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Between Aztlan and Quivira: Europeans and Indians in the Southwestern United States

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The whole story cannot be told from one perspective. History happens in layers of dust, like the rings of a tree. The United States history we have studied, which begins with Roanoke and continues with the colonization of the east coast, is the history of New England's spread south and west and the extension of political institutions to include other regions. But what do we learn of those other regions? We see them only through the eyes of those who pushed ever west to own the land by possessing it. We learn little of the territories until they are absorbed into the whole. Like the actors themselves, the presidents and politicians who made decisions about purchases and wars, we stand on one side of the stage, learning about other regions only from the reports of our own messengers.

But like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, the minor characters in one play are central figures of a different drama.

Regional history offers a different perspective. Instead of beginning with time, with a date or event, and watching the ripples it sends across the whole, we begin with a place, and watch the layers of history build. The size of the region is our choice. We may choose a small region, such as the drainage area of one river, or a very large region, such as New England or the Southeast.

This unit is the beginning of a regional study of the southwestern United States to be taught in Middle School to students of Spanish. For in the Southwest, Spanish was the language of the explorers, of the settlers, and of the government for three hundred years, before the region was annexed as territories of the United States. Spain, and later Mexico, united a vast and sparsely populated region with language.

Language is not devoid of personality. We teach about Spain and Latin America to understand that language lives, that it adapts to its environment. A greatly desired goal for students in the United States is fluency in a second language, and especially Spanish, the first language of the most rapidly growing minority group in the country. A more subtle goal of foreign language instruction is the simple extension of empathy. The more we understand about the people we consider different from us, the less we cling to prejudice to protect ourselves from fear.

The southwestern United States is a different place. The earth itself is different. It is drier and more sparsely vegetated. Its hills are not rounded with treetops. The horizon is forever away, where dusty land meets

relentless blue sky. This earth is not tamed by civilization. People must adapt to it. Only so much water can be spread over the cracked earth to grow food for humans.

The first Southwestern people left traces of their existence perhaps as early as 40,000 years ago. Geology teaches us that the climate of the Southwest was much wetter up to 10,000 B.C., when it began to dry gradually to the desert it is now. Archeological evidence is so sparse it is impossible to reach any conclusions about early peoples and their relationship to cultural traditions which followed. Suffice it to say, humans were here. For 41,500 years they lived with the land, first as nomads, and later, planters of corn. Then Spanish explorers spread northward from the lush Mexican valleys. The Indians had told them of Aztlan, the land from which the Aztecs had come. The conquistadors came for gold, searching for C'bola and Quivira. Finding neither, they saw how adobe dwellers survived, and gave them a name, "Pueblo," the village, the people. For three hundred years the Spanish and Indians mixed their blood, their architecture, their husbandry, their religion, and their language, but remained separate peoples dwelling apart together. When the Anglos came, they found a culture already layered with Indians and Spaniards, Mexicans and mestizos. The Anglos brought trade between the territories and the states already united east of the Mississippi, adding new layers to the region known as the Southwest.

In recent years "Aztlan" has been claimed as poetic title of the borderlands, the stage of the collision of three cultures: the American Indians, the Spanish, and the Anglo Americans. These borderlands are geographic, the valley of the Rio Grande, and the arid lands stretching east and west and north. They are the political boundary between Mexico and Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Beyond geographic and political, they are a cultural frontier, an edge where the mixture becomes more important than the prototypes, a border where "mestizo" stops meaning mixed parentage and begins to be a people itself, "*la raza*."

This unit is designed as part of a series of units about the Southwest. Here we will concentrate on the people who first inhabited this land, the prehistoric Indians and their descendants, and on the endurance of Indian culture through the successive waves of invasion. The second section will be a study of the Spanish explorers and conquerors in the region up to the reconquest of the Pueblos in 1693. Other units may focus on 20th century survivors of this cultural collision, with particular attention paid to modern chicano writers' integration of their ancestry, and on the protest of 20th century prejudice and economic disenfranchisement.

