

# AN IN-DEPTH REVIEW OF REGIONAL HISTORY

## SUMMARY OF THE CULTURE HISTORY OF THE PURGATOIRE AND ARKANSAS VALLEY REGIONS IN SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO

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The summary of the culture history of the region is outlined from general accounts of prehistoric activity in southeastern Colorado derived from sources in Bent County, in particular John Martin Reservoir, located approximately 3 miles to the west (Eddy, et al 1982; Earles, et al 1987), previous studies conducted at Boggsville Historic Site (Carrillo n.d., 1994a; Carrillo and Barnes 1990; Carrillo and Petersen 1995; Carrillo, et al 1993a, 1994, 1995, 1996) and other locales in present Bent County (Earles, et al 1987; Carrillo and Peterson 1996). In Las Animas County the Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site and other sites (Carrillo 1981, 1985, 1990, 1994a, 1994b, 1995a, 1995b, Carrillo and Kalasz 1990; Carrillo, et al 1989; Weber 1990; Hardesty, et al 1995; Carrillo, et al 1996; Carrillo, et al 2003 and Carrillo 2007). These sources were utilized extensively to provide a general culture history overview of the prehistoric and historic periods.

The types of sites that have been located in the region, primarily in the John Martin Reservoir area, range from prehistoric to historic sites (Eddy, et al 1982). The time periods represented within the project area, based on data from John Martin Reservoir, indicate that the prehistoric occupation of the project area "extended from the Archaic Period through the Plains Apache in the eighteenth century" (Eddy, et al 1982:1). In terms of the historic sites, the majority were represented by "farmsteads of ranch-related features which dated from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (Eddy, et al 1982:1).

The cultural history of southeastern Colorado most probably dates to ca. 12,000 years ago, as Clovis occupations have been discovered in the Colorado area of the Great Plains (Fagan 1987). From that point until the 1600s the area remained the domain of various groups of Native Americans. With the beginning of the Spanish presence to the south in Santa Fe and Taos in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the area of southeastern Colorado was initially impacted in the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, when a comparatively rapid evolution of local life ways and significant migrations of people into and out of the area began that continued into the early 1900s. It was at this time that the final wave of sodbusters poured across the lands hoping to succeed at dryland farming. The climate rebuffed their attempts to plow the lands and the area returned to a grazing region, much as it had been for thousands of years for bison and other native wildlife. Later sheep were introduced by Hispanic settlers, and eventually cattle were brought in by Anglo Americans.

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## CULTURE HISTORY OVERVIEW OF SOUTHEASTERN COLORADO

The prehistory of southeastern Colorado is incompletely known, yet due to the presence of Clovis sites, it is presumed that the area has been occupied by aboriginal groups since at least 11,500 years ago. Because few sites have been excavated in the immediate vicinity of the study area, this summary of the prehistory is based on information from surrounding areas. Four stages (Pre-Projectile Point, Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Ceramic) are used in this overview.

### *Pre-Projectile Point Stage*

In the early 1960's Alex Krieger proposed the existence of a Pre-Projectile Point stage in Colorado in an attempt to document occupation prior to that of well-known Clovis sites of the period before 11,500 years ago (1964:42-51). At three sites in northeastern Colorado, Krieger cited possible Pre-Projectile Point levels, dated between 13,140 B.C. and 11,710 B.C. on the basis of the presence of extinct megafauna bone. His argument rested on presumed modification of these bones by humans, but few or no stone artifacts were recovered. Numerous archaeologists since have debated the presence of this stage in this area, searching for definitive proof of a pre-Clovis occupation. Thus far sites with clearly defined stratigraphy, reliable and consistent radiocarbon dates, and the established presence of humanly made artifacts in a primary stratigraphic context remain elusive (Fagan 1987; Meltzer 1993; Wenke 1990). Consequently, at present there are no designated Pre-Projectile Point stage sites known in southeastern Colorado.

### *Paleo-Indian Stage*

The earliest generally recognized evidence for human activity in southeastern Colorado is of the Paleo-Indian stage (10,500-5000 B.C.), when the climate was characterized by cool summers and warm winters (Bryson et al. 1970:53-74). Attributes of this tradition include the presence of relatively large, occasionally fluted, lanceolate projectile points found in association with large extinct Pleistocene animals, including mammoth, bison, and camel, as well as some extant species, such as elk, deer, and bear. Evidence suggests that people were organized into egalitarian bands of a few dozen individuals who had a nomadic way of life. They depended primarily on the large game they hunted and on seasonally available plant resources for food and the other necessities of life (Hester and Grady 1977:78, 79; Wheat 1971:24-28).

The Paleo-Indian stage is divided into three periods, recognizable primarily by their distinctive projectile points. These include the Clovis period (10,500 B.C.-9000 B.C.), the Folsom period (9000 B.C.-8200 B.C.), and the Plano period (8200 B.C.-5500 B.C.). Although Paleo-Indian projectile points have been reported from many areas of southeastern Colorado, no sites containing intact deposits have been reported south of the Arkansas River.

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### *Archaic Stage*

The onset of the Altithermal in the early Holocene period marks the beginning of the Archaic stage, during which a significant reorientation of lifestyle occurred (Benedict 1978:1-12). As a result of the changing climatic conditions and a decrease in the large game population, the people turned to hunting smaller game and gathering wild plants. The appearance of a more diverse tool kit, the development of an expanded ground-stone assemblage, and a general decrease in the size of projectile points in the archaeological record mark this stage. Based on changes in projectile point morphology, archaeologists have divided the Archaic into three periods: Early (5500 B.C.-3000 B.C.), Middle (3000 B.C.-1000 B.C.), and Late (1000 B.C.-A.D. 200). Archaic projectile points are mostly stemmed and are not as delicately flaked as the earlier Paleo-Indian points. Although considerable regional differentiation is evident, few Archaic stage complexes are well-defined. The extreme intersite assemblage variability hinders meaningful delineation of the Archaic complexes, even though the number of Archaic sites appears to increase through time. Archaic stage surface finds are fairly common in southeastern Colorado.

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### *Early Archaic Period*

The Altithermal climatic episode of hotter and drier conditions marks the start of the Early Archaic (5500 B.C.-3000 B.C.) (Frison 1978:41). In response to this drastic climatic change, the Plains may have been partially depopulated (Wedel 1964:200), with the probable relocation of some groups to the relatively cooler and wetter conditions of the higher foothills and mountains (Benedict 1979; Benedict and Olson 1978). Others have argued Altithermal sites no longer exist simply because of the vagaries of preservation (Albanese 1978).

Large shallow side-notched and some large corner-notched projectile point types are characteristic of the known Early Archaic sites located in the mountain-foothill areas and along mountain slopes (Benedict 1974, 1975a, 1975b; Frison 1978:41; Benedict and Olson 1978). Surface Early Archaic projectile points have been reported from the Apishapa Highlands, the John Martin Reservoir area, the Fort Carson Military Reservation, and the Pinon Canyon Maneuver site in southeastern Colorado (Lutz and Hunt 1979:133; Eddy et al. 1982:169; Alexander et al. 1982:179-180; Anderson 1985; Anderson 1989).

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### *Middle Archaic Period*

The Middle Archaic (3000 B.C.-1000 B.C.) represents continued changes with groups moving onto the Plains and the interior montane basins (Frison 1978:46). Frison suggests that these groups followed a carefully calculated schedule of seasonal food exploitation (1978:49). In southeastern Colorado, one Middle Archaic site, Draper Cave in Custer County, has been excavated. It contained mixed levels of Duncan, McKean, and Hanna projectile points. Radiocarbon dates obtained from this shelter suggest that occupation began by 1750 b.p. (Hagar 1976:1). A date of  $3140 \pm 60$  b.p. from 5LA1055, a rockshelter on the Carrizo Ranches, indicates that the area was occupied during the Middle Archaic-Late Archaic transitional period (Nowak 1982:30).

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### *Late Archaic Period*

The Late Archaic period dates between 1000 B.C.-A.D. 200, although the archaic lifestyle persisted much later. Aboriginal groups during this period continued to practice a subsistence strategy based on both hunting and foraging. A noticeable increase in the amount of ground- and pecked-stone artifacts in Late Archaic period sites, compared to the amounts in earlier periods, suggest an increased importance of vegetal food processing. In hunting, small mammals such as jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, and prairie dogs, also appear to have increased in importance in comparison to large mammals. Campbell (1969:364-366) felt some crude barrier walls may have been used for shelter during the Late Archaic period. A partially excavated semi-subterranean structure with a ramp entry and a 2.7 m long floor basin at the McEndree Ranch site, Baca County, is the only known Late Archaic structure in southeastern Colorado. Two hearths located some 35 - 50 m southwest of the structure were dated 220 B.C. and 400 B.C. (Shields 1980).

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### *Ceramic Stage*

The Ceramic stage is characterized by the appearance of the bow and arrow, ceramics, and horticulture. Each of these innovations appeared during the Early Ceramic period, the first period of the Ceramic stage. Neither ceramics nor horticulture were ever dominant traits in the cultures of southeastern Colorado, but their presence are distinct markers of this stage. In southeastern Colorado distinctive small masonry structures also seem to have appeared during this stage. The relationship of these structures to the large structure at the McEndree Ranch site is uncertain. Three distinct periods are assigned to the ceramic stage: Early Ceramic (A.D. 200-A.D. 800/1000), Middle Ceramic (A.D. 800/1000-A.D. 1550), and Late Ceramic (A.D. 1550-A.D. 1750). An increase in assemblage variability has permitted the identification of several locally diverse groups within each period.

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### *Early Ceramic Period*

During the Early Ceramic period mountain glaciation resumed and major alluviation occurred on the plains. Although a hunting-foraging lifestyle persisted throughout the region, distinctive traits developed and/or adopted from other cultural groups mark the appearance of the Early Ceramic period (A.D. 200-A.D. 800/1000) (Eighmy 1984; Wood 1967). Traits associated with the Early Ceramic period include the appearance of cordmarked pottery and small, corner-notched arrow points, the widespread appearance of architecture, and perhaps incipient agriculture. The occurrence of cordmarked pottery in Early Ceramic sites generally indicates influences from the east. Some Southwestern contacts are evident for certain projectile point styles present in Early Ceramic components at Trinchera Cave and thirteen sites on the Apishapa Highlands (Wood Simpson 1976:204; Lutz and Hunt 1979:135). A few large projectile point styles present during the Late Archaic period persist in small numbers throughout the Early Ceramic period and into the following Middle Ceramic period. A marked increase in the number of sites dating to this time period suggests a significant population increase and/or greater site visibility due to the presence of architectural remains.

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### *Middle Ceramic Period*

The Plains Village pattern developed during the Middle Ceramic period (A.D. 800/1000-A.D. 1550), predominantly on the prairie-plains of eastern North Dakota through central Oklahoma and into the Texas Panhandle. The classic Plains Village culture is characterized by a more settled pattern than the Early Ceramic period Plains Woodland. Sites tend to consist of villages composed of one room, wattle and daub, square or rectangular, four-post houses, with a central fire pit and eastward extending entrances. These village sites are typically found in defensible locations adjacent to river bottoms where maize, beans, and squash were grown to supplement hunting and other gathered food products (Wedel 1964:205-207). Material traits of the Middle Ceramic period include globular cordmarked pottery, diamond-shaped alternately beveled knives, small side-notched and unnotched projectile points, drills, scapulae hoes, bone awls, beads, and stone elbow pipes.

The classic Plains Village pattern never fully developed on the eastern Colorado plains. The absence of Plains Village architectural styles and bone horticultural tools, coupled with the continued use of masonry architecture with cordmarked globular pots, suggests that Middle Ceramic period remains are a diluted form of the Plains Village pattern. Numerous non-architectural sites in eastern Colorado are thought to represent seasonal hunting camps from the more sedentary villages further east (Wood 1971). Although six Plains Village cultures may have influenced southeastern Colorado cultures during the Middle Ceramic period, only two (the Upper Republican aspect, Antelope Creek phase, and the Panhandle aspect) are mentioned in the regional literature. Three cultural complexes have been identified in eastern Colorado during this period. The Upper Republican and Apishapa phases are primarily derived from the Plains Village influences/groups, whereas the Upper Purgatoire (Sopris phase) is derived from Southwestern influences.

The Upper Republican phase (A.D. 1100-A.D. 1300) follows the Early Ceramic period in northeastern Colorado and along the Front Range (Wood 1971:80). Upper Republican is a variant of the Plains

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Village pattern prevalent elsewhere on the Plains. Upper Republican villagers resided in central Nebraska and north central Kansas, where they grew corn, beans, squash, and sunflowers. Their pottery consisted of large, round jars with cord-roughened exteriors and collared rims. In contrast to the sedentary villages of eastern Upper Republican sites, western sites may represent penetrations by hunting parties from the east or seasonal hunting camps by local, permanent western residents. Wood considers the former to be more likely (1971:80). With the exception of a single grain of corn from the Agate Bluff area (Irwin-Williams and Irwin 1966:22), no pollen or macroscopic remains of cultigens have been found in association with Upper Republican materials in eastern Colorado, supporting the position that Upper Republican sites on the Colorado High Plains were oriented toward hunting and gathering (Wood 1971:81; Wood 1967:558).

The Apishapa phase is characterized by villages composed of vertical slab stone enclosures in defensible locations near arable land, with increased and improved horticulture (Campbell 1969:418-419). Other material traits include side-notched arrowpoints, snub-nosed end scrapers, side scrapers, core scrapers, scraper knives, graters, choppers, tapered flange drills, manos, metates, basketry, and cordmarked pottery. Bison bone horticultural tools and diamond-shaped beveled knives are noticeably absent. This tool assemblage is indicative of generalized Plains affiliations. Campbell observes that Apishapa culture, which had developed on and around the Chaquaqua Plateau, is full-blown around A.D. 1000 and continues to about A.D. 1350. During this period, there was a noticeable increase in the number of sites as well as the number of rooms in a site. Sixty-eight sites, largely located near arable land in defensible positions, have been reported. Most houses were circular stone enclosures, though oval, semi-circular, D-shaped, and rarely, rectangular rooms are represented. Campbell postulates that horticulture became a "fundamental part of the subsistence pattern during Apishapa times" (1969:391). Although five varieties of maize and beans were cultivated, the small number of sites containing evidence of cultigens or immovable storage facilities for cultigens indicates that horticulture did not play a major part in the Apishapa economy on the Chaquaqua Plateau, as Campbell suggests. Hunting of large and small game and wild plant gathering continued. The number of dart points continued to decline in relationship to the number of arrowpoints. After A.D. 1150, some cord-marked pottery was slipped, smoothed, and/or polished (Campbell 1969:389-401).

After A.D. 1300, the number and size of sites on the Chaquaqua Plateau is thought to have sharply declined. Campbell hypothesizes that warfare and severe droughts contributed to the abandonment of the Chaquaqua Plateau by Apishapa peoples during the fourteenth or early fifteenth century (1969:401-402). He postulates that two divisions of the Panhandle aspect, the Antelope Creek focus and an unspecified conservative group who occupied the middle Canadian River valley until the middle sixteenth century, were derived from the Apishapa focus (Campbell 1976:89-90). Lintz argues against this phylogenetic relationship between the Apishapa and Antelope Creek focuses (1978), and recent studies indicate that the middle Canadian River valley of eastern New Mexico was not intensively occupied by groups using cordmarked ceramics (Kirkpatrick and Laumbach 1984; Way 1984; Baker 1984).

On the Chaquaqua Plateau, twenty-six sites dating to the Terminal Middle Ceramic (A.D. 1300-A.D. 1550) are reported (Campbell 1969:402-408). These include rectangular enclosures, rockshelters, and one surface encampment. Earth ring and spaced stone ring sites appear during the latter part of the period. Hunting and gathering were important and, although people raised beans, there is little evidence of farming (Campbell 1969:402-408). Because the Apache were on the Las Vegas Plateau by

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A.D. 1525, Campbell estimates that they may have used spaced stone circle sites and earth rings that postdate A.D. 1435 (Campbell 1969:407).

