

THESIS

FROM BORDERED LAND, TO BORDERLAND, AND BACK AGAIN:

HOW THE SANGRE DE CRISTO LAND GRANT

BECAME PART OF THE UNITED STATES, 1844-1878

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Summer 2020

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ABSTRACT

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BECAME PART OF THE UNITED STATES, 1844-1878

From 1844 to 1878, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, a one-million-acre parcel in Colorado and New Mexico's San Luis Valley, experienced a transition from a Ute landscape, to a Ute, Nuevomexicano, and American borderland, and, finally, to an American region. This rapid, thirty-year transformation centered on conflicts between Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and American and European migrants and land speculators over the grant's borders, including legal, racial, political, economic, and scientific ones. By 1878, the outcome of these border contests was a relatively stable, bordered landscape on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Examining this transition as a shift from a Ute bordered land, to a Ute, Nuevomexicano, and American borderland, and, finally, into a bordered, American region not only demonstrates that border contests were central to the expansion of the United States and its settler populations across the American West but also shows how contests over borders have offered important avenues of resistance for local communities in the San Luis Valley in both the past and present.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For a project like this one, there are certainly too many people to thank—many more than can adequately be listed here. I am grateful to the department of history at Colorado State University, the Rosser Family, and the Charles Redd Center for Western Studies for their financial support of this project. I have also been fortunate enough to embark on a journey into the historical profession at two institutions where I have met faculty and peers who helped me along the way as I became increasingly interested in historical scholarship. To Mary Murphy, Michael Reidy, Mark Fiege, and Janet Ore, thank you for encouraging me to attend graduate school. To Janet Ore, I owe a special thanks for sending me to Colorado State University; my time here has been beyond fruitful. I am particularly grateful for the time and energy that the faculty here at CSU have invested in my education. To Ann Little, Sarah Payne, and Andrea Duffy, thank you not only for being excellent members on a master's committee but for reading paper drafts and always challenging me to be a stronger thinker. To Michael Childers and Leisl Carr Childers, thank you for offering me valuable scholarly and professional advice and for always keeping your office doors open. I owe a special thank you to Jared Orsi, who has read countless drafts of my work in the past two years and has made me a better thinker and writer. Jared is both a model historian and a model of a good human being; words here cannot fully express my gratitude for the role he has played as my advisor for the past two years. And last, although certainly not least, my biggest thank you is to Tori, who, throughout this project, has remained my most valuable sounding board and source of support as she has also been working to complete her own master's degree.

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INTRODUCTION

On a brisk day in early October of 1868, William Gilpin, Ferdinand Hayden, and their horses trotted over Sangre de Cristo Pass and into the San Luis Valley. As they descended, meandering along Sangre de Cristo Creek, the valley landscape, a blend of extensive pasture and Rocky Mountain peaks, came into focus before them.¹ As Gilpin, the former Governor of the Colorado Territory turned land speculator, and Hayden, a budding U.S. Geologist, gazed across the San Luis Valley, the environment made manifest the promises of the late-nineteenth-century American West: land seemingly ripe for American settlement and handsome profits for those who could acquire, appraise, and carve the broad expanse into marketable pieces. For Gilpin, the San Luis Valley had become one such landscape of opportunity when he acquired the title to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, a one-million-acre parcel in the southeastern portion of the valley, in 1864.² Gilpin intended to market the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to American and European settlers, a goal he hoped Hayden's scientific expertise and reputation might help him realize. But his venture encountered a significant obstacle at its outset: the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was not an unsettled landscape.

Although Gilpin and Hayden infused their movement through the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant with a sense of personal and national purpose, the pair traveled through the landscape as

¹ On the circumstances leading to Hayden's 1868 tour of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, see Jack E. Deibert and Brent H. Breithaupt, *Tracks, Trails & Thieves: The Adventures, Discoveries, and Historical Significance of Ferdinand V. Hayden's 1868 Geological Survey of Wyoming and Adjacent Territories* (Boulder: Geological Society of America, 2016),

² On Gilpin's acquisition of the grant, see Thomas Karnes, *William Gilpin: Western Nationalist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), 302-6; for documents on the transfer of interests from Beaubien's heirs to Gilpin, see "Beaubien Deeds," Land Rights Council, Records of the Land Rights Council, 1958-2009, Water Resources Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Morgan Library, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

only two individuals among a population of Nuevomexicano settlers, American soldiers and Euro-American migrants that numbered in the thousands. Only two decades prior, Nuevomexicano shepherders had moved into the region after Charles Beaubien, a French trader and naturalized Mexican citizen, had acquired the grant's title.³ Valley Nuevomexicanos first traversed the landscape much like Gilpin and Hayden; the colonists and their sheep quickly set upon the environment's grasses while paying little mind to the territorial sovereignty of the Ute bands who had resided in the San Luis Valley for centuries. Gilpin and Hayden's passage through the valley was but one voyage among many in a cycle of migration, settlement, and dispossession that had defined the valley's history for centuries. Gilpin's acquisition of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, however, differed from previous intrusions into the San Luis Valley in one significant regard: the grant transformed into an American landscape during the course of Gilpin's attempt to develop and sell the parcel. This transformation, however, was not simply the result of Gilpin's venture in the San Luis Valley. Rather, a series of contests over the future of the grant's material environment and human geography led to the parcel's eventual incorporation into the United States.

On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, these contests stemmed from questions that lay at the core of the mid-nineteenth-century history of the San Luis Valley and American West: who was entitled to control and benefit from the landscape's environment, and, perhaps more

³ The initial settlement of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant is covered briefly in Herbert Brayer, *William Blackmore: The Spanish-Mexican Land Grants of New Mexico and Colorado, 1863-1878* (Denver, Colo.: Bradford-Robinson, 1949), 64 and Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross*, 2d ed. (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1999) 83-6. For more extensive treatment of Beaubien's involvement with the grant, see Maria Mondragon-Valdez, "Challenging Domination: Local Resistance on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant" (Ph.D. diss., University of New Mexico, 2006).

importantly, why?⁴ Between 1844 and 1878, three competing groups—local Utes, Nuevomexicano settlers, and white American settlers and speculators—offered three competing visions for the parcel’s future. As Nuevomexicano colonists and American soldiers spread across the grant in the 1850s, Utes attempted to maintain their longstanding control of the parcel through a mixture of raiding and negotiation, tactics that had served them well for centuries. By the late 1860s, however, Ute efforts to retain their power over the San Luis Valley proved ineffective as Nuevomexicano communities continued to grow alongside the recently established U.S. military presence at Fort Garland. Nuevomexicano control of the grant soon came under duress as Gilpin became financially involved in the parcel, a shift that expanded the importance of American law, land use, and culture beyond the walls of Fort Garland. By the late 1870s, however, Gilpin’s venture failed to realize its financial ambitions even though the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and its communities became a part the American nation, its economy, and legal structures. This transformation, in short, hardly conformed to the simple, linear process of American Western history like the one Frederick Jackson Turner forwarded in 1893 as he argued that “the existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development.”⁵

Rather, on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, a markedly different version of Turner’s thesis held true. During the grant’s mid-nineteenth century, the existence of an area of settled

⁴ The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant’s history reflects Patricia Nelson Limerick’s insight that “Western history has been an ongoing competition for legitimacy—for the right to claim for oneself and sometimes for one group the status of legitimate beneficiary of Western resources.” See Patricia Nelson Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987), 27

⁵ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays*, edited by John Mack Faragher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 31.

land, contestation over its future, and the convergent advances of Nuevomexicano settlement northward and American settlement westward, explained American development in the region. This thesis examines the course of this process on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and, in doing so, demonstrates that a process-based approach to American Western history can move beyond what historian Patricia Limerick described as the “ethnocentric and nationalistic” underpinnings of the Turner thesis.⁶ In other words, it outlines a narrative of Americanization where Utes and Nuevomexicanos, white and black Americans, and men and women all have roles to play. By connecting the history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to the wider process of the Americanization of the North American West while still accounting for the significance of the everyday actions taken by the grant’s multitudes, all of whom engaged in that process, this thesis demonstrates the methodological value of borderlands and digital history to the study of the American West, both of which offer powerful approaches to highlighting the lived experience of the grant’s residents in historically meaningful ways. Borderlands history and digital history, it argues, hold the key to explaining the Americanization of the West in ways that surmount the problematically white, masculine, and nationalistic legacy of Turnerian American Western history.

“On Borderlands”⁷

Historians commonly identify Herbert Eugene Bolton’s 1921 monograph, *The Spanish Borderlands*, as the first study to employ borderlands as a framework of study. A student of

⁶ Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 21.

⁷ For a recent survey of borderlands history, see Pekka Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” *Journal of American History* 98, no. 2 (September, 2011): 338-61.

Turner, Bolton's interest in the history of Spanish colonization in North America led him to consider how the frontier, a space where American triumph over nature and Native peoples begat progress, might also explain the "marks of Spanish days" on the United States' southern border.⁸ Bolton applied the frontier thesis to the American Southwest by exploring the history of what he termed "the Spanish borderlands," a region that contained the American states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida.⁹ Bolton's borderland was regional, a space defined by the legacies of northward, not only westward, colonization. For some time, Bolton's borderlands approach remained subsumed beneath the legacy of Turner's work and stood only as an example of how the Turner thesis might be applied to the Spanish Southwest.¹⁰ In recent decades, however, Bolton's borderlands concept has found new life not only in American Western history but as an approach broadly applicable to studies of historical borderlands around the globe.

Borderlands historian David Weber has suggested that the renewed attention to the Bolton school of Western history during the 1980s and 1990s stemmed from two factors: the 500th anniversary of Columbus's voyage to the Americas and a Latinx population that grew more numerous not only in the United States, but in academia as well.¹¹ This reinvigorated interest in borderlands, though, came about shortly after historian Patricia Limerick published *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* in 1987. Limerick, quite simply, blew Turner out of the water. Claiming that Turner's thesis forced scholars to "stand in the East and

⁸ Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996; 1st ed., Yale University Press, 1921), xlvii.

⁹ Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands*.

¹⁰ David Weber traces the intellectual relationship between Turner and Bolton in David Weber, "Turner, the Boltonians, and the Borderlands," *American Historical Review* 91, no. 1 (Feb., 1986): 66-81.

¹¹ David Weber, "The Spanish Borderlands, Historiography Redux," *History Teacher* 39, no. 1 (Nov., 2005): 44.

look to the West,” Limerick instead argued that, by “rethinking Western history” as the story of a place, not a process, we might reimagine the American West “as many complicated environments occupied by natives who considered their homelands to be the center, not the edge.”¹² Before long, borderlands historians, whose theoretical core had grown out of Turner’s work, would find themselves confronting the so-called New Western Historians, a group of scholars invested in carrying Limerick’s insights to the foreground of the region’s historiography.¹³

In 1999, borderlands and the New Western history collided in Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron’s essay, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in between in North American History.” In it, Aron and Adelman defined borderlands as the “contested boundaries between colonial domains.”¹⁴ They also argued that borderlands in North America ceased to exist as empires “gave way to national borders,” a claim quite similar to the argument Turner forwarded about the disappearance of the American frontier.¹⁵ Fundamentally, Aron and Adelman suggested, borderlands history was inherently a form process history where “borderlands” became “bordered lands” as empires transformed into nations.¹⁶ At a moment when the New Western history had cast aside the relevance of the frontier to the study of North

¹² Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*, 26.

¹³ Borderlands scholars were not the only ones to grapple with the effects of *Legacy of Conquest*. On New Western History and its implications for the Turner thesis and the study of the American West, see, for example, William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin, “Becoming West: Toward a New Meaning for Western History,” in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America’s Western Past*, edited by William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York: Norton, 1992), 3-27.

¹⁴ Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States and the Peoples in Between in North American History,” *American Historical Review* 104, no. 3 (June, 1999): 816.

¹⁵ Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders,” 816.

¹⁶ Adelman and Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders,” 816.

American and U.S. history, Aron and Adelman made an unabashed argument that process history rooted in Turner's work still held value for historians of Early North America.¹⁷

In the months and years that followed, Aron and Adelman found many critics and their 1999 essay has since become an overly problematized touchstone for a field that still struggles to define itself. Some scholars critiqued Aron and Adelman for relying on an overly imperial geography and for failing to adequately recover the agency of Indigenous peoples in the borderlands-to-bordered-lands process.¹⁸ Others, such as historians Samuel Truett and Elliot Young, have criticized both Aron and Adelman's framework and process histories more generally for a "tendency" to "harness borderlands history to the centralizing logic of the nation."¹⁹ For Truett and Young, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands revealed a glaring hole in Aron and Adelman's thesis: the region retained a borderlands character despite the emergence of a well-defined boundary between the two nations. Process history, Truett and Young suggested, had the effect of subordinating unique regional and local histories of places like the U.S.-Mexico borderlands to overarching, Turner-style constructions of the American West.²⁰

¹⁷ As if in anticipation of these critiques, Adelman and Aron lay out the recent historiography of debates over the value of the frontier in Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 814, fn 1.

¹⁸ On the problematic aspects of Aron and Adelman's framework, see Evan Haefeli, "A Note on the Use of North American Borderlands," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October, 1999): 1222-25; Christopher Ebert Schmidt-Nowara, "Borders and Borderlands of Interpretation," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October, 1999): 1226-28; John Wunder and Pekka Hamalainen, "Of Lethal Places and Lethal Essays," *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October, 1999): 1229-34; Jeremy Adelman and Stephen Aron, *American Historical Review* 104, no. 4 (October, 1999): "Of Lively Exchanges and Larger Perspectives," 1235-39.

¹⁹ Samuel Truett and Elliot Young, "Making Transnational History: Nations, Regions, and Borderlands," in *Continental Crossroads: Remapping U.S.-Mexico Borderlands History*, ed. Samuel Truett and Elliot Young (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 6.

²⁰ Truett and Young, "Making Transnational History," 7-8.

As the twenty-first century moved along, borderlands scholars continued their departure from Aron and Adelman and began to more fully explore borderlands as places with stories that often confound the expectations readers carry with them. In a 2011 survey of the field, Truett and historian Pekka Hämäläinen noted that “if frontiers were the places where we once told our master American narratives, then borderlands are the places where those narratives become unraveled.”²¹ The unraveling of the American frontier has, in many ways, proved useful for borderlands history—especially as the field has applied transnational approaches to our understanding of North America. For example, Native historians like Joshua Reid have worked to “challenge the problematic notion that only European imperialism produces borderlands.”²² As Reid demonstrated in his study of the Makahs, Native peoples proved equally capable of creating and maintaining political, cultural, and economic “protocols,” what Reid describes as norms or rules that structure human behavior, that supported continued exercises of Native power in the wake of European colonization.²³ Lissa Wadewitz, who, like Reid, is a historian of the Pacific Northwest, has considered how Native peoples leveraged the U.S.-Canada border to retain their status in the regional fish harvest through a study that takes borderlands history not only further north but into the twentieth century.²⁴ Yet despite these exciting new applications of borderlands history to the study of North America’s past, the field still suffers from what Hämäläinen and Truett described as the tendency of the borderlands histories to “pull in

²¹ See Hämäläinen and Truett, “On Borderlands,” 338.

²² Joshua Reid, *The Sea is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 14.

²³ Reid, *The Sea is My Country*, 22.

²⁴ Lissa Wadewitz, *The Nature of Borders: Salmon, Boundaries, and Bandits on the Salish Sea* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012).

hundreds of localized directions” while offering “little in place of imperial, national, and regional history.”²⁵

How, then, might borderlands history transcend its limitations? The answer, this thesis argues, lies in a reinvigoration of Aron and Adelman’s borderlands-to-bordered-lands process. Although much of the criticism of Aron Adelman’s work was warranted, especially regarding their treatment of Indigenous peoples, the idea that borderlands (places of instability) can disappear as bordered lands (places with structured and relatively stable power relations) take form is not without merit. By demonstrating how borderlands become bordered lands, historians can begin to fruitfully link changes in borderlands to broader turning points in regional, national, and even global histories.²⁶

To reinvigorate Aron and Adelman’s work, borderlands historians should reconceptualize the turning points of borderlands histories. Rather than marking the transition from borderland to bordered land as the moment when national borders emerge, as Aron and Adelman did, borderlands scholars should instead consider how changes in local communities, networks, and environments evidence a transition from borderland to bordered land. Historian Jared Orsi laid the conceptual foundation for such a shift in his 2015 essay, “Construction and Contestation: Toward a Unifying Methodology for Borderlands History.” In it, Orsi argued that all borderlands were defined by a shared process where “borders are reciprocally constructed and contested.”²⁷ Instead of defining borderlands by their proximity to historical power centers, Orsi called on

²⁵ See Hämäläinen and Truett, “On Borderlands,” 338-39.

²⁶ As Aron and Adelman argued, “Turner’s frontier concept at least insisted on temporal boundaries” that allowed historians to more effectively chart change over time. See Aron and Adelman, “From Borderlands to Borders,” 815.

²⁷ Jared Orsi, “Construction and Contestation: Towards a Unifying Methodology for Borderlands History,” *History Compass* 12, no. 5 (May 2014): 433; Reid, *The Sea is My Country*, 14.

borderlands historians shift their attention to that which was being constructed and contested in borderland zones: the borders.²⁸ In Orsi's framework, borders are not simply geographical; they can include "proxy markers of race, family, class, and gender" too.²⁹ In other words, borders are ways of differentiating space, resources, and bodies that produce "protocols," or norms of behaviors, in both borderlands and bordered lands.³⁰

By building on Orsi's construction-contestation framework for defining borderlands, this study outlines how, between 1844 and 1878, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant oscillated between a borderland (a place where borders are constructed and contested in meaningful ways) and a bordered land (a place where borders are not contested in meaningful ways). Successive migrations and border contests defined this thirty-year period in the grant's history as it transformed from a Ute bordered land, into a Ute-Nuevomexicano-American borderland, and, finally, into an American bordered land. At first, the contours of this narrative appear eerily familiar as though the ghost of Turner's frontier—a space of white, American triumph over nonwhite peoples—has returned to haunt the borderlands history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. If this is true, then the borderland-to-bordered-land process I have outlined fails to surmount the limitations of Aron and Adelman's thesis.

This narrative of the borderland-to-bordered-land process on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, however, moves beyond from Turner's thesis and Aron and Adelman's scholarship in

²⁸ Orsi, "Construction and Contestation," 433-4.

²⁹ Orsi, "Construction and Contestation," 435. For recent works in borderlands history and American Western history that reflect this shift, see, for example, Katherine Benton-Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); Anne F. Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families: A New History of the North American West, 1800-1860* (Norman: University of Nebraska Press, 2011); Reid, *The Sea is My Country*.

³⁰ On "protocols," see Reid, *The Sea is My Country*, 22.

three significant ways. First, national borders matter little here. Just as the U.S.-Mexican War concluded in 1848, which moved most of the U.S.-Mexico border to its current location, Beaubien and his shepherders began migrating northward in an attempt to construct a Nuevomexicano bordered land on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, not an American one. Second, it treats the San Luis Valley before 1844 as a Ute bordered land, not as a region populated by disorganized Native peoples who exist as one side of what Turner called “the meeting point between savagery and civilization.”³¹ Instead, I adopt approaches in Native history explored by Hämäläinen, who has argued in *The Comanche Empire* that recovering Native peoples as “full-fledged humans and undiminished historical actors” allows scholars to reveal how, at specific moments, Native peoples “inverted the projected colonial trajectory” of American Western history.³² Third, I place Orsi’s construction-contestation framework at the center of the borderland-to-bordered-land process on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. I do so to recover the everyday actions of Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and Americans as meaningful actors in the narrative of the grant’s borderlands history rather than lending outsized importance to speculators like William Gilpin. Together, these departures allow this project to leave behind the Turnerian underpinnings of Aron and Adelman’s work while also demonstrating that borderlands do not have to be, as Hämäläinen and Truett claim, the “places where” our “master narratives become unraveled.”³³ Rather, the borderlands history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant suggests the opposite is true: borderlands are places where the contours of our master narratives, and the wide-ranging historical processes they claim to evidence, might gain both clarity and inclusivity.

³¹ Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” 32.

³² Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 345.

³³ See Hämäläinen and Truett, “On Borderlands,” 338.

Between 1844 and 1878, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant became part of both the United States and U.S. History. Yet the route by which the grant became part of the United States depended on choices made not only by the white, male heroes of Turner's frontier thesis, but by Utes, Nuevomexicanos, African Americans, and women too. Before 1844, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was part of an expansive Ute bordered land in the San Luis Valley. At the time, Ute bands controlled the region by creating political borders, which drew territorial boundaries around the San Luis Valley, cultural borders, which differentiated between Muache and Capote Ute bands as well as between Utes and foreign subjects, and economic borders, which structured the capture, incorporation, and exchange of persons that the Utes took as slaves during captive raids in New Mexico. For centuries, these borders retained stability as the Utes ruled over the San Luis Valley, a region that remained a Ute bordered land until the mid-nineteenth century.

Though Don Manuel Armijo, the governor of the New Mexico Territory, transferred the title for the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to Narciso Beaubien and Luis Lee in 1844 and, within a few years, Charles Beaubien (Narciso's father) settled sheepherders on the grant, the Sangre de Cristo did not immediately become a borderland. When Nuevomexicano settlers first colonized the grant in 1848, they were but pseudo-subjects in a Ute bordered land. In time, however, Nuevomexicanos began contesting Ute borders in the San Luis Valley as they sought to replace Ute borders with Nuevomexicano ones that would govern land ownership, land use, slavery, and political sovereignty on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Perhaps most significantly, Nuevomexicanos contested Ute economic borders, which were predicated on highly mobile subsistence strategies like long-distance trading and raiding, by establishing sedentary sheepherding communities on the grant's southern third. In the early 1850s, Nuevomexicano

efforts to contest Ute borders and construct new, Nuevomexicano ones marked the grant's transition from bordered land to borderland.

By the 1850s, American soldiers moved onto this contested terrain and, in the 1860s and 1870s, growing numbers of American migrants and settlers followed close behind. With them, they carried American legal, racial, political, and economic borders, all of which they constructed on the grant as most Ute and Nuevomexicano borders fell to the wayside. By 1878, these American borders began to stabilize as the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad completed its route through the grant and into the San Luis Valley just as the grant had become an American bordered land. But unlike a Turnerian frontier, Americans, Nuevomexicanos, and Utes *all* participated in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's transformation from bordered land, to borderland, and back again. Though the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant became part and parcel of the United States in the mid-nineteenth century, local choices and local contingencies determined the role that U.S. expansion would play in the grant's history.

Mapping Beyond the Archive:

Environmental and Spatial History on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant

The intersection of broad historical processes and local contingency during the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's borderland period took particular form according to what Arthur McEvoy describes as an "interactive theory of nature and culture." McEvoy's "interactive theory" posits that, in order to understand cultural and material transformation in a particular place—what we might describe as the environmental history of that place—we must account for the ways in which "ecology, production, and cognition evolve in tandem, each according to its own

particular logic and in response to changes in the other two.”³⁴ Recovering ecology, production, and cognition on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, however, is hardly a straightforward task. Existing studies of the grant, especially those by Herbert Brayer and Virginia McConnel Simmons, have relied on archival materials that lend themselves to histories where white men like William Blackmore and William Gilpin drive changes in the grant’s interactive nature. Other scholars, like Nicki Gonzales and Maria Mondragon-Valdez, have instead emphasized the lengthier history of resistance by local Nuevomexicano communities against interlopers like Blackmore, Gilpin, and, later, Jack Taylor, a rancher who acquired and fenced in the grazing commons near San Luis in the 1960s. A narrative of resistance, however, focuses the grant’s history on communities at Costilla and San Luis while obscuring border contests that took place throughout the parcel’s one million acres.³⁵ Within the grant’s mid-nineteenth-century historiography, the role of local Utes, Nuevomexicanos engaged in nonagricultural labor, and laboring white and nonwhite migrants remains marginal to the grant’s past. Often, Utes, soldiers, and migrants simply exist as a backdrop for conflicts between land speculators and Nuevomexicanos at Costilla and San Luis. Although the presence of Ute bands, white settlers, and Nuevomexicanos working in the grant’s northern and upland regions is minimal in the parcel’s archival record, they lived upon, extracted resources from, and induced changes in the grant’s physical environment, many of which were important in shaping the parcel’s transition from borderland to bordered land. Environmental history offers a useful method for expanding

³⁴ Arthur McEvoy, “Toward an Interactive Theory of Nature and Culture: Ecology, Production, and Cognition in the California Fishing Industry,” *Environmental Review* 11, no. 4 (Winter, 1987): 301.

³⁵ Nicki Gonzales, “‘Yo Soy Loco Por Esa Sierra’: The History of Land Rights Activism in San Luis Colorado, 1863-2002” (Ph.D. diss., University of Colorado at Boulder, 2007); Maria Mondragon-Valdez, “Challenging Domination.”

historical agency in our narrative of the grant's past, especially for everyday individuals and the material environment, both of whom lack large archival collections. By tracing how animals, working people, and more familiar characters like Gilpin and Blackmore induced changes in "ecology, cognition, and production" across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, this thesis leverages environmental history to recover the actions of a multitude of historical subjects rather than just considering the agency of those with large manuscript collections.

Without a narrative that recovers the agency of all actors—both human and nonhuman—in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's borderland period, we are simply left with a sense that the landscape did change but still fail to explain *why* that change occurred in ways unique to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. To recover Nuevomexicanos, Utes, and American migrants in the environmental history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's borderland period, I rely heavily on ArcGIS and approaches from spatial history to quantify the extent and material impact of settlement, resource development, extractive labor, and the material environment on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's history. ArcGIS is a digital, mapping software that researchers and professionals rely on to analyze spatial relationships between geographically coded data points and is a standard research tool in many scientific disciplines. Historians, however, have been slower to incorporate ArcGIS into their research methods and the use of GIS platforms continues to remain an uncommon approach in historical scholarship. GIS-based approaches, however, should no longer remain at the fringes of historical research methods. ArcGIS can empower environmental historians to produce better, more holistic environmental and borderland histories throughout the American West, a premise this thesis demonstrates through its approach to recounting the entwined borderlands and environmental history of the mid-nineteenth-century Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

This thesis posits that ArcGIS is not only a methodologically powerful tool, but a necessary one to producing historical narratives capable of incorporating thousands of individuals into our stories of places like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Quite simply, ArcGIS allows historians to push beyond the confines of nondigital, archival research and to map historical events and large datasets onto neighborhoods, communities, and even regions. As historian Richard White indicates, the powerful nature of digital tools stems from the way that humanists approach them. Digital mapping tools, which support what White calls “spatial history,” produce valuable data visualizations that can display historical information geographically. But more importantly, ArcGIS requires a considerable investment of the historian’s time and, as White suggests, the act of using software and creating maps is a process of thinking through the historical record and viewing it differently.³⁶

Viewing history differently—in spatial terms in the case of this thesis—is necessary to produce environmental and borderlands histories that tell intimate, detailed, and local stories while also revealing larger historical processes at work. Because of the nature of the grant’s historical archive, which contains a sizeable collection of county clerk’s records and papers from William Blackmore, traditional archival research is unsuited to this goal on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Where traces of individuals appear only momentarily, such as in census records, a close reading of sources makes it difficult for the historian to discern patterns and to draw conclusions about the lived experience of everyday people on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In other words, humans are often incapable of effectively analyzing thousands of manuscript

³⁶ On spatial history, see Richard White, “What is Spatial History?” Stanford Spatial History Lab, February 1, 2010. On spatial approaches and the Digital Humanities, see David J. Bodenhamer, “The Spatial Humanities: Space, Time and Place in the New Digital Age,” in *History in the Digital Age*, ed. Toni Weller, (London: Routledge, 2013), 23-38.

records on their own without the aid of computer processing. In this regard, my use of ArcGIS explores a fundamental question of history: how can we tell narratives where those who have often been pushed to the margins operate with historical agency while still maintaining a cohesive historical narrative? In other words, how do we tell the story of that which is not obviously visible in the archival record?³⁷ The answer, this thesis argues, lies in using spatial thinking and digital tools to trace associations between historical actors, between humans and the environment, and between those with manuscript collections and those without.³⁸

Scope of Study

Scholarship, even with digital methods, is not a limitless pursuit—every study needs boundaries to define its scope and goals. My outermost boundaries are natural ones, including the western slope of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the eastern bank of the Rio Grande, the southern slope of the Sierra Blanca, and the foothills south of the Rio Costilla. From 1844 to 1878, the parcel of land known as the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant lay within these physical borders. Internal borders too, shaped both the grant and this study, including cultural, political, economic, and scientific ones. As Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and Americans contested one

³⁷ As Michel-Rolph Trouillot has noted, “the ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility; the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.” This thesis argues that, for the environmental and borderlands historian, digital tools are necessarily to take up and overcome that “ultimate challenge.” See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), xxiii.

³⁸ My use of spatial history positions different communities, individuals, organisms, and borders as nodes and protocols with a larger network, what sociologist Bruno Latour would describe as “society,” on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Latour describes this approach to studying changes in “society” as “Actor-Network-Theory” in Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

another's borders in favor of constructing their own, the borderland-to-bordered-land process that defined this period occurred within the grant's physical landscape. The material borders produced by the grant's hydrology, ecology, and topography, then, were just as significant in this process as the borders constructed by human communities. As I will attempt to show, these borders "evolved," as McEvoy would suggest, "in tandem" with one another as Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and white Americans all struggled to construct borders for their own benefit on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

Chapter 1 examines the Ute-Nuevomexicano borderland that existed on the grant from the 1850s, after Charles Beaubien first settled sheepherders on the parcel, to 1864, when William Gilpin first acquired interests in the grant. This chapter begins, however, with the arrival of humans in the San Luis Valley almost 10,000 years ago. In the millennia that followed, subsequent groups of Indigenous people moved through, settled in, and changed the valley's physical landscape. Ute bands were the most recent group control the valley by the time Nuevomexicanos began colonization efforts in earnest. As this deeper human history of the valley suggests, Nuevomexicano settlers migrated into an already "bordered land," and their attempts to contest Ute borders, and to displace them with new, Nuevomexicano ones, remade the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into a temporary borderland. By 1864, Ute borders became unstable due to both Nuevomexicano endeavors and the recent expansion of the American military and state into the San Luis Valley.

Chapter 2 considers how William Gilpin and William Blackmore, a British financier and business associate of Gilpin's, incorporated themselves into the existing Ute-Nuevomexicano borderland on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and, ultimately, how the American borders introduced by Gilpin and Blackmore became part of the parcel's American bordered land by

1878. In particular, this chapter explores the new scientific, racial, and legal borders that Gilpin and Blackmore brought to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Modern science, American racial categories, and the individualism inherent to American property law each operated in tandem with one another on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and each category attempted to reorient “ecology, production, and cognition” on the landscape to better serve Blackmore and Gilpin’s financial ambitions. By 1878, Blackmore and Gilpin had both departed the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant without financial success. Their new borders, however, remained behind to govern the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant’s future as new technologies, such as the railroad, further yoked this American bordered land to a growing nation.

Chapter 3 revisits the borderland contests that defined Chapter 1 and Chapter 2, but instead privileges the stories of humans, animals, and places not directly involved in the drama surrounding Blackmore and Gilpin’s intrusion into local affairs on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In particular, this chapter leverages ArcGIS to visualize the historical geography of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as it maps, among other things, the distribution and movement of animals, plants, and people across the grant’s physical landscape. In doing so, it considers how border contests in places like San Luis and Costilla held ramifications for populations in other locales on the grant, such as Placer and Vega Creek. Additionally, this chapter explores how the growing connection of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to American markets and transportation networks induced changes in the ecological and economic borders that structured both land use and the distribution of human populations across the parcel’s physical landscape. Often, as this chapter reveals, shifts in the borders that structured labor, land use, and economic production on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant originated at the intersection of the grant’s ecology and human

migrations to the San Luis Valley rather than strictly emanating from the influence of speculators like Gilpin and Blackmore.

This thesis concludes by examining the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's exposure to the well-known (and often amplified) signal of Americanization throughout the Mountain West: the railroad. Instead of positioning the railroad as a cultural and spatial force that rapidly connected the grant to the growing American nation, the grant's borderlands history suggests an alternative conclusion: the railroad's arrival was the result of the grant's Americanization, not its source. Rather, the transformation of the grant's borders and the transition of the landscape from a Ute bordered land, to a Ute-Nuevomexicano-American borderland, and, finally, to an American bordered land explains the region's incorporation into the growing United States. Locating the contests over the construction of American borders at the center of this story demonstrates that individual action, rather than the cultural and economic inertia of settler-colonial policies and technologies like the railroad, was the most significant factor in determining how landscapes like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant became part and parcel of the American West. Perhaps more importantly, however, revealing the importance of border contests in the long course of American Western history enables us to see how, in the present, local communities throughout the American West are challenging American borders in attempts to reassert control over the places, both at the edge of and internal to the American West, that they and their ancestors have long called home.

