



C A S A D E A L I A G A

ANTIGUO SOLAR - 1535

480 YEARS OF HISTORY

A unique example in America, this colonial house has always been inhabited by the descendants of the Peruvian conqueror, Jerónimo de Aliaga y Ramirez.

Seventeen generations of Aliagas have lived in the street of “Calle del Hierro Viejo” – where today the palace stands – they have been there since the day that Lima was founded on the 18th January 1535, when Don Francisco Pizarro gave to his comrades in arms the first repartition in Lima, of colonial houses, built round an interior courtyard, called *Solares*. Months before in recognition of his fighting skills, Captain Aliaga had received *casonas* in Jauja, Piura and in Cusco, and for his role in the rescue of the Incan Atahualpa he received 3,994 silver frames and 8,880 gold pesos.

During the *Virreynato*, when Lima had already become a large, well designed city, with good families and rich mansions, the Aliaga Casona was

often used to protect within its walls those persecuted by war or by injustice. Very early in the history of the *Casona* illustrious conquerors took refuge there, such as Captain Sebastian Garcilaso de la Vega - father of the Inca chronicler - fleeing the wrath of Francisco de Carvajal, the Demon of the Andes. Since the forming of the Peruvian Republic among those who have been protected within the walls of the *casona* are: the President of Peru Miguel Iglesias, the Rear Admiral Aurelio García y García and Generals Manuel Velarde and Antonio Bentián.

In the 480-year history of the house – which is the same age as the city of Lima - successive generations of the family have left traces of their own fashions and styles. These can be found in the interior layout and in the furniture. In beautiful synthesis of Lima's architecture you can admire the different styles, from an old roof of the sixteenth century, which is probably the oldest in the capital, to the romantic furniture from the late nineteenth century. The only absent styles are those from the 20th and 21st centuries.

When you enter the Aliaga house it is like entering another world. The tall, strong front gate is the first boundary, which separates the hustle and bustle of the crowds and the businesses from the silence within, the private, from the commonplace. The staircase, with its marble steps and the vestibule lead you to a cocobolo hardwood and tumbaga railing, unique in Lima. In the large hallway, far from the noise of the streets reigns a calm, which has been lost to our generation, paintings from Lima and Cusco hang on the thick walls, also genealogical family documents and documents from the Independence. On the different floors there are cabinets and closets delicately crafted.

In the living room called “salón de los azulejos”, which means the living room with blue tiles, what catches your eye is the fireplace and an oil painting of the conqueror Aliaga. Beautiful seventeenth century tiles are hand painted and their colorful and flowery designs lighten up this somber room. In a showcase the sword of Captain Aliaga is kept. His sword was made at the forges in Solingen, and it was his faithful companion, it accompanied him in battles under the Italian sky and in the New World. On your way to the interior courtyard you walk along a luminous hall with carvings, sculptures, paintings, columns and coats of arms which highlight the two important titles of the family: Counts of San Juan de Lurigancho and Marquise Zelada de la Fuente.

Connecting to the corridor are various rooms, which are family sitting-rooms and bedrooms. On your right, you will see the vast gilded hall on whose

walls hang large mirrors in which Marie Antoinette's profile is highlighted, Louis XVI furniture, paintings and a large French carpet from the XIX century. Also there is a bronze stove which won an award at the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1889 and two fine multicolored Japanese vases, all of which show us fine examples of what the family collected during the course of centuries, and which today enrich the elegance of the different salons.

The dining room is generously proportioned and through its large windows you can appreciate the courtyard and hear the sound of water running in the English fountain, which was forged in the XIX century. The paneled ceilings is elaborately styled, and on its walls hang portraits of colonial figures painted by the leading masters of the eighteenth century, such as Cristobal Lozano and Jose Bermejo. The courtyard is one of the most original in the capital due to the different levels of the ancient *huaca* – or oratory – upon which the house was built. At certain times of the year not only can you hear the water running in the fountain but also the sound of the nearby river Rimac as it flows with its heavy load on its descent from the mountains.

