

ALONSO DE BENAVIDES (1578–1635)

MEMORIAL (1630)

Nations Which Dwell Along the Road to New Mexico

Ever since New Mexico was discovered, always that these hundred leagues are being traversed there have been wars with these Indians, to avert the damage they try to do us. Yet by the mercy of God our Lord, the Spaniards always come forth victorious. We have tried all possible [means] to convert and pacify these nations, as well for the good of their souls as for the security of the road. But so great is their barbarism that they will not even let themselves be talked with.

Mines of Socorro

For all this [land] is full of very great treasures of mines, very rich and prosperous in silver and gold . . . And although it is true that at the beginnings of the conversions the Indians might be scared off by the labor of the mines, everything considered, I feel that if the [mines] were administered by persons of moderate greed, who would treat the Indians well and pay them for their work, conforming now at the beginning with their simple capacity, [which is] slack as to working, that not only would it not scare off the [Indians] but would win them by this path, and that they would submit themselves to treating and communication with us. And they themselves, seeing and knowing that they were not treated ill, and that they were paid for their work, would come to offer themselves for it. With this it would be easier for us ministers to reduce them to peace.

Queres Nation

There are three monasteries and churches, very costly and beautiful, aside from those which each pueblo has. These Indians are very dexterous in reading, writing, and playing on all instruments, and craftsmen in all crafts, [thanks to] the great industry of the Religious who converted them. It is also a very fertile land in everything that is sown in it.

Chartered Town of Santa Fé

. . . the Villa of Santa Fé [is] head of this Kingdom, where [the] governors reside and the Spaniards, who must number as many as two hundred and fifty, though only some fifty of them can arm themselves, for lack of weapons. And though few and ill-equipped, God hath permitted that they should always come out victorious; and hath caused among the Indians so great fear of them and of their arquebuses that with only hearing it said that a Spaniard is going to their pueblos they flee. And to keep up this fear, when it is in order to punish some rebellious pueblo, they use great rigors with them. Were it not for this, many times they would have tried to kill the Spaniards, seeing them so far from New Spain whence any succor might come to them. All the soldiers are well doctinated and humble, and of good example, for the most part, to the Indians. Your Majesty supports this presidio . . .

Taken from Alonso de Benavides, *The Memorial of Fray Alonso de Benavides 1630*, trans. Edward E. Ayer (Chicago: Edward E. Ayer, 1916): 13, 18–19, 22–23.