



## ***The Tewa Indians of the Rio Grande and their neighbors - A.D. 1450-1680***

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# THE TEWA INDIANS OF THE RIO GRANDE AND THEIR NEIGHBORS-A.D. 1450-1680

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## INTRODUCTION

The Tewa country, flanked on the west side of the Rio Grande by the Jemez Mountains and Pajarito Plateau and on the east side by the Sangre de Cristo Range, extended along the river throughout the Espanola Basin of the Rio Grande rift, roughly from Bandelier National Monument north to the Abiquiu-El Rito area. The Tewa story, briefly reviewed herein and covering the transition from late prehistoric times into the early historic period, takes place within this region. However, interaction with neighboring people, both Indian and Spanish, provides a wider cultural environment within which the Tewas operated.

## LATE PREHISTORIC TIMES

Between A.D. 1450 and 1540, more than 100 pueblos existed between the Chama Valley on the north and the Socorro area on the south, and from the Pecos, Galisteo Basin, and Salinas area on the east to the Acoma, Zuni, and Hopi villages on the west. These people had much in common. However, they differed regionally from one another in certain crafts, tool kits, architectural features, and cultural practices. Generally, their homes, small to large pueblos of masonry or coursed adobe, ranged from one to several stories high (seven or more at Picuris in early historic times) and were built in a linear or rectangular plan with a plaza in front or enclosed by the house blocks (as at Tesuque today). In some cases the pueblo was a large compact mass (like Taos). These prehistoric puebloans farmed, hunted, gathered wild foods, herded turkeys, and pursued a number of crafts which produced a variety of items.

Cultural variations that had developed prior to A.D. 1450 survived into late prehistoric times as distinct sets of characteristics in different regions of the Pueblo world. These regional clusters of pueblos with the same characteristics suggest that each cluster represented an identifiable ethnic unit as was the case in early historic times. For example, certain groups of closely associated pueblos, dating before Spanish entry, exhibit big kivas, either one (like the historic-period Tewas) or two (like the Keres), while other villages had little kivas alone (as among the Zunis) or in combination with a big kiva. These occurrences suggest differing socio-religious concepts occurred among different prehistoric regional groups as does the practice of cremation of the dead by some as opposed to interment unburned by others. Color combinations and decorative motifs of ceramics as well as use or non-use of glaze paint also reveal definite regional variations.

Other differences between specific areas in late prehistoric times appear to be environmentally rather than culturally determined. Irrigation farming, such as reported among the Tewas in the late 1500's, was practiced earlier in locales where stream runoff was dependable. Farming dependent on rainfall was more common and included water-control devices such as check dams, terraces, and reservoirs. Variations in growing seasons limited the types of crops in some areas. While cotton could be raised in the lower elevations south of the Tewas, pueblos to the north of Espanola probably found it necessary to harvest green corn on many occasions. Proximity to natural resources which were mined or quarried (lead, turquoise, obsidian, salt, jet, malachite, hematite, etc.) provided commodities to nearby pueblos for barter with other less fortunately located groups and with Indians on the plains. Identifiable late prehistoric clusters of pueblos, each with a set of characteristics in common as opposed to a set of another contemporary group, provide the archaeologist with leads by which to link them to early historic period ethnic or pueblo units recognized by the Spaniards.

This task is simplified when a set of prehistoric regional traits occurs in the same region of a historic group that shares similar traits and customs.

Early Spanish journals of the late 1500's described the way of life of Pueblo Indians before they adopted any western European cultural items or practices. In this sense, the Pueblo culture of late prehistoric times had not yet been altered by contact with the Spaniards. As described in the journals, the material culture was similar to that found by archaeologists in late prehistoric sites. Socio-economic factors, unlikely to be gleaned in any detail from excavations in late prehistoric ruins, can be postulated from these early records.

