

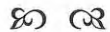
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Journey of Oñate
to California by Land

by Gerónimo Zárate-Salmeron

DOCUMENT NO. AJ-015



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The Spaniards set out from here, and Chief Otata came forth to the road to receive them, with a great following and a tumult of ceremonies, as is their custom, flinging their bows and arrows to earth. He gave the governor a string of white beads which he wore on his neck, and the Father Commissary another, which among them is a great gift. These he had sent to the island of Zifogova to purchase with some cotton *mantas*, which on going the governor had given him for that purpose. It is plainly to be seen that the island is near since he had gone and returned in so short a time. They again examined them about everything and in nothing did they contradict themselves.

57. They told of many prodigies of nature which God has created between the Buena Esperanza River and the sea, and which have caused incredulity in the hearers. When we see them we will affirm them under oath; but in the meantime I refrain from mentioning them, and pass them by in silence. And to put an end to this journey, I will say that after having endured much hardship and hunger (even coming to eat their horses) which, lest I be too long, I do not recount, they reached the villa of San Gabriel on their return, all sound and well, and not a man missing, on the 25th of April of the year 1605. There they rested, and were as well received as they had been anxiously awaited.

45. In the province of Zúñi are deposits of silver of so fine a blue that they use it for paint and carry it to sell to the settlements of New Mexico. I brought some stones to show, and the painters told me it was the best blue in the world, and that in this city¹ each pound of it was worth twelve *pesos*, and that there was not a pound to be had. Likewise the green of New Mexico, in particular that of Homex,² is extremely fine in the leaf; and of these two sorts whole cargoes could be gathered to bring here.

46. They set out from Mooqui and at ten leagues toward the west they arrived at the Colorado River.³ They called it thus because the water is nearly red; the river runs from southeast to northwest, afterwards turning to the west, and they say it enters California. From here to where it empties into the sea there are more than a hundred leagues of pine forests. From this river they travelled toward the west, crossing a mountain range of pine forest which was eight leagues across, on whose southern slope runs the San Antonio River, seventeen leagues distant from San Jose,⁴ which is the Colorado; it runs from north to south through rough mountains and very high cliffs. It carries little water, but has many good fish. From this river forward the land has a temperate climate. Five leagues farther on toward the west is the Sacramento River.⁵ It has as much water as the San Antonio, and as many and as good fish. It rises eleven leagues towards the west, and runs from northwest to southeast, along the skirts of some very high mountains where the Spaniards took out very good ores;⁶ and there are many mineral deposits. Until they arrived at this place the Spaniards had not found anything that satisfied them. The place is very well suited for the dwelling of the Spaniards; it is a place where reduction

¹ The City of Mexico.

² Xémez.

³ The Little Colorado; the Río de la Alameda of Farfán. Farfán gave the distance, perhaps from a different pueblo, as nine leagues.

⁴ Farfán gave the distance from the Little Colorado to the Agua del Valle as thirteen and one-half leagues. It is probable that the San Antonio River is the same. From the course described, it is clearly the western branch of the Rio Verde.

⁵ Farfán reached "a very good river" at six leagues from the Agua del Valle.

⁶ From this it is inferred that prospecting was done in a region farther east than that in which Farfán did most of his.

works can be erected; there are good lands for crops, beautiful fields and pasture for stock, and plentiful water. In this mountain range the Cruzados Indians¹ have their homes. They live in scattered dwellings,² the houses being of straw; they plant no crops; they live on the game which they kill, deer and mountain sheep, of which there are many. With the skins both the men and women cover their loins; all go shod, little and big. They also use for food *mescali*, which is a preserve of the root of maguey.

