**Chapter 6: The Great Missionary Period and Pueblo Revolt**

Priest Juan de Paz knew he had to act quickly. Wandering through New Mexico was a peddler named Bernardo Gruber. Gruber, it seemed, practiced witchcraft. That was a crime against the church, and Paz ordered Gruber arrested. Gruber was a German, but he traveled through northern New Spain selling his goods. Part of what he sold got him into trouble. The German sold little pieces of paper. He claimed these had special powers. Anyone who chewed one could not be harmed for a whole day. To the priests, claims of such powers made Gruber a witch.

Gruber spent 27 months in jail. But in June 1670 he escaped with an Apache servant, five horses, and a gun. In a cloud of dust they vanished into the southern New Mexico desert. In July word of Gruber reached Santa Fe. Travelers in the desert had found his horse tied to a tree. Nearby were bones and what looked like the German's hair and clothes. It appeared the Apache had killed him for the horses and gun. Since then this stretch of desert has been called the "Journey of the Dead Man."

The case of Bernardo Gruber showed the power of missionaries in New Mexico. New Mexico was a missionary field in which priests worked to spread Christianity. In this chapter you will learn about Spanish missions. You will also learn how the Pueblo Indians united to oppose Spanish rule. Indeed, they revolted and drove the Spaniards from New Mexico. As you read, you will find information divided into the following sections:

* **THE MISSION COMMUNITIES**
* **NEW MEXICO'S GOVERNMENT**
* **THE CRACKDOWN ON PUEBLO RELIGION**
* **THE PUEBLO REVOLT**

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**THE MISSION COMMUNITIES**

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**WORDS TO KNOW**

* **monogamy**
* **mission**

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**The great missionary period begins.** From 1610 to 1680 New Mexico's history had one theme. This was the story of Spanish efforts to Christianize the Indians. In a larger sense the Spaniards tried to change Indian culture They wanted it to be more like Spanish culture. They felt it their duty to make the Indians practice new ways of living.

Under Spanish law, the Indians were subjects of the king. They were regarded as citizens. Thus they lived under Spanish law. So they would have to work as the Spaniards said. They would have to dress as the Spaniards said. Indian males would have to wear shirts and pants. Females would have to wear blouses and skirts. They would have to practice **monogamy,** meaning marriage to one person. Also, they would have to marry in the Catholic Church. And, of course, the Indians would have to become Christians.

**The Spaniards set up missions.** The Indians' main contact with Spanish culture came through the **mission.** The mission was a community of Indians who were supposed to obey the mission priest. They were to follow his instructions in matters of religion and day-to-day living. Because the Pueblo Indians already lived in towns, the missions grew up at the pueblos.

Usually a mission priest would move to a pueblo. He wished to make the Indians in the pueblo turn their attention toward him. He began his work by preaching the Catholic faith. He baptized those children who were brought to him. These children and their families became the heart of the mission's congregation.

Once he had made some converts to Christianity, the mission priest oversaw the building of a church. In time, permanent churches appeared at each mission. So, too, each mission had living quarters for the priest and his helpers.

**New Mexico's mission communities are unique.** The New Mexico mission community differed from most other Spanish missions in North America. Elsewhere, the church was at the center of the mission community. But at most New Mexico pueblos the church and the priest's living quarters were at one side. The pueblos were already compact living units. There was simply no place at the center of the pueblo for a large church.

So, the priests looked for sites nearby. They needed space for both a church and a cemetery. They needed room for their animals and gardens. As a result, the priests chose sites for their churches carefully. Once built the large mission buildings dominated most pueblos. And over time the priests gained control of the pueblos.

The mission priests were Franciscans. New Mexico was one of the Franciscan missionary fields. With each priest lived Indian helpers. Sometimes Spanish soldiers lived there also. From their mission churches, the priests worked to control the lives of the Indians.

**The Franciscans teach religion.** The first duty of the priests was to teach religion. In some pueblos priests began small schools. The priests began with a few converts. From there they expanded their work. In time, the mission priests set up a religious routine for the pueblo. They led regular prayer sessions. They oversaw the teaching of the basic beliefs. They held mass on Sunday. They also used visual images to show the Indians basic Christian beliefs.

