

**Military Service, Captive Exchange and the formation of a  
Hispanic-Apache Community in the late-Colonial Chihuahua Borderlands**

In August 1834, an Apache raiding party captured José Madrid—a Mexican youth—from his home in Carrizal, Northern Chihuahua. Two months later, the boy managed to escape on horseback, hiding himself at night in the tree-cover along the Rio Bravo [known in the U.S.A. today as the Rio Grande]. De-briefed by the military commander at El Paso, 12 year old José painted a vivid portrait of the Apache camp in which he had dwelled, describing how the Apaches played cards by the campfire at night and danced for days to celebrate the fruits of their successful raids. He told the story of how several of his Apache captors had met with *Americano* merchants, sharing coffee with the Anglos only to fall sick a few days later. The sickness had spread among the Apache camp, filling the Apaches with horror as more than three hundred men, women, and children died. José noted that the Apaches had harbored extreme bitterness towards the *Americanos* ever since. If this was perhaps good news to a Mexican army commander's ears, the boy brought a warning with him as well: the Apaches had "many" captives among them, and a number of these, he explained, appeared to have allied themselves with the Indians. Worst of all, according to José, the Apaches were plotting against Mexican settlements in Chihuahua: by wearing Mexican military uniforms they were going to sneak up close to towns for surprise attacks. Jose concluded his account to the captain by offering to guide the Mexican army back to the Apache camp, "if the governor so desires." Captain Ronquillo relayed all of this news to Chihuahua City. He then returned the boy to his worried father.<sup>1</sup>

To the 21<sup>st</sup> century listener—familiar as we are with mythic tales of cowboys and Indians—José Madrid's account of his two months of captivity among the Apache may seem fantastical. Far from a terrifying experience, captivity—at least in retrospect—became the adventure of a lifetime for José Madrid. José even yearned to return to the Apache camp, to guide the army back to the place from which he had escaped. Whether reality or the work of a child's imagination, the boy's account hints at cultural changes resulting from decades of contact between Apache and Hispanic groups, and also to the lingering possibility of Apache-Hispanic solidarity. José, for example, noted that many Hispanic captives were allied with the Apache; he also described card playing and Apaches wearing clothing of Hispanic origin. What

---

<sup>1</sup> Janos Collection, original documents on file at the Benson Latin American Collection, the University of Texas at Austin. Referenced hereafter as F(older), plus file number, S(ection), plus file number (e.g., F1, S1). Justiniana, El Paso, to Secretario Interno, 9 October 1834: F36, S1. All translations in this essay were done by the author from the author's transcriptions of the original manuscripts.

12-year-old José did not know in relaying (or imagining) the impending attack by Apaches disguised in Mexican military uniforms is that only several decades before, Apache men had in fact served *with* Hispanic soldiers in the Spanish army.

Beginning in 1790, Apache groups across the colonial Mexican North settled in and among Hispanic towns and military garrisons in what were known as “peace establishments.” The traditional narrative of these years is well-established: the Spanish had developed the policy of peace establishments in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as a new tool drawn from a colonial repertoire of Indian pacification and cultural extermination. Drawing upon French and English methods—colonial policies and techniques had long circulated between European powers—the Spanish sought to make Apaches dependent upon Spanish goods, with the ultimate goal of educating, Christianizing, and civilizing succeeding generations. The peace establishments were thus a means to eventually make “gente sin razon” into “gente de razon”—to make irrational, nomadic heathens into rational, sedentary colonial subjects. Though many Apaches lived in and among Hispanic groups for almost forty years, receiving rations, farming, and attending school, these interethnic settlements disbanded in the 1830s when the Mexican system of distributing rations to Apaches and other “barbarous” tribes was ended. Apaches across the northern frontier of Mexico returned to a more mobile hinterland existence, though they had maintained connections and returned to the hinterlands to hunt, trade, and harvest cactus throughout the period.<sup>2</sup>

