Olde New Mexico

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CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS

PUBLISHING

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This book first published 2011

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

12 Back Chapman Street, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2XX, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-4438-2709-6, ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-2709-6

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FOREWORD

New Mexico has always fascinated me. It was a place one seemed to travel through if on enroute to a final Southwestern destination in Arizona or California in the old days of Route 66 'America's Highway'. Sadly the highway is no longer an Interstate Route.

In my youth I decided to see the 'West' and travelled on a Greyhound 'Scenicruiser' Bus. A three-day journey in those days.

Many people have vivid memories of traveling on route 66. I recall the constant changing of buses as one went over each State line and the scenery of Kansas, Oklahoma and of the Texas Panhandle then from Amarillo and West through Texas. I noticed that the landscape became more arid as I entered New Mexico. After leaving Albuquerque the bus headed into Santa Rosa and then Tucumcari. I saw my first adobes and was fascinated to see that people still lived in them.

I have always been interested in history. I took Prehistory and Early Agriculture at University and now have found time to redevelop my interest in the southwest.

Within these pages, I have tried to combine a history of the State together earlier accounts of the Spanish in New Mexico (New Granada) and to take a look at native history and culture. Included are a few accounts of the "Old West' in the territorial days.

Whilst the book pertains to the present area known as New Mexico, there are areas that overlap due to the fact that there were no 'State lines' and Spanish territory later was divided much later into the territories of modern day Arizona, Texas, New Mexico and parts of south eastern California.

The book ends at the pre-Statehood territorial period. It is hoped that this portrayal will go beyond the material found within modern travel guidebooks and give the reader a chance to travel back in time to eyewitness this fascinating and volatile period.

PREFACE

The book describes the archaic period from the hunters and food gatherers. The Clovis and pre-pueblo era. The evolvement of early settlements and the Pueblo societies. The Spanish Conquistadors, Pueblo civilization and the lawless 'Old West'.

An observation of a supernova in July 1054 AD by Pueblo 'astronomers' recorded by an unknown Chacoan painted on a canyon wall. Are the Navajos descedents of the Yukon Dene peoples and were the Dene from Siberia?

Cabeza de Vaca, reported rumours of gold in the north. He was a member of a Spanish expedition that was *shipwrecked on the Texas coast around 1528 who* swam to shore and lived as a slave of an Indian group and later escaped into the interior and survived, becoming both a trader and a medicine.

The age of the Conquistadors is portrayed. The expedition of Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán in 1529 with a force of 10,500 men on a march through Nayarit, Jalisco, Durango, Sinaloa and Zacatecas. Killed thousands of natives. The expedition of Coronado. Francisco Vazquez de Coronado, who searched for the mythical "Seven Cities of Gold". De Niza who set out on his famous expedition in 1539 found a tribe whom he named 'The Pintados' because they painted their faces.His are among the earliest descriptions of people in the Southwest. The Pueblo revolt and later the Apache Wars are included together with an extensive 19th century tour of Spanish America culminating in the new territory of New Mexico and the 'Old West.

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THE CLOVIS CULTURE

The Clovis culture (sometimes referred to as the Llano culture is a prehistoric Paleo-Indian culture at the end of the last glacial period. Evidence was uncovered of the manufacture of "Clovis points" (arrowheads) together with bone and ivory tools. Archaeologists' have determined that radiocarbon dating gives an approximate 13,500 to 13,000 calendar years ago. The Clovis culture was replaced by several localized regional cultures from the early 'Younger Dryas 'cold climate period.

Several Post-Clovis cultures include the Folsom tradition, Gainey, Suwannee-Simpson, Plainview-Goshen, Cumberland, and Redstone. Each of these are thought to have a direct connection with that of the Clovis site.

The only difference was the length of the fluting on their projectile points which could be attributed to the result of normal cultural influences over a period of time.

After the discovery of several Clovis sites in western North America in the 1930s, the Clovis people came to be regarded as the first human inhabitants of the New World. It appears that when the Clovis culture ended, there was a decline in fauna, a less mobile population and different local differences of both lithic and cultural traditions.