A Note on Terminology

Historically, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant has played host to numerous human communities, many of whom developed identities that often confound the standard terminology of American Western history. Before the southeastern corner of the San Luis Valley became the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Native peoples had maintained residency in and cultural ties to the San Luis Valley for millennia. When possible, I refer to different Native groups by tribal or band designations. Otherwise, I employ Native, Indigenous, and American Indian at different times to refer to the first peoples who inhabited the San Luis Valley and the North American continent. When discussing so-called Americans on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, terminology becomes particularly fraught as identity categories like American cannot fully capture the complexities of the mid-nineteenth-century social and racial history in the region. When I employ the term American, I often identify individuals or groups with a racial category too. In doing so, my intention is to construct a historical narrative that most accurately reflects the historical relationship between race and American identity, a relationship that was significant to the borderlands history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.³⁹ Though Nuevomexicanos—individuals with a shared cultural identity rooted in the Mexican (and, later, American) New Mexico Territory—living on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant were American citizens through law and treaty, Americans of Anglo and northern European descent increasingly imagined Nuevomexicanos and other Hispano peoples as nonwhite and racially un-American throughout

³⁹ On whiteness and American identity, see Barbara J. Fields, “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States,” *New Left Review* 181 (May, 1990): 95-118 and James R. Barrett and David Roediger, “Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the ‘New Immigrant’ Working Class,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, no. 3 (Spring, 1997): 3-44.

the nineteenth century.⁴⁰ When readers encounter the word American throughout this text, they should remind themselves of the messy nature of the term and the ways in which American identity and belonging remained linked to whiteness throughout the nineteenth century, especially on borderlands like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

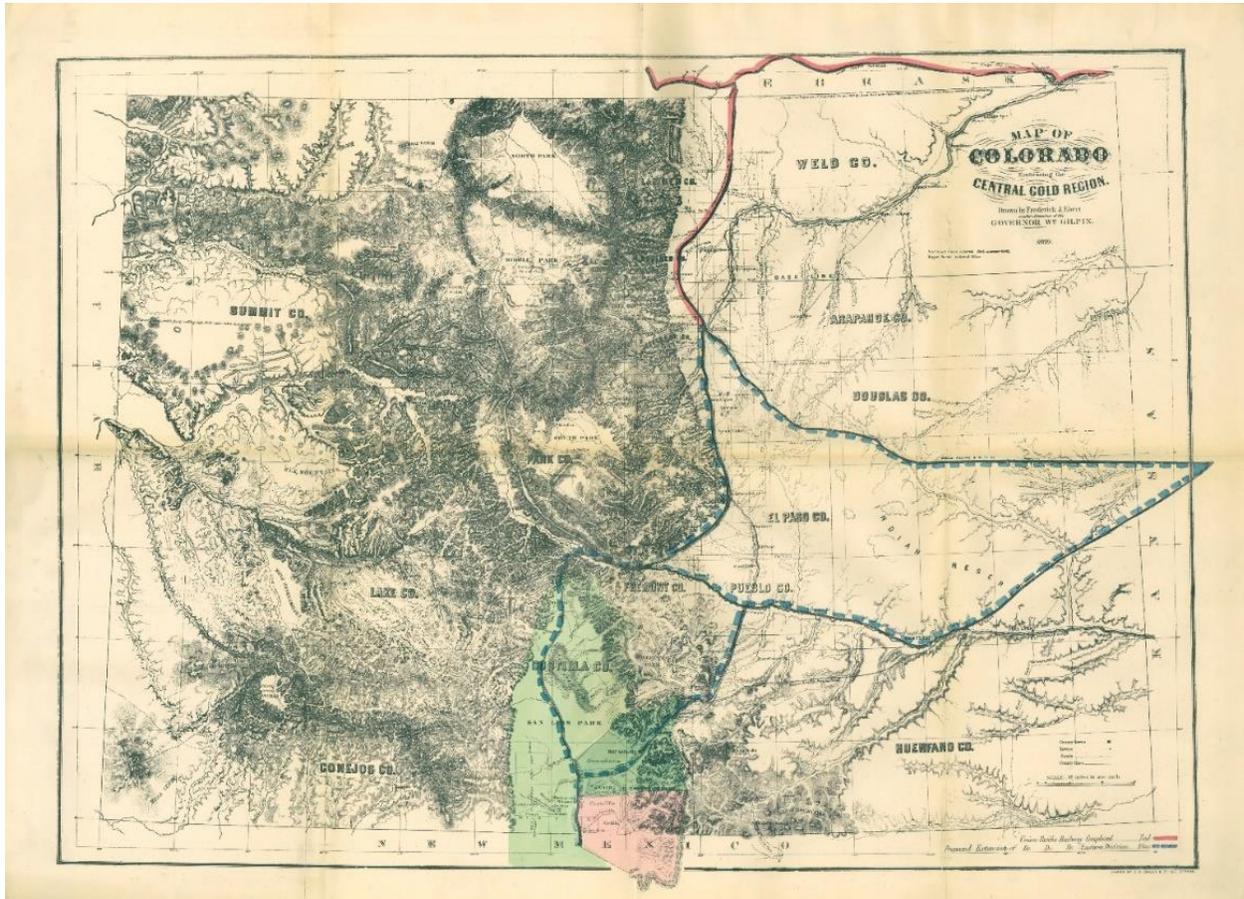


Figure 1. Map of Colorado Embracing the Central Gold Region, 1869. The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant is colored in dark green and pink. The San Luis Valley is shaded in light green. Credit: Colorado State University Water Resources Archive.⁴¹

⁴⁰ On Mexican and New Mexican identity as an expression of regional and national affiliation, see Anthony Mora, *Border Dilemmas: Racial and National Uncertainties in New Mexico, 1848-1912* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011), 10-13.

⁴¹ Frederick J. Ebert, Map of Colorado Embracing the Central Gold Region, 1869, Colorado Agriculture Bibliography, Water Resources Archive, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

CHAPTER 1

FROM BORDERED LAND TO BORDERLAND:

THE UNMAKING OF UTE SPACE IN THE SAN LUIS VALLEY, 1200 TO 1868

In early October 1863, Lafayette Head found himself surrounded by a large but expected number of guests. In the span of just a few days, various Ute bands and American officials had descended on the San Luis Valley with hopes of negotiating a treaty between the Utes and the U.S. Government. Head, who served as an Indian Agent for the U.S. Government at the time, and his wife, Martina, had quickly become hosts. Together, Lafayette and Martina welcomed Colorado Governor John Evans and other American bureaucrats to the San Luis Valley and into their home as thousands of Ute men, women, and children gathered nearby. Evans, Head, and various other officials then began negotiations with the fully assembled band of some 1,500 Tabogauche Utes and representatives of the Muache and Capote Utes despite the inability or outright refusal of other Ute bands, such as the Wemenuches, to attend the negotiations. On October 7, Evans and the American delegation bid farewell to Lafayette and Martina and departed the San Luis Valley with an agreement to allow American miners into Ute lands where they might prospect for valuable minerals in the San Juan Mountains. The Tabogauches, however, were the only signatories to the treaty; an outcome that kept the agreement from creating a lasting, stable relationship between the American government and the various Ute bands within the greater Rocky Mountain region.⁴²

⁴² On the Head family, see “Major Lafayette Head,” *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo, Colorado), March 11, 1897. On the treaty negotiations at the Head family home, see “Indian Affairs,” *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, Colorado), February 20, 1864.

This encounter at the Head family home was but one of many between Utes, Euro-Americans, and Nuevomexicanos in the mid-nineteenth century San Luis Valley, including some that occurred within the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's boundaries. Although the Head family home lay west of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, this episode contained common elements of cross-cultural encounters between the diverse peoples that populated the mid-nineteenth century San Luis Valley. Like much of the nineteenth-century San Luis Valley, the meeting at the Head family home was a space where multiple polities and languages mingled with one another. Utes may have met with English-speaking American officials at the Head home, but Spanish operated as the shared language through which discussions took place. The presence of women and families at the negotiations, including Martina Head and the hundreds of Ute women and children who travelled to the Head home, was hardly surprising; San Luis Valley women not only provided material and reproductive labor for their families but exercised economic and social power in their communities as well. The environment, too, shaped the course and setting of encounters like the 1863 treaty negotiations. The Head family's home site along the Conejos River was much like those of other families throughout the valley that distributed themselves in settlements clustered around the basin's concentrated hydrological resources. The valley's topography also determined who could feasibly participate in the negotiations. Some Ute bands, such as the Uintah and Yampah Utes, missed the negotiations because their horses "could not endure the journey" over the mountainous Colorado landscape and into the relatively inaccessible San Luis Valley.⁴³

This chapter considers how the cross-cultural nature of encounters in the San Luis Valley shaped Ute engagements with Nuevomexicano colonists and, later, with American soldiers and

⁴³ "Indian Affairs," *Rocky Mountain News*, February 20, 1864.

the American government. During the mid-nineteenth century, Nuevomexicanos and American soldiers transformed the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into a borderland as they contested the existing Ute borders that, for some time, had shaped both Native and Nuevomexicano lifeways on the parcel. Although these border contests occurred in the 1850s and 1860s, the Utes' presence in the San Luis Valley, and the creation of Ute borders in the region, stretches back centuries. This chapter begins, then, by tracing Ute arrival in the San Luis Valley and considers how Ute bands controlled the area's ecology, topography, and human populations as they constructed a Ute bordered land upon the valley floor. Although separated into distinct bands, Utes employed similar borders to control the human and animal populations residing in the San Luis Valley, including economic borders that differentiated between owner and enslaved and political borders that separated Utes and other Indigenous groups like the Comanches and Jicarilla Apaches and distinguished between Ute and Euro-American territory. Together, these borders created a Ute bordered land in the San Luis Valley that rested upon a foundation of hunting, raiding, and trading and allowed Utes to remain at the apex of the valley's economy and ecology for centuries.

After exploring the emergence of this Ute bordered land, this chapter then turns to the border contests that began after the Mexican government transferred the title to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant in 1844 into private hands, an act that extended private Nuevomexicano land tenure into the southeastern San Luis Valley. As Charles Beaubien, the grantee, and Nuevomexicano colonists moved onto the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, they took the first steps toward contesting the Ute borders that had long governed the region by introducing new types of land ownership and land use onto the grant. Nuevomexicanos also struggled, often violently, to resist Ute raids, a mainstay of the Utes' resource extraction in the valley. This chapter then closes

by exploring how Ute bands confronted the arrival of the American state in the San Luis Valley and the Army regulars and Euro-American settlers who soon followed. In the 1850s, this new American military presence held profound consequences not only for the Muache and Capote Utes, but also for Nuevomexicanos who took advantage of American challenges to Ute sovereignty to bring stability to their new colonies and, by extension, the Nuevomexicano borders they had introduced to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

In the late 1840s, when Charles Beaubien commenced settlement and sheepherding operations on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Nuevomexicano settlements existed more as colonized communities within a Ute bordered land than as would-be colonizers pushing the boundaries of Mexican power further northward.⁴⁴ In the years following the U.S.-Mexican War, however, Nuevomexicanos worked to shift the balance of power in the region. They did so by appealing to American soldiers and the American state, of which they were now citizen-subjects, and, at times, engaged in violent reprisals against Native communities. Nuevomexicanos also introduced new legal structures, settlement patterns, and modes of resource extraction that challenged existing Ute political and economic borders in the region. In the 1860s, William Blackmore and William Gilpin would enter this fractured landscape as they worked to purchase, develop, and sell portions of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Blackmore and Gilpin's involvement in the grant, however, would occur within a starkly local context shaped by the

⁴⁴ Recent scholarship in Early American history has probed the degree to which we can write American histories that recover Native agency and resist a teleological narrative of Euro-American expansion while also explaining that Native power did indeed decline and that Euro-American settlers and states successfully expanded across the North American continent. On Early American history and master narratives, see, for example, Michael Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations: How the Native New World Shaped Early North America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011) and Juliana Barr, "There's No Such Thing as 'Prehistory': What the Longue Durée of Caddo and Pueblo History Tells Us about Colonial America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (April, 2017): 203-40.

border contests and the borderland economy that developed in the 1850s and early 1860s. Much to the frustration of Blackmore and Gilpin, these early border contests provided local Nuevomexicanos and some American settlers with land rights and community relationships that would prove crucial to later attempts to resist Blackmore and Gilpin's efforts.

The Indigenous Southwest

In the 1840s, Nuevomexicano settlers represented only the latest group to arrive in the San Luis Valley. The valley's Indigenous presence stretched back for millennia and, not unlike the Nuevomexicano community, local Utes were relatively recent migrants to the region. Over the course of centuries, Utes gained control of the San Luis Valley. In the process, they constructed a set of borders that supported Ute subsistence strategies and Ute sovereignty in the region. Ute borders functioned in ways similar to what Joshua Reid described as "protocols" in his study of the Makahs; these borders were more recognized and socially enforced norms than codified practices. Utes primarily relied on political borders and economic borders to maintain control of the San Luis Valley. Ute political borders differentiated between Ute territory and lands controlled by other Native and European groups, a boundary Utes policed through violence against trespassers. Ute economic borders differentiated between enslaved persons (who could be traded) and free members of Ute bands. Utes also adapted effectively to the ecology that shaped the region's lengthy history. Animal populations, hardy plant species, and geologic cycles produced a physical landscape within which Utes developed subsistence cycles based on seasonal hunting, gathering, raiding and trading practices. Although Utes and Nuevomexicanos often found themselves at odds with one another, they did share one temporal commonality: both

groups resided in the San Luis Valley as the currents of its deep human and nonhuman past underwent profound redirection.

The San Luis Valley's modern topography came into existence sometime in the Miocene (23 to 5.3 million years ago), when the basin emerged from beneath an ancient lake and peripheral glacial features. The former lakebed—created by an expulsion of lava that depressed the valley's center as its flow coursed eastward—slowly transformed into a mountain park as the Sangre de Cristo Mountains rose in east, followed by the San Juan Mountains to the west.⁴⁵ Ecological changes soon followed. Millennia after the San Luis Valley's aqueous beginnings, humans first incorporated themselves into the landscape's ecology when Folsom peoples arrived in the region approximately 10,000 years ago.⁴⁶ Folsom is an archaeological designation that refers to a group of Paleoindians with shared practices of hunting a now-extinct species of bison and a common reliance on “Folsom points,” a stone projectile pattern commonly utilized by Paleoindians during the Folsom period.⁴⁷ Archaeologists have excavated Folsom artifacts throughout the Rocky Mountains and the Great Plains, including Folsom bison kills in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.⁴⁸ In addition to bison, archaeological sites indicate that the San Luis Valley's early human populations hunted deer, elk, turkey, and grouse, which they

⁴⁵ Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, “Water Supply Paper 240: Geology and Water Resources of the San Luis Valley, Colorado,” by C. E. Seibenthal (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), 51-54.

⁴⁶ On Folsom arrival, see Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross*, 2d ed. (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1999), 14.

⁴⁷ On the characteristics of Folsom peoples, see Mark Stiger, *Hunter-Gatherer Archaeology of the Colorado High Country* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2001), 26; on Paleoindians in Colorado, see also, Marcel Kornfeld, *The First Rocky Mountaineers: Coloradans Before Colorado* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2013).

⁴⁸ On known Folsom sites and their distribution across the Rocky Mountains and Great Plains, see David Meltzer, *Folsom: New Archaeological Investigations of a Classic Paleoindian Bison Kill* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 2.

roasted in small cooking pits.⁴⁹ Following the Folsom occupation of the San Luis Valley, Yuma peoples migrated to the region in 5,000 b.c.e.⁵⁰ Six millennia later, a new human community moved into the valley and took control of the region until the arrival of European-descended peoples in the mid-nineteenth century: the Utes.

Around 1200 c.e., Utes migrated out of the Great Basin and into the San Luis Valley where they would remain as the dominant Native group in the region for almost 700 years.⁵¹ Utes (*Núu-ci*) are a group of Numic-speaking people. Numic speakers can be separated into three categories based on dialectical differences: Nahuatalan, Sonoran, and Shoshonean. The latter grouping, Shoshonean, commonly refers to Ute peoples who have historically occupied the Great Basin. Within the Shoshonean dialect, Utes can be further subdivided by regional dialects, including Western, Central, and Southern Numic, that developed throughout the Great Basin beginning in 1,000 c.e.⁵² Although a shared Shoshonean dialect of the Numic language linked Utes to one another across North America, geographical separations formed a crucial component of Ute identity. As Utes encountered Europeans in the Southwest, these new arrivals gave geographically separate Ute communities different names that are commonly used today to distinguish between Ute bands. Though language drew borders between Utes and non-Utes (non-Shoshonean speakers) historian Virginia McConnell Simmons notes that band designations,

⁴⁹ On early human activity in the San Luis Valley and archaic sites near Great Sand Dunes National Park, see Bradford Andrews, Heather Mrzlack, Marilyn Martorano, Ted Hoefer III, and Wade Broadhead, "Modeling Late Archaic/Late Prehistoric Settlement and Subsistence in the San Luis Valley, Colorado," *Southwestern Lore* 70, no. 1 (Spring, 2004): 1-16.

⁵⁰ On Folsom and Yuma arrival, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 14-15.

⁵¹ Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 16-19. On Ute origins in the Great Basin, see Sondra G. Jones, *Being and Becoming Ute: The Story of an American Indian People* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019), 9-12.

⁵² Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The Ute Indians of Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2001), 14-15.

which, to Europeans, signified geographic and cultural borders among Utes, did not adequately capture the fluidity of Ute society in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, especially following the Utes' adoption of the horse in the 1640s.⁵³

Historians estimate that, at the time of European contact, Utes numbered somewhere from 5,000 to 10,000 people distributed in twelve bands across the Great Basin and Rocky Mountains.⁵⁴ Among the larger Ute population were the Capote and Muache Ute bands who resided in the San Luis Valley. The Capote Utes lived on the eastern slope of the San Juan Mountains near the San Luis Valley's Rio de Chama. Capote derived from the Spanish *capota*, which Simmons identifies as meaning "cloak" or "blanket."⁵⁵ The Muache Utes resided across the valley on the slopes of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Muache is Ute in origin, meaning "cedar bark people."⁵⁶ The Muache appear to have been more mobile than the Capote and ranged back and forth across the Sangre de Cristo Mountains as they made the eastern San Luis Valley and the Wet Mountain Valley further east their home.⁵⁷

In the San Luis Valley, Utes subsisted within an ecology particularly conducive to supporting ungulate populations and, later, the horse herds that would become the primary technology of Ute power in the region. The San Luis Valley is a high-desert, intermontane basin that sits at approximately 6,900 feet above sea level.⁵⁸ The Rio Grande hydrates the San Luis

⁵³ On the Ute adoption of the horse, see Simmons *The Ute Indians*, 29. On the fluidity of Ute society, see Simmons, *The Ute Indians*, 16-17.

⁵⁴ Simmons, *The Ute Indians*, 16-18.

⁵⁵ Simmons, *The Ute Indians*, 22.

⁵⁶ Simmons, *The Ute Indians*, 22

⁵⁷ Today, the Muache and Capote Ute belong to the Southern Ute Tribe, and now reside on the tribal reservation in Southwest Colorado. For a lengthier discussion of the various Ute bands that populated North America during the Spanish period, see Simmons, *The Ute Indians*, 17-23.

⁵⁸ On the physical characteristics of the San Luis Valley, see Douglas C. Andersen, "Climate, Streamflow, and Legacy Effects on Growth of Riparian *Populus angustifolia* in the Arid San Luis Valley, Colorado," *Journal of Arid Environments* 134 (2016): 104-121.

Valley. Its headwaters begin in the San Juan Mountains just east of present-day Del Norte and a series of smaller tributaries, all of which drain into the Rio Grande and eventually exit the valley at its southern terminus. Much of the valley landscape, however, retains a relatively arid character and its plant communities rely heavily on rainfall for survival. In addition to the various tree species that populated the basin's foothills, including pine, fir, spruce, and aspen, North American shortgrass species, including buffalo grass and blue grama grass, have historically covered the valley floor.⁵⁹ Both buffalo grass and blue grama are, as historian Andrew Isenberg notes, "admirably adapted to the unpredictable, semi-arid climate of the plains." Although we commonly associate these species with landscapes that lay east of the Rocky Mountains, shrub-steppe grasses thrived in the higher elevation San Luis Valley as well. There, buffalo grass and blue grama grass provided local mammals with a relatively stable food supply, except during drought periods when shortgrass species like buffalo grass and blue grama temporarily enter a dormant state.⁶⁰

A diverse animal community populated the valley too, including fish and game birds as well as large ungulates (the primary source of protein and skins in the San Luis Valley). Both bison and deer provided sustenance for Ute bands and the first Spaniards to voyage northward into the basin. Don Diego de Vargas, who led the first Spanish expedition to enter the San Luis Valley in 1696, noted the presence of a "great herd of bison on an extensive vega" during his

⁵⁹ On tree species, see Ferdinand V. Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden, of the University of Pennsylvania," in William Blackmore, *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for Emigration; with an Account of the Trenchera and Costilla Estates in the San Luis Park* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869), 201. On grasses, see "The Cow Boys Happy," *Colorado Chieftain*, May 11, 1875.

⁶⁰ On buffalo grass (*Buchloë deactyloides*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), and semi-arid ecosystems, see Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison: An Environmental History, 1750-1920* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18-23.

journey. The Spaniards, who experienced a “desire to eat meat and see live bison,” quickly chased down the herd on horseback.⁶¹ “Their approach,” however, “miscarried” and the novice hunters “only killed fourteen or fifteen bison and some very large deer” in the course of the chase.⁶² Vargas and his Nuevomexicano compatriots were amazed by the size of the herd, which included “more than five hundred head of bison,” and, as the poor results of their hunt attest, existed in a landscape where Nuevomexicanos found their ecological knowledge to be lacking.⁶³

Ute knowledge of the San Luis Valley’s ecology and topography, however, was more than sufficient to control the movement of humans and animals throughout the San Luis Valley. Vargas and his men discovered this reality firsthand on July 12 after crossing over the Ute political borders that extended around the San Luis Valley. After attempting to attract Ute bands in the region with smoke signals, the Spaniards fell prey to a violent, nighttime encounter with Ute riders wielding clubs and lances. The Utes, Vargas claimed, had mistaken the party for a group of unwanted interlopers. As the Spaniards fended off the attack, killing eight Utes in the skirmish, Vargas admitted that their survival was more a matter of luck than anything else. Fortunately, Vargas noted, “most of the men were awake and up” as the Utes descended on the Spanish camp.⁶⁴ This good luck allowed the Spanish to quickly mount a defense. According to

⁶¹ Diego de Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, 1694-97*, ed. John L. Kessell, Rick Hendricks, and Meredith Dodge (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 305. On Vargas’s journals and expeditions, see also Ruth Marie Colville, *La Vereda: A Trail through Time* (Alamosa: San Luis Valley Historical Society, 1996).

⁶² Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders*, 305.

⁶³ Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders*, 305. Lisa Brooks has argued that “different maps emerge when we center Native spaces in colonial American history.” Like Brooks, I argue that recognizing the ways in which Utes leveraged ecological and spatial knowledge of the San Luis Valley is crucial to revealing how Utes, and not Euro-Americans, set the terms of Ute and Euro-American encounters in the San Luis Valley from the seventeenth through mid-nineteenth centuries. See Lisa Brooks, “Awikhigawôgan ta Pildowi Ôjmwôgan: Mapping a New History,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (April 2018): 259-94.

⁶⁴ Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders*, 306.

Vargas, this case of mistaken identity occurred because Indigenous groups outside the valley had, for some time, been disguising themselves as Spaniards by crafting rawhide hats similar to those worn by the Spanish (with whom the Utes had peaceful relations) to enter the valley with the hopes of hunting bison without drawing unwanted Ute attention.⁶⁵ Just as a group of Apaches settled near the Sangre de Cristo Mountains had informed the Spanish, the Utes had developed a reputation for policing their political borders effectively and with intimidating force.⁶⁶ As the sudden nature of the Utes' attack on the Vargas expedition suggests, Ute bands maintained their political borders in the San Luis Valley by embarking on rapid, violent campaigns against unwanted interlopers.

Like other Indigenous groups throughout the American Southwest, Muache and Capote Utes adapted quickly and effectively to the arrival of Europeans along the continent's edge. The Utes' integration of the horse into their economy and military tactics was one such adaptation. The Utes also reoriented their economy, which was connected to what historian James Brooks has called the "raid and trade networks" of the American Southwest, to benefit from the Spanish presence in North America.⁶⁷ Taos, New Mexico was the nexus of Ute participation in the Southwestern slave trade. There, Spanish demand for slaves and other goods, such as bison robes, provided Utes with an outlet for excess human property and animal products as well as regular access to Spanish material goods and weapons.⁶⁸ For some time, Utes engaged peacefully

⁶⁵ Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders*, 306-7. On clothing and Native and European "cross-dressing" in Early America, see Ann M. Little, "'Shoot on that Rogue, for He Hath an Englishman's Coat On!': Cultural Cross-Dressing on the New England Frontier, 1620-1760," *New England Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (June, 2001): 238-73.

⁶⁶ Vargas, *Blood on the Boulders*, 302.

⁶⁷ James Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 33.

⁶⁸ On Ute participation in the "raid-and-trade networks" of the American Southwest, see Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, 117-59.

in trade with Spaniards and other Indigenous groups at Taos, especially while they remained allied with the Comanches, a group of Native peoples who controlled much of the southwestern plains. The Ute-Comanche alliance dated at least to the early 1700s, when the two groups had partnered to wage war against their Apache and Spanish rivals. By 1752, however, the Ute-Comanche alliance collapsed as the conflict with the Apaches and Spanish came to a close through treaties signed between the Comanches and Spanish officials at Santa Fe. Without a common enemy, Ute-Comanche relations deteriorated quickly as both groups sought to dominate trade with the Spanish throughout northern New Mexico.⁶⁹

Following the breakdown of Ute-Comanche relations, Capote and Muache Ute efforts to maintain both their local dominance and regional influence depended in large part on the San Luis Valley's topography and ecology. Bison herds continued to provide Utes with nutritional sustenance and valuable robes to be exchanged with Spanish traders. Topographically, the relatively inaccessible Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east and the San Juan Mountains to the west made the San Luis Valley a thoroughly remote landscape. These natural borders functioned as defensive barriers protecting the Utes from incursions by other Native peoples. Natural boundaries such as the fortress-like Sangre de Cristo Mountains aided the Utes as they fended off unwanted trespasses across their political borders by Navajo, Jicarilla Apache, and Comanche raiders.⁷⁰ Until sustained northward Nuevomexicano colonization efforts in the mid-nineteenth-

⁶⁹ Historian Pekka Hämäläinen has argued that, without a common enemy, a Comanche-Ute rivalry over access to Spanish markets at Taos and Santa Fe was hardly surprising. Pekka Hämäläinen *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 49-50.

⁷⁰ On Ute relations with the Spanish and neighboring Native groups in the Southwest, see Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, 150-59. On the breakdown of the Ute-Comanche alliance, see Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 49-50.

century, ecology and topography ensured that the San Luis Valley remained a center of Ute power.

When Nuevomexicanos did arrive in the San Luis Valley, they did so on Ute terms.⁷¹ Many of the first Nuevomexicanos to pass through the San Luis Valley arrived as slaves taken through Ute participation in the Southwestern slave trade.⁷² Ute economic borders facilitated the flow of non-Ute individuals through the San Luis Valley by identifying them as moveable commodities much like horses or bison hides. Ute political borders also proved useful in structuring the movement of free Nuevomexicanos into the San Luis Valley. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Utes allowed for the establishment of small Nuevomexicano communities in the southern end of the San Luis Valley. As Nuevomexicano communities moved onto the valley floor, like the group of colonists led by Tata Atanasio to the settlement of Los Rincones in 1849, they settled as territorial subjects located on the edge of the Ute bordered land. In other words, Nuevomexicano settlement did not mean that the San Luis Valley had become a Nuevomexicano bordered land. Instead, local Utes strategically incorporated Nuevomexicano communities into the valley's periphery to provide a human buffer zone against potential incursions by their rivals, especially the Comanches.⁷³ By the mid-nineteenth century, however, Nuevomexicano settlers began to journey further into the valley to establish additional

⁷¹ On Ute activity in the San Luis Valley following the arrival of Europeans in Early America, see Thomas Andrews, "Tata Atanasio Trujillo's Unlikely Tale of Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and the Settling of Colorado's San Luis Valley," *New Mexico Historical Review* 75, no. 1 (2000): 9-13; see also, Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

⁷² Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, 33.

⁷³ On Ute accommodation tactics, see Andrews, "Tata Atanasio Trujillo's Unlikely Tale of Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and the Settling of Colorado's San Luis Valley," 4-41 and Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 189-91.

settlements. As they did so, they disrupted Ute borders and introduced Nuevomexicano ones predicated on a sheep economy and a settler colonial vision for the landscape's future.⁷⁴

Nuevomexicano Borders in the Ute Bordered Land

In the late 1840s and early 1850s, the San Luis Valley became a Ute-Nuevomexicano borderland, a space where Nuevomexicano settlers contested existing Ute borders as they attempted to construct new ones that aligned with the shepherding economy of the San Luis Valley colonies. Unlike Ute borders, which demarcated a large area as Ute territory and facilitated the economic circulation of human and animal property through the Ute bordered land, Nuevomexicano borders structured space around sedentary, settler colonial communities. As Nuevomexicano families and sheep moved onto the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, they introduced new legal borders predicated on legal ownership of land rather than of resources associated with certain lands, spatial boundaries that clustered community populations in *plazas* rather than as mobile bands, and economic borders that not only reoriented the landscape to suit shepherding operations but reserved the condition of enslavement for Native peoples, not Nuevomexicanos. Nuevomexicano borders, the colonists hoped, would support the prosperous expansion of Nuevomexicano communities across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Ute sovereignty and control of the San Luis Valley, however, would prove to be at odds with the

⁷⁴ Kelly Lytle Hernández argues that “settler colonialism differs from other, more familiar systems of colonialism because it is not organized around resource extraction or labor exploitation.” Instead, Hernández argues that, in a settler colonial project, “settlers invade in order to stay and reproduce while working in order to remove, dominate, and, ultimately, replace the Indigenous populations.” See Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1711-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 7.

Nuevomexicano attempts to colonize the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In order to realize their settler-colonial vision for the landscape's future, Nuevomexicanos transformed the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into a borderland as they contested the Ute borders that had long-governed the landscape.

This borderland period began in the late 1840s and early 1850s when settlers arrived on the grant following the Mexican government's official attempted to extend its authority into the valley through the Spanish-Mexican land grant system. The land grant system, which dated to 1598 in Spanish (and later Mexican) New Mexico, transferred property from the Spanish (and later Mexican) government to wealthy subjects with the means to support settlement by poor Nuevomexicanos.⁷⁵ The Spanish-Mexican land grant system mixed recognition of private title over massive parcels of government land for the grantee(s) with the requirement that the grantee(s) transfer small, private property rights to Nuevomexicano settlers for homes and small, subsistence plots as well as usufruct rights over pasture and timber lands throughout the grant.⁷⁶ The land grant system transferred titles for large parcels of land to individual property owners through *empresario* grants, which required that the grantee settle their new holdings with colonists as a condition of their acquisition of the land from the state. *Empresario* grants like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant produced, as historian Maria Montoya has aptly put it, a "feudal"

⁷⁵ Arnold Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns of the Culebra River Villages of Southern Colorado (1850-1950)," (M.A. Thesis, University of New Mexico, 1992), 18.

⁷⁶ For an overview of the Spanish-Mexican land grant system, the different types of land grants, and American legal interpretation of land grant titles, see Maria Montoya, *Translating Property: The Maxwell Grant and the Conflict over Land in the American West, 1840-1900* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 157-90 and Allan Greer, *Property and Dispossession: Natives, Empires, and Land in Early Modern North America* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 120-24.

landscape where settlers labored for the benefit of the grantee and reaped only minimal rewards.⁷⁷

In 1844, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's title fell to Narciso Beaubien and Luis Lee following their successful petition to Manuel Armijo, the governor of the New Mexican Territory.⁷⁸ Narciso Beaubien was the son of Charles Beaubien, a wealthy wool merchant, Frenchman who had naturalized as a Mexican citizen, and landowner in northern Mexico. Luis Lee, an American, had partnered with Narciso to acquire the grant. Together, Narciso and Luis likely hoped to settle the grant with sheep and laboring Nuevomexicanos to supply wool to southern markets in Taos and Santa Fe.⁷⁹ The 1846 outbreak of the Mexican-American War soon scuttled their ambitions. With New Mexico under siege by American forces, colonization in the northern territory at the scale Beaubien and Lee envisioned was hardly feasible. Unfortunately for the would-be grantees, the chaos of the 1847 Taos Revolt, a moment of violent resistance by Nuevomexicanos and Puebloan Indians against occupying American soldiers and their supporters within the New Mexico Territory, resulted in the death of both Beaubien and Lee.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Montoya, *Translating Property*, 163-67.

⁷⁸ Documents concerning the application's approval, subsequent transfer to Carlos Beaubien, and legal recognition by the U.S. Congress on the recommendation of U.S. Surveyor General William Pelham can be found in "Copies of Act of Congress of June 21, 1860 and of Various Documents and Other Records Relating to the Title of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates, Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant, Situate in the San Luis Park, Colorado," box 1, folder 4, William Blackmore Land Records, 1856-1870, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

⁷⁹ Brayer has suggested that Narciso's involvement with the Sangre de Cristo Grant occurred because his father had already maximized the amount of land he could receive from the Mexican government and, as a result, sought to use Narciso and Lee as proxies to expand Charles Beaubien's wool operation. See Herbert Brayer, *William Blackmore: The Spanish-Mexican Land Grants of New Mexico and Colorado, 1863-1878* (Denver, Colo.: Bradford-Robinson, 1949), 60-62.

⁸⁰ On the Taos Revolt, see William A. Keleher, *Turmoil in New Mexico, 1846-1868* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952), 116-18.

Following the death of Narciso Beaubien and Luis Lee, Charles Beaubien acquired the title to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Beaubien inherited Narciso's share in the grant and purchased Lee's share to settle the outstanding debts owed to him by Lee's estate. Although the United States had recently taken over the New Mexico Territory in the U.S.-Mexican War, American occupation did not interfere with Beaubien's acquisition of the entirety of the parcel.⁸¹ Beaubien's new holding was massive. Located along the San Luis Valley's southeastern edge, the one-million-acre Sangre de Cristo Land Grant took the Sangre de Cristo Mountains for its eastern border and the Rio Grande for most of its western edge. The northern boundary of the grant stretched from the Sierra Blanca Massif to the Sangre de Cristo Pass. Its southern edge lay just south of *el Cerro de las Utas* (Ute Mountain).⁸² For Beaubien, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was something of a shepherd's paradise; shrub-steppe species like blue grama and buffalo grass covered the grant's flat land and foothills. Shortly after the U.S.-Mexican War came to a close in 1848, Beaubien attempted to capitalize on the grant's organic wealth. He began by commencing settlement operations on the grant that culminated in the establishment of Costilla, the first permanent Nuevomexicano outpost on the grant, in 1848.

At Costilla, Charles Beaubien ruled as the feudal lord, or *patron*, of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant where he and the grant's shepherds ran sheep cross the grant's ample pasture. As Costilla grew from a small shepherding camp into a permanent Nuevomexicano settlement, the

⁸¹ Narciso Beaubien died unmarried without any children and Lee's shares were sold to Charles Beaubien to settle outstanding debts, on the detail of their deaths and transfer of property, see Brayer, *William Blackmore: The Spanish-Mexican Land Grants of New Mexico and Colorado, 1863-1878* (Denver, Colo.: Bradford-Robinson, 1949), 62-3; on the founding of Costilla, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 64; see also, Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 83-6.

