UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
RIVERSIDE

Spiritual Geographies of Indigenous Sovereignty
Connections of Caxcan with Tlachialoyantepec and Chemehuevi with Mamapukaib

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

History

by

Daisy Ocampo

December 2019

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Clifford E. Trafzer, Chairperson
Dr. Rebecca Kugel
Dr. Robert Perez

The Dissertation of Daisy Ocampo is approved:

_____

_____

_____

Committee Chairperson

University of California, Riverside

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank many people, tribes, and institutions for all their support, knowledge, and patience. Thank you firstly to my three committee-members: Cliff Trafzer, Rebecca 'Monte' Kugel, and Robert Perez. I must especially acknowledge Cliff Trafzer for providing me all of the guidance I needed every step of the way. On behalf of my family and Caxcan people from El Remolino, thank you for believing in this research project, in the power of our sacred places, and the value of our rich knowledge. I wish to express my gratitude to the California Center for the Native Nations, Rupert Costo for Native American Affairs and the gracious support from the Graduate Assistant in Areas of National Need (GAANN) Fellowship. This report also would not have been possible without the Native American Land Conservancy, 29 Palms Band of Mission Indians and the Mike Family. To Matt Leivas, who kindly offered me his knowledge through the rich oral histories he possesses while also taking the time to introduce me to the people of Chemehuevi Indian Reservation including his sister June Leivas, I extend many thanks to them all for we share the common bond of a mutual deep respect for our sacred sites. Likewise, I am particularly grateful to the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation for welcoming me to their land, hosting, and housing me at Havasu Landing. To my family and community back home in Juchipila, Zacatecas, thank you for graciously giving your time, energy, and heart to making sure this research reflects our truth. A special thank you to the *Hermandad de Xuchitl* and the Council for allowing me to represent our Caxcan culture, history and resilience.

I must also acknowledge Beyaja Notah, Paloma Abell-Orozco, LeeAna Espinoza Salas, Romanie Arterberry, Gloria Flores, Blanca Nunez, David Chavez, Gabe Flores, Daisy Vargas, Orfil Ocampo and Cuauhtémoc Peranda for their unwavering and unconditional friendship throughout my writing process. And most importantly, I am eternally thankful to my parents Refugio Ocampo and Eduvigez Gomez, my brothers Edwin, Edgar, and Cesar, my nieces Ava and Cathryn, and my nephews Juju, Niko and Ivan, and to the rest of my family who endured long periods of my absence in order to see me finish this project—thank you for your understanding. I wish also to recognize my best friend and husband Daniel Diaz for his support, love, and kind words. Thank you for being my constant in the midst of fluctuating deadlines, timelines, research trips, and conference presentations. I cannot go without appreciating Malinalli Diaz for your presence, patience and genuine kindness that so uniquely defines you. Lastly, to our child who will arrive shortly after this dissertation is filed, I've waited a lifetime for you.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to our ancestors that came before us, those that recently left us, and those still here. I thank Caxcan elder Moctezuma Meza for being the rock of our community, custodian of the Xuchitl Dance and tying everything back to Creation and our sacred places. I am grateful to my grandmother, Petra Bautista Gallegos, whose strength is measured by her unconditional love and gentle touch to all that surround her.

I dedicate this dissertation to the people who made themselves available since day one, passed away during my writing process, and today are no longer with me to celebrate this moment. This dissertation is a testament of their lives and love for our sacred places. Maria del Refugio Rodriguez, locally known as Doña Cuca, taught me fierceness and how to live life unapologetically with freedom. She loved our sacred mountain with all her heart and fought to protect it until her last days. This is dedicated to my aunt Imelda who poured herself into taking care of my grandmother, nieces and nephews. She was the head of our very extended household and connected me with all the right people from the community. No one knew she was ill in the duration of my research when she accompanied me to every single interview. Unknowingly, she made her last rounds visiting people before her departure. I would like to thank two special men who early on in my childhood shaped my understanding of my place in this world through teachings of this mountain: my grandfather Refugio Ocampo Alvarez, and his best friend and local medicine man Pichilingue, or Guadalupe Rodriguez. Kind,

intelligent, confident, witty, and somewhat stoic, these two men shared so much of their memories, visions, and cultural teachings to a little girl who they nurtured by their side.

Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to the many people who advocate, honor, and strive everyday to preserve our sacred sites and keep their Spirit alive – thank you!

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Spiritual Geographies of Indigenous Sovereignty
Connections of Caxcan with Tlachialoyantepec and Chemehuevi with Mamapukaib

by

Daisy Ocampo

Doctor of Philosophy, Graduate Program in History
University of California, Riverside, December 2019
Dr. Clifford E. Trafzer, Chairperson

This dissertation is a comparative examination of the construction of memory at two indigenous sacred sites, one in the United States and the other in Mexico. This research project juxtaposes two sets of relationships: the Chemehuevi people and their ties with Mamapukaib, or the Old Woman Mountains in the East Mojave Desert, and the Caxcan people and their relationship with Tlachialoyantepec, or Cerro de las Ventanas, in Zacatecas Mexico. This dissertation outlines a personal journey, a process of making connections through indigenous decolonial methodologies, and a research project in histories of both the Chemehuevi and Caxcan and their relationships to sacred mountains. This work emphasizes cultural engagements with performative and phenomenological insights as having historic preservation value. This comparative work (in)forms what I hope is a growing field in History: the study of Native sacred places as sites of ancestral and contemporary sovereignty. This relationship to places is critical to the sovereignty of Chemehuevi and Caxcan people. It is one of the most simplified and overlooked forms of

community autonomy and well-being within Native History. These two tribal communities have been historically silenced, deemed too small, and irrelevant by the academe, yet this work demonstrates the need to work with small tribal communities as they are often targeted by colonial processes, many of which persist today. This work finds that future academic research, state and federal governmental policies, and land conservations need to center Indigenous preservation models as proven and sustained means of protecting sacred places for generations to come.

A Note on Use of Indigenous Languages

This dissertation is an English text, yet not out of choice, but as a result of colonization. English and Spanish, two colonial languages, and Chemehuevi and Caxcan, two Indigenous languages, share space in this research to express meaning, histories, and worldviews. Indigenous people have come to use colonial languages such as Spanish and English to have a voice in literary outlets, yet elders and speakers argue colonial languages have been unsuccessful in fully capturing Indigenous worldviews, especially spiritual relationships to places, the topic of this research project. Including and emphasizing Indigenous languages without exoticizing them is an intentional effort towards language reclamation. Chemehuevi and Caxcan words will be italicized once to draw an acknowledgement, not an othering effect, and then left in Roman throughout the text. The Indigenous words used in this text are few and by far the most important words to emphasize and cloak in beauty. This is meant to provide readers with an opportunity to pause, acknowledge the meaning and honor the speaker. Here, the author provides as much translation from the speakers as possible, yet the reality is that there is an overwhelming epistemic gap, which causes a loss in translation. Spanish words will be fully translated and not italicized. Translation targets inclusivity of a primarily English-speaking audience (which may include Native people) and the use of italics here is to honor the speakers who have, in their lifetime, kept alive ancestral knowledge.

Table of Contents

List of Images

Introduction: *Journey Back Home*

I grew up in a place that is not home, Los Angeles. My parents migrated to Catalina Island in the early 1980's to work in the cattle industry. They soon moved to Inglewood, and then eventually to downtown, but specifically the Crenshaw neighborhood of Los Angeles. They started their family and chose this place to provide and maximize resources and opportunities. For this dissertation it is important to note that Inglewood is also a social and cultural hub for Caxcans—my people from my tribal community of El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas of Mexico. The Inglewood satellite community connects to ones in Fontana, Gustine, and Fresno, which creates as statewide coalition of Caxcans in California, of the United States of America (U.S.). These insulated spaces allowed my brothers and I to grow up within a recent immigrant experience that grounded us with a sense of Caxcan pride.

It is important for United States born Caxcans to know everyone's parents, marriage ties, and place in the community. This sense of Caxcan pride and knowledge is rooted in ancestral Creation Stories, dances, community relationships and landscape, especially to *Tlachialoyantepec*, Caxcan Creation Mountain. The Caxcans from the small community of El Remolino have a uniquely strong relationship with Tlachialoyantepec because they come from living right below it. They understand themselves as immediate caretakers of this place. This spiritual upbringing was not taught through a book or intensive conversations, instead my brothers and I learned about our Creation Mountain by visiting home every year and following protocol around dance, prayer, medicine, food gathering, and preparation. Caxcan identity is tied to this mountain and the relationships

that emanates from this connection. Home is Tlachialoyantepec for Caxcan people and belonging is tied to the memories, relationships, and people of this landscape.

Caxcans in California and El Remolino expressed anxieties over the current preservation efforts of Tlachialoyantepec by the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (National Institute of Anthropology and History), otherwise known as INAH in Mexico. INAH, a federal entity, prioritizes the physical integrity of sacred places in Mexico while Caxcans claim a neglect of spiritual and cultural community-based histories. Memories of my childhood include family, community, and cultural bearers feeling left out of the conversation, curation, and narrative of this project. Chief among concerns includes INAH's neglect to acknowledge this place as Caxcan's place of Creation. Primarily, INAH began preservation plans to make Tlachialoyantepec, or Cerro de las Ventanas in Spanish, a tourist destination to boost the local economy. Caxcan people feel silenced, misrepresented and erased in this preservation process. This research project grew out of a community need to voice, visibilize, and present a historical rendering of their spiritual relationship with Tlachialoyantepec.

Five years ago, Petra Bautista Gallegos, my grandmother, asked my aunt Imelda to buy an international calling card to let me know that Doña Cuca, my great-aunt, would like to speak to me about Tlachialoyantepec. Caxcan elder, Doña Cuca, and her family traditionally gathered food in the local mountain ranges for decades and knows intimately the specific sites of cultural importance on Tlachialoyantepec. Upon learning about this project, she requested my presence to speak with me about her cerrito sagrado, or little sacred mountain. In September 2016, I boarded a three-hour plane from Los Angeles to

Guadalajara and continued on a four-hour bus trip into the Juchipila Canyons where my aunt Imelda and two cousins waited for me to make our final trip to our small pueblo, El Remolino.

The windy and steep roads into El Remolino from Guadalajara descend to the bottom of the Juchipila Canyon. Along the way to my grandmother's house, family- both immediate and extended- greeted me and said they would stop by soon after I rested. Before resting, I wanted to take inventory of what educational books and print material are available to community members to learn their Caxcan history. I visited the small local library and community museum and did not find a single book on Caxcan people, history, and culture. I then went to Juchipila, the larger neighboring town, and visited a school's supply store and found three books: one on the region's economy, the second on the Xuchitl Dance, an ancestral Caxcan dance and the third on local stories often told to children to about supernatural beings.

Like the United States, the overwhelming number of books available narrate from a particularly biased national perspective that represents the state's values and undermines the complex relationships between the state and native people. Overrepresented topics include the Mexican Revolution, Independence and highlights national heroes such as Pancho Villa, Emiliano Zapata and Benito Juarez. These histories engage Mexicans to events and people that do not include local indigenous identity, culture, historical engagements, worldviews, and lifeways. Although community members do not have access to books and historical material, one can walk in the evening by elders' homes and hear stories that are present, alive, and orally shared. The

knowledge exists in the people and their stories. For this reason, oral histories are critical to native research, and central to this research project.

After resting the remainder of the day, my aunt Imelda suggested we prepare to visit my great-aunt, Doña Cuca. As a trained oral historian, I carefully crafted all the questions to be open-ended, thorough, and fluid. Afraid of losing any recordings, two audio recorders were packed along with a back-up phone audio recorder. Oral History seminars outlined that in this field, the recording is the official document and historical record of the person. According to theories in the field, guided structure shape one-on-one oral interviews. While I prepared my notes and recording devices, my aunt and grandmother gathered a lighter and tobacco from a handkerchief located in a reused coffee can. My grandmother then brought out a stack of dried corn husk and scissors. Doña Cuca is an avid smoker and my grandmother wanted to make sure we rolled up farros, or smokes, for her to enjoy and say thank you for meeting with me.

During this preparation time, three cousins stopped by to visit, at which point they wanted to join the interview. I grew nervous by the growing number of people that would be present. Cousins purchased my great-aunt a coke which she enjoys, favorite bag of chips, and a crowd of seven people began walking towards her home. Unsure of what role my cousins and aunt would play in follow-up questions and keeping the conversation focused, I soon learned community protocol was the rule of law in her household. My aunt Imelda properly introduced me, our relation and gifted her the tobacco. Doña Cuca immediately smoked a farro as she and my aunt Imelda caught up on family, health, and local gossip. Finally, my great- aunt spoke about the purpose of my visit and why she felt

it was important to share her knowledge of our sacred mountain. Suddenly, in a sincere and yet naïve moment, I asked, "why have the elders agreed to speak to me and not the INAH archaeologists" and she responded "we are in no rush to make known to them what only interests us and what we know, only we value. Our stories only have value to *us* and you are one of us."[1]

She began sharing stories and spoke passionately while taking slow, deep breathes in between tastes of her tobacco. Doña Cuca detailed certain portions of the Caxcan Creation Narratives. Her cultural knowledge of the landscape allowed her to connect how one ancestral story is encoded into different features and processes of the landscape. She explained how different medicinal practices are tied to the landscape and stories. Some of these stories and medicines I had learned before the start of this project, from the local medicine man Pichilingue. He and I had extensive conversations of Tlachialoyantepec. People in the community interacted with him cautiously because of his power and visions, and he was my grandfather's best friend. Pichilingue and many of the elders in El Remolino shaped and paved this project. This work centered, in part, on oral histories to access knowledgeable people on Tlachialoyantepec. Back in the house of Doña Cuca, that evening she continued sharing what she thought was important for me to know and include in my research.

I continued listening and slowly began asking questions I had prepared. Suddenly my great aunt visibly demonstrated she was struck with insult by my questions. My great-aunt excused herself for the restroom, and I turned to my aunt Imelda to ask if I had done

[1] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016

anything wrong. She explained that it is considered disrespectful for the youth to speak to elders, especially in an assertive way. She reminded me that youth are not to look at elders straight in the eyes like I had, and instead should remain quiet and pay attention. In my efforts to keep the recorded conversation focused, I sought to redirect the conversation to important themes, yet a directed conversation was disrespectful to elders in our culture. By walking out of the interview momentarily, Doña Cuca allowed my aunt Imelda, which I then understood as my sponsor for this interview, to restore the community protocol of respect. My aunt Imelda said she would take the lead on my questions and when my great- aunt returned, she answered to her with wonderful stories, knowledge of the landscape and narratives of massacres which took place in the Caxcan region.

My aunt Imelda, cousins and I listened attentively. I surrendered to the process and trusted that whatever my great aunt decided to share was what was meant to be. Many beautiful moments followed. As the interview continued, different people came to visit her home, and soon we had an audience of about ten people listening and conversing with her. It was a profoundly intimate conversation that led me to redefine what oral history means in different community context, especially in Native communities. There was a natural law which Doña Cuca was following as a way of being an elder. Her authority required humbling, active listening, time to process and an acceptance for *the way things are offered*. Often, the idea of a fraught one-on-one interview is beautifully disrupted when multiple people are participating, narrating, and informing each other's knowledge, memory, and stories. These community- curated oral histories are one of the

practiced-ways in which Caxcan people pass down information. Often personal one-on-one interviews at interviewee's homes would grow with unexpected visitors, relatives, neighbors, and children who listened attentively on the floor as they ate chips.[2] Everyone respectfully shared their knowledge, stories, and elders felt safe speaking candidly. This arguably enriches the interview in spiritual, timely, and democratic ways. This is crucial to understanding the transmission of knowledge among Indigenous communities.

On my return to the United States, I also returned to my academic journey that first began with a desire to conduct archival research and oral histories on this spiritual relationship Caxcans have with Tlachialoyantepec, and secondly explore how sacred sites are targeted sites of colonization. Access to my family and community for oral histories required frequent trips to Mexico and proved costly. Because of this, my mentor Clifford Trafzer encouraged me to work on my master's thesis with the Native American Land Conservancy and their efforts to preserve the Old Woman Mountain, a sacred place for the Chemehuevi. Chemehuevi Indian Reservation is located in Parker, Arizona. This would allow me to work on a more local level, while learning to do research of spiritual sovereignty through sacred places and be better prepared to complete my dissertation with my tribe. Four years ago, Trafzer phoned Chemehuevi tribal member, Matthew Leivas, to propose this collaboration.

Matthew Hanks Leivas spoke to the Chemehuevi Tribal Council and agreed to provide lodging for me at the Havasu Landing Resort for the times I visited the

[2] Cuca Interview included Imelda Ocampo Bautista, Jordy Ocampo Bermudez, Francisco Rodriguez Sr., Francisco Rodriguez Jr., Brissa Reyes, and three other children.

reservation to conduct oral histories. The hospitality, perseverance and stories soon taught me elements of the rich Chemehuevi culture. I completed my master's thesis, titled "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert: A Historical Account of the Chemehuevi People and their Spiritual Relationship to the Old Woman Mountain Preserve (Mamapukaib)." I marked my experience with the Chemehuevi as more than a stepping stone in my research. The Chemehuevi and Caxcans shared parallel histories of spiritual grounding in places, colonial violence, and contemporary resistance to protect their sacred sites. The research conducted for this dissertation involved numerous trips to Chemehuevi and Caxcan lands. The oral histories with the people revealed more nuance understandings of sacred sites and how both tribes have traditionally preserved them.

One of the ways tribes ancestrally preserved their sacred sites and its spiritual integrity involved prayers. Chemehuevi do this through song. Caxcans do this through dance. Observation of these acts in prayer made apparent the need to visibilize performance-oriented narratives within historical scholarship. Movement through dance, and sound through song, are the antithesis of traditional historical sources such as colonial documents and maps, as it challenges the unspoken canon of history as vital and valid. Previously, written documents had to be deemed lifeless, verifiable, tangible, and historically muted in order for traditional historians to give voice this knowledge. For Native history to be documented, one must look past documents and into the living memory, movements, and sounds of indigenous people to understand how traditional dances and ancestral songs reflect the histories of their tribe, land, and place in this world. Native scholar Greg Cajete reiterates that there is language inherent in performative

histories: "Native cultures talk, pray, and chant the landscape into being. This is the animating power of language inherent in the spoken word that connects breath of each person to the breath of the word" and adds that "Native languages are highly descriptive of natural places and pay special attention to the way the event or place they are describing is in a perpetual state of motion."[3] For Caxcans, dancing is an active community process in a constant state of flux leaving historians with a perception of ungraspability. Performative and oral histories revealed Creation Narratives, colonial histories (from a Native perspective), and the spiritual geographies absent in the documents abundantly found in archives.

This work explores the Chemehuevi's sacred Salt Songs and Caxcan's Xuchitl Dance to understand how these performative histories regard the landscape as alive. These performance-oriented forms of ancestral prayer to places, power, and spirits allows for imagined worlds into *being* and *becoming*, taking performers and participants into spiritual spaces for change. Salt Songs and Xuchitl Dance allow for Chemehuevi and Caxcans to access and reconnect with their Creation, land, and culture. Caxcan elder and medicine man, Pichilingue, shared

> some days you don't know how you will endure bad moments and the only thing you have to hold on to is prayer. It seems these days that prayer is the last thing that's free in this world. So, we pray, we dance, and keep in our hearts the good and let go of the bad. We dance because we have always been taught that in hard times, you have to keep moving. If you are broken-hearted, cry but keep moving. We don't pray on our knees; we pray with moving feet like that.[4]

[3] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 184.
[4] Personal Communication with Guadalupe Rodriguez (AKA Pichilingue) and Daisy Ocampo in front of El Cerro de las Ventanas, Summer of 2008.

These ways of looking as historical sources cannot be found in books. Caxcan and Chemehuevi elders and community members gifted their knowledge to this project so that there may be an alternative and accurate representation of why their respective sacred mountains matter to them. Both Caxcans and Chemehuevi have had a few linguist, historians and anthropologists take interest in writing about them. This work centers how these two tribes' sacred sites engage as a way of exploring Indigenous sovereignty and colonial violence.

Chapter One brings the reader to Southern California, specifically the East Mojave Desert where the Old Woman Mountain Preserve is located. This chapter explores the Chemehuevi religious history, with a specific emphasis on sacred landscapes, and engages with the role Creation Narratives, Salt Songs, trails, caves, and other cultural resources play in medicinal practices, community well-being, and storyscapes of the land. This landscape's power in this community context is replete with meaning.

In this chapter, I provide the framework from which to situate sacred landscapes as places of power within the larger regional network of places. Especially important to this chapter, is understanding landscapes as living entities that express spiritual power, agency, and control over human matters. Throughout this chapter I will underscore the importance of Chemehuevi Creation Narratives, Salt Songs, and other cultural resources to have a closer look at the historical and spiritual relationship the Chemehuevi people have with the Old Woman Mountain. This spiritual and cultural sovereignty is a

departure from today's sovereignty defined by legal frameworks, yet sacred landscapes were, and continue to be, a central form of governance.

In Chapter Two, I create a Caxcan-centered history of their Creation Mountain, through personal biographies, Spanish and Caxcan histories of Tlachialoyantepec, Caxcan Creation Narratives, archaeological investigations, and Caxcan oral histories. Much like the spiritual relationship the Chemehuevi have with Mamapukaib, Caxcans also revere Tlachialoyantepec, their Creation Mountain. I explore the relationship that Tlachialoyantepec has to current medicinal practices, dance traditions, and religious worldview. Much like in Chapter One, Chapter Two aims to contextualize the historic and spiritual relationship Caxcan people have with this mountain.

For this work, Chapter One and Two provide a comparative approach to understand Indigenous histories of sacred sites from two different communities. Although seemingly different, similar community institutions rely on Creation Narratives, performative histories and material cultures to understand their spiritual relationships. Often the significance of sacred places is romanticized or seen as barren, both limiting their significance as layered, complex, evolving through relationships, and powerful points of departure and understandings for what it means to be Chemehuevi and Caxcan.

Chapter Three explores how colonial and contemporary agendas impact the relationship the Chemehuevi have with Mamapukaib. Here, colonization is defined as a continuum in American history and begs the question: "to what and whose expense is 'progress' taking place?" And in turn, this work asks: how do Chemehuevi navigate these colonial processes to protect their sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains? Often

historians are guilty of only focusing on the resilience of indigenous people and their abilities to maintain ties with their land base while refusing to offer a critical assessment of colonial, state, and federal governmental violence. For this reason, Chapter Three centers violence, death, displacement, and forced assimilation. These histories of loss, mourning, resistance, and resilience continue today. Exploring colonial and contemporary histories such as mining, militarism, and boarding schools are necessary to understand why and how Chemehuevi, like many Native people, lost access to protect their sacred sites. Non-Native people naïvely assume that native people have lost their traditions, language, and care for their sacred sites without accounting for the ongoing violence which limits their ability to steward the land. The perspective in this chapter allows for some historical responsibility to be lifted off of Native people, and instead put on a wider audience to understand how we are complicit in a political and colonial arrangement that continues to displace Native people. In this chapter, I argue that contemporary challenges such as mining, militarism, and even historic preservation effort need to reconsider and re-center indigenous histories of landscapes as places of power.

Chapter Four explores Spanish and Mexican colonial worlds for the Caxcans and how their Creation Mountain played a role in their survival. Colonial encounters have introduced new histories which have affected Caxcan's relationship to Tlachialoyantepec and inhibited their ability to access this place to fulfill their community obligations. Caxcans believe that if they cannot pray to Tlachialoyantepec then the world will be unbalanced. Much like the Old Woman Mountain, Tlachialoyantepec was, and continues to be, a target in the deadly enterprise to gain access to land and wealth beginning with

the Spanish ‘conquest,’ into Mexican statehood and contemporary Mexican entities like the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia. While coloniality is determined by different religious, economic, legal and political systems, both Spanish and English colonial histories have unsurprisingly parallel objectives of taking land and resources through numerous forms of violence towards the caretakers of these lands. Although many of these apparatuses continue today, Caxcan use their cultural traditions as a way to claim their ancestral rights to protect their sacred sites.

The conclusion focuses on some recent revitalization efforts. For Chemehuevi and Caxcans, their relationship with these special mountains are critical to personal and community well-being. This spiritual tie with the land is indispensable and contingent upon a sustained relationship with their traditions that honor, activate, and revere sacred places as living entities. A need exists to decolonize preservation efforts to effectively preserve the Indigenous relationships to sacred places. Spiritual sovereignty based on sacred geographies is a restorative and healing process for indigenous people.

Chapter One

Mamapukaib- an Extension of Ocean Woman

Introduction

Early and contemporary American public perceptions of the desert landscape in the West renders the land barren, empty and desolate. For thousands of years, Chemehuevi people interacted with their desert homelands through rich spiritual, physical and cultural connections. One of these connections involves the sacred relationship the Chemehuevi have with *Mamapukaib*, also known as the Old Woman Mountains, located in the East Mojave Desert of California forty miles west of the Colorado River. Mamapukaib's english name, Old Woman Mountains, takes after a rock cropping at the top of the mountain range, which silhouettes a woman. Famously, Mamapukaib is in a broader geographic area known as the Ward Valley—a site of historical contention over a proposed radioactive waste dump (which will be later discussed in Chapter Three). Within the center of the Chemehuevi community, Ocean Woman created Mamapukaib and infused this place with spiritual power during Origin times. Chemehuevi well-being and the desert landscape has a vast expression of spiritual power, or *puha*. Mamapukaib has always been a special place for Chemehuevi people. The stories of Mamapukaib and the Salt Songs teach important lessons, gifts from the beginning of time. Mamapukaib exists within a larger regional network of significant places called the Salt Song Trails. These interrelated trails span across California, Arizona, Utah and Nevada. Mamapukaib should not be explored as an isolated place of study as its importance exists in the in-betweenness and connection to other places. Creation Narratives and Salt Songs (stewarded by Chemehuevi singers-elders) create the

spiritual fabric which defines Chemehuevi identity and sovereignty. According to both Salt Song singers, and Chemehuevi elders, prayers held together by puha and the sacred Salt Songs activate the landscape to maintain and bring well-being to the People. Further, this work emphasizes this relationship as a practice in existing, and as the central nexus of Chemehuevi existence—Mamapukaib and her relations offers the tether and tie, the grounding, and the affirmation of the Chemehuevi's whole being.

American public consumption of Native cultures framed Creation Narratives as undynamic- unimportant myths created out of sheer imagination or altogether fabrications. Non- Native academics, state preservation entities, and the larger American angst to memorialize a static and romantic indigenous past participated in this development. Popular images of Indigenous people as inherently in touch with the environment ignored critical understandings of the structure, ethics, deeply developed spirituality, and science encapsulated in Creation Narratives and Salt Songs. These cultural relationships with sacred places must understood within its ancestral and community context. Indigenous people preserve and protect the extensive biodiversity in this world against destruction. Indigenous identities root themselves in places through stories, songs, rock art and other cultural expressions. Prayer, rooted in Creation Narratives and Songs, provided the foundation of culture and a sense of belonging for Chemehuevi and numerous communities including the Mohave, Southern Paiute tribes, Hualapai and Yavapai to name a few. Chemehuevi people make enormous efforts to protect Mamapukaib from mining, tourism, and waste dumps because of the reciprocity and responsibility they have with sacred places. To explore the power embedded within

Mamapukaib, Chemehuevi Creation Narratives, Salt Songs, and other cultural resources, puha should be explored through engagement with the people and their spiritual orientations.

The relationship Chemehuevi have with Mamapukaib, is the foundation of culture and laws or norms. This relationship to sacred sites has a fruitful potential to provide a new model, a transformation model, that moves the discourse from a Western notion of stewardship to an active assertion of indigenous sovereignty by reaffirming and reactivating sacred places as alive. In *Native Science*, Gregory Cajete argues that "along with words like "primitive," "ancestor worship," and "supernatural," animism [has, and] continues to perpetuate a modern prejudice, a disdain, and a projection of inferiority toward the worldview of Indigenous peoples."[5] Western science created confined categories of belonging for Indigenous people that have been anthropologically determined, poorly investigated or understood, and ethnocentrically biased via romantization and mythification. Chemehuevi's sense of belonging is tied to land and specific sites imbued with puha throughout the Salt Song Trail. Creation Narratives, sovereignty and self-determination guide Indigenous community preservation efforts. These emancipatory paradigms allow for a closer look at the depth of *being* when connected to land. Chemehuevi knowledge of East Mojave Desert emerges from Chemehuevi Creation accounts, Salt Songs, and use for thousands of years. Together, these expressions of knowledge systems provide a more nuanced, layered and relational

[5] Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 27.

narrative for the Chemehuevi. This not only accounts for the physicality of places but ensures accurate spiritual and scientific paradigms to speak about this relationship Chemehuevi people have with Mamapukaib. This chapter recenters sacred geography and the relationship Chemehuevi have with them, as the center of Chemehuevi existence. This work supports the Chemehuevi people and their resurgence of Chemehuevi culture, integrity of sacred sites and cultural sovereignty. Much like the desert landscape composed of extreme terrain, Mamapukaib also expresses true patience and persistence to replenish future generations.

Chemehuevi Creation Narrative

Chemehuevi regard Creation accounts as sacred oral texts. They detail how the world formed and tell of the different processes necessary to get there. Animals and plants play prominent characters that leave teachings and living philosophies on how to act correctly. At the beginning of time, water filled the Earth and land masses did not exist. Then, a worm descended from the sky and transformed into *Hutsipamamau'u* (Ocean Woman). Hutsipamamau'u then "took dry skin and dirt from her own body and added mud from the bottom of the ocean."[6] She made this mixture and "laid it upon the endless sea where it floated. Ocean Woman made the ball of mud, skin, sweat, and oil- composed of elements of the earth and her body- to create the land."[7] Hutsipamamau'u began stretching and pulling her body across in various directions to make what is today the Americas. In the process, she elongated her arms as far as she could and carefully

[6] Clifford E. Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians: Historic Properties of Traditional Lands in the Yuma Proving Grounds*, (Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, 2013), 34.
[7] Ibid.

guided her feet to form the mountains, deserts, valleys, plains, plateaus, and coastal regions of the continent. Hutsipamamau'u (Ocean Woman) created Mamapukaib during this creative and birthing process. Therefore, Chemehuevi elders regard sacred places like Mamapukaib as physical handprints of the presence of Hutsipamamau'u on Earth.

In Carobeth Laird's rendition of Chemehuevi Creation, Chemehuevi elder George Laird introduces *Shinav* (Coyote). Hutsipamamau'u created Shinav from the ocean mud, skin from her vaginal area, sweat, and oil mixture. She gave him the task of exploring the entire Earth and reporting back with an assessment of the land mass size. Hutsipamamau'u wanted the land base to be the perfect size. Hutsipamamau'u proceeded to create Shinav's two brothers: *Tivatsi* (Wolf) and *Tukumumuuntsi* (Mountain Lion). Hutsipamamau'u created Tivatsi and Tukumumuuntsi to balance Shinav because, although the eldest, demonstrated too much impulse, little reason and proper judgement.[8] Hutsipamamau'u regarded Tivatsi as wise, brave, and generous, and Tukumumuuntsi as a fearless hunter and provider.

Hutsipamamau'u needed to hear back from Shinav, who continued his journey north and south of the first land mass to determine whether it was large enough. Shinav reported it was not, and Hutsipamamau'u proceeded to lay her body down and began stretching herself again and again. After an entire day of travelling across the land, Shinav reported to Hutsipamamau'u that everything was the perfect size.[9] Hutsipamamau'u's body can be seen in present day, resting on the land at *Nivaganti*

[8] Carobeth Laird *Mirror and Pattern: George Laird's World of Chemehuevi Mythology* (Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1984), 32-33.
[9] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 32.

(Snow- Having, or Mt. Charleston) in the Spring Mountains of southern Nevada. Cahuilla scholar Anthony Madrigal discusses how Chemehuevi cultural sovereignty is lied to land: "for the Chemehuevi, the land was given birth by Ocean Woman and is alive, and the people believe they continue to draw sustenance from the land as their mother."[10] The Spring Mountains contain several places of power (for example, medicine caves). Chemehuevi, and other Paiute people today, regard the Spring Mountains as their Creation Mountain. This story does not end with creating a body, after establishing the land, Hutsipamamau'u proceeded to establish the elements of sustaining life in a good way. This included creating all the other peoples and animals, that would become key characters to all stories- together reflecting the moral compass of the Chemehuevi.

[10] Anthony Madrigal, *Sovereignty, Land and Water: Building Tribal Environmental and Cultural Programs on the Cahuilla and Twenty-Nine Palms Reservations*, (Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, 2008), 43.

1.1 Snow Capped Mount Charleston. Photo credit to Wikipedia user Dicklyon.

After she formed the Earth, Hutsipamamau'u established how procreation would take place. To establish this process, she selected Shinav, who was resting at Nivaganti with Tukumumuuntsi.[11] Shinav became bored of sitting around at Nivaganti and began to wander the newly formed lands when suddenly he came across some tracks. He followed the footsteps on the desert floor to see whom they belonged to. He encountered an attractive woman, named *Poo'wavi,* who only wore a jackrabbit apron that bounced up and down as she walked. Shinav was immediately sexually aroused by her. Shinav decided to pursue her until he could have sexual intercourse with her. At first, Poo'wavi initially responded with disinterest and even disdain. Yet, at the same time wanted a

[11] Mt. Charleston has been identified as Nivaganti and Nuva Kiav in different anthropological notes of Isabel Kelly.

chase from him, and she indicated they could not have sex out in the open. “A house must be built!” exclaimed Shinav. Everytime Shinav made a brush house where they could have sex privately, Poo’wavi outsmarted him by using sleeping medicine on him--leaving him asleep for hours at which point she would throw dirt on him with her foot and leave.

When Shinav finally awoke, he grew upset that he had missed his opportunity to have sex. With lust, Shinav again went and found her, made another brush house, and fell right back into a deep sleep- by the sleeping medicine of Poo’wavi. To tease him and have fun, she proceeded to sing a song, “honored little jackrabbit apron jumps up and down, jumps up and down,” and proceeded to leave.[12] She did this several times on her journey westward from the Great Basin area, across the Mojave Desert and into the Pacific Ocean to an island where her mother lived.[13] Shinav insisted he join her, but worried because he could not swim. Poo’wavi offered to take him on her back across the ocean. Excited and ready to go, Shinav held onto Poo’wavi’s back, but once in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, Poo’wavi decided to take a dive into the depth of the waters to get rid of him. To her surprise, Shinav became a water spider and ran across the ocean and arrived at the shores of the island, before Poo’wavi.

Now on the island, Shinav remained fixed on having sex with Poo’wavi. Here, he found an old woman making a basket, and sitting alone in front of her lodge. Shinav grew exhausted from his journey, and without a word he went into the woman’s lodge and

[12] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 39.
[13] Clifford Trafzer, *A Chemehuevi Song: The Resilience of a Southern Paiute Tribe* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 23.

rested. When Poo'wavi arrived, she told her mother, the old woman, about her encounter with Shinav and how she outsmarted him and finally "threw him away" in the Pacific.[14] Her mother immediately corrected her and announced that Shinav was far from dead, having arrived a long time before she did. That same night Shinav decided to have sex with Poo'wavi, and he painfully cried "kikiki, kikiki!!!" Chemehuevi elder George Laird clarifies that Shinav's painful call out was because Poo'wavi's vagina had teeth, and penetration caused his penis to be scraped and torn. The pain was so immense, that it drove him to tears for three nights, as he attempted to achieve climax. While out hunting for a small animal on the fourth day, Shinav came across another elderly woman who instructed him on how to have sex: "When you have killed a female mountain sheep, [and you] have well- prepared [the sheep's] neckbone[,] and have hidden it [near] the place where you lie down, you will first [penetrate] her with [that] bone."[15] On the fourth day, Shinav had only hunted duck and per the instructions of the elderly woman, he needed to bring in a big animal, specifically a female mountain sheep. On the fifth day Shinav successfully hunted a female mountain sheep, butchered it, and prepared the neckbone to use that night. He carried the meat back to the lodge and that same night he penetrated Poo'wavi with the neckbone and the bone broke off all the teeth in her vagina.[16]

[14] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 41.
[15] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 42.
[16] In review of these narratives, anthropologists have recorded numerous versions of creation narratives, like the Chemehuevis, where vagina dentatas (vaginas with teeth) act as powerful catalyst to interpret sexual relationships and power dynamic among men, women, and the landscape. Some of the communities where vagina dentatas are powerful motifs in creation narratives and material culture include the Incan, Nahuatls, Maori, Pueblo, Navajos, Hopi and Hindu people.

In this Chemehuevi version of the Creation account, Chemehuevi use mountain sheep neck as a tool for breaking the teeth and represents male sexual dominance. For example, anthropologists Daniel Meyers' work of a variance of Numic Creation Stories suggests "the actions of Coyote, as he attempts to rid the women of their vagina dentata, are a further step toward Coyote's efforts to acquire dominance over the women," and successfully "breaks" the threat of the nonproductive state the women represented.[17] This narrative is incomplete as masculinity defines the male as the aggressor, while the narration of the woman's body is rendered conquerable—a problematic colonial perspective. In the spirit of Salish scholar, Lee Maracle's continues with indigenous feminism, and advocates for a larger "restoration of matriarchal authority and the restoration of male responsibility to these matriarchal structures to reinstate respect and support for the women within them."[18] These colonial overtones of male dominance, stemming from anthropological notes and oral histories, provided by mainly Chemehuevi men, put into question whether the focus centers fragile male sexual anxieties, or whether the vagina dentata expressed women as powerful, and literally extraordinary, complete, and with the capacity to alter her physical being for reproduction. The vagina dentata is not a passive fragmented body to be broken. Questioning whether these modern usages indiscriminately impose themselves to understand indigenous Creation Narratives requires a close read of Creation through the lens of Chemehuevi women.

[17] Daniel Meyers, "Animal Symbolism Among the Numa: Symbolic Analysis of Numic Origin Myths," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 19 (1997): 32-49.
[18] Lee Maracle, *Memory Serves Oratories*, (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2015), 149.

George Laird (1871-1940) shared that in his day, formal courtships followed the underlying values in this story as pedagogical. Chemehuevis did not champion male dominance over women, instead they established for themselves the importance of hunting, as indicator that a man could fulfill the role of the provider in the marriage. Shinav and Poo'wavi provided the instructions for how a Chemehuevi man and woman would attempt sexual union for five days. For example: a Chemehuevi custom follows that the mother of a desired girl would throw dirt at a suitor on the first days of this five-day process. The marriage itself would not be honored, until the boy came back with a successful hunt, marking his ability to provide. His ability to hunt proved his ability to be a man, leader, provider and protector of his wife. In addition, in order to successfully hunt, the Chemehuevi man needed an intimate knowledge of the landscape to understand its plant and animal food sources. If the desired girl did not consent to sexual intercourse, the marriage would not be honored. And thus, her consent, and agency ultimately confirms the marriage. This example demonstrates how the Creation Narratives informed Chemehuevis on how sex should be performed. Finally, in this narrative's conclusion Shinav and Poo'wavi had sex numerous times after that fifth night.

After numerous nights of sexual intercourse, Poo'wavi became pregnant. Poo'wavi "gave birth to many larvae, which her mother placed in the basket she had [known to need and had] been [weaving for] several days."[19] In George Laird's account, Shinav continued having sex with Poo'wavi until the grandmother completed the narrow neck of the basket. Shinav had to transport the basket back across the Pacific Ocean to his

[19] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 32.

brother Tivatsi. The old woman warned Shinav that the basket would get heavier as he crossed the ocean, but under no circumstances should he untie it, opening the basket. At the edge of the ocean, he began his journey as a water spider again. On his way to his brother, Shinav began to feel the weight of the basket get heavier, as the old woman said it would. Shinav's curiosity grew as he wanted to know what was inside and why it grew heavier. Tempted to open the basket, Shinav carefully took the basket off his back. In an act of impulse and imprudence, Shinav finally decided to untie the basket and several people immediately ran out from inside it. Shinav panicked and could not maintain control of the basket to retie it. This represented the first distribution and designation of people to their homeland.

The basket woven by Poo'wavi's mother represented the Womb of Mankind, which gave birth to the first peoples who each made their way to their respective homes across the western hemisphere—first beginning with the California Coastal Indians.[20] Shinav glimpsed at the bottom of the basket and saw more people squished together and quickly tied the basket to continue his path to his brother at Nivaganti. Tivatsi scolded Shinav as he knew what had occurred and then "looked into the basket and saw the crushed people. He took them, held them close, and blew his powerful medicine on them. The people responded, quickly growing strong, intelligent, and pragmatic."[21] Tivatsi then named all these people in the Nuwuvi language:

> You will have the name Nɨwɨ 'Person' (Chemehuevi); you will be Paran'nɨ; you will be Koh wa itsɨ (Shoshoni); you will be Pamingko wa itsi; you will be Panamitsi (Panamint); you

[20] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 37 and Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 43.
[21] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 37.

> will be Kɨmaniwɨ ‘Different Person’(Cahuilla); you will be ‘Ayata (Mojave); you will be Waarɨpayatsi (Walapai); you will be Pasagwagarɨtsɨ ‘Blue Water’ (Supai); you will be Kwisaani (Yuma, Quechan); you will be Tuhug w antɨ ‘Enemy’ (Maricopa); you will be Hatpah (Papago or Pima); you will be Aakwaatsi (San Carlos Apache). What remains will have the name of Huk w antsi (European).[22]

For Chemehuevi people, their Creation Narrative informs their sense of selves, community, and world around them. Stories are pedagogical, acting as instructive manuals for the Chemehuevi people. Stories act as moral guides, and establish customs, such as the explained marriage tradition and their overall tie to the land. Madrigal explains how this story of Poo’wavi from the beginning of time tells of the birth of Chemehuevi nation, a basket, a symbol of the womb, made by the mother of Poo’wavi.[23] These sacred stories inform Chemehuevi identity and their responsibility to their homeland. More, these sacred stories point to an established time, a time of perfection, and locate a point of return for renewal. Put another way, these stories make possible for the Chemehuevi, the ability to tap into a *backward-forward* to that which is constantly in a process of reconnecting with culture and land as a means to recall their own birth as People of this Earth. In *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico*, Mexican historian Enrique Florescano addresses the re-generative power in Creation Narratives for communities. He adds that Creation accounts “are essentially founding acts, constituting a reality, that become archetypal acts” where the sense of time “do not seek to explain a happening; rather, they reveal the sacred reality that have that beginning, organization, and

[22] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 44.
[23] Madrigal, *Sovereignty, Land and Water*, 44.

movement to the universe."[24] Also, historian Calvin Luther Martin echoes this unique sense of time and space in his research with numerous Indigenous communities. He found that "the mythic [indigenous] mind never imagines the First Time as remote but as continuing even now, ever fresh, ever capable of being experienced in all its crackling power and originality through the medium of ritual."[25] Chemehuevi look to their Beginning to outline how Ocean Woman created the landscape for the people which include valleys, mountains, springs and rivers. These landscapes of return allow Chemehuevi to remain grounded and connected to plant, animal and spiritual beings through sacred sites.

Sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains carry power, or puha, from this beginning of time, a special time. Wyandot historian Cliff Trafzer furthers that "puha is a Southern Paiute theory of power, which is at once cultural, spiritual, and medicinal."[26] Puha identifies a concertation of power living in specific places, such as mountains and caves. The Old Woman Mountains for the Chemehuevi and Tlachialoyantepec for the Caxcans in Mexico exemplify these kinds of places that tether the community to their land in search of that first breath of life. Certain individuals who access this power also connect with the generational resiliency of their ancestors. Chemehuevi elder, Matthew

[24] Enrique Florescano, *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence* (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1994), 29.
[25] Calvin Luther Martin, *In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Time* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 72.
[26] Clifford E. Trafzer, *Where Puha Sits: Salt Songs, Power, and the Oasis of Mara* (Riverside: Rupert Costo Endowment, 2018), 4.

Hanks Leivas of the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation states, "engaging with sacred places allows the power that resides in these places to know they have not been forgotten."[27]

Leroy Little Bear attributes sacred geographies and its power for renewal to be at the heart of Indigenous sovereignty. Often, Indigenous people refer to this time-period during Creation as time immemorial. Unlike (western enlightenment) linear notions of time which focus on progression and a sense of "always moving away from a past-time," time immemorial refers to a period when these stories of creation mark a place of return. Creation marks a period when all was in a functioning order and in a perfect state of being, thus marking the epitome of sustainability. Engaging with sacred landscape allows Chemehuevi to also acknowledge their life-giving source. Creation Narratives, sacred places such as Old Woman Mountain are a known as a source of life, for they provide the footprint to live a sustainable life. This source renewal becomes even more important due to hardships imposed by colonization. Sacred places become places of healing especially after colonial ruptures marked by constant change, dissolving, transforming and reforming of Chemehuevi identity. Stories serve as a spiritual and mental landscape to embark return. Florescano adds that "to the extent that distancing of the original plenitude implies a degeneration of creation, religious and human effort concentrated on recovering original time, which is translated into an eternal return, in a constant turning backwards, in search of primordial time."[28]

[27] Oral Interview of Matthew Leivas with Daisy Ocampo, May 23, 2015, Old Woman Mountain Preserve. Hereafter cited as Matthew Leivas Interview, May 23, 2015.
[28] Florescano, *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico*, 26.