After this time, Clovis-style fluted points were replaced by other fluted-point traditions (such as the Folsom culture) in a basically uninterrupted sequence across North and central America. The Clovis period lasted through both the Middle and Late Paleoindian periods.

The Clovis culture ended abruptly.This may have been due to their overhunting of the mammmoth, or climate change,or even disease and other species,though this is still an open question.. Thir culture dissapeared at the start of the Younger Dryas cold phase that lasted nearly 1,500 years that affected many parts of the world, including North America. It appeared to have been triggered by a vast meltwater lake when Lake Agassiz emptied into the North Atlantic, disrupting thermohaline circulation.

A cowboy and former slave, George McJunkin, found an Ancient Bison , an extinct relative of the American Bison) skeleton in 1908 after a flash flood. It was excavated in 1926, near Folsom, New Mexico under the direction of Harold Cook and Jesse Figgins. On August 29, 1927 they found the first Folsom point with the extinct bones.

The best documented evidence of a Clovis tool site was excavated between 1932 and 1937 near Clovis, New Mexico, directed by Edgar Billings Howard from the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences/ University of Pennsylvania.

Howard's crew left their excavation in Burnet Cave, New Mexico (truly the first professionally excavated Clovis site in August, 1932 and visited Whiteman and his Blackwater Draw site. In November, Howard was back at Blackwater Draw to investigate additional finds from a construction project.

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Note: The Dent Site, in Weld County, Colorado, was simply a fossil mammoth excavation in 1932. The first Dent Clovis point was found November 5, 1932 and the in situ point was found July 7, 1933. 1931 and reported early in 1932. E. B. Howard brought the Burnet Cave

Oldest Settlement

The oldest settlement in the Southwest belongs to a period after 9500 BCE.The North American ice sheets (Glaciers) ***never*** reached as far as the Southwest. At that time period there were no Deserts, desert grasslands had not yet been formed. Animals prevelant in the area (now extinct) were; the American camel, the Shasta ground sloth, lion and the mammoth. The earliest periods. The Clovis and the Folsom were only discovered in the 1920's.

Archaeologists suggested that in the latter half of the 20th century, that people associated with the Clovis culture were the first inhabitants of the Americas. Due to the fact that; no solid evidence of pre-Clovis human inhabitation had been found. According to the accepted theory, the Clovis people crossed the Beringia land bridge over the Bering Strait from Siberia

to Alaska during the period of lowered sea levels during the ice age, then made their way southward through an ice-free corridor east of the Rocky Mountains in present-day western Canada as the glaciers retreated. This theory has been challenged by studies that suggest a Pre-Clovis Human occupation of the Americas.

Human Habitation before Clovis

Predecessors of the Clovis people may have migrated south along the North American coastlines, although there are arguments for many migrations along several different routes. According to researchers new radiocarbon dates place Clovis places remains more recent than former estimates to a period dating to 11,050 to 10,900 years ago. Dating of the Monte Verde site in Chile place Clovis-like culture there as early as 13,500 years ago and remains found at the Channel Islands of California place coastal Paleoindians there 12,500 years ago. Suggesting that Paleo-indian migration could have spread more quickly along the Pacific coastline, proceeding south, and that populations that settled along that route could later have migrated eastward into the continent.

Worked stone tools were found at Topper, South Carolina were dated by radiocarbon techniques to 50,000 years ago, but there is some dispute regarding those dates. A more substantiated claim is that of Paisley Caves, where extensive carbon-14 and genetic testing indicates the possibility that humans related to modern Native Americans were present in caves over 1000 years before the earliest evidence of Clovis. Another published in offers strong evidence of humans occupying sites at Monte Verde, at the tip of South America, as early as 13,000 years ago. If this evidence is true, it would appear that humans must have entered North America long before the Clovis Culture perhaps 16,000 years ago. The Tlapacoya site on the shore of the former Lake Main , Burnet Cave Chalco reveals bones, hearths, middens, and a curved obsidian blade, presumed to date to over 21,700 years BP,although even tis dating has been disputed.

