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A Big War in Little Las Vegas: The War of 1898 in the Newspapers of Las Vegas, New Mexico

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A Big War in Little Las Vegas: The War of 1898 in the Newspapers of Las Vegas, New Mexico

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Figure 1. “La Nueva Era en Nuevo Mexico”, *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 1.

"We are convinced that midnight is the first minute of a new day, and we are further convinced
that we are entitled to a new day."

-Gil Scott Heron

"I hope you know, there's no one else like you
I hope you know, I never want to see you go"

-Supaman and Ashley Hall

To all those who carried me through and those I carried with me,
the words will never be enough.

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Introduction

As the 19th century came to a close, residents of New Mexico had waited over 50 years for the citizenship promised to them by their forcibly adopted country. Las Vegas, in the northeast corner of the territory, had been founded about a decade before the 1848 U.S. invasion and sat at the point that the Santa Fe Trail entered the mountains from the plains. The arrival of the railroad in the 1880s brought a huge influx of anglo settlers, but the town itself was the product of a shift in settlement in the territory. Prioritizing maintaining an internally strong province over expansion, Spanish colonial presence in New Mexico had long been limited to the Rio Grande Valley; at the turn of the 19th century land grants were issued in the surrounding plains in response to changing conditions in the valley. Founded as a buffer against Plains Indian incursions and to produce goods for export to the north, from its beginning Las Vegas acted as a point of resolution for the two colonial systems. As the territory's prime commercial center in the late 19th century, much of the nuevomexicano elite resided in the town, operating law firms, speculative interests, and often newspapers on either side of town. With circulation limited by the wealth and literacy of the territory's population, these papers were offshoots of various commercial and political machines, such as the notorious Santa Fe Ring. Las Vegas, at the end of the 19th century, was a site of resolving rather than replacing these two distinct colonial systems. As the nation lurched towards war with New Mexico's former metropole of Spain, the newspapers of Las Vegas worked overtime to accomplish such a resolution. *How, then, did the three major newspapers of Las Vegas represent the lead up and aftermath of the War of 1898?*

The first group of colonists arrived in 1598 to the Rio Grande valley, then lined with walled settlements the Spanish termed pueblos. They called the residents of the settlements by the same name, in front of the Pueblo inhabitants of the valley the arriving colonists performed dramatic reenactments of the Conquest of the Moors and of the Valley of Mexico.¹ While the latter was legible to the audience, representing a recent event in a region with which they had sustained contact, the performance of the former served to establish among the colonists the meaning of their arrival in this new place. Still, the early period of Spanish presence differed significantly from these references, isolated by vast deserts and without extractable bullion, the

¹ Gutiérrez, Ramón A. 1992. *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*. Stanford, Calif: Stanford Univ. Press. pg 47

colonial venture was largely driven by Franciscan missionaries. The early colonial system was no light imposition on the valley's residents who eventually rejected the colonists' designs, rising up and expelling the Spanish entirely from 1680-93. The reestablished Spanish presence weighed less heavily on the Pueblo than elsewhere in the empire; an unstable peace within the valley was further complicated by relations with indigenous groups beyond, like the Comanche, who alternately traded and raided with the Pueblo and Spanish residents of the densely settled valley. The suspension of trade following sustained hostilities with Comanche and other groups, coupled with outbreaks of smallpox, brought about the 'Defensive Crisis' of the late 18th century which set the conditions for the establishment of Las Vegas in following decades.²

While the population of the Rio Grande Valley shrank by around 25% during the 'Defensive Crisis' colonial sources portrayed the Spanish-speaking vecino population as rebounding faster than their Pueblo counterparts, forming a majority for the first time in the aftermath of the outbreaks.³ To relieve population pressure in the valley, colonial officials began issuing land grants on the plains below to detribalized Indian, or genizaro, families who held the land in common and served to insulate the valley from further raids. Grants were also given to wealthy individuals, operated primarily by the coerced labor of debt peons and Indian slaves to produce wool, beef, and other goods for export. Mercantilist trade restrictions had begun to weaken in the late colonial era before falling away completely after Mexican independence in 1821. Independence also brought an end to the distinctions of the *casta* racial hierarchy, though largely meaningless by the late 18th century, all categorizations were replaced with universal citizenship. Individuals of high standing now sought to distinguish themselves by wealth and began acquiring goods for transport along the Santa Fe Trail which arrived the same year as independence. New Mexican elites' deep commercial ties to U.S. commerce and sometimes conflictive relationship with the revolving-door of governments in Mexico City led to questions of loyalty, but New Mexico was no secessionist Texas. In fact, the capture of a band of Texan filibusters near Las Vegas in 1841 was marked as the high point for the administration of popular Governor Armijo during the Mexican period.⁴

² Frank, Ross. 2000. *From Settler to Citizen*. Berkeley, Calif. [u.a.]: Univ. of California Press. pg. 14

³ Frank pg. 55

⁴ Reséndez, Andrés. *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*. 1. publ. Ed. Cambridge Univ. Press 2005. pg. 253

Still, when Captain Kearney of the U.S. Army marched into Santa Fe in 1846, the city and the territory were captured “without firing one single shot.”⁵ The territory's residents were promised full citizenship and a handful of officials were now appointed by Washington rather than Mexico City, otherwise the disruption to most people's lives was minimal. It remained so until 1880 when the first railroad arrived in Las Vegas. A flood of anglos soon formed East Las Vegas near the railroad depot and began contesting the tangled web of land grants that surrounded the now split town. Anglo judges were only too happy to discount Spanish legal concepts, awarding vast swaths of land to export driven capitalists who ran herds of thousands of cattle on previously communal land. Poor genizaro farmers agitated for legal and political protections, alternatively in tandem or in conflict with wealthy nuevomexicanos; agitation that occasionally veered into the criminal such as the famous Gorras Blancas band which cut fences and destroyed export oriented infrastructure. This is the standard story of Las Vegas and accomplishes the core aims of Spanish, Mexican, and U.S colonial systems, the marginalization and eradication of indigenous identity.

These narratives were crystallized in histories of the territory from the Mexican period into the American one, like most narratives they were formed by excluding facts that did not fit. Two uprisings separated by a decade, the Chimayo uprising of 1837 and the Taos uprising of 1847, saw broad coalitions of actors mobilize, seize the capital, and execute the governor.⁶ Histories of the territory struggled to incorporate either event into a coherent narrative, both uprisings containing various indigenous, hispano, and religious groups whose identities and interests were meant to be opposed or unrelated. Their incompatibility with standard narratives of the territory point to something larger, the divisions of identity represented by colonial and national authorities did not map on to the reality lived by most of New Mexico's residents. Continuing into the territorial period, an oft repeated framing places the spanish-speaking population of the territory as simultaneously colonizers and colonized under U.S. rule, imagining the pre-1846 populace as composed of individuals that were equal parts exploiters and exploited.⁷ The framing ignores the fact that the majority of the territory's political and commercial elite through the U.S. territorial era were Spanish-speakers, as were the debt peons whose coerced labor benefitted this elite.

⁵ Reséndez, pg. 239

⁶ Reséndez, 188

⁷ See Kinnally, Cara A. 2019. *Forgotten Futures, Colonized Pasts*. 1st ed. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press. and Montgomery, Charles H. *The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico's Rio Grande*. 1st ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. *CiNII Research of NDL*.

Nuevomexicanos who wished to receive US citizenship were granted it by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, but a last minute revision at the behest of President Polk modified the timeline of the extension of statehood from, “as soon as possible,” to “at the proper time.” As such nuevomexicanos received federal citizenship, but as state citizenship was the “primary vehicle for suffrage” the territory’s sixty two year wait for full incorporation to the union meant effective second-class status for its residents.⁸ Suffrage was not the only limitation, federal judicial oversight and in appointing territorial officials meant whatever party held the presidency could impose its will on the territory. While poor nuevomexicanos struggled to navigate this system, elite Spanish-speakers mobilized their wealth, extant patronage systems, and connections to incoming anglo elites to shape a new colonial order. Unlike other areas of the southwest, where hispano elite were on the defence trying to preserve what aspects of the pre-US order they could, nuevomexicano elite were able to use their size and influence as a class to obligate anglo arrivals to adapt to a developing hybridized form of power.⁹ Of course nuevomexicano society continued adapting as well. The colonial social order of the *casta*, wherein people were stratified according to perceived degrees of Spanishness, was weak by the time Mexico declared universal citizenship for all residents. Following seizure by the US elite nuevomexicanos engaged the forming of an imagined community, almost identical to the process described by Anderson. Led especially by the territory’s Spanish-language newspapers, which undoubtedly, “began essentially as appendages of the market,” those classed as *genizaros*, *vecinos*, or *españoles* became members of a linguistic cohort, on whose behalf these papers were willing to speak.¹⁰ The new federal government was central in drawing these lines, despite the treaty’s extension of citizenship to former Mexican citizens, following a territorial bill specifically extending suffrage to Indians, “the US Congress intervened, exercising its veto power over territorial legislatures, and rescinded the right of Indians to vote in New Mexico in 1853.”¹¹ Thus a Spanish-speaking pueblo living in a tribal community lost most rights, while a *genizaro* living in debt peonage on an estate theoretically had the same rights as the elite land-owner. These elites engaged in a form of ‘official nationalism’, “an anticipatory strategy adopted by dominant groups which are threatened with marginalization or exclusion from an

⁸ Burnett, Christina Duffy and Burke Marshall, eds. 2001. *Foreign in a Domestic Sense*. American Encounters/Global Interactions. 1st ed. Durham: Duke University Press. pg. 146

⁹ Lozano, Rosina. 2018. *And American Language*. American Crossroads. 1st ed. ed. Vol. 49. Oakland, California: University of California Press. pg. 46

¹⁰ Anderson, Benedict. 2006. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed ed. London: Verso pg. 61

¹¹ Saldaña-Portillo, María Josefina. 2016. *Indian Given*. Latin America Otherwise. 1st ed. Durham: Duke University Press. pg. 174

emerging nationally imagined community.”¹² Here on a micro scale played out an episode of romantic nationalism that swept around the world in the 19th and 20th centuries; one carried out through newspapers, construction of linguistic communities, and in exaltations of ‘authentic’ traditions that would leave a lasting mark on New Mexico. It is also an episode that should not be mistaken for reality.

Terminology

One of the challenges in engaging with the history of Las Vegas and New Mexico as a whole is the ever shifting and ill-defined categories which are applied to the territory's residents. A brief introduction into these categories, their meanings, and, perhaps as importantly, their limitations will aid in understanding.

The two main groups inhabiting Las Vegas were the *anglos* and *nuevomexicanos*, defined by contrast. Along the borderlands of the U.S. and Mexico, *anglo* distinguishes settlers originating from the U.S. not necessarily of anglo-saxon ancestry. *Nuevomexicano* came to be used broadly to refer to the spanish-speaking population of the territory, though in the period discussed here *hispano-americano* was increasingly adopted to emphasize European ancestry. Outside of New Mexico *hispano* was a catch all for all spanish-speaking residents, though regional terms like *tejano* and *californio* were also used.

The bulk of settlers of Las Vegas came from the *genizaro* class, a still contested label. Deriving from the term *indios genizaros*, Ramon Gutierrez traces the etymology to the Turkish words *yeni* and *cheri*, from which the English janissary also derives, both referring to enslaved origins. Genizaros included, “detribalized Indians,” captives taken from Plains Indian groups and held as slaves in New Mexican society, and the offspring resulting from captives' assimilation into Spanish-speaking families.¹³

Vecino is a broad category generally used to refer to non-*indio* settlers of New Mexico. Meaning neighbor in English, the term originated from the *casta* racial hierarchy though by the late colonial period had shifted to denote status as citizen, membership in a

¹² Anderson, *Imagined Communities* pg. 101

¹³ Gutiérrez, Ramón A. *When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away*. pg 151

Spanish town, and/or “civic status under Spanish law.”¹⁴ In some contexts vecino is limited to civic identity as opposed to *residente* (non-landowning resident) or *naturale* (native) but by the end of the 18th century it came to incorporate non-Pueblo castas including genizaros.

The term *español* had a similarly convoluted use, initially designating one as Spanish, at the top of the casta, later it came to be used in contrast to genizaro and finally in the flattened dichotomy of español/indio.

Indio, Indian in Spanish, had both legal and racial dimensions that varied widely through the Spanish Empire. *Indios del pueblo*, as applied in New Mexico, denoted people of three major language groups that lived in walled settlements in and around the Rio Grande Valley. The term *pueblo*, meaning town or people, referred to their sedentary lifestyle. Combined with nominal christianization, *indios del pueblo* had more protection under Spanish law than *indios barbaros*, though the Spanish relied heavily on Pueblo cooperation to remain in the valley, a reality which may have shaped their relationship more than opinions of legal theorists and courts.

Indios barbaros, or barbarian, referred to primarily nomadic groups which surrounded the valley. Portrayed as antithetical to Spanish Christian civilization, more hostile relations such as slave taking were often permitted, though many groups which the Spanish depended on for trade were included in the category.

The *Comanche* were a group that split from the Ute in the mid-18th century having obtained horses via raiding of Spanish outposts. They formed the *Comancheria* on the Great Plains, a region occupied by autonomous bands stretching between the US, Spanish, and French colonial systems. The term Plains Indians is often used to refer to Comanche as well as Kiowa and Wichita who are inconsistently identified in colonial sources.

¹⁴ Frank, *From Settler to Citizen* pg. 189

Literature Review

Scholarship on this region has introduced some novel interventions. Sitting at the vertices of U.S Western, Spanish colonial, early Mexican, and indigenous histories; many concepts and categorizations taken at face value elsewhere are unsettled by the complex web of relations existing here. A touchstone in the field is *When Jesus Came the Corn Mothers Went Away* by Ramon Gutiérrez which traces the changes and continuity in social structure in their Rio Grande Valley following the arrival of the Spanish colonial system using marriage and sexuality as a lens. Gutiérrez marks Franciscan missionaries as the prime colonial impulse of the first century of Spanish presence while scandals in earlier colonial ventures outside of New Mexico led colonists to refrain from documenting much of the abuse of the early years. *From Settler to Citizen* by Ross Frank develops the concept of the 18th century 'Defensive Crisis' in New Mexico which fundamentally reshaped colonial society, leading to the establishment of vecino communities on land grants beyond the Rio Grande Valley. Frank attempts to reconstruct shifting lines of identity, though inconsistent colonial records defy any clear or consistent categorization especially as, "new currents of economic activity added to the incentive for passing from Color Quebrado, Coyote, Lobo, Genizaro or other Castas to vecino or Espanol through self-identification."¹⁵ *Captives and Cousins* by James Brooks details the extent and importance of captive-taking and slave trading in systems of exchange between indigenous groups, Spanish, and anglo settlers; systems central to the economic function and kinship systems of New Mexico. Brooks concludes that, "integration with a capitalist economy did not bring free-wage labor to the borderlands. New forms of peonage, such as sharecropping, and dependency on conquest governments appeared during the late nineteenth century."¹⁶ Kiser's *Borderlands of Slavery* follows these themes, focusing on the longevity in New Mexico of captive-taking and debt-peonage in relation to chattel slavery in the U.S. Southeast.¹⁷ He shows coerced labor to have a much broader history in the U.S. of which 19th century New

¹⁵ Frank, pgs.178-9

¹⁶ Brooks, James F. *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands*. 1st ed. Chapel Hill: Omohundro Institute of Early American History & Culture, 2002. Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and the University of North Carolina Press pg.367

¹⁷ Kiser, William S. *Borderlands of Slavery*. 1st ed. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, Inc, 2017. America in the Nineteenth Century Web.

