Pedro Pino

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Reservation and Retirement: “I Have Been a Great Captain”

Indian Agent Ben Thomas’s request to the commissioner of Indian affairs was submitted on February 28, 1877. It began,

The Pueblos of Zuni, like the other eighteen Pueblos of this Agency, have a land-grant from the Spanish Government, but unlike those of most of the other Pueblos, the Zuni grant is nearly worthless, and if the Zuni Indians were restricted to their grant, they could not possibly maintain themselves nor their stock, consisting as it does of a sand-bed two leagues [sic] square. These Indians have hitherto supported themselves by farming outlying arable lands at or near . . . “Nutrias,” “Ojo Pescado,” and “Ojo Caliente,” and many small patches of land on the course of the stream. The Indians have held and farmed it from time immemorial and have firmly believed, and still believe, that it belongs to them; but now as the country settles up, they are being crowded more and more, year by year, and if some protection is not guaranteed them, they will soon lose their only means of subsistence.

Thomas went on to describe a tract of land intended to include the three main farming villages, then countered potential negative arguments about the size of the reservation:

It may be objected that this tract is unnecessarily large for fifteen hundred Indians and their stock, but when it is considered that nearly all of it is nearly or quite barren, I hope that it will be conceded that it is none too large. The other Pueblos hold their land
by quit-claim title from the United States, but this plan seems to work evil in that such a title seems to confer the right to sell the land, at least, there is much trouble growing out of this question continually, and it is difficult to prevent individual Indians from squandering the land of different communities. For these reasons it would seem much better in this case simply to withdraw this tract from sale and entry and set it apart as a reservation for the use of the Zuni Indians as long as they occupy it . . . it [the boundary description] is believed to be nearly correct. There are, at present, no settlers within the limits proposed, and I am confident that there is no adverse claim to any portion of the tract.320

During the same month, Thomas informed Governor Pino that the tribe no longer could control their salt lake the same way they had since aboriginal times.321 Pino was beginning to feel the immediate loss of autonomy which came with reservation life. Also during February, Thomas licensed another trader to work at Zuni, the first of three who were approved during 1877.322

Then, on June 27, 1877, Pino received the news about the reservation. Thomas blandly announced to old Pedro Pino that a reservation had been set aside for the Zuni people and that he was busy finding another teacher for the pueblo. “I send you today,” Thomas reported, “an order from the President giving you a large Reservation for the use of the Pueblo of Zuni.” And then with hardly a breath between, Thomas went on about the teacher, “I am trying to find a good teacher with a family, to go to Zuni to live with you for the purpose of teaching all the children of the Pueblo and helping you to keep away people from this land which the President has given you.”323

Thomas negotiated with the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions and finally contracted with H. K. Palmer to act as teacher at Zuni for six hundred dollars a year.324 The old governor was deluged with new restrictions and obligations as a result. A fair example of the government’s new attitude toward Pino’s authority was illustrated in the agent’s instructions to the Zuni governor regarding the new reservation school. Pino was ordered to find a house for the teacher and a home for the school; he was told to require the people to send their children to school and sell food to the teacher (“you have fat sheep to sell”), supply the school with
firewood, and fill the quota of four hundred children in the school every day.\textsuperscript{321}

It must have reminded old Governor Pino of the Spanish mission system, from which he had escaped as a youth. And these were not the only problems Pedro Pino faced on the new reservation. The smallpox epidemic of 1878 was raging so badly that the new teacher temporarily left Zuni by February, and the troops at Fort Wingate were being inoculated.\textsuperscript{322} Another problem came from Santiago Baca, one of the two new traders licensed at Zuni in 1878. Baca almost immediately got into trouble with the Zunis when he settled on property which had been improved by the people but was outside the new limits of the reservation, near Ojo Caliente. Pino complained to the agent that Baca was on Zuni land, but Thomas responded that the trader was within his rights and the Zunis had better not molest him.\textsuperscript{327} Pedro Pino was quickly learning what a reservation meant and how much land the Zunis had lost. It must have been a crushing experience for the man who had spent his entire life fighting to preserve those ancient Zuni boundaries.

