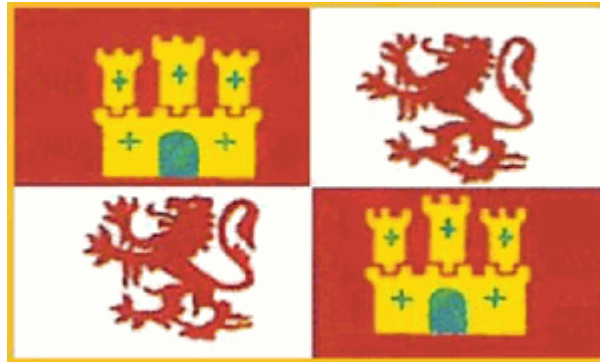


La Sociedad de la Entrada



Oñate And The European Invasion

We do not attempt to defend or accuse the actions of the original Spanish Colonists – particularly Oñate who was guilty of human rights violations, even such as they were in those days. History has already done that. He was arrested in Mexico City, tried, and convicted of his crimes and King Phillip III never forgave him for his cruelty to both, natives and colonists alike (a fact that is largely overlooked). But, unfortunately, everyone was cruel in those days. Those were hard times and it took hard people to survive. And the native peoples faced one especially hard fact. The Europeans were coming and no one could stop that.

However, one thing must be pointed out in regard to New Mexico history. The Pueblos still exist. Anyone can travel to Acoma Pueblo, for example, and listen to their story, learn about their language, religion, food, song, dance, history, and traditional way of life. And although the Spanish are considered to have been overly cruel “Conquistadores” compared to other nations, people who believe that should travel to the area of, say, Jamestown, Virginia, to learn about the native tribes who lived in the region and what they suffered at the hands of the English Colonists. But that’s not possible because they don’t exist anymore. In fact, when the movie “A New World” was made they had to invent a language, customs, and habits in order to portray the native tribes who lived there. Here in New Mexico the descendants of the Native Americans still live in their ancestral home grounds and keep their traditional way of life as they see fit – and we’re very lucky to have them.

Though Spanish had problems with the natives in the beginning, the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 taught them to be more tolerant. When they returned to New Mexico in the 1690s the Natives and Spanish began to learn to respect each other and work together to survive against the onslaught of nomadic and semi-nomadic hostile raiders that surrounded them. Later, the Americans would come to New Mexico and each culture still retained its own distinctive and colorful features. These features are a vital part of New Mexico today, the foundations of which we celebrate.

Seen from the long perspective afforded by history, Juan de Oñate's performance seems more accomplished than it did at the time. The foundations he established proved solid and were built upon by others, often in ways that Don Juan could never have anticipated. He was godfather of the Franciscan missionary program on the northern frontier, which within two centuries stretched from the Texas gulf to coastal California. He can be credited with launching the livestock industry in the Southwest, for the herds of horses and cattle and flocks of sheep he brought in 1598 furnished a foundation for ranching. He inaugurated mining and the first processing of ores. And he made a notable contribution, through his wide-ranging explorations, toward an understanding of the true geography of western America.

Oñate's greatest achievement, of course, resided in his establishment of a new kingdom (afterward downgraded to the status of a province) within the Spanish empire. At the time, he set great store by the titles of governor and adelantado, but he would probably have been pleased to know that four hundred years later he was still remembered and considered deserving of another title, Father of New Mexico. That realm of which he was the architect, while not evolving into the viceroyalty he had hoped, did grow to become the chief anchor and most populous province in the Spanish Borderlands.¹

Educational Materials

We have two standard handouts. *Exploracion de Nuevo Mejico* covers various Spanish expeditions. *Oñate's Legacy* is about Oñate's entrance to colonize the province and his legacy, the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail, and the purpose of our historical interpretation. Barbara has also written an unpublished manuscript on period dress for men and women.

Our Group

Andrew Garcia, Donald Shoemaker, and Mike and Barbara Bilbo founded La Sociedad de la Entrada in 1988. We are incorporated under the Charter of the First New Mexico Volunteer Infantry, Company A, a non-profit, non-tax corporation. Our purpose is to represent a generic mixed-arms company of the day, approximately 1590 to 1610, to represent members of the original colonial expeditions. People of all social strata and authentic interpretations are welcome. In other words, members may represent Spanish aristocrats, commoners, or friendly Indians. Members may also be mounted if so desired (and they have the means). Oñate had over a hundred professional soldiers on his original expedition. These were mounted troops and he took many of them with him on his expeditions of exploration. In addition many

¹ Marc Simmons, *The Last Conquistador, Juan de Oñate and the Settling of the Far Southwest*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, 194-195.

soldiers had to garrison each mission and encomienda (usually 2-4 to each one). The result was that the colonists pretty much had to defend themselves by serving as volunteer militia. The professional soldiers had armor and arquebuses furnished by Oñate and his captains, but the colonists themselves were relegated to secondary arms. Pikes were cheap and easy to make and were obtained as soon as possible. Oñate also had many halberds but these were not preferred for fighting. The infantry also had falchion or machete type swords, although a few may have had better swords and daggers. Leather and cotton padded armor was prevalent and chain mail was used too. Helmets were a necessity since the natives tended to throw and sling many stones which the Spanish feared more than other weapons. A good hit on the head could render a man senseless or even blind.

