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# Mestizaje: Piro Indian And Spanish Vecino In Socorro, Texas From 1744 To 1813

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MESTIZAJE: PIRO INDIAN AND SPANISH VECINO IN SOCORRO,  
TEXAS FROM 1744 TO 1813

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MESTIZAJE: PIRO INDIAN AND SPANISH VECINO IN SOCORRO,  
TEXAS FROM 1744 TO 1813

by

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## **Abstract**

This research examined culture on what is now the U.S./Mexico border, among Piro Indians and Spanish citizens (*vecinos*) in the community of Socorro, Texas between 1744 and 1813. The purpose was to better understand the process of mestizaje as experienced by Piro Indians as they participate in larger hegemonic Spanish civil and ecclesiastical institutions. Using archival materials along with secondary sources, this thesis reconstructs the antecedents that ultimately led the primary Indian community to transform into a Hispano settlement along the banks of the Río Grande. Pressured by vecino encroachment, participation in the Spanish wage-labor system, several environmental catastrophes in the form of the flooding of the river, and the constant threat by various Apache groups helped transform this new community into one best characterized by cultural hybridity and mestizaje.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

In 1901, the anthropologist J. Walter Fewkes made a brief visit to the El Paso valley to document if any Native American customs still existed in the distinct communities of Ysleta and Socorro, located in Texas and Senecú and San Lorenzo in the Mexican state of Chihuahua. His assessment was the “Indians had practically become Mexicanized” in the previously mentioned communities (Fewkes 1902:58). The alleged lack of Indian identity allowed Fewkes to describe the communities of the El Paso valley as engaging in or in the completion of a process whereby the inhabitants that laid claim to indigenous ancestry had customs that have lost social importance due to the population changing culturally and demographically from Indian to Mexican. Fewkes, like many historical scholars on the subject of Socorro, TX tell only a partial story.

Only in Ysleta and Senecú had Fewkes found that indigenous practices mixed with colonial tribal organization still existed. In Socorro, Texas, he found the small agricultural hamlet to be void of any Piro Indian customs and language, although he contended that a few families claimed to be of “Indian blood” but they had no tribal organization and no ability to speak the Piro language (Fewkes 1902:72). The indigenous Piro community of Socorro had seemed to melt away with time, leaving only shallow remnants of the first mission of 1681, along with the existing church located on Buford Rd. and scattered but abundant shreds of pottery as evidence of a complex Piro heritage.

The Piro identity seemed to fade with time according to Fewkes but in the long historical trajectory of the El Paso valley the Piro’s managed to imprint themselves on

the social landscape. The Indians of Socorro much like the other indigenous peoples that settled in the area juxtaposed ideas and ways of life that incorporated traits and values that would allow for families to live and prosper. Some opting to Hispanicize while others held on to an identity that acknowledged an Indian ancestry and would later show a resurgence of customs which labored to demonstrate an affinity to the New Mexico tribes to the north while being unique to southern New Mexico and west Texas. Nevertheless, the Piro did survive and reemerged as members of the combined Piro-Manso-Tiwa (PMT) tribe (Campbell 2006). In the nineteenth century members of the group migrated to the village of Tortugas near Las Cruces, New Mexico and founded the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe.

The primary focus of this thesis is to examine the social processes, with the use of historical documents, that led the pueblo of Socorro, Texas to transform from a Piro Indian settlement into a predominately Hispano “*vecino*” community. I will be focusing on the ongoing construction of ethnic identity among the Piro experience whereby tradition and the negotiation brought about by Spanish rule resulted in a new mestizo community. The Socorro Piro Indian of 1681, 1751, and 1801 was not the same individual. That is, there never existed a base set of ideas of what constituted a Piro Indian. Rather the Piro identity was responding to oscillating paradigms of subordination that resulted in individuals taking actions that would allow them and their families to prosper. Tracy Brown a historian, in the *Journal of the Southwest* notes, “Spanish beliefs and practices overlapped with Pueblo peoples until, eventually, the two merged. That merging led to the acceptance of a more Hispanicized existence and even the abandonment of community” (2004:467).

I have already touched on the general problem I wish to investigate in my analysis of Socorro. The problem is in the analysis of mechanisms that individuals or groups of Piro employed to sustain an existence, be it the incorporation of cultural traits and or the miscegenation of peoples. This was a constantly modifying process where the Piro, since the first contact with the Spanish, were recomposing ideas and practices that allowed an advantageous method of survival in differing social and ecological environments. Therefore, since its inception in 1682 the small agricultural community has gone through syncretic transformations whereby the inhabitants initiated change in response to outside forces. Their decisions for such actions were chosen but they occurred within a context of a larger world system that was ever influencing those decisions consciously or not. Socorro is then emblematic of a community that undergoes change in activities and rituals that foster any number of identities in a periphery. This zone is not merely a geographical one but a cultural one where hegemonic forces lay claim to advantageous living conditions and thereby choices that facilitate mestizaje within the Piro community of Socorro. This fusion of unequal power relations within the ethnic community in Socorro, Texas is a complex endeavor but with the limited data I look to reconstruct the conditions that led to Hispanizing of the Piro population.

### **1.1 Mestizaje**

The term Mestizaje is fluid and open to numerous definitions. In its simplest understanding mestizaje implies a biological or cultural mixture, often resulting in a new creation- a human being of mixed origins or state of consciousness in response to hegemonic forces. This hybridity brings different elements together that fuse, yet

maintain a certain distinction between its contributing elements. Jeffery Gould describes mestizaje as “as the outcome of an individual or collective shift away from the strong self-identification with indigenous culture...but emphasizes the openness, fluidity, and the multiplicity of identities” (Gould 1998:10).

In the past as in the present, this complex process of mestizaje is initiated in an effort by communities or individuals to recompose or reconfigure the spatial realm of certain ideas in practice. They make local adjustments to the new paradigms imposed by the dominant group and thereby constantly recreate ideas that combine distinct but unequal social structures. In the examination of mestizaje as an agency of changing cultural and political processes I dare not look to generalize mestizaje or claim that the miscegenation of “races” is the simple result of long cultural and biological conquest. Instead, I offer only a picture or glimpse of the complexity of human interaction in the regional and global scale. Noted anthropologist Eric R. Wolf stated, “Cultural change or cultural evolution does not operate on isolated societies but always on interconnected systems in which societies are variously linked within wider ‘social fields’ (1982:76)”. Therefore the historical analysis of this mestizo phenomenon in Socorro is merely an episode of changing configurations that although on the periphery of the Spanish world is bridged by global affairs.

Mestizaje is a phenomenon that continued well beyond the Spanish dominance of the area (Campbell 2006, Gruzinski 2002). In effect, these same processes of conflict and necessity in turn led to an identification with each other in the changing world system that continues to the present (Field 2002, Gruzinski 2002). For this reason, the scope of this endeavor is to elucidate a segment of relations between

groups of peoples who out of necessity create a community that is distinct in the valley of El Paso during the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century. This process resonates into the present and therefore the future as U.S. society becomes more diversified in the global scene.

## **1.2 Data and Methods**

Throughout this dynamic period of Socorro history the Piro seem to melt away much like the weathered adobe of the mission church. The Indians of this community are the focal interest of this thesis, but because the Indians of Socorro left no known first hand documentation of their lives this thesis employs a multi-disciplinary approach using anthropology and history. Being that this thesis is about the Indian community of Socorro an attempt is made to understand the dominant institutions these individuals found themselves in. A section of this thesis will focus on an overview of Spanish world system as it would have impacted this community. Additionally, the examination of primary sources in the form of historical documents will offer an opportunity to glimpse the process of mestizaje as the Piro deal with new opportunities and new hardships. The methods used in this research include the consideration of census records, Spanish government documents, and church records in the form of prenuptial investigations.

By examining the various historical documents found in the archives and other sources, I look to track the population demographically with the use of census records of the indigenous people in Socorro in order to understand the process of mestizaje between the years 1744 and 1813. I have also collected the census records for Senecú, now in present day Ciudad Juárez, to compare both communities. Both

populations consisted of primarily Piro people but in 1813, there numbered 299 Indians in Senecú as compared to the 68 in Socorro (Archivo Municipal de Ciudad Juárez MF489 R14).