Chemehuevi people look back to their Creation for balance, to reassert themselves, and their responsibility to all things, and people. Hutsipamamau'u "set the world into motion, a creative imaginative process that continues today and helps Chemehuevi people understand their places on earth, relationship with each other, [the] elements of the earth, and [how to] know who they are in the twenty first century."[29] The Chemehuevi people engage with sacred landscape and re-experience their Birth as a people and as human beings. Community traditions and prayer bound this sacred relationship. Prayer happens when Chemehuevi understand the rightful relationships to the natural world, specifically, one's homeland. The Salt Songs exemplify how the Chemehuevi journey through time, landscapes, and relationships, to reconnect with their Creation.[30] This return can be understood as a lived relationship that is ongoing, elastic and shaped by the personal experience.[31] Time immemorial is part of this spiritual tapestry of the desert landscapes, which connects Chemehuevi people with Mamapukaib. The Salt Songs connect people with their ancestors, while actively participating in the present-time transmission of cultural knowledge. By walking the trails, singing ancestral songs, and telling old stories, Chemehuevi literally experience their Creation again and activate their spiritual tie with the landscape.

Chemehuevi Salt Song and its Spiritual Trail

Chemehuevi bring Creation into the present. Chemehuevi Creation Narrative established itself on Earth through sacred sites, like Mamapukaib, in the desert landscape.

[29] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 33.
[30] Cajete, *Native Science*, 80.
[31] Keith Basso, "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape" in *Senses of Places*, eds. Keith Basso and Steven Feld (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 54-55.

Although Nivaganti is the Creation mountain of the Chemehuevi, along with other Southern Paiute tribes, each tribe has a specific area with its own sacred places like Mamapukaib. Chemehuevi came into the world bounded by mountains, desert, springs, the Milky Way and in that boundedness was their homeland—which engendered certain responsibilities to this place.[32] Southern Paiute/ Chemehuevi, Quechan, Mojave, Cahuilla, Hualapai, Yavapai, Cocopah, Pimas, Tohono O'odham, Paipai, and Hopi have a shared responsibility to steward Mamapukaib in the East Mojave Desert. Kaibab Paiute scholar Vivienne Jake explained: "we came from nowhere else. These are our homelands. This is where the Creator put us." She continues, "our ancestors roamed this homeland [or *enugwuhype*] before we did, held it, protected it and depended on it for their survival. Today, we continue to revere it because of their dedication and their teachings. Acknowledging that we are spiritually connected to it will never cease."[33] Vienne Jake keeps an ancestral memory of these lands which informs the spiritual connection of the people to Mamapukaib.

These sacred places are connected by a complex of songs called the Salt Songs: the nodes that bond Chemehuevi with the land and specific sacred places. Chemehuevi people view Nivaganti as sacred and through stories and songs, they continue to connect themselves to their sacred place on Earth. Mamapukaib spatially anchors Chemehuevi Creation Narratives here on Earth. The Salt Songs include an ancient complex of approximately one hundred and twenty songs. The Salt Songs express themselves in two

[32] Cajete, *Native Science*, 37.
[33] Richard Stoffle, "The Enugwuhype (Ancestral Numic People): An Ethnogenesis Analysis," Unpublished manuscript, Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology, University of Arizona, 3 as found in Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 6.

different ways: as specific physical trails, and the other, a spiritual trail taken by the spirit of a Chemehuevi person at the time of death. These songs are both sacred (in that they are sung at the time of someone's passing) and are functional (in that they denote a knowledge system of plants and animals of the desert landscape). These Salt Songs act as binding oral document to establish proprietary rights, establish intertribal relationships, and tie people with the land and water sources along the physical and spiritual trails across the desert.

The spiritual terrain which the Salt Songs narrate began with Shinav. Shinav noticed many wandering spirits alongside the living people at Nivaganti. These restless spirits searched for their spiritual home and could not find it. Shinav consulted with Tivatsi about what to do. Chemehuevi elder Matt Leivas explains that at this point Tivatsi created an opening in the sky, known as *Nuva Kiav*, in the Milky Way so that the spirits of the deceased could head home.[34] Shinav knew the spirits of the Chemehuevi needed guidance and so Shinav and Tivatsi "ultimately gave this knowledge to two sisters who entered a sacred cave called *Ting-i-ai*" to guide them through the route which would descend their Spirits through to Nuva Kiav.[35] Larry Eddy, notable Salt Song Singer, referred to Salt Songs as the vehicle which would help "deliver spirits through the hole in the sky."[36] Two sisters took this spiritual journey for the first time detailing the landscape and journey throughout what become known as the Salt Song Trail.

[34] Trafzer, *Where Puha Sits*, 32-33.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid, 34.

The journey for the deceased begins at ting-i-ai Cave on the Bill Williams River in Western Arizona. Trafzer has conducted extensive oral histories on the Salt Songs with various Chemehuevi people on the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation and Colorado River Indian Tribe Reservation. Various elders shared that these Salt Songs present a journey of two sisters who travelled down ting-i-ai, or Bill Williams River, to the Colorado River before turning north along the river, east into Hualapai country, and north to the Colorado River west of the Grand Canyon. This set of songs and stories spans across four current day states: Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and California. More, the Salt Songs follow the journey of these two sisters who travelled together across desert lands. "They were inseparable travelling partners," said Matt Leivas. At midnight, the two women arrived at Spring Mountain, or Mt. Charleston, the Creation site of the Southern Paiute, including the Chemehuevi.[37] At this place of Creation, the two sisters anticipated their separation. They had been longtime travelling companions and knew they had to part at Nivaganti. One woman travelled north, to the Northern Paiutes, while the other travelled south to bring the songs through the Mojave Desert, Little San Bernardino Mountains of Joshua Tree, and east towards the Colorado River from now-days called Palm Springs. This sister did not cross the Colorado River but instead travels north on the California side of the river to the Riverside Mountains and reenters Arizona onto the Colorado River Indian Tribes reservation. Here, the sister travels through Mamapukaib before continuing her journey back to the cave on the Bill Williams, where the Salt Songs end.[38] As the sister

[37] William L. Hebner, *Southern Paiute: A Portrait* (Logan: Utah State University Press: 2010), 170.
[38] Trafzer, *A Chemehuevi Song*, 4-5.

travelled through all these special places, they blessed each place with puha. As the sisters made the first journey across the Salt Songs, they also left spiritual power in these places to leave behind for the living.

1.2 Map of the Salt Song territory, including Old Woman Mountain. Photo courtesy of Native American Land Conservancy.

The Cry Song, a significant element of the Salt Songs, speaks about this separation and tells of the time when the two sisters had to part, one going north and the other south. They cried as mourners cry, knowing they had to say good bye. As Trafzer beautifully narrates: "the woman going north represents the soul of the dead travelling

north on her journey to the spirit world, while the other woman traveled south into California's Mojave Desert, thus representing the living."[39] Crying represents an integral part of everyone's beginning and end. Salt Song singer Larry Eddy explained the relationship Creation has with the Salt Songs and the Cry ceremony: "The great Creator told us, I'm going to teach you these songs, but before I teach you these songs, I'm going to break your heart" and in this way introduced the Salt Songs to help the people cope with the loss of a loved one.[40] During a Blessing Ceremony in 2015 at the Old Woman Mountain Preserve Phillip Smith, a respected Chemehuevi elder living on the Colorado River Indian Reservation at the time, noticed a trail of rocks for guests as they hike the mountain. Suddenly Smith remarked: "well look here they made a trail so I can find my way back home when I have to go."[41] Phillip Smith referred to the spiritual journey the spirit takes when deceased. The spirit, like the sister who travelled south, visits sites of significance like the Old Woman Mountain before heading back to Nivaganti and eventually across the Milky Way. This spiritual journey visits these places to release themselves among the living and earthly in preparation for the descension into the Spirit World. This spiritual journey across the Salt Song Trail by the sisters and surviving family and loved ones speaks about sadness, letting go and being in community.

Chemehuevi extract metaphors from these historical Creation Narratives to gain a cultural foundation on how to maintain the relationships with sacred land and its spiritual

[39] Trafzer, *A Chemehuevi Song*, 6.
[40] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 14.
[41] Ocampo Journal, Field Notes, May 23, 2015 as found in Daisy Ocampo, "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert: A Historical Account of the Chemehuevi People and their Spiritual Relationship to Mamapukaib, the Old Woman Mountain Preserve," (Riverside: Master Thesis, 2015), 22.

entities. Behaviors like caring for the land, for the spirit of the deceased, and developing relationships to natural entities are religious expressions of maintaining community and ecological balance.[42] For the Chemehuevi, mourning directly relates to the integrity of their sacred places. At a Cry, relatives learn about death, healing and how to mourn properly. The Salt Songs allow healing for the dead but also for the surviving relatives. In *Memory Serves* by Lee Maracle (Stó:lō First Nation or Salish) expresses the importance of Creation and community memory. When further exploring the connections between language and death, she notes, "once we understood order, natural order. First comes the crying, and then comes laughter. Babies cry for months after birth. Babies' tears are their first language. This language was understood by grandmothers who were proud of their grandchildren's capacity to create language of the original voice creation gave us- crying. *Original sound*."[43] Singers reserve the Salt Songs for funerals. Singers release their songs for closure to guide the deceased's spirits to its destination in the Spirit World by making a last visit to places like Mamapukaib. Through the Salt Songs, Creator provided the mechanism of tying death, landscape, prayer and Creation into a single process. Chemehuevi and other Paiute Salt Song singers come together to guide the spirit out of this world and into the next. The Salt Songs must be sung at a certain time to honor specific places of power. Altogether, they create a network of power and prayer that is received at Nivaganti before the deceased's spirit parts the living world to the Milky Way—just as the sisters did.

[42] Cajete, *Native Science*, 42.
[43] Maracle, *Memory Serves*, 5.

1.3 Milky Way from the Mojave Desert. Photo courtesy of Jeff Sullivan Photography.

Creation Narratives embedded in the landscape focus on specific places of power like Mamapukaib. Salt Songs do not emphasize when Creation happened, but rather where events occurred, thus revealing Chemehuevi Creation as more appropriately understood as place-based rather than time-based. Many of the Salt Songs include many place names which speak about mountains, springs, valleys and other sites across the desert. George Laird provided an account to explain how Creation Narratives anchor themselves spatially. In an ancient story where "Southern Fox shoots four arrows as he begins his journey, each of which creates a well- known spring when it strikes the earth and is pulled out."[44] Ancestral stories are tied to places. Another aspect of the landscape

[44] Carobeth Laird, *The Chemehuevis* (Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1976), 159.

which heavily informs the Salt Songs is the celestial landscape, specifically the Milky Way. Chemehuevi view the Milky Way as a prominent celestial referent. Anthropologist Isabel Kelley documented several notes of various natural phenomenon such as earthquakes, rainbows with particular attention to constellations, and their association to the Salt Songs. She noted that *Naɤumps*, dead trail or sky road, is the Milky Way and is the "road travelled by souls of the departed. When a person is going to die, the Milky Way shines brighter."[45] She continues, the "dead have to jump across a river, and if bad, can't make it; then they turn into white butterflies and some come around here."[46] This sky road leads towards a hole in the sky north of Mount Charleston. Extending our understanding of landscapes to the celestial sphere ties the relationship that Mamapukaib has with other places. In this spiritual cartography, the spirit's travels are guided by the puha located in sacred places like Mamapukaib. Puha holds the Salt Song homeland through song.

Keith Basso was a linguistic and cultural anthropologist noted for his groundbreaking study of Western Apache place-names and language. In his examination of the role individuals play in this relationship, he notes "for the place- makers' main objective is to speak the past into being, to summon it with words and give it dramatic form, to produce experience by forging ancestral worlds in which others can participate and readily lose themselves."[47] Here, Basso's insight on the relationship Apache have to the landscape through stories captures Chemehuevi's role in sustaining a relationship

[45] Isabel Kelley Death 22: 43 M: ES.
[46] Isabel Kelley Constellations 23: 25b M: ES and 22: 43 M:ES.
[47] Keith Basso, "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape" in *Senses of Places*, eds. Keith Basso and Steven Feld (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 32.

with Mamapukaib through Salt Songs. Basso continues, "animated by the thought and feelings of persons who attend to them, places express only what their animators enable them to say; like the thirsty sponges to which the philosophers alludes, they yield to consciousness only what consciousness has given them to absorb."[48] Basso assumes an anthropogenic perspective which centers humans as the ones who create meaning out of landscapes, yet several Native elders such as Matt and June Leivas argue landscapes, in and of themselves, yield their own agency, power, gender, with a full reign to impact human affairs. Places have puha which has will, thought, action and movement. In other words, Chemehuevi can choose to activate this power, or it can go dormant, but it will never cease to exist.[49]

Southern Paiute elders such as Vivienne Jake and Larry Eddy furthered this claim when they spoke of a time period they almost lost the Salt Songs: "the knowledge of the songs were merely dormant, like the seeds of many desert plants, and were simply awaiting a time until someone was ready to be responsible for that knowledge again."[50] They allude to Mamapukaib having her own agency, and even life history. In *Sacred Ecology*, ecologist Fikret Berkes furthers the Aboriginal Australian concept of dreamtime: "there is no geography without meaning or without history…The land is already a narrative- an artifact of intellect- before people represent it."[51] Sacred places

[48] Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 108.
[49] Oral history of Matthew Leivas and June Leivas with Daisy Ocampo, February 20-22, 2015, Chemehuevi Indian Reservation.
[50] Melissa K. Nelson, "From Oral Tradition, Identity and Intergenerational Healing through the Southern Paiute Salt Songs," in *Cultural Representation in Native America* ed., Jolivette Andrew (New York: Altamira, 2006) 103.
[51] Fikret Berkes, *Sacred Ecology* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 33.

embody Creation and its puha, or spiritual power. Chemehuevi utilize sacred places like Mamapukaib as a vehicle for recalling ancestral knowledge. Chemehuevi refers to puha as the spiritual domain that functions as a unifying thread binding community engagement, land, and meaning. Puha is Mamapukaib; it persists throughout generations since time immemorial. Chemehuevi mark wellbeing by their successful responsibility to honor this puha through the Salt Songs. Singing the Salt Songs, engaging with Mamapukaib, and its larger Creation is part of that power which goes with prayer and allows access to repository of knowledge contained in this song-complex.

Mamapukaib and the Salt Songs require a historical framework to situate and better understand spiritual geographies within the larger Chemehuevi worldview. As we have explored, Chemehuevi's Creation spatially anchor themselves through places like Mamapukaib. Hence, it cannot be understood simply as a secular, material space. Rather, sacred sites exist as spiritual, active spaces. Anthropologists Christopher Tilley juxtaposes the phenomenological approach to landscapes when approached from an abstract, or secular, perspective to reveal that landscapes viewed as containers, objective, substantial, external, neutral, and coherent neglect a humanistic side. Tilley suggests this humanistic perspective, one more in line with Chemehuevi understandings of landscape, concludes that landscapes like Mamapukaib become mediums for spiritual power and understandings, subjective and mediated by personal realities, relational to people and other places of power, internal and empowered agents of will, and often contradicting

notions of a complex character that does not conform to a fixed state of being.[52] During a Learning Landscape program for Native youth at Mamapukaib, Matt Leivas shared with the children that bad spirits at times roam in the form of small dust devils. Matt chuckles as he remembered the elder women running to break the dust devils with brooms.[53] Mamapukaib is alive with puha and spirits for Chemehuevi people, everything is animate.[54] Just as Chemehuevi experience the world, so are Chemehuevis experienced by the world. Mamapukaib has played a central role in Chemehuevi existence and can be understood as having a life history.

Mamapukaib also consists of the physical and spiritual trails which connect Mamapukaib to other places of power, specifically Nivaganti, during a Singing ceremony at the time of someone's passing. When the Chemehuevi sing Salt Songs, the songs travel throughout the desert landscape. Chemehuevi elder Matt Leivas described the songs: "they travel. They move. They come from the caves found throughout the Salt Song Territory. They instruct. They remember. They carry the history."[55] Leivas conveys that these sacred songs are not only mobile but have life and agency. Chemehuevi elder, Larry Eddy, dedicated his life to preserving the Salt Song for the future. The Salt Songs to him reveal information about the landscape and power. He shared

[52] Tilley, Christopher, *Phenomenology of Landscape* (Oxford: Berg, 1994), 8 as found in Kurt Russo, "Healing Landscape: A Historical Perspective" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Riverside, 2008), 37.
[53] Matt Leivas Interview, May 23, 2015.
[54] Cajete, *Native Science*, 20.
[55] Kurt Russo, "Notes from a Storied Landscape," *Painted Rock and the Old Woman Mountain: A Learning Landscape* (Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, 2008), 19.

> The Chemehuevi believe Ocean Woman-Hutsipamamau'u- She's the mother of all living things and they see Her image up in the sky when they're singing the Songs and they look and they see Her…There's a lot of other stories that goes along and tells in the morning it tells of how the Coyote [Shinav] made the Milky Way. It tells about the stars. It tells about the North Star. This is what makes the Salt Song- give it its power- because it goes from station to station to station drawing the power of the land and bringing it back.[56]

Nancy Munn and Marilyn Strathern's anthropological research focuses on regional lived worlds, which can be defined as, and approximates the connective tissue of the Salt Songs that weave in and out of California, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. Here, both anthropologists critique how the privileging of an individual's vantage point risks peripheralizing all other places in the process.[57] Munn furthers this argument, stating: "instead of confining the analysis to the actor's view of a wider social milieu, let us consider how specific places implicate each other in a wider geographical milieu as well. Landscapes, too, can be "listening posts" to somewhere else."[58] This connective nature of the Salt Songs reveals a sacred geography that implicates the landscape in Chemehuevi wellbeing, both in the living and spiritual worlds.

The Salt Songs not only speak about death, but also outline living places. Matt Leivas connects Salt Songs with movement, prayer, and doing because all that is put into Mamapukaib, a part of the Salt Songs, is received at other locations and their Creation Mountain, Mt. Charleston in Nevada.[59] Mamapukaib joins a regional network of

[56] Oral history of Larry Eddy with Clifford Trafzer, October 18, 2007, Colorado River Indian Reservation. Hereafter cited Larry Eddy Interview, 2007.
[57] Marilyn Strathern, "Commentary: Concrete Typographies" *Cultural Anthropology*, 3 (1988), 94.
[58] Munn, Nancy D. "Constructing Regional Worlds in Experience: Kula Exchange, Witchcraft and Gawan Local Events." *Man*, New Series, 25, no. 1 (1990): 1-17 as found in Rodman, Margaret C. "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 94, no. 3 (1992): 640-56.
[59] Matt Leivas Interview, February 21, 2015.

relationships, with other Paiutes throughout the four states but also with other associated sacred places. Through trails, movement, prayer, and power, Mamapukaib connects with other mountains, events, springs, and caves. In one of Isabel Kelley's recording of the Salt Songs, Chemehuevi described a long journey of two birds on the eastern side of the Colorado River from roughly Blythe to the salt caves beyond a great bend of the river to the north and then back south through the Las Vegas valley and Ash Meadows. They continue through the Bill Williams River, ultimately ending their journey by entering a large cave.[60] The places inform each other through the movement of the historical narratives in the songs. These forms of communication evoke the puha of one place. This process will inevitably continue onto another process until finally received at Nivaganti, or Mt. Charleston, their Creation Mountain. This Chemehuevi understanding of places decenters the western anthropocentric approach to understanding landscapes as existing as isolated places, depriving them of holding their own relationships to other places.

Through the Salt Songs, Chemehuevi people can recall and revere places as sites that have their own life history. Chemehuevi regard places like Mamapukaib as alive and the stories in the Salt Songs narrate the indigenous history and memory of the places. The Salt Songs boaster the voice of Mamapukaib. Scholar Greg Cajete emphasizes how "land becomes an extension of the Native mind, for it is place that holds memory."[61] Keith Basso agrees with Cajete in this regard but Leivas and Trafzer adds that at the beginning

[60] Isabel Kelley, 1933: 18: 106f as found in Catherine S. Fowler, "Reconstructing Southern Paiute-Chemehuevi Trails in the Mojave Desert of Southern Nevada and California: Ethnographic Perspectives from the 1930s" in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective* ed James Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 88.
[61] Cajete, *Native Science*, 205.

of time Ocean Woman gifted puha, or the power located across different places like Mamapukaib. Chemehuevi oral histories become crucial to understanding the life history of Mamapukaib. These oral accounts reveal the puha of places, and how the Chemehuevi collective memory is an ongoing active process of remembering, honoring, and singing. Chemehuevi People placed high value on their sacred places, which continue to persistent into the present and future. Chemehuevi people hold a commitment to not forget these places and the spirits that dwell there. The Salt Salts then activate a practice organized to never forget their history, and the places that they carry in their melody and harmony. The singing should be thought of, also, as the method by which the people carry the places with them.

The life-story approach, found within the field of Oral History, has traditionally applied to people and, within a Native perspective, should be extended to places like Mamapukaib. Noted Italian oral historian, Alessandro Portelli argues that unlike the life history approach (a chronological and largely descriptive account of a life containing events that happened), life-story recognizes the creative and interpretative entity of oral accounts. This illustration of life-story highlights "how we choose to represent events and experiences from our life to communicate our sense of self, [and] who we are, to others."[62] For Chemehuevi specifically, the Salt Songs, and in their own relationship to them, Chemehuevi people narrative and create a Chemehuevi Way, which holds Mamapukaib as central to their existence and well-being. It is not only about the story in the Salt Songs which give voice to landscapes, it is also largely how the experience of

[62] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 40.

this relationship was salient in that person's own understanding and interpretation of their life, how it affected their sense of self, how it had an impact on their way of life, and how it was lived subsequently.[63] Chemehuevi oral histories reveal personal biographies, but largely center on the relationships Chemehuevi people have had with Mamapukaib since time immemorial. This humbling relationship reflects a cumulative process that outlives a human life span. The meaning is unimaginably enormous, yet, has remained consistent and understood through the Salt Songs.

Puha embodies a spiritual power and strength in the Chemehuevi understanding. Recognizing that Mamapukaib has existed since the beginning of time, and has witnessed countless generations, serves as a living testimony of the persistence of this mountain and its puha. Considering this, Chemehuevi surrender their agency to places like Mamapukaib. Ocean Woman formed Mamapukaib and the power there lives, has will, can concentrate, give itself, or deny itself to humans. An extension of puha includes familiars that take power to shaman. The prayers imbued into the Salt Songs for Mamapukaib and the spirits that live there are done with humility, caution and sometimes even fear. The songs include spiritual authority that live within and are part of the desert landscape and therefore require honoring through prayer, song, and reverence.

Although a multiplicity of meaning to places referenced in oral histories exist, the Salt Songs and the power residing in Mamapukaib remain highly structured. For example, during a Sing, a memorial, or when people pass away "it is the responsibility of the lead singer to guide the singers across the spiritual landscape[,] to gather at Nuva

[63] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 41.

Kiav [hole in the sky on the north side of the Spring Mountains-Mt. Charleston)] at midnight when the mourners assist the deceased in their spiritual crossing."[64] A successful Sing includes extreme precision in timing and execution of the song. Chapter Two will deal with the spiritual relationship Caxcan people have with Tlachialoyantepec and their Flower Dance, Xuchitl. Here too, timing, care, and execution demonstrate respect for the Spirits. In the case of the Salt Songs, the timing of the singers ensures the spirit leaves the physical world safely. During an interview conducted by Phillip Klansky, lead singer Larry Eddy further explained, "I am like a bus driver making sure the singers visit all the right spots at the right time along the way."[65] Additionally, Paiute elder from the Indian Peaks Band, cautions: "whoever wants to learn those Salt Songs, you have to have that spirituality. If you make a mistake on it, sing those Salt Songs in the wrong order, bad things happen, bad things."[66] Moapa Paiute singer Irene Benn adds "you have to remember them all; each song goes after each other, certain times, certain songs come on. On those songs, they said it meant something at that special time. Sam Mike used to explain some of those things while singing, when he stops and sits there to rest for a while."[67] Chemehuevi have a relationship with Mamapukaib and thus the responsibility lies in the Sing timing precision, which carries the critical role of execution for successful and safe passage—and proper healing for the people.

[64] Phillip Klansky, "The Salt Song Trail Map: the Sacred landscape of the Nuwuvi People," *The Storyscape Project of The Cultural Conservancy*, 2009.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 70.
[67] Ibid, 131.

Singing the Salt Songs for memorial purposes invokes the power of place and can be best understood as a performative document. During a Sing, Salt Sing singers, both men and women come together. Lynn Abrams' performance theory focuses "on the idea of the oral history as a performance- oriented narrative rather than a content- oriented document and in some instances clearly the performance is paramount." She continues, "the narration of a folk tale or a song lyric for instance, makes little sense devoid of the performance because the performance makes them come alive, and in many cases, the meaning is conveyed by the performance as well as and sometimes in place of the words."[68] Although Abrams' observation of performances could contain the Salt Songs to a limited idea of theatricality of life. This nuanced relationship can be best understood as both an individual, and community prayer, a space that is private, and protected by the people. Here, when Chemehuevi sing a song the song from the heart, at the rights times, the singers regard the songs strong ones. Salt Songs holds power to relive and re-experience the past in the present. Songs narrate the past for Chemehuevi people and other Paiute People who participate in the Salt Songs.

Salt Song Trails and its Sung Physicality

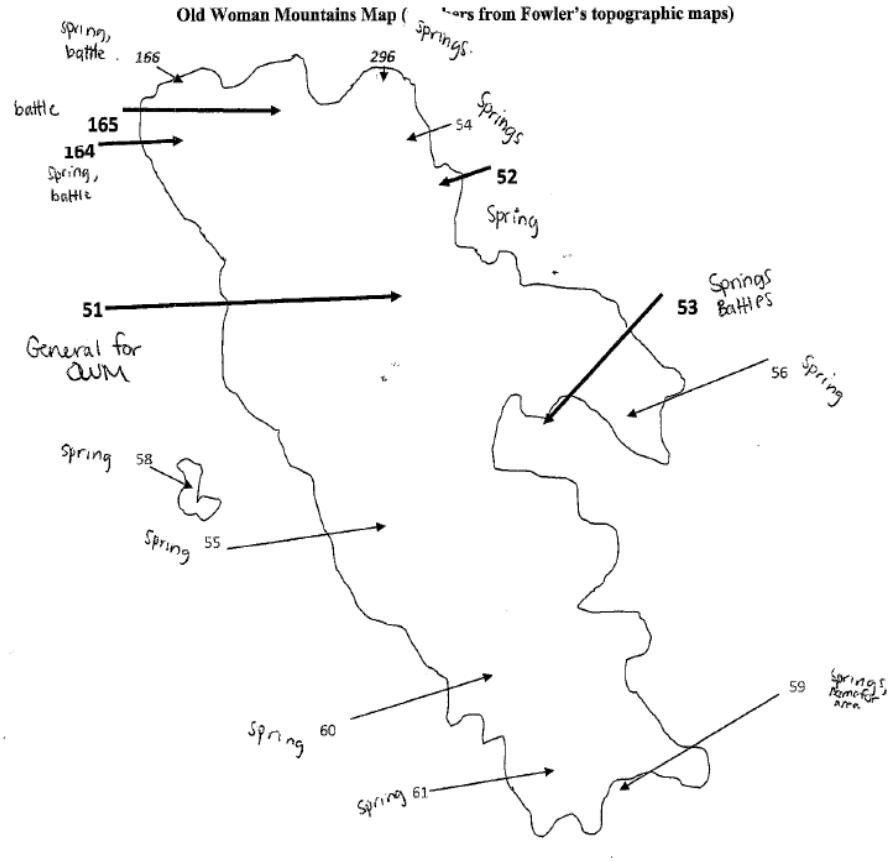
The desert landscape of the East Mojave Desert includes several physical trails that lead to other important locations such as old village sites, rock art, sites of power, and various destinations often part of intertribal relationships. Trails across the desert landscape of southern California, and its neighboring states like Arizona, mark spaces of constant work, commerce, prayer, and intertribal communication. These trails connect

[68] Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 140.

people through movement and allowed for constant intertribal dialogue. Depictions of trails as stagnant places limit the possibility of change, meaning, and vibrancy associated with them. Chemehuevi interact with trails as active agents of change and conduits of relationships. They reflect movement patterns and indicate possible new or torn alliances of the past. Mohave and Southern Paiute accounts identified in the *Handbook of Indians in California* has provided insight on the vast network of trading goods, which includes songs.[69] For example, some Southern Paiute believe that in the past the Mohave had Salt Songs and the Southern Paiute people had Bird Songs, now understood as Cahuilla Bird Songs. It should be noted, according to this Mohave account, at some point in the past, these songs were traded.[70] Anthropological notes from Isabel Kelly indicate there are Mohave words in the Salt Songs. But the Mohave do not recognize themselves as contributors and owners of the Salt Songs. This leaves room for the possible interpretation of a Mohave influence to have existed.[71] Trails found throughout the desert belong to a spiritual compass and map where people gain directions to powerful sacred places. A Chemehuevi integral part of the journey and navigation across the trails involves connecting with these places. Isabel Kelly describes two primary trails from Chemehuevi Valley to *Kaiva*: "along base *Anpanikaiv*, past *Tukumkavits*, and up Providence range. Took 4 days: 1st camp on top *Nantapaaxant*; 2nd at spring at n. end *Mamapukaib* (Old Woman Mountains); 3rd at spring end *tukumkavits*; 4th at

[69] A.L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California,* (Berkeley, California Book Company Ltd., 1967), 599.
[70] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 131.
[71] Isabel Kelley 25: 11b TP: KP

Timpisaxwats; 5th at *Kaiva*."[72] Along these ranges, people use the knowledge found in the ancient songs to guide their journeys safely across the trails.



1.4 Old Woman Mountain map outlines spring. Map gathered from Catherine Fowler's Collection.

Chemehuevi had an intimate relationship with water sources along the trails as it was necessary for their survival through their journeys. Because of the importance of water in the desert, Chemehuevi people encrypted their songs with roadmaps to several

[72] Isabel Kelly field notes 23:7b M:ES.

place-names of water sources such as springs. For example, "routes and specifically trails in the desert usually linked 'named water sources', many of them permanent springs, but also more ephemeral ones such as smaller sandstone tanks and potholes (locally called tinajas after the Spanish term, which means depressions formed in bedrock, or a small pool in a rocky hollow). Most tinajas in the desert trails link these "islands" [of water] in the desert."[73] The Chemehuevi view these tinajas as talking points, where one water island can communicate with another one. The trails connected both the permanent and ephemeral water sources, making access to water not only vital for surviving desert travels, but also connected people to the land and water. The landscape became part of them, their identity, and their sense of responsibility.

According to Isabel Kelly's email correspondence with her publisher, she located five springs on The Old Woman Mountains: *pausipa* (hoop and pole), *pasaivaxant* (water plenty), *avimparaka* (gypsum top), *nayaukwasi* (sheep tail), and *tutupikabo* (spirit- tank) and several springs on the west side of the mountain range which are seasonal, not permanent.[74] From the larger Salt Song Trail, Kelley identified that of the two hundred and thirty place-names collected from Daisy Smith (Las Vegas Paiute), ninety two are the names for springs and other water sources, seventy are for mountains or mountain-related features, and the remainder are other geographic features.[75] As a person encounters new springs or water sources, the person begins to name those water sources, and weaves the names into the story and song. By giving directional markers to those

[73] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 91.
[74] Tom Painter interpreter kate paddadp map data.
[75] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 100.

new water sources, the person also co-authors, and leaves a personal imprint, in and to the Salt Songs. This exemplifies the endless cumulative process of the Salt Songs--detailed previously in this chapter. This makes songs a malleable archive to store Chemehuevi history and knowledge for future generations to access. For example, the Chemehuevi use the desert willow plant to identify water and can also be known as a phreatophyte plant for their "long roots to tap moisture deep in the sand."[76] Desert willow can be seen throughout the Sunflower Wash in The Old Woman Mountain Preserve. People connect to water sources through plant knowledge, such as with the desert willow, while on the long journeys through the trails. Chemehuevi saw botanical knowledge (plant knowledge) as a basic and necessary skill for planning a trip across the trails; access to knowledge on water sources became an asset for Chemehuevi travelling through the desert landscape. This sacred dimension of Indigenous places like Mamapukaib, or the Old Woman Mountain, represent a cumulative ancestral project of observation and integration; prayer and reverence through song hold these places together.

Travels and Runners

According to Matt Leivas, it took approximately two years to plan a trip across the trails. Chemehuevi never embarked on a journey through the desert as simply frivolous going.[77] A strict planning process had to take place to account for timing, weather, water access, and the physical health of the people trekking across the desert.

[76] James Andre, "Ethnobotanically Important Plants of the Old Woman Mountains Preserve: A Photographic Guide," *Native American Land Conservancy*, 14.
[77] Matt Leivas Interview, February 22, 2015.

Timing and planning according to water availability became even more pressing matters when elders and children accompanied the traveling group. When elders travelled through the trails the planning committee had to account for more water stops and places for rest along the way. Miscalculation in the miles travelled and limited water access, or dried water sources, could quickly turn tragic. Elders coped with these perils through prayer at cairns along the trails. Here, they "broke off twigs of creosote brush and placed them on top of the pile with a stone to cover. They stood on the stone for 10-15 minutes talking to the stone pile and asking to be refreshed saying 'I [do this so] that my limbs may not be tired.' Only older people did this- [and] they never passed [a cairn] up."[78] The creosote, a sacred plant with puha, assisted the elders with bone maladies to find relief, especially those with arthritis. They rubbed the creosote across their aching bodies to utilize the medicinal properties of the plant. Chemehuevi people living in the desert of the American Southwest believed creosote to be a sacred plant.[79] Elders particularly understood the value of leaving prayers and offerings because of the many elements out of human control such as frail health and extreme heat. Cultural knowledge regarding water, trails, weather, and shrines played a critical role with little room for miscalculation. Chemehuevi travelers, especially runners, required a knowledgeable expertise of water and food sources.

Chemehuevi runners held a respectable position within communities as they became the communication system of the physical trails which connected different tribes.

[78] Isabel Kelly notes 23: 7b M: ES Trails and Travels
[79] Clifford Trafzer, *Tribal Cultural Biological Resources Whitewater River of the Twenty-Nine Palms Indian Reservation*, 45.

Runners carried messages from one community to another and served as ambassadors of their tribes. Runners maintained intertribal communications of relations. The very act of running associated this special group of people with sacred powers. Mojave accounts of travelers include male runners who "often ran 100 miles a day, reaching coastal destinations in three to four days." [80] These journeys across the trails included navigating peak summer heats, and so they travelled alone taking shorter trails during the night to stay hydrated for longer periods. Within Chemehuevi society, "men often took more direct routes and more "shortcuts" through drier country as they could travel more rapidly and cover more distance between water sources.[81] In the past,

> Chemehuevi runners went out to all the villages carrying the *tapitcapi,* or knotted string. The number of knots indicated the number of nights before a ceremony began, and runners informed villagers that the host had invited them to a ceremony at a given place. Past generations of Chemehuevi used runners with the knotted string to announce death, funerals, and ceremonies. The people considered them a special "class" within each Chemehuevi community who found joy in running and knew the land intimately, enabling them to race over deserts and mountains using the shortest routes. They knew the desert springs and places where water could be found trapped in deep depressions found in the rocks.[82]

The trails marked neighboring villages as destinations for announcement of gatherings. This extensive communication system permitted long standing relationships among tribes across the greater Southwest.

[80] Fowler, "Reconstructing Southern- Paiute- Chemehuevi Trails," 88.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians,* 52.

Runners not only brought people into intimate proximity with the landscape, but also commanded spiritual authority, and these runners held respected positions in the community. In an oral interview conducted in 1997, Chemehuevi elder Joe Benitez explained, "runners traveled in the old way." He stated that past generations of Chemehuevi elders, including his mother Susie Mike, believed runners could fly. Carobeth Laird, the anthropologist that set the standard for thorough ethnography of the Chemehuevi, stated runners "went alive" and "used this secret method [of travel]." Runners went about "just staggering along,' taking giant steps, his feet touching the ground at long, irregular intervals, leaving prints that became further and further apart and lighter and lighter on the same."[83] Within the Chemehuevi worldview, running represented mobility, communication, and prayer. Running allowed Chemehuevi to transcend the limits of the physical world and transport themselves to experience their Creation. The trails became their vehicle and their spiritual gift; it is the engine which activates the entire cosmology. Running reflected a way of being in and with the world—not simply just going.

The Intertribal Relationships

Chemehuevi engaged and learned extensively from and with neighboring tribes; the trails facilitated this intertribal communication system across the desert. Chemehuevi used these trails as primary modes of travel, but their sacredness lies in what they accomplished along the way as much as where it took people. The trails connected

[83] Ibid.

Chemehuevi people and other desert and coastal Indians through a trading network.[84] Anthropologist Catherine Fowler indicated that "several of the major routes were still in use by the Mojave, River Yumans, and Chemehuevi during the Contact Period (1770s) to furnish trade goods such as shells, but also food stuffs, rabbit-skin blankets, salt, property, and basketry to each other as well as the Cahuilla, Pai groups, other Southern Paiute, and Navajo."[85] Long journeys required cooked food, saved, or otherwise dried to store in jars to support people on their trips across the desert. Laird reports "the need for caches of food and other goods was sufficiently important that stealing food from someone else's cache was enough to bring on a war."[86] Chemehuevi highly controlled food, its ownership, and sharing through protocol and permission, because of its necessity for vitality and survival.

Chemehuevi used songs as a way to assuage some of these intertribal tensions by establishing proprietary rights and demarcating land use. Chemehuevi also used songs to determine what kind of natural resources could be taken from certain areas, as songs connected with property rights of families. The Chemehuevi people have several song cycles related to ancient stories of great journeys by spiritual beings and ancestors, at least some of which establish hunting and other territorial rights for their hereditary

[84] Daisy Ocampo, "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert: A Historical Account of the Chemehuevi People and their Spiritual Relationship to Mamapukaib, the Old Woman Mountain Preserve," (Riverside: Master Thesis, 2015), 26.
[85] Catherine S. Fowler, "Reconstructing Southern Paiute- Chemehuevi Trails in the Mojave Desert of Southern Nevada and California: Ethnographic Perspectives from the 1930s" in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009), 88.
[86] Laird, the Chemehuevis, 6.

owners.[87] Southern Paiute sang songs that included Mountain Sheep Song, Deer Song, Salt Song, and Talk Song. In addition, Isabel Kelly notes: "Mountains containing salt belonged to one family in the old days when the mountains were divided. Can't remember name of family (Hanks), but they owned the whole mountain, springs and all."[88] Matt Leivas, who comes from the Hanks family, confirms that salt was and continues to be a commodity of value for Chemehuevi people.[89] He remembered his father going on trips and arriving with a lot of salt. All the children hovered over his father to look at the salt. Further, at the first annual UCR American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) conference "Healing the Earth: Decolonizing Ecology," Matt Leivas further emphasized the need for salt to survive, especially with maintaining of meats for protein. Kelly adds that Chemehuevi always collected rock salt from the caves.[90] In fact, when Chemehuevi gather salt they engage in a sacred act collecting a gift given to them by the Creator.[91] Leivas explained the "entire region was connected through salt trading network and how the Salt Songs told of a vital network of water sources along these routes."[92]

Intimately knowing the desert trails, resources, landscape, and their proprietary rights carry elements that could bring on warfare. Chemehuevi ethnographic notes written

[87] Fowler, "Reconstructing Southern- Paiute- Chemehuevi Trails," 88.
[88] Field Notes of Isabel Kelly notes 25: 12 tp : kp
[89] Daisy Ocampo, "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert: A Historical Account of the Chemehuevi People and their Spiritual Relationship to Mamapukaib, the Old Woman Mountain Preserve," (Riverside: Master Thesis, 2015), 27.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Clifford Trafzer, Luke Madrigal and Anthony Madrigal, *Chemehuevi People of the Coachella Valley* (Coachella: Chemehuevi Press, 1997), 18-19. Hereafter cited Trafzer, *Chemehuevi People of the Coachella Valley*, page number.
[92] John Pinson, "A Moment of insight along the Salt Trail," *Painted Rock and the Old Woman Mountain: A Learning Landscape* (Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, 2008), 39.

by Richard F. Van Valkenburg in the 1950s detail oral histories from , a Chemehuevi woman over ninety-year-old at the time, and *Tasamavant*, about eighty-year-old Chemehuevi woman. They reflect on numerous Chemehuevi traditions and a recent feud, of 1867, with the *Turat Aiyet*, or Land Mohave, who lived below Danby, in Mamapukaib. Various accounts from Mohave and Chemehuevi remain in common discourse about the conflict. *Mukewiune* related that while hunting mountain sheep, the Mohave raided a Chemehuevi camp and "stole women and killed children."[93] A hallmark of this battle included a deep understanding of the springs, short cuts across the mountain ranges, local caves, and a sense of a violation of proprietary rights. This Chemehuevi accounts notes that the Chemehuevi defeated the Mohave by setting fire in the cave where the Land Mohave sought rescue. Mohave sought military support, so the Chemehuevi found support from neighboring tribes by scattering the news through the knotted strings where they decided to meet at *Ivanpah*.[94] The Mamapukaib range was a key mountain during this battle. Intimate knowledge of the landscape proved to be a military asset.

To own a song, meant having the authority to grant or deny access to the hunting grounds outlined in their songs. In owning a song, the individual or family had a deep understanding of those lands outlined in the song. The Salt Songs could both discredit and establish kinship as well as establish hunting rights to those lands delineated in the songs. Songs measured relationships. Through the Salt Songs, Chemehuevi knew that someone who told identical details of a song, implicitly described a kind of copyright

[93] Richard F. Van Valkenburg, "Chemehuevi Notes" (Prescott: Prescott College, 1971), 4-5.
[94] Van Valkenburg, "Chemehuevi Notes," 7.

which established kinship rights to use those lands for hunting. George Laird related to Carobeth, "the theft of a song, as opposed to its "borrowing," was a serious matter; and either borrowing or theft of a shaman's song was unthinkable. Respect for the incalculable power of words, whether spoken, chanted, or sung- aloud, or silently "in the hearts" – was ingrained in the Chemehuevi mind."[95] In the case of Mamapukaib, "a Mountain Sheep Song might tell of the south side of Mamapukaib that begin on the desert floor far from the base of the mountain and rises up in a broad sweeping plain from the desert floor into some rocky outcroppings."[96]

1.5 Juniper Berries found on the Old Woman Mountain Preserve. Photo courtesy of Davina Wellness.

[95] Laird, *Mirror and Pattern*, 276.
[96] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indian*, 98.

Songs expressed a nuanced and intricate understanding of the landscape. Songs were "excellent devices for learning one's own hunting territory as well as those of others and became a mechanism for further attaching oneself to the land and its resources."[97] For example, a song could explain an area in higher elevations around Mamapukaib where pinon and juniper can be found. The eastern region of Mojave Desert has a thriving location with notable biodiversity. The East Mojave Desert is couched within neighboring major deserts, and in an intermediate zone known for its exceptional vegetational and faunal diversity. In fact, Jim Andre, a botanist with the Sweeney-Granite Research Station, at the request by the Native American Land Conservancy, conducted a survey of the plant community on Mamapukaib, and determined there are 237 plant species present, which represents thirty five percent of all the plant families listed for the State of California.[98] Just forty miles from the Colorado River, Mamapukaib has four general habitat types, each providing food, shelter for plant, and animal life.

Chemehuevi used juniper berry, a desert plant, which has both spiritual and nutritional value to the people. California juniper can be found around Lazy Ranch on the west side of The Old Woman Mountain Preserve. According to Andre, Native people carried juniper berries while traveling on the trails to ward off bad spirits, or placed on hot rocks in sweat lodges to help purify the spirits.[99] The berries held spiritual power to protect people while on their journeys across the desert- again, expressing the landscape as alive and full of spiritual agency. Taking into account bad spirits dwelling throughout

[97] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 104.
[98] Jim Andre, *A Survey and Assessment of the Botanical Resources of the Old Woman Mountains Preserve* (Kelso, California, 2004), 3.1.1.
[99] Andre, "Ethnobotanically Important Plants of the Old Woman Mountains Preserve," 20.

parts of the trail adds a layer of fear which situates prayer within a very prominent role.

Calvin Martin, noted how Native people regard plants as other-than-human persons, or medicine beings, that will give themselves to people, as long as they refrain from overexploitation and treat them with respect and avoid offense.[100] Juniper berries are available throughout the year and Chemehuevi usually gathered, dried, ground to later make into cakes and mush or beverages. California juniper berries have astringents properties and the bark treats colds, fevers, and constipation. Chemehuevi used other parts of the plant for clothing and mattresses contributing to the intricacy and inter-relatedness of the desert landscape and Chemehuevi households. Chemehuevi use these songs as a repository of knowledge that teaches people how to live with the land and with each other. This is how sacred places like Mamapukaib, the Salt Songs and puha wove itself to organized Chemehuevi people, families, and entire regional communities. Ocean Woman created this sacred geography for different tribes to communicate, trade, and work together.

Puha and Spirit Beings

Mamapukaib was one of these places where various people worked together, came together, and served as a prominent place where medicine people came to gather power. Couched within the Mamapukaib's mountains range, is a medicine cave, also known as Painted Cave. Moapa Paiute elder recalls the power of caves. "When they wanted these things, they went up to that cave, whatever they wanted to be. They stayed there for the night, asking what they wanted to be, to sing or what they wanted to know,"

[100] Martin, *In the Spirit of the Earth*, 20.

she mentioned.[101] Many medicine people went to pray and receive their medicine, and often familiars, or *tutuguuvi* in a medicine cave found in Mamapukaib.[102] Only specific people received this medicine through visions. Historian Calvin Martin accurately describes visions as vivid engagements with potent earth beings in suspended time.[103] From the power in these places, numerous people learned to doctor (heal): arrow doctor, deer doctor, Mt. sheep doctor, snake doctor, rain doctor, wind doctor, and rock doctor.[104] In an oral history conducted with Larry Eddy, he recalled memories of his grandfather who was a medicine man. "The Indian doctor, he has, as a spirit, he has an animal friend. And nobody sees that animal but him. He calls to that animal through his [Salt] Songs. He can do this, sing and sing, and when that animal arrives, he knows that he's going to save that person. Until that animal gets there, he doesn't really put on his power," Eddy shared. He continued to share the relevance of the Salt Songs and its relationship with landscapes,

> It was all done in his Songs. He sang his Songs and his Songs were a beckoning to his familiar, whatever it may have been or whatever it was, and [his familiar] could come out from the mountain or from the valley or wherever he was at, he would come down to this doctor singing there and play around. But as soon as he got close enough the doctor would grab him. And once he had his familiar in his hand or by him and captured him this is when that healing power would be transferred to him, to the doctor, to the patient. That's how they healed.[105]

[101] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 128-129.
[102] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 53-54.
[103] Martin, *In the Spirit of the Earth*, 13.
[104] Isabel Kelley notes 23: 31b M: ES Shamanism
[105] Oral history of Larry Eddy with Clifford Trafzer, October 18, 2007, Colorado River Indian Reservation. Hereafter cited Larry Eddy Interview, 2007.

