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## New Documentary Materials Bearing on Coronado

*By* AGAPITO REY

**T**HE ASSEMBLING and publishing of documents is one of the objectives of the various organizations fostering the commemoration this year of the Cuarto Centennial of the discovery of New Mexico. The Coronado Commission is sponsoring as one of its activities the publication of a series of eleven volumes dealing with the history of this part of the country. One volume, *Narratives of the Coronado Expedition*, is now ready for distribution, and others will appear in the course of this year, as the various collaborating historians complete their works.

Since G. P. Winship published in 1896 his English translations of the chronicles by Castañeda, Jaramillo and other members of Coronado's party, hardly any new materials bearing on this subject have been brought to light. In the last few months, two brief letters by Coronado and the muster roll of the expedition have been brought to light by Dr. A. S. Aiton to capitalize on the current interest.

During the last two years the University of New Mexico has been adding to its rich collection of photostatic copies of original documents. Of this vast amount of source material, some twenty thousand sheets are directly related to the Coronado expedition. Most of these documents were photographed by Professor L. B. Bloom in the Archives of the Indies located at Seville, Spain. The gathering of these materials is being done by the University of New Mexico with the coöperation of the New Mexico Historical Society, the Historical Records Survey and the Coronado Commission.

Not all of these documents are new, as many of them have already appeared either in Spanish or in translations. But by obtaining photostatic copies of the original docu-

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ments already in print, we are able to correct errors and misreadings and to present now a text more accurate than has been possible in the past.

By far the most voluminous documents hitherto unpublished, and little or not at all utilized, are the court records in connection with the inquiries into Coronado's management of his expedition and his administration as governor of New Galicia. The many thousand sheets of records comprise two legajos, which are divided into twelve sections of several hundred sheets each. The enormous bulk of the bundles has served as a deterrent to the study of these documents. We have waded through them, some twenty thousand sheets in all, to see if there were new materials that should be brought out in connection with our Coronado publications. As a result of this search we are able to present some documents for the first time. Coronado's testimony and that of his chief officer, López de Cárdenas, the charges filed against them, and their final sentences are most important. These depositions clarify many obscure points in Castañeda's chronicle of the Coronado expedition. Through these new documents, a more complete picture of the undertaking may be obtained.

At this point, it may be well to explain the legal proceedings that gave rise to all these court papers. It was the universal practice in sixteenth-century Spain and its colonies to review the administration of all important public officials, from viceroys to alcaldes, at the end of their incumbency or when they were transferred. Such an inquiry was called the *residencia*. There were supposed to be two hearings, one public, the other private. The public hearing was announced through the city by the town crier. This was the method followed in Coronado's case, although only one hearing was held at the judge's quarters. On September 7, 1543, the Spanish authorities appointed Judge Tejada to investigate rumored abuses against the Indians by Coronado's party, and at the same time to review Coronado's administration as governor of New Galicia. This review

extended to all important public officials. In the case of the conduct of the expedition the investigating judge was instructed to hold hearings, gather testimony and forward it to the high tribunal at Mexico City for study and final disposition of the matter. In the investigation of public officials the judge had full powers to gather testimony, press charges, impose and execute sentence.

Accordingly, Judge Tejada summoned fourteen members of the expedition to testify, including Coronado himself. The testimony revealed that violences had been committed in dealing with the Indians of New Mexico, for they had been forced to give food and clothing against their will. This, with other abuses, had led the natives to revolt. Responsibility rested on Coronado, as general of the expedition, and his officer, López de Cárdenas. The six charges lodged against Coronado by Fiscal Benavente were: (1) excessive punishment of the rebel Indians of Chiametla, (2) failure to name a capable person to rule at St. Jerome, (3) unnecessary attack on Cíbola, (4) waging war on the Indians, (5) secret execution of the Indian named the Turk, and (6) failure to plant colonies.

These charges were pressed as a result of the testimony obtained by Judge Tejada, who submitted to the witnesses twenty-five elaborate and carefully prepared questions to establish whether Coronado allowed his soldiers to blaspheme and use profanity, if he protected the natives, if he consulted with the friars, if he summoned the Indians to peace before waging war, and if he punished his men for misconduct. Finally the high court at Mexico acquitted him and cleared him of all charges.