Language reflects changes in national or ethnic identity. Thus we say Indian, and American Indian where needed for clarity, rather than other words which were attempts by Anglos to recognize American Indian identity. These were not terms acceptable to the people whose own identity was being described. Zuni is also spelled without the Spanish tilde.

Pre-Columbian

The date of the arrival of the first humans in the Americas is an open debate among archaeologists. Most agree that evidence has been found of human habitation 11,500 years ago. On Sunday, May 5, 1991, the *New York Times* reported that archeologists have discovered bones, charcoal, and possible stone artifacts which point to human presence 35,000 years ago near Orogrande, New Mexico (p. 30). The debate rages about the authenticity of the evidence.

Dozier states that corncobs have been found in the Southwest dating back to 3000 B.C. The earliest use of pottery and of settled life Dozier dates at 300 B.C. This first tradition, as Dozier puts it, is called the Mogollon. They built pit houses clustered in villages, developed the bow and arrow, and gradually added tools and implements of stone, bone, and shell. By 1100 A.D., 5 different archeological periods are recognized by their

different pottery styles. A separate tradition farther south and west in the desert areas, the Hohokam, developed complex irrigation systems. Both of these prehistoric groups, and other smaller developments, were absorbed around 1100 A.D. by the Anasazi. These were the people of Mesa Verde, the cliff dwellers, the ancient ones who abandoned their homes in the desert during the droughts of the 14th century, and moved south to greener valleys. They left behind hundreds of ruins and baskets and pots, clues to their civilization. The dry desert air preserved it well. Drawings on the canyon walls are often symbols which are difficult to interpret, yet give us clues about Anasazi culture.

Though we know that the Anasazi sites were abandoned suddenly around 1400 A.D., we don't really know why. Most archeologists believe severe drought caused the move south. Others believe the departure was dictated by a religious or mystical belief that the gods had abandoned the sites and that the people must follow the gods. Increased raids by nomadic tribes in the times of drought may have encouraged the migration. The pattern of abandoning sites and relocating was a well-established facet of Anasazi life. However, this massive relocation at the pinnacle of culture still intrigues us. It remains one of the most fascinating of archeological puzzles.

For a long time it was commonly held that the disappearance of the Anasazi was an extinction of sorts, the end of a people and their culture. Similarly, it was believed that the massive destruction of Indians in the 500 years since Columbus' arrival was a total annihilation of these cultures. Historians and archeologists are now reaching a far different conclusion. In recent decades, perhaps since the 1935 Tewa Basin study, a tremendous amount of research has been done, both archeological work on the ancient peoples and anthropological studies of modern day Indians. The most astounding discovery is that Indian culture seems to have survived conquest, colonization, and reservation. The Hopi, Zuni, and modern Pueblo Indians appear to be the direct descendants of the Anasazi who abandoned their complex society for other sites. A case in point is the petroglyph character Kokopelli who is still seen in the Hopi kachinas.

The final wave of Indians to arrive in the southwest were the Athapascans, nomadic peoples who later became the Navajo, Apache and Kiowa Indians. The earliest archeological evidence of these groups is from the 15th century, about 100 years before the Spanish began to push north into the Rio Grande, and 100 years after the Anasazi relocation. Pedro de Castañeda reports that Pueblo Indians told him of raiders attacking Pueblos approximately 16 years previous to 1540. (p. 162. v9, Smithsonian). These nomadic peoples were hunters. In times of plenty an economy of exchanges was maintained between the nomads, who supplied game, and the farmers, who provided corn. Slowly over the centuries the pueblo dwellers also taught the nomads the crafts of their lives: weaving, pottery, basketry. Two groups on which we will focus are the Navajo and the Apache. Their anthropological roots are the same— they come from Athapaskan nomadic peoples. But their responses to the cultures with which they came in contact varied greatly, and continue into the present to influence their tribal history.

