

Tom Chávez Lecture
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Lecture 1 of 6

FIRST SETTLEMENT OF JUAN DE OÑATE

Oñate has been mixed up with the Cuartocentenario. In fact, some people say, “The Oñate Cuartocentenario” or, “The Cuartocentenario of Oñate.” When officially, it’s just the Cuartocentenario. The Cuartocentenario kind of begins with Oñate and so we are supposed to all be in awe of this—this man Oñate, Don Juan de Oñate. Don is not part of his name.

Juan de Oñate: where do you start with this guy, Juan de Oñate, who lived four hundred years ago? Where do we start with this guy? Was he a nut? Was he an ambitious man? Was he misunderstood? Was he a benevolent despot? A dictator? Ruthless, humane, daring, dashing, young and old when he came to New Mexico? You all have images of him and you all probably, when I went down the list, checked off things. And when I was researching for this presentation, I said “Where do I start with this guy?” Because he’s an interesting character to say the least. But then so are each of us. If you don’t believe me ask yourself. You know we are all legends in our own minds. Those of us who are the biggest legends run for political office.

Juan de Oñate was a Basque. You know that’s a good defense for people who say they’re Hispanic. You run into someone who doesn’t like Oñate: “Yeah, but he wasn’t Hispanic, he was Basque. He was Basque.” He wasn’t born in the Basque Province of Spain. He was born in New Spain. His dad was born in the Basque Province of Spain. His dad actually had a surname of Pérez. But because he moved into the town of Oñate, he became Cristobal de Oñate, from the town of Oñate, which actually means foot of the mountain pass. And his dad came to the New World in 1524, just two years after the defeat of Tenochtitlan, Mexico City. And he came to the New World as barely a fifteen year old, maybe even fourteen years old. These guys are always unclear about their dates. Their birth dates, you know, as if they needed to chop a year off here

and there. And so he came to the New World as a fifteen year old, tagging along with a guy who would become the fiscal for the viceroy, meaning his assistant. A kind of assistant viceroy but also a glorified bean counter, as well. And these guys are the guys in government that have all the power, even today. The accountants who tell you can and can't spend things and it's not right and all that. That's no fun, cuts out all the graph. And so, he came over and he trained and he learned from these people. Unfortunately, the guy he was under was a guy named Salazar; who, to say the least, was a scurvy knave. He was one of the people who turned on Cortés when Cortés was gone. He thought that he could abuse the Indians in Mexico City. In fact, he was so bad with his colleagues and cohorts that when Cortés returned from an expedition in the Yucatan Peninsula, the Indians went out of town, built an arch and hailed Cortés. If you can imagine talking about Hernando Cortés, the same guy, as the savior of the Indians. And this guy Salazar was really bad. He took Cortés land for his own.

He joined up with another good guy in Spanish Colonial History, Nuño de Guzman, a slave trader, a man who slave traded illegally, a man who was brutal, a man who fed dead Indians to his dogs. And so here's Oñate's father, as a young man, now hooked up with Guzman. And Guzman went off to Culiacan and up to Nueva Galicia and places like that where he raided. It was Guzman, incidentally, who ran into Cabeza de Vaca, after his journey across the Southwest and back into Mexico. Guzman was out slave raiding, looking for Indians to sell. Actually, he thought Cabeza de Vaca was an Indian. After eight years wandering, he couldn't tell the difference. Cabeza de Vaca had to convince Guzman that he wasn't Indian. And so, this Oñate was with Guzman. By all accounts Oñate wasn't as brutal as Guzman. But then, this man also had a brother, who came over from Europe after he did and became a great pal of Guzman. In fact, the brother was so bad that when Guzman's number was called up; when the Archbishop who had been appointed temporary viceroy of Mexico, a guy named Zumarraga, another Basque, smuggled a letter out of Mexico because Guzman and Salazar were very adept at cutting off the mail so none of the bad information could get back to Spain. Well, this Franciscan

Archbishop smuggled a letter that explained what was going on. And so the word came back that Guzman was going to be arrested, Cristobal Oñate's bother who was with them too and really liked Guzman's tactics fled to Peru to avoid persecution. Guzman on the other hand was caught and thrown in jail and punished. But the father didn't receive any punishment because they couldn't find anything on which to bring up charges against him.

The father goes on and becomes very, very wealthy because he and three other people discover silver in the present area of Zacatecas, Mexico. They become filthy rich, fabulously wealthy. They set up there. The father married late and so when our Juan, our Governor, our future Governor, comes along, dad is an older man and young Juan hears tales of dad's exploits with Guzman and of great battles that he fought. So, young Juan grows up wanting to emulate his dad. Like a lot of us do, unless we have a good mommy. So he wants to be that too.

He ends up going and fighting in the Chichimeca Wars, in the area of Zacatecas because of course we all know that the silver strikes in Zacatecas, just like the gold strikes in the Black Hills in the Dakotas, precipitated war with the people who were already there because all of sudden you have all these people, tongues hanging outside of their mouths, rushing up to get rich real quick. There's people living there and they don't like people panting all over them and slobbering, salivating and all this stuff and so wars break out.

Now the Chichimecas were very formidable people. Took forty years for the Spanish to finally defeat them and they did it in a peaceful manner. There was fighting for forty years and then they came up with this idea to move the Tlaxcalan Indians from the Central Valley of Mexico, who are allied with the Spanish in the first place and transplant them up into the area because, as Indians, they're cousins after all. Can you imagine believing that? They're different cultures altogether, but the Spanish said, we'll stake them for a year with tools and such, and somehow that worked. A guy named Miguel Caldera, a mestizo, an Indian-Spanish person, was

the guy that came up with the idea that worked and ended the wars. The peace allowed them to go back to New Mexico.

Now, young Oñate lived through most of the Chichimeca Wars. He was born around 1552. Chichimeca Wars began in 1540 or so and they lasted into the 1580s. So he grew up with it. We know he went out on expeditions and fought in battles as early as 14 years old. So here's an experienced guy. But he also grew up in the tradition of mining. He became an expert at mining. He knew how to make a profit at it, how to turn a rock of silver into silver, how to use Mercury, etc. All of that.

He had heard of this other Mexico, "La Nueva Mejico." "Another Mexico." That's what we were called originally. And Villagrà's book is *La Historia de La Nueva Mejico*. Another Mexico. It's too long to write out, I guess, all the time so we just do New Mexico. And so he'd heard about this place. How'd he hear about New Mexico? Well his own dad was Vásquez de Coronado's assistant when Coronado was the Governor in Nueva Galicia. His own dad stayed as acting Governor when Coronado led his expedition to New Mexico. His own dad was there when Coronado's army formed up to leave, with the kettle drums beating and the trumpets blaring and the plumes and the banners. You know, it's a great story. We have a description of the whole thing: the expedition is formed, and the viceroy came out and made them swear obedience to King, God, and country—and not necessarily in that order—and off they went.

And right there was Oñate's dad, watching it all. Oñate's dad even invested in the expedition and loaned Coronado, his good friend, a black stallion that Coronado was a little bit broken up over when it died on the return trip. Of course by then, Coronado had fallen off his horse and had a head injury so he was not altogether there anyway after that happened. So there he was and not only that, but his dad's brother's son went on that expedition and the son would be the father of Juan and Vicente de Zaldivar. And so there's no way they didn't know about New Mexico.

Now what else happens? Four decades later, the Chichimeca Wars die down. All of sudden people starting thinking, well what happened up there with Vásquez de Coronado? “Didn’t he leave some priests?” They said, “Well yes he did. Well we better go see what happened to those priests.” And so right away an expedition goes up there. The Chamuscado, Francisco Chamuscado, expedition. Francisco—actually Sánchez was his surname. Chamuscado was tacked on, it means singed in Spanish, apparently it had something to do with his drinking habits, who was an elderly man and Fray Augustine Rodriguez, a Franciscan, and they go north looking for Coronado’s friars. Of course, they’re long gone. It’s been forty years. In fact, they were snuffed out pretty quick after Coronado left. One of them was snuffed out on the plains out there and they knew the story because his assistant, who was a Portuguese guy, with the help of his dogs, made it all the way back from present day Kansas to Mexico in 1541. There’s no account of that journey, except for the fact that the guy witnessed the death of the priest and got the heck out. You know he was a smart guy. Said, “I’m out of here” and made it all the way back to Mexico. What an amazing journey to take. To do something like that.

