

THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF A FRONTIER CAPITAL
ARISPE, SONORA

by

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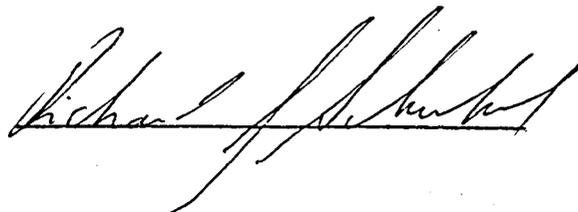
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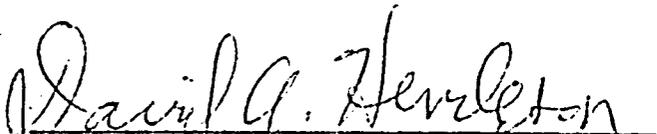
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ABSTRACT

When all of northern Mexico and the western United States was a Spanish frontier, Arispe, Sonora, was the capital. The historical geography of the former capital has three main stages. The first (1640-1769) began with the introduction of Spanish culture and Christianity. Little change occurred, however, until the discovery of precious metals on the frontier. To exploit these resources, the Crown had to control the warring Apaches and devise a new administrative system. Arispe's second stage (1769-1837) began when the Apache menace was contained, allowing for the establishment of numerous new mines, settlements and ranches. During this period Arispe experienced its greatest growth and became the administrative, military, trade, and ecclesiastical center of the newly formed Provincias Internas. However, with Mexican independence in 1822, Arispe began to decline as the military forces in the north fell into a state of disarray. The Apaches renewed their attacks, resulting in the abandonment of mines, settlements, and ranches. Consequently, the economic and population center shifted to the Ures-Hermosillo area. The capital was moved to Ures in 1837. Arispe's "golden age" had ended. In its third stage (1837-present) Arispe again

became a small agricultural settlement removed from the hub of economic and political activity. Today Arispe's population is declining, its future nebulous.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Present day Arispe¹ is a small, sedate agricultural settlement nestled against the mountains along the west bank of the Sonora River in Sonora, Mexico (Figure 1). It was this unobtrusive village which once held the esteemed position as the capital of a vast area that included most of northern Mexico and the western United States. Today, signs of its former greatness and importance have all but vanished from the townscape.

In its early days as a colonial power in the New World the Spanish Crown established the administrative center of New Spain in Mexico City. Almost at the outset of the establishment of the Viceroyalty of Mexico, the complexity of the area began to assert itself in difficulties of governing all parts of the vast Mexican realm. In consequence, a hierarchy of administrative provinces evolved under the supreme authority of the Viceroy.

Within the highland area of Mexico, Spanish authority was relatively easy to administer but beyond the central

1. In this thesis the original spelling of Arispe has been retained. Sometime in the 20th century the s was changed to a z and the name now appears as Arizpe.

plateau the ties became weaker. To the north, distance and desert made the farther highlands a difficult place in which to establish Spanish control. In the hope of strengthening a failing Spanish supremacy in northern New Spain, the monarch sent his missionaries and dons northward in the 17th and 18th centuries to extend Spanish rule. The outcome of the expansion was the establishment of new settlements along a frontier that encompassed all of northern Mexico, the Pacific coast of California as far north as San Francisco Bay, the Colorado Plateau, and the adjacent lowland areas of the Gulf of Mexico (Whittlesey 1939, pp. 409-413).

In order to govern and protect the vast landholdings in the northern frontier of New Spain, the Crown established the political division known as the Provincias Internas in the latter half of the 18th century. This new political unit, which was to be governed from Arispe included all of northern Mexico, the southwestern United States and the Californias.

Arispe was truly the first town in Sonora created strictly as an administrative center. The first political centers of Sonora had been mining towns which had sizeable Spanish populations. San Juan Bautista had become the first capital of Sonora in 1659, but its mineral deposits were exhausted by 1750 and the entire town moved to the new mining area of San Miguel de Horcasitas (Almada 1952, p. 722). This settlement then took on the function of the capital,

but eventually suffered the fate of its predecessor.

Arispe's rise to power as the center of political authority was not the result of a continued growth and prosperity experienced by the settlement, but a sudden occurrence stemming from the Apache destruction of Caborca, the original choice for the site of the capital of the Provincias Internas. Initially, Arispe was a small Opata village on an old Indian trade route which during the colonial became the Spaniards Camino Real to the north. The Opata farmers who tilled the soils of the small basin adjacent to their settlement eventually proved to be an attraction to the missionary movement in the frontier and a mission was founded at Arispe in 1644. The founding of the mission brought Spanish culture to the Indian village but did not greatly alter the basic economic function of the settlement. Arispe in its incipiency continued to be a small Indian agricultural community but the complexion of the mission changed drastically with the discovery of minerals in the northern frontier of New Spain. The unearthing of precious metals in northern Sonora had a very pronounced affect upon the mission at Arispe. With the expansion of economic activity spurred by mining, the function of the settlement took on the new role as an important supplier of agricultural goods and beasts of burden for the mines in the area. The formation of new settlements to accommodate the increased Spanish population and continued economic growth in the frontier brought about a series

of events which would greatly transform Arispe from a demure agricultural village to the prestigious position as the administrative center of the hinterlands. In 1783 Arispe officially became the administrative, military, trade and ecclesiastical center of the vast Provincias Internas of the north and once again the scope of the town changed considerably. Arispe had become the core area for northern Mexico under Spanish rule. The ciudad increased in size and economic activity grew and prospered, but with Mexican independence from Spain, northeastern Sonora's military forces fell into decay, enabling the Apaches to renew their depredation and bring economic ruin to the area. Mines, ranches and settlements were abandoned because of the intense Indian attacks, resulting in an overall economic decline that caused the capital to be moved in 1837 to the new economic-political center of Ures and at a later date Hermosillo, which had become better places for the capital than Arispe.

The purpose of this thesis is to reconstruct the historical geography of a town which was a capital when the area under its jurisdiction was a thriving, expanding frontier, but fell victim to isolation and decay when the frontier retreated. The ensuing chapters will describe Arispe as it stood before its "Golden Age", while it was the capital of Sonora and as it appears today. Through an examination of Arispe's changing geographical situation, I hope to arrive at an understanding of the reasons for Arispe's

rise to power as an important provincial administrative center and its eventual decline to the seat of an economically deprived municipio (county).

CHAPTER II

THE SONORAN FRONTIER OF NEW SPAIN

Arispe was one of the many small Indian villages on a trade route which passed along the lower country west of the Sierra Madre Occidental through Sinaloa, the lower Yaqui River Valley, and northward to the Colorado Plateau (Figure 2). In Sinaloa the road ran along the edges of the foothills near the coast of the Gulf of California, but the track turned inland in the arid country to the north to follow the well watered Sonora River Valley into the Province of Sonora.¹ Spanish explorers followed this route which Sauer called the road to the fabled cities of Cíbola. During the colonial period the important old Indian trail became the Camino Real of the Spaniards.

Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, in search of a Spanish settlement after having been shipwrecked off the coast of Florida and after having crossed the southern basin and range country of Texas, New Mexico and Arizona, was the first Spaniard to come upon the road to Cíbola. He found

1. In the latter half of the 17th century the administrative authority of Sonora included the area of northwestern New Spain extending from the Mayo River north to the delta of the Colorado and west of the Sierra Madre Occidental. (Gerhard 1939, p. 19).

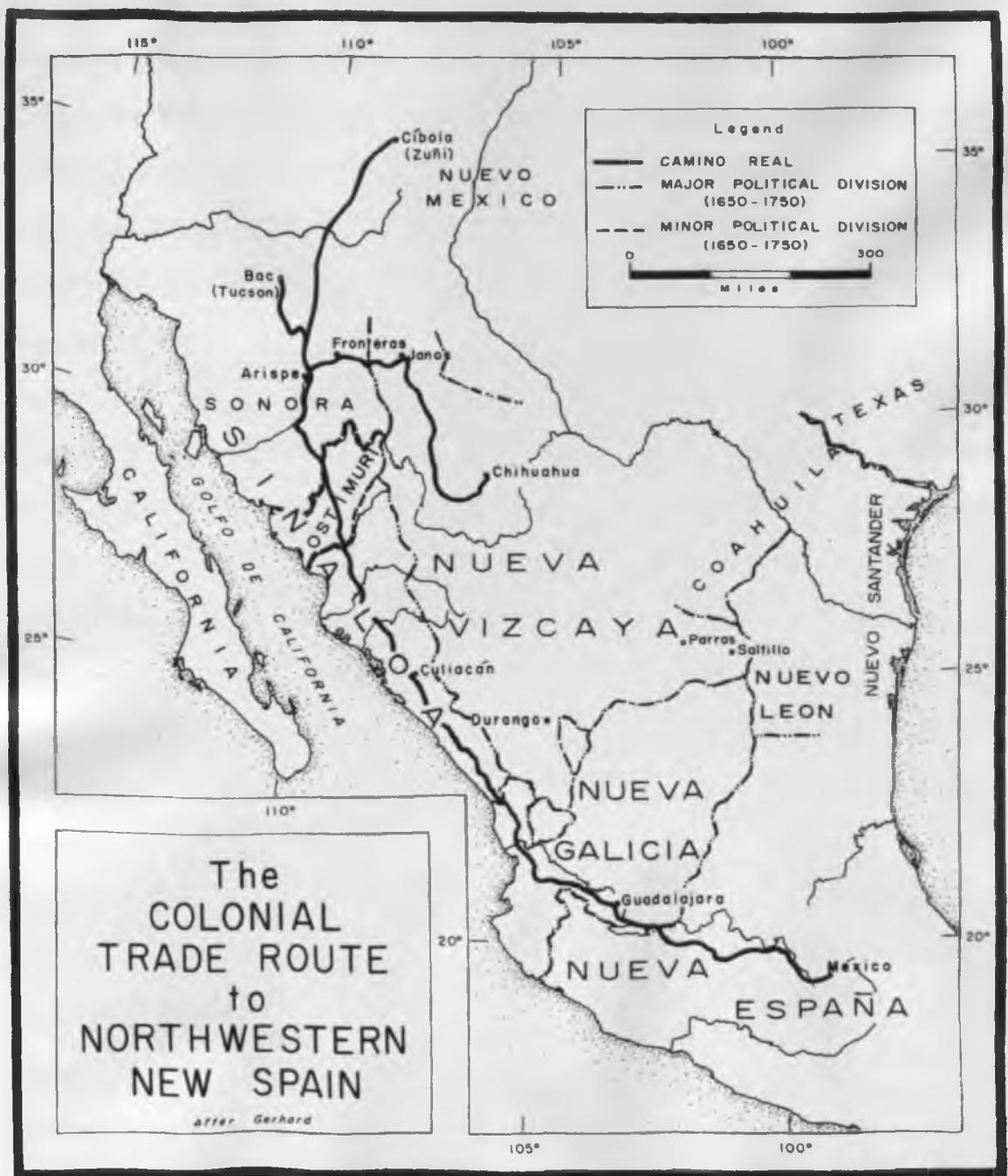


Fig. 2. The Colonial Trade Route to Northwestern New Spain

this trail in 1536 in the vicinity of the present town of Fronteras, Sonora (Figure 1). The area that Cabeza de Vaca entered when he reached the road to Cibola was described later by Father Kino in 1687 as a vast washboard with corrugations running north and south (Bannon 1955, p. 11). The five valleys that form the depressions of this washboard are those of the Sonora, Moctezuma, Bavispe, Nacozari and San Miguel Rivers (Figure 1). These valleys are part of the Basin and Range Province (Sauer 1930, p. 3), and the mountains that border the valleys can be described as a series of steps, diminishing in elevation and becoming more uniform in height as they near the coast of the Gulf of California.

One of the major streams of northeastern Sonora is the Sonora River, which originates some 25 miles south of today's international boundary in the high undissected, grassy country around Cananea (Figure 3). Just north of Arispe, approximately 50 miles south of its source, the Sonora River converges with the Bacanuchi and then continues to flow southward to Ures. There it breaks out of the foothill country of narrow valleys and parallel ranges and takes a southwestward course across the broad desert basins to the sea.²

The vegetation of most of the Sonora River Valley is included in Shreve's easternmost subdivision of the Sonoran

2. The river reached the sea in flood periods before the earth-filled dam was built at Hermosillo.

Desert Province, the "Foothills of Sonora" (Figure 4). Plants of the area occupy a transition zone between the Nearctic and Neotropical biotic regions and reflect the influence of the semi-arid environment. The northernmost extremity of this vegetation association extends southward from the vicinity of Arispe (3300 feet above sea level) on the Sonora River to the Delta of the Yaqui River (Shreve 1964, p. 43). At its northern limit the Foothills subdivision is of special interest because it is an ecotone between the mesquite grasslands of northern Sonora and southern Arizona, the Arborescent Desert of southern Sonora, and the cooler desert of the Arizona Uplands (Figure 4).

Local distribution of plant life in the Sonora River Valley is related to surface configuration, slope exposure and elevation. In the vicinity of Arispe the vegetation on the narrow dissected and undissected bajadas clearly exhibit the influence of these topographic controls. North-facing slopes on the dissected bajadas are covered by encinos or evergreen oaks (Quercus chihuahuensis) and enegros tascotes, alligator juniper (Juniperus deppeana var. pachyphloea), while the southern slopes are dominated by open shrubbery and cacti including many desert plants such as uña de gato or catclaw acacia (Acacia greggii), ocotillo (Fouquieria splendens), incienso or brittlebush (Encilia farinosa and the nopal or Engelmann prickly pear (Opuntia engelmanni))

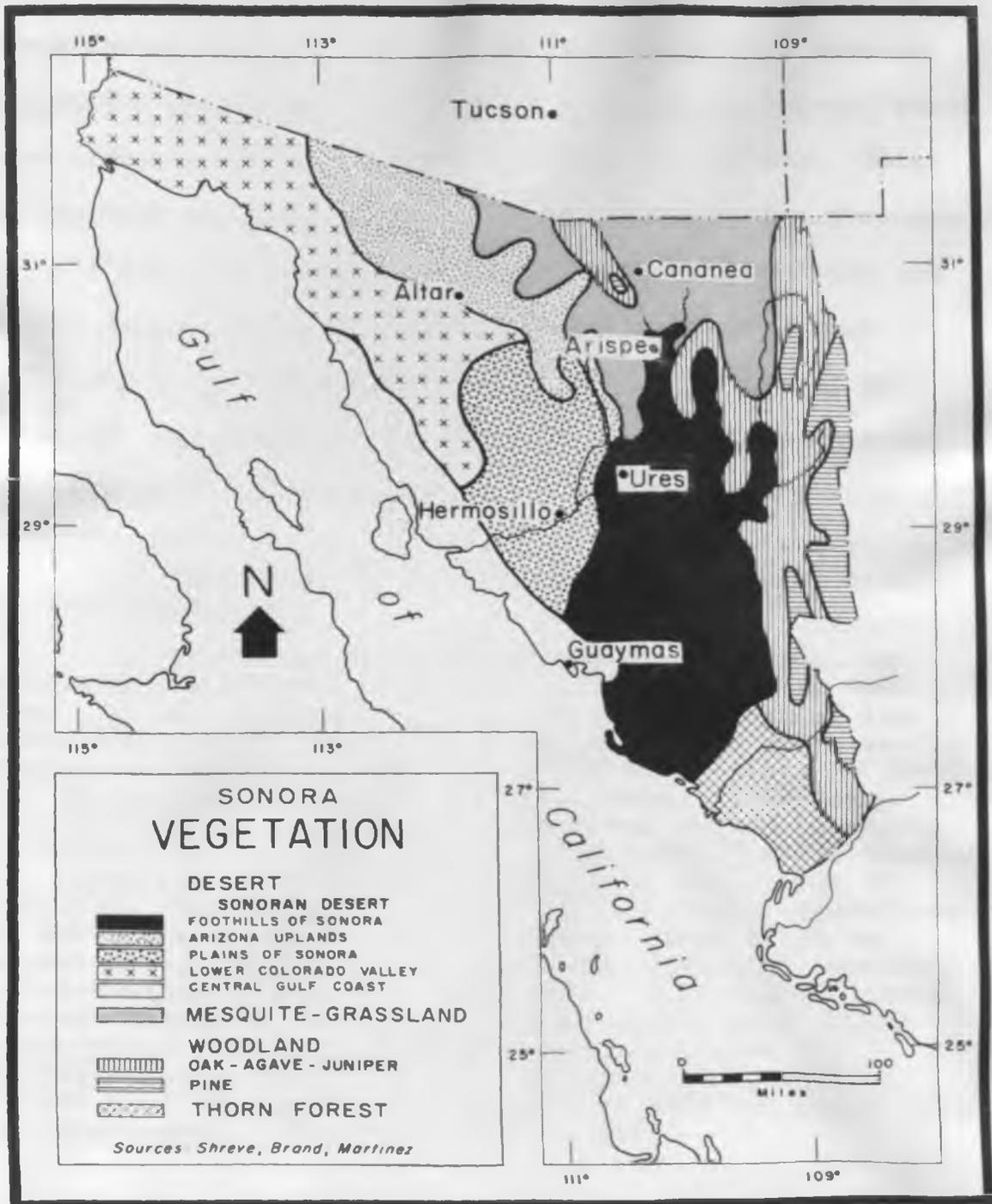


Fig. 4. Sonora Vegetation

(Figure 5). Undissected bajadas in the area are covered with a heavy stand of grasses of Bouteloua sp.

