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# Salinas Pueblo Missions: The Early History

Jeanette L. Wolfe

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Jeanette L. Wolfe

*Candidate*

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Department of History

*Department*

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This thesis is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication:

*Approved by the Thesis Committee:*

Dr. Paul A. Hutton, Chairperson

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Dr. Margaret Connell-Szasz

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Dr. Larry D. Ball

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**SALINAS PUEBLO MISSION: THE EARLY HISTORY**

**by**

**JEANETTE L. WOLFE**

**BACHELOR OF ARTS, HISTORY**

**THESIS**

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of

**Master of Arts  
History**

The University of New Mexico  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**May, 2013**

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Bryan Wolfe, one of the very best souls I have encountered in my lifetime. I am thankful for your love, grateful for your untiring support, and appreciative of your dry humor. Thank you for seeing me through this project.

Dedicated also to my parents David and Fae, who ingrained in me the value of education and the desire to never stop learning.

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# **SALINAS PUEBLO MISSIONS: THE EARLY HISTORY**

**by**

**Jeanette L. Wolfe**

**B.A., History, University of New Mexico, 2005**

## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the early history of Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument just beyond the time when Gran Quivira was set aside as a government reservation. It focuses on the Pueblo Indian and Spanish Colonial mission ruins now protected by the National Park Service, at the management units of Gran Quivira, Abó, and Quarai, while also placing the Salinas story into the broader historical context of New Mexico and U. S. West history. This is accomplished by a careful examination of the first hand accounts by individuals who visited the sites throughout this early period in their history, with a view toward how the perception of these places affected their use, and how this ultimately led to their preservation. It is hoped that this study will illicit further investigation of the many topics it can only briefly touch upon.

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*Cities and Thrones and Powers,  
Stand in Time's eye,  
Almost as long as flowers,  
Which daily die:  
But, as new buds put forth,  
To glad new men,  
Out of the spent and unconsidered Earth,  
The Cities rise again.*

*This season's Daffodil,  
She never hears,  
What change, what chance, what chill,  
Cut down last year's:  
But with bold countenance,  
And knowledge small,  
Esteems her seven days' continuance  
To be perpetual.*

*So Time that is o'er-kind,  
To all that be,  
Ordains us e'en as blind,  
As bold as she:  
That in our very death,  
And burial sure,  
Shadow to shadow, well-persuaded, saith,  
'See how our works endure!'*

*A Centurion of the Thirtieth  
— by Rudyard Kipling*

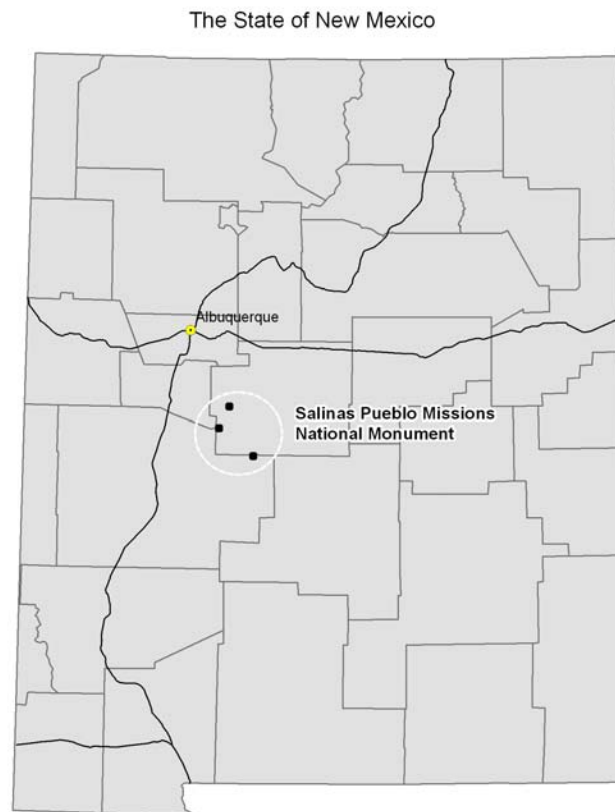
## **Introduction**

This is a history of place, a place often overlooked in the standard or popular histories of this region we call the Southwest, and more specifically New Mexico. What is a "place"? Is it any location, specified space, or simply the land? Does it have to have a series of structures, or to contain people to have meaning? Or is it really a combination of all of these things? Can we take a place with us? Most New Mexicans would say that you can, or more to the point, that a place can so affect you and become a part of you that it is taken whenever and where ever one goes — we are after all the sum of our experiences. Is a place the sum of its experiences as well? Yes, I think it is, and its experiences very often leave physical alterations and marks upon a place. "Place" is in our perception of it, and perception leads to how we use a space. So this is the history of a place called Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument , the sum of its experiences, the change over time in how it was perceived, and how it was used or experienced.

Although it is often overlooked in histories of this place we call New Mexico, what happened there has impacted the whole, just as one ring in the series of waves emanating from a pebble dropped in water impact the ones before and after it, pushing them along in an ever widening arc. Salinas has arguably affected the people who have resided there or visited it, and they have most definitely affected it for good or ill.

Situated almost in the geographic center of the state of New Mexico, the Estancia Basin, alternately known as

the Salinas Basin, is an area with a long habitational history. Named for the dry lake beds which provided salt to much of the region in the colonial and pre-colonial period, human habitation in the Salinas Basin stretches back, possibly to before the Clovis period.<sup>1</sup> This region east of the Río Grande valley and the Manzano Mountains



**Figure 1: Location of Salinas Pueblo Missions**

— accessed via the Abó Pass at the southern end of the mountain chain or Tijeras Canyon to the north, and Hell's Canyon east of Isleta Pueblo — is now home to a little-known monument in the National Park Service system, named Salinas Pueblo Missions National

<sup>1</sup> Jerry Harbour, “Microstratigraphic and Sedimentational Studies of an early Man Site near Lucy, New Mexico, (M.S. thesis, University of New Mexico, 1958).

Monument. Established in 1909, the monument first consisted of the Spanish mission ruins and associated Native American pueblo house blocks on the Chupadero Mesa, named Gran Quivira National Monument. In 1980, two other sites located in the Salinas Basin were added to the park, and the name was changed to Salinas National Monument. A few years later, in an effort to avoid confusion over what the monument protected — the salt beds nearby or the ancient pueblo ruins — the name was altered again to the one it still holds, Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument. But what are these Pueblo Missions next to the salt lakes or *salinas*; why are they important to the history of the state, Southwest, and United States?

Salinas Pueblo Missions National Monument is actually three separate sites: Abó, Quarai, and the largest, Gran Quivira. Each contains ruins of Puebloan house blocks with exceptional associated Franciscan Missionary complexes. They stand as a testament to human habitation in the sometimes harsh environments they were chosen to become a part of, and represent four of only six remaining seventeenth-century Spanish Mission churches left in the United States.<sup>2</sup> That makes them rare and precious indeed. Their value and uniqueness also stems from their quality as a sort of time capsule of that period when Western Europeans met and interacted with, and eventually changed, Native American culture during the early colonial period, prior to the changes in the colonial experience swept into place by the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Abandoned before the revolt took place, and remaining for the most part uninhabited until the American entry into the southwest, the sites have escaped those influences of the later Spanish colonial period,

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<sup>2</sup> The Salinas missions are: San Gregorio de Abó, Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Quarai, San Ysidro at Gran Quivira, and San Buenaventura also at Gran Quivira. The mission churches of San José de Jémez, and San Estevan del Rey at Acoma are the only other two missions remaining from the seventeenth century.

after the re-conquest of New Mexico by Don Diego de Vargas, and offer a unique opportunity to study and explore the initial contact of the Spanish and Native worlds in the North American Southwest.

Native North Americans had passed through the basin hunting and gathering since the last Ice Age and eventually migrated into the valley, bringing with them influences from the Mogollon culture area in the south, the Ancestral Puebloans from the north and west, and later the nomadic Plains groups from the east-northeast, becoming one of the early ‘melting pots’ in America before the term was even coined. Caddoan speaking groups traded buffalo hides and meat, and freshwater mussel shells for maize, beans, and other goods at Las Humanas (Gran Quivira) pueblo long before the arrival of the Europeans. Pottery manufactured in the Río Grande valley and in the Galisteo area was traded to the Salinas pueblos, until Abó and Quarai became centers of manufacture for that commodity. Dwellings evolved from semi-subterranean pit-houses to jacals, to the masonry pueblo house-blocks familiar today.<sup>3</sup>

These early inhabitants of the Estancia Basin were Tiwa and Tompiro speaking Indians. The pueblos of Chililí, Tajique, and Quarai most likely spoke Tiwa, a language they shared with the pueblos of Taos, Picurís, Sandía, and Isleta on the west side of the mountains, although there is some historical documentary evidence to suggest they may have been Tompiro speaking peoples.<sup>4</sup> Abó, Las Humanas (Gran Quivira), Tenabó, Pueblo Blanco (Tabirá), Pueblo Pardo, and possibly Pueblo Colorado were Tompiro

<sup>3</sup> Pithouse occupation dates to A.D. 800-1200, and was usually not built in defensive locations. Jacal occupation dates to A.D. 1175 to 1350. Jacal dwellings are characterized by upright stone slabs outlining the lower portions of one to ten rooms the walls made of a wattle and daub like structure of upright posts, with adobe intermediate fill which eventually gave way to stone masonry fill.

<sup>4</sup> There is some historical documentary evidence to suggest Quarai was also a Tompiro speaking pueblo; see the NPS Memorandum ,dated 18 April 1967, from Albert H. Schroeder to the Superintendent of Gran Quivira, in the Kessell Collection (MSS767), Box 7, Folder 48, at the Center for Southwest Research, which refers to the *Relaciones* by Zarate Salmeron.

speaking pueblos; an extinct dialect related to that of the Piro pueblos of Sevilleta, El Alamillo, Senecú, Teypana (renamed Socorro by Oñate), Trenaquel, and Pilabó (where the mission of Nuestra Señora de Socorro was founded) which were located south of Los Lunas along the Río Grande. Of the Tompiro pueblos, three were further distinguished by the Spanish term *Rayados Jumanos/Humanas*, meaning “painted people,” and display slightly different cultural characteristics than the other Tompiro villages in the group. These differences are shown at Pueblo de las Humanas, Pueblo Pardo, and Pueblo Blanco (Tabirá), in the types of pottery used, in their burial practices, and in the evidence of increased hunting and/or the trading of bison meat with nomadic groups. Over time these early tribal peoples developed a pattern of subsistence living that included agriculture, hunting and gathering, as well as trade with other culture groups that remained little changed for hundreds of years.

### **Chapter 1: Encounters, Conflict, Concord and Failure — The Spanish Entrada**

Sixty feet, stone by stone, the walls rise up, red sandstone against the clear cerulean sky. The window apertures and beam sockets gape open to the wind that blows across the dry expanse of grasslands on its approach to centuries old ruins, built room-by-room, block-by-block. Even so close to the Manzano Mountains the summer sun burns hot. It was from this mountain range the native men dragged the logs, timber by timber, to serve as roof-beams for the pueblo and later the mission, some over twenty feet in length, with only hand-tools to fell the trees. An early anthropologist wrote, “the ruined city itself is a huddle of indeterminate mounds of masonry [. . .]. But, [. . .] it is companioned by a huge and mysterious edifice — an edifice in ruins, it is true, but so tall,

so solemn, so dominant of that strange, lonely landscape, so out of place in that land of adobe box-huts, as to be simply overpowering. On the Rhine it would be a superlative; in the wilderness of the Manzano it is a miracle.”<sup>5</sup> Once experienced firsthand the ruins of the Salinas captured the imagination of the Americans who swept into New Mexico in 1821, following the opening of the Trail, and who injected into their descriptions the romanticism so in favor in early nineteenth-century writing. But the ruins belonged to a time before their migration out of the east, to an era when other Western Europeans came up from the south out of New Spain, across the *Jornada del Muerto* (Journey of Death), that vast, waterless expanse of desert starting outside of present day Las Cruces stretching over one-hundred miles to the north. Now the seventeenth-century missions in the Salinas Basin belong to the American people, a window back to a time when conquerors came to leave their mark on the land and those they encountered in it.

What little we know about the natives of the Salinas area comes mostly from evidence gleaned from archaeological excavations, and Spanish Colonial sources. Understandably, the Pueblo people only reluctantly share their oral histories and little has been shared regarding this region which has so long been uninhabited by its native people. Spanish colonial sources mention the Salinas, but few Spanish observers wrote specifically about the cultural traits of the Tiwa and Tompiro. Most information was passed by way of comparison to other pueblos with whom the Spanish came into contact before they visited those settlements east of the mountains and whose cultural traditions were documented in more detail.

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<sup>5</sup> Charles F. Lummis, *The Land of Poco Tiempo* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1893; reprint, Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 225.

The general observation by the Spaniards that came into contact with the Salinas Tiwa and Tompiro was that they lived like the Pueblo people of the Río Grande valley. By combining the information gleaned by inference to comparative pueblos through colonial sources with archaeological evidence, what we receive is a picture of subsistence farming communities that planted corn, beans and squash, cotton and gourds, and hunted pronghorns, deer, rabbit and other small mammals from the adjacent grasslands and occasionally from the piñon-juniper woodlands. To this they added piñon nuts, harvested from the nearby scrub woodlands, and amaranth seeds.<sup>6</sup> Like their river valley brethren they kept flocks of turkeys. At the Tompiro sites in Salinas however, they maintained a now extinct variety whose remains have only been found at Las Humanas, Pueblo Pardo, and Tabirá, known as the *Small Indian Domestic Turkey*. These fowl were kept not as much for their meat as for their bones and feathers; the bones used in tools and ornaments and the feathers for blankets.<sup>7</sup> Unlike the Río Grande pueblos though, the outlying pueblos of the Tompiro and eastern Tiwa, were immediately adjacent to bison range. Strong evidence suggests that the Salinas puebloans hunted bison as well as traded with the nomadic tribes for bison meat and robes, just as the Taos and Pecos natives did. Water resources east of the mountains were, and are to this day scarce. Abó, and Quarai were situated at perennial springs, but the Pueblo de las Humanas had no perennial source of water. The inhabitants of Las Humanas survived the dry environment by digging shallow wells, which were supplemented by collecting rainwater in clay-lined cisterns, and by diverting rainfall runoff directly onto their terraced fields.

<sup>6</sup> Alden C. Hayes, Jon Nathan Young, and A. H. Warren, *Excavation of Mound 7* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1981), 10-11.

<sup>7</sup> Charmion R. McKusick, "The Faunal Remains of Las Humanas," in *Contributions to Gran Quivira Archaeology* (Washington D.C.: National Park Service, 1981), 52, 65.

In cultural characteristics, such as dress, architecture, and religion, the Salinas Indians closely resembled the Tiwa and Piro Indians of Río Grande valley. They followed the kachina cult, holding seasonal dances using kachina masks, but little else is known regarding their religion. Fine masonry workers, they lived in terraced pueblos two or more stories high, built of stone and accessed from the roof by retractable ladders. The interiors of their homes and kivas were whitewashed, often bearing painted designs, and some rooms in the upper stories of the dwellings had windows. As with the other pueblos in the country, the Salinas villages were governed by a counsel of elders. The people were described by the Spaniards as industrious, “handsome and fair-skinned,” some having light hair.<sup>8</sup> They wore cotton cloth “with which they cover[ed] their privy parts. Over this they w[ore], fastened at the shoulders, a blanket of the same material, decorated with many figures and colors, which reache[d] to their knees.”<sup>9</sup> The women were said to dress similar to the men, with cotton skirts, often embroidered, covered with a cotton blanket fastened at the shoulders, but with an embroidered cotton sash around the waist. The men attended the cornfields, and carried the “burdens” while the women ground the corn, prepared food, tended children, and made pottery.

Centuries after the establishment of village life in the Salinas area, strangers bearing strange arms arrived. The first recorded entry of Western Europeans into this basin was possibly by members of the expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado. Coronado was born in the beautiful city of Salamanca, Spain in 1510. At the age of twenty-five he traveled to the New World of North America, a second son of wealthy and

<sup>8</sup> George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594: The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete, and Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, ed. George P. Hammond, vol. 3 (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 86-86.

<sup>9</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 85.



influential parents, arriving in Mexico City in 1535 with the first viceroy of New Spain, Don Antonio de Mendoza. A court favorite in his home country, Coronado married well in New Spain and was named to the city council by his friend Mendoza, without the customary royal sanction required for such posts. With reports filtering south after the return of the shipwrecked adventurer Cabeza de Vaca, an exploratory mission under Fray Marcos de Niza was sent beyond the frontier to investigate the stories of rich cities full of gold and civilized natives. Niza's confirmation went beyond the viceroy's expectations and after thorough but hasty preparations Coronado himself was soon on his way north on April 22, 1540 with fifteen hundred horses and other stock animals in train.<sup>10</sup>

When Francisco Vázquez de Coronado arrived in the unexplored northern reaches of the Spanish colonies he entered a country populated with numerous pueblos two to four stories tall. The group of explorers, including five Portuguese, two Italians, a Frenchman, and a Scot, reached the pueblo country in the late summer of that year, half starved and in desperate need of food and quarters for the coming winter. After appropriating through fair means or foul those things they needed, they set up their winter base in the Tewa/Tiguex province in the central Río Grande Valley, around present-day Albuquerque. From this central location they reconnoitered in all directions looking for resources to exploit, seeking to duplicate the successes of fellow conquistadores Hernán Cortés, Francisco Pizarro, and Pedro de Alvarado. In all their travels they were instructed to,

be very careful to observe the number of people that there [were], whether they are few or many, and whether they are scattered or living together. Note also the nature, fertility, and climate of the land; the trees,

<sup>10</sup> George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *Narratives of the Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, ed. George P. Hammond, vol. 2. (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1940), 162, 7.

plants and domestic and wild animals there may be; the character of the country, whether it is broken or flat; the rivers, whether they are large or small; the stones and metals which are there; and of all things that can be sent or brought, send or bring samples of them in order that his Majesty may be informed of everything.<sup>11</sup>

It was with these directives in mind that Coronado marched east to visit an area the Spanish referred to in their reports as Tutahaco — an area that Frederick Webb Hodge thought may have been in the Salinas Basin.

We do not know the specific date of this first meeting between white men and the natives east of the mountains. In the Spanish narratives the foray to Tutahaco comes shortly after Coronado's August 3, 1540 letter to viceroy Mendoza and the establishment of the winter quarters in Tiguex, and before their April 23, 1541 departure from the river pueblo in search of the fabled city of Quivira on the Plains of Kansas. Most likely it was in the winter of 1540 that Coronado first rode into the area with thirty of his men.

Castañeda, the expedition's chronicler wrote:

the general, having received information of a province of eight pueblos, took thirty of the most rested men and went to see it, intending to come back by way of Tiguex. He had experienced guides. . . . from the time they left their stopping place until noon of the third day when they came within sight of a snow-covered mountain where they had gone in search of water, neither they nor their horses had had anything to drink. The Indian servants likewise could not stand it on account of the intense cold. After an eight-days' journey, they reached Tutahaco, although with difficulty, where they learned that down the river were other pueblos.<sup>12</sup>

The natives of Tutahaco were described as having housing and clothing similar to the Tiguex, and having “the same ceremonies and customs” as all the other pueblos.<sup>13</sup>

Castañeda continues:

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<sup>11</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 60.

<sup>12</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 220.

<sup>13</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 254.

They build their pueblo houses in common. The women mix the plaster and erect the walls; the men bring the timbers and set them in place. They have no lime, but they mix a mortar made with charcoal ash and dirt, which is almost as good as if it were made with lime. For although the houses are four stories high, their walls are built only half a yard thick. [. . .]

The unmarried young men serve the pueblo in general. They bring the firewood that is needed and stack it up in the patios of the pueblos, from where the women take it to their homes. These young men live in the estufas, which are located in the patios of the pueblo. They are built underground, either square or round, with pine columns. Some have been seen having twelve pillars, four to the cell, two fathoms thick; the common ones had three or four columns. The floors are paved with large smooth slabs like the baths in Europe. In the interior there is a fireplace like the binnacle of a boat where they burn a handful of brush with which they keep up the heat. [. . .] The top is even with the ground. We saw some so large that they could be used for a game of ball.<sup>14</sup>

He also makes reference to a “tomb outside the pueblo of Tutahaco, where it seemed that some one had been buried recently,” as “there was [a] cross at the head.[. . .] made of two small sticks tied together with cotton thread, and there were many dry and crumbled flowers.”<sup>15</sup>

It is only speculation that the province of Tutahaco was one of the Salinas group of pueblos. Dr. Frederick Webb Hodge theorized that it was either the area around Isleta, or more likely the Tiwa/Tigua and Piro pueblos east of the Manzano Mountains in the Salinas district. Isleta is an unlikely candidate for Tutahaco since it sits adjacent to the Río Grande and sources of water can be found along the route between the Zuni province, where the Spaniards were originally based, to Isleta. So it does not correspond with the travel description given by the Spanish sources of marching three days from Cíbola without finding water. It is however, entirely possible to cross over the land between the Río Grande through Abó pass, without seeing water for that period of time. The

<sup>14</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 254-255.

<sup>15</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 280.

Coronado narratives also note that the people of Tutahaco told the men, “that down the river were other pueblos.”<sup>16</sup> While this passage can be confusing, if the Piro pueblos of the lower Río Grande to whom the Tompiro were related by language and trade are taken into account, this reference begins to make sense.<sup>17</sup>

Although the above quote from Casteñeda was a general discussion of the cultural aspects of Tiguex and Tutahaco, it also gives evidence of two important thoughts. First, that the people of the two areas closely resembled each other in customs and appearance, *at least to their Spanish observers*. Secondly, while modern archaeologists point out that kivas are not always circular, square kivas are not very common in New Mexico. While the date of construction and use of the rectangular kiva at Quarai is not exactly known, the fact that the pueblo contains one offers intriguing circumstantial evidence that Tutahaco could indeed be the Salinas district as theorized by Dr. Hodge. The fact that the reports regarding this first entry to the east side of the sierra do not mention the huge salt deposits in the vicinity should not cast doubt on the notion that Tutahaco is in the Salinas province. This can be explained by the time of year the expedition visited the area. Although the writers do not specifically tell us (outside of the reference to the snow-capped mountains), there could have been snow on the ground, which is especially



NPS Photograph by Murty Sullivan

Figure 2: Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Quarai

<sup>16</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 220.

<sup>17</sup> Sevilleta, El Alamillo, Senecú, Teypana (renamed Socorro by Oñate), Trenaquel, and Pilabó.

true if the Spaniards were at Quarai. It is also possible that in the winter the salt could have been mistaken for snow especially if seen from a distance. Yet another possibility for why the salt marshes were not mentioned lies in the fact that Chililí, Tajique, and Quarai sit some distance from the salt lakes, and the party may not have gone farther afield due to the intense cold they found so unpleasant. Going over the Abó Pass and turning north toward the mountains would have put the group on a path to one of these three pueblos, and does correspond with the sparse information given about the trail the Spaniards took to the area.

For his part, Coronado expressed some confusion as to the governance of the pueblo people, relating by letter to the king, “by what I can find out or observe, none of these towns has any [lords], since I have not seen any principal house by which any superiority over others could be shown.”<sup>18</sup> His men were amazed at the cleanliness of these “uncivilized” people. One chronicler wrote, “The towns are free from filth [. . .]. Their houses are well separated and extremely clean in the places where they cook and where they grind flour.”<sup>19</sup> Given the Western European attitude that the Native Americans were “savages” and that conditions in Europe were far from sanitary — with human and animal waste more often than not piling up in the streets and against structures and running through the streets — one can readily understand why they found the cleanly conditions among the natives surprising. After their cursory visit to the cold and inhospitable area, the group traveled on to Tigüex to wait out the winter, leaving the people of Tutahaco, which is possibly in the Salinas, in relative peace.

<sup>18</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 174.

<sup>19</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Narratives*, 255.

The next documented encounter the Salinas Indians had with white men was with the Chamuscado-Rodríguez party of 1581-1582. This group of three friars, nine soldiers, nineteen Mexican-Indian servants and six hundred head of stock, lumbered over the northern frontier apparently oblivious to the expedition of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado forty years before. Historians George Hammond and Agapito Rey explain this by saying it “was not strange in an era when there were almost no printed books except for religious tracts.”<sup>20</sup> They left Santa Bárbara in Nueva Vizcaya on June 5, 1581, and did not come upon their first native pueblo in the northern land until August 21<sup>st</sup>— and that in ruins and abandoned. The small party named it anyway, selecting San Felipe in honor of the King, and christened the entire land San Felipe del Nuevo México. Soon they encountered the Piro pueblos, “but found no inhabitants. They had left the night before because they had noticed our approach.”<sup>21</sup> Not lacking ambition, the Chamuscado-Rodríguez group visited most of the pueblos in the Río Grande valley, “travel[ing] steadily toward the north,” as far as the Keres pueblos of Santo Domingo, San Felipe (of modern name), and Cochití, as well as venturing over to the Towa pueblo of Pecos and the Tewa in the Galisteo basin. It was most likely at Tunque pueblo in the Galisteo basin that Fray Juan de Santa María separated from the party on September 10, 1581, “in order to go to some pacified region of his own choice without his guardian’s authorization, . . . to report on their discoveries.”<sup>22</sup>

From this central vicinity around the Galisteo basin, the remainder of the group pushed on with the "discovery" of the province. Moving beyond the Pecos River in search of the hump-backed hairy cattle, Chamuscado, Rodríguez, next went out onto the

<sup>20</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 12, 8.

<sup>21</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 82.

<sup>22</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 121.

Plains to hunt buffalo. After a successful if circuitous hunt, they returned to Puaray, passed on to Zuñi and back to Puaray. It was not until after this whirl-wind tour that they finally, “heard reports of some salines fourteen leagues beyond the said pueblo [of Puaray] and went on to examine them, locating them behind a mountain range which they named Sierra Morena [the Manzano Mountains].”<sup>23</sup> One member of the party testified,

The salines are the best thus far discovered and extend over a five-league area, in the opinion of the present witness and his companions, who provided themselves with salt for their own needs and brought back for his Excellency the amount he has been shown.

Near these salines, many more pueblos, similar to the others, were seen and visited. The natives informed them of three other pueblos, which they represented as being near these salt deposits and very large.<sup>24</sup>

Three separate accounts of the expedition report virtually the same description, all lauding the quality and sheer size of the salt beds, a clear indication of how valuable they would prove to be for the Spaniards.

Gallegos, the chronicler of the party, recorded the names and approximate sizes of the five pueblos visited on the far side of the sierra. He says Zacatula, the first of this group visited had one hundred and twenty-five houses, of two or three stories; the next, Ruiseco, two hundred; the third, of ninety houses, three stories tall was named La Mesa; the fourth with ninety-five houses either two or three stories in height was named La Hoya; and the fifth and final Saline pueblo visited was named Franca Vila and contained sixty-five, two and three story house blocks. At the last they were told, “there were three very large pueblos beyond the salines,”<sup>25</sup> which remained unvisited due to the heavy snowfall that was occurring while they were in the area.

<sup>23</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 131-2.

<sup>24</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 132.

<sup>25</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 107.



This was not however, to be the end of the group's contact with the Indians east of the mountains. After leaving his small party, Fray Santa María traveled south on the east side of the Manzano mountain range, where, three days later he was killed, likely by the eastern branch of the Tigua/Tiwa.<sup>26</sup> The main party of eleven (not counting the servants brought from Mexico), returned once again to Puaray where the remaining two Franciscan friars, Francisco López, and Fray Agustín Rodríguez, decided to remain and preach the Gospel. Captain Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado, who had grown ill on the expedition, turned the party southward for the return to Santa Bárbara. On April 15, 1582, Easter Day, eight Spaniards returned to Nueva Vizcaya, to a populace who thought them dead, and officials who wanted them arrested in order to seize the documentation of the trip so that they might take credit for the discoveries made. All three of the friars had been left in the "rediscovered" country, and Chamuscado had died on the way home. Almost immediately, a return was planned to save those left behind.

The leader of the rescue expedition, and the next Spaniard the Tompiro and Tiwa Indians of the Salinas were to come into contact with, was an unlikely sort of hero from a modern perspective. Antonio de Espejo had been a successful cattle rancher, along with his brother Pedro Muñoz de Espejo, before being charged and found complicit in the murder of two of his own vaqueros.<sup>27</sup> Choosing to become a fugitive rather than pay the punitive fine he was sentenced with, he fled to the frontier and away from justice. It was here that news found him regarding the return of the Chamuscado-Rodríguez expedition, and the planned rescue of the two Franciscans presumed to still be at Puaray. Grasping

<sup>26</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 58 and note.

<sup>27</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 17.

Espejo's brother is actually the person who committed and was found guilty in the murders, but Antonio was found complicit and fined for his part in the event.



the chance to redeem himself through the glory of rescue and further discovery, Espejo offered to fund the next expedition to New Mexico, as the province had by then been dubbed.<sup>28</sup> After some confusion regarding which friars had permission from their prelate to attend the journey, and a period of time spent waiting for permission and paperwork from the appropriate authorities to leave New Spain, Espejo and expedition was off. The rescue party had only fifteen soldiers (Espejo and fourteen men he was given permission to recruit), as well as Fray Bernardino Beltrán, the group's only friar at the time of departure. On November 10, 1582, only seven months after the return of the Chamuscado-Rodríguez, reconnaissance, the fugitive rescuer and his band of fifteen men, 115 horses and mules and attendant servants, left San Bartolomé convent for the frontier.

On January 31, 1583 they reached a ruined and abandoned pueblo that must have been the same village the previous group named San Felipe, the first indication they were in the pueblo country.<sup>29</sup> By the opening day of February, they had reached the Piro region along the river and reported twelve pueblos in that group.<sup>30</sup> It was here that Espejo received confirmation from the natives that the religious men who had elected to remain behind from the earlier party had been killed at Puaray. After debating the merits of building a fort in the current region before pressing on, Espejo made the decision to turn east to explore that region with only a handful of his present contingent. They set off on February 10, 1583 and at the end of the day reached the first of the pueblos east of the Manzano Mountain range.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 12.

<sup>29</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 171.

<sup>30</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 21.

<sup>31</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 22.

Upon seeing the Spaniards, some of the Indians fled, perhaps fearing reprisal for killing Father Santa María. Friendly relations were eventually established with the inhabitants of what is believed to be, Chililí, Tajique, or Quarai pueblo. Luxán wrote, “These people are more bellicose than those met before; and they are well armed. The houses are of slabs and rocks, well built and whitewashed inside. [. . .] There are two large plazas in this pueblo.”<sup>32</sup> Hammond and Rey surmise that he incorrectly assumed that Chamuscado had not visited these pueblos. It is at this point in the narrative where Luxán departs from the other two reports of the trip; Espejo and Obregón saying the diversion east occurred after the party reached Puaray, while Luxán states it was after visiting the Piro on the Río Grande, and before going to Puaray which he called Puala.<sup>33</sup> In either case, Espejo gives us important details left out by Luxán. He relates,

I there found eleven pueblos with a great many inhabitants, more than forty thousand souls, in my estimation, counting men, women, and children. In this area there are no running streams or springs of which the natives can avail themselves. They do have abundant corn, turkeys, and other supplies, as in the province previously visited. The Maguas province borders on the land of the so-called Cíbola cattle. The natives clothe themselves with the hides of these animals, cotton blankets, and chamois skins. They are governed like the people of the provinces already mentioned. They have idols which they worship in the same manner as those other Indians. There are indications of mining possibilities in the mountains of this province . . . Moreover, in this province we found metals in the houses of the Indians.

We learned that in this place the Indians had killed a friar named Juan de Santa María, who had entered the land together with the other friars accompanying Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado . . . We made friends with these natives without touching on the subject of the killings. They provided us with food, and after observing the characteristics of the land we left.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 175.

<sup>33</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 175 and note.

<sup>34</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 222.

Hammond and Rey interpret his reference here to “the province” as the whole eastern side of the sierra. They interpret Espejo’s comment about where the friar was killed as meaning among the Tiwa or Tiguas of the eastern slopes.

Three facets of Espejo’s account bring to mind not the pueblos of Chililí, Tajique, or Quarai, but those farther south and east, namely Las Humanas (Gran Quivira). In his pointed remark regarding the lack of running water, and the sheer size of the pueblo, anyone familiar with the Salinas group begins to suspect that Luxán may have been correct when he said Chamuscado had not been there. By Gallegos’ account they had not been to the “very large pueblos beyond the salines,” and Gallegos does not relate anything regarding villages close to the size that Espejo indicated in his report, even leaving margin for exaggeration. Each of the pueblos on the slopes of the Manzanos, Abó included, was in its precise location because there was a spring available at those sites. Quarai was, in fact, at one time moved farther up the slope when the spring began to run dry at the lower elevation. Only Las Humanas, Pueblo Colorado, Pueblo Pardo and those farther afield fit the description of the size, lack of water and proximity to the buffalo range. Later Spanish Colonial writers will distinguish Las Humanas for these very traits. The references to the specific pueblo who admitted to killing the friar are too vague to make a definitive guess about which pueblo or group, the Tiwa or Tompiro, committed the murder.

Espejo’s expedition was not as peaceable as Chamuscado’s had been. At several points during these Spaniards’ travels they skirmished with the Indians, and in fact, Espejo put Puaray to the torch. This punitive measure was not for the murder of the two

priests and the boys accompanying them,<sup>35</sup> but for their refusal to provision the party and for their impudence and mockery of the troop of nine men.<sup>36</sup> The Spaniards returned to San Bartolomé on September 10, 1583. News of the great discovery of a land full of souls to save and exploit reached the capital quickly. By the 26<sup>th</sup> of October, the Archbishop of Mexico City had written to the King and his Council of the Indies. Having received earlier favorable intelligences, “the king had issued a cédula, April 19, 1583, instructing the viceroy to make a contract with some suitable person for the conquest of the new lands in accordance with the laws and regulations for colonization.”<sup>37</sup> Even before Espejo returned from his rescue expedition, the competition had begun for the right to the contract for the conquest of these new lands — the stage was set and Don Juan de Oñate had but to make his grand entrance.

The lure of an opportunity to reap the rewards from the conquest of new lands was irresistible. Since the discovery of the Antilles by Columbus, men of ambition had sought royal licenses to colonize in the name of Spain and subdue and exploit the native people. The authority on which the systematic coercion of indigenous populations was based began with the Papal bull of Alexander VI on May 4, 1493 in which he “assign[ed] the temporal dominion of the newly discovered territories to Castile and Portugal [despite the fact] it was expressly stated that the sole justification for that assignment was the propagation of the Christian religion.”<sup>38</sup> Faced with Spanish colonists who considered themselves hidalgos the minute they landed on shore, whether low or high born, Columbus first suggested the development of a slave trade to meet the labor shortage on

<sup>35</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 140.

<sup>36</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 26 and 203.

<sup>37</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 28.

<sup>38</sup> Lesley Byrd Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish Mexico* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 1.

Española. The Indians, for their part, understandably refused to work voluntarily at mining the gold so coveted by the whites, going so far as to refuse to perform agricultural duties as well.<sup>39</sup> After several unpleasant incidents between Queen Isabella and her captains of discovery, on April 16, 1495, the queen issued a cédula outlawing the taking of Indian slaves. In August of 1503 this ruling was qualified by excluding the capture and enslavement of Indians who were cannibals and resisted Christianization.<sup>40</sup>

Do not perchance get the mistaken impression that slavery in general was illegal — it was not — and shiploads of chattel slaves were regularly imported from Africa, or peaceful natives were, “badgered into resistance” so that they could be enslaved.<sup>41</sup> With the legal restrictions and costs of transportation however, slaves were beyond the budget of the ordinary colonist. And all the while the labor pool was decreasing due to death by disease, overwork, general mistreatment, or suicide, and the Spaniards had not yet surmounted their distaste of manual labor. After the death of Queen Isabella, King Ferdinand encouraged the hidalgos to find pretexts to kidnap and enslave Indians from the ‘worthless islands’ (or those without gold), to replace the natives of Española who were dying at a frightening rate.<sup>42</sup> A separate system of labor was needed, and so a new system was devised — that of the *encomienda*.

To fully understand the landscape of relations between the Spanish colonists who settled in New Mexico and the Native Americans they encountered there, one must first have some understanding of the *repartimiento de encomienda*. The beginnings of the *encomienda* system, as it came to exist in the New World, lay in the rulings of the first

<sup>39</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 10.

<sup>40</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 6.

<sup>41</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 88.

<sup>42</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 22-3.

royal governor of the Indies appointed by the Queen, Fray Nicolás de Ovando. In a series of instructions to the colonists, Ovando specified that the Indians could be compelled to work in the service of the crown (public works like building roads and bridges, or mining gold for the king rather than personal services to individuals), on a wage-earning basis, among other directives. He combined this with the notion of traditional feudal land assignments, known as *encomienda* in Castile, which gave “temporary grant by the sovereign, of territory, cities, towns, castles, and monasteries, with the powers of government and the right to receive the revenue, or a stipulated part thereof, and the services owed to the Crown by the people of the areas concerned,”<sup>43</sup> to soldiers as repayment for conquests undertaken at their own expense. A royal *cédula* of the Queen, dated December 20, 1503, gave permission to make these feudal-style land assignments in the Indies.<sup>44</sup> The “labor clause” of Ovando’s instructions, as explained above, was combined with the Castilian notion of granting territory to conquerors and became the basis of *repartimiento de encomienda* as it operated in the New World.<sup>45</sup>

The new system did indeed go a long way to alleviate the labor problem, because “In reality the *encomienda*, at least in the first fifty years of its existence, was looked upon by its beneficiaries as a subterfuge for slavery,”<sup>46</sup> thus providing a cheap source of slaves to the impecunious colonials. Almost as quickly as it began, the Council of the

<sup>43</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, note 25 p. 176.

<sup>44</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 12.

<sup>45</sup> For an excellent discussion of the etymology of the term see note 3 in Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 183. “. . . *repartimiento* deriving from *repartir*, “to allot or distribute”; *encomienda* from *encomendar*, “to give in trust.” *Repartimiento* was frequently used in official documents for *encomienda*, but the former term had several other applications, as has been brought out by F. A. Kirkpatrick. He lists three common usages of *repartimiento*: “1. The distribution (in fact, forcible sale) of goods to the Indians by *corregidores*. This use, where *repartimiento* means *repartición*, cannot be confused with the other two. 2. The allotment of groups or gangs of Indian labourers to works such as tillage, building, mining, transport; or the labour gang itself thus allotted. 3. The allotment of *encomiendas* (*repartimiento de encomiendas*) or the *encomienda* itself.”

<sup>46</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, xiii.

Indies, the mendicant orders, and especially the Dominican friar Bartolomé de las Casas worked for years to end the encomienda system, as it existed in the colonies. From the beginning, the Indians allotted to the Spaniards were treated as spoils of war rather than feudal tributaries. Through the Laws of Burgos promulgated in December 27, 1512, the theologians of Spain codified the treatment of the Indians, as free, if lazy people, in an effort to stop the abuses in the encomienda system. The Emperor, Charles V, sought to curtail its proliferation by outlawing it in Mexico when Hernán Cortés requested leave to make encomienda grants. But Cortés had replied with the feudal equivalent of “go jump off a cliff,” invoking *obedezco pero no cumplo*, “I obey but I do not fulfill.”<sup>47</sup> The institution of *encomienda* was to haunt the natives for a further two centuries. Despite its spread to the new colonies, the determination of its opponents to “tame” the encomienda resulted in the mitigation of the apocalyptic brutality practiced by encomenderos in the Antilles, “and thus they determined to a considerable extent the later fate of the [native] population of New Spain.”<sup>48</sup>

In these early encounters the Salinas Pueblos had not fared as badly as their river valley counterparts. None of the Salinas pueblos had been sacked or burned, as had happened under Coronado at one of the Zuni pueblos, and between two to ten of the Río Grande Tiguex (Tiwa) pueblos. Espejo burned at least one of the Tiguex/Tiwa pueblos, Puaray, on his expedition, but had left the Salinas area in peace, despite hearing from the Indians there that they had killed father Juan de Santa María. The Spaniards did not evict any of the Salinas people from their pueblos, nor did they demand the natives’ clothing by force in the middle of winter at Salinas, at least insofar as the narratives report. The

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<sup>47</sup>Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 60.

<sup>48</sup> Simpson, *The Encomienda*, 30.

reason for the relative peace the province experienced during the initial Spanish forays may be due to the fact that only three (two if you discount Tutahaco as one of the Salinas pueblos) of the seven recorded expeditions into New Mexico between 1540 and 1593, reached the Salinas province.<sup>49</sup> If the conjecture based on Espejo's description of the land "not seen by Chamuscado,"<sup>50</sup> being Salinas is correct, only one group, that of Espejo, may have gotten as far as the Jumano Tompiro pueblos. The explorers thus far had only spoken to the Tiwa and Tompiro Indians in the Salinas basin through signs and interpreters, they had observed aspects regarding their homes, resources, and numbers, and erected crosses in some of the villages. The Rio Grande valley pueblos had borne the brunt of hostilities in the early encounters.

This difference in treatment may be explained by the Salinas pueblos' remoteness from the Spaniards' chosen base along the river, and the danger a well armed and "more bellicose" group represented. Exploration to the peripheral areas was conducted by small parties that were sent off from the main group. Being so far away from the base camp, the reinforcements the other troops represented, and from their supplies, possibly made the exploration parties more reluctant to engage in hostilities. Also, some of the Río Grande valley pueblos had, on occasion refused to provision the Spanish troops. Rather than face hunger, the Spanish had used their superior weaponry and tactics to take what had not been given voluntarily. The object of the smaller parties was to reconnoiter the area for possible resources, the lay of the land, and assess the people, not to engage an enemy, so they lacked sufficient numbers to win in pitched battle. These smaller groups

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<sup>49</sup> The seven expeditions are that of Fray Marcos de Niza, Francisco Vázquez de Coronado, the Chamuscado-Rodríguez expedition, Antonio de Espejo, the Gaspar Castaño de Sosa expedition, the party of Juan Morlete sent to arrest Castaño, and the expedition of Captain Francisco Leyva de Bonilla and Antonio Gutiérrez de Humaña.

<sup>50</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 174. The description of the land is given on page 222.



were effective in their objective, bringing back to Mexico reports on what they had been ordered to observe.

All of the accounts regarding the lives of these native people at the time of contact come from the narratives left by the Spanish explorers. No written accounts by Indians from Salinas have to date come to light, nor have oral histories from Salinas descendants been divulged to tell us what they thought of the Spaniards, how they themselves lived, or how the newcomers treated them. The most notable difference between the Tiwa and Tompiro on opposite sides of the sierra, as noted by the colonial records, was their proximity to the buffalo ranges, and their trade with the nomadic tribes. Without the ability to communicate effectively, and without an interest in really understanding the cultures and religions they were encountering, the Spaniards were correct in a very superficial sense that the pueblos *appeared* very similar, just as Western Europeans must have appeared very similar to each other from the natives' perspective. While only the most superficial differences between the tribes on either side of the mountains is grasped by the Spaniards, there were many more subtle differences they overlooked or were not able to learn

What made each of the pueblos unique were the influences at work within the culture, their relationship with the environment within which each community had been built, and the nature of their relationship with the other native nations neighboring them. At Salinas influences from Mogollon, Ancestral Puebloan, Plains nomadic, and Rio Grande Pueblo have been among those identified, prior to the arrival of the Spanish. As Linda Cordell explains in her work on the prehistory of the Southwest, "Pecos and Las Humanas, the eastern border pueblos, became centers of articulation between Pueblos

and Plains. They took in both Pueblo and Plains products and transferred goods between the two areas."<sup>51</sup> The trade relationships developed first with the Jumano, the early plains trading entrepreneurs from the eastern buffalo range. Then later in a more limited capacity trade continued with the Apaches who displaced the Jumano. This gave the eastern pueblos access to goods they in turn traded farther west to the Piro and Tiwa along the Rio Grande valley, including bison meat and hides. Some archaeologists theorize that the Jumano with whom the Salinas pueblos traded may have been sedentary agriculturalists who had given up farming generations earlier in this marginal southern area to hunt the plentiful food source buffalo represented.<sup>52</sup> Evidence suggests that Jumano or plains peoples may have been incorporated into the Salinas communities as well. The natives the Spaniards came into contact with in the basin had a culture of broad and complex influences and far reaching trade networks. The differences in cultural characteristics between the Salinas communities and the Río Grande pueblos were not noted or understood until excavations were conducted in the twentieth century. Although the Spanish may have missed many of the subtleties of the Tompiro and eastern Tiwa cultures, they were not unaffected by the area.

Salinas affected the Spanish by being one of the only locales in this new northern frontier that had the sought-after mineral resources. Besides the obvious consumption, livestock, and food preservation needs, salt was a valuable commodity for another reason. Rich silver mines had been in production in Mexico since Cortes made the first mining claim in 1522, and salt, a valuable ingredient in the smelting process, was always in demand. Due to its mineral importance, the salt available in the Salinas Basin was

<sup>51</sup> Linda Cordell, *Archaeology of the Southwest* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Cost Press, 2009), p. 439.

<sup>52</sup> Stuart Baldwin, *Tompiro Culture Subsistence and Trade* (Ph.D. diss., University of Calgary, 1988), p. 154.

mentioned in almost all of the reports regarding the province, as was the lack of water resources at the far eastern Tompiro settlements. Salt was not the only resource the northern frontier area had to offer. The Indians represented both a resource and a responsibility to the Spaniards; a resource for future labor and taxation, and a responsibility to educate them in the Christian life — for the Spaniards sought not only to convert them, but to civilize them by changing those cultural customs that were at odds with Christian practice, such as plural marriage, and sex outside the sanctity of marriage. Puebloans were considered *more civilized* than their nomadic American counterparts because they practiced agriculture and lived in permanent villages, but were not considered as enlightened as the Spaniards thought of themselves. This was a situation that many Spaniards felt was their duty to remedy. From the time of the first Spanish expeditions to the Salinas Basin until the first Catholic missions were established, the area was perceived by the newcomers as a host of possibilities, a ledger with both credits and drawbacks in its rolls, but the hegemony of the natives over their land had not been broken.

The Tompiro and Tiwa still controlled and utilized the land and its resources to their benefit, one simply of subsistence and a time-honored balancing act which the natives maintained as best they could — using mobility to cope when the balance was broken and could no longer be maintained. Villages were built, expanded, altered, and abandoned when no longer tenable, agricultural fields and water systems were created and maintained, and trade was established and maintained between tribal territories. So far as we can tell, the exploratory forays of the Spaniards into the Salinas territory may have caused a stir in the communities visited, certainly it was an opportunity for disease

to be transmitted, but it did not yet re-order how natives lived their lives, tilled their fields, and governed their communities. The brief sojourns by the Spaniards — in 1540 by Coronado (if the interpretation of Tutahaco as a Salinas pueblo is correct), then in 1582 by the Chamuscado-Rodriguez party, and finally in 1583 by the Espejo rescue expedition — were the proverbial shots across the bow. If the natives hadn't known about the interlopers that lay to the south, they had certainly been made aware of not only the Western Europeans' existence, but also their weapons, technology, and through word-of-mouth if not *a-priori* experience, their martial prowess.

