

Taos County Land Grants

Arroyo Hondo Land Grant—issued on April 2, 1815 by Governor Alberto Maynes. This grant was issued as a *community land grant* containing 30,674 acres. This grant is located about 11 miles north of Taos on NM 522.

In the early 1800's, population in the Rio Chama, San Juan, Santa Cruz, Trampas and other areas was growing rapidly. Felipe Nerio Sisneros, (from the San Juan area) and other hunters became familiar with the Arroyo Hondo area on their frequent hunting trips in the upper Rio Grande and saw that the Arroyo Hondo area had resources which could sustain families and future growth. So, in 1815, Felipe Nerio Sisneros and others petitioned to the Alcalde, Don Jose Miguel Tafoya for a community land grant.

“To strengthen his request, Sisneros wrote that approving the grant would “not injure anyone, as it is distant from the league of the Indians and is suitable for the formation of a town” since “pasture, water, firewood and timber [were] abundant.” “The league of the Indians” Sisneros referred to was the four square leagues of land that Spanish law granted to each pueblo, usually measured from the cross in the center of each pueblo's cemetery to the four cardinal directions. It was important for Sisneros to establish that the land grant which he sought would not infringe upon Indian land because “paternalistic Spanish legislation protected [Indian lands] from encroachment by outsiders” (see G. Emlen Hall and David Weber). Sisneros' proviso that “pasture, water, firewood and timber [were] abundant” reflects his knowledge of the requirements used by Spanish colonial officials when approving land grants. Officials refused requests for land grants that did not guarantee enough water and other natural resources to sustain the proposed community. Communities who lacked basic resources inevitably failed and depleted valuable resources in the process.” By D.H. Damico

The original grantees were: Nerio Sisneros, Juan Quintana, Jose Romero, Jesus Sandoval, Juan N. P. Luna, Juan Antonio Alcon, Manuel Tofoya, Salvador Padia, Juana Martin, Eusebio Abila, Lorenzo Cordoba, Francisco Vigil, Ramon Arellano, Miguel Lucero, Antonio Martin, Julian Arellano, Juan Duran, Xabier Garcia,

Francisco Sandoval, Felipe Martin, Lorenzo Baca Sebastian Xaramio, Cristobal Medina, Manuel Padilla, Juan Gonzales, Tomas Lobato, Anastacio Abila, Antonio Archuleta, Jose Martin, Benito Trujillo, Nicolas Romero, Benito Gallegos, Jose Gabriel Martin, Juan Antonio Martin and Seferino Martin, all of these people were granted 100 varas of property. However, Ramon Blea was granted 400 varas, also Pablo Lucero was granted 300 varas. In addition, Gregorio Pacheco was granted 60 varas, the following were granted 50 varas, Juan Medina, Juan Angel Garcia, Manuel Mondragon, Juan Gonzales and Rafael Sisneros.

This excerpt is taken from a copy of the original which describes the geographical boundaries:

. . . can be seen in this decree of July 12th day of 1823, that the legal boundaries of the land granted Area on the North el Serro on the side of the river of San Cristoval; on the south the hill which (unredable) to those of the Arroyo Seco; on the East the little Canon up above of he same river; and on the West the Rio del Norte; also decreed that the settlers of the Arroyo Hondo have a full and absolute right to the water of their river . . .

Canada de los Mestanos—issued to Juan Gallegos and 10 other individuals by the Alcalde of Taos, Vicente Trujillo on December 11, 1828. This grant was a Hispano *community* grant of 16,000 acres. This grant is located north of Arroyo Hondo, NM.

The boundaries were:

On the north, the Penasco de San Cristobal; on the east, the Mesita road which goes to San Cristobal; on the south, the brow of said canada which separates it from the lands of Arroyo Hondo; and on the west, the Rio Grande.

On June 7, 1861, the owners gave the Surveyor General (SG) the grant papers. At the time, they did not request the SG to validate the grant as the documents contained several alterations. On March 3, 1893, Julian Martinez owner of some

property on the grant filed a petition to the Court of Private Land Claims to have the grant confirmed. However on December 2, 1896, the court referred to Spanish and Mexican laws that only the governor had the authority to issue land grants, as a result the court ruled that Alcalde Vicente Trujillo did not have the authority to issue a grant, so the grant was rejected. Martinez then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court which dismissed the case.

Canon del Rio Colorado—issued on June 23, 1836 by Alcalde Antonio Jose Ortiz of Taos. This grant was issued as a *community land grant* holding 162,939 acres it is located in Questa, NM which is about 24 miles north of Taos on NM 522.

The Cañon del Rio Colorado Land Grant

The first attempt for this grant was the June 12, 1836 petition for land filed by Antonio Elias Armenta, Jose Victor Sanchez, and Jose Manuel Sanchez. According to the Posecion document, these settlers were “praying for a tract of land in grant for our livestock, it being the place of the Canon del Rio Colorado, which is considered pasture land, although very few animals enter the ground...”¹

For more information refer to:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=21982>

¹ Tessie Rael y Ortega and Judith Cuddihy, Another Time in This Place: Historia, Cultura y Vida en Questa (2003)

The San Antonio del Rio Colorado Land Grant

A second group of settlers petitioned for a land grant on the Rio Colorado early in 1841, essentially for land that is now Questa proper. This petition was returned to the settlers by the Governor Manuel Armijo in a decree dated September 6th, 1841. On January 8th, Rafael Archuleta, Antonio Elias Armenta, and Miguel Montoya and 35 families filed a petition with Don Juan Andres Archuleta, Prefect of the First District of the Department of New Mexico for a tract of land on the Rio Colorado. These pobladores, or settlers, stated in their January 8th petition that “...finding ourselves in want of land for the support of our families, and believing that the public lands should be given to those, who take an interest in developing them for the promotion of agriculture...” they should be granted “...the land which we solicit at El Rio Colorado..” which is “...very fertile for the purpose which we solicit it...”.²

Available information can be found in the following web site:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org> -- Questa- San Antonio del Rio Colorado by Judith Cuddihy.

