

DOCUMENTS FOR THE HISTORY OF THE NEW  
MEXICAN MISSIONS IN THE SEVEN-  
TEENTH CENTURY

FRANCE SCHOLES

In the past our knowledge of the New Mexican missions in the seventeenth century has depended very largely on the writings of Benavides and Vetancurt. During the year 1927-28 I found a mass of new documentary material for the history of New Mexico in the archives of Mexico and Spain, and in these documents there is a great fund of new information concerning both general mission policy and the history of the individual missions which will make it possible to present a fairly detailed study of the New Mexican missions in the seventeenth century.

Most of the information is incidental, but there are several documents which consist entirely of descriptions of missions or of statistics concerning missions. These documents are presented here for separate publication because of their importance and interest.

I.

The first of the documents consists of a list of missions together with brief descriptions of the church, *convento*, *visitas*, and number of Indians in connection with each mission. It is a list which seems to have been part of or supplementary to the *Relation* of Fray Gerónimo de Zárate Salmerón. The edition of Salmerón's *Relation* which is printed in the *Documentos para la Historia de México*, third series, does not contain such a list, so that apparently the *Relation* as we have had it is not complete.

It is interesting to compare the list with the informa-

tion contained in the *Memorial* of Benavides, for, in certain respects, it contains more definite and more complete information than the Benavides account. It is possible also to check up some of the information presented in the new list by reference to statements in the papers of the Inquisition in the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City.

The document is part of a larger *expediente* which is in the Archivo General de Indias, *legajo* 60-3-6, and which has the title: *México. Ecclesiastical. 1664. The Provincial of the Order of Saint Francis of the Province of Santo Evangelio concerning the matter of granting 40 friars to the said province.*

A translation of the document follows:<sup>1</sup>

Certification of the notices which exist concerning the Custodia of New Mexico which is part of the Province of Santo Evangelio of México; the state of the missions, churches, *conventos*, and provision for public worship, which are described below according to the relation and notice which were given concerning that Custodia by Padre Predicador Fray Gerónimo de Zárate Salmerón, exemplary minister in that Custodia, and remitted to the Very Reverend Padre Fray Francisco de Apodaca, Padre of the Province of Cantabria and Comisario-general of the Provinces of New Spain; from the year 1538 to the year 1626.

The Villa of Santa Fé, capital of that Custodia, in which live the Governor and the Spaniards, has a very good church in which is kept the Blessed Sacrament; everything pertaining to public worship is very complete and well arranged; it has a fair *convento*, and there are 200 Indians under its ad-

---

1. I have not tried to make any elaborate commentary, in the form of notes, on any of the documents translated. Such a commentary, to be complete, would necessitate a more careful study of the documents in the Inquisition papers than I have yet been able to make.

ministration who are capable of receiving the sacraments. 200

The said Villa also has a *visita* in the pueblo of Tesuque, with a church and 170 Indians under its administration. 170

The pueblo of San Ildefonso has a very good church, in which is kept the Blessed Sacrament; it has whatever is necessary for public worship, a choir, and an organ; it has two *visitas* and 400 Indians under its administration. 400

The pueblo of Santa Clara has a very good church, whatever is necessary for public worship, a choir and organ, a fair *convento*, and a *visita* in the pueblo of San Juan. It also has eight *estancias* under cultivation, and their serving people; and it has 993 souls under its administration. 993

The pueblo of Nambé has a very good church and *convento* and the rest pertaining to public worship, a choir, and an organ; it has a *visita* which is called Cuyamungué; and there are 300 souls under its administration. 300

The pueblo of Santo Domingo has a very good church, in which is kept the Blessed Sacrament, a choir, an organ, and many musical instruments; everything pertaining to public worship is very complete; it has a good *convento*. This pueblo has a *visita* called Cochiti; it has a church. There are 850 souls under the administration of the mission. 850

The pueblo of San Felipe has a good church, and the provision for public worship is very well arranged; it has a choir, an organ, and other musical instruments; it has 350 souls under its administration. 350

The pueblo of Pecos has a very good church, provision for public worship,<sup>2</sup> and organ and choir;

2. The Spanish phrase "culto divino" is used throughout the document to include the things necessary for worship as well as the act of worship itself.

there are 1189 souls under its administration. 1189

The pueblo of Galisteo has a good church, provision for public worship, an organ and choir; and a good *convento*. It also has a *visita* called San Cristóbal which has a good church and dwelling. There are 1000 souls under the administration of the mission. 1000

The pueblo of San Marcos has an ordinary church, and the provision for public worship is poor; the *convento* is not finished. It has two *visitas* called San Lázaro and La Ciénega, with poor provision in every respect.<sup>8</sup> There are 777 souls under the administration of the mission. 777

