

El Rancho de las Golondrinas Placita Narrative



Golondrinas Placita Introduction

The *Golondrinas Placita* is a partially reconstructed example of an 18th century Spanish colonial home, built as a defensive structure and positioned on the *Camino Real* as a *Rancho* and *paraje* (stopping place). Built in the 1960s, the entire structure is not original. The Chapel and Founders Room are believed to have been constructed between the 18th and 19th century as a private dwelling and later used as a barn until its transformation into a museum exhibit. Partial adobe foundations were present where the Kitchen and Captives Room are now. Their original form and function is unclear and it is not known with certainty who lived in what is now the Chapel and Founders Room.

Ranchos such as these would have been the residence of one family including any extended family plus servants and slaves. Because of its location on the *Camino Real* a *Rancho* and its grounds would also serve as a *paraje*, accommodating traveling military personnel, government emissaries, Franciscan clergy and traders. In 1780, Governor Juan Bautista de Anza led an expedition seeking to establish a new trade route between Santa Fe and Arispe, Mexico. On November 9th of that year the group marched 4 leagues (approximately 10 miles) south from Santa Fe on their first day and camped in *La Ciénega* at a place described as *Las Golondrinas*. While its unknown exactly where Anza camped, one can imagine a large expedition force, full

of excitement and trepidation about the adventure ahead, setting up somewhere at *Las Golondrinas*.

The architecture is specifically designed for defense and is of Spanish origin. Construction is of *adobes* (sun-dried mud bricks) covered with mud plaster. Roofs are flat and covered with earth. The peaked roof of the Chapel is a later addition from the late 19th or early 20th century when tin roofing material was readily available with the advent of the railroad in New Mexico after 1880.

Entry is through one of the two *zaguanes* (covered entries) leading to the *placita* (little plaza) with a *noria* (well) and *hornos* (earth ovens) where the family and their servants and slaves would have spent a majority of their time working. A *puertón/portón* (large door) could be opened for wagons, animals and groups of people, while a *puerta de zambullo* (small door) was used by individuals. The *hornos* were in constant use. The *horno* came to Spain from the Moors in North Africa and to New Spain with no change in design. They were used to bake many foods such as *pan* (bread), *dulces* (sweet bread), *panocha* (sprouted wheat and sugar pudding), *cajeta* de membrillo which is dried quince and sugar. *Hornos* were also used to steam fresh corn for *chicos* (dried corn) and roast green chile. The rooms, which surround the placita, make up the defensive exterior walls. The rooms are accessible from one another through interior doors and from the *placita* through exterior doors. Interior windows looking into the *placita* are large, allowing air and light into the rooms. Exterior windows are small for defensive purposes and are inset with selenite or mica to allow light in. Selenite is a mineral gypsum whose crystals can occur as tabular sheets which have been used as glass panes as early as the ancient Roman empire. Mica is a sheet silicate mineral that can be used for the same purpose but is typically not as translucent. Exterior windows were also covered with animal skins and wood *rejas* (bars) while interior windows were barred and/or shuttered. Fireplaces are of adobe and typically constructed in corners. The roofs are supported by *vigas* (wood beams), which would have been primarily round and are characteristic of adobe construction. Early examples of finely adzed square beams do exist and are displayed here as well. The ceiling is a mix of round *latillas* (poles) and *rajas* (rough strips of wood) laid across the *vigas*, signifying a lack of milled lumber. Doors are hand hewn with an adze giving them a stout and substantial appearance. It was also common for animal hides to be hung and used as interior doors. While on average, 18th century Europeans and their New World counterparts were slightly shorter than we are today, door height was not dictated by this fact. Rather, the doors are small for a number of other practical reasons. They require less material to make, help to maintain heat in a room when opened and high thresholds on exterior doors help keep rain water, snow, mud and leaves from entering the room. Smaller doors also offer some defense by forcing you to both stoop down and step over the threshold when entering a room or building.