Cebolla—issued on December 31, 1845 by Governor Manuel Armijo of New Mexico, (it was named after a creek that ran through this grant). This grant was issued as a Hispano *private* land grant to Carlos Santistevan and 4 associates (Jose Manuel Garcia, Julian Santistevan, Carlos Ortivis and Tomas Ortivis, also known as Tom Tobin)³. It held 17,157 acres. This land grant was located North of Arroyo Hondo on NM 522 actually between the San Cristoval Land Grant and the the San Antonio de Rio Colorado Land Grant (the town of Questa). The boundaries of this land grant were:

On the north, the boundaries of the San Antonio del Rio Colorado Grant; on the east, the mountain; on the south, the boundary of the San Cristobal Grant; and on the west, the edge of the bluffs bordering the Rio Grande.

² Ibid.

³ Janet Lecompte and George Autabee, The Life and Times of Charles Autabee 1812-1882, p 27.

There is no written evidence that Cebolla grant was settled, however, it was used as pasturage for their livestock. During the next 25 years, the interests of the original grantees were sold several times. On January 24, 1872, John T. Graham acquired title to the entire grant from the assignees of the original grantees. The following day, Graham sold half of the interest to William Blackmore followed by selling of a fourth interest to Clarence P. Elder. Eleven days later, Graham and Blackmore petitioned the Surveyor General T. Rush Spencer seeking the confirmation of the grant. This was the beginning of a long judicial conflict for the benefit of the new owners. The first judicial action occurred in 1877 followed by others in 1891, 1893, 1896 and final decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1900. The original grantees benefitted this grant for a short time.

More information on the Cebolla Grant, a historical review was made available by J.J. Bowden:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24850>

Miguel Chavez—I was unable to find literature on this land grant. If interested, please refer to the following documents: PLC (Court of Private Land Claims) 186 (50/657).

Cieneguilla, Town of—issued on February 12, 1795 by Governor Fernando Chacon. This grant was a Hispano *community land grant* issued to Jose Sanchez and nineteen other colonists (Jose Sanches, Jose Pablo Sanches, Concesion Sanches, Juan Sanches, Miguel Sanches, Francisco Sandobal, Antonio Begil, Juaguin Begil, Domingo Crus, Juan Jose Suaso, Miguel Urtado, Ysidro Suaso, Joaquin Martin, Jose Garcia, Juan Jose Martin, Juan Cordoba, Christobal Martin, Rafael Lobato, Juan Dairil, Felis Montolla). It held 43,961 acres. The Cieneguilla Land Grant is located where Pilar, NM is currently located, on US 68, eighteen miles south of Taos.

The boundaries were:

On the north, the Los Seritos de los Aguajes; on the east, the Arroyo Hondo; on the south, the summit of the Picuris Mountains; and on the west, the surplus lands of those of Embudo in the Rio Grande Valley.

This description of the grant boundaries is taken from the United States Court of Private Land Claims dated August 1896:

On the east the arroyo hondo, on the south the edge of the mountains of Picuris, on the west, the boundary of the Embudo grant at a place called, the arroyo quemado, the the north the orejas of the aguajes. . .
Testimony of Albino Lopez.

This land grant has an interesting history for more information on the Town of Cieneguilla Grant, see a historical review by J.J. Bowden at:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24850>

Also, please refer to the following site for a transcript of court proceedings:

[www.unm.edu/cdm/ref/collection/catron/id/11207\(Cieneguilla grant\).](http://www.unm.edu/cdm/ref/collection/catron/id/11207(Cieneguilla_grant))

Cristobal de la Serna Land Grant—issued on April 8, 1710 to Cristobal de la Serna by Governor Jose Chacon Medina Salazar y Villsenor. This grant was issued as a *quasi-community grant* containing 30,000 acres. The grant is located in what is now Ranchos de Taos. Ranchos was originally called Las Trampas de Taos, settled in 1725 later the settlement was re-named Ranchos de Taos. In 1760 Ranchos de Taos, also called Taos "Old Town", was attacked by Comanche Native Americans who took 50 women from a fortified house, the home of the Vialpando family, and killed the men of the settlement. After several years of Indian attacks in the early 1770's the settlers moved in with the Indians of the Taos Pueblo for mutual protection.

In 1772, settlers began the construction of a mission church; finally in 1815 the San Francisco de Asis Mission Church was completed. The church, built in the center of the fortified Ranchos de Taos plaza represents the building pattern of most New Mexican villages built during Post-Revolt period (after 1692).

In 1786, Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin negotiated a treaty with the Comanche in Santa Fe. The Comanche Nation was allowed to participate in markets and trade fairs and New Mexican traders could not cheat the Native clients. In return, the Comanche agreed to stop raiding and would unite behind one chief who would be the principal negotiator with the Spanish. They also agreed to refrain from trading with foreigners, especially the Americans.

The Taos region population grew as the result of land grants made by Mexico between 1821 and 1846.

For more information see:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24861>

Dominguez, Jose Land Grant—in 1880, Santiago Valdez petitioned the Surveyor General that he had in his possession the papers of the Jose Dominguez grant. As he had been unable to locate the heirs, he decided to file the grant papers. Valdez, actually presented a copy of a copy and on those grounds, the Surveyor General declined the request. The history of this grant shows that:

“Jose Dominguez had petitioned Governor Pedro Rodriguez Cubero seeking a grant covering a tract of vacant land located in the Taos Valley which had formerly belonged to Francisco Gomez Robledo as a remuneration for the military services he had rendered against the Indians. On February 9, 1702 Cubero granted the request and directed the Alcalde of Taos, Juan Paez Hurtado, to place Dominguez in royal possession of the lands he had requested. In response to the governor’s decree, Hurtado assembled the officials and inhabitants of the Pueblo of Taos and advised them of the grant. Since no objections were raised, he delivered possession of the grant to Dominguez.

