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# From Asturias to New Mexico: Don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés

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EDWARD K. FLAGLER

Francisco Cuervo y Valdés, soldier and administrator, served the Spanish Crown for almost forty years on the northern frontier of New Spain, from 1678 until about 1715. From March 1705 through July 1707 he was acting governor of New Mexico, where he is primarily known for having founded the city of Albuquerque.<sup>1</sup> Although a number of works have revealed considerable information concerning Cuervo's career as a servant of the Crown, much of his personal life and family affairs remains shrouded in mystery. The purpose of the present study is to present information concerning Cuervo's family background and supposed marriage to *doña María Francisca García de las Rivas* together with other aspects concerning the life of this representative of Spanish officialdom.

Don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés was born in La Frontera de Llamero, jurisdiction of the villa of Santa María de Grado, in the province of Asturias, northern Spain. The legitimate son of Alonso Cuervo Palazio and Ana Suárez, he was baptised in Llamero on 16 June 1651.<sup>2</sup> Thus it is possible that he was born in May of that year. Alonso Cuervo and Ana Suárez belonged to the numerous lower middle class nobility of Asturias. It is quite possible that they possessed at least a modest tract of land which provided sufficient farm produce for them to live on. In southern Spain—Andalusia and Extremadura—the total number of nobles was insignificant in comparison with the rest of the population. However, they generally lived on vast estates that had been granted their

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ancestors by the Crown in compensation for services performed in the wars of the Reconquest and had developed a lifestyle that permitted them to disdain manual labor as something below their social class.

In contrast, the mountain areas of northern Spain, including Cuervo's native Asturias, had never been effectively controlled by the Muslim invaders, and therefore the inhabitants had "preserved their honor" from generation to generation in the isolation of their mountain communities carrying with them "their origin of known property." They had no need to prove that they were "*hijos de algo*" (sons of somebody) for they and their families along with their traditional trades and professions were known by everyone. The official *padrones* (censuses) include wagon drivers, tailors, stonecutters, bricklayers, shoemakers, and tavern keepers among these *hidalgos*. Some were even officially listed as "*pobres de solemnidad*" (poor as churchmice).<sup>3</sup>

Proof of Cuervo's noble lineage is his election in 1691 as *alcalde* of the Holy Brotherhood of Grado for the category of "*hijos nobles*" and his investiture in the Military Order of Santiago.<sup>4</sup> About the year 1699 while serving as governor of Coahuila province he was knighted in the Convent of San Francisco in Monterrey, Mexico.<sup>5</sup> Candidates were required to belong to the nobility and investiture in any of the military orders of chivalry was always preceded by a meticulous investigation of the candidate's ancestry with particular emphasis on the absence of "unclean" Jewish blood, and an untarnished reputation.

In regard to his immediate family, don Francisco had at least two brothers; Juan Cuervo y Ventoza, who remained a resident of Grado, and Ildefonso Cuervo y Valdés who served as a royal official in the city of Guadalajara, New Spain.<sup>6</sup> During this period the mother's surname was frequently not used after that of the father as is current practice in Spain today.<sup>7</sup> However, the use of the second surname Valdés by Francisco and Ildefonso is somewhat of a mystery as the investigation conducted by the tribunal of the Order of Santiago reveals no ancestors by the name of Valdés.

When Cuervo was about seventeen years old he left his hometown for Madrid and either in 1677 or 1678 arrived in New Spain.<sup>8</sup> On 13 April 1678, he was promoted to Captain of Infantry at the royal settlement of San Juan Bautista in the province of Sonora, or Nueva Andalucía as it was also called. Cuervo continued in Sonora until 1680 and then spent approximately a year in Mexico City recruiting and preparing a company of soldiers for service in the Philippine Islands. Then on 6 February 1681, he was appointed *Visitador General* (general inspector) for the province of Sonora. The position specifically included San Juan Bautista, the Real de San Miguel Arcangel and the Royal Mines at San

