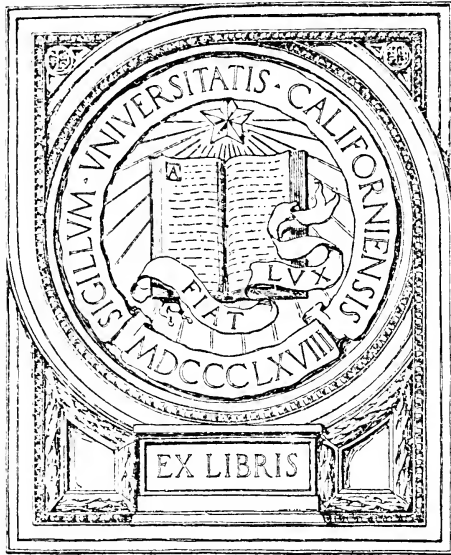


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THE ANCESTRY AND FAMILY OF JUAN DE OÑATE

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THE ANCESTRY AND FAMILY OF JUAN DE OÑATE¹

BEATRICE QUIJADA CORNISH

THE ancestry of Juan de Oñate,² on his father's side, may be traced to the Basque provinces.³ The importance of these provinces in the evolution of Spain and her possessions is historically established. In religion alone, through Ignatius de Loyola of Guipúzcoa and Francis Xavier of Navarre, they have left their mark upon Europe.

Cristóbal de Oñate, father of Don Juan, was born in Vitoria,⁴ the capital of Álava.⁵ He was the son of Cristóbal Pérez de Narriahondo and Ossanza Martínez de San Vicente, his wife. He was also a nephew of Pedro de Baeza and María de Yrarrázaval, his wife, of the ancient and illustrious house of Narriahondo,

¹ This paper was written in the Bancroft Library at the University of California.

² Originally Oinati or Oniati, Soraluece, *Historia General de Guipúzcoa*, I, 256.

³ *Provincias Vascongadas*, a division of northeastern Spain, comprising the provinces of Álava, Biscaya or Viscaya, Guipúzcoa and Navarre. Their isolation, the mountainous and easily defended nature of the country, their comparative poverty and the possession of a seaboard, all tended to the development of rugged characteristics essential to a people who were destined to carry on warfare and adventure for centuries in the liberation of their mother country from the Moors, and in the conquest and settlement of her distant colonies.

⁴ Mendieta, *Historia Eclesiástica Indiana*, 402; Bernárdez, *Descripción Breve de la muy noble, y leal ciudad de Zacatecas*, 31, according to Haro's *Nobiliario*. Béthencourt, *Historia Genealógica Heraldica de la Monarquía Española Casa Real y Grandes de España*, I, Introduction, 8-9, says regarding López de Haro, author of the *Nobiliario*: "A Alonso López de Haro, Criado de Su Magestad, cronista que fué de Felipe IV, debemos el Nobiliario Genealógico de los Reyes y Títulos creados en Castilla desde que tuvieron el caracter de transmisibles y hereditarios, ó lo que es lo mismo, desde los tiempos de Don Enrique II, el de las Mercedes, hasta los de Felipe IV, á la sazón reinante." Bernárdez, p. 34, in quoting Haro, does so verbatim. A copy of Haro's work was furnished to him by Doctor Don Juan Ignacio María Castorena y Ursúa. A *Cívica Corona* compiled by Castorena y Ursúa from his researches in archives, from his detailed study of *crónicas* and surveys of *Nobiliarios*, is mentioned by Bernárdez, but it is not available to the writer. For information on Castorena y Ursúa, see his *Las Indias Entendidas*, Sermon 10/1 and *El Predicador Convertido*, Sermon 8/4.

⁵ For the origin of the name Álava, see Madoz, the *Diccionario Geográfico-Estadístico-Histórico de España y sus posesiones de Ultramar*; Salazar, *México en 1554*, p. 56. For the history of the province of Álava, see Pírala, *España, sus monumentos y artes, su naturaleza e historia*, pp. 48-185. For the history of Villa de Oñate, see Pírala, pp. 330-384.

within the jurisdiction of the important Villa de Oñate, in the province of Álava. There is evidence that this Villa was in existence in 1149.¹ It is situated in the centre of the Basque provinces. Pedro de Baeza was a descendant of López Díaz de Haro, "Señor de Viscaya," chief and captain-general of the Andalusian frontier, bishopric of Jaén, who conquered the city of Baeza from the Moors in 1227. This achievement caused him to order that all of his descendants adopt the surname of Baeza, so as to perpetuate this victory over the Moors.² In the early seventeenth century there were many families of this name both in Baeza and Viscaya.³

The ancestry of Juan de Oñate on his mother's side may be traced to Granada.⁴ Doña Cathalina de Salazar, his

¹ Pirala, p. 179.

² Bernárdez, p. 32, according to Haro's *Nobilario*.

³ Arlegui, *Crónica de la Provincia de N. S. P. S. Francisco de Zacatecas*, 1st ed., pp. 56-57.

