

#### 4. New Mexico's Indians Rebel Against Suppression of Their Native Religion, 1680: Four Accounts

##### *Alonso García to Fray Francisco de Ayeta*

The señor governor tells me to advise your reverence of the state in which he finds himself, which must certainly arouse great pity in every one, at seeing so many children and women on foot, naked, and dying of hunger, according to reports that have reached us, they not having been able to escape with even a shirt.

The señor governor informs me that all the rest are coming in the same plight. Let your reverence reflect upon the afflictions that the señor governor and all those of us who are present will have experienced. I am going out to meet the señor governor and to ascertain his lordship's decision, leaving all the families in this place, guarded by most of the men.

It is said that nothing remains of the temples and sacred vestments—that they have burned everything. From your reverence's report and from the necessary slowness of the señor governor, I judge that he will arrive here at about the same time as the wagons with the supplies. That which the señor governor urges me most strongly is to advise your reverence as quickly as possible, for the relief of such great suffering.

Meanwhile, may our Lord keep your reverence for the protection of so many poor people, who desire to see you with the spiritual increase which your reverence merits. In this place of Fray Cristóbal, to-day, September 4, 1680. Your reverence's humblest servant, who kisses your feet.

Alonso García

##### *Fray Antonio de Sierra to Fray Francisco de Ayeta*

... My escape from [La Isleta] was a divine dispensation, through circumstances which I will tell personally, or of which your reverence will learn from many persons. All the rest have perished. The Indians who have done the greatest harm are those who have been most favored by the religious and who are most intelligent. Many of them have already paid with their lives in the fighting in the villa, where the entire battery was, as well as a large number of Indians. The latter, terrified by the conflict, gave the Spaniards an opportunity to retire from the villa with small loss, although that of Sargento Mayor Andrés Gómez Parra and other soldiers was a great one. According to reports, few were wounded, among them the señor governor. . . .

##### *Statement of One of the Rebellious Christian Indians*

... Having been asked his name and of what place he is a native, his condition, and age, he said that his name is Don Pedro Nanboa, that he is a native of the pueblo of Alameda, a widower, and somewhat more than eighty years of age. Asked for what reason the Indians of this kingdom have rebelled, forsaking their obedience to his

Documents on the revolt of the Pueblo Indians, 1680. "Letter of the lieutenant general, Alonso García, to the Father Visitador," "Letter of Father Fray Antonio de Sierra to Father Visitador," "Statement of one of the rebellious Christian Indians," and "Statement of Pedro García." In Charles W. Hackett ed., *Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico and Otermin's Attempted Reconquest, 1680-1682* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1942), I, 56-62.

Majesty and failing in their obligation as Christians, he said that for a long time, because the Spaniards punished sorcerers and idolaters, the nations of the Teguas, Taos, Pecurías, Pecos, and Jemez had been plotting to rebel and kill the Spaniards and the religious, and that they had been planning constantly to carry it out, down to the present occasion. Asked what he learned, saw and heard in the juntas and parleys that the Indians have held, what they have plotted among themselves, and why the Indians have burned the church and profaned the images of the pueblo of Sandía, he said that he has not taken part in any junta, nor has he harmed any one; that what he has heard is that the Indians do not want religious or Spaniards. Because he is so old, he was in the cornfield when he learned from the Indian rebels who came from the sierra that they had killed the Spaniards of the jurisdiction and robbed all their haciendas, sacking their houses. Asked whether he knows about the Spaniards and religious who were gathered in the pueblo of La Isleta, he said that it is true that some days ago there assembled in the said pueblo of La Isleta the religious of Sandía, Jemez, and Zia, and that they set out to leave the kingdom with those of the said pueblo of La Isleta and the Spaniards—not one of whom remained—taking along their property. The Indians did not fight with them because all the men had gone with the other nations to fight at the villa and destroy the governor and captain-general and all the people who were with him. He declared that the resentment which all the Indians have in their hearts has been so strong, from the time this kingdom was discovered, because the religious and the Spaniards took away their idols and forbade their sorceries and idolatries; that they have inherited successively from their old men the things pertaining to their ancient customs; and that he has heard this resentment spoken of since he was of an age to understand. What he has said is the truth and what he knows, under the oath taken, and he signs and ratifies it, it being read and explained to him in his language through the interpretation of Captain Sebastián Montaña, who signed it with his lordship, as the said Indian does not know how, before me, the present secretary.

Antonio de Otermín

*Statement of Pedro García*

... [T]here appeared before his lordship an Indian named Pedro García, a sworn witness in these *autos*, and he stated under oath that he remembers distinctly that the captains of the Tagnos told him before the revolt that they had desired and discussed it in these parts for more than twelve years; that the said Indians wished to rebel because they resented it greatly that the religious and the Spaniards should deprive them of their idols, their dances, and their superstitions. . . .