Not everyone could become a doctor. The commitment involved rigor and took a lot of sacrifice, at times this sacrifice included offering the lives of relatives and children.

Entering the cave, a smooth surface on the ground in the cave can be observed. Use over a long period of time by people in the past eventually caused the floor surface to texture smoothly. The natural oils secreted from human skin coupled with human weight compacted the ground into a smooth surface. Although probably unconscious of it, each person who visited the cave participated in the construction and larger spiritual commitment to the shaman's cave, their power imbedded in this place of prayer. Snead continues, "over time the landscape becomes a complex overlay of different marks from different eras that have been 'overlain, modified, or erased by the work of another."[106] The knowledge comes from a cumulative process in which engaging with Mamapukaib means engaging with the complex trail systems that connect several places, mountains, and springs to people. The spiritual power, or puha, located in this cave was placed there at the beginning of time by Ocean Woman as a way of bringing healing to the people.

[106] James E. Snead, "Trails of Tradition: Movement, Meaning and Place" in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths and Roads in Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 44.

1.6 Painted Cave along the Old Woman Mountain Preserve.

This medicine cave contains rock art found throughout Mamapukaib. Rock art throughout the east Mojave Desert relate to each other and share a deeply connection in community with each other. When on the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation, Matt Leivas visited West Well's petroglyphs. A puha trail moves from Chemehuevi Valley on the river over Turtle Mountains to Old Woman Mountains. Along the way, West Well can be found which outlines water sources near Turtle Mountains, just west of the river. These song maps describe the desert mountains and water sites. He explained that the large panels of petroglyphs found on this site corresponds with some found on the north face of The Old Woman Mountain Preserve- both panels map out rivers, particularly the

Colorado River.[107] It took Leivas a long time thinking about the meaning of the petroglyph and suddenly a vision came to him of a water map with local springs and rivers. The pictographs on the large panel in West Well includes a water island that can possibly be located where Lake Havasu is today. Matt Leivas described how this map came to him: "I know all the rivers and water sources, you have to know the land well and then you will realize that all the important sites are on this map."[108] Petroglyphs contain information that hold everything one needs to survive in the desert landscape. This petroglyph on the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation resembles one located on the Old Woman Mountain Preserve, and thus share a connection. Chemehuevi were, and continue to be, avid travelers who relied on these maps for sustainability.

1.7 Water map taken at West Wells in Chemehuevi Indian Reservation. Photo courtesy of author.

[107] Trafzer, *Quechan Indians*, 142.
[108] Matt Leivas Interview, February 20, 2015.

This rock art not only evidences human use, but also evidences a spiritual presence: an imprint of spiritual beings. When asked about the origins of the rock art, Matt Leivas narrated a story once shared to him by his mother. Matt asked his mother who made the rock art. She answered that the Little People made the rock art a long time ago but can sometimes still be heard—meaning the spirit of the Little People are still among the Chemehuevi people today. Further support of this lies in the Mohave People accounts, which attribute the authorship to be owned by "dwarfs" or Little People. One account recalls a "cave inside of hill (Old Woman Mountain) where they have been marking walls- no one could touch."[109] Leivas' mother further described them as cute little boys.[110] A long time ago, Matt's mother remembered hearing the cute little boys working while outside. She heard "tick tick tick" as they worked creating new rock art. Creator gifted this rock art to the people as it provides knowledge. Little People, according to Nuwu (Chemehuevi) elders, "made the rock drawings that they created with deep-rooted spiritual information and [intimate] connection to places."[111] Many of these rock drawings can be seen within different mountain ranges on Mamapukaib and trails. These rock arts communicate with each other, connect places with people, and become part of the living cultural landscape. As Trafzer described, "the people are careful and cautious not to violate the teachings of the Creators."[112] In an interview with Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians tribal member Sean Milanovich, he added: "these places you really don't know where the power and teachings are coming from but you

[109] Van Valkenburg, "Chemehuevi Notes," 7.
[110] Matt Leivas Interview, February 20, 2015.
[111] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indian*, 28.
[112] Trafzer, *Quechan Indian*, 143.

can feel though, you can't quite see it, in reality it is coming from everywhere."[113] Sean agrees that Mamapukaib is a place of puha where the spiritual web of power can be felt and only those who are chosen can access this power. "When you crawl through the caves, you are going through the womb," he adds. The landscape is charged with spiritual power, which the people revere and respect.

Conclusion

Mainstream society often overlooks the depth of all these connections, yet the Chemehuevi hold them near and dear. Chemehuevi way of life and cosmology depends on these networks of relationships. Creation, trails, Salt Songs, and sacred sites become part of Chemehuevi health, wellbeing, and sovereignty. Chemehuevi argue that the Salt Songs kept evolving as an expressive archive and repository of knowledge. Everything has life and takes part of a greater whole. Mamapukaib would be referred to as *Nar+wiin y a kaiv ya,* or Immortal Myth, which refers to a great power and mystery assumed within it.[114] The mountains, trails, and water sources all come together to tell a story that the Chemehuevi people have not forgotten and keep alive through their songs and sacred places. The trails found in the landscape are themselves a spiritual embodiment of reverence and respect for sacred sites like Mamapukaib. The trails stand "worn deep through use, these trails became places in and of themselves as fundamental to world view as mountains and springs."[115] Chemehuevi continue to constantly engage with Mamapukaib line in time immemorial. The wear and tear of the trails into the desert

[113] Oral history of Sean Milanovich by Daisy Ocampo, February 05, 2016, California Center for Native Nations in Riverside.
[114] Carobeth Laird, 1 Box Folder 2 87-115, Natural World, 84.
[115] Snead, "Trails of Tradition," 58.

landscape express the very truth at the time of Creation: Hutsipamamau'u, or Ocean Woman, would designate the East Mojave Desert the homeland of the Chemehuevi people.

The Salt Songs not only reflect a huge physical place that outlines a spiritual homeland and a conglomerate of destination before the dead depart. This Salt Song Trail includes multiple places connected by song and puha. Across the four states- California, Arizona, Utah and Nevada- this spiritual power concentrates itself in sites now known as sacred. For the deceased to peacefully leave this world, they must be sung to the Milky Way, the place where the dead reside. Trafzer adds that "during special times *Yagapi* singers unite their songs with those from other Nuwu territories to intersect with their songs to build strength and momentum needed to describe Southern Paiute homelands and their journey to the afterlife" into the Milky Way.[116] The spirit must make their rounds through the desert landscape trails to part with their homeland much like the two sisters had to part and cry when they parted. The different sacred places sung in the Salt Songs create a network of spiritual geographies that function as listening posts. Salt Songs Trails connects places and the destruction of one site affects the other. When Chemehuevi sing the Salt Songs for funerary purposes and for organizational purposes, the physical and spiritual integrity of Mamapukaib, and all other places in the Salt Songs, are critical to the prayer, and ceremony for the deceased. Chemehuevi spiritual and physical health relies on Mamapukaib and the Salt Songs. Sovereignty maintained tribal well-being and maintaining functional relationships with all life, including sacred sites.

[116] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 93.

Chemehuevi's whole being is tied up to these places. As Cajete argues, the wellbeing of sacred places impacts community and so illness has an environmental and spiritual root.[117] Chemehuevi understood health, wellbeing, and sovereignty in its full expression as a balance of relationships with the landscape, upholding sacred sites such as Mamapukaib, and travelling across the trails- both spiritual and physical. Today, tribes in the United States have creatively engaged in new forms of preservation to protect their sacred sites and ensure the spiritual health of the community. The Native American Land Conservancy became one of these avenues that multiple tribes including the Chemehuevi, Mojave, and Cahuilla committed to preserve and restore Mamapukaib, or the Old Woman Mountain Preserve. Although not a perfect legal system, Indigenous tribes in the United States have the ability to create their own organizational infrastructure which differs drastically from Indigenous peoples in Mexico, who are not recognized as sovereign entities. The following chapter follows Caxcan people and their spiritual relationship to Tlachialoyantepec or El Cerro de las Ventanas, their Creation Mountain. This sacred center parallels Mt. Charleston for the Chemehuevi. These two tribes carry a community history through their Creation narratives, song, and dance which outlines the significance of sacred sites to community well-being. Each community engages their sacred sites and its puha through community prayers. This can be in the form of song and sound or dance and movement, but each do so to honor and activate the power residing in their sacred places.

[117] Cajete, *Native Science*, 117.

Chapter Two

Tlachialoyantepec: Sacred Places as the heart of Community Existence

Introduction

Indigenous people from across the world have regarded sacred places— such as springs, mountains, and rivers- as ancestral places that receive power. Chapter One explored how the spiritual relationship that the Chemehuevi have with Mamapukaib follows the Salt Song Trail connecting people to places and power. The travel of the Salt Songs through these power places tells a story that ends at their creation mountain, Nivaganti. This chapter begins with *Tlachialoyantepec*, also known as el Cerro de las Ventanas in Spanish, the creation mountain for the *Caxcan*, or *Caz' Ahmo* people of the community of El Remolino in the Juchipila municipality of what is now Zacatecas, Mexico.[118] Caxcan ancestral homelands, or Caxcan Nation, extends throughout a region of over thirteen communities and at the heart is the larger town of Juchipila.[119] This historical study focuses on El Remolino. The community consists of approximately five hundred people and sits at the foot of Tlachialoyantepec. The people of El Remolino maintain a unique spiritual relationship with this mountain. They feel a great sense of privilege and pride in being able to see their creation mountain every day. This joy fills their days with beauty and cultural strength. The valley of Juchipila is nestled between

[118] *Tlachialoyantepec* is commonly known in Spanish as the *Cerro de las Ventanas*, named after a cliff house, that became a look-out point during the Mixton Battle. Chapter Four will explore this Battle in detail. In an effort to reclaim indigenous names of sacred places, this dissertation will utilize its nahuatl name, *Tlachialoyantepec*, meaning Sacred Mountain.

[119] These other towns include Juchipila, Xalpa Nochistlan, Tabasco, Moyagua, Mesquitita, Cuspala, Apozol, San Miguelito, Teocaltichillo, Tayagua, Apulco, Tenayuca, Guanusco, Mesquital del Oro. These towns then break into many rancherias such as El Remolino, Contitlan, Pueblo Viejo etc.

two mountain ranges: to the west is the Sierra de Morones and to the east is the Sierra de Nochistlan.[120] These two parallel mountain chains run north and south creating the Juchipila Canyon. This valley and mountain landscape boast a rich varied climatic zone with rivers, streams, mesas, and cliffs. Caxcan elder, Petra Bautista, says "during spring and summer seasons, the clouds bring the rains leaving our land green, fertile, and youthful."[121] The fall and winter seasons blanket the land in dry crisp weather, colored in warm brown hues and a striking desert character where only the cactus thrive. And much like the land that becomes old and new again, Tlachialoyantepec is the sacred mountain where both the elder Caxcan generation and the youth of El Remolino forge a vital communal identity tied to this power mountain. Caxcans believe in communicating with the spirits of this place through prayer, dance, and offerings. The physical and spiritual caretaking of this place materializes into a relationship with their Creation Narratives and maintain balance with, what is for them, *their* center of the world. This ancestral tie depends on Caxcans honoring their Beginning, like a child honors their mother.

Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) claimed national ownership of Tlachialoyantepec officially in 2002 for the development of a tourist archaeological designation. Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia named this mountain and archaeological project in Spanish, Cerro de las Ventanas, or Mountain with Windows. Anyone walking a few miles from the face of Tlachialoyantepec can observe a cliff house

[120] Juan Ramon Rodriguez Torres, "El Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas y sus Terrazas Prehispanicas," (Master Thesis, Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas, 2008), 20-22. Hereafter cited Rodriguez, "Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas," pg.
[121] Phone conversation with Petra Bautista Gallegos by Daisy Ocampo, December 12, 2017. Born in a community in the region named Tabasco, her family moved to the neighboring community of Contitlan and married into the community of El Remolino in her early 20s.

in the upper right quadrant of the mountain. The cliff house better known as Las Ventanas, or the windows, eventually drew archaeological attention. Recorded archaeological studies began in 1889 with Czech anthropologist Ales Hrdlicka, Norwegian ethnographer Carl Lumhotlz in 1902, American anthropologists Isabel Kelley in 1948 followed by Phil Weigand and Elizabeth Mozzillo in the 1980s.[122] Coincidentally, Isabel Kelley, trained anthropologists by Alfred Kroeber, worked with both Chemehuevi and Caxcans people to detail their sacred geographies. Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia archaeologists focused less on understanding material culture as community and spiritual expressions and instead centered a colonial narrative of this cliff house feature on the mountain. In this narrative, Caxcans utilized the cliff house as an onlooking point to attack the Spanish during the Mixton War where numerous barbaric massacres took place. This is important because historical narratives of massacres have traditionally been used as a tool to curate notions of an Indian extinct past. Terminal narratives contributed to the historic extermination of Indian people in writings. Historical archaeologist, Michael V. Wilcox, defined terminal narratives as:

> historical accounts of demographic collapse, missionization, military conquest, and acculturation have long dominated contact period studies and colonial archaeologists and contributed to the enduring mythology of the perpetually vanishing primitive, and affirmed a sense of disunity, rupture,

[122] Nicolas Caretta, "Proyecto Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas, Municipio de Juchipila, Zacatecas," *Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia-Zacatecas* (2002) and Nicolas Caretta, "La Zona Arqueológica de cerro de Las Ventanas, Poblado del Remolino, Municipio de Juchipila, Zacatecas. Proyecto de investigacion arqueológica. Informe de la prospección arqueológica, poligonal de protección, mapeo, diagnóstico y propuesta para la temporada 2003," *Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia-Zacatecas* (2003).

> and alienation between contemporary Indigenous peoples and the material remains of their ancestors.[123]

Caz' Ahmo people claim a different significance to this mountain. Caxcans, or Caz' Ahmo, come to Tlachialoyantepec as a place of healing and connection to their homeland. Caxcans believe they were birthed from Tlachialoyantepec. Multiple Indigenous accounts exists for this place.

2.1 Barbed wire around El Cerro de las Ventanas. Photo courtesy of author.

Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia persists on centering the Mixton Battle as the official narrative of Tlachialoyantepec despite the myriad of cultural significances by the Caxcan. Caxcan pray to this mountain like their ancestors did since time immemorial. Their traditions rely on the physical and spiritual integrity of this

[123] Michael V. Wilcox, "Indigenous Archaeology and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680: Social Mobility and Boundary Maintenance in Colonial Contexts" in *Rethinking Colonial Pasts Through Archaeology* eds. Neal Ferris, Rodney Harrison, Michael Wilcox (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 151.

mountain. Caxcans warned Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) of the dangers that can come about when tourist visit concentrated areas of power on Tlachialoyantepec. Caxcans fear specific areas of power on Tlachialoyantepec, such as a notable cave where evil spirits live. Community protocols exist to address visiting these places.[124] For hundreds of years the community has assigned different people to the caretaking and management of the mountain. Unlike political sovereignty, Caxcan feel their sovereignty is invested in maintaining a relationship with their sacred places, including rites on the mountain. Tired of being studied and misrepresented, the Caxcan Council of Indians came together in 1924 to respond to this historical and archaeological extermination.

With the help of a Caxcan educator and journalist, Juan Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza, the Council published a community document and response critiquing academics' use of Western ways of thinking to distort indigenous realities of Caxcan lives, cultures, and histories. These distortions have had long-term impacts for Caxcans fighting for access to resources to protect their sacred sites. The Caxcan Council argued "these historical lies have had, for us, consequences far more devastating than the conquest itself."[125] Council added, "the revitalization of our people and our fight for our homeland are the biggest revisions to our history."[126] In the spirit of this Council, this academic work challenges the assumption that the Mexican state owns this mountain and

[124] Oral Interview of Guadalupe Rodriguez Rodriguez, (AKA Pichilingue Sr.) by Daisy Ocampo, 2008, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Pichilingue Sr. Interview, 2008.
[125] Consejo de los Caxcanes de Juchipila, Zacatecas and Juana Belen de Mendoza ed., "Por la Tierra y Por la Raza" (Mexico D.F.: Consejo Primera Edición, 1924), 60. Hereafter cited Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," pg.
[126] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 82.

its historical narrative and, instead, asserts that indigenous people have a knowledge system, voice, agency and power in the matter. Caxcan elder Maria del Refugio Rodriguez Rodriguez, also known as Doña Cuca, argued, "if you want to understand the story of why we are devasted by this tourist project then you need to understand that these lands, this mountain belonged to me, to my mother and to her mother. We inherit a section for our foods, and we grow carefully. We come from nowhere else, this is where we belong. To understand that you need to understand our stories."[127]

During one of the several oral histories with community members, elder Petra Baustista Gallegos gifted a young woman a metate and mano.[128] Petra explained that she stopped using it when her husband passed away years ago. When she buried her husband, she buried her metate in her patio, and with it many memories. Her husband, Refugio Ocampo Bautista, passed away of skin cancer after a high exposure to pesticides while working as part of the Bracero Program.[129] During this time (1942-1964) the men left the women to raise their children for months at a time. When Caxcan braceros returned from the United States, they brought with them blenders, nail polish and pants from Montgomery Ward's Department Store. Many braceros introduced this indigenous town to ideas of progress, the lure of "el norte" and a more "civilized" life. Petra recounted,

[127] Oral Interview of Refugio Rodriguez Rodriguez, (AKA Doña Cuca) by Daisy Ocampo, September 13, 2016, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[128] A metate is a grinding stone often used to grind *nixtamal*, or lime treated maize, for tortillas and other plant foods. The mano is the hand tool.
[129] The Bracero Program was a bilateral agreement that began in 1942, lasted throughout World War II, and ended in 1964. The underlying rationale for the program involved a food shortage in the U.S. due to its participation in the war. Growing concerns led farmers to press the federal government to ask their Mexican neighbor for men to provide temporary work in agricultural fields. Over two million male able bodies participated and worked fields in the U.S. on short-term contracts and returned to Mexico upon completion.

> I never want to go to the United States. The U.S. took my kids. They U.S. took my husband. The United States took my opportunity to meet my grandchildren. The U.S. took everything. I buried this metate because I learned to reject it. I learned to deny it and so I hid it, I buried it. Without my husband, it didn't have value anymore.[130]

She shared many of the memories the metate bought, especially those before the Bracero Program. She remembered her mother making traditional clothes, washing in the river, making stacks of tortillas on the metate every morning and taking it to her husband who worked the fields on a *cuamil,* a traditional land parcel used for agriculture on Tlachialoyantepec.[131] Petra, and many women of her generation, feel these traditional ways and intimate connections to the land are being forgotten. During a visit, Petra asked for help and placed a bucket of water on the soil in a corner of her home's patio. Relatives assisted her as she got on her knees and began kneading the hardened soil into mud. After some time, the feet of a metate uncovered and Petra shared that this metate belonged to her husband's great grandmother, dating it back to the 1850s. She then gifted this metate and mano to a young woman who held a special place in her heart.

For Caxcan people, material objects living through the spirit bestowed during Creation. The metate given to this young woman as a gift was something Petra wanted to forget, something that she learned to feel ashamed about. This young woman took interest in her life and Petra enjoyed their conversations. In this spirit, Petra shared her heart was happy and she knew this metate was happy too because these talks bought it back to life. When Petra gave the young woman her metate, she cautioned to never put it

[130] Oral interview of Petra Bautista Gallegos by Daisy Ocampo, September 16, 2015, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited Petra Interview, September 16, 2015.
[131] Petra Interview, September 16, 2015.

on display in a museum like the archaeologists do and the way she decided to ensure this would never happen was by teaching her how to use it, "if not it won't mean anything to you, you have to use it," she cautioned.[132]

After an ardent fourteen hours of work to gather the wood, start the fire, gather the purple corn, ungrain them, soak them, cook them, clean the metate of residual dirt, then came the most difficult part of the process: kneading the corn on the metate. After completing the entire process, the young woman made a stack of beautiful purple tortillas. Caxcans regard tortillas as medicine foods with spirit and of spirit. A lot of medicinal food and spiritual traditions have been lost with colonization. Much like the Chemehuevi (and a large number of tribes), the Caxcan communities have not survived all the colonial assaults intact, but the people survived and so did their veneration of sacred places as this relationship to places was fundamental to their resilience and sense of cultural selves. And like the dormant metate, this chapter uncovers that indigenous history and brings it back to life. This chapter provides a historical account of the spiritual relationship Caxcan people have with Tlachialoyantepec. More importantly, this research looks to define and re-claim a voice within Native history, resilience over loss, and survival utilizing indigenous epistemologies to reconstruct Native approaches to knowledge and healing through what matters most, sacred places.

Creation Story

The Caz' Ahmo (the Mountain People) as the Caxcan call themselves, mark Tlachialoyantepec as the central sacred mountain of their homeland. For local people,

[132] Ibid.

Caz' Ahmo means more than Mountain People, the name itself tells an ancestral story. Caz became the more contemporary spelling for *Cax*, the word to describe this homeland.[133] Ahmo refers to an emptiness in the heart or 'there is none' to describe the heartfelt response of the first people after learning one morning that their surrounding body of water disappeared. The disappearance of the water created the first dry lands, including mountains such as Tlachialoyantepec, that we know today. Therefore, Caz' Ahmo tells the story of how the world came into being.

Caxcan Creation tells of two different time periods, the present and the Beginning, when the world as we know it came into existence. Caxcans refer to this Beginning of time as a kind of in-utero space time. Caxcans believe the planet Earth grew from a cosmic disturbance caused by an arrow shot into a point in space.[134] This point in space shattered and the planet Earth took shape. At the beginning of Caxcan time, water covered the entire Earth without any land in sight. A dark, empty and quiet feeling filled the world. Suddenly, water slowly receded for the first time and the tips of two land masses emerged to the surface. These became known as twin islands named Tlachialoyantepec and Sierra de Morones by the Caxcan community.[135] Caxcans describe these land masses as twin fetuses that emerged from an endless body of water much like an amniotic sac. Different interpretations among Caxcan communities exist today to approximate the extent of water. The Caxcan community of Contitlan, for example, refers to the body of water as a lake in their narration, while Caxcans of El Remolino insist an

[133] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 22.
[134] Ibid, 5.
[135] Community member Federico Bautista shared that when the Spanish invaded, Caxcans lost the traditional word for Sierra de Morones.

ocean covered the Caxcan homelands including the Juchipila Canyons.[136] Since Tlachialoyantepec and Sierra de Morones came from water, Caxcans view water as a sacred element that held these twins like a mother carries her children in her womb. Caxcans describe this time as *Tachiwalisti*, or creation. Caxcans do not believe in a singular Creator, rather the process of things being in motion explains how the world came into being. In this story, the twin mountains become anthropomorphic and gendered. The story narrates how the male and female twins grew un-uniformly. The sister grew strong and healthy, while the brother's health became frail.[137] The sister received better blood flow and more nutrients leaving her brother struggling and debilitated. While the sister grew bountifully and giving, her brother grew resentful and bitter. This duality and rivalry framed life on Earth for the Caxcan and introduced the concept of balance through storied landscapes. Tlachialoyantepec is the mountain that represents the sister, the one that gave life to the first people and the brother is represented by what is now the Sierra de Morones.

The mountainous and rocky island of Tlachialoyantepec became the place where the People were born, lived and returned to after death. The ground broke open from the Tlachialoyantepec island and the People emerged from an underground *nautilostot* (tunnel). When asked where this tunnel leads people to, different answers emerged. "Well this tunnel is our portal to everything that matters to us. It is the center of our cosmology. This is where everything began for us and it is our final resting area. Our *ilamazi*

[136] Oral interview with Joel Rodriguez by Daisy Ocampo, November 2017, Contitlan, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited Joel Rodriguez Interview, November 2017.
[137] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

(ancestors/ grandmothers) return here when our time is up," said Ruben Ruvalcaba.[138] Caxcans traditionally cremated their relatives on this mountain because they believe people's spirits return back to this place. For one year, the family and community mourn the death of a relative and end with a celebration where ashes are spread throughout Tlachialoyantepec. Gil Gonzalez D'Avila, a spanish conquistador, wrote a forty-page war memoir that included observations of Caxcan funerary practices: "their cult involves smudging themselves in black ashes from their dead. They do this for a while and before washing away their bodies, they celebrate with friends and family. They do not bury their dead; they cremate them and keep their belongings and ashes in a small pouch for this year. [When the year is up] the remaining ashes are thrown into the wind."[139]

Although the introduction of Catholicism shifted funerary practices to a burial at a cemetery, people today return to the cremation tradition followed by the spread of ashes across Tlachialoyantepec. The caretaking of both human remains and ashes commands careful practices, prayer, and mourning process. This is done so that the dead may leave in a healthy way and not stick around with the living. The community and immediate family burn the belongings of the deceased after a year so that their spirit no longer lingers among the living. Caxcan deceased then belong to the land where they came from. The ashes must be spread at this mountain so that their souls may return safely back home in their afterlife. Disruption to their sacred mountain will disrupt their journey into the Spirit World. Various elders recounted that they wished archaeologists and the

[138] Oral interview with Ruben Ruvalcaba by Daisy Ocampo, November 2015, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited Ruben Ruvalcaba Interview, November 2015.
[139] Gil Gonzalez D'Avila, *Guerra de los Chichimecas*, "Extractos y Noticias MS," 16th century, National Library of France, Paris, 25. Hereafter cited D'Avila, Guerra de los Chichimecas, pg.

Mexican state would stop their tourist project as it would negatively affect their spiritual beliefs. "This is not just about a random mountain with a few relics, this is about the wellbeing of our ancestors and our community. We all die, and we all need a resting place and for us, our resting place is that mountain," said Cuca.[140]

The tunnel is considered a birth canal and a way back home for Caxcans. A Caxcan youth, Orfil Ocampo, discussed the importance of the connection between *nautilostot* (tunnels) and *chaneques* (Little People). He shared, "the chaneques are the protectors of the underworld and nature. They created tunnels to come and help us. They are small little people. Very small. They take care of our core, harvest and like us they come from the Earth."[141] The tunnel located on Tlachialoyantepec has historical and cultural significance for the Caxcans. Through this portal, Caxcans can access a different time and place, an ancestral time. Although Caxcans today do not know the exact details of how the first People formed, they do know they waited a long time underground before they surfaced.[142] Doña Cuca added, "maybe we lost certain information along the way…I know a lot was taken from us but maybe that detail doesn't exist. What's important to us is that we not forget this place and that our Father Snake, *zozocat*, and Mother Crow brought us here. We were created deep inside the Earth. The people waited a long time until the water receded, and it was time for us to come up."[143] Caxcans believe they came from an underworld through this tunnel and Tlachialoyantepec became the center of the

[140] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[141] Phone conversation with Orfil Ocampo Bautista by Daisy Ocampo, February 24, 2018; Carolina Sandoval and Juan Campos de Loera, *Cuentos y Leyendas de la Region de Juchipila* (Zacatecas: Instituto Zacatecano de Cultura, 2015), 49.
[142] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[143] Ibid.

world for the Caxcans. When the people came from the mountain, they proceeded to learn how to live in balance with all relatives. Snake and Crow would be instrumental in their learning as people did not understand their purpose quite yet.

The first challenge people learned from involved how to live among their animal relatives. As the Earth slowly formed, tumultuous waters created jagged cliffs and caves. Caxcans wandered the island lost and afraid of the waves that crashed onto the cliffs. Caxcans called on the bird people to help shape the Earth with more land for them to take refuge from dangerous animals. Condor offered to help as he opened his wing span to smoothen the land. Flat land did not provide Caxcans safety. His unsuccessful attempt led Elderly Bat to try to create safety for the Caxcans. "I can help" said the white bearded Bat carrying a cane. The people and the birds spoke the same language at this time. The people thought he looked incredibly frail. That night the bat flew fast and shaped the first valleys, yet they were so deep that the People could not possibly travel them. People told the Bat, "no we want the valleys to be less inclined and for these mountains to provide shelter." Elder Bat responded, "fine I will do it this way" and began shaping the Earth's first canyons, cliffs, mesas and caves. People of El Remolino today believe this is the reason bats look old and fly with quick and abrupt trepidation near cliffs along the water, canyons, and caves. Caxcans believe the Bat People continue to shape the land and create caves and canyons for the People. "This is why bats are near mountainous cliffs and caves. They are still working," said Cuca.[144] Bats, and many other animals, demonstrate the relationship between animals, Indigenous worldmaking, time and how these become

[144] Ibid.

intertwined in Caxcan understandings of the land through storytelling. These stories hold a repository of cultural knowledge that serve as testimonies of their Creation. These spiritual engagements with animals, landscape and a commitment to not forget illustrates the relational nature of Caxcan culture to their land base.

The Caxcan Council documented pieces of their Creation account and noted the larger physique of the People's compared to today. An elder even described them as giants.[145] After people had intercourse, the population on the island grew considerably. The people crowded the island and continued learning of this new world that did not exist in the underworld. Caxcans elders relate, "we learned of water and animals at that time. From the *ilhuicatl* (sky) water fell and we took refuge in our mountains, but we no longer fit in the crevices of the mountain."[146] The People and Animals had less habitable space on the island mountain. At one point the People and the Animals lived in close proximity. The People knew the Animals were relatives, so much they thought they were the same. Since the bird people helped them shape the land, Caxcans believed the animals that travelled the land would also be helpful. This was not the case. Duality extends to understandings of animals. Only land animals such as jaguars, mountain lions, and rattle snakes fought for habitable land. Caxcans did not comprehend this. Caxcans considered the animal people kin yet, they soon learned to fear jaguars and mountain lions. Caxcans learned this one day when a jaguar roamed the land and abruptly ate a small boy who played freely outside. The jaguar ate a *tepechi* (little boy) and fled into the mountains

[145] Pichilingue Sr. Interview, 2008.
[146] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 8.

when Mother Crow screamed for help. Father Snake, Mother Crow, and their children fell into a despair and fear. The People cried and cried.

Father Snake's sadness deepened and realized he had to teach the People to live among Animals, not with Animals. The People were broken hearted as it was the first time, they experienced death. Mother Crow cried uncontrollably in a cave where she hid the rest of her children to keep them safe. Caxcan People no longer used the caves occupied by animals. An elder describes the feeling during that time: "our sadness was as big as the mountains on the island."[147] Father Snake knew survival of the People depended on teaching them respect and reverence for all living things. During a period marked by fierce winds and water that clashed violently against rocks and cliffs, trees violently tore from the ground. Father Snake never once cried over the death of his child and Mother Crow gathered her children to cry for him. These sacred tears (*xayome*) raised the water levels and caused a storm that night. In an effort to release his anger, Father Snake's eye began to glow with thunder. Lightening exhumed out of his eyes and aimed at the mountains to create caves to keep his children safe. Father Snake continued to mourn the death of the child in silence and the lightning he created landed on mountains creating deep caves.[148] Father Snake, the protector, created cave openings (*quiyahuac*) for his children to take refuge. That night, he moved a bolder to cover the cave opening to prevent the People, especially the children, from getting eaten by felines like jaguars and mountain lions. The People slept safely in the covered cave for the first

[147] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 9.
[148] Ibid.

time. The next morning the People woke up and rejoiced to find the animals did not eat them and found safety. The caves became a sacred place for Caxcans. Approximately six caves can be found on Tlachialoyantepec.[149] Caves remind Caxcans of their small brother eaten by the jaguar and also the love shown by Mother Crow and Father Snake. Everyone felt gratitude and humility.

Xuchitl Dance

After sleeping through the night in the cave, the People rejoiced in gratitude for Life. Mother Crow, still mourning the loss of her son, decided to bring *cacalotxuchil* flowers to zozocat for showing the People how to stay safe. She felt relief that she would no longer need to worry about her children getting eaten. To this day, this flower grows bountiful in the region. Caxcans use cacalotxuchil for prayer and offering to show gratitude for life. In one of these caves found on Tlachialoyantepec, the People placed many cacalotxuchil petals on the floor and created a flower bed in the cave so that their Mother Crow could lay down and rest.[150] Everyone noticed that from the rugs of flower petals, the tepechi emerged from the flower bed located inside the cave. The small child that earlier had been eaten by the jaguar resurrected and rejoiced to be back with his family. His resurrection took place in this cave and his rebirth signaled the cacalotxuchil as sacred. The people considered this cave a portal between their world and that of the afterlife.

[149] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[150] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 9.

After that point, the Caxcans named the tepechi *Xochipilli,* or Flower Prince. Xochipilli confirmed that gods and spirits live inside the mountain and the resting place is here.[151] History for Caxcan people is the inscribed into the land. Earth is spirits and revered as alive. The people named this cave *Xochipillan* in honor of the gods residing in Tlachialoyantepec and for allowing Xochipilli to live. Xochipilli began as a human young boy and after his resurrection became the god of flowers, dance, fertility, and agriculture. Local historian, Maria de La Luz Ruvalcaba Limon, shared Xochipilli's role in the interconnected of all living things:

> so that rain and moisture perform their fertilizing act, that gives impulse to the growing of vegetation, the emergence of flowers and fruits, which finally entail the abundance of animals and plants and the simultaneous development of human life, necessarily must exist one basic element, universal and eternal, which is without doubt is the earth, (*Tlalticpatl*) where the man inhabit surrounded by the living beings, where makes his domestic activities and rituals. It is in this place where he observes and visualize the phenomena of nature and participates in the action of the gods.[152]

All things begin and end with the story of Xochipilli. Caxcans revere Xochipilli through dance. Caxcans attribute Xochipilli to the impregnation of the Earth to bring good harvest, sustenance, and community wellbeing. All things have a life cycle which Xochipilli throws into motion. The Earth is alive with spirit, story, and prayer. Today, the town Juchipila draws from this place-name and its memory, which the people keep alive through an ancestral dance. The only way the People could express gratitude was through dance, offering, and remembering.

[151] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[152] Maria de la Luz Ruvalcaba Limon, *El Xuchitl: Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de Juchipila y Zacatecas* (Zacatecas: Primera Edición, 2016), 22. Hereafter cited Ruvalcaba, *El Xuchitl*, pg.

This cave became a place of power where ancestors interceded in human affairs. In honor of this cave and the power that resides there, Caxcans decided to dance in gratitude for the return of the young Xochipilli. This dance became known as the Xuchitl Dance. The Flower Dance involves gathering cacalotxuchil flowers which grow abundantly in the Juchipila region. Before gathering flowers, people today first place their intentions, needs, worries, and gratitude into the plumeria tree. Young women wear crowns intricately woven from these cacalotxuchil flowers. They wear these proudly. Before any discussions of a tourist development project, communities of Juchipila came from afar to meet at this cave and begin the ceremonial dance.

First, community members prepare *huetime* (offerings) which include wax candles, ribbons, soda, cake and a local corn fermented drink called *tesguino*. Elders first ceremonially bless the People and space with *copal* (sacred tree resin) to signal a spiritual activation. The eldest man and woman in attendance initiates the dance before integrating youth. Ruvalcaba comments regarding its courtship and elder blessing: "the fact that eldest brother and eldest sister initiates the dance, and the transfer of the tlapaleoliztle to a young person of the opposite sex, and this in turn to a person of its choice, symbolizes the approval of adults to initiate the search ritual to find couple and creation of specie."[153]

A red cloth, called *tlapaleoliztle*, centers the dance. Each person grabs the cloth, dances in a simple two step motion waving the tlapaleoliztle right and left with their hands. Dancers wave the tlapaleoliztle in the two-step zigzag manner to represent the water. The cloth waves at the top of the person's head to honor the celestial world,

[153] Ruvalcaba, *El Xuchitl*, 39.

Mother Crow, and to plead protection from Xochipilli. "People ask a lot for their harvest. Our region is still the desert and a drought can really wipe us, so it never goes without a prayer from Xochipilli that we may have rain and fertile harvest," said the Dance Keeper Moctezuma Meza.[154] The people waved the cloth over their heads and passed alternatively to a person of the opposite sex to honor the connection between men and women. The passing of the cloth stimulates the spiritual communion. This ceremonial dance became a meeting place for people to gather, court people of interest, and eventually procreate and populate the Earth. "We dance for Life but also because we have a responsibility to the old gods, who are responsible for governing the universe they created, where the man has a fundamental task, the punctual practice of the complex ceremonial that promotes the continuity of life," adds Ruvalcaba.[155]

In the past, Caxcans conducted this dance on Tlachialoyantepec, but today Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia's ownership of this mountain for tourist development has forced people to move the dance to the plaza in the town of Juchipila. People from the entire Caxcan region attend this very important dance, including El Remolino. Although people today are not physically at the mountain, their dances, prayers, and offerings are there in spirit. The Xuchitl Dance offers Caxcan people an opportunity to experience a renewal of themselves, an assertion of who they are, and where they belong. The People honor their Creation by dancing with these flowers.

> Every time the cacalotxuchil blooms, I'm reminded that this is the season when the first cave was built for us after Xochipilli was eaten and then

[154] Oral interview with Moctezuma (AKA Don Chuma) Meza Solano by Daisy Ocampo, June 5, 2018, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited Moctezuma Meza Interview, June 5, 2018.
[155] Ruvalcaba, *El Xuchitl*, 24.

> resurrected, and I'm touched by the tenderness of our Mother Crow and strength of Father Snake who protected us. When these flowers bloom, we dance because our stories are of love and they created this cave, mountain, flower and dance to remind us of that. We remain grateful.[156]

The dance, the gathering of the flowers, and the community coming together offers a physical and communal prayer recognizing and thanking Creator for flowers, traditions, prayers, power, harvest, and their homelands. Although this dance no longer takes place on the mountain, two dance keepers Alfonso Diosdado Reyes and Moctezuma Meza Solano discuss the importance of punctuality. Alfonso Diosdado Reyes, the Mayordormo (Mayor), states, "we are proud of our so-called pagan religion. This dance was danced during the Summer Solstice yet when the Catholics came it was adopted under the Gregorian Calendar."[157] This dance extends past the performance. Its complex nature engages with a ritual calendar that implies an understanding of "the astronomic knowledge, identify the climatological phenomena, the role of agrarian wisdom and dispose of a symbolic system which expresses this system of analogies, and articulates the correspondence between imagination and the nature.[158] Every year, since Time Immemorial, people have kept this ceremonial dance to honor the sacred landscape, the deities, which keep life in motion, and to honor the Creation.

[156] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 14.
[157] Oral interview to Alfonso Diosdado Reyes by Daisy Ocampo, October 10, 2017, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited Diosdado Interview, October 10, 2017.
[158] Ruvalcaba, *El Xuchitl*, 24.

2.2 Cacalotxuchil blooms in Juchipila Canyon. Photo courtesy of author.

Caxcans see this dance as a responsibility to demonstrate their love and commitment to steward the land. After Caxcans learned the dance they also acquired a certain kind of maturity towards learning the nuances of their homeland. They learned of the stars, caves, gathering of foods, and hunting. Father Snake continued to teach the people how to make bows and arrows, hallowing caves, making special ovens to cook, creating clothing as well as hunting and gathering. They paid close attention and did

everything with intention. Caxcans learned of the fire when a piece of a star shattered and landed on the island. An elderly woman gathered the fire and did not share it among the people. Different animals such as the Frog and Turtle attempted to steal the fire, but one leaped too loudly and alerted the woman of an intrusion while the Turtle moved too heavy and slow. The Hummingbird volunteered to take the fire and she did. She took the fire meanwhile the woman slept and burned her beak which eventually became red. Caxcans received fire this way and learned to stay warm in their cave homes. Since Time Immemorial, Caxcan people have commemorated this Beginning by grabbing a rock from the highest area of Tlachialoyantepec to honor the Sun and a rock from the lake to honor the Water. Caxcans place these two rocks in the cave where Xochipilli resurrected. This cave has been a source of power for hundreds of years and across many generations. Cuca shares, "we do these things (place rocks) and dedicate this dance so that we may never forget and so that everyone that comes after may remember. This cave and all its content is for us the origin of life."[159] Historian Kurt Russo's dissertation research focused on the Chemehuevi's relationship with Old Woman Mountain and provides striking parallels between the Old Woman Mountain and Tlachialoyantepec. He stated,

> by speaking to these landscapes and approaching their resident power(s) is a ritualistically susceptible state, the supplicant is engaged in something much more than a rite of passage. It is a practice that, in the context of the indigenous social imaginary, provides for the integration and healing of the mind, self, song, spirit and life, and 'renders people whole, adult healthy, safe, successful in skills of living and lucky.'[160]

[159] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[160] Kurt William Russo, "Healing Landscapes: an Historical Perspective" (dissertation: University of California, Riverside, 2008), 131-132. Hereafter cited Russo, "Healing Landscapes," pg.

For indigenous people, the landscape is alive and an agent in human affairs. The wellbeing of place and spirits living there are critical to community wellbeing.

2.3 Hermano Mayor Moctezuma Meza Solano opening the Xuchitl Dance with the *tlapaleoliztle*. Photo courtesy of imagenzac.com.mx.

The cacalotxuchil flower was the sign of life given to Caxcans by Xochipilli who encountered different spirits inside Tlachialoyantepec. Today, cultural material such as pillowcases, tablecloths, traditional shirts, and rock art contain flowers as a common motif. Caxcans identify their own people through cross-stitched skirts and shirts in public. Caxcans recognize community members this way to express their history through material culture sacred to them. Cross stitching allows people to connect spiritually to their god Xochipilli and set intentions for the land, harvest, wellbeing and personal needs.

Diné scholar Jennifer Denetdale stressed the importance of oral traditional to transmit these cultural traditions rooted in places and prayer. She argued, "placing at the center of their inquiries oral traditions as vehicles for understanding the past, Native scholars and their allies are revising the definition of oral traditional and history, demonstrating how they remain integral to how tribal people see themselves, the past, and their future."[161]

In addition to oral tradition, the field of history still widely defines itself as a study of the past while for Native people history is a practice of the past. Weaving, cross stitching, adobe homes, caves, and dancing reveal how creative expressions in material culture imprint Creation Narratives, places, and spiritual entities residing there into these practice of the past into the present. Native peoples regard a sacred dance as an indigenous historical document. Caxcans woven cloths presents an historical narrative of significance. History is central to Caxcan people, past and present. Caxcans use the Xuchitl Dance as an act of bringing the past into life today, a re-enactment of part of their Creation. Dance Keeper and Caxcan elder Moctezuma reminds everyone that "as Native people our community is based on memory."[162] This Flower Dance recalls these ancient stories of places and the landscape to guide community morale and allow them to connect to the past through stitching, song, and dancing. Caxcans believe the act of creating is transformative, bringing the past into the present. A woman who makes a traditional shirt weaves her intentions and prayers into her shirt. Her thoughts, intentions, and prayer become extensions of the shirt, skirt, or pottery. Caxcans do not exact when this Creation

[161] Jennifer Nez Denetdale, *Reclaiming Dine History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita*, (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 2007), 38.
[162] Moctezuma Meza Interview, June 5, 2018.

happened, nor do people break their heads to date these stories rather Caxcan people care about where these events took place. Place holds primacy in the unraveling of Creation Narratives. This speaks to the resilience of Caxcan people who draw their spiritual tenacity from sacred places and power found there.

First Migration

After the people rejoiced and danced on the island mountain, Creator noted the island became too small and populated for all the people and animals. In her oral histories with the Council of Caxcan Indians, Juana Belen Gutierrez Mendoza recounts "during our early days, we were big people. Our bodies were known to be very big."[163] In addition, Xochipilli became known as a god of maturity to mark transitions from childhood and adulthood. The people had sex and populated the island. Crushing waves from the lake intensified the need for more space. People multiplied and needed shelter to stay safe. The desperation the People felt began many quarrels. Father Snake's brother *Teponahua* (god of the night) had the gift to create deep caves.

Soon Teponahua had a large following. Teponahua asked for tribute for his labor to create caves used as homes. Tribute included fruits and other foods. Teponahua did not need all this food. His greed continued as he demanded loyalty and royalty from his followers. Eventually this drove the people to fight. According to the Caxcan Council of 1923, he brainwashed the People and led them to believe that if they erected a tall temple with rocks the people could reach the Sky world and never have to work again.[164] Some

[163] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 8.
[164] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 19.

people grew confused about who to follow. Lured by his offer, many followed Teponahua and left their Mother Crow. After learning that the People no longer honored their mother, Father Snake knew he needed to start over and save only those who followed their mother and honored Xochipilli. Father Snake only took the children who remained connected to their mother into the sacred cave where Xochipilli resurrected and covered it with a large rock where they all waited.

Crashing waves and rising waters eventually led the first flood on Earth. The next morning when the sun rose, the People exited the cave and noticed the water from the large lake receded. The lake disappeared, and Caxcans harnessed themselves in their lesson from Father Snake to be grateful people and tied to the traditions learned earlier. The children who disowned their mother and no longer followed their god Xochipilli perished in this flood. According to elders, the Caxcan brothers and sisters who died in the flood are the very large cactuses that reach to the sky. Community members believe they are the relatives who mistakenly followed Teponahua and attempted to build a tall temple towards the sky. Large cactuses have arms facing the sky for this reason. Cactuses can be observed today in the Juchipila Canyons. For Caxcans the landscape lives through stories, the spirit of people, and events today. Caxcans refer to cactus as relatives and remembered fondly as their first brothers and sisters.