The grant papers consisted of a certified copy of a certified copy of the *testimonio*. The certificate was dated March 9, 1836 and made by Antonio Jose Ortiz, based on a certified copy made by Santiago Martinez on June 12, 1795. None of the three instruments which comprised the grant papers contained a description of the boundaries of the tract or other means of identifying its limits”. J.J. Bowden

For more information see the following site:

http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=24857

Don Fernando de Taos—issued May 1, 1796 by Governor Fernando Chacon. This grant was a Hispano *community land grant* issued to sixty-three families originally, it held 38,400 acres. During the 18th century, many Spanish families and half-castes lived in the Taos Pueblo. They were invited to live with the Taos natives for the purpose of helping defend the “pueblo” from other attacking tribes. In 1794, Governor Francisco Cuervo y Valdez issued an order prohibiting the Spanish, mulattos and Negroes from settling near or in the pueblos, at the same time the Taos natives began to force these groups out of the pueblo. So, these families moved out and unto the lands just south of the pueblo and on May 1, 1796 Governor Fernando Chacon issued to sixty-three families the “Don Fernando de Taos Land Grant” to form a new settlement. Its boundaries were:

“On the north, the lands of the Indians of Taos; on the east, the Canon of the Rio de Don Fernando de Taos; on the south, the brow of the ridge on the other side of the river; and on the west, the lands of Antonio Jose Lavato below and the middle road above. “

As this new settlement grew, the inhabitants depended on the success of their irrigated crops and petitioned the governor for a grant which would cover the surplus waters from the Taos and Lucero Rivers. On November 7, 1797 Alcalde Ortiz gave the settlers a certificate showing the appropriation of water rights. As growth continued, the inhabitants became eager to secure individual land allotments. On August 9, 1799 Alcalde Antonio Jose Romero (at the order of the governor) partitioned the grant amongst its inhabitants.

Don Fernando de Taos or “Taos”, was an agricultural settlement, however, it developed into the principal trading center of New Mexico. During the latter part of the eighteenth and first part of the nineteenth centuries, “annual trade fairs” attracted traders, once or twice a year these trade fairs included visiting hostile plains tribes most often people from the Comanche Nation. Beginning in the early

19th century, “mountain men” arrived and made Taos their winter home; from here they organized their fur shipments to St. Louis. At Taos, they also traded for necessary items, married local Hispanic women, raised their families and became a functional part of the local fabric. As these men made their way to St. Louis, they touted the “Taos” life-style, inviting people to move to Taos. So, people from the east have been coming to Taos since the early 19th century.

After the U.S. annexed New Mexico in 1846, the U.S. Congress in 1854 established the office of the Surveyor General of New Mexico to determine "the origin, nature, character, and extent to all claims to lands under the laws, usages, and customs of Spain and Mexico." At first the Congress tried to deal with each land grant by special bill and the House had a **Committee on Private Land Claims**, seats on which were sought after as a way of dispensing patronage. By 1880 the corruption (inherent in determining these claims by politics rather than on a legal basis) forced an end to this practice. For ten years no claims could be proved as against the United States.

So the U.S. Congress, in 1891, created the **Court of Private Land Claims** consisting of five justices appointed for a term to expire on December 31, 1895. The court itself was to exist only during this period, although its existence extended until June 30, 1904. This court was to determine the claims of land in the territories of New Mexico, Arizona, and Utah, and in the states of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming. Spanish or Mexican land grants were based upon incomplete documentation, in part because those governments did not issue deeds to the grantees, and records were kept at various territorial and state sites.

On January 21, 1878 the inhabitants of this grant petitioned the U.S. Surveyor General to confirm their grant. On June 10, 1881, he recommended to Congress that this grant be approved. However, Congress, as in all other private land claims from New Mexico which had been pending since 1879, failed to act upon the matter. Meanwhile, a preliminary survey of the grant was made by Deputy Surveyor John Shaw in June, 1883 for 1,899.89 acres.

Juan Santistevan, on behalf of himself and the other heirs, legal representatives and including descendants of the original grantees, filed suit against the United States in the Court of Private Land Claims on February 28, 1893 in an effort to secure the recognition of the grant.

For more information on the Don Fernando de Taos Land Grant see:

http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails_docs.php?fileID=24859

Embudo Grant—issued on July 17, 1725 by Governor Juan Domingo de Bustamante. This grant was a Hispano *quasi-community land grant* issued to three men, Juan Marquez, Francisco Martin and Lasaro de Cordova. “This place was called *Embudo* because it is there that the Embudo river flows through a narrow pass which resembles a funnel.”⁴ The settlement on this grant became known as San Antonio del Embudo and was settled by eight families, (in 1900 the name was changed to Dixon when the U.S. post office was established and named after the local school master, Collin Dixon.)⁵ The settlers built their homes around a *plaza*, with two *torreones* or watch-towers near the corners of the compound.

This grant was triangular in shape, the boundaries were:

Bounded on the northwest by the Rio Bravo del Norte (Rio Grande), on the east by a dry arroyo, and on the south by the Sebastian Martin grant.

Some unfortunate results (for the claimants) during the time period when claimants filed petitions to the Surveyor General in 1863 to have the grant validated included:

- a.) Surveyor General made no investigation or recommendation at the time.
- b.) Thirty years later, descendants and heirs filed suit in the Court of Private Land Claims for recognition of their title for the 25,000 acres in the grant. This court found that the claimants had in their possession a copy of the original document and not the original, the original had become torn from frequent handling. As a result, the court declared that “. . . there being no proof offered of the correctness of this copy, or of the power of an *alcalde*, by virtue of his office, to make a copy that would be binding on the Government of Spain.”⁶

⁴ Land Grants & Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico, Ebright, Malcom, p. 127, Center For Land Grant Studies Press, 2008.

⁵ The Place Names of New Mexico, Julyan R., p. 110, University of New Mexico Press, Albq., NM.

⁶ Land Grants & Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico, Ebright, Malcom, p. 131, Center For Land Grant Studies Press, 2008.

