

Military

During the period of colonial colonization of California, the military played an important role in protecting the new colonist, pueblos and missions. In military terminology 'Soldados' and the term 'light cavalry' refers to such units that were characterized by speed and maneuverability. This required horses that could take their riders both far and fast.

The Soldados were instrumental in the exploration and colonization of California. The cavalry played an important role in the Mexican War, when the Mexicans were defeated and forced to cede an enormous tract of land in the Southwest.



Equine/Period Animals

No creature means so much to man, as does the horse. The Spanish horses introduced to California and the American southwest, are known as the finest in the world. These horses were the first to populate the new world, pre-dating all other breeds. Selective breeding produced three types: the proto-Andalusian, the Jinete, and the Gallego. They have characteristics which were incredibly beneficial to the early colonization, ranching and agriculture of California. These horses are rugged, surefooted, willing and versatile. The Heritage Discovery Center has the conservatorship of a herd of these horses - known as the Cruce Spanish Colonial Mission Horse. The Wilbur-Cruce horse is a horse strain derived from Spanish colonial times which persist into the present day in as pure a state as can be determined. The need to continue to conserve this herd is great, since they represent a unique genetic resource. They also fit perfectly into the content of the Living History Museum, as they were a major component in the development of colonial California.



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