⁴ Carranza, *Sumaria Relación de las Cosas de la Nueva España*, 289. The work of Baltasar Dorantes de Carranza, to which frequent reference will be made, appears to have been little used heretofore. Because of its importance, the writer feels warranted in adding a statement bearing on the interesting history of both the author and his manuscript. This manuscript, probably his autobiography, according to Obregón, writer of the prologue of the publication, was published in 1902 by the Museo Nacional de Mexico. Prior to this time it had been in the possession of Sr. Lic. D. José Fernando Ramírez. Upon the death of this distinguished "bibliófilo" it was obtained along with other manuscripts and the majority of the books in his valuable library, by Sr. Lic. D. Alfredo Chavero. Upon one occasion, having shown this manuscript to Sr. D. Joaquín García Icazbalceta, he was so delighted with the work, that it was given to him as a present by its owner. While in possession of Icazbalceta, Sr. D. José María de Agreda y Sánchez had occasion to see the manuscript, and he in turn was so pleased with its contents that he decided to make a paleographical translation. Agreda then requested Luis González Obregón to check the copy with the original, and he became so interested in its contents that he suggested to him that the manuscript be published as soon as possible. Unable to do so at that time, he did so later. His idea was greatly encouraged by Sr. Dr. D. Manuel Urbina, who communicated with Sr. D. Francisco del Paso y Troncoso, already familiar with the manuscript. The document was published in its entirety for the first time in 1902; a few pages are incorporated in García Icazbalceta's *Memorias de la Academia Mexicana*. As the first fourteen pages of the original manuscript were missing, and therefore a title was lacking, Ramírez gave the book the name of *Sumaria Relación de las Cosas de Nueva España, con noticia individual de los descendientes legítimos de los conquistadores y primeros pobladores españoles*. Carranza was the son of Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, one of the companions of Cabeza de Vaca. Andrés Dorantes was a native of Béjar del Castañar in old Castile, and a descendant of noble families, of ancient lineage, possessing many "*mayorazgos de calidad*." Baltasar was born in Mexico about the middle of the sixteenth century, and inherited an *encomienda* which brought him five thousand *pesos de renta*, of which he was despoiled, being left, as he good naturedly remarks, "*desnudo y en cueros como cuando salió mi padre de la Florida*." He wrote in Mexico in 1604, as he himself states in several places in his work. On one occasion he says: "Not more than eighty-four years have elapsed since this land was conquered, which is in 1604, and therefore the persons living are known, and the memory of those deceased is still alive." Beyond the data furnished by himself, little is known of him, but he enters into an interesting account of the life, ancestry, and descendants of his father, Andrés Dorantes de Carranza. Baltasar

mother,¹ was the daughter of Gonzalo de Salazar, "el gordo," and Doña Cathalina de la Cadena.² She had previously been married to Ruy Díaz de Mendoza, who upon his death left her a widow in Spain. She then came from Spain to Mexico and married Cristóbal de Oñate, Don Juan's father, who was at that time a *vecino* of the city of Mexico.³ Doña Cathalina de la Cadena was the daughter⁴ of Alonso Dávila,⁵ "el de Malacatepec,"⁶ *conquistador* and *vecino* of the city of Mexico.⁷ Antonio de la Cadena came from Spain to Texcoco⁸ with Gerónimo Ruiz de la Mota, also a *conquistador*.⁹

Don Cristóbal de Oñate came from Spain in the autumn of 1524,¹⁰ with the *contador*, Rodrigo de Albornóz¹¹ and Gonzalo de

was *tesorero* for the king in the port of Vera Cruz, and occupied other positions of merit in New Spain. Later he was named *procurador general* to the king of Spain. He mentions another book which he wrote, and which he calls "el libro principal." He says: "se tocará universalmente lo que conviene decir en este propósito en el libro principal, porque no es deste lugar, que haría historia de inmensidad" (Carranza, p. 63). According to Obregón, this book has never been found.

¹ The discussion relative to Juan de Oñate's mother, namely: whether Doña Isabel Cortés Montezuma was his mother or his wife, has been brought about because the only source on which authorities have based their deductions was Haro's *Nobilario*, and this work has been differently quoted. Arlegui, 1st ed., p. 31, erroneously calls Doña Isabel Cortés Montezuma the wife of Don Cristóbal. The San Luis Potosí *Relacion Circuns.* confirms this statement by calling Don Juan "hijo de Doña Isabel," according to Bancroft, *Hist. Arizona and New Mexico*, p. 116; Villagrà, *Historia de la Nueva Mexico*, Canto Sexto; Bernárdez, p. 31; Arlegui, 1st ed., p. 34; Luis Tribaldo de Toledo, *Intro.*, Villagrà, and likewise Carranza, Don Juan was the husband of Doña Isabel.

² Carranza, p. 290.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 290.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 163. Alonso Dávila had a son, Gerónimo Dávila; grandsons, Hernando de Salazar, Joan Alonso Dávila, Francisco Dávila, Diego de Cayas; great grandsons, Alonso Dávila Magariño, Joan Magariño.

