

Don Pedro de Peralta was ordered by the Viceroy of Spain, in 1609, to found the Villa Real de Santa Fe de San Francisco de Assisi. In *The Founding of Santa Fe*, a bronze by sculptor Dave McGary, Peralta shares his vision of the city to come. Photograph by Eliza Wells Smith, 2007.



Prelude to the Pueblo Revolt

By David Roberts

“With Peralta began an insidious pattern of conflict between church and state in the remote northern colony that would checker the eighty-two years between Oñate’s arrival and the outbreak of the Pueblo Revolt.”

“A Place Like No Other,” a series inspired by the creation of the New Mexico History Museum, is devoted to exploring new Mexico History through new research and recent insights of curators, artists, collections managers, educators, historians, archaeologists, and ethnohistorians—work that will inspire lines of inquiry and exhibitions for years to come.

History is a lens through which we can examine the causal relationships between policies and events and gain perspective on the past. Only with the clarity of hindsight can we see how actions taken by governments, or particular governors, led to unintended consequences, in this case the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. From our vantage today, we might wonder why no one saw it coming.

In “Prelude to the Pueblo Revolt,” author David Roberts traces conflicts between church and state that began

almost from the moment that the colony was founded in 1598. For four generations, Pueblo people were caught between the opposing goals of zealous Catholic missionaries and ambitious governors and suffered because of both. On August 9, 1680, one of those governors, Antonio Otermín, learned that two young Tesuque Pueblo runners—Catua and Omtuwa—were carrying a knotted cord, and a message that the time had come to strike and drive the Spanish from New Mexico.

In his companion article, historian Carroll Riley focuses on the short and often fraught career of colonial Governor López de Mendizábal, who envisioned a policy of fair treatment toward Pueblo people. Riley asks if the Franciscans had not objected to economic and social reforms proposed by López de Mendizábal, could the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 have been avoided?

By the time Pedro de Peralta

arrived in New Mexico, in the winter of 1609–10, to succeed Don Juan de Oñate as governor, the total Spanish population of New Mexico had dwindled to about 200, virtually all of them lodged at San Gabriel. Peralta's main achievement would be to move the capital to Santa Fe, which he founded in 1610. Peralta brought with him twelve soldiers and eight more Franciscan priests. Yet even before Peralta arrived, the colony of Nuevo México came very close to being abandoned. In a long history riddled with woeful ironies, here lies one of the most poignant. In 1608, weighing all the reports he had received from colonists and deserters alike—the tales of near starvation, of mistreatment of Indians, of the failure to find gold or silver—the viceroy in Mexico City made a summation to the Spanish Crown of the state of affairs in the far northern province. On September 13, 1608, the Council of the Indies formally recommended that New Mexico be abandoned.



Amérique septentrionale divisée en ses principales parties. This hand-colored map drawn in by a French cartographer Nicolas Sanson (1600–1667) illustrates the geographical confusion of the day, with California shown as an island and the Rio Grande draining into the Gulf of California rather than the Gulf of Mexico. Digital image ©Fray Angélico Chávez History Library.



Mission church, Pojoaque Pueblo, New Mexico, 1899. Photographer Adam C. Vroman.
Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Negative No. 013894.

It would have taken only a single expedition with carts to arrive from New Spain, pack up the settlers, and trundle south down the Rio Grande, leaving the bloodstained land to the Pueblos, who had lived there in sovereign independence for centuries, perhaps for millennia. How different would Southwest history be, had New Mexico been abandoned in 1608?

One can only guess—for it took but a single Franciscan to foil the abandonment. Fray Lázaro Jiménez, who had already recommended giving up the colony, returned in December from a second trip to New Mexico with the glorious but problematic news that by now, no fewer than 7,000 Indians had been converted and baptized. In the logic of Catholic thinking, it was unconscionable to abandon Christianized natives, and in the end, King Philip III suspended the order of the Council of the Indies. New Mexico must not be abandoned, no matter what the cost or hardship.

