

**Purgatorio, Purgatoire, or Picketwire: Negotiating Local, National, and Transnational Identities along the Purgatoire River in Nineteenth-Century Colorado**

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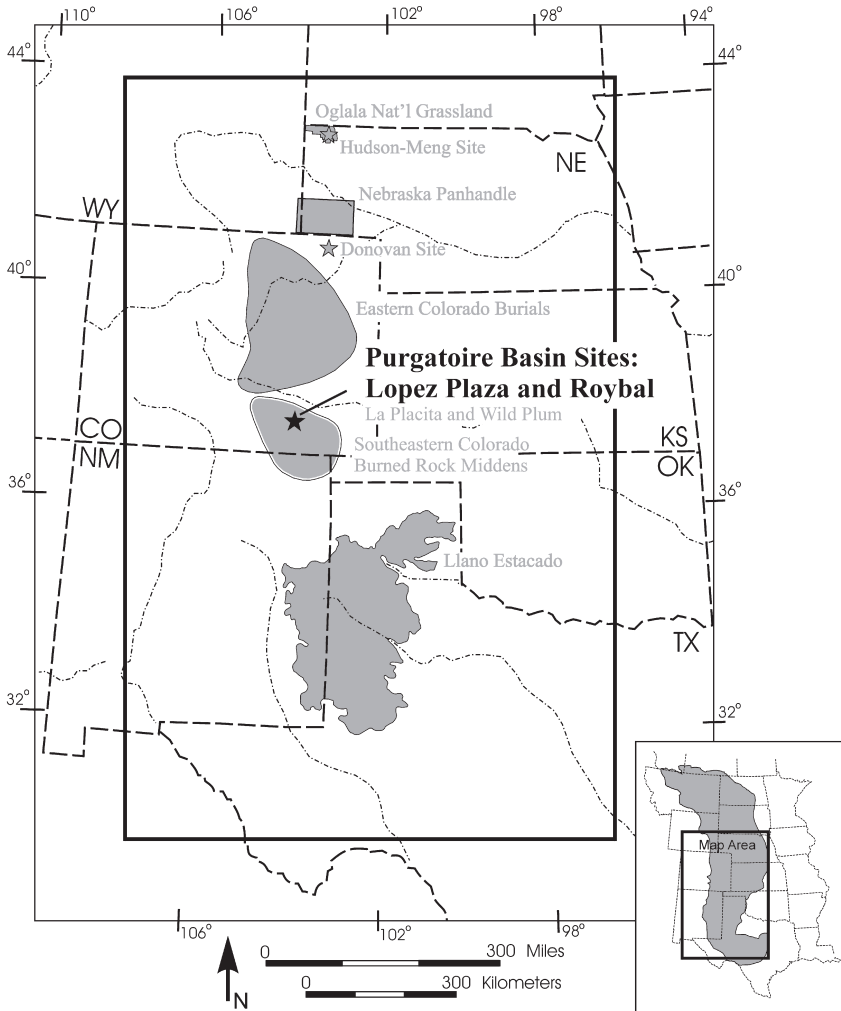
IN THE INTRODUCTION to their book *Archaeologies of Landscape*, A. Bernard Knapp and Wendy Ashmore (1999) divide the assembled authors' treatments of landscape into four themes: "landscape as memory, landscape as identity, landscape as social order, and landscape as transformation." These themes refer to the ways people conceptualize, perceive, and shape landscapes and how landscapes, in turn, shape human behavior. The themes are defined without reference to what some have considered in many cases false dichotomies of "natural" versus "cultural" landscapes or implicitly hierarchical core versus peripheral or frontier areas; the editors instead refer to heterarchically "nested" or linked spaces, the cultural meanings of which change, coexist, and overlap (Knapp and Ashmore 1999). In their examples, conceptual and spatial linkages connect architecture and land within specifically ritual places, but I contend here that such nested spaces can also be conceptualized in mundane

spaces shaped by daily practice and in scalar terms ranging from nation and region to homestead, campsite, and field.

In the Anglo/Hispano borderlands of southern Colorado, national affiliations and boundaries as well as local use of space have long been, and still are, linked in processes of contestation and negotiation of identities and multiple senses of place. Choices and uses of material culture are linked in much the same way (Clark 2005; Deutsch 1987). The sites discussed here are located along a tributary of the Arkansas River, an area that was for generations a region of contested and changing international borders (Figure 7.1). The creation of homelands of memory, identity, social order, and transformation is ongoing in this area and arguably, given the abundance and variety of rock art, dates back to at least the Archaic period. I will focus here, however, on the nineteenth century. International rivalries in this era were very dynamic, and Michael Kearney has noted that people in such situations “create transnational spaces that may have the potential to liberate nationals within them,” to a degree, from strong state controls (Kearney 1995:553). This contrasts strongly with older frontier and core/periphery models, where strong state controls were assumed, and is more in line with current models, which account for more variability (e.g., Hall 2000; Limerick 1987, 1996).

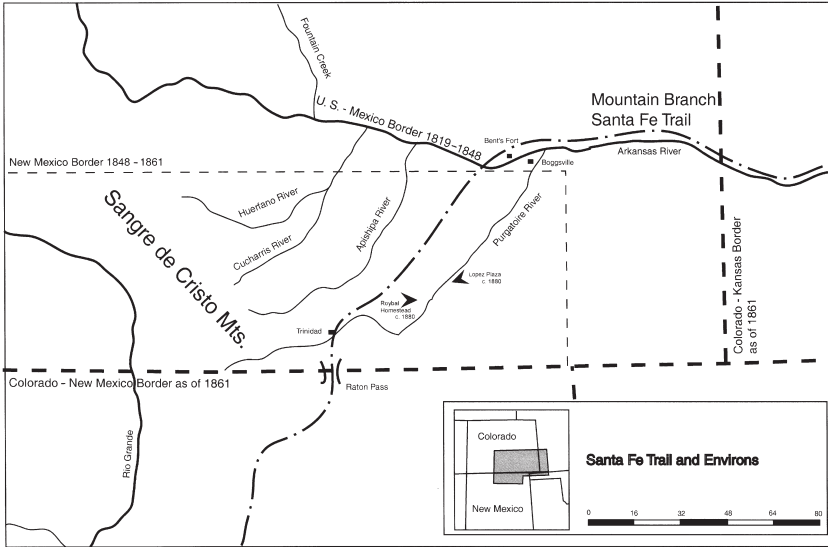
For purposes of this chapter, although I do refer to this region’s status within larger structures of nationalism and power, I am more interested in examining particular case studies that show how these larger processes played out during this dynamic period among actors on the ground, along the Purgatoire River. Cristina Blanc and her colleagues noted that “individuals and groups renegotiate and contest their positions and identities within these transformed but still inherently hierarchical discourses of power. . . . [N]ewly created transnational spaces are sites at which new and multiple identities are fashioned and a variety of old and new forms of power or domination exercised” (Blanc, Basch, and Schiller 1995:684). Here I will present a regional case study of such processes using, primarily, two archaeological sites situated in southeastern Colorado, broader observations on archaeological settlement patterns, and documents generated by site occupants that allow us some access to their perspectives on these changes.