47. They call these Indians Cruzados on account of some crosses which all, little and big, suspend from the lock of hair that falls over the forehead; and this they do when they see the Spaniards. The origin of this custom was not known at that time; subsequently it has been learned that many years ago there travelled through that land a religious of my father San Francisco who told them that if at any time they should see men bearded and white, in order that they might not molest or injure them they should put on those crosses, which is a thing esteemed by them. They remembered it so well that they have not forgotten it. The men are well-featured and noble; the women are handsome, with beautiful eyes, and they are affectionate.³ These Indians said that the sea was distant from there twenty days' journey, of those which they travel, which are calculated at about five leagues. It is to be noticed that none of these nations was caught in a lie. They also said that two days' journey from there was a river of little water,⁴ by which they went to another very large one⁵ which enters into the sea, and on whose banks there was a nation called Amacaya,⁶ and, a short distance beyond, many nations who plant and gather maize, beans, and gourds.

They left the Sacramento River, travelling between west and southwest fifteen leagues, finding at every step good watering-places. They arrived at the river of little water; it is

¹The Yavapai. See note to the Farfán documents, p. 242, above, note 2. Farfán encountered the Cruzados two leagues beyond the Agua del Valle. This confirms the conclusion that the latter was identical with the San Antonio River.

²"Son rancheros." A *ranch* usually meant a separate house; a *ranchería*, a group of houses. To say that they are ranchers conveys an entirely erroneous idea.

³The Yavapai women are still noted for their good looks.

⁴Bill Williams Fork.

⁵The Colorado.

⁶Mohave.

called San Andrés.¹ *From here the country has a hot climate. There were many *pitayas*² and different kinds of trees. They travelled along it twenty-four leagues, and arrived at the large river, which they sought because of the report which the Indians had given. It is called Buena Esperanza River,³ and at the sea it is called Tizon River. It carries as much water as the Duero, and is as quiet as the Guadalquivir. It runs from northwest to southeast and soon forms a narrow channel between high mountains which cross it; and after passing these narrows it flows from northwest [*sic*] to southwest, having on both sides very high mountains⁴ which run in the same direction, forming on the banks a wide river bottom.*⁵

48. The next day after having arrived, the adelantado sent Captain Gerónimo Márquez with four soldiers up the river to discover this nation of the Amacavas Indians. In a short time he brought two Indians, whom the adelantado regaled and sent to call the rest. They said that they would do it and that they would bring something to eat. On the day following, as the adelantado saw that the Indians were making loads, he ordered that twelve soldiers should prepare to go to the settlement for provisions; but before the soldiers went, there arrived more than forty Indians loaded with maize, beans, and gourds. Then arose an Indian who was called Curraca, which in their language means Lord, and made a long speech, giving to understand, as was supposed, that he was pleased to have seen the Spaniards and that he desired their friendship.

49. Here was heard the first news of the Lake of Copalla,⁶ whence they suppose the Mexicans set out who settled this New Spain. They described this lake and land and all its

¹ The main stream of Bill Williams Fork. The name San Andrés was given to one of the richest mines discovered by the Farfán party.

² *Pitahaya*, the *cereus giganteus*, whose fruit was much used as food by the tribes of the Southwest.

³ The Colorado River. It is about fifty miles from the junction of Big Sandy and Santa Maria rivers to the Colorado.

⁴ The Chocolate Mountains run parallel with the river, on both sides, for a long distance.

⁵ The lines between the * * are omitted from the translation in the *Land of Sunshine*. See vol. XII., p. 48.

⁶ The country sought by Ibarra in 1563 was called Copala.

banks as densely populated. An Indian said Copalla very plainly, and Captain Gerónimo Márquez told me that, hearing those Indians talk to a Mexican Indian, servant of a soldier, one of them asked, "Whence comes this man? Is he perhaps from Copalla? because those from there talk thus." And those Indians also said that those of that language wore bracelets of gold, on the wrists and on the fleshy part of the arms and in their ears, and that from there they were fourteen days' journey, of those which they travelled. They pointed to this language between west and northwest. The Indians also said that the Spaniards could travel by this river bottom all the way to the sea, and that it was ten days' journey, of those which they travel, and that it was all populated. This river can be navigated.

