



Francisco Vasquez de Coronado: Explorer and Conquistador

Francisco Vázquez de Coronado (1510-1554) was a Spanish ruler, explorer and conquistador. He was the first European to explore North America's Southwest.

Coronado was a governor of New Galicia, a western province of Mexico. He searched fruitlessly for treasure that was rumored to exist in northern Mexico: the fabled seven Golden Cities of Cibola. With a group of hundreds of Spaniards and enslaved natives, he traveled through what is now northern Mexico and the southwestern USA (including Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Kansas). His expedition found only Zúñi, Hopi, and Pueblos, native Americans who repelled Coronado when he demanded that they convert to Christianity. Coronado killed many native Americans during this expedition. Since he did not find gold, silver, or other treasures, his expedition was branded a failure by Spanish leaders.

Explore like Coronado did. Use Google Earth to find the following places where Coronado traveled:

- The Grand Canyon in northern Arizona. Coronado was the first Mexican Explorer to send men to explore it in 1540.
- Coronado Heights - a hill northwest of Lindsborg, Kansas. A castle was built here in memory of Coronado.
- Coronado National Memorial near Sierra Vista, Arizona - established to commemorate his expeditions through this area.
- The Coronado National Forest is located in southeastern Arizona and is named in honor of the explorer.
- At Palo Duro Canyon, Texas, (southeast of present day Amarillo, Texas) on May 23 1541, his group celebrated the first Thanksgiving in North America, after finding food supplies.