The chapel is privileged that Mass is celebrated there. Until the time of the independence the chapel's walls were lined with silver paneling, which was the result and rewards of plundering. The family has in their custody old documents, which refer to the possessions they have accumulated over four centuries, as well as Royal appointments, letters and obituaries of notable figures, both political and literary. In this way the written legacy of Luis Enrique Tord has survived, for half a century in the Aliaga house, the Segovian conqueror who, loud and clear, proclaimed "Aliaga the warrior knight of both worlds".

THE PERUVIAN CONQUEROR JERONIMO DE ALIAGA

The conqueror Don Jerónimo de Aliaga, founder of the Aliaga lineage in Peru and initial builder of the house that bears his name in the street Palacio de Lima, was the son of a Segovian nobleman called Juan de Aliaga, Aragonese by birth, and Francisca Ramirez, his legitimate consort. In the ancestral home in Segovia hung the old family coat of arms: a golden field, a

band of sabers, at the top, a clump of gorse, with sinople, and below, the heads of three eagles with their necks twisted together.

Like many young men of his time and condition, Jerome at the age of sixteen, decided to go to *Las Indias* where he arrived at Castilla del Oro. From Panama he participated in and was noted for, several military operations under the command of captain Pedro de los Rios in the exploration of the Gulf of San Miguel on the South Sea coast. Later he was under the command of Captain Hernando de la Serna in the Totonaga campaign where Aliaga personally captured the chieftain of the region thus achieving the pacification of that town. Already an outstanding military man he joined in the expedition for the conquest of Peru, embarking from Panama on the ship "Gregorio", which was taking weapons, ammunition and horses to Francisco Pizarro. He joined the army of the leader in Coaque, and took part in the domination of numerous towns on the way to the island of La Puna, he integrated many of the conquered peoples and, as stated by the documents of the time, "fighting with his weapons and his horse, he did what a nobleman had to do."

He went with the leader Pizarro to Tumbes where they were informed, first hand, about the existence of the Inca Empire - the Tahuantinsuyo- he was present at the founding of the first Spanish city in Peru, San Miguel de Tangarará, on August 15th, 1532. In November that same year they went towards Cajamarca in search of the Inca Atahualpa and his army. From there Pizarro sent a delegation to the Inca king, sending as its leader captain Hernando de Soto and Pizarro's brother Hernando Pizarro. Aliaga took part as one of the horsemen in the party.

As agreed, the following day in the morning, Saturday November 16th, the imperial army slowly entered the great square of Cajamarca but they had to wait until dusk before the Incan king made his entry on a lavishly adorned litter. Friar Vicente de Valverde went out to meet him, to present their demands and to show him the book of Gospels, which the Incan King, not knowing what it was, threw to the ground.

This resulted in an attack to the call of "Santiago!". The horsemen were the first who attacked violently. After fierce fighting it was possible to capture the emperor alive and resulted in the withdrawal of the Incan army. With the Incan king imprisoned, and the posterior arrival of part of the ransom offered by the sovereign Inca, Aliaga's reward was 339.4 silver frames and 8,880 gold pesos. As Aliaga was able to read and write he served as a clerk in the army in May 1533.

During the following months Pizarro's army advanced through the territory of the Tahuantisuyo - which had been convulsed for years by the war that had taken place between the brothers Huascar and Atahualpa - they entered the sacred city of Cuzco on November 14th, 1533. Aliaga played the important role of overseer and in the distribution of the treasure in Cuzco he received 2,533 gold pesos and 1,023 silver frames. Aliaga was present in the founding of the city of Cuzco by the Spanish on March 23rd, 1534, and then in Jauja on April 25th of that same year. From then on Aliaga was the scribe to the army, which gave him participation in the distribution of Chuquirrecuay, in the region of huaylas.

