**Archaeology and History in Your Backyard-Tumultuous 1600s**

Hello everyone, this **Archaeology and History in Your Backyard** and my name is Bob Berglund. KXNM 88.7 FM and the Torrance County Archaeological Society are pleased to bring you a series of programs designed to acquaint you, our listening audience with little known people, places, and events that took place in the past, right here in your own back yard. Our goal is to inform, educate, and possibly enlist your help in preserving and protecting the past. Today I want to talk about the turbulent and hard first 80 years of Spanish colonization of New Mexico.

The history of the 1600’s in New Mexico culminated in 1680 with the pueblo revolt that successfully drove the Spaniards out of New Mexico for 12 years. What isn’t so well known is the number of times revolts were planned but were brutally put down, or that a large part of the conflict and discontent that culminated in the successful revolt originated in our Estancia Basin, also known as the Salinas Province because of the salt lakes. The story of Esteban Clemente, an Indian who was raised to be a devout Christian at Abo, spoke Spanish and several Indian tongues, and grew to be a pueblo governor and war chief, strikes particularly close to home for those of us in the Salinas Province area.

Coronado’s expedition in 1540 did much to destroy what little good will many of the natives had for the Spanish; so, 60 years later when Juan Onate brought settlers to set up a permanent presence in New Mexico, the memory of Coronado lingered. There was always an undercurrent of dislike and distrust even before abuses by the Spanish clergy and civil authorities became almost unbearable for the Indians.

Acoma pueblo struck first when they ambushed a party of about 30 men led by Onate’s nephew Juan de Zaldivar in the winter of 1598-99. Juan Zaldivar and 12 others were killed, and one soldier died jumping off of the mesa. Onate then sent another nephew, a brother to Juan de Zaldivar named Vicente de Zaldivar, to avenge this challenge to his authority. Leading a troop of 70 men, Zaldivar succeeded after a 5 day battle. The trial of the Acoma rebels was held at Santa Domingo pueblo in 1599, and the sentences handed down were brutal. Men over 25 years old were to have a foot cut off, those between 12 and 24 were to serve 20 years as slaves, girls under 12 were transferred to the Franciscan superior and many were sent to Mexico City and distributed among convents, the boys under 12 were put in Zaldivar’s charge and were spread among his men as slaves. The documentation about all of this is unclear as to whether some or all of the amputations actually took place. After all, what good was a slave with one foot, but that is an argument for others.

Onate’s troubles were only beginning. The Piro speaking peoples of the Estancia Basin from the start resisted the demand for corn and blankets and Onate sent a force to Gran Quivara to enforce the demands. His troops set fire to part of the pueblo, killed several Indians, and hung 2 war chiefs and an interpreter. Later word came that two Spanish travelers had been killed, so Onate called again on Vicente de Zaldivar to put the Indians in their place. He took troops and after a five day siege succeeded in subduing the Indians by taking control of their water supply, which we believe to have been hand dug deep wells. Details of what had to be a bloody siege ranged from Zaldivar’s hard to believe claim that he left the Indians grateful and submissive, to a Captain’s claim that 900 Indians were killed and the pueblo leveled. This all happened in 1601.

After subduing Gran Quivara Onate took a major force of soldiers onto the Eastern plains in search of riches. While he was away about 400 men, women and children deserted and headed back to Mexico. When he returned that November Onate called for the heads of the traitors, but Mexico City declined to prosecute because they were civilians. Onate himself resigned in 1607. The following difficult years caused major upheaval with the Franciscans trying to force the natives to give up their native religions and the civil authorities trying to extract as much labor and supplies from the people as possible. The Spanish conducted slaving raids on the Navajos and Apaches, and those natives now were becoming competent horsemen and conducted lightening attacks on pueblos and Spanish ranches. In 1640 there was a major pandemic, possibly smallpox, that killed an estimated 3000 Puebloans. Strife within the Spanish government at Santa Fe resulted in the assassination of Governor Rosas by colonists. The next governor then beheaded 8 of the conspirators, with a captain’s head displayed as a warning to the public.

