

La Sociedad de la Entrada

After Action Report for Oñate Event 9/20-21/08

Event

The event was the Spanish Renaissance Fair at El Rancho de las Golondrinas Living History Museum (<http://www.golondrinas.org/>). This was the first of what we hope will become an annual event for the museum with a theme centered on the Spanish Renaissance period. Our premise was to serve the weekend as guards for El Rey Ferdinand and La Reina Ysabella. A pavilion was set up in Baca Plaza with colorful banners and two thrones. We set up our Campamento Español (Spanish encampment) on the lawn behind the Plaza for our base of operations. That way we could easily coordinate with Their Majesties. We were able to use the fireplace, tables, and benches near our camp in the Plaza. It's difficult to describe the fair. There were dozens of vendors. There were Pirates, Knight combatants in full armor who fought with live steel, there were SCA people, Belly Dancers, and mounted knights on horseback. The list of participant groups was very long. Unfortunately for us, such a complete list did not include La Sociedad de la Entrada.

Muster

On Saturday nine soldados were mustered in: Roberto Valdez, Mike Bilbo, Tony Campisi, Sam Ulibarri, David Poulin, Blaine Bachman (El Suizo), Justin Guerrero, Davin Poulin, and Chris Schaefer. On Sunday we had six: Mike, Tony, Sam, Dwight Thompson, Dave, and Ron Sanders. Mike Vigil visited us in his gentleman outfit and Tim Wilson of the museum staff was the Royal Herald who coordinated with us as to our duties. Barbara Bilbo and Angelina Poulin also attended both days and Dwight's two girls, Indiana and Libertad, came on Sunday.

Saturday

Friday night had thunder and lightning and a light rain but Saturday was beautiful weather, partly cloudy, but a bit warm. The clouds helped some to keep the heat down. Angelina and I set up our tent just before dark. The Bilbos arrived around 11:00 PM and set up their tent in the dark.

Greetings and Salutations

The morning began with Capitan Valdez making salutations and introductions of our company to the festival King and Queen. His sweeping bow and courtly gentilhomme manners and expressions were most impressive. Their majesties were very receptive to our services offered by the Capitan.



Fernando y Ysabel and attendants in their outdoor court.



Capitan Roberto Valdez greets the royalty.

Pike Drill

After salutations our company assembled in Baca Plaza to perform a spirited pike drill for Their Majesties. Several Celtic men (Galicians) joined us for the drill. Afterwards La Reina commended us on our proficiency in arms stating that such skill was the means of protecting the Kingdom from our enemies. Then we rested until called again

