

## Blood Tears

By Ray John de Aragon

The peaceful blue skies of Nuevo Mexico and the uneasy silence of this enchanted land erupted suddenly erupted in a volcanic explosion of violence and terror in the year of Our Lord, 1680. For many moons the Indians harbored the seeds of discontent and anger because strange white men on horses had invaded their mother earth. These people, who called themselves Spanish, uprooted the Indian way of life by introducing a new God, and this the Indians felt brought chaos to the children of the sun.

From the very depths of hopelessness and despair, a leader arose unlike any other that had ever been seen in the Indian nations before. This Red man was Popé, a medicine man from San Juan Pueblo who promised to heal all the wounds of sorrow and pain. Along with his trusted disciples, Tupatú, and Catiti, Popé traveled from one remote tribe to another fanning the fires of war.

Popé was a masterful commander with a gifted tongue. He skillfully won over the support and the hearts of the chiefs who swore to follow his leadership. He wanted the old way of life returned to his people. Popé could not rest until all the signs of the Spaniards intrusion was erased from their sacred land.

As the sun rose on August, 10<sup>th</sup>, 1680, the unsuspecting Spanish were caught completely by surprise. Farmers tilling the soil were hacked to pieces. Many women were raped and then brutally murdered. The Indians in their raging fury spared no one. Not even the children, who cried uncontrollably as the crimson blood of their parents spilled every where, could be saved.

The skies darkened with the smoke from burning buildings. The holy images of the Spanish settlers were pulled off of the altars of the Christian churches and viciously desecrated as the Franciscan friars looked on in disbelief. While the church walls crumbled around them, the friars begged for the thirst for blood to end, but no one listened. The sorrow filled kneeling priests then accepted a martyr's death as the raging fires of Hell scorched the earth.

After many days peace returned and the smoke finally cleared. The bodies of the Spanish and those of some of the Indians that had desperately tried to help them were strewn all across the ravines, valleys, plains, and hills of

Nuevo Mexico. Surprisingly though not all of the Spanish were killed. Through the grace of God some of them managed to escape the turmoil and fled south to a place called several hundred miles away called El Paso del Norte (the Northern Pass). Here they cried for their loved ones Spanish and the Indians that helped them.

The Spanish settlers had arrived in New Mexico in 1598. These brave and daring colonists came in search of a new life. These families, which included men, women, and children, had either come directly from Spain, or by way of New Spain (Mexico), where they had settled temporarily before their arrival in New Mexico. Contrary to popular myth, the colonists were all of Spanish origin, but a few did take their Indian servants along with them on the perilous journey through the Jornada del Muerto (Journey of the Dead Man).

After nearly one hundred years under Spanish control, the Indians revolted en masse in what is recognized as the most brilliantly planned, and best executed uprising by American Indians in the history of North America. Although the Spanish were unmercifully forced out of New Mexico, the Indians soon discovered, much to their grief, that things were not any better with the white man out of the way. The terrible droughts that left the soil parched and useless still continued and the numbers of wild game decreased even more than before. But what did make the situation much worse for the more peaceful sedentary tribes were the fierce marauding Indians which included the Utes, Comanches, Apaches, and Navajos who raped, pillaged, and indiscriminately destroyed everything within their reach.

The Spanish military had kept the attacking Indians at bay for decades, but now the marauding tribes were free once again to build up a reign of terror. Thunder rolled into New Mexico as the braves of the pueblos were killed and their women and children carted off to a foreign life by other Indian tribes. Some of the villages were wiped out completely and within time they ceased to exist altogether even in the memories of those who knew.