Ildefonso de Ostimuri. In addition at one time or another he served as *alcalde mayor* and *capitan a guerra* for the royal mines at San Juan Bautista.<sup>9</sup>

In 1682, the Opatas Indians of Sonora rebelled against the Spaniards and "Lieutenant Governor" (probably a temporary appointment) Cuervo was sent to campaign against them. Moving boldly against the upper Montezuma River towns of Turicachi, Cuquiarachi, and Tebadeguachi, Cuervo defeated the Opatas and executed several of their leaders. The latter was to cause considerable resentment among the Indians. It was said that Cuervo had ruined Sonora and by executing the Opatas chiefs had created an atmosphere of distrust and hate which made it difficult to return the Opatas to an alliance with the Spaniards.<sup>10</sup>

However, for the moment the frontier areas of the towns of Santa Maria, San Miguel Bavispe, and San Juan Guachinera had been pacified thanks mainly to Cuervo's energetic action. Upon completion of his tour of duty in Sonora the customary *residencia* or investigation of his service record credited him with having performed his duties "cleanly and with zeal" and furthermore stated that he was entitled to the honors that the King should see fit to bestow upon him.<sup>11</sup>

The Great Southwestern Revolt which commenced with the Pueblo uprising in New Mexico, spread to the province of Nueva Vizcaya in the spring of 1684. On 6 May, the Janos and Sumas of Mission Nuestra Señora de la Soledad—present city of Janos—revolted, killing their missionary, Fray Manuel Beltrán, and Captain Antonio de Alviso, along with a servant. Captain Francisco Ramírez, in command at Casas Grandes, received news of the affair on 11 May and immediately sent word to El Paso for aid. Meanwhile other Sumas at Santa María de Carretas joined the rebellion and then the Conchos of the area south of Casas Grandes followed suit. At San Francisco de la Toma near El Paso, the Sumas abandoned their mission and the Conchos and Sumas of Ojito de Salamayuca joined in destroying Mission Gertrudis. The situation was indeed critical with a large number of the hostiles moving on Casas Grandes when aid was finally sent by Governor Jironza from El Paso and troops from Sonora led by Cuervo arrived to drive them off.<sup>12</sup>

Together with Cuervo's men, the settlers at Casas Grandes, and thirty of Jironza's soldiers, the Spaniards had a strong force of some one hundred harquebuss-armed troops. They encountered over two thousand Indians on *Peñol del Diablo* near Casas Grandes and in early June were able to drive the Indians from this strong defensive position. However, in the ensuing follow-up campaign the Spaniards were unable to force the hostiles from the hill and after a sharp engagement in which the soldiers and their Indian auxiliaries suffered heavy casualties—several dead and thirty-three wounded—they were compelled to withdraw. Then in September 1684, a large body of Sumas and Janos attacked Casas

Grandes, carrying off all the stores and livestock. Once again Cuervo went to the aid of Captain Ramírez, leading a hundred mounted riflemen on a march that took them a hundred and thirty leagues in pursuit of the marauders. By that December the hostiles were suing for peace.<sup>13</sup>

Cuervo's gift for organization and unrelenting activity against the enemy apparently drew the attention of his superiors, for on 14 July 1687 he was appointed acting governor and captain general of the eastern borderland province of Nuevo León. There he replaced the Marqués de San Miguel de Aguayo who would later win fame for his role in the reoccupation of Spanish Texas.<sup>14</sup>

During his tenure in Nuevo León, Cuervo cooperated closely with other colleagues, notably don Alonso de León, governor of neighboring Coahuila province which was being devastated by the Indians led by their chief, don Pedrote. These Indians had committed numerous depredations against ranches and settlements, including Hacienda de Caopas and Mission Contotores. As a result, Governor León led a punitive expedition against them which in addition to his own force included eight well-armed, especially chosen men who along with one hundred and fifty horses had been provided by Governor Cuervo.<sup>15</sup>

The following year the situation in Coahuila became even more critical due to another widespread Indian outbreak. De León sent urgent pleas for aid to the authorities of Parras, Saltillo, Nueva Vizcaya, and Nuevo León. However, only Governor Cuervo responded and due mainly to the troops he sent it was possible to practically pacify the province by April 1688. Cuervo himself conducted several punitive expeditions against the Indians, many of whom were led by a survivor of the French colony established in 1684 at Matagorda Bay, Texas, by Robert Cavelier, sieur de La Salle.

