INTRODUCTION

For some historians, the fascination with Hispanic culture in New Mexico begins with the simple, demographic proposition that these communities constitute a unique cultural group, formed from centuries of isolation on Spain’s northern frontier (Nostrand 1970, 1975, 1980). Richard Nostrand based his interpretation of Hispanic exceptionalism on cultural traits and demographic data, identifying in the process a geographic culture area he called the “Hispanic Homeland,” a concept that drew immediate criticism from borderlands scholars. Appropriately called the Hispano-Homeland debate, scholarly discourse focused on the twin issues of ethnicity and frontier isolation in the
cultural emergence of New Mexican Spanish-speaking populations (Frank 1996; Rodriguez 1986). For Nostrand’s detractors, the Hispano Homeland was a fabrication; a myth of Spanish purity spun from the threads of American ethnoclass interests (Blaut and Ríos-Bustamante 1984; Hansen 1981). For his supporters, the unique demographic and historical trajectories of New Mexican populations and the benefits of the Homeland thesis for comparative and analytical research were significant (Hall 1984; Meinig 1984; Simmons et al. 1984). The debate ultimately reached an impasse, leaving a new generation of scholars to reframe it altogether. Following the prevailing interactionist view of ethnicity at the time, Sylvia Rodriguez (1986) argued that the Hispano-Chicano identity of New Mexico was produced, not through isolation, but through its many entanglements with outsiders past and present. Ross Frank presented a combined historical and economic perspective, locating the genesis of the distinctive vernacular expression of Vecinos and Vecino culture under the colonial, socioeconomic policies of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain (Frank 1996). John Van Ness (1987b) argued that the rural agropastoral village tradition contributed decisively to the evolving contemporary Hispano identity of the region.¹

“Homeland” evokes a political concept of shared mother country, native land, land of birth, and, by implication, a certain priority of place or possession. “Ethnogenesis” refers to the appearance of new ethnic groups (or group identities), based on a recognizable, coherent system of shared beliefs, practices, and material systems, in an area where they did not exist before. Both concepts are cited in discussions of Vecino origins in the northern Rio Grande region, but they mostly refer to shifting states defined by new frontier boundaries and political borders or configurations of material culture and social practice. While the value of these ideas should not be downplayed, they may not prove entirely satisfactory for archaeologists who seek to understand social change as a process.

“Aquí me quedo”—“here I stay” or “here I remain”—is a phrase heard throughout Latin America (and frequently seen on restaurant marquees and hotel billboards) that offers a different perspective. Immortalized as a Chilean protest anthem in the 1970s, the phrase evokes a sense of belonging and a defiant attachment to place.² As a construct or metaphor of the Hispano Homeland in New Mexico, it speaks to the transformation of the Spanish colonial population into an endemic one, a decolonization, but only after its initial expulsion during the Revolt of 1680 and the subsequent Reconquest in 1692. In the eighteenth century, the reconstituted Spanish colony encompassing the northern Rio Grande above Santa Fe was reestablished on a slate that for the most part had been wiped clean by the Pueblo Revolt. A new administration moved quickly to consolidate its frontiers, to establish and protect new settlements from warring Plains
nomads, and to make the colonies economically viable. It took nearly a century to achieve. However, with independence looming, an era of postcolonial decolonization was about to begin.

“Aquí me quedo” is a sentiment that contemporary Hispano New Mexicans can relate to, as the descendants of Spanish colonists and Native and genízaro ancestors. For the purposes of the following discussion, the phrase also serves to contextualize an archaeological consideration of the origin of New Mexican Vecino society, specifically in the northern Rio Grande, in ways that help to elucidate and explain the transformation of this late colonial society into an endemic community decades before Mexican independence in 1821.

**WHO WERE THE VECINOS?**

Prior to reconquest, the term vecino referred to a person’s racial status in the institutionalized Spanish *regimen de castas*, a system well suited to perpetuating the separation of colonizer and colonized or conqueror and conquered. However, after the 1790s, being vecino conferred civic status under Spanish law regardless of racial background or heritage (Jenks 2011, and chapter 8 in this volume). One simply had to own land, which was a significant issue in establishing an individual’s *calidad*, or status in legal proceedings (such as marriage declarations and property exchange). The qualities of being a Spanish citizen no longer served as the legal means of racial *segregation* for the purposes of regulating marriage (miscegenation) and position relative to the Spanish Crown. Instead, it became an instrument of social *integration* within communities of vecinos, and a framework for emergent, corporate landholding that promoted endogamous unions among property owners of mixed heritage (Eiselt and Darling 2014).