The Apache have been popularly identified with fierce resistance to the frontier settlers. Their most famous resistance fighter was Geronimo. The word *Apache* is probably derived from the Zuni word "Apachu" which means the enemy. In contrast the *Navajo*, the People, began to adapt to local ways and to adjust their life ways into harmony with the other Indian, Spanish, Mexican, and Anglo cultures. The Navajo became the great weavers of woolen rugs and blankets, using the wool from the sheep the Spanish had brought. The Navajo nation now is one of the largest and the most organized of all the Indian tribes.

When the Spaniards arrived, they found Pueblos throughout the Rio Grande Valley, and farther west the Hopi settlements and Zuni pueblos. The nomadic Indians were present especially to the northeast, gradually

spreading into western New Mexico and eastern Arizona.

Who Were These Spaniards?

In 1492 the king and queen of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabel had been married for fourteen years. Their union had united the two largest and most powerful regions of Spain, and had served as the backbone to the final push to drive the Moors from Spain. In 1492 all Moors and all Jews had to leave Spain or convert to Catholicism. The Spanish Inquisition was established to verify the claims of converts, to discover who were, or were not, the true believers in the One True Faith. Columbus' voyage to the West was delayed until August due to the severe shortage of ships caused by the diaspora of Jews and Moors from Spain, the homeland of their fathers for hundreds of years.

Ferdinand and Isabel agreed to finance this expedition to the West for an array of motives, each with the final goal of glory for Spain, for the Church, and for their Majesties. Columbus himself was neither wealthy, nor noble, nor Spanish. Current historians believe he may have been Jewish. Whatever his true motives, the impact of his voyages was immediate and extensive. Within fifty years Central and South America had been conquered and explored. The stories of wealth and adventure appealed to the romantics of the 16th century. Who could blame them for believing it would continue as it had begun? In 1519 Hernán Cortés conquered Mexico City and the Aztec nation, and found gold in such quantities as to fuel the fever of the Conquistadors for another century.

The exploration and conquest of the southwestern United States followed slowly on the footsteps of the fast first fifty years for several reasons. The current geographical assumptions were incorrect. Distances were much greater than the explorers of Mexico and Florida had believed. Though rumors of the cities of C'bola abounded, the very absence of proof of their existence fired the imagination of the explorers. And exploration was very expensive, and generally not paid for by the state.

The first accounts of the region north of Mexico come from Alvar Nu- ez Cabeza de Vaca. He was a member of the expedition of Panfilo de Narvaez sailing from Florida to Mexico, which was shipwrecked off the coast of Texas in 1528 leaving 4 survivors. By living with the Indians they encountered and travelling south and west they made their way into northern Mexico where they were found by Spaniards. The stories were not recorded, but were told and retold until they became part of the fabric of myth about the cities north of "here" where the streets were paved with gold and the doors were inlaid with turquoise.

In 1539 an expedition was sent north from Mexico City. Fray Marcos de Niza, and Esteban (Estevánico) who was another of the four survivors of the Cabeza de Vaca trek, and therefore qualified to be the guide, set forth to find the seven cities of C'bola, reported to be richer still than Mexico. The expedition pushed north into New Mexico. Esteban, sent ahead, found the Zuni Pueblos. He reported back to de Niza, and they approached Zuni together. De Niza did not enter the village, but Esteban did and was killed. De Niza reported back to Mexico City that great wealth existed in Zuni, this based on his observations from the mesa of the pueblo he never visited.

The immediate result of de Niza's reports of what he thought he had seen was the famous and extensive expedition of Francisco Vásquez de Coronado into the southwestern United States. Coronado himself was an interesting person, a classic Spanish gentleman from Salamanca who conducted his expedition with discipline. The story was not recorded until 20 years later when Pedro de Caste-eda compiled his memoirs. The end of the expedition occurred as the result of a serious head injury sustained by Coronado and the resulting collapse of the discipline which had held his troops together. No gilded cities were found.

The reaction of the New Spain authorities to the Coronado expedition was so negative there was no further exploration north for forty years.

