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THE DEATH OF AN OLD CONQUISTADOR: 
NEW LIGHT ON JUAN DE OÑATE

ERIC BEERMAN

Many brave conquistadores left Spain and died in Mexico. This is the story of Juan de Oñate, who left his native Mexico and died in Spain. To paraphrase the famous statement, "the reports of the death of Juan de Oñate at the rich silver mines of Pánuco near Zacatecas have been greatly exaggerated." Although Oñate died near great silver mines, they were those at Guadalcanal in Andalusia. Oñate’s career in Mexico and New Mexico during the latter half of the sixteenth century and the first years of the following century is well documented, but almost nothing is known about Oñate after he left Mexico. It is now evident that death came to the first adelantado of New Mexico at Guadalcanal in 1626.

Juan de Oñate y Salazar was born about 1550 at Zacatecas. The son of a famous and wealthy miner and conquistador, he soon commenced his brilliant career which culminated in the conquest of New Mexico and his subsequent service there as governor. After more than a decade in New Mexico, Oñate resigned in August of 1607, and the news of his resignation reached Mexico City the following February. When he returned to the capital, he faced charges of abuse of authority. Seven years later, after protracted judicial proceedings, Oñate was sentenced to perpetual banishment from New Mexico, a four-year banishment from a radius of five leagues from Mexico City, fined the considerable sum of 6,000 pesos, and penalized with the loss of the title of adelantado of New Mexico "por dos vidas." In 1617 Oñate appealed and asked that his long, faithful service in New Mexico, largely at his own expense, be taken into consideration. Two years later he was
still at his residence at the mines of Pánuco fighting for vindication. Shortly thereafter, Oñate’s wife of many years, Isabel de Tolosa y Cortés Moctezuma, granddaughter of Cortés and great-granddaughter of Aztec emperor Moctezuma, died at their home in Zacatecas. She was buried there, survived by her husband and her daughter, María de Oñate y Cortés Moctezuma.³

Shaken by the death of his wife, Oñate departed Zacatecas in 1621 and traveled to Spain to appeal his case before the new monarch crowned that year, Felipe IV.⁴ He arrived in Madrid that December for his first look at the city about which he had heard so much. Not one to avoid conflict, Oñate presented his case the following year before the powerful Consejo de Indias and asked that his punishment be entirely revoked. He additionally petitioned that the title of adelantado “por dos vidas” of New Mexico be perpetuo, noting that it had been granted in 1602 to him and his son Cristóbal; but with the latter’s death in 1612, Oñate wanted this title to be passed on to his descendants, commencing with his grandson Juan Pérez de Naharroindo y del Castillo. Oñate stated that these titles had been granted in perpetuity and gave as precedents the title of Francisco Pacheco de Córdoba as adelantado perpetuo of Nueva Galicia in Mexico and that of Miguel López de Legazpi of the Islas de los Ladrones (Mariana Islands).⁵ After reviewing the case, the Consejo de Indias recommended to the King that Oñate be absolved of all blame and reimbursed 6,000 pesos.⁶

The following year, 1623, Oñate wrote to Felipe IV and asked for vindication, noting his years of valuable service in New Mexico and mentioning his age of more than seventy-three years.⁷ A Royal Order of August 11, 1623, that seven members of the Consejo de Indias initialed on September 7, partially vindicated the conquistador of New Mexico. He received reimbursement of 6,000 pesos, but the perpetual banishment from New Mexico still stood; however, given his advanced age, this punishment was more psychological than physical. Oñate retained the title of adelantado of New Mexico, but only “por dos vidas.” Still, he was content to know that after his death, this title for which he had sacrificed so much would pass on to his eldest grandson residing in Mexico.⁸
Onate had a special love for his orphaned grandchildren some five thousand miles away and apparently felt deeply the loss ten years before of his only son, Cristóbal de Naharriondo Pérez Oñate y Cortés Moctezuma. In 1622 Oñate asked the eminent poet Francisco Murcia de la Llana to write a poem about the tragic death of Oñate’s son. The following year in Madrid this work was published under the title, *Canciones/Lugubres y/Tristes, La Muerte de/Don Christoval de Oñate*. 