Mexico was a key chapter. Finally, Andres Reséndez connects the debt peonage system in New Mexico to the Reconstruction south, where there was the key development of mass criminalization given that the, "Thirteenth Amendment prohibited slavery and involuntary servitude 'except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted,' the constitutional amendment itself provided an obvious loophole."¹⁸ These works underscore the transient nature of categories of identification through the colonial and national periods, exaggerated by religious and administrative officials that had a vested interest in overrepresenting the territory's population as christianized and acculturated to Spanish norms while hiding the labor and sexual violence that was foundational to much of New Mexican society. They go on to show how these systems of coerced labor were anything but archaic remnants of an illiberal colonial order but rather were developed in relation to modern capitalist forces.

Forgotten Futures, Colonized Pasts by Cara Anne Kinnally introduces a unique history of transnationalism in 19th century 'Greater Mexico' that disrupts the teleology often inherent in narratives of national consolidation. Her reminder that "transnationalism... is not always subversive or liberating" sets the stage for a discussion of ideological collaboration between different American elite classes.¹⁹ An illuminating passage follows the travels of Lorenzo de Zavala, future vice president of the Texan Republic, who describes the people of Missouri, "the inhabitants of this part of the United States are generally uncivilized, and there are many that resemble our Indians, though they are always more proud," a prescient facsimile of later anglo condemnations of nuevomexicanos.²⁰ An earlier work by Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*, blurs identities that complicate national boundaries, New Mexico's elite chafed under centralised governments in Mexico City infringing on their long held autonomy yet they are anti-Texan before, perhaps, all else. Two uprisings display the shortcomings of colonial social divisions to explain on the ground realities, challenging both U.S federal forces in the 1847 Taos Uprising and Mexican centralist governance in 1837 which, according to Reséndez, "whatever else it may have been, the Chimayo rebellion was also an indigenous uprising."²¹ *Unspeakable Violence* by Nicole Guidotti-Hernandez is a transnational feminist investigation of

¹⁸ Reséndez, Andres. 2017. "North American Peonage." *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 7 (4) (Dec 1): 597–619. pg. 608

¹⁹ Kinnally, *Forgotten Futures, Colonized Pasts* pg. 28

²⁰ "los habitantes de esta parte de los Estado Unidos son generalmente poco civilizados, y hay muchos que se aprocsiman a nuestros Indios, aunque siempre son más orgullosos" Kinnally, pg. 67

²¹ Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier* pg. 180

the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and of the instrumentalization of violence to define identity and belonging.²² Chapter 2 on the Camp Grant Massacre, where over 100 Apache were killed by Anglo, Mexican, and, primarily, Papago attackers, pushes against the tendency to flatten indigenous actors into a monolith while later sections on mestizaje (race-mixing) in Northern Mexico provide a contrast to New Mexico's eventually developed multicultural self-image. In these works actors from all social classes defy the orderly, often teleological, identities ascribed by both contemporary colonial officials and later writers.

Hispanicism and Early U.S Literature introduces the concept of Hispanicism in conversation with Said's Orientalism and Morrison's Africanism as defining Anglo-American identity in contrast to Spanish, especially in imperialist discourse. The construction laid the groundwork for the notion that the U.S. would naturally inherit much of Spain's empire, "Africanism constructed the Anglo-Americans as capable of political self-organization, whereas Hispanicism constructed Anglo-Americans as capable of liberal political organization."²³ Rosina Lozano in *An American Language* shows how hispanos after 1848 tried to maintain their language and identity in the new order, contrasting marginalization in California against "New Mexico, where nuevomexicanos retained their demographic advantage, the treaty citizens retained their power through both land ownership and presence in territorial government."²⁴ The author focuses especially on the use of Spanish in governance finding the, "discussions surrounding nuevomexicano use of language and retention of culture a precursor for later ones in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and other territories."²⁵ *The Imperial Archipelago* traces the development of various colonial relationships between the US federal government and territories taken in 1898 with Puerto Rico most closely resembling territorial New Mexico until the insular cases began drawing legal distinctions between contiguous and overseas territories. Like elites in New Mexico, those in Puerto Rico,

"believ[ed] that an equal or greater measure of autonomy would be granted and that access to new markets would be economically advantageous...they understood that in

²² Guidotti-Hernández, Nicole Marie. *Unspeakable Violence*. Durham [u.a.]: Duke Univ. Press, 2011. Latin America Otherwise : Languages, Empires, Nations

²³ Havard, John C. *Hispanicism and Early US Literature : Spain, Mexico, Cuba, and the Origins of US National Identity*. University of North Carolina, 2018 pg. 16

²⁴ Lozano, *An American Language*, pg.36

²⁵ Lozano, pgs. 56-7

their role as local leaders, the existing patronage system of political control and influence would persist in their favor.”²⁶

Legal distinctions in citizenship are examined by *Foreign in a Domestic Sense* as two changes in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo laid the groundwork for New Mexico’s territorial era; Article X mandating respect for Mexican land grants was deleted and article IX was modified to extend the timeframe for statehood, cementing New Mexican residents’ second class status for sixty two years. The role of racial prejudice in determining territorial policy is a central theme, both in the US’s seizure of the Mexican northern frontier rather than British Oregon and in the later insular cases which cite legal discrimination against Indians and Chinese immigrants to justify unequal constitutional protection in overseas territories.²⁷

Finally several works relate to the immediate context in which these newspapers were published. *The Spanish Redemption* by Charles Montgomery traces the development of the Spanish identity in New Mexico following the seizure by the U.S. It recounts the common narrative of Spanish-speaking residents abandoning Mexican or nuevomexicano identity in favor of hispano-americano to emphasize European ancestry held in common with anglo arrivals. Montgomery errs in a manner common to many works on territorial New Mexico, to emphasize the shock of the region’s inhabitants to seizure by the U.S. he over historicizes their presence on the land and privileges only Spanish ancestry, “with family roots deep in northern New Mexico’s soil, most citizens shared a pride in ancestors who settled local villages and withstood depredations of hostile tribes.”²⁸ Not only had most of these villages been created only a few years before the U.S. invasion, many of their inhabitants would have counted members of “hostile tribes” in their ancestry. *Speaking for Themselves* by Doris Meyer, *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico* by Gabriel Melendez, and *The Territorial Press of New Mexico* by Porter Stratton are broad surveys into the development of newspapers in New Mexico, the first two focusing on Spanish-language publications and the third primarily on English ones.²⁹ While providing valuable context for the newspapers in Las Vegas, different language publications are rarely put in conversation with each other and the expansive amount of material covered can obscure relevant details, especially as a single publication could go through a handful of editors and formats in the course of a few years. *Under the Same Glorious Flag* covers the land grant

²⁶ Thompson, Lanny. 2010. *Imperial Archipelago. Writing Past Colonialism*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press pg. 252

²⁷ Burnett, and Burke, *Foreign in a Domestic Sense*. pg 141

²⁸ Montgomery, *The Spanish Redemption* pg. 70

²⁹ Meyer, Doris. 1996. *Speaking for Themselves*. 1. ed. ed. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press.

disputes around Las Vegas and vigilante Gorras Blancas that appeared to challenge at least sections of the town's elite yielding valuable insights.³⁰ Chapter 5 examining intermarriages from the view of nuevomexicana women, rather than arriving anglos, reverses the typical view of a cash hungry Spanish-speaking elite happily incorporating in anglo men and is an example of a social history grounded in a place giving novel perspectives. These works illuminate a rapidly changing town and territory without relating too often to larger national or international events, leaving open this area of inquiry.

Methodology

For this study three papers published concurrently in Las Vegas are used. For each period two weeks of the year are reviewed, separated by six months so far as available sources allow. Two papers were weeklies while one was a daily. Given the focus of the *Daily Optic*, mainly local events, livestock pricing, and going on related to the railroad, five issues of a certain week are reviewed, compared to one issue of the weekly papers. Beyond this limitation occasional other issues are referenced, generally to ascertain ownership or editorial control of the imprint rather than following any broader themes. The three periods reviewed here are 1897, 1899, and 1900, representing coverage before the War of 1898, after it, and during the subsequent election of 1900 which was largely defined by the question of imperialism. 1898 is excluded partially because of a lack of concurrent sources, but also owing to a convergence in views of the wartime coverage. Subsequent years, as the Philippines occupation deepened and the legal relation to overseas territories was defined by Supreme Court decisions, are similarly excluded. This is also due to a lack of concurrent issues, but more to a lack of interest in the colonial occupation shown by the papers, as the 1901-1902 statehood effort dominated coverage. While the papers were chosen for representing an array of views, questions of ownership and editorial control complicate these distinctions, discussed in chapters 2 and 3.³¹

³⁰ Taylor-Montoya, Amanda. ""Under the Same Glorious Flag": Land, Race, and Legitimacy in Territorial New Mexico." University of Oklahoma, 2009.

³¹ Allegations that one of the Cabeza de Vaca brothers worked as an editor at *El Independiente* during the period discussed here appear in Porter A. Stratton's "The Territorial Press of New Mexico, 1834-1912." who claims Ezequiel's involvement and in Graeme Mount's 1983. "Nuevomexicanos and the War of 1898." who claims Manuel was involved. Neither claim is substantiated by the more in depth investigations of Gabriel Meléndez's *So all is Not Lost : The Poetics of Print in Nuevomexicano*

What is certain is that all the papers included present exclusively elite points of view, even when separated by language and political affiliation. Many authors lament the absence of lower class nuevomexicano people in the historical record, with some turning to later records of folk traditions or artifacts to reconstruct aspects of these peoples' lives.³² Still there are no substantial self-representative sources of the lower class which might be put into conversation with these elite sources produced and preserved in New Mexico. Ostensibly Felix Martinez's imprint *La Voz del Pueblo* attempted to speak on their behalf, but a cattle baron who had a hand in several newspapers in the region and moved freely between New Mexican and Texan political circles certainly had his own interests.

Communities, 1834-1958 or Doris Meyer's *Speaking for Themselves* nor in the pages of *El Independiente* itself but seem to originate from a family history of the Cabeza de Vaca's.

³² See Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*, pgs. 1-11, Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, chapters 4 and 5, and Gonzales Silvestro, Kaddiz. 2023. "An Untellable Tale: Recovering Indigenous Captivity in New Mexico (1852-1870)."Harvard University. 1-7

Chapter 1

Histories of Nuevomexicanos and Statehood

Histories concerning the identity of New Mexico's residents in relation to the US began before the territory became the 47th state in 1912. These early histories eclipsed the Mexican period almost entirely, declaring nuevomexicanos to be essentially of Spanish ancestry or hispanoamericano in a fusion of European and American elements. Hubert Howe Bancroft's *History of Arizona and New Mexico 1530-1888*, published in 1889, emphasized the antiquity of Spanish settlement in the area and underlined how well established the colonial system in the Rio Grande valley was by the time English colonists arrived on the east coast of North America. It is self-conscious of its liminal position, claiming, "the dangers of serious Indian troubles is believed to be past; the old and absurdly inaccurate ideas of the east respecting this country and its people are rapidly disappearing," before listing the technological and economical deficits the region must overcome to achieve equal footing with the states already admitted to the union.³³ Francisco de Thoma would publish the first such history in Spanish in 1896 with *Historia Popular de Nuevo México desde su descubrimiento hasta la actualidad*, though Meyer notes it is little more than a recompilation of the material presented by Bancroft.³⁴ Neither account gave much notice to the ongoing influence of nuevomexicanos through the territorial period. Benjamin Read's *Historia Ilustrada de Nuevo Mexico* in 1910 corrected this, including many Spanish colonial documents unreviewed by these previous authors.³⁵ These works emphasize the age of the colony and the European character of its founders, and, to varying degrees, contemporary Spanish-speaking residents, in a bid to promote its eventual ascendancy to statehood. Other works, such as William Watt Hart Davis's *El Gringo* in 1857, drop any pretense of objectivity and focus on the perceived inferiority of nuevomexicanos.³⁶

Following statehood a great boom of tourism swept New Mexico, building off and contributing to the image of the state as an embodiment of the true 'Old West' by romanticizing

³³ Bancroft, Hubert Howe. 1889. *History of Arizona and New Mexico : 1530-1888*. California: The History Company, 1889 pg. iv

³⁴ Thoma, Francisco de. 1896. *Historia Popular De Nuevo México, Desde Su Descubrimiento Hasta La Actualidad*, Por Francisco De Thoma. New York (State): American Book Company. and Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves*, pg. 189

³⁵ Read, Benjamin Maurice. 1910. *Historia Ilustrada De Nuevo Mexico* Arno Press.

³⁶ Davis, William W. H. 1856. *El Gringo*. Repr. [of the ed.] New York, Harper 1857 ed. New York, NY: Arno Press.

hispano and Pueblo cultures.³⁷ In 1948 Carey McWilliams challenged the embrace of hispano identity as a form of false consciousness not reflective of the region's history in *North from Mexico*.³⁸ Later in the 20th century, works responding to the Chicano movement took this charge and developed it further. In *The Contested Homeland*, the authors place nuevomexicanos as a subset of the larger Chicano identity, challenging Spanish American identity as an inauthentic construct promoted by the territory's elite. While this is generally true, the work swings with certainty to another extreme, "let there be no doubt that nuevomexicanos have always been very sure of their identity as a people who for centuries have occupied a particular region which they have come to see as their homeland."³⁹ In the past few decades, works like *Unspeakable Violence* have risen to question this certainty to, "make a critical intervention into celebratory discourses about mestizaje, hybridity, and nationalism," in the field. Guidotti-Hernandez doesn't offer an alternate, all-encompassing identity but traces how, "what we now call people of color in the US-Mexico borderlands were not exclusively victims but often enacted violence on other racialized, gendered subjects in the name of the state."⁴⁰ More recent histories concerning New Mexico have tended to move away from rigid hispano or Chicano categorizations but the continued use of the colonizer/colonized framework continues to flatten the territory's population into anglo/non-anglo binaries. The attempts by Las Vegas newspapers to formulate their own historical narratives concerning the territory's population and its relation to the US on the eve of the War of 1898 offer a novel view of these shifting identities.

