

# **Wills of a Father and Son and A Contribution to the American Revolution**

**Part 1 of 2**

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On January 9, 1765, a soldier lay ill at the Royal Presidio in the Villa Capital of Santa Fe and asks his teniente (lieutenant) to document his last will and testimony. In this will, Cristobál Madrid affirmed his faith in God, his guardian angel, and the saints. He requested of his named executors, his wife Francisca Herrera and son Juan Antonio Madrid, to be buried in the San Miguel parish church in Santa Fe and that his body be shrouded in the habit of Saint Francis. Most notably, he listed among his possessions six horses and his complete military equipment with which he served the King. 1 On January 4, 1768, Cristobals son, Antonio Xavier Madrid, enlisted in the Spanish military in place of his father, and in all probability, used his fathers military equipment. This recruit signed by the mark of a cross to signify his understanding of his responsibilities as a soldier. Antonio Xavier, age 25 and described as having a swarthy complexion with black hair, eyebrows, and eyes, was assigned to the Tropa de Cuera, the Leather Jacket troop, at the Presidio of Santa Fe. 2 3 4 Antonio Xavier Madrid served in the Spanish military in colonial New Mexico when Spain actively supported the revolution of the American Colonies. During this time, Spains northern territory included almost all of the United States west of the Mississippi, Louisiana, and Mexico. Spain and its colonies in America played a significant role in the American Revolution by providing military support, loans, and gifts of cash historical facts of which most United States citizens are still unaware.

When the American colonies waged a war for independence against England, King Carlos III of Spain sought opportunity to regain land Spain lost to England in 1773. Spain agreed to join France as an ally and covertly shipped arms, munitions, cattle, uniforms, medicine, blankets, and money to the American colonies using France as the go between. Visitor-General José de Gálvez, Spanish secretary of the Indies and his nephew, Count Bernardo de Gálvez, provided secret aid to the American cause by allowing guns, ammunition, and tons of supplies to be shipped up the Mississippi to patriot forces in the north. By 1777, Spain had sent a large shipment of the following from a French port by way of Bermuda to Boston: 215 bronze canons, 4,000 field tents, 12,826 grenades, 30,000 muskets, 30,000 bayonets, 30,000 uniforms, 51,314 musket balls, and 300,000 pounds of gunpowder.5 Money and supplies were funneled through the French and handled by a third party appearing as open business transactions.6 Spains support for the American colonists remained secret until June 21, 1779, when Spain officially entered into war with England. Thomas Jefferson wrote to Bernardo de Gálvez on November 8, 1779 and expressed his thanks for Spains assistance to the revolutionary cause.7 History books in United States schools relate the aid France gave to the American Colonists and mention very little about the aid given by Spain.

As stated by Thomas E. Chavez, United States history is a story of a country born out of English colonies, the role of Spain has not been genuinely recognized. Nor have the sacrifices of Spains colonies been acknowledged. Eighteenth-century Spanish subjects, who lived in areas that make up the present states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California, answered Carlos IIIs call for a special [donation] to help with the war and, in the end, secure American independence.8 In March of 1780, Carlos III decreed that to sustain the war his vassals in America were to contribute a one-time donativo (donation) of one peso (approximately \$30 by todays standard) per Indian and other castes and two pesos per Spaniard and noble. Collectors went to towns and pueblos in the New World and collected one peso per Indian over 18 years old and other castes, and two pesos from each Spaniard. Donativos were collected from soldiers and citizens throughout Cuba and Spains hard-pressed North American colonies, including the provinces of California, New Mexico, and Texas.9

New Mexico Governor Juan Bautista de Anza was officially notified of the decree in a letter dated August 17, 1780 from Teodoro de Croix.<sup>10</sup> With regard to donativos made by the Indians of the Province, Anza obtained permission to exempt the Indians of the Zuni and Hopi pueblos. (In the Province of California, Fray Junípero Serra used church funds to pay the [donations] for mission Indians.)<sup>11</sup> By 1783 a total of 3,677 pesos (approximately \$110,300) had been collected from soldiers and citizens in the Province of New Mexico; 247 pesos came from soldiers of the Santa Fe Presidio.<sup>12</sup> The donativos were shipped to Mexico then shipped to Havana and transferred to the American colonies, sometimes via French carriers.<sup>13</sup> Supplies and aid to the American cause came from almost every part of the Spanish empire and currently, historians and genealogists throughout Spain, Mexico, and the United States are reviewing historical documents in an effort to rightfully give Spain and its Colonial Patriots credit for their aid.

The Sons of the American Revolution and the Daughters of the American Revolution are two national lineage societies that are interested in Spains involvement in the American Revolution and they are reaching out to descendants of all Spanish soldiers to research their lineage and apply for society membership. By submitting their genealogy, these Colonial Patriots can be catalogued in the SAR and DAR national repositories of genealogical and historical information, and thereby become a part of Americas history.

Some activities recognized by the SAR and the DAR include service in the Spanish military, service in the militia, service as Indian auxiliaries, making voluntary contributions to defray expenses of the War, Spanish cowboys (in Texas) who drove cattle to feed the American colonial troops, and mission priests who lead public prayers on behalf of Spains support of the American Revolution. Because many priests did not leave descendants, the SARs interest is in locating and marking their graves as patriots. For example, Californias Franciscan mission priest, Fray Junípero Serra, led a prayer for the success of the American colonists because we believe their cause is just and that the Great Redeemer is on their side.<sup>14</sup>

## Part 2

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