Coastal migration route

Recent studies of the DNA of Native Americans suggest that the people of the New World may have diverged genetically from Siberians as early as 20,000 years ago, much earlier than had been previously supposed.

According to one alternative theory, the Pacific coast of North America may have been free of ice such as to allow the first peoples in North America to come down this route prior to the formation of the ice-free corridor in the continental interior. Coastal marine life indicates diverse fauna persisting throughout the Pleistocene ice ages along the coasts of Alaska and British Columbia; these findings include common food sources of coastal aboriginal peoples, suggesting that a migration along the coastline was feasible at the time.

A very controversial theory has been suggested that the Clovis people could have inherited technology from the Solutreans. a people who lived in southern Europe 21,000-15,000 years ago, who also created the first Stone Age art work in southern France The link is suggested by the similarity in technology between the projectile points of the Solutreans and those of the Clovis people. The model envisions these people making the crossing in small watercraft via the edge of the pack ice in the North Atlantic Ocean that then extended to the Atlantic coast of France, using skills similar to those of the modern Inuit people.

Other supporters of an ancient European link to North America have suggested that stone tools found at Cactus Hill (an early American site in Virginia), are knapped in a style between Clovis and Solutrean. Other scholars have also suggested a Northern Atlantic point of entry, citing toolmaking similarities between Clovis and Solutrean-era artifacts.

Human occupation of New Mexico stretches back at least 11,000 years to the Clovis culture of hunter-gatherers. They left evidence of their campsites and stone tools. After the invention of agriculture the land was inhabited by the Ancient Pueblo Peoples who built houses out of stone or adobe bricks. They were a thriving population until 1000AD, when an abrupt climate change led them to migrate. The Pueblo peoples lived primarily along the few major rivers of the region. The Rio Grande, the Pecos, the Canadian, the San Juan, and the Gila.

TIMELINE OF NEW MEXICO HISTORY

c. 25000 B.C. Sandia people leave earliest evidence of human existence in what is now New Mexico.
c. 10000-9000 B.C. Clovis hunters roam area in search of mammoth, bison and other game.
c. 9000-8000 B.C. Folsom people flourish throughout Southwest at the end of the last Ice Age.
c. 10000-500 B.C. Cochise people are first inhabitants to cultivate corn, squash and beans, the earliest evidence of agriculture in the Southwest.
A.D. 300-1400 Mogollon culture introduces highly artistic pottery and early architecture in the form of pit houses.
A.D. 1-700 Anasazi basketmakers elevate weaving to a high art, creating baskets, clothing, sandals and utensils.
A.D. 700-1300 Anasazi culture culminates in the highly developed Chaco Civilization.
PALEO-INDIANS – Early Hunters and Gatherers
c.9500 to 7000 BCE

The Transition - From Hunter Gathering to Agriculture

During the late Archaic period. Corn and squash appear to have been the first crops. Beans were introduced later. Farming was firmly established by 1000 BCE.

Discoveries at Bat Cave, in the highlands of west-central New Mexico depicted a wide variety of cultural evidence such as; early use of both corn and squash, large storage pits, multiple hearths, rabbit-fur robes and wooden implements and an indication of later reoccupation of the site.

Village Life

Settlements at the end of the Archaic period c.200 AD indicated that people became less mobile. Their raising of crops tended to keep them within their own habitat.Individual villages became prevalent after 600-800 AD. Storage pits were built to guard against food shortage. At

Shabik'eschee Village in northwestern New Mexico is one of the numerous settlements (they exceed over a hundred) in the Chaco Canyon.(later in the 11th and 12th centuries the area was renowned for having spectacular pueblos).

Shabik'eschee Village[1] had numerous shallow pithouses. It appeared the groups living there gathered pinon nuts in the fall. The site indicated a change from communal ownership of food to individual ownership.Later the Mogollon area became highly developed.

The local Mimbres people were artisans who created elegantly designed black-on-white ceramics containing depictions of birds, deer, fish, rabbits, and lizards which have no comparison with other areas.