The sharp rise in the vecino population beginning in the late eighteenth century was an obvious measure of the prosperity wrought by the Bourbon reforms. However, few archaeological treatments have focused on the materials and settlement changes that must have accompanied the transformation of late Spanish colonial society into the Hispano social formation known as Vecino (but see Jenks, chapter 8 in this volume). This chapter describes the emergence of the Vecino cultural pattern from the 1730s to the 1830s using archaeological and ethnohistoric materials from the Rio del Oso Valley above Española (Figure 7.1). The Rio del Oso grant was settled by the first generation of reconquest *españoles* in 1734 and again in the 1810s by some of their ethnically mixed descendants. Archaeological components are distinctive and mark the shift from a late colonial (postreconquest) settlement pattern to Vecino as it appears in the northern Rio Grande. This analysis suggests that shifting relations between vecino families through marriage and filial ties with property—not status or race—conditioned endogamous unions among Vecinos in the settlement of new lands and ultimately contributed to the decolonization of the region.
Ross Frank (2000) and others (Bustamante 1982; González 1969; Swadesh 1974) relate the economic ascendency of Hispano villages in Spanish Colonial New Mexico to an emergent self-identity that increasingly differentiated vecino “citizens” from their Indian neighbors. Economic advancement was stimulated even further with the establishment of the Bourbon monarchy in Spain during the early 1700s, whose economic reforms rippled throughout the Spanish colonies. In New Mexico, the Bourbon reforms helped to secure the province from warring Plains tribes and provided a market structure that could circulate wealth and capital throughout the colonies while generating taxes owed to the Spanish Crown (Frank 2000). Some of this wealth went directly into Vecino households, but it also provided many opportunities for New Mexican settlers and local heads of household to become legally recognized as Vecino. In addition...
to receiving land and money for military service, Vecino families provided livestock, meat, agricultural produce, salt, tobacco, and textiles for distribution to pacified tribes. Government purchases greatly stimulated the growth of vibrant cottage industries in weaving, carpentry, and blacksmithing that by the 1790s quickly became hallmarks of a distinctive Vecino material culture and lifeway (Dickey 1949; Frank 2000).

But the reforms did more than that. They laid the foundations for a demographic rise that was unparalleled in the American Southwest. A close examination of the years prior to the nineteenth century reveals the dynamic cycles of growth and decline leading up to this steady and rapid rise in population, and calculated growth rates put these apparent fluctuations into perspective (Figure 7.2). The New Mexico settlements experienced the greatest rate of population growth in the 1750s, rising to 7 percent. This type of growth far exceeds the biological capacities of settled agricultural communities (Chamberlain 2006), but can be attributed to a colonial pattern in which cycles of growth and decline are tied to enslavement (as a means for augmenting population), raiding, and disease. Oscillating demographic rise and decline reached a low point in the 1760s, when the colonial population actually fell by 2.6 percent, only to recover at a paltry 0.2 percent during the following decade.

After the 1790s, this trend reversed. The annual population growth rate stabilized and began to rise steadily between 2.3 and 1.8 percent per annum over the next 100 years. Unlike the marked fluctuations that characterized most of the eighteenth century, the post-1790s growth rate is consistent with natural population growth in stable agricultural communities (Chamberlain 2006). More important, the 1790 census marks the first time that the settler and casta (ethnically mixed and detribalized) populations turned the demographic corner, rising sharply from 14,416 in 1790 to 56,223 by 1850 (almost tripling in sixty years). This inflection coincides with the initiation of what may be called a Vecino phase of material culture and settlement in the northern Rio Grande (Eiselt and Darling 2014).

**NEW LANDS, NEW LAND GRANTS**

Population change is reflected in the expansion and contraction of Vecino territory through time, a reflection not only of demographics but also geopolitics and raiding. During the first forty years after the reconquest, settlers were distributed in only three villages—Santa Fé, Albuquerque, and Santa Cruz de la Cañada—with individual estancias and ranches lining the low-lying farmlands of the Rio Grande. The sharp rise in annual population growth in the 1740s necessitated the first wave of settlement expansion. Overcrowding and poverty among the colony’s freed and enslaved population compelled Spanish authorities to establish eleven new community grants from 1740 to 1765, providing land ownership and
access to legal vecino status and social mobility to hundreds of genízaros. The ancestral make-up of these villages and grants was highly diverse, demonstrating the polyethnic roots of Vecino society (Brooks 2002).

The sharp drop in the population during the 1760s and 1770s at the hands of Comanche and Athapaskan raiders forced the abandonment of many of these settlements and a corresponding decline in land ownership over the same period. Some villages, such as San José de las Huertas and San Miguel de Carnué, were never reoccupied. In other cases—as in Abiquiú, Ranchos de Taos, and Las Trampas—settlers sought temporary protection in the larger villas or nearby