Many people would have been content to take a well deserved rest after many years of toil and struggle, but not Oñate. Approaching the end of a long life which spanned some three-quarters of a century, he did not retire. Because of Oñate’s experience in the Pánuco mines, two leagues from Zacatecas, Felipe IV asked him in 1624 to assume the vital position of “visitador general de minas y escoriales de España.” Gold, silver, and mercury mines in Spain had fallen into a sorry state because for many years the crown had come to depend on the rich mines of the Indies. Wanting to increase home production, the new monarch asked Oñate to make a visita (inspection) and prepare a status report on the mines of Spain. Oñate willingly accepted the request of the King, and soon he was making inspection trips to various mining regions.

Oñate seemed to be back in good graces with his appointment the following year as a caballero in the prestigious Military Order of Santiago. A prospective candidate for the Order had to prove character and lineage, which included the time-honored “limpieza de sangre” (purity of blood). Some sixty witnesses were interviewed in Granada, birthplace of Oñate’s mother; in Burgos, birthplace of his maternal grandmother; and in Madrid, where many of the witnesses had served with Oñate and his father in Zacatecas and New Mexico. This voluminous dossier gave a detailed historical and genealogical report on the Oñate clan. The candidate must have passed the examination with flying colors, for he was initiated into the Order the same year the proceedings commenced, an unusual case as generally several years were required. His son-in-law Vicente de Zaldívar y Mendoza, who was also his nephew and second cousin, entered the Order the following year while residing in Zacatecas.
NUEVAS LEYES Y ORDENANZAS.
Hechas por su Magestad del Rey, don Felipe nuestro señor, cerca de la forma que se hase tener en estos Reynos, en el descubrimiento, labor, y benéficio de las minas de oro, plata, acogue, y otros metales: Y con la parte que se ha de acudir a su Magestad, y la que han de acer los de Cubridores y beneficiadores dellas.

QUE CON ORDEN Y MANDATO DE LA Real Junta de Minas de estos Reynos, y a espensas de don Juan de Oñate, Adelantado del Nuevo Mexico, hizo imprimir Andres de Carvajal, Secretario del dicho Adelantado.

CON LICENCIA,

En Madrid, por Luis Sanchez, impresor del Rey N. S. año de 1625.

Oñate's New Laws and Ordinances . . ., 1625.
Oñate was not satisfied to sit at a desk. He had been active all his life, much of the time in climate and terrain considerably more hostile than those of Spain, so he saw no reason to slow down after his arrival in Spain. Oñate made various inspection trips to mines in Spain, including those at Cartagena, Burgos, Granada, and Guadalcanal. One of the witnesses for Oñate’s entry into the Order of Santiago noted in Granada on October 1, 1625, that Oñate had been there eight months ago, a fact confirmed by most of the additional nineteen witnesses in that historic Andalusian city. His mother Catalina de Salazar y de la Cadena was a wealthy native of Granada, and while there, Oñate did a little personal business, checking on the Belicena hacienda a league from the city, which his nephew Fernando de Oñate looked after for the family. He also heard mass at the convent of San Francisco and viewed for the first time the Oñate coat of arms on the wall of the family chapel.

In 1625 Oñate traveled throughout Spain to several mining regions. He then prepared a report for the King, and as a result of his findings new regulations were published in Madrid in September as Nuevas Leyes y Ordenanzas. The first folio of the publication listed the members of the Junta of the special mining council that Felipe IV had established, and all were influential figures of the day. Francisco Murcia de la Llana signed the publication stating that it was in agreement with the original manuscript and noted that three years before he had written a poem about the death of Oñate’s son. The introduction by Andrés de Carrasquilla, secretary of Oñate, gave considerable background on the adelantado of New Mexico, stating that he was more than seventy years of age when he left Mexico and one of the wealthiest persons in the Indies, with a special love for his orphaned grandchildren, highly respected in Zacatecas and in good health for his advanced age. Still, he gave up all this and went to Spain “sin saber a qué.”

