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Appendix A
Biography of Pedro Pino
by
Frank Hamilton Cushing

Pedro Pino, or Lai-a-ai-tsai-luh [Lai-iu-ah-tsai-lu], must have been born some time during the last decade of the eighteenth century. He is a member, on his mother’s side, of the Keia-k-ia-li-kwe, or Eagle Gens, on his father’s side, of the Sho-ho-i-ta-kwe, or Deer Gens [?]. He was distinguished in his early youth by remarkable strength and endurance, and, when only thirteen or fourteen years of age, he accompanied his father and uncle and other members of his tribe, on a war party against the Navajos, by whom he was at that time captured. For some reason or other the Navajos did not murder him. After living a year or two with them, during which period he suffered terribly, although he acquired a fair knowledge of the Navajo language, he was redeemed by a wealthy Mexican, named Pedro Pino, hence, this came to be his name. It seems that he remained with his Mexican friends for a considerable period, acquiring not only a fair foundation of the Spanish language from them, but also conceiving a great attachment for his foster father, Pedro Pino.

He was ultimately restored to his tribe by the latter, and, for three or four years, seems to have been, together with other now aged members of the tribe, kept rather closely under the severe discipline of a Spanish ecclesiastical school teacher. Full of life and mischief, he says himself that his education was of no benefit to
him, that he ultimately rebelled against the rod and the master and left the Pueblo to dwell in the then occupied village of He-sho-ta, just north of the Valley of Zuni.

Between the ages of seventeen and eighteen he was probably married to the wife with whom he still faithfully lives.

At an early age he was made a member through an injury received in battle, of the order of Kea-shi-kwe, or Cactus People, a society of war surgeons, and one of the twelve secret sacred organizations of the tribe. Evincing, under the training of his father and uncles, remarkable prowess in war, he was made soon after this a member of the Priesthood of the Bow, and throughout his long life this prowess seems never to have forsaken him, and he ultimately became one of the highest members of the order.

In youth, a handsome man, with rare intellectual and executive ability, as well as one of the greatest orators of the tribe, he was early made a subchief. Through his connection with the sacred orders and by virtue of his clanship heredity, he became ecclesiastical head of the Eagle Gens, in addition to the sacred office of Keeper of the Gods of Prey, and the Medicine of the Hunt.

Through his sterling ability in council and his family connections, which were the wealthiest of the tribe, he was made, at this early age, Head Political Chief, an office which he occupied almost constantly during his forty-five subsequent years.

Through his connection with the Pino family and his early training with the Dominican priests, he had as a young man a remarkably good knowledge of Spanish, which circumstance gave him great consideration with the authorities in Santa Fe. He was personally well acquainted with and always well received by the last Spanish Governor of New Mexico, [Manuel] Armijo.

A prominent member of the Priesthood of the Bow, he was often the leader of war parties, which, from their success, attracted the attention and gained the favor of all other Pueblo Indians, as well as the Mexican authorities.

When the first expedition, after the close of the Mexican War, took place, Pedro Pino was still Head Chief of his nation, the hospitable host of the first Americans who ever officially visited his country, and chief of the first council which was held between his people and representatives of our government.
He became the staunch friend and powerful ally of General Kendrick, Campbell and other early officers of the Department of New Mexico, and he at present holds papers from nearly all officers of the United States Government who have visited his country since those early days. A few years since, when General Sherman, then a junior officer, passed through the country of Zuni, he was so impressed with the eloquence and ability of Pedro Pino, as to name him, in a letter which he gave the latter, the genius and intellect of Zuni.

Some six or eight years since, he was, after a brief term of rest, reelected to the office of Head Chief. He chose, however, only to name his son, Patricio Pino, or Pa-la-wah-ti-wa [Ba:lawahtiwa] as his successor. Although between eighty and ninety years of age, he has since then 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.

During the early days of the Navajo wars and the subsequent War of Rebellion, he was promised, in reward for his services to our Government in both those enterprises, by the Commanding General then stationed at Santa Fe, opportunity for visiting the reverenced home of Washington, or of our Government. Through the intercession of brother priests, however, he was induced, on account of his connection with some religious ceremonials then to take place, to renounce the opportunity. During a period of more than thirty-one years he had occasionally renewed his hopes of visiting the East, or the “land of sunrise.” Only a year or two since, feeling the influence of his increasing age and consequent infirmities, he at last gave up his long cherished hopes, and broke down in tears and sobs before me. It was, therefore, with remarkable alacrity, on my proposition of a journey with a chosen small delegation of the tribe, that he urged his claims to consideration. When reminded of his great age and infirmities, of the immense distance to be traveled over, and of the possible consequence of change in food and climate, he remarked;—“I have but a few days, as it were, to live. If disappointed, I must die ere the return of the pilgrims. If permitted to join your party, through the happiness of my heart and the joy of meeting my brothers of old Washington times, it may be I shall
grow young again. Or, if I should die! What matters it? At best, I have but a few days to live.”

It thus chanced that Pedro Pino was numbered among the Zuni visitors at Washington. During the protracted journey he suffered much, but with the rare fortitude which he had evinced during many a Navajo campaign, he endured his self-imposed sufferings and no word of complaint escape [sic] his lips from the beginning to the end of his long and novel journey.

Although aged, he was, during his brief residence in Washington, foremost spokesman of the little delegation; and while the other members of this delegation were absent with myself on the sacred pilgrimage to the Atlantic Ocean, under the influence of his host and hostess, Colonel and Mrs. Stevenson, he rapidly acquired and unfailingly observed the little niceties and usages of civilized society.

During his visit to the Tomb of Washington, at Mount Vernon, he was, while engage [sic] in prayer over the grave of the dead hero, most seriously affected, as he regarded Washington as the Great Cacique of all the American chiefs he had known during the prime of his life, and mourned that he should never have had an opportunity of grasping him by the hand.

While returning, the chill and damp of the journey gave him such a severe cold that he was taken violently ill on the following day; but with characteristic Zuni superstition and religious devotion, he remarked, in explanation of his illness;—“Before the grave of my father I stood in prayer, but my heart wept and my thoughts decayed, and illness entered therein.” Whatever mat [sic] be the cause of Pedro Pino’s illness, under any circumstance, he invariably ascribes it rather to supernatural causes than to the failing strength of years, hence he is sometimes known in his own tribe as the “old boy.” He was intensely grieved on parting with his children, as he chooses [sic] to call the present Head Chief and myself, but he endured the Journey back to his country with the same fortitude that had distinguished his outward trip, and arrived at his home by no means seriously ill from its effects.

F.H.C.