Between 1540 and 1550 silver was discovered in northern Mexico. Though Coronado's reports were largely forgotten, the silver mining expansion pulled settlements north from Mexico City. Slaves to work the mines were taken from the Indian groups in northern Mexico. But by 1550 slave hunters and silver miners in Chihuahua began to hear again rumors of greater kingdoms to the north. Interest in exploration of the north reawoke in the viceroyalty. However, times had changed. In 1542 laws had been enacted to delineate procedures for expeditions. In 1573 regulations were created which stated that expeditions into Indian country must seek conversion of the Indians, not subjugation for mining profit. As a result the expedition which went north in 1581 was jointly led by Fray Agust'n Rodr'quez with two other friars, and Captain Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado with 9 soldiers. They rediscovered what Coronado had found and actually stayed among the Pueblos. In 1582 Fray Bernardino de Beltrán and Antonio de Espejo visited Indians in Taos, the Hopi and the Pueblo. All of these excursions were met with resistance by the Indians. Simmons points out (p. 179 Smithsonian, vol.9) that the Spaniards' expectations were influenced by their recent battles with Moors at home and Aztecs in Mexico. Further, they could not sustain themselves, but depended on Indian tribute for survival. The Indians, however, were accustomed to resisting raiders. The result of these sets was confrontation. The crown of Spain authorized the "pacification and settlement of New Mexico."

The right to lead an expedition included the right to be appointed governor of the new province. Bidding was intense. Hernán Cortés himself was among the competitors. The winner of the bid was Juan O-ate of Zacatecas. He was a Mexican born criole Spaniard of a silver mining family, now appointed governor of New Mexico. He set about organizing the expedition which he would finance, but with the blessing of the crown. From 1595-1598 the O-ate expedition waited in Chihuahua for political maneuvering to clear the way. In 1598, they crossed the Rio Grande, more than 100 years after Columbus' first voyage, and nine years before the first British colony at Jamestown. O-ate rode out not as an entrepreneur but as an official arm of the crown of Spain.

O-ate established headquarters at San Juan de los Caballeros, and across the river at San Gabriel. He divided the territory into missions, and set off to explore to the north and west. In 1601 he travelled to Quivira "beyond the grand Bend of the Arkansas River where it is joined by the Walnut River, north of Oklahoma Territory." (Great River, vol. 1, p.217) He still wanted to explore beyond Quivira, but returned to San Gabriel to discover mutiny. In 1607, O-ate was recalled and replaced by the new governor Pedro de Peralta. Peralta reestablished the capital at Santa Fe, and the first missions were built. By 1625 there were 50 churches and 26 friars. Extensive building of the city and provisioning for the new Spanish rulers fell on the backs of the Indians. Their corn, their blankets, all they had accumulated was claimed by the Spanish. The Apache Indians grew more adept at raiding and resistance, even as the Pueblos bore the yoke of Spanish rule. But the Spaniards were there to stay, and continued to establish their presence. The need for supplies led to a regular supply train from Mexico to Santa Fe every three years.

A system to manage Indian populations was developed, as it was throughout Spanish-America. It was called "encomienda." The souls and wellbeing of the Indians who lived on the land were commended to the Spaniard recipient of the land grant. In theory his responsibility was spiritual and physical, as in an extended family structure. In reality it was a form of slaveholding.

Eventually competition and jealousy built up between the state and the church. The churchmen argued against the abuses of the governors; the state officials worked to discredit the religious workers. Slavers were

undermining the work of the church by raiding Apache villages for slaves even as the missionaries were seeking trust and conversion of the Indians. Then in the mid-17th century, a severe drought began. Plains Indians began to increase their raids on the settled Pueblo Indians. Apaches were killing Christian Indians. The Pueblos became double victims of the drought and the raiders, but the holy fathers denied them access to their traditional religious appeals to the gods. The Pueblo Indians planned a coordinated revolt against the Spaniards. At one moment all the Pueblos struck, with Zuni and Hopi pueblos following suit. 21 missionaries and 400 colonists were slaughtered at once. By September 1680, all lands north of El Paso were abandoned by the Spaniards. For 13 years the Pueblos were able to live unmolested. In 1693 a new governor, Diego de Vargas surrounded Santa Fe. He pledged to end the abuse by the governors. He then cut off the water supply and regained control of the Pueblos. 70 rebel leaders were executed in December 1693. Santa Fe was Spain's again.