By 1598 the early bands of rogues and religious men, such as Espejo and Fray Rodríguez, had made the initial discoveries. The institutions and laws were primed and the colonists in New Spain were waiting for their chance at conquest and overlordship. Even as these laws were being hammered out, another fateful decision was being made — the powers at hand selected Don Juan de Oñate from the list of competitors seeking the license to conquer and colonize New Mexico in 1595. Oñate began his march north after the final viceroyalty inspection on January 21, 1598. By July 11<sup>th</sup> the Spanish contingent under Oñate founded their first capital at the pueblo of Yungeh Oweenge naming it San Gabriel de los Españoles, across the river from Okay Owingeh, which they renamed San Juan de los Caballeros.

It was autumn before Oñate set off for the Salinas Basin on October 6, 1598. By the 11<sup>th</sup> he had visited the "first pueblo of the salines," and arrived at the "last pueblo of the salines, or Gallinas," the next day, where on October 12, 1598, he administered the Oath of Allegiance and Vassalage to a collected group of Tiwa pueblo leaders at

Acolocu, thought to be Quarai, or one of the pueblos near there.<sup>53</sup> Having thus officially brought them into the fold, Oñate progressed on to Abó on the 16th of October, stopping only briefly. On October 17, 1598, he administered the same oath to the Tompiro at Cueloce, believed to be the Pueblo de las Humanas (Gran Quivira), with the leader of the Abó pueblo in attendance, before setting off for the South Sea.<sup>54</sup> A new era in the history of Salinas was to begin with these events, for Oñate's expedition was different from those that had gone before him.

The difference lay in the fact that Don Juan de Oñate was the first to receive an official license to *settle* the new country and to establish a government under the new laws of 1542, and the colonizing regulations of 1573. The colonization of New Mexico began for much the same reason as the explorations had, primarily as a search for mineral wealth. When no hoards of native gold, and then no rich mines like those of Zacatecas could be found, however, the settlers tried to desert the new colony. After the new viceroy of Mexico, the Marquis of Montesclaros, studied the issue in 1605 he, "recommended that if there was even one baptized native in New Mexico, the king would be compelled by reason of justice, conscience, and prestige to protect him, even if it meant great expense to the treasury."<sup>55</sup> So, the colony would be maintained as a Christianization endeavor, and since the land was viewed as being very poor, as a buffer against other colonial powers inching toward Spain's domain and her valuable mines in

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<sup>53</sup> This "last pueblo of the salines" or Salinas, is probably Quarai. It is here being referred to as "Gallinas" pueblo, either yet another in the list of names for this location, or more likely, another name for the jurisdiction of the salt lakes in the Estancia/Salinas Basin.

<sup>54</sup> George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *Don Juan de Oñate: Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628* Vol. 1, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940, vol 5, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), 393. See also: Scholes, France V. and H. P. Mera. "Some Aspects of the Jumano Problem," *Contributions to American Anthropology and History*, Vol. 6, No. 34 (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1940), 277.

<sup>55</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, Vol. 1, 30.

northern Mexico. The first mission assignments were made at this time, and Fray Francisco de San Miguel received the huge jurisdiction of Pecos, and, “all of the Vaquero Indians of that range [ . . . ], and the pueblos of the great saline back of the sierra of Puaray, and, in addition, the pueblos of [ . . . ] Acoli, Abbo, [ . . . ] and also the three large pueblos of the Xumanas or Rayados.”<sup>56</sup> No real progress toward the Christianization of the Salinas region would occur until the founding of the first mission at Chililí in 1612-1613. Oñate was also given authority to assign encomienda as well, and while the records of tribute were recorded in the narratives regarding his time as governor, it was done so without mention of the particular men assigned to each of the pueblos. Salinas could not escape the trouble that now found all of New Mexico with the coming of this determined and controversial leader. The settlement period had begun.

This turning point in the history of the Salinas pueblos brought with it the colonial violence that the region had thus far escaped. The first engagement occurred in July of 1599, when Vicente de Zaldívar, Oñate's twenty-seven year-old nephew, stopped at one of the Salinas pueblos, most likely the Pueblo de las Humanas, to get provisions, but was, in a telling if rather derisive act, offered rocks to eat instead. Earlier chroniclers, from the exploration period, had observed that the Salinas Pueblos were well armed and more bellicose in character than their river valley brethren, perhaps owing to their interaction with, or relation to, the raiding plains groups.<sup>57</sup> Oñate himself traveled to collect the tribute from the pueblo, and to punish them for the act he perceived as impudence. For their part, it seems clear the Tompiro-Jumano Puebloans still considered themselves to have hegemony in the region, and did not feel they had been subjected to a higher

<sup>56</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, Vol. 1, 345.

<sup>57</sup> In the account of Diego Pérex de Luxán from the expedition of Antonio de Espejo in 1582; Hammond and Rey, *Rediscovery*, 175.

authority that required their show of respect. It is equally clear that Oñate felt it necessary to disabuse them of this notion, for when the Indians continued their defiance by only offering twelve or fifteen *mantas* (blankets) as tribute, Oñate commanded his men to fire upon the collected Natives, killing six of their number. To complete the punishment of the offending pueblo he ordered, "certain groups of houses of the most guilty," be put to the torch, and two of the most guilty individuals hanged. Acting upon the accusation from one of his soldiers that, "what the said interpreter told them [the Indians] was to the contrary," of what the Spaniards desired to convey, Oñate ordered the interpreter hanged as well.<sup>58</sup> The inauspicious start of relations between the two cultures continued in the months and years that followed.

Another clash between the Spaniards and the Salinas Natives occurred in December of 1600, which turned into a siege that lasted six days and nights. What precipitated the battle was the murder of two, out of a party of five, deserting settler-soldiers, along with the slaughter of twenty of the of horses they were driving as they passed through the territory of the pueblo of Abó, trying to return to New Spain. When informed of the infraction, Oñate quickly dispatched Vicente de Zaldívar to punish the pueblo. Upon hearing about the Spanish expedition riding against them, the natives called for reinforcements from neighboring villages and fortified themselves in the pueblo of Agualagu.<sup>59</sup> When the siege ended in the defeat of the pueblos, exaggerated estimates list the Native dead at between 600 to 900 people, and each soldier was given

<sup>58</sup> Scholes and Mera, "Some Aspects of the Jumano Problem," 278.

<sup>59</sup> Most of the pueblos in the early colonial period were referred to by more than one name, and as no criteria for the spelling of even commonly used words existed, and the native names were spelled phonetically by the Spanish writers, it is not known definitively which modern site the pueblo of Agualagu corresponds to. Agualagu, also spelled Agualacu, is thought to be a derivative of Acolocu and perhaps correspond to the pueblo at Quarai or one of the pueblo ruins in the vicinity. If the residents of Abó were seeking help from their neighbors, the pueblo of Tenabó however, would certainly have been closer to Abó than Quarai.

"one of the most guilty Indians" as a slave.<sup>60</sup> For these and other excesses against the native inhabitants, Oñate was brought to trial in 1614, and while he was convicted and sentenced for his punishment of Acoma, he and his nephew, Zaldívar, were absolved of the charges of excess in the punishment of the two Salinas pueblos.<sup>61</sup> Future conflicts with the Spaniards took a different, but still fatal form for the Salinas natives.

In 1613 the mission system had expanded out of the Rio Grande valley, and with it the conflict between the ecclesiastical and civil authorities. After the initial assignment of Fray Francisco de San Miguel, who had been stationed at Pecos during Oñate's tenure as governor, the Salinas jurisdiction was ministered as a *visita*, or on a visiting basis, by the priest residing at the Pueblo of Isleta. Salinas received its first resident priest in 1621, when Fray Francisco Fonte arrived in New Mexico and was assigned to the pueblo of Abó, beginning construction on the first mission church there by 1622. That same year the custodian of the New Mexico province, Fray Esteban de Perea, sent a letter to the tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico City, regarding the growing discord between the ecclesiastical and civil authorities in his province. In answer to this missive, the Inquisition cooperated with the Franciscan Order to elect Fray Alonso de Benavides to the offices of *both* the custodianship of New Mexico, and the commissary of the Holy Office, to act as the Inquisition's agent in the province. So, when Fray Benavides arrived in on January 24, 1626, the Spanish Inquisition arrived with him, along with the latest group of priests to assist in the missionization of the natives.

<sup>60</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Oñate* Vol. 1, 23, 704, 705. See also Scholes and Mera, "Some Aspects of the Junamo Problem," 279. Death estimate of 900 from Eric Reed, *History of Quarai, from Special Report on Quarai State Monument, May 1939* (Santa Fe: National Park Service, 1940), 5.

<sup>61</sup> Hammond and Rey, *Oñate*, Vol. 2, 1111.



From among the twelve new friars who accompanied him, Benavides made assignments to missions throughout the province. To further missionary work in Salinas, Benavides assigned Fray Juan Gutiérrez de la Chica to the pueblo of Quarai, who quickly began construction on a mission church sometime between 1626 and 1628. It is also at this time that three new pueblo house blocks are believed to have been constructed, hinting perhaps at the consolidation of population at the pueblo of Quarai from other smaller, or more distant villages, in order to facilitate Christianization work among them. Missionary activities began at Las Humanas in 1627, when Benavides himself visited the pueblo, the conversion of which he recounted in his 1630 *Memorial*, revised in 1634:

. . . drawing away from the [Queres] nation ten leagues toward the east, the Tompira nation begins. Its first pueblo is Chililí. It extends for more than fifteen leagues through those regions, through fourteen or fifteen pueblos, which must have more than ten thousand souls. It has six very good convents and churches. The Indians are all converted, the majority baptized, and more are being catechized and baptized every day. They have their schools of all the arts, just like the others. Among the pueblos of this nation there is a large one which must have three thousand souls; it is called Xumanas, because this nation often comes there to trade and barter. I came to convert it on the day of San Isidro, archbishop of Seville, in the year 1627, and I dedicated it to this saint on account of the great success that I experienced there on that day. Many were converted, and our Lord delivered me from the manifest dangers in which I found myself on that day, because these Indians are very cruel. Nevertheless, many leaders were converted, and with their favor, I erected the first cross in this place and we all adored it.

I cannot refrain from telling about . . . an old sorcerer who opposed me. . . . He had been, no doubt, in some Christian pueblo during Holy Week when they were flagellating themselves in procession, . . . [he said to] me: "How are you crazy? You go through the streets in groups, flagellating yourselves, and it is not well that the people of this pueblo should commit such madness as spilling their own blood by scourging themselves." . . .

This pueblo was left with this start, and later on there came to continue this conversion the blessed father, Fray Francisco Letrado, who

converted and baptized the people and founded there a convent and fine church.<sup>62</sup>

Benavides' report contains an indication that Quarai, located south of Chililí, was a Tompiro rather than a Tiwa village. Some historians have discounted this detail, arguing that the absolute accuracy of Benavides' observations were sometimes suspect, since the distances he estimated between pueblos was incorrect, and he often exaggerated population numbers in his favor. Other sources, however, also identify the pueblos south of Chililí as Tompiro rather than Tiwa villages.<sup>63</sup> An explanation for the conflicting sources regarding the language affiliation at Quarai may be achieved by looking at the question less simplistically. Rather than trying to compartmentalize the pueblo as one language group or another, the evidence suggests that Quarai may have been both Tiwa and Tompiro; perhaps due to the consolidation of populations from various outlying eastern pueblos during the early colonial period (an action that was not always recorded), or simply due to its situation in the territorial borderlands of several different tribes, absorbing influences from multiple cultures like the Pueblo de las Humanas. Father Benavides' term as custodian ended in 1629, prompting his return to Mexico.

With the departure of Father Benavides, Fray Esteban de Perea, whose letter triggered the promulgation of the Inquisition into New Mexico, returned to the province for his second tenure as prelate. He brought with him thirty new priests, doubling the missionary force in New Mexico, and enabling him to send two friars to the Salinas area.

<sup>62</sup> Frederick Webb Hodge, George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, *Fray Alonso de Benavides' Revised Memorial of 1634*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940, vol 4, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1945), 65-66.

<sup>63</sup> For a discussion of this see the Kessell Papers, MSS 767, Box 7 Folder 48; the article by Albert H. Schroeder, in the NMRHR, 39, no. 3, 1964; and Geronimo Zarate Salmeron, *Relaciones*, translated by Alicia Ronstadt Milich (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1966). See also Lange and Riley, *The Southwestern Journals of Adolph Bandelier 1883-1884* (Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1970), p. 15, regarding his theory that there were two distinct tribes settled at Quarai, due to examination of pottery found at two mounds.

Fray Francisco Acevedo, was appointed to Abó to serve alongside Fray Fonte, who was still in residence there. To the Pueblo de las Humanas, Perea sent Fray Francisco Letrado to act as the first resident priest. Possibly in response to a request made by the natives of Salinas, Fray Letrado arrived at Las Humanas in 1629, and began the smaller of the two churches at the pueblo that year — completing it in 1631 just prior to his transfer to Hawikuh. The request was made, “On July 22, 1629, [when] some fifty Jumano appeared at Isleta, where the custodian (probably Perea) was then staying, to renew their oft-repeated request for resident missionaries, which had always been refused on account of the rapidly diminishing force [of priests in New Mexico].” In a discussion regarding this remarkable request, taken from annotations by Hodge and Lummis, the two historians try to clarify the work of Fray Juan de Salas who converted the, "Tompiras and Salineros Indians — where are the greatest salt-ponds [or salines] in the world, which on that side border upon these Xumanas — there was war between them." They relate that Salas and his companions, friars Tomás de San Diego, Diego de la Fuente, and Diego de San Lucas, were all assigned to,

. . . the "great town of the Humanas, and in those called Pyros and Tompiros." It is hardly believable that the Jumano ever occupied a typical pueblo in this region, or indeed anywhere else. Their habitat, or tribal range, was at this time some 112 leagues or 295 miles eastward from the Rio Grande, as Benavides says, and it is more likely that the mission of San Isidore (probably never designed to be permanent) was established at one of the Piro pueblos (possibly Tabirá) for their benefit.<sup>64</sup>

Despite the Hodge and Lummis' doubt that the Jumano ever lived in large towns, the passage, at the very least, establishes that the priests at the Tompiro villages also ministered to the Jumanos. Given that it was to the Pueblo de las Humanas that the

<sup>64</sup> Fray Alonso de Benavides, *The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides, 1630*, trans. Mrs. Edward E. Ayer, annotated by Frederick Webb Hodge and Charles Fletcher Lummis (Albuquerque: Horn and Wallace, 1965), p. 275, note 54, 58.

Jumanos went to trade, it would only make sense for the priest of San Isidro to convert the Jumanos while they were in residence at the pueblo. The arrival of Acevedo and Letrado with the 1629 mission supply caravan, assured the continued ministrations to the souls of New Mexico's native population. While the friars worked to convert the Indians and direct them in the construction of their places of worship, the conflict between the church and civil authorities in New Mexico was heating up.

The arrival of the Inquisition did not abate the growing tension between the two Spanish powers governing this northern frontier area, and with the arrival of the new prelate the quarrel between the church and government officials spilled into Salinas. Sometime about 1630, Father Esteban de Perea took over the mission at Quarai, and with him, to his resident mission moved the seat of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. As historian France Scholes explains, "It was expected that the Inquisition would become a powerful weapon in the hands of the Church in dealing with hostile civil authorities," thus drawing Salinas into the center of New Mexico politics in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>65</sup> The hostilities described by Perea in 1622 worsened when government officers were required to pay the equivalent of half of one year's salary before they could resume office, starting in 1631, a policy known as *media anata*.<sup>66</sup> Corruption among New Mexico's governors, which had already been a problem, reached all new levels as officials attempted to profit from the authority they had purchased, most often by monopolizing Native labor for their own gain:

<sup>65</sup> France V. Scholes, "The First Decade of the Inquisition in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 10, (July 1935), 201.

<sup>66</sup> Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint, "Bernardo López de Mendizábal," *New Mexico Office of the State Historian*, accessed March 3, 2013, [http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails\\_docs.php?fileID=480](http://www.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=480).

Moreover in the Salinas area where the controversy was most bitter the Indians were being used in large numbers to accumulate and transport large supplies of salt, piñon, hides, etc., for the governor's account. On the other hand, it seems clear enough that the clergy had formerly enjoyed great freedom in the employment of large numbers of Indians for purposes that could not be considered absolutely essential for the routine services of the Church.<sup>67</sup>

The battle lines were drawn and by 1633, the ecclesiastics charged the governor and encomenderos with everything from illegally selling licenses to remove native children from their families for use as personal servants, to destroying native and church agricultural fields. The government officials counter-charged the priests with illicit congress with Indian women (in one case claiming the priest of Tajiقة engaged in "concubinage" with twenty pueblo women), and illegal use of Indian labor.<sup>68</sup> The most serious phase in the hostilities occurred during the tenure of Bernardo López de Mendizábal as governor of New Mexico.

Mendizábal arrived in Santa Fé with the 1658-59 mission supply caravan from Mexico City, and was immediately at odds with Fray Juan Ramírez, the ecclesiastical custodian, of the territory. Soon after Mendizábal assumed his duties in 1659, he appointed accused murderer, Nicolás de Aguilar, *alcalde mayor* of Salinas. In the months that followed both factions began flinging accusations at the other. The priests charged that Mendizábal, through his agent Aguilar, was punishing the Indians for any aid they provided the clerics, and was sending slaving expeditions out to capture Apaches and other nomadic Indians on the plains, prompting retaliatory raids against the missions. Mendizábal defended himself by claiming he was trying to end the use of Indian labor for

<sup>67</sup> France V. Scholes, "Troublous Times in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 13, (October 1937), 407.

<sup>68</sup> Charles Wilson Hackett, ed., *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya and Approaches Thereto, to 1773, collected by Adolph F. A. Bandelier and Fanny R Bandelier* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1937), 129, 134.

personal services without payment. The Inquisition became the hammer used against the civil authorities, and the Indians became collateral casualties in many of the skirmishes.

On one occasion twenty Indians who had traveled from Quarai to Las Humans for a religious festival were given fifty lashes in punishment. The clergy contended the abuse was simply for participating in the mass. Aguilar and the governor's defenders, claimed the lashes were given in punishment for traveling to Las Humanas when the Apaches were present — something forbidden in order to avoid bloodshed since a state of war existed between the Pueblos of Quarai and the Apaches.<sup>69</sup> While it was true that the governor had issued the travel ban on the Quarai residents, it was also true that Mendizábal was engaged in trade with the Seven Rivers Apaches — through his cultural intermediary Esteban Clemente, the Indian governor of Abó — and trying to maintain amicable relations with them.<sup>70</sup> At the same time Mendizábal was raiding other Apache tribes for slaves, putting the Salinas villages in a precarious position, situated as they were in close proximity to Apache territory, and thus more vulnerable to their attacks. As the Apache stepped-up their raids, the Salinas pueblos became trapped in a three-jawed vice — between the clergy on one side, the civil government on the other, and the nomadic plains groups on another.

The civil-ecclesiastical conflict culminated in charges of heresy against Aguilar and Mendizábal for encouraging the natives to perform their *catzina* dances, and a host of lesser accusations. Ultimately Aguilar was publicly excommunicated sometime prior to

<sup>69</sup> Hackett, *Historical Documents*, 143.

<sup>70</sup> John L. Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 101.

May 29, 1660, before being arrested by the Inquisition in May of 1662.<sup>71</sup> Aguilar had been warned to flee, but had been caught at Isleta, before being taken south to Mexico City for trial. The surviving documents record the first hearing of Nicolás de Aguilar in Mexico on April, 12, 1663, and describe the defendant as, "a man of large body, coarse, and somewhat brown; he says he is thirty-six years old." Throughout the series of hearings that lasted until January 17, 1664, Aguilar answered questions and responded to the charges in an unshrinking manner. At one point he requested an audience with the tribunal, "in order to say some things which seem important for the purpose of securing justice for himself." The threat of torture always present, its use is confirmed in a chillingly matter-of-fact reference appearing just before the record of Aguilar's sentence, in an inserted note from the document's translator which reads: "Folio 173. The fiscal, Ruiz de Cepeda, requests that Nicolás de Aguilar be put to the torture. The accusation is read to him again, for the second and last time."<sup>72</sup> For his crimes, and for the audacity to request that the sentence be revoked, Aguilar's original six years deprivation of office was translated into perpetual deprivation of office, and ten-years of exile from New Mexico. While Aguilar faced an uncertain future outside the colony he had called home for some years, his superior, Mendizábal fared even worse.

The church authorities received the order to arrest Don Bernardo López de Mendizábal and his wife on August 19, 1662.<sup>73</sup> In the course of his trial, distant Jewish family connections were brought out, and Mendizábal languished in a secret prison in

<sup>71</sup> Hackett, *Historical Documents*, 167, 137. A letter relating his arrest at Isleta was dated June 1, 1662, placing the event before that date.

<sup>72</sup> Hackett, *Documents Relating to New Mexico*, 144, 146.

<sup>73</sup> Hackett, *Documents Relating to New Mexico*, 239. France V. Scholes, "Troublous Times in New Mexico," *New Mexico Historical Review* 12, no. 4 (October 1937), 450; states the order to arrest the governor and his wife was issued in March 22, 1662, but the translated primary document in Hackett states the issue was not received by the commissary of New Mexico until August.

Mexico City while submitting to questioning for a year and seven months. In March of 1664, he became too ill to stand trial and died in prison on September 16, 1664. In the end the tribunal decided to absolve Mendizábal of the judgment against him, and allow him a Christian burial, restoring his goods after deducting the costs of his trial from his estate. Mendizábal's successor to New Mexico's office of governor, Diego Dionisio de Peñalosa Briceño y Berdugo, had learned nothing from the trials of the former New Mexico officials he was taking over for, and the corruption and greed continued unabated, with the Indians still caught in the middle.

The toll that the misfortunes the Native inhabitants had been living under during the growing hostilities between the church and state, began to cause even those among the Spaniards' loyal converts to reconsider their allegiances. Among the number of natives who switched their loyalties was a Tompiro Indian of Abó, Esteban Clemente, who had been taught in the Abó mission school by the Franciscans. By the time Clemente reached adulthood, he spoke six Indian languages fluently, had become the governor of Abó, the Salinas district's chief war captain of the Indian auxiliaries, and ran a trading business hauling freight via packtrain to the Apaches of the Seven Rivers. As an influential cultural intermediary, Clemente counted among his business associates the new governor, Bernardo López de Mendizábal. In November of 1660, however, the guardian of San Buenaventura de Las Humans, Fray Diego de Santander, convinced Clemente to give testimony against the governor, Aguilar, and the catzina dances they encouraged the natives to perform.<sup>74</sup> Then, after being drawn into the political controversy of the early 1660s and siding with the clergy, Clemente became an apostate.

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<sup>74</sup> Kessell, *Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico*, 97-106.



At what point Clemente abandoned his fidelity to the Spanish friars and the culture they had so assiduously inculcated in him is not known. The causes for his change of heart can certainly be traced to the manifold catastrophes the Salinas Basin was experiencing in the second half of the seventeenth century: the intermittent drought that began in 1659 and turned into the sustained drought in 1666; the ever-increasing Apache depredations; and the physical punishments meted out by both the clergy and government officials. Clemente was not alone in his contumacy, as more and more of the Christian Indian converts began to feel the new religion was specious and plotted the removal of their tormentors and a return of the traditions that had in the past sustained their people. According to historian John Kessell, the turning point for Clemente came when Spanish officials learned of a Piro plot to overthrow the Spaniards, and hung six of the conspirators to dispel the insurrectionary sentiment of the Indians. The punishment may have ended the Piro plans for revolt, but it turned Clemente against the Spaniards and created an enemy from an ally.

Following the execution of the Piro leaders, Clemente devised a plan to overthrow the colonial overlords that was eerily similar to the later successful Pueblo Revolt of 1680. Using his influence as governor, war captain, and trader to mask the true purpose of his activities, he sent messages throughout the kingdom in an effort to unite the Pueblos against the Spaniards. The crux of his plot was to remove the Spaniards' method of escape by driving their horses into the remote mountain areas. Then on Holy Thursday, in a simultaneous attack, "they must destroy the whole body of Christians, not leaving a single religious or Spaniard." Before the plan could be put into action however, the conspiracy was discovered and Esteban Clemente was hanged at some unknown date.

In one of the ironies of history, a revolt very like the one Clemente planned, was responsible for the loss of records that prevents us from knowing exactly when this episode occurred. From the scant testimony that exists regarding this event, dating to the year after the Pueblo Revolt, Clemente's conspiracy and execution transpired sometime during the tenure of governor Fernando de Villanueva, thus between 1665 and 1668.<sup>75</sup> While Esteban Clemente was keeping the civil authorities on their toes, another incident occurred about this same time that would occupy the Holy Office of the Inquisition, and result in it being stripped of its power.

During Christmas mass at Quarai in 1668, German merchant Bernardo Gruber, drunk from the night's revelries, climbed into the choir loft with his friend, Juan Martín Serrano. There he offered the choral members magical slips of paper he claimed would protect them from all harm for twenty-four hours after their consumption. Having accepted some of the spells, a mulatto from Quarai, Juan Nieto twice attempted to demonstrate their effectiveness. After stopping his attempts to stab himself in the legs with a knife, Nieto's wife convinced him to report Gruber to the guardian at Las Humanas. Fray Joseph de Paredes must have in turn passed word on to the New Mexico commissary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, Fray Juan de Paz. On April 19, 1668 Paz tried Gruber in absentia and issued a writ for his arrest. It was executed that same night when the notary for the Inquisition and Abó's resident priest, Fray Gabriel Toríja, Captain Joseph Nieto, Salinas' alcalde mayor, Juan Martín Serrano, and Joseph Martín Serrano left Abó and traveled to Quarai to detain Gruber. At first Gruber was held in a room at Abó, but was transferred to a more secure location at the hacienda of Captain

<sup>75</sup> Charles Wilson Hackett and Charmion Clair Shelby, *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermín's Attempted Rebonquest, 1680-1682*, Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, 1540-1940, vol. 9, ed. George P. Hammond (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), 299-300.

Francisco de Ortega in the jurisdiction of Sandia Pueblo, where he remained for two years. Gruber used the time of his incarceration to plot his escape with the help of his friend and one time jailer (who also owed Gruber money) Juan Martín Serrano, and his sixteen or seventeen year-old Apache servant, Atanasio.

On June 22, 1670, Gruber set in motion his plans for escape. First he pretended illness to induce the guards to remove his shackles. Once unfettered, he gathered the supplies his accomplices had provided him and removed the wooden bars from a window in his cell, before mounting one of the five stolen horses Atanasio had acquired, and riding away. They made their way down the Camino Real, being spotted by the son of a prominent rancher, Tomé Dominquez de Mendoza. Greeting the young man and swearing him to silence they rode on until reaching the vicinity of the waterless expanse of Las Peñuelas on the June 25th where Gruber found he could not continue. At this point he decided to send Atanasio back to San Diego for water while he waited with the horses. When the Apache boy returned two days later, Gruber was gone leaving the spare horses behind. Atanasio reported looking for Gruber until the next day, then he returned to Senecú where he was captured and questioned before he ran away. It was not until a month later that the fate of Bernardo Gruber was discovered.

On July 30, 1670 Francisco del Castillo Betancur, a trader and friend of Gruber's, on his way to Chihuahua found the grisly remains of Gruber's stolen roan horse tied to a tree. Scattered around the vicinity were clothes, hair, and bones showing signs of animal scavenging. Betancur concluded, "It is supposed that an Indian who was traveling with Bernardo Gruber killed him," without any substantiating evidence. The remains were taken to El Paso where they were given a Christian burial. In reviewing the case, the

Holy Office of the Inquisition in Mexico City found Fray Paz guilty of "'gross ignorance and lack of attention to the obligations of his office.'" His successor, Fray Juan Bernal defended the Holy Office of New Mexico explaining that with the Apache raids, coupled with the drought and famine that had been occurring they had been unable to transfer Gruber for Trial. In the end, "the Holy Tribunal in Mexico City decreed that the local commissaries of New Mexico and other areas no longer had authority to make arrests without express orders from the Holy Office of the Inquisition., thus effectively ending the power the friars had wielded against the civil government in the province.<sup>76</sup>

In the midst of the civil and ecclesiastic unrest, even the climate of New Mexico conspired to further complicate the discord. Starting in 1659, Salinas began experiencing intermittent periods of drought, causing crop failures and the need to shift the Las Humanas mission's livestock to pueblos with better sources of water. To combat the famine that was beginning to set in, the clergy began to shift supplies from other mission centers to Salinas. By 1669 these measures were no longer enough, and Juan Bernal, the New Mexico agent of the Inquisition wrote to the Holy Office to inform them that in the past three years, since 1666, no harvests had been reaped, and that at the Pueblo de las Humanas,

In the past year, 1668, a great many Indians perished of hunger, lying dead along the roads, in the ravines, and in their huts. There were pueblos (as instance Humanas) where more than 450 died of hunger. The same calamity still prevails, for because of lack of mony, there is not a fanega of corn or of wheat in the whole kingdom, so that for two years the food of Spaniards, men and women alike, has been the hides of cattle which they had in their houses.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Joseph P. Sanchez, "Bernardo Gruber and the New Mexican Inquisition," in *Salinas Archaeology, History and Prehistory*, edited by David Grant Noble (Santa Fe: Ancient City Press, 1982), 31.

<sup>77</sup> Hackett, *Documents Relating to New Mexico*, 272

The Spanish and their pueblo converts were not the only groups hit hard by the drought and resulting food shortages — nomadic tribes suffered from the drought as well.

The Apaches, no longer able to trade for the corn and other foodstuffs they needed, increased their depredations on the pueblos and missions throughout the Salinas Basin, and other regions in New Mexico. On September 3, 1670, the Apaches from the Seven Rivers area, attacked the Pueblo de Las Humanas, profaning the new mission church, San Buenaventura, whose construction was begun in 1660 after the old one, San Isidro, had been damaged in a 1653 Apache raid. At Abó, Apaches:

burned the convent after having sacked it and murdered the missionary, who was Father Fray Pedro de Ayala, a native of Campeche, stripping him of his clothing, putting a rope around his neck, flogging him most cruelly, and finally killing him with blows of the *macana*; after he was dead they surrounded the body with dead white lambs, and covered his privy parts, leaving him in this way, a thing that caused astonishment to the inhabitants of the said provinces when they went to see him, knowing as they did the ferocity of these Indian barbarians, who kill one another for a piece of meat. . .<sup>78</sup>

From this point on, one by one Salinas pueblos and missions became depopulated as the residents abandoned areas that could no longer support them and were too dangerous to vulnerable to remain in. Writing in May of 1679, Fray Bernal reported:

It is public knowledge that from the year 1672 until your Excellency adopted measures for aiding that kingdom, six pueblos were depopulated— namely, that of Cuarac [Quarai], with more than two hundred families, that of Los Humanas with more than five hundred, that of Abó with more than three hundred. . . that of Chililí with more than one hundred, Las Salinas with more than three hundred — restored, as has been said —, and Senecú, both these last being frontiers and veritable keys to those provinces.<sup>79</sup>

<sup>78</sup> Hackett, *Documents Relating to New Mexico*, 298. A *macana* is a wooden weapon that often had obsidian blades imbedded in it, resembling a cross between a Medieval mace and a sword.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

Records indicated that priests were elected to Tajique, Quarai and Abó for the last time in 1672. The priest at Las Humanas had abandoned the mission in 1669, ministering to the residents there on a visiting basis from Quarai, until its abandonment as well. With the drought and Apache raids continuing, about 1674 the residents of Quarai removed the interred body of Fray Geronimo de la Llana from Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Quarai and moved north to Tajique, before it too is abandoned sometime before 1677. The residents from the various Salinas pueblos, like all Spanish subjects were not supposed to abandon colonial settlements without permission from the viceroyalty, but the Indians had used mobility for millennia before the arrival of the Spaniards. It is probable that Tompiro, Jumano, and Tiwa Indians departed the Salinas Basin in small numbers starting as early as 1670, if not before. The church register from El Paso del Norte records Indians from Quarai performing their wedding vows in this southern mission in 1671. As Abó, and Las Humanas were depopulated, the Tompiro and Jumano dispersed among the Piro pueblos along the river, with some joining the Towa at Jemez according to the oral tradition of that pueblo.<sup>80</sup> Spanish records indicate that the majority of Salinas Indians went to either the Pueblo of Isleta, which shared the Tiwa language with the residents from Quarai, or to the Piro villages along the river, before being swept south with the fleeing Spaniards during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. There is some indication that an effort was made to re-establish at least some of the Salinas pueblos and their missions in the undated petition of Father Fray Francisco de

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<sup>80</sup> Joe S. Sando, *Pueblo Nations: Eight Centuries of Pueblo Indian History* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 1992), 26. Sando relates: "Jemez legends say that the Arrow Society was evicted from the main Jemez group, and the members journeyed toward the southwest until they settled with the Tampiros who lived in the area at that time. Some of the references in the songs are entirely foreign in the Towa dialect, so the deities described may be Tampirop words and songs. The Arrow Society eventually returned to the Jemez country and established a village on the ridge east of today's Ponderosa, before they were welcomed back into the community of several Jemez villages in the mountains north of Jemez Pueblo."

Ayeta, "Having learned also that the pueblos and frontiers of Las Salinas and Senecú are ruined . . . having recourse to the said allowances that belong to me by reason of the said office, and taking the food from the mouths of my religious, [I arranged] to rebuild the pueblos and give support to the frontiers of Cuarac in Las Salinas and to those of Senecú in Los Piros."<sup>81</sup> Despite these efforts by 1679 the area was depopulated of all but its nomadic residents.

The Spaniards had entered Salinas in 1598 with a view at subjugating the Native Americans they encountered there, but in the end it was they that were subjugated by one of the nomadic tribes who claimed the plains of the Salinas Basin for their own. In between the conquest and abandonment, the Spaniards brought their institutions, moral values, language, and most importantly their religion, to the colonial settlements they established at existing pueblos villages. At first the Pueblos resisted the demands placed upon them by the interlopers, but superior weaponry and the use of cavalry allowed the Spaniards to impose their culture on the region. Salinas was one of the few regions in the northern frontier that contained any exploitable mineral resources. Because of this the Natives found themselves caught in the struggle between the civil and church officials who sought to monopolize their labor. The delicate balance that had existed between the villages and the environments the Indians made them a part of could not long be sustained in such an arid region. As severe and sustained as the drought proved to be, the abandonment may have been necessary whether or not the Spaniards had altered the Indians' subsistence pattern, we will never know. There can be no doubt however, that the concentrating of the population at fewer central locations, the introduction of livestock, and crops that required greater water resources, considerably hastened the

<sup>81</sup> Hackett, *Historical Documents*, 292. See also page 297 and 298.

depopulation of the jurisdiction. The Spaniards contributed too to circumstances that worked to increase the Apache raids that also plagued the region, by conducting slaving expeditions among the nomadic tribes, increasing the animosity felt by the Apaches for the Spanish and their pueblo wards. The Salinas Pueblo Missions were the tangible evidence of this collision of cultures during the seventeenth century. As sites abandoned before the changes in Spanish colonial administration swept into place by the Pueblo Revolt, they provided an intriguing mystery to be solved by the new colonial explorers.

## **Chapter 2: Early American Accounts of Salinas Pueblo Missions**

These sites in the Salinas basin have seen the comings and goings of explorers from two different empires, the Spanish Inquisition, homesteaders, miners, treasure hunters, and famous archaeologists. The initial entry of Europeans to this arid region, reaching even into the remote Salinas Basin, had come from the south-west out of the province of Nueva Galicia in New Spain. Exploration and missionization were the driving forces behind the Spanish development of the Southwest from the time of Francisco de Coronado's foray between 1540 and 1542. Further exploration in the intervening years led to the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico by Don Juan de Oñate in 1598. During the early Spanish colonial period, the communities along the Camino Real in the Rio Grande Valley corridor grew, while those to the east of the great Sandia and Manzano mountain chain withered and died just prior to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, which ended the Spanish rule in the region north of Paseo del Norte for twelve years.



The reconquest of New Mexico in 1692 reimposed Spanish dominion in the province, but this security was to prove elusive. Other colonial powers were pushing toward the northern provinces of New Mexico and Alta California. From Alaska along the coast of the Pacific Northwest, the Russians were moving south in search of new territory where the lucrative sea otters had not been trapped into extinction, threatening Spain's hold on Alta California. The French also began approaching Spanish colonial territory in Texas and New Mexico from the north-east early in the eighteenth century. By July of 1739 the first French traders entered where they resided nine months waiting to receive a petition to trade, which was never granted, from the viceroyalty.<sup>82</sup> These encroachments encouraged the Spanish to open trails to their remote territories from the longer-held settlements in New Mexico in order to aid in the development of the new provinces and expand trade within their own dominion. In 1775 – 1776, about the time the British colonies on the continent's eastern edge began their struggle for independence from King George III of Great Britain, two Franciscan friars started their trek northwest from New Mexico in an effort to discover a route to Alta California. Fathers Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Silvestre Vélez de Escalante set out from in late July 1776, turning northwest through Abiquiú with the intention of rendering aid “to the insecure and struggling missions of California from the old, established institutions of the upper Rio Grande Valley.”<sup>83</sup> While the Domínguez and Escalante expedition was among the first *official* party of Spaniards to venture out beyond the New Mexico frontier, other unsanctioned explorers and traders had begun to forge links into the uncharted territory at

<sup>82</sup> Martha Royce Blaine, "French Efforts to Reach Santa Fe: André Fabry de la Bruyère's Voyage up the Canadian River in 1741-1742," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 135-136.

<sup>83</sup> LeRoy R. Hafen, "The Old Spanish Trail, Santa Fe to Los Angeles," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 11, no. 2 (February 1948): 150-51.

the southern edge of the Great Basin as early as 1765 in search of furs and slaves despite Spanish law forbidding the practice.<sup>84</sup> The Dominguez-Escalante expedition followed trails the unsanctioned traders had forged a decade earlier as far as the Gunnison River in Colorado, before blazing a new path deep into the Great Basin which became known as the Old Spanish Trail. Eventually, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, the Americans began to encroach as well with the expedition of General Zebulon Pike, sent by the duplicitous governor of the new Louisiana Territory in 1806. Pike reported that he was not the first American to enter the New Mexico capital of , relating that he met and befriended trapper James Prucell living as a Spanish subject in the old town. Later evidence, published shortly after the Civil War, suggests Americans had been in Santa Fé as early the last quarter of the eighteenth century.

In 1773, John Rowzée Peyton, the son of a prominent Virginia family, who purportedly enjoyed the hospitality of the Washingtons, the Blairs, the Fairfaxes, and the Lees, was taken prisoner by the Spanish after the ship he was sailing on from New Orleans to St. Augustine was blown off course by a hurricane. Becoming disabled, the French vessel was taken as a prize by the Spanish fleet in the Gulf of Mexico. Marched in chains from the mouth of the Río Grande, where the captives were unloaded, to , John Peyton fell ill en route. Once in jail in the city, he recovered his health and hatched a plan for the escape of the prisoners. Helped in his plans by a Father Lopez, and Annetta, the daughter of the jailer, Peyton spread the rumor that, as a wealthy American, he could pay for the aid he needed to escape, attracting the notice of a willing local merchant. The plan was put into play on the night of a wedding, by Annetta bringing food from the feast

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<sup>84</sup> Joseph J. Hill, "The Old Spanish Trail: A Study of Spanish and Mexican Trade and Exploration Northwest from New Mexico to the Great Basin and California," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 4, no. 3 (August 1921): 44-447.

to the guards and drinks drugged with laudanum. Once the guards were incapacitated the prisoners fled over the mountains on horses supplied by the local merchant bribed by Peyton. Avoiding Indian and Spanish settlements for fear of being recaptured and using an old French map, the group set out for what they felt was the nearest safe haven, St. Louis. Traveling twenty-one days after spending a little time hunting and drying meat for the journey, the group paused for twelve more while they waited out a late winter blizzard, reaching the Missouri River by 28 April 1774. Following the river they came upon an Osage camp, where they acquired a guide to take them on to St. Louis and traded one of their stolen muskets for a canoe.

While the adventures of John Rowzée Peyton are indeed exciting, it is his mention of ruins that are believed to be of the Salinas missions group that are of interest to us here. Educated at the College of William and Mary, Peyton was probably aware of basic theories concerning the history of the region. Of the march north from the Gulf Peyton says,:

more interesting were several ruins at Quivira, where we remained the night indicating, as they do, a former civilization. I was permitted to make a short examination of them, on promising to pay 5 dollars at Santa Fé, . . . I was informed that they were the ruins of the Aborigines, but I do not think so. The slight view I had of them was enough to convince me that they were of Spanish origin.<sup>85</sup>

His tale gives us precious few details regarding the site, but what it does indicate is the loss of local knowledge regarding the origins of some of the structures there. Later visitors reported receiving similar information from residents of the territory.<sup>86</sup> This bit

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<sup>85</sup> J. Lewis Peyton, *The Adventures of My Grandfather, with Extracts from his Letters, and Other Family Documents, Prepared for the Press with Notes and Biographical Sketches of Himself and his Son, John Howe Peyton, Esq.* (New York: Argonaut Press for University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, 1966), 35-36.

<sup>86</sup> see Charles H. Lange and Carroll L. Riley eds., *The Southwestern Journals of Adolph F. Bandelier 1880-1882* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), especially page 385.

of information in itself is important, for it indicates that visitors were not coming into contact with descendents of the original inhabitants. When the area was abandoned in the 1670s due to drought, famine, disease, and Apache depredations, the Tompiro, Tiwa, and their Spanish overlords fled north to Tajiique, and later west over the mountain passes to Isleta, another Tiwa tribe. It is not unreasonable to speculate that some of these refugees may have gone to the Piro pueblos along the Río Grande around Socorro as well, before all fled south to Paseo del Norte during the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. In either case, the communal knowledge these survivors held does not seem to have been retained by New Mexico residents at the time of these early American visits, and the ruins remained a mystery. There may have remained a few among the native refugees at Isleta del Sur or other pueblos who remembered their homeland, remembered Las Humanas pueblo, the seventeenth-century Spanish missions, and how and why Gran Quivira was ultimately abandoned — but that history was no longer common knowledge among the eighteenth-century settlers in New Mexico.

Since Gran Quivira was deserted, Peyton met with no inhabitants and so left no indication of how he may have viewed the natives or Spaniards who constructed the site. His letter does clearly outline what he felt about the territory and its residents in general. He wrote, “As I approached the post of Santa Fé, I was struck with a mixed sensation of surprise and delight at its appearance. The first view is really enchanting. It is situated upon the slopes of hills, and the green fields and luxuriant foliage in which it is embosomed, even at the advanced season of our arrival, gave it a most lovely and picturesque aspect. The surrounding meadows, which are green and beautiful . . .” His initial enchantment turned to ash upon entry to the city, which he described as, “filthy

and loathsome, and the population indolent and indifferent, a miserable lot of emaciated, sun-burnt and dejected-looking Spaniards.”<sup>87</sup> His general dislike of the Spanish can be categorized as coming, in whole or part, from the Black Legend of Spain which contends that the Spanish were uniquely evil and inferior to their Protestant counterparts.<sup>88</sup> The poor treatment he was purportedly subjected to both on the march north and in captivity may explain his lack of regard for the people and the more arid areas of the region, as could the tense relations that existed between the two colonial powers at the time of the reported capture. Peyton did express however, a certain restrained fascination and excitement for New Mexico. If there is truth behind Peyton’s claim to have promised payment for touring the site, it would make him the first documented ‘tourist’ of the ancient ruins!

The Salinas mission and pueblo is not the only Native American site Peyton described in his story. He related that during the course of his harrowing escape, he came across “numerous evidences . . . of a previous and extinct civilization,” in the shape “of conical shaped mounds and pyramidal hillocks.”<sup>89</sup> These observations are the ones for which Peyton is most famous, in addition to the attribution of his tale of adventure as the start of the myth surrounding the Mound Builder’s culture of the Mid-Western United States. Critic Jeffrey K. Yelton contends, “A critical examination of the document’s contents indicates that the story was fabricated by Peyton’s grandson, John Lewis

<sup>87</sup> Peyton, *The Adventures of My Grandfather*, 35.

<sup>88</sup> Joseph P. Sánchez, *The Spanish Black Legend: Origins of Anti-Hispanic Stereotypes* (Albuquerque: National Park Service, Spanish Colonial Research Center, 1990).

<sup>89</sup> Donald J. Blakeslee, “John Rowzee Peyton and the Myth of the Mound Builders,” *American Antiquity* 52, no. 4 (October, 1987): 788.

Peyton,” who published the account in the nineteenth century.<sup>90</sup> Further arguing that John Lewis had the technical knowledge to write the story himself as a corresponding member of the Wisconsin State Historical Society and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society of Great Britain, Yelton maintains that historians have largely ignored the tale due to its obvious lack of veracity. Donald J. Blakeslee responds however, that the story is genuine, at least in part, but concedes that it contains “nineteenth-century additions and changes, none of which affect the episode of the mound excavation.”<sup>91</sup> Making an argument for the genuineness of the story, Frederick Webb Hodge suggests that the account related in letters home to his father, “rather than being intended for publication, they were designed to explain the reasons for the writer's long absence and to assure his family of his personal safety, with some account, of course, of the ordeal through which he had passed.”<sup>92</sup> If, as Blakeslee contends, the basic facts of the tale are true insofar as the Indian mounds are concerned, we may also cautiously extend that caveat to the portion of the tale concerning the ruins of Gran Quivira. As such, John Rowzée Peyton’s relation of Gran Quivira and its origins are the first Anglo American’s observations of the Salinas ruins to appear in the written record, and they become an important first view from this new quarter. Without incontrovertible proof however, the account is genuine and not fictional, Peyton's views may continue to be discounted by historians.

<sup>90</sup> Jeffrey K. Yelton, “A Comment on John Rowzée Peyton and the Mound Builders: The Elevation of a Nineteenth-Century Fraud to a Twentieth-Century Myth,” *American Antiquity* 54, no.1 (January, 1989): 161.

<sup>91</sup> Donald J. Blakeslee, “Reply to Yelton,” *American Antiquity* 54, no. 1 (January, 1989): 165.

<sup>92</sup> F. W. Hodge, “A Virginian in Ne Mexico in 1773-74,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 4, no. 3 (July, 1929), 239.

Following John Rowée Peyton’s strange tale of captivity in New Mexico, among the first Americans to enter the Spanish territory were traders in 1804. Quick on their heels was Lieutenant Zebulon Montgomery Pike. Probably the first American explorer to make an official foray into Spain’s northern frontier province, Pike and his men left Fort Belle Fontaine near St. Louis on July 15, 1806. They were captured in Spanish territory along the Río Conejos near what is now Alamosa, Colorado on February 26, 1807 and then marched to , where they arrived on March 2<sup>nd</sup>.<sup>93</sup> Spain viewed all such activities as intrusions, “and used whatever means . . . to prevent the Americans from exploring”<sup>94</sup> what they viewed as their sovereign territory. Thus began the twisted intrigues that were to mark relations between the two ruling empires in the west, blocking most (legal) trade and commerce into New Mexico from the east. Historian William Goetzmann remarks, “All up and down the Mississippi from St. Louis to the Gulf of Mexico, a network of spies and informers kept Spain posted as to the activities of Americans on the frontier,” among them the double-agent and American governor of Louisiana territory, General James Wilkinson.<sup>95</sup> With such an “iron curtain strategy,”<sup>96</sup> the lucrative markets of did not open to American entrepreneurs until after Mexico’s independence from Spain in 1821.