While I do not go into twenty-first-century local or national politics in any depth, the importance of understanding these processes in the nineteenth century has implications for current debates ranging from “English only” educational initiatives and immigration reform, to lawsuits over Mexican-period land grants (Stoller 1997), to a military proposal to displace local ranchers by means of sale and eminent domain. Understanding the past in this area



**FIGURE 7.1.**  
*Map of the High Plains, highlighting sites discussed in this chapter. Illustration by Kevin Gilmore.*

has impacts on the present. Along the Purgatoire River in southern Colorado, negotiations of identity and corollary creation of spaces happened at scales ranging from international disputes over national borders to the way groups and individuals negotiated fluid individual identities within changing contexts. These political situations, both local and national, demonstrate that such negotiations are ongoing.



**FIGURE 7.2.**  
*Map of internationally contested region of southeastern Colorado.*

For the most part, scholarly discussion of transnational strategies and processes has pertained primarily to the present or the very recent past and has applied to immigrant enclaves within modern nations. In this case study, analysis of the flexible strategies and fluid identities people use to cope within transnational settings begins long before the present, and this discussion focuses on the nineteenth century. Furthermore, the New Mexican settlers in the borderlands were not an immigrant enclave; they stayed on their lands along tributaries of the Arkansas River as national boundaries shifted around their settlements. The term “borderlands” has long referred to the U.S./Mexican region of mutual cultural influence in the Southwest, but it applies even more specifically to this area of southern Colorado where several nations contested boundaries, drawing and redrawing lines on maps throughout the nineteenth century (Figure 7.2). On the local scale, fluidity of identity and flexibility in economic and social strategies were as key to cultural survival in such a transnational borderland then as they are today.

Geographers have used toponyms to illustrate the complexity of how different groups seek to define such contested spaces (Wood and Fels 1992). All the areas discussed in this chapter lie along a river that was variously called El

Rio de las Animas Perdidas en Purgatorio by Spanish explorers, La Purgatoire by French traders, and the Picketwire by Anglo ranchers who could not wrap their tongues around the correct French pronunciation. By the early nineteenth century, the region was already an internationally claimed and contested nexus of international trade between Chihuahua and St. Louis. The area south of the Arkansas River was variously claimed by French Louisiana (by 1810), Spain (by 1820), Mexico (by 1830), and Texas (by 1840) before annexation by the United States in 1848 (Beck and Haase 1989). The Spanish-speaking settlers of New Mexico and southern Colorado did not have to move across a national border to leave Mexico and arrive in the United States in 1848, after the Mexican-American War. The United States came to them. Many of them had antecedents in the area reaching back hundreds of years. The periodic redrawing of international borders around these settlers must have been disconcerting and at times called for relatively swift renegotiations of personal and public identities, sometimes within the span of a single generation. Documentary, settlement, and material culture changes attest to these renegotiations in ways to which archaeologists have particular access, as they are not confined to only one or two of these data sets.

Given relatively stationary settlers in a landscape of shifting state sovereignty, a change in analytical structure from a “two-dimensional Euclidian space with its centers and peripheries and sharp boundaries, to a multidimensional global space with unbounded, often discontinuous and interpenetrating sub-spaces” (Kearney 1995:549) makes sense and answers Ashmore and Knapp’s call for refiguring our analysis of landscape. It is not only how we as researchers need to approach these regions, it is also probably closer to the ways nineteenth-century occupants themselves saw these spaces: as shifting and contingent. This shift in our conceptualization of historical spaces is not congruent with either traditional “melting pot,” assimilation-based histories or popular Anglo-American “western frontier” narratives, imbued as they are with imperialist notions of linear progress and clearly bounded, defined, and—when necessary—defended or expansionary nation-states. Nor does it adopt the overarching perspective of core/periphery models as the context for people’s decision making on the ground and in the moment, focusing instead on local contingencies of identity building and cultural transformations, which often go unrecognized, yet are inextricably built into larger-scale political and economic processes (Comer 1996).

A look at interpenetrating national spaces and transnational identities has caused researchers to differentiate between legal citizenship—as a function of birth within a country—and what Blanc and her colleagues (1995:685) call

“cultural citizenship.” Locals living along the Purgatoire River in the late nineteenth century made this distinction as well, and it is still not uncommon for Spanish-speaking New Mexicans to refer to their Anglo neighbors as *Americanos* even though they and their ancestors have been American citizens since the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, and many have lived in the area much longer than that. Clearly, legal citizenship in the United States and cultural citizenship as a Spanish American in this transnational setting are not congruent in people’s minds to this day. Currently, terms of identity such as Latino, Hispano, Hispanic, Chicano, *mestizo*, and Spanish American are all available to Spanish-speaking residents of southern Colorado. All of these terms refer to American citizens. All have implications for ethnicity, nationality, class, race, and cultural identity. All have made accommodations in terms of settlement and material culture, negative and positive, to the dominant Anglo-American economy and political system. Yet all are set in contrast to “Americano” or “Anglo,” the latter an enormously broad term referring to anyone not of Native American or Spanish descent, or both.

Archaeologists often only have access to remnant cultural landscapes, unrepresentative artifact samples, and, if they are lucky, an incomplete selection of documents. Such is certainly the case for the sites I will use as examples here: the Lopez family Plaza settlement, the Roybal family homestead, and various structures of undocumented origin—some of which would have belonged to more transient groups that contemporaries termed squatters. Since the artifact analysis for the Lopez Plaza is incomplete and this is a volume emphasizing archaeological interpretations of landscape, I will focus more on geography, constructed spaces, and architecture than on excavation and artifacts. The challenge at such sites lies in finding ways to incorporate site occupants’ cross-cutting and often fluid senses of identity into our understandings of landscape remnants and our interpretations of dynamic culture change in the past, including material culture when our analysis is complete.