Although resistance continued throughout the 1690's and a second revolt was mounted in 1696, Spain never again lost control of the Rio Grande Valley until Mexico's independence in 1821. The effect on the Indians despite their 12 years of self rule, was devastation. Their total numbers were reduced by 14,000 (Smithsonian, vol.9 p. 186). Many pueblos were abandoned. The factionalism which had been set aside in 1680 became a central divisive force again.

However, the Spanish as well had been affected by the experience of rebellion, and did not reestablish the encomienda system. The power of the Church waned. Further, the need for Indian labor diminished as settlers from northern Mexico moved into the area and began to increase in number. The result of these adjustments was the beginning of Pueblo and Spaniard coexistence. Their mutual acceptance was further aided by the increase in raids from Navajo and Apache, and now Ute and Comanche to the north.

The period from reconquest to the present is a story of adjustment and readjustment between many peoples. During the century and a half between the reconquest of the Pueblos and Mexico's independence from Spain, the Pueblos and Spanish settlers became uneasy allies against the increasing raids by nomadic Indians and competition with the French for control of the eastern portion of Spanish-claimed lands.

In the 16th century the Pueblos had gained valuable resources from the Spanish, principally livestock: cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens and of course, the horse. These as well as the European grains which the Pueblos were cultivating, in addition to corn, made them a lucrative target for the neighboring Apache tribes. Thus the Pueblos continued their close alliance with their hispanic neighbors throughout the balance of Spanish rule.

On August 24, 1821 the Treaty of Córdoba was signed, granting independence to Mexico, and the rights to racial equality, preservation of personal property, and personal rights to the Pueblo Indians. The Hopi Indians had held themselves separate from the Spaniards and were not included in the citizenship. The reality, however, was that laws and regulations did not follow promise, and that officials followed customs. As a result the Pueblos continued to struggle to maintain their land and water rights. The change of power did remove from the Pueblos the necessity of practicing their religious rituals in secret. By the 1830's religious ceremonies, especially dances, were performed publicly.

In 1846, the Mexican War began. President Tyler had annexed Texas in 1845, and in 1846 a border dispute broke out between Texas and New Mexico. Now President Polk used this as an excuse to declare war on New Mexico, in accordance with the expansionist policies of the current administration. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848. The Gadsden Purchase was finalized in 1853, completing the acquisition of the New Mexico and Arizona lands for the United States. As is the case with borders, especially borders which run through the lands of nomadic peoples, this border was arbitrary, and created a barrier where none had existed

for the centuries it took to create so many layered a culture. The nomadic Indians were now legally denied access to their traditional lands. Perhaps more devastating in a longer perspective was the denial of easy access for those people whose roots, ancestry, culture, and heritage had grown without a border and were now dissected by this imaginary and well-enforced line.

To make matters worse, there had developed a clear distinction between the Pueblo Indians and their nomadic counterparts. What the Anglos found were two types of village cultures: one, “an archaic Spanish rural culture heavily overlaid with Indian elements” (Smithsonian p. 209), and the other a Pueblo village culture with substantial influences from the Europeans. It was clear from the beginning that the Pueblos could not be treated as the Plains Indians had been treated. They must be allowed to remain settled as they were, and peaceful. The Spanish land grants to the Pueblos were upheld in 1854, and reaffirmed by the Supreme Court in 1890.

