The Zuni Indians' land was their church, their cathedral. A sharp-faced butte was an altar. A lake was their home in the afterlife, a mesa their hope for this life. The boundaries of their land in 1830 had been relatively exact and intact for hundreds of years. Though threatened by the Navajos and Apaches and ruled to some extent, first by the Spaniards and now by the Mexicans, the Zunis had managed to deal with all invaders. Whether by technology, statesmanship, organization, or defensive military prowess, they had been able to overcome every threat to their existence.

Their complex, well-evolved culture was in large part responsible for this success. Theirs was a true economic equality, and a pervasive cultural equality united the people. Their theocracy worked well in the vast, arid, sparsely populated Nueva Mexico landscape.

Zuni traditional society was organized around the clans, controlled by matriarchs in the intertwined community. The clans held use rights to land and rights to most physical property. The Zunis were governed politically by a theocratic Council of Priests. The bow priests were the executive branch that directly interacted with the secular leaders. Beginning in the Spanish period and persisting through the United States territorial era, Zuni priests were referred to as caciques. Civil authorities at Zuni adopted titles from Spanish organization: for instance, governor, lieutenant governor, and teniente. These leaders were the equivalents of the tribal chair or chief in other tribes. The caciques of the pueblo appointed all the secular leaders, including the governor, who was the central
authority on all political matters. Pino’s experience with the Navajos, the Mexicans, and the Spanish priests, plus his knowledge of their languages and politics, made him a natural choice as the new governor about 1830.47

Pino would remain in office for nearly forty-five years. There were several breaks in his tenure, but they were few and very brief. Though the caciques appointed the governor, they were reported to say, “Though it is our place to elect your Governor, it is not for us to say anything that may influence his judgement.”48 In fact, it was considered a very serious breach of policy for a cacique as a religious leader to dirty his hands with secular affairs. Pino had much of the weight of the future of the tribe resting on his shoulders for four-and-a-half decades.

During Pino’s early years as governor, the tribe’s most important occupation was agriculture, as it had been for centuries and would continue to be throughout the nineteenth century. The Zunis practiced a unique form of agriculture in their dry landscape. Utilizing every drop of moisture throughout their expansive area, they implemented floodwater irrigation to nourish their crops. Brush dams were constructed in the washes, where water flowed during the occasional storm, so that silt would deposit behind the dams. By planting in these silted areas, they not only made use of all the available arable land and all the water but at the same time discouraged erosion. (The major gullying in the area began between 1880 and 1910, after territorial pressures caused overgrazing, lumber companies overcut the timber in the Zuni Mountain watershed, and the United States constructed dams that damaged the watersheds.) Crops grew all over the territory of the Zunis, and the people lived in the summers in widely separated villages.

In many ways, this was a rich country. The Zunis were completely self-sufficient and had much produce left over to trade with other tribes and non-Native Americans in the region. “A trade route from Zuni and the Arizona pueblos to the west coast of Mexico was well established by the end of the ninth century.”49 Yet somehow many United States officials persist to this day in their view that the land is “poor” or “worthless.”

The Zunis under Pino were strong when threatened. Defensive action was usually undertaken promptly against those
who attempted to rob the tribe; the Zunis were competent at controlling their land and carrying out the necessary military actions against those who threatened the peace. But above all, this people was religious. Everything was done with the ceremony of a thoughtful, devout people. They were in touch with their environment and their universe and treated all their crops, their game, their land, and their ceremonial heritage with respect. Theirs was not a Sunday religion but one that encompassed their whole lives and way of life. Their peace and friendliness were noted across the continent and even overseas during the nineteenth century. However, neither European governments nor the later U.S. territorial government ran on the same kind of moral principles as did the Zunis. The governor of Zuni (in Zuni, tapupu) had a heavy responsibility. His job was to deal with the interlopers, the thieves, the politicians, and the schemers.50

During the 1830s, in his early years as governor, Pedro Pino helped his people expand their jewelry and blacksmith industries. Goods produced by these industries were traded widely to other tribes in the Southwest.51 This increase in trade helped solidify the tribe’s economic status in the Southwest. The Mexican government was not as strong as the Spanish government had been, and trade helped encourage peace in the area. The Zunis were relying more on their own resources to defend their land, though the Mexican government was probably supplying arms and ammunition.