This style of living is directly transplanted from medieval Spain and persisted in other parts of the Spanish colonies. Its important to remember that the plane of existence in colonial and territorial New Mexico was much lower than it is today in

that everyday life in even well-to-do homes occurred much lower to the ground. The Spanish colonials were heavily influenced by medieval and Mozarabic customs. These customs prevailed well into the 19th century as a matter of preference and in some instances as a result of cultural isolation. As a matter of custom and familiarity New Mexicans typically sat, ate and slept on cushions and low stools throughout the 18th and 19th century. This Spanish custom waned in the late 19th and early 20th century because of increasing American influence and affordable mass-produced furniture. Some of these low seating areas or *estrados* were exceptionally lush with soft mattresses, pillows and textiles.

The material culture on display will be a mix of fine and utilitarian Spanish goods, native made material, and Spanish colonial material fabricated on the northern frontier.



Capilla y Sala de Fundadores
Chapel and Founders Room

Sala Grande
Formal Living Room

This structure is believed to be the oldest building still standing on original foundations at *Las Golondrinas*. Originally having a traditional flat roof, the peaked roof of the Chapel is a later addition from the late 19th or early 20th century when tin

roofing material was readily available with the advent of the railroad after 1880. The original level of *vigas* is still visible on the building's exterior. The wood floor was added when the building was transformed into a museum exhibit. Prior to its transformation into a chapel it was being used as a barn. Based on the layout and objects on display the current interpretation is of a Northern New Mexican Hispanic chapel from the late 19th century. This room does not represent a family chapel or serve as an example of a religious space that would have existed at a *Rancho* from the 1700s. Rather, this chapel serves as a testament of faith and of the enduring role that religion has played in the lives of New Mexicans from the colonial period to today. In 1994, eleven artists working in traditional styles constructed the altar screen. In 1995, fourteen *santeros* (saint makers) and a tinsmith made the Stations of the Cross. The Founders Room is where the first meeting of the Colonial New Mexico Historical Foundation was held. This group, under the auspices of the *Paloheimos*, laid the foundation that brought about the existence of the museum. It now serves as a rotating exhibit space. See "The Bultos of the Golondrinas Chapel" in the interpreter handbook for more information on the altar screen and Stations of the Cross.

As a part of a Spanish colonial home this room would be quite different. It would have served as the *Sala Grande* (Formal Living Room). This large multipurpose room would have seen a variety of activities but primarily been reserved for the family of the *Rancho*. Family meals would have been taken here or the family room with service coming from the adjacent kitchen. Members of the family may even have slept in this room. Celebrations and *fandangos* (Spanish dance parties) would have been staged here and large community and political meetings would also have been held in this room. Distinguished guests would have used this room for lodging.



La Cocina **Kitchen**

The Spanish Colonial Kitchen was a hub of activity since it provided the fuel to run the *Rancho*. Basic meals, mostly served on the run, were probably the norm for most of the people who populated the *Rancho*. The *Rancho* owner, his honored guests and his immediate family would be served their meals in the family's quarters while servants, captives, slaves and workers would eat in the kitchen or grab a quick meal as they went about their business. The food served would be a mixture of Spanish and Pueblo dishes as colonization created a culinary fusion. Vessel forms also reflected this cultural mixture and in many cases traditional Spanish forms such as redware *soperos* (soup plates) were being commissioned by colonists and made by Pueblo Indians. This utilization of native skill is indicative of the early New Mexican local economy. The preparation and storage of food was a constant and required great effort mostly on the part of women, although men hunted, slaughtered and prepared the meat from game or large domesticated animals. The *metates* and *manos* (grinding stones) were used to prepare grains; this arduous work was left to young women both in the Pueblos and on the ranch. Eventually grain mills relieved part of this burden. *Tortillas* of corn and flour, a modest amount of meat, squash, beans and chile were the mainstays with fruits and other vegetables added in season or stored for use. Spices, salt, and special foods such as chocolate or sugar were carefully stored and protected.