Company Staff

Event Coordinators

Dave Poulin “El Furriero” (Quartermaster)

Mike Bilbo “El Bilbolero” (man from Bilbo, a city in Spain north of Bilbao)

Duties: Coordinate with host leaders, organize travel arrangements if people need rides, obtain travel reimbursement if possible, organize food arrangements, keep a schedule of upcoming events, select campsites.

Note: Everyone is responsible to invite potential new members to attend events.

Capitan (Captain)

Currently: Roberto Valdez “El Lobo.”

Badge of Office: A sash Tied around the waist or chest and a Captain’s Spear (*SP. gineta*) for parade. Captain’s spears were about 5-6 feet tall with a leaf or teardrop-shaped etched blade with fringes tied just below the blade. Captains might choose to use other arms when in the field.

Duties: Run the company and lead it at events; train NCOs; assign duties to the sergeant; lead a dress parade and inspect the troops in the morning; lead the drill when desired; lead the march in a street parade or in the field. Coordinate activities with other groups or hosts at the event. The Captain performs Adjutant duties if an adjutant is not available.

Alférez (Ensign)

Currently: Michael Bilbo “El Bibolero.”

Badge of Office: Sash worn over the waist or chest and the company flag (*Sp. bandera*).

Duties: Carry the company colors on parade and in the field; command the color guard; raise or lower the camp flag if there is one; take over from the Capitan if required; act as adjutant to the Capitan in camp. Adjutant duties: carry messages when required; keep a roster of attendees; maintain the event schedule, order the music to perform when required. The color guard may carry pole-arms or two-handed swords.

Soldados Particular (Gentlemen Volunteers)

Currently: Sir Michael Vigil, Knight of Santiago.

Badge of Office: A very fine set of clothing, weapons, and armor, nice boots, big hat, lots of colorful plumes.

Duties: Gentlemen volunteers could fight with whomever they chose but often they assisted the Alférez. Some whole color guards were made up of Gentlemen Volunteers who hoped to become officers by exemplary service.

Sargento (Sergeant)

Currently: Anthony Campisi “El Siciliano.”

Badge of Office: A red sash worn over the shoulder and a halberd (*Sp. alabardo*), for drill or parade or a musket or pike for field (if desired). The alabardo was a long pole arm with a distinctive axe blade and fringe tied just below the head.

Duties: Take over command from the Officers when required. At events the Sargento is in charge of distributing the company arms and armor; and collecting them after the event and turning them in to the Quartermaster. The Sergeant is the main drill leader and leads the company or division in drill, unless a Cabo is directed to do so. The Sergeant is not a member of a specific division, but in the field the Sergeant normally leads the pike division unless assigned otherwise. He assigns fatigue and guard details if required; keeps the camp orderly and proper; oversees company formations for parade, patrol, and battle and insures that Cabos of each squad have aligned their men properly.

Cabo (Corporal)

Currently: Samuel Ulibarri “El Vasco” (the Basque)

Badge of Office: A red sash worn over the shoulder and a partisan (*Sp. Partesana*), a spear with a long ornate blade and fringed tied just below the blade. There were many variations in the shape of the blade.

Duties: The Cabo is the person responsible for the individual men in his squad (*Sp. camerada or escuadra*); sees that each man is properly equipped (coordinate with the QM and Sargento to distribute and return equipment and clothing); he trains each man in the proper individual drill; assembles his squad when assembly is called; sees that the men form up properly; keeps track of the squad during breaks; sees that they do not leave equipment (or garbage) improperly strewn around the camp; sees that they do not wear or carry anachronisms; makes sure they get some rest, and be sure they report back at the required time; deters unseemly or improper behavior in camp. The Cabo may lead the company or division in drill when required. Ideally, cabos are in charge of squads of three to twelve men. Our goal is to have one squad for each division: pikes, muskets, and swords (Cabo de Piqueros, Cabo de Arcabuceros, Cabo de Rodeleros)

Musicos del Campo (Field Music)

Current Drummers (Tambours): Ron Sanders “El Tambor”

Current Fifers (Pífaneros): Dave Poulin and Kathy Palmer “El Pífanero”

Duties: Perform according to the Music extracts of the Tactics manual. Spanish musicians usually carried a dagger and were unarmored.