Felipe IV seemed impressed with Oñate’s contention that the mines in Spain, which had existed since the time of the Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Romans, should be developed to supplement the gold and silver of the Indies. After meeting with the King, Oñate planned another inspection to the mines of southern
Spain with a scheduled stop at Cartagena on the Mediterranean. Then he would go west to the Guadalcanal silver mines, where he could make side trips to the nearby mines at Aracena and Cazalla de la Sierra. Guadalcanal was the center of that region where mines had been continually worked since Roman times. A mining regulation of 1559 indicated that no mining could be conducted within one league of the royal mine at Guadalcanal.

Although Oñate was still in good health in Madrid before departing on this trip, his advanced age was sufficient to remind him that he should leave his personal affairs in order, and he made out a codicil to his will in August 1625. This document noted that he had considerable wealth in Cartagena, where he generally heard mass at the Church of Nuestra Señora. Oñate made provisions for this church as well as for the San Isidro Convent and the San Sebastián Church. Apparently, he had a premonition that his health was beginning to deteriorate, and he specified that if he were to die in Cartagena, his advisors should continue the inspection trip and that the chief executor of his will, Padre Hernando Chirino de Salazar, be informed. Additionally, his son-in-law, Vicente de Zaldívar, residing at Zacatecas, should then come to Spain and assume the visita of the mines. Oñate left 20,000 pesos for this operation which should be carried out with the help of Carlos Pablo Mercador. Oñate then departed Madrid for the last time in August for the 250 mile trip southeast to Cartagena, accompanied by five advisors: Juan de Carranza y Alvear, Gonzalo Rodríguez Morán y Talavera, Tomás de Calayandía, Juan Camarena, and his secretary Carrasquilla. At Cartagena, Oñate made out another codicil putting his affairs in order. After carrying out the visita to Cartagena, Oñate and his group commenced the journey to Guadalcanal, some 250 miles to the west. En route, Oñate fell gravely ill, but with his strong constitution, he was able to reach Guadalcanal. As soon as he partially recovered, he made out his last will and testament, incorporating all previous wills and legal documents prepared in Spain and the Indies into this final document, presenting it to the escribano (notary public) of Guadalcanal, Juan Vázquez Tamayo, on October 4, 1625. Oñate’s final will still listed Padre Chirino de Salazar as chief executor, with full administrative responsibilities to carry out the terms and clauses.
In addition to listing Padre Chirino de Salazar chief executor, Oñate's will written at Guadalcanal named as secondary executors Carranza y Alvear, official in the Holy Inquisition, member of Oñate's mining visita, who was present in Guadalcanal; licenciado Cristóbal Freyle de Gálvez, priest and escribano of Guadalcanal and member of the Order of Santiago; Juan Vicente Carrillo, priest of Guadalcanal and commissar of the Holy Inquisition; and Morán y Talavera, former servant of Oñate and official with Oñate's visita at Guadalcanal. On this date the will was notarized by the escribano de número, Juan Vázquez Tamayo. Signing as witnesses were Padre Cristóbal de Borrilla, Juan González Carranza, Francisco de Bastida, Luis de Igarra and Juan González Toledano, all from Guadalcanal. Oñate's health did not improve, and two weeks later he called Vázquez Tamayo to his home and added a codicil to his testament replacing Juan Vicente Carrillo with Juan de Rivera of Guadalcanal. The escribano noted that Oñate was sick in bed and close to death, although lucid of mind.

Between this amendment of October 18 and the following June 3, 1626, no direct word came from Oñate. He must have been very ill at his home in Guadalcanal, but considerable activity was going on during this time, including his entry into the Order of Santiago and the process for "limpieza de sangre" for the Inquisition which commenced in 1626. These two proceedings were also underway for his son-in-law and nephew Vicente de Zaldivar, and they included much testimony regarding Oñate at that time at the mines of Guadalcanal.