On one of these incursions against the hostiles, Cuervo managed to capture the wily Frenchman who had gathered nearly a thousand Indians to fight the Spaniards.<sup>16</sup> Although not specifically identified in the report, he was probably Jean Jarri who deserted La Salle's colony before its destruction by the Indians. Jarri was sent first to Monclova and then to Mexico City for interrogation. Although his capture was credited to de León, apparently it was Cuervo who actually brought him in. The information provided by Jarri was later instrumental in the Spanish decision to explore and occupy Texas.

Cuervo's life between the years 1689 and 1696 is somewhat confusing. However, we do know that his fortunes went from one extreme to another; from imprisonment under false accusations to marriage with a person who would facilitate his investiture in the prestigious Military Order of Santiago.

A *memorial* (report) dated 11 July 1690, and filed in the General Archive of the Indies in Seville states that "Don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés [is] a prisoner in the Royal Prison at this Court by order of the Chamber and Council of the Indies."<sup>17</sup>

The document, endorsed by Cuervo himself, states that in 1681, having been appointed by Bartolomé de Estrada to the position of *Visitador* and *alcalde mayor-capitán general* of Sonora, Francisco Iglesias, *alcalde mayor* of Ostimuri denounced him before the Audiencia of Guadalajara because of his *desafecto* (dissaffection). This and "specious motives" are the only reasons stated for the accusation. Furthermore, the royal scribe appointed to handle the case in Mexico was one Luis de Morales, a man who Cuervo had previously processed for supposed crimes. Cuervo protested the appointment of this clerk, but the orders of the Audiencia instructing Morales not to continue with the case came late, after Cuervo had been condemned to prison, the loss of his patrimony, and exile in the Philippine Islands. He was sent to Spain, however, rather than the Philippines, where he was imprisoned.<sup>18</sup>

In Spain, Cuervo had access to greater legal resorts and personal connections to obtain his freedom. First of all, the court order sentencing him was based on accusations formulated by Morales in relation to the residencia of Bartolomé Estrada held four years before which concluded with the latter's exoneration and that of his *ministros* (officials). Estrada had appointed Cuervo *visitador* and *capitan general* of Sonora. Cuervo, who was still in prison in 1696, requested that he be included in the royal pardon which had been proclaimed in conjunction with the marriage of King Carlos II to María Ana of Neuberg in 1689.<sup>19</sup> Although written evidence is lacking it is possible that this petition was taken into consideration. At any rate on 11 January 1695 don Martín de Solís publicly declared as a witness in Cuervo's request for entrance in the Military Order of Santiago that don Francisco had been fully exonerated and the charges dropped. This of course is more than a royal pardon and suggests that Cuervo had been falsely accused in the first place.

Cuervo's fortunes began to improve considerably at this time. First of all he married a lady of noble birth, doña Margarita de Alderete, probably prior to the month of June 1695. Included in the dowry of doña Margarita was the privilege of investiture in any one of the military orders, something her father had preferred to transfer to his daughter. As females could not enter the orders it was understood that her future husband would inherit the privilege. The royal certificate authorizing the aforementioned is of particular interest for it also confirms the marriage of don Francisco and doña Margarita:

The grace of the cloak of the Military Orders, without exempting that of Santiago, which was granted to Don Luis de Alderete, who having died without making use of this favor I resolved in a decree dated the twenty-sixth of December of the year one thousand six-hundred and eighty-five should be granted to Doña Margarita de Alderete his daughter for the person whom she might wed; and having married Don Francisco Cuerdo y Baldés, I have decided in a decree dated the fourth of the present month shall be verified by in him. And having chosen the Order of Santiago, I order you that upon presenting you with this my certificate within thirty days from this date, you shall procure to receive the accustomed information in order to know if the said Don Francisco Cuerdo y Baldés possesses the necessary qualifications that are required of him, in accordance with the regulations of the same Order; and having determined that he does possess them you shall deliver to him the title to the said cloak in order that I might sign, and thus is my will.

