

## Descriptions of New Mexico

Excerpts from: *Pichardo's Treatise on the Limits of Louisiana and Texas*, edited by Charles Wilson Hackett, translated by Charles Wilson Hackett and Charmion Clair Shelby (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1941).

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Mexico, April 24, 1724. To the señor *auditor*. Signed by his Excellency.

*Most excellent señor:* By three *juntas de Guerra y hacienda* held beginning with January 2 of the year 1720 it has been ordered that there be established at the place of La Xicarilla a presidio of soldiers, whose number was estimated at twenty-five, as sufficient, and later at fifty, due to circumstances explained therein. There also were to be two or three missionaries for administering the sacraments to the Apache Indians of the valley of this same La Xicarilla, who, like those of El Cuartelejo and Sierra Blanca, of the same Apache nation, love the Spaniards of New Mexico, either through inclination toward us, or by reason of their enmity toward the Cumanche nation, which makes war upon them, together with the Canceras and Pananas, with whom are allied the French who live among them, in their own pueblos, at a distance of 200 leagues from the villa of Santa Fé, capital of New Mexico. . . . And from the *consulta* which the new governor of that kingdom submits—concerning the coming of three captains from these same Apaches to ask for baptism, to offer obedience, and to submit to the rule of and vassalage to his Majesty, and, in fact, telling of that governor's having passed to their country, which is fifty leagues from Santa Fé, and of that nation's receiving him with great joy because of the spiritual and temporal benefits that would come to them, alike from being Catholics, and because of being protected and defended from their enemies the Cumanches, who, confederated with the nations mentioned, live in alliance and friendship with the French—it is apparent that conditions are most opportune for the successful founding of the presidio with the missionaries under the conditions provided for by the said *juntas*. Your Excellency, if you approve, can order that it be done thus.

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*Don Tomás Vélez Cachupín's interrogation of three Frenchmen. Santa Fé, April 13, 1749.*

Don Bernardo de Bustamante, who was there . . . in charge of the negotiations held on the 6<sup>th</sup> instant with the Cumanche Indian nation . . . has brought with him three white men who are apparently of the French nation, who were traveling with the said Cumanches to the pueblo of taos . . . and in as much as it is advisable to ascertain what were their motives for joining the Cumanche nation, and quitting their domains for these, I had to order, and did order that an interrogatory should be prepared. . . .

To the 8<sup>th</sup> question [what Indian nations they have encountered, and whether they are numerous] he said that they encountered only the Panipiquet nation—there being two Rancherías about 300

Indians, all warriors—and the Cumanche nation; that they are about 150 leagues apart; that is has been two years since they made peace; that they found several Cumanche Rancherías; that the first one had eighty-four tents, containing 800 persons, the second Ranchería forty tents, and the third twenty-three, with a proportionate number of persons. ...

[Another of the Frenchmen] said that in his colony they do not know the Cumanche nation (then the Cumanches have never belonged to the French, and consequently their lands ought to be reckoned among those belonging to Spain, at least those that may lie north of 41° of latitude and beyond 85° of longitude); and that the fact that this nation did not harm his party was due to their fear of the Panipiquetes.

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*Felipe De Sandoval's account of the French and Comanches. Santa Fé, March 1, 1750*

I, Felipe de Sandoval, a native of the port of Santa María, certify in due form that in the past year 1742 I left the Bay of Cádiz for America in a vessel of the Guipúzcoa. ... The French have a detachment of ten soldiers, a sergeant, and a lieutenant at a place which they call Los Sarcos (that is, Arcansas), ten leagues from the Río Napestle ... I stayed longer in this said place of Los Sarcos, engaging in hunting in order to subsist. I was well received and treated by all the French during the period of five years in which I lived in the places mentioned in that colony. ...

From what I have seen the Frenchmen, Jumanes, and Cumanches have become very friendly. Having remained five days engaged in trading muskets, hatchets, glass beads, powder, balls, buffalo hides, horses, mares, and slaves, the Jumanes returned. ... Three days later I went out with a Cumanche to hunt. ... He was describing to me a guard room and the sentry of the arms and was giving me to understand that he had seen this very far away, toward the north, and that the man who marched with the musket was white, like me, large, and with a very long beard. From the direction that he indicated, I believed that these would be the English. After hunting, we returned to the Ranchería.