In nineteenth-century southeastern Colorado, census records show that Hispano settlers with origins in New Mexico made up 90 percent of the people in the Purgatoire Valley, an area today located within the United States Forest Service’s Comanche National Grassland and the United States Army’s Pinon Canyon Maneuver Site (Colorado State Census 1885; Colorado Territorial Census 1870). Unfortunately, census data can be a relatively blunt tool when one hopes to dissect the nuanced ways class, race, and national identities were constructed and intertwined within a population of settlers who were often simply labeled white (Colorado Territorial Census 1870) or “Mexican” (Colorado State Census 1885) by nineteenth-century census takers. The changing ter-

minology is in itself telling. The categories confuse nationality and “cultural citizenship” (as well as race) in just the ways Cristina Blanc and her colleagues suggest (1995).

To the descendants of many of these early settlers, the fact that Anglo census takers from the 1880s onward failed to make a distinction between “Spanish American” and “Mexican” indicated a clear failure to recognize what were to them clear differences of national heritage, race (as constructed in the nineteenth century), and class. Many families in southern Colorado and New Mexico still associate Spanish American identity with pure European bloodlines (including Spanish and in some cases French and Irish) and socioeconomic respectability. In contrast, other families and individuals embraced then and now the term “Mexican,” an identity that acknowledges Indian heritage and *mestizo* bloodlines. Distinctions of nation, race, and class run to some degree in tandem; are fluid, flexible, and intersecting identities; and are tied to and inscribed upon the landscape in ways archaeologists can discern only if we take into account all of these factors in this particular transnational context.

#### **NATIONAL SCALE—LANDSCAPES OF MEMORY AND IDENTITY**

The Lopez family Plaza in the Purgatoire Valley landscape is one site where such national and local conceptions of space intersected in the nineteenth century. In a letter to her sister, Manuela Lopez Merez (Mela for short), who grew up on this site, explained her version of the history of settlement in New Mexico and Colorado since Mexican independence in 1821: “Quite a number of Spaniards left Mexico and called themselves ‘Los Dragones.’ They had some trouble with Mexicans (mostly of Indian blood), and being on the losing side (when Mexico declared its independence from Spain) left those parts and came north to later New Mexico” (Hudson 1987b:98).

Bonnie Clark (2005:441) has noted that archaeologists have “slighted nationality and citizenship positions” in active constructions of ethnicity. In Mela’s version of events, those who migrated north into New Mexico did so as an explicit rejection of Mexican national and also *mestizo* heritage. Mela illustrates the preference, common among some descendants of the region’s early Hispano settlers, for “Spanish American” as an ethnic descriptor in explicit opposition to Mexican American or Chicano, the latter of which explicitly embraces both Mexican nationality and *mestizo* heritage. Several local Hispano historians from other parts of southern Colorado have made this distinction as well, for example, describing people as “descendents of conquistadores and seventeenth century Spanish Colonists” who participated in the “transplanting

of old Spain into the San Luis Valley” (Lopez-Tushar 1992:1; see also Romero 1981). As Bonifacio Lopez (2002:36) stated in his memoirs: “For some of us, accepting the fact that we may have some Native American blood coursing through our veins is a problem that we typically cannot face. We can bring ourselves to say *Nosotros Mexicanos*. But, when speaking in English, many will still call ourselves Spanish-American.”

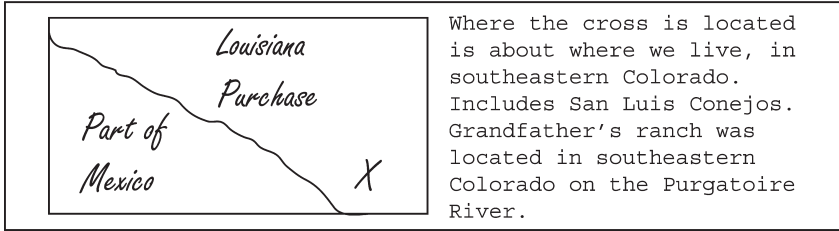
Lopez notes people’s willingness to use “Mexican” (in the sense of “cultural citizenship”) among themselves but their desire to emphasize more of a European heritage to outsiders. This attitude is changing somewhat, but with a few exceptions such chroniclers do not address the long history of frequent and well-documented instances of intermarriage with, or capture by and of, Native Americans in Old Mexico or New, despite hundreds of years of coexistence (Brooks 2002). Although it is possible that those families who have lived in the U.S. borderlands for over 350 years, and before that in New Spain, are of pure European descent, odds are heavily against it.

Spanish Americans emphasize their European ancestry, including Spanish and French as well as occasionally Irish and English. Intermarriages between French traders and the daughters of trading families in New Mexico were common and were facilitated by their common Catholic faith (Craver 1982). The same would have been true in the case of many Irish suitors. In their memoirs, Mela’s siblings Julia Lopez Hudson and Elfido Lopez take pains to note their mother’s French roots, evidenced by her maiden name, which appears variously as “de Arce,” “de Arcia,” and “DeArce.” Like Mela, Julia does not mention any Native American family ties (Hudson 1987a; Loudon 1998 [1937]), although their brother Elfido, seventeen years Julia’s senior, does. She does emphasize that their mother, Loretta, came from some wealth in the past, that their father, Damacio’s, parents were Miguel Lopez and Antonia Lujan, and that “both were from respectable families living near Española and Santa Cruz [New Mexico].” Julia continued, “As mother told me many times: we should be proud of our ancestry: French and Spanish on our mother’s side; Scotch and English on our father’s side” (Hudson 1987a:36). The Scottish and English heritages were presumably at least one more generation removed, given the surnames of Damacio’s parents, although it is also true that during the early nineteenth century it was customary to Hispanicize foreign surnames (Usner 1995).

Mela’s preference for things French, Spanish, and British over things Mexican and Indian is illustrated in a more concrete manner in the letter quoted earlier. In fact, Mela writes her anti-Mexican sentiment onto the very landscape of her family homesite along the Purgatoire when she goes to some length to assert that the land her father, Damacio Lopez, settled was never



"...we were not born on any land that ever belonged to Mexico..."



