

## TREATY OF ACOMA PUEBLO, ACT OF OBEDIENCE AND VASSALAGE

In the name of the most holy trinity...; Be it known and manifest to all who may see or in any way hear about this instrument of loyalty and vassalage that Don Juan de Oñate.....

at the foot of a very large rock, on top of which is situated the pueblo of Acoma, accompanied by the most reverend father, Fray Alonso Martinez, apostolic commissary of his Holiness, the friars of the order of Saint Francis, and many captains and soldiers, and there being present also numerous natives, including chieftains, leaders, and common people, and among them three Indians named Coomo, Chaamo, and Ancua, who said that they were chiefs of the pueblo of Acoma, all of whom had been assembled there by the governor; in his presence and before me, Juan Velarde, secretary, with the aid of the reverend father, Fray Alonso Martinez, apostolic commissary, and Don Tomás, Indian interpreter, the governor explained to the chieftains and the other Indians the object of his coming and what it was fitting for them to do.

He told them that he had come to their country to bring them to the knowledge of God and the king our lord, on which depended the salvation of their souls and their living securely and undisturbed in their nations, maintained in justice and order, safe in their homes, protected from their enemies, and free from all harm. Wherefore they should know that there is only one true God Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, rewarder of the good and punisher of the wicked, who has a heaven for the bliss of the former, and a hell for the punishment of the latter. This God and master of all had two servants on earth through whom He governed. The one who ruled in spiritual matters was the pope, Roman pontiff, high priest and head of the church, whose representative in this country was the most reverend father commissary, whom they saw in their midst, and they should respect and venerate him and all the priests wearing the habit, as ministers of God and men of His church. The other, who governed the world in temporal matters, was the most Christian king, Don Philip, our lord, sole defender of the church, king of Spain and the Indies, whose representative in this land was his lordship, the governor, and therefore they should respect and obey him in everything. And it was fitting that they render obedience and vassalage to God and the king, and in their places to the reverend father commissary in spiritual matters and to the governor in temporal affairs and in the government of their nations, as they were free people and owed allegiance to no one. It was to their advantage, moreover, to place themselves of their own free will under the authority of the king, Don Philip, our lord, great monarch and ruler, who would maintain them in peace and justice and defend them against their enemies, and employ them in positions and occupations in political and economic affairs, as would be explained to them in more detail later. Therefore, they should consider whether they wished to render obedience to God and the king.

The chieftains, having heard and understood the above and conferred among themselves about the matter, replied with spontaneous signs of pleasure and accord that they wished to become vassals of the most Christian king our lord, and, as his vassals, they desired to render at once obedience and vassalage for themselves and in the name of their nations. The governor reminded them that they should realize that by rendering obedience and vassalage to the king our lord they would become subject to his will and laws, and that if they failed to observe them they would be punished as transgressors of the orders of their king and natural master. Therefore they should consider what they desired to do and what answer to give. To this they replied that they wished to render the said obedience and vassalage, as they had stated before, both in their own name and in the name of the people of their nations. The governor said that since this was the case, they should rise, as a sign of obedience, for during all this time they had remained seated, and embrace the father commissary and his lordship and kiss their hands. The said three captains rose and did as they had been directed, as a sign of obedience and vassalage.

The governor ordered me to make a record of these proceedings for him and pointed out that as far as was known and could be learned, the governments and nations in this land were all

autonomous and free, not subject to any particular monarch or ruler. They, of their own free will, as has been set forth, wished to have Don Philip, our lord, as their king, and to render obedience and vassalage to him voluntarily, without compulsion from anyone. As I recognized that this was the truth, I made a written record of it for the greater peace and comfort of the royal conscience and in order that the governor's zeal and diligence in the royal service might be manifest to everyone. I gave it to him, with my name and seal affixed. It was likewise signed by the governor and stamped with the great seal of his office. Done at the pueblo of Acoma, October 27, 1598. The witnesses were Don Cristóbal de Oñate, Captain Gregorio César, Alférez Bartolomé Romero, Antonio Conte de Herrera, Cristóbal de Herrera, and Francisco Vido, servants of his lordship. **Don Juan De Oñate.**

I, Juan Velarde, secretar , was present at all the aforesaid, together with the governor and the witnesses. In testimony of which I signed. JUAN VELARDE, secretary.

This copy was corrected and compared with the original, which remains in the possession of the governor, who attached his name. I had it copied by his order at the pueblo of San Juan Bautista, New Mexico, on February 21, 1599. The correction was witnessed by Alonso Nüflez de Inojosa, Cristóbal de Herrera, and Diego de Castilla.

In testimony whereof I signed it and stamped it with his lordship's great seal. In testimony of the truth, **JUAN VELARDE**, secretary.

s. From a photograph of a certified copy in the Archivo General de Indias, *Patronato, legajo 22*. In the manuscript, the name Acoma is sometimes spelled Acome, but we have kept the recognized form.

Source Don Juan de Oñate, colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628  
Hammond, George Peter, 1896-  
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