When the water receded, confusion grew among the surviving People. The People missed their lake. They felt disoriented and deeply lost. The lake served to orient their sense of habitable land and their place on Earth. Father Snake saved his children to be the chosen people to populate the Earth. With the receded water, land became abundant and

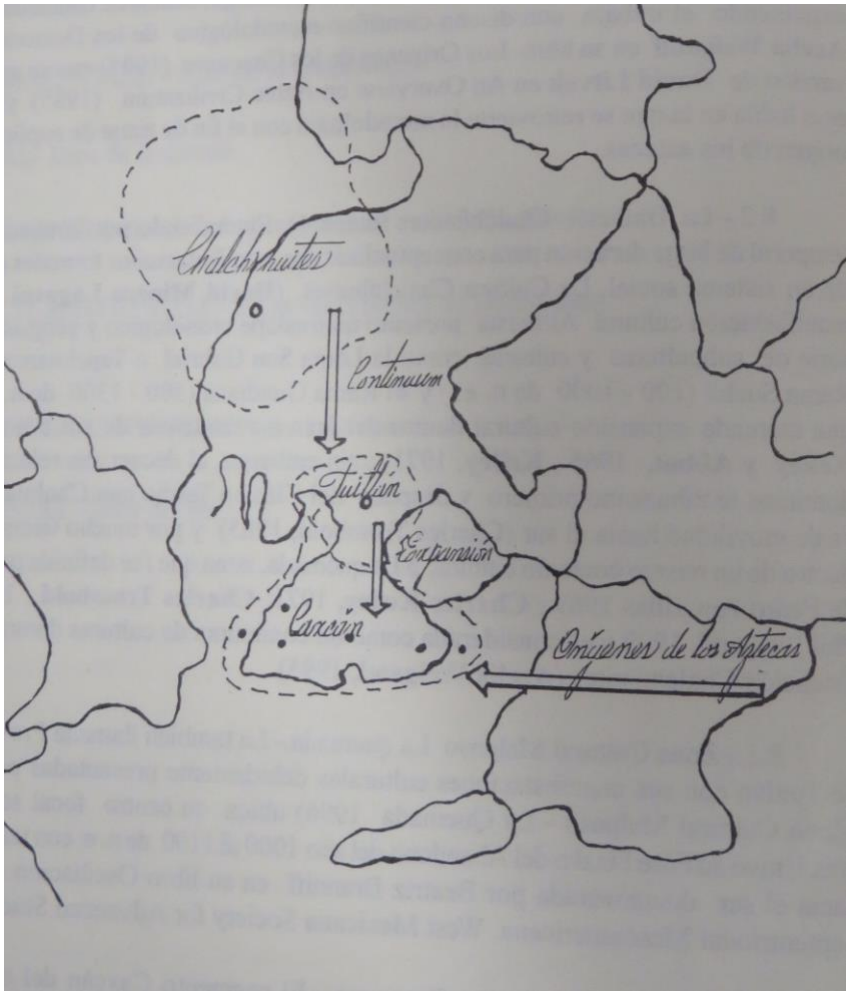
people would no longer be cramped. However, the People oriented their sense of place by the lake that surrounded them. They no longer recognized Tlachialoyantepec. New valleys, deserts, canyons and lands became visible. Lost, confused and in search of their lake, the people scattered like birds migrating the land to find their lake or special body of water. The people disbanded creating new tribal communities throughout the Earth. Some went south into what is today Mexico City and beyond into the tip of the continent. In the surrounding lands, new neighbors and relatives such as the Wiraritari, Zacatecos, Purepecha, Na' ayeri, Tecuexes and Guachichiles formed.

Ethnohistorian and Caxcan linguist José Ignacio Davila Garibi takes a genealogical approach to the Caxcan language to explore its relationship with the Caxcan migration story. Further south, the Mexicas (Aztecs) eventually settled near Lake Texcoco in what is now Mexico City. Garibi made significant distinctions between the Caxcan language and the classical Nahuatl language. He determined the Caxcan language is much older than the Nahuatl spoken by the Mexica/ Aztecs.[165] Early Spanish conquistadores noted that the Caxcan language was nahuatl yet "less refined" indicating Mexica nahuatl has a relationship and trajectory from Caxcan language. Caxcan community from El Remolino today coincide with linguist Garibi that these two languages are mutually intelligible languages and do share a genealogy. Caxcan community members draw from their Creation's migration story to explain this parentage through a sacred geography. Caxcan informants from Garibi's linguist research offered another etymology to the word Caxcan. "We used to be called caxani which meant

[165] Dávila Garibi and José Ignacio Paulino, *Los Cazcanes* (México: Editorial Cultura, 1950), 24.

'loosen ties' to describe the different bands broke off in search of their sacred waters."[166] They eventually populated the entire Earth. In 2008, medicine man, Pichilingue, stated "these are all my relatives. We are cousins, once, a long time ago, we were all the same," referencing this migration story in the Creation Narrative. [167] If one maps the migration, Caxcans believe other bands of people went northward such as Caxcan relatives, the Wiraritari (Huichol) and Na'ayeri (Cora) who settled near Lake Cajijitlan and Lake Chapala. Caxcan hold both of their homelands to be sacred and connected to Tlachialoyantepec. Further north, the Yaqui settled around the Hiak Vatwe, or the Yaqui River. They attribute their Creation to their water source. From the original large body of water became rivers and lakes of the Earth. Personifying Creator, Cuca said, "let the people populate this Earth and with them life."[168] Different gods followed the People in all the different directions and established their corresponding sacred places. Gods have the responsibility of health, beauty, and consciousness into this world and maintaining these sacred duties. In his book *Los Caxcanes: Reporte Previo y Parcial de su Magnificia*, regional scholar David Legaspi mapped the migration from the Chalchihuite perspective. What Legaspi coincide with other Caxcan elders is that the origin of many societies, like the Aztec came from Caxcan homelands.[169]

[166] Jose Ignacio Davila Garibi, *Cazcanos y Tochos: Algunas Observaciones Acerca de estas Tribus y su Idioma* (Guadalajara: Instituto Jaliscience de Antropologia e Historia, 1991), 204.
[167] Pichilingue Sr. Interview, 2008.
[168] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[169] David Salomon Minero Lagaspi, *Los Caxcanes: Reporte Previo y Parcial de su Magnificia* (Zacatecas: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografia y Estadistica, 1997).



2.4 Expansion and migration of Caxcan Nations. Photo from David Salomon Minero Legaspi, *Zacatecas en la Prehistoria III, Los Caxcanes*.

As for the Caxcan, they did not go in search of their old lake. The Caxcans did not go anywhere. They stayed on their ancestral lands, on Tlachialoyantepec. After the flood, water receded, and the originals lands expanded when the lake dried up. What had been an island mountain became a compilation of mesas, deserts, and large mountain chains. After the water receded, the island turned into a mountain, Tlachialoyantepec. In other words, the island was truly the tip of the mountain that Caxcans hold sacred. According to Caxcan elders, Tlachialoyantepec was the first sacred mountain. The people who

disbanded and populated the lands went to build their own sacred centers. These remain significant indigenous places as they are in connection and conversation with Tlachialoyantepec. Unlike Mamapukaib (Old Woman Mountain), Tlachialoyantepec would be the equivalent to Mount Charleston. Yet each place, like Mamapukaib, is incredibly important in its own right. All the mountains communicate and are related to each other via creation and the net worth of power between them. It is believed that at this time of origin, the water represented the first water, the woman's amniotic fluid and that Tlachialoyantepec was the *zecuizti* (twin), which was strong and healthy while the other twin was down under the lake but later revealed to be the Sierra Madre.[170]

Although the ancient lake no longer exists, Caxcans regard their springs as sacred, because Caxcan believe the same water from the lake are in the springs. These are Caxcans' ancestral waters and these are the first lands made from the site of the lake. When asked how Caxcans knew these were the same ancestral lands before the flood, elders state, "we lived here; we can tell by the stars above. They were all in the same place because we never moved. We remember."[171] Father Snake taught his children of a star that shines bright and never moves. This celestial marker oriented Caxcans and at once they were home and did not need to go in search of their home elsewhere. Many significant places, such as caves, on Tlachialoyantepec as well as in the region draw their power from these stories. They became alive through story and shaped community knowledge of the landscape. The migration narrative shaped the name of Caz' Ahmo

[170] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[171] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 9.

people, which literally translated to People with No Lake. Elders also translates it as Mountain People. The name Caz' Ahmo can only be explained through an understanding of the Creation Narrative.

Land as Medicine (Pacti)

Creator's first imprinted the Earth with twin mountains, Tlachialoyantepec and Sierra de Morones and provided the people with ways to heal themselves through *pacti*, or medicine power. This spiritual power weaves into the landscape and can only be accessed through people who have gifts. Southern Paiute, or Chemehuevi people, also orient themselves by their theory of power, or puha, which is at once cultural, spiritual and medicinal.[172] Both pacti and puha originated at the time of creation for Caxcans and Chemehuevis respectively. Trafzer described puha as a web of power that "spiraled, like some spider webs into a cone-like shape with a broad opening at top and narrowing to the bottom" and adds, "invisible spider webs and spirals encircled the Earth, but they also concentrated power in certain places on earth."[173] These tie the mountains together. The concentration of power in select areas paves the way storied landscapes, narratives that teach about this power. located in certain areas. Caxcan, Chemehuevi and other tribal communities regard the land in terms of its sacred geographies. In the case of Caxcans and Chemehuevi, Tlachialoyantepec (Cerro del las Ventanas) and Nivaganti (Mt. Charleston) are the center of this web of power and serves as a kind of cultural-spiritual orientation. This sovereignty glues tribal communities.

[172] Clifford E. Trafzer and Matthew Hanks Leivas, *Where Puha Sits: Salt Songs, Power, and the Oasis of Mara* (Riverside: Rupert Costo Endowment, 2018), 4. Hereafter cited Trafzer and Leivas, *Where Puha Sits*, pg.
[173] Trafzer and Leivas, *Where Puha Sits*, 4-5.

Caxcans believe their Creation Narratives informed their community health practices and spiritual beliefs. The town of El Remolino is located between these two significant mountains. Caxcans take great pride living within such proximity with their Creation Mountain and within their traditional homelands. After the water receded, a mountainously corridor with miles of desert, canyons, and mesas became home for Caxcans. Here, the restless earth abundantly provided food, adobe and cave homes, material pottery, and ancient rocks inscribed with community stories. The Caxcan people believe they came from the woman, the Creation Mountain, or Tlachialoyantepec. When asked about her birthplace, Caxcan elder and noted storyteller, Cuca responded, "that mountain right there. That's where we came from. We came from the ground a long time ago and we were brought into this world by this mountain. Our grandparents, they move on, but this mountain endures because it takes care of us, it takes care of us in many ways. We belong to the Earth."[174]

The Caxcan Creation Narrative weaves balance into the fabric of medicine ways and healing. Because the land embodies their Creation, Caxcan believe their Father Snake designated certain places for medicine. One of these locations is Tlachialoyantepec and the medicine derives from the previous twin story. The narrative indicates that one of the siblings in utero received medicine to heal the people. Today, when twins are born in the region, their personalities begin to unravel and reveal. The indigenous community then slowly identifies and seeks the twin who gave of themselves to make the people healthy and bountiful. This sibling with medicine power can usually be identified as more giving

[174] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

because they have a larger source of life, meanwhile the other sibling is protective, limited and cautious. Tlachialoyantepec embodies the female twin, and the male twin, Sierra de Morones. Caxcan people have lost the Caxcan indigenous name for Morones, yet not its significance and associations. Today, people can see a fireball come across the mountain confirming that it is a place of bad medicine. The People identified the twin. The People sought out the bountiful twin for medicinal use, the same way the people seek Tlachialoyantepec for guidance. In other words, the twin with a giving nature is the one gifted with the pacti, or medicine power, to heal. If a community member, especially newborns and elders, are in pain, the patient goes to this twin so they may be bitten in the area where they hurt. This bite sucks the pain and injury from their body. A twin can be of young age when they become biting doctors. Patients provide a variety of gifts and offerings to express gratitude for the doctoring. Some of these gifts include small toys, fruit, surplus crops, Mexican pesos, and candy. When, and if, money is involved it is often a small amount as people have scarce resources. Caxcans believe both the twins have medicine, yet, the identified twin has more than he/she needs and has been brought to life by the Creator to heal the people. Caxcan health care is tied to sacred landscapes.

In *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*, renowned anthropologist Keith Basso explored the importance of landscapes in upholding cultural traditions and identities. “If place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history, it is also a way of constructing social

traditions and, in the process, personal and social identities,"[175] Basso argued. The key here is the *doing*, for "we are, in a sense, the place-worlds we imagine"[176] and in this vein Caxcans have linked their creation narrative to healing traditions rooted in storied landscapes. These medicinal practices rooted in ancestral stories continue hold value to people today. For Caxcans, it is about how you *live* your history thus making history an ongoing practice not something confined to the past. Caxcan stories shape and create worldviews rooted in the landscape. There is an interrelationship between the past, present and future. By continuing this practice, Caxcans not only honor their Creation but also the relatives who went before them. This is one of the many ways that Creator taught Caxcans how to be of the land. The Creator taught them how to be human, to tend to their sicknesses, and their purpose in caretaking of their homeland. Puha relies on community health because both are tied to the health of the land.

Dream Trails of Pichilingue and Cuca

Spirits and pacti, or medicine, still walk the trails of Tlachialoyantepec and its surrounding areas, according to Caxcan elders Pichilingue and Cuca. Caxcan spiritual respect for this mountain as a way of life. Tlachialoyantepec is a place of power and if this power is not respected, Caxcans believe it can make people sick. Since early archaeological investigations in the early 1900s, the Caxcan Council have historically appointed medicine people to guide people who may engage inappropriately with this place. The Caxcan Council appointed Pichilingue appointed to care for Tlachialoyantepec

[175] Keith H. Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language Among the Western Apache* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1996), 7.
[176] Ibid.

and fulfilled this obligation for forty years before Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia designated their own security detail. Pichilingue followed community protocols according to sacred laws inscribed in Caxcan stories such as leaving a prayer or offering before going up. Pichilingue's knowledge rest in how he ties culture, stories, traditions, and the physical landscape; he further expressed how they all come together as the center of life for Caxcans.

Before any recent archaeological involvement, Pichilingue took care of all spiritual matters. He granted permission for people to go up the mountain. Every morning during these forty years, he hiked up the mountain to look for any animals such as snakes and mountain lions. Weather conditions also determined whether he would allow someone to go up. If Pichilingue found loose rocks or boulders after heavy rains, for example, he would not allow people to enter. For decades, he remained the only person in charge of the physical integrity of the mountain but also the historical, cultural and spiritual history of this place. "You can drop me off randomly anywhere you want around our lands and I would find my way back home through the trails. I know where they connect," he shared.[177] In addition to knowing the terrain, Pichilingue acquired his power from Tlachialoyantepec and became a shapeshifter.

Community member Orfil Bautista, recalled a time when he went to Pichilingue to ask if he could go up Tlachialoyantepec. Pichilingue said yes but assured him to not go through one of the back trails.[178] Curious and a defiant teenager at the time, Orfil

[177] Pichilingue Sr. Interview, 2008.
[178] Oral Interview of Orfil Bautista by Daisy Ocampo, July 12, 2017, El Remolino, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Orfil Interview, July 12, 2016.

travelled the trail that Pichilingue prohibited. He wanted to know "what the big deal was?" Along the trail that Pichilingue instructed him not to travel, Orfil heard a big animal roar but could not see the animal. After looking around, a black jaguar suddenly appeared on the trail. Tlachialoyantepec is at the edge of large lush sierra where many animals such as jaguars and mountain lions roam. Orfil shared that his heart almost jumped out of his chest before he began running down the mountain, taking long and risky leaps along rocks. He said, "I was terrified."[179] After running in what felt like eternity, Orfil looked back only to realize he was no longer being chased, the jaguar disappeared. He began to slow down, catch his breath, and walked towards the exit where Pichilingue sits all day.

In the aftermath Orfil behaved calm and composed when he saw Pichilingue at the foot of the mountain. He did not admit that he did wrong in disobeying him by going on the trail instructed not to. Pichilingue asked "how are you doing?" Too embarrassed and ashamed, Orfil responded, "fine, everything was good." Pichilingue insisted, "you sure? Did you see something up there?" Orfil lied and said no. Pichilingue bursted in laughter and told him, "you have a lot to learn."[180] Later, Orfil approached Pichilingue's son about what happened, and his son urged Orfil to be honest with his father about what he saw. His son also chuckled and said, "that jaguar was my dad. When he tells you to not go through a trail, don't go through there. He was teaching you a lesson. He knows more than what we can understand, he has visions that guide him, he dreams a lot at

[179] Orfil Interview, July 12, 2016.
[180] Ibid.

night."[181] Orfil's encounter displays the powerful role Tlachialoyantepec has in the community as a place of power. It is especially the caves that illicit strong power for Pichilingue.

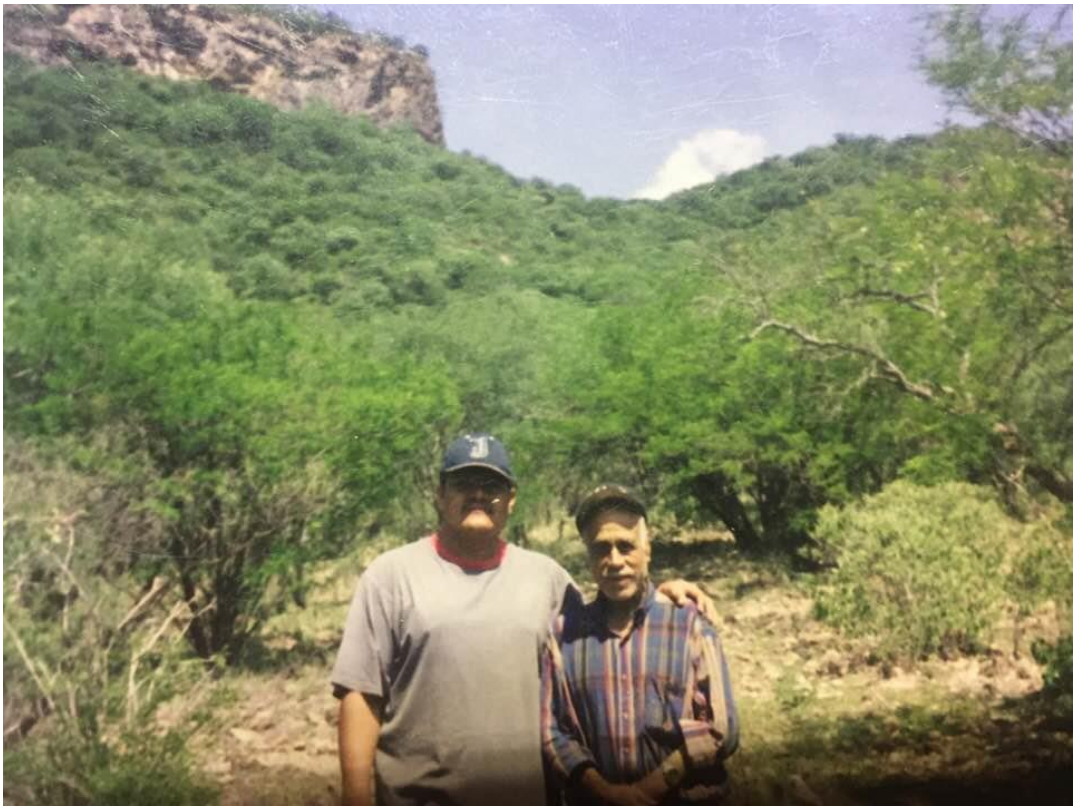
Tlachialoyantepec contains many places of power, many of which are caves. Caves serve as a medium for prayer, a connection to the ancestors. Different caves have different stories and powers associated with them. Caxcan believe there is a lot of power associated with places, and so caution, is given to foreign people who go up the mountain. Caxcans do not speak much about the caves and what power resides there. The only publicly known cave is where a goat, a bad spirit, was spotted, according to Cuca.[182] Community members make this public so that people stay away and avoid sickness. Community members adhered to the instructions of Pichilingue when he was alive. Pichilingue is very important, because he was the last traditional caretaker of Tlachialoyantepec before Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia took over. Caxcans believe that the spiritual world centers on this mountain but in a different dimension- a different kind of time and space. If people do not learn of these powers, such as energy and space time, then they can get trapped in these caves. Various incidents have been woven into stories and serve as reinforcement for protocol. People come to these caves, which act as portals to be able to communicate with their ancestors, yet there are certain caves that should only be used by certain people. These places of prayer and power should only be accessed by medicine people.

[181] Orfil Interview, July 12, 2016.
[182] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

Pichilingue generously shared the story of his first vision which came in a cave late one night. "The first time I had a vision, I fainted. I remember leaving my body to be with the spirits. I received a lot of power and learned a lot from the faintings overtime. They only came to me. I don't know why, perhaps I was the only one who listened," said Pichilingue.[183] He continued, "I now can travel through animals; I don't have words to describe this, but I can see the world differently. I learned about different power, where it is located and dedicated myself to the [spiritual] trails."[184] When asked how he sees the world differently, Pichilingue left behind a powerful message: "our lands, including our mountain, are the most valuable things in Life. The land that people today refer as 'just a mountain or an adventurous trail' have been misled. The ground we walk on are our ancestor's ashes and so we tread respectfully and lightly to not disturb them. We humbly ask for forgiveness and give offering when we go up our mountain."[185] Pichilingue expressed a disinterest in being referred to as any kind of god or special person because he, himself, could not fully ascribe to some of the instructions in his visions. People in the community of El Remolino are aware that in one vision, Pichilingue was asked to sacrifice his youngest son by throwing him over a specified mountain. Pichilingue refused and never had a vision after that. Pichilingue shared the burden of this vision, "I just couldn't do that to my son. People who get visions pay a high price. Often you see us alone, without family, and estranged. It's a solitary life."[186] Pichilingue passed away July 25, 2009.

[183] Pichilingue Sr. Interview, 2008.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid.

2.5 Pichilingue walking the trails of El Cerro de las Ventanas. Photo provided by Rodriguez Family.



2.6 Pichilingue walking the trails of El Cerro de las Ventanas. Photo provided by Rodriguez Family.

Pichilingue's wife, Maria Isabel Rodriguez, also known as Chabela, remembered the day her husband, Pichilingue, experienced a vision. "One night he told me, if I leave in the middle of the night, I don't want you to follow me," she narrated.[187] For weeks, Pichilingue left their home in the middle of the night. One rainy night, Chabela decided to follow Pichilingue to learn of his late-night whereabouts. She sat quietly in bed as her husband walked out the house. She grabbed an umbrella and noticed that he walked "without knowledge of himself." Pichilingue walked through a stream towards Tlachialoyantepec when she grew shocked to see that he was not getting wet. She recalled, "his pants were dry and so I walked across the stream wondering whether I

[187] Oral history of Maria Isabel Rodriguez by Daisy Ocampo, June 2017, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas. Hereafter cited Isabel Rodriguez Interview, June 2017.

would get wet and I did."[188] She turned back and headed back home. The next day she confessed to Pichilingue that she followed him the previous night. He remained upset with her for several days. She explained, "you see my husband's body was guided by spirits. Different spirits came to him and showed him things on the mountain. There were times when he disappeared for days and the community did a body search only to find his body found in different areas of the mountain. I've always known it was not sleepwalking, he was having visions."[189] When Chabela saw how trusting her husband was of this experience, she was both amazed and shocked. "He surrendered to the visions, he was not afraid," she reflected.[190] Sacred landscapes are filled with certain places of power where pacti or medicine, awaits. In a reciprocal manner, the spirits chose him, and he surrendered.

Larry Eddy, a Chemehuevi elder found this same parallel among the Salt Song tradition. Eddy made clear that not all places on the land have power. Many complex spiritual considerations take place for power to be met. Much like Tlachialoyantepec and Mamapukaib, or Old Woman Mountains, Eddy shared, "the healing and medicine power that I speak about comes from the mountains…you know, you go and talk to the mountain. That's where spirits sits. I've been to [caves] and I go there, and I can see things or see something that nobody else can see."[191] A medicine cave located on Mamapukaib, or Old Woman Mountains, contains the puha for people in need of healing and following community protocol. These sacred places should not be treated as public

[188] Isabel Rodriguez Interview, June 2017.
[189] Ibid.
[190] Ibid.
[191] Larry Eddy Interview, 2007.

spaces. *Pacti* and *puha* reveal concentrated power throughout the land. Pichilingue shared with his wife that through these visions and cave visits he received his powers to shapeshift and travel.[192] He adhered to his visions until asked to sacrifice his son. For people in the community, this mountain, Tlachialoyantepec, is the backbone of Caxcan culture.

Refugio Rodriguez, also known as Doña Cuca to locals, adhered to these sacred laws and knew spirits on Tlachialoyantepec were among her. Doña Cuca family's business relied on cultivating their cuamil, or traditional family parcel, as well as gathering pithayas, mangos, mesquite and other desert foods throughout the region. She knew local recipes and creatively made peanut treats and *mezquitamal* for sale. [193] Ingenuity flowed through the Rodriguez family. They are one of the last families to live completely off Tlachialoyantepec. Doña Cuca's traditional knowledge and inventory of food and animal ways also includes a deep understanding of the environment, weather conditions, and cloud movement. More importantly, she grew a unique connection with the spirits of this place. She shared space with snakes and scorpions, yet she never felt fear, much like Pichilingue. Several spirits visited her throughout the decades when she worked alongside her family. A typical family work days included splitting the work among each other. One morning during the month of May, while her son went to gather pithayas, she chose a large flat rock where to sit comfortably while she removed the spikes of the cactus fruit. Every day she despines pitayas for a few hours on

[192] Oral Interview of Alan Rodriguez Rodriguez, (AKA Pichilingue Jr.) by Daisy Ocampo, June 2018, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Pichilingue Jr. Interview, 2018.
[193] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

Tlachialoyantepec before hiking down to sell fruit from door to door. One day, a customer expected three buckets full of despined pitayas before 11AM. She worked incredibly hard and grew tired, so she rolled her tobacco in a corn husk. Her husband then brought another bucket of pitayas for her to peel. Finally, she yelled how tired and desperate she was by the number of pitayas left to peel. Doña Cuca remembers taking a puff of her cigar and also how Pichilingue said there were many spirits in this area of the mountain. "I wondered if our ancestors ate pitayas like us?" she pondered.[194] She became distracted by a large shadow over her. She looked up and noticed crows flocked over her vigorously. "Everything around me was moving but I could not process time," she remembered with confusion.[195] She snapped out of it suddenly because the cigar in her hand started burning her fingers. "It felt like only like ten seconds, but I knew something happened. I wasn't sure how much time passed," she recalled.[196] Immediately, Cuca returned to peeling pitayas when she saw that they had been all peeled. "I thanked the crow and spirits for helping me out but told them I would no longer frequent them. I did not like living in their world," she concluded in her oral history. Trails become part of the sacred landscape and everyday life of Caxcans.

Trails Reflect Regional Relationships

Caxcan people see the trails, which connect different places, as portals that are connected. Tlachialoyantepec does not exist in isolation, this mountain is a receiving living entity. Unlike Mamapukaib, which is part of the Salt Song Trail, Tlachialoyantepec

[194] Ibid.
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.

is equivalent to Mt. Charleston, it is the central mountain which connects all people together. Creator established these connections at the Beginning of Time when the rest of the People disbanded to populate the rest of the Earth. A complex set of trails connect Tlachialoyantepec to many places. The Caxcan region finds itself protected by two chains of mountains which are prolongations of the Sierra Madre Occidental: there is the Sierra of Morones to the west and the Nochistlan mountains to the east. The Sierra Madre Occidental is home to various silver mines that played a pivotal role during Spanish colonial era and the forced removal and labor of Caxcan communities (This will be further discussed in Chapter Four).

Trails connect the mountains. Various trails detailed the complex system of trail communication system that existed here and although not currently in use, they are still meaningful reminders of the connection with various towns, many of which cross state boundaries and reflect inter-tribal communication. Anthropologists James Snead explained landscapes through the lens of what movement represents upon the land. In his article, "Ancestral Pueblo Trails" remain "trails go in and out of use as political bonds change, so 'where' they go 'when' is a source of information regarding such relationships."[197] Trail networks, that extend into neighboring states are physical manifestations of these ancient and current relationships.

Trails reflect the organization of regional connections and their sacred landscapes. Caxcans were semi-nomadic people who travelled the region of Juchipila. The region did

[197] Snead, James E. 2002. "Ancestral Pueblo trails and the cultural landscape of the Pajarito Plateau, New Mexico." *Antiquity.* 76 (293), 757.

not have the state borders known today. Caxcans comfortably navigated farther lands into what is known today as the states of Nayarit, Durango, Sonora, Sinaloa, Jalisco, San Luis Potosi and Aguascalientes. In the midst of travels, Caxcans knew many languages which allowed for inter-tribal communication. Caxcans, historically and today, are known for their joy of freedom expressed through movement. Movement indicated physical health, access to food resources following the seasons, and created allies, as well as foes, along the region and trails. Movement is imprinted onto the trails and these reflect living action. In an oral history interview with Pichilingue, he stated the trails are vast. He shared that traditionally, these trails regionally went into what is today Zacatecas, Durango, Jalisco and Nayarit.

Caxcans refer to people living in these regions as relatives. These trails also evidence the movement of Caxcans to neighboring places of power. Notable mountains in the Juchipila region include the Mixton Mountain, La Quemada Mountains, and Teul de Ortega Gonzalez. Trails reflect the spiritual relationships Caxcans had to other places and also the relationship other tribal communities had with Tlachialoyantepec, which demonstrates how Caxcans travelled the world before the arrival of the Spanish. Spanish imposed a sedentary lifestyle onto Caxcans. Although Caxcans today live in homes, a large tradition of migration, to move and return, although with new contexts of national borders still continues today. Caxcan define their sovereignty in their ability to know the land, move through the land, and visit places of spiritual significance.

Caxcan political organization never divorced from its spiritual responsibilities. Tribal communities organized around *cacique,* or leader. The communities chose this

individual to lead in different projects and was someone who everyone respected and trusted. The Council of Elders and General Council counselled leaders as they represented the voice of the community. These two Councils took the role of what would be considered the governing entities. They protected community interests of the Caxcan region. Within this governmental umbrella, military leaders were chosen for war when necessary.[198] Caxcans value elders for their life experience but also because they ground the community in spiritual sovereignty. All Caxcans followed the Xochipilli tradition despite different Caxcan communities being polytheist. For example, those who faithfully followed *Xiuticutli* (God of Fire), *Teopolit* (God Child), *Centeot* (God of Corn), *Teocatl* (Serpent God), and *Teteotl* (God of Battles).[199]

Xochipilli was, and continues to be, the largest religious order in the Caxcan region. As indicated in the Origin Narrative, although some Caxcans and neighboring tribes erected their own spiritual centers in faraway lands, they ancestrally returned to Juchipila to honor Xuchitl Dance. During the time of the Xuchitl Dance, people came from faraway places to Juchipila to dance to Tlachialoyantepec, their god Xochipilli, and acknowledge the leadership and Dance Keeper tradition. According to Professor Arturo Reyes Viramontes, "Juchipila is a religious center where Indians attended during certain time periods to offer honor to the cult of Xochipilla and dance the Xuchitl."[200] In an interview with Dance Keeper Moctezuma Meza, he stated, "before I leave the world, I

[198] Hector Pascual Gomez Soto, "Los Caxcanes una Tribu Indomita," *Cronicas de Jalpa Zacatecas*, Accessed March 9, 2016. http://cronicasdejalpa.blogspot.com. Hereafter cited Soto, "Los Caxcanes una Tribu Indomita," *Cronicas de Jalpa.*
[199] Moctezuma Meza Interview, June 5, 2018.
[200] Soto, "Los Caxcanes una Tribu Indomita," *Cronicas de Jalpa.*

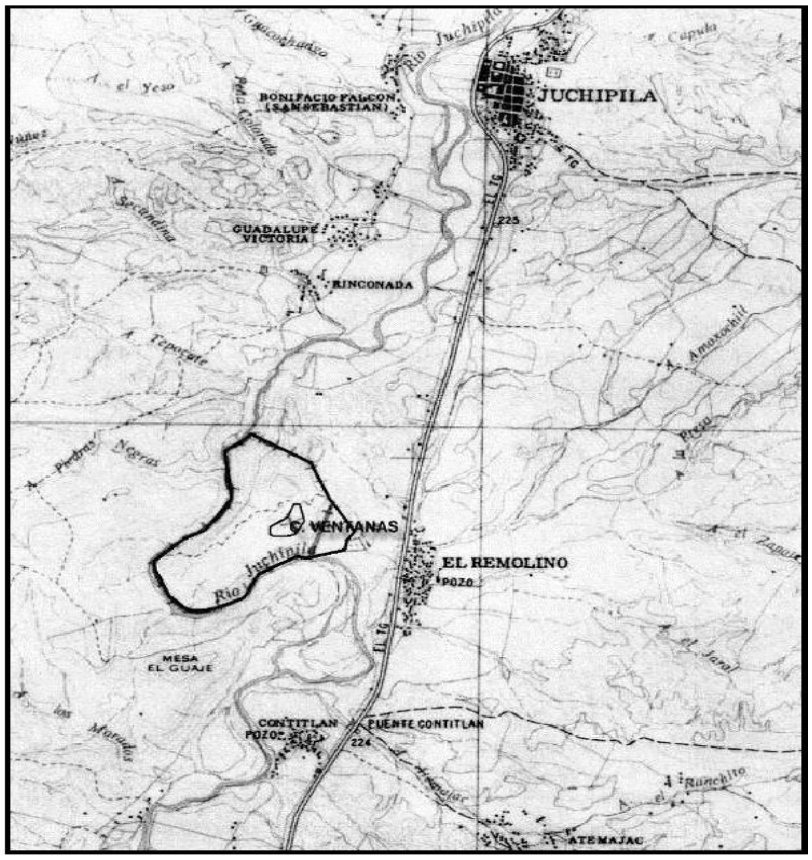
want you to write why the dance starts at my house today with drinks. I welcome the people with drinks because it is our way to welcome the people who come from far and are thirst. It is a pilgrimage and you must take care of those who are tired."[201] Political, spiritual and intertribal relationships are imprinted into the landscape through trails.

Caxcans' use of the trails today is limited to local trails with a distance of just a few miles, yet the mental maps of the landscape are still part of the overall tapestry of the region. Caxcan elders Pichilingue and Cuca noted two significant maps found on the mountain of Tlachialoyantepec; these maps are found on rocks.[202] Few people can read these maps today. Understanding the map engraved on the rock requires a general understanding of the landscape. The map identifies the Juchipila River, springs, and different trails, which reveal a large archival repository of knowledge. Pichilingue shared, "the archaeologists think we are stupid, and we have no knowledge. These trails are proof of our intelligence. You place me anywhere in this region, and I will find a trail and make my way back home. Our people were aware of the landscape, directional markers."[203] Before colonization, Caxcan people's semi-nomadic lifestyle allowed them to achieve physical, community and spiritual wellbeing by travelling their trails. Movement across the Juchipila Canyons, for example, was part of the culture to hunt, gather, planting, trade, pray and visit relatives.

[201] Moctezuma Meza Interview, June 5, 2018.
[202] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[203] Pichilingue Sr. Interview, 2008.

Trails Connect to Resources

Movement has always been a metaphor for life, well- being, and health much like air, breath, and wind. More practically, movement took people to their food sources. Gathering food sources was, and continues, to be a vibrant cultural activity that takes place along the trails. People who use the trails to access food become active agents on the land. In the past, the people cleaned them, shaped them, and breathed life into them. Trails offer proof of an ancestral footprint that connects Caxcans to their homelands and the spirits that still walk them. The trails navigate the local semi-desert and mountain geography of the Juchipila Canyon, which is dry and arid half the year and lush and green the other half. Sierra de Morones and Sierra de Nochistlan run parallel North- South forming the Juchipila Canyon and the many local trails found throughout. These two sierras represent the twin mountains from the Caxcan Creation Narrative. The arid and semi-arid environments create both dry and sub-tropical micro climates. Much like Mamapukaib (Old Woman Mountain), Tlachialoyantepec is located between an intergrade zone and the perfect home for diverse and abundant foods.



2.7 Topographic map of Juchipila and archaeological site of Cerro de las Ventanas, 2002. Photo from *Instituto Nacional de Estadisticas y Geografia*.

Caxcans outline the food sources in specified caves in certain sections of the local mountains. For example, certain foods grow at the foot of Tlachialoyantepec, while different foods grow at the mesas of the Juchipila Canyon. The Juchipila River nourishes the land at the foot of the Canyon. For example, Caxcans named trails after their food sources. Caxcans, past and present, continue to use the Mesquite Trail located in the lower parts of the Canyon. Early Spanish observers getting to know the land before the

Mixton war noted abundant Mesquite trees along trails.[204] Caxcan people use mesquite trees as a major food source. One Spanish document noted, "they also eat a fruit from a tree they call mesquite, which is a wild tree known for its veins and which they make a bread."[205] Caxcan first collect dry mesquite bean pods scattered under the tree and then grind them with other wild seeds in mortars to create a nutrient flour. Eventually, this flour mixed with water and honey turns into a thick paste that is then wrapped in *tlanepa* (Hoja Santa) leaves to create mezquitamal, a cherished sweet treat given to children and historically utilized for long travels.[206]

Despite its sweet flavor, mesquite pods do not trigger high sugar levels for those with diabetes today and last months. The mesquite tree also carries powerful and spiritual significance. One of the local dances, Tastuanes, in the community of Moyahua uses the wood from the mesquite tree to make their traditional masks. The red wood of this tree is solid and sturdy wood, perfect for a mask, which will remain in a family line for generations. Briefly, Caxcans utilize these masks in a tastoan dance that performs the clash of the Spanish and Caxcans. This re-enactment through performance involves tesguino, or fermented corn drink, as a practice of forgetting yet reconnecting to Caxcans roots, Creation, and landscape. Caxcans believe the tree is sacrificing a piece of itself for the healing of the People through the many layers of historical trauma experienced.

[204] Pedro de Ahumada, *Relación Sobre la Rebelión de los Indios Zacatecas* (1562), (México: Vargas, Rea. 1954), 22.
[205] D'Avila, *Guerra de los Chichimecas*, 22.
[206] Oral Interview of Refugio 'Cuco' Ocampo by Daisy Ocampo, June 2016, Los, Angeles, California. Hereafter cited as Cuco Interview, June 2016.

2.8 Ancestral Caxcan food- Mezquitamal. Photo courtesy of Cultural Gastronomica de Mexico.

Meanwhile back at the trails- trails reflect an active presence of Caxcans knowledge of the landscape. Caxcans constant engagements with the land reveals what James Snead termed "landscapes of movement."[207] He pointed out that indigenous people constantly travelled in search of sustenance, the trails created structured local food niches. For example, *guamuchil* (Pithecellobium dulce), *huisache* (sweet acacia), and *huizcolote* can be located on trails located on at the skirt of Tlachialoyantepec.[208] New

[207] James E. Snead, "Trails of Tradition: Movement, Meaning and Place," in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths and Roads in Anthropological Perspective* ed. James E. Snead, Clark L. Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2009), 47.

[208] Juan Ramon Rodriguez Torres, "El Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas y sus Terrazas Prehispanicas," (Master Thesis, Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas, 2008), 25.

trails reflect new foods in the area. For example, the Spanish introduced many Mediterranean fruit trees. Caxcans frequented trail that takes people to a section near the Juchipila River that has many communal mango orchards. Trails lead to other fruit trees such as bananas, oranges, lemons, avocados, grapefruits, plums, and pomegranates as well as cane sugar. Trails signal, regardless of who planted the trees years ago, communal foods. The higher trails on Tlachialoyantepec lead to more sturdy trees such as pochote, which produces cotton for pillow stuffing. Indigenous to the area, and part of the local cactus-based diets, *pithaya*, *guamuchil*, and prickly pear cactus grow abundantly. In addition to the Creation Narratives, several community members indicated the importance of the trails and food sources.

Several people emailed recipes with photographs where they captured the process of gathering, preparing, and cooking their dishes. A noted dish was penca de picadillo and includes a simple process. Caxcan gather a bucket full of nopales on Tlachialoyantepec and while on the mountain, clean them against a rock with a knife. Caxcans cleaned nopales and then take them back home to cook with locally grown tomatoes and onions.[209] These dishes have kept Caxcan people and their bodies healthy and without diabetes, which is epidemic today. Here, the community found an opportunity to realize how many traditional dishes came from the areas and provided a space for the elders to share about dishes that were not commonly made anymore. Several community members explained the Caxcan local economy depended on traditional homelands and tools. People also credited the many medicinal plants in the

[209] Valduvil Haro Garcia, Facebook message to author, January 12, 2018.

region: *cuachalalate*, copal, dragon's blood, cola de caballo, and pochote. Caxcans consider themselves rich and grateful for the abundance of food. The Xuchitl Dance allows people to culturally express that gratitude.

2.9 Cleaning fresh nopales on El Cerro de las Ventanas. Photo courtesy of Valduvil Haro Garcia.

Caxcans consider foods found along the trails as gifts from the Creator. Anyone can gather foods along the trails, yet an indigenous system called cuamil outlined proper land use on Tlachialoyantepec, and neighboring mountains, to sow corn, squash, and beans. Exclusive family use governed cuamiles, although this never implied legal ownership. Cuamil translates to "tree heritage" in Caxcan and indicates the rights of the family to use of land. The size of cuamiles vary in size although most are small and followed close family lines to gain access. Cuamiles provided low impact, low scale parcels of land of mountainous slopes that captured rain usually between February and September. Anyone who desired to grow food on unused cuamiles asked permission from surviving relatives and were rarely denied. This small-scale agriculture was manually

intensive and maintained practice by all family members with able bodies. In an oral interview with Refugio Ocampo, he shared

> I was a child, then when my father took me to the cuamil on our mountain. We would pass all the elders sitting on their chairs in the afternoon, awaiting a conversation, and they would ask 'where you going?' and we would shout across, 'to tend to our cuamil, we'll be back.' At the time, I didn't think much of it but now I realize how special it was for me to spend time with my dad like that. You don't get those moments back. That cuamil on our mountain, may seem backwards to some now with technology, but tending to the land glued us, my father was my best friend, and I worry that the youth see our responsibility to our land as pointless. How will they be grounded with themselves, their families, and their community?[210]

In another interview with Francisco Rodriguez, one of the last people to harvest pitayas, expressed the importance the of Nuestro Cerro Sagrado, our sacred mountain. "It protects us and guides us. Everything we need is there," he shared.[211] He remembered, "how many beautiful squashes came out of there, and sweet corn and peas. That mountain sustained us! I went to the Norte [United States], and yeah, I got money, but I couldn't abandon my little place on earth, I was taught to never forget this mountain, and I returned. This is where I want to spend the rest of my life."[212]

[210] Cuco Interview, June 2016.
[211] Oral Interview of Francisco 'Pancho' Jr. Rodriguez by Daisy Ocampo, May 08, 2015 Ejido Cucapah, Mexicalli, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Pancho Interview, May 08, 2015.
[212] Pancho Jr. Interview, May 08, 2015.

2.10 Elders selling cactus fruit in Juchipila. Photo courtesy of author.

The Rodriguez family is one of the last family to sustain themselves substantially from the Tlachialoyantepec mountain. At 87 years old, Doña Cuca uses her walker as she travels through the trails to cut pithayas and mangos with her husband. They walk back home and sell to the local town of El Remolino. "It's work. Pitayas, we are told, need to be cut at four in the morning or they will go bad. There is a story about that you know. I bump into the archaeologists and they tell me I can't gather, and I tell them to fuck off. I've always been hot headed," she laughed. [213] The food and medicine Cuca gathered had become a small business. After returning to the village, Cuca went from door to door knowing on doors to sell, and by noon, she completed her rounds to various homes selling. For many elders who struggle to walk to the store, Cuca selling at their doorsteps

[213] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

provides a huge relief. The Rodriguez family is one of the last to work the mountain this way.

Cuca's husband, Francisco Rodriguez, Sr., gathers tule and carrizos to make the gathering tools for pithayas. He walks from the Juchipila River, plucks carrizos from the ends of the rivers, ties them, and carries the bundle back home. Here, he cuts the end in four and forms a mouth to pluck cactus fruit, which is sometimes twenty feet in the air. From this same carrizo material, the Rodriguez family make baskets, sleeping mats, or petates.[214] The resources on this mountain grow abundant. The people have always interacted with this mountain, the people have always belonged to this mountain. Everything from the cuamiles, to gathering, to praying, holds special significance to Caxcans. Cuca says, "this sacred mountain you see here, it fed me and those before me. My children and I prayed to it, held many conversations with the Old Ones, I walked along those trails for decades. I can't walk up often because I am old. When I see the youth going up there, it's an important thing for them to step foot on that mountain so the Old Ones know they haven't been forgotten. Our people go back home to this mountain."[215] She continued, "when the Spanish came and even the Mexicans, they were obsessed with the silver. A lot of it. They made slaves out of us for the silver. But these rocks on our mountains, this dirt, these trails and caves- these hold things- together- this is our gold."[216]

[214] Oral Interview of Francisco 'Pancho' Sr. Rodriguez by Daisy Ocampo, September 13, 2016, El Remolino, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Pancho Sr. Interview, September 13, 2016.
[215] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.
[216] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016

Animals

Part of this equation includes animals found along the trails and throughout the region. The most respected, and feared, animal in the region is the scorpion. Scorpions hide in dark crevices of the land including people's homes under rocks, pans, and even inside shoes. Behind Tlachialoyantepec the pristine lands remain currently uninhabited by people but are home to various animals. There, pumas, turkeys, deer, and rabbits can be found. Vulture can be seen circling above a dead animal. Sheep, goats, deer, and cows makeup the local meat consumption. Smaller mammals include squirrels, *cacomixtle*, *coati*, rabbits, coyotes, bobcats, *jabali*, raccoon, bats, kangaroo rats, possums, *tuza*, whitetail deer, and skunks. The bird population include golden eagles, redtail hawks, mockingbirds, quails, hummingbirds, parrots, crows, gallina de monte, sparrows, macaws, turkeys, falcons, *huilota*, owls, and vultures. Many of these animals can be found on this mountain precisely because the Juchipila River forms around the mountain, creating a microhabitat which hosts many animals. Several of these animals, especially the *cacomixtle* (pictured below), are nearly extinct today. Reptiles include snakes, iguanas, lizards, rattlesnakes and *chorrionera* (red bull snake).[217] There are many fish in the Juchipila River, yet consumption is limited today due to water contamination from large scale farmers.

