicarilla Apache ranching within the broader contexts of Indigenous resistance and adaptation to settler-colonial challenges. By incorporating Indigenous research methodologies and decolonizing frameworks such as survivance, relational accountability and critical Indigenous theory, this study prioritizes Jicarilla Apache perspectives and seeks to present their history with respect and accuracy.

Findings demonstrate that cattle ranching was not merely an imposed economic transition but a deliberate strategy that reinforces Jicarilla Apache sovereignty, resilience and agency. While this research is limited by the availability of archival materials, it addresses a significant gap in the scholarship on Jicarilla Apache history, particularly regarding their early engagement with cattle ranching. Future studies incorporating oral histories and community-driven narratives would further illuminate Jicarilla perspectives.

This thesis underscores the significance of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching as far more than an economic endeavor, but as a deliberate assertion of sovereignty, resilience and self-determination. By reframing ranching as a strategic adaptation, this research challenges

dominant Western historical narratives, amplifies Indigenous agency, and contributes to broader conversations on Native economic autonomy.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Amid the shifting power dynamics in 19th century North America, the Jicarilla Apache navigated settler-colonial pressures by engaging in cattle ranching, as a means of subsistence, but also as a deliberate assertion of autonomy over their lands and way of life. While much scholarship on Indigenous ranching during this time has focused on Tribes with larger populations with more recognized political power or federally established cattle programs, the Jicarilla Apache's early engagement with cattle husbandry remains understudied. This thesis examines the history of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching from 1846 to 1900, to explain how it functioned as a tool of adaptation and resistance within the broader context of settler-colonial expansion and federal Indian policy.

The key questions guiding this study are: How did the Jicarilla Apache use cattle ranching to assert sovereignty and economic independence? How did external forces – such as federal policies, settler encroachment, and regional economic shifts – impact the Jicarilla Apache's ability to sustain their cattle operations? What does the Jicarilla Apache experience with cattle ranching reveal about broader Indigenous strategies for economic survival and political resistance in the southwest? To answer these questions, this thesis employs a combination of historical analysis and Indigenous research methodologies. Archival sources, including agency reports, census records, and legal documents provide insight into federal policies and their impact on Jicarilla ranching. Additionally, through incorporating Indigenous perspectives and frameworks, this research seeks to prioritize the agency of the Jicarilla Apache

rather than simply viewing their history through a solely colonial lens, which often views Indigenous history as a reaction to colonial efforts.

To explain the significance of cattle ranching for the Jicarilla Apache, it is essential to situate their experiences within the broader context of Indigenous land dispossession, U.S. territorial expansion, and economic transformation in what would become known as the American West. Prior to contact with Spanish, Mexican, and later American forces, the Jicarilla Apache were highly mobile, engaging in a combination of hunting, gathering, and seasonal agriculture (Opler 1936, 203). The arrival of Spanish settlers and livestock in the southwest introduced cattle to the region (Baxter 1987, 4). Over time, the Jicarilla incorporated aspects of livestock management into their economy – though largely on their own terms. Their ability to maintain traditional ways of life became increasingly difficult in the nineteenth century as waves of settlers, ranchers, and military forces encroached on their lands (Gutierrez 1991, 166-172).

The annexation of New Mexico by the United States in 1846 marked a pivotal turning point in Jicarilla history (Hollon 2015). U.S. officials, upholding the ideology of Manifest Destiny, sought to secure land for white settlement and economic development, primarily at the expense of Indigenous nations (Carroll and Haggard 1942, 61-62). As federal policies prioritized containment and assimilation, the Jicarilla faced violent military campaigns. Forced removals, and increasing restrictions on their movements (Tiller 1983, 32). By the 1870s and 1880s, policymakers and U.S. Indian agents promoted livestock husbandry and agriculture as a tool to "westernize" Native nations and integrate them into the settler economy while attempting to continue reducing their traditional cultural and subsistence practices (Tiller 1983, 30). Rather than simply conforming to federal expectations, the Jicarilla actively shaped their engagement with ranching, to assert control over their land and resources.

By 1887, the Jicarilla Apache had secured a reservation in northern New Mexico after decades of displacement and broken promises from the federal government (United States 1887b). Cattle quickly became central to their economy, as Tribal members built herds, branded calves, and engaged in regional livestock markets (United States 1887c, 168). Despite facing challenges like drought, overgrazing, and competition with non-Native ranchers. The Jicarilla leveraged cattle ranching to strengthen their economic independence and maintain claims to reservation lands. Their participation in organizations like the Lincoln County Stock Association further illustrates how they navigated the complex legal and economic structures of the time to protect their herds from theft and ensure access to grazing lands (United States 1885, 150). It was early actions such as these that helped contribute to the booming Jicarilla Apache cattle industry in the 20th century.

Understanding the history of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching is not only important for filling a gap in historical scholarship but also for recognizing the broader significance of Indigenous agricultural and economic practices. Examining these histories challenges the misconception that Native engagement in agriculture, specifically ranching, was solely a product of assimilation. Indigenous peoples have long engaged in strategic adaptations to maintain their sovereignty and autonomy, and the Jicarilla's experience with cattle ranching is a testament to this ongoing resilience. By exploring their early engagement with ranching, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of how Native Nations navigated settler-colonial pressure while actively shaping their own futures.

This also makes this research have contemporary relevance. Discourse on Indigenous land use, economic development and sovereignty remain central in policy debates today, particularly as Native nations assert their sovereignty over land and resources. By examining the

historical roots of Jicarilla Apache ranching, this thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of Indigenous resilience and adaptation. It emphasizes that Native economic strategies were not simply reactive but were proactively shaped by community priorities and sovereignty.

Recognizing Jicarilla Apache early engagement with cattle ranching challenges dominant narratives that position Indigenous peoples as peripheral to the economic development of the American West. Instead, it highlights their role as active, independent participants who skillfully leveraged new opportunities to uphold sovereignty and sustain their communities. The Jicarilla Apache were not passive recipients of federal programs or settler economies – they were strategic actors who navigated an era of immense upheaval with intention and resilience. Through this lens, Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching emerged not only as an economic endeavor but as a deliberate act of resistance, a method of asserting territorial control, and a strategy for safeguarding sovereignty.

Chapter 2: Methods

As a researcher, I approach this thesis as a non-Native with a background in History and Native American Studies who is deeply committed to understanding and amplifying the histories of Indigenous communities. My goal is to approach this research with respect and humility, ensuring that the narratives and resilience of the Jicarilla Apache Nation are represented with integrity.

In addition to this thesis, a compiled records of Jicarilla Apache-related holdings at the University of Oklahoma and the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History will be provided to the Jicarilla Apache Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO). This deliverable is intended to

support the Nation's broader efforts in historic preservation while aligning with my commitment to produce research that benefits the community involved.

This study employs a historical research methodology to examine the development of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching between 1846 and 1900, centering Tribal sovereignty, economic adaptation and cultural resilience. By analyzing government records, agency reports, and archival documents, this research reconstructs the context in which the Jicarilla Apache engaged in cattle husbandry. Additionally, this study situates their experiences within broader regional and national trends in ranching, land use, and Indigenous self-determination.

Analytical Approach

A qualitative analysis of primary documents was conducted to identify patterns in government policies, Jicarilla Apache actions, Indian Agent reports, and broader economic shifts in the cattle industry. This study also examines the limitations and biases present in government reports, particularly in how federal officials documented Native agricultural and ranching practices. By critically engaging with these sources, I am intentionally highlighting the agency of the Jicarilla Apache in the shaping of their economic futures, to cope with restrictive policies and external pressures.

Research Approach

This research employs a qualitative approach to analyze historical documents and archival materials, using methods that emphasize careful interpretation of written records. Primary source materials form the foundation of this research. Key archives and collections consulted include the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma, the *Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, available through the University of Wisconsin-

Madison, and the Tribal Treaties Database hosted by Oklahoma State University. Through support of these institutions, I examined federal documents, tribal histories, and materials related to ranching and economic development. Particular attention was paid to treaties, ranching records, and historical reports illuminating the Jicarilla Apache's strategies for asserting sovereignty.

The primary sources for this research include reports from Indian agents and federal documents detailing the provision of livestock to the Jicarilla Apache. These records provide insight into government policies, economic conditions, and how the Jicarilla Apache navigated imposed livestock management systems. Specific attention was given to references concerning cattle ownership, grazing practices, conflicts over land and resources, and participation in organizations such as the Lincoln County Stock Association.

Indigenous Research Methodologies and Decolonizing Frameworks

In addition to employing a historical research methodology, this thesis incorporates Indigenous research methodologies and decolonizing frameworks to center Jicarilla Apache agency and challenge colonial narratives. Traditional Western historical approaches often frame Indigenous histories as reactionary to federal policies rather than a deliberate, strategic engagement.

A critical framework guiding this study is Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies,* which critiques Eurocentric of academic research and presents an emphasis on the need to center Indigenous voices, priorities, and ways of knowing. This thesis applies to Smith's framework by challenging narratives that portray cattle ranching and other economic endeavors as only a product of assimilation rather than a tool of sovereignty and self-

determination. It also acknowledges the power dynamics of historical archives, which often reflect perspectives of non-Natives and federal officials rather than that of Indigenous peoples (Smith 2021). Through critical engagement with these sources, this research focuses on Jicarilla Apache agency instead of merely presenting their economic adaptations as responses to colonial pressures.

This thesis is also informed by Shawn Wilson's concept of relational accountability which asserts that research must be conducted to the benefit of Indigenous communities, instead of an extractive, exploitative academic exercise (Wilson 2008, 97-122). In practice, this thesis is accompanied by a compilation of Jicarilla Apache-related archival holdings at the University of Oklahoma and the Sam Noble Museum of Natural History. This deliverable ensures that this research serves and supports the THPO's work in historical preservation efforts rather than solely academic discourse.

Gerald Vizenor's theory of survivance also informs this research, as it rejects the confined narratives of Indigenous victimhood and instead highlights active resistance resilience, and adaptation (Vizenor 2009). Through the application of this lens, the study challenges the archival biases that often depict Native economic engagement as a coerced and dependent assimilation rather than an independent assertation of autonomy. Examining historical records critically, and acknowledging their limitations and biases, allows for a more nuanced understanding of how the Jicarilla Apache actively navigated economic and political structures to sustain their community within the 1846-1900 timeframe.

By integrating these methodologies, this thesis aims to offer a more accurate and respectful representation of Jicarilla Apache history while decentering colonial frameworks. While constrained by the limitations of archival sources, this research prioritizes Indigenous

agency and resilience and reinforces the importance of cattle ranching as a tool of self-determination.

Subject Limitations

The temporal scope of this research (1846-1900) was chosen to address a specific agricultural historical gap but leaves room for future studies to explain earlier or later developments in Jicarilla Apache ranching. The study is also based on archival research and does not include oral histories or fieldwork. While this limits the ability to incorporate first-hand Indigenous perspectives, efforts have been made to center the Jicarilla agency by closely examining their documented decisions, strategies, and adaptations in the western historical record. Additionally, this study does not claim to provide a comprehensive account of all Jicarilla Apache ranching activities but rather focuses on key developments and themes between 1846 and 1900. This thesis is intended as a contribution to ongoing scholarship on Jicarilla Apache ranching, acknowledging that further research is needed to fully capture the complexities of this history.

Chapter 3: Literature Review

The following secondary sources provided a vital framework for understanding broader themes, including tribal sovereignty, community identity, and economic adaptation during the 19th century. These works contextualized the primary source analysis and assisted in the identification of gaps and areas that require further investigation. This research draws upon existing historiography on Indigenous ranching, Western expansion, and Jicarilla Apache history. Works on the livestock industry, reservation economies, and regional history provide a comparative framework for understanding the Jicarilla Apache's engagement in ranching.

The work of Veronica E. Velarde Tiller has been instrumental to this study. *The Jicarilla Apache Tribe: A History,* provided crucial historical context and direction that were incredibly relevant and foundational to this research. While Tiller's work covers a broad period, her focus between 1846 and 1900 centers more on the effect of federal policies than on livestock husbandry. The cattle industry does not emerge as a central topic in her research until the 1930s with the Jicarilla Apache cattle boom (Tiller 1983). Additionally*, Tiller's Guide to Indian Country* also offered valuable insight into the contemporary economic landscape of the Jicarilla Apache Nation, further informing this study (Tiller 2015).

The many works of Morris Edward Opler's scholarship on Jicarilla Apache culture also informs this research. His research provides cultural background that remains relevant to understanding the Tribe's historical trajectory. However, given the age of Opler's research and its lack of Indigenous perspectives or agency, Tiller's scholarship has been prioritized in this analysis.

