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The El Paso Presidio Pursues the Sumas

Other than a scattering of frontiersmen, no other defensive force existed at Casas Grandes to oppose the outbreak of the Suma revolt in May 1684. The nearest available garrison was the presidio at El Paso, formed from New Mexico refugees in 1683. Reluctantly sent to Casas Grandes by the new governor of the exiled colony of New Mexico, the El Paso contingent quickly found themselves plagued by the rebels' ability to elude the Spaniards almost at will. In addition to the New Mexican Roque Madrid, captains who would dominate the military effort in the far north now begin to make their mark. The Apaches have appeared in force and the Spanish commanders have come to the realization that the Suma, Janos, and Manso rebels are in league with them and together have formed an aggregate force against the incursions of the Iberians.

Governor and Captain-General, Sir:

From the area of San Diego¹ I reported to your excellency on my journey up to that point. Now I do so again, giving you an account of the whole trip up to the present time. I left the Río [Grande] del Norte following the trail of the Mansos,² the same trail I had given up on the first time. I left at around two in the afternoon and made camp just before dawn because the pass through which we had to go would be difficult to cross. We waited until daybreak so as to see our way down. We noticed a fire from which three Apaches were fleeing. One of them ran off alone while the other two set out cross-country. I and my soldiers pursued the two; seeing themselves imperiled, they finally barricaded themselves in a cave. There they made their stand, while we dismounted so as to capture the Apaches alive. Two of my companions were wounded: Francisco Márquez in the arm and Captain Pedro de Leyva near his temple. God favored us, and we captured

1. San Diego is approximately 15 kilometers southwest of Casas Grandes at the confluence of the Río Piedras Verdes and the Río San Miguel.

2. The Mansos were a semi-nomadic, sometime riverine group centered in the area of El Paso. They were probably Uto-Aztecan speakers and seem to have been related to the Suma and Jumano. Many of them peacefully settled at the Franciscan missions at El Paso and Samalayuca immediately to the south, but those that did not increasingly became affiliated with the rebelling Sumas in 1684 and then with marauding bands of Apaches. In the minds of the Spaniards, those who remained hostile were often grouped with the Apaches.

the Apaches, although one suffered some lance wounds. I comforted and entertained the two and asked where I could find water. They led me to the Sierra Florida,³ where I had to water the animals one at a time.

At the watering place I was joined by Captain Juan Fernández de la Fuente⁴ and Captain Francisco Ramírez [de Salazar],⁵ as well as the men under my charge. They had come to ask if it would not be timely to make peace with the Apaches by sending the one captive who was not wounded to his leader. The captive promised to do so and to return with his chief, adding that the Apaches would help us fight the Mansos. I dispatched him and remained to treat and comfort the wounded Apache. I then continued my journey, always keeping to the same trail. No one knew where there was water, except at the wells of San Francisco, and no one was sure of their precise location.

Now things were such, sir, that the troops were eating pozole made from maize day in and day out and the horses were exhausted, their hooves bruised from so much traveling. Finally Our Lord God granted that we should find the wells of San Francisco. We had traveled for more than twenty-four hours and reached the wells at around eight in the morning, only to find they had been filled in. I had my soldiers guard the wells and then pursued and caught the Indian who had filled them in. The Indian was Jusephe, the husband of Pancha, the Manso woman. I had him tell me where the Mansos were or where he had left them, and under pressure he told me that he would tell the truth. He said that if we traveled fast and did not stop we could reach their ranchería in three days. Since the Mansos had not yet joined up with the Janos,⁶ and seeing that we were perishing as it was, I decided to push on.

So as to prevent the Janos and Mansos from joining forces, I ordered some men to take the captive to the valley of Casas Grandes along with a letter from Captain Francisco Ramírez. The three men soon returned, bringing only two sacks of unshelled corn, saying the citizens of Casas Grandes were in grave danger and asking for help. With full agreement of the officers and men, I sent troops with full speed to help these Christian people. With twenty-five of my men and others belonging

3. The Florida Mountains are in southern New Mexico, just southeast of modern Deming.

4. Fernández de la Fuente was an extremely active military commander. In the 1680s he fought out of Casas Grandes against the Sumas and their allies. The following decade he was the presidial commander at Janos and took part in far-ranging campaigns against rebellious Indians—Apaches in general, Pimas in northern Sonora in 1695, Tarahumaras in southwestern Chihuahua in 1697, and Pima Bajos in southeastern Sonora in 1701.