Plants of the valley floor reflect the vegetation of the cooler, drier areas to the north, while the warmer south-facing slopes of the valley exhibit plants such as Fouquieria macdougalii³ (Figure 6) and Bursera odorata which have tropical affinities (Shreve 1964, pp. 45-46). This arrangement of plant communities is caused by the drainage of cold air from elevated areas into the valley floor and by the resulting winter temperatures which reach lows of 15° - 20° F. at the bottom of the valley (Ibid., p. 80). Oaks and pines grow on the upper portions of the surrounding sierras.⁴ In the Arispe area, because of the aridity

3. The Sonora River Valley is the northern limit of this Fouquieria.

4. White, in his study of the Bavispe area, observed that the oak zone extends from 3600 feet to 5900 feet. Quercus chihuahuensis is the dominant oak of the lower elevations. Above the Q. chihuahuensis zone, encino blanco, or Arizona oak (Q. arizonica) and bellota or Emory oak (Q. emoryi) become the dominant trees. Other oaks regularly found at higher elevations are encino blanco or silverleaf oak (Q. hypoleucoides), bellota, Mexican blue oak (Q. oblongifolia) and encino chaparro or Toumey oak (Q. toumeyi). (White 1948, p. 243). In the higher elevations of the oak zone (5500 feet and above), pines begin to appear on the landscape and become the dominant vegetation at elevations in excess of 5900 feet. The pines of north-eastern Sonora are the pino piñon or pinyon pine (Pinus cembroides), the ocote blanco or Chihuahua pine (P. chihuahuensis), Ponderosa pine (P. ponderosa), Arizona Yellow pine (P. arizonica), (Ibid., p. 244) and Apache pine (P. engelmanni), (Martinez 1948, p. 287).



**Fig. 5. Ocotillo, Cholla, Mesquite, Acacia
and Brittlebush**



Fig. 6. Ocotillo (Fouquieria macdougali)

and absence of high ranges the piñon is probably the only significant pine found in the surrounding sierras.

According to the Köppen classification system the climate at Arispe and that of the eastern margin of the Sonoran Desert is considered a hot tropical or subtropical steppe (BSh). Although the land mass is adjacent to the Gulf of California, the narrow, shallow upper gulf does not moderate temperatures and thus the climate of the area is continental. The yearly pattern of rainfall is characterized by a period of maximum precipitation extending from June through August, while a secondary rainy period occurs between December and April. Dry periods in late spring and in the fall separate the rainy seasons.

Basic to the precipitation regime in the area are the movements of the Pacific High and the Sonoran Low northward in the summer and southward in the winter. In summer the dominant force in the cause of precipitation is the Sonoran Low, which is situated over northwestern Sonora and southwestern Arizona. Summer showers, which bring the greater part of the annual precipitation in the Arispe area are associated with tropical air masses moving toward the low from both the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf of California. The torrential convective summer rains, called chubascos in Sonora, are less effective than the winter rains because each storm releases its moisture within a relatively short

time and runoff is thereby great. Also, the rains occur in the warmest part of the year, during which evaporation rates are high.

Winter rains are the result of the southward migration of the Pacific High and the displacement of the Sonoran Low. The rains are associated with cold fronts and cyclonic storms called nortes caused by the movement of cold air masses under the influence of the westerlies. These storms supply a very essential part of the total effective precipitation because the low winter temperatures retard evaporation. Also, the nature of the rainfall is gentle and the ground can absorb a high percentage of the moisture. However, the quantity of precipitation deposited by these storms is not comparable to that brought by the summer storms.

An infrequent contributor to the precipitation in Sonora every three to five years is the Cordonazo de San Francisco, which is the name given to the Mexican west coast hurricane. When these autumn storms do occur, torrential rains cause much damage to crops in most of northern Sonora. Drought is also a constant threat to the farmer and rancher in this semi-arid environment. The absence of the well developed winter storms or a shift in the Sonoran Low during the summer months affects the total precipitation in the area. Thus, the amount of rainfall received can, and often does, fluctuate greatly from one year to the next.

In contrast to the variable rainfall, temperatures do not fluctuate much from year to year. Summers in north-eastern Sonora are generally hot with many days having temperatures exceeding 90° F. The winters are cool and frequently have freezing temperatures at night and in the early morning. Spring and fall are marked by moderate temperatures.

Unfortunately, climatic data for Arispe are completely lacking, and in order to establish meaningful estimates, the annual precipitation and the average yearly temperature must be interpolated from the available climatic data of several representative towns in the area.⁵ Data from these stations indicate that the average annual temperature of Arispe approximates 65° to 70° F., with the warmest month averaging 80° F. and the coldest 50° F. The annual precipitation is 10 - 15 inches (Figure 7).

In the dry country around Arispe the success of agriculture is directly related to the supply of water for irrigation. Therefore, the annual precipitation in Arispe is not as significant as the amount of rain intercepted by the surrounding sierras which provide the flow for the Sonora River, an important perpetuator of the settlement. The Indian farmers realized that irrigation reduced the likelihood of crop failures caused by local drought

5. These towns are Aconchi, Cananea, Nacoziari, Cucurpe, and Bacoachi (Hastings 1964, pp. 1-152).

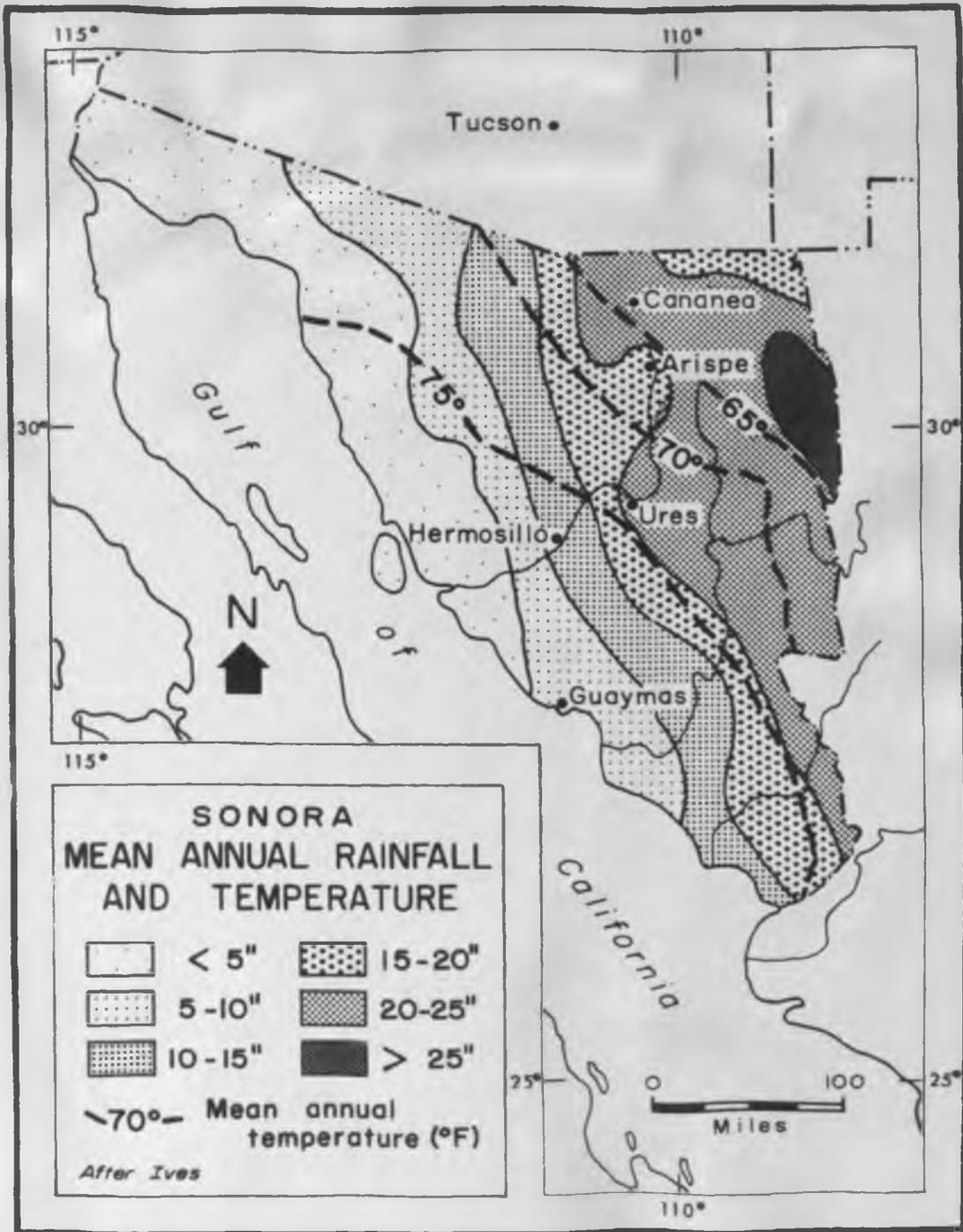


Fig. 7. Sonora Mean Annual Rainfall and Temperature

conditions, and that the hot summers provided a favorable environment for the cultivation of maize, the staple crop. Irrigation agriculture led to the establishment of permanent Indian villages. As Cabeza de Vaca travelled southward 240 miles along the Sonora River from Fronteras to Ures, which at the time was the most densely populated part of Sonora, he observed that the inhabitants of the Opataría were excellent agriculturalists and therefore called the area as the Indians did, the maize country (Sauer 1932, p. 63).

The agricultural peoples of northeastern Sonora described by Cabeza de Vaca were the Opatas⁶ who numbered about 60,000 at the time of the initial Spanish contact (Sauer 1935, p. 5). The Opata territory extended 146 miles south of the present day Arizona boundary, and encompassed the five valleys of northeastern Sonora previously mentioned. It was bounded by the lands of the Apache and Pueblo Indians to the north, the Upper Pimas to the west, the Jovas to the south and the Tarahumaras to the east (Figure 8).

Opata towns, located adjacent to the agricultural lands of the valley floor, were large orderly settlements with several house types. The wattle and daub house was the

6. Kroeber (1934, p. 8) placed the Opata in the Cáhita-Opata-Tarahumara group of the Uto-Aztecan linguistic family and noted that many similarities existed between the Opata and the Cáhita peoples of the Mayo-Yaqui area.

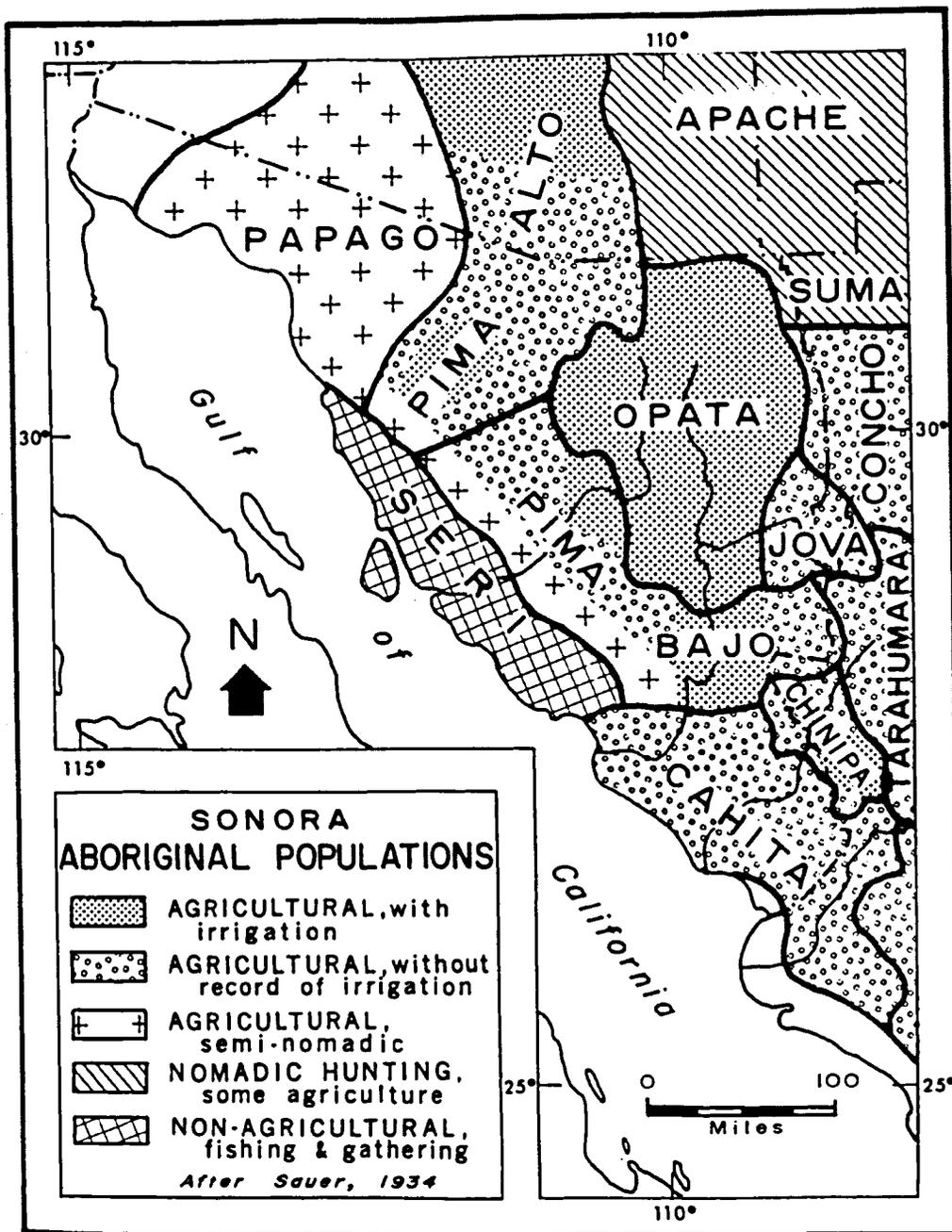


Fig. 8. Sonora Aboriginal Population

most common structure; next in significance was the adobe hut; and least important was the flat-roofed ramada. Each town had several storehouses built for the sole purpose of keeping corn for future use and trade (Johnson 1950, p. 10).

In general, the agricultural lands of the Opata were very productive, and the use of irrigation was initiated wherever the need arose and water was available. Males tilled the ground with the traditional digging stick or coa (Ibid., p. 10). Most of the agricultural lands of the Opata were used for the cultivation of corn, which was the staple food of the Indians. Beans, including the tepari bean, were the second most important crop. Various types of squashes were grown and dried for future use. Cotton and tobacco also held an important place in the agricultural economy of the Opata. The cotton was spun, woven, and dyed by the women. They used the chonuro plant for blue, brasil wood (Caesalpinia platybola) for red, and coca (Erythroxylon sp.) for black dye (Ibid., pp. 12-16).

Because of the diversified flora in the northern limits of the foothills the Opata were able to utilize many wild plants for food, for medicinal purposes, and for building materials. The mesquite tree (Prosopis juliflora var. velutina), common to the three vegetation zones previously mentioned, was very important in the Opata diet. The Indians used the beans of the tree extensively. They gathered the unripened pods, which they then boiled and used in stews;

they ate the ripened pods raw or stored them for future use. The fruits of the pitahaya dulce or organ pipe cactus (Cereus thurberi engelmani) (Figure 9) and the nopal or prickly pear (Platyopuntia spp.) were harvested, and the hearts of the palmito or Yucca elata and the agave or century plant (Agave spp.) were boiled to provide an important source of food. The Indians made an alcoholic beverage which the Spaniards called aguardiente by boiling the heart of the agave and allowing the liquid to ferment. Mats constructed of the leaves of the palmito and cordage made from the fibers of the agave leaf were extremely useful building materials (Ibid. pp. 11-12).⁷

Fishing and hunting were also significant in the economy of the Opata. Fish were caught with the hand, weirs, hook and line, and by poisoning them with barbasco, which is extracted from the San Juanico tree or cudjoe wood (Jacquinia pungens) (Ibid. p. 14). The principal weapon used in the hunt was the bow and poison dipped arrow.

Large mammals were the most important source of meat to the Opata. The buro or mule deer (Odocoileus hemionus) and the venado or white tailed deer (O. virginianus) were hunted extensively. The hides were tanned and made into clothing. Other animals hunted by the Opata were the

7. Documentos para la historia de México, 3ra serie (Mexico, 1853-1857) and parts 4, 5, and 6 of the Rudo Ensayo give an extensive list of the plants used by the Opata, and the uses to which they were put. Only the major ones have been considered here.