Water at this *Rancho* was easily accessible but still had to be hauled about and stored for the family's use and for food preparation. Cooking was done in an open fireplace that had a shelf above for storage of tools and food which could also be used as a bunk, known as a shepherds bed, in especially harsh weather. The hooded hearth or shepherds-style hearth was typical of Northern New Mexico homes and a direct descendent of Spanish hooded fireplaces. The fire was simply made on the floor in the corner with the hood and flu directing smoke out of the room. While split wood such as *piñon*, juniper and cottonwood were used in fireplaces it was more common to use charcoal. Colonists quickly understood the limitations of resources and wood that had been prepared as charcoal was much more efficient, less wasteful, resulted in kitchens that were less smoky and food that had less ash fall into it. It was so important that Franciscans had native boys assigned to its preparation. "The cooking is done with charcoal winter and summer; this makes things much easier for the people...The food is better; the cooks are not troubled and filth does not fall into it [food]" (Dominguez, "The Missions of New Mexico, 1776", p.311). In warm weather cooking would be done in the *placita*. The *hornos* adjacent to the kitchen were for baking and roasting. Servants and slaves would sleep in the kitchen or other rooms where they worked -- like all of the rooms of the *Rancho*, the kitchen would serve multiple uses. Although the kitchen is full of tools and equipment, it had little furniture. *Trasteros* (cupboards) which were used to store *trastes* (dishes) were uncommon in the 18th century but big chests used to store just about everything and used as work surfaces could be found in a large kitchen such as this. The log *harinero* (*grain chest*) is an especially prized storage device. Low stools and benches were used for both sitting and for the preparation of food. The practice of eating family style while seated at a table and discussing your day, so much a part of our modern lives, was not a part of life before the late 19th century in various parts of the world. As was typical of the time, meals were a task, not an event and often taken on the go. There was typically an element of segregation so men, women and children often ate separately or in stages. Meals were simply a means of stocking up on calories to get you through the day and were typically treated with little fanfare. The serving pieces such as tin-glazed earthenware (*talavera and majolica*), silver plates and eating utensils, glassware and pewter were used to serve the *Rancho* family while servants might have a shared pot of food and a tortilla on a simple unglazed earthenware plate and cup. Everywhere, metal was highly prized so all vessels and other tools made of metal were especially valuable. Pueblo pottery was also widely used for storage and service.

- The *harinero* (grain chest) is made from a hollowed cottonwood log and shows the ingenuity of Spanish colonists. This form is unique, very difficult to make and not typical of the types of grain chests used in 18th century New Mexico.
- *Manos* and *metates* (grinding stones) are on the floor nearby for the daily process of *tortilla* making.
- In the hearth are iron, copper and ceramic cooking vessels with trivets, iron skewers, spoons, and other cooking implements. Metal items were either

- brought in by colonists or made by local Spanish blacksmiths. The pottery is a mix of pueblo and Spanish forms.
- Paddles and other implements for the *hornos* are by the doorway.
 - The space above the hearth was multipurpose and would be used to dry food or for general storage. In extreme cold weather it could be used as a sleeping platform/shepherds bed.
 - Near the hearth is a low hanging cradle so the women grinding corn or flour on the floor could easily check on the baby. The small built-in *banco* (*bench*) is used for sitting and storage.
 - The *repisa* (wood shelf) held the special serving pieces for the family such as majolica, pewter, silver and glass.
 - The *nicho* (niche or recess in wall) with shelves as you enter could hold a variety of culinary objects and household or personal effects including pots of dried food and some of the pots used for food preparation.
 - Hanging about the room are baskets, dried food, herbs and tools.



El Cuarto de Recibo **Reception Room**

Located directly adjacent to the large entry *zaguán*, the Reception Room would have been the realm of the man of the house. The *Rancho* was far more than a home and served as the center of a business enterprise that included farming, raising livestock, production of wool products including woven textiles, stakes in mining endeavors and the trading of local and imported goods on the Camino Real. There was a need

for space to work and for transactions of a wide variety to take place, precious commodities to be sorted and stored, visitors to be received and housed and documents to be prepared and guarded. Here the *Rancho* owner, *Ranchoero*, could greet visitors arriving at the *paraje* from their journey. His honored guests would be offered housing in this room which adjoined the family living quarters—rolled hides and textiles could be spread out for guests or used by the *Rancho* owner when he wished to have privacy from the rest of his family. Here he might work late into the night going over his accounts or preparing other important documents. From here he might also give his workers their assignments or provide them with their pay in the form of commodities of the realm. Since he might be the only one in the *Rancho* who was able to read or write, he would have used this space to house precious books or to write upon his *escritorio* (desk), where he also kept important papers. Heaped about the room would be special goods that were in transition—either coming from or going to Mexico proper. Since the *Rancho* produced surplus woolen goods, he was in a position to be involved in the merchant trade by exchanging his surplus for such things as the newly arrived luxury goods or tools-- things that could later be sold or bartered to add to the income of the *Rancho*. In general, this entry room served as the main office, special storage and guest room for the *Rancho*. The room also buffered the rest of the family from the general comings and goings of non-family members and arriving strangers.