During the decade of the thirties, Pino not only enhanced the position of his tribe through increased trade but also promoted the Zunis’ position with the New Mexican government. During the closing years of Mexican rule over New Mexico and Pueblo Indian lands, Pino traveled to Santa Fe, where he was well acquainted and visited often with the last Mexican governor of the territory, Manuel Armijo. At the same time, he was enhancing his position in clan and religious orders.52 He was respected among the other pueblos and, because of his facility with the Spanish language, was considered influential among the Mexican authorities in Santa Fe.

Under Mexican rule, Indians became quasi-citizens. They were equal in many ways but still did not have the right to alienate
their lands. As pressure increased on the New Mexican government from the United States during the closing years of Mexico’s domination over the territory, 1841–1846, the territorial government, under Armijo, began to issue more and more land grants. These grants were written for several purposes, a primary one being to encourage the protection of the outer perimeters of New Mexico territory from encroachment by warring Indian tribes and the Americans. It is likely that Pino got some kind of confirmation from the Mexican government for Zuni lands during this period, and, indeed, he later said that he had received a land grant.

Later, after the Americans arrived, the United States made no serious effort to determine Zuni tribal boundaries under Spanish law, but some United States officials did make observations which provided important evidence of Zuni boundaries. George M. Wheeler of the United States Geological Survey described the boundaries as “the following area: Bounded on the north by the dividing ridge between Zuni River and the Puerco, on the east by the summit of the Zuni Mountains, on the south by an east and west line through the Salt Lake, and on the west by the Little Colorado.”

Zuni Governor Pino early recognized the value of documents, though he was unable to read and relied on his memory for the content of the papers. Throughout the years he was governor, he tried to retain all the papers written to him that he believed had a relevance to tribal well-being or recorded tribal business transactions. Though the papers were lost or taken from the pueblo in later years, many of them did survive to form an important source of archival material documenting nearly fifty years of Zuni Pueblo history. Without these papers and Pedro Pino’s testimony in other documents, much knowledge of the history of Zuni throughout the nineteenth century would surely have been lost.

Other forces were at work in the Nuevo Mexico territory during the period. The pro-Americans, who wanted a government that truly separated church and state, were against the issuance of grants and for a “free” system of government. Thus, since many of the pueblos seemed to be pro-American (Zuni was one) but nevertheless needed their lands confirmed under any government, they found themselves in a political vise. Pino was probably in
favor of United States rule but was, on the other hand of course, against the alienation of his people’s lands. This conflict would later cause a minor revolt against the U.S. territorial government at the Taos Pueblo. For Zuni it meant that Pino’s administration was to become much more complex and difficult.

Governor Pino engaged in trading on behalf of the tribe and knew the important New Mexican merchants. One of these merchants, Juan Cristobal Armijo, who was also pro-American in his political leanings, traded with Zuni under Pino’s guidance.\textsuperscript{58} Juan Armijo later loaned the United States territorial legislature ten thousand dollars to meet governmental expenses and was one of the more influential New Mexicans throughout the U. S. territorial period.\textsuperscript{59}

Throughout the Mexican period, the Zunis remained an outpost on Mexico’s frontier, trading their jewelry, blacksmith wares, and blankets with other tribes and protecting their borders against marauders. Although Zuni was relatively secure on the boundaries of Mexico’s frontier, there was little doubt in the New Mexico territory as to the outcome of the U.S. war with Mexico. Though there was fighting in Texas and Mexico, enough of the New Mexican leaders were pro-American that there was little resistance when Brigadier general Stephen Watts Kearny’s Army of the West entered the Southwest in spite of the fact that the Mexican forces in New Mexico far outnumbered Kearny’s troops. The leaders of New Mexico, especially Governor Manuel Armijo, capitulated with barely a battle, following a few brief skirmishes. It was reported that Pino graciously welcomed the conquering American forces when they reached the Zuni Pueblo and was therefore viewed with respect by the American officials.\textsuperscript{60} It is evidence of Pino’s political acumen that he correctly judged the outcome of the Mexican War from his distant vantage point at Zuni.

Kearny had orders to retain as much of the Mexican government as possible to facilitate the takeover of the territory, but he actually only kept the administrators who were pro-American, a very small minority.\textsuperscript{61} Though Pino had known these pro-Americans and dealt with them for years, there is little evidence that they offered any assistance to Zuni under the new American regime.
The archivist for the Armijo administration, Donaciano Vigil, was one of those who stayed on under the United States territorial administration. Vigil certainly knew of the Zunis’ land confirmation and the disposition of all pueblo holdings under Mexican and the previous Spanish administrations, but many documents from the period were lost, destroyed, or secreted away. Perhaps we will never know for certain whose responsibility all of the new problems with Pueblo Indian lands were. There are indications that people closely associated with the new administration were involved in land-grant forgeries and deceits even early on.