Armero (Armorer)

Currently: Tim Willson “El Armero”

Duties: Set out displays of Arms and armor of the day. Tim sets out a nice display near our encampment and talks with visitors about the arms and armor. One big attraction is allowing young visitors to try on various bits of armor. This is a big job and Tim is often assisted by other members when they are not busy with other duties.

Furriel (Clerk of the Works, Clarke del Junco, aka Quartermaster)

Currently: Dave Poulin

Duties: Account for all company equipment, tents, loaner clothing, arms, and armor; and store it between events; and transport it to and from events; issue clothing to members and to collect it after events (with the assistance of the Cabo). The Sargento is responsible to distribute and collect arms and armor at events. The Quartermaster must give regular reports as to what is currently in stock, reporting new items and lost or broken items.

Categories:

Arms and Armor (Sargento) – helmets, pikes, half-pikes, swords, daggers, shields, and jerkins.

Clothing (Clerk) – footwear, stockings, garters, breeches, shirts, caps, haversacks, gourds, and pockets.

Note: Company equipment and clothing does not belong to the company per se; but is privately owned by the individuals who purchased them and allow them to be loaned out. Individuals who own some equipment may have some concerns as to how it is used; i.e. loans of equipment and clothing are subject to the approval of the individual owner. Members are encouraged to bring any extra gear they may have to events even though they may not want to turn it in to the Company Clerk.

Mounted Troops

Horsemen (Armored Horsemen)

The mounted troops (*Sp. caballeros*) of Oñate were outfitted as mounted harquebusiers while his Captains were most likely outfitted as Cuirassiers. They could fight mounted or on foot.

Mounted Arquebusiers (Light Cavalry)

Arcabuceros were armed with arcabuces, swords and daggers. Some may have carried lances also. There were armored with a helmet with a bevor that protected the face, chain mail and light armor over the chain mail (leather, padded cloth, or brigadinos).

Cuirassiers (Heavy Cavalry)

In the Old World cuirassiers carried lances, swords, and daggers. In the New World they also carried arcabuces. The Captains and most likely Oñate himself were probably armored with full armor with closed helmets. They also carried arcabuces, swords, and daggers, and may also have carried lances. The bandera could be fastened to the horse and rider in such a way that left the Alferes free to fight with a sword. Cuirassiers are named from their breastplates (*Fr. Cuirasses*). The cuirassiers in this time period preferred burgonet helmets that could close over the face.

Infantry (Infanteria)

Spanish Tercios were organized into three branches of arms, Pikes, Shot, and Shieldmen. Though the original meaning is obscure the organization of three groups is the most plausible explanation of the word Tercio, meaning thirds. To demonstrate European military tactics of the time this infantry company is

comprised of mixed arms, pikes, swords, and muskets. In the field, this company has a Captain, an Alferéz, a Sergeant, and at least one Corporal. Officers must demonstrate an ability to learn the Spanish commands as required. Men are assigned to specific squads according to their chosen arms.

Pikes (Picas)

Pikes were generic arms for infantry companies of any European infantry company during this period, mixed with swordsmen to protect the flanks, and arquebuciers (musket men) who would fire from inside or beside the pike square. Pikemen had to be the strongest and best warriors and were considered to require more training than musket men. In Europe where the enemy fought in formations the long pikes (16-20' long) were used. In the new world the natives fought in skirmish so the shorter half-pikes (6-8') became more popular because they were more maneuverable. Long pikes were kept in the colonial armories in case Europeans from other nations should attack. Capitan Valdez and Sgto. Campisi have studied the ancient pike drill manuals and leads us in performing the routines of holding the pike for marching, changing facing, and in going into the attack. Pike drill is performed according to the drill described in *The Captains Companion* by Nicholas Worthington. Worthington and several companions constructed a tactics manual for use by Spanish reenactors/interpreters, complete with commands.

Armored Pikemen (Picas Coseletes)

Armored pikemen wear a helmet (*Sp. Casco*), breast and back-plates (*Sp. peta*), and leather gloves (*Sp. guantes de cuero*) to protect the hands. They also must have a sword and a dagger. They are posted in the front ranks of the pike square (*Sp. cuadro de gente*). Coseletes may wear three-quarter armor if they wish. Most of the helmets were morions, cabacetras, or comb morions.

Unarmored Pikemen (Picas Secas)

Unarmored pikemen wear a helmet, leather (*Sp. cuero*), padded cloth, or brigandine armor (*Sp. brigadinos*), and leather gloves to protect the hands. They are posted in the back ranks of the cuadro de gente.