**FIGURE 7.3.**  
*Redrawn from map and accompanying text included in a letter from Manuela Lopez to Julia Lopez Hudson (Hudson 1987b:98).*

part of Mexico—claiming this despite the homestead's location south of the Arkansas River, which was generally acknowledged as the legal border between Mexico and the United States from 1821 until 1848. She claims instead that her parents homesteaded in what had been French Louisiana. The fact that the land had been part of Louisiana for a time is true. The fact that it was never part of Mexico is not. This territory had not been in the hands of French Louisiana since 1803 and was only Louisiana Territory for a short time between 1805 and 1819, at which time it became Mexico's by the terms of the Adams Onís Treaty (Beck and Haase 1989). One might argue that Mela's assertion is a matter of emphasis, given the competing and confusing national claims at various junctures by Texas, France, Spain, and the United States, as well as Mexico. But Mela chose to emphasize a vision of her family's land as part of Spain and French Louisiana, ignoring two and a half decades of actual Mexican sovereignty. She included in her letter her map of the Lopezes' Purgatoire Plaza homesite (marked with an X), which illustrates her particular vision of her heritage and family homeland (Hudson 1987b:98) (Figure 7.3).

Mela had reason to be familiar with the power that lines on maps have to transform landscapes and homelands from someplace legally belonging to long-term Hispano owners to someplace belonging to someone else. Such historical interpretations and designations on maps were then, and continue to be, important. Lawyers, legislators, surveyors, and cartographers could and did reallocate homelands with the stroke of a pen. Competing Colorado land claims based on such cartography are in the courts to this day (e.g., the Taylor Ranch lawsuit in Costilla County, settled in 2002). Many Hispanos had been

in what is now New Mexico for hundreds of years before agents of the United States government redrew the boundaries around their land grants and villages into neater rectangular forms and, through legal maneuvering, transformed long-term and legal (under Spanish and Mexican law) Hispano settlers into squatters and poachers (Ebright 1987; Rosenbaum and Larson 1987). No doubt taking that lesson from the past, Mela chose to use the power of maps to emphasize her claims to the landscape, to emphasize her family's Spanish heritage (not coincidentally a heritage with higher status according to wider Anglo society), and to deny any family ties to the Mexican nation. As Bonifacio Lopez noted, Mela was by no means alone in such assertions. Olibama Lopez-Tushar, in her book on people of the high mountain valley to the west of the Purgatoire, across the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, characterized settlement there as a "transplanting of old Spain into the San Luis Valley" (Lopez-Tushar 1992:1).

While we can use archaeological settlement patterning and cultural geography to demonstrate the Hispanic presence in the borderlands with great time depth, what that settlement meant to the settlers and how it was reconceptualized by their descendants are archivally available. Such context helps us interpret the changing numbers and patterning of commercial goods along with locally produced ones at homesites like the Lopez Plaza and the Roybal Homestead. In turn, we will be able to compare material culture sites like these with both earlier sites and those occupied by people of less economic means.

However, high status was never determined exclusively through material wealth. Historian John R. Chávez (1984) has posited that the "Spanish American" identity common to families of substance in the Southwest borderlands was created in the twentieth century by longer-term residents to differentiate themselves from Mexicans who immigrated during the Bracero Program in the 1940s and were often portrayed in an unflattering light by contemporary Anglos. The Lopez family stories illustrate that the roots of this European-oriented identity and the attendant anti-Mexican feeling were important much earlier, even if the term "Spanish American" is more recent. A caste system emphasizing purity of bloodlines has a long history in Latin America, and claims of pure European descent were always somewhat flexible and roughly aligned with class ambitions. During the earliest years of New Spain, having noble Indian blood was also an avenue to elite status. But by the nineteenth century, romanticized notions of a noble Spanish aristocracy, explicitly contrasted with people of mixed heritage and therefore lesser virtue, were already common in popular literature and were exemplified by the characters in the

widely popular novel *Ramona* (Jackson 1919 [1884]). In one of Julia Lopez's letters, she tells her son, "[Y]ou may be interested in one of my old books, *Ramona*, by Helen Hunt Jackson. . . . Those leading characters are very much like the Spanish of my parents [sic] time, except they had the friendship of the Indians. Ours didn't" (Hudson 1987b:75).

Individual flexibility when choosing to emphasize one part of cultural heritage over another is illustrated well by the eldest Lopez sibling, Elfido. Elfido presents an account of family ancestry different from that described by his younger sisters Mela and Julia, who were among the last born. Specifically, Elfido mentions that their maternal grandmother might have had "some Indian blood" (Louden 1998 [1937]:24). But clearly, there were times and places where blood ties to surrounding Native peoples could be perceived as more or less of a liability. During Elfido's childhood, while his parents were still struggling up the social ladder and one of his playmates was a Ute boy, perhaps it seemed less of one (Hudson 1987a; Louden 1998 [1937]). Fifteen years later, when his younger sisters were growing up, the Indian Wars were over, and their father, Damacio, had become "Don Damacio," it was more of one. Furthermore, Hispanos who had been listed as "white" by Anglo census takers in the 1870s were by the 1880s listed as "Mexican," so emphasizing European heritage and identity was a strategy to combat externally imposed and negatively perceived definitions of nationality and identity (Colorado State Census 1885; Colorado Territorial Census 1870).

While Elfido's memoirs focus on work, both income-generating and nonpaying, from age six, Julia Lopez Hudson remembers a more Victorian-influenced childhood, playing with her sister using dolls and more traditional and commercially available toys (Hudson 1987a). Some artifacts from the site analyzed to date relate directly and indirectly to children, most obviously including porcelain doll parts. A partial bisque figurine of an eighteenth-century gentleman in a frock coat demonstrates the kind of edifying Victorian knickknacks that adorned the house. There are also more ambiguous potential playthings, such as a number of pairs of spent cartridge casings hammered together with small bits of paper inside. It is well documented that children will play with whatever is available, and Julia's brothers may have had more access to these latter items, as she notes significant gendered segregation of space. Starting with childhood activities, such identity transformations clearly had concrete implications in terms of class-aligned behavior. In the history of New Mexico and Colorado, "Spanish Americans" were the descendants of those in New Mexican society who had let U.S. troops march into Santa Fe in 1848 with virtually no resistance; many upper-class or upwardly mobile families involved in the Santa Fe

trade felt they would benefit from liberalization of that trade under U.S. rule. Uprisings such as that in Taos, where locals killed the U.S. territorial governor Charles Bent, were generally led by Native Americans and *mestizos* who were not direct beneficiaries of the trade and who felt they suffered from the change in jurisdiction.