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Interval</th>
<th>Beginning Population</th>
<th>Ending Population</th>
<th>Interval in Yrs.</th>
<th>Growth Rate %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1700-1747</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>4791</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747-1749</td>
<td>4791</td>
<td>5278</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1749-1750</td>
<td>5278</td>
<td>5365</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1750-1760</td>
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<td>11194</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1760-1766</td>
<td>11194</td>
<td>9580</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1776-1790</td>
<td>9742</td>
<td>14416</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1850</td>
<td>11416</td>
<td>56223</td>
<td>60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1855</td>
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<td>61547</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855-1900</td>
<td>61547</td>
<td>139550</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 7.2.** Changes in population growth rate from 1700 to 1900 using the formula for exponential population growth: \( P(t) = P_o e^{rt} \); where \( P(t) \) = the amount of population at time \( t \), \( P_o \) = initial amount of population at time \( t = 0 \), \( r \) = growth rate, and \( t \) = time.
Pueblos. Land ownership expanded again on a grand scale following the execution of Spanish treaties with the Comanche, Jicarilla, Navajo, and Ute tribes in the late 1780s, leading to the establishment of the highly integrated multi-community settlement pattern described by John Van Ness (1991) and others (Kutsche and Van Ness 1981; Quintana 1991; Snow 1979; Weber 1979). Land requests show a comparable pattern over the same period (Snow 1979). Roughly 20 to 25 requests were made every decade from 1699 to about 1775, followed by less than 10 requests per decade from 1775 to 1819, indicative of early eighteenth-century attempts by colonial residents to subjugate and occupy new territory but with little success due to raiding and disease. In contrast, the Mexican territorial period (1821 to 1849) witnessed a dramatic increase, including fifty applications for lands in unoccupied locations during the 1820s alone. Nostrand (1970, 1975, 1980) mapped the Vecino homeland in the northern Rio Grande using census data from the 1850s and 1900s, demonstrating the dramatic expansion of villages and corporate land holdings to the north, south, east, and west from a central core area of population (Figure 7.3). Kenneth Weber (1979) also identifies a “splinter-diffusion” or “hiving off” pattern of internal colonization as new lands became available for settlement.

**VECINO SETTLEMENT PATTERN**

The settlement pattern and cultural ecology of land grants demonstrate the transformation from the late colonial (settler) to Vecino period. Prior to the 1790s, private (noncommunity) grants were awarded almost exclusively for the purposes of grazing livestock. These were large, 10,000 to 30,000 acre parcels, comparable in size and purpose to the peonías, or foot soldier grants, given to settlers or colonists to occupy new lands. Such large allotments were generally made when intensive development of a region was not possible due to low population densities and tribal raiding. Historical documents indicate that many of these mercedes were not occupied on a permanent basis, even though they might contain log cabins and corrals built by the settlers or their servants (Van Ness 1987a:162). The owners of the grant or their representatives used the land through transhumant grazing practices to fulfill the minimal requirements of legal ownership. An important consideration in awarding a grant was the ability of the petitioners to occupy and hold frontier lands against hostile tribes (Van Ness 1987a:166). To accomplish this, they had to have access to resources and personnel. Consequently, most grants were awarded to the leading citizens of the region, many of whom were the settlers of the reconquest or their children. Tenure rights were vested in kindred families that were usually (but not always) represented by male heads in whose name the grant was made. The extended family units of the grant (including the servants) constituted the basic corporate, social, and economic units for livelihood and inheritance (Van Ness 1987a:166–67).
Fifty or sixty years after the reconquest, colonial populations fell back into more defensible communities, and large areas of land and certain land grants appropriated on the return of the Spanish were abandoned. Populations declined dramatically, and, teetering on the brink of survival, they concentrated in a few remaining fortified settlements. This trend reversed itself in the later part of the eighteenth century. Populations rebounded, year-round settlements appeared
along tributary streams, and land grant cooperatives adopted mixed economies that relied on stock raising, farming, and trade (Van Ness 1991).

The rancho was the most prevalent settlement pattern at this time. In its general usage, the term rancho implies a small rural property managed by individual families or groups of coresident families for the purpose of subsistence-level farming or ranching, but in its more specific usage refers to the area of settlement within the grant rather than the entire grant. Rancho households within grants typically consisted of the members of an extended kin network who resided in clustered structures, located within or among individual farm lots (called lineas). Household facilities and buildings included mud-and-thatch (jacal) structures and adobe houses. Dried foods were stored in ceramic vessels, adobe bins, or wooden bins that were placed in a dispensa, or storage shed, attached to the main residence. Grain, farm implements, and fodder were stored in a fuerte, or thick-walled stone structure (Wozniak et al. 1992:153). Other storage facilities included subterranean soterranos and raised platforms (tapeistes).

Together these closely spaced domestic structures comprised an extended family household compound.

The typical land grant of the later period delineated an area in which the residents selected parcels of irrigable land (the lineas, or long lots) that were privately owned and could be sold after a period of occupation (Westphall 1983). The occupants managed a shared ditch system and were required to act as stewards of the watershed commons (Crawford 1988; Rivera 1998; Swadesh 1974:32). The commonwealth or shared portions of the grant, typically situated above the acequias and cultivated bottomland, were communally owned and managed for hunting, herding, and wild plant and timber harvesting. The acequia and long-lot agricultural complex promoted and protected regional biodiversity by creating a patchwork of habitats linked by crosscutting irrigation corridors (Peña 1999). Farming in this context did not end at the edge of the field. Rather, the farm was part of an ecological system that was embedded in a larger nexus of cultural and biological interactions that promoted regional biodiversity (Eiselt 2013).

