

# WHAT'S IN A NAME?

## Origins of New Mexico Families, Part 1



Photo by Paul Harden

Numerous Piro Indian Pueblos were along the Rio Grande from Mesa del Contadero to Sabinal. Some have been lost to time. Callapsed rock walls are all that's left of the others, such as *Penjeacú Pueblo* shown here near Luis Lopez. Many arriving Spanish colonists settled near these Piro Pueblos.

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### INTRODUCTION

When one studies the history of the United States, it goes something like this: Columbus discovered America in 1492. Then, the Mayflower arrived with the first European settlers in 1620. From this history, you'd think nothing happened between 1492 and 1620.

Yet, in 1519, 101 years before the Mayflower, Cortez sailed across the Gulf of Mexico, colonizing what is today Vera Cruz. Later, with 2,200 soldiers, he defeated Montezuma at Tenochtitlan. Renaming the Aztec capital Mexico City, about 1,300 of these Spanish soldiers remained, taking local Aztec women as wives and starting families in the new world. The numbers of these "Spaniards" quickly grew, more than doubling every generation. Statistically, these 1,300 Spanish Conquistadors have fathered 700 million children over the 19 generations since Cortez, of which over 150 million descendants are living

today between Mexico and the United States.

By the 1600s, the third generation of the Cortez Conquistadors and their families had grown to about 5,000, living from Mexico City to Vera Cruz, and north to the Rio Grande. In New Mexico, the original 200 families had grown to over 1,000 colonists and Conquistadors when the Mayflower arrived. They lived under an established government, the Spanish flag flying over Santa Fe, building government facilities, ranches and farms. It was a developing culture of it's own, modeled after Spain.

Yet, those 102 people that bumped into Plymouth Rock in 1620 get all the credit for being the first European colonists!

From the above, it is obvious the growth of New Mexico, prior to about 1850, had nothing to do with the Mayflower or the westward expansion. It was due entirely to the Spanish colonization of the American southwest from 1598 through the late 1800s.

### THE EARLY RECORD

For the most part, the Spaniards kept very good records. The names, places of birth, and a physical description of each person coming into colonial New Mexico are well

documented. For example, we know Coronado's Conquistadors in 1540 had names like Benevidez, Bustamante, Castilla, Delgado, Gallegos, Garcia, Gomez, Gutierrez, Lopez, Padilla, Sanchez, Torres and Zamora. While identified as "Mexican" names today, these men were Europeans - pure Spaniards - all coming from their homeland near Sevilla. And, long before the Mayflower.

A complete list of colonists arriving with Onate in 1598, and later with Vargas in 1693, also exist. Likewise, the early Catholic Church kept excellent records of marriages, births and deaths for geneological research. These documents allow us to identify the "first New Mexicans."

