



History of Utah

Hubert Bancroft

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As Francisco Vazquez de Coronado was journeying from Culiacan to the north and east in 1540, he rested at Cibola, that is to say Zuni, and while waiting for the main army to come forward, expeditions were sent out in various directions. One of these, consisting of twenty men under Pedro de Tobar, and attended by Father Juan de Padilla, proceeded north-westward and after five days reached Tusayan, or the Moqui villages, which were quickly captured. Among other matters of interest, information was here given of a large river yet farther north, the people who lived upon its banks being likewise very large.

Returning to Cibola, Tobar reported what had been said concerning this river; whereupon Captain Garcia Lopez de Cardenas was sent with twelve men to explore it, Pedro de Sotomayor accompanying to chronicle the expedition. Obtaining at Tusayan, where he was well received, guides and carriers, with an ample supply of provisions, Cardenas marched for twenty days, probably in a north-westerly direction through a desert country until he discovered the river but from such high banks that he could not reach it. It was the river called the Tizon and it flowed from the north-east toward the south-west. It seemed to the Spaniards when they first descried it that they were on mountains through which the river had cut a chasm only a few feet wide, but which if they might believe the natives was half a league across. In vain for several days, with their faces toward the south and west, they sought to escape from the mountains that environed them, and descend to the river, for they were suffering from thirst. At length one morning three of the lightest and most active of the party crept over the brink and descended until they were out of sight. They did not return till toward evening, when they reported their failure to reach the bottom, saying that the river, and distances and objects, were all much larger than they seemed to the beholder above, rocks apparently no higher than a man being in fact larger than the cathedral at Seville. Compelled by thirst they retired from the inhospitable stream, and finally returned to Tusayan and Cibola...

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