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The Vildósola Family: A Sonoran Political, Military, and Ethnic Legacy¹

DONALD T. GARATE

North America's extensive *mestizaje* makes the tracing of the ethnic, cultural, and family ties prevalent hundreds of years ago a difficult task. Because of this difficulty, the study of such topics does not lend itself to broad, general histories. Consequently, historians have often overlooked the crucial role such ties have played in the transformation of the population of the New World. A close look at the societies of New Spain's northern frontier and other regions reveals nearly as many Spanish cultures and ethnic groups as native cultures. Each of these groups, when examined as a distinct group and broken down into interactive families and individuals with ties to both sides of the Atlantic, can greatly add to the understanding of ethnology and historiography in the New World. In order to paint a more accurate picture of colonial life on New Spain's extreme northern frontier, this study will focus on one group, the *Vizcaínos*, or Basques as they are known today, and on one family in particular, the Vildósolas.

The dawn of the eighteenth century saw relatively few Spaniards, or others of European descent, living near what is today the international boundary between the modern states of Sonora, Mexico, and Arizona, USA. The region was governed at that time by the political district known as El Reino de Nueva Vizcaya.² Sonora, Sinaloa, and Ostimuri, the geographic territories of Nueva Vizcaya discussed here, had, as might be surmised from the name, a dispro-

¹ Carmen Pellat, historian of Arizpe, has provided the author with numerous Vildósola family names and addresses throughout Sonora and Baja California. Iris Engstrand, historian at the University of California at San Diego, has provided the names of descendants in California.

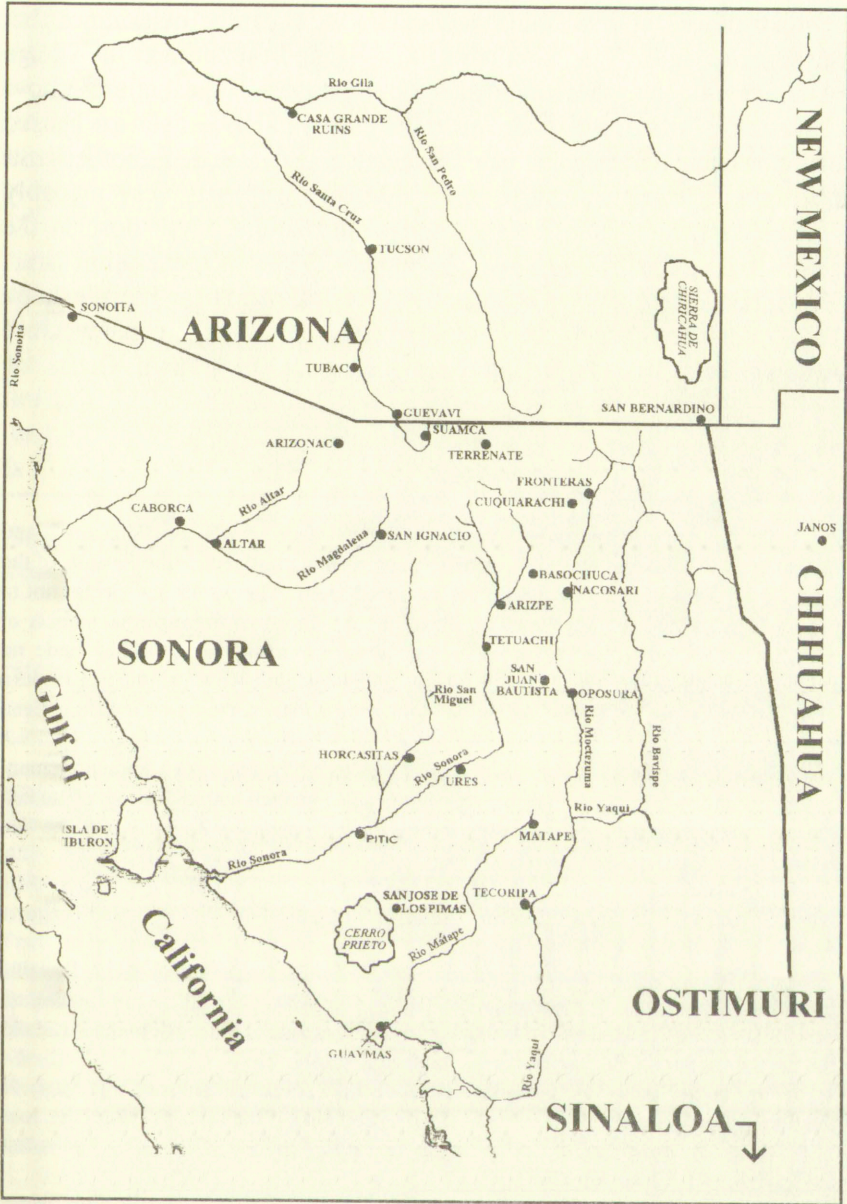
² *Auttos de visita hecho por el Capitan don Antonio Bezerranieto en la provincia de Sonora y Ostimuri, 1718*, Archivo de Hidalgo del Parral, Chihuahua (hereinafter AHP), microfilm series 2017, roll #15, folio 1.

portionate representation of Vizcaínos.³ These Vizcaínos banded together in ethnic, spiritual, and economic networks and brotherhoods which reached across the frontier to Mexico City and beyond to the Basque country in Spain. The *Cofradía de Aranzazu*, a Basque economic brotherhood, jointly with the *Cofradía de Montañeses*, controlled the merchants' guild to which only Basques could belong, which nearly all those living in Mexico did. The *Apartado*, which separated silver and gold and took its share of all that came in, was owned and operated by the Basque Fagoaga family. The *Caja Real de México*, the national silver bank, was also operated by the Fagoaga dynasty, which in Mexico City included such prominent Basques as the Villaurrutia family, the Castañiza family, Antonio Basoco, Ambrosio Meave, and Manuel de Aldaco; this group provided much of the money-lending in New Spain. Prominent Basque lawyers were involved in the royal *audiencia* and other political entities that provided support to Basque businessmen, soldiers, and missionaries on the far northern frontier. Furthermore, the massive tobacco and playing card monopoly was controlled by Basques who were also sympathetic to their *paisanos* on the northern frontier. Finally, the *Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País*, which was headed for a time by Virrey Antonio Bucareli y Ursua, did much to pull Basques together into an economic and cultural unit that helped its members in their endeavors throughout Mexico.⁴

This article will examine the achievements, exploits, and frustrations of three members of the *Vildósola'tarrak*, or the extended Vildósola family of Vizcaya—Agustín, Gabriel, and José Antonio—in

³ Pedro Tamarón y Romeral, *Demostación del vastísimo obispado de la Nueva Vizcaya, 1765: Durango, Sinaloa, Sonora, Arizona, Nuevo México, Chihuahua y porciones de Texas, Coahuila y Zacatecas, con una introducción bibliográfica y acotaciones por Vito Alessio Robles* (México: Antigua Librería Robredo, de José Porrúa e Hijos, 1937). The eighteenth-century designation for all Basques—"Vizcaínos"—has been retained throughout.

⁴ Donald T. Garate, "Basque Names, Nobility, and Ethnicity on the Spanish Frontier," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 2 (1993):77-104; and Donald T. Garate, "Basque Ethnic Connections and the Expeditions of Juan Bautista de Anza to Alta California," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 4 (1995):71-93.



Map of the Northwestern Frontier. Created by the author.

relation to this Basque support system on the Sonoran frontier.⁵ The origin of this particular Basque family can be traced to the fifteenth century. Based on available documentation, it can be determined that the founder of the Vildósola *casa solar* (landed estate) near the village of Elejabeitia was Martín Ochoa de Vildósola,⁶ a caballero whose gravestone, sword, and other fifteenth-century paraphernalia are housed in the Museo Arqueológico in Bilbao. He also founded another *casa solar* near Ceanuri.⁷ Agustín de Vildósola, who was very probably descended from this famous caballero and soldier, was born in the nearby village of Villaro on 28 August 1700.⁸ A generation later, Gabriel de Vildósola was born on the ancestral farm near Elejabeitia on 10 November 1722.⁹ His ancestry and that of his nephew, José Antonio de Vildósola,¹⁰ can be traced back to Martín Ochoa de

⁵ The commonly accepted accent marks in such words as "Vizcaíno" and "Vildósola" will be used herein for consistency, even though neither the Basques of the eighteenth century nor today used or pronounced them. The writer has elected not to use modern Basque spellings such as Bizkaino and Bildosola because the subjects of this study, like most other Basques of their day, wrote in Spanish. They made no attempt to write their native, spoken language and certainly knew nothing of modern Basque orthography. With the exception of the accent marks, their spellings have been retained.

