# CHAPTER 3.

# A Sketch of the Cultural-Historical Environment—Part 2: Spanish Entradas to the Present

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## Introduction

This chapter outlines the history and culture of the lands in the Valles Caldera National Preserve (VCNP) from the mid-sixteenth-century Spanish *entradas* (expeditions) into New Mexico to the present. The discussion draws from documentary sources listed in the accompanying annotated bibliography.

## The Spanish *Entrada*s (1540–1598)

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado was the first Spanish explorer to reach the Río Grande. In the winter of 1540–1541, he made his headquarters at the Tiguex pueblo of Alcanfor or Coofor near present-day Bernalillo (**Schroeder 1979**:242), within sight of Redondo Peak. Coronado and his lieutenants explored north to Taos, west as far as the Grand Canyon, and east into the Kansas plains, but they did not find a reason to venture into the rugged Jémez Mountains.

In 1541 Captain Francisco Barrionuevo, leading a detachment of Coronado's main expeditionary force, traveled north from Tiguex to the Jémez pueblos. **Pedro de Castañeda** (**1907**:339–340, 352, 359), chronicler of this expedition, recorded seven pueblos in the drainage of Vallecitos Creek and three villages near the *aguas calientes* on the Jémez River.

Forty years later, in 1581, fray Augustín Rodríguez and Captain Francisco Chamuscado led an expedition up the Río Grande to the Southern Tiwa and Keres pueblos. They visited several of the Jémez pueblos and left two Franciscan missionaries at the Southern Tiwa pueblo of Puaray (**Bolton 1930**:139, 147).

An expedition led by Antonio de Espejo returned to the region in 1582 to search for the two missionaries left by Rodríguez and Chamuscado. Espejo learned that the Tiwa of Puaray had killed the priests. Espejo visited the Jémez pueblos as well as Ácoma, Zuni, and the Hopi villages (**Bolton 1930**:163–166, 182). Just as Coronado, Barrionuevo, and Rodríguez and Chamuscado, Espejo did not explore the Jémez Mountains.

In 1598 Juan de Oñate, son of one of the original silver magnates of Zacatecas, Mexico, and a professional miner, was awarded a contract to colonize New Mexico. Oñate established the first permanent Spanish colony and capital in New Mexico at the Tewa Pueblo of Yunge Oweenge (which he renamed San Gabriel) west of the confluence of the Río Grande and the Río Chama. As a mining expert, Oñate also noted mineral indications in his visits to various regions of New Mexico. He visited eight of the Jémez pueblos, including Giusewa at the Jémez hot springs. He noted other springs and deposits of "sulfur and rock alum" in this general area (**Reiter 1938**:27).

According to historian **Lansing B. Bloom**, Oñate passed through the Valles Caldera on his way from San Juan Pueblo to Giusewa and the other Jémez villages:

He "descended" thro [*sic*] the Valles to the Pueblos in the Vallecito drainage then working to the west over the high mesa land he "descended" from the potrero to the "last pueblo" of the province which he associates with the marvelous hot springs. Giusewa is the Pueblo meant beyond any reasonable doubt, and the trail from the Vallecito down into Hot Springs is still in daily use (**Bloom1946 [1922]**:123).

## Early Spanish Colonial Settlement (1598–1680)

The establishment of missions was an important part of Oñate's colonization project. Franciscan friars began to set up missions in the pueblos in the early 1600s. Father Alonso de Lugo established a church, probably at Giusewa, about 1600 (**Reiter 1938**:28). The second resident missionary at the Jémez pueblos was fray Gerónimo Zárate de Salmerón, who served there from about 1618 or 1620 to 1626. Zárate de Salmerón was also a prospector. He stated that he filed on numerous mineral locations in the Jémez Mountains in the name of the King of Spain (**Ayer 1916**:217). He might have been the first European to take note of the mineral wealth in what became known as the Cochití Mining District south of the Baca Location No. 1 (Baca Location).

The period between 1598 and 1680 in Spanish colonial New Mexico was one of brutal exploitation of the Pueblos by the new Hispanic overlords. This time also was one of fierce competition between the Franciscans, who had their own settlements (the missions) and their own governing hierarchy, and the governor and his secular officials (**Dozier 1970**:52–55). This competition was mainly over control and

exploitation of the Indians. The Pueblos were decimated by new diseases to which they had no immunity, and driven to the brink of extinction by Hispanic masters who exacted their labor.