Between 1000 to 1130 AD, many lived in a dozen or so larger villages with several clusters of single-story dwellings containing between 50 and 200 rooms. Each room cluster contained several families, each who occupied a living room connected to at least one smaller storage room. The standard living room had an adobe floor, a slab-lined hearth with an adjacent slab-lined ash bin, and an open for smoke from the fire to be expelled from the dwelling. Excavations have revealed that the Mimbres carried out their daily activities, included grinding corn and cooking food, in adjacent plaza areas or on rooftops.ening in the roof which served as both an entrance and a vent

[1] It was partially excavated in the 1920's by Archaeologist Frank H. H. Roberts; 'Shabik'eschee Village. A Late Basket Maker Site in the Chaco Canyon; *New Mexico-Bureau of American Ethnology-Bulletin 92, Washington, DC, Government Printing Office.*

PUEBLO PEOPLE

The Pueblo people built a flourishing sedentary culture in the 1200s, constructing small towns in the valley of the Rio Grande and pueblos nearby. The Spanish encountered Pueblo civilization and elements of the Athabaskans in the 1500s. Cabeza de Vaca in 1535, one of only four survivors of the Panfilo de Narvaez expedition of 1527, tells of hearing Indians talk about fabulous cities somewhere in New Mexico. Fray Marcos de Niza enthusiastically identified these as the fabulously rich Seven Cities of Cíbola, the mythical seven cities of gold.

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado assembled an enormous expedition at Compostela, Mexico in 1540–1542 to explore and find the mystical Seven Golden Cities of Cibola as described by Cabeza de Vaca who had just arrived from his eight-year ordeal traveling from Florida to Mexico. Cabeza de Vaca and three companions were the only survivors of the Panfilo de Narvaez expedition of June 17, 1527 to Florida, losing 80 horses and all the rest of the explorers.

These four survivors had spent eight arduous years getting to Sinaloa, Mexico on the Pacific coast and had visited many Indian tribes. Coronado and his supporters sank a fortune in this ill-fated enterprise taking 1300 horses and mules for riding and packing and 100s of head of sheep and cattle as a portable food supply.

Coronado's men found several adobe pueblos (towns) in 1541 but found no rich cities of gold. Further widespread expeditions found no fabulous cities anywhere in the Southwest or Great Plains. A dispirited and now poor Coronado and his men began their journey back to Mexico leaving New Mexico behind.

Probably Coronado's greatest legacy was his loss of several horses and cattle into the plains of America. Doubling in number about every five years, these animals grew well in the wild and soon became the precursors of nearly all the horses rode by the Indians 100–150 years later as well as wild herds of Spanish cattle.

Chaco Canyon

Chaco Canyon is located in the San Juan Basin of New Mexico. Visitors to the site have stated that it mesmerizes everyone that sets foot there. To reach the houses, one descends in the Chaco Canyon and evident are isolated butters or mesas. The few trees do little to break the stark inhospitable lanscape. There is little vegatation in this area due to minimal annual rainfall. The largest house is Pueblo Bonito it covers nearly 2 acres and has 650 rooms that stood 4 stories high in parts of the village. This multi-story construction has wqalls as much as 3 feet thick.

Pueblo Astronomers

Many native Americans can predict the change of the seasons, determining when to plant crops by observing the movements of the sun and the moon. They have extensive knowledge of the stars and of the contellations. Archaeological discoveries confirm that prehistoric Southwestern people had a similar perception.

At Fajada Butte in Chaco Canyon, three sandstone slabs were discovered. Each slab was about 6.5 feet high, that fell from the vertical walls of the mesa, landed in such a way that they deflect light against the wall at certain times of the day. The Chacoans noticed this pattern and pecked one large and one spiral on the wall behind the slabs so that the intersection of the daggers of light and the stone spirals mark important points in the movement of the sun.

At the summer solstice on June 21st, a single dagger of light cuts across the large spiral; at the winter solstice Dec.21st, two vertical stripes of light bracket each side of the large spiral. The spring and autumn equinoxes are also marked. As one band of light cuts across the middle of the small spiral, a larger band falls to the right of center of the large spiral on Mach 21st. A similar pattern unfolds on Sept.21st, except that the dagger of light falls to the left of center on the large spiral.