Navajo raids had continued unabated and, in fact, with increased ferocity as United States troops occupied the territory. Horses, cattle, and thousands of sheep were being stolen from the Mexicans, Pueblo Indians, and other citizens. Shepherds were killed; women and children were kidnaped. To be sure, the Navajos felt some casualties themselves, some of them unprovoked. These drove the raiders to further lengths in their depredations. The people of the outlying pueblo of Zuni had to keep a constant vigil to prevent attacks from Navajos and renegade Mexican Americans alike. When travel was necessary, which was daily, it was done in groups.

By October 5, 1846, the situation was deemed serious enough that Kearny authorized the inhabitants of New Mexico, both Mexican American and Pueblo Indian, to form independent war parties against the Navajos. The next day Colonel Alexander W. Doniphan was authorized to make an excursion into Navajo country and attempt to negotiate a peace treaty with the tribe. During the next five years, four treaties and agreements were signed at Zuni by Governor Pino in an attempt to make peace with the Navajos, but each in turn was broken by the Navajos, usually within a matter of months or even days.

Preliminary to Doniphan’s journey into Navajo country, on October 20, Captain John W. Reid left with thirty men to make a reconnaissance of the area west of the Chuska Mountains. As Reid camped on the east side of the Zuni Mountains after talking to some Navajo leaders, a Zuni approached to meet with the officers. The Zuni reported that he had been sent to represent his people, so in all likelihood he was Pedro Pino. A member of Reid’s
expedition reported that the Zuni had come “to invite us to come and see their women and children: he told us that on his side of the mountain [Zuni Mountains] they were very honest; that three of his children had been taken prisoners by Mexicans and much stock stolen, but if he could obtain his children, he would be satisfied; and they had never yet made war against the Mexicans, and never should. Captain Reid advised him to go to Santa Fe and see the governor.”

After concluding a treaty with the Navajos, Doniphan’s main command moved on to Zuni, where he hoped to settle upon a peace plan between the two tribes. Doniphan took three Navajo leaders (Zarcillos Largos and Narbona were probably two of them) along with his contingent of troops. The chronicler of this expedition, who evidently had a better interpreter for the Navajo language than for Zuni, reported that the Zunis housed the command and the Navajo visitors in “a spacious adobe building in the city,” and then the negotiations began. The Navajos boasted of being more successful at war than the Zunis and grandly blamed all of the troubles on them, charging that Zunis had killed forty Navajo women who were gathering pine nuts in the Zuni Mountains. A Zuni leader indignantly denied the charge and threatened to hold the Navajos hostage until Zuni captives were released.

The council to arrange a treaty was held on November 26, 1846, and the description of that council is brief. “They met accordingly, and after much debate, consummated a treaty of peace and amity, on the 26th, just and honorable to both parties. This was the last treaty Col. Doniphan made with any tribe of Indians. His labors with the Indians were now finished.” The treaty was reported to have given the Zunis the right to govern themselves, for which Pino must have argued strenuously. But neither was the treaty ratified or even submitted to Congress, nor is there a surviving copy of the text. The chronicler of this expedition, like so many who followed him, ended by praising the Zunis for their hospitality. Although the treaty had little effect on the status of the war in the area, it did provide the United States military with a knowledge of a small portion of the Navajo country. By February of 1847, the Navajos had resumed predatory raids in the region.
In September 1847, Major Robert Walker led an expedition against the Navajos. The command passed through Zuni and went on toward the north. But the campaign was poorly planned, and the troops verged on starvation before the Zunis came to the rescue by sending provisions.72 It was an early example of Pino’s and the Zunis’ commitment to an alliance with the United States. Although there is no mention in available documents of the Zunis actually joining the United States forces during this period, Cushing later reported that “during the war of the United States with Mexico, the Zunis joined against the Spanish American dominion.”73 Perhaps he was referring to these support services given to the early army expeditions.

In 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, officially ending the Mexican War and making New Mexico part of the United States. It also guaranteed that the Pueblo Indians’ land would remain forever theirs, as it had been under Spanish and Mexican rule. The situation between the Navajos and both Indian and Hispanic settlements had deteriorated to the point where it was again considered necessary to send a military expedition into Navajo country and attempt another peace negotiation. As with the 1846 expedition, the policy included a stop at Zuni, where a treaty was signed as well as in Navajo country.