The Indians saw images of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. The priests then asked them to do Christian paintings on the walls of the church. The priests asked them to put on religious plays. Selected Indians served in church choirs. In missions that had organs, the priests taught church music. In these ways the Indians learned about the Catholic faith.

**The Franciscans oversee Indian labor.** Besides teaching religion, the mission priest oversaw other parts of Pueblo life. He selected one or more Indians to take care of the church.

He appointed other Indians to make sure the people came to mass. Some Indians looked after Spanish crops and livestock. Others learned to use new tools. Some became skilled blacksmiths and carpenters. Indians were also assigned to weave cloth, cook, and serve the Spaniards.

The Pueblo Indians also built the churches. These churches took many adobe bricks made in the Spanish manner. Spanish adobes were molded and big. They measured 10 inches wide, 18 inches long, and 5 inches thick. Each adobe weighed 50 to 60 pounds. With these adobes the Indians built high walls. On top of these walls they laid huge beams called vigas. The vigas supported the roof. The roof was topped with adobes and a bell tower. These churches took a great deal of hard work. They often took years to build.

Other work required by priests must have seemed not only hard but also degrading. Many Indians were forced to work as servants. Still other work went against Pueblo Indian culture. The priests told Pueblo males to build walls. Wall building was a female task. The other Pueblo Indians made fun of those males who obeyed the priests. Those who refused were punished. The priests whipped some who broke the rules. The priests placed others who disobeyed in stocks. Made of wood, these stocks held the legs of the person being punished.

**The Pueblo Indians keep their own religion.** The Pueblo Indians accepted much of the new religion. They adjusted to the rituals. They adopted the saints. Yet, at the same time, the Pueblo Indians fully intended to keep their own religion. After all, Pueblo religion was a part of everything in the Pueblo Indians' lives. Had the Franciscans let the Pueblo Indians practice their religion, New Mexico's history might have been different. But the Franciscans did not.

What the Franciscans did, in effect, was to outlaw Pueblo religion. They outlawed kachinas. They outlawed religious dancing and singing. Indeed, they outlawed all Pueblo religious rites. The Franciscans saw the Pueblo religion as devil worship.

In their attack on Pueblo religion, the priests destroyed Pueblo religious objects. They smashed kachina masks, costumes, and prayer sticks. They destroyed the kivas. They punished Pueblo religious leaders. The Franciscans tried hard to wipe out Pueblo religion. Instead, they succeeded only in driving Pueblo religion into hiding.

***SECTION REVIEW***

1. What was a mission, and where did the priests live in the pueblos?

2. How were the mission churches built?

3. How were Indians who refused to obey the priests punished?

4. How did the Franciscans deal with Pueblo religion?

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**NEW MEXICO'S GOVERNMENT**

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WORDS TO KNOW

* custodio
* república
* alcalde mayor
* encomienda
* cabildo
* tribute

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**Church government grows up in New Mexico.** From 1610 to 1680, then, the great mission work in New Mexico went on. A total of 250 Franciscans served in New Mexico. They began their work among the northern Rio Grande pueblos. In time, their mission field included the Zunis and, in present-day Arizona, the Hopis.

New Mexico needed someone to oversee the work of the mission priests. It also needed someone to oversee the Spanish settlers. As a result, two types of government grew up in New Mexico. One was religious government. The religious manager was the ***custodio.***The *custodio* ("custodian") was in charge of all church matters. His office was at Santo Domingo.

The other type of government was civil government. It oversaw the day-to-day managing of New Mexico as a royal colony. The civil manager was the royal governor. He, of course, had his office in Santa Fe.

**Civil government grows up in New Mexico.** The king or viceroy appointed the royal governor. The governor was in charge of governing New Mexico's Spanish settlers. He was also in charge of New Mexico's defense. Because of the distance of Santa Fe from Mexico City, a strong governor could become powerful. Under the governor served other officials. One was the lieutenant governor. After 1660 he served in the region south of Santa Fe.

At the local level ***alcaldes mayores***kept the peace. These local officials acted as judges. They settled minor disputes among Spaniards. They also handled problems that arose between the settlers and the Indians.

