On February 8, 1678, Jose de Mena and Polonia de Tapia completed a *diligencia matrimonial* (pre-nuptial investigation) at the mission at the Pueblo of Santo Domingo. The mission there served as the headquarters of the Franciscan Custody of the Conversion of St. Paul. The prospective bridegroom was a native of Puebla in Mexico and was the son of Francisco de Mena and Nicolasa Ontiveros. The bride to be was the daughter of Pedro Tapia and Maria Salazar and it is likely that she was from the area of Isleta. Several pages of handwritten testimonials from people who knew the bridegroom and the bride attesting to their character accompany this document and declares that both were free to marry and was sufficient to allow the wedding to proceed. This document, catalog number LDDM (for Loose Documents, *Diligencias Matrimoniales*) number I is the earliest document in the Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and is only one of five extant documents in New Mexico that pre-date the Pueblo Indian Revolt of 1680. The Pueblo Indian Revolt in New Mexico began on August 10, 1680. On this day and the days following, twenty-one Franciscan Priests and many Spanish settlers were killed. Those that survived the revolt were forced out of New Mexico.

Three Franciscans, Fray Juan de Talaban, Fray Jose Montes de Oca and Francisco Antonio Lorenzana were killed in the Pueblo of Santo Domingo where the Franciscan Archive and Library were located. The Franciscan Custody of the Conversion of St. Paul had been established in New Mexico in the early 1600s and Custodial headquarters had been set up at this Pueblo, located about 25 to 30 miles south of the present day city of Santa Fe, the capital of New Mexico since it was officially established in 1610. On the retreat from Santa Fe and northern New Mexico, Governor Otermin and the surviving Spanish saw the destruction of the missions along the Rio Grande, including the custodial headquarters at Santo Domingo. The Spanish did not stop long enough to collect any Franciscan material that may not have been destroyed in the revolt, and the numerous volumes of books and documents collected in the archive and library until that time were left behind. Soon after the re-conquest of New Mexico in 1692-93, many of the missions were re-established and rebuilt. The Franciscan headquarters of the Custody of the Conversion of St. Paul was re-established at Santo Domingo but also maintained headquarters in El Paso where the custodial headquarters had been established after the Pueblo Revolt. It is not known what was recovered of the pre-1680 documents, but it is certain that not all had been destroyed.

On September 4, 1775, Fray Francisco Atanasio Dominguez, a Franciscan Friar, visited the Friars in El Paso in preparation for his trip to New Mexico and a report he was to prepare on the missions there. Fray Francisco
Atanasio Dominguez was born in Mexico City about 1740 and joined the Franciscan Order in about 1757 when he was just 17 years old. In 1772, at the age of thirty-two, he was serving as Commissary of the Third Order at the Convent of Vera Cruz and had been in the Franciscan Order for fifteen years. His appointment as Commissary Visitor of the missions and his instructions were to make a detailed report on both the spiritual and economic status of the missions of New Mexico and to search for a new route to Monterey in California. Fray Dominguez arrived in Santa Fe on March 22, 1776 accompanied by Fray Jose' Mariano Rosete y Peralta and Fray Jose' Palacio who was to serve as his secretary during the visitation that took place during the months of April, May and June of that year. He did not visit the Pueblo of Santo Domingo until late May-early June of 1776. An entry in the book of Baptisms at the mission at Santo Domingo de los Queres dated May 30, 1776 states that “the baptisms are in good order and conform to the guidelines of the Council of Trent.” At that time, Fray Mariano Rodriguez de la Torre served as minister there as well as Vice-Custos of the Custody.

Dominguez makes mention of the “library of this Custody and a chest that serves as the archive (that) is said to be located in the sacristy of this mission.”

The Dominguez report was discovered at the National Archives of Mexico by Dr. France V. Scholes, a historian of Colonial Hispanic America, in 1928. Eleanor B. Adams and Fray Angelico Chavez, a Franciscan priest, worked many years on the translation of this document. It has proved invaluable to the student and researcher of New Mexico mission history. In describing the archive and its contents at Santo Domingo Pueblo, Fray Dominguez simply states that “A large chest with a lock" serves this purpose. The disorder of the material in the chest made it impossible, due to time restraints, to list the contents systematically. Fray Dominguez feels it is important enough, however, to make a listing of the contents which includes six bundles of matrimonial investigations dating from 1619 to the present year (1776). This comment on the number of matrimonial investigations, or diligencias matrimoniales, found during his inventory makes one wonder why there were only the two found when a complete inventory of the material in the archives was made after the entire collection was deposited with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe in 1934.