Dated in Madrid, on the thirteenth of October of one thousand six hundred and ninety eight.<sup>20</sup>

As a part of his rehabilitation and in recognition of his excellent service record to the Crown, King Charles II appointed Cuervo on 30 August 1695 to succeed don Gregorio de Salinas Varona as governor of Coahuila province when the latter's term expired in 1698. Back in New Spain once again, on 28 May 1698 Cuervo formally took possession of the coveted position he had worked so hard to obtain. And sometime between 1698 and 1703, probably in 1699, he was invested with the robe of St. James. The event took place in the Convento de San Francisco in Monterrey and in accordance with established ritual don Francisco Vergara y Mendoza, governor of the province of Nuevo León acted as witness at the ceremony.<sup>21</sup> Not even don Diego de Vargas, reconqueror of New Mexico, achieved that honor.

During the five years he served as governor of Coahuila, Cuervo displayed the same dynamic talents so characteristic of him. In addition to pacifying the province he devoted considerable time and expense to rebuilding churches and missions in addition to establishing new ones. At his own expense he rebuilt and furnished with bells and ornaments the parish church of Coahuila and the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Azapopan. He also concerned himself with the proper moral behavior

of settlers and friendly Indians alike, paying out of his own pocket the expenses for fifteen marriages for couples who had been living out of wedlock.<sup>22</sup>

Cuervo founded a total of six new missions, twenty-five homes with their corresponding fields for new settlers, and a presidio complete with its garrison. As many of the Indians were practically starving he found it necessary to supply them with two hundred fanegas of corn and thirty horses until they could harvest their own crops. At his own expense he conducted a number of Spanish families to augment the population of Monclova and the country to the north of that villa. By the time he completed his term in 1703, Cuervo had founded seven new towns with a total population of one thousand forty people.<sup>23</sup>

Cuervo had been without employment for a year and nine months when in 1704 the news of Diego de Vargas' death reached Mexico City. The reconqueror of New Mexico had barely begun his second term as governor when at the beginning of April he fell ill while campaigning against the Faraon Apaches. He was taken to the home of Fernando Duran y Chaves, alcalde mayor of Bernalillo where he expired on 8 April, shortly after dictating his last will and testament.<sup>24</sup>

On 4 August the *fiscal* of Viceroy Francisco Cueva, Duke of Albuquerque, drew up a report for the king informing him that on 4 June, Francisco Cuervo y Valdés had been appointed acting governor of New Mexico. He also indicated that Cuervo had been selected "for his extensive military and civil services, and for his experience with the natives of those lands."<sup>25</sup>

The Duke of Albuquerque did not write King Felipe V until 11 October 1704, informing him officially of his interim designation of Cuervo and requesting royal confirmation of the appointment.<sup>26</sup> If the viceroy had written his letter in August when the *fiscal* prepared the original report it is possible that Cuervo would have received confirmation of his appointment. However, the viceroy's letter did not reach the monarch until two days after he had officially appointed Almirante José Chacón Medina Salazar, Marqués de la Peñuela to a five-year term.

Cuervo was living in Zacatecas when he received the news of his appointment. From that city he journeyed to Mexico City where he took the oath of office and received instructions from the Duke of Albuquerque, then very concerned with the unstable situation in New Mexico. The viceroy must have been pleased with Cuervo's enthusiasm and determination. Indeed, he had personally chosen the Asturian due to his proven dedication and over twenty years of experience on the frontier. The Duke of Albuquerque had been instrumental in having de Vargas reappointed as governor of New Mexico and must have felt that in Cuervo he had found a worthy successor.<sup>27</sup> The trip from Mexico City to Santa Fe was described by Cuervo as "long and difficult." His

introduction to New Mexico was hardly propitious, for his party was delayed at El Paso due to Apache raids in the vicinity of that post. It was not until 10 March 1705 that he was able to take office in the provincial capital.