⁶ Since the universal designation of Basques as *hijos dalgo*, or minor noblemen, called for the use of the Spanish preposition "de" in their names in the eighteenth century, that designation will be used herein for consistency with early records. See Garate, "Basque Names," 83-85.

⁷ The ancestral home near Elejabeitia is still called "Vildósola" and is owned by Iñigo Goyoaga Gortazar, a fifth great-grandson of Gabriel de Vildósola and Gregoria Anza.

⁸ Partida de Bautismo, 28 de agosto de 1700, San Bartolome de Villaro, Bizkaiko Eleizaren Histori Artxiboa (hereinafter BHA), folio 104v. See also, Informacion de Vizcainia de don Agustin de Vildosola y consortes, Bizkaiko Foru Aldundia Artxiboa, Bilbao (hereinafter BFA), legajo 291, número 26, folio 53v.

⁹ Partida de Bautismo, 10 de noviembre de 1722, Nuestra Señora Santa Maria de Castillo, BHA, Seminario Ikasteetxea, Derio. See also, Prueba de Hidalguia de Jose Luis Torres Vildosola, Gernikako Batzar-Etxeren Artxiboa, Guernika (hereinafter GBA), número 1593, folio 705.

¹⁰ For verification that José Antonio was Gabriel's nephew, see El Gobernador Matheo Sastre al Virrey Antonio Maria Bucareli y Ursua, 20 de enero de 1772, Archivo General de la Nación, México (hereinafter AGN), Provincias Internas 81, folio 492.

Vildósola.¹¹ Since Gabriel was the seventh of twelve siblings, it is difficult to determine which of his brothers was José Antonio's father, nor has José's birthdate been established. Contrary to one theory, Agustín was not Gabriel and José Antonio's father.¹² Indeed, there is no relationship between Agustín and Gabriel and José Antonio that can be verified for at least five generations. By today's system of naming in which a person takes the father's surname, Gabriel and José Antonio would not even have been Vildósolas but would have had the surname "Gamboa." Gabriel had to go back to his fifth great-grandfather, and José his sixth, to pick up the surname "Vildósola" (see Figures 1 and 2).¹³ This may have been an accepted practice in the eighteenth century. In fact, Gabriel officially signed his name "Gabriel de Vildósola" after coming to New Spain, although in various archival documents he is referred to under all combinations of the two surnames: Vildósola, Vildósola Gamboa, Gamboa, and Gamboa Vildósola.¹⁴

Because of a family military tradition that began with Martín Ochoa and lasted until after the Spanish civil war, his descendants have kept the name of their famous ancestor. Even today the *solar*, which

¹¹ Alberto and Arturo García Carraffa, *El Solar Vasco-Navarro* (San Sebastián: Librería Internacional, 1967), 6:271-72.

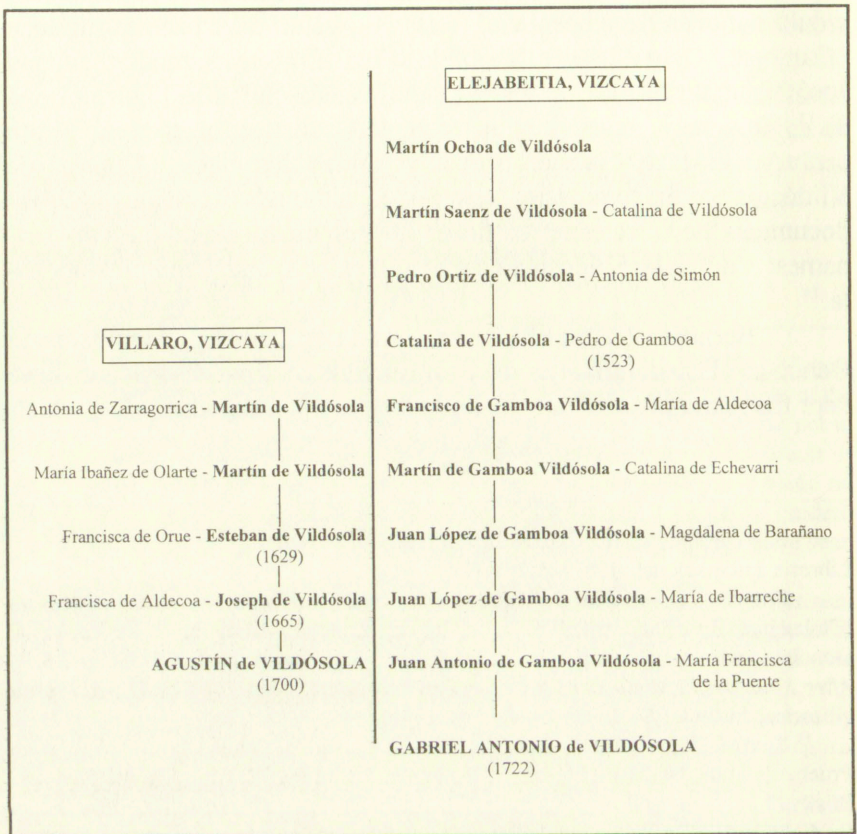
¹² Francisco R. Almada, *Diccionario de historia, geografía y biografía sonorenses* (Chihuahua: Ruiz Sandoval, 1952), 725-26, erred in that assumption. John Augustine Donohue and others have perpetuated the error. See John Augustine Donohue, S.J., *After Kino: Jesuit Missions in Northwestern New Spain, 1711-1767* (St. Louis: Jesuit Historical Institute, St. Louis University, 1969), 145.

¹³ Sources for Figure 1: Information for Agustín de Vildósola compiled from Prueba de Hidalguía, BFA, legajo 291, number 26, folios 52, 52v, 53, and 53v; and Books of baptisms and marriages for Villaro, BHA, unnumbered folios. Information for Gabriel de Vildósola compiled from baptismal and marriage records for Castillo-Elejabeitia, BHA, folios 10v and 127; Prueba de Hidalguía for José Luis Torres, GBA, número 1593, folios 223 and 705; and A. and A. García Carraffa, *El Solar Vasco-Navarro*, 6:271-72.

Sources for Figure 2: Partidas de Bautismo, San Bartolome de Villaro, BHA, folios 35v, 53, 54v, 71v, and 104v; Partidas de Bautismo, Elejabeitia, BHA, folios 1, 4, 10v, 17v, 28v, 35v, 39, 108v, 110, 114v, and 124; and Angel Martínez Salazar and Koldo San Sebastián, *Los vascos en México: estudio biográfico, histórico y bibliográfico* (Estella, Navarra: Gráficas Lizarra, 1992), 397.

¹⁴ A. and A. García Carraffa, *El Solar Vasco-Navarro*, 6:271. See also Figures 1 and 2, which reflect these inconsistencies in the surnames.

Figure 1



These family trees provide graphic evidence that Agustín de Vildósola and Gabriel de Vildósola were not closely related. See footnote 13 for sources.