According to the early journals, Pueblo Indians spoke several mutually unintelligible languages. By 1601, 130 pueblos were recorded as "surrounded entirely by uninhabited areas." The Spaniards also noted that the pueblos had contact with wandering Indians who lived in tents, obviously a reference to Indians on the plains. Reports covering this period from 1540 to 1608 remark on the trade of the eastern-frontier pueblos of Taos, Picuris, and Pecos with tribes on the plains (Hammond and Rey, 1940, p. 259; Hammon and Rey, 1953, pp. 629, 633, 640).

Relations with these people to the east were not always cordial. According to information obtained from Pecos Indians in 1540 (Hammond and Rey, 1940, p. 258), the Teyas, who may have been ancestral Wichita (Schroeder, 1962, p. 8), attacked Pecos and other pueblos in 1526. Similar hostilities existed between Plains Indians and Tano pueblos of the Galisteo Basin in the early 1580's (Hammond and Rey, 1927, p. 29), and with or between pueblos near the north end of the Sandia Mountains in 1591 (Schroeder and Matson, 1965, p. 160). In 1540, Pecos was attempting to obtain farmland by force from the Southern Tiwas of the Bernalillo area (Hammond and Rey, 1940, p. 328). In the 1580's, these Tiwas were at war with the Piros on their south boundary south of Isleta (Hammond and Rey, 1966, p. 303). It appears that some, if not all, of these enmities may well have originated prior to the entry of the Spaniards. The Tewas are not known to have been involved in hostilities before A.D. 1600, yet a few years later some of the pueblos were engaged in similar activities, particularly the four along the Chama drainage to the north of the other ten pueblos from San Juan Pueblo to Tesuque along the Rio Grande (Schroeder and Matson, 1965, pp. 112ff, 131).

In addition to these conflicts, we know that the pueblo people in prehistoric times faced disruptive extremes in their natural environment, such as the several years of cold winters in the 1540's (Hammond and Rey, 1940, p. 234; Schroeder, 1972, pp. 43-44). Also, because of experiences with droughts in the past, the Pueblo Indians of the early historic period practiced the storage of corn for three, four, and even up to seven years to provide insurance against crop failures (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 653, 660, 693, 698, 863; Schroeder and Matson, 1965, p. 100). In fact, the droughts of the 1560's to the 1590's probably played a major role in the abandonment of the pueblos in the Bandelier National Monument area and on the Pajarito Plateau by the 1590's (Schulman, 1956; Fritts, 1965, fig. 3; Schroeder, 1968, p. 18).

The above, combined with known data recovered from sites occupied in late prehistoric times, suggests that the people of the latter period developed regional patterns and customs that survived and closely conformed to those of early historic times. The pueblo people of the transitional period were the sole occupants of their territory, interacted among themselves, traded with neighbors on the plains, and maintained their regional cultural identities.

## CONTACT PERIOD

During the period of Spanish exploration, between 1540 and 1598, the pueblo way of life and material culture was little affected. It was, to all intents and purposes, nothing more than a time of contact between two vastly different cultures. The pueblos received gifts of pearl and glass beads, jingle bells, some metal artifacts, and a vague knowledge of the cross. They were introduced to, but did not receive any, wheeled vehicles, cattle, or other stock. Even the gifts were similar to items in use among Indians, the only difference being the material from which they were made. The Spaniards, however, gained considerable knowledge of the pueblo country, its resources, and its people and customs, all of which provided an incentive to colonize and exploit New Mexico's resources and souls—the latter variously stated to be some 20,000 men in the 1540's or 30,000 men plus numerous women and children in 1602 (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 483, 863).

Only two exploratory entries visited the Tewas. In 1540, some of Coronado's men departed from the Jemez pueblos, traveled north over the Pajarito Plateau, and dropped down into Rio Grande-Chama River junction area. Here they visited two Tewa pueblos, San Juan and Yuqueyungue, the occupants of which had fled to four pueblos in the sierras (Hammond and Rey, 1940). In 1591, Gaspar Castafio de Sosa was the first to visit the Tewa pueblos below San Juan as well as nearby Picuris (Schroeder and Matson, 1965).