Then the next year, another expedition headed north because Chamuscado had left his priests up in New Mexico. The next expedition departs to find the priests. This is Antonio de Espejo. Of course, they find out that the priests also have achieved the highest goal of all missionaries, martyrdom. A direct pipeline to heaven, get martyred. Unlike us, we just die. I don’t care if you die as a teacher or for the cause of History or your profession, only priests and nuns can be martyred for the cause. The rest of us saps just die. I’m petitioning the Pope on that issue. That’s why I’m spending time with this. The Pope needs to know I disagree with this. That and dogs in heaven. There are dogs in heaven. The Pope disagrees.

Okay. So they found that the priests were killed and returned. In 1585, the King of Spain, basically says I want New Mexico settled. Now why does the King of Spain say he wants New Mexico settled? That’s because the reports from New Mexico —and there are a number of

reports and many witnesses—that there are people living in villages, in towns. And the Franciscan who had come here loved people in towns. Franciscans were the first in the New World. Franciscans knew that the easiest people to convert are sedentary people, people who live in towns. Because you go put your church there and you don't have to round up potential converts. Franciscans say, "We have a captive audience if they live in towns. Let the Jesuits chase the Apaches and the Pinos and the Papagos and all these other people. We're not doing that because we're going to sit in our mission, in the town, and over the years, we'll begin to look like cookie jars, and then the Germany will come along and make Hummel Doll pottery out of us." This starts over here in New Spain. You didn't know that but it's true.

So the Franciscans are arguing. There are sedentary people are up there, we got to go there. And that's the official reason for the Spanish coming to New Mexico.

The unofficial reason—and if you go through all these documents; most of which are translated, incidentally. So I'm not going to give up any secrets here, unless you don't read English, but there are a lot of them in Spanish so you can read Spanish too—the unofficial reason and it's strewn throughout everything, instructions and letters back and forth, was to find the Straits of Anian, The Northwest passage, a waterway through the continent, a connection by water between what Oñate called the North Sea and the South Sea. They had no idea that the further North you go the further away the two coasts get from you and they just keep going further away, they don't go straight up and the Spanish didn't know that. So they figured, heck, let's send the guy up there with the priests. He's supposed to take care of the priests but he's got to go explore and find this Northwest passage. And he goes up there with ship building material. After a couple of years, he even sends an agent to Spain. What does he want? He wants some ships carpenters and two ships pilots, in New Mexico, in San Juan. That was before they dammed up the river, I guess. But it seems funny to us in New Mexico. And he sent at least three expeditions looking for the South Sea. On the fourth expedition, he went and

found the South Sea, It was probably the happiest time he experienced in New Mexico, when he found the South Sea. And, the accounts of it are just glorious. All haggard, he went from New Mexico into Arizona up to the Hopi Pueblos down into the Green Valley, Valley Verde, past where Phoenix is and he finally hit the Gulf of California. And the guy was so overwhelmed, he walked into the river with his arms out. "I have found the South Sea, at last, at last." And he started incantating and everything. And he said for God and Country, I claim the South Sea. Now that takes care of all the rest of the world that Spain didn't have, gets them to the Orient actually. And then he had his priest follow him in there. Probably everybody would have been happy to follow him in there because it was hot down there. Good to get in water in Southern Arizona. And, oh, they were overwhelmed. He came back and wrote this glowing report about having found the South Sea and the best harbor in the world, which still hasn't worked out.

Now that's jumping ahead, but that kind of gets you to the reasons why he came here in the first place. He succeeded in spite of himself and I guess that's why we have to talk about him.

It's really interesting that the King says, "Okay, we want somebody to settle New Mexico" and then almost ten years later, Oñate gets the contract. There were at least seven other people who bid against him. Now as a state employee, I know how that works. I want something done, I have to let out bids and generally I get the lowest bidder. And you know what kind of work I get out of them, don't you?

Oñate won the bidding process, pure and simple. In fact, he won it ,then he lost it and he got it back. Of course the bidding wasn't as sane as it is today. Today we have committees and we do this arbitrarily, and then after we interview people, we get behind the closed doors and say, "Is he your friend? Yeah. Sign right here. Okay!" Then it was open. And it was almost a form of warfare, at least rivalry to the max. One guy even assigned agents, it appears, on Oñate's own expedition to sabotage it so that Oñate would be recalled and this guy could go. This guy had agents in Spain, as did a couple of others. Even though Oñate had an in with the viceroy, who

gave him the contract initially, because they had been on an expedition together. His competitors said, "Heck with that, we're sending agents to the Council of Indies, in Spain, and we're going to win them over. We're going to get an audience with the King in Spain." And it wasn't one of these things like you do now where you go up and say, "I want the job because here's my designs and obviously I'm the best architect for the job. Just look at these plans. You know that I'm better. You know this is it. Here, let me show you the bathroom. The guy doesn't even know how to do a toilet. Look at mine." We don't do that today.

Back then, they did not just boast about themselves in these competitions. Then, what they did was to go over there and do everything they possibly could to put their competition in bad light. They never talked about their merits. Rather, it was, "Oñate! He's lying. He doesn't have any money. He's lying, he doesn't have any influence. In fact, he has no respect at all in North Central Mexico. No one likes him. He can't keep his people together. The guy's incompetent. Besides that, there's a rumor that he's retarded."

And so, the idea was to get enough people buzzing this kind of stuff in the proper ears that he'd get his contract pulled or he'd lose the bidding, which is what happened. One guy, who was close to getting it, had a competitor, not Oñate, but another competitor, accuse him of poisoning his wife. His wife had died. "Well this is opportune, my competitor's wife died, this is great. Go tell the officials that he poisoned his wife, that will screw up his bid." And it did. The guy got hauled in, went to court, was found not guilty, but by then it was too late. He was out of the program. So Oñate gets the contract late in the game, in 1595, loses it and by 1598, this after two inspections from the viceroy, but really because of politics. He said in his contract that he would supply so many men, so many supplies and so much money, so many horses and livestock and all of this. He said that because he could do that. He said, "This is what I'll do for you, King. Give me a loan of six thousand pesos and I'll provide all this stuff for you and lead the people up to New Mexico. And that was the best offer of all. One of his competitors did the

same thing—must have seen his contract—and then added he was going to take some sailors up there and build ships as well. So then, Oñate had his ship building equipment added to his contract. Thus they went back and forth.

Oñate says all that, and then he says, “In exchange for all this, I want you to make me the governor of the New Territory of New Mexico. I want you to grant me the title of Adelantado for my life and the lives of all my successors.” And he asked for a form of independence; he asked that he not have to answer to the Viceroy directly but to the Council of the Indies. Now if you’re the Viceroy that will get your attention. It really will. He asked for a kind of a supreme power. It appears that he wanted to create a new vice royalty in New Mexico, which the Viceroy, per the laws of Spain published in 1573, these new laws that were supposed to cut off all these conquistadors going out and running amuck and everything, he went beyond that and so the Viceroy reigned him in and gave him a contract that Oñate didn’t originally want but felt that he should accept.

But the Viceroy was replaced by another man who looked at all this stuff, became suspicious of Oñate, asked for another inspection of what he was doing. And it’s interesting, for the first inspection, Oñate had something like five hundred soldiers ready to go. A few months later, in a second inspection, he has one hundred and twenty nine soldiers ready to go. He’s two hundred short of his agreed allotment in the contract and his supplies aren’t up to snuff, whereas before he was in excess by some forty thousand pesos. And so while waiting for the *políticos*, he was losing people. When he finally was granted permission, with a late comer in Spain almost taking it away from him again, but the guy turned out to be fraud, and so Oñate left.

Now here’s the interesting part of Oñate, basically when we think of Oñate we think 1598 to 1610, twelve years of Oñate in New Mexico. We don’t even like our own governors today to be here that long. If we had any governor, even if they were good, we’d find fault with them for that long. We would. I’m sorry. We’re very hard on our governors in this state.