With Peralta began an insidious pattern of conflict between church and state in the remote northern colony that would checker the eighty-two years between Oñate's arrival and the outbreak of the Pueblo Revolt.

Bernardo López de Mendizábal

Could He Have Prevented the Pueblo Revolt?

By Carroll L. Riley

If scholars, past and present, could organize a contest to find the greatest scoundrel in the seventeenth-century province of New Mexico, the winner, hands down, would surely be Governor Bernardo López de Mendizábal. López's administration (1659–61) ended with his arrest, and he died in an Inquisition prison. Commentators from his time to the present have highlighted his shortcomings, and even today the majority tend to ignore any evidence of good governance on his part. He has become a scapegoat for the sins, suspected or real, of all the seventeenth-century New Mexico governors.

My own attitude toward López is more favorable, in part because of his relatively enlightened Indian policy. Add to that the fact that he was the only governor in the seventeenth century who saw the dangerous military implications of Spanish policy toward the Pueblo Indians *and* was willing to take on the Franciscan power structure in New Mexico, the engine that was driving that policy.

López was certainly not the epitome of honesty and high morals. He shared a series of vices with most or all of the other governors in seventeenth-century New Mexico. Their pay was fixed at the amount

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Petroglyph of a Spanish rider, found at Cienega, near Santa Fe, ca. 1925–30. Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Negative No. 42435.



Fred Kabotie, *1860 Pueblo Revolt At Hopi*, 1976. Watercolor, illustration board, approx. 16 x 20 in. Courtesy the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture / Laboratory of Anthropology.

In the summer of 1612, a supply train from Mexico City arrived with one Fray Isidro Ordóñez in tow. Ordóñez who was, in the words of historian Carroll L. Riley, “very much a loose cannon,” almost immediately became Peralta’s nemesis. The friar’s first act, however, was to present the prelate of the colony’s priesthood with a letter from Mexico City (very likely forged) removing that worthy from his office and installing Ordóñez himself as prelate.

Some sort of monomania must have fueled Ordóñez tyranny. Like many a despot, he saw traitors on all sides. During the months of his reign over the miserable colony, wrote one witness, “Excommunications were rained down.... Existence in the villa was a hell.”

If Ordóñez’s tyranny turned the colony into a veritable hell for the settlers, it had an even more lugubrious impact on the Puebloans. On hearing that a Cochiti man had been murdered by Indians from Jemez, Ordóñez sent

given the first colonizer, Juan de Oñate, and it was never adjusted, even though the period was one of continuing inflation. Nor was the inadequate travel allowance for the governor significantly raised during the pre-Pueblo Revolt period. Governors were expected to pay up front for the privilege and honor of the office, and there was a tacit understanding that they could (and should) recoup these monies while in New Mexico. Governors, therefore, were virtually forced to use their office for profit, and probably all of them abused the governorship in one way or another. But this does not, or at least *should* not, detract from López's social and economic policies.

Bernardo López de Mendizábal was born in New Spain of an influential, upwardly mobile family. He was educated at the Jesuit *colegio* in Puebla and continued his education at the university in Mexico City. López had originally intended to join the priesthood but under family pressure turned instead to governmental service, first in Cuba, then in Cartagena, modern northern Colombia. There he met and married the governor's daughter, Teresa de Aguilera y Roche, a sophisticated woman born in Spanish Italy of a Spanish father and Irish mother. Returning to Mexico, López held a number of influential positions before his appointment as governor of New Mexico.

In December of 1658, López and his wife began the journey to Santa Fe, traveling up the Camino Real from Mexico City to Santa Fe with the mission supply train. Bernardo and Teresa, with their urbane outlook, and carrying an impressive collection of books, may well have been the best-educated couple ever seen in seventeenth-century New Mexico. López's appointment came at a time when Spanish New Mexico was on the cusp of a great change. New Mexico, settled by Juan de Oñate in 1598, quickly became a mission province in which power was shared between the governor and the Franciscan missionaries. During the first half-century or so, the missionaries were cautious, turning a blind eye to Native ceremonialism while they worked incessantly to educate and Christianize each new generation of Pueblo Indians. By the time of López, the Franciscans, having proselytized two generations of children, felt secure enough to impose ever-harsher penalties for the practice of Pueblo religion. This brought the missionaries into immediate conflict with the Pueblo political and religious power brokers. In enforcing their new policies, the missionary leaders needed the police power of the governor and his entourage.