The principal primary source of archival material comes from Archives of the *Ayuntamiento de Ciudad Juárez, 1726-1900*, which is located in the University of Texas at El Paso library. Some other primary archival sources come from the Municipal archives or the *Documentos históricos / Archivo Municipal de Ciudad Juárez 1750-1939* and the Spanish archives of New Mexico both of which are also located at the UTEP library. The daunting task of going through archival material on this area has been most notably done by Rick Hendricks and to a lesser extent by archeologist Rex Gerald. I also have spent the entire summer of 2004 going through a substantial number of microfilm reels that have potential information from the periods of 1740 and 1815. I made copies of the pages that were readable but some material may have been excluded due to the poor quality of the microfilm. Other documents may have been excluded due to the unreadable penmanship.

Robert Jackson describes the problem that he encountered while investigating census, marriage rosters, and baptismal records; there was a high degree of subjectivity on the part of the recorder (1999). As an example of this complexity, he states that indigenous people would renegotiate their status by working in mines and ranches and thereby modifying their behavior so as not to fall prey to the stereotypical elements that constituted Indian status. Cheryl Martin, a historian who specializes in Colonial Latin America and the Borderlands, also noted that the majority of the documents were written by local elites for a small group of literate people that went about their

administrative and judicial lives (Martin, 1996).

Research into historical materials about this complex and subtle process in Socorro, Texas may never have a single, clear resolution due to the paucity of information. With these limitations, the historical analysis of mestizaje of the Piro Indians of Socorro begins just before the monumental change of 1751; this is when the communal lands of the indigenous communities are privatized thereby giving greater opportunity for the homogenous community of Socorro to participate in the larger civil sphere (Hendricks 1992; Timmons 1990). No longer were the friars the stewards of the Piro but rather they were there only to minister to their spiritual needs. Consequently, the Piro person could use this land for his liking and thereby have more choices in how to deal with the daily dramas of existence. The census of 1744 taken of Socorro by a Franciscan priest is a starting point for the historical analysis of mestizaje. The reason is that the Piro population outnumbered any other ethnic class of people at this time. This analysis ends with the last known Spanish census of Socorro of 1813; it does so because once the area came to be Mexican territory in 1821 all residents were now citizens of the new republic, and after the Constitution of 1824 all ethnic distinctions were not noted in the censuses.

Therefore, within this period, the civil and religious archives that were written by the few literate Spaniards document in their censuses the diminishing ethnically indigenous population as time progressed. These archival sources not only describe this phenomenon but they do so in a linear manner that allows one to assume and therefore simplify the complexity of mestizaje. But Gruzinski in *The Mestizo Mind* states, “that mestizo mechanisms disrupt that linearity” (1999:28). Therefore mestizaje

disturbs the various states of equilibrium by the unpredictability of the search for new configurations, which are in response to cultural, social, and environmental conditions.

The archaeological assemblage of Socorro also elucidates the process of mestizaje within the community by showing the distinction of stylized and manufacturing differences in ceramicware (Marshall 1999, Tice 1987). The limited literature on this subject matter explains that there is significant disruption in the style of Piro ceramicware from the loosely defined chronological components or phases of 1680 to 1750 and later (Vieira 1994). Ceramic tradition is an excellent marker for kinship affinity if typologies imply spatio-temporal variability (chronology and geography) (Mbutu 2002).

### **1.3 Literature Review**

The history of the Piro population of Socorro, Texas lacks abundant literature. For the most part, there are unpublished master's thesis and manuscripts mixed with technical archaeological reports. In respect to the diligent work done in Socorro by these researchers they fail to account for the dynamic activities that were happening in the later half of the eightieth century, perhaps due to the scope of their work. The process of mestizaje is a complex activity where manifold actions on the part of individuals and communities are taking place in response to the hegemonic forces. Many researchers chose not to examine the history of Socorro in this manner. The following two authors describe the common paradigms that are used to understand the changing demographics of Socorro, Texas during the mid-seventieth and early nineteenth century. What is the impetus for cultural identity in Socorro?

There are two popular ideas that account for this change in Socorro. Southwest historian, Rick Hendricks states one of them has to do with the heterogeneity of the

primary group that was settled in the in the area after the 1680 Revolt. He describes the Indian population of Socorro militating against the preservation of Piro customs and language, which lead to the rapid loss of Indian identity (Hendricks 1992). To support this claim, he as well as others, stated, that in 1778 Fray Silvestre Vélez de Escalante, abstracting documents from the archives in Santa Fe, many of which are now missing, recorded the founding of Socorro soon after Otermín's return in 1682. According to Fray Vélez, Socorro was established some 12 and ½ leagues south of El Paso and settled for Piros, Tanos and Jémez Indians (Burrus 1980, Hendricks 1992, Mbutu 2002, Timmons 1990).

Historian and priest of the Socorro Parish from 1925 to 1946, Decorme disagreed with the Fray Vélez recordings, believing that it would have been highly unlikely for the Spanish to mix ethnically different people (Decorme 1962). Several censuses taken from Socorro never list indigenous groups other than Piros, except when Bishop Tamaron recorded erroneously the population as Suma Indians (Adams 1953:197). So why did the Indians of Socorro lose their customs and language much sooner when compared to the other indigenous communities of the El Paso valley. Senecú located just a few miles up river managed to keep their customs and language up to at least 1803 when a religious census was taken of the area and it recorded that Piro was still spoken along with Castilian (Juárez Archives Mf 495 reel 48 frame 83).

Archaeologist Bradley Vierra in *Searching for Piros near the old Socorro Mission* accounts for this difference when he states, "Assimilation appears to have occurred more rapidly in Socorro in comparison with other pueblos, presumably owing to its smaller size (Vierra, Chapman, Piper 1999:50). His argument is based solely on the

numerical aggregate of the inhabitants of Socorro. In contrast, the Juárez archives list the census of 1784 clearly numerating more people in Socorro at 402, San Lorenzo at 248 and Senecú at 376 and Ysleta at 358 (Juárez Archives Mf 495 reel 46). By 1813 Socorro had a population of 700 people whereas Senecú had 462 (Juárez Archives Mf 489 reel 14).

These hypotheses ultimately lack the resources to fully describe not only mechanisms of biological miscegenation and cultural assimilation but also the actions the inhabitants partake in order to reinvent a culture that can ultimately survive new difficulties. Anthropologist Les Field in his journal article, "Blood Traits: Preliminary Observations on the Analysis of Mestizo and Indigenous Identities in Latin America vs. the U.S.," explains that mestizaje is an alternative to Indian identity, which enables individuals to make their way up the social hierarchy (2002:15). To a certain extent, it is a resistance to the hegemonic construction of identity as applied by the Spanish caste system by allowing the individual to choose from the distinct systems when it is convenient for him or her.

For Gruzinski the mestizo process at work in Spanish America must be understood in a global context and Indians who opposed the Spanish hegemony coexisted with certain parts of it (2002). They took advantage of the maneuvering room that allowed them to be in-between spaces, thereby recreating ideas and practices that facilitated temporary solace in an ever changing world.

Susan Deeds', a colonial historian, offers a solid theoretical framework in her study of the indigenous peoples of Nuevo Vizcaya. She calls it mediated opportunism. She states, "Indigenous peoples could formulate mixed strategies and exercise choices

in adapting to changing cultural and ecological circumstances which was tempered by many factors perhaps the most important of which were the mortality produced by disease, the endemic warfare ... and the incapacity to accept changes that violated the most basic principles of assuring life's balance" (2003: 6). The process of mestizaje was also facilitated by the growing numbers of non-indigenous peoples to the areas whereby commingling of peoples forged new social networks. These connections also brought increasing social differentiation within the indigenous communities.

Deeds' term of mediated opportunism influenced the term I have coined as mediated necessity. Mediated necessity helps understand the social relationships that bound both Spanish *vecino* and Piro Indian in Socorro during the described period of historical analysis. This process is the symbiotic relationship that developed out of the common experience each individual had in the greater community of Socorro in respect to cultural, political, and environmental strains.