Observation of a supernova

In July 1054 AD, a super nova[1] appeared in the sky two degrees below a waning crescent moon. No European accounts of this occurrence are known. The Chinese reported that the supernova was visible for 23 days. Tantalizing evidence suggests that both the Mimbres and the Chacoans reorded this event. On a canyon wall near the Great House of Penasco Blanco, a Chacoan painted a crescent moon with a star below it. Although these rock paintings cannot be dated it is extremely suggestive.

Equally beguiling is a Mimbres bowl showing a star-like object with 23 rays near the the back feet of a rabbit. It has been argued by Astronomers that the rabbit is a comon symbol for the moon in Native American art and suggests that the bowl from a village occupied for several centuries and illustrated on the bowl in the late 11th century depicts the supernova.

Arroyo Hondo

Arroyo Hondo was a large pueblo over 4 miles south of modern day Santa Fe.It was situated along a tributary canyon of the Rio Grande. Archaeological analysis of tree-ring dates indicate that the initial settlers built at least a single roomblock by 1315 AD. Over the next 15 years erected one of the largest pueblos in the Southwest. Eventually it was completed with 1200 two-storey rooms, distributed among 24 room-blocks arranged to define 13 plazas of similar size. By the mid-1330's, it was mainly deserted.

A second cycle of growth was attempted during the 1370's and 1380's when new residents initiated a second smaller pueblo of 200 single-storey rooms. They resided there until approximately 1410 AD when a devastating fire detroyed most of the pueblo. This became a period of population movement. Groups who once formed communities of smaller villages joined others to form new pueblos for short periods of time.

[1] Source' p100 –'Ancient Peoples of the American Southwest' – Stephen Plog - 1997.

One of the reasons for abandonment of the Pueblos was difficulty in accumulating sufficient food. The agricultural land around Arroyo Hondo was not very productive. No more than 400-600 people could have been fed in an average year. It was also difficult to accumulate adequate reserves. Archaeologist found foods that witnessed the inadequate food source by discovery at the site of cattails, cholla cactus and grass seeds which are associated with a starvation diet.

Bones showed some of the people had bowed long bones indicating a period of endemic malnutrition. Infant mortality figures showed that 26 percent died before their first birthday and 45 percent before the age of five. Average life expectancy was only 16.6 years, the shortest period discovered for any group of prehistoric Southwestern people.

There was an overall decline in other large settlements in the Southwest in the 14th and early 15th centuries. For example in the Cibola region of west-central New Mexico the ancestors of the Zuni reached a peak population of c.9300 in 17 pueblo towns near the end of the 13th century. Yet only 6500 people remained in 10-11 towns in the mid-14th century, possibly followed by an even more rapid drop to 900 people in the last half of the 14th century, and then a subsequent recovery.he growth of large towns was thus not necessarily a product of rising population levels.

CORONADO

Francisco Vásquez de Coronado y Luján (1510 – 22 September 1554). Coronado was born in to a noble family in Salamanca. He went to Mexico in 1535 with Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, his partner. In Mexico, he married Beatriz de Estrada, called the Saint (la Santa), sister of Leonor de Estrada, ancestor of the de Alvarado family and daughter of Treasurer and Governor Alonso de Estrada y Hidalgo, Lord of Picón.

The Coronado Expedition, "Seven Cities of Gold"

Were rumors were caused by reports given by the four shipwrecked survivors of the failed Narváez expedition, who included Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca and an African slave named Esteban Dorantes, or Estevanico. Upon finally returning to New Spain, the adventurers said they had heard stories from Natives about cities with great and limitless riches. Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza organized an expedition headed by the Franciscan friar Marcos de Niza.[1] During the voyage, in a place called Vacapa (probably mear the state of Sonora) de Niza sent Estevanico to scout ahead. Estevanico met a monk who had heard stories from Natives about 7 cities called "Cibola", said to be overflowing with riches.

