



El Caballero de Croix



Teodoro de Croix

AND THE NORTHERN

FRONTIER OF NEW SPAIN, 1776-1783

FROM THE ORIGINAL DOCUMENT
IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE INDIES, SEVILLE
TRANSLATED AND EDITED

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their relief and transportation of provisions, and lessen the number of troops within the province.

¶ 115. Without the intercession of their governor, the officers and troop of the presidio of La Monclova have obligated themselves to contribute two thousand pesos, and those of Agua-verde, two thousand and six hundred. I am persuaded that this example of generosity may animate the settlers of the villas of Monclova and San Fernando. After they contribute a normal donation, according to their resources, the transfer-ence of the two companies and the abandonment of the pre-sidios may be carried out very soon. The same action will be taken in regard to San Saba and Babia.

¶ 116. The bankruptcy of the two quartermasters, which amounted to more than sixteen thousand pesos, has been the reason this San Saba company is in a condition to be suppressed. This I have decided upon. The useful officers and troops will be added to those of Monclova and Babia until an opportune time occurs to reorganize San Saba. That will be when the governor remits me the reports I have asked of him concerning the points that ought to be occupied on the frontier of the Bolson to impede the invasion of the Indians and dislodge them from the nearby sierras where they are ranching.

¶ 117. In the meantime, I am satisfied that the troops of Coahuila are well distributed in the four principal posts of the province, namely, the presidio of Rio Grande; the Villa of San Fernando, eighteen leagues away; the valley of Santa Rosa, twenty leagues distant; and the villa of Santiago de la Monclova, thirty-five leagues distant from Santa Rosa.

¶ 118. This distribution, proposed to your Excellency in my letter No. 458 of January 23, '80,³³ agrees with the latest solicitations of Governor Don Juan Ugalde. Each post has forces sufficient to resist invasion of any class of enemies. In a very short time all can be united in the center and on the flanks of the territory which they occupy. They will defend without anxiety the pueblos and haciendas of their respective districts.

³³ See above, page 12, footnote 12.

The Indians of the North will encounter resistance, the Mes-caleros will withhold their hostilities in the territory of the capital, and the Lipan will see themselves obliged to remain beyond the frontier of our settlements.

¶ 119. These are the only measures that can be taken today in benefit of the province of Coahuila. It is one of the most estimable dominions, which must be sooner or later, in my opinion, the theater of a most useful and advantageous war, but it is necessary to support and develop it.

¶ 120. The establishment of the new bishopric, and the payment of the appropriations for its presidios and those of Texas in the valley of Santa Rosa, will make it flourish in a few years for the reasons extensively set forth in the representation which I have made to his Majesty, and which accompanies the one I made your Excellency in letter No. 507, April 23, '80.³⁴

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THE eight jurisdictions or lieutenantships of which this government is composed, without including that of the pueblo of El Paso, amount to 20,810 persons according to the population list. They recognize as the capital the villa and presidio of Santa Fe. The missions of Acoma and Zuñi are those which are at the greatest distance, sixty leagues (from the capital).

¶ 122. The Comanche and all the Apache, with the exception of the Navajo and Jicarilla now at peace, attack in this province; the Mogui need today our assistance to avoid perishing from hunger and misery; the numerous and valiant Ute nation remains friendly and aids us happily against the Comanche.

¶ 123. From the pueblo of El Paso there intervenes to the north a desert of more than one hundred leagues to the first establishment of New Mexico. For this reason, and for the reason that this province is advanced beyond the rest of my

³⁴ A.G.I., Guad., 277, Croix to Gálvez, No. 507, Arispe, April 30, 1780.

command, without other communication with New Vizcaya except by caravans which annually cross the above mentioned desert, it depends for its defenses upon the presidial company at Santa Fe of one hundred and ten units, and upon the strength of its settlers, Indians, and Spaniards.

¶ 124. Its conservation is so important that if we should lose New Mexico a second time,³⁵ we would have upon Vizcaya, Sonora, and Coahuila all the enemies which now invade that Province.

¶ 125. The just view of warding off these possible misfortunes obliged me to hold in Chihuahua, with the attendance of Brigadier D. Pedro Fermín de Mendinueta,³⁶ who had governed the province more than eleven years, and his successor, Lieutenant Colonel Don Juan Bautista de Anza,³⁷ the particular councils of war of which I have given an account to your Excellency in letter No. 236, July 27, '78, and which his Majesty approved in his royal order of January 21, '79.³⁸

¶ 126. The points agreed upon in the said councils reduced themselves to the arrangement of the militias of El Paso, to the development of this province, an examination of the spot of Robledo, the reunion of the dispersed settlers of the province, the remedy of various disorders, and operations of war.