Historian Ross Frank in *From Settler to Citizen*, illustrates the importance the Bourbon reforms had on the northern communities of the province of New Mexico within the later stages of the eighteenth century. He examines the development of the changing relationship the Pueblo Indians and the Hispano community experienced by linking economic change to social and cultural change. He shows that New Mexico was not an economic void but rather was growing robustly and the resulting economic boom dramatically altered the balance of power between the Spanish settlers and the Pueblo Indians, giving the *vecinos* the incentive and the means to exploit their Pueblo Indian neighbors. He explains how the Hispano community began to define its cultural identity through the economic and social subordination of the Pueblo Indians.

The historian Robert Jackson describes in *Race, Caste, and Status* the Spanish caste system as imprecise and amorphous, which had different meaning in core areas, central Mexico and Bolivia (Potosí), as compared to the peripheral areas of the northern empire. He states, “The caste system itself was an artifact of Spanish colonialism ... all definitions of status and identity must be understood in terms of their purpose” (1999:12). He describes the caste system as a Spanish construct that attempted to create a hierarchal and stratified corporate society based upon bloodlines.

Robert Jackson in his book *Indian Population Decline* draws on extensive and scattered archival sources; he produces a sophisticated demographic analysis that permits evaluation of the causes, manifestations, and regional variations of the demographic collapse of mission Indians. The central finding is that diseases are only part of the explanation of population decline. He describes mestizaje as cultural or biological miscegenation. Such mixing was much more common with the development of a market economy that was based upon mining, ranching, and agriculture. He states, “Mestizaje, in both its biological and cultural manifestations and patterns of seasonal and permanent migration to the mining camps and other settler communities ... contributed to the relative and actual decline of the mission populations (1996:34). The historical analysis of this project looks to examine if Socorro, being a satellite settlement for El Paso del Norte region, contributed to the mestizaje of the Piro community.

I have proposed that culture or ethnic affiliation is not a fixed set of practices and traits; rather it is an historical relationship that has fluidity within structures as it responds to contemporary challenges, i.e. vecino encroachment, flooding of the river, participation in the wage labor market system, and Apache threats. I will argue that the

Piros long historical contact with Spanish facilitated the formation of shared and mutual practices. This then fostered a new identity where advantageous living conditions flowered from the individual's ability to choose his or her course as larger world occurrences helped shape that tempo.

#### **1.4 Thesis Overview**

This thesis is comprised of four chapters, the first of which is this introduction which elucidates the statement of the problem and defines mestizaje. The following section discusses the methodology used in obtaining and examining pertinent archival data from several repositories. The last section of Chapter 1 focuses on the literature review which examines recent work about the pueblo of Socorro as it relates to process of mestizaje.

Chapter 2 summarizes the Spanish imperial world system as it sets up the hegemonic paradigms the inhabitants of northern frontiers of New Spain experienced. It summarizes the role of the Franciscan missionaries and the civil authority's ever-growing dominance the Piro Indians of Socorro may have found themselves in. It also examines the significant impact the mechanisms of the Bourbon reforms had on the northern frontier of New Spain. This chapter illustrates the dynamics the Spanish sphere of influence had on the Piro Indians.

Chapter 3 presents the historical documents that shed light on what may have led to the mestizaje of the community of Socorro. It discusses the changing social milieu for the Piro Indian in the pueblo of Socorro by examining, in chronological order, census records, and other religious and civil documents. These documents examine the environmental and political constraints the Piro Indians and *vecino* Spanish

population collectively experienced. The flooding of the river valley and the subsequent damage and in some cases the destruction of the mission coupled with growing Apache raids on the population and livestock created a common threat and therefore a common response. In addition no longer tethered to the mission system the Piro are seen participating in Spanish wage-labor market and additionally the vecino population grows as land reform grants greater access to the pueblo of Socorro. Finally, chapter 4 summarizes and concludes the current research as well as discusses its limitations, implications and provides suggestions for future focused research.

## **Chapter 2: The Spanish Imperial World System**

The previous outline elucidated examples of data that made clear that the Piro populations of Socorro were experiencing conflict that manifested in the peripheral zones of New Spain. Piro Indian populations and Spanish citizens (*vecinos* or *gente de razón*) relied on each other for the mutual protection of their shared ideals of people who practiced husbandry and agriculture along the Rio Grande. During this time the roles that the individuals played were of imperative value to the community, it allowed growth but most importantly, it fostered a Hispano environment that the inhabitants looked to recreate in an area that lacked it.

### **2.1 Background of the Socorro Mission**

In 1680, the Puebloan people of northern New Mexico successfully shook the yoke of Spanish hegemony. The insurgency under the leadership of the Cacique Popé of San Juan Pueblo along with Xaca of Taos and Francisco of Ildefonso united the northern pueblos as never before, defeated the Spanish, and forced them southward. In their wake they left the countryside littered with the dead colonizers and sympathizers. Some indigenous groups of Tiwas of the Isleta Pueblo and Piros of Socorro, Senecú, Sevilleta and Alamillo who did not participate in the general revolt either joined or were coerced to accompany the defeated Spanish and a small number of other indigenous allies into exile to the El Paso del Norte region.

A camp to shelter the Piro was established by Governor Otermín and Father Francisco Ayeta in 1680 in the Socorro, TX. area. In 1682 a church, however primitive, was constructed for the Piros in Socorro but after an unsuccessful attempt by the Piros to revolt and kill the Franciscan priest in 1683 the mission was relocated closer to

Ysleta. A new mission location was established, and for the first time the name of *Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de los Piro del Sur* was used in 1684. In 1691, the construction of the first permanent structure was completed. As required by the laws of Castile and the Indies the mission was granted to Fray Joaquín de Hinojosa by Governor Vargas in 1692. The mission along with the Piro would be under the stewardship of the Franciscan Order (Hendricks 1992).

## **2.2 The Mission System**

Before 1751 the mission system managed to play a dominating role in the lives of the Piro of Socorro. It administered the Indians within the Spanish sphere of influence by instructing religious doctrine and requiring compulsory labor within the mission and its lands by the Indians that were assigned to it. With the onset of privatizing the majority of the church lands and assigning individual plots to Indian families the Franciscans would ultimately lose much of its power over the community of Socorro. What follows is an attempt to understand the greater mission system the Indians of Socorro would have experienced.

The Franciscan program in the northern frontier of New Spain was a two fold approach. It constituted the use of a mission system to Christianize the indigenous peoples and acculturate Spanish customs and practices to the Puebloan peoples. Hypothetically, the neophytes would then be ready to enter the civil realm of the Spanish Empire where his or her role would be dictated by the labor they could offer to help generate peninsular wealth. Each of these agendas had various impacts on the Indians, economically, linguistically, and in religious affiliation. In most cases it was dictated by the Indians as they were willing to take advantage of certain social settings

that would later promulgate a fostered sense of identity with the Hispano community. This was but one mechanism employed by indigenous peoples that offered survival in the hostile northern frontier of New Spain.

The role of the Roman Catholic Church on the Spanish program played an important part in the attempt to reduce and “civilize” the Indians of the north. Historian Edward Spicer states, “Every mission community was a social unit organized for intensive efforts to change features of Indian behavior” (1966:294). This community was paternalistic in nature where the residing priest had total control of the community agenda. Its support came by the Spanish monarch, giving the Franciscan Order power and influence over the lives of the Indians in New Mexico. The Spanish crown mandated a ten-year grace period to missionaries where the inhabitants of the mission communities did not have to pay taxes. Ten years was too little time according to the priests and they often asked for extensions to that time limit and it was usually extended indefinitely as the priest saw fit. In that period the primary agenda of the mission was to set up routines in the daily lives of the Indians and through these routines new habits would form thus attempting to incorporate Indians into Spanish society through gradual modification.

