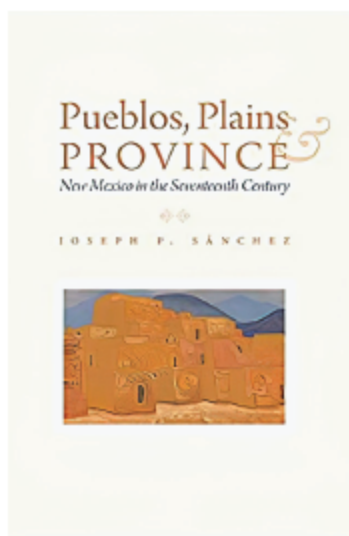


“Pueblos, Plains & Province–New Mexico in the Seventeenth Century” by Joseph P. Sanchez. Louisville, CO: University Press of Colorado, 2021. 325 pages, end notes, index, drawings. Hardcover \$48.00

Even for those readers who are familiar with the exploration stories of de Anza, Oñate, de Peralta, and de Vargas, this new volume by Professor Joseph Sanchez is a refreshing modern presentation. Sanchez takes time to clear the slate and to present each character on an evolving stage without preconceptions or prejudices. He looks at the story of the colonization of New Mexico from 1595 through the Pueblo Revolts of 1680 and the reconquest. He writes as a neutral observer, not taking sides with either the native Indian cultures or the newly arriving Spanish. Through this approach, we avoid some of the “what were they thinking?” questions that linger from the traditional colonization reports.

Oñate surprises a collection of Puebloan leaders in 1598 when he asks for their submission to the Spanish crown. The surprise is that in this introductory meeting he already knows the names and location of at least thirty-seven of their pueblos by their Indian names. The problem for the reader is that we may not know those locations. When he strays from the familiar Rio Grande communities to the “Mountain Air” pueblos



you are left somewhat adrift. Prepare to keep your computer browser busy as you find Galisteo, Quarai, Tajiue, and Chilili and many of the other thirty-seven. A contemporary map is a necessity for this otherwise well-written narrative. It is unfortunate that such a map is not included.

Also, though informative, it is too bad that two chapters of this narrative are taken up by the unfortunate and ill-advised brawling between the “Two Majesties,” i.e., the governor and the church. The fight might be viewed as a contest for the allegiance of the native Puebloans, but it is portrayed as a peevish struggle between a governor who was incarcerated for nine months in an Inquisition lockup by an out-of-control church official, ostensibly for the ownership of a few buffalo calves. Excommunications and public atonements are thrown around in a frequency that greatly outdoes the Puritans of Cotton Mather’s New England seventy years later.

For lovers of New Mexico this retelling of the arrival of Europeans and the subsequent changing of the land and cultures is a stimulating journey to the past and a reminder of why we love visiting the remnants of this early colonial culture.

Posse members who take the time to look at the feature article in our January 1960 *Roundup* magazine (available on our website www.DenverPosse.org) will have a leg up on knowing the people and places that form the tale told in *Pueblos, Plains and Province*.

This book was made available to the Denver Posse in PDF form, one of the first in our e-Book Reader program.

– Dan Shannon