On June 3, or just before, Oñate died at his home in Guadalcanal. On that date, Padre Carrillo and Carranza y Alvear, members of the visita, entered the office of the alcaldes ordinarios, Diego de Sotomayor and licenciado Antonio del Castillo López, and informed the local authorities of the death of the adelantado of New Mexico. Oñate died a muerte natural in bed. As executor of Oñate's last will and testament, Carranza y Alvear requested that the legal document given eight months before at Guadalcanal be opened and read, that Padre Chirino de Salazar in Madrid be informed, and that the terms and clauses of the will be carried out in accordance with the law of the realm. To substantiate the date of death, a witness in Madrid on June 15, 1628, indicated that
Oñate had died at Guadalcanal a little more than two years before. To verify Oñate’s year of birth, Fernando Martín Casuo, a friar in the Order of Predicadores and born at Zacatecas, stated that when Oñate died in 1626, he was “76 años de edad más o menos.”

The Guadalcanal alcaldes agreed that all was in order, and the will was opened June 3 by the other escribano of Guadalcanal, Freyle de Gálvez. Francisco de Rojas Bastida also testified that Oñate died a natural death at his home in Guadalcanal, and Pedro de Andrada and Juan García de Paredes substantiated this testimony. Guadalcanal’s village priest, Francisco de Padilla Olmedo, and Alonso Sá testified that they were with Oñate at his home when the will was notarized the previous October 4. The reading of the will commenced, and one of the first clauses detailed Oñate’s considerable wealth at Cartagena and stated that the silver belonging to him at Havana and being shipped to Spain on the galeones with the flota of that year would be under the administrative control of Chirino de Salazar. A copy of the will was sent to Madrid, and on August 16, 1626, Padre Luis de la Palma, head of the Jesuits of the province of Toledo, took the will, which bequeathed money to the Colegio Imperial, to the escribano of Madrid, Francisco Caramaño. One month later, on September 16 and 18, Chirino de Salazar notarized these provisions before another escribano of Madrid, Juan de Bejar. On the thirtieth, Chirino de Salazar received the license for approval of the will from Padre Luis de la Palma, which was then given to escribano Caramaño.

A considerable part of Oñate’s fortune was left to the Colegio Imperial. No doubt the Jesuits were interested that the legal proceedings move rapidly and that the funds specified in the Oñate testament be received as soon as possible by the Colegio. Because these provisions are important for an understanding of Oñate, they deserve extended discussion.

A quinto (fifth) of Oñate’s total wealth, inside and outside Spain, was given to the Colegio Imperial, and Oñate specified that Vicente de Zaldivar be advised of this provision so that Oñate’s wealth in Mexico would be made available. Oñate left 10,000 ducados for a chapel in the new church which was being constructed alongside the Colegio Imperial and stipulated that, when
possible, his remains should be brought from Guadalcanal and interred in this chapel with the Oñate coat of arms on the wall and that this chapel would be the burial place for his heirs and descendants. To help insure his memory and that of his descendants, Oñate left two hundred ducados for a capellania, which permitted three masses weekly at the discretion of the Jesuits of the Colegio Imperial in the Oñate chapel.

Four thousand ducados were donated to a Jesuit "Colegio de Pasantes," a bequest to religious students in convents who finished their studies and assisted a professor. One or two halls were to be constructed at a site the director of the Colegio thought the best location for lodging forty colegiales. Five Jesuit "colegiales religiosos" were to be maintained. These men must be capable persons so when their pasantes completed their training they would be able to teach in and outside Spain. Ten pasantes were to come from the province of Toledo, five from Castile, five from Andalusia and five from Aragón, and if a new province were added the proportions would remain the same, with Toledo always having ten. Candidates would be chosen by the leading Jesuit in the province after consultation with the director of the Colegio Imperial. Typical of Jesuit tradition, these students would receive meals, clothing, books, and round-trip transportation. The duration of studies would be five years, and at the completion of this training the students should be able publicly to debate philosophy and theology.