⁶ For information regarding Malacatepec, see Alcedo.

⁷ Carranza, p. 195.

⁸ Tezcoco, a jurisdiction and *alcaldía mayor* of New Spain. It was here that king Nzahualcoyotl maintained his sovereignty, and after the establishment of the Mexican empire it was the court of the princes of the race of Montezuma. It is 15 miles e. n. e. of Mexico at the foot of the sierra, which is the e. wall of the valley of Tenoxtitlan, in lat. 19° 31' 30" and long. 98° 52' w.

⁹ Gerónimo Ruiz de la Mota, "capitan de un vergantin de los vallerteros." He left many sons and daughters, the oldest being Antonio de la Mota. Alonso de la Mota and Pedro de la Mota are his brothers. *Memorial* (anonymous) *de los conquistadores de esta Nueva España que se hallaron en la toma de Mexico y fueron despues a ganar y conquistar con el Marques del Valle las provincias de Tutuqueque y la provincia de Guatemala, Honduras e Higuera que fue toda la Nueva España.* Incorporated in Appendix of Carranza's work as published by the Museo Nacional de Mexico, p. 443 *et seq.* Carranza, p. 195.

¹⁰ Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 144, states: "Salazar arrived in the autumn, acc. to Cortés Cartas." Carranza, p. 315, states: "Vino á esta Nueva España quando el contador Rodrigo de Albornóz."

¹¹ Carranza, pp. 290, 315. Rodrigo de Albornóz had been secretary to the king prior to his appointment as revenue official. His appointment is dated Balladolid,

Salazar, the latter as *factor*. The strongest characteristic of Gonzalo de Salazar, grandfather of Don Juan, as gleaned from the pages of authorities who have treated of his career in Mexico, is one of subtle duplicity. Arriving in Mexico with the expectation of acquiring great and sudden wealth, he lost no time in fawning upon Cortés in the hope that he might be allowed to share in the plunder of the colonial revenue. Failing in this endeavor, because Cortés neither possessed the treasures, nor was willing to share his receipts with others, he with other revenue officials instituted a systematic attack upon the captain-general, libelling his character and his acts to the king of Spain. Cortés seems to have proved pliable to their purposes, because upon leaving on his expedition into Honduras, Salazar and Chirinos were left in charge at Mexico. This so facilitated their plan of intrigue that prior to 1526 they were in entire control of the government. During the long absence of Cortés in Honduras, false reports of his death were eagerly circulated by Salazar and his associates, thereby urging the commissioners to greater activity, and resulting in a usurpation of power. The estates of Cortés, the offices, lands, and Indians of his followers, were seized and appropriated by Salazar. Salazar was soon overthrown by a portion of the followers of Cortés who had been inspired with courage upon learning that Cortés lived. He was released on the plea of Albornóz while at the court of Spain. He went to Spain prior to 1542, and joining Soto in the expedition to Florida, narrowly escaped hanging for disobedience to his chief. He died in obscurity. When Salazar went to Spain he left his son Hernando de Salazar, uncle of Juan de Oñate, as *factor*. Hernando de Salazar left an indebtedness to the king of three hundred thousand *pesos*, and upon his death Juan Velázquez, his younger brother, bound himself to liquidate this debt. Assuming the office of *factor*, he served the king many years, in the *haciendas* of his father as well as in the *encomiendas* and *pueblos* of Taxímore, in the province of Michoacán and in

October 25, 1522, and reads: "cuidando hacer cargo al oficial real tercero de los tributos, servicios, composiciones que los indios y naturales de la tierra debían pagar, como de todo lo demás perteneciente en cualquier manera al real erario, según es de ver en el tomo I de los cedularios que existen en el real tribunal de la contaduría mayor de cuentas." Fonseca, *Historia General de la Real Hacienda*, vol. 1, p. 413.

the province of Tepetlaeztoc, seven leagues from the city of Mexico.¹

Juan Velázquez de Salazar, son of Gonzalo, was a native of Granada.² He married Doña Ana de Esquivel, daughter of the *tesorero*, Alonso de Mérida.³ By 1604, the greater number of his children and their descendants were deceased, but his daughter Doña Francisca de la Cadena y Salazar, married Gaspar de Rivadeneira, and they had children. In 1604 were also living three unmarried daughters of Juan Velázquez, who were cousins of Juan de Oñate.⁴ Juan Velázquez was not a *conquistador* but an *encomendero* appointed by Cortés, as was also Don Cristóbal, his brother-in-law.⁵

Although, as stated, Juan de Oñate's father, Don Cristóbal, arrived in Mexico in 1524, the first record of actual service is as captain in the confidence of Nuño de Guzmán, and the recipient of generous gifts of pueblos, which of right belonged to Cortés and others.⁶ This was in 1528-29, during the period of the first Audiencia. In his relations with Guzmán, his self-respect and conservatism are a striking contrast to the "unprincipled ambition of the self-sufficient autocrat." Don Cristóbal was one of the conquerors of New Galicia.⁷ He proved himself equal to the difficulties and responsibilities of the situation he encountered,

¹ Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, pp. 143-145, 193-237. Salazar y Olarte, p. 284, says: "Gonzalo de Salazar deseoso de ser unico en el dominio de la Nueva España." Also, *ibid.*, pp. 282-283: "No se ignora la confianza de nuestro celebre capitán á favor de Pedro Almindez Chirinos y de Gonzalo de Salazar; pues vencido de la persuasion, ó pagadó de la lisonja (ruido agradable de la fantasía, y flecha, que destruye el mundo de la razon), quiso conferirles el gobierno de la Nueva España." Data bearing on the indebtedness left by Hernando de Salazar has been taken from Carranza, p. 290.

