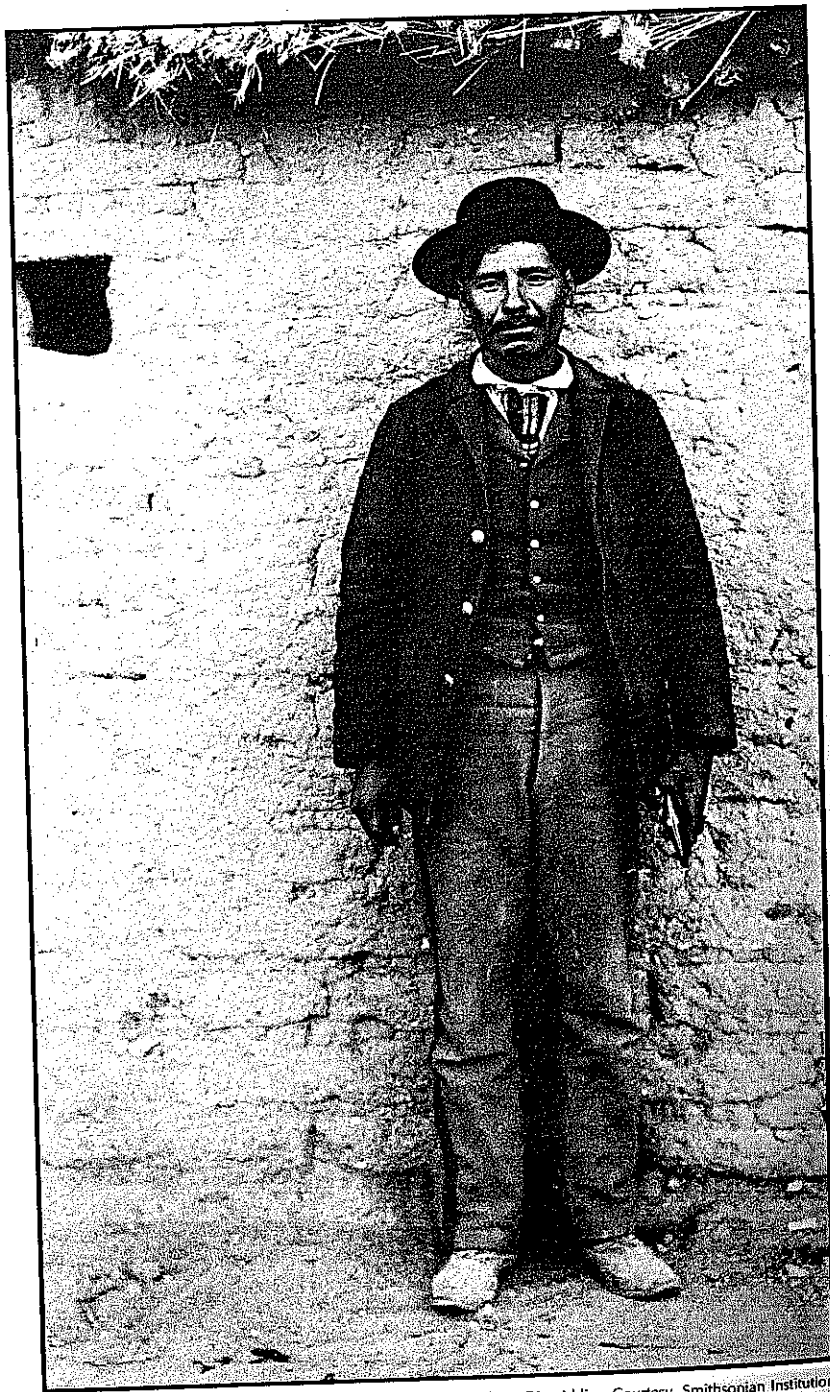


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Photo, William Dinwiddie Courtesy, Smithsonian Institution  
José Louis Brennan, Papago Indian, who served as interpreter to Frank  
Russell in 1894

# THE PIMA INDIANS

FRANK RUSSELL

Re-edition  
with Introduction,  
Citation Sources, and Bibliography  
by BERNARD L. FONTANA

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*About the Author . . .*

FRANK RUSSELL was an early and dedicated member of the anthropological profession whose detailed work on the material culture of the Piman people was accomplished in Arizona virtually on the eve of his death from tuberculosis. A member of the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences, in 1900 Russell was given leave of absence for field work on the Gila River Reservation for the Bureau of American Ethnology. By contrast, his previous investigations had been among the tribes around Great Slave Lake and Herschel Island in the Arctic Sea. Russell's distinction as researcher and author is relatively little known to modern students of anthropology because his career was cut short at age 35. By that time he had completed this standard reference work on the Gila River Pimas, originally published as part of the *Twenty-sixth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 1904-1905*.