With the separation of Mexico from Spain, the regulations enforced by the crown eased, and a more free-flowing American trade with the Mexican-held province began. Wagons rolled into New Mexico over the Trail across the plains and prairies from St.

<sup>93</sup> Herbert E. Bolton, “Papers of Zebulon M. Pike, 1806-1807,” *The American Historical Review* 13, no. 4 (July 1908): 800.

<sup>94</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the American West* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2000), 41.

<sup>95</sup> Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 43.

<sup>96</sup> Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 53.

Louis almost as soon as the ink dried on the Treaty of Córdoba, which established Mexican independence from Spain.<sup>97</sup> Clandestine trading, gold prospecting and trapping expeditions had slipped into the territory despite the best efforts of the Spanish authorities — in fact the first legal venture into could be termed an accident. While ostensibly on a foray to gather wild horses from the plains, William Becknell ran into Mexican rangers just over the Raton Pass who informed him that Mexico had declared her independence and the onerous trade restrictions which had kept New Mexico isolated for so long were no longer in force. It is even possible that in 1821 Becknell had started toward on an illegal venture that turned legal by this fortuitous news. Before the decade was out, Senator Thomas Hart Benton of Missouri stood in the U.S. Senate and insisted on “a federally sponsored international road from Missouri to Santa Fé.”<sup>98</sup> That the demanded road was completed by 1827, gives a clear indication of how important the trade with the provincial capital of the fledgling nation of Mexico was. The opening of the Trail and the traders who came over it marked a turning point in the history of New Mexico, and Americans began to enter freely and establish roots in the territory. As they began crossing the land, they encountered the old Spanish ruins and on occasion recorded their views on the ruined villages of the Salinas Basin for future generations.

It is from one of these early traders, Josiah Gregg, that the second American account of a mission in the Salinas Basin comes. Having fallen ill after 1831 with “chronic diseases, which defied every plan of treatment that the sagacity and science”<sup>99</sup> and medicine could offer, he followed the advice of his physicians and traveled west over the prairies, hoping the dry air and adventure would improve his condition. Improve it

<sup>97</sup> Treaty of Córdoba was signed 24 August 1821.

<sup>98</sup> Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire*, 66.

<sup>99</sup> Josiah Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1962), xi.



did, and in his words “beget a passion for Prairie life which I never expect to survive.”<sup>100</sup> This Kentucky farmer’s son born in Tennessee, moved with his family to Illinois, and eventually was transplanted again, to Missouri where young Josiah was educated and grew up. The itinerant pattern of habitation which led the Gregg family from one frontier territory to the next was indicative of many of the settlers who eventually found their way to New Mexico. Josiah Gregg was, by all accounts, a very detail-oriented man who excelled at mathematics and taught himself surveying. Upon reaching , he put his skills to good use, becoming a merchant’s partner before going into business himself between the years of 1831-1840, during the course of which he crossed the vast expanse of the western prairies on eight different occasions. In 1844, his work *Commerce of the Prairies*, based on journals he kept throughout the years, was published by H. G. Langley publishers of New York.<sup>101</sup>

As a respected observer of the Mexican region’s culture and sites, many future explorers, including men from the U.S. Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, read and took cues from Gregg's account. Among the topics Gregg wrote about was the Pueblo de las Humanas which became known in the nineteenth century as Gran Quivira. In his chapter regarding the rumored lost Spanish mines he wrote:

In every quarter of the territory there are still to be seen vestiges of ancient excavation, and in some places, ruins of considerable towns evidently reared for mining purposes.

Among these ancient ruins the most remarkable are those of *La Gran Quivira*, about 100 miles southward from . This appears to have been a considerable city, larger and richer by far than the present capital of New Mexico has ever been. Many walls, particularly those of churches, still stand erect amid the desolation that surrounds them, as if their sacredness had been a shield against which Time dealt his blows in vain.

<sup>100</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, xii.

<sup>101</sup> Archibald Hanna, introduction to *Commerce of the Prairies*, by Josiah Gregg (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1962).

The style of architecture is altogether superior to anything at present to be found north of Chihuahua — being of hewn stone, a building material wholly unused in New Mexico. What is more extraordinary still, is, that there is no water within less than some ten miles of the ruins; yet we find several stone cisterns, and remains of aqueducts eight or ten miles in length, leading from the neighboring mountains, from whence water was no doubt conveyed. And, as there seem to be no indications whatever of the inhabitants ever having been engaged in agricultural pursuits, what could have induced the rearing of a city in such an arid, woodless plain as this, except the proximity of some valuable mine, it is difficult to imagine. From the peculiar character of the place and the remains of the cisterns still existing, the object of pursuit in this case would seem to have been a *placer*, a name applied to mines of gold-dust intermixed with the earth. . . .

By some persons these ruins have been supposed to be the remains of an ancient Pueblo or aboriginal city. That is not probable, however; for though the relics of aboriginal temples might possibly be mistaken for those of Catholic churches; yet it is not to be presumed that the Spanish coat of arms would be found sculptured and painted upon their façades, as is the case in more than one instance.<sup>102</sup>

Although one of the modern editors of Gregg's work said of him, "He abhorred exaggeration and unfounded speculation,"<sup>103</sup> Gregg's description of Gran Quivira abounds with supposition regarding the reason for the settlement as well as its wealth. He concludes that the town must have been a wealthy Spanish city before being massacred in the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, "all except one, as the story goes; and that their immense treasures were buried in the ruins."<sup>104</sup> Gregg also footnotes the presence of Abó, Tajique, and Chilili writing, "In the same vicinity there are some other ruins of a similar character, though less extensive," but does not further speculate on their reason for existence or any possible relationship between the villages.

Despite Archibald Hanna's belief that Gregg was not prone to unfounded speculation, historians now know that Gregg's theories on Gran Quivira were incorrect.

<sup>102</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 85-86.

<sup>103</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, x.

<sup>104</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 86.

As pointed out by Dr. Durwood Ball, the editor of the *New Mexico Historical Review*, however, his speculations follow a pattern that was common in the era, and compare to similar opinions regarding Pecos.<sup>105</sup> Gregg fell victim to the popular rumor of his time regarding a fabulous Spanish treasure hidden in the ruins. With no ready evidence of a spring or other consistent water supply, given the American/Western European value placed on precious metals he could not fathom a reason, other than the lure of wealth from gold and silver mining, to settle in such a desolate and lonely place. No physical evidence has ever been located nearby to indicate placer mining and so his supposition that the area was the site of this activity was based solely on what were then fairly obvious signs of water catchment. He did not however, recognize the evidence of the pueblo's agricultural areas. Later archaeologists and other visitors have identified what are believed to be agricultural fields off the north and northwest slopes of the knoll on which the village is situated. Waterless, windswept and isolated, Gran Quivira does seem an unlikely home for anyone, surely contributing to why Gregg was mistaken as to the reason for habitation at the site. As with other early Anglo observers of the west, his cultural values and biases caused him to draw incorrect conclusions regarding the evidence at hand, and completely miss some clues. The gold and silver fever that permeated American culture at that time contributed to the *desire* to believe in the treasure stories linked to Gran Quivira. The preconceived ideas such as these that Americans held regarding the ancient sites in the West may have led to Gregg's other errors in interpreting the evidence at the site.

One of the more common mistakes made by many of the early Anglo observers was that the stone used as building material for the churches was quarried, dressed stone,

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<sup>105</sup> Personal communication from Dr. Ball, 26 March 2009.

and as a Spanish structure, this may have been what observers expected to be the case. While the façades of the buildings at Abó, Quarai, and Gran Quivira, are impressively finished in appearance, the building stones are *not* dressed, but are flag or field stones that have been so artfully placed as to provide a very smooth face. Most high-architecture in Europe at the time, such as churches and government buildings, were built using dressed stone, and given the amazing craftsmanship of the mission churches, and the preconceived notions of Western-European superiority in civilization and architecture, this is not a completely surprising blunder. While the style and design of the buildings was indeed Spanish in origin, what Gregg didn't know was that they were Native American in construction and method. Gregg's preconceptions regarding Spanish versus Pueblo architecture and level of civilization may have also led to his suggesting features that were not actually in evidence.

Toward the end of Josiah Gregg's description of Gran Quivira he makes a quite puzzling comment about the use of Spanish heraldic signs as a way of distinguishing between Spanish and Native American structures. No evidence of a Spanish crest however, exists on the churches at Grand Quivira, and no other independent source notes there being traces of one at the site — only other writers quoting Gregg mention a crest. In all actuality, he does not say specifically that San Buenaventura mission at Las Humanas had Spanish heraldry on it, only that they are often “*sculptured or painted upon their façades, as is the case in more than one instance.*”<sup>106</sup> This could be taken as a general observation, not a specific detail about this particular ruin. In consequence, Gregg's statement *suggests* the existence of a Spanish coat of arms at Gran Quivira, but never definitively states or describes where the device is located, leaving the existence of

<sup>106</sup> Gregg, *Commerce of the Prairies*, 86. Italics added for emphasis.

it up to question. Even though Gregg's report on Gran Quivira is tantalizingly brief and brings up more questions than it answers, part of its value is that it illustrates the preconceptions on which the newcomers' perceptions of the site were based. It also has value beyond showing us how European cultural values were applied to interpreting ancient sites by the general public and non-professional scientists.

Gregg's account had a profound impact on the history of Gran Quivira, despite its shortcomings. Gregg was extremely influential because he was a scientifically-minded man who shared that natural curiosity about his surroundings and everything in them that motivated the post-Enlightenment scientists of his day. But for Gregg, Lt. James W. Abert, Maj. James H. Carleton, and Lt. Charles C. Morrison might never have ventured into the vast plains so near the *Jornada del Muerto* to explore these mysterious ruins, opening the way to the scientific study and preservation that was to follow their explorations. Although Gregg missed the terraced areas that had once been the pueblo's agricultural fields, he significantly makes note of the extensive network of what he believed to be aqueducts that in former times supplied the village with water. Also of import are his observations on the superiority of the building techniques used at Gran Quivira, and the fact that the ruins were credited to Spaniards rather than to the Native Americans. Although his comments regarding Abó, Chilili, and Tajique are relegated to a footnote, it is significant that he compares them to Las Humanas/Gran Quivira by saying they are of the same "character." This indicates too, that at least partial ruins were, at that time, evident, where now, at all except Abó, very little trace remains of the pueblos or their early colonial missions.

What could appear to be corroboration for Gregg's description of Gran Quivira comes from a one-time employee of his trading business in New Mexico, Benjamin David Wilson. Wilson, who was born in Nashville, Tennessee on December 1, 1811, lost his father at the age of eight, and by the age of fifteen had left home to establish a trading post in Yazoo City, Mississippi, "to do business with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians." Due to a decline in his health, doctors recommended he "leave that country," so he travelled north to Forth Smith, Arkansas, before moving on to Missouri and joining the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, reaching in 1833.<sup>107</sup> Joining a party of trappers headed into the Gila and Apache Country, Wilson reported that his time in the territory trapping was "quite successful" but otherwise uneventful until the Spring of 1837. On his return trip to he was captured by Apaches in a retaliatory raid for the death of Apache chief Juan José Compás at the hands of John Johnson in the Animas mountains in southwestern New Mexico. Wilson eventually escaped and made it back to the capital, whereupon he was approached about leading a group to the site of the massacre of another party of Americans by Apaches at a place called Point of Rocks, about one hundred fifty miles south of . This he did, before returning to and taking a job with a local merchant for a few months. Then he says: "Whilst I was there, Dr. Gregg . . . arrived with a large quantity of merchandise; wishing to pass on with a portion of his goods to Chihuahua; he engaged me to take charge of the rest of his goods. I attended to all his business to his satisfaction." So he "remained in charge of Dr. Gregg's business, some two years, and then bought out the remainder of the goods, and remained in Santa Fé, till the Fall of 1841," when he moved on from New Mexico to California, becoming

<sup>107</sup>Benjamin David Wilson, "Benjamin David Wilson's Observations on Early Days in California and New Mexico," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Historical Society of Southern California, 1934), 77.

the second (though by his accounts, the first) mayor of Los Angeles. During his sojourn, he witnessed the 1837 riots of which resulted in the murder of the then governor Albino Pérez, and his having to lock himself in the store to avoid angry mobs. As harrowing as his adventures were, it is his tale about his "uneventful" time prior to 1837 that we are concerned.

Benjamin David Wilson is one of those few travelers in the West to have left an account of a Salinas mission. His visit to the site was not under pleasurable circumstances, or to suit any sort of curiosity. After his first successful foray in the Gila to trap for beaver, he returned to the area "in the winter of 1835- 36," on his second fur trapping expedition.<sup>108</sup> He relates:

On our return as before mentioned to intercept the Mission caravan, after crossing the Del Norte, at the head of *Jornada*, going eastward to the River Pecos, we had the misfortune to find no water till the fifth day at night. On the fourth day, crossing an arid sandy plain leading North to South between the two parallel mountains, we saw to the North of us in the midst of this plain a large building, which encouraged us to believe that our water trouble was at an end; we went to the building and found it to be a large Church. On the northern side of the building saw evidences that there had been on that site a very large town, the Church itself was built of stone, and stood almost in a perfect state of preservation, while all the other buildings had decayed. We spent the whole day looking for water without any success. Just at night I discovered on the eastern side what satisfied me were the remnants of a concrete aqueduct. Camped there that night, next morning endeavored to trace the aqueduct which led easterly to a mountain range. Spent the whole day in tracing it, to ascertain which was the gorge it entered, believing we should find water there. Our hopes were gratified, and our terrific sufferings ended. . . . After my return to Santa Fé narrated our discovery of that building, and some enthusiastic men went in search of it, they called it the Grand Quivira.

Those men, dug for treasure and reported that they had discovered some five miles from the buildings, a place where extensive mining operations had been carried on, by some civilized people, yet the best

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<sup>108</sup> Wilson, "Observations on Early Days," 84-95.

informed of the Mexicans could give no information on the matter. The whole thing was involved in mystery.<sup>109</sup>

So it was a search for water that led the group to the ruins of the ancient pueblo and church. No less harrowing than his later adventures, the description of this trek across the New Mexico countryside and the ruins, is the first real description of the topography of the area from an American, and also coincides with Josiah Gregg's story in certain aspects.

The most striking similarity between Gregg's and Wilson's accounts are the description of what they believe to be aqueducts leading to mountains nearby. Where Gregg described them as being eight or ten miles in length, Wilson is more specific in giving a direction, saying that the path he traced led to the east. Indeed there is a small mountain range there called the Gallinas Mountains where later settlers wrote they were also told there was available water however, Wilson describes a *concrete* aqueduct — a material foreign to the pueblo builders in the sixteenth century and earlier. The best explanation for this supposed aqueduct comes from a mid-twentieth century archaeologist, and a custodian of Gran Quivira National Monument, Joseph H. Toulouse Jr. The "concrete" aqueduct Wilson describes may be the, "rock-lined, natural arroyo which runs toward the flats bordering the north side of the ridge" that Toulouse describes in his monograph.<sup>110</sup> Regarding the aqueduct reported by Gregg and Wilson he theorizes, "The traces of the 'aqueduct' mentioned in both Gregg's and Wilson's accounts appear, in light of recent research, to have been nothing more nor less than the ditch which runs along the top of the ridge on which the ruins lie. This ditch connects with a 'tank' some 200 yards east of the ruins and runs westward to another 'tank' some thirty feet from the

<sup>109</sup> Wilson, "Observations on Early Days," 95-96.

<sup>110</sup> Toulouse, "Early Water Systems," 370.



eastern boundary of the village."<sup>111</sup> The most damning evidence against such structures is Toulouse's observation that the land between the Gallinas Mountains and Chupadera Mesa on which Gran Quivira sits, is considerably lower in elevation, and as one interpreter of the site points out to visitors who ask about this today, "water doesn't run uphill!"<sup>112</sup> In the end Toulouse speculates that Gregg's account may be based on the hearsay of Benjamin David Wilson, and that "it is not certain that he [Gregg] visited the ruin. His account, . . . would tend to show that he had not."<sup>113</sup> Since Wilson was in the employ of Gregg, and had ample opportunity to relay his tale of deprivation during their two-year acquaintance, this is most likely the case. It is also clear however, from Wilson's description of the topography that he *had* been to the site.

Tracing Wilson's possible route by looking at topographical maps of New Mexico, several possible routes suggest themselves. Gran Quivira sits about halfway between the Rio Grande and the Rio Pecos to which Wilson said he and his companions were heading. The "Del Norte" he talks about crossing is the Rio Grande del Norte, as it was known on the maps of the day. The easiest path east from the Gila in southwest New Mexico to Gran Quivira is the gap between the Sierra Oscura mountains and the south end of the Chupadera Mesa, the path that the current New Mexico Highway 380 now traverses. It leads into the flats or plains just below Gran Quivira, possibly an little north of what could be described the "head" of the *Jornado del Muerto*. Instead, if the party were to have turned north at the south end of the San Andres mountains after coming around to their east side, this would have put them squarely in the *Jornada del Muerto*

<sup>111</sup> Joseph H. Toulouse, Jr., "Early Water Systems at Gran Quivira National Monument, *American Antiquity*, 10, no. 4 (April 1945), 365.

<sup>112</sup> Personal communication from Murt Sullivan, 17 January 2013.

<sup>113</sup> Toulouse, "Early Water Systems," 364.

and surely put them on a route without water for a number of days as well. Just as he describes, anyone who has travelled the country south of the Gran Quivira in the vicinity of Bingham, New Mexico, knows how sandy it is on the flats that stretch on a north-south axis between Chupadera Mesa and the Sierra Oscura/San Andres mountain chain on the west and the Gallinas and Jicarilla Mountains strung out along the east side of the plain. While it is difficult to determine his route exactly, his description matches the area fairly well, and lends credence to his claim of having been at the sight, unlike Gregg's. Other parts of his observations are of interest as well.

Wilson's description of the Pueblo de las Humanas at Chupadera Mesa is as brief as his description regarding the topography of the area, but it still holds valuable clues. He readily recognizes the largest structure as a church, most likely the mission of San Buenaventura, and notes that it is made of stone and in a nearly "perfect state of preservation." He did however miss the smaller of the two churches, San Isidro, that sits opposite the larger one across the main plaza at Las Humanas. His lack of elaboration of what nearly perfect preservation entailed, is maddening to modern researchers who might have been aided with the question of whether San Buenaventura had been completed or not. The fact that its condition struck him as well as it did, and the ease with which he identified the type of structure it was, tells us that the ruins had not yet begun to be seriously vandalized by the treasure seekers he also mentions. Although in a more severe condition, the pueblo was still evident enough to give him the impression of a large village, one of the two aspects that helps distinguish Gran Quivira from other Salinas pueblos in the documentary record despite the many names each site carries. The other identifying aspect of the site is what caused him and his companions so much

consternation, the complete lack of water resources. In these two points, his very brief description correlates with some of the earlier Spanish Colonial observers. Given the last detail he relays about this experience, the continued quality of preservation of the church at Gran Quivira could not be long sustained.

Upon his eventual return to Wilson tells us he passed along the tale of Gran Quivira's discovery. No sooner had he relayed his experience to the "enthusiastic men" of the capital, than a party of them were off to explore the desolate site. He seems skeptical about the reported success of the group when he states they had dug some miles from the village in the location of obvious mining, but that he could not get any "information on the matter" from the local Mexican populace. His skepticism may spring from not having encountered any obvious signs of "extensive" mining while he traversed the area. The gold fever he witnessed may originate from the name Wilson was given by those he reported his discovery to, Gran Quivira — the place Coronado went in search of the treasure the Turk had described.

The name itself, has long been shrouded in mystery and controversy. Although the *Quivira* Coronado sought, and the Gran Quivira that is Las Humanas are not even close to being in the same area, the name itself is linked with the search for gold, and its application to the Pueblo de las Humanas may account for the attachment of gold legends to the site. The word *Quivira*, is thought to come from Coronado's expression "*Quien vivira, vera*" (He who lives shall see), which was shortened in steps to "*Quien vivira*," "*Qui'vivira*," until it degraded finally to "*Quivira*"<sup>114</sup> Wilson's use of the name Gran Quivira in relation to the village on Chupadera Mesa, is felt by some historians to be the earliest use of that moniker for the Pueblo de las Humanas since his trip is purported to

<sup>114</sup> Sandra Bell, "The Legend of Quivira," *Western Folklore* 22, no. 2, Kansas Number (April 1963), 113.

have happened on the return from an 1835-36 trapping expedition. His account however, was not first made public by publication until sometime after it was initially recorded in 1877. While his visit to the site is more probable than either John Rowzée Peyton's, or Josiah Gregg's, and likely predated Gregg's, if, in fact, his employer ever did visit the site, both Peyton and Gregg use the name Quivira in their accounts, and were published before Wilson's, in 1867 and 1844 respectively. In either case, by his report we know that the populace in was already using the term as early as 1836. Whenever the name was first applied, it stuck from this point forward, and the next explorer to visit it was not one of those symbols of freedom and individualism as represented by the trader and trapper Benjamin David Wilson, but instead a new sort of western hero — a Topographical Engineer.

This Corps of highly trained Civil Engineers traces its roots to the country's birth, during that period when the great minds of the world followed Enlightenment ideals. It was with the appointment of Robert Erskine by General George Washington in July of 1777 as "the first geographer and surveyor in the Continental Army,"<sup>115</sup> that the Corps originated, becoming fully incorporated as an engineering unit in the War of 1812. The military academy at West Point had been dedicated, since its inception in 1802, to the education of a new breed of "engineer-soldiers," and trained over eighty-five percent of the officers of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Considered savants, they were expected to develop and maintain relationships with the top American scientists, keep abreast of the leading European scientific advances, and continue to develop their West Point training by an exchange of papers and professional criticism with their fellows. As

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<sup>115</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West 1803-1863* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 6.

America sought expansion across the continent, the need for men of this branch of expertise, who operated under the regular Corps of Engineers, grew until in July 5 of 1838, when they were created equal to the Corps of Engineers answerable directly to the Secretary of War with the Army Reorganization Act. In the intervening sixty-odd years since their genesis, the intellectual mien of the world had changed — Enlightenment thought had given way to Romanticism, and the Corps of Topographical Engineers was formalized at the height of the Romantic period.

As the Corps of Topographical Engineers performed their duties, "It was the expression of a general spirit of Romanticism that both governed its purpose and prescribed its methods."<sup>116</sup> Where the Enlightenment had been a reaction to the despotism of the Church and State, and championed reason as the path to reform society's ills by promoting science, skepticism of what was viewed as superstition in religious orthodoxy, and individual intellectualism; Romanticism was a revolt of what was seen as the aristocratic valuation of rationalism at the expense of open-mindedness, emotional awareness, and personal intuition. Romanticism meant not rejecting the mysterious and exotic, but embracing it. It stepped away from the Enlightenment's "narrow selectivity in the gathering of data or erecting of hypotheses," instead operating under the premise "One thing alone is needful: Everything." Historian William Goetzman explains, "Certain characteristics of the scientific work of the Corps therefore seem more intelligible if regarded as manifestations of this spirit."<sup>117</sup> The product then, was a military institution, whose total number at any time was never more than thirty-six officers, that also operated as a civilian public works department who met the ever

<sup>116</sup> Goetzman, *Army Explorations*, 13, 17.

<sup>117</sup> Goetzman, *Army Explorations*, 18.

growing demand by the American populace for roads, bridges, canals, harbors, lighthouses, and most importantly, surveys and other data on the land Americans intended to expand onto.

Just before the 1837 riots that caused Benjamin David Wilson to closet himself in a storefront, tensions began between the United States and the fairly young government of Mexico, under the pretext of disagreements over the annexation of the Republic of Texas. Following the declaration of war between the two countries on May 13, 1846, the United States sent General Stephen W. Kearney to capture New Mexico, and upon the completion of that mission, to continue on to seize California. Attached to his Army of the West were Corps of Topographical Engineer officers First Lieutenant William H. Emory, and Lieutenant James W. Abert, (son of Colonel John James Abert, the chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers). Emory and Abert were assigned the task of surveying the territory of New Mexico for routes to California. En route from Fort Leavenworth, Lt. Abert became ill and as a consequence was left by Emory at Bent's Fort in order to convalesce before resuming with his orders. From the 22<sup>nd</sup> of July until August 26<sup>th</sup> Abert's condition was fairly serious, leaving him often delirious, unable to focus his eyesight, or even write in his diary. Finally recovered enough to proceed, on September 9, 1846 he set off for New Mexico with two men in his service, reaching on September 27. Two days later he received orders from General Kearny "directing the survey of New Mexico."

Abert began by touring the mining district south of , before he set off with a party of four men to commence their "regular tour through this *departimento*,"<sup>118</sup> on October 8.

<sup>118</sup> James W. Abert, *Abert's New Mexico Report 1846 – '47* (1848; reprint, with foreword by William A. Keleher, Albuquerque, N. Mex.: Horn and Wallace, Publishers, 1962), 46, 62.

Along the way he made observations about the topography, geology, the native plants, animals, and people of the country as well as sketching many of the pueblos he visited. He read Josiah Gregg's *Commerce of the Prairies* prior to his assignment, and thought it an excellent source. His own observations display the work of a detailed, task focused, and scientific mind always seeking to meet his reporting directives, obtain samples of any possible mineral resources, and ascertain the mien of the locals. Still, his writing displays traces of honest enjoyment in his surroundings with touches of the poetic. He clearly had some sympathy with the natural world, in one instance writing, "At night we had a serenade from a full choir of prairie wolves [coyotes]; they collected around our camp in great numbers, and broke forth in sudden bursts of their inimitable music. There are times when the wolf's howl sounds pleasantly, and again there are times when the spirits of desolation seemed to be conjured up by it." Where Lt. Emory's writing illustrates that he thought little of the New Mexicans or their culture, Abert seems to have had conflicting views of respect and repulsion. He described the Mexicans he encountered in as having "an excellent notion of time, fine voices, and seemed to be enthusiastically fond of music. They are polite to excess, and I hear them often exclaim at what they call rudeness of the Americans."<sup>119</sup>

On November 1, he crossed the Manzanitas through Cañon Infierno (now called Hell's Canyon) and got his first look at the Estancia Basin. Reacting to the sublime in a way that was so a part of the Romantic writing of the time, he recorded in his journal:

To look upon this boundless extent of prairie, fills the mind with ideas, not of beauty, but of grandeur; and when, with the mind's eye, we travel still further over successions of these boundless plains, one is seized with a feeling allied to pain, as the mind expands to comprehend such vastness. Such were the impressions of the scene before us; and when we looked

<sup>119</sup> Abert, *Report*, 27, 46

back, we saw the hoary heads of the lofty and snow-capped mountains, to mid-height clad with sombre cedars, while round their base, and near to us, the rugged rocks were piled, as if the wild disorder in which nature had first thrown them had been anew confused by subterranean convulsions.<sup>120</sup>

Thoroughly impressed with the country and finally through the mountain pass the party then turned south. The first of the Salinas villages they visited was Chililí, where Abert stopped to purchase some sheep and noted, "The grazing grounds to the east of the mountains afford excellent pasturage; and this basin, around the salt lakes as well as the valley of the Pecos, are deservedly celebrated." His enchantment with the landscape stands somewhat in contrast to his experience with its people, for while Abert was occupied with this transaction, his lieutenant "encountered two Mexicans; [who] no sooner did they see him, than they dismounted, and commenced examining the loading of their carbines." Abert's comrade then drew both his pistols and faced the men, at which point the two Mexicans "held a council of war" before they cried out "Amigos!" and explained they had purportedly mistaken the lieutenant for a Navajo.<sup>121</sup> Continuing south to Tajiique the group met Mr. E. J. Vaughan, a Missouri trader who lived in the vicinity. Vaughan, it seems, had become afraid for his safety, explaining to the group, "an insurrectionary feeling was rife . . . particularly at this out-of-the-way place," but talk of resistance to the Americans was not all that worried him since he had also heard, "some of the inhabitants of this town arranging the partition they would make of his goods." Despite Vaughan's apprehension, the Lieutenant reported no further trouble until reaching Manzano about which he said, "When we first neared the town, several of the inhabitants came out to meet us with guns in their hands. The people still have a lingering inclination for the old government, . . . yet it will be some time, before they will regard

<sup>120</sup> Abert, *Report*, 104.

<sup>121</sup> Abert, *Report*, 105.



the entrance of Americans otherwise than as an intrusion."<sup>122</sup> Evidently able to calm the populace, they camped near an *acequia* close to one of the old orchards, and that night were invited to a fandango where Abert met and spoke with the mine owner or superintendent living in Manzano. Having been informed that the nearby mountains contained silver, copper, and iron mines, Abert received samples of silver ore from Don

Pedro Baca the next day before pushing onward.

By November 4, 1846 he reached Quarai, and was impressed with the construction of the Spanish mission, leaving us the first American description of Nuestra Señora de la



Figure 3: Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Quarai

Purísima Concepción de Quarai. He took the time to make a careful analysis of the church:

Here there is yet standing the walls of a time-worn cathedral; it is composed entirely of stone, red sandstone; the pieces are not more than 2 inches thick. The walls are 2 feet wide, and the outer face dressed off to a perfectly plain surface. The ground plan presents the form of a cross, with rectangular projections in each of the angles. The short arm of the cross is 33 feet 2 inches wide; the long arm is 18 feet 9 inches wide; their axis are, respectively, 50 feet long, and 112 feet long, and their intersection is 30 feet from the head of the cross. The rectangular projections that partly fill the angles formed by the arms, are 6 feet square. At the foot of the cross are rectangular projections, that measure 10 feet in the direction of the long axis, and 6 feet in the other direction. Around the church are the less conspicuous remains of numerous houses, that had been built of the same

<sup>122</sup> Abert, *Report*, 105, 107.

material, and the surfaces of the walls finished with tools; but these houses are almost level with the earth, while the walls of the ancient church rises to the height of 60 feet.<sup>123</sup>

His narrative of Quarai closes with the details about a man who approached him at the ruin. Abert tried to enquire after Gran Quivira from the stranger, but being more interested in telling the Lieutenant about a great gold and silver mine in the vicinity of Quarai, he had nothing to add that Abert had not been told at Manzano.

The details in Abert's report make evident the shift in how the Salinas ruins would now be scrutinized — carefully and scientifically. It seems clear from his enquiries while travelling through the villages in the Estancia valley that he intended to visit the Salinas pueblo missions, rather than that he simply stumbled upon them while surveying the territory. His measurements coupled with his sketches of the ruin and its environs indicate just how well the old church had been preserved. The watercolor sketch places the ruin and its surrounding features in context better than narrative alone would be able to convey, and lends credence to the accuracy of his analysis, making clear the roof-beam sockets along the top of one wall. He notes the cruciform plan of the church, although like Gregg, he mistakes the carefully laid flagstone masonry for dressed stone. After visiting Quarai, he moved on to Abó, where his party was camped.



NPS Photograph by Derek Toms

Figure 4: San Gregorio de Abó

<sup>123</sup> Abert, *Report*, 109.

Abert's analysis of Abó was just as careful as the inspection he made of Quarai. Here he made a sketch of San Gregorio, and a watercolor, as well as again taking the requisite measurements for a thorough analysis. He wrote that it was one of “the ancient ones” and described its construction as “in the style of those at” Quarai, also having a cruciform plan. San Gregorio at Abó measured twenty-two feet and six inches wide at the cross arm of the church, and thirty feet wide in the nave; the axes were twenty-seven feet and one hundred twenty feet respectively; with the sacristy containing a stone altar nine feet square, for a total of one hundred twenty-nine feet in total interior length. At Abó, however, he noted: “The areas of the cross coincide with the lines that pass through the cardinal points. In the east end of the short arm, there is a fine large window, the sides of which have what is called a flare, a style often used in Gothic windows. The walls of the church are over two feet in thickness, and beautifully finished; so that no architect could improve the exact smoothness of their exterior surface.”<sup>124</sup> His measurements were exceptionally accurate and detailed, being the first scientific inspection of San Gregorio de Abó that occurs in the historic record.

Abert's journal entries outline his careful consideration of the evidence he had at hand, and in keeping with his West Point training, display a familiarity with not only the American sources, but also the Spanish historians in print at that time. He concluded that the buildings at all three sites, Quarai, Abó, and Gran Quivira, “were erected by Indians under the direction of the Spanish priest.”<sup>125</sup> He ultimately compared the architecture of New Mexico with that of the Aztecs of Old Mexico; the primary similarities being multi-storied houses, and the aqueducts, a feature which he probably infers from Gregg’s

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<sup>124</sup> Abert, *Report*, 110, 113.

<sup>125</sup> Abert, *Report*, 114.

description at Gran Quivira. Abert was thus convinced of a common origin for the natives of New Mexico and the Aztecs, showing some signs of being under the sway of theories espoused by President of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, Lewis Henry Morgan, though the connection was a common enough assumption at that time. Abert did mistake the *Quivira* in the accounts of Fray Marcos de Niza and Coronado for the Gran Quivira of the Salinas Basin, not realizing that in the sixteenth century, *Quivira* was the land beyond Pecos in the Great Plains of Kansas and Nebraska. He makes an interesting comment that is easily slipped past following the debates in his journal concerning the merits of the seventeenth-century historians Clavigero, Solis, and Miguel Venegas, “We had quite a hearty laugh at our guide, who had never been beyond Chililí and Tagique, . . . Yesterday, he had insisted that Abó was much farther off than it had proved to be; and now, to confirm what he said, he declares that there is another Abó.”<sup>126</sup> The unfortunate local guide was probably making reference to the ruined pueblo now known as Tenabó, and referred to in some Spanish sources as Abó II, or the ‘second Abó’ — and if this is the case, is the first reference in American accounts of Tenabó.

Abert ended his discussion of the Salinas monuments by finding the local knowledge regarding the relics lacking, or the villagers uncooperative. His primary complaint was that he could not get reliable information from the inhabitants of the communities neighboring the “hoary monuments,” and that their replies to his queries “were wrapped in the mystifying language of ignorance, or the very unsatisfactory reply of ‘quien sabe.’” He attributed their silence to their distrust of Anglo curiosity regarding the architectural relics. According to Abert, they assumed “that [Abert and company] are

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<sup>126</sup> Abert, *Report*, 116.

in search of gold, which tradition has said is buried beneath the altars and floors of these old churches.” He obviously spent some time listening to these legends, as he related one regarding an old man in some detail. This fellow, says Abert, after "having amassed quite a snug little sum of money," spent it all excavating in the aisle of the church at Quarai, where instead of gold he found the bones of some poor soul. Disappointed and desperate, he “invoked the soul that had once animated these bones,” after the compatriots he convinced to join the venture had gone to sleep.<sup>127</sup> The old man begged the departed soul's bones, whom he presumed to have been a priest, to tell him where the treasure was buried, promising to have the remains once again interred in holy ground and having “masses without number” said in the deceased’s honor.<sup>128</sup> Of course the treasure hunter did not receive an answer to his entreaties, and remained disappointed. As other explorers to the Salinas Basin before him, Abert seems skeptical about the veracity of the treasure legends attached to yet another of the missions. His observations however, are quite different than those who visited before him.

Abert’s report of his visits to the Salinas Pueblo Missions represents a turning point in the American accounts of the sites. While amused by the tales of treasure, and frustrated by the obstinacy of the locals, he took a more thorough and scientific view than is displayed in the previous accounts. He engaged in some of the same debates as Gregg regarding the origin of the structures, but included a serious scholarly survey of the known historians to support his theories. He had an ethnologist’s or anthropologist’s eye for folklore, but clearly displayed the prevalent Anglo bias regarding those of Hispanic descent. In his mind, the fineness of the construction evident in the ancient ruins was

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<sup>127</sup> Abert, *Report*, 117.

<sup>128</sup> Abert, *Report*, 116-117.

proof that the Spanish culture of the region had not advanced, but had taken a backward slide in the intervening years since the missions had been built. Upon entering the Salinas district, Abert commented, “The major portion of the people live not one bit better than the negroes on a plantation in our southern States; and the rico of the village, like the planter, possesses everything; no one else owns a single sheep.”<sup>129</sup> He also noted that, “with all [the hidalgos] air of wealth, true comfort is wanting; and very few of our blessed land would consent to live like the wealthiest Rico in New Mexico.”<sup>130</sup> His report, along with that of his commander, Lt. Emory, made it clear that the Mexicans were not making proper use of the resources at their disposal, and rather than improving were falling farther away from enlightenment. Here was justification for the war with Mexico and the annexation of their northern territory, what John Rowzée Peyton described as the bad administration of fertile soil.

The capture of Mexico City in September of 1847, found the United States finally in possession of the North American continent all the way to the Pacific coast. When the Topographical Engineers were attached to General Kearny's command and sent west, one of the aims of their work was to determine whether or not New Mexico was worth annexation. Lt. Emory, Abert's commanding officer, determined that indeed it was:

New Mexico, although its soil is barren, and its resources limited. . . is, from its position, in a commercial and military aspect, an all-important military possession for the United States. The road from to Fort Leavenworth presents few obstacles for a railway, and, if it continues as good to the Pacific, will be one of the routes to be considered, over which the United States will pass immense quantities of merchandise into what

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<sup>129</sup> Abert, *Report*, 104.

<sup>130</sup> Abert, *Report*, 52.

may become, in time, the rich and populous States of Sonora, Durango, and Southern California.<sup>131</sup>

America's appropriation of Mexico's northern provinces opened up the New Mexico territory, which at that time included what is now Arizona, as well as parts of Colorado and Nevada, to American travelers and settlers. The U.S. military, as promised, began to protect the residents against nomadic Indian depredations, something the government in Mexico City had failed to do. Then in January of 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in northern California. With these changes, the survey work and the written reports the Topographical Engineers had completed in the New Mexico Territory took on new importance. During the gold rush New Mexico became host to the southern gold trail, over which miners and settlers began traveling on their way to the California gold fields in order to avoid the severe mountainous regions of the transcontinental trail farther north.

The published works of Gregg, Abert and others became guidebooks to the overland emigrants trying to reach the Pacific coast states. In the summer of 1849, three different wagons trains bound for California encamped together for almost two weeks near Quarai. As other wagon trains also joined them at the site, the "temporary community" came to contain over three hundred people.<sup>132</sup> Among those answering the siren's call of the gold rush were three married men who had left their families at home to seek the promised wealth of the gold fields — William W. Hunter who set out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April from Montgomery County, Missouri; J. W. Chatham who departed from

<sup>131</sup> United States Army Corps of Topographical Engineers, *Lieutenant Emory Reports: A Reprint of Lieutenant W. H. Emory's Notes of a Military Reconnaissance*, introduction and notes by Ross Calvin (1948: reprint Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1951), 61.

<sup>132</sup> William W. Hunter, *Missouri '49er: The Journal of William W. Hunter on the Southern Gold Trail*, edited and annotated by David P. Robrock (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 71.



Cambridge, South Carolina on February 27; and H. M. T. Powell from Illinois who began his journey on April 3, 1849. All three, had been keeping journals documenting the adventure of the overland trek, and contained within their travel diaries were also accounts of Quarai and Abó.

The South Carolinian, J. W. Chatham was with one of the wagon trains that camped near the ruins at Quarai in 1849. He had left western-central South Carolina in February, and headed through Georgia to Tuscumbia, Alabama along the Tennessee River, where he booked a steamboat passage to St. Louis. While awaiting his next departure he attended the theater and toured the city, ". . .much impressed with the magnitude of the public edifices."<sup>133</sup> From St. Louis he sailed to Independence, Missouri where he arrived on May 6, after which the group (several men he met en route joined together for the trip) sold their horses to buy oxen to pull the wagon for the overland journey. With their preparations in order they departed from a camp outside the city on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May. The wagon train, now combined with other small trains along the way, pulled in to Galisteo by mid-July, where they stopped for a few days before pressing southward and arriving at Quarai on the 27<sup>th</sup> of July.

By the time he reached central New Mexico, Chatham had been on the trail for five months. He had crossed through six states and the Indian Territory before reaching New Mexico. His train had experienced death due to cholera, and had been joined by others until, by his count there were about twenty-five wagons with seventy-nine people in the group; forty-four men whose number included two African-Americans, one

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<sup>133</sup> J. W. Chatham, *Private Journal Commencing February 27, 1849*, manuscript, Center for Southwest Research, Special Collections, University of New Mexico General Library.



invalid, whose sex he does not give, and 36 women and children.<sup>134</sup> Upon arriving at Quarai he recorded in his journal:

We traveled over some rough road but the grass is bad and no water until we arrived at an old Pueblo village named Quarra [Quarai], which was once a flourishing place from its extensive ruins. I measured one of the principle which must have been a house of worship. It is about 100 feet long and 100 feet broad, its Hall is 100 feet by 30 wide and some 30 or 40 feet high. Built of stone but now where once was such splendor resides in the same old walls some poor Spaniards principally Pastores as they have but spindle farms. The walls of the old building show some skill as the plastering in some places is yet remaining, which shows its builders possessed skill. Here in the cracks of the wall are exhumed skulls, also there is sitting in the middle of the Hall a cross around which is a pile of stones, so must crumble all art of man and much faster the workmanship of Idol worshipers. So it is with the worshipers of the sun. Spanish avarice and persecution has laid waste some pretty Indian villages and palaces, and they now are more degraded than those they ousted. Planting the cross in Mexico may have been a blessing, but in many cases it does not appear so.<sup>135</sup>

Here at Quarai his group resided, in order to rest the animals and wait for the grazing along the trail to improve from the summer rains. Shortly after their arrival, he relates that a party of "about forty men from the four different trains" had gone to the White Mountains (Sierra Blanca) in search of a gold mine with a Spanish guide.<sup>136</sup> Rather than going so far afield, Chatham spent his time in camp on watch, hunting, exploring the countryside, and prospecting for gold in the nearby Manzano mountains. During one such exploring sojourn he climbed a hill and looked out over the horizon and described the salt lakes of the Estancia Basin: "at a distance I saw the Salt Lakes mirrored surface as men dots on the stage. To their right and left before and behind lay the dark blue masses of high pinnacled mountains casting their reflections afar on the smooth surface

<sup>134</sup> Chatham, *Private Journal*, 31-32.

<sup>135</sup> Chatham, *Private Journal*, 85-86. Punctuation added and spelling corrected.

<sup>136</sup> Chatham, *Private Journal*, 92. Punctuation added and spelling corrected.

of the level plains."<sup>137</sup> When the prospecting party to the Sierra Blanca returned, the trained pulled-up camp and resumed their journey.

The next encampment for Chatham's wagon train was near the pueblo of Abó on August 12th. Curious as ever, Chatham describes how four of the group visited the old ruins:

After looking around I took the dimensions. Inside length of the principle Hall, 135 feet, the base of the walls being each about 5 feet thick makes the whole length 145 foot width. The same on the southern end. There is an angle built which added to the principle, makes it 200 feet long running S.E.N.W. On the northern end there was no angle. To strengthen the walls there were built abutments or columns. Around the whole village there was a stone wall about 100 yas wide by 150 long which must have been for defense. The ruins or rubbish shows it to have been a considerable place. It is situated in a valley of the mountains near a deep canyon from which there issues sufficient water. The buildings are too much decayed to show much of the architecture. The mountains [mounds?] are quite distinct from the ruins. The stones of the building is as nature formed them, having no polish. All of the old ruins I have visited yet, in the interior hall represent the cross. We had Emory's report along which had a sketch of the ruins, but had we not known it to have been Abo we could have found it out by the sketch. My survey is different to Emory, but he having advantages which I have not, may be right, but his sketch is no representation of the place.<sup>138</sup>

Curiosity satisfied, they returned to camp to amuse themselves as they could. Chatham closed the day's entry with a notation on the beauty of the spot, surrounded on all sides by mountains. The last daily entry describes two days spent gathering the oxen and other livestock scattered in an overnight stampede, and with this the manuscript ends after a few rambling notes regarding the reason for his observations and an apology for any harsh opinions the journal may contain. Without any further notations recording when the wagon train continued on its journey, what trail they took, or other details, Chatham's ultimate fate is unknown. His record of the ruins, while not as polished, holds details not

<sup>137</sup> Chatham, *Private Journal*, 88. Punctuation added and spelling corrected.

<sup>138</sup> Chatham, *Private Journal*, 104-105. Punctuation added and spelling corrected.

contained in the other two forty-niner accounts, and yet at times very closely follows the others.

Chatham's journal entries regarding the ruins at Quarai and Abó are fairly consistent with each other. In both, he takes a fairly critical, almost scientific view and seeks to estimate the dimensions of the structure, as well as outline some of the unique building features still apparent. He notes that the ruins at Quarai still displayed traces of the plaster with which they had been finished, its survival to that time itself being evidence to him that it had been applied with some skill. He also reported that although the ruins were currently being inhabited by impoverished herdsmen, burials were visible inside the walls of the old structure through cracks in the masonry. His final thoughts on Quarai illustrate a sentiment also echoed in Abert's report — for him the missions illustrated that the Spanish had been capable of obvious skill and a certain level of grandeur in their civilization, but judging by their current living conditions, they had not been able to maintain their superiority and had actually degraded to a level below those they had sought to rule. About Abó, he notes the abutments or columns built along the walls to increase their strength, and what he believed to be a perimeter wall around the mission. Although it is difficult to discern from his statement about how, "The mountains are quite distinct from the ruins," it is possible that he is trying to distinguish between the mission ruins and the *mounds* of masonry rubble that delineate the pueblo house blocks. He does not tell us until the end of his analysis at Abó that he had read the report of Lt. Emory's and Lt. Abert's reconnaissance of the territory, and that he did not think Abert's sketch was in the least accurate — an opinion he shared with at least one of his companion forty-niners. Although he does not specify, it is entirely possible the

writer of the next account was one of the three men with him during the exploration of Abó.

H. M. T. Powell was a part of the wagon train that left Greenville, Illinois, on April 3, 1849, bound for the California gold fields. As they progressed they were joined by other wagon trains, and the group determined to take the southern route through New Mexico to avoid the cholera epidemic that was occurring along the more heavily traveled northern trail through Wyoming. Averaging about twenty miles per day, by May 18th they had passed the Lone Elm tree that stood sentinel on the prairie some forty miles outside of Independence Missouri, marking the pioneers' entrance to the western frontier. Sometime after this, possibly in the Texas panhandle or just prior to entering the New Mexico Territory, they seem to have joined with the train on which J. W. Chatham was traveling. It is evident from comparing their journals that both trains were camped at Galisteo around July 20th and continued south four days later.

Powell relates that at Galisteo on the 23rd of July, "I read to many of our party what Abert says about his adventure at Quarra [Quarai] with José Lucero, who told him he knew the richest mine in the country, etc. As we shall pass through there, they are all talking of it, and speculating on the consequences." The anticipation must have been ripe when they reached Quarai on July 27th, because that same day Powell searched out José Lucero in the village, discovering, "he lived in the ruins, as Abert said."<sup>139</sup> Before moving the camp that evening in favor of better grazing, he had the opportunity to speak with Lucero, who told Powell about a treasure of fifteen million dollars which was buried at a place named Gran Quivira, but Powell had heard the story before and was unmoved.

<sup>139</sup> H. M. T. Powell, *The Santa Fé Trail to California, 1849-1852*, ed. Douglas S. Watson (San Francisco: The Book Club of California, 1931), 78, 79.