Las Vegas and its Newspapers

As the vecino population of the valley swelled in the late 18th century, Spanish officials began issuing grants of land along the approaches to Pecos pueblo. San Miguel del Bado was established in 1794, this tract of land along the San Miguel was held in common by 52 families of primarily genizaro settlers. The boom of commerce that accompanied the Bourbon Reforms encouraged already wealthy individuals to apply for land on the same banks. A scion of the Cabeza de Vaca line, Luis Maria Cabeza de Vaca, received around 500,000 acres at the future Las Vegas town site in 1819, residing there for two years along with a massive herd of livestock

³⁷ Nieto-Phillips, John Michael. 1997. "'No Other Blood': History, Language, and Spanish-American Ethnic Identity in New Mexico, 1880s-1920s." University of California pg. 143

³⁸ McWilliams, Carey. 1968. *North from Mexico : The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States* Greenwood Press.

³⁹ Maciel, David, and Erlinda Gonzales-Berry. 2000. *The Contested Homeland : A Chicano History of New Mexico*. 1st ed ed. University of New Mexico Press. pg. 5

⁴⁰ Guidotti-Hernández, *Unspeakable Violence*, pg. 3

until repeated raids pushed him to abandon the claim.⁴¹ The resolution of this and other conflicting grants would be a main issue of territorial politics. Finally in 1835, twenty nine families left San Miguel del Bado, which had now grown to a population of over 2,000, settling the meadows along the river.

After Kearny seized the territory, debates on statehood sprang up immediately. The first push was derailed by the 1850 Compromise, negotiated between opposing congressional blocs to preserve the balance between free and slave states in the US. Las Vegas thrived in the decades following the invasion as the commercial power which traditionally resided in Santa Fe shifted to this new settlement. This growth was supercharged in 1880 with the arrival of the railroad. R.A. Kistler arrived the year before to the previous end of the line in Otero, where he set up his press. The paper took on many names and formats throughout the years owing to intense local competition, in the late 1890s it would be *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*.⁴² With a brother in the territorial legislature, Kistler was immersed in the powerful Republican machine of New Mexico, called the Santa Fe Ring. The *Optic* focused on local issues, as many Spanish-language newspapers in town sought to orient their readership in the national and international currents of the day, the *Optic* familiarized anglo readers with the goings-on of New Mexico. In 1897 Kistler formed a printing company in partnership with Thomas Catron, future first senator of New Mexico, often marked as the head of the Santa Fe Ring. Still this proximity to the Republican power structure was not marked by dogmatic adherence to the party, the year before partnering with Catron the paper endorsed his opponent Harvey Fergusson in the contest to be the territory's congressional delegate. While Stratton claims the defection was over the issue of free silver, he also notes Kistler sold his support to the Democrats during the 1880 and 1886 elections due to financial difficulties.⁴³

⁴¹ Perrigo, Lynn. 1982. *Gateway to Glorieta*. 1. ed. ed. Boulder, Colo: Pruett.

This claim overlapped with the later communal land grant for the Las Vegas townsite. Demonstrating the capability of elite nuevomexicanos to navigate the territorial system in comparison to lower class farmers, the Cabeza de Vaca family ultimately ceded their claim in exchange for five 100,000 acre grants elsewhere in the territory. After protracted legal struggle the Las Vegas communal grant was later transferred to the federal government, the heirs of the original communal claimants receiving tiny parcels of the total half million acre grant. Gilbert Cabeza de Baca, Fabiola. 1994. *We Fed them Cactus*. 2. ed. ed. Albuquerque: Univ. of New Mexico Press. pg. 78

⁴² Las Vegas Daily Optic Las Vegas, N.M.1880 -1908. (Las Vegas, NM), Jan. 1 1880.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/sn86063592/>.

⁴³ Stratton, Porter. 1967. "The Territorial Press of New Mexico, 1834-1912." Doctor of Philosophy, Texas Technological College. pgs. 57,233

La Voz del Pueblo was founded in Santa Fe by Enrique Salazar and Nestor Montoya in 1888.⁴⁴ Salazar came from an influential nuevomexicano family, his stepfather, an anglo named William Manderfield, owned the New Mexico Printing Company and was for many years the publisher of the mixed language *New Mexican* in Santa Fe. The oldest, and longest running of the territorial newspapers, Manderfield bought the *New Mexican* in 1863 and came to monopolize the contract for printing public information from the territory's government. This monopoly was the main reason for the paper's longevity but also left it exposed to the changes in territorial appointments as new federal administrations came into power.⁴⁵ Following Democratic ascendancy in the mid-1880s Manderfield sold the paper to Max Frost, operator of the rival *New Mexico Review*, who again leased the paper to Democrats in the mid-1890s during the Cleveland administration.⁴⁶ *La Voz del Pueblo's* cofounder, Nestor Montoya, came from one of the oldest nuevomexicano families in the territory and continued editing the paper after its move until 1901 when he founded the *Bandera Americana* in Albuquerque.

Two years after the paper's founding Salazar would sell his share to Felix Martinez, whose ancestor of the same name served as Capitan General and governor of the territory in the early 18th century. Martinez leaned Democrat, save his shift to the short lived Partido del Pueblo Unido in the early 1890s, on whose ticket he was elected to the territorial legislature.⁴⁷ Martinez was a powerful force in the territory, with much of his wealth held in livestock he also had investments in a near unending series of papers throughout the region.⁴⁸ He was aligned with a Democratic party in New Mexico that floundered in the late 19th century, already marginalized by the Santa Fe Ring it faced further stigmatization being associated with secessionist elements in the Civil War and anglo settlers in the east of the territory who arrived from Texas. Whatsmore the streak of Republican presidential administrations during Reconstruction meant Republican dominance in the realm of appointed territorial officials, further evidence to New Mexicans' of their limited citizenship as they remained without statehood. In 1897 Martinez moved to El Paso, though he continued to have a hand in *La Voz del Pueblo* among other newspapers. Ezequiel Cabeza de Vaca and Antonio Lucero were the

⁴⁴ *La Voz Del Pueblo* Santa Fe, Nuevo México; Las Vegas, N.M. -192?. (Las Vegas, NM), Jan. 1 1889. <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn83045436/>.

⁴⁵ Stratton, "The Territorial Press of New Mexico pgs. 47, 479

⁴⁶ Stratton pg 208

⁴⁷ Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves*, pg. 191

⁴⁸ Melendez, *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico*, pg. 83

main editors of the newspaper, both coming from elite families and being future elected officials in the later state government.⁴⁹

The final paper examined here is *El Independiente*, founded in 1894 by Enrique Salazar, who moved to Las Vegas following the sale of *La Voz del Pueblo*.⁵⁰ Portrayed by Meyer as similarly liberal democratic as *La Voz del Pueblo*, *El Independiente* was given to lengthy editorial asides opining on the state of the territory's population and national politics.⁵¹ Salazar was twice appointed as City Postmaster by successive Republican administrations of McKinley and Roosevelt over a decade before, a prize only given to those loyal to the territorial branch of the party. Furthermore the paper secured most of the printing contracts in the Republican dominated county, giving it a degree of financial stability that was reflected in its unchanging format and extensive editorials. Salazar married the daughter of Lorenzo Lopez, one-time political boss of the Santa Fe Ring whose falling out with the Romero family of the same organization animated much of the town and territory's conflict of the early 1890s.

Land Disputes and the Santa Fe Ring

This conflict largely centered around the land grants given to the original settlers of the town in 1835. These disputes were complicated by overlapping grants, such as the one issued to Luis Maria Cabeza de Vaca in 1819, and conflicts between the Spanish, Mexican, and US legal systems especially in the designation of common land. The Gorras Blancas, or White Caps, were a group of vigilantes who primarily engaged in fence cutting on large land grants, though their activities eventually included masked marches through town in protest of arrests and more extensive destruction of export oriented infrastructure. Exactly what they did and who belonged to them was complicated by their nature as a secret organization and the constant internecine struggles that characterized New Mexican political life. Though most prominent

⁴⁹ The Cabeza de Vaca family was among the most elite of the territory, tracing their lineage to Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, a 16th century Spanish explorer who travelled much of what is now the southern US. Ezequiel's niece Fabiola was a well known New Mexican writer in the 20th century, her autobiography *We Fed Them Cactus* provides evidence of the family's involvement in maintaining the peonage system late into the territorial period, as well as the difficulty in separating such relations from other social or fictive kinship connections. "I heard from a woman who had been a servant in my grandmother's home... her grandfather had been a bond slave in my grandmother's home and her whole family had to serve out the bondage. Once they were set free they still worked for the family in some capacity or another." Cabeza de Vaca, *We Fed Them Cactus*, pg 121

⁵⁰ *El Independiente* Las Vegas, Nuevo México 1894 -19???. (Las Vegas, NM), Jan. 1 1894.
<https://www.loc.gov/item/sn94056852/>.

⁵¹ Meyer, *Speaking for Themselves*, pg. 194

Democrats were alleged to have a connection to the band, they were often also targets of the fence cutting as large landowners themselves. It's not certain who belonged to the group, but their opponents were unquestionably the Santa Fe Ring, who organized their own semi-secret group under the leadership of Manuel Cabeza de Vaca. Manuel, owner of the short lived *Sol de Mayo* and brother of Ezequiel, formed the Los Caballeros de Ley y Orden,⁵² to counter the Gorras Blancas. Members of Los Caballeros alleged the Gorras Blancas had ties with the Knights of Labor, Partido del Pueblo Unido, and later Sociedad de Bandidos;⁵³ allegations that were often linked by one Knights of Labor organizer, Jose Herrera. While it is possible the Gorras Blancas, were linked to the Partido del Pueblo Unido, its representatives were isolated by their opponents and the party collapsed in frustration two years after its founding. Links to the Knights of Labor are more spurious, the national president of the organization, Terence Powderly, suspended the primarily nuevomexicano chapters organized by Herrera at the behest of Republican Governor Prince and anglo chapters in the territory; a theme common to early Knight of Labor actions privileging white labor at the expense of non-white potential members. Though no connections to the Gorras Blancas to other organizations were substantiated, Governor Prince hired Pinkerton agents to investigate such links, their reports proved unconvincing for those not already disposed to belief.⁵⁴

A major outcome of this period was the Borrego Affair involving high level interference in a murder trial for five men accused of assassinating Fransisco Chavez, former sheriff and Democratic party chairman of Santa Fe county. A formidable foe to the Santa Fe Ring, following his acquittal for involvement in the murder of Republican politician Faustino Ortiz in 1890 Pinkerton agents hired by Governor Prince accused Chavez of orchestrating an assassination attempt on Catron. In the summer of 1891 Sylvester Gallegos and Fransisco Borrego got into a shootout in Santa Fe after the latter's defection to the Republican party, a conflict that resulted in the former's death. Though Borrego was acquitted on the grounds of self defence, he alleged abuse at the hands of Sheriff Chavez. When Chavez was killed the following summer, Borrego, his brother, and three others stood trial for the murder and were represented by Catron. The defendants were found guilty in 1895 and appealed their case to the territorial Supreme Court. By this time, Catron was fending off accusations of involvement in the sheriff's death leveled by Chavez's mother and disbarment proceedings for five counts of witness tampering. Ultimately all

⁵² The Knights of Law and Order

⁵³ Society of Bandits

⁵⁴ For an in depth, cautious examination of the Gorras Blancas and land grant disputes more broadly see Taylor-Montoya, "Under the Same Glorious Flag"

five witnesses had their testimonies undermined by attacks on their moral character, intellect, age, and English speaking ability.⁵⁵ While Catron escaped the period rather unscathed, the drama left a bad taste in the mouths of many in the territory, in 1897 a bill was introduced to move the capital to Albuquerque to undercut the authority of the Santa Fe Ring. This effort was unsuccessful, but the whole affair illustrated the corruption of territorial politics in which a small band of influential men traded power and bullets to the detriment of the territory's image nationally. As the US wound up for war with Spain, the fallout of the Borrego affair sat at the front of the minds of Las Vegas's editors.

The *Las Vegas Daily Optic's* 1897 Coverage

Though distant from foreign events, the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* presented a view of the lead up to the War of 1898 that was in line with national papers, the so-called Yellow Journalism often blamed for provoking the conflict. Spanish forces in Cuba were presented as alternately incompetent and cruel, destined for defeat as a retrograde force both morally and technologically. Even when victorious on the battlefield, the the *Optic* struggled to report Spanish success. An article titled 'A Spanish Victory' recounts an inferior Cuban force as "at first victorious" and after the arrival of Spanish reinforcements, "the Cubans withdrew into the woods." Cuban losses in the encounter were noted as 50 compared to the Spanish 200.⁵⁶ The only Spanish perspective came in a September article which quotes General Weyler at length, the general by now was commonly called the Butcher in anti-Spanish accounts. "War is war... what means all this outcry against my decree ordering the concentration of pacificos?...It is not my fault if hundreds of thousands of people die from its effects."⁵⁷ Another article the same day frames a different set of colonial troops as saviors rather than devastators of the land. It details the deployment of three additional companies of cavalry to Fort Apache in "the Indian Country in New Mexico", present day Arizona, to assist "in preventing fanatical outbreaks and outrages by the savages...(which) may lead to depredations among the white settlers." Here forcing much of the population onto reservations under military supervision is not painted as wanton or immoral but necessary to prevent further, "disturbances."⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Duran, Tobias. 1984. "Francisco Chávez, Thomas B. Catron, and Organized Political Violence in Santa Fe in the 1890s." *New Mexico Historical Review* 59 (3) (Jul 1): 291. pgs. 303-305

⁵⁶"The Spanish Win Battle", *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 3 March, 1897 1.

⁵⁷ "Line Item", *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 8 September, 1897 1.

⁵⁸"Indian Fanatics", *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 8 September, 1897 1.

El Independiente's 1897 Coverage

El Independiente was similarly distant to the events in Cuba as the *Optic*, discussing two related incidents without much of the full-page coverage that typified larger, English-language newspapers. The most emotive article describes a band of Texan filibusters who arrived on the island, gleefully describing their demise in terms that might have invoked the 1841 Texan filibuster expedition into New Mexico defeated by Governor Armijo. They found, “welcoming graves in the soil of that Spanish possession, and very few of these intruders have been able to return to their birth country.”⁵⁹ Not only did the article mention Spain’s possession of the island, it emphasized the foreign character of the Texan fighters. If the Texans received a disdainful characterization, the description of several US senators was not far off. “The Senate of the United States has recently felt a worsening of its chronic hostility against Spain,” notable for the fact that, “Senators Morgan, Daniels, Lodge, and others vented their proverbial hate against the Spanish and painted in very stark colors their cruelty against the Cubans.”⁶⁰ *El Independiente* framed this as an irrational attitude toward the Spanish rather than a symptom of corrupt politics as did many papers critical of the incoming McKinley administration. Whatsmore the reason for the debate, the cause of insurrectionist Julio Sanguily, was undermined by the description of, “his supposed character as an American citizen,” an interesting aside for an editorial team whose full citizenship was yet unrealized.⁶¹

This framing relates to *El Independiente's* true interest, long editorials on the character of the people of New Mexico, especially nuevomexicanos. The same issue contains an article entitled “Naked Truths” which proposes using a sort of ‘social thermometer’, “to measure the culture of peoples.”⁶² While nearly all descriptions of the internal dynamics of New Mexico took care to separate spanish-speaking farmers from the indigenous groups from which most of these farmers likely descended, here the delineation was dropped. The author addresses, “our indians and hardworking ranchers,” in the same breath, both measuring low on this ‘social thermometer’ owing to their lack of hygiene and decency.⁶³ The author continues, “It’s embarrassing to confess and painful to write, but the truth is while there exists among us

⁵⁹ “sepulcros hospitalarios en el suelo de aquella pertenencia española, y muy poco de estos intrusos han podido regresar a su país natal” “Line Item”, *El Independiente* 6 March, 1897, 1.