The testimony implicating Cárdenas was forwarded to Spain where he had returned, injured, from the expedition, after having fallen heir to the family estate at the death of his oldest brother. The Spanish authorities brought criminal charges against him and clamped him in jail at the fortress of Pinto near Madrid. Both the crown and Cárdenas called for additional testimony, and as a result we

have records of other hearings held in Mexico. For five long years Cárdenas remained in prison while the attorneys wrangled in court. Finally he was sentenced to pay a fine and to serve at the frontier as a soldier for one year at his own expense.

The court records of the Cárdenas trial comprise more than four thousand sheets. The testimonies given in Mexico by some thirty former members of the expedition are quite prolix but very much alike, whether favorable or adverse to the leaders of the expedition. The testimonies of Coronado and Cárdenas add interesting details to the narratives of the expedition. From them and from other witnesses we learn that in the Rio Grande valley in the neighborhood of Bernalillo were some fifteen pueblos, located on both banks of the river. Of these pueblos, two, Arenal and Mohi, were attacked and entered by the Spaniards. Castañeda, in his history of the expedition, says two hundred Indians were killed at Arenal alone. This figure is a gross exaggeration. All witnesses agree that the total number of prisoners taken was about eighty, and the number sentenced to be burned at the stake, between fifteen and thirty. How many were actually killed is still not clear. The fact that the fiscal charged Cárdenas with the death of thirty leads us to believe that no more than fifteen died, in view of the fact that a prosecutor always inflated his accusations knowing they would be reduced by the defense. In defense of Coronado and his management of the expedition, Viceroy Mendoza stated that not even twenty members of the expedition, counting soldiers, servants and Indian allies, had died in the venture. This is indeed a remarkable record. We have checked the documents to verify the viceroy's statement and we find it substantially correct. It is not easy, however, to estimate how many native Indians were killed. Our reckoning, based on the testimony given at the trials, shows that perhaps one hundred natives may have perished as a result of the coming of the Spaniards. Castañeda's figures are altogether unreliable. But his exaggerations have been ex-

ploited by some historians and writers bent on the sensational. Journalistic writers would make one think that lust and zest for gold were the only incentives of the Spanish conquistadors, and that religious zeal, a spirit of adventure, and an intellectual curiosity counted for nothing.

Judge Tejada conducted the two inquiries simultaneously. In the summer of 1544 we find him in Guadalajara examining the past record of all the chief public officials. As a result of his investigation he brought charges against Coronado indicting him on thirty-four counts. The indictments comprised accepting gifts, which governors were absolutely forbidden by law to accept; not paying for the wine consumed at his home; playing cards for big stakes; failing to build bridges; neglecting duty, showing favoritism, etc. Coronado testified in answer to these charges on September 1, 1544. He did not prove to be a forceful witness as did Cárdenas, whose testimony far overshadows his in interest. Judge Tejada dismissed some of the charges and imposed fines for others. The total amount of the fines assessed was a little over 607 gold pesos. Coronado's immediate appeal was still being fought over nine years later by his various lawyers, who were trying to regain for their client some towns that had been taken from him. When he died in November of 1544, his appeal was still pending. Not until fifty years later did Coronado's grandson say his grandfather had been vindicated.

It is curious that among the thirty-four charges lodged against Coronado by Judge Tejada is one to the effect that he received his governor's salary illegally for three years. Another such accusation, made against Coronado by the partisans of Cortés, was that his appointment was illegal, as the viceroy had had no authority to appoint a captain general. In the court records we found Coronado's appointment as captain general of the expedition. The appointment states specifically that Coronado is to be paid the salary assigned to him as governor of New Galicia during the time he is with the expedition to Cíbola in the service of the

crown. Viceroy Mendoza named Coronado to this post by virtue of a royal *cédula* dating from 1535 which authorized him as viceroy to appoint as captain general someone other than Cortés if he thought it desirable. The viceroy held this *cédula* in reserve for five years before he had occasion to use it.

