

FOURTH ARTICLE IN THE SERIES -- FREE STATE OF SOCORRO 1953-2003  
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### **SOCORRO LAND GRANT**

New Mexico was declared part of the Spanish empire by the Coronado expedition in 1540. This became official in 1598 when Onate declared San Juan Pueblo, and later Santa Fe, the capitol of New Spain. Settlers into the region were given parcels of land by the King of Spain. This began twenty-two years before the Mayflower landed on Plymouth Rock. Socorro was one such Spanish Land Grant. New Mexico remained part of the Spanish empire until 1821, when it became part of Mexico. In 1848, the land was transferred to the United States and became the Territory of New Mexico, and attained statehood in 1912.

Spanish occupation of New Mexico was significant in the 1600's. In 1680, the Pueblo Indians, tired of the laws imposed on them by the Spanish Conquistadors, revolted and drove most of the non-Indian people out of the territory.

During the "Pueblo Revolt," the handful of Spanish families in Socorro left. They traveled south along the Rio Grande into Mexico and established a new Socorro, near present day El Paso, Texas, in 1680. Socorro, New Mexico, and Socorro, Texas, are thus linked through the same heritage. New Mexico remained virtually abandoned by Europeans during the 1700's.

When New Mexico was re-opened for settlement in the early 1800's, many of these families returned to legally claim the land of their forefathers on the Socorro Land Grant. Some of these families have descendants still living in Socorro today.

Socorro fell under Mexican jurisdiction in 1821. However, Mexico recognized many of the settlements along the Rio Grande, including Socorro, as sovereign Spanish settlements. Some of the original Spanish Land Grants are recognized by the United States government today. It is not clear when, if ever, the status of the Socorro Land Grant was forfeited.