Despite being skeptical about the treasure of Quivira he was anxious to try his luck at the silver mine in the Manzano mountains that Lucero promised to take them to. It was not until the 31st that Powell, took the time to visit the ruins of Quarai. Being more interested in another meeting with José Lucero he wrote only: "Still very unwell with cold and sore throat but rode back with Dr. Compton to old Pueblo of Quarra to examine the ruin. It was about 7 miles back, . . .For description of Ruins, see Abert's report; for appearance of Ruins, see my sketch."<sup>140</sup> Besides nursing his cold, writing in his journal and sketching, Powell spent the remainder of his time at camp in Quarai much the same as most of the men; on watch, prospecting on occasion in the nearby mountains, and hunting. Finally, on the 12th of August, with the return of the unsuccessful gold prospecting party from Sierra Blanca, the company resumed their journey, heading first east back toward Quarai, then once on the main road, toward the Abó Pass, stopping for the night just south of the ruins of Abó.

Without the distraction of José Lucero's tales of gold and silver mines, Powell had more to say about the ruins of San Gregorio de Abó. On August 12, he recorded:

A little East of North and one Mile from where we camped are the ruins of Abo. Went with Dr. Compton in a shower of rain to see them. When there the rain held up for four or five minutes, which enabled me to take a hasty sketch. Abert's does not give the idea at all. The background of the Mountains in mine shows our old friends, "the Sierra Mina," at the foot of which we have encamped so long. Abert is wrong in some particulars concerning these ruins, as well as those at Quarra [Quarai]. I have observed that the Churches of Pecos, Quarra, and Abo all stand due North and South and at each place the Turtle Doves resort. They are indeed the only places that I have seen Doves since coming into this country. They tell many stories of great quantities of money being hid in or near all these ruins, and some still believe it. We had not sufficient faith to try.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Powell, *The Santa Fé Trail*, 82.

<sup>141</sup> Powell, *The Santa Fé Trail*, 89.

Due to a severe thunder storm and stampede that scattered the trains' livestock, the groups remained camped at Abó for several days in order to look for their missing stock, giving

Powell an opportunity to again visit the site on the 15th of August:

I went with Dr. Compton to the Ruins of Abo again. West of the ruins of the Church there are the remains of along line of buildings parallel with the Church about 300 paces long. Other ruins are to the South and East. These are chiefly of small rooms, all built with the flat red stone described by Abert. They have not been faced by hand but arranged with the natural face of the stone out. The Church, too, like that at Quarra, is not built as well as experienced workmen could put it up, but looks as if built by just such persons as it was. They are erected with great care to be sure but many of the towers and walls lean, some one way, some another, and some bulge out in the middle. This is not the work of time or the effect of decay but evidently the result of want of skill. I would very much like to get some work that would give me some reliable information respecting these places, and the people by whom they were built.<sup>142</sup>

Through his discussion of Abó, it is clear that it is from Powell that the other two writers, Chatham and possibly even Hunter, heard about Abert's report on these two sites. His statement regarding the deficiency of Abert's sketch, indicates if he was not the source of this opinion, that at least he discussed it with the other chroniclers. It is from his second entry on the 15<sup>th</sup> that we learn in what aspects he believed Abert was wrong; he argued that the stones used to construct both the church and the pueblo were not faced or dressed, but were field stones that were carefully laid in place, and in this he is indeed correct. His opinion regarding the skill of the Pueblo builders disagreed with Chatham's, stating that the leaning and bulges in the walls was not part of the structures' degradation due to age, but displayed a lack of skill. His journal entries give evidence that he heavily influenced the other forty-niners in the train, or at least that they were all influenced by someone, as is evidenced by the similarities in their stories. In all, his description of Abó

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<sup>142</sup> Powell, *The Santa Fé Trail*, 90.

is not as detailed as others. Where his journal shines is in detailing another cultural resource no one else had as yet recorded.

Powell's most important contribution to the early perspectives of the Salinas Pueblo Missions is his description of the rock art found near Abó's ruins, and provides the first documentary evidence of them in the historical record. His discussion about the rock art appears in his journal entry from the 15th of August, immediately following that on his second trip to the ruins:

Dr. Compton and self, after rambling about for awhile, returned to near Camp, struck off the road and, entered what, in the parlance of the country, is called a cañon. We proceeded a short distance when Dr. Compton turned to the right to look at rather a singular looking place in the bluff. He got off his mule and went up a piece and then called to me to come. When I got to him I perceived some paintings on the overhanging rocks of what seemed to be an excavation. We scrambled over the rocks and then over a rude wall and found ourselves in front of a large hollow in the rock evidently excavated and all to one little seam in the rock which lay in strata or layers. The upper ledge projected considerably forming a roof or ceiling. On this there were a number of paintings, but time had defaced them so much that we could only make out some isolated arms, legs, heads. The colours were still bright; black, white, green, red, blue, and yellow. The little seam beneath which the excavation was made was about  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch thick and extended in length many rods. We supposed it to be an old Gold mine. We took some of this vein with us and, pushing on followed the cañon and caught the Train which had encamped about 8 Miles from us.<sup>143</sup>

From his description of the site, it is possible to discern which specific rock art site he is writing about — the sandstone hollow that now sits to the north of New Mexico Highway 60, located about one mile south west of the Abó ruins. Sitting as it does in a highway corridor, its appearance is necessarily much changed from this 1849 description, and makes it impossible for others to see the site in the raw, unaltered state in which the forty-

<sup>143</sup> Powell, *The Santa Fé Trail*, 89

niners experienced it. For this reason, Powell's description is very valuable to the historical record of Abó and gives us details now lost.

Powell provides us with a first hand look at a site that has been greatly altered by the road construction it sits adjacent to. Of the features no longer visible is the crude short wall, which has long since eroded away or been torn down. The site is still fronted by large boulders and slabs of sandstone that have fallen from the bluff of which the hollow is a part, but without a sketch or other illustration, there is no way of knowing if they are in the same relative positions as they were then. It is possible that to the untrained eye, the natural erosion at the base of the hollow could look like excavation, but since the construction of the road-bed has since changed the drainage of the area it is impossible to tell if this is the case. Powell also mentions a seam of what must have been differently colored stone than that of the prevailing sandstone in the bluff, which he thought was the reason for the excavation — it also is no longer visible. Being themselves in the grip of gold-fever, Powell and his traveling companions could not understand why anyone would work to excavate anything but gold or silver. Ignorant of the cultural values of the Native Americans who inhabited the region, they did not know the Indians did not place the same high value on gold and silver that they themselves did, and that the natives excavated clay for pottery, stones and minerals to grind into pigments, and a number of other things, but not gold. Powell's discussion about the rock art is the last entry that he made concerning the Salinas area. Later that same day the party continued west and crested the pass to camp on the plain overlooking the Rio Grande valley. Powell's wagon train had not been the only one camped near Abó, other trains were in the vicinity, having joined together during the overland trek, and it is a



member of one of these other trains that leaves us another account of the Salinas pueblos of Quarai and Abó, that of the Missouri pioneer William Hunter.

William Hunter's wagon train entered New Mexico along the trail by using the Cimarron cutoff, and reached the Estancia Basin in late July.<sup>144</sup> Traveling south from Galisteo Hunter's party stopped at Ojo la Estancia on July 30th, now the site of the village of Estancia though one did not exist then, where he says he learned from a group of Mexicans who were also at the spring, that the site was a favorite of Apaches and Navajos and three Mexicans had recently been killed there. They reached Quarai on July 31<sup>st</sup> quite by chance, having missed their desired road somewhere along the way. He writes:

This [road] was [on a] plain and good, being mostly a plain destitute of timber till within 2 or 3 miles of Quarra [Quarai]. Here we found plenty of water and very good grass by driving the stock off the road a short distance.

From the extent of the ruins at this place, still visible, it must at one time have been of considerable size. The walls of a Cathedral or church are still standing, but the roof has fallen in. The walls are some 2 feet in thickness, built of thin flat sandstone not more than 2 inches thick, and laid with mud mortar; they are perfectly smooth on the outside and from 35 to 40 feet high. The ground plan of the building is that of a cross. It has a venerable and time worn aspect.

I asked one of the villagers, whose countenance bespoke more than ordinary intelligence, the probable age of these ruins. He replied that they were about 300 years old, and had been built by or under the direction of the Spaniards shortly after their conquest of the country. From their appearance and the implements that must have been used in their construction, evidently such as only could have been used at that period by civilized people, I judge to be about the date and truth of their origin.

Attached to the church were other ruins, partly demolished, which some of the villagers had metamorphosed into modern habitation on their own rude and uncouth plan. There were several acres of land in cultivation at this place, the crops on which looked well.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>144</sup> See Robrock, *Missouri 49er*, p. 74 and 229 note 4.

<sup>145</sup> Hunter, *Missouri '49er*, 75-76.

The next day Hunter's train moved their camp about three to five miles southwest of Quarai, joining an encampment of three other wagon trains bound for California. Here they resided, resting, hunting, and sometimes gold or silver prospecting. Having read Lt. Abert's account (or hearing it read by Powell) of the stranger who told him of a rich gold and silver mine, members of the wagon trains decided to enquire after the José Lucero of Quarai mentioned in the report. Just as related in Chatham and Powells journals, Hunter relates that Lucero agreed to lead a party of the forty-niners on an expedition to the White Mountains in search of a gold mine in exchange for seven hundred dollars, although he himself did not accompany the group. Hunter was not with the party that took an expedition to a silver mine in the Manzano Mountains around August 6th, while the trains were awaiting the White Mountain prospectors. Hunter, like Powell reports the Manzano silver prospectors returned with what were believed to be ore samples, though they did not have the tools needed to smelt the material. Some of the train considered staying in New Mexico to work these mines if they were found to be sufficiently productive, but by the 11th of August the White Mountain party had returned without success, and the wagon train commenced its journey toward California the following day.

Travelling slowly the train turned west at the southern end of the Manzano Mountains, and encountered the ancient pueblo of Abó on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Hunter records:

To the northwest lie some ruins called "Pueblo de Abo." On visiting them this evening I was particularly struck with the loneliness and desolation which attached to them. Only one feature seemed to remind me that it was a spot where civilization had once smiled. This was a narrow skirt of cotton wood trees, which looked as tho' they had been planted on the banks of a small water course (supplied by a few springs) which lay between me and the ruins as I descended from the hill from the Eastward. Their bright green foliage contrasted strongly with the deep color of the Cedars which grew plentifully near them, and beautifully relieved the

sombre aspect of the time worn and dilapidated buildings but a few paces behind them.

The Cathedral, or Church, is the most entire building now standing, altho it is fast going to decay. The outer wall, built of sandstone from 1 to 4 inches thick and cemented with mud, is about 5 to 6 feet thick, by about 4 feet in height at the highest points which are now left standing. It is impossible to trace its original height, but from the stones and rubbish fallen on each side, it must once have been considerably higher. It encloses an area of about four acres.

The walls of the Church itself, the construction of which would do credit to any of our masons considering the material used, are some 50 feet high by 2½ broad. It is built perfectly square like all the rest I have seen lately, in the form of a cross, from the entrance (S) to the extremity of the cavity for the altar. It is 40 paces long through the arm of the cross 15 paces, and its mean breadth almost 9 paces (the same measurement at the church at Pecos). The top walls are castellated, and the window, two in number, are built in gothic style but have arms near the top resembling a cross.

The entrance has fallen in, as also the roof, gallery, orchestra &c. The ends of some of the rafters, joists, beams &c. still remaining embedded in the masonry have been burnt off, which might possibly have been the fate of these edifices altho the walls show no evidence of fire. There is no woodwork left about the ruins except a platform over a cell some 3 feet square like a huge square column standing N. against the western wall on the outside, and resembling very much those living sepulchers in which incontinent nuns and others have been oftimes incarcerated to meet the most horrible of all deaths. My blood chilled as I contemplated the use of that dismal looking niche.

The ruins resemble those at Pecos, but it is impossible now to form a correct idea of their ground plan, as they have fallen down and scattered their materials in every direction.

Outside the enclosure the ruins would indicate a once populous village. An "Acequia" [irrigation ditch], long since dry, passes through the enclosure S. of the ruins and runs for some distance under a wall, probably supplying or at one time having been supplied from or through a large cistern, the cavity of which is still visible in a small court or yard amongst that portion of the ruins which formed the cells or habitations of its founders or occupants. Pieces of earthen vessels (some neatly painted) lay thickly strewn about the enclosure.<sup>146</sup>

By August 13th Hunter's company had also moved out of the Salinas Basin through Abó Pass on their way to La Joya for the crossing of the Rio Grande. According to calculations Hunter had been keeping, Quarai was the halfway point on their chosen

<sup>146</sup> Hunter, *Missouri '49er*, 93-94.

overland trail. After reaching California, the fate of Hunter becomes a mystery, and the editor of his journal writes, "A terse note in a different hand on one of his hand-drawn map sheets reads: 'Papers taken from chest sold at auction to pay charges. San Francisco, June 16, 1852.' It is possible that Hunter obtained passage to San Francisco after his arrival at San Diego, placed some of his belongings in storage, and then set out for the gold fields. Why he failed to reclaim his property is unknown, as is his ultimate fate."<sup>147</sup> This absence of further information makes us wonder, did he die like so many others, on the trail or in the gold fields, and did the family he left behind know of his fate, even if we don't? Given the fate of so many who attempted the transcontinental crossing, and the cryptic note written on his manuscript, it is miraculous that his account survived to become one of the few early-American first-hand accounts we have today.

William Hunter and his fellow forty-niners represented yet another kind of western chronicler. Not among the first-string of Americans to enter the frontier with the mountain men, fur trappers and traders, and not sent to document, survey and improve, as the Corps of Topographical Engineers had been, Hunter represents the wave of people these first two types of western heroes were anticipating and constantly trying to move out ahead of — the settler. Just as curious as the first explorers and military men, Hunter and his fellow pioneers often proved to be able observers of the new territories they entered. In education Hunter and his fellow forty-niners fell somewhere between the highly trained and educated Topographical Engineers, and the rough-and-ready mountain men, fur trappers and traders that had preceded them. For their part, the pioneers created

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<sup>147</sup> David P. Robrock, introduction to *Missouri '49er: The Journal of William W. Hunter on the Southern Gold Trail*, by William W. Hunter (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1992), xxi.

fairly detailed first-hand accounts and seemed more than adequately educated enough to form reasonable hypotheses about the sites they visited.

Hunter's observations regarding Quarai bear a striking resemblance to those of Lieutenant Abert in some respects, but prove to be more accurate in others. Knowing members of the wagon trains read both Abert's and Gregg's reports about their earlier visits to the site, it is possible Hunter and the other forty-niners simply recorded what they *expected* to find. In regards to the general surroundings, Hunter provides us with more details about the topography around Quarai than did Abert, noting not just the quality of grazing, as Abert had, but also the start of timber within a few miles of the ruins. Hunter also specifically mentioned the cave-in of the roof indicating that remnants of it may still have been in evidence. Hunter seems to mimic Abert in his notations about the thickness of the walls, and the cruciform shape of the mission, but estimated their height slightly less than Abert had recorded. Unlike Abert, the pioneer was able to get reasonable information about the ruin from the nearby inhabitants, information that oddly coincides with Abert's hypothesis that the ruins were of Spanish design but native construction. Hunter's remark regarding flag stone as the building material while not referring to it as dressed stone, like Powell, is more accurate than Abert's assumptions. Another important detail is Hunter's statement about the buildings attached to the church, presumably the old *convento*, being used for habitation by the locals, corroborating the previous accounts. Overall, while Hunter's description of Quarai is very similar to Lieutenant Abert's, it does provide details not available in the latter and in several aspects corroborates the observations of the military surveyor. These traits also appear in his description of the second Salinas pueblo mission Hunter visited, Abó.

Hunter's narrative on San Gregorio mission at Abó while in keeping with his earlier writing, seems somewhat changed. About this site he is both more expansive in his description, and attempts to be more analytical. He also utilized more emotional language and displays more prejudice than in his description of Quarai. He equates the cottonwood trees with civilization and compares them to the native juniper trees which his writing implies are emblematic of the wilds in which he then finds himself. Again he mimicked Abert in describing the windows' appearance as Gothic, and by noting which cardinal direction the entrance faced (although Abert said only that each arm of the cruciform building matched a cardinal direction). Unlike Powell, Hunter displayed a certain respect for the Native American builders by comparing the construction to American masonry workers' abilities, and a disdain for the Spanish religion in his ignorance in believing the small space at the north side of the church was used for incarcerating nuns. His description of the tops of the walls being castellated is probably an erroneous interpretation of the empty beam sockets that run along the top edge of the outside walls, as is his interpretation of the cross-shaped windows, which probably occurred from the wooden window headers rotting or burning away, in turn causing the masonry above each opening to collapse — two details not mentioned in Abert's report. Hunter's comment regarding the collapse of the roof, gallery, and choir loft, indicates that there must have been some evidence remaining to discern that the church did indeed have these features, although it is possible he may have inferred their existence because he expected the structure to have them. The latter possibility is weakened somewhat by his description of the rafters, joists, beams and other remaining woodwork showing signs of a fire. The lack of incendiary evidence on the masonry that he mentions, could be

explained by the work of over two hundred years of weather and the elements eliminating the soot from the walls. His account also differs from Abert's in that he, along with Chatham, mention evidence of a perimeter wall around the mission — Abert either interpreting the evidence differently or simply not noting its presence — and in his discussion of what he believed to be an *acequia* that ran from a cistern in the courtyard. The cistern he refers to may be the mysterious kiva in the west court of the *convento*, for there is no evidence of any other water storage features within the convent or mission. In all, his observations of Abó are among the most detailed that are available up to 1849. But he was not alone in stopping at the two sites. New Mexico was still a relatively new possession of the United States, and the topographic surveys and military reconnaissance of the territory were far from complete.

On December 14, 1853, a squadron of dragoons commanded by Major James Henry Carleton and 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Samuel D. Sturgis, consisting of one hundred men, left Albuquerque for “the country around the ruins of Gran Quivira, New Mexico, and for other objects connected with the bands of Apache Indians who often infest that portion of the territory.” His route followed the Río Grande through the village of Valencia and on to Casa Colorada, where he turned east and headed for the *Los Puertos de Abó* (Abó Pass), the road over which he commented was, “by far the finest we had seen in New Mexico, and is not surpassed, in any point of excellence, by the celebrated shell road at New Orleans.”<sup>148</sup> The quality of the road could be evidence of its age and frequency of use, being as it was the main southern route over the Manzano mountain chain for traders

<sup>148</sup> James H. Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion to the Ruins of Abo, Quarra, and Gran Quivira, in New Mexico under the Command of Major James Henry Carleton, U.S.A.,” in *Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution* (Washington, D.C.: Beverly Tucker, Senate Printer, 1855), 296, 299.

from the plains area to the river villages; or this could just be Carleton's preface for its suitability for a rail line. Extremely critical of the people he encountered along the way, the countryside nevertheless impressed him. Crossing over the pass on December 17<sup>th</sup> he observed, “The scene presented by the column winding its circuitous route to the summit, with parts of it lost to view behind some jutting crag, . . . the sun glancing brightly on their appointments — the towering snow-clad peaks on either hand — the back ground the valley of the Rio Grande, with the distant mountains in the northwest marking with a serrated line the far off horizon — was a picture whose beauty will not easily be forgotten.”<sup>149</sup> He noted all the springs and ponds along the route, the geology, possible mineral resources, the general topography, and the advantages of using Abó pass for a railroad. Just as night was setting in, the squadron reached the ruins of Abó, where they camped for the night.

The travel conditions had not been entirely pleasant for Carleton, rain, sleet, or snow storms harassed the column three out of the four days of marching. A storm was blowing as the regulars arrived at Abó giving Carleton a not altogether favorable impression. He reported: “the country was cheerless, wintry, and desolate. The tall ruins, standing there in solitude, had an aspect of sadness and gloom. . . . The cold wind when at its height appeared to roar and howl through the roofless pile like an angry demon. But when at times it died away, a low sigh seemed to breathe along the crumbling battlements; and then it was that the noise of the distant brook rose upon the ear like a wail.”<sup>150</sup>

<sup>149</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 299.

<sup>150</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 301-2.



As Abert had done before him, Carleton made detailed notes regarding the plan, size and architecture of the mission. He had measurements taken of the church, though admitted they fought the wind during the examination, and so only recorded each distance in whole numbers of feet, rather than the additional incremental inches. The overall dimensions he recorded for San Gregorio were 132 feet from inside the door to rear wall; thirty-two feet in width inside the nave; forty-one in width in the transept, or cross arm of the structure; the transept was sixty-six feet from the doorway; and the height was fifty feet “in over half the [remaining] structure.” Besides noting the cruciform plan of the church, and its alignment to the “magnetic meridian,” he brought to light a previously unmentioned detail, namely that “the upper edge of these walls is cut into battlements.” He disagreed with Abert’s assessment that the stones were dressed, contending that “each piece is of the form it had when it was broken from its native bed.” Carleton also disagreed with Abert regarding the arched form of the windows, which Carleton explained as the fall of the masonry from above the wood beams used to support the apertures when the beams rotted. He then mentioned another detail not addressed by the previous military examiners (although mentioned by the forty-niner William Hunter), “The wood-work of the church was evidently destroyed by being burnt. Wherever in the walls portions of beams still remain they are found charred and blackened by fire.” The last important feature about Abó that Carleton mentioned in his report, was the “distinct mark of an axe in one of the pieces of timber, which is imbedded in the east wall of the church some six feet from the ground,” as well as on “some beams that supported a landing at the head of the stairway which is made in the west wall.”<sup>151</sup>

<sup>151</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 300-301.

Carleton looked toward the land around Abó with a critical eye, searching for signs of agriculture, exploitable resources, and the possibility of irrigation. He did not feel that there was any “good arable land,” and certainly not enough water to support irrigation. “The adjacent country is rolling and broken, and covered with piñon and cedar,” he wrote. Nothing is mentioned about the fauna in the immediate area. He concluded the site must have supported a village of many people, judging by the numbers of ruined buildings and the size and stature of the church. The mission itself, he thought, must “have been designed by Christians,” and *perhaps* the workmen had been Indians.<sup>152</sup>

Carleton's information of Abó ends with the thought,

In the mystery that envelopes everything connected with these ruins — as to when, and why, and by whom, they were erected; and how, and when and why, abandoned — there is much food for very interesting speculation. Until that mystery is penetrated so that all these questions can be answered without leaving a doubt, Abó belongs to the region of romance and fancy; and it will be for the poet and the painter to restore to its original beauty this venerable temple.<sup>153</sup>

On the following day, Carleton marched his squadron on to the ruins of Quarai. He was immediately struck by their similarity to Abó, and commenced to measure and record details concerning its structures:

These appear to be similar to those of Abó, whether regarded with a view to their evident antiquity, the skill exhibited in their construction, their preservation at the present time, or the material of which they are built. They too are situated upon a small stream of water that soon disappears in the earth.

The church at Quarrá is not so long by thirty feet as that at Abó. We found one room here, probably one of the cloisters attached to the church, which was in a good state of preservation. The beams that supported the roof were blackened by age. They were square and smooth, and supported under each end by shorter pieces of wood carved into regularly curved lines and scrolls, . . . . The earth upon the roof was

<sup>152</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 301.

<sup>153</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 302.

sustained by small straight poles, well finished and laid in herring bone fashion upon these beams.

We had heard that in a stone panel inserted in the front end of the church at Quarrá we should find emblazoned the *fleur-de-lis*, the ancient armorial bearing of France; and many therefore supposed that possibly this church had been erected by French Catholics who had come as missionaries across the country from the direction of New Orleans. But we saw no panel, no fleur-de-lis, and no stone of any kind, that bore marks of a chisel or of a hammer.<sup>154</sup>

From his report it would appear that Carleton had been told a French crest appeared at Quarai, just as Gregg alluded one appeared at Gran Quivira. More straight-forward than the Josiah Gregg's comment regarding the existence of a coat of arms at Gran Quivira, Carleton's refutation that any crest appears at Quarai strengthens the notion that Gregg was either making a general statement as to the existence of such ornaments in colonial architecture, or that Gregg, as Carleton guessed, never visited any of these sites. Yet another explanation could be that a misinterpretation of Gregg's discussion regarding the issue may have been picked up by readers of his work who passed on this erroneous detail, or that informants with preconceived notions regarding what features might be found repeated what was rumored to be at the site.

His inspection of Quarai ended, he moved on to the village of Manzano to procure feed corn for the troops' stock. He found the community completely wanting, thinking its "dilapidated church . . . a practical antithesis to the morals of the inhabitants; for Manzana enjoys pre-eminently the wide-spread notoriety of being the resort of more murderers, robbers, common thieves, scoundrels and vile abandoned women than can be found in any other town of the same size in New Mexico, which is saying a good deal about Manzana. Fortunately it contains but few inhabitants, not more than five or six

<sup>154</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 302.

hundred at most.”<sup>155</sup> Finding that the corn which had been ordered from the vicar general of New Mexico was stored in Torreon rather than Manzano and not wanting to travel eight miles farther north to pick it up, he was forced to purchase on credit his needed supplies before moving on to Gran Quivira, for which he set off on December 19, 1853.

This portion of Carleton’s journey seems to have been the most trying. Catching site of the mission on its prominence at the end of Chupadera mesa over thirteen miles away on the second day out, he was frustrated not to have attained his destination by the third day: “still another day has passed away, and the ruins are not yet reached. Quivira would seem always to have been a difficult place to arrive at.” On December 21<sup>st</sup> he wrote, “Soon after we left camp we again saw the cathedral of Gran Quivira; but in surmounting one eminence after another as we moved along over a rolling country, the ruins, phantom like, seemed to recede before us the same as yesterday.”<sup>156</sup> Late that morning, they finally reached the elusive ruin.

His description of Gran Quivira was much like those of Abó and Quarai. He noted the cruciform plan, the measurements and the blue limestone rather than red sandstone masonry, before taking samples of the architecture for the first time on his journey. He was the first to note the existence of a second church on the mesa, which he called a chapel.<sup>157</sup> Inside the larger church, he reported:

A gallery extended along the body of the cathedral for the first twenty-four feet. Some of the beams which sustained it, and the remains of two of the pillars that stood along under the end of it which was nearest to the altar are still here; the beams in a tolerably good state of preservation — . . . and are very elaborately carved. . . .and exhibits not only great skill in the use of various kinds of tools, but exquisite taste on

<sup>155</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 303.

<sup>156</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 306.

<sup>157</sup> San Isidro, the first small mission constructed at the Pueblo de Las Humanas.

the part of the workmen in the construction of the figures. . . [and] would be an ornament to any edifice even at the present day.<sup>158</sup>

He cut one of these main beams into three pieces, to make it more easily transported and also collected pottery sherds and two metates, which, he felt, “prove to us that the ancient inhabitants of Gran Quivira knew the use of corn as an article of food.” Besides the architecture, once again Carleton looked to the area around the ruins for signs of agriculture, but felt “There [was] no sign that the ground in the vicinity ha[d] ever been cultivated,” despite his deduction that the metates indicated corn had been a food item. The circular walled depressions located in various locations in the village, Carleton felt might be the remains of cisterns, although he noted that, “some have concluded that they were *estufas*.”<sup>159</sup> Overall Carleton could not work out how the inhabitants had obtained enough water to sustain life much less grow crops of any sort, unless the ancient water



NPS Photograph by Derek Toms

**Figure 5: San Buenaventura church with Pueblo de las Humanas in the foreground**

<sup>158</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 307.

<sup>159</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 306-308.

sources had since run dry. Carleton was also "surprised at not finding, in the cathedral and chapel, some of the doorways and windows surmounted by an arch. Had they been so, originally, these buildings would be in a better state of preservation. The beams across windows and doors, in giving way to the weight above as they became decayed, made a fair beginning towards letting down the whole superstructure."<sup>160</sup> In what could be evidence of the old Plains-Pueblo trade route to the village, or simply be paths worn by the Apaches who held sway in the area at that time, Carleton notes a "well defined road, which kept the ridge for a few hundred yards, then turned off toward the southeast, where all further vestiges of it are lost in the sand."<sup>161</sup> Thus he concluded his description of the site. But Carleton's report did not contain only his observations; in it he also quoted from early Spanish Colonial sources, Josiah Gregg, and personal communications from New Mexicans regarding Gran Quivira as well, combining this information in to a rough ethnographic sketch of the inhabitants.

Part of Carleton's report is aimed at testing the statements made by the earlier chroniclers, and comparing his observations with theirs. Like Gregg (and Peyton) before him, he did not notice the terraced areas, which had once been the corn and bean fields, to the north of the pueblo. He also disagreed with Gregg about the existence of aqueducts or any form of irrigation at the site — the system of furrows and ponding-areas among the terraces surrounding the knoll escaping his attention — noting that aqueducts from the spring at the Gallinas mountains was not practicable since, "the point occupied by the town appears to be considerably higher than the surrounding country."<sup>162</sup> Looking for the Spanish coat of arms, as indicated by Gregg, he wrote, "There is no indication that the

<sup>160</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 309.

<sup>161</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 308.

<sup>162</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 309.

escutcheon of Spain was ever sculpted or painted on any façade about the ruins; and the facts, as regards the style of architecture,” led him to believe, “Mr. Gregg must have described the appearance of this place from what he heard about it,”<sup>163</sup> rather than having visited it himself. Having read the report of Pedro de Castañeda, the chronicler of the Coronado expedition, he too confused the *Quivira* in this Spanish colonial source for the Gran Quivira he was then visiting, and concluded then that since the village did not match the descriptions of the thatched huts in Castañeda’s sixteenth-century report, the church had been built much later, in the same era that the missions of Texas and California were constructed. Little did he know, the structures he was visiting were a century older. His conclusions regarding the age of the Salinas missions being contemporary with the Texas and California missions is somewhat puzzling, because like many of the earlier sources, he also believed the missions were abandoned due to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680.

Carleton's retelling of the Pueblo Revolt in relation to the Salinas pueblos blends the Spanish Colonial sources known to the nineteenth-century scholars, local oral tradition that could constitute myth, and the American preoccupation with precious metals. While he clearly had part of the narrative from Coronado's foray into New Mexico, it is clear he mistook the age of the Texas and California missions, believing they were built before 1680. He couples his confidence in the mining possibilities in the nearby mountains with lore from both the Native American and Hispanic residents of the area:

It is more than probable that valuable mines of the precious metals were found in their vicinity [Abó, Quarai, and Gran Quivira], and worked under the direction of the Spaniards by the Indians who had been

<sup>163</sup> Carleton, “Diary of an Excursion,” 310.



subjugated; for there is every reason to believe that the mountains east of the Rio Grande are at this day rich in gold and silver.

We have been informed that there is now a tradition amongst the Indians, that as soon as their forefathers had become successful in expelling the Spaniards, they filled up and concealed all traces of the mines where they had toiled and suffered for so many years; declaring the penalty to be torture and death to any one who should again make known their locality.

Old Mr. Chavis, who overtook us soon after our arrival at Gran Quivira, informed Major Carleton that he had been told, when in his youth, by very old people, that a tribe of Indians once lived here called the Pueblos of Quivira; that the Spanish priests came and lived amongst them, in peace and security, for twenty years; that during this period these large churches were erected; and that at the time of the great massacre there were seventy priests and monks residing here — all of whom were butchered excepting two, who contrived to make their escape; that, previous to their massacre, the priests had had intimation of the approaching danger, and had not only buried the immense treasures which had been collected, but had concealed likewise the bells of the churches; that many years afterwards the people of Quivira died off until but few remained; that one of these, a descendant of the chief, knew where the treasures were buried; that the remnant of the tribe afterwards emigrated and joined other Pueblos below El Paso; and that many years ago an old man, one of the last of the tribe, had told in what direction from the church these great treasures had been concealed. So far as the building of the churches and the massacre of the monks and priests are concerned in this account, as well as the final decrease and removal of the people who once lived here, there is no doubt but the story told by Mr. Chavis is, in the main, correct. The Account of the depositories of the bells and the treasure is said to have been written down as given from the lips of the last cacique of Quivira, who, at the time he made the disclosure, was living away below Mesilla, on the Mexican side of the river. A copy of this paper has been secured, and is here inserted in the original language, for the benefit of those who may take an interest in such matters.

"In the cemetery of the great parish church, in the centre of the right side, according to figure number one, there is a pit, and by digging will be found two bells. By taking the line of the opening left by the two bells, there will be seen to the east, along the lane left by the old church and the town, a hill, at the distance of three hundred yards, more or less, which forms precisely a line with the bells. At the foot of said hill is a cellar of ten yards or more, covered with stones, which contains the great treasure. 'Mentioned by Charles Fifth of Gran Quivira.'"<sup>164</sup>

<sup>164</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 312-313. Translation of the statement in Spanish by Charles Fifth of Gran Quivira, from footnote on page 313. Interestingly enough, the portion of the page on which these directions to the fabled treasure of Gran Quivira is found in the park's original 1855 Smithsonian publication has been cut out of the book. A handwritten marginal memo by the custodian, Doc Smith,



Earlier in the expedition Mr. Chavis had approached Carleton's column of one hundred men carrying a twelve-pound mountain howitzer encamped in Valencia, near modern day Los Lunas, and requested to accompany the column on its way to Gran Quivira, bound as he was for Seven Rivers. This Chavis was granted, but was told the troop could escort him no farther, and that if he wished, he could accompany a different company who was going to the vicinity of Seven Rivers by way of Doña Ana — an offer Chavis refused, Carleton thought because, "The truth doubtless is, the old gentleman fancies that the purpose for which this squadron is going into that country is to search for a great amount of treasures which are said to be buried beneath the ruins there, and he hopes he may be able to obtain a share of them."<sup>165</sup> Having had several days during travel and camp to converse with Mr. Chavis, it seems that despite Carleton's belief in the possibility of gold and silver mines in the area, he discounted the tradition of vast wealth buried in the missions. He also notes significant vandalism by treasure hunters "in every room" of the ruins and surrounding countryside. Carleton is not the first to relay treasure legends associated with the missions, however, his detailed commentary, which blends traditions from multiple cultures into one narrative, is the first to imply mines were concealed near Salinas by the natives after the revolt. This account of the rise and fall of the Spanish missions in Salinas is significant as later authors draw on and perpetuate the legends appearing for the first time in Carleton's report. He concluded that people believed the

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notes that he was not responsible for the defacement of the book. Treasure seekers have sought permission to search for treasure at the park as late as the 1991.

<sup>165</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 297.

legends regarding Gran Quivira, "even when to a reasonable mind those traditions and accounts ran counter to probability."<sup>166</sup>

Carleton's relation of his visit to all three of the Salinas Pueblo Missions is noteworthy for several reasons. First, it represents a turning point in who the audience of his observations would be. The first accounts of the sites had been from mountain men, traders, and forty-niners who were recounting their experiences in the west overall, with the Salinas missions being but one aspect. Their stories were recorded as diaries and were intended for themselves and their families, or in Gregg's case, for the curious American public with some aim toward the scientific community. Next came the military explorations, which had an entirely different design. Although the military reconnaissance included a significant scientific aspect and the data collected was collected with the specific intention that it be would be disseminated to the appropriate scientific authorities, the reports were always intended for the War Department. Carleton's report however, does not appear in the *Annual Report to the Secretary of War*, but in the *Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution*, the country's national museum and the home of some of the nation's top scientific minds. Even if the aim of the trek was a hunt for Apaches (one doesn't normally take a hundred men and a howitzer to see the sites), it is specifically a report about the antiquities found in the Salinas basin rather than a broader western experience.<sup>167</sup> As such it is in considerably greater detail than the

<sup>166</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 313-314.

<sup>167</sup> Even though the report's content was taken up almost entirely on descriptions and discussion about the Salinas ruins, this was not the only, or perhaps even the primary reason for Carleton's foray east of the mountains. Earlier survey and exploration parties had ventured into the basin with only a fraction of the number of men Carleton took with him, and none reported having heavy ordinance in tow. Additional evidence that the column was seeking to engage the Apache raiders that had so long been harassing the territory, and whose haven the Sacramento mountains and vicinity was purported to be, is clear from brief statements made in both the opening and closing entries about having "some business" with the then hostile bands.

previous accounts, with most of its twenty pages being devoted to the Salinas Pueblo Missions. Carleton's monograph, like the other military reports before it, was written in journal format, but by appearing in a Smithsonian publication, his audience was clearly the archaeologists, ethnologists, historians, and antiquarians of the day rather than other military men or the War Department. Its second point of significance is that in the model of the Topographical Engineers like Abert, Carleton was clearly familiar with early Spanish Colonial sources, as well as the work of Gregg, and others, but he goes farther than Abert in this respect by including in his report a relation of multiple cultural legends. We can see from his ethnographic discussion about the tribe the early conquistador Castañeda likened the *Quivira* natives to, that scholars had not yet distinguished between Coronado's *Quivira* on the Kansas plains, and the Gran Quivira of the Salinas Basin. The influence of the Smithsonian report is evident in how certain portions of the report were repeated by later authors and lecturers, and is due in part to its wide distribution in publication and the authority which the national museum commanded coupled with the reputation for impartiality afforded the military explorers. For his part Carleton closed his discussion with the thought, "With all those pleasant reveries and romantic fancies which these ruins away here on a desert are so wonderfully calculated to awaken we can have nothing to do. We came here to note realities; and now the facts we have seen, the theories we have read which were of value, the traditions we have heard deserving of attention, and the conclusions to which we have come concerning this interesting place, are all written down."<sup>168</sup> Having made his inspections of the Salinas Basin, he returned with his artifacts to Albuquerque, encountering none of the detested Apaches he had been seeking. Carleton's reconnaissance of the Salinas basin was not the final military foray

<sup>168</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 314-315.

into the area, although, due to the outbreak of the Civil War it would be more than twenty years before another military reconnaissance studied the basin mission ruins.

Due to the shift in military priorities just prior to and during the Civil War, future surveys of the newly acquired western territory were increasingly preformed by civilian government or contract surveyors. With the end of the Mexican-American War, the new territories, including New Mexico, changed from strictly military frontiers, to frontiers for miners and settlers as well. Along with this change in frontier emphasis came a change in the emphasis in the projects of the Corps of Topographical Engineers and to a lesser extent the Army Corps of Engineers. First seen as projects that were a military necessity to aid in the binding of the newly acquired territory to the Union, in the words of one historian, "The relationship between the projects for military use and those for civilian use was such as to make them very often identical. The policy of frontier defense went hand in hand with the aggressive, positive advance of commercial settlement."<sup>169</sup> The projects of the Topographic Engineers had always contained a component of the public works about them, but with the mounting discoveries of precious metals in the west, and the ever-increasing subsidizing of settlement by the federal government through road building, and similar projects, "there were fortunes to be made from government contracts" if civilian contractors could get control of the appropriations for these public works.<sup>170</sup> Coupled with the monetary incentives were the competing regional and even local demands, as settlers petitioned for roads and other improvements in their neighborhoods, in excess of what the meager appropriations could cover. Often projects were delayed until decisions could be made about which route would be chosen

<sup>169</sup> William H. Goetzmann, *Army Exploration in the American West, 1803+1863* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 211.

<sup>170</sup> Goetzmann, *Army Exploration*, 347.

as, "A system of commercial rivalries had thus developed which made every reconnaissance in the West a skirmish in the battle. No longer was the safety of the emigrants the primary aim; instead the possibilities for future economic promotion stood uppermost in the minds of the representative statesmen."<sup>171</sup> In hopes of separating the construction of the projects from the federal government, and specifically the Corps of Topographical Engineers, territorial and state representatives pushed to have the Department of the Interior take over the building of public works with the issuing of civilian contracts. With the commencement of the transcontinental railroad surveys in 1853, these commercial sectional and local rivalries only intensified. The passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 further increased the need for surveying to facilitate the exchange of public land, and the construction of infrastructural improvements. Eventually there were more projects than the complement of thirty-six Topographical Engineers could handle. To meet the fast growing needs of the American settlers, the Office of Surveyor General, established in 1796, began appointing Surveyors General in the new territories as the need arose. In 1854 an Office of Surveyor General of New Mexico was created to direct the work of untangling the complex issue of Spanish and Mexican land grants in the territory. The deputy surveyors from this office also performed much needed surveys in areas that had thus far been neglected by previous reconnaissance. Before township and range surveys could commence, the New Mexico Base Line had to be established, and it was the Office of Surveyor General who conducted this survey in 1872, finding that the Salinas pueblo and mission of Gran Quivira sat directly on the principal Base Line.

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<sup>171</sup> Goetzmann, *Army Exploration*, 219.

According to the field notes of Deputy Surveyor, Robert B. Willison, his work commenced on the principal Base Line on the 23rd of March, 1872. Since the reconnaissance and survey reports of the military and the Topographical Engineers were published and widely distributed, and the civilian surveyors were continuing work begun by them, Willison had probably seen some of the earlier accounts describing the ruins in the Salinas Basin. His initial remarks in his field notebook discuss the topography and the difficulty in finding water in the area, and indicate he had visited the Chupadero Mesa some years prior, "At the point where I found the greatest amount of water three years ago, I was at the present unable to find a supply, but found an abundance by digging some 300 yards farther down the cañon at a place that was entirely destitute of water at my former visit, showing a marked change in the course of the water."<sup>172</sup> Before reaching the ruins he notes numerous sink holes and vents in adjacent ranges similar to those found around Gran Quivira, illustrating how widely distributed those features are. Then he finally reached the ruins, and his observations are well worth quoting at length:

The Gran Quivira, about which so much has been written and so many attempts made to reconcile with the city of that name spoken of by the early Spanish explorers, and which was said by them to be the seat of immense wealth is passed through by the line in Sec. 34, range 8 East. The most prominent building is the church, which, as well as all the other buildings, is of limestone laid in mortar. The ground plan presents the form of a cross. The dimensions of the buildings are as follows: Width of short arm of cross, 33 feet; width of long arm of cross, 42 feet. Their axis are respectively 48 feet long and 140.5 feet long, and their intersection 35 feet from the head of the cross. The walls have a thickness of 6 feet, and a height of about 30 feet. The main entrance has a height of 11 feet, an outside width of 11 feet, and an inside width of 16.5 feet. The church is situated due east and west, having its front to the east.

<sup>172</sup> Robert B. Willison, "Field Notes of the Survey of the Base Line of the Territory of New Mexico from the corner to Ranges 4 and 5 East to the corner to Ranges 27 and 28 East: Surveyed by Robert B. Willison Dep. Surv. under his contract No. 44 bearing date the 17th day of February 1872," (Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, Santa Fé, microfilm duplication), 142.

Extending south from the church a distance of 160 feet, and connected with it by a door in the short arm of the cross, is a building containing a number of apartments. On the window-frames of this building the mark of the carpenter's scribe is still plainly visible, though doubtless exposed to the action of the atmosphere for nearly two centuries. The carved timbers in the church are still in a good state of preservation; a portion of the roof still remains.

Some of the timbers must have weighed 3,000 pounds at the time they were brought to this place, and they could not have been procured within a less distance than 16 miles.

The site of the ruins is elevated about 100 feet above the surrounding country and embraces an area of about 18 acres. The town has been well and compactly built, and probably contained a population approaching to 5000 souls. Numerous excavations have been made by the Mexicans in search of the treasures said to have been left by the Jesuits when they were expelled by the Indians. In one of these excavations I found a large quantity of human bones, including a skull. From the formation of the latter, and its thickness, it was undoubtedly that of an Indian.

The questions that arise in contemplating these ruins are, how was it possible for such a number of people not only to exist, but to build a town of such superior construction at a point which is now entirely destitute of water, and to which water cannot be brought from any present source, the nearest water being 15 miles distant? What was their occupation? and what has become of them?

That this town was the abode of Jesuit [Franciscan?] priests, and a tribe of Indians under their control, the architecture of the buildings conclusively shows. That they were there for agricultural and pastoral purposes I consider certain, from the fact that there are no evidences of mines, or any mineral indications of any kind in the surrounding country, and that the country, with the single exception of the absence of water, is well adapted to the mode of cultivation pursued and crops raised by the Indians.

That water was brought there from some distant point--and distant it would have been--cannot be the case, as the face of the country would have required the construction of numerous aqueducts for its conveyance, remains of which would be found at the present time: — and why would a people bring water a long distance for the purpose of working lands no more valuable than such as could have been had at the water? Where, then, did the inhabitants get the water necessary for their subsistence? There are two arroyos between the ruins and the Mesa Jumanes, within a mile of the town, having well-defined watercourses, which might have contained permanent water at the time that the town was inhabited. Even at the present time, the drainage from these arroyos furnishes water for a Laguna some five miles below that lasts during about one half the year. Again, springs may have existed around the rise upon which the town is

situated that, from natural causes, have become dry. The phenomenon of the failures of water is no uncommon one in this region, as is evidenced by the numerous vents where the surrounding rocks show the action of running water.

A case directly supporting the assumption of the failure of the water is furnished at a place about 35 miles northerly from the Gran Quivira, known as "La Cienega." At this point a stream of water, furnished by two springs, and running to a distance of about a mile at all seasons of the year, which has never been known to be dry within the memory of the oldest inhabitant, has, within the last year, entirely disappeared; and even digging to a considerable depth in the bed of the late springs fails to find the stream, or the channel by which it has so mysteriously disappeared.

To those at all familiar with the Cretaceous formation of the southeastern portion of New Mexico, and who have seen the numerous rivers that flow hundreds of inches of water within a few yards of where they make their first appearance, and the total disappearance of these streams within a few miles, who have seen the water flowing in caves and subterranean streams, and the fact that the whole country is cavernous, can easily imagine the possibility of a stream acting upon its cretaceous bed, and eventually wearing a channel, to connect with some immense cavern, and disappearing at once from the surface beyond all reach of human power.

To the south of the Gran Quivira, at a distance of about 20 miles, commences the mal pais, an immense bed of lava, 60 miles in length from North to South, and covering an area of 500 square miles. To the southwest of this commences the salt marsh, which has an area of 50 square miles, and which is fed entirely by subterranean streams from the Sacramento and White Mountains, receiving without doubt by the same means the drainage of this plain for a hundred miles to [the] north. The above facts are, I think, sufficient to account for the absence of water at the present time near Gran Quivira.

As to what became of the inhabitants of this place, as well as those of Abo and Quarrá to the north-west,--towns that are coeval with the Gran Quivira,--we can only conjecture. The most reasonable conclusion that can be arrived at is that they were exterminated by the Spaniards upon their reoccupation of the country. Though history is silent as to the complete operations of the Spaniards upon their return to New Mexico, yet it is a fact established by documentary evidence that a relentless war was waged against the Indians, and a number of tribes are spoken of as being engaged in certain battles, of which tribes we know nothing at the present day; and in some instances it is stated that some tribes sued for peace, and promised obedience to the rule of the Conquerors, for which they received grants of lands that they at present occupy. The inhabitants of Gran Quivira, Abo, and Quarra would be among the first that the Spaniards



would meet on their reoccupation of the country, and there is every reason to believe that they were exterminated by the incensed invaders.<sup>173</sup>

This is the first detailed description of the ruins in the nineteen years since Carleton's visit to the eastern side of the mountains. The primary contribution of Willison's examination is that it is the first to seriously and extensively consider the geology of the area in relation to the question of water sources for the village. In fact, besides the overall surveyor's description of the ruin, it almost seems to be the primary focus of his deliberation on the site.

