

RIO TESUQUE

CHURCH OF SAN ISIDRO

Historical records show that Spanish residents first inhabited Rio de Tesuque when land grants were issued to Juan de Venabides, Juan de Ladesma, and Juan de Gabaldon. In 1752, Corporal Juan de Venabides was required to present documents to establish his land boundaries in the Cajon de Tesuque. A grant had been issued on November 25, 1744. Don Juan Gabaldon also received a royal grant in 1752 to lands in Rio Tesuque. Those of Juan de Ladesma bordered the Gabaldon Grant.

The residents of Rio Tesuque were mentioned in documents in the Spanish and Mexican church and civil archives. Through baptisms, marriages, burials and other historical information, the family histories of the residents can be established. Although incomplete, the genealogies of most of the families show many to have been continuous residents of the area.

One of the earliest descriptions of the Rio Tesuque area was made by the Commissary Visitor to the Franciscan Missions of New Mexico, Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez who reported in 1776 that Rio Tesuque had 17 families with a population of 94 individuals. He states that the settlement had been founded long after the Reconquest. Dominguez does not mention any churches or church buildings in the settlement of Rio Tesuque.

A 1795 census within the Santa Cruz de la Cañada area shows that in Rio Tesuque there were 175 Españoles, consisting of 93 men and 83 women. By 1821, the church census for Rio

Tesuque shows 270 residents with 47 families.

This same year, a report of the missions includes that Don Gregorio Alarid owned a private chapel, or oratorio, within his home and had the necessary permission so that the Holy Sacrifice of the ~~Mass~~^{1/4} could be celebrated. This same Gregorio Alarid, in 1823, was identified as a "vecino del Rio Tesuque" who owed \$360 pesos to Don Juan Estevan Pino. In due payment he mortgaged "...un rancho de 536 varas de tierra, seis varas de tierra cercadas de madera, de una casa de tres portales, un oratorio dedicado a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, de otra casita que se encierra tarsole y un cuartito para molino." (...a ranch of 536 varas of land, six varas of fenced land, a house of three portals, a chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, another little enclosed house (?) and a small room for the mill.) If the debt was paid within three years, the ranch would be returned. Interestingly, he is also identified as "Teniente del Partido de San Ysidro del Rio de Tesuque".

Juan Bautista Vigil y Alarid owned the estate now known as El Rancho Viejo in 1830. Acquired from his uncle, Gregorio Alarid, it consisted of lands, a home and an "oratorio".

In 1827 the Confraternity of Carmel of Santa Cruz, reported that on July 18, 1827, \$121 was collected in dues in Rio Tesuque, but there is no mention of a specific village church. However, on January 11, 1855, there is a record of a marriage which took place "en la capilla del Rio Tesuque", in the chapel of Rio Tesuque, between Jose Manuel de Herrera, viudo and Josefa Gabilan, viuda. The names would indicate that they were

residents of the Pueblo, but it is curious that the marriage was solemnized in Rio Tesuque.

The various baptisms and marriages of the residents of Rio Tesuque apparently took place in Santa Fe. The records indicate that the participants were "vecinos," neighbors from Rio Tesuque. Many Rio Tesuque burials took place in Santa Fe as well, however by 1869, the earliest recorded burial in the Camposanto of Rio Tesuque, was that of Maria Bruna Ortega, the 12 day old daughter of Juan de Dios Ortega and Victoria Trujillo. Burials before this time appear to be in a "cementerio" and are labeled from Rio Tesuque.

It is clear that by 1870, the inhabitants had their own cemetery if not their own church. In a deed from Vicente Ortega and others to Rev. J. B. Lamy, dated June 9, 1870, a parcel of land was granted from the residents of Rio Tesuque. The document states: "that the residents having built a cemetery for the burial of their families, and in consideration of one dollar, the residents deed to J.B. Lamy, the cemetery, composed of 20 square varas, and bounded on the south by the Arroyo of the Benavides..." They further pledged to defend the Bishop or his successors against any claims against the cemetery. The document was signed in the presence of Vicente Ortega, Justice of the Peace, of the Precinct of Rio Tesuque. The signatures follow. They are:

Vicente Ortega
Jose Maria Gonzales
Juan Benavides
Jose Ignacio Trujillo
Jose Antonio Garcia
Frco Domingues y Lucero
Jacinto Griego

Julian Benavides
Jesus Jimenes
Simon Garcia
Roque Ruival
Francisco Ruival
Guadalupe Ruival
Guadalupe Melquiades Ruibal

Jn Antonio Jimenes
Je Antonio Gimenes
Juan Garcia
Miguel Abeyta
J Anacleto Contreras
Jn Antonio Gonzales
Jn Climaco Ortega
Francisco Domingues
Jn Nepomuceno Martinez
Antonio Aban Samora
Carmel Romero
Je Atanasio Sais
Antonio Jose Garcia
Manuel Duran
Romulo Benavides
Tomas Ortega
Feliz Duran

Bautista Bernal
Polito Domingues
Jn Rafael Jimenez
Je Miguel Domingues
Je Leonicio Gimenes
Jesus Domingues
Secundino Jimenes
Anastacio Ortega
Agustin Gimenes
Cristoval Garcia
Je Narvais
Francisco Domingues
Antonio Trujillo
Natividad Romero
Manuel Garcia

→ Attached to the document is a statement signed by Rev. J. Ag. Truchard, dated June 9, 1870, in which he ^{declares} states that he blessed the Cemetery of the Chapel of Rio Tesuque.