Although this was the attempt, it would assume that the Indians were passive actors in an unfolding drama but it rarely occurred that way, it was much more dynamic. The priest would create activities and the Indians felt obligated to participate in such community activities. There the priests would preach and instruct their religious doctrines and those people that accepted such dogma were then obligated to attend and perform rituals that professed their loyalties to doctrines being taught. In practice,

the priest created rituals that included daily mass, the reciting of prayers, and the active participation in religious ceremonies and reenactments. The use of these methods was a stepping-stone to new tasks that would be expected by the priests of the Indians. This was considered mandatory labor in order to sustain the activities needed in the mission program. In describing the means of emotional production Randall Collins states, 'that particular forms of social interaction designed to arouse emotions operate to create strongly held beliefs and a sense of solidarity within the community constituted by participation in these rituals' (Kivisto 2003: 228).

Other than the government stipends, the missions had very little income coming into the community. The mission community then had to sustain itself by enforcing active participation in agricultural and husbandry duties. It included the seeding and maintaining of fields, the implementation of community projects that required all to take part, as in creating irrigation ditches or *acequias* to redirect water to the fields and or creating new structures to house animals or store grain. In these jobs, the Indians would be exposed to new social roles, often creating offices that garnished more prestige. These roles were specialized to the duties that were required for the job.

During the height of the missions in northern New Spain in the mid seventeenth century, the communities commanded extensive farms and herds of animals that were sources of supply for not only that particular community but also for surrounding villages. The priests of these communities would then command economic power in the surrounding area, putting them in direct conflict with civil authorities that also looked to exploit the Indian labor and force them to pay taxes.

### **2.3 Spanish Civil Authority**

The Indians of Socorro during the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the earlier part of the 19<sup>th</sup> were immersed in the Spanish civil sphere. The local officials would yield more power after managing to successfully challenge the Franciscans for influence over the indigenous populations. Though the civil authority would expand and create new structures of subordination between vecino and Indian communities, the Piros would also successfully use these same institutions for their benefit as will be later observed in chapter 3. The following section describes the general Spanish civil system under which the Piros of Socorro experienced.

Influential peninsular leaders led the civil government of the northern frontier of New Spain and their primary motive was to satisfy their own interests while generating revenue for the royal crown. The Spanish civil program was based on the need to exploit the resources of a particular area in order to amass wealth for its institutions and in that process, it relied on the backs of the Indians and other lower *casta* peoples for that labor. The mission system could be viewed as an approach that alienated Indians into Catholic enclaves while the Spanish authorities took a different approach to the Indian situation and it was one that relied on rapid integration into the empire. In this process, the Spanish civil authorities recreated Spanish towns in these various regions in the north and in turn created vast new roles that also differed from those of the missions. Spicer comments as follows, “The civil authorities urged incorporation throughout the organization of Indians into formal political units of Spain, the forcing of European work habits in mines and agricultural establishments run by Spaniards, the production of tribute, the distribution of tribal land to individual Indians, and the fusion of

Spaniards and Indians through intermarriage and living together in the same communities” (1966:303). According to Spicer, this was the official agenda but to believe that regional Spanish leaders actually practiced such a policy would be misleading, instead their immediate interests would be on local affairs.

The Spanish process of political incorporation attempted to organize Indian villages into formal governments that resembled the local governments of Spain. The Spanish governor of a province, usually by recommendation of a priest, appointed individuals to positions like governor or *gobernadorcillo* who headed civil affairs, a captain or *aguazil* as a police head, and *alcaldes* who served as judges. The Spanish would provide symbols of these positions of power by giving canes that represented the authority of Spain and the right for these appointed individuals to hold these positions.

The next step by the Spaniards was to put the Indians to work as soon as possible in Spanish controlled enterprises rather than on their own farms. In those areas where precious metals were discovered and the immigrant population could no longer sustain or reach the capacity levels of production, the Indians would then be forced to work in the mines. In areas where ranching and agriculture was important, the Spanish authorities relied on the *encomiendas* or tribute system. These were land grants given to Spanish individuals or groups for their service to the crown. These *encomiendas* were set up near pueblos or Indian settlements so that the Indians could be used as a viable labor source. Although officially those owners of the grants could not actually reside on the land, this was often overlooked. Another important factor for the civil authorities' program would be the distribution of land to individual Indians.

Many times Spanish landowners looked to acquire the rich areas of land around Indian villages and through social networks managed to get deeded much of the arable land.

Another feature of the civil program involved the transplanting of a “desirable type of Spaniard” to the northwest area, where eventually biological and cultural mixing could take place. In the northern frontier, there existed very few towns where potential Spaniards could live, although in mining rich areas towns did manage to grow much more frequently. There was also very little security for individuals and their families in the north. In the seventeenth century, the area was almost in a constant state of revolt, while opportunistic Athapaskan groups moved freely and without impunity. Spicer states, “Settlers could not be attracted to a country in which mines were petering out, Indians were raiding unrestrainedly, and most agricultural development was carried on against considerable odds” (Spicer 1966:306).

The features of the civil program took place around Spanish towns. They were setup so that the daily affairs of government and commerce could take place in recognizable arena. For the Indians the Spanish town was a community that was unlike something they were used to. Those Indians that had gone through a mission system or were part of one found the towns to be outside the network of kinship and local communities. In Spanish towns, the Indians lived on the outskirts often with other ethnically different people. The Indians were also exposed to a wage labor market system that ascribed a monetary value to their ability to perform a job. These new ideas made the Indians that participated in such work responsible only for themselves and their family; the reliance on kinship ties was not as valuable in the Spanish town setting. It not only alienated them from their community but also from the product that was being

mined or cultivated. In the wage labor system the product produced was not theirs personally to own but was owned in many instances by an unknown person who had ultimate authority. Due to this new set of rules and roles that the Indians had to take part in, many moved in and out of these communities, as was the case in the missions as well. Many times over the Indians were described by the Spanish as transients and therefore lazy.

#### **2.4 Spanish Bourbon Reforms**

The mission and civil agenda were in constant conflict over what roles the Indians should play. Although both were frontier institutions that looked to change the nature of the Indian culture to one that was similar to theirs. With this premise both authorities failed to realize that the Indian groups that were being encountered and later conquered already had working institutions that set up frameworks for how they experienced their lives in the world. From the standpoint of an Indian who was affected by one or both aspects of the Spanish program, the individual or group could get up and leave the Spanish communities, moving to indigenous communities that did not want to actively participate in that program. The Spanish for the most part understood this problem and believed that in order to stem it they must use methods that could bring the Indians into their sphere of control.

During the seventieth and eightieth century the Spanish economy was in a serious crisis. Fed by bullion, the economy was in a state of inflation. Spanish products were seriously overpriced and many times lacked quality when compared to French or English products. These cheaper goods flooded the Spanish market increasing their demand throughout the empire and the raw resources coming out of its empire were

going to these other countries since Spain was losing its manufacturing capability. At the same time Spain practiced restrictive commercial policies that was aimed to aid those living in Spain while hurting most those small and isolated populations on the frontier. Historian of Spanish colonial America David Weber explains, "To protect its own manufactures, Spain discouraged manufacturing in its colonies. To protect its mercantile guild and to facilitate the collection of tax revenues, Spanish policy generally limited trade to Spanish goods, handled by Spanish merchants, and carried on Spanish vessels" (1992: 175). To exacerbate the problem all goods could only be brought in through certain ports and had to be terrestrially transported on certain routes.

The Hispano population of the northern frontier protested fervently and the Spanish government responded by setting the prices of goods going to the north, even then prices were considerably higher than those of its competitors. The newly established colony of Texas in an effort to thwart French expansion in the Gulf of Mexico did not have any shipping port. Instead, all goods had to come through the port of Vera Cruz or Mexico City. Due to these problems, the population of the northern frontier failed to grow numerically in any great manner as it failed to attract new settlers to the region. This neglect of choices had repercussions to all the inhabitants. Whereas the colonists were confined to products made in Spain, the Indian peoples now had an option (Weber 1994:186). The Indians could not only choose between goods but between what European power could offer a better allegiance. This being the case the Indians were leaving the Spanish sphere of influence and many times turning hostile to the Spanish as the Spanish culture like manual labor was being forced upon them. The French and English looked to establish trade and not force their customs

upon the Indians. Later once such allegiances showed to have no benefit they would wage war upon the tribes and these same tribes would then realign themselves with Spain.