Life at Zuni was apparently too hard on Dr. Palmer, the teacher, and in the spring he closed the school and left the pueblo for good. Thomas reported that it was a result of Palmer’s failed health and promised a new teacher in the near future—a promise that may have sounded more like a threat to Governor Pino. Until this time, the Zunis had supplied housing for the teacher at no cost. Thomas reported that the next teacher would be authorized to build a school.\textsuperscript{328} Pino must have wondered where that authorization would come from and who was going to pay for the land the school would be built on. It was becoming evident that the Zunis were no longer the autonomous tribe they had been for so many years. Pino’s authority was eroding daily.

But Pino was not completely forgotten. Authorities knew that he was the expert on that area of New Mexico and Arizona, and so when dignitaries visited, they stopped to talk with him. In 1878 one of the most important military leaders in the United States army made a visit to the Southwest to survey the country which the railroad would soon be forging across. General William Tecumseh Sherman had said, before a House Committee, that he thought
both Arizona and New Mexico should be given back to old Mexico. After his visit, he changed his mind and agreed that the area had potential.\textsuperscript{329}

During the course of his trip, Sherman determined to visit Governor Pino, perhaps having read one of the recent articles written by Francis Klett or reviewed Wheeler’s reports. At any rate, Pueblo Agent Thomas wrote to Governor Pino. “I have to inform you,” Thomas began, “that General Sherman is now here enroute from Washington to Zuni to make the people of Zuni a visit. I cannot tell you just when he will arrive at your Pueblo, but he will probably get there in about fifteen days from the present time. General Sherman,” Thomas emphasized, “is one of the greatest men in the United States and he is the first in command of the United States Army. He commands all the soldiers.”

One must wonder if Pino recognized a new patronizing tone in the letters now coming from the U.S. Indian agent, if he noted how the agent belabored every point as though all that the old governor had done for the past thirty years had been for naught. “Now I want the people of Zuni to treat the General with great respect,” Thomas continued. “He has talked with me about you and is very desirous of seeing you at home. I know it is only necessary for me to make the request of you in order to secure to the General the kind treatment which I desire for him. “\textsuperscript{330}

The only record we have of the meeting between Sherman and Pino is the note the general left with the governor. Sherman reported that Pino had shown him his letters of testimonial, including an 1848 document, which must have been the agreement with the United States that he had signed. Sherman said he personally knew most of the men who had written these testimonials and that the documents entitled “him personally [Pino] and his people to the friendly conduct of all Americans. I commend him to all who pass this way, and recommend that the farms, gardens, stock, and property of the Zunis be respected. They seem industrious, friendly and worthy, because they are self maintaining.” Then in a parting comment Sherman praised Pino once more: “Pedro Pino seems to be the Ancient of the village and knows all its past history and the road which leads to every point of the compass.”\textsuperscript{331}
Pedro Pino did indeed know all of the pueblo’s past history, and it must have been lying very heavily on his mind. The year 1878 was Pedro Pino’s last as governor of Zuni. After a brief interruption of his duties, evidently necessitated by his age, he was again offered the position of governor by the caciques. Old Pino was nearing ninety and declined the offer; instead, he nominated his son Ba:lawahdiwa (Patricio Pino) as his successor.332

The story of Ba:lawahdiwa is as long and interesting as his father’s, but it is another story, one about the governor of Zuni fighting to keep the reservation, an orator who talked to audiences throughout the nation, a man caught in the middle of intense political maneuvering as different power groups tried to gain control of the Zuni people. With the establishment of the reservation, a new chapter began for the Zuni people. Pedro Pino had led them well up to this point, but it must have been a great tragedy for him to see so much of his land lost and the authority of the position of governor usurped.