His knowledge of the watercourses and geology of the territory is evident in the discussion. In true scientific fashion he considers the possibilities, tests them against similar models, and weighs the evidence. First he considers all possible sources of water: aqueducts, which he sees no evidence of; two nearby arroyos which he defines as being "well defined watercourses" that could since have run dry; and springs, evidence for which he ties to the previously mentioned vents in the area, that could also have run dry. In weighing the evidence, he contemplates a concrete example from the nearby area of La Cienega where a spring disappeared; as well as the subterranean water flows from southeast New Mexico, whose geology is similar to the Salinas area; and the subterranean water flows that feed the nearby salt marsh. He concludes, that the area at one time had water, and that by some natural phenomena it had since altered course or gone away. But this is not all that is important about his field notes.

Willison also mentions architectural features then still in evidence in the church and convent. He remarks that the carved beams of the church's roof were still in a good

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<sup>173</sup> Willison, "Field Notes," 146-157. Bracketed addition of the work "Franciscans?" from a marginal note made by Willison.

state of preservation, almost twenty years after Carleton too admired them. Significantly he also mentions that part of the roof was still in evidence, which may be the choir loft, or gallery that Carleton referred to. Also of interest are the window frames that he said remained in the convent attached to San Buenaventura, which he gives us some dimensions of for the first time. In the final portion of his description of the ruin, he notes the treasure pits dug throughout the site, one of which can probably be traced to the *campo santo* or small cemetery attached to the smaller church of San Isidro, by the skeletal remains visible in it. While some of the information in Willison's report discusses details mentioned by others, if considered carefully, he provided new details about these old subjects — clearly, the wooden structural elements have not yet been destroyed by the elements, vandals, or architectural theft as yet, but the treasure seekers continued to disturb the site. Despite the repetitive nature of this evidence, it allows us to track, to some degree, the degradation of the ruins, both by what he mentions, and by what he doesn't. One such telling omission is that of San Isidro, the second smaller church in the village. It can be argued that Willison's study of the site is at least as thorough as Carleton's, but that he either had not read Carleton's report which clearly indicated a second church, or San Isidro was not as easily distinguished as a house of worship.

Willison's theory as to the fate of the former inhabitants of Gran Quivira displays the prejudice common to Americans against the previous colonial power of the region. Having contemplated at length the water issues of the village, rather than concluding the disappearance of the village's water source was the cause of its decline, he theorized that the most reasonable explanation was that the Spanish had killed the Indians of Las

Humanas/Gran Quivira in retaliation for the Pueblo Revolt. With evidence for other possible causes immediately at hand, such as the continuing raids by nomadic tribes in the area even in his day, Willison still placed the blame for the "extermination" of the native inhabitants on the Spanish, without considering hostilities with other Native Americans. The fact that he asserts the inhabitants were most likely "exterminated," rather than the possibility that they had abandoned the area, further illustrates his bias. This dim view of the Spanish Colonial era was continued by others who followed Willison in writing about the conjectured history of the site.

Deputy Surveyor Willison represented a new contingent of western surveyors, but military engineers continued to provide significant service to the country, and especially the West. The Civil War witnessed the end of the period in which the Corps of Topographical Engineers was an independent military unit. Between the contentions created throughout the New Mexico Boundary survey of 1850-1854; the early Corps of Topographical Engineer transcontinental railroad surveys of 1853-1855; and the growing commercial sectional rivalries for public works improvements, the Corps began to suffer from its precarious position as a military agency whose projects were an indirect way of subsidizing frontier settlement. The Corps of Topographical Engineers supported Secretary of War Jefferson Davis in his stubborn adherence to the 32nd parallel transcontinental railroad route over the equally practicable 35th parallel route through Albuquerque — a route which might have appeased both Northern and Southern factions. When Davis's insistence of the 32nd parallel over the 35th killed the possibility of a transcontinental railroad before the start of the Civil War, the Corps reputation for impartiality suffered a blow from which it could not recover. As early as 1854, just after

the conclusion of the boundary surveys, in the midst of this growing distrust of the Corps of Topographical Engineers, Secretary of War Davis had toyed with the notion of "reorganizing the Army to make it more effective in its defense of the frontier."<sup>174</sup> In New Mexico, as it was throughout the country, the Civil War's onset caused a shift in military operations as activities became concentrated on higher-priority missions in the fight to preserve the Union that had so recently achieved its goal of stretching across the continent. As the fighting extended into even the remote territory of New Mexico, many of the officers of the Corps of Topographical Engineers resigned their duties to join the regular army. Eventually the long contemplated reorganization was put into place and "On March 3, 1863, the Corps of Topographical Engineers was legislated into oblivion" by being folded once more into the Army Corps of Engineers.<sup>175</sup> While the Civil War, reconstruction, and the Indian Wars caused a temporary re-prioritization in military operations and a decrease in the number of government surveys with significant scientific contingents, the dissolution of the Corps of Topographic Engineers did not end military surveying and scientific study in the West. The pattern developed during their period of greatest achievement, 1838 to 1859, of a military engineer complemented by the services of civilian scientific staff, was continued in New Mexico with the 1877 geographical survey of Sixth Cavalry officer Lt. Charles C. Morrison.

Lieutenant Charles C. Morrison left Fort Lyon in Colorado on May 25th and proceeded into New Mexico to commence the topographic surveying of "the most rugged and thinly-settled portions of the western mountain region," during the 1877 field

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<sup>174</sup> Goetzmann, *Army Exploration*, 342.

<sup>175</sup> Goetzmann, *Army Exploration*, 432.

season.<sup>176</sup> In view of the continued reality in the West, the War Department felt, "a rapid completion of the work, more especially commends itself in view of the Indian campaigns of the past few years, rendered necessary against the hostiles, in which the want of accurate and detailed topographical maps of the Western mountain regions has been felt." His commanding officer, Lieutenant George M. Wheeler, was in charge of and had developed the survey plan which had completed 71,427 square miles in New Mexico, out of the 332,515 square miles completed in total in the western territories since the surveys had resumed during the field seasons of 1869 and 1871-1877. The National Academy of Sciences was consulted regarding the "methods . . . of all surveys of a scientific character under the War and Interior Departments, and the surveys of the Land Office," and as a result, Lt. Morrison and his colleagues used the most up-to-date methods and equipment the developing science then had to offer.<sup>177</sup>

The party of nine men began their work in the Magdalena Mountains, moving from mountain range to mountain range before finally reaching Gran Quivira:

A Monument to the dead past, the churches, both over a hundred feet long (the larger being 130 feet long), built in the form of a cross, stand in silent evidence of the energy of the enthusiastic priesthood of the sixteenth century. . . . Walled-up cisterns, apparently for the public use, were found at the crossings of streets. In the vicinity of the larger church, the buildings were better built, the rooms being much larger. The cathedral faced the east. The walls are of a limestone shale, the exterior edges chipped square, the interior being rubble. They vary from 2 feet in thickness for the interior walls to from 4 to 6 feet for exterior ones. The interior had formerly been plastered, the woodwork painted. Over the entrance had been a gallery. Some of the beams, with their Moorish

<sup>176</sup> Lieutenant George M. Wheeler, "Appendix NN, Annual Report upon the Geographical Surveys of the Territories of the United States West of the 100th Meridian, in the States and Territories of California, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming," in the *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1878* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 1211.

<sup>177</sup> "Extract from the Annual Report of the Secretary of War," in Lt. George M. Wheeler, Appendix NN of Annual Report upon the Geographical Surveys of the Territories . . .," *Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1878* (Washington, D.C.: Gov't Printing Ofc, 1878), p. III-VII.

ornamental work, still project from the wall. The floor of this gallery consisted of small split poles laid in juxtaposition diagonally from one girder to the next, which girders were squared beams, 11 by 13 inches, placed about 3 feet apart, the sides exposed to view being finished with the squares and circles marking the type of the best of the ornamental work. On these diagonals was a heavy, rudely woven matting or thatching of straw. On the right of the entrance was a small room. Opening from the left transept was a larger one, out of which opened a door to the exterior, also one into the corridor leading to the rooms of the monastery or rooms devoted to the residence of the priest. Many of the window-frames were intact; one door-frame, showing that the door turned on wooden pivots for hinges, was well preserved. . . . Several square miles of ground about the old town had been under cultivation, as was apparent from the vegetation. The buildings seemed of two dates, those about the eastern church, which was evidently the older, being built with smaller rooms, with the streets parallel to the church, running at an angle to the east and west lines on which the better part of the town was built. The difference in preservation may have been due to having been built less substantially for the lower class, but I think the other theory [that they are older] more probable. Some fifteen-miles to the east were the Indian ruins of the Pueblo Blanco.

. . .

. . . There are no remains of furnaces at the Quivira, and the absence of slag, only one or two pieces of which were found, would indicate that the town was rather the agricultural center, from which the mining population gathered its supplies, than the smelting town itself, as has been surmised by many. Tradition gives this ruin as the hiding-place of fabulous wealth, and numerous parties have dug haphazard over the ground, particularly in the region of the cathedral, looking for the silver and gold fondly believed to have been concealed there when the priests were compelled to abandon their churches, the soldiery their barracks, and flee to Old Mexico, or New Spain, as it was then called. . . . It is of much more interest archæologically than it ever probably will be in gold or silver. The great change in its water features may be the result of the gradual rising of this section, once an interior ocean, and the filling in of this basin by denudation of the surrounding mesas.<sup>178</sup>

The great care and accuracy used in the examination of the ruins performed by the 1877 military expedition is evident in Morrison's notes, which included a plate of four sketches

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<sup>178</sup> Charles C. Morrison, "Appendix F, Executive and Descriptive Report of Lieutenant Charles C. Morrison, Sixth Cavalry, on the Operations of the Party No. 2, Colorado Section. Field Season of 1877," in Lieutenant George M. Wheeler, *Annual Report upon the Geographical Surveys of the Territories of the United States West of the 100th Meridian, in the States and Territories of California, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Arizona, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming, Appendix NN of the Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers for 1878.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 136.

depicting Gran Quivira. Once again, an account contains information never before imparted by its predecessors.

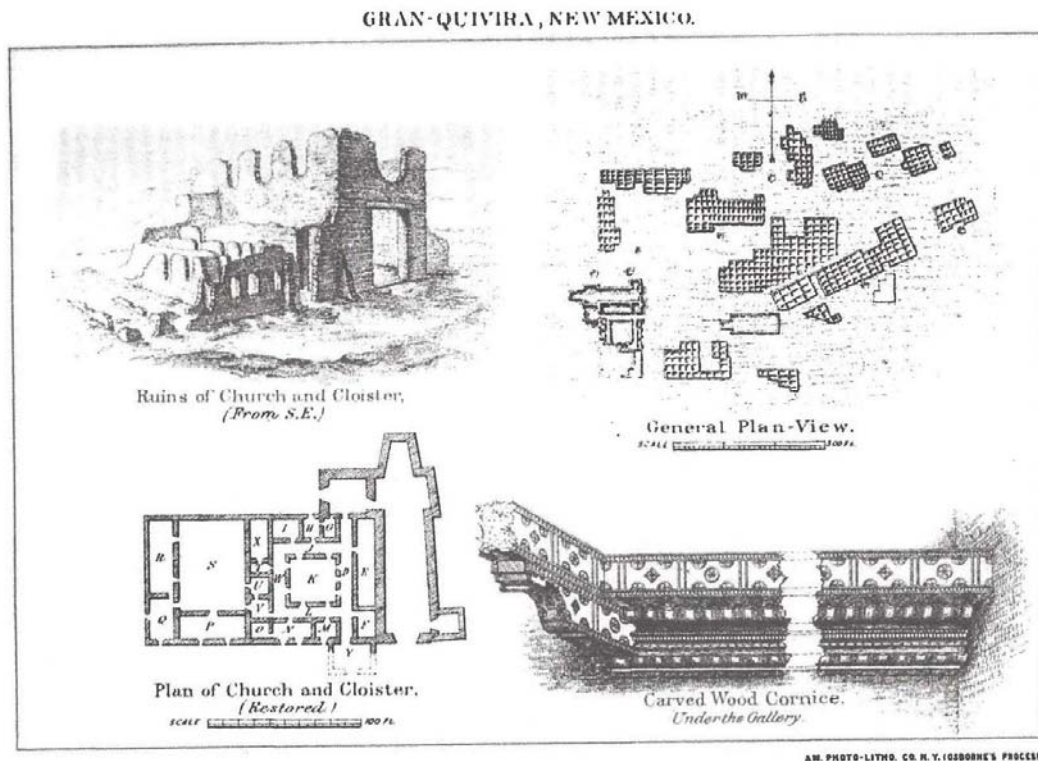
Morrison's contribution to the documentary history of the site pertains to the architectural details he noted of the interior of the main church, San Buenaventura. The first and most important of these never-before-mentioned items, is the plaster on the interior walls and the painted woodwork. His discussion of these two things implies the existence of some traces of paint and plaster in the interior of the church. If so, it is probable that the theories regarding the fact that San Buenaventura was never completed are most likely incorrect. Plastering and decorative painting would have been work done during the very final stages of construction, just before use of the structure for services and dwelling. It is important to point out that Morrison does not say "*would* have been plastered and painted," which might indicate that he *expected* those details to be present, rather than that they were indeed in evidence. Instead, he clearly and succinctly says that, "the interior had formerly been plastered, the woodwork painted." Some historians have discounted this as evidence since Morrison is the only one to mention these details. It can be argued though, that many of the reports on Salinas Pueblo Missions contain information unique to their authors, and lack of corroboration does not in itself constitute reason to discount those details as the authors visited the ruins while engaged in different pursuits, and often during very different circumstances; some with the express aim to explore the ruins, others incidentally while on other tasks. A second notation that, in part, corroborates earlier reports, but also in part contains new information, is his discussion of the window frames that remained in the convent area of the ruin with the additional detail that one wooden-hinged door frame also remained. In this Morrison's

examination agrees with that of Deputy Surveyor Robert B. Willison from twenty years earlier, but the additional detail of the door frame illustrates Morrison's greater attention to the architectural features of Gran Quivira rather the question of water resources which Deputy Surveyor Willison concentrated on. Where Willison had missed, or simply not noted the second church, San Isidro, Morrison not only notes it, but theorizes its age in comparison to the larger structure.



The final important details Morrison discusses but others do not, regards the environs of the village rather than the architecture of the structures, but also speaks to the care with which the military surveyor examined the area. He notes first that some of the vegetation around the ruins indicate those areas were apparently used for the cultivation of crops — a technique used to this day to suggest areas possibly disturbed due to agricultural pursuits by professionals conducting cultural landscape inventories, and

**Figure 5: Lieutenant Charles C. Morrison's sketches as they appeared in Lt. George Wheeler's Geographical Survey Report**



vegetation surveys, as well as by archaeologists. This detail is something that escaped Major Carleton's notice when he visited the site in 1853. Morrison's examination of the area in its broader view, and the site's varying degrees of preservation also led him to the conclusion that there were two different phases of construction at Las Humanas/Gran Quivira, and significantly that the smaller eastern church and the adjacent area were older, an assumption that we know today is correct. To illustrate these thoughts,

Morrison included a plate of four sketches with his narrative. The first is an illustration of San Buenaventura and its attached convent, accompanied by a floor plan of the same, then a map of the village from an aerial perspective, followed by a detail of the wood cornice underneath the gallery above the entry. This level of detail in perspective and examination lends credibility to his briefly mentioned observation of plaster in the interior and paint on the woodwork, exhibiting a level of detail not attempted by other visitors rather than suppositions made by an observer with preconceived notions. No matter how accurate Morrison's observations seem to be, some aspects of it show how little these military surveyors were familiar with Pueblo culture and history.

Morrison incorrectly interpreted kiva structures for cisterns, a mistake also made by Major Carleton. Also like Carleton, Morrison mistakes the Gran Quivira of the Salinas Basin with the *Quivira* sought on the Kansas plains in the Coronado narratives. He notes that there was no evidence of metal smelting at the site, apparently weighing the theory that if the village was not the location of mining activity, the raw materials were transported there for processing, giving evidence that Gregg's theory, regarding the occupation and reason for the situation of the town, was proving to be quite durable. From the Salinas Basin, Morrison's party moved on to the Sierra Blanca to continue their work. Mapping was not the only aim of the surveys, and to that end, "Incident to the principal object of the survey, and as far as practicable without too greatly increasing the cost, all the information necessary at the present stage of settlement of the country concerning the branches of mineralogy and mining, geology, paleontology, zoology, botany, archaeology, ethnology, and philology is collected by specialists, experts in their

branches of science."<sup>179</sup> One of these specialists was Thomas W. Goad, an English scientist who performed the meteorological observations on Morrison's crew.

According to his article, which appeared in the 1877-1878 *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, T. W. Goad, traveled to the United States four years earlier as a civil engineer and was appointed to Lt. George Wheeler's explorations of the territories west of the 100th meridian. In his rambling narrative, Goad explains, "As I cannot go into a complete history of the survey, I shall confine myself to the exploration in New Mexico during the season of 1877," during which he was attached to Morrison's survey party.<sup>180</sup> Despite Goad's assignment on the party as the meteorologist, his report to the scientists of his country consisted of notes on every conceivable topic from the topography, geology, water resources, ethnography, folklore, and even an anecdote on the criminal element represented by the scourge of the west — desperados — that seems to belong more to the pages of dime-novels than a monograph appearing before the Royal Geographical Society. This 1877 geographic survey is the first instance where there exists more than one account from the same exploration of the ruins at Gran Quivira:

Of the numerous Pueblo and Spanish ruins visited, the Gran Quivira is the largest. It is situated in the plains between the Manzana and Gallinas Mountains. It is supposed that, in the year 1550, Cortez, in crossing the continent, left some of his followers located in this spot. These men, taking advantage of the superstitions of the Montezuma Indians, compelled them to build a city under their supervision. Eventually the Indians rebelled, killing their masters and destroying everything.

Tradition says treasure lies buried in the ruins. The walls of the principal church are still standing, from 40 to 50 feet high; the inside

<sup>179</sup> Extract from the Annual Report of the Chief of Engineers to the Secretary of War," in Lt. George M Wheeler, Appendix NN, p. VII.

<sup>180</sup> T. W. Goad, "On Lieutenant Wheeler's(U. S. Engineers) Explorations in New Mexico," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society of London* 22, no. 4 (1877-1878), 273.

length is 127 feet, with a breadth of 35 feet. On the outside the walls from the top are slightly bevelled, the corners being well tied. At the base, these walls are 5½ feet thick, the masonry might be called rubble, with the sandstone well dressed on the outside and beautifully plumbed. Coarse mortar fills the crevices. There is only one door, facing the city, and no windows seem to have been built for light. Timbers still show where the gallery was, and the ornamentation of the cross-beams is very artistic. Adjoining the church is the monastery, with the priests' cells and refectory. Due east of the church is the town; the main building of which had 800 to 900 rooms.

Dwellings of the Indians were easily recognisable, divided into much smaller compartments. All the walls of these places were unnecessarily thick. A fort of some pretensions to solidity was south of the town.

Now no water is near, although drains and dried-up springs indicate there having been formerly a plentiful supply.

The Indians told us that a river flowed underneath the church, but we were unable to discover it. Innumerable fragments of pottery were found. The population might be estimated at between 3000 to 5000 inhabitants.<sup>181</sup>

Just as in the instance of the 1849 accounts from the overland emigrants describing Abó and Quarai, T. W. Goad's monograph gives us the opportunity to compare viewpoints from contemporary observers.

Mr. Goad's summary of his visit to the mission and Pueblo ruins begins with folklore and legend related to the site. Like Charles C. Morrison, the survey team's executive officer, Goad describes the structure, giving dimensions and describing construction materials. But in contrast to the accuracy of Morrison's report, Goad's is more general, and contains several inaccuracies; in describing the building material as sandstone rather than limestone, and in saying that the stones were "well dressed" instead of field flagstones. He seems to only grudgingly agree with Morrison that the walls contain a rubble core. While presented in a more general discussion and with less detail, Goad also comments upon the beams still present in the larger church, and on the lack of

<sup>181</sup> Goad, *Proceedings*, 277-278.

water present at the site. Although Goad's observations are overall much less detailed than Morrison's, he does make several unique comments about the site.

Goad is the first to comment that the large church, San Buenaventura, did not contain in window apertures in its exterior walls, something Morrison's sketch of the façade does not clearly indicate as its angle is from the south to capture the convent as well. He also mentions that there is only one door (presumably meaning exterior door), where Lt. Morrison indicated another led out of the left transept. In this Goad's observation was correct as the exit from the south arm of the transept leads into another room rather than the exterior. Goad also noted the pueblo directly east of San Buenaventura, the "main building" of eight hundred to nine hundred rooms being what is now referred to as Mound 7. The civil engineer relayed hearsay from unidentified Indian witnesses concerning a tantalizing explanation for how the former inhabitants had survived the arid region — telling the survey team that a river had once flowed beneath the ruins. Without specifying which tribe or pueblo the natives were from in order to try and obtain further oral tradition on the matter, it is difficult to weigh this closing detail. Support for it can be obtained by the occurrence of such phenomena elsewhere in New Mexico (as described by Goad himself regarding the cave near Ft. Stanton), but this is however contradicted by the earliest Spanish Colonial sources that note, like Goad, Morrison, Carleton and others, the lack of any source of water at the site. Goad closed his monograph explaining, "having no data in England of the survey, my Paper has necessarily been superficial. It is my intention to return shortly to the United States,

when I hope once more to visit unknown territories. . ."<sup>182</sup> From this point forward however, Salinas was no longer an "unknown territory," and Morrison's 1877 expedition again signals a change in the history of the Salinas Pueblo Missions.

From before the time of its acquisition in 1848 by the United States, until the final military survey expedition by Lieutenant Charles C. Morrison, the ruins of the Salinas Basin were perceived as a mysterious curiosity, an exotic puzzle yet to be unraveled. The Americans, like the Spanish before them, spent decades exploring their new territory, and in keeping with Romanticism's mindset the new government sought knowledge on everything its new western lands held. Because discovery, characterization, classification, and documentation were the emphasis in this initial phase, the Salinas Pueblos and their Spanish Colonial missions were administered in much the same manner as the remainder of the western resources; once "discovered" by the incoming colonial power, they were poked, prodded, sampled, and fairly well documented.

Each of the observers contributed or signifies something important to the documentary history of the Salinas antiquities. The account of John Rowzée Peyton's visit to Gran Quivira in 1773, although suspect in its veracity and therefore controversial, nonetheless represents initial American entry into Spanish territory. Whether his adventures are true or not, his story signifies the ability of the ruins to capture the American imagination, perhaps more so if Peyton was so fascinated with them that he or his descendents fabricated a tale about having visited the site. Benjamin David Wilson represents the entry of that class of the American populace who stayed out ahead of regular settlement — the mountain men and fur trappers who pushed out beyond the

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<sup>182</sup> Goad, *Proceedings*, 282. All notes, samples, and sketches of the survey crew remained the property of the U. S. Government, specifically the Corps of Engineers or the War Department, and as such were not released to the individual scientists for work outside the United States.

established boundaries of civilization into virtually unknown frontier. Hailed by historians since Frederick Jackson Turner, these trail blazers of the American frontier were the guardians of a usually unwritten collected knowledge that often died with them, making Wilson's account of his 1837 visit to Gran Quivira all the more remarkable for its survival by being recorded. His employer, Josiah Gregg embodies the traders who followed or accompanied the fur trappers and ventured into little known lands, in search of economic opportunities, and who interacted and often competed with other colonial interests in frontier areas, paving the way for settlement by other Americans. While it is debatable whether Gregg actually ever visited the ruins at Gran Quivira, or wrote about them based on hearsay he received from Wilson, his record of the site was extremely influential since it was published nearly three decades earlier than Wilson's own. Considered a detail-oriented, scientifically minded man of the Romantic era, Gregg's book was read by many, if not all of the subsequent visitors to the Salinas Basin, who sought out the ruins having learned about them from Gregg's work.

With the start of military exploration in the West, the perspectives of the Salinas Pueblo Missions enter a new phase in history. Lieutenant James Abert represents several significant aspects in the history of the Salinas Pueblo Missions. His reconnaissance signifies the shift of Salinas, and New Mexico as a whole, from a Spanish settlement area to an American military frontier. The entry of the American military, as represented by the new Western heroes and pathfinders, the U. S. Corps of Topographical Engineers, also signaled the professionalization of exploration in the west. This professionalization provided for the surveying and mapping that facilitated the binding of the new territory to

the union by the construction of infrastructure, which in turn facilitated the defense and rapid American settlement of the region — something the Spanish had been unable to do.

Without the initial work done by Abert and his cohort of Topographical Engineers, the entry of William W. Hunter, H. M. T. Powell, and J. W. Chatham along the southern gold trail would not have been possible. This group of overland emigrants who camped at Quarai and later Abó in 1849, represent the entry of settlers to west, many of whom contemplated remaining in Salinas rather than pushing on with their forty-niner brethren, and signal the initiation of the shift from military to settlement frontier. They also provide a change in perspective from the explorers and military men who preceded them — no less curious, but on a different level, with a micro rather than macro set of goals. Powell was further unique among his fellow travelers in being the only individual in this initial exploration phase to document the Native American rock art in evidence at Abó.

Despite the military nature of the next expedition to the Salinas ruins in 1853, Major James Henry Carleton signals a change in the method of study, and in the audience for the data recovered. Carleton is the first to visit all three of the Salinas Pueblo Missions now a part of the National Monument, is the first to take samples of artifacts and architecture, and is the first to publish his report in a scientific rather than a military publication. The visit nineteen years later of Robert B. Willison, represents the ascendancy of civilian interests on the frontier by 1872, following the changes wrought by the Civil War which included the decline of the Corps of Topographical Engineers. Willison was the first professional civilian explorer of Salinas, and the first to look to the geology of the Basin for an answer to the water source quandary at Gran Quivira. The



final military expedition by Lieutenant Charles C. Morrison to Salinas in 1877 followed the model established by the Corp of Topographical Engineers by containing a military executive officer complemented by civilian scientists, represented by English scientist/civil engineer Thomas W. Goad. Lt. Morrison presages the future of the Salinas missions with his comment that Gran Quivira is of more archaeological resources than its mineral or land resources.

Like the Spanish before them, the Americans viewed the cultures they encountered in New Mexico with a critical eye and considered them inferior to their own. The Americans' prejudice was directed more against the former conquerors, than against the Pueblo peoples and their ancient remnants. While the Americans viewed the Pueblo Indians as industrious, clean, honest, and fairly moral, they saw their Mexican neighbors as the worst aspect of the new land. On his return to Albuquerque, Carleton, who was never known to think highly of Indians or low-born Mexicans, passed again through Manzano. He wrote, "From what we have observed during our second visit to this place, this Botany Bay of New Mexico, we have concluded that our former estimate of the character of the inhabitants was premature and ill-judged; we now believe that there is not one single redeeming trait of disposition or habits to be found within its borders."<sup>183</sup> Even the food of the people confounded the newcomers, as Lt. Emory experienced on his tour through the jurisdiction: "Chilé the Mexicans consider the chef-d'œuvre of the cuisine, and seem really to revel in it; but the first mouthful brought the tears tickling down my cheeks, very much to the amusement of the spectators with their leather-lined

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<sup>183</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 315-6.

throats. It was red pepper, stuffed with minced meat.”<sup>184</sup> So while the ruins gained the respect of the new masters, the former masters were looked upon with the greatest disdain.

Mystery surrounded Abó, Quarai, and Gran Quivira, giving them an elusive and romantic quality that piqued the interest of the newcomers to New Mexico. Their wonder and admiration of the missions, disseminated through their writings only contributed to that mystique. Few questions outside the obvious were answered, and more questions were raised. Major Carleton summed up the American attitude regarding Salinas best, "Our business is not that which will permit us to clothe with imaginary grandeur these vestiges of a people whose name has been erased from the book of nations, nor that which will allow us time to indulge in abstruse speculations as to their race or their language. These things belong to the poet and philosopher."<sup>185</sup> Curiosity satisfied, the Americans would focus on the business of securing their hold on the province, and leave the mysteries to be solved by another generation. One was coming, and sooner than Carleton might have anticipated. The attention garnered by the numerous military and public surveys which described the Salinas Pueblo Missions led to their coming to the attention of that group of individuals who were interested in the archaeological possibilities available at the ancient sites — as first suggested by Lt. Charles C. Morrison. The start of a new phase in the perception of the ruins and a shift in their use, from exotic mystery and developing ground for exploration to a curious puzzle to be used as a laboratory for anthropology, began with the entry of this new group into the history of the

<sup>184</sup> William H. Emory, *Lieutenant Emory Reports: A Reprint of Lieutenant W. H. Emory's Notes of a Military Reconnaissance*, intro. and notes Ross Calvin (1948; reprint, Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1951), 68.

<sup>185</sup> Carleton, "Diary of an Excursion," 314.

Salinas Pueblo Missions. Salinas became the realm of settlers, miners, treasure hunters, and a new type of explorer — archaeologists. Adolf Bandelier, Charles Fletcher Lummis, and Edgar Hewett would begin to answer some of the questions the early explorers had so persistently asked.

### **Chapter 3: The Preservation Movement and the Development of the Antiquities Act**

Curiosity had shaped the use of the Pueblo and Spanish mission ruins in Salinas during most of the nineteenth century, as it had during the initial Spanish period of the mid-sixteenth century. If the early American period provided the intellectual and emotional seeds which were to determine the future use of the ruins, the last two decades of the nineteenth century developed the roots which eventually provided for their ultimate preservation. The first prehistoric and historic sites in America given federal protection were set aside initially as federal reservations because of their substantial prospective archaeological value. The first site to be given such treatment was Casa Grande in Arizona — granted a federal appropriation for protection and repair March 2, 1889. The bill that provided the appropriation for the ruins also stated: "the President is authorized to reserve from settlement and sale the land on which said ruin is situated and so much of the public land adjacent thereto as in his judgment may be necessary for the protection of said ruin and of the ancient city of which it is a part."<sup>186</sup> The bill which included the appropriation was followed by a letter from the Secretary of Interior on June 21, 1892, which recommended the president use the authority granted in the appropriation bill to reserve the land. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 1892, a letter of indorsement was signed by

<sup>186</sup> Cosmos Mindeleff, "The Repair of the Casa Grande Ruin," in *Fifteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology to the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution 1834-'94* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1897), 326.

President Benjamin Harrison, setting aside Casa Grande and 480 acres surrounding it from settlement, public sale or development. By this and other methods federal reservations began to be created to protect areas of significance to the nation, but a more streamlined process by which to achieve the protection of antiquities like the Salinas Pueblo Missions ruins was needed. The curiosity about the west's cultural antiquities and geologic wonders had not subsided, and in fact, the accounts of the early explorers like Peyton, Gregg, Abert, Carleton, and Morrison led to curiosity turning into serious interest by groups who specialized in archaeological investigation. Eventually more and more people began to explore and move westward, and the hunt for pieces of this era began to cause new stirrings in the intellectual circles back east. As interest in these ruins became increasingly focused, the scientific study of the cultures they represented also expanded. By the close of 1879 several events occurred that would strengthen the influence of those scientists and philanthropists who were growing concerned regarding the study, protection and condition of these resources.

The first of these events was the founding of the Anthropological Society of Washington, or ASW, on February 10, 1879, during a meeting of anthropologists, ethnologists and geologists at the Smithsonian Institution. Following this on March 3<sup>rd</sup> the U.S. Bureau of Ethnology was established by an act of Congress<sup>187</sup> and Major John Wesley Powell, who headed the 1869 Grand Canyon expedition, was named its first director.<sup>188</sup> In rapid succession, a short two months later on May 17<sup>th</sup>, Charles Eliot

<sup>187</sup> Clark A. Elliot, "Chronology of Science in the United States," [database on-line] (Bellmont, M.A., last updated 8 December 2005 [cited 27 September 2006]); available from <http://home.earthlink.net/~claelliott/chron1870.htm>.

<sup>188</sup> Ronald F. Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906* (Washington, D.C.: Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, 1970), p. 1.

Norton among others, founded the Archaeological Institute of America or the AIA.<sup>189</sup>

The AIA's stated purpose was to promote projects in Classical studies, but also conceded "the study of the aboriginal life in America [was] essential to complete the history of the human race, as well as to gratify a legitimate curiosity concerning the condition of man on this continent previous to its discovery."<sup>190</sup> During the late summer meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held between 27 August and 2 September, Lewis Henry Morgan was elected as president of that organization, the first Anthropologist to hold the distinction. The last event that would mark 1879 as a turning point for Anthropology and Archaeology in America was the publication of a book edited by Frederic W. Putnam, the Curator of the distinguished Peabody Museum of American Archaeology and Ethnology at Harvard University. This volume with 50 illustrations reported on the pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona and the study of the Indians of Southern California and would prove to be an extremely influential component to the growing interest in the region.<sup>191</sup>

While these events may seem mundane and trivial to us now, their importance to the protection of Antiquities is best explained by discussing their historical context. Today it is fairly common to hear or read about Anthropology, Ethnography and Geology from popular magazine articles, television programs and news reports and the internet is always a ready source of information. For more interested amateurs and specialists in these fields, in-depth articles and professional papers are easily found in the numerous

<sup>189</sup> Charles H. Lange and Carroll L. Riley, *Bandelier: The Life and Adventures of Adolph Bandelier* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1996), p. 30.

<sup>190</sup> Archaeological Institute of America, *Sixth Annual Report* (1885), p. 32; quoted in Ronald F. Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906* (Washington, D.C.: Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, 1970), p. 5.

<sup>191</sup> Frederic W. Putnam, ed., *Archaeology*, Vol. VII of Geographical Surveys West of the 100<sup>th</sup> Meridian (U.S.), *Report upon United States geographical surveys west of the one hundredth meridian, in charge of First Lieut. George M. Wheeler*, 7 vols. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1875-1889).

professional journals, and most universities now offer degrees or at least courses in these disciplines. With this culture of information saturation it is easily taken for granted that in 1879 communication of information was much more difficult. The telegraph was the only rapid method of relaying messages and could still take hours, even days to cross the country and was not available in large tracts of the Western United States. Secondly, the existence of many of the sites now protected and so often studied and written about, had then only recently been discovered. Also, each of these disciplines was fairly new to America, and the foundation of these societies and the inclusion of such fields of study as Archaeology and Anthropology to the American government were sweeping changes at that time — much akin to the study of say, genetics and DNA today. Finally, it is key to remember that the federal government, which was just over one hundred years old at this time, had since its inception, and *still* was engaged in fighting several Native American tribes; General George Armstrong Custer had fallen at the Battle of the Little Bighorn against a combined force of Sioux and Cheyenne only three years before and the final surrender of the Apache tribes would not occur until 1886. As the massacre at Wounded Knee in 1890, and the proliferation of Indian schools would so aptly demonstrate, many within the United States believed in a policy of eradication of Native American culture, not its preservation and study.<sup>192</sup> Another hurdle the Historical, Anthropological, and Archaeological societies had to overcome was the fact that the government was just beginning to move from discussions regarding the Civil War and reconstruction and turn to other matters such as our country's distant past. Considering these issues, the changes

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<sup>192</sup> Gregory F. Michno, *Encyclopedia of Indian Wars, Western Battles and Skirmishes, 1850-1890* (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 2003), p. 351.

that were propitiated by the various Gentlemen's and Ladies' Societies were extraordinary.

Europe had long been interested in the past as presented by the Roman ruins, Iron Age settlements and petroglyph sites, but America was just beginning to turn its attention and considerable resources to such endeavors. It is difficult today to imagine an era when electricity, running water, and mechanical refrigeration were not yet commonalities, the primary means of transportation was still the horse and carriage, and medical treatments were just beginning to include surgical procedures besides amputation. And yet, the people of this age thought of themselves as the height of civilization and learning. The Anthropological, Archaeological and Geological societies being founded in 1879 were the centers for the dissemination of information pertaining to antiquities in the United States. So really, the events of 1879 were the inception of public Anthropology and Archaeology in the United States as we know it today. One of the first major efforts of these societies was the initiation of legislation aimed at the federal protection of the prehistoric and historic sites, or cultural resources as they would become known, that were central to their studies and very existence — those sites, ruins and artifacts that belied the antiquity of our very existence as a people and a nation. For America, the study of Native American culture, in a way, was to become the United States' Classical studies. It became to American intellectual societies what the study of ancient Greece and Rome was to European cultural origins and many of the practices learned and applied to classical studies found application in this new area of study, such as zoology, linguistics, thoughts on the importance of social organization and architecture.

It was architecture that Lewis Henry Morgan, the president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science stressed when he drafted his comprehensive plan for the exploration of the Southwestern United States. So it was the architectural remains that were to be carefully scouted and surveyed to add credence to Morgan's theory that all of the Native American structures could "be explained by the analogies of the existing communal buildings of New Mexico."<sup>193</sup> Once the plan was presented to the Archaeological Institute of America, Frederick W. Putnam, the Curator of the Peabody Museum at Harvard, and historian Francis Parkman convinced Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard history professor and AIA president, to have Morgan's recommended investigator retained to perform the exploration that Morgan had so carefully planned. Thus entered Adolph Francis Alphonse Bandelier into this growing intellectual movement aimed at the study, documentation, and preservation of American antiquities.

Destined to become a powerful influence in the antiquities study and preservation movement, Adolph Bandelier was born in Bern, Switzerland, on August 6, 1840, the only child of Adolphe Eugene Bandelier and Marie Senn Ritter Bandelier.<sup>194</sup> Young Adolph arrived in America on October 6, 1848 after leaving Switzerland with his mother to join his father Adolphe in Highland, Illinois, twenty-five miles east of St. Louis.<sup>195</sup> Educated at home until old enough to attend school,<sup>196</sup> Bandelier studied in the local public facility receiving, for a time, private lessons to augment his education,<sup>197</sup> learning besides his native French and German, English as well. After turning from business interests to science in the 1860s, he came to learn Spanish and Latin later in life to aid in his

<sup>193</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 6.

<sup>194</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 3.

<sup>195</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 10.

<sup>196</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 3.

<sup>197</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 12-13.



ethnographic and anthropological research. Bandelier's career in the field of anthropology did not really begin in earnest until 1873, when he had occasion to meet Lewis Henry Morgan in Rochester, New York.<sup>198</sup> It was this meeting that precipitated the long friendship that eventually led to Bandelier's contract with the Archaeological Institute of America in June of 1880 to explore the Southwest.

Before beginning his contract work Bandelier traveled east to meet first with the architect of the expedition, and then with the head of the society that was financing it. After spending several weeks visiting Norton in Boston and Powell in Washington, D.C., Bandelier traveled home to Highland, Illinois, before leaving for New Mexico, August 20<sup>th</sup> 1880, to commence his expedition.<sup>199</sup> He reached Santa Fé by August 23<sup>rd</sup> and after contacting people who might aid him in his endeavor, continued on to his first object of field study, the abandoned and ruined Pecos pueblo. He began his measurements of the ruin on the 29<sup>th</sup> of August and completed the survey of the complex by September 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>200</sup> In the report he sent to Norton later that month and published in 1881, Bandelier noted a conversation with the wife of a Polish settler living nearby in which she related how her husband had made free use of the roofing material that had remained on the church until he had torn it down to roof outhouses on his own property. Bandelier reported, "In general the vandalism committed in this venerable relic of antiquity defies all description. [. . .] Most of [the beams and their carvings were] taken away, chipped into uncouth

<sup>198</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 23.

<sup>199</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 41-2.

<sup>200</sup> Lange and Riley, *Bandelier*, p. 45-6.

boxes, and sold, to be scattered everywhere. Not content with this treasure hunters [. . .] have recklessly and ruthlessly disturbed the abodes of the dead.”<sup>201</sup>

This and other reports on the vandalism and destruction of many sites throughout New Mexico, Colorado and Arizona stimulated the archaeological societies into action. The end result was a petition read before Congress on the 10<sup>th</sup> of May 1882 requesting the introduction of legislation to protect American antiquities on federal land. Though the petition died and no new legislation came from the action, it brought the issue to the attention of those in government and significant efforts were to follow. Bandelier went on to explore, photograph and draw over forty-five more pueblos, becoming a major force in the effort to increase awareness about the plight of Native American sites and antiquities.<sup>202</sup> He continued reporting to the AIA and in 1890 contributed another volume, to accompany Putnam’s, considered extremely influential in the growing Archaeological field, his *Final Report of the Investigation among the Indians of the Southwestern United States, carried on Mainly in the Years from 1880 to 1885*.

While Adolf Bandelier's later 1890 book is his most famous, it was his initial publication from the year following his first trip to the Southwest, that provided eastern antiquarians with their first strictly *archaeological* survey in the region. His preliminary report, published in the *Papers of the Archaeological Institute of America* in 1881, was divided into two sections, several pages within the first section of which, he devoted to

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<sup>201</sup> Adolph F. Bandelier, “Report on the Ruins of the Pueblo of Pecos,” *Papers of the Archaeological Institute of America: American Series* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Boston: Cupples, Upham and Co., 1883), I; quoted in Ronald F. Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906* (Washington, D.C.: Office of History and Historic Architecture, Eastern Service Center, 1970), p. 8. Besides pottery, basketry, and projectile points, human bones, especially skulls from American Indian burials were highly sought after for research as well as for artifact collections.

<sup>202</sup> Adolph F. Bandelier, “Report by A. F. Bandelier on his Investigations in New Mexico in the Spring and Summer of 1882,” *Bulletin of the Archaeological Institute of America*, Vol. I (1883), p. 17; quoted in Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 14.

research findings regarding Gran Quivira. Section one contained the products of Bandelier's documentary research, which he felt were necessary in order to "enable us to form an idea of the ethnography and linguistical distribution of the Indians of New Mexico in the sixteenth century. Upon this knowledge alone can a study of the present ethnography and ethnology of New Mexico rest on a solid historical foundation."<sup>203</sup> The second section contained the preliminary and most important of his physical examinations of the archaeological sites on the 1880 trip, that of Pecos. The prominent inclusion of material regarding the Salinas antiquities despite their not yet having been visited by the AIA's chosen surveyor, illustrates their importance among those who were at the forefront of preservation efforts and places Salinas in that group of archaeological sites that became the central examples for the preservation movement as well as the laboratories where the burgeoning discipline proved itself. For his part, Bandelier contributed greatly by laying the foundation to answering those questions Carleton and the early military and civilian explorers had asked.

From his discussions on the Native American tribes, it is evident that Bandelier was able to correctly determine the importance of the Jumanes tribe in the Salinas area, and the linguistic relationship between Abó, Quarai, and Gran Quivira to the Piro pueblos along the Rio Grande south of Socorro. Bandelier is the first to correctly surmise from his study of the documentary and physical evidence, that Coronado's *Quivira* was on the Kansas-Nebraska plains and not the Gran Quivira pueblo of Las Humanas. Bandelier did however, perpetuate a mistake made by one of the early Spanish chroniclers Captain Juan Jaramillo, confusing Acoma, or Acuco as it was named in the 1540's narrative, with the

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<sup>203</sup> Adolf F. Bandelier, "Historical Introduction to Studies Among the Sedentary Indians of New Mexico," in *Papers of the Archaeological Institute of America* (Boston: A. Williams and Co., 1881), 9-10.

Tutahaco of Cansteñeda, a contemporary of Jaramillo's. This error led to Tutahaco remaining misplaced in its modern geographic context — confusion regarding which caused Salinas to be overlooked in research regarding the earliest colonial explorations of New Mexico. This error was not corrected until the 1940 publication of translations of the Spanish exploration narratives by Hammond and Rey, and then was only noted but did not give details about Frederick Webb Hodge's belief that Tutahaco was one of the Salinas group. In what seems to be an attempt to make up for his own inability to visit the Salinas Basin, the final three and half pages of section one of Bandelier's 1881 report provide an appendix which contained an excerpt of Robert B. Willison's examination of the ruins at Las Humanas during the Base Line survey of 1872.

Adolf Bandelier returned to New Mexico in March of 1882, and at the end of that year made his way to the Salinas Basin to visit the pueblo and Spanish mission ruins east of the Sandia and Manzano Mountain ranges. He left on December 18th and made his way to Galisteo, before turning south and west visiting pueblo ruins along the way, sketching and photographing as many as he had the time to accomplish. By the 22nd of December, he had reached Chililí where he met and spoke with a Mr. Dow about the change in watercourse at the village. Later the next day Bandelier stopped in Tajiique where he enquired about Gran Quivira, to no avail writing, "About the Quivira there are various reports, but it seems the nearer we come, the smaller it gets!"<sup>204</sup> Bandelier and his guide continued on to Manzano where they based themselves from the 24th of December until after the first of the New Year while examining the ruins at Abó and Quarai and making arrangements for a wagon to take them on to Gran Quivira. On the

<sup>204</sup> Charles H. Lange and Carroll L. Riley eds., *The Southwestern Journals of Adolph F. Bandelier, 1880-1882* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1966), 385.

26th, he noted the postmaster, Mr. Kusz, "showed me the sculptured beams of the church of Quivira, and also some of the pottery. It is absolutely different from all that I have seen in New Mexico, gray, with black and red designs, and almost recalls the tinaja of Cochiti which I brought to the Museum of Cambridge two years ago. It appears that at Abó they found an entire tinaja painted black and white which is still preserved at Abó."<sup>205</sup> On the 28th he visited Quarai:

. . . The road goes over hills, wooded and with occasional pinabetes. Cuaray [Quarai] is, in a direct line, six miles from the Manzano, southeast, and close by the edge of the Salines, in a beautiful spot, near the banks of an arroyo, in a valley very similar to that of Chililí and of Tajique, well sheltered. The church is a grand structure, 104 x 50 feet, and very well-laid in adobe mortar. The walls are 1.17 [meters?] thick, and the whole presents an imposing appearance. It is situated on the northeast corner of the pueblo, which latter consists of high rubbish-heaps, with about a dozen rooms exposed. These are built like the church, but they are only 0.25 to 0.30 [meter?] thick, and on an average 3.0 or 3.5 to 5.0 [meters high?]. In many places it looks as if the pueblo had been three stories high; it was certainly two. I photographed the church from the south. . . Afterwards the pueblo and the church from the northwest. . .

There are two or three new ranchos about the earth, and a large rancho of stone, now abandoned, on the south side of the pueblo. The pottery is red, corrugated, and principally glossy. Owing to the deep snow, I found but little pottery, but the pieces are characteristic. I was through at 1:30 p.m. and we returned home [to Manzano].

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<sup>205</sup> Lange and Riley, *Southwestern Journals, 1880-1882*, 387. In this journal Lange and Riley refer to the postmaster of Manzano as Kriss, however, in *The Southwestern Journals of Adolph F. Bandelier 1883-1884*, they correct this in note 6 on page 356: "This individual was erroneously identified in our first volume through a misinterpretation of Bandelier's handwriting. His 'u' became 'ri' with the help of a small speck on the page; this, together, with Bandelier's phonetic use of 'ss' rather than 'sz,' resulted in Kriss rather than Kusz. With the correction made, Charles L. Kusz, Jr., has emerged from a variety of sources as a prominent figure in the Manzano area. . . . postmaster, . . . ; also noted was Kusz & Co., Assayers, Surveyors, etc. Kusz was the Commissioner for Valencia County in 1884. For that year Polk and Danser (1884a: 337) listed Kusz as postmaster and also as a livestock breeder, real estate dealer, and proprietor of the 'Gringo and Greaser,' a newspaper. Anderson (1907: I, 241-42) added, 'The assassination of Charles L. Kusz, Jr., editor of the Gringo and Greaser at Manzano, Valencia County, on March 26, 1884, caused high feelings throughout New Mexico. The editor was killed while seated at supper table in his home by two rifle shots fired through a window. He was entertaining Dr. John M. Bradford at dinner, and they were alone. His paper was an authority on mining and ranching in New Mexico and the only paper in the world printed entirely in italics. It is believed that the assassination was due to his fearlessness in discussing public affairs, especially on account of his efforts to expose cattle thieves.'"