The pueblo of Chilili has a very fine church and *convento*, choir and organ; in this pueblo there have been assembled many people from the other pueblos; there are 250 souls under its administration. 250

The pueblo of Tajique has a very good church and *convento*, choir and organ, and there are 484 souls under its administration. 484

The pueblo of Cuarac has a very good church, an organ and choir, and very good provision for public worship; there are 658 souls under its administration. 658

The pueblo of Abó has a church and *convento*, organ and choir, and provision for public worship. It has two *visitas*, the one for the Jumanos, the other is Tabirá. It has 1580 souls under its administration. 1580

The pueblo of Jemez has a splendid church, a good *convento*, a choir and organ, and 1860 souls under its administration. 1860

The pueblo of Sia has a church, *convento*, choir,

---

8. "Todo pobre."

and organ, and a *visita* called Santa Ana; it has 800 souls under its administration. 800

The pueblo of Sandia has an excellent church in which is kept the Blessed Sacrament; there is a choir and organ, and very complete provision for public worship; it has a *visita*, and estancias under cultivation, and the *visita* of the pueblo of los P.....' (Puaray?); and 640 souls under its administration. 640

The pueblo of Isleta has a very fine church and *convento*; it has very good music and organ; there are fourteen estancias under cultivation. In this pueblo is kept the Blessed Sacrament. The pueblo has 750 souls under its administration. 750

The pueblo of Alameda has a fair church and *convento*, music and organ, and poor provision for public worship; and 400 souls under its administration. 400

The beautiful rock of Ácoma has on its summit the church which is the most handsome (in the Custodia?), the paraphernalia of public worship is abundant and unusual; (the church) has a choir and organ; there are 600 souls under its administration. 600

The pueblo of Oraibi has a very good church, very good provision for public worship, a choir with many (musical) instruments, a good *convento*, and 1236 souls under its administration. 1236

The pueblo of Aguatobi has a church and *convento*, and a *visita* called Gualpi, and it has 900 souls under its administration. 900

The pueblo of Xongopavi and its *visita* of Moxainavi have churches, a good *convento*, the provi-

---

4. It is not clear whether there was one *visita* or two, but probably only one. The word "P....." was illegible. Inasmuch as Puaray is not mentioned elsewhere in the document it seems reasonable to assume that "P....." may refer to Puaray.

<p>sion for public worship is well arranged; there are 830 souls under its administration.</p>	830
<p>The pueblo of Socorro has a church and <i>convento</i>, with two <i>visitas</i>, Alamillo and Sevilleta; there is very good provision for public worship; there are 400 souls under administration.</p>	400
<p>The pueblo of Picurís has a very good church and <i>convento</i>, provision for public worship, music, and 564 souls under its administration.</p>	564
<p>The pueblo of Taos revolted, killed its minister, destroyed a handsome church and <i>convento</i>, and profaned everything pertaining to public worship; a very barbarous people; and of them 600 souls are reduced.</p>	600
<p>The province of Zuñi, severely punished for having destroyed churches and <i>conventos</i> and for having killed one of the ministers who served in the work of conversion; in this province there are 1200 Indians who have asked for ministers once more.</p>	1200
<p>The pueblo of San P.....o,<sup>5</sup> which is being populated again, has 200 souls that have been converted.</p>	200
	20,181

All the churches and conventos, together with all the rest pertaining to public worship have been built (or provided) by the ministers of the Province of Santo Evangelio of México, without trying to avoid the hardships of those lands; thinking only of the spiritual future of so many converted souls, who now live peacefully in the missions of that Custodia; and in such a holy ministry is recognized the service of God Our Lord, and the solicitude of fulfill-

---

5. I do not know to what mission this refers.

ing with what His Majesty (God protect him) has ordered us to do for the advancement of Our Holy Catholic Faith.

I, Fray Bartolomé Marquez, secretary-general of the Indies certify that at the request of Padre Fray Antonio de Aristoi (?), Procurator-general of the Province of Santo Evangelio of México, I made this copy of the original which is in the archive of the Secretariat of the Indies, and it agrees with the original. Madrid, May 24, 1664.

Fray Bartolomé Marquez (Rubric)  
Secretary-general of the Indies.

## II.

The second document, which is a report to the officials of the Hacienda in Mexico City, describes the status of the missions during the years 1663-1666, and contains a statement of needs for the future.

The manuscript is in the Museo Nacional, Mexico City, in *Asuntos de Conventos y Colegios*, vol. 191, ff. 21, 22.

A translation follows:

Certification concerning the Friars of New Mexico.