Figure 2

FATHER - Josef de Vildósola MOTHER - Francisca de Aldecoa	FATHER - Juan Antonio de Vildósola Gamboa MOTHER - María Francisca de la Puente
1. Francisca de Vildósola Born - 15 June 1686	1. José Antonio de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 24 April 1709
2. Jacinta de Vildósola Born - 12 June 1688	2. Manuel de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 30 April 1712
3. Esteban de Vildósola Born - 30 March 1690	3. María Francisca de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 15 September 1713
4. Francisca Antonia de Vildósola Born - 1 August 1693	4. Juan Bautista de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 21 June 1717
5. Miguel de Vildósola	5. Felipe Agustín de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 7 February 1719
6. Agustín de Vildósola Born - 28 August 1700	6. Thomasa Josepha de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 7 March 1720
	7. Gabriel Antonio de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 10 November 1722
	8. Juan Bentura de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 5 May 1725
	9. Francisco Antonio de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 28 July 1728
	10. María Ignacia de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 28 July 1728
	11. Phelipe Antonio de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 6 July 1731
	12. Martín Antonio de Vildósola Gamboa Born - 11 September 1732

Parents and siblings of Agustín and Gabriel de Vildósola. See footnote 13 for sources.

was handed down to Gabriel in 1775 through his fourth great-grandmother, Catalina de Vildósola,¹⁵ is called "Vildósola" by the heirs of the estate and is designated as such on maps of the area.¹⁶ They continued to use the name as part of their surname until well into this century, even though the last Vildósola male ancestor was Catalina's father, Pedro Ortiz de Vildósola, who lived in the early sixteenth century.¹⁷

Agustín de Vildósola, the eldest of the three persons to be considered here, was the first to arrive in Sonora. Exactly when he arrived and what his connections were in the New World are unknown at this time. One source claims Agustín had a brother who lived on the frontier, but nothing is recorded about him.¹⁸ It has been established that Agustín owned and worked mines at the Reales de Minas de Nuestra Señora de Aranzazu at Tetuachi, Rosalia, in the jurisdiction of Nuestra Señora del Rosario at Nacosari, and at San Joseph de Basochuca in the jurisdiction of Arizpe in northern Sonora.¹⁹ As early as 20 February 1722, he lived in the ancient Real de Minas de San Juan Bautista, then the capital of Sonora. By then Agustín was already involved in a heated controversy that had drawn lines between the

¹⁵ Gabriel de Vildósola al Excelentísimo Señor Antonio María Bucareli y Ursua, 20 de febrero de 1776, AGN, Provincias Internas 82, folio 354. See also, Torres Vildósola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folios 238, 711.

¹⁶ This information is based upon personal conversations between the writer and Jesusa Zubikari, Angela Zuberó, and María Jesús Zuluaga, all tenants on the Vildósola estate, and from personal observations of military documents and pictures in the ancestral home on 2 June 1993. It has been further confirmed by documentation provided by and conversations held with several of the descendants of Gabriel Vildósola—Casilda and Magdalena Gortazar Aguilar and Iñigo, Pilar, Casilda, Angela, Juan, and Gabriel Goyoaga Gortazar and their families—at the Vildósola ancestral home on 21 September 1996.

¹⁷ A. and A. García Carraffa, *El Solar Vasco-Navarro*, 6:271. See also Figure 1.

¹⁸ Angel Martínez Salazar and Koldo San Sebastián state that Miguel de Vildósola y Aldecoa was living in Sonora in 1734 and in Sinaloa in 1744. Martínez Salazar and San Sebastián, *Los vascos en México*, 397. The writer was unable to locate this brother among the other siblings of Agustín in the baptismal entries for Villaro at the seminary archive in Derio, Spain.

¹⁹ San Joseph de Basochuca was one of the earliest *real de minas* established in Sonora. Information for Arizpe and its *visitas* is contained in Partidas de bautismo, casamiento, y difunciones, University of Arizona Special Collections Microfilm (hereinafter AZU), microfilm series 811, roll 10, unnumbered pages.

Vizcaínos and other Spaniards on the northern frontier.²⁰ The *caballería de las fronteras*, or cavalry of the frontier, was stationed at a presidio in far northern Sonora known as Santa Rosa de Corodéguchi, later to be called simply "Fronteras." Its commanding officer, Gregorio Alvarez Tuñón y Quiros, was a corrupt and unscrupulous individual whom the locals were trying to oust. Alvarez Tuñón, in turn, wanted to see Sonora rid of the Jesuit priests and the missions secularized.

The founder of the Jesuit order, Iñigo de Loyola, was a Basque from Guipúzcoa, as were many of its earliest disciples, including Francisco Xavier of Navarra, a co-founder of the order.²¹ Since Basques have always been among the order's most ardent supporters, Alvarez Tuñón probably knew that the Basques would side with the Jesuits; he had lived among the Basques for many years and apparently had an immense dislike for them, often using his influence to bring reprisals against those who supported the Jesuits. According to the Jesuit Father Visitor José María Genovese, "those so injured have exposed the continuous malignings of Don Gregorio, especially those of the Basque nation (of whom there are many and very honorable ones in this province) of whom Don Gregorio says he will not stop until he has run the Vizcaínos out..."²² That statement is born out in Captain Alvarez Tuñón's assessment of a Basque and close friend of Agustín de Vildósola, Juan Bautista de Anza, the elder,²³ who was rapidly rising to prominence on the frontier and who would eventually replace Alvarez Tuñón at Fronteras: "I am obligated to notify you of the miserable condition of five of its [Sonora's] subjects, and especially a

²⁰ Vecinos de San Juan Baptista, 20 de febrero de 1722, AGN, Archivo Histórico de Hacienda, legajo 278, expediente 35, folios 1-4.

²¹ Tomás Uribeetxebarria Maiztegi, *Jesusen Lagundia Bizkaian* (Bilbao: Bizkaiko Foru Artxibategiko Erakustarteoa, 1991), 17.

²² Joseph Maria Genobese Informe, AGN, Archivo Histórico de Hacienda, legajo 278, expediente 41, folio 8. All translations, unless otherwise indicated, are by the author.

²³ Don Agustín de Vildósola Informe, Archivo General de Indias, Sevilla (hereinafter AGI), Audiencia de Guadalajara 67, folios 3-29; translated in Donald Rowland, "The Sonora Frontier of New Spain, 1735-1745," in *New Spain and the Anglo-American West: Historical Contributions Presented to Herbert Eugene Bolton*, ed. George P. Hammond (Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Press, Inc., 1932), 1:151-57.

boy of little more than twenty-five years called Juan Bautista de Anza...."²⁴

Whether Agustín was one of the other four "subjects" Alvarez Tuñón was referring to is unknown. What can be ascertained is that Agustín's signature appears with that of twelve other Basques condemning Alvarez Tuñón two years later.²⁵ In the end, Alvarez Tuñón was found guilty and removed from office:

The negligence was obvious...his soldiers, good and bad alike, were in tatters and debt. The troops, although never leaving the area of the presidio, were attacked there by the Apaches. Six soldiers were often employed in the captain's personal interest. Tuñón was arraigned on fifteen charges; tried on two and found guilty, he was removed from command. He was fined 14,654 pesos for using two soldiers in his personal service for a period of seventeen years. He was ordered to Mexico City to stand trial on the remaining thirteen charges before a viceregal court.²⁶

Alvarez Tuñón would have undoubtedly been convicted of the other charges, considering the massive evidence against him, but he died before he could be transported to Mexico City.

In another ethnically charged controversy that began in the 1730s and culminated in 1740, Agustín de Vildósola and Manuel Bernal de Huidobro vied for the governorship of the new political entity of Sinaloa and Sonora. Agustín's detractors would claim that he was no more than a puppet, a product of the Jesuit fathers, his fellow

²⁴ Gregorio Alvarez Tuñón y Quiroz a Señor Gobernador y Capitan General don Manuel San Juan de Santa Cruz, 1720, AHP, folios 491-521.

²⁵ Vecinos de San Juan Baptista, AGN, Archivo Histórico de Hacienda, legajo 278, expediente 35, folio 4.

²⁶ Donohue, *After Kino*, 51. For a pro-Alvarez Tuñón perspective on the controversy, see Raúl Flores Guerrero, "El imperialismo jesuita en la Nueva España," *Historia Mexicana* 4 (1954):159-73. For pro-Jesuit examples, see Donohue, *After Kino*, 24-31; and Fay Jackson Smith, *Captain of the Phantom Presidio: A History of the Presidio of Fronteras, Sonora, New Spain, 1686-1735, Including the Inspection by Brigadier Pedro de Rivera, 1726* (Spokane: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1993), 51-56.

Vizcaínos, and the Sonoran presidial captains (the majority of whom were Vizcaínos).²⁷ There is probably a certain amount of truth to these accusations, considering all the Basques with whom he was in contact. Agustín, however, had plenty of initiative of his own.