Beyond these key sources, this study also draws from works that explain the broader economic and social structures in the region and period. John Baxter's *Las Carneradas: Sheep Trade in New Mexico, 1700-1860* provides a foundational knowledge of the livestock economy that predates large-scale cattle ranching that we are more familiar with today (Baxter 1987). Susan Calafate Boyle's *Los Capitalistas: Hispano Merchants in the Santa Fe Trade* offers valuable insights into early trade networks and economic relationships that shaped the region's development patterns (Boyle 1997). Studies such as Malcolm Ebright's *Land Grants and Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico* (Ebright 1994) and Maria E. Montoya's *Translating Property: The Maxwell Land Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West. 1840-1900* provides

critical perspectives on land ownership disputes and their long-term impacts on Indigenous and Hispanic communities (Montoya 2002).

Additional histories, including Helen Haines' *History of New Mexico: From the Spanish Conquest to the Present Time, 1530-1890* (Haines 1891) and Erna Fergusson's *New Mexico, A Pageant of Three Peoples*, contributes additional context on the intersection of Spanish, Indigenous, and Anglo influences in the region (Fergusson 1951). Thomas Merlan's *Historic Homesteads and Ranches in New Mexico: A Historic Context* (Merlan 2010) and Robert MacCameron's article, "Environmental Change in Colonial New Mexico," also provides an essential background on the environmental and legal landscapes that shaped New Mexico's agricultural and ranching practices (MacCameron 1994).

Altogether, these sources establish a robust historiographical foundation for examining the Jicarilla Apache's engagement with cattle ranching, while offering comparative perspectives on land use, economic adaptation, and sovereignty within a broader regional and historical context.

Chapter 4: Pre-1846

Black Sky and Earth Woman were the only two beings. From them, anthropomorphic supernatural beings called Hac˙ct'cin came to be, living within their mother, the earth, and surrounded only by darkness. Here, Black Hac˙ct'cin, the eldest offspring and Supreme Supernatural, formed all the animals and birds out of clay, and then Ancestral Man in his image, followed by Ancestral Woman. In this underworld, only eagle plumes provided a light source, but it was not enough. Then, minor Supernaturals made a miniature Sun and a miniature Moon to go up to the heavens and rise and set once to provide light. But still, this was not enough light.

The minor Supernaturals then brought the Sun and Moon back down to make them bigger before putting them back in the heavens to rise and set four times. After the creation of the Sun and Moon, evil shamans worked to destroy and control them. This angered Hac˙ct'cin, so he allowed the Sun and Moon to escape to this upper world. After thinking, praying and singing to decide what to do, the Jicarilla Apaches united under the decision to follow the Sun and the Moon into the upper world (Tiller 1983, 1-2).

The holy people, with the help of the Hac˙ct'cin began to ascend using all the powers of the underworld creatures and the ceremony that the Hac˙ct'cin also gave them to start the journey. As the ceremony progressed, four mounds of earth laid in a row began to grow taller and taller into giant mountains that reached upward toward the hole the Sun and Moon had escaped from. But the mountains had stopped growing just short of the hole, and the people and animals could not reach, so they tried making ladders out of feathers, but they were not strong enough. Hac˙ct'cin then created four ladders made of sunbeams for the people and the animals to reach the opening of the upper world. They all climbed the ladder except for an old man and an old woman, who were both too weak to continue the journey and decided to stay. This would then be the place that the Jicarilla Apache would return to at death (Tiller 1983, 2).

Once they reached the upper world with the Sun and the Moon, the people and animals realized that the earth was completely covered in water. The Wind Deity then offered to push back the waters in the four directions and dried out all the waters, leaving no water for anyone to drink. Prayers were then offered, and with them, rivers and lakes appeared. However, the people soon discovered another obstacle; This world was full of monsters. Fortunately, Monster Slayer, a cultural hero, slayed all the monsters of the earth and the Supernaturals helped to remove any other dangerous obstacles. Then the people and animals began to travel clockwise in all four

directions to pick territories to settle down. As the people separated into smaller groups and selected where they would reside, the Supernaturals gave them different languages and names (Tiller 1983, 2).

The Jicarilla Apache were indecisive and continued to circle around and around. Finally, the Supreme Deity, who was getting impatient, asked them where they would like to reside, to which they responded, “near the center of the earth.” The Supreme Deity then created the four sacred rivers that would outline this territory: the Arkansas, Canadian, Rio Grande and the Pecos Rivers. It was this land that became the Holy Land for the Jicarilla Apache (Tiller 1983, 2-3).

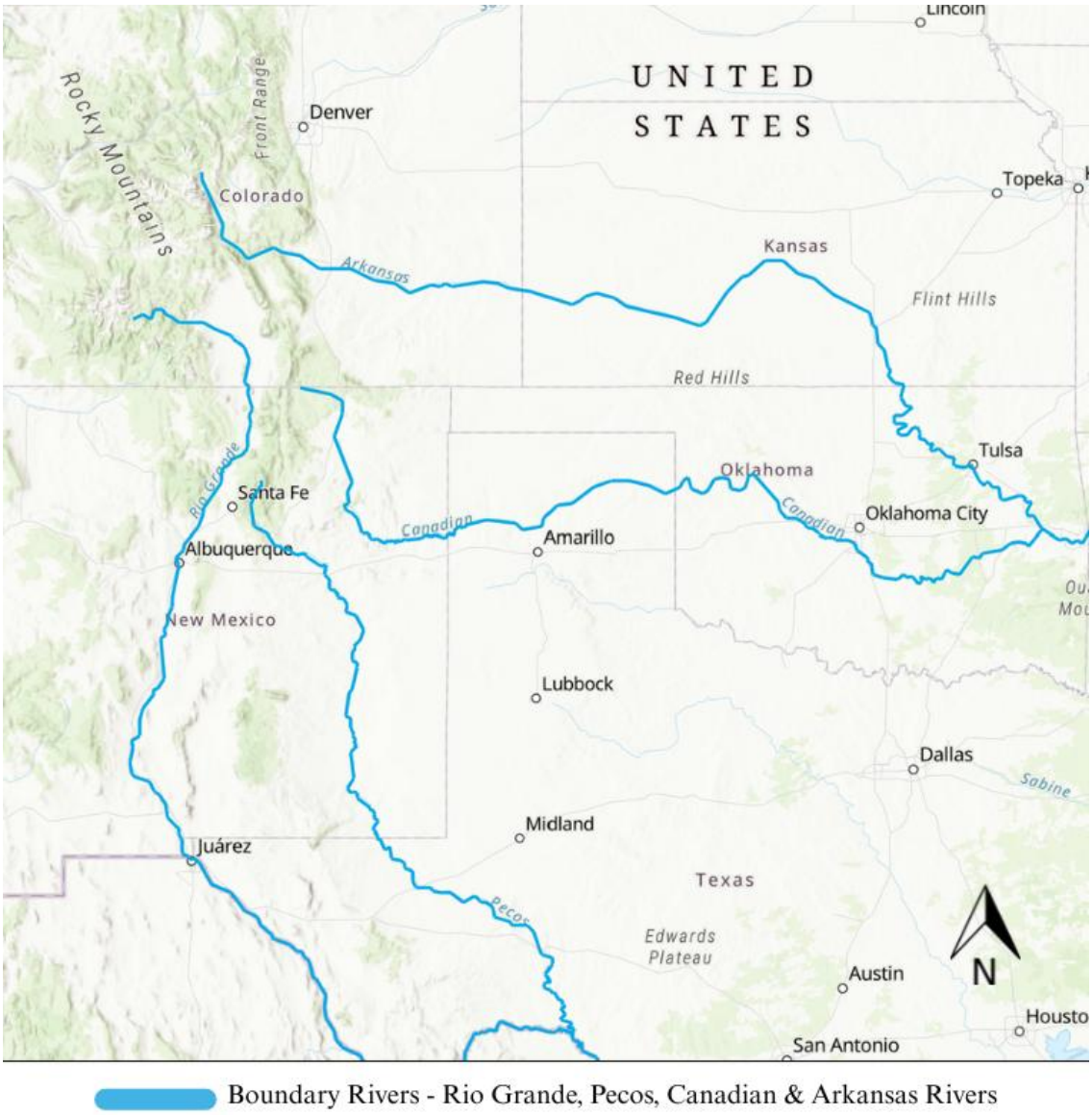


Figure 1 Jicarilla Apache Boundary Rivers

The Supernaturals then bestowed specific ceremonies, customs, laws and traditions upon the people. The animals lost their human attributes, including their ability to communicate with the people, but were able to maintain the powers they used to emerge. Therefore, the Jicarilla Apache were told to never mistreat animals, plants, or mineral life, and must always have proper ceremony and prayer whenever hunting was necessary. The Sun, Moon, Wind, and Lighting are

recognized as the most important sources of power and are always represented in ceremonies. The Jicarilla Apache cosmology and subsequent world view is that of a personified creation, where there is a Hac˙ct'cin of every living creature, natural object and phenomena (Tiller 1983, 3).

This worldview extends beyond creation itself, shaping the Jicarilla Apache's understanding of their relationship to the land and their movement through it. With this perspective in mind, they are one of six Southern Athapascan groups that originally migrated out of the Canadian Mackenzie Basin to the present-day southwest region of the United States. Along with the Chiricahuas, Kiowa Apaches, Mescaleros, Lipans, Navajos, and Western Apaches, they settled throughout Arizona, New Mexico, northern Mexico, southeastern Colorado, the Oklahoma panhandle, and most of Texas circa 1300 to 1500 A.D. (Tiller 1983, 4).

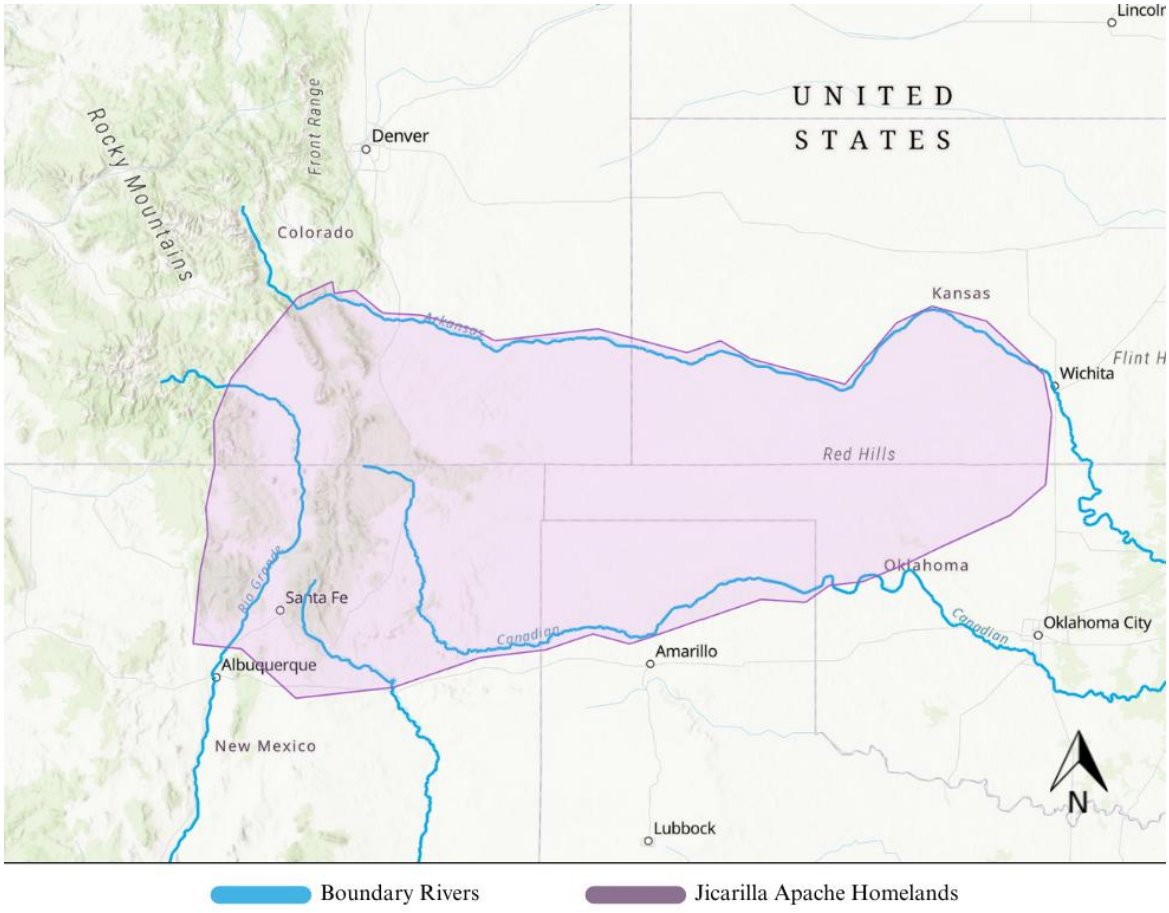


Figure 2 Jicarilla Apache Homelands highlighted in purple

The Jicarilla Apaches established their homeland in the area spanning the central and eastern regions of northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. With an easily defined northern boundary of the Arkansas River, the modern-day location of Mora, NM as the southernmost boundary, the Canadian River serves as an eastern border and the location of the Chama River Valley as the western border. Within this territory, the Jicarilla Apache settled within two diverse physiographic regions- the mountains and the plains. This area experiences hot, dry summers and receives little rain, if even ten inches in a year, but heavy snowfall and freezing temperatures can be expected, particularly in the mountains (Tiller 1983, 5). Although the mountain and plains regions are geographically distinct, their inclusion within the Jicarilla Apache homelands makes

sense given that the territory centers around the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and is naturally bordered by wide plateaus.