- Animal hides were used as bedding and floor covering as well as door coverings. In addition, woolen mattress-like bags were commonly used as both bedding and seating.
- Writing desks were based upon the Spanish *vargueño* which was a separate chest sitting upon a table. Smaller boxes with drawers and a hinged front writing surface were often referred to as *escritorios* and could be transported for use by the literate and well-to-do. Even though ink was constantly in short supply, notaries and scribes played an essential role in the documenting of legal affairs in the colony. Often lacking their services, local *alcaldes* (mayors) or other educated individuals such as our *Ranchoero* would fulfill this role. Especially important documents were sent back to Mexico City to be entered into the Notarial Archives. Documents such as these, as well as ecclesiastical reports, have provided us with information about life on the far frontier of Northern New Spain. Inventories of goods being transported to and from the colony were kept as much for the government—so that goods could be taxed—as for the merchant.
- As a reception room for the merchant/rancher this room would hold goods either coming or going. The six-board chest was used for transport as well as for storage—it would be raised off the floor. Woven leather chests were made in Mexico proper and in other colonies as well, they were used for both the transport of goods and for storage. A chair for special visitors and for the *Rancho* owner's use would represent another example of status and wealth.
- There are piles of woolen goods being set aside in this room in preparation for trade. Other important trade goods for this *Rancho* might be trained mules, horses and oxen needed for the journey. These might be traded for

something rare to the colony such as iron tools or even chocolate, a book, or a bolt of silk.

- The owner's room might also include the luxury goods used to serve such as pewter, silver, or glass.
- Lighting for his tasks would include precious tallow candles and possibly oil lamps.
- There was little to no hard currency in circulation in New Mexico during this period. This was further complicated by *monedas imaginarias* (illusory moneys) invented by dishonest merchants to deceive colonists and natives. This consisted of 4 different kinds of *pesos* to confuse consumers. Silver *pesos* were valued at 8 *reales*, *de proyecto* (inflated *pesos*) were valued at 6 *reales*, old *pesos* were valued at 4 *reales* and *la tierra* (common *pesos*) valued at 2 *reales*. However, colonists had a complex system of barter with a clear understanding of how much something was worth, in terms of silver *pesos*, and what combination of goods in return for something would be considered sufficient payment. Below are a few examples of values from 1776 in the Santa Fe area:
 - *Fanega* (100 pounds or 1.5 bushels) of wheat or maize: 4 *pesos*
 - *Fanega* of chick peas: 12 *pesos*
 - *Fanega* of any other legume: 8 *pesos*
 - Cow with calf: 25 *pesos*
 - Cow without calf: 20 *pesos*
 - Wild bull: 15 *pesos*
 - Tame bull trained under yoke: 20 *pesos*
 - Tame ox: 25 *pesos*
 - Yearling calf: 6 *pesos*
 - Other livestock (sheep, ewe, goat): 2 *pesos*
 - Fowl: 4 *reales* (half of a *peso*)
 - Mule female: 40 *pesos*
 - Mule male: 30 *pesos*
 - Donkey (male and female): 100 *pesos* or more depending on animal
 - Horse (male and female): 100 *pesos* or more depending on animal
 - 1 *vara* of linen: 2 *pesos*
 - 1 pound of chocolate: 2 *pesos*
 - 1 pound of sugar: 1 *peso*
 - 1 pair of shoes: 2 *pesos*
 - 1 deer skin: 2 *pesos*
 - 1 fat pig: 12 *pesos*
 - 20 eggs: 1 *peso*
 - 1 *ristra* of *chile*: 2 *pesos* in Rio Arriba, 1 *peso* in Rio Abajo
 - 4 fleeces of wool: 2 *pesos* in Rio Arriba, 1 *peso* in Rio Abajo