Old Pedro Pino continued to advise the caciques and help his son in difficult situations, but he turned most of his attention to his gardens and fields. Five or six years later, Cushing commented that since his resignation, “he has . . . been constantly occupied with his agricultural pursuits, as well as with his duties as ecclesiastical chief of his clan, and Keeper of the Amulets of the Hunt.”333

But it was not long before Pedro Pino was back in the thick of a political controversy. In early 1879, Patricio Pino was arrested and jailed for assault. Pedro Pino sought help through the agent. Unable to write himself, he asked the wife of the new schoolteacher to write to Thomas for him. While Pino had been following his retirement pursuits, a new schoolteacher, T. F. Ealy, had arrived at Zuni in 1878 with his wife and rented a house from old Pedro. Almost immediately Ealy had tried to come to the aid of the Zunis by keeping the agent informed of Navajo depredations and, apparently, arranging for a shipment of plows to the pueblo.334

The new Zuni governor was deluged with problems during his first days in office. Ealy immediately tried to oust any Mormons from the reservation, and a controversy started over the number of missionaries who should be on the reservation. Navajos were herding their flocks of sheep into the grain fields near the farming
villages. Mexican Americans were settling in traditional Zuni areas. The school was opening full-time. The agent asked for a wagon load of pottery, apparently for a government sponsored study. And finally, to add insult to a delicate situation, Thomas invited Patricio to Santa Fe to instruct him on how to run the pueblo.\(^{335}\)

Patricio declined the invitation to visit Santa Fe and did not send any pottery to the agent (in the coming years, many individuals and expeditions would buy, trade, and steal much of the material wealth of Zuni—pottery, jewelry and religious artifacts). The trespassing of Navajos and Mexican Americans was not so easily avoided. Patricio was involved in meetings and councils and ordered trespassers to leave, but apparently he was finally forced to remove one man himself. As a result, Patricio and two other Zunis were arrested and jailed in Los Lunas.

Pedro asked Mrs. Ealy to write Thomas and explain that the Mexican was trespassing and there was no assault. The case finally went to trial, and Governor Patricio Pino was acquitted. However, his horses were confiscated for court costs! This was Patricio’s early initiation into the American justice system.\(^{336}\) Pedro must have taken cold comfort from the fact that his son had to deal with the problems now.

The floodgates were now open. Patricio had to deal with extortion attempts, robbers, trespassers, surveying parties, squatters, and any number of other problems caused by the influx of whites into the area. But newcomers were still met with the same hospitality shown at the pueblo for centuries. In October 1879, a surveying party for the railroad reached the vicinity of Zuni, causing much excitement at the pueblo. Eventually the railroad would follow the valley of the Rio Puerco, but these surveyors were mapping a route closer to the pueblo. When they arrived at Zuni, Governor Patricio Pino appointed three men to accompany the party as guides “and point out the best route through their country.”\(^{337}\) The guides were reportedly successful: “The route they designated proved to be excellent, nearly devoid of hills, with frequent springs of water, and with grass in abundance. It is probably not too much to say that there is no people on the continent, enlightened or otherwise, among whom the laws are executed with greater regularity and efficiency than they are among these Pueblos.”\(^{338}\)
It was against this backdrop that anthropologists, or ethnologists, as they were commonly called then, arrived at Zuni. Late in September of 1879, a government party led by Colonel James Stevenson came to Zuni. The party and its members were highly important to the Zunis for many years to come. Under Major John Wesley Powell, the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) had commissioned parties to go among some of the Indian tribes and collect art and artifacts. Powell was afraid that the material and social cultures of the Indians would soon disappear if they were not quickly recorded.

Stevenson’s expedition was the first of several to go to the Zuni Pueblo and acquire, in one way or another, thousands of pots, blankets, and other objects. An employee of the BAE, who was on this first expedition and had shown remarkable ethnological ability at a young age, had also been commissioned by Powell to stay at the pueblo for several months and study the Zunis’ religion and culture. This young man was Frank Hamilton Cushing. His presence would have a tremendous impact on the future of the pueblo and its political relations with the government for many years.

As the expedition departed from Zuni, Cushing stayed behind, as though abandoned, and the Zunis, true to custom, took pity on him, fed him, clothed him, and finally adopted him and allowed him to join several of their secret and sacred societies. He stayed at Zuni longer than his commission—four and a half years—all the while writing about the religious ceremonies of the tribe. He used his influence to pressure the tribe into following his advice, at times even resorted to military might to gain what he wanted, but on the whole was a friend of the Zunis and seems to have been truly converted to the Ashiwi. His work is a marvelous account of Zuni life, but there were consequences which he could not have seen at the time.