THE DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE RIO DEL OSO GRANT

Archaeological demography provides some of the best evidence for the emergence of an endemic growth pattern in Vecino populations. Our example comes from the Rio del Oso Valley above Española (see Figure 7.1). Spanish settlers first occupied the valley soon after the Spanish reconquest. Juan Manuel de Herrera, and Rosalía Valdez (with her two sons Juan Valdez and Ignacio Valdez), and several other petitioners were granted a tract of land encompassing approximately 10,000 acres in 1734. Soon after, Roque Jacinto Jaramillo also joined the grant. Herrera was Jaramillo’s contemporary and father-in-law; Jaramillo married...
Herrera’s second daughter, Juana. These individuals were the children of the reconquest, inhabitants of Santa Cruz de la Cañada who had come with their parents from Mexico City, Zacatecas, and the El Paso exile colony to resettle New Mexico. Vargas recruited Jaramillo’s father, a brick mason, in 1693 from the largely Spanish artisan class in Mexico City (Kessell et al. 1998:223). Roque was around eleven years old at the time of the trip (Kessell et al. 1998:247). Rosalía’s father, José Ruiz, was born in Oviedo, Spain. Accompanied by his wife and two children, he traveled with the original colonists in 1696 and became the Sargento Mayor (Sargent Major) at Santa Cruz where Rosalía was born around 1700, but he was later killed at the Zuni Mission while singing a hymn in the church after mass. Juan Manuel de Herrera’s mother and stepfather, likewise, lost both of their spouses in the Pueblo Revolt, but joined their families in marriage, after retreating to the El Paso exile colony (Kessell et al. 1998:1144; 1995:43).

The settlement of El Paraje Rio Oso, as it was then known, was small in its early stages. The 1744 census by Fray Miguel de Menchero indicates that together the Rancho de Chama and Rio del Oso settlements maintained only eleven to seventeen families (Hackett 1937:399; Jones 1979:123), not enough to ward off a devastating attack by the Utes that occurred in 1736. Nearly all of the settlers abandoned their ranches, but Jaramillo and Herrera stayed, reaffirming their interest in the grant in 1746, and possibly moving their headquarters downstream. Further depredations by the Comanche and Utes in 1747 prompted most of the early settlers of the Abiquiú area to flee once again. Nevertheless, Jaramillo persisted, purchasing shares from the others who abandoned the grant citing the lack of sufficient water and farmland. Shortfalls in water and real estate may only be partly true. Jaramillo used the Rio del Oso as pasturage for his cattle, and his children built structures and were farming in the valley in 1762; but, their presence also was short lived. Jaramillo lost his claim to the grant soon thereafter, having become entangled in an unrelated dispute over the adjoining Vallecitos grant. The Rio del Oso grant reverted to public domain in 1763 and was held in trust by Juan José Lobato, alcalde mayor (municipal magistrate) of Santa Cruz de la Cañada, for the next fifty years.8

On October 5, 1810, José Antonio Valdez along with ten other heads of household requested a new grant in the valley.9 Some thirty years later this grant was reaffirmed by the alcalde of Santa Cruz de la Cañada in 1840. José Ramón Vijil (justice of the peace for the district of Santa Clara) surveyed the area in August to put the settlers in possession of the land. Vijil’s 1840 report provides the only existing description of the Rio del Oso grant and its inhabitants during the nineteenth century.10 By the 1870s, the settlement had acquired a name. An 1877 map drafted by G. M. Wheeler of the US Army Corps of Engineers shows the village of San Lorenzo and related houses midway up the valley (Wheeler 1877).
GENEALOGY OF THE RIO DEL OSO GRANT

The US Court of Private Land Claims extinguished the title to the Rio del Oso grant in 1893 (Swadesh 1974:212), effectively ending the historic occupation, but leaving us with a number of unanswered questions. Were any of the later grant occupants related to the first settlers? If so, then how did kinship condition occupancy and ownership of the Rio del Oso lands? Are phases of occupation (the first of which is clearly derived from the reconquest) reflected in the archaeological record of the valley and, if so, how did they change through time? Using land grant documents and baptism, marriage, and death records, we reconstructed the genealogy of the grant and traced the family histories of eight out of eleven of the nineteenth-century petitioners.

Figure 7.4 renders the grant genealogy in simplified terms beginning with the first settlers of the de Vargas reconquest on the left. These individuals were the parents of the eighteenth-century Rio del Oso grant residents or owners. José Antonio Valdez, the main petitioner on the 1840s grant, was the third son of Juan Bautista Valdez (Van Ness 1980:11). The parents of Juan Bautista are currently unknown, but he appears to have grown up in the Rosalía Valdez household, after she left the Rio del Oso and took up residence at the Plaza Colorada near Abiquiú. Juan Bautista founded the community of Cañones to the west of the Rio del Oso grant in 1807. Jose Antonio’s sister, Antonia Rosa Valdez, in turn married José María Ortega. He and his brother San Juan (both petitioners on the grant) were born in Chili to the east, at the mouth of the Rio del Oso. The parents of the Ortega’s maternal grandmother are currently unknown. Cristóbal and Juan Pedro Herrera were brothers as well and were related to Juan Manuel Herrera, Roque Jaramillo’s partner and son-in-law. Juan Manuel was Cristobal and Juan Pedro’s great-uncle on their father’s side. The great-grandfather of Juan Cristobal and Polito Lobato, also brothers, was Juan José Lobato, the alcalde mayor who exterminated the Herrera-Jaramillo holding in 1763. Their mother also is currently unknown.