El Cuarto de Familia **Family Room**

This room was among the most protected locations in the *Rancho* since it was entered only by passing through the entry *cuarto* (room) or by the *torreón* (tower) room. This was the inner sanctum ruled by the lady of the house where she stored her precious things and raised her children. As such, it is characterized by the use of a variety of textiles for warmth, comfort and decoration and would be the spot where women would gather to work and socialize. Along the walls are *adobe bancos* (benches) used for both sleeping and seating, as are the large rolls of bedding that are spread out at night. During the day, these comfortable sofa-like rolls were the spot that women could use for seating and lounging as they worked. Some of these low seating areas or *estrados* were exceptionally lush with soft mattresses, pillows and textiles. Like the entry room, a small fireplace provided heat and could be used for some modest cooking although most of the serious food preparation took place in the kitchen. Servants would serve the family its meals in this room as they sat upon their rolls of bedding or upon low stools. The chests so ubiquitous to the entire *Rancho* were not only for storage but could also be used for serving and as work surfaces. Little other furniture graced the room although a chair or two might be reserved for special guests. An altar area in the room was maintained for the family's private worship. Above a modest table were stacked religious images that mimic the form of the more elaborate altars and altarpieces to be found in the churches in town. Some large *Ranchos* had their own small chapels that could serve the family and neighboring colonists. Small windows with a form of glazing made of

selenite or mica allowed some light to enter while larger windows with shutters faced the interior courtyard.

- Hanging blankets and examples of New Mexican weaving, which would be brought down at night for warmth and hung during the day for safekeeping.
- Woolen mattress, made from *jerga* (utilitarian weaving) and stuffed with wool fleece are throughout the room and used for sleeping and sitting.
- Altar area with *retablos* (painting on wood of a religious figure), *bultos* (wood statue of religious figure) and other personal religious paraphernalia being used as a private devotional area which has a fine *colcha* embroidered altar cloth covering the table (*colcha* means bedcovering but in this case *colcha* refers to New Mexican embroidery, which utilizes a couching stitch called the *colcha* stitch). *Retablos* are stacked and placed in a manner that reflects the arrangements of larger altar screens. Saints depicted would have been from the pantheon of Franciscan saints as well as those that might be personal to the family. Colonial New Mexico did not have an official Patron Saint but a few of the many religious figures commonly prayed to by Spanish colonists were *San Francisco de Asis* (Saint Francis of Assisi), *San Pablo* (Saint Paul), *San Isidro* (Saint Isidore), *Santo Niño de Atocha* (Holy Child of Atocha) and various avocations of the Blessed Virgin including *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (Our Lady of Guadalupe) and *Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Rosario* (Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary).
- Women's fine clothing, such as *rebozos* (shawls), would be stored in chests.
- In front of the fireplace women would gather to do their work—a *malacate* (spindle) and embroidery in process can be seen.
- A small table is being used in the general hearth area and the family would have had a number of woolen mattresses being used as seating by the ladies of the house.
- Clay candle holders with tallow candles provide light for the work being done.



Torreón y Zaguán al Torreón
Tower and Tower Entrance Room

Torreones were a common sight throughout Northern New Mexico during the Spanish Colonial period. Colonists were responsible for defending themselves, as the soldiers of the *presidio* (fort) could not be notified in time to protect their fellow citizens. These towers provided a place for the Spanish to retreat while under attack.

These multipurpose structures were also used for storing food, water, tack and weapons used in the defense of the *Rancho*. This particular *torreón* is built into the *Rancho* complex but many were also constructed as stand-alone towers in a strategically defensible position offering expansive views. On the upper level, a sentinel stood watch and was ready to warn others of approaching danger by any means available including blowing a horn, beating a drum, shouting or ringing a bell. Field workers would run to the protection of the walled *placita* while others would enter the *Torreón* to fight off the enemy. Raiding was typically done by both the Spanish and native tribes in order to obtain needed supplies, animals and captives but not as a matter of absolute extermination. Attacks were usually over as quickly as they started and may have resulted in injury, death or captivity.