Cushing, called by some the father of anthropology and by others “the first professional field ethnologist,” is recognized today as “the earliest professional anthropologist to so completely identify with and integrate into Indian society.” He eventually signed his letters as “1st War Chief of Zuni and Asst. U.S. Ethnologist,” an intriguing fusion of two different cultures. He was quickly adopted by Patricio Pino as a brother (a man without a
family in Zuni was in trouble). Thus, Cushing came to know not only Patricio but his father, Pedro Pino, as well. Through all that went on during the nearly five years he was at Zuni, the relationship between Cushing and the Pinos grew and flourished. Cushing did his level best to protect the tribe from a number of threats which he saw to their existence—land-grab attempts, Navajo rustling, white outlaws, and corrupt politicians and Indian agents. Many whites visited the pueblo to see the people Cushing wrote about in his nationally syndicated articles—and kept quite secret from the tribe. Newspapermen, writers, and other ethnologists came in ever-increasing numbers.  

Now more than ninety years old, Pedro Pino paid most of his attention to his religious duties and tending his gardens and fields. But the elder statesman was not yet free from Zuni business. In 1880 Pino was called to Santa Fe to file a deposition with the surveyor general concerning the Zunis’ land grant. Ethnologist Matilda Coxe Stevenson complimented Pedro Pino in 1881: “Though holding no official position his fluency in speaking Spanish, together with his mature judgement and good sense, commands for him a high seat in the councils of his people.” His enduring friendship for the Americans was illustrated in her following comment: “Appreciating the advantages of education, he is anxious to have the youth of the pueblo taught English.”

Old Pedro’s friendship for the whites did not make him immune to badgering from some of them, even in his later years. In May of 1881, another ethnologist, John C. Bourke, who was also an army officer, visited Zuni to meet the people and make a report to General Sheridan on their condition. Bourke was accompanied by the prominent artist, Willard L. Metcalf, and Sylvester Baxter, a reporter for the Boston Herald and Harper’s.

When Bourke reached the pueblo, he found that Cushing was violently ill, and so, because the army officers at Fort Wingate had told him that Pedro Pino knew more than anyone else about the Zunis’ customs and history, he searched him out and questioned the former Zuni governor.

“I see you have on a uniform,” the old governor said when Bourke entered his room. “Wait a moment until I put on my good clothing.” The old man produced a red flannel, long-tailed shirt,
which he donned before resuming the conversation in his perfect Spanish.

Bourke faithfully recorded in his journals the conversations which took place. Some of this dialogue is a fine example of the way early ethnologists and later anthropologists extracted information from Indians. Bourke immediately began to quiz the old man, pausing only for a few preliminary flatteries.

“It was asserted by some ignorant people that the Zunis were not a bit different from the wild Indians who roamed the plains and were only a little above the level of the brute, but I knew better than this,” Bourke said, “and wished that Pedro would give me a list of the families or clans of his people so that I could show the white men when I returned to Washington that the Zunis were a most excellent race, equal to the Americans in every respect.”

Admitting that he resorted to “flattery” and “exaggeration,” Bourke reported that Pino initially gave the officer/scientist some valuable information. In response to questions about the project engrossing him when Bourke arrived, Pino explained, “These feathers, you see, are to bring us rain. All the Zunis will plant these feather sticks in the ground and water will come down on their crops.” Pino, who had been married for a great many years, explained his kin and clan in a few brief words: “I, Pedro Pino, am one of the Aquila (eagle) clan, but my wife belongs to the Guacamayo (Parrot) clan, and all my children belong to the same clan. And I live with my wife’s people but when I die the Eagle clan will bury me, because I am Eagle and have been a great captain in that clan.”

Pino was also willing to give Bourke a list of the clans at Zuni at that time. He explained that his grandson Napoleon was the governor of Acoma, but Pino refused to give any information about some things. He was willing to explain the political structure of the tribe and describe some of the customs and games, but when asked to provide the Indian names of some of the men, he refused. And when Bourke asked Pedro Pino if he could accompany him to plant the prayer feathers he had been assembling, Pino had to draw the line.