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This re-edition of *The Pima Indians*  
is dedicated to the memory of  
JOSÉ LEWIS  
O'odham scholar and author,  
and to the  
modern descendants of the AKIMEL O'ODHAM

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was the prevailing mode of disposing of the dead, as it was also on the lower Gila and the Salt river. Nothing was learned to indicate that the Sobaipuris of the San Pedro practised incineration. If some of the clans of the Hopis or Zuñis are to be identified with the Hohokam of the Gila, as is maintained by some of the most able authorities upon Southwestern archeology,<sup>6</sup> how is the total disappearance of this primal custom to be explained?

There is a strong belief among the Pimas that they came from the east. It is in that quarter that the abode of their dead is located. Their gods dwell there. Their beliefs do not seem to have been influenced in this respect in the least through contact with the tribes of Yuman stock who have sought a paradise in the opposite direction. There are vestiges of a tradition that the Pimas were once overwhelmed by a large force of warriors who came from the east and destroyed nearly all the people and devastated the entire Gila valley. This does not appear to be another version of the account of the invasion by the underworld clans. While the majority of the Pimas declare that their people have always lived where they now are, or that they came from the east, there are some who say that the Hohokam were killed by an invasion from the east before the Pimas came.

The Pimas formerly regarded the ruins with the same reverence or aversion which they felt toward their own burial places. After the excavations made by the Hemenway Expedition on the Salt river, as no disasters followed the disturbance of the dead, they grew less scrupulous and can now readily be hired as workmen to excavate the ruins or ancient cemeteries.

#### CONTACT WITH SPANIARDS

From the meager records of the Coronado Expedition of 1540-1542 it has been surmised that Chichilticalli was the Casa Grande, but this statement lacks verification. After traversing the entire southern and eastern part of Arizona the writer can not but believe that it is extremely improbable that Coronado saw the Casa Grande and the

<sup>6</sup> The earliest mention of the Gila origin of the Hopi theory is that of Garcés: "Also they knew that I was padre ministro of the Pimas, who likewise are their enemies. This hostility had been told me by the old Indians of my mission, by the Gileños, and Coco-Maricopas, from which information I have imagined (as discussed) that the Moqui nation anciently extended to the Rio Gila itself. I take my stand (and thus ground myself) in this matter on the ruins that are found from this river as far as the land of the Apaches, and that I have seen between the Sierras de la Florida and San Juan Miguel mensero. Asking a few years ago some Sobaipuris Indians who were living in my mission of San Xavier if they knew who had built those houses whose ruins and fragments of pottery (bars for looms) are still visible—on, on the supposition that neither Pimas nor Apaches knew how to make (such) houses of pottery, no doubt it was done by some other nation—they replied to me that the Moquis had built them, for they alone knew how to do such things, and added that the Apaches who are about the missions are neither numerous nor valiant; that toward the north was where there were many powerful people; 'there went we,' they said, 'to fight in former times (and) garments; and even though we attained unto their lands we did not surmount the mesa whereon they lived.'" *Diary in Cases, on the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer*, New York, 1900, II, 366, 367.

neighboring Pima villages. For a century and a half after that invasion no white man is known to have reached the territory of the Pimas Gileños.

The earliest as well as the most important explorer in the history of Pimeria Alta was Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, who, between the years 1687 and 1710, journeyed many a dusty, thirsty league in the eager search for souls. In 1694 he reached the Casa Grande in company with native guides who had informed him of the existence of the ruin. Absolutely nothing is known about this expedition except that a mass was said within the walls of Casa Grande. However, it may be safely inferred that Kino visited the near-by Pima villages. As the Papagos were at that time also called Pimas it is sometimes difficult to determine what part the true Pimas played in the events chronicled by the padres. Yet it is probable that they are referred to in the account of the religious festival which was observed in 1698 at Remedios, in Pimeria Baja. Among the visitors were "native chieftains from as far north as the Gila valley." Then as now the Pimas and Papagos were on a friendly footing, and the character and movements of the Spaniards must have been made known to the Pimas before the latter saw Kino or any other white man.