There were other governmental bodies in Spanish New Mexico. Two such bodies deserve special mention. One was the ***cabildo,***which was a town council. Since it was the only town, Santa Fe had the *cabildo.* The people of Santa Fe elected four men to serve in the *cabildo.* The *cabildo* advised the governor about matters that concerned the people.

The second body was the ***república.***It was the only body under Spanish rule in which the citizens could take part in politics. The *república* had come to New Mexico with Oñate. Having found that pueblos had no one leader, Oñate had set up a *república* in each pueblo. He had allowed the people of each pueblo to elect their own governor and some other officials. Once picked, each pueblo governor received a cane of office from Spanish officials. (See Special Interest Feature.)

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**THE PUEBLO GOVERNOR'S CANES**

During the 1600s a practice began that continues to this day. The person who served as governor of each pueblo had a cane. This cane showed that person's authority to serve as governor. Under Spanish rule each pueblo governor received a cane from the Spanish government. The Spanish cane had a metal top. In this metal was carved the Spanish cross.

In time, New Mexico became a territory first of Mexico and then of the United States. Under Mexican rule the pueblo governors received new canes. The Mexican government wanted the office of pueblo governor to continue as it had under Spanish rule. The Mexican canes were topped with silver. Now, pueblo governors had two canes to show their authority.

A third cane was the gift of President Abraham Lincoln. At that time New Mexico had been a territory of the United States for more than 10 years. This new cane was ebony black. Its top, made of silver, bore the president's name, "A. Lincoln."

Today pueblo governors still use their canes of office to show their authority. They bring their canes to public events. Most pueblo governors, however, have only two of the three canes. They have kept the Spanish and Lincoln canes. It seems the Mexican canes were either given to lieutenant governors or were simply lost.

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**Conflict develops between church and state.** As a royal colony, then, New Mexico had two kinds of government. One was religious. The other was civil. The two had separate areas of concern. They really had little to do with each other. And yet the two disagreed. They disagreed over who would control the Indians. It grew into a struggle for power. The sticky problem was whether religious leaders or civil leaders would control New Mexico.

To learn more about this conflict, we need to look more closely at the Indians within Spanish New Mexico. Pueblo Indians at that time lived under the control of mission priests. They had to obey the mission priests. At the same time, Indians were subjects of the king. As such, the Indians were expected to do two things for their Spanish ruler.

These two things were part of the ***encomienda***system. Under this system leading settlers were given some Indians to oversee. In return these settlers served the Spanish rulers. The Spanish rulers used the *encomienda* system to defend New Mexico. The persons granted *encomiendas* became part-time soldiers. In return for military service, they collected **tribute** from the Indians rather than pay from the king. Tribute, then, was a tax to help pay for defense.

Indians in the Rio Grande Valley paid tribute after being under Spanish rule for 10 years. In time, tribute became a yearly payment of one bushel of corn and a blanket from each family. During good years the Indians could pay this tax. In bad years the tax was a hardship.

Also, under the *encomienda* system Spaniards expected to use Indian labor. Persons granted *encomiendas* could make Indians work for them on Spanish-owned land. Under the law Spaniards were to pay for this labor. The labor was to be for a limited time. The Indians were to be treated well. Priests did not like this labor, however. They complained time and again that the Spaniards did not pay the Indians or asked them to work too long.

**Conflict weakens Spanish control over the Indians.** The Franciscans at first accepted the *encomienda* system. They had to. It provided defense. In time, though, arguments over tribute and labor boiled over into conflict. This conflict began with the first royal governor, Pedro de Peralta.

In 1613 New Mexico was threatened with civil war. As Peralta saw it, it was his job to govern New Mexico. However, the leader of the priests, Fray Isidro Ordonez, felt he should control New Mexico. After all, New Mexico was primarily a missionary field. So, the priest hindered Peralta's work. He stopped the governor from collecting tribute (taxes) from the pueblos.

He told the governor to stop using Indian workers. Peralta needed these workers to help build the new capital at Santa Fe. Then one Sunday the governor found his usual chair tossed into the dirt outside the Santa Fe church. The message was clear. The governor was not welcome in church. He picked up the chair and went to church anyway.