I, Fray Domingo Cardoso, of the Order of the Lesser Brothers of the Regular Observance of Our Seraphic Padre San Francisco, Preacher, and Minister — Provincial of this Province of Santo Exangelio, Custodias of Tampico and New Mexico, Nuns of Santa Clara and Brothers of the Third Order, etc. —, certify to the Judges and Officials of the Royal Hacienda of this New Spain who reside in this City of Mexico, that from the third of August of the year 1663 to the third of August of the past year of 1666 the friar-priests who will be noted (below) have served and are serving in the missions of the Custodia of New Mexico, and that they have served during the three years referred to, being occupied in the administration of the Blessed Sacraments to the natives of the Custodia, converting to our Holy Catholic Faith and catechising innum-

erable others of the different tribes that are being converted there by means of their teaching and preaching; and they will serve in the same manner during all of the triennium following, and in the same work, fulfilling in so far as is possible on our part, the ministry in which His Majesty (Whom God protect) has placed the said friars, and for which effect he aids them with his royal alms; and for which reason there is due the said friars the grant (of alms) for the three years which are beginning and which are to be counted from the third day of August of the past year of 1666 and will be completed on the third of the aforesaid month of the year 1669; there being complete the number of friars, contained in this our certification, in each of the *conventos* of the aforesaid Custodia; and also the urgent need which exists for a greater number of priests. In the following form:

1. In the *convento* of La Concepción of the Villa of Santa Fé there serve and will serve three friar-priests,\* who will administer the said Villa, three *visitas*, and several *estancias*; and it is necessary that there should be five friars, four priests and one lay-brother.
2. In the *convento* of Nuestro Padre San Francisco of Nambé there serve and will serve two friars, one priest and one lay-brother; the priest will administer the pueblo, two *visitas*, and several *estancias*; another priest is needed.
3. In the *convento* of San Ildefonso there serves and will serve one friar-priest, who will administer the pueblo and six *estancias*; and because of the lack of friars he visits the *convento* of Santa Clara of the Tewas, and that of San Juan of the same nation, distant and separate pueblos; and at least three friars are needed, two priests and one lay-brother.

---

6. "Religiosos sacerdotes."

4. In the *convento* of San Lorenzo of the pueblo of Picurís there serve and will serve two friars, one of them a priest who will administer the pueblo; and because the said pueblo is in the mountains and suffers isolation from the beginning of October to the end of April, (the way) being impassable because of the frequent and severe snowstorms, and because the number of natives is increasing, it is necessary for the spiritual welfare of them, as well as of the friars, that at least four priests should serve in the said pueblo, three of them priests.
5. In the *convento* of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles of the pueblo of Pecos, which is established in the mountain region, there are and there will be two friar-priests for its administration.
6. In the *convento* of the San Gerónimo of the pueblo of Taos there serves and will serve one friar-priest, who will administer the pueblo, which is on the other side of all the mountain ranges; and for that reason it is absolutely necessary that there should be two priests.
7. In the *convento* of Santa Cruz of the pueblo of Galisteo there is and will be one friar-priest who will administer it and also a *visita*; it is necessary to ask for one more priest.
8. In the *convento* of San Marcos of the pueblo of the same name there is and will be one friar-priest who will administer it, together with two *visitas* and three *estancias*; and in the said pueblo, which is of the nation called Tanos, it is necessary that there should be at least two priests.
9. In the *convento* of San Miguel of the pueblo of Tajuque there serves and will serve one friar-priest for the administration of the said pueblo, and who also looks after the affairs of the pueblo of

Chilili in which there is established a *convento* with the title of La Natividad de Nuestra Señora; and (because) both are in the mountain region and surrounded with the hardships of mountainous country, it is absolutely necessary that two priests should serve in these pueblos.

10. In the *convento* of the Immaculate Conception of the pueblo of Cuarac there serves and will serve, for the administration (of the pueblo), one friar-priest; and because (the pueblo) is in the rugged part of the mountain area, it is necessary that there should be at least two priests.
11. In the *convento* of San Gregorio of the pueblo of Abó established in the mountain area and surrounded with similar hardships, there serves and will serve one friar-priest, who will administer it; and the service of two priests is absolutely necessary.
12. In the *convento* of San Buenaventura of the pueblo of the Jumanos there serves and will serve one friar-priest for the administration of the Blessed Sacrament in the pueblo and in a *visita* which is also in the mountain area; for this reason it is regarded that the assistance of two more priests is indispensable.
13. In the *convento* of Nuestro Padre Santo Domingo, established in the stated *peaje de sierra*<sup>7</sup> there serves and will serve one friar-priest for the said administration in it and in a *visita*; and for lack of friars he will also administer the pueblo of Cochití in which there is the *convento* of San Buenaventura. Moreover, in the *convento* of Nuestro Padre Santo Domingo there is a *sagrario* and in it is a lamp which burns continuously and in it there serves the Padre Custodio together