Hopi and Zuni settlements fared slightly worse. The Hopi Reservation was not delineated until 1888, a section being pulled from the Navajo lands for this purpose. The Zuni still today occupy the same lands they have lived on since before Esteban first identified them as the residents of C’bola in 1539. These lands had been recognized, legally granted, at least in part, by the government of Spain in 1689, and again by the government of the United States in 1877. In 1883 the boundaries of Zuni which exist today were established.

The settled agricultural Pueblos offered no threat to the incoming Anglo population. The Apache and Navajo, on the other hand, were seen as the devil incarnate.

As we have stated earlier, the Athapascan Indians arrived in the southwestern United States shortly before the Spaniards. What information we have about them comes to us through Spanish eyes. There are reports of sightings of nomadic Indians from the very beginning of Spanish records. It seems clear that these Indians stayed in or on the periphery of Spanish influence for a long time. Their presence begins to be felt more during the droughts of the mid-17th century. By then the Pueblos’ agriculture had absorbed much of the Spanish contribution. Times were bad.

What we know of the prehistoric Athapascans is that they came from Canada, where their northern linguistic cousins remain. They were extremely mobile, which led them to live in small groups. Like other Indians, the groups were increased by adding sons-in-law to the family. It isn’t clear how or why or when the Athapascans separated into the tribes. There are seven tribes which speak Apache: Chiricahua, Jicarilla, Kiowa-Apache, Lipan, Mescalero, Western Apache, and Navajo. They share a root language, and larger traditions. Their belief in ghosts runs through all groups, and they follow similar styles of pottery. In application they are differentiated.

Over the early years they scattered throughout the region. They all remained nomadic but the Navajo, who began to settle and domesticate in the mid-1800’s. The price for freedom was very high. The Chiricahua in southeastern New Mexico and western Arizona drew the attention of Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico from 1777-1787. He made it a personal goal to subdue them. His attempts were unsuccessful, but probably contributed to the tradition of resistance which we see in the following century.

The first promise of the new government of the United States to the inhabitants of the New Mexico Territories was to protect them from the raids of the Navajo and Apache. As it began it continued. The extension of mining and agriculture further encroached on the liberty of these Indians. In 1848 the California gold rush brought hoards of gold-hungry prospectors through the very lands occupied by the Indians. Prospectors were not concerned with the violation of human or property rights. The tension mounted. The United States built

more forts, more Anglos tried to settle or to pass through the territories, and the Indians, feeling increasingly threatened, became more hostile. The crisis began to come to a head as several Indian leaders from Apache tribes were captured by the U.S. troops. In many cases the captures involved trickery on the part of the captors, specifically the captures of Mangas Coloradas and Cochise of the Chiricanuas. The ethical issues of these captures deeply offended the Indian leaders and inflamed their resistance.

The Chiricahua were the last Apache band to be subdued. From their first contact with whites in the early 16th century until their final defeat in the late 19th century, the Chiricanua resisted with their lives. They observed whites enslaving and slaughtering Indians, deceiving them, breaking agreements, and disrespecting the relationship between humanity and nature. The Apache response to these threats to their existence was a style of warfare impossible for the whites to combat. Raiding and escaping was a very effective method of resistance and survival until the white population became so large that the authorities made Apache control a priority. In 1873 the Chiricahua numbered 1675 (Mails p. 216). In 1886 when Geronimo, the last leader of resistance, was taken into custody 340 Chiricahua had survived. The bloody guerrilla war was over. The remnants of the tribe were shipped to Florida. In 1894 the 296 who had survived were relocated at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where Geronimo died in 1909. Finally in 1913 the Chiricahua, now reduced to 258, were allowed to move to the Mescalero Apache reservation in New Mexico where their lives merged with those of their cousins.

Navajos begin to emerge as a group separate from other Athapascans around the beginning of the 18th century. During the reconquest of the Pueblos in 1692-1696 many Pueblos fled the Spanish rule. They pushed north into the San Juan Valley where the Navajos were living a hunting and gathering life, supplemented by the beginnings of agricultural practice. The Pueblos brought their culture with them, pottery, farming, irrigation, weaving, and joined the Navajos who were skilled among others in self-defense. A cultural and biological hybrid was the result of this union.