They set out from here and travelled five leagues without seeing Indians, because the mountain was very rough and the road narrow and steep; but beyond this narrow pass there is a wide river bottom, very thickly settled. Here as many Indians came out with food to receive the Spaniards as in the last *ranchería*. They are of the same nation. Being asked about the sea they said that down the river it was nine days' journey, but if they crossed the river it was only four. This river they kept on the north and they travelled toward the northwest. It did not seem proper to the *adelantado* to leave off following the river down stream, so he continued, travelling through its bottom lands, seeing always many Indians, asking all of them about the sea, which they now knew was called "acilla," and all answered pointing to the west, northwest, north, northeast, and east, saying that thus the sea curved, and was rather near, for they said that from the other side of the river it was only four days' journey, and that that Gulf of California is not closed,¹ but is an arm of the sea which corresponds to the North Sea and coast of Florida. All the Indians of this river are comely and good-featured; and the women are handsome, and whiter than those of New Spain, being people of whom the men go naked and the women² in skins, having the

¹ Father Zárate was writing at a time when it was generally believed that California was an island, which was not the case when Oñate made his journey. See the relation by Father Ascensión.

² *Ellos* for *ellas*.

loins covered. Always when these Indians travel they carry a lighted firebrand in the hand, for which I think it should be called Tizon River. Thus declared a soldier of this journey who had gone with Sebastian Vizcaino to California; he said that he went in search of the Tizon River, and I believe that had he reached it he would not have returned, as he did, for lack of food, because there is much here.

50. Having passed this nation of Amacabos, of which, as of the others, they saw only what was along the road, they arrived at the nation of Bahacechas.¹ The language is almost the same, they are friends, and they communicate with each other. The dwellings of all those of this river are low, of wood, and covered with earth. The chief of this nation is called Cohota. He came out with a great following to the road to receive the Spaniards and to beg them not to pass on that day, but to remain over night in his pueblo; and this was done to please him. This Indian and his people told of many things and secrets of the land. They asked them about the lake of Copalla and he said the same as has been told; and on showing them a gold toothpick, he put it to his wrist as if putting it around, giving to understand that the Indians of that lake wore bracelets of that material. The adelantado showed them a coral, and being asked where there was some of that, they pointed toward the south. They said that the Indians of the coast took them out of the sea, and that the sea when it is rough casts many ashore, and that the Indians dig in the sand and take it out to sell. This about the coral was said by all the Indians where they passed, and it was seen to be the truth, as much was found in the possession of the Indian women.

51. After having passed this place, and while resting in the pueblo of Captain Otata, of the same nation, they asked him and his people some questions and showed them some silver buttons; and they declared, in the presence of many soldiers, that near there, pointing toward the west, there was much of that substance, and that it was called *ñañe querro*. They showed them a silver spoon, and as soon as they saw it they said that the bowls and pots from which they ate were

¹ Bandelier thought this tribe to be either a branch of the Mohave or of the Huallapais. Arch. Inst. of Am. Papers, III. 110.

of the same substance, and they indicated that they were very big and deep. They rolled a plate of silver so that it would make a noise, giving to understand that the others sound the same when they fall on the ground, and that they do not break; and putting a silver plate on the fire with water in it they said that in the place they told about they boiled meat in those articles; but that the others, although they were of the same material, were large. And this performance was of their own accord, without anyone's suggesting it to them. And striking the plate several times with a knife and letting it fall upon it with violence, so that it would make more noise, they said that the others sounded the same, and that they were no farther than five days' journey from there, drawing on the ground the sea, and in the middle of it an island, which they call Ziñogaba, which is the name of the nation that inhabits it. To this island one goes by sea in canoes or boats, and since from the coast there it is only one day's sail, they set out in the morning and are there before sunset. They showed on the ground the size of the boat, drawing a line on the ground; he commenced to measure, and the boat was seventy feet long and twenty wide. On asking them if the boat carried a sail in the middle, the Indian took a stick and put it in the middle of the boat which he had drawn, with an Indian at the stern, making as if he managed the rudder. He then took a cloth and, stretching out his arms on the stick that he had set up, started to run as fast as he could, saying that thus the others ran through the water, and much faster. It is certain that if the Indians had not seen it they would not know how to draw it so perfectly. They said also that the inhabitants of that island all wear around the neck and in the ears pearl shells, which they call "xicullo." They also told of an instrument with which they make the sound when they dance. It is a long stick from which are pendant many pieces of that metal of which they make dishes from which they eat; and, making a great noise, they dance in pairs to the sound.