[217] Rodriguez, "Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas," 29-36.

2.11 *Cacomixtle* running on Cerro de las Ventanas. Photo from "El Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas y sus Terrazas Prehispánicas."

Community Protocol

This mountain provides sustenance for the people but more importantly Caxcans regard their mountain as the Creation Mountain, the most sacred place for Caxcans. Caxcans approach this place of power carefully and respectfully with full consideration for its stories and significance. It is the life source for the Caxcan people. According to Caxcans, land cannot be owned, and yet legal Mexican acquisition officially took place in the early 1900s. Part of the caretaking responsibility involves honoring all the life that surrounds the mountain. Caxcans believe Chaneque, or Little People, live on Tlachialoyantepec and in the surrounding towns. It is said that they live in the Under World, where they care for the crops. Caxcans see them as Sacred People who are attributed to a successful crop season. At the foot of the mountain is a shrine. Caxcans find it important to ask permission before entering this mountain, doing so would show respect for the power that lives here. In large part, the acknowledgement is that of respect and humility to be in the presence of a power which is larger than oneself. Caxcans view this mountain and other places like these as places of persistence because Caxcans, past and present, carry this tradition. These places have their own life history and the

relationship people have had to this place reveals astounding resiliency. To be in its presence, is to be back with one's full self. The Caxcan Creation Narrative involves a worldview where Tlachialoyantepec is respected as a living entity, one that commands spiritual agency and is a medium to access their Creation and the Old Ones. Caxcan healing involves a process of re-establishing oneself with spiritual and historical landscapes, like Tlachialoyantepec and Mamapukaib. They are integral to not only community medicine ways but to sovereignty in its full expression. Sovereignty is the ability to maintain these connections to the sacred geography. The offering, Xuchitl Dance, and prayer embedded in it, are the backbone of indigenous identities, so much so that Caxcans feel that if they cease to pray to this mountain, they cease to exist as Caxcan people. If this mountain, this center, would be lost then it would be difficult for Caxcans to sustain their identity. Collectively, indigenous people around the world have been preserving this planet for centuries. Indigenous people continue to be at the front of environmental preservation efforts for these reasons because their livelihood and ancestral memory is at stake.

Chapter Three

Mamapukaib: A Place of Healing and Resistance

Introduction

Every year tribal members, specifically elders from neighboring tribes and their youth, gather at Mamapukaib, or the Old Woman Mountains, in the East Mojave Desert. The Old Woman Mountain is a sacred place for the Chemehuevi, Mohave, and other Southern Paiute people. With the help of tribal members, elders, and traditional historians, the Native American Land Conservancy organizes an educational youth program called Healing and Learning Landscapes where numerous guests arrived at Mamapukaib for an outdoor weekend stay. The Native American Land Conservancy (NALC) coordinates annual gatherings to connect native communities, especially youth, to sacred sites like Mamapukaib. The NALC formed in 1998 by an intertribal interest with the mission to protect sacred sites while developing educational programs for Native youth.[218] NALC addresses the need by responding to the unprecedented levels of development that endanger sacred places in the Mojave Desert due to a lack of protection under state and federal laws. Many sacred sites face harm and destruction due to laws regarding private ownership or state power to condemn lands for development.

Part of this program involves Native youth visiting various rock art and together attempted to decipher its meaning. Chemehuevi elder Matthew Leivas shared with the youth the significance of the Salt Songs, trails to and through the Old Woman Mountains, their connection to the Milky Way, and afterlife for the Chemehuevi and other Southern

[218] Kurt Russo, *In the Land of Three Peaks: the Old Woman Mountain Preserve* (Coachella Valley: Native American Land Conservancy, 2005), 15.

Paiute people. During one program in 2017, one young girl pointed to her dad, "look at the Milky Way! It's so pretty." To humor her comment he responded, "space must be a cool place to live in" and she responded, "dad don't you get it, we are *in* space. Our planet is in space, space isn't out there, we are a part of it."[219] Her astute observation caused many parents to chuckle at her insightful realization. Youth continued vocalizing their observations, empowered to do so freely with the support of this program and community.

That same day, later that afternoon, native youth began noticing how anxious they grew without their cell phones. Some youth raised their phones to the sky in an effort to connect wirelessly to the internet or cellular service, while others climbed the mountains to see whether they could find the perfect location for reception—all to no avail. Finally, the group of native youth surrendered to the desert landscape, the spirits that inhabit this sacred mountain, its silence, and stories. That evening, Matt Leivas and other coordinators began a bon fire where he shared ancestral stories of the Old Woman Mountain. He explained, "I remember my family coming here chasing down small whirlwinds because the woman believed they were bad spirits."[220] He continued explaining the connection between the significance of the Old Woman Mountain to the Salt Songs, and its puha (spiritual power) which is received at Mt. Charleston leading up the Chemehuevi afterlife. He ended his stories by singing a few Salt Songs. The youth began connecting for themselves the relationship of this place to power, medicine, plants,

[219] Ocampo Journal, Field Notes, May 23, 2015 as found in Daisy Ocampo, "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert: A Historical Account of the Chemehuevi People and their Spiritual Relationship to Mamapukaib, the Old Woman Mountain Preserve," (Riverside: Master Thesis, 2015), 22.
[220] Ibid.

and animal relatives. That evening, everyone expressed feeling something special in their hearts, and Matt Leivas reassured them that this feeling was because the spirit beings that live at Mamapukaib were happy to know they had not been forgotten.[221]

The next day, Matt Leivas and Sean Milanovich of Agua Caliente Band of Mission Indians, led the group through a trail to gather juniper berries, or ghost beads, as many local tribes call them. He explained the properties of juniper berries to preserve meats but also to ward off bad spirits and keep travelers protected from illnesses. The children grew eager to collect the berries. Matt instructed the students to leave a prayer behind before taking the berries. The youth then began looking for scattered containers to store their juniper berries. They found rusted tin cans throughout the trail. As they looked for more tin cans, they noticed the large quantities of bullet shells and other scrap metal scattered throughout the trails of the Old Woman Mountain Preserve. Another young girl wanted answers, "why are there bullets here? Was there a war here?" The facilitators responded, "the military was here."[222]

The Old Woman Mountain Preserve underwent numerous proprietary changes of historical significance. One of these included the United States Department of Defensive's largest military simulation operation: the Desert Training Center in the East Mojave Desert. In addition, a cement wall between a crevice in the mountain indicated a military presence at the Old Woman Mountain. War simulation took place specifically on Mamapukaib and soldiers used the cement wall to take cover. This cement wall stood

[221] Ibid.
[222] Ibid.

below a medicine cave at the Old Woman Mountain presenting two different uses by different entities. Unlike rock art and yucca fiber, these military discards and features do not get marked as part of the landscape by tribal members. However unwanted of a history, these material items and others reveal a very different historical narrative, one of encroachment, mining, military installations, and displacement.

These often-contradicting features demonstrates a history of colonization that recently took place at Mamapukaib and impacted the spiritual significance of this place. This colonial presence directly interrupted how Chemehuevi (and other Southern Paiute) connected with its puha. When articulating puha, historian Trafzer and Chemehuevi elder Leivas, referred to it as a web of power that expands and concentrates in certain places of the Earth like the Old Woman Mountains.[223] This puha comes from the time of Creation when Hutsipamamau'u, or Ocean Woman, fell from the sky in the form of a worm to create the land masses we know today. Chemehuevi, past and present, rely on their Creation Narratives, Salt Songs, and the sacred sites found along the trails for their sense of sovereignty and community wellbeing. The puha of Mamapukaib is tied to the physical and environmental integrity of this place. Puha drives the vision of tribal advocacy groups, such as the Native American Land Conservancy, to ensure the protection of sacred sites and reconnecting them with community. Multiple corporate interest at Mamapukaib threatened the relationship Chemehuevi had with Mamapukaib. When this mountain was taken for mining and military endeavors, these projects created

[223] Clifford E. Trafzer and Matthew Hanks Leivas, *Where Puha Sits: Salt Songs, Power, and the Oasis of Mara* (United States of America, 2018), 4.

legal barriers for Chemehuevi to access Mamapukaib for prayer, lodging, medicine, and spiritual power.

Chemehuevi people interact with landscapes like Mamapukaib in terms of networks of belonging. These networks tie them to their Creation Narratives and Salt Songs. Sacred places like Old Woman Mountain are the heart of Chemehuevi existence and sovereignty. For non- Native people this profound connection between people and places may be difficult to understand, yet it is a crucial conversation when discussing sovereignty in the face of colonial encounters. For example, this chapter will discuss a proposed radioactive waste dump in the Ward Valley, just miles from Mamapukaib, where racism, violence, and corporate greed revealed to be the primary motives in the battle for land acquisition for development and modern notions of progress. This chapter engages a long overdue conversation of Indigenous people, sacred places, and sovereignty amidst contemporary colonial enterprises. Colonization must be explored as a process and continuum in American history. Indigenous and environmental scholars must ask, "to what and whose expense is progress taking place?" This chapter answers this question by exploring how colonial agendas impact sacred places. And in turn, this chapter explores how Chemehuevi navigate these colonial processes to protect sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains.

When Chemehuevi could not collect medicine and puha from these sites, it warped Chemehuevi sense of freedom, sovereignty, and connection to their Creation- to themselves. These networks of belonging necessitate physically visiting these sacred sites and leaving prayers to Mamapukaib through the Salt Songs. Indigenous students of this

area underwent a violent boarding school experience that targeted and prohibited these traditional belief systems and cultural practices—such as the Salt Songs. Colonial agendas threatened a core aspect of being Chemehuevi and it is this genocide- ripping of this connective tissue called puha- which is often unexplored in American History. This chapter is organized around select historical colonial encounters, that took place at Mamapukaib, as well as those that sought to attack the sense of belonging to these sacred places. Chemehuevi are responsible for respecting and honoring the puha, or sacred connective spiritual whole.

Genocide is more than physical human death, it is the violent attacks on these relationships to people, their emotions, mental, and physical states, as well as on the places and spiritual entities. The beacon of imperial American identity involved having a full reign over land and resources; key to this included eradicating Indigenous people and their ties to sacred places. While Whites' focus was on accumulating wealth, Chemehuevi's resilience was tied to places, stories and singing the Salt Songs to bring Life into balance. In singing the Songs, the Chemehuevi affirmed their existence. In the midst of the trauma Chemehuevi experienced, the Salt Songs created an internal housing of traditional knowledge belonging to sacred places which took new meaning in colonial undercurrents. The Salt Songs allowed their sacred places, such as Mamapukaib, to stay alive in their hearts and communicate with the spirits found in those places—they have not been forgotten. The Songs harnessed a sense of belonging outside of material wealth

creating a new sense of power and resistance in the process.[224] And despite the challenges that colonial constraints imposed, the Salt Songs, Creation Narratives, and landscape became a generative force which served to assert power, historical agency, community, and a homeland in the midst of flux, trauma, and loss.

Spanish Colonization

The first Spanish colonial wave in the early 1540s along Chemehuevi homelands was minimal, in Chemehuevi's periphery yet marked by local tribes. Driven by mineral wealth and a quest to save souls, Francisco de Coronado and Don Juan de Oñate led the first Spanish expedition towards the Southwest during 1550 to 1620. The Spanish left an overwhelming imprint of violence, stolen land, disease, death and a social dislocation in many Indigenous communities in present-day Mexico and Southwest, including the Chemehuevi. Although contact with the Chemehuevi did not take place immediately during this first Spanish wave, the Spanish introduction of trade items such as livestock and manufactured items created a silent presence among the Chemehuevi. Namely, these trade items became breading grounds for bacteria, viruses and new diseases which traveled into deep areas of the desert from the Southwest, especially coastal areas, into Chemehuevi homelands.[225] Awareness of the Spanish grew among the Chemehuevi runners thanks to the extensive, well-organized communication, and trade system which encompasses what is today Utah, Arizona, California, and Nevada. The Salt Song Trail system, a physical manifestation of communication patterns, asserts that announcing

[224] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 72.
[225] Trafzer, *A Chemehuevi Song*, 58.

foreigners, invaders, wars, and disease would have heavily relied on Native neighbors and pre-existing alliances. Chemehuevi runners who trekked across the numerous desert trails outlined in the Salt Songs facilitated communication that would bring news of the Spanish back home before the Spanish ever step foot in their homelands. Communication systems became the hallmarks of intertribal relationships.

Few written sources exist of these early Spanish encounters, yet more sources surfaced during the second Spanish wave into the Southwest. Sources such as Francisco Tomas Hermenegildo Garcés' diary during his assignment in Mission San Xavier Del Bac in 1771 remains one of the most reliable primary sources to document the Spanish presence in the interior of the Mojave Desert.[226] Father Francisco Hermeneglido Tomas Garcés belonged to the Franciscan missionaries of the colonial Viceroyalty of New Spain and played a key role after the Jesuits Expulsion.[227] Both Junipero Serra and Francisco Garcés geographically expanded Spanish colonial reach northward by creating an overland corridor to connect New Spain with Upper Las Californias, eventually reaching present states of Arizona, New Mexico, and beyond. Francisco Garces went across the Sonoran Desert, crossed the Colorado River and reached the interior of the Colorado Desert. He meticulously recorded his travels and encounters with different Native people such as Mojave, Chemehuevi, Quechan, and Hopi to name a few. He travelled through

[226] Father Eusebio Kino established Mission San Xavier Del Bac on the Tohono O'dham homelands. He interacted with local native American communities and documented religious, astronomical and geographic knowledge systems among tribes. Francisco Garcés followed in his footstep engaging with tribes.
[227] The Society of Jesus were expelled from all Spanish colonies for reasons still in debate among scholars today. One major reason for their expulsion involved the extensive wealth, property and power they had acquired. During this time, lands and property turned to the hands of the Spanish Empire, leaving the Franciscan with full missionary dominion.

trails in the Mojave Desert on February 26, 1776 and recorded his encounters with Chemehuevi in his diary, "I passed through the gap of a sierra that runs northwest and at its base made a halt at some small springs of water that I called (Ojitos) del Santo Angel, where I met some 40 persons of the Chemebet nations."[228]

One of the first written observations made in Garcés' journal included the Chemehuevi runners. Chemehuevi runners left Garcés with the impressions "of being the most swift-footed of any I have seen" and described their running as having the "speed of deer."[229] Chemehuevi elders and scholars regard running as a sacred process involving a spiritual transformation. Carobeth Laird, the anthropologists who set the standard for thorough ethnography of the Chemehuevi, noted Chemehuevi beliefs about runners: runners went about "just staggering along, taking giant steps, his feet touching the ground at long, irregular intervals, leaving imprints that became further apart and light and lighter on the same."[230] Joe Benítez referred to running as the ability to fly because it "was a way to transcend the limits of the physical world and transport themselves in more complex ways."[231] The Chemehuevi had certainly impressed the Spanish. Garcés ended his recorded entry of the *Chemebet*, "they conducted themselves with me most beautifully; by no means were they thievish or troublesome, but rather quite

[228] Francisco Tomas Hermenegildo Garces and Coues, Elliot, *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer; the diary and itinerary of Francisco Garces (missionary priest) in his travels through Sonora, Arizona, and California, 1775-1776* (New York: F. P. Harper, 1900), 219-220.
[229] Garces, *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer*, 219-220.
[230] Trafzer, *Chemehuevi Indians*, 52.
[231] Ocampo, "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert," 30.

considerate."[232] Chemehuevi people today credit their survival to their ability to socialize and learn from different people, adapt their skillsets, and welcome new people.

Certainly, other tribes fared much worse than the Chemehuevi through the mission system along the California coasts. Many Native people endured forced labor and at a community level also survived substantial attempts to destroy Indigenous cultures. Spanish injured Chemehuevi's family unit, political systems, economies, and spiritual ties during the Mission Era. Inland and desert tribes, such as the Chemehuevi, still felt the collateral damage of the missions. Although Spanish did not establish missions and presidios on Chemehuevi homelands, tribal member Matthew Leivas asserts, "Spanish missionaries brought economic chaos to the lives of many indigenous people with whom Chemehuevi traded, and when the Nuwu traded, they sometimes received pathogens they took back to their people, especially early episode of measles, mumps, chicken pox, pneumonia, colds and smallpox."[233] The imposition of Catholicism, through its different missionary expeditions, caused cultural dislocation, weakened traditional chieftainships, and frayed spiritual ties of sacred sites. Missionaries sought to replace traditional beliefs such as the Salt Song culture, Creation Stories, songs, and offerings with new Catholic meaning rooted in the Scriptures, new praying methods, and religious hierarchy and order.

Breaking the connections to places and sacred sites challenged missionaries' progress. A re-naming and rebranding of the land occurred as demonstrated by Francisco

[232] Garces, *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer*, 225.
[233] Trafzer, *A Chemehuevi Song*, 64.

Garces, who named and baptized springs and other natural resources with Catholic references. Renamed mountains, rivers, canyons and lakes attempted to claim places, and disrupt the ancestral attachment Indian people had with places of spiritual significance. The Spanish claimed Chemehuevi lands simply through cartographic means, which missionary diaries served to itemize. Historian Frederic Murray states, "the Spanish Empire from far across the Atlantic had claimed Paiute land, though it had never held any real administrative or political control over the basin and range."[234] When the United States formally consolidated California as American territory, Chemehuevi would see an increased violence to their homelands with the arrival of American explorers, surveyors, soldiers, and investors after 1848 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Colonial powers continued to evolve, as the Spanish "claim passed over to colonial Mexico, which in turn ceded this swath of the Southwest to the United States in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848."[235] Networks of belonging for the Chemehuevi began changing rapidly in complex ways.

Gold Mines on Old Woman Mountain Preserve

American companies and private individuals mined the Old Woman Mountains extensively starting in the 1880s until 1940s. By the 1880s, the United States established itself as an expansionist empire in search of land that could produce profits. Economic craze continued to drive settlers into Native lands. For settlers, the desert was a transient

[234] Frederic Murray, "Shifting Boundaries: Violence, Representation, and the Salt Songs of the Great Basin Peoples," Proceedings of the Ninth Native American Symposium at the Southeastern Oklahoma State University (2011), 42.
[235] Murray, "Shifting Boundaries," 42.

space to trek across in order to gain access to mineral wealth. In the process, settlers and immigrants built new economic inroads and social systems—a drive that played a role in the genocide of California Native communities and disruption of indigenous economies. Religious practices such as the Salt Songs, as well as the uprooting of Native land to become private property, became the goal in order to create protected lands under a new state: California. The multiple mining explorations on the Old Woman Mountain threatened access to this space, disrupting its spiritual context for the Chemehuevi, and overlaying it with new economic meaning. Chemehuevi people travelled across the trails which connected lands as far as the Pacific Ocean to more local tribes. Historically, Chemehuevi travelled in groups of about eight to twenty at a time. The West became a mobile place, on the move, and with immigrants and prospectors came their ideals of economies and political systems to safeguard their profit. The search for silver and gold uprooted some Chemehuevi people of their traditional homelands and impaired access to their sacred sites.

This loss of territory and encroachment by settlers went hand in hand to build a capitalist economic structure and legal system. The Mining Law of 1872 has roots in the California Gold Rush and other mining explorations of the nineteenth century. The Gold Rush in Northern California created mining bonanzas that opened the Mojave Desert to miners and eventually the taking of tribal lands. In 1892, one newspaper account reported "Marcus A. Thompson, the veteran miner of '49, […] has some fine property just north of the Old Woman mountains, which is a new discovery, and will in the near future put

prospectors on the jump for the precious metals in his section."[236] Miners at this time had no legal avenue to secure minerals from public lands.[237] Miners responded to this issue by implementing their own customs, codes and laws which The United States Congress amended as the Mining Law of 1872. Its central provision identified miners holding common-law assumption that any metal deposits obtained did not belong to the federal government, instead would become property of the discoverer, without any obligations to pay royalties. The Mining Law of 1872 remains intact today. More specific to California deserts, the law required discoverers to note the location, date of location, geographic position, name of the claim, and the specific minerals being claimed. Registering this information with the San Bernardino County Courthouse would allow private prospectors a right to those hard minerals.[238]

The Mining Law of 1872 also protected claims against other miners. In October of 1902, the *Los Angeles Herald* published an article detailing litigations over different claims at the Old Woman Mountains. The case of J.C. Middleworth against A.E.S. Price involved a lawsuit for land title to a half interest of five mining claims in the Old Woman Mountains. Often these claims turned into legal titles, unless multiple claims occurred, which would result in lawsuit.[239] These mining claims grew exponentially and created breeding grounds for prospectors, as one strike led to another with financial assistance

[236] *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 38, Number 30, 11 May 1892.
[237] A specific emphasis on 'public' is placed here as these terms denote national dominion as the sovereign entity without accounting for the taking of desert lands from Native people like the Chemehuevi and instead resort to words such as 'public' implying an inclusive and terminal national narrative.
[238] Larry M. Vredenburgh, Gary L. Shumway, and Russell D. Hartill, *Desert Fever: An Overview of Mining in the California Desert*, (Canoga Park: Living West, 1981), 2.
[239] *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume XXX, Number 26, 28 October 1902.

preferred by businessmen to further expand. Miners operated unregulated by the federal government and maintained a free-access zone with cheap Indian labor. Legal historian Gordon Morris Bakken explored how this law specifically altered the western landscape and how mining became a symbol of "corporate greed and congressional inertia" even when popular depictions of the West included enterprise, ingenuity, and development.[240] This remains one of the most overlooked ways in which miners and the United States legal system trampled Chemehuevi lands to outsource for private interests without any consultation, compensation, or cultural consideration.

Ideas of American exceptionalism, ingenuity, and corporate enterprises drove mining expeditions in the East Mojave Desert. These ideas made possible the framing of hard work and the land as extractive as the new national ethos, displacing Indigenous people in that process. Chemehuevi rule of law, such as Creation Narratives, Salt Songs, and sustainability traditions all revere the land, especially sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains, as a living entity. These Chemehuevi laws rooted more wholesome and integrated science-based sustainability became invisibilized by miners. Dismissal of these Chemehuevi laws, and their spiritual meanings fell on deaf ears. The Mining Law of 1872 provided immense subsidies to miners; it created an entire economic and legal infrastructure at the expense of Chemehuevi mobility, access to their spiritual network of belonging, and sovereignty. Notes from the Danby District regarding the Parker Mine on the Old Woman Mountains relate: "the immense amount of fine ore [its owners] have

[240] Gordon Morris Bakken, *The Mining Law of 1872: Past, Politics, and Prospects* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008), 4-7.

shown up and the handsome little fortune they are soon to receive show how sensible they have been in braving the hardship and privations of desert life for four long years."[241] Historical scholarship of the West includes mining explorations during the 1880s. Life across the West depicts violent Indians harming innocent explorers enduring hardships for their riches. Often, writings on mining explorations lacks dimension, neglects local conceptualizations of religious and national identities, and oversees what Native people hold closest to their hearts: the wellbeing of their sacred sites. This American memory is crippled by amnesia to the genocide of Native people in the United States. While the national hysteria towards the West for mining drove the Mining Law of 1872 to protect mining right against other miners, legal articulation of indigenous lands never took place. Meaning, the legal question of who owns the land did not begin until mining explorations took place. White American explorers considered the land null and void, vastly unoccupied and ready to be developed for profit. Miners would become the beginning layers of propriety contentions that would begin to push Chemehuevi away from accessing their sacred mountain. Chemehuevi people had to endure extreme hardships in accessing their traditional homeland due to state-sponsored unregulated mining.

Archival sources from local newspaper identify numerous strikes on the Old Woman Mountain, beginning as early as February 1889.[242] Primary sources on a gold strike in Southern California can be found in general mining history of the Mojave

[241] *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 38, Number 30, 11 May 1892.
[242] Larry Vredenburgh, *History of Mining in the Old Woman Mountains, San Bernardino County, California*. (Unpublished, 2014), 1.

Desert. Although problematic for its romantic narrative of California's early ghost towns, these newspaper accounts provide insight to various mining operations on the Old Woman Mountains—which cannot be emphasized enough, is a Chemehuevi sacred place used to gather medicine and puha. Larry Vredenburgh from the San Bernardino County Mining Division conducted research on the mining history of Mojave's desert as well the ghost towns that went hand in hand with gold and silver strikes.

Many mining districts established themselves throughout the Old Woman Mountain range. Notable among them included the Scanlon Mine, Lucky Jim, Wheel of Fortune, Silver Wave and Black Metal, to name a few.[243] In one interview with the *Booth's Bazoo* newspaper, Mr. Wm. Sandford commented of the Old Woman Mountain prospects: "Why man that camp will howl before long, you mark my words; why it is the greatest thing of the kind on earth. All that is needed now is smelter and then the camp will boom."[244] To conclude this interview, Sanford left a generous gold specimen which would later go to the San Bernardino Board of Trade to be placed on a mineral exhibition. Institutions like the Board of Trade utilized newspapers for the lure, sampling, and display of mineral to further bourgeoning economic inroads and promote mineral investment. In order for a claim to gain approval, miners had to demonstrate profit, and in one way, they did this by publicly marketing its mineral findings through newspapers regardless of previous use or alternative uses. These newspaper accounts involved white

[243] Ibid.
[244] *Booth's Bazoo*, April 16, 1889, 4.

male prospectors beginning to fame the Old Woman Mountains and its potential for immense deposits of silver and gold.

3.1 Compressor stamped "National Compressed Air Machinery Co." found on OWMP. Photo from "Mines and Cabins in the Old Woman Mountains," <www.dzrtgrls.com>.

Several newspaper accounts revealed a fluctuating economic potential on the Old Woman Mountains. Some reported a craze over the prospective of the Old Woman Mountains while others reported inactivity. A few references attribute inactivity to the scarcity of water in the desert, a necessity in the mining operations. One miner noted, "there was considerable gold in evidence, but dry washing was a slow process of recovering it and there was no immediate prospect for the introduction of water to the miners."[245] Alan Hensher wrote in *Ghost Towns of the Mojave Desert: A Concise and Illustrated Guide*: "as the Native Americans had already realized, the rainfall was too limited and the heat too intense to support large populations or vast farmlands.

[245] Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild, "Fairchild, Mahlon Dickerson Memoirs" (1849-1866), 13-1. Society of California Pioneers.

Amazingly, however, people, settlements, and culture made their way into every canyon and cranny of the deserts."[246] Despite periods of mining inactivity due to weather and scant water sources, it is important to note that these mining claims fully exploited what they could from the Old Woman Mountains. In fact, companies created partnerships and eventually created a mining enterprise in the East Mojave Desert. In 1905, the Stem-Winder Mining and Development company announced it had capitalized $250,000 with a paid- up capital of $125,000. This company consisted of seven mining claims in the Old Woman Mountains.[247] Other companies included the Danby M. & M. Company, S. & W. Health, and Todd Copper Company located in Los Angeles. In looking at these desert capital enterprises, wealth accumulated in what are today's California's major cities, have clear roots in the exploitation of Native livelihoods and lands.

One early account from 1892 noted that "the Scanlon mines on the south side of the [Old Woman] mountains are soon to pass into the hands of San Bernardino and Riverside capitalists."[248] These transfers of money, companies, and industries secured a legal channel that ensured the success of these economic infrastructures. And, at the same time, it also ensured the continued displacement of Chemehuevi people; forcing Chemehuevis into wage labor to subsist, and a deepening arrest of Chemehuevi claims to lands. Chemehuevi elders and siblings, June and Matthew Leivas, shared their position on these development projects taking place on their traditional homelands: "us Chemehuevi people have paid a high price for the comfort of city people. Mining

[246] Alan Hensher, *Ghost Towns of the Mojave Desert: A Concise and Illustrated Guide* (Los Angeles, California Classic Books, 1991), 9.
[247] *Los Angeles Herald*, volume 32, Number 239, 28 May 1905.
[248] *Los Angeles Herald*, Volume 38, Number 30, 11 May 1892. California Digital Newspaper Collection.

companies gutted our sacred lands; Havasu flooded our lands to supply water to Los Angeles. People in the city don't see us and never wonder where their water and jewelry come from. We see everything and have to endure. Those are the two realities."[249]

Capitalist American histories and Indigenous histories exist in different lived realities, two conversations spoken in different languages, with different intentions, and spiritual orientations—they rarely speak to each other, due to their dissonant integrities. Mining in the Mojave Desert reflected American corporate entrepreneurship, settling of the West, and giving life to new industries. These aspects all seem like a normal, neutral, and boastful history of American superiority. While these mining endeavors documented by miners themselves reflect their individualistic investment, it certainly does not account for the Chemehuevi perspective. Chemehuevi experienced these mining operations as synonymous with a thwarting their subsistence, livelihood, and access to sacred places within their worldview. For so long in American history, Indigenous peoples and cultures have been dismissed as necessary collateral damage to achieve national progress. Savage portrayals of Native people by settlers sought to invalidate Chemehuevi claims to humanity in order to refute any claims to access resources. For the Chemehuevi, this meant disrupting their ties to sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains.

It is unclear what role Chemehuevi played in the mining operations, spanning the 1880s to early 1940s. As noted earlier, Chemehuevi had always been industrious, open to meeting and learning from new people. Many Chemehuevi chose to participate in a wage

[249] Oral Interview of June Leivas and Matthew Leivas with Daisy Ocampo, February 20-22, 2015, Chemehuevi Indian Reservation. Hereafter cited as June & Matt Leivas Interview.

economy without compromising their sovereignty. Chemehuevi learned to adapt and adjust as new economic inroads entered their world. Mines on the Old Woman Mountains certainly disrupted access, and in turn hurt the relationship Chemehuevi people had with the Salt Songs, which depend on access to sacred sites. Chemehuevi people hold the Old Woman Mountains as a sacred place gifted with puha at the time of Creation. According to Chemehuevi tribal member, Matt Leivas, it was also a rest stop along the way to other locations in the desert and coast tribes, arguing that with more miners entering the interior desert trails, the less mobility Chemehuevi had to their traditional lifestyle. "One thing affected everything else," Leivas shared.[250] A census map titled "Indian Map of California" dated October 18, 1913 revealed twenty Natives (Chemehuevi) located at the Old Woman Mountains.

D.E. Coon drew one of the few maps that reflects residency in the Old Woman Mountains. In 1913, Maricopa Queen Oil Company purchased property on the Old Woman Mountain and established bunkhouses, a boarding house and barn.[251] At least two mines- Wheel of Fortune and Black Metal- were in operation around the same time in 1913. Specifically, the Wheel of Fortune established a bunkhouse and blacksmith shop on the Old Woman Mountain property in December 1913. The Old Woman Mountain range is miles long, yet not long enough to miss each other along the various trails. This map presents a possibility that Chemehuevi villages existed on the Old Woman Mountains during 1913. In *A Chemehuevi Song*, Wyandot historian Trafzer detailed an

[250] June & Matt Leivas Interview.
[251] Vredenburgh, *History of Mining in the Old Woman Mountains*, 4.

oral history from a Chemehuevi named George Laird who provided an understanding on Indians during this mining period. George Laird entered the wage economy slowly and cautiously. He began as a cook for miners, guides through the desert trails, caretakers of animals, and more importantly laborers.[252] Carobeth Laird noted in *The Chemehuevis* that miners often fought, and some ended in murder. To avoid violence George Laird ended his work as a miner and other related jobs. Chemehuevi people lived on the Old Woman Mountains during the year of 1913 while numerous operations took place simultaneously. These overlaps call into question the interrelationships of Chemehuevi people with the operations of miners.

[252] Trafzer, *A Chemehuevi Song*, 135-138.

3.2 Indian Map of California of 1913 includes people count on Old Woman Mountains. Photograph from Grace Nicholson Papers.

Another primary source that provides insight to prospector claims and Chemehuevi relationships include the *Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild Memoirs, 1849-1866*. This 175-page manuscript entitled "Pioneer Reminiscences" details Mahlon Fairchild's travels, along with twelve New Yorkers, to prosper his business: the Ganargawa Mining Company. Their travels included many prospective sites to Panama, San Francisco, Sacramento Valley, Nevada County, and eventually the desert trails near the Colorado

River. Here, Fairchild provides a first-hand account of the tenuous relationship between miners and Chemehuevi, perceptions of desert landscape as barren, scarcity of water for mining processing, and Chemehuevi- Mohave relations. Fairchild, and his mining crew, correlated indigeneity with savagery and held poor understanding of the shifting power dynamics introduced with colonialization- which includes the destruction of miners' operations. Fairchild begins his manuscript describing how Indians killed an acquaintance, Charley Cunningham, during his journey to Los Angeles and warns: "it behooved the wayfarer to be constantly upon alert" as a result.[253]

3.3 Adit, or mining entrance, on the Old Woman Mountains. Photo from dzrtgrls.com.

Knowledge of the desert landscape's springs, trails, and food made Chemehuevis indispensable guides. Fairchild hired three different Chemehuevi guides at various points to take them from the Colorado River into the interior trails of the Mojave Desert. One

[253] Fairchild, *Mahlon Dickerson Fairchild Memoirs*, 13-1.

burro was recorded as 'stayed behind' after it could not make it over a rocky mountain. The three Chemehuevi guides vanished that night, assumed to have left to gather the burro. Eagle- Sky and Hooked-Nose were noted Chemehuevi guides in Fairchild's recordings. Fairchild recorded Eagle-Sky's murder. Across the desert, the Mojave reported to have endured a violent massacre at the hands of the United States Army. "Defying the white man, a detachment of regular United States troops were sent to teach them a lesson. Scored of them [Indians living in Fort Mojave] were bayoneted and shot to death, when, realizing the futility of their struggle they finally gave up and ever after remained friendly,"[254] recorded Fairchild about the violence crossing the desert landscape. With the intention to demonstrate control over Indians, this documentation reveals a sample of Chemehuevi-Mohave responses to ever growing violence that sought to quickly suffocate Indigenous efforts to survive.

Violence became a catalyst of wealth. The legal apparatus of laws, such as Mining Law of 1872, secured corporate interests at the expense of Indigenous people, their claims to land, and environmental impacts. More importantly, Mining Law of 1872 set the precedent for shaping western legal thought and established a precedent for the settlement of the West, with little to no regard for Indigenous claims to lands. Mining intensified settler encroachment of Chemehuevi land. This forced a new Chemehuevi reality to be forged from everyday interactions and resistance to colonial constraints. Mining enterprise on the Old Woman Mountains introduced Chemehuevi to cash labor

[254] Fairchild, *Pioneer Reminiscences*, 14-5.

and dismantled their traditional economies, their notion of movement -often a sign of health- was severely disrupted and their ability, or lack thereof, to defend themselves in a position of subjugation despite sovereignty being contested. Just as the Mining Law of 1872 set the precedent for the protection of corporate wealth, it set the precedence for generations of Chemehuevis that would experience historical trauma from the lack of access to sacred places which defined their ancestral sovereignty.

Reservations

The desert landscape rapidly changed, while the Chemehuevi continued adapting their approaches to colonial violence. Traditionally, Chemehuevi people connected themselves to subsistence, people, and puha through the trails across the East Mojave Desert into the Chemehuevi Valley. Chemehuevi were, and continue to be known as, people who enjoy learning new things and meeting new people across the trails. Chemehuevi experienced movement as health; their Salt Song Territory reflected an abundant range of travel, trade, and connectivity to people and places. Visiting sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains activated the puha and spirits living there. Chemehuevi kept in intimate contact with other tribes to meet their religious obligations, gather medicine, harvest food, and trade material goods. In *Trails of Tradition: Movement, Meaning and Place*, anthropologist Snead articulates this idea of movement by marking the relationship between trails and place and exploring movement across a landscape as a process of cultural engagement with places like the Old Woman

Mountain.[255] Creation Narratives storied the land with teachings and a physical map of the Salt Songs. This sovereignty rooted in movement, places, and stories differs drastically from the new American legal articulation of sovereignty which includes reservations.

As various extractive entities, such as miners, invested in Chemehuevi lands, the question of how to remove the Indians intensified. Chemehuevi people experienced life-altering changes and pressures at the turn on the twentieth century. Ethnohistorian Martha Knack notes that the people "had relocated physically, had completely changed the routine of their lives, were facing novel material changes, and were involved in a complex and hostile interethnic social environment in which, suddenly finding themselves a minority, they lacked any control."[256] This physical and mental dislocation to the reservation impacted Chemehuevi's sense of wellbeing, access to their traditional homelands, and spiritual lifeways. In order to gain full jurisdiction of Chemehuevi lands, non- Indian settlers exerted legal pressures to segregate many of the Indigenous people onto reservation lands through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) which served as the supervising federal entity.

Reservations provided a solution to "The Indian Problem," which opened the land, secured the West, and freed its resources to non- Indian people. Federal Indian policy held "that Indian lands be cleared to make room for non- Indian settlers, the

[255] James E. Snead, "Trails of Tradition" Movement, Meaning, and Place" as found in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 44.
[256] Martha C. Knack, *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiute, 1775-1995*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2001), 119.

natives be shifted to an agricultural economy, that Indians be acculturated into a lifestyle comfortable to their Euro- American neighbors, that specialists manage Indian relations for the general population, and that this transformation be accomplished as inexpensively as possible."[257] And so by Executive Order in 1907, the Bureau of Indian Affairs established the Chemehuevi Valley Reservation—which in part secured hundreds of acres of their traditional homelands, yet also disrupted an entire way of navigating the landscape of the Salt Song Territory. Traditional movement brought freedom to leave, stay, visit, pray, and create political as well as economic alliances.

Movement captured in the Salt Songs expressed an entire way of life. Demands from settlers and miners channeled through the Bureau of Indian Affairs altered and imposed colonial signatures onto the mountains, water, and valleys. This became the beginning of disrupting the ancestral ties between the Salt Songs, the People, and physical landscapes such as the Old Woman Mountain. Reservations introduced the notion of permanence in a desert landscape, where in contrast, Chemehuevi shaped a deeper understanding of travel and movement, both spiritually and physically. As anthropologist James Snead asserts: "deliberate formalization of the process of travel may take place for numerous interesting reasons that have little to do with movement itself and may reflect an effort to control or even subvert other ways of travel."[258] Limiting travel and movement of Chemehuevi people, and for other Southern Paiute tribes, politically determined access to land and resources.

[257] Knack, *Boundaries Between*, 111.
[258] Snead, "Trails of Tradition," 43.

Many Chemehuevi elders believe that if sacred places, like the Old Woman Mountain become sick, then they as a people will too be made sick.[259] Maintaining relationships with places was, and continues to be, an expression of health. In an oral history with Gertrude Hanks Leivas, she recounted the process of displacement and removal through the reservation. She remembered, "I was born right here. We lived right at the mouth of Chemehuevi Wash. It was nice, nothing around here but our homes, cottonwoods along the river. It was a river then, until they put in the [Parker] dam."[260] In 1907, the Chemehuevi Valley Reservation consisted of thirty- six thousand acres, and in 1935 Metropolitan Water district of Southern California proposed the Parker Dam to create Lake Havasu which threatened hundreds of acres belonging to the Chemehuevi. Shortly after, the United States Congress approved the appropriation of reservation farmlands for its construction.[261]

Soon after the establishment of the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation the approved Parker Dam again removed Chemehuevi people to Parker, Arizona. Gertrude Hanks Leivas recounted, "Well, we had to move to Parker. Father was given an allotment out there. It was heartbreaking. We lived here all our lives. We loaded up our wagons, went south through the mountains here, come out by the river, and crossed the river by ferry. Didn't have animals. Father pulled the wagons."[262] As her family said farewell to their lands, she remembered, "we had a big Sing: someplace around this valley here, we had a

[259] Oral Interview of Matthew Leivas with Daisy Ocampo, February 21, 2015, Chemehuevi Indian Reservation.
[260] Legan Hebner, *Southern Paiute: A Portrait* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2010), 158.
[261] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 156.
[262] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 158.

Sing. All the people went, singing goodbye to the land, the ancestors, goodbye to everything."[263] Gertrude, her family, and Chemehuevi community held on to their ancestral songs and traditions to spiritually part ways, in the same manner the Sisters had to part and go separate ways through the Salt Song Trail. As Chemehuevi sung to their old village, they left a piece of themselves behind to let those Spirits know that they would not be forgotten. The Sings took place for mourning and healing. This helped make sense of themselves in the midst of this displacement and relocation. "How do you mourn the death of a place you called home?" Matt Leivas responded, "you sing and mourn and keep moving forward the best you could. Those we hard times for us."[264] For Chemehuevi people view places as sentient beings filled with ancestral meaning, memories made in their lifetime, and spirits living there. Not all Chemehuevis were drawn to the reservation. Many continued on to Twentynine Palms and to Colorado River Indian Tribe (CRIT) reservation while many moved to different reservations in Southern California.

Reservations secured a portion of their Chemehuevi homelands, yet it also represented a paternalistic relationship with the federal government, where BIA politics and federal assimilation policies would scar communities with ongoing historical trauma—and in turn limit their ancestral movements. Limiting Chemehuevi movement, controlled access to sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains. This correlated with the rapid access to land-resources for non-Indian settlers, federal, and state entities. The

[263] Ibid.
[264] Oral Interview of Matthew Leivas with Daisy Ocampo, February 21, 2015, Chemehuevi Indian Reservation.

wear and tear of these changes upon the land and Chemehuevi people weakened the shared immune systems of the desert. One can argue that genocide, or large extermination campaigns did not occur to Chemehuevi, yet similarly, these policies often resulted in erasure, displacement, and death.

One generation witnessed drastic changes to their traditional life. Moapa elder Irene Benn (born June 27, 1923) recalled the increasing number of Singing Memorials of different Southern Paiute people. She says before "they were Memorial Sings, once or twice a year. Seems to me people didn't die off so much like that. Seems to me it was quite a while before somebody passed away. Not now. Seems like we're losing them almost two at a time."[265] Irene Benn goes on to recount family narratives of diabetes, alcoholism, and smoking addictions on the reservation. The changing food systems, and everyday disassociations (now known as historical trauma) demonstrates the uphill battle Chemehuevi, and other Southern Paiute communities, must contend with economically, physically, mentally, and spiritually. In the midst of constant loss, flux and deficit, Chemehuevi grounded themselves and their deceased loved one with Salt Songs and their associated sacred places. Salt Songs became mobile, flexible, and flourishing symbol of Chemehuevi resistance.

Boarding Schools

The turn of the nineteenth century came with another wave of displacement for the Chemehuevi: boarding schools. In a new effort to "kill the Indian, save the man," the Bureau of Indian Education opened its first boarding school at Carlisle Boarding School

[265] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 130.

unleashing another layer of trauma upon Native children. California followed by opening Sherman Institute in 1902. Boarding schools served to assimilate Native students by forbidding them to practice their traditions, culture, and speak their ancestral languages. Like many Indian communities impacted by boarding schools, Chemehuevi people responded with strength, galvanizing themselves in cultural traditions, friendships, and negotiations. Many Chemehuevi students attended Sherman Institute in Riverside, California. Colonial encounters at boarding schools instilled a sense of loss, fear, and at times death, which students learned to navigate. Sherman Institute's formative years centered labor programs, with the goal of loosening cultural identification markers for Native students, to produce a labor supply. Conceptually, Chemehuevi experienced death as a loss, a kind of depletion of a sense of self, while at other times death was a literal physical loss of life.

Jean Keller presented her scholarly research in her book, *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute 1902- 1922*. Dr. Keller became one of the first scholars to thoroughly access archival documents housed at the Sherman Indian Museum Collection. Her fourth and fifth chapters "Morbidity and Mortality" and "Epidemics, Accidents, and Illnesses" respectively discussed the demographic data of the many student illnesses and deaths while the fifth chapter explored different epidemics, industrial training accidents and illnesses.[266] Her archival primary sources include the student health status found in letters to families and correspondence from superintendents

[266] Jean A. Keller, *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute 1902-1922* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002).

to medical entities. She put a human face to these historical narratives of children who suffered and especially those who died and never returned home.

Bureau of Indian Affairs forcibly removed children from their parents and some never returned home. Removing children from their parents under the legal guise of unfit parenting injected state terror into Indigenous family structures. Removing children from families and communities violated all forms of consent and control over their bodies, families, and futures. A Chemehuevi woman, Gertrude recalled the day the Bureau of Indian Affairs representations took her: "they tricked me into going. That BIA lady waited in the car, and my mother told me there were some apples in there, so I got in. I was scared. I didn't know a word of English; I couldn't communicate with anybody. I didn't know anybody."[267] Another Chemehuevi elder, June Leivas recalled being taken to another Bureau of Indian Affairs school in Parker where matrons shaved the student's head, and humiliation deepened as she did not know English. She shared, "her mother didn't argue with the BIA taking her away because she had become accustomed to losing her children this way; she didn't have a choice."[268]

Boarding schools provided isolated educational institutions where Native youth received a Euro-American education out of reach [from] their families.[269] In her book, *Reclaiming Dine History*, Diné scholar Jennifer Denetdale explored, through oral histories, the impact of boarding schools on her Diné people. She found her family stories

[267] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 160.
[268] Ibid.
[269] Juliet Larkin-Gilmore, *Homesick: Disease and Distance in American Indian Boarding Schools,* November 18, 2016, https://remedianetwork.net/2016/11/18/homesick-disease-and-distance-in-american-indian-boarding-schools/?blogsub=confirming#blog_subscription-5.