Cristóbal de Oñate, who had been acting governor of New Galicia during the absence of Coronado, came out of the inquiry unscathed. In fact, Judge Tejada used the occasion to praise his administration and public spirit. Governor Oñate was the father of Juan de Oñate, the founder of New Mexico in 1598. Other associates of Coronado did not fare so well under the scrutiny of the investigating judge. Alonso Alvarez, Coronado's page and guidon, drew a twenty pesos fine for engaging in a fight inside a church. The heaviest sentence was imposed on jailer Diego de Colio for striking a prisoner in his custody. He was fined two hundred pesos and suspended from office for two years. In Spain, where this sentence was forwarded for review, the public prosecutor appealed it as too light.

An Indian chief accused of trafficking in slaves was sentenced to be exposed at the public square of the town to the derision of his own people. This punishment was extremely effective, as the Indian chiefs feared nothing so much as humiliation. Judge Tejada's method of assessing fines is quite illuminating. Fines imposed and collected for quarreling in the church were used to buy church ornaments and for the upkeep of the buildings. Fines imposed on Cárdenas were applied to defray passage of friars from Spain to Mexico and to support charities in New Spain. Money collected from public officials accused of neglecting their duties or of other offenses was used to build bridges and maintain barges.

Coronado's appointment as captain general to lead the expedition to Cibola is important as it contains the instructions of Viceroy Mendoza, who charges Coronado with the proper conduct of the expedition and the good treatment of

the Indians. He was to send back reports of what he found in the new country, to take possession of any good land he might find for his Majesty and hold it until further orders. This seems to indicate that Viceroy Mendoza was intent on colonization. While it is true that Coronado's party was not properly equipped to establish colonies, reinforcements would have been sent from Mexico. In fact, Juan Gallego arrived with them just as Coronado was about to return. Nevertheless, failure to establish colonies was one of the six charges lodged against Coronado after the investigation of his management of the expedition. This was also the most serious charge pressed against López de Cárdenas in Spain. Fiscal Villalobos asked that Cárdenas be sentenced to pay the crown 500,000 ducats, the sum he reckoned the crown had lost by the failure to establish colonies.

That colonization was in the mind of Viceroy Mendoza is also shown by his instructions to Hernando de Alarcón, who was to sail to the Gulf of California to establish contact with Coronado and bring him supplies. Alarcón was to remain in charge of the colony that would be established on the Colorado River in the neighborhood of the present Yuma, Arizona, which was about as far as Alarcón came.

After Alarcón spent considerable time sailing up the Colorado River, he decided to return to Mexico when he learned that he was still thirty or forty days' travel from Cíbola. Before leaving, he distributed Spanish chickens, hens and cocks, to the Indians and told them how to take care of them. He distributed also wheat and other seeds and instructed the Indians how to plant and cultivate them. This is another indication that colonizing was one of the aims of the expedition. Before returning to Mexico, Alarcón planted many crosses and erected a small shrine by the Colorado River, which he named Buena Guía River after the emblem of the viceroy. Alarcón had been empowered by the viceroy to draw legal proceedings and take possession of the land for his Majesty. So in his report to the viceroy, Alarcón said he brought along numerous legal acts of possession.



While these documents probably were not worth much, the detailed information contained in his report is extremely valuable.

These court records do not make very interesting reading. But the testimony of the various witnesses often furnishes details which, when pieced together, give a good composite picture of the whole expedition. As each witness was required to identify himself when he was sworn in, we are able to tell something about many of these men. Thus we know now there were about a dozen Europeans in the expedition who were not Spaniards. Most of these foreigners were Portuguese, but there were also two Italians, one Frenchman, one Scot, and a German, who was the bugler. We know likewise that three Spanish soldiers brought their wives along in the expedition. One of these women wanted to remain in New Mexico as a colonizer; another nursed the soldiers who were ill and mended their clothing. The first one testified against Coronado.

The number of pueblos in the Rio Grande valley in the Bernalillo-Albuquerque area is given by most of the witnesses as fifteen. The pueblos mentioned by the witnesses in the province of Tiguex are Arenal, Alcanfor or Coofor, Alameda, Cruz, Circo, and Moho or Mohi.