⁶⁰ “El senado de los Estados Unido ha sentido últimamente una crudecsencia de su crónica hostilidad contra España” and “los senadores Morgan, Daniels, Lodge, y otros ventilan su odio proverbial contra los españoles y pintaron con colores muy subidos los crueldades de estos contra los Cubanos”

⁶¹ “su supuesto carácter de ciudadano americano,” “Line Item”, *El Independiente* 6 March, 1897, 1.

⁶² “para medir la cultura de los pueblo” “Verdades Al Desnudo” ,*El Independiente*, 6 March, 1897, 1.

⁶³ “Nuestros indios y nuestros rancheros que trabajan rudamente”

compatriots in such lamentable situation, so backwards, the journalist's discourse, their cheap words of 'sovereign people' 'rights of the people' 'constitutional prerogatives' ect ect are in vain, hollow, and practically senseless."⁶⁴ Aspirations held by Salazar would be meaningless if not bestowed on a deserving populace, one which he clearly didn't believe to exist. Furthermore critiques of comportment went beyond an elite distaste for the behaviors of lower class people, at the turn of the century race was understood to have both cultural and biological elements.⁶⁵ The following paragraph hewed as close to a description of intentional national formation as might be found, "to have truly sovereign people, it's necessary to manufacture it in advance and this work should be taken up by all those who think and meditate on the truth of things."⁶⁶ Despite all the claims and fiction in speaking for the nuevomexicano people, it is clear Salazar saw the bulk of his linguistic compatriots as distinct and lesser to his class of thinking man. In fact the category gente de razon had been introduced to censuses in New Spain during the Bourbon era and was defined in contrast to indio to which tribus salvajes, or savage tribes, were ascribed.⁶⁷

La Voz del Pueblo's 1897 Coverage

La Voz Del Pueblo reported extensively on the national and international events of the day, especially the brewing conflict between Washington and Madrid. While *El Independiente* focused on the identity of the actors concerned (Texan filibusters, proverbial hate towards the Spanish and supposed character as American citizen) *La Voz del Pueblo* took aim at the enterprise in broader terms. An article in March pretended to present an objective view of the situation, citing the allegedly disinterested French journalist Charles Benoist. Benoist described Spain as a vital, capable nation that ought to be allowed to manage insurrections in its colonies as internal affairs. His description, "if what constitutes a nation is thinking the same thoughts and acting with common action, what we've seen... has lifted the soul of a great nation," was at odds not only with contemporary English-language papers but many descriptions of Spain around the

⁶⁴ "cuesta rubar confesarlo y cause pena escribirlo, pero la verdad es que mientras entre nosotros existen compatriotas en tan lamentable situación, en tan gran atraso, las vociferaciones del periodista, sus palabras pacotilla de 'pueblo soberano' 'derecho del pueblo' 'prerrogativas constitucionales' ect ect resultan vana, huecas, sin ningún sentido práctico."

⁶⁵ Bederman, Gail. 1995. *Manliness & Civilization*. Women in Culture and Society. 1st ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press pg. 29

⁶⁶ "para tener un pueblo verdaderamente soberano, es preciso fabricarlo previantente y para esa labor deben darse cita todas los que piensan y meditan en la verdad de las cosas"

"Verdades Al Desnudo", *El Independiente*, 6 March, 1897, 1.

⁶⁷ Saldaña-Portillo, *Indian Given*, pg. 139

turn of the 20th century.⁶⁸ While a paper which often extolled at length about the virtues of the working class defending a colonial power's right to manage uprisings as a purely internal affair might seem odd, Texas's war of independence and incorporation into the US that century looked similar to many contemporary residents of New Mexico.

Another article that September draws the links between the potential US involvement in Cuba and the invasion of 1846 even more clearly. A set of 'Yankee Codices' were purported to be uncovered by *Las Novedades de Nueva York* (translated as the *The New York News*, though possibly referring to a paper of a different name) consisting of correspondence between the Spanish foreign minister in Washington and the Viceroy of New Spain, don Fransisco Javier Venegas, theoretically dating from the early 19th century. The codices described a plot by the US government to establish its borders at the Rio Grande extending straight to the Pacific and including the then Spanish provinces of Texas, New Santander, New Mexico, and part of New Vizcaya. The plotting didn't stop there but rather, "including *the island of Cuba* as belonging naturally to that Republic [emphasis from the original]."⁶⁹ Such plans were devised in the same way as the Roman republic and Napoleon Bonaparte's conquests, "to nourish dissent in our provinces of this continent, provoke civil war, and give aid to insurgents."⁷⁰ This set of codices was taken without skepticism by the author, not only did they appear to predict the events of the 19th century exactly, but they explained the present behavior of the US. Despite its often critical view of federal politics, *La Voz del Pueblo* often took care not to speak seditiously of their forcibly adopted country, though this article described the US as a cynical, self-conscious empire that sought to replicate their invasion of 1846 some five decades later. Perhaps most telling is the apparent identification with the Spanish colonial regime rather than the mass of Cuba's residents fighting for citizenship in an independent country.

⁶⁸"si lo que constituye una nación es pensar con un mismo pensamiento y obrar con una acción común, lo que hemos visto... ha sabido elevarse el alma hermosa de una gran nación" "España y la Crisis Colonial", *La Voz del Pueblo*, 6 March, 1897, 1.

⁶⁹ "incluyendo a la Isla de Cuba como una pertenencia natural de esta República", "Codicias Yankees", *La Voz del Pueblo* 4 September, 1897, 1.

⁷⁰ "alimentar las disensiones a nuestro provincias de este continente, favorecer la guerra civil y dar auxilio a los insurgentes"

Chapter 2

The War and Colonial Occupations

Following the explosion of the Maine in Havana harbor in February 1898 and mutual declarations of war in April, the first clash between US and Spanish forces in Manila Bay saw the Spanish naval force defeated. Insurgent leader Emilio Aguinaldo was transported by the US Navy from exile in Hong Kong, leading to the declaration of independence by the Insurgent Assembly on June 12th. Tensions were clear, especially after US commanders secretly negotiated the surrender of Spanish forces in Manila, staging a mock battle to allow for an honorable surrender and threatening Filipino forces with violence should they try to intervene. Subsequent months saw a tense standoff with US forces in the capital and Filipino troops stationed throughout the suburbs, worsened with the publicization of the US purchase of the Philippines from Spain for \$20,000,000 and McKinley's proclamation of a policy of 'benevolent assimilation.' When Aguinaldo declared himself president of an independent Philippines on January 1st 1899, the outbreak of fighting was only a matter of time, arriving on February 4th after clashes in the Manila suburbs. The US Congress ratified the terms of the Treaty of Paris two days later by a margin of two votes.⁷¹

Besides the Battle of Manila Bay most attention in the US focused on Cuba, especially with Under Secretary of the Navy Roosevelt resigning to lead the Rough Riders, over a third of whom came from New Mexico. Though seeming to confirm Governor Otero's contention that the territory would "furnish... more men in proportion to her population than any state or territory in the Union," both the Rough Riders and New Mexico's volunteer regiment had few soldiers with hispano last names.⁷² Among the most prominent was Maximillano Luna of Las Vegas who translated a preliminary peace agreement in Santiago.⁷³ In light of success in Cuba and the Philippines, in July the Congress approved the annexation of Hawaii, a controversial issue since a coup led by American business interests in 1893, and a force was sent to occupy Puerto Rico. The various forms of insular governance that would develop in later decades took shape in the negotiations for the Treaty of Paris. Spain ceded outright Puerto Rico and Guam, selling the

⁷¹ Barnes, Mark. 2011. *The Spanish-American War and Philippine Insurrection, 1898-1902*. Routledge Research Guides to American Military Studies. 1st ed. New York: Routledge. pg.. iiv

⁷² Melzer, Richard and Phyllis Mingus. 1984. "Wild to Fight: The New Mexico Rough Riders in the Spanish-American War." *New Mexico Historical Review* 59 (2): 109–136. pg. 111-113

⁷³ Ferrer, Ada. 2022. *Cuba : An American History*. New York: Scribner, chapter 13

Philippines and relinquishing sovereignty over Cuba. The latter was contentious, the Teller Amendment to the declaration of war forbade the US exercise of sovereignty over Cuba, while the later Platt Amendment of 1902, incorporated into the country's constitution, gave the US the right to intervene in Cuba without formally incorporation into its empire. Guam was soon transferred to the control of the Navy, which operated the island as little more than a military base.⁷⁴ As 1898 came to an end the US had added Puerto Rico, Guam, the Philippines and Hawaii to its list of territorial possessions. The extension of federal judicial and administrative control over these territories proved to many that New Mexico's territorial status meant colonial subjugation. What the conscious imperial turn in US politics would mean for the residents of the territory, long denied their full citizenship guaranteed by Gaudalupe-Hidalgo, was front of mind for the editors in Las Vegas.

The *Las Vegas Daily Optic's* 1899 Coverage

Following the formation of the Las Vegas Publishing Company in September 1897, in February 1898 *The Las Vegas Daily Optic* was sold to a Democrat aligned group including Felix Martinez, future Democratic senator A.A. Jones, F.A. Manzanares the Democrat delegate to congress in 1883, and George T. Gould.⁷⁵ Gould was appointed editor, though a well known Democrat he had worked at the *Optic* in the late 1880s writing "Republican leaning editorials," under Kistler's supervision.⁷⁶ Following his return as editor in 1897, Gould would be forced out of the *Optic* in the beginning of 1899 after pleading guilty to libel for comments printed in the *Optic* against *New Mexican* owner Max Frost. Though the plea ended the suit against Gould, another remained against the *Optic* for having published the libelous content; curiously Gould's replacement in 1899 was George H. Cross, the editor of the *New Mexican*.⁷⁷ Despite his career working at Republican leaning papers throughout the region, Cross had been editor of the *New Mexican* in the mid 1890s when the paper was leased to the Democrat appointed territorial administration. In Cross's first year at the *Optic*, the paper began diverging from the McKinley administration's policies, especially regarding the Philippines.

⁷⁴ Thompson, *Imperial Archipelago*, pgs. 227-243

⁷⁵ Stratton, "Territorial Press of New Mexico", pg. 59

⁷⁶ Runyon, Randolph Paul. 2021. *The Assault on Elisha Green*. 1st ed. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky pg. 173

⁷⁷ Dargan claims Frost was central to behind the scenes manipulation in multiple newspapers. "Frost was a master in the art of propaganda. The latter had also organized a secret press bureau to influence the smaller weeklies throughout the territory." Dargan, Marion. 1939. "New Mexico's Fight for Statehood (1895–1912)." *New Mexico Historical Review* 14 (2). pg.. 131

As an outwardly Republican paper, the *Optic* was unsurprisingly dismissive of Filipino resistance, framing Aguinaldo as an illegitimate representative of Filipino aspirations. While the Cuban insurrectionaries received frequent, glowing coverage in US papers before the war, the Filipino independence struggle was generally overlooked. After the Filipino insurrection rejected transfer to the sovereignty of the US, the *Optic* turned quickly, describing Aguinaldo's actions as 'anarchy' it framed the independence movement; not the newly arrived occupiers as the prime obstacle to order, "the opinions of all prominent men at Manila is, that the military force of the insurgent anarchy must be broken before a stable government can be established."⁷⁸ While Aguinaldo wasn't legitimate to the *Optic*, neither were many of the aims of the US government, though often on practical rather than moral grounds. Presenting "A Wall Street View" the author took to task Henry Clew of "35 Wall Street" who hoped the US relation to the Philippines "will be disposed of in a way not only considering the interests of those people, but also wisely consolidating our new position as the foremost power in the Pacific." The author at the *Optic* found this view, "not only interesting but amusing," given the banker's greed and "ambition to toady to the administration... he's well nigh bereft him of any true American sentiment."⁷⁹ The McKinley administration's embrace of explicitly colonial policies came in the first year of fighting. The annual report to the president by the civil service commission included a "full discussion of the methods of governing all the colonies of the world," through stopping short of advocating the extension of civil administration to the new acquisitions, "the application of these conclusions in the consideration of our insular affairs is left for deduction therefrom."⁸⁰

The *Optic* disputed the administration's evolving policy toward the Philippines, grounding their reasoning in the unfinished colonial projects of much of the territorial US. An article titled "Conquering the Philippines" relates the occupation there directly to the settler colonial project in the west of North America.

"There are only two ways in which a tribe of savages (and the Filipinos are nothing else) has ever been brought into subjugation. One is by almost complete annihilation and the other is the slow but steady advance of civilization in their midst. The first method is inhumane, the latter slow and expensive. That this government would adopt the former

⁷⁸ "Must Whip Filipinos: Military Authorities Say Insurgent Anarchy must be Broken". *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 7 March, 1899, 1.

⁷⁹ "A Wall Street View" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 8 March, 1899, 2.

⁸⁰ "Colonial Studies" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 9 March, 1899, 2.

alternative is not to be thought of. That it would adapt the latter after its experience with the [illegible] American Indian is hard to believe.”⁸¹

Despite the moral queasiness of “almost complete annihilation,” the article was deeply concerned with adding more wards, as both Filipinos and indigenous people of America are positioned here, to the fledgling empire. A response to Kipling's *White Man's Burden* drew these territorial lines clearly, the issue not being motivation or means of subjugation but its occurring beyond the continental American territory. “We've told the world often, that we were never vain, to rule half-savage nations, Beyond our country's line.” The ongoing incorporation of conquered areas should thus be the US concern, “Within our country's border, we cannot do with ease. So do not add to the burden, of the folks across the seas- Do not urge it on us, muchas gracias, now, do! Please!”⁸² The contemporary situation of New Mexico was undoubtedly on the mind of this author. Several lines of the poem are peppered with phrases in Spanish as if to ground the argument in the character of the territory yet to gain full membership in the union. Updates like, “Civilizing New Mexico's Indians,” appeared with some regularity; at once celebrating that, “Pueblos and Jicarillos have become self-supporting,” given extensive cultivation while also tracing the size of the school-age population, the overcrowding in extant schools and the, “revival in the desire of the Indians to be taught at government schools.”⁸³ The membership of the two tribes is noted at 8,961. Comparing the entirety of the settler colonial project in North America to the present occupation of the Philippines the paper claimed the former to have been composed of, “over thirty Indian campaigns costing hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of human lives; and the total number we aimed to subdue was less than half a million people.”⁸⁴ Similarly the paper emphasized that the federal government was occupied by its commitments to Cuba, less controversial as an informal protectorate, describing the delivery of funds for the army there as the “‘White Man's Burden' Goes to the Island.”⁸⁵

The shape of the occupation of the Philippines came into focus within the early months of 1899 to the dismay of the *Optic*. Members of the Philippines Commission were recalled early despite expecting to, “spend some months working on the establishment of municipal governments.”⁸⁶ While civil administration was paused, the head of the commission, Professor Schurman, recommended policies to the State Department that would evolve into a system of

⁸¹ “Conquering the Philippines” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 7 March, 1899, 2.