⁸² The boundaries of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant are described in, "Copies of Act of Congress of June 21, 1860 and of Various Documents and Other Records Relating to the Title of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates, Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant, Situate in the San Luis Park, Colorado."

local community constructed a town that would better support continuous resource extraction by a sedentary community, unlike the Utes who relied on mobile bands to gather wealth from the San Luis Valley. Settlers constructed Costilla according to the standard, rectangular *plaza* layout of Nuevomexicano settlements throughout the North American Southwest. Costillans farmed small *vara* (strip) plots granted to them by Beaubien. Some also herded sheep on the *vega*, a designated section of common property where settlers held usufruct rights to pasture and timber.⁸³ Often, settlers acquired their sheep through a *partido*, a contract between a wealthy sheep owner who loaned his sheep to a hired shepherd. The shepherd then raised the sheep for the length of the contract, returned the agreed upon number of animals to the owner, and kept any surplus animals for their own use.⁸⁴ On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Beaubien ran sheep on *partido* and shipped Nuevomexicano wool south to Taos and Santa Fe.⁸⁵ Nuevomexicanos at Costilla also dug an *acequia*, a community ditch that conveyed water to the settlers' *vara* plots.⁸⁶ Though Nuevomexicanos established market-based relationships to Taos and Santa Fe by trading in wool, the *vega* and *acequia* at Costilla reflected the hybrid nature of property on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sheep may have headed to market through private owners like Beaubien, but

⁸³ On characteristics of Nuevomexicano settlements in the Southwest, see John Mack Faragher, "Americans, Mexicans, Métis: A Community Approach to the Comparative Study of North American Frontiers," in *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*, edited by William Cronon, George Miles, and Jay Gitlin (New York: Norton, 1992), 100-1; on Nuevomexicano settlement patterns in the San Luis Valley, see Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns of the Culebra River Villages," 28-31; see also Alvar Ward Carlson, "Rural Settlement Patterns in the San Luis Valley: A Comparative Study," *Colorado Magazine* 44, no. 2 (1967): 111-28.

⁸⁴ On the basics of *partido* contracts, see Montoya, *Translating Property*, 142-3; on *partido* on the Sangre de Cristo Grant, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 11-6.

⁸⁵ Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 62-4.

⁸⁶ Costilla's earliest *acequia*, the Acequia Madre Ditch, dates to 1853. On adjudicated water rights in Costilla, see "Decree," June 14, 1889, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources.

common property regimes on the parcel privileged equitable, rather than commodified, access to some natural resources in communities like Costilla.

Other Nuevomexicano settlements followed behind Costilla.⁸⁷ Nuevomexicanos founded San Luis de La Culebra in 1852 and soon dug the San Luis Peoples' Ditch, an *acequia* now recognized as the oldest claimed water right in the state of Colorado.⁸⁸ Like Costilla, the community at San Luis structured their life and labor around a central *plaza*. Nuevomexicanos built the *plaza* at San Luis in what architectural historian Arnold Valdez describes as a vernacular form of the Early Territorial style in New Mexico that spread across the San Luis Valley as Nuevomexicano towns proliferated.⁸⁹ While some Nuevomexicanos constructed their dwellings with wood, most utilized native stone and adobe as the primary building materials on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.⁹⁰ As Valdez notes, later towns like Chama often chose to forego the traditional *plaza* layout, which concentrated homes in a square or rectangle, and instead opted to organize themselves in a "settlement pattern called *la cordillera*," which distributed homes in a dispersed, linear fashion, often along a water source.⁹¹

⁸⁷ On the Nuevomexicano settlements that followed Costilla, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 85-8.

⁸⁸ Patricia J. Rettig, "Tracing the Source of Irrigation: An Examination of Colorado Ditch Company Collections in Archival Repositories," *Journal of Western Archives* 3, no. 1 (2012): 3.

⁸⁹ Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns of the Culebra River Villages," xvi. Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley define vernacular architecture as "simply common architecture-what most people build and what they use" and is stylistically influenced by regional practices and materials. "Common," however, should not be understood in a "pejorative way." See Thomas Carter and Elizabeth Collins Cromley, *Invitation to Vernacular Architecture: A Guide to the Study of Ordinary Buildings and Landscapes* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2005), 7-13.

⁹⁰ Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns of the Culebra River Villages," 56.

⁹¹ Valdez argues that the later emergence of *cordillera* style communities is due to the emergence of Fort Massachusetts and (later) Fort Garland. These military forts, according to Valdez, provided a defensive role on the grant that made the *plaza* (a defensive spatial form) unnecessary. *Cordilleras*, too, were likely better suited to agricultural plots zoned by *varas*.

As new Nuevomexicano settlements began to dot the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's landscape throughout the 1850s, they shared one significant commonality beyond architecture and spatial layouts: a relationship to Charles Beaubien. Beaubien was French by birth, but a naturalized Mexican citizen who traded sheep and wool out of Taos and Santa Fe before coming to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. As a merchant in the North American Southwest, Beaubien, who likely spoke both French and Spanish, appears to have developed a facility with English as well. Beaubien was one of a select few among Costilla County residents who signed contracts in both English and Spanish before the Clerk of Costilla County. Beaubien also developed a relationship with Ceran St. Vrain, a French trader who immigrated to the United States and, like Beaubien, acquired land in southwestern Colorado and northern New Mexico through the Spanish-Mexican land grant system.⁹² By 1862, Beaubien had sold land near San Luis to St. Vrain where St. Vrain established a local flouring mill.⁹³ Beaubien also provided land for the original Nuevomexicano colonists who settled the grant alongside him, who often provided the labor necessary to run his sheep on *partido*. Additionally, Beaubien transferred both private property rights to the colonists' home sites and *vara* strips as well as common property rights for timber collection and grazing on a section of the *vega* near San Luis in 1863.⁹⁴

While Charles Beaubien had operated as *patron* the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant since the 1840s, a network analysis of the records of the Clerk of Costilla County reveals that Paula

Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns of the Culebra River Villages," 30.

⁹² On St. Vrain's entry into the New Mexican fur trade and his partnership with Charles Bent, see Maria Mondragon-Valdez, "Challenging Domination," 55.

⁹³ "Agreement between William Gilpin and Ceran St. Vrain," Deed Book 1, December 30, 1862, Costilla County Clerk and Recorder's Office, San Luis, Colorado, 205.

⁹⁴ Costilla's residents received their rights through a documented legal transfer from Carlos Beaubien. See "Beaubien Deed to Settlers," Records of the Land Rights Council, Water Resources Archive, Colorado State University.

Beaubien, Charles's spouse, was commonly involved with contracts on the grant (Figure 1). Alongside Charles, Paula regularly signed her name on property transfers involving the Beaubiens and local Nuevomexicanos as well as on contracts with land developers like William Gilpin, Ceran St. Vrain, and Lucien Maxwell. Montoya has argued that "the story for Mexican American women is a declensionist tale" in the American Southwest, one defined by "a loss of autonomy as individuals capable of contracting and holding property became wards of their husbands" following the region's incorporation into the U.S. legal system.⁹⁵ As Montoya notes, New Mexican law in the American New Mexico Territory only allowed married Nuevomexicano women to control and dispose of property either with the consent of their husband or after their husband's death, after which they acquired a legal status of *feme sole*.⁹⁶ Yet Paula Beaubien appears to have actively engaged in contract making alongside Charles acting as a second signatory to contracts involving the Beaubien's landholdings (see Figure 2). On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, local circumstance and relationships between community members often challenged social borders imposed by American law and, in the case of Paula Beaubien, gendered norms that limited women's control over property.

Although the Nuevomexicano borders that shaped land use and subsistence practices through private and common property ownership of physical space differed from Ute borders, not all Nuevomexicano boundaries were at odds with Ute economic borders that still persisted in the San Luis Valley. Nuevomexicanos, like valley Utes, embraced the captive raiding and

⁹⁵ Montoya, *Translating Property*, 76.

⁹⁶ In the 1850s, New Mexican territorial legislation and courts clarified that married women retained the right to control dotal property, or property the acquired as part of a dowry, but that, with the territory now under U.S. control, that married "could engage in property transactions only if their husbands cosigned the contract." In the case of Paula, it is unclear if Charles was consenting to the contracts or if the two acted jointly. See Montoya, *Translating Property*, 57-63.

enslavement practices that had shaped southwestern economic and kinship networks for centuries. Nuevomexicanos acquired slaves in two ways: through trade with the Indigenous slavers like Utes, Apaches, and Comanches or through raids on Indigenous communities. As

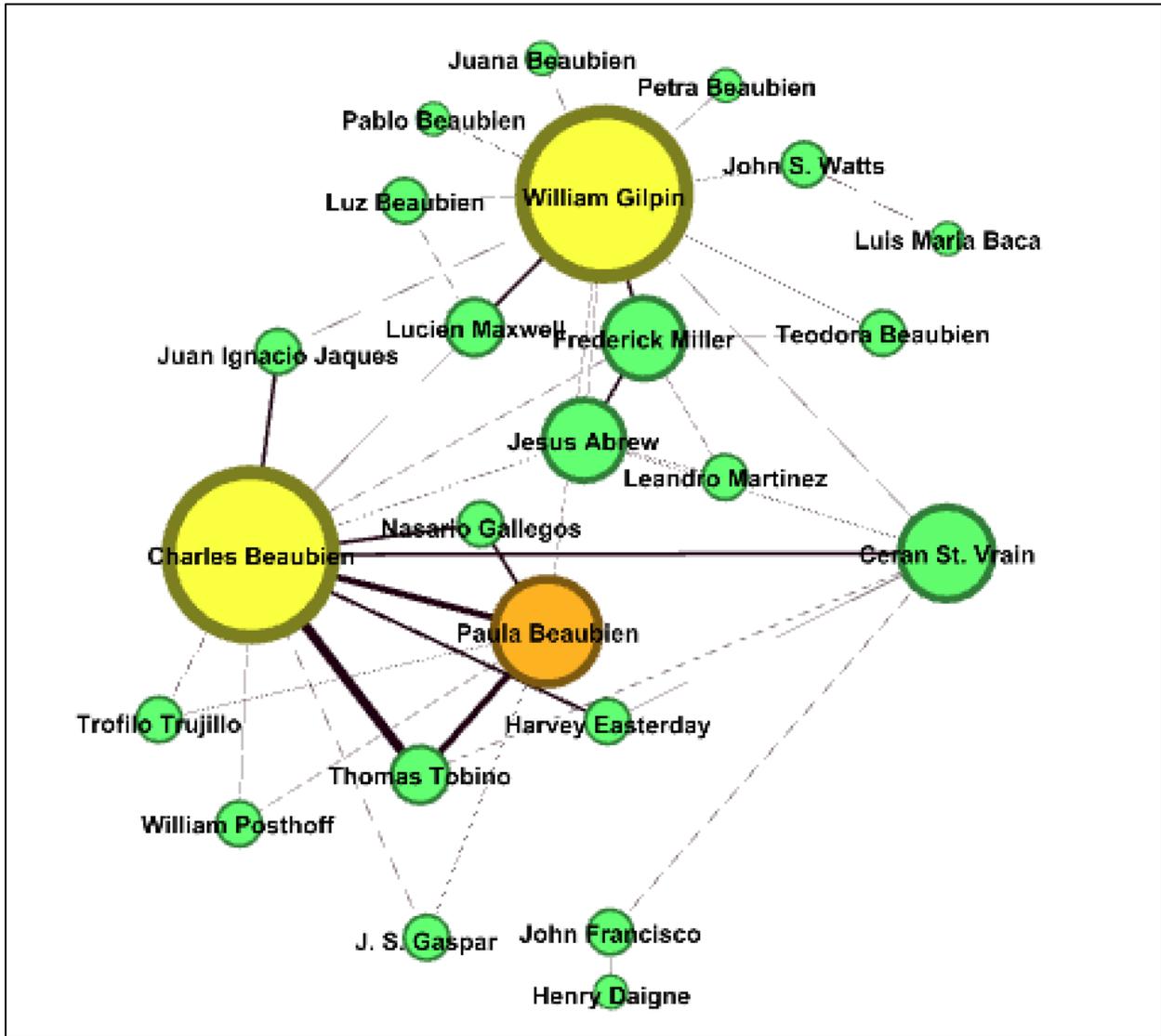


Figure 2. Network of property transfers in Costilla County connected to Charles and Paula Beaubien, 1862 to 1864.⁹⁷ Node (circle) size indicates the frequency of appearances for each individual in the Costilla County Clerk’s record books for the period covered in the network with larger nodes representing a higher frequency of appearance. Edge (connective line) size indicates the number of connections between two individuals with thicker edges representing a higher quantity of connections.

⁹⁷ The records incorporated in this network can be found in Deed Book 1, Costilla County Clerk and Recorder’s Office, 200-42. Network visualized in Gephi. Bastian M., Heymann S., and Jacomy M, *Gephi*, 2009, gephi.org.

historian William Kiser notes, captive raiding by non-Natives in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico hinged on the formation of “civilian militias” that “typically avenged—or tried to avenge—Indians’ captive raids.”⁹⁸ Retaliatory raids, however, were not simply acts of revenge; Nuevomexicano raiders also benefited economically from raiding. In 1864, for example, the Denver-based *Daily Commonwealth* reported that a “party of citizens of Colorado” embarked on a “raid into the Navajo country” and returned with “plunder of all kinds, including horses, cattle, and sheep.”⁹⁹ “About a dozen captive women and children” were among the “plunder,” who the Coloradans likely took as slaves.¹⁰⁰ In the midst of a violent conflict over the place of slavery in the American nation, the actions taken by these citizens of Colorado—ostensibly a pro-Union territory in the Civil War—made visible the continued importance and acceptance of slavery in the nineteenth-century United States.¹⁰¹

The *Commonwealth*’s report, while critical of raids on Navajo communities by Coloradans, seemingly justified the raids by explaining the value slave labor—enslaved women’s labor in particular—to families in the San Luis Valley. Navajo women, the *Commonwealth* noted, were particularly skilled artisans. According to the paper, Navajo women’s “blankets” were “unequaled” in the North American Southwest.¹⁰² The rhetoric employed here by the *Commonwealth* is peculiarly reminiscent of newspaper reports printed in the wake of lynchings

⁹⁸ William Kiser *Borderlands of Slavery: The Struggle Over Captivity and Peonage in the American Southwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 62. On the history of slavery in Colorado and New Mexico, see also Estévan Rael-Gálvez, “Identifying Captivity and Capturing Identity: Narrative of American Indian Slavery in Colorado and New Mexico, 1776-1934,” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2002).

⁹⁹ “A New Phase in the Navajo War,” *Daily Commonwealth* (Denver, Colorado), May 18, 1864.

¹⁰⁰ “A New Phase in the Navajo War,” *Daily Commonwealth*, May 18, 1864.

¹⁰¹ For an overview on the relationship of the American West to the American Civil War, see Stacey L. Smith, “Beyond North and South: Putting West in the Civil War and Reconstruction,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 6, no. 4 (December, 2016): 566-91.

¹⁰² “A New Phase in the Navajo War,” *Daily Commonwealth*, May 18, 1864.

across the United States in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Often, reports on lynchings employed language that justified extralegal acts of violence and, in turn, transformed lynch mobs into just actors. Though the *Commonwealth* asked if the captured Navajo women and children should be “returned to their own people at the Reservation at Bosque Rodondo in New Mexico,” the report was laden with language that rationalized the captors’ actions—an attitude most clearly communicated through descriptions of enslaved women’s labor.¹⁰³

Native women may have also performed sexual and reproductive labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant by, perhaps unwillingly, providing sexual pleasure and bearing children for their owners, as may have been the case for Marcelina Vigil. In 1870, Juan Santisteran, the census enumerator for Costilla, indicated in his records that Marcelina, listed as an Indian woman, resided in the household of Albino Vigil, a farmer identified as a white man, and Francisca Vigil, Vigil’s spouse who Santisteran identified as a white woman. The Vigil household’s fourth and final member, Placida Vigil, was a two-year old child recorded in the census as Indian. Census enumerators often differentiated between familial household relationships and others, such as tenancy, by providing a full name and surname for an individual and their dependents who lived in a household but were not familial dependents of the listed head of household. Marcelina, listed only as “Marcelina” with a lengthy dash preceding her name to denote her dependency to Vigil Albino, also received an occupational enumeration of “domestic,” a signal that she resided within the home, remained dependent to Albino Vigil, yet

¹⁰³ “A New Phase in the Navajo War,” *Daily Commonwealth*, May 18, 1864. The language used by the *Daily Commonwealth* bears a striking resemblance to reports on lynching in the American Southwest in which newspapers often decried the lack of an efficient court system to adjudicate crimes which, in turn, explained lynchings as the only reasonable response by community members. See William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, *Mob Violence against Mexicans in the United States, 1848-1928* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 23-33.

was not a child of Albino and Francisca (children old enough to work yet not employed outside the home nor designated as the female head of the family would be listed as “at home”). It is quite plausible that the Vigils had enslaved or purchased Marcelina, brought her into the household through baptism, as was the common practice in Nuevomexicano households with Indigenous slaves, and that Marcelina then carried Placida for Albino, whose surname the young Indian child received.¹⁰⁴ Although consensual relationships certainly existed between nineteenth-century Nuevomexicanos and Native peoples, it is also possible that Marcelina experienced sexual violence in the Vigil home—an experience that would not have been uncommon for enslaved persons throughout the nineteenth-century United States. Either for sexual pleasure or reproduction, many enslaved women in the American Southwest, much like those in other regions of the United States, likely lived as both “domestic and intimate partners” for white men.¹⁰⁵

Despite Nuevomexicano dominance over enslaved Native peoples and the ongoing economic growth of towns like Costilla and San Luis, Nuevomexicanos hardly resided in a safe and secure landscape. Instead, Nuevomexicano communities lived peaceably among local Utes

¹⁰⁴ For the Vigil family’s census records, see U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States (1870)*, New Mexico, Taos Co., Costilla, roll M593_896, p.596A, RG 29, NARA, Washington, D.C.

¹⁰⁵ Tiya Miles identifies this dual role of enslaved Native women in the *pays d’en haut* and argues that European men’s “eroticize objectification of Native women” precipitated a sense that “they possessed an unbridled right to the bodies of Indian women, with or without the consent of Native families or the women themselves.” See Tiya Miles, *The Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits* (New York: The New Press, 2017), 48. On enslaved women’s lives and labor, including reproductive labor, see also Jennifer L. Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Sasha Turner, *Contested Bodies: Pregnancy, Childrearing, and Slavery in Jamaica* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

for only as long as the San Luis Valley bands would allow. Often, cordial relationships like the one historian Thomas Andrews described between Los Rincones and San Luis Valley Utes (likely Capotes) broke down when Utes raided Nuevomexicano villages for domestic animals and slaves.¹⁰⁶ Nuevomexicano traders also fell prey to Ute raids, as was the case for an unnamed Nuevomexicano man whose son Utes enslaved after raiding a trading expedition in 1856.¹⁰⁷ Alone, Nuevomexicanos could only implement new legal borders in their colonies and adapt existing economic borders to incorporate enslaved Native bodies into Nuevomexicano homes. They proved unable, however, to bound their own lands in ways that kept Utes from ignoring Nuevomexicano borders; a failure made visible by continued Ute raids on Nuevomexicano colonies. The arrival of the American state, its settlers, and military forces, however, would finally allow Nuevomexicanos to erode Ute sovereignty over the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

The Demise of the Ute Bordered Land

Although Americans like Zebulon Pike and John C. Fremont passed through the San Luis Valley in the first half of the nineteenth century, the U.S. military did not establish a permanent presence in the region until the 1850s.¹⁰⁸ In 1852, Army regulars constructed Fort Massachusetts on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant along Ute Creek, five years after Nuevomexicanos initially

¹⁰⁶ Andrews, "Tata Atanasio Trujillo's Unlikely Tale of Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and the Settling of Colorado's San Luis Valley," 4-41.

¹⁰⁷ "Southern Colorado," *Daily Commonwealth*, December 30, 1863.

¹⁰⁸ On Pike in the San Luis Valley, see Jared Orsi, *Citizen Explorer: The Life of Zebulon Pike* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 159-203; on Fremont, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 55-62 and Tom Chaffin *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 426.

settled on the parcel.¹⁰⁹ Although Fort Massachusetts provided protection for Nuevomexicanos, many of whom had become U.S. citizens through the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the growing American involvement in the region also diminished Ute power. No longer were Nuevomexicanos alone in contesting Ute political borders, the American state and its military forces joined the colonists in challenging Ute sovereignty in the San Luis Valley. With the newfound protection of the U.S. Army, Nuevomexicanos challenged Ute economic borders on the grant as they sought the return of Ute captives to Nuevomexicano families. The material environment also introduced new pressures to the valley floor as an extended dry period likely reduced the availability of native grasses, thereby increasing pressure on the already dwindling bison populations upon which Utes relied. As resources, including bison and enslavable people, grew in scarcity, San Luis Valley Utes intensified the strategy that had supported their lifeways for centuries, especially in times of hardship: raiding.¹¹⁰ Though raids had rewarded San Luis Valley Utes in the past, the valley's new American military presence ensured that raids on local communities would not go unpunished. In the 1850s and 1860s, American military reprisals ultimately drove Utes from the San Luis Valley, an outcome that, at least temporarily, brought new stability to Nuevomexicano communities and borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

While raiding for subsistence resources, slaves, or simply for retribution was a well-established tactic in the North American Southwest by the mid-nineteenth century, especially in times of scarcity, the Utes' raids in the late 1840s and early 1850s may have been a product of

¹⁰⁹ On the construction of Fort Massachusetts, see Brandon Reynolds, "The Denizens of Manifest Destiny: An Archaeological Examination of Life on the Military Site of Fort Garland, Colorado" (M.A. thesis, University of Nevada Reno, 2013), 37.

¹¹⁰ Blackhawk describes this as a longstanding Ute practice of "taxing New Mexicans" residing within Ute territory. See Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 192-93. Pekka Hämäläinen describes this as a form of "reversed colonialism" in *The Comanche Empire*, 1-2.

increased ecological pressures made more intensive by an extended period of drought.¹¹¹ Between 1848 and 1855 (when Ute raids in the San Luis Valley reached their height), valley precipitation fell consistently below the 800-year historical mean with 1851 being an exceptionally dry year at seven inches (approximately 60%) below the historical mean (see Table 1 and Figure 3). In the San Luis Valley, a relatively arid shrub-steppe ecosystem, decreased precipitation could result in a poor growth year for local buffalo grass and blue grama grass.¹¹² In the mid-nineteenth century, a sustained drought period meant that San Luis Valley grasses would be less effective at photosynthesizing, thereby producing less biomass for Ute horses and local ungulates, like bison, deer, and elk, who faced increasing competition for resources as Nuevomexicanos introduced sheep into the valley’s southern end. A shift in climate, while not the root cause of growing regional scarcity, likely added increased pressure to valley resources that Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and animal populations relied on to extract energy (in the form of animal nutrition, which was then transformed into food or material wealth).

Table 1. Precipitation (inches) in the San Luis Valley, 1848 to 1855. Annual mean based on precipitation data from 1035 to 1855.¹¹³

Year	1848	1849	1850	1851	1852	1853	1854	1855	Annual Mean
Precipitation	9.17	10.55	10.26	5.2	9.14	9.12	11.06	11	12.92

¹¹¹ On mid-nineteenth-century drought, see Connie A. Woodhouse, Jeffrey J. Lukas, and Peter M. Brown, “Drought in the Western Great Plains, 1845-56: Impacts and Implications,” *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 83, no. 10 (October 2002): 1485-93.

¹¹² On the effects of drought timing on shortgrass species, see Nathan P. Lemoine, Robert J. Griffin-Nolan, Abigail D. Lock, Alan K. Knapp, “Drought Timing, not Previous Drought Exposure, Determines Sensitivity of Two Shortgrass Species to Water Stress,” *Oecologia* 188, no. 4 (December 2018): 965-75.

¹¹³ Precipitation data taken from tree cores near Great Sand Dunes National Park. See U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *A Multicentury Reconstruction of Precipitation for Great Sand Dunes National Monument, Colorado*, by Henri D. Grissino-Mayer, Christopher H. Basin, and Thomas W. Swetnam (Fort Collins, CO: Mid-Continent Ecological Science Center, 1998).

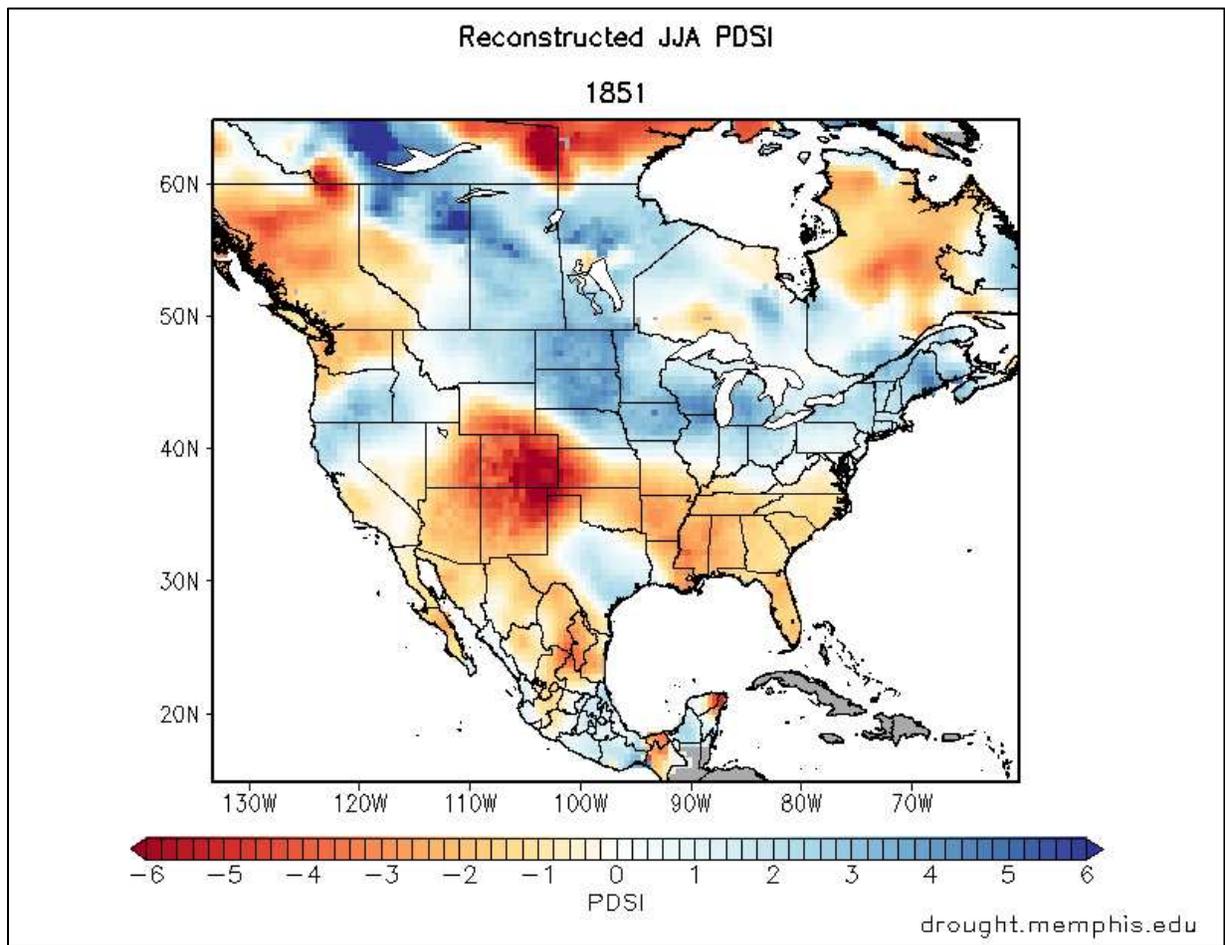


Figure 3. Reconstructed drought severity, North America, 1851. Generated by the North American Drought Atlas.¹¹⁴

Reports generated by James Calhoun, the Governor of the New Mexico Territory, suggest that the sharp 1851 drop in precipitation that occurred in the San Luis Valley was part of a dry climate pattern that covered much of Colorado and New Mexico during 1851 (Figure 3).

In February 1851, Calhoun noted that “during the month past the Indians have been active in every direction, and for no one month during the occupancy of the Territory by American troops

¹¹⁴ For historical drought severity data, see the North American Drought Atlas, <http://drought.memphis.edu/NADA/>. See also, Edward R. Cook, Richard Seager, Richard R. Heim Jr., Russel S. Vose, Celine Herweijer, and Connie Woodhouse, “Megadroughts in North America: Placing IPCC Projections of Hydroclimatic Change in a Long-Term Paleoclimate Context,” *Journal of Quaternary Science* 25, no. 1 (January 2010): 48-61.

have they been more successful in their depredations.”¹¹⁵ A month earlier, Calhoun indicated that the raids in January 1851 were aided by the fact that the “weather was extremely moderate.”¹¹⁶ Moderate winter weather likely helped the Utes to move across the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, as they did in January when they raided a settlement “near the Arkansas River and carried off all the provisions, animals, and money they could find.”¹¹⁷ By June 30, Calhoun reported on talks between U.S. officers and a group of Apaches “residing east of the Rio del Norte [Rio Grande]” during which a Colonel Munroe distributed corn to the Apaches “as they complained of being in a starving condition.”¹¹⁸ Similarly, Calhoun described a group of Puebloan Indians he met with in August as “exceedingly poor; and wretched, indeed, did they look.”¹¹⁹ Navajo raiders had recently descended upon the Pueblos referenced in Calhoun’s letter.

Violence in New Mexico only continued to escalate, and, on October 1, Calhoun reported that “the number of depredations committed during the past month have not been exceeded in any previous month since I [Calhoun] have been a resident of this territory.”¹²⁰ In lean times, as Calhoun’s reports suggest, the Utes and other Native groups in Colorado and New Mexico responded as they had for centuries by raiding available resources from their neighbors. The U.S. Army responded to Ute raids on American and Nuevomexicano settlements by engaging in military reprisals against valley Utes throughout the late 1840s and early 1850s. As American

¹¹⁵ J. S. Calhoun to L. Lea, report, February 2, 1851, in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1851* (Washington, D.C.: Gideon & CO., 1851), 186.

¹¹⁶ Calhoun to Lea, February 2, 1851, 186.

¹¹⁷ Calhoun to Lea, February 2, 1851, 186.

¹¹⁸ J. S. Calhoun to L. Lea, report, June 30, 1851, in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1851*, 197.

¹¹⁹ J. S. Calhoun to L. Lea, report, August 31, 1851, in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1851*, 200-1.

¹²⁰ J. S. Calhoun to L. Lea, report, October 1, 1851, in U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, for the Year 1851*, 204.

reprisals made clear, the American state would not recognize Ute political borders or tolerate the raids on non-Utes that Ute political borders sanctioned. Often, American reprisals occurred after reports of Ute raids regardless of whether Ute bands in the region were responsible.¹²¹ In the San Luis Valley, for example, U.S. Army Colonel Thomas Fauntleroy responded to a December 1854 raid by Tierra Blanco, a Muache leader, by mounting a series of campaigns out of Fort Massachusetts against Muache and Capote Utes as well as Jicarilla Apache bands in 1855. Following Fauntleroy's campaign, which resulted in the destruction of lodges and trade goods as well as the capture of many Ute women and children, Ute bands signed new but temporary treaties with the United States in 1855.¹²²

The construction of Fort Garland furthered the U.S. Army's efforts to control the Muache and Capote Utes and to prevent raids on local Nuevomexicano communities. In 1858, Captain Thomas Duncan and the Army regulars stationed at Fort Massachusetts surveyed a new site for a more strategically located outpost. They named the new station Fort Garland after Colonel John Garland, a Union General during the Civil War.¹²³ A viewshed analysis of the Fort Massachusetts and Fort Garland sites suggests the relocation effort was a successful one (Figures

¹²¹ Gregory Michno argues that many reports of Ute raids in New Mexico were likely fabricated by American citizens seeking financial resources through the 1796 Trade and Intercourse Act, which allowed for citizens to receive compensation from the U.S. government for property taken in Indian raids. See Gregory Michno, *Depredation and Deceit: The Making of the Jicarilla and Ute Wars in New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), 5-9. In contrast, Blackhawk accepts evidence of widespread Ute raids which, he argues, occurred as Ute bands were "simultaneously fighting rivals for access to diminishing bison herds and raiding villages in times of scarcity." See Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 192-93.

¹²² Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 198-99. On violent conflict between Ute bands and the U.S. Army in southern Colorado and northern New Mexico, see Averam Bender, *The March of Empire: Frontier Defense in the Southwest, 1848-1860* (1952; reprint, New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 149-70 and Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue: The United States Army and the Indian, 1848-1865* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), 143-52.

¹²³ On the relocation of Fort Garland, see Reynolds, "The Denizens of Manifest Destiny," 37-40.

4 and 5). In comparison to Fort Massachusetts, Fort Garland provided soldiers with a 35.4 percent increase in visibility, a difference of 2.73 square miles.¹²⁴ Additionally, Fort Garland was more strategically attuned to the topography of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Its location allowed soldiers to better spot potential Ute incursions from the west rather than unlikely attacks from the east, a direction to which Fort Massachusetts was better suited. By employing localized spatial knowledge of both the San Luis Valley landscape and the behaviors of Ute warriors in the siting and construction of Fort Garland, the U.S. Army effectively leveraged the San Luis Valley's physical geography to enhance their capacity to fend off Ute incursions, a strategy that Utes had employed successfully to control the region for centuries.

American prohibitions on the Southwestern slave trade also hindered Ute economic viability in the region. While both San Luis Valley Utes and Nuevomexicanos had long exchanged captives for material goods, American prohibitions on trade in slaves taken in Native captive raids disproportionately affected Utes in the San Luis Valley.¹²⁵ Nuevomexicanos, while also engaged in enslavement practices, largely escaped prohibition on slavery until the passage of the thirteenth amendment following the Civil War, a reality apparent in the *Denver*

¹²⁴ Visibility distance based on average height of American males in the mid-nineteenth century and the maximum distance at which the unaided human eye can perceive distant objects along the horizon. On height, see Max Roser, Cameron Appel, and Hannah Ritchie, "Human Height," *Our World in Data*, last modified May 2019, <https://ourworldindata.org/human-height>. On human vision and the earth's horizon, see Kristina M. Rand, Margaret R. Tarampi, Sarah H. Creem-Regehr, and William B. Thompson, "The Importance of a Visual Horizon for Distance Judgement under Severely Degraded Vision," *Perception* 40, no. 2 (2011): 143-54. Maps throughout this thesis were created using ArcGIS® software by Esri. ArcGIS® and ArcMap™ are the intellectual property of Esri and are used herein under license. Copyright © Esri. All rights reserved. For more information about Esri® software, please visit www.esri.com.

¹²⁵ These prohibitions were largely enforced through American officials, who prohibited the purchase of captives and instead worked to repatriate enslaved persons held by Native groups. See Kiser, *Borderlands of Slavery*, 66-87.