Estevanico did not wait for the friar, but continued traveling until he reached Cibola (Háwikuh, now in New Mexico), where, at the hands of the Zuni tribe, he met his death. Marcos de Niza returned to Mexico City.

[1] Fray Marcos de Niza, travelled through the rancheria region in 1539, he described that he saw "more than two thousand skins of cattle, extremely well tanned." obtained from the city of Cibola (Zuni).These buffalo hides had in fact been traded all the way from the plains of eastern New Mexico and northern TexasOther valued goods were shell from the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of California, parrot and macaw feathers from the Gulf Coast region of Mexico. Travel over long distances was apparently common at that time. (Source; Ancient Peoples of the American Southwest-Stephen Plog-1997).

EARLY EL PASO

Inhabited for centuries by various Indian groups, El Paso saw its first Europeans when Spaniards passed through in the mid-1500s. During 1540 to 1542, an expedition under Francisco Vázquez de Coronado explored the area now known as the American Southwest. These earliest Spanish explorers saw on their approach from the Rio Grande two mountain ranges rising from the desert, with a deep chasm between.

They named the site "El Paso del Norte", or, "the Pass of the North." The Rodríguez-Sánchez expedition in 1581 was the first party of Spaniards to explore the Pass of the North, bringing about the beginning of El Paso's modern history. Further expeditions followed, culminating in an April 30, 1598 ceremony near the site of present-day San Elizario.
Juan de Oñate took formal possession of the territory drained by the Rio del Norte (now the Rio Grande). Called "La Toma," (the claiming) this act brought Spanish civilization to the Pass of the North, laying the foundation for more than two centuries of Spanish rule.

Pueblo Revolt

Many of the Pueblo people harbored a latent hostility toward the Spanish, primarily due to their denigration and prohibition of the traditional religion. The traditional economies of the pueblos were likewise disrupted, the people having been forced to labor on the encomiendas of the colonists.Some Pueblo people may have been forced to labor in the mines of Chihuahua. However, the Spanish had introduced new farming implements and provided some measure of security against Navajo and Apache raiding parties. As a result, they lived in relative peace with the Spanish since the founding of the Northern New Mexican colony in 1598.
In the 1670s, drought swept the region, which not only caused famine among the Pueblo, but also provoked increased attacks from neighboring nomadic tribes,attacks against which Spanish soldiers were unable to defend. At the same time, European-introduced diseases were ravaging the natives, greatly decreasing their numbers. Unsatisfied with the protective powers of the Spanish crown and the god of the Church it imposed, the

people turned to their old gods. This provoked a wave of repression on the part of Franciscan missionaries.

Popé - *Po-Pay*

Following his arrest on a charge of witchcraft and subsequent release, Popé (or Po-pay) planned and orchestrated the Pueblo Revolt. Popé moved to Taos after being freed from Spanish control and planned a Pueblo war against the Spaniards. Popé dispatched runners to all the Pueblos carrying knotted cords, the knots signifying the number of days remaining until the appointed day for them to rise against the Spaniards in unison.

The day for the attack had been fixed for the August 18, 1680 but the Spaniards learned of the revolt after capturing two Tesuque Pueblo youths entrusted with carrying the message to the pueblos. Popé then ordered the execution of the plot on the feast day of Saint Lawrence (San Lorenzo), August 13, before the uprising could be put down.

Knowing that the Spaniards had learned of their plans, the Pueblo Indians began their attack before August 11, 1680. One Spaniard was killed on August 9. The full fury of the revolt then began to be felt on August 10.

The attack was commenced by the Taos, Picuris, and Tewa Indians in their respective pueblos. Eighteen Franciscan priests, three lay brothers, and three hundred and eighty Spaniards, counting men, women and children, were killed. Spanish settlers fled to Santa Fe, the only Spanish city, and Isleta Pueblo, one of the few pueblos that did not participate in the rebellion.