These spatial differences also offer interpretation for the social divisions within Jicarilla Apache, consisting of the Llanero (meaning "plains people" (Tiller 1983, 4)) and the Olleros (meaning "potter, or person who makes or sells pots and pans in Spanish," but have also been said to mean "mountain-valley people," (Tiller 1983, 4) or "sand people" (Opler 1936, 203)). The Llaneros resided east of the Rio Grande along the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the Olleros primarily inhabited the area west of the Rio Grande, within valleys and canyons. These two bands shared customs, dress, family, identity, spirituality and language, and only differ by choice of environment and associated means of subsistence activities. While the Ollero band traditionally engaged more in farming due to their geographic location, the Llanero band increasingly adopted agricultural practices following American expansion. Long before American occupation, however, Jicarilla Apache agriculture was already thriving (Tiller 1983, 27).

The Jicarilla Apache grew large amounts of corn along riverbanks and streams in the region. They cleared fields through controlled burns and watered by purposely flooded regularly using carefully constructed dams and irrigation ditches. Corn kernels, corn pollen, and cornmeal were and are, used in a variety of ceremonies and are frequently referenced in ceremonial songs. They also cultivated other crops including beans, cantaloupes, peas, pumpkins, wheat and tobacco were also cultivated. Agriculture was not only a cornerstone to Jicarilla Apache subsistence but also reflected the broader societal structure (Opler 1936, 203).

As a matrilocal society, Jicarilla Apache families were organized around extended kinship networks, with family units that include the parents, unmarried children, married daughters, and

the husbands and children of those daughters (Tiller 1983, 12). Beyond the household, Jicarilla Apache families existed within a local community that typically had an informal leader to negotiate external and internal disputes. This social structure also influenced agricultural labor, seed to harvest was largely non-gendered, with both men and women sharing duties, except for tobacco cultivation (Opler 1936, 206). Women were active participants in tribal decision making, and regularly achieved positions in leadership, medicine, and advisement (Tiller 1983, 16). Positions of leadership were only given to those who demonstrated generosity, although hereditary leadership was common (Tiller 1983, 14). This system ensured a balance of social, economic, and political responsibilities within Jicarilla Apache society.

Jicarilla Apache subsistence practices began to shift with the arrival of livestock. European livestock first arrived on what is now referred to as the Americas a year after the first European contact in 1492. It was on Columbus's second voyage to the Indies that cattle, horses, and sheep were brought to the island of Santo Domingo, then to Cuba. Later in 1521, Hernando Cortez and Gregorio Villalobos brought livestock to the colonies on mainland Mexico. In a mere ten years, ranches with private brands emerged around Mexico City. By 1540, cattle and Europeans arrived in Jicarilla Apache homelands. In his search for the mythical golden Seven Cities of Cibola, from 1540 to 1542, Francisco Vasquez de Coronado traveled through modern day Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas, bringing with him stock animals such as cattle, horses and sheep (Guengerich 2013, 256). The reported livestock population that joined Coronado vary, but it is estimated that there were about 500 head of cattle and a herd of 5,000 sheep (Baxter 1987, 4). This influenced the reports made by those on expedition, as one explorer explicitly described the Galisteo-Pecos River region as "suitable for sheep, the best for that

purpose ever discovered in New Spain" (Hammond and Rey 1966, 89). This expedition marks the beginning of what would later be referred to as the Spanish Period, from 1540 to 1821.

While at this time strays most likely left Coronado's herd, continuous livestock husbandry did not truly take hold in the region until about the 1580s with more and more Spanish people entering New Mexico (Merlan 2010, iv). These Spanish newcomers all describe Pueblo Indians as excellent farmers with large yields, with specific mentions of corn, beans, calabashes and tobacco, but no further insight into agriculture of the time beyond a vague mention that there were incredible canals for irrigation (Merlan 2010, iv). In 1598, Don Juan de Onate took 'formal possession' of New Mexico at San Juan de la Toma, bringing with him 1,000 cattle, 1,000 goats, 150 mares with colts, and 4,000 sheep (Merlan 2010, 1). More and more colonists settled in New Mexico and in tandem the livestock population also increased, leading to the creation of a market in Nueva Vizcaya. It was here that sheep became the colony's primary export (MacCameron 1994, 21-22).

Early missions, especially in Arizona, New Mexico and Texas became epicenters for livestock, seeking conversion in both religion and livelihood. During the 1620s and 1630s, each entering friar would be allotted 10 heifers and sheep, as well as 48 laying hens (Merlan 2010, 1). This initial stock population grew rapidly by 1650, with each friar in New Mexico having a few thousand sheep and around 30 horses (Merlan 2010, 2). The labor required to maintain these large herds was primarily accomplished by the efforts of enslaved Pueblo peoples under the encomienda system. This system allowed Spanish settlers, or the encomenderos, the 'right' to extract goods and labor from Indigenous peoples in exchange for Christian conversion, protection, and governance. This led to extreme abuse, forced labor, high tribute demands, and

complete exploitation of the Pueblos people coupled with the fact that the Spanish had taken these lands by force (Ebright 1994, 14-15).

As these massive herds continued to grow, an increase in sporadic and tightly controlled exportation of livestock by church and political officials began to take place down the Camino Real to Mexico (Baxter 1987, 8-9). This intense governmental grip on the livestock industry, enforced through taxation, seizures, and trade restrictions, led to a smaller livestock population in New Mexico, which not only furthered economic hardship, but greatly escalated feelings of resentment – all factors that contributed to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 (Baxter 1987, 10-11). This Revolt successfully drove out 2,000 settlers and resulted in the death and captivity of another few hundred. Partial herds of livestock remained as one of the few exceptions to the exclusion of most things Spanish (Gutierrez 1991, 107). The exile of Spanish settlers only lasted until 1692, as Governor Diego de Vargas led a large military force back into the region and began the reconquest of New Mexico.

Spanish repopulation of New Mexico happened quickly, with the colonial population rising to 3,000 by 1700 (Gutierrez 1991, 166-172). It was also this year that the Jicarilla Apache first specifically appear in the Spanish historical record. In an order made by New Mexico Governor Pedro Rodriguez Cubero, he called for the impalement of a criminal's head to a stake in the town of Taos as a warning to the "apache of la Xicarilla" to discourage the harboring of Spanish fugitives (Gunnerson 1974, 167). This name, "Xicarilla," referred to the Apache peoples living within the Taos Valley and Raton Mountains area. The name "Jicarilla" would later be applied, which means "little basket maker" (Tiller 1983, 5).

While the Spanish did not reestablish the encomienda system, they did replace it with the repartimiento system. Similar to the encomienda system, the repartimiento system required

Pueblo communities to provide forced, but this time, rotational labor for settlers, government officials, and missions assigned by colonial government officials. Instead of Indigenous labor being privately owned and enforced, it was now state controlled with the intention of there being more government oversight in order to limit the amount of exploitation previously allowed under the encomienda system (Galindo 2023, 152). However, Indigenous peoples were still regularly exploited and abused, usually in systems of slavery.

Captivity and violence against Native people continued well beyond initial colonial contact and persisted throughout the Spanish, Mexican, and early American periods. Indigenous people from a variety of tribal nations were targeted in slave raids by Spanish, Mexican and other Native groups. These captives were sold, traded, or gifted to serve as domestic workers, herders, and agricultural laborers. Captivity became an entrenched part of New Mexico's colonial economy and social structure, shaping intertribal relations, alliances and the movements of people throughout the region (Blackhawk 2006, 24-26).

In the aftermath of the Pueblo Revolt, the Spanish army confiscated 900 head of sheep from the Cochiti Pueblo and the church imported another 1,500 sheep and an unkown number of cattle for the reestablishment of the once large mission herds. To deter from another revolt, in 1697 the Spanish government had 150 bulls, 500 cows, 4,000 ewes and 170 goats brought in from Mexico to allot to settlers on a need-by-need basis. This averaged out to be two to three cows and roughly 10 to 25 sheep per family (Baxter 1987, 13-14). It was also at this time that a new land policy was adopted, which resulted in the gifting of large tracts of land to either prominent individuals or military officers. Regular families received smaller tracts (Baxter 1987, 15-17). This land allotment system created a new social structure, where the top of the pyramid

consisted of incredibly wealthy land-owning families that justified their elite status through claiming pure Spanish ancestry (whether or not it was true) (Gutierrez 1991, 130, 149-150).

These aristocratic families, or ricos, that controlled the majority of New Mexico's livestock economy. The general population was referred to as mestizos. Native slaves were referred to as genízaros and were regarded as the lowest in social standing despite making up one third of the colony population (Gutierrez 1991, 171-175). Under this system, it was then the mestizos and genízaros that were tasked with the majority of colonial labor (Carroll and Haggard 1942, 89). Within decades, the livestock herds of the few rico families were larger than any pre-Revolt herd.

With this increase in livestock and the issue of finding enough labor to maintain the herds, the partido system was put into place. This system, which was first documented in 1745, is a contractual agreement where the partidario rents a flock of about 1,000 sheep from his patron for about three to five years, before returning the flock to the patron with a fixed amount of lambs each year as rent, which usually was about 20% along with a percentage of the annual income from wool (Baxter 1987, 29). Everything that remained was considered the partidario's compensation (Carroll & Haggard 1942, 41). *If* all went well, the partidario would have a sizeable herd of his own in just a few years. With this system in place, both livestock and settler populations continued to rise through the early nineteenth century. By 1757, there was a population of 5,000 colonists, nearly 50,000 sheep and 7,832 head of cattle and an estimated 9,000 Pueblo and Hopi who owned 8,325 head of cattle and 4,813 horses (Baxter 1987, 42).

Leadership changed once again in 1821 when Mexico gained independence from Spain and New Mexico became a province. Three years later, New Mexico becomes a territory of the Republic of Mexico. Due to the relaxing of trade restrictions of independent Mexico, American

fur trappers, traders, and stockmen begin arriving in New Mexico, paving the way for future United States conquest by means of the Santa Fe Trail which went from Santa Fe to St. Louis (Boyle 1997, 17). This early influence strengthened the U.S. economic presence in the region, with the trail serving as a crucial route for good and settlers, ultimately aiding in the later annexation of New Mexico. Many of these incoming men from United States gained Mexican citizenship and took advantage of the new land policy that allowed foreigners who received Mexican citizenship to partner with a native New Mexican and apply for a private land grant. Most likely due to the lowered government oversight during this period, there is less documentation about the livestock market between New Mexico and Mexico. However, the collapse of the Chihuahua market and the marked trade decrease on the Camino Real led to a clear increase in New Mexico's livestock population numbers (Baxter 1987, 75-76, 79). In 1827 there were about 5,000 head of cattle and 240,000 sheep in the colony (Baxter 1987, 90).

In spite of this, the Mexican government was not making any money and stopped their annual annuities to local Native Nations (Boyle 1997, 23-24). Coupled with deteriorating living conditions, peace with the Navajos ending in 1818 (Weber 1982, 11) (Twitchell 2007, 198), and early American traders selling guns and powder to Natives in the region, a tax revolt turned insurrection in 1837 was no surprise (Fergusson 1951, 269). Manuel Armijo took advantage of this insurrection and placed himself in the governor's seat. During his final years, several large land grants were awarded to Americans with Mexican citizenship and New Mexican partners (Westphall 1983, 45-46). Notably, one of the largest grants of this kind was awarded in 1841 to Guadalupe Miranda, Governor Armijo's collector of customs and Provincial Secretary of State, and Charles Beaubien, a French-Canadian merchant and former mountain man. The Beaubien-Miranda Land Grant encompassed 1,700,000 acres northeast of Taos, along the New Mexico and

Colorado boarder that was primarily used for grazing and agriculture, but to what extent at the time is unclear (Montoya 2002, 31). This grant would later become known as the Maxwell Land Grant in 1864 under the ownership of Beaubien's son-in-law Lucian B. Maxwell, who rose to power through marrying Beaubien's mixed-race daughter Luz (Montoya 2002, 50, 62).