Shortly after arriving in Santa Fe, Cuervo must have met doña María Francisca García de las Rivas, a lady of noble Spanish family residing in Santa Fe. Cuervo's wife, doña Margarita de Alderete, is believed to have died at an unknown date prior to his appointment as governor of New Mexico. No offspring have been documented for this marriage. However, in 1707, while in Santa Fe, Cuervo sent a petition to the king seeking aid for his "three male children, poor and unprotected." For the eldest, Francisco Cuervo y Torres, a student at the Colegio de San Juan in Guadalajara, Nueva Galicia, Cuervo requested a "canonry or cathedral prebend in the Cathedral of said city" or "a position as judge in the *Real Audiencia* of the aforementioned city of Guadalajara."<sup>28</sup> The child's age is not given, but he must have been at least six, perhaps older. It would seem logical that Cuervo should leave a son in a school in Guadalajara instead of taking him to rustic, frontier New Mexico where none was available.

The fact that Cuervo had a child of school age in 1707 suggests that possibly doña Margarita did in fact bear him offspring. The use of the second surname Torres is somewhat confusing and indicates one of two possibilities as to the identity of the child's mother. Either Torres is a surname taken from an ancestor of Cuervo or of his wife, or it is the surname of a different woman, as yet unidentified. Although today normal Spanish usage requires the surname of the mother after that of the father, this was not always done. A good example is the fact that Cuervo himself never used his own mother's surname of Suárez and chose to use Valdés instead.

Although at least one historian states that Cuervo married doña María Francisca García de las Rivas, there is no evidence as to when or where the marriage took place.<sup>29</sup> Indeed there is good reason to believe that they were never married. An examination of the data available should clear up any doubts in this regard.

Doña María Francisca, a native of Mexico City, moved to New Mexico with her parents in 1694. Her father, don Miguel García de las Rivas, belonged to the *hidalgo* class of nobility, and served with de Vargas in the reconquest, providing his own horses and weapons as befitted a person of his social status. One of his sons, Francisco, died fighting the Indians during the campaign.<sup>30</sup> García de las Rivas served for many years as *corregidor* (chief magistrate) and *alcalde mayor* of Santa Fe and there is much documentation concerning him and his activities.<sup>31</sup>

Doña María Francisca's mother was Micaela Velasco, also of noble lineage. The correspondence between her and the provincial authorities in New Mexico casts serious doubts over the existence of a formal marriage between Cuervo and María Francisca.

In October 1707, María Francisca returned to Mexico City with Cuervo. This was some three months after he had been relieved as governor of New Mexico. Cuervo continued to serve the Crown in other capacities until his death which occurred sometime prior to 1716. In January of that year María Francisca was living in Mexico City and was in the process of suing the heirs of Cuervo for the sum of ten thousand pesos which she claimed he owed her.

In January 1716, doña Micaela, residing in Santa Fe, submitted a petition on behalf of her daughter to Governor Felix Martinez requesting a copy of a *escriptura* (sworn statement) which had been drawn up and signed by the late Francisco Cuervo y Valdés in which the latter promised to marry María Francisca once he obtained permission from the crown to do so. Apparently this authorization was necessary because at the time the document was prepared he was serving in the royal position of governor and captain general of New Mexico. Furthermore, doña Micaela states that in the *escriptura* Cuervo promised to pay her daughter the sum of ten thousand pesos in case he did not marry her.<sup>32</sup>

According to doña Micaela, all the details of the agreement were included in the copy of the sworn statement that she was trying to recover from the Santa Fe archives where it was supposed to have been filed. She also states that Cuervo had managed to obtain the original document from her daughter under the pretext of wanting to examine it more closely and never returned it.