Fort Massachusetts Viewshed Analysis

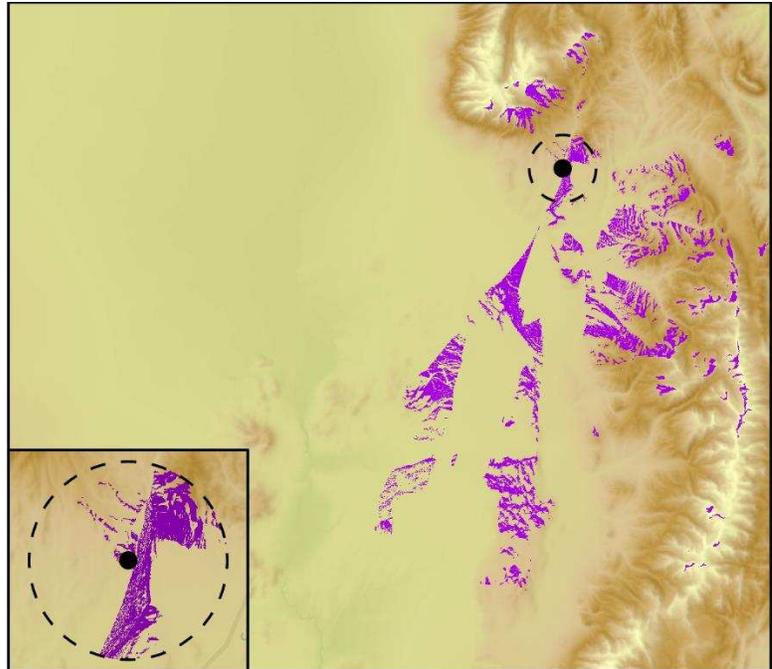
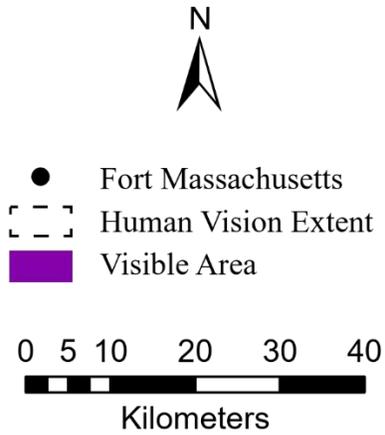


Figure 4. 50km viewshed at Fort Massachusetts, Colorado. Inset map visualizes Fort Massachusetts Viewshed at 5km (maximum extent of unaided human vision). Sources: National Elevation Dataset, ESRI.

Fort Garland Viewshed Analysis

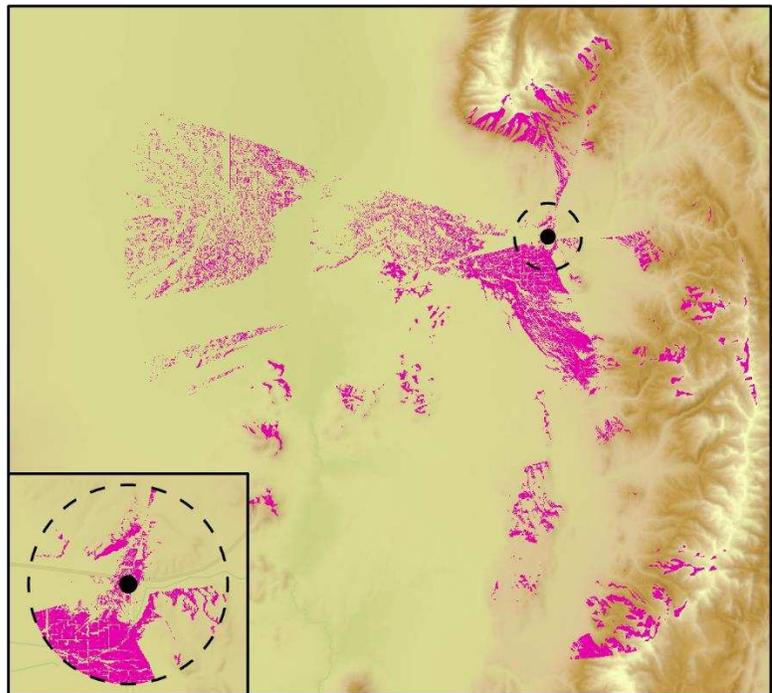
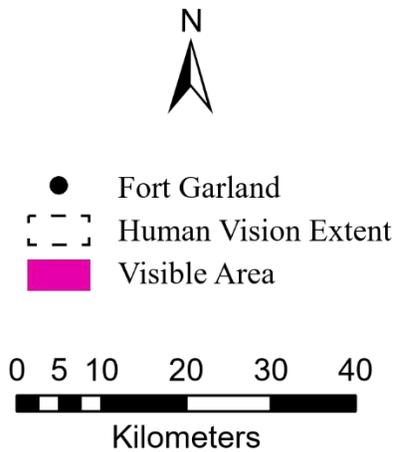


Figure 5. 50km viewshed at Fort Garland, Colorado. Inset map visualizes Fort Garland viewed at 5km (maximum extent of unaided human vision). Sources: National Elevation Dataset, ESRI.

Commonwealth's 1864 report of captive raiding on Navajo communities.¹²⁶ Unlike local Utes, who largely benefited from the income gained by trading enslaved persons and not from their labor, Nuevomexicanos successfully dodged new prohibitions on slavery. Some Nuevomexicano masters initially maintained control over their slaves through debt peonage, a longstanding form of southwestern slavery involving “a contractual verbal agreement between creditor” that “immediately shifted in favor of the master once a labor deal was finalized.” The result of these debts, Kiser has argued, was that they “typically ensured perpetual bondage.”¹²⁷ In 1867, however, the United States Congress passed the Peon Law, which abolished debt slavery and legally affected the status of enslaved persons in the American Southwest.¹²⁸

After 1867, Nuevomexicanos continued to resist post-Civil War prohibitions on slavery by claiming enslaved Indigenous peoples as family members, again demonstrating the uneasy status and irregular enforcement of American law in the San Luis Valley. After the passage of the thirteenth amendment, which abolished slavery and involuntary servitude, Nuevomexicanos found that they may potentially lose ownership and control of their slaves in the post-Civil-War American West. They surmounted their potential loss of enslaved labor by testifying to the past incorporation of enslaved Indigenous peoples into Nuevomexicano families—an action that normalized slavery in the San Luis Valley through the language of family. This occurred through baptism, where the enslaved individual was baptized and claimed as a child of a Nuevomexicano family, or through assertions of familial affiliation between enslaved persons and masters before the Clerk of Costilla County. For example, enslaved Navajo women like Juana Maria and Maria Antonia came before the J. L. Gaspar, the county clerk alongside their masters, Mariano Pacheco

¹²⁶ “Southern Colorado,” *Daily Commonwealth*, December 30, 1863.

¹²⁷ Kiser, *Borderlands of Slavery*, 16.

¹²⁸ Kiser, *Borderlands of Slavery*, 162-66.

in the case of Juana and Juan Andres Trujillo in the case of Maria, to testify to their incorporation into the valley's Nuevomexicano families.

If Juana and Maria had previously identified themselves by Navajo names, these were likely taken from them in the course of baptism.¹²⁹ As they stood before Gaspar, both master and slave testified that each enslaved woman had “lived a number of years in the family” of the Nuevomexicano master who had always “given her the liberty of going wherever she wished to go and of doing any and all things which she may have wished to do in the same manner.” The testimony assumed that women taken captive, transported out of Navajo country and onto the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, and then forced into servitude under Nuevomexicano families might realistically exercise freedom of movement throughout Costilla County and, perhaps, out of the San Luis Valley.¹³⁰ As the presence of Juana Maria and Maria Antonia in county records suggests, the economic consequences of American prohibitions on southwestern slavery and slave trading disproportionately affected Ute bands. Through debt peonage and familial recapture, Nuevomexicanos on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant appear to have escaped the force of American legal borders, which removed distinctions between free and enslaved persons and appear to have disproportionately targeted Ute economic borders in the San Luis Valley. In effect, U.S. law eroded the Ute economic borders surrounding slavery while failing to challenge the adoption of those borders by local Nuevomexicanos.

¹²⁹ Kiser and Gálvez identify this practice as a commonplace method of asserting Nuevomexicano control over enslaved captives and integrating them into Nuevomexicano households throughout the American Southwest. See Kiser, *Borderlands of Slavery*, 166 and Gálvez, “Identifying Captivity and Capturing Identity,” 103-10.

¹³⁰ The records regarding Juana Maria and Maria Antonia can be found in Deed Book 1, Costilla County Clerk and Recorder's Office, 11-12.

American military force and prohibitions on slavery alone, however, do not entirely explain the increasingly tenuous hold that Ute bands exercised over the San Luis Valley. Territorial politics in Colorado also shaped Ute-American political relationships in the late 1850s and 1860s. While the San Luis Valley, despite its Nuevomexicano and Ute populations, had remained distant in the minds of Coloradans occupied with discoveries of gold along the Front Range in the late 1850s, Coloradans soon shifted their ambitions southward by the 1860s following rumors of mineral deposits in the San Juan Mountains.¹³¹ Euro-American miners hoping to reach the San Juan mines, however, faced a significant obstacle: the Ute bands that controlled the San Luis Valley. In 1860, a “Mr. Rennington,” who had recently returned from the San Juan mines, captured the constant fear the Utes’ presence in the San Luis Valley instilled in Euro-American prospectors.¹³² Describing the journey of a “well armed and equipped” group of prospectors led by a “Captain Baker,” Rennington was relieved to report that Baker’s company had only encountered “but small bands of Utes” and had continued along without violent conflict.¹³³ Had the Utes materialized in “sufficient numbers,” Rennington claimed, “it is probable that they would have been in open opposition to Capt. Baker and his associate prospectors.”¹³⁴

In addition to supporting the expansion of American military power in the Colorado Territory, territorial politicians sought to resolve the perceived Ute threat peaceably. For their part, the San Luis Valley Utes found that the economic, ecological, and political tactics that had

¹³¹ On the Colorado gold rush and its implications for relationships between Euro-Americans and Native communities, see Elliot West, *The Contested Plains: Indians, Goldseekers, and the Rush to Colorado* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998).

¹³² “The San Juan,” *Western Mountaineer* (Golden City, Colorado), December 13, 1860.

¹³³ “The San Juan,” *Western Mountaineer*, December 13, 1860.

¹³⁴ “The San Juan,” *Western Mountaineer*, December 13, 1860.

sustained them for centuries were no longer tenable in a San Luis Valley that increasingly operated under the purview of the American state. As the Ute bordered land dissolved in the 1860s, the Utes decided that treaties offered by Colorado's territorial governors offered the most viable path forward for their community. Over the course of the 1860s, Ute leaders met with various American politicians, including Colorado Governor John Evans, and Indian agents, like Lafayette Head, with whom they signed a series of treaties in 1863 and 1868. While the 1863 treaty had opened Ute territory in southern Colorado to mining and immigrant traffic, a resurgence in Ute raids in the following years led the American government to seek a more permanent solution for white miners and settlers in the Colorado Territory. In 1868, the Utes capitulated to the United States, signing a treaty that relocated the San Luis Valley bands to the Southern Ute Indian Reservation in the far southwest of the Colorado Territory. This act redrew the political borders of the San Luis Valley and placed Ute communities inside the boundaries of the reservation system, a kind of bordered land that, at least for the United States, confined Native sovereignty in a more acceptable position vis-à-vis the Federal Government.¹³⁵

Prohibitions on slavery and a declining supply of animals and other natural resources may have encouraged Ute raids on Nuevomexicano and white settlements in the Colorado Territory, but American and Coloradan political interests ultimately drove the removal of the San Luis Valley Utes to the far corners of the Colorado Territory.¹³⁶

For some of the San Luis Valley's Nuevomexicanos, however, the arrival of Euro-American immigrants and the American government was a welcome one. In January 1863,

¹³⁵ Treaty with the Ute, US-Ute Nations, March 2, 1868, in Commission on Indian Affairs, *Laws and Treaties*, vol. II: Treaties, ed. Charles J. Kappler (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), 990-96.

¹³⁶ On the decline of Ute power in the San Luis Valley and American military and economic expansion, see Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land*, 200-25.

Charles Beaubien died leaving behind a vibrant sheep economy in need of exporters to move wool out of the San Luis Valley.¹³⁷ While some white immigrants travelled to the valley hoping to prospect for gold and other minerals in the San Juan Mountains, others filled the vacuum Beaubien left behind as they integrated themselves into the grant's community as wool exporters.¹³⁸ Ferdinand Meyer, a German immigrant and valley merchant, embodied the latter category of arrivals. Meyer came to the San Luis Valley sometime in the 1860s, established a trading post in Costilla, and, in the wake of Beaubien's death, Meyer and Co. regularly sold wool to outside markets throughout the following decades.¹³⁹

Nuevomexicanos also relied on the valley's new American presence to seek reparations from past encounters with the Utes. In 1862, for example, a Nuevomexicano man who lived along the Rio Culebra arrived at Fort Garland to appeal to Colonel Samuel F. Tappan for the safe return of his son, whom the Utes had captured in a raid six years prior when the boy was only eight years old. The man, who had recently engaged with local Utes as part of a trading venture, "was discovered and recognized by the son who," according to an editorial in Denver's *Daily Commonwealth*, "was anxious to return home with him but was denied that privilege by his kidnappers."¹⁴⁰ In exchange for the boy, the Utes demanded "five ponies, a sack of flour, and

¹³⁷ On Beaubien's death, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 66.

¹³⁸ Simmons identifies most of these early migrants as soldiers, homesteaders hoping to farm wheat, or eager prospectors hoping to discover mineral wealth in the San Juan Mountains, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 125-39. On the logistics of travelling to the San Juan Mountains and transporting ore in the mid-nineteenth century, see Cathy Kindquist, "Communication in the Colorado High Country," in *The Mountainous West: Explorations in Historical Geography*, edited by William Wyckoff and Lary M. Dilsaver (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 114-37.

¹³⁹ Meyer was active in Costilla by at least 1867, when he served as Costilla's representative on the Colorado Board of Trade, see "The Board of Trade," *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), December 26, 1867; Meyer & CO regularly advertised sheep for sale, for example see "For Sale," *Colorado Daily Chieftain* (Pueblo, CO), October 14, 1874

¹⁴⁰ "Southern Colorado," *Daily Commonwealth*, December 30, 1863.

other provisions in return,” a price the Nuevomexicano father was unable to pay.¹⁴¹ Instead, as the editorial noted, he sought “military recourse” from Colonel Tappan, who convinced the father that the boy would be returned to him “without cost.”¹⁴² For local Nuevomexicano communities, Fort Garland operated not only as a looming fortification that discouraged Ute raids but also functioned as a site where they might seek restitution from the American government.

Alongside the U.S. Army’s presence at Fort Garland, the arrival of American government officials proved useful to both Charles Beaubien and local Nuevomexicano communities. When Governor Armijo first transferred the title for the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to Narciso Beaubien and Luis Lee, the property was described only by its metes and bounds, a geography that prevented Beaubien from effectively appraising parcels of the land for sale should he so choose.¹⁴³ In 1856, U.S. Surveyor General William Pelham affirmed the boundaries of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as Charles Beaubien had identified them in the 1850s, thereby lending the property legitimacy under the American legal system. According to Pelham, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant ranged from the Sierra Madre formation in the north down to one league south of the Rio Costilla, with the Rio Grande marking most of its western boundary and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains defining its eastern edge.¹⁴⁴ In sum, the grant encompassed almost one million acres and, on June 21, 1860, the United States Congress affirmed Pelham’s

¹⁴¹ “Southern Colorado,” *Daily Commonwealth*, December 30, 1863.

¹⁴² “Southern Colorado,” *Daily Commonwealth*, December 30, 1863.

¹⁴³ “Copies of Act of Congress of June 21, 1860 and of Various Documents and Other Records Relating to the Title of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates, Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant, Situate in the San Luis Park, Colorado,” 8.

¹⁴⁴ “Copies of Act of Congress of June 21, 1860 and of Various Documents and Other Records Relating to the Title of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates, Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant, Situate in the San Luis Park, Colorado,” 15.

survey and officially recognized Beaubien's title to the land under American law.¹⁴⁵ In later years, the timing of Pelham's survey would prove fortuitous as American officials limited the quantity of land that could be affirmed from titles originating from the Spanish-Mexican land grant system to eleven leagues per grantee.¹⁴⁶ The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, having already been affirmed in 1860, remained exempt from such legislation.¹⁴⁷ For the moment at least, the existing legal and social borders that structured Nuevomexicano settlement on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant appeared to be compatible with the growing interests of the American state and new settlers within the San Luis Valley.

Conclusion

The dwindling power and eventual removal of the Capote and Muache Utes from the San Luis Valley was both social and ecological. Over the course of centuries, the Utes made social *and* ecological choices that contributed to their eventual dispossession at the hands of the American state.¹⁴⁸ San Luis Valley Utes adapted their lifeways quite effectively after the arrival

¹⁴⁵ Pelham recommended that the grant be approved on December 30, 1856 although Congress does not appear to have recognized Beaubien's claim under U.S. jurisdiction until 1860. "Copies of Act of Congress of June 21, 1860 and of Various Documents and Other Records Relating to the Title of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates, Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant, Situate in the San Luis Park, Colorado," 20-22.

¹⁴⁶ This limit was imposed through executive action by Secretary of the Interior Jacob Cox in 1869. See Montoya, *Translating Property*, 92-94.

¹⁴⁷ The Sangre de Cristo Grant's unique status was a subject of interest in *Tameling v. U.S. Freehold and Immigration Company*, where the Supreme Court revisited Cox's authority to impose limits on the size of former Mexican land grants. See Montoya, *Translating Property*, 171-73.

¹⁴⁸ As Hämäläinen has argued, allowing our historical subjects to make choices is necessary to writing compassionate narratives, even when those stories end in failure for the very human people we seek to study. See, Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire*, 360.

of Europeans in North America, both by incorporating the horse into the Ute economy and by establishing Nuevomexicano communities as territorial subjects with whom the Utes could trade and raid depending on their economic needs. Until the 1850s, the San Luis Valley remained a part of what historian Michael Witgen calls the “Native New World,” a historical space where we see “Native peoples refashioning a New World on Indigenous terms” rather than on European ones.¹⁴⁹ For centuries, the Utes had successfully controlled the Native New World in the San Luis Valley by regulating Euro-American access to the valley’s land and resources through raiding, trading, and enslaving—all from horseback.¹⁵⁰

After the 1848 incorporation of the San Luis Valley and much of the American Southwest into the United States and the arrival of the American military at Fort Massachusetts in 1853, Ute sovereignty in the region became increasingly tenuous. Increased ecological pressures on Ute power, including a growing sheep population at the valley’s southern end and an extended dry period from 1848 to 1855, contributed to the decline of Ute sovereignty in the San Luis Valley. Legal pressures such as American prohibitions on the southwestern slave trade and, later, slavery also eroded the borders that had governed Ute space in the San Luis Valley for centuries. Instead, Nuevomexicano lifeways, predicated on shepherding and the incorporation of enslaved peoples into Nuevomexicano households through baptism and kinship claims, proved more compatible with the legal and economic borders imposed by the American government.

¹⁴⁹ Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 33.

¹⁵⁰ By 1868, the United States was well-versed in subordinating Native peoples through treaty negotiations, a strategy they cultivated, in part, through encounters with Native peoples in the Great Lakes region. See Witgen, *An Infinity of Nations*, 356-7.

By the 1860s, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant began shifting towards an economy and political status that was increasingly oriented towards the growing American state and economy. For a brief moment, Nuevomexicano borders remained compatible with American ones. The grant's Nuevomexicano borders, however, came under duress as Blackmore and Gilpin worked to upend the traditional contours of the grant's sheep economy and sought to insert themselves as the new beneficiaries of Nuevomexicano *and* Euro-American labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Just as Nuevomexicanos had contested Ute borders in the San Luis Valley, Blackmore and Gilpin would similarly attempt to erase Nuevomexicano borders from the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. And, as the grant's existing residents would soon discover, Blackmore and Gilpin were harbingers of a new cultural order.

CHAPTER 2

BORDERING THE UTE-NUEVOMEXICANO-AMERICAN BORDERLAND, 1864-1878

On a brisk October morning of 1868, William Gilpin, Ferdinand Hayden, and their horses likely made little commotion as they trotted through the San Luis Valley. The valley, like much of Colorado and New Mexico, buzzed with excitement over rumors of a renewed Ute-American conflict and final reports from a federal boundary survey at the Colorado-New Mexico border.¹⁵¹ Gilpin and Hayden, however, remained focused on their task at hand: surveying the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In just a few short weeks, Hayden, a federal geologist, would travel across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant with Gilpin to determine the extent of the grant's agricultural and mineral resources. Gilpin hoped that Hayden's findings would help him to appraise, develop, and sell with the help of English and American financiers.¹⁵² For his participation in the survey, Hayden received 10,000 shares in the United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company (USFLEC), which Gilpin and his partner William Blackmore had formed to develop and sell portions of the grant.¹⁵³ Upon his return, Hayden promptly wrote to Blackmore to report that the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant "could not have been more perfectly adapted to the wants of an agricultural region if it had been arranged by the hand of art."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ "The Utes," *Daily Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, Colorado), October 10, 1868 and "The Southern Boundary," *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, October 24, 1868.

¹⁵² On Gilpin, Blackmore, and Hayden's efforts on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, see Herbert O. Brayer, *William Blackmore: The Spanish-Mexican Land Grants of New Mexico and Colorado: 1863-1878* (Denver: Bradford-Robinson, 1949).

¹⁵³ William Blackmore to Ferdinand Hayden, February 16, 1871, box 2, folder 5, William Blackmore Collection, 1872-1890, Fray Angelico Chavez History Library, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

¹⁵⁴ Ferdinand V. Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden, of the University of Pennsylvania," in William Blackmore, *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for*

Although Hayden’s October sojourn into the San Luis Valley was likely unimportant to many local residents of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Hayden’s presence on the grant reflected a broader relationship between nineteenth-century science and land and mineral speculation in the American West. On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Hayden operated in the role William Goetzmann ascribed to him: the “Gilded Age explorer.”¹⁵⁵ In 1868, Hayden was at once a scientist and a capitalist—twin roles whose professional distinctions blurred as Hayden purported to have objectively evaluated a parcel of land in which he now held financial interests. Hayden, Gilpin, and Blackmore, however, hardly exhibited the “rugged qualities” of Turner’s “frontiersman” who transformed the wilderness into an American region. Hayden and Blackmore met and bonded over train rides and recreational excursions in Wyoming and Utah and Gilpin used his political reputation to access credit to purchase the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.¹⁵⁶ Instead, Hayden, Gilpin, and Blackmore represented a new type of pioneer—one dependent on American legal, scientific, racial, and economic borders to transform places already settled by Native and Nuevomexicano communities into American landscapes.

This chapter outlines how Blackmore and Gilpin contested the existing Nuevomexicano borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as they endeavored to introduce a new, distinctly

Emigration; with an Account of the Trenchera and Costilla Estates in the San Luis Park (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869), 197.

¹⁵⁵ William Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the West* (Austin: Texas Historical Association, 1966), 489.

¹⁵⁶ Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *Rereading Frederick Jackson Turner: “The Significance of the Frontier in American History” and Other Essays*, edited by John Mack Faragher (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 42. On Hayden and Blackmore, see Jack E. Deibert and Brent H. Breithaupt, *Tracks, Trails & Thieves: The Adventures, Discoveries, and Historical Significance of Ferdinand V. Hayden’s 1868 Geological Survey of Wyoming and Adjacent Territories* (Boulder: Geological Society of America, 2016), 58-64.

capitalist vision to the parcel.¹⁵⁷ Although Gilpin and Blackmore sought to promote the grant's settlement in order to bolster American expansion into the Mountain West, the partners' desire to profit from the sale of grant lands and the corporate development of mineral resources drove their intrusion into the San Luis Valley. They may have portrayed settlement as a desirable outcome, but profits remained the primary objective. The borders Beaubien and the Nuevomexicano settlers had introduced to the valley, however, challenged Gilpin and Blackmore's ability to easily profit from the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

In order to transform the grant's borders into ones that would better support their financial ambitions, Blackmore and Gilpin contested the Nuevomexicano borders by introducing new scientific, economic, racial, and legal borders to the grant. Scientific borders employed disciplines like biology and geology to map and divide the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's environment by its available resources. These scientific borders readily morphed into economic ones as Blackmore, Gilpin, and Hayden associated the resource zones they produced through scientific observation with an appropriate economic use. Legal borders, which bounded both property claims and individual rights, and racial borders, which differentiated between white and Nuevomexicano settlers on the grant, followed closely behind the movement of American settlers and the American state onto the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In the course of their venture, Blackmore and Gilpin attempted, at various points, to leverage these borders in order to profit from the sale of portions of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to white settlers from Europe and the United States.

¹⁵⁷ On Gilpin's acquisition of the grant, see Thomas Karnes, *William Gilpin: Western Nationalist* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), 302-6; for documents on the transfer of interests from Beaubien's heirs to Gilpin, see "Beaubien Deeds," Land Rights Council, Records of the Land Rights Council, 1958-2009, Water Resources Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Morgan Library, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO.

But Blackmore and Gilpin's endeavors, despite their ambitious optimism, did not ultimately succeed on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. By the late 1870s, the USFLEC fell into tax delinquency and Blackmore died by suicide.¹⁵⁸ While the San Luis Valley's remote location behind the imposing Sangre de Cristo Mountains offers some explanation for the failure of Blackmore and Gilpin's efforts, local resistance to Blackmore and Gilpin's scheme more fully explains their venture's demise. Ultimately, Nuevomexicano' common property rights and identity proved to be the greatest obstruction to Gilpin and Blackmore's plans for two reasons: (1) the grant's large common property rights prevented the easy differentiation of the landscape by type of resource extraction and the specialization of labor throughout the grant and (2) the existing distribution of rights and labor through the *plaza*, *vara*, and *vega* were not readily incorporated into the grid system that the U.S. relied on to facilitate land sales. Yet, resistance did not stop the emergence of an American bordered land on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant; if anything, Nuevomexicano's mobilization of American legal borders as tools of resistance against dispossession and racialization only hastened the grant's transformation into an American bordered land. Even though some of the grant's residents found themselves at odds with one another during this tumultuous period, both Nuevomexicanos and land speculators alike participated in and sought to benefit from the construction American borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

¹⁵⁸ On the USFLEC, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 122-23. On Blackmore's death, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 315-18.

Scientific Borders

Enticing investors and Euro-American settlers to participate in Blackmore and Gilpin's venture required a new portrait of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant; one devoid of productivity but full of potential. Scientific exploration stood ready to construct that image. Throughout the nineteenth century, the American public viewed scientific inquiry as a powerfully rational and, more importantly, objective enterprise.¹⁵⁹ Aware of public trust in scientific expertise, Blackmore and Gilpin hired Ferdinand Hayden, a prominent geologist, to survey the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's resources.¹⁶⁰ When Ferdinand Hayden accompanied William Gilpin on their 1868 tour of the grant, he did so as an enlightened, objective arbiter on an expedition to reveal the inner workings of the grant's environment for the benefit, not only of Blackmore and Gilpin, but of the expanding American republic.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ On scientific inquiry in the Early Republic and nineteenth century, see Andrew Lewis, *A Democracy of Facts: Natural History in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011); on the roots nineteenth-century scientific objectivity, see Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jacob, *Telling the Truth About History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994) 15-51.

¹⁶⁰ On Hayden, see Mike Foster, *Strange Genius: The Life of Ferdinand Hayden* (Niwot, CO: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995); see also, James Cassidy, *Ferdinand V. Hayden: Entrepreneur of Science* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000); on the Hayden Survey, see Richard Bartlett, *Great Surveys of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962); see also, William Goetzmann, *Exploration and Empire: The Explorer and the Scientist in the Winning of the West* (Austin: Texas Historical Association, 1966), 489-529; on the circumstances leading to Hayden's hiring by Blackmore, see Deibert and Breithaupt, *Tracks, Trails & Thieves*, 58-68. On Blackmore, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*; see also, Anthony Hamber, *Collecting the American West: The Rise and Fall of William Blackmore* (Salisbury, UK: Hobnob Press, 2010).

¹⁶¹ The Colorado press hailed Hayden as a scientific hero who, with his geological skills, would reveal the wealth and potential of the territory, see "Professor Hayden," *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), November 20, 1868; see also, "Local Matters," *Colorado Transcript* (Golden City, CO), July 28, 1869.

Hayden, however, was hardly the first American explorer or scientist to pass through the San Luis Valley. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike and his company became the first Americans to find their way to the San Luis Valley in 1807. John Fremont's 1848 expedition marked the second, U.S. government-backed venture to pass over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. While Pike and Fremont were not university-trained scientists, their expeditions did produce knowledge and, perhaps more importantly, maps of the San Luis Valley.¹⁶² In the early-nineteenth century, Americans prized geographical knowledge that would aid future government expeditions and American settlers.¹⁶³ Pike's expedition was the first to put the San Luis Valley in a geographical relationship to the existing territory held by the United States, and Fremont further refined Pike's reports with more accurate maps.¹⁶⁴ Locating the San Luis Valley and placing the region on maps and in the American consciousness was a minor yet significant step that later generations of enterprising Americans would capitalize on.

And Gilpin was about as enterprising as they came in the mid-nineteenth century. After acquiring financial interests in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant in 1864, Gilpin worked to add to the maps of the San Luis Valley produced by Pike and Fremont. While Pike and Fremont primarily concerned themselves with accurately identifying the location of the San Luis Valley, Gilpin sought to position the San Luis Valley as an environment of opportunity the likes of

¹⁶² These reports and maps were what sociologist Bruno Latour has called "immutable and combinable mobiles." Immutable mobiles, according to Latour, are objects of knowledge, often in the form of tables or charts, that allow knowledge of distant places to be "conveniently at hand" for the mobiles' users, even if those users have never travelled to the place in question. See Bruno Latour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987), 227.

¹⁶³ Jared Orsi raises this point in his discussion of Thomas Jefferson and "Enlightenment geography." See Orsi, *Citizen Explorer*, 169.

¹⁶⁴ On Pike in the San Luis Valley, see Orsi, *Citizen Explorer*, 159-203; on Fremont, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 55-62 and Chaffin, *Pathfinder*, 426.

which American settlers and miners could scarcely resist. Gilpin began this task in 1864, shortly after he involved himself with the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, when he hired Nathaniel Hill, a geologist and chemistry professor at Brown University, to survey and report on the grant's resources. Unfortunately for Gilpin, Hill's journey through the grant led to a pessimistic appraisal of the grant's potential, especially with regard to its mineral resources.¹⁶⁵ Much to Gilpin's frustration, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant would have to remain a relatively unknown parcel until the ex-governor could find a more willing scientist who might positively survey the grant's resources.

In 1868, Gilpin found his salvation when Blackmore procured the services of Ferdinand Hayden, an eminent government geologist and professor who agreed to accompany Gilpin on a two-week survey of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Unlike Hill, who had focused strictly on the geological resources of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Hayden introduced a new, scientific method of bordering the landscape according to its *various* resource types. While Hayden had professionalized himself as a geologist, his surveys for the U.S. government were not strictly geological. In addition to documenting the geology and potential mineral resources of western landscapes, Hayden frequently reported on the land's hydrological and agricultural resources, an approach he applied to his report on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.¹⁶⁶ Although Hayden commented on the grant's potential "metallic wealth" and its bordering mountains, which appeared to hold "ores of gold, silver, copper, lead, and iron," he also offered his opinion on the

¹⁶⁵ On Hill and Gilpin in the San Luis Valley, see James E. Fell Jr., *Ores to Metals: The Rocky Mountain Smelting Industry* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009), 10-13; see also James E. Fell Jr., "Nathaniel P Hill: A Scientist Entrepreneur in Colorado." *Arizona and the West* 15, no. 4 (Winter, 1973): 315-332.

¹⁶⁶ See, for example, Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, "Preliminary Field Report of the United States Geological Survey of Colorado and New Mexico," by F. V. Hayden (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1869).

grant's agricultural potential.¹⁶⁷ Hayden remarked that the grant's soils were "most productive for cultivation." According to Hayden, this was due in part to the erosion of "igneous or basaltic rocks" that provided the landscape with alluvial fertility.¹⁶⁸ The grant's hydrology, Hayden claimed, was one of "the most beautiful systems of drainage on the continent." He noted that the Rio Grande "could not have been more perfectly adapted to the wants of an agricultural region if it had been arranged by the hand of art."¹⁶⁹ The grant's ecology also found its way into Hayden's report; Hayden noted the presence of "an abundance of saw timber, yellow pine being the most plentiful." Moreover, he argued that the "foothills of the grassy valleys" and the presence of pinon pine nuts—which offered excellent fodder for "fattening swine"—made the grant's hilly regions ideal sections of pastoral land.¹⁷⁰ In sum, Hayden concluded that the landscape "held all the elements of wealth and productiveness."¹⁷¹

Hayden's report treated science not only as a means of separating the grant through resource-based economic boundaries, but as a method of demarcating the grant's physical landscape to better support its entire human geography. Prior to Gilpin's interest in the grant, humans extracted *biological* resources from the land in the form of crops, animal products, and human slaves. Gilpin, inspired by recent discoveries of gold and other minerals throughout

¹⁶⁷ Ferdinand V. Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden, of the University of Pennsylvania," in William Blackmore, *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for Emigration; with an Account of the Trenchera and Costilla Estates in the San Luis Park* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869), 199-200.

¹⁶⁸ Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden," 198.

¹⁶⁹ Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden," 197.

¹⁷⁰ Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden," 198-9.

¹⁷¹ Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden," 200; scholars have suggested that Hayden clearly exaggerated the economic potential of the Sangre de Cristo Grant, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 73-4; see also, Foster, *Strange Genius*, 158-60. Despite Hayden's exaggerations, his report reveals how he and Blackmore imagined the grant's potential and categorized both humans and nonhuman nature.

Colorado, sought to maximize the grant's economic potential by drawing new, *geological* borders on its landscape. Hayden blended biological and geological forms of production in his report on the grant's resources. In it, he told Blackmore that human labor on the grant's "arable and pastoral land" would be capable of producing more than enough foodstuffs to support "the employment of a vast mining population" whose purpose, surely, was to extract and profitably export the grant's mineral resources.¹⁷² Together, these scientifically bordered resource zones would allow the parcel and its communities to realize their full economic potential. Hayden's template offered Blackmore, Gilpin, and their financial backers a means to expand the grant's economy. By bordering the parcel's landscape through scientific categories and defining how individual, bordered regions—and the specialized, human labor within those borders—might function in tandem, Americans could maximize the extraction and distribution of natural wealth from the grant's environment.¹⁷³

In 1869, Blackmore eagerly publicized Hayden's findings in his promotional tract, *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for Emigration, With an Account of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates in the San Luis Park*. In *Colorado*, Hayden's description of the grant appeared alongside other extracts from other mid-nineteenth century letters and

¹⁷² Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden," 200.