Other grants rejected by the court because the copies of the grant documents were made and certified by an *alcalde* were: Cieneguilla, Conejos, El Rito, Sanguijuela and Sitio de Navajo.⁷

M. Ebright suggests that the court's decision was "unfair".

"If any land grant meets this test, it is Embudo. In fact, the audacity of the federal government in the Embudo situation is amazing. First it took the land upon which the villagers depended for their subsistence—farming, grazing, hunting, and gathering land."⁸

The Court of Private Land Claims rejected 91 percent of the acreage in the Embudo decision and other studies indicate that the majority of other decisions were rejections, like Embudo, "unfair".

On page 142 of, *Land Grants & Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico* is a quote by Sandra Grisham and Jay Ortiz

"... Perhaps it was inevitable that the United States would acquire this land [and] that the interests of Spanish-speaking peasants would not prevent such acquisition. Perhaps it was inevitable, but somehow that does not seem to render it less wrong."⁹

For all quotes from the Embudo title papers see New Mexico Land Grants-Surveyor General (NMLG-SG), Roll 31, report 91, frames 285-288 (original documents), frames 299-304 (translations), State Records Center and Archives, Santa Fe.

Fernandez, Manuel—information on this grant is very limited. This is what I found:

Manuel Fernandez grant in Taos County was dismissed and grant rejected on January 31, 1898 by the Court of Private Land Claims.

⁷ Ibid, p. 319.

⁸ Ibid, p. 142.

⁹ Sandra Grisham and Jay Ortiz, "Methods of Proving Foreign Law in the Court of Private Land Claims," in *Land, Law and La Raza*, p.37.

Gijosa (Rancho de Taos)—There is limited information on this grant. It seems that this grant was the first in Taos County made to a woman, Francisca Antonia de Gijosa. It was issued on June 16, 1715 as a Hispano *quasi-community* grant by Governor Juan Ignacio Flores Magallon. Initially, it contained 20,000 acres however it was patented at 16,365 acres.

For more information refer to:

J.J. Bowden's unpublished 1969 six volume Master's Thesis "Private Land Claims in the Southwest", 4: p. 986-89.

Plaza de Guadalupe—issued to Jose Miguel Ortiz and others. This grant was a Hispano *community* grant issued on January 1, 1851, by George Levy, Perfect (Alcalde) of Taos. I am not sure if this is the Conejos Grant. If it is, it contained 39,852 acres however the result by the Court of Private Land Claims refused to approve it.

For more information, refer to the following:

Land of Contrast: A History of Southeast Colorado, BLM Cultural Resources Series (Colorado: No. 17)

https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/blm/co/17/chap5.htm;

Colorado Hispanic Genealogist Volume 10, No. 4, Winter 2013

Conejos Land Grantees List---by Denise Miller and Pat Sanchez Rau

People of the Valley: A History of the Spanish Colonials of the San Luis Valley, Olibama Lopez Tushar (Denver: n.p., 1975.)

"Mexican Land Grants in Colorado," LeRoy R. Hafen, *Colorado Magazine*, 4, 1927, pp. 81-93;

Las Trampas—issued on July 15, 1751 by Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin. This was a Hispano *community* grant issued to Juan de Arguello and 11 other individuals, it contained 46,461 acres. These 12 petitioners came from the “Barrio de Analco” region in Santa Fe, the area south of the Santa Fe River. Inhabitants of this barrio were primarily Presidio soldiers, Tlascalan (Mexican Indians) and *genizaros*. Among the Las Tramps settlers included Melchor Rodriguez, son of Sebastian Rodriguez, (African drummer for de Vargas), Pedro Felipe son of Melchor, his daughter Joaquina and her husband Juan Garcia, also, Juan de Arguello and his wife Juana Gregoria Brito, and Salvador Baca and his family. The boundaries were:

. . . north, Picuris Pueblo, south, the Canada del Ojo Sarco and the east, a canoncito made by the river, next to the mountains, on the west the Sebastian Martin Grant.¹⁰

With constant attacks from various Indians throughout the 1740’s, in several villages and fearing that the larger population centers like the “*villas*” of Santa Cruz de la Canada and Santa Fe might be overrun, Governor Tomas Velez Cachupin began to issue land grants to “*genizaros*”. These grants were located on the northern frontier; the settlement plan involved the establishment of buffer communities to provide protection to both “*villas*”. His instructions were that these communities were to be built around a central “plaza”, they were to be completely enclosed, windows could only face the plaza and only one entrance, “large enough for wagons to enter.

As in most land grants in New Mexico, there were two important elements, land was to be allotted to individuals and there must also be an “*ejido*” or common lands. This grant underwent immense scrutiny during the confirmation process. It was initially confirmed as a community grant in 1860, however in 1876 the new Commissioner N.C. McFarland of the General Land Office was not satisfied and ordered a resurvey resulting in only 28,000 acres. The next issue facing the descendants and heirs was that the common lands were sold to various interests.

¹⁰ *Land Grants & Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico*, Ebright, Malcom, p. 142, Center For Land Grant Studies Press, 2008.

Leaders in this shenanigan, were certain members of the Santa Fe Ring, Alonzo B. McMillan, Alois B. Renehan and Charles Catron, son of Tomas B. Catron. These men used the “double edge sword of duplicity”, telling the villagers one thing and the court another.

For more information on the settlers of Las Trampas grant refer to:

Myra Ellen Jenkins, “Documentation Concerning San Jose de gracia del Rio de las Trampas”, (unpublished manuscript, pp. 5-6.

Leroux, Antoine (Los Luceros)—issued on August 12, 1742 to Pedro Vigil de Santillan on behalf of his nephews, Juan Bautista and Cristoval Vigil by Governor Gaspar Domingo de Mendoza. This was a Hispano *quasi-community* grant. It included 126,024 acres. The grant became known as the Los Luceros grant named after the “Rio Los Luceros”. The Vigils promptly settled upon the grant and their descendants were still living there when Antoine Leroux, the famous mountain man, married Juana Caterina Vigil, a granddaughter of Jean Bautista Vigil, on November 4, 1833. Antoine moved into the family *hacienda* on the Luceros River and became the principal owner and manager of the grant. Thereafter, it was usually referred to as the Antoine Leroux Grant. On May 21, 1857, Leroux petitioned Surveyor General William Pelham seeking the confirmation of the grant.