Attendance at all college functions would be a requirement, and each day all must attend a mass in memory of Oñate and his descendants, as well as one in memory of Vicente de Zaldívar, his children, and descendants. If income from the mines was greater than anticipated, Oñate then specified that 4,000 ducados should be given for a "Colegio de Estudiantes Seglares" for religious students who did not live in the convent. A hall near the Colegio Imperial would be purchased for thirty "colegiales seglares." Twelve of these would be chosen by the director's examination, would have completed studies in humanities and theology, and would bring references from a university or a Jesuit college in Spain. The curriculum of the seglares would be similar to that of pasantes. The remaining eighteen students would have good voices and would be examined by the maestros of the Capilla Real,
convent of Descalzas Reales and convent of Encarnación, with final approval given by the director of the Colegio Imperial. In addition to taking classes, these eighteen students would attend mass on Sundays, holidays, and on those days when a sermon was given in the church of the Colegio Imperial. They would also assist with mass and with high mass on the day before a holiday. Altogether, they would have ten years of college—three of grammar, three of humanities, and four of theology.

Several other characteristics of the school for the seglares are of note. For example, this college would give special veneration to the Virgin Mary, and the main door would display the Oñate coat of arms. The dress for all colegiales would be a dark violet robe. The descendants of Oñate and Zaldívar, and the latter's children, would be given preference in the examination for entry. After termination of classes each afternoon, the eighteen "colegiales músicos" would say a "salve cantada" with a prayer for Oñate and a high mass on the days before a holiday and on holidays. A high mass in memory of Oñate would be said on the day after the Immaculate Conception feast (December 9) and was to be attended by all the colegiales, as well as the Jesuits of the Colegio Imperial.30

When Padre Chirino de Salazar, the chief executor, had these provisions of Oñate's will notarized on September 18, 1626, before the escribano Juan de Bejar and witnessed by Madrid residents Fernando de Abarca and the brothers Angelo, Eduardo and Cristóbal de Santiago, he made additional notations regarding his administrative responsibilities. If Oñate's quinto increased more than projected, then the 4,000 ducados destined for each of the "Colegio de Pasantes" and for the "Colegio de Seglares" would be increased to 5,000 ducados. Chirino de Salazar also reiterated that he would carry out the terms and clauses of the will.31

Oñate's will left a great fortune to his heirs, as well as the quinto to the Colegio Imperial. His descendants also had right to interment in the church of the Colegio Imperial and priority for entry into the colegios that his will established. Thus, it was important to know the descendants of Juan de Oñate and his wife Isabel de Tolosa y Cortés Moctezuma. They had at least two children who
grew to maturity: Cristóbal de Naharriondo Pérez Oñate y Cortés Moctezuma, who was born in Mexico about 1590, married to María Gutierrez del Castillo, and who died at twenty-two years of age; and María de Oñate y Cortés Moctezuma, born at Zacatecas shortly before the turn of the sixteenth century and married to her relative Vicente de Zaldivar who figured so prominently in the Oñate story. Oñate’s son and wife had a child, Juan Pérez de Naharriondo y del Castillo, who inherited his grandfather’s title as adelantado of New Mexico on Oñate’s death in 1626 and who was married to Petrona Hinojosa. This couple had a son, Bartolomé Manuel Pérez Toqueno, who married María de Medrano Pardo de Lago y Altamirano. Their son, Antonio Pérez Toqueno, was the great-great-grandson of Juan de Oñate, born in the middle of the seventeenth century and married to Joaquina Fernández Márquez y Amarillas.

But Oñate’s significance goes far beyond the importance of his family line. The traditional view of Oñate has rightly emphasized his notable role as founder of New Mexico, but we now know that in Spain, because of the generous stipulations of his will, he established a significant educational institution. In the Basque language, the name Oñate means “at the foot of a mountain.” Juan de Oñate was born at the foot of the La Bufa silver mountain of Zacatecas; his father and forefathers were born at the foot of Aloña Peak at Oñate, Spain. Appropriately, the first adelantado of New Mexico died at the foot of the silver mine mountain of Guadalcanel.

