



# LA GRANADA



## January 2026

Granaderos y Damas  
De Gálvez



San Antonio  
Founding Chapter

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editor: joe pérez

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On the heels of a very successful year, we start a new one. 2025 was a banner year for our chapter. We continued with our monthly meetings and members represented our group at events in San Antonio, New Braunfels, Waco, Floresville, Laredo, Pearsall, Granbury, and Washington DC. We marched in three parades, gave presentations to other historical and genealogical groups, helped unveil a historical marker, participated in symposiums and a history festival.

We mourn the loss of four of our members and celebrate the 17 members we gained in 2025.

We conducted another successful 4<sup>th</sup> of July Patriotic Ceremony, hosted an amazing 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, and topped off the year with another fun Christmas party.

All that was accomplished in 2025 was the result of our members working together to make things happen and to achieve our goal of educating the public about Bernardo de Gálvez and Spain's participation in our country's War of Independence.

Our chapter officers did an excellent job of ensuring we stayed on track, scheduling meetings, speakers, and practices as well as coordinating our participation in various types of events throughout the year.

THANK YOU to all of our officers and members for a fantastic 2025. Now, we can look forward to a great 2026.

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**Next Meeting**  
Wednesday, January 7

La Fonda Restaurant  
8633 Crownhill Blvd  
Dinner: 6:00 Meeting 7:00

Presenter:  
Governor Joe González

Presentation:  
State of the Chapter Report

Governor José (Joe) González will present to us a report on where the chapter stands with regard to accomplishments and where we stand with finances, membership, and with our living history component (soldiers and fife & drum corps). He will also let us know what our goals are for 2026.

**Happy  
Birthday!**

Jan 4  
Cindy Flores

Jan 6  
Connie Villarreal

Jan 8  
Briana Perez  
Susan Thonhoff Rodriguez

Jan 10  
Nathan Jones

Jan 14  
Jesse Guerra

Jan 19  
Steve Chiscano

Jan 20  
Delia Rodriguez

Jan 25  
Mike Aguayo

Jan 28  
Melissa Zamora

Jan 30  
Stan Bradford

Governor  
José (Joe) González

Treasurer  
Manny Rodriguez

Chaplain  
Charles Carvajal

Deputy Governor  
Joe Weathersby

Secretary  
Janie Rodriguez

Sergeant Major  
Adam Dominguez



# 2025 Christmas Party

Once again, we had a fun Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez Christmas party at La Paloma Blanca restaurant. There was an abundance of good food and good friends.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND  
HAPPY NEW YEAR!**



# *Virreinato de Nueva España: End of an Era Bernardo de Gálvez*

*By Rueben M. Perez*



Coat of arms of the viceroyalty of New Spain

The story of Spain, and Gálvez, during the American Revolution needs to be continually told so that it will not become a forgotten part of our history. In this story, we will discuss the Viceroyalties of New Spain, Gálvez, his achievements during the American Revolution, and serving as Viceroy of Nueva España, (New Spain).



Shown at left is a 1548 map of *Nueva Hispania Tabula Nova*, drawn by Giacomo Gastaldi. It was one of the most important printed maps showing Nueva España and Texas. It was the first printed map to focus on New Spain and first used in the new copperplate engraving method. The map was used for 2½ centuries. The Viceroyalty of New Spain was founded in 1535, and the first of four, that Spain established in the New World.

Nueva España included land north of the Isthmus of Panama, upper and lower California, central and southwestern United States, territory eastward to Florida, land in the Caribbean, and the newly acquired Philippines.



In 1521, Hernán Cortez conquered the Aztec Empire, named the territory Nueva España and established the new capital in Mexico City, on the site of Tenochtitlan, the capital of the Aztec Empire. The crown established New Spain as a viceroyalty in 1535, with Antonio de Mendoza as the first Viceroy. New Spain was the first to be created and Peru, the second in 1542. Both New Spain and Peru had indigenous populations as a source of labor and vast amounts of silver deposits that were mined. In the 1540s, the discovery of silver in Zacatecas attracted entrepreneurs, but more so, enriched the Spanish crown immensely. The Viceroyalty was administered by a Viceroy in New Spain, who resided in Mexico City, the capital, home of the Archdiocese of the Catholic Church, the Holy Office of the Inquisition, (the inquisition was practiced in New Spain), the merchants' guild and home to elite families in the Kingdom of New Spain. The Viceroy was appointed by the Spanish monarch, as the king's deputy or substitute. They had superior authority, however, were hampered in exerting that authority, due to, a considerable independence of governors and royal *audiencias*, who were responsible to the viceroy and also answered to the Council of

the Indies. A third level of administrative positions existed as Captaincy-Generals of the provinces and two *governorates* for the Florida and Louisianan territories.



Viceroyalty of Spain flag  
and Coat of Arms

Viceroyalty aided in converting Natives to Christianity, developing educational institutions and overseeing the economy. During the first 100 years of Spanish rule, the indigenous population decreased from 25 million to 1 million due to maltreatment, disease, and disruption.

