

Rumors of Seven Golden Cities

Francisco Coronado was a Spanish explorer who visited parts of the American southwest. He was born in Salamanca, Spain around 1510. He quickly took to exploring. As governor of New Galicia (a province of New Spain in present-day Mexico), Coronado heard stories of seven golden cities along the Pacific Ocean named Cibola and quickly assembled a simultaneous land and sea expedition. The cities were said to contain houses made out of gold and streets paved with gold. Coronado and a friend, Antonio Mendoza, invested large sums of money in the expedition. In 1540, Coronado, Mendoza, 335 Spaniards, 1300 natives, and four Franciscan monks headed north for the purposes of taking the gold from the Seven Cities of Cibola.

The Search

Coronado divided the expedition into small groups that would begin the arduous inland journey at different intervals so that the grazing areas and water holes along the trail would not be overwhelmed. Coronado and the expedition first crossed into present-day America by following the Zuni River into Cibola (present day New Mexico). Coronado expected to find the fabled seven cities, but instead, found little more than a complex of Zuni Indian pueblos. Nevertheless, a devastated Coronado and his half-starving expedition pushed on into present-day Arizona, where they entered Zuni Indian territory at Hawikuh and demanded entrance into the village. When the Zuni refused, the men of the expedition took their village by force and confiscated all of the food they needed. This incident intimidated natives of nearby villages, who quickly submitted to Coronado in future encounters.

Discovery of the Grand Canyon

From Hawikuh, Coronado sent several scouting parties to search for the Seven Cities of Cibola. The first scouting party raided a Hopi Indian Village, that turned out to be as poor as the Zuni villages. Although no gold was discovered, members of the expedition learned of the Colorado River that was located to the west. Coronado then sent a second scouting party to find the Colorado River. Members of this scouting party became the first to find the Colorado River and the magnificent Grand Canyon. The expedition, however, was unsuccessful in descending the Grand Canyon to the Colorado River, and thus could not link up with the water expedition. They next headed east where they encountered another pueblo village along the Rio Grande in New Mexico. It was near this village called Tiguex, close to present-day Albuquerque, where Coronado and his expedition spent the winter of 1540-1541. During the winter, Coronado clashed with Indians from the village in what came to be known as the Tiguex War.

Still, No Golden Cities!

During the winter of 1540-1541, Coronado once again heard of a mythical city to the northeast known as Quivira that was said to be full of gold and riches. Coronado and his expedition traveled hundreds of miles to the village of Quivira in present-day Kansas. Once again, Coronado suffered a crushing disappointment when he found the village and there was no gold. Coronado returned to Tiguex and spent another winter there. On June 29, 1541, Coronado held the first ever Christian mass in the interior of the present-day United States near Dodge City, Kansas. The event is commemorated with a large concrete cross known as Coronado's Cross.

Death in Disgrace

Coronado was soon ordered back to New Spain (Mexico). He remained the governor of New Galicia, but his expeditions had bankrupted him. He died on September 22, 1544 in Mexico City

- 1. What is explained in the first paragraph?**
 - A. Coronado's determination to take the gold in the Seven Cities of Cibola
 - B. Coronado's struggle to find the Seven Cities of Cibola
 - C. How Coronado was elected as governor of New Galicia
 - D. Coronado's adventures before 1540

- 2. Why did Coronado divide his expedition to begin the inland journey at different times?**
 - A. To confuse natives in the area
 - B. To have a better chance of finding gold
 - C. To make sure the animals would have food and water
 - D. To make sure his expedition did not starve

- 3. Which best describes how Coronado and the expedition felt after following the Zuni River to Cibola?**
 - A. Bitterly disappointed
 - B. Somewhat disappointed
 - C. Excited and enthusiastic
 - D. Hopeful and rested

- 4. After Coronado's expedition took Hawikuh by force...**
 - A. other native groups began building defenses.
 - B. his men were unable to procure food and supplies they needed.
 - C. other native groups were scared and gave the expedition what it asked for.
 - D. the expedition was finally able to collect some gold.

- 5. Coronado and his expedition...**
 - A. are credited with discovering the Colorado River and Grand Canyon.
 - B. found gold and riches in the village of Tiguex.
 - C. held the first Christian mass in present-day New Mexico.
 - D. failed to find the Seven Cities of Cibola but did find the riches of Quivira.

- 6. Following his expeditions in the New World, Coronado was...**
 - A. poor
 - B. wealthy
 - C. removed as governor of New Galicia
 - D. making plans for new expeditions

7. For which of the following questions could “Tiguex” be the answer?

A. Where did Coronado die?

B. Where did Coronado and his men plant Coronado’s Cross?

C. Where did Coronado and his men discover the Grand Canyon?

D. Where did Coronado and his men spend the winter of 1540-1541?