52. With all these reports, the adelantado did not wish to leave off going in search of a port, as it was so easy to see, with the advantage of guides, for they volunteered for that purpose. Having passed this nation of Bahacecha they ar-

rived at the nation of Ozaras¹ Indians, a difficult tongue; the Indians are ill-featured, less affable, and from them little satisfaction and less security can be had. These Indians are settled along a large river, although not of as much water as that of Buena Esperanza. It is called Nombre de Jesus River;² it runs between bare mountains, and flows into the Buena Esperanza from southeast to northwest, twenty leagues before reaching the sea. It was learned that all the river is inhabited by this nation, and that the people are numerous. They drew on the ground twenty rancherías or pueblos of this nation. They make *mantas* of cotton; the dress and hair are different from the rest; the hair is long and they wear it braided, and then covered with a cloth or deer skin. The river makes many basins³ in this meadow. Here they saw some good and sweet oak acorns, which the Indians said were from the other side of the river, and that there were many of them. On asking about the source of the Buena Esperanza River, the Indians said that it is near the sea, toward the northwest, and that from its source to where it enters the sea it is one hundred and sixty leagues, all populated, and that at its source range buffaloes and deer of the kind as big as horses, from which it is seen that it is good level country and well watered.

From this river of Nombre de Jesus to the sea it is very thickly settled with more people than had been seen hitherto; but the language is like that of Bahacecha,⁴ and if it is not the same, they differ very little. The dress, the manner of living, and the houses are the same, and they are well-featured and comely. All came out to receive the Spaniards, and offered them their food. Among these Indians were found many white pearl-shells and other shells, very large and shining, which they make into squares⁵ and drills, which are very sightly. These Indians said that on the coast toward the west there were many of those shells, and they indicated that the sea ran behind a very large mountain, on the skirts of which the Buena Esperanza River enters the sea. From these Indians they again informed themselves anew of all the things

¹ Supposed by Bandelier to be the Maricopa. Arch. Inst. of Am. Papers, III. 110.

² "Name of Jesus"; the Gila.

³ *Orteros*.

⁴ The Yuman.

⁵ Translation uncertain.

that Captain Otata had told of,¹ and they did not differ in anything. And showing them a pearl, they gave it a name and said there were many and very large. And one Indian, coming up to the Father Commissary and taking a rosary of large beads that he wore on his neck, said that there were pearls as large and thick as the beads of that rosary; and in regard to the island of Ziñogaba, they said that the mistress or chieftainess of it was a giantess, and that she was called Ciñacacohola, which means chieftainess or mistress. They pictured her as the height of a man-and-a-half of those of the coast, and like them very corpulent, very broad, and with big feet; and that she was old, and that she had a sister, also a giantess, and that there was no man of her kind, and that she did not mingle with anyone of the island. The mystery of her reigning on that island could not be solved, whether it was by inheritance, or tyranny by force of arms. And they said that all on the island were bald, having no hair on the head.

53. The first nation after passing the Nombre de Jesus River is the Halchedoma.² There are eight pueblos: the first has one hundred and sixty houses, and was judged to have about two thousand persons. I have already said that they saw only what lay along the road. Next is the nation of Cohuana.³ There are nine pueblos. A great many of these went along with the Spaniards. There must have been more than six hundred men and women. They camped for the night with the Spaniards. Next is the nation Haglli.⁴ There are one hundred pueblos. Next the Tlalliquamallas,⁵ six pueblos. Here more than two thousand persons assembled when they brought the maize. Next the Cocapas;⁶ there are nine pueblos. This is the last nation seen, and they reached to the last place where one can drink fresh water, which is five leagues from the sea, because the salt comes up

¹ *Hecho* for *dicho*.