In 1598, Juan de Ofiate's advance party hardly paused as it came up the Rio Grande until it arrived at San Juan Pueblo. Perhaps Onate selected this area for settlement of his colonists because of Castafio de Sosa's report which noted good supplies of food among the Tewas derived from irrigated fields (Schroeder and Matson, 1965, pp. 117-118). He and those of previous expeditions had reported in their journals that the Tiwas of the Albuquerque-Bernalillo area were unfriendly. Ofiate's temporary settlement or camp, as it is referred to in the journals, was established across the river from San Juan Pueblo at Yuqueyungue. He named his camp of 129 men, plus women and children, San Gabriel. While most of the Indian occupants of this 400-room pueblo moved to San Juan, some remained with the colonists.

As a protective measure (against enemies or to protect stored crops from rodents), pueblos were built without doors on the ground floor. Entry was through a hatchway in the roof or from the second story. When the Spaniards moved in, they added doors and windows, indicating that they used the ground-floor rooms for their homes. Within a month, a church large enough to accommodate the colonists was built. These changes, a flour mill, new crops and stock, and other Spanish features marked the Spanish occupation as different from that of the Tewa and other Indians (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 323, 619, 639, 652, 653). At the same time, this frontier Spanish settlement bore little resemblance to towns in Mexico.

The day after the 1598 dedication of the church at San Gabriel, Mate assigned eight priests to the pueblo provinces. A little more than a week after these assignments were made, the friars left for their new posts, probably accompanied by a few soldiers. Within three to five years, churches were erected among the Towa-speaking Jemez, the Keresan-speakers of Santo Domingo, the Tewas at San Ildefonso, and perhaps among the Tiwa-speakers of Picuris (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 324, 630-631, 709, 711; Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, p. 260). With these padres came Spanish culture.

Ofiate's report to the viceroy in March of 1599, written after exploration of some of the region, emphasized the economic potential of the area. He remarked on the returns expected in revenues from mineral lodes, pearls, salt and sulphur deposits, and buffalo skins, as well as from Indian tributes. The treasurer of New Mexico, Alonso Sanchez, had written a letter a few days prior to Ofiate's report, indicating that he expected excellent returns because the Pueblos were such good farmers who also were "much given to commerce, taking from one province to another the fruits of their land and the products of their labor." This suggests that the exchange of food items among the Tewas and others played a large role in trade. In an effort to expand the potential of the local labor market, Onate also requested that Indians be sent from Mexico, skilled in all trades, to teach the Pueblos various crafts

(Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 425, 486, 489).

The experiences of the first few months included some hostilities, but none mentioned involved the Tewas. In spite of the difference in numbers between the colonists and the Pueblos, initially the Spaniards seem to have had the upper hand. Their horses provided mobility and rapid movement, their edged metal weapons and armor were a decided advantage in close combat, and the arquebus, though not as efficient as the bow and arrow, provided enough bluster to scare the Indians, as observed in 1581 (Hammond and Rey, 1927).

During this period of contact, there was an additional intrusion into New Mexico—the Apaches, who were referred to as masters of the plains in 1601 (Hammond and Rey, 1953, p. 749). In spite of statements made by Spanish explorers in the 1540's and 1601 that none other than the Pueblo Indians lived in the Pueblo country, some doubt has been expressed as to the date of the entry and settlement of Apaches in the state. Most investigators agree that Apaches were on the plains east of New Mexico by the middle 1400's and entered New Mexico in late prehistoric times for purposes of trade or to spend winters close to some pueblos. However, two statements suggest that some, at least, spent part of the growing season in New Mexico. The Antonio de Espejo expedition journals of March 1583 refer to "peaceful mountaineers" near the locale of present Laguna Pueblo. In June, they were reported living in shacks and raising corn and were referred to as "Corechos" (Hammond and Rey, 1929, pp. 86, 110-112), a term applied to nomads, usually Plains Apaches, prior to the early 1600's. This rancheria could have been ancestral Gila Apaches who lived south of, and were friendly with, Acoma and were first reported by that name in the 1620's. In addition, during the Vicente de Zaldivar inquiry of 1602, one witness reported that Zaldivar, on his 1599 exploratory trip west of the Rio Grande, met Apaches (perhaps in the locale of those noted in 1583), Cruzados (who were the Yavapais of central Arizona), and Tepeguanes (probably Pimas) (Hammond and Rey, 1953, p. 829).

