Mexican friar's bones believed at site

## Mission history left scattered

LAMPAZOS, Mexico (AP) — Any hope of finding the remains of Friar Diego de Saiazar, founder of the remote Mexican village of Lampazos, remained scattered among the nearly 300-year-old bones unearthed this spring.

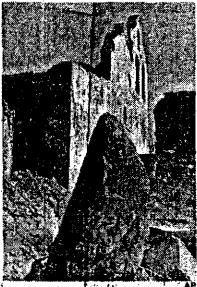
The skeletons were discovered beneath the floor of a church within the walls of the city's oldest structure, Mision de Santa Maria de los Doiores, established in 1698 by Friar Salazar.

WHEN THE discovery was made, excited workers ran through the vilinge to a site where architects busied themselves over the restoration plans of three other structures in the city of 6,000. Lampazos is about 80 miles southwest of Laredo.

Work stopped and archeologists were called in from Mexico City.

Meanwhile, speculation ran high among villagers that the bones might be those of the much revered Salazar, whose burial place has been the object of decades of search by villagers who still revere him.

When archeologists arrived, they spent less than two hours at the stie. Much to the disappointment of the community, no instruments were available to sieve through the fine sand. No attempt was made to bring in other equipment that might have separated the thousands of bits of debris.



The Mision de Santa Maria de los Dolores in Lampazos.

WORKERS CONTINUED excavating with shovels and pickaxes. Hundreds more bones were found, and many beautiful but rotted pieces of pecan and walnut coffin wood were uncovered.

Workers also ran into a boulder about 20 feet in circumference. Shovels struck on the boulder surface produced a distinct hollow sound. But attempts to search below its surface were abandoned when even the combined efforts of the workers were insufficient to budge the huge rock.

Of the nearly 100-foot by 45-foot section of flooring removed, an area no larger than 30 by 45 feet was searched. The remaining 70-by-45-foot section was left untouched, poured over with packing sand, and laced with reinforcement bars. By the end of the week it would be buried under a solid slah of concrete nearly 3 feet thick.

AND EXCEPT for several daily visits by the resident architect, neither the archeologists nor the architects in charge of operations remained behind to supervise any of the work.

During the Mexican revolutionary years, Lampazes was raided by both the rebel forces of Venustiane Carranza and Pancho Villa.

in 1912, a band of Carranza's army occupied the mission. The nuns' quarters were overtaken and used to store ammunition, gunpowder, and hay for the horses.

Then one night they burned it to the ground.

One of the older residents of Lampazos, Maria Refugio Guajardo, recalled the days when the mission was a "veritable paradise." Beautiful trees and immense courtyards were surrounded by the convent walls. Children sat at the feet of nuns and learned Latin and Greek, and most learned plano and violin as well.

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