### THE FIRST NEW MEXICANS

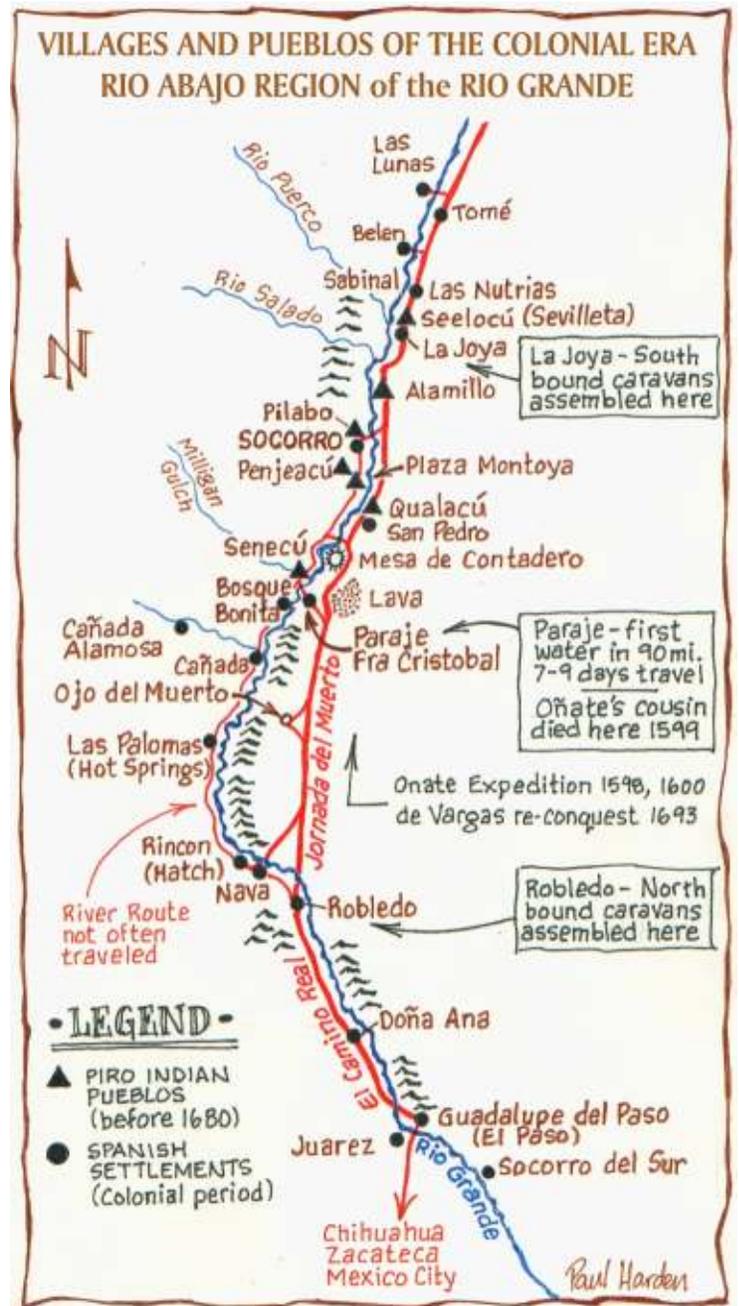
The first colonizer of New Mexico was Don Juan de Onate, arriving in "New Spain" in 1598 with about 130 Spanish soldiers, many bringing their families. Another 80 soldiers and their families arrived in 1600. These people settled along the Rio Grande from Socorro to Taos. From 1610 to 1680, other soldiers and merchants came into New Mexico along El Camino Real from Mexico City and Chihuahua, many marrying the daughters and grand-daughters of the Onate colonists.

In 1680, the Spaniards were driven out of the country by the northern Pueblo Indians, in what is commonly referred to as the "Pueblo Revolt." There were about 2,500 Spaniards in New Mexico by 1680, comprising soldiers, priests and friars, merchants, and of course, the colonists. The majority of these people fled to the south with then Governor Antonio de Otermin.

However, not everybody left. Some of the Spanish colonists remained in New Mexico in areas such as Santo Domingo (Quirix pueblo), San Ildefonso and San Juan (Yuque pueblo). Those who continued to exert Spanish rule on the Indians were killed. Those that did not lived peacefully with the Pueblo Indians.

Don Diego de Vargas recolonized New Mexico in 1693 with the exiled families and others recruited from Zacatecas, Mexico. Most returned to their original land from Ysleta to Taos. However, the southern part of the Rio Grande, the Rio Abajo, remained virtually abandoned until the 1800s. This included Socorro.

The Hispanic surnames in New Mexico today are all directly linked to these early settlers, colonists and Conquistadors. In and around Socorro, when you meet a Baca, Chavez, Lopez or Padilla, they may be a family



that has been here for hundreds of years, some since before the Mayflower. Not only are they the oldest New Mexicans, they are truly some of the oldest Americans.

The following brief descriptions from old colonial records show not only the origins of today's New Mexico families, but an interesting look into life of those times. Note the spellings of the names often differ from that used today.

#### ABEYTIA.

The Abeytia family came from Zacatecas with the Vargas expedition in 1693, moving to Santa Fe around 1700. The patriarch was Diego de Beytia and sons

Antonio, Baltasar and Paulin. Antonio was born in 1699, living most of his life in the Rio Arriba area, raising several children. Baltasar, married in 1728, also lived in Rio Arriba. In 1741, he was serving as a soldier with the Albuquerque garrison. He was married twice and had two sons. The settlement of Los Abeytas on the Rio Abajo were primarily descendants of Baltasar.

By the late 1700s, the family name took the form Abeytia, and later still, Abeyta. The Abeytia's are also one of the first families to reoccupy Socorro in the early 1800s.

