

La Sociedad de la Entrada

After Action Report for Oñate Event 6/2-3/07

Event

The event was the Spring Festival at Rancho de las Golondrinas Living History Museum (<http://www.golondrinas.org/>). This is an annual event for the museum with a theme centered on agriculture and the season to plant. It is also an animal fair with llamas, wolves, horses, mules, donkeys, birds, and snakes. Visitor attendance was very high. A large group of 150 people were holding a convention in Santa Fe and visited us in the afternoon on Sunday. They were the Association of Living History Farms and Agricultural Museums in Santa Fe, ALHFAM. We set up a Spanish encampment under the cottonwoods as our base of operations. Many thanks to Sam who helped Mike and Dave set up. We set up some tents, a fly, and a fire pit.

Muster

On Saturday five soldados were mustered in: Mike Bilbo, Sam Ulibarri, Wayne Gustafson, David Poulin, and Bennett Poulin. On Sunday we had six: Roberto Valdez, Mike Bilbo, Tony Campisi, Wayne Gustafson, Dave Poulin, and Austin Dimick. Throughout the weekend 'Soldaderas,' Angelina Poulin and Barbara Bilbo also attended. Cabo Ulibarri led us on Saturday and Sargento Mayor Valdez led us on Sunday. Dave and Wayne played fife and drum respectively on both days.



The Spanish camp...

Saturday

It was beautiful weather, a bit warmer than we have been used to lately, but welcome all the same.



Cabo Samuel Ulibarri "El Basco."



Pikeman Bennett Poulin strikes a pose.



Acting Alferez, Mike Bilbo, wearing his chain mail and helmet.



Recruit: Drummer Wayne Gustafson.

On Patrol



El Basco assembles his men for patrol.



The patrol moves out to music.



La Bandera de Castilla y Leon

In Camp



Resting in Camp...



Mike and Sam talk to school kids while Ben and Barbara try to get the pesky green firewood burning. Being an animal fair, the place was swarming with kids. They listened eagerly to Mike and Sam and tried on various forms of armor.

Comida

Barbara Bilbo presented us with a fine selection of authentic Spanish food.



La soldaderas - the heart of the camp. Barbara (left) and Angelina (right).



A tantalizing table set with typical New World Spanish finger foods – cold chicken, bread, cheese, olives, grapes, apricots, and tomatoes; with cold water and lemonade to wash it down.



In the evening Barbara and Angelina enjoy the shade.

Sunday

Sunday was a little cloudy and cooler than Saturday – very comfortable. Thunderstorms threatened us at times on the horizon but did not bother us until the day was over and then it wasn't much.

The Procession

In the morning, after Mass, the annual procession to bless the fields made its way to the shrine of San Isidro on top of the hill. They stopped along the way to bless the various fields and buildings. This is a long standing ritual in many farming communities of New Mexico.



Lead by Samuel Delgado and other members of the Caballeros de la Conquistadora the procession approaches our camp. The Sociedad follows them. We were joined by Mike Vigil's group who fell in with us.



Carrying the standards of the cross. The standard bearers are followed by people carrying their own banners. These represent some of the founding families of New Mexico. Each banner has a unique design and bears the name of the family. It was a long procession...



Caballeros de la Conquistadora are carrying the effigy of San Isidro, the patron saint of farmers. They are followed by the priest, Father Crespín. Behind them are the spectators and worshippers. A very long procession...



Virginia is carrying a basket filled with items from last year's harvest as well as things that represent this year's harvest, with the hope that last year's fruition will carry on into this year.



Blessing the mountain village...



The faithful climb the hill to the shrine...

When we reached the shrine at the top of the hill our commander, Roberto Valdez, assaulted and won it, claiming it for the king of Spain – by climbing to the roof and waving the flag of Castile y Leon - while the rest of us just watched in amazement.

Distinguished Guests



Kathy and Andrew Garcia – visitors from another era (about 150 years later). Andrew is dressed as a regular army Spanish colonial soldier. Andrew, along with Don Shoemaker, and Mike and Barbara Bilbo were founding members of la Sociedad de la Entrada in 1988.



Recruit: Austin Dimick joined us on Sunday.

Afternoon Pike Drill



Pike drill in the afternoon was led by Sargento Mayor Valdez. Mike picked up a couple of young recruits at this time.



Pifanero Dave (left) y Tambour Wayne (right) - Wayne and I struggled some but we got out more good than bad notes.

Conclusion

Las Golondrinas is a great location and the campsite under the cottonwoods was the best we had seen in a long time. Hopefully, it will become a regular spot for us. Guys thanks for all the help to pack things up. We were trying to beat the rain. The energetic teamwork was awesome. Mike King, the museum's Curator of Education and Interpretation, wrote: "Thanks for a great weekend. It was a huge success with almost 2000 people." Professional photographer Ann Murdy wrote, "Your camp and participation in the procession was a wonderful addition to the Spring Festival this year." Photos of the Festival by Ann can be seen at http://www.pbase.com/annmurdy/las_golondrinas

Roberto and Dave

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