² Carranza, pp. 289-290.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 269: "Alonso de Mérida, thesorero que fué de la Casa de la Moneda y Señor de la Provincia de Metztilan. Quedó en esta casa y sucesion Francisco de Quintana Dueñas, y en la encomienda por casamiento con Doña Mariana de Mérida, nieta del dicho thesorero por varon."

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁵ "Memorial de los que no son conquistadores y tienen Yndios encomendados de el Marqués de el Valle." Incorporated in Carranza, p. 456. Cortés gave freely to recently arrived friends who had taken no part in the conquest. Cortés, *Residencia*, pp. 48, 81-82, 259-262.

⁶ Nuño de Guzmán was a native of Guadalajara in Castile, and a "caballero notorio." It is not known whether he left any descendants, and Carranza only knew Diego de Guzmán, a nephew of Nuño, in Mexico. Carranza, p. 306.

⁷ For most of the events of this rebellion and the work of Oñate therein, we are indebted to the three early chroniclers: Tello, *Hist. N. Gal.*, 362-438; Mota Padilla, *Conquista de Nueva Galicia*, 111-154; Beaumont, *Cron. Mich.*, IV, 59-66; 386-421; Ms. 300-303; 422-425; 550-580. Herrera also speaks of these

and the characteristics of the Basque people stood him in good stead. His obstinate conservatism during the Mixton War, combined with intelligence and executive ability, make Don Cristóbal a type figure. Throughout his strenuous career in the new world, and more particularly during this rebellion, his courage, combined with other qualities characterized as inherent in the "Señores de Viscaya,"¹ are apparent.

While Don Cristóbal was in Galicia, his family was in the pueblo of Tacámbaro in the province of Michoacán, of which he was *encomendero*.² He was also *encomendero* of Culhuacán, two leagues from the city of Mexico.³ His brother, Juan de Oñate, took a very active part in the conquest of New Galicia, and about 1531 was sent to establish Espíritu Santo, called later Guadalajara in honor of Guzmán's birthplace.⁴ The movements of Don Juan prior to this time are not clear. He was a staunch partisan of Guzmán, and after the fall of the latter his brother Don Cristóbal advised him to escape. He fled to Peru, where, as some say, he died poor and blind.⁵

The relations of Guzmán's successor, Diego Pérez de la Torre,⁶ and Don Cristóbal were most friendly, and upon the death of the former in the revolt of 1538, he formally appointed Cristóbal de Oñate his successor as governor, and entrusted to his protection his two marriageable daughters. Oñate proved faithful to the trust.⁷

In the year 1548 we find Cristóbal de Oñate in Zacatecas, with his friends Diego de Ibarra, Baltasar Treviño de Bañuelos, and Juan de Tolosa, all Spanish officers of rank, in search of mines.⁸

events. Original documents on the subject are few, according to Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 511.

¹ Arlegui, p. 58; Villagrà, Canto Tercero.

² Mota Padilla, *Conquista de Nueva Galicia*, 193.

³ Carranza, p. 315. By royal *cédula* issued February 1534, New Spain was divided into four provinces, designated as Mexico, Michoacan, Goazacoalco, and Miztecapan. The limits of each were properly defined. Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 391, according to Puga, *Cedulario*, pp. 90-91.

⁴ Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 366.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 462.

⁶ Appointed governor of Nueva Galicia by *cédula*, March 17, 1536. Mota Padilla, pp. 104-109.

⁷ One of the daughters married Jacinto de Pineda y Ledesma, a person of good birth, and the other married the *alferez mayor*, Fernando Flores, from whom Mota Padilla claims to be descended. Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 464.

⁸ Bernárdez, p. 26. For portraits of these four men, see Bernárdez. Tolosa was known as "el rico" and nicknamed "barba longa."