The only other early references to Apaches concern groups in more northern locales, such as the Quinia Apaches west of Taos in the first decade of the 1600's and Navajo Apaches who in the 1620's lived within one day north of Santa Clara (Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, pp. 85, 89, 306). This also is the locale of early Navajo sites (near Abiquiu) dating from the early 1600's (Schaafsma, 1979). Ofiate's report in 1598 of Cocoyes, who lived in the "neighboring sierras" of Jemez, evidently to the north since the following year he described these people as being numerous, living in jacales, and farming in the upper Rio Grande (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 345, 485). The described locale seems to apply to the same area as that of the Quinias in the early 1600's, perhaps a band of those who later became known as Navajo Apaches. Navajos are not reported near the San Jose River north of Acoma until after the middle 1700's (Schroeder, 1963, pp. 7-11). In any case, it does appear that some Apaches were living west of the Rio Grande in the early 1600's—one group on the San Jose and another one, which evolved into the group known as Navajos, north of the Tewas, in the Chama drainage.

The Apaches on the north, perhaps just moving in at the time of Spanish entry in the late 1500's and perhaps identical with those reported as allied with Taos, Picuris, and Pecos, played a part in the events of the first decade of the 1600's, particularly in the Tewa area along the lower Chama River. Four pueblos in this drainage area, first noted by the Coronado journals of 1540-1542, seem to have survived into the very early 1600's. One of them, Tsama Pueblo, is designated as an existing pueblo on a map of 1602 relative to the Onate colonization venture (Hammond and Rey, 1966, end papers). The coincidence of the previously mentioned long drought of the late 1500's, the establishment of the first Spanish settlement near the junction of the Chama and Rio Grande, and the first recorded Apache attacks on the Spaniards and pueblos prior to 1608 (Hammond and Rey, 1953, p. 1059) suggest that these events and the stress of the times led to the abandonment of the pueblos along the Chama. Excavations in some of the ruins of the latter have yielded evidence of violent deaths (Jeancon, 1912, pp. 29-30; 1923, p. 3; Wendorf, 1953, p. 46). These pueblos also may well

have been those the Spaniards referred to in 1608 as having been destroyed and burned by Apaches (Hammond and Rey, 1953, p. 1059). This situation probably played a large part in forming the viceroy's decision to move the colony out of the Tewa country to an area unoccupied by Indians, in conformance with the 1573 laws of settlement (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp.975-976, 1076, 1089).

During the first twelve years of residence among the Tewas, the Spaniards maintained their own, but definitely frontier, type of life. They also depended on their hosts for various needs, and the Tewas helped them build the irrigation ditch at San Gabriel. The colonists also exacted tribute to make up for some of their needs, such as blankets and food, the latter when their own crops of wheat, barley, chili, and peppers failed to provide sufficiently for their needs. Many of the colonists were unhappy with the venture after the first three years, but some felt otherwise (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 619ff, 629, 655-656).

While two patterns of material culture representing pueblo and frontier-Spanish people existed side by side in Yuqueyungue, the rest of the Pueblo world away from the Spanish settlement remained unchanged except for the churches in nearby pueblos. The Apache entry from the plains, though it seems not to have brought about any significant material-culture change, marks the introduction of a nomadic group that generated among its sedentary neighbors both friendly and hostile reactions, the latter of which were to continue for more than 200 years.