But López de Mendizábal, a devout Christian and would-be priest, proved resistant. Even while on the trip along the Camino Real northward, a trip that took six months or more, López and the incoming Franciscan *custodian*, Fr. Juan Ramírez, had become sworn enemies. This was probably to some degree a matter of conflicting personalities, but it also reflected specific reforms planned by López. An especially

drastic one was to raise the pay of Pueblo Indians in Spanish service from the abysmal half-real per day to a real plus rations. Actual coinage was not in circulation in New Mexico. The standard currency was a manta of cloth one and a half varas (about 50 inches) square, which was computed to be worth six reales, or three-fourths of a silver peso.

This particular reform may actually have been initiated by the viceroy, though in past offices López had shown a tendency to sympathize with his Indian charges. In any case it enraged the settlers in New Mexico. When López announced that he expected the missionaries, who had received free Indian labor, also to pay their servants, the Franciscans were outraged as well.

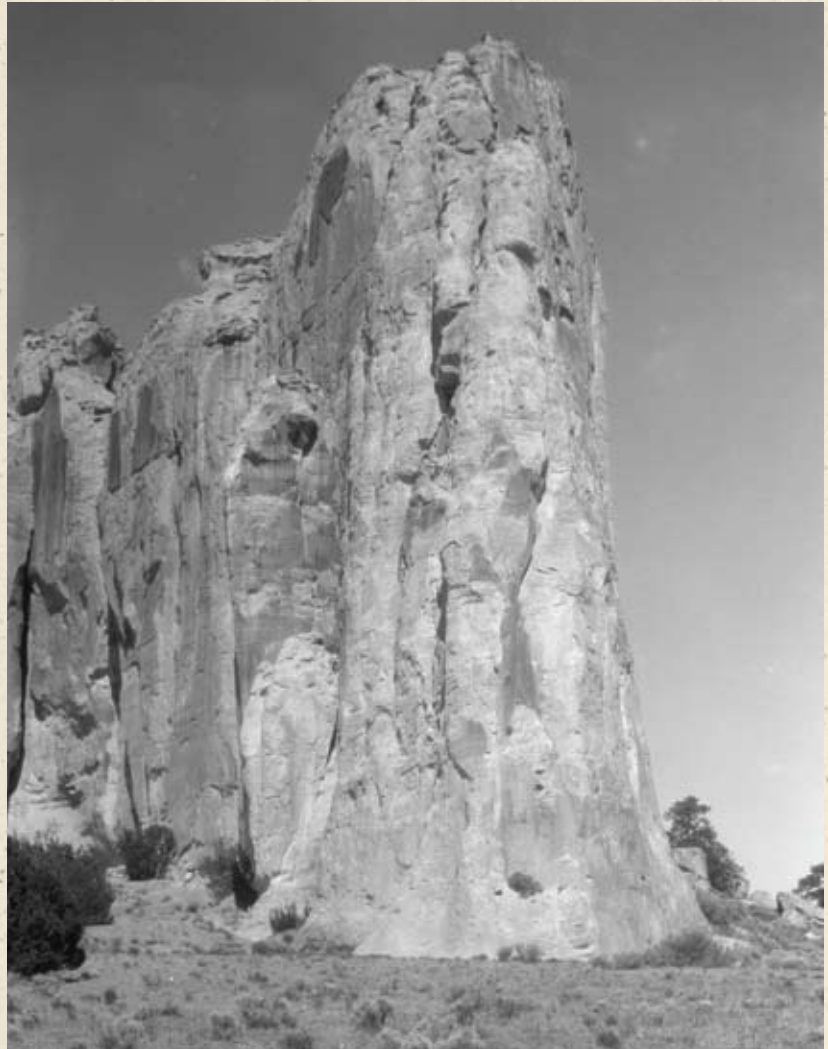
Once they were in New Mexico, the feud between López and the missionaries deepened. The governor began an investigation of mission mistreatment of Indians, and the Franciscans retaliated by charging López with inciting Apache nomads east of New Mexico so that he could raid them for slave boys and girls. López did engage in slave raids, a lucrative business practiced by governors and settlers alike; but whether he provoked the Apaches in this particular case is not clear. López accused the missionaries of sexual misbehavior with their Pueblo charges. The missionaries in turn charged López with sexual misconduct, even rape, involving a variety of women. The governor denied the rape but was quite open about his sexual adventures.