The governor of Nueva Vizcaya, Ignacio Francisco de Barrutia, a Basque from Bergara, Guipúzcoa,²⁸ appointed Agustín militia captain for all of Sonora in 1728.²⁹ By that time, Agustín had acquired a substantial fortune in the silver mining industry, owning several mines and *haciendas de sacar plata*, or silver refineries, all by the age of twenty-eight.³⁰ He had a large number of employees and Indian servants, and he utilized them and his own time and money in the war being fought against rebelling Seri and Pima Indians and marauding Apaches.³¹ In the conflict with the Seris, he commanded forty-two men, armed and maintained at his own expense, as well as ten veteran soldiers from the company of Juan Bautista de Anza at Fronteras. He also had charge of a regiment of Pimas Altos auxiliaries.³²

In 1734, Sonora, Sinaloa, and Ostimuri, a geographic area which today constitutes southeastern Sonora, were removed from the Reino de Nueva Vizcaya and became a separate political unit.³³ The first governor of the new entity, Huidobro, conferred the office of *sargento mayor* on Agustín, under which commission the latter persevered in nearly continuous campaigns against the Apaches for more than twenty-four years.³⁴ Relations were not good, however,

²⁷ Testimonio de Autos, 8 de diciembre de 1741, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 188, folios 47-167. Garate, "Basque Names," 95-96.

²⁸ Hacinto Suárez, "Diccionario biográfico vasco-mexicano," unpublished manuscript, (Reno: Basque Studies Library, University of Nevada, n.d.), unnumbered pages.

²⁹ Relacion del Sargento Mayor don Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, Biblioteca Nacional de México (hereinafter BNM), Departamento de Manuscritos, Estampas e Iconografía, número 28/106, folio 1.

³⁰ Relacion de Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, BNM, número 28/106, folio 1v.

³¹ Partidas de bautismo, casamiento, y difunciones, 1738, AZU 811, roll 10, unnumbered pages.

³² Relacion de Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, BNM, número 28/106, folios 1-7v.

³³ Thomas C. Barnes, Thomas H. Naylor, and Charles W. Polzer, *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1981), 111.

³⁴ Relacion de Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, BNM, número 28/106, folios 1-7v.

between Agustín and the governor. During the 1730s, Huidobro had his first run-in with Agustín, Juan Bautista de Anza, the Jesuit missionaries of the region, and the Basque community of Sonora which supported them.³⁵ It was also about this time that Agustín moved his headquarters from Tetuachi to his hacienda at what would become Pitic, and later Hermosillo, Sonora.³⁶

The year 1740 saw the political ruin of Huidobro and the propulsion of Agustín to the forefront of Sonoran politics.³⁷ Just as a massive Yaqui and Mayo rebellion was erupting in Sinaloa and Ostimuri, Captain Juan Bautista de Anza was killed by Apaches near Mission Santa María de Suamca on 9 May 1740.³⁸ While José Díaz del Carpio, captain of the Presidio of Janos, pursued the perpetrators, Agustín quickly abandoned his mines and haciendas to take charge of the defense of Sonora.³⁹ Governor Huidobro, who by this time had his hands full trying to contain the rebels in Ostimuri from a temporary headquarters he had set up at Alamos, dispatched orders to that effect to Agustín on 9 June.⁴⁰ By then, however, Agustín was already south of present-day Hermosillo at Tecoripa, Sonora, having marched day and night for two hundred miles from Tetuachi with twenty-six of his armed servants and other settlers.⁴¹

The question of what should be his next course of action developed into a heated debate. The governor wanted him to gather a force of Spanish soldiers and Pima auxiliaries from Sonora and march into the Yaqui country of Sinaloa. The Jesuits wanted him to stay at Tecoripa and protect the province of Sonora.⁴² Agustín complied with

³⁵ Luis Navarro García, *La sublevación yaqui de 1740* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1958), 21-22.

³⁶ Relación de Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, BNM, número 28/106, folios 1-7v.

³⁷ Navarro García, *La sublevación yaqui de 1740*, 20.

³⁸ Juan Bautista de Belauzaran al Virrey Juan Antonio de Vizarrón y Eguiarreta, 6 de julio de 1740, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 88, folio 564.

³⁹ Belauzaran al Virrey, 6 de julio de 1740, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 88, folio 564. Thirteen Apaches were killed and fourteen taken prisoner by Díaz del Carpio in retaliation for the death of Captain Anza.

⁴⁰ Navarro García, *La sublevación yaqui de 1740*, 96.

⁴¹ Relación de Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, BNM, número 28/106, folios 1-7v.

⁴² Edward H. Spicer, *The Yaquis: A Cultural History* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), 47.

the wishes of the Jesuits and, of course, the Vizcaínos sided with him. One Basque in particular expressed his gratitude to Agustín. Felipe Zatarain, a merchant who for two years had not been able to conduct his business in either Culiacán, Durango, or in Ostimuri, claimed to have been a "fugitive in the mountains" for six months. There he had witnessed gross atrocities too numerous to inscribe on the only scrap of paper he had. He did, however, lament the death of Captain Anza, repeatedly thanked Agustín for his quick action against the enemy in Sonora, and begged him not to leave.⁴³

Once Agustín had confirmed that Huidobro had retreated to Alamos, he began to take action at Tecoripa, winning victories in two separate engagements, one of which, according to the Spaniards, was the most decisive defeat of the Indians in 1740.⁴⁴ He successfully went out with five different detachments to stop the advance of the rebels, calming the settlers and opening the roads.⁴⁵

Agustín's speedy and decisive actions influenced Virrey Duque de la Conquista's decision to remove the timid Huidobro from the governorship of Sonora and replace him with Agustín. On 31 December 1740, Agustín informed Huidobro that he was relieved of his office and must go to Mexico City to respond to a number of serious charges brought against him.⁴⁶ The ex-governor claimed that he "was the victim of an intense Jesuit political campaign," while the Jesuits extolled Agustín as "a military man with character."⁴⁷ On 17 June 1741, Agustín, who had been acting in an interim capacity since 15

⁴³ Phelipe de Zatarayn a don Agustín de Vildosola, 30 de julio de 1740. Reprinted in Ernest J. Burrus, S.J., ed., *Misiones mexicanas de la Compañía de Jesus, 1618-1745: cartas e informes conservados en la "Colección Mateu"* (Madrid: Ediciones José Porrúa Turanzas, S.A., 1982), 28-29. One aspect of this letter is especially interesting to students of Basque populations on the Spanish Frontier. Because Spanish was the universal written language, few Basques ever wrote in their native language. It is therefore often difficult to make ethnic connections today. In this letter, however, Zatarain addresses Vildósola as "Jauna" (Basque for Sir or Lord), and closes with "agur, agur" (goodbye, goodbye).

⁴⁴ Spicer, *The Yaquis*, 48.

⁴⁵ Relacion de Agustín de Vildosola, 6 de febrero de 1749, BNM, número 28/106, folios 1-7v.

⁴⁶ Evelyn Hu-DeHart, *Missionaries, Miners, and Indians: Spanish Contact with the Yaqui Nation of Northwestern New Spain, 1533-1820* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1981), 73.

⁴⁷ Hu-DeHart, *Missionaries, Miners, and Indians*, 72.

November of the previous year, received his official commission as the second governor of Sonora-Sinaloa.⁴⁸

Indian policy changed sharply and swiftly under Agustín. He "thought in terms of force decisively applied as the basis for his authority." Within a few days of his appointment as governor, two Yaqui officials were captured and beheaded. Within a few months twelve more Yaqui officers suffered the same fate and numerous other Yaquis were taken captive.⁴⁹

Unlike Huidobro, Agustín did not quarrel with the Jesuits, at least not initially. He undoubtedly dealt with the order on a daily basis, consulting with and involving them in his policy-making process.⁵⁰ All of this helped bring peace with the Indians on the northern frontier. Nonetheless, quarrels among the various factions of Spaniards had been fermenting for years and Agustín did little to alleviate these disputes. Indeed, they worsened during the seven years of his governorship. Some of the Jesuits of other cultural backgrounds, like the Italian Alejandro Rapicani, were agitating for his removal by the time a new viceroy, the Conde de Revillagigedo, relieved him of his governorship and ordered him to appear in Mexico City in 1748 on charges ranging from misuse of funds to his continued residence at his hacienda, rather than at the new presidio he had established at Pitic.⁵¹ Basque Jesuits whom Agustín had helped, like Francisco Xavier de Anaya, Agustín de Arriola, and Gabriel de Urrutia,⁵² were not so critical, nor was Captain José de Uzarraga, the only Basque remaining among the presidial captains at the time.⁵³

⁴⁸ Luis Navarro García, *Don José de Gálvez y la comandancia general de las Provincias Internas del Norte de Nueva España* (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1964), 83. Official royal confirmation of Vildósola's governorship came from Madrid on 27 July 1744. Donohue, *After Kino*, 103.