⁸² “After Kipling” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 11 March, 1899, 2.

⁸³ “Civilizing New Mexico's Indians” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 15 September, 1899, 3.

⁸⁴ “Conquering the Philippines” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 7 March, 1899, 2.

⁸⁵ “Line Item” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 11 March, 1899, 1.

⁸⁶ “Commissioners Recalled” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 14 September, 1899, 1.

concentration similar to that imposed by the Spanish in Cuba . “All the towns and villages captured must be garrisoned... with Americans scattered all through the islands, the process of civilizing and transforming the people can be carried forward very rapidly.”⁸⁷ The positive impact of the presence of ‘Americans’ was applied equally in the Philippines as New Mexico. Responding to the failure of a statehood convention that year largely boosted by Democrats and potentially joining western sections of Texas to eastern and southern New Mexico, the *Optic* found one positive. Such agitation had the potential to, “attract the east of New Mexico and when eastern people reach Las Vegas as they will pitch their tents and stay,” resulting in an influx to Las Vegas of anglos who formed the majority of eastern New Mexico's population.⁸⁸ A reprint of a *San Francisco Chronicle* article described the perceived benefit more explicitly, without rebuke from the *Optic*'s writers. “[T]he young state under progressive laws would populate southern New Mexico with a desirable class of American citizens and capital would no[t] (sic) be afraid to develop the resources of the country.”⁸⁹ Notably the *Optic* only found this upside after the effort had been definitively defeated, while agitation was ongoing it was determined to prove its claim that, “politically *The Optic* shall be independent,” pointing at unsavory motivations for the statehood effort's boosters. Felix Martinez was described as one of the main supporters of the plan, the *Optic* emphasized his business interests in El Paso, while the *New Mexican* was alleged to be interested in the, “prospective boodle,” of \$31,000 of printing contracts for the potential bid.

El Independiente's 1899 Coverage

El Independiente continued its relative disinterest towards events on the ground in the US's new territories, announcing on the 12th of October, “nothing important has happened in recent days in the Filipino theater of war.” Despite this humble opening, the article related Aguinaldo's unwavering position demanding absolute independence meaning, “his submission to American sovereignty will never be achieved except by force of arms.”⁹⁰ Like the *Optic*, *El Independiente* emphasized insurgents targeting public buildings, though this may have been an effect of the military's tight control of information. *El Independiente*'s true concern was not what happened in the recently seized islands but what that would mean for people in New Mexico. A

⁸⁷ “Should Force Fighting” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 16 March, 1899, 2.

⁸⁸ “Two New States” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 10 March, 1899, 2.

⁸⁹ “The New State” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 11 March, 1899, 1.

⁹⁰ “Su sumisión a la soberanía americana no se conseguirá nunca sino por la fuerza de armas” “Complots Y Escaramuzas En Filipinas” *El Independiente*, 12 October, 1899, 4.

pair of articles in January points to the nuevomexicano population's prospects in quite catastrophic terms. Wondering what the "enemies of the hispano-american people in New Mexico" would do with the addition of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines since they were already so, "hostile and implacable against the neo-mexicano natives because they speak Spanish."⁹¹ The addition of millions of linguistic comrades was painted as a grave threat to Spanish-speakers in New Mexico, with shocking outcomes prognosticated. It wasn't just overseas Spanish-speakers that threatened the status of nuevomexicanos, according to *El Independiente*. "Our customs, our religion, our feelings, and opinions or all of our past and present provide abundant ammunition," for the detractors of nuevomexicanos. The author laments that, "many of us ignore that 'en todas partes se cuecan habas,'" before conceding that all people have their virtues and faults.⁹²

The limits of territorial citizenship were clear in the pages of *El Independiente*, the first issue of the year celebrated the wave of elected and appointed Republican officials in the territory projecting that they would destroy differentiation between "Americans and Mexicans," and inevitably achieve statehood.⁹³ Already by October the paper admitted statehood wasn't dead, it was just sleeping.⁹⁴ In making this shift to the Republican camp, *El Independiente* showed the territory's dependence on external factors. "New Mexico has only prospered in the times where the Republican party was supreme in the national government," with times of calamity associated with Democratic ascendancy.⁹⁵ While Republicans are portrayed as the true representatives of 'neo-mexicanos' authentic voice, *El Independiente* still had reservations to equality within this group. Rather than picking juries by sortition, the author advocated creating a commission to select the, "best and most knowledgeable men," the drive to find the 'best' of the nuevomexicano population to act as representatives in civil affairs is made more explicit later

⁹¹"tan hostiles e implacables contra de los neo-mexicanos nativos porque hablan espanol"

"Line Item 1899". *El Independiente*, 5 January, 3.

⁹²"Nuestra costumbres, nuestra religión, nuestra sentimiento y opiniones o todo nuestro pasado y presente suministran municiones abundantes"

"Nuestro Pueblo Y Sus Detractores", *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 1

The phrase translates literally as 'beans are cooked everywhere.' The phrase is used in *Don Quijote de la Mancha* with a common addition, "en otras casas cuecen habas y en la mía, a calderadas" (in other houses beans are cooked and in mine there are cauldrons full) to express that problems exist all over but they exist in excessive quantity in one's home. Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel de, Andrés Trapiello, and Mario Vargas Llosa. 2015. *Don Quijote De Le Mancha*. Colección Áncora Y Delfín. 2. ed. ed. Vol. 1338. Barcelona: Ediciones Destino. pg 383

⁹³"La Era Nueva en Nuevo México", *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 1

⁹⁴ Line Item 1899. *El Independiente*, 12 October, 1.

⁹⁵ "Nuevo México ha prosperado únicamente en los tiempos en que el partido republicano ha sido supremo en el gobierno de la nación" "La Nueva Era En Nuevo Mexico", *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 1.

that year.⁹⁶ Reporting on the composition of the three person San Miguel county commission, “it’s true: one of them is Mexican but he has enough capacity to determine what is beneficial to the people generally and will never consent to be second to anybody.”⁹⁷ Here were expressed twin imperatives for the nuevomexicano population in *El Independiente*’s formulation, being perceived as capable and not acceding to anglo domination.

While the paper had never been as Democratic as *La Voz del Pueblo*, *El Independiente*’s shift to the Republican camp was unshakable by 1899. The shift was accompanied by increasingly desperate calls for statehood, despite the fact that the federal government must acquiesce if this were to be realized. In comparing New Mexico to Oklahoma, the other territory considered for statehood, the author claimed that in nearly every category other than population, New Mexico was the more deserving choice. They concluded, “if these circumstances do not entitle [New Mexico] the first spot then there is no justice in the world.”⁹⁸ The conclusion of the article previously mentioned concerning the addition of overseas Spanish speakers to the union explained this desperation. “What will [the enemies of hispano-americano people] do now that several million people who speak the same language as us will be added to the US? It doesn’t leave them any remedy except to protest or demand the extermination or expulsion of the whole race.”⁹⁹ In this understanding nuevomexicanos must do anything to achieve statehood before these linguistic comrades doom them.

La Voz del Pueblo’s 1899 Coverage

La Voz del Pueblo took not only the most oppositional stance to the policies of the McKinley administration but was the most sympathetic to the insurrectionaries in the Philippines. Multiple articles each issue follow developments there, using phrases like, “the killing of hundreds of Filipinos, including many women and children, carried out by our troops,” to describe the reality of the occupation.¹⁰⁰ If the early stages of the US occupation of the

⁹⁶“Line Item” *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 3.

⁹⁷“Es verdad: uno de ellos es Mexicano, pero tiene suficiente capacidad para distinguir lo que es beneficioso para el pueblo en general y nunca consentirá en ser segundo de nadie” “Line Item” *El Independiente*, 12 October, 1899, 1.

⁹⁸“Si estas circunstancia no lo intitulaba al primer lugar entonces no hay justicia en el mundo” “Line Item” *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 4.

⁹⁹ “Que harán ahora cuando se van a adicionar varios millones de individuos a los estados unidos que hablan el mismo idioma que nosotros? No les queda más remedio que protestar o pedir el exterminio o destierro de toda la raza” “Line Item” *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 3.

¹⁰⁰ “Matanza de centenares de filipinos entres ellos niños y mujeres por nuestras tropas” “En Las Filipinas” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 18 March, 1899, 1.

Philippines were portrayed as bad policy in the *Optic* and largely ignored by *El Independiente*, *La Voz del Pueblo* continued its wholesale criticism of the ideals and morals behind the enterprise. It quoted at length Senator Mason's speech at a black church in DC where he lamented, "we made war in the name of humanity... and our first step in a new direction is the killing of five thousand Filipinos, many of them naked and armed with bows and arrows."¹⁰¹ Whatsmore he emphasized that at the party conventions the following year, no party would advocate Filipino independence in their platforms. This disconnect between popular will and party policy is underlined by the claim that, "the preponderance of public opinion will be in favor of leaving the Filipinos in full liberty that they might govern themselves."¹⁰² Such a position was perhaps unsurprising for someone whose party was out of power, both nationally and locally, but *La Voz del Pueblo* spent little time defending Democrats on either scene. Coupled with Martinez's short lived jump to the Partido del Pueblo Unido, his alliance with primarily anglo Democrats in the south and east of the territory appears motivated to challenge the dominant Republican power structure and the Santa Fe Ring rather than a deep ideological affinity to the Democrat camp.

La Voz del Pueblo reprinted a speech by Aguinaldo spanning half an issue, wherein the insurrectionary leader appealed to the sympathies of American and European readers. It begins, "Filipinas! Beloved daughter of the ardent tropical sun, at the behest of Noble Spain! Do not be ungrateful to welcoming the one who animates you with the breath of her own civilization and culture."¹⁰³ While not exclusively claiming European descentance, the first section of the speech developed at length the Spanish inheritance that was inseparable with Filipino culture in similar terms to claims made by nuevomexicanos. Calling the Spanish "our brothers and our fathers," the speech was aimed beyond perceived identity to stimulate direct aid from Spain for the independence fight. Such an appeal would have been harmful in New Mexico, directly antithetical to nuevomexicanos' interest in being seen as loyal American citizens, but Aguinaldo's aim never wavered from absolute independence. In pursuit of a rapid conclusion of hostilities he made an appeal to US public opinion as well. He lamented,

¹⁰¹"Hemos hecho guerra en nombre de humanidad... y nuestro primer paso es la matanza de 5000 filipinos, muchos de los cuales estaban desnudo y armados de arcos y flechas"

"Lo Que Dice Un Senador" *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 18 March, 1899, 1

¹⁰²"La preponderancia de la opinión popular será en favor de dejar a los filipinos en plena libertad para que se gobiernan por sí mismos"

"En Las Filipinas" *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 18 March, 1899, 1.

¹⁰³ "Filipinas! Hija predilecta del ardiente sol de los trópicos, encomendada por la Providencia, al saludo de la que te animó con el soplo de su civilización y cultura propia"

“it’s a cowardice and indignity that a nation as large as America, constituted by a republican government, abuses its principles and constitution with the aim of oppressing a weak and small country when it struggles so heroically to gain its freedom as did Washington in 1776, much more so when the same leader [Aguinaldo] during the Spanish American conflict offered special privileges to the American republic.”¹⁰⁴

By positioning himself as a freedom fighter like George Washington, naming the McKinley administration as the force violating ideals, and recognizing the efforts of Democrats that opposed the president, Aguinaldo tried to fracture support for the occupation. *La Voz del Pueblo*’s engagement with Aguinaldo diverges sharply with the other two papers. Neither the *Optic* or *El Independiente* approved of the administration’s policy in the Philippines but their motivations were grounded in domestic concerns. In publishing Aguinaldo’s full speech and emphasizing how easy it would be for the readership to understand, having been delivered in Spanish originally, *La Voz del Pueblo* engaged with him as a political figure whose views would be relevant to nuevomexicanos.

The stakes of political marginalization came into focus in a pair of articles in March. The first details a proposed law in Arizona to, “remove the right to vote in elections to all Mexicans who don’t know how to read or write the English language.”¹⁰⁵ Initially the western half of the territory of New Mexico with a relatively low non-indigenous population in 1848, Arizona split from New Mexico during the US Civil War. Following the arrival of the railroad and the development of the mining industry, in the latter part of the 19th century anglo and Mexican immigration soared, but without a powerful Spanish-speaking population nominally guaranteed citizenship by treaty anglo interests were dominant in the territory. Linda Noel describes this as a strategy of marginalization, contrasted to New Mexico’s pluralism.¹⁰⁶ Interestingly many anglos in Arizona were of the same southern Democrat origin as Martinez’s political allies in the south and east of New Mexico. *La Voz* opines, “fortunately in the house of representatives there’s one representative that speaks Spanish, named Gonzales, and he, accompanied by one Mr. Brown, took the side of the Mexicans,” both representatives noted as being elected with, “Mexican

¹⁰⁴“Que es una cobardía y una indignidad que una nación tan grande como la américa, constituida por un gobierno republicano abuse su principio y constitución al grado de oprimir a un débil y pequeño país cuando se esmera tan heroicamente para obtener su libertad como lo hizo Washington en 1776, mucho más cuando el mismo como jefe durante la contienda hispano-americano ofreció privilegios especiales a la República Americana” “Aguinaldo” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 29 July, 1899, 1–2.

¹⁰⁵ “Para quitar el derecho de votar en las elecciones a todos los Mexicano que no saben ni leer ni escribir el idioma inglés” “En La Legislatura De Arizona” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 18 March, 1899, 1.