These were the kinds of disagreements that the missionaries had with other governors and probably would not have led to drastic action on the part of the Franciscans. However, López also sponsored Native dances, an action that to the missionaries threatened the very foundation of Franciscan work in New Mexico. The Franciscans were at this very time launching the second phase of their great plan to missionize the Pueblo Indians. The compromises of earlier times, the willingness to allow conservative elements in the pueblos to hold their sacred ceremonials, were now to end. The diabolical kachina dances and other manifestations of Native religion were to be wiped out once and for all.

Actually, the missionaries somewhat misjudged the situation. They believed that Indians who had been raised under the mission system, who spoke (and sometimes read and wrote) Spanish, and who were seemingly devoted sons and daughters of the church were now firm Franciscan allies. They ignored several danger signs. Resentment of the enforced labor and tribute payments to missionaries and the civilian *encomenderos* (men who owned the right to Indian labor) was widespread and clearly rising. In the two decades after López, it became a raging fury.

At the same time, Native war societies were being conscripted in the continuing struggle between Spaniards and the Apachean nomads. Slowly, generation by generation, young Indian men were learning the

Inscription Rock, El Morro National Monument, New Mexico, 1925. On it are centuries of carved messages including those by Don Juan de Oñate, after his "discovery of the Sea of the South, the 16th day of April, 1605"; Juan de Eulate, praising himself for being "a most Christian and great gentlemen"; and Don Diego de Vargas, dated 1692, the year of his reconquest. Edward S. Curtis Collection, Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Negative No. 144700.



soldiers to seize the alleged perpetrators and bring them to Santo Domingo. There he had one Jemez man hanged on the spot and ordered the execution of the others. That set the mold for a fierce resentment of the Spanish on the part of the Jemez, which would only grow more bitter over the next sixty-five years. Not surprisingly, Jemez would play a leading role in the Pueblo Revolt, and an even more pivotal one in the resistance after Diego José de Vargas's reconquest of 1692.

Further twisting the screw of Puebloan discontent were the practices, introduced by Oñate, of the *encomienda* and the *repartimiento*. The former granted landed settlers the right to collect regular tribute from a specified number of Puebloans, usually in the form of corn or animal hides. The latter demanded a similar tribute in the form of forced labor. Both practices had been made explicitly illegal by the Spanish Crown, but they flourished in New Mexico. For Puebloans barely able to feed and clothe their own families, these tributes worked a severe hardship.

ways of sophisticated Spanish warfare and becoming acquainted with Spanish weaponry and cavalry techniques. Though formally forbidden to ride horses, Pueblo Indians in labor-scarce New Mexico were usually in charge of herds of Spanish animals, so their training in horsemanship was inevitable. To make them part of the Spanish war machine was obviously a double-edged sword. But it was necessary for the undermanned Spaniards. As Apachean tribes gradually absorbed Spanish war methods and increasingly adopted horse transport (many horses had been smuggled from disaffected Pueblo Indians), these frontier wars grew in intensity year by year, decade by decade.