In the Upper Purgatoire Valley, the Upper Purgatoire complex is defined between A.D. 1075 and A.D. 1225 (Wood and Bair 1980:15). Unlike the previously described Plains complexes, the Upper Purgatoire complex probably reflects influences from the Puebloan Southwest, characterized by semi-sedentary settlements and a subsistence based on hunting, gathering, and floodplain farming. Houses are constructed of stone, adobe, or jacal depending on the most available materials, and bell-shaped storage pits are present. Ceramics indicate trade with both Plains and Puebloan groups (Wood and Bair 1980:225-232).

The Upper Purgatoire complex is divided into three sub phases: Initial Sopris subphase (A.D. 1000-A.D. 1100), Early Sopris subphase (A.D. 1100-A.D. 1150), and Late Sopris subphase (A.D. 1150-A.D. 1225) (Wood and Bair 1980:15). The Initial Sopris subphase is characterized by the construction of semi-subterranean pit houses, jacal structures, and campsites, which may or may not have been associated with jacal or brush superstructures. Ceramics include Taos Gray and Sopris Plain, both of which have identical morphology. Basin metates predominate over slab and trough metates, and corner-notched projectile points are more common than side notched and stemmed projectile points. Elbow pipes appear and persist throughout the phase (Wood and Bair 1980:228-229).

Early Sopris subphase architecture is characterized by a shift from jacal to predominantly adobe architecture. Taos Gray-Sopris Plain are the dominant ceramic types, but incised wares from the northern Rio Grande pueblos, and some cordmarked, polished, and corrugated wares are present. Occasionally Taos Black-on-White and Red Mesa Black-on-White (A.D. 850-A.D. 1150), wares are also present, which are associated with the turquoise mines near Cerrillos, New Mexico. There is no significant variation from the artifact assemblage from the earlier subphase except that trough metates replace the basin types and small shell and stone disc beads appear during this period (Wood and Bair 1980:229-231).

During the Late Sopris subphase, unfaced, horizontally dry-laid, sand-stone slab masonry appears as the preferred construction material, although construction using adobe, stone, and jacal still continues. The quantity of Red Mesa Black-on-White ceramics decreases while the Taos Black-on-White ceramics increase in the Late Sopris subphase collections. Taos Gray Incised wares predominate and Taos Gray-Sopris Plain wares are abundant. Cordmarked and polished wares decline in importance. Slab metates replace trough metates, and grooved mauls appear in the artifact assemblage at this time (Wood and Bair 1980:231-232).

Wood and Bair (1980:241) conclude that the Sopris phase represents remains of an indigenous population who had contact with, but were distinct from, the Anasazi. Rather than a northern extension of the Anasazi, the Sopris phase possibly represents an early Athabascan group who adopted a generalized Plains Woodland pattern (Wood and Bair 1980:241). Although skeletal evidence provides some support for an Athabascan identification, the material similarities with Plains Woodland materials are weak.

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### *Late Ceramic Period*

The Late Ceramic period (A.D. 1500-A.D. 1750) spans the time from the initial contact between the Spanish and the Plains Indians to the initiation of regular contact between the Native Americans of the Arkansas Valley and the Spanish colonies in New Mexico, ca. 1750. In 1540 the Spanish had laid claim to the Purgatoire and surrounding territory. This period was a time of upheaval and unrest. In southeastern Colorado, groups of Apache and Comanche arrived from the north, while the Ute continued to exploit local resources seasonally. Both archaeologically and ethnohistorically identified groups were present on the Plains during the Late Ceramic.

Dismal River Aspect sites date between A.D. 1675 and A.D. 1725, and are located in southwestern South Dakota, southeastern Wyoming, eastern Colorado, western Kansas, western Nebraska, and possibly the Oklahoma Panhandle and northeastern New Mexico (Gunnerson 1960:144; 1968:167-169; 1987:102-110). The Dismal River economy was based primarily on bison, deer, and beaver hunting and secondarily on the cultivation of corn and squash (Gunnerson 1960:245; 1987:103). Settlements consisted of small clusters or scattered houses, which had unprepared floors and pole and earth roofs supported by five center posts. Irregular trash-filled pits are common in most Dismal River village sites, but cache pits are absent. Also present in many villages in southern Nebraska and Kansas are bell-shaped baking pits (Gunnerson 1960:248-250). Dismal River aspect pottery is a thin, sand-tempered, grey-black plain ware, which may also reflect the surface decorations used by the nearest adjacent group. Micaceous shards, probably trade wares from northeastern New Mexico, are in the minority at Dismal River sites (Gunnerson 1960:246-248; 1987:105). Other characteristic Dismal River artifacts include small, triangular unnotched arrowpoints, plano-convex end scrapers, and a variety of bone implements including bison scapula hoes (Wedel 1959:594-597). Euro-American trade goods include iron, brass and glass beads, iron axes and scrapers, and copper and brass conical tubular objects (D. Gunnerson 1974:251; Wedel 1959:596). Trade with other indigenous groups is indicated by the presence of Ocate Micaceous pottery, Puebloan painted pottery, obsidian, turquoise, and various other lithic materials (Gunnerson 1960:251; 1987:105). The Dismal River aspect has been associated with Plains Apachean groups who are thought to have migrated south across the Plains, some arriving in the Southwest around A.D. 1525 (D. Gunnerson 1974:5).

Within the region, a number of other archaeological sites not part of the Dismal River Aspect have been attributed to the Plains Apache. Most "Plains Apache" sites near the project area have been identified by the presence of spaced stone circles (tipi rings), earth rings (Campbell 1969:404, 407, 419; Hand et al. 1977:65-67), and micaceous tempered pottery (Ocate Micaceous and Cimarron Micaceous), some of which may be attributable to Taos-Picuris Puebloans rather than to Apachean peoples (Wedel 1959:593; Wood and Bair 1980:21-22). The validity of assuming these traits are Apachean has not been tested.

Within southeastern Colorado, a number of purported Apachean sites have been reported. The Loudon site is a roughly circular mound of fire-cracked rock containing a 3.5 m diameter central depression filled with ash. The site, dated A.D. 1435, has been attributed to the Apache (Greer 1966). Several tipi ring sites, a date of A.D. 1350, and the presence of micaceous and San Lazaro Glaze polychrome pottery (dated A.D. 1440-A.D. 1515), suggest that eastern Apachean peoples were present in the Carrizo Creek area of southeastern Colorado by A.D. 1400. This information also suggests trade with the Puebloans as early as the late fifteenth century (Kingsbury and Gabel 1980). Cimarron

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Micaceous pottery has been reported from three sites on the Apishapa Highlands and is attributed to the period dating A.D. 1550-A.D. 1750, although Cimarron Micaceous ceramics have been dated elsewhere between A.D. 1750-A.D. 1900 (Gunnerson 1987:107; Lutz and Hunt 1979:136; Wood and Bair 1980:21). Two other sites on the Apishapa Highlands are tentatively assigned an Apachean affiliation based on the presence of Taos Incised pottery (Lutz and Hunt 1979:136). Site 5LA1411 in the Trinidad Reservoir area, which contains two tipi rings and Ocate Micaceous pottery, is attributed to the Carlana phase, a putative Jicarilla Apache manifestation dating between A.D. 1525 and A.D. 1750 in the Upper Purgatoire Valley (Hand et al. 1977:vii, 65). Campbell (1969:407, 419) postulates that the Plains Apache may have been on the Chaquaqua Plateau as early as A.D. 1435 and ascribes the earth and stone rings of the fifteenth century to Dismal River aspect.

According to ethnohistoric and linguistic evidence, the Apache migrated rapidly from west central Canada, with the southern branch (Jicarilla, Lipan, Mescalero) arriving in the Southwest in A.D. 1525. Initially, they were a nomadic, dog travois-using, bison-hunting, non-ceramic people (D. Gunnerson 1974:5; Schleiser 1972; Wilcox 1981). No archaeological or linguistic evidence supports an Apachean entrance into the Southwest prior to A.D. 1525, and some argue that the earliest date for resident Athabascan groups in the Southwest is A.D. 1690. (Gunnerson 1987:108-110; Wilcox 1981:227). No pre-pottery Apachean sites have been identified on the plains, perhaps because diagnostic materials of the aceramic Apachean groups are unknown (Gunnerson 1983:275).

In sum, the Ceramic Stage in eastern Colorado can be divided into three periods. The first is characterized by the introduction of the bow and arrow, ceramics, widespread architecture, and horticulture. Gradual change occurred until the latter part of the Middle Ceramic period, when the character of sites changed and their number decreased. At that time, the people may have partially or completely abandoned the area. New groups also may have entered the area, a pattern which continued into the Historic stage. By the beginning of the Late Ceramic period, the Spanish began to explore the region and document the presence of Apachean peoples. The Comanches joined the Apachean peoples by the early part of the eighteenth century. The stage ends with the establishment of regular trade between aboriginal and European groups.

## ETHNOHISTORIC OVERVIEW

The ethnohistory of the Purgatoire valley is a reconstruction based upon observations in the region, the surrounding areas, and to a much lesser extent, the immediate area of Boggsville. It traces general historic and cultural patterns and ties local events into the larger patterns when possible. The ethnohistorical summary relating to Native Americans is extensively based on Kenneth Weber's ethnohistoric overview of southeastern Colorado (Weber 1990). Additionally the ethnohistorical overview of the New Mexican Hispanic presence in southeastern Colorado is a compilation from general research relating to the Middle Purgatoire region (Carrillo 1990; Hardesty, et al 1995) and other areas in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.

The High Plains experienced dramatic culture change and population movements among Native American and New Mexican populations during this period, continuing a pattern begun in the early nineteenth century. The Purgatoire region was affected by these changes, as its location at the southwestern margin of the High Plains afforded the area increased cultural interaction with groups in

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neighboring physiographic regions, including the Rocky Mountains and the desert and oasis areas of the American Southwest (Weber 1990).

## GEOGRAPHIC AND ECOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The area is located in the Colorado Piedmont near the margins of three major physiographic regions. These are the short grass portions of the Great Plains to the north and east, the Sangre de Cristo Range (Spanish Peaks) of the Colorado Rockies to the west; and the Raton Mesa uplift to the south. Also included is the somewhat more distantly located desert and oasis areas of the American Southwest (Thornbury 1965).

## PERSPECTIVE AND CONTEXT

For most of the Native Americans of the East, Great Plains, and Rocky Mountains, the 100 years between 1770 and 1870 were marked by tremendous population changes, a cultural florescence, disease, and often displacement and death. The survivors became wards of the federal government. All of these changes were direct or indirect results of Euro-American contact and were intimately tied to two phenomena of Euro-American origin: the fur trade and the introduction of the horse (Weber 1980:16; 1990). Both phenomena are key elements in post-contact Native American culture change, and are singled out here to exemplify the type and extent of changes wrought by the Euro-Americans. Although the beaver fur trade began in the Northeast and Great Lakes area, it set into motion processes that eventually reached the Plains and the Southwest. The introduction of the horse, on the other hand, came from the opposite direction--the Southwest--and in a relatively short time horses were found throughout the tribes of the Plains and Plateau regions. New forms of economic exchange that accompanied Anglo American goods resulted in a shift affecting Native American groups and the Hispanic population in the Southwest. These groups went from independent and self-sufficient units, to subordinate members of the international trade community (Weber 1980:16; 1990). However, one should not lose sight of the fact that these people reacted in active ways to adapt to or to resist these processes.

The fur trade began in the Northeast and spread west following the deciduous forest ecozone inhabited by the beaver. The later and somewhat different trade in buffalo hides on the Plains was in many ways an extension of the fur trade. The Native Americans' quest for guns and other trade goods provided incentive for their entrance into the fur trade. However, their involvement in the fur trade was not simply a matter of choice, or a desire for Anglo American goods. It was also a matter of necessity and survival, since groups without access to firearms were at the mercy of those who had them. This differential access to power and trade goods was exploited by Anglo Americans and Native Americans alike. Continued access to trade goods was predicated upon access to beaver or bison. A domino effect of population pressure and cultural conflict was created when tribes moved west from their traditional territories into that of others, searching for new beaver lands (Weber 1990).

About the same time that the beaver pelt-and-gun-trade network moved in from the Northeast, an equally momentous catalyst for cultural change was spreading from the Southwest. With the

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adoption of the horse, the pedestrian hunting and gathering adaptation to the Plains environment changed profoundly. Small, scattered groups coalesced into large and powerful tribes with an annual cycle no longer geared solely to the availability of resources for human consumption, but increasingly to the requirements of the horse herds. As with guns in the East, the acquisition of horses created wealth and power differences both within and among tribes. Mounted groups expanded their territory at the expense of unmounted groups, and Plains social organization was almost completely restructured and reorganized. Not only were groups within the Plains region changing locations, expanding and/or contracting, but new groups were drawn to the Plains as well. The Comanche moved from the Wyoming area to dominate the Southern Plains, while the Lakota (Sioux) thrust westward onto the Northern Plains. Other groups, such as the Ute, retained their home base in the mountains but added a Plains hunting period to their calendar and a Plains veneer to their material culture. The Ute, along with the Jicarilla Apache, raided regions as far as the Texas and Oklahoma panhandles. With the meeting of the horse and gun frontiers in Montana, the classic "Plains horse culture" was formed (Lewis 1942; Secoy 1953; Weber 1980:17, 1990).

The adoption of the horse and gun not only brought population and territorial changes on a grand scale to the Plains, but also led to the reorganization of local groups, fundamentally changing the way local inhabitants viewed and used the natural environment. Prior to the horse and gun, Native Americans on the plains were pedestrian nomads who collected wild foods while following the movement of the buffalo herds. General equality of wealth existed within the groups as the resources to make the needed goods were available to all and material possessions were necessarily limited to what could be readily carried. The evolving trading complex provided an external outlet for local production, introduced new trade goods, and brought about differential access to buffalo, the primary resource. This same combination of events had ramifications for the utilization of the natural environment. Local production, no longer limited to local needs, was refocused upon what the national and international markets could absorb (Hickerson 1973; Mishkin 1940; Secoy 1953; Weber 1980:17-18; 1990).

The various tribes became competing and consuming economic groups locked into and increasingly dependent upon an external trade network over which they had no control. These societies, which had been relatively self-sufficient, became both initial producers (hides) and ultimate consumers (guns, other articles) of Euro-American manufactured goods (Weber 1980:18). In short, adoption of Anglo American goods led Native Americans to lose some of their previous subsistence options, and, while they acted to mediate some of the negative impacts, they ultimately lost sovereignty and became a satellite of the larger market economy (Weber 1990).

The Native Americans and the New Mexican Hispanic *pobladores* developed a system of guarded cooperation over a period of 200 years of coexistence between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Southeastern Colorado was part of Spain's claim on the New World based on Columbus' discovery. Papal decree later divided Spain's claim with Portugal. In 1540, members of the Coronado expedition were the first of Spaniards into the area. This area, generally comprising the present American Southwest, served as Spain's northern frontier and is referred to in the current historical literature as the Spanish Borderlands (Bannon 1974; Bolton 1964; Weber 1982). No successful Spanish attempts to colonize the area that is in present-day Colorado ever occurred. The region was used for hunting and trade with indigenous Native American Plains groups, a tradition acquired from Pueblo Indians who had established a trading network predating the arrival of the Spanish (Kenner 1969; Carrillo 1990).

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The Louisiana Purchase by the United States in 1803, when France forfeited control of an enormous portion of the midcontinent, caused a dispute between Spain and the United States over the western boundary. In 1819 the dispute was resolved with the Adams-Onís (Transcontinental) Treaty that delineated the Spanish-American boundary by a series of rivers and parallels. The boundary commenced with the Sabine River, the western boundary of present-day Louisiana, and extended to the Pacific Ocean at the forty-second parallel, the present boundary of Oregon. In southeastern Colorado, the Arkansas River was established as the Spanish-American boundary. The new boundary brought the United States to within several hundred kilometers of the New Mexican settlements (Anderson 1985:46; Friedman 1985:34; Lamar 1977:4-5; Mehls and Carter 1984; Stoffle et al. 1984:58; Weber 1982:12; Carrillo 1990).