Most historians have explained peace establishments as a technique of Spanish Indian policy. And while this explanation is not inaccurate, it is incomplete. What motivations, besides rations, did Apache groups have to settle at presidios and towns in the colonial Mexican North? What characterized social relations in these settlements, and what impact did these interethnic communities have on Apache and Hispanics groups in the North American West in the long term? While these broad questions interest me, and are guiding questions for my larger research project, I will focus today on what I see as one motivating factor in particular for Apaches to settle in and among Hispanic groups in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century: access to service as auxiliaries in the Spanish army. I will argue that Apache notions of the raid—and its centrality to Apache manhood—converged with the ideals of Spanish martial masculinity to facilitate the settlement of

---

<sup>2</sup> See William B. Griffen, *Apaches at War & Peace* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), 14-17 and David J. Weber *The Spanish Frontier in North America*: New Haven (Yale University Press, 1992), 233, for a discussion of scholarship addressing these themes.

Apaches among Hispanics, contributing to the formation of interethnic households as Apache and Hispanic men alike incorporated captives they received as rewards for valiant service into their families.

In sum, Jose Madrid's 1834 report that Hispanic men had allied themselves with Apaches to raid settlements in the Mexican North, and his warning that Apaches wearing military uniforms would descend upon Mexican towns, strangely echoes an earlier history: that of interethnic military service and its contribution to the formation of Apache-Hispanic communities in the late-colonial Chihuahua borderlands. Before I examine Apache auxiliary service more closely, however, let me first address why I think this history matters.

A close analysis of military service, captive exchange, and community reveals a range of possible relationship between Apaches and Hispanics that complicates the notion of simple enmity that has long dominated the historical literature. In addition, much of the literature that addresses Apache history before 1846 has focused on a geographical anachronism: the boundaries of the present-day United States, leaving the history of Apache-Hispanic relations in Chihuahua and elsewhere in the Mexican North under-examined. The years of contact with Hispanic groups in Northern Mexico are significant not only because the distinction between Apache tribal groups now employed emerged during the colonial period, but also because this earlier history of cultural exchange shaped later Apache encounters with the Mexican and Anglo-American militaries in fundamental ways. In studying relations between Apache and Hispanic men through the lens of the Spanish army, I draw in particular from James Brooks's recent study of captive exchange in New Mexico. In *Captives and Cousins*, Brooks shows the ways that shared notions of masculinity facilitated the interpenetration of Indigenous and Hispanic cultures in the New Mexican Borderlands.<sup>3</sup> While his insights into captive exchange economies have been enormously valuable to me, I deviate from Brooks in a number of ways: Most obviously by examining a distinct region—Northern Chihuahua—but also by drawing upon Andrés Reséndez's call to “insert the Mexican state back into analyses of the Mexican North.”<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> James F. Brooks, *Captives & Cousins* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), especially 30-35. See also Brooks “This evil extends especially...to the feminine sex’: Negotiating Captivity in the New Mexico Borderlands,” *Feminist Studies* 22, 2 (Summer 1996), 279-309.

<sup>4</sup> Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), especially 6-7.

If Brooks brings the state back into the picture primarily with the Anglo conquest in 1846, I seek to explore the ways in which the goals of the Spanish and Mexican States intertwined with, sought to assimilate, and ultimately shaped the meaning of informal trade, captive exchange, and community formation in Northern Chihuahua throughout the period of my larger study [my masters report]: 1770-1850. In this longer study, furthermore, I show that interethnic exchange did not always center on contest between men over access to women, but at times operated through Apache women's role as intermediaries.<sup>5</sup> But a more thorough explanation of forms of exchange in the Chihuahua borderlands will have to wait. To examine one arena in which intimate bonds were formed between Apache and Hispanic groups in Janos, Chihuahua and surrounding towns like El Paso, I return to 1790, as Apache warriors prepared for a raid.