Needless to point out, there were some horrifying instances of abuse against the indigenous people.

Basically, the powers of the Viceroy of Nueva España were largely confined to central and southern New Spain, (now known as Mexico). Mexico City was the seat of federal departments and government entities of the Kingdom of Nueva España. Mexico as a country did not exist. The history of mainland Nueva España spans three hundred years beginning with the Spanish conquest of the Aztec Empire in 1521 to 1821. During the 17th and 18th centuries Spanish settlers founded major cities such as Mexico City, Puebla, and Guadalajara and established missions and presidios on the northern frontiers reaching into what we refer to as the “Spanish Borderlands” that later became the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Spain in its attempts to make claims in North America, like other countries, sent expeditions to the Pacific Northwest to British Columbia and Alaska. Trade routes were essential and New Spain had two major ports in Veracruz, the principal one for the Atlantic, and Acapulco for the Pacific.



**The Decline of New Spain:** At left is the flag El Doliente de Hidalgo, which was used with Mexico’s fight for independence from Spain. At right is the Banner of the Virgin of Guadalupe used by priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla in the revolution of 1810. Spain, was one of the most powerful countries in the world, however, the decline of New Spain came in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with



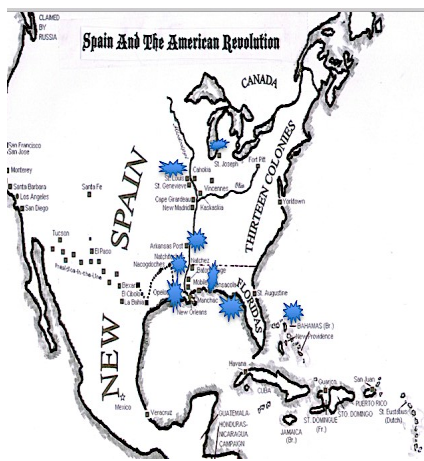
the Mexican War of Independence. Following Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla’s 1810, Cry of Dolores, the insurgent army waged an eleven-year war against Spanish rule for independence.

Insurgent royalist army officer Agustín de Iturbide, along with Vicente Guerrero, led a successful campaign for independence. In 1821, New Spain or *Nueva España*, officially became the independent nation of Mexico, thus, ending three centuries of Spanish colonial rule. The official name became: “United Mexican States” or “Estados Unidos Mexicanos”



Bernardo Vicente Apolinar de Gálvez y Madrid Gálvez was born in the village of Macharaviaya, in the province of Málaga, Spain on July 23, 1746. He is best known for his role in denying the British the ability to encircle the American colonies, forcing the British to fight on two fronts. In addition, Gálvez supplied the American troops, while soundly defeating the British troops down the Mississippi River and across the Gulf of Mexico.

Let's explore some outstanding achievements of Bernardo de Gálvez during his career prior to becoming the Viceroy of New Spain. Following family traditions, Gálvez chose a military career. In 1762, he served as a lieutenant in the war with Portugal and was promoted to captain. To add to his experiences, Gálvez, accompanied his uncle José de Gálvez y Gallardo in an inspection tour of New Spain. He was later, commissioned as commandant of military forces in Nueva Vizcaya and Sonora in 1769. While fighting the Apaches in 1770 – 1771, he was wounded twice, but gained invaluable military experience. Gálvez returned to Spain in 1772 and spent three years in France, while studying military science in the regiment of Cantabria. He participated in a failed attack on Algiers and was injured again while serving as captain of the infantry under Alejandro O'Reilly. Again, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel and attached to the Military School of Ávila. In 1776, he was transferred to the Province of Louisiana as Colonel of the Louisiana Regiment and became Governor of Louisiana in January 1777. King Carlos III instructed him to assist the American patriots and on June 21, 1779, Spain formally declared war against Great Britain.



### **War Accomplishments of Bernardo de Gálvez:**

- > Provided supplies and money to the Colonies.
- > Control the Mississippi River so that only Spanish, American, and French ships could use it.
- > Stop the British from attacking New Orleans.
- > Defeated the British along the Mississippi River and along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico.
- > Raised a multi-diverse force to fight the British.
- > Kept the Gulf opened for trade and commerce.
- > Reformed the Louisiana administration, established new towns and created settlements for Canary Islanders and people from

Málaga. All in all, Gálvez never lost a battle.

Gálvez increased existing military regiments and negotiated cattle from Texas to feed his troops. He stopped the British smugglers dealing with contraband and opened up religious tolerance for non-Catholic citizens. During the campaign of fighting the British, he demonstrated compassion for humanity by leaving his fighting soldiers in New Orleans before attacking Manchac so they could take care of their families after a severe hurricane had demolished the area. Over two thousand people (mostly families) from the Canary Islands arrived in Louisiana in addition to about 700 soldiers. Gálvez decided to keep the families together by making them settlers and militiamen in newly formed settlements. He singled out recruits who signed up as fighting soldiers for the Regiments. His humanity was shown when he released British prisoners instead of issuing them death sentences. In Mobile, he treated the British prisoners with properly. In Mobil and Pensacola, he negotiated with British commanders as what might be done to protect the civilian population, especially in Mobile when he opposed the British commander who wanted to burn the civilian's homes. Gálvez was preparing a military campaign against Jamaica when peace negotiations ended the war. In September 1783, General Gálvez, accompanied by his wife, the former Marie Felice de Saint-Maxent d'Estrehan of New Orleans, and two infant children returned to Spain. Gálvez



was among those who helped draft the Treaty of Paris that formally ended the Revolutionary War.

