

Colonies settled by the 400 Tlaxcalan families

Research notes by Stanley A. Lucero, Jan 2010.

Quotes are from Chapter VI. Privileges, Tributes, and Colonies from the book: Tlaxcala in the Sixteenth Century by Charles Gibson.

This section of the chapter presents the migration of the 400 Tlaxcalan families in 1591 to the lands of the Chimcimecas (pages 184-189).

“The group that finally enlisted did not number exactly four hundred families. Some bachelors joined the group, and the total number of units (bachelors and heads of families) was 401.¹ It had been planned that each of the four Tlaxcalan cabeceras would supply one hundred families. But of the final 401, 94 were from Quiahuixtlán; 102 were from Tizatlán; 105 were from Ocotelulco; and 100 were from Teetícpac.” (Gibson 1952, 184-185)

“In June, 1591,² the expedition left Tlaxcala, accompanied by Zarate and other Franciscans from Tlaxcala and under the general command of Agustín de Hinojosa Villavisencio. By July 6 they had arrived at the San Juan River.³ At Cuicillo they were met by Rodrigo de Río de Loza (Rodrigo del Río y Loza), governor of Nueva Viscaya. The settlers were delivered to his charge, and the process of colonization began under his direction.⁴ He divided the Tlaxcalan into groups for the first six settlements: Asunción Tlaxcalilla, San Miguel Mezquitic, and Agua del Venado, near Potosí; San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala near Saltillo; Colotlán and San Andres to the west.⁵” (Gibson 1952, 185)

“Within the next few years Tlaxcalans were established at Mineral de Sierra de Pinos, at San Jeronimo del Agua Hedionda, at San Francisco de los Chalchihuites, and with Jesuits and Aztecs far to the northwest at San Felipe on the Río Patatlán.⁶” (Gibson 1952, 185)

“The settlement near Saltillo, for example, was named San Esteban de Nueva Tlaxcala, after San Esteban Tizatlán, and was settled by people from that cabecera.⁷” (Gibson 1952, 186)

“Mezquitic, similarly, was named after Tepetícpac (San Miguel Mezquite de la Nueva Tlaxcala Tepetícpac); its first Indian governor, in 1591, is known to have been a member of the Tepetícpac

¹ See footnote 83 on page 184: “The group is nearly always described, nevertheless, as consisting of 400 families or 400 married Tlaxcalans.”

² See footnote 85 on page 185: “... gives June 6, 1590. Probably this represents the true month and day for the first departing group.”

³ See footnote 86 on page 185: “Vito Alessio Robles’ belief that the Rio de San Juan may be the Zahuapan.”

⁴ See footnote 87 on page 185: “The viceroy’s letter to Rodrigo de Río de Loza, instructing him to take charge of the Tlaxcalan settlers, is dated June 22, 1591.”

⁵ See footnote 88 on page 185.

⁶ See footnote 89 on pages 185-186.

⁷ See footnote 90 on page 186: “Robles ... commenting on a document in the Saltillo archives, observes that nearly all the settlers were descendants of Xicoténcatl. This may perhaps best be interpreted as a claim made by the settlers for the purpose of gaining additional privileges. All known names of Nueva Tlaxcala settlers may be found among the listed names of the Tizatlán delegation.”

delegation; and it is likely that most or all of its settlers were also affiliated with this cabecera.⁸ (Gibson 1952, 186)

“The six original Tlaxcalan towns became points of departure for further colonies, and in generation after generation descendants of the first Tlaxcalan families spread northward to the Río Grande and into Texas and New Mexico.” (Gibson 1952, 187)

“Barrios or localities named after Tlaxcala are still preserved in certain parts of the north today, as at Pinos, Venado, Colotlán, San Miguel de Allende, San Luis de la Paz, and San Luis Potosí”⁹ (Gibson 1952, 188)

“After the first settlements the chief colonial enterprise was Parras, populated in 1598 by Tlaxcalan families from Nueva Tlaxcala. From Nueva Tlaxcala also fourteen Tlaxcalan families went out to found San Juan de Carrizal in the late seventeenth century, and to found Nuestra Señora de la Purificación in the early eighteenth century.¹⁰ (Gibson 1952, 188)

“At the same time, Indians came westward from Nuevo Leon to be taught by the Tlaxcalans of Nueva Tlaxcala and Venado. By 1720 Tlaxcalans in Nueva Tlaxcala were giving men regularly to supply the troops in Texas, and in the mid-eighteenth century nine Tlaxcalan families from Saltillo were designated as teachers for neophytes in the Apache missions going out from San Antonio.” (Gibson 1952, 188)

“From Parras in the eighteenth century, Tlaxcalans moved to Los Hornos and to Alamo de Parras (Viesca). The eighteenth-century movements often involved small military excursions by “Tlaxcalan” garrison troops. Thus in 1714 a group of about seventeen “Tlaxcalan” soldiers engaged in a punitive expedition against rebellious Indians in Coahuila.” (Gibson 1952, 188)

“in 1756-57 a small colony of Tlaxcalans went on to San Sabá on the Colorado River north of San Antonio to aid against the Apaches, and twenty years later the suggestion was made to take Tlaxcalans even farther north to the Red River among the Taovayas Indians. “Tlaxcalans” also appear to have been in Santa Fe, New Mexico by the early eighteenth century.¹¹ (Gibson 1952, 188-189)

⁸ See footnote 91 on page 186.

⁹ See footnote 96 on page 188.

¹⁰ See footnote 97 on page 188.

¹¹ See footnote 99 on page 189: Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, p 345. William Edward Dunn, “The Apache Missions on the San Sabá River; Its Foundings and Failure,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XVII (1913-1914), 391. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, IV, 128-129. Ralph Emerson Twitchell, ed., *The Spanish Archives of New Mexico* (2 vols.; Cedar Rapids, Ia., 1914), I, 36.

Bibliography

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