**Archaeology and History in Your Backyard—Revolt Years**

Hello everyone, this is **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 history, 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.

In a recent broadcast I talked about the tumultuous times that New Mexico went through in the 1600s leading up to the successful Pueblo Revolt of 1680. The twelve years after 1680, the period the Spanish were banished from New Mexico, were years of conflict both for the successful Indians, but also for the Spanish colonists who were living near El Paso, Texas. Today I want to focus on the 12 years from 1680 to 1692 when New Mexico was under the control of the Indians.

When the revolt started in Mid-August of 1680 about 1000 colonists were trapped in the government complex on the north side of the plaza in Santa Fe. As the days passed the Indians tightened the noose surrounding the colonists and they cut off the ditch supplying water to the government buildings. After some days the animals within started dying of thirst and the people were suffering intensely from both starvation and thirst. Rather than die of hunger and thirst, one morning every able bodied person capable of fighting charged out into battle. This decisive action broke the siege, and Governor Otermin later boasted that 300 Indians were killed. The Spanish lost 5 killed, but managed to capture weapons and provisions, and to reopen the ditch supplying water before retreating. 47 Indians were captured, interrogated and then executed.

The siege was broken temporarily and the Spanish realized that in a short time reinforcements would again surround them. Retreat was the only option, so the next morning a caravan of 1000 terrified colonists headed through the gate, and the Indians let them go without a fight. They met up with 1500 settlers and Indian allies from lower on the Rio Grande. As they worked their way south, the Indians watched but did not attack, and the colonists finally made it to El Paso.

For the colonists the twelve years they lived in the refugee camp near El Paso were not uneventful, with forays into Texas to evangelize and convert tribes, with other expeditions looking for French settlements to the east to destroy, with fights with other tribes, and with internal dissension always simmering beneath the surface. What happened with the Spanish in El Paso is well documented in the Spanish archives as correspondence was steadily passed back and forth with Mexico City. What we know about what happened in New Mexico among the Indians is based on interrogations of prisoners as well as friendly Indians whose stories are also recorded in the archives.

The first of four attempts to take back New Mexico took place in 1681. Governor Otermin gathered a force of 146 soldiers, 112 Indian allies, some servants and Franciscan friars, and set out in early November. Early November weather in El Paso might be good, but the further north they went the more bitter the cold they encountered. They found only destroyed Christian statues and churches and deserted pueblos until reaching Isleta a month after leaving El Paso. At Isleta the Indians did not resist and obeyed orders to destroy their religious paraphernalia, which was gathered up and burned. The Spanish sent word to pueblos further north to stay in their pueblos and to submit. Receiving no replies, Otermin sent Lieutenant Mendoza with 70 soldiers to investigate. At Cochiti the Indians gathered in defiance and reviled the Spaniards as “horned bleating he-goats”, a serious insult in Spanish. The mood of the Indians softened after a few days and they asked for forgiveness. Indians came and told how the pueblos would be peacefully repopulated by the people who fled into the mountains. But, a former servant of one of the soldiers reported that it was all a deceit and the plan was to steal the horses and massacre the trapped soldiers. Mendoza realized they were serious and chose to withdraw to Isleta. It was a hard winter with snow and severe cold, and the troops suffered badly. From Isleta the frost-bitten expedition withdrew to El Paso.

Otermin retired in poor health as governor and was replaced by Domingo Jironza, who was soon replaced by Pedro Reneros. Reneros led a 2nd attempt north up the overgrown Camino Real in 1687. He met stiff resistance at Santa Ana and Zia, and is believed to have burned Santa Ana. Reneros likely used deceit to take 4 headmen and another 10 males captive. Back in El Paso the governor promptly condemned the headmen to public execution and the 10 males to 10 years of slavery.

Governor Reneros was replaced by the returning Domingo Jironza and in August of 1689 Jironza led another expedition north, the 3rd since the revolt, this time consisting of 80 soldiers with new and reconditioned weapons he had brought from Mexico City, as well as 120 Indian allies. His force moved up the Jemez River to subdue Zia. A battle ensued that lasted all day. Many Indians were killed, and 50 of the soldiers suffered wounds, one fatally. Four leaders were executed and about 80 captives were taken to El Paso. A Spanish speaking Indian named Bartoleme de Ojeda became these captives leader. As the story goes, he volunteered to go with the captives to watch over the captive children. He later appeared to say the children were doing well. His memory persisted at Santa Ana to as recently as 1980

The pueblos may have cooperated to drive out the Spanish in 1680, but after that the old disputes between pueblos resurfaced with a vengeance. Many Indians liked what the Spanish had brought to their homeland. Pope and the revolt leaders wanted all traces of Spanish influence eradicated and the people to go back to the old traditional religion and way of living. But after growing up with sheep and cattle, peaches, plums, wheat, and many other useful food plants, and with iron tools, many of the Indians were not content to go back to corn, beans, squash and digging with sticks instead of iron hoes. The benefits promised by the rebel leaders if just the old religion was revitalized did not come true. Zia, Santa Ana, San Felipe, and Cochiti, allied with Jemez, Taos, and Pecos and fought continually with the Tewas and Picuris. At Acoma there was a split, with some staying at the old pueblo and some going to Laguna with families from Zia and Santa Ana. The Zunis and Hopis were at war. Apaches made peace with some pueblos and kept up attacks on others. The Utes from up north began raiding the more northern pueblos.

In 1691 Diego de Vargas took over as governor from Jironza. Vargas went on to lead the 4th and finally successful expedition to permanently resettle New Mexico in 1692.

The cold came earlier than usual in the fall of 1692 and smoke rose into the night from the Indian fires in Santa Fe. The government buildings had been incorporated into a pueblo with many rooms added, and other dwellings had been constructed with room for about a 1000 people. The church on the plaza and one across the creek were open to the sky and cattle and sheep were corralled within the walls. On a cold dark morning on September 13 suddenly out of the dark 200 men were heard to shout 5 times “Glory to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar!” Asked who was there, the reply came back that these were Spaniards returned to forgive and to resume what was theirs. In the dark, not sure these were Spaniards, they asked that a trumpet be sounded and it was along with a drum roll. The Indians began to howl in fury and promised to kill every Spaniard. After continued defiance Vargas ordered the ditch breeched that supplied water and proclaimed that water would be restored and peace made if the Indians came down and rendered their obedience. He gave them time to consider while reinforcing his position. Vargas for the second time seized his banner, rosary and cross and went forward to deliver a final chance before attacking. The Indians accepted providing he pull back his troops and cannon. The long day was over and the Indians came out to make peace. Vargas trusting to fate, pulled all his forces back to camp leaving the town free and open.

The next morning Vargas took off his armor and went into the plaza unescorted. Doing so reassured the Indians and they emerged. The royal banner was raised, three times the multitude is supposed to have shouted “Long live the King”, the Franciscan friars intoned the Te Deum, and the crowd knelt to receive absolution of their sins. Santa Fe was again a royal city.

This final and permanent entrance of the Spanish into New Mexico was the beginning of more years of violence and turbulent times. Besides the internal struggles between the different pueblos, many Indians were not ready to submit to the Spanish. What happened after Vargas retook Santa Fe will have to be the subject of another day.

Much of the today’s material came from a great source for New Mexico history, the book Great River: The Rio Grande in North American History by Paul Horgan, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in history.

The Torrance County Archaeological Society is on winter break, with the next meeting to take place the 2nd Tuesday in March. We meet every month on the 2nd Tuesday from March through November. 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.

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