Fig. 9. Organ Pipe Cactus

oso negro or black bear (Euarctos americanus), javelina or collared peccary (Pecari tajacu), berrendo or pronghorn antelope (Antilocapra americana), liebre or common jackrabbit (Lepus genso), and the conejo or cottontail (Sylvilagus audubonii). Ardillas or squirrels (Sciurus sp.) were used for food in the same manner as rabbits (Ibid., pp. 13-14).

The Indians also hunted game birds for food. Their quarry were codorniz de Gambel or Gambel's quail (Lephortyx gambelii), codorniz de Douglas or the Douglas quail (L. douglassi), the guajalote silvestre or wild turkey (Meleagris gallopavo), paloma con alas blancas or white-winged dove (Zenaida asiatica) and the huilota or mourning dove (Zenaidura macroura).⁸

The success of the Opata peoples which at a later date would prove to be one of the main attractions for the Jesuit expansion into northeastern Sonora, can be attributed greatly to the resourceful use of the natural environment. The river valleys of northeastern Sonora with their rich agricultural soils, the many useful plants, the diversified fauna and a relatively reliable source of water provided the Indians with an excellent economic base.

After his trek through the Opata country, Cabeza de Vaca ended his journey at Culiacán, Sinaloa (Figure 2).

8. For a more detailed description and distribution of the game animals in Sonora see A. Starker Leopold's Wildlife of Mexico.

His reports of the large number of Indians to the north, coupled with the revival of the old fable of the Seven Cities of Cibola, sparked Viceroy Mendoza's interest and direct participation in furthering explorations into north-western New Spain. The viceroy wished to claim these new lands in the northern frontier for himself, and he sent Fray Marcos de Niza in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola.⁹ The report of Fray Marcos is quite confusing. However, at some time, probably in the first week of May, 1539, he did pass through the Indian settlement of Arispe.

The favorable reports produced by Fray Marcos encouraged Mendoza to organize a second and larger expedition in search of the seven cities. This venture was the Coronado expedition which was assembled in Campostela, Nayarit, in 1540. Juan Jaramillo wrote the narrative of the expedition and he very clearly described the entry of the party into the valley of Sonora. In his account he mentioned the many existing villages along the valley and identified Arispe as the settlement of Ispa (Sauer 1932, p. 88, Hammond and Rey 1928, p. 297). Crossing Sonora and following the Indian trails that led to the Colorado Plateau, Coronado finally did reach the so-called Seven Cities of Cibola. Very much to his dismay the seven cities proved to be a group of poor

9. The chronicle of Fray Marcos is by now familiar to many and according to Sauer it is a fabrication to aid Mendoza and his claims. It appears that Fray Marcos falsified practically the entire report, as Coronado attested after his expedition in 1540.

Indian pueblos in the Zuñi country of northwestern New Mexico.

Interest in the northwestern frontier greatly diminished after this disappointing expedition. Then, in 1564, Francisco Ibarra, governor of Nueva Vizcaya, organized an expedition to retrace the greater part of the route to Cibola. The expedition was to reconnoiter the area in search of mineral wealth, especially silver deposits (Sauer 1932, p. 91). Twenty years later Baltazar de Obregón wrote the account of the expedition. His descriptions and information of the party's entry into the valley of Sonora are similar to, but more complete than, Jaramillo's account of the previous expedition. Obregón stated that the Indian settlement of Guaraspi, which later became the village of Arispe, consisted of 600 houses inhabited by clothed people who practiced irrigation agriculture and were more advanced than the other Indians in the frontier (Ibid., pp. 94-96).

With the death of Ibarra at the end of the expedition in 1565, plans for the development of the country north of the Mayo-Yaqui River area were largely abandoned because of the apparent absence of precious metals. However, early expeditions into northeastern Sonora did confirm that north of the Cáhita along the River Yaqui (Figure 1) there were many agricultural peoples who were relatively

advanced when compared to the other Indians in the area.

The large number of farming Indian heathens in the northwestern frontier provided the great impetus for the Jesuit expansion into the area some 80 years later.

CHAPTER III

THE SPANISH MISSION EPOCH IN ARISPE

1640-1769

With the establishment of the mission at Arispe in the middle of the seventeenth century, the settlement acquired an aura of permanence in an area where many new communities were temporary placer-mining camps. The history of Arispe during the Jesuit period was typical of the many newly established missions along the northern frontier, but was in sharp contrast with the history of missionization of Central Mexico. In the mission period, Arispe must be reconstructed from the writings of the first Jesuit missionaries and early travellers. Thus, it is necessary to derive information about the growth and existence of Arispe from the general accounts of events that were taking place in Sonora during the mission period.

The primary motivation of the early Spanish explorers in the New World was the dream of discovering large deposits of gold and silver; but, when riches were not found or were depleted, emphasis turned to the creation of large landed estates owned by Spaniards and worked by Indians.

In New Spain the Spaniard wished to exploit Indian labor to increase his own wealth. The encomienda system was established by the Crown to prevent the abuse of the Indians and to help control the Indian through the establishment of permanent settlements (pueblos) on the large estates. Each encomendero became responsible for the Christianization and education of the Indians. In return, the Crown allowed the encomendero free labor or other tribute from the Indians under his jurisdiction. Thus, the presence of a large Indian population and the existence of precious metals became the prerequisites for the formation of Spanish settlements.

When the Spaniard conquered central Mexico, he found a somewhat submissive Indian population that apparently was willing and able to work and live under the encomienda system. Along the northern frontier, however, the Spaniard encountered an Indian population of tribal groups that were warlike and whose members abhorred working for the Spaniards. These two factors, in addition to the remoteness of the area and the apparent lack of mineral wealth, discouraged the establishment of the large estate in northern Sonora. Thus, on the northern frontier the missionary took over the function of the encomendero, and the mission, that of the pueblo (Bannon 1955, pp. 187-189). In the Opateria (Figure 8) as elsewhere the mission served the Crown as an extension of Spanish authority; the mission aggregated the native popu-

lation and acted as a buffer against possible encroachment by foreign powers. The mission served the church by converting the Indians to Christianity and educating them in new trades (Bannon 1955, p. 221). Each mission was to have a shoemaker, carpenter, tailor, blacksmith, weaver and an apprentice for each tradesman (Bannon 1955, pp. 113-114). In the valleys of northeastern Sonora the Jesuits managed to impress upon the Indians that the acceptance of Christianity would better their lives. Once convinced, the Opata encouraged the rapid expansion of Christianity by requesting that missionaries be sent into the area. Padre Cárdenas, a Jesuit, started the missionary work in 1638, and by 1646, the Opatería was well on its way to becoming a model mission area (Bannon 1945, p. 80).

Arispe became permanently exposed to Spanish culture in 1640 when the Franciscan padre Fray Juan Suárez founded the first mission at the settlement and chose the Indian village as his residence. The encroachment by the Franciscans into Jesuit territory was the result of the actions pursued by Pedro de Perea, first commandant of Sonora. Perea's intense dislike for the Jesuit order induced him to attempt to replace the black robes in northeastern Sonora with five Franciscan padres under the authority of Fray Suárez. The initial period of Franciscan authority was short-lived, and in 1644, Padre Gerónimo de la Canal, a

Jesuit, was assigned as the new resident missionary of Arispe (Bannon 1955, p. 83).¹

Not until 1646 did Canal make his first inspection of the mission, and the report of his visit states that he was not welcomed by the people of Arispe, which at that time consisted of 100 families (Figure 10).² The people did not wish to be baptized, although they were well acquainted with the doctrina from earlier missionary contact. The padre was received similarly at the villages of Sinoquipe, Chinapa and Bacoachi. Realizing that his presence at this time was more harmful than beneficial to the Jesuit movement, Canal decided to return for the time being to the Bishopric at Durango. This initial rejection of Padre Canal by the Indians could have been initiated by Fray Suárez or

1. Geronimo de la Canal is credited by many historians as being the founder of the Spanish settlement of Arispe in 1646, while Pradeau (1959, p. 87), in his study of the missions in Sonora, credits Ignacio Molarga as the founder in 1645. However, the credit should be given to Juan Suárez.

2. Sauer (1933), in his work on the Indian population of northwest Mexico, states that at the time of Spanish contact the average family included six persons. Gerhard's study of the 1742 population census interprets the average family as including five individuals. If Sauer's or Gerhard's estimates are applied to the censuses for Arispe, the total population is increased to an unrealistic number. The inflated population estimates become quite apparent when the population data of Arispe during the mission period is inspected. Therefore, in this study the average family included four persons.

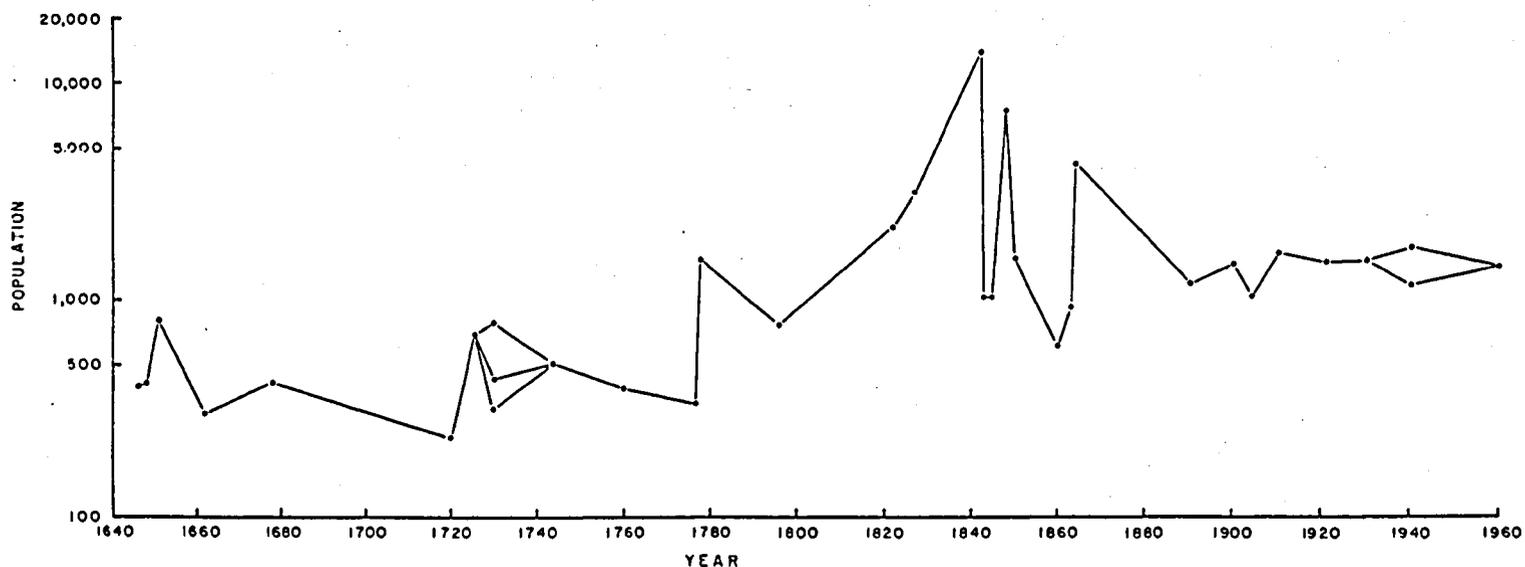


Fig. 10: Population Chart

Sources:

1646 (Bannon 1955, p.90), 1648 (Decorme 1941, p. 392), 1651 (Bannon 1955, p. 90), 1662 (Alegre 1960, p. 57), 1678 (Bannon 1955, p. 146), 1720 (Alegre 1960, pp. 508-509), 1726 (Donohue 1960, p. 91), 1730 (Documentos 1856, p. 78), 1730 (Cossio 1945, p. 605), 1730 (Bancroft 1886, p. 513), 1744 (Bolton 1744, p. 28), 1760 (Hernandez, Sanchez 1958, p. 1016), 1777 (Pesqueira Tomo I, p. 374), 1778 (Spicer 1962, p. 97), 1778 (Bancroft 1886, p. 722), 1796 (Salorda 1796, MS.), 1822 (Velasco 1861, p. 284), 1827 (Ward 1827, p. 598), 1842 (Escudero 1849, p. 96), 1843 (Velasco 1861, p. 284), 1848 (Stevens 1964, p. 220), 1850 (Ibid.), 1860 (Stone 1860, p. 14), 1863 (Estrella 1871, no. 273 p. 2), 1864 (Mowry 1864, p. 52), 1890 (Monteverde 1891, p. 423) (Velasco 1893, p. 112), 1890-1960 (Mexico Dirección General de Estadística, 1890-1960), 1940 (Rebeil 1940, p. 8)

Pedro de Perea, who hoped to discourage the Jesuits from moving into the area. In fact, Fray Suárez did not return to New Mexico with the other ousted Franciscans, but resided in Arispe until his death in 1650 (Bannon 1955, p. 94).

Padre Gerónimo de la Canal did return to Arispe in 1648 to established officially the mission for the Jesuit Order. By 1651, Canal reported that the population of the mission had doubled to 200 families (Bannon 1955, p. 95). The population figures may be misleading since the early censuses were based on the number of baptisms and conversions registered in the church or parish records, which at times were quite inaccurate. The enlarged population counts were the product of the padres' double counting, which was unknowingly brought about by giving food and clothing to the converts and thus encouraging individuals to go through the motions of baptism more than once. (Ives 1948, p. 338). In any case the probable reason for both the relative growth of the settlement of Arispe and the Indian's desire for Christianization was the fact that very few mission Indians went hungry. Many missions were subsidized by the Crown, allowing the padres to buy food during crop failures from missions not affected by poor agricultural conditions.

Success of the new missions in northern Sonora necessitated the formation of the Rectory of San Francisco

Xavier in 1651 (Eckhart 1956, p. 2). The founders of the new rectory were Padre Pedro Pantoja and Padre Bartolomé Castaño (Alegre 1960, p. 45), and their rectory extended over all of Sonora, Baja California, and parts of Arizona. The new ecclesiastical division included 25,000 baptized adults who were taught Christianity by Jesuit priests in 23 missions (Bannon 1955, p. 101). Arispe, having a resident population of 300 persons in 1662 (Alegre 1960, p. 45), but showing a notable increase in the next sixteen years, (Figure 10) was one of the smaller missions in the rectory. The first Apache attacks on the missions of the north in 1680 impeded the continued growth of the missions within the Rectory of San Francisco Xavier.

Arispe gained some recognition in 1696, when Padre Francisco Mora chose the mission as the center of the Rectory of Pimería Alta, which at the time was made up of seven missions or partidos.³ With the death of Mora in 1720, Padre Cristóbal de Cañas became the new rector of the northern missions. His immediate churchly duties extended over the principal pueblo or cabecera of Arispe and

3. The administrative hierarchy of the missions in the northwestern frontier was initiated at this time by the Bishopric of Durango, which gave the orders to the rectorados (rectories of the province). Under the authority of the rectorado were the several partidos (districts), each administered by a resident padre who lived in the cabecera (capital of the district). From the main pueblo, the padre was responsible for the administration of the many visitas (temporary chapel) of the partido.

its population of 108 families. It also covered the visitas⁴ of Chinapa, six leagues north of the cabecera with 53 families and Bacoachi, north of Chinapa, with a total of 19 families (Report of 1730, Anonymous, Bancroft Papers).⁵

The true expansion of the Sonoran frontier began with the discovery of the Arizonac ore body (Figure 1) in 1736, which yielded close to the surface chunks of silver reported as weighing 4000 pounds (Mesa 1939, p. 35). This silver deposit was also referred to as the Planchas de Plata mine, a name derived from the deposits which occurred in long sheets between sedimentary layers. The richness of the deposit compelled the Crown to take an active interest in the region for the first time and to encourage the establishment of missions and presidios along strategic streams. Consequently, the Spanish population of Sonora increased with the increase in economic activity.

Up to the time of the Arizonac silver discovery, few Spaniards resided in the area of northern Sonora. The census of 1742, the first to separate Indians from

4. See note 3 on page 35.

5. Francisco Cossio in his popular study "Estado y descripcion de la provincia de Sonora, 1730" (pp. 587-636) states that Arispe had a population of 198 families. This contradicts the original manuscript which accounts for 108 families in Arispe at the time. The census report of 108 families if the figure used in this thesis, because it is cited in the original document, while Cossio's study does not give a citation for his information.

non-Indians, showed that the Spanish population throughout Sonora (Figure 10) increased with the discovery of silver. This census reported 14,640 Indians and 1,680 persons under the classification of "others" of which 50% were mestizo (Gerhard 1962, p. 17). The previous estimates of the Indian population for the area in question were in excess of 60,000 people, which in the next 100 years declined by 82% (Gerhard 1962, p. 37). Although a widespread population decline took place in Sonora between 1730 and 1742, Arispe showed a slight increase during the same years (Figure 10). Arispe's growth was directly related to the excellent agricultural lands of the small basin which were worked by an Opata population willing to produce goods for the mission's residents and the surrounding mining camps.