After attempting to determine the true boundaries of this grant and several surveys the final field notes were approved on August 25, 1909 and showed that the grant covered 56,428.31 acres. A patent was issued for such land on August 1, 1911.

Lovato, Salvador (Lorenzo Lobato)—issued on June 20, 1793 to Salvador Lovato and his two sons by Governor Fernando Chacon. This was a Hispano *private* grant which included 2,500 acres. The boundaries were:

On the north, a small rocky hill opposite the Llomita Chamisalosa; on the east, the Canada de Mirando and the road leading to the ***Pueblo of Picuris***; on the south, the small valley of the Cuesta de Cire; and on the west, by the pass of the ridge of the Canada de los Alamos.

On February 14, 1893, Lorenzo petitioned the Court of Public Land Claims to confirm this grant. Lovato alleged that Salvador Lovato and his two sons, Juan Antonio and Rafael, petitioned Governor Fernando Chacon in 1793 seeking a grant for agricultural purposes at the place known as Los Llomitas. When Lorenzo was unable to secure the appropriate Spanish documents describing the grant, the Court rejected the claim.

Lucero de Godoi, (Godoy or Antonio Martinez)—issued to Antonio Martinez on October 26, 1716 as a Hispano *quasi-community* grant by Governor Felix Martinez. This grant contained 67,480 acres. The boundaries were:

On the north, the mountains which are the source of the Lucero River; on the east, an arroyo, being the nearest one to the Pueblo (Taos); on the south, the junction of the Rio Grande and Taos Rivers; and on the west, the Rio Grande; save and except the portion thereof located south of the Lucero River.

The heirs of Antonio Martinez filed a petition with the Surveyor General to have their claim granted on January 17, 1876. However, on February 10, 1888, Surveyor General, Julian recommended the rejection of the claim because the claimants had failed to sustain their burden of proving that the claim was one which the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo obligated the United States to recognize. On March 5, 1892, the claimants' filed suits against the United States in the Court of Private Land Claims and on May 8, 1896 the Court approved a patent for this grant.

Martin, Sebastian—issued on May 23, 1712 to Sebastian Martin by Governor Jose Chacon Medina Salvador y Vallasenor . This was a Hispano *quasi-community* grant, it contained 54,387 acres. Its boundaries were:

On the north, a cross which was erected on the Canon which ran to El Embudo; on the east, the river which ran between Chimayo and the Pueblo of Picuris; on the south, the north line of the Pueblo of San Juan Grant and on the west, the table lands on the west side of the Rio Grande.

In 1703, this grant was initially issued to Joseph Garcia Jurado, Sebastian de Vargas, and. Sebastian de Polonia. However, when they failed to take possession, Sebastian Martin and his brother Antonio asked Governor de Vargas to forfeit it and award the grant to them. In 1705, Governor Francisco Cuervo y Valdes ordered that the grant be awarded to Sebastian and Antonio Martin. Sebastian and Antonio Martin, together with three of their brothers, moved to the grant and immediately started improving and developing the property. A number of fields were opened for cultivation, an irrigation system was constructed, and a large four room house with two strong towers was built to protect its inhabitants from the hostile Indians.

In 1712, Sebastian was awarded title by Governor Jose Chacon Medina Salazar y Villaseñor after acquiring his brother's interest. In 1751, Sebastian deeded a strip of land one thousand six hundred and forty varas wide, off the east side of the grant to the twelve colonists who had proposed the establishment of the Town of Las Trampas.

The grant was confirmed by Act approved on June 21, 1860, and surveyed on June, 1876, by Deputy Surveyors Sawyer & McBroom. The survey showed that the grant contained 51,387.20 acres. A patent for that amount of land was finally issued on February 10, 1893.

Martinez, Jose (Ignacio)—information on this grant is very limited. This is what I found:

Jose Ignacio Martinez grant in Taos County in the amount of 500 acres was dismissed and grant rejected on January 31, 1898 by the Court of Private Land Claims.

Maxwell (Carlos Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda)—issued to Carlos Beaubien and Guadalupe Miranda on Jan 11, 1841 by Governor Manuel Armijo. It was classified as a Hispano *private* grant containing 1,714,764 acres. This land grant was one of the largest contiguous private landholdings in the history of the United States. The New Mexico towns of Cimarron, Colfax, Dawson, Elizabethtown, French, Lynn, Maxwell, Miami, Raton, Rayado, Springer, Ute Park and Vermejo Park, came to be located within the grant.

The principals in this grant were Beaubien and Miranda who were the primary grantees, Armijo, and Charles Bent each held 1/4th interest.

The American occupation of 1846 tragically presented Charles Beaubien with a new situation. First, two of his partners in the Beaubien-Miranda land grant, Guadalupe Miranda and Governor Manuel Armijo, moved to Mexico. Then in January 1847, his son Narciso, son-in-law Stephen L. Lee, and Governor Charles Bent were all killed by members of the Taos Rebellion, a response in opposition to the American occupation. Beaubien himself most likely would also have been murdered but he was away from Taos at the time of the rebellion. Needing a partner, Beaubien asked Lucien Maxwell, his son-in-law to join him in settling the grant. Kit Carson, a friend joined Maxwell on his first settlement at Rayado. Soon after, the town of Cimarron was settled in 1857. It was here where he setup his first store along the Cimarron route of the Santa Fe Trail. During the 1860's, he allowed miners and other settlers in the area as long as they paid rent in the form of produce. By the early 1870's his landholdings totaled over 2 million acres. However, because of its size and management issues, he sold it; keeping his home and several mining claims. The first buyer was a group of investors in Colorado and New Mexico purchased the land and formed the Maxwell Land Grant and

Railroad Company. The next buyer was a group of English and Dutch investors, they filed claim to have the U.S. Government to approve it. With difficulties ahead, they sold it to Thomas B. Catron and his associates (known as the notorious Santa Fe Ring). Another event in Maxwell Land Grant history were the “Colfax County Wars”, these conflicts were created when the new owners wanted to rid the “squatters” from their lots.