Despite getting access to American markets, American influence was relatively minimal compared to Spanish customs and economy as the Maxwell Grant continued the Partido system to raise livestock (Pueblos 2009, 105-148). Into the early 1840s, New Mexicans continued exporting large numbers of sheep to Mexico, a majority of them coming from prominent rico families such as the Chaves, Otero, Sandoval, Ortiz, Pino, Perea, and Armijo.[1] During this time period, class distinctions became even more apparent. Peonage grew drastically, with many Pueblo Indians and freed genízaros falling into peonage (Gutierrez 1991, 323), and enslavement of genízaros continued despite the outlawing of slavery in Mexico in 1824 (Westphall 1983, 5-6).

1841 the military force of the Republic of Texas unsuccessfully invaded New Mexico and were promptly marched to Mexico City. This incident created a deep-seated hatred in New Mexicans toward Texans, who already despised Mexicans at this point stemming from sentiments about the Alamo and the Texas War of Independence (Fergusson 1951, 269). This rivalry would continue throughout the 1800s, resulting in range land conflicts between cattle and sheep interests (Baxter 1987, 100-101).

That same year, the U.S. Congress passed the Preemption Act. This act allowed any head of household over the age of twenty-one to file a 160 acre claim within the public domain as long

[1] Chaves brothers owned 52,500 head; the Otero family 44,500; Antonio Sandoval 38,500. (Baxter 1987, 103-104, 107). Manuel Armijo drove 34,916 sheep over the decade, 1835-1845. (Boyle 1997, 39).

as there was proof of settlement at the land office, and that there was no intention to turn around and sell the land. With these requirements met, he was then allowed to buy the land for an affordable price of about $1.25 an acre (United States 1841). This act would later apply to squatters turned ‘settlers’ in New Mexico once it became a U.S. territory.

The arrival of European livestock in the region marked a turning point in Jicarilla Apache subsistence and economic life. While their agricultural practices had long sustained them, the introduction of cattle, sheep, and horses created new opportunities and challenges that would shape their relationship with the land and external powers for centuries to come. From Coronado’s expedition to the rise and fall of the Spanish livestock economy, the Jicarilla Apache navigated these changes while maintaining their cultural identity and traditions. Their deep connection to the land, informed by their cosmology and history, ensured their resilience and agency in the face of colonial expansion and economic transformation. This foundation sets the stage for the Jicarilla Apache’s evolving role in ranching, adaptation to shifting political landscapes, and the assertion of sovereignty over their homelands for centuries to follow.

Chapter 5: 1846 – 1870

In May 1846, the United States formally declared war on Mexico, initiating the Mexican-American War. That August, Colonel Steven Watts Kearney arrived in New Mexico with his U.S. Army of 2,500 men, referred to as his “Army of the West.” This occupation was largely uncontested, as the Mexican governor fled, and the troops experienced no resistance (Hollon 2015, 7). The immediate effects in New Mexico were minimal, aside from an increase in trade out of Santa Fe with the removal of Mexican import taxes. Because of the 25 years of political turmoil leading up to American infiltration, many New Mexicans had lost any sense of allegiance

to the Mexican government (Carroll and Haggard 1942, 61-62). Upon his arrival, Col. Kearny began a five-year military occupation that included the implementation of a government and legal system based on American common law. What was most notable, however, was that Kearny promised to honor Hispanic and New Mexican land ownership rights, which directly impacted the existing land grants, grazing tracts, and the cattle industry.

Tensions between Indigenous groups and settlers escalated in the late 1840s, particularly along the Santa Fe Trail. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, signed in 1848, officially ended the Mexican-American War and guaranteed the protection of New Mexican land ownership rights. However, the treaty also promised to safeguard property from raids by groups like the Navajo and Apache, reinforcing policies that framed Indigenous people as threats to colonial expansion (United States 1848). Although the treaty claimed to protect property, it did not address the institution of slavery directly. In practice, the treaty's silence on slavery, combined with clauses requiring the return of captives taken in cross-border raids, only facilitated the continuation of systems of coerced labor and captivity. Rather than acting as a shield against enslavement, the treaty reinforced settler-colonial frameworks that policed Indigenous mobility while leaving the broader institution of slavery unchallenged in the newly acquired territories.

Veronica E. Velarde Tiller describes geography as the major contributing factor in the Jicarilla Apache's ability to maintain their traditional lifeways leading up to American occupation. Since Jicarilla Apache traditional lands were so far north, and not known for having good soil for agriculture, most non-Natives did not encroach. This led to the region and the Nation not being well-known by 1846 (Tiller 1983, 29). Kearny attempted to maintain peaceful relations with the Jicarilla Apache, but he relied on false promises. On September 23, 1846, he met with a band of Jicarilla at Abiquiu, assuring them that the U.S. government would provide

aid and protection if they settled into a farming lifestyle and ceased hostilities. The Jicarilla welcomed these assurances but soon realized they would not be upheld (Tiller 1983, 32). That same year, Kearny appointed Charles Bent as the first American governor of New Mexico. Bent reported that there were approximately 500 Jicarilla Apache in the region, marking the beginning of a long history of portraying the Jicarilla Apache as small, yet troublesome. However, Bent was killed during the Taos Revolt in January 1847, after which control of Indian affairs fell primarily to the military. This is where it remained until 1849 (Tiller 1983, 33).

In July of 1849, James S. Calhoun was appointed the first Indian agent for New Mexico. Upon his arrival, he was given little guidance, as even the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, William Medill, admitted that "little [was] known of the Indians there" (Tiller 1983, 33). Along with this lack of information, Calhoun received neither steady military support nor sufficient federal funding to enact meaningful policies. While isolation had previously allowed the Jicarilla Apache to continue their hunting and gathering economy, increasing traffic along the Santa Fe trail, the growing populations on the Maxwell Land Grant, and the decline of wild game signaled impending disruptions (Tiller 1983, 30).

Despite mounting pressures, Jicarilla Apache families maintained their traditional migratory patterns. In 1850, the Ollero and Llanero bands of the Jicarilla Apache lived across present-day northern New Mexico and Colorado. There were six Ollero family units, and about eight Llanero family units, the former migrating along the Chama River, and the latter, within the Cimarron Valley, moving with the game into the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles, which was traditional hunting territory (Tiller 1983, 13-14).

From 1846 to 1851, the Jicarilla Apache were referred to as the 'Icarillas' or the 'Jiccarillas,' but regardless of spelling, J.S. Calhoun speaks primarily of the Jicarilla Apache

rustling livestock during this time period along with other increasing hostilities (United States 1850). As these tensions grew, stereotypes also began to develop to the point that Calhoun stated in 1851 that all Apache and Navajo in the region had begun to disguise themselves as Pueblo in order to enter cities without being accused of rustling or other depredations (United States 1851, 186-187). To illustrate the extent of livestock theft, he presented a table documenting the stock losses in Santa Ava and Bernalillo counties, which he claimed to be representative of all other counties across the Territory, as seen below:

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Years.	Sheep.	Horses.	Mules and Asses.	Cows.
1846 - - - - -	14,243	167	149	80
1847 - - - - -	24,333	307	217	210
1848 - - - - -	28,502	137	167	271
1849 - - - - -	24,754	260	137	522
1850 - - - - -	58,399	22	91	151

Figure 3 Calhoun's table of approximate livestock losses in the counties of Santa Ava and Bernalillo, New Mexico Territory. (United States 1851, 186-187).

The same year of Calhoun's report on livestock loss, the Indian Appropriations Act (1851) was passed, officially creating the reservation system. This Act permitted the U.S. government to forcibly remove Indigenous peoples to reservations, severely restricting their ability to provide for their communities and families without government controlled and provided rations (United States 1851a). Also in response to the series of skirmishes in the Territory, the U.S. military established a series of forts, including Fort Union (1851) at the

junction of the Santa Fe Trail's Cimarron and Mountain branches, Cantonment Burgwin (1852) near Taos, and Fort Massachusetts at the base of Blanca Peak in Colorado.

Following passage of the Indian Appropriations Act, Jicarilla Apache agricultural efforts appeared regularly in the Reports to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs. This is possibly because the U.S. government sought to encourage assimilation through farming as a means of control. By promoting, if not enforcing, Euro-American agricultural methods, officials aimed to shift the Jicarilla Apache away from their traditional subsistence practices. In 1853, Indian Agent E.A. Graves wrote to Governor Meriwether that the Jicarilla Apache were farming about 100 to 150 acres, which would have normally resulted in a large harvest. However, because of lack of rain, streams ran dry, and irrigation efforts were fruitless, leaving a likely crop failure as an expected outcome (United States 1853, 194).

In 1854, the Gadsden Purchase, or Gadsden Treaty, was ratified between the United States and Mexico, which expanded New Mexico territory to its present-day size for the affordable price of $10 million for the 29,670 square miles that would later be known as Arizona and New Mexico. Along with purchasing this land, part of the treaty's provisions included that the U.S. had to assist Mexico in preventing Native raids along their shared border, with the intended goal to help settle tensions between the two countries from the Mexican-American War. While the U.S. agreed to provide protection, they did not assume any fiscal responsibility for previous attacks, leading to further diplomatic complications (United States 1854a).

Increasing conflicts, including murder and theft of stock from settlers and the military led to the Jicarilla Apache War of 1854-55. This war officially concluded at Abiquiu on September 12, 1855, with the signing of the Treaty with the Jicarilla Apache. This treaty ceded substantial amounts of land to the U.S., promising a reservation, annuities, farming and livestock support

(United States 1855b). Like many treaties at the time, this treaty was poorly implemented by the U.S. government. Though small in scale compared to later conflicts, this war represented a significant turning point in the Jicarilla struggle against U.S. expansion.

From 1856 to 1860, it was regularly reported by either Indian Agents or by New Mexico's Superintendent of Indian Affairs that the Jicarilla Apache were quiet, peaceful, and demonstrate agricultural prowess (United States 1856, 180; United States 1857, 273; United States 1858, 185; United States 1859, 334). Some Jicarilla families at this time had also began farming on land that was "loaned" to them by Spanish friends near Abiquiu and El Rito (Tiller 198, 57). During this time, they were continually blamed for murders or robberies, but it was documented that they were often innocent of a vast majority of these accusations (United States 1856, 180). This possibly demonstrates the impact of the older stereotype of 'small, but troublesome' that was prescribed to the Jicarilla Apache during the 1840s, in addition to the broader stereotypes against Natives of the time. The Jicarilla Apache continued to grow corn, beans, and pumpkins in stable, but not sufficient amounts, which is regularly attributed to the lack of an assigned permanent settlement location according to J.L. Collins, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs at the time (United States 1860, 159-160). This lack of territory that was promised in the Treaty of 1855, is a regular request in every single report. During this period, it is also recorded that the Jicarilla Apache population rose from 600 to 950 (United States 1857, 274; United States 1860, 164). It is also worth noting that livestock is not mentioned in regard to the Jicarilla Apache at all during these years. This raises questions about not only the lack of sustainable food sources, but also the availability of economic independence during a time of increasing government oversight.

The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 temporarily shifted federal attention away from Native conflicts, but expansionist policies continued. In November of 1862, President Lincoln signed the Homestead Act into law, which in summary, provided any adult citizen, or soon-to-be citizen, who had never fought against the U.S. government the ability to claim a surveyed plot of 160 acres if they agreed to "improve" the lot by means of cultivation. After the claimant lived five years on their plot, they were fully entitled to the property after paying an insignificant registration fee (United States 1862a). This act placed about 10% of the United States, or 270 million acres into the ownership of private citizens. Initially, 500 million acres were dispersed by the General Land Office between 1862 and 1904, but only 80 million acres of that went to homesteaders, as homesteads themselves were fairly expensive to maintain. Successful land claims significantly decreased by the 1930s and officially closed in 1976, except for homesteading claims in Alaska, which only ended in 1986 (National Park Service 2025).

The same year that the Homestead Act was passed, non-Native complaints of the Jicarilla Apache stealing or killing their livestock also increased through 1865 (United States 1865, 162). The Indian Agents of the time were not concerned by this and attributed the cause to lack of food and no permanent land base for the Jicarilla Apache to cultivate. Instead, Agents like W.F.N. Arny state that the Jicarilla Apache "possess the balance of power in New Mexico," and that this Nation alone stands "between the unfriendly Indians and the citizens" (United States 1862b, 243). During the entire decade of 1860 through 1870 it is reported that the Jicarilla Apache were only granted cattle by the government in 1862, despite regularly cattle shipments being outlined as a provision in the 1855 treaty. Even then, there were only 60 head of agency-controlled cattle that were intended to feed both the Jicarilla Apache and the Utes (United States 1862b, 249). At the time the Jicarilla Apache population alone ranged between somewhere between 960 and

1,300, clearly making this amount of cattle insufficient (United States 1862b, 243 & 247). This year also coincides with the establishment of Fort Sumner along the Pecos River, a Fort that would later be the destination of the prominent Goodnight-Loving Trail (Merlan 2010, vi).