One important outcome of the success and stability of the mission at Arispe was the impressive church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción which was completed in 1756 (Decorme 1941, p. 471) under the supervision of Padre Carlos Rojas, the last Jesuit rector of Arispe. The Spaniards had the Indians build a stone and masonry structure which at the time of its completion was the largest church in Sonora (Figure 11). It was the existence of this magnificent church which influenced the Crown's representative to



Fig. 11. Church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción

recommend the establishment of the political capital and bishopric at Arispe.⁶

Within the last quarter of the eighteenth century, Arispe, as well as the rest of northern Sonora, experienced a mining boom. In 1758 rich gold placers were unearthed near Bacoachi (Treutlein 1949, p. 92), and in 1769 silver deposits were discovered on the northern frontier of Sonora but were abandoned because of the frequent Apache raids (Velasco 1861, p. 109). At an earlier date (1761-62) the wrath of the Apache onslaught had been directed at Cananea, then a rancho, and all mining activity in the immediate area had ended (Nentuig 1863, p. 65). However, in the vicinity of Arispe, at this time the southern limit of Apache incursions, silver mining continued to expand throughout the latter part of the eighteenth century. The mines in operation utilized the technique of vein mining, which followed gold and silver bearing sulfides found in structural faults formed by the cataclysmic vulcanism and diastrophism of the

6. Arispe's church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción is built on the site of the original mission chapel, which probably was a simple ramada of branches. Subsequent structures of adobe were built, each replaced by a larger building in order to accommodate the growing population of the settlement. (Eckhart 1956, pp. 3-4) Señorita Carmen Pellat, a resident of Arispe and a descendent of an early pioneering family, states that the older members of her family recollect the ruin south of town, (Figure 12) which Roca (1967) asserts was the first mission, as being the remnants of an unfinished chapel started in the closing years of the nineteenth century (Personal communication).



Fig. 12. Chapel Ruins South of Town

Early Tertiary (Moore 1948, p. 64). Vein mining played a significant role in the growth of northern New Spain because this operation required a sizeable investment, a large labor force, and therefore necessitated the formation of permanent Spanish settlements (West 1949, p. 3).

Silver mines, such as the Babicanora (Figure 1), twenty four miles east of Arispe, the Santa Rosalía sixteen miles to the north, and the Saguaripa fifteen miles to the south, were in full production during the last part of the century and contributed much to the wealth of Arispe. These mining communities must have become quite dependent on Arispe for food, labor, beasts of burden and protection from Apache incursions and thereby the mining centers expanded greatly Arispe's sphere of influence.

Despite the apparent economic boom in Sonora, serious problems existed. Spanish miners and gambucinos⁷ made excessive demands upon the Indians for labor to operate the mines. The goal of the Spaniard was to attain quick wealth, but many failed. Some of those who failed started to raise livestock and supplied hides and tallow used at the mines. Cattle did extremely well on the native grasses and multiplied very rapidly (Stevens 1964, p. 13). However, ranching declined greatly by the late 1750's due to over-grazing and Apache thievery in northeastern Sonora

7. The term used to describe small mine operators or prospectors in the frontier of New Spain.

(Treutlein 1949, pp. 94-95). It was at this time that the Jesuits wrote many letters to the Crown condemning the abuse of the neophytes by the miners. The paternalistic attitude of the Jesuits toward their proselytes and their refusal to secularize the missions⁸ incited the wrath of Spanish ranchers and miners who, through false accusations against the order, played an important role in the eventual expulsion of the Jesuits from Mexico. All of the agricultural lands of the missions and adjoining Indian settlements were left in excellent condition at the time of Jesuit expulsion in 1767. Moreover, the missions had accumulated sizeable herds of cattle, sheep, horses and mules which incited the envy of the Spanish populace (Mosk 1939, p. 342). The ousting of the Black Robes from New Spain in 1767 removed the staunchest element of stability in the economy of the northwestern frontier.

After the expulsion, the Crown confiscated all the mission lands under the pretext that they had belonged to the missionaries rather than the Indians. Temporary

8. The initial task of teaching the Indians Catholicism and Spanish culture was to have been fulfilled within a period of ten years. Afterwards, by royal decree, all the mission lands were to be redistributed among the Indian population and the mission itself was to be secularized. The secularization of the mission meant that the church in Rome, not the Jesuit Order, was in charge of the religious function. However, the padres postponed secularization as long as possible in the hope of protecting the Indians from the Spanish miners and landgrabbers. Therefore, the mission lands under Jesuit administration were rarely turned over to the secular clergy for redistribution (Bannon 1955, p. 209).

officials known as "Royal Commissaries" administered the newly acquired lands of the Crown. Corruption was facilitated in the northwestern frontier by the remoteness of the area from central Mexico. The flagrant abuse of Indian labor and the exploitation of Indian lands for self-profit by the commissaries gave rise to numerous protests, especially from the Franciscan friars who had replaced the Jesuits in 1768. When General José de Gálvez made his inspection of the Provincias Norteñas in 1769, he discharged the local commissaries. He delegated the administrative duties of the missions and their lands to the Franciscans, who once again tried to protect the greatly reduced Indian population.⁹ The decline of the Indian population of Arispe to 114 individuals (Bancroft 1886, p. 563) during these trying days indicated a shortage of the cheap labor needed in the mines and a change in the make-up of Arispe's population, which was estimated at 700 persons, primarily mestizos and Spaniards (Figure 10).

The reluctance of the Spaniards to establish new permanent settlements, except where vein mining was practiced, constituted another major economic problem. Lack of these settlements can be ascribed to the disinclination

9. The decline of the native population in all probability can be ascribed to the forced Indian labor at the mines, disease, and miscegenation which produced mestizos or mixed bloods.

of the Spaniard to settle in the area and the increased hostilities of the Apache. Whenever mining reached a new low or Apache attacks increased, many Spaniards took up residence in well-established settlements of Indians who were hostile to the Apache. The influx of newcomers upset the local economy because the Spaniard displaced families, took over the best agricultural lands, and allowed his livestock to graze in the Indians' fields. Thus, the Spaniard to a great degree acted as a parasitic element rather than an economic asset in much of Sonora (Mosk 1939, p. 344).

To further complicate matters in the region, the Spaniards demanded the involuntary services of the native during the same period that the Indian had to cultivate his own land. Thus, the Indian was forced to ignore his own crops and subsequent food shortages occurred in the region (Mosk 1939, p. 345). The chaotic economic situation that existed in Sonora was absent in Arispe probably because of the protection offered the resident Indians by the mission and the reliable agricultural production of the settlement.

In summary, mining proved to be a source of income to the Crown rather than to the province. The breakdown of the Jesuit missions, the Apache raids, and the economic parasitism of the Spaniards were all principal forces leading to the decline of economic stability in Sonora. Economic troubles continued through the latter part of the

eighteenth century in Sonora, but relative economic stability existed in Arispe. The soundness of the economy of Arispe was largely based upon the permanency of the settlement, the excellence of the agricultural lands, a sizeable population to till the soil, and the reliance of the semi-permanent mining settlements upon the mission for supplies.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOLDEN AGE OF ARISPE

1769-1837

Arispe's sudden rise to power during the latter part of the eighteenth century was the direct result of the chaotic conditions that existed in the northern frontier. Apache attacks became the major force in deterring the exploitation of vast untapped mineral wealth and the expansion of Spanish settlements into the northern frontier of Sonora and Chihuahua. As a matter of fact, the repeated Apache raids became a definite threat to the continuation of effective Spanish authority in the northern frontier. To further complicate matters, French, Russian and English powers began to encroach upon Spanish lands. The French occupied Louisiana until 1762; the Russians in pursuit of precious fur-bearing animals, settled in northern California by 1769; and the English started to expand their frontier in America by establishing settlements west of the Mississippi River. Moreover, the grave economic situation present in the middle of the eighteenth century became more severe in the last quarter of the century. The apparent lack of military control and the economic

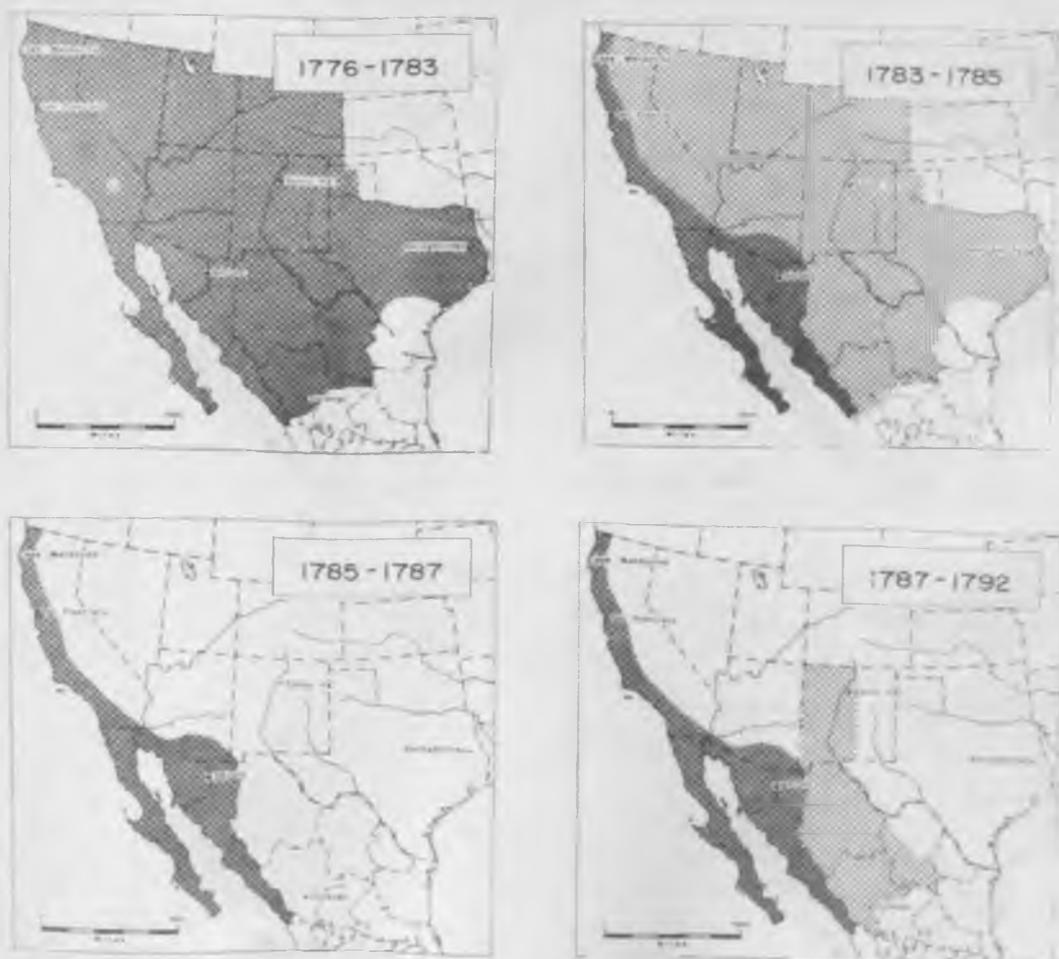
instability of the Provincias Internas (Figure 13) rendered the entire area useless to the Crown. In order to correct the grave situation in the north, a new administrative center and new governing procedures had to be established in the northern provinces of New Spain.

In 1765 Don José de Gálvez, the Crown's representative became the new Visitador-General of New Spain (O'Gorman 1937, XXXIII). It was Don José's recommendations and ideas that were to transform Arispe from a serene Indian mission settlement to the prominent position as the capital of the immense Provincias Internas (Figure 13). The King of Spain wanted Visitador Gálvez to completely reorganize the administration of the northern provinces and to recommend measures for eradicating the many ills present in the frontier. His primary assignments were to establish a functional administrative system and to strengthen the military forces of the frontier. In addition, Gálvez was to choose a site midway between California and Nueva Viscaya for the future capital of the northern provinces. The new administrative center would also be the seat of the bishopric of the provinces (Priestley 1916, p. 240).

If Gálvez' policy changes were to be successful, relative peace had to be brought to the northern provinces. At the time of his inspection, Indian unrest and attacks upon the Spanish settlements were a major problem. The Apache Indians were a constant threat to settlements in

ARISPE'S CHANGING SPHERE OF INFLUENCE 1776 - 1968

- CIVIL ADMINISTRATION
- MILITARY AUTHORITY
- CAPITAL OF THE MAJOR POLITICAL DIVISION



**Fig. 13. Arispe's Changing Sphere of Influence
(1776-1968)**

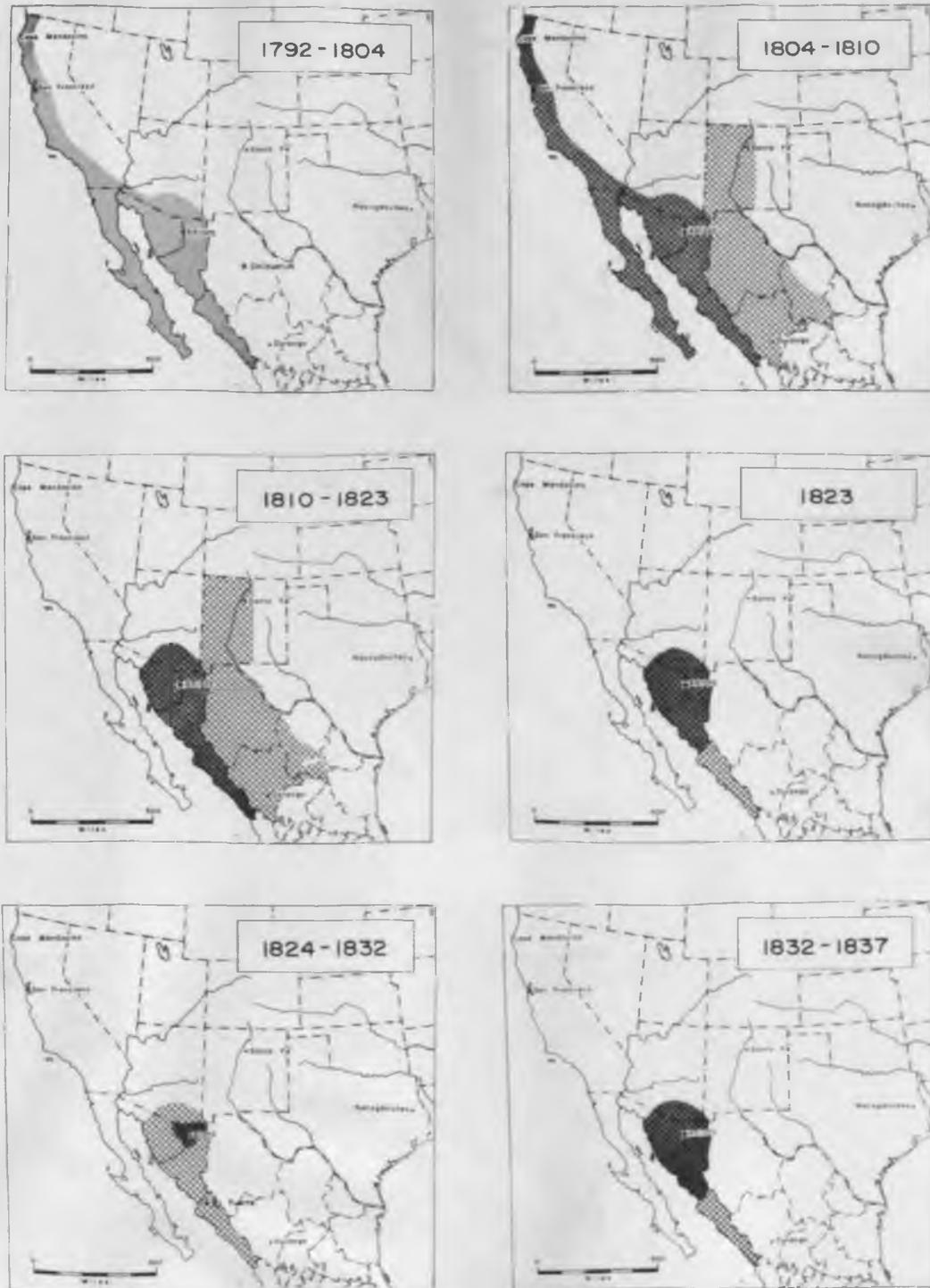


Fig. 13. continued



Fig. 13. continued

Sonora and Chihuahua; the Pima in their uprising of 1751 greatly disrupted Spanish authority in the Pimería Alta; the Seri could not be contained in their attacks in western Sonora; and the Comanche, aided by the French, were attacking Spanish settlements in Texas.