When the copy of the copy of the document did not appear in the provincial files, doña Micaela persisted in her request for evidence that Cuervo had never married her daughter. Although he had died by 1716, she states that the ten thousand pesos comprised a debt that Cuervo's legal heirs were bound to satisfy. The identity of the latter is an intriguing question. Obviously they were not her daughter's children. The only answer is that they were the legal offspring of a previous marriage and in this case the only person on record as Cuervo's wife is Margarita de Alderete, unless Cuervo had given recognition to children born out of wedlock by another woman. Still another possibility is that doña Micaela was suing one of Cuervo's brothers in the supposition that he had inherited Cuervo's estate.

Upon the petition of doña Micaela, two witnesses were called upon to testify, Alfonso Rael de Aguilar and José Manuel Gil Thomas, both officers of long standing in New Mexico. Their testimony is of particu-

lar interest as it throws considerable light on the question of whether Cuervo ever married doña María Francisca, at least while they were in New Mexico.

Rael de Aguilar states that he was present when Cuervo signed and delivered the sworn statement to doña María Francisca. Furthermore, he affirms that María Francisca had an illegitimate son named Francisco Antonio Xabier and that the father was Francisco Cuervo and that "this fact is well known in the villa [Santa Fe] and throughout the Realm." Gil Thomas supported this testimony in his declarations and added that María Francisca's child was recognized by Cuervo "as his illegitimate son and that his name was don Francisco Antonio Xabier."<sup>33</sup>

The evidence appears to be conclusive regarding the supposed second marriage of Francisco Cuervo. However, he continued to petition the king on behalf of his sons. As Professor Ovidio Casado-Fuente states, Cuervo's many years of service plus a donation of seven thousand pesos made to the royal treasury obtained the desired results, for on 12 July 1712, Francisco Antonio Cuervo was granted the position in the Royal Treasury of "official supervising judge and commission agent for the chests of Zacatecas." As the boy was only six years old at the time, he received the appointment *en futura*, thus assuring him employment when he reached legal age.<sup>34</sup>

Francisco Antonio is obviously the son born out of wedlock in Santa Fe, while Francisco Cuervo y Torres, a student in Guadalajara, Spain in 1707, would be an older half-brother of the former. In 1733, Francisco Antonio began the legal process of obtaining an *amparo de nobleza*, the official recognition that his family was of noble background, both on his father's and his mother's side of the family. To handle the part of the investigation involving New Mexico he named Juan Paéz Hurtado, a well known officer who had served his father and de Vargas. In 1735 the viceroy confirmed the "quasi-possession" of nobility in favor of Francisco Antonio and his heirs.<sup>35</sup>

The fact that Francisco Antonio had to resort to obtaining official recognition of his noble background supports the evidence denying that a marriage ever took place between Cuervo and María Francisca. Finally, the viceroy gave quasi-possession of nobility instead of full recognition. Possibly this was due to Francisco Antonio's illegitimate birth, even though his father recognized him as his son. Why Francisco Cuervo never married doña María Francisca remains an unsolved question.

The topic of Cuervo's two-year term as acting governor of New Mexico is subject matter for another paper. However, a brief mention here of later events in his varied lifetime will serve to complete the present study. Cuervo did his best to produce tangible results in New Mexico with the hope of obtaining royal confirmation of his temporary appointment as governor and used his previous experience as a colo-

nizer to full avail. In February 1706 he established the villa of Albuquerque without bothering to request royal permission from the viceroy.<sup>36</sup> When Cuervo informed his benefactor and requested the usual royal donation of a bell, ornaments, holy images, chalice, and cruets to equip the new church—future San Felipe de Neri—the Duke of Alburquerque sent him the objects but at the same time included instructions “not to proceed to found another [settlement] without first informing his Excellency and stating the motives he might have.”<sup>37</sup>

