

A MEMORIAL

RECOGNIZING THE ROLE OF GENIZAROS IN NEW MEXICO HISTORY AND THEIR LEGACY.

WHEREAS, indigenous captivity and servitude were common in frontier society that became New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, various indigenous peoples, including Apache, Dine (Navajo), Pawnee, Ute and Comanche, were captured; and

WHEREAS, indigenous people became part of New Mexican communities and households through capture in war, kidnapping, trade fairs, punishment for crimes, adoption, abandonment and the sale of children; and

WHEREAS, baptismal records reveal that at least four thousand six hundred one captive indigenous persons were baptized between the years 1700 and 1880, becoming part of Spanish, Mexican and territorial households; and

WHEREAS, numerous primary source records document the captivity, presence and experience of indigenous people displaced in this way, including marriage records, court cases, wills and censuses; and

WHEREAS, the experiences of captives, while varied, included being raised and serving within households, and sometimes remaining in a captor's home for a lifetime; and

WHEREAS, the practice of taking Indian captives lasted through the Mexican and into the American period in New

Mexico; and

WHEREAS, there were many terms to describe Indian captivity and servitude in New Mexico, including "cautivos", "criados", "coyotes" and "famulos" but the most common used prior to 1821 and into the Spanish colonial period was the term "genizaro"; and

WHEREAS, the term "genizaro" derives from the Turkish word "yeniceri" or "janissary", terms used to describe Christian captives who, as children, had been forcibly abducted, traded and trained as the nucleus of the Ottoman empire's standing army; and

WHEREAS, genizaro families could be found in various communities throughout the colony, including the major villages of Albuquerque, Santa Cruz de la Canada, Santa Fe and El Paso del Norte; and

WHEREAS, in the mid-eighteenth century, many genizaros were again relocated strategically at the edges of Hispanic communities, thus providing both an initial line of defense against raiders and the foundation for communities such as Abiquiu, Belen, Carnuel, Las Trampas, Ojo Caliente, Ranchos de Taos, San Miguel del Vado and Tome; and

WHEREAS, by 1776, genizaros comprised at least one-third of the entire population of the province; and

WHEREAS, genizaros and their descendants have participated in all aspects of the social, political, military

and economic life of New Mexico during the Spanish, Mexican and American periods; and

WHEREAS, eventually the migration patterns of cautivos and genizaros paralleled that of all New Mexicans with communities extending southward to El Paso del Norte (Ciudad Juarez) and northern Chihuahua, Mexico, as well as northward in Colorado and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the direct result of the Indian slave trade was the emergence of generations of racial and cultural mixtures often referred to in the colonial period with terms such as coyotes, colores quebrados, lobos and mestizos; and

WHEREAS, many New Mexicans can trace their ancestry to these indigenous peoples;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the important role of genizaros and their descendants have had in the social, economic, political and cultural milieu of New Mexico and the United States be recognized; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the house of representatives recognize the existence and importance of this indigenous group and the presence and importance of its descendants today; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be transmitted to the office of the state historian.