⁴⁹ Spicer, *The Yaquis*, 49.

⁵⁰ Spicer, *The Yaquis*, 48.

⁵¹ Donohue, *After Kino*, 109-11.

⁵² Alberto Francisco Pradeau, *La expulsión de los jesuitas de las provincias de Sonora, Ostimuri y Sinaloa en 1767: disertación documentada y anotada* (México: Antigua Librería Robredo de Porrúa, 1959), 128, 194. From this it is clear that, although the Basques generally supported the Jesuits as a group, reciprocation probably depended more on cultural and ethnic ties.

⁵³ Donohue, *After Kino*, 108.

Although he was officially removed from office in 1748, the Vizcaínos continued to speak of Agustín's good qualities to the end. Pedro Felipe de Anza, cousin of the deceased Juan Bautista de Anza, the elder, and godfather of the renowned Juan Bautista, the younger, wrote to Agustín while he was in Mexico City answering charges. In a 30 January 1749 letter, written from the newly established Real Presidio de San Pedro de la Conquista at Pitic,⁵⁴ Pedro de Anza referred to Agustín as governor and captain general as if he had not been removed from office and expressed his hope that Agustín would be triumphant in his trial and return home soon to continue his good works in Nueva Vizcaya where a new calamity was developing. Anza prayed for Agustín's good health and safe return that he might remedy the situation.⁵⁵

While the Yaqui rebellion was over, Anza's letter is one of the first notices that the great Seri rebellion had begun. In Agustín's absence, the Seris had raided ranches, stealing cattle and horses. They had attacked José de Mesa's ranch where eleven people died from arrows and burns. Agustín did return home to his Pitic hacienda soon afterwards, stripped of his title of governor. He died there a few years later. It would be left to others to suppress the Seri rebellion, an impending rebellion in the Pimería Alta, and to continue the fight against the Apaches.

By this time, Gabriel Antonio de Vildósola was living in the Pimería Alta of northern Sonora. Even though he arrived in the same area that Agustín had first come to as a young man, it is not known if Agustín was his contact there. Agustín had been living in Sonora before Gabriel was born but, considering the small size of the rural communities of Villaro and Elejabeitia, it is probable that the two families knew each other in Vizcaya. The sparse population of Sonora in the early eighteenth century also makes it likely that the two men became acquainted after Gabriel's arrival.

By about 1747, Gabriel was living at the same Real de Basochuca where Agustín had mining interests. There, on 1 February, he married Josefa Gregoria Joaquina de Anza, the fourteen-year-old

⁵⁴ Garate, "Basque Ethnic Connections," 79.

⁵⁵ Pedro Phelipe de Ansa al Señor don Agustín de Vildosola, Real Presidio de San Pedro de la Conquista, 30 de enero de 1749, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 188, folios 307-308.

youngest daughter of Juan Bautista de Anza, the elder, and María Rosa Bezerra Nieto.⁵⁶ Her younger brother, Juan Bautista, the younger, who undoubtedly witnessed the wedding, was nearly eleven.⁵⁷

From there the couple moved to the Anza family's Rancho de Santa Barbara, in the San Luis Valley near the headwaters of the Santa Cruz River, where they were ranching when the Pima Revolt of 1751 erupted in November. Gabriel witnessed many of the events that precipitated the revolt at nearby Mission Guevavi.⁵⁸ Undoubtedly out of concern for his pregnant wife's safety, he sent her back to Basochuca where their first child, Carlos Ildefonso Gonzaga, was born on 9 April 1752.

On his first military campaign in King Fernando VI's service,⁵⁹ Gabriel rode south to San Ignacio with four armed men to present himself before Governor Diego Ortiz Parilla and to offer his services in the suppression of the violent uprising.⁶⁰ Two friars were already dead and a third seriously wounded; the destruction would leave many Pimas and over one hundred Spaniards dead before it was over.⁶¹ Charged by the governor with reconnoitering the mountains where the rebels had retreated, Gabriel took the four men who were in his employ and four regular soldiers. Accomplishing the task in "seven or eight days," he returned to take his four men on campaign with José Díaz del Carpio, now captain of Terrenate, who had been put in command of operations.⁶² The soldiers rode out to the Santa Catalina Mountains near Tucson and convinced the leader of the uprising to

⁵⁶ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folios 243, 761.

⁵⁷ Expediente promovido por doña Ana Maria Perez Serrano, 1789, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 169, expediente 536, número 436, partida 4.

⁵⁸ Expediente de la sublecion de los Indios de la Pimeria Alta y sus incidencias, informacion que pretende a don Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, 1774, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 419, número 69.

⁵⁹ Partidas de bautismo, casamiento, y difunciones, 9 de abril de 1752, AZU 811, roll 11, unnumbered pages.

⁶⁰ Relacion de Gabriel Anttonio de Vildosola, capitan del Real Presidio de Fronteras, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 248.

⁶¹ Informacion que pretende a don Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara 419, número 69.

⁶² Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Señor Gobernador y Capitan General Don Juan de Pineda, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 248.

surrender to the governor at San Ignacio.⁶³ In late March or early April, Gabriel again conferred with the governor and was given two more commissions. First, he and his four men were assigned to scout out and recommend a place to establish a new presidio to protect the Pimería from rebellion and from the Apaches.⁶⁴ Once that assignment was complete, they rode south and, with the residents of a number of Reales de Minas to the south, searched for those Spaniards killed and captured by the Seris.⁶⁵ Probably on the recommendation of Gabriel and his men, the Pima village of Tubac was eventually selected for the site of the new presidio. Although he did not reveal who those four men were, one of them may have been his sixteen-year-old brother-in-law, Juan Bautista de Anza, who claimed to have begun his military service as a volunteer in 1752.⁶⁶ If that is the case, Anza may have had a say in establishing the presidio where he later served as captain for sixteen years.

Juan Antonio Menocal, a longtime friend of the Vildósola and Anza families and captain of the presidio at Fronteras, who was under investigation for allegedly having precipitated the Pima uprising, died in the spring of 1754.⁶⁷ Because of his exemplary service during and after the rebellion, Gabriel was given command of Fronteras in May 1754.⁶⁸ He would serve honorably for over twenty years under eleven different governors.⁶⁹

In February 1757, Gabriel went on an extensive campaign against the Apaches after they killed the priest at Nacosari.⁷⁰ In the

⁶³ James E. Officer, *Hispanic Arizona, 1536-1856* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1987), 36.

⁶⁴ Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Señor Gobernador y Capitan General Don Juan de Pineda, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 248.

⁶⁵ Relacion de Gabriel Antonio Vildosola, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 249.

⁶⁶ Hoja de Servicio, El Coronel don Juan Baptista de Anza, diciembre de 1783. Reprinted in Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed. and trans., *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico, 1777-1787, from Original Documents in the Archives of Spain, Mexico, and New Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1932), 365.

⁶⁷ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folio 769.

⁶⁸ Relacion de Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 249.

⁶⁹ Barnes, et al., *Northern New Spain*, 112.

⁷⁰ Don Antonio Maria Bucareli y Ursua a don Juan de Mendoza, 26 de enero de 1758, AGN, Provincias Internas 87, folio 252.

summer of 1760, he was again on the Apaches' trail.⁷¹ His brother-in-law, Juan Bautista, was in training with him from the time he took command of Fronteras and by 1755 had risen to the rank of lieutenant.⁷² When Anza was given command of the Royal Presidio of Tubac in December 1759,⁷³ Gabriel's nephew, José Antonio de Vildósola, replaced him as lieutenant at Fronteras.⁷⁴ Although when and how José Antonio came to the New World is unknown, it is clear that his uncle played a part in his arrival. Military service on the frontier was becoming a family affair.

Both the Vildósolas and Anza carried out campaigns to curb Seri hostilities in the south in 1761.⁷⁵ After José Antonio's sweeping campaign against the Apaches to the north at the site of the Gila River in present-day Arizona, he returned to Fronteras via Janos, Chihuahua, in June 1762.⁷⁶ In July, he and Gabriel then went on a joint campaign against the Apaches with Anza,⁷⁷ traveling north to the Gila and then back south to Oposura.⁷⁸

That fall, a joint campaign was planned against the Seris in the south which would involve the larger family of Basque *paisanos*, the presidial captains of the far northern frontier: Bernardo de Urrea at Altar,⁷⁹ Anza at Tubac, Gabriel de Vildósola at Fronteras, and José de Leizaola at Janos.⁸⁰ The only other captain on the northern line of

⁷¹ Diario de Capitan don Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, julio de 1760, AGN, Provincias Internas 87, folios 276-80.