“My friend,” responded Pino, “everybody in this world has his own business to attend to; for instance, there is the maestro (i.e.,
the school-master, the missionary, Reverend Dr. Ealy), he has his business, he teaches school; then there is Mr. Graham, he has his business, he sells flour and sugar and coffee in his store, and I have my business, I am going to plant these feathers and so, everybody has his own business.”

With the influx of missionaries, anthropologists, government agents, military personnel, and settlers into the Zuni area, it became more and more difficult to determine who, in fact, was the true spokesman for the U.S. government. Cushing, to gain the Zunis’ confidence to further his studies and gather ethnological information, competed with the missionaries, the teacher, and sometimes the agent for authority at the pueblo. The new school-teacher was especially resentful of Cushing’s presence and attitude. As an ethnologist and member of the Priesthood of the Bow, Cushing seemed to support the native religion, while the new teacher/missionary opposed the “pagan” beliefs of the people.

The Reverend Samuel A. Bentley replaced Ealy as teacher in 1881. Ealy was still renting his living quarters from Pedro Pino because all building materials were being diverted for railroad construction. Before he left, he complained that Cushing was interfering with the operation of the school, and the controversy continued when Bentley arrived and took up the argument. Another person who opposed Cushing was Matilda Coxe Stevenson, wife of Colonel James Stevenson and herself a fledgling ethnologist. Cushing and Stevenson did not get along from the first, and Bourke complained that she “monopolized all the available eggs and milk at the pueblo.”

Bentley and Stevenson apparently went to Pedro Pino and suggested that Cushing was a fraud, “a nobody, and of no importance.” Pino then went to Bourke and asked him for the truth. Bourke impressed the retired governor with the fact that he was an army official and then produced an official-looking Smithsonian report, saying that Cushing had contributed to it and Bentley was a liar. As for Stevenson, Bourke commented that “she didn’t know anything about it.” Pino believed Bourke’s statements and impressed by his uniform, and he accompanied Bourke throughout the rest of his stay at the pueblo as interpreter and guide.
Privately Cushing told Bourke that he was afraid the Zunis would discover his trickery (publishing their esoteric knowledge), and he would be forced to flee the pueblo. Cushing had refused, thus far, to take a Zuni wife, and so the Zunis, in turn, were beginning to suspect that he was merely trying to learn their secrets. Pedro Pino went to Bourke with this accusation and explained that with he had learned, Cushing would not be allowed to leave the pueblo.

“But then he can never take my old friend, Pedro Pino, to Washington, to see the Great Father, to take him by the hand, see the wonderful sights of the Estados Unidos, and receive beautiful presents from the Americans,” Bourke replied.352

Cushing confided to Bourke that as he continued to refuse to take a Zuni wife, he feared that the Zuni would become convinced that he had duped them in order to learn their secrets. For the present he felt fairly safe, holding out to them the promised trip to Washington as reward for being admitted further into their esoteric life. Within six months or so he expected he would have penetrated to the “Arcana of Zuni traditions” and after that he would have to be ready for flight.353

Another problem which faced Cushing was the growing number of Mormon converts. Non-Mormon officials at the pueblo claimed that the Mormons opposed the federal government in their policy with the Zunis (as well as other tribes) and were encouraging the Zunis to ally themselves with Salt Lake City and not Washington. In a show of force, Cushing and Bourke sent troops to arrest a leading Mormon Zuni named Ramon Luna.354 Luna was forced to pledge his allegiance to the United States and deny the authority of the Mormon church. Through this demonstration, Cushing convinced the Zuni leaders that the government was indeed backing him and thus was able to prolong his stay at the pueblo without having to marry a member of the tribe. Pedro Pino also talked to Bourke about the Mormon situation. He reported that he had been baptized but it had been accomplished by trickery. Pino told Bourke that he felt “chagrin, for he was a Washington man, not a Mormon, and he wanted Bourke to make this clear in Washington.”355
Cushing vehemently denied the accusation by Bentley that he was deceiving the people, though it was at least partly true. Cushing wrote to his superiors in Washington, describing Bentley’s charges. “He has constantly been casting mud and slime in my pathway, by telling the Indians I was not what I had been representing myself, that I had come here to write about all their secret affairs, and when I sent my papers East, I was paid for them and that was the way I was enabled to live.” Eventually, when Pino was caught in the middle of the deception, Cushing was forced to call him a “liar” to avoid admitting that he was one.