Believing themselves the only survivors, the refugees at Isleta left for El Paso del Norte on September 15. Meanwhile Popé's insurgents besieged Santa Fe, surrounding the city and cutting off its water supply. New Mexico Governor Antonio de Otermín, barricaded in the Governor's Palace, called for a general retreat, and on September 21 the Spanish settlers streamed out of the capital city headed for El Paso del Norte.

The Piro Pueblo, along with the Isleta, accompanied the Spanish to El Paso del Norte, presumably because they would be seen as Spanish sympathizers.

The people of Isleta founded the settlement of Ysleta, Texas, and live there to this day.The retreat of the Spaniards left New Mexico in the power of the Indians. Popé ordered the Indians, under penalty of death, to burn or destroy crosses and other religious imagery, as well as any other vestige of the Roman Catholic religion and Spanish culture, including Spanish livestock and fruit trees. Kivas (rooms for religious rituals) reopened and Popé ordered all Indians to bathe in soap made of yucca root. He also forbade the planting of wheat and barley.

Popé went so far as to command those Indians who had been married according to the rites of the Catholic church to dismiss their wives and to take others after the old native tradition. Popé set himself up in the Governor's Palace as ruler of the Pueblos and collected tribute from the each Pueblo until his death in approximately 1688.

Following their success, the different Pueblo tribes, separated by hundreds of miles and six different languages, quarreled as to who would occupy Santa Fe and rule over the country. Power struggles, combined with raids from nomadic tribes and a seven year drought, weakened the Pueblo resolve and set the stage for Spanish conquest.

Epidemics

One of the earliest smallpox epidemics occurred from 1623 until 1625 in parts of northern Mexico and being in close proximity to the present area known as New Mexico could have been the first to decimate the inhabitants of northern Sonora (and southern Arizona). The loss of life at that time from smallpox must have been catastrophic as it is now estimated that New Worlds native population levels were reduced by 90 percent by the end of the 18th century.

At the beginning of the 15th century there was a marked decline in the Hohokam culture probably due to a massive loss of life incurred by the native population from European diseases. Epidemics had an equally severe impact in the Pueblo region substantiated by 17th century Spanish records. One of the best examples was in Pecos, it was located on top of a small mesa on the eastern area of the Pueblo region.

It was a significant trade area with the Spanish also with the Native Indian groups further east. Between 1622 to 1635, Fray Andres Juarez who was in charge of the Pecos mission, estimated a native populkation of approximately 2000 people. Twenty years later another observer found a 40 percent reduction to 1189 inhabitants and by 1694 the population had decreased by 40 percent again to only 736[1].

[1] "La Calle de Cadena en Mexico," en *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, v. V, México, 1974, pps. 1—46, Guillermo Porras Muñoz.

JUAN DE OÑATE-
DON JUAN DE OÑATE SALAZAR

The First Spanish Settlement

Over 50 years after Coronado, Juan de Oñate founded the first Spanish settlement in New Mexico on July 11, 1598. Oñate was born in the New Spain city of Zacatecas to Spanish-Basque colonists and silver mine owners. His father was the conquistador/silver baron Cristóbal de Oñate. Juan de Oñate began his career as an Indian fighter against the Chichimecs in the northern frontier region of New Spain.

The governor named the settlement San Juan de los Caballeros. This means “Saint John of the Knights”. San Juan was in a small valley. Nearby the Chama River flows into the Rio Grande. Oñate pioneered the grandly named El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, “The Royal Road,” a 700 mile (1,100 km) trail from the rest of New Spain to his remote colony.

Oñate was made the first governor of the new province of Santa Fe de Nuevo Mexico. The Native Americans at Acoma revolted against this Spanish encroachment but faced severe suppression. In battles with the Acomas, the total number of indigenous slaughteres at the Acoma Pueblo was 800 and 580 were ‘captured’ as the town was levelled by the Spanish forces.

Don Juan de Oñate Salazar,(1552–1626), was a Spanish explorer, colonial governor of the New Spain (present-day Mexico) province of New Mexico, and founder of various settlements in what is now the Southwestern part of the United States. As had Coronado, he encountered Apaches in the Texas Panhandle. He proceeded eastward following the Canadian River into Oklahoma.

