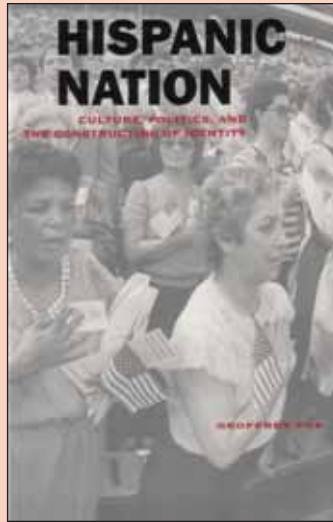


LIBROS NUEVOS

By Andrew Lovato

Hispanic Nation: Culture, Politics, and the Construction of Identity. By Geoffrey Fox. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson. 1997. 264 pages.



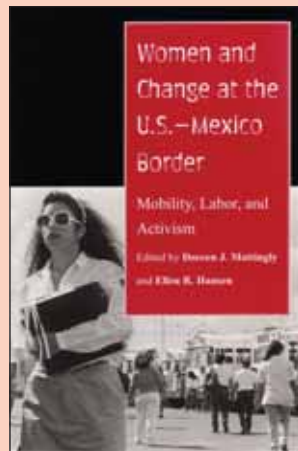
A decade has passed since the initial publication of this book, but the issues raised appear to be increasing in relevance, especially given the importance of the Hispanic vote in deciding the political future of the country. In his thought-provoking examination of Hispanic identity in the U.S., Fox tracks the emergent identity shift of Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans and other Americans of Spanish-language origin separate from their regional, racial and political orientations toward a single American Hispanic identity.

Fox, who is of Puerto Rican descent, asserts that the implications of this changing paradigm will have a profound impact in relation to Hispanic political power and cultural influence on American society. Contemporary technological influences such as Spanish-language television and the Internet are creating a united audience that transcends boundaries and identifies itself as a homogeneous community. He argues that the single most important factor is not origin but rather “unity of language.”

As Fox points out, toward the end of the 20th century there were more than 17 million Spanish speakers in the United States, more than 10 times as many as the next largest groups (French, 1.7 million, German, 1.5 million, Italian, 1.3 million and Chinese, 1.25 million). In addition to television, Fox cites Spanish-language newspapers and radio as vehicles in the forging of a common Hispanic identity. He labels these media influences as “The Image Machine” and examines the growing clout it will have on Hispanics and non-Hispanics alike.

The concluding area that Fox examines is the influence of Hispanic artists (writers, visual artists, filmmakers, musicians, etc.) and their role as “Image Makers” for the evolving Hispanic identity in the 21st century.

Women and Change at the U.S.–Mexican Border: Mobility, Labor and Activism. Edited by Doreen J. Mattingly and Ellen R. Hansen. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson. 2008. 231 pages.



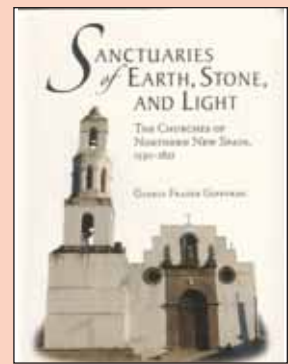
This text is an insightful and penetrating look into the complex and challenging lives of women along the U.S.–Mexican border. In the last two decades, policy changes have altered the landscape considerably. The emergence of NAFTA, growing U.S. efforts to seal the border against undocumented migrants and changing attitudes toward Mexican immigrants have created contradictions of opportunity and disempowerment for border women.

Contributions to this anthology have been provided by both Mexican and U.S. scholars who focus on issues related to migration, shifts in women’s consciousness in the workplace and political and social activism in border communities. Part one examines the question of women’s mobility along the border, as well as issues such as employment, child care, transportation and health care that play key roles in their daily lives. The second section focuses on labor and empowerment in the border region. The essays examine the gender composition of the *maquiladora* workforce, the autonomy of working women and domestic service/care labor employment. The concluding section addresses the question of how women’s activism is changing the border.

This collection is a valuable contribution to both U.S.–Mexican border social science research and feminist scholarship. Women’s experiences and stories are embedded throughout. The common thread that links the essays in this text is the portrayal of women as agents of change in their own environment. Whether they are workers, students, leaders or researchers, they are contributing toward a climate of empowerment, social change and justice.

Sanctuaries of Earth, Stone and Light: The Churches of Northern New Spain 1530–1821. By Gloria Fraser Giffords. The University of Arizona Press. 2007, Tucson. 416 pages.

Gloria Fraser Giffords’ comprehensive study of Spanish colonial architecture is a valuable contribution to the understanding and appreciation of the churches of northern New Spain over nearly three centuries. She provides an analytical framework that offers a view of all these mission churches as a single geographical, cultural and social entity. This beautifully produced volume features 200 photographs and more than 300 illustrations.



Diverse cultural influences from Europe, Moslem Mediterranean countries and the indigenous peoples of the northern New Spain territory are meticulously traced in Giffords’ examination of structures, furnishings, liturgical vestments and objects and religious symbols and iconography. She writes, “The church buildings, decorations, and furnishings of northern New Spain serve as other records, records in stone, tiles, wood and adobe that have much to tell those who can read them.”

The architecture of these churches does indeed impart a tale of conversion and the demise of indigenous religion and culture. It also recounts the introduction of new technologies and worldviews that would influence the development of the entire region.

When compared with their counterparts in central and southern Mexico, the churches of northern New Spain were much simpler and lacked the opulent, dramatic visual effects and lavish decorations due to their more isolated geography and lack of mineral wealth. However, these churches were also an integral part of the Spanish colonial legacy, often constructed in a unique fashion that departed from original plans and style considerations due to economic constraints and the changing needs of the community.

Giffords’ study spins a story as reliable and compelling as any historical investigation. This volume is required reading for anyone with an interest in Spanish colonial history.

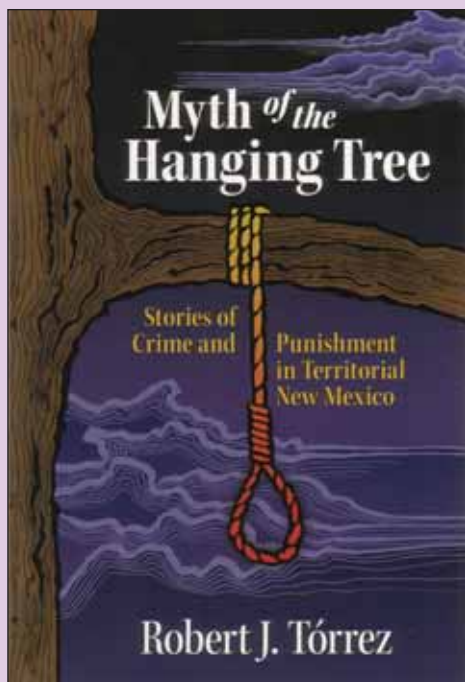
Andrew Lovato received his doctorate in intercultural communication from the University of New Mexico in 2000. He is an assistant professor of communications at Santa Fe Community College and teaches courses in interpersonal, intercultural, small group and speech communication. He is the author of *Santa Fe Hispanic Culture: Preserving Identity in a Tourist Town*.



LIBROS NUEVOS

By Adrián Bustamante

Myth of the Hanging Tree: Stories of Crime and Punishment in Territorial New Mexico. By Robert J. Tórréz. University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 2008, 186 pages.