By the 1890s, many of the most poorly treated settlers were Hispanic farmers who resisted being evicted from lands they had farmed for many decades along the Ponil and Vermejo creeks and in the Cieneguilla valley. By the late 1890s most of these settlers had either been evicted from their farms or had in some way settled with the company. Many of these settlers came from the Mora Valley, Las Vegas etc. In their northward movement, many settled in Raton, Trinidad, La Veta, Gardner, Pueblo and east on the Arkansas River Valley.

In 1887, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the “company” and awarded 1,700,000 acres

For more information refer to:

<http://newmexicohistory.org/places/maxwell-land-grant>

Medina Felipe—information on this grant is very limited.

Felipe Medina grant in Taos County in the amount of 300 acres was dismissed and grant rejected on January 31, 1898 by the Court of Private Land Claims.

Mora, Town of—issued to Jose Tapia and 76 settlers by Governor Albino Perez on September 28, 1835. It was a Hispano *community* grant which contained 827,631 acres. On October 20, 1835, Manuel Sanchez laid out the plaza sites at Lo de Mora (Mora Valley) and distributed agricultural and grazing lands to the original seventy-six families. At Santa Gertrudis (present day town of Mora) and at Plaza de San Antonio, located three miles upstream (in the present-day town of Cleveland) he laid out plazas with identical dimensions.

For more information refer to:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=21925>

Ojo Caliente—around 1730, Antonio Martin and other settlers were issued a *community* grant. In August of 1747 these settlers and other nearby settlers were forced to flee back to Santa Cruz de la Canada due to the constant raids by the Comanches and Utes. These settlers were ordered to return to the grant in 1749, 1751, 1752, by various governors. In 1766, they had not yet returned in fact the record shows that many of them went elsewhere to live. It wasn't until September 1790 that a new group of settlers intended to settle the area, they were led by Jose Manuel Velarde, he and eighteen other petitioners asked Governor Fernando de la Concha permission to resettle Ojo Caliente. When the governor intervened and outlined the location of the new settlement, the petitioners rejected his notion and decided to not settle the area. By September 1790, the Comanche and Ute peace had made settlement at Ojo Caliente feasible for the first time in decades. Finally, on September 11, 1793, Governor Concha made the grant to the community of fifty-three heads of families, giving them the land they had requested.

During the period of the American occupation, when land grants were being evaluated by the Surveyor General and the Court of Private Claims, the Ojo Caliente suffered several legal challenges. By 1878 Antonio Joseph, a speculator claimed to have purchased the interests of most of the grantees of the Ojo Caliente

grant including the location of the current Ojo Caliente Hot Springs Resort. He received the patent for the grant when it was issued on November 2, 1894, for a tract of land of 2245 acres which was greatly reduced in size from the original 44,000 acres he had originally claimed earlier.

The boundaries of 1730 were:

. . . north, the Cañada de los Comanches; south, a landmark "of stone and mortar with a holy cross made of cedar placed in the center;" east, the foothills; and west, the foothills on the other side of the river. The southern landmark containing a cross of cedar was undoubtedly connected to the official name for the mission at Ojo Caliente: Santa Cruz de Ojo Caliente.¹¹

For more information refer to:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=4767>

Paraje del Punche (Rancho, Hurraca)—information on this grant is very limited. This is what I found:

According to Land Grants in Taos County, by the Center of Land Grant Studies, this grant was issued to Antonio Maestas Gomez de Costillo et. al., on Dec 7, 1821 by Governor Facundo Melgares. It contained 90,000 acres.

The Paraje del Rancho grant in Taos County was dismissed on May 17, 1897 by the Court of Private Land Claims.

Petaca—issued to Jose Julian Martinez, his father, Antonio Martinez, Francisco Antonio Atencio and his sons on February 25, 1836 by Governor Albino Perez. It was a Hispano *community* grant which contained 186,977 acres. The Petaca grant was situated on the Ojo Caliente River. After several reviews by Surveyor

¹¹ Ojo Caliente Grant, PLC 88, Roll 43, frames 6-25, Ojo Caliente Grant, SG 77, Roll 21, frames 6-138, Ojo Caliente (Antonio Joseph) Grant, PLC 94, Roll 43, frames 588-617.

Generals, Court of Private Claims and the U.S. Supreme Court, this large grant was whittled down to 1,392 acres. A patent was issued by the Board of Commissioners for the Petaca Grant.

In the 1890's, an investor from Chicago L. Z. Farwell, purchased the interests of most of the heirs. Farwell established sawmills and lumber camps in the pineries and for ten years shipped lumber by rail from Tres Piedras to markets of Colorado and New Mexico.

The boundaries of the grant were:

On the north, the hill commonly called Tío Ortiz Hill; on the east, the Arroyo de la Aguaje de Petaca; on the south, the entrance to the Canoncito and lands of Jose Miguel Lucero; and on the west, the Vallecito Grant.

For more information refer to:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24871>, J.J. Bowden provides a summary which include, history and events, leading to approval of the grant.

Picuris Pueblo—issued to the people of the Picuris Pueblo on September 25 1689 by Governor Domingo Jironza Petroz de Cruzate. It was a Pueblo Cruzate grant (see definitions). According to Spanish law and customs every pueblo in New Mexico was entitled four square leagues or five thousand varas measured in the four directions from the cross in the cemetery, this equal to 17,000 acres

“Picuris was one of the strongest northern pueblos with 3,000 inhabitants in 1680. Pope, the leader of the Pueblo Revolt, relied heavily on the Picuris for both warriors and leaders. The leader of the Picuris braves was Luis Tupatu, who was chosen to succeed Pop after his death. In 1705 the entire pueblo moved to another site, called Quartejejo, on the plains 350 miles north of Santa Fe. Two years later the Picuris were induced to return by Sergeant-Major Juan de Ulibarri.”¹²

¹² *Land Grants & Lawsuits in Northern New Mexico*, Ebright, Malcom, p. 314, Center For Land Grant Studies Press, 2008.