5. Ramírez de Salazar was born about 1618 in New Mexico. In 1663 he moved with his wife to El Paso and later moved again to the newly colonized area around Casas Grandes. There he became the second *alcalde mayor*, serving in that capacity from 1680 until his death. He was named the first commander of the *Compañía Volante* of the Sonoran frontier. Having received that distinguished office from the hand of the viceroy, he died while returning to the northern frontier in 1693. He owned the hacienda of Ramos northwest of Casas Grandes.

6. The Janos were nomadic hunter-gatherers who occupied extreme northwestern Chihuahua. They shared many traits with the Manso, Suma, and Jocome and allied themselves with them and the raiding bands of Apaches that increasingly came into the area.

to captains Juan de la Fuente and Francisco Ramírez, I continued on to attack the Mansos, who had retreated to the Sierra de Carretas.⁷

Finally, sir, we turned back to help the people of Casas Grandes. We received word that the enemy had been victorious and had taken all the horses, sheep, and goats. After burning the jacales where supplies were stored, the enemy had entrenched themselves in the sierra five leagues from here. After the scouts I had sent out returned and confirmed that the enemy was in the sierra, we left at the hour of prayers and reached the sierra at dawn. We saw that the sierra was so rough, impassable, and without entrances or exits that it greatly favored our Indian enemies. I resolved to end the Indians' audacity, for they were in sight, and I decided to go in on foot if need be. We accordingly attacked at about seven or eight in the morning, and, sir, I have never seen such a battle in all my life. The battle lasted the entire blessed day, until the sun had finally set. The fighting was the most savage ever seen, and I did all the damage I could to them. We killed more than forty and wounded many. Our heroic effort was evident, for I and eleven men in my command were wounded, as well as four Piros and Tiguas who demonstrated their great bravery and loyalty. There were wounded in the other two groups as well, making the total twenty-seven. The puncture wounds looked to be the worst; Acuña was the most seriously wounded. This battle was waged on the 30th day [of September?], and today we are feeling some relief, because the wounds on our faces, legs, arms, and heads have begun to heal. To allow these wounds to heal and to let the horses rest, I decided to rest three or four days.

Yesterday Captain Francisco Ramírez and the Reverendo Padre Proveedor Fray Juan Porras⁸ came before me to request four men to go with them and the *alférez de campo* to make a report to your excellency of all that has happened and to see how your excellency is faring. I have received word of the meeting your excellency had because of their treason on being caught asleep at their posts. I therefore did not postpone my trip, and I made haste to come to help these people and punish the enemy in the name of our lord the king. Without my troops, this entire jurisdiction would cease to exist, and the *alcalde mayor* would remove the population because no one came to his aid. In his *requerimientos*, the *alcalde mayor* made 2,000 demands of me, so that to best serve Our Lord God, the boldness of the enemies should not cause the depopulation of this jurisdiction. At this time I shall not send the *requerimientos* to your lordship because I have yet to take testimony on them. I shall accordingly deliver them in person for your lordship's decision so that I may execute your orders. *Alférez* Alonso García⁹ will explain everything,

7. The Sierra de Carretas is approximately 60 kilometers southwest of Janos near the present Sonora border.

8. Porras was the resident Franciscan at the mission of San Antonio de Padua de Casas Grandes.

9. This was Alonso García de Noriega II. He was born about 1640 and along with his father and other family members abandoned New Mexico after the 1680 Revolt. Some of his family remained at El Paso after 1692, but Alonso took part in the reconquest as a captain. In the interim he was involved in operations against the Mansos, Sumas, and Apaches in the El Paso and Casas Grandes areas. He married a second time at Santa Fe in 1694 and died in Sevilleta from Apache arrow wounds received in 1696.

telling how your grace and the rest of the officers and soldiers have acted like the brave, noble, and loyal vassals of his majesty that they are. They have earned fame and honor amongst both friends and enemies. Words fail me in trying to tell your lordship of this without exaggeration. Captain Juan de la Fuente has demonstrated his valor and nobility. Captain Francisco Ramírez has asked me to beg your lordship to send 100 Piro and Tigua Indians¹⁰, if you do not desperately need them yourself. I trust in God, and with these reinforcements victory will be ours.

Your lordship need not fear the cold, for glory be to God, He has not willed it this year. I beg your lordship to send me, provided Captain Don Alonso [García] has arrived, four or five bundles of tobacco, six or eight pounds of chocolate and sugar, and one bundle of paper, because there is none to be found here. I am sending to your lordship the sealed orders which were in the care of Captain Francisco Ramírez. There is nothing else new here to tell your lordship. I only ask your lordship to tell me what is new there and all that concerns the father chaplains and all the soldiers—particularly the *alférez real* and Xavier, who kiss your lordship's feet. I hope God grants you many happy years. From this valley of San Antonio de Casas Grandes. October 3, 1684.