With a faltering Spanish economy, those groups that relied on government subsidy now found themselves with meager funds. The mission and presidio systems were greatly affected during the early eighteenth century, reducing their importance and effectiveness on the frontiers. Both systems relied on such funds to purchase goods in order to buy approval of the local indigenous population but when funds became tight the missions found themselves hurting the most. The mission system no longer offered any incentives for most of the regions. The exception was in New Mexico where Apache and Comanche raids intensified, uniting both Hispanos and Puebloan Indians to fight off the raiders. Everywhere else, the Indians found little reason to stay. When the missions could no longer attract neophytes, they would be forced to shut down. In the case of the presidios, they too were hurt but they did not entirely rely on the Indian presence to be seen as functional, instead they were seen as a Spanish presence to other European powers.

With economic stagnation and faltering institutions, the Spanish king set out to strengthen the northern frontier from the rising indigenous hostilities and the rising threat of encroachment of European powers on Spanish claimed land. Finding it difficult to expand its commercial and colonial sphere the king now looked to protect its assets in Mexico by making the northern frontier into a buffer from outside threats. In 1772, the King of Spain Carlos III promulgated the new regulations that would breathe a short but new breath on the frontier. These *reglamentos de 1772* according to Weber,

“emphasized force over diplomacy. In military terms, the Regulations of 1772 offered essentially European solutions to American problems” (Weber 1992:216). In the new decree, a cordon of presidios was to be established, removing those that had out lived their effectiveness and reinforcing those that were needed. The central and upper part of California at this time was being colonized, but unlike most of the frontier where the missions were seen to have overstayed their usefulness here they were used as a means to Hispanize the indigenous population. People from the Canary and Minorca Islands were recruited with limited success to settle certain areas of California and Texas. These settlers were offered low titles and lands in an effort to sway them from existing lands. With new settlers and stronger presidios the Spanish looked to bring war to the hostile tribes. The Spanish government set out policy that would enlist more Indian allies and to increase the efficiency of presidial troops in an effort to exterminate the Apache threat. Before any real serious campaigns could occur and after large sums of money were spent to ready such a force it was called off. An imminent war with England shifted official policy.

Spain in little over three hundred years had altered the lives of Indian peoples throughout a vast region. Motivated by the acquisition of material wealth and later the protection of it, the policy of the Spanish frontier was not solely based on regional interests. Instead outside affairs that were transpiring in Europe affected the decrees that the Spanish colonist would have to follow, while in turn also affecting the non-Hispano populations of the area. In this manner the Spanish colonists being the dominant society in the region was not a fully replicated model of Iberian culture. It was more of a watered down version that lacked the material wealth and in relative isolation

lacked the direct contact that would strengthen Spanish ideals. Constant contact with indigenous people influenced the food they ate, the dress they wore, and marriage practices. Though the Indians influenced the Spanish, the Indians on the other hand took in much more of the Spanish culture. Early on it was forced upon them but as time advanced benefits were had in the Spanish culture and many Indians moved back and forth between the Spanish and Indian spheres of influence. Indians adapted Spanish customs to their own while also protecting certain aspects as unique markers of affinity.

Each of Spain's borderland provinces had its own identity, in large part because Spaniards who sought to replicate familiar institutions were forced to accommodate themselves to distinctive Indian peoples, geographies, and climates. Even then, outside global forces were helping shape the attitudes the Spanish monarchs took in relation to its northern frontier. The people of the area although affected by such decrees managed to adapt to the new changes often modifying their interests in an effort to create an environment where human interaction could foster a reciprocal, negative or positive, existence.

### **Chapter 3: Socorro Indians and Vecinos: The Changing Social Melieu, An Examination of Historical Documents**

Sergie Gruzinski in *The Mestizo Mind* states that “by ignoring history we deprive ourselves of a crucial perspective, overlooking the effects of Western colonization in all those lands and, consequently, the reaction it triggered” (2002:14). The triggered reaction among the Piro population manifested from the experience of the colonial structures that ultimately affected ethnic persistence. These structures are the Spanish administration, religious paternalism, the effects of the growing market economy, and the shared experiences that led to the participation of group activities with *vecinos* in response to environmental conditions and the hostile relations with surrounding groups of Apaches. With that participation, the indigenous person in Socorro has the ability to participate in mestizaje as he or she finds more social benefits or advantages in the Spanish world. What follows is an example of how the historical documents show where mestizaje was taking place in the time frame being examined. It illustrates how a new identity forged out of mediated necessity would flourish in order to successfully compete and some cases help the vecino population of Socorro against common threats.

Changes in civil policy brought an onset of effects in the Socorro area in forms of administration and daily life. There then exists a myriad of activities that were affecting the group of Piros in the Socorro community. The censuses record fewer and fewer individuals claiming to be Piro. This trend of diminishing indigenous identity was common with the other missions of Ysleta and Senecú but was much slower as the last census of 1813 listed.

### **3.1 A Chronological Examination of the Historical Documents**

The historical documents reviewed were placed in chronological order and encompassed 10-year periods. The documents start in the 1750's and end in 1813 with last known Spanish census of Socorro. All of the documents examined were correspondence between Spanish civil or religious officials.

#### **3.1.1 1750's**

In the onset of the 1750's the Indian populations of the valley had been more or less isolated to Piro, Tigua, Suma, and Manso enclaves that were represented by the missions and the surrounding land that had been allotted by the Spanish authorities. A paradigm shift shocked the ecclesiastical system loosening the influence the Franciscans had on the Indian population and in turn thrusting the Piro community into the realm of the Spanish civil authority. This fundamental change came in the form of land ownership. It was manifested as a decree from Governor Tomás Vélez Cachupín on February 17, 1751 stating that the land held in trust for the Indian peoples of the El Paso Valley by the Franciscan missionaries was to be assigned to the Indians (Timmons 1990). However, within the month of May of that same year 35 *vecinos* registered land titles within the boundaries of Socorro (Juárez Archives MF 495).

No documents were found that pertained to the Indians of the pueblo registering individual tracts of land but this does not mean they do not exist. Several of the vecino registrations document along with the dimensions of boundaries, the names of their neighbors. Several of these individuals were listed as landowning Indians of the pueblo that shared a boundary with a specific vecino landholder. An example could be found when José de la Sierra on the 8 of May in 1751 registered the largest tract of land of

any other vecino. He registers a house lot, a garden area, and ranch that measures 780 *varas* (.4 miles) east to west and 1,200 *varas* north to south (.58 miles). It is bounded by the Acequia Madre to the north, on the south with land of Javier Provencio, Antonio Romero the Indian governor of the Pueblo, Bartolo Frésquez, Juan de Rivera, and Manuel Valencia. To the east, it shares boundaries with Acensio Gómez and land of an Indian named Juan Diego. From the west the Camino Real which comes from El Paso bounds de la Sierra property (Juárez Archives MF 495 reel 40 copy 496-498).

Fray Juan Miguel Menchero just a few years prior in 1744 reported sixty Piro and six Spanish families residing in Socorro. The Piro Indians in Socorro clearly outnumbered the Spanish vecinos but immediately after the land tenancy reform of 1751 an influx of non-Indians settled and ultimately changed the dynamics of Indian/vecino relations. In 1754 the Franciscan visitor general, Manuel San Juan Nepomuceno y Trigo, had high praise for the firm faith of the natives, who now amounted to over fifty families (Timmons 1990:36, Hendricks 1992:28, Bowden).

The land usurpation of Socorro during the 1750's by the Spanish community seemed to have created a hodgepodge of individual plots of lands owned by Indians and vecinos alike. This was illustrated by José de la Sierra's previously mentioned land registration. The historical documents reveal that the Indian enclave described in 1744 by Fray Juan Miguel Menchero appears to no longer exist after 1751. Instead an individualistic outlook on land ownership may have grown out of necessity of the land reform. Additionally, the close proximity to the vecinos would have also fostered new social networks that went beyond what was commonly found in the Indian community, thus thrusting mestizaje into the forefront.