They were extremely successful in their ventures, becoming the wealthiest men in America at that time.¹ Don Cristóbal came to Zacatecas accompanied by his family, and all others who might desire to accompany him.² The deeds of this illustrious sire are praised by all of his chroniclers, and the generosity which he displayed in Zacatecas is held to be equal to the munificence of the wealthiest *príncipes del universo*.³ One of his chroniclers calls him "son of the most noble and ever loyal province of Álava, whose sons ever noble and generous, have always proved themselves magnanimous and renowned."⁴ His Christian and fervent piety is attested to on various occasions. While in Zacatecas he had a bell with which he daily summoned to his table all who might desire to eat, a practice which he continued throughout his life.⁵ That he was an excellent specimen of the old time sire, considerate, kind, and courteous, cannot be disputed. The Reverend Padre Fray Diego de Vasalanque of the order of St. Augustine, states that in order to recount the praises due to Oñate because of his generosity, an "*historia particular*" would be required, that his nobility, his courage, and his liberality kept pace with his Christian spirit; that he endeavored to care for the Indians as if they were his own, and neither he nor his son Don Fernando collected the tribute⁶ from the Indians for many years, but permitted them to receive the benefit thereof, so as to help them in the construction of the missions.⁷ Mota Padilla takes occasion to remark that Don Cristóbal could not have been like the other *conquistadores*.⁸ The date of his death has not been determined, but we know that both he and his wife were deceased at the time Carranza wrote, which was in 1604. How many years prior to that date we do not know.⁹

Juan de Oñate, son of Cristóbal and Doña Cathalina de Salazar, was born in Mexico,¹⁰ although we do not know the date or his

¹ Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 554.

² Frejes, *Historia Breve*, p. 124; Bernárdez, p. 26. For the founding of Zacatecas, see Bernárdez, pp. 1-90; Mota Padilla, p. 191.

³ Arlegui, pp. 58-59.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58; Bernárdez, p. 26.

⁶ For history of Tributos y Reales Servicios, see Fonseca, VI.

⁷ Mota Padilla, p. 103.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

⁹ Carranza, p. 315.

¹⁰ *Mercurio Volante*, p. 2; Villagrá, prólogo, fol. vi.

native town.¹ We know little of his youth, although we may infer that in a stimulating environment he had every advantage that good birth and opportunities could bestow. He entered the service of the king early in life and continued therein throughout his career, being still active in 1620.² His general services cover "bloody encounters with the Chichimecs, the discovery of the rich mines of Zichú,³ Charcas, and San Luis Potosí, which he peopled with Spaniards, as well as being the settler of New Mexico, where he brought many natives to the obedience of the king, thereby immortalizing himself in the history of both hemispheres."⁴ He has been compared in daring to Cortés and in adventure to Columbus.⁵

Juan de Oñate married Doña Isabel Tolosa Cortés Montezuma, great granddaughter of Montezuma, granddaughter of Cortés, daughter of Juan de Tolosa and Leonor Cortés de Montezuma.⁶

¹ Davis, *Spanish Conquest of New Mexico*, p. 263, says: "Don Juan de Oñate, native of Zacatecas," but no reference is given as to source of information.

² Bernárdez, p. 32, according to Haro's *Nobiliario*: "Don Juan de Oñate, respondiendo á su valor y virtud militar despues de aver fervido a la corona de los Reyes sus Señores lus primeros años hafta el presente de 1620, con honor."

³ Carranza, p. 129.

⁴ Bernárdez, p. 32.

⁵ Tribaldo de Toledo, Villagrà, *Canción Pindarica*.

⁶ Villagrà, Canto Sexto; Bernárdez, p. 31; Luis Tribaldo de Toledo, *Soneto, Intro.*, Villagrà; Arlegui, 1st ed., p. 34. Cortés was first married in Cuba to Catalina Suárez, a native of Granada, in Andalusia. Her death occurred in 1522. It is supposed that by her he had a child, but nothing definite can be ascertained on this point. A natural daughter by a Cuban Indian is also mentioned at that time. His second marriage was with Doña Juana de Zúñiga. Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 483. From the second marriage he had a son Don Martín Cortés, "que sucedió en su casa y estado y vino á tener ciento y sesenta mill pesos en renta, y en discurso de 34 años creo que han quedado en quarenta mill y se va consumiendo de manera que á poco rato ó tiempo se imagina una gran ruina y acabamiento, porque los indios se acaban á prisa." Carranza, p. 99. Don Martín was married to Doña Ana Ramírez de Arellano, daughter of the Conde de Aguilar. They had a child, Don Fernando Cortés, third Marquis, who married Doña Theresa de la Cerda, sister of the Conde Chinchón. Don Martín also had another son, Don Gerónimo Cortés, "del hábito de Santiago," who had died before Carranza wrote, i.e. 1604. Also Don Pedro Pizarro Cortes, "del habito de Calatrava ú Alcántara." In 1604 he still lived and had inherited the estate of his brother, Don Fernando. Carranza, pp. 99-100. Don Martín also had a daughter Doña Catalina Pizarro, who married the Conde de Pliego. According to Bancroft these last two children were illegitimate. Don Martín married a second time, but Carranza says there was no issue. Cortés, the original Marqués del Valle, also had through the Zúñiga marriage three daughters, Doña Catalina, who died single; Doña Juana Cortés, who married the Duque de Alcalá, Marqués de Tarifa; Doña Maria Cortés, who married the Conde de Luna, in the city of León. Cortés also had several illegitimate children. Don Martín Cortés was the son of the Malinche, an Indian woman. He belonged to the "hábito de Santiago." This illegitimate son left an illegitimate son, Don Fernando Cortés, of whom Carranza says: "Trae una cruz á los pechos, y no de la muestra y calidad que su padre y tios y primos. Húbole en Castilla en una señora, en la ciudad de Logrono, que sin ofensa de su calidad pudiera casarse con ella, y aun con este concepto se fió ella de el. Húbole pasando á la guerra de