Oñate though didn't have to wait twelve years to do some wrong things. It's really interesting, we think about all the stuff that he did within the first two years. It's amazing, yeah. He had explored all the pueblos, had been out to Hopi, had sent an expedition down into Arizona looking for the South Sea—didn't find it—had received most of his settlement because he went ahead of them and set up in San Juan, which became San Gabriel. His nephew had gone out into the plains, that's Vicente. Juan had gone down to the Salinas missions, the Jumanos, as they were called then, and then over to Zuni and Acoma. He had fought the battle at Acoma. He had punished the people at Acoma that has led to the stuff going on today. He got reinforcements. Oh, he assassinated two of his own people and he had received reinforcements and two thirds of his colony had abandoned him— all within two years. It's amazing. I mean it really is amazing.

So let's look at the itinerary a little bit and see what's going on. And it took him almost two years to write his first letter home. All this stuff going on. He arrived at the place he called San Juan initially on July 11th. He was ahead of his expedition because they were slow. They had eighty some wagons or carts. He was impatient. In fact, one of his commanders had disobeyed an order and had gone ahead just to scout out what was ahead. Oñate told him not to enter the pueblos for fear of scaring people out of the pueblos. The guy entered the first pueblo he saw, and so Oñate felt that then he should rush up ahead do the advance diplomacy himself. So he left the main body of his expedition behind him. They came up almost a full month after him.

Now he met them at Santo Domingo and then told them not to go up the La Bajada but to go up the Galisteo wash over there past San Marcos and come in. He didn't come through Santa Fe but out West of Santa Fe, probably where the bypass is going. Out that area over there. And then up to San Juan where Oñate decided that's where he was going to be.

He called the place, initially, San Juan de Los Caballeros. He did occupy the pueblo. The building blocks that he occupied, according to archeological evidence were partially abandoned

but not totally. And so the Spanish shored them up with their own walls and their own style of rooms and put windows and doors on the bottom floor and everything. The pueblo probably looked, from descriptions, much like what you envision Taos Pueblo. You know, multistory. And he occupied that. Historians tell you it was within a very short time; but we don't know how long, or if he even moved across the river to a place called San Gabriel. Well that's why I like working at the Palace of The Governors, we have this wonderful staff and we've been re-looking at the documents. We think that he didn't move across the river. We think he stayed in the same place and for some reason started calling it San Gabriel. Archaeologists haven't found the other site. There's no mention in any document of a move. Just all of a sudden they start calling the place they're staying at with a different name. And, a number of people say, "I came up with Oñate and settled in this spot, San Gabriel. But, they're saying it a year later. So we think probably, one theory doesn't rule out the move, but it kind of looks like they renamed the original settlement San Gabriel from San Juan.

His group comes up on August 18th, middle of the summer, and make it to San Juan, soon to be San Gabriel. Now there was more reason for them to come up late besides being slow with wagons. There was a near mutiny on the way up. In fact, Oñate had to send one of his nephews down to kind of get things back in order.

People were already disgruntled. They were coming up into New Mexico, they didn't see a ski run, the Lobos weren't winning, so they weren't happy with the place. They expected to find bars of silver on the ground and when they weren't there they were a little bit perturbed by the matter. Oñate, who had come up earlier and who had already been exploring, hadn't found any mines which kind of worried them a little bit. And so here they come and here they are. Within days of their arrival, there's an attempted mutiny. Now what we hear from Villagrà is, "Oh everybody was happy. And so, the Moros y Cristianos play was performed was performed, and we built the church, and then right after that we held the dedication." In fact, they built the

church in two weeks, so it wasn't a big structure. Since they said they fit all the people in there, we think there were between five and seven hundred people in all. Not the hundred and twenty nine men listed in the rolls, but a lot more. This conclusion comes from historians and archeologists going through a lot of documents and identifying names associated with the initial movement up from Mexico.

There were servants and black slaves and mulattos and all kinds of people that aren't listed in the rolls taken in Mexico. In fact, the Viceroy's own man says, "I listed these people, but I know there are a lot more out there who didn't want to come in for fear of maybe being arrested or questioned or something and so they didn't get registered." They just hooked on to the expedition.

So by compiling a lot of the names, we think between four to seven hundred people—probably five hundred is a safe guess. And here they all are.

Right away, four guys desert the colony, take some horses and head south. "We're out of here." What is interesting, you don't need to know the names, two of them were brothers and they were Hispanic. Two others were Portuguese, which says something about the initial colony, people being from all over. Oñate orders Villagrà and a couple of other captains to go after them and so they head after them. And in a journey that again is amazing, they finally caught up with the four deserters down near Santa Barbara. Outside of Santa Barbara. I mean, they went all the way past El Paso. It's not fun driving to El Paso, much less chasing somebody on horseback and these guys they went past El Paso, past the desert south of there, all the way down almost to Santa Barbara and they caught up with these guys. Tricked them into surrender, "We're not going to do anything, we just want to take you back to New Mexico." "Uh, okay." And what happens? Villagrà beheads two of them and lets the two others escape. You want to guess who the two were that were beheaded? The Portuguese, yeah. He beheads the Portuguese

and the two Spanish brothers, who were friends of Villagr, get to leave. Villagr and his captains go on into Santa Barbara, hang out a little bit before they decide to return.

Meanwhile, Villagr is gone. Keep in mind, these guys left in early September, within the month of arriving, just after some forty some soldiers conspired to abandon the colony and got wind of it and almost executed a couple of them. One of these guys was the same guy that went into the pueblo in violation of Oñate's orders. Oñate wanted to kill him the first time; now he wanted to kill him the second time, but his people said, "No, no, no. We need people, please. Be nice."

"Okay, I'll be nice."

And so he's nice, except he had those other two guys, he ordered all four of them executed; two of them got out of it because of friendship. So while Villagr is gone, Oñate sends his nephew, Vicente out to hunt buffalo. Vicente is the younger brother of Juan. Juan and Vicente are nephews of Oñate. In later life, Vicente will be Oñate's son-in-law. Juan and Vicente were also first cousins, once removed, starting a long New Mexico tradition. I'm not talking familial relationships; I'm talking politics.

And so Vicente is sent out on to the plains. And he goes out on to the plains because they decide one way to get food besides taking it from the people of San Juan, the good people by all accounts, was to go out on the plains and hunt buffalo. Boy, this will be fun and he even tells them, "Why don't you herd some up and bring them back. Herd up some buffalo. You just do that."

And Vicente being the obedient nephew, said, "Sure, uncle, I'll go do that." And it's a great account: they built this corral out on the plains out there off the Canadian river and then they try to herd the buffalo into the corral. When the buffalo figured out what was going on, they started going in a big circle, the whole damn herd, and the circle just got faster and faster and they got

going so good that the Spanish who were outside the corral on horseback couldn't even see the buffalo for all the dust and stuff. Before they knew it, the corral fences were down and they were lucky to get out with their lives because the buffalo were stampeding. So they lassoed a couple of calves after they killed some buffalo and butchered them.

Juan is told go look at the salt beds down behind the Manzano Mountains because salt was very valuable in that day. Well Juan goes down there and he says, "Well there is some talk about a pueblo" that today is Grand Quivera. "You know, there are pueblos down there and you should see, Tio," Tio being Juan. Juan goes down there and down behind the Manzano Mountains he decides he is going to discover the South Sea. This stuff is amazing: "I think I'll do a right turn, go through the Manzano Pass there, and go to the South Sea. Okay."

And so he heads off goes to Acoma pueblo where he tries to trade some trinkets. Mostly hawk bells is what they liked to trade. We have one on exhibit in the Palace of The Governors if you want to see what those are. I kind of wonder how anybody would be overwhelmed with hawk bells. If it had been me, I would have been underwhelmed with this. Apparently the Acomans were underwhelmed with hawk bells because they basically said, "You don't have enough hawk bells for us." Or, "We don't have enough blankets to give you for the hawk bells that you have." One way or the other, Oñate didn't like the message, but he went ahead anyway and kept on going. He goes out to a place where we now know as Inscription Rock. He camped there, that was a *paraje*, a rest stop on Indian an trail because of the water tank there.

All of you who live in New Mexico who haven't been there should go there. It is truly is a neat place. It now is an archive on rock. It's just an amazing place, pretty much like it was, and if you are healthy enough to walk up on the top as well, there is a trail.

So, there and then, he went he went up to Zuni. He really liked the Zunis. Every time he went out there he stopped and spent a lot of time in the Zunis. The record doesn't show what

the Zunis thought of him. Whether they liked him or not, but they acted like it at least in his mind. And he stayed there. And then an amazing thing happened: it snowed a little bit. It is now November, and it was a lot colder then than now; we know that. Even his own people talk about the river freezing up, the Rio Grande freezing up. It doesn't freeze up like that today. Maybe up in Colorado, but not in New Mexico. The Rio Grande froze up; now that's a lot of flowing water to freeze up. We have to do some computations to figure out how cold it has to get for the Rio Grande to freeze up as far south as Bernalillo. That's cold.