## The Pueblo Revolt, the Reconquest, and Spanish Colonial Rule (1680–1821)

In 1680 the Pueblos revolted and drove the Spanish colonists out of New Mexico. The exiles camped near the mission of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe near present-day El Paso, Texas. They stayed there 12 years, until a new governor, Diego de Vargas, led a military expedition into the northern Río Grande in 1692 to begin the reconquest of New Mexico. Vargas obtained the peaceful submission of 23 pueblos, but when he returned with a stronger force in 1693, the Pueblos took up arms. Vargas besieged the former capital of Santa Fe and recaptured it in early 1694 (**Dozier 1970**:61). He then proceeded to subdue the Pueblos along the Río Grande. The Jémez people vacated their villages, and many fled into the Navajo country. They did not reestablish a town until about 1703. A census at the time recorded some 300 Jémez inhabitants—as little as 1 percent of the aboriginal Jémez population of 100 years earlier (see **Schroeder 1979**).

To promote the resettlement of the province of New Mexico, the Spanish colonial government granted lands to colonists. The Pueblos were understood to have certain lands, or "leagues," reserved for their exclusive use. Yet most of the Pueblo leagues were not formalized in writing until the late nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the idea of the Pueblo league was used by the Spanish colonial authorities to protect Indian lands against the growing Hispanic population and encroachment on the Indian lands by the land grants to the colonists.

The Cañada de Cochití Grant (1728) was between Cochití Pueblo and what became the Baca Location; by 1782 this grant had an Hispanic population of 184 residents. A grant that included the Rito de los Frijoles was made before 1740 but was abandoned because of nomadic Indian raids.

Governor Pedro Fermín de Mendinueta made the Ojo de San José Grant on Vallecitos Creek in 1768. Eleven families were living on this grant by 1776. During the 1700s settlers also began moving into San Diego Canyon north of Jémez Pueblo. Governor Fernando Chacón made the Cañon de San Diego Grant in 1798, which extended north from the Jémez Pueblo lands to the area of modern La Cueva and Fenton Lake. The first European settlement on the grant was probably Cañon, at the confluence of the Jémez and Guadalupe rivers. By 1821 the Hispanic population of the Jémez Valley was 864 (**Scurlock 1981**:135).

By about 1790/1800—because of the growing population, a period of peaceful relations with some Apaches and other nomads, and the reforms and development promoted by the ministers of King Charles III (the so-called "Carlist Reforms")—some economic diversification appeared among the Hispanic population. For nearly a century, almost all settlers had been farmers. Some artisans and skilled craftsmen now began to set up shops, and farmers began to switch to herding cattle and sheep. Around this time, Hispanics began to use the lush grazing lands that became the Baca Location (**Scurlock 1981**:134–135).

Although the documentary record is incomplete, the pastoral use of the Valles Caldera might have begun as much as a generation earlier. The Miera y Pacheco Map of 1779 makes clear that some New Mexicans knew of the Valles by the third quarter of the eighteenth century. Cartographer **Bernardo Miera y Pacheco** (1779) drew the map at the request of Governor Juan Bautista de Anza and labeled the Valles Caldera the *Valle de los Bacas* (Valley of the Cows [chapter 6]). The map is not to scale; the caldera is drawn many times its actual size. This distortion probably indicates the obvious: while travelers and herders had admired its majesty, no one had yet measured it.

## The Mexican Period (1821–1846)

Anglo-American and French Canadians trappers and traders, arriving in New Mexico as early as 1805, encountered a closed system. Spain limited and often prohibited trade among its colonies, and between its colonies and other nations. Trappers and traders were sometimes arrested and their goods confiscated (**Bancroft 1889**:277–303). After Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, the United States quickly became New Mexico's trading partner and the main source of cash for the departmental government. A strong American Party, with the declared object of eventual annexation to the United States, grew up in New Mexico. Nevertheless, foreigners were prohibited by law from trapping fur-bearing animals, and many disputes arose between Mexican officials and Americans over fees and customs duties. Luis María Cabeza de Baca, the original grantee of the Baca Grant, died in 1827 after being shot by a soldier attempting to confiscate13 packs of illegally harvested furs, which Baca had hidden in his house for American trapper Ewing Young (**Cleland 1950**:219).