### 3.1.2 1760's

In the 1750's the local secular government grew in power due in part to the Bourbon reforms as seen in Governor Vélez's directive, weakening the position of the Franciscan Order throughout the province of New Mexico. In 1760 Pedro de Tamarón y Romeral, bishop of Durango, visited Socorro during his tour of New Mexico. Unlike the report of Manuel San Juan Nepomuceno y Trigo six years earlier Bishop Tamarón reported on the general bad state he found the missions. He was now in a position to challenge the Franciscans and push for a secularization of the missions and therefore help the Spanish authorities wrestle more power away from the religious order of St. Francis. Most importantly during his visit to Socorro he furnished population statistics and measurements of the church building. He recorded forty-six Suma Indian families for a total of 182 individuals. Including several residents of Tiburcio (present San Elizario), Socorro had eighty-two Spanish families, for a total of 424 persons. The Bishop may have erroneously listed the Indians of Socorro as Suma because in the pueblo of Ysleta he listed the Indian population as Piro and not Tiguas. For the other Piro Indian community of Senecú he documented 111 Indian families with 425 persons. He also recorded 80 Suma Indians residing at the mission being taught catechism and 29 vecino families with 141 persons (Adams 1953:197).

Now the civil authorities of the El Paso communities were to wield more power, having the liberty to employ Indigenous workers from the several indigenous communities for civil projects. Following a decade of changing demographics the 1760's brought about new and profound changes for the Piro population of Socorro. It was now no longer a priority to maintain collective mission lands under the mandate of a

Franciscan priest but instead the individual was thrust into the Spanish wage-labor economy.

When not involved in agricultural duties within individual farm plots, the Indians of Socorro participated in working on *casas Reales* or royal properties of El Paso del Norte in the 1760's. One such example came in 1765, when the Indian *gobernadorcillo* Luis Melón and *cacique* Simón Mendoza of Socorro presented a roster of 19 individuals who demanded payment for services completed upriver in El Paso del Norte (MF 495 reel 40 frame 190-191). Unable to obtain the payment for the services rendered, both Melón and Mendoza again petitioned for payment the following year but this time uniting their laments with those of the governing bodies (*gobernadorcillo and cacique*) of the Piro's of Senecú and the Tiguas of Ysleta. A number of the pueblo Indians throughout the El Paso valley had been contracted by Antonio de San Juan but were not paid before his death (MF 495 reel 40 frames 198-229). That same year, Francisco Antonio Velarde records payments to each individual Indian of Socorro that participated in the public works (MF 495 reel 40 frames 241-244).

The Piros of Socorro like the other indigenous groups from the various communities are observed in the historical documents actively participating in the Spanish civil sphere. Not only were they working for a wage but when they failed to receive just compensation they were observed using legal recourse to achieve a satisfactory outcome. The groups represented by 18<sup>th</sup> century pueblo Indian institutions in the form of the *gobernadorcillo* and *cacique* are observed using the Spanish system of justice to litigate grievances therefore requiring a sense of understanding of how the system works. Whereas before 1751 the mission priest would have petitioned the local

government on the behalf the tribes but almost 14 years later the Piro workers are collectively asserting more vecino-like treatment. The Piro are bridging Indian and Spanish institutions and therefore facilitating the process of mestizaje.

The use of Indian public works did not stop at *casas reales*. The *teniente-mayor* of Socorro Diego Tiburcio de Ortega organized labor for a water works project. The *Río del Norte* or the Rio Grande had experienced extreme drought in several occasions where the river ran dry for an extended period of time but during the mid 1760's the river had been flowing with intensity. As a consequence it threatened to completely destroy the pueblo of Socorro. In 1764 Governor Vélez states,

“Habiendo reconocido en el ingreso de mi visita en esta Jurisdicción el riesgo de inundación total de los Pueblos Ysleta y Socorro, y expuesta así mismo la población de los Tiburcios que sigue al Pueblo del Socorro el que con la creciente del río perdió algunas casas, tierras de (unreadable) y estuvo expuesta su Iglesia y habitación del Misionero hacer perdida totalmente por su penetración que hizo el río en dicho Pueblo (Socorro)” (Juárez Archives MF495 reel 44 frame 275-276).

In order to advert disaster the mayor pooled resources in the form of inhabitants of the pueblo to help construct a dam that would ultimately safeguard the community for some time (MF495 reel 44 frames 241-244). Such a challenging endeavor would require cooperation between the Indian and vecino communities. During the same year the Indians of San Lorenzo, Ysleta, and Socorro filed a complaint against José Horcasitas who was charged to oversee the construction of the flood control works along the river (MF 495 reel 44 frame 273-275).

Here we observe the community of Socorro as a whole being affected by the overflowing of the Río Grande which brought much devastation to the area. Both Indian and vecino populations would have shared in the hardship of the initial flooding and would have both been affected by the near destruction of the Socorro mission. A sense

of shared identity brought about by the misfortune may have started to germinate at this time but again the Indian communities being of lower social order were filing complaints about mistreatment by the vecino José Horcasitas and therefore possibly creating further divisions between the groups.

With a growing number of people through out the valley of El Paso, the need for wood and pasture around the villages started to grow and competition for said resources would intensify. The vecinos of Paso del Norte had been moving beyond the limits of the village and were seen encroaching onto Indian lands and procuring wood without permission. This was observed when Governor Vélez after hearing out the cases from the representatives of El Paso del Norte and that of San Lorenzo el Real for the Suma Indians prohibited the cutting of wood and the use of their land for pasture by vecinos. It also stated that the directive should not only apply to San Lorenzo but for all of the pueblos of the area, hinting at a problem that all communities were experiencing. He states that the mayors of each pueblo should not abuse their commission and office and should not turn a blind eye to the cutting of wood by vecinos on any Indian land. Those vecinos apprehended breaking the directive would be fined and sentenced to jail. If the vecinos needed wood they were directed to make their way to the Salineta where the resources were communal but would have to proceed with caution since Apaches were said to be in the area (MF495 reel 44 frame 315-318).

### **3.1.3 1770's**

In 1765 King Charles III of Spain appointed the Marqués de Rubí as part of the Bourbon reforms to inspect all the presidios on the northern frontier and make recommendations to improve the presidio system. A single cordon of presidios would

protect the northern frontier from colonial powers and hostile Indian tribes. The pueblos of the El Paso valley totaled over 5,000 inhabitants and were told that the neighboring pueblos could defend themselves from Apache attacks with implementation of local militias. It was therefore recommended that the presidio in Paso del Norte be relocated south to Carrizal in Nueva Vizcaya (Chihuahua) in order to better protect the commerce between the villa of Chihuahua and the province of New Mexico. Marqués de Rubí also recommended that the presidio of Guajoquilla, present day Jiménez, Chihuahua, be moved to the valley of San Elceario on the banks of the Rio Grande, near present-day Porvenir, Chihuahua. The presidio of Paso del Norte was eventually relocated to Carrizal in 1773 and as a consequence during the preceding two decades Apache attacks would intensify throughout the El Paso valley (Juarez Archives MF495 reel 45 frames 144-146, Hendricks and W. H. Timmons 1998).

The construction of the presidio of San Elceario roughly 40 miles south of Socorro would require local manpower to complete the project. Lt. Governor Sánchez Daroca in 1774 determined that the Indians from the pueblos of Paso del Norte, Senecú, Ysleta, and Socorro should participate in the construction and each pueblo should furnish nine Indians but for Socorro only eight would suffice (MF 495 reel 45 frame 146-147). With the presidio in the process of being constructed further south, the communities of the El Paso valley were much more vulnerable to Apache raids with the southern most communities of Socorro and the hacienda of Tiburcios at most risk. As a consequence, Lt. Governor convened the captains of the militias and instructed that each pueblo should provide individuals for the security of key areas. The defense of the communities was of the outmost importance. The other communities of the area were

required to safeguard solely one area around the distinct pueblos, but Socorro was responsible for three separate locales. One of the areas was guarded by two vecinos and four Indians while the other two points are guarded by just vecinos (MF495 reel 45 frame 154-156). Even with the extra vigilance it was documented in 1779 that on two occasions Apaches were seen in Socorro. The lieutenant governor of El Paso was informed that this could have been avoided if the guards preformed their jobs adequately (MF495 reel 45 frame 538).