In order to wage a more effective campaign against the Apache, a chain of forts extending from the Gulf of California to the San Antonio River in Texas was established in 1765. Prior to the Gálvez inspection, the policy of the Crown had been to seek and kill the Indian rebels. With this new line of defense along the frontier, Don Hugo O'Connor, who was in charge of the military reorganization, was able to deal several defeats to the Apache by 1775. The military victories against the Apaches were a notable feat because for the first time in almost two hundred years the Spaniard forced the Apache to retreat to the mountains (Graebner 1940, pp. 12-15). Don Teodoro de Croix became the Comandante General after ill health forced O'Connor to relinquish his command in 1776. The new Comandante continued the fight against the Apache, but the Indian depredations continued throughout the latter part of the 1770's and the mid-1780's.

Since the military operations were extremely costly and only partially successful, Gálvez recommended a new policy of attrition, which was initiated in 1783. Gálvez reasoned that military force against the Apache had met with

failure in the past and would in the future. He realized that the threat of the Apache was in his ability to attack wherever and whenever he wished. The new policy was designed to cause the ruin of the Apache from within. This was to be accomplished by forcing the Apache to become dependent upon the Spaniard for his livelihood. The Crown was to provide free food, clothing, guns and intoxicating liquors to the Apaches who settled in the immediate vicinity of military presidios (Graebner 1940, pp. 16-17). The cost of this new policy was 180 pesos per year, per individual, which was far cheaper than the expense of fighting them. The new policy met with remarkable success, and for a period of almost twenty five years (1786-1810) very few Apache depredations took place (Graebner 1940, p. 18). For the first time in generations there was an opportunity for constructive development in the frontier area. During this prosperous and peaceful period, Arispe gained its prominent position as the political center of Sonora; mines once again were put into operation; large churches were built or beautified; and ranches prospered.

Throughout the colonial period the administrative division of the northern provinces was constantly being reassessed in the hope that efficient rule of such a vast area could be achieved. The formation of the Provincias Internas in July of 1769 was a direct outgrowth of the Gálvez inspection. This new political division originally was to have

been governed from Caborca; however, frequent and furious Apache attacks had nearly destroyed that settlement and had rendered it useless as an administrative center. A new site for the capital of the Provincias Internas had to be selected, and Arispe was that choice (Navarro 1964, p. 205).

The assets Arispe's site offered as a capital were, 1) a strategic location in a basin restricted at both entrances by narrow gorges and therefore easily defended from Apache attacks, 2) fertile soils which, though limited in areal extent, could provide ample food for the small settlement, 3) a sizeable church which could become the temporary cathedral for the bishopric, and 4) a centrality which was a necessary prerequisite for the proper administration of the immense Provincias Internas.

Pope Pius VI indirectly enhanced the administrative importance of Arispe in 1779 by establishing the Bishopric of Sonora, the seat of which was to be in the new capital. However, Fray Antonio de los Reyes, the first Bishop, was very disappointed with the physical appearance of Arispe and established his residence first at Ures and later permanently at Alamos (McCarty 1958, pp. 1-15). Arispe had become the Bishopric of Sonora in name only; it was not the residence of any bishop.¹ Bishop Reyes also suggested

1. Only one bishop was ever inaugurated in Arispe. Bernardo del Espiritu Santo was instated there in February 1822, but never resided in the town (Berber 1937, p. 124).

that the administrative center be moved from Arispe to Ures, which offered greater safety from Apache raids, more arable land, and a larger population (Navarro García 1964, p. 512). Reyes' report was the first to question the wisdom of choosing Arispe as the administrative center of the Provincias Internas. Although the town of Arispe did possess certain drawbacks as the site for the capital for the northern provinces, its advantages outweighed its disadvantages at this time, and Reyes' suggestions were disregarded by the Crown.

It was in 1782, during the administration of Caballero de Croix, the first Comandante-General, that Arispe became the official capital of the Comandancia of the Provincias Internas (Wall 1940, p. 11) and officially the only ciudad in Sonora.² The area administered from Arispe included the provinces of Sinaloa-Sonora, Nueva Viscaya, Coahuila, Texas, New Mexico and the Californias³ (Figure 13). The political autonomy of northern New Spain from the Viceroy, made immediately feasible measures to correct the administrative problems plaguing the area. In 1780, Croix established a caja real or subtreasury in Arispe to collect taxes, tributes, and rents and to pay the military troops in the Provincias Internas. Since a poor communication

2. The title ciudad at this time designated administrative importance rather than size.

3. Ostimuri was included as part of Sonora, although it was an independent territory until 1786 (Almada 1952, p. 543) (Figure 2).

system hindered effective administration of the northern frontier, Croix, in January 1779, extended postal services north from Durango through Arispe and eastward to Bahía del Espíritu Santo in Texas (Navarro García 1964, p. 318).

With the establishment of the subtreasury and postal services, the small settlement of Arispe became the major redistribution center for the payment of troops and mail in the north.

Arispe in 1779 was a rustic frontier town of 390 persons: thirteen Spanish families and ninety seven Opata.⁴ The 120 poorly constructed adobe dwellings did not conform to any particular street pattern, but were scattered on the loma overlooking the Río Sonora (Figure 14). The most formidable structure of the settlement was the church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, located on the north side of the main plaza. Adjacent to the church was the military barracks (Morfi 1778, p. 2), which housed the twenty soldiers and one officer of the militia⁵ (Navarro García 1964, p. 279). The new capital totally lacked adequate living quarters for the new commandant and his family. To

4. The general decline in the Indian population between 1750 and 1780 was largely due to the mistreatment of the Indians and the breakdown of the mission system (Bancroft 1886, pp. 567-568).

5. For a detailed and interesting description of Arispe in 1778 see Morfi's report translated from the original document in Appendix A.



PLANO GENERAL
 DE LA MISION Y PUEBLO DE ARISPE. QUE
 S.M. EN SUS RE INSTRUCCIONES DESTI-
 NA PARA CAPITAL DE LAS PROVINCIAS DE
 NUEVA ESPANA SITUADO A LOS 36: Y 3: DE
 LAT. Y 266: Y 4: DE LONG. BOREA. DIA 4 DE
 JUNIO DE 1780.

- EXPLICACION**
- A. Casa de la Mision con sus habi. el Oidor Comand. Don
 - B. Iglesia
 - C. Casa de Comandancia que tiene el Sr. Oidor.
 - D. Alameda y Plaza de la Mision.
 - E. Alameda y Plaza de San Sebastian.
 - F. Plaza de San Sebastian.
 - G. Plaza de la Mision.
 - H. Plaza de San Sebastian.
 - I. Rio de San Sebastian.
 - J. Rio de San Sebastian.
 - K. Rio de San Sebastian.
 - L. Casas de San Sebastian.
 - M. Casas de San Sebastian.
 - N. Casas de San Sebastian.
 - O. Veredas que sirven a diferentes parroquias.
 - P. Alameda y Plaza de San Sebastian.
 - Q. Alameda y Plaza de San Sebastian.
 - R. Alameda y Plaza de San Sebastian.
 - S. Alameda y Plaza de San Sebastian.

- EXPLICACION DE LOS PROYECTOS**
- T. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - U. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - V. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - X. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - Y. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - Z. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - AA. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - BB. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - CC. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - DD. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - EE. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - FF. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - GG. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - HH. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - II. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - JJ. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - KK. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - LL. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - MM. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - NN. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - OO. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - PP. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - QQ. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - RR. Plano de San Sebastian.
 - SS. Plano de San Sebastian.
- Escala de Paces.
 Año de 1780.

Fig.14. Plano of Arispe, 1780

accomodate them, the house of the missionary next to the church was made into the temporary administrative "palace" of the Provincias Internas in 1779.

A newly created pattern of small agricultural fields on the floodplain below the town were a direct outgrowth of one of the first measures initiated by Visitador Gálvez to augment the impoverished agricultural production in the north. He had confiscated and redistributed all the Jesuit mission land in 1769. By decree, all individuals, Spanish and Indian, were allotted a certain parcel of land with the stipulation that, if the land was not tilled for a period of two years, it would revert back to the ownership of the Crown (Priestley 1916, p. 286). The redistribution of farm land in the basin of Arispe resulted in the formation of small, individually operated plots which are still evident on the landscape today (Figure 15).

Plans for the future development of the new capital were drawn in 1780 by the engineer Manuel Mascaró, who envisioned the formation of a large city with four plazas, a large alameda, a palace for the commandant, an episcopal palace, a cathedral, a military barracks, etc. (Figure 14) (Navarro García 1964, p. 546). Mascaró's plan conformed with the prescribed instructions of the Crown which stated that 1) the streets of the town had to be laid out in the pattern of the conventional Roman grid; 2) the actual site



Fig. 15. Aerial Photo of Basin of Arispe

of the town should be an elevated place affording healthful conditions and protection; 3) if mountains existed in the area, they should be either east or west of the settlement; 4) there should be an adequate amount of fertile land, fuel, building materials, good water and a supply of native labor; 5) the town should be accessible by road, thus furnishing easy communication and transportation. Further instructions stated that 1) the design of the plaza should be in the form of a rectangle, with its length at least twice its width because this shape lends itself best to horse races during celebrations; 2) the main plaza should be in the center of town surrounded by administrative buildings and soldiers barracks; 3) the cathedral should be erected away from the main plaza on ground that is above the level of the town, and thus commanding a site that is visible from every corner of the settlement (Stanislowski 1947, pp. 102-104). Completion of the elaborate plan by Mascaró was never fully realized because of the lack of funds in the closing decade of the eighteenth century.

Monetary problems existed in the north even though the area produced silver and a surplus of agricultural goods. Pilfering of precious metals en route to the mint in Mexico City was the chief cause of the financial deficit in the monetary administration of the province (Navarro García 1964, p. 497). Loss of revenues in transport had been a

problem since the inception of the Provincias Internas.

As early as 1780 Teodoro de Croix recommended that a mint be established in Arispe, but none ever was (Ibid.). Therefore, the loss of revenues continued throughout the colonial period, and the northern provinces suffered the consequences.

In short, Arispe's history had been greatly affected by the decisions of Caballero de Croix. Under his leadership (1776-1783) the ciudad 1) became the capital and military center of the vast Provincias Internas (Figure 13), 2) became the seat of the Bishopric of Sonora, 3) was given a new plan for the future development of the town, 4) received a new postal service and subtreasury, and 5) attained a new military hospital. Arispe's sphere of influence had grown greatly under Croix's administration, but this authority was somewhat lessened after don Teodoro was relieved of his command in 1783.

Upon leaving office, Croix recommended to the Crown that the Provincias Internas be divided into three provinces to facilitate and improve administrative procedures in the north. In 1785, the Provincias Internas was partitioned into three autonomous units, reducing Arispe's political influence to Sonora, Sinaloa and the Californias (Navarro García 1964, p. XXXVIII) (Figure 13). Two years after the division of the vast Provincias Internas, the three separate provinces were consolidated into two administrative units. The western half, which did not change in area and

whose capital was Arispe, became known as the Provincias Internas del Occidente. The eastern half of the province became known as the Provincias Internas del Oriente and included Chihuahua, New Mexico and Nueva Viscaya. The Comandante-General was still in charge of the newly formed Provincia de Occidente, but a new administrative system was superimposed on the military structure. The Provincias Internas del Occidente was divided officially in 1786 into two civil administrative intendencies. Arispe was the capital of the intendency of its namesake which included Sonora, Sinaloa and the Californias.⁶ (Figure 13). Nueva Viscaya became the Intendencia de Durango (O'Gorman 1937, p. XLIV). The installation of the intendency system gave the Comandante-General the authority to be both the military leader and the civil administrator of the two intendencies in the Provincias Internas del Occidente. This dual function of the commandant lessened the importance of the Intendencias de Arispe and Durango, and generally the province was referred to as the Provincias Internas del Occidente (O'Gorman 1937, pp. XLVIII-XLIX).

Five years after the formation of the Provincias Internas del Occidente and Provincias Internas del Oriente, the administrative divisions of the north of New Spain were

6. The Intendencia de Arispe was established in 1783 on an experimental basis. Three years later the intendency system was established throughout New Spain (O'Gorman 1937, p. XL).

once again reunited into one province (Figure 13). The new province became known as the Comandancia de Chihuahua, and the capital was moved from Arispe to Chihuahua⁷ (Navarro García 1964, p. 486). This shift of the administrative center in 1792 was not an original thought, recommendations to move the capital to a more favorable location had been suggested as early as 1769 by some of Gálvez's advisors and formally in Bishop Reyes' report in 1783. The change of the capital and the formation of the new comandancia at this time were attempts to remedy the continual disorganization in the administration of the northern provinces, and the transfer of the administrative center did not reflect a noticeable shift in the population or political control. The immensity of the Comandancia de Chihuahua proved again to be an impracticable political division and the former Provincias del Occidente and Provincias del Oriente were reinstated in 1804 (Figure 13) (O'Gorman 1937, p. XLI). Arispe regained its previous administrative responsibilities, but the controversy over relocating the capital came forth again. The newly-suggested site of the capital was Ures because that town occupied a central position with regard to the population concentration, possessed many more square leagues of

7. Although the seat of the Comandancia was transferred from Arispe, the old capital still remained the administrative center of the Intendency of Arispe (Navarro García 1964, p. 486).

arable land and was safer from Apache attacks (Ocaranza 1939, p. 37). The proposed change in location of the capital did not come about because the Apache were relatively peaceful and Arispe's agricultural lands produced a surplus of foodstuffs; so the expense of moving the capital to Ures could not be justified. Furthermore, the continuance of Arispe as the capital was greatly influenced by powerful military personages who lived in the ciudad and who wished the capital to remain there for reasons of prestige.

During the closing years of the colonial period, Sonora's mining industry flourished and thus Arispe prospered. The Intendency of Arispe had become the sixth largest silver producer of New Spain as the result of measures drawn up during a conference between mining and commercial interests summoned by Gálvez in 1769. Price controls to insure low prices on quicksilver, salt, and gunpowder were initiated with the purpose of attracting gambucinos who would seek new ore deposits and thus increase the total mineral production of the northern provinces. Gálvez realized that the gambucinos as individuals had little capital, but the aggregate of their labors was one of the main contributors to the revenue of the frontier. Wages and working conditions in the mines were improved in order to attract the Indian labor needed to remove the valuable gold and silver ores (Priestley 1940, p. 284).

Arispe benefitted greatly from the renewed mining activities in New Spain. The mines at Cananea were producing sizable quantities of silver and copper during the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The Babicanora and Sagaripa mines were producing silver and lead which was smelted in Arispe (Figure 16). However, most of the silver in Sonora was being extracted from the Alamos area (Velasco 1861, p. 150). This prosperity in Sonora began to decline when the Crown increased taxes on azogue or quicksilver (mercury) to finance its wars. The price of azogue (mercury) rose from \$60 per quintal (100 lbs.) to \$170 by 1820. The drastic price increase on quicksilver forced many gambucinos to abandon mining; some turned from silver to gold mining because it required less azogue for amalgamation, but the overall effect was a severe decline in mining production (Velasco 1861, p. 104).

"El Grito de Dolores," the cry of the revolution of 1810, further disrupted economic conditions in the north. The exorbitant cost of quicksilver was the initial cause for the decline of mining in Sonora, and the revolutionary war of 1810 was the catalyst in the total disruption of mining. A complete breakdown in the defenses of the north followed the decline of mining because the Crown could no longer afford the expense of keeping the presidios in the north operative. Administrative readjustments, further decreasing Arispe's sphere of influence, were undertaken, and the



Fig. 16. Rudimentary Smelters

Californias were placed under the direct jurisdiction of the Viceroy of New Spain (Figure 13) (O'Gorman 1937, p. 29).

The termination of Spanish rule in Mexico in September 1821, left the northern provinces in a state of utter confusion. The new government discontinued the high subsidies initiated by the Crown. Consequently, the Apache renewed his marauding ways. At first the attacks were of minor significance, but eventually they developed to catastrophic proportions. By 1831, northeastern and central Sonora were completely laid to waste and almost totally depopulated. Extending as far south as Hermosillo, the destructive Apache raids rendered the entire northern section of the state unsafe. (Graebner 1940, p. 18). These attacks were so furious that the continuation of Arispe as a permanent settlement was in great jeopardy. The abandonment of mines, missions, and ranches further complicated the economic problems in Sonora, now without subsidies from the Crown.

A provincial deputation, which met in Arispe in 1822 to solve some of the problems created by the war of independence, resolved to move the capital of the Provincias Internas del Occidente from Arispe to Chihuahua (Palomero 1822, p. 30). They acknowledged that Chihuahua had a larger population, had better and more extensive agricultural lands, was considerably safer from Apache attacks, and was more centrally located within the northern provinces. The delegation also emphasized the disadvantages of Arispe's site;

these, at an earlier date, were considered advantageous (Ibid.). One of the major criticisms was that Arispe was hemmed in by mountains barely allowing the formation of a narrow floodplain (Figure 15). Roads leading to and from Arispe were necessarily treacherous, for they had to cross the heavily incised sierras. Where the ranges were severely dissected, a road had to follow the river bed and invariably became impassable for weeks during the floods of the rainy season (Ibid.). Once again, though, Arispe remained the capital, in all probability because of inertia and the influence exerted by its citizens.