So this guy is at Zuni. He has traveled through some snow flurries. You know, he's camping and doing all this stuff and he gets to Zuni. He spends two weeks at Zuni enjoying himself. And a major storm rolls in. And, we are talking major. We are kind of reliving some of that these days. A major snow storm rolls in. He says, "Mount up, guys. We're heading out." Now he is going to Hopi from Zuni in a major snow storm. We don't *drive* in that kind of weather today! And this guy is taking his soldiers into snow storm.

Accounts of that storm describe it as blinding. It was really coming down. We know that from a number of sources. One of those sources is Villagrà, recently arrived from Mexico and decides he's not going to go all the way up to San Juan or San Gabriel. He is going to go find his *comandante*, Oñate. He hears down in Bernalillo from another soldier who happened to be at a pueblo that Oñate is going to discover the South Sea.

So Villagrà takes off by himself. Yup, parram, parram, parram, he takes off by himself. Villagrà is forty some years old. He's bald, with a deep furrow on his forehead and he has a walrus mustache. He was an educated guy, but he didn't act like it. The guy had a degree from the University of Salamanca, which was very rare for a person born in the New World a *Criollo*. And so he goes galloping off by himself over to Acoma, where he senses he going to be ambushed. He avoids that and goes through the bad lands, the lava flow over there, and falls into a trap.

Now historians will tell you that those devious, bad Acoma Indians made this trap to get the joyfully galloping Villagr . However, it was an animal trap, a very common animal trap. They trapped animals to eat. And Villagr , in the blinding snow storm, of course rolled right into the thing and it killed his horse. He was lucky that he didn't get killed himself.

So he crawls out of the animal trap. Now he's thinking, "Well, I avoided an ambush. Because those devious Indians set this trap for me, they're after me. They know where I am because how else could they get the hole dug so fast."

So he leaves his helmet and his breast plate sticks them in a shelter there puts his boots on backwards and starts walking in the blinding snow storm. You see, by having his boots backwards, he thinks he is going to fool anybody who tracking him. Which I don't understand, though it might work with me. I tell you, it would work with me; I'm not that bright.

So it he went that way, but, yea, the heels begin here and there are no more that way. So his tracks point *that* way though he is walking the opposite way. Okay, he wanders for four days in this snow with his boots on backwards, without his helmet, in this cold. He is semi-consciousness and ends up crawling up to a water hole, which was at the place we call El Morro. He describes how he is crawling with his boots on backwards; I don't think the deceptive tactic worked anymore if he was crawling. You got to learn to look between the lines when people say this stuff. And you know he gets water there. And he's relieved with the water, although he'd been in snow for four days and shouldn't be thirsty. I mean, you can drink out of snow.

So there he is. He decides he is going to head back to San Juan. Do you know how far El Morro is from San Juan? He starts. I guess he couldn't do anything else. I mean he didn't have any animal traps to go check did he?

There's a wonderful story here. I like dogs, doggies. There is Augie the doggie and Brandy the backpacking Pomeranian, both in dog heaven. Anyway, he had a dog and he describes this dog; Villagr  had a dog, who was with him the whole time. The dog didn't reverse its paws, incidentally. The dog is going one way and the guy is walking the other way. How did that happen? Whoa!

Towards the other end of his journey to the water hole he decides he has to kill his dog to eat. It's true. And in his poem he describes looking at his dog and the dog looking back at him. I mean, you can see the dog probably had these brown watery eyes, kind of looking at him, you know, and the tail was down because he knew this wasn't a fun time. He entices the dog to come to him and whacks him over the head with his sword, thinking that he's going to do to his dog what he did with the two guys down in Mexico. But perhaps because of his poor state of health at that moment, he doesn't do the job. It is not a clean hit, and the poor dog is suffering. Now is the time when he should have done the dog in. He decides, no; he's not going to eat the dog after all. And then the dog dies.

And he leaves the dog in the snow and doesn't take advantage of it. He keeps crawling with his boots on backwards. So now you trackers, you know that there is a dead dog, a dead horse, boot prints going backwards, and the dog prints going the other way.

So, he starts walking back and, lo and behold, these guys on horseback find him. These Spanish soldiers find him, and they come out of this scene of snow like coming out of fog. And it's described that way in the poem. I can't understand what these people are doing wandering around in the snow storm over there. It's just crazy.

These guys that found Villagr  were sent by O ate to find his nephew. Remember Vicente is out on the plains, right? So O ate tells Juan, "You stay here at San Juan. When Vicente comes back, catch up with me. You can go to the South Sea too in the winter." What we don't have in

the record is these people saying, “Oh great. I get to go out in the snow storm too—Northern Arizona in the winter.”

So, Vicente comes back. Juan takes off. Oñate is now at Hopi and he’s wondering where Juan is, not to mention the South Sea. He hears from the Hopis , “Mas allá. Keep on going.” Oñate decides to stay at the Hopi Pueblos and sends one of his captains off. And the captain goes down somewhere south—what is today Phoenix—looking for all this stuff. Oñate also tells the guy, “When you come back, I’ll meet you at Zuni because I’m going to start back there because I don’t know where Juan is and it is getting late in the season. I want to be home for Christmas.” Which was unlike Christmas today, incidentally.

They didn’t have Christmas trees and all that stuff, you know. It was Holy Day of Obligation, so he wanted to be home for Christmas. He is back at Zuni and is still worried about where Juan is. He sent these guys out to find Juan and they, as we know, did find Villagrà. Villagrà tells them, “I fell into a trap, these people were chasing me, and I had to put my boots on backwards. I caused the death of my dog, I lost my horse, I don’t know where my helmet is . You know, it’s all because of the people at Acoma. I mean, we better get to the comandante and warn him about Acoma.” Now here’s where I began to think that Oñate wasn’t all together there this time. I mean, if taking his soldiers out in the winter from Zuni to Hope isn’t a hint, and making arbitrary decisions on the trail— like “I’m going to the south sea—isn’t a hint.

He gets a warning from Villagrà that something’s up at one of the pueblos. Now these guys are severely out numbered. Not all of them are as brazen as we like to think they are ; you know, short mean bastards. Only museum directors are. I mean some of these guys are actually thinking, “We better protect ourselves or we’re easily wiped out here. We better behave ourselves or were going to start a rebellion that we can’t put down.” And indeed, you know, ninety years later that happened. I mean its a very real possibility.

Now most of these people who came with Oñate, in letters and such that have survived, have nothing but good to say about the Pueblos and the people that they met. A lot of them talk about how they were alienated, especially those who didn't like Oñate. And so, Oñate now hears that one of the Pueblos is acting very suspiciously. He hears it from Villagrà . Does Oñate send another runner off to warn his nephew Juan? Nope. Does he send anybody to any of the pueblos where he had sent his priests? Nope. He sits in camp.

And what happens to Juan? Juan is galloping off into the winter, following his uncle. He is going to catch up with his uncle. He gets to Acoma pueblo with his hawk bells and thirty-some men. The Acomans tell him the same thing they told Oñate, his uncle: "Your hawk bells aren't worth what you want. We don't have enough blankets."

Juan says, "Well, we will camp here until you round up enough blankets." He waits a couple of days and parlays with the Acomans again. The Acomans have eight blankets.

Juan takes thirteen men up on top of the Mesa, the Sky City, because the people he was talking to said they would have more blankets up there. And up there Juan is ambushed.

Now you've seen all kinds of accounts of how many Spanish were killed. I heard one just the other day. Thirty of them, thirty Spanish were killed. Not true. At least three of them jumped off the Pueblo and survived. And I remember in graduate school the professor talking about these guys jumping off the grand mesa of Acoma. It was a miracle that they survived because they jumped —you know, it's so high that it's like watching somebody fall out of a plane—and then falling off the rocks like they're in the Andes or something. That didn't hold. You go over there and find this big sand dune on one side of that mesa. They jumped into the sand. The one guy who died jumping didn't calculate correctly and hit some rocks.