² Alchedoma, a Yuman tribe. See Hodge, *Handbook*, I. 36.

³ Bandelier identified this tribe with the Yuma proper or Cuchan. Arch. Inst. of Am. *Papers*, III. 110. See also Hodge, *Handbook*, I. 520, II. 1046.

⁴ Regarded as part of the Halliquamayas, or Quigyumas (Hodge, *Handbook*, I. 520; Bandelier, Arch. Inst. Am. *Papers*, III. 110).

⁵ Halliquamaya, or Quigyuma (Hodge, *Handbook*, II. 340, 1059).

⁶ Still so called. See Hodge, *Handbook*, I. 319. They are noted for the great size of the men.

stream that far. In the space between the Nombre de Jesus River and the arrival at the sea they saw more than twenty thousand persons on that side of the river alone. They said that on the other side they were innumerable, but only the smokes were seen. The Indians said that they did not cross to the other side because the others were their enemies, although of the same nation, and that they came and killed them and did great harm to them, by which it can be seen that the others are numerous.

They arrived on San Ildefonso's day¹ at the last stopping place, nearest to the sea, and the last where water can be drunk. Then, the day of the conversion of San Pablo,² having sung mass, the adelantado and religious, with nine soldiers, set out and arrived at a wonderful port, which port and bay are made by the Buena Esperanza River when it enters the sea. We call it Port of the Conversion of San Pablo. So large is this port that more than a thousand vessels can anchor in it without hindrance to one another. The river enters the sea by a mouth four leagues wide. It forms in the middle of the mouth a small, low island, not of sand, as is all the coast, but of mud, the whole island, which must be about two leagues long from northwest to southeast.³

From what could be seen, it forms a great shelter⁴ to the bay; the island enters it by that river, southeast-by-east, dividing it into two mouths, one to the east and one to the southeast, each being more than a league and a half wide. The port is guarded and protected from the south and west by a mountain range,⁵ between whose bases the river enters the sea, which there trends nearly north and south, or northwest and southeast; and a point of the range runs more than six leagues into the sea.⁶ On the east this port or bay has another mountain range,⁷ which runs seaward from northeast to southwest. It is seen seven leagues distant from the bay; it ends and terminates at the sea in seven or eight small hills or buttes, with low points. Beyond these, on the edge

¹ January 23.

² January 25.

³ Montague Island answers this description.

⁴ Or barrier; the word is *reparo*.

⁵ Sierra Gigantia (?)

⁶ This might be Shell Point, or Point Diggs farther south.

⁷ Sierra Sonóyta.

of the land, it forms a point, higher than the rest, in which the range ends. On the west side, which is the one next to the bay, it ends in three small hills or round points, somewhat more elevated than those of the other range, and the last of these is higher than the other two. Beyond these, toward the edge of the land, it forms a more elevated point, whence the range forms a sharp ridge which runs inland more than twenty leagues south-southeast and north-northwest. The gulf, on this coast where they were, trends east and west, and doubling the point of this mountain range on the west side, which as I have already said enters the sea more than six leagues, it runs behind this mountain northward,¹ according to what all the Indians said, both those of the coast and those of the river, for they declared that it turns to the north, northeast, and east.

54. The adelantado, Don Juan de Oñate, took possession of this port in the name of his Majesty, and gave possession in his Majesty's name to the Father Commissary, Fray Francisco de Escobar, in order that our sacred religion may settle and people that land and the others next it and round about, and that we may occupy ourselves in the conversion of the natives in the place and places most suited to our mode of life.

55. We took this possession on the 25th of the month of January, day of the conversion of the Apostle St. Paul, patron of those provinces and of the Custodia of New Mexico, in the year of our Lord 1605, for the glory and honor of God our Lord.

56. This done, the adelantado and those who had gone with him returned to the camp, in order that the rest of the soldiers might go and certify to the sea. They did so, the space of four days being spent therein. Some soldiers stated that they had seen tunny-fish, and that they knew them because they were men from Spain. Having seen this,² they came back by the same way they had gone, being as well received by the Indians and with the same hospitality as when going.