As a skilled administrator and military man, López attempted as best he could to defuse the situation. We have seen his attempt to lessen the economic burden on Pueblo families with a more reasonable pay structure. But the main source of strife was in the matter of ceremonial dances. López genuinely saw no problems with these dances, liking them to the *zarambeque* and other European folk dances. He was certainly wrong about this: the kachina dances *were* religious and, from the missionary standpoint, a threat to the Christianization program.

But he was right in that by attacking such dances, the Franciscans were simply fanning the flames of resentment. The religious ceremonialism was central to Pueblo society. With religion under attack, Pueblo Indians faced cultural death, and they knew it only too well. Though López probably would not have phrased the problem quite that way, he undoubtedly saw the dangers of steadily increasing repression of the Pueblos.

Since the fall of 1659, a steady stream of complaints against the governor issued by missionaries and settlers made their way south, and the Holy Office of the Inquisition began to take more and more interest. A new Franciscan custodian, the ruthless and narrow Fr. Alonso de Posada, reached New Mexico in 1661, and the new governor, Diego de Peñalosa, joined Posada in August of that year. They moved quickly against López and his wife. The two were arrested and quickly transported to Mexico City, where they were held in the Inquisition prison. Among other things, López was accused of encouraging idolatry among the Pueblo Indians and immorality with women. Bernardo and Teresa were accused of being secret adherents to the Jewish faith. The latter charge was an Inquisition favorite, especially when dealing with upper-class Spaniards, since many of them, including probably López, did indeed have Jewish or Moorish ancestors. The trial dragged on for some time. López, although in increasing ill health, was never allowed to see his wife, lodged in the same prison. The ex-governor eventually died in September 1664 and

Another illegal practice was the slaving expeditions carried out by governors against the nomadic tribes on the periphery of the Pueblo world. These had as an excuse the effort to protect the Puebloans from attacks by raiders, mostly Apache. But the taking of Apaches as slaves led to the predictable retribution of Apaches attacking and burning yet more pueblos, usually those farthest from the military presences in and around Santa Fe.

Meanwhile, churches were being built at a breakneck pace, and Indians converted and baptized.

All across the colony of Nuevo Mexico, the Franciscans built churches directly on top of existing pueblos. Usually, the new mission obliterated the villagers' most important kivas, thus stamping the superiority of the Catholic over the kachina religion into the very architecture.

The overarching explanation of why so many Puebloans attended these churches and converted to Christianity lies in their gift for adaptability and secrecy. As a conquered people, the Puebloans quickly understood that even more than gold and silver the Spanish desired to save the souls of the thousands of unbelievers they had come among. To undergo conversion and baptism, nonetheless, was more than a simple matter of feigned acquiescence: the Puebloans also felt free to take what was useful from the new religion and meld it to the kachina faith.

Yet underneath the apparent acceptance of the cross and the Church, a profound malaise and resentment simmered for eight decades, a bitterness that the shaman Popé would tap in 1680. No symbol of the Christian faith was more potently laden with meaning for the Puebloans that the church bell, whose ringing every morning summoned children and adults alike to service. In the Pueblo Revolt, not every mission church would be destroyed, but virtually every bell would be.

Over several months in the spring of 2003, I visited the ruins of five such missionized pueblos. No more vivid diorama of life in seventeenth-century New Mexico exists today. The churches themselves, built of adobe and stone in the same style as the pueblo rooms, have weathered so handsomely that it is hard to see them as grandiose monuments to oppression. They tower as high as forty feet above the ground. Twentieth-century excavators devoted their efforts, for the most part, to the missions, leaving the surrounding roomblocks unexcavated. Today, the



Giusewa ruins, Jemez State Monument, New Mexico, 1925. Edward S. Curtis Collection.
 Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Negative No. 144676.

buildings in which the Puebloans lived sleep beneath vague earthen ridges covered with grass and cactus.

