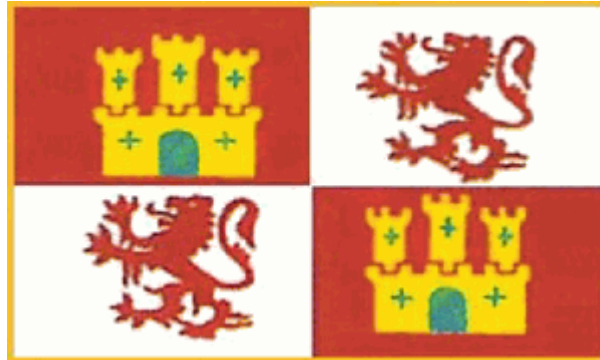




La Sociedad de la Entrada



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 in the New World. 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 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.

The Spanish Colonists were called Conquistadores (conquerors) but English Colonists of this period were something else. They took whole areas of land on the east coast for themselves and made no attempt to try to co-exist with the native populations – even intermarriage was not considered. After a long time, and much tribulation, the Natives and Spanish learned to respect each other and work together to survive against the onslaught of nomadic and semi-nomadic hostile raiders that surrounded them. Eventually, the Americans came into this melting pot – yet not a true melting pot, because 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

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 corporation. Our purpose is to represent a generic infantry company of the day, approximately 1590 to 1610 to represent members of the original colonial expeditions. Onate 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 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 Onate and his captains, but the colonists were relegated to secondary arms. Pikes were cheap and easy to make and were obtained as soon as possible. Onate 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.

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

To demonstrate European military tactics of the time this company is comprised of mixed arms, pikes, swords, and muskets. In the field, this company has a Captain, an Alferez, a Sergeant, and at least one Corporal. As in the volunteer companies of the day, officers are not noblemen; they are regular townsmen who are elected to their post (we hold elections once per year to determine unit staffing). Officers must demonstrate an ability to learn the Spanish commands as required. Men are assigned to specific squads according to their chosen arms. The company also has field music – fifers and drummers. The company also has *soldaderas*, who are family members who work toward the domestic and culinary arts.

Pike Drill

Pikes were generic arms for infantry companies of any European infantry company during this period, mixed with swordsmen to protect the flanks, and arquebuceros (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 in other arms (except the sword). 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.

Sword Drill

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 eventually won the day by breaking up enemy pike formations. Swordsmanship takes many years of study. Contrary to popular belief the buckler is not a target shield (tarjeta). Targets are about 12" in diameter while bucklers are 22-24" in diameter. Soldiers in New Mexico also used the Moorish style adarga, a bullhide shield.

Musket Drill

Matchlock muskets contributed to the battle with small arms fire. By this time (circa 1600) crossbows had been replaced by firearms. Musketmen (mosqueteros) and caliver men (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 (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.

La Soldaderas & etc.

Señora Barbara Bilbo “La Bilboana” (woman from Spanish Pyrenees town of Bilbo) has done extensive research authentic foods of the period. She has an impressive display of various vegetables, fruits, cooking utensils, and dishware. Assisting is Señora Angelina (Vigil) Poulin.

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.

Company Staff

Event Coordinators

Dave Poulin “Pifanero” (Fifer)

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 Solo” (the lone wolf).

Badge of Office: A sash worn over the shoulder and a Captain’s spear (for parade) and or musket for field (if desired).

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. The Captain may have a servant if he can convince anyone to take on the role.

Alférez (Ensign)

Currently: Michael Bilbo

Badge of Office: Sash worn over the shoulder and the company flag.

Duties: Carry the company colors; 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, cause the music to perform when required.

Sargento (Sergeant)

Currently: Anthony Campisi “El Siciliano” (the Sicilian)

Badge of Office: A sash worn over the shoulder and a halberd (for drill or parade) or a musket or pike for field (if desired).

Duties: Take over command from the Captain 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 division have aligned their men properly.

Cabo (Corporal)

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

Badge of Office: A sash worn around the waist.

Duties: The Cabo is the person responsible for the individual men in his squad; sees that each man is properly equipped (coordinate with the QM and Sargento to distribute and return equipment and clothing); 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 (all officers assist in this). The Cabo may lead the company or division in drill when required. Ideally, cabos are in charge of squads of three to twelve men. The goal is to have one squad for each division: pikes, muskets, and swords (Cabo de Piqueros, Cabo de Arcabuceros, Cabo de Roderos)

Musicos del Campo (Field Music)

Current Drummers (Tambours):

Current Fifer (Pifero): Dave Poulin

Duties: Perform according to the Music extracts of the Tactics manual.

Clerk (Maestro del Junko)

Currently: Dave Poulin

Duties: Account for all company equipment (loaner gear); store it between events; and transport it to 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 Clerk must give regular reports as to what is currently in stock, reporting new items and lost items.

Categories:

Arms and Armor (Sargent) – 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. 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.

*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 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.

***Santiago y Cierra España!**
Spanish battlecry, invoking the Spanish army patron saint,
San Iago (St. James),
"y cierra España:"
"and close (protect) Spain!"*