However, in May or early June 1706 Cuervo had already gone ahead and founded still another villa, this time north of Santa Fe, one that did not survive. According to Fray Juan Alvarez in a testimony signed on 5 June 1706, Maestro de Campo Roque Madrid requested on behalf of the settlers of “La Cañada de Chimayó” that the governor regroup them in a new villa because their scattered ranches were too vulnerable to Ute and Navajo raiders. In his report Cuervo stated that in accordance with the stipulations specified in Title Seven, Book Four of the Laws of the Indies he had

founded a villa of Spanish settlers between the two rivers—El Grande del Norte and the valley of La Cañada in a good location of land, water, pasture, and firewood ten leagues north of this villa of Santa Fe and calling it Santa Maria del Grado . . . there are twenty-nine families comprising three hundred eighteen persons, old and young, the Church and Royal Buildings . . . all at no extra expense to the royal treasury.<sup>38</sup>

How characteristic of Cuervo. At the age of fifty-five he must have felt nostalgia for the green mountains of his native Asturias when he named the new settlement. On 1 August 1707, Marqués de la Peñuela relieved Cuervo as governor of New Mexico. As his residencia was still pending he stayed on in the province until late in the year. During this time there was considerable friction between the two men, motivated apparently by the demands of the presidial soldiers who felt that Cuervo had manipulated their pay accounts, charging them exorbitant prices for merchandise. Also there was disagreement between Cuervo and the Marqués regarding the value of merchandise stored in the governor's warehouses.<sup>39</sup>

Cuervo left for Mexico City with his family at the end of 1707. Once in the viceregal capital he initiated proceedings against the presidial soldiers who he claimed owed him the sum of forty-three thousand pesos for supplies distributed during his administration. He also initiated pro-

ceedings against the Marqués de la Peñuela who was ordered by the Audiencia to pay Cuervo for corn and wheat at a higher price than originally stipulated, plus the loss of three horses.<sup>40</sup>

In 1711 Cuervo became *factor veedor* and official judge of the Treasury at Zacatecas. The following year he was promoted to factor of the Treasury and Finances at Guadalajara.<sup>41</sup> Although the date of his death is not known we do know that he had passed away by January 1716 when doña Micaela initiated proceedings against his heirs.<sup>42</sup>

### NOTES

1. Existing bibliography on Cuervo consists of the following key studies: Ovidio Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés, Gobernador de Nuevo Mexico, Fundador de la Ciudad de Albuquerque* (Oviedo, Spain: Instituto de Estudios Asturianos, 1983); Marc Simmons, "Governor Cuervo and the Beginnings of Albuquerque: Another Look," *New Mexico Historical Review* 55 (1980), 189-207; Eloy Benito Ruano, "Nuevos datos biograficos sobre don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés, Fundador de Albuquerque," *Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Asturianos* 111 (1984), Oviedo, Spain; Edward K. Flagler, "Defensive Policy and Indian Relations in New Mexico During the Tenure of Governor Francisco Cuervo y Valdés," *Revista Española de Antropología Americana* 22 (1992).

2. Pruebas de Caballero, Military Order of Santiago, Francisco Cuervo Suárez, Madrid, 30 October 1698, expediente num. 2263, caja 437, folio 33. On the cover page of this document someone has added Cuervo's maternal surname Suárez. However, he never used it, always calling himself Francisco Cuervo y Valdés.

3. Gonzalo Anes, *El Antiguo Regimen: Los Borbones Historia de Espana, Alfaguara IV*, (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1979), 49-50. The Aranda census of 1750 gives a total of 283,233 nobles out of a population of 403,445 corresponding to the Bishopric of Oviedo, Asturias, or 70% of all the inhabitants.

4. Cabildo de Grado, nombramiento de alcalde de la Hermandad de Grado, Principado de Asturias, a favor de don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés, Grado, 29 September 1691, Guadalajara, legajo 116, documento legajo 254, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain [hereafter cited as AGI].

5. Benito Ruano, "Nuevos datos," 334; Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 19.

6. Cabildo de Grado, leg. 116, doc. 254, AGI.

7. Benito Ruano, "Nuevos datos," 333.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Meritos de don Francisco Cuervo y Valdés, with "memorial and suplica," Guadalajara, leg. 116, doc. 254, AGI.