Other inventoried items were:

- one bundle and a number of loose sheets of patentes (official letters from Franciscan Superiors, such as the Commissary General of the Indies, the Minister Provincial of the Holy Gospel Province, and the local Custos or the Vice-Custos in charge),
- seven volumes and a number of loose sheets of baptismal records beginning in 1694,
- three small volumes and a number of loose sheets of burial records
beginning with the year 1701,
-two volumes of marriage records beginning in 1694,
-three volumes containing inventories and convent dispositions of various missions, papers dealing with matters pertaining to the Custody, the villas or cities of the province of New Mexico, and
-other items of interest and importance.¹⁰

This collection of material, except for the matrimonial dispensations, make up the “mission period” portion of the archival collection of the Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe.

In 1933, the Reverend Rudolph Aloysius Gerken was appointed the seventh Archbishop of Santa Fe. He immediately set about establishing up-to-date administrative guidelines and norms for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. He was instrumental in having the archival material collected and placed with the Archdiocese of Santa Fe’s administrative offices in Santa Fe. The importance of the collection was immediately recognized and it has been stated that many of the local historians and scholars wanted access to it for research once it was made aware of. The importance of the collection and the need to catalog it before access for research was granted was considered essential by the Archbishop, and he asked a well respected local citizen of Santa Fe, Colonel José D. Sena, to organize and catalog the material. Colonel Sena set about the task but his age and his limitations to knowledge of archaic Spanish church language and paleography kept him from progressing at a steady and quick pace. Fray Angelico Chavez, ordained to the Franciscan Order on May 6, 1937 and a native New Mexican, undertook and completed the task sometime during the early years of the episcopacy of Archbishop Edwin Vincent Byrne, D.D. (1943-1963), who also understood the importance of such a project. Fray Angelico’s personal interest in the history of the Franciscans in New Mexico, his knowledge of church matters and his familiarity with the Spanish language gave him a clear advantage in undertaking this task.

The collection was at that time arranged into several categories as follows:
-
_diligencias matrimoniales_
-
mission documents (Loose Documents, mission);
-
bound volumes including books of _patentes_, books of accounts, books of baptisms, marriages and burials
-
diocesan documents (Loose Documents, diocesan).

The largest category (over 3,500 items) was the _diligencias matrimoniales_ or pre-nuptial investigations that were a much more formal and detailed inquiry than what is used by the church at present. Individuals who knew the bride and groom were questioned and asked to give testimony on the character of the parties and to insure that the parties were who they said they were, that they were not already married and more importantly that they were
not closely related to one another. Two of these documents are the earliest documents in the *Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe*. As already mentioned, the earliest is the *diligencia matrimonial* of Jose de Mena and Polonia de Tapia dated February 8, 1678. The other is from the mission convent of San Francisco de Sandia dated April 26, 1680. The next category is the loose documents from the mission period (1680-1850). This group was chronologically arranged by date, with the earliest of these being copy of a fragment of Governor Otermin's journal of the withdrawal of the Spanish from Santa Fe and New Mexico in 1680. It details the events during the days following the revolt and their eventual arrival in Paraje, near present day El Paso. The majority of these documents are dated from the time of the return of the Spanish in 1692/93 to the end of the mission period in 1850. The information contained in this material is generally administrative in nature and includes letters from the Heads of the Franciscans in New Mexico to the Governors of New Mexico relating to a number of items, as well as providing information on the missions. The next category is the collection of bound volumes that include the books of patentes already mentioned and described, books of accounts and sacramental registers dating from 1694 to about 1850. An example of these is a beautiful volume of marriages from the Pueblo of San Ildefonso north of Santa Fe that dates from 1703 to 1720. The volume is bound in soft buckskin and painted with Indian motifs in pigments of red, yellow and green. All entries are formally handwritten in black ink and the information is recorded in Spanish. The paper was probably produced in Mexico since a caravan from Mexico brought supplies to the missions every two years during that time. The Spanish in Mexico had been producing paper since 1580 when a twenty-year privilege for making paper in New Spain was granted by royal decree on June 8, 1575. The handwriting of most of the Friars is quite legible and even today the information can be easily read. Many of the later documents, unfortunately, were written with diluted ink on poor quality paper that allowed the ink to penetrate the paper from one side to the next making what was written on the back of the page almost indiscernible.

After the early material was collected and organized it was decided to include loose documents from the Diocesan period beginning in 1850. Bound volumes of sacramental records from that period were also included and combined with the overall collection of books of baptisms, marriages and burials. Once cataloguing of this part of the collection was completed it was submitted for publication to the Academy of American Franciscan History and it was published in 1957 under the title *Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1678-1900*.