### **AGUILAR**

There seemed to be two distinct Aguilar in early New Mexico. The first was Pablo de Aguilar Inojosa, a 36 year old Captain with Onate. He was described as of good stature and chestnut colored beard. Another was Francisco de Aguilar, one of 50 convicts sent to New Mexico in 1677 to serve as soldiers. He returned to Mexico in 1680, and never heard from again.

Following the Pueblo Revolt, Pedro de Aguilera from Mexico City, his wife and 6 year old son Rodrigo, were part of the 1693 reconquest. Pedro was described as having a fair complexion, a large nose and small eyes, while son Rodrigo, as an adult, had a broad face, large and deep-set eyes and a flat nose. These descriptions were recorded for legal purposes - long before fingerprints and DNA were used for identification.

There was also Manuel de Aguilar, living in Santa Fe in the late 1700s. Cristobal Aguilar, a shoe maker by trade from Zacatecas, was serving as a soldier at the Santa Fe Presidio in 1837.

### **ARCHULETA**

Asencio de Archuleta was one of Onate's soldiers, arriving in New Mexico in 1598, and a native of Ybar in Guipuzcoa. He was 26 years old with a medium build and a black beard. In 1603, he escorted four friars from Mexico City to San Gabriel, and later served as an ecclesiastical notary. Records indicate he died about 1623 at 50 years of age.

His son, Juan de Archuleta, was born in New Mexico. Unfortunately, he was beheaded on July 21, 1643 in Santa Fe, along with other political associates, for their possible involvement in the assassination of Governor Rosas the year before.

Juan Archuleta left sons Juan II and Melchor, and daughters Josefa and Ann. Juan de Archuleta II, and a cousin also named Juan, escaped New Mexico in 1680



From *The Story of New Mexico*, 1891  
**A caravan of colonists, in the 1600s, arriving from Mexico. After a week's travel along the waterless Jornada del Muerto, the friendly Piro Indian pueblos were a welcomed sight. Socorro was built near the Pilabo Lueblo.**

with the Pueblo Revolt, but returned in 1693. Resettling in the Rio Arriba region of New Mexico, the Archuleta family grew and spread along the Rio Grande.

A descendant of the familia de Archuleta de Belen moved to Socorro in the early 1800s, as several Archuleta's are listed as land owners on the 1815 Socorro Spanish Land Grant, and thus, one of the first families of Socorro.

### **ARMIJO**

Jose de Armijo quickly populated New Mexico by arriving from Zacatecas in 1693 with de Vargas, bringing a wife and 4 adult sons. Within two years, all 4 sons had married women from Santa Fe, all bearing sons and daughters. Son Antonio married Maria Quiros, Marcos married Tomasa de la Parra, Jose married Maria Velasquez and Vicente married Maria de Apodaca. Like George Foreman, Vicente Armijo had three sons, naming all three of them Manuel! (Manuel el Primero, Manuel el Segundo and Manuel el Tercero).

Manuel el Primero de Armijo, considered a "peasant" at this time, raised quite a stir in Santa Fe when he married Francisca Baca in 1733 against the wishes of her "upper class" family. Francisca's father, Antonio Baca, blocked their marriage from being recorded in Santa Fe until 1735.

Manuel el Segundo moved to Albuquerque and Manuel el Tercero joined family in Juarez. The next several generations were all large families as well, quickly filling New Mexico with Armijo's from Santa Fe to the Rio Abajo.



Photo by Paul Harden

**Ramon "Sonny" Baca is one of many in a long line of Baca's living in Socorro and Luis Lopez since the early 1800s. A branch of his family, the de Vacas, settled in the San Luis Valley, in Colorado, in the 1700s.**

### **BACA (VACA)**

Cristobal Vaca was also one of Oñate's soldiers and the son of Juan de Vaca of the 1540 Coronado Expedition. Christobal was of good stature and swarthy, arriving with wife Dona Ana Ortiz, three grown daughters, and a young son, Antonio. All were born in Mexico City and joined the colonists settling in San Gabriel.

The original family name was Cabeza de Vaca, though the spelling Baca seemed to begin with sons Antonio and Alonzo, who remained in New Mexico after the Pueblo Revolt. The family quickly grew over the following generations. Many of New Mexico's Baca's are descendants of Cristobal de Vaca, and sons Antonio and Alonzo.