In July, 1823, the central government dissolved the Provincias Internas del Occidente into the four independent departamentos of Sonora, Sinaloa, Chihuahua and Durango. The capital of Sonora, as well as the military center of Sonora and Sinaloa, remained in Arispe. (Figure 13) (O'Gorman 1937, p. 31). A year later Mexico became a federal republic, and the territorial divisions were once again reshaped. Sonora and Sinaloa became the newly formed state of Interno de Occidente (O'Gorman 1937, pp. 41-43).

The reunification of Sonora and Sinaloa was an attempt to correct the grave economic problems, but Occidente was doomed from its very inception by petty political jealousies between the representatives of Sonora and Sinaloa. In order to alleviate the political quibbling, the capital was moved from Arispe to Ures in 1824, only to be moved to

El Fuerte, Sinaloa, a few months later (Velasco 1850, p. 54). To appease the Sonorans, the military center of Occidente remained in the old capital of Arispe (Figure 13) (Bancroft 1889, p. 649), but the administrative power of Arispe had diminished to the administrative center of a department of northeastern Sonora. This subservient administrative role came to an end with the breakup of Occidente in October, 1830. Sonora and Sinaloa became independent states, and Hermosillo became the temporary capital of Sonora in 1831. However, in 1832 Arispe regained its previous position as the official capital of the state, but the Congress disapproved of the decision and planned to have the administrative seat of the state moved to Hermosillo at the earliest possible date. To prevent the removal of the capital, the citizens of Arispe threatened armed rebellion against the congress of the state of Sonora in August, 1833. The insurrection of Arispe was adhered to by most of the pueblos of the state, and by September the situation became extremely dangerous. In order to avert a civil war, Arispe was recognized officially as the capital and military center of the state of Sonora (Berber 1953, p. 38) (Figure 13).

A period of political tranquility followed the insurrection, and the congress began to take some constructive steps to solve some of the problems that were plaguing the state. New plans for an active campaign against the

Apache were initiated and met with some success. Funds given to the state by the central government for the advancement of educational facilities resulted in the establishment of Arispe's first primary school (Berber 1958, p. 43). Shortly after the breakup of Occidente, Arispe became the home of the first official press of the state of Sonora. El Restaudor was printed in the capital until 1837, at which time the paper was transferred to Ures (Almada 1952, p. 564).

By 1827 the former capital of the Provincias Internas could boast of having some very substantial houses and an attractive alameda. The area had good agricultural soils with sufficient water to irrigate all the lands. Annual production of grain was 25,000 fanegas (62,500 bushels), and the cattle population totaled 8,000 head. Arispe was the residence of the Comisaria-General, who was in charge of all military activities in Sonora and Sinaloa. The town had the state's only military hospital, which was constructed between the years of 1780 and 1792. It also had a drugstore, the first in the province. Manufacturing was limited to the most elementary of activities, blacksmithing, tanning and carpentry (Riesgo y Valdez 1827, pp. 1-80). Another visitor at this time described the town as having some very good houses, a theater, and some very pretty gardens along the river (Hardy 1829, p. 425). In

substance, Arispe at this late date (1828) was a small ciudad of 2,179 (Velasco 1861, p. 284) which, when compared to other settlements in the frontier, was a sizeable town offering many amenities to its populace.

Arispe had been the hub of political life in Sonora for over half a century, but this prestigious period came to a finish in 1837, when the capital was moved to Ures and the Bishopric of Sonora, to Hermosillo. Neither ever returned to Arispe. Two major reasons for the change in the administrative center were: one the Apache onslaught of the 1830's had rendered Arispe completely ineffective as an administrative center by virtually isolating the capital from the rest of the state; and two the commercial and population centers had shifted to the Ures-Hermosillo area. One reason for this commercial shift was the expansion of the port of Guaymas in 1837 to facilitate trade. Ures became the capital because the agricultural lands could support a larger population, and the Apache did not control the immediate area around that town.

Thus, we see the Apache as one of the instigating factors in the founding of Arispe as the capital of the vast Provincias Internas and subsequent political divisions, as well as the reason for the abandonment of Arispe as the capital of Sonora. Arispe had become the capital at a time when the emphasis in the choice of a site was of strategic

importance. As the population of the north increased, new administrative measures were innovated. The northern provinces were divided, subdivided and reunited several times in the hope of reaching an adequate solution to the problems of governing the northern territories. With each administrative change, Arispe's political sphere of influence was affected greatly, and eventually it diminished to the point of insignificance. (Figure 13). The continuance of Arispe as the administrative center through the latter part of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth centuries was largely due to the powerful political influences exercised by certain residents of Arispe rather than to its ideal position as a capital.

In summary, the precarious economic prosperity in the closing years of the colonial period came to an abrupt halt with the expulsion of Spanish rule. The defenses in the north were completely neglected, and the Apache began to raid the unprotected settlements. Sonora suffered greatly from Indian attacks; as a matter of fact, the raids were so devastating in the north that Arispe's continuation as a permanent settlement became questionable. This turn of events forced the capital to be moved to Ures. At that time, the Bishopric was transferred officially to Hermosillo. The establishment of the capital at Ures had not been a sudden resolution, but evolved from an idea that was present

from the very beginnings of the northern provinces. Arispe's position as the capital was doomed from the first because of the limitations on the growth of the ciudad by the relatively small amount of arable land, the confined site of the town and the marginal nature of its mineral deposits. Arispe for all practical purposes had been an adequate choice as the military center of the northern provinces, but the function of the ciudad as an administrative center left much to be desired. The important administrative function which Arispe had occupied ended when the dynamic frontier shifted away from the old mining country of northeastern Sonora to the new area of central and western Sonora. By 1837, the commercial and population centers of Sonora had shifted to the Ures-Hermosillo area, and therefore the capital was moved to a site which was in the heart of the state.

Arispe's gilded age had come to an end.

CHAPTER V

AFTER THE FALL

A combination of factors led to the final collapse of the administrative power of Arispe, Sonora. After the Mexican war for independence, the armed forces in the north were neglected and left in complete disarray. Lack of military control encouraged the Apache to renew his hostilities against settlements in northeastern Sonora and southern Arizona. Renewed Apache attacks provided the United States government with an excuse to pursue its expansionistic policy by sending troops into northern Mexico in pursuit of the treacherous Apache. Filibusters exploited Sonora and tried to establish new American colonies. With the termination of Spanish rule there was a vacuum in leadership within the central Government of Mexico and also within the governments of the states of the nation. Revolution became a way of life in Sonora throughout the nineteenth century. Rivalry for power further decreased the military effectiveness of the forces in Sonora, and the Apaches ran rampant. The decadence that befell Arispe after the removal of the capital to Ures without a doubt was caused directly or indirectly by the Apache depredation that took place between 1830 and 1883.

The chief offenders in Sonora were the Chiricahuan Apaches who directed their attacks against settlements from which they stole cattle to sell later in Arizona and Sonora. In the course of rustling livestock, the Apache terrorized the entire region of northeastern Sonora and killed indiscriminantly lone miners, travellers and ranchers.¹ The intensified Apache raids forced the abandonment of towns, mines and ranches. The subsequent drastic decline in population, mine production and number of livestock in northeastern Sonora resulted in an economic depression.

Arispe, although it remained one of the larger settlements of northeastern Sonora, clearly illustrates the general decline that was taking place in the area in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The population had diminished from 2,079 persons in 1822 to 1,000 by 1850 (Velasco 1893, p. 599). The California Gold Rush of 1848 further encouraged a mass exodus from Sonora, in particular the area under Apache seige. This migration resulted in a shortage of food throughout much of northern Sonora (Bartlett 1853, p. 285). As always, a few of the disgruntled emigrants from Sonora returned to Arispe in 1850, but the general exodus from the old capital was still in progress in 1870 when 227 individuals chose to leave Arispe for California and Arizona (Anonymous 1869, pp. 708-709).

1. The Pesqueira Newspaper Collection of Sonora has innumerable early newspaper accounts of the frequent Apache attacks during this period.

In the early part of the nineteenth century, mining had been one of the major economic activities of the district of Arispe, but by the latter half of the century it had become only a minor contributor to the economy of the ciudad. The district of Arispe by 1870 had only three mines in production, while Hermosillo had forty-eight; Ures, sixteen; Alamos, twenty-nine; Altar, twenty-one; and Sahuaripa, eighteen (Anonymous 1871, p. 208). The much-decreased mining operations within the district of Arispe clearly illustrated the overall deteriorating effect of the Apache attacks upon northeastern Sonora.²

Arispe in 1857 had lost its prestigious position as the military center of the Comandancia-General and by 1860 only twenty-six soldiers occupied the military barracks. (Pesqueira Collection 1860, no. 51) Then, suddenly in the middle of the nineteenth century, the ciudad of Arispe was once again being considered seriously for the military center of Sonora, but this time the troops to be stationed in the old capital were American soldiers.

The idea of stationing troops in Sonora was a direct outgrowth of the American policy of Manifest Destiny. By 1860 the design of American expansionists was to annex Sonora and Chihuahua in order to exploit the mineral wealth.

2. By 1872 only one mine was in operation in the entire district of Arispe (Pesqueira Collection 1871, no. 273).

of northern Mexico and to offer a place of refuge to U.S. southerners for political reasons. One of the major proponents of the American takeover of Sonora was Sylvester Mowry, the mining magnate of Arizona, who suggested that a railroad be built from El Paso to Guaymas via the Sonora River Valley (Mowry 1864, p. 52). In 1859, Charles P. Stone, then the U.S. representative to Sonora, suggested that Arispe be made into an American fortress. Stone cited Arispe as a once flourishing settlement of more than 2,000 inhabitants now reduced to 600. He blamed the devastation of the town and of northeastern Sonora on the frequent Apache raids (Stone 1860, pp. 1-14). President James Buchanan's interests were aroused by the Stone report, and in his annual message to Congress in December, 1859, he expressed the need of an American takeover of Sonora and Chihuahua. The stationing of U.S. military troops in Arispe was to stop the Apache depredation.³ (Buchanan 1859, p. 17). The ambitions of an American takeover of northern Mexico were thwarted by the start of the Civil War in 1860. In all probability, if this internal struggle had not developed in the United States, northern Mexico would be part of them today.

3. Charles P. Stone states in his report of 1860 (page 14) that as soon as the President's message was received by the governor of Sonora, the capital of the state was moved back to Arispe. However, the Stone report is the only document that mentions this information and probably is fallacious.

In any case, the Apache depredations continued to increase, and the population of the district of Arispe continued to decrease. The Apache raids had completely demoralized the Mexican populace. Local citizens refused to join military campaigns against the Apache out of fear. By the 1860's the Apache had become so confident and bold that they began to conduct raids within the confines of the larger settlements. The inner bounds of the ciudad of Arispe, which up to this time had been safe from Apache raids, no longer could offer such protection (Corral 1920, p. 120).

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Apache had become a major threat to settlements in southern Arizona and New Mexico, as well as to those in northern Sonora. By May , 1883, the situation forced General Crooke then commander of troops stationed at Fort Huachuca to send U.S. forces into Sonora in pursuit of the warring Apache. Crooke's campaign met with remarkable success. With the capture of 300 Apache warriors, Indian attacks became virtually a thing of the past by the end of the year. Only infrequent raids by a few renegade Apache warriors still occurred (Ibid.).

Prior to the American intervention of 1883, northeastern Sonora experienced a resurgence of mining. The silver mines in Tombstone began to decline and the lawless situation of the American frontier town encouraged many

individuals to leave and seek their fortunes elsewhere. The resurgence of mining in the vicinity of Arispe was great enough to require the installation of a stagecoach between Tombstone and Las Delicias, Sonora, twenty miles south of Arispe (Figure 1) (Arizona Daily Star, March 4, 1882, p. 3). However, the stage was discontinued in the latter part of 1882. The mining boom in the Las Delicias area had lasted only a few months. The continual Apache hostilities, the rapid depletion of silver ores from the antigua mines,⁴ and the betterment of economic conditions in Arizona hastened the end of the renewed mining activity in the Arispe area.

With the Apache defeat of 1883, mining activities were rekindled throughout northern Sonora. By 1885, the old mining district of northeastern Sonora was in full production. Large quantities of lead were being extracted in the vicinity of Arispe for use in the reduction of silver ores. In the Bacoachi area placers were producing gold and the antigua mines, silver. Mines at Cananea began to yield copper which in the future would change the entire complexion of the settlement. Antiguas at Las Delicias and San Juan de Sonora (Figure 1) once again were yielding sizeable amounts of silver. Intensification of mining in the

4. Antiguas are old mines excavated during the colonial period of Mexico.

district of Arispe made Sonora the eighth largest producer of silver and gold in Mexico (Cubas 1885, pp. 201-232).

Cessation of Apache depredations and the renaissance of mining encouraged individuals to return to northeastern Sonora. Arispe's depleted population began to show signs of increasing, and by 1890, 1,154 persons resided in the ciudad. The inhabitants of the former capital gained their livelihood primarily by farming and ranching. Exports of wheat, cattle, fruits and minerals contributed 300,000 pesos per year to the economy of the town or a per capita income of 260 pesos in 1890 (Velasco 1893, p. 118). Administratively, Arispe was the center of a district which boasted a population half the size of the District of Hermosillo and was the administrative center of an area delimited in the north by the international boundary with the U.S., in the east and southeast by the District of Moctezuma, in the south by Ures, and in the west by Magdalena (Figure 1). In addition, Arispe served as the postal distribution center for the towns of Aconchi, Baviácora, Banámichi, Sinoquipe, Bacoachi, and Fronteras (Figure 1) (Velasco 1893, pp. 112-113). By this time only the minutest vestige of its former military importance remained. The total military force of the former capital of the vast northern provinces in 1890 consisted of one corporal and eight soldiers (Ibid.).

The twentieth century came quietly to Arispe. The population of the town has remained almost constant since 1900, never exceeding its one time high of 2,079 in 1822 (Figure 10). Arispe evolved into a tranquil agricultural settlement which experienced periodic mining booms encouraged by increased demands on the world market for silver and gold. The intermittent resurgences of mining did little to enhance the economy of the settlement, however. Each time, the operations were the purely speculative reworking of old mines and no new deposits were discovered.

In 1917, Arispe's administrative responsibility diminished further. The old capital had become the center of a small municipio (Almada 1952, p. 493) within the district of Cananea (Figure 1) and administered the settlements of Bacanuchi, Chinapa, Chispes and Sinoquipe. The lack of adequate transportation facilities made Arispe unfit for more extensive political authority. A railroad line connecting Hermosillo and Nogales via the desert lowlands was completed in 1882, and in 1908 a second line connecting Nogales to Cananea was constructed (Almada 1952, pp. 275-276). This rail network virtually isolated Arispe from the commercial centers of the state and left her with only the old colonial road for the transport of her export and import goods.

The opening of new agricultural lands in the Yaqui-Mayo region of southern Sonora and the Valle de Hermosillo

in the twentieth century further shifted the agricultural center away from the Sonora River Valley. Consequently, Arispe's relative commercial importance decreased greatly, although its present agricultural output is in all likelihood greater than in the past. The area of farm land under irrigation in the small basin has increased from 600 hectares in 1926 to 1,241 hectares in 1959. Of the 1,241 hectares now in production, 937 are now cultivated under gravity flow irrigation. (Sonora. Sonora en cifras, June 1968).

Agriculture is still the life-giving occupation of the inhabitants of Arispe. The tractor in many cases has replaced the mule, yet the crops are still grown on individually owned small plots of land (Figure 15). The staple crops such as corn, wheat and beans make up the major part of production, wheat being the most important crop. Recently potatoes have become an important crop for shipment to the cities of Hermosillo, Cananea and Nogales. Other crops such as sugar cane and peanuts, as well as fruits such as peaches, apricots, figs, oranges, etc. from the many orchards along the river's edge, are raised strictly for local consumption. Acequias (irrigation ditches) constructed during the colonial period divert waters from the river to many of the agricultural fields (Figure 14). Much

temporal agriculture⁵ is practiced in Arispe on the alluvial terraces of the valley, especially in the raising of wheat, which relies upon the stored moisture in the soils from the total annual precipitation especially the rainfall of the winter storms (Figure 15).