During Spanish colonial times (up to the 1810s), the land grants owned by individual proprietors, or *ricos* (individuals with much land and livestock), were used mainly to raise sheep, especially in outlying areas where nomadic Indian raids made it too dangerous to establish permanent communities. Sheep were a measure of wealth and moved across the internal borders of the Spanish colony with fewer restrictions than those placed on most other goods. U.S. Army Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, taken into custody in 1807 for entering New Mexico illegally, reported seeing large herds of sheep as he was escorted down the Río Grande to Chihuahua, which was a major market for New Mexico sheep. After Mexico gained independence from Spain, relaxed trade restrictions with the United States meant new markets for wool and sheep. U.S. Army Lieutenant James Abert, reporting from New Mexico in

1846, noted that some large proprietors owned tens of thousands of head (**Wentworth 1948**:112, 114).

The Mexican government allowed Anglo-Americans to become citizens and to acquire land. As the demand for land increased, the government made large grants of three kinds: (1) to individuals or groups of families who proposed to develop a new community; (2) to farmers and ranchers for the development of agricultural enterprises; and (3) to the Pueblos, implicit awards of title to the "leagues" which they had occupied either from time immemorial or since the Reconquest. Some grants were also made to naturalized Anglo-Americans, with a view to placing the land under private ownership as a barrier to U.S. expansion. The U.S. Court of Private Land Claims subsequently confirmed 30 land grants of this period.

Two land grants of the Mexican Period, the Luis María Cabeza de Baca Grant (1821) and the Town of Las Vegas Grant (1835), embraced the same lands on the Gallinas River. To settle this conflict, the Baca heirs eventually relinquished their claim in exchange for U.S. Congressional authorization (1860) to select an equal amount of land in five square blocks elsewhere in the Territory of New Mexico. The first block they chose was the Baca Location. They did not receive title, however, until 1876, when the New Mexico Surveyor General completed the survey of the Baca Location.

## The U.S. Territorial Period (1846–1912)

In August 1846 U.S. troops marching from Fort Leavenworth invaded New Mexico. That the New Mexican government offered no resistance undoubtedly was due in part to its economic and social ties to the United States. The U.S. then occupied Arizona and California. Two years later the Mexican War officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. When New Mexico became a territory of the United States in 1850, Santa Fe continued to be the capital. The occupying U.S. Army first quartered troops in private houses, but soon began to build Fort Marcy.

Raiding by various Native American nomadic groups, including the Navajo, Apache, and Ute, was among the challenges the new U.S. administration faced. The Valles Caldera played a role in several notable episodes.

In 1851, after persistent drought conditions and overgrazing had depleted rangelands at lower elevations closer to Santa Fe, a civilian company headed by Robert Nesbit and Hiram R. Parker won a contract from the quartermaster at Fort Marcy to cut hay in the Valle Grande for the Army's horses and mules. Nesbit and Parker established a hay camp, still remembered as "Old Fort," on the East Fork of the Río Jémez (**McNitt 1972**:184). In the early hours of the morning of July 2, a band of about 35 to 40 Navajo warriors attacked Nesbit and Parker's camp, slightly wounded one of the sentries, and kept the rest of the hay men holed up in their log bunkhouse, massively constructed but poorly sited for defense. The attackers decamped two hours later with 6 of Nesbit and Parker's horses and 43 of their mules, only to be ambushed by 11 Jémez Pueblo herders who happened to be running cattle nearby and had heard the commotion. The Jémez herders killed two of the raiders and recaptured five mules (**McNitt 1972**:185; see also chapter 5 for further discussion of the hay camp raid and its aftermath).

The Navajo continued to plague the Jémez Mountains and the region over the next three decades. In 1853 raiders killed two Hispanic shepherds at Vallecitos in the upper watershed of the Río del Oso, a short distance northeast of the VCNP (**McNitt 1972**:256). Three years later Navajos attacked near Peña Blanca on the Río Grande between the Pueblos of Cochiti and Santo Domingo. They killed 2 shepherds and stole 400 sheep belonging to José Ignacio Montoya (**McNitt 1972**:277). New Mexican militiamen tracked the raiders into the Valle Grande. The militiamen attacked four Navajo herdsmen who were tending the stolen animals, killing two and recovering Montoya's flock (**McNitt 1972**:277; **Scurlock 1981**:137).