Bernardo de Gálvez probably felt more at home in the Americas than in his native Iberian Peninsula. After all, he spent most of his adult life on the American continent where he married his wife, had three children, and decided it was where he wanted to be buried.

### **A HERO'S WELCOME to *Nueva España***

In 1783, Bernardo de Gálvez was promoted to lieutenant-general of the army and governor/captain-general of Cuba.



Coat of Arms:  
Count of Gálvez

Gálvez was given the titles Count of Gálvez (“Conde de Gálvez”) and Viscount of Gálvez-Town (“Vizconde de Gálvez-Town”) by King Carlos III on May 20, 1783. He returned to the Indies the following year and shortly, thereafter, his father Matias de Gálvez y Gallardo (then the viceroy of New Spain) died in November. Gálvez was appointed by the king to fill the position. After arriving in Vera Cruz on May 21, 1785, he proceeded to make his formal entry into Mexico City in June. Gálvez entered the city with a clamorous welcome and was popular amongst his constituents. Words preceded him of his heroic feats and victories over the British. His popularity continued to grow with the admiration, kindheartedness and positive personal traits he had for the people. After his arrival, his new style of governing, made him popular among the commoners, however, the elites and judicial body of New Spain, called the Real Audiencia feared him, believing he would call for a rebellion for New Spain’s independence like the American Revolution. Eventually, this would cause rise to a conspiracy theory regarding the true nature of his death.

### **Gálvez’s Achievements as Viceroy of *Nueva España***

Gálvez’s tenure in New Spain would be short but remembered for his leadership during 1785-1786 when a severe famine and early freeze destroyed the crops. To solve the issue, he used government funds as well as his own resources, including his inheritance from his father. He suspended taxes, adopted price control, implemented health measures and prosecuted profiteers. Gálvez issued new orders and instructions for governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain by introducing a new model for relations between the indigenous and European settlers. The plan made the indigenous natives dependent on the Spanish, so they would eventually be assimilated into main stream society. Two of his main achievements were the start of the reconstruction of the Castle of Chapultepec and completion of the Cathedral of Mexico. He ordered José de Evia to survey the Gulf Coast. Evia named the biggest bay of the Texas coast *Bahía de Galvezton*, later changed to Galveston. Gálvez had streetlights installed in Mexico City and paved many streets. He dedicated 16% of the lottery income to charity and sponsored an expedition of botanists and naturalist to catalogue species of plants, birds and fish. While traveling to a meeting on horseback, he encountered a party of soldiers escorting three criminals to the gallows. He suspended the hanging and set the criminals free.

Overall, Bernardo de Gálvez was simple, amiable, gallant and frank. He traveled in an open carriage attending bullfights, pilgrimages, and fiestas. Several sources reported the Audiencia relayed their suspicions to Madrid of Gálvez's intentions. Afterwards, the Crown severely rebuked Gálvez. It was reported he became melancholy and unsociable.



Gálvez endeared himself to the people of Mexico City by helping the populace through difficult times. He became ill on Nov. 8, 1786, turned over all governmental duties except the captain-generalship to the Audiencia and died on Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>, 1786 in Tacubaya (now part of Mexico City) at the age of 40. Rumor had it that he was poisoned by his enemies with the approval of the court. His body was buried next to his father's crypt in the wall of San Fernando Church. His heart, as per custom, was placed in an urn and enshrined in the Cathedral of México. On December 12, 1786, 12 days after his funeral, his widow gave birth to another child, Guadalupe. **THUS WAS**

### **THE END OF AN ERA FOR A GREAT HERO!**

What Spain feared most came to fruition when Napoleon invaded Spain, giving time for the Spanish colonies to garner momentum to move toward independence. France took back Louisiana and later sold it to the United States.

We must continually tell the heroic stories of Bernardo de Gálvez, his achievements and accomplishments so that he will not be forgotten. **NO MAN IS BORN GREAT; HE MUST BECOME GREAT ... and so it is with Bernardo de Gálvez.**

Granaderos Ralph Benavides, V. G. Pérez, and Willie Rodríguez flank the Bicentennial Plaque on the Crypt of Bernardo de Gálvez



The photo at left shows the San Antonio Chapter of Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez paying homage to Bernardo de Gálvez for the Bicentennial of his Death on November 30, 1986 at La Iglesia de San Fernando. The event was co-sponsored with the Sociedad Mexicana de Amigo de España. The photo and label are courtesy of Robert H. Thonhoff.

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