### 3.1.4 1780's

Table 3.1. Partial Copy of the Table for the Census of 1784

Name of Town	Men	Women	Boys	Girls	Slaves (men)	Slaves (women)	Total
Pueblo del Paso	816	849	521	549	4	5	2744
Real	68	74	60	41	-	-	243
Senecú	106	103	70	71	-	1	351
Ysleta	115	95	74	79	-	-	363
Socorro	115	104	95	88	-	-	402
Totals	1220	1225	820	828	4	6	4103

In 1784 a detailed census was taken of the El Paso jurisdiction by Eugeno Fernández. Official documents furnished a general table illustrating the nominal counts for the entire region (see Table 5.1); it was then followed by a detailed summary for each community. The sex, age, caste, marital status, size of family and occupation of each head of household was reported. In order to track presumed purity the Spanish established a caste system based on race but more importantly it was based on social mobility within the Spanish system. The caste system was complex and varied greatly (See Figure 3.2). John Nieto-Phillips states, "Race was not a fixed, constant idea. An individual's *casta* could change over his or her lifetime, especially if one had the economic or political means to redefine one's racial designation by purchasing a *gracias*

*al sacar'*, (Nieto-Phillips 2004:28) translated to dispensation of a royal exemption purchased by the bearer. For the pueblo of Socorro the *vecinos* or citizenry made up 110 households which listed Español, mestizos, Indians (possibly *genizarios* or detribalized Indians), blacks, coyotes, and lobos. In contrast the Indians of Socorro constituted 19 households which totaled 57 individuals or just 14 percent of the total population (MF 495 reel 46 frame191-194). In comparison Senecú, also an Indian pueblo originally established for Piros, accounted for 33 vecino households and 71 for Indians. A total of 229 individuals or 65 percent of the entire population consisted of Indians of the pueblo (MF495 reel 46 frames 185-187).

Table 3.2. Select Caste Designations by Percentage

<b>Father</b>	<b>Mother</b>	<b>Offspring</b>
Español	India	Mestizo
Español	Mestiza	Castizo
Español	Castiza	Español
Español	Negra	Mulatto
Español	Mulatto	Morisco
Español	Morisca	Albino
Español	Albina	Torna atrás
Español	Torna atrás	Tente de el aire
Indio	Negra	Cambujo
Cambujo	India	Lobo
Lobo	India	Albarazado
Albarazado	Mestiza	Barnocino
Barnocino	India	Sambaigo
Mestizo	Castiza	Chamiso
Mestizo	India	Coyote

Taken from Nieto-Phillips 2004:27

A census of the area was again conducted in 1787 but this time by a Nicolás Soler. In Socorro he documented 112 men, 100 women, 97 boys, and 84 girls totaling 393 inhabitants (Table 5.2). Only 58 people were recorded as belonging to the Indians of the pueblo. Interestingly, nine of the 20 Indian households were widowed of which seven had no children (MF 495 reel 46 frame 75-79). Again in comparison, Senecú

totaled 361 people which broke down to 113 men, 106 women, 87 boys, and 55 girls. Vecinos totaled 133 and Indians 218 slightly diminishing to 61 percent of the entire population of the pueblo (MF 495 reel 46 frame 70-72).

Table 3.3. Partial Copy of the Table for the Census of 1787

<b>Name of Town</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Slaves (men)</b>	<b>Slaves (women)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Pueblo del Paso	680	879	659	547	6	-	2771
Real	100	83	59	47	-	-	289
Senecú	113	106	87	55	-	-	361
Ysleta	101	83	65	38	-	-	287
Socorro	112	100	97	84	-	-	393
Rancho de Tiburcio	19	14	13	5	-	-	51
Totals	1125	1265	980	776	6	-	4152

A comparison of the 1784 and 1787 tabulations elucidated interesting results. The majority of the populations around the El Paso valley experienced slow gains but Socorro and Ysleta exhibited declines. While the decline in population was quite substantial for the pueblo of Ysleta, a 21 percent drop, Socorro only experienced a 3 percent drop but continued to be the largest community outside of El Paso del Norte. The drop in population for these two communities within a span of three years is not clear. Natural death, people migrating out of the area, and deaths due to hostile encounters with Apaches may have all contributed to the decline, although the decline of population between 1760 and the 1780 censuses was even greater. As discussed earlier, Bishop Tamaron's visit in 1760 documented a total of 606 people in Socorro of which 182 were Indians and in Senecú there were 646 people of which 425 were Piro Indian. The drastic decline primarily could have been attributed to the 1780-1781 smallpox plague that ravished New Mexico. The province lost close to 5,000 inhabitants of which the native populations suffered most (Simmons 1966).

After 1786 the Spanish government after several successful military encounters persuaded many Apaches to settle at the chain of forts along its northern frontier. The administrative units, usually called *establecimientos de paz* (peace establishments), were unique in that the military and not the church administered to the Apache (Griffen 1988:9). In the El Paso valley the rancho de los Tiburcios was proposed to be a Mescalero Apache peace camp. This would put the both vecino and pueblo Indians within close proximity of the Apaches. The vecinos were prohibited from cultivating and ingesting *mata ponce* and other Indian plants (MF 495 reel 47 frame 63). In 1788 it was decided that the presidio of San Elcario was to be moved to the old site of the Tiburcios in an effort to better protect the surrounding communities (Hendricks and Timmons 1998).

With the pending movement of the presidio, Apache attacks intensified in the Socorro area. In 1788, livestock are recorded being stolen and several vecinos are killed by Apaches located in large concentrations in the Sacramento Mountains (See Figure 3.1). Additionally any parties looking to go to the salinas must go well prepared and with caution (Juárez Archives MF495 reel 47 frame 57). Official order was given out to campaign against these “*enemigos*” or hostiles who had rancherias in the surrounding mountains. A company of soldiers was to be supplemented by an additional 60 to 70 men made up of militia, *vecinos*, and *indios*, from the area (Juárez Archives M 495 reel 47 frame 61 & 64).

In order to stem the attacks the presidio was moved to the current location of San Elizario, Texas. The building of this edifice was to be done by Indian labor (Juárez Archives Mf 495 reel 47 copy 117). In 1789 again the Indians of Socorro would actively

participate in working on royal properties as they seen furnishing 1,500 adobes for the construction of the presidio (MF495 reel 48). The construction of the presidio would last until 1793 and Socorro was obligated to provide 20 men for 130 days of work (MF495 reel 47 frame 268)



### 3.1.5 1790's

In early 1790 the proposed Apache peace plan began in earnest when several Mescalero leaders came to the El Paso region seeking peace (Hendricks and Timmons 1988). The congregation of Apaches from various nations around El Paso del Norte and its satellite communities would untimely put a great burden on both the vecinos and Indians alike. Not only would they be prone to theft of property but they would be obligated to provide the necessary staples that would be needed to coerce the Apaches to stay within the Spanish field of influence. Of the numerous Apache groups, by far the most troublesome for the El Paso settlers were the Gileños west of the Rio Grande, the Faraones in southern New Mexico, and the Mescaleros and Lipans to the east of the Rio Grande. Different bands of Apaches would settle at the outskirts of El Paso del Norte while others settled around San Elceario and they were even documented on the opposite side of the river from Socorro. In 1791 Commandant General Pedro de Nava ordered the military leader of San Elceario to purchase corn, beans, and wheat for the Apaches de paz from community of Socorro (MF495 reel 47 frame 117 and 228). With a fluctuating size of Apaches within the area it became a strain on the local populations trying to supply the presidio the adequate amounts of foodstuff. In August of 1793 Cristobal Archuleta, lieutenant of Socorro, claiming there was a shortage of maize, delivered only 7 *fanegas* or bushels of the required 10 for the Apaches de paz (MF495 reel 47 frame 317).