NOTES

1. George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey, in their monumental two-volume work on Oñate, Don Juan de Oñate, Colonizer of New Mexico, 1595-1628 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1953), are among the few scholars to state correctly that Oñate left Mexico at an elderly age and went to Spain. They did not know the date of his trip or the place of his death, but hoped one day that the Archivo General de Indias in Sevilla would reveal the secret. However, this
information on Oñate’s death at Guadalcanal in 1626 was finally uncovered in
the provisions of his will found in the Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid
(AHN).

2. Juan de Oñate to the King (Felipe IV), Madrid, September 7, 1623, Colec­
ción de Pellicer, Ms. XXII, ff. 192-93, Real Academia de Historia, Madrid
(RAH); Francisco Murcia de la Llana, Canciones / Lugubres y / Tristes, La
Muerte de / Don Christoval de Oñate- / Teniente de Gouernador, y Capitán Ge-
neral de les conquistadas del nue- / uo Mexico. / compuestos por Francisco / Mur­
cia de la Llana, professor de letras humanas. / Dirigida a Don Juan de / Oñate,
Adelantado, y Conquistador / del nuevo Mexico (Madrid: Viuda de Fernando
Correo, 1622), p. 21. The prologue to a facsimile edition printed in Valencia in
1953 is by Agapito Rey and José Blecua; the John Carter Brown Library, Brown
University, holds an original copy of the work.

3. Testimony of Friar Baltasar de Tebes, Madrid, November 5, 1626, and of
Antonio Lope de Ortega, December 13, 1626, Inquisición, legajo 1367, no. 5,
AHN (Limpieza de sangre de Zaldivar). This dossier is the “limpieza de sangre”
for Oñate’s daughter and her husband, prepared between 1625-1628 for the In­
quision and contains much historical and genealogical data on the Oñate,
Zaldivar, Tolosa, Moctezuma, Salazar, Díaz de Mendoza, Cortés and de la
Cadena clans. It is entitled: “Información de la genealogía y limpieza de Doña
María de Oñate Cortés Moctezuma mujer de Vicente de Zaldivar, maestre de
campo. Echa por mandado de los señores inquisidores apostólicos de la ciudad
y reyno desto. Comisario Licenciado Alonso García de Allande y notario Luis de
Briones, Madrid, 1627.” For a study of these families, see Donald Chipman,
“The Oñate-Moctezuma-Zaldivar Families of Northern New Spain,” New Mex­
ico Historical Review 52 (October, 1977): 297-310, and José Ignacio Dávila
Garibi, La sociedad de Zacatecas en los albores del régimen colonial (Mexico,
1939).

4. Oñate to the King, Madrid, September 7, 1623, Pellicer, Ms. XXII, f. 192,
RAH; Murcia de la Llana to Oñate, Madrid, December 4, 1621, Jesuitas, leg.
553, fol. 32, AHN. The letter from Murcia de la Llana indicates that on that date
Oñate was in Madrid, and on May 6, 1621, he was still in Zacatecas.

5. Oñate to the King, Madrid, September 7, 1623, Pellicer, Ms. XXII, ff.
192-93, RAH; Rey and Blecua, prologue, Canciones / Lugubres, p. 21.

6. Rey and Blecua, prologue. The authors mistakenly assert that Oñate’s
destierro from Mexico City was perpetual, but this was the case only for New
Mexico. His banishment from Mexico City, commencing in 1614, was only for
four years.

7. Oñate to the King, Madrid, September 7, 1623, Pellicer, Ms. XXII, ff.
192-93, RAH; Delmiro de la Válgoma, “Juan de Oñate, hacia 1550--hacia
1625,” in Los descubridores celebres (Barcelona: Editores Gustavo Gili, 1965),
pp. 116-17.