---

7. The meaning of this phrase is not entirely clear.

- with a lay-brother who assists him as companion to the said Padre. It is indispensable that there should be at least three priests and the lay-brother.
14. In the *convento* of San Diego of the pueblo of Jemez there serves and will serve two friars, one of them a priest who will administer the pueblo; and it is necessary that one more priest should be added.
  15. In the *convento* of La Asunción de Nuestra Señora of the pueblo of Sia there serves and will serve one friar-priest, who will administer it and also a *visita*; the service of two priests is necessary.
  16. In the *convento* of Nuestro Padre San Francisco of Sandia there serve and will serve two friars, one of them a priest who will administer the said pueblo, two *visitas*, and thirty *estancias*, more or less; for this reason three priests and one lay-brother are indispensable.
  17. In the *convento* of San Antonio of the pueblo of Isleta there serves and will serve one priest for the administration (of the mission) and as guardian of the *sagrario* which is there and of the lamp which burns continuously; and he also has charge in fourteen *estancias*. For this reason the continual assistance of two priests is indispensable.
  18. In the *convento* of Nuestra Señora of Socorro there serves and will serve one friar-priest for the administration of the (pueblo), two *visitas*, and two *estancias*; and another priest is necessary.
  19. In the *convento* San Antonio Glorioso of the pueblo of Senecu there serve and will serve two friars, one of them a priest who will administer the said pueblo; and one more priest, at least, is needed.
  20. In the *convento* of San Estevan of the Rock of Acoma, which is twenty-four leagues distant from

the nearest settlement, there serves and will serve one friar-priest for the administration (of the pueblo) and it is positively necessary that three priests should serve (there).

21. In the *convento* of Nuestra Señora de la Candelaria of the pueblo of Halona there serves and will serve one friar-priest, who will administer the Blessed Sacrament in it and in a *visita*; and also because of urgent necessity he serves the pueblo of La Purísima Concepción of Hawikuh, with also another *visita*, which is distant thirty six leagues from the nearest settlement; and for these reasons it is almost inaccessible; and it is necessary that there should be at least three friars to serve (the pueblos).
22. In the *convento* of San Miguel of Orabibi there serves and will serve one friar-priest who will administer it and also a *visita*; and also, for lack of a friar, he looks after the pueblo of Moxainavi in which there is a *convento* and also a *visita*; it is necessary to add one priest.
23. In the *convento* of Xongopavi there is one friar-priest who will administer it and a *visita*; and it is necessary that another priest should be added.
24. In the newly established *convento* of Nuestra Señora of Guadalupe in El Paso<sup>8</sup> there serve and will serve two friar-priests who will administer more than seven hundred new christians and a large number of neophytes.<sup>9</sup>
25. In the new conversion of the nation of the Sumas there has been erected a hermitage and dwelling whose title is that of Las Lagas de Nuestro Sera-

---

8. The mission was founded in 1659, the corner stone of the church dedicated in 1662, and the completed church dedicated in 1668. Hughes. *The Beginnings of Spanish Settlements in the El Paso District*. pp. 306-308.

9. "Catechumenos."

fico Padre San Francisco; and there serves and will serve (the conversion) one friar-priest who will administer a single family of christians and several neophytes, and he is reducing a large number of gentiles to Our Catholic Faith, with great hope that they will receive Holy Baptism, Another friar is requested to aid him.

And that the said Judges and Officials of the royal Hacienda who reside in this City of Mexico may reply to the aforesaid, and that there may be granted the customary alms, which His Majesty (whom God Protect) has formerly granted to the said friars of Our Holy Order, for all the three years which have begun and will be completed on the third day of August of 1669, as more fully noted and explained in the first part of this document — I make the present certification and swear on the word of a priest, with my hand on my breast, that in the conversion of the stated Custodia of New Mexico neither I nor the Reverend Father Provincials, my predecessors, have admitted into the (said conversions) any friar who may have come from the Kingdom of Castile with stipend from the King Our Lord (whom God protect) and destined for the Philippine Islands or for other parts of these kindgoms, nor will I admit them. And I also swear, in the same form as aforesaid, that in all the stated *conventos visitas*, and *estancias*, of this our said Custodia, in which it is customary to celebrate ths Holy Sacrifice of the mass, I have ascertained that they have ornaments, chalices, and the remaining things necessary to celebrate properly; and also that in the *conventos* there are books in which are registered and inscribed the natives of the said Custodia, with individual notation for those who are baptised, married, or who die; and that the *conventos* which are noted in this certificate as having *sagrarios* there are lamps which burn continuously before the Blessed Sacrament. And by the present( certi-

fication) I certify the truth of the (aforesaid); signed with my hand, sealed with the great seal of our office and countersigned by our secretary. In this City of Mexico the sixth day of \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_, 1667.

Fr. Domingo Cardoso, (rubric)  
Minister Provincial  
By order,  
Sr. Felix de Pandateguis  
Secretary.

(To be continued)

---

10. Month omitted.