¶ 127. For the discharge of these objectives, I dispatched to the new governor the necessary instructions. I am leaving for the second part of this report a statement of the results concerning the arrangement of militias of El Paso and development of that pueblo. I shall set forth to your Excellency briefly and methodically the matters which touch the rest of the points.

¶ 128. Having reconnoitered the spot of Robledo, and finding no suitable place to establish the detachment advised in Ar-

³⁵ The first time was in 1680. See Charles Wilson Hackett, "Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in 1680," *Texas State Historical Association Quarterly*, XV (1911-1912), No. 2.

³⁶ For data on Mendinueta, see Alfred B. Thomas, "Governor Mendinueta's Proposals for the Defense of New Mexico, 1772-1778," *New Mexico Historical Review*, VI (1931), No. 1.

³⁷ See above, page 39, footnote 121.

³⁸ See above, page 39, footnote 121.

title 23 of the royal instruction inserted in the Regulation of the Presidios, Lieutenant Colonel Don Juan Bautista de Anza agreed with the opinion of his predecessor and proposed to me that the forces destined for Robledo be established in the abandoned pueblo of Socorro.

¶ 129. Of these results, I have given an account to your excellency in letter No. 388 of April 26, '79. Governor Anza, having verified for me by verbal reports the impossibility of establishing the detachment of Robledo, I did not find it convenient to establish it now at Socorro. I based my action upon the fact that the new post was not in keeping with the purposes which the previously cited article 23 of the royal instruction indicates. I held as more useful the measures that the presidial company of Santa Fe conserve its force united, and that the annual expense of the thirty settler-auxiliaries from the pueblo of El Paso, with that which the militia tax fund can support, be devoted to the important defense of the pueblo itself. I also considered that there be maintained in El Paso a detachment of veteran troops which may discharge the duty of escorting the caravan of mule drivers and passengers and resist where possible the contact of the eastern Apache with those of the west.³⁹ Concerning this matter, I am referring to what I set forth to your Excellency in the second part of this paper.

¶ 130. The point concerning the reunion of the settlers has developed an extensive file of papers. The governor began with efficiency the orders decided upon in the councils. The idea was proposed of establishing the pueblos in good order, walled, close to the fields of labor, and filled with fifty families each. He informed me of the defects of the villa of Santa Fe, and of the necessity of keeping together the company which garrisoned it, and of the possibility of building quarters and rebuilding the villa in its contiguous barrio of Anasco. He sought permission from me (which I conceded) to proceed to the execution of the undertakings.

¶ 131. Disgruntled, the settlers came begging me that the

³⁹ A.G.I., Guad., 267, Croix to Gálvez, No. 388, Chihuahua, April 26, 1779.

measure of their reunion be not continued. I commanded them suspended and advised the governor that he make his reports to me.

¶ 132. In view of them, attending to the fact that the larger part of the settlers were reunited, experiencing the particular benefits in their greater security, arrangement, and defense, and that the governor in a new report, well founded on good and congruous reasons, proposed to me the transference of the presidial company of his command to ten leagues from the Villa of Santa Fe, I decided, agreeing in everything with the opinion of the assessor of this commandancy general, that the reunion of the settlements of New Mexico be carried out in the manner commanded by the governor, Don Juan Bautista de Anza;⁴⁰ that the works begun be concluded, and that he should proceed to the transference of the presidio along the banks of the Rio Grande del Norte on the spot which was halfway between the places called Santo Domingo and Cochiti.

¶ 133. For this new establishment, the officers and troop of the company have contributed voluntarily 2,175 pesos. I have freed the two thousand pesos which exist in the treasury of Chihuahua for the purpose of building materials for the detachment which was to be established in Robledo. A copy is being made of the file of papers which sets forth the fundamentals of my decisions, to remit it to your Excellency and to ask for the sovereign approval of the king. Likewise, I am doing the same with that which has been brought together relative to the disorders of which an accusation can be made when the assessor may draw it up.⁴¹

¶ 134. With regard to operations of war, I have given an account to your Excellency in letter No. 462, January 23, '80,

⁴⁰ Thomas *Forgotten Frontiers*, 379-80, note 59.