They had two children, Cristóbal de Oñate and María de Oñate. Dona María married the *Maestre de Campo*, Vicente de Zaldívar.¹ In 1620, at the time of the publication of Haro's *Nobilario*, the son was not married and was active in the service of the king. At that time he had already shown great courage, and had held the position of lieutenant-governor and captain-general in the province of New Mexico, where he had served Philip II and Philip III, demonstrating the soldierly qualities and the nobility of his antecedents.²

Where and when the lad was born, or where he obtained his "early" education, we do not know. That his father took pleasure in developing in his young son the martial spirit so predominant

Granada, por capitan, donde murió." Martín Cortés, son of Malinche, also had a daughter Doña Ana Cortés de Porres, through his marriage with Doña Bernardina de Porres, "señora de gran calidad, seso y discrecion." Doña Ana Cortés de Porres was married to a "caballero muy igual a su merecimiento" whose name is not given by Carranza. They had a son, Don Juan Cortés, who in 1604 had recently arrived in the fleet which brought the viceroy Marques de Montesclaros, to whom Carranza dedicated his work. He states that in his intercourse with Don Juan, he has always found him honorable and worthy on account of his virtues, being the son and grandson and great-grandson of worthy persons. His exact language is interesting: "de lo poco que he tratado á este caballero, y de la buena fama que tiene, le conozco por muy cuerdo y honrado y que es digno, por sus virtudes, de ser hijo y nieto de quien es, y bisnieto del gran Cortés." Carranza, pp. 100-101. Again, Cortés, the original Marqués del Valle, had a daughter Doña Leonor Cortés, who married Juan de Tolosa in Zacatecas. Doña Leonor was the daughter of Doña Isabel, oldest daughter of Montezuma. Doña Leonor had two daughters, one of whom married Don Juan de Oñate, the other married Cristóbal de Zaldívar. Doña Leonor also had other daughters whose names are not given, but who in 1604, were nuns in Seville. Carranza, pp. 100-101. Cortés also had another illegitimate son, Don Luis Cortés, "del hábito de Calatrava," que hubo en esta tierra en una muger spañola, no de las mas ignotas y escondidas, sino muger de buena suerte." This Don Luis married in Mexico Doña Guimor Vázquez de Escobar, "dama muy calificada, rica y muy hermosa." They had no children. Don Luis was taken as prisoner to Spain, and died on the journey. Both he and his brothers died "desnaturalizados de su patria, pareciéndose mucho a su padre en los trabajos que le saltaron como atajado En Castilleja de la Cuesta, y un corazón, tan grande, que no cupo en el mundo, ni se hartó ni llenó su ánimo con lo que descubrió y conquistó: le sobró en aquel lugarejo un palmo ó siete pies de tierra en que cupo aquel cuerpo y bravosidad, y acabó con sus grandes pensamientos y deseos de servir mas a su Rey, como lo mostró en la conquista de tan grandes reinos y estados, y en los que de nuevo quiso conseguir á la corona de Castilla donde gastó toda la hacienda que habia adquirido." Carranza, pp. 100-101. Martín, Luis and Catalina were legitimized by Papal Bull, April 16, 1529. Bancroft, p. 483, according to Alamán, *Desert.*, ii, 2d, app. 32-36. Philip II later restored the "jurisdiccion del Marquesado, con muy honradas palabras y efectos," to Don Fernando Cortés third Marqués del Valle, and second by the name of Fernando. In 1604, Don Pedro Cortés, his brother, had inherited the same. Carranza states that if he is "cuerdo, no deseará venir á las Indias, porque esta tierra no sufre mas señor que al que aqui nos gobierna por Su Magestad." Carranza, pp. 100-101. Salazar y Olarte, 2ª parte, p. 472 states: "cuya bastarda impresion llegó á desconocerse con el recuerdo de la nobleza de nuestro capitan, habiendose casado con caballeros distinguidos y permanentes en la gran ciudad de Mexico.

¹ Bernardez, p. 34, according to Haro's *Nobilario*; Mota Padilla, p. 193.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35, according to Haro's *Nobilario*.

in his own character and that of his ancestors, going back to the Moorish struggles in Spain, is evident when we learn that when not yet ten years of age he accompanied his father on his expeditions.¹

The ancestry of Cristóbal, Juan de Oñate's young son, great-great grandson of Montezuma, and great grandson of Cortés, is interestingly given by Villagrà: ²

“En quien vereis al uiuo cifrados,
 Todos los nobles Reyes que falieron,
 Destas nuevas Regiones y plantaron,
 La gran ciudad de Mexico, y con ellos,
 Vereis tambien aquellos valeroços,
 Que à fuerças de valor y de trabajos,
 Eftas remotas tierras pretendieron.”