### SPANISH SETTLEMENT

When the colonists moved to Santa Fe in 1610, differences between pueblo and Spanish settlement patterns became obvious. The seat of government was a villa with a street pattern. According to the instructions, each household was to be assigned land for a house, garden, and grazing needs, and the villa divided into six districts with a square block for public buildings (Hammond and Rey, 1953, pp. 1087-1088). The pueblo communally arranged multistoried dwellings and farmlands stood in marked contrast. By the 1620's, Santa Fe had some 250 residents with about 1,000 servants (Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, p. 68). Headquarters for the Franciscan Order was at Santo Domingo.

The governor was instructed to congregate the dispersed or outlying pueblos to more defensible locations and to arrange for the young people to be instructed in the Spanish language so as to facilitate administration (Hammond and Rey, 1953, p. 1090). By the 1620's, only seven of the Tewa pueblos were occupied. How many Tewa and other pueblos were consolidated is not known, since possible pertinent documents were destroyed in the Pueblo Uprising of 1680. However, there was a drastic decrease in the number of pueblos and population in the 1600's possible also due to Spanish-introduced diseases-from about 130 recorded pueblos with perhaps 60,000-100,000 people in the first decade of the 1600's to 64 pueblos with 69,000 in the 1620's and only 40,000 in 1638, to 46 pueblos with 17,000 in 1679, and by 1706, after the uprising, to only 18 pueblos with 6,440 people, exclusive of the Hopis (Schroeder, 1979, p. 254).

Such a rapid decline suggests that in addition to disease other factors also were at work, such as reported famines, attacks on, or enslavement of, the pueblo people, and flights of pueblo refugees to plains tribes. Drought and resulting famine caused 3,000 deaths in 1640 (Scholes, 1936-1937, p. 324), and similar events in the 1660's resulted in an untold number of fatalities. Smallpox obviously took its toll among the Indians in the 1600's, if the number of pock-marked faces of Spaniards (colonists who fled in 1680) returning to Santa Fe in 1693 can be used as a gauge (Chavez, 1954).

The core of Spanish settlement was in the Santa Fe area, but small family rancherias were set up along the Rio Grande, mostly between Albuquerque and Espanola. They depended on nearby pueblos for some of their needs, such as pottery. The vessels for table and kitchen needs, made by the Tewas, were plain or decorated in black, white, and red-matte paint. Those made by potters to the south of the Tewas were decorated with glaze paint on a yellowish to reddish background (Snow, 1973). Though caravans from Mexico brought containers and dishes of majolica, olive jars, and some metal items of Mexican manufacture, these came in small quantities and only every few years, perhaps reaching

only a minor sector of the population. The friars also depended on Indian potters for candlestick holders and plates, thus increasing the number of new shapes and forms in pueblo ceramics.

Trade with Plains Indians, a pueblo monopoly before the 1640's, was gradually taken over by Spanish governors who dealt directly with the suppliers, the latter often offering captives as items of barter (Scholes, 1940, p. 262). This interruption of Pueblo-Plains traffic in goods no doubt had an effect on the economy of the pueblos. It also brought about a significant change among the Apaches. By the mid-1600's they were acquiring horses not only to replace dogs (used to drag Apache belongings packed on tent poles), but also to be able to retaliate with high-speed vengeance against the Spaniards for taking their people as slaves (Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, p. 171; Scholes, 1930, p. 193; 1935, p. 109; 1936, p. 300). The expansion of Spanish settlement, decrease in pueblo population, shift in trade patterns, Apache mobility, and grazing of horses and sheep over larger and larger areas took place gradually in the 1600's.