Early in the sixteenth century, decrees were issued in Spain to the effect that conquistadors or their descendants should be favored in appointments if properly qualified. The members of Coronado's expedition, who were all classed as conquistadors, were not slow in filing applications for appointments or rewards. These testimonials stating the services to the crown by the applicant and his forefathers are extremely valuable in that they give us reliable information about individuals not found elsewhere. We have photostatic copies of many such testimonials. Others were published by Icaza in his biographical "dictionary." From all these documents combined we were able to add forty-eight names to the muster roll of Coronado's army and to tell something about each one. The muster contains only the

names of those who were at Compostela on February 22, 1540. In it each soldier, in addition to his name, gives the number of horses and the equipment he carries. The muster does not list those who had gone ahead to escort the friars, or those who were still on their way and who joined the expedition at various places on the route. It does not include the friars, the women, the servants or the Indian allies. From the various records we find there were 1300 Indians and some negroes in the expedition. The total number of horses and mules was about six hundred, which, with the cattle, comprised 1500 head by actual count, according to Coronado. It was one of the best organized expeditions ever sent afield in New Spain. The human element was of very high quality. Many of Coronado's men belonged to the nobility and to distinguished families in Spain. Of more than sixty witnesses called, only two were unable to write their names. No codices or graphic descriptions of the land traveled by Coronado's men have survived. However, we know that at least two chroniclers and two painters had been purposely sent with the expedition to prepare a picture history of it. Coronado said he sent back pictorial descriptions of the country. Alarcón, too, had an Indian draw pictures of the most notable things of the country.

Two petitions addressed to the crown by a grandson of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and by a grandson of his oldest brother, Gonzalo, give us interesting family history of Coronado. Coronado did not leave any male heir. His only son, Juan, died young. On October 14, 1605, Don Francisco Pacheco de Córdoba y Bocanegra, a son of Coronado's daughter, Doña Marina, presented a detailed testimonial to the crown asking for 10,000 gold pesos annual income for life, to be made a marquis or count, to be granted the gown of the order of St. James, and to be properly employed in Spain or the Indies. He based his petition on the services of his paternal and maternal grandfathers. Of Coronado he claims that as a result of wounds and illness contracted

during the time of his expedition he died prematurely and did not build up an adequate estate for his family.

Juan Vázquez de Coronado, grandson of Gonzalo, oldest of the Coronado brothers, presented in 1590 a testimonial of the services of his forefathers. He said his grandfather Gonzalo Vázquez de Coronado had three other brothers, and that Francisco was the second born. He shows that the Coronados were prominent at the court in Spain. This Coronado descendant does not ask for anything. He files his testimonial only for future reference.

While in the celebration of the Cuarto Centennial the emphasis is being placed on Coronado's expedition, it does not follow that our interests are limited to this brief period. The Coronado Cuarto Centennial Publications, comprising eleven volumes, will cover the history of New Mexico from the time of Coronado to the end of the eighteenth century. These volumes will contain considerable new materials, only recently acquired. The volume dealing with the post-Coronado period will be based almost entirely on unpublished materials. The volume on Oñate will be made up mostly of documents never before published either in English or Spanish. The volume devoted to Father Benavides will contain in addition to his Memorial of 1634, many other documents photographed at the Vatican Library in Rome. Practically all of this material has never been published before. These are only some of the bare facts pointing out the value these photographed documents have for the scholars who are helping to unravel New Mexico's history. The value or use of these materials is not limited to any individual or group. Any one interested in the study of the development of the Southwest will find these materials valuable, if not indispensable. The University of New Mexico has now some 75,000 sheets of photographed source material on hand. If the present rate of acquiring photostatic copies of original documents and printed materials continues, despite the inadequate funds available, the University of New Mexico

will soon become the center of historical research for the Southwest. With the materials on hand it is now possible to study in detail any phase of New Mexico's history from original sources, provided the scholar is competent and willing to use them.

Landscape for Nothing  
*"Such as the poor in California"*

By WILLIAM PETERSON

Nothing like tall green palms to make a heart  
stand out equal to stars.

Nothing like the long green lifting of music  
and the green heights to ascend  
and the green horizons  
laid out before us in perfect order.

Such as the stuff of Spring is always with us,  
for us, and a fortune that  
cannot quit the young imagination.

And the drowsy days are just so many leaves,  
fan-shaped leaves, fat with caressing  
and forgetfulness,  
And the mild dumb hills are green with content.

Nothing to ask ourselves about or want to do,  
Nothing but the long green poems of the palms  
waltzing in a cool free sky.