**Archaeology and History—After Hawikuh**

**Coronado #3**

Hello everyone, this is **Archaeology and History Your Backyard.** This script was written by Bob Berglund, and my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_. 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.

Two previous programs discussed the origins of **Coronado’s expedition**, the fact it was a huge assembly of Europeans, slaves, servants, families, and Mexican Indian warriors—perhaps as many as 2500 people—accompanied by several thousand head of livestock. The Spanish and other European’s main goal was to find rich native cities with populations they could exploit by receiving an encomienda, the right to receive tribute from an assigned population of natives. To become an encomendero and live a life of ease and honor was as good as it got in those times. The expedition made its way north and subdued Zuni Hawikuh, the first of the fabled rich cities of Cibola where we pick up the story in this 3rd program.

Poor Coronado! He had invested his life savings in the expedition to New Mexico expecting to strike it rich and here he was at Hawikuh, nursing his wounds from having big rocks dropped on his head, and all he found was a dusty pueblo with no riches to exploit—not gold or silver, not valuable fabrics, not even enough people to support encomiendas for his men. Remember, the goal of many participants was to find a large enough population to become an encomendero, someone who lived a life of leisure at the expense of the native population. The disappointment was throughout the expedition, so a decision had to be made, whether to turn back or continue on. There were still rumors and tales of riches and that if they just continued on they would find what they were looking for, so the leaders met and decided to continue.

A group of 20 soldiers accompanied by some Indian allies and guides was sent to learn about pueblos to the west, the Hopis. They were received with some hostility but the Hopis played it smart, and shortly after peace was achieved and maintained, and the Hopis cooperated just enough to get rid of the Spaniards without bloodshed. Based on rumors of large wealthy communities further west of the Hopis, a second small force went further west with Hopi guides and saw the Grand Canyon, and tried to proceed further but lack of water forced them to turn back. No riches in that direction!

About the same time the Spanish force headed west, a group of Indians from Pecos arrived at Hawikuh to meet and size up the Spanish forces—where did they come from, what did they want, should they be considered friends or enemies. The group included an old chief and a tall young Indian they named Bigotes because he had an impressive mustache. In this encounter, as was true since leaving Compostella, Mexico, the Indians talked with Coronado through a chain of interpreters, perhaps as many as four interpreting from one language into another, then into another, and so on, so what message each side heard is questionable. Coronado asserted the rights of the King of Spain and the good intention of the Catholic Church and asked for submission. Bigotes replied that they were coming to offer peace and to be allies. Bigotes told of the many pueblos between Zuni and Pecos and of the huge herds of bison further east, and offered to lead the Spaniards through the region.

Coronado dispatched Hernando de Alvarado with 23 soldiers, a friar and some Indian allies to reconnoiter what lay east, with Bigotes leading the way. After 4 days of travel they arrived at the Rio Grande. The pueblos obviously knew they were coming, and representatives of 12 pueblos met Alvarado and gave him gifts of food, blankets and hides. They made clear their peaceful intent. Bigotes continued to guide them through the different pueblos and made sure nearly all the pueblos greeted the Spaniard peacefully.

The lush river valley of the Rio Grande with its many pueblos and agricultural fields appeared a lot more attractive than the area around Hawikuh and Alvarado sent a letter to Coronado recommending the valley as a much better place to spend the approaching winter. Coronado took the advice and moved the whole entrada to the valley.

The tour of the pueblos ended at Pecos, Bigotes home. Bigotes showed them what he wanted them to see, and did not show him other significant places like the turquoise mines at Cerillos, the pueblos east of the Manzanos, or La Salina the salt lake. While they rested and feasted at Pecos they heard stories of rich cities to the east. The stories were told by two slaves of Bigotes named Turco and Ysopete (E-so-pay-tay) who were both plains Indians. Alvarado wanted to continue east. Bigotes begged off as a guide and instead offered the services Turco and Ysopete.

Turco quickly learned a little Spanish and began to talk about a land of Quivara far to the east with gold, silver, and silks, rich harvests, and great towns. Gold, Turco said was proven by a gold bracelet he had brought from Quivara when captured by Bigotes. Where was the bracelet? Bigotes had it at his home, was the reply. Alvarado decided to turn back and get the bracelet to show Coronado what might lie to the east. When he got back to Pecos he demanded the bracelet be brought out. Bigotes insisted Turco was lying and it did not exist. Alvarado had Bigotes and the old chief put into chains as captives. They still could not come up with a bracelet. Turco and Ysopete tried to get away but were captured and also put into chains.

When Coronado questioned Turco the story got better and better, and he was convincing. To the east was a vast river where the fish were as big as Spanish horses and canoes floated that held 20 oarsmen on each side. In the towns gold and silver was plentiful, ordinary table service was of silver. Poor Bigotes continued to insist Turco was lying, there was no bracelet, but the interrogation continued. Alvarado thought Bigotes was lying and turned dogs loose on him, badly injuring him. The treatment of the 4 captives and especially Bigotes became known and caused bitterness in the pueblos.

Turco was a consummate con artist. He convinced Coronado that Bigotes, the man who had enslaved him, was lying, resulting in Bigotes being tortured. He also convinced Coronado that the riches to the east he was describing were worth going after. So, in late April of 1541 the whole expedition of maybe 2500 people with all their horses, mules, cattle and sheep crossed the frozen Rio Grande and moved east around the north end of the Sandia Mountains. Two and a half months later most of the huge expedition were worn out and dejected by how little of value they had seen, and returned to the Rio Grande valley. Coronado decided to continue on east with 30 mounted soldiers, a few infantry and Turco and Ysopete in chains. Turco kept insisting what they were looking for was just further east while he led them on a trek more designed to wear them out. Ysopete kept insisting Turco was lying. They never came to the river with fish as big as horses and gold and silver tableware, or anything else of great value. Coronado finally had enough. He had a grave dug and in the night Turco was garroted and buried. Coronado and his small force turned back west.

All they had seen were immense plains with Indians living in grass huts, people who ate raw meat and drank blood, people who used little flint knives they sharpened with their teeth. It was time to head back to the Rio Grande and secure provisions for the coming winter. At the River Coronado put the best face he could on the situation and talked of leading another force east in the spring of 1542 since he now knew his way there. The winter was miserable without enough clothing and firewood to keep warm, or enough food so hunger was constant, and the lice, they couldn’t get rid of the lice. Soldiers accused the officers of favoritism in distributing the blankets and food they could find. The low spirits of men and officers led to most wanting to return to Mexico. Then Coronado while out racing Captain Maldonado for fun had his saddle girth break, he hit the ground and was run over by the officer’s horse. He was close to death but recovered, and then received bad news about deadly Indian attacks with poison arrows on the route back in Mexico. The dispirited army signed a petition stating they wanted to return to Mexico. Whether some people should stay behind was seriously discussed. In the end the Franciscans stayed to convert the Indians, and were never heard of again. In April of 1542 the dispirited entrada turned south. The army began to disintegrate with people dropping off along the way to seek fortunes elsewhere. Three years later Coronado was viewed as a broken man unfit to lead, perhaps due to the fall from the horse. What took place in the pueblos of the Rio Grande valley in the two winters the expedition spent there left a legacy of distrust and hatred that affected New Mexico affairs for many years to come, a subject for another time.

The Torrance County Archaeological Society is on winter break with the next meeting on the first Tuesday in March. We meet every month on the first Tuesday from March through November and always have interesting expert speakers. Guests are welcome. 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.

12/22/2015