Meanwhile, the cattle industry was rapidly growing in the Southwest. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the land grant that would become known as the Maxwell Land Grant was established in 1864, following the death of Charles Beaubien. Beaubien's son-in-law, Lucian B. Maxwell, who had managed the agricultural and grazing resources of the grant, acquired the entirety of the grant which only flourished under his ownership. According to Helene Haines and Maria Montoya there was an estimated 552 settlers residing on the grant, and Maxwell himself became the owner of 10,000 cattle, 50,000 sheep, 1,000 horses and mules, and farming 5,000 acres (Haines 1891, 244; Montoya 2002, 71). By 1868, he had an annual income of $50,000 (an equivalent to $1,118,559.86 in 2025) (In2013Dollars.com 2025), effectively making him one of the wealthiest men in New Mexico Territory (Montoya 2002, 71).

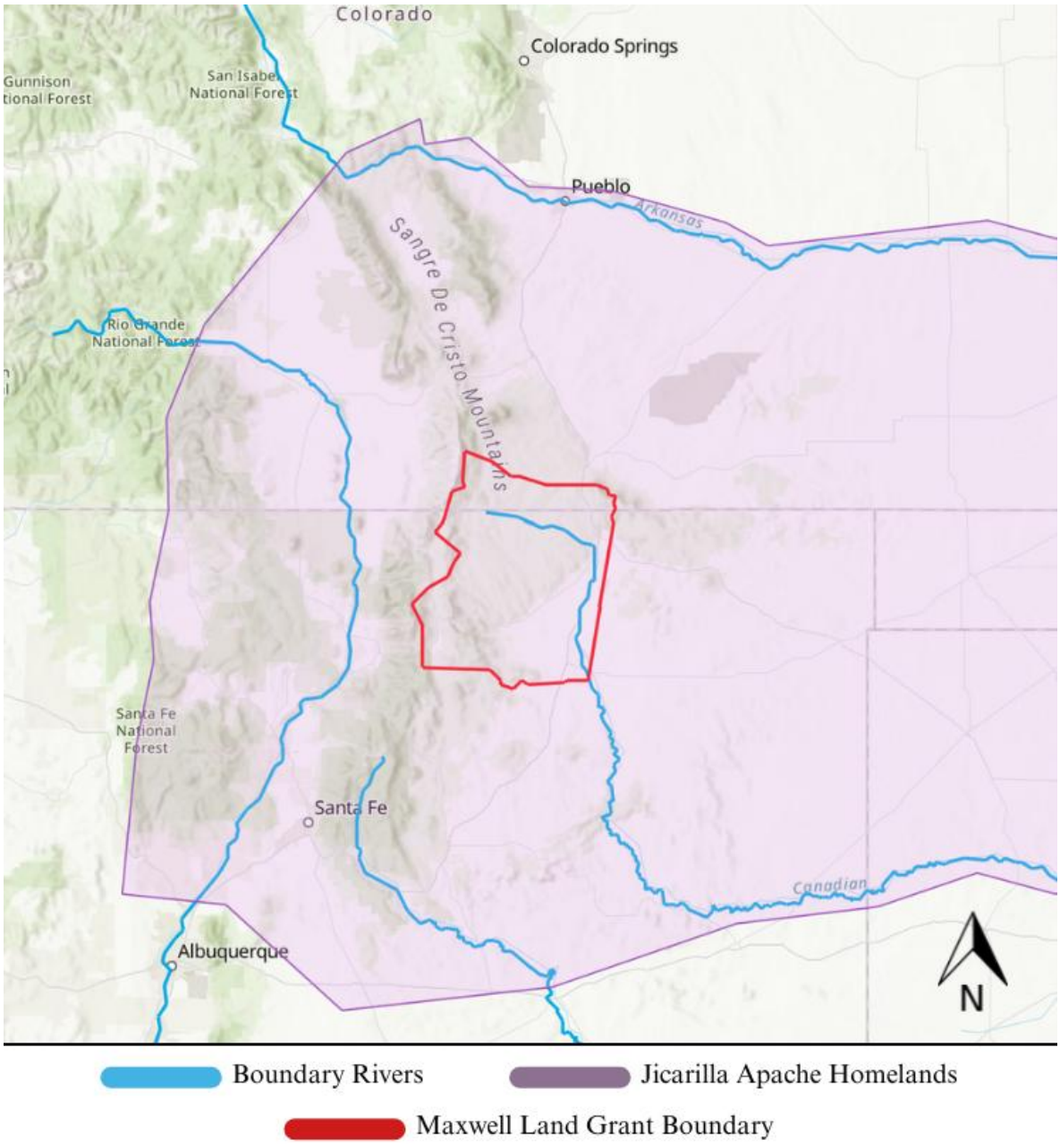


Figure 4 Red Maxwell Land Grant boundary within Jicarilla Apache homelands.

Cattlemen began driving herds of cattle from Texas to the Midwest in as early as the 1840s. These drives primarily took place via the Shawnee trail that stretched from north-central Texas to Kansas City and Sedalia, MO. However, it was not long until thieves and hostile farmers began disrupting the efficiency of the Shawnee Trail, forcing Texans to use trails that

extended further west, bordering farmlands in order to reach the railroad shipping pens of Kansas and Nebraska, the mining towns of the Rocky Mountains, and more significantly for the purpose of this thesis, the Indian agencies of New Mexico and other plains territories. It was for this reason that the Goodnight-Loving Trail came into existence (Merlan 2010, 9).

The year after the American Civil War ended (1866), Charles Goodnight and Oliver Loving drove their very first herd of longhorn cattle across west Texas, then up the Pecos River to Fort Sumner, NM. This trail would come to be known as the Goodnight-Loving Tail. With the purpose to supply the Indian agencies in New Mexico, these cattle contributed to the first significant cattle population in New Mexico territory under the authority of the U.S. This trail became one of the more significant cattle trails of the time, and of all U.S. cattle ranching history. The only other substantial cattle trails during this time period were the Chisholm and Western Trail. The Chisholm Trail crossed Texas and Oklahoma, ending in Kansas. The Western Trail reached from Dodge City, Kansas to Colorado, Wyoming and Montana (Merlan 2010, 9).

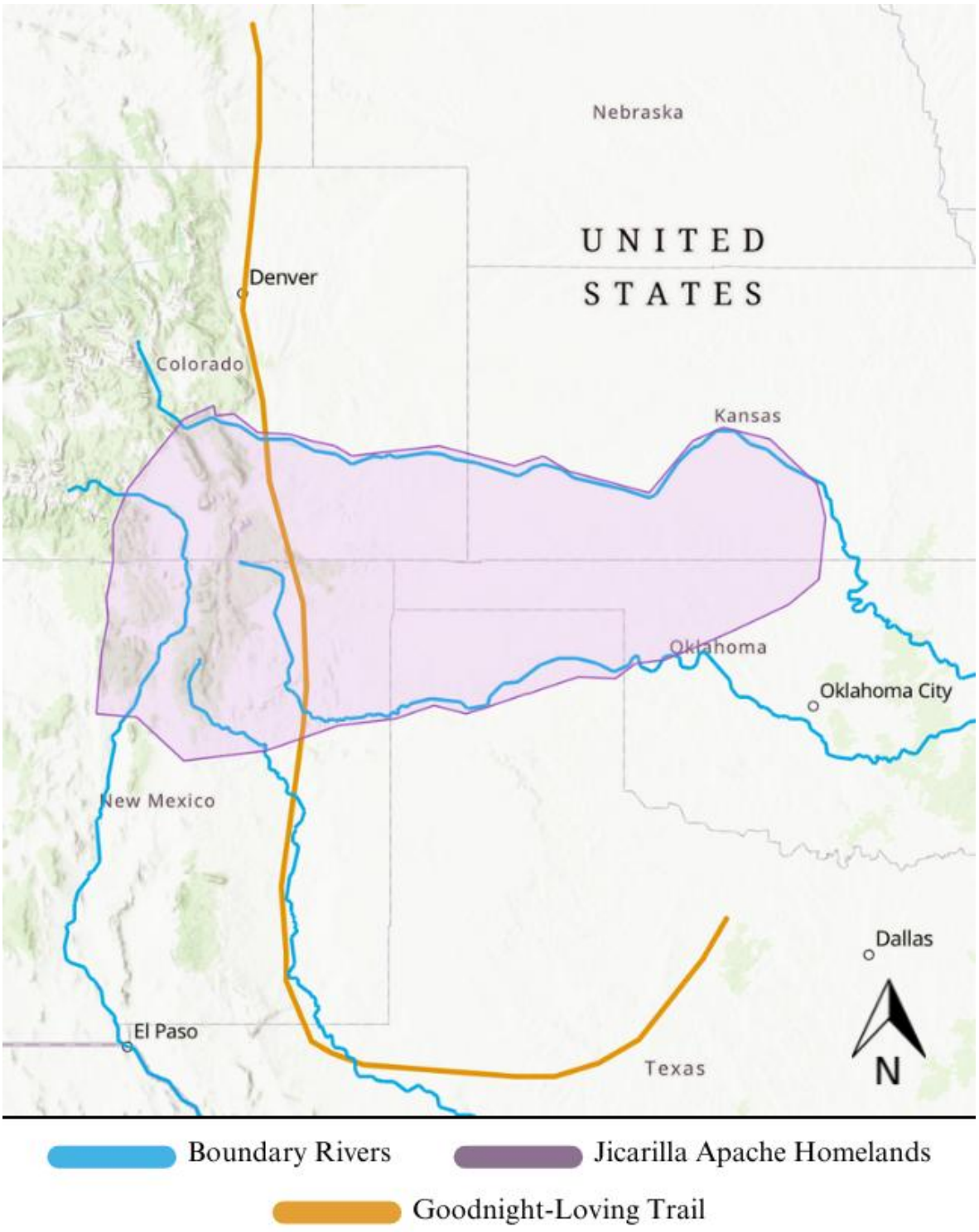


Figure 5 Goodnight-Loving Trail and Jicarilla Apache homelands.

The following year, the number of cattle in the U.S. soared to 28.6 million head, a number that would only continue to grow through the end of the century, contributing to the first cattle cycle of the U.S. cattle industry (Peel 2021). 1868 is the first year that the Jicarilla Apache were recorded owning any kind of livestock by the Office of Indian Affairs. Even then, all that is mentioned is that they owned 261 horses (United States 1868, 366). However, it is highly probable that they had far more horses and even some livestock despite the lack of documentation within the colonial archives

1869 was a year of profound change for the Jicarilla and Utes. A group representing Colorado mining interests had reached out to Maxwell about purchasing the Maxwell Land Grant. He agreed. The sale happened quickly after that. The Colorado business rapidly began promoting their new property for development. By January of 1870, a British company negotiated a six-month contract option to buy the grant for $1,350,000. This option was then transferred to the new Maxwell Land Grant & Railway Company, who then assumed the responsibility of navigating the purchase agreement (Tiller 1983, 71).

There were mixed reactions when Jicarilla Apache and Utes learned about the sale that ranged from betrayal to outrage. Maxwell had been viewed as a friend who they allowed to live on their land. Tiller notes that much of the anger was because the Jicarilla had not realized that they had already lost possession of the land grant during the Mexican period, were upset that Maxwell failed to discuss the sale with them, nor share the profit from the sale.

The new British landowners further eroded the situation. They began new efforts to remove the Jicarilla and the Ute from the land, which the U.S. federal government used as an opportunity to remind the Jicarilla that it was time for them to be removed, threatening to withhold rations if the Tribe did not cooperate (Tiller 1983, 71).

Chapter 6: 1870 – 1890

The final decades of the 19th century marked a period of immense transition for Native Nations across the modern-day U.S. Federal policies increasingly undermined – or outright ignored – tribal sovereignty. For the Jicarilla Apache, the shifts altered traditional ways of life. These years were defined by struggle and skilled adaptation – facing battles over land rights, forced policy changes, and intensifying settler encroachment while simultaneously asserting control over their ways of life and economic future.

By 1871, roughly half of all treaties negotiated with Native nations had never been ratified by Congress, leaving many agreements unfulfilled. The Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 officially ended the federal government's practice of making treaties with Native nations, fundamentally altering the legal and political landscape for tribal sovereignty. While this act is often framed as a bureaucratic shift, it was in reality part of a broader federal effort to consolidate authority of Indigenous nations, building on previous legal and political maneuvers (United States 1871a).

The Indian Appropriations Act of 1871 would not be an isolated policy decision but a response to increasing federal interventions across multiple branches of government. It marked a significant shift in federal Indian policy and reinforced Congressional control of Native affairs at the expense of Indigenous sovereignty and executive power. The centralization of authority was later reinforced by Supreme Court decisions such as *Ex parte Crow Dog* (Matthews 1883), which stripped tribes of jurisdiction over crimes committed by their own members, and *United States V. Kagama* (Miller 1886), which upheld Congress's power to unilaterally legislate over Tribal nations. Making the Indian Appropriations Act a key step in unifying executive, judicial, and congressional authority in imposition of federal policies upon Native nations.