. . . Krusz told me (as well as Luján) that the Quivira is not as large as the Manzano.<sup>206</sup>

The following day he traveled southwest to the ruins at Abó where he stayed overnight in order to have adequate time with which to examine the ruins:

Traversing the level plain, we reached the descent to the Puerto de Abó. On the right, fine cliffs of red sandstone protrude out of the heights and the valley expands, with the Mesa de los Jumanos on the east, an independent mesa south, and a high sierra southwest and west fronting Socorro. As we descended in a narrow valley dotted with piñones and sabinos, snow began to decrease. Reached Abó at 3:30 p.m. It lies in a deep valley or cañada, shut in on two sides, with two arroyos passing through it to the southwest. These empty into the Rio Grande at La Joya, but the water never reaches the river. It loses itself in the sand.

The sierra is in sight from north to northeast. In the center is the church, a handsome structure, made of thin plates of red sandstone with adobe mortar. It is more ruined than that of Cuaray [Quarai], but the stonework is more intricate and therefore more handsome. The pueblo is on the west and northwest of the church and was large. There are few foundations left, and it appears that it was made of sandstone, but not as handsome as the plates of the church. It resembles in every respect that of Cuaray and Tajique, etc. They found a large tinajón in one of the cells; it was empty, but large, about three feet high. The broke it, and I am promised the privilege of seeing the pieces. An escudilla [porringer] is also said to be here, entire. The affirm that there were many, many stone axes and stone arrowheads (black and white).

. . . The ranchos here are built into the ruins, and out of the stone of the ruins. These ranchos were founded in 1869 (April) by the father and father-in-law of Manuel Cisneros. They had formerly settled at the Saladas six miles below, near where there is also an arroyo and a ruin of a pueblo. There are also scattered ranchos all over the hills. They raise corn and wheat, chile and beans. . .

December 30: . . . The report is, that the pueblo was originally three stories high, the lowest of which is regarded as a basement or as subterranean. There is but one arroyo, which has water within 500 yards of the pueblo; the other one, on the northwest side, is dry at this time. Beyond it, are the ruins of another pueblo, which appears much larger than that of Abó proper. At a short distance south-southeast and southwest are scattered.

. . . They tell me here that in the small rooms which still were found intact, when they first unearthed them, entire skeletons were found intact, not buried, but lying on the [?] floor. Also that there were many signs of combustion, even in the church itself. I noticed that on some of the few

<sup>206</sup> Lange and Riley, *Southwestern Journals, 1880-1882*, 387-388.

beams still at the latter edifice, there are marks of burning, so that it looks as if the people had been slaughtered and the place burnt.<sup>207</sup>

On January 1, 1883, Bandelier returned to Manzano, where he resided until January 4th, when he set out for Gran Quivira in the company of his guide José Olivas. Deep snow halted their progress at Punta de Agua until the next day when they set off again before reaching the Pueblo de las Humanas, at this point strictly referred to as Gran Quivira, on January 6, 1883.

. . . We traversed this cold, rolling basin, and on the last brow saw the Medano [a sand drift, being a feature of the pueblos of this area] with the church of Quivira on it. The valley of the Medano is beautiful, fertile, grassy, with sabinos dotting it, but no water. On the northeast side there is a dry arroyo.

The section presents itself as follows: the church and pueblo stand on the highest brow (not point) of a series of ridges running nearly east and west; the church overlooking the valley west and northwest. South of it there are a series of similar ridges also dotted with sabinos, with dry gulches between, about parallel, but lower than the one of Quivira. Beyond it, [are] wooded low mesas with steep banks. Surrounded by fertile fields or valleys, the Quivira has thus been a most favored spot up to [except for] the water, of which I cannot, as yet, find any trace. The pueblo is large, evidently at least three stories. Room or cells are sometimes very small, and the walls of well-broken limestone with soil or mud between. Many timbers protrude. Pottery [is] in abundance. Glossy prevails, but there is also black-and-white, smoky, black, and red. It is plain that any pottery except the glossy is exceptional and perhaps intrusive. The church and convent is an enormous structure. The north wall of the church is forty-four inches wide; the east wall is wider yet. . . . We have a fine lodging.

January 7: I took the compass and counted the rooms. . . José . . . found a ditch, clearly an acequia, leading northeast. At ten meters above the base of House #1, and three-hundred-fifty meters northeast of it, there is a distinct old pond, about two meters deep, and forty meters in diameter. It had a rim of stone on the north side, and there also it was broken and a deep gulley trends down to the dry arroyo. Some distance to the southwest of it, there is another one thirty meters wide and two to three

<sup>207</sup> Lange and Riley, *Southwestern Journals, 1880-1882*, 389. "Sabino" is another name for a *Taxodium mucronatum*, or Montezuma Cypress, which is found in Mexico and in the Rio Grande Valley in southern Texas; here it would appear that Bandelier has adopted this as the general name for any of the juniper varieties found in New Mexico, or more specifically the One-Seed Juniper, or *Juniperus Monosperma* widely found in the region.



meters deep. At three hundred meters the acequia terminated in a third pond, flat, indistinct, and about thirty-five meters in diameter. Thus the water question is settled. Rain supplied the drinking water for the population, and the number of the latter could not have exceeded on thousand souls.

I am glad that the water question is solved. Thus another idol and myth is gone; it looks as if there had been two distinct pueblos at Quivira. January 8: . . . Going about in the afternoon, I found a fourth pond, 35 meters west of House #9, and north of the church. It is the best made of all, at least 3.0 [meters?] drop [deep], and with a semi-circular rim, very plain from northeast by north to west. This rim appears to have been of stone, and it is covered with pottery. There are still two channels running down from it to the north and north-northeast. (José says they are 'Desaguas [drainage ditches].') Thus the case is positive and plain. These ponds above the pueblo communicated with the large pond below the church by a channel running through the village. . . .<sup>208</sup>

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, unable to find their horses, Adolph Bandelier returned to Punta de Agua on foot, a journey that took him nearly twelve hours. The next day he was back in Manzano, staying once again with the priest in the village. With much of the accumulated snow having melted away, Bandelier returned to Quarai for another look around on January 13<sup>th</sup> and examined what is most likely the Gonzales house on a small hill near the ruins. He noted, "The contrast between the pottery of this mound, and that of the other, which are about 20.0 [meters] distant [apart] only, is very marked and striking, and it looks as if there had been two distinct tribes settled at Cuaray. . . . Several rooms, on the east side, are still entire, with white plaster on the wall, wooden lintels and ceilings."<sup>209</sup> He ended his Salinas sojourn by visiting Abó on his return journey to the Rio Grande valley through Abó Pass. His notes regarding the ruins at the three sites are the most extensive to this point in the documentary record, and his stay in

<sup>208</sup> Charles H. Lange and Carroll L. Riley eds., *The Southwestern Journals of Adolph F. Bandelier, 1883-1884* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1970), 11. Bracketed information from endnote 11 on page 356.

<sup>209</sup> Lange and Riley, *Southwestern Journals, 1883-1884*, 15.



the Salinas Basin, the longest at nearly a month, provided him with ample time to make a thorough examination of the ruins in the area.

The fruit of Bandelier's efforts provided archaeologists, ethnologists, and historians with much desired data on these antiquities, many of whom were also actively involved in the burgeoning preservation movement. As the first archaeological survey performed on the Salinas Pueblo and Spanish mission ruins, Bandelier looked at the sites from a new perspective. He more carefully examined the artifacts and pottery, and compared it to other areas within each site, as well as the other pueblos he visited in the basin and the region. He used these observations as the basis for theorizing that there may have been two different cultural groups as Quarai. At Gran Quivira he solved the question of water resources to his satisfaction, documenting four rainwater storage ponds edged in stone with their connecting ditches. From his inspection of the pueblo mounds, he felt that the house-blocks at each pueblo were at least two if not three stories tall. Interestingly he noted wooden timbers protruding from some of the walls of the pueblo rooms at Las Humanas. At Abó Bandelier noted that the stonework was more intricate, and felt that explained why the ruins there were in a worse state of preservation than those at Quarai. During his interview with local residents at Abó he also heard how skeletons had been found unburied and lying on the floor amid evidence of fire.

While the information given by the locals was valuable, it testified to a problem the preservation-minded groups had begun to struggle with since Bandelier's first visit to the territory in 1880 — that of the deterioration of the ruins due to their detrimental use and amateur explorations by settlers and curiosity seekers. Unlike the tone adopted in his report on Pecos, Bandelier uncritically reports that locals had found the skeletons while

excavating rooms at the pueblo. With a somewhat sarcastic tone he remarks that he is being "afforded the privilege" of examining a tinaja (a canteen) also excavated at Abó. At Quarai, he mentioned two exposed rooms in the pueblo, and of Gran Quivira he notes being shown the carved beams from Gran Quivira being used in a home in Manzano, followed by an aside by a local there no more beams remain at the ruin. Whether the shock at the destruction occurring at the various ruins had just worn off, or he had come to expect it is unclear, but he nonetheless continued to document the dispersal of artifacts and architectural elements removed from, what would be considered from this point forward as archaeological resources, in Salinas.

By 1889 the vandalism and destruction of prehistoric and historic sites had reached all new proportions. The deterioration of ruins such as Casa Grande alarmed philanthropists and scientists across the United States and on February 4, 1889 another petition was presented to Congress on behalf of the Arizona ruin.<sup>210</sup> More specific than the 1882 measure, it named only Casa Grande for protection rather than all antiquities on federal land and was signed by such luminaries in intellectual circles as Oliver Wendell Holmes, John Greenleaf Whittier and Anna Cabot Lodge among others. This petition was successful, Casa Grande being granted protection and an appropriation for repair on March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1889 with an executive order setting aside a 480-acre land reservation following on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1892.<sup>211</sup> But the fight was not yet won.

The preservationists needed ordinary citizens, settlers, and travelers to care about the ruins and their antiquities, and value them as more than the source of a quick income or building supplies. If preservation legislation could not be enacted soon, there might no

<sup>210</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 20.

<sup>211</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 20.

longer be any sites left undisturbed enough to be of value for the scientists to study, and all of the data that may have been learned would be forever lost. Education was the key, but the question was how best to accomplish that outside the hallowed halls of Washington, and the learned circles of the country's leading universities — how to capture the common person's attention, incite their imaginations, and sympathies, rather than scold and threaten — how to make them care. The earliest accounts by the mountain men, traders, and forty-niners who had visited the sites, relayed rumors of gold and grandeur that only contributed to the problem. The reports of the military and civilian surveyors, told people where the sites were and how to get there, further contributing to the problem. The reports of Bandelier and other ethnographers, archaeologists, and ethnologists were read by those people who were already aware and concerned about the problem. They needed to reach a wider audience to say, "Looke! Don't be scared! All these Greek words are harmless! All these Ologies are only the Story of Man — the story of you and me . . . and carried back five or ten thousand years. And it's fun!" with the aim that, "If we can give back to that perennial Story the Humanness that belongs to it, a million Americans will understand where one understands now; and where you have now one supporter you will have fifty; and while your epoch-making research now is buried in sacrosanct reports for a few Bostonians, it will become part of the consciousness of America."<sup>212</sup> Charles Fletcher Lummis was the man for the job.

Lummis was not an archaeologist, an ethnographer, nor an historian — he was a journalist who was interested in those things. He had met Adolph Bandelier in August of

<sup>212</sup> "The Works of Chas. F. Lummis," Lummis Foundation, Los Angeles, 1928, booklet in Lummis Collection, quoted in Edwin R. Bingham, *Charles F. Lummis Editor of the Southwest* (1955; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1973), 13.

1888 when Bandelier had walked into his camp in Los Alamos, south of Tijeras, during a sandstorm, ". . . the crunch of footsteps alerted him to the presence of someone outside. Opening the tent flap, he beheld a tall, trim, sun-bronzed European gentleman looking for shelter, 'dusty but unwearied after his 60 mile tramp from Zuni.'"<sup>213</sup> Where Bandelier was an exacting scientist and historical researcher, Lummis was a photographer and storyteller of romantic yarns, and more importantly a crusader — for the Southwest, for Indian rights, against the prevailing Hispanic and other minority prejudice, and eventually for the preservation of antiquities. Lummis' love of archaeology had been awakened by the thrill of finding artifacts in the furrows of the Chillicothe, Ohio, farm he managed for his father-in-law, and had been nurtured by excavations at the ruins uncovered on land owned by his friend, Amado Chaves, in San Mateo, New Mexico. Together the two men, Adolph Bandelier and Charles Lummis, traveled throughout the southwest performing archaeological examinations and photographing the sites.

In 1890 Lummis visited and photographed Abó, Quarai, and Gran Quivira, including them in a chapter of his latest book, *The Land of Poco Tiempo* published in 1893, while he was still living at the pueblo of Isleta. This work best illustrates his contribution to the preservation crusade. It was a romantic narrative more digestible to a popular audience, and attempted to debunk the myths regarding the ancient pueblos and correct misinformed historical theories regarding these venerable sites. The historical information, clearly obtained through his close association with Bandelier, was peppered with dramatic prose describing the ruins, meant to awe and in turn create sympathy for them in his audience. Lummis was able to paint a picture with words, in a way none of

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<sup>213</sup> Mark Thompson, *American Character: The Curious Life of Charles Fletcher Lummis and the Rediscovery of the Southwest* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2001), 146.

his contemporary preservationists had thus far been able to do. An excellent example of this is his poetic prose describing Gran Quivira:

. . . it is spread before you, a wraith in pallid stone — the absolute ghost of a city. Its ashen hues which seem to hover above the dead grass, foiled by the sombre blotches of the junipers; its indeterminate gray hints, outspoken at last in the huge, vague shape that looms in its centre; its strange, dim outlines rimmed with a flat, round world of silence — but why try to tell that which has no telling? Who shall wreak expression of that spectral city?<sup>214</sup>

Subtly relaying how miraculous and important the sites were to the United States, Lummis compared the Salinas Pueblo Mission ruins to the great medieval ruins along the Rhine, in Europe. In an effort to counter the vandalism at Gran Quivira by treasure hunters, Lummis attacked the gold myth and its believers head on:

Here is the asylum of the modern Quivira-myth; the Mecca of the Southwestern fortune-hunter; the field of the Las Folly. That it should have been chosen from among all the fifteen hundred pueblo ruins in New Mexico for credulity to butt its head against, is not strange physically. Its bleak, unearthly site, the necromancy of the plains, its ghostly aspect, and its distance from all water, were enough to stop and hold the later treasure-seekers, who had heard vaguely that "Coronado hunted the Quivira," but utterly failed to hear that he found it — found it in northeastern Kansas, and found it worthless. . . .

For the myth of the Quivira has come to [Las Humanas] to stay. Neither fact nor reason will ever fully dislodge it, and it will always count its dupes. It has even grown, in that arid home, to startling proportions. The Quivira of Coronado is forgotten, and in its stead is the Gran Quivira. It is no resurrection of the old myth, but the invention of a new. To keep it in the vital spark its nurses have to stand history upon its head, and turn the compass inside-out; . . .<sup>215</sup>

Lummis continued to combine his love for the West and its culture, with his love of storytelling, eventually becoming the editor of *Land of Sunshine* magazine in 1895.

Using the pages of the magazine he edited, renamed *Out West* in 1901, others he

<sup>214</sup> Lummis, *The Land of Poco Tiempo*, 227. In his narrative Lummis subscribed to the common mistake of his time in equating Gran Quivira with the pueblo ruin of Tabirá. Later researches determined the Tabirá of the Spanish colonial sources is actually the pueblo ruins given the modern name of Pueblo Blanco.

<sup>215</sup> Lummis, *The Land of Poco Tiempo*, 229-230.

contributed to, and the books he wrote, Lummis was able to continue crusading for the causes that meant the most to him. His crusade for the preservation of California's eighteenth-century Spanish missions led him to become the president of the Landmarks Club, where he gained first-hand experience in the challenges faced in the efforts of preserving architectural antiquities. His editorial work did not end his archaeological adventures, however, and he regularly traveled to New Mexico and throughout the Southwest to photograph pueblos and archaeological locations, capturing details which were quickly disappearing as the indiscriminate use and out-right vandalism at the sites destroyed features that had once been prominent. Despite the efforts of Lummis to dispel the rumors and legends regarding millions in buried gold at Gran Quivira, treasure hunters continued to damage the archaeological value of the village by digging crude pits throughout the buildings and grounds, and in some cases removing veneer stones from the walls to look for voids where hoards might be secreted.

Following reports of Richard Wetherill's and his brother-in-law Charlie Mason's 1888 discovery of Cliff Palace and Spruce Tree House at what is now known as Mesa Verde National Park, further catastrophes were to befall American Archaeology. Swedish explorer Gustav Erik Adolf Nordenskjöld excavated many ruins throughout the area during the summer season of 1891 — sending all of the objects he uncovered, a collection of around 600 items, back to Stockholm, Sweden, which were to eventually be displayed in the National Museum of Finland in Helsinki. Such great umbrage resulted from the news that Nordenskjöld was sending the artifacts to a foreign museum that he was arrested for destruction of the ruins (though there were no protective laws) and only

freed by intervention from Washington.<sup>216</sup> Yet with even this scandal and the loss of valuable data and artifacts to a foreign museum, the government was still not ready to pass legislation protecting such resources. The Mesa Verde collection would never be recovered, all efforts to regain it were in vain and it remains the largest collection of artifacts from Mesa Verde outside America. The market for artifacts continued to explode and eventually became so intense that pot-hunters burned the remaining roof beams at Cliff Palace for firewood and began knocking holes in the walls to accommodate more light while digging for treasures.<sup>217</sup> Curio hunting came to such measures that “when extensive ruins were found by ranchers on public land that was still open to settlement, applications for homesteads were sometimes filed solely to acquire the ruins, with no intention of” improving the land.<sup>218</sup> The discoverer of Cliff Palace, Richard Wetherill, filed a 160 acre homestead claim that included Pueblo Bonito, Chetro Kettle and Pueblo del Arroyo in Chaco Canyon and began excavating in 1896-1899. He soon began shipping out whole rooms, complete with stones and timbers, to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, selling still more artifacts to the highest bidder.<sup>219</sup>

Similarly, in the Estancia Basin, William G. and Clara Corbin filed homestead patent 4544 on 20 February 1896 for land that covered part of the pueblo mounds and Spanish Colonial mission complex of Gran Quivira.<sup>220</sup> Though the Corbins were never able to begin extensive excavations on the Spanish Colonial era ruins or pueblo mounds,

<sup>216</sup> Duane A. Smith, *Mesa Verde Nation Park: Shadows of the Centuries* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002), p. 33; and Electra Draper, “Mesa Verde Artifacts Ended Up in Sweden,” *The Denver Post*, 26 June 2006, Section B, p. 5.

<sup>217</sup> Hans Randolph, Quoted by John Ise, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961), p. 145; quoted in Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 31-2.

<sup>218</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 34.

<sup>219</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 37.

<sup>220</sup> Eugene P. Link and Beulah M. Link, *The Tale of Three Cities* (New York: Vantage Press, 1999), p. 22.

reports of numerous other parties searching for the fabled gold treasure of Gran Quivira reached Archaeological Societies in Colorado and the east. Alarmed at the prospect of archaeological artifacts and data being compromised or destroyed in amateur excavations, Virginia D. McClurg challenged the Corbin claim to the property at the General Land Office in Santa Fé, New Mexico.

Finally in response to this growing problem, in 1899 the American Association for the Advancement of Science and the Archaeological Institute of America combined their resources and established a joint committee to sponsor legislation for the preservation of antiquities and ruins included on federal lands. Soon after their draft bill was presented to Congress and the House of Representatives in early 1900 four other competing bills were developed. In political wrangling that lasted over a year, “among the scientists of the country, the Department of the Interior, the Bureau of American Ethnology, and the House Public Lands Committee,” all efforts to develop legislation ended in a stalemate.<sup>221</sup> Once again the chance to enact the protection so desperately needed slipped away. Again in 1903-‘04, a concerned Rev. Henry Mason Baum of the Records of the Past Exploration Society had a draft bill written and printed, sending out 500 copies to all of the leading institutions in the field, and receiving in return overwhelming support. On April 20, 1904 Senator Henry Cabot Lodge of Massachusetts introduced the bill to Congress and letters of support from major institutions were read in hearings before the Senate Public Lands Committee the same day — victory seemed imminent.<sup>222</sup> The regents of the Smithsonian Institution however, had developed their own bill as well, one in which they were to control the permits for excavation and have

<sup>221</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 57.

<sup>222</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 60.



“supervision of all aboriginal monuments, ruins, and other antiquities,” rather than the Director of the Department of the Interior, even though Interior was to care for and manage the land reservations on which they sat.<sup>223</sup> When the Senate Public Lands Committee reported favorably on the bill as presented by Senator Lodge, the Smithsonian Regents sent representatives to both houses to object to the recommendation of its immediate passage. Yet again, protection slipped away.

It would take Edgar Lee Hewett, the former school superintendent turned Archaeologist to level the playing field. After receiving a Ph.D. from the University of Geneva in Switzerland, Hewett returned to the United States to begin his career in archaeology. “Hewett’s unusual combination of western background, farming and teaching experience, first-hand knowledge of ancient ruins on federal lands [ . . . ] and experience as an archaeologist and administrator, enabled him [ . . . ] to enjoy alike the confidence of members of Congress, bureau chiefs, staffs of universities and research institutions and members of professional societies.” He was asked to undertake the drafting of a new piece of legislation that accounted for the recent transfer of control of antiquities within the forest reserves from the Department of the Interior to the Department of Agriculture. Hewett’s bill, endorsed by both the American Anthropological Association and the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), was read before the House on January 9, 1906 with a companion bill being presented to the Senate on the 26<sup>th</sup> of February.<sup>224</sup>

Hewett’s draft of protective legislation encompassed resources on public lands as well as forest, military and Indian reserves, including not only man-made but natural

<sup>223</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 62.

<sup>224</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 68, 71-72.

resources as well. He navigated around the previous conflict with the Smithsonian Institution in a paper he presented at a joint meeting of the AIA and the American Anthropological Association in which he said, “The purposes for which the lands of the United States are administered are so diverse that no Department could safely undertake to grant privileges of any sort upon lands under the jurisdiction of another Department.”<sup>225</sup> He settled the matter of jurisdiction by dividing issuing control of excavation permits to the Secretaries of the departments upon which the sites were located. He also provided further direction that the Secretaries of Interior, War and Agriculture were to write and publish “uniform rules and regulations” to administer this and other provisions in the new law. Senator John Fletcher Lacey reported favorably on this draft legislation by Hewett and on June 8, 1906 Senate Document 4698 was signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt without any changes.<sup>226</sup> The Antiquities Act, or the Lacey Act as it was otherwise known, was finally a reality.

The societies founded in 1879, endeavored to make the American public and government aware of the importance of the antiquities and prehistoric and historic sites in their own country. They, and those that followed them, had fought alongside philanthropists and concerned citizens to see protective legislation passed despite the attitudes of many that Native American culture should be abolished rather than studied and preserved. In an age when communication was slow and imprecise, scholars tirelessly worked to disseminate accurate and timely data to highlight the significance of the sites they where documenting. Hewett’s final draft of protective legislation

<sup>225</sup> Edgar Lee Hewett, “Preservation of American Antiquities; Progress During the Last Year; Needed Legislation,” *American Anthropologist*, N.S., VIII (1906), p. 113; quoted in Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 71.

<sup>226</sup> Lee, *The Antiquities Act of 1906*, p. 76-7.

incorporated the natural wonders of the country as well as the architectural and antiquarian remnants of the continent's native people, allowing for the bridging of the gap left open by former proposals. Despite the final passage of this legislation, numerous court battles would be fought for years afterward to challenge the false homestead claims that included valuable ruins. While it had taken three separate efforts and the presentation of nine different draft bills before a solution to the problem could be reached, the nation was now poised to begin setting aside its treasures for future generations to enjoy and investigate. The framework was in place to begin the conservation work that so many of these endangered sites needed and some of the first National Parks and Monuments to be created under the Antiquities Act included El Morro, Chaco Canyon, and the Gila Cliff Dwellings. It would take three more years before the stately ruins of Gran Quivira would be added to the ranks of protected reservations, and many more before Abó and Quarai would be brought under the aegis of the National Park Service.

The Salinas Pueblo Missions continued to be visited by the curious and the studious. Adolph Bandelier visited and sketched rough aerial-styled layouts of the pueblos and their associated mission ruins. He included information on the Piro, Tompiro, and Jumano tribes and their relationship to the Salinas Basin in several of his publications, furthering the exposure of Abó, Quarai, and Gran Quivira in the intellectual circles of the nation. Charles Fletcher Lummis had photographed the ruins in Salinas, and dedicated an entire chapter to them in his own 1893 publication on the southwest. Written for a popular audience, Lummis' work filled the breach that had previously existed between the scholarly works by Bandelier and his contemporaries and the wild rumors spread in the territorial newspapers and dime novels. Before the Antiquities Act

was passed, a new battle was heating up, started by the entry of William Gould Corbin and his wife, Clara, to the Salinas Basin in 1895 — a battle that began about the same time that the struggle for the Antiquities Act gained momentum, just before the turn of the century.

#### **Chapter 4: The Great Battle: Clara Corbin and Virginia McClurg, 1900–1914**

In the midst of the men who were engaged in the study of, and fight to preserve prehistoric sites on the North American continent, were women who were beginning to expand their accepted roles in society. The only acceptable vocations for women had been as wives, mothers, teachers, nurses, governesses, and ladies' companions, but slowly, they began to take on new causes that coincided with society's expectations of the female gender. Long held the guardians and purveyors of civilization and culture in the West, it seemed natural for women to join the crusade for the preservation of American antiquities and historic sites. As the movement to preserve America's past gained ground, stalwart females worked together and alongside men, using social clubs to organize, engage greater numbers to their cause, and draw attention to their efforts. The history of the preservation movement in America can in fact be traced back to one of their number, Ann Pamela Cunningham, who founded the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association in 1853, in a successful bid to save General George Washington's Potomac River estate. Following her example, Women's preservation organizations were created throughout the country during the reform era that also saw the inception of the Women's Suffrage, temperance, and other movements. Within this context, is the story of two women who

fought each other within a governmental system which had not yet granted them the right to vote and still viewed women as the property of their husbands.

The combatants were the eccentric and little known Clara A. B. Corbin (later in her life alternately spelled Corbyn), widow of the Civil War veteran, and failed railroad entrepreneur, William G. Corbin; and Virginia D. McClurg, from Colorado Springs, the crusading preservationist newspaper reporter, and regent of the *Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association*, which was fighting to preserve the ruins in Mesa Verde. In some respects these two women were quite similar, sharing that force of character that propelled them forward even when all hope of attaining the desired result seemed lost. They were both authors and lecturers, who had the education and intellect to absorb, and digest information regarding the history, archaeology, ethnography, and ethnology on the ancient peoples of the Southwest. Their differences though were vast; Clara was the childless widow of an itinerant Civil War veteran of sketchy character, and Virginia was the wife of a civically active, stable, and fairly well respected upper middle-class man, and the mother of one son. Both women developed plans for the preservation of the ruins at Gran Quivira wildly divergent from the other, and both lectured on the history and value of the site to audiences throughout the United States. Corbin and McClurg were not alone in their interest in Gran Quivira, as other researchers and curiosity seekers continued to study and visit the ruins. They were also joined on the New Mexico lecture circuit by the wife of the Department Commander of the Socorro Post of the *Grand Army of the Republic* (G.A.R.), Magaret Monroe Rudisille of White Oaks, herself the provisional department president of the Woman's Relief Corps in the G.A.R.

At stake in this test of wills was property that the contestants believed included the ruins of the pueblo of Las Humanas, and two seventeenth-century Spanish Colonial era churches, collectively known as Gran Quivira. Located approximately seventy miles southeast of Albuquerque, the pueblo of Las Humanas had been built atop Chupadera Mesa, overlooking the southern end of the Estancia Basin at a site long inhabited by the native people of the continent. With the entry of the Europeans to the area, a tumultuous relationship between the native inhabitants of Gran Quivira and the new Spanish explorers and missionaries was precipitated that would last for nearly one hundred years, leaving behind the indelible marks of a collision between the two vastly different cultures. Spanish influence at Las Humanas began with Juan de Oñate, when during his survey of the lands he claimed for Spain, he visited the pueblo on the 17<sup>th</sup> of October 1598 and administered the oath of allegiance and vassalage to the Indians of Las Humanas. Missionary activities at the pueblo began in earnest soon after. Two Catholic churches would be built at the site in those efforts; the first, San Isidro was dedicated in 1629, and construction of the second by far grander church and convent of San Buenaventura, began sometime after 1659. As a relic representing this meeting of the Spanish and Native American cultures during a very important period in the history of the region and of the country, Gran Quivira's value archaeologically and historically was — and still is — incalculable. The inception of trouble began with the homestead entry of William G. Corbin on the 160 acres that he believed encompassed the ruins of Gran Quivira.

Corbin entered his application for the homestead as a Civil War Veteran under the authority of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Homestead Act of June 8, 1872.<sup>227</sup> He had earned this privilege fighting for the Union, enlisting first with the 151<sup>st</sup> New York Infantry Company F on 27 August 1862.<sup>228</sup> Upon the formation of the 32<sup>nd</sup> U. S. Colored Infantry in March 1864, William was commissioned as a second lieutenant among the cadre of white officers who were to lead black troops.<sup>229</sup> In November of that same year he was discharged from the 32<sup>nd</sup> Infantry's Company G due to illness, and returned home to his first wife, Mary J. Benedict Corbin, and their four children in Lockport, New York.<sup>230</sup>

Described by a friend of the family as a man of a "roving disposition, [who] would come and go,"<sup>231</sup> William Corbin had traveled in the west for three years before his marriage to Mary J. Benedict in 1851. After the war, he once again began his wandering ways, leaving home in June 1870 to find work near Corry, Pennsylvania, never to return.<sup>232</sup> After residing for an unknown amount of time in Pennsylvania, correspondence places Corbin in Ohio where he had a sister living in Bellefontaine, near Sidney. Later letters then indicate he had moved on to Chicago to begin working as a building contractor a year after the Great Fire of October 1871, then on to Grand Rapids, Michigan.

<sup>227</sup> Military Service Records, "Affidavit of William G. Corbin dated 20 February 1896," General Land Entry Files, RG 49, National Archives.

<sup>228</sup> Military Service Records, "C 151 N.Y., Co. F Regimental Descriptive Book card," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>229</sup> Military Service Records, "Act of June 27, 1890 Invalid Pension, submitte for approval 26 Nov 1895," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

Upon the formation of the United States Colored Troops (USCT) regiments, only Caucasian males could be commissioned officers and lead the enlisted and non-commissioned African-American soldiers.

<sup>230</sup> Military Service Records, "3-060 War Department, Record and Pension Division card dated 15 Jan 1895," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>231</sup> Military Service Records, "General Affidavit of Mary Scholfield dated 19 Jul 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>232</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition C of Mary J. Corbin, dated 28 June 1900," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

During his time in Chicago he would write to his wife Mary recommending that they dissolve their marriage, going so far as to have papers drawn up.<sup>233</sup> The decree was never properly filed however, due to what pension investigators later felt was probably a failure to pay the filing fees.<sup>234</sup> Despite this on April 4, 1874, only two years after asking Mary for a divorce, at the age of fifty-one he married Clara A. Ball in Lebanon, Ohio, a woman twenty-four years his junior.<sup>235</sup> From this point forward Clara A. B. Corbin accompanied William during his peregrinations.

Shortly after their April wedding, William took Clara to the home of his sister Mary E. Chase in Ohio. After this meeting, Mrs. Chase then wrote to their other sibling, a Mrs. Brown of Buffalo, New York, informing her of the nuptials. In a move that indicates her disapproval of William's actions, his sister, Mrs. Brown, in turn informed Mary J. Benedict Corbin of her husband's second marriage.<sup>236</sup> Sometime before the end of the summer of 1874, in what was a very inauspicious start to William and Clara's union, William was arrested and sent to jail for unknown reasons.<sup>237</sup> Released around the first part of August, he then took his new wife, Clara, to Indiana. After this introduction to his nearest kin, his arrest, and their move to Indiana, little is known of their movements from sources, which historians can agree upon are reliable, until the couple turned up in New Mexico.

<sup>233</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition A of Harrison B. Riley, dated 25 March 1901," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>234</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to H. Clay Evans, re: divorce of Wm. G. and Mary J. Corbin, dated 26 March 1901," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>235</sup> Military Service Records, "Certificate of Marriage, dated 4 April 1874," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>236</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition C of Mary J. Corbin, dated 28 June 1900," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>237</sup> Possible bigamy, but just as possibly debt, or failure to pay his debts was the reason for this incarceration of William Corbin. See Clara Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 333.



The pattern that emerges from this time is that of an incredibly itinerant couple who never settled long enough to establish lasting friendships, or accumulate property or wealth. Indeed, in a seemingly autobiographical moment in her book, titled, *La Gran Quibira: A Musical Mystery*, Clara Corbin writes:

[. . .] married life presented such a kaleidoscopic series of ups and downs, as to baffle correct description.

From time to time, they moved from city to city, as the freak took possession of [her husband]. And as they always boarded instead of keeping house these flittings mattered but little to either. But when it was too late they both realized the mistake they had made; for one forms only acquaintances and can never hope to make true friends in this constant change of residence.<sup>238</sup>

It is also possible that aside from the Ohio, Indiana, and New Mexico tenures, the couple may have resided in Chicago for two or three years before moving on to New York in pursuit of a railway scheme. Ultimately, this varied and often ambiguous life that the Corbins lived before coming to New Mexico, seriously complicated Clara's defense of her husband's homestead claim.

In the late summer of 1882, while Adolph Bandelier was conducting his second archaeological survey in New Mexico, William Corbin was setting up the offices of the New Mexico Central and Northern Railway company headquarters in Las Vegas. While it is unknown if Clara accompanied him, he remained in the territory from at least August, until the end of September, working on a railroad proposal to run a narrow-gauge line from El Moro, Colorado (3 miles east of Trinidad) to Las Vegas, New Mexico.<sup>239</sup> Billed as, "one of the best paying roads in the territory," by the end of the summer, Corbin allegedly received right-of-way through the Maxwell land grant, as well as "other

<sup>238</sup> Clara A. B. Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira, a Musical Mystery: Opera Historique, a Romanza in Five Acts, with Overture, Prelude and Interlude* (N. P. Author's Edition, 1904), p. 309.

<sup>239</sup> "N.M.C. & N. Railway," *Las Vegas Daily Gazette*, 2 August 1882.

favorable offers that he had not expected."<sup>240</sup> Members of both the William and Clara's families were listed as officers of the company, which boasted of having capital of eight million dollars, divided into thirty-thousand shares. Two years later, no rail had yet been laid in furtherance of the project, although newspapers in Buffalo, New York, where the Corbins were likely located in 1884, reported thirty miles of railway bed had been graded from Pueblo south.<sup>241</sup> Following these reports the historical record is silent and for a decade nothing is known regarding the whereabouts and activities of William and Clara Corbin.

Then in 1894 records once again place William and Clara Corbin in New Mexico and also indicate a serious change in their means. It was from this territory in November 1894, that William Corbin filed for, and received, a \$12 per month soldier's claim for an invalid's pension.<sup>242</sup> Then a year later, William filed the fateful homestead claim on the land presumably containing Gran Quivira.

Gran Quivira had long been rumored to be the home of a fabulous gold and silver treasure deposited somewhere amongst the ruins by priests fleeing the hostile Indians of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. The problem with the treasure legends was that the site had been abandoned years prior to the Revolt and no such wealth had ever been documented in the colonial records of the Salinas missions. Either not knowing these facts or not believing them, it can be inferred from statements made by Clara throughout her volume that it was in hopes of finding this treasure that the Corbins entered their claim. When Clara Corbin and her husband, William G. Corbin, arrived at Gran Quivira in 1895, the

<sup>240</sup> *Las Vegas Daily Gazette*, 20 September 1882, col. 3, p. 4.

<sup>241</sup> "Wm. G. Corbin, The New Mexico Central & Northern Railway, That Will Never Be Built," *Las Vegas Daily Gazette*, 19 March 1884.

<sup>242</sup> Military Service Records "Declaration for Invalid Pension dated 19 November 1894," Pension file, film number M551:29 and M589:19, RG 94.12, National Archives.

architectural remnants there had survived the test of time, the elements, and human depredations during the over two hundred years of its habitational abandonment — but only just. The growing craze for Native American relics and the rumors of treasure under the ruins had brought many people throughout the years in search of both commodities, leaving pits in the floors of its rooms and holes in its walls. The new claimants to Gran Quivira and its land were, on the surface, no different.

The Corbins had traveled west, from either New York, or Illinois, after a rather itinerant past in hopes of making their fortune from the treasure they believed could be found buried beneath the ruins of Gran Quivira. Like many men of his time, William put his hand to many different occupations to make ends meet. If what Clara indicates in her book is true, the land at Gran Quivira had come to the attention of her husband when he “had been with the party who had surveyed the route for the proposed railway in which he had sunk all his fortune.”<sup>243</sup> That ‘fortune’ had ostensibly been lost in the “scandalous failure of Ferdinand Ward” which was, “followed by the failure of the Marine Bank and the great financial crash” of 1884. As a result of this change in situation the couple had, “By dint of long and patient effort [ . . . ] hoarded a few hundreds,” and “determined that [Gran Quivira] was the place of all others they were most anxious to visit, and which might prove to be the means of speedily retrieving their fallen fortunes.” The goal of visiting the ruins to ostensibly begin searching for the treasure was not easily attained however, and eleven years passed before they were able to visit the ruin on the hill. According to Corbin, the couple tried twice to reach Gran Quivira; the first attempt an utter failure whereby, “the worthless team to which they owed all the exposure and hardships they endured during their three weeks outing and their great disappointment at

<sup>243</sup> Clara A. B. Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 310.

never reaching the wished-for destination was the cause of their being prevented from returning to this search for years to come.”<sup>244</sup>

Their plan was achieved when the couple finally arrived at Gran Quivira in 1895, pitching a tent at the site while conducting preliminary explorations of the ruins. Clara Corbin reports that they were not alone in the area, being frequently visited by “sheep herders and tourists who came to prospect for water and for the treasure, too.” She made the startling observation that, “Everywhere beneath and around these buildings were to be seen parts of human skeletons. Many deep and dangerous holes had been dug in and near the ruins,” in search of treasure.<sup>245</sup> In a passage that indicates her feelings for the site, and how the couple’s intentions had grown beyond simply seeking the fabled treasure, she says, “There is no created thing upon this earth so destructive as the average American, who can scarcely look at anything without attempting to pull it to pieces. So to prevent the total destruction of the grand old ruins at the hands of these nineteenth century vandals, [William] staked off the ground upon which the ruins were located as a homestead claim, thereby securing the enmity of the treasure seekers [. . .].”<sup>246</sup> William filed his homestead claim at the GLO in Santa Fé on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1896, obtaining the rights to the 160 acres that the couple felt contained the better part of the ruins of Las Humanas pueblo, San Isidro church and San Buenaventura mission and convento — or as it had become known — Gran Quivira.<sup>247</sup>

<sup>244</sup> Corbin, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 310-311, 333.

<sup>245</sup> Corbin, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 370, 353-4.

<sup>246</sup> Corbin, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 370.

<sup>247</sup> Military Service Records, “To the Honorable, the Commissioner of Pensions, Interior Department from Virginia D. McClurg, dated 18 February 1902,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

Despite this triumph for the Corbins and their hopes for a return to prosperity, events again took a downturn and further contributed to the hardship Clara Corbin later faced in her battle to retain the homestead she and William had filed upon. No evidence remains which indicates exactly when the Corbins left Gran Quivira and returned to civilization, and this period of their lives is not covered by Corbin in her book. We do know however, from William’s pension file that difficulties continued to plague them and prevented the Corbins from properly fulfilling the terms of the homestead agreement during William’s lifetime. Letters from Clara to William’s daughter, Mary Halifax, mention an incident in which at the age of seventy-two, William again found himself in jail sometime before April 1896, this time in Socorro, New Mexico and it was with some difficulty that Clara gained his release.<sup>248</sup> He later died on 9 September 1898 in Albuquerque, New Mexico after what appears to have been a lengthy illness and it would seem that no notice was ever sent by Clara to his family in New York.<sup>249</sup> It is also evident that they remained in financial trouble since according to sworn statements in William’s pension file; the *Ladies Non-Sectarian Benevolent Association* of Albuquerque had cared for the couple during the winter of 1897-1898 by “paying rent, buying fuel and other items,”<sup>250</sup> as the funds from William’s pension were insufficient to cover all their living expenses. It is clear then that they never found any portion of the fabled treasure during their sojourn at the site or profited from the selling of antiquities as the Wetherills

<sup>248</sup> Military Service Records, “Deposition E of Mary Corbin Halifax, dated 16 August 1900, Exhibit F, Letter Identified by Mary C. Halifax,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>249</sup> Military Service Records, “Letter from O. W. Strong, ‘The Practical Undertaker and Embalmer’ dated 16 September 1898” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>250</sup> Military Service Records, “Affidavit of Ladies’ Non-Sectarian Benevolent Association dated 28 February 1898,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

had, and the property was to cause Clara significant difficulty in her final years as she fought to retain it.

With the passing of her husband, a new set of hardships was to befall Clara. In the nineteenth century, although the property and any benefits from the labor of married women actually belonged to their husbands, a woman's status as widow afforded her privileges and a certain amount of respect and autonomy not granted otherwise. One of these privileges was the right to draw upon their late-husbands' accounts or military pensions if not entailed to other male heirs. Eight days after William's death, Clara took advantage of this benefit by filing for a widow's pension from Albuquerque, only to have her status as a widow threatened ten months later.<sup>251</sup> In July of 1899, while Clara's claim was still pending, William's first wife also filed a claim against the pension, this one from Lockport, New York as a deserted wife.<sup>252</sup> Since William had died nearly a year prior, Mary J. Corbin's claim as a deserted wife (which would have entitled her to half of whatever military pension William was drawing at the time) was denied in September of 1899 and it was at this time that she was informed that her husband had died the year before.<sup>253</sup> Mary quickly followed up the rejection of her deserted wife's claim with another for widow's benefits.<sup>254</sup> The conflicting claims of the two women upon the same veteran's pension left the War Department's Record and Pension Office with no alternative but to investigate the claims of both. The investigation commenced in early

<sup>251</sup> Military Service Records, "Notarized Statement of Clara A. B. Corbin dated 17 September 1898," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives; and Military Service Records, "Application for Accrued Pension (Widows) of Clara A. B. Corbin, dated 28 April 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>252</sup> Military Service Records, "Declaration of Wife Under Act of March 3, 1899 of Mary Jane Corbin, dated 18 July 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>253</sup> Military Service Records, "Act of March 3, 1899, Class Deserted Wife, Submitted for Rejection 27 September 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>254</sup> Military Service Records, "Declaration for Widow's Pension of Mary Jane Corbin, dated 12 October 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

1900 with affidavits and depositions being taken in Albuquerque, Lockport, and Chicago. While the bureaucratic wheels slowly began to turn, the nearly blind Clara having already sold what little remained of their personal property — William’s horse, a farm wagon, set of double harness, wagon sheet, and farming implements — traveled north to Colorado Springs.<sup>255</sup>

We cannot be sure when or why Clara Corbin first visited this bustling Colorado town, but letters in the pension file dispatched by her from Colorado Springs prove that she spent some time there. Clara indicates in her book, that having visited Denver with William for health reasons sometime before filing the homestead claim in 1896, after William’s death she again traveled to Colorado, “to have removed some unnatural inward growth that had long been sapping her physical strength, and which her physician assured her would otherwise, in a very short time, prove fatal.”<sup>256</sup> While this visit to St. Francis Hospital in Colorado Springs as outlined in her book is one of those details that as yet cannot be corroborated, pictures showing St. Francis as it appeared at that time (with the balcony and associated chapel with resident priest) are exactly as Corbin describes — indicating that she had at some point at least seen or visited the building, even if she had never been a resident there. While the real reason for the trip is as yet a mystery, Corbin did travel to the area, and it is likely that on one of these occasions she met ostensible preservation champion Virginia D. McClurg, the regent of the *Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association*, Lucy Peabody, the Association’s vice-regent (who worked as a deputy

<sup>255</sup> Military Service Records, “Affidavit of Claimant Clara A.B. Corbin, dated 4 January 1899,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>256</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 428.

registrar in the State Land Office), or one of the other members of this women's club.<sup>257</sup>

The fight that the Association, and McClurg in particular, was waging for the protection of Mesa Verde about that same time was widely publicized in Colorado, and their activities would have made them attractive to Clara Corbin as possible allies.

Virginia McClurg became involved in preservation work shortly after her arrival in Colorado in 1877.<sup>258</sup> Born Mary Virginia Donaghe in 1858<sup>259</sup> in New York City she received her education in Virginia, coming west from Morristown, New Jersey as a news correspondent for the *New York Daily Graphic* and opening a private school in Colorado Springs in 1878.<sup>260</sup> Her own conflicting reports say that she first visited the cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde in 1882, making a second better-documented journey to the area as the organizer of a group that would discover Balcony House in 1885-1886. Her visits to the ancient sites spawned a passion for their protection that lasted the rest of her life and she wrote numerous articles to increase public awareness about their plight.

She came to use the second of her names, Virginia, rather than Mary, and in 1889 wrote a series of articles for the *Great Divide* that appeared only months after the news regarding the Wetherill discovery of Cliff Palace.<sup>261</sup> Later that same year she married fellow writer and publisher Gilbert McClurg in Morristown, New Jersey, with whom she

<sup>257</sup> Duane A. Smith, *Women to the Rescue: Creating Mesa Verde National Park* (Korea: The Durango Herald Small Press, 2005), p. 7.

<sup>258</sup> Chronology: Virginia McClurg ?-1931, Adapted from a biography by the El Paso County Pioneers Association, The Virginia and Gilbert McClurg Collection, The Starsmore Center for Local History, The Pioneers' Museum of Colorado Springs.

<sup>259</sup> Though unverified, the date of October 5, 1857 has been postulated by researchers of Ken Burns' production company *Florentine Films*. Susan Shumaker, "Archives & Archivists List," [electronic bulletin board], March 2004 [cited 28 November 2006]; available from listserv @ Miami University, <http://listserv.muohio.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A2=ind0403d&L=archives&T=0&P=1562>.

<sup>260</sup> Duane A. Smith, *Women to the Rescue: Creating Mesa Verde National Park* (Korea: The Durango Herald Small Press, 2005), p. 4.