Muskets (Mosquetas)

Matchlock muskets contributed to the battle with small arms fire. By this time (circa 1600) crossbows had been replaced by firearms. Muskets weighed 15-20 pounds. Musketmen (*Sp. mosqueteros*) and caliver men (*Sp. arcabuceros*) were the least skilled soldiers. The mounted Spanish preferred the arcabuce, which was a lighter version of the musket for easier use on horseback. These were sometimes sawed-off to make shotguns (*Sp. escopetas*). Arcabuceros were often armored for close quarter fighting while musketmen generally were not. Our musket drill is also taken from *The Captains Companion* by Nicholas Worthington. The Spanish often referred to all men using firearms as arcabuceros. The Spanish made great use of massed firearms.

Arquebuses (Arcabuces)

Arquebusiers (*Sp. arcabuceros*) carry an arquebus, match cord, fine and coarse powder flasks or horns, and a bullet bag. They are also armed with a sword and dagger. They may be half-armored with a helmet and breast and back plates, or just a helmet. Arquebuses weighed about 11 pounds.

Musketeers (Mosqueteros)

Musketeers (*Sp. mosqueteros*) carry a musket, match cord, musket stand, and bandolier with wooden bottle (referred to as the twelve apostles, regardless of the actual number). If they do not have a bandolier they may use fine and coarse powder flasks or horns. The musket was heavier and longer than the arquebus so a stand or rest was required to fire it. Musketeers are unarmored.

Swords (Espadas)

Swords were of various sizes and hilts. The swords carried by Oñate's men may have varied from ancient Medieval style with cross hilts to newer Renaissance swept-hilt design and everything in between. The Spanish were known for the very fine steel produced in Toledo.

Swordsmen (Esgrimadores)

Swordmaster Cabo Ulibarri leads us in sword drill in the Spanish method, known as *La Destreza*. The Spanish excelled at swordsmanship during this period and it was with the sword and buckler that they often won the day by breaking up enemy pike formations. Swordsmanship takes many years of study. The round steel buckler, or target shield was normally about 24" in diameter, but they could also be other shapes. Spanish soldiers also used the Moorish style adarga, a bullhide shield.²

Sword and Buckler Men (Rodeleros o Escudados)

Shield men (*Sp. rodeleros or escudados*) wear a helmet, breast and back-plates, and leather gloves to protect the hands. They may wear three-quarter armor. The preferred helmet was a burgonet but other styles could be used. The buckler (contrary to popular belief) was a round shield 22-24 inches in diameter. The smaller shields 12"+- that are called bucklers today were usually referred to as targets (*Sp. tarjetas*). The rodeleros also carried a good sword and a dagger.

Ladies (Soldaderas)

Of course, what would a colony be without our women. Spanish women tended to follow their men whether in the army or settling a new territory. Señora Barbara Bilbo "La Bilboana" (woman from Spanish Pyrenees town of Bilbo) has done extensive research authentic foods of the period. She set out an impressive display of various vegetables, fruits, cooking utensils, and dishware. Assisting is Señora Angelina (Vigil) Poulin. Other soldaderas are of the Thompson family, Merthe, Indiana, and Libertad, and Stephanie Sanchez.

Other Historical Impressions To Consider

There are many impressions available to would-be historical interpreters besides military: Blacksmith (*Sp. Herrero o herrador*), Tailor/Seamstress (*Sp. sastre, costuradora*), Cook (*Sp. cocinero/concinera*), Doctor/Surgeon or Barber (*Sp. médico, cirujano, barbero*) [barbers did haircutting and bloodletting],

² Terrence Wise, *The Conquistadores*, Osprey Publishing Ltd., Oxford, UK, 8.

Healer (*Sp. curandera*), Carpenter (*Sp. carpentero*), Baker (*Sp. panadero/hornero*), Food Seller (*Sp. vivandero*), Farmer (*Sp. granjero, agricultor, labrador*), Sailor (*Sp. marinero*).

*Our authentic non-profit living history group, **La Sociedad de la Entrada**, is open to individuals and families.*

Joining us is easy. All we require is an appreciation of history and a desire to portray the original colonists of New Mexico. We currently have no dues or membership fees. You simply come to an event to try us out. There is no obligation. We have plenty of loaner gear (for men) so you can see if you like what we do without investing any money. If you enjoy working (playing) with us you can begin to get your own clothing and equipment at your own convenience.

We welcome women and children but ladies will have to find a long skirt and a plain blouse to start. Young ones may also eventually be costumed but it's not necessary. Our clothing guideline is in the "History" section.

We do not discriminate against race, gender, creed, or age but women will have to understand that we are an historical group that volunteers to do living history interpretation for museums and other historical organizations. If a woman wishes to dress as a man she will have to be able to appear as a man. To do anything else would be historically incorrect and misleading to the public.

If you have any other questions let us know. Our emails are listed in the "Contacts" section and our event schedule is in the "Events" section. Come help us celebrate the founding of our home state of New Mexico.

***S**antiago y Cierra España!*

Spanish battlecry, invoking the Spanish army patron saint,

San Iago (St. James),

"y cierra España:"

"and protect Spain!"

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