For the Jicarilla Apache, this act had profound consequences. Having long faced challenges in securing land and resources, they now had even fewer legal avenues to negotiate on their own terms. After the passage of this act, instead of engaging in a nation-to-nation agreements, the U.S. simply further imposed policies upon Native communities without their direct consent. This further eroded their legal recognition as a sovereign political entity, making the securement of land rights, grazing rights, settlement and economic development even more difficult. Additionally, this act directly annulled earlier treaties – most significantly, the Treaty of 1855 as it was never ratified by Congress. This allowed the U.S. to "legally" abandon their promises of land, education and agricultural provisions that were provided in exchange for the cession of Jicarilla Apache land.

The 1872 Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs mentions, for the first time that the Jicarilla Apache raise stock in addition to farming the land. However, this information is only applied to the 400 Jicarilla Apache located at the Tierra Amarilla agency. For the 850 Jicarilla Apache located at the Cimarron Agency in northeastern New Mexico, there was no mention of agriculture or livestock (United States 1872, 54, 307). This discrepancy might be reflective of differences in available resources, agency policies, or reporting biases rather than an actual absence of agricultural or livestock husbandry practices among the Jicarilla Apache at Cimarron. The lack of documentation for the Cimarron Agency is most likely due to the Jicarilla in the region still being actively engaged in alternative subsistence strategies, continued seasonal movements, or simply because they were less integrated into the government-imposed agricultural programs of the time. This is supported by the fact that in 1871, the Jicarilla Apache at Cimarron had a very successful hunting season and did not start to return to the agency until June to receive their rations (Tiller 1983, 74). By 1872, though, insecurity and overall

sustainability for most, if not all, of the Jicarilla Apache groups had been all but diminished by the lack of government action in determining a land base, not providing sufficient rations, and a lack of wild game in the region (Tiller 1983, 74).

From November 14th to December 10th of 1873, the U.S. government held a convention with the Jicarilla Apache during which the U.S. agreed to provide $10,000 annually for five years in aid, along with an additional $3,000 for education purposes over a ten-year period (United States 1873a). This agreement also designated a specific territory in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado for the Jicarilla Apache, along with the promise of protection from settlers and access to agency benefits through joining the Southern Ute Agency – on the condition that they relinquish all land claims outside the newly designated reservation. While the convention's terms were considered valid by the U.S., Congress never ratified the agreement, a failure which likely prolonged the Jicarilla Apache's struggle to secure land, which was not officially resolved until 1887.

Both historical Jicarilla Apache territory and strategic federal interests likely influenced the land that was eventually chosen. The region's northwestern remoteness in what is now New Mexico, may have been seen as a method to avoid settler conflicts as well as to bring the Tribe closer to the Southern Ute Agency. It also appears that the allocated land that was not seen as agriculturally "desirable" compared to other regions in the territory.

Moreover, the placement of the reservation lands was a military tactic. L. Edwin Dudley, then Superintendent of Indian Affairs in New Mexico, called for the establishment of a new reservation for the Weeminuche, Capote, Muache Ute and Jicarilla Apache along with construction of an additional military post. This request was not primarily aimed for the purpose of benefiting any of these Tribes, but instead was intended to promote settler safety as "the

execution of this plan would place these Indians in a location where they would be a barrier against the incursions of the plains Indians into this Territory and Colorado." Additionally, he described them as a potential human shield that would serve as "an obstacle" for Mexican and Comanche cattle thieves. Furthermore, he pushed for consolidating multiple Tribes into a single reservation to reduce federal expenses (United States 1873b, 269).

Between 1873 to 1875, there is hardly any mention of Jicarilla Apache livestock or agricultural pursuits. What is regularly mentioned however, was the wish for the U.S. government to make good on their agreement of allocating specific lands for the Jicarilla Apache. By 1876, however, records indicate that the Jicarilla Apache owned 1,000 horses (United States 1876, 230-231) - a number which more than doubled in the following year,[2] and then in 1878 had grown to a staggering 12,400 (United States 1878, 306-307). Then suddenly, this number plummets to 1,200 and remained that way for the next three years straight (1879-1881). This unexplained rise and drop in horse numbers raises questions about the accuracy of colonial record-keeping, as there is the possibility of an extra zero being added to the 1878 horse population. Or there are potential and undiscussed external factors that could have contributed to such a drastic decline.

One possible explanation is inconsistent or negligent recordkeeping during Indian Agent Ben Thomas' tenure, as he was responsible for the reports showing a stagnant horse population of 1,200 from 1879 to 1881. Further evidence suggesting unreliable reports also originates from the fact that the documented population of the Jicarilla Apache is also static for all three years, remaining at 750 persons, despite natural fluctuations being expected (United States 1879;

[2] 2,400 horses were recorded under the ownership of the Ute and Jicarilla at the Abiquiu Agency (United States 1877, 312-313).

United States 1880; United States 1881). There is a notable shift in reporting that occurs when William H.H. Llewellyn takes over as the Indian Agent for the Mescalero and Jicarilla Apaches from 1882 to 1885, during which time human and horse population numbers begin to change again (United States 1882, 359; United States 1883, 297; United States 1884, 131; United States 1885, 388-389).

The introduction of barbed wire in 1874 allowed ranchers to enclose land on an unprecedented scale, and restricted access to gazing areas and natural water sources (Merlan 2010, vii). That same year also saw the largest single cattle drive in New Mexico history, as 110,000 head of cattle were trailed north from Roswell, NM to Colorado (Merlan 2010, 10). A cattle drive of this size was still feasible as barbed wire fencing had not become widespread on the southern plains until 1881. This unprecedented growth in the cattle industry led to an increase in settler encroachment onto Indigenous lands, further compounding the struggles of Native communities seeking to maintain control over their land and resources.

In 1883, the Jicarilla Apache were removed to southern New Mexico to the Mescalero Apache Reservation. This is of course after the government promised two reservations in 1874 and 1880, both of which the Government disregarded. Upon finding out that the executive order of 1874 was going to be rescinded, Indian Agent Sam Russell of the Abiquiu Agency had written to the commissioner inquiring if this was in fact true or not. He found out that the order was being rescinded because non-Natives would supposedly agriculturally benefit the San Juan area better than the Jicarilla Apache. Russel wondered if the region was so agriculturally valuable, why was it not suitable for the Tribes. Upon further investigation, Russel uncovered that white settler in the San Juan region had petitioned the president, the secretary of the interior, and the commissioner of Indian Affairs to annul the executive order and move the Jicarilla Apache to

Mescalero (Tiller 1983, 80-81). As non-Native settlers increasingly sought to control land for agricultural and ranching purposes, their influence over government decisions became undeniable – not only in the revocation of promised reservations, but also in the broader transformation of the landscape. The expansion of the cattle industry further restricted Indigenous access to traditional lands and resources and played a role in the acceleration of their displacement.

In the 1870s and 1880s, Texas ranchers began entering New Mexico, driving longhorns along the Magdalena Livestock Driveway to the train station in Magdalena. Texans also pushed into the heart of Jicarilla Apache territory in the San Juan River Valley on their way into Utah (Merlan 2010, viii). By the mid-1870s, cattle barons began establishing massive ranching operations in New Mexico. John Chisum, for example, set up the South Spring River Ranch in Chaves County, which managed around 80,000 head of cattle (Merlan 2010, vii). At the same time, conflicts over land and water escalated until they reached a breaking point in 1878 resulting in the Lincoln County War. This conflict was sparked by the murder of John Tunstall, an English rancher, by associates of the established Murphy-Dolan faction, who had majority control of trade and land in the Territory. Tunstall's allies, which included John Chisum, the infamous Billy the Kid and the Regulators, retaliated, leading to a series of violent skirmishes before reaching its peak at the Battle of Lincoln in 1878. Although this war officially ended when the federal government intervened, it had lasting effects on the relationships between settlers, ranchers, and Indigenous communities in New Mexico Territory (Fulton 1968).

As a solution, the territorial assembly reaffirmed travelers' rights to access water sources but also imposed a new restriction that required permission from the landowner for larger migrating herds (Merlan 2010, vii). This policy disproportionately affected Native communities,

further limiting their ability to maintain or even begin grazing patterns (Merlan 2010, vii). The Desert Land Entry Act of 1877 further incentivized settler expansion by allowing individuals to cheaply purchase land if they committed to irrigation and cultivation. This act accelerated the privatization of lands that had been essential to Indigenous economies and ways of life (United States 1877a).

By the 1880s, New Mexico's cattle industry had grown exponentially, driven by railroad expansion and the influx of Texas ranchers into the territory. The arrival of the railroad in 1880 connected the Territory's ranching economy to national markets, which fueled large-scale cattle operations (Merlan 2010, viii). The number of cattle soared from 160,000 in 1880 to 500,000 by 1890 (Merlan 2010, 6). As corporate ranching syndicates, especially those backed by foreign investors, consolidated land and water resources, competition over grazing lands only intensified. Some ranchers, like the Chisum family, responded by strategically filing land claims along the Pecos River to control these vital water rights (Merlan 2010, viii). These filings effectively left little room for Indigenous livestock or agricultural irrigation operations to expand (Merlan 2010, 10).

Despite this, 1885 appeared to be a prosperous year of cattle husbandry for the Jicarilla Apache. Having received 250 heads of cattle the year before, part of an even split of 500 with the Mescalero Apache, Agent William H.H. Llewellyn believed that this year they had branded at least 250 calves. But in the compiled data of stock owned by Indians, only a combined total of 500 head of cattle were listed for both groups. While this could be close to the actual number, it is not unreasonable to think that this number was only listed because a full account of the herd was not provided in the report, but it was known that they had at least 500 head (United States 1885, 150, 388-389). The Jicarilla and Mescalero Apache had joined the Lincoln County Stock

Association. This powerful organization offered a standing $500 reward for the arrest and conviction of cattle thieves, a practice which may have helped protect their herds from theft. Even so, challenges remained. Non-Native owned cattle often grazed on the reservation, just as Apache livestock sometimes wandered off it. However, this didn't appear to be an area of contention, as mutual cooperation between the Apache and local cattlemen helped maintain a relatively good relationship. Unlike cattle, however, sheep were strictly opposed by both groups, as the Jicarilla Apache and their neighboring white ranchers saw them as destructive to grazing lands (United States 1885, 150).

This interesting dynamic reveals the opportunities and constraints of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching in the late 19th century. Their participation in the Lincoln County Stock Association demonstrates an attempt to join the cattle economy and protect their herds, but the continued presence of outside cattle on reservation lands underscores the limits of their control over their grazing resources. While collaboration with non-Native ranchers fostered stability, it also reflected the reality that the Jicarilla had to navigate settler-imposed economic structures rather than operate entirely on their terms. Additionally, from how it is reported, it appears that the Jicarilla Apache joined the Lincoln County Stock Association on their own volition. This act was not mandated or controlled by federal agents. Because of this, it also suggests that there were far more cattle being managed by the Jicarilla Apache than what had been reported by the Indian agent. Additionally, the opposition to sheep, shared by both the Apache and their ranching neighbors, suggests a strategic alignment of interests, yet it also highlights the broader competition over land use in the West. Ultimately, these factors illustrate the complex balancing act the Jicarilla Apache faced as they sought to assert their economic autonomy within an evolving and often challenging cattle industry.

The following year, under a new Indian Agent by the name of Fletcher J. Cowart, cattle were never explicitly mentioned in his report, but records show that there were 495 head of cattle owned by the Mescalero and Jicarilla Apache (United States 1886, 445). The inconsistencies between the 1885 and 1886 reports – combined with the absence of detailed herd accounts in the written report – continues the suggestion that the Jicarilla Apache herds may have been larger than what was officially reported. Environmental factors from 1885 to 1887, such as blizzards and long periods of below-zero temperature, devasted livestock herds across the region, with losses as high as 90%, yet once again this was also not acknowledged in the reports (Merlan 2010, viii).

These discrepancies reflect the broader challenges that the Jicarilla Apache Nation faced in maintaining an accurate representation of their resources. This also underscores the complexities of cattle ranching and how Jicarilla Apache economic success could have easily been underreported due to poor or biased governmental record-keeping. Therefore, these numbers provide insight into the Jicarilla Apache's growing cattle economy and the ongoing struggle for visibility and autonomy. There is also the possibility that the Jicarilla Apache purposefully prevented the documentation of accurate cattle numbers as a measure to limit further federal government interference and tracking.