Your humble servant kisses your lordship's feet.

Roque Madrid¹¹

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DOCUMENTO ORIGINAL

Señor, Gobernador y Capitán General:

Del paraje de San Diego, di cuenta a vuestra excelencia, de lo sucedido en mi viaje hasta allí, y ahora lo vuelvo ha hacer, dando a vuestra excelencia cuenta de todo el viaje hasta la hora presente y así digo señor, que salí del Río del Norte siguiendo el rastro de los mansos que habían dejado la primera vez y habiendo salido como a las dos de la tarde y caminando aquella noche hasta el cuarto del alba, paré por ofrecerse un puerto que teníamos que pasar a la vista mala; y aguardando allí a que acababa de amanecer para registrar bajada, se vio una lumbre y de ella salir huyendo tres apaches. El uno se desabrigó de sus compañeros y los dos, cerro arriba y cerro abajo, los seguí con los señores y soldados de mi cargo y viéndose ya perdidos se metieron en una cueva atrincherándose a toda prisa y resistiéndose allí por lo favorable en que se hallaban tirándome a pie con los dichos, mis compañeros a cogerlos vivos me hirieron dos compañeros los

10. The Piros and Tiguas were Pueblo Indians from central New Mexico who had not rebelled against the Spaniards. Many joined them in the retreat to El Paso and remained in the lower area after New Mexico was reconquered.

11. Madrid was born in New Mexico about 1644 and with his wife and small children escaped from New Mexico in 1680. He was active militarily during the exile in the El Paso and Casas Grandes areas. He played a leading role in the 1692 and 1693 Vargas expeditions and returned with his family to New Mexico, where he served as *alcalde mayor* of Santa Cruz from 1699 to 1707.

cuales fueron Francisco Márquez en un brazo y al capitán Pedro de Leyva, junto a la cien, quiso Dios que los cogiéramos aunque al uno con algunas lanzadas los agasajé y acaricié y tomé razón de ellos de donde había aguaje que me llevaron a la Sierra Florida donde me fue forzoso estar dando agua de en una las bestias. Allí se juntaron los capitanes Juan Fernández de la Fuente, y Francisco Ramírez [de Salazar] con la gente de mi cargo a pedirme era muy conveniente procurásenos la paz con el capitán de su nación el cual la prometió, y que volviera con su capitán y que haríamos amigos de una vez y que ellos procurarían a los mansos y les darían guerra, en fin lo despaché y quedé haciendo curar y acariciar al herido y proseguí con mi viaje siempre por el rastro sin que hubiera hombre que supiera aguaje alguno sino era él de los ojos de San Francisco que los que lo sabían estaban muy neutrales del gesto y a señores comiendo el real por ración, el maíz hecho pozole de veinte a veinte y cuatro horas con la caballada estropeada y despeada. En fin y quiso Dios Nuestro Señor, diéramos con los ojos de San Francisco al cabo de haber caminado más de veinte y cuatro horas como a las ocho del día y llegando a dichos ojos se sido inhumito al cual le di cerco con los señores soldados de mi cargo y huyendo el indio que lo había hecho se le cogió el rastro y se siguió y cogió el cual fue el indio Jusephe, marido de Pancha.

La mansa tomó razón de él de la parte donde se hallaban los mansos o donde los dejaba y haciéndole aprieto me dijo que él me decía la verdad como lo vería que caminando a toda prisa sin parar, daría con la ranchería dentro de tres días; con cuya razón y la de que no habían juntado con los janos, viendo que perecíamos, se determinó por no dejar de proseguir en el seguimiento del rastro por no darles lugar a que se juntasen con los janos.

El enviar algunos hombres a que lo llevaran de este valle de Casas Grandes con carta que trajeron del capitán Francisco Ramírez, los cuales volvieron a toda diligencia; los tres llevando sólo dos costales de mazorca y pidiendo favor y socorro con nueva que se hallaban apretados y en peligro los vecinos de este dicho valle que con el aprieto de la nueva comparecer de todos los señores oficiales y demás soldados de mi cargo envié el real a toda diligencia a dar favor a dicha cristianidad y yo o veinte y cinco hombres de mi cargo y otros de los campos con los capitanes Juan de la Fuente y Francisco Ramírez proseguimos a dar asalto a los mansos que estaban ya retirados en la Sierra de Carretas. En fin, señor volvimos a diligencia a dar favor y socorro como llevo dicho y hallamos la noticia de que la gente que había dado en este valle con la victoria que llevaban de haber llevándose todas las caballadas y ganados menores y el haberles quemado los jacales donde tenían encerrados los bastimentos, estaban de asiento cinco leguas de este valle en la sierra y habiendo enviado espías y traído la noticia de que estaba en la dicha sierra salimos a la hora de la oración y fuimos al amanecer a la dicha sierra donde por reconocer lo áspero de ella y lo incontrastable tan a favor de los indios enemigos y no tener entradas ni saber ninguno salida alguna resolviéndome a que no quedaran con mayor avilantez pues los teníamos a la vista determiné el entrar a pie o como pudiéramos como lo hice y dándole guerra, como a las siete y ocho del día fue señor, la mayor guerra y batalla la que tuvimos que no se ha visto otra que le haya semejado desde que tengo uso de razón. Duró la pelea todo el sagrado día hasta ponerse el sol y fue la guerra la más cruda que se ha visto. Híceles todo el daño y destrozo que se pudiera. Matándoles más de cuarenta e hiriéndoles muchísima gente y se puede recontar el mucho empeño que hicimos pues yo y once