Juan de Oñate had four brothers: Don Fernando, whom we have already seen associated with his father; Don Cristóbal, Luys Núñez Pérez, and Don Alonso, all of whom were wealthy, and were summoned by Don Juan to help him in his work of exploration in New Mexico. They rendered him valuable assistance financially and acted as his agents in the responsible governmental transactions which developed out of this exploration and settlement of New Mexico, his most important undertaking.³ Don Fernando is described in 1604 as a “cavallero muy principal.” He had been *alcalde mayor* of the cities of Los Ángeles, Guajocingo and Villa de Carrion.”⁴

¹ Villagrà, Canto Sexto.

“Y qual fuelen las Aguilas Reales,
 Que à los tiernos polluelos de fu nido,
 Largo trecho los facan y remontan,
 Para que con esfuerço cobren fuerças,
 En el libiano buelo, y del fe balgan,
 En prouechofa y dieftra alterneria,
 Afí determino don Juan faliefe,
 Su hijo don Chrifτόval, niño tierno,
 Para que con el fueffe y fe adeftrafe,
 Sirbiendoos gran feñor en el oficio,
 De la importante guerra trabajofa,
 Siendo teftigo fiel de fus palabras,
 Para que con las obras que alli viefte,
 Le tuuiefte depues en bien ferbiros,
 Por vnico dechado, y claro exemplo.”

² Canto Sexto.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Carranza, p. 315.

He married Doña Leonor de Rivadeneira, daughter of Hernando de Rivadeneira and Doña Maria de Mérida, his wife, daughter of the *tesorero* Alonso de Mérida and Doña Inés de Perea, his wife. They had several children: Don Fernando, the younger, Don Cristóbal, and Doña Antonia, who married Don Bernardino Vázquez de Tapia. They also had a daughter Doña Catalina, who had not married in 1604, and is described as so good a Christian that she was desirous of entering a convent so as to better serve God.¹

Don Cristóbal married Doña María del Castillo who had died prior to 1604. Upon her death he inherited the *encomienda* of his wife, which was the pueblo of Santiago Tecali, and which yielded handsome returns. They had no children.² Don Cristóbal is mentioned in 1599, when, acting in the name of his brother, Juan de Oñate, he appoints Capitán Gaspar de Villagrà, "Capitán de Caballos."³ Juan de Oñate also had a sister, Doña Maria Galarza,⁴ who married Antonio de Ordaz. Her husband inherited the pueblos of Calpa and half of Chilapa from Diego de Ordaz Villagómez, nephew of Diego de Ordaz,⁵ who had previously been granted these pueblos by the king in recognition of his services. Don Antonio had died before 1604. Their daughter, Juan de Oñate's niece, became heir to the various pueblos, being of the third generation. She married Ruy Dias de Mendoza,⁶ her

¹ Carranza, p. 315.

² *Ibid.*

³ Nombramiento Real de Capitán de Caballos á favor del Capitán Gaspar de Villagrà, Mexico, Agosto 20, 1599. In *Documentos relativos á Gaspar de Villagrà, Apéndice Primero*, p. 40. Incorporated in Obregón's Villagrà.

⁴ Villagrà, Canto Honze.

⁵ Diego de Ordaz, Capitan de los diez, segundo Procurador General que fué á Castilla. Diego de Ordaz came over with Cortés as captain of one of the vessels in the armada. He was a person of importance in New Spain, served in the wars with Cortés, until he was expelled by the natives from the city of Mexico. He was in the war of Tepeaca and there held the position of captain of infantry, and from there went as Procurador to Hayti ("la Isla spañola") and from there to Spain. When he returned, the land had been brought under subjection, but notwithstanding this, he was given Yautepec with its Indians and Teutila and Chiautla, and also the province of Huejocingo. He then went as governor to the Río Maranon, and through his services and qualities secured the "hábito de Santiago." This Diego de Ordaz was one of the courageous men who ascended the volcano of Popocatepetl. Although eminently successful in Mexico, having received pueblos and *encomiendas*, he never seemed satisfied and ever sought new successes. He had no legitimate descendants, but he had an illegitimate son Alvaro de Ordaz, whom Carranza knew personally, and whom they called "el volcan" in memory of his father. He was considered as legitimate, and was married to Ana de Ordaz. They had children, but all, both parents and children, were very poor. Carranza, pp. 170, 455.