### **Apache Auxiliaries in the Spanish Army**

The spirit of the raid has settled on the Chihuahua borderlands. Apache men are gathering on horseback, preparing to descend upon the Spanish military garrison at Janos. The call spreads through the Apache camps scattered in a twelve-mile radius around the fort—it is time. Galloping past homes and farms dotting the riverbank, the Apaches arrive at the edge of the presidio and wait. When the Spanish commanding officer emerges, he selects auxiliaries to guide a campaign against hostile Apache clans. Four, six, or more Apache men are chosen, and the rest—"seized with the greatest sorrow"—return to their camps in and around Janos. The men selected "go about happy and proud," looking forward to the rewards that Spanish military service will surely bring.<sup>6</sup>

A 1799 report on the northern provinces of colonial Mexico provides us with an invaluable window onto Apache auxiliary service. Drawing upon years of archival research, personal observation, and extensive travel, José Cortés—a Lieutenant in the Spanish Royal Corps of Engineers—described Apache

---

<sup>5</sup> In seeking to emphasize the contingent nature of gender in my larger study, I draw from Toby L. Ditz, "The New Men's History and the Peculiar Absence of Gendered Power: Some Remedies from Early American Gender History," *Gender & History* 16, 1 (2004), especially her discussion of how relations between men often center on access to women, and how this insight can be used to keep the impact of constructions of masculinity on the larger gender order in mind when discussing the history of relations between men.

<sup>6</sup> This narrative draws upon the account of Jose Cortes, *Memorias sobre las provincias del norte de Nueva España, 1799*, in Elizabeth A. H. John and John Wheat, eds. and trans., *Views from the Apache Frontier* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), 30, Spanish military officers descriptions of Apache rancheria distribution around Janos, and a late-18<sup>th</sup> century map of Janos that shows homes and farms of soldiers and civilians along the riverbank. The map is one of many drawn of late 18<sup>th</sup> century presidios and towns in the Colonial Mexican North by Jose Urrutia.

auxiliary service to argue against the notion that it was impossible to make peace with the Apache or to teach them the customs of a rational life. This idea was “a most patent fallacy,” Cortés wrote, and he believed that Apache auxiliaries were but one example that Apaches as a whole represented a resource “that we must cultivate.”<sup>7</sup>

Cortés’s report challenged existing Spanish policy. In 1788, the viceroy in Mexico City ordered that all Apache prisoners of war be exported out of province. The chain of prisoners that resulted sent Apache warriors to far flung locales: from Cuba to Central Mexico. While several scholarly articles examine this slave trade, and it is referenced in passing in numerous book-length works, the fascinating image of fierce Apache warriors on Cuban plantations has distracted scholars from considering the implications of the prisoner chain in Northern Mexico itself. In fact, access to the chain of captives was at least one key factor that led Apache groups to settle around Janos beginning in 1790, as military commanders used the *threat* of deportation to leverage Apache headmen to settle with their clans in a “peace establishment” at Janos, one of several across the Northern frontier of New Spain.<sup>8</sup>

As Spanish military officers drew upon the threat of deportation of relatives to attempt to pacify Apaches and make them sedentary, the existing means of captive exchange began to be altered. Apache women’s role in negotiating exchanges through the practice of heraldry became less common as Spanish commanders dealt directly with Apache men, often by capturing Apache women and children and offering them to Apache men in exchange for their settlement at Janos. Apache and Spanish men came into increasingly intimate contact—and not solely by battling one another.

One of the first Apache groups to settle at Janos was the clan of El Compá. His wife had been taken captive in 1788 along with several other close kin. To redeem them, El Compá agreed to aid the Spanish, settling first at Bacoachi and then at Janos.<sup>9</sup> December 1790 correspondence between Janos commander Antonio Cordero and Chihuahua City provides further evidence of the tactic of taking and threatening to deport captives to leverage Apaches to settle at Janos. Cordero explained that in a recent raid, troops had taken the wife, sons, and other relatives of an Apache named Gimiguisen captive. Cordero

---

<sup>7</sup> Cortes in Elizabeth A. H. John and John Wheat, eds. and trans., 28.