Leaving the river behind in a sandy area where his ox carts could not pass, he went cross country, and the land became greener, with more water and groves of walnut and oak trees.Jusupe probably led Onate on the same route he had taken with Humana and Leyva six years earlier. They found an encampment of people Onate called Escanjaques.

He estimated the population at more than 5,000 living in 600 hundred houses. The Escanjaques lived in round houses as large as ninety feet in diameter and covered with tanned buffalo hides. They were hunters, according to Onate, depending upon the buffalo for their subsistence and planting no crops.

The Escanjaques told Onate that a large settlement of their enemies, the Rayados, was located only about twenty miles away in a region called Etzanoa. Thus, it seems possible that the Escanjaques had gathered together in large numbers either out of fear of the Rayados or to undertake a war against them. They attempted to enlist the assistance of the Spanish and their firearms, alleging that the Rayados were responsible for the deaths of Humana and Leyva a few years before. The Escanjaques guided Onate to a large River a few miles away and he became the first European to describe the tallgrass prairie.

He spoke of fertile land, much better than that through which he had previously passed, and pastures “so good that in many places the grass was high enough to conceal a horse.”He tasted and found of good flavor a fruit that sounds like the Pawpaw.

Near the river Onate, the Spaniards, and their numerous Encajaque guides saw three or four hundred Rayados (painted or tattooed people) on a hill. The Rayados advanced, throwing dirt into the air as a sign that they were ready for war. Onate quickly indicated that he did not wish to fight and made peace with this group of Rayados who proved to be friendly and generous. Onate liked the Rayados more than he did the Escanjaques. They were “united, peaceful, and settled.” They showed deference to their chief, named Catarax, whom Onate detained as a guide and hostage, although “treating him well.

Caratax led Onate and the Escanjaques across the river and to a settlement on the eastern bank, one or two miles from the river. The settlement was deserted, the inhabitants having fled. It contained “about twelve hundred houses, all established along the bank of another good-sized river which flowed into the large one [the Arkansas]. As he described it, the settlement of the Rayados seemed typical of those seen by Coronado in Quivira sixty years before. The homesteads were dispersed; the houses round, thatched with grass, large enough to sleep ten persons each, and surrounded by large graineries to store the corn, beans, and squash they grew in their

fields. Onate restrained with difficulty the Escanjaques from looting the town and sent them home.

The next day Onate and his Spaniards and New Mexican Indians proceeded onward for another eight miles through heavily populated territory, although without seeing many Rayados.

At this point, the Spaniard's courage deserted them. There were obviously many Rayados nearby and the Spaniards were warned that they Rayados were assembling an army. Discretion seemed the better part of valor. Onate estimated that three hundred Spanish solders would be needed to confront the Rayados, and he turned his soldiers around to return to New Mexico.

Onate had worried about the Rayados attacking him, but it was instead the Escanjaques who attacked him as he was beginning his return to New Mexico. Onate described a pitched battle with one thousand five hundred Escanjaques—probably an exaggeration—in which many Spaniards were wounded and many Indians killed. After more than two hours of fighting, Onate retired from the battlefield.

The Rayado chief, Catarrax, was freed by a raid on the Spanish and Onate freed several women captives, but he retained several boys at the request of the Spanish priests so that they could be instructed in the Catholic faith. The cause of the attack may have been Onate's kidnapping of women and children. We have only the Spanish description of the battle and what caused it. Onate and his men returned to New Mexico, arriving there on November 24, 1601 without any further incidents of importance.

Onate's Route - and the Indigenous Tribes he met

The path of Onate's expedition and the identity of the Escanjaques and the Rayados are much debated. Most authorities believe his route led down the Canadian River from Texas to Oklahoma, cross-country to the Salt Fork, where he found the Escanjaque encampment, and then to the Arkansas River and its tributary, the Walnut River at Arkansas City, Kansas where the Rayado settlement was located. A minority view would be that the Escanjaque encampment was on the Ninnescah River and the Rayado village was on the site of present day Wichita, Kansas. Archaeological evidence favors the Walnut River site.