But all the guys Juan Zaldivar left down below survived. So, in the end, it appeared he lost six to nine who were killed in the ambush. And one of the survivors says, "Oh my God, there's

been an ambush.” And they round up the guys that had jumped; they were in a little bit of shock, having jumped into the sand dune. And he says “We have a problem here.” He immediately sends one person off to find Oñate. And he sends other people off to all the Pueblos to warn the priests. Now that made sense.

When I was reading all this stuff and trying to put it together, I asked myself, why didn't Oñate do that? Well he gets a second chance to do it because, of course, word gets to Oñate over at El Morro. And what does Oñate do, he orders his tent repitched; he orders a cross made out of reeds and spends the night in grief. I guess his soldiers were outside freezing and wondering what he is going to decide to do. He doesn't send anyone out to any pueblo to warn anybody; he doesn't send anyone back to San Juan. For all he knows, all of New Mexico in rebellion. He doesn't even want to check that. And then he goes back to San Juan where he arrived just before Christmas.

Now begins the controversial part of Oñate. Killing the Portuguese was kind of controversial. The dogs, that was a low point. Okay. He goes through all the Spanish legal process, trying to determine what constitutes a just war on an enemy in accordance with the laws of 1783. He spends days hearing what he should do. Of course, he's getting opinions from people like his surviving nephew, the brother of Juan who is Vicente—Vicente in his early twenties was somewhat of a fire brand. He was the guy who liked to whip ass and take names. You know about his attitude.

Then Oñate went to the priests, and the priests said, “Well, we can't consider this, given the season. You'll have to wait till after Christmas.” After Christmas the priests came back and laid out what a justified war would be. Oñate says, “Okay I've got all the reasons now to go exact revenge on Acoma under Spanish law.” Which is what he did.

And so he gathers up all his men up starts equipping them for the expedition to Acoma and then apparently Vicente prevails upon Oñate not to go. “Don't go uncle. Don't go. Let me lead

the expedition.” And Oñate acquiesces and stays in San Juan and sends Juan’s brother Vicente to Acoma.

Over three days a major battle was fought in Acoma. Vicente had a great strategy. Apparently the Acomans miscalculated Spanish arms or miscalculated that anyone could get up on the Mesa in a pitched battle— they thought that they had the ultimate defensible position. They miscalculated.

I have to tell you, Spanish soldiers had a lot of experience of attacking mesas. Anybody been to Spain and seen castles knows they always are on a Mesa. The same is true in many places in Mexico. I mean, these guys have a history laying siege to things like that. And then in the wars where Oñate’s dad came from, there were a lot of Mesas where they had to go up and fight in the Mixton Wars. So this was nothing new to them. And it was a serious miscalculation for the defenders of Acoma.

Vicente had his men feign a frontal attack to go up the known trail that went up to Acoma. Meanwhile he and some others go around the back and climb up the cliff. They even pulled a couple of cannons up the side. Which was the beginning of the end for the Acomans. He got up to the top and found there was a little arroyo that Villagrà talks about. He writes how the Mesa was separated and they laid down a log to run across to get to the main part of the Mesa. Then some dummy—he doesn’t say it in so many words, but it is implied in his poem—pulls the log up while the rest of them were left over on the other side. And here were just six of them faced by six hundred fierce warriors. It was Villagrà writing, you understand. This is the same guy with the backward boots. And Villagrà, of course, is one of the people left on the other side. What did Villagrà do? He went and leaped across the chasm to demonstrate that it was possible. By his account, he would have gotten an Olympic gold medal for this mighty leap. Apparently it’s not that big of leap. Villagrà, in fact, did not lead the way. They fought a war or a battle of attrition on that Mesa top.

Here's where Villagrà messed up. He describes in detail and with great color, almost equal to the story about his dog, what happened up there. It's one thing to describe the battle, people with stones, and spears, and swords, and flint locks, and shooting, and hand-to-hand fighting which went on. It's one thing to describe the people taking refuge in the houses as defense while the Spanish set them afire. He describes the burning of bodies in very great detail. And he describes some of the Acomans jumping, just like the Spanish had a few weeks before. But he describes others who refused to surrender, and not unlike Masada in the Mid-East and Numancia in Spain, the defenders killed themselves and their loved ones rather than surrender. But in the end there were prisoners. We don't have an exact account. I think five hundred is pretty accurate. Five hundred people. And Vicente rounded them up and marched them to Santo Domingo. Oñate got word before everybody came back because messages were sent so he met them at Santo Domingo Pueblo and there he felt he should hold a trial and set an example. Santo Domingo in the center of all the pueblo land. "Let me set an example."

He assigns one of his soldiers to be the defense attorney if you will. And he calls witnesses including some of the Acomans. Some of them say they weren't there at the ambush of Juan: "We were working our crops." Some of them said, "We just happen to be up there when you attacked. We were protecting our lives." Others said, "He deserved it. But that's war."

If you've seen the movie, "Contact," you will recognize that this is like the movie: a situation involving two very different people who don't understand each other. The Acomans had no way of knowing what was going on in Oñate's mind; Oñate had no way of knowing what was going on in their minds and why they resisted. And there was no attempt to understand.

So they come up with this punishment: all males over twenty-five years old would have one of their feet cut off. All women and children will be put into servitude for twenty years. And the two Hopis that were found among the defenders had one hand cut off. Oñate did not want them

all to be punished there; rather, he decided to disperse the prisoners out and have them punished, as examples, in different pueblos.

Now we hear accounts which reported that there were maybe five hundred prisoners, that maybe three hundred men remained. Twenty-four Aromans had their foot amputated and the two Hopis their hand amputated. We know of sixty young women or young girls, children under twelve, who were sent to Mexico in the care of the priests. (It would be an interesting story as to what happened to them; right now no one knows because no one has done the research.) They were sent to the Viceroy who then dispersed among convents in Mexico City. We're not quite sure how many women and male boys were dispersed among the settlers, but we do know his own settlers protested the judgment when he issued it. They told him not to do it, that it was too harsh. "This isn't us." I'd like to think that if there was a Chávez he was one of them.

Charles Bennett, my assistant, asked me the other day. "If you were Oñate what would you have done?" I would have left. I would have been one of the people who would have left, I think. But you know, we are each different in each generation, I guess. And I wasn't there, so I don't know. But his own people said *don't do that*.

Oñate's own people as it turns out—because there were no more than a hundred men and women who actually got dispersed—were letting people escape, so they wouldn't have to suffer the penalty. And we know that, within a year and a half, Acoma was repopulated.

Oñate's intention had been to abolish the pueblo, wipe it out, a form genocide, if you will. But within a year and a half we have accounts of it being repopulated. Now part of it is the people who escaped as prisoners. We also know that within a couple of years there is hardly anybody listed in a household in New Mexico, or mentioned, who is from Acoma pueblo. So

they apparently all went back, or were allowed to; or they escaped on the own volition or simply were allowed to stay there.

In 1604, Oñate actually sent an expedition to Acoma to make peace. So the pueblo was there inhabited. The other people who went back to Acoma were those who weren't there for the battle or who had escaped the battle. We have no account of how that was. So, Acoma is something that really gets people going. Acoma occurs in January of 1599. The man and his colony hadn't been here in New Mexico six months. By then, he had executed the two Portuguese, allowed the Spanish to escape, had the battle. In addition, Juan was killed and they exacted revenge on Acoma— all within six months! That is kind of amazing!

All that stuff that happened within months of him arriving. March 2, 1599, Oñate writes his first letter home and he sends Farfán, who is famous in the poem for having written the first play down at El Paso. Today the El Pasoans claim the first Thanksgiving took place. He was one of the loyal captains of Oñate. He, Villagrà, and another officer were sent down to Mexico to bring some more supplies and recruits. So now he's going to do that because he's fought this battle. Incidentally, in the battle, the Spanish had one casualty, shot by one of his own guys, friendly fire casualty if you will.

So they are down nine people or so, plus the two guys decapitated, which makes eleven soldiers that we know of. And we don't know who sneaked off, because there were people sneaking off. In fact, Oñate and his family were kind of running the operation, if you haven't figured it out, with the Zaldivars, as well as Oñate's brothers, one in Mexico and the other in Spain, both trying to keep up a good front with those in positions of official power: keeping them happy about what Oñate was doing.