Colonel Edward W. B. Newby, commander of the military forces of New Mexico, met with the Navajos on May 20 of that year and signed a treaty with them. It required them to return stolen stock, release all prisoners, and pay for some of their recent depredations.74 Like all parties dealing with the Navajos during this early territorial period, the army officers did not realize that there was no central leadership within the Navajo tribe. When a few Navajo headmen in one locale or another signed an agreement, it was likely that the vast majority of the tribe in other bands neither heard about the treaty nor felt any obligation to abide by it if they did hear. Some Navajo bands were living in peace with Hispanic and Pueblo Indian settlements, but those bands that were engaging in raids were not likely to change their habits at this point in history without real military pressure, and there was none since the Americans had arrived.

Two of the signers of this May 20 agreement were Pablo Pino and Chapetone.75 It may be that these names constitute a
coincidence—other than the names, there is no evidence that the two were Zunis—but on July 1, empowered by Newby, Colonel Henderson P. Boyakin was at Zuni, where he negotiated another treaty with Governor Pedro Pino and Antonio Chapeton, “Commander of the War Parties of Zuni.” Boyakin’s orders indicate that he was sent to impress upon the Zunis the fact that the Navajos had signed a treaty with the government and the Zunis were thus obliged to end their war. Evidently the Navajos had made the same allegations against the Zunis because the troops were sent to prevent depredations on the Navajos by the Pueblo Indians, an ironic note at the least. The orders stated that

the said town of Zuni shall immediately [sic] Comply in Every particular with said treaty on their part, and that they shall from and after this Cease from mistreating said Navajo Indians . . . . The undersigned [Boyakin] further notified said Pueblo de Zuni and its inhabitants that in Case of a Refusal on their part to comply with the provisions of said Treaty Between the Navajo Indians and the United States and in Case they refuse to obey the laws of the United States and New Mexico and the orders of the Commanding officer at Santa Fe then they will be treated as Enemies [sic] of the United States and Troops in Sufficient Numbers will be immediately [sic] marched against This Town to punish them for this refusal.76

But Pedro Pino, governor of the Zunis, must have done some fine negotiating during the conference with Boyakin because the agreement signed at Zuni had a somewhat different flavor. The Zunis had been subject to severe restrictions, or attempted restrictions, on their practice of religion under the Spanish government. Pino’s foremost considerations must have been to obtain freedom of religion. The U.S. government was promising, in essence, that it would henceforth take care of the peace. The Zunis needn’t worry about maintaining an army—the United States was all powerful, and it would take care of the Navajo problem. After the bargaining, Pino and Boyakin signed an agreement which did guarantee that the “Pueblo of Zuni shall Be Protected in the full management of all its rights of private Property and Religion. By the Authorities Civil and Military of New Mexico and the United States.” It goes on
to state that the Zunis shall obey all United States and New Mexico territorial laws and that the Pueblo of Zuni and the Territory of New Mexico shall “Remain good friends forever[,] that they will always act towards Each other as Brothers.”

The words in this agreement typify Pino’s relationship with the U.S. for the next thirty years. But the treaty was not even submitted to Congress. Likely the troops did not even keep a copy of the document. Pino and the Zunis were the only ones who remembered the wording. Pino carefully saved his copy of the document for the next three decades.

This agreement made little more difference than the 1846 treaty. That same year a large force of Navajos attacked Zuni. First a Navajo war party diverted the Pueblo warrior defenses to a battle at Pescado, one of the outlying Zuni farming villages; then a larger force attacked the women left at the pueblo from the other direction, the trail to the Hopi villages. “But . . . the women and children successfully defended their homes until the return of the men at night.”

During this period, whenever the U.S. sent expeditions against the Navajos, Governor Pino and the Zunis were approached and asked for guides, food, and sometimes additional troops. Food and materials in large quantities were often supplied to the army when it pressed against the Navajos. But the Zunis remembered their promise to refrain from taking action against the Navajos themselves. Cushing commented that “when General Kearny and his successors were, after the Treaty of Guadalupe, subduing the, until then, implacable Navajos the Zunis did invaluable service on our side.” This is a considerable understatement.

The war with the Navajos continued unabated, and by September 1849, territorial Governor John M. Washington, Indian Agent James S. Calhoun, and Major H. L. Kendrick left Santa Fe on another expedition to the Navajos. On September 9, 1849, a treaty was signed between Washington and two relatively unimportant Navajo leaders, which, like those before it, required that the Navajos release all of the captive slaves they had in their possession. The party then traveled on to Zuni.

