

ORDINANCE "99"

By Eugene Hill

The Hispanic culture and Hispanic people have a great history and a great tradition. There are eighteen lusty nations in Latin America that developed in the Hispanic culture and tradition. Spanish is spoken by more than 300 million people in Latin American and by more than twenty million in the United States. During the sixteenth century Spain created the largest and most populous empire since the days of ancient Rome. Their colonial administration of this empire was marvelous in its development and rivaled Rome in its execution. Their empire lasted until the Napoleonic Wars hamstrung their efforts to maintain control over so large an area.

Very shortly after they were in the New Spain they founded a college for the sons of Indian chiefs in Mexico City, in 1536. They also founded a university in Santo Domingo, in 1538 and the University of Mexico, in 1553. By comparison, Harvard was not founded until 1636. The Spanish brought the first printing press to the New World in 1539. Spain brought Renaissance art, philosophy, and institutions and established them in the New World in a very short time. As an example of this, there were poetry competitions being held in Mexico City, with 300 poets competing, in the 1590's.

Although it is popular to criticize Spain for its supposed mistreatment of the Indians and its policies in the New World the facts do not justify the criticism. The Royal Council of the Indies convened a meeting of learned men to examine the treatment of the Indians. For 16 years the King held up all exploration and conquests until a Christian document could be developed. As a result, the "New Laws" of 1573 were expedited by King Phillip II, these new laws placed strict limits on the use of force and forbid slavery. Most marvelous of all, they granted citizenship, with all the corresponding rights, to the Indians.

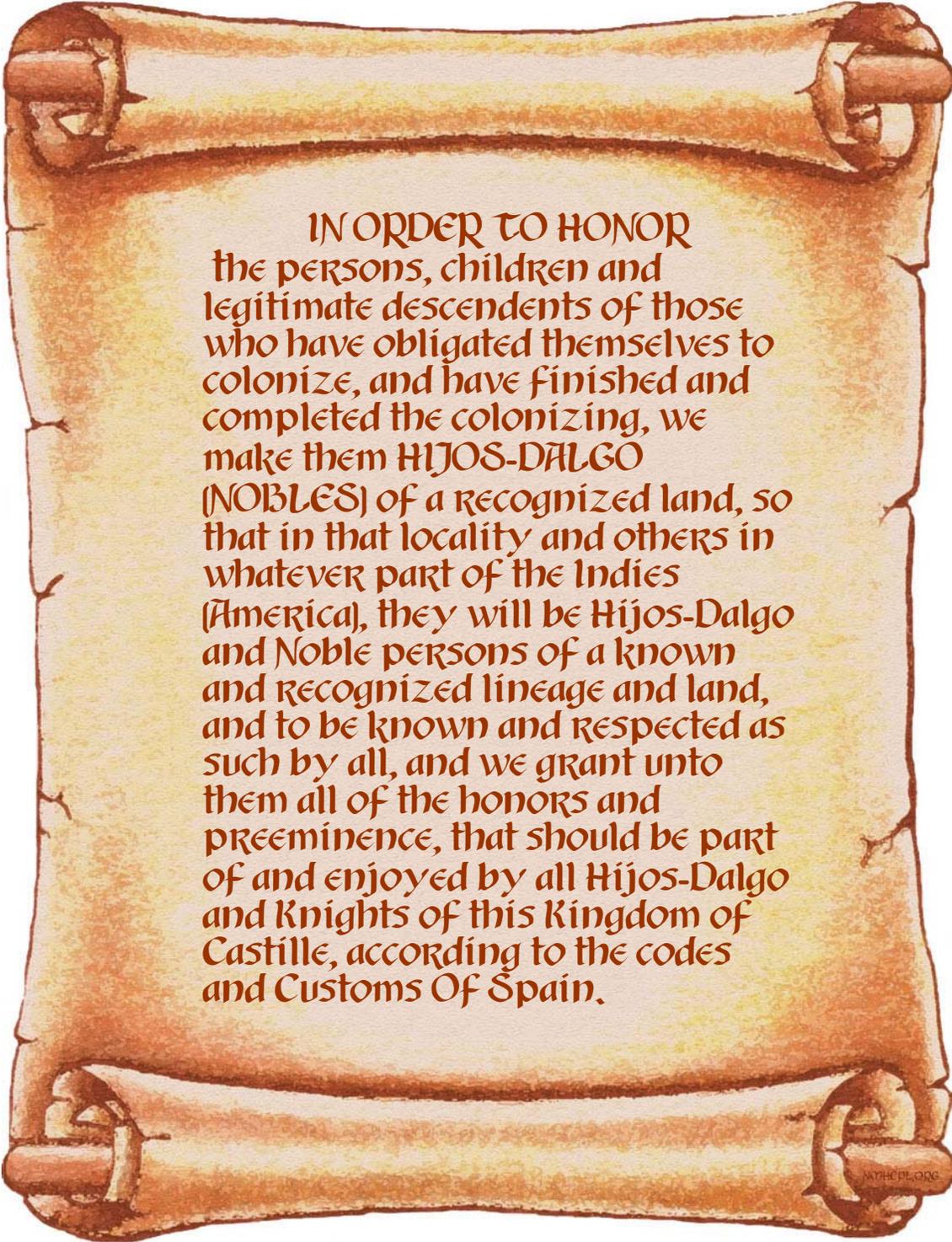
In these new laws we find Ordinance "99", a very unique law dealing with the colonizers of the Americas. It reads as follows:

ORDINANCE "99" OF KING PHILLIP II OF SPAIN

ISSUED THE 13TH DAY OF JULY OF 1573

LAWS OF THE INDIES: BOOK IV TITLE VI AND LAW VI

***THAT THE COLONIZERS AND THEIR CHILDREN AND LEGITIMATE
DESCENDENTS SHALL BE HIJOS-DALGO IN THE INDIES (AMERICA).***

A scroll with a parchment-like texture, rolled up at the top and bottom. The text is written in a dark brown, serif font. The scroll is set against a white background.

IN ORDER TO HONOR
the persons, children and
legitimate descendents of those
who have obligated themselves to
colonize, and have finished and
completed the colonizing, we
make them HIJOS-DALGO
(NOBLES) of a recognized land, so
that in that locality and others in
whatever part of the Indies
(America), they will be Hijos-Dalgo
and Noble persons of a known
and recognized lineage and land,
and to be known and respected as
such by all, and we grant unto
them all of the honors and
preeminence, that should be part
of and enjoyed by all Hijos-Dalgo
and Knights of this Kingdom of
Castille, according to the codes
and Customs Of Spain.