<sup>8</sup> For articles addressing the deportation of Apache prisoners of war, see Max L. Moorhead, “Spanish Deportation of Hostile Apaches: The Policy and the Practice,” *Arizona and the West* 17 (Autumn 1975), 210-211, 215, 217 and Christon I. Archer, “The Deportation of Barbarian Indians from the Internal Provinces of New Spain, 1789-1810,” *Americas* 29 (January 1973), 376-385.

<sup>9</sup> Ugarte, Valle de San Buenaventura, to Cordero, September 18, 1788: F5, S2.

suggested that this “disgrace” would likely make Gimiguisen think hard about soliciting peace and seeking forgiveness for his “past sins.” Having shamed him, Cordero expected that he would step forward to restore his honor, perhaps by serving with the Spanish army in its next campaign.<sup>10</sup>

In June of the following year, Commandant General Nava noted that a number of the prisoners taken in the last military campaign did not have to be sent to Mexico with the chain of prisoners, “because they are the kin of El Compá.” Returning these kin to El Compá, who had requested them, Nava noted that he would hold onto the other prisoners until he received word that “the five Apache men they belong to have come in good faith to settle at Janos.” He added that if they came to Janos to settle he would “keep his word” by returning their kin to them.<sup>11</sup>

The exchange of captives that had developed in the early 1790s was not limited to attempts to leverage Apaches to settle at Janos. One advantage of settlement in and among Hispanic communities was access to the chain of prisoners bound for Mexico. In March 1790, for example, Ojos Colorados—an Apache headman settled in the Janos peace establishment—asked the Janos Commander, Antonio Cordero, about the wife of an Apache in his clan who had been taken prisoner and was now at the town of San Buenaventura. Cordero’s commanding officer told him that he should go ahead and negotiate an exchange—trading her for a Spanish boy and girl the Apaches had among them. He added that Cordero should feel free to give the Apaches settled at Janos the prisoners they wanted, as long as he always “exchanged them for our own captives.”<sup>12</sup> In April 1791, a list of the prisoners that Apache headmen settled at Janos had requested was circulated: Vegonz-in-é, Faggaiso-é, Chinaggai, Fajuyé and other Apache prisoners’ names were carefully transcribed in Castilian phonetics. Apaches at Janos inquired about nine women and children and two men in total. If earlier forms of captive exchange centered on Apache women inquiring at Spanish presidios and towns about captives, Apache men were now dealing with Spanish commanders, either directly or through an interpreter.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to providing direct access to petition for captives in the chain of prisoners, settlement around Janos also provided Apaches “at peace” with the opportunity to serve as auxiliaries in the Spanish

---

<sup>10</sup> Cordero, Janos, to Casanova, 4 December 1790: F6A S1

<sup>11</sup> Nava, Chihuahua, to Janos Commander, 7 June 1791: F7, S1.

<sup>12</sup> Borica, Chihuahua, to Cordero, 29 March 1790: F6A, S1.

<sup>13</sup> “Noticia de los Prisioneros Solicitados por los Capitancillos Mimbrenos,” Chihuahua, 18 April 1791: F7, S1. Cordero is known to have had a particularly strong grasp of the Apache language.

army in campaigns against other Apache groups. This served the interest of the Spanish commanders, who found the Apaches to be especially useful guides and scouts, even as it provided Apaches with another means of access to captives and livestock—to the fruits of the raid—a central symbol of status in Apache manhood.<sup>14</sup>