hombres de los de mi cargo hemos salido heridos y cuatro indios piros y tiguas que han peleado con sobrado valor mostrado, mucha lealtad de los demás de los otros dos campos también han tenido estoqueos que con unos y otros han sido por todos los heridos veinte y siete heridos, que es de más riesgo según la herida fue Acuña. Y esta pelea fue el día treinta de [ilegible] y hoy día de la fecha nos hallamos con alivio, pues han empezado a purgar los heridos que han sido en la cara, piernas, brazos y cabeza, por cuya causa y dar descanso a la caballada. Me determiné a esperar tres o cuatro días y ayer me presentó el capitán Francisco Ramírez, y el reverendo padre proveedor, fray Juan Porras cada uno su requerimiento a que les tengo respuesto, pidiéndoles cuatro hombres para poderle con ellos y el alférez de campo dar cuenta a vuestra señoría de todo lo sucedido y saber el estado en que se halla vuestra señoría por allá pues he tenido la noticia de la junta que tengo avisado a vuestra señoría con la traición de cogerlos durmiendo, por cuya causa no dilataba más mi viaje y lo aceleraba todo lo posible, y me requiere en nombre del rey nuestro señor, le dé favor y socorro hasta echar con castigo al enemigo de aquí. Pues de faltar de aquí mi campo se acabaría esta jurisdicción despoblándola el dicho alcalde mayor por faltarle a dar favor haciéndome en dichos requerimientos, dos mil cargos que mirando al mayor servicio de Dios Nuestro Señor y que no tengan mayor avilantez los enemigos con el despueblo de esta jurisdicción, teniendo modo de dar cuenta vuestra señoría de todo. Como más largamente cuenta de dichos requerimientos, que por testimonios de ellos y que me lo den de mi respuesta no se los remito a vuestra señoría y los llevaré en persona pues sólo espero la razón de vuestra señoría para con sus órdenes ponerlas en ejecución y de todo dará razón bastante el alférez Alonso García, que su merced y los demás señores, oficiales y soldados han acudido como nobles leales y valerosos vasallos de su majestad ganando todos créditos y reputación con amigos y enemigos procurando cada cual aventajar sus personas, que para poderse lo decir a vuestra señoría sin encarecimiento, y con verdad, me falta discurso, haciendo lo mismo con su gente el capitán Juan de la Fuente que en todo ha mostrado su valor y nobleza, y el capitán Francisco Ramírez, quienes me han pedido haga súplica a vuestra señoría, de que me remita cien indios piros, y tiguas, si acaso no se viere vuestra señoría en algún aprieto; pues con eso fío en Dios de conseguir la victoria que vengan si acaso los enviare vuestra señoría sin temor de que hay fríos, que gloria a Dios no han dado este año, y lo que ahora suplico a vuestra señoría me haga favor de enviarme si es que ha venido el capitán don Alfonso me socorra con cuatro o cinco manojos de tabaco, seis y ocho libras de chocolate y azúcar y una mano de papel, que es género que por acá no se halla, remito a vuestra señoría el pliego que estaba en poder del capitán Francisco Ramírez. Otra cosa de nuevo, no hay que dar aviso a vuestra señoría y sólo le pido a vuestra señoría, me avise de toda novedad de por allá y reverencia vuestra señoría las de los reverendos padres capellanes y de todos los señores y soldados muy en particular del alférez real y de Xavier que besan los pies vuestra señoría y con tanto Nuestro Señor me guarde a vuestra señoría los muchos y felices años que deseo y he menester de este valle de San Antonio de Casas Grandes y octubre a 3 de 1684 años.

Beso los pies de vuestra señoría su mayor criado,
Roque Madrid