The Navajos were concerned only with getting United States troops out of their homeland. They quickly signed the agreement
and then falsely informed the command that they had just received word that Apaches were in the process of attacking Zuni Pueblo. Washington marched his troops to the pueblo and, when he arrived, found that the story about the Apaches was untrue. He learned, in fact, that Navajos had just attempted an attack on the pueblo. The evidence of the recent battle was very apparent. Within a half mile of the village, the body of a Navajo lay in a field. Agent Calhoun reported, “The inhabitants of this Pueblo gave us a hearty reception, manifesting their gratification in the most uproarious, wild and indescribable manner, offering to us large quantities of fruit and bread; all of which was becomingly received.”

The Zunis made several kinds of bread in their “bee-hive” ovens and raised fruit in their orchards at Dowa Yalanne and Twin Buttes.

Pino met with Governor Washington on several occasions, discussing policy and the situation in the Zunis’ part of the country. One of the members of the expedition, James H. Simpson, described the Zuni governor: “A very interesting man we found him to be—about six feet high, athletic in structure, uncommonly graceful and energetic in action, fluent in language, and intelligent—in fact he actually charmed me with his elocution.”

The actions of another member of the military detachment may not have seemed quite so charming to the Zunis. Richard H. Kern mentioned in his diary that he “procured” the head of the Navajo lying in the vicinity. Kern was an artist and topographer, who also provided ethnographic information to the army. He had been asked to acquire a head for scientific purposes.

Governor Pino’s conversations with Governor Washington led to a transaction in which the Zunis sold the army a supply of corn. Like the Spanish and Mexican armies, the American forces would not have been able to survive in their new western frontier without the Zunis’ supplies of corn during the next ten years. Other Americans were quick to take advantage of the Zunis’ willingness to deal with U.S. authorities. Agent Calhoun was outraged to learn a short while later that an emigrant train had arrived at Zuni about this time, claiming to be emissaries of the government, and commandeered food, horses, and mules for their trip to California. In these early years of U.S./Zuni contact,
Pino probably had a good deal of trouble determining who really represented the United States government. The problem would only multiply in the years to come.

Under Mexican rule, there had been no effective courts, lawyers, or judges. Justice had been a somewhat whimsical thing, sometimes accomplished mainly through bribes and contacts with powerful New Mexican families. Pino had known some of these families and influential people, and through these contacts the tribe had managed to maintain a remarkably coherent policy with Spain and Mexico, though the government had sometimes seemed arbitrary and occasionally near anarchy. It was no wonder that Pedro Pino had difficulty in identifying the United States government’s representatives.

The early territorial courts did not remedy the problems. They were also subject to bribery and corruption, even to the extent that there was a virtual lawless dictatorship by a few leading New Mexico citizens later on. Non-Indian New Mexicans came to the Zuni Pueblo and demanded bribes (usually for fictitious services) when a court decided in favor of the tribe. If the Zunis were lucky enough to win a case in a territorial court—for instance, involving rustling from tribal herds—normally the court costs were higher than the original loss of stock.

By October 1849, the uselessness of the last Navajo/United States treaty had already become apparent to the Zunis. In fact, the treaty had not had the slightest effect on the war situation. Pino and the “captain de guerre” traveled a difficult, two-hundred-mile-long trail to Santa Fe to talk with Indian Agent Calhoun. The United States assurance of protection had amounted to little, according to Pino. Calhoun reported, in a highly revealing letter, some of the difficulties facing the Zuni people:

The Governor, the Grand Captain and the Captain of War, from Zuni, an Indian Pueblo, which you will remember is two hundred and one 7/100 miles west of Santa Fe, has [sic] been with me today.

These are intelligent, active, and athletic Indians, and stated their grievances with great energy, and were especially vehement and vindictive in their denunciations of the faithlessness of all Navajos—they represented they had been greatly harassed
since we left their village on the 16th of September last—that wheresoever they went, they were under the necessity of going guarded and armed, and that they had to watch their horses, mules, and sheep during every hour of the twenty-four.

These people asked for arms and ammunition, and permission to make a war of extermination against the Navajos.