Finally Aliaga took part in the founding of the final capital of the Governorate of New Castile-later Viceroyalty of Peru in the Rimac valley, on Monday January 18th, 1535, proceeding to name it the City of Kings, which would finally be known by the name of Lima. In documentation of the event Aliaga wrote: "and at the same time as the city of Kings was founded (the governor being Francisco Pizarro) I was given my site, where I built a colonial house and presently reside as an honourable person."

In his role as the royal accountant he travelled to Cuzco with Francisco Pizarro. He returned to Lima with the intention of going home to Spain to be with his family, a project that was prevented by the rebellion of Manco Inca. The lieutenant of the rebellion, Titu Yupanqui, surrounded Lima and Aliaga participated in the main actions of defending the newly founded capital. Acting as horseman for Captain Pedro de la Serna he identified the Incan army in Puruchuco. In these skirmishes he saved the lives of several fighters from being killed by the assailants and Pizarro rewarded him by making him Lieutenant Mayor. The death of Titu Yupanqui in combat ended the siege of the capital.

The crown gave him permission to travel to Spain and he was granted a new and personal coat of arms: designed and cut so that the first part was a castle of gules and in the second, of sinople, two tigers fighting and gripping each other by their claws, in the lower part a caravel sailing in the azure.

As explained by the historian Jose Antonio del Busto, Aliaga married one of the first Spanish ladies who arrived in Peru, Beatriz Vasquez de Medrano. She died in 1545. They had three sons, Juan, Jerónimo and Alonso, and a daughter Beatriz de Aliaga Medrano who died as a child. The Aliaga family of today are direct descendants from this marriage.

After the assassination of Governor Marquis Francisco Pizarro, on June 26th, 1541, together with Pedro Lopez de Cazalla, Diego de Peralta Cabeza de Vaca and others, Aliaga resisted in his home against the Almagro insurgents. Later when the insurgents abandoned the capital Pizarro's followers entrusted the command of the city to Aliaga. Months later he joined the Royal Commissioner Cristóbal Vaca de Castro taking part in the Battle at Chupas, on September 16th, 1542, thereby gaining the position of Chief Secretary of the Audiencia of Lima which promoted him to the rank of captain in 1544.

When Gonzalo Pizarro, brother of the murdered governor, commanded the Great Rebellion, Aliaga refused to participate, and on April 9th, 1548 he fought in the King's army against the rebels who were with Gonzalo.

Aliaga was appointed Governor General of Peru and along with Fray Tomas de San Martin they traveled with President Pedro de la Gasca to the mainland taking the gold to the Crown. In the name of God they had to face the uprising of the Contreras brothers, and Aliaga was appointed Governor of that port. After the insurrection was quelled the President honored him with the title of Admiral of the nine vessels which set sail for Spain. The fleet arrived in Seville on 16th September 1550. After visiting the shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Extremadura, Jeronimo de Aliaga and Fray Tomas de San Martin traveled to Germany to meet with the Emperor Charles V who conceded that Lima could build a stone bridge, and the reassessment of Peru's taxes and regulations to work in the mines.

On May 12th, 1551 they got permission for Lima to have a university to be styled after the university at Salamanca. In Spain Aliaga, who was a widower, decided to remarry. He married Juana Manrique de Lara, daughter of the third Earl of Paredes de Nava, Rodrigo Manrique de Lara, commander of Solana and the Alhambra in the Order of Santiago, and Isabel Fajardo, sister to the Marqués de los Vélez. Having decided to stay in Spain the Crown granted him permission by accepting his resignation to his commission in favour of his firstborn son. He lived as a sick man in Spain between 1562 and 1569. In April 1569 he wrote a "Will and testament" leaving his estate to his second wife and to his three children from his first wife: Juan, Jeronimo and Alonso de Aliaga Medrano. Then he set aside 12,000 pesos for the poor people of the town.

Don Jeronimo de Aliaga died on April 21st, 1569 in Villapalacios, which was dominion of his in-laws the Counts of Paredes de Nava. **Luis Enrique Tord.**