Sited on a gentle hill with ready access to water, Nesbit and Parker's original hay camp "was apparently later the site of Camp Valles Grandes, established by the U.S. Army as a deterrent to Navajo and Apache movement through the area during the final Navajo Wars of 1863" (**Scurlock 1981**:137; see ***Whitney v. Otero*** **1893**, Exhibit No. 2, in which Walter Marmon indicates the location of the "Old Fort" in a map). Lieutenant Erastus W. Wood, 5 non-commissioned officers, and 31 privates from Company A, 1st Infantry, California Volunteers, manned this encampment under orders from General James A. Carleton. From this location, they were

> *. . . to lie in wait for thirty days to kill every Navajo or Apache Indian who attempts to go through that noted thoroughfare. No women and children will be harmed; these will be captured. [General James A. Carleton, in* **Keleher 1982***:314].*

Although maps dating between 1876 and the 1930s show Old Fort's location, by the late 1950s all traces of the place had been destroyed, according to John Davenport who served as the Baca Location ranch manager during the 1920s. Recent efforts to relocate this site have been unsuccessful (**Martin 2003**:21–22).

On September 27, 1863, 5 weeks after General Carleton's orders to the Company A, 1st Infantry, California Volunteers to set up a month-long post in the Valles Caldera, Lieutenant P. A. J. Russell led four mounted men and a group of Pueblo warriors from the Valle Grande. They rode in pursuit of a band of Navajo raiders who had stolen livestock from nearby Río Grande Pueblo villages. This contingent surprised the raiders at Jémez Springs, killing 8 men, capturing 20 women and children, and recovering 125 sheep and 2 horses (**Keleher 1982**:314).

Jémez Pueblo preserves the memory of another battle with Navajo raiders in the Valles Caldera. A group of young men, including Cristóbal Sando, were tending the Pueblo's horse herd when they spied some Navajos camped on the southeast side of the Valle Grande. As retold by **Joe S. Sando**, Jémez Pueblo historian and Cristóbal Sando's grandson, Cristóbal

stealthily approached the raiders and fired a lethal arrow at the Navajo leader, starting the Jémez' surprise attack. The Pueblo herdsmen then chased the other raiders toward the west with a sustained volley of arrows, which they meant more as a scare tactic than an actual effort to kill the fleeing Navajos (**Sando 1982**).

The development of large single-owner herds of sheep, increased military protection, and the often brutal subjugation of the Navajos and other nomadic Indians during the 1860s and 1870s, caused expansion into previously little-known areas adjacent to the Río Grande Valley. There were two homesteads near the Baca Location by about 1883 (**USDA Forest Service 1883–1913**). Maríano Sabine Otero and his uncle, Miguel Antonio Otero, planned to develop Jémez Springs as a commercial resort (with the backing of officials of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad). They built a hotel and new bathhouses in 1882. Prospectors discovered gold and silver about 5 miles (8 km) south of the Baca Location in 1889. Major mines and the boomtowns of Albemarle, Allerton, and Bland followed circa 1894. The demand for lumber led to the establishment of several sawmills (**Scurlock 1981**:138).

Maríano Otero bought the Baca Location in 1899 for the Valles Land Company. He appears to have made this purchase in an insider deal made possible by a partition suit (***Whitney v. Otero 1893***; see also chapter 4). Maríano shared ownership of the Valles Land Company with his son, Frederico J. (F. J.). F. J. then became president of the Valles Land Company and used the Baca Location as summer range. In 1905 the Federal government created the Jémez Forest Preserve, known today as part of the Santa Fe National Forest, which surrounds the land grant.

In 1909 F. J. Otero sold the Baca Location to Redondo Development Company (with headquarters in Pennsylvania). He continued to lease the Location for grazing sheep up to 1917.