8. Oñate to the King, Madrid, September 7, 1623, Pellicer, Ms. XXII, ff.
192-93, RAH. Additional information is available in Juan de Oñate (Madrid:
Ediciones España, n.d.).
9. Licenciado Francisco Murcia de la Llana published many works in Spain in the first part of the seventeenth century. See note two for the complete title of the work by Murcia de la Llana.

10. Testimony of Hernando Chirino de Salazar, Madrid, September 30, 1626, Jesuitas, leg. 766, no. 1, AHN. This testimony is part of a detailed dossier which includes segments of the Oñate will at Guadalcanal on October 4, 1625, which pertain to funds left to the Colegio Imperial in Madrid. The dossier is entitled: "Escritura que otorgó, el dn. Hernando Chirino de Salazar de la Compañía de Jesús, predicador de su majestad, consultor de el Santo Oficio, cerca de declarar las disposiciones pías, y fundación de colegios que el señor Maestre Campo Don Juan de Oñate..." (Escritura de Oñate); Nuevas Leyes y Ordenanzas, Hechas por Su Magestad del Rey don Filipe nuestro Señor, cerca de la forma que se hade tener en estos Reynos, en el descubrimiento, labor, y beneficio de las minas de oro, plata, acogue, y otros metales. Y con la parte que se ha de acudir a Su Magestad, a la que han de auer los descubridores y beneficiadores dellas. Que Con Orden y Mandato De La Real junta de Minas destos Reynos, y a espensas de Don Juan de Oñate, Adelantado del Nuevo Mexico, hizo imprimir Andrés de Carrasquilla, Secretario del dicho Adelantado (Madrid, 1625), introduction (Ordenanzas de Oñate), found in Osuna, Leg. 2252, AHN and Caja 157-22, Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid.

11. Ordenanzas de Oñate. Oñate’s entry into the Military Order of Santiago is in a large dossier (expediente) at AHN, Orden Militar de Santiago, expediente 5925 ( Expediente de Santiago-Oñate). These documents contain much historical and genealogical information on Oñate. They indicate that Oñate returned to Spain in 1621 after the death of his wife in Zacatecas, and they mention his work as visitador general of the mines of Spain.

12. Zaldivar’s membership in this same Order is recorded in his voluminous dossier at AHN, Orden Militar de Santiago, esp. 9070 ( Expediente de Santiago-Zaldivar). This dossier contains the same type of extensive information on Zaldivar and testimony regarding Oñate’s return to Spain. The approval for Zaldivar’s entrance into Santiago came near the time of Oñate’s death, an event not mentioned in the Zaldivar dossier.

13. Ordenanzas de Oñate; testimony of Rodrigo Tapia de Vargas, Granada, October 1, 1625, Expediente de Santiago-Oñate.

14. Testimony of Rodrigo Tapia de Vargas, Expediente de Santiago-Oñate; testimony of Fernando de Oñate (brother of Juan), Puebla (de los Angeles), Mexico, January 15, 1583, Expediente de Santiago-Oñate. This information is included in “Memoria de los sucesores que ha habido en la hacienda de Don Fernando de Oñate y sus hermanos.” There are several coats of arms of the Oñates, and the one of Cristóbal de Oñate, at the Archivo National, Mexico, vinculo 261, reproduced in María Lourdes Díaz-Trehuelo, Navegantes y conquistadores vascos (Madrid, 1965), p. 165, and cited in Alberto and Arturo García Carrafia, Enciclopedia heráldica y genealógica hispanoamericana, 88 vols. (Madrid, 1919-1963), 61:22, is a shield of five gold bands, alternating with five red bands, with a silver quarter moon at the bottom in a transversed position.
15. *Ordenanzas de Oñate*.