¹⁷³ The construction of Hayden's scientific borders here reflects Michel Foucault's claim that, "at the emergence of large-scale industry, one finds, beneath the division of the production process, the individualizing fragmentation of labour power; the distributions of the disciplinary space often assured both." Hayden's attempt to border the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant suggests that disciplinary space was not only a question of distributing human bodies, but was a process of categorizing, individualizing, and ultimately producing knowable, categories of nonhuman nature as well. Hayden's scientific template was a roadmap for how Blackmore—and industrial capitalist enterprise—might effectively "discipline" the grant's human and natural environment in order to "create a useful" space for capitalist modes of production. See, Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2nd Vintage Books ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 141-9.

volumes about Colorado and the San Luis Valley.¹⁷⁴ While the bulk of the volume most frequently emphasized the mineral opportunities for would-be migrants to the Colorado territory, Hayden’s scientific borders informed the shorter, second part of the volume that provided readers with a description of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and its available resources. Whereas the portion of the volume covering the Colorado territory, entitled “Colorado: Its Resources and Prospects,” discussed minerals and mineral extraction most frequently relative to other resources and land use practices, the volume’s second part, entitled “The Parks of Colorado: With a Description of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, in the San Luis Park,” provided a more balanced portrayal of the landscape to Blackmore’s readers (see Table 2).

Table 2. High-frequency terms in Blackmore’s *Colorado*. While Part 1 of Blackmore’s volume emphasized the mineral opportunities in the Colorado Territory, Part 2 provided a more balanced portrait of potential types of land use on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. High-frequency terms identified using Voyant Tools.¹⁷⁵

<i>Colorado, Part 1:</i>		<i>Colorado, Part 2:</i>	
Term	Frequency	Term	Frequency
Mines/Mining	238	Mines/Mining	55
Ore(s)	197	Gold	37
Gold	188	Stream(s)	36
Silver	102	Land	23
Water	72	Cattle	22

Hayden and Blackmore’s descriptions of the Colorado landscape both depicted the region as what historian David Wrobel described as a “promised land” of the American West.¹⁷⁶

Hayden portrayed the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant “the most inviting and most promising district west of the Missouri River.”¹⁷⁷ Blackmore, too, emphasized the landscape’s exceptional

¹⁷⁴ For Hayden’s description of the Sangre de Cristo Grant, see Hayden, “Report of Professor F. V. Hayden,” 196-200.

¹⁷⁵ Stéfan Sinclair and Geoffrey Rockwell, 2016. *Voyant Tools*. Web. <http://voyant-tools.org/>.

¹⁷⁶ David Wrobel, *Promised Lands: Promotion, Memory, and the Creation of the American West* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002).

¹⁷⁷ Hayden, “Report of Professor F. V. Hayden,” 200.

economic potential and frequently described Colorado's resources not simply as rivers and veins of silver ore, but as "great rivers" and deposits holding "great richness in silver" that would certainly aid any enterprising settler who arrived in the San Luis Valley.¹⁷⁸ By framing the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's physical landscape as a cornucopia of the American West, Blackmore's linguistic choices in *Colorado* worked to ensure potential migrants that maps and volumes describing Colorado and the San Luis Valley as parts of the "great American Desert" were products of an annoyingly "popular error."¹⁷⁹ As Blackmore attempted to discredit the description of the American West as a dry, resource-poor wasteland, his emphasized the abundance of western resources and the capacity of American settlers to reclaim transform those resources into wealth.¹⁸⁰ On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Blackmore's inflated description of the area's natural resources—a description that Hayden's scientific reputation lent legitimacy to—all but assured would-be settlers of their economic success as they participated in "the march of civilization [sic] and progress" into the San Luis Valley.¹⁸¹

Hayden's scientific borders also found their way into maps of the grant. The "Geological Map of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant," drawn by an English lithographer, captured Hayden's vision in cartographic form (see Figure 6). The map demarcated the grant into three distinct zones divided by color. Green marked the valley's arable sections, pink denoted pastoral regions,

¹⁷⁸ In Blackmore's *Colorado*, "great" receives 215 unique mentions and ranks fifth in high-frequency terms across the volume. "Great" most frequently appeared in concordance with different resources in Colorado. For quoted examples, see Blackmore, *Colorado*, 97 and Blackmore, *Colorado*, 34.

¹⁷⁹ Blackmore, *Colorado*, 87.

¹⁸⁰ Mark Fiege describes this as the tendency of Americans to envision western settlement as an "epic of personal and national regeneration." See Mark Fiege, *Irrigated Eden: The Making of an Agricultural Landscape in the American West* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1999), 171.

¹⁸¹ Blackmore, *Colorado*, 179.



Figure 6: Map depicting Hayden’s scientific borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant’s physical landscape. Credit: New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.¹⁸²

¹⁸² “Map of the Sangre de Cristo Grant Situate in the San Luis Valle, Colorado Territory,” nd., William Blackmore Land Records, box 1, folder 177, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives.

and yellow sectioned off mountains and their mineral resources. The color-coding of different sections of the grant through scientific categories—which separated different material environments by their optimal economic function—gave the map its shape, suggesting that resource types were more important than questions of ownership. The lithographer collapsed Nuevomexicano settlements, perhaps intentionally, under a single cartographic symbol. Empty circles transformed communities into geographic features, not legitimate land users. Such was the potency of modern science. Its association with objectivity gave Hayden's scientific borders the ability to divorce humans from the land, not because they were not there (as we know, Indigenous peoples and Nuevomexicanos had occupied the grant for some time), but because Hayden used scientific borders to imagine what the grant might become. American and British developers relied on these scientific borders to erase Native peoples and Nuevomexicanos from their vision for the grant's future. On Hayden's map, Native peoples and Nuevomexicanos were no longer crucial components of a colonial landscape; instead, they were inconvenient roadblocks for the grant's American future.

Racial Borders

While Hayden's science portrayed Native peoples and Nuevomexicanos as obstructions to American progress, Blackmore and Gilpin simultaneously cast European and American immigrants as the landscape's saviors. Preparing the landscape for their arrival, however, required the removal of these human obstructions. Like the American government's attempt to push Ute bands into the new political borders of the reservation system, Blackmore and Gilpin sought to delegitimize Nuevomexicano claims to the San Luis Valley through new racial borders.

Yet, as they soon discovered, the grant's Nuevomexicano population confounded the standard racial borders of the United States. Unlike the grant's Native peoples, Nuevomexicanos occupied an unclear position in the American racial hierarchy; they were legally white, but their racial status regularly fluctuated.¹⁸³

On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Nuevomexicanos' legal whiteness derived from the Naturalization Act of 1795, which limited U.S. naturalization to "free white persons," and the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which extended citizenship and property rights to all Mexican nationals who remained in newly claimed U.S. territory following the Mexican-American War.¹⁸⁴ Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, however, Americans increasingly embraced an understanding of race that was both immutable and determined by invisible, heritable factors—a shift that increasingly led Americans of European descent to identify Nuevomexicanos as phenotypically nonwhite. In the 1860s and 1870s, Mexicans increasingly occupied what James Barret and David Roediger term an "inbetween" status of non-Anglo whites in the late nineteenth century. Unlike European immigrants, who, according to Barrett and Roediger, underwent a process of "whitening" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Nuevomexicanos in the Southwest were increasingly stripped of their

¹⁸³ On the legal precedent for and history of Mexican's legal whiteness, see Kelly Lytle Hernandez, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 56-7; see also, Ian Haney Lopez, *White by Law: The Legal Construction of Race* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

¹⁸⁴ Mexican's legal whiteness and their ability to attain American citizenship are codified in Article VIII of the treaty, see United States, February 2, 1848, Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, Library of Congress, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=009/llsl009.db&recNum=982>; see also, US Congress, January 29, 1795, "An Act to Establish a Uniform Rule of Naturalization; and to Repeal an Act Heretofore on the Subject," Chap. XX, 3rd Cong., 2nd Sess., *Library of Congress*, accessed May 1, 2019, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=001/llsl001.db&recNum=537>.

whiteness as Anglo-Americans and European immigrants recategorized them as a distinct, Mexican race.¹⁸⁵ While historians regularly point to the role of nineteenth century sciences, such as phrenology, in infusing American racial categories with a sense of scientific legitimacy, Blackmore and Gilpin's activity on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant points to another mode of race-making in nineteenth century America: the racialization of bodies through their relationships to the physical environment.¹⁸⁶

On Gilpin and Hayden's 1868 tour of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Hayden searched for evidence of racial degeneracy in the physical landscape. Hayden claimed that the primary evidence of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's economic potential derived from existing Nuevomexicano settlements on the grant. "The productiveness of this region," Hayden argued, "is illustrated by the results which follow even the rude cultivation in practice among the Mexican settlers."¹⁸⁷ Imagine, Hayden suggested, how the grant might offer "bountiful returns

¹⁸⁵ On inbetween peoples and critical whiteness studies, which underpins my interpretation of racial borders on the Sangre de Cristo Grant, see James R. Barrett and David Roediger, "Inbetween Peoples," 3-44; see also, Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Kunal Parker applies a similar approach in his study of citizenship law, and Mexicans on the Sangre de Cristo Grant underwent the process of being "rendered foreign" in the late nineteenth century, see Kunal M. Parker, *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America, 1600-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015). On attempts by Euro-Americans to divorce Nuevomexicanos from citizenship on account of a racialized identity in, see Mora, *Border Dilemmas*.

¹⁸⁶ On scientific theories of race, nineteenth-century phrenology, and Black scientific resistance to polygenetic theories of race, see Britt Rusert, *Fugitive Science: Empiricism and Freedom in Early African American Culture* (New York: New York University Press, 2017); this process of racialization indicates that Anglos increasingly used land use as what Natalia Molina calls a "racial script," or a way of racializing bodies by attaching recognizable features to them that function across space and time, see Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

¹⁸⁷ Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden," 198.

for well-directed efforts” that white settlers would presumably undertake.¹⁸⁸ In 1869, Hayden recapitulated his racialization of Nuevomexicanos through their land use practices in his geological survey for the U.S. Government. While Hayden’s perceived backwardness of Mexican agriculture reappeared in the report, Hayden also extended Mexicans’ productive impotence into the geological realm.¹⁸⁹ In the course of his survey, Hayden visited the Ortiz Mine near Santa Fe, New Mexico where a Colonel Anderson, formerly of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, had recently sunk a new shaft to extract iron, copper, and, if Anderson was fortunate, gold. The justification for this new shaft, Hayden indicated, was that the prior Nuevomexicano owner constructed the existing shaft in the “shiftless, slovenly manner characteristic of the Mexicans.”¹⁹⁰ Similar to Nuevomexicano agriculture in the American Southwest, Hayden signaled that the untapped potential of the region’s mineral resources was the product of racially incapable settlers.

Local newspaper articles in Southern Colorado indicate that Hayden’s association of racial inferiority with Nuevomexicano land use was not idiosyncratic. In a report on settlement and agriculture in the San Luis Valley, the *Daily Chieftain* of Pueblo, Colorado remarked that “the average Mexican in this country is not a very intelligent being, according to the American standard.”¹⁹¹ The *Daily Chieftain* more explicitly juxtaposed Nuevomexicanos with white Americans in a subsequent report on Huerfano Park, a valley adjacent to the eastern slope of the

¹⁸⁸ Hayden, “Report of Professor F. V. Hayden,” 196.

¹⁸⁹ Department of the Interior, “Preliminary Field Report of the United States Geological Survey of Colorado and New Mexico,” 60, 143.

¹⁹⁰ Department of the Interior, “Preliminary Field Report of the United States Geological Survey of Colorado and New Mexico,” 121-2.

¹⁹¹ F., “New Mexico: The Towns of San Luis and Taos—Peculiarity of Mexican Life and Institutions—Another Sound Letter from Our Travelling Correspondent,” *Colorado Daily Chieftain* (Pueblo, CO), December 4, 1872.

Sangre de Cristo Range in the Raton Basin.¹⁹² As the *Daily Chieftain* noted, Huerfano Park exhibited “steadily progressing improvement” because “the Mexican population is sensibly diminishing and white settlements [are] taking the place of Mexican placitas and hovels.”¹⁹³ The *Daily Chieftain*, like Hayden, drew racial borders upon the Colorado and New Mexico landscape that identified Mexicans as obstructions to American (read: white) progress throughout the American Southwest.

Hayden and the regional press were hardly alone; in 1870 the San Luis Valley’s Mexican population became the focal point of a racially-charged conflict over the location of the Colorado-New Mexico border.¹⁹⁴ In 1870, Jose Francisco Chaves, New Mexico’s territorial delegate to the United States Congress, had introduced a bill to redraw the existing Colorado-New Mexico border which, at the time, ran along the 37th parallel. Chaves’s proposal was simple: Congress should redraw the border to annex Costilla County, Conejos County, and Saguache County into the New Mexico Territory.¹⁹⁵ Chaves’s reasoning was straightforward too: these Mexican counties, and their Nuevomexicano population, belonged in New Mexico. While Chaves aimed to help Nuevomexicanos in the San Luis Valley by offering them entwined

¹⁹² On the geography of Huerfano Park, see Department of the Interior, Geological Survey, “Geology of the Huerfano Park Area Huerfano and Custer Counties Colorado,” by Ross B. Johnson (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1959), 87.

¹⁹³ “Fendo’s Letter: News From Huerfano Park,” *Colorado Daily Chieftain* (Pueblo, CO), January 28, 1875.

¹⁹⁴ On the Colorado-New Mexico border in the mid-nineteenth century, see Derek Everett, *Creating the American West: Boundaries and Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), 167-89 and Phillip B. Gonzales and Virginia Sánchez, “Displaced in Place: Nuevomexicanos on the North Side of the New Mexico-Colorado Border, 1850-1875,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 93, no. 3 (Summer 2018): 263-301.

¹⁹⁵ US Congress, House, January 24, 1870, “A Bill to Authorize the People of the Territory of New Mexico to Form a Constitution and State Government, Preparatory to Their Admission to the Union on an Equal Footing with the Original States,” H. Res. 954, 41st Cong., 2nd Sess., *Library of Congress*.

political and “racial similitude,” his bill made explicit the ambiguous racial status of Nuevomexicanos throughout the Colorado Territory in the late-nineteenth century.¹⁹⁶

White Coloradans latched onto the Chaves bill as well, and, like Chaves, emphasized the racial differences between white and Nuevomexicanos to support the bill’s passage. Baden Weiler, who resided on Saguache Creek in the northern reaches of the San Luis Valley, offered perhaps the most explicit racial argument in favor of Chaves’s measure in an 1870 editorial published in the *Rocky Mountain News*. After accusing valley Nuevomexicanos of tax delinquency and arguing that their need for government documents printed in Spanish created an burden for the Colorado taxpayer, Weiler turned to racial borders to transform Nuevomexicanos into Mexicans, a process historian Kunal Parker describes as “rendering insiders foreign.”¹⁹⁷ In the course of his editorial, Weiler overtly conflated citizenship, racial identity, and belonging as he asked of his readers: “Why should the citizens of Colorado longer detain this mongrel race within their borders?”¹⁹⁸ Like Hayden and southern Colorado’s regional press, Weiler’s support of the Chaves bill suggested that, if Colorado were to achieve its true potential, the territory would have to answer its Mexican question first.

Some Nuevomexicanos in the San Luis Valley disagreed with Weiler and Chaves’s views on *who* belonged in the Colorado Territory. Almost immediately, valley residents organized a local committee to oppose the bill through an editorial campaign in the regional and territorial

¹⁹⁶ Chaves’s logic for why Nuevomexicanos should support the proposed relocation of the Colorado-New Mexico border appears most readily in a newspaper report from the San Luis Valley that documented how Chaves’s representatives engaged with local communities. The desirability of “racial similitude” emerged as one of their most important, and most heavily rejected, arguments as they lobbied the San Luis Valley’s Nuevomexicanos. See, Juan B. Jaquez, “From Guadalupe,” *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, February 4, 1870.

¹⁹⁷ Parker, *Making Foreigners*, 4.

¹⁹⁸ Baden Weiler, “The Southern Counties—The Other Side,” *Daily Rocky Mountain News*, March 16, 1870.

press. In doing so, they challenged attempts to racialize the Colorado-New Mexico border and, by extension, the rejected racial borders that differentiated between Nuevomexicano and white residents of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Referring to the group as the “citizens of Costilla,” the committee claimed that “to be annexed would be a sacrifice to the people of this valley.”¹⁹⁹ Moreover, the possibility of annexation produced an identity crisis among San Luis Valley residents. Valley populations, the committee argued, had lived for years “supposing they were citizens of Colorado.”²⁰⁰ And the local resistance effort proved successful, the Chaves Bill never made it out of committee in the United States House of Representatives and disappeared from regional newspapers by the close of the year. Moreover, the committee’s actions revealed that the racialization of valley Nuevomexicanos could not succeed without the community’s acceptance of new racial borders. Racial borders, in short, were not endemic to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. American racial borders had to be produced *and* accepted by local residents in order to gain traction on the valley floor.²⁰¹

But local white and Nuevomexicanos were not the only targets of new racial borders in the San Luis Valley. Blackmore also directed the ongoing racialization of Colorado’s Nuevomexicanos towards the San Luis Valley’s physical environment. Blackmore’s short pamphlet, *Southern Colorado and Its Resources: A New Field for English Emigrants*, portrayed the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as an ideal landscape for white settlement. While Blackmore

¹⁹⁹ Walsen, “Anti-Annexation Meeting,” *Daily Rocky Mountain News*.

²⁰⁰ San Luis, “More About Annexation,” *Colorado Chieftain*.

²⁰¹ On the production of Mexican identity and the local dimensions of racial borders, see Mora, *Border Dilemmas*, 5-16. On the Chaves bill, see Jacob Swisher, “Were they Mexicans or Coloradans: Debating Race and Identity at the Colorado-New Mexico Border,” *Colorado Heritage Magazine* (Winter 2019/2020): 4-17. On racialization and attempts at Nuevomexicano exclusion in the San Luis Valley, see also, Everett, *Creating the American West*, 167-89; Gonzales and Sánchez, “Displaced in Place,” 264-301.

noted that the landscape “possessed every favorable characteristic of an agricultural, pastoral, and mining region,” he also went to great lengths to emphasize that the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant’s “general climate, health invigorating atmosphere, and equable temperature make it a most desirable district for settlement and residence.”²⁰² In the late nineteenth century, whites increasingly imagined the Western climate as a potential safeguard against their racial degeneration, a belief that Blackmore tapped for promotional reasons.²⁰³ The San Luis Valley’s members of the “Mexican American race” also factored into Blackmore’s description of the landscape but, unlike in Hayden’s survey, Nuevomexicanos did not emerge only as racially ill-equipped landowners. Instead, Blackmore claimed that, by “rendering labor cheap,” the valley’s “industrious and quiet Mexican-American people” would readily support white migrants in need of an affordable workforce.²⁰⁴

These racial borders were new to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant but their purpose, to divide bodies racially and to identify nonwhite bodies as a source of cheap labor, reflected the ongoing incorporation of American Western communities into the American racial hierarchy. Moreover, the racial borders distinguishing nonwhite Mexicans from white Americans produced a new, racially distinct class of laborers in the San Luis Valley. Prior to American and English arrival in the valley’s cultural landscape, Nuevomexicanos existed as part-time shepherders employed by Charles Beaubien *and* as part-time subsistence farmers with both legal and cultural rights to the valley’s resources. As Hayden, Blackmore, and other whites introduced new racial

²⁰² William Blackmore, “Southern Colorado and Its Resources: A New Field for English Emigrants,” pamphlet, nd., box 1, folder 24, William Blackmore Land Records, 1.

²⁰³ On the association of Western climate with White racial vigor, and its use in railroad promotional materials, see Jason Pierce, *Making the White Man’s West: Whiteness and the Creation of the American West* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 151-77.

²⁰⁴ Blackmore, “Southern Colorado and Its Resources,” 1.

borders to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, they attempted to erase the cultural legitimacy of Nuevomexicano claims to the land and repositioned Nuevomexicanos as a distinctly laboring class of individuals. Drawing borders between Nuevomexicanos and whites allowed white settlers to explain their movement into an already settled landscape.²⁰⁵ Racial borders enabled Blackmore, Hayden, and other Americans to effectively produce a favorable (to them) racial terrain on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Nuevomexicanos' legal whiteness, however, proved far more difficult to overcome.

Legal Borders

Legal whiteness meant that Nuevomexicanos enjoyed the same rights as all other white male citizens in the mid-nineteenth century. This included, to the frustration of Blackmore and Gilpin, legally recognized property rights. Unlike the Utes, whose property claims were treated as politically outside the protection of the United States and could be ceded by treaty, Nuevomexicanos' legal whiteness meant that Blackmore and Gilpin could only acquire Nuevomexicano titles to the grant's physical landscape through purchase. Acquisition was crucial to their venture. The settlement pattern on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, which relied on the *vega*, *vara*, and *plaza* to organize space and labor, produced a legal map of the grant's landscape defined by irregularly shaped property claims. To the eager developer, the apparent disorganization of the Nuevomexicano landscape obstructed the efficient appraisal and sale of fee simple titles to new settlers. Blackmore and Gilpin preferred the familiarity of the grid

²⁰⁵ Barbara Fields describes this process of producing race as a way of "shaping the terrain" of a cultural landscape, see Barbara J. Fields, "Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States," 113.

system, which divided land into geometrically identical squares that could easily be parceled into small subsections for sale.²⁰⁶ Nuevomexicano legal rights, however, prevented Blackmore and Gilpin from simply imposing the grid on the valley floor. Instead, they sought to purchase Nuevomexicano land before repackaging titles into uniform squares.

Like with Hayden's scientific borders, Blackmore and Gilpin's preference for uniform property boundaries surfaced in the "Map of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates Forming the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant." Produced by Witherby & Co., a New York lithographer, the map depicted the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant beneath the range, township, and section boundaries of the General Land Office (see Figure 7). The irregular geometry of the *varas* that dotted the grant's physical landscape, however, were nowhere to be found on the Witherby map. The *vega* at San Luis remained absent from the image too. Instead, the grant appeared ripe for settlement to the viewer. In it, empty 640-acre sections of land covered a seemingly unsettled landscape where the "military reservation" at Fort Garland was the only large, clearly claimed parcel. Local property ownership, however, was far more widespread with Nuevomexicano communities in San Luis and Costilla owning sizeable extents of property along the grant's major watercourses, the Rio Costilla and the Rio Culebra. In order to more closely align local property rights with the empty yet opportunity-laden squares of the Witherby map, Blackmore and Gilpin sought to gain

²⁰⁶ Blackmore and Gilpin intended to install C.W. Schaap as the County Recorder of Costilla Country, who would select and sell parcels of land on the Sangre de Cristo Grant that met "the wants and requirements" of prospective buyers. These parcels would be made available near newly surveyed town sites where Gilpin and Blackmore would "locate" English settlers in the most attractive regions of the Sangre de Cristo Grant. "The profit arising from the sale of Town Lots," they suggested, "will, in all probability, exceed the total cost of the Estate." On plans for the grant's gridded development, see United State Freehold Land and Emigration Company, "An Informal Meeting of a Majority of the Directors of the Above Company was held in Amsterdam," January 20, 1871, box 1, folder 34 William Blackmore Land Records, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, 1-4.

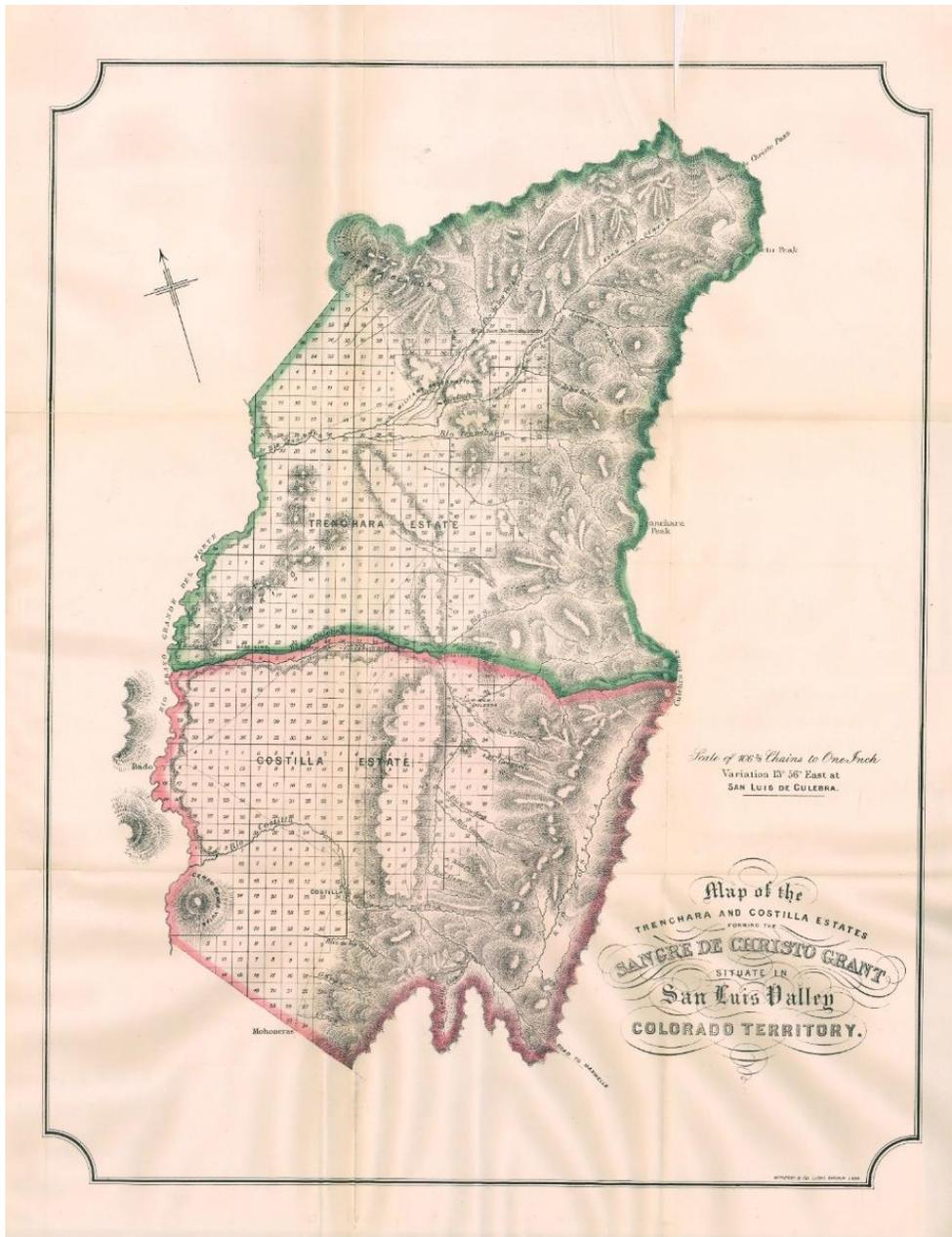


Figure 7. Map of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates Forming the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. This map, produced by Witherby and Co., visualized the gridded, American legal borders that Blackmore and Gilpin attempted to introduce to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Credit: Colorado State University Water Resources Archive.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ Though the map is undated, archival holdings suggest it was produced alongside Blackmore's *Colorado* sometime in the late 1860s or early 1870s. Witherby & Co., "Map of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant Situate in the San Luis Valley, Colorado Territory," nd., box 1, folder 19, William Blackmore Land Records, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives. The high-quality scan above is from Witherby & Co., "Map of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates Forming the Sangre de Cristo Grant Situate in the San Luis

control of existing Nuevomexicano property rights on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, especially to the *vega*.

Blackmore and Gilpin recognized that in dealing with Nuevomexicanos who held citizenship rights as well as federally backed private and common property rights on the grant, they would have to acquire control over the *vega* through legal means. Negotiation became their preferred tactic. In a series of meetings with Blackmore, Gilpin, and Newell Squarey, the company representative on the Sangre de Cristo and other land grants, Nuevomexicano residents led by Ferdinand Meyer haggled over the extent of the settlers' rights throughout the grant. During an October meeting in Costilla, Blackmore, Gilpin, and Squarey drew up terms of agreement that called for a survey of private lands held by Nuevomexicanos. During the meeting, they offered options to purchase sections of the *vega*, which they referred to as "portions of the public lands as may for the time begin be unoccupied and used for pasture."²⁰⁸ The language of the agreement, which historian Herbert Brayer suggests the Nuevomexicanos may have agreed to due to a poor facility with English and the lack of an able interpreter (Ferdinand Meyer was conveniently out of town), transformed the *vega* from a commonly held zone of land use to a private parcel available for sale.²⁰⁹

When Meyer returned to Costilla, he acted quickly to ruin any chance of an agreement between Blackmore, Gilpin, and the grant's Nuevomexicano settlers. In part, this was probably due to Meyer's economic interest in maintaining the Nuevomexicano economic borders of the

Valley, Colorado Territory," nd., Colorado Agriculture Bibliography, Water Resources Archive, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado.

²⁰⁸ "Memorandum of a Meeting Held at Costilla, Colorado," October 4, 1871, William Blackmore Land Records, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, transcribed in Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 109-10.

²⁰⁹ "Memorandum of a Meeting Held at Costilla, Colorado," in Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 110.

Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. As a prosperous merchant and store owner in Costilla, Meyer operated as a conduit connecting Nuevomexicano sheep to external markets. He was, like Beaubien before him, a de facto *patron* on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. But his representation of the grant's settlers, who recognized him as a governing member of the negotiating committee, also reflected a widespread anti-corporate sentiment among the Nuevomexicano population. Meyer vocally criticized Blackmore and Gilpin and his efforts proved successful due to Gilpin and Blackmore's lack of investors and Euro-American buyers as well as an economic downturn in 1873.²¹⁰ Ultimately, Blackmore and Gilpin never realized their vision of reducing the *vega* and successfully populating the grant with white settlers.

But the successful resistance of Meyer and the grant's Nuevomexicanos did not mean that the grant's Nuevomexicano borders remained intact. Instead, the contours of their resistance suggest that American legal categories had grown increasingly stable on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant by the late 1870s. By positioning themselves as legitimate negotiators equal to Blackmore and Gilpin, Nuevomexicano settlers recognized both their citizenship rights and the importance of fee simple titles to navigating the American legal system and growing national economy. The increased legal value of private property rights on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant emerged in a counteroffer put forward by Meyer. The offer would have released the Nuevomexicano land rights granted through Charles Beaubien in exchange for a title to "half of the *Vega*" to be held by the people of Costilla.²¹¹ While community solidarity proved useful for

²¹⁰ On Meyer's return and involvement in the negotiations, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 110-12.

²¹¹ Costilla's residents received their rights through a documented legal transfer from Carlos Beaubien, see "Beaubien Deed to Settlers," Records of the Land Rights Council, Water Resources Archive, Colorado State University; on Meyer's counteroffer, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 115.

Nuevomexicano resistance to external developers, the increased stability of American legal borders indicate that a larger ideological shift away from common property rights and towards individual, private ones was sweeping across the grant's cultural landscape.²¹² Essentially, they beat Blackmore and Gilpin, but in order to do so, accepted that the game would be played by American rules.

The fleeting presence of white homesteaders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, however, suggests that Blackmore and Gilpin's introduction of American legal borders to the grant was hardly in the service of a settler-colonial project to bring white Americans and Europeans into the San Luis Valley. Instead, Blackmore and Gilpin mobilized legal borders in service of capitalistic ambitions, and not colonial ones, as they challenged to claims of migrants who had invoked the 1862 Homestead Act instead of purchasing rights to portions of the grant's physical landscape from the USFLEC. When new settlers claimed their 160 acres, the specified limit on claims under the Homestead Act, on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, they joined the thousands of westward travelers who migrated to large swaths of so-called free land that existed in places where the U.S. Government had eliminated Indigenous claims to the landscape—either through violence or treaty negotiations (or both). The Spanish-Mexican land grants in the American Southwest, however, proved challenging for new settlers to navigate. In the mid-nineteenth century, the American legal system defined land grants like the Sangre de Cristo

²¹² Nicki Gonzales positions Nuevomexicano resistance as a continuity in the landscape's nineteenth and twentieth centuries and highlights Nuevomexicano activism as central to the grant's history. Part of Nuevomexicano resistance, as this thesis suggests, to the form of leveraging American borders to maintain a degree of continuity in Nuevomexicano lifeways. See Nicki Gonzales, "Yo Soy Loco Por Esa Sierra"; on Meyer and the resistance of the "pobladores," see Mondragon-Valdez, "Challenging Domination," 124-27. The process of imposing private property ownership on lands throughout North America also occurred on the Eastern Seaboard, as Virginia Anderson details in *Creatures of Empire: How Domestic Animals Transformed Early America* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2004).

through their metes and bounds; topography, and not widespread fencing or a gridded patchwork of farms visibly marked legal space where land grants were present.²¹³ For homesteaders ignorant of the legal boundaries of land grants in Colorado and New Mexico, landscapes devoted primarily to sheepherding (like the Sangre de Cristo) could appear at first glance to be unsettled and therefore available for preemption after five years of continued residency as stipulated by the Homestead Act.²¹⁴

The United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company (USFLEC), with whom Blackmore and Gilpin were partnered, did not take kindly to homesteaders attempting to settle on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, as was the case for John Tameling. In 1873, Tameling had occupied a tract of land on the southern bank of the Culebra River adjacent to the ranch of Henry Blackmore (William Blackmore's son).²¹⁵ In 1874, the USFLEC took Tameling to court, arguing that the company maintained the fee simple title to the tract and, therefore, that Tameling's occupation of the land was unlawful.²¹⁶ In the suit, John Henry, Tameling's attorney, attempted to argue that USFLEC's title to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was illegitimate as it exceeded the eleven-league limit that the Mexican government had placed on land grants in 1824. The Supreme Court of the Colorado Territory disagreed, finding that congressional recognition of the

²¹³ On the legal precedent set in Tameling, see Montoya, *Translating Property*, 171-73.

²¹⁴ On the 1862 Homestead Act, see Sarah Dant, *Losing Eden: An Environmental History of the American West* (Chichester, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2017), 71.

²¹⁵ On the location of Tameling's settlement, see "John G. Tameling, Appellant, against United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company, Appellees, in Ejectment" (New York: John H. Amerman, Law Printer, 1874), box 1, folder 130, William Blackmore Land Records, 6.