Between 1786 and the 1870s, important exchange systems developed in the region and continued basically unchanged throughout the American period. *Comancheros* (Hispanic New Mexican and Pueblo traders to the Comanches and other tribes) and *ciboleros* (Hispanic buffalo hunters) ventured from central New Mexico onto the plains ranging from the Davis Mountains on the southeast, well into Oklahoma on the east, and to the Platte River on the northeast. With the exception of traffic in horses and mules, the initial trade of both groups was generally a simple exchange of the produce of the valley for the game of the Plains (Forbes 1960:86). After American trading posts were built in the region, they also became suppliers to, and consumers of, goods carried by the *comancheros*. *Comancheros* traveled throughout southeastern Colorado and were observed by Captain Lemuel Ford and Jacob Fowler in the late 1840s (Forbes 1960:78-114; Weber 1990).

## GENERAL ETHNOHISTORY

While the Spanish had records of the plains Apache dating to Coronado's 1541 expedition, it was not until the turn of the eighteenth century that the Euro-Americans observed the maximum expansion of the range of the Southern Athabascans on the Great Plains. The Apache ranged from north of the Black Hills southward between the Front Range of the Rockies and the central High Plains to central Texas and westward across the Rio Grande near the Big Bend area into northern Mexico (Weber 1990). Early in the eighteenth century, however, the fortunes of the Plains Apache declined quickly due to several factors, which included both the Comanche advance and the infiltration of the southern and central Plains by French traders. The expansion of French traders led to a colonial struggle between Spain and France which lasted until 1763, when France ceded Louisiana to Spain in the Peace of Paris.

The net effect of these events was the retraction of the Apache from the northern and eastern parts of their territories and their migration south and southwest into New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico. By at least 1706, Colorado Apaches joined in a defensive posture to protect themselves from Comanche and Ute attacks (Kenner 1969:28). In 1719 Valverde "found the settlements of the former Colorado Apache concentrated in the area of the Cimarron and Ponil Creeks [New Mexico]" situated "at the Plains entrance of the Taos trail" (Schlesier 1972:116) and the Apaches had left their original settlements in Colorado and Kansas by about 1750 (Weber 1990).

Soon after 1700, two Spanish expeditions came into southern Colorado. Juan de Ulibarri came through the Purgatoire River valley in 1706, and Antonio Valverde Cosío came through in 1719. Documentation

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from these expeditions illustrates two major ethnohistoric patterns for this period. This valley was in the midst of Apache territory which extended from at least central New Mexico to the western Kansas plains and presumably much farther to the north. Although documentation of Native American presence in the Purgatoire area itself is limited to the single case cited earlier, it seems fair to assume that the general area was used, if not inhabited, by Apaches during the period up to approximately 1720. Secondly, the expeditions document the increasing pressure exerted by the Ute and Comanche that led to the subsequent retreat of the Apache from the southern Colorado plains and foothills areas. This, coupled with pressure on the Cuartelejos (sedentary Apaches along the Arkansas River) from the Pawnee and the Jumano, led to the abandonment of previous Apache territory in western Kansas and adjoining parts of Colorado by about 1750 (Weber 1990).

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### *Comanche*

The early years of the eighteenth century saw the Apache populations of the Colorado and Kansas Plains give way before the aggressive, invading Comanche. The Comanche, of Shoshonean linguistic stock, were first recorded in 1705 when the Spanish reported them trading in Taos. In the next year Ulibarri reported that the Comanche and allied Ute were about to attack that community. At that time their homeland was thought to be in the valleys around the headwaters of the Arkansas River. In an earlier period the Comanche probably resided with the closely related Shoshone in western Wyoming, southern Idaho, and northern Utah. From their ancestral homelands the Comanche supposedly spread in two directions: east onto the Plains and to the southeast. The Comanche were initially a hunting and gathering, mountain-based people who later became highly mobile plains bison hunters, and raiders (Hyde 1959:64-65; Kenner 1969:28; Shimkin 1940:40; Wedel 1959:75-76; Weber 1990).

By 1706 the Comanche were raiding in southeastern Colorado. Ulibarri reported Penxaye Apache in the area between the present-day towns of Pueblo and Trinidad retreating from expected attacks by Comanche and Ute. During the following years, attacks by combined Ute and Comanche groups ranged along the Spanish frontier in western Arizona, northern New Mexico, and southern Colorado. By 1719 the Penxaye and Carlana Apache had been driven from the lands fronting the Spanish Peaks and by mid-century the Apache previously inhabiting the Colorado-Kansas plains had been pushed into west-central Texas and eastern New Mexico (Hyde 1959:66-105; Kenner 1969:28-36; Weber 1990).

By this date the "mounting Comanche depredations," which included a destructive raid on Taos and interference with the barter between New Mexico and Plains Apaches, impelled Governor Valverde to lead 600 men in an expedition against the Comanches in northeastern New Mexico and southeastern Colorado. As noted in the previous section, Valverde did not find the Comanches but did locate numerous trails, camps, and habitation sites along his looping route through much of southeastern Colorado. Kenner described Carlana Apaches in this area as "...shattered remnants of a once powerful tribe, in full retreat before the Ute and Comanches" (1969:30). Even after retreating to the La Jicarilla area along the Cimarron and Ponil creeks in northern New Mexico, the Apache were not safe and continued to attract Comanche raiders (Weber 1990). By this period, "the High Plains from the upper Colorado River of Texas northward to the Platte in Nebraska, and the Colorado Piedmont fronting the Rockies, were firmly in the hands of the Comanche" (Wedel 1959:76).

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By 1750 the Comanche and Ute had parted as allies. The breakup of the Comanche-Ute alliance in 1748 may have been due to successes in Comanche-French trading. The Ute found themselves subject to Comanche attack in the area south of the Arkansas River and east of the Rockies. In the following year the Ute ceased their raids on northern New Mexico settlements and requested Spanish protection from the Comanche (Hyde 1959:107).

Perhaps the single most important success of the Spaniards during the years of Comanche raiding was Governor Juan Bautista de Anza's 1779 expedition against the Comanche chief, Cuerno Verde (Green Horn). With Pueblo, Ute, and Jicarilla allies, de Anza marched north through the San Luis Valley, crossed the Front Range near present-day Colorado Springs, and captured Cuerno Verde's camp near present-day Pueblo while Cuerno Verde and his warriors were away on a raid. A short distance to the south at the foot of Greenhorn Mountain, Cuerno Verde stumbled into de Anza's trap, where he was killed, along with many of his warriors. Following this battle, Spanish-Comanche relations along the far northeastern frontier of New Mexico were generally quiet (Kenner 1969:50-51).

The Comanche continued their southern and southeastern expansion during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The dissolve of the still formidable Apache barrier east of Pecos by voluntary removal allowed the Colorado Comanche to expand unchecked south and southeast. Until 1758 their winter camps stood on the Arkansas, but by 1761 they had extended southeast to the Canadian River of the Texas Panhandle (Weber 1990).

During this period, Comanche territory extended from the Arkansas River above the Huerfano on the northwest, south along the Pecos River to near the Big Bend country of Texas, east to the present-day Austin area, and north to the Great Bend of the Arkansas in Kansas. Comanche raiding extended far beyond these boundaries, well into Old Mexico on the south and against the Pawnee and Arikara villages on the north (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:7-8; Wedel 1959:76-77; Weber 1990).

Spanish attempts to "civilize" some Comanche bands included the construction in 1787 of a fixed village (*San Carlos*) on the Arkansas River near present-day Pueblo, Colorado, in hopes that the Comanche would take up horticulture and stock raising. The Comanche abandoned the settlement the following spring, which Thomas (1935:41) surprisingly attributes to a fear of living in Jicarilla territory. A much more plausible explanation is the death of a headman's favored wife - the Comanche were not comfortable remaining where someone had died - and a general distaste for the confinement of a settled life (Moorhead 1968:161-163; Weber 1990).

Although at the northwestern margins of their territory, Comanches continued to live in southeastern Colorado and on the upper Arkansas into the early nineteenth century. In 1806, Zebulon Pike saw traces of Native Americans he suspected were Comanche on the upper Arkansas. He suggested erecting a trading post for them "near the mountains on the Arkansas" (cited in Wedel 1959:76). By 1821, when Jacob Fowler traveled along the Arkansas, the area reflected more of a frontier beyond the core area of any single group. On the Arkansas River, just west of the present-day Otero County line, Fowler found a large camp of Kiowa Indians. Over the course of the next several weeks the camp was joined by large numbers of Comanche, Arapaho, Cheyenne, and at least two other less well-identified groups. This total encampment, Fowler estimated, reached between 10,000 and 18,000 persons. The status of the area as a peripheral or transit zone is further attested to by the contemporaneous presence of Crow and Taos Pueblo Indians (Coues 1970:53-68; Weber 1990).

In 1833, Bent, St. Vrain and Company began the construction of their famed trading post, Bent's Fort, just north of the Arkansas and east of La Junta. The local ethnohistoric importance of Bent's Fort is

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dealt with more completely in the following section addressing the Cheyenne and Arapaho, but it should be stressed that Comanche, as well as other tribes of the Southern Plains, traded at this post. The fort became the economic and communications center for the southwestern Plains and adjoining mountain areas. In 1835, Colonel Dodge met with large numbers of Cheyenne, Arapaho, Gros Ventre, Comanche, Pawnee, Arikara, and some Blackfoot visiting the post. At this time he passed out peace medals, advocating peace (Lavender 1972:170-174). Some five years later an even larger peace parley was held 4.8 kilometers (3 miles) downstream from Bent's Fort and was attended by thousands of Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, Comanche, and Prairie Apache (Kiowa-Apache). After several days of dancing, gifting, feasting, and purchasing provisions from the fort, these traditional enemies from opposite sides of the Arkansas declared a peace among themselves and with the traders so that commerce would continue (Lavender 1972:201-203). In 1843 a trader at Bent's Fort observed that "some thousands" of Comanche were in the vicinity of the fort, although for the most part posts to the south, nearer to the center of their territory, were the focus of Comanche trade (Richardson 1933:180; Weber 1990).

The Comanche also were noted in Pope's report during his 1854 government-sponsored exploration for proposed railroad construction. He noted that "...Comanches ranged into the upper Arkansas in the summer along with Kiowas." Of the Kiowas he wrote "portions of them, even during the winter months, occupy the valley of the upper Arkansas, and of its tributary, the Purgatory River" (Schroeder 1974:428; Weber 1990).

Settled in an area bordering both sides of the Civil War, the Comanche were offered agreements by both the North and the South. In the winter of 1861-1862 Comanche with over 600 lodges camped at Fort Wise (later renamed Fort Lyon) and awaited annuity goods and items promised in an agreement signed the previous fall. The government's goal was to ease tensions brought about by increased white transit and settlement pressures and to free soldiers for duty in the East (Richardson 1933:275-278). Due to increasing pressures from the whites, the year 1864 saw widespread Native American disturbances in the western Plains and in eastern Colorado. The Cheyenne and Arapaho were the primary groups involved in the Colorado hostilities along the Arkansas and farther south, but as Richardson (1933:284) wrote, "the Kiowas and Comanches were not guiltless." The vast majority of the Comanche military activity took place to the south on the New Mexico plains and in Texas. In 1867, a Congressionally authorized commission was sent to secure a lasting peace with the Native Americans of the southwestern Plains (the Comanche, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apache), and in Barber County, Kansas, a treaty was signed. In return for peace and the right to build military posts, roads, and railroads through their territory, the Comanche were promised annuity goods, an agency, schools, farms, seeds, implements, a physician, and a carpenter. They were also confined to a reservation in what became western Oklahoma (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:309-310; Weber 1990).

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### *Ute*

Like the Comanche, the Ute were of Shoshonean linguistic stock and were located immediately to the south of the Comanche in the area that extended from the Colorado Front Range on the east, to Utah's Oquirrh Mountains on the west (Jorgensen 1972:29). They traditionally held areas west of the Front Range (Jorgensen 1972; Schroeder 1965; Stewart 1966), but their hunting range extended well onto the Plains, depending in large part on their relationship with the group(s) currently inhabiting that

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area. In the period before 1700, the Ute hunted the eastern Colorado plains with the Jicarilla Apache and ranged as far south as the Texas panhandle. From about 1700-1750 the Ute and Comanche were allies and frequently were reported together, raiding and hunting on the High Plains. The Ute-Comanche combination is credited with driving the Colorado Apache away from their territory to the east of the Spanish Peaks and into New Mexico by 1719. Tribal dynamics shifted again in the early 1750s when the Ute and Comanche alliance dissolved. By 1754, the Ute had joined with the Jicarillas and Spanish in attacking the Comanche (Schroeder 1965). From at least this period forward, tribal territory was not well defined and was often more a matter of power than tradition (Weber 1990).

During the early 1800s, the Ute and Jicarilla made seasonal expeditions to hunt buffalo. In 1837 a Ute rancheria was seen east of the mountains and south of the Arkansas River (Schroeder 1965:63). Increasing pressures on the Ute and their subsistence base resulted in some Ute raids in northern New Mexico in the early 1850s. In 1854 an expedition of New Mexico volunteers, guided by Kit Carson, marched through the San Luis Valley, defeated the Ute at Poncha Pass, and "...chased others eastward to the Purgatory, and at the moment of victory were called off" (Lavender 1972:353). Pope, in a report of his explorations of 1854 wrote:

Utah Indians, who inhabit the vastnesses of the Raton and Sangre de Cristo, frequently avail themselves of the absence of the Comanches, during the summer, to make descents from the mountains upon the small parties of Kiowas who remain in the valley of the Arkansas [cited in Schroeder 1974:428].

The last Ute contact in the region appears to be a series of Ute-Apache attacks on settlements along the lower Purgatoire in 1868 (Lavender 1972:392; Weber 1990).

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## *Cheyenne and Arapaho*

As Hyde (1959) observed, the general drift of the Comanche to the south brought, and perhaps was in part encouraged by, the movement of new groups into the Colorado High Plains and Front Range country. Primary among these groups were the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Although the early history of these two tribes is not well detailed, it is known that these Algonquian-speaking groups were previously horticultural village people who entered the Plains from the shores of the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi Valley. Like the Ute, the Arapaho traveled in small groups rather than as "tribal" units. They came from the valley of the Red River and entered the Plains before the Cheyenne, who arrived later and entered from somewhat farther south (Weber 1990).

Archaeological data suggest that Cheyenne residence on the upper Missouri River extended for at least one and possibly two centuries, ending by about 1840 (Wood 1971:71). The Arapaho, long neighbors of the Cheyenne, were pushed onto the Plains ahead of the Cheyenne and by about 1816 some Cheyenne and Arapaho were hunting together between the sources of the North and South Platte rivers. Pike did not mention either of these groups in his journey up the Arkansas in 1806, but by at least 1811 the Cheyenne were reported to be among the tribes making predatory excursions into Mexico to steal horses from the Spanish (Berthrong 1963:18). The horses were then traded to the Arikaras (Weber 1990).

Choteau and DeMun, French traders from St. Louis, met a large winter encampment of Kiowa, Arapaho, and Cheyenne on Cherry Creek, near present-day Denver, on their trading expedition in 1816-1817. In 1820, Captain Bell, leading one contingent of Stephen H. Long's party, encountered "Arapahoes" on the north bank of the Arkansas River below the mouth of the Purgatoire River. Fowler, as previously noted, camped with a large number of Cheyenne and Arapaho tribesmen at a sizable winter encampment in Pueblo County in 1821. "During the mid-1820's," as Berthrong (1963:21) summarized, "the Cheyenne were widely scattered from the Missouri River to the Arkansas." This, however, is not meant to suggest that the area was used exclusively by the Cheyenne and Arapaho (Berthrong 1963:4-26; Schroeder 1974:393; Wedel 1959:80-81; Weber 1990).

These initial contacts foreshadowed an increasing amount of Anglo-Native American contact along the Arkansas River in the late 1820s and early 1830s. This was a period when interest in the southern Rocky Mountain area became increasingly focused on trading rather than just trapping, including trade with New Mexico, and later Mexico itself. Trade was becoming increasingly profitable due to changes in policy following Mexico's independence from Spain and the amount of traffic on the Santa Fe Trail was increasing. It was during this time, that the Bent brothers arrived in the Arkansas River Valley (Weber 1990).