The deputation from Zuni, also stated there were five-hundred and fifty-five able-bodied men in their village, and only thirty-two fire arms, and less than twenty rounds each for said arms. They spoke confidently of their ability to protect and defend themselves against the aggressions of the Navajos and Apaches, and, if permitted to form a combination of Pueblos, they could and would exterminate these tribes, especially every Navajo who should be so unfortunate as to be caught south of the high mountains north of the San Juan, a supposed tributary of the western Colorado, provided the government of the United States would furnish the necessary fire arms, ammunition and subsistence. But the request for firearms was denied by the authorities.

It is notable that the Zunis, while suffering from constant attacks by the Navajos, made the long journey to Santa Fe partly to ask "permission" to go to war—they were standing by their commitment to peace and their alliance with the U.S. government.

Cebolleta, a town seventy-five miles northeast of Zuni Pueblo, was occupied by the military in December 1849 as a protective garrison for the area. Negotiations began at once to obtain corn from Zuni to supply the fort. Despite this new military presence, again in January of 1850, Governor Pino informed the military of depredations against the Zuni people by Navajos—in this case the kidnaping of two women and the theft of mules and horses.

On August 7 and 8 of 1850, the situation again forced Governor Pino and other Zuni officers to journey down the hard road to Santa Fe for a conference with Agent Calhoun. The agent had drawn up another treaty with the Pueblo Indians. He reported that the Zunis came “not only for the purpose of signifying their concurrence in the terms of the treaty proposed, and signing the same, but also for the purpose of urging the Commanding Officer of this Military Department to permit them to make war upon the Navajos.” It had been nearly a year since the treaty with Governor
Washington had been signed, and the Zunis had been waiting diligently for the government to honor its commitments. Pino’s honesty and persistence in this particular effort is notable. Finally, the authorities relented, and “on this occasion,” Calhoun wrote, “Col. Monroe has consented to their wishes, and has furnished them with powder and lead to a limited extent.”

Calhoun went on to record some of Governor Pino’s complaints: “Within the last four weeks the Navajos have made two assaults upon Zuni. On the first assault, they killed two of the Zuni Indians, and on the second the Governor’s Lieutenant was killed, and several animals were driven off.” The military command which had been stationed recently at Cebolleta had quickly been withdrawn because of Apache depredations, and the Zuni governor questioned the efficacy of United States military policy in the area since General Kearney’s arrival. Obviously referring to the treaties the Zunis had previously signed, which gave them the right to protection from their enemies by the government, Pedro Pino inquired, “How does it happen that at the very moment the Navajos are commencing a war against him (the Pueblo of Zuni), the American troops are withdrawn from Cebolleta?” He [Pino] answered, “I supposed to give the Navajos a fair chance against us—who were promised PROTECTION.”

The treaty which Pino came to Santa Fe to sign had been approved by the pueblos of Santa Clara, Tesuque, Nambe, Santo Domingo, Jemez, San Felipe, San Ildefonso, Chochiti, Santa Ana, and Zia during the month of July and was signed by Pino, representing Zuni, in August of 1850. The various pueblos promised not to give any aid or countenance to tribes which were at war with the United States and to treat all U.S. citizens humanely. Referring to Pueblo Indian lands, Calhoun intimated that precise boundaries of the pueblos were known by the government. Certainly Pino would have described the exact boundaries of Zuni land. The treaty resolved that “the Government of the United States will, at its earliest convenience, afford to the contracting Pueblos its protecting power and influence; will adjust and settle, in the most practicable manner, the boundaries of each Pueblo, Which shall never be diminished, but may be enlarged whenever the Government of the United States shall deem it advisable.” Pino would later complain that the
authorities in Santa Fe had promised him the exact boundaries of Zuni land would be secure under U.S. rule. This must have been one meeting where this promise was made.

The supply of powder and lead was put to efficient use by the Zuni soldiers, evidenced when, on September 30, 1850, Calhoun informed the commissioner of Indian affairs that a battle had taken place in which the Zunis had killed thirty Navajos. But Calhoun stated that the Navajos were not deterred and were planning another conflict.94

Finally, the authorities in Santa Fe complied with Governor Pino’s request for sufficient arms and ammunition to defend the pueblo. On October 9, it was reported that the military commander had arranged for sixty flintlock muskets, an adequate supply of flints, and six thousand buck-and-ball cartridges to be sent to Zuni so that the people could defend themselves. Pino’s diplomacy had worked, but before the delivery was made, the Navajos again attacked the pueblo.95