⁷² Hoja de Servicio, don Juan Baptista de Anza, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 263.

⁷³ Lorenzo Cancio al Excelentísimo Señor Marques de Cruillas, Presidio de San Carlos de Buenavista, 22 de octubre de 1765, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folio 63.

⁷⁴ Joseph Tienda de Cuervo al Excelentísimo Señor Marques de Cruillas, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folios 105v, 107.

⁷⁵ Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Excelentísimo Señor Marques de Cruillas, Virrey, Governador y Capitan de Estos Reynos, Santa Rosa de Corodeguachi, 20 de marzo de 1762, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folios 251-51v.

⁷⁶ Relacion de Joseph Antonio de Vildosola, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folios 123-25v.

⁷⁷ Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Señor Theniente Coronel don Joseph Tienda de Cuervo, Cavallero del Orden de Santiago, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folio 120.

⁷⁸ Diario de don Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, Presidio de Fronteras, 26 de julio de 1762, AGN, Provincias Internas, folios 133-40v.

⁷⁹ Officer, *Hispanic Arizona*, 46.

⁸⁰ Vildosola a Cuervo, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folio 122.

presidios was Francisco Elías Gonzales at Terrenate who, although he was born across the line from Navarra at Soto de Cameros in the Spanish province of Logroño,⁸¹ also had close connections with the Basque network.⁸² At any rate, the "Vizcaíno fraternity" went to battle that October but Gabriel, and most likely José Antonio, did not participate because of a "terrible epidemic of furious fevers" that had devastated the soldiers at Fronteras the month before, from which both were recovering.⁸³

Between the Apache raids to the north and the Seri hostilities to the south, the presidial soldiers were continuously on the move, year in and year out. In October 1765, Apaches surprised the *caballada* and its guards at Fronteras, killing five soldiers and stealing many of the horses. But this time, Gabriel and José Antonio were back on the campaign to recover the lost animals.⁸⁴ The year 1767 saw increased activity on the part of the Spaniards as they geared up for a massive, all-out campaign against the Seris in the Cerro Prieto, south of present-day Hermosillo. Spanish regulars were brought in, and a Basque colonel, Domingo Elizondo, sailed from Spain to take command of the operation.⁸⁵ Over the next few years, the Vildósolas and Anza would spend a tremendous amount of their time in the Cerro Prieto.⁸⁶

In the midst of all these preparations, King Carlos III arrested all the Jesuits in his domain, exiling and imprisoning them. Although the Basque presidial officers appeared to be loyal supporters of the Jesuits, many of them received orders to participate in the expulsion.

⁸¹ Armando Elías, historian and descendant of said captain, in telephone conversation with writer. Vail, Arizona, 22 November 1995.

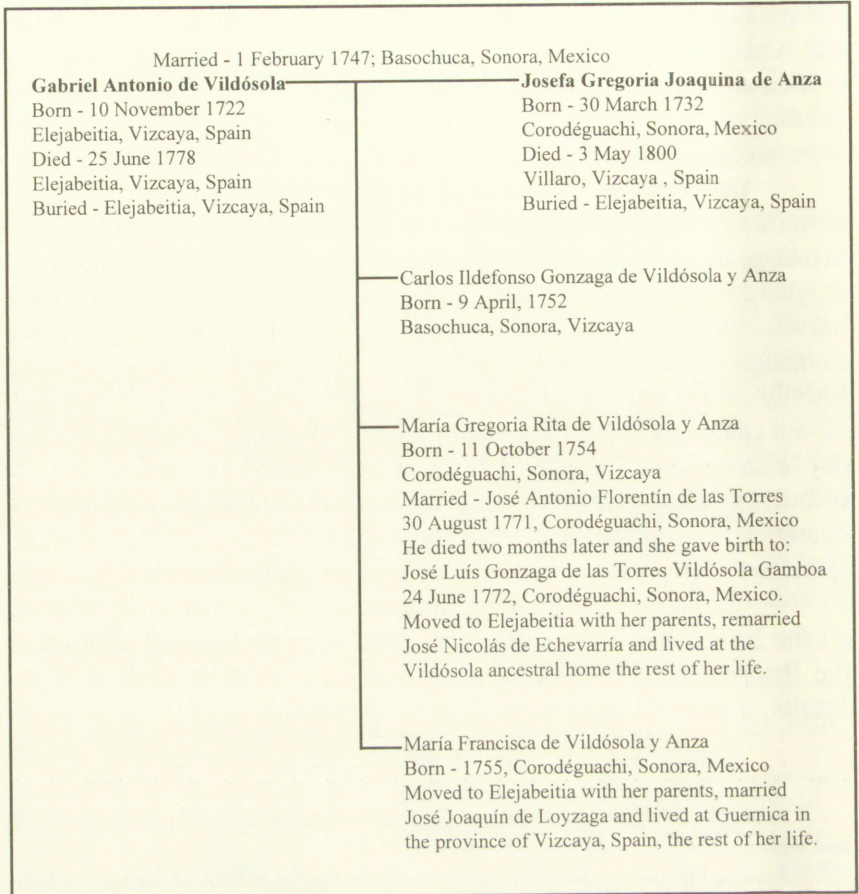
⁸² Juan de Pineda al Señor don Francisco Elias Gonzales, BNM, número 222/900, folios 3-3v, in which Governor Pineda asks for a bank draft against Elias' account with Ambrosio de Meave, manager of the Fagoaga Import House in Mexico City. Not everyone on the frontier was able to open an account with this powerful Basque financier. See Garate, "Basque Ethnic Connections," 81-84.

⁸³ Joseph Tienda de Cuervo al Excelentísimo Señor Marques de Cruillas, 14 de septiembre y 15 de octubre de 1762, AGN, Provincias Internas 86, folios 145 and 153.

⁸⁴ Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Señor Theniente Coronel Don Juan de Pineda, Fronteras, 8 de junio de 1767, BNM, número 233/911, folio 8v.

⁸⁵ Relacion de la expedicion de las Provincias de Sinaloa, Ostimuri, y Sonora en el Reino de Nueva Espana, 1767-1771, AGI, Audiencia de Guadalajara, Spanish Colonial Research Center, University of New Mexico, roll 36, frames 747-938.

⁸⁶ See Elizondo letters in AGN, Provincias Internas 81 and BNM, números 69/47, 259/936, and 268/946.



Family of Gabriel Antonio de Vildósola. Sources compiled from Partidas de Fallecimiento, Bizkaiko Eleizaren Histori Artxiboa, unnumbered folios; Gernikako Batzar-Etxeren Artxiboa, Guernika, número 1593, pp. 245, 249, 254, 255, 702, 733, and 761; Partidas de bautismo, casamiento, y difunciones, University of Arizona Special Collections Microfilm, microfilm series 811, roll 10, unnumbered pages.

As the arrested priests arrived from the north at Mátape, José Antonio gathered them together and transferred them to the newly-constructed military barracks at Guaymas, where they awaited embarkation by sea.⁸⁷ In mid-August, Anza was the last captain to arrive at Mátape with his captives, at which time José Antonio left for Guaymas with the entire group.⁸⁸

Because of his actions against the Apaches and Seris and his role in the Jesuit arrest, José Antonio was promoted to captain, and on 31 August 1767 he was put in charge of organizing a second *compañía volante*, or mobile company. He left Guaymas and went northeast to the mission community of San José de los Pimas to accomplish the task, completing it by 10 September. As a true mobile company, the soldiers found themselves perpetually on the move, headquartering mainly at San José de los Pimas or Guaymas.⁸⁹ José Antonio remained their captain throughout most of the great Cerro Prieto campaign until 23 May 1771, when he was made captain of the Presidio of Terrenate.⁹⁰

In 1769, there was a mammoth thrust into the Cerro Prieto by four divisions of soldiers under the command of Colonel Elizondo. José Antonio and members of his *compañía volante* scouted the area in late March and early April.⁹¹ In the all-out attack that followed, Gabriel de Vildósola was put in command of one of the divisions, which included the Compañía de España, the Segunda Compañía Volante under command of José Antonio, a company of presidial soldiers under Ignacio de Urrea of Altar, and a company of Yaqui auxiliaries.⁹²

As with soldiers throughout the ages, however, life was not all gallantry on the battlefield. On the night of 29 December 1769, a

⁸⁷ Instrucciones Particulares, 14 de julio de 1767, BNM, número 58/736, folios 1-10.

