

The Emergence of Jicarilla Apache Enclave Economy During the Nineteenth Century in Northern New Mexico

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TRAVEL UP THE RIO DEL OSO above Española, New Mexico, and you will find scores of unassuming cobble rings, bits of forgotten pottery, and scatters of golden mica-laden rocks shimmering in the sunlight. You may also find shards of glass and cut metal, grinding stones, and the occasional iron projectile point lying in the midst of an obsidian flake scatter. You are standing in the middle of one of the largest Jicarilla Apache settlements recorded in northern New Mexico. Forty-five Jicarilla sites are present in the valley. These sites are distributed neatly into three settlement areas, one on each mesa arranged in succession along the northern river bank. Settlements encompass 107 rock (tipi) rings and associated features. On the south bank of the river, opposite these sites, you'll discover Spanish and Mexican *ranchos* with *torreóns* (round towers), masonry houses, and miles of rock fences. Sheep bones, glass fragments, stone tools, and metal tinklers are scattered across these historic sites. A network of wagon roads and footpaths connects the hamlets and households of the Hispanic occupation with the Jicarilla tipi settlements and fields to the north.

It is September, 1867, and the cottonwoods of the Oso have turned yellow in the wake of cold air streaming down from the mountains at Jemez. Jicarilla men, as day labor, have arrived in the village of San Lorenzo to tend sheep and assist with the harvest. The 10 or so Hispanic families making up the San Lorenzo land grant are busy in the fields, and the women are grinding corn for the noontime meal. Jicarilla women are busy too, making pottery, tending to the horses, and preparing for the annual

Gojia, or footrace celebration that will bring scores of visitors from surrounding Pueblo villages. After Gojia, the Jicarilla will move into the mountains for the fall hunt, but not before they restock San Lorenzo kitchens with high-quality micaceous cook pots and bowls.

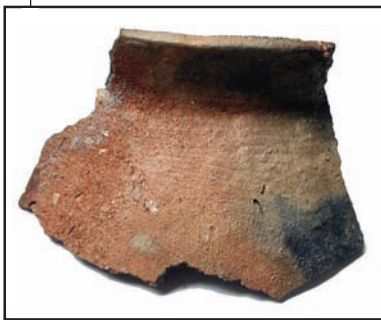
Why were the Jicarilla in the Rio del Oso, and why were they making pottery? Why this place for Gojia, and why weren't they out on the Plains or at Taos Pueblo? I turned to the ceramics for answers. Chemical source analysis of raw micaceous clay and micaceous ceramics allowed me to trace the movement of the Jicarilla from the Plains and into the Spanish colony at Taos Pueblo in the 1730s. From there, the Ollero band moved to Abiquiú and the Rio del Oso area. Clay source analysis allowed me to reconstruct the changes in Jicarilla economy as they moved farther away from the Plains. My dissertation explored this process of enclavement

and its effect on Jicarilla society, including settlement patterns, multiethnic interactions, and the productive capacities of women. Jicarilla resettlement in the northern Rio Grande was a strategic response to the pressures of contact that preserved and extended key elements of their society and cultural identity, including mutualistic ties with Hispanic and Pueblo villagers. Pottery production, once a household craft, replaced bison hunting on the Plains as the primary industry of the Ollero band.

Jicarilla women provided the bulk of micaceous cooking vessels to Hispanic and Pueblo kitchens of the Chama during the nineteenth century. In so doing, they were major players in the multiethnic economy of the region prior to the turn of the last century. This economy had its benefits. Trade with settled villagers allowed the Jicarilla to resist American attempts to settle them on a reservation well into the 1890s. Unlocking the mysteries of this unassuming valley revealed a previously unrecognized pattern of cultural accommodation and persistence that was regional in scope and part of the enduring legacy of Northern Rio Grande society.



View of the Rio del Oso, looking north over the golden October aspens.



A sherd from a Jicarilla Apache micaceous cook pot recovered from the Rio del Oso (circa 1860–1890).

This research was funded by a University of Missouri Research Reactor National Science Foundation Grant (BCS-0504015).