**Archaeology and History – The Entrada moves out**

**Coronado # 2**

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.

Again, we are focusing on Coronado because his expedition was so important to the history of New Mexico. A previous program talked about the motivation of the expedition participants, namely to find a wealthy population with riches that could be exploited by the Spanish, so they could become encomenderos and live a comfortable life at the expense of the natives. Strong rumors of wealthy cities led many to go into debt in order to participate. The expedition, or entrada as it was known, consisted of **over** 300 free men carrying arms and mostly on horseback plus all of their slaves and servants, probably another 400 men, women and children, and at least 800 but maybe as many as 1300 Indios Amigos, Indian warriors from Mexico. All except the men-in-arms were on foot. The Entrada was a diverse group with Europeans from countries other than Spain, many servants and black slaves, and the Indian warriors. The whole entrada may have had upwards of 2500 people plus 600 pack mules and horses, extra mounts for the Europeans, and over 5000 sheep and 500 head of cattle.

The expedition assembled at Compostela on the west coast of Mexico about 250 miles NW of Mexico City. The Viceroy of New Spain, Viceroy Mendoza held a review of forces, presided over a ceremony of blessing of the flag, and made a speech and extracted an oath of allegiance. When they set out the next day it was certainly an extravaganza with the leaders and troops attired in their finest outfits and no doubt accompanied by music, the drummers setting the pace and the fifers playing tunes. This huge force moved out with Coronado and his troops in the lead followed closely by the pack train attended by servants and slaves and most of the Indian warriors. The camp followers of women and children would be trailing along behind. Bringing up the rear would be the meat-on-the-hoof livestock herded along mostly by servants or slaves. The pace was no doubt at a walking speed even for the mounted men who would frequently walk to relieve their horses.

The Indian trails they followed were well traveled and in the early going may have been considered roads by our standards. The trade network among the different Indian tribes and villages was very extensive with materials from tropical Mexico such as macaws traded into today’s SW in return for turquoise, and buffalo hides; Shells from both the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean were an item of commerce. Communications were also very good—the entrada didn’t sneak up on many Indians. The key for following the Indian roads and trails was to pick the right one at forks, and they relied on Indian guides to keep them on track.

Camps were set up at the end of each day. Lope de Samaniego was camp master and it was his responsibility to select the sites, position the tents and latrines, make sure everyone was fed, and make sure of the water supply. Food was always a problem and in the end as much as possible had to be requisitioned by force from Indian villages along the way. After a couple weeks on the trail the army paused to collect food. A crossbow man chased some Indians into a village and was followed by Army Master Samaniego and some men. They rescued the crossbow man and Samaniego, thinking the fighting over, raised his visor and was shot in the eye by an arrow and killed. Several skirmishes ensued and the Spanish gathered food and prisoners. The prisoners were hanged and left swinging from the trees as an example. This was the beginning of guerrilla warfare practiced by both sides in North America for the next 350 years.

The expedition continued north with squads making detours into the countryside to seize provisions. After a pause at Culiacan Coronado split off a force of fifty horsemen, a few foot soldiers and a large contingent of Indian allies with the intention of reconnaissance of the journey ahead, which was in uncharted countryside known to be dangerous. The rest of the entrada was supposed to follow later. With this force Coronado headed north to Cibola, where 7 wealthy cities were supposed to be. While it was an advance guard it was strong enough to be a respectable strike force.

Coronado reported to Viceroy Mendoza that the hardships as they pushed north into southern Arizona were extreme. Horses were dying from being overworked and underfed. The sheep taken along for food soon fell behind and many died. Several Indian allies, a Spaniard and two Negros died from eating a poisonous herb. Despite the hardship the force continued on northeast through Arizona until the Zuni River was reached, probably about 20 miles from Hawikuh, and the first of the fabled seven cities of Cibola. The first skirmish was fought the first night camped there. A contingent of Spaniards had gone ahead to secure a dangerous pass lying ahead and were attacked to the eerie sound of conch shell trumpets. The Indians were driven off and the only casualties were some horses wounded by arrows.

The next day the force continued on to within sight of Hawikuh. The first view was a shock. Rather than an awe inspiring city with a large wealthy populace, they were greeted by a mud colored pueblo of small rooms three or four stories high. Some of the men were furious with disappointment and turned on Fray Marcos who had claimed to have seen the city, and that it was rich as everyone hoped.

While Coronado’s force was not the entire expedition, it still consisted of 50 or so armed men on horses and 550 or 600 men on foot and must have looked formidable to the watching Zunis. Coronado tried to give diplomacy, if it can be called that, a chance. He had a standard statement mandated by the king read to the Indians that declared the papacy held the world for God and the Pope had awarded this part of the world to the Spanish. While it is highly unlikely that the legalistic language was understood, the intent probably was clear—submit or fight. To fight was chosen and the Zunis attacked with a barrage of arrows, and the Spanish charged in retaliation and the Zunis broke and retreated into the city. A dozen or so Indians were killed and the Spanish suffered seven or eight wounded and three horses killed. The Spanish forces were suffering badly from hunger and needed to seize the stores in the pueblo, and thus could not stand a long siege.

Coronado gathered and organized his forces and attacked. He had a few small cannon that were not very effective and the Zunis were holding their own from atop the pueblo walls. Coronado decided the time had come for a do or die assault with him leading the way. He attempted to climb a scaling ladder and twice was knocked down by large stones—the quality of his armor saved him, though his gilded and glittering armor also made him a prime target. Out cold, two of his men withstood a barrage of stones and dragged him to safety. He also had three wounds on his face, an arrow wound in a leg, and his body was covered in bruises. The troops, not knowing whether their leader would survive, redoubled their assault and gained the roof. After bloody fighting the Indians withdrew and left the city without being pursued by the attackers. Spanish casualties were light because of the armor worn. Casualties among the Indian allies were not recorded. Perhaps most important the Spaniards were able to take possession of enough corn, beans, squash, and fowl—probably turkeys—to last the winter. They also found pure white salt of the best purity, no doubt from the Zuni Salt Lake, which is still sacred to the Zuni today. Inspection of the pueblo confirmed their disillusionment with no riches to be found.

The Zuni were careful not to provoke the Spanish again. They abandoned all of their pueblos and lived on their high fortified mesa with only limited contact with the Spanish. After over a month Coronado sent for the remainder of the expedition and later the decision was made to move on to the Rio Grande valley where there were rumored to be riches. Coronado realized the Pacific Ocean was a long way west and concluded resupply by sea wasn’t going to happen. They would have to live off whatever food and clothing the natives could supply. What happened after arriving in the Rio Grande valley will have to be a subject for another day.

The Torrance County Archaeological Society is currently on winter break. We are scheduled to meet the first Tuesday of every month from March through November, and always have interesting expert speakers at our meetings. You can listen to Archaeology in Your Backyard on Monday at 1 PM, Tuesday at 7PM, Friday at 10 AM, and Saturday at 4 PM. Thank you for listening.

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