⁸⁸ Joseph Antonio de Vildosola al Excelentísimo Señor Virrey Gobernador y Capitan General Marquez de Croix, Terrenate, 10 de junio de 1771, AGN, Provincias Internas 82, folios 366, 372.

⁸⁹ Razon de Joseph Antonio de Vildosola, BNM, número 63/741, folios 1-3.

⁹⁰ Joseph Antonio de Vildosola al Excelentísimo Senor Virrey Gobernador y Capitan General Marquez de Croix, Terrenate, 10 de junio de 1771, AGN, Provincias Internas 82, folios 366, 372.

⁹¹ Diario de la corredería, 1 de abril de 1769, BNM, número 67/745, folios 4-5.

⁹² Detalla de la Tropa que salio el 17 de octubre del año de 1769, BNM, número 63/741, folio 3v.

crowd of soldiers were gathered in the barracks at Guaymas during a lull in the great Seri campaign, drinking and playing cards. José Antonio, Lieutenant Pedro de Allande of the Dragones de México, a Basque born and raised in Cádiz,⁹³ and Miguel Gallo de Villavicencio, *comandante de armas* at the Guaymas barracks, were playing a game of *virlán*. The cards were dealt, and José Antonio and Allande placed a one-peso bet. When the cards were turned, José Antonio lacked the *siete de copas* (seven of cups) to give him a winning hand.

After Allande collected the peso and all the cards were handed in, José Antonio asked to see the deck. When the *caballo de bastos* (horse of clubs) could not be located among the other cards, an argument ensued between the two officers. Not everyone present understood the game of *virlán*, but those who did sided with Allande. Still not satisfied, José Antonio continued the dispute with "complete irrationality." In disgust, Allande tried to return the coin to José Antonio, who refused it, saying, "Don't you give me anything that isn't mine." Allande, feeling that José Antonio had offended him, drew his sword to defend his honor. At that moment, Gallo de Villavicencio stepped between the two men and ordered Allande to his room. A scuffle ensued, and Gallo de Villavicencio called for his lieutenant and the guards. As Allande was taken to his room under house arrest, he called back over his shoulder at Gallo de Villavicencio, who was now arresting José Antonio, "Is this the satisfaction that you give my honor? You can be assured that the viceroy will hear about this!"⁹⁴

Both men were held under house arrest for a few days while the governor was notified. What kind of punishment, if any, either of them received went unrecorded. Shortly thereafter, they were both back out on the campaign. Ten years later, after various promotions, demotions, and firings, José Antonio was back at Terrenate and Allande was given command of the Tucson Presidio.⁹⁵ This is just one of many examples of how, although the Vizcaínos put on a united front

⁹³ Oja de Servicio de Pedro Maria de Allande, 1790, Archivo General de Simancas, Guerra Moderna, legajo 7278, expediente 7, número 53. Suárez, "Diccionario biográfico," unnumbered pages.

⁹⁴ Lorenzo Cancio al Señor don Juan de Pineda, BNM, número 270/948, folios 1-3.

⁹⁵ Officer, *Hispanic Arizona*, 51.

against other Spaniards when there was a quarrel in Sonora, they also fought amongst themselves.

By 1773, the continuous pressure coming from the Apaches in the north and the Seris in the south resulted in the beginning of the end of the Vildósola family connection to the frontier. On 17 October of the previous year, Apaches had run off more than one hundred head of horses from Tubac, killing a soldier in the process. On 15 December, they stole 257 horses from the presidio at Terrenate. José Antonio sent seventy *soldados de cuera* (leather-jacket soldiers) after them, but only succeeded in losing another seven horses.⁹⁶ In order to pursue the Apaches, the two Vildósolas and Anza went into an encampment at a place called San Bernardino near the Chihuahua-Sonora border at the end of December. Anza took a third of the troops in search of the marauders on 1 January 1773,⁹⁷ but by 20 January José Antonio was officially relieved of his command. The month before he had complained that it was too cold and the days were too short to mount a campaign. Governor Sastre had ordered José Antonio to go "even if there was snow on the ground," but when the governor learned of the loss of the seven saddle horses he fired him, informing both the viceroy and Colonel Elizondo.⁹⁸

By this time, Gabriel's health was in decline, and he requested to be relieved of his command.⁹⁹ Finally, in February 1776, he was granted permission to return to Spain because of his failing health and to care for the family estate.¹⁰⁰ In March 1776, Gabriel, his wife Gregoria Anza, and his two daughters, the elder of whom was a widow with a four-year-old son named José Luis de Torres Vildósola, were in

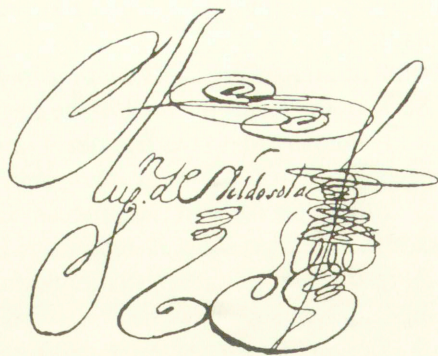
⁹⁶ Matheo Sastre al Excelentísimo Señor Fray don Antonio Maria Bucarely y Ursua, Real Presidio de San Miguel de Horcacitas, 20 de enero de 1773, AGN, Provincias Internas 81, folios 491-93v, 505.

⁹⁷ Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Señor Theniente Coronel don Matheo Sastre, San Bernardino, 2 de enero de 1773, AGN, Provincias Internas 81, folios 496-97, 501v, 502.

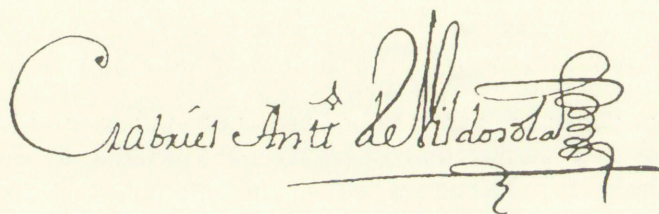
⁹⁸ Sastre a Bucarely, AGN, Provincias Internas 81, folios 492, 493v.

⁹⁹ Don Gabriel mentions his poor health in a number of letters to the viceroy, and his deteriorating health can be seen in his shaky handwriting. See, for example, Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola al Excelentísimo Señor Theniente General don Antonio Maria Bucarely y Ursua, Presidio de Fronteras, 6 de marzo de 1773, AGN, Provincias Internas 82, folio 351.

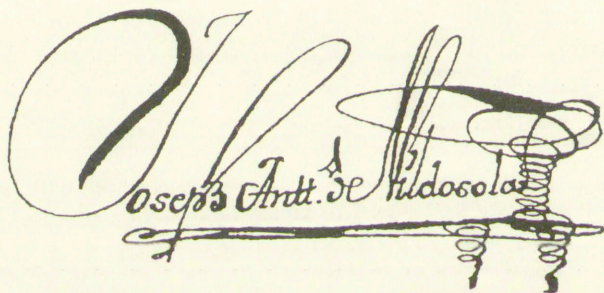
¹⁰⁰ Instancia y Decreto, A.M. Bucarely, México, 23 de febrero de 1776, AGN, Provincias Internas 247, folios 164v-65.



Agustín de Vildósola



Gabriel Ant^o de Vildósola



José Ant^o de Vildósola

Signatures of Agustín, Gabriel, and José Antonio de Vildósola. Sources compiled from Vecinos de San Juan Baptista, 20 de febrero de 1722, Archivo Histórico de Hacienda, legajo 278, expediente 35, folio 4; Gabriel Antonio de Vildósola al Excelentísimo Señor Virrey Marques de Croix, 29 de enero de 1770, Archivo General de la Nación (hereinafter AGN), Provincias Internas 70, folio 208; Joseph Antonio de Vildósola al Excelentísimo Señor Marquez de Croix, 20 de junio de 1770, AGN, Provincias Internas 70, folio 211v.