²¹⁶ "John G. Tameling, Appellant, against United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company, Appellees, in Ejectment," 6-7.

parcel superseded any limits under Mexican Law that may have been ignored when Governor Armijo granted the parcel to Carlos Beaubien.²¹⁷

While, as historian Maria Montoya has pointed out, the language of the court's decision held ramifications for other land grants, the suit brought by USFLEC also placed settlers like Taming outside of the company's vision for the grant's future. Instead of acting as the Turnerian frontiersman who, "little by little ... transforms the wilderness," Taming's settlement of the grant brought no benefit to USFLEC.²¹⁸ Taming's legal troubles with USFLEC appear to have reflected a wider pattern of the company deploying legal borders to oust settlers from the grant's physical landscape. In 1877, a Mr. Parrot, who maintained 160 acres of grassland on the grant, and Oscar Wilkins, who maintained 320 acres on the northern edge of the grant, informed a reporter with the *Saguache Chronicle* that, like Taming, they felt as though their holdings were also "in danger of 'this land improvement company.'"²¹⁹ On this newly bordered landscape, Blackmore, Gilpin, and USFLEC mobilized legal borders in attempts to remove any resident, white or Nuevomexicano, who might diminish the company's potential profits.

Conclusion

By 1878, Blackmore and Gilpin's scheme to sell off sections of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant had largely collapsed. The USFLEC had fallen into a state of delinquency and was

²¹⁷ "John G. Taming, Appellant, against United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company, Appellees, in Ejectment," 37.

²¹⁸ Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier," 33.

²¹⁹ "Wayside Jettings," *Saguache Chronicle* (Saguache, Colorado), August 25, 1877.

unable to meet its tax obligations on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. A group of Dutch Bankers eventually purchased the estate in 1880 after the Costilla County treasurer advertised the parcel for sale due to USFLEC's unpaid taxes.²²⁰ Blackmore, after losing his wife, Mary, on an expedition to Yellowstone in 1872 and developing liver problems, died by suicide in 1878.²²¹ Local Nuevomexicano landholders, however, remained upon the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Moreover, for the next century and half, Nuevomexicanos and their descendant communities continued to resist—both successfully and not—attempts by white Americans to delegitimize Nuevomexicano common property rights and limit community access to the *vega*.

Although Blackmore, Gilpin, and the USFLEC failed to realize their ambitions on the grant, they did succeed on one front: the borders they introduced remained behind to structure labor, property ownership, and community relationships on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In part, these borders gained stability because they relied on legal, scientific, and racial categories familiar to new American settlers on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. The individuals involved in subsequent lynchings of Nuevomexicanos in the San Luis Valley were more than likely aware of the racial borders that sanctioned Anglo-American violence against non-white individuals and communities in the late-nineteenth century.²²² But more importantly, the choice by local Nuevomexicanos to mobilize new racial and legal borders as tools of resistance against Americans who sought to dispossess them of their land and Colorado citizenship also constituted a form of local recognition that American racial and legal definitions were potent sources of

²²⁰ Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 122-23.

²²¹ On Blackmore's death, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 315-18; on Mary's death, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 191.

²²² On the lynching of Mexicans in the San Luis Valley and patterns of racial violence in the Southwest, see Carrigan and Webb, *Forgotten Dead*.

power in the American West. By 1878, both white American and Nuevomexicano choices had remade the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into an American bordered land.

The transformation of the grant also manifested itself on the valley floor as land use practices exhibited a marked shift away from communal uses of space to more individualized ones. As an influx of new migrants and outside capital introduced new manufacturing sites, such as blacksmiths' shops and service buildings, including hotels, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's physical environment began to support an increasing number of market-oriented land use practices. Americanization also brought new types of resource extraction to the grant and new species, like cattle, began to populate the grant's environment in growing numbers. Even as new connections to American markets helped to diversify land use on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, these changes were not strictly physical. Instead, new American borders, especially racial ones, informed how Anglos and Nuevomexicanos engaged in new economic opportunities, either as laborers or as owners of local businesses and ranching operations. As the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant transitioned from a Ute bordered land, into a Ute, Nuevomexicano, and Anglo borderland, and, finally, into an American bordered land, border contests on the grant shaped (and were shaped by) the physical landscape where they occurred. Although Blackmore and Gilpin played significant roles in introducing American borders to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, everyday migrants and skilled laborers played an equally important part in introducing and stabilizing new racial and economic borders on the parcel.

CHAPTER 3
MIGRATION, LABOR, AND ENVIRONMENT ON
THE SANGRE DE CRISTO LAND GRANT

By the 1870s, tensions between Gilpin, the United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company (USFLEC), and San Luis Valley communities were on the rise. Since Gilpin's 1864 purchase of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant from Charles Beaubien's heirs, local populations on the grant had expanded as families grew and new waves of Nuevomexicano and white settlers migrated to the landscape. Gilpin was hardly pleased. In 1872, a letter to the editor appeared in the *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo, Colorado) noting that "the ambition of" the valley's expanding population was in the midst of being "destroyed by the continued howl of Gilpin and his agents."²²³ Gilpin, according to the editorial, had been travelling around the grant asking, much to the dissatisfaction of local settlers: "do you know that you are improving my land for me?"²²⁴ Immediately afterward, Gilpin would offer to sell the land they had settled upon for "fifteen dollars an acre."²²⁵

As Gilpin's proclivity for accosting the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's residents suggests, local communities had developed during the grant's borderland period without the express consent of Blackmore, Gilpin, and the USFLEC. These new arrivals, however, were not only homesteaders like John Tameling. Blacksmiths, carpenters, schoolteachers, shoemakers, and other laborers flocked to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant too. To explore the stories of these

²²³ "San Luis Valley: The Course of Governor Gilpin Criticized – The Last of the Late Trouble," *Colorado Chieftain* (Pueblo, Colorado), June 13, 1872.

²²⁴ "San Luis Valley," *Colorado Chieftain*, June 13, 1872.

²²⁵ "San Luis Valley," *Colorado Chieftain*, June 13, 1872.

settlers and migrating laborers, we must take the grant's history beyond the nexus of Charles Beaubien, William Gilpin, and William Blackmore, often heading outside the population centers of San Luis, Fort Garland, and Costilla in the process. Doing so reveals how, in the 1870s, working people, including those in existing Nuevomexicano communities as well as new American and European migrants, participated in the ongoing Americanization of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as much, if not more so, than Gilpin, Blackmore, and the USFLEC.

The overwhelming majority of the grant's residents, however, rarely appear in historical archives. Often, the individuals who migrated to the parcel in the 1870s surface only once or twice in manuscript census records. Others never appear at all. This chapter's central task is to surmount the archival absences of the grant's multitudes and to write, as much as is possible, the many forgotten residents of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into the region's historical narrative. Although individuals like Blackmore, Gilpin, and Beaubien are well-accounted for in the grant's historiography, it is crucial that we uncover the stories of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's everyday residents in order to more fully reveal the contours of the parcel's transformation from a Ute, Nuevomexicano, and American borderland into an American "bordered" land.²²⁶ In doing so, this chapter builds on the work of previous scholars like Nicki Gonzales, who has employed oral history as a method for studying the community at San Luis, and Arnold Valdez, who has utilized vernacular architecture as a lens onto the grant's Nuevomexicano communities, both large and small.²²⁷ This chapter differs, however, by employing digital methods to visualize the grant's populations between 1870 and 1880. It

²²⁶ On the process through which borderlands become "bordered" lands, see Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Bordered Lands," 814-41.

²²⁷ Nicki Gonzales, "Yo Soy Loco Por Esa Sierra"; Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns of the Culebra River Villages."

employs Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to map the historical geography of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant between 1848 and 1880. In doing so, this chapter shows how communities, land use practices, and American economic and racial borders evolved on the grant, both in tandem with and independently of Blackmore, Gilpin, and the USFLEC.²²⁸

On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the material environment profoundly shaped how the outcomes of border contests between Utes, Nuevomexicanos, and Americans affected communities in the region. Although the parcel was massive, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, like all landscapes, had a specific ecology, topography, and geology. Together, these facets of the parcel's environment influenced the location and distribution of early Nuevomexicano and American populations on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. The concentration of the grant's mineral and timber resources, too, shaped the migration of prospectors and railroad workers into the area in the 1870s. New mining and timbering settlements that appeared in the grant's high-elevation, northeastern corner shared a proximity to Fort Garland rather than Nuevomexicano towns like Costilla and San Luis that lay much further to the south. When new immigrants streamed west across the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and onto the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the parcel's physical geography funneled them towards the whiter, northern third of the grant. Alongside the racial borders that Blackmore, Hayden, and other whites introduced to the Sangre

²²⁸ By using ArcGIS Pro to visualize the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's historical geography, this chapter leverages the computational power of GIS software to engage in what Richard White calls "spatial history." In doing so, it considers how the borders identified in Chapters 1 and 2 intersected with the lived experience of the grant's residents to uncover how, on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, "space [was] itself historical." On spatial history, see White, "What is Spatial History?" On the spatial turn in history, see David N. Livingstone, "Science, Site and Speech: Scientific Knowledge and the Spaces of Rhetoric," *History of the Human Sciences* 20, no. 2 (2007): 73-5. On spatial approaches and the digital humanities, see Bodenhamer, "The Spatial Humanities," 23-38.

de Cristo Land Grant, the parcel's physical environment contributed to the growing segregation of white and Nuevomexicano populations in the area.

This chapter begins by mapping the nonhuman geography of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Using ESRI's ArcGIS platform, it reconstructs the grazing environment where white and Nuevomexicano settlers ran sheep and cattle between the western foothills of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the banks of the Rio Grande and considers how topography shaped early human settlement patterns. It then turns toward the grant's human geography and maps manuscript census records from 1870 and 1880 to consider the interplay of human and ecological factors that shaped the grant's environmental history in both the built and agrarian landscape. Finally, this chapter closes by considering how racial borders shaped human labor roles, land use practices, and community demographics on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. When positioned within the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's historical geography, the borderlands history of the region suggests that Americanization was a spatial process contingent, in part, on how migrants, working people, and landowners constructed economic borders within the existing physical borders of the parcel's landscape.

Ecology and Human Geography

At 150 miles-long by 50 miles-wide, the San Luis Valley is the largest of Colorado's four intermontane parks. Nestled in between the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the east and the San Juan Mountains to the west, the mountain park boasts a surprising diversity in its material environment. Within a visibly arid valley populated by grass and brush, pockets of moisture appear with surprising frequency as both small streams and the mighty Rio Grande course

through the high-elevation basin. Along the valley’s eastern edge, just north of the Sierra Blanca, massive windswept sand dunes—remnants of thousands of years of physical change in the San Luis Valley—dot the valley floor.²²⁹ Historian Michael Geary has described the San Luis Valley as a “paradoxical landscape,” one “defined by a distinctive combination of aridity and moisture.”²³⁰ Although just a portion of the wider San Luis Valley, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant embodies the paradoxical character Geary ascribed to the region. Its landscape ranges from 7,344 feet at its lowest point to 14,351 feet at the top of Blanca Peak.²³¹ Multiple large watercourses flow across the grant’s lowlands while numerous smaller streams and creeks dot the landscape’s foothills.²³² In many ways, the concentrated yet abundant moisture on Sangre de Cristo Land Grant’s physical landscape mirrors other mountainous spaces throughout the American West.²³³ With pockets of moisture, widespread grass populations, and few arable soils, ecology made the majority of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant most conducive for only one type of agrarian land use: grazing.

²²⁹ For an overview of the San Luis Valley’s geography and topography, see U.S. Geological Survey, *Water Supply Paper 240*.

²³⁰ Michael Geary, *Sea of Sand: A History of Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016), 7.

²³¹ U.S. Geological Survey, National Elevation Dataset (10m), 2002, <https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/70039555>, (cited hereafter as National Elevation Dataset).

²³² U.S. Geological Survey, National Hydrography Dataset, 2019, <https://www.usgs.gov/core-science-systems/ngp/national-hydrography/access-national-hydrography-products>, (cited hereafter as National Hydrography Dataset).

²³³ William deBuys has offered the most complete account of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. See William deBuys, *Enchantment and Exploitation: The Life and Hard Times of a New Mexico Mountain Range* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985). On moisture and the mountainous American West, see Thomas R. Vale, “Mountains and Moisture in the West,” in *The Mountainous West: Explorations in Historical Geography*, ed. William Wyckoff and Lary M. Disalver (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 141-65.

In the mid-nineteenth century, San Luis Valley ranchers identified blue grama grass (*Bouteloua gracilis*) as the predominant grass species and source of forage in the region.²³⁴ Blue grama grass is a shortgrass species that is well adapted to relatively arid environments like the high-elevation San Luis Valley.²³⁵ The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's landscape was a particularly well-suited habitat for shortgrass species. In general, the grant's soils are well-drained and the contours of the landscape primarily rise and fall at lower slopes, both of which are important habitat criteria for the growth and proliferation of shortgrass species.²³⁶ Despite the presence of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains along the grant's eastern and northern edges, much of the parcel rests beneath 10,500 feet, the upper limit of the elevation range for blue grama grass. In total, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant contained at least 765,000 acres of suitable habitat for blue grama grass (see Figure 8).²³⁷

Although shortgrass species provided domesticated animals with crucial sources of forage, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's moist environment made the parcel uniquely conducive to a grazing-oriented economy. As geographer Thomas Vale has argued, the

²³⁴ Blue grama grass is comparably nutritious relative to grass hays. Blue grama grass crude protein content in Colorado retains an average of 10% throughout the year, although blue grama grass can contain up to 18% crude protein during the early growing season. Grass hays generally contain anywhere from 8 to 14% crude protein. See Michelle D. Anderson, "Bouteloua gracilis," in U.S. Forest Service, Fire Effects Information System, 2003, <https://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis/plants/graminoid/bougra/all.html> and Krishona Martinson, "Understanding Your Hay Analysis," University of Minnesota Extension, 2018, <https://extension.umn.edu/horse-nutrition/understanding-your-hay-analysis#crude-protein-%28cp%29-1320261>.

²³⁵ On blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*) and semi-arid ecosystems, see Andrew Isenberg, *The Destruction of the Bison*, 18-23.

²³⁶ National Elevation Dataset; Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, Soil Survey Geographic (SSURGO) Database, <https://sdmdataaccess.sc.gov.usda.gov>.

²³⁷ Criteria for blue grama grass habitat and range based on Anderson, "Bouteloua gracilis."

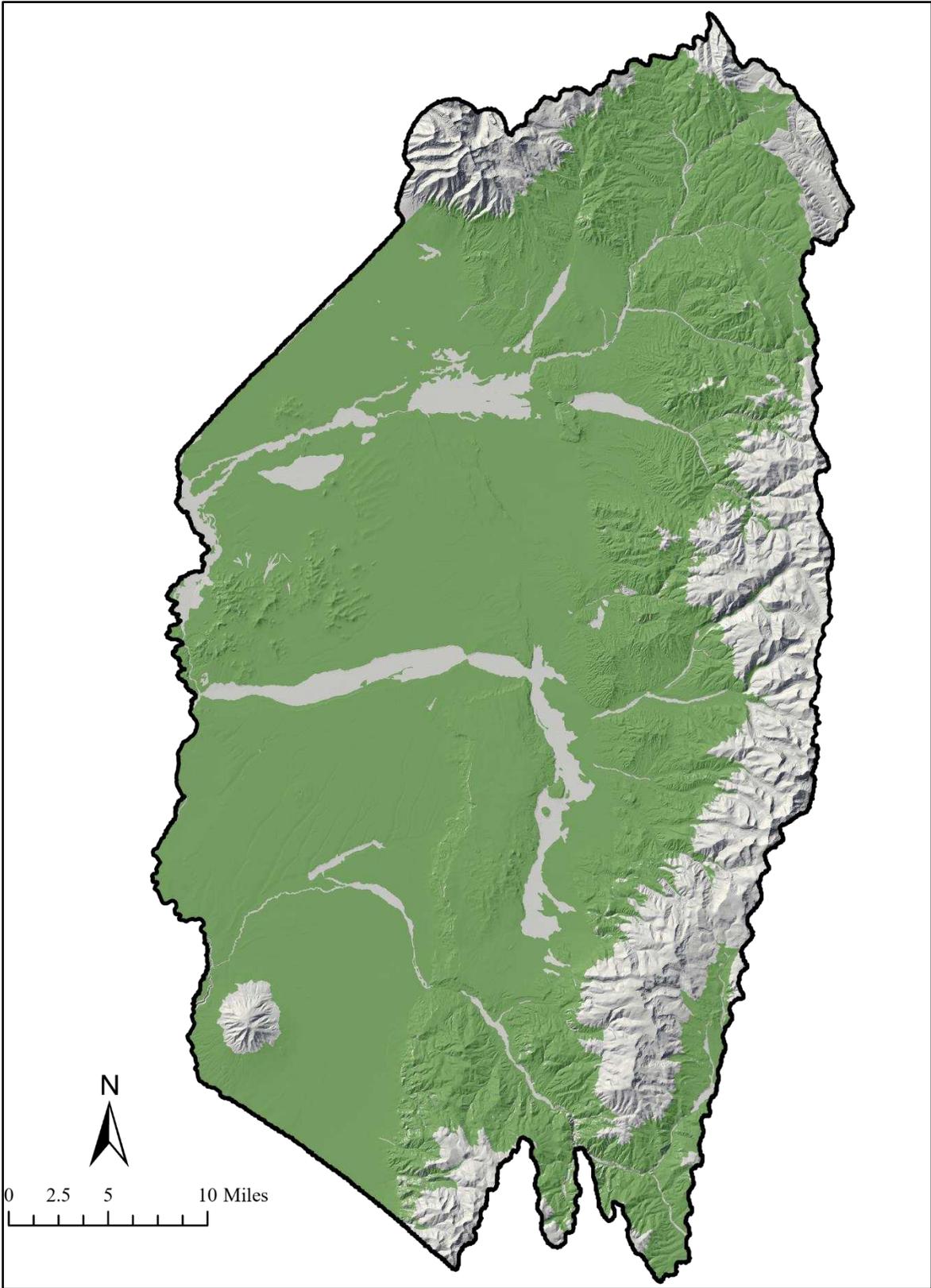


Figure 8. Map showing blue grama grass habitat range on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, ESRI.

“quintessence” of high-elevation landscapes in the American West is “a juxtaposition of dry lowland and moist mountain.”²³⁸ The Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was a classic mountainous landscape, one characterized by “the coupling of these two antithetical characters.”²³⁹ Four main rivers course through or along the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant: the Rio Trenchara feeds the northern section of the grant, the Rio Culebra travels through its center, the Rio Costilla flows through its southern third, and the Rio Grande forms its western border. Perhaps more importantly for Nuevomexicano shepherders, however, were the numerous smaller streams and springs, many of which were seasonal, that provided crucial water sources for herds moving through the grant’s foothills (see Figure 9).²⁴⁰

When Beaubien and a small group of Nuevomexicano shepherders began introducing sheep to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant in 1849, they primarily operated on the southern half of the parcel. At first, Nuevomexicano shepherders worked out of a small camp at the future site of Costilla, although the grant’s sheep population soon burgeoned in tandem with growing human communities at Costilla and San Luis.²⁴¹ Costilla, the first shepherding settlement on the grant, was optimally located in relationship to wool markets at Taos. As the crow flies, Costilla lay only 39 miles from Taos. When the journey between Costilla and Taos is measured using friction of distance, which accounts for how topographic factors, such as slope, influence human movement over the landscape, we can conclude that shepherds and merchants travelling from

²³⁸ Vale, “Mountains and Moisture in the West,” 143.

²³⁹ Vale, “Mountains and Moisture in the West,” 143.

²⁴⁰ National Hydrology Dataset.

²⁴¹ On the initial introduction of sheep to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, see Virginia McConnell Simmons, *The San Luis Valley: Land of the Six-Armed Cross*, 2nd ed. (Niwot: University Press of Colorado, 1999), 84. On the broader regional history of sheep in Colorado, see Andrew Gulliford, *The Woolly West: Colorado’s Hidden History of Sheepscares* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2018).

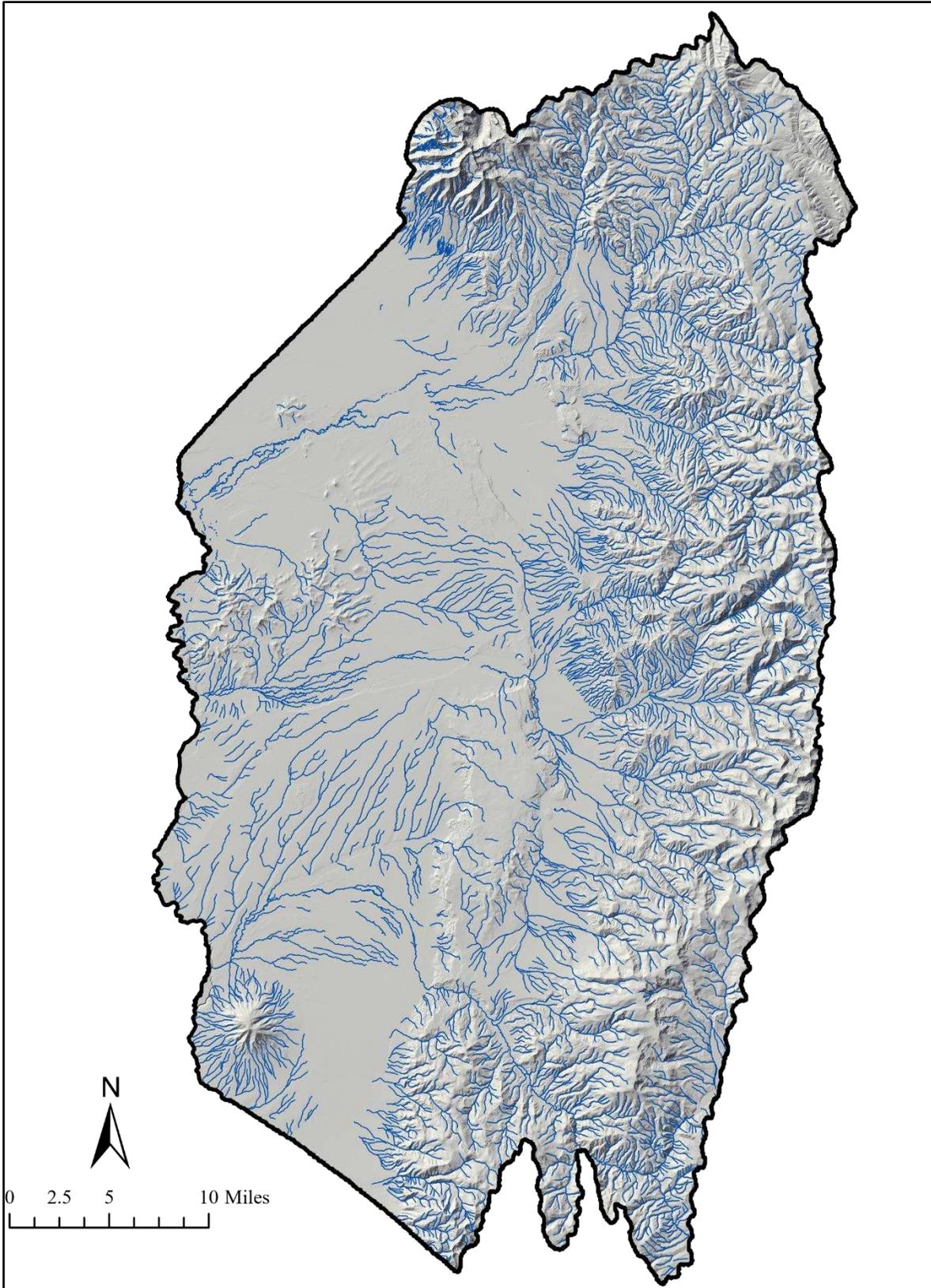


Figure 9. Map showing the hydrology of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, National Hydrology Dataset, ESRI.

Costilla could have reached Taos in at least two and a half travel days (see Figure 10).²⁴² For Nuevomexicano merchants like Dario Gallegos, a shop owner who sold goods at San Luis, and Nuevomexicano shepherders like Jose Medina, who ran sheep on the *vega* near San Luis, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's material environment provided ample grazing lands and facilitated the easy transport of goods between Nuevomexicano settlements on the parcel and Nuevomexicano markets to the south.²⁴³

While Nuevomexicanos in the 1850s shipped woolen sheep southward, the arrival of American and European settlers in the 1860s and 1870s redirected the flow of wool and other goods on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Instead of sending wool south to Taos, American and European merchants like Ferdinand Meyer generally shipped commodities eastward over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and north to markets like Denver, Colorado. There, the San Luis Valley had developed quite the reputation as a quality stock range for merino sheep. As Denver's *Rocky Mountain News* reported in 1870, newly arrived stock ranchers in the San Luis Valley

²⁴² Travel times based on slope-based friction derived from the Naismith-Langmuir rule. See Mingyu Yang, Frieke van Coillie, Min Lui, Robert du Wulf, Luc Hens, and Xiaokun Ou, "A GIS Approach to Estimating Tourists' Off-Road Use in a Mountainous Protected Area of Northwest Yunnan, China," *Mountain Research and Development* 34, no. 2 (May 2014): 108-9. The authors employed GRASS's anisotropic capability for calculating cost-based distance to account for downhill travel by human hikers. Though Yang et al.'s study considers friction of distance and tourist movement in China, their methods are broadly applicable to calculating cost distance movements over any terrestrial landscape. My analysis does not differentiate between uphill and downhill travel costs as merchants and shepherders likely gained little to no downhill cost-advantage when moving sheep and goods along trading routes through and out of the San Luis Valley. On a frictionless surface, an individual would require 2.1, 6-hour walking days. When we account for the friction of terrain between Taos and Costilla, travel time increases to 2.4 walking days. On the 6-hour walking day and friction of distance mapping, see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 47-8.

²⁴³ On Gallegos and Medina, see Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedules*.

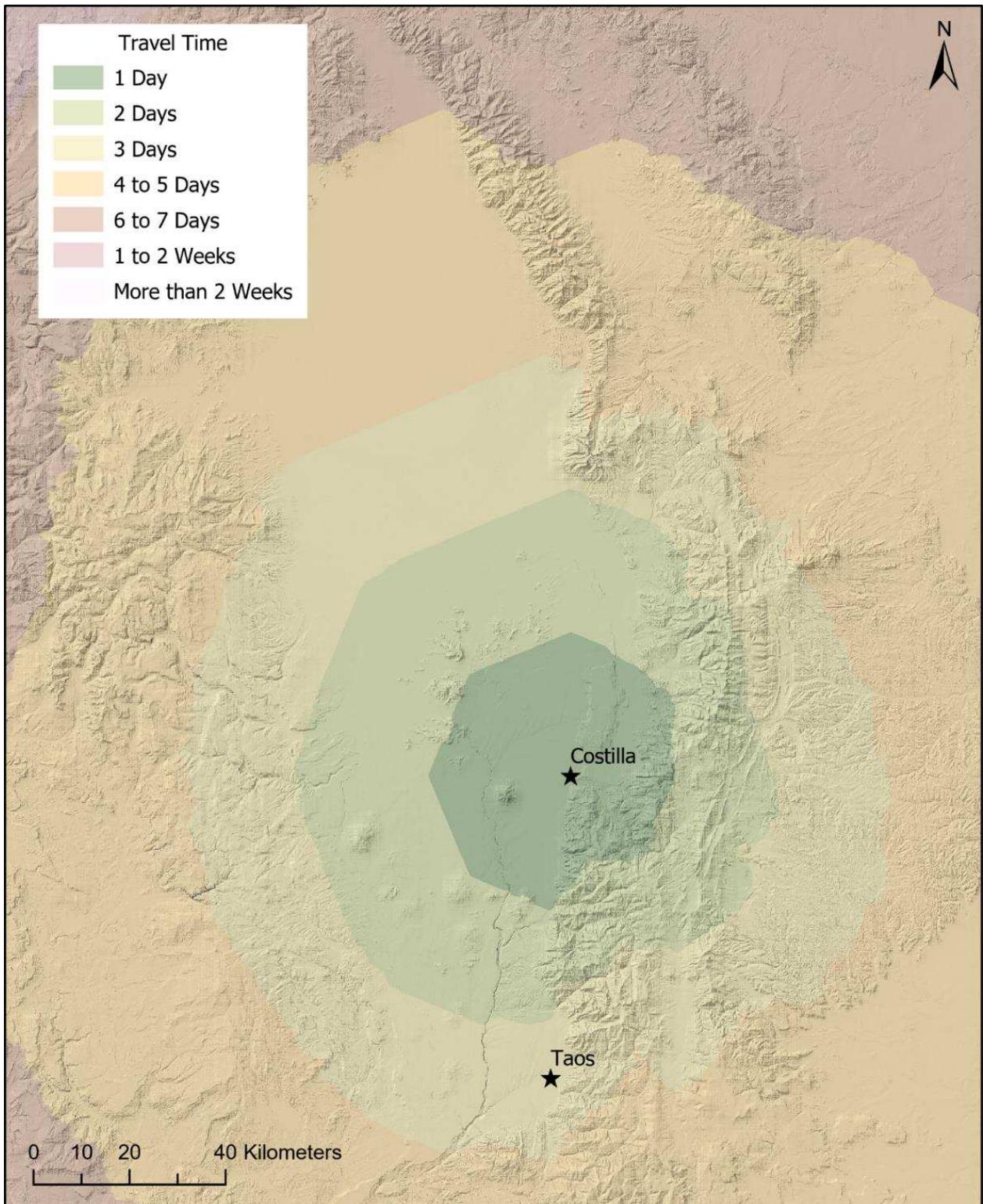


Figure 10. Map showing travel time from Costilla. 1 day of travel time assumes a 6-hour walking day. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, ESRI.

raised Spanish merinos that “brought from fourteen to sixteen pounds of wool each.”²⁴⁴ In 1870, sheep in Costilla County generated 45,020 pounds of wool, a quantity worth approximately 15,000 dollars.²⁴⁵ Relative to travel between the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and Taos, merchants like Rudolph Schmieding, a Prussian immigrant and dry goods merchant who settled at Fort Garland in the 1860s, found that the movement of people and goods between the grant and communities to the northeast, like Denver and Pueblo, was significantly more difficult. In part, later white migrants to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant settled in the grant’s northern third near towns like Fort Garland to reduce the friction of distance between themselves and markets along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains (see Figure 11). On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, topography shaped both white and Nuevomexicano settlement patterns throughout the parcel in ways that better attuned shepherding operations to the realities of transporting merinos, humans, and other goods between the parcel and distant markets.

Although humans attempted to overcome the topographical challenges of transporting sheep to market by adjusting their settlement patterns, the grant’s ecology placed more insurmountable limits on the ability of settlers to raise sheep for profit. Just as with the grant’s human populations, the grant’s topography, hydrology, and ecology shaped the movements and land use practices of the landscape’s woolly residents. As Nuevomexicanos and Americans extracted woolen wealth from the grant, their daily movements through the parcel were spatially linked to areas most suitable for sheep populations. To survive on the Sangre de Cristo Land

²⁴⁴ “Untitled,” *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver, Colorado), August 31, 1870.

²⁴⁵ On wool production in Costilla County, see Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, Volume III, The Statistics of the Wealth and Industry of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), 108-9. Wool value based on reported market price in 1872, see “The Wool Market,” *Colorado Chieftain*, May 30, 1872.

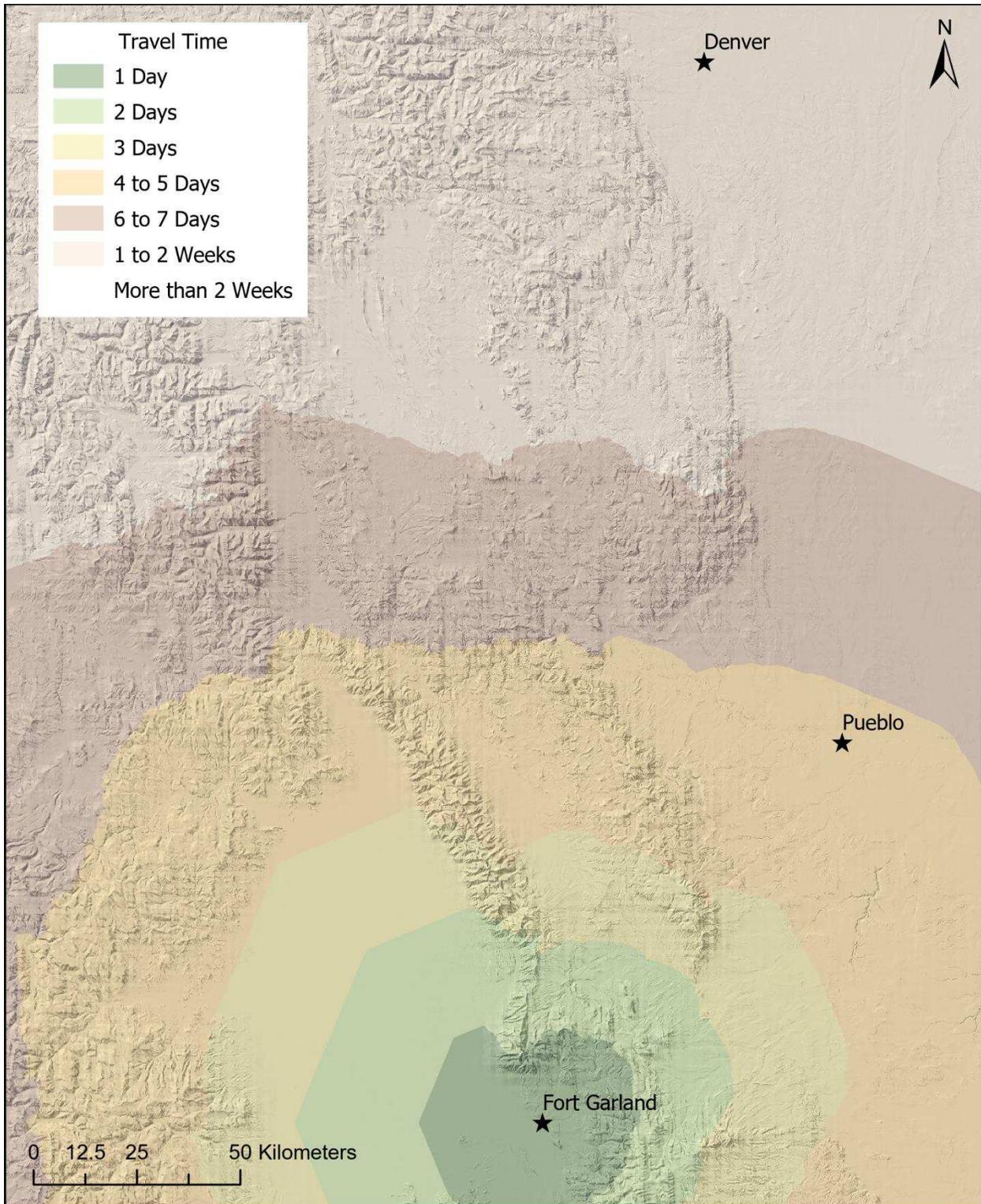


Figure 11. Map showing travel time from Fort Garland. 1 day of travel time assumes a 6-hour walking day. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, ESRI.