### REGIONAL SCALE—LANDSCAPES OF TRANSFORMATION

Wealthy families in Bernalillo, Santa Fe, and Taos wanted the United States government to liberalize commerce along the Santa Fe Trail. This commerce, which stretched at various times from St. Louis to Chihuahua and beyond, forms the economic backdrop to the human history and transnational context of southeastern Colorado. Late-nineteenth-century politicians in the United States, influenced by captains of commerce and industry, were implementing laissez-faire economic policies beneficial to trader and merchant elites. Hispano merchant elites in Taos and Bernalillo wanted to take advantage of the new rules. Information on these regional connections is archaeologically accessible by looking at available goods through time, as well as settlement decisions.

Changing international boundaries, regional trade, and local strategic advantage within the trade system influenced settlers beginning to occupy plazas and ranchos along the Purgatoire River in southern Colorado in the late 1860s and 1870s. After Mexican independence and the subsequent Mexican-American War, the New Mexico commercial center of the Santa Fe trade shifted from the south around Bernalillo, New Mexico, where the Lopezes' maternal grandparents had lived, to the mountain route of the Santa Fe Trail along the Purgatoire River, where the Lopez family later came to settle in the 1870s. This shift of the nexus of international trade was accompanied by a shift of Hispano settlement in general to the north, the archaeological remains of which are still seen along the Purgatoire River.

Juan Córdova led the New Mexican settlements along the Purgatoire in the late 1860s, convincing families such as the Sandovals and the Lopezes to settle there as well. Many of the men had worked as freighters on the Santa Fe Trail. They were there under U.S. law, but the pattern of a Patrón leading communal extended-family settlements into northern valleys was hundreds of years old in both Old and New Mexico. One local historian who was along the Purgatoire in the early twentieth century observed twenty-eight such plaza settlements still occupied at that time by extended families, as well as a number of abandoned ones (Smith 1930). These plazas, many of which can still be seen today, are a patterned human response seen at a regional scale as peo-

ple chose strategies of settlement to adapt to the shift from Mexican to U.S. rule and the shifting focus of trade from Chihuahua to St. Louis. In short, as commercial opportunity shifted north and east, so did Hispano settlement. Archaeologically speaking, their mode of settlement differed visibly from that of their Anglo neighbors and traders. There is no mistaking an extended-family plaza settlement for the typical single-occupancy Anglo homestead of that period. However, their move to this area illustrates in archaeologically available physical terms this transnational community's geographic adaptation to the new U.S. liberal economy.

## LOCAL SCALE—LANDSCAPES OF TRANSFORMATION AND SOCIAL ORDER

### Plazas and Patronos

In moving to the Purgatoire Valley, families like the Lopezes had to adapt to U.S. policies concerning land title and distribution under the Homestead Act of 1862. Yet the architectural and domestic spaces the Lopez family created on their homesite were similar to those in other Hispanic plaza settlements found in New Mexico and Colorado and settled under Spanish or Mexican land law (Church 2002; Clark 2003, 2005, and this volume). The settlers along the Purgatoire constructed and inhabited plazas that deviated greatly from the strict legal criteria set out by the Homestead Act, which was geared more toward individual family domiciles on formally patented acreage. Extended-family groups inhabited these plazas. The differences are observable archaeologically. The structures consist of adjoining adobe or stone-built rooms organized around a courtyard, sometimes incorporating an adobe house just off the courtyard group.

The archaeological site of the Lopez home consisted of several adobe buildings and livestock pens surrounding a defensible courtyard (Figure 7.4). Families like the Lopezes were using the flexibility of their position within the Hispano borderlands, at the faded edges of enforceable U.S. policy, to occupy land and build homes in a traditional New Mexican style that in some ways ran directly counter to the spirit of the Homestead Act (Church 2002). At the same time, they were taking advantage of economic opportunities made available by the liberalizing economy under U.S. law. We can see these negotiations in the archaeological record (Church 2002).

Even while rejecting U.S. land law in favor of familiar and comfortable spaces, the Lopez family did make compromises and changes at the intimate scale of domestic and work space to take advantage of opportunities for social

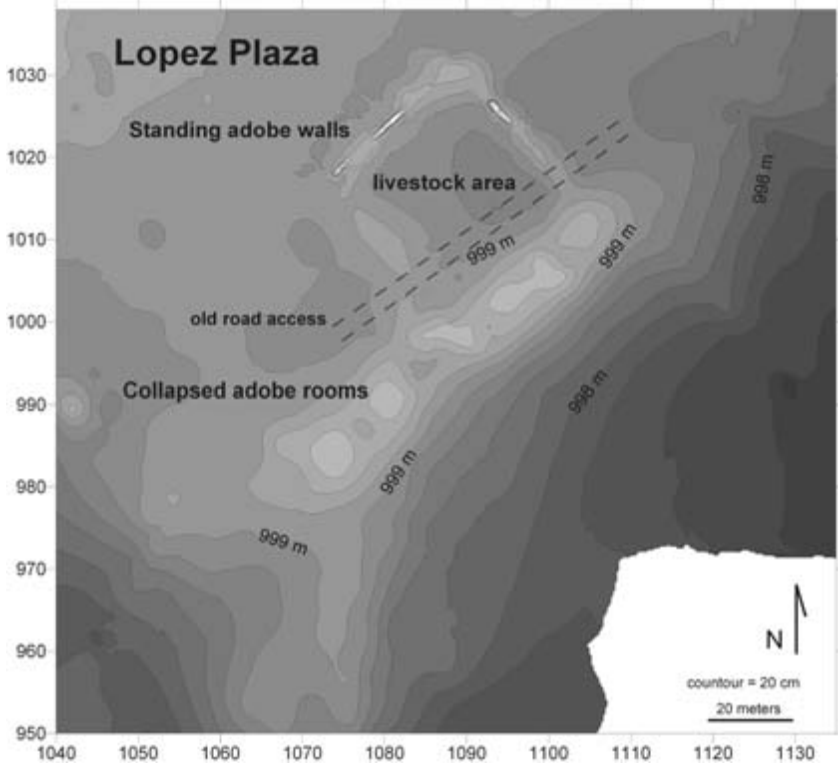


FIGURE 7.4.  
*Topographic map of the Lopez Plaza site.*

and economic advances within the changing economic context. Around their traditional Hispano plaza they built a tidy cattle business, acquiring “large herds of cattle as well as fine horses for ranch and farm work” (Hudson 1987a:51). The growing business venture kept Damacio Lopez busy “constructing new stables and other outbuildings, repairing irrigation ditches, managing the ranch hands and two Indians [Taos Pueblo] who farmed [the Lopezes’] fields of grain and tended [their] vegetable garden and small orchard, making infrequent but long trips to Trinidad, and driving his well-fed cattle to railheads at La Junta and Las Animas” to be shipped “to Kansas City, Chicago, and other Midwestern Cities” (Hudson 1987a:51–52) (Figure 7.5). The majority of architectural space on the Lopez site was dedicated to livestock, and the largest proportion of metal artifacts analyzed so far comes from fencing, including fencing staples, fencing nails, and wire.