The grant genealogy is revealing with respect to marriage patterns and land acquisition. First, the Rio del Oso grant was resettled in 1810 by sets of siblings, either brothers or brothers and sisters, who could claim lineal descent from one of the original landowners (Herrera, Jaramillo, or Valdez). The sisters drew spouses from families that were unrelated to the original three lines (the Vijils and Ortegas), but the lands where they grew up bordered or were in close proximity to the Rio del Oso grant. The Ortegas could claim ties to the adjoining Mestas grant to the east (which encompassed the neighboring settlements of Chili and La Cuchilla at the mouth of the Rio del Oso), and the Valdez family occupied the Cañones region to the west. These ties would have facilitated innumerable resources and cooperation across the boundaries of the grant for social events, trade, and herd management.
What remains to be fully deciphered, however, is the occupational hiatus of the Rio del Oso Valley between 1760 and 1810, effectively skipping the second generation after the reconquest from the terminal late colonial through the Bourbon reform period. The presumed grandchildren or great-grandchildren (third and fourth generations) of the original reconquest settlers reestablished the Rio del Oso Valley settlement by the early 1800s. This reoccupation is consistent with the population boom that marks the appearance of Vecino settlements throughout the northern Rio Grande. However, little is known of the parents and grandparents of these sibling sets that reoccupied the Rio del Oso during the Vecino period.

One possible explanation lies in the high frequency of captives and Indian adoptions in the reconquest households of the 1740s, especially on rural land grants, where the availability of labor was key to survival. The gaps in the Rio del Oso lineages may suggest the incorporation of unidentified Indian children and/or children of mixed heritage into Spanish households. Nevertheless, the anonymity of these individuals, particularly by comparison with the record of

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**FIGURE 7.4.** Rio del Oso grant genealogy. Rounded rectangles represent the males, and the ovals represent the females in lines of descent. Marriage is indicated by overlap in polygons of different shapes, and siblings are marked in the nodes of branches labeled “Sib.” Shaded polygons indicate the residents or owners of the Rio del Oso grant during the late colonial and Vecino periods. The demographic rise of Vecino populations are graphed relative to the genealogy of the grant.
the preceding generation of reconquest españoles and subsequent generations of Vecinos, seems particularly telling.

Indian or mixed-blood adoptions could undermine subsequent claims to lands or grants based solely on direct lineal descent. However, complementary or advantageous marriages among siblings during the expansion of the Vecino homeland also could bolster land claims and serve to consolidate corporate landholdings and kinship alliances that crosscut grant (and family) boundaries. Such alliances provided a clear mechanism for the hiving-off process or pattern of splinter-diffusion described by Weber (1979:81) by which daughter villages were created from mother villages, thereby expanding Vecino occupation into neighboring grants in outlying areas. This is easily recognizable in the archaeological evidence produced by a full coverage survey conducted in the Rio del Oso, as follows.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE RIO DEL OSO GRANT

Archaeological research on ranchos involves a survey of the entire grant so that contemporary features can be identified and settlement patterns and household organization can be reconstructed (Church 2002; Galindo 2004:195). Survey coverage of the Rio del Oso meets these requirements. The combined efforts of multiple researchers have documented nearly the entire Rio del Oso grant and the lower reaches of the Rio del Oso Valley watershed (Anschuetz 1993, 1995; Gadd 1988, 1989a, 1989b; Jeançon 1911, 1912; Vierra 1980). Research also has identified a large Jicarilla Apache presence in the valley dating to the mid-1800s (Eiselt 2012).

Two occupations define the Spanish and subsequent Vecino record. The early component pertains to the Jaramillo-Herrera grant and consists of three household complexes surrounded by hundreds of meters of rock walls on the south side of the drainage. Two of the household complexes are located at the village of Pesede’uinge (a Classic Period Pueblo site), and the third is positioned upstream in an area used previously for late prehistoric farming. Settlers built the extensive network of walled terraces from rock scavenged from Puebloan structures and features. This includes prehistoric grinding stones, grinding slicks, and cupule boulders. The walls are substantial, one meter in width at the base by fifty centimeters in height in many places, and are constructed of large boulders that would have required draft animal transport. Most of the walled areas are located on the second and third terraces above the valley floor, in areas that would have required rainwater farming to be productive, further supporting the contention that they likely served as enclosed pastures. The total area includes nearly seventy acres of walled terraces.

The household complexes of this early period of historic occupation are simple, consisting of a single linear room block associated with an horno (earthen
oven) and *torreón* (guard tower), a plan that is repeated at all three sites. Figure 7.5 (top) illustrates the typical roomblock arrangement. Prehistoric groundstone and cobble clusters or scatters also are common in the vicinity of structures, but artifacts are rare. Occasional historic plain or micaceous sherds are all that remains. Horno foundations are rounded to subrounded in outline and are approximately one to two meters in diameter and two to three cobble courses in height. The stonework for the structural foundations is, however, distinctive, being made with carefully laid masonry composed of locally acquired angular rock with well-dressed (flat) interior and exterior facing. While no rubble core is evident between the parallel rows, the presence of possible adobe melt toward interiors of structures suggest that the walls built above the foundation were composed of either adobe brick or jacal, consisting of small posts and thatch covered with an adobe plaster. The quality of the masonry is distinctive for the late colonial period and is clearly distinguishable from the later Vecino structures that feature loosely laid stone foundations with aboveground, post-and-adobe construction. The lack of structural mounds suggests that building materials were removed and reutilized after abandonment. Structures range in size from 7 to 10 meters in length by 4 to 5 meters in width and show evidence of an interior wall that divides the building into two rooms. Their locations on the edges of valley terraces overlooking the Rio del Oso provide for easy access to live water sources below, adjacent flat-top mesas, and vistas up and down the valley.