Apaches had served in the Spanish army even before the peace establishment at Janos was formalized. A troop roll from the spring of 1788, for example, notes that of 60 soldiers at Janos, 5 were Chiricahua Apache auxiliaries. But such service became increasingly common as larger numbers of Apaches settled around Hispanic communities in the colonial Mexican North; correspondence between Janos commanders and Chihuahua City throughout the early 1790s reveals the extent to which Apaches were serving in the Spanish army, and the access to captives they received as a result.<sup>15</sup> In August 1790, for example, Cordero noted that “Indio Güero”—an Apache headman—had asked for an Indian woman taken prisoner in the recent campaign against hostile Apaches. Cordero had given the woman to him, explaining to El Güero that this gift was an example of “my appreciation for his good services.”<sup>16</sup>

By December, the Apache population in and around Janos and San Buenaventura was growing; Cordero was particularly pleased that a number of Apache *rancherías*<sup>17</sup> had gone out as auxiliaries on the last military campaigns. Cordero noted that military officers should continue the policy of granting Apache auxiliaries prisoners of war, as long as they were made to understand that it was “because the Spanish were so goodhearted, not because they deserved it.” He added that they would have to “work hard in our alliance to make us forget their past ingratitude.”<sup>18</sup> The granting of prisoners to Apache auxiliaries continued throughout the following year. In July 1791, Cordero wrote to Nava in Chihuahua City to inform him that the two little Indian boys taken prisoner in a recent campaign would be given to Tetsegoslan, an Apache headman, and that he would be made to understand that this was evidence of Cordero’s satisfaction with his service and his “good behavior in recent days.” Cordero added that ten Apaches and twenty soldiers had

---

<sup>14</sup> See Morris Edward Opler, *An Apache Lifeway: The Economic, Social, and Religious Institutions of the Chiricahua Indians* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1941), 399, for a discussion of ideas about manhood and the raid in Apache culture. Though Opler’s conclusions are based on the testimony of Apache men who lived almost 100 years after the time period of my study, military correspondence and the testimony of Apaches incorporated into Spanish military accounts, however “ventriloquized” this testimony may be, support the notion that the raid was a central element of Apache culture in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

<sup>15</sup> *Estado de Tropa Divisiones 1a y 2a*, 1788, F5, S2.

<sup>16</sup> Cordero to Janos, 22 Aug 1790: F6A, S1.

<sup>17</sup> “Ranchería” was the term used by the Spanish to refer to Apache kin groups or clans.

<sup>18</sup> Cordero, San Buenaventura, to Casanova, 4 December 1790: F6A, S1.

recently gone out on a campaign that had been particularly successful. They had captured an Apache warrior and six Apache women and children. Cordero noted that “Indio Carlos” warranted special mention for the fervor he had demonstrated in the early days of the campaign.<sup>19</sup>

If for the Apache, auxiliary service was a motivating factor to settle in the peace establishment at Janos and gain access to captives, this auxiliary service meant more to Spanish commanders than Cordero would have us believe. Auxiliary service was not simply a means of judging Apache loyalty, just as the granting of captives to Apaches was not simply a reward for “their good behavior.” As José Cortés explained, Spanish commanding officers were well aware that without the Apache auxiliaries little would be accomplished. Commandant General Ugarte also indicated the usefulness of Apache auxiliaries. “Take advantage of their friendship and confidence to get them to tell us about the hostile Apaches,” Ugarte wrote, adding that Apache auxiliaries were valuable in detailing the names of Apache headmen, “where their camps and hideouts are, and how many warriors we can expect each headman to be commanding.”<sup>20</sup>

Even as they described Apaches as a resource to cultivate, however, Spanish military officers hinted at ways that reliance on “heathen” Apaches may have troubled Hispanic soldiers’ martial manhood. The Indians not only guided the troops through unfamiliar landscapes, leading them to grass and watering places, but they also scouted out the Apache clans the army intended to attack. The Apache were more than just scouts and guides: the Apache “auxiliaries,” as Cortés explained it, “almost totally [led] the attack in this insidious warfare...the Indian auxiliaries [were] the first to fight as lions.” Cortés noted that everyone from the lowest private to the commander of the party would corroborate his claims, a fact he found noteworthy because “soldiers would exaggerate nothing that might detract from the glory of their own good success.”<sup>21</sup>