Picuris lies about 25 miles south of Taos on NM 75.

Rancho del Rio Grande—issued to Nicolas Leal, Jose Mirabel and others on February 4, 1795 by Governor Fernando Chacon. It was a Hispano *protective and grazing* grant, it contained 109,043 acres. Initially, settlers wanted to create a community on these lands, however, Alcalde Antonio Jose Ortiz determined that due to limited water and mountainous terrain, the establishment of community was not feasible. So, Nicolas Leal and ten individual heirs of Diego Romero requested these lands for the purpose of pasturage for their livestock. Immediately, these grantees stocked the lands with livestock.

This grant was not without its share of conflicts. Some individuals believed that the lands were available for settlement purposes, since no settlement was seen on the grant. One such individual was Nicolas Sandoval, a landless resident of the Pueblo of Taos. Sandoval had received a deed covering a tract known as Los de Montes in consideration for the services and assistance he had rendered in the construction of an acequia. However, this conveyance had been revoked and the land delivered to another party. In 1827, Sandoval complained and was issued a portion of the Rancho del Rio Grande grant, however, in 1837 an investigative body determined that this request violated the boundaries of the grant, therefore, the request was denied.

On August 16, 1901, the Rancho del Rio Grande received a patent for the 91,813.15 acres.

The boundaries of the grant were:

On the north, by the boundaries of Manuel Montes Vigil; on the east, by the spur of the Rio de Don Fernando Mountain; on the south, by the Cuchilla del Oso Mountains; and on the west, by the Canada de Miranda and the Picuris Pueblo Road.

For more information refer to:

<http://newmexicohistory.org/people/rancho-del-rio-grande-grant>

Rio del Picuris (J.D. Fernandez)—issued to Rafael Fernandez and 23 others on July 28, 1832 by Territorial Deputation. It was a Hispano *community* grant which included 20,000 acres. These families lived there from 1832 to 1893 when on January 25, 1893, Juan Fernandez, as the heir of Rafael Fernandez, petitioned the Court of Private Land Claims, seeking confirmation of the grant, which he said that it contained approximately 20,000 acres. However, on September 15, 1894, the Court of Private Land Claims rejected their claim.

This is another case which encountered procedural/authoritative issues.

The boundaries were:

On the north, the boundaries of those of Taos; on the east, Mora Hill; on the south, the Rio del Picuris; and on the west, the league of the Pueblo.

For more information refer to:

<http://dev.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=24864>

San Antonio del Rio Colorado—issued to Rafael Archuleta, Antonio Elias Armenta, and Miguel Montoya and thirty-two others by Perfect Juan Andres Archuleta of Taos. It was a Hispano *community* grant which included 18,955 acres.

On March 11, 1872, sixty-two of the residents of the Town of San Antonio del Rio Colorado filed an informal petition to the Surveyor General's office on March 11, 1872, seeking the recognition of the grant. In 1874, the Surveyor General reported to Congress recommending the approval of the grant. By 1891 Congress had not acted on the recommendation, so the Court of Private Land Claims became the decision maker.

“The plaintiff's petition was filed on January 30, 1892, and was brought by Francisco A. Montoya for himself and on behalf of all others similarly

situated. When the case came up for trial on August 18, 1892, he proved that the title papers were genuine and argued that if the title was not legal it was at least an equitable title which the United States was bound under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to recognize and protect.”¹³

On March 10, 1893, the court rejected the claim on the grounds that a prefect had no power to make a valid disposition of public land.

The government’s attorney contended that the original colonists were mere trespassers and therefore, an equitable title had not been created.

The boundaries were:

On the north, Jelo (cerro) de los Pinabetas and the point of the Guadalupe Hill; on the east, the mountains; on the south, the brow of the Colorado; and on the west, the point where Guadalupe Hill joins the Rio Colorado.

This grant is located immediately south of the town of Questa, NM.

For more information refer to:

<http://newmexicohistory.org/people/san-antonio-del-rio-colorado-grant>

San Cristobal—issued to Severino Martinez by Governor Alberto Maynes.

This was a Hispano *private* grant which included 5,000 acres. Severino wanted this tract of agricultural land on the San Cristobal River so he could till, and construct corrals and buildings. In 1815, the Alcalde of Taos, Pablo Lucero granted Martinez’ request. Twenty years later, Father Antonio Jose Martinez, son of Severino requested the lands east of his father’s grant. On November 13, 1835, Alcalde Jaramillo granted tracts to Antonio Jose Ortiz, Jose Madrid, Pablo Lucero, two sons (Juan Antonio and Tomas), Juan Antonio Salazar and Father Antonio Martinez.

On January 19, 1878, Daniel Martinez, petitioned the Surveyor General for himself and on behalf of the other owners for the grant issued on 1815 and 1835. On

¹³ *Montoya v. United States*, 18 S Ct. 944, 42 L. Ed. 1213 (1897) (mem.).

October 4, 1878, the Surveyor General recommended that Congress reject the claim on two issues: first, the grantees could not produce documents for either the 1815 or 1835 grant, and second, Severino Martinez had not settled upon the grant for a period of four years in order to have perfected a valid title.

The San Cristobal Grant became one of the six grants rejected by the Surveyor General's office prior to the time Surveyor General George W. Julian took office.

The boundaries were:

On the west, by the mouth of the Canoncito of the Rio San Cristobal; on the east, by a large spruce which stands above the Sierra del Alamo; and on the north and south, by the ridges lying on each side of the river.

Sangre de Cristo—issued to Stephen Luis Lee & Narciso Beaubien on December 30, 1843 by Governor Manuel Armijo. This was a Hispano *quasi-community* grant, it included 998,780 acres. This was the second largest grant to be given only the Beaubien-Miranda (Maxwell Grant) was the largest. The Sangre de Cristo grant spans the northern boundary of northern New Mexico and the southern border of Colorado.