One such attack is documented as taking place in *La Ciénega* in the writings of Franciscan priest, Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez. On Thursday June 20th 1776, a party of Comanche warriors attacked *ranchos* in *La Ciénega* killing nine men and boys and taking two young children captive. Antonio Sandoval, the owner of *El Rancho de las Golondrinas*, lost his 19 year old son Jose Sandoval and nephew Santiago Mascareñas, who were killed as they tended crops. Scenes such as this were typical on the northern frontier as uneasy relations resulted in tragedies on both sides.

- Weapons stored in the *torreón* included *escopetas* (Spanish muskets), lances, swords and bows. Colonists would use whatever they had at their disposal to defend themselves. Gunpowder was constantly in short supply from Mexico and the Spanish often used bows, arrows and lances. Barrels contained what little gunpowder the *Rancho* possessed.
- Horse tack was stored here as well. Saddles, bridles and blankets hang on the walls. Straps, rope, and cinches were often made from horsehair, which produced superior reins as well.
- An *aparejo* is stored here. *Aparejos* are pack pad saddles that go over the backs of donkeys and mules to form the base of the packing system and protect the animal from injury. Large *atajos* (caravans) of pack mules and donkeys would travel the Camino Real carrying goods and in the 19th century would travel west to California and north as far as Wyoming. *Arrieros* (muleteers) were responsible for packing and taking care of the animals. This entire system of packing was passed on to the Spanish from the Moors of North Africa and was a guild-controlled profession in Spain.



La Despensa/Dispensa **Pantry**

Infrequent wagon trains from Mexico, drought and raids made it imperative to take rigorous measures to store and stock provisions. Starvation was a very real possibility and times of famine would stalk the fledgling colony. Wild game was an indispensable source of protein. Large flocks of sheep were important for survival and for revenue. Corn, beans and squash provided the most important foodstuffs and these were stored in great abundance by the colonist and guarded in the *Despensa* (pantry) from both pests and humans alike. Preservation of food was limited to salting, smoking and drying—canning was to come much later. Seed storage was another significant use for the *Despensa*. Colonists in New Mexico would look to their Pueblo neighbors when they had failed to adequately harvest sufficient quantities of food. These supplies were either acquired through the *encomienda* system (mandatory tribute and labor) or taken by outright force, which often resulted in starvation for the Pueblos.

- Dried food such as chile and corn are stored here. They are both hanging as *ristras* and piled into sacks.
- Containers of seeds are stored here and used for planting in the spring. Seed saving was an important aspect of Spanish Colonial agriculture. The finest specimens of vegetables would have been selected, dried and the seeds removed.

- This room also serves as the storage space for agricultural implements of the field such as rakes, digging sticks, hoes, and sifters for grain.
- Measuring containers for grains: *fanega*, *almud* and *cuartilla*. A *fanega* constituted the standard Spanish volumetric unit for dry measurement. A *fanega* of dry corn was equivalent to approximately 100 pounds of grain or 1.5 bushels. An *almud* is one-quarter of a *fanega*. The *cuartilla* is 1/12th of an *almud* and 1/48th of a *fanega*.
- Barrels are in this room for food storage such as dried grains and salted meat. The baskets would have been used for gathering fruits and harvesting vegetables.
- Dried fruits and vegetables could include apricots, peaches, apples raisins, peas, beans, onions and garlic, also melon and squash—such as watermelon, and pumpkin.
- Fresh vegetables include tomatoes, cabbage, onion, lettuce, radishes.
- Dried grains—corn and wheat are stored in the *harineros* (grain chests or bins).
- Glass and pottery vessels are for the storage of oils, wine, brandy, vinegar, and tallow.
- Luxury goods and foodstuffs such as olives, chocolate, sugar and tobacco would be stored here for safe keeping.
- Dried and curing meats such as venison, sheep and buffalo would hang from the *vigas*.
- Dried herbs hang from poles and materials for food preservation such as salt are kept dry here.