"filled with accounts of struggles to maintain a sense of stability in the face of extreme loss and absence" and family separation premised deep trauma. In the case of Gertrude, families scattered and regrouped at different schools, some "brothers and sisters did not see each other for years; neither did they see their parents."[270] June Leivas says she was

> just a little girl when they took her sisters, and she knew them by their Chemehuevi names. They were all given white names there [Sherman], so she didn't recognize her sisters' names. That's where she got the name Gertrude. Her mother never could say it. Anyway, mom heard these girls talking Chemehuevi, but was shy and stayed away from them. Then Henry came for Christmas; he told her to go get her sisters. She didn't know she had any sisters there.[271]

This degree of disassociation created profound and wide-reaching consequences. Today, depression, substance abuse, parenting issues, and suicide run rampant and have become well-known intergenerational legacies of boarding schools. Mental health professional now understands these self-inflicting behaviors to numb pain as historical and intergenerational trauma. In the article "Oral Tradition, Identity, and Intergenerational Trauma through the Southern Paiute Salt Songs" by Anishinaabe and Metis scholar Melissa Nelson, she described how this as "ongoing trauma and oppression coming from federal, state and local governments; religion; education; economics; and society at large become internalized."[272] June Leivas remembered that her grandfather got his name this way, through the boarding schools. "Grandad got his name Henry Hanks like that. When they were giving out the allotments, they couldn't say his name,

[270] Jennifer Denetdale, *Reclaiming Dine History: the Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 160.
[271] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 160.
[272] Melissa K. Nelson, "Oral Tradition, Identity, and Intergenerational Healing through the Southern Paiute Salt Songs" in *Cultural Representation in Native America* ed. Andrew Jolivette (New York: Altamira Press, 2006), 104.

Siwantip. So they just called him Henry Hanks. We call these white names our slave names," June recalled.[273] Boarding school education came at a cost; one had to leave parts of oneself and identity to survive.

Boarding schools warped indigenous identities into bourgeoning structure of new colonial architectures that translated into capitalist economic inroads and a Christian ethos. Assimilation through boarding school education replaced culture, traditions, language with a new sense of meaning rooted in capitalist work ethics of a mainstream economy. Sherman superintendents supplied the local Inland Empire economy with cheap and effective labor through Sherman students. This pipeline from Sherman into low wage labor sought to make students productive workers in society. These programs utilized racialized labor to bring Indian students into the fold of American civilization and progress—a constant move away from Indigenous worlds. After being sent to a Bureau of Indian Affairs school in Parker, Gertrude attended Sherman Indian High School where she said "it was a nice school. I liked it very much. I graduated after four years and out working afterwards in Riverside, housework. It was all I was trained to do."[274] Sherman introduced students to intensive occupational trades such as foremen, house service workers, gardeners, cooks, and farming. They trained for America's lowest working sector. Occasionally, opportunities were given for trades such as nursing, where Sherman women students rose to the occasion to assist their fellow students infected with

[273] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 160.
[274] Hebner, *Southern Paiute*, 160.

viruses and diseases such as tuberculosis.[275] Boarding schools suppressed Native culture, health, and futures.

This deadly enterprise of cultivating students into laboring Indian bodies had a direct relationship towards boosting the local economy of the Inland Empire, into the Los Angeles region in industries such as house workers, orange groves pickers, restaurant industries, and bakeries workers. Labor programs encouraged sustaining, and establishing new, philanthropic connections. Sherman administration used humanitarian sentiment among Riverside's non- Native affluent community to legitimize the success of Sherman Institute. These philanthropic efforts towards Sherman grew out of the political 'Friends of the Indians' movement.

While charitable efforts sought to protect and invest in Indian education, boarding school implementations had negative consequences politically, economically, and culturally for Native students at Sherman. The educational enterprise at Sherman operated with student lives at stake. Many children died due to workforce neglect and rampant disease shot students' immune systems, making students more susceptible to contracting airborne diseases. Superintendents carefully managed the reputation of the school by covering the death of these students. A cemetery near Sherman Indian High School evidences this dark reality. Many parents often saw their children leave for Sherman in perfect health and some returned without life and died away from their parent's arms without proper burial. Some parents could not afford the transportation of

[275] Lorene Sisquoc, Matt Gilbert Sakiestewa and Clifford E.Trafzer, *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue Voices and Images from the Sherman Institute (*Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012), 161.

their child's bodies.[276] For Chemehuevi people, and other Southern Paiute tribes, singing the Salt Songs for the dead was an obligation they did not meet for Sherman students who did not return home. Years later, the Salt Song Project emerged to honor these students, their cultural ties to their homeland and sacred places along the trails. These physical deaths created death worlds that Sherman students endured. It was a lingering reality that death was always around the corner, yet their agency allowed for a blossoming of hope as many found ways to cope within new made family, friends, and student community at Sherman. The assimilationist culture at Sherman tried to break the connection with cultural land base to places like the Old Woman Mountains and other countless sacred places in Native America.

A key piece in the assimilation of Sherman students involved severing that relationship to cultural identifications such as the Salt Songs. Survival of Chemehuevi and other Southern Paiute students depended on the Salt Songs. The Songs provided a cultural category of belonging that challenged the assimilationist narrative of boarding schools. Assimilation at Sherman also meant removing cultural markers that tied students to tribal homelands, instead tying them to an American identity. In resistance, one of the things that tied Chemehuevi students to their homelands and specific sacred places were the Salt Songs. Chemehuevi student, like all Sherman students, were not allowed to sing their sacred songs and practice their traditional ways.

[276] Lorene Sisquoc, Matt Gilbert Sakiestewa and Clifford E.Trafzer, *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue Voices and Images from the Sherman Institute (*Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012), 162.

During a visit to the Sherman Museum, an oral history interview took place with Chemehuevi tribal member, Matthew Leivas Sr. to recount his family ties to the school. He picked up the Sherman yearbook of 1939 and saw a picture of his mother when she attended. He recalled a story of his mother and her other Paiute friends:

> They were just reminiscing on old times, good times and bad times, but especially the good times. Especially how they used to sing the Salt Songs and go behind the buildings to hide from the matrons and what not, so they couldn't hear them speak their language or sing the songs. They used to laugh about it afterwards and I thought that was very cute, it [Salt Songs] was part of the culture. It was very powerful to them. It stayed with them.[277]

Sherman Indian Institute and the employees that carried out its assimilationist agenda undermined the power of these Songs to Chemehuevi and other Southern Paiute students. The Salt Songs allowed Sherman students to engage with the landscape, specific sacred sites, its Spirits, and resources found there. Singing the songs secretly allowed students to activate the landscape in their minds even when they were outside of their homelands. Even though students were far from these places, the Salt Songs allowed them to connect to sacred places like the Old Woman Mountains, and the Oasis of Mara at Twentynine Palms. These were, and continue to be landscapes of return, which allowed people to reconnect with sacred places remotely. To sing the songs meant returning to this place mentally and spiritually. Singing the songs renewed the spirit and cultural values of Sherman students. Although these places were not physically accessed because of national and corporate dominion, they were mentally and spiritually accessed.

[277] Melissa Nelson and Phillip Klasky, *The Salt Song Trail: Bringing Creation Back Together* (2009), DVD.

Sherman students held on to their songs. As they may have it, it was children like Larry Eddy, Betty Cornelius, Vienne Jake, Matthew Leivas, Sr., and Lalovi Miller, who a generation later would bring the songs back and start the Salt Song Project. It was precisely their graceful tact of singing the Salt Songs secretly which embodied their agency, resistance, and voice to challenge head staff and the entire assimilationist discourse at Sherman. The Salt Songs functioned as grounding tools to maintain their indigeneity in a place trying to erase it. The criminalization of these songs held deep impacts for many generations of Sherman students.

Sherman policies outlawed the practice of singing Salt Songs at Sherman Institute in order to instill fear and disdain for any aspect of Indigenous identities. The fact that Southern Paiute students continued singing secretly with such grace demonstrates the power of these students, songs, and what they meant to people during these hard times. Making sense of their life in an off- reservation boarding school and away from home, family, and community, Sherman students held complex narratives of their experiences at Sherman. Many recalled running away, being punished for speaking the language, and getting sick while a majority of Sherman alumni also held beautiful memories of the home, family, and community built at Sherman. This is a source of great pride for Sherman alumni. Chemehuevi elder Larry Eddy recounted a story of his mother when she attended Sherman. When the children gathered in the school auditorium for musical programs, Pearl Eddy was surprised "…to her surprise when they had a program one day and everyone was singing, these four Hualapai girls started singing and they sang the Salt Songs and she looked up at them and said: what are they doing singing our

songs?" Larry shared about her mother, that "she was a Salt Singer too, something she heard from back home. The people up north, they came down, going to school there also, singing the song but then came to find out later those were songs they all sung. These songs are the bondage or the glue or the strings that has us all united and make us into one tribe."[278] Despite the inability to access the traditional trails, these songs allowed Sherman Southern Paiute students to identify themselves, connect to their distant relatives, and bond with the memory of the landscapes identified and carried in the Salt Songs. As Frederic Murray explored, the Salt Songs "invite a different sort of imaginative engagement with the land, as well as promote new histories that help mitigate the destructive effects of colonial expansion," in this case boarding schools.[279] In a social space like Sherman, at the time, connecting with Salt Song singers facilitated a bond which proved revolutionary, provided hope, grew autonomy, and forged a way to negotiate assimilationist agendas on their terms.

Desert Training Center

The power and medicine of the Salt Songs depends on the physical integrity of its sacred landscapes like the Old Woman Mountains. The East Mojave Desert has a significant history of military use which have continued the impact of physical use of the Old Woman Mountains. East Mojave Desert where Old Woman Mountains is located was home to the Desert Training Center, the largest military training grounds led by General Patton. During World War II, the 1940s saw a growing American concern for

[278] Ibid.
[279] Murray, "Shifting Boundaries," 48.

German and Italian encroachment into Egypt and eventually the Suez Canal. This led American leaders to plummet into military training specific to desert landscapes. After the Japanese's military attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States began preparing for desert warfare in North Africa.

The East Mojave Desert became a prime training location for its remarkably similar terrain to the northern African desert, where WWII was taking place. During 1942 and 1943, the United States Army brought 18,000 square miles of desert lands in the Mojave and Colorado Deserts. In a Technical Report from the East Mojave Desert Symposium, Howard Wilshire from the United States Geological Survey confirmed that American military use in the East Mojave Desert has impacted ecological diversity. One of these periods includes a time "in 1942 and 1943, Patton's troops conducted training maneuvers over 11.5 million acres of arid land," and "in 1964, 400,000 acres of the East Mojave Desert was again used for military training activities in an operation called Desert Strike."[280] Next, the United States Army selected General George Patton to oversee this training operation called the Desert Training Center. The Desert Training Center included Camp Essex, Clipper, Coxcomb, Iron Mountain, Ibis, Granite, Rice and Pilot Knob in California; Camp Bouse, Horn, Hyder, and Laguna in Arizona. Many of these camps impact sacred places like Pilot Knob, Hyder and another sacred mountain in Laguna. Bureau of Land Management, now the caretakers of these lands, states "camps were strategically located so each unit could train without impacting the other. Entire

[280] Howard Wilshire, "Wasting of California's Desert" in *Technical Reports* ed. Claudia Luke, Jim Andre, and Margaret Herring, (Riverside: Proceeding of the East Mojave Desert Symposium, 1992), 116-117.

divisions could conduct mock and live-fire air, tank, infantry and artillery exercises. The maneuvers could involve as many as 30,000 troops battling against each other at one time."[281]

3.4 Soldiers train along the Old Woman Mountains. Dean Gordon, "War Games spread over the Desert," 1964, Valley Times Collection, Los Angeles Public Library Collection, Los Angeles.

The American public perception of land as barren' and 'empty drove much of the decision to settle in the East Mojave Desert. Western images of the desert as empty and desolate exist outside of agency, power, and religious understandings shaped, especially by relationships of places to people, spirits, animal, and plant communities. Chemehuevi revere the Old Woman Mountains as a place of power and puha provided by Ocean Woman at the beginning of time. These lands have been far from barren, Chemehuevi see

[281] Desert Training Center: California-Arizona Maneuver Area (Bureau of Land Management), 2, brochure.

places such as Old Woman Mountain as storied landscapes. Hence, this section provides a small insight into how everyday American operations, like its military, impact sacred places for Indigenous people. After years of caretaking for their homeland, Chemehuevi understood the vibrancy of the desert and also its fragility, something the United States Army disregarded. Environmental scientist confirmed that these large military tank maneuvers that took place in the East Mojave Desert reduced ecological diversity for years to come.[282]

Tanks destroyed plants, animals, village sites, burial grounds, artifacts, and sacred places. The weight of these tanks compacted the desert soil, and it takes years, often decades, for soil to loosen and allow for some vegetation. Yet, General Patton regarded the desert as the perfect empty and open space. According to one captioned photograph taken by Dean Gordan, the Old Woman Mountain stood where the Second Armored Headquartered utilized a firing range.[283] A low cement fortification can be observed on the side of Painted Cave on the Old Woman Mountains, just below the medicine cave. The military and spiritual history of a place come together to express overlapping and contradicting histories.

Numerous shells from this firing range can still be found throughout the Old Woman Mountain Preserve today. These are the same material items that the youth found during their weekend stay at the Preserve. The youth listened attentively to the elders who shared the Salt Songs and took note of the various other histories associated with

[282] Howard Wilshire, "Wasting of California's Desert" in *Technical Reports* ed. Claudia Luke, Jim Andre, and Margaret Herring, (Riverside: Proceeding of the East Mojave Desert Symposium, 1992), 116-117.
[283] Gordon, "War Games spread over the Desert," 1964.

Mamapukaib. The Desert Training Center did not clean up the East Mojave Desert after its closure. Bullet shells remain scattered throughout the Preserve, but the most disturbing remains of the Desert Training Center include unexploded ordnances (bombs, mines, and grenades) found throughout the desert. These unexploded ordnances can be seen as far as the Chemehuevi Indian Reservation in Parker, Arizona. Chemehuevi elder, Leivas sadly remembered when one of them exploded as children played outdoors. This military operation is inscribed on the land, especially at the Old Woman Mountains.

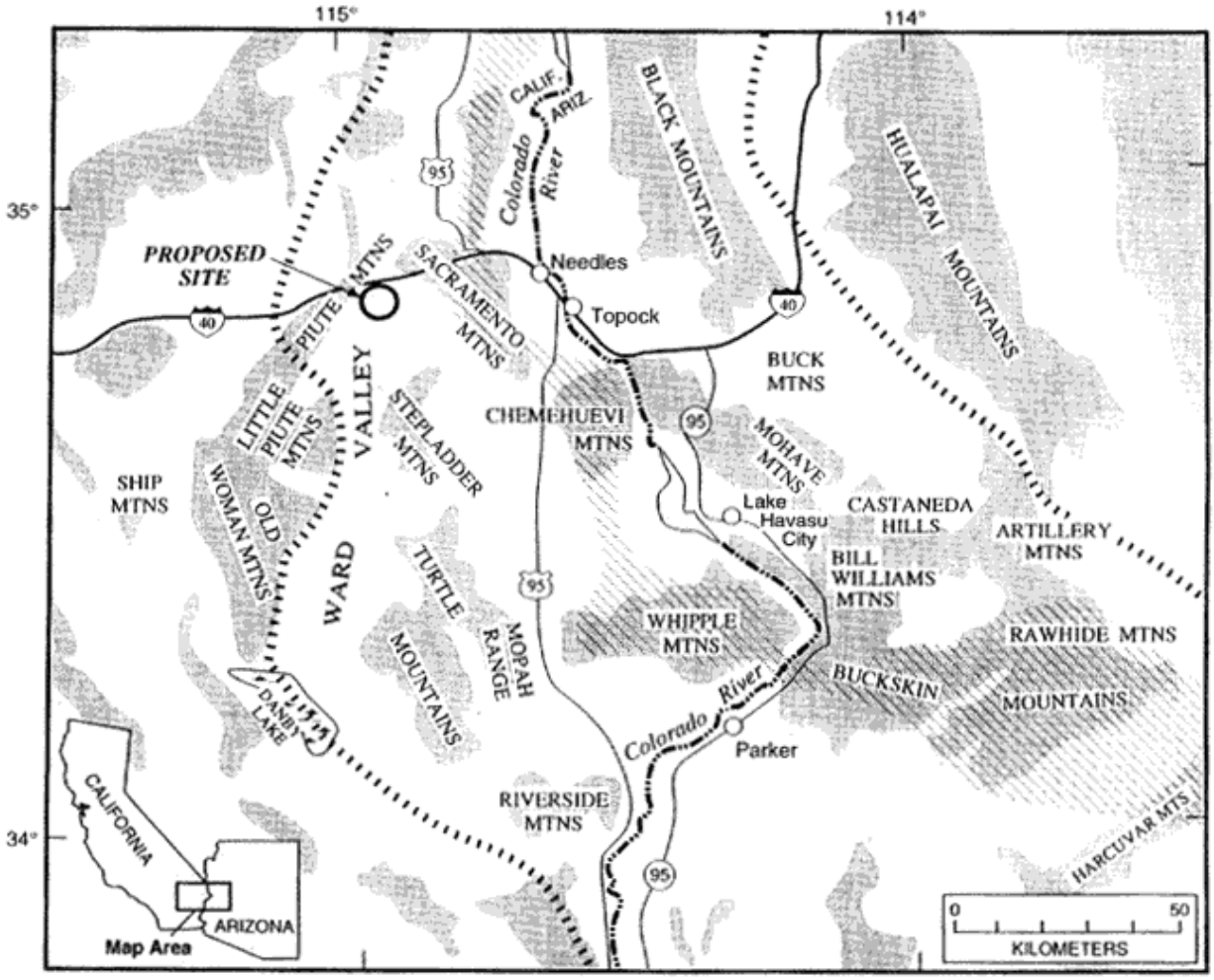
The Desert Training Center was the largest military training center United States history. American based narratives of this covert military simulation are often celebratory, yet the angle least explored is the impacts of militarized sacred places on the spirituality of Native people, lands and spiritual connections. Military perceptions deem desert landscapes barren and without activity, hence suitable for military activity without regard to any historic, spiritual, or cultural claims. It is important to consider the ways in which environmental harm and tribal movements for environmental justice are shaped. It is also important to consider intersection of racial politics in the efforts to protect sacred places. Damage ensues when national security and corporate economy are at stake, because what follows is tribal sovereignty trumped, and tribal lands, bodies, and spirituality are deemed collateral damage.

Ward Valley Radioactive Waste Dump

Chemehuevi saw the desert as alive, and they practiced different sustainability traditions with small-scale disturbances to maintain a healthy desert ecosystem. Chemehuevis integrated these scientific understandings into their cultural practices.

Colonial encounters included devastating profiting projects that extracted resources and introduced poor sustainability practices with irreversible large-scale disturbances. For example, before taking medicinal plants, Chemehuevi and many Native people leave an offering and ask for forgiveness for taking the plant's life and express an intention for its use.[284] These customary practices taught people to orient themselves to not take more than needed. Numerous colonial entities, especially industrialized corporate companies, regarded these Indigenous small-scale disturbances as an expression of backwardness. Much like the military, corporate interest, such as nuclear industries concerned with waste disposal, sought spatial solutions rooted in colonial ideas of land as empty. Although western science has long collaborated with United States national interest on grounds of ingenuity, corporate progress, and national exceptionalism, it has yet to address irreversible effects on the land caused by their projects—especially those damages in the desert which take hundred, if not thousands, of years to recover from. One of these projects proposed the Ward Valley Radioactive Waste Dump in the East Mojave Desert.

[284] Ocampo, "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert," 22.



3.5 Local map of the Ward Valley and Old Woman Mountains. Image courtesy of Philip Klasky.

The Ward Valley is located in the East Mojave Desert and is part of the area which the Chemehuevi and Mohaves from the Colorado River Indian Tribes regard as their homeland. More specifically, along the Ward Valley's southwest border is the Old Woman Mountain range. The State of California proposed a controversial radioactive waste dump in the Ward Valley. The location of the proposed dump sat on thousand acres of Bureau of Land Management (federally- owned) land. The State of California petitioned the Department of Interior for this land to build the facility. Several dump opponents claimed, "the repository would be built to accommodate nuclear utilities who

are looking for a cheap way to transfer the cost and liability of nuclear waste containment to the public."[285]

In 1993 Governor Pete Wilson licensed the nuclear waste facility despite opposition concerns for water poisoning. US Ecology, the dump contractors, proposed to bury low-level radioactive waste and argued that the majority of the wastes slated for Ward Valley would be short-lived medical, research and biotech waste.[286] However, US Ecology had a track record of leaked radioactive waste into the surrounding ecosystem at their previous four waste repositories in operation.[287] A major public outcry ensued! Despite stakeholders' diverse personal, religious, economic, and environmental investments, they all coincided in protecting the waters of the Colorado River from leaks stemming from this proposed nuclear waste facility. The Colorado River flows just forty miles from the Ward Valley and a concern of leaked radioactive waste through aquifers surfaced, impacting drinking water for over two million people. Local tribes, including the Chemehuevi, argued for tribal religious rights and health impacts on the reservation. Determining the risk of leakage proved daunting as science and tribal sovereignty often had different agendas and interest.

According to Blackfoot professor and Native Science advocate Leroy Little Bear, "science has been and can be defined many different ways depending on who is doing the defining" and in the legal courtroom science is defined largely by what science you are hiring to conduct the environmental impact report (EIR) and in turn what criteria they use

[285] Philip M. Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship Native American Perspectives: Ward Valley Nuclear Dump" (Master's Thesis: San Francisco State University, 1997), 2-3.
[286] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 4.
[287] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 71.

to define that science as a valid field of study.[288] The case of the proposed Ward Valley Radioactive Dump drew political, pedagogical, and economic skepticism. US Ecology (dump contractor) then contracted the Cultural Systems Research Incorporated (CSRI) to assess any cultural ties to the Ward Valley. Despite significant findings of tribal ties to the Ward Valley-for hunting grounds, trade routes (Salt Songs and Bird Songs), and habitat for sacred animals- the US Ecology chose to not include these findings in their Environmental Impact Report (EIR). In an incredibly unethical, and yet legal, effort former DOI (Department of Interior) Secretary Manuel Lujan signed over the land to California's Department of Health and Safety (DHS) who purchased it with funds from US Ecology on his last day in office.[289]

In a rapid response, United States District Judge Marylin Patel blocked the transfer because of a lawsuit brought forward by an environmentalists group named the Bay Area Nuclear Waste Coalition, which included multiple local tribes. Howard Wilshire, Keith Howard and David Miller were three experts from the United States Geological Survey who questioned the reliability of the previous Environmental Impact Statement used to decide whether the Ward Valley was a proper place for the dump. They conducted more environmental analysis, and in a report that came to be known as the Wilshire Report, determined the following: "many of the data assembled for the License Application and utilized in preparation of the EIR/S were seriously flawed, incompletely

[288] Leroy Little Bear, Forward to *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence*, Gregory Cajete (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishing, 2000).
[289] Bay Area Nuclear Waste Coalition, et al., Plaintiff-appellee, v Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of Interior, et al., Defendants. State of California, U.S. Ecology Inc., Applicants- appellants, 42 F.3d 1398 (9th Cir. 1994) U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit- 42 F.3d 1398 (9th Cir. 1994) Argued and Submitted May 11, 1994. Decided Nov. 22, 1994.

reported, and interpreted on the basis of unproven assumptions" and that the "discussion of groundwater flow directions presented by USE [US Ecology] is based on inference, supported by little or no data."[290] In fact, this United States Geological Survey team identified five possible subsurface pathways from the Ward Valley into the Colorado River. In an incredibly heated legal entanglement, tribes and their knowledge system, those of scientific value, played a pivotal role in proving an enduring relationship that the tribe had with the wellbeing of the land.

Overwhelming public participation represented diverse points of interest and investment. Some critiqued the economic liability of having public tax dollars assume responsibility for waste produced by medical and nuclear multimillion-dollar industries. During one of the hearings, Dr. Laura Lake from Americans for a Safe Future critiqued laws like Low Level Waste Policy Act which "aim to dump cost and liabilities for this waste from industry onto taxpayers." She added, "it secured legislation for weaker standards."[291] During federal hearings, litigation explored the impact the Ward Valley Radioactive Facility would have on public health. Several interviews with doctors, including oncologists, explored the relationship between radiation and the increase of cancer diagnosis.

Dr. John Gofman (M.D. and Ph.D.) supported the claim that there is simply no safe amount of radiation exposure. Professor of Radiation Physics, Dr. Ernest Sternglass, argued

[290] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 18.
[291] "Choicepoint- California's Water & Radioactive Waste- Updated" YouTube video, published December 25, 2015.

> breast cancer epidemic is due in large part to these experiments that were carried out silently under the nation when all these reactors were known to release radioactivity were allowed to operate while the government kept secret all these early studies that would have warned us about the seriousness of the small release we are getting from nuclear reactors and waste dumps and all the activities in the nuclear cycles.[292]

Capitalist economic inroads have been complicit with the state in compromising people's health, especially Native Americans who have been disenfranchised and invisibilized. Many non-Native opponents of the Ward Valley Nuclear facility were concerned with *their* intake of clean water which comes from the Colorado River. Few spoke about the colonial reality built upon layers of colonial processes which have compromised the health and wellbeing of tribal people.

The opposition to the nuclear waste facility in the Ward Valley gained momentum. Many constituents against the facility questioned the democratic process against corporate and destructive industries. It cannot be overstated that Native people have always been at the forefront of questioning democratic processes and economic extractive industries that hurt the environment. Chemehuevi lands reflect their Creation and puha found throughout the Ward Valley, especially the Old Woman Mountains. Tribal perspectives on land, culture, and spirit differed in fundamental ways from those of their counterparts. For tribal people, it meant more than the water quality to Los Angeles residents. Tribes had different concerns that attest to their own tribal history and knowing. As a result, an inter-tribal coalition of several local Indian communities near the Ward Valley formed. This coalition began with a joint resolution signed on June 19,

[292] Ibid.

1995, and officially named themselves the Colorado River Nation Native Alliance (CRNNA). This coalition included the Fort Mojave, Chemehuevi, Cocopah, Quechan, and Colorado Indian Tribes. One tribal member, Steve Lopez, from Fort Mojave argued "we are not the dumping grounds for urban Los Angeles,"[293] and this demonstrated the difference in historical memory.

For the five tribes that consider the Ward Valley a sacred homeland, their memory of various efforts to colonize their community and lands is much more extensive, visceral, and traumatic. The reality of living in tribal communities exist within a chronic state of distress because the people, land, and world rarely adjust back to their healthy and sustainable baseline after projects such as the Ward Valley Nuclear Waste Dump. This colonial fatigue disproportionately burdens Native people. Non-Native people found the possibility of having their water poisoned appalling, and their outrage centered around betrayal at the hand of the state of California that risked their health for corporate profit. On the other hand, Native people have harnessed their agency and voice in healing practices to weather through difficult moments by valuing community history based on memory, which includes Creation Narratives, songs, gatherings, and medicine,

The fight to protect the Ward Valley for the tribes held deep cultural, economic, environmental, scientific, political, and religious significance. The Mohave and Chemehuevi utilized their sacred songs to outline their traditional homelands. For example, the Mohave Bird Songs tell of the occupation, settlement and travels in areas west of the Colorado River including the Old Woman Mountains in the Ward Valley. As

[293] Ibid.

articulated in Chapter One, the mountains, springs and river serve as landmarks, and listening posts, which refer to their relationship with places. This spiritual tapestry of homeland is referred to as *Puaxant Tuvip* (or Holy Land) by the Chemehuevi. Despite Chemehuevi and Mohave claims to their traditional homeland through the Songs, Indigenous and anthropologist' testimony, Bureau of Land Management's legal rights to the Ward Valley revealed that land ownership is ultimately determined by those who dominates the political process.[294]

However, tribal leaders proved the land to be sacred using songs as their evidence. Chemehuevi tribal member Matthew Leivas shared that

> one of the songs of the Chemehuevi, the Salt Songs, which are very sacred, they sing about this area. Ward Valley is included in these sacred songs along with other basin areas. They are all part of this great route of the sacred song. [The dump] would infringe on our practice of religion, reviving our culture. One thing the government did not do, not successfully, they didn't take away our spirit. They have taken about everything else, but they haven't broken our spirits.[295]

Still, the tribes moved forward to protect Life and the desert tortoises which are known endangered species in the area. Tribes' call to action was done legally and always in their sovereign way, through prayer, the most impenetrable form of sovereignty.

Colorado River Nation Native Alliance led a team of tribal members to provide testimony during federal hearings against the proposed nuclear waste dump. One of the initial challenges, according to Phillip Klasky, was the old argument of oral histories not constituting a *real* testimony of *real* historical value. During the federal hearings in 1995,

[294] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 64
[295] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 133.

court staff informed tribal members that oral testimony would be prohibited. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) responded by planning a workshop where the public could submit comments in writing or could speak individually to a staff member who could then take notes. This public forum format allowed Indigenous histories and Songs to enter the administrative record. This workshop format set a precedent "for other scoping hearings where oral testimony on a wide range of issues and traditional Native American stories and songs were placed into the administrative record."[296] Songs, dances, and stories hold ancestral and invaluable knowledge which should orient state and federal public policy.

Another challenge arose over how to convey a Salt Song or a community story to the general audience. For Native people the knowledge in the songs revealed indigenous science. Leroy Little Bear identifies this science as "a science of the whole, a science of inter-relationship and logic, interdependence and rationality, of deep capacities to sense and know, of reason, rigor, plurality and collaboration."[297] Little Bear identified that "indigenous knowledge systems incorporate many but not all of these elements [scientific study], and they are embedded in a larger social and human context. Therefore, interpreting "science" in the narrowest sense can render traditional knowledge systems "non- science." Despite the many scientific 'advancements' which read as national progress, it would be naïve to assume Indigenous science as backwards. It is time to give credit to Indigenous communities who maintained non-destructive relationships with the

[296] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 66.
[297] Little Bear, Forward to *Native Science.*

natural world around them. Leroy added, "humans possessing equivalent cognitive, emotional and spiritual capacities have lived in stable human communities for many thousands of years. Moreover, many of these societies have come to value observation and the understanding of nature, combined with societal arrangements for holding, developing, and applying knowledge gained thereby for common benefit."[298] Indigenous knowledge systems was critical to the federal hearings. Klasky believed that federal agencies needed to develop an evaluation criterion that directly addresses the cultural, religious, and human rights of Native Americans.

Colorado River Nation Native Alliance (CRNNA) argued spiritual sovereignty, economies, and culture intertwine with sacred landscape, songs, and Creation Narratives. According to Leivas, part of the advocacy around the proposed Ward Valley nuclear facility dump for tribes included prayers, activating the landscape, and speaking to the spirits of these sacred places to let them know they have not been forgotten. In June of 1995, Colorado River Nation Native Alliance organized an event to honor all Life in the desert. This event began at dawn. A school bus rumbled through the desert trails toward the Old Woman Mountains. Passengers included Spirit Runners who continue to honor the trails, places, and prayer in the Old Way. Colorado River Nation Native Alliance prepared a written statement to former President Bill Clinton and in conjunction with the signing ceremony, the tribes organized a Spirit Run from the Old Woman Mountains in the southern part of the Ward Valley to the proposed dump site.

[298] Little Bear, Forward to *Native Science*.

Spirit Runners carried the resolution to where Tribal leaders signed the document and sent it to President Clinton and Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt."[299] At the hearing in Sacramento on June 14, 1996, tribal representatives and individual members of the Fort Mojave, Chemehuevi, Quechan and Colorado River Indian Tribes "sang traditional songs into the administrative record and performed traditional dances to generate communal strength and to illustrate the connection they felt between the protection of Ward Valley and the preservation of their cultural sovereignty.[300] Community wellbeing rooted in prayer activated landscapes like the Old Woman Mountain. Klasky defined the spiritual gathering at Ward Valley as "an event that combined both spirituality and politics to create an atmosphere of reverence and determination."[301] Support for the tribal coalition included Western Shoshone spiritual leaders, Hopi pueblos of Arizona, Sac and Fox Tribe in Oklahoma, Bear Clan of Coast Chumash in San Luis Obispo, and Lower Colorado River tribes, as well as people from the American Indian Movement and non-Native allies.

During this legal battle, the protection of the desert tortoise played a role in denying the proposal for the nuclear waste dump. The Southern Paiute tribes were, and continue to be, advocates for desert tortoise because of their spiritual relationship to this animal. The desert tortoise has been on the decline and are currently on the United States federal endangerment species list, due to disease, increased urban pollution trapped in desert pockets, introduction of invasive species (such as tamarisk), and the decimation of

[299] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 142.
[300] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 148.
[301] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 157.

desert ecosystems. The rebuttal to the proposed radioactive waste dump highlighted how the project would create destructive effects for tribal communities, animal life, and sacred places. The court was tasked with the determination as to whether the proposed project would exacerbate the extinction of the tortoise.

Tortoises played important roles for Mohave and Chemehuevi cultures, and can be seen in bead work, basketry, pottery, pictographs, and petroglyphs. Specifically, Chemehuevi use the desert tortoises for sacred rattles, while the Mohave engraved the animal into their turtle songs which are part of their spiritual song complex. Elder Weldon Johnson (1996) said the following to describe the relationship between tribes and the tortoises: "The Creator designed that area for the tortoise. You don't have to look for them; they are there. The tortoise is our tie to the land. If they go, we will go. What is at stake is the survival of our people."[302] Indigenous economies that included trade, trails, animal and plant beings, and spiritual knowing should be seen as a representation of sustainability and health in the desert. These cumulative, extractive, and pollutive projects undermine tribal sovereignty and strained, reshape, and challenge Chemehuevi's relationship to sacred places and beings.

By opposing the nuclear waste dump, Chemehuevi fought for life and spiritual survival in the Ward Valley. The Old Woman Mountain, found in the Ward Valley, is a landscape that connects the people to their Creation, to their beginning when Ocean Woman set the world in motion. The Salt Songs Trail outlines the places where the spirit of the departed must visit before leaving this world. It is imperative for the deceased

[302] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 137.

spirit to visit places like the Old Woman Mountains to part from the material world. The Old Woman Mountain and the spirits that live there must not be disrupted. The spiritual integrity of sacred places relies on environmental well-being. In addition to Chemehuevi worldviews, Mohave birdsongs also discuss the Ward Valley and specific sacred places located there. Member of the Colorado River Indian Tribe (CRIT), Betty Cornelius stated: *Mutavilya* [Creator God] instructed them that this land area [Ward Valley] was to be theirs, and this is how they claimed it from thousands of years until now, to the present. They are very protective of this area. They feel that they have no place to go if this was taken away from them, that they would probably wilt up and die. They feel very strongly about the land.[303]

The Old Woman Mountain located in the Ward Valley and the proposed dump has existential and spiritual consequences for Chemehuevi and Mohaves. If Chemehuevi cannot maintain a relationship with their sacred places, then there would be a spiritual disconnection with their land base and journey in their afterlife. The Spirit of the people and their songs, stories and Creation Narratives have been their guide. The spiritual tenacity of the Chemehuevi demonstrated an impenetrable fabric of resistance rooted in places. Several indigenous gatherings took place between 1995 and 1996 to oppose the nuclear waste dump. Chemehuevi conducted Sunrise ceremonies each morning during this time of activism and Klasky recalled, "a large circle around a small mesquite fire as Corbin sang songs to welcome the sun and create a spirit of community and

[303] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 133-134.

resistance."[304] Their love for the land and commitment to their spiritual obligation is so strong that within colonial constraints and the constant fatigue of having to experience more loss, the tribes still choose to remain and resist. After a long legal battle, tribal efforts for land and animal preservation, public support for clean water, and for the protection of tribal sovereignty, the proposed low-level radioactive waste dump was conclusively denied.

Conclusion

Many of these colonial and corporate projects attributed to the last hundreds of years of violent policy towards Chemehuevi- removal from traditional lands, relocation to reservations, forced assimilation through the boarding schools, inability to practice traditional economies and food ways, and the continuing pollution of reservation lands and waters by mining and nuclear industries. Altogether, Chemehuevi faced these challenges with prayer and cultural resiliency rooted in the land. These historical extracts provide windows that reveal two histories, which can be loosely categorized as the relationship between colonial American capital, Indigenous people, and their ancestral stewardships to their homelands. In studying the effects of the impact of perceptions of the land and how people interact with places, this chapter examined how American institutions and capitalist economy have attempted to undermine a healthy Chemehuevi future. And despite this, the Chemehuevi have persisted. Chemehuevi sacred places are the heart of personal and community well-being because it allows them to access their economy, their relationships with other tribes, their desert trails, movement, food, water

[304] Klasky, "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship," 155.

sources, and prayer that honors their Creation. The Salt Songs of the Chemehuevi, and other Southern Paiute, carry the prayer for the places that revere the Spirits residing there, to surrender into what is and, in that prayer, find guidance into the future. These traditional knowledges, practices with spiritual, economic and scientific value served the Chemehuevi in hard times.

For this author, looking back at the Healing and Learning Landscapes youth program, what became apparent and significant, was the students' sense of renewal. After their weekend stay, the youth put together, that despite the historic trauma to the landscape and their indigenous livelihoods, their people persisted and protected the future through songs, ceremony, and prayer. Youth learned to understand the land and its specific sacred places as alive and filled with power. They also connected with their own sense of power in becoming stewards of their land for the future.

Chemehuevi and Caxcans share this spiritual connection, power rooted in places, and respective Creation Stories. And like these two tribes, many tribal communities throughout the world found ways to cope with colonial changes, fatigue, and trauma. The following chapter, with a comparative case study of the Caxcan's, in parallel to the history of the Chemehuevi, seeks to demonstrates how tribes have rooted their survival with their places of belonging and Creation.

Chapter 4

Holding Sacred Places together through Dance

Introduction

During a research trip to the Caxcan region of Zacatecas in 2016, Refugio Rodriguez Rodriguez, locally known as Doña Cuca, and the author went to gather mesquite on Tlachialoyantepec, their Creation Mountain. As they exited the local trail into a larger dirt road, Doña Cuca turned towards an Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) employee working on an archaeological dig on their sacred mountain and shouted, "we are fed up with your digs on our mountain! For starters, it looks ugly and two this place does not belong to you! Shoot, it doesn't even belong to me either, but it is our responsibility to take care of this place and you don't understand that. Leave this place alone!"[305] After arguing back and forth, the man wearing a tan vest rolled his eyes and annoyingly replied, "how can we prove this place is what you say it is. This was a military fortress where the Spanish defeated the Caxcan, yet you all argue it's a sacred place. Show us. If you can't, you are wrong." "We've been dancing and praying to this place since I have use of reason! Our people have always come to this place. But you have no way of understanding this," Doña Cuca responded.

In a complicated and heated policing of authenticity, the archaeologists replied, "but you all are not the same people from the 1500s." To this Doña Cuca replied, "Well you're not the same Spanish soldier from the 1500s either but you're still here trying to shut me up and take our land." She defended: "We are not the same, yet we are still

[305] Ocampo Journal, Field Notes, September 13, 2016, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico.

related, and it is the same thing with the people before us, they are our relatives. We come from nowhere else. This is our home. We didn't change, we still acknowledge each other this way but what changed is *you* and the way *you* see us! Go ahead, keep tangling yourselves in knots."[306] To end her debate, Doña Cuca, an elder in her late eighties, grabbed a pebble and threw it at him. It was a clear miss and neither one cared. Both knew she had wounded him.

The Caxcan community of El Remolino, Zacatecas have long battled with the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia (INAH) because of their politics of representation and visibility. Caxcan people and their community histories have become silenced in the official narrative of Tlachialoyantepec, their place of Creation. Caxcan elders argued there are many untold histories of this mountain. Caxcan People believe this mountain's spiritual significance which narrates Caxcan Creation Narratives (outlined in Chapter Two) holds priority over any other colonial narrative.[307] Chapter Two demonstrated how central Creation accounts and their corresponding adherence to protocol are to the overall spiritual wellbeing of the Caxcan People. Colonial encounters have introduced new histories which have affected Caxcan's relationship to Tlachialoyantepec and inhibited their ability to access this place to fulfill their community obligations. Caxcans believe that if they cease to pray to this Mountain, the world, better yet their perception of the world, will be brought unbalanced and sickness will follow.

[306] Ibid.
[307] Oral Interview of Refugio Rodriguez Rodriguez, (AKA Doña Cuca) by Daisy Ocampo, September 13, 2016, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

Much like the Old Woman Mountain, Tlachialoyantepec was, and continues to be, a target in the deadly enterprise to gain access to land and wealth beginning with the Spanish so-called conquest. One of the most erroneous assumptions is that the conquest happened once and in a conclusive, terminal manner. A selection of historical narratives will show how persistent colonial processes have attempted to disconnect Caxcan people from their lands and sacred centers. When community members approach archaeologists regarding the right to a consultation in order to express their concerns and role in the curation of historical narratives, the archaeologists' response reflect the larger national discourse which re-enforces and ensures the invisibility of Indigenous people in Mexico. Colonial histories have a need for community- centered approaches which triangulates historical sources to explore grossly overlooked aspects of colonization and a very simple message: *Indian People are still here*. Thus, this chapter introduces an overdue conversation of Indigenous people, sacred geography, and sovereignty in Mexico.

Caxcans need an alternative space for a community interpretation of the colonial histories (past and present) related to Tlachialoyantepec. Because, Tlachialoyantepec legally belongs to the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia and Mexico's cultural tourism sector, it becomes even more pressing that this chapter engages and critiques Public History and Historic Preservation—the two fields which this Institute employs to construct historical narratives of sacred sites. Despite the fact that these new academic fields show good faith in preserving national patrimony, it is necessary to question how Indigenous people, specifically Caxcan, situate themselves in the national discourse of preservation of sacred places. Are Caxcans best represented by the same institutions

which sustain the colonial apparatus through national agendas? When considering the field of Public History, one must ask whose history is the project at hand making public and who is at the table during the decision-making process?

Indigenous people of Mexico, including Caxcans, rarely partake in conversations of inclusion and consent. Mexican archaeologist and nationalist historians exist in an academic, political, and cultural space which privileges them to have more ownership and authority over the Indian experience than Indians do in shaping their own representation. For this reason, Caxcans require a community- based approach in Native scholarship to explore the relationship people have to Tlachialoyantepec. Caxcans challenge the assumption that the state owns the narrative of Tlachialoyantepec and that Caxcan communities have no history and voice. By working closely with Caxcan communities, this study asserts Caxcan agency, power, and knowledge.

This comparative history echoes similar, but distinct colonial processes experienced by the Caxcan and the Chemehuevi. While the attack on the tie between Tlachialoyantepec and Caxcan People is rooted in a Mexican experience of coloniality, the American colonial experience of the Old Woman Mountain and the Chemehuevi is shaped by different religious, economic, legal, and political systems. Both Spanish and English colonial histories have unsurprisingly parallel objectives to take land and resources which relied on various forms of violence towards the caretakers of these lands, Indigenous people. Many of these mechanisms persist today. The theoretical concept of death worlds outlined in Chapter Three focus on colonial processes as ongoing structures, continuums in American and Mexican histories. Caxcan Mexican history begins with the

conquista, or conquest, and erroneously ends there, without any sort of ties to contemporary realities. The myth of the Mexican conquest of Native people stagnates colonial encounters to the early sixteenth century. A sequestering of time within Mexican history crystalizes the conquest into a neatly packaged era of the early 1500's. National histories assume a single, decisive act of destruction or domination.

In reality, this flawed periodization does not allow scholars to explore colonization in its continual need for repeated episodes of encounters, struggles, and violence long after the early sixteenth century encounters. This provides the grounding to better understand how colonial institutions created catastrophic disruptions (death worlds) for Caxcan People which have yet to subside and where contemporary legacies (and outright attacks) endure. Caxcans define coloniality as a persistent process which seeks to reproduce the institutions which maintain power, especially over the land and its resources. A time stamp of select seemingly disjointed moments in Mexican colonial history define this violent persistence process.

Sacred places became impacted by these colonial processes. How did Caxcan people navigate these colonial processes to protect sacred places like Tlachialoyantepec? Caxcan narratives disrupts narratives of progress found in primary and secondary sources gathered as they pertain to the relationship Caxcan people have with Tlachialoyantepec. Death of Indigenous people corresponded with the material national wealth introduced by the Spanish, inherited into Mexican governance and capitalized by Mexican state formation after the Revolution- creating a deadly enterprise of Caxcan people. Death

worlds created an intersection of pervasive ideas like the vanishing Indian, Native culture as backwards, and savage- in need of progress.

Historically, racially driven ideologies drove numerous attempts to exterminate, dislocate, and assimilate Caxcan people in order to harness their land and resources into profits. A rationalization to justify economic development, campaigns of removal at the expense of Caxcan lands, lives, and sovereign futures through colonial violence ensued. More than physical human death, genocide includes violent attacks on these relationships to people, sacred places, and spiritual entities. In the midst of the trauma Caxcan people were subjected to, the Xuchitl Dance venerating Tlachialoyantepec created a category of belonging which took new meaning in colonial undercurrents. The Xuchitl Dance allowed their sacred place, such as Tlachialoyantepec, to stay alive in their hearts and communicated with the spirits found in those places to let them know they had not been forgotten. The Xuchitl Dance harnessed a sense of belonging outside of material wealth creating a new sense of power and resistance in the process.[308] Despite the challenges that colonial constraints imposed, the Xuchitl Dance, Creation Narratives and sacred landscapes became a generative force which served to assert power, historical agency, community, and a homeland in the midst of flux, trauma, and loss.