Mexico City awaiting passage to Spain. Realizing that one day José Luis, born in Cuqíarichi, Sonora, would need to prove his noble birthright, Gabriel set about acquiring notarized affidavits from his friends among the prominent Basque businessmen and politicians in Mexico City.¹⁰¹ Gabriel even arranged for the Basque archbishop at the cathedral in Mexico City, Alonso Núñez de Haro y Peralta,¹⁰² to confer first communion on young José Luis.¹⁰³

By June 1777, Gabriel was back at his ancestral home, Vildósola, with the rank of lieutenant colonel in the San Sebastián Plaza de Armas at Guipúzcoa. There he served as *primer síndico fiel* (recorder and clerk of the town market) for the united municipalities of Castillo-Elejabeitia, a job to which the people had elected him five years earlier in hopes that he would return to take over the family estate.¹⁰⁴ He died just one year later, on 25 June 1778. His wife, Gregoria Anza, continued to live at Vildósola until her death in 1800.¹⁰⁵ Gabriel's oldest daughter, also named Gregoria, inherited the Vildósola *Solar*, passing it on to her son, José Luis. It is from his proof of nobility, filed in 1793 when he took command of a militia company "raised to protect the ports and frontiers of Vizcaya," that most of the information on Gabriel's family is derived.¹⁰⁶

Back in Sonora, things were improving for José Antonio de Vildósola. In 1780, he was commissioned by Teodoro de Croix, *comandante general de las Provincias Internas*, to assist Juan Bautista de Anza, by this time governor of New Mexico, in an expedition to find a route between Santa Fe, New Mexico, and Arizpe, Sonora, the seat of government for the Internal Provinces. José Antonio was

¹⁰¹ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folios 267, 286, 288, 289, 291. These friends included, among others, Ambrosio de Meave, José de los Heros, and Vicente de Arteaga Lazcano. For a biography and description of Meave's ties to the Basque country, see Garate, "Basque Ethnic Connections," 71-93. José de los Heros was a merchant and freighter from Mexico City. Julián Martínez Ruiz, *Catálogo general de individuos de la Real Sociedad Bascongada de los Amigos del País, 1765-1793* (San Sebastián: Caja de Ahorros Municipal de San Sebastián, 1985), 61. Vicente de Arteaga was *contador* of the Real Tribunal del Consulado de México. Suárez, "Diccionario biográfico," unnumbered pages.

¹⁰² Suárez, "Diccionario biográfico," unnumbered pages.

¹⁰³ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folio 730.

¹⁰⁴ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folios 197, 229, 687.

¹⁰⁵ Partidas de fallecimientos, 1800, Castillo-Elejabeitia, BHA, unnumbered folios.

¹⁰⁶ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folio 695.

ordered to lead a company of 116 soldiers northeast from Las Nutrias, where the presidial soldiers of Terrenate were now stationed, through the Chiricahua mountains to the Sierra de los Mimbres in New Mexico to try to meet up with Anza on his way southwest from Santa Fe. His alternative plan was to explore the uncharted country in that area. He failed in the first objective but succeeded in the second, arriving back at Las Nutrias just a few days ahead of Anza's expedition as it continued south toward Arizpe.¹⁰⁷ José Antonio de Vildósola died sometime after this expedition, possibly living as late as 1787.¹⁰⁸

José Antonio was the last of the three Vildósolas to die. With his passing, the familial ties between the Old World and the New dwindled away. Today, the hundreds of descendants of José Antonio and Agustín, who live in Sonora, Baja California, California, and Arizona, are culturally Mexican, Mexican-American, or American and know little or nothing of the strong Basque ties that helped their ancestors establish themselves in the New World. Although the many descendants of Gabriel de Vildósola living in Vizcaya and Guipuzcoa are culturally Basque today, they too have little or no knowledge of the struggles of their ancestor in the New World or how a network of fellow Basques helped him accomplish his goals.

These three men, all originally from the Arratia River Valley in Vizcaya, had come to New Spain in search of a better life. All three utilized the informal Basque economic and political organizations to further their purposes. A very strong tie existed between the financiers and merchants in Mexico City and the Basque businessmen and military officers on the frontier. Manuel de Aldaco and Ambrosio de Meave, managers of the Basque conglomerate, La Caja Real de México¹⁰⁹ (Silver Bank of Mexico), and the Fagoaga Import House in Mexico City, helped their *paisanos* on the frontier. Both men were heavily involved in Basque organizations throughout Mexico, and individuals on the frontier who dealt with them were almost invariably of Basque ancestry.¹¹⁰ It is known that José Antonio purchased supplies from

¹⁰⁷ Diario de la Campaña, Las Nutrias, 17 de diciembre de 1780, BNM, número 98/776, folios 1-2v.

¹⁰⁸ Almada, *Diccionario de historia*, 726.

¹⁰⁹ *Relación* concerning the Junta de Guerra to establish the presidio at Buena Vista, Sinaloa, AGN, Provincias Internas, folio 466.

¹¹⁰ Garate, "Basque Ethnic Connections," 82-85.

Meave around 1772¹¹¹ and that Gabriel dealt with both Aldaco¹¹² and Meave, whom he knew personally.¹¹³

All three *Vizcaya'ren Vildosola'tarrak* (Vildósolas from Vizcaya) were married and raised families, as attested to by their many descendants in California, Sonora, and Baja California, but much work remains to be done in determining relationships. All three left their mark, albeit a sometimes dubious one, on Sonora. Although each of them had their detractors, all three men were respected throughout the northern frontier. Agustín, highly controversial in his day, was a strong governor in many ways and did much good for Sonora and Sinaloa. Of the three, the impetuous José Antonio was probably the most controversial and least popular with the general citizenry. Gabriel was generally well liked and, like the other two, started off with little and made much of himself. Probably the worst thing recorded about him is found in a letter sent by Governor Juan Claudio de Pineda on 7 January 1767 in which the governor accuses him of insubordination and orders him to be in Altar on 22 January. There the governor was to "instruct him in his obligations."¹¹⁴ Yet, the following 30 November, Governor Pineda wrote that, after thirteen years as a presidial captain on the frontier, Gabriel de Vildósola "performs very well whatever commission he is charged with in the Royal Service and has much practical knowledge of the Apache lands, and also the Seris and Pimas."¹¹⁵

Research into Basque cultural and ethnic relationships is made difficult by the fact that virtually no one was able to write in the Basque language in the eighteenth century. Then, as now, it was a language of trade and negotiation, uniting fellow Basques in a network that provided assistance in politics, economics, trade, and education.¹¹⁶ The Vildósolas knew and dealt with many powerful and influential Basques in Mexico City and other places. Other Spaniards

¹¹¹ Joseph Antonio de Vildosola al Excelentísimo Señor Virrey Gobernador y Capitan General don Antonio Vucareli y Ursua, Presidio de Terrenate, 1 de julio de 1772, AGN, Provincias Internas 82, folio 377v.

¹¹² Razon formado por Padre Manuel Aguirre, BNM, número 48/726, folio 2v.

¹¹³ Torres Vildosola Prueba, GBA, número 1593, folio 286.

¹¹⁴ Juan Claudio de Pineda al Señor don Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, 7 de enero de 1767, BNM, número 227/905, folio 7v.

¹¹⁵ Hoja de Servicio, don Gabriel Antonio de Vildosola, AGN, Provincias Internas 47, folio 246.

¹¹⁶ Garate, "Basque Ethnic Connections," 71-93.

on the far northern frontier did not generally participate in the negotiations common between Vizcaínos and powerful Basque businessmen, politicians, importers, and financiers from Mexico City. It is more than coincidence that the Vildósolas could count on their fellow Basques to come to their aid when they were in trouble, and they in turn could be found siding with their countrymen in the ethnic controversies of the era. Like most ethnic groups, they fought among themselves but rapidly came to each other's defense when an outsider was involved. This is especially true of their relationship with the Jesuits: although the Basques were usually quick to come to the Jesuits' defense, ethnic ties often took precedence over religious convictions. In a larger sense, then, the Vildósola family is representative of the larger Basque community. By examining these men's personal histories, their experiences, and their ties to one another, one can begin to understand the role the Vizcaínos played in the shaping of colonial Sonora and New Spain.