The Jicarilla Apache continued facing immense challenges during this period, as their land base remained contested and outside settlers took blatant advantage of the lack of enforcement on reservation boundaries. In 1887, Special Indian Agent Welton reported that at least 10,000 non-Native cattle were roaming Jicarilla Apache lands, further illustrating the extent to which the Tribe's grazing rights were disregarded (Tiller 1983, 102-103).

On February 8th, 1887, the Dawes Act became law, mandating the allotment of land to individual Native male head of households – 160 acres each – while single individuals over 18 received 40 acres (United States 1887a). This act sought to further impose Euro-American gender norms and patriarchal structures onto Native communities, many of which did not define family or leadership through a male-dominated framework. Three days later, the Jicarilla Apache Reservation was created through an executive order, totaling in at about 416,000 acres in northwest New Mexico (United States 1887b). On April 25, 1887, Special Agent Welton joined 500 Jicarilla Apache and about 2,000 head of livestock to the new reservation. (Tiller 1983, 96).

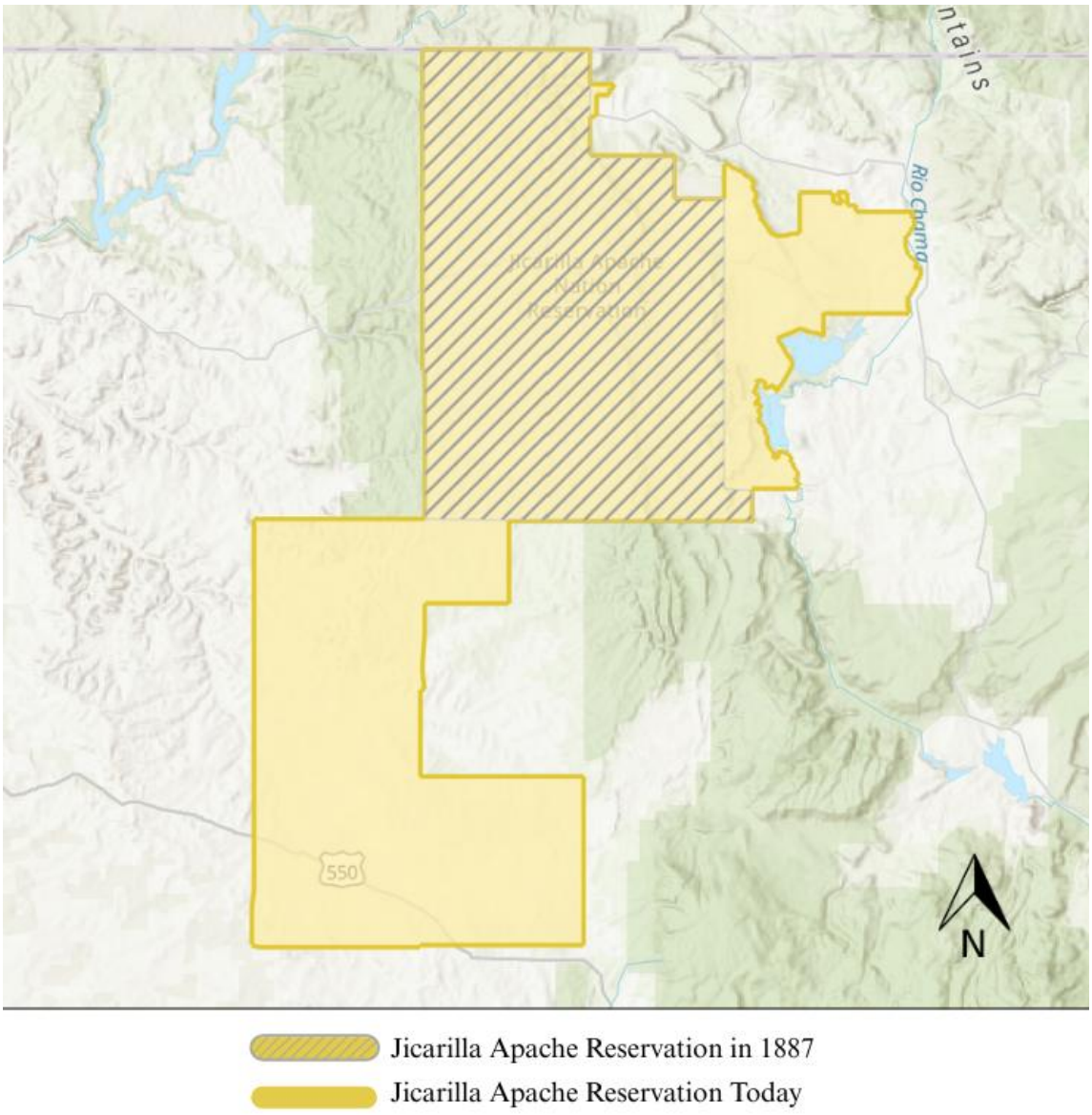


Figure 6 Map of Jicarilla Apache Reservation. Hatch-shaded area represents the initial reservation boundaries of 1887.

Federal Indian policy during this period not only imposed settler-colonial property norms but also reinforced patriarchal author structures. By privileging male heads of household in allotment decisions, U.S. officials projected gendered assumptions about leadership and ownership that were often misaligned with Indigenous ways of organizing family, labor and land

stewardship. In turn, this framework shaped federal records. Jicarilla Apache women are largely absent from federal government documents, not because they lacked influence or leadership positions, but because their roles did not fit into the categories recognized by federal agents or policymakers. This silencing in the archive is not accidental and instead reflects the limitations of a bureaucratic system that rendered women invisible in official accounts of land, governance, and daily life. Further emphasizing the need to review federal reports critically to recognize biases and evident absences that shaped these narratives.

Amid these dynamics, the late 1880s saw the cattle industry in New Mexico experience a sharp decline due to overgrazing, drought, and severe winters, creating widespread economic instability that further pressured Indigenous communities already fighting for land security (Baydo 1970, 134). Amid these struggles, government policies continued to undermine Jicarilla Apache sovereignty. The passage of the Hatch Act in 1887 created agricultural experiment stations that were aimed at improving farming techniques, whose developments were intended to benefit settler interests rather than Indigenous communities (Merlan 2010, viii). Similarly, the 1889 act of the New Mexico territorial assembly regulating the overstocking of public ranges theoretically sought to prevent ecological degradation (Merlan 2010, viii). In practice, however, it essentially reinforced the idea that land use was dictated by ownership of water rights – further privileging non-Native ranchers. This belated attempt failed to regulate grazing to combat the lasting effects of a series of hard winters, accompanied by drought and rampant overgrazing, which led to the collapse of the cattle industry in the region (Baydo 1970, 134).

In August of 1887, a report reaffirmed that “three or four years ago 500 head of stock cattle were issued by the Government to the Mescaleros and Jicarillas…as tribal property – 250 head to each tribe” (United States 1887c, 168). What is significant about the report this year is

that Cowart mentions that the Jicarilla Apache Tribe had withdrawn their cattle from the shared herd and divided them into private ownership, under private brands. Cowart appears to attribute the change due to "nearly all the calves were killed and eaten secretly" despite the presence of the chief herder, whose role was akin to that of a shepherd (United States 1887c, 168). On the other hand, this change in ranching practice could be accredited for a variety of other reasons, such has the enaction of the Dawes Act or the fact that the Jicarilla Apache had moved to their own reservation, which does call for Nation-to-Nation cattle separation, but not necessarily individual ownership.

In 1888, there is little mention of stock or agricultural efforts. The Jicarilla Apache are noted to have cut about 100 tons of hay but are reported to have no cattle and no horses (United States 1888, 240). However, the 1889 Annual Report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs provides additional context. This report, the first completed by Indian Agent Charles Bartholomew, is of note for several reasons. First, the first of two reports from this period lists the Olleros and Llaneros as separate bands of Jicarilla Apache within the *Table of Statistics of Indian Lands, Crops, Stock, and Labor* (United States 1889, 516-517). According to this table, the Jicarilla Apache owned no cattle, but they possess a little over three thousand horses. Second, the report also includes a statement from the Indian Agent at the Mescalero Apache agency, noting that "the 150 head of cattle… fell to the lot of the Mescaleros in 1887, when the Jicarilla's were removed have increased to about 300" (United States 1889, 254). This suggests that the Jicarilla Apache's original cattle herd doubled within two years and yet, were no longer under Jicarilla ownership as they apparently had to leave the cattle behind when they moved to their new reservation.

Meanwhile, Bartholomew reports that "the agency stock cattle consists at present of 180 cows and calves, which are but the remnant of what were purchased for the benefit of the Indians some five years ago and are not increasing for the want of a good range" (United States 1889, 128). This statement, coupled with the fact that the Jicarilla Apache had to leave some of their cattle behind and had no cattle recorded in the 1889 statistics table, suggests that any cattle they were able to bring with them were assumed under agency ownership. Bartholomew even clarifies that these 180 heads of cattle are from the same herd that was purchased five years prior—the same cattle that had been divided among families under private brands just two years earlier. This significant shift warrants further investigation.

By the late 19th century, the Jicarilla Apache had endured decades of shifting policies, broken agreements, and building pressure from both the federal government and invading settlers. Despite these challenges, there is proven resilience through their navigation of new economic landscapes, including early cattle ranching, even as external forces restricted their access to land and resources. The inconsistencies in government records throughout this period reflect not only administrative negligence but also the broader erasure of Indigenous economic agency during this period. While the expansion of corporate ranching and federal land policies further marginalized Native nations, the Jicarilla Apache's persistence in securing land and regularly asserting control over their livelihoods laid the groundwork for their future as skilled cattle ranchers. As the 1890s unfolded, these foundations would become increasingly important, shaping their economic strategies and interactions with both government authorities and neighboring ranching operations.

Chapter 7: 1890 – 1900

The 1890s marked significant environmental, legislative, and economic change for the Jicarilla Apache, the cattle industry, and New Mexico. In 1890, the Census Bureau declared the western "frontier" officially closed due to rapid American settlement, claiming that there was no longer a distinct frontier line (Nash 1980, 98). This declaration, however, failed to acknowledge the continued presence of Indigenous communities. For the Jicarilla Apache, this decade would bring profound shifts in land use, leading to more ranching opportunities, and economic stability in spirit of environmental pressures, changing legislation, and broader economic downturns that created a challenging landscape for the cattle ranching industry as a whole.

At the start of the decade, the cattle industry reached its first cyclical peak in 1890, with numbers soaring to 60 million head nationally (Peel 2021). However, a series of environmental challenges would soon reshape the industry. Between 1891 and 1892, New Mexico experienced severe drought, leading to widespread livestock loss (Merlan 2010, ix). The following years, 1893 and 1894, saw continued below-average precipitation, further exacerbating the situation and contributing to the decline of large-scale cattle operations (Merlan 2010, ix). By 1895, open-range ranching was no longer the dominant pattern in New Mexico, as drought and overstocking rendered it completely unsustainable. While some areas, such as Lea County, maintained open ranges into the 1920s, the broader trend signaled a shift toward enclosed ranching and a more regulated method of land use (Baydo 1970, 224-228).

The Jicarilla Apache were particularly vulnerable to these environmental shifts. Unlike large Anglo-owned cattle operations that could absorb financial losses or simply relocate herds, Indigenous ranchers faced far more barriers in acquiring and maintaining livestock. The prolonged drought's effects were further compounded by federal policies that restricted land

access and provided inadequate support for Indigenous cattle ownership outside of agency control. Furthermore, while non-Native ranchers were able to secure grazing rights through political and financial means, the Jicarilla Apache had to remain dependent on government allocations, which frequently failed to account for environmental constraints.

In addition to the environmental conditions that plagued the start of the decade, the early 1890s also saw critical legislative changes that further complicated cattle ranching for the Jicarilla Apache. In 1892, Congress amended the Dawes Act to require that one-eighth of an allotment must be agriculturally suitable or that one-fourth must be appropriate for grazing. This change led to the allotment of 129,313.35 acres to 845 members of the Jicarilla Apache Nation in November of 1891, though these allotments would not receive officially approval from the Secretary of the Interior until 1898 (Tiller 1983, 101).

In recognizing the community's agricultural success despite the limited irrigation resources, U.S. Indian Agent Charles Bartholomew recommended the government supply sheep rather than cattle (United States 1891, 228). His successor, John H. Robertson, reiterated Bartholomew's previous suggestion favoring sheep over cattle "as the former can be tended with much safety, being herded in the hills" (United State 1892, 336). However, this recommendation conflicted with previous historical accounts that suggested that the Jicarilla Apache opposed sheep ranching. The report from 1885 indicated that the Jicarilla Apache did not favor sheep herding and this disdain for sheep was a shared belief between the Jicarilla and neighboring cattlemen. This opinion was to the point that the Jicarilla were reportedly so "bitterly opposed to their entering or even crossing the reservation on the public road" as the sheep were so destructive to the grasses (United States 1885, 150). The push for sheep over cattle then, appears to be less a reflection of Jicarilla Apache preference and more a product of federal policy aimed

at directing Indigenous economies in ways that better suited the administrative goals rather than recognizing Tribal sovereignty.

