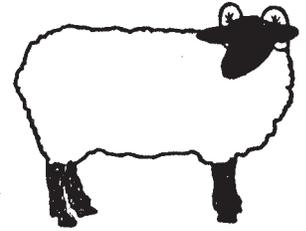


Juan Cruz Lujan and the Pastores

In the mid-to-late 19th Century sheep herders, or pastores, from New Mexico **pastured** their flocks in the western section of present Cimarron County. The area offered **vast, continuous grasslands** in the **watersheds** of the Cimarron, Beaver (North Canadian), and South Canadian Rivers. **Playa lakes** also dotted the landscape. The Santa Fe-Missouri **trade route**, which developed in the 1820s, crossed through the area. This connection provided New Mexicans with a **market** for wool and **woven** goods. In addition, **breeding-stock** sheep and sheep **destined** for **slaughterhouses** were driven from central New Mexico for sale in Kansas and Nebraska. Because of these activities, in the last half of the 19th Century numerous Hispanic communities, or *placitas*, developed near the trail's path through Cimarron County.

After spring lambing in east-central New Mexico, the *pastor*, or sheep herder, moved the herd eastward into the grasslands. In summer and autumn the flock covered a wide area through the grassy **plains** around the Cimarron and Canadian rivers and returned to the mountain valleys for the winter. Sheep needed grass but could survive without much water. The pastores established various "base camps," often building small houses and **corrals** of native stone, when available.



In 1885 Juan Cruz Lujan turned a sheep camp on Corrumpa Creek into his own ranch. He was joined by his brothers Francisco, Lorenzo, and Alejandro, who came from Mora County, New Mexico. The Lujan ranch had a flat-roofed adobe house, a chapel, and beehive-shaped baking ovens, called *hornos*.

The **descendants** of the pastores continued to live and ranch in the Oklahoma Panhandle. The 1900 and 1910 US **censuses** recorded sizeable concentrations of Hispanic stock raisers, including the Lujans, in Harrison Township of Cimarron County. In 1899 a widely circulated newspaper report asserted that a "colony of three hundred New Mexicans" were raising sheep there, and approximately 125 individuals (25 surnames) are represented in the 1900 census. As late as 1920 and 1930 Juan Cruz Lujan still appeared in the census as a sheep rancher. He died in Cimarron County in 1943.

The Hispanic presence in Cimarron County is reflected in local place names that include Carrizo, Castañeda (at Wolf Mountain, on the Santa Fe Trail), Cimarron, Delfin, Hidalgo, and Nieto Junction. Geographical designations include Corrumpa, Cienquilla, Tesesquite, Carrizozo, and Carrizo creeks, and Trujillo Springs. In the 20th Century some of the environment that served as pasture in the four-state area was preserved as the Rita Blanca National Grassland in Texas and Oklahoma, the Kiowa National Grassland in New Mexico, and the Comanche National Grassland in Kansas.

Source: Everett, Diana, "Pastores," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*, Oklahoma Historical Society: <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/P/Pa029.html>

Vocabulary

breeding stock— a group of animals used for the purpose of planned breeding.

census— a counting of the population (as of a country, city, or town) and a gathering of related statistics done by a government every so often

continuous— continuing without a stop

corrals— pens for keeping or capturing livestock

descendant—proceeding from an ancestor or source

destined— to be bound or directed

grassland— land covered with herbs (as grasses and clover) rather than shrubs and trees

market—a meeting together of people to buy and sell

pastured— fed (as cattle) on pasture

plains— a broad area of level or rolling treeless country

playa lakes— round hollows in the ground in the Southern High Plains of the United States. Most playas fill with water only after spring rainstorms when freshwater collects in the round depressions of the otherwise flat landscape of West Texas, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas.

slaughterhouse— an establishment where animals are butchered

trade route— a road followed by people in the business of buying and selling items

vast— very great in extent, size, amount, degree, or intensity

watershed— the area that drains into a river or lake

woven— formed by lacing together strands of material