The Cumanches came to this Ranchería from several others which I did not see, and went from it to the others. According to what I gathered, and from what they gave me to understand, there were many Rancherías in different places, which, according to the seasons, are moved from time to time in search of pasturage, wood, water, and buffaloes. Throughout the region which I traveled with them, which was extensive, the land was all good, level, and had rivers and water holes. There were hills but no high mountains, and the buffalo were plentiful.

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*Tomás Vélez Cachupín's second report of the interrogation of the three Frenchmen. Santa Fé, March 8, 1750.*

I am persuaded that French policy, with the idea of enlarging and extending their colony, has influenced the desire of the Jumanes Panipiques to make peace with the Cumanches, their recent enemies, thereby enabling the French to advance by way of the Río de Napestle and approach New Mexico. With the consent of the Cumanches, who would further any plans that the French might have in the future, the French can send troops as far as the environs of the pueblo of Taos without the knowledge of this government. ...

The Río Colorado also rises in this same mountain range, a few leagues from Taos, and the two rivers flow into the Mississippi [together]. These two rivers, and the alliance between the Jumanes and the Cumanches, will facilitate the founding of French settlements and establishments nearer this kingdom [than at present]. The forces of this presidio under the command of Don Bernardo Bustamante y Tagle, in pursuit of Cumanches, have already arrived in the neighborhood of the Jumanes, following the banks of the Río de Napestle. By means of this expedition, quite adequate information was acquired concerning those lands, which are very delightful and pleasant in summer, and are stocked with innumerable buffaloes which Divine Providence created for the subsistence of the barbarians and the avarice of the Frenchmen. ...

You will conceive from [the sworn statement of a Spaniard] the trade that the French are developing with the Cumanches by means of the Jumanes, which in time will result in most serious injury to this province. Although the Cumanche nation carries on a like trade with us, coming to the pueblo of Taos, where they hold their fairs and trade in furs and in Indian slaves whom they take from various nations in their wars, and in horses, mares, mules, knives, large knives [*belduques*], and other trifles, always, whenever the occasion offers for stealing horses or attacking the pueblos of Pecos and Galisteo, they do not fail to take advantage of it. During the five-year term of my predecessor, Don Joaquín Codallos, as many as 150 of the Pecos perished at their hands. They have such a grudge against these pueblos that I find it necessary to garrison them with thirty presidials and to keep spies out, so that, seeing them in time, they can notify me and I can go out to meet them. For after they make their attack it is difficult to overtake them, because they cover a great deal of ground, stopping neither by day nor by night, until they have put behind them a hundred or more leagues and reach the place where they left their Rancheria and women. They flee in scattered groups, so that no one can follow their trail. They leave spies behind in the mountains or hills to observe whether they are being followed. These engagements are a shambles for horses, for they incapacitate them for further use, and most of the time the Indians escape both unpunished and unencountered. I have surrounded the said pueblos of Pecos and Galisteo with entrenchments, with towers at the gates, capable of defending them against these enemies, since the presidio cannot always keep the garrison there, because it has many places to take care of.

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Don Juan Rodriguez de Albuerne's interrogation of four Frenchmen. City of Mexico, June 26, 1751.

There being present in the royal prison of the court, in the apartment called Sala de Confesiones, Señor Don Juan Rodriguez de Albuerne, Marquis of Altimara, ... for the purpose of taking the declarations of the four Frenchmen who are held in this prison, through Don José de Cuenca, as interpreter, appointed by the said señor. ... Asked whether he went to New Mexico in the year 1740, [and] what nations they encountered, [he said that] [o]n that occasion he did not go by Natchitoches or Caudadachos, but farther north, through an entirely level country, watered by many rivers and arroyos. They encountered no nation of barbarian Indians except the Cumanches. One of the declarant's companions, who had lived with said Cumanches, told him that said nation had fifty or sixty villages, but that they lived scattered about, caring for the many horses that they get from New Mexico. The country has excellent pasturage, is level, and very fertile, having many deer, buffaloes, and prairie chickens. All Spain and France would not suffice to populate this vast country which the said Cumanches occupy. All the land is of a very desirable quality. They were about forty days from Misuri before encountering any Indian nation, until they found the Cumanches. These Indians are much nearer New Mexico, with whose citizens they hold their fairs and barter at the pueblo of Taos.