¹⁰⁶ Noel, Linda C. 2011. “‘I Am an American’: Anglos, Mexicans, Nativos, and the National Debate Over Arizona and New Mexico Statehood.” *Pacific Historical Review* 80 (3): 430–467. pgs. 449–452

votes.”¹⁰⁷ While this was being fought over in the legislature, in Clifton on the eastern edge of the territory those identified as Mexican were attacked physically. A dispute over quarantining people alleged to have smallpox turned into an outbreak of racialized violence. Whatever led up to this is unclear to *La Voz*, “what’s certain is, a multitude of Americans met and arrived at the Mexican neighborhood where they carried out a grueling fight. There were, according to the report, several dead and injured and the Americans finished by burning the houses and huts of the Mexicans.”¹⁰⁸ This follows the pattern for the other Mexican territories seized by the US. In California, Texas, and Arizona the relatively limited number of upper and middle class hispanos were quickly marginalized by anglo arrivals, losing political power, land, and often any expectation of safety in a matter of decades. The irony is that Martinez’s political foes, the Republican nuevomexicanos and anglos including those in the Santa Fe Ring, enabled his alliance with primarily southern Democrats, who, in other territories, were quick to marginalize figures like him. The size and weight of the nuevomexicano power structure allowed their influence not only among Reconstruction era Republicans but among Democrats as well.

Visions of Statehood

In fact *La Voz del Pueblo* and Martinez’s project of building a Democratic leaning political bloc from lower class nuevomexicanos was dependent on this relative protection within the territory. If *El Independiente*’s prognostication of extermination or expulsion following the addition of overseas Spanish speakers motivated the paper’s adherence to the Republican party to secure statehood as quickly as possible, *La Voz del Pueblo*’s attempt to reformulate the political landscape was born out of a surety that nuevomexicanos would continue to exercise political power in the territory. Such explains Martinez’s ‘unholy alliance’ with not just the anglos in east New Mexico originating from Texas, but representatives of Texas itself to agitate for the formation of a new state including western sections of that state and the eastern portions of New Mexico. Of course his motivations were not purely populist or pro-labor. The *Optic* points out that Martinez had significant business interests in El Paso, the prospective site of the statehood convention, alleging the whole proposal to be a scheme to make money off

¹⁰⁷“Afortunadamente en la Cámara de Representes hay un Represente de habla espanol, llamado Gonzales, y este, en compañía de un señor Brown, tomaron el parte de los Mexicanos” “En La Legislatura De Arizona” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 18 March, 1899, 1.

¹⁰⁸“Lo cierto es, que se reunió una multitud de Americano que llegó hasta el barrio Mexicano, en donde se efectuó una reñida lucha. Hubo, según se dice, varios muertos y heridos y los Americanos acabaron por incendiar las casa y jacales de los Mexicanos” “Line Item” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 18 March, 1899, 3.

delegates' lodging expenses.¹⁰⁹ Though far from an objective view of the affair, a line item in the *Optic* paints an interesting view of the convergence of interests in one site. In addition to running major real estate and cattle interests in the territory and publishing one of the most influential newspapers, Felix Martinez's office was also a polling place, effectively a one stop shop for commercial, media, and political operations throughout the territory.¹¹⁰

Despite fervent opposition to this statehood initiative led by Martinez, the *Optic's* independence and political coherence began to waver this year. On defeat, the joint statehood effort was described as, "conceived in sin and born in inequity," and the paper crowed for having been the first to oppose it. Now that the Democrat led effort was dead in the water though, the *Optic* asked, "why not send delegates to the convention? Agitation is a good thing."¹¹¹ Rather than advocating immediate statehood under certain Republican control, the paper started reporting increasingly on the rifts in the territory's Republican party as in the 13 September article "Who Will Be Damned?", describing a brewing fight between the 'old guard' associated with Catron and the new bloc aligned with Governor Otero. Despite Republicans being the majority party of the territory and nation, the *Optic* positioned itself as politically marginalized and emphasized its rupture with the McKinley administration. As part of its extensive coverage of the Dreyfus affair it quoted the St. Louis Dispatch lamenting,

"when mere differences of opinion among patriotic Americans are denounced as treason, the Dreyfus case does not seem so remarkable... there are people in the service of the administration who whole heartily wish that there could be a Devil's island for everyone who does not think it right that this country should be expanded by war."¹¹²

El Independiente saw the incorporation of New Mexico and realization of full citizenship for its eligible residents as more pressing than either other paper. While the *Optic* linked the US policy toward Filipinos to that towards indigenous people in North America, *El Independiente* took this a step further placing hispano-americanos as threatened by elimination or dispossession of land because of the inclusion of overseas Spanish-speakers into the empire. The threat came not just from beyond the territory but within it. The self-sufficiency of New

¹⁰⁹ "Two New States" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 10 March, 1899, 2.

The *Optic* made many claims to the effect, first alleging on March 8th the convention was a scheme to gain \$4,000 for businesses in El Paso, estimating \$20 spent by each of the 200 delegates attending. Subsequent charges leap exponentially, topping out at \$31,000 in printing costs that Martinez's company would apparently gain in producing the material for the convention.

¹¹⁰ "Line item" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 16 March, 1899, 2.

¹¹¹ "Two New States" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 10 March, 1899, 2.

¹¹² "Line Item" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 15 September, 1899, 2.

Mexico, championed by *El Independiente*, would make it neither dependent on the opinions of those outside the territory, “nor what is said by intruders who came to the territory without any aims but to spread fake news against us.”¹¹³ Such intruders are not just anglo Democrats but include, “undercover enemies,” within the territory’s Republican establishment whose, “perverse machinations,” are the only thing that could shake the party’s dominance; dominance that flowed from the Republican party nationally and was the only arrangement under which New Mexico might prosper.¹¹⁴ Such charges would prove prescient for things to come, election year 1900 saw polite fictions abandoned for partisan advantage.

¹¹³ “Ni tampoco de lo que puedan decir intrusos que hayan venido al territorio sin más fin que el de propagar malos informes en contra nuestra.”

“Nuestro Pueblo Y Sus Detractores” *El Independiente*, 5 January, 1899, 1.

¹¹⁴ “Enemigos Encubiertos” *El Independiente*, 12 October, 1899, 1.

Chapter 3

Occupation and Elections in 1900

1900 saw the US occupation of overseas territories take shape, hardening into the differing colonial statuses that would last at least until the mid-century. The process for the formal withdrawal from Cuba began, the Teller Amendment and subsequent Platt Amendment laid the groundwork for the least direct colonial relationship between the US and its territories seized from Spain. Motivated as much by racism as rhetorical appeals for Cuban liberation, the devolution of self-governance looked to some like the culmination of a war fought in the name of humanity. That the US would reoccupy the island two separate times in the following two decades would eventually undercut this image of freedom. The US occupation of Puerto Rico rarely broke through the headlines. Positioned as a sort of model possession, limited civil governance was extended to the island. The following year began a series of US Supreme Court cases collectively called the insular cases that defined overseas territories relation to the federal government, most succinctly and infamously with the phrase that claimed Puerto Rico was “foreign to the United States in a domestic sense.”¹¹⁵

The political fictions of the Caribbean found no parallel in the Philippines, the first Philippines Commission was replaced by the second, headed by future President Taft, as the ongoing insurrection across several islands left military governance in effective control over much of the archipelago. While the first years of war were suffused by the rhetoric of war in the name of humanity, the reality of colonial occupation had dimmed this claim. Military censorship limited the spread of all but the most terse reports on the ground, even as the United States’ own policy of population concentration developed. As election year 1900 began in the US, criticism of the military occupation couched in any but the most patriotic terms became politically toxic. At the same time the perceived inherent foreign quality ascribed to Chinese and then Japanese immigrants in the West of the US, used to justify some of the first immigration restrictions in the country, increasingly came to include Filipinos.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Burnett and Marshall, *Foreign in a Domestic Sense*, pg. 1

¹¹⁶ Burnett and Marshall, In fact the decision of one of the insular cases, *Downes v. Bidwell*, hinged off the fact that the, “theory of universal political equality does not apply to tribal Indians, to Chinese, or to negroes under all conditions,” in the words of Justice Lowell’s opinion. pg. 95

The election of 1900 was a rematch between incumbent McKinley and Democrat William Jennings Bryan. Dominated by the issue of silver backed currency and imperialism, Republicans rode victory in the war and a recovery from the late 1890s depression to electoral success. Although anti-imperialism became a central plank in the Democratic and aligned parties platforms, the objection was generally that it was bad policy for enfranchised Americans and the integrity of the republic's ideals. New Mexico, unable to vote for president, was defined by its own brand of locally oriented politics. Corruption and backroom dealing continued at pace, perhaps nowhere more than in the offices of the territory's newspapers.

Las Vegas Daily Optic's 1900 Coverage

George H. Cross, simultaneously editor of the *Las Vegas Daily Optic* and *New Mexican* in Santa Fe, continued in both roles at least for the early months of 1900. The first issue of the year names him as editor, while mentioning Kistler's apparent return.¹¹⁷ Described as the editor and proprietor of the paper for 18 years, this inaugural issue of 1900 only describes Kistler's "connection" with the editorial department, perhaps in an effort to wash out the unsavory nature of the nominally Republican paper's ownership and editorial control.¹¹⁸ Owned by a Democrat aligned group since 1898, the *Optic* had functioned to widen rifts in the territory's Republican wall by highlighting internal struggles. Through the course of 1900 however, this antagonistic stance would develop into a full scale reversal of its professed positions in previous years. At the start of the year the paper's position towards statehood had solidified into full opposition, by the eve of the election it had endorsed the full Democratic ticket.

Reporting on newly occupied territories dropped off sharply in the *Optic* in 1900. Military censorship in the Philippines, enacted at the end of 1899, was in full force. On the ground reporting was replaced with, "The Usual Manila Dispatch," relating movements of US forces and an occasional death or injury among occupying troops, with nearly no mention of Filipinos to be found.¹¹⁹ In the reporting this year the occupation of the Philippines became representative of larger motifs and debates rather than a series of events affecting the archipelago's residents. The imagery of empire was commercialized, such as in a calendar distributed by the McCormick Harvesting Machine Company depicting, "an American scout in the Philippines, mounted on a

¹¹⁷ "The Year Condensed" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 2 January, 1900, 3–5.

¹¹⁸ "Announcement" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 2 January, 1900, 2.

¹¹⁹ "The Usual Manila Dispatch" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 14 February, 1900, 1.

magnificent charger,” accompanied with the motto, “always at the front.”¹²⁰ Purported accounts from the Philippines followed a similar formula, one in McClure’s Magazine told the story of Lt. Col. James C. Gilmore of the US Army, held prisoner by insurgents. The “narrative reads like a page from Robinson Crusoe,” and concludes with the lieutenant colonel being, “rescued by American troops from bloodthirsty armed savages.”¹²¹ Mirroring many popular US narratives regarding the Philippines, insurgents had gone from likely progressive partners in pre-war coverage to being depicted in terms that differ little from exaggerated accounts of the ‘Indian Wars’ in the West of the US.

The debate over US policy toward the Philippines was entirely subsumed by the election, as were the *Optic*’s claims to editorial independence. Democratic politicians were quoted at length and without editorial asides, while Republican speeches were quoted only insofar as they challenged the McKinley administration. The domestic focus championed by the *Optic* the previous year now came from the mouths of people like Senator McEnery, Democrat of Louisiana, arguing, “the sums of money we are spending in the Philippines would easily reclaim the arid lands of the West.” Like McKinley’s assimilation policy there was nothing benevolent about this position as the senator, “opposed expansionism, and said he believed God will solve the problem by destroying the inferior races.”¹²² The most expansive article was a serial reprinting of a speech by Judge Long, a former territorial supreme court justice, at the Bryan and Stevenson club.¹²³ The judge distinguished expansionism and imperialism, defined as territorial acquisition within and beyond the contiguous US respectively. While the latter was portrayed as venal and unamerican, the settler-colonial project in the contiguous US was an, “opportunity to the poor man... where he could take his little family, and his team, and drive into the promised land.” This idealized version of settlement was contrasted with the cost of emigrating to the Philippines and the exotic, unsuitable qualities of the place, “Do you want to take up a plantation over there, or have a banana farm, or plow up rice land with elephants? How are you going to get there? We have hardly enough money to live on at home.”¹²⁴ This extensive speech, of which only a section occupied half an issue, far overshadowed any views sympathetic to the administration. In what was reported to be the “strongest defense,” of McKinley’s positions, an article titled ‘McKinley’s Side’ recounted policy achievements over a

¹²⁰ “Always at the Front” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 13 February, 1900, 2.

¹²¹ “Line Item” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 4 September, 1900, 2.

¹²² “Philippine Plans- House and Senate” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 16 February, 1900, 1.

¹²³ The club took its name from the Democratic presidential ticket of Williams Jennings Bryan and Adelai Stevenson

¹²⁴ “Judge Long’s Address” *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 3 September, 1900, 2–3.

few dozen lines with no quotes or endorsements from the newspaper's editors, though they promised to print more excerpts at a later date.¹²⁵

As the national election loomed large, New Mexico's residents would have no say in the matter. Judge Long acknowledged as much with his disclaimer, "if I was in the States where I could vote for president."¹²⁶ The *Optic's* focus was to widen the divide of the territory's Republican power structure. At the start of the year the paper included line items like, "many Republicans would endorse statehood if there were more republicanism and less oterism," but by February it ran a recurring column oposing statehood at length.¹²⁷ Citing previous failures as evidence that, "the people did not want statehood in the least," the *Optic* went on to contradict its position of the previous year. While proponents of statehood in 1899, including the *Optic*, cited increased immigration for the East as a primary benefit, the paper now claimed only a few dozen newcomers might find work in Santa Fe or Albuquerque while the bulk of the prospective 5-10,000 immigrants would become a burden. This grim spectre was undercut by the allegation that statehood would in fact stop immigration almost entirely, ending the "healthful growth" the territory saw since the arrival of the railroad. Potential newcomers would be driven off by the "odor of our politics," as, "the same class of political, personal, and class interests that have shaped and controlled nearly all of our legislation for the past twenty-five years would continue to do so under the new system of statehood."¹²⁸ This class was the same that the *Optic* supported for Kistler's 18 year tenure as editor-proprietor, now positioned as the bane of the territory's political future. The coherence of the *Optic's* election year reporting was non-existent. In defending the continuing need for the federal government to intervene on legislation passed by the territory's legislature, the author cried, "most of these men represent large land grant and other speculative interests that they are demanding and will demand special legislation for."¹²⁹ Not only did this describe both Kistler and Martinez's associates, only a day before the *Optic* lauded the future of the territory's mining industry now that the grant question had been resolved in large landowner's favor, opening up, "rich mining prospects which only need the enterprise and capital of the east for development."¹³⁰ Positioning itself as supporting the federal government's right to intercede in territorial affairs, this sudden anti-statehood turn was little

¹²⁵ "McKinley's Side". *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 8 September, 1900, 1.

¹²⁶ "Judge Long's Address" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 3 September, 1900, 2-3.

¹²⁷ "Line Item" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 19 January, 1900, 1.

¹²⁸ "No Statehood in Ours" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 16 February, 1900, 2.

¹²⁹ "Statehood Series" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 16 February, 1900, 2.