**FIGURE 7.5.**  
*Enclosed corral area of Lopez Plaza.*

Damacio also took on the operation of a general store and post office and donated land and funds to build a school, church, and cemetery (Figures 7.6, 7.7). Damacio thus parlayed his economic success in the U.S. *laissez-faire* capitalist economy into an elevated social standing in Hispano cultural terms, becoming a *Patrón*, or “Don” in the traditional sense, and he was referred to by other settlers as Don Damacio at this stage in his life. He was also progressive in the Anglo-Victorian sense of the term. His patronage of the school provided his younger children with the kind of educational opportunities he and Loretta felt would be critical to their success in the increasingly economically liberal, capitalist-driven Anglo world into which they were born.

This was not the only choice available. Ninety percent of the Lopezes’ neighbors were also Hispanic, and Hispanics elsewhere in the nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century New Mexico/Colorado borderlands debated the comparative value of traditional Catholic education, often conducted in Spanish, versus secular education, which was always conducted in English (Usner 1995). Don Damacio and Doña Loretta’s decision to provide a schoolhouse on their land where both their children and those of neighboring Anglo and Hispanic ranchers could get a secular education in English as early as the 1880s is indicative of the Lopezes’ upward social mobility, flexibility of tradition and identity, and concomitant ambitions for their children.



**FIGURE 7.6.**  
*Church built by Don Damacio Lopez.*

Perhaps even more striking than their decision to abandon traditional Catholic education is that these ambitions were not confined to the Lopez sons. Unlike their unschooled mother, the Lopez daughters went to school alongside the boys, and all the books Julia remembers reading at home were within the Anglo-Victorian literary tradition, including *Ramona* (Hudson 1987a). Artifacts on the site include fifteen whole and fragmented slate pencils, and school census documents show all the Lopez children attending the school their father built, albeit Elfido only briefly (Las Animas County School Census 1880–1900). However, although the Lopez daughters may have been the first generation of girls educated in the family, upper-class Hispano gender norms and Anglo-Victorian ideals about separate domestic and work spheres were complementary and are reflected in the spatial layout of the Lopez Plaza. Corrals and agricultural work areas—venues for men’s work—were set apart from the house where the girls spent most of their time, according to Julia’s memoirs (Figures 7.8, 7.9). Virtually all the clearly gender-marked artifacts for women—including a Spanish-style decorative hair comb, glass beads, doll fragments, straight pins, a sewing machine leg, and a baby spoon—came from





FIGURE 7.7.  
*Lopes [Lopez] headstone at the church.*

within the house foundation or the midden, created for post-flood cleanup. The Lopez parents wanted to prepare their children for life in the Anglo-American economy and social context, but in doing so they adhered to tradition wherever Anglo and Hispano ideals ran parallel.



**FIGURE 7.8.**  
*Woman's hair comb from domestic  
 area of Lopez Plaza excavation.*

When all the children had grown and left home, Damacio and Loretta left their ranch but retained the land. The landscape comes up over and over in primary documents by Hispanos describing their attachment to place and to the past even after they have moved elsewhere. Rafael Chacón, a settler in southeastern Colorado in the 1890s, described the land thus: “The work was hard, the results uncertain, but men are no more uncertain or less hard, for the land at least is thankful like a common mother of all of us” (quoted in Meketa 1986:333). According to the Lopezes’ daughter Julia, her parents’ 1902 move to Rocky Ford, Colorado, after over thirty years of ranching was timed concurrently with seeing their children independently set up in homes of their own (although she also mentioned the crises of repeated droughts). She wrote, “He and my mother had a sentimental feeling for the land where they started from scratch, and built a small empire” (Hudson 1987a:66). This sentiment is pure Victorian “Horatio Alger,” but with a culturally Hispanic twist. Evidence of



**FIGURE 7.9.**  
*Woman's makeup pencil from domestic  
area of Lopez Plaza excavation.*

their “small empire” remains in the assortment of foundations and walls on what was their land along the Purgatoire River. The specific buildings, as well as their spatial layout and material culture, are testament to Damacio’s negotiation of traditional New Mexican–style and upper-class Patrón status within the increasingly dominant Anglo-American economic order.

### **Settlers without Documented Title (“Squatters”)**

Not all New Mexican families who settled in southern Colorado had the same sense of place, class, and ethnic identities as the Lopez family did, however, and the landscape and archaeology along the Purgatoire and its tributaries reflect other modes of settlement and negotiation that were also choices available within the nineteenth-century transnational borderlands setting. On Lopez lands, besides the plaza proper, there are scattered isolated domestic structures in the valley and alongside drainages for which we have no records of patent, tax, or sale. The occupation dates of these structures suggested by recorded artifacts do not match dates of documented landownership (Carrillo et al. 2003). These sites may reflect Don Damacio’s role as Patrón just as much as the foundations of his plaza and adobe house do, but they also represent the ways economically disadvantaged groups moved to better their lot. Damacio’s great-grandson Paul wrote, “At infrequent intervals of time squatters would trespass on grandfather’s land and ‘settle’ on it. Grandfather would notify them

that they were trespassing but explained that they could stay, at least temporarily, provided they would help with the farm and garden work” (Hudson 1987a:65). His mother noted, “Papa was glad when the squatters moved in. They didn’t pay rent, or taxes, but did build their one-room houses on the banks of the Purgatoire River—on Papa’s land—and raised chickens, a cow or two, and found employment with the ranch owners. My parents were glad to get them to do the many chores in the fields, and help Mama with the numerous household duties” (Hudson 1987a:65). Thus Don Damacio and Doña Loretta, a couple who reportedly arrived in the valley with no more than a cartload of goods (much of which was lost in the river in transit), by the 1890s had servants of a sort, just as the trading households of Taos and Bernalillo did. The fact that these squatters did work in “the fields” is significant, in that Hudson also stated that her brothers considered themselves cattlemen and did not do crop and orchard work. The Purgatoire Valley in general is peppered with one-room stone structures with corner fireplaces or stoves typical of Hispanic construction, accompanied by few to no artifacts, which confirms the presence of these settlers.