Having arrived among the Ozaras Indians, as they had

¹ This interpretation of what the Indians said agreed with the theory current when Zárate wrote, that California was an island.

² He refers now to the return of the whole party to New Mexico.

already inquired of the other nations, and all had said that this nation is very extensive and runs along the coast, and that these are the ones who get from the sea the coral which they call *quacame*, they made inquiry and found a few. They said that since they were a long distance from the coast they did not have many; but further up the Buena Esperanza River, among Indians of this same nation, a few more were found, and in the province of Zuñi still more were found and bartered for. They¹ said the Indians of the valleys of Señora² brought them there to sell; and that they are no more than seven days' journey from there,³ and that they get them out of the sea, and are not far from there; and that this nation extends to that place. This sea they pointed out toward the south and southwest. Father Fray Francisco de Escobar found that from the province of New Mexico to the sea, on the road alone, there were ten different languages.⁴ This priest was so able and had so fine a memory that wherever he went he promptly learned the tongue, and so on the return journey he talked with all the nations and they all understood him.

They arrived at the Bahacechas where, on going, Chief Otata and the others had given so many reports of the country, of the lake of Copalla and of the gold, and of the island of gold and silver. On examining them again, they made the same statement as on the journey going, without varying it in any respect. They went through the same performance with the plate of silver as on the outward journey, as has been said; only they added that this silver was taken out of the top of a hill which was on the further side of the island, behind which the sun hides when it sets; and they said that they cut it out with a hard instrument. Being asked if it was of the same they said no, and gave to understand that it was something dark-yellow; and being shown a small sheet of brass, they said it was not of that material. Seeing that they were not understood, one of them rose and went to the adelantado's kitchen and took hold of a copper kettle and said that the instrument with which was cut the metal of which they made their bowls and pots was like that.

¹ The Zuñis.

² Sonora.

³ Zuñi.

⁴ *Leguas*, a misprint for *lenguas* (Lummis).

JOURNEY OF OÑATE TO CALIFORNIA BY LAND, [ZÁRATE, 1626]

*Journey of Don Juan de Oñate to California by Land.*¹

44. IN the year 1604, on the 7th of the month of October, Don Juan de Oñate set out from the villa of San Gabriel to discover the South Sea. He took in his company Father Fray Francisco de Escobar, who was then commissary of those provinces, and a lay-brother called Fray Juan de Buenaventura, apostolic men; and the Father Commissary was a very learned man and had a gift for languages, as he learned them all with great facility. He took on this journey thirty soldiers,² most of them raw recruits, and they did not carry more than fourteen pairs of horse armor. After having travelled towards the west sixty leagues, they arrived at the province of Çuñi, which is in some plains more inhabited by hares and rabbits than by Indians. There are six pueblos; in all of them there are no more than three hundred terraced houses of many stories, like those of New Mexico. The largest pueblo and head of all is the pueblo of Cibola, which in their language is called Havico.³ It has one hundred and ten houses. The food, like that general in all the land, is maize, beans, gourds, and wild game. They dress in *mantas* of *iztli*⁴ woven of twisted cord. These Indians have no cotton. They set out from this pueblo, and having travelled twenty leagues⁵ between northwest and west they arrived at the province of Mooqui. There are five pueblos and in all four hundred and fifty houses—the same kind⁶ of houses and *mantas* of cotton.

¹ Zárate Salmerón, *Relaciones de . . . Nuevo Mexico*, paragraphs 44–57, in *Doc. Hist. Mex.*, tercera série, III., 30–33 (Mexico, 1856).

² *Soldodos*, a corruption of *soldados* in the text.

³ Hawikuh. See Hodge, *Handbook*, I. 539. ⁴ See note 7, p. 235, above.

⁵ Oñate gave the distance as twenty-two leagues to the first pueblo and thirty-two to the last.

⁶ It is quite certain that there is a corruption here. The sense is better satisfied by “manner” (*manera*) in place of “number” (*número*).