Antonio and family lived in Santa Fe, where he became one of the ring leaders of the anti-Rosas movement, leading to the assassination of Governor Rosas in 1642. Antonio Baca was one of the participants. He was beheaded on July 21, 1643 on the Santa Fe plaza.

Brother Alonso was also arrested and ordered beheaded along with Antonio, but he and 13 others managed to escape. Alonso moved his family to La Joya in the remote Rio Abajo region. No further documentation of his whereabouts exist. Of course, escaping an order of execution, he was laying pretty low!

Some of the Baca families remained in New Mexico following the Pueblo Revolt, such as Ignacio Baca, wife Juana, and sons Alonso and Andres. By 1684, Ignacio was assistant Alcalde of San Lorenzo. He died in 1689. Juana and son Alonso were killed in 1893 during an Indian uprising, and son Andres killed shortly thereafter in Nambe.

Today, Baca is the most dominant surname in New Mexico, with descendants in virtually every town and village in the state. The Baca's are also one of the oldest families in Socorro.

### **BARRERAS**

A "Captain Barrera," a Basque from central Spain, served in Santa Fe in 1647. He either arrived with one of the reinforcement missions to Santa Fe, or perhaps with a caravan along the El Camino Real. In 1680, he fled back to Mexico along the same trail.

In 1693, 30 year old Domingo de la Barrera, a native of Zamora, Spain, entered New Mexico with the Vargas reconquest. In the early 1700s, there were four other known Barrera families in New Mexico, possibly the children of Domingo de la Barrera. They were Ignacio Barrera and Micaela Lopez, Manual Barreda and Maria Garcia, Marcial Barreda (later Barreras) and Rosa Trujillo, and Manual Barrera and Maria Torres. They raised numerous children from Santa Fe to Tome.

Around 1815, when the Rio Abajo was reopened for settlement, some of these families moved from Tome to La Joya and Las Canada. By the late 1800s, some of these families were living in Paraje Fra Cristobal, San Marcial, and the southern "suburb" of El Bosque Bonito.

The history of the Barreras family is the history of many families living along this part of the Rio Grande. For example, living in the village of Bosque Bonito was Felix Barreras, who married Damacia Gonzales of Milligan Gulch in 1920. Shortly thereafter, they were forced to abandon their ranch when Elephant Butte Reservoir began to fill. Relocating to San Marcial, the Barreras family was one of many losing their homes in the 1929 flood. Felix Barerras rebuilt at San Marcial. However, this home was also destroyed by the flood of 1937. This was a real blow to Felix and Damacia Barreras, trying to raise seven children after losing their livelihood three times in 15 years.

Like the other families, they threw in the towel and left for good, moving to Socorro to finish raising their children. This included sons Bennie, Willie and Felix. G. Junior, and daughters Beatrice Birner, Mary Jane Chavez, Emma Silva and Estella Craig.



Photo by Paul Harden  
**Socorroan Benigno "Bennie" Barreras is a descendant of a long line of Barreras families that live in Paraje, Bosque Bonito and San Marcial since the early 1800s.**

## CHAVEZ

The first known Chavez in New Mexico was Alferes de Chavez, arriving with the Onate Expedition, but was shortly after killed at the battle at Acoma, leaving no descendants.

Many Chavez' in today's New Mexico are the descendants of Don Pedro Duran y Chavez, one of the founding families of Santa Fe in 1610. By 1626, at 60 years old, he was the Commanding General, or Campo, of all the royal troops in New Mexico. With a wife 20 years younger, Dona Isabel, their children were Fernando, Pedro and Isabel. This first Chavez family, and their descendants, developed large land holdings that extended south from their home at San Felipe Pueblo to Bernalillo and Atrisco.

Most of the Chavez' fled during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt. Don Fernando Duran y Chavez II, grandson to Campo Chavez, appears to be the only Chavez of this family to return, arriving with Vargas in 1693 with a wife and several children. He returned to the original family land near Bernalillo.

In 1704, Governor Don Diego de Vargas took ill. He was taken to Bernalillo where he made his last will and testament and died in the Chavez home. By 1707, Don Fernando and wife Lucia Hurtado had 7 sons and 3 daughters, spending the last of their years in Atrisco.