The fifth of the missionized pueblos I visited, called Giusewa, has by far the loveliest setting, tucked in a bend of the Jemez River beside State Highway 4, between forested 1,500-foot-tall slopes that soar toward mesa rims crowned with Ponderosa pine. Giusewa is a diminutive pueblo; there is no room in the small basin formed by a tributary creek joining the Jemez River for a village to grow to more than modest size. The ruined mission of San José de los Jémez is modest, too, and as beautiful as any in New Mexico. It also is a monument to oppression.

An original mission was founded at Jemez Pueblo around 1600 by Fray Alonzo de Lugo. Assigned to minister to the Jemez people, the friar faced an impossible task, for these tough, independent mountain dwellers were scattered among at least eleven different villages, some of them on distant mesa



Coat of Arms, Don Juan de Oñate. Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Negative No. 000959.

was buried in a corral on Inquisition grounds. Three months later Doña Teresa, who had made a vigorous and angry defense, was released.

It was another six and a half years before the inquisitors decided that there were no grounds to proceed against López, and he was reburied in consecrated ground in 1671. This trial and the later proceedings against Governor Peñalosa, who also fell afoul of the Franciscans, though for rather different reasons, had one interesting effect. The inquisitors became increasingly sour on the New Mexico situation. Within a few years they were warning the Franciscans to stop making every disagreement a matter for the Inquisition, something that was “giving rise to much prejudice and hatred against this [Holy Office] Tribunal.”

Nevertheless, the governors, though they continued to have their problems with the Franciscans, no longer dared to address the rights of Pueblo Indians. Meanwhile, struggling with Spanish-introduced disease and miserable economic conditions, Pueblo Indians continued a century-long decline. By the latter part of the seventeenth century, Pueblo Indian population

tops at altitudes above 7,500 feet. Fray Alonzo dutifully visited eight of these remote pueblos but chose the most convenient, down in the river valley, as the site for his mission. Then he set about attempting a standard Spanish ecclesiastical practice of the day, called the “reduction” of the natives. Fray Alonzo pleaded with the mesa-top dwellers to give up their villages and congregate at Giusewa. Met with stony refusal, the friar gave up and left in 1601. A succession of later priests likewise failed to reduce the Jemez.

...

Exacerbating the already strained relations between church and state in New Mexico, its fourth governor, Juan de Eulate, who came into office in 1618, called a halt to the building of a number of churches on the grounds that the demands on Puebloan labor required to do the building were inhumane. Eulate also encouraged the Puebloans to venerate the “idols” and perform the dances that the friars had done all they could to extinguish.

The governor, however, was no benevolent champion of the Indians. It was a personal antipathy for the Franciscans that motivated his seemingly tolerant reforms. Later Eulate would face the charges in Mexico City for having waged slave-taking forays against even peaceful nomadic bands. He was also taxed with having seized Puebloan orphans and selling them on the market in Mexico.

At El Morro, I had puzzled out a long inscription that, although its author is not named is attributed to Eulate on the basis of its date. In this windy boast, the governor congratulates himself for having pacified the Zuni pueblos and sworn their inhabitants to vassalage—“all of which he did,” claims Eulate, referring to himself in the third person, “with clemency and zeal and prudence, as a most Christian and great gentleman, a most extraordinary and gallant soldier of imperishable and praised memory.” Some skeptical passerby later saw fit to scratch out the epithet “great gentleman” (“gran Caballero”), whose characters can just be discerned in the grazing light of a summer sunset.

In 1626, the Holy Office of the Inquisition was formally introduced to New Mexico. The idea of the Inquisition had been born in A.D. 1231, when Pope Gregory IX had estab-

lished the office to bring to trial and execution such heretics as the ascetic Cathars, who roamed across Languedoc in southwest France. In New Mexico, at first, the Inquisition was used not so much against Puebloans as against settlers. Among the scores of accusations brought against Spaniards were matters that ranged from grave to ludicrous. The overall impact of the Inquisition, however, was to give ambitious Franciscans yet another weapon in their struggle to seize power from the colony's governors.

No Franciscan was more ambitious than Fray Alonso de Benavides, who arrived in New Mexico as the new custodian in 1625, and who became the commissary of the Inquisition the following year. Benavides's great dream was to elevate the province to the dignity of a diocese, with himself as the first bishop.