Grant, sheep required two essential resources: grass and water. San Luis Valley sheep, however, did not simply need to survive from season to season; Nuevomexicano shepherders and their *patrón* expected sheep to reproduce and grow healthy coats of wool. Sheep require anywhere from 3.5lbs to 7lbs of grass on a daily basis, an amount that fluctuates for ewes depending on where they are in their gestation cycle or if they are nursing newborn lambs.²⁴⁶ Additionally, sheep require regular access to water (approximately 2 gallons per day) and sheep grazing further from a water source will grow less efficiently than those grazing near available water.²⁴⁷ While sheep likely enjoyed widespread grass availability on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the geography and seasonality of the grant's hydrology determined which lands were most suitable for shepherding. Lands at the base of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and in the grant's foothills, such as the *vega* near San Luis, were the most hydrologically conducive to grazing (see Figure 12). The result of the grant's physical geography and its concentrated hydrological resources was stagnation in the area's sheep populations. By 1870, at least 22,500 sheep populated the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.²⁴⁸ By 1880, however, the grant's sheep population expanded only slightly to include at least 23,000 animals.²⁴⁹ With only so much available land that was suitable for grazing, the trend in decennial census records suggests that, among other factors, environmental constraints caused the grant's sheep population to reach its carrying capacity by the 1870s.

²⁴⁶ On the nutritional requirements of sheep, see Michael Fournier, "Feeding the Flock," PennState Extension, October 23, 2010, <https://extension.psu.edu/feeding-the-flock>.

²⁴⁷ Ben Bartlett, *Watering Systems for Grazing Livestock* (East Lansing, MI: Great Lakes Basin Grazing Network and Michigan State University Extension), <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/CT/WateringSystemsforGrazingLivestockBook.pdf>, 3.

²⁴⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, Volume III*, 108-9

²⁴⁹ Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, Volume III, Report Upon the Productions of Agriculture* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 144

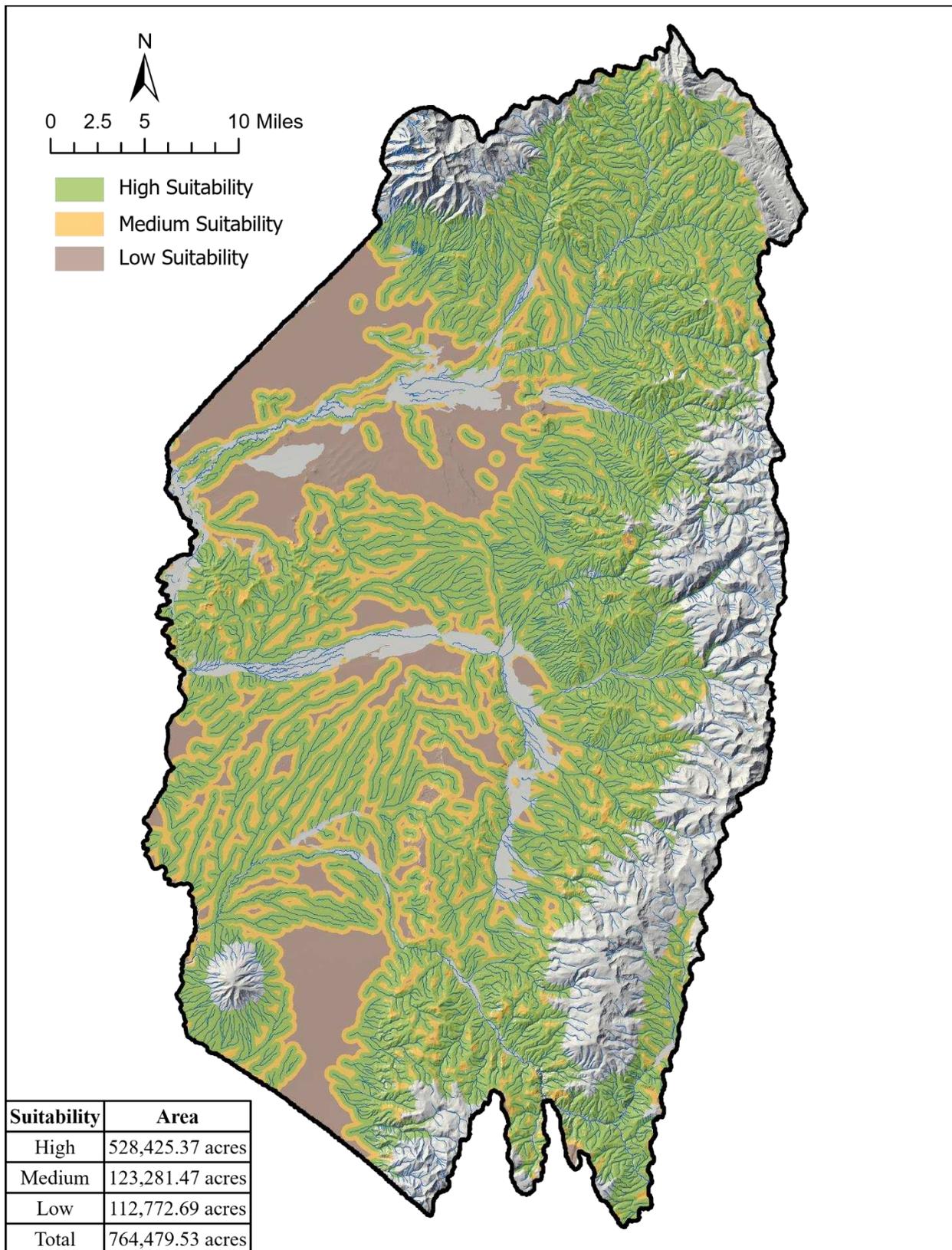


Figure 12. Approximated extent of grazing area for sheep on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, National Hydrology Dataset, ESRI.

Although sheep had remained important the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's economy since their introduction to the region in 1848, cattle followed in the wake of an increased number of American and European settlers to the grant in the 1860s and 1870s.²⁵⁰ By 1870, at least 1,267 head cattle resided on the grant, a population that quadrupled to 5,146 head in 1880.²⁵¹ After spending a few years growing and fattening for the market, San Luis Valley beef cattle would head eastward for sale at larger population centers. For example, Robert Robinson drove 800 head of cattle eastward out of the San Luis Valley in August 1875 for delivery to Messrs. Irwin, Allen & Co. who sold beef cattle near Kansas City, Missouri.²⁵² In contrast to sheep, cattle require significantly larger amounts of forage (around 27 pounds of dry forage per head per day) and water (around 20 gallons per day).²⁵³ Additionally, cattle prefer forage within 650 feet of a water source.²⁵⁴ While, as Blackmore was fond of reminding potential settlers and investors, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant contained almost one million acres of land, the growing incorporation of cattle into the grant's economy placed further pressure on the extent of land that might be used by humans reliant on four-legged sources of nutrition and wealth.

²⁵⁰ Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 84. On the Anglo-American roots of cattle husbandry, see Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*, 75-105.

²⁵¹ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, Volume III*, 108-9; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, Volume III*, 144

²⁵² "Untitled," *Las Animas Leader* (Las Animas, Colorado), August 27, 1875.

²⁵³ On cattle forage requirements, see Rick Basby, "Determining How Much Forage a Beef Cow Consumes Each Day," University of Nebraska Lincoln Extension, April 2013, <https://beef.unl.edu/cattleproduction/forageconsumed-day>. On cattle water requirements, see Bartlett, *Watering Systems for Grazing Livestock*, 3. Forage requirements also vary according to a cow's size, sex (in relation to gestation and lactation), and the economic needs of ranchers (cows that consume higher quantities of crude protein grow more quickly). See David Lalman and Chris Richards, "Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle," Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, <http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-1921/E-974web.pdf>.

²⁵⁴ Bartlett, *Watering Systems for Grazing Livestock*, 7.

Gilpin and Blackmore may have portrayed the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as a cornucopia of arable soils and extensive grasslands, but the overlapping ecological and animal geographies of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant tell a much different story.²⁵⁵ The parcel's ecology, hydrology, and topography all worked in tandem to structure and, often, to constrain the movements of domesticated animals and their human compatriots across the physical landscape. In total, around three-quarters of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant could have supported blue grama grass populations and, by extension, sheep and cattle grazing. When narrowed further based on the availability of water, just over half of the grant's landscape was highly suitable for sheep grazing. For cattle, this approximation further shrinks to just over 35% (see Figure 13).²⁵⁶ Gilpin and Blackmore may have attempted to control the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant by contesting its cultural borders and introducing new scientific, racial, and legal ones, but the grant's ecological boundaries proved far more significant in shaping the distribution of humans, animals, and land use on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In effect, ecological borders concentrated ranching and human settlement in the grant's lowlands. However, as American and European immigrants arrived on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, many avoided the established lowland communities and instead opted to develop economies based on mining and timbering in the grant's high-elevation zones near the Sangre de Cristo Pass. While ecology may have proved initially beneficial for shepherders and wool merchants like Beaubien, the settlement patterns of skilled white migrants on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant ultimately ensured that northerly (and whiter) communities like Fort Garland, which lay in proximity to both new migrant communities

²⁵⁵ This vision emerges throughout William Blackmore, *Colorado: Its Resources, Parks, and Prospects as a New Field for Emigration; with an Account of the Trenchara and Costilla Estates in the San Luis Park* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Marston, 1869).

²⁵⁶ Figures based on suitability analysis conducted in ArcGIS Pro.

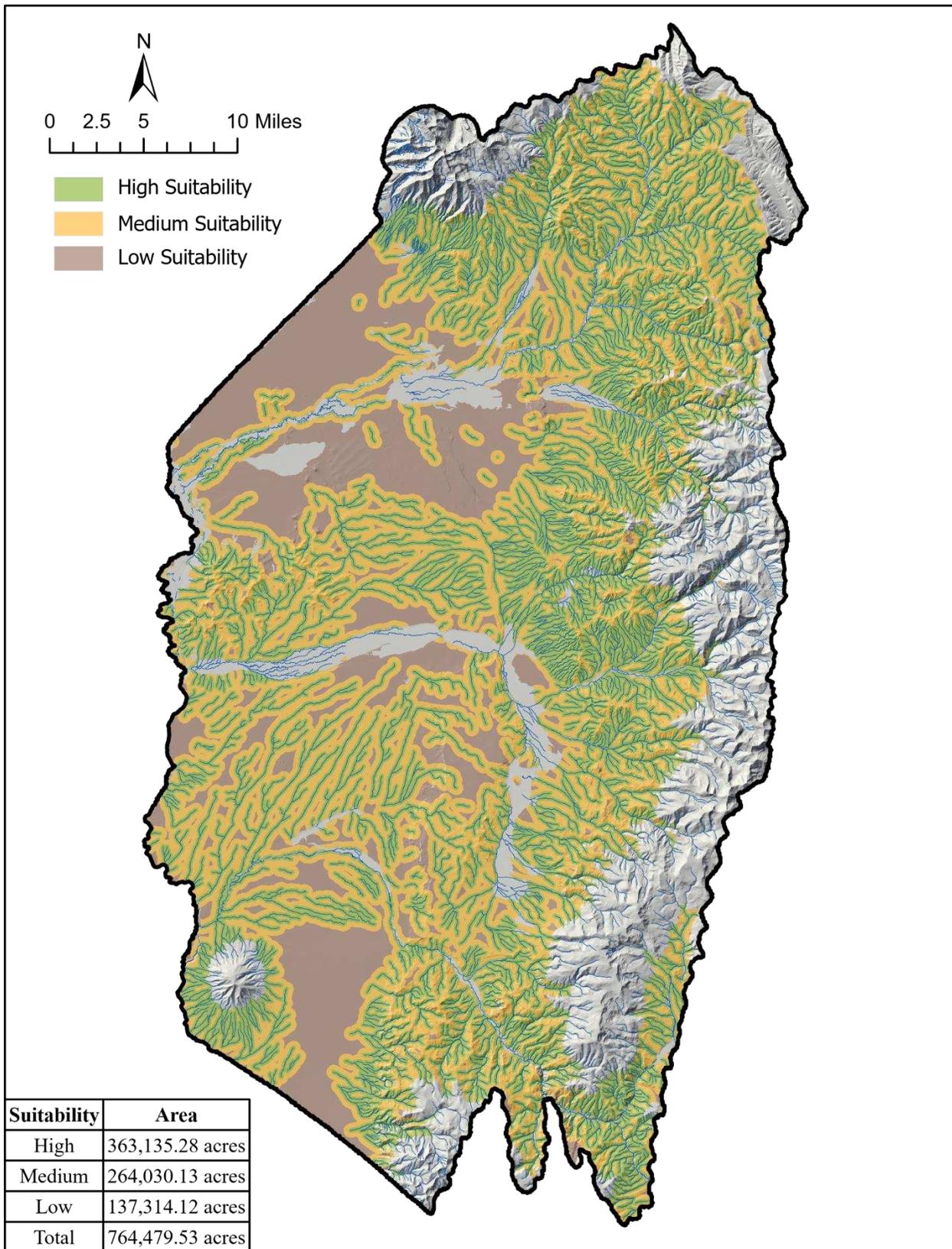


Figure 13. Approximated extent of grazing area for cattle on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, National Hydrology Dataset, ESRI.

and existing overland routes, would garner a larger share of the financial benefits from the new economic borders and modes of production that followed immigrants to the parcel in the 1870s.

The Geography of Production

As Gilpin strutted through the communities across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant asking local residents if they were aware they had been “improving” *his* land, his pointed questions revealed what was surely a troubling fact for Gilpin and Blackmore: a complex built environment was developing on Sangre de Cristo Land Grant without their express consent.²⁵⁷ Moreover, most of the population contributing the expansion of the parcel’s built environment was Nuevomexicano. Despite Gilpin and Blackmore’s best efforts, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant remained a predominantly Nuevomexicano space throughout the 1860s and 1870s. By the 1870s, however, the effects of Blackmore and Gilpin’s new borders became increasingly evident in the geographies of labor and land use on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. With time, the land use practices rooted in Beaubien’s early settlement efforts gave way to a more individualized landscape as new arrivals on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant took on employment as wage laborers, established themselves in skilled trades, and privatized access to newly developed resources on the parcel.²⁵⁸ As these new arrivals induced changes in the grant’s economy, they also became increasingly reliant on local, market-based systems of exchange and labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

²⁵⁷ “San Luis Valley,” *Colorado Chieftain*, June 13, 1872.

²⁵⁸ Maria Montoya details a similar evolution on the nearby Maxwell Grant in Montoya, *Translating Property*.

In the early 1850s, sheepherding and subsistence farming formed the basis of Nuevomexicano land use and labor on the parcel. Under *partido* contracts with Beaubien, Nuevomexicano shepherds raised sheep on the blue grama grass spread across the grant's valleys and foothills.²⁵⁹ Closer to the *plazas* at Costilla and San Luis, Nuevomexicanos raised subsistence crops on *vara* plots fed by *acequias* like the San Luis Peoples' Ditch.²⁶⁰ As the name of the *acequia* at San Luis suggests, the development of Nuevomexicano colonies on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was in many ways a communal effort. Nuevomexicanos dug ditches together and, by constructing adobe homes in a *plaza* formation, laid out their communities in ways that supported their mutual defense against possible Ute incursions.²⁶¹ While certainly more economically beneficial for Beaubien than for the grant's laboring Nuevomexicano colonists, a human geography defined by communal land use was crucial to the success of early settlement efforts in the San Luis Valley.

By the 1870s, however, the communal land use practices of the early Nuevomexicano colonists increasingly gave way to a growing proliferation of individualized access to the grant's natural resources. This shift was most evident in the growing number of farm laborers enumerated in the census records for Costilla and Taos Counties and in the appearance of non-communal water claims in locations outside of the grant's major population centers. By 1870, 443 individuals worked as farm hands or laborers on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.²⁶² By

²⁵⁹ On the basics of *partido* contracts, see Montoya, *Translating Property*, 142-3; on *partido* on the Sangre de Cristo Grant, see Brayer, *William Blackmore*, 11-6.

²⁶⁰ On the San Luis People's Ditch, see Rettig, "Tracing the Source of Irrigation," 3.

²⁶¹ On the *plaza* as a defensive layout in the San Luis Valley, Valdez, "Hispanic Vernacular Architecture and Settlement Patterns," 30.

²⁶² Figures based on quantities recorded in the manuscript census rolls for Costilla County, Colorado and parts of Taos County, New Mexico. See Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules, NARA Microfilm

1880, the number of laborers on the grant increased to 640 workers.²⁶³ Alongside the growing pool of agricultural laborers on the grant, the acreage of improved land in Costilla County (which contained most of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant) doubled from 5,583 acres in 1870 to 11,173 acres in 1880, most of which was concentrated along the grant's main watercourses.²⁶⁴ Although the amount of developed acreage on the grant increased over time, the number of individuals enumerated in the census as farmers, and not as farm laborers, decreased over time. In 1870, census enumerators identified 192 individuals as farmers on the grant, a quantity that decreased to 74 by 1880.²⁶⁵ As the decreasing number of farmers suggests, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's economy increasingly relied on wage labor, and not self-employed landowners, to produce wealth as the region's borderland period drew to a close.

The development of the grant's water resources in the landscape's higher-elevation regions mirrored the proliferation of irrigated acreage along its main watercourses. On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, water rights dating to the 1850s were community oriented. These diversions served a large number of claimants in towns like San Luis and Costilla as well as the soldiers housed at Fort Garland. In contrast, water rights established in the 1870s were

Publication M593, 1,761 rolls, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

²⁶³ Figures based on quantities recorded in the manuscript census rolls for Costilla County, Colorado and parts of Taos County, New Mexico. See Department of the Interior, Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules, NARA Microfilm Publication NARA Microfilm Publication T9, 1,454 rolls, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

²⁶⁴ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, Volume III*, 108-9; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, Volume III*, 144.

²⁶⁵ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

individualized and concentrated in the hands of only a few claimants.²⁶⁶ In 1861, the Colorado Territorial Legislature had recognized the *acequia* rights of communities in Costilla and Conejos counties. The territory also allowed local communities to elect a watermaster to manage those diversions.²⁶⁷ All new water rights, however, would be adjudicated under the riparian doctrine, with the priority of use going to miners and farmers.²⁶⁸ On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, new claims consolidated by individual families under the riparian doctrine often moved upstream of existing *acequias*, a geographic choice that provided claimants with access to water before local communities diverted large portions of the grant's hydrological resources into *acequia* ditches (see Figure 14).²⁶⁹

While Nuevomexicano men worked the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's farms and pasture and dug new irrigation ditches, Nuevomexicano women tended to the built environment of the *plaza* at locations like San Luis and Costilla.²⁷⁰ Perhaps more importantly, Nuevomexicano women performed the most valuable form of labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant: bearing and raising children. By 1870, 1,100 children resided on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and accounted for 45.9% of the grant's population.²⁷¹ This quantity remained fairly consistent through the following decade and, in 1880, 1,126 children resided on the grant and accounted for

²⁶⁶ On adjudicated water rights on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, see "Decree," June 14, 1889, Colorado Department of Natural Resources, Division of Water Resources, accessed April 18, 2019, <https://dnrweblink.state.co.us/dwr/DocView.aspx?id=579434&cr=1>.

²⁶⁷ On Colorado's acceptance of Mexican-era claims, see Donald Pisani, *To Reclaim a Divided West: Water, Law, and Public Policy, 1848-1902* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992), 44.

²⁶⁸ Pisani, *To Reclaim a Divided West*, 50.

²⁶⁹ "Decree," June 14, 1889.

²⁷⁰ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedules*; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Population Schedules*.

²⁷¹ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Population Schedules*.

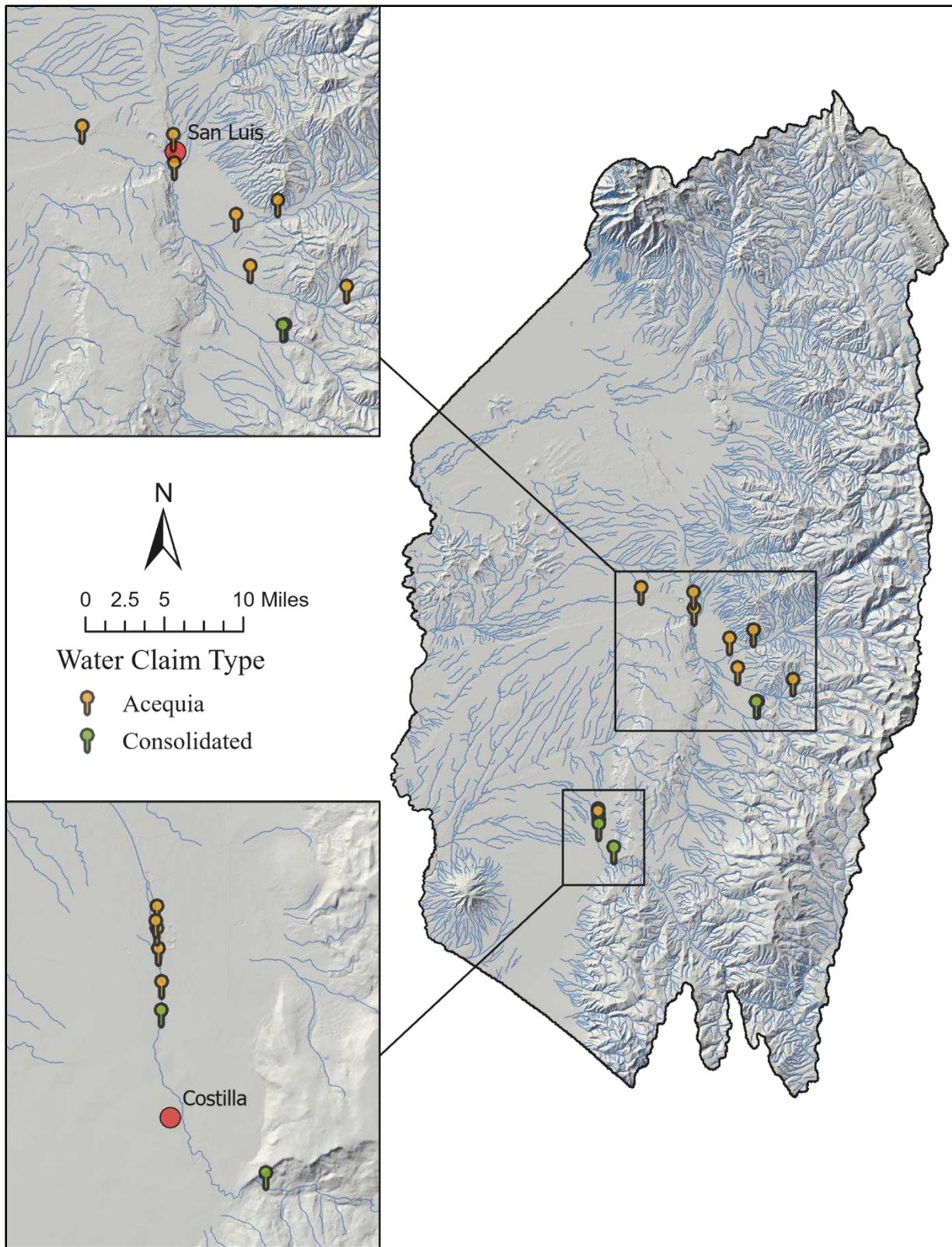


Figure 14. Borderland period water claims on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant differentiated by community *acequias* and consolidated (individual or family owned) ditches. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, National Hydrology Dataset, ESRI.

35.9% of the local population.²⁷² Manuscript census records from 1870 and 1880 suggest that children capable of taking on employment outside the home, rather than sheep, could provide the most direct route to upward economic mobility on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Gendered labor roles, however, determined whether or not children actually would become vehicles for a family's economic growth.²⁷³ For families like the Luceros, a preponderance of male children brought economic success. Ventura and Luce Lucero raised four children to adulthood and, in 1870, all four sons worked as farm laborers. The labor of the Lucero children, in addition to Ventura's work as a farmer, allowed the Lucero family to amass property valued at 1,200 dollars and a personal estate worth 1,545 dollars.²⁷⁴ The combined sum of 2,745 dollars was a sizeable one for a San Luis Valley family. Families that produced larger numbers of daughters tended to develop smaller estates, as was the case for the family of Jose and Juana Mestas. Together, Jose and Juana produced ten children, eight of which were girls. Although the census enumerated Jose as a farmer like Ventura Lucero, the Mestas accrued only real estate valued at 130 dollars.²⁷⁵ While the wage economy clearly offered financial opportunity to some Nuevomexicanos, the gendered division of labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant often influenced where economic opportunity might flow.²⁷⁶

²⁷² Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules.

²⁷³ As Dee Garceau shows in her study of ranchers and ranch work in Wyoming, the gendered division of labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was commonplace throughout the American West. See Dee Garceau, "Nomads, Bunkies, Cross-Dressers, and Family Men: Cowboy Identity and the Gendering of Ranch Work," in *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*, ed. Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau (New York: Routledge, 2001), 149-68.

²⁷⁴ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules.

²⁷⁵ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules.

²⁷⁶ The gendered borders that structured labor and economic growth on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant had the effect of producing what David Harvey called a "geography of difference." As Harvey notes, difference and inequality are "forged out of certain conditions (material, discursive, psychological, ect.) embedded in the social process," as was the case on the Sangre

Adult women, however, were not excluded from the grant's economy in the same way that young girls often were. On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, white, Nuevomexicano, Native, and black women engaged in a variety of skilled trades. Some, like Catalina Sanchez, an unmarried Native woman living in Costilla, worked as laundresses. Others, such as Ann P. Day, a widowed, white woman living in Mountain Home Valley, found employment as teachers.²⁷⁷ Women also took in boarders, monetizing the domestic space of the adobe house in the process.²⁷⁸ Widowed women also exercised significant financial control over their family's wealth. Census records suggest that widowed women on the grant retained their status as the head of the family household and controlled the family's personal estate, even after the oldest male child (if the family had one) grew to adulthood.²⁷⁹ The majority of adult women on the grant, however, engaged in skilled and reproductive labor at home that went unquantified in the census rolls that documented the area's population in 1870 and 1880.

In contrast, the census readily quantified the value of men's skilled labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. As enumerators like Harvey Easterday, William Stewart, and Juan Santisteran travelled throughout Costilla County, Colorado, and Taos County, New Mexico, they encountered communities with a growing number of skilled laborers.²⁸⁰ In 1870, 114 skilled

de Cristo Land Grant. See David Harvey, *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference* (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 1996), 362-5.

²⁷⁷ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules.

²⁷⁸ See, for example, the Chastain family in the Placer Mining District. While Benjamain Chastain was a "ranchman," his wife Amanda helped to generate wealth for the family by taking in Samuel and Solon Chase as boarders in the Chastain home. See Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

²⁷⁹ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules. On widow's legal rights and the Spanish-Mexican land grants, see Montoya, *Translating Property*, 76.

²⁸⁰ Easterday and Stewart enumerated Costilla County while Santisteran was responsible for Taos County. See Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population

laborers resided on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant working in 23 different trades.²⁸¹ By 1880, the grant's skilled labor pool grew to 301 individuals employed in 62 different trades.²⁸² As the presence of wealthy carpenters and shoemakers on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant suggests, the parcel's economy had grown significantly by 1880 as a variety of skilled laborers produced goods and services for consumption by the grant's residents.²⁸³

This expanding pool of skilled labor also induced changes in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's environment. While adobe houses and the walls of Fort Massachusetts and Fort Garland were among the earliest manifestations of a sedentary human presence on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, other structures, like Ceran St. Vrain's mill and a growing number of blacksmith shops and hotels, embodied changes in the grant's economy.²⁸⁴ Wealthier residents like Easterday constructed hotels on the grant at San Luis to house travelers conducting business at what one reporter for Pueblo's *Colorado Chieftain* described in 1872 as "the principal grain market of Costilla and Conejos Counties."²⁸⁵ Mercantile outfits, such as Ferdinand Meyer & Co. and Mazers & Rich, also spread across the grant and were likely bolstered by the flow of prospectors who travelled over La Veta Pass en route to the mines in the San Juan Mountains.²⁸⁶ By 1880, Colorado's growing connections to national markets had provided the Sangre de Cristo

Schedules; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

²⁸¹ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules.

²⁸² Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

²⁸³ Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

²⁸⁴ On St. Vrain's mill, see "Agreement between William Gilpin and Ceran St. Vrain," Deed Book 1, December 30, 1862, Costilla County Clerk and Recorder's Office, San Luis, Colorado, 205.

²⁸⁵ "San Luis Valley," *Colorado Chieftain*, June 13, 1872.

²⁸⁶ "San Luis Valley," *Colorado Chieftain*, June 13, 1872. On the journey to the San Juan Mountains, see Kindquist, "Communication in the Colorado High Country," 114-37.

Land Grant's economy with access not only to skilled migrants eager to settle in the American West but also to passing travelers in need of consumer goods and services.

These emerging national connections were perhaps most evident in a single group of laborers: the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad's tie choppers.²⁸⁷ On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, tie choppers labored to transform timber resources into ties for the expanding Denver and Rio Grande Railroad (D&RG). In the 1870s, William Jackson Palmer, then the supervisor of surveys for the Kansas Pacific Railroad, established the D&RG with William Bell, an English doctor who helped to finance the construction of the new railroad. Bell also happened to be an acquaintance of William Blackmore who soon became involved in marketing bonds for the D&RG.²⁸⁸ In the late 1870s, the D&RG advanced across the landscape of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant through the labor of tie choppers like Galbert Fleming, a Pennsylvanian, and Jose Mondragon, a Nuevomexicano.²⁸⁹ At the direction of Patrick Judge, the crew's foreman, the choppers would have produced thousands of ties as the D&RG climbed over La Veta Pass and eventually reached the San Luis Valley by way of Fort Garland in the late 1870s.²⁹⁰

Like other skilled laborers on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Judge's crew of tie choppers evidenced the growing connection of the San Luis Valley to the American economy.²⁹¹ While Gilpin and Blackmore had hoped to profit from this potential flow of migrants, settlers,

²⁸⁷ For an overview of American railroad companies and railroad construction in the nineteenth century, see Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011).

²⁸⁸ Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 154-59; see Pierce, *Making the White Man's West*, 151-74.

²⁸⁹ Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

²⁹⁰ Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

²⁹¹ The tie choppers and other skilled laborers on the grant are, in many ways, representative of William Cronon's claim that "the central story of the nineteenth century West is that of an expanding metropolitan economy creating ever more elaborate and intimate linkages between city and country." See William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991), xv.

and goods to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, census records from the period suggest that Gilpin and Blackmore's venture likely garnered no real benefits from the grant's post-1848 incorporation into the United States. Instead, skilled laborers and the capital they generated largely flocked to the grant's existing population centers, which were either places where Beaubien had already transferred land rights to local communities prior to his death or, in the case of Fort Garland, were under the control of the U.S. Army.²⁹² Although existing Nuevomexicano communities grew in population, Nuevomexicano men and women appear to have primarily labored within the grant's local economy. Moreover, many were not in a position to purchase land from Blackmore and Gilpin. Instead, the migrations that followed closely behind the American state's intrusion into the San Luis Valley often contributed to the ongoing Americanization of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's economic borders, a process that appears to have largely occurred independently of Blackmore, Gilpin, and the USFLEC.

Race and American Economic Borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant

Much like other aspects of the borderlands history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the individualized, American economic borders that increasingly structured land use and labor on the parcel often operated in tandem with the American racial borders that emerged during the grant's borderland period. By 1880, most of the grant's Nuevomexicano residents found employment primarily in the laboring role envisioned for them by Blackmore. Yet, despite Blackmore's claim that Nuevomexicano populations would come to labor for new white settlers,

²⁹² On the transfer of lands to the grant's early settlers, see "Beaubien Deed to Settlers," Records of the Land Rights Council, Water Resources Archive, Colorado State University. On Fort Garland, see Reynolds, "The Denizens of Manifest Destiny."

Nuevomexicanos appear to have largely remained in the employ of other Nuevomexicanos.²⁹³ Instead of drawing clear distinctions between a landed white population and a landless and laboring Nuevomexicano one, racial borders that marked Nuevomexicanos as nonwhite had the effect of structuring the distribution of white and Nuevomexicano populations throughout the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Throughout the 1870s, racial borders increasingly shaped the spatial distribution of the human populations, land use practices, and wealth on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.²⁹⁴

Although early San Luis Valley communities were predominantly Nuevomexicano, the racialized borders that Nuevomexicano colonists carried with them to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant had encouraged integration rather than segregation in local communities.²⁹⁵ For Nuevomexicano colonists, the integration of Nuevomexicanos with other ethnic groups occurred through the structure of the family. Native peoples who arrived on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as slaves found their way into Nuevomexicano households through a combination of purchase (or capture) and baptism.²⁹⁶ Although the white men who migrated to the Sangre de

²⁹³ William Blackmore, “Southern Colorado and Its Resources: A New Field for English Emigrants,” pamphlet, nd., box 1, folder 24, William Blackmore Land Records, New Mexico State Records Center and Archives, 1.

²⁹⁴ Natalia Molina describes this process as an ongoing development of “racial scripts,” which, Molina argues, operationalize a “racialization process” that “involves both social structures and cultural representations.” See Natalia Molina, *How Race is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 8.

²⁹⁵ The desire, often displayed by white Americans, to engage in the *de facto* segregation of white and Nuevomexicano populations throughout the Southwest is further documented in Linda Gordon, *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) and Katherine Benton Cohen, *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

²⁹⁶ William Kiser *Borderlands of Slavery: The Struggle Over Captivity and Peonage in the American Southwest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 166; Estévan Rael-Gálvez, “Identifying Captivity and Capturing Identity,” 103-10.

Cristo Land Grant during its borderland period experienced a process of integration that was nowhere near as harsh as the enslaved Indigenous experience, white migrants still integrated themselves into Nuevomexicano communities through family structures.²⁹⁷ As census records from the period suggest, many single white men who relocated to Nuevomexicano communities married Nuevomexicano women after arriving on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.²⁹⁸ Nuevomexicano communities, it appears, could comfortably mask any racial borders they may have introduced to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant with patriarchal family structures that simultaneously integrated and subordinated non-Nuevomexicano women within the community all the same.