Kino diligently strove to establish missions among the many tribes that he visited, but was much hampered by lack of funds. He succeeded in interesting the authorities sufficiently to induce them to send a military expedition to the Gila in 1697 for the purpose of ascertaining the disposition of the Pimas. The party included 20 soldiers, with 3 officers. Juan Mateo Mange was sent with Kino to write the official reports of the expedition. On the upper San Pedro river 30 Sobaipuris joined the party, which followed that stream to the Gila. They reached the Pima villages on the 21st of November, visiting and for the first time describing the Casa Grande. The return was by the more direct route of the Santa Cruz valley. It was by this route also that Kino in September, 1698, again descended to the Pimas with a small party of native guides. He returned by way of Quijotas (?) and the Gulf.

Early in 1699 Kino, in company with Mange, made his fourth journey to the Pimas by way of Sonoita and the lower Gila. The return was by way of the Santa Cruz.

A year later Kino again reached the Gila by a new route. From a point above the Bend, and hence doubtless among the Pimas, he descended to the mouth and returned to Sonoita by way of Sonoita.

In 1702 he made his sixth and last journey to the Pimas, going by way of Sonoita and the lower Gila. Among the "40,000 gentiles" whom he is said to have baptized there were quite a number of Pimas, but as his sojourn among them was never of more than a few days' duration his influence could not have been very great. Nevertheless,

he gave away great quantities of beads, and as the people already valued highly those of their own manufacture it is probable that they readily accepted Kino's statement that magic power resided in the new beads of glass. At any rate, the writer has found very old glass beads on all Piman shrines and has no doubt that some of them were brought by Kino. The first horses, also, to reach Pimeria were brought by these expeditions. There is no record of any cattle being brought so far north, though they were generally distributed to the Papago rancherias in Kino's time.

After the death of Kino, in 1711, no Spaniard is known to have reached the Gila or even to have entered Arizona for a period of more than twenty years. In 1731 two missionaries, Father Felipe Segreser and Juan Bautista Grashoffer, took charge of the missions of San Xavier del Bac and San Miguel de Guevavi and became the first permanent Spanish residents of Arizona. In 1736-37 Padre Ignacio Javier Keller, of Suameca, made two trips to the Pima villages on the Gila, where he found "that many of the rancherias of Kino's time had been broken up."<sup>a</sup> Again in 1743 Keller went up to the Pimas and endeavored to penetrate the Apache country to the northward. Communications by means of native messengers indicated a desire on the part of the Hopis to have Jesuit missionaries come to them from Sonora. The point of greatest interest to us is that any communication should have existed at all. Keller failed in his attempt on account of the hostility of the Apaches, and Sedelmair, who tried to make the journey in the following year, was unable to induce the Pimas or Maricopas to accompany him. In 1748 Sedelmair reached the Gila near the mouth of the Salt river and journeyed westward. Of his trip to the Gila in 1750 little is known.

Accounts of these earliest missionaries of course preceded them by means of Papago messengers, who doubtless made clear the distinction between the slave-hunting Spanish adventurers and the Jesuits and Franciscans. Fortunately for the Pimas they were quite beyond the reach of the former and were so remote from the Sonoran settlements that only the most devout and energetic friars ever reached them.

The first military force to be stationed in Arizona was a garrison of 50 men at Tubac, on the Santa Cruz. This presidio was moved to Tucson about 1776, and in 1780 the garrison was increased to 75 men. Even when at Tucson the influence of this small force on the Pimas could not have been very great. Between 1768 and 1776 Padre Francisco Garcés made five trips from San Xavier del Bac to the Pimas and beyond. The fifth entrada was well described in Garcés's Diary (admirably translated and edited by Elliott Coues under the title "On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer"), though he exhibited a pitiful waste

of opportunities for ethnological observation while among the Pimas.<sup>a</sup> From this time forward until the American occupancy of the Gadsden Purchase in 1853 the Spanish and Mexican population of Tucson varied from 500 to 2,000, and there was more or less trade with the Pimas either at the post or through small trading parties that went from Tucson to the Gila villages.