## Early Statehood to World War II (1912–1945)

In 1917, Frank Bond, one of New Mexico's most important general merchants in the late Territorial and early statehood periods, acquired, along with his brother, the summer grazing rights for the Baca Location. By the end of the following year, he entered into a purchase contract for the tract (**Scurlock 1981**:144, 147; see also chapter 4). Despite suffering major losses on the Baca Location during the severe winter of 1918–1919, Bond continued to develop his operations there. He finalized his purchase of the land grant in 1926. The Redondo Development Company retained its timber rights for the next 99 years (Deed, April 8, 1926, Redondo Development Company to George W. Bond and Frank Bond, in Abstract of Title of Timber Interest in and to the Baca Location No. 1, ***Baca Land and Cattle Company v. New Mexico Timber, Inc.*** [***Baca Co. v. NM Timber, Inc. 1967***]). Thus, this sale agreement was the basis for large-scale timbering in the Valles. The logging would continue until James Patrick Dunigan, the major shareholder in the companies that bought the Baca Location in 1963, went to court to restrain logging.

Guy H. Porter and his son, Frank H. Porter, formed the White Pine Lumber Company in 1922. In 1924 they began to ship timber from the Cañon de San Diego Grant by rail to Bernalillo. This meant the condemnation of a right-of-way across Jémez Pueblo, authorized by the (Federal) Pueblo Lands Condemnation Act of 1926, subsequently reenacted in 1928. The White Pine Lumber Company cut about 100 million board feet of lumber between 1924 and 1931 (chapter 7).

T. P. Gallagher, Jr., President of the New Mexico Lumber and Timber Company (later New Mexico Timber, Inc.), bought the White Pine Lumber Company after it stopped operations in 1931 because of falling lumber prices, and resumed logging on the upper Cañon de San Diego Grant. Redondo Development Company sold the logging rights on the Baca Location to the Firesteel Lumber Company in 1935. Under an agreement with Firesteel, New Mexico Lumber and Timber Company began logging in the vicinity of Redondo Creek and built a logging camp (Redondo Camp) consisting of cabins, sheds, stables, a mess hall, and a school for the loggers and their families in Redondo Meadows. This rush of activity led the Civilian Conservation Corps to build a road from Los Alamos to Cuba through Valle Grande in 1935 (**Boyd 1938**; see also chapters 4 and 7). This road continues to be the main access to the Valle Grande.

New Mexico Timber, Inc., received the rights to the Baca Location's timber in 1939 (Deed, December 31, 1939, Redondo Development Company to New Mexico Timber, Inc., in Abstract of Title of Timber Interest in and to the Baca Location No. 1, ***Baca Co. v. NM Timber, Inc.*** **1967**; see also chapter 7). Redondo Camp was abandoned this same year, and most of the Valles' logging was moved to the northwest part of the Baca Location. Logging continued into the war years and included cutting on Redondo Peak, at El Cajete, and along the Jaramillo drainage.

## Post-World War II to Present (1945–2003)

Because of the decline in wool prices during 1939 and 1940, Frank Bond added cattle to his operation. After his death in 1945, the Bond family leased the Baca Location to various cattle ranchers. In 1963 James Patrick Dunigan, owner of Dunigan Tool and Supply Company of Abilene, Texas, bought the Baca Location to run cattle. In 1964 Dunigan sued New Mexico Timber, Inc., in federal district court to obtain recognition of his successor interest in the 99-year timber lease. He appealed his case to the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in 1967, and won some rather minor restraints on logging (***Baca Co. v. NM Timber, Inc*** **1967**; see also chapter 7). Dunigan eventually bought back the timber rights in 1971 and temporarily ended logging on the Baca Location. He also drilled an experimental geothermal steam well in 1963 (following up the discovery of geothermal capacity in 1960). In the 1970s Westates Petroleum Company, Baca Land and Cattle Company, and Union Oil Company drilled wells within the

caldera that produced steam and hot water. Dunigan also made commercial elk hunts a part of his operation.

In 1976 the National Park Service bought 3,076 acres (1,244 ha) of the southeast corner of the grant as an addition to Bandelier National Monument. The National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service began studies in 1979 with a view to acquiring the Baca Location for the public.

The Federal Government and the Dunigan companies signed a purchase contract for the Baca Location on October 27, 1999, and the acquisition was carried out in 2000 (**Martin 2003**). The Valles Caldera Trust, a Federally chartered oversight board appointed by the President, assumed responsibility for the operation and development of the property for public purposes.

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