They were doing a pretty good job of censoring the mail going back; people were pretty disgruntled. They had already tried to desert within days of getting up here. So Oñate writes a letter praising the virtues of New Mexico and sends it down to Mexico with Villagrà: "The

expedition has great potential. We are finding mines everywhere. Why there's even salt, and we've heard tales of great silver mines over in the other area that he called Tierra Adentro, which is Arizona, and we still have hopes of finding the North and South Seas close at hand." Remember he's going to end up sending his nephew to Spain to bring those pilots over, those ships pilots, for when he finds the oceans.

So, the Viceroy sends some more people up. He invests in this: "I've already spent a lot of money. The priests are just happy as heck because they're converting everybody, all these souls being converted. And after all, King, you have an obligation to do that." That's why the Pope divided the world in half at the Treaty of Tordesillas; he said, "You get this half of the world if you convert everybody there." The crown of Spain took that seriously and there was an attempt to convert everyone encountered. That was a serious thing for them *and* the official reason for New Mexico.

An interesting thing happened, Villagrà goes back down to Mexico. Now, this was his second time back within two years. He goes to Mexico City and gives testimony on behalf of his commander. And, with the other two captains there, he starts recruiting people and supplies. They form them up at Santa Barbara, up here north of Durango, the furthest reaches of New Spain civilization. And the Viceroy says, "You know what, Villagrà, you're not going to be in charge of this relief column. I'm going to put one of my own people in charge." And Villagrà didn't like that. He ran into a local church and refused to go to New Mexico; they couldn't arrest him because he had the sanctuary of the church. So here's one of Oñate's faithful servants, one of his *capitanes*, the guy who's going to end up publishing the first account of the expedition in 1610, deserting Oñate.

And an inspection was given of this group, you know where all the soldiers step forward and gave their name and what they were bringing up and everything. And you know what, the other two officers weren't there either. The faithful Farfán, the early day playwright, abandoned

Oñate. This happens within two years of him coming here. So he's got a nephew dead and three of his faithful officers have deserted him. Remember, Villagrà, the one that executed the two for deserting him in the first place. There's an irony here.

On Christmas Eve, 1600, the relief column arrived and what a disappointment it is. Only eighty some people, eighty-nine to be exact. Eighty-nine people. Oñate was hoping for three or four hundred people. Eighty nine people. I'm sure he said something like, "Gee whiz, maybe the Viceroy doesn't like me. Eighty nine people; this is ridiculous." He thought, "I've got to find something. I've got to discover something." Now while all this other stuff was going on, something else happened. It wasn't dull.

This scraggly looking person wandered off the plains. Said his name was Jusepe, or Josello, or Josefino, Little Joe and he's not from *Bonanza*. And says he was with an earlier expedition. "An earlier expedition!" exclaims Oñate. "What expedition?"

And the guy says, "You remember Leyba? Remember that expedition?"

"It was an illegal expedition," replied Oñate. These two guys, whose names are Leyba de Bonilla and Juan Gutierrez y Humaña, had come to New Mexico illegally, in 1592, and in Oñate's contract, he was to find them and arrest them and send them back to Mexico. This person that straggled in was a Mexican Indian who had been a servant to them and went with them out on to the plains. One killed the other. Stabbed him to death. Nice guys. The survivor was killed by the Indians out there, around what is Quivera, present day Wichita, Kansas.

This servant survived. He was captured. He lived among the Indians. He escaped the Quiverans, was captured by the Apaches, was with them for a few years, and then he heard that there were more Spanish settlers in the Rio Grandé Valley. He left the Apaches and returned to New Mexico and told this story.

So, one part of Oñate's contract now (in 1600) is accomplished. He *does* accomplish something. You can't say he's a total failure now. Because now he knows what happened to these two guys: they're dead. He doesn't have to capture them. But this Mexican Indian talks about the routes out there and everything. And this is going to be a good source for Oñate. He has written this letter. He's gotten this lousy, small contingent of reinforcements so he decides that he is going to find the North Sea.

Let's go find the North Sea. Where's the North Sea? Across the plains. So he loads up with some eighty people and wagons. This wagon train is interesting, especially for the Santa Fe Trail buffs. Think about this. Oñate goes down to Galisteo, out to the Pecos River, crosses the Pecos, onto the plains, to the Canadian River, into the Texas Panhandle, roughly to where it ends with the Oklahoma border today. I mean there weren't signs saying WELCOME TO TEXAS, YOU ARE NOW LEAVING TEXAS, or BIENVENIDOS, ADIOS DE NUEVO MEJICO. None of that. He gets to Oklahoma, does a left turn, goes up to the Arkansas River, follows the Arkansas River to the Big Bend area where now he's among the Quiveran Indians, who today are the Wichitas.

To the first group he runs into, he says, "I hear there's great settlements everything." And they say, "Yeah, there are people who smelled just like you here earlier. And ugly like you too." Spanish and all Europeans back then were all pot marked from all the diseases they had. They had great teeth too. Did you ever wonder what people did in those days without dentists? God, what misery!

This group of Indians tried to get Oñate and his group to attack their arch enemies, which were just the next group up the way, which is usually the case. You should have learned that in high school. Who was your arch enemy in high school? The school closest to you. That's why we get along with our neighbors so well these days. Oñate doesn't want to do that.

From the journal of this expedition we know he was in what today is Kansas. He went on The Santa Fe Trail and he took wagons. Now he didn't go the exact route of the Santa Fe Trail; he went a little South, near the Canadian River, but in the same basic corridor. And he's over there and he has trade goods, you know, more hawk bells, apparently. I think we ought to revise the hawk bells trade. We could make a fashion statement here. Everybody would know it was us. Only New Mexicans would wear hawk bells. We could travel with hawk bells on us. We wouldn't need passports anymore. In fact, we ought to petition the state to put a hawk bell on our license plate.

So Oñate is out there. He wants to trade and he wants to find out who these people are and he's also asking about waterways. And he hears, he actually hears, from these people, there is a great river further on. The Mississippi. Well within twenty four-years of Oñate being out there, a New Mexican *does* go to the Rio Espiritu Santo, the Mississippi. He gets to the Mississippi River from New Mexico. Oñate hears about it and he wants to plug on. But his men are starting to get a little bit surly. He should be used to it by now. He reports they're even more surly; the fact that he reports this must have meant that they were even more surly than usual. They all have the *Oh-Man-We-Don't-Want-To-Go* attitude, stomping their feet and pawing at the dirt and stuff.

"Boy, this is just so much fun, crossing the plains. It's endless."

" We're in Kansas. This is another world, Kansas. Where's Dorothy?"

"We can't find a thing out here."

"Let's turn around. The heck with the Great River."

The thing is, Oñate needs this big discovery; it's the only way he's going to salvage everything that he's done. He *needs* a discovery. He's got to find something. "Gosh, guys, we're so close to the North Sea. We got to get to the North Sea."

They're going, "Aw, man, we're running out of supplies." And so he finally acquiesces, one of the few times in his whole life that he acquiesced to his own people, the other time being when he resigned. So they turn around to return to New Mexico.

Now he leaves the Indian group that he's in and comes back to the original group that wanted him to make war on the tribe that he went to. And so the original group is now mad at him and they're waiting for him. They want to do battle with the guy. So he ends up in a pitched battle. It lasted for three or four hours. Apparently there weren't a lot of casualties. It was one of these rare times in that period where there was a battle and the Spanish don't claim like nine hundred dead on the other side and one of their own self inflicted type of things, you know, one of these good military histories. They just report that they had this battle and it didn't matter much and they finally just left the field and kept on going to New Mexico.

They apparently took the direct route back to New Mexico. They came back a lot faster than they went out because they had somebody guiding them. Just like Vásquez de Coronado had somebody guiding him back the same route. The direct route, from Kansas to New Mexico, which we now call the Cimarron cut-off on the Santa Fe Trail. Just right down here. Westward ho and he's coming back with wagons. So here you have in 1601 an expedition that went to Kansas, traded and came back. And we like to talk about 1821. In fact, I even dressed up for that occasion. And here's an expedition. And they didn't call it the Santa Fe Trail, not yet. So he comes back.