To that end Benavides wrote two versions, in 1630 and 1634, of a work usually called simply the *Memorial*, though the actual title of the first volume tellingly translates as *A Harvest of Reluctant Souls*. Scholars have been grateful to Benavides ever since, because Benavides's *Memorial* represents the first ethnography of the colony, however crude and limited by Catholic preconceptions. There are chapters on a number of the most important pueblos, as well as an attempt to identify and characterize some of the more shadowy nomadic tribes on the outskirts. Like many another friar, Benavides misjudged the Puebloans' apparent willingness to be converted. In a chapter called "How Well They Take to Christian Practices," he wrote, "All these people make their confessions in their own tongues. They ready themselves for confessions by studying their own sins, bringing them along recorded on a series of knotted strings..."

The potent foreshadowing of 1680 embodied in those knotted strings, Benavides would not live to appreciate. It did not take long, however, for the custodian to receive vivid evidence of the hatred of the brown-robed men of God that lurked under the surface of the charade of Puebloan piety. At Zuni, in 1630 or 1632, the resident priest was murdered, as was another friar who had left Zuni to travel to the Mexican state of Sonora.

A few years later, priests at Taos and Jemez were also murdered by the Puebloans, and the miracle-working fray Francisco de Porras was poisoned at Hopi.

Under the governorship of Luis de Rosas, relations between church and state were strained almost to the breaking point. Rosas's innovation was to install the Indians in workshops of his creation, the goods they turned out to be sold for the governor's personal profit. The friars were outraged, ostensibly because Rosas was exploiting Indian labor, but also because the workshops denied these men of God the kinds of help from Indian "servants" they had grown to take for granted. Rosas also conducted the most ambitious slave-raiding expeditions against the Apaches yet attempted in New Mexico.

When in the middle of Rosas's reign, a terrible smallpox epidemic swept through the pueblos and at least 3,000 Indians died, a movement to revive the kachina religion also swept the Pueblo world. This provoked a predictable counteraction and some priests once scripted to play the role of saviors and protectors proved themselves apt disciples of the Grand Inquisitor Tomás de Torquemada. At Hopi, Fray Salvador de Guerra brutally flogged a Puebloan for "worshiping idols" until "he was bathed in blood," then poured hot turpentine on his wounds. At Taos, Fray Nicolas Hidalgo is reported to have "punished his insolent children by castration and acts of sodomy." At their most extreme, some of the punishments carried out by friars against Puebloans bespeak a cruelty, guided by religious bigotry, whose horror still resonates more than three centuries later.

In the mid-1640s, as part of the backlash against the revival of the kachinas, Governor Fernando de Argüello Carvajal had forty Indians whipped and imprisoned for "sedition." No pueblo suffered more than Jemez. On the flimsiest of evidence, Argüello accused Jemez leaders of aiding the Apache and Navajo enemy, and summarily hanged twenty-nine of them.

After the 1640s, the dismal pageant of Spanish rule in New Mexico trudged toward an apocalypse that, however unforeseen by governor and custodian alike, must have seemed almost inevitable to the Pueblo leaders who conceived it. The nineteenth governor of the colony, Bernardo López de Mendizábal, who held office from 1659 to 1661, enacted what seems today an extraordinarily enlightened reform. He not only sharply curtailed the amount of forced labor the missionaries could demand from their Puebloan "servants," but he explicitly encouraged the resumption of kachina dances



Don Diego de Vargas, 1640–1710. Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Negative No. 011409.

was perhaps one-quarter what it had been at the beginning of the century. Exacerbating this situation was a drought, reaching famine proportions in the five-year period of 1667–72. Here, the Franciscans did their best, distributing surplus grain and donating meat from mission-owned flocks to Indians and Spaniards alike. But the famine years brought other problems, for example, an increasing intensity of attacks by nomadic Indians and demand on the Pueblos to supply soldiers to help fight off these attacks.