¹³⁰ "The Lopez Mines" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 15 February, 1900, 1-2.

more than a cynical attempt to block the addition of two new senators in Washington, certain to be Republican given the composition of the territory's legislature.

The case for maintaining New Mexico's territorial status was not purely negative though. As much as the paper objected to the developing policy in the Philippines it would have been hard not to see some similarities with their own territorial power structure. An article titled, "Colonial Business: Pronounced a Good thing for Fellows on the Inside," related the corruption of the archipelago's American administration, where a single commercial company gained exclusive right to operate canteens on army posts with 150-200 open at the time.¹³¹ Though this was a clear sign that the friends of the administration could do as they please, it was printed under the authority of an editor whose other paper, the *New Mexican*, had for years monopolized territorial printing contracts. Not only was the right gained by backroom dealing, it was perhaps the primary reason for the paper's longevity. Territorial governance was the best way to preserve the present order. The territory's organic act forbade 'special legislation,' from the legislature, such as the kind that might challenge the resolution of the land grant question implemented by federal courts.

El Independiente's 1900 Coverage

El Independiente maintained its format of long-winded editorials in the election year. Buoyed by a contract to print the county's tax supplement, sometimes spanning 18 pages, the paper was insulated from the less seemly financial maneuvering of its peers, though not in any true sense independent. As such it continued to advocate for statehood as soon as possible, the political order at the time would have suited *El Independiente's* interest were they to be the incoming state delegation. While the end point didn't change, the reasons for how and why New Mexico might achieve it fluctuated. If, in 1899, the inclusion of overseas Spanish-speakers in the country's domain threatened extermination or expulsion of nuevomexicanos at the hand of anglos, now that the inclusion was guaranteed *El Independiente* found a way it might twist in New Mexico's favor. This involved a sort of revived *casta*, wherein people would be judged on perceived proximity to Spanishness. The 150,000 hispanos in New Mexico were now joined by two millions more of their ilk, "counting only the hispano-americans and Spanish of Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines, without counting the millions of Tagalog and blacks in those

¹³¹ "Colonial Business: Pronounced a Good Thing for Fellows on the Inside" *The Las Vegas Daily Optic*, 4 September, 1900, 2.

places, many of whom have a familiarity with the language and customs of the Spanish.”¹³² The author took care at every turn to define exactly who out of these populations ought to be affiliated with nuevomexicanos, lest all former Spanish subjects be placed in the same camp. “The people of Cuba, or at least the large portion of Spanish descent, are in many respects identical to New Mexico, in language, religions, and to a certain point, customs.”¹³³ The author was most comfortable comparing New Mexico to Puerto Rico without caveats of what sections of the population needed to be considered distinct, or less than Spanish. Puerto Rico was, “another of the territories that will accompany New Mexico in its quality as an american possession,” which would likely, “stay for some years under a semi-civil, semi-military governance, until finally achieving territorial government like New Mexico and probably at some distant point, will gain dignity as a sovereign state of the Union.”¹³⁴ Indeed before US conquest the two territories' governments were highly centralized and controlled by a Europhilic elite, much like New Mexico, Puerto Rico was notable for, “the extent to which the US did not have to create structures of political and economic domination after the initial decision to possess, those structures were already there.”¹³⁵ If New Mexico and Puerto Rico's shared qualities were largely beneficial to the author, they had something in common that weakened their position. Unfortunately Puerto Rico, “bears much resemblance to the condition of New Mexico during the time they have endured the depreciation and insults that they have been the target of.”¹³⁶ Though Cuba received less favorable treatment, attributed to the racial and climatic conditions there, their armed resistance to colonial rule was to be lauded. Correctly anticipating the devolution of local governance in Cuba they wrote, “in this point of view one can anticipate with foresight what has been the case in New Mexico and Puerto Rico, since strength imposes respect and weakness gives rise to others having little consideration.”¹³⁷

¹³² “Contando solamente los hispano-americanos y españoles de Cuba, Puerto Rico, y las islas Filipinas, sin contar los millones de tagalos y negros que habitan en aquellos lugares, muchos de los cuales tienen conocimiento de la lengua y costumbres españoles”

“Nuestros Primos De Ultramar,” *El Independiente*, 15 February, 1900, 1.

¹³³ “El pueblo de Cuba, o a lo menos la gran proporción que desciende de españoles, es en muchos aspectos idéntico a Nuevo México, en idioma, religión, y hasta cierto grado, costumbres”

¹³⁴ “Es otro de los territorios que van a acompañar a Nuevo México es su calidad de posesión americana” and “Quedando por algunos años bajo régimen semi-civil y semi-militar, hasta adquirir al fin gobierno territorial como Nuevo México y probablemente en alguno período distante alcanzará a la dignidad de un estado soberanía de la Unión”

¹³⁵ Bouvier, Virginia Marie. 2001. *Whose America?* pg.166

¹³⁶ “Lleva mucho parecido a la condición de los neo-mexicanos durante el tiempo que han sobrellevado los desprecios y vituperios de que han sido al blanco”

¹³⁷ “Bajo este punto de vista se puede anticipar que los de Cuba serán tratados con mayor miramiento de lo que han sido los de Nuevo México y de Puerto Rico, pues la fuerza impone respeto y la debilidad da pábulo a que los otros tengan poca consideración”

“Nuestros Primos De Ultramar,” *El Independiente*, 15 February, 1900, 1.

While *El Independiente* was willing to accept most of Puerto Rico and a section of Cuba's population as appertaining to their linguistic cohort, extending such fraternity to the Philippines would go too far. The author claimed the islands should be considered hispano-asiatic, in contrast to the hispano-americans of the Southwest and potentially of the Caribbean territories. The largest ethnic group and the one comprising the bulk of insurgents, Tagalogs were considered "the civilized tribe," and "semi-hispanic," having received instruction in the ideas and language of Spain during its 400 year rule. While the insurrection had not yet been stymied by the "superiority of American arms," the author believed that given the number and condition of insurrectionaries they might obtain favorable conditions in a negotiated end to hostilities with the US occupiers. The newfound optimism in the *El Independiente* reflected that the inclusion of these peoples in the American domain seemed to be a fait accompli, a new reality with which nuevomexicanos must contend with but which might offer the chance to be agents rather than subjects of a civilizing mission. "Maybe in some day not far off, New Mexico and these new possessions will come to be sovereign states of the union that will help carry forward the mission of civilization and progress that is the aim of the American government."¹³⁸

Unlike the new possessions, or in the *Optic's* view, New Mexico, for *El Independiente* the territory needed nothing else to be deserving of statehood. Responding to an insulting article in the *Boston Advertiser*, *El Independiente* reminded it that New Mexicans meritted statehood because they, "have not only proved worthy of investiture in the full rights of american citizenship, but because the treaty that made it a part of the union also provides for the admission of New Mexico as a state and this territory has waited patiently for 50 years for the fulfillment of this promise."¹³⁹ As this promise had gone unfulfilled, the gap in development between New Mexico and a place like Boston resulted from, "Uncle Sam not having done the work it ought to for its peoples [nuevomexicanos], nor what it is doing for the Indians."¹⁴⁰ In this view the failure of progress did not originate in New Mexico but Washington, which failed to

¹³⁸"Tal vez en algun dia no muy lejano, Nuevo México y estas nuevas posesiones llegarán a figurar como estados soberanos de la unión que ayudarán a llevar adelante la misión de civilización y progreso que es la lema del gobierno americano"

"Nuestros Primos De Ultramar" *El Independiente*, 15 February, 1900, 1.

¹³⁹ "Porque no solamente ha probado ser digno de ser revestido con todas los derechos de ciudadanía americana, sino porque el tratado que le hizo una parte de la Unión también provee para la admisión de Nuevo México como estado y este territorio ha estado aguardando con paciencia cincuenta años el cumplimiento de esa promesa"

"Nuevo México Y El Estado" *El Independiente*, 6 December, 1900, 2.

¹⁴⁰ "el Tio Samuel no ha hecho lo que debía por sus pupilos, ni lo que está haciendo por los indios"

enact the civilizing mission in territories conquered. It was a view echoed by J Francisco Chaves, two time delegate to congress, who claimed the gap in development to be a consequence of New Mexican's second-class status in favor of those he saw as less deserving, "the federal government has persistently ignored true citizenship of the territory,' and New Mexico's taxes supported, 'long haired, blanketed Indians."¹⁴¹ In fact New Mexico exceeded in many respects already incorporated territories. Claiming, "there are more traitors and disloyalty in Boston than there has been in New Mexico since the territory formed part of the US," the author cited both the territory's high rates of participation in wars and strong support for the incumbent administration's party in contrast to Massachusetts.¹⁴² These two proofs of loyalty were linked throughout the piece, supporting the war meant both fighting and voting for the party which led the effort. The territory displayed its deserving of admission through both avenues,

"New Mexico, having expressed its loyalty in recent wars and in newly electing the Hon. B.S. Rodey, who by no means is Spanish, as delegate to congress, is better equipped and certainly more entitled to statehood than were California, Colorado, or Kansas when they were admitted to the union."¹⁴³

The questions posed by the *Advertiser* to provoke this rebuke were in the minds of many within and beyond the territory. While the recent census left no doubt that New Mexico had sufficient population to be considered for statehood, the *Advertiser* asked, "if only numbers matter, what excuse is there not to extend statehood at once to the Philippines or Puerto Rico? Are Hispanic New Mexico or Mormon Arizona desirable as american states?"¹⁴⁴

La Voz del Pueblo's 1900 Coverage

La Voz del Pueblo saw a shift in its election year coverage, though certainly less dramatic than that at the *Optic*. The rhetoric of the humanity of Filipinos that suffused its reporting in 1899 dropped away, the question of US policy toward the archipelago was now one

¹⁴¹ Lozano, *And American Language*, pg. 129

¹⁴² "Hay más traidores y más deslealtad en Boston que los que ha habido en Nuevo México desde que el territorio formó parte de los Estados Unidos." "Nuevo México Y El Estado" *El Independiente*, 6 December, 1900, 2.

¹⁴³ "Habiendo expresado Nuevo México su lealtad durante las guerras recientes y de nuevo eligiendo la Hon. B. S. Rodey, que de ningún modo es español, como delegado al congreso, está mejor equipado y más ciertamente intitulado al estado que lo estaban California, Colorado, o Kansas cuando fueron admitidos a la unión"

¹⁴⁴ "Si solo cuentan los números, que excusa hay para rehusar conceder el estado de una vez a las Filipinas o a Puerto Rico? ...Son el hispano Nuevo México y el mormon Arizona deseables como estados americanos?"

of near sole domestic importance. The only reference to the concept of humanity came in a speech by Republican dissenter Champ Clark and was discarded just as quickly. Clark painted the imperial enterprise as quixotic and one that believed, “that our mission is to bring the blessings of liberty to the ends of the earth. I deny that. Our business is to attend to our own business and pursue the blessings of liberty for our own prosperity.”¹⁴⁵ Now that the Filipino insurrection had robustly turned in opposition to the US occupation, any inkling of sympathy for Filipinos as a whole became politically toxic. Clark showed which way the wind was blowing, “I don’t give a damn about Aguinaldo or the Filipinos, my sympathy, my heart, and all my efforts are with the American people. I value more, a million times more, the freedom of my children than all the commercial traffic in the world.”¹⁴⁶ While this dismissal devalued support for Filipino independence and the commercial policies of the administration, what followed went much further. “And to add I will say I value the life of one American boy more than all the Filipinos that are on the archipelago.”¹⁴⁷ Though less extensive or ideologically antithetical than the *Optic’s* quoting of Democratic politicians, *La Voz del Pueblo’s* 1900 coverage of the Filipino insurrection stopped articulating its broad critique of the imperial enterprise in favor of quoting dissenting Republicans to drive further wedges in the party. Clark divided the American people into three classes depending on their reaction to imperialist policies. Two groups, those honestly supporting or rejecting the McKinley administration’s policies according to personal beliefs, were respectable. The third camp, those who disagreed with the administration’s policies but wished to support McKinley no matter, were the true targets of Clark’s ire and *La Voz del Pueblo’s* attempt to winnow away Republican unity.

Not only did *La Voz del Pueblo* abandon international sympathy to advocate a focus on the internal condition of the country, it in turn accused its opponents of being overly influenced by foreign concerns. The comparison of the British, “war in south Africa... is as unjust and wanton a war as what we are doing to the Filipinos,” was provocative but would develop beyond allegations of similarity in policy.¹⁴⁸ In a September speech yet another disaffected Republican,

¹⁴⁵ “Y que nuestra misión es la de llevar las bendiciones de la libertad hasta los confines de la tierra. Yo lo niego. Nuestro negocio es atender a nuestros propios negocios para conseguir las bendiciones de la libertad para nuestra posteridad”

¹⁴⁶ “A mí no me importa un pito de Aguinaldo o los Filipinos. Mi simpatía, mi corazón, y toda mi solicitud están con el pueblo Americano. Estimo mas, mil veces más, la libertad de mis hijos que todo el tráfico comercial del mundo”

¹⁴⁷ “Y por añadidura dire que yo estimo mas la vida de un muchacho americano que todas los Filipinos que hay en el archipiélago”

“Champ Clark Y Imperialismo” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 10 February, 1900, 1.

¹⁴⁸ “La guerra en África meridional... es una guerra injusta e inmotivada como lo es la que nosotros les estamos haciendo a los Filipinos”

Senator Wellington, said in conclusion that he was, “of the opinion that McKinley was nothing more than an instrument of England in the administration of American affairs.”¹⁴⁹ These allegations of near treasonous comportment had no equivalent in preceding years. Rather than calling into question the loyalty or respect for American traditions shown by the president’s actions, *La Voz del Pueblo* had castigated McKinley for the brutality and inhumanity enacted by his government. In 1900 the paper had all but stopped expressing its own sweeping ideological vision, which typically aligned with Democratic or populist ideals, instead hammering points most likely to divide the Republican bloc.

The events in the newly seized territories ceased to be important in themselves, but rather for their significance toward domestic US policies. Such was reflected even in the description of the insurrection, “its evident that Filipinos, although defeated, think not to abandon their fight for independence until knowing the results of the election this year.”¹⁵⁰ Giving some oxygen to *El Independiente*’s formulation that supporting the Republicans was a proxy for a patriotism determined to win the struggle, for insurrectionaries “the hope that the democratic party will be triumphant is animating them to continue their fight for liberty.”¹⁵¹ That this was conjecture and not voiced by an insurrectionary showed the influence of military censorship. Some reports even included, “signed MacArthur,” lest there be confusion to the origin of the information.¹⁵² This near silence gave space for new disasters to take the front page. The developing Boxer Rebellion drew much attention this year, especially as American and European residents of Peking came under threat. Roosevelt, now vice presidential candidate on the Republican ticket, warned all that was needed for Manila to become Peking was the withdrawal of American troops.¹⁵³ US control over the islands facilitated intercession in China, troops arriving or departing Peking cycled through Manila first. In fact the only words from a Filipino in this year came in response to the developing situation and Roosevelt’s remarks. Sixto Lopez, a member of Agoncillo’s committee representing the First Philippine Republic lamented the, “hurried speech of the ex-leader of the rough riders,” which mischaracterized the actions of

“Line Item” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 10 February, 1900, 1.