17. *Ordenanzas de Oñate.* The island of World War II battle fame in the Solomon Islands in the Pacific was named after this mining center in Andalusia. The Solomons were first explored by Europeans during a Spanish expedition commanded by Álvaro de Mendaña, who departed the Peruvian port of Callao in 1567, while Oñate was still a teenager in Mexico. Mendaña’s trusted *maestre de campo* was Pedro Ortega Valencia, who departed from a Spanish base on Santa Isabel Island in the eastern Solomons and explored an island to the southwest which he named after his native village in Spain-Guadalcanal. Once back in Peru in 1569, the rugged survivors of this expedition, to get the viceroy’s support for another voyage, began circulating stories of great wealth found in these islands, with *limenos* soon referring to them as being “rich as King Solomon’s Mines.” Years later, another figure familiar to New Mexico, viceroy of New Spain, Duke of Alburquerque, held the *encomienda* of Guadalcanal in the Order of Santiago. Encomienda de Guadalcanal, Orden Militar de Santiago, legajos 132, 3919, 4500, 4887, 5823, AHN. For a study of Guadalcanal, see the manuscript, Conchita Burman and Eric Beerman, “Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands and how they got their names.” submitted to *Marine Corps Gazette.*

18. “*Codicilio,*” Madrid, August 1625, Escritura de Oñate.


20. “*Codicilio,*” Madrid.

21. “*Codicilio,*” Cartagena, August 1625, and Oñate last will and testament, Guadalcanal, October 4, 1625, Escritura de Oñate.

22. Oñate’s last will and testament, Escritura de Oñate.

23. “*Codicilio,*” Guadalcanal, October 18, 1625, Escritura de Oñate. For additional information about Oñate’s activities in Spain that year, see a copy of an interesting letter from Antonio Rodríguez to viceroy of Naples (Duke of Alba, Antonio Álvarez de Toledo), Madrid, January 12, 1625, “... Donde se declaran los herederos hechos de don Juan de Oñate, Adelantado del nuevo Mexico; su venida a España a descubrir las minas de oro y plata que en ella ay: todo a su costa. Dase cuenta de un funcionario presente que dió a su Majestad, y otras cosas dignas de ser leídas.” José Toribio Medina, *Biblioteca hispano-americana,* 7 vols. (Santiago de Chile, 1898-1907), 2:240. Original document at the Biblioteca de la Universidad de Sevilla.

24. *Escritura de Oñate; Expediente de Santiago-Oñate; “Limpieza de sangre de Juan de Oñate,”* Inquisición, leg. 408, no. 1, AHN. This pureblood examination for Oñate was commenced in 1626 and was finally closed in 1628, two years after his death. The date on the document may help explain why George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey assumed that Oñate was alive in Spain in 1628. Several factors may have complicated this process and extended it for two years: Oñate left a sizeable fortune, his daughter, son-in-law and grandchildren had certain burial privileges at the church of the Colegio Imperial in Madrid, the provisions for schooling at the *colegios* founded by Oñate’s will, and the importance
of establishing the “limpieza de sangre” for Oñate’s heirs. This dossier of Oñate contains much documentation on his family and the testimonies of many witnesses telling of Oñate’s life in Zacatecas, New Mexico, Mexico City, Granada, Madrid, and about his death in Guadalcanal in 1626.

25. Expediente de Santiago-Zaldívar; Limpieza de sangre de Zaldivar.
26. Testimony of Juan Vicente Carrillo and Juan de Carranza y Alvear, Guadalcanal, June 3, 1626, Escritura de Oñate.
27. Testimony of Friar Baltasar de Tebes, Madrid, June 15, 1628, Limpieza de sangre de Oñate.
28. Testimony of July 20, 1628, Limpieza de sangre de Oñate.
29. License of Padre Luis de la Palma, Madrid, September 30, 1626, Escritura de Oñate.
30. Oñate’s last will and testament, Escritura de Oñate.
31. Testimony of Chirino de Salazar, Madrid, September 18, 1626, Escritura de Oñate.
33. Expediente de Santiago-Zaldívar; Expediente de Santiago-Oñate; Limpieza de sangre de Zaldivar.