During this period, interaction between the pueblos and Spaniards became increasingly strained. For administrative purposes, the Spaniards introduced a set of officers into the pueblos, to be elected by local occupants. These officers were to deal directly with the governor in Santa Fe (Bloom, 1928, p. 363), an obvious attempt to weaken the authority of the local caciques. The effect, however, was the reverse in that the new Indian officers acted as buffers between the Spanish authorities and pueblo leaders. Also, to further missionary efforts, caravans from Mexico brought additional friars to expand the mission system (Scholes, 1930; Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, pp. 109ff, 174). In pursuing their aims to convert the Indians, these friars became a major element in the spread of Spanish culture. One immediate effect of missionization was the need for the Pueblo Indians who spoke different languages and dialects to learn Spanish. This resulted in better communication and interaction with the Spaniards as well as among pueblo groups speaking different languages. It became the lingua franca.

In the 1600's, all but two of the Tewa pueblos after the 1620's had a resident padre for varying lengths of time. From a mission, the padre also attended to neighboring pueblos that lacked a resident friar. He also set up classes and shops at his mission to teach religion and music. New crafts introduced in these shops, such as carpentry, leather working, and smithing, provided the Indians with a livelihood by which to provide certain needs of the Spaniards (Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, pp. 100-102; Scholes, 1936-1937, p. 21). The priest's garden and cattle, tended by the Indians, introduced new elements to the pueblos.

The presence of the friars and their opposition to pueblo practices of worship and other customs obviously developed antagonism between the padres and the pueblo religious leaders. Spanish efforts to stamp out masked kachina dances and the use of kivas, as well as to weaken the authority of the ceremonial leaders (NMSRC, 1968, p. 274), succeeded only in driving pueblo rites into secrecy. This, along with the elected Indian officers, probably was responsible to a considerable measure for the preservation of much of pueblo ceremony and culture over the remaining years of the Spanish period. However, conversion to christianity was in part successful, to a great extent probably due to the presence of elements in catholicism that are similar to those in pueblo religious practices-the use of altars, singing, specialized instruction for neophytes, ornamentation and painting, formalized ceremonies and rituals, care of religious objects, and a religious calendar.

Friction between padres and pueblos, plus continuing disagreements between Spanish church and state on the handling and exploitation of the Pueblo Indians, led to a breakdown of the mission system to some extent in the 1600's. In addition, encomiendas were another burden that complicated relations. These were granted to favored Spanish individuals who were to provide protection for a pueblo and give aid to its local church in return for which tribute of blankets and corn could be collected from the pueblo. The Spaniards often went beyond this, illegally conscripting Indian labor to work their farms without compensation. Some of the governors went so far as to set up sweat shops

in Santa Fe manned by Indians taken on one pretext or another, or led slaving expeditions and used the captives as miners in Chihuahua (Scholes, 1940; Hodge, Hammond, and Rey, 1945, pp. 168-173).

This treatment of, and demands on, the pueblo people drew many away from their routine and obligations in the village, undoubtedly leading to breakdowns in the local society. Converted Indians in the pueblo became outsiders, further depleting ritual representation in ceremonies and causing factional splits. These situations in turn led to some outward opposition against the Spaniards. In the early 1640's an unknown number fled from Taos, taking refuge among their Apache friends in Cuartejejo located in present Scott County, southwest Kansas. They came back to Taos in 1662. This is the same locale to which many Picuris fled in the 1690's, not returning until 1706 (Thomas, 1935; Schroeder, 1974, pp. 4, 6).

The combination of cultural and environmental stresses that smoldered among the Indians between 1640 and 1670's finally broke out in a general uprising in 1680, an event in which Pope, a Tewa from San Juan, played an important part. The Spaniards were driven out of the Pueblo world to El Paso del Norte, where they remained for 13 years. While the pueblo leaders attempted to stamp out everything Spanish during this period, they were unsuccessful in ridding themselves of Spanish crops, horses, cattle, sheep, and metal implements. Thus, like the Romans, the Spaniards in the 1600's came and saw, but, unlike the Romans, did not conquer, though they left a definite imprint of Spanish culture on the pueblos of the late 1600's.

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