Since the establishment of the Office of Historic-Artistic Patrimony and Archives in 1983, it has served as a repository not only for archival material, mostly paper based, but also for church related material as well. This material ranges from pieces of altarscreens and alter stones to relics of saints.
acquired from the Vatican, as well as from vestments and vessels to furniture and many personal effects of people associated with the church. Among the furniture in the collection is a day bed that belonged to our first Bishop/Archbishop, John Baptist Lamy. Another item of interest is a First Holy Communion dress worn by a niece of Fray Angelico Chavez at his ordination. All of this material culture of the church, although extremely important as part of its patrimony, has taken up much needed space in the collection storage area and has made it necessary to creatively prepare storage space for the different types of objects. The material in the collection is used extensively for research and for exhibition purposes in the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Museum administered by this office. The museum was established in 1993 and is housed in a building that was one of several that once comprised the Archbishop's compound. Much of what was once part of this compound included the Chancery Office, located in Santa Fe until 1967 and the Archbishop's house, torn down at about the same time have been relocated or demolished to make room for other things. The building where the Office of Historic-Artistic Patrimony and Archives and the Archdiocesan Museum are now located was also a part of this compound. Parts of the historic building date back to 1832 and have served many purposes since that time. The historic building was remodeled and an additional facility for storage of the archives was added. The museum serves as the visible arm of the Office of Historic-Artistic Patrimony and Archives and exhibits reflect the types of material in the collections of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Recently Archbishop Michael J. Sheehan, Archbishop of Santa Fe, deposited material received by Bishops and Archbishops attending the canonization of Juan Diego by Pope John Paul II in Mexico City on July 30, 2002. The material is being catalogued and will be placed on display sometime in the near future.

The collection of unanticipated or unexpected cultural material continues to grow and may one day need a storage facility of its own. Other objects of this type have also in the past been collected but deposited, on loan, with the Museum of New Mexico. This includes material of an archaeological nature, unearthed during excavation projects for the building of new churches or church buildings. Much of this material is Native American from the pre-Spanish period (pre 1598) and includes collections of potshards and miscellaneous household objects as well as some building materials. Other material belonging to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and on loan to the Museum of New Mexico includes altarscreens, statuary and other religious art known as bultos (carved wood statues) and retablos (flat painted panels). Many older vestments, vessels, books, furniture and other such items are also on loan to the Museum of New Mexico. The staff uses these items for research and for its own exhibitions.

The Office of Historic-Artistic Patrimony and Archives continues to research and catalog material that it acquires. Expanded research of material in
the catalogued collections as covered in the book *Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, 1678-1900*, continues to provide information and knowledge of church history and administration. A recent conservation project of artwork at the famous Santuario de Chimayo was assisted by an 1818 inventory of the chapel in the archives that listed the images in the church at that time. This inventory provided information on the artwork and related material currently in the church and provided dates for many of the pieces needing conservation. The archives also provide historic information for churches and parishes. Licenses to build churches was one of the documents needed from the Diocese in Durango in Mexico before the building of a church could be undertaken and many of these have been found in the archives. We can therefore determine at about what time the church was built. This material has proved invaluable in providing historical documentation on churches, especially those undergoing preservation. The Archdiocese of Santa Fe also benefits from the material in the archives especially when specific celebrations are being planned. On July 29, 2003, the Archdiocese of Santa Fe will be celebrating its 150th anniversary as the Diocese of Santa Fe. A document establishing the Diocese of Santa Fe in 1853 is being researched and will possibly be translated for this event. Photographs of the document have been taken and are being used for various projects of the sesquicentennial. The archives are also used by numerous persons interested in genealogy and family history and many persons have been able to trace their family back to the late 1600s and early 1700s.

The Office of Historic-Artistic Patrimony and Archives is vital to the Archdiocese of Santa Fe and provides a much needed and important service to its parishes, offices and its people. The museum generates interest in all types of church programs and in the long history of the church in New Mexico. The museum is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., and is visited by people both Catholic and non-Catholic alike. Material up to 1932 is open for research and can be accessed by appointment. The documents, or related material, is catalogued by date and separated by the dates of service of each of the Archbishops. Sacramental material post 1900 is held at the parishes and all non-genealogical requests are directed to the parishes. The sacramental material is on microfilm up to and including 1955 with some material dating to the early months of 1956. Genealogical requests are referred to the microfilm available at various public institutions in New Mexico and the Family History Centers of the Genealogical Society of Utah, a branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, throughout the country. Genealogical Societies interested in the records have also assisted this effort by providing extractions of specific mission or parish records.

*The Archives of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe* are extremely important to the student or scholar interested in the history of New Mexico. The area that now comprises the Southwestern United States, now divided into the States of
New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Utah, Colorado and even Texas, were established as mission fields first and as civil entities second. The crown of Spain supported the missions and their activity and the civil government served as support and guardian of the missions. The church provided people who came to New Mexico spiritual support and needed services. People were born and baptized, married and buried in these far reaches of the Spanish realm. Documentation of these important events in their lives and a record of their deaths was left to the church and it is through the church that their names and the important events in their lives are recorded and preserved.

Notes

1. New Mexico Roots, Limited, Fray Angelico Chavez, O.F.M. Vol. VII (Mena) p. 1217
6. Ibid, p. 137
7. Ibid, p. 234
8. Ibid, p. 234 n.2