Now while he was gone, he was not receiving reinforcements. He's figured out somebody down in Mexico doesn't like him. They're just not supporting him. And so he's sending samples of ore back to be tested in Mexico, saying well this must be silver. Being a miner, he had his own testing material in New Mexico. Why did he send ore back to Mexico? It gets to the point where the Viceroy writes to the King and says, "This whole project in New Mexico is nothing but a *fairy tale*." Those are the exact words. Oñate is a player in a fairy tale, a fantasy. "He's sending

these rocks back as if they mean something and they're nothing. He's talking about the North and South Sea. They are not there. People are deserting him and coming back and talking. What went on in Acoma?"

Word is getting back. Letters are getting out. Let me give you one example that comes from one of his captains. Now the captain may have been sent here or placed in the expedition by the Viceroy to keep tabs on Oñate. The problem was, this is the first letter that the captain is able to get out. And he says,

"Because we are zealous of our honor and sign complaints, we are labeled as traders. The fact is that we are all depressed, cowed and frightened, expecting death at any moment. We are not masters of ourselves or of our children. We find ourselves in the most harrowing position of servitude ever endured by Spaniards and are threatened with the loss of our rights. Who can help but complain about matters here, being unfortunate subjects of your Lordship?" ('lordship' meaning the Viceroy to whom he wrote this letter.) "We had all come so eagerly to serve you in this conversion at our own expense, but after spending many thousands from our estates, we did not have the fortune to be governed by a person such as you," again meaning the Viceroy, "but instead by one whose treatment is such that unless his Majesty sends relief, we shall doubtless all perish with our women and children."

This is a serious letter. This guy is not very optimistic about things. Something is not right in New Mexico. Oñate is out there on the Santa Fe Trail. Some of his own people said, "We don't think you should go Oñate." This is within the same year that all these people showed up and told him they did not think he should go, but he did anyway. He said, "I will take the people that I know don't like me with me out on to the plains." He takes them out on to the plains.

And what happens immediately after they leave? The head Franciscan calls a meeting of the colony. The lieutenant governor, this poor guy, has to preside over the meeting. And the head Franciscan doesn't go because it's beneath his dignity; he will have his priests talk for him, and

so the priests lead the discussion. "Let's get the hell out of here. What are we waiting for? Oñate is gone. He's out on the plains. Let's go." And then some of the captains spoke and expressed the same sentiment. Apparently they tried to get the people that didn't want to go to go through peer pressure.

When it was all said and done, a bunch of them did go. When Oñate returned from Kansas, he had about a third of his colony there. He was greeted by twenty-five men at San Gabriel. Oñate immediately called a court. He loved these courts, apparently. He tried all the people that deserted and charged them with treason. And as punishment, ordered their decapitation. And he sends Vicente after them, but they had a month head start.

He sent another letter with Vicente. This is from that poor forlorn lieutenant governor, apparently the same guy who had trouble with the main colony coming up. He wasn't a very good control person. He didn't know how to exact discipline and apparently he didn't have a lot of respect from a lot of people. But seems to be a very decent person. There are a lot of us like that. He had to oversee this thing. Ironically, it seems clear from his later correspondence that he wanted to leave too. But, by virtue of his position of being Lieutenant Governor, he felt obligated to stay with the twenty-five guys. He sends a letter down to Mexico and this is it:

"I do not know how I should explain to your excellency the events and charges that have taken place in these provinces of New Mexico. I am at a loss to know who is responsible for the situation. If I blame the Governor, it would be unjust since he is away with most of the army in search of new provinces, enduring many hardships in the service of his majesty. If I blame the friars, they quote so many texts from the Holy Scriptures to prove that we cannot in good conscience take food and blankets from the Indians, who have very little indeed, and charge us with mortal sin if we take anything at all. If I blame the captains who accompany them, they answer that they are acting in accordance with the claims of the friars and to satisfy their own privation in order to survive, for in all the time they have been here, they have been unable to get what they needed, as is evident...All will be lost if our Lord does not remedy this situation by

committing the Governor to discover something so important that the men may overcome their indifference and lack of confidence in finding anything worthwhile in these lands.”

That’s exactly Oñate’s strategy, to find something important here to keep these guys settled. The quote continues,

“If aid does not reach us within five months, we will be compelled to abandon this land as we are determined to do. We have served his majesty for six years in the expedition, together with our wives, children and families, and have spent large amounts of our estates. Our greatest sacrifice has been the loss of liberty...”

Now this is the Lieutenant Governor who stayed is one of the twenty-five men who did *not* leave. Now there were other people who took more direct means of leaving. One of the two of the captains who was leading the conspiracy was the guy that went to the pueblo when Oñate had forbidden him and was caught organizing an earlier but aborted desertion. Oñate wanted to kill him both times. He wanted to garrote him when he disobeyed by entering the Pueblo and, again, when was caught leading the earlier conspiracy to desert, but he didn’t. Well Oñate apparently got impatient with the guy when he came to Oñate and said he wanted to leave and take his family back to Mexico.

When you read the roll calls coming up, the guy brought all these horses, and a cart full of equipment and everything. He was saying, “You know, I paid my own way up. Legally I can leave. I am not obligated to you.” Well, that night Oñate himself, with Vicente and some others entered the guy’s dwelling and killed him, the fatal thrust coming from Oñate’s own sword.

Another guy who barely shows up on the record, but who brought his family, a wife and four children, all paid for himself, went to Oñate and said, “We can’t survive here anymore. I seek permission to leave. I paid my way, you didn’t pay for me. I would like to leave.”

Oñate says, “Quiere volver usted? Por supuesto. Of course. But, before you go, can you help the others round up the horses in the pasture?” Later that night, this man’s wife raises the alarm,

“Where is my husband. He is not back yet and all the others are.” She finds out he’s in a hollow grave, under a pile of rocks. Vicente and some of the others killed him.

The colony is unraveling. San Gabriel is in desperate straits. And now, right at this time, October 1604, , Oñate decides to make another attempt to find the South Sea. And he leaves in October. We don’t have the full account, but I am sure he ran into snow again.

He goes to Zuni, he goes to Hopi, and he cuts south. This time he *does* get to the South Sea. When he goes in with arms up. Because now he *does* find the South Sea! He’s accomplished something else. Maybe the expedition can be saved because he can write a glowing report of his great discovery.

The South Sea! On his way back, he comes to Hopi and Zuni and then stops off at the watering hole, the site of the now famous Inscription Rock— and carves his name in stone: “Paso por aqui El Adelantado, don Juan de Oñate, al descubrimiento de la mar del Sur, 16 de Abril 1605.” It’s still there today. You can see that he was happy. This was going to be a triumph though didn’t look like it. By now all the armor was rusty, all the fine clothing was torn, all the shoes and boots, whether he wore them backwards or not, were worn. These people had suffered for seven years now. And now, after coming back from this long expedition to the Gulf of California, he writes the Big Letter that he sends with Vicente to Mexico.

“Now,” he reasons, “we’ll get our supplies.” But they don’t come. And Vicente doesn’t find a happy Viceroy because the rest of the colony is down there. Oh, and incidentally, what happened to them? They were supposed to be decapitated. Oñate had tried them. They made it back to Mexico, out of Oñate’s jurisdiction. When word got to the Viceroy that Oñate had

ordered their decapitation for desertion, the Viceroy convened a committee where cooler heads prevailed. They said, “No these people can’t be charged for treason because this was not a military expedition. It was a settlement.” And so they’re all down in Mexico and word gets the Viceroy; they’re telling him stories.

In the meantime, Vicente shows up and the Viceroy is not too pleased. This is when the Viceroy is thinking *fantasy land*. So Vicente decides to go on to Spain. Amazing. The guy who was at Acoma. The guy who was dealing with the buffalo. The guy who was killing everybody up in New Mexico is now going to Spain.

He travels to Spain, gets off the boat in Seville, rides up to Madrid, tries to get an audience with the King. Though he talks to some influential people, the king avoids him. The guy is a low life,. Why would the King bother with him? Where’s this guy from? Zacatecas. Where is that? (And we wonder why the King of Spain won’t come here for our celebration.) And that is when they asked for ships pilots. And so what does he get? The King’s council says, “Okay, we’ll give you a dozen guys or so to go.” But they don’t go because they can’t find passage on a ship out of Seville. Vicente comes back empty handed.

Meanwhile Oñate is in New Mexico and nothing is happening. He immediately thought that because of his great discovery, maybe, just maybe the Viceroy would see the light and send supplies and people up here and the colony would be successful. Years pass—you know, no Vicente, no nothing and Oñate is beginning to wonder. Dejected, he sits down and writes a letter on August 24, 1607. Oñate was completely frustrated.