But the governor had had enough. He ordered Fray Isidro to leave Santa Fe. The priest refused. In the scuffle that followed, Peralta's pistol fired. The priest was unhurt, but two bystanders were injured. At this point Fray Isidro fled the capital. Peralta then left for Mexico City. He would take his case to the viceroy and get rid of the priest. He never made it, however. Fray Isidro arrested the governor at Isleta and jailed him in chains. For a year the priest would be the real ruler of New Mexico. When a new governor arrived, Peralta left for Mexico City. On the way south, friends of Fray Isidro caught up with him at Perrillo Spring. There they robbed the former governor.

This was just the first of many arguments between governors and the priests. And the conflict between church and state officials was not good for the peaceful rule of New Mexico. It confused the Indians. How could the Indians believe their priest when the royal governor called him a liar? This happened during the late 1630s. The church and state conflict led the Pueblo Indians to believe that Spanish power was weak. This, in time, helped break down Spanish control over New Mexico's Indian population.

***SECTION REVIEW***

1. Describe church government in New Mexico in the early 1600s.

2. Describe civil government in New Mexico in the early 1600s.

3. What was the purpose of the *encomienda* system and tribute?

4. Why did church officials and state officials fight with each other?

5. What was the result of the conflict between church and state?

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**THE CRACKDOWN ON PUEBLO RELIGION**

**Indians suffer hard times.** Life in New Mexico during the 1600s was hard. No group of people had an easy time. Still, the Indians had perhaps the hardest time. One problem was disease. The Pueblo peoples were not immune to the diseases brought by priests and new settlers. Smallpox, measles, whooping cough, and other diseases took an awful toll. In 1640 alone some 3,000 Pueblo Indians died from smallpox. This was more than 10 percent of the total Pueblo population. Disease struck again in the 1660s, just when New Mexicans faced other problems.

One problem was a change in the weather. After 1650 New Mexico became much drier. Drought killed the crops in the fields. The Indians faced starvation for several years. A report written in 1669 claimed over 450 Indians died of hunger at Las Humanas Pueblo alone. At the same time, Apaches and Navajos raided the pueblos. They came looking for food and livestock. In these raids they killed hundreds of Pueblo Indians. They carried off others as captives.

As time passed, conditions grew worse and worse. Drought and poor crops lasted from 1667 to 1672. Starvation among the Indians became commonplace. In the 1670s Indians abandoned entire pueblos like the one at Humanas. Today, Salinas National Monument reminds us that there once was a Humanas Pueblo.

**Spaniards also suffer.** Indian raids also killed Spanish settlers. In response Spanish governors sent troops to punish the Apaches and Navajos. Sometimes these expeditions destroyed the Indians' crops. However, this just made things worse. With their crops gone, the Apaches and Navajos stepped up their raids for food in New Mexico. The governors could only appeal to the viceroy for more soldiers.

Hunger also hit the settlers. Drought killed the grasses needed by the livestock. The Spaniards' crops also failed. Corn and wheat were in short supply. For two years Spanish men and women turned for food to the cowhides they sat on at home. These they roasted and ate. And, like the Indians, Spanish settlers suffered from outbreaks of disease. Studies of Spanish death records have revealed deadly outbreaks of disease every few years. These outbreaks hit younger Spanish settlers the hardest.

**The Pueblos think of unity.** To deal with the problems of drought and disease, some Pueblo Indians turned to their old religion. But under the watchful eyes of the Franciscans, they could not even perform their religion's rain dances. At first, they made few efforts to regain control of their own lives. To act effectively, the Pueblo Indians would have to unite. They would have to find a way to work together.

Unity would not come easily. After all, each pueblo had long remained independent of the other pueblos. And yet the pueblos finally did unite. They united at last because Spaniards renewed their efforts to destroy the Pueblo Indian religion.

**Spaniards attack Pueblo religion.** The new attacks on Pueblo religion came in the 1670s. In meeting the problems of hunger and Indian raids, leaders of church and state put aside their old quarrels. This meant the priests could focus their attention on religion and on the pueblos. It also meant that the priests could rely on civil officials to back them up.