Forced underground, the religious leaders of the Pueblos began to plot rebellion, and increasingly they won over the crucially important leaders of the warrior societies. It was the collaboration of these two influential groups, but with widespread approval among rank-and-file Pueblos, that led in a few years to the fury of the Pueblo Revolt. And the primary targets of the revolt were the missionaries themselves.

Could López have prevented the revolt (or, as the modern Hopis call it, the liberation movement)? Given factors totally beyond any human control, like the famine years, perhaps not. Also, clearly, when the revolt came, it was cast in millenarian terms, somewhat like the Ghost Dance of the nineteenth century. The drought years, the population collapse, the religious repression all fed into the hands of religious leaders who increasingly talked of a society purified of the pollution brought by the Spaniards and their evil lifeways.

Still and all, after the “reconquest” by Diego de Vargas (1692–96), there was indeed a religious accommodation between the Franciscans and the Indians that was not so different from what López had proposed a half-century before. And in spite of the millenarian fervor, leaders and rank-and-file Pueblos alike, even during the revolt years, continued to utilize Spanish plants and animals and Spanish technology. Had the missionaries and settlers in New Mexico accepted López’s sensible economic reforms, and had the Franciscans been willing to turn a blind eye to Pueblo religious ceremonies, would the Pueblo leadership have been willing to compromise? After all, there were many problems that Spaniard and Indian might best have faced as allies. They *did* make these adjustments, with give and take on both sides, in the eighteenth century, so why not the seventeenth? If only they had, might they, together, have faced and overcome drought, disease and decline—even the differences between them? ■



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At the Pueblo Revolt Tricentennial commemoration in 1980, relay teams reenacted the 1860 run that heralded the start of the Pueblo Revolt. Palace of the Governors (MNM/DCA), Nancy Hunter Warren Collection.

and rituals. For his troubles, López was eventually arrested, imprisoned, and charged before the Inquisition.

If there were a single precipitating event for the Pueblo Revolt, it was the paranoid roundup of miscreants enacted by Governor Juan Francisco Treviño shortly after taking office in 1675. Judging that the Tewas were at the heart of the growing malcontent within the colony, Treviño ordered the arrest of forty-seven “sorcerers,” mostly from Tewa pueblos. One was hanged at Nambe, one at San Felipe, and another at Jemez, as an instructive lesson to the others. Another committed suicide by hanging. The other forty-three were brutally flogged and held as prisoners. One of them was Popé.

In response, the Tewas took an action that Puebloans had never before dared to attempt. They marched en masse to Santa Fe and demanded the release of the shamans. Caught off guard by this show of force, Treviño relented and released his prisoners, which only served to fuel the hopes of the rebellious Tewas. Popé, a shaman from San Juan Pueblo who was some forty-five years old at the time, returned to his home and began to brood on the vision that had been forming in his mind even before the flogging he had publicly endured. Distrusting some of the San Juan leaders, he moved to Taos. In the kiva, he beseeched the kachinas and gods. Meanwhile,

in secret meetings with shamans and war captains from other pueblos, he hatched the plan that would change New Mexico forever.

Popé’s plan was set in motion the very moment two Puebloans were handed the knotted cords and given their instructions: stop first at San Marcos Pueblo, and tell the San Marcoseños to untie one knot a day and when none remained, attack. It was a message to be carried from pueblo to pueblo.

On August 9, 1680, the slim young runners Catua and Omtua set out jogging from Tesuque Pueblo, headed south to San Marcos Pueblo and into destiny. ■



David Roberts is the author of twenty books on mountaineering, adventure, and the American Southwest. Among them are *On the Ridge Between Life and Death*, *Four Against the Arctic*, and *The Pueblo Revolt: The Secret Rebellion that Drove the Spaniards Out of the Southwest*, the source for this article. His essays and articles have appeared in *National Geographic*, *National Geographic Adventure*, *The Atlantic Monthly* and other publications. He lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Photograph by Matt Hale.