The Navajo party attacked the pueblo and began to burn the cornfields. That would not have been possible if Zuni men had not again been away from the pueblo, and evidently the contingent of U.S. troops at Cebolleta was also busy elsewhere: The soldiers and Zunis were escorting the bishop of Durango on a visit to Zuni. This was Bishop Zubiria’s third visit to the pueblo—he had been there in 1833 and 1845—and the Zunis had joined the escort to hack out a road for the bishop across the Zuni Mountains.96

Calhoun, who had recognized that another attack on Zuni was imminent, could also see the significance it could have on the U.S./Zuni alliance and policy in the region. He reported to the commissioner of Indian affairs on October 12 that if the Zunis (now under attack) “have been able to save their crops, it will be fortunate for our troops, as they relied upon them for a portion of their supplies, which would have been greatly augmented if their warriors could have been engaged in tilling the earth instead of guarding the Pueblo.” He went on to suggest that an agent be stationed at Zuni and ordnance facilities be built to increase the amount of food which could be raised there.97

This trade relationship with the government was one which Pino had worked hard to establish. The garrison at Cebolleta had
contracted for five thousand bushels of corn (at about two dollars a bushel) from Zuni in 1850. Corn was said to be abundant on Zuni land during this season, and Agent Calhoun’s suggestion that an ordnance depot be built would have provided much more storage space. The agent whom he proposed should be stationed at Zuni would also have prevented unofficial acquisitions from the tribe, but neither the agent nor the depot was ever established.

The tribe, under the secular direction of Pino, had thousands of bushels of corn to sell at the time, even though they kept on hand at least a two-years’ supply in case of drought or grasshopper infestation. Without the support of the Zunis and their large fields of corn, the army’s western New Mexico forts could not have survived this period. A few years later, as whites began to settle in the area, it became more advantageous for the army simply to take the land and grow its own corn, while allowing the enemies of the Zunis to molest the pueblo with little protection. But for the time being, the arrangement worked in favor of the tribe.

The attack on Zuni took place on about October 14. It turned into a siege and lasted for sixteen days before the muskets sent by Calhoun arrived on the scene. Pino signed for the arms and ammunition on October 30, agreeing to return the muskets on demand. Though the garrison of Cebolleta was only seventy-five miles away and the contingent of troops was with the bishop in the vicinity, the attack on the pueblo went on under the nose of the U.S. troops until the Zunis were supplied with their arms. When the muskets arrived, the Navajos retreated from the area around Zuni and again focused their raiding on the villages along the Rio Grande and Rio Puerco to the east. Pino’s diplomacy had brought about much-needed relief from attacks.

By early 1851, it became apparent to the U.S. command that a campaign against the Navajos was again necessary because their attacks against the eastern pueblos had become so persistent. Henry Dodge, later agent to the Navajos, traveled to Zuni to buy corn for the contingent of troops. He was able to purchase a thousand bags and reported that much more was available if needed. He further said that the Zunis could be used as auxiliaries with no remuneration necessary. But increased Apache depredations to the south of the territory caused Dodge to cancel the campaign.
While at the pueblo, Dodge reported that a recent Navajo attack had wounded one man and horses had been stolen from the Zuni tribal herd. So the Navajo attacks had not altogether ceased, though they had lessened.

Despite Pino’s efforts to make a true alliance with the U.S. command and end Navajo depredations, by 1851 Calhoun (newly appointed governor of the territory) reported that “during the past year the Navajos had been more successful in their depredations than at any former period—these outrages should be stopped.” The statement reinforced the suggestions made by Governor Pino (which, in turn, mirrored those his namesake had made in 1812). Fort Defiance would be set up in the vicinity of the Navajos’ heartland, and Colonel Edwin Vose Sumner, now in command of United States forces in the territory, would attempt to keep the Navajos permanently in check—a policy the Mexican and Spanish governments had attempted with more success. It is easy to see just how important the Zunis’ corn was during this period, not only because of the outlying garrisons but also because the only money in the territory was government money, and the only commodity was Zuni corn—the Zunis should have done very well. Calhoun, however, was for a more “humane” treatment of the Navajos, and rumors quickly spread that he was out to take the Pueblo Indians’ lands from them.

Sumner organized his command and set out in August, accompanied by Calhoun, on an expedition against the Navajos. With help from the Zunis and advice from Pino, the Americans set up Fort Defiance. Sumner told Pino he was “going to give the Navajos the devil,” but the command had not gotten far from Zuni before they got into trouble. On leaving the pueblo, one of the troops reported that, “unknown to us, the Zunis had dug numerous holes, beside a deep ravine where the trail crossed, and placing in the center of them a sharp pointed stick, and over it laid a slight cover of dirt, to ensnare the Navajos.” Colonel Sumner rode into one and almost killed his horse. At the same time, the troop’s herder ran his sheep into another hole, where three were killed and the troops had great difficulty in removing the remainder.