<sup>261</sup> Smith, *Women to the Rescue*, p. 32.



remained for the rest of her life.<sup>262</sup> Gilbert assisted and encouraged Virginia in her preservation work and the couple became avid collectors of the objects being dug from the ancient sites. One account describes how in Durango in 1891 Gilbert overheard a man who was purchasing supplies, talking about his intention to go into the mesa country and dig for artifacts during the winter. Mr. McClurg then requested the first purchase option on any items recovered and in the following spring of 1892 bought a large collection from the man, who turned out to be the father of archaeologist Earl Morris.<sup>263</sup>

In her efforts to raise awareness about the ongoing destruction at the ancient dwellings of Mesa Verde, Virginia performed a series of lectures in Denver which produced a petition in 1894 for the protection and preservation of Mesa Verde that was ultimately sent to Washington only to be set aside.<sup>264</sup> Undaunted McClurg continued her crusade to preserve and protect the cliff dwellings, convincing the Colorado Federation of Women's Clubs to join the cause in 1897. She ultimately became the chairman of a committee they created just for this purpose and wrote letters to President and Mrs. McKinley in an effort to bring them into the battle as well. Though the response to this letter brought a cool request from a presidential aid to send future inquiries to the Secretary of Interior, McClurg forged on.

In May of 1900, she helped incorporate the *Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association*, although the action caused some friction within the ranks due to the fact that a Women's Club committee for the cause already existed. The new association required an initiation

<sup>262</sup> Chronology: Virginia McClurg ?-1931, Adapted from a biography by the El Paso County Pioneers Association, The Virginia and Gilbert McClurg Collection, The Starsmore Center for Local History, The Pioneers' Museum of Colorado Springs.

<sup>263</sup> Smith, *Women to the Rescue*, p. 30.

<sup>264</sup> Duane A. Smith, *Mesa Verde National Park: Shadows of the Centuries* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2002), p. 45.

fee of \$2 and annual dues of \$1 and with it McClurg gained an organization over which she had control rather than just a committee, as she had been elected regent of the group upon the incorporation of the new Association.<sup>265</sup> Women’s social groups were much in vogue at the time, growing as the women’s suffrage movement gained momentum, and were becoming the women’s equivalent to the male-dominated intellectual societies from which women had long been excluded. By establishing such organizations, nineteenth and early twentieth-century women were gaining the status they had long been denied, and in the process were tackling social reform issues that began with the reform movements of the 1830s. Virginia’s plan was to create a park that protected the ruins of Mesa Verde and would be controlled by the Women’s Association, just as Ann Pamela Cunningham had done with Mount Vernon in 1853. Highly elitist and exclusionary, most of the organizations appealed to upper middle-class and wealthy women who had the time and money to devote to the causes that their social clubs espoused. McClurg’s own Association gave root to chapters in four other states, with the California chapter limiting their membership to those of a “cultured Christian” background.<sup>266</sup>

It was into this extremely active and fairly influential environment of Women’s Clubs that Clara Corbin entered upon her arrival in Colorado Springs. At some time during her tenure in the town, Corbin had come into contact with McClurg, Peabody or another of the influential ladies involved in the Mesa Verde preservation efforts since their initial adoption of the preservation cause in 1897. Having turned to lecturing in Albuquerque on various subjects related to Gran Quivira in order to support herself, on July 25, 1899, Clara Corbin gave a lecture at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert McClurg

<sup>265</sup> Smith, *Women to the Rescue*, p. 43.

<sup>266</sup> Smith, *Mesa Verde National Park*, p. 51.

in Colorado Springs. The content of Corbin's public presentation at the McClurg home was Clara's search for the lost spring presumed to exist at Gran Quivira, and for which the state of New Mexico was then offering a \$5,000 reward for locating. It is likely that Corbin's and McClurg's acquaintance, and shared interest in antiquities, provided an occasion for Virginia McClurg to become aware of the existence of the ancient ruins at Gran Quivira and the particulars regarding the Corbins' homestead there.

McClurg continued her work by promoting preservation through public appearances. After seeing to the incorporation of the *Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association* in May, she soon left on a trip to the continent. During the April-November 1900 Paris Exposition, McClurg acted as a delegate to the Ethnological Congress and received an award and “the title of *Officier del Instruction Publique*, as well as the Gold Palm of the French Academy.”<sup>267</sup> By the end of October 1900, William Henry Goodyear, the first curator of the Brooklyn Museum, was writing to Virginia in an effort to divert her to New York on her way home from the exposition — evidence of her growing influence not only in women's preservation circles but in the more male-oriented archaeological and ethnographic circles as well. While McClurg was away on preservation business, Clara Corbin learned that Mary J. Corbin had also filed for widow's benefits against William's Civil War Pension, the same month Clara had given her lecture from the McClurg's home.

William's death did not cease the itinerant style of Clara's life, for she did not remain long in Colorado. Sometime during the spring or summer of 1900 Corbin traveled from Colorado Springs back to New Mexico after being absent from the

<sup>267</sup> Chronology: Virginia McClurg ?-1931, Adapted from a biography by the El Paso County Pioneers Association, The Virginia and Gilbert McClurg Collection, The Starsmore Center for Local History, The Pioneers' Museum of Colorado Springs.

homestead since 1895-1896. She then spent “several months upon the homestead claim of [her] deceased husband” at Gran Quivira in an effort to begin meeting the requirements of the Homestead Act before returning to Colorado by August of that year.<sup>268</sup> Upon her return to Colorado she wasted no time in again petitioning the Department of the Interior for a widow’s pension with which to support herself and begin making the required improvements upon the homestead, which would in turn facilitate her residence upon the site. Clara’s last communication issued from Colorado Springs was sent in August 1900, and by February 1901 letters place her in Washington D.C. where she had gone in an effort to conclude the Civil War Veteran’s Widow’s pension case.

Given her financial situation, it is not clear how Corbin found the funds to travel to Washington D.C. By 26 February 1901 however, she was addressing missives regarding her ongoing pension battle to the U. S. Chief Justice Melville W. Fuller in Washington from her lodging at the Washington *Home for the Blind*.<sup>269</sup> How the notion came to her to travel so far is also a mystery, although the proximity in Colorado Springs of women such as the well connected Lucy Peabody (who had worked for nine years as a secretarial assistant in Washington D.C. for the *Bureau of American Ethnology* before marrying and moving to Colorado), and other associates of Virginia McClurg, can lead to speculation that they might have influenced and funded Mrs. Corbin’s journey to the nation’s capital and Corbin indicates in her book that her return to Gran Quivira had been

<sup>268</sup> Military Service Records, “Letter from Clara A. B. Corbin to the Honorable The Secretary of the Interior, dated 2 August 1900,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

<sup>269</sup> Military Service Records, “Letter from Clara A. B. Corbin to U.S. Chief Justice, Melville W. Fuller, Washington, D. C., dated 26 February 1901,” Pension File of William G. Corbin of William Corbin, RG 94.12, National Archives.

financed by a benefactor.<sup>270</sup> It is nevertheless clear that while Clara Corbin was fighting to gain the widow's benefit of \$8 per month, Virginia D. McClurg was secretly planning to travel south from Colorado Springs to Gran Quivira while Clara was conveniently out of the way. Corbin did not return to the ruin on the hill until 1903, and in the meantime became embroiled in battles on two separate fronts: the continuing fight with the family from William's first marriage for the pension that they believed Mary J. Corbin was entitled to as the widow of Mr. Corbin; and a second battle that began in July 1901 with the determined crusader for American antiquities, Mrs. Gilbert McClurg. How Clara Corbin intended to make the improvements to the land required by the homestead patent without the implements she had sold off is difficult to say, but her intent was clear — she would move herself to Gran Quivira and set up a permanent home there to watch over the venerable ruins, at least until such time as the treasure could be found.

Corbin continued her battle for widow's benefits staying in Washington through March. Her deposition was taken on the 18<sup>th</sup> by Record and Pension Office Special Examiner C. H. Jonas Jr. who said that although Clara, "impressed me as a lady of refinement, and consequently of good repute from evidence so far obtained it would appear that claimant Mary is the legal widow."<sup>271</sup> Examiner Jonas recommended that before final adjudication was given, that divorce records in Chicago be searched on the possibility that William had obtained a divorce without Mary's consent, as he had threatened to do in his letter to her 11 November 1872.<sup>272</sup> A search was indeed

<sup>270</sup> Smith, *Women to the Rescue*, p. 6.

<sup>271</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to Hon. Commissioner of Pensions from C. H. Jonas Jr., Special Examiner, dated 19 March 1901," Pension File of William G. Corbin of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>272</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to Mary Corbin from Wm. G. Corbin, dated 11 November 1872," Pension File of William G. Corbin of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

conducted and the deposition of the Vice President of the Title Guarantee and Trust Company of Chicago was taken. He presented the finding that during his search of the Title Company's records, "[a] bill for divorce was filed by William G. Corbin, vs. Mary J. Corbin on May 27, 1873 in the Superior Court of Cook Co. Ill. Case no. 43532, but said proceeding was on March 28, 1876 dismissed at complainant's cost, no decree of divorce having been entered therein."<sup>273</sup> In a final report from the Chicago Special Examiners office, Wm. W. Watson said,

In many cases the applicants for divorce were told that the decree had been obtained and the fee was demanded. The applicant thinking they were free from their marriage contracts would in some cases refuse to pay, and the decree would never be obtained. This may have been the case in this instance.

The Soldier evidently considered that he had been legally married to the claimant Mary J. or he would not have applied for a divorce.<sup>274</sup>

So this was the crux of Clara Corbin's problem: was she or was she not the legal widow of William — in the end she apparently was not, and the issue would continue to haunt her.

On April 6<sup>th</sup> 1901 Corbin's battle for William's pension ended in defeat when the Pension Board unceremoniously awarded the widow's benefits to Mary J. Corbin. Mary had faced abandonment in 1870,<sup>275</sup> the loss of a home she had purchased with inheritance money from her brother and father,<sup>276</sup> the death of two daughters,<sup>277</sup> had lived under the

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<sup>273</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition A of Stanison B. Riley, dated 25 March 1901," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>274</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to Hon. H. Clay Evans, Commis. Of Pensions from Wm. W. Watson, Special Examiner, dated 26 March 1901," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>275</sup> Military Service Records, "Declaration of Wife Under Act of March 3, 1899 of Mary Jane Corbin, dated 18 July 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>276</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition C of Mary J. Corbin, dated 28 June 1900," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>277</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition E of Mary Corbin Halifax, dated 16 August 1900," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

auspices of her nephew and brother for years,<sup>278</sup> and was finally being granted some, although very small, remuneration. She had been unable to produce a marriage certificate, since there had been no Bureau of Vital Statistics at the time of her marriage to William. Mary J. had however, been able to secure the testimony of no less than a dozen neighbors and relatives in her case, including both of William's surviving children and another that was most likely a sibling or niece of Mr. Corbin.<sup>279</sup> All of William's and Clara's protests to the contrary had proved in vain, the Pension Commissioner had found the truth — and the truth was that William had been a bigamist, opening wide the door for the furious battle over the land in New Mexico that the first widow Corbin could not care less about, but that Clara desperately wanted to keep.

Clara did not give up her bid to obtain widow's benefits and followed up the Pension Board's decision that April by appealing while she was still in Washington. Corbin wrote a scathing letter to the Secretary of the Interior in which she openly accused the Commissioner of Pensions of causing William's death by not paying the pension owed him (\$32 rather than \$12 per month) and thereby preventing him from receiving the necessary medical attention his condition required.<sup>280</sup> Earlier in the fight for the pension claim, she had also accused a chapter leader of the G.A.R. in New York, one Warren A. Ives, of unfairly influencing the Pension Department against William and herself, and of stirring up trouble with the G.A.R. chapter in New Mexico. On the face of it these claims may sound more like desperation than fact, but they may have had more truth in them

<sup>278</sup> Military Service Records, "Deposition I of Harry T. Benedict, dated 13 August 1900," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>279</sup> This would be Martha Corbin Hayes who signed as a witness for Mary J. in her deserted wife's claim. See Military Service Records, "Declaration of Wife Under Act of March 3 1899 of Mary Jane Corbin, dated 18 July 1899," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>280</sup> Military Service Records, "An Appeal to the Honorable The Secretary of the Interior, witnessed 11 April 1901," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

than some would, at the time, admit. The G.A.R. *had* been very influential with the Pension Department and had also been giving Mary J. financial assistance for years. The most telling statement Clara Corbin made in her diatribe to the Interior Secretary, expressed a very real fear that what had been revealed in the pension investigation would affect her future opportunities. She wrote:

I accuse the Hon. Commissioner of Pensions [. . .] [of defaming] my character *making it impossible for me to associate with the people to whose society I had been accustomed* by the unfair action of giving information as to the matter of there being a second claimant to pension claim No. 683,240 with opinion freely expressed which forestalled the result of the adjudication of these respectable people and have made it impossible for me to secure respectable employment.<sup>281</sup>

This passage suggests several things; Corbin had apparently been mingling with people of society, probably those people who could help her most — those who had the money and time to do so — people like McClurg, Lucy Peabody and the other ladies of the *Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association*. From this statement it is also clear that she seems to think (or these people had already made clear) that they were no longer willing to do so. Corbin ended her letter with a final note of bitterness, by demanding that, “no such allowance as the one in question be made or paid to the contestant Mary J. Benedict,”<sup>282</sup> — to the end denying Mary J. even the benefit of her married name.

The appeal failed as well. The final decision was given in a report signed by Assistant Secretary of the Department of the Interior, F. L. Campbell, in which he commended the devotion that Clara Corbin had shown William as a wife, but determined, “[f]rom certain correspondence on file in the case it seems quite clear that claimant

<sup>281</sup> Military Service Records, “An Appeal to the Honorable The Secretary of the Interior, witnessed 11 April 1901,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives. Italics added for emphasis.

<sup>282</sup> Military Service Records, “An Appeal to the Honorable The Secretary of the Interior, witnessed 11 April 1901,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.



herein, after the death of the soldier, became cognizant of the fact that at the date of her marriage to him he had a wife living from whom he had not been divorced.”<sup>283</sup> It seemed as if Corbin’s fate was cast.

As early as 1 July 1901, Alfred Wetherill accompanied Virginia McClurg on an expedition to Gran Quivira. There is little evidence of this trip to the arid New Mexico plain, because as McClurg herself wrote, “I did not care to confide my mission, which demanded delicacy and secrecy, to correspondence, lest some enterprising squatter or relic hunter should anticipate my claim upon Tabira [Gran Quivira], and therefore went to Mancos, the home of Mr. Wetherill, to see him personally.”<sup>284</sup> Was the squatter, or relic hunter to whom McClurg referred Clara Corbin or was it someone else she was worried about? We may never know, but it is clear from statements that appear later in the document that she meant to take the land containing the ruins and hand it over to the *Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences*. She herself as a married woman, despite all that she had so far accomplished, could not legally file a homestead claim — only unmarried women, widows and men could file — so the action had to be taken in the name of her husband. In a report obviously meant for Professor Goodyear, curator of the Brooklyn Museum, McClurg laid out two plans for securing title to the property. In the first, which she had already begun, a contest claim was entered in Gilbert McClurg’s name, and was due to be heard within the year.<sup>285</sup> In order to reopen the land for homestead claims McClurg had only to prove that the Homestead Act requirements had not been met. Once

<sup>283</sup> Military Service Records, “Letter to the Commissioner of Pensions from F. L. Campbell,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>284</sup> Culin Archival Collection, “The Pueblos of the Salines,” Object 4.2.002, Southwest Indians, 1901-1917, Brooklyn Museum Archives copied 26 October 2004.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.* Note: the date of 2 December was given by McClurg in this report although the Contest Dockets show the case was initially heard much earlier in September (see below).

this had been done, Mr. McClurg would have thirty days to take possession of the land and add the called-for improvements. The title could not be handed over to the *Institute* for seven years and she stipulated that, “we [she and Mr. McClurg] should wish to retain a third interest in the place.” She informed Goodyear that a home would have to be constructed to prove habitation, “tho’ an occasional visit will do,”<sup>286</sup> she wrote.

The second plan called for purchasing the acreage outright by buying the Soldier’s Scrip at \$6.50 an acre as soon as William Corbin’s claim was declared vacant. This could only be done providing that the *legal* heirs had allowed the previous claim to lapse according to the homestead law. With this, she cautioned, “The woman who has passed herself off as Corbin’s wife (but who is not) has told everyone she meets, stories of twenty-five millions of dollars in bars of silver and gold buried there by the Spaniards, and the place is jealously watched, remote as it is.”<sup>287</sup> Thus Corbin’s own indiscrete comments seem to have contributed to McClurg’s desire for the site. McClurg’s plans however, cast her in a somewhat hypocritical light. Despite her accusations against Clara, her own intentions were also against the spirit of the homestead law, which required the site to be the *primary* home of the applicant and also forbid the speculation of claimants for the benefit of third parties.

How exactly McClurg first learned of the two widows of William G. Corbin is yet another of the mysteries that surrounds this story, but however it occurred once set in motion McClurg’s determination proved indefatigable and it was at this point the battle for the homestead at Gran Quivira began in earnest. After McClurg’s secret July 4<sup>th</sup> 1901 trip to the ruins, she filed a contest affidavit in on 23 July, and an initial hearing was set

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Culin Archival Collection, “The Pueblos of the Salines,” Object 4.2.002, Southwest Indians, 1901-1917, Brooklyn Museum Archives copied 26 October 2004.

for September 16<sup>th</sup> with the final hearing to take place a month later. This first round of hearings was dismissed due to the failure of the parties involved to appear, and it is most likely that the notices sent out to the involved parties in preparation for the hearings were how Corbin first became aware of the threat to her claim. A subsequent hearing in was also dismissed for failure to appear, and it is at this juncture that William and Clara Corbin's itinerant lifestyle began to cause Clara significant difficulties. Having never resided in any one community long enough to form any significant connections, Corbin was denied possible allies of the sort that McClurg utilized — such as Mr. Franklin Eli Brooks who acted as McClurg's attorney from Colorado Springs (until Judge Napoleon B. Laughlin was retained to represent her in New Mexico) and was the husband of one of her friends from the Women's Association. From the Contest Dockets, it appears that Corbin had problems in finding witnesses to act on her behalf in the contest case, and the dockets also show that after each dismissal for failure to appear or failure to prosecute, McClurg re-filed her contest to the Corbin homestead claim. Corbin, for her part rushed to make some improvement to the property, having a Mr. Mannakkee cover one of the rooms of San Buenaventura church at Gran Quivira<sup>288</sup> in an effort to have something that might qualify as a habitation upon the property as the Homestead Act required. To end McClurg's bid to gain the property she shortly thereafter applied for final proof on the homestead claim on 8 February 1902.<sup>289</sup>

McClurg however was not swayed from her course. In response she fired off a letter to the Commissioner of Pensions in mid-February 1902 in which she made known,

<sup>288</sup> Culin Archival Collection, "OPINION signed by Manuel R. Otero, Fred. Muller, Receiver," Object 4.2.002, Southwest Indians, 1901-1917, Brooklyn Museum Archives copied 26 October 2004.

<sup>289</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to the Honorable, The Commissioner of Pensions, Interior Department from Virginia D. McClurg, dated 18 February 1902," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

That the said Clara E. Corbin is not, in truth and fact, the widow of the said William G. Corbin, nor has she any right, title, interest, equity or demand by, through or under the said William G. Corbin in and to the said premises, or any part or parcel thereof.

That the said William G. Corbin died heretofore, to wit: [. . .] leaving him surviving a lawful widow, resident in the State of New York.

[. . .] Your Petitioner further alleges that she is informed and verily believes that the said William G. Corbin was a member of Company F in the One Hundred and Fifty-first Regiment of New York Infantry; that the above facts, and all of them, together with the additional facts of the name and place of residence of the said lawful widow of the said William G. Corbin, and the date of his death are matters of record in the office of the Commissioner of Pensions.<sup>290</sup>

Verily indeed, she was very well informed if she had such details regarding the Corbins and their holdings. No response from Corbin is documented, though there is sure to have been one from the lady who later wrote, “It is one of my most firmly-rooted principles to always have my own way.”<sup>291</sup>

Somehow, Virginia D. McClurg had discovered the most sordid detail of the Corbin pension case — William’s bigamy. When Clara referred to the Pension Office disseminating information regarding the existence of *two* widows making claims against the pension during her appeal, there can be little doubt — considering how events were to unfold — that it was to McClurg, or one of her very close associates, whom the information had been given. In the end this suspicion is supported by the small flurry of letters held in William’s pension file, beginning with the February 1902 request from McClurg for transcripts of the pension investigation. Now Corbin faced her second great fight — this one with an equally determined, independent and tenacious woman who had extensive experience battling what many considered to be nearly impossible odds. Given

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<sup>290</sup> Military Service Records, “Letter to the Honorable, The Commissioner of Pensions, Interior Department from Virginia D. McClurg, dated 18 February 1902,” Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>291</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira a Musical Mystery*, p. 441.

the decision of the Pension Bureau, this particular contest must have seemed a simple matter to McClurg.

Five months later on 16 July 1902 the Registrar in the Land Office requested documentation in connection with the pension claim investigation of the widows Corbin. McClurg's attorneys, Lunt, Brooks & Wilcox in Colorado Springs made the same request in August<sup>292</sup> in preparation for the hearing set to begin in the New Mexico capital on the 18<sup>th</sup> of that month.<sup>293</sup> The Commissioner of Pensions did not seem in the least cooperative in response to these requests, refusing to send any documentation unless the precise evidence wanted was specified. Presumably after the August hearing Virginia McClurg was able to get an Opinion issued by the Registrar at the Land Office in that sounded suspiciously similar to the letter she had sent to the Commissioner of Pensions earlier that year. It can only be speculated whether she gave the Registrar the words to use or stole the phrase from him, but once again Clara was deemed, "not in truth and fact, the lawful widow of William G. Corbin."<sup>294</sup> The Opinion stated that the Clara Corbin's claim was invalid and should be re-opened to other homestead claims. Yet again Clara found herself appealing a government agency's decision and the final battle would once more take place in Washington, D.C.

It is evident from letters to Professor Goodyear that Virginia was still involved in the land battle with Clara as of 17 February 1903, as well as simultaneously continuing with her crusade for the protection and control of Mesa Verde. It is also worth noting

<sup>292</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to the Commissioner of Pensions from Franklin Brooks, dated 12 August 1902," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>293</sup> Military Service Records, "Letter to Mr. Franklin E. Brooks, Attorney from Commissioner of Pensions, dated 15 August 1902," Pension File of William G. Corbin, RG 94:12, National Archives.

<sup>294</sup> Culin Archival Collection, "OPINION signed by Manuel R. Otero, Fred. Muller, Receiver," Object 4.2.002, Southwest Indians, 1901-1917, Brooklyn Museum Archives copied 26 October 2004.

that although the previously mentioned final report from the Assistant Secretary of the Interior that denied Clara Corbin's appeal to the pension claim was not dated, its cover sheet was date-stamped received on 13 February 1903, indicating that a final decision was not reached until around that time. What bitter years these must have been for Clara. McClurg herself was not fairing as well as she might have hoped in her efforts to get park legislation passed for Mesa Verde — with bills dying in the House Land Committee in the years 1902 and 1903 despite McClurg's testimony before that body in both instances.<sup>295</sup>

Besides William Corbin's bigamy, there were many reasons why Clara's claim to the homestead might not have been considered valid. The Homestead Act entitled those qualified to one hundred sixty acres of land, but required that claimants meet provisions before their claim was considered final. Those provisions stated that settlers would have six months after filing the initial claim to begin improvements, namely building a place of primary residence, and cultivating the land. Patents would not be issued unless the homesteader had resided upon, improved, and cultivated his land for at least a year after starting the improvements on it. The patent was issued after final proof on the claim was made, which could be done after a period of five years — less when the applicant's time served in military service was deducted from that total.<sup>296</sup> Widows could inherit the homestead claim of their husbands and were also entitled to deduct time off of the five-year proof period requirement for their husbands' military service time.<sup>297</sup> William and Clara however, had not begun improvement on the land within the six-month time frame

<sup>295</sup> Smith, *Women to the Rescue*, p. 51.

<sup>296</sup> Act of April 4, 1872 (42<sup>nd</sup> Congress, Sess. II, Ch. 85).

<sup>297</sup> James Muhn, "Women and the Homestead Act: Land Department Administration of a Legal Imbroglio, 1863-1934," *Western Legal History*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (Summer/Fall 1994), p. 297, 299-300.

due to his incarceration, extended illness (from the symptoms given he appears to have suffered a stroke which led to paralysis), and death. Clara had gone out to Gran Quivira in an effort to begin meeting these stipulations, but it was well after the first year of filing.

The GLO Commissioners were given broad authority on homestead claims and contest cases in their regions — so the Commissioner could have ruled that extenuating circumstances kept the Corbins from meeting their obligations, and that Clara had indeed later made efforts to remain in “good faith” as the law required. Clara’s cause however, was set back by McClurg’s connections — being well situated within preservation circles she was able to retain a New Mexico judge and practicing attorney that was also strongly associated with the preservation movement as well and with the local historical and archaeological groups in the territory, and therefore sympathetic to McClurg’s cause. Her attorney in the homestead contest case was Judge Napoleon Bonaparte Laughlin, a prominent New Mexican, who was a friend of Edgar Lee Hewett’s (the first director of the School of American Research and founder of the Museum of New Mexico). Since Laughlin acted as the attorney in many matters for the Museum of New Mexico, such as land purchases, he was familiar with the Commissioner at the GLO in as well as that GLO’s specific requirements.

The most damning evidence against Corbin though, was William’s failure to complete a divorce from his first wife. This left Clara Corbin with no legal status with which to claim William’s homestead. Her only options then were to try and contest the Pension Office ruling that she was not the legal widow of William; or to allow the claim to be invalidated and apply as a single woman for the homestead (which according to the

Homestead Act was permitted) before anyone else was able to do so, and thereafter meet the requirements of occupying, and improving the land under her own name.

It was in this period that Clara finally began an occupation of the homestead in an effort to maintain her precarious hold on the property, and changed the spelling of her married name from Corbin to Corbyn. In her book, published in 1904, she recalled how she began her journey to her new abode on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of February 1903.<sup>298</sup> Upon arriving at the site she noted with patently clear fury that a great deal of damage had been done to her beloved and long neglected ruin, “to furnish building material for the store at the foot of the hill.”<sup>299</sup> That she was upset about the vandalism done to her ancient architectural relic is clear, but it is equally clear that she avidly desired the discovery of the treasure she was sure was secreted beneath the ground of that same ruin. In contrast it was the architectural remnants themselves and the cultural artifacts beneath the ground that were the treasure to McClurg, who remained steadfast in her efforts to remove Clara Corbyn’s claim to them. Except for a few letters from Virginia to the *Institute* continuing to outline her plans for the property, not much is heard from either woman during this time. McClurg was still trying to break Clara and William’s original homestead claim by having the land declared vacant and therefore accessible to new petitioners. Virginia had changed her mind about how best to file on the site, saying now that she wished to file a ‘desert lands’ claim that would preclude the need to build a primary residence — the claim being confirmed by the development of water, and would deed 320 rather than only

<sup>298</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira a Musical Mystery*, p. 441.

<sup>299</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira a Musical Mystery*, p. 446-447.



160 acres to her and the *Institute*.<sup>300</sup> A letter sent to a member of the board of the *Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences* reveals that the Institute had reservations about McClurg's plan and feared that, "advancing money at present would be encouraging Mrs. McClurg to suppose that we had definitely decided to acquire the site by the plan which she proposes [ . . . ] [and] would be to encourage [her] hopes just at the time when it is possible that the Institute may determine that it is unwise to go farther in this matter."<sup>301</sup> Their reticence would be of little consequence, as the decision was only a few months from being determined.

While Stewart Culin, an ethnographer on contract with the *Brooklyn Institute*, was arranging to stop by Gran Quivira on his tour of the Southwest in the summer of 1903, events were building toward a final clash between the two independent and stubborn women fighting for the site. No official documents have yet come to light that detail the end of the saga by explaining how the two antagonists met in Washington D.C., or why the Secretary of the Interior took the action attributed to him, but what we do have is a much later newspaper report written by Ralph E. Herron of the *Tucson Star* in November 1913 that provides clues as to how the tale ends.<sup>302</sup> As with any newspaper article that relies on the interviews of people, there are a great many inaccuracies in his tale. For example, he gives the wrong date for the Land Office hearing in 1902, placing it on the 21<sup>st</sup> of July rather than the 18<sup>th</sup> of August as the official documents record, and gives the year of McClurg's trip to Gran Quivira as occurring in 1902 rather than the summer of

<sup>300</sup> Culin Archival Collection, "Letter to Professor Goodyear from Virginia McClurg, dated 17 February 1903," Object 4.2.002, Southwest Indians, 1901-1917, Brooklyn Museum Archives copied 26 October 2004.

<sup>301</sup> Culin Archival Collection, "Letter to Prof. Franklin W. Hooper, dated 26 February 1903," Object 4.2.002, Southwest Indians, 1901-1917, Brooklyn Museum Archives copied 26 October 2004.

<sup>302</sup> Ralph E. Herron, "Strange Story of the Gran Quivira," *Tucson Star*, November 1913.

1901, but in one particular, he is our only detailed source — the outcome of the Washington D.C. hearing. As had been the case in the pension claim, Clara A. B. Corbin was found not to be the legal widow of William G. Corbin under whom the homestead claim was made, consequently, Clara’s claim was deemed invalid. McClurg had finally won her case and the largest prehistoric ruins in the Southwest were almost within her grasp — a victory at last! Then in the last hour, according to Herron’s *Tuscon Star* article, the Secretary of the Interior, E. A. Hitchcock, overturned the Land Office’s decision and deemed Clara’s claim to be valid on 28 January 1904. The only corroboration of this tale is contained in the Contest Claim Docket, which records,

‘H’ June 22-1903, affirms decision of local office and holds entry for cancellation. Parties notified June 26-1903. Appeal filed Aug. 19-1903. Ans. to appeal filed Sept. 14-1903. All papers forwarded to G.L.O. Sept 15-1903. H. Jan 28-1904, transmits Departmental decision reversing the decision of G.L.O. of June 22-1903. Parties notified Feb. 8-1903. R. and R. report no action Mch. 16-1904. ‘H’ July 23, 1904 – Closes case.<sup>303</sup>

These few lines lend credence to the story laid out in Herron’s article, yet we are left with the mystery regarding why the decision was reversed.

Bitterness cannot begin to describe what Virginia D. McClurg must have felt. One is left to wonder if this might have been the origin of her acrimony against the federal government that caused her to reverse her efforts to make Mesa Verde a national park, and return to the idea of “a state park, which would be comfortable controlled by the Association [ . . . ] in effect, [placing] the cliff dwellings under her personal control.”<sup>304</sup> In the past she had expressed her reluctance to trust her beloved cliff dwellings to the government, and now one of the government’s agents had refused to

<sup>303</sup> Records of Division “H” (Contests Division), “Docket of [Homestead Contest Cases], page 125” RG 49, National Archives.

<sup>304</sup> Smith, *Mesa Verde National Park*, p. 63.

rescue the largest and arguably one of the most important sites of antiquity from a person whom Virginia thought of as a base treasure hunter.<sup>305</sup> She had succeeded in saving this stately giant only to be thwarted at the end of an arduous battle, the opportunity of protection and scientific study of a site slipping away once more. But this would not always be so. The passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906 would immediately precede the passage of legislation safeguarding her adored Mesa Verde, and protection would soon follow for Gran Quivira as well.

In the meantime, on 12 June 1905 Corbin wrote an intriguing letter to President Theodore Roosevelt that raises yet more questions about how the battle for the property ultimately wound down. It is not clear if Corbin was residing on the homestead or not, but we know her desire was to do so, keeping locals from taking any more stones and beams, and preventing treasure seekers and curio/relic hunters from digging in the ruins. Corbin never gave up the hope of finding the fabled hoard herself and wrote a book whose proceeds she hoped would finance the endeavor. Corbin's 1905 letter makes allusions that McClurg requested a review of Hitchcock's decision and was denied, and that Corbin herself was prevented from living in her "home" — presumably that portion of the church that she had Mr. Mannakkee roof — by the President's request dating from August 18, 1904 for some sort of report. Corbin also wrote,

I request therefore that you at once withdraw the embargo you have placed upon the issuance to me of my rightful patent and that you recommend to the Honorable Congress of the United States of America that it pursue the investigation asked-for by me more than thre[e] years since, route the gang of thieves and outla[w]s, forcing them to make good to me the entire amount they have stolen from the land [. . .]. I had the honor to notify the Hon. Secretary of the Interior that your life was threatened by the outlaws of La Gran Quibira should you be induced to visit The Ruins you were lending your honorable aid in despoiling. I

<sup>305</sup> Smith, *Mesa Verde National Park*, p. 48, 60, 62-65.

received no acknowledgment whatever of my loyal and generous action. [. . .] Never before has a President shown me the discourtesy of i[g]noring a communication of an[y] kind, and under the circumstances it looks not well. It is now near the end of the fiscal year, yet in your name my patent to land including the Ruins of La Gran Quibira is withheld in your name. Why is this, and for how much longer a time am I in your name to be kept from perfect title to [m]y claim? There is no one who does not see the unworthy part acted by the Hon. Secretary of The Interior in the name of the President in countenancing the fraud perpetrated upon one whom he believes to be helpless and for the sole purpose of preventing her from bringing the case to the attention of Congress during its last session that the ground might be completely robbed. [. . .] It would now appear that they are attempting to misplace the U. S. Go. Survey marks that claim described in S. H. E. #4,544 may not so include the Ruins.<sup>306</sup>

Tongue in cheek, one wonders just how many Presidents of the United States Corbin had contacted in her battles, and just what threat was really made on President Roosevelt and by whom. The references in the letter to the ground being robbed hint that there may have been some archaeological excavation going on at the site during this time that Corbin was incensed about, wanting all the items returned to her or to receive payment for them. It also brings up the possibility that the fight over the homestead had not yet concluded, and that the President was directly involved in the continuance of the dispute.

While Corbin’s claims in this letter may seem outlandish to observers, it is interesting to note that Virginia McClurg did know President Roosevelt — the McClurg Collection at the *Starsmore Center* in Colorado Springs in fact contains a Christmas card the couple received from him while he was in residence at the White House. Further evidence that Corbin’s assertions are not unfounded can be found in the Corbin Homestead Patent Case File which contains a short note explaining,

The letter of the Secretary to the President of August 10, 1904, enclosing a telegram from Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert McClurg, D. B. Fairley and Philip Stewart was endorsed as follows:

<sup>306</sup> Land Entry Case File, “Letter to President Theodore Roosevelt from Clara A. B. Corbin, dated 12 June 1905,” Records of the Bureau of Land Management, RG 49, National Archives.

Interior Department

August 15, 1904

Respectfully referred to the Commissioner of the General Land Office for immediate report in duplicate and return of papers, with instructions to suspend the issuance of patent or any other action in the case herin referred to until further directions from the Department.

(signed) Thos Ryan  
Acting Secretary<sup>307</sup>

A patent was issued to Clara Corbin on the 18<sup>th</sup> of April 1905 for the, “South half of the South East quarter of Section thirty-four and the South half of the South West quarter of Section thirty-five in Township one North of Range eight East of the New Mexico meridian,” signed by the President. Her vituperative letter to President Roosevelt was written in June of 1905.<sup>308</sup> One explanation of this evidence is that government surveys conducted after the initial Corbin claim found that the Spanish Colonial church and *convento* ruins were not on Corbin’s land — modern plat maps certainly bear this out — and that Corbin is protesting the exclusion of the mission ruins from her land. Another might be that a patent was issued but later suspended. No documents clarifying the questions raised in Corbin’s letter to the President have yet come to light, although you can be sure that the search for them continues.

In the end, at the age of sixty-six, Clara Corbyn died in Los Angeles, California on the 30<sup>th</sup> of December 1913, outliving the first widow of William, Mary J., by a little over three years. On 29 April 1931, Mary Virginia Donaghe McClurg died in the Stonington, Connecticut home she and Gilbert had maintained throughout their marriage.<sup>309</sup> Clara’s peripatetic life would become the stuff of legends, for a time, as

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<sup>307</sup> Ibid, “Endorsement Report for letter of the Secretary to the President of August 10, 1904.”

<sup>308</sup> “Homestead Certificate No 2921, Application No. 4544, of Clara A. B. Corbin,” 18 April 1905, Records of the Bureau of Land Management, RG 49, National Archives.

<sup>309</sup> Unverified date that has been postulated by researchers of Ken Burns’ production company *Florentine Films*. Susan Shumaker, “Archives & Archivists List,” [electronic bulletin board], March 2004 [cited 28

would Virginia's efforts to save antiquities, and their fight succeeded in bringing Gran Quivira and its need for protection to the attention of the federal government, much as Mesa Verde had been. Clara Corbin had presented herself as the widow of a military veteran, and Virginia McClurg was the wife of a prominent writer and lecturer in Colorado society. While the men in the ethnographic and archaeological fields generally respected McClurg, Corbin was viewed as a crank. Their situations in society and their writings reveal a great deal about the cause of this disparity — the documents outline how they sought to accomplish their goal of controlling the Spanish Colonial mission ruins and pueblo of Gran Quivira and reveal the government institutions they petitioned, up to the President of the United States. Although denied direct access to government through voting, by entering homestead claims or contests in the General Land Office, each sought to obtain rights to the architectural remnants in central New Mexico.

Their goals pivoted on the legal implications of the homestead laws for women as well as the perception of the governmental heads that were to decide their case. Virginia, as a wife could not file a homestead claim, but was able to conduct her efforts in her husband's name, with his support. She also utilized the extensive connections she had developed in the preservation circles both she and her husband moved in. Clara, having been denied the legal protections of a wife by William Corbin's failure to complete the dissolution of his first marriage, had to rely upon the good opinion she was able to garner through personal meetings with those who were deciding her case — a tactic not always successful given the fact that many of the officials in , and the President himself, was

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November 2006];available from listserv @ Miami University,  
<http://listserv.muohio.edu/scripts/wa.exe?A2=ind0403d&L=archives&T=0&P=1562>.

sympathetic to McClurg's cause. The content of Corbin's book, *La Gran Quibira: A Musical Mystery*, also hurt, rather than helped, her cause.

Many readers viewed the book as a work of pure fiction, and in 1906 Frederick Webb Hodge even expressed the belief to Charles Fletcher Lummis that, “she was a crank.”<sup>310</sup> Corbin herself stated that “she blend[ed] Science, Religion, History and Romance,” in this volume, which she uses to reveal her theories upon the origins of the people of Las Humanas, the existence and origins of the treasure of Gran Quivira, and what happened at the site after the arrival of the Spanish.<sup>311</sup> Although greatly discounted, Corbin does seem to draw upon the widely accepted theory of the 19<sup>th</sup> century regarding the Aztec origins of the people who inhabited the Pueblo of Las Humanas at the time of the initial European contact, showing she was familiar with the ethnographic and historic work regarding Gran Quivira.

Close reading of her work reveals that, although Corbin used pseudonyms for many of her characters — Marguerite Zolange for herself and Lawrence Jerome for her husband William G. Corbin for example — it was meant to be a highly romanticized autobiography and history.<sup>312</sup> Corroboration for the reliability of information found in

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<sup>310</sup> Handwritten note on the back of letter from Corbin to Lummis, Alamogordo, NM, 22 April 1906, Charles Francis Lummis Collection, Braun Research Library, Autry National Center, Southwest Museum of the American Indian. The note is only initialed FWH and it is presumed given their association and working relationship that it is the note of Frederick Webb Hodge.

<sup>311</sup> Enclosed circular included with letter from Clara A.B. Corbin to Charles F. Lummis, Gran Quivira, NM, 23 March 1906, Charles Francis Lummis Collection, Braun Research Library, Autry National Center, Southwest Museum of the American Indian.

<sup>312</sup> Clara Corbin's story line concerning the early marriage of Marguerite, her husband's death and the death of their baby bears an uncanny resemblance to the basic elements of *Faust* as interpreted by Charles Gounod. Whether Corbin wrote the story to resemble the play, or it is truly autobiographical or both, is not at this time known. The changing of peoples' names and the using of only the first letter of a place name with the rest of the name represented by a dash (for example, A—, for Albuquerque) was a commonly used literary device in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. There are numerous literary devices and themes used in Corbin's work; romanticism, spiritualism, the occult, Kabbalistic myth, biblical legend, feminism, as well as the resemblance in the storyline to Faust. It is hoped that pointing out these aspects of Corbin's book may encourage future research.

her work can be derived from newspapers, William Corbin's pension file, and other sources, as well as identification of historically identifiable acquaintances in the village near Gran Quivira. This can be coupled with another factor that should not be discounted — the uncanny descriptions and observations made by Corbin in *La Gran Quibira*, concerning the ruin itself. The most significant of these are archaeological details mentioned by her that correlate to discoveries made by the archaeologist Alden Hayes in his excavations at Gran Quivira in the mid to late 1960s — notably Corbin's description of the discovery of masonry walls below the current ruins, and her postulation that it represented an earlier pueblo underneath the surface structures.<sup>313</sup>

Corbin's heavy use of romanticism, mysticism and spiritualism, or occult subject matter in her publication greatly contributed to the damage to her credibility in preservation circles.<sup>314</sup> Much in vogue during the Victorian era, spiritualism gave a voice

<sup>313</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira, a Musical Mystery*, p. 375. Corbin also mentions the discovery of the skeleton of a woman whose "head [was] upon one side of the broken wall and her lower limbs protruding into the chamber beyond," (pg. 425) the description of which is eerily similar to a discovery by Hayes [see: Alden C. Hayes, *Excavation of Mound 7 Gran Quivira National Monument, New Mexico* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, Department of the Interior, 1981), pg. 171.] for details on burial 410].

<sup>314</sup> The book begins almost immediately with such notions, opening with an explanation of her aim for writing — to reveal the missing link between the origins of man as revealed in the bible and history, specifically the origins of mankind on the North American Continent; ultimately using this as a way of explaining the history of the people and origins of the fabled treasure at Gran Quivira. These thoughts are then contrasted to more scientific views, covering the relationship between Science, History and Faith — all of which is spiced with veiled, and sometimes blatant, references to the place of women in the debate regarding these subjects. Corbin wastes no time in tying her views and research to spiritualism, saying on the first page, "These missing links have been supplied to me not only by research but by inspiration and by revelation also." (Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 19.) Very shortly into the narrative the biblical references turn rather Kabbalistic in nature when Lilith, the original wife of Adam, is introduced as a main character, about whom Corbin later says, "'Lilith?' She? Ah, you have guessed it. For I am 'She.'" (Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 71) However, rather than resembling the character from Semitic mythology that eats children and seduces men, Lilith then becomes the heroine within the story and the icon of feminist ideals. Given the rather feminist penchant of Corbin's story, it is possible that the draw to Kabbalistic tradition, came from its equal emphasis on feminine as well as masculine aspects of God — a very powerful notion during Corbin's time given that women still did not have the right to vote, and virtually became the property of their husbands when they married. (for a discussion of this see <http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/10/03/INGI190GNJ1.DTL> )

The essence of Lilith's status, and for Corbin, her power, lay in her refusal to submit to Adam. The feminist theme is carried throughout Corbin's story, in her portrayal of women, specifically priestesses, in superior roles/positions to men; such as the assertion by the character of the Aztec Queen-Priestess



to the disenfranchised — women, free blacks, and even children — by making them the speakers for those who had supposedly passed on to the afterlife. Rising around the same time as the reform movement, women found a place on the podium and in public giving lectures to crowds interested in how to gain direct knowledge of what lay beyond death. The period following the Civil War was ripe for the growth of the movement as so many then were grieving the loss of loved ones during the war and large proportions of the population were without any other avenue to voice their opinions, desires and woes.. Spiritualists however, came not only from the ranks of the disenfranchised, but also from the ranks of the affluent, with members such as the first lady, Mary Todd Lincoln (who attended lectures and held séances in an effort to contact the spirit of her dead son Tad), noted author Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and evolutionary biologist Alfred Russel Wallace.<sup>315</sup> A further draw to the movement and one of its hallmarks was the individualism it promoted — most likely the reason it remained popular through the turn

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Marahquirita, that she was queen in her own right through her superior wit and not ruler through marriage, “[. . .] although her lip quivered and her eyes flashed in resentful anger and she bit her lip lest she should be tempted to assert her own prerogative as queen in her own right, and high-priestess of her nation, and not that wifely obedience which she had schooled herself to observe upon all public occasions.” (p. 387) Here Corbin’s view on the feminine role is made fairly clear and this thought is again put forward a few pages later when she writes, “[Marahquirita] had vowed obedience, and however rebellious she might be that thus her rights of birth had been usurped, she rendered it him in appearance as least.” (p. 390) This is rounded off by the assertion the queen makes when she declares, “‘I will rule. I will never obey,’ was her motto and she yielded not one atom of her authority to another.” (p. 391) Corbin places other women in the story in the same class with Lilith/Marahquirita — virginal women who refuse to submit to men, but whose later rapes represent their forced submission to the interlopers in their land. Corbin seems to be romantically retelling the legend of Lilith from Lilith’s point of view through the vehicle of this Queen Marahquirita, who is the reincarnation of Lilith herself. The negative aspects of the Semitic legend of Lilith, the mother of all demons, are here being given a more reasonable spin than the original legend suggests. One example of this occurs in the explanation of Lilith as the killer of her children. In Corbin’s romantic retelling, the queen only kills her children to placate the gods, much as the biblical Abraham was prepared to sacrifice Isaac. This theme is given greater foundation when Corbin says, speaking as Lilith, “And God who requites, has given to woman through me, as recompense for her wrongs, that mission which He who came in guise of Man but half fulfilled — the redemption of all mankind.” (p. 73)

<sup>315</sup> Ruth Brandon, *The Spiritualists: The Passion for the Occult in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson Ltd., 1983), p. 55.

of the century — an individualism that Clara Corbin seems to have embraced as a hallmark of her own.

That Clara was a subscriber to the spiritualistic fad of the era is evident in her absolute belief in the ghosts, spirits and visions she describes having experienced while trying to uncover the “truth” about Gran Quivira. The notions of spiritualism are paired with heavy romanticism, which abounds throughout, as Corbin spends the majority of the piece weaving in the tale of the origins, life and loves of first Lilith (the first wife of the biblical Adam), then herself as Marguerite Zolange, and finally the Aztec Priestess-Queen Marahquirita whom she portrays as the ruler of the pueblo — all the while identifying herself as the reincarnated persona of the characters she was writing about. The extensive use of romanticism was explained by Corbin herself when she said, “For of all romances the historical romance possesses the greatest fascination,” indicating a desire to entertain with the story as well as explore the links between Native North American prehistory and the bible.<sup>316</sup>

The second and certainly larger issue with the book is Corbin’s frequent rambling descriptions of visions concerning the ghost priest and the tortured souls of the Indians in the catacombs she believed were under the ruins. Clearly unreal and hardly relevant to the discussion of Gran Quivira, it is possible that she was giving vent to the Victorian fad of occult subject matter, or perhaps in reality experiencing hallucinations. A possible explanation for hallucinations can be found in her admission, “For insomnia had taken so strong a hold upon her that she had [. . .] to resort to the use of opiates [. . .].”<sup>317</sup> Shortly after this she mentions,

<sup>316</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 335.

<sup>317</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 344-5.