The priests were determined that the Pueblo peoples would practice only the Catholic faith. To enforce their religion, they did whatever they thought was needed. In 1675, for example, the priests asked the royal governor to arrest some Pueblo Indian religious leaders. To the Spaniards, of course, these men were devil worshippers.

The royal governor did what was asked of him. He sent soldiers into the pueblos. There they arrested 47 Pueblo medicine men. The soldiers then took the captives to Santa Fe. There, Spaniards dealt harshly with the medicine men. They hanged three. (One Indian hanged himself.) They then whipped and jailed the rest.

**Indians plan the Pueblo Revolt.** After punishing the Pueblo medicine men, the soldiers rode off to fight the Apaches. With the soldiers gone, some Indians from the northern pueblos acted boldly. They came into Santa Fe. They demanded the release of their religious leaders. With no soldiers to help him, the governor gave in. He released the captives. Among those released was a young San Juan Pueblo man named Popé.

Over the next five years, Pueblo peoples would think about what they had learned. United they could likely defeat the Spaniards. United they could likely drive these newcomers out of New Mexico. But united action against the Spaniards would take careful planning. It would take secrecy. And it would take leadership.

Popé, who moved to Taos after being freed from prison, became one of the leaders. There were other leaders as well. Together they planned a Pueblo war against the Spaniards.

**Spaniards learn of the plans.** The day chosen for the start of this war was August 11, 1680. To let each pueblo know the date, runners carried knotted yucca cords among the pueblos. Each day one of the knots would be untied. The number of knots left would tell how many days remained until the start of the fighting. Secrecy was critical. Popé even killed his own son-in-law when he began to doubt the young man's loyalty to the Indian cause.

Pueblo people as far south as Isleta got the message. So, too, in time did the Spaniards. Some settlers learned about the plans for the revolt on August 9. However, they got the date wrong. Whatever the date was to have been, it came too soon for the settlers. The Pueblo Indians attacked before they could find the means to defend themselves.

***SECTION REVIEW***

1. What problems did the Pueblo Indians and Spaniards face in the 1660s?

2. What did Pueblo Indians decide they would have to do to gain control of their lives?

3. How did the Spaniards deal with the Pueblo religious leaders in 1675?

4. How did the leaders of the revolt let the pueblos know when the revolt was to begin?

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**THE PUEBLO REVOLT**

**The revolt begins.** Knowing that the Spaniards had learned of their plans, the Pueblo Indians began their attack before August 11, 1680. One Spaniard was killed on August 9. The full fury of the revolt then began to be felt on August 10. Everywhere the Indians attacked the story was the same.

The Tesuque people quickly killed 30 Spanish settlers. Indians from Taos killed about 70 Spaniards, including settlers and mission priests in Taos Valley. Whole families died at the hands of the Indians. At one household alone the death toll was 38. Where they could settlers sought safety in numbers. Settlers from Galisteo Valley and some from north of Tesuque Pueblo fled to Santa Fe.

Settlers who lived in the area of the Rio Arriba suffered the greatest losses. The Rio Arriba was the area "up the river" from Santa Fe. There were other settlers who lived south of the lava cliff named La Bajada, meaning "the descent." These people lived in the area of the Rio Abajo. They lived "down the river" from Santa Fe.

The Rio Abajo settlers also suffered loss of life and property. But the survivors from the Rio Abajo found a way out of the fighting. More than 1,000 refugees gathered at Isleta, a pueblo that had not joined the revolt. They remained at Isleta for a time. Then, they left, heading for El Paso. Their leader was Alonso García, the lieutenant governor of New Mexico.

**The Spaniards leave Santa Fe.** In the meantime, fighting in the north centered around Santa Fe. Santa Fe in 1680 was the only real Spanish town in New Mexico. By August 15 the Indians had the town surrounded, but the Spaniards did not give up. Under the leadership of Governor Antonio de Otermín, they fought hard. Some of the Spaniards went out from the town several times. They went out to fight. They went out to get water once the Indians cut off the town's water supply.

