THE REDISCOVERY OF NEW MEXICO

1580 - 1594

The Explorations of Chamuscado, Espejo, Castaño de Sosa, Morlete, and Leyva de Bonilla and Humaña

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THE SPANIARDS LEARNED OF THE PUEBLO OF ACOMA AND WENT THERE. IT IS SITUATED ON A HIGH AND ROCKY HILL, WITH FOUR CARVED-OUT FLIGHTS OF STEPS.

We learned that close to this place was a pueblo called Acoma. So we left the camp by this lagoon while Captain Antonio de Espejo, Diego Pérez de Luxán, and six other companions went to this pueblo, which was four leagues distant. Because of its conflict with the Querechos Indians, who are like the Chichimecos, it is built on a high and rocky cliff.[61] The pueblo has four ascents made of steps carved in the very rock, up which only one person can climb at a time. Even the doors of the houses are like trapdoors. They keep watch day and night.

THE NATIVES CAME OUT TO MEET THEM WITH GREAT REJOICING AND MERRIMENT, AND GAVE MANY BLANKETS, TANNED DEERSKINS, TURKEYS, AND A QUANTITY OF CORN.

The natives came out to meet us and in order to honor us they performed a very impressive dance after the Mexican fashion, in which the women took part, wearing Mexican blankets, very elegant with colors, feathers, and other trappings. There they gave us many blankets, tanned deerskins, turkeys, and a quantity of corn.

THE VISITORS FOUND MANY IRRIGATED FIELDS WITH CANALS AND DAMS BUILT AS IF BY SPANIARDS.

We left the aforesaid place on March 7 and went four leagues up a river which flows through some bad lands. We found many irrigated cornfields with canals and dams, built as if by Spaniards. We stopped by the said river, calling the place El Río de San Martín.[62]

Setting out from this locality on the eighth, we traveled four leagues,

61. These Querechos were undoubtedly a Navajo band, who, as shown here, inhabited the mountainous area about Mount Taylor. In Spanish times, the term Navajo was used to refer both to the tribe and to a band subdivision inhabiting the classic Dinetah region, in the Largo-Gobernador basin. According to Navajo tradition, there were local band groupings of this people before the introduction of clans. Early Spanish travelers, in their slight contact with these tribes, had an imperfect understanding of their social and political organization. Espejo's contact with them, and the accounts of his expedition, though they contain the best information recorded to that date, did not give the Spaniards very much enlightenment of this nature. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that they did not take the trouble to write it down. After all, they were not concerned about studying or understanding the Indian's way of life, but rather of uprooting his heathen beliefs and substituting Christian principles instead.

62. This was the present San José, the waters of which were used by the Acoma Indians to irrigate their cornfields.

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halting at a place one and a half leagues beyond the spot where the river flows into a marsh. We named that stopping place El Salitrar. We left El Salitrar on the ninth and continued four leagues, camping at some bad lands without water.[63] It snowed so hard that we were forced to halt there.

We departed from this place on the tenth and went seven leagues until we came to a large pine forest. We slept in the woods because it snowed so much that we were unable to proceed. We retired without water, and this day drank snow water melted in pots and pans. We called the place El Helado.[64] We set out from there on the eleventh of the month and marched three leagues, stopping at a water hole at the foot of a rock. This place we named El Estanque del Peñol.[65]

We left this spot on the thirteenth, I mean the twelfth, and traveled seven leagues. We camped at a small arroyo with water,[66] and because there was a very high rock in the shape of a sugar loaf we named the site El Real del Pilón. Here, at the request of the party, two aides to the captain were chosen, Gregorio Hernández and Bernardino de Luna. They granted, in the name of his Majesty, the office of alférez mayor to Gregorio Hernández, and to Diego Pérez de Luxán that of alguacil mayor of the camp and of the new jurisdiction *(gobernación)* of New Andalusia, as well as of the first town or city of that province to be founded, with a vote in its cabildo.

THE VISITORS DISCOVERED THE PROVINCE OF ZUÑI AND SIX PUEBLOS CALLED MAZAQUE, QUAQUEMA, AGUICO, ALONA, QUAQUINA, AND CANA. POOR PEOPLE.

We set out from this place on the fourteenth, went a league, and halted at the first pueblo of the province of Zuñi, called Malaque by the natives, where we had a row of houses for our use. They gave us to eat of what they had until we went to other neighboring pueblos. The people of this province, which comprised six pueblos, are poor. One was called Mazaque, another Quaquema, another Aguico, another

63. The lava beds in this region, west of McCarty's along U.S. Highway 66, cover many square miles.

64. On this day's march, the party passed from the vicinity of Grant to Guadalupe, or Zuñi, canyon and on across the Zuñi mountains toward El Morro.

65. El Estanque del Peñol was El Morro, better known as Inscription Rock, where there is a pool of permanent water. It is intriguing to speculate that some members of the party might have inscribed their names on the towering sandstone cliff, but there is no evidence that anyone did so before Oñate, on his return from the Gulf of California, April 16, 1605, left his name on this remarkable monument.

66. The Zuñi river. The men evidently camped where it flows through the "gateway," east of Zuñi.

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