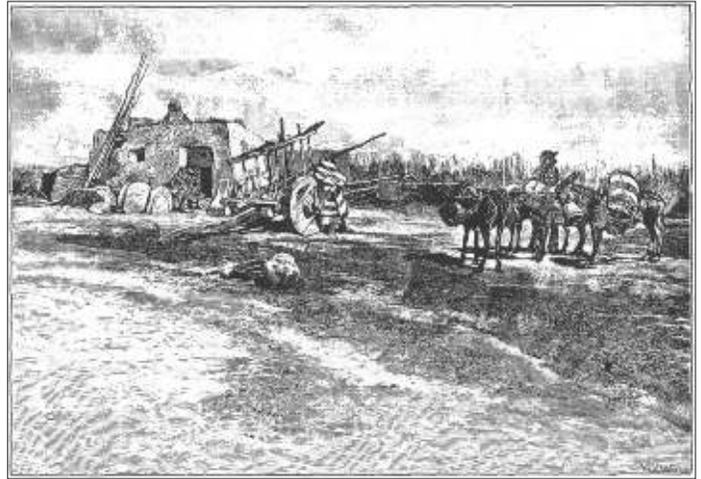
One of Don Fernando's sons, Pedro Duran y Chavez, fathered 10 children by wife Juana Montoya and another five by wife Gertrudis Sanchez, mostly sons. Pedro Chavez was one of the original 12 families that founded Albuquerque in 1706.

Beginning with Don Pedro Duran y Chavez, and the good fortune of having numerous sons and grandsons, the Chavez name quickly spread from Atrisco to Ojo Caliente over these three generations, and of course those that followed. Today, the Chavez name remains one of the most dominant Hispanic families in New Mexico.

## GALLEGOS

Jose and Antonio Gallegos were brothers in New Mexico in the mid 1600s living in the Rio Abajo region. Both brothers were married with children, fleeing to Guadalupe del Paso during the 1680 rebellion.

Antonio was then 26 years old, tall and slim with a long face, large eyes and blond hair with a beard. He and his wife appeared to have died before the Vargas reconquest. However, their children, Antonio II, Elena



Engraving from *El Gringo*, 1857  
**A typical New Mexico estancia in the 1600s to 1800s consisted of a small adobe home, a carreta (ox cart), a burro or two, a few small animals and enough crop-starters to sustain a family - and to barter with El Camino merchants for other needed items.**

and Felipe, returned with Vargas to the Bernalillo area, becoming the progenitor of the Gallegos families in New Mexico today.

The whereabouts of Jose after 1681 is unknown. His son, Diego Gallegos, married Josefa Gutierrez in Bernalillo in 1709. By 1730, he obtained a Spanish Land Grant on the north side of Cochiti Pueblo, where the next many generations of the Gallegos family took root.

## GRIEGO

Juan Griego entered New Mexico in 1598 as one of Onate's soldiers, being a native of Greece. The last known whereabouts of Juan was in 1631, where he listed his age as 60. His son, Juan Griego II, was born in Santa Fe about 1605, married by 1626, and had died before the 1680 revolt. His children, all Griegos, fled New Mexico, including son Blas, who escaped at age 36 with "17 members of his family, made up of wife, children and servants."

One of the descendants of Juan Griego was Agustin, serving the Governor of New Mexico as an interpreter of the Tewa language. He was described as tall and slender, swarthy, having a long, beardless face, long nose and black hair. Juan Griego, wife Josefa Lujan and several children fled to Guadalupe del Paso (El Paso) in 1680. He apparently died shortly thereafter, for Josefa returned in 1693 as "a widow with four sons." Somewhere in there, she had additional children by a second husband, Antonio Cisneros.



Photo by Paul Harden

**The village of Luis Lopez, south of Socorro, was an estancia founded in 1667 by Captain Luis Lopez of the Royal (Spanish) Army. He also served as the Alcalde (mayor) of Senecú Pueblo.**

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The Griegos, and the Cisneros element, settled in Santa Fe. Son Juan Griego sold his land in Santa Fe and moved to Albuquerque before 1718, marrying Juliana Saiz. Another son, Miguel Angel Griego, remained in the Santa Fe area. Jose Griego married Ana Maria Baca in 1727. After giving birth to daughter Petrona, Ana Marie died on June 27, 1729 at only 26 years of age.

