

# *EXPEDITION*



# *CONQUISTADOR*



**Traveling Exhibit Proposal**

*The Palm Beach Museum of Natural History*

## Minimum Requirements

500-3,500 sq. ft. (variable, based on available space) of display area

8-12 ft ceiling clearance

Available for 6-8 week (or longer) periods

Expedition Conquistador takes three to seven days to set up and take down

Assistance by venue staff may be required to unload, set up and break down the exhibit

Venue provides all set up/break down equipment, including pallet jacks, fork lift, etc.

## Structure of Exhibit

Basic:

Armored Conquistador Diorama – (3 foot soldiers or 1 mounted on horse, 120 sq. ft.)

Maps and Maritime Navigation Display

Weapons and Armor Display

Trade in the New World Display

Daily Life and Clothing Display

American Indian Weaponry and material culture (contemporary 16<sup>th</sup> century)

Optional:

First Contact Diorama (explorers, foot soldiers, sailors, priests, American Indians)

American Indian Habitation Diorama

Living History Component

**Both the basic and optional versions of Expedition Conquistador can be adjusted via the modification of the number of displays to accommodate venues with limited exhibition space.**

**We welcome your questions regarding “Expedition Conquistador”  
For additional information or to book reservations please contact**

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# Expedition Conquistador

Expedition Conquistador provides the public with a vision of what life was like for the earliest European explorers of the New World as they battled to claim territory, discover riches, and later, establish colonies in North America, South America, and the Caribbean. Visitors will be able to explore the world of these early adventurers including both life aboard ship and on land. They will get an unprecedented opportunity to view original and replica historical weapons and armor, see what hazards awaited these expeditions, and to view clothing and tools from the time period.

Standing at the center of the exhibit are three armored 16th century conquistador soldiers, (or a single equestrian mounted warrior) reminiscent of many of the exploring expeditions. This scene is supported by sub-displays featuring original artifacts and museum-quality replicas including arms, armor, trade items, navigational instruments, and clothing. A number of modern maps, prints, and illustrations support the exhibit

Expedition Conquistador also looks into the world and life-ways of the people these men encountered, the American Indians of Florida and the Caribbean, via the presentation of actual archaeological artifacts and replica tools and weapons.

The beginnings of European colonization in the New World began a series of violent changes. Cultures and technology both clashed on a monumental basis. Here was the flowering chivalry of the European continent brought to its knees by climate, indigenous populations, and while at the same time, European contact decimated indigenous groups via disease.

The European period of contact with other world cultures occurred at a pivotal period in military history. Prior wars were fought by lines of heavily armor-clad aristocrats mounted with lances. These “armored tanks” were supported by vast groups of conscripted infantry and the newly adapted trained arquebusier or musket-bearing soldier. As time wore on and lighter weapons were introduced, the role of an aristocratic land-holding warlord gave way to professional fighting men and mercenary groups. Many of these professionals formed the basis for military expeditions to the New World.

The Palm Beach Museum of Natural History, is a 501(c)3 non-profit Florida corporation with more than ten years’ experience in the creation educational travelling exhibits and informal learning through history and the sciences. The museum also conducts original research and publishes its findings

# First Contact – Central Diorama

The basic central diorama of “Expedition Conquistador” features three fully armored European conquistador soldiers. Dependent upon space available, more conquistador soldiers and sailors may be added as well as a welcoming group of American Indians.



With a large enough space available (and ceiling clearance), a mounted and armored conquistador cavalryman with lance on horseback may be included.

To the museum visitor, this display demonstrates the importance of mounted cavalryman in military operations during the age of exploration.



# Weapons

The European arms race reached an all-time high by the mid-1500s. All across Europe, wars raged and brought with them a massive demand for varying types of weapons. In earlier centuries, the mounted aristocratic knight was quickly being replaced by more maneuverable and lightly-armored infantry.



Expedition Conquistador highlights the variety of weapons carried on early expeditions. Swords, crossbows, daggers, lances, and early primitive firearms are featured in several display areas of the exhibit.



# Armor

Although armor would be made obsolete by the development of gunpowder and the increased presence of firearms and artillery on the battlefields of Europe, steel armor was still a recognized necessity for warfare. In exploring unknown lands and warring with indigenous populations, European personal defenses were often found to be lacking.



Combined with having to cross swamps, contend with humid tropical environments, and face attack weapons which could pierce steel plates, armor quickly lost its importance, but still remained symbolic to the representation of the European conquerors in the New World.

# **Ships and Life at Sea**

The story began at the great port centers of Europe where ships, armies, and sailors embarked for a transatlantic voyage to the New World. Ships weighed down with cargoes of foodstuffs, arms and protective armor, items for trading, as well as tools for keeping mending their ship and spare lumber for rebuilding their ship if it was damaged.



Expedition Conquistador includes displays of items carried by sailors for good luck as well as tools of maintenance, including sewing equipment to mend sails and foods which sustained the sailors and soldiers on their voyages.

