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## Necrology

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## NECROLOGY

### AMADO CHAVES

IT IS with genuine sorrow that we record the death of another of the older members of our Historical Society, and worthy member of one of the oldest families of Spanish name in America. Amado Chaves passed quietly away at his home on Palace Avenue, in the city of Santa Fé, Tuesday evening, December 30th.

Don Amado was born in Santa Fé April 14, 1851, the eldest son of Colonel Manuel Antonio and Señora Vicenta Labadie de Chaves. He was educated at St. Michael's College in that city, and later attended the public schools in the city of Washington, and the National University, from which he was graduated in 1876. He was at once admitted to practice in the supreme court as an attorney and counsellor at law, but he soon returned to his native home and engaged in business in San Mateo, Valencia county, and in Santa Fé. He was an excellent Spanish and English scholar, and his special interest was in proving up the titles of old Spanish and Mexican land grants.

In 1884, Don Amado was elected to the territorial legislature, from the county of Valencia, and was unanimously chosen speaker. The late Governor L. Bradford Prince appointed him in 1891 as the first superintendent of public instruction, a position in which he served with honor for six years. In 1901, he was elected mayor of the city of Santa Fé, and in 1903, he was made state senator from that county, and again, for a short period, ending in March, 1905, served as superintendent of public instruction, this time by appointment of Governor Miguel A. Otero. In the summer of 1912, he was employed by the state attorney general for special investigation as to the New Mexico-Texas



AMADO CHAVES

boundary in the Rio Grande valley, and his careful report formed an important part of the evidence before the federal supreme court in this case. In 1916, he was appointed by the late Governor W. C. McDonald as a member of the state tax commission, and during the late war he was a district board member by appointment of President Wilson.

In 1891, Mr. Chaves was married at Santa Fé to Mrs. K. N. Foster (née Kate Nichols, of Ohio), who died at Albuquerque in 1914. Of their three children, their only son, Amado, Jr., served with honor in the late war and after his return, was appointed U. S. consul to La Guaira, Venezuela. This son's death, early in 1928, was a severe blow to the father. He is survived by the two daughters, Katherine Isabel (Mrs. B. W.) Page, of Chicago, and Consuelo Mercedes (Mrs. O. B.) Summers, of Santa Fé.

Don Amado was an *hidalgo* (*hijo de algo*—"son of somebody") if there ever was one. When the writer was in Spain, he received a letter from him, under date of May 23, 1928, which said in part: "Among my father's old papers I found two . . . which contain some information concerning the Chaves family in Spain in the early days. I do not know where they came from originally; no doubt they must have come from Spain. . . The copies I will enclose in this letter." A translation of one of his enclosures will be of interest:

*Chaves*—is a very noble and old family in Spain, whose name was derived from the Villa of Chaves, in Portugal, in the following manner. In the year 1160 there were living in Portugal two youths related to the king of Spain (Don Alonzo Henriquez) who were called Garcí López and Ruí López, and they were intrepid warriors. This city was then in possession of the Moors and the king had not been able to capture it, but in the year 1160 these youths raised an army and took the city without the aid of the king, and for this memorable feat there was given to the two of this lineage the appellation of "Chaves." This is so stated by a lettering which remains on the arch of the principal church of the said villa, which reads thus:

Dos hermanos con ai guinas  
 Sin rey ganaron a Chaves;  
 Donde en Rouxo Cristalina  
 Les hay dado por mas signas  
 En su escudo cinco llaves.

These knights had relatives very close to the king, Don Alonzo Henriquez, as appears from various writings and from the [heraldic] arms which they display of the five silver keys upon a crimson field, bordered with the royal *quinas* of Portugal,—thus they are carried by the Trujillo family, but the other [family or descendants] changed the color of the keys to blue upon a field of gold, bordering [the shield] with eight *aspas* [crosses] of gold over crimson [field],—because of the member and chief head of this house who participated, in the year 1212, in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa, as is told in song by Don Luís Zapata in his “Carlo Famoso”:

Son Chaves cinco llaves relucientes  
 En el hermoso escudo colorado;  
 Su orla con ocho aspas excelentes  
 De San Andrés el bienaventurado.  
 Por los que antiguamente de sus gentes  
 Fue el Lugar de Baeza conquistado  
 Que por su esfuerzo fue tal dia  
 Y fue de Portugal su antigua guia.

In the principal church of Baeza, say Haro and others, close to the font of holy water there was an ancient slab of stone on which was inscribed the fact that the Chaves had been the conquerors of that city.

From the said knights was descended Martín Raymundes de Chaves, the first who passed, before the year 1280, from Portugal to Castile to serve the king, Don Fernando IV and the queen Doña María his mother. The latter, in the year 1304, sent him as her ambassador to the Infante Don Henriquez de Castilla and [to] other Lords who had gone to Aragon, to secure their oath for Don Alonso de la Cerda as king, and finding them in Ariza he so did with them, and on the day following, when the oath was about to be taken, the treaty was broken in the manner described in the chronicles of the King Fernando.

The last passage is obscure and very much involved, but the point of present interest is that the Chaves family

originated in Portugal, and in Castile is traced to the early part of the 14th century. From then until the latter part of the 17th century there is a break in the lineage record of the New Mexico branch of the family, although Twitchell (*Spanish Archives*, II, pp. 134-135) states that General Fernando Durán y Chaves, who was a resident of New Mexico prior to the Indian rebellion of 1680 and who figures prominently in the records of that period, "was a lineal descendant of Ruíz López," and from Don Fernando he traces the descent thus:

He was the father of eight children, one of whom, Don Bernardino Durán y Chaves, was also an officer under Governor Otermin and later with Cruzate and De Vargas. Don Bernardino had a son, Diego Antonio de Chaves, whose son, Don Pedro de Chaves, married Doña Catalina Baca, of Tomé, Valencia county. . There were several children born of the Chaves-Baca union, of whom Don Julian Chaves was the father of Colonel Manuel Antonio Chaves, father of Don Amado Chaves . .

Don Amado was thus sixth in descent from Don Bernardino. The latter was a *caballero* of the famous Order of Santiago, and very possibly in the archives of that order records might be found which would trace the Chaves ancestry back over much or all of the break in lineage. In another letter to the writer, under date of December 22, 1928, Don Amado gave what may be considered as an interesting bit of substantiating evidence connecting the New Mexico branch with the Chaves family in Spain. He wrote in part:

My father had an old gold ring, in which was engraved the coat of arms of the Chaves family. He was a lieutenant-colonel during the Civil War and was in command at what is now called Fort Wingate. . . At one time my father and family were going from the fort to Albuquerque in a family carriage. When we arrived at Blue Water the creek or arroyo was very high, as it had been raining. In the middle of the arroyo the mud was very soft and the horses got mired and could not pull the carriage across. . . My father

got off to help [the driver]. They had to use a rope, and in pulling the rope my father lost his ring and it could never be recovered.

It would be interesting to know the origin of this old seal ring; doubtless it had been handed down for various generations, perhaps from the time of the conquistadores or even earlier.

Don Amado was justly proud of his distinguished descent, but in a quiet and unpretentious way. Far more important is it that in his private and public life he was a worthy representative in the world of today of his noble ancestry. In honoring his heritage he has won for himself a high place of honor in the history of New Mexico. Exemplary in private life, faithful servant in public office, he was a cultured Christian gentleman whose place cannot be filled but whose life may well be an inspiration to others of Spanish-American descent.—*L. B. B.*