The livestock industry in Arispe is a very important segment of the economy. In 1968, 72,087 head of cattle were registered in the Municipio of Arispe, an increase of 38,242 head since 1950 caused by the increased demands for cattle by the U. S. Market. "Improved Mexican Cattle" with mostly Hereford genes are the predominant breed and are raised for export to the United States. In 1958 an eight to ten month old steer was sold for \$120, but in 1968, because of the increased number of cattle raised in the southwestern U.S. and Sonora, the price dropped to \$80 - \$90 per steer (Sonora, Sonora en cifras, June 1968). Horses are raised for local transportation and ranching. The donkey and mule are still widely used as beasts of burden, but are no longer as numerous as in the past because of farm mechanization and the use of trucks and automobiles for transporting goods and people.

The present landscape of the Arispe area reflects man's long years of altering the land. Farmers for centuries have planted willows to line the river banks and fields

5. Temporal agriculture is the method of raising crops without the aid of irrigation.

to prevent flooding (Figure 17). Willow poles six or more feet in length are placed in the ground one to two feet apart and made into a fence by interweaving willow branches between the poles. In time the willow poles and branches take root and grow to form a living dike to prevent destructive damage by the floods. Mining activities have created pock-marked barren slopes denuded of all sizeable trees, which in the past were needed either for beams in shoring the shafts or for charcoal used by the smelters in the area. Ranching, which was a vital supporting industry of the mines, brought about the denudation of the grass cover which in turn caused widespread erosion and the removal of much of the topsoil (Figure 5).

Today, Arispe is a quaint, sedate agricultural settlement nuzzled against the mountains. Since 1900 changes upon the townscape have been subtle but significant. Basically the small ciudad has undergone few outward changes in the last 150 years. The houses and the church of Nuestra Señora de la Asunción reflect Arispe's glorious past (Figure 18). The rectangular grid, the alameda, and the plaza mayor are the direct outgrowth of the plano of 1780 (Figures 14 and 19).

The church is the most imposing building in this town of some 1,480 individuals and is the original structure completed in 1756, thus, being the oldest church of its kind still in use in Sonora today (Eckhart 1960, p. 180).



**Fig. 17. Looking Across the Floodplain
of the Sonora River.**



Fig. 18. Aerial Photo of Arispe's Main Plaza.

In this report are the results of the examination of the
 and founder of San Francisco, California, designed and
 executed by him. In 1845, in accordance with the
 order of the state, the city of San Francisco constructed a
 wall, glass-covered windows, and the roof was made of
 for the lower part. To accommodate a family of
 five, the interior of the church was fully furnished.

Prayer
 church
 altar
 sharp
 the
 all
 roof
 floor
 room



**Fig. 19. Aerial Photo of the Town of Arispe and
 Adjacent Agricultural Lands.**

For a more complete description of the site and the
 (Figure 19) and these conditions have all the characteristics
 found in those of a large city. It is not known of pro-
 ducing its own electrical power, generated by the dam.

6. For a detailed description of the excavation and
 summary of the history, see the study by J. F. Adams and
 E. F. Baker, "Arise and the Northern Frontier of the State"
 in Geological Survey Papers, No. 20.

In this church are the remains of the illustrious explorer and founder of San Francisco, California, Caballero Juan Bautista de Anza. In May, 1963, in appreciation of Caballero de Anza, the city of San Francisco contributed a marble, glass-covered sarcophagus as the new resting place for the famous explorer.⁶ To accomodate Arispe's renewed fame, the interior of the church was fully renovated. Prior to this event, the only significant change in the church was the addition of the present bell tower in the nineteenth century (Figure 11).

The ornate interior of the renovated church is a sharp contrast to its simple exterior and to the rest of the small, humble ciudad (Figure 20). Arispe's houses are all very similar; they are adobe, brick-capped, with flat roofs in the colonial architectural tradition (Figure 21). Closer inspection reveals that wealthier families have reconstructed the dwellings of their forefathers and have transformed the old structures into luxurious homes. A few modern homes have been built in the last five years (Figure 22) and these residences have all the conveniences found in homes of a larger city. Arispe can boast of producing its own electrical power, generated by two diesel

6. For a detailed description of the excavation and ceremony of the interment, see the study by J. N. Bowman and R. F. Heizer, "Anza and the Northwest Frontier of New Spain" in Southwest Museum Papers, No. 20.



Fig. 20. A Typical Street in Arispe.



Fig. 21. Street Scene Exemplifying Spanish Colonial House Types.

engine. Water pumped from wells at the river's edge to a concrete tank furnishes running water to the entire town.

The center of the town is the place surrounded by administrative offices, a district office, a government school, a gasoline station, an electric power plant, and several religious buildings. The layout of the plaza is typical of the old towns, with the



Fig. 22. One of the Few Modern Homes of Arispe.

The final result of the administrative changes was the result of the increasing Apache dependence upon the state. The Apache people were isolated Arispe from the rest of the state between 1880 and 1890 and forced the capital to be moved to a more central position. Apache attacks were intensified as the result of the power vacuum initially created by the war for independence and later by the dissolution of the political

engines. Water pumped from wells at the river's edge to a concrete tank furnishes running water to the entire town.

The center of the ciudad is the plaza surrounded by administrative offices, a doctor's office, a drugstore, the school, a gasoline station, an old hotel no longer in use and several residences (Figure 18). The location of the plaza is atypical in that the church does not face the plaza mayor as is the case in the other towns of the Sonora Valley. The church is situated a block's distance from the center (Figure 18). This anomaly is the direct result of the plano of 1780 which was designed to develop Arispe into a large ciudad with a new cathedral constructed on a site overlooking the town (Figure 14). Arispe's plaza also differs from that of other towns of the valley in that the familiar kiosco was replaced by a clock tower in the 1930's (Figure 23). In short, although Arispe appears to be a typical backcountry town, there are many signs of its former greatness.

The final decline of the administrative center was the result of the devastating Apache depredations that essentially isolated Arispe from the rest of the state between 1830 and 1883 and forced the capital to be moved to a more favorable position. Apache attacks were facilitated as the result of the power vacuum initially created by the war for independence and later by the dissolution of the political



Fig. 23. Arispe's Plaza and Clock Tower.

division of Occidente in 1830. Internal political struggles weakened the military forces and thus enabled the Apache to increase his hostilities, which greatly disrupted the economy and way of life in northeastern Sonora. As a result, Arispe's population by 1860 had declined to one quarter its former size of 1824 (Figure 10). By 1883 the Apache were routed from the area by General Crooke, and a relative peace returned to the area. During the closing years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth the district of Arispe experienced renewed mining activities. But the important mining area and population concentration of northeastern Sonora had shifted to the copper mining center of Cananea. By the 1920's Arispe had declined to only a minor administrative center which was primarily an agricultural settlement. Today Arispe is the seat of a small municipio (Figure 13) subservient to the larger cities of Sonora located in the great river valleys that run out of the old mining country of the mountains.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Spanish expansion into the northwestern frontier of New Spain in the sixteenth century opened up a vast area that became one of the major producers of gold and silver during the latter part of the colonial period. Early explorations into the northeastern frontier of Sonora revealed little mineral wealth but did establish the fact that a sizeable population of agriculturalists resided in the area. In response to the reports of the early explorers, missionaries began their work in northeastern Sonora in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. Indian villages were transformed into missions; some became large important settlements and others remained as obscure little villages.

Initially, Arispe was a small agricultural mission inhabited by 100 Opatá families, and it remained so until the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when suddenly the small settlement became the center of the Comandancia-General of the vast Provincias Internas (Figure 13). Arispe, during its mission period, served an important economic function in supplying the mines in the area with agricultural goods. Increased mining activity in the frontier and

in the vicinity of Arispe resulted in increased population and economic importance.

In essence, the formation of the new administrative center in Arispe was only a small part of the total scheme to expand Spanish authority. The need for effective defenses to stop the encroachment of foreign powers and Indian attacks became a necessity if the Crown was to exploit the area.

In the hope of solving the chaotic situation in the north, a constant reorganization of the administrative units took place, and with each new division of the province Arispe's authority changed (Figure 13). In 1776, Arispe became the military and administrative center of the north and it was during the period between 1779 and 1837 that Arispe enjoyed its greatest authority and prestige. When Arispe became the capital as well as the Bishopric of the Provincias Internas, a plan for its future growth was initiated by the engineer Mascaro in 1780 (Figure 14). Parts of the plano were carried out during the 1790's, a period of relative peace and prosperity due to decreased Apache hostilities.

With the expulsion of the Crown from Mexico, the defenses in the north fell into decay along with the many settlements of northeastern Sonora. Subsidies to the Apache were terminated and soon the area was exposed once again to devastating Apache raids. The renewed Apache hostilities

forced mines, ranches and farms to be abandoned. Apache depredations became the governing force in the disruption of northeastern Sonora throughout much of the nineteenth century (1822-1884). Apache attacks had a great influence in the shift of the location of the capital away from Arispe to Ures and eventually to Hermosillo. The Bishopric of Sonora, which had been in Arispe in name only, was also officially transferred to Hermosillo shortly after independence. The military center of Sonora and Sinaloa remained in Arispe after independence but this was only a token gesture since the authority of the Comandancia had been greatly reduced since the colonial period, and Arispe could claim a military force of only 26 soldiers by 1860. The administrative authority and function of Arispe was also declining rapidly. The town declined in importance from being the capital of the vast Provincias Internas to the administrative center of a district and eventually to its present position as the center of a small agricultural municipio (county) (Figure 13).

In retrospect physical and economic isolation have been the key factors in Arispe's rise to power and its subsequent decline. During the colonial period the entire area of northern New Spain was removed from the administrative authority of the Viceroy in central Mexico, and therefore the capital of the vast area of the province in the north

could be placed in any suitable location as long as it was somewhat centrally located. Arispe's centrality in relation to the vast area of the Provincias Internas, its easily defensible basin, and good agricultural lands made the area a wise choice at that time for the site of the new capital. But, as the frontier became more settled and new centers of population arose south of the older important mining center, economic isolation became a very strong factor in the eventual downfall of Arispe as the center of Sonora.

During the period of aboriginal occupation, the small farming community was a self-sufficient unit and only traded with other peoples for ornamental objects. The arrival of the missionaries at first did not drastically alter the basic economic way of life. The mission at Arispe was still a somewhat self-sufficient unit which eventually underwent drastic changes because of the initiation of mining activities in northeastern Sonora. Mining in Sonora, as well as in the rest of the frontier, did much to alter the economy of the north. To exploit the mineral wealth of the north, a need for military protection and administrative authority were necessary. The site of the new capital was established at Arispe and, with the establishment of the capital, a new economic way of life was superimposed upon the old. The presence of military forces in the frontier provided protection for the mines in the area. New mines

were put into production and Sonora became an important producer of gold and silver. The establishment of the military center of the Provincias Internas in Arispe created a new consumer and contributor to the economy of the ciudad. The need for supplies by the military garrison in Arispe and the presidios increased greatly the commercial demands upon the inhabitants of the town. As previously mentioned, the increased mining also aided the growth of the economy of Arispe. The mines needed agricultural products, hides and beasts of burden which Arispe provided.

The formation of the Comandancia-General in Arispe changed the entire spectrum of the economy of the town and this occurrence is reflected in the population growth of the ciudad while it was the center. Arispe had become the service center of the military needs of the Sonoran frontier. In addition, the economic boom experienced by Arispe was further increased with the establishment of the administrative capital in the town. The ecclesiastical power did not exert a great deal of influence upon the economy of the town because the Bishopric was never formally established in Arispe. Thus, the economic success of Arispe during the colonial period can be largely attributed to its physical isolation. The entire frontier was isolated from central Mexico and, although Arispe was also well removed from the central seat of power, it was situated in a favorable position to be the administrative center in relation to the rest

of the vast provinces of the north and could fulfill the role as the capital of the frontier. The war for independence disrupted the military shield that the frontier so drastically needed. Without military subsidies and protection, the area suffered greatly due to Apache attacks. The Apache was indirectly allowed to attack wherever he wished in the area and thus brought economic ruin to the area of northeastern Sonora. The almost complete collapse of economic activity in the Arispe area and the shift of the commercial and economic center of the state to the Hermosillo area brought about a new type of isolation to the former capital. Isolation this time was of a different nature since it signified the decline of economic and administrative importance for Arispe. The isolation which had been a plus factor in the growth of Arispe became a serious disadvantage. Commerce had become the key word by the latter part of the nineteenth century and twentieth century, and Arispe was not situated to participate in the new commercial growth. The downfall of Arispe can be greatly attributed to external forces acting upon the economy of the town. The removal of the military forces removed a staunch segment of the population of Arispe and also allowed the Apache to renew and increase his attacks upon the settlements of the area. The closing of the mines also dealt a staggering blow to the economy of Arispe. The Apache raids with their devastating effects created an isolation which

Arispe could not overcome economically. The town once again had to rely on its agriculture to survive, only this time on a subsistence level. One important factor which should be kept in mind is that had the Arispe area had any great ore deposits, the Apache menace in all likelihood would have been overcome. Due to the lack of lucrative mining, the expense of containing the Apache was greater than the profits which could be realized and therefore only minor punitive actions were undertaken. It is ironic that it was the U.S. government which ended the Apache attacks in Sonora. The removal of the Apache menace from the Arispe area at this late date did not greatly alter the economic way of life which the settlement had adopted by this time. Arispe had reverted back to an agricultural economy and mining was of minor significance. Through modern mining techniques a new mining area was established in northeastern Sonora, the Cananea open pit copper mine. This new mining area became the economic and administrative center for the area, further eclipsing Arispe from the main stream of economic life in Sonora. New transportation routes were established with the expansion of mining in Cananea but the routes unfortunately circumvented Arispe and thus further isolated the town.

Isolation has in many respects been the key factor in Arispe's growth and decline. The interdependencies in the economy of the former capital because of its physical

isolation cannot be emphasized strongly enough. The administrative branch, the military, the mining interests, the commercial activities and the agricultural production were all closely interrelated and a decline in any one segment of the economy greatly affected the total economy of the town.

Today Arispe has a population of some 1480 inhabitants which since the turn of the century, has fluctuated very little (Figure 10). The stability of the population illustrates that the present agricultural base cannot support a larger populace. The larger population in the past reflect the importance of the location of the capital in Arispe and also the important role of mining. Today Arispe is economically deprived because of its limited economic base and lack of adequate transportation links with the rest of Sonora.

The future of Arispe is difficult to predict. The population of the area is once again declining because the young people have to leave the area to find work in the towns of Cananea, Agua Prieta, Nogales, Mexicali and Tijuana. This exodus is bound to continue unless some unforeseen event takes place in Arispe to boost the local economy. In short, it is very unlikely that Arispe will ever surpass its previous high population of 1822, when it was occupied by a resident populace of 2,079 (Velasco 1893, p. 549) (Figure 10). It is this writer's opinion that the

population of Arispe never exceeded this figure and the reports of the town having a population in excess of 4,000 are erroneous. If one compares the map of the plano of 1780 (Figure 14) and the current air photo (Figure 15), it is quite clear that the physical limits of the town have never extended beyond its present boundary. A close examination of Arispe does reveal some unoccupied structures and foundation ruins, but these do not occupy more than twenty-five percent of the present town's area. Thus it seems very unlikely that a resident population two times greater than today's could be accommodated within the confines of the present town.

The one possibility for broadening Arispe's economic base would be the discovery of a large ore deposit in the vicinity of the former capital. This event would bring prosperity to the town, but this is only speculation and probably will never occur. More realistically in the future, the town will most likely decrease in size or remain static. With the industrialization of Mexico, agriculture's role as the major employer will undoubtedly diminish. Rural areas will continue to decline in population as is so often the case in modern society. To prevent this continual decline of the towns along the upper Sonora River Valley, the federal government has initiated the construction of a major road between Cananea and Ures via the Sonora Valley (Figure 1). The work on this new road to date links Ures with

Baviácora. With the completion of this transportation route, the long experienced isolation of Arispe will come to a close. This newly proposed link with the larger cities of Sonora has revived the hope of the local inhabitants that Arispe once again will become an important center. That the road will be the saviour of Arispe remains to be seen.

APPENDIX A

DESCRIPTION OF ARISPE, SONORA, CAPITAL OF THE PROVINCIAS INTERNAS, WRITTEN IN 1778 BY PADRE FRAY AGUSTIN DE MORFI.¹

The present town of the Mission of Arispe occupies a piece of land measuring 750 varas (2,060 feet)² in length and 400 varas (1,100 feet) in width, on the western edge of the Sonora River, and is situated on the slope of a sandstone hill.³ Although the bluff rises some ----⁴ feet above the level of the river, it is only slightly higher than the town, which without much difficulty could be extended to the summit of the hill. The houses were built upon two plateaus or mesas that run north and south, divided by a small depression which will not be noticed with the houses and streets that are being built on it. The mesas are a musket's shot distance from the river, whose waters

1. With the purpose of reviving the feeling of the times, this document has been translated as literally as is possible. Annotations will be cited whenever necessary.