After several years of trapping and trading in the Southwest, William Bent built a trading stockade a few kilometers east of the mouth of Fountain Creek near Pueblo to tap into the local Native American trade. Returning to Missouri in 1832, the four Bent brothers camped at the confluence of the Purgatoire and Arkansas Rivers, and were joined shortly by a number of Cheyenne, returning from a successful horse raid against the Comanche to the south. Charles and William Bent explained to the Cheyenne their idea of a large trading post to be built along Fountain Creek. The Cheyenne, reportedly, were greatly impressed but argued for a site at Big Timbers, a location some 40 kilometers (25 miles) downstream from the mouth of the Purgatoire and a favorite Cheyenne camping site. In the following spring, construction was begun on Bent's Fort at a location below the Fountain but about 19

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kilometers (12 miles) above the mouth of the Purgatoire. The Cheyenne, as promised, provided a ready clientele for the fort, and additional Cheyenne and Arapaho were attracted to the area (Moore 1973).

The fort was located on the Arkansas River along what had become the boundary between the Cheyenne and Arapaho and various other southern tribes (Comanche, Kiowa, and Kiowa-Apache). It was also near tribes to the west and southwest (Ute and Pueblo) and, therefore, had a large and varied potential market. The river became the political boundary between the United States and Spain, and later Mexico, after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The Bents' trading permit granted them trading rights with the Cheyenne, Arapaho, Snake (the Wyoming Shoshone and probably the Comanche), Kiowa, Sioux, and Arikara. At the height of the firm's power, their territory ranged from the Texas Panhandle on the southeast, to the Green River area in western Wyoming on the northwest; and from the Black Hills, South Dakota to the northeast, to just across the Arizona line on the southwest (Weber 1990).

Shortly after completion of the fort, a group of Cheyenne drifted from the north toward the Arkansas River, with some 350 lodges representing probably more than 2,500 persons, and thus made permanent the division of the Cheyenne into northern and southern branches. As the predominant trading enterprise in this vast region, much of nineteenth century history of the southwestern Plains is linked with that of Bent's Fort (Lavender 1972:6-7, 138-154; Weber 1990).

In addition to the established and regular commerce Bent's Fort enjoyed with the various tribes of the region, it also served as a major communications hub and meeting place. Major parleys between Native American groups and government representatives were held at or near Bent's Fort in 1835, 1840, 1848, and 1850. These attracted Cheyenne, Arapaho, Gros Ventre, Pawnee, Arikara, Kiowa, Comanche, Kiowa-Apache, and, occasionally, members of other visiting tribes. Intertribal and Native American-Anglo peace prospects were common topics of these gatherings, which also served as dispersal points for the distribution of goods from the government (Weber 1990).

These parleys reflected the shifting military and political domination of the Plains from Native American to Anglo control. By 1851, the government felt it was both necessary and strong enough to demarcate tribal territories for High Plains aboriginal groups from southern Colorado and western Kansas through Montana. Such was the intent of the representatives of the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Assiniboine, Gros Ventre, Mandan, and Arikara, and members of the United States Government assembled at Ft. Laramie in 1851. The Treaty of Fort Laramie was signed by members of these delegations and the fifth article of the treaty defined the territory of the Cheyenne and Arapaho as follows:

...commencing at the Red Butte [sic], or the place where the road leaves the north fork of the Platte River to its source; thence along the main range of the Rocky Mountains to the headwaters of the Arkansas River; thence down the Arkansas River to the crossing of the Santa Fe road; thence in a northwesterly direction to the forks of the Platte River, and thence up the Platte River to the place of beginning [Van Hook 1933:45].

This treaty thus recognized the area north of the Arkansas in Colorado as Cheyenne and Arapaho territory. It is important to note that all parties to this treaty, Native American and Anglo, recognized this territorial delimitation. The treaty also recognized the right of the United States to establish roads and military posts in the area. The treaty, however, was not ratified by the Senate and so was not legally binding (Van Hook 1933:45; Weber 1990).

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The area south of the Arkansas was not a part of the Treaty of Ft. Laramie but was included in the Treaty of Ft. Atkinson, which was signed in 1853, ratified in 1854, and recognized the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache tribes as the inhabitants of this area. In addition, the treaty acknowledged the right of the United States government to build roads and posts and also gave reciprocal guarantees against depredations. Together the two treaties recognized and delineated aboriginal territorial areas in eastern Colorado, and established certain limited governmental rights, but these did not include the right of American citizens to settle in this territory (Van Hook 1933:45-46; Weber 1990).

In 1861, the next treaty affecting the Native Americans of the Upper Arkansas Valley, the Cheyenne and Arapaho, was written and ratified at Fort Wise (previously Bent's New Fort). This treaty reserved for these tribes the area:

Beginning at the mouth of the Sandy Fork of the Arkansas River and extending westwardly along the said river to the mouth of the Purgatory River; thence along up the west bank of the Purgatory River to the northern boundary of the Territory of New Mexico; thence west along said boundary to a point where a line drawn due south from a point on the Arkansas River, five miles [8 kilometers] east of the mouth of the Huerfano River, would intersect said northern boundary of New Mexico; thence due north from that point to said boundary to the Sandy Fork to the place of beginning [Kappler 1904:807; Van Hook 1933:63-64].

All other lands owned or claimed by these two tribes were ceded to the United States. In addition to a number of other conditions, the treaty stipulated that no white persons other than employees of the United States "shall be allowed to reside or go upon any portion of said reservation without the written permission of the superintendent of the central superintendency, or the agent of the tribes" (Van Hook 1933:64-65; Kappler 1904). However, the territorial exclusivity provisions of the treaty were not adhered to by Native Americans or Anglos, and the treaty provisions were not enforced during the Civil War years (Van Hook 1933:64-65; Weber 1990).

The lack of success of these treaties in establishing Native American rights and ending conflict was made manifest in Chivington's attack on the Cheyenne and Arapaho camp at Sand Creek in 1864, along with the hostilities that followed. Many of the Anglo residents of Colorado subsequently mounted increasing pressure for the removal of all Native Americans from the eastern part of the state. After retaliations and counter-retaliations, representatives of the U. S. signed a treaty of peace with the Cheyenne and Arapaho in Kansas, on the Little Arkansas River, in 1865, and it was ratified in the following year. This treaty effectively removed the Cheyenne and Arapaho from Colorado. The Apache chose to adhere to this treaty by confederation, and they too were removed from Colorado. A parallel treaty with the Comanche and Kiowa, negotiated at the same site in 1865, removed these tribes from Colorado. Although these new reservations were located at some distance from the Bent's Fort area, the reservation boundaries were not impervious, and a limited number of raiding forays continued. In the late summer and fall of 1868, the lower Purgatoire valley properties of Kit Carson, John W. Prowers, Thomas O. Boggs, William Bent, and E. R. Sizer were among those raided. No raids, however, occurred after 1868 (Kappler 1904:887-891; Van Hook 1933:69-71, 76; Weber 1990).

Thus, in the approximate life span of Bent's Fort, these High Plains Native American groups went from dynamic, independent, and autonomous units, to greatly weakened groups whose territories were delimited by an outside political power, and whose economies were linked and subordinate to

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national and international markets. By 1853 the economic destiny of these groups had already become apparent. In that year Indian Agent Fitzpatrick wrote in his final report that:

they are in abject want of food half of the year....The travel upon the road drives [the buffalo] off or else confines them to a narrow path during the period of emigration, and the different tribes are forced to contend with hostile nations in seeking support for their villages. Their women are pinched with want and their children constantly crying with hunger....Already, under pressure of such hardships they are beginning to gather around the few licensed hunters....acting as herdsman, runners, and interpreters, living on their bounty; while others accept most immoral methods with their families to eke out an existence [Lavender 1972:349].

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### *Comancheros and Ciboleros*

The lives of the Hispanic settlers in New Mexico was left unrecorded by contemporary documents, and therefore fall into the category of ethnohistory. These New Mexicans have been considered only recently in the history and ethnohistory of the southern High Plains (Kenner 1969). Archaeologically, even less consideration has been given to this group. However, these individuals played an important part in the Plains economy prior to the arrival of the Anglo Americans in the 1820s, and continued through the American occupation into the 1870s. They are considered in this section, as they represent an important element in the ethnohistory of the region (Carrillo 1990).

Pueblo Indians from various villages in northern New Mexico conducted hunting activities in the vast Plains region prior to occupation of the area by Apaches, but were forced to curtail hunting activities after the Apaches arrived. As a result, with the Pueblos lacking in meat and hides, and the Apache lacking in corn, trading between the two groups developed. This pattern was well established when Coronado arrived in New Mexico in 1540 (Kenner 1969:5-9). When Spanish contact was reopened with the upper Rio Grande forty years later, a brisk trade was observed between the Tompiro Pueblos, who produced corn and blankets, and the "people of the buffalo," who bartered with deerskins, buffalo hides, and meat. Because of their fear of venturing onto the Plains controlled by the Apache, the Pueblos conducted trading activities in their home territory (Carrillo 1990).

In 1598 Don Juan de Onate founded the settlement of San Gabriel in New Mexico. A few months later, his nephew Vicente de Zaldívar, while exploring the Canadian River region, met a group of Plains Native Americans. He indicated that the group was returning from Picuris and Taos, "populous pueblos of this New Mexico, where they sell meat, hides, tallow, suet, and salt in exchange for cotton blankets, pottery, maize, and some small green stones which they use" (Anderson 1985:41; Athearn 1985:15; Bolton 1916:226; Friedman 1985:28; Carrillo 1990).

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the New Mexicans and the Plains Native Americans had stabilized their relationship. A flourishing trade existed, attributable at least in part to the Apache having adopted both Hispanic and Pueblo cultural traits. The new Comanche presence dealt New Mexico inhabitants their most serious challenge prior to the arrival of the Anglo Americans. The Hispanos were able, however, to preserve much of the Native American trade and to establish significant commerce with the Comanche, even venturing into the Plains to trade. Most of the trade occurred in the New Mexican villages. Throughout the century Taos dominated this trade and hosted annual fairs where New Mexicans converged to trade with the Comanche. The New Mexican traders offered, among other items, "beads, trinkets, and a wide variety of ironware ranging from knives and

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axes, to bridle bits and cooking utensils." In return, the Comanche bartered, "buffalo hides, meat, tallow, and captives" (Anderson 1985:44-45; Kenner 1969:37; Stoffle et al. 1984:58; Carrillo 1990).

Initially, trading horses to the Comanches was prohibited, but by the 1770s, as their herds increased in number, the Comanches began to sell them. By at least the 1760s the Comanche also were trading guns to the New Mexicans. In 1776 an observer stated that the Comanche sold "good guns," pistols, powder, and balls, which they obtained from the Jumano Indians (a western Texas - eastern New Mexico group of uncertain affiliation, possibly Caddoan or Athabascan), who in turn had obtained them from the French (Kenner 1969:25, 38).

The trade fairs were an important factor in the New Mexican economy. New Mexican traders took buffalo robes and Native American slaves to the great Chihuahua fairs, and exchanged them for manufactured items not available in the frontier regions. Settlements in northern New Mexico also carried on trade for buffalo and other hides with the Ute (Anderson 1985:44-45; Kenner 1969:40).

The New Mexicans and Comanche managed to maintain an uneasy truce, marred by occasional Comanche attacks on frontier villages. In the 1740s, these attacks became more frequent. From this time until the defeat of the Comanche in 1779, New Mexico was under continual siege by the Comanche. During this period New Mexicans lacked guns and horses, and many of the villages had few defenses. The Comanche, on the other hand, were being supplied weapons from the Jumanos, who traded them for stolen Spanish horses. These weapons were obtained from illicit English traders from east of the Mississippi River (Anderson 1985:44-45; Athearn 1985:18; Friedman 1985:31-32; Kenner 1969:41-45; Stoffle et al. 1984:48-55). As mentioned in the Comanche section, in August of 1779 Governor Juan Bautista de Anza defeated the Comanche chieftain Green Horn with the aid of 800 soldiers, settlers, Pueblos, Ute, and Jicarillas, near the base of Greenhorn Mountain, near present-day Pueblo, Colorado. Peace negotiations were concluded between de Anza and Ecuercapá, a Comanche chieftain, at Pecos in 1786. Peaceful relations lasted at least fifty years, longer in some locations. This brought about changes in New Mexico, the most significant being the expansion of the New Mexican frontier (Anderson 1985:45; Athearn 1985:18; Friedman 1985:32-33; Kenner 1969:50-63; Stoffle et al. 1984:51-54).

One of the major changes that resulted from the peace treaty was the emergence of the *comancheros*. The term, which is not found in Spanish documents, first appeared in print in *Commerce of the Prairies* by Josiah Gregg in 1843. Because of its detailed descriptions of the Santa Fe Trail and New Mexico, the book was read extensively by many army officers who served in New Mexico in the 1840s and 1850s. When New Mexican traders were met on the Plains they were labeled *comancheros*. They consisted primarily of two groups: the "indigent and rude classes of the frontier villages" (Gregg 1954:257), and the Pueblo Indians who had traded with the Plains Native Americans centuries prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.

The changing conditions did not initially impact the *comancheros*, but eventually they fell victim to social and political transformations beyond their control. Whereas under the Spanish and Mexican governments *comancheros* were important factors in the economic system, conquering Anglo Americans who initially viewed them as "harmless rovers of the plains" came to see them as notorious villains by the 1860s and 1870s (Kenner 1969:78).

Prior to the 1786 peace treaty, trading on the Plains had been limited by Spanish governmental restrictions and fear of hostile Plains Native Americans. After the treaty, the government acceded to

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numerous requests by the *pobladores* to trade in the Comanche country. Governor Fernando de la Concha, who had succeeded de Anza, granted their requests in order to gain information about the lands and watering places in the region as a precaution in the event of renewed hostilities. New Mexicans began to trade for horses with the Comanches to resupply their war-torn land, which resulted in raids on other Native American allies of the Spanish, and threatened the uneasy peace with these groups. New restrictions were placed on trading in the Plains until about 1810, when Anglo American intrusions into the Spanish-controlled Plains began to occur (Kenner 1969:78-79).

About this time trade also was occurring between the *comancheros* and other tribes inhabiting what is now southeastern Colorado. Hides and pelts were traded with the Kiowa on the Arkansas River, with the Pawnee along the Platte River, and with the Arapaho, who were located between the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers. Although the Arkansas River Valley served as the center of trade of buffalo hides, New Mexican traders were operating as far east as the Kansas River (in present-day northeastern Kansas). The confluence of the Purgatoire and Arkansas Rivers served as a regular rendezvous area between Plains Native Americans and New Mexican traders. In 1818, Spaniards were trading in the area referred to it as *La Nutria*, the place of the beaver (Stoffle et al. 1984:58; Weber 1971:29-30).

The items that were traded by the *comancheros* in the nineteenth century, with the exception of the added traffic in horses and mules, had not changed much from those traded between the Plains Native Americans and Puebloan groups at the time of Coronado. The *comancheros* carried trade goods that were much coveted by the Plains Native Americans, including bread, flour, and corn meal, as well as sugar, dried pumpkins, onions, tobacco, barley meal, and other dried foods. Manufactured items such as hardware and cloth were rarely traded during the nineteenth century because they were difficult for the *comancheros* to obtain for themselves (Kenner 1969:84-86). *Comancheros* were considered by most Anglo Americans to be "gunrunners," but prior to the arrival of the Anglo Americans the Mexican traders were still obtaining guns from the Comanche, just as they had done in the previous century at the Taos trade fairs. Later, during the period of U.S. control, the Indian agent for the Osage tribe, John M. Richardson, in his report to the Commission of Indian Affairs, reported that the Osage were buying "guns, blankets, cloth, powder, lead, etc. of the traders in this nation." Lances, tomahawks and "iron or steel arrow spikes ready made," which were quickly replacing the traditional flint projectile points, were being sold to the Plains peoples by the *comancheros* (Mooney 1898:141). In return for their trade goods, the *comancheros* obtained horses, mules, buffalo robes, and meat from the Plains Native Americans (Kenner 1969:86).