<sup>a</sup> Pfefferkorn, who published his Beschreibung der Landschaft Sonora in 1794-95, gives a very full account of the southern Pima-speaking tribes, but dismisses the "unconverted Pimas" in the following words:


"Wir sind folgen den Gila hinunter die noch unbelohrten Pimas, welche sich auf beyden Seiten des Flusses ansetzen. Diese Volk ist in drey sehrliche Gemeinden getheilt; wovon die stärkste ein sammtliches mit Bäumen wohl besetztes Land von 14 Meilen bewohnt; welches durch Wasserflüssen, als sich wegen dem ebenen Boden mit geänder Milde am dem Flusse auf das unallergische Land flühren lassen, bebauet, und fruchtbar gemacht werden kann." (Vol. 1, p. 6.)

Padre Pedro Font, who accompanied Garcés in 1775, wrote an extended diary of the journey, in which he devotes a few pages to the Pimas. Following is a translation from a copy of the original manuscript, pages 49-52:

"First of November: Wednesday.—I said mass, which was attended by some Gileño Indians who happened to be there and who gave evidence of considerable attention, good behaviour, and silence. They sought to imitate the Christians in crossing themselves, which they did awkwardly enough, and in other things. We left the Laguna (Lagoon) at half-past nine in the morning, and at one o'clock in the afternoon we reached the town of San Juan Capistrano de Utrituric, after having travelled four leagues towards the west-north-west. This town consists of small lodges of the kind that the Gileños use. We were received by the Indians, whom I estimated to be about a thousand in number. They were drawn up in two rows, the men on one side and the women on the other. After we had dismounted they all came in turn to salute us and offered their hand to the Commander and the three Fathers, men and women, children and adults. Indeed they all gave token of much satisfaction at seeing us, touching their breast with their hand, naming God, and using many other expressions of benevolence. In short, their salutation was most lengthy, for almost every one of them bowed to us, saying: "Dios ato m' bux-boy," as do the Pimas Christians of Pimeria alta, which signifies "May God aid us." We, on our part, must needs return their salutations. They lodged us in a large hut, which they constructed to that end, and in front of it they placed a large uruc, Pagans though they were. The river being somewhat distant, the Governor ordered his wives to bring water, which they straightway carried to his lodges for the people. These Pimas Gileños are gentle and kind-hearted Indians. In order to let us arrive they sought permission of the Commander to dance, and soon the women were moving from mass to mass, dancing after their fashion with hands clasped. In short, the whole people gave token of great pleasure at seeing us in their country, and some of them even offered us their little ones to be baptized. This we did not do, being desirous of proceeding with circumspection, although we sought to comfort them with good hopes. In the afternoon I went to the town with Father Garcés and the Governor, Papago de Cojai, to see the fields. These *mizas* are enclosed by stakes, cultivated in sections, with five canals or draws, and are excessively clean. They are close by the town on the banks of the river, which is large only in the season of the freshets. At that time the water was so low that an Indian who crossed it had the water but halfway up his leg. From what they have told me, this is the reason they had not yet made their sowing, for inasmuch as the river was so low the water could not enter the canals. They also told me that to remedy this need they were all anxious to come together for a council, and had already thought of sinking many stakes and branches into the river to raise the water so that it might enter the drains; this industry on their part is a proof of their devotion to toll and shows that they are not restless and nomad like other races, for to maintain themselves in their towns with their fields they themselves have contrived to hold and control the river. I also saw how they sow cloaks of cotton, a product which they sow and spin, and the greater number of them know how to weave. They own some large-sized sheep whose wool is good, and also Castilian fowl. These things are somewhat heavy in bulk, very ugly and dark; the women much more so than the men. However, abundance on account of their excessive eating of *pechón*, which is the husk of the crushed squibito made into a gruel, of screw bean, grass seed, and other coarse foods, a very foul odor may be perceived when they are gathered in groups. This evening the Commander presented them all with tobacco, beads, and glass trinkets, wherewith they were highly pleased. The distribution of these things lasted until night.