Each time the Spaniards ventured forth, they defeated the Indians. Still, the Spanish position seemed hopeless. The news about settlers leaving the Rio Abajo was bad. It meant there was no hope of getting new supplies or soldiers from the south.

So on August 22, Governor Otermín decided to give up Santa Fe. The Spaniards left Santa Fe and headed south. Their march down the Rio Grande was slow. All along the way the Spaniards saw the results of the uprising. Farms or missions lay destroyed or abandoned. The bodies of those who did not escape lay nearby.

**The Spaniards move to El Paso.** Otermín and García united their parties south of Socorro. Together they traveled on to El Paso. There the New Mexicans settled and built new homes. Governor Otermín now awaited orders on what to do next. The question facing the Spaniards was simple. Should they try to reconquer New Mexico or not?

The Pueblo Revolt had taken a large toll on the Spaniards. In 1680 about 2,900 settlers lived in New Mexico. About 400 of these had lost their lives in the uprising. Twenty-one out of 33 mission priests had been killed. Some 380 settlers had also died. In some cases whole families had perished.

**Otermín revisits the pueblos.** In 1681 Otermín received his orders. He was to return to New Mexico. In the party that headed northward were 146 soldiers. Many of the pueblos Otermín visited were abandoned. The Spaniards, then, could do little except bum kivas. They destroyed whatever else the Indians had left behind.

At Zia Pueblo the Indians put up a fight but were easily defeated. Otermín's party then moved southward to Isleta, a pueblo where some Indians remained loyal to Spanish rule. There he gathered some 385 friendly Indians. He then took them with him when he returned to El Paso

Among these Indian refugees were the Piros, who had also remained loyal to Spanish rule. The refugees never returned to their former homes in New Mexico. Instead, they began new lives for themselves near El Paso. One of their four new settlements was named Isleta del Sur, meaning "Isleta of the South."

Otermín did not reconquer New Mexico. Two other expeditions in the 1680s also met Indian opposition. The reconquest of New Mexico would have to await some other day.

**Popé outlaws Spanish ways of living.** With the Spaniards gone, Popé tried to erase all traces of Spanish rule. He outlawed the speaking of Spanish. He ordered the Indians not to plant Spanish crops. Only the old crops could be grown. Churches were burned, and kivas reopened. To undo Christian baptism, Popé ordered all Indians to bathe themselves with soap made from yucca root. Anyone acting in a Spanish manner would be punished. Popé's orders, however, were not always obeyed. Many Indians wanted to keep their new crops.

The Pueblo unity of 1680 did not last long either. Each pueblo once again became a separate unit. Often old quarrels flared up, and the Pueblos went to war among themselves. Apache and Navajo raids on the pueblos increased, and they became worse. The raiders struck quickly, now riding the Spaniards' horses left behind in New Mexico. The people at Galisteo Pueblo had to abandon their homes because of the raids. Meanwhile, the drought continued. So, according to Indian tradition, a small group of Pueblo men went to El Paso in 1692. There they asked the Spaniards to return to New Mexico.

***SECTION REVIEW***

1. How did the settlers from the Rio Abajo get away from the fighting?

2. At what point did Governor Otermín and the people from the Rio Arriba abandon Santa Fe?

3. Where did Spanish New Mexicans settle after the revolt? 4- What did Popé do to erase the traces of Spanish rule?

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**Chapter Review Words You Should Know**

Find each word in your reading and explain its meaning.

1. monogamy

2. mission

3. custodio

4. alcalde mayor

*5. cabildo*

*6. república*

*7. encomienda*

8. tribute

**Places You Should Be Able to Locate**

Be able to locate these places on the maps in your book.

Taos Pueblo

Rio Arriba

Rio Abajo

Santa Fe

**Facts You Should Remember**

Answer the following questions by recalling information presented in this chapter.

1. Give a brief description of the mission system in New Mexico as set up and controlled by the Franciscans.

2. Why was the conflict between church and state bad for Spanish rule in New Mexico?

3. What led to the Pueblo Revolt of 1680?

4- What happened to Spanish and Indian New Mexicans after 1680?

5. Who are the following people, and why are they important?

a. Popé

b. Alonso García

c. Antonio de Otermín