Cushing also showed Bentley his bracelet of small sea shells and pointed out that it meant he was a member of the Priesthood of the Bow: “Each member of our order was sworn to eternal fraternity and fidelity, and that once a Priest of the Bow always so. . . .” Cushing’s sense of “fraternity” and “fidelity” was quite malleable according to the ends he wished to accomplish. His work, as noted earlier, is marvelous in its authenticity and detail, but the effects of his deceptions and manipulating at the pueblo lingered long after. Pedro Pino found himself caught in “a center of controversy in the village over acceptance of new ways, a controversy which during the 1880s developed into mild factionalism.”

In fact, the divisive politics fostered in the pueblo by Cushing, Bentley, Bourke, and others were partly responsible for serious factionalism and division for decades to come. Historian Oakah L. Jones commented on Cushing’s behavior at the pueblo. “He certainly antagonized the Zunis repeatedly in his early activities—a defiance which today simply would not be tolerated in any pueblo of New Mexico. In the end, he violated Zunis’ trust by publishing many of the secret legends and ceremonial practices of his adopted nation.” Zuni tradition today suggests that after Cushing’s adoption, disasters began to befall the tribe, a correct historical observation whatever the cause may be.

Bourke continued to encourage Pino’s beliefs about the power of Washington. In 1880 and 1881, the railroad was finally coming into Zuni country. During both of these years, all the able and willing men from the pueblos of Zuni, Acoma, and Laguna were working to lay the tracks. Bourke told Pino that “the Rail Road at Wingate [A&P] would soon give the Zuni a fine market.
for all their manufactures and products—silverware, blankets, pottery, eggs, chickens, corn, fruits, and vegetables.”

Nothing could have been further from the truth. The railroad brought homesteaders to settle on former Zuni land. It brought produce from the outside, destroying what trade the Zunis had left with the military. Army officers began grazing their own stock and forming cattle companies (like Washington Matthews at Fort Wingate, whose company owned no land at all). The railroad intensified the loss of Zuni aboriginal holdings. The military and the B.A.E. sent joint expeditions to gather more Zuni artifacts for the Smithsonian Institution. Thousands of pots, many, many wagon loads, were taken to Washington, where they still fill corridors of storage space in the Smithsonian. Records do not indicate adequate payment to the Zunis.

Bourke summed up his propagandistic speech:

And a little farther on, the Rail Road would approach a lot tumble-down rookeries on top of rocky mesas, and the Americans on the cars would ask “who are those naked, half-starved old men up there? Why! don’t you know? Those are the Moquis [Hopi], the friends of the Mormons.” The Mormons came to them and wanted to be their friends and asked for a little land. The Moquis gave it. By and by the Mormons grew strong and first took away the cottonfields of the Oraybes at Mayencope (laughter among the Zunis). And afterwards the peach orchards and fields of the villages themselves. Then they took away all the women, because every Mormon wants 7 or 8 women and the Moquis had to go without; and all the good the Mormons ever did the Moquis was go baptize them in a cold spring two or three times a week and give them a bad attack of rheumatism or make their teeth ache and their throat choke just as Pedro Pino’s did when they baptized him.

All of the pressure from Cushing and Bourke strengthened Pedro Pino’s belief in the power of Washington and his policy of friendship toward the great nation. Cushing’s description of Pino as “Cazique Grande” was likely correct in political matters. Even though he was retired, his opinions must have carried a good deal of weight. Bourke reinforced Pino’s support for the government by paying fifteen dollars for the old man’s services as guide.
and interpreter when he finally left the village. Pino supported Cushing, but he still believed that the ethnologist should marry a Zuni and raise a family, like any respectable man. It was becoming clear to Cushing that he would actually have to take some of the Zunis to Washington to continue his work at Zuni.