Labeling Apaches “auxiliaries” was only one way of reinscribing the position of Spanish men at the top of the gender order in the face of their dependency on Apache men. Even as Cortés argued that Apaches could become peaceful and rational, he expressed discomfort with the way they fought against their own people. Explaining that they die in combat with the greatest loyalty and gallantry, he took care to note that they die battling “their countrymen...for whom they should feel more affinity than to us...Poor

---

<sup>19</sup> Cordero, Janos, to Nava, 1 July 1791: F7, S1.

<sup>20</sup> Ugarte, Chihuahua, to Tovar, 14 June 1790: F5, S2.

<sup>21</sup> Cortés in Elizabeth A. H. John and John Wheat, eds. and trans., 30.

Indians! Let us pity them for a moment.” If a good soldier was made through valiant military service, he was also distinguished by his civility, his loyalty to his own kind. A rational Spanish soldier would never act in the same manner as these heathen Apache, Cortés’s account implied, hinting at the rhetorical tactics Hispanic soldiers drew upon to negotiate the Apache challenge to their manly independence.<sup>22</sup>

The language that Spanish commanders used to explain granting prisoners of war to Apache auxiliaries is worth considering in greater depth. Describing this exchange as “gift giving” and pointing to the Apaches “past sins” was a means of shaping Spanish reliance on Apaches into a narrative of Spanish benevolence and civility. Recall that when Cordero noted that military officers should grant Apache auxiliaries captives, he emphasized that the Apaches should be made to understand that it was “because the Spanish were so goodhearted, not because they deserved it.”<sup>23</sup> Referencing this civility reassured Spanish men that they were by nature superior—they had suffered at the hands of the Apache, and the Apache would have to work hard to earn their respect, they would have to work hard to become *gente de razon*. As Cordero explained it, the Apache would have to work hard to make the Spanish forget their “past ingratitude.”<sup>24</sup> The subversive potential of Apache settlement in and around Janos, and the threat to soldiers’ masculinity that Apache auxiliary service embodied, was shored up by placing interethnic exchange into the ritualized artifice of gift exchange—and most importantly, by asserting that this exchange was between unequal partners.

If we have seen the effort of Spanish men to maintain their superiority on the gender and racial hierarchies of the Northern frontier in reference to Apaches, it must be noted that relations among and between Apache groups were influenced by this interethnic contact as well. While settling at Janos had its clear benefits: rations and access to captives being two key examples—relations among Apache men and women were also reshaped by this decision. The Apache practice of raiding continued—Spanish commanders often wrote about their frustration that Apaches “at peace” continued to disappear into the hinterlands, evidence that Apaches were still practicing the “barbarity” embodied by the raid. But it is clear that status within the Apache community at Janos was also shaped by the fact that control of the raid had, to some extent, been ceded to Spanish military commanders.

---

<sup>22</sup> Cortés, 30.

<sup>23</sup> Cordero, San Buenaventura, to Casanova, 4 December 1790: F6A, S1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

To illustrate, return with me to the scene described by Cortés with which I began. When Apache men gathered at the presidio to be selected as auxiliaries, access to captives and livestock—a defining element of Apache manhood—was submitted to Spanish authority. Notice the language that José Cortés used to describe those Apaches not chosen for the military campaign: they left “in shame” when they were not chosen, returning to their *rancherías* to care for their families. While he may be exaggerating their “sadness” and “sorrow” to dramatize the scene, it is nonetheless worth noting that the shame of not going out on the raid likely reflected concern about status in relation to other Apache men. Though Cortés explained that those who were not chosen were “proud for having achieved our trust,” it seems more likely that they were proud for having achieved access to the fruits of the raid, a central status symbol in Apache culture. Spanish military officers were apparently oblivious to the fact that army campaigns and the practice of raiding by Apaches were in fact remarkably similar.<sup>25</sup>