Thus the arrangement of the Lopez homesite, church, school, and surrounding sites reflects a type of settlement diagnostic of the family’s ethnic background, but these arrangements also attest to the Lopezes’ sense of class identity. Pueblo Indian laborers on the ranch lived in the plaza proper, nearer the livestock. They were hired to do farming and orchard work that Julia noted several times her brothers considered too menial for them (Hudson 1987a:65). The Lopez boys were raised as *vaqueros* (cowboys), latter-day *caballeros* (mounted gentlemen). As they grew to adulthood, they were able to combine this *caballero* heritage with the complementary and equally romantic Anglo-American notion of the “cowboy” (which itself had Spanish origins). They engaged in cattle raising, and one son, Isidoro (Sid), rode in Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show (see another example from northeastern Colorado in Scheiber, this volume). The less glamorous work of tending the crops and orchard at home was the domain of Pueblo Indians and squatters. In contrast to the details about cattle, the memoirs do not mention whether any crops or fruits were raised for the broader market. Nor do they mention goats, the butchered remains of which have been recovered in our excavations.

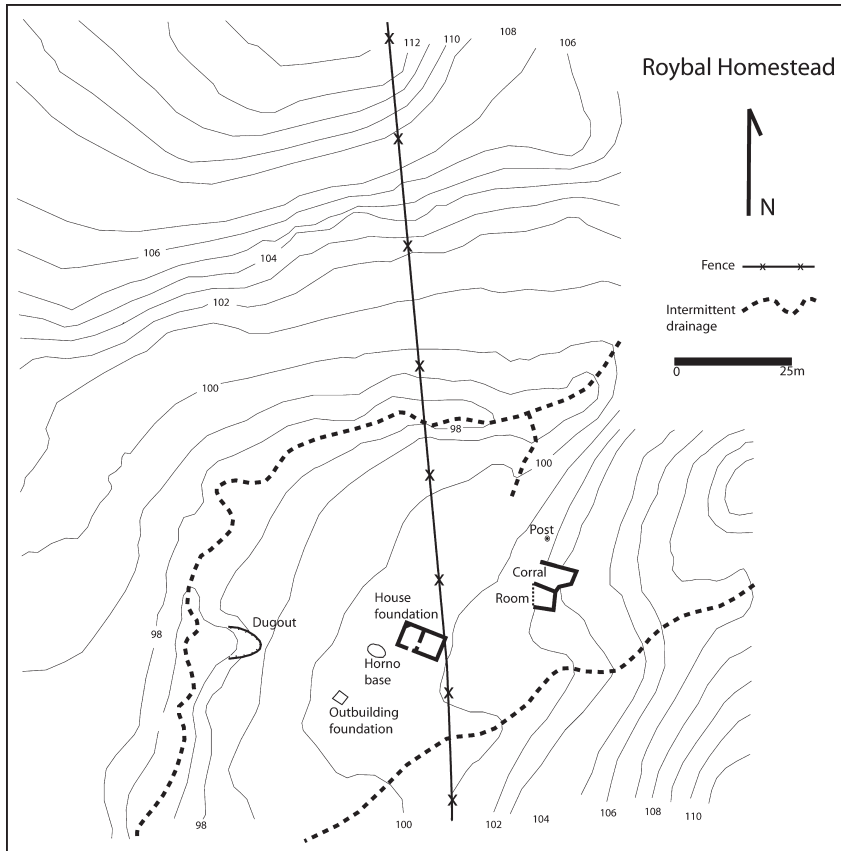
## Homesteads

Damacio and his wife came to the region with ties to important trading families farther south and therefore with local political and social influence.

According to their daughter's account, they lost all their worldly goods, contained in one cart, in the river on the way to their new home, but they retained the social ties. Unlike the situation in the Anglo-American world, such social capital did not necessarily correlate with material wealth for Hispanos in this era. Other Hispano settlers and their descendants differed from the Lopez family in terms of both ethnic identity and sense of place. The late Marcelino Durán, born in 1912, embraced both Indian and Hispano heritages, although this identity meant he could not ride the bus to school with the Anglo children because, in his words, "we weren't the right breed of people" (quoted in Loendorf and Clise 1997:11). In recorded interviews, he and some Hispanos of lesser means and sometimes Indian descent complained more about the way upper-class Hispano sheep ranchers treated them than they did about their treatment by Anglos: "An' you think these people would help one another you know. Baloney! . . . We're a contrary son of a bitching race of people" (quoted in Loendorf and Clise 1997:17).

Durán saw himself as having a shared heritage (and apparently "race") with families like the Lopezes, even if some of the Lopez children would perhaps not have agreed because he was *mestizo*. Families of lesser economic means did not leave as many personal accounts from the nineteenth century as families like the Lopezes did, but poorer families shared the same aspirations to realize financial gain in the larger market system. Durán related, "[E]ver since I was a little kid I wanted to start something, and I had about 40 head of cows, my brother had about 200 head of sheep . . . we had a pretty good start" (quoted in Loendorf and Clise 1997:15). However, they often attempted to do so while maintaining comfortably familiar spaces and activities at home and within a social matrix of community reciprocity. A very few, like the Duráns, who were successful remain in the area. The remains of the homesteads of others dot the landscape along the Purgatoire.

In 1876 (when the Lopez family had temporarily relocated to the town of Las Animas), José Roybal, his wife, and two young boys established one such homestead farther up one of the side drainages of the Purgatoire River and constructed their architectural and exterior spaces quite differently than did the Lopez family, who had better land along the valley bottom. We have no documents written by the Roybals, but we do know them through documents written about them and the archaeology of their homestead (Church 2001, 2002). The Roybals succeeded in establishing their patent on land where they were engaged in irrigated subsistence farming, a strategy with deep roots in the Hispano borderlands, until 1881. In that year, just as soon as José had fulfilled the Homestead Act requirements and could legally do so, he sold his



**FIGURE 7.10.**  
*Topographic map of  
Roybal Homestead site.*

160 acres to Anglo sheep ranchers (Church 2001; Las Animas County Deeds and Records 1860–1996).

