



# Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

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*To Bring Alive the History of Santa Barbara for Present and Future Generations*

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## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ADDITIONAL PHOTOS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

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**"Sacred Steps: Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago" comes to the Casa de la Guerra Historic House Museum – Exhibition highlights 1,000-year-old Spanish pilgrimage route**



Azofra 1: Some portions of the Camino have remained unchanged for a millennium, such as this view of broad plains of green crops beneath a crisp blue sky. Photo by Tom Wood.

(Santa Barbara, CA) – The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation presents **"Sacred Steps: Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago,"** a traveling exhibition featuring **38 contemporary photographs and works of art depicting one of the most storied pilgrimage routes in all the world – opening Thursday, March 6, 2008 at the Casa de la Guerra Historic House Museum.**

With images captured on film and canvas by contributing artists during their own pilgrimage in Spain, this fascinating exhibit celebrates the experience of modern day pilgrims from the United States and Canada as they follow the historic *Camino de Santiago* (Way of Saint James) to the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia in northwestern Spain.

At its height in the Middle Ages, the basilica of Santiago de Compostela was second only to Rome and the Holy Land in attracting Christian pilgrims. The exhibition illustrates the resurgent interest since the 1980s in the 500-mile trek from the French border to the basilica, which is believed to contain the remains of the biblical apostle St. James.

The exhibit, curated by George D. Greenia, Professor of Modern Languages, College of William and Mary, is sponsored by the Xunta de Galicia, Spain and its Office of Tourism.

**The opening reception for “Sacred Steps: Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago” will take place on Friday, March 7 from 4:30 to 6:30pm at the Casa de la Guerra Historic House Museum. The exhibit will run from Thursday, March 6 through March 30, 2008.**

### **CALENDAR LISTING**

#### **OPENING RECEPTION:**

“Sacred Steps: Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago”

Friday, March 7

4:30 to 6:30 pm

Casa de la Guerra Historic House Museum

15 East De la Guerra Street, Santa Barbara

Refreshments Served

Public Welcome

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#### **EXHIBITION:**

“Sacred Steps: Pilgrimage on the Camino de Santiago”

#### **DATES:**

March 6 through March 30, 2008

#### **TIMES:**

Thursday – Sunday, Noon to 4:00 pm

#### **LOCATION:**

Casa de la Guerra Historic House Museum

15 East De la Guerra Street, Santa Barbara

#### **COST:**

Museum Admission \$3 (children 16 & under are free)

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION:**

Visit [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org) or call (805) 965-0093

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**ABOUT the Camino de Santiago** – The Camino de Santiago has led travelers for over a thousand years to the shrine and relics of St. James the Apostle in Galicia, the northwest corner of Spain. The crypt of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela, titled for James's common Spanish name (Sanctus Jacobus, Sancti Yagüe, Santiago), has long been one of Christianity's premier pilgrimage sites, only surpassed in popularity during the Middle Ages by Rome and the Holy Land, and outstripping them in forging celebrated trails such as the Camino francés (the French Route from the Pyrenees), the Ruta mozárabe (the Mozarabic Route that skims the north of Portugal) and the Vía de la Plata (the Silver Route that starts in Seville).

During the height of its popularity from the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries, the trek to Santiago attracted perhaps as many as one hundred thousand pilgrims every year. Travelers sought a chance to pray in the living presence of one of Christ's closest friends and the first apostle to be martyred. They also came to beg for cures for illness or affliction, to ensure blessings for their families or communities, to repent of their sins, and to overcome their doubts and the weakness of their faith. A rosary of sublime monuments, folksy secondary shrines, and hospitable monasteries and refuges were created to welcome vulnerable travelers who added their good will, artistry and labor to the Camino as they passed by.

Pilgrimage fell from favor in the early modern period in the wake of the stiffening of national identities and national borders. Protestant reformers pointedly denounced the abuses of casual pilgrimage and its often carnivalesque trappings. Even the once choked roads to Santiago lapsed into silence, lonely travelers making their own shelter in increasingly abandoned structures while in others the footsteps of aged guardians echoed along crumbling corridors. The Route of St. James became a trail smudged by time and eroded by the indifference of a less religious age.

But in the later twentieth century, for reasons that remain unclear, intrepid scholars and spiritual seekers began to thread their way along the nearly forgotten byways to Santiago once again. Spain undertook the mission of recovering the Camino as part of its national heritage, publicizing the ancient routes and investing in a simple infrastructure of well marked scenic trails. Town councils, parishes and local associations of Friends of the Camino equipped simple refuges (albergues or refugios) to provide a night's shelter at minimal cost. The universal goal was to provide safe passage for those hoping to breathe the same air, experience the same landscapes, and rest in the same cool churches that inspired an age of faith.

The tide of modern pilgrims now approaches a quarter of a million souls every year who retrace at least portions of the various Caminos in Spain, starting from their homes within

Iberia, or from nearby France, or trekking from Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany or Italy – and thousands of others coming from Brazil, Canada, Mexico, the United States, South Africa, and even Israel and Japan. **For more information visit**

**[www.sacredstepsinspain.com](http://www.sacredstepsinspain.com)**

**ABOUT the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation** – Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase and other concerned community leaders, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization working to preserve, restore, reconstruct and interpret historic sites within Santa Barbara County. The Trust is the primary force behind the reconstruction and preservation of El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park and the restoration of Casa de la Guerra in downtown Santa Barbara. The Trust is also preserving and restoring the Santa Inés Mission Mills—the site of a future California State Park and recently purchased the building that housed Jimmy’s Oriental Gardens, providing an opportunity to interpret the history of Santa Barbara’s Asian community in the Presidio neighborhood. The Trust is currently reconstructing the Northwest Corner of El Presidio de Santa Barbara, the eighteenth-century Spanish colonial fort that is Santa Barbara’s birthplace. Using over 50,000 adobe bricks made on site, these additions will eventually house the new Presidio visitors’ center, and with the help of the new Santa Barbara Presidio Research Center, serve to interpret the city’s Hispanic heritage, and the larger multi-cultural heritage of the surrounding Presidio neighborhood from the eighteenth century to the present. **For more information visit [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org)**

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