Despite this reported prioritization of sheep, the 1893 Jicarilla Apache agency report recorded the construction of a slaughterhouse and a corral that was specifically for butchering beef, not sheep. This decision raises questions about the extent to which cattle remained a priority for the community, even as federal agents were actively attempting to shift them toward sheep herding. The Pueblo half of the agency at the time owned a recorded 3,500 head of cattle, which may have influenced this infrastructure investment. Nevertheless, the Jicarilla Apache's own cattle holdings remained minimal (United States 1893, 218, 714-715).

The broader economic turmoil of the 1890s further complicates the Jicarilla Apache's ability to develop a sustainable cattle industry. The Panic of 1893, one of the most severe economic depressions in U.S. history, led to a steep decline in livestock prices. Ranchers who had borrowed money to expand their herds faced foreclosure, and banks were hesitant to extend new credit (Caldbick 2019). This downturn here had disproportionately affected Indigenous ranchers, who had limited access to financial resources and were confined to relying on government aid. For the Jicarilla Apache, who were already struggling to establish consistent cattle holdings according to agency reports of the time, this economic instability made investment in livestock even riskier.

Between 1894 and 1897, the Tribe lacked a permanent Indian Agent and was instead overseen by Acting Indian Agent Captain John Bullis of the Twenty-Fourth Infantry. Under his supervision, cattle numbers remained inconsistent. In 1894, the Jicarilla Apache reportedly owned only ten cattle, and by 1895, their cattle holdings had dropped to zero. This decline was not due to poor grazing conditions. Bullis observed that cattlemen of the surrounding area

frequently sought to graze on Jicarilla land, with many attempting to return even after being moved off the reservation as "immediately after crossing [the reservation] they wish to return and would, if allowed, spend the entire season this way" (United States 1894, 210). This suggests that the reservation possessed valuable grazing land, but that federal policies and present economic limitations prevented the Jicarilla Apache from being able to fully utilize their own resources.

By 1896, the national cattle market reached its first major downturn, with U.S. cattle numbers declining to a mere 49.2 million (Peel 2021). The Jicarilla Apache also saw little progress in cattle ranching during this time. Between 1896 and 1898, their cattle holdings remained at only 25 head of cattle, though their sheep and horse holdings grew into thousands. This shift raises questions about economic adaptation: Did the Jicarilla Apache actively embrace sheep ranching during this time as a strategic move, or was it a forced choice based on federal policies and economic necessity?

In 1898, major policy and administrative changes reshaped land management practices in New Mexico. The U.S. Congress passed the Fergusson Act, which effectively set aside 500,000 acres for permanent irrigation reservoirs in New Mexico. However, these irrigation projects were primarily for the benefit of white agricultural development, further limiting the Jicarilla Apache's access to critical water sources. The New Mexico Territorial Assembly created the office of Commissioner of Public Lands and the Board of Public Lands in March of 1899 to oversee the leasing and management of these newly appointed Fergusson lands (Merlan 2010, ix). That same year, the Territorial Assembly also passed an act that aimed at the prevention of overgrazing due to overstocking and fencing, which reflected the continued and growing concerns over land degradation in the wake of declining open-range ranching (Merlan 2010, viii).

The appointment of permanent Indian Agent N.S. Walpole in 1998 marked a turning point in the reporting of Jicarilla Apache livestock management. By the end of the year, it was reported that the Tribe owned 95 head of cattle, 2,500 sheep, and 1,650 horses. However, by 1900, their cattle numbers had dropped again to 60 head (United States 1900, 666-667). Unlike his predecessors, Walpole explicitly recommended the U.S. government increase cattle holdings provided either through timber sales or by other means, arguing that "the reservation is totally unfit for agriculture, but is well adapted to stock raising" (United States 1900, 297).

The decline in cattle ownership during the 1890s reflects a broader pattern of Indigenous economic displacement in the American West. The Jicarilla Apache, despite their resourcefulness and adaptation to shifting policies, faced significant barriers to establishing a stable cattle industry. The prioritization of sheep over cattle, driven by federal officials' perceptions of suitability rather than potential Tribal preference, further limited the expansion of Jicarilla Apache-owned cattle herds.

By the dawn of the 20th century, the Jicarilla Apache had navigated decades of economy hardship, changing federal policies, and environmental challenges that reshaped cattle ranching in New Mexico. While the fluctuating livestock population, drought, and government oversight presented persistent obstacles, the Jicarilla Apache remained skilled and active participants in the region's evolving cattle economy. Their continued engagement in ranching, despite the external pressures of the time, speaks to a broader pattern of Indigenous resilience and strategic adaptations. As later decades would reveal, their efforts to maintain control over their resources and economic future through the medium of cattle ranching would become even more crucial in the face of new federal policies.

Table 1. Reported Population and Stock Numbers from 1890-1900

Year	Population	Cattle Population	Horse & Mule Population	Sheep Population	Reporting Agent	Sources
1890	808	0	3,012	800	Charles Bartholomew	(United States, 1890, 448,466-467)
1891	824 (309 'Alleros' 515 Llaneros)	0	1,906	100	Charles Bartholomew	(United States 1891, 74-75, 92-93)
1892	842	0	985	575	John Robertson	(United States 1892, 790, 808-809))
1893	843	0	992	660	John Robertson	(United States 1893, 700, 714-715)
1894	842	10	1,540	2,200	John L. Bullis	(United States 1894, 574-574, 590-591)
1895	845	0	1,780	2,400	John L. Bullis	(United States 1895, 570, 586-587)
1896	853	25	1,985	3,000	John L. Bullis	(United States 1896, 526-527, 542-543)
1897	841	25	1,575	600	John L. Bullis	(United States 1897, 488-489, 502-503)
1898	840	25	1, 305	1,000	N.S. Walpole	(United States 1898, 604-605, 620-621)
1899	831	95	1,910	2,500	N.S. Walpole	(United States 1899, 570-571, 588-589)
1900	815	60	1,666	3,060	N.S. Walpole	(United States 1900, 646-647, 666-667)

Chapter 8: Discussion

The findings presented in Chapters Four through Seven offer a nuanced explanation of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching in the late 19th century and highlight both the opportunities and challenges faced by the community. This discussion contextualizes these findings within broader historical trends and decolonial methodologies. Using methods from the work of scholars Shawn Wilson, Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Gerald Vizenor, this analysis situates the Jicarilla Apache's ranching experiences as acts of survivance – the assertion of agency and sovereignty in the face of colonial pressures.

Throughout the process of reviewing primary source material for this period, it became evident that there were at least three different timelines or historical narratives that needed to be wove together in order to provide accurate context for Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching from 1846 to 1900. The first narrative is a Jicarilla Apache Nation-focused history, the second encompasses the broader story presented through U.S. federal law and policies, the third is Indian Agents' reports on the Jicarilla Apache. This fragmented history is both a reflection of settler-colonial narratives and the consequences of colonial archives that record Indigenous histories.

One of the key themes emerging from this study is the role of cattle ranching as a means of economic and social stability for the Jicarilla Apache. As detailed in Chapter Four, the transition to cattle husbandry was not merely an imposed policy by the federal government but a strategic adaptation by the Jicarilla to assert autonomy within the settler-colonial economy. The incorporation of cattle into their livelihoods allowed them to navigate the challenges of reservation life while maintaining aspects of traditional land use and resource management. This interpretation aligns with Wilson's method of relational accountability, wherein the researcher

recognizes the responsibility to Indigenous communities is not just that of a neutral observer, but as someone actively engaged in further community-centered, empowering narratives.

Chapter Five highlights the external pressures that shaped Jicarilla ranching efforts, particularly the encroachment of non-Native settlers, government policies, and market forces from the United States. Despite these challenges, the Jicarilla successfully joined the Lincoln County Stock Association, as detailed in Chapter Six, which provided them with a level of protection from cattle theft and reinforced their most likely underreported participation in the broader cattle industry. Notably, this also challenges the assumption that Indigenous communities were passive recipients of federal programs.

However, the limitations of this engagement must also be acknowledged. As seen in Chapter Six, while the Jicarilla Apache were able to grow their herds and participate in stock-raising, they still faced significant obstacles, including insufficient resources, land use conflicts with neighboring ranchers, and internal struggles. Additionally, Chapter Seven illustrates how environmental factors and competition over grazing lands complicated their ability to maintain sustainable herds.

While external forces undoubtedly added constraint to their actions, the Jicarilla Apache's ability to successfully navigate these challenges reveals a resilience that is central to Indigenous experiences within settler-colonial contexts. This is further underscored by Vizenor's concept of survivance, which sees the Jicarilla Apache's economic participation in ranching as more than a survival strategy; it is a deliberate act of asserting sovereignty and cultural continuity within changing times. Despite the limitations imposed by the settler-colonial state, these acts of adaptation are essential to understanding the broader patterns of Indigenous resistance, where economic participation becomes a tool for cultural resilience.

The Jicarilla Apache's experiences with cattle husbandry reflect a larger pattern of Indigenous resilience, where economic participation was leveraged as a tool for survival and autonomy. The shared economic interests between the Jicarilla Apache and non-Native ranchers, particularly regarding opposition to sheep, reflect how Indigenous communities could strategically align with settler interests when it served their needs, without relinquishing their sovereignty. This alignment reveals not only shared economic interests but also underscores broader conflicts over land and resource control in the region.

This thesis' findings contribute to a deeper understanding of Indigenous cattle ranching as both an economic strategy and a site of negotiation and potential relationship-building between Native communities and the settler-colonial communities. Yet, their participation in the cattle industry also reveals the structural constraints imposed by external forces, highlighting the complexities of Indigenous adaptation in the face of colonial expansion and economic transformation.

Moving forward, further research could explore how Jicarilla cattle ranching evolved in the decades following the late 19th century, particularly in relation to federal policies, shifts in land ownership, and continued economic adaptations. Additionally, examining oral histories and Indigenous perspectives could provide further depth to understanding how these historical processes continue to shape Jicarilla ranching practices today. By situating this history within the broader context of Indigenous economic agency, this study contributes to an ongoing dialogue about Native sovereignty, land stewardship, and the enduring legacies of cattle ranching in Indigenous communities.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

The beginnings of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching were not simply an economic endeavor – it was a direct assertion of sovereignty, survival and self-determination in the face of colonial constraints. Throughout the latter half of the 19th century, the Jicarilla Apache navigated shifting economic landscapes, government-imposed policies, and settler encroachment while asserting their autonomy through cattle husbandry. This study has shown that while cattle ranching was initially an externally introduced practice, the Jicarilla strategically incorporated it into their community, balancing economic opportunity with cultural identity.

One of the key findings of this research is the role of cattle ranching in strengthening Jicarilla Apache self-sufficiency. By the 1880s, Jicarilla ranchers were not only raising cattle for subsistence but also engaging in broader market economies. Their participation in the Lincoln County Stock Association highlights a conscious, independent effort to participate in regional ranching networks while ensuring protection for their herds. However, this involvement was not without its challenges like conflicts over land use, tensions with non-Native ranchers, and the persistent issue of insufficient rations all shaped their experiences.

Furthermore, this study underscores the complex relationship between Indigenous ranchers and external economic forces. Federal policies that sought to impose Western agricultural models on Native communities often failed to consider Indigenous approaches to land and resource management. Despite these constraints, the Jicarilla enacted their agency by adapting cattle ranching to suit their needs, incorporating it into existing social and economic structures rather than wholly assimilating into settler practices.

While this research provides a foundational understanding of Jicarilla Apache cattle ranching in the late 19th century, there are still gaps that warrant further exploration. Future

studies could benefit from a closer examination of oral histories, tribal records, and other firsthand accounts to deepen our understanding of how cattle ranching evolved within the community over subsequent generations. Additionally, exploring the long-term effects of early cattle programs on contemporary Jicarilla ranching practices would provide valuable insight into the lasting legacies of these historical developments.

In alignment with the Jicarilla Apache creation story, animals were not an afterthought. They were formed before humans, shaped with care by the Supreme Supernatural. This enduring relationship between people and animals has long-shaped Jicarilla Apache lifeways, including the adoption of cattle ranching in the 19th century. Though introduced through colonial channels, ranching became more than an economic strategy; it reflected an existing ethic of living alongside and caring for animals.

Like their ancestors who relied on the guidance of the Hac˙ct'cin and underworld creatures to reach a new world, the Jicarilla Apache of the late 1800s navigated foreign systems with intention. They adopted new practices on their own terms, grounding them in community values and their longstanding relationship with the land and its animals. Ranching, then, was not merely a response to settler-colonial pressures, but a continuation of the Jicarilla Apache story of survivance, adaptation, and sovereignty.

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