Roybal had invested five years of his and his young family's time in making architectural and agricultural improvements, but with only a minimum of cash. They built the house and outbuildings with local materials, materials they could salvage and move elsewhere upon leaving (Figure 7.10). For example, although the patent documents describe a log house, the absence of any evidence of logs—even in a decayed state—on the site suggests they were recycled, which is not surprising given that logs were in great demand on the increasingly denuded High Plains landscape of the 1880s (West 1995). Even

discounting the material Roybal might have removed to his next house, his investment of time and material paid a relatively handsome dividend by the standards of the day; whereas the Roybals had made no cash investment in the land and the U.S. government valued it at \$200, the Roybals sold it for \$300.

Historians who have framed the homesteading experience in terms of “success” or “failure” have usually characterized such short-lived homestead occupations as failed ones (Friedman 1988). They judge these domestic sites that dot the landscape by the standards of congressional legislative intent and Jeffersonian agrarian ideals, not according to the intentions and goals of the homesteaders themselves. Archaeologists are too often led by historians to discount such sites. But they are part of a pattern of borderlands settlement. Families like the Roybals negotiated traditional Hispano home life in a setting increasingly dominated by commercial agriculture and larger landholdings. The remains of short-occupation homesteads can represent strategic choices made by Hispano families with less wealth than the Lopezes to accommodate the nineteenth-century market system and U.S. sovereignty, another strategic compromise between comfortable and familiar living and work spaces and the emerging market economy. They could settle and farm the land for a few years, growing familiar crops and livestock, then sell it to livestock ranchers for a 150 percent profit. Although this strategy was clearly informed by market forces, the Roybal family practiced mixed irrigation agriculture on their small farm, following a subsistence strategy with hundreds of years of history on Spanish land grants in New Mexico. The Roybal site demonstrated little evidence of reliance on imported canned goods, in contrast to Anglo-American neighbors of similar economic means, and a comparatively smaller proportion of artifacts related to ranching (and none to dairy) (Church 2001, 2002).

Along the Purgatoire, such isolated, single-occupation homesteads may reflect a different negotiation between traditional family and farm life and the late-nineteenth-century market system than the Lopez Plaza does. However, it is no less a way Hispanos tried to bend the free market system around, but not through, their domestic activities and spaces during this period of changing national and state sovereignty and law.

## CONCLUSIONS

Many archaeologists have explained patterning of artifact assemblages in reference to both local and national scales of consumption, such as Leslie Stewart-Abernathy’s description of “industrial goods in the service of tradition” on farmsteads in the Ozarks (Stewart-Abernathy 1992). Fewer have taken

a landscape approach to the nineteenth- or twentieth-century archaeological record (Horning 2000). I expect that when our artifact analysis is complete, the material culture will enrich the anthropogenic landscape-scale analyses I have presented here, as the preliminary materials touched on already suggest. Using examples ranging from northern New Mexican villages to the southern Colorado coalfields of the upper Purgatoire, social historian Sarah Deutsch has written, “[R]esisters [of the] onslaught [of Anglo westerners] from the 1870s to the 1890s did not necessarily resist progress but [rather] the form they saw progress taking. Many adopted, when they could, new technology and manufactured goods—iron bedsteads, cookstoves, guns, and plows began showing up in remote Hispanic villages—but for their own ends” (Deutsch 1987:38; see also Clark 2005; Kutsche and Van Ness 1981; Quintana 1991 [1974]).

It is important to realize that these “ends” were not some type of static traditionalism or uncomplicated resistance to change. Accommodation and resistance were not always entirely separable behaviors, as people made decisions on a day-to-day contingency basis, with no prescient idea of outcomes. The ends changed, and the means were negotiated within a context of increasing numbers of Victorian-period Anglo settlers and all attendant changes in trade and transportation technology. Hispanos resisted some aspects of change brought by Mexican and, later, U.S. political and economic hegemony, but they acquiesced and willingly participated in others or tweaked new practices to fit with the old. Some, like the Chávez family, ended up with a seat on the New York Stock Exchange (Milner, O’Connor, and Sandweiss 1994). They were defending some aspects of communal social networks while changing others in order to benefit from the new context, and they were doing so at many scales of site and region visible archaeologically if one adopts a multi-scalar landscape approach.

Landscape approaches to archaeology have been with us for some time (e.g., Willey 1958), yet archaeologists still find themselves confined to site-level interpretations more often than not. Even when a landscape approach is part of the research design, it has often been confined to exploring questions of human ecology. However, just as dialogues among ethnic identity, class identity, national identity, and market opportunities structured consumer behavior, they also structured settlement behavior at the scale of ranches and homestead properties and choice of artifacts on such sites. Such variables affected not only the landscapes themselves but also the ways occupants and descendants remember and depict those landscapes and use them to create narratives of identity, past and present. To interpret patterns in the material remains at the site level, archaeologists must be aware of these narratives and interpret such patterns on



the physical landscapes in terms of perception, facets of which include memory, identity, social order, and transformation. They must acknowledge that these contexts are as important as those with which archaeologists have tended to feel more comfortable: resources, subsistence, and economic interests.

Having observed such negotiations at scales ranging from homesites to regional homelands to national borderlands, it seems clear that these kinds of nineteenth-century sites and their patterning on the landscape, combined with documentary and material evidence, provide the historical and spatial and material perspectives on transnationalism explicitly proposed by cultural anthropologists (Blanc, Basch, and Schiller 1995; Kearney 1995) and should be useful to archaeologists working in such contexts. Yet archaeologists have not made much use of such contexts, nor have they conducted such research at multiple scales, often because of insufficient documentary context or because they cannot spend enough time researching a particular region to grasp the documentation that lies buried in courthouses or in people's attics. Often, cultural resource management work is by its nature constrained to rights-of-way and individual properties, leading to fragmented archaeological coverage of landscapes.

The people of the nineteenth-century borderlands clearly operated within the kind of liminal, interpenetrating, and nested conceptions of space, economy, and identity prescribed by transnational environments. In terms of personal identity, Elfido Lopez never anglicized his name, but his younger brothers Socorro (Sam) and Isidoro (Sid) certainly did. They maintained some traditional practices and modified others at different times and places as a result of larger contexts. As national and cultural borders shifted around them, their ability to remain economically and socially flexible through time was and still is fundamental to the culture history of Spanish American, Chicano, *mestizo*, and Hispano families living in the vicinity of the Purgatoire River or the Picketwire Valley.

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