2. One vara equals 33 inches.

3. The parent material of the hill is made up of compacted alluvium.

4. The elevation of the bluff as estimated by the translator is approximately 350 feet above the valley floor.

enter the lowest part of the town via a badly aligned ditch, which never-the-less carries enough water for the needs of the residents, for the service of a mill, and for the irrigation of some orchards on the foot of the hill, between the town and the river. The town is situated at $32^{\circ}32'$ north latitude, and according to the routes, at $266^{\circ}30'$ of longitude measured from Mexico City along the meridian of the Isla del Fierro.

On all sides, the town is surrounded by fairly high mountains which permit no entrance nor exits other than by the ravines formed by the rivers: to the northeast by the ravine of the Bacuachi, to the north-northeast by the Bacamuchi, and to the southwest by the Synoquipe:⁵ besides by the first mentioned (Bacuachi) one fords the river thirty-two times just in going to Chinapa, and somewhat more by the last mentioned (Synoquipe), which makes the road somewhat bothersome.

On the higher mesa of the town lives the major part of the small population, for it is the larger, as well as containing the Plaza and the Church (Figure 14). Together with the Mission house, the Church occupies the south facing side of the Plaza, and is a very tall building constructed without plan nor proportions, being 193 feet

5. The Synoquipe River at this time constituted a small stretch of the Sonora River.

long and 55 feet wide, including the thickness of the walls which are of adobe. The roof is supported by thick and abundant rafters. Two vestries, old and new, have been constructed; the old one is used only to store useless furniture. It is in the body of the Church and consists of two rooms, one 27 1/2 feet by 22 feet, the other a square 16 1/2 feet on a side, both threatening collapse. The new vestry, constructed on the same side and with a door to the presbyterium is an oblong 55 feet by 22 feet, very dark, since it receives the light of only one window, which in addition to being small is shaded by the Church. The roof was of small vaults of which some remain, badly preserved and uncared for -- with the last rains four rafters fell from rot -- soon the same will befall them all if they are not protected from moisture, which they receive from innumerable leaks.

On the north side of the Church, at the back of the main altar, is the room of the Mission Father, which is an ancient granary 60 feet by 14 feet, inclusive of a small division which serves in addition to a cell, as kitchen, chicken coop and two yards, all badly roofed and almost abandoned.

The Commander General lives in the Mission house, which is the best house in the town, even though without comfort whatsoever. His living quarters consist of a large living room on the second floor, a bedroom for His Lordship,

and a room for two servants, and at the other end which abuts the Church, the offices are located in three small rooms, two almost useless because they are too dark, and the main room with a door to the choir room. The lower floor consists of six rooms which are occupied by the rest of the family, with the lodgings, kitchen, storeroom, coach room, chicken coop, two yards that were granaries and could be easily roofed over, and a large patio.

Beside the Church, and on the east facing side of the Plaza, are the Community houses, which now house the Dragoons -- it is a building of 82 1/2 feet by 22 feet, so scanty and so in ruins that the preventive guard barely fits in it, along with a few prisoners since there is no prison to keep them.

The other two sides of the Plaza are occupied by several low adobe houses, without depth (back rooms) and poor. Only on the north facing side is there an extensive and commodious house, where lives the only merchant we find in the town, and who is the justice of the district.

On the lower mesa is a large orchard, and in the center a large factory of 77 feet by 16 1/2 feet, with an upper story which was necessary to have taken down because it was falling. The ground floor contains 3 rooms with a wheat mill built without intelligence and for that reason almost useless -- the Mission house and the Church have among many others, the defect that being of adobe and very

tall, they have been overloaded with an enormous weight of lumber, which cracks and destroys them.

The rest of the town on both mesas is a collection of 120 little houses without order or street regularity, mostly of adobe, a few of stone and mud, but all poorly made, with low roofs, no windows, and covered with dirt, but in spite of their squalor, the climate and the site make the mesas healthful and attractive.

The floodplain adjacent to the town, through the center of which the river runs, is divided in 2 parts: the northern part measures 2,130 feet wide at its narrowest point and 4,260 feet at its widest, and has a length of 11,000 feet. It terminates at a hill which separates it from the southern part, which measures 3,580 feet long and 2,200 feet wide. In both parts some fields and orchards have been opened, and the floodplain could be cultivated in its entirety, and even the floods to which it is exposed at times of abundant rain could be prevented, if the waters of the 2 rivers which join in the northern part of the plain were distributed intelligently, which could be done with little difficulty or expense.

Of these 2 rivers, the Bacuachi⁶ originates to the northeast of Arispe at the place called la Cananea, it

6. At this time many sections of the Sonora River were simply named after the towns along its course.

passes Bacuachi, where it gets its name and a little water from the swamps near this town, then a short league before reaching Chinapa a spring enters it, called Comatetori, which breaks out almost in the river canyon, and may even be a portion of the river filtered by the sands of the bottom; it runs by Guepaverachi, irrigating here considerable land, and forming a narrow canyon between steep cliffs, which I have said, is the only road in this direction. To the north-northeast of Arispe at the foot of the mountains next to the hacienda of Bacaruchi (sic) (Bacamuchi) the river of this name has its origin. It runs south-southwest, very narrow though not so much in a canyon as the Bacuachi; and at the northern extremity of the plain of Arispe the rivers join and continue southwest watering what is properly called the Valle de Sonora, and providing the towns of Synoquipe, Montepore, Banamichi (near where an arroyo enters), Huepaca where another enters, and in Sonora a third, Aconchi, Baviácora, Concepción and Uris (another spring joins here); and turning its course to the west, passes San José de Gracia, three leagues (6 1/2 miles) beyond this mining town the River of San Miguel de Horcasitas joins it, it passes Pitic and runs as far as el Tenuage, where its waters are lost in sand still 25 leagues (55 miles) from the coast of the Gulf of California. The river only empties into the Gulf when the rains have been

excessive and the river has received a great deal of water from the innumerable torrents that empty into it.

In spite of the continuous hostility of the Apaches, the land around Arispe is not unpopulated, for 5 leagues (13 miles) northwest is the town of Chinapa, 10 leagues (26 miles) north-northeast is Bacanuchi, 12 leagues (21 miles) northwest is Cocóspera, 7 leagues (18 miles) southwest is Synoquipe, 9 leagues (23 miles) southwest is Motepore (sic) (Motemore). The Presidio of Fronteras is 29 leagues (75 miles) northeast, Terrenate is 35 leagues (91 miles) north, Tucson is 65 leagues (169 miles) north-northwest, Altar is 90 leagues (243 miles) west, San Miguel de Horcasitas is 50 leagues (130 miles) southwest, and San Carlos de Buenavista is 100 leagues (260 miles) south.

The seasons of the year are regular; spring is benign, summer very hot, autumn temperate, and winter cold with frequent snows and almost always violent winds which generally blow from the southwest or west, and not infrequently from the north. In spite of all this the climate is healthful -- of the acute diseases only a little spotted fever is seen in the summer, and the chronic ones are hardly known, except for syphillis with which almost all the Indians of the province are afflicted, men and women, and which is aggravated by their untidiness and bad food -- lack of medical knowledge and medicines carry many to the

grave. The excellent waters of the Bacanuchi River contribute greatly to the kindness of the climate. Many have been cured of chronic diseases with no medicine but the water and the air here. In the hottest part of the summer very cold water can be obtained from a small spring at the edge of the river; I judge that the good qualities of the water of this river derive from the many times that it cuts below, being filtered by the sand of the bottom, and running long distances in its subterranean filtration.

This town possesses 14 fanegas (1,850 acres)⁷ of arable land, and although they do not have the marvelous fertility found in lands of other towns of New Spain, and especially in parts of these provinces, they can be called really fertile. But the indolence, ignorance and terror in which the farmers live causes them to seriously neglect the crops, so that the return they get on wheat is barely 10 to 20 for 1 (of seed), corn 70 to 80 for 1, and beans 40 to 50 for 1. The plants yield similar proportions with barley, lentils, chick peas, vetch, chile and cotton. They obtain with great abundance and quality pomegranates, quinces, figs, apricots, grapes, all kinds of peaches, oranges, limes, prickly pears, pitahaya (cactus fruit from the organ pipe cactus), and some pears. No good apples have been

7. A fanega in present day Mexico represents 8.81 acres which obviously is too small an increment for use in the 1778 report. At the time of the report, a fanega was 400 fathoms square which when calculated yields 1850 acres.

grown as yet here, even though in Bacanuchi and Cuchiarachi the best in America are grown. Excellent watermelons and canteloupes are produced; canteloupes are harvested twice a year, in July and October, the latter being the better quality. Vegetables are produced, though they are not very good, perhaps because the people do not yet know how to cultivate them. The sugar cane, sweet potato, peanut, walnuts and acorns are very good. But above all, the bread, the meat and the water cannot be surpassed anywhere.

The hills which enclose Arispe on all sides are covered with excellent pasture, and if the enemies⁸ would allow the raising of stock, there would be an astounding number of all kinds.

Although the two rivers that water the valley are of small flow, they have abundant and delicious catfish -- the quantity that is caught causes astonishment.

In the nearby mountain ranges of Mababi, Purica, Bacuachi, Cananea, etc., and in the river canyons there is a prodigious amount of pine, live oak of two species, sabino or (Juniper), beech,⁹ sycamore, cottonwood, taray or tamarisk,¹⁰ big mezquite, chino, caesalpinia, huerigo or

8. The Apache.

9. Stanley's work on the trees and shrubs of Mexico does not verify the existence of beech in Mexico.

10. This is probably a palo verde tree.

cottonwood, walnut, garambullo or pisonia, willow, tepeguage or acacia, mulberry, and other woods useful for construction and easy to work. There are also several shrubs, which though useless for manufacture, produce very good charcoal and good firewood, such as the huisache or acacia, cúmaro or ?, tesot or acacia, pochote or silk cotton tree, catclaw, sauco or Mexican elder, etc.

There are also abundant herbs and medicinal plants, some native and others introduced, such as oregano, poleo or satureia (Clinopodium laevigatum), salbia or sage, culantro or coriander (Coriandrum savitum), culantrillo or maidenhair (Adiantum capillus), berdolaga or ?, trebol or oxalis (Oxalis primavera), anis or anise, hierba buena or lippia (Lippia sp.), inmortal or everlasting (Helichrysum orientale), tomatillo or nightshade (Solanum sp.), hierba del indio or scarlet bouvardia (Bouvardia ternifolia), del manso or ?, (Spathiphyllum sp.), sanari or ?, jicamilla or nettlespurge (Jathropa sp.), chiotillo or ?, pichichagui or groundsel (Senecio cervariaefolius), damiana del canzer or damiana turnera (Turnera diffusa), la sonsa or ?, chigura or ambrosia bursage (Franseria ambrosoides), tabinagua or ?, cumeme or ?, negrita or delichos (Dolicholus phaseoloides), de la muela or stevia (Stevia salicifolia), barbas del viejo or clematis (Clematis sp.), cacalosuchil or Mexican frangipani (Plumeria acutifolia), toje or mesquite American-mistletoe (Phoradendron calif-

ornicum), canelilla or croton (Croton ciliato-glandulosus), hediondrilla or larrea (Larrea tridentata), jojoba or goatnut (Simmondsia chinensis), cocolmecalt or yam (Dioscorea sp.), hierba del empeine or leucothoe (Leucothoe mexicana), calabacita or cross leaf calabash (Crescentia alata), toloache or datura (Datura sp.), de la flecha or sapium (Sapium biloculare), frijolillo. (By the river bank) peonila or _ ? _, golondrina or euphorbia (Euphorbia prostrata), estafiate or bursage (Franseria tenuifolia), tomate or groundcherry (Physalis sp.), tomatillo.

Much pitch (resin) is found, mesquite gum, prickly pear, chino, torote, remolino, ash plant; these last two are burned as incense and they produce a pleasing odor; the gomilla de Sonora, which is in demand everywhere as its medicinal qualities become known. The mezcal is of use for good brandy that can be obtained from it.

Within the town is found as much stone as is needed for the new factories, and its removal serves at the same time to level the terrain. In the Mababi Range there is handsome granite, in Synoquipe and Oposura very beautiful marble in such quantities that many cities could be built with it. Less than a league from the town very good lime is manufactured on hills covered with firewood which is used in the process. Three short leagues, west-southwest, there is a large gypsum mine, which has no expense but transport. Thus almost at the eaves of the town are found as many

materials as could be desired for the execution of the project, although good lumber is somewhat distant and the scarcity of oxen makes transportation more difficult.

Within the jurisdiction three placer gold mines are known: The Bacuachi Range, the Cananea Range and the Penuelas Range. From the first have been obtained nuggets of up to seven marks, in the two others there have never been such large ones found. None of them is presently worked due to the grave danger from enemies and the lack of water to wash the ore, though in the seasons of snow and rain some prospectors go to the alluvial fans of Bacuachi, where they find some gold, but in small quantity due to the few days they work and the continuous alarm in which they live. Besides these placers, there is scarcely an arroyo in the vicinity where one does not find some little grains of gold; the Indians used to work the placers when they did not have work, as they do now in order to subsist.

Within the jurisdiction several mines were worked; the Santa Rosalía mine gave gold of 17.5 karats -- its "bonanza" lasted over 25 years with a numerous crew -- some loads produced up to 1,000 pesos. It is now not in exploitation, and collapsed, since it was abandoned in 1748. In the vicinity of Banamichi there is a gravel hill from which much gold has been taken -- some is worked today, but not much because of the hardness of the hill and the low purity of the ore.

Silver mines are even more abundant, since there are 37 known within the town's jurisdiction. The best were the Espíritu Santo, which produced eighteen marks per load, the Rocha, twelve marks, the Bavicanora, 1 mark per pound, and the rest from three to six marks per load. But it has been more than 20 years since all have been depopulated due to the repeated hostilities of the Apaches, who killed many people in the mines and destroyed the mules who worked in the process and transportation of the ore.

Here is found much red and yellow ochre, capa-rosa or ?, and doubtless more wealth will be found when peace and a greater population facilitate the examination of the mountains, slopes and valleys of the environs.

In this town reside 390 souls, 13 Spanish families of all lineages and 97 Opata Indian families. The Opatas live throughout a great part of this river as well as that of Santa María Basaraca. Their character in general conforms to that of the rest of the Indians -- suspicious, lazy, indolent and superstitious, yet long-suffering, industrious, robust, vigorous, and very resolute, particularly when they fight within sight of Spaniards, who they love. They submitted themselves voluntarily to religion and servitude, and although a few times either oppression caused them to think about shaking off the yoke, or malice attributed to them this crime, the truth is that up to now

they have remained loyal and obedient. Nothing do they hold in greater esteem than those distinctions that attest to their fidelity in service to the King. If one marries a Spanish woman he no longer wants to be treated as an Indian; he disdains the occupations and tasks of his relatives; and the same happens with the women when they marry Spanish men. Both men and women affect our dress and titles, and are very desirous of learning our language; and if this general tendency of the men and women were taken advantage of, it would not be difficult to make them diligent and hard-working. The carelessness with which they have been treated keeps them practicing most of their old customs. Their dances are very savage, their music the harsh noise of a guage (gourd), and their song an annoying repetition of a few phrases with no harmony or rhythm, and their games are all directed to an exercise of strength, agility, and the bow and arrow at which they are expert, and so habituated that even when they return tired from work they usually entertain themselves shooting at a target. On some holidays they beat the bush around the town to kill hares, deer, coyotes, bobcats and lions¹¹ (which they call thus although they are nothing like them). Lastly, a little attention to their upbringing would make them useful vassals and truly Spaniards.

11. The Opatas used the Spanish word for lion (leon) to describe the common puma.

The Republican Officials (Oficiales de Republica) are a Governor, a Mayor, a Constable, and two topiles for civil matters; a Captain, a lieutenant, a second lieutenant, and two sergeants for military matters; a Mador, two prosecutors and four temastianes or Sacristans for the Church. The annual election of these officials should be in the Community Houses by vote, and in the presence of the regional Spanish Justice, but usually they agree to the proposals made by the latter at the door of his house; as soon as the proposals are accepted, he installs the officials with no formality beyond announcing to those present who are to fill the posts. The election of Church officials is generally the decision of the Padre Ministro.

The Governor and Mayor take charge of the economic government of the Town, and the distribution of work, punishing misdemeanors by means of the topiles and imprisoning and trying the criminal in cases of greater crimes. The Captain commands all sorties, campaigns and marshallings against enemies, with power to punish and correct cowardly behavior, desertion or disobedience to officials.

It is the duty of the Mador to teach the Catechism in the Church to all children of both sexes in the morning and afternoon, to punish those who fail to attend, and to urge parents to send their children to this exercise. The duty of the prosecutors is to call the people to Mass and

to Church functions, to punish non-attenders, to bury the dead, to visit the ill with the Mador, and to inform the priest of their condition so they do not die without sacraments, and the temastianes have the duty of attending to the care of the vestry, ornaments, holy vessels, and keeping the Church and altars clean. And lastly all of these depend in every respect on the Spanish Lieutenant, and he on the Head Mayor (Alcalde Mayor) of the Valle de Sonora.

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