Many of the trade goods were taken to the Plains on either pack animals or *carretas*, archaic ox carts described by Lieutenant J. W. Abert as having:

two eccentric wheels, not exactly circular, formed by sawing off the ends of large logs, and rimming them with pieces of timber to increase their diameter...They were perforated in the neighborhood of the centre, to receive an axletree of cottonwood. A suitable pole, and a little square box of wickerwood completed the laughable machine (Abert 1846:53; Simmons 1983:324-334).

Using this home-made equipment, the *comancheros* ranged over a vast region and were quite adept at traversing the subtly featured landscape of the Plains. They were reported as far north as the South Platte River in 1811, and as late as 1849 in the vicinity of the Wichita Mountains in Oklahoma and the Davis Mountains in Texas. Other reports indicate that, in addition to the expeditions out to the Comanche and Kiowa, bartering took place with the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, Ute, and

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Shoshone. The principal trade months were August and September, and most trips lasted only a few weeks (Kenner 1969:82-88).

Another important group that came into prominence at the same time as the *comancheros* was the New Mexican buffalo hunters or *ciboleros* whose name derived from the Spanish name for bison, *cibolo*. The new pattern of New Mexican-Plains Native American relationships that evolved after the 1786 treaty stimulated organized bison hunts on the Plains, although the pueblos had hunted bison sporadically in New Mexico before the arrival of the Spanish. Although the Spaniards and the Pueblos probably obtained most of their buffalo meat and hides through barter, buffalo hunting is mentioned in seventeenth century documents. For example, a great bison hunt in Texas occurred in 1683, when an estimated 8,000 buffalo were killed (Kenner 1969:98-100).

Documents suggest that bison hunting had become fairly common in the eighteenth century. In 1706, Ulibarri, while at El Cuartelejo, a sedentary Apache community, noted that Picuris Puebloans were on a bison hunt. In 1719 Governor Antonio de Valverde, on a punitive expedition against the Comanches, found a large herd of bison in eastern Colorado. The hunts were fairly common by 1726, and were not considered newsworthy. However, the Comanche migration into the Plains reduced the number of hunts at this time. In 1752 Governor Tomas Velez reported that it was risky for the Pueblos to venture too far into the Plains. In 1785, several years after de Anza had defeated Cuerno Verde, buffalo hunting once again occurred. One hunt in particular led indirectly to the 1786 peace treaty between de Anza and Ecueraacapa (Kenner 1969:99-100).

Several factors contributed to the stimulation of buffalo hunting. Buffalo products such as meat and hides were not available to the Pueblos and New Mexican villages in great quantities because trade was now focused on the Plains. In turn, the increasing population of New Mexico was putting pressure on the available food supply. Buffalo robes were in great demand to exchange for manufactured items in Chihuahua, and the *ciboleros* could traverse the Plains in relative safety in their hunt for the buffalo (Kenner 1969:100-101).

The techniques for hunting may have come somewhat naturally to the New Mexicans. Native and Hispanic captives were traded by both groups, and many families who began in settlements as *genizaros* (Christianized Indians), after a few generations of intermarriage, became *vecinos*, New Mexican villagers. Through such people knowledge and technologies of Plains and Pueblo groups were incorporated into the northern New Mexican Hispanic lifeway (Hurt 1939; Swadesh 1974).

The *ciboleros* came to be active in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, as did the *comancheros*, and endured until the middle part of the century. Thus, the *ciboleros* period overlaps from the Spanish period into the succeeding Mexican period of 1821-1848 (below). By 1832 approximately 10,000 to 12,000 buffalo were being harvested annually. In contrast to the attitude Anglo Americans held toward *comancheros*, *ciboleros* were considered rugged, daring, and picturesque. They impressed several Anglo Americans who visited New Mexico, including Josiah Gregg who initially encountered them in 1831 as his caravan was approaching Santa Fe. His book, *Commerce of the Prairies*, has come to be a classic work on the nineteenth century American Frontier. Two of his observations indicate that at least some New Mexicans had, by the 1830s, adapted to life on the Great Plains by adopting many ways of the plains Native Americans. For example, Gregg offered two interesting descriptions of New Mexican *ciboleros*:

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... As we were proceeding on our march, we observed a horseman approaching, who excited at first considerable curiosity. His picturesque costume, and peculiarity of deportment, however, soon showed him to be a Mexican *Cibolero* or Buffalo-hunter. These hardy devotees of the chase usually wear leathern trousers and jackets, and then straw hats; while, slung upon the shoulder of each hangs his *verage* or quiver of bow and arrows. The long handle of their lance being set in a case, and suspended by the side with a strap from the pommel of the saddle, leaves the point waving high over the head with a tassel of gay part-colored tufts dangling at the tip of the scabbard. Their fusel, if they happen to have one, is suspended in like manner at the other side, with a stopper in the muzzle fantastically tasseled.... (Gregg 1954: 63).

... A word concerning the *Ciboleros* may not be altogether uninteresting. Every year, large parties of New-Mexicans, some provided with mules and asses, others with *carretas* or truckle-carts and oxen, drive out into these prairies to procure a supply of buffalo beef for their families. They hunt, like the wild Indians, chiefly on horseback, and with bow and arrow, or lance, with which they soon load their carts and mules. They find no difficulty in curing their meat even in mid- summer, by slicing it thin and spreading or suspending it in the sun; or if in haste, it is slightly barbecued. During the curing operation they often follow the Indian practice of beating or kneading the slices with their feet, which they contend contributes to its preservation. (Gregg 1954: 67).

As Gregg observed, the weaponry, clothing, and other characteristics of the *ciboleros*, closely resembled that of Native Americans of the High Plains. Another observation made by Gregg and others was that New Mexicans had only very limited access to iron (Gregg 1954: 147). As a result, the poorer New Mexicans relied on other metals or stone as substitute materials for their tools. In their journals and other accounts the Santa Fe traders went to great lengths to describe the foods, dress, and social customs of New Mexico during the 1830s and 1840s. The trade lasted for nearly thirty years after the 1848 treaty transferring control of the Southwest from Mexico to the U.S. (Gregg 1954).

In contrast to the *comanchero* trading expeditions, common in August and September, the *cibolero* hunting expeditions usually occurred in October. Several factors encouraged hunting at this time: 1) the weather was still agreeable; 2) their annual migration southward from summer pastures on the Arkansas River to the Canadian Valley in the Texas panhandle region brought the buffalo closer to the settlements during this period; 3) the crops were already harvested; 4) the buffalo hides were in good condition; and 5) meat was needed for the winter months (Kenner 1969:102).

Caravans were formed and sometimes large parties of about 300 men, women, children, and dogs, led by veteran hunters, would venture onto the Plains. The large groups increased safety, and a few athletic young men (*cazadores*) were sufficient to do the actual lancing, although many individuals were needed for skinning and processing (Gregg 1954:34-35; Kenner 1969:102).

Although equestrian buffalo hunting necessitated learning the habits of the buffalo from hunting aboriginal groups, the use of the lance as a hunting weapon was introduced to Spain by the Visigoths in the early Christian Era. The technique involved "riding into a herd of milling buffalo, moving ahead of the selected prey, and taking it with a backward thrust of the spear" (Swadesh 1974:19-20). The *cazadores* would steal close to a herd of buffalo and then dash into the midst of the fleeing animals. Each hunter singled out a victim, shouldered its horse next to the brute, and drove his lance downward past the animal's left ribs into its heart. Wrenching the lance loose, the hunter

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swiftly turned on another lumbering beast" (Kenner 1969:103). An experienced lancer could kill between eight and twenty-five buffalo during a single chase. Although the lance was used most often, the bow and arrow was preferred by some hunters (Kenner 1969:103).

A decline in the size of the buffalo herds in the early 1850s led to animosities and eventually to an altercation between the Cheyenne and the *ciboleros*. Since the Cheyenne were supported by William Bent and Thomas Fitzpatrick (the Cheyenne Indian agent), as well as the U.S. Army, the *ciboleros* were warned to stay out of the Plains. In 1854, war did break out between the New Mexicans and Cheyennes. The U.S. Army basically ignored the struggle since officers such as Colonels Philip St. George Cooke and John Garland felt the Cheyenne were justified in their attacks. Although the war lasted only through the year, the animosities remained until 1858 when a treaty was finally negotiated by Kit Carson (Kenner 1969:108-112).

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### *The Demise of Native American Occupation in Southeastern Colorado*

Increasing commercial and governmental traffic along the Santa Fe Trail had both direct and indirect effects on both the Native American populations of the region, and the activities of the *Comancheros* and *Ciboleros* on the Plains. Before the coming of the white traders, Plains Native Americans relied on buffalo as a source of food, clothing, and shelter, and were autonomous and self-reliant. After the end of the trading in beaver pelts and the establishment of trading posts on the Plains, buffalo robes became one of the primary mediums of exchange, which had dramatic implications for the vast buffalo herds. The buffalo shifted from being a resource with a local, modest, and sustainable demand to a resource for which demand was to become national and international, almost unlimited (Weber 1990).

With increased mobility and Anglo contact, epidemic diseases also spread across the Southern Plains. The horse had allowed the nomadic groups to travel over larger areas in more populous groups, making diseases more devastating in their spread. Smallpox, although not as devastating as on the Northern Plains, struck the Kiowa during the winter of 1839-1840. The Kiowa often traded at Bent's Fort but during this season they were well to the south of the fort (Lavender 1972:201). In 1854 smallpox was carried from a Kiowa camp to a small Cheyenne village near Bent's New Fort in Big Timbers. With William Bent's doctoring and an effective quarantine, the disease was contained and only one Cheyenne died (Lavender 1972:336). Cholera, too, was a problem, and an epidemic in 1849 wiped out half of the Southern Cheyenne population (Lavender 1972:336; Weber 1990).

On a more local level, Bent's Fort attracted a continuing parade of traders, hunters, government employees, and private individuals. As the most distant American bastion in the Southwest, this traffic seems to have peaked during the Mexican War period. Many of the goods and men destined for New Mexico and the Southwest went through Bent's Fort (Bieber 1936; Calvin 1951; Cooke 1964; Drumm 1962; Garrard 1955; Robinson 1972). The route of travel from Bent's Fort to New Mexico took these parties west of the Boggsville area, and none mentioned the presence of Native Americans once away from the Arkansas. A single exception was Edwards (cited in Bieber 1936:146) who mentioned signs of Native American use of the area. Describing a location some 16 kilometers (10 miles) from Hole-in-the-Rock and across the Purgatoire River, he wrote, "Here a great many dead cottonwood trees said to be killed by Native-Americans who burn the thick undergrowth to start out the deer, elk, bears, turkeys, etc." (Weber 1990).

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Increased travel across the southwestern Plains in the late 1840s disturbed the buffalo and made the Native Americans restive. Following the Mexican War, business was down, and William Bent attempted to sell Bent's Fort to the Army. The Army showed little interest. In August 1849, William Bent allegedly blew up his fort. During the winter of 1852-1853 he constructed a new stone structure, Bent's New Fort, at Big Timbers. Bent conducted freighting operations and traded with the Native Americans at his new fort, while increased Anglo migration across the Plains led to Native American hostilities. With the discovery of gold in the Denver area even more Anglos flooded across the central Plains to work and settle the lands expressly reserved by the Treaty of 1851 for the Sioux, Cheyenne, and Arapaho. Late in November 1858, a delegation of anxious Cheyenne and Arapaho asked William Bent to write to the President to present their case and to remove the invading whites from their territory. For his concern Bent was named Indian agent but no solutions to the Native Americans' problems were presented. In the meantime, some 60,000 emigrants, Bent estimated, marched up the Platte River, the Arkansas River, on the Smoky Hill route between the two rivers, and through the heart of the Native American's favorite buffalo country (Weber 1990).

The evolution of the buffalo robe trade took place during the period from the 1830s through the 1870s. At first traders, including William Bent, ranged over multi-state areas to visit Native American villages. Traders employed by other fur trading companies worked the High Plains from Colorado to Montana and the Dakotas, and buffalo robes became the focus of trade with Native Americans. During this period, buffalo became a primary food source for the increasing number of Anglos--traders, trappers, military men, governmental expedition personnel, railroad work gangs, travelers, sportsmen, and settlers--who traveled to, or through, the High Plains. The hunting of cows (female bison) and other wasteful hunting habits further reduced the size of the herds (Weber 1990).

It was not until a technological innovation in hide tanning emerged that the buffalo were truly imperiled. Before this 1871 innovation, tanning buffalo hides had been a painstaking process left entirely to Native American women. The buffalo skins were used almost entirely with hair on, as the tanning process produced a soft leather with few uses. The new process produced a leather fully competitive with cowhide, and demand for buffalo hides soared. Buffalo hunting became a specialized occupation that employed shooters, skinners, and teamsters. The Panic of 1873 sent even more unemployed men to the West as buffalo hunters hoping to get in on the bonanza. Hunting and skinning techniques were inefficient and it was estimated that, due to rotting and poor processing, only one in three or four of the buffaloes shot provided a useful hide. In the spring of 1878 the hide hunters realized there would be no buffalo hunting on the Southern Plains that year. In six years time the millions of buffalo that had roamed from northern Kansas into Texas and New Mexico had been wiped out (Andrist 1969:178-181, 203; Lavender 1972:154-157). So, too, had the livelihood and independence of the remaining Plains Native Americans (Weber 1990).

After 1861, the newly formed Colorado government sought various means, legal and extralegal, using treaties to clear lands between the Arkansas and the South Platte of Native American title, and to clear eastern Colorado of indigenous peoples (Kappler 1904). Skirmishes and retaliations became common, and outlying farms and ranches in western Kansas and eastern Colorado were attacked. Native American - U.S. negotiations in Denver failed and elements of both the Native American and Anglo populations were spoiling for battle. In November of 1864, a sleeping camp of Cheyenne and Arapaho awaiting further instructions from their agent was attacked at dawn by Colonel Chivington and his 750 Colorado volunteers. Using grapeshot from cannons, withering rifle fire, and a saber charge, an estimated 163 persons were killed, 110 of which were women and

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children. Of the small number captured alive, three children were taken to Denver and exhibited in a carnival. The Sioux then joined the Cheyenne and Arapaho in a series of attacks in eastern Colorado and Nebraska. These attacks were just the early phase of the battles between the Anglos and the Native Americans that were to rage across the High Plains from Oklahoma to Montana, prior to each tribe's eventual confinement on reservations (Berthrong 1963:152-223; Lavender 1972:338-393; Weber 1990; Carrillo and Petersen 1996).

While two major political changes--the shift from Spanish to Mexican control, and the subsequent shift from Mexican to American control--did not greatly affect the activities of the *comancheros* and *ciboleros*, the above described events did. Anglo American migration westward in the mid-1860s, the subjugation of the Plains Native Americans through the reservation system, and continued extermination of the bison, all contributed to the end of a traditional way of life that had endured for centuries (Kenner 1969:112-114).

As previously indicated, Native American - Anglo hostilities in the Arkansas Valley during the later 1860s were mild compared to those that occurred in the present-day areas of Oklahoma and Montana. Sporadic raiding occurred locally in 1867 with typical targets being isolated stage stations and ranches. The number of incidents increased during 1868, and troops from Fort Lyon and the newly established Fort Reynolds, located some 31 kilometers (19 miles) down the Arkansas River from Pueblo, were sent out against the Native Americans. Common targets continued to be ranches, especially those in the Boggsville and Purgatoire Valley areas. Anglo losses were generally very modest, while Native American casualties were greater. These raids were characterized by harassment, burning of buildings, livestock theft, and isolated killing, rather than concerted attempts to kill or drive all Anglos from the area. A few scattered instances of Native American raiding occurred locally in the early 1870s, but for all practical purposes the area was free from Native American threats after that period (Andrist 1969; Berthrong 1963; Bowman 1881; Friedman 1985; Taylor 1966, 1971a, 1971b, 1972; Weber 1990).