So, on August 24, 1607, Oñate writes the Viceroy from San Gabriel, and he goes through all the stuff about, you know, he’s been waiting, and he’s disappointed that he hasn’t received any word. Not even an answer from the Viceroy to his correspondence that went down with Vicente. And this is a dejected man. He writes,

“Although I do not tire of waiting or of enduring the hardships that one encounters here, the soldiers are so worn out by seeing themselves put off for so long with mere hopes that they do not wish, nor are they able to wait any longer...Finding myself helpless in every respect because I have used up on this expedition my estate and resources of my relatives and friends [that is pretty true, although he still had the mines, and he got rich again when he went back to Mexico] amounting to more than six hundred thousand pesos. I am anxious that the fruits of so many expenditures in more than eleven years of labor should not be lost, and especially, because I'm eager that our Holy Catholic faith should be spread[referring to the official mission of the expedition] in these lands and that our King our Lord should increase his dominions...I find no other means to attain all this than to renounce my office. Which resignation I am sending your excellency.

I am doing this in order that his majesty, since he has failed to support this undertaking as an importance demands, may appoint for this post a person who may be able to carry on the service I have started.

To effect this change, it was necessary to reach an agreement with the soldiers in the name of his majesty, whereby they will await an answer from you excellency until the end of June of next year. From that date on, I have granted them permission to leave at will.[In other words, send a replacement by next June or everybody is leaving. Not only was this a dejected man, this was a very frustrated man.]

As far as I am concerned, matters have moved in such a way that my feelings have been greatly hurt, in view of the fact that those who fled from this camp have gone entirely unpunished [meaning the settlers had left and Viceroy is saying no you can't execute them]. Through extensive testimonies and falsehoods they have tried to justify their treason...Therefore, in order that my limited means should not be a hindrance to the work of baptism and the extension of the royal crown. I decided for the unburdening of my conscience to resign my office which I cannot maintain without more help, assured that in doing this, I am rendering a most important service to his majesty.”

It really is a neat letter from our hero, the founder of New Mexico. It brings it down to earth doesn't it? What he didn't know was that the Viceroy's letters and words of Fantasyland in New Mexico had reached the King in Spain. And the King himself, within months of this letter, had sent a letter to the Viceroy saying to fire the guy. Get him out of there. The king didn't say anything about appointing a replacement. The king and his advisors were thinking about abandoning New Mexico.

The Viceroy in office was the very Viceroy who had originally awarded the contract. He had gone off to Peru, which was a promotion. Then he was reappointed back to Mexico, another kind of promotion because Mexico had become a step up in the interim. So, it is an interesting circle in which he went. But he is back, and he is Oñate's old friend. He got the letter from the King first. So now he has to fire his friend. He had to admit that awarding of his friend the contract was wrong. That the whole thing was a failure. That he blew it. Which was a mar on his otherwise sterling record.

Then he gets the letter from his friend which says, "I'm resigning, I'm quitting. You have till June." So you hear historians say the King and the Viceroy removed Oñate. And then you hear other historians say that Oñate quit.

In truth, the Viceroy accepted Oñate's resignation and then named one of Oñate's captains, Juan Martinez de Montoya, as the new governor. Somehow he came up to New Mexico in 1600 and stayed here. A man who when given testimony in front of Oñate and then his son Cristobal—we know he went out onto the plains, went on one of the journeys to the South Sea. One of the ones who didn't make it. He fought the Apaches when the Apaches attacked San Gabriel. Went on a little known raid of Taos Pueblo, its hardly mentioned, say for documents like this, and founded the Villa, or as he called it, the Plaza de Santa Fe. We brought his letters back here. They are in our library right now. Where he says twice, I founded—one time he says, *poblado*: I

populated Santa Fe. Another time, he says, "I founded the Plaza de Santa Fe. " Now he doesn't give a date. This is unfair. How can we tweak Jamestown? But we can.

The internal evidence of the document and the way he lists things in chronological order suggest at least 1607 as the founding date, the same year Jamestown was founded. We have been revisiting this document; in another part of it, he said he did this while Oñate was away. Away, where? On one of his expeditions? When? He didn't go anywhere in 1607 that we know. Could it be that Santa Fe was founded when Oñate was away discovering the South Sea, in 1605? Is that possible? Yes, it is. So, from those documents ,Santa Fe was founded at the latest 1607, and maybe as early as 1605, before Jamestown.

Now, I want to remind you about this guy Oñate and, in the next lecture, I'm going to talk about his settlers more, who they were, what kind of people they were. What percentage were single women, single men, married men, mulattos, that kind of stuff. We know of how many of them there were from tallies that we've taken.

But you know, here is this man Oñate who was born around 1552. He comes to New Mexico, in 1598, which makes him forty-six years old. He was here twelve years. He was almost sixty-years-old at the end of this period. This is an old man in those days. Young today, but old then, right. Young today, but ancient then. And here is a guy who is making right turns to go to the South Sea and deciding to go out to the North Sea, and he is doing all this in his fifties for the most part. You know anybody in their fifties who could ride that much in that short of time? Some of his soldiers were even older! Actually, most of them were young types, you know, and that was one of the problems. You know they wanted to do boom boxes and lowriders and Oñate didn't understand it. And they wanted to leave.

So, the Viceroy appoints as Oñate's replacement a man named Martinez de Montoya who is, in his own right, a Capitan. Martinez de Montoya, from what I can tell, was an adventurer. Relatively late in his life, his mid-forties, he decided to leave his village in Spain to come over to

New Spain. He gets here just in time to sign up with the eighty-nine recruits coming up and comes up to New Mexico with them. A captain needed to stay here for the required five years because one of the things in Oñate's contract with the King of Spain stipulated, if you are part of the settlement of a new province for five years, you could be made a *hidalgo*. Hidalgo was the lowest level of nobilism. And you are called *Don* —remember *Don* Juan de Oñate. And, what does *Don* mean? You know what that means? De orden neblese: of noble origin. Al you had to do was to be here for five years. Get through the seasons, survive, and go back.

And so what does Martinez de Montoya do? He is here for five years and nine months. (He has it down to the months.) And he goes before Oñate and asks him, "Will you testify to everything that I've done? I've been here this long, etc. Oñate says he will. Martinez de Montoya said he wanted to be a hidalgo, *son of something: hijo de algo*. Son of something. While this is going on, he is appointed to be Oñate's replacement. Kind of embarrassing you wouldn't you think?

Historians write that Oñate formed a council, in 1605, a legislature for the kingdom of New Mexico. The legislature was given to understand that they had to accept the new governor. But they didn't accept the new governor. The fact of the matter is, they wrote a letter saying they wouldn't accept him. The truth of the matter is, if the Viceroy really wanted Juan Martinez de Montoya to be governor, the cabildo would have accepted it, no doubt. It was real simple.

But Juan Martinez de Montoya did not become governor. Why ? Well he surfaces in the papers brought to the Palace of The Governors from London. From these papers we learn that he was ahead of the man who the cabildo wanted to be governor, Juan's son, Cristobal. All eighteen-years-old of him.

From these papers we learn that Martinez de Montoya has served his required time and wanted his just rewards and permission to leave. So the *cabildo*, the council, no doubt influenced by Oñate, picked Juan's son to be governor.

Cristobal was barely literate, having grown up in New Mexico. At age eighteen, the *cabildo* makes him governor. And the next thing you see in the documents is Juan Martinez de Montoya appearing before Cristobal, and Cristobal is conferring the title of *hidalgo* upon him. Juan Martinez de Montoya is sent to Mexico on the next expedition with some priests to talk about the virtues of New Mexico. Everything was turned around ever so conveniently.

Oñate then received word from the Viceroy that another man was being sent to be governor. The Viceroy's advisors could not accept young Cristobal because of his inexperience. Oñate was therefore ordered to wait in New Mexico until his official replacement arrived.

Pedro de Peralta arrived in New Mexico in early 1610. Oñate returned to Mexico where he and Vicente Zaldivar revitalized their mining interests.

In Mexico, Oñate faced charges for his activities in New Mexico and was found guilty for about half of them. he, along with his captains received various punishments. Oñate spent the rest of his life trying to exonerate himself, but never completely succeeded. He died in Spain at age seventy-two, while working as a royal mining inspector.