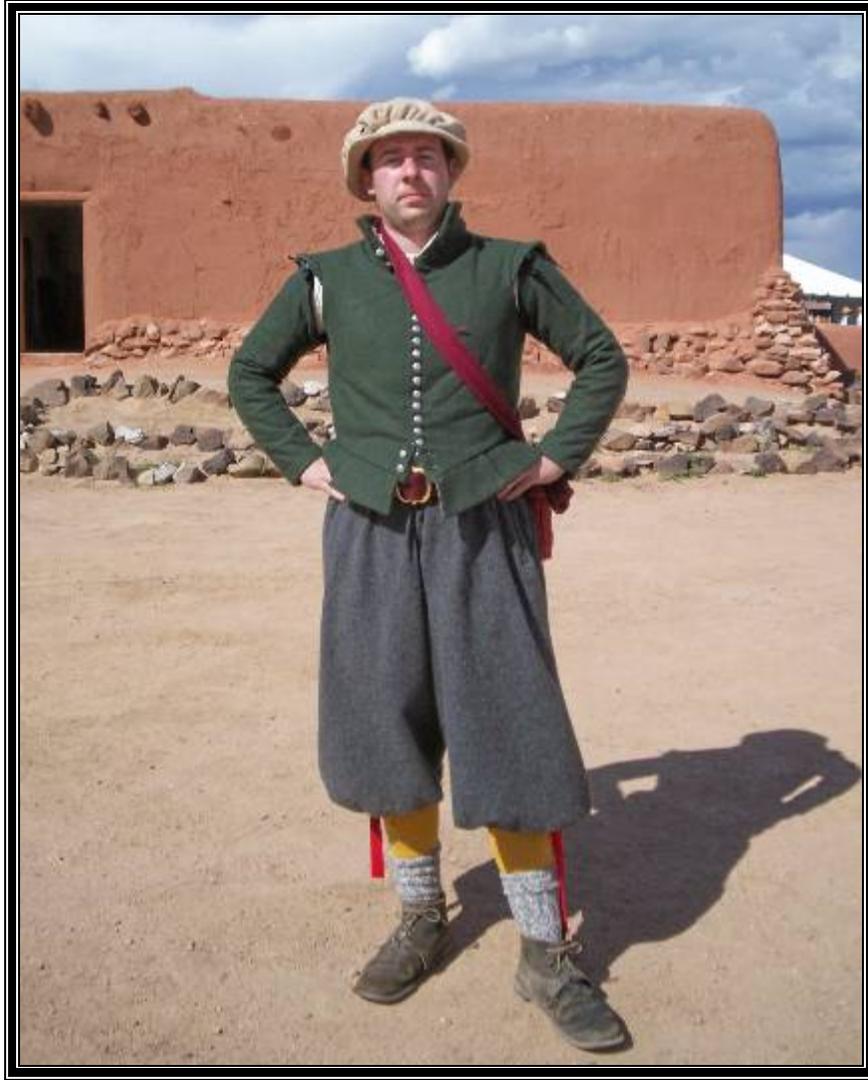


Muster and drill for Their Majesties



The Procession

Just before noon we escorted Their Majesties to the jousting arena for afternoon entertainment. We remained there as guards until the performance was finished. Then we escorted the Royal Party back to the Main Plaza where we were dismissed.



Sargento Campisi in his very fine set of new clothes.

Sword Drill

El Maestro d'Espada, Sam Ulibarri, drilled us in the Spanish method of sword drill. We soon came to know why the Spanish sword was master of the battle field. We learned the attacks and then the defense for these attacks. This drill was well-attended by visitors



Mustering for pike drill
(photo courtesy of David L. Geary)



Mustering for sword drill.

Comida

Barbara Bilbo set up her usual table of typical New World Spanish finger foods – bread, cheese, olives, grapes, apricots, and tomatoes; with cold water and cranberry juice to wash it down. She also cooked a delicious beef stew for lunch.



Barbara and Mike Bilbo





Pay Call

In the afternoon Sargento Campisi ordered Assembly for the purpose of paying the soldados. We lined up and were paid according to the customs and regulations of the day, modified for good or bad behavior or debts incurred – or the whim of the Sergeant.



Dave, Blaine and Sam.



Cabo Ulibarri waits while Sargento Campisi checks the pay rates.



Even the Capitan stands in line. L-R: Blaine, Roberto, Justin, and a Galician



Sergento Campisi hands out the reales and escudos and notes payment in the company book.



And after pay call there is the inevitable session of gambling in the camp



Dave can't play cards; Angelina's got his money.



At the rate the Sargento was winning, some people were getting ideas as to how he could afford his fine new set of clothes.

On Patrol

Sargento Campisi assembled us in the Plaza and marched us down the hill to view the live steel sword fighting. We got there a bit late but had a great conversation with one of the Knights. We did a pike demonstration for them and then retired back to camp where we were dismissed.

Sunday

Sunday was a little cooler than Saturday – very sunny and comfortable with occasional clouds.



Recruits L-R: Chris Schaefer and Davin Poulin

The Procession

Just before noon we escorted Their Majesties to the jousting arena for afternoon entertainment. Dave played fife for the march. We continued on down the hill and remained as Royal Guards until the performance was finished. Unfortunately it was cut short due to the fact that one knight was unhorsed on the first pass and was unable to continue the contest. Another Caballero on a horse that was being trained for the joust tried to continue in his place but the horse didn't quite 'get it.' When it was over, we escorted the Royal Party back to the Main Plaza where we were dismissed.



Forming up for the procession



Resting in the shade.

Fife and Drum

With Ron's arrival we were able to play fife and drum. The fife always sounds good and so does the drum but there is something special that happens when they play together – an unbeatable combination, unmatched by any other combination, neither bugles nor pipes. Dave and Ron played all the Renaissance tunes on our list and it sounded very good. It also attracted many people to come through the Plaza. This was good because the lack of traffic through the Plaza itself had been a problem all weekend.



Pirates

Is there anything the Spanish hate more than Pirates? At 2 PM we were ordered by Their Majesties to stand guard at the Costume Contest. The march to the stage was the highlight of the weekend for Dave since, with Ron Sanders there, we could finally march to the fife and drum. What a difference! We posted ourselves on both sides of the stage. At one point in the ceremonies a Pirate contestant grabbed the microphone from the Frey (Friar) who was MC of the ceremonies, and he began to invite all the ladies in the audience to join him later for some private entertainment. He had no soon begun his silly diatribe whereupon a horde of these contemptible men stormed the stage and contrived to cause the most deplorable commotion imaginable. The monk crossed himself and La Reina shouted for her guards to arrest the louts, a maneuver which we promptly and efficiently executed. Ron played the long roll on his drum and upon hearing this sound, our men stormed the stage from both sides and escorted the riotous lot off with alacrity.

We took them to the hacienda placita and processed them there for imprisonment and their leader for hanging. Well done! We hope we have a chance to run into this scurvy lot again.



Conclusion

The Renaissance Fair had a good start and the graciousness and appreciation of the King and Queen was more than enough recompense for our toils. We certainly look forward to serving them again in the future if they so desire. It was a very good event for us; perhaps it was the chance to work alongside museum staff members that was so gratifying. All photos by Angelina and David Poulin (unless otherwise noted).

Very fine photos of the event by Ann Murdy can be seen at this website:
http://www.pbase.com/annmurdy/renaissance_fair&page=all

Dave

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