"Axcan Quema, Tehuatl, Nehuatl!"

Caxcans confronted many colonial processes that challenged their spiritual sovereignty and access to Tlachialoyantepec. The first recorded attack on Caxcans took

[308] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 72. Hereafter cited Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, pg.

place during the Mixton War where early Spanish took more than 15,000 Caxcan lives, especially children's lives, in cold blood. The Indigenous resistance led by many Caxcan communities in the Juchipila Canyon was the second largest Spanish-led military campaign waged on Native people in Mexico, the bloodiest were the Mexica (Aztec) in what is today Mexico City. A long scholarly practice of only granting serious academic studies of the conquest to those Indigenous communities who came from a state level society suppress nomadic tribal histories such as the Caxcan's role in the Mixton War. Tribes with state level societies included the Mexicas, best known today as the Aztecs, along with those from Monte Alban, Chichen Itza, and Cholula. Mexican historiography has centered Indigenous communities who the Spanish acknowledged as having a written system, advanced architecture, and extensive food agricultural systems such as the chinampas and pyramid structures.

For example, Bernal Diaz Del Castillo, a soldier and chronicler of Hernan Cortez's early colonial campaign, wrote extensively to Charles V about Tenochtitlan, a state society. He described, we "continued our march towards Iztapalapa [Mexico City], and when we saw so many cities and villages built in the water and other great towns on dry land and that straight and level causeway going towards Mexico, we were amazed and said that it was like the enchantments they heard of in the legend…And some of our soldiers even asked whether the things that we saw were not a dream."[309] Charles V's

[309] Bernal Diaz del Castillo, *History of the Conquest of New Spain*, transl. David Carrasco (University of New Mexico, 2008), 156-179.

colonial imagination captivated early Spanish because this romanticized Indigenous ingenuity confirmed their perception of wealth in these lands.

These documented encounters played a significant role in solidifying Indigenous Mexican history. Mexican histories left resistant nomadic Indian histories out of official narratives. Caxcans refer to their politically organized homeland (which stretches across four states) as *chimalhuacan*, or lands that have shields- expressing interregional alliances to express a nation.[310] And though nomadic, the Caxcans were, and continue to be an incredibly organized people. This confederated tribe organized itself through the different relationships one sacred place has with another. Mexican scholars placed more emphasis on the romantic colonial worlds than on the spiritual worlds that Caxcans navigated through sacred places like Tlachialoyantepec, their Creation Mountain. This sequestered Mexican historiography from expanding early colonial narratives to include nomadic tribes, created new imaginations and more threatening depictions and military responses to the "savage nomads." Caxcans suffered erasure because of these colonial historiographies.

Spanish colonization of the Mexica ensured two things: a northward expansion in search for "God, Glory, and Gold," and secured an ever-growing manpower of allied Indians to enforce the new colonial power. Mexica accomplished this through artillerized wars, interpreting terms of negotiations between neighboring tribes, and modeling assimilation for captive Natives. Of the colonized Mexica, Indigenous caciques, or elites,

[310] Phillip C. Weigand, "Territory and Resistance", in Andrew Roth- Seneff, Robert V. Kemper, and Julie Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: the University of Arizona Press, 2015), 16. Hereafter cited Weigand, "Territory and Resistance," pg.

notoriously served this role to prove their loyalty to the Spanish Empire by providing frontier military services. Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli, a Native cacique of Tlalmanalco, wrote a detailed narrative of military campaigns, massacres, and the sixteen-year war against the Caxcans. In the document, "Relación de la Jornada que hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli," Acazitli grossly characterizes Caxcans as savages while highlighting his courageous military leadership. Acazitli's military men included the "tlaxcaltecas, huexotzincas, quauhquechultecas…followed by the mexicans, xilotepecas and aculhuas…and finally those from Michoacan, Mextitlan and Chalcos."[311] The advantage of these neighboring tribes included knowledge of pre-existing animosities, partnerships, and networks of trade, culture, and language to name a few. Archaeologists Phillip C. Weigand became the first scholar to focus his studies in the Caxcan region and argued for more historical depictions of Indigenous sovereignties of nomadic communities.

In his article, "Territory and Resistance," Weigand provided a new interpretation for Juchipila as a Caxcan center which reflected "their cultural power [and] to serve their expansive economies."[312] These economies included pre-colonial mining chambers with underground mining complex.[313] Allied Natives who had knowledge of the Caxcan mining economy played pivotal roles in the northern expansion because they could locate mining goods. This kind of information fueled the Spanish imaginary for gold, silver, and

[311] Written by Gabriel de Castañeda in nahuatl and translated to Spanish by Pedro Vásquez in 1641. *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, Joaquin Garcia Izcalbaceta, II: 31. Hereafter cited as Castañeda, *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, 31.
[312] Weigand, "Territory and Resistance," 66.
[313] Ibid

other resources. The goal of Native allies involved proving their loyalty by enduring adversity and hoping for reciprocity from the Spanish—which included access to artillery, lands, leadership, and enslaved Caxcan Indians. In the military rendering of Acazitli, he states "and the Mexicans [Mexica], even though they were our enemies at one point, before they belonged to the Emperor [Charles V], they are punctual with things of their responsibility until they have accomplished their tasks."[314]

The Mexica Empire had a long history of trade, travel, and war with nomadic tribes, like the Caxcans. Caxcans and Mexica maintained extensive trade networks for turquoise and food. The knowledge of the landscape they acquired along the way proved crucial for the Spanish. Weigand further argued, "the social, political, and economic impact of the Spanish arrival and conquest of the Culhua Mexica (Aztec) Empire, [which] put an end to a vitally important long- distance trade system intimately tied to the region."[315] Weigand's analysis missed an understanding of the pre-colonial subservient relationships between the Mexica and Caxcans. Caxcans today correct people when told all Mexicans come from the Aztecs. Caxcans today claim that their history with the Aztec has fluctuated over time—at one time they mutually used trade routes, and in other times, there was war, with Caxcan enslavement and theft of Caxcan resources.[316] Notorious Spanish conquistadors capitalized on the subservient effect of war between the Caxcans and Mexica to create a loyal army to attack Caxcans.

[314] Castañeda, *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, 31.
[315] Andrew Roth- Seneff, Robert V. Kemper, and Julie Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 16.
[316] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

4.1 Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza with Tlaxcaltecas allies fighting Caxcans and Zacatecos in Xochipilla (Juchipila), place represented by a small boy holding a bouquet of flowers. Anonymous piece, Xochipilla (item 58). Painted Cloth from Tlaxcala, lithograph of bell, 1892.

To wage war against Caxcans, reputable Spanish conquistadors such as Nuño Beltran de Guzman and Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza entered the Caxcan region certain of an easy victory. Caxcan chief, Tenamaztle, led the struggle against the Spanish for many Caxcan communities such as Nochistlan, Apozol, and Juchipila. With the support of other Native allies, the Spanish moved through the Caxcan region and a major battle took place across the canyon in notable mountains such as the Mixton and Tlachialoyantepec, the Caxcan Creation Mountain. The Mixton Mountain became the center stage for the first battle and an excellent choice for Caxcans who knew the steep

mesas and its dangerously narrow trails. Cristobal de Oñate led the first weeks and months of battle and found his army unequipped. In a letter headed to Mexico City Oñate wrote, "these entire lands are full of rebels and the Caxcanes have become lions, and there is no other choice but to ask for help to the entire kingdom."[317]

Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza responded immediately to this request and assigned Pedro de Alvarado, who at the time was in Guatemala also initiating genocidal campaigns against Indigenous people.[318] Alvarado responded to this request, "Mister Governor, I do not think it will be long before punishment is served to those traitor enemies which is a shameful how four little cats have given so much thunder; with the few people by my side, will be more than enough to subject them…let's not wait any longer."[319]

Confident Alvarado underestimated the biggest weapon Caxcans had: an intimate knowledge of the land. The Spanish military had infantry weapons, horses, armor, and guns yet the novelty of the Juchipila River, springs, canyons, crags, cliffs, mesas, caves, and trails made it impossible to escape warfare and penetrate the region.[320] The cliffs were physical key points for Caxcans who had height advantage to drop boulders and delay the scaling for the Spanish. In an ambush attack, Spanish accounts narrate Alvarado's fear. In one of these moments, various accounts, including chroniclers Tello and Bernal Diaz del Castillo, shared that his horse slipped and fell on Alvarado breaking

[317] Miguel Leon-Portillo, *Francisco Tenamaztle: Primer Guerillero de America Defensor de los Derechos Humanos* (Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 2005), 68. Hereafter cited Leon- Portillo, *Francisco Tenamaztle*, pg.
[318] Pedro de Alvarado became the mythical Spaniard which some Native people referenced as the Sun god, or Tonatiuh.
[319] Leon-Portillo, *Francisco Tenamaztle*, 72.
[320] Oral Interview of Alan Rodriguez Rodriguez, (AKA Pichilingue Jr.) by Daisy Ocampo, June 2018, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited as Pichilingue Jr. Interview, 2018.

several of his ribs causing internal injury, and eventually his death. Caxcan people today ardently argue against this historical portrayal. Caxcan elder Cuca Rodriguez, and medicine man Pichilingue, as well as those living in the region today continue to transmit a different story. Caxcans today affirm that their people attacked Alvarado with boulders and knocked him and his horse down the cliff yet Caxcans believe the story changed to save face because no one would accept that the so-called savages could have knocked down such an avid conquistador.[321] A depiction of injured Alvarado being escorted off the battlefield can be identified in the bottom left quadrant of the image below. Caxcans yelled their war cry "Axcanquema, Tehuatl, Nehuatl!" or "the time is here, it'll be you or me." Mexican historians agree this battle was a conclusive Caxcan victory.

4.2 Drawing of death of Pedro de Alvarado. Photo courtesy of Carlos Cañas Dinarte.

[321] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

Viceroy Mendoza became agitated at the thought that these Indians could engage in such a fight, especially because he believed Spanish weapons to be superior. Mendoza decided to take command of troops fighting Caxcan. Spanish military diaries of these massacres narrate the cruel massacres of Caxcan communities ordered by an infuriated Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. A major war between Spanish and Caxcans secured northward Spanish expansion to gain access to mineral resources such as silver found in Chihuahua and Durango. According to Andrew Roth- Seneff, "during three centuries of colonial government, this was the only occasion when a viceroy actually led an army into battle."[322] However, Caxcans historically represented the best organized military threat to precolonial entities such as the Mexica empire, and Tarascan state. Committed to end their livlihoods, Mendoza ordered a complete burn down of any small-scale farming and personal homes found throughout the canyons. Several primary sources of eye witness accounts exist detailing the barbarian Spanish attacks. On one specific day, Spanish military murdered seven Caxcans and captured and tortured another Caxcan for intel. When the torture proved unsuccessful, Spanish military stoned this Caxcan to death, or used the brutal tactic of having dogs eat their bodies alive.[323] This Spanish military tactic, called, left surviving Caxcans with a cruel sense of death.

These massacres continued as Spanish captured Caxcans. Another disturbing account narrates a twelve-day journey where Spanish state:

> We killed them with artillery…we cut their bodies, an arm, and ultimately made their bodies into little pieces that it looked like a whirwind of body parts, and their hands and meats were all over, and some we left mounted

[322] Roth- Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty*, 16.
[323] Castañeda, *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, 31.

> on the trees; and right where they were stationed for battle we hung seventeen, shot another seventeen, and five we stoned, and another six we hung near our Viceroy's camp, and right where the Caxcans stationed, we cut down all their trees and totaled their homes.[324]

Another night that same week, when the Spanish held night guard, they shared how they captured two Caxcans people. "Again, refusing to give up locations, we cut their hands; and just like that we grabbed two women and cut their breast off."[325] Spanish sent dismembered body parts with four Caxcans to their leadership as threats. The spiritual and cultural world, which long defined Caxcans immediately warped into a world of survival.

Death worlds were a living reality for Caxcans who now feared murder, rape, imprisonment, and torture in their homelands. One Caxcan written account by a *tastoan*, or military leader, Francisco Tenamaztle, to the Council of Indies in Spain highlighted the cultural, familial, and societal disruption the Spanish caused during the Mixton War. While imprisoned in Spain, Tenamaztle presented his grievances to the Council and wrote:

> why has it not been enough what the Spanish have done to me, their damage is so immense, unimaginable and irreparable to have caused unjust wars, cruel treatment, death of my people, my relatives, making me flee and exile me of my home, lands, wife and kids through the mountains in fear of what could be done to me.[326]

[324] Ibid.
[325] Ibid.
[326] Francisco Tenamaztle and Bartolome de las Casa, *Relación de Agravios hechos por Nuño de Guzman y sus Huestes a Don Francisco Tenamaztle* (Mexico: 1959), 11. Hereafter cited Tenamaztle, *Relación de Agravios*, pg.

Caxcan sense of integrity and livlihoods had been ruptured by warfare. These catastrophic disruptions translated to a constant state of fatigue, loss, and death. Tenamaztle continued, "our beautiful ways now found us tired, oppressed, fatigued, and destroyed, this took a large toll for us because we are a free people."[327] Although Spanish committed genocide every day, this war started and continued with an underestimation of Caxcans power. Caxcan military persistence resulted from superior Indigenous leadership and interrelated through kinship ties which allowed for quick reorganization.[328]

4.3 Spanish suppression of fallen rebels were brutal some of the worst punishments during the early 'conquest' like the practice of having dogs eating rebels alive were a primary means to deliver a spectacle of death and fear. Anonymous Piece, Manuscript of Attack of Dog Eaters (Details), 1560. Bibliotheque Nationale, Francia.

A Spanish calculated attempt to dismantle Caxcan people involved targeting Caxcan leadership and rupturing their ties to sacred places. The case of military leader

[327] Tenamaztle, *Relación de Agravios*, 15.
[328] Phillip C. Weigand, "Territory and Resistance, Part II" 86.

Tenamaztle and his imprisonment in Spain demonstrated the effort invested to suffocate and weaken Caxcans fighting the Mixton War by eradicating its leaders. Well known for his fierce advocacy of Indigenous rights, Tenamaztli learned Spanish and built a legal framework as a foundation to set forth grievances of Indigenous People, and in his case Caxcans, against Spanish conquistadors like Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza and Nuño de Guzman. This genocidal war involved massacres, cutting access to food resources, imprisoning Caxcan leadership, and eventually enslaving people. The Spanish charged Tenamaztle on accounts of disloyalty to the Spanish Crown due to his role as a Christianized Caxcan and leader of the Caxcan resistance. In a letter from prison in Spain (and with the assistance of Bartolome de las Casa), Francisco Tenamaztle wrote his grievances against Nuño de Guzman and Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza. "Guzman continued his path towards Culiacan in search of gold and riches as our lands abound in them. He stabbed a knife into our bodies without any regard for sex or age nor dignity; he burned our homes of children, elders, little and big as he watched our people burn in flames," Tenamaztle exclaimed.[329] Despite considered a rebel savage by the Spanish, Tenamaztle became one of the first Indigenous intellectuals who legally questioned the idea of righteousness and civilization in light of the massacres, torture, and enslavement of Caxcans to the silver mines and as far as Antilles Islands. He called for a closer look at Indigenous governance and natural law which included reverence to the land. Tenamaztle's legal thought played a crucial role in the discourse and foundation of Indian

[329] Tenamaztle, *Relación de Agravios*, 13.

people having human rights. His thinking added a new dimension of morality and ethics into colonial campaigns, which would later include enslavement.

Miguel Leon-Portilla, a noted Mexican historian, wrote extensively about Francisco Tenamaztle and his relationship with an infamous Franciscan, Bartolome de las Casas, in *La Flecha en Blanco*.[330] Fray Bartolome and Tenamaztle had many conversations in Caxcan, a Nahuatl variant. Leon-Portillo stated "having the priest Las Casas by his side, with rich arsenal like arguments, he became an interpreter of the expressions put in Spanish, so that the Indian not only defended but demanded justice" having successfully gained a double consciousness to sustain his human right arguments.[331] He learned to take the Spanish perception of Natives to create a new sense of self in an effort to advocate for Indigenous rights. Leon-Portilla's seminal work helped put Caxcans on the map. Until Leon-Portilla's publications, Mexican histories deemed Caxcans historically unworthy of study. Leon- Portilla approached the Caxcans through military history and centered the Mixton Battle in purely colonial and military terms. These militarized depictions sequester any depth to Indigenous livlihoods and values. If one follows the chronology of military history, readers easily fall into the myth that the conquest was a singular crystallized moment in history that annihilated Indian people. This train of thought leaves Native people, voices, and stories in the past even though Caxcans adapted, persisted, and survived. In the Mexican historiographic tradition,

[330] Miguel León-Portilla, *La Flecha en Blanco: Francisco Tenamaztle y Bartolomé de las Casas en Lucha por los derechos de los Indígenas, 1541-1556* (México: Editorial Diana, 1995).
[331] León-Portilla, *La Flecha en Blanco*, 33.

Indigenous leadership becomes confined to military narratives, ultimately obscuring the historical character of Indigenous resistance, the role of the landscape, sacred places, and performative elements as generative agents in their resistance.

Historical narratives of this war must center on Caxcan values. Although Spanish narratives regard the landscape as the setting to this war, Caxcans highly regard the role of places, especially those within their sovereign and sacred geographies. Tlachialoyantepec, or Cerro de las Ventanas, is the Caxcan's Creation Mountain and its spiritual, economic, scientific, and political configurations were beyond Spanish articulation. Cerro de las Ventanas took its name 'mountain with windows' from the Mixton War precisely because Caxcans fortified their Creation Mountain. They knew this place best. Within the scholarship of the Mixton War, historians such as Miguel Leon-Portilla credit another mountain, the Mixton Mountain, as the center point for this war. Community elder and Dance Keeper, Moctezuma Meza, argues that places and stories connected this entire region into a whole. Tlachialoyantepec, in addition to being part of Caxcan sacred geography, also served as a place of refuge, vantage point during war, and had to be protected for its spiritual significance.

Tlachialoyantepec is the center of the Caxcan world, past and present.[332] Today, one can observe the windows which functioned as a strategic lookout point for Caxcans against the Spanish. Caxcan elder, Doña Cuca, shared that certain trails going up Tlachialoyantepec disappear at certain angles if one stands at the skirt of the mountain.[333]

[332] Oral history with Moctezuma Meza by Daisy Ocampo in Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico on March 18, 2018. Hereafter cited Moctezuma Interview, March 18, 2018.
[333] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016

This feature alone made Tlachialoyantepec the perfect place to fight. Doña Cuca worked gathering food along numerous trails for close to several decades and knows the trails better than anyone. Carolina Sandoval, a local historian, interviewed many elders who stated, that "a great number of Spanish soldiers attempted to capture Tenamaztle from Tlachialoyantepec, but curiously when the Spanish attempted to go up the mountain to the top, they would lose their trail and simply go in circles without ever reaching the top."[334] Doña Cuca adamantly shared, "our people were not dumb, they were architects, they knew how to protect this place that is so special to us."[335]

Acazitli's Spanish account described these trails: "the river [Juchipila] surrounds the mountain and it seems water bursts out of the concavity and the stream is wide. The trails where one goes up the mountain are four, and they turn through the cliffs in areas that are cold and difficult."[336] In addition to anticipating defense to protect their Creation Mountain, Caxcans traditionally used this mountain to plant many foods such as: cotton, chile, tomatoes, and *huaji*. In an interview with Caxcan elders in Inglewood, California, many recalled the old farming system called *cuamiles* which relied on an irrigation system where different families utilized the land for small-scale cultivation.[337] Spanish colonizers knew the significance of the land as a means for Indigenous sustenance and livlihoods. Recorded accounts of Spanish soldiers cutting access to food resources reveals their goals of starving Caxcans and disrupting their ancestral food ways. In Acazitli's

[334] Carolina Sandoval y J. Jose Campos Loera *Cuentos Y Leyendas de la region de Juchipila* (Zacatecas: Instituto de la Region de Juchipila, 2015), 92.
[335] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016
[336] Castañeda, *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, 31.
[337] Ocampo Journal, Field Notes of Caxcan Community Meeting, January 18, 2018, Inglewood, California.

account, soldiers reportedly spent an entire day cutting magueys and mesquite trees throughout the Caxcan region. The Spanish utilized starvation as a colonial tactic that expanded Caxcan death worlds. Death of Indigenous bodies crippled the threatening Indian presence in order to access their lands for the future encomienda system. The Spanish also sought to create mineral wealth, and when possible, harness bodies to labor in service of the Spanish empire.

Local Caxcan history tells of the Spanish's accuracy in targeting Tlachialoyantepec, because of its spiritual significance. Existing Spanish primary sources support Caxcan claims that sacred landscapes, traditional dances, and prayer played foundational roles during Mixton battle. Traditional dances asserted Caxcans identities and claims to their homelands and sacred places located throughout their sacred geographies. Primary Spanish documents must be read against the grain to unearth a Caxcan centered history of the Mixton Battle. For example, Acazitli's account detailed "and we saw at the top of the Xuchipiltepetl, where we know a demon's temples resides, a large one, and full of grass…there were adobe walls, an ancient temple, which no one knows who built it…the mountain was built with homes along the mountains, in areas which seem difficult landscape."[338] This account reveals the knowledge the Spanish had of the Caxcan Creation Mountain, as significant to everyday life, identity, and as a spiritual center. Caxcan medicine man, Pichilingue, confirms that Tlachialoyantepec was a temporary residence, a resting point, for Caxcans moving up and down the region.[339]

[338] Castañeda, *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, 31.
[339] Personal Communication with Guadalupe Rodriguez (AKA Pichilingue) and Daisy Ocampo in front of El Cerro de las Ventanas, Summer of 2007. Pichilingue had a cargo and community responsibility to

Six archaeologists studied pottery from El Cerro de las Ventanas, and confirmed "the main monumental structures lie on Cerro de Las Ventanas, which encompass a pyramid- altar square complex (i.e. ceremonial center) and several residential houses including a cliff-house."[340] Pichilingue revealed in an oral interview that

> anyone who saw the name 'Xuchipiltepetl' in documents would know that it is our sacred mountain. First because it tells our story of how we were born from this place just by looking at the language. It tells how our flower god resurrected from the dead by our Creator. Those flowers are our cacalotxuchil and yes there was a temple at the top of our mountain, the remnants of the walls are still up there. This is the mountain we go back to as people.[341]

Spanish primary sources support this claim, as many saw Caxcans on top of their mountain singing and reported "there were flowers, food, cacao drinks; and all the diverse nations danced."[342] Given the unique description of this dance, it was the Xuchitl Dance, which will be discussed later.

The Mixton Battle was a strong, prolonged, and multi-faceted resistance movement to preserve their homelands, natural sources, and spiritual sovereignty. Multiple attempts and processes to maintain colonial domination lasted well into the eighteenth century.[343] Understanding the duration of the battle dispels the myth of a singular conquest which renders silent Caxcan resistance, resilience, and agency over

protect this mountain. People who wish to enter must ask him for permission. Hereafter cited Pichilingue Communication, Summer, 2011.

340 Hugo Lopez del Rio, Fernando Garcia, Raul Y. Mendez-Cardona, M Caretta, Robert Speakman, and Michael Glascock "Characterization of pottery from Cerro de Las Ventanas, Zacatecas, Mexico," *Radiochimica Acts* 97 no. 9 (January 2009): 514.

341 Pichilingue Communication, Summer, 2011.

342 342 Castañeda, *Relación de la Jornada que Hizo don Francisco de Sandoval Acazitli*, 31.

343 William B. Taylor, "Santiago's Horse: Christianity and Colonial Indian Resistance in the Heartland of New Spain" in *Violence, Resistance, and Survival in the Americas: Native Americans and the Legacy of Conquest* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press,1994), 154.

identity. Caxcans from the Juchipila Canyons- or *Xuchipiltecos* as Spanish called them- responded to war and religious conversion by reclaiming their stories, places, and power through dance—a prayer, artifact of history, and living practice.

Caxcan Religious Revitalization

A millenarian movement (a revitalization movement) took place from 1541-1542 on Tlachialoyantepec (El Cerro de las Ventanas), throughout the Caxcan region and beyond. Indigenous millenarian movements uphold a more just order in the midst of rapid change or colonial incursion. Caxcans expressed a desire for a more balanced world, against the widespread colonial inequality. The nomadic Indians of Juchipila primarily led this revitalization movement that advocated for the protection of their Creation Narratives, spiritual traditions, and sacred landscapes. They did this in large part to reject the Catholic intrusion that sought to disconnect Caxcans from the gods, sacred places, and pacti (medicine). The movement demanded that all those who sought to return to a time "when everything was good" must take arms in an indigenous insurrection against the Spanish presence. This call to arms reached and included different neighboring tribes from the states of Durango, Jalisco, and San Luis Potosi. The millenarian movement, a spiritual revitalization, became a response to the fear that Caxcan felt at the hands of conquistadors, friars, and by destruction of idolatry, forced labor at encomiendas, haciendas, slavery at the silver mines, and overall loss of autonomy.[344]

[344] Enrique Florescano, *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994), 106.

Mexican historian Enrique Florescano described the importance of the millenarian movement to Caxcan survival and protection of sacred places. Florescano and Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez described a primary source indicating an Indian god from Zacatecas who resided in a mountain promised to restore native traditions if Christianity was defeated. One sources from Cristobal de Oñate described this cleansing effect and rebellion against Christian, Spanish, and other Indians as one that "would create a great opening in the earth into which all Christians would be sucked, and then a great flame of fire would come sent by the devil [Indian god] and the Christians and all Indians who did not wish to take up arms and rebel would be swept up and burned and, that done, would go on to Mexico [City] subdue it and do the same."[345] Caxcans today argue this mountain was Tlachialoyantepec and the Indian god was Xochipilli. Another legal declaration from Cristobal de Oñate said "…they had rejected the faith and washed their heads to wipe away the baptism they had received, and that they were repentant of the times they were Christian."[346] Tenamaztle converted into Catholicism and still became persecuted by the Spanish. Escaping Caxcans saw conversion as a farce. Regional cohesion began to deteriorate as enslavement campaigns displaced hundreds and eventually thousands of families to the silver mines in Zacatecas, Parral in Chihuahua and San Luis Potosi. This religious movement spread to neighboring rival tribes, and their ancestral cultural

[345] AGI, Justicia 262, pieza 2, Auto de inicio para los descargos, fols. 134r-134v, declaracion de don Cristobal, 1547 as found in Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez , "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Nueva Galicia" Roth- Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 157.
[346] AGI, Justicia 262, pieza 2, Auto de inicio para los descargos, fol. 175 r, declaracion de Cristobal de Oñate, 1547 as found in Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez , "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Nueva Galicia" Roth- Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 157.

connections brought them together. Many historical studies ignore centering of sacred sites, Creation Narrative and ceremonial dances that grounded their Caxcan identity. Caxcan resistance responded to active military attacks yet more importantly it was a call to revitalize their Indigenous identity and assert their spiritual sovereignty to sacred places, worldview, and regard for the power that resides in places. This religious and social movement promising to restore Caxcan traditions and sovereignty emerged as a response spanish encroachment to Caxcan homelands and livelihood.

Several Spanish primary sources refer to this millenarian movement as el habla del diablo, or devil's speech. One letter written by Cristobal de Oñate mentions, "if the devil's message ever entered those towns, they would have no choice but to rise up" ultimately indicating the power of behind this message to transform community stances.[347] One Caxcan governor of Juchipila in 1547 wrote about the beginning of the rebellion:

> Some eight years ago, while the witness was in Juchipila, the usual [leader] of the town was Juytque. One night this witness saw that certain Zacateca Indian messengers arrived, met with Cuish…to say that all land should come together and that the fathers and grandfathers and ancestors would resuscitate and join them and that they should kill all the Christians in this province…and from that moment they would not have to work, as the corn and other seeds would grow in just one day, and to tell them that all those who did not wish to believe the words of their devil would die with the Christians...and this messengers had said and spread to many towns.[348]

[347] AGI, Justicia 262, pieza 2, Auto de inicio para los descargos, fol. 172 v, declaracion de Cristobal de Oñate, 1547 as found in Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez , "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Nueva Galicia" Roth- Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 86.
[348] AGI, Justicia 262, pieza 2, Auto de inicio para los descargos, fols. 439v-440r, declaracion de Juan Juchipila, and fol. 444r, declaracion de Martin, 1547 as found in Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez , "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Nueva Galicia" Roth- Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to*

This prolific religious movement had a deeply shared cultural and religious underlining in the region and neighboring tribes. The Xuchitl Dance and its Creation Mountain grounded a collective Caxcan identity. Caxcans offered this dance as a community prayer which acknowledged the spirits which dwell on Tlachialoyantepec. The Xuchitl Dance unsettled colonial control in the region, and its performative and spiritual agency threatened Spanish confidence.

Spanish authorities feared the Xuchitl Dance and other so-called pagan practices as it threated their sense of control over the future of the Spanish Empire. The Spanish worked in collaboration with the Catholic Church to replace indigenous traditions with a new sense of belonging, that would be based in Catholicism. Another notable legal narrative outlines,

> The dispute between Spaniards and Indians was not limited to a conflict of religions, differentiated labor systems and opposing cultural forms. It also included confrontations over effective territorial occupation, another facet of the conflict expressed in the promise that the Indians would recover the full territorial domination they had enjoyed before it was destroyed by the Spanish occupation.[349]

The significance of this hearing shaped a clearer understanding and conversation of genocide, and the historical realities that lead to these Caxcans millenarian movements. Caxcan Xuchitl Dance cannot be understood in purely spiritual terms as it served to prevent legal, physical, spiritual, and economic extermination. Caxcans fought for

Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 155.

[349] AGI, Justicia 262, pieza 2, Auto de inicio para los descargos, fol. 151r, declaracion de Francisco, 1547 as found in Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez , "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Nueva Galicia" Roth-Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 161.

livelihood, for those present, and with eyes to the future generations. Spanish coloniality attempted to rupture the ancestral networks of belonging which oriented Caxcans to their sense of place in their homelands. The millenarian movements made a direct call for the return of Caxcan traditional dances, ceremonies, and honoring of the local gods and Mother Earth. The Xuchitl Dance specifically narrates the Caxcan Creation Narratives in its movement. When Caxcans dance, they affirm their faith in sacred geography, ancestors, and in their Creation.

As Caxcan danced, it threated the colonial order and progress. Eventually, the Spanish outlawed these dances and practices. An extensive judicial process opened, against the Caxcan, which instigated the growth of Xuchitl dancing participants, gatherings, and resistance motives. Legal trials sought to discredit Native practices as demonic and inciting rebellions. In the Spanish legal narratives detailing this rebellion, the Spanish misinterpreted and described how the Caxcan used black dye on their body while dancing. The Spanish interpreted this use of dye as 'having mocked the baptism sacrament.'[350] For the Caxcans, however, the use of dye was ceremonial, with no relation to Catholic symbolism. Other Spanish accounts misinterpret and assumed to assure that Caxcans mocked the Catholic communion consumption of the wafer, when they saw Caxcans break a tortilla.[351] To this day, Caxcans have a peculiar sense of humor rooted in

[350] Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez, "Indigenous Space and Frontier in nueva Galicia" as found in Roth-Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 157.
[351] Jose Francisco Roman Gutierrez, "Indigenous Space and Frontier in nueva Galicia" as found in Roth-Seneff, Kemper, and Adkins, *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015), 162.

cultural pride and sovereignty. Caxcan cultural principles grew during the millenarian movements, despite Spanish legal narrative attempts to outlaw dances that connected them to their Creation Narratives and homeland.

The spread of the Caxcan revitalization, through dance, travelled and extended into northern Mexico and included the Tepehuanes, Coras, Acaxees, and Tarahumaras. These intertribal efforts, which started with dancing led to regional solidarity, and supported the healing efforts of various tribal nations. For example, when the Tepehuanes decimated due to smallpox and measles epidemics, tribes came together to support each other and, in an effort, to eradicate this disease—specifically, the Tepehuan offered a healing dance called mitotes, which Caxcans participated in, to support.[352] Sovereignty, healing, history, traditions, and the landscape intertwined to create a generative force where none else existed at the time.

[352] Jean- Francois Genotte, "La evangelizacion de los Tepehuanes de los valles orientales de Durango (1596-1604): Las primeras misiones jesuitas" in trans. Chantal Cramaussel and Sara Ortelli, *La Sierra Tepehuana: Asentamientos y Movimientos de Poblacion* (Mexico: Colegio de Michoacan, Zamora, 2006). 140-141.

4.4 A map from 1550 where one can observe major sacred centers: Teul, Nochistlan, Juchipila, and Mixton. Anonymous Piece, *New Galicia*, 1550, Drawing painted by hand, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla.

The momentum behind Xuchitl Dance recalled Caxcan Creation Narratives, and their sacred lands. It was both a search for collective restoration, and a reclamation of spiritual integrity. The Spanish had ruptured Caxcan spiritual wellness and connections to the land through their colonial misinterpretations, manipulations, and projections. For example, a Spanish archival source reveals the role sacred places and Creation accounts played during the millenarian movement. This source claimed some "sorcerers and emissaries of the devil" came from the north from the mountain ranges of Zacatecas where fierce unconquered Indians claimed to resurrect ancestors.[353] This group of

[353] Florescano, *Memory, Myth and Time in Mexico*, 106-107.

Caxcans fought fiercely on and for their Creation Mountain and the religious traditions associated with this sacred place. In one Spanish document, the widespread call to restore Indigenous ways cautioned that "the Indian man and woman who believes [in the Christian God and not in the Indian god] would no longer see light and would be eaten…[by] the wild animals."[354]

During an oral interview with the current caretaker of the Xuchitl Dance, Moctezuma Meza, he smiled when reading the above text with the author, and had this to say:

> the fact that the fear was instilled by getting eaten by animals is significant because it refers to this part of our Creation Story where the little child was eaten by a wild animal. See we dance in celebration of Life and gratitude and protection from our god because Creator gave him and us another opportunity to live according to our teachings. This movement was a call to bring our traditions back from the dead much like the child who had been eaten by the wild animal.[355]

Through this, he reaffirmed that "part of the return to restore Indian traditions was this flower dance and the location where they fought the Spanish was prime. We dance to our mountain. We fortified our Creation Mountain to protect it, and because we felt safe here. We are people of this land. We belong to this place here. We belong here and everything makes sense to us here. We see all our beautiful mountains and see our ancestors. We see stories." He also expressed, "We also hear chains. We remember when our people were taken. Our people were just thrown like dice, fumbled, and scattered."[356] Mexican

[354] Florescano, *Myth and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence*, 107.
[355] Moctezuma Interview, March 18, 2018.
[356] Moctezuma Interview, March 18, 2018.

historian Florescano adds "the device that activated this insurrection was the force of its historical memory, the conviction of having one's own past based on autochthonous forms of living and customs and the violent rejection of the Spanish invasion, which threatened to suppress these traditions."[357] Many people today credit the survival of the Xuchitl Dance to this millenarian movement.

While the Spaniards focused on accumulating wealth, Caxcan people tied resilience to places, stories, and dancing the Xuchitl. In dancing, Caxcans affirmed their existence and sovereignty as well as their relationship to these places. In the midst of the trauma Caxcans experienced, through dancing a sense of belonging grew and took new meaning in colonial undercurrents. Dancing the Xuchitl allowed their sacred places, such as Tlachialoyantepec, to stay alive in their hearts. This embodied preservation practice for sacred places is foundational Caxcan. The Xuchitl provided an ordering principle that helped Caxcans endure colonial catastrophes, something to ground them and make sense of themselves in the midst of the colonial flux. The Xuchitl harnessed a sense of belonging outside of material wealth, creating a new sense of power and resistance in the process.[358] The dancing Native body threatened the successful accumulation of wealth. Dancing ruptured the notion that the enslaved Caxcan did not have ownership over their own bodies for something other than enslaved labor. Dancing rendered the body unexploitable. While Caxcans became enslaved to the numerous silver mines in Zacatecas, Chihuahua, and Durango, Caxcans bodies also transformed into legally

[357] Florescano, *Myth and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence*, 108.
[358] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 72.

acquired property. Spirits of the places remained tied to their land base. However, by dancing, even while enslaved, Caxcans reclaimed ownership of their bodies- they belonged to themselves.

In an effort to instill Catholicism and end the millenarian movement, the Spanish outlawed the Xuchitl Dance for a century during the late sixteenth century. Jacqueline Shea Murphy, in *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing*, argued that "praying through bodily movement and ritual practice rather than through sitting, reading, and believing threatened colonizers' notions of how spirituality is manifested."[359] In 1924, the Council of Caxcan Indians from Juchipila, Zacatecas, published a historical document outlining their Creation Narratives, importance of the Xuchitl Dance to the preservation of their sacred places and the subsequent persecution for dancing. The Council wrote, Caxcans who "were caught dancing our most beloved dance [Xuchitl] which truly bothered the Spanish were irremissibly murdered without regard to sex or age."[360] This did not stop Caxcans from dancing the Xuchitl Dance.

In spite of enslavement for over two centuries, during the month of June every year, Caxcans continued dancing in the midst of displacement as they had done since time immemorial. Spanish saw the dance as "wasteful of practioner's physical energy and time, and thus as excessive expenditures of bodily labor" and a threat to mining labor and production value.[361] Even those Caxcans enslaved danced in silence and oriented

[359] Jacqueline Shea Murphey, *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 31. Hereafter cited Shea Murphey, *People Have Never Stopped Dancing*, pg.
[360] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 55.
[361] Shea Murphey *People Have Never Stopped Dancing*, 31.

themselves towards Tlachialoyantepec while those hiding in the local mountains and canyons would make pilgrimages to the cave found on Tlachialoyantepec. This brought the people together, through prayer, as they danced for protection from their gods. Tired of dancing secretly for about a century, a council of Caxcans from Juchipila went to Mexico City to ask Viceroy Luis de Velasco to permit the dancing publicly. Caxcans decided they would never stop dancing, as it would deny who they are. Caxcans kept dancing to honor of Tlachialoyantepec precisely because it had existential implications. At the Caxcan's request, the Spanish allowed the dance to continue after noting the severity of this dance to Caxcan sovereignty. Luis de Velasco gave conditional permission to dance. Luis de Velasco allowed Caxcans to dance yet had to agree to do so in the name of the Catholic Church. The Caxcan delegation in Mexico City accepted these terms yet ardently negotiated them with the local Juchipila church when they returned home.

Caxcans created a religious stewardship society, La Hermandad del Xuchitl, to secure the survival of this dance. Caxcans experienced great losses: lives, freedoms, religious practices, and political structures. Although the sixteenth century Spanish wars, massacres eventually dismantled Caxcan polities, Caxcan religious leadership fought hard to preserve the dance. The commitment to preserve the dance strengthened internal cohesion in the midst of colonial flux. This stewardship society, and its resistance and preservation efforts that included its Creation accounts and ties to sacred places, like Tlachialoyantepec, continues today.

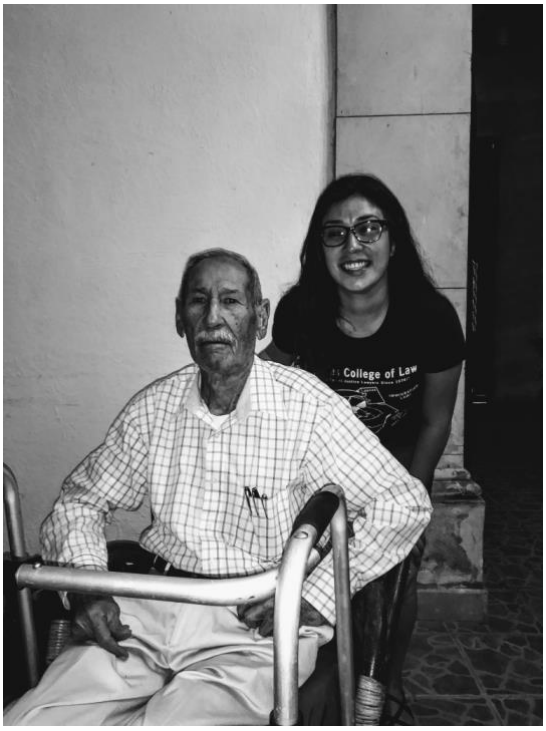
Two Dance Keepers now stewards and preserve the Xuchitl Dance's continued practice: Alfonso Diosdado Reyes and Moctezuma Meza Solano. Alfonso Diosdado Reyes, the Mayordormo (Steward and Brother), stated, "we are proud of our so-called pagan religion. This dance was danced during the Summer Solstice yet when the Catholics came it was adopted under the Gregorian Calendar, but we kept moving forward with our celebration."[362] Also part of La Hermandad del Xuchitl, the Xuchitl Society, Maria de la Luz Ruvalcaba Limon, author of *El Xuchitl: Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de Juchipila y Zacatecas* shared the Caxcan importance of the ritual calendar, "this interrelationship is really complex, because [it] implies to understand the astronomical knowledge, identify the climatological phenomena, and the role of agrarian wisdom."[363]

On the ground, Alfonso Diosdado Reyes and Moctezuma Meza Solano organize the offerings, initiated the dance, fundraised with the community for the costs, and maintained a peaceful relationship with the Church, not *within* it. The structure of mayordomias (caretakers) throughout the last four centuries never ceded into the Church. They maintained equal and separate identities. Part of the negotiations which took place in the seventeenth century involved an offering of wax, ribbon, and candles to the Catholic priest before commencing the Xuchitl Dance. These offerings continue today. Many religious movements and Indigenous mayordomias in Mexico use already-established indigenous organizations and leadership to instill a cult of a patron saints

[362] Oral interview to Alfonso Diosdado Reyes by Daisy Ocampo, October 10, 2017, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico. Hereafter cited Diosdado Interview, October 10, 2017.
[363] Maria de la Luz Ruvalcaba, *El Xuchitl: Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de Juchipila y Zacatecas* (Juchipila: Secretaria de Cultura, 2016), 24.

created by the Catholic clergy.[364] Unlike other indigenous mayordomos throughout Mexico who were responsible for instituting Catholic rituals into their community dances, La Hermandad del Xuchitl negotiated its terms of agreements to dance in a separate, non-Catholic space. Through La Hermandad del Xuchitl, Caxcan sovereignty survived without integrating Catholic iconography into its dance. Throughout the four long centuries the offerings to the Church remained. When asked "why the offerings continue after so much time," Moctezuma Meza replied firmly "because we gave our word."[365] His response reflects the tedious relationship between the Xuchitl Dance and the Catholic priest. The offering he provides represents a simple exchange with open refusal, meaning their contentious relationship is never truly stable and simply held up by these small acts of good faith.

[364] Florescano, *Myth and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence*, 173.
[365] Moctezuma Interview, March 18, 2018.



4.5 Photograph of Moctezuma Meza and Daisy Ocampo during an oral history in Juchipila, 2018. Photo courtesy of author.

Although this gesture of offerings felt outdated for many participants of the Xuchitl Dance, it cannot be understated that the Church continues to yield immense religious power and fervor. Non- Caxcans living in Juchipila consider Xuchitl Dance pagan. This was best exemplified in 2014 when La Hermandad del Xuchitl decided to rotate their statue of Xochipilli, symbolic of the small child who the Creator allowed back from the dead. They turned the statue inwards facing the church, symbolizing its equal sovereignty, coexistence, and spiritual weight. This action comes forth from a new generation of Caxcan Xuchitl dancers who are more politically engaged and resistant to the Catholic Church. In reaction, Catholics felt insulted by the turn of the statue of the Caxcan God Xochipilli, and the Church and its devout parishioners found the change

audacious. This tension highlighted the myth of mestizaje in Mexico.[366] What becomes evident is that the national syncretic identity of mestizaje, actually operates through and with complex and contested identities. In the end, the Church ceded to the statue being turned towards the church. Moctezuma navigates this relationship very carefully.

Moctezuma welcomes the Xuchileros, or dancers, in his home and greets them with corn and beverages. The community from the region also come bearing their offerings for Xochipilli. He would like future generations to understand why this Xuchitl tradition continues. "In the old days, neighboring tribes who came to participate in the dancing were welcomed by the council and leadership. I welcome the people and our neighbors in the same way. We do this in gratitude for Life, rain, and a good harvest,"[367] he remarked. Diné scholar Jennifer Denetdale's parallels awe for community memory, and practices of survivance, that resonate deeply, and carry oral histories. She shares about her Navajo community, "the fact that my grandparents' and my mother's generation retain connections to land [through dancing] where their ancestors had once lived, in spite of all these dislocations, attests to the enduring relationships created and recreated through narratives, narratives that link us Navajos to the land."[368] For the Caxcans, the Xuchitl Dance harnesses that connection to sacred places and their Creation. Dancing in the Caxcan way is about place-making and geographic spirituality. One opens a spatial realm to access these ancestral entities to then return to them through prayer. In

[366] Mestizaje is a process of assimilation of Indians into a national identity rooted in 'progress,' modernity and anti-Indian sentiment.
[367] Meza Interview, March 18, 2018.
[368] Jennifer Denetdale, *Reclaiming Dine History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press), 161.

spite of the odds against Caxcan sovereignty, this dance demonstrates how rooted they are to their land and the spirits residing there. In dancing, Caxcans preserve not only Tlachialoyantepec but the plant medicine, places of power, and the solitude to connect back to their Creation, their Beginning.