## ETHNOHISTORICAL SUMMARY

Although direct archaeological evidence for occupation of the region is scant or has not been properly recognized, inferences of the areas use may be drawn from regional ethnographic data. Three major Native American groups--in chronological order of appearance, Apache (Athabaskan), Comanche/Ute (Shoshonean), and Cheyenne/Arapaho (Algonquian)--are known to have frequented the area during the approximately 330-year period that began with the earliest European incursions into the Southern Plains (1540-1541). Additionally, New Mexican Hispanic *pobladores* also used the region and maintained a system of economic exchange with the Plains groups described above (Weber 1990).

The history of these three major groups, as well as others who used the area at least occasionally, is one of movement and displacement, intertribal conflict, and ultimately, Native American and Anglo-American conflict. This was a dynamic era that witnessed the transition from Native American and New Mexican group autonomy, to subjugation by a political entity based far outside of the region. Demographic and political changes, and the disappearance of crucial natural resources such as bison, marked this period as one of staggering economic transition; self-sustaining local economies

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were supplanted by a capitalist system of national/international scope that initially exploited and then excluded Native Americans. Many of the former Hispanic buffalo hunters and traders turned to herding sheep for their livelihood (Kenner 1969; Carrillo 1990; Weber 1990).

## HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Arkansas River valley, and much of southeastern Colorado, is an historical frontier in both the American and European sense. In the American lexicon a frontier represents an unsettled or sparsely settled zone, or the edge of "civilization." On the other hand, Europeans view frontiers as boundaries or borders between nations, provinces or ethnic groups. Historically, in southeastern Colorado the way people viewed their frontiers varied according to their cultural perspective. Hispanic settlers moved into the area from New Mexico as part of their slow, measured northern expansion of settlement. Anglo Americans, pursuing different goals, crossed the area, built outposts and then, by the late nineteenth century, came to the area in large numbers. When the two civilizations met, both conflict and cooperation resulted. Hispanics, Anglo Americans and Native Americans coexisted with each other and the local natural environment. The region became something of a microcosm of the American experience.

The natural setting of the Colorado High Plains and Piedmont area limited the types of human activities that could be carried out successfully. Farming in the traditional Anglo American sense proved all but impossible. Instead grazing dominated the land use patterns, and traditional agriculture was limited to those areas along the rivers, as those lands could be irrigated from simple diversion systems of ditches and laterals. The same broad, open spaces and rolling terrain that allowed vast tracts to be grazed, also led Anglo Americans to view the Arkansas and Purgatoire as a route to be traveled to Santa Fe and other New Mexican destinations (Carrillo 1990).

Transportation continued and intensified as a major land use in the area during the period of U.S. control. This activity increased the intermingling of cultures in the area and served to break the isolation of the region by the second half of the nineteenth century. The development of new transportation systems, first stagecoaches and freight wagons, and later the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway (AT&SF, Santa Fe), made the marketplaces and goods of America's emerging industries available to the area's residents with disposable cash. When the iron horse arrived, the Purgatoire Valley already had a history of use as a route in and out of New Mexico that dated back hundreds of years to the days of Spain's colonial greatness (Taylor 1971a; Carrillo 1990).

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### *The Hispanic Frontier: 1540-1848*

Previous researchers (Friedman 1985; Carrillo 1990) have identified two significant divisions in the region's history using archival and documentary records and archaeological remains. The divisions, primarily chronological, also reflect larger issues of political control and settlement of the region. The Hispanic Frontier, 1540-1848, ends with the beginning of American political control of the region with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The American period begins in 1849 and continues to the present. The irony of this political chronological division is that the major

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Hispanic population movements into southern Colorado occurred during the American period, not that of the Spanish or Mexican Republic.

Within each of these periods various chronological subdivisions are possible (see SE Colorado Historical Chronology). However, for the purposes of this study, a topical discussion within the broader contexts is used to avoid arbitrary subdivisions or the obscuring of broader themes. The transition from the Hispanic Frontier to the American period of occupation coincides with increased activity levels and interest in the lands of the Purgatoire and Arkansas valleys. Equally important is the idea that these trends did not exist in isolation. For example, the contact between, and transition from, the Hispanic Frontier to the American Period is responsible for the initial settlement of the land. Trade, culture, and religion do not exist in a vacuum, and the multi-cultural context is important to understanding events in the area.

The period of transition between the Hispanic and American periods, the late 1850s/early 1860s, witnessed the settlement of the Arkansas and upper Purgatoire Valley frontier by two distinctly different cultural groups. Hispanics moved into the area from northern New Mexico while Anglo Americans came from the eastern United States, and immigrants from Europe also sought out these valleys as a place to settle. The Anglo Americans and European immigrants shared many cultural and economic traditions. These traditions often exhibited marked contrasts with those of the Hispanics also settling the area. American frontier farming and ranching during the late nineteenth century relied on a cash-oriented economy, although other systems, such as barter and work exchanges, were used to a lesser degree. While subsistence work was viewed as a necessary economic phase of development, these immigrants sought to raise more commodities than necessary for subsistence and actively participated in larger trade networks. Adaptation to the environment would be necessary since most immigrants came from more temperate Midwest or European environments. Their traditional patterns of agriculture would not be successful in the arid Southwest.

The New Mexicans brought with them a lifestyle developed over a period of more than 250 years of Southwestern frontier experience. As a result, "the Hispanic frontier produced a pattern at least as distinctive as that of the Anglo American frontier" (Swadesh 1974:4). The Hispanic Frontier, however, was organized in different ways than the Americans', and was often less externally oriented in terms of markets and aspirations. Inward orientation may stem from the Spanish tradition of a closed, imperial economic system. Also known as mercantilism, theorists of such systems believed that the world possessed a finite amount of wealth. The country that controlled the most wealth would be the most powerful. In an attempt to prevent wealth from escaping their control, Spain restricted or prohibited trade with other countries (Wallerstein 1980).

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The Spanish effort to conquer and control the lands that would become southeastern Colorado tended to be slow and methodical. The lands claimed by New Spain extended from Panama to the Arctic, although the capital was located in Mexico City. Gradually rumors of riches in the area of present-day New Mexico and Colorado spread south to Mexico City during the early 1500s. Several attempts to find the riches were made, including that of Francisco Vasquez de Coronado. Leading a crown expedition, Coronado began his exploration effort in 1540. Marching northward with 75 men, his mission was to subdue the Native Americans, conquer the lands, and gain riches. By July of 1540, Coronado was in the modern American Southwest where he found mud pueblos inhabited by natives. The Spanish subdued the natives, established bases, and sent out smaller exploration parties. Coronado's expedition failed in its search for wealth, but brought about the first contacts between Europeans and the Native American population. Native Americans eventually gained two valuable commodities from subsequent contacts with Europeans - the horse and the gun (see Ethnohistory section). The Spaniards reported on indigenous people, the absence of cities of gold, and the "worthless" lands (Bannon 1970:9-25).

As emphasized previously, when the Spaniards first arrived in the modern American Southwest, Native American groups already possessed elaborate trade networks. These networks included a vast communication system, as well as more traditional trading relationships. The Spaniards and their New Mexican descendants recognized the economic successes and adopted many of the Native American trade patterns and customs. This resulted in the development of cultural and economic traditions adaptable to the environment of the Southwest. The arid, semi-desert environment required creative innovation in terms of water usage, crops, and livestock-raising techniques. Development of trade with the Native Americans allowed the aboriginal inhabitants limited access to European material culture, such as iron and other metals, as early as the mid-eighteenth century. Another shared aspect of life included the Roman Catholic religion, which many friars and padres brought along with material goods to the Native Americans of the Southwest.

Gradually, settlement efforts by the Spanish expanded farther and farther north. These settlements were slow to form, as inhabitants lived in constant danger of attack, and thus proved economically weak. Raids by Comanche and Ute bands constituted a constant and disruptive threat for the fledgling outposts. In response, the Spanish were purported to have established El Cuartelejo in 1709 to protect settlers against the Comanche. The exact location is unknown, although perhaps located in present-day southeastern Colorado or western Kansas. The fort eventually proved to be the northernmost Spanish outpost in this part of the New World.

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### *The Region of El Cuartolejo in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century*

In the early part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 in New Mexico, a series of mini-rebellions by the local Pueblo populous were conducted against the Spanish due to religious persecution. Pueblo priests were subjected to flogging, imprisonment, slavery or death by hanging. In 1640 on-going revolts in Taos and the death of the mission priest Fray Pedro de Miranda, led a number of the Taos people to flee to the buffalo plains to live with the

Apache. The Taos fugitives went to a place called *El Cuartolejo* (The Far Quarter). According to Brandon (1990) they:

lived with other Pueblo refugees and with a band of Apaches who themselves became part-time Pueblo-style farmers. They built a puebloan village on the high plains, someplace north of the Arkansas River, apparently the place later called by the Spaniards *El Cuartolejo* (Brandon 1990:101).

In 1642 (earlier accounts indicate 1660s), Juan de Archuleta led an expedition to the high plains to retrieve the rebellious Pueblos. Although Archuleta's journal has not been found, accounts of his expeditions taken from other sources indicate that Archuleta journeyed onto the plains prior to 1642 with "twenty soldiers and an unspecified number of allied Pueblo Indians. Escalante (1778) describes Archuleta's time at El Cuartolejo:

He found in the possession of these rebellious Taos Indians some casques and other pieces of copper and tin, and when he asked them whence they had gotten these they replied from the Quivira pueblos,' to which they had journeyed from the Cuartolejo (Carson 1998:35).

The location of this place remains in dispute because historical evidence seems to place it near the junction of the Purgatoire and the Arkansas River in present Colorado, near the later famous Bent's Old Fort. The archeological evidence seems to place it a considerable distance to the east, in what is now Scott County State Park in Kansas. In the 1950s, the archaeological remains of an adobe pueblo, initially discovered in the late nineteenth century, was excavated by Waldo Wedel (Wedel 1959) and was considered the site of *El Cuartolejo*. According to several historians, both locations may be correct. LeCompte (1978) indicates that *El Cuartolejo* represented a regional location comprised of several Apache villages stretching from eastern Colorado into western Kansas.

Brandon (1990) states that:

Both may be right, since evidently a number of puebloan-Apache rancherias came into being scattered between at least two widely separated centers, the principal one called El Cuartolejo, the second, perhaps a later dependency, known as Sanasesli, some forty leagues to the northeast which could fit tolerably well with the distance between the two sites (Brandon 1990:101).

Carson (1998) also indicates that:

Whether this archaeological site is the location to which Taos Indians fled in the 1640s remains uncertain. El Cuartolejo may have referred to a region, rather than a fixed location, that encompassed eastern Colorado and western Kansas, north of the Arkansas River (Carson 1998:33).

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Based on the interpretation of A.B. Thomas from diaries of the expeditions into southern Colorado (that took place between the 1640s and the 1720s), his indication is that it was a series of small villages or *rancherías* located in eastern Colorado north of the Arkansas River between present-day Crowley, Bent, Kowa and Lincoln counties, and that extended into western Kansas, at least as far as Scott County. As indicated above, Lecompte basically reiterates this same basic position. A general reading of the journals in terms of distances (given in leagues) suggests that the westernmost location was possibly in Crowley County on Horse Creek, although there are indications that one of the villages (*El Cuartelejo*) served as a central or principal center of the *rancherías* within the region. Based on Ulibarri's account of 1706, when he reached the Arkansas River near present-day Pueblo, he states:

On Friday, July 30, the expedition turned sharply eastward toward its destination, El Cuartelejo. A four-league march the first day brought them to the Rio de San Buenaventura, (present Fountain Creek). Beyond this stream they followed the faintly marked buffalo trails... Another search brought the party by good luck upon a dry arroyo, at the head of which they presently found an Apache water hole. From this point, some miles north of the Arkansas, Ulibarri sent out scouts to search for water before the expedition again moved. Traveling generally to the east, the scouts shortly stumbled upon one of the outlying *rancherías* of El Cuartelejo itself, located evidently in the branches of present Horse Creek in either western Kiowa or southern Lincoln county... (Thomas 1935:18-19).

Their next journey took them twenty-five miles to the east to another and larger *ranchería* where more friendly Apaches gave the soldiers bison meat and corn. Here, also, Ulibarri received other Cuartelejos and some Picuries arrived to present the respects of Don Lorenzo. Cordial relations soon established, Ulibarri pushed on. from this *ranchería*, named by Ulibarri Nuestra Senora de los Angeles de Porciuncula, the entourage arrived the next morning after a short march at the Ojo de Santa Rita, a springs in a pleasant dale. From there they climbed a prominence where many apaches welcomed the travelers to El Cuartelejo. "The Apaches," writes Ulibarri, "came without weapons, very happy and elated. They brought us much buffalo meat, roasting ears of Indian corn, tamales, plums, and other things to eat... from out of the huts or little houses came Don Lorenzo and the rest of the Picuries Indians, men and women who were with him. There we alighted a second time and embraced him and gave them to understand why we were coming, having been sent by our governor and captain-general." The party finally halted in the principal center of the *rancherías*, located on the Rio de Penas, where Ulibarri in a picturesque ceremony took possession of El Cuartelejo for his king (Thomas 1935:18-19).

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### *The 18<sup>th</sup> Century French Incursions into the Arkansas River Valley*

By the early 1700s, rumors of the presence of French traders on the periphery of the Southwest reached Santa Fe. The French presented a threat to the closed Spanish colonial economic system. Success of the Spanish mercantile system depended on tightly controlled and limited distribution of goods and the exclusive participation of Spanish merchants. In remote locales, such as Santa Fe or Taos, trade goods were rare and highly priced. As the French expanded their trade networks into the Mississippi River Valley, they threatened Spanish economic and political control. The French traders frequently traveled into east Texas and opened new trade routes into the Southwest (Goetzmann 1966:100-105).

The Spanish governor of New Mexico, Antonio Valverde, responded to the perceived French threat by sending Pedro de Villasur and 100 men northward in 1720. Searching for the French, Villasur left Santa Fe, crossed southeastern Colorado and stopped on the South Platte River. Pawnees attacked the Spaniards and only thirteen members of the party survived. Several calls for a northern outpost fell on deaf ears. In 1739 two French brothers, Pierre and Paul Mallet from Illinois country, followed the Arkansas River to modern Pueblo, and then moved south over Raton Pass into New Mexico. This became the first recorded trip by Europeans along this popular route. In addition, the vulnerability of Spain's far-flung empire was demonstrated by the unexpected success the Mallets enjoyed (Goetzmann 1966:70-285).

News of the Mallets' successes in Santa Fe spread to New Orleans, where enterprising French traders planned additional visits to the Southwest. Pierre Mallet made a return visit in 1750, resulting in his prompt arrest and transportation, in custody, to Mexico City. Two years later two more Frenchmen wandered into Santa Fe and also were sent to Mexico City. A respite from French encroachment occurred with the French and Indian War of 1756, which resulted in the diversion of French attention to their Native American allies in the Mississippi Valley who were at war with England.

New Mexico remained unmolested by other Europeans until peace was established in 1763. The English, victors of the conflict, took over the "old Northwest" or Mississippi Valley area. Native Americans in the Southwest took advantage of the political changes and raided settlers in New Mexico, virtually closing the plains to the Spanish. The Comanche represented a real threat to the New Mexican settlers, and in 1770 the Spanish crown responded. A series of *presidios* from California to Texas were established to protect settlements and stop the raiding. When Comanche power was broken in 1779, the Plains were freed from raiding, and for the first time in 100 years the Plains of northeastern New Mexico were secure (Atheam 1985:70- 83; Bannon 1970; Thomas 1935:130-145).

As relations between the Spanish and the natives became friendlier, a settlement was established along the Arkansas River, near future Pueblo, to provide missionary services. San Carlos became operational in 1787, but was abandoned the next year because the sedentary mission lifestyle did not suit the wandering Comanches. At the same time, traders and trappers began crossing the area of southeastern Colorado and intensified international pressures on the region (Bannon 1970).