As the 18th century progressed, the Utes began raiding the more settled Navajos, in the established pattern of the economy. These raids had several results. The Navajos moved south into lands which were desired by the Spaniards. This brought increased tension between the whites and the Indians. Second, the Navajos shifted their own economy away from planted crops, which are difficult to protect, into herds which are easy to hide in the canyons and arroyos which are the terrain of this land. The third result was an increase in raids by the Navajos. The result of increased raids by the Navajos was increased attention from the military forces of the Southwest. During the Civil War, the New Mexico Territory was the scene of extensive Indian raids.

The United States retaliated with the Navajo War of 1863-1864. Troops led by Kit Carson invaded Navajo lands and destroyed property. By the winter the Navajos were so destitute that they surrendered themselves to the authorities. The people were removed to Bosque Redondo, a reservation prison. It was hoped that they would become self-sufficient farmers there. Circumstances proved otherwise, and it soon became clear to the authorities that they would have to provide continued sustenance to the Navajos. A treaty was signed in 1868 establishing a Navajo reservation in northwestern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona. The area provided was large compared to other Indian grants. It was understood that these people would be self-sufficient as herders as long as there was sufficient land for the herds to prosper. The Navajos numbered around 10,000. Though raids continued for a few years (Bailey and Bailey, p.30), they gradually tapered off, and the Navajos were enabled to begin to live independently on their reservation.

Bailey and Bailey make an eloquent case that the experience of Bosque Redondo provided the energy for a rebirth of the Navajo Nation. They feel the experience of deprivation and of forced relocation had been so

profound that the Navajos determined never again to be at the mercy of outsiders. Certainly the theory lends itself to the reality of the Navajos in the following century. The Navajo Nation is the largest of the Indian Tribes in the United States. It has an elected self government and negotiates with the United States as a separate power. The Navajo have learned how to survive in the white man's world without yielding their cultural core. Two examples spring to mind. One is a political issue between two of the powerful leaders and elected officials of the Navajo Nation, Peter MacDonald and Peterson Zah. They agree on the importance of Navajo self-sufficiency, and they agree in the essential value of maintenance of the ways of the people. However, in the issue of the ecological impact, especially on the families in the area, of the building of a power plant, they differ. Zah feels that the affected families should have the right to decide. MacDonald feels that the benefit to the nation outweighs other considerations. A second example is a quote from Susanne Page's *A Celebration of Being*. "A Navajo tribal official told me once: 'Sure, we want computers. We would like a PC in every hogan. It's just we want those computers programmed to think Navajo.'" (p. 26). Cultural survival was possible through adapting the ways of the outsiders to meet the needs of the people, and to adapt the fulfillment of those needs to the realities of the modern world.

Strategies for Teaching

Our first step in the classroom exploration of the Southwest will be to begin a timeline beginning with 35,000 B.C. On one side of the line will be recorded events in the southwestern United States. Opposite, we will record events, either parallel or contrasting, elsewhere in the world. For each event one card will have a date and a caption; on a second a student will create a small picture.

The first recorded event will be the presence of humans in the Orogrande Cave at the same time that paintings are being made in caves in northern Spain, 35,000 years ago. Consult the appendix for a list of suggested dates to include.

The prehistory of the region will be presented largely visually. The Yale library abounds in books of photographs of the Southwest, and of the Anasazi ruins. Students will first learn about the land, the scene which never changed through the drama of five hundred years. The Holiday Video Library has two films which will be useful; *Ancient Indian Cultures of Northern Arizona* and *The Grand Canyon, Painted Desert and Petrified Forest*. Students will see the vastness of the land, the waterless earth, and the relentless canyon and mesa terrain. After we have feasted on the wonder of the Anasazi ruins, we will begin to read about Indian spirituality. We will read stories from the many collections of Indian legends, particularly stories of origin, and of the gods. Once we have achieved an appreciation of this Indian core, we will design religious or spiritual Indian motifs, and transfer them into sand paintings, using colored chalk and salt for our sand.