Different bands of Apaches would come and go from the jurisdiction of El Paso del Norte. Often they would be seen living in peace but on numerous occasions' small groups would breakaway and resume raiding areas throughout New Mexico and New

Viscaya. Other times groups of disenfranchised Apaches from around the region would gather together and look to wage war on the El Paso communities. This was seen in 1791, when captain of the presidio of San Elceario, Manuel Vidal de Lorca Vidal, informed Lt. Governor Uranga that three Apache bands had left the area and were in route to join a large band or almost 1,000 Apaches which had gathered around *los Arenales* or the sand dunes and were looking to attack the El Paso Valley. He warned that the communities must prepare and be on alert (MF495 reel 47 frame 290). The following month the large group of Apaches that had formed by the *capitancillos* or captains of the Lipiyan and Lipan Apaches had broken up dispersing to the north to the Río Colorado (presently called the Canadian River) and along the Coahuila border (MF495 reel 47 frame 297).

In the month of January of 1794 Uranga stationed in El Paso del Norte informed the captain Vidal de Lorca, that there are between 800 and 1,000 Apaches camped on the other side of the river (MF495 reel 47 frame 45). A smaller band of Apaches was seen located the other side of the river from Socorro led by *captiancillo* Eslaya and other bands from the Sacramento Mountains were on the way. The mayors of the pueblos were advised to take the steps to ensure their readiness but should not let the Apaches know of their intentions (MF 495 reel 47 frame 27). With the large number of Apaches moving in the area Lt. Governor issued an edict to all of the pueblos the El Paso region, directing them to guard their livestock night and day and those that did not would be levied a monetary fine on the first offense; the second offense would also require jail time (MF495 reel 48 frame 258-259).

If constant thefts of livestock and eminent doom of Apaches attacking the communities was not enough the Río del Norte in 1795 was once again overflowing and causing havoc among the residents of Socorro. Fray José Bravo during his ecclesiastical visit to the area mentions in his report that the church had been newly rebuilt and that the *convento* was in deplorable conditions (MF495 frame 48 reel 193-195). This flooding was the second in about twenty years and as a consequence would have caused great hardship for the community of Socorro.

### **3.1.6 1800's**

By 1802 as a probable consequence of the mission of Socorro still lacking a *convento* no friar was assigned. The census of the area also documented 50 Indians and 558 vecinos of various castes. In Senecú the pueblo was still dominated by Indians as 318 were counted while only listing 185 vecinos (MF494 frame 49 reel 46). Only two years later in December of 1804 another census of the jurisdiction of El Paso was conducted. This time around 37 Indians and 475 vecinos were documented living in the pueblo of Socorro. Senecú, much like in the previous census primarily consisted of Indians, which numbered 320 while the vecino population slightly increased to 201. Senecú accounting for more people than Socorro was now the largest of the pueblos outside of El Paso del Norte. It was also the community with more Indians than any other pueblo. El Paso numbered 191 Indians as opposed to the 4,281 vecinos, Real de San Lorenzo only contained 30 in comparison to the 276 vecinos, while Ysleta accounted for 209 Indians and 178 vecinos (MF495 reel 48 frame 82-83). The census taker also briefly described the Indians of the pueblos in his concluding notes. He states, "the Indians from El Paso which are composed of various nations have lost the

ability to speak their native tongue and only speak Castilian and the same goes for those in Socorro. Those from El Real (San Lorenzo) are Sumas and comprehend and speak their native language but they speak Castilian much better. Those from Senecú are Piros and those from Ysleta are Tiguas and few here and there speak their language as well as Castilian” (MF495 reel 48 frame 83).

A census of the area was again conducted in 1805, this time only the age and sex were documented for the pueblos. Interestingly the El Paso del Norte is now broken up into several *partidos* or districts. These include partido del Centro, el Charco, del Chamizal, de la Playa, de los Álamos, del Álamo Guacho, de las Calaveras, del Barrial, and del Pueblito. Socorro was listed as containing 545 people which was higher than the 512 that was recorded the year prior. In Senecú a total of 482 inhabitants were recorded and in comparison with the 521 from the year before demonstrated a sharp decrease (MF 495 reel 48 frame 83).

### **3.1.7 1810 to 1813**

The end of the eighteenth century did not cease all the hostilities with various groups of Apaches for the residents of the jurisdiction of El Paso. A monthly report in 1806 mentions Apache raids on Socorro and the theft of numerous oxen (Juárez Archives MF 495 reel 49 frame 20-23). The community of Socorro much like the other pueblos continued to be at risk and on constant alert from potential threats. In order to punish the bands of Farones and Mescalero Apaches not settled within the El Paso area, Lt. Governor Manrique requested for 15 well equipped vecinos for a period of 50 days in order to wage war (Juárez Archives MF495 reel 49 frame 52). Within the month of August a census of the able-bodied men for the El Paso area was conducted

in which 100 citizens and 13 Indians of the ages of 16 to 60 were able to bear arms from the pueblo of Socorro. On the other had Senecú could provide 73 Indians and 35 vecinos (Juárez Archives MF 495 reel 49 frame 115). A few weeks later the Lt Governor requests 15 of the best Indians from throughout the pueblos to accompany the troops of San Elceario on their punitive expedition (Juárez Archives MF495 reel 49 frame 49).

Despite some success in the attempt to reduce the Apache bands the results were fairly ambiguous. The raids and consequential retaliatory expeditions continued well into the end of the Spanish period. The vecinos and Indians of Socorro persisted and overcame many hardships of frontier life. By 1813, and in the midst of the Mexican fight for sovereign control over its destiny, a final census of the area was taken. The entire El Norte del Paso now numbered 6,072 residents of which only 115 were Indians. In Socorro the population now totaled 700 with the vecinos increasing to 632 residents while the Indians now numbered 68. In Senecú, for the third consecutive time the population was documented as decreasing with the community now totaling 462. Indians still made up the largest segment accounting for 299 residents with the vecinos now numbering 179 (Archivo Municipal de Ciudad Juárez MF489 R14).

## Chapter 4: Conclusions

During the middle of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century vast changes to the political and social landscape were taking place within Socorro and the greater El Paso region. The historical documents from the Archivo Municipal de Ciudad Juárez and archives of the Ayuntamiento de Ciudad Juárez revealed a complex relationship between the Indians and vecinos of Socorro. The land tenancy reform of 1751 initiated by Governor Vélez Cachupín brought Piro's and vecinos often in direct competition for resources. The historical documents revealed that at times it would require a legal recourse on the part of the Indians to resolve any grievances. Additionally the land reform would pave the way to greater participation into the Spanish wage-labor system and thus greater mobility outside of Socorro for the Indians of the pueblo. The close proximity to the vecinos fostered new social networks that went beyond what was commonly found in the Indian community prior to 1751, thus thrusting mestizaje into the forefront.

This accelerated during the 1770's when Apache raids into the area intensified as a result of the El Paso del Norte presidio being moved further south. The Indians and vecinos found themselves participating in shared duties in order to protect their communities from potential raid. The early competition gave way to a mutual understating needed in order to confront a common foe and to maintain a way of life that would be advantageous for each household. Here mediated necessity was used to understand what bound both Spanish vecino and Piro Indian in a symbiotic relationship that developed out of the common experience in respect to cultural, political, and environmental strains. This necessity came from the need to maintain the community of

Socorro at all costs since both vecino and Indian of pueblo now had a stake in its survival.

In conclusion it has been demonstrated that decrees or *cedulas* from across the Atlantic affected the populations in the El Paso region although because they were somewhat isolated the adherence to such demands was taken with some measure of plasticity. Actions by outside forces in the form of Apache threats and royal *cedulas*, bind both vecinos and Indians to a commonality. Increasing cultural resemblances that would foster a shared reality that went beyond the categorization that Spanish clergy or civil authorities propagated. Activities such as joining the local militia, working on private or royal projects, participating as auxiliaries in campaigns against the hostile foes, living through a small pox epidemic, the shared problem of the turbulence of the Río del Norte, and participation in trade networks would give the people in the area relational identities based on a mediated necessity to survive.

I have proposed that culture or ethnic affiliation is not a fixed set of practices and traits; rather it is an historical relationship that has fluidity within structures as it responds to contemporary challenges. The Piro's long historical contact with Spanish institutions facilitated the formation of shared and mutual practices among the residents of pueblo of Socorro. This then fostered a new identity where advantageous living conditions flowered from the individual's ability to choose his or her course as larger world occurrences helped shape that tempo.

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