⁴¹ Desordenes que se advierten en el Nuevo Mexico y medios ... para mejorar su constitucion ... enclosed in A.G.I., 103-4-18, Croix to Gálvez, No. 217 (Confidential), Chihuahua, June 29, 1778, enclosure No. 3. This is without signature and certified to by Antonio Bonilla, Chihuahua, July 22, 1778. This document has been credited to Father Morfi. However, the present editor is not entirely satisfied that Morfi was the author. For similar "desordenes" in New Vizcaya, Coahuila, and Texas, see A.G.I., Guad., 270, Croix to Gálvez, No. 282, Chihuahua, September 23, 1778.

of the fortunate campaign which Governor Juan Bautista de Anza executed against the Comanche in the months of August and September of '79 with a corps of six hundred men, presidial troops, militia, and Pueblo Indian auxiliaries, to which were added two hundred Ute and Jicarilla Apache allies.

¶ 135. Twice they attacked the Comanche; destroyed one hundred and twenty wigwams, killed their great chief called Cuerno Verde, his son, his lieutenant-general, Aguilá Bolteada, Pujacante, or priest, and fifty-two other warriors; twenty women and children and thirty-four other individuals were taken prisoner along with five hundred head of stock.⁴²

¶ 136. In another representation, No. 476, February 23, '80, remitting copies of documents, I notified your Excellency of the miserable state to which hunger and sickness had reduced the Indians of Moqui.⁴³ I set forth my measures dictated to reduce them by the Christian means of succoring their necessities, offering them our aid and protection, and not demanding of them anything by violence on the points of religion and vassalage.

¶ 137. To carry out these measures, the governor of New Mexico went to the province of Moqui. He found it destroyed by the rigors of hunger, pestilence, and war. But the chief priests of the nation were inexorable in their purpose of remaining heathen, preserving their customs, and remaining in their desolated pueblos, in spite of the sad references which they made to the fact that, when Father Fr. Francisco Garcés presented himself and was badly received in their towns, he predicted for them the infelicities and miseries they are now suffering.

¶ 138. Notwithstanding, the governor came back with two hundred Moqui, who voluntarily left without opposition of their chiefs, and on allotted land they are now happy in the New Mexican settlements. Unfortunately, forty other families who desired a similar life were murdered by the Navajo Apache.

⁴² Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers*, has this translated, 119-42.
⁴³ *Ibid.*, 221-45.

¶ 139. After all, the governor, while hoping that the voluntary reduction of the Moqui may continue, intimated that our convenience may force the whole nation to make this choice to prevent the Navajo from seizing them and thus increasing their numbers and our enemies. But having agreed with the opinion of the assessor, Don Pedro Galindo, I directed that the same measures be carried out as practiced for the gentle reconquest of the Moqui; that there should be extended to them the promises made to the reduced Indians. I also indicated that the latter be not disturbed by aggravations, vexations, and injuries, which may oblige them to prefer the infelicities of their people, and flee from the pueblos in which they are settled. I further provided that from the fund for gratification of the presidial company of Santa Fe, from the communities of the pueblos, or from other suitable resources, necessary assistance be sent to enable them to live, so that their own felicity may be the most real and efficacious example for the voluntary reduction of their compatriots. I also determined that to this end, one of the reduced Moqui who may be considered influential and reliable be dispatched to Moqui soon under the pretext of trade. I directed, too, that in order not to see advantages wasted in the future, which the present unhappy condition of the Moqui offer, care be taken not to gather them into a single pueblo, but in many towns distant from the confines of their provinces. These dispositions I hope will merit the superior pleasure of your Excellency and the royal approval of his Majesty when I give an account with copies of the latest developments of this affair.

¶ 140. I have given in letters No. 52, 111, and 389 of March 23 and October 10, '77, and April 26, '79,⁴⁴ an account of my first measures for the discovery of a road from Santa Fe to Sonora, and method of operations of war in New Mexico. Under date of March 26 last, letter No. 628, I sent you an extract of the file of papers, with copies of my second dispositions to make effective the discovery, and of the results of the

⁴⁴ Harvard College Library, Sparks Mss. 98 (VI), No. 2371, Croix to Gálvez, 387, Chihuahua, April 26, 1779.

campaigns executed to aid it with troops from this province and that of New Vizcaya.⁴⁵

¶ 141. In the above cited letter, No. 628, I set forth to your Excellency that the route of the discovery was mistaken, as Anza ought to have reached the presidio of Santa Cruz in Sonora, but came out almost in front of that of Janos, and that it was necessary to repeat the operation in this year. This will be done, if it is possible, with the hope of achieving greater results than those which the campaign detachments produced, which were the death of thirty-one Apache, the apprehension of twenty-five, the freeing of four Christian prisoners, and booty of three hundred and fifteen head of stock.