### **LOPEZ.**

Juan Lopez came to New Mexico from Zacatecas in 1633. He was a soldier escorting a caravan along the El Camino Real. He was married in Santa Fe in 1634 to Ynez de Zamora. Governor Zevallos and several friars testified in 1634 that Lopez already had a mulatto-mestiza wife in Habana, causing much grief with his family. Historical records do not show if the charge of bigamy was ever proven.

Pedro Lopez del Castillo returned to New Mexico with the 1693 reconquest with wife Marie de Ortega. In 1699, the family was living in Bernalillo. Several years later, Pedro Lopez, and sister Juana Lopez del Castillo, were among the original 12 founding families of Albuquerque in 1706. Over the next several generations, the Lopez family extended from Belen to Pojoaque, and one of the dominant Hispanic families in New Mexico today.

Of particular interest to Socorro is Captain Luis Lopez, the Alcalde to the Piro Indian pueblo of Senecu in 1667. His estancia was located between the old Pueblos at Socorro and Qualacu, near present day San Antonio,

and was referred to as Estancia de Luis Lopez. Ninety years after the 1680 abandonment of Socorro, Bishop Tamaron recorded the site of the estancia was called "Luis Lopez" after its original owner. In the early 1800s, several families settled south of Socorro on the old estancia. The village has been called Luis Lopez ever since.

### **MARQUEZ**

Captain Geronimo Marquez was one of the soldiers joining Onate in Santa Fe in 1600, his specialty being artillery. He was described as being 40 years old, swarthy and black bearded. He arrived with his wife, Dona Ana de Mendoza and five grown sons, Francisco, Pedro, Juan, Hernando and Diego. Francisco Marquez apparently lived some of his life in Socorro, as the records indicate he married a Piro Indian woman from Socorro de los Piro - present day Socorro. They had a daughter, Catalina, who married Nicolas de Aguilar, who is known to have fled from Socorro during the 1680 revolt. This is one of the few cases documenting the names of Socorro's earliest families.

The other four brothers lived in the Santa Fe area. These Marquez brothers were siblings with a string of bad luck. A witch named Beatriz was hired to place a hex on Hernando for living with a concubine named Juana de la Cruz in 1628. She must have been a good witch, as Hernando was dead by October, with the cause of death listed as "witchcraft."

In 1841, brother Juan, or perhaps Juan's son, was executed for unspecified reasons by Governor Rosas. Two years later, Governor Rosas was assassinated, with brother Captain Diego Marquez accused of participating in the plot. He was beheaded on the Santa Fe plaza in 1643. Pedro Marquez was living in Santa Fe in 1826, but died shortly thereafter. His widow, Catalina de Bustillo, moved to an estancia at La Canada, south of Socorro.

Fortunately, these brothers had fathered some sons (and daughters) to carry on the family name before meeting their sordid demise.

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Photo by Paul Harden

**Lonnie Marquez, of Socorro, has been able to trace his family back to the Jemez Pueblo area in the early 1700s.**

Another Francisco Marquez, listed as 22 years old in 1681, may have been the son of Francisco Marquez of early Socorro. He and his family returned to New Mexico with the reconquest of 1693. Not allowed to resettle in the destroyed village of Socorro, his family located in the Rio Arriba country. Joining Francisco with the 1693 colonists was Diego Marquez de Ayala, described as having an "aquiline face, large eyes, the left one darker than the other." He, and his wife Maria Bolivar, settled in the Santo Domingo area.

It was these two members of the Marquez family that resettled New Mexico and the name sake of many of the Marquez' today. Present day Socorroan Lonnie Marquez has been able to trace his ancestors back to the early 1700s living near Santo Domingo at Jemez, presumably of the Diego Marquez lineage. It would be his great-great-great uncle by many generations that lived in Socorro in the 1600s.

This is a small sampling of New Mexico's first families. Additional families will be presented next month. If your family is one of the original 1815 settlers in Socorro, please contact the El Defensor Chieftain or the author to be included in Part 2.

#### References:

Historical documents of the Coronado, Onate and Vargas expeditions, "Origins of New Mexico Families" by Fray Angelico Chavez, courtesy Sam Pino, the New Mexico Hispanic Geneological database, and published church records.