Model Sixteenth Century ship typical of those used by the Conquistadors



# Maps and Navigation

Maps and maritime navigation played an important role for these ocean-going explorers. Sea voyages were the 16<sup>th</sup> century equivalent to taking a shuttle trip to the moon. Being able to explore without running their ship aground on a reef was just as important as logging any unknown lands and their inhabitants.



Expedition Conquistador contains original and museum quality replicas of early navigation equipment used by Europeans to explore the far reaches of Western knowledge. The land “beyond the horizon” was mapped using simple but effective tools which were to remain relatively unchanged until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The exhibit contains examples of equipment used to record and map these early expeditions, as well as to navigate the way homeward.



Sounding Leads

# Trade in the New World

Right and Below: Samples of trade items brought to the New World, as well as actual artifacts recovered from 16th and 17<sup>th</sup> Century sites.



A sample of the artifacts contained in the exhibit are glass and ceramic trade beads, small iron tools, religious items including an original copper/gilt silver crucifix, and of course, copper coins.

# Daily Life in the New World



Left: An example of a primitive encampment similar to those which were established on the coast of La Florida by Spanish, French, and English expeditions.



Right: Examples of men and women dressed and equipped as explorers who came to the New World in an attempt to colonize it.

Clothing examples included in this exhibit are highly authentic, hand-made replicas.

# American Indian Life

Right and below: Examples of bone and shell tool replicas based on archaeological evidence used by populations of Caribbean and Southeastern Indigenous populations.



Left: Native American foods were often of extreme importance to European expeditions, as only finite amounts of preserved food could be brought to the New World and this forced many Europeans to steal or extort foodstuffs from native populations.

An American Indian habitation site diorama including several mannequins may be included depending upon space available.