¶ 142. In New Mexico, a similar discovery of a direct route to the presidio of Monterrey in California failed me when the attempt which the reverend father missionaries, Fray Francisco Atanasio Domínguez and Fray Francisco Velez Escalante, made was frustrated.⁴⁶ The execution of the same measures would not be useless respecting a route from Santa Fe to the presidio of Antonio de Bejar, in Texas, and to the Rio Grande, in Coahuila, but nothing of this matter is possible now.⁴⁷

¶ 143. Although incomplete and at a cost of many fatigues, the supply of horses was provided, at the king's expense, for the New Mexican settlers. Of this affair I have given your Excellency an account in letter No. 581, December 23, '80.⁴⁸ In the monthly extracts of news of the enemies, I have referred to the matters corresponding to this province.

¶ 144. In these extracts it is seen that the Comanche swept over the province in the year of '78. Its settlers, dispersed, were unable to resist them. The province, at a single blow, saw sacrificed 127 persons dead and captured.

⁴⁵ Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers*, has this translated, 171-221.

⁴⁶ A. G. I., Guad., 516, Croix to Gálvez, No. 81, México, July 26, 1777, has a copy of the Domínguez-Escalante diary; the map, however, is missing.

⁴⁷ The Bejar-Santa Fé expedition was made later (Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, 122-33).

⁴⁸ A. G. I., Guad., 277, Croix to Gálvez, No. 581, Arispe, December 23, 1780.

¶ 145. In line with what was agreed upon in the councils of war, with the reports of Brigadier Don Pedro Fermín de Mendinueta, and with the knowledge which, with these antecedents, Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza immediately acquired of the sufferings of the territory of his command, he made peace with the valiant Ute and Jicarilla Apache. He also took care not to disturb the Navajo, and, leaving for a more opportune time the means of withstanding the attacks which the Apache enemies were committing, he united his forces and employed them with the aid of the Ute in the campaign against the Comanche referred to in paragraph 134.⁴⁹

¶ 146. Others followed this fortunate operation, carried out by the Indian allies and settlers of the province with equal felicity, and with sensible losses on the part of the Comanche. The former, as a result, took courage; the latter swallowed their pride and solicited peace in the pueblo of Taos, but recognizing opposition, transferred their hostilities to the province of Texas.

¶ 147. These established results induced a fortunate reaction so that these Comanche, who are the most valiant and warlike of Indians known on our frontiers, became dismayed by the first unfortunate blows they received and retired from the territory where they found resistance. With what greater reason can we hope that the Lipan Apache, who do not have the asylums and hiding places the Comanche have, will surrender their arms to the first threat of our forces and those of the Nations of the North without giving us reason to shed their blood?

¶ 148. If the Comanche were capable of recognizing their real interests they would never attack in New Mexico; they would be happy and the province would not have the enemies that now incommode it.

¶ 149. The nation is numerous; the country which they live in is wild, and has abundant streams, arroyos, and springs which fertilize it. The species of deer, antelope, and bison

⁴⁹ See Thomas, *Forgotten Frontiers, passim*.

there are inexhaustible. Thus, without prejudice to the aversion which the Comanche have, as all Indians do, to the cultivation, conservation, and development of possessions which nature providently offers them, they cannot enjoy these things peacefully, but acquire what they need in hostility.

¶ 150. Their possessions are reduced to the horses which they need for their hunts and firearms whose advantages they understand. They can have everything at the hands of the Spaniards. In a few years they would see in their country the procreation of horses in the same abundance as that of deer and buffalo, and then not needing these animals, the acquisition of firearms in barter for hides and herds would be less difficult for them.

¶ 151. The Comanche have on the frontier of their territories enemy nations which impinge upon and fight them frequently. But if they were our friends in New Mexico, they could count upon the support of our arms and we upon theirs.

¶ 152. In this case the Ute, an aggrieved branch but irreconcilable enemy of the Comanche nation, would see themselves forced to live under our protection. The alliances which they are accustomed to make, when it is convenient, with the Jicarilla and Navajo Apache would cause us no fears.

¶ 153. These last, Navajo, deviating nobly from their race, are inclined to work and to recognize a stable domicile, make their woven stuffs from wool, sow and conserve their crops.

¶ 154. The fear of losing their possessions obliges them to keep peace in New Mexico, but when they observe afflictions within the province, they are induced by their relatives, the Gila, to declare war upon us.

¶ 155. To withstand them, no better means has been found than that of availing ourselves of the arms of the Ute. It is sufficient that the latter declare war to make the Navajo desist from war on us. Notwithstanding, in the midst of peace they commit small robberies, are accustomed to mix with the rest of the Apache in their incursions, and cannot live without