¹⁴⁹ “era de opinión que McKinley no era otra cosa que el instrumento de Inglaterra en la administración de los asuntos americanos”

“Line Item” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 8 September, 1900, 1.

¹⁵⁰ “Es evidente que los Filipinos, aunque derrotados, piensan no abandonar su lucha por la independencia hasta saber el resultado de las elecciones de este año”

¹⁵¹ “La esperanza de que el partido Democra [sic] a tendrá triunfo los está animando a continuar su lucha por la libertad”

¹⁵² “Esos Filipinos” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 8 September, 1900, 1.

¹⁵³ “El Que Mucho Habla En Algo Yerra” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 8 September, 1900, 2.

the insurrectionaries who, “waged war in such a way and more in accord with the means of civilization than the Americans.”¹⁵⁴ More than anything he was surprised by the rapidity by which Aguinaldo, so recently embraced and enabled by the Americans, came to be despised as political winds shifted.

“It’s marvelous the speed by which the little one, called by the Americans, ‘my dear general’ and ‘excellent sir’, transformed into a pirate and a Boxer savage with no other apparent reason than he did not want to be fooled like a dummy forever and ever. Now he’s only referred to as ‘bloody Aguinaldo’.”¹⁵⁵

Lopez had grasped a key quality of the American empire, this revolving door of enemies to the nation spun faster than did reality and often included those whose interests had previously aligned with the US. In the four short years covered here, the frontier was declared closed, war began with Spain, the Philippine insurrection was betrayed leading to decades of conflict, and US troops landed in China to confront the Boxer rebellion.

Trends in 1900 Coverage

The year 1900 saw two of the major newspapers of Las Vegas converge in their coverage. *La Voz del Pueblo* and the *Las Vegas Daily Optic*, both under Democrat affiliated ownership, sought to fracture the politically dominant Republican bloc. The election year influenced *La Voz del Pueblo*’s coverage though the changes were comparatively subtle; what topics got space, who was quoted at length, and a notably more domestic focus, its longstanding opposition to the Santa Fe Ring and associated figures was still clearly present. The *Optic*’s changes were more distinct. Though owned by the Las Vegas Publishing Company for two years and following the departure of editor George T. Gould, a known Democrat, it was under the nominal editorial control of George Cross and a returned Kistler that the paper endorsed a full Democratic ticket. Consistency in politics was never the norm in territorial New Mexico but the change didn’t go unnoticed, the *Alamogordo News* in March 1900 wrote,

“I note that the *Las Vegas Optic* is again doing its utmost to ‘rib up’ a fight between Governor Otero and Mr. Catron... those who know are of the belief that Charles Easley,

¹⁵⁴ “Atropellado lenguaje del ex-jefe del Rough Riders” and “hacen la guerra tanto y más de acuerdo con los métodos de la civilización que los Americanos”

¹⁵⁵ “Es la maravillosa rapidez con que el poco ha llamado por los americanos ‘mi querido general’ y ‘excelentísimo señor’ se metamorfosis en una pirata y salvaje Boxer, sin otra razón aparente que la de no querer prestones a que le siguieran engañado como un muñeco por todos los siglos de los siglos. Ahora solo se le menciona por el ‘sanguinario Aguinaldo’”

“Line Item” *La Voz Del Pueblo*, 8 September, 1900, 2.

Jake Waltner, and George Cross furnish the alleged ‘sensations’ that occasionally rip the Republican party up the back.”¹⁵⁶

El Independiente appeared above such chaos, but its consistency and relative independence flowed from a more stable form of backroom dealing. Taking a page from his stepfather’s book, Salazar cornered the county printing contracts and thus gained a steady income. Manderfield’s *New Mexican* had to contend with changes in appointed territorial officials depending on what party was nationally ascendant, something *El Independiente*, in the solidly Republican San Miguel county, was insulated from. This stability was reflected in the pages of the newspaper, the unchanging editorials that characterized the imprint were not interrupted by changes in format to compete with rivals or in political stance to align with shifting winds. Whatsmore it was reflected in the constant and urgent appeal for statehood. Though *El Independiente* was nominally non-partisan, it aligned with the Republican camp as the 1890s progressed, maintaining its pro-statehood stance even as its allies wavered. Salazar, stepson of the long time owner of the territory’s most important paper, united by marriage to the family of Lorenzo Lopez the one-time Republican then Partido del Pueblo Unido politician, and eventual business partner with Secundino Romero, scion of the Romero political dynasty and chair of the county’s Republican committee, was as central a figure in the territorial political scene as may be found. For Salazar statehood could bring nothing but benefits as the editorials of *El Independiente* made clear.

¹⁵⁶ “Line Item” *The Alamogordo News*, 8 March, 1900, 2.

Conclusion

Given the expansive coverage of the conflict from 1897 to 1900, the resulting entanglements of the war fell out of the pages of Las Vegas's newspapers relatively quickly. In the Philippines this was due in part to military censorship, but McKinley's decisive victory in the 1900 campaign was interpreted as a mandate for his administration's imperialist policies. As the anti-imperialist movement shifted to challenging interventions in already independent states in the Americas and Roosevelt declared victory against the Philippine Insurrection in 1902, this chapter of martial imperialism came to a close, though fighting would continue in the archipelago for years.¹⁵⁷ The legal distinction between New Mexico and overseas territories began with the insular cases starting in 1901, the Supreme Court distinguishing contiguous and overseas territories as receiving different constitutional protections, largely grounded in perceived inherent racial difference. Though contentious even among contemporaries one observer noted, "no matter whether th' constitution follows th' flag or not, th' Supreme Court follows th' iliction returns."¹⁵⁸ The administration laid the groundwork for such decisions, nowhere in the Treaty of Paris was citizenship meant to be extended to the empire's new subjects, not even with the nebulous phrase "at the proper time." While Puerto Rico's residents would be extended federal statutory citizenship in 1917, Filipinos never were.

Although New Mexican statehood appeared in both parties' 1900 platforms and then-president Roosevelt voiced support for the matter, in 1902 the push died definitively as racist depictions of hispanos in the Southwest peaked. This was infamously displayed in the Beveridge committee's 1902 report, though even within the confrontational committee statehood likely had the votes to pass and appears to have been single-handedly squashed by Beveridge.¹⁵⁹ A decade later the momentum would finally boil over, both New Mexico and Arizona were admitted in 1912 in a scheme that preserved the balance of power in the Senate. The wait proved worth it for the papers of Las Vegas. *La Voz del Pueblo*'s editors Antonio

¹⁵⁷ Bouvier, Virginia Marie. 2001. *Whose America?* Praeger. pg 173

¹⁵⁸ Burnett, *Foreign in a Domestic Sense*, pg. 135

¹⁵⁹ Lozano, *An American Language*, pgs. 115, 134

Given the centrality of Beveridge in halting the 1902 statehood effort, several authors have speculated as to his motivation. Lozano speculates that the denial had been influenced by Beveridge trip to the Philippines in 1899, citing his vocal opposition to self rule there, while Dagan alleges the denial to be at the behest of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad, concerned about potentially higher taxes in the new state. Pg 130

Lucero and Ezequiel Cabeza de Vaca were elected secretary of state in 1912 and governor in 1916 respectively.¹⁶⁰ Their efforts to postpone statehood until winds shifted in their favor had worked, though the state leaned Republican until the New Deal era, it was by no means the dominance of the late 19th century. Salazar remained close to power too, partnering with Secundino Romero in 1904 who doled out patronage positions as chair of the county's republican committee.¹⁶¹ Whatsmore nuevomexicanos secured a place in the future of their state, forming a majority of delegates in the constitutional convention that made New Mexico the only state to enshrine bilingual rights in its founding document. The achievement is especially noteworthy considering Arizona where only one Spanish-speaking delegate was present to object to an attempt to limit suffrage to English-speakers in their constitution.¹⁶²

Beyond the realm of territorial politics, New Mexico helped shape social stratification in the US at the turn of the century. Coerced labor, especially in the form of debt peonage, surged in the late 18th and 19th centuries in response to the increasing proximity of capitalist markets.¹⁶³ A post civil war bill to target this form of coerced labor mentioned New Mexico specifically, but in the Reconstruction era the practice spread extensively to the Southeast with a key modification. Given the thirteenth amendment's exception in prohibiting slavery unless as punishment for a crime, debt peonage there was accompanied by the mass criminalization of a whole range of behaviors.¹⁶⁴ An especially pernicious form of this was laws mandating work contracts, someone without written proof of employment could be deemed a vagrant, arrested, and then saddled with court fees and fines which a wealthy landowner could take on in exchange for the now convict's labor. Significantly most of the litigation targeting peonage focused on the Southeast, though the practice had by no means ended in the Southwest. The Department of Justice's peonage files document cases of debt peons in the state through every decade of the 20th century covered by their investigation.¹⁶⁵ The reports' conclusions point to yet another evolution of coerced labor now targeting immigrants.

¹⁶⁰ Melendez, *Spanish-Language Newspapers in New Mexico* pgs. 86-87

¹⁶¹ Melendez pg. 77

¹⁶² Noel pg. 463

¹⁶³ Gonzales Silvestro, "An Untellable Tale", pg. 23

¹⁶⁴ Reséndez, Andres. 2017. "North American Peonage." *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 7 (4) (Dec 1): 597-619. Pg 613

¹⁶⁵ Daniel, Pete. 1989. *The Peonage Files of the US Department of Justice, 1901 - 1945*. Bethesda, Md: Univ. Publications of America

Recent investigations concerning settler-colonial projects have increasingly focused on multiple subjectivities that complicate the settler/indigenous division, yielding insights far more challenging than the colonized/colonizer conundrum present in many New Mexican histories. Guidotti-Hernandez's work is one such example; the chapter on the Camp Grant massacre shows the need to not universalize indigenous identity, illuminating anti-indigenous violence carried out by other indigenous peoples under the aegis of settler colonial institutions . Other works like "They Killed the Word" are especially relevant to the questions of identity addressed here, focusing on, "mestizos, who are not presently Indian but whose ancestors were Indian.... The process of detribalization works/ed within a colonial system that sought to modify/codify new structures of identification, leadership, government, and worship."¹⁶⁶ It is important not to reify the categorizations inherited from surviving documents, especially as identity represented in the historical record could be modified by factors such as the purchase of land. In 19th century New Mexico a series of shifts in documented identity from Indian in a tribal community, to detribalized genizaro, to land-owning vecino, to hispano-americano citizen, allowed the incorporation of this population into a country where full citizenship depended on perceived whiteness. While the social acceptance of nuevomexicanos as white was far from universal, the status was achieved legally and politically, demonstrated by the insular cases' designation of other marginalized populations as inherently foreign. Other works like 'An Untellable Tale' have attempted to unravel these sweeping identities to reconstruct the experiences of those written out of the historical record, though such approaches are limited by the fragmented evidence available.¹⁶⁷ Genizaros who had either descended from, or had themselves been, debt peons on large estates did not become social or political equals of landed elite simply because they were later enumerated as vecino. Land grant seizures under the territorial administration largely targeted this class, while the elite were able to navigate the challenges with high rates of success. Framings that collapse members of these groups into one because they both spoke Spanish miss the continuity between the colonial, Mexican, and American periods of New Mexico's history. Territorial New Mexico was not primarily inhabited by nuevomexicanos who were both colonized and colonizers, those that had benefited from the colonial order prior to the US invasion largely continued to do so after, those who suffered under the previous regime were most likely to suffer under its successor.

¹⁶⁶ Gómez, Reid. 2003. "They Killed the Word." *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 15 (3/4) (Oct 1): 64–95. pg.68

¹⁶⁷ Gonzales Silvestro, "An Untellable Tale"

What played out in the pages of Las Vegas's papers was another type of acting through conquest. Though the conquest of New Mexico by the US was no less real than the Spanish in the Rio Grande Valley or the American forces in Manila, in all three cases the performance of conquest was an important step for the conquerors. What the Chimayo and Taos uprisings showed was not only the danger of internal revolt, but the inability of colonial regimes to even make sense of the people revolting. In adding vast swaths of the Southwest to its imperial fold with a quick war, the US depended on the elite already residing there to make its conquest more than lines on a map. While Hispanism paved the way for US imperial expansion overseas, the impulse found its modern form in New Mexico. Unlike Texas, California, and Arizona where Spanish-speaking elites attempted to cooperate with the new regime to secure their interests, nuevomexicano elites were not subsequently marginalized by waves of anglo arrivals. The size and power of the territory's elite instead forced anglos to adapt, as was the case in the colonies where massive anglo immigration was never realized. Still in sixty two years as a territory, second longest after Puerto Rico's ongoing status, even New Mexico's elite could not ignore their second-class citizenship. Largely sheltered from more serious consequences like land seizures, they occupied a political landscape where no victory would ever be final and no political dominance absolute while the highest positions in government were spoils to the presidential victor. As such the ideas expressed by the papers were often little more than servicing the immediate needs of their respective political machines, which themselves could change valence depending on the latest national election outcomes.

The War of 1898 served to underline New Mexico's political instability and marginal status in the country as a whole. For the newspapers of Las Vegas, the war represented a moment where their aspirations of full citizenship via statehood could be realized or ruined. This vacillation between extremes was shown most clearly by the diametrically opposed articles concerning the addition of overseas Spanish-speakers appearing in *El Independiente* in 1899 and 1900, their inclusion to the empire could alternatively lead to the total destruction of hispanos or the elevation of 2 million Spanish-speakers as full US citizens. It is tempting to see this as wild speculation, to portray the full incorporation of New Mexico in 1912 as inevitable as the deep divisions of its society in the colonial, Mexican, and territorial eras vanished into sweeping romanticized linguistic and cultural identities. Fifty years into territorial status nuevomexicanos understood statehood to be no automatic or easy victory, the eventual sixty-two year wait for statehood was an extended effort to sell the new divisions both internally and externally. Various moments give a glimpse to other formulations of nuevomexicano identity,

such as *La Voz del Pueblo*'s temporary engagement with Aguinaldo as a relevant political figure or *El Independiente*'s sudden recognition of themselves in a new mass of Spanish-speakers conquered in war and held in second class status. Ultimately neither were to be, New Mexico would be incorporated with a majority population identified as hispano-americano. The small slice of nuevomexicano population that composed the elite that made this vast, foreign-populated region digestible for the expanding US empire, laid the groundwork for subsequent colonial seizures and sustained and obscured the form of coerced labor that would spread widely following abolition. That this was the sole model of incorporating Spanish-speaking people into the US empire that resulted in both full citizenship and constitutionally protected bilingual rights adds a weighty caveat on New Mexico's multicultural self-image.

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