The proximity of these late colonial occupations to late Pueblo (possibly revolt period) settlements also suggests that their placement was strategic. This includes not only the symbolic reoccupation of Puebloan settlements but also the availability of ready-made construction materials and preexisting structures that could be reused by the Spanish settlers. This pattern of occupation and reuse has been documented elsewhere in the northern Rio Grande (Snow 1976) and can include the modification of existing prehistoric structural mounds for animal pens, habitation, cultivation or grazing.

*Torreones* also may have been refurbished from Puebloan structures, kivas, or circular stone shrines. The largest of these at Pesede’uinge measures seven meters in diameter at the base. Jeançon (1912:29–30) noted the lack of apparent kivas at Pesede’uinge, and argued that the *torreón* seemed to be built up from the foundation of a kiva with cobbles held in place by adobe cement. The structure stood approximately two meters high in 1912 and still contained several vigas in the roof.

The nineteenth-century occupation of the valley is very different. This occupation consists of one large, multidwelling settlement, identified as San Lorenzo on historic maps, and three additional household complexes located at some distance including structures, livestock pens, and early-component rock-lined fields. San Lorenzo household complexes display a “classic” nineteenth-century
The concentrated accumulation of artifacts at the site in middens associated with structures suggests permanent, year-round occupation. Structures are smaller and less substantial jacales with expedient stone foundations. Unlike the earlier occupation, sites are located on both sides of
the drainage in areas relatively devoid of prehistoric Pueblo architecture (none of the nineteenth-century occupations are situated on top of Pesede’uinge or prehistoric habitation sites).

The later occupants also made greater use of the valley as evidenced by isolated sheep herder structures, wagon roads, trails, and Hispanic rock art downstream. Torreones and hornos are not part of this record, and sites are not situated on strategic overlooks. Moreover, artifacts show the integration of Native American material culture into men’s and women’s activities. This includes evidence for small amounts of plain (grayware) and micaceous ceramic production;\(^{12}\) the use of expedient stone tools for cutting and as gun-flints; the utilization of milling equipment scavenged from Puebloan sites; and the production of tinworks including frames, nichos (household alters), and cone tinklers, or ornaments that Jicarilla women used to decorate their clothes. Additional evidence for regular trade with Indian people includes Tewa plain-ware and decorated ceramics, Jicarilla micaceous cookware, and metal arrow points also obtained from the Jicarilla.

Unlike the earlier residents, whose settlements were positioned to defend against Ute and Comanche attacks, the residents of San Lorenzo carried on a brisk trade in metals and ceramics with the Sattinde band of the Ollero, a subdivision of the Jicarilla Apache, who also occupied the valley starting in the mid-1800s (Eiselt 2012; Eiselt and Darling 2012). Jicarilla encampments are located on the north side of the valley and overlap the boundaries of the grant. These settlements represent several extended families of around forty to fifty people. The Gojia, an annual Jicarilla gathering and foot race, was celebrated at the mouth of the Rio del Oso prior to the fall hunt in the Jemez Mountains, which brought additional families and neighboring Tewa people from Ohkay Owingeh to trade (Eiselt 2012).

**LATE SPANISH COLONIAL AND VEÑINO SETTLEMENT PATTERN IN THE RIO DEL OSO VALLEY**

In summary, the settlement pattern of the early and late occupational components of the valley reveal a marked archaeological contrast (Table 7.1). Created by the children of españoles from Mexico City, Zacatecas, and the El Paso exile colony, the late Spanish colonial occupation exhibits a settlement pattern that is quasi-military or defensive in nature, situated on top of Pueblo archaeological sites, and focused on exploitation of the valley for large-scale livestock management and farming. Settlement was equally strategic and expedient, taking advantage of the readily available building material provided by recently (and perhaps forcefully) abandoned Tewa structures, as well as preexisting field and irrigation systems, which when left fallow would have sustained ample forage for the grazing of livestock.
The early eighteenth-century Spanish colonial occupation was short lived, and the valley remained unoccupied for nearly fifty years due to Ute and Comanche raiding, though use of the Rio del Oso Valley as a pilgrimage route and travel corridor by Tewa and Athapaskan populations likely continued. In the final decades of the eighteenth century, the new Vecino population that emerged reestablished and occupied former Spanish land grants prior to expansion into previously unoccupied areas. The new settlement pattern lacks the defensive posture and is more fully integrated into the surrounding landscape and engaged with Indian neighbors, including the semisettled Saitinde band of the Jicarilla Apache. The later grant emphasized an integrated subsistence-settlement economy with significant Indian input into technology and trade, and unlike the earlier colonial occupation, the Vecino settlement of San Lorenzo was located away from the late prehistoric or early historic Pueblo archaeological sites. While even the settlement of San Lorenzo did not survive, other Vecino settlements persist until the present day and have done so since the initial expansion of Vecino population beginning in the late eighteenth century.