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## AMERICAN INFLUENCES DURING THE 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY

After the American Revolution and the loss of the eastern seaboard colonies, the competitive British reinforced their holdings in Canada and began moving southward. The Americans found their power limited by the Appalachian Mountains and French control of the lower Mississippi Valley. However, the uneasy situation changed in 1803 when Napoleon Bonaparte sold the lands of Louisiana for \$15 million to the United States. The size of the U.S. doubled, and Spain and the United States were now neighbors in the Southwest. Eager to record the new holdings, President Thomas Jefferson sent an expedition headed by Meriwether Lewis and William Clark to investigate the territory. Heading westward they explored the Missouri River, crossed the Rockies, and moved on to the Pacific Northwest. Their northern route provided much information, but the southern areas of the new territory remained unknown to Americans for a brief period.

Lieutenant Zebulon M. Pike began his survey of the central Rockies in 1806. Leaving St. Louis in July, his party traveled up the Arkansas River and into southeastern Colorado. By November they had reached the future site of Pueblo and built a shelter. They explored Fountain Creek and attempted to climb Pike's Peak. Then they marched downstream to Royal Gorge, having completed a circular tour of the area. Near present-day Canon City they built a small shelter and left two men while the remainder of the expedition headed southward into the Wet Mountain and the San Luis Valleys. Finally, reaching the site of Alamosa, Pike sent a man named Dr. Robinson to Santa Fe. The Spanish responded to this intrusion by sending an armed party to meet Pike, arresting him, and taking his party to Santa Fe. Eventually released, Pike published his journal, which provided valuable information about southeastern Colorado, northern New Mexico, and Chihuahua (Goodykoontz 1927:46-48; Ubbelohde, et al. 1976: 15-20).

Other Americans came into the area and threatened Spanish economic hegemony. James Purcell was trading with the natives by 1805 and made several trips to Santa Fe. Ezekial Williams, who worked for Manuel Lisa's Missouri Fur Company, trapped the streams of South Park. In 1811 Williams and two others were working the Upper Arkansas River, slowly moving into South Park and the Mosquito Range, and then back to St. Louis. The beaver fur trade flourished with trappers selling their goods at the annual Taos fair or trading with local inhabitants. The Spanish continued to worry about these traders who threatened their closed economic system. In 1812 Robert McKnight was thrown into jail in Santa Fe for illegal trading, and three years later Spanish authorities arrested August Chouteau and Jules deMunn in Taos for the same violation (Goodykoontz 1927:50-60).

The situation changed in 1821 when Mexican revolutionaries overthrew Spanish control in New Spain. The Mexicans declared independence, and in January of 1822 became the Republic of Mexico. The new Republic was open to all traders. With the participation of Americans, trade intensified between St. Louis, Santa Fe and Taos, and continued south into Chihuahua. The economy underwent a small boom as trappers and traders came into the area. Young men were anxious to trap beaver in the Rockies and trade in the Southwest. Trappers such as William Sublette, Jim Bridger, and Jim Beckworth formed expeditions exploring the upper Missouri, the Green River, and future Colorado and Utah.

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The most obvious significance of the fur trappers' and traders' presence in the Southwest involves the knowledge of geography they gained through their wanderings. Moreover, they carried back stories of the "exotic" lands and people to the rest of the United States, and in so doing piqued American interest in the area which led first to attempts to open the Santa Fe trade, and later to war with Mexico to annex of the area. The fur traders also began the process of erosion of Mexican political control, which made the United States conquest of the area in the 1840s much easier. Finally, successes enjoyed by the trappers and traders led other enterprising individuals to establish permanent trading outposts on the fringes of New Mexico. Those frontier outposts furthered American interests in the area, which became their justification for the doctrine of "Manifest Destiny," war with Mexico, and realization of the United States' territorial ambitions (Chittenden 1902: vol. 2; Goetzmann 1966: 20-30; Hafen 1965-1972; Hollon 1949; Lyon 1974; Pike 1966).

Other significant economic changes also took place in the wake of the Mexican Revolution of 1821. After the war, Mexican traders traveled north, east, and west as American traders moved west from towns along the Missouri River. Without reciting the details of William Becknell's adventures or those of other pioneer traders, suffice it to say that the Santa Fe Trail became a major trade route from Missouri to Santa Fe. The trail was a viable route until the buffalo trade declined, coinciding with the construction of railroads to and through southeastern Colorado. Along the route entrepreneurs built outposts of American influence.

One of the forts established was in southeastern Colorado. Near future Las Animas, the Bent Brothers built an adobe post, Bent's Fort. As the beaver trade declined in the late 1820s and eventually ended in the 1830s, trappers moved onto the prairies to hunt buffalo. The forts were used to buy goods, trade with Native Americans and others, and to sell buffalo robes. Equally important, they provided safety and goods along the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Other "forts" dotted the prairies, including Crow's Nest near Hardscrabble Creek and El Pueblo along the Arkansas River. On the South Platte River Lancaster Lupton built Ft. Lupton near the present-day town of that name, and Luis Vasquez established Fort Vasquez farther north near modern Greeley, Colorado (Carrillo and Mehls 1992a).

As the fur trade declined, diplomatic relations between the United States and Mexico deteriorated due to disputes concerning Texas, and by 1844 war appeared inevitable. After several years of warfare Mexico surrendered in 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo gave the lands south and west of Louisiana to the United States, and officially recognized the United States' possession of Texas. The lands of New Mexico and Colorado were part of this agreement, which expanded the United States almost to its present, continental size. A few hardy immigrants wandered into the area of southeastern Colorado, including Mormons traveling westward. As previously mentioned, because of the decline of international trade, in 1852 William Bent tried to sell his fort to the U.S. government. As negotiations slowed Bent blew up portions of the fort. In the early 1850s, he built a second fort near modern Lamar, Colorado (Lavender 1972:140-150; Moore 1973; Morgan 1968:153-171; Weber 1971).

Beyond the imperialistic urges that the Santa Fe trade and trail engendered in the United States, it also led to two things important to an understanding of the Boggsville area. First, the Santa Fe trade coincided with a period of rapid population growth in New Mexico and the attendant social pressures. Scholars of this period in New Mexican history have identified this

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as a time of stress on existing social institutions (Hall 1989:162). Many American Santa Fe traders commented on the problems faced by the traditional *patron* system. They noted especially its "feudal" overtones and its apparent inability to cope with the pressures, both internal and external, of the period (Hall 1989:158). Moreover, the American trade led to a growing merchant class in New Mexico whose wealth sprang from their role as importers and sellers rather than from land and livestock holdings, the traditional definition of wealth and status in New Mexico. These *ricos* embraced the Americans and soon became as concerned about affairs in Washington, D.C., or Missouri as they were about events in the northern or eastern reaches of New Mexico. To solidify their positions with United States traders, *rico* families encouraged their daughters to marry U.S. traders. The traders found such marriages equally beneficial, giving them access to New Mexican government officials and others in power that they might not have enjoyed otherwise (Hall 1989:190-193; Craver 1982). After 1848, the end of the Mexican War, those intermarried families ascended to power in the Territorial Government, becoming known as the New Mexico Ring by the late nineteenth century (Hall 1989:213; Craver 1982).

The economic changes in New Mexico that began in the 1820s with the introduction of American trade, continued in the expansion of the areas used for agricultural lands by the 1840s and 1850s. As more and more land was cultivated or grazed, the northern Hispanic frontier moved into what would become Colorado. By the early 1840s, the Mexican government was providing large tracts of lands to settlers who would move northward, including lands in southeastern Colorado. Small settlements known as *plazas* arose, and these constituted the beginning of agricultural settlement in southeastern Colorado. Three fingers of Hispanic settlement reached into Colorado; the San Luis Valley, occupied in the late 1840s and early 1850s, the Colorado Plateau in the area of the San Juan Mountains at the same time, and, 10 years later, the upper and lower Purgatoire Valleys. The Mexican land grant in the area of future Boggsville, the Las Animas grant, encompassed much of the Purgatoire River valley and surrounding table-lands. This area may well have been used for grazing sheep by New Mexican herders long before, but it was not settled until the U.S. period, ca. 1860, around the same time Boggsville was established.

New Mexican settlements in the region were based upon the Spanish plaza. Homes were built around a central square, and families settled together. Fields were divided in long narrow parcels or *varas*, and operated in a semi-communal manner, becoming known as long lots. Animals grazed on common pasture lands. Responding to the arid conditions, settlers obtained water through *acequias* or irrigation ditches. Some of these constitute the first recorded water rights in Colorado. The extension of irrigation technology to the north was important, because the trend was to continue, allowing the lands of southeastern Colorado to be agriculturally successful (Carlson 1967; Cheetham 1928).

So it is clear that while the Hispanic Period officially ended with the Mexican War and Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, trends and patterns begun in the 1830s and 1840s carried forward into the period of American control.

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### *The American Period: 1849-1900*

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo in 1848 led to United States annexation of the American Southwest, today comprising Nevada, Utah, portions of Colorado, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. The year 1849 ushered in a 20 year period of transition, which brought several important changes leading to permanent Hispanic and Anglo American occupation of southeastern Colorado.

Of importance through this transition period was the continued presence of the American military in the Southwest after the Mexican War. Soldiers attempted to guarantee the safety of settlers by controlling the Native American population, and by providing secure outposts for trading and a communication network. Fort Lyon lay in proximity to Boggsville. Further south was Fort Union in New Mexico, and to the west in Colorado was Fort Garland, in the San Luis Valley. A town selling vegetables emerged around Fort Garland. Trade networks developed as goods and people moved in and out of the region. William Bent, seeing the opportunities afforded by United States occupation of New Mexico, became one of the first government freight haulers. Headquartered out of his new fort on the Arkansas River, he hauled freight for the new U. S. Army posts being built in the Southwest (Friedman 1985: 60-61; Goetzmann 1966).

As the 1840s closed the area underwent further change. The fur and buffalo trade declined, prospectors and miners had not yet discovered the gold of the Rockies, and only a few hardy souls attempted to settle the lands of southeastern Colorado. During this quiet period, small, permanent settlements began, including the establishment of farms, ranches, and irrigation systems. Peaceful relations between the various populations reigned.

At the beginning of the Anglo American sovereignty, the first people to establish permanent communities in Colorado were those Hispanic *pobladores* who migrated from northern New Mexico and settled in the San Luis Valley beginning in 1849. In southeastern Colorado there were only a few settlers. The settlements in the Arkansas River Valley were restricted primarily to the area of present-day Pueblo. By the 1850s, agricultural patterns were established in southeastern Colorado. Stores in towns such as Costilla, San Luis, and Conejos grew and provided important trade goods to settlers who were able to sell grains, corn, and other crops. Trade northward was limited, but this would soon change with the discoveries of gold. Within a short time, as many as 100,000 people would head to the lands of Colorado. While there was not a gold rush in southeastern Colorado, gold seekers crossed the region and, more importantly, the gold camps and later coal mining towns became markets for locally produced food. A booming trade was to grow between the San Luis Valley farmers and the Denver market.

Prior to the discovery of gold, the land contained within the present political boundaries of the state of Colorado was located in four territories. The area west of the Continental Divide was part of Utah, a portion of the southeast belonged to New Mexico, and the remainder of the eastern section belonged to Kansas and Nebraska. The formation of the Colorado Territory coincided with the onset of the Civil War. In February of 1861, President James Buchanan

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signed the bill. The next month, newly inaugurated President Abraham Lincoln appointed the first Territorial Governor, William Gilpin. Counties were created and local governments established. The people of Colorado, believing an attempt would be made by the Confederate States to invade the gold fields, remained loyal to the Union. Because of the war, immigration from the east declined, and large numbers of individuals returned east to participate in the fighting (Smith 1989).

## SETTLEMENT OF THE LOWER PURGATOIRE VALLEY

Settlement of the lower Purgatoire Valley began during the 1850s as a response to the Santa Fe trade and later the Colorado gold rush. In 1859 William Bent was appointed Indian agent for the tribes located on the Upper Platte and Arkansas Rivers. He also made improvements to his ranch on the Purgatoire River at about that time. In 1860, Thomas O. Boggs acquired over 2,000 acres of the Las Animas Land Grant along the Purgatoire near Bent's Ranch, which he used as a summer range for livestock (Friedman 1982:252).

The traffic produced by the many would-be miners traveling along the Santa Fe Trail created problems with the Native American populations. As a consequence, on June 30, 1860, the War Department ordered a military fort to be constructed at Big Timbers. In September, companies of the First U.S. Cavalry and the Tenth Infantry arrived at Bent's New Fort. The site selected for the construction of the new fort was bottom land about 0.8 kilometer (0.5 mile) west of Bent's New Fort on the north side of the Arkansas River. Constructed of adobe and initially named Fort Wise after Henry A. Wise, the governor of Virginia, the name was changed to Fort Lyon to honor Brigadier General Nathaniel Lyon, the first Union general to be killed in the Civil War.

Despite the demand for local produce and livestock generated by the newly emerging towns along the Front Range, due to local Native American problems and the Civil War, settlement in southeastern Colorado remained sparse in the early 1860s. Since the mid-1850s, a temporary truce had existed between Native Americans and the settlers, but the gold rush and the attendant increase in contact between the two groups inevitably produced conflicts. The decade of the 1860s, especially the early portion, was one of persistent turmoil (Utley 1984; Friedman 1982:248).

Although treaties were made and reservations established, the Ute continued to use the upper Purgatoire area until the early 1870s. The Southern Cheyenne and Southern Arapaho signed the Fort Wise Treaty of 1861, which mandated the exchange of their traditional hunting land between the Platte and Arkansas Rivers, for a smaller reservation extending from Sand Creek to the Huerfano along the Arkansas River (Kappler 1904:807-811). The various native groups never completely accepted the treaty, and raids along the South Platte River continued to occur, followed by Army reprisals. The situation continued to degenerate into 1864. For example, violence spread south to the Arkansas Valley and southwestern Colorado during the late spring when Cheyenne attacked and burned the Missouri Stage Company's Iron Spring stage station on the Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail. Additionally, the murder of the Hungate family led to a series of events eventually resulting in the Sand Creek Massacre (Friedman 1985:70).

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The Sand Creek Massacre (1864) incited the Cheyenne and Arapaho. Intensive raiding of settlements along the Santa Fe Trail began and spread farther north on the South Platte River. Julesburg, located in extreme northeastern Colorado, was raided in early 1865. In the fall of that year the Cheyenne agreed to the Treaty of the Little Arkansas that gave them a new reservation between the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers (Kappler 1904:887-891; Friedman 1985:71).

With the signing of the Treaty of the Little Arkansas in 1865, many of the displaced Cheyenne conducted sporadic raids on settlers. In October 1867, the Treaty of Medicine Lodge was negotiated with the Arapaho and Cheyenne. This treaty allowed stage lines and railroads to pass through hunting grounds and called for these Native American groups to relinquish land claims in Kansas. The treaty re-affirmed a reservation between the Arkansas and Cimarron Rivers. The treaty was short-lived, and in 1868 raids occurred again, this time near the lower Purgatoire Valley. A major military campaign during the winter of 1868-1869 resulted in relocation of most of the Southern Cheyenne and Arapaho to an Oklahoma reservation. This relocation removed a major threat to settlers in the region by 1870. However, a few minor incidents involving small groups of Native Americans occurred until the mid-1870s (Friedman 1982:249, 1985:71-72; Lamar 1977:719).

By the mid-1860s, in spite of these troubles, permanent settlement of the Purgatoire region progressed. The period between 1867 and 1870 proved crucial in terms of the historical development of the area. The military presence in the immediate region served as protection for the immigrants traversing the area to the Rocky Mountain gold fields and the emerging cities and towns of Colorado's Front Range. Other events affecting the settlement process in the region, particularly the Boggsville area, included the relocation of Fort Lyon to a point near the mouth of the Purgatoire and the accelerated settlement of both the lower and upper Purgatoire Valleys. This settlement resulted in intensified competition between Native Americans and the emerging settlements. However, settlers continued to arrive, and initial Anglo American settlement began (Friedman 1985:69; Lamar 1977:1105).

