



Sister Cities (Albuquerque and Alburquerque) New Mexico and Spain

Alburquerque, (Badajoz) Spain became a Sister City with Albuquerque, New Mexico after culmination of a journey that began in March 1993 by me in search of my roots. My journey took me through our city's namesake Alburquerque in the Extremadura of Southwestern Spain.

Alburquerque in the rugged Extremadura region, an area that had produced several Spanish Explorers. Traces of Iberian, Celtic, Roman, Visigoth and Moorish cultures still remain, in the language, costumes, architecture and social mores. The Castle overlooks the community of red tiled roofs and white washed walls of homes sprawled along the escarpment. Olive and Cork trees dominate the landscape, and it is known as Spain's Cork Industry. Medieval Alburquerque with its 11th Century streets and markets, Musulmanes (Moors) referred to the village as ABU-AL-QURQ - "Town of the Christians and Jews", by the 13th century the spelling of Alburquerque evolved.

The villa is a fortress with a stone wall in Moorish Tradition surrounding the castle and the village. Erection of the Castle was initiated in 1276 as a gift to Don Alfonso Sánchez, son of King Don Dionís of Portugal, construction throughout the XV century brought the configuration to what we see today with the castle being named after Don Alvaro de Luna in 1463. In 1464 King Don Enrique IV, brother of Queen Isabel of Aragon appointed Don Baltran de la Cueva and made him the First Duke of Alburquerque.

In 1706 the 10th Duke of Alburquerque, Don Francisco Fernandez de la Cueva Enrique was the viceroy of New Spain in Mexico City (appointed by King Felipe II of Spain). In that year, the colonial governor of New Mexico, Don Francisco Cuervo y Valdes founded the Villa of Alburquerque (NM) to honor the viceroy and that's why we are Albuquerque!

While in Alburquerque, Spain I befriended Mr. Cipriano Sanchez Gonzalez, a businessman and Jesus Gamero Guerrero, manager of the Alcabalas Hotel. I have kept in constant contact with Mr. Sanchez and others ever since. I have made several visits, the last three with my late brother Nicolas. During our visit of September 1994, the idea of establishing a relationship common to both cities was discussed with then Alcalde, Emilio Martin Garcia.

In 1996 the current Mayor (Alcalde-Pres.) Angel Vadillo Espino, Mr. Cipriano Sanchez Gonzalez and three other businessmen, were invited to our 290th Anniversary Founders Day Celebration. Myself, Nicolas and Millie and Vidal Santillanes of Albuquerque Founders Day, Inc. hosted them during their stay.

Albuquerque was invited back to Alburquerque, Spain the following year (August 1997 for their third Medieval Festival). A delegation of 11 New Mexicans headed by my late brother Nicolas and myself made the trip and visited for 6 days.

In 1999 (the late) Mr. Vidal Velarde, a member of Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation and Chairman of Gijon, Spain visited the Sister City of Gijon and while there traveled to Alburquerque and delivered a letter from Mayor Baca to Alcalde-Pres. Angel Vadillo Espino with the idea of becoming friendship cities. After Mr. Velarde returned he suggested I call Ms. Betty Mae Hartman the President of Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation in regards to my contacts in Alburquerque, Spain. Shortly afterwards I contacted Ms. Hartman, regarding the idea of bringing our two cities together as Friendship Cities, (Alburquerque did not qualify as a Sister City due to its size). I was asked to Chair the Committee for Alburquerque, Spain to spearhead this effort.

After nearly a year of communicating back and forth this effort became a reality. Mayor Jim Baca signed our city's part of the Friendship Proclamation Agreement on July 16th, 2001 and on August 14th, 2001, myself, my late brother Nicolas, Betty Mae Hartman, Margaret Dike, (Chairman Sister Cities Board), and several other Sister Cities members journeyed to Albuquerque, Spain to complete the signing of the Proclamation Agreement by the Alcalde-Pres. Angel Vadillo Espino.

After two years of the two Albuquerque's being Friendship Cities (with many thanks to Mrs. Ruth Hashimoto's whose sponsorship and effort worked to make this possible) Sister Cities International authorized the two cities to become Sister Cities.

As of August 6th, 2003 the two cities became Sister Cities, with the two Mayors signing the proclamation.

Now we plan for our Tercentennial where all our sister cities will be invited to celebrate our 300th anniversary.

Ramon D Gonzales,
Committee Chairman, Albuquerque Spain
Albuquerque Sister Cities Foundation, Inc.

Please join us in welcoming the following guests from Albuquerque, Spain

Angel Vadillo Espino, Alcalde-Pres.
*Ayuntamiento de Albuquerque
San Mateo, 1 06510 Albuquerque, (Badajoz), Spain*
Pablo Cordovilla Fernandez, Proyectos Ciudades Hermanas
*Ayuntamiento de Albuquerque
San Mateo, 1 06510 Albuquerque, (Badajoz), Spain*
Ana Belén Gamero Samino, Agent, Economic Development
*Ayuntamiento de Albuquerque
San Mateo, 1 06510 Albuquerque, (Badajoz), Spain*
List of business people;
*Jose Manuel Castro Garcia
Marcos Bermudes Berjano
Manolo Maldonado Maya
Joaquin Maldonado Maya
Manuel Piriz Cardoso
Miguel Antonio Guerra Samino
Jose Rivero Sudon
Anibal Canelas Gonzalez
Cristian Lay*