Talleres de Hilar y Tejer
Weaving and Spinning Rooms

In 1540, the first sheep were brought to New Mexico with Francisco Vasquez Coronado's expedition. They were driven along with the expedition and used to feed the soldiers during their two-year exploration of the Southwest. With the Spanish colonization of New Mexico in 1598, sheep were utilized as more than just food. Herds of churro sheep were brought north from Mexico and raised on the plains of the northern frontier for their wool. Weavers knowledgeable in treadle looms and dyeing produced finished products that sustained the colony. By 1638, weaving appears to have developed beyond local consumption as New Mexico Governor Luis de Rosa was producing woolen goods in Santa Fe workshops for trade with the rest of New Spain for much needed goods. Pueblo Indians already had a tradition of growing, spinning and weaving cotton. In the early 17th century, Pueblos learned how to use wool from the Spanish while still using their traditional upright looms. Wool quickly became integral to Pueblo weaving traditions that was later passed on to the Navajo. As flocks grew the sheep themselves, which flourished on the New Mexico plains, were driven south for barter and sale. Flocks continued to grow in the following centuries, as did the production of wool and woolen goods. Authorities in New Spain recognized the importance of the sheep trade and wool production to New Mexico's economy. The market was greatly expanded with Mexican Independence in 1821 and the opening of the Santa Fe Trail that same year. By 1840, it was reported that 20,000 Rio Grande blankets were sold in Mexico. Trade with California offered an even greater boost as wool, woven goods and sheep made their way from New Mexico to the West Coast. In 1853, Kit Carson drove 6,500 sheep from Taos to Sacramento. By the early 20th century, the sheep and wool industry had declined greatly because of cheap goods brought by the railroad, overgrazing and the loss of grazing lands. Despite this, woven goods figure prominently in New Mexico's cultural and artistic heritage today.

These three rooms show how the Spanish colonists carded, spun and wove wool to make rugs for the floor, blankets for the bed and horses and clothing including *serapes* (blankets or shawls worn by men) and *rebozos* (shawls worn by women). Wool, woven goods and sheep were the most important commodity and export from New Mexico besides slaves. Wool could be left as its natural color or prepared with natural dyes. Dyestuffs were typically grown on the ranch but brilliant blues such as indigo and rich reds such as *cochineal* were imported from Mexico on the *Camino Real*.

- The looms are all contemporary or reproductions and only the large four-harness beam loom is an accurate reproduction of a Rio Grande loom. These looms were multiple harness "walking" beam looms, meaning that the weaver stood while weaving and operating the treadles, essentially "walking" on the treadles.
- Spinning was almost exclusively done by *malacate* (spindle). The weights or whorls for these spindles were often fashioned from broken pottery. A variety of spinning techniques were employed including the drop method which could be done while walking or standing, the thigh method which was done while sitting and also the method of using a bowl to support the spindle

- which was also done while seated. There was a certain practicality to using *malacates* in that they were easily transportable and could be used anywhere. It is interesting to note that carding and spinning was typically done by women and captives, while weaving was predominantly done by men.
- There were *ruecas* (spinning wheels) but these were much less common due to their expense, size and the material and tools required to make them. The *rueca* seen in the Spinning Room is a contemporary descendent of the Spanish colonial *rueca* and is still used in Mexico today. Characteristic traits of this type of *rueca* are a horizontal bench and small wheel turned by a handle attached to its center. This was quite different from the Scottish walking wheels that have a steeply angled bench and a large wheel as tall as the operator.
 - Other tools of the weaver include weaving battens to separate the warp shed and facilitate adding yarn to the weft pattern. Shuttles which hold yard and are shaped to easily slide through the sheds of yarn when operating a treadle loom. Carding combs used to separate wool fibers in preparation for spinning. Skein winders used for preparing and measuring spun wool in preparation for weaving or sale.