11th Day: Thursday.—We began to say mass very early in the morning, and with the sacred vestments aided by us and with those which Father Garcés brought from Tubac to use in Colorado river, we crossed two altars. It being All-Souls day, we three Religious said nine masses. It was, moreover, a most notable and unheard of thing that in the river Gila so many masses should be said. They were attended by a goodly number of Indians, who preserved the utmost decorum and silence. We left the town of Utrituric at eleven o'clock in the morning, and about three in the afternoon we halted on the

daylight. The Apaches ran confusedly about without their weapons; fifteen were killed and many guns, bows, and quivers were captured.

 *Blackwater.* At the hill, Ká'matúk, somewhat detached from the Sacatons on the northeast, a man was bitten by a rattlesnake and died.


At about the same time the Pimas killed an Apache who was known as Vakoá, Canteen, near the Superstition mountains.

1872-73

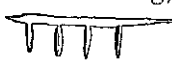
*Gila Crossing, Salt River.* For several years the Pimas had had little water to irrigate their fields and were beginning to suffer from actual want when the settlers on Salt river invited them to come to that valley. During this year a large party of Rso'túk Pimas accepted the invitation and cleared fields along the river bottom south of their present location. Water was plentiful in the Salt and the first year's crop was the best that they had ever known. The motive of the Mormons on the Salt was not wholly disinterested, as they desired the Pimas to act as a buffer against the assaults of the Apaches, who were masters of the country to the north and east.<sup>a</sup>

*Salt River.* It was during this winter that the United States soldiers and the Pima, Maricopa, and Apache scouts surrounded the Superstition Mountain Apaches at the "Tanks" and rained bullets into their ranks until not a single man remained alive. "It was a sight long to be remembered," said Owl Ear, in narrating the circumstances.<sup>b</sup>

1873-74

 *Gila Crossing.* Ku-ukámúkam, the Apache chief, and his band were killed by the soldiers and Pima scouts.

Kámúk Wutcá Â-átam, People-under-Ká'matúk, or the village at Gila Crossing, was settled during this year.<sup>c</sup>

 *Gila Crossing, Salt River.* The telegraph line was run through from west to east during the winter.<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> By Executive order of June 14, 1879, the land occupied by the Pimas on Salt river was set apart as the Salt River reservation. It embraces about three townships on the north side of the river about 30 miles north of the original Pima villages. There are several large ruins and at least one large canal upon the reservation that were built by the Hohokam. By an arrangement with the canal companies the Pimas have insured for themselves a constant supply of water, and the Salt River community is regarded as the most prosperous among the Pimas.

<sup>b</sup> This sharp engagement took place on the 28th of December, 1872, in the canyon of the Salt river south of the Mazatzal mountains. It has been graphically described by Capt. John G. Bourke in *On the Border with Crook*, 191-200. He states that 76 Apaches were killed and 18 captured. One wounded man was overlooked and made his escape. "Lead poured in by the bucketful" and an avalanche of boulders was hurled down hundreds of feet from above upon the enemy.

<sup>c</sup> There is an unfailing supply of water at this place; the Gila, after flowing 75 miles beneath the earth, rises to form a stream large enough to irrigate several hundred acres.

<sup>d</sup> This was a military telegraph built from funds obtained by special appropriations from Congress. Arizona was fairly well provided with telegraph lines by the time the railroad reached Yuma, in 1875, as there were more than 1,000 miles in operation in the Territory.

gravel and are mounted on a handle. Gourds are never used in forms over which to mold pottery.

At least five varieties of beans are now cultivated. The first known, the *tatcoa pavfi*, "white bean," is said to have been brought some forgotten time from the valley of the great "Red river," the Colorado. Considerable quantities are raised and the thrashing is done by horses driven in a circle on the same hard floor that is prepared for the wheat thrashing.

Not with the withering drought alone has the Gileño planter to contend, but also with the myriads of crows that are extravagantly fond of a corn diet, and with the numerous squirrels and gophers that thrive apace where protected in a measure from the coyotes, which are themselves a menace to the fields. From the birds and predatory animals the fields are guarded during the day by the boys, who amuse themselves meanwhile by a dozen games that develop skill in running, and shooting with the bows and arrows which scarcely leave their hands during their waking hours. Scarecrows, "men artificial," are used, but a fluttering rag was never as effective as a feathered shaft hurtling from a well-drawn bow. Night marauders were in olden times kept at a distance by the rings of the terrible cholla cactus *Opuntia bigelovii* Engelm., that were laid up around the individual plants. Plate XII illustrates this cactus as it grows on the hills about Sacaton. It is recognized as the most effectually armed of the many cacti and is the symbol in Pima lore of impenetrability.

