



PrimarySource

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Aguayo's Expedition

Diary of Fray Juan Antonio de la Peña

Marqués de San Miguel de Aguayo was appointed governor of the province of Coahuila y Tejas. From 1720 to 1722 Aguayo led an expedition that established presidios and missions across Texas.

January 23 [1721]. . . His Lordship realized that the Presidio de San Antonio was defenseless and also exposed to fire as the soldiers had recently experienced living in thatched roof huts. Therefore, His Lordship attempted to construct an accident-proof fortress made of adobe. After ordering the cutting of the necessary lumber for the church, stores and quarters, His Lordship selected a better site than that on which the presidio used to be located. . . . It was first necessary to clear the land by cutting down many trees. A great number of people were then put to work making adobe. His Lordship then outlined the fortress as a square with four bulwarks.¹ . . .

His Lordship encouraged the abundant² planting of corn for the maintenance of the soldiers and friendly Indians. . . . The irrigation ditch which His Lordship had ordered constructed at his own expense from the San Pedro River could very well irrigate the two leagues of fertile land which it encloses between itself and the San Antonio River. . . .

[March] 24th. . . His Lordship arrived at the Presidio of Our Lady of Loreto de la Bahía del Espíritu Santo. . . . Nothing was accomplished during the first eight days because the Governor was confined to his bed due to his poor health. . . . On . . . April 6, His Lordship began to outline the foundations of the presidio in accordance with the orders of Our Lord the King at the site where the French had theirs under La Salle from 1684 to 1690. . . . On digging the foundations for the fortress, we found nails, pieces of gun locks and fragments of other items used by the French. The foundation for the octagonal³ fortress was laid in 15 days. . . . After completing this chore, His Lordship proceeded to establish Mission Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga, which was located near the presidio. All this time a number of Indian families had come telling the Governor that many more would

settle here. . . . There was no doubt that they would do so because they had shown much pleasure and happiness with the gifts and other items distributed among them by the Governor. . . . It was also known that these Indians were more docile,⁴ and they would be happier cultivating crops and their own souls. . . .

Leaving Captain Don Joseph Ramón . . . entrusted with finishing the construction of the fortress, His Governor set out for San Antonio. He arrived on April 26, still in poor health. . . . The new Presidio de San Antonio could have been finished in the meantime had it not been for the continuous rains. Not only was it impossible to work for three weeks, but the 30,000 adobe bricks which His Lordship had ordered made while he went to La Bahía were all destroyed in the rains. . . . All continued working. . . .

All the kingdoms of New Spain are now protected by . . . the string of presidios which had been established from Los Adaes, Texas, and [La] Bahía, and by fortifying the [one at] San Antonio. . . .

Review Questions

1. What structures did Aguayo have built?
2. What did Aguayo name the presidio built at the site of La Salle's fort?

Critical Thinking

3. **Summarizing** What hazards made it difficult for Aguayo to complete his tasks?
4. **Identifying the Main Idea** What was the main purpose of Aguayo's expedition?

1 **bulwark** defensive structure

2 **abundant** plentiful

3 **octagonal** eight-sided

4 **docile** quiet, calm