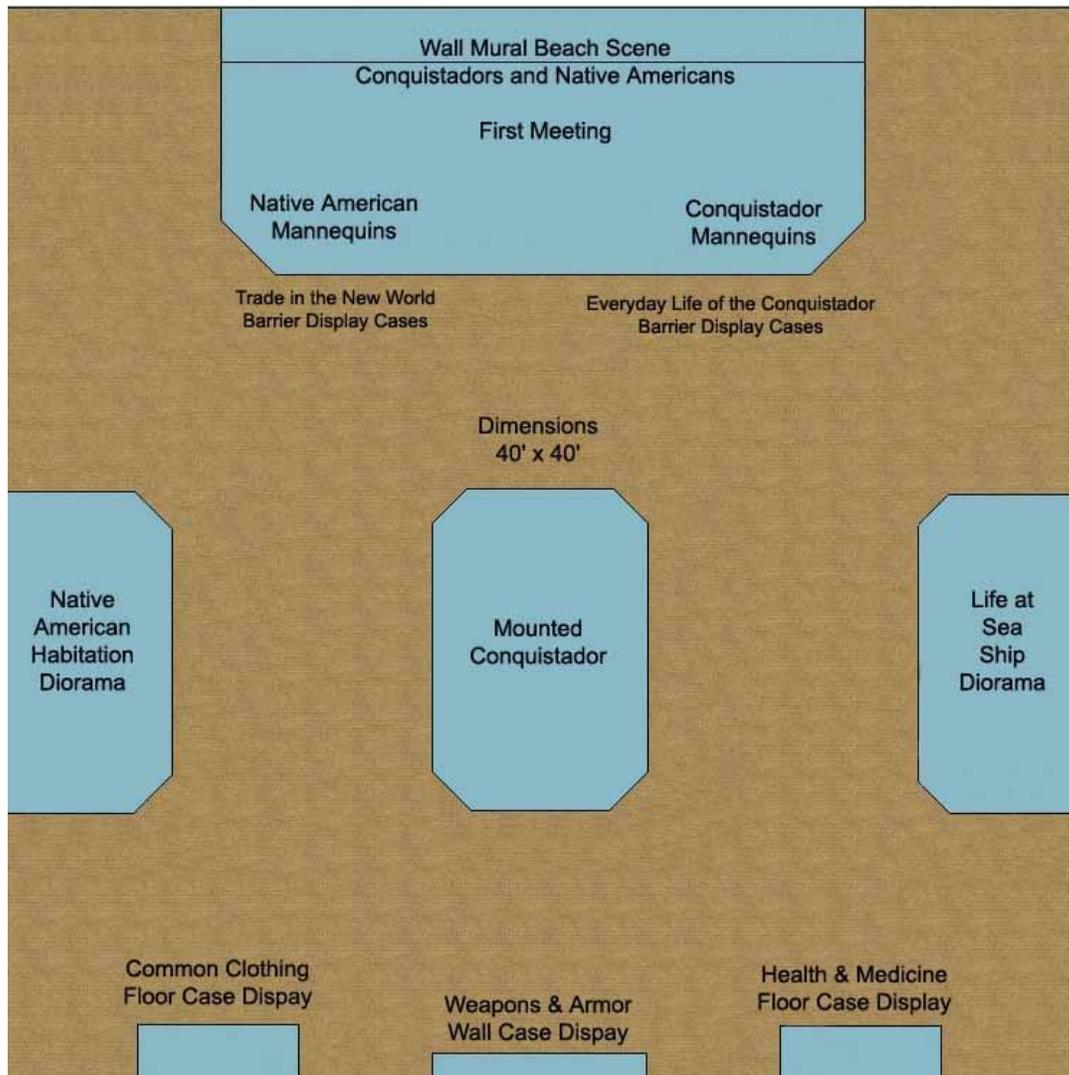
# Living History Component and Outreach

Expedition Conquistador also has an optional “living history” educational outreach program (various topics are available) which offer museum and historical society visitors the opportunity to meet their very own conquistador. Children will have the opportunity to see real historical weapons and try on pieces of armor (in a supervised setting), handle trade goods, and learn firsthand what life was like for explorers to the New World.



# Expedition Conquistador Floor Plan

The following hypothetical floor plan arrangement allows for 4 foot minimum to 8 foot maximum width walkways to permit easy traffic flow and to include the accommodation of visitors in wheelchairs. This plan can be modified and adapted to fit a variety of locations or room configurations.



Suggested Floor Plan 50' x 70' 3,500 sq. ft.

Displays of mannequins and armored warriors are mounted on custom-made bases, temporary stages, or directly on the exhibit floor. The main dioramas are surrounded by two-foot wide wooden barriers upon which are attached the exhibit information panels, graphics, maps, photos. Hands-on and “touch” items are also permanently affixed to these barriers. An additional one foot wide buffer space between the barriers and the diorama platforms has also been planned for.

# Basic Exhibit Inventory

## Weapons and Armor

1. Original 16<sup>th</sup> Century Armor Components
2. Spanish Sword, Rapier, 40" long) (Reproduction)
3. Broadsword (38" long) (Reproduction)
4. Dagger (12" long) (Reproduction)
5. Lance (Original, with Reproduction haft)
6. Assorted Horse Tack (Original)
7. Sallet Helmet (Reproduction)
8. Morion Helmet (Reproduction)
9. Kettle Helmet (Reproduction)
10. Burgeonet Helmet (Reproduction)
11. Gorget (Reproduction)
12. Breast and Back Plate (Reproduction)
13. Spaulders (Shoulder Armor) (Reproduction)
14. Chainmail Hood (Reproduction)
15. Chainmail Armor Section (Reproduction)
16. Chainmail Skirt (Paunce) (Reproduction)
17. Arm and Leg Armor (Reproduction)
18. Musket balls from matchlock musket (Original)
19. Matchlock cord (fuse) (Reproduction)
20. Crossbow quarrels (bolts) (Original)
21. Spurs (Reproduction)



**Morion Helmet**



**Body Armor**



**Crossbow**

# Basic Exhibit Inventory (cont.)

## Navigation Equipment

1. Quadrant (Reproduction)
2. Chip Log and line reel (Reproduction)
3. Astrolabe (Reproduction)
4. Compass (reproduction)
5. Inkwell (Original)
6. Charts (reproduction)
7. Dividers (Original)
8. Model XVI Century Ship

## Personal Possessions

1. Wool Sailor's hat (Reproduction)
2. Wooden Rosary (Reproduction)
3. Wooden Spoon (Reproduction)
4. Personal Eating Kit (Reproduction)
5. Sailor's Sewing Kit (Reproduction)
6. Fire-Making Flint and Steel (Original)
7. 16th Century Armor Buckles (Original)

## Trade Items

1. Spice Box (Original)
2. Brass Hawk Bells (Reproduction)
3. Glass and Ceramic Trade Beads (Original)
4. Red Wool Fabric (Reproduction)
5. 16th Century Copper/Gilt Silver Crucifix (Original)
6. Iron Trade Chisels (Reproduction)
7. 16th Century Copper Coins (Original)

## Shipboard Items and supplies

1. Wooden Trencher (Reproduction)
2. Pewter Plate (Original)
3. Wine Jug
4. Chests, Boxes, and Barrels (Reproduction)
5. Water cask
6. Clay Pots and Jugs (Reproduction)
7. Olive Jar Fragments (Original)

## American Indian Artifacts

1. Pottery sherd assemblage (original)
2. Habitation site artifacts (original)
3. Items of personal decoration (original)
4. Bone, shell, and stone tools (original and replica)

# Exhibit Highlights

- Conquistador Mannequins dressed in war regalia (armor and weapons)
- Original Artifacts from the 16th Century
- Museum-quality replica items recreated from those found at Florida sites and contemporaneous shipwrecks
- A look at the “arms race” during the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries: Weapons utilized by the conquistadors in their attempts to colonize the New World
- American Indian Archaeological artifacts including pottery sherds, carved pendants, and other material excavated from habitation sites. Replica and actual examples of shell, bone, and other tools.
- Engaging Educational Programming and Living History Component Available (Outreaches and Outdoor Demonstrations including: cooking, women’s roles in New World Exploration, weapons and armor, shipboard life, and the blending of Old World and New World cultures)



## *The Palm Beach Museum of Natural History*

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