### TRADE

#### STANDARDS OF VALUE

For purposes of trade or in gambling the following values were recognized: A gourd was equivalent to a basket; a metate, a small shell necklace, or the combination of a basket and a blanket and a strand of blue glass beads was equivalent to a horse; a string of blue glass beads 4 yards long was equivalent to a bag of paint; and a basket full of beans or corn to a cooking pot.

#### MEASURES

The principal linear measurement was the *humakâ os*, "one stick," equal to the distance from the center of the breast to the finger tips. The writer is inclined to regard this as a primitive Pima measurement notwithstanding its resemblance to the yard of the invading race. This corresponds with the Aztec *cenyollotli*, the Cakchiquel *ru vach qux* and the Maya *betan*.<sup>a</sup> It was the basis of a sort of decimal system, as follows: Ten "sticks" made one "cut" of calico, equivalent to a "load" of wheat, or about 150 pounds. Ten cuts or loads were equivalent to

<sup>a</sup>D. G. Brinton, *The Lineal Measures of the Semi-civilized Nations of Mexico and Central America*.

one horse in value. Two units were employed in measurement of distances. One of these is an ancient measurement which it will be of interest to apply to the Hohokam ruins of the region. It is *humakâ kvirspa*, "one step"—that is, one step with the same foot, equal to about 5 feet. Land is divided into plots 100 or 200 "steps" in width, according to the size of the family. Long distances were measured in terms of a day's journey on foot; thus it is said to be seven days to Zuñi. The term "step" is also applied to the English mile, but they have had as yet little opportunity to acquire a definite knowledge of the meaning of the latter term.

### BARTER

For a long period prior to 1833 the Maricopas lived at Gila Bend and came at harvest time to trade with the Pimas. Soon after that time they settled beside the Pimas, living upon such intimate terms with them that barter between the tribes was of no more consequence than between two Pima villages.<sup>a</sup> With all other tribes they were perpetually at war, except with their Papago kinsfolk to the southward. These people live in a vast territory of cactus-covered plains, here and there interrupted by up-thrust barren peaks that, with striking outlines, form good landmarks and yet offer little to those that hunger and are athirst. The Papagos are a desert tribe, and yet so well had they mastered their all but hopeless environment that the trade which they carried on with the Pimas was by no means one-sided, as may be seen from the following list of products that were formerly brought to the Gila at the time of the June harvest. Of vegetable products there were saguaro seeds, the dried fruit and sirup; *tcí'aldi*, a small hard cactus fruit; agave fruit in flat roasted cakes; agave sirup; *rsat*, an unidentified plant that grows at Santa Rosa; prickly pear sirup; wild gourd seeds; a small pepper, called *tcíl'tipín*; acorns of *Quercus oblongifolia*; baskets of agave leaf; sleeping mats; *kiâhâs* and fiber to make them; maguey fiber for picket lines. They brought the dried meat of the mountain sheep, deer meat, deer tallow in small ollas, buckskins, dried beef, tallow, cheese, and cords of human hair. Cattle were formerly traded "sight unseen," but the modern "education" of the Papagos led them to exaggerate the good qualities of their stock and even to deal in "fictitious values," or cattle that the new Pima owner sought in vain to find, until finally the Pimas would consider no proposition to trade stock unless the animals were exhibited. Of mineral products they brought red and yellow ochers for face and body paint, and the buff beloved by Pima weavers. They

<sup>a</sup>The author of the *Rudo Ensayo*, who wrote in 1762, stated that "these very numerous nations [Opas and Maricopas] inhabit both sides for a distance of 36 leagues down the river, and at the far end of their territory there is a very abundant spring of hot water a short distance from the river to the north." This spring is now known as Ojo Caliente; it is at the southern end of the Bighorn mountains. Gutiérrez translation in *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society*, v, 129.