By the end of the 1640’s the number of pueblos was cut in half due to disease, Spanish demands, and Apache raiding. Sporadic outbreaks of Pueblo natives against Spanish rule began. In 1647 natives of the Jemez pueblos and Navajos plotted an uprising, but their scheme was betrayed, and 29 of the supposed rebels were hanged. This was followed by another failed rebellion in 1650 resulting in 9 leaders being hanged and many followers sold into slavery. It is important to note that while much discontent simmered in the pueblos, the elders kept alive the religious beliefs and organizations, influencing the next generation of leaders.

Among these new leaders was Esteban Clemente, a native of the Salinas district. Esteban was a child in the 1620’s and was raised by the Franciscans at Abo. He was a precocious student and learned Spanish as well as the Puebloan languages, and he became a devout Christian. He became governor of his pueblo and chief war captain of Indian auxiliaries in the Salinas district, supplying Indian manpower for slaving raids on the Apaches and Navajos. He ran a profitable trading business that undoubtedly included salt harvested from La Salina.

In 1660 as a good Christian he was persuaded by the Franciscans to denounce the kachinas as evil, and to denounce the governor for encouraging their continuing use. Soon after Esteban Clemente denounced the kachinas as evil, drought and famine settled over the area. By 1668 a great many Indians perished of starvation including approximately 450 at Las Humanos, today’s Gran Quivara. About the same time the Apaches were killing both Spanish settlers and Christian Indians, and stealing thousands of head of sheep, cattle and horses. Esteban Clemente became convinced that his condemning of the kachinas had brought on the misery. In the late 1660s the Spanish discovered a plot to overthrow them, and they hanged 6 of Esteban’s neighbors. Instead of taking this as a warning he vowed to avenge them. Esteban Clemente put together an elaborate plan to have the colonists’ horses away in the mountains so the Spanish couldn’t escape, and for the Puebloan people to descend on the Spanish during Holy Week church services. Once again the plan was thwarted by informers and Esteban Clemente was hanged. This once devout Christian was found to have accumulated the paraphernalia of the kachinas religion in his house in an attempt to placate the kachinas.

In the 1670s the signs were clear that the old Pueblo religion was rebounding. A new governor, Governor Trevino charged his military to assemble a force to make a sweep of the pueblos to round up sorcerers and confiscate all the heathen paraphernalia they could find. This they did and the Puebloans never forgave them. They imprisoned 47 men including Pope of San Juan, and hanged 4 of them. Pope went on to lead the revolt of 1680 that drove the Spaniards out of New Mexico.

In early 1680 the Spanish leaders were still causing turmoil with their unscrupulous behavior toward the Indians. For example, Francisco Xavier, an assistant to the Spanish governor, led a group that approached an Apache camp under a flag of truce and then took them all prisoners to distribute as slaves to his men and then to sell the rest in Mexico.

Word of the impending revolt began to spread. As before, some Indians were informers for the Spanish and warnings came from as far away places as Pecos, Taos and Galisteo. Before the Spanish could take action the Tesuques drew first blood and the revolt was on. The Spanish that weren’t killed escaped down the Rio Grande.

Reckless exploitation by the Spaniards along with years of drought, disease, and Apache attacks all contributed to set the stage for a successful revolt. In their quest to produce a single kingdom of Puebloans and their use of Indian auxiliaries for military campaigns they also taught the Indians to work together. The result was the holy war of Puebloan religion revitalization that Esteban Clemente of Abo had imagined 10 years before.

By the time of the revolt the Salinas Province pueblos were deserted. The surviving peoples had fled to other pueblos to the west. When the Spanish settlers retreated down the Rio Grande they forced a large group of these people to accompany them to the El Paso area. After the Spanish were gone the different pueblos had different ideas about whether or how the Spaniards would return from their exile in the El Paso area. More than 80% of the Spanish had been born in New Mexico, it was their home too. Immediately after the revolt and before the Spanish returned permanently was a very contentious and difficult time in New Mexico, but that is the subject best left for another day.

Much of the material for this talk came from a book entitled Pueblos, Spaniards, and the Kingdom of New Mexico by John L. Kessell, Professor of History at the University of New Mexico. The book is a very readable history and I would highly recommend it to all who are interested in New Mexico history.

The Torrance County Archaeological Society meets at 7 PM the first Tuesday of every month from March through November, so our meetings are currently on a 3 month winter break. You can listen to Archaeology in Your Backyard on Monday at 1 PM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday at 10 AM, and Saturday at 4 PM. Thank you for listening.