Although racially integrated communities had existed on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant since the 1850s, the newly established racial borders that Hayden, Gilpin, and Blackmore introduced to the grant enabled migrants to imagine the parcel as an ideal landscape for white settlements. Outside of Colorado, Blackmore and, later, the D&RG advertised the San Luis Valley and other locales as hospitable to white settlers and as sites where white Americans might escape increasingly diverse urban centers that many feared would lead to racial degeneracy.²⁹⁹ Coloradans, however, recognized that nonwhite populations had settled upon the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant some time ago. Unlike the D&RG, which portrayed the San Luis Valley as unpopulated, local Coloradans positioned the railroad as an Americanizing force that would

²⁹⁷ As Anne Hyde has argued, “family connections across national and ethnic lines allowed business and diplomacy to flourish.” Moreover, these connections “were business—and family—as usual” on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and across the mid-nineteenth-century American continent. See Hyde, *Empires, Nations, and Families*, 5.

²⁹⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules.

²⁹⁹ On the D&RG’s promotional campaign, see Pierce, *Making the White Man’s West*, 151-74. Blackmore expresses a similar sentiment in Blackmore, “Southern Colorado and Its Resources,” 1.

whiten the San Luis Valley's racial geography. One Coloradan claimed that the disappearance of Mexican identity, language, and culture, which tarried "upon the fringes of civilization" in the San Luis Valley, was inevitable.³⁰⁰ That assured erasure, he editorialized, derived from the D&RG which would deliver the "westernized Yankee to revolutionize this condition of things."³⁰¹ And the Yankees did arrive, increasing the area's white population from 160 in 1870 and to 746 in 1880.³⁰² While the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's white population had increased by 1880, census records indicate that white settlement did little to displace existing Nuevomexicano populations. Instead, whites tended to settle in predominantly white areas while Nuevomexicano towns remained primarily Nuevomexicano. The railroad may have ushered new white settlers onto the grant, but new arrivals primarily congregated within distinct communities that aligned with the racial borders that emerged on the parcel in the 1860s and early 1870s.³⁰³

The result of white settlement on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was *de facto* segregation, both in the distribution of valley residents and in labor. Based on occupations recorded by census enumerators, whites were far more likely to engage in mineral extraction or to operate as merchants than Nuevomexicanos. Nuevomexicanos were far more likely to be

³⁰⁰ "Alamosa," *Weekly Gazette* (Colorado Springs, CO), August 24, 1878.

³⁰¹ "Alamosa," *Weekly Gazette* (Colorado Springs, CO), August 24, 1878.

³⁰² When Fort Garland's population is removed from consideration, the increase in the area's white population becomes quite significant. Without accounting for Fort Garland, the white population increased from 14 in 1870 to 624 in 1880. My calculation of the grant's white and Mexican population is based on a close reading of the 1870 and 1880 manuscript Census records. Because the Census Bureau did not differentiate between whites and Mexicans in 1870, I have assigned a late-nineteenth-century race to each individual living in Costilla County (the northern, and most populous two-thirds of the Sangre de Cristo Grant) based on name, place of birth, and parent's place of birth. All data generated through HeritageQuest. For records on individuals living in Costilla County, see Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

³⁰³ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

labeled as general laborers than whites, a trend that may have reflected their ongoing racialization that began in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's borderland period.³⁰⁴ Much like the segregated communities that dotted the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the racial borders that governed the grant led to racialized spatial distributions in certain types of labor.³⁰⁵ As white migration increased in the 1870s, racial borders took hold in the form of a racialized human geography on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.³⁰⁶ By 1880, this racial geography had stabilized in three distinct sections: the Nuevomexicano landscape in the grant's southern half, the white landscape at Fort Garland, and the polyglot landscape populated by tie choppers and prospectors in the grant's high-elevation zone.

The Nuevomexicano landscape on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant ranged from the parcel's southern terminus to the south of Costilla all the way north to the banks of the Rio Trenchara. This landscape was largely agrarian in character due to both the area's material environment and the history of Nuevomexicano sheepherding and farming in the San Luis Valley. Although Nuevomexicano land use practices were more than appropriate for the region's shrub-steppe ecology and concentrated hydrological resources, the lack of large crop fields on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant provided Blackmore and Hayden with the opportunity to equate the visibly barren landscape with the position of Nuevomexicanos in the American racial

³⁰⁴ Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, Population Schedules.

³⁰⁵ On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, what Molina called "racial scripts" had the effect of racializing the ways in which humans distributed themselves across the landscape, in effect, created a highly racialized form of what Henri Lefebvre described as "spatial practice." On racial scripts, see Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 8. On "spatial practice," see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, English translation edition, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Malden, MA: 1991), 8.

³⁰⁶ The only significant exception to this pattern appears to have been Judge's crew of tie choppers.

hierarchy.³⁰⁷ By 1880, the racial borders Blackmore and Hayden introduced solidified into a racial landscape as Nuevomexicanos on the grant rarely found employment outside of the agrarian boundaries of the Nuevomexicano landscape (see Figure 15).³⁰⁸

Much like the Nuevomexicano landscape in the grant's southern half, the militarized landscape at Fort Garland conflated the power of the U.S. Army and the American state with its racially white citizens. Aside from a small Nuevomexicano, Indigenous, and African American presence, European and white American immigrants made up the majority of Fort Garland's military population.³⁰⁹ The white landscape at Fort Garland, however, differed from the Nuevomexicano landscape in one significant regard: Fort Garland was home to a larger population that performed no labor on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Although Nuevomexicano and white families on the grant both kept domestic servants, some of whom were former slaves, in their households, Fort Garland's white children were more likely to escape laboring roles on farms or at home than their Nuevomexicano counterparts. Both Nuevomexicano and white children attended school in small numbers on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, but school-aged children at Fort Garland attended classes taught by William Smith, an Irishman that census enumerators identified as a "Teacher of Mathematics" at Fort Garland.³¹⁰ Often, as at Fort Garland, the benefits wealth and whiteness became inseparable from one another throughout the racial geography of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant (see Figure 16).

³⁰⁷ Ferdinand Hayden espoused this view in Ferdinand V. Hayden, "Report of Professor F. V. Hayden, of the University of Pennsylvania," in Blackmore, *Colorado*, 196-200.

³⁰⁸ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

³⁰⁹ Bureau of the Census, *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870, Population Schedules; Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

³¹⁰ Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

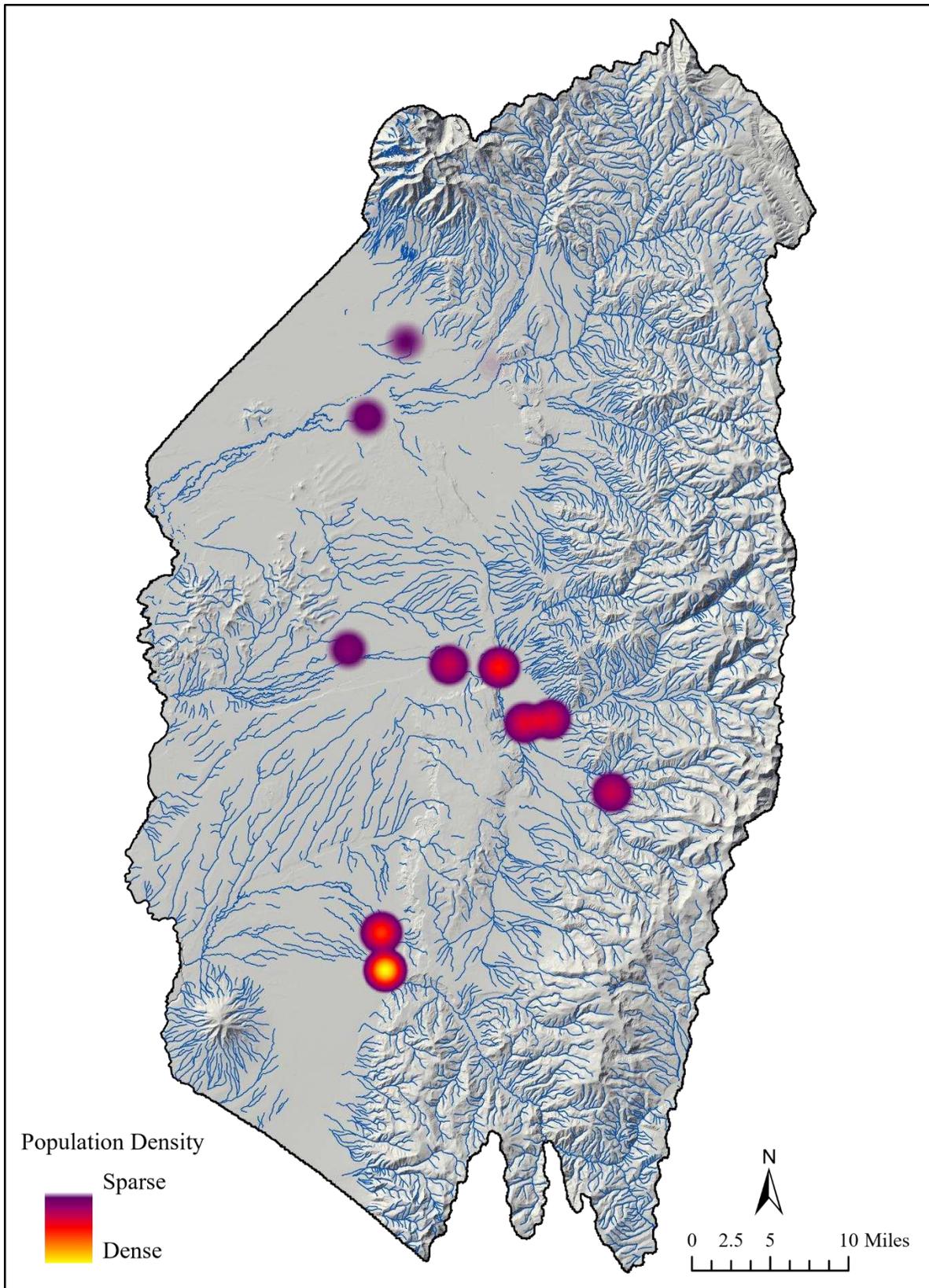


Figure 15. Nuevomexicano population density on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, National Hydrology Dataset, ESRI.

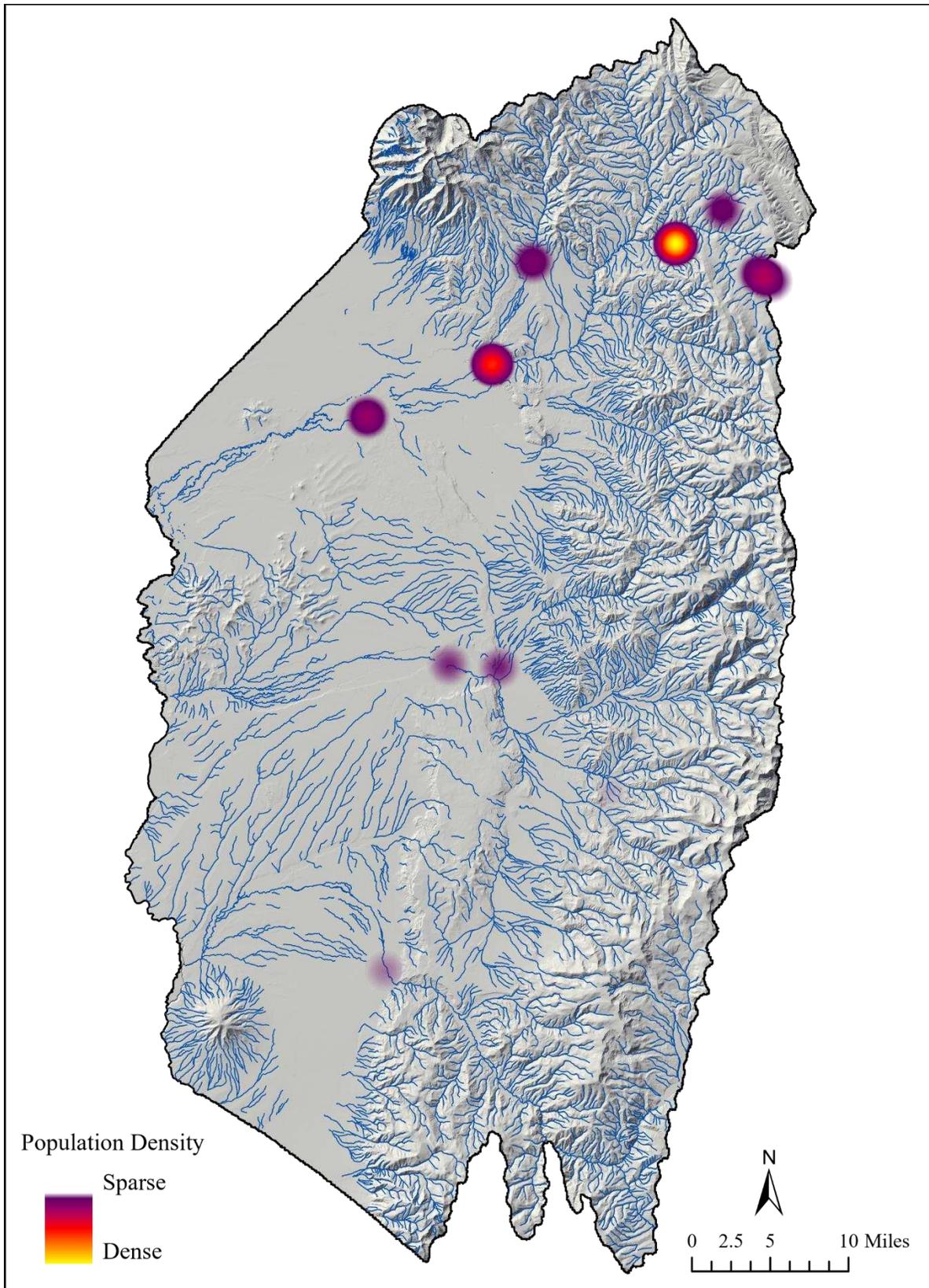


Figure 16. White population density on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Sources: National Elevation Dataset, National Hydrology Dataset, ESRI.

The racial geography of the higher-elevation regions of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant was more complex. In spaces like the Placer Mining District, migrants were primarily American-born, white men, a pattern common to mineral-fueled migrations throughout the mid-nineteenth-century American West.³¹¹ The presence of a diverse crew of tie choppers along Vega Creek, however, was more reflective of the growing American wage economy in the late-nineteenth century. As historian Richard White has argued, “the demand for contract labor on western railroads during the construction boom of the late 1870s and early 1880s was enormous.”³¹² The multiracial crew of tie choppers along Vega Creek likely reflected the D&RG’s necessity for reliable skilled labor on the grant. Together, Nuevomexicanos, Mexicans, and whites labored under the direction of Patrick Judge, an Irishman, to extract the grant’s timber resources for the D&RG.³¹³ Much like other laborers who leveled soils, carved out hillsides, and laid railroad tracks across the North American continent, the tie choppers on Judge’s crew were a multiracial cohort that worked to usher the D&RG across the San Luis Valley. Their story, however, was of little import to the travelling reporters who failed to mention tie choppers and other laborers as they portrayed the D&RG as the locomotive force behind the San Luis Valley’s emergent American identity.³¹⁴

³¹¹ On race, American identity, and nineteenth-century miners, see Susan Lee Johnson, “Bulls, Bears, and Dancing Boys: Race, Gender, and Leisure in the California Gold Rush,” in *Across the Great Divide: Cultures of Manhood in the American West*, ed. Matthew Basso, Laura McCall, and Dee Garceau (New York: Routledge, 2001), 45-71.

³¹² White, *Railroaded*, 295.

³¹³ Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

³¹⁴ On the erasure of labor from the railroad landscape, see Thomas Andrews, “‘Made by Toile’? Tourism, Labor, and the Construction of the Colorado Landscape, 1858-1917,” *Journal of American History* 92, no. 3 (December, 2005): 837-63.

Conclusion

As the outcomes of border contests reverberated across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant throughout the 1870s, the parcel's transition from borderland to bordered land was all but complete. Not only did the racial and legal borders introduced by Gilpin and Blackmore begin to take hold on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, new economic borders began to take shape as well. As skilled migrants flooded the grant in growing numbers and the number of laborers rapidly outpaced the number of self-employed farmers, the basis of a wage economy oriented toward consumption, rather than subsistence, increasingly structured labor and land use practices on the grant. The landscape's ecology began to change too as cattle consumed plant organisms in growing numbers while sheep populations stagnated. As the historical geography of the grant suggests, the contestation of existing Ute, Nuevomexicano, and nonhuman borders throughout the area occurred on many fronts, ranging from the valley floor to the crest of the Sangre de Cristo Mountain Range.

On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Americanization was a process that relied on the transformation of borders in population centers like Costilla and San Luis as much as in the parcel's hinterlands. As tie choppers, blacksmiths, laundresses, and teachers labored across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, each individual worked to transform both the cultural and physical landscape of the parcel. Although Blackmore and Gilpin had sought to realize their capitalist ambitions by selling of titles to pieces of the grant's physical landscape, the labor of Nuevomexicano farm hands, American and European miners, and various skilled workers did far more to orient the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to the American capitalist economy. And soon enough, American economic borders would fully stabilize across the grant's economy as

subsistence-based land use practices more fully gave way to wage labor and the consumption of purchased food and specialty goods across the grant. The disappearance of the last remnants of the Ute, Nuevomexicano, and American borderland and the emergence of an American bordered land, however, required only one thing: a new *patron* on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In 1878, the grant's new, *de facto patron* arrived in the form of locomotive engines as the D&RG finally steamed into Alamosa, Colorado.³¹⁵

³¹⁵ On the D&RG's arrival, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 158-9

CONCLUSION

FROM BORDERLAND, TO BORDERED LAND, AND BACK AGAIN

In 1878, the D&RG finally steamed into Alamosa, Colorado. Located just a few miles northwest of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Alamosa was, according to Carl Wulsten, a reporter for the *Daily Chieftain*, to become the next “metropolis on the banks of the great Mexican river [the Rio Grande].”³¹⁶ Like the D&RG, which made its way over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and into the San Luis Valley through the labor of tie choppers like Patrick Judge’s crew, Alamosa was also a product of the valley’s growing connection to the American economy. The D&RG had established Alamosa as a company town in the hopes of capitalizing on their new line through the San Luis Valley.³¹⁷ Alamosa lay in the center of the San Luis Valley and boasted proximity to the region’s grain markets on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant as well as to towns like Del Norte, Colorado that funneled both prospectors and minerals in and out of the San Juan Mountains. Although some Coloradans saw Alamosa and the D&RG tracks as evidence that American culture and life had begun to arrive in the San Luis Valley, the D&RG did not simply materialize on the valley floor. Rather, its arrival was the product of the valley’s Americanization—a process that occurred as places like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant transformed into American bordered lands.

On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, Americanization occurred through border contests, including cultural, ecological, and political ones. The dissolution of Ute political and economic borders was the first step in incorporating the San Luis Valley and the Sangre de Cristo Land

³¹⁶ Carl Wulsten, “Southern Meanderings,” *Colorado Daily Chieftain*, July 4, 1878.

³¹⁷ On Alamosa, see Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 159-73

Grant into the United States. Following the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexican War, both American soldiers and Nuevomexicano colonists contested Ute borders in the San Luis Valley.

Nuevomexicanos first contested Ute political borders by claiming land on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, a parcel that clearly lay within the boundaries of Ute territory. Although Ute bands likely accommodated Nuevomexicano settlers, whom they could both trade with and raid as necessary, Nuevomexicano colonization efforts claimed Ute lands for settler communities and their growing herds of sheep. When American soldiers arrived in the San Luis Valley and established Fort Massachusetts on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, they contested Ute borders on two fronts. First, American military campaigns like Fauntleroy's 1854 attack on Ute lodges proved effective in bringing Ute's into treaty negotiations that eroded Ute sovereignty and political in the region.³¹⁸ Second, the Army's willingness to protect local Nuevomexicanos from Ute raids and enslavement recognized Nuevomexicano settlers as citizen-subjects of the United States and, by extension, challenged Ute economic borders that had previously sanctioned the enslavement of valley Nuevomexicanos. Aided by the protection of the Army regulars at Fort Garland, Nuevomexicano settlements succeeded in transforming the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant from a Ute bordered land with an economy based on bison hunting and captive raiding into a borderland where Nuevomexicano land use, sedentary communities, and a wool-based export economy began to flourish.

Sedentary agriculture and American soldiers, however, did not immediately transform the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into an American bordered land. In somewhat Turnerian fashion, groups of predominantly white settlers and land speculators catalyzed the parcel's cultural and economic incorporation into the United States. On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant,

³¹⁸ Blackhawk, *Violence over the Land*, 198-99.

Americanization proceeded as mostly white settlers introduced new forms of land use to the parcel, employed American legal borders to define property ownership on the grant, and introduced racial borders that separated Nuevomexicanos from white migrants. Yet, Nuevomexicanos did not sit idly by. Some challenged the racial borders white Americans introduced to the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant by asserting claims to citizenship. Others challenged the attempts of Blackmore, Gilpin, and the USFLEC to dispossess them of their common property rights by mobilizing American legal borders as tools of resistance. As the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant transformed from borderland to bordered land in the 1860s and 1870s, *both* Nuevomexicanos and white speculators and settlers played a role in constructing new American borders on the parcel.

Immigrants, including white, black, Native, and Nuevomexicano ones, also participated in transforming the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant into an American bordered land. In the late 1860s and 1870s, settlers and skilled migrants arrived on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, many of whom took up residence in existing communities. While some, like John Taming, faced legal removal from the grant at the hands of the USFLEC, others established themselves as skilled professionals in towns like Fort Garland, San Luis, and Costilla.³¹⁹ There, blacksmiths, carpenters, teachers, shoemakers, and laundresses offered services to the local community. Together, these skilled laborers localized the economic borders of the American market economy and displaced Nuevomexicano economic borders that blended market-based exports with communally-oriented resource development. This shift affected Nuevomexicano communities too as many local Nuevomexicanos engaged in unskilled, wage labor for community members

³¹⁹ “John G. Taming, Appellant, against United States Freehold Land and Emigration Company, Appellees, in Ejectment” and Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States*, 1880, Population Schedules.

who had accumulated farms and other forms of private property. By the end of the 1870s, American economic borders enveloped all communities, both white and Nuevomexicano, on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

When the D&RG finally made its way over the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, the company relied on new American legal, racial, and economic borders, like those on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, to facilitate the railroad's arrival and success in the San Luis Valley. The gridded, legal borders that carved up private property throughout the American West persuaded D&RG executives to lay their track across the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Following the passage of the 1862 Railroad Act, railroad executives became accustomed to accepting federal cash payments or land grants as compensation for building new lines across the West.³²⁰

Blackmore and Gilpin enticed William Jackson Palmer, the builder of the D&RG, with a similar offer of land on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In exchange for constructing a spur line of the D&RG into the San Luis Valley, Palmer would receive a substantial personal interest in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, a company right of way through the grant, and acreage for train depots. Blackmore and Gilpin, notably, did not quantify their offer in *varas* or in *vega* rights.³²¹ Instead, the language of the grid connected the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant to potential investors and developers regardless of their proximity to the physical landscape itself.

Alongside the grant's legal boundaries, recently established racial borders supported the D&RG's attempts to portray the San Luis Valley as an ideal location for white tourism and

³²⁰ On the 1862 Railroad Act, see Dant, *Losing Eden*, 76.

³²¹ Simmons, *The San Luis Valley*, 158; Blackmore clearly anticipated the potential that the D&RG's arrival held for his investments and his collections contain various maps with proposed routes that would cut through the Sangre de Cristo Grant, for example, see "Map of the Denver & Rio Grande Railway," 1871, box 3, folder 1, William Blackmore Collection, 1827-1890, Fray Angelico Chavez History Library, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

settlement. Much like Blackmore and Hayden, the D&RG marketed the climate of the San Luis Valley to would-be travelers and settlers.³²² Doing so often came at the cost of erasing the presence and memory of railroad workers like Patrick Judge and the tie choppers atop the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. White travelers and the D&RG's promoters, as historian Thomas Andrews has argued, "joined to erase work and workers alike" from landscapes like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.³²³ And, as some local boosters of the railroad hoped, the D&RG would usher in a wave of white settlement that would erase Nuevomexicanos from the San Luis Valley too.³²⁴

While legal and racial borders generated land and enthusiasm for the D&RG's arrival in the San Luis Valley, economic borders ensured that it would benefit from local markets like those on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. In the 1870s, skilled migrants had introduced new consumer services to the grant's economy alongside existing merchants and hoteliers. As the D&RG collapsed the friction of distance between the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and the eastern United States, new goods flowed readily into the parcel's existing markets. The *Colorado Springs Gazette* reported in 1878 that, in nearby markets at Alamosa, surrounding communities could now acquire "Lubins soaps and perfumeries" and that "elegant toilet ware is to be found in every stock." In fact, the paper claimed, "the class of goods" in the D&RG's company town "appeared more like a city stock than that of a frontier town."³²⁵

The excited traveler, however, had misrepresented the so-called civilizing effects of the railroad on places like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. The D&RG hardly brought instantaneous change to the San Luis Valley. Instead, the company simply capitalized on the

³²² On the D&RG's promotional campaign, see Pierce, *Making the White Man's West*, 151-74.

³²³ Andrews, "'Made by Toile'?" 859.

³²⁴ "Alamosa," *Weekly Gazette* (Colorado Springs, CO), August 24, 1878.

³²⁵ "From Friday's Daily," *Colorado Springs Gazette*, 13 July 1878.

prior transformation of borderlands, like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, into American bordered lands. For the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the D&RG brought stability to the new American borders that Gilpin, Blackmore, and others constructed on the parcel in the 1860s and 1870s. In part, the D&RG offered a consistent importer and exporter of goods and people that functioned comfortably alongside the economic borders of the parcel's Americanized market economy. The growing profusion of larger, private farms and ranches on the grant, too, ensured that the legal borders structuring American property law would continue to support economic borders on the parcel. Moreover, the company's preference for racialized marketing campaigns further stabilized American racial borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. When the D&RG rolled into the San Luis Valley in 1878, it appeared that the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's status as an American bordered land had finally gained a degree of stability.

From Bordered Land to Borderland

Although some Americans viewed the arrival of the D&RG as a turning point in the grant's transformation into an American bordered land, both bordered lands and borderlands do not exist perpetually. Much like the mid-nineteenth-century Ute bordered land, the American bordered land on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant has faced new moments of contestation in the twenty-first century. Although Aron and Adelman articulated the borderlands-to-borders concept as a unidirectional process, recent events on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant suggest that the parcel may yet again be a borderland. In other words, the borderlands-to-borders process has historically been *multidirectional* on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. As recent border contests suggest, the parcel has and will continue to oscillate between borderland and bordered land.

Perhaps the most significant effort at contesting American borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant occurred in the Colorado State Supreme Court during the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Before the court, the descendants of the grant's early Nuevomexicano colonists brought suit against the ranch of the then-deceased Jack Taylor, a rancher who had acquired the title to the *vega* near San Luis in the mid-twentieth century. After acquiring the *vega*, Taylor and his children fenced in the property and denied Nuevomexicano communities at San Luis access to the historical timber and grazing commons. Soon, local residents filed suit in *Lobato v. Taylor* and appealed to the Colorado State Supreme Court to restore their access to the *vega*. In effect, their challenge insisted that the common property rights Beaubien granted to the original Nuevomexicano settlers still held sway on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant despite the Taylor Ranch's acquisition of the fee simple title to the *vega*. In 2002, Chief Justice Mary Mullarkey agreed with the residents of San Luis as she handed down the majority opinion in *Lobato v. Taylor* and restored Nuevomexicano access to the *vega* at San Luis.³²⁶ Since the decision, the fee simple legal borders of the American private property system have existed alongside the communal borders introduced by the grant's Nuevomexicano colonists and reinvigorated by their descendants on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

Communities on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant and across the San Luis Valley have also contested the nineteenth-century economic borders that still exist in the region. In 2018, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) began the process of opening the Sangre de Cristo Range to fracking through a proposed auction of subsurface mineral rights near Great Sand Dunes National Park. Oil and gas developers have often portrayed fracking as an economic boon to

³²⁶ On *Lobato v. Taylor* in the context of the Spanish-Mexican land grant system and historical context of the case, including previous litigation, see Montoya, *Translating Property*, 208-16.

Mountain West communities.³²⁷ San Luis Valley communities and activist groups, however, protested the proposed development. Organizers successfully persuaded the BLM to delay the auction in July 2018.³²⁸ While their nineteenth-century predecessors greeted new technologies and market-based, extractive land use practices with enthusiasm, the valley's current residents have made clear that extractive forms of resource capitalism need not be at the center of the region's future. Instead, the delay of proposed fracking developments in the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant suggests that local residents have begun, and may continue, to contest the individualistic nature of American economic borders in the San Luis Valley.

Aron and Adelman's borderlands-to-borders process, as both recent and more distant border contests suggest, may run in reverse as well. Ute bands experienced this reversal in the mid-nineteenth century as Nuevomexicanos and white Americans successfully contested the Ute bordered land in the San Luis Valley. Moreover, recent border contests suggest that borderlands may emerge inside nation-states rather than simply existing at their peripheries. Communities on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant may not be seeking separation from the United States, but recent contests *have* challenged the logic of American borders that early settlers and migrants constructed as members of the American nation state in the nineteenth century. In both past and present, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant has operated as a borderland that lay well inside the claimed political boundaries of the United States.

³²⁷ In Colorado, the debate over the economic benefits and health effects of fracking recently surfaced in Proposition 112, a ballot initiative that would place limits on the locations of future drilling sites. Much of the public disapproval for the measure, which did not pass, centered on jobs and other economic benefits of fracking. For a brief summary of the measure and debate, see John Aguilar, "Prop 112 Fails as Voters Say No to Larger Setbacks for Oil and Gas," *Denver (Colo.) Post*, 6 November 2018.

³²⁸ Cristopher Osher, "Federal Plan to Auction Mineral Rights near Great Sand Dunes National Park Opposed by Environmentalists," *Denver (Colo.) Post*, 12 March 2018.

The Internal Borderlands of U.S. History

Places like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant remain unfortunately absent from the historiography of the North American borderlands. Instead, scholars have largely focused on places where nations, empires, and Native polities meet. These locations, more often than not, exist in close proximity to the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders. Doing so, however, has placed limits borderlands history through an insistence on using the concept of borderlands to complicate our understanding of empires and nation-states from the periphery. Where then, might the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant fit into the larger field of borderlands history? What might recent border contests and their antecedents tell us about borderlands and the American nation state? The answer, it seems, is that borderlands need not limit themselves to being places at the edge of states, empires, and polities. Rather, by turning inward, borderlands history may begin to more fully reveal the centrality of the borderlands-to-borders process to American history.

On the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, the history of contests over legal, racial, scientific, and economic borders that transformed the parcel into an American bordered land explain how a one-million-acre property became part of the United States in more ways than one. Yet, the territorial borders of the United States were hardly significant to the border contests that followed the collapse of the Ute bordered land in the San Luis Valley. Instead, the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's borderlands-to-borders process was one where a diverse population of individuals participated in constructing an American bordered land in the San Luis Valley. In other words, the boundaries between empires and nation states mattered little on borderlands like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.

When we displace the significance of national boundaries in borderlands histories, places like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant may come into view as what we might call internal borderlands, or borderlands that lie physically within an empire or nation-state rather than at its edge.³²⁹ As this history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant demonstrates, internal borderlands are useful places for studying how borders structure human behavior, communities, and geography in ways that incorporate local economies and cultures into the nation-state. On the grant, Nuevomexicanos and white Americans both participated in constructing new economic borders that linked the parcel to the American market economy. Individuals participated in constructing legal borders in ways that benefitted both white and Nuevomexicano residents on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. Others built and contested racial borders that some hoped would define American identity and belonging in the San Luis Valley. Though similar border contests occurred throughout the U.S.-Mexico borderlands in the nineteenth century, internal borderlands like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant were markedly different in one regard: the majority of whites and Nuevomexicanos were citizens of the American bordered land they constructed together on the parcel.

Throughout much of this thesis, larger ideas about the relationship of belonging and citizenship in U.S. history have remained in the background as I have placed the economic, legal, racial, and environmental components of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant's borderlands history in the foreground. Although the belonging of Nuevomexicanos in the American body politic was certainly up for debate at different points in the San Luis Valley's history, Nuevomexicanos on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant retained their citizenship from 1848 onward as they owned property, paid taxes, and exercised the right to vote. Citizenship certainly drew meaningful

³²⁹ Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 814-41.

political borders on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, especially when Nuevomexicanos and the soldiers at Fort Garland contested Ute borders in the San Luis Valley. But whereas histories of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands commonly shed light on the entwined nature of political borders, racial borders, and citizenship throughout the American Southwest, internal borderlands ask us to also consider how racial borders operated in tandem with economic ones to structure labor and social relationships *among* American citizens in places like the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant.³³⁰ As the history of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant suggests, American borders included more than just racial and political ones; American economic and ecological borders were just as significant to internal borderlands. Future studies of other internal borderlands may add to our understanding of how diverse, although not always equitable, American communities constructed American bordered lands as the United States expanded across much of North America.

Revisiting internal borderlands can also reveal the timely, rather than timeless, characteristics of American borders. Though residents of the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant have recently contested American borders with roots in the nineteenth century, doing so hardly made the grant's communities any less American. New moments of contestation in internal borderlands, like recent ones on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, may further point to the ways in which the borders of nation states and empires exist in a state of flux. Rather than Aron and Adelman's clean transition between borderlands and nation states, the presence of internal borderlands suggests that the borders-to-borderlands process might be one whereby citizens contest and reconstruct the borders of the state without losing membership in the nation.³³¹

³³⁰ In many ways, encounters between Nuevomexicanos and white Americans were similar to conflicts detailed by Linda Gordon in the *The Great Arizona Orphan Abduction*.

³³¹ Adelman and Aron, "From Borderlands to Borders," 814-41.

When the United States came west, Native people, Nuevomexicanos, Europeans, and a racially diverse group of American citizens struggled to determine the future of a one-million-acre parcel in Colorado and New Mexico's San Luis Valley. As individuals, *they* set terms upon which an American bordered land would emerge on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant. They still set terms upon which that American bordered land exists today. In an American history that values and explores borderlands both inside the nation and at its periphery, a long arc of "construction and contestation" may begin to emerge—one where all individuals hold agency over the future of places like the San Luis Valley and throughout the American nation. Doing so reveals how American bordered lands did not emerge at the behest of an all-powerful state or empire; rather, individuals bear the responsibility for constructing American bordered lands throughout the United States. And, just like past and present communities on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant, individuals everywhere will continue to dictate how these American bordered lands will operate in the future.

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