⁶ Villagrà, Canto Sexto.

cousin, who later helped Juan de Oñate very materially in his work of exploration and settlement of New Mexico. Both were living in 1604. Juan de Oñate at this time had another niece, whose name is not given, and who was not married.¹

The Zaldívar brothers, Cristóbal, Francisco, Juan, and Vicente were Juan de Oñate's cousins.² According to Villagrà, Juan de Oñate's father was the uncle of the Zaldívares.³ Their mother's name seems to have been Oñate, but whether she was Don Cristóbal de Oñate's sister has not been determined. The father of the Zaldívar brothers was Juan or Vicente de Zaldívar.⁴ The Zaldívares were distinguished persons in the service of the king, proving the valor and worth of the illustrious and ancient house of Zaldívar, well known in Vizcaya, because of its acknowledged merit.⁵

Doña Isabel, wife of Juan de Oñate, had a brother Juan Cortés, who in 1620 had not married. Doña Isabel's sister, Doña Leonor Cortés, married Cristóbal de Zaldívar, brother of the *Maestre de Campo*.⁶ They had two children, Juan and Leonor, who were cousins of Juan de Oñate's children, Cristóbal and María. Doña Isabel's mother, Doña Leonor de Cortés Montezuma, daughter of Cortés and granddaughter of Montezuma,⁷ in 1604 had other daughters who were nuns in Seville.⁸

As already noted, when Cristóbal de Oñate came to Zacatecas in 1548, we do not know whether Juan de Oñate was yet born. In the data available to the writer, the first record of Juan's service

¹ Carranza, p. 171.

² Villagrà, Canto Sexto; Duro, *Don Diego de Peñalosa* (1548); Torquemada, p. 671.

³ Villagrà, Canto Tercero and Sexto; Torquemada, p. 671.

⁴ Bernàrdez, according to Haro's *Nobilario*, calls him Vicente, but Mota Padilla states that his name was Juan and not Vicente, and that he was not governor, but one of the illustrious captains contemporaneous with Cristóbal de Oñate, Don Juan's father. Mota Padilla, p. 196.

⁵ Haro intended to make further mention, as he himself states, of this illustrious family in his vol. 4, when dealing more in detail with the illustrious houses of Spain. This work is not available beyond quotations therefrom, interpolated in the works of other authorities. It undoubtedly would contain valuable data in a genealogical way, and might clear some of the points now left pending, e.g. whether the Zaldívar boys were Oñate's cousins or "sobrinos" as he calls them, according to Bancroft. From what has preceded it is evident that by reason of the marriage of Christóbal Zaldívar to Juan de Oñate's sister-in-law, any issue therefrom would be his "sobrinos" or "sobrinas" by marriage.

⁶ Bernàrdez, p. 25, according to Haro's *Nobilario*; Arlegui, p. 135; Carranza, pp. 100-101.

⁷ Villagrà, Canto Sexto; Arlegui, p. 135.

⁸ Carranza, pp. 100-101.

is in Zacatecas in 1574,¹ when "immediately after the founding of the eighth mission in the province of Zacatecas, namely: Santa Maria de las Charcas, the barbarous Indians reduced it to ashes. Because of the gentle preaching of the friars, and with untold hardships, they were able to rebuild it, help being furnished by Juan de Oñate, son of Cristóbal de Oñate. The mission was rebuilt in 1583."²

We also find that "in 1583,³ San Luis Potosí was discovered, conquered and settled by Juan de Oñate,"⁴ according to Arlegui and Bernárdez. With the exception of this limited information as to specific service in the early part of his career, we must leave Don Juan until he began negotiations for the settlement of New Mexico, for the king of Spain. At the time that he petitioned he was residing in Zacatecas. His age, his previous success, "and his general characteristics"⁵ have been aptly embraced in the expression "hombre de buenas partes," prerequisites for final success. "He seemed better fitted than others who had previously undertaken the enterprise."⁶

¹ Arlegui, 1st ed., reads 1574; 2d ed., reads 1564.

² Bernárdez, p. 32; Arlegui, p. 66.

³ Arlegui, pp. 56-57, 134-135; Bernárdez, p. 32.

⁴ Bernárdez, pp. 32-33, says 1586. Bancroft, *Hist. Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 763, states: "In 1576 Luis de Leixa had penetrated northeastward and on the slope of a metal bearing mountain he founded the town of San Luis Potosí." Friar Diego de la Magdalena is also claimed as the founder. *Ibid.*, p. 763. The San Luis Potosí *Relacion Circuns.*, calls Oñate, "descubridor, conquistador, y poblador de San Luis, 1583." See Bancroft, *Hist. Ariz. and New Mexico*, p. 116.

⁵ Villagrà substantiates these qualifications of Oñate when he says:

"Afsi don Juan fin aguardar mas plazo,
Llamado de la fuerça y voz de Marte,
Y de la illuftre fangre generofa,
De todos fus maiores y paffados,
Y deftos grandes Reyes que dezimos,
Como el prudente Griego que las armas,
Del valerofo Aquiles pretendia,
Por deuida jufticia que alegaua,
Afsi dio en pretender aquelta imprefa,
Por el derecho grande que tenia,
A ferbiros en ella fin que alguno,
Otro mejor derecho le moftrafe."

Canto Sexto.

⁶ "Memorial sobre el descubrimiento," *Col. Doc. Ined.*, vol. 16, pp. 188-189; "Carta del Virrey Velasco de 14 de Octubre, 1595."



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