The troops moved on, and Sumner ordered that Fort Defiance be established near Canyon Bonito with Major Electus...
Backus as its first commander. Sumner went on with the remainder of his command and conducted an ineffective campaign in the Canyon de Chelly country. While Sumner was setting up Fort Defiance and leading his troops through Navajo country, Governor Pino was entertaining a group of the troops which had been left behind at Zuni. The Zuni governor arranged for a dance, which he apparently wished the United States soldiers to see.

There were other newcomers to the Zunis’ land during this period. Exploring expeditions, such as the one led by Captain Lorenzo Sitgreaves, began to pass through the western New Mexican territory. On reaching the pueblo, they were met by Governor Pino, who tried to obtain a written record of each visit, arranged feasts and dances for them, and supplied them with guides through Zuni territory. The testimonials he gathered from these people uniformly praised the Zunis’ outstanding hospitality and Pino’s intelligence, integrity, and statesmanship.

Sitgreaves’s group, along with some of the troops left at Zuni by Sumner, went west from the pueblo, attempting to find a suitable route to the Colorado River. A few days after leaving Zuni, near the Little Colorado and a few miles from the present site of St. Johns, Sitgreaves met a group of Coyotero Apaches, who were herding mules on their way to Zuni to trade. Sumner eventually returned to Santa Fe to regroup, ordering Backus to keep pressing the Navajos from Fort Defiance.

Backus and his new command at Fort Defiance were having considerable difficulties. Supplies were slow in arriving, and the men were engaged in heavy labor, preparing for the upcoming winter. But the Navajos did not seem to be openly hostile, nor did they resist the construction of the fort in their country. Early on, Backus arranged with Governor Pino to have the fort supplied with Zuni corn. The Zunis complied and increased their crops accordingly. But the Navajos did not view the fort as a deterrent to their raids; they considered it rather a “protective buffer” which allowed them to raid Zuni without fear of reprisal.

Backus arranged for a peace summit among the Navajos, Zunis, and Hopis. The leaders of the three tribes gathered at Canyon Bonito on October 26, 1851, and a treaty was agreed to by
all of those present, who must have included Pino. Backus reported to Colonel Sumner the content of the agreement:

The following verbal agreement was entered into, and being submitted to the main body of Indians, was accepted and confirmed by them.

1st The Navajo Indians, shall be at peace with and shall cease to molest or steal from, the people of the United States, the Mexican people, and our friends the Zuni and Moca [Hopi] Indians.

2nd The Navajo Indians, shall send three of the principal men of their nation, with an escort of United States troops, to the Department Head Quarters at the Moro [Fort Union], with full powers to enter into and conclude a lasting treaty of peace, between the people of the United States and the Navajo nation.¹¹²

This was the last recorded “treaty” with Pino and the Zunis. Although it was 1871 before the U.S. officially ended the policy of treaty making, there would be no further attempts to negotiate agreements with the pueblo of Zuni.¹¹³

During the five-year period from 1846 to 1851, Pedro Pino had signed four agreements with the United States government. None was ratified by Congress, and, in fact, only one—that of Calhoun in 1850—was probably even submitted. The others included the 1846 treaty with Doniphan, the 1848 agreement with Colonel Boyakin, and Backus’s 1851 agreement. Although the treaties were quickly forgotten by government officials, Pino and the Zunis believed they had entered into lasting agreements. The 1846 treaty gave the tribe the right to govern itself. The 1848 agreement gave the Zunis the rights of personal property and freedom of religion, as well as promising protection. Calhoun’s treaty suggested that the government was well aware of the tribal boundaries and that, although they might increase in the future, they would never be reduced. Finally, Backus’s agreement ensured that the Navajos would not steal from the tribe, as the government had promised for years.

Pino, now in his sixties, with fifteen years of experience as governor, had every reason to believe that he had guaranteed the future rights of the Zunis: Their land was safe, they were to be protected, a
valuable trade had been instituted. The people could practice their religious beliefs without fear of reprisal from the government. Pino had done a good job of negotiating these agreements, but the United States government paid the same attention to them as did the Navajos—they were ignored by everyone but the Zunis. Pino would learn in the coming years that every single point he had fought for in these councils was lost to the United States. We can only guess how much worse the situation could have become if Pino had not been in charge politically.