The settlement of Boggsville in 1866 represented an early non-military settlement in the lower Purgatoire Valley. Las Animas City, another major settlement founded in 1869, sprang up about 3.2 kilometers (2 miles) northeast of Boggsville on the banks of the Arkansas River. It lay across the river approximately 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) from the Fort Lyon, and about 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) east of the mouth of the Purgatoire River. At approximately the same time, settlers established themselves farther southwest on the upper Purgatoire.

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## THE SETTLEMENT OF BOGGSVILLE

Permanent settlement along the lower Purgatoire Valley increased in the latter 1860s and into the 1870s, despite the threat of Native American reprisals. One of the original settlements became known as Boggsville. Sometime during 1862 or 1863, Thomas O. Boggs, L.A. (Leftwich) Allen, and Charles Ritc established a settlement for purposes of raising stock and crops (Abstract of Title 1986). Boggs brought his wife and two children, Ritc, his wife and family, and Allen arrived a single man. Boggs had a long relationship with the Bent brothers and Ceran St. Vrain. He came to Bent's Fort in 1843, began working as a trader and stock foreman, and became a close friend of Kit Carson. Boggs married the step-daughter of Charles Bent, Rumalda. Rumalda had received promise of a 2040 acre grant from St. Vrain under the Vigil-St. Vrain (Las Animas) land grant in 1860, and this promise provided Boggs with further claim on their land. Coming west and moving to Boggsville provided Boggs with useful experiences (Hurd 1957:5). He spoke eleven Indian languages, as well as Spanish and English, and was held in high respect by the Plains Indian groups (Grayson 1885:1).

Boggsville, (also known as Boggs Ranch at that time), was first settled adjacent to a sharp bend in the Purgatoire River. The buildings were made of local timber or adobe, and were of crude construction (Figure 4). The party was soon joined by others upriver, such as E.R. Sizer who came in the summer of 1864 (National Archives Letters 1868). In a short time, during the mid-1860s, an irrigation ditch was built to divert water from the Purgatoire, and by 1868 over 1000 acres was under irrigation. Boggs, his associates, and others settling nearby, raised stock, fodder, and food crops for the military at Fort Lyon, stage stations along the Purgatoire, and supplied many any traveler heading west (Hurd 1957:6; Prowers 1869-1871).

In June of 1867, the Fort Lyon Military Post was moved from Big Timbers to a point on the north side of the Arkansas River nineteen miles upstream. Floods in the early spring all but destroyed the fort at Big Timbers. This move put Boggsville in a better position as a trade center and brought more protection against Indian attack to arriving citizens (Hurd 1957:7).

The move of Fort Lyon prompted the move of another trader, John W. Prowers. Prowers came to New Bent's Fort in 1856 with Indian Agent Robert Miller. Prowers stayed to become employed by William Bent as freighter. In 1861 Prowers married Amache, daughter of Ochinee (One Eye), a Cheyenne sub-chief. Prowers purchased the abandoned Caddoa Indian buildings upstream from New Bent's Fort in 1863, and began the first permanent cattle operation in the area (Hurd 1957:7; Carrillo and Petersen 1996). He controlled much land in the area through his association with Amache and, hence, the Cheyennes. She had claim to land from U.S. reparations to survivors of the Sand Creek Massacre (Kappler 1904:889). Many of the 640-acre tracts given survivors under the treaty of 1865 were sold or traded to Prowers (Baldwin-Jay Abstracts 1870-1884). He kept his ranch in the vicinity of old Fort Lyon (later called The Meadows) and moved to Boggsville in 1867 (Hurd 1957:7).

Boggs had built a new house west of the original site about ten feet higher in elevation, because the Purgatoire was a constant threat to the first settlement. Two wings of a large adobe house were built in 1866. A third wing was added about 1868. This house represented the success Boggs had in the years since his coming. Raising mostly sheep, some cattle, mules and horses, and crops had made Boggs a well-to-do man. By 1872, Boggs was owner or

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part owner of over 50,000 head of sheep and controlled much of the open range country south of Boggsville (Legard 1872:113).

The arrival of Prowers brought the building of another large, permanent adobe house located north of the Boggs house. Others soon built west of the Prowers house, and south and west of the Boggs house. The original site was abandoned, with many of the original materials reused in the construction of the new buildings (Cragin 1908).

Prowers was soon joined by his brother-in-law, John Hough. Hough was a merchant from Missouri and came with a load of goods to open a store and go into business with Prowers. Hough and his wife (the only Anglo American woman in Boggsville at the time) lived in three rooms of a six room adobe house near the original settlement site. Prior to his death in 1868, Kit Carson and family lived in the other three rooms of this house. Hough left Boggsville in April of 1869 and moved to Trinidad to open a store (Hough n.d.).

Prowers continued business as merchant and freighter, but his main passion was the raising of high quality cattle. He began breeding better beef cattle while still at The Meadows. He continued cattle raising to the time of his death in 1884. He controlled most of the grazing land along the north side of the Arkansas River, extending over the prairies to the north. Where he controlled the water, he controlled the open range. At some point in his career he owned over 10,000 cattle (Hurd 1957:9).

In February of 1869, William Craig, a notorious lawyer and land speculator, having Power of Attorney for Ceran St. Vrain, sold 400 acres to the Trustees of the Las Animas Town Company to layout the new town of Las Animas City. The town was located in the northeast corner of the Las Animas Grant, about three-quarters of a mile from Fort Lyon, on the south side of the Arkansas River, and three miles northeast of Boggsville. A toll bridge over the Arkansas River was constructed in July of 1869, connecting the main Mountain Branch of the Santa Fe Trail with roads along the south side of the river, leading to The Meadows, Boggsville, Bent's Old Fort, and Trinidad. Other ferries and fords across the river, upstream and downstream, were soon out of business. Las Animas City grew to about thirty buildings and to a population of about 150 by January of 1870. It appeared that Las Animas City would become the hub of the newly created county of Bent (Petersen 1993:2). It had been named the County Seat in February of 1870, but at the following election Boggsville was designated the County Seat and remained so until after the election of 1872 (Las Animas Leader, 6/ 27/1873). In 1874, Bent County's borders were expanded, and the county covered over 9000 square miles. It remained this size until 1889 when the present-day Bent County was created.

Boggsville being designated the County seat brought about another change to the settlement. Due to Las Animas City's reputation as a wild town, Boggsville was selected as the site of the first public school in new Bent County. Prowers and others had hired Mattie Smith as a subscription school teacher in December 1869, but it was not until 1871 that a new public school was opened west of the Prowers house. Its first teacher was Peter G. Scott. The children of Kit Carson, John Prowers, R. M. Moore (son-in-law of William Bent), and others attended during the first term (Scott n.d).

Las Animas City was a trade center for troops of Fort Lyon and for the surrounding countryside. A.E. Reynolds, the sutler at Fort Lyon, had a dry goods store in town, and R.M.

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McMurray, a former officer from the fort, also had a store. The Barlow and Sanderson Southern Overland Mail and Express Company used the town as a major stage stop on its line between Kit Carson and Santa Fe, and Prowers and Hough soon opened a commission house and transfer company. The town enjoyed a brief boom, and by the spring of 1873 it boasted 700 inhabitants (Las Animas Leader, 6/27/1873).

Reflecting the influences of New Mexico, many of the buildings in Las Animas City were of adobe, some of stone, and a few were wooden frame on stone foundations. As the town grew it quickly acquired a reputation as a wide open frontier town (Eddy 1982:253). While the establishment of this speculative town halted the thought that Boggsville might someday become a town, Las Animas City was doomed by October of 1873 when the Kansas Pacific Railroad built the Arkansas Valley Railway branch line from Kit Carson and established the new town of West Las Animas, north of Boggsville (Petersen 1993:25). By the early 1880s, Las Animas City had vanished except for its worn streets, foundations, and discarded fragments of habitation. The establishment of West Las Animas at the rail head prompted the movement of freighting to the southwest, beyond Boggsville's reach and convenience. Only local traffic passed through Boggsville by late 1873, and the hamlet settled down to become a typical large ranch headquarters for Boggs and Prowers.

The Prowers house was constructed as a U-shaped, adobe, two-story building with interior, open porches, and a porch on the southerly, formal-entrance side. C.W. Hurd's book *Boggsville* (1957) and John S. Hough (n.d.) report a construction date of 1867. Another indication suggesting this date comes from a journal entry of July 1867 by Dr. William A. Bell (1965:80-83), while surveying a southern railroad route to the Pacific Ocean. A photograph was also taken (it is thought by Bell's party) of the original settlement of Boggs Ranch, near the river (see Figure 4). Excerpts from the journal concerning building of the newer settlement are as follows:

Three miles farther we crossed the Purgatoire, to join the surveyors on the eastern bank, over a bridge built by settlers who live in this part of the valley.... Then there was Mr. Boggs, a tall, shrewd, energetic Western man, by whose perseverance fine fields of maize and wheat seen on either side had been planted.... Two or three other Americans, doing business in a small way, either as traders or farmers, also lived in the colony....

On crossing the river [to west side] we found a well-filled ranche on the opposite side, which had only just been built by two enterprising Yankees [Boggs & Prowers or Prowers & Hough]. Here we could buy everything--cloths and candles, bowie- knives and groceries, canned fruits and Mexican saddles, powder and shot, boots and shoes, caps and crinolines, Worcestershire sauce, whiskey, and drinks without end. This well stocked storehouse, raised up in the wilds, to which everything has to be carried hundreds of miles by wagon through hostile Indian country, speaks more for the extraordinary energy and foresight of these Western traders than any panegyric I could write....(Bell 1965: 80-83).

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P. G. Scott, longtime resident of Bent County and former employee of Prowers, states that Prowers moved to Boggsville in 1868 (Scott 1929:185). Mary Prowers Hudnall, daughter of Prowers, also sets the date as 1868 (Hudnall 1945:239). John Hough spent time with Kit Carson while Carson was at Boggsville, during the period from December 1867 into May 1868. Hough did not arrive until after Prowers had moved to Boggsville (Hough n.d.). It is possible that the house was not all constructed at one time. The Boggs house was found to have undergone a construction evolution through time once a closer examination was made of it in 1987 (Caufield and Caufield 1987:10). The archaeological and architectural indications suggest that the Prowers House was constructed in several stages (Carrillo, et al 1993a, Carrillo, et al 1994, Carrillo and Petersen 1995; Long-Hoeft 1994).

## SUMMARY

Before the establishment of Boggsville, or the Boggs' Ranch as it was known in the early 1860s, the lower Purgatoire Valley had been the setting for thousands of years of occupation by the Native North American groups. Beginning with the period from the late 1500s with the founding of New Mexico, when the initial European influences began from the south by Hispanic New Mexicans, a continuous impact occurred to the Native American cultures. Beginning in the early 1820s, and culminating in the late 1840s, a radical change was brought about by the American political conquest of the region. One of its successes consisted of total displacement of the Native American population's area by the late 1860s. Land lying south of the Arkansas River was claimed by Spain upon purchase of adjoining lands north by the United States, under the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The area claimed by Spain was its northern frontier. This region was situated away from the Spanish center of government in Mexico City, and European and American trade goods were not easily accessible on its northern frontier. Mexican independence from Spain in 1822, opened access to permanent trade with the Eastern United States and Europe, and led to the establishment of the Santa Fe Trail. In the early 1830s, Bent's Fort was established on the north side of the Arkansas River, thirteen miles west of future Boggsville, in response to Santa Fe trade and the lucrative market demand for furs and hides in the eastern U.S. and Europe. The fort was the center of trade on the Mountain Route of the Santa Fe Trail during the period ca. 1834 to 1849.

As a means to keep control of its vast frontier, Mexico offered large tracts of lands to its citizenry in exchange for settlement and production. This giving of land reached its peak in the 1840s and many millions of acres were given to notable Europeans and Americans who had become Mexican citizens. The Vigil-St. Vrain Land Grant (also known as the Las Animas Grant) comprised over four million acres, and was given to Cornelio Vigil and Ceran St. Vrain. Vigil was an influential New Mexican *rico*. St. Vrain was a trader and partner of William and Charles Bent of Bent, St. Vrain and Company, the proprietors of Bent's Fort. Although the land grant was contested, Boggsville and the surrounding area derived good title through settlement on the Las Animas Grant.

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In the midst of the major increase of settlement activity along the lower Purgatoire Valley during the late 1860s-1870s, the historical importance of Boggsville is evidenced by its inception in the early 1860s in the midst of questionable land grant titles, unresolved Native American antagonism to further settlement, the presence of U.S. troops protecting the Santa Fe Trail trade, and explosive movements of Americans to the gold fields in the Colorado Rockies. Sometime during ca. 1862 or 1863, Thomas O. Boggs, L.A. (Leftwich) Allen and Charles L. Ritc established a settlement on the west bank of the Purgatoire River for purposes of raising stock and crops. Boggs was originally from Missouri and arrived in the region in 1841 to work at Bent's Fort.

Boggsville was first built near a sharp bend in the Purgatoire River. The buildings were made of local timber or adobe and suggested a New Mexican architectural pattern. There are indications based on the archaeological, historical, and pollen data that the original site may be associated with the early Bent Period (ca. 1830s-1840s through the late Bent Period [ca. 1850s]). Thomas Boggs built an L-shaped adobe building south of the original settlement. By the year 1866, a successful Boggs built a new seven room adobe house on higher ground west of the original settlement. This probably occurred based on the location of the original settlement adjacent to the Purgatoire River where flooding presented a problem. In 1867 Fort Lyon was relocated to the north bank side of the Arkansas River, northeast of Boggsville. In 1865, a branch of the Santa Fe Trail was located through Boggsville. Traffic reached its peak from July 1869, upon construction of a bridge across the Arkansas River between Fort Lyon and Las Animas City, through October 1873. During this time, one notable addition to the settlement was made by John W. Prowers who built a large two-story adobe house north of the Boggs House between 1867 and 1869. Prowers had been in the territory since coming to work at Bent's New Fort in 1856. He had pioneered a large successful cattle ranching business along the Arkansas River, in addition to his involvement in the mercantile business with his brother-in-law, John S. Hough who came to Boggsville in 1867. Hough operated the newly constructed store near the location of Bogg's first house at the original settlement along the Purgatoire River. The store was located north and adjacent to the Santa Fe Trail branch and a newly constructed toll bridge. Kit Carson and his family lived at Boggsville, in Bogg's original house, and shared half of it with John Hough, in the months prior to his death at Fort Lyon in 1868. That same year, Boggs added a wing with two rooms to the house. It is thought that this was done at this time to create more living space, as Thomas and Rumalda Boggs became the guardians of Kit Carson's children. Architecturally, the addition served to create a New Mexican style porched courtyard on the south side of the house.

During the succeeding years, Boggsville and the adjoining upriver area became populated by many families and individuals. By 1873 Boggsville began its decline. This was mainly due both to the establishment of the rival town of Las Animas City in 1869, opposite the Arkansas River from Fort Lyon, and the coming of the Kansas Pacific Railway to West Las Animas in 1873. Thomas Boggs moved to New Mexico in 1876. John Prowers moved to West Las Animas in 1874 but retained his holdings at Boggsville until 1883. Boggs sold the ranch property containing Boggsville to John Lee in 1883 and it was renamed the *San Patricio* Ranch. Prowers died in 1884. The

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former settlement dwindled and the adobe buildings returned to their natural state. Tenants occupied both houses after John Lee's death until 1970. Maintenance of the structures was not carried out and by 1985, only two of the original period structures remained, albeit in a state of bad repair. The site had once contained more than twenty structures. The property containing 110 acres was gifted to the Pioneer Historical Society in the late 1980s and rehabilitation of the Boggs House was initiated in 1989 and completed in 1992. The rehabilitation of the Prowers House began in 1993 and was completed in 1996.

## INFORMATIONAL SOURCES

An array of historical records were reviewed. These include archival records many which are in the private collection of Philip L. Petersen. Additional records were obtained at the Bent County Courthouse and the Kit Carson Museum in Las Animas, the Las Animas Public Library, Woodruff Memorial Library in La Junta, Wheeler Library at Otero Jr. College in La Junta, the Colorado Historical Society in Denver and the Bureau of Land Management in Denver, Norlin Library at the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Pioneer Museum in Colorado Springs, and the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

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