Wonderful literature exists about Indian people. Throughout the chronology of the unit, novels set in the relevant period will be recommended. Early, I will use *A Thief of Time* by Tony Hillerman, which deals with the theft of archeological remains from Anasazi ruins on the Navajo reservation. A second book at this point is *Sing for a Gentle Rain* by J. Allison James. This is a story of a teenager in Utah who is called through time to help an Anasazi village prepare to relocate.

We will then turn our attention to the Spaniards. There will be no shortage of materials of the Conquistadors and what they found in Meso-America. A children's abridgement of Castañeda's account of Coronado's exploration will be read. The novels of Tom Bea, particularly *The Hands of Cantú* give an accurate picture of the perceptions of the time. We will use maps to chart the travels of the several Spanish explorers. Excerpts from many of the sources listed for adults can be used by students. Paul Horgan's prose is particularly descriptive. It will be interesting at this point to cook some food authentic to the time as well as the region.

Hopi Cookery has some recipes for foods which are probably unchanged since the time of Columbus. Others use ingredients such as mutton or pork.

There are several movies which deal with the relationships between Indians and whites. One, *The Mission*, is the story of Indians in the rain forests of South America who were brought into missions by the Jesuits. When the Jesuits were expelled from the New World in 1764, the Indians of the mission were abandoned to Portuguese slavers. Though it takes place far to the south of our focus, it clearly depicts the destruction of Indian ways which came with the Europeans. Other films of North American Indians worth considering are *Dances with Wolves* about the Lakota Sioux, *When the Legends Die*, about a Ute boy growing up to understand the importance of learning and continuing the culture, *I Will Fight No More Forever*, an account of the campaign against the last of the Nez Perce Indians and the surrender of Chief Joseph in 1877, and *The End of the Indian*, a 1926 film about the last days of California Indians. Early 20th century Navajo life is well-chronicled in the novels of Oliver La Farge, *Laughing Boy*, and Laura Adams Armer, *Waterless Mountain* and *Dark Circle of Branches*. *Ramona* by Helen Hunt Jackson is the story of a California Indian girl caught in the void between two cultures.

Another ongoing activity, like the timeline, will be Renaming, a compilation of words exchanged from one language and culture to another. Many words about Indians crept into our vocabulary from Spanish, beginning with the words adobe, pueblo, and Indian. In his book, *Cycles of Conquest* on page 23, Spicer includes a list of the original names for the several Indian tribes. The Rio Grande herself has a series of names from Indians and from Spaniards as they approach the realization that they are speaking of the same river. Parallel with the idea of language being applied across boundaries is the concept of ideas and technology spreading from one culture to its parallel. Irrigation, agriculture, and animal husbandry, the *compania volante* (hit and run warfare), architecture, religion, and art all were influenced by the exchange of the cultures of these people who lived separately together.

As concluding activities students will demonstrate their understanding of the truth of two opposite statements, the universality of the human experience, and the uniqueness of the Indian in North American history. I would like to see projects such as a comparison between Geronimo and Cechise on the one hand and Nat Turner on the other. I would like a student to write a journal of a fictional Spanish explorer and a second journal of an Indian who is his contemporary. A comparison of the reactions of the Pueblos, Zuni, Apaches and Navajos can provide an interesting analysis of the relative merits of cooperation, separatism, violence, and constant adaptation. How do these methods of survival relate to the experiences of middle school students in the inner city of America? Who wins?

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TIMELINE

(figure available in print form)

Acquisition of Southwestern Lands by the United States

(figure available in print form)

Approximate locations of Precolombian Anasazi Cultural Areas

(figure available in print form)

Approximate Locations of Modern Indian Reservations in the Southwestern United States.

(figure available in print form)

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