After New Mexico became a territory, the United States Government established courts for the adjudication of the many land claims. The villagers of Tesuque had by 1871 petitioned the United States government to issue "patentes" to prevent the sale of the land by unauthorized individuals. In the documents Rio Tesuque is identified as San Ysidro del Rio Tesuque. However, in Sadliers' Catholic Directory, for 1875, within the Diocese of Santa Fe, only the Chapel of Holy Family is listed for Rio Tesuque.

A Baptismal record of Maria Refugio Dominguez y Lucero, daughter of Francisco Dominguez y Lucero and Maria Martha Jimenes in "la capilla de Rio de Tesuque" July 8, 1880 was recorded. Unfortunately, the name of the chapel is not mentioned.

A notation within the Santa Fe Baptismal record shows that Archbishop Don Juan Bautista Lamy confirmed in the chapels of Rio Tesuque and the Pueblo of Tesuque. The name of the chapel was

not listed.

"A los 28 de abril de 1881, confirmó solemnemente el Reverendo Arzobispo Don Juan Bautista Lamy en las capillas del Rio Tesuque y Pueblo de Tesuque."

In Sadliers' Catholic Directory for 1882 containing the churches and clergy in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, all of the individual churches are listed. Included are the Santa Fe Cathedral of San Francisco de Assis, the Chapel of San Miguel, Chapel of Nuestra Señora de la Luz, the Chapel of Nra. Sra. del Rosario, and the Church of Nra. Sra. de Guadalupe. Also listed are the Chapel of San Isidro in Agua Fria, Chapel of San Jose in Cienega, Chapel of San Isidro in Rio Tesuque. Whether or not this particular chapel is the same one which now exists cannot be ascertained.

Interestingly, in 1885, the Baptism of Maria Antonia Carrillo took place "en la Capilla de San Ysidro de Tesuque" on December 8. The father's name is unclear: _____ Carrillo and the mother was Martina Badre. There are no other families named Carrillo or Badre recorded during that period.

A burial dated November 21, 1889 of Faustin Dominguez, age 24 husband of Francisca Ortega states that he was buried "en el camposanto de San Ysidro del Rio de Tesuque" which shows that there was a cemetery or church cemetery by that name.

In 1887, the residents of Tesuque requested the United States Government to recognize the claim of the Benavidez Land by the petitioners and heirs. The documents identify the Tesuque Grant,

Grant, Townsend Tract and the "old church". Also, within the T.B. Catron papers, dated 1897 are documents of the Benavides Land Claim or Rio de Tesuque Grant. The "old church," the Gabaldon grant, the Bishop's house, and Ladesma Grant are mentioned. The old church is not named in either document.

Feliz Duran, Senova Benavides, Santiago Martin and Martina Jimenes deed^d property to the Most Reverend Archbishop John B. Salpointe on October 17, 1890, in consideration of five dollars. The tract of land was situated in Precinct No. 2 of Santa Fe County and bounded on the north by property of Santiago Martin and Feliz Duran; on the south and on the east by property of Santiago Martin; on the west by property of Feliz Duran and Juan Jose Ortega. The deed was executed by Feliz Duran, Senova Benabides, Santiago Martin and Martina Jimenes. Christian Noedel, Justice of the Peace, witnessed the document. It is interesting that no mention of a church is made. The Martinez family attributes the sale of the land for the expressed purpose of constructing a church. Further, the deed in possession of the Archdiocese has a note attached. It states: Land in Rio Tesuque; Church and Cemetery.

It is my conclusion that the present Church of San Isidro was constructed during or after 1890 in the present site. Further evidence is an 1890 census prepared for J. B. Lamy which shows the existence of such a church. The census of the missions, churches, value, and residents, shows that Rio Tesuque had 250 Catholics with one church named San Isidoro, (error?) 60-100 people could be accommodated within the church, and it had a value of \$500.

In 1922, the residents of Rio Tesuque were the subject of a series of articles by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant, a writer for Harper's Magazine. She describes the interior of the church as painted blue and pink and covered with tin scones. She reported that the mass, celebrated every three weeks, was said by a Franciscan Friar in a German Spanish.

The chapel of San Isidro Labrador is today evidence of a long history of the religious devotion of a people.

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