El Cuarto de los Cautivos y los Criados
The Captives' and Servants' Room

The history of slavery, captivity, peonage and servitude in New Mexico is a long and difficult story. The earliest years of the colony's history involved a system called *encomienda*, a demand for tribute goods and labor used throughout the colonial world. Given the especially harsh conditions of life on the far northern frontier of New Mexico, the *encomienda* along with disease and other abuses led to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The *encomienda* system was eventually abandoned after the return of Spanish colonists under Don Diego de Vargas, however some aspects of the tribute system continued. Against this backdrop, there was also the widespread practice of raiding and stealing of humans—especially women and children—being practiced by many tribal groups and the colonists. The great value of this human capital can be parsed from trade reports citing slaves sold in Mexico proper and those sold were high priced commodities. One of the terms given for those who were separated from their tribes was *genízaro* (detrribalized Native Americans). By some estimates almost one-third of the population of the area consisted of people with some form of mixed ancestry and/or separation from their original people through captivity, slavery and peonage. In our prosperous *Rancho* it is likely that captives were purchased through barter and then “rescued” in a fictive form of salvation called *rescate* where captives were baptized by the church and “saved” by their owners thus avoiding the laws that forbade slavery. The lives of these individuals were very much dependent on the luck of the draw—they could be used harshly or brought into the family in a modest way but still their labor and care was at the discretion of their owners. Even though the colony was far from centers of power, this was a highly stratified society where servants and slaves had few rights while *vecinos* (citizens) and the highest levels—the *Dons and Doñas* (honorific titles)—were given access to legal and economic benefits. Unlike the chattel system of slavery in the American South, the children of this colony's slaves could make their way in the world and extraordinary individuals were known to have bartered their abilities to become prosperous and well-regarded. In time, through avenues such as the *rescate* and other kinship alliances, tribal and mixed heritage individuals became part of the overall population and their past hidden—in similar fashion to crypto Jews. Few of the slaves or peons of this colony were of African heritage. In terms of marriage, “Captives had limited opportunities to achieve socially approved marriages...theoretically, a captive gained freedom by marrying. This naturally gave owners strong motivation for preventing marriage. In fact the small number of marriages that occurred shows how successful owners were at preventing marriage. What formal control owners had in this matter is not known, but whatever pressures they brought to bear were effective. Social attitudes were perhaps of importance and the stigma of marrying a captive may have been enough to discourage these marriages.” (Brugge, “Navajos in the Catholic Church Records of New Mexico 1694-1875”, p. 117, 125). Servants and peons could be fellow Spanish colonists. Men serving in the militia, with no other option, often resorted to selling their children into peonage in order to afford to equip themselves for the required term of service. As late as 1868, the United States government formally freed well over 300 individuals from peonage and slavery in New Mexico. Human trafficking in New Mexico was intense, went on for centuries, and had a profound effect upon all levels of the population.

At the *Rancho*, the servants and slaves would have likely slept in the kitchen or in their working quarters. In the captives room you see that a woman of Navajo origins is using her knowledge of weaving to make textiles that could be bartered for other goods. Other women and children would share this room with her. Their sleeping/working quarters are not markedly different from those of the rest of the family but all that you see would have belonged to the owner family and not to the peon or slave. In general this room has few objects of comfort and value indicating the status of the individuals who reside here.

The large basket-like crates along the back wall are holding raw wool to be carded or spun. These types of crates were common in New Spain and would have come up the *Camino Real* to New Mexico loaded with goods on a caravan. Instead of disposing of them the colonists would have repurposed them as you see here. Other work that may be done in this room is the carding and spinning of wool. Grinding would have been done using the *mano* and *metate* with corn or wheat coming from the *harinero*. The *Rancho* would need as many *metates* going as possible and the prepared grain would be added to what was already ground in the kitchen.

- Open basket-like boxes or crates are used to store the raw materials of the weaver.
- Like other rooms, the servants or slaves have a rolled *jerga* mattress that is used for both sleeping and sitting.
- The textile on the upright loom is being made using the techniques and designs of early Navajo weavings. This type of vertical loom is a native design. Even smaller looms of similar design were portable and are known as back-strap looms.
- Navajo rugs and Hispanic weavings are displayed on hanging poles. These would be pulled down at night for bedding or used during the day for seating.
- A small fireplace provides warmth and light.
- A *mano* and *metate* in the room would be used by the captive or other servants, spending much of their time preparing corn meal or wheat flour.
- Storage of grain adjacent in the *harinero* was a convenience for the woman working at the *metate*.
- The only light source for the workers would have been daylight through the open door or the light of the fire at night. Precious tallow candles or oil lamps would have been reserved for the use of the *Rancho* owner's family.