**“AQUÍ ME QUEDO”**

This chapter proposes that the permanent, “Hispanic” occupation of the Rio del Oso Valley and many other areas like it in northern New Mexico was the result of Vecino population growth and settlement expansion beginning approximately 100 years after the Spanish reconquest. This was accompanied by material and sociocultural practices visible in the historical and archaeological records. “Aquí me quedo” provides the metaphor for the transformation of a people who were formerly citizens of Spain into a cohesive, endemic society that was increasingly less dependent on the administrative and religious apparatus embodied by the Spanish Crown. The *penitente*, who assumed responsibility for maintaining the rituals and beliefs of the secularized and disenfranchised...
Catholic Church in colonial New Mexico, offers an obvious example of the decolonization process that signaled a break with Spanish authority decades before Mexican independence. However, this was not the only institution. The system of *mayordomos*, acequia associations, and other religious, political, and even quasi-military organizations also served to establish the Vecino community and to assume local authority.

Genealogical reconstruction speaks to the gradual decolonization of the northern Rio Grande region, in particular the transformation of the Spanish colonial status system from one that intentionally segregated Spanish reconquest settlers from nonlanded *genízaros* and Indians to the more inclusive system in which all individual landholders were considered Vecinos regardless of, or perhaps in spite of, family bloodline.

The temporary abandonment of the Rio del Oso Valley from the 1760s to the early 1800s by Spanish settlers is an especially critical time in the transformation of colonial society. It may also serve as a prime example of a broader pattern of partial abandonment of lands during Ute and Comanche hostilities, and the concentration of survivors in defensible towns and settlements. This set the stage for the initial breakdown in Spanish institutions including the arcane and untenable *regimen de castas*, after it became necessary to replace lost family members with adopted captives or individuals of mixed ancestry.

The land negotiations that led to the Vecino reoccupation of the Rio del Oso after 1810 also suggest that genealogical reckoning by Vecinos purposely emphasized descent from late Spanish colonial land grant founders, while simultaneously suppressing Native or *genízaro* ancestry. This had little to do with matters of race or denial of certain details of descent. Instead, it was necessary for new marriages to perpetuate the family and consolidate existing landholdings on the basis of ancestral ties to original landholders and grant recipients. Historians recognize this but the implications have not been appreciated sufficiently in archaeological investigations. Current chronologies, for example, still use historical events, such as Mexican independence in 1821 or the American invasion of the 1840s, as benchmarks for culture change. However it is clear that many of the sociocultural transformations indicative of the new Vecino community in the northern Rio Grande precede these events by years or even decades.

**THE HOMELAND REVISITED**

We have characterized the Spanish Colonial to Vecino transition as a “decolonization” with certain implications for population dynamics and the occupation of new lands. Slavery and miscegenation were driving forces in the population dynamics of the late colonial period along with disease and deaths due to raiding. Frontier violence along with customs of marriage and inheritance that
segregated populations limited the stability and longevity of land holdings. This is reflected not only in the abandonment of villages and land grants, but also in the occupations themselves—the locations, structure, and content of archaeological sites that were defensive, quasi-militaristic, and that appropriated the Puebloan landscape.

After 1790, Vecino status shifted from the strictly legal definition that existed nearly 100 years earlier. The demographic collapse of the eighteenth century that followed the Comanche raids and a series of epidemics generally undermined local, colonial systems of class and status that served to distinguish Vecinos from *naturales*. The Bourbon reforms stimulated a significant increase in endogamous marriages among property-owning Vecinos of mixed heritage, which in turn, served to concentrate wealth and property within a new ethnic group. By the early 1800s, Vecinos were marrying within landholding groups in order to extend control over territory and integrate the economies of neighboring grants. Filial ties with property conditioned the emergence and consolidation of an endemic Vecino population with connections to a deeper Indian heritage. When viewed demographically, the need for favorable endogamous unions to consolidate and hold property promoted the process of Vecino decolonization. The archaeological record reflects this process and the material connections to Indian neighbors that resulted.

In short, the Rio del Oso Valley provides a compelling case study, demonstrating an important but overlooked body of data (kinship) and the demographic processes responsible for changes in land tenure and the hiving-off of new settlements. Hispanic settlement of the Rio del Oso includes late Spanish colonial and Vecino occupations that are clearly discernable in the archaeological record, and the genealogy of the grant demonstrates the connections between them.

Richard Nostrand’s Homeland Thesis was a milestone in studies of Southwestern cultures, sparking a debate that still influences borderlands scholars today. Efforts to locate the source and nature of New Mexico’s Spanish-speaking population have identified two axes of interest—cultural interactions and connections to the land—both emphasizing place-based, civic identities that are unique to New Mexican Hispanos. However, it is also understood generally that historical efforts of the Bourbon state to make the colony economically viable also contributed to its transformation.