During the Taos Revolt of 1847, Luis Lee and Narciso Beaubien were killed. As a result, Charles Beaubien, father of Narciso inherited his half of the grant, and also purchased the rights of Luis Lee from his heirs. At this time, Charles who was part-owner of the Beaubien-Miranda grant sold his share of that grant to his son-in-law Lucien Maxwell. After the American occupation, Miranda escaped to Mexico, and abandoned his share so Maxwell became sole owner of the Beaubien-Miranda Grant; it became known as the Maxwell Grant. Charles then became the sole owner of the large Sangre de Cristo grant. From that time forward until his death in 1864,

“Taosenos moved in two surges into lateral watersheds on the grant; first at the Rio Costilla late in the 1840s and on the Rio Culebra in 1853. Initially

plazas in the Rio Costilla and Rio Culebra were similar despite being situated eighteen miles apart”¹⁴

Some of Beaubien’s conveyances included “commons” areas, such as the “vegas” in San Luis.

After the death of Beaubien in 1864, Colorado Territorial Governor William Gilpin purchased the grant from Beaubien’s wife for back taxes. As part of the sale, Gilpin was required to respect some of Beaubien’s wishes which were to acknowledge the *pobladores’* private property and communal rights. Ignoring, the seller’s wishes, Gilpin and other investors divided the grant into two parts: the Trinchera Estates in Colorado and Costilla Estates in New Mexico. Maria Valdez-Mondragon explains the history of deceit in her Dissertation (see below no. 2 website for more information). Since the late 1860’s through the 1960’s illegal tactics were used by every party who became owner or part-owner of this grant.

Various parts of the Sangre de Cristo Grant have been in litigated beginning in the 1870’s,

Tameling v. U.S. Freehold Land Emigration Co., 2 Colo.411 (1874),

Eugene Lobato v. Zachary Taylor, Case No. 00SC527 (this case involves recent litigation regarding use of grazing and timber rights by heirs of San Luis versus the Taylor Ranch owners).

See the following sites for more information.

1. http://www.newmexicohistory.org/landgrants/sangre_de_cristo/english/home.html
2. <http://admin.newmexicohistory.org/filedetails.php?fileID=705>
3. www.southwestbooks.org/sangredecristo.htm

¹⁴ Valdez-Mondragon, Maria. "Challenging Domination: Local Resistance on the Sangre de Cristo Land Grant." University of New Mexico, 2006 (Ph.D. dissertation).

Santa Barbara—issued to Valentin Martin, Eusebio Martin, Jose Olguin, Clemente Mestas and Sixty Seven (67) other unnamed Resident Settlers of the Place of San Jose de las Trampas by Governor Fernando Chacon on January 11, 1796. It was a Hispano *community* grant which involved 31,084 acres. In 1744, this property had been granted to Jacinto Martin (alcalde, Santa Cruz), Felipe Bustamante, Antonio Martin and Juan Francisco Martin (Antonio and Juan Francisco were sons of Francisco “El Ciego” Martin Serrano; and “El Ciego” was the son of Pedro Martin Serrano y Salazar and Juana de Arguello). The grant was vacated due to frequent attacks from Apaches and Comanches, the settlers returned to Santa Cruz and did not try to re-settle the area. Under Spanish rules, the property was available so Valentin Martin and the others were awarded the grant by Governor Chacon.

In 1905 the Santa Barbara Grant received a patent, all 31,084 acres were approved. The lawyer for the residents is paid \$6,000 in the form of land. He partitioned the “common” lands and sells them to Santa Barbara Tie & Pole Co. a subsidiary of Santa Fe Railroad. All readily accessible lumber is milled and shipped to Panama for the construction of the Panama Canal. In 1926, Santa Barbara Tie & Pole Co. sells the land to the U.S. Forest Service for \$1.

For more information refer to:

<http://www.kmitch.com/Taos/stbarb.htm>

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/LGC%20070516%20Item%201%20SantaBarbaraHistory72016.pdf> (timetable of events on or near the Santa Barbara grant)

Taos Pueblo—issued to the natives of the Taos Pueblo in the early 1700’s. It wasn’t until 1816 that Governor Alberto Maynez declared that this Pueblo like the others were entitled to 4 square leagues. The Spanish residents of the area complained to the governor, responding to their complaints, “he re-emphasized

that the Indians' right to the league which had been granted to them by the King was incontestable.”¹⁵

On September 30, 1856 Pelham, the Surveyor General recommended to Congress that this grant be confirmed and on December 28, 1858, Congress approved this and the other seventeen Pueblo grants.

¹⁵ Archive No. 1357 ((Mss., Records of the A.N.M.).

Rio de los Conejos—issued to Pedro Alcanter and eighty (80) other settlers by Governor Francisco Sarracino in 1833. It was a Hispano *community* grant which involved more than 2 million acres. Settlers were unable to colonize the area due to numerous attacks by the Navajo nation and other tribes. These attacks continued until 1841 when the Mexican Government forced the Navajos to seek peace. On February 21, 1842, the grantees appealed to the “Perfect” of the Northern District of the Department of New Mexico, Juan Andres Archuleta to re-confirm the grant. Archuleta acknowledged that the settlers had lost their rights to the lands for not settling the lands within the prescribed time limit, however, he directed Alcalde, Cornelio Vigil to perform the appropriate ceremonies and give possession of the lands to the grantees. He directed the settlers to “. . . the tract shall be cultivated and never abandoned . . .”¹⁶

However, the attacks continued and the settlers were unable to fulfill their requirements. It wasn’t until 1851-1854 that a permanent settlement was established.

In 1861, Jose Maria Martinez on behalf himself and the other grantees sought confirmation of the grant through the Surveyor General. Because the majority of the grant was in Colorado, the New Mexico Surveyor General transferred the case to the office of the Surveyor General of Colorado. He did not act this request.

In 1900, the Court of Private Land Claims ruled against the heirs of the grant. The court cited two reasons, (1) “the grantees had forfeited their rights to the land by failing to settle the grant as required by law and (2) Perfect Archuleta had no authority to re-grant the claim.

¹⁶ The Los Conejos Grant, No. F-80; Miscellaneous Records of the Surveyor General of New Mexico.