All that she ate seemed instinct with animal life. From every kind of vegetable shot forth those tiny spiral worms or snakes, while every leaf was covered with lice, and round and round the loins of meat which they procured wound the terrible tape-worm, its length formed like the seed of a muskmelon blanched to snowy whiteness, and when opened were found to be filled with microbes, which were in their turn, like small, black seeds — the seeds of destruction and of death.<sup>318</sup>

Opium abuse in the Victorian era was indeed a serious problem, particularly among middle-aged housewives. It is clear from various passages in the volume, that she attributed such ‘visions’ not to the side-effects of drug use and withdrawal, but as messages from the beyond given to aid her in her mission of finding the missing link between the bible and history as well as the treasure of Gran Quivira. Considering the widespread nature of opium abuse, the nature of some of her more bizarre passages, opium use or even addiction is the most likely explanation for these passages and contributed to the discredit of Corbin during her own time.

With her incorporation of romanticism and her stated belief that its use would make for a more fascinating story, it becomes evident then that Corbin was writing as much for entertainment as for education. Her penchant for using Lilith as a vehicle to express her feminist ideals, however, along with her belief that she and her character Queen Marahquirita were the reincarnated essence of Lilith, as well as the blending of feminism, spiritualism, Kabbalistic myth, and romanticism, all hint at deeper thought than mere entertainment.<sup>319</sup> In the end Corbin’s use of occult and feminist storyline, as

<sup>318</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, p. 346.

<sup>319</sup> What all of this says about Corbin’s feelings regarding the key to feminine status among women, and the relationship between History, Science and Faith can long be debated, and while these topics may prove interesting to scholars of gender issues and further study of them is certainly warranted, to the archaeologists, historians and preservationists of Corbin’s day, her use of these devices, must have seemed hardly to the point of a historical telling of the site in question. For the purposes of the current study, the romanticism, spiritualism, feminism, and mysticism are secondary to the main point of tracing the history of Salinas Pueblo Missions. In using Corbin’s book as a source for this purpose it is important to discuss its shortcomings as perceived by her contemporaries and place her use of such literary devices into some

well as her possible drug use, discredited the more serious and reasonable discussions she included about her life, research, the ruins, and her archaeological observations. Had Corbin been more mainstream, like McClurg, she may not have been cut off from the valuable allies in the scholarly set she sought help from. She also may have weathered the scandal created by her husband's bigamy, which nearly cost her the property she wanted to retain, being viewed instead as a victim.

Despite having few legal rights, women had begun to expand their roles in society. By organizing Women's Clubs and by participating in reform and preservation efforts, they not only continued as the perceived guardians of cultural morals and values, but also increased their influence in society. They entered the male-dominated field of government by utilizing its institutions in pursuit of their causes; in this way gaining the voice denied them through voting. In the rapidly changing nation, they began to carve out a place for themselves in the public arena by undertaking causes such as abolition, temperance, and antiquities preservation, making great accomplishments in each enterprise. Corbin and McClurg were a small part of this larger trend, and exemplify how women could achieve tremendous goals in the nineteenth-century world and have an impact far into the future. By drawing upon the few resources at their disposal, taking advantage of those few laws in their favor, and by being unafraid to aggressively pursue their own goals even into the public domain, Corbin and McClurg were able to highlight the need for the protection and preservation of Gran Quivira. Both women lived to see protection enacted (although it did not take the form either woman had desired) when a Presidential Proclamation put the site under the largesse of the federal government in

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historical and literary context, so as to in some small way, establish the legitimacy of her writing and the possible influences on her style and the thoughts she expresses.

1909. Ironically, in preparation for Gran Quivira’s designation as a National Monument, a more accurate survey was conducted that definitively determined the property the two women struggled to obtain in their efforts to protect the ruins, did not contain the majority of the architectural remnants. This does not however, diminish their contributions to the preservation of the architectural treasure that we can still see today. Had it not been for Corbin’s and McClurg’s labors to preserve the venerable relic and the attention they purposely drew to their cause, the pueblo mission structures might have gone decades longer without protection and been further vandalized and exploited by treasure hunters, curio seekers and settlers seeking building supplies. It was only through their contributions to preservation, and each woman’s willingness to invest a great deal of themselves in the effort that Gran Quivira was saved for future generations.

## **Chapter 5: Creation of a Monument - Gran Quivira**

### **The Creation of a Monument**

When the Lacey Act of 1906 passed into law, the idea of preserving tracts of land for their natural, historic, or archaeological value was not a new one — explorers, naturalists and antiquarians had worried about the fate of sites that were remarkable for their natural beauty, special geologic features, or historical value since the early days of westward expansion. Their concerns contributed to the April 20, 1832 creation of the Hot Springs Reservation in Arkansas, and the subsequent government donation of land in the Yosemite Valley for the establishment of a state park in California in 1864. The first federal land reservation to be established under the designation of a “National Park” was Yellowstone in 1872, followed by the formation of several others, such as Sequoia,

General Grant, Yosemite (which was transferred back to the federal government for this purpose in 1890), and Mount Rainier National Parks.

All of these sites were created prior to the turn of the century through the lengthy process of presenting proposals to Congress, examining the bills that proposed new federal reservations in legislative committees, receiving recommendations on the proposal, and finally submitting the measure to a vote in both the House and Senate. By 1899 it was clear to the leading scientific and preservation societies, and like-minded individuals, that comprehensive legislation was needed in order to more easily facilitate the creation of federal reservations to protect antiquities, areas of outstanding scenic beauty, and natural wonders — culminating in the passage of the Antiquities Act, also known as the Lacey Act, on June 8, 1906. Even with this new legislation America’s historic and geologic riches were not necessarily safe — “Now the real work was to begin.”<sup>320</sup>

The reason for this continued insecurity was simple — although the tracts of land containing these treasures were set aside, there was as yet no bureau dedicated to their monitoring, maintenance, or security. Each park was still subject to the whims of the communities and people that were near or came into contact with them. There was little to stop settlers, stockmen, miners, hunters, fur-trappers, treasure seekers, and lumber men from continuing to exploit the resources contained on the land. While the Antiquities Act facilitated the creation of the reservations for the resources’ protection, it would be another decade before legislation would create a bureau to safeguard and care for the parks and monuments and provide annual funding for that care. In the meantime,

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<sup>320</sup> Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: The Missing Years* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 130.

protection was provided to each park or monument on a case-by-case basis or not at all. The crown jewel of all such resources, Yellowstone National Park, would remain under the care of the U.S. Army until after the start of World War I, and individuals, societies and preservation-minded communities continued their struggles to safeguard other sites.

Despite these remaining challenges, the 1906 legislation was a groundbreaking accomplishment that contributed greatly to the potential for protection and conservation of American Antiquities. It was under this new law that President Taft signed proclamation number 882 on November 1, 1909, setting aside one hundred and sixty acres described as, “the North half of the North half of Section Three of Township one South, Range Eight East of the New Mexico Principal Meridian in Socorro county.” With this action, a new phase in the history and care of the ancient pueblo site of Las Humanas and its associated missions, San Isidro and San Buenaventura, began when Gran Quivira National Monument was created, thereby preserving “one of the largest and most important of the early Spanish church ruins [. . .] together with numerous Indian pueblo ruins in its vicinity.”<sup>321</sup> Gran Quivira then joined the ranks of a small group of special places to be so honored, but its troubles were not yet over.

Ownership of the land on which Gran Quivira sat had been the subject of legal contest since 1901 and the ruins’ protection by National Monument status did not end its disputation. As outlined in the previous chapter, William G. and Clara Corbin applied for the homestead rights to the one hundred sixty acre parcel they felt contained the mission and pueblo ruins in order to obtain for themselves alone rights to search for the fabled but fictional hoard of treasure Gran Quivira was rumored to contain. At some point, possibly

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<sup>321</sup> President, Proclamation, “Establishment of Gran Quivira National Monument, Proclamation 882,” Federal Register XX, no. X (1 November 1909): 200, microfiche.

during one of the many government surveys, it was ascertained however, that the Corbin homestead did not contain *either* of the missions. It did hold rather the largest portion of the pueblo house-blocks of the Pueblo de las Humanas — what is now referred to as Mound 7 — the earliest portions of which date from c. 1300 A.D. As of November of 1909 Clara Corbin still held the homestead patent to that acreage just north of the newly created national monument, and as indicated in her June 1905 letter to President Theodore Roosevelt, she vociferously objected to the government’s contention that San Isidro and San Buenaventura were not included on her parcel. Furious over what she felt was further chicanery by the government in regards to her claim, she continued her vituperative letter writing campaign to officials in Washington complaining of the continued destruction going on at the missions and demanding that they be restored to her control.

As with numerous such sites in the southwest, the path toward protection of Gran Quivira had taken years and had not come soon enough to save it from severe damage under the hands of the needy, the curious, and the just plain greedy. With the resettlement of the Salinas area in the mid-1800s the old ruins on the mesa had been severely exploited. Homesteaders removed stones and beams from the ruins to build their own dwellings or outbuildings; treasure hunters dug pits and shafts in the floors of its rooms, or removed stones from its walls in search of voids where the fabled hoard might be secreted; explorers and relic hunters removed bones and building materials to take back east for collection and study; and herders grazed animals amongst or on its mounds. Clara Corbin herself noted the pillage of the site upon her return to Gran Quivira after William’s death, “I came now only to find the grand old ruins which had



been my pride and for whose preservation and intelligent uncovering my husband had taken up this claim, almost totally demolished, literally destroyed, to furnish building material for the store at the foot of the hill.”<sup>322</sup>

By August of 1909, Corbin was not alone in her cry against the destruction. Letters were being written to members of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico in Santa Fé calling for the protection of the ruins “about Willard,” saying further, “Having visited yesterday La Gran Quivira I find parts of the wall of the Mission badly defaced and great holes cut thro[ugh] it which less than a month ago were in good condition.”<sup>323</sup> Another letter from one Dr. William A. Wilson from Willard, New Mexico, to Governor Curry, which was later forwarded to the Archaeological Society relates, “In the last two years the walls have been badly disfigured and in places completely destroyed by curious tourists.”<sup>324</sup> In response to the issue, Alfred H. Brodhead, the treasurer of the Archaeological Society wrote to Dr. Edgar L. Hewett, “I have written them that I have referred the matter to you, but doubt if there is any method of preserving the ruins except to take up the work locally.”<sup>325</sup>

Here Gran Quivira’s path to preservation becomes foggy, but there are sources that suggest that this is exactly what was done. In his *Mission Monuments of New Mexico*, Hewett explains how each of the New Mexico missions came to be under his purview. In the case of Gran Quivira he succinctly states, “In 1908 the President of the United States was requested to assume control of the mission ruin by declaring the same

<sup>322</sup> Corbyn, *La Gran Quibira*, 446.

<sup>323</sup> Willard Drug Company to Mr. A. H. Brodhead, Willard, 10 August 1909, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library and Photo Archives, Santa Fé, New Mexico, Box 1, Correspondence 1909.

<sup>324</sup> William A. Wilson to Gov. Curry, Willard, 9 Sept 1909, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library and Photo Archives, Santa Fé, New Mexico, Box 1, Correspondence 1909.

<sup>325</sup> Alfred H. Brodhead to Prof. Edgar L. Hewett, Santa Fé, 17 August 1909, Fray Angélico Chávez History Library and Photo Archives, Santa Fé, New Mexico, Box 1, Correspondence 1909.

a national monument, under the recently enacted (1906) Lacey Act for the Preservation of American Antiquities. This was done.”<sup>326</sup> A 1956 source reiterates this information,

almost verbatim without stating from what quarter this “request” was generated.<sup>327</sup>

Unfortunately until such documentation is found we may never know whether a petition by concerned local residents, or the influence of important people in preservation circles was responsible for the protection of the site. Letters to the Archaeological Society and the School of American Research certainly illustrate that there was considerable local concern for the old missions in the Salinas area, and that the residents desired the ancient ruins be preserved from further destruction. These concerned New Mexicans had reason to hope that the government would intervene. After the passage of the Antiquities Act Colorado residents were successful in their bid to attain national park status for Mesa Verde and several of New Mexico’s historic and prehistoric areas had then been brought under federal aegis as well — El Morro National Monument in December of 1906, Chaco Canyon National Monument (now a National Park) in March of 1907, and Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument in November of 1907. While it is not yet known what the direct cause of intervention was, the local residents’ hopes were realized in November 1909 when Gran Quivira was the fourth such reservation created in New Mexico under the groundbreaking law and efforts toward its protection slowly built momentum.

While the Corbin v. McClurg battle over the homestead claim for the land San Buenaventura mission was thought to sit on certainly brought Gran Quivira to the attention of preservation societies, historic documents reveal that several prominent men

<sup>326</sup> Edgar L. Hewett, *Handbooks of Archaeological History: Mission Monuments of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1943), 202.

<sup>327</sup> Channing Howe, “Area History: Gran Quivira National Monument” (Gran Quivira, NM: National Park Service, 1956, photocopied), 30-31.

played significant roles in the ruins' protection, stabilization, and study in the Monument's early days — and notable among them was Dr. Edgar Lee Hewett. A powerhouse in Southwestern archaeology, Hewett was a founding member of the New Mexico Archaeological Society, had assisted in, or single-handedly drafted (depending on which source you follow) the 1906 Antiquities Act, had lobbied for and attained the Palace of Governors in Santa Fé for the newly established School of American Archaeology (SAA), and was at that time the director of SAA and the Museum of New Mexico, institutions whose purpose was just such protection and study. From the year Gran Quivira National Monument was created, both Edgar L. Hewett and the school he headed would play major roles in its history as well as other Salinas area antiquities — so a brief background and an understanding of the man and his organizations becomes crucial to our story.

Unlike many of the early leading men in Anthropology who were wealthy gentlemen scholars, Hewett had been born in rather more humble circumstances on November 23, 1865 in Warren County Illinois. The youngest son of Harvey Hanson Hewett and Tabitha Stice, Edgar Hewett had spent his formative years on the family's Warren County farm before they relocated to Chicago, later returning to Warren County and finally settling on a farm in Missouri in 1880. It was there he began attending high school in Hopkins at the age of fourteen. Always hardworking, Hewett moved to town and lived by himself in a room with a doctor's family before securing a room above the drugstore by working Saturday's to cover the rent while attending school. Upon graduating he moved to Fairfax, Missouri where he became a teacher for a time before trying law in Sioux City, Iowa. Unsatisfied with reading law he returned to Fairfax

where he became principal in 1889. The hard work, experience in switching careers, and flexibility he learned in these early years were to hold him in good stead. Two-years later Hewett married Cora Whitford in Colorado and, “In the years between 1890 and 1896, when Hewett’s travels in southern Colorado and New Mexico were developing in him a lively interest in the history and preservation of the ruins he visited, several of Bandelier’s publications strengthened his knowledge.”<sup>328</sup> Self-taught to this point, he began lecturing at the invitation of academic colleagues when he came to the attention of Frank Springer, the wealthy and influential New Mexico attorney who shared Hewett’s fascination with antiquities.

It was this new acquaintance that provided a turning point in Hewett’s life and shortly after turned his long-time archaeological interests into a serious occupation and the life’s work for which he would become famous. In October of 1898 the board of regents of the Las Vegas Normal University, on which Springer sat, named Edgar Hewett the first president of the new school. It was during his tenure there that he came to national attention for his call to preserve the Pajarito Plateau and developed the lasting relationships with talented individuals such as Kenneth Chapman, Jesse Nusbaum, Paul A. F. Walter, Alice Cunningham Fletcher, and William H. Holmes that would persist throughout the remainder of his life. In 1900, “seeking to meet important national figures in the scientific world,”<sup>329</sup> Hewett traveled to Washington D.C. where he met John Wesley Powell and likely became acquainted with the political maneuvering that would prove one of his strongest assets.

<sup>328</sup> Beatrice Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends: A Biography of Santa Fe’s Vibrant Era* (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1983), 37.

<sup>329</sup> Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends*, 42.

Washington movers and shakers had developed methods of attaining and preserving funds that allowed them to continue their ethnographic, anthropologic and archaeological programs despite inadequate appropriations. Two of the most prominent and adept men in Washington at this sort of political maneuvering were Joseph Henry, the Smithsonian Institution's first secretary, who was able to ensure that the "funds from the Smithson bequest *not* be mixed with public monies," which set the "precedent of the Smithsonian as a quasi-autonomous organization managing another organization created and funded by Congress;"<sup>330</sup> and John Wesley Powell who placed "his people on the payrolls of other agencies," in order "to secure a fair amount of extra support for his fledgling [ethnographic] corps."<sup>331</sup> Both of these were tactics Hewett applied to good effect when back in Santa Fé with consummate political skill. In 1902 and 1903 his contributions to governor Miguel A. Otero's annual reports to Washington on territorial archaeology enhanced his reputation, and though his tenure as president of the New Mexico Normal University did not last beyond his original five-year contract, his tenure as one of the foremost southwestern archaeologists/administrators did.

In 1903 Hewett's flexibility and willingness to change careers proved useful when, "Governor Otero's partisans on the board of regents decided not to renew [his] contract,"<sup>332</sup> due to his controversial educational philosophy. At Hewett's instigation, "New Mexico Normal University became one of the first universities in the country to teach anthropology," which included frequent field trips to archaeological sites.

"Although students adored Hewett, conservative board members criticized his

<sup>330</sup> Don D. Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology: Science and Romanticism in the American Southwest, 1846-1930* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), p.80.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

<sup>332</sup> Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends*, 47.

educational policies, which they claimed ‘encouraged young people to traipse around the countryside in pursuit of education. How could picnic lunches contribute to scholarship?’”<sup>333</sup> After the loss of this position Hewett decided on a career change and early the next year the couple embarked for Europe in order for Hewett to pursue a doctorate in sociology at the University of Geneva. During the summer of 1904 they returned to the United States where Hewett found work in Washington, D.C. at the National Museum and Bureau of Ethnology. Long suffering from frail health after contracting tuberculosis, Cora Hewett died there in 1905. Hewett’s biographer, Beatrice Chauvenet records, “He had always worked long hours. His rugged constitution could take sixteen, eighteen, even twenty hours a day of sustained effort, and he now drove himself with a sort of desperation.”<sup>334</sup>

Developments in archaeology began to move quickly in 1905, and Hewett moved with them. In December, as the secretary of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) committee on antiquities he presented his draft of the protective legislation for antiquities at the joint AAA/AIA meeting in New York that was finally successful in maneuvering around previous conflicts with the Smithsonian regarding control of excavation permits. Throughout the first half of 1906 he began traveling extensively to promote the Antiquities Act and the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), and conduct an archaeological site survey of Mesa Verde. With his draft of the Antiquities Act reported on favorably and passing in June of 1906, the AIA granted him a \$600 fellowship to conduct a comparative study of the Pueblo sites in the American Southwest and Mexico, and “promote the growth of the local archaeological societies in the

<sup>333</sup> Nancy Owen Lewis, “Creating a School for American Research, 1907-1966,” in *A Peculiar Alchemy: A Centennial History of SAR 1907-2007* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2007), 9.

<sup>334</sup> Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends*, 53.

West,<sup>335</sup> a task he set about with determination. Hewett continued his involvement in the promotion of Mesa Verde as a national park and in June began his survey of sites in Mexico, where he stopped and visited Alice Cunningham Fletcher, another powerhouse in Southwestern ethnography and archaeology.

By the end of 1906 a motion was in the wind to create “a School of American Archaeology, in which graduate students should be received for instruction and employment in field research.”<sup>336</sup> This plan as presented by Fletcher also called for the appointment of a Director of American Archaeology to administer the school and “direct and coordinate all work undertaken by the affiliated societies,” in order to promote *American* archaeology within the AIA and “strengthen [its] ties with its burgeoning western chapters.”<sup>337</sup> Edgar Hewett was Fletcher’s recommendation for the position and in January of 1907 he was confirmed director of the Committee for American Archaeology.

The school itself was finally created by resolution at the AIA’s annual meeting in Chicago on December 30<sup>th</sup> of that year. But not everyone within the AIA agreed with Fletcher’s plan or the selection of Hewett as director of the American committee. Some prominent members moved to negate the school at the November 1908 meeting Fletcher called in order to vote on a site for the new institution. In the centennial publication of the school Nancy Owen Wilson explains,

There remained one final step — selecting the school’s location. This proved more difficult than Fletcher had expected. [. . .] her and Hewett’s plan went awry. Bowditch argued for three hours against turning the committee into an American School. Putnam and Boas voted with

<sup>335</sup> Chauvenet, *Hewett and Friends*, 55.

<sup>336</sup> Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 264.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*

him, with Hewett and Fletcher opposing. Four Committee members were absent.

Fletcher protested vehemently. The School of American Archaeology already existed, she argued, by vote of the entire institute. In a stroke of political genius, she and Hewett mailed ballots to the four absent committee members — Francis W. Kelsey, Mitchell Carroll, Mrs. John Hays Hammond, and Charles Lummis — all of whom voted for Santa Fé.<sup>338</sup>

Some of this animosity might be explained by examining the cutthroat politics of archaeology at the turn of the century. One of the opponents of the new school and its proposed home in Santa Fé, Franz Boas, had been organizing his own International School of American Archaeology and Ethnology in Mexico City — making the Santa Fé establishment a direct competitor for funds from the AIA and other sources.<sup>339</sup> Still other eastern intellectuals were angry that Hewett and his supporters, especially Charles Fletcher Lummis, “succeeded in getting their bill [the 1906 Antiquities Act] passed, and block[ed] control of western archaeology by eastern universities and the Smithsonian.”<sup>340</sup> So in part, regional partisan politics and the control of the sites and their resources were at the heart of the difficulties.

While these machinations were afoot in the eastern half of the continent, Hewett worked on in Santa Fé. With fellow members of the Archaeological Society of New Mexico, he began lobbying the legislature for use of the Palace of the Governors on the north side of the Santa Fé plaza as the home for the proposed School of American Archaeology. It was hoped among the Santa Fé elite that the possible addition of such a modern institution in the city would help increase the fortunes of the city and even the territory. “After its annexation to the United States in 1848, New Mexico’s residents

<sup>338</sup> Lewis, “Creating a School for American Research, 1907-1966,” 11

<sup>339</sup> Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 267.

<sup>340</sup> Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 263.



watched with growing impatience over the next sixty-four years as newer, more sparsely settled western territories became states.”<sup>341</sup>

The crux of the problem lay primarily in the image of the territory as viewed from those very same eastern intellectuals circles that produced the influential and well-educated people who came to the southwest to study anthropology. To their minds the large Mexican population in New Mexico was seen as too backward to be included in the union. The rich and powerful elites of the region began working to remedy this perception in two ways: first, by trying to Americanize the “backward” elements within the territory — the populace, religion, practices, and the appearance of their capital; and secondly among the wealthy and influential Hispanic families in Santa Fé, by stressing the purity of their Castilian blood, thus separating them from the “mongrel” Mexicans. In their eyes, “status rested on landownership and the inherited noble title of hidalgo, conferred by the crown on their conquistador ancestors.”<sup>342</sup> What Hewett had entered when he settled in Santa Fé in 1906 were the efforts of a community, and in some respects an entire territory, trying to reinvent itself. As explained by Chris Wilson in his study of the city’s transformation:

As Santa Fé sank deeper in economic stagnation at the close of the nineteenth century, it also became ensnared in a double bind of conflicting expectations. Local boosters struggled to prove that the territory was progressive and Americanized enough to be admitted as a state. Simultaneously tourism rose as a potential solution to the city’s economic woes but demanded a contrasting romantic identity. As a result Santa Fé’s public identity, and that of the territory in general, split into two contradictory images.<sup>343</sup>

<sup>341</sup> Chris Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997), 80.

<sup>342</sup> Wilson, *The Myth of Santa Fe*, 42.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 80.

To the minds of his supporters, men like Hewett and institutions like his new School of American Archaeology were just what New Mexico needed to reverse its slackening fortunes.

Hewett had other plans for the Palace besides just housing his school. Having “long lamented the loss of local antiquities to museums outside the Southwest,”<sup>344</sup> he also planned a museum. In February 1909 both became a reality and Hewett set Jesse Nusbaum on the task of renovating the Palace to make it suitable for its dual purposes, a move that proved to be the inception of “Santa Fé Style.” According to the enabling legislation for the Museum of New Mexico, the School of American Archaeology would *operate* the museum, but be *controlled* by a board of regents appointed by the governor of New Mexico and funded by the territorial legislature. Hewett was named the museum’s director, but requested the legislature not provide funds for a salary for this position, “remov[ing] the position from political pork-barreling,”<sup>345</sup> and thus giving him more latitude. As the director of the school, Hewett would draw a salary from the AIA, and answer only to the AIA Americanist Committee for that half of his two-headed organization. Following the pattern of Joseph Henry of the Smithsonian, Hewett had the funds of the school kept separate from the museum's funds, and following the pattern of Powell put staff members from the school on the museum’s payroll to stretch his funding for SAA projects. In August 1910 the Museum of New Mexico opened its exhibits to the public, and Hewett was well on his way to shaping the new image of New Mexico.

With Hewett firmly in control of the School of American Archaeology and the Museum of New Mexico he turned to his next major project — that of acquiring sites to

<sup>344</sup> Lewis, “Creating a School for American Research, 1907-1966,” 13.

<sup>345</sup> Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 268.

study. In the summer of 1907, while awaiting the resolution that would establish the SAA, Hewett conducted his first archaeological field school, one that became legend in the annals of archaeological history. From that time on, in keeping with the vision for the School of American Archaeology, field schools became a regular part of the institution's operations, but competition for sites could become fierce between the various groups and individuals seeking to study in the southwest. Even before Hewett proposed the incorporation of the school in 1916 to enable it to purchase property and secure an endowment, the School of American Archaeology and the Museum of New Mexico were jointly deeded possession of the parcel containing the mission ruins at Quarai in 1913. Although their ownership of the site did not last, being “dispossessed in favor of the private claimant”<sup>346</sup> who contested title by the donors, the die was cast.

The next Spanish Colonial missions Hewett set his sights on were at Gran Quivira. The San Buenaventura and San Isidro missions at the monument had been withdrawn from the private appropriation and use in November of 1909, but adjacent property to the north of the monument was still available and in private hands — the Corbin homestead. Virginia McClurg of the Colorado Cliff Dwellings Association, against whom Corbin had so staunchly battled, had been in contact with Hewett since at least 1908 — and given McClurg's outspoken support of Mesa Verde starting in 1897, probably before then — leaving open the likelihood that Hewett had been familiar with the eccentric owner of the Gran Quivira property for some time. Evidence of this can be found in one of Hewett's later works where he records,

The mission and pueblo of Gran Quivira were found to be under dual ownership, the church being situated on government land, the pueblo on a

<sup>346</sup> Edgar L. Hewett, *Handbooks of Archaeological History: Mission Monuments of New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1943), 202.

privately claimed section. [. . .] The School of American Research followed up investigation of the title to the pueblo, commenced privately by the writer of this chapter, some years before. After protracted litigation, the Secretary of the Interior validated the homestead claim of Mrs. Clara Corbin, a soldier's widow. There the title rested until some time after the decease of the owner, when the quarter section including the pueblo ruins was put up for tax sale by the authorities of Torrance County. It was bought in [1914] by the School of American Research and title duly perfected in 1922.<sup>347</sup>

Conclusive proof is lacking, but in light of these details it is possible that Hewett had aided, or had possibly worked parallel to Virginia McClurg in her efforts to wrest the homestead from Corbin's control.

On 30 December 1913, Clara A. B. Corbin died in a Los Angeles hospital, the taxes on her homestead unpaid since 1909. Examination of the tax deed reveals several important details. First that the board of regents of the Museum of New Mexico purchased the land, 27 August 1914, only eight months after Corbin passed away. Corbin's obituary did not appear in the Santa Fé newspaper until March of 1914 — so it is clear the museum moved quickly to purchase the property. The second interesting bit of information is *who* purchased the homestead and signed the tax deed — N. B. Laughlin — the very same New Mexico attorney and judge that represented Virginia McClurg in 1901 hearings at the General Land Office in Santa Fé. A third tidbit revealed on the tax deed is that the land was being purchased from “Unknown Owners” in tax sale. This last is made more interesting, and very unlikely, by the second detail outlined; judge Napoleon B. Laughlin certainly *did* know who the previous owner had been since he had assisted McClurg in her bid to obtain the property, so it is unclear why this information was not given. The last and certainly most staggering fact contained on the deed is that Corbin's 160 acres, containing the largest group of pueblo mounds in the Salinas

<sup>347</sup> Hewett, *Mission Monuments of New Mexico*, 202.

jurisdiction, was purchased by the Museum for \$54.52. The tax deed was lost for some months, mistakenly filed under Laughlin's name rather than the museum, until 15 April 1915 when Laughlin filed an Assignment of Certificate of Sale For Taxes in Torrance County to correct the error. Hewett's first archaeological site was in hand and the first work to protect the mission structures and pueblo could begin.

At this point there is a gap in the historical documentation regarding Gran Quivira National Monument. The legislative history reveals that the land owned by the School of American Research (SAR), formerly known as the School of American Archaeology (SAA), was incorporated into the national monument boundaries by Presidential Proclamation No. 1545 on November, 25, 1919, but remained "subject to all prior valid claims" — leaving the Museum's ownership of the Corbin piece intact.<sup>348</sup> Then the record falls silent — and remained so until late in 1921 when Hewett began preparing for the 1923 archaeological field school at the monument. He remained frenetically busy in the intervening years; first being drawn into the politics of Santa Fé myth making with the fiesta and architectural concerns, then with the organization of the Panama-California Exposition in San Diego. His association with the San Diego Exposition culminated with his becoming the director of yet a third institution, the Museum of Man in San Diego. All the while, Hewett maintained his hold on Southwestern Archaeology through the School of American Research and the Museum of New Mexico, and while Hewett was busy elsewhere, the silence regarding Gran Quivira continued.

<sup>348</sup> President, Proclamation, "Proclamation No. 1545 — Nov. 25 1919 — 41 Stat. 1778," Federal Register XX, no. X (25 November 1919): 200, microfiche. NOTE: While the acronym identifying the institution has remained the same since it was changed from SAA to SAR, the name was changed again in the early part of this century to: Research, School for Advanced Research on the Human Experience.

The reason for this silence is simple and yet complicated. Before Gran Quivira could receive the care and study it deserved, a new corps of dedicated individuals who emerged around 1913 would need to tackle the next great hurdle in the history of the American antiquities — the creation of the National Park Service to care for them. As previously stated, though such sites were proclaimed national monuments by the federal government and preserved from development, no bureau within the departments of Interior, War, or Agriculture yet existed to administer them. Worse yet, monuments were under the jurisdiction of *all three* departments, depending on who administered the land prior to it being set aside as a national park or monument. As Horace Albright would say, “. . .they were orphans. They were split among three departments — War, Agriculture, and Interior. They were anybody’s business and therefore nobody’s business. The time was ripe for some person who really cared to wade into the problem, get them united in a strong, separate bureau, and get Americans acquainted with their own scenic and historic sites [. . .].”<sup>349</sup> Horace Albright arrived in Washington D.C. May 31, 1913, and Stephen Mather took the oath of office in the Department of the Interior on January 21, 1915, and the work began.

The delay in the development of a bureau for the parks was caused oddly enough in part by the parks themselves. During his term President Roosevelt set aside vast tracts of land for inclusion into forest reserves or parks, greatly angering western interests. Government representatives of those stockmen, miners, and settlers were chary of creating bigger government that would continue to withdrawal land and work up to ever-larger appropriations. Some of those who were working to get legislation enabling a park

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<sup>349</sup> Horace M. Albright and Marian Albright Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service: The Missing Years* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press), 35.

bureau passed felt that another cause of the repeated defeat of the proposal “was due to the unrelenting pressure of Gifford Pinchot and his influence on the Forest Service.

Pinchot always believed the Forest Service should take over the national park areas.”<sup>350</sup>

The year-to-year details of the parks and monuments had thus far been handled in a haphazard way by an unsung hero of the service, Bertrand Acker, the assistant attorney to the head of the Miscellaneous Section of the Chief Clerk’s Office. “It was he who, over the years, had worked out the contracts for operation of park concessions and had developed the rules and regulations for the care and protection of these parks.”<sup>351</sup> After the Raker-Pittman Bill was signed into law by Woodrow Wilson creating the Hetch Hetchy dam, Secretary of the Interior, Franklin Lane, who had championed the bill tried to redeem himself by then turning his attention to the nation’s parks.<sup>352</sup> Having lost most of his credibility with conservationists and preservationists, he accomplished this by wooing Stephen T. Mather into federal service.

Mather, a millionaire businessman from Chicago and native of California, was an avid outdoorsman and member of John Muir’s Sierra Club. He came to the attention of Secretary Lane through a long and very detailed letter of complaint regarding the exploitation of resources within the national parks by private companies and individuals, the efforts of business interests to steal land from Sequoia, and the neglect of the government to do anything about these issues though charged with the parks’ protection. Under provisional agreement with Lane, Mather agreed to work for the Department of the Interior for *one* year, to see what he could do to improve the conditions at the parks and

<sup>350</sup> Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 124-5.

<sup>351</sup> Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 19.

<sup>352</sup> The controversial Hetch Hetchy dam flooded a magnificent mountain valley conservationists were trying to get included in Yosemite National Park to provide water for San Francisco.

work toward the establishment of a bureau to oversee them, but only so long as Horace M. Albright assisted him.

For his part, Albright's circumstances were quite the opposite of Mather's, the Chief he came to admire and love. Born to a poor family who lived in the Owens River Valley at the base of the majestic Sierra Nevada Mountains, Albright was another native Californian, who arrived in Washington, D.C. quite by chance in 1913. His path to the Park Service began while he was working his way through college. In desperate need of money, Albright took a job as the latest in a string of teaching assistants to the irascible Professor Adolph Miller, winning Miller's respect through his hard work and intelligence. When Miller was asked to assist his friend, the new Secretary of the Interior Franklin Lane, in Washington D.C. he requested Albright accompany him. Albright agreed, with the understanding that he would stay only a short while and return to California —plans that were forever altered after meeting Stephen Mather.

The two men embarked on a whirlwind tour of the largest and grandest of the national parks, seeing Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Sequoia, Crater Lake, Mount Ranier, Rocky Mountain and Glacier National Parks all in three months during their first year. After the inspection tour, Mather decided to take a different tack to improve the sad state the parks were in. Albright explains why Mather shifted the emphasis from a bureau to getting exposure and publicity for the sites, “As soon as Mr. Mather was back in Washington, he directed all his attention to ways and means of getting the national parks more widely known. He felt he had to get people to use the parks before he could get legislation and appropriations.”<sup>353</sup> Toward this end, Mather brought in the talents of Robert Sterling Yard, the Sunday editor of the *New York Herald*. His next plan in the

<sup>353</sup> Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 59.



quest for support through knowledge was an extended pack-trip through Sequoia and Yosemite National Parks with influential members of Congress, the press, conservation, and railroads. By organizing the Mather Mountain Party in July of 1915, the two were able to not only highlight the magnificence of America’s natural wonders, but also show these men the challenges faced at such sites due to the exploitation by private interests of the resources they contained. Out of this two-week trip came the first major publication, the extremely influential *The National Parks Portfolio*. Published in two forms — a buckram folder issued at 35¢, and a dark green hard-bound cover issued at 55¢ — by Scribners and paid for by the western railroads, “more than 350,000 were issued and mailed out to libraries, travel office, editors and others [ . . .].”<sup>354</sup>

The publicity campaign of their first year was a great success, but the bureau that was so necessary to the continue momentum of improvement in conditions at the parks was not yet established, and so the two were convinced to remain. Their next year was spent concentrating on the legislation that would make this possible. Very like the Antiquities Act that preceded it, the Organic Act of 1916 went through several iterations before a compromise bill could be reached. In the process, the interests of stockmen had to be appeased with provisional allowance for grazing, and further provision protecting national monuments from being removed from administration by the Forest Service also had to be added to enable the bill to pass through committee. Finally, “On August 15 [1916] the Senate accepted the compromise bill and passed it with flying colors. [ . . . ] On August 22 the House also passed the bill.”<sup>355</sup> The day the bill was sealed for delivery to the president, Albright raced ahead of the clerk delivering the bill to the White House and

<sup>354</sup> Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 60.

<sup>355</sup> Albright and Schenck, *Creating the National Park Service*, 146.

“used all the persuasiveness and smooth talk” he possessed to convince the White House legislative clerk to be sure that the President signed the park bill that day and save the pen used to sign it as a gift for Mather who was away on business in California.<sup>356</sup> President Wilson signed the bill at around 9 p.m. August 25, 1916 and the National Park Service was a reality.

The fledgling service struggled in the years ahead. Getting appropriations for the protection and improvement of the parks proved to be as difficult as Mather and Albright had feared it would be, but they managed. Shortly after the passage of the enabling legislation that they had worked so hard to achieve, Mather suffered a mental breakdown and was forced to retire from public life for almost a year. In his absence Horace Albright worked tirelessly to fulfill the vision of his chief for the parks and the service that represented them. He gathered personnel, directed the focus of the new bureau, and moved it into its permanent headquarters. “After the creation of the National Park Service in 1916, archaeology became one of its major functions, especially at Mesa Verde National Park and various national monuments,”<sup>357</sup> taking over these duties from the Bureau of American Ethnology to whom the Department of the Interior had contracted them to.

Horace Albright eventually worked in tandem with men like Dr. Edgar L. Hewett to accomplish the preservation and stabilization the ruins in his care needed — in fact becoming a member of the Board of Directors at the School of American Research. During all of this political wrangling to establish the various pieces of legislation required for the proper protection of cultural resources, the face of archaeology in America had

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<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 294.

changed, and Hewett had not changed with it. Of the two most important of these changes the first was the shift from the evolutionism of Lewis Henry Morgan and John Wesley Powell, “to twentieth-century historical particularism as it came to be called,” which applied the notion of cultural relativism rather than that of psychic unity.<sup>358</sup> The second major change was one of method. The “new archaeology” espoused the theories of stratigraphy and seriation that had been in use in Europe and Egypt long before they were accepted in Southwestern archaeology. As the tide changed, more and more of Hewett’s former students began to distance themselves from his “old” form of archaeology and consequently from him. He became unpopular because he was viewed as one of the last remaining holdovers of the “unscientific” methods embraced by the early pioneers in the field. Despite this he remained one of the major influences in southwestern archaeology, and started the careers of many of the “new” archaeologists who revolutionized the field. New Mexico became the proving ground for their theories.

Much had been accomplished in the new century. A new school had been established in the territory as well as a new museum, putting the artifacts of the region within reach of its students; Gran Quivira National Monument had finally been established and the boundaries of the monument were enlarged in 1919 at last bringing an end to the land disputes that had plagued the ruins; and New Mexico finally achieved its

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<sup>358</sup> Fowler, *A Laboratory for Anthropology*, 275. These concepts are beautifully explained by Don Fowler: Psychic unity; “The social evolutionism promulgated by Morgan and Powell hinged on the premise of universal psychic unity: human minds and reason were the same everywhere. It followed that as the elementary ideas in human minds unfolded, societies and cultures (including material cultures) would evolve through the same stages of development in the lock-step fashion envisioned by Morgan. Some societies would proceed more slowly than others, due to environmental limitations or historical accident. But at any one stage, the social forms, ideologies, and forms of material culture would be the same everywhere.” (Fowler 275) As opposed to the cultural relativism notion that, “each [group] embodies a [unique genius/group psyche]; each interacts in a synergistic way with its environment to produce a unique, organic whole with its own social forms and ideologies. Each [group] is the product of its [. . .] own unique historical development, and must be understood in its own terms, not as a product of humanity-wide historical ‘forces’.” (Fowler 276)

long denied goal — statehood. The *state* of New Mexico was poised for a new beginning and with it the Salinas Basin antiquities.

## Chapter 6: Conclusion

Throughout time the land in the Salinas Basin has been perceived as a resource for what it contained, despite what the various cultures who utilized it felt its shortcomings to be. It had played host to Native Americans since at least the Clovis age. Over time, the nomadic people began to construct semi-permanent jacal dwellings, they could revisit as they pursued the seasonal cycle of subsistence living, harvesting seeds, roots, berries, and hunting both small and large game. With the spread of adoption of cultivated crops — corn, beans, and squash — which had been domesticated farther south, the natives were able to begin settling for longer periods of time rather than having to strictly maintain a nomadic lifestyle. As their agricultural pursuits developed, their dwellings evolved from semi-permanent wattle and daube structures, into the complex masonry house blocks in about A.D. 1300. Despite the advance in dwelling structure, the Ancestral Puebloans continued to use mobility as a coping mechanism, moving to new areas when the land could no longer support them, developing over time a balance with their environment.

In the sixteenth century, the first Western Europeans entered the region from the south and "discovered" this land inhabited with sedentary, but fierce, natives — the Spanish had arrived. With their arrival came dramatic changes to the ancient cultural traditions and religions practiced for millennia by the inhabitants of the region. Hoping to find gold in the Seven Cities of Cibola, just as Cortez had in the Aztec cities, what they

found instead were agricultural villages and nomadic traders living in careful, and often precarious balance with the environment. Being far removed from the trails north into the Rio Grande valley utilized by the Spanish, and east of the barrier the Sandia and Manzano mountain chains provided, the Salinas pueblos did not come into contact with all of the Spanish expeditions that reached the central valley Indian settlements. When the Europeans did venture east of the mountain ranges, the Spanish colonial sources speak of traveling days from available water to a dry sometimes bitterly cold country near the mountains where groups of pueblos near the plains were inhabited by fierce painted people. The land then, became an obstacle to be overcome, and the people in it a resource from which to procure supplies and information during their quest.

At first their forays into the Natives' world were often months or years apart, then in 1598, the Spaniards came to stay. Almost from the moment the Spanish entered the region they began to shake that careful balance, by demanding food and supplies from the pueblo stores; introducing livestock, which damaged fields and required portions of their precious water resources; diverting native labor from their traditional occupations and fields to aid the Spanish; concentrating dispersed pueblo populations into larger centrally located villages; and most surely by introducing diseases the natives had no immunity to. Being on the periphery of the colonial settlements, Salinas might have been overlooked by the Spaniards and spared some strife, but for the very valuable salt the basin had available, and of course for the labor pool and souls awaiting conversion the remote eastern inhabitants represented.

This was, and still is, a drier region than that along the river or in the northern reaches of the territory, and the environmental balance here was much more precarious

than that of the villages in the central valley where the water supply was more reliable. The puebloans had developed crops suited to the aridity and soil, methods of storing sufficient water for crops and people, and had kept population numbers at settlements to no more than the land would support. They had also developed far-reaching trade relationships with the nomadic groups from farther east, the Jumano Indians acting as trade intermediaries to resources as far away as eastern Texas, as well as with pueblo centers along the Rio Grande who had food surpluses that could be traded for in lean years. The entry of the Spanish into the basin with their water-hungry crops and livestock, and their propensity for taking "uncivilized" nomads as slaves, upset the centuries old balancing-act perfected by the local inhabitants. To make matters worse, the Pueblo people were forced to turn away from the traditions and ceremonies they had relied upon for centuries to appease the spirits who brought the rain, protected them from their enemies, and made the land fruitful.

The manifold catastrophes visited upon the Pueblos of the Salinas Basin convinced them that the new Catholic religion imposed upon them by the Spaniards, had upset the balance their traditional spirits had maintained. In response to the prolonged drought, increased Apache raids, and incessant abuse by both the civil government and the church officials, one of Abó's loyal converts, Esteban Clemente, secretly began to practice the native religion, all the while plotting to eliminate the oppressive overlords. Before he could execute the conspiracy against the Spaniards though, his plot was discovered and he was executed as an example to others who might try to rise up and attempt to regain control of their ancestral land. The years that followed witnessed a continuation of the drought, and the spread of famine, disease, and discontent.

Eventually these stresses took their toll, and villages which had been inhabited for centuries emptied. When the Pueblo Revolt occurred a little over eighty years after the first Spanish settlers arrived, the Salinas villages and missions, by then being uninhabited, and were spared the destruction those communities actively involved in the revolt faced. This did not mean that the Tiwa and Tompiro natives did not participate in the rebellion — having been incorporated into other pueblos in the Rio Grande valley, they experienced the revolt as members of their new communities. After the abandonment of Salinas in the late 1670s, it was largely absent from the written sources until the coming of the next wave of colonial power.

The Americans began entering the area from the east shortly after the opening of the Santa Fé Trail from St. Louis in 1821, and by 1846 when the United States took control of New Mexico Territory, the mysterious cities and their ruins had captivated many a traveler's imagination. As fur trappers and trading explorers gave way to military and expansionist exploration, the military began to document the land, its people, and the available resources. Salinas entered a new phase in its long history; no longer were the people and the salt the most sought-after resources, now the land became the prize to be won, and eventually, the ruins themselves became a resource to be exploited. As America expanded toward the western coast, its intellectuals began to search for the origins of those people who inhabited the land before Western European entry, with the feeling that these "noble savages" were analogous to their own origins. This interest competed with others, such as the desire for resources and land as needed for American expansion. The Salinas Pueblo Missions sites represented both available building resources and land on the one hand, and sources of information as to the antiquity of the

continent and human-kind on the other — interests not necessarily compatible with each other. As America began to secure her possessions, the pre-eminence of the land at Salinas as a resource fought with the nascent notion of protecting cultural and natural resources. The military explorer gave way to explorers in archaeology, anthropology, ethnology and biology, and use of the Salinas ruins changed yet again from sources for building materials for settlers, stock grazing land, and possible railroad right-of-way, to a field site for the acquisition of artifacts and knowledge.

As the ruins in the Salinas Basin came to the awareness of the public through the published reports of the geographical surveys and archaeological studies, the United States fought to pass legislation to preserve the antiquities that had so captured the American imagination. At the same time, Civil War veteran William G. Corbin, a down-on-his-luck railroad executive who believed in the wild treasure legends that were associated with Gran Quivira, applied for a homestead patent on the land surrounding the venerable ruin in an effort to deter other treasure hunters. His death sparked a battle between two determined women who had formulated widely divergent plans for the archaeological resources there. William's presumed widow, the eccentric author Clara Corbin, fought the well-connected preservation heroine Virginia McClurg all the way to the General Land Office in Washington, D.C. before losing her bid to retain the homestead when she was found to be the unlawful wife of William due to the incompleteness of his divorce proceedings from the first Mrs. Corbin. In the end, the GLO's decision was overturned by Secretary of Interior Ethan Allen Hitchcock, resulting in the return of the Gran Quivira homestead to Clara Corbin. The attention garnered from their contest highlighted the need for the sites' protection, and upon Mrs. Corbin's death



in 1913, it was purchased by the relatively young School of American Archaeology, which, for a time, became a leader in the preservation of antiquities in the Southwest.

The future use of Salinas Pueblo Missions and their preservation was assured when the desire for knowledge, and for the preservation of some areas or sites, won out over the desire to exploit all the land and its available resources for subsistence. The passage of the Antiquities Act in 1906 paved the way for the entry of each of the sites to join the ranks of protected federal reservations —Gran Quivira, in 1909, and Abó and Quarai in 1981. The path to that point was serpentine and often rough, and the balance can still be described as a precarious one. No matter how many drawbacks there are to integration into the National Park Service system, the resources embraced by federal protection benefit from a mission which aims to preserve, "the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> National Park Service Organic Act. P.L. 64-235, 16 USC §1.

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