If I have focused thus far on Apache auxiliaries, their motivations to serve in the Spanish army, and how Hispanic soldiers made sense of this practice, I conclude by noting that Hispanic soldiers also incorporated prisoners of war into their households. When Commandant General Jacobo Ugarte wrote to the commander of the Janos Presidio to instruct him about what he should do with Apache prisoners of war taken in military campaigns, he was quick to point out that the policy was not his own. “You see, the viceroy has decided that Apache prisoners should not be distributed among our households,” Ugarte wrote, “*aunque sean pequeños*”—“even if they’re children.” Military officers were to send all prisoners to Chihuahua City, taking care to distinguish between types—men/women, girls/boys—and to count the total number of *piezas*—literally “coins,” but the term commonly used to refer to both Apaches and slaves. All Apache prisoners were then to be dispatched from Chihuahua City to Mexico in chains.<sup>26</sup>

Even as it officially prohibited the distribution of Apache prisoners, Ugarte’s letter in January 1788 to the Janos commander made it clear that the practice of integrating Apache captives into Hispanic households was in fact common. By taking care to note that the viceroy included even Apache children in his order to send all prisoners to Mexico, Ugarte indicated the reluctance with which he expected that this all-encompassing order would be received. As we have already seen with Apache auxiliaries and the benefits of service they received, the viceroy’s order—and the policy of deporting all Apache prisoners out

---

<sup>25</sup> Cortés in Elizabeth A. H. John and John Wheat, eds. and trans., 28-30.

<sup>26</sup> Ugarte, Chihuahua, to Cordero, 22 January 1788: F5, S2.

of province—was enforced strategically in ways that benefited the goals of local state officials. And as with Apache auxiliaries, access to captives was used to reward Hispanic soldiers' valiant service as well.

In March of 1794, General Nava wrote to Casanova to tell him that the little Apache girls that Sergeant Nicolas Madrid and Mariano Varela had chosen could be left to them, and that the other soldiers that had been on the latest campaign should be given the same opportunity, "to select *una indita prisionera*—a little Indian girl—to their satisfaction." In September, Nava wrote to Janos again to inform Casanova that the *criaturas de pecho*—the infant girls—could be left to the Spanish soldiers that had chosen them, "as long as they agreed to nurture and educate them." Clearly, the viceroy's order that Apache prisoners were not to be distributed among Spanish households was being followed quite selectively by local officials of the Spanish state, and census records reveal that these Apache children would remain in Hispanic households for years to come.<sup>27</sup>

In sum, military service shaped relations among men—Apache and Hispanic alike—in and around Janos. The standing of a Spanish soldier—his *calidad*—was shaped by multiple factors: his family background, perceived racial characteristics, his social status in the community, and most importantly for a soldier at this time, his achievements in battle, including the capture of Apache prisoners. The defining elements of manhood among Apache communities shared many of these same characteristics: centering in particular on access to horses, captives, and goods. Even as ideas about masculinity could align between groups, reliance on Apache auxiliaries also threatened the manhood of Hispanic soldiers, who drew upon various rhetorical tactics to deal with this threat, especially by stressing their rational benevolence and civil superiority to the inherently irrational, heathen Apache. This vision of civil manhood would become increasingly dominant in the early 1800s, reinforced by a growing civilian population, relative quiet on the battlefield, and the new expectations of military superiors influenced by broader cultural shifts underway in late colonial Mexico. While interethnic exchange shifted to other venues in the 1810s and 1820s as a result, the Spanish army in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century facilitated the formation of an Apache-Hispanic community in the Chihuahua borderlands, forging intimate ties that persisted even after Apache camps in and around Mexican settlements disbanded after 1830.

---

<sup>27</sup> Nava, Chihuahua, to Casanova, 20 March 1794, and 23 Sept 1794: F10, S1.