“Aquí me quedo,” or “here I stay,” is more than a simple reference to a protest song made famous throughout Latin America. It is a metaphor through which Vecino origins in northern New Mexico may be better understood. “Here I stay” appeals to the notion of a people and a homeland that was quickly subsumed by the American invasion following Mexican independence but only after Vecino society emerged as a persistent indigenous community.
1. For editorial consistency we use the term “Hispano” rather than “Hispanic” following Adrian Bustamante 1982; Charles Carrillo 1997; Richard Nostrand 1980, 1992; Rodríguez 1986; Van Ness 1987b, 1991. We acknowledge that the terms “Hispanic” and “Hispano” are not interchangeable but refer the reader to these authors for further nuanced discussion of the differences.

2. Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda, memorialized the phrase in the song, “Aquí Me Quedo,” the music for which was composed by Victor Jara (with Patricio Castillo). It was recorded in 1973 and was released in 1974 on the album Manifiesto following the deaths of Neruda and Jara.

3. Genízaro was a specialized ethnic term used by the Spanish to designate the mixed progeny of Indian captives, who were born free but, having been raised in the Spanish milieu, had lost their tribal identity, customs, and language (Chávez 1979:198).

4. In early eighteenth-century parlance the term vecinos referred to Spanish neighbors as opposed to naturales, who were “uncivilized,” presumably unbaptized, Pueblo Indians. In its most basic form, a Vecino was a tithes-paying settler with an established household and the legal right to marry other settlers. For non-Vecinos, becoming Vecino required a change in legal status that was based on land ownership and economic achievement. Eligibility also was determined by adherence to the Catholic faith and by behaving like fellow colonials. After reconquest, the system became more relaxed. Indian, ethnically mixed, and genízaro individuals could achieve Vecino status through Plains Indian trade and warfare, which brought them the necessary economic success, independent of their position in the local expression of the regimen de castas (Bustamante 1991).

5. See Sunday Eiselt and Andrew Darling (Eiselt and Darling 2014) for additional analysis of this demographic pattern.

6. Land ownership was also facilitated by the 1822 Plan of Iguala, which extended Mexican citizenship to all individuals regardless of their ethnic or economic consequences. The new administration, eager to secure the loyalties of the population under Mexican rule, further undertook a broad program of reaffirming titles to grants during the 1840s.

7. Vincento Jirón and Joseph Gomes were additional associates. Jirón and Ignacio Valdez likely never settled on the grant.

8. Frances Swadesh (1974:212) points out that as the ranking civil servant of this district, Lobato frequently took possession of lands that were forfeited by settlers during Indian raids, and later placed settlers in possession of lands that were claimed in his name. Although it is unclear whether Lobato actually occupied this grant (as required by Spanish law), he did sell portions to neighboring landowners. A certain amount of land speculation therefore clouds the history of the Rio del Oso valley and its relation to the larger Lobato grant that encompassed it.

10. An excerpt: “proceeding to divide them from east to west in the area of the houses to some with a greater number of varas than others so that the width of land is not equal and to each is as follows: Cristoval Herrera 287, José Antonio Valdez 287, Cristoval Lobato 115, Seberino Valerio 115, Miguel Mariano Chavez 115, Jose Ramon Vijil 115 (a short piece given in this intermediate area without owner since it is considered unusable), and follows Jose Maria Ortega 115, San Juan Ortega 230, Francisco Gallego, 115, Juan Pedro Herrera 115, Polito Lobato 230. The uplands of this grant being left without division as far as where one cannot see the source of water for the main acequia [canal], for from there all that is irrigated they divide in equal parts as if they were legitimate heirs of that site, being preferred in distributing without title the said Valdez and the rest who make primary use with these and others that the ditch provides, and who work in maintaining the entire said acequia. They agree unanimously that some of the said donors [shareholders or associates] would do their part for whatever reason, this being the primary title of the aforementioned Valdez. The boundaries of this land being distinguished on the north by the canyon of the Almagre, on the south by the upland adjacent to the river, on the east where the arroyo of the Almagre empties, and on the west the rim of Ute Mesa.” Translation by J. Andrew Darling; for the original Spanish, see Eiselt (2012).

11. The Mestas grant provides an example. Juan de Mestas established the settlement of La Cuchilla at the mouth of the Rio del Oso in the early 1730s (Swadesh 1974:33). In 1808 Manuel Mestas, a famous genízaro who had served the Abiquiú settlers as a Ute interpreter, was a private landowner at La Cuchilla. Several other residents of the same surname were listed at Abiquiú, including Guadalupe Mestas, who was married to José el Apache in the 1780s. Swadesh (1974:43) states that these families may have been relatives of Manuel Mestas, or they all may have acquired the surname through service to the Mestas family of La Cuchilla. Given that 73 percent of the captives during the early to mid-1700s were Apache (Brugge 1985), the likelihood that at least some of the Vecino residents of the lower Chama (including the Rio del Oso) during the nineteenth century had Athapaskan or Ute blood cannot be discounted.

12. See discussions of Vecino micaceous ceramic production in Carrillo (1997) and in Eiselt and Darling (2012).

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