10. José Neira Quiroga testimony, San José del Parral, 26 April 1685, Meritos, Guadalajara, leg. 116, doc. 254, AGI.

11. Guadalajara, leg. 116, doc. 254, AGI.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.* A *peñol* is a hill of a rock.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.* See also John Francis Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier, 1513-1821* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1974), 100.

17. Memorial 16 July 1690, Guadalajara, leg. 116, doc. 254, AGI. See also Benito Ruano, "Nuevos datos," 338.

18. *Ibid.*

19. Benito Ruano, "Nuevos datos," 338-39.

20. Pruebas de Santiago, Expendientillos, leg. 59, No. 6003, Archivo Historico Nacional, Madrid, Spain. See also Benito Ruano, "Nuevos datos," 339.
21. Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 19, 23.
22. Meritos de Francisco Cuervo, Guadalajara, leg. 116, doc. 265, AGI.
23. *Ibid.*
24. Inventory of the estate of Diego de Vargas, Marqués de la Nava Brazinas, 20 April 1704, roll 3, frames 900–913, Spanish Archives of New Mexico, New Mexico State Archives and Records Center, Santa Fe, New Mexico [hereafter cited as SANM]. See also John L. Kessell, et al., eds., *Remote Beyond Compare: Letters of don Diego de Vargas to His Family from New Spain and New Mexico, 1675–1706* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 83–84, 87.
25. Duke of Alburquerque, Mexico, to King Felipe V, 11 October 1704, Guadalajara leg. 142, doc. 22, AGI. See also Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 33–34.
26. *Ibid.* Guadalajara, leg. 129, 14 March 1705, AGI.
27. Francisco Cuervo, pleito homenaje, 30 June 1704, Guadalajara, leg. 116, doc. 265, AGI; Memorial de Toribio Huerta, Guadalajara, leg. 139, doc. 3, AGI; See also, Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 34; Duke of Alburquerque, Mexico, 28 February 1706, roll 3, frames 1083–1092, SANM.
28. Francisco Cuervo y Valdés to the King, Mexico, 1706, Guadalajara, leg. 561, doc. 723, AGI.
29. Casado-Fuente states that "by this marriage they had many children," in *Don Francisco*, 18.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Two of the numerous documents signed by Juan García de las Rivas are to Marqués de la Peñuela, Santa Fe, 16 September 1712, role 4, frames 645–47; and 15 April 1712, role 4, frames 527–43, SANM.
32. Doña Micaela de Velasco to Governor Felix Martinez, Santa Fe, January 1716, roll 5, frames 435–445, SANM.
33. Alonso Rael de Aguilar and José Manuel Gil Thomas, testimony, Santa Fe, 14 January 1716, roll 5, frame 441, SANM.
34. Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 18–19; Francisco Antonio Cuervo y Valdés, 20 July 1711, D.G. del Tesoro, inv. 24, leg. 175, f. 233, Archivo General de Simancas, Valladolid, Spain.
35. Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 19; Francisco Antonio Cuervo y Valdés, Amparo de nobleza, Guadalajara, leg. 414, AGI.
36. Simmons, "Governor Cuervo," 194–95.
37. Duke of Alburquerque, Mexico City, to Francisco Cuervo, Santa Fe, 30 July 1706, roll 3, frame 1099, SANM.
38. Fray Juan Alvarez, Santa Fe, petition, 5 June 1706, and Cabildo of Santa Fe, 15 September 1706, Guadalajara, leg. 116, AGI.
39. Flagler, "Governor José Chacón, Marqués de la Peñuela: An Andalusian Nobleman on the New Mexico Frontier," *New Mexico Historical Review* 65 (1990), 464–65; Francisco Cuervo v. the Marqués de la Peñuela, 29 October–8 November 1710, roll 4, frames 244–93, SANM.
40. Audiencia of Mexico to Marqués de la Peñuela, Santa Fe, 31 May 1712, roll 4, frames 610–11, SANM.
41. Casado-Fuente, *Don Francisco*, 18–19.
42. Santa Fe, 16 January 1716, roll 5, frames 435–45, SANM.

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