

VALENCIA SOFA AND CHAIR

For 300 years, from 1492 until the late 1800s, countless numbers of ships set sail from ports such as this all over Spain to explore and conquer lands in the New World. And conquer they did. Cortes took Mexico in 1521, Pizarro claimed Peru in 1533, Valdivia led the conquest of Chile in 1541. The Philippines were claimed by the Spaniards in 1565. In 1598, don Juan de Onate traveled 1500 miles north of Mexico City to claim for the Spanish crown the territory now encompassing the states of New Mexico, Texas, Arizona and parts of California.

In the course of their travels, the Spaniards brought many beautiful things—furniture, porcelain, silver, and silks—from Spain to the New World. One such piece they might have brought was a *trastero* or armoire. Trasteros were used for storage and placed in almost every room of the home. These important furniture items were often elaborately carved or decorated. Hand-turned spindles, for example were a popular door decoration.

The same detail is employed on this sofa and chair stretcher. The Spanish *trastero* from which this spindle-stretcher is derived dates to the late 1800s and is part of the extensive furniture collections at the Museum of International Folk Art, in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

SPANISH PORT, CA. EARLY 1800S