Enslavement and Mining

Enslavement involved more than holding Native bodies captives for brute labor. A sequestering of humanity occurred during the Mixton Massacre. Spanish framed Caxcans as savages through a relationship between the imposed perception of inferiority of the landscape as abrasive and the perception of inferiority of Native peoples. Spanish referred to Caxcans fighting on the Mixton Mountain as 'stray cats' for their abilities to swiftly navigate steep and narrow cliffs. These eurocentric perceptions of the land as hostile, anthropologists Pedro Tome Martin, described as a "rhetoric for control, which implies colonization happens simultaneously with description of the enemy as savage and the land as hostile."[369] And, in fact, the Spanish described this region as one fruitful with ample water from the Juchipila River—so much so, it could provide water for the whole world.[370] In *War and Peace on the North Mexican Frontier*, Phillip Powell adds a Spanish description of the land, "these Indians occupy a lot of land and the best of New Spain, fertile land and lots of mines now discovered and much more to discover."[371] The Sierra Madre Occidental is home to the two mountain ranges where the Caxcan Nation is

[369] Pedro Time Martin, "La Invencion del desierto" as found in *Dinamica y Transformacion de la Region Chichimeca* (Guadalajara: Seminario Permanente de Estudios de la Gran Chichimeca, 2012), 52.
[370] Phillip Powell, *War and Peace on the North Mexican Frontier: A Documentary Record* (Madrid Ed. Jose Porrua Turanzas, 1971), 257.
[371] Ibid.

located, and is home to the various silver mines which drew the Spanish to the region. The Spanish employed a new economic system which would create a new perception of the land and Indians as productive entities—instead of as solely savage and hostile. Spanish repackaged ideas of savagery into more productive ties, where Indians would serve the Spanish in its multiple economic ventures, such as mining. To do this, the Spanish during the Mixton Massacre attempted to kill the Caxcan polities in order to break the frontier to access silver mines and initiated the enslavement of Caxcans to work them. Tenamaztle demanded justice while in captivity in Spain for the nine leaders in the Caxcan region who were hung and executed, which he correlated directly to enslavement in the region.[372]

Gaining access to these mines required an ideological erasure of Native people on the land, in order to fabricate a blank slate to be able to acquire the land abundant in silver. Spanish had to force Caxcans into a more sedentary lifestyle to limit their nomadic mobility and vitality across the region. They did this through haciendas, encomiendas, Catholic churches, and enslavement. Spanish saw enslavement as critical to the colonial project which secured 'saved souls,' settlement along northern frontiers, and a constant flow of forced labor. Caxcan enslavement from the sixteenth to nineteenth century in New Spain sought to create new ties of belonging to colonial economic ideologies of productivity at the silver mines in Zacatecas. This period of enslavement in Mexico remains absent in the national narrative and history books. Historical interpretations of Native agency during this period are even more rare.

[372] Tenamaztle, *Relación de Agravios*, 14.

So, who were these slaves and how did they become enslaved? Caxcan slaves survived the Mixton Massacre and then captured by the Spanish. Enslaved Natives at the mines in Zacatecas also came from pre-existing bondage from distant state societies such as the Mexicas, Nayaritas and Zacatecos. This specific slave status was called rescates, or rescued, for what the Spanish considered was a rescue mission from a savage lifestyle. Yet, Caxcan sovereignty and freedom laid in their ability to move constantly and interact with different people, seasons, and sacred places. Caxcans past and present value relationships with people and the land. Some Caxcans could not fathom the dislocation and chose suicide over enslavement.[373] Caxcan elders today relate that for "those who were tied to our land, lived off our mountains and drank our clean waters, this is where they found that insatiable feeling of freedom. They never accepted enslavement."[374] This first generation of Caxcans experienced a proximity to death and dying never seen before. These Caxcans did not recognize this world marked by a dying culture, language, political system, and spirituality rooted in sacred places like Tlachialoyantepec. This new colonial world lacked any sort of previously known, experience or understood basic human rights.[375] Because of this, many Caxcans jumped off the cliffs in their last act of resistance to the Spanish. Some Caxcans found power and agency in death.

Enslaving Caxcan, and other Indians in neighboring states, required a moral, economic, and political debate between the Spain Crown, colonies, and their peripheries. Committed to offer multiple justifications for Indian slavery, Nuño de Guzman outlined a

[373] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 50.
[374] Moctezuma Interview, March 18, 2018.
[375] Sandoval and Campos de Loera, *Cuentos y Leyendas de la Region de Juchipila,* 89.

denial of humanity to Indian people, confining them to savage typecast. This sprung from fear of Indians banding together to wage war against the Spanish, prohibiting passage to the northern frontiers, hindering ecclesiastical efforts to save souls, and thus risking the obvious need for enslaved labor to work the mines. Author Karoline P. Cook, in "Muslims and Chichimeca in New Spain: The Debates over Just War and Slavery," offered a historical take on Christian- Muslim relation on the Iberian Peninsula as a historical window to understand racialized enslavement processes as a means to justify slavery. She explored overlooked references of Muslims in Spanish colonial documents concerning Native Caxcans to cast semi-nomadic Indigenous people as Muslims in their attempt to render them enslaveable. Here, she used Pedro de Ahumada Samano as an example of a stakeholder in the mining enterprise in Zacatecas who advocated for the enslavement of Caxcans. She argued the Reconquista in Spain was a successful model for the Spanish to justify and continue their position in Mexico.[376]

Enslavement required a just reason to proceed with a legal slave economy, and considerations of perceptions of morale. Charles V argued in favor of adequate laws outlining proper treatment of Native people through Anti-Slave Acts. Implementation and adherence of these laws in Mexico City proceeded successfully but differed greatly in rural areas. Here, the Anti-Slave Acts became non-existent, and even contested, in the rural peripheries like the Caxcan Region. Daniel Garcia Ponce, in his Master's Report, writes: "their dismissal of the King's orders is evident in the reports written by friars that

[376] Karline P. Cook, "Muslims and Chichimeca in New Spain: The Debates over Just and Slavery," Anuario de Estudios Americanos 70 no.1 (January-June 2013), 20.

worked as missionaries in the mines and borderland regions of Nueva Galicia. In 1550, Friar Rodrigo de la Cruz wrote about a group of 400 slaves who remained in bondage and forced servitude in the mines, despite their claims to being free."[377] Ponce argued: "The regression in policy occurred as the war prolonged, Spaniards discovered more silver deposits, and the rhetoric against the nomadic tribes continued to grow. Colonists had long used allegations of idolatry, barbarity, theft, raiding, incest, cannibalism, as attacks against, and reasons to war against natives."[378]

Captured Natives from these wars eventually became enslaved and ripped from their homelands. These lands carried the spirit of the Creation and embodied their well-being; being away from their lands introduced a severing effect. The Archivo Historico del Estado de Zacatecas holds a large collection of documents of the sale of Indian slaves in Zacatecas. These documents reveal that the institution and practice of slavery did not end until 1810.[379] The book *Iconografia Restrospectiva de Tenamaztle* published numerous primary sources regarding Zacatecan slavery in the Caxcan region, and also traces the long process to legally abolish slavery—which did not occur until 1829.

Throughout Mexican slavery Indigenous people, specifically people from northwest Mexico, were not passive agents. They continued to practice the Caxcan culture through ceremonial dances and sacred places that grounded their humanity. Many mining administrators recorded rebellions of Native people disrupting distribution of

[377] M. Cuevas, Documentos ineditos del siglo XVI., 155. Carta de Fray Rodrigo de la Cruz al Emperador Carlos V. as found in Daniel Ponce, *Indian Slavery in 16th Century New Spain: the Politics and Power of Bondage, 1519-1600* (Austin: University of Texas- Master Thesis, 2013), 33
[378] Ibid, 54.
[379] Humberto Avila Marquez, *Iconografia Retrospective de Tenamaztle* (Mexico: Primera Ediccion, 2012).

minerals. These colonial encounters continued and so did an extensive inter-tribal response to enslavement in the region. Enslaved Caxcans, and neighboring tribal people, entered newly established towns, burned down the local church, cut their supply zones, and destroyed local roads. The neighboring Guachichil tribe also allied with the Caxcan and formed "into small groups or leagues joining several tribes, they raided the caravan of the Spaniards from their stronghold in the valleys of the Tunal Grande, stealing horses, looting supply posts, and killing many [Spanish] travelers on the Zacatecas road."[380] These Indian responses demonstrated dissatisfaction to the existing order to become a "means to reestablish the lost balance or as an offensive mechanism to end social inequality and political oppression."[381]

Local oral interviews narrate how "when a Caxcan Indian fell ill of enslavement and servitude to encomenderos, they sought freedom, they would guard the night to escape to El Cerro de las Ventanas," their beloved Creation Mountain.[382] Juana Belen Gutierrez, a Caxcan women born in Durango in 1875, with parents heavily involved in mining, spent her formative childhood years exposed to working indigenous peoples in mines and fields. She saw the discrimination and exploitation against her Caxcan people, and other Indians. Here, she developed a strong opposition for dictator Porfirio Díaz. She, and many intellectuals of her time, stand as the precursors to the Mexican Revolution, because of their revolutionary cultural identity. She worked as a journalist to include Indigenous people in the formation of a new identity, which continued after the Mexican

[380] Ruth Behar, "The Vision of a Guachichil Witch in 1599: A Window on the Subjugation of Mexico's Hunter-Gathers," *Ethnobotany* 34 no.2 (Spring 1987), 116.
[381] Florescano, *Myth and Time in Mexico*, 173.
[382] Sandoval and Campos de Loera, *Cuentos y Leyendas de la Region de Juchipila*, 93.

Revolution. She believed Native people should hold power in the discourse of the new national identity with agrarian, educational, and health reforms.

Turn of the Twentieth Century

As a Caxcan woman, Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza uniquely shaped a new generation of Native intellectual women before the Mexican Revolution. Her writing conveys a unique historical memory, committed to creating accountability of the coloniality surrounding Mexico. She did this by designating a political space through journalism for Indigenous people, and specifically Caxcan women, in the twentieth century. In 1922, the Minister of Education, José Vasconcelos, issued a call for "dedicated teachers with a missionary spirit to accept the hardships of living in isolated rural areas and to teach Spanish, reading, writing, and basic hygiene to Indians.[383] Mexican Revolution marked a new colonial wave to bring rural Mexico into a new civilized identity premised on Western concepts of progress. Vasconcelos instituted a new Mexican mestizo identity through schooling in rural communities, like Juchipila and neighboring rancherias such as Teul, Apozol, Jalpa, Nochistlan, Moyahua, and Mesquital del Oro in the Caxcan region. Juana signed up to become one of these missionary teachers, and later critiqued the assimilationist policies through a colonial education apparatus.

As a rural teacher in Juchipila, she approached the Council of Caxcan Indians to write and propose to rescue the values, dignity, and culture of Caxcan communities

[383] Joel Bollinger Pouwels, *Political Journalism by Mexican Women During the Age of Revolution, 1876-1940* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellin Press, 206), 79.

through personal and community autonomous writing. Her nationally acclaimed journalism found a community home with the Council of Caxcan Indians in Juchipila during 1924. With the active participation of the Council, Juana wrote a document that detailed the Caxcan Creation Narrative, the significance of the Caxcan Creation Mountain, Tlachialoyantepec, and the importance of the Xuchitl Dance as a preservation model. With the assistance of elders, she detailed colonial encounters that nearly wiped out Caxcan communities through massacres, enslavement, and religious persecution. In addition, Juana Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza holds accountable academics such as Mexican and international archaeologists, historians, and linguists who have silenced Caxcans narratives.

In response to them, the Consejo de los Caxcanes along with Juana Belen wrote *Por la Tierra y la Raza* to have ownership of their stories, beginning with their Creation. For example, the Caxcan Council has long claimed that the Caxcan Region was once full of water as narrated in their Creation accounts. Academics (historians and archaeologists specifically) suffocated and discredited Caxcan histories because these stories did not support what they thought was real scholarship from real Indians of the 1500s. In the 2000's, archaeologists found several fossils of fish and alligators found on the walls of Tlachialoyantepec. The scientist conducted carbon data studies, and concluded that this entire area was, in fact, a body of water. For this reason, *Por la Tierra y la Raza* should be understood as a written project of truth for the Caxcans.

Tlachialoyantepec, or El Cerro de las Ventanas, in Zacatecas has been a site of German archaeological inquiry since 1903 followed by a growing Mexican and American

interest. Particularly, the fortification of this mountain and its man-made "window" or ventanas, from which it acquires its Spanish name, is a cliff house utilized as a look out point during the Mixton War. This feature alone drew many scholars to this place, without any knowledge of the spiritual significance for the Caxcans, and led to its eventual nomination as tourist site, in 2002. Juan Ramón Rodríguez Torres published his Master's Thesis "El Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas y sus Terrazas Prehispánicas" from the Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas where he explored the flora, fauna, rock art, human remains, and even pottery pieces found throughout the mountain. His research shaped the official narrative for the tourist project and set a precedence for research that lacked community consultation. This produced a limited research project, reduced to a purely archaeological study, divorced from any sort of community relationship—and reproduces a major loss of opportunity to include and uplift Caxcan histories. The archaeological findings have a direct impact on shaping this information into often romantic, static, and essentialized national narratives. Caxcans must contend with the national narratives produced by this project, and others of the like.

In 2007, Dr. Elizabeth Anne Oster published her PhD dissertation, "Cerro de las Ventanas: A Northern Mesoamerican Frontier Site in Zacatecas, Mexico." Her fieldwork in archaeology included site mapping and photography, architectural analysis of surface remains, and test excavations. Her research established the periodization of use of the mountain and explored the importance of the Mixton Battle for Spanish colonization northward. However, her fieldwork is limited to the physicality of this mountain and, like the work of Juan Ramon Rodriguez Torres, neglects the local community. Their lack of

community involvement renders holes in understandings of the importance of relationships between places of power in Caxcan culture. These shortsighted methods render their research incomplete. And their research continues the notion that Caxcan people and Caxcan communities have no living history.

In addition, well-known archaeologists such as Isabel Kelly (1948) have been drawn to the tunnels at the top of the mountain. The answer to where these tunnels leads to varies widely. Early Spanish Catholic entities believed a devil's temple existed underground. Others have speculated that this an opening for an underground tunnel traveling complex. Spanish seeking silver wondered whether there existed silver and an indigenous temple inside. Caxcans, however, confirmed these are spiritual spaces that have existed since the beginning of time. The People adamantly refuse to have any of this information published or in print. Medicine man, Pichilingue, affirmed that "silence is our preservation and weapon of choice."[384] Romanticism surrounding Tlachialoyantepec led numerous people in 1970s to ransack the mountain in search of beads, turquoise, religious items, and silver--all of which have been stolen. This, and other illegal ransacking ventures led the Mexican federal government to intervene, claiming the local community did not have the resources to protect their sites of historical value, creating a pathway in 2002 to the mountain's nomination as a tourist designation. The nomination provided financial resources for 24-hour security surveillance and prevented Caxcan people from entering their sacred mountain without permission.

[384] Pichilingue Communication, Summer, 2011.

4.6 Doña Cuca sharing stories of Tlachialoyantepec one of many oral histories. Photo courtesy of author.

INAH's Legal Assault on Indigenous People

Caxcans today identify Las Ventanas tourist project as the biggest threat to their mountain. Las Ventanas project disrupted access to Tlachialoyantepec and hindered traditional obligations and dancing ceremony of Caxcans.[385] Las Ventanas is the tourist project managed by the Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia. Porfirio Díaz established this Mexican federal bureau in 1939 as the sole entity responsible for large scale projects of archaeological, historical, anthropological, and paleontological nature with the intention of preserving Mexico's cultural past. This Institute is credited for its labor in reconstructing ruins as well as creating public engagement with these sites as a

[385] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

way to connect to the ancient past. Its preservation principles grew out of the Porfiriato. President Porfirio Díaz (1830-1915) was a controversial statesman, known for consolidating a national Mexican mestizo identity and a key factor in this identity transformation was to create a discourse and urgency around the preservation of Mexico's national patrimony. This included a rampant commodification and commercialization of indigenous places, cultures, and living communities. This national 'mestizo' identity Diaz sought to create accomplished four major transformations:

1. It established a schizophrenic idea of indigeneity where Indigenous people and cultures exist only in the Mexican "past" thus silencing living Indigenous communities today.
2. It sought to distance itself from the colonial legacy of the Spanish by establishing a celebratory position of Mexican Indigenous folklore without any accountability to its ongoing colonial marginalization of Indigenous people, who are also Mexican citizens.
3. This silencing of indigenous people through the previous two processes allows Mexico, through INAH, to declare federal ownership of sacred places without any consideration of historical claims by indigenous people thus legally, yet immorally, seizing Indigenous lands.
4. Finally, the Mexican state establishes an intricate tie between the Mexican economy and preservation identity politics to showcase Mexican modernity and development to prove its pursuit of progress.

Living indigenous communities threatened the illusion that Mexico does not perpetuate colonial violence. As the introductory story of Doña Cuca and the archaeologist conveys, there cannot be an indigenous claim, if there are no real Indians. This Institute (INAH) perceives Indigenous people and communities as backwards and a hindrance to national progress. Through INAH, Mexico attempts to negotiate this tension by institutionalizing a racial hierarchy, which would exchange the demands of indigenous representation and visibility for a singular Mexican national identity. These national histories largely benefit the nation-state which capitalizes on the idea of the vanishing

Indian. The pervasive vanishing Indian myth propagated in large part because of academic scholarship written by non- Native researchers who shape national narratives. Mestizaje, the process of assimilation, involved a whitening ideal which exchanged indigeneity for a Western Mexican national identity.

A cornerstone of INAH's power lay in its capacity to harness and display the indigenous past while silencing contemporary indigenous communities. The agency looks to package an explicit spatialized experience to be consumed as authentically indigenous—in that it is a dead and safe history. INAH's legal ability to identify ruins, propose a preservation plan and declare it national patrimony defines its political and institutional power. INAH legally acquired Tlachialoyantepec in the 1990s. In the process, INAH assumed all caretaking responsibility, guardianship, and declared itself the ultimate author of the historical and archaeological narrative. This work comes into contention with the presumption that Caxcan communities are unable to care for this mountain, so one must ask: "how did Caxcans traditionally care for their sacred places before INAH?" An overwhelming number of community members referred to the leadership in charge of the Xuchitl Dance to understand traditional preservation practices. Dancing is a Caxcan preservation practice rooted in history. Yet, the discipline of history has little engagement with performative and phenomenological insights as having historic preservation value. Performative historical considerations rely on the field of anthropology, where romantic essentialist characterizations abound.

This leaves the Mexican state with full jurisdiction of the future of sacred sites and risks the eradication of Indigenous forms of preservation rooted in ancestral

traditions, like the Xuchitl Dance. Caxcans believe dancing has ensured the well-being of these places since time immemorial. In *The Pursuit of Ruins: Archaeology, History and the Making of Modern Mexico*, historian Cristina Bueno explored the role that academics played in the construction of Mexico's modern national image. She contended: "a tight link was thus forged between the state and science, as the archaeologists helped construct an ancient past for the nation and legitimize the government's claims to the ruins."[386] And in many ways the voice of the academic, in service to the state, has held priority over communities in state-led preservation efforts. INAH preservation politics reinforced the idea that Native communities do not have rights to their own histories, curation, and knowledge systems. Ned Kaufman, the historian at the forefront of historic preservation in the United States, insightfully identifies the conundrum: "the purpose of protecting cultural resources from depredation has rarely been to ensure their continuing use by Native American."[387]

[386] Cristina Bueno, *The Pursuit of Ruins: Archaeology, History, and the Making of Modern Mexico*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press: 2016), 59.
[387] Ned Kaufman, *Place, Race and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 343.

4.7 Caxcan medicine man, Pichilingue, keeping an eye on INAH archaeologist.
Photo provided by Alan Guadalupe Rodriguez Rodriguez.

At the heart of INAH's politics around preservation, and claims to places, is the erasure of indigenous voices—discrediting them while also invisibilizing Caxcans. Put simply, there cannot be an indigenous claim, if there are no real Indians. One INAH archaeologist explained, "this mountain is no longer just local, you guys should be happy to receive such national recognition, it is now national patrimony, it belongs to all Mexicans."[388] Tourists sites emerged with claims to antiquity and Mexican excellence without narratives of Caxcan history and colonial encounters with the Spanish and Mexican governments. Narratives of Indigenous sacred sites are usually terminal, in that a major goal of the historical narrative is to silence and end indigenous voices by

[388] Oral interview of Marco Antonio Santos Ramirez by Daisy Ocampo, Summer 2012, El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico.

deeming them extinct. Tourists often visit ancient ruins and simultaneously see and hear Indigenous communities selling arts and crafts at the entrances of notable sites such as Teotihuacan, Monte Alban, and Ixcaret to name a few. This ruptured sense of indigeneity leaves Indigenous communities contending with Western categories of authenticity.

This visual representation demonstrates how Mexico, through institutions such as INAH, continues to legally displace Indigenous communities in their own homelands. Since 2002, INAH has prohibited Caxcans from accessing their Creation Mountain without a permit and cannot practice their Xuchitl Dance as there is no community consultation in INAH's preservation model. These preservation practices include a range of destructive actions from cutting trees, to paving roads that are aesthetically conducive for tourist, excavating human remains, taking rock art to university labs without repatriation, and closing access to the public so INAH's research would not be compromised. Because indigenous people in Mexico are not political sovereign nations, community consultations are not required when research on sacred lands is conducted. The Hermandad del Xuchitl have decided to continue dancing in the plaza of Juchipila. The Xuchitl Dance is a place-based tradition. These national narratives portray distorted perceptions and images of Indigenous realities, depictions, and traditions. Caxcan people today have told INAH, *we are still here* to no avail.

INAH claimed national ownership of El Cerro de las Ventanas thus displacing Caxcans and threatened their relationship with Tlachialoyantepec. And, it cannot be said enough, Caxcan people claim a different narrative of this mountain. Primarily, this mountain is their place of Creation, and they believe this mountain gave birth to them.

Caxcan Creation accounts reveal the need to center a dance tradition within Indigenous scholarship and historical preservation models. Caxcans view Tlachialoyantepec as a living entity, yet INAH persist on centering the Mixton War as its only historical narrative. This terminal, and solo narrative leaves tourists with the impression of an Indian extinct past. And unlike INAH's tourist proposal, which speaks to an eventual fully accessible tourist destination for recreational use, the community cautions the dangers of visiting certain places of power and argues there are protocol involved when visiting this mountain. For hundreds of years the community has assigned different people to the caretaking and management of the mountain. Caxcans feel their sovereignty and community wellbeing mandates a relationship with Tlachialoyantepec.

Tired of being studied and misrepresented in 1924, the Caxcan Council of Indians of Juchipila came together to publish a document in response to this historical and anthropological erasure. With the help of a Caxcan educator, Juan Belen Gutierrez de Mendoza, the Council published a document, arguing that academics have used their (Western) way of thinking and distorted Caxcan lives, realities, cultures and histories—which in turn, in fact, had long term impacted to Caxcans' access to resources, specifically sacred sites. The Council argued "these historical lies have had, for us, consequences far more devastating than the conquest itself."[389] They added, "we are still here, we survived everything and still we are denied and in doing so they deny our claims to our land and sacred places." Caxcans continued to challenge the assumption that the

[389] Consejo de los Caxcanes, "Por la Tierra y por la Raza," 60.

Mexican state owns this mountain, and its historical narrative. Instead, by dancing they assert a knowledge system, voice, agency, and power in the matter.

Perhaps, the most divergent of priorities between INAH and Caxcan communities is that INAH's focus is on the protection of the physical integrity while the community is invested in protecting the relationships of people, places, and the spiritual world. Dancing to Tlachialoyantepec includes an active honoring of ancestral ties, stories, and relatives who have passed, and challenge the assumption that places must be sanitized (for public consumption) and rid of any activation. Sacred places do not exist in isolation- they are, in fact, part of a larger network of living powers—human, non-human, and memory. Sacred places, water sources, and caves have a connection. Caxcan elders argue fiercely that if this mountain is disrupted the well- being of the entire Earth will be off balance. Caxcans cease to exist as a people if they cannot engage with their Creation Mountain. Within a Caxcan worldview, many of these Mexican nation-building processes (meant to consolidate and accumulate wealth) pose existential losses for Caxcan people and their relationship with Tlachialoyantepec.

Conclusion

Caxcans and Chemehuevi, like many Indigenous people, have a responsibility to protect their sacred sites. Caxcans in diaspora have committed to the Xuchitl Dance as a way of community preservation of Tlachialoyantepec. INAH has yet to implement a viable community consultation process and small tribes lack committed academic who will research and publish Indigenous centered histories. These limitations strain the ability for Caxcans to protect and engage with their mountain. Indigenous people do not

have any legal sovereignty in Mexico. However, Indigenous people in the United States have some legal framework, through treaties and Executive Orders, to create reservations and tribal governments. Although not a perfect system, for those indigenous peoples in the United States, these legal interactions have allowed some tribal efforts like the Native American Land Conservancy to exist in order to protect sacred places like Mamapukaib. Both Caxcans and Chemehuevi experience parallel histories of colonization that continue in different manifestations. Both Caxcans and Chemehuevi look toward maintaining wellbeing with their sacred centers and the spiritual entities that dwell there. For Chemehuevi, the dead must make a final trip throughout the Salt Song visiting places like Mamapukaib that have puha, spiritual power, before their parting from this physical world while the Caxcans receive pacti, or medicine, from Tlachialoyantepec. For Caxcans, Tlachialoyantepec is also their final resting place. Spanish and English colonization sought to eradicate these traditions, songs, and dances, yet those colonial forces continue to be unsuccessful with their eradication efforts.

Conclusion

Several elders found this project healing, because they felt validated and heard. They no longer felt academically silenced, the way they felt with archaeologists. They were experts and teachers. During this project, the author validated Creation Narratives and cultural landscapes as real forms of knowing and spiritual sovereignty. These elders are truly the masters, educational and cultural students of their school and their homelands. Chemehuevi and Caxcan People are small tribes, but part of a larger nationhood outlined by song and dance. These two tribes are small and mighty, and this research demonstrated that they both have a valuable history and spiritual core. Despite the various challenges that have historically kept Chemehuevi and Caxcans from accessing their sites, they have pioneered preservation projects which allowed tribal members to continue to keep contemporary connections, and in this way keep the memory of these two places alive.

The Native American Land Conservancy (NALC) formed in Coachella Valley, California with a vision to steward healing and spiritual landscapes. This Conservancy is composed of members from multiple tribes, including the Chemehuevi at Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians and Chemehuevi from the Chemehuevi Indian Tribe. Tom Askew, a nontribal member, and other entities inherited the Old Woman Mountain property from his grandfather. Askew approached Theresa and Dean Mike about the possibility of returning the Old Woman Mountain to its rightful owners, the Chemehuevi. After years of hard work, the NALC acquired the Old Woman Mountain in 2002 and has since organized annual weekend retreats with the youth. The goal is to engage the youth

with the landscape, its cultural resources, stories and songs. More importantly, the NALC engages and respectfully honors its puha as a healing source for participants. The Native American Land Conservancy believes this creative process inscribed into the landscape is very much alive and living within the Old Woman Mountain Preserve. In her book *Trust in the Land* Beth Rose Middleton credited the work of the NALC for its efforts to preserve "cultural identity, historical continuity, and contemporary healing from intergenerational trauma due to the historic and contemporary impacts of colonialism."[390] During a Blessing Ceremony in 2015 at the Old Woman Mountain Preserve, Sean Milanovich, tribal member of the Agua Caliente Band of Mission Indians, shared, "it is about spiritual relationship but it is also about a relationship with ourselves. Once you know the knowledge here at the Preserve you are transformed. You become stronger because you know who you are. You now have a responsibility that adds meaning to your life."[391] As future generations navigate and negotiate the realities of a western world; the Old Woman Mountain Preserve is a way that Chemehuevi look to the past to meet the challenges of the present.

Unlike non-profit tribal conservancies in the United States, INAH is the only entity allowed to preserve places of historical value in Mexico. Caxcans in El Remolino did not successfully become part of the narration of Tlachialoyantepec. Caxcans argue that while INAH preserves its physical integrity, the impacts of silencing its spiritual integrity, practical use, and disregard for access to places of power is of more alarm to

[390] Beth Rose Middleton, *Trust in the Land: New Directions in Tribal Conservation* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2011), 65.
[391] Sean Milanovich Interview, February 05, 2016.

Caxcans. Caxcan's preservation practices of sacred sites relied on their community traditions such as prayer, offerings, and dancing. These acts activate the spiritual significance to this place which then cements the respect and reverence to never desecrate such places. INAH continued with their preservation plans without community input and just two days before writing this conclusion, August 2, 2019, INAH opened the Cerro de las Ventanas tourist site to the public after several years of curating the physical space. Caxcan people still committed to providing their history of this place, decided to request funds from the satellite community in Inglewood to create a community museum to house a community-based interpretation center. After four years of fundraising, the Inglewood satellite community restructured an old church as the site of the community museum.

Community members began to donate their family cultural items, correspondences, and photographs to exhibit in the museum. The author of this dissertation will serve as a curator for this community institution providing all primary sources found in archives. This community museum becomes a place of hope and agency for Caxcans who will continue to engage with Tlachialoyantepec. And although INAH prohibited Caxcans from dancing the Xuchitl Dance on this mountain like in ancestral times, Caxcans continue to dance wherever they are located. This spiritual responsibility to their place of Creation glues the Caxcan Nation. In an oral history interview with Caxcan elder Cuca Rodriguez, she leaves these words for the youth, "if we forget this

place, if we forget to visit this place, then we have abandoned ourselves. This sacred mountain you see in front of us gave us life, honor it."[392]

The prayer in dance activates their Creation Stories, homeland, and journey back home. Sacred sites are these spiritual centers and openings to the past. This research project has provided many with the opportunity to reclaim this history, including the author. Moctezuma Meza repeatedly told the youth that Creation Narratives are the community's memory of how the Earth formed and shaped by different Spirit beings. He believes the Earth is still in formation and that these prayers and dances to this mountain allow people to be part of this process. He shared that this is the magic that outsiders, including archaeologists, cannot comprehend. Yet, the Caxcans and Chemehuevi both carry this memory and responsibility with dignity and resilience into the future.

[392] Cuca Interview, September 13, 2016.

Bibliography

Archival Collections

Isabel Kelly unpublished field notes.

Carobeth Laird Papers, Special Collections, University of California, Riverside.

Digital Newspaper Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, California.

Fairchild, Mahlon Dickerson Memoirs, Society of California Pioneers, San Francisco, California.

Grace Nicholson Papers and Addenda, Huntington Library, Pasadena, California.

Valley Times Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, California.

Joaquin Garcia Izcalbaceta Collection, Mexican General Archives, Mexico City, Mexico.

Oral Histories

Bautista Gallegos, Petra. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, September 16, 2015.

Diaz del Castillo, Bernal. *History of the Conquest of New Spain*, transl. David Carrasco. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2008.

Diosdado Reyes, Alfonso. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico October 10, 2017.

Leivas, June. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Chemehuevi Indian Reservation, February 20-22, 2015.

Leivas, Matthew. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Chemehuevi Indian Reservation, February 20-22, 2015.

Leivas, Matthew. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Old Woman Mountain Preserve, May 23, 2015.

Meza, Moctezuma. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, March 18, 2018.

Meza, Moctezuma. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, June 5, 2018.

Milanovich, Sean. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. California Center for Native Nations, February 05, 2016.

Ocampo Bautista, Orfil. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, July 12, 2016.

Ocampo Bautista, Orfil. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, February 24, 2018.

Ocampo Bautista, Refugio. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Los Angeles, California, June 2016.

Rodriguez, Alan. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, June 2018.

Rodriguez, Francisco. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Ejido Cucapah, Mexicalli, Mexico, May 08, 2015.

Rodriguez, Francisco. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, September 13, 2016.

Rodriguez, Guadalupe. Personal Communication with Daisy Ocampo. Cerro de las Ventanas, El Remolino, Zacatecas, Mexico, Summer 2008.

Rodriguez, Joel. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. Contitlan, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, November 2017.

Rodriguez, Maria Isabel. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, June 2017.

Rodriguez, Refugio. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, September 13, 2016.

Ruvalcaba, Ruben. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, November 2015.

Santos Ramirez, Marco Antonio. Interview by Daisy Ocampo. Personal Interview. El Remolino, Juchipila, Zacatecas, Mexico, Summer 2012.

Reports on the Old Woman Mountain Preserve

Andre, James M. "Ethnobotanically Important Plants of the Old Woman Mountains Preserve: A Photographic Guide." Native American Land Conservancy and University of California, Riverside- Granite Mountains Desert Research Center, 2005.

Andre, James M. "Survey and Assessment of the Botanical Resources in the Old Woman Mountains Preserve." Native American Land Conservancy and University of California, Riverside- Granite Mountain Desert Research Center, 2004.

Newspaper

Los Angeles Herald

Booth's Bazoo

Books and Articles

Abrams, Lynn. *Oral History Theory*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

Andrew, Jolivette (ed.). *Cultural Representation in Native America.* New York: Altamira, 2006.

Avila Marquez, Humberto. *Iconografia Retrospective de Tenamaztle*. Mexico: Primera Ediccion, 2012.

Basso, Keith. Wisdom Sits in Places: Landscape and Language among the Western Apache. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996.

Basso, Keith and Feld, Steven. *Senses of Places*. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996.

Bay Area Nuclear Waste Coalition, et al., Plaintiff-appellee, v Manuel Lujan, Jr., Secretary of Interior, et al., Defendants. State of California, U.S. Ecology Inc., Applicants- appellants, 42 F.3d 1398 (9th Cir. 1994) U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit- 42 F.3d 1398 (9th Cir. 1994) (November. 22, 1994).

Behar, Ruth. "The Vision of a Guachichil Witch in 1599: A Window on the Subjugation of Mexico's Hunter-Gathers," *Ethnobotany,* vol. 34, no.2 (Spring 1987), 115- 138.

Berkes, Fikret. *Sacred Ecology*. New York: Routledge, 1999.

Bollinger Pouwels, Joel. *Political Journalism by Mexican Women During the Age of Revolution, 1876-1940*. Lewiston: Edwin Mellin Press, 2006.

Brown, Vincent. *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Bueno, Christina. *The Pursuit of Ruins: Archaeology, History, and the Making of Modern Mexico.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2016.

Cajete, Gregory. *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence.* Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishers, 2000.

Caretta, Nicolas. "La Zona Arqueológica de cerro de Las Ventanas, Poblado del Remolino, Municipio de Juchipila, Zacatecas. Proyecto de investigacion arqueológica. Informe de la prospección arqueológica, poligonal de protección, mapeo, diagnóstico y propuesta para la temporada 2003," *Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia-Zacatecas* (2003).

Caretta, Nicolas. "Proyecto Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas, Municipio de Juchipila, Zacatecas," *Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia-Zacatecas* (2002).

Cook, Karline P. "Muslims and Chichimeca in New Spain: The Debates over Just and Slavery," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* vol. 70, no.1 (January-June 2013), 13-38.

Cramaussel, Chantal and Ortelli, Sara. *La Sierra Tepehuana: Asentamientos y Movimientos de Poblacion.* Mexico: Colegio de Michoacan, Zamora, 2006.

De Ahumada, Pedro. *Relación Sobre la Rebelión de los Indios Zacatecas* (1562). México: Vargas, Rea. 1954.

Denetdale, Jennifer N. *Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies of Navajo Chief Manuelito and Juanita.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2007.

Fábregas, Andrés., Nájera Espinoza, Mario Alberto., and Valdés, Carlos Manuel. *Dinamica y Transformacion de la Region Chichimeca*. Guadalajara: Seminario Permanente de Estudios de la Gran Chichimeca, 2012.

Ferris, Neal, Harrison, Rodney, and Wilcox, Michael. *Rethinking Colonial Pasts Through Archaeology.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Florescano, Enrique. *Memory, Myth, and Time in Mexico: From the Aztecs to Independence*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 1994.

Fowler, Catherine S. "Reconstructing Southern Paiute- Chemehuevi Trails in the Mojave Desert of Southern Nevada and California: Ethnographic Perspectives from the 1930s" in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths, and Roads in Anthropological Perspective* edited by James Snead, Clark Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2009.

Garibi, Davila and Paulino, Jose Ignacio. *Los Cazcanes.* México: Editorial Cultura, 1950.

Garibi Davila and Paulino, Jose Ignacio. *Cazcanos y Tochos: Algunas Observaciones Acerca de estas Tribus y su Idioma.* Guadalajara: Instituto Jaliscience de Antropologia e Historia, 1991.

Gonzalez D'Avila, Gil. *Guerra de los Chichimecas*, "Extractos y Noticias MS." Paris: National Library of France, 1578.

Hebner, William L. *Southern Paiute: A Portrait William.* Logan: Utah State University Press, 2010.

Hensher, Alan. *Ghost Towns of the Mojave Desert: A Concise and Illustrated Guide*. Los Angeles, California Classic Books, 1991.

Hermenegildo Garces, Francisco Tomas and Coues, Elliot, *On the Trail of a Spanish Pioneer; the diary and itinerary of Francisco Garces (missionary priest) in his*

travels through Sonora, Arizona, and California, 1775-1776. New York: F. P. Harper, 1900.

Jolivette, Andrew, ed. *Cultural Representation in Native America*. New York: Altamira Press, 2006.

Kaufman, Ned. Place, Race and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Keller, Jean A. *Empty Beds: Indian Student Health at Sherman Institute 1902-1922*. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2002.

Kemper, Roth S. and Adkins, Julie *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: the Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition.* Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2015.

Klansky, Phillip. "The Salt Song Trail Map: the Sacred Landscape of the Nuwuvi People." *The Cultural Conservancy*, 2009.

Knack, Martha C. *Boundaries Between: The Southern Paiute, 1775-1995*. Lincoln:

University of Nebraska, 2001.

Kroeber, A. L. *Handbook of the Indians of California.* Berkeley, California Book Company Ltd., 1967.

Laird, Carobeth. *Mirror and Pattern: George Laird's World of Chemehuevi Mythology.* Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1984.

Laird, Carobeth. *The Chemehuevis.* Banning: Malki Museum Press, 1976.

León-Portilla, Miguel. *La Flecha en Blanco: Francisco Tenamaztle y Bartolomé de las Casas en Lucha por los derechos de los Indígenas, 1541-1556*. México: Editorial Diana, 1995.

Leon-Portillo, Miguel. *Francisco Tenamaztle: Primer Guerillero de America Defensor de los Derechos Humanos.* Mexico City: Editorial Diana, 2005.

Lopez del Rio, Hugo, Garcia, Fernando, Mendez-Cardona, Raul Y., M Caretta, Speakman, Robert, and Glascock, Michael. "Characterization of pottery from Cerro de Las Ventanas, Zacatecas, Mexico," *Radiochimica Acts* vol. 97, no. 9 (January 2009), 513-518.

Luther Martin, Calvin. *In the Spirit of the Earth: Rethinking History and Time*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

Luke, Claudia, Andre, Jim and Herring, Margaret *Technical Reports.* Riverside: Proceeding of the East Mojave Desert Symposium, 1992.

Madrigal, Anthony. *Sovereignty, Land and Water: building Tribal Environmental and Cultural Programs on the Cahuilla and Twenty-Nine Palms Reservations*. Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, 2008.

Maracle, Lee. *Memory Serves Oratories*. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 2015.

Mendoza, Juana Belen ed. *Por la Tierra y Por la Raza.* Mexico D.F.: Consejo Primera Edición, 1924.

Meyers, Daniel. "Animal Symbolism Among the Numa: Symbolic Analysis of Numic Origin Myths," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* vol. 19 (1997): 32-49.

Middleton, Beth Rose. *Trust in the Land: New Directions in Tribal Conservation*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2011.

Minero Lagaspi, David Salomon. *Los Caxcanes: Reporte Previo y Parcial de su Magnificia.* Zacatecas: Sociedad Mexicana de Geografia y Estadistica, 1997.

Minero Legaspi, David Salomon. *Zacatecas en la Prehistoria III, Los Caxcanes*. Zacatecas: Zacatecas, 1997.

Morris Bakken, Gordon. *The Mining Law of 1872: Past, Politics, and Prospects*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2008.

Murray, Frederic. "Shifting Boundaries: Violence, Representation, and the Salt Songs of the Great Basin Peoples," Proceedings of the Ninth Native American Symposium at the Southeastern Oklahoma State University (2011), 39-48.

Phillip Powell, Phillip. *War and Peace on the North Mexican Frontier: A Documentary Record*. Madrid Ed. Jose Porrua Turanzas, 1971.

Rodman, Margaret C. "Empowering Place: Multilocality and Multivocality." *American Anthropologist*, New Series, 94, no. 3 (1992): 640-56.

Russo, Kurt. *In the Land of Three Peaks: The Old Woman Mountain Preserve.* Coachella: Native American Land Conservancy, 2006.

Ruvalcaba Limon, Maria de la Luz. *El Xuchitl: Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial de Juchipila y Zacatecas.* Zacatecas: Primera Edición, 2016.

Sandoval, Carolina and Campos Loera , J. Jose. *Cuentos Y Leyendas de la region de Juchipila.* Zacatecas: Instituto de la Region de Juchipila, 2015.

Shea Murphey, Jacqueline. *The People Have Never Stopped Dancing: Native American Modern Dance Histories*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.

Sisquoc, Lorene., Sakiestewa Gilbert, Matthew., and Trafzer, Clifford E. *The Indian School on Magnolia Avenue Voices and Images from the Sherman Institute* Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 2012.

Snead, James E. "Ancestral Pueblo Trails and the Cultural Landscape of the Pajarito Plateau, New Mexico," *Antiquity* 76 (2002): 756-765.

Snead, James E., Clark Erickson, and J. Andrew Darling. "Trails of Tradition: Movement, Meaning and Place" in *Landscapes of Movement: Trails, Paths and Roads in Anthropological Perspective.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009.

Strathern, Marilyn. "Commentary: Concrete Typographies" *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 3 (1988), 88-96.

Taylor, William B. and Pease G. Y. Franklin. *Violence, Resistance, and Survival in the Americas: Native Americans and the Legacy of Conquest.* Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press,1994.

Tenamaztle, Francisco and De Las Casa, Bartolome. *Relación de Agravios hechos por Nuño de Guzman y sus Huestes a Don Francisco Tenamaztle*. Mexico: 1959.

Trafzer, Clifford. *A Chemehuevi Song: The Resilience of a Southern Paiute Tribe*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015.

Trafzer, Clifford E. *Chemehuevi Indians: Historic Properties of Traditional Lands in the Yuma Proving Grounds*. Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, University of California, Riverside, 2013.

Trafzer, Clifford E., Luke Madrigal and Anthony Madrigal. *Chemehuevi People of the Coachella Valley.* Coachella: Chemehuevi Press, 1997.

Trafzer, Clifford E., Kurt Russo, Christie Firtha, William Medina, and Shannon Smith. *Painted Rock and the Old Woman Mountain: A Learning Landscape.* Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, University of California, Riverside, 2008.

Trafzer, Clifford. *Tribal Cultural Biological Resources Whitewater River of the Twenty-Nine Palms Indian Reservation*. Coachella: Twenty- Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians, 2011.

Trafzer, Clifford E. *Quechan Indian Historic Property of Traditional Lands on the Yuma Proving Grounds.* Riverside: California Center for Native Nations, University of California, Riverside, 2012.

Trafzer, Clifford. *Where Puha Sits: Salt Songs, Power, and the Oasis of Mara*. Riverside: Rupert Costo Endowment, 2018.

Van Valkenburg, Richard F. "Chemehuevi Notes" in Kelly, Isabel T. *Southern Paiute Ethnography*. Prescott: Prescott College, 1971.

Vredenburgh, Larry M. *History of Mining in the Old Woman Mountains, San Bernardino County, California*. Unpublished, 2014.

Vredenburgh, Larry M., Shumway, Gary L., and Hartill, Russell D. *Desert Fever: An Overview of Mining in the California Desert*. Canoga Park: Living West, 1981.

Dissertations and Theses

Klasky, Philip M. "An Extreme and Solemn Relationship Native American Perspectives: Ward Valley Nuclear Dump." Master's Thesis: San Francisco State University, 1997.

Rodriguez Torres, Juan Ramon. "El Sitio Arqueologico Cerro de las Ventanas y sus Terrazas Prehispanicas." Master Thesis, Universidad Autonoma de Zacatecas, 2008.

Russo, Kurt. "*Healing Landscape: An Historical Perspective."* PhD diss., University of California, Riverside, 2008.

Ocampo, Daisy. "Voices and Memories of the East Mojave Desert: A Historical Account of the Chemehuevi People and their Spiritual Relationship to Mamapukaib, the Old Woman Mountain Preserve." Master Thesis, University of California, Riverside 2015.

Ponce, Daniel. *Indian Slavery in 16th Century New Spain: the Politics and Power of Bondage, 1519-1600*. Austin: University of Texas- Master Thesis, 2013.

Field Notes

Ocampo Journal, Field Notes, May 23, 2015.

Ocampo Journal, Field Notes, January 18, 2018.

Ocampo Journal, Field Notes, September 13, 2016.

Online Sources

"Choicepoint- California's Water & Radioactive Waste- Updated" *YouTube*, published (December 25, 2015).

"Cultural Gastronomica de Mexico," *Facebook*, (2018)

Desert Training Center: California-Arizona Maneuver Area. Bureau of Land Management. Brochure.

Gomez Soto, Hector Pascual. "Los Caxcanes una Tribu Indomita," *Cronicas de Jalpa Zacatecas* (2016) <http://cronicasdejalpa.blogspot.com.>

Haro Garcia, Valduvil. Online Facebook message. (January 12, 2018).

Larkin-Gilmore, Juliet- Larkin. *Homesick: Disease and Distance in American Indian Boarding Schools*, (November 18, 2016)

<https://remedianetwork.net/2016/11/18/homesick-disease-and-distance-in-american-indian-boarding-schools/?blogsub=confirming#blog_subscription-5>.

"Mines and Cabins in the Old Woman Mountains," <www.dzrtgrls.com> (January 13, 2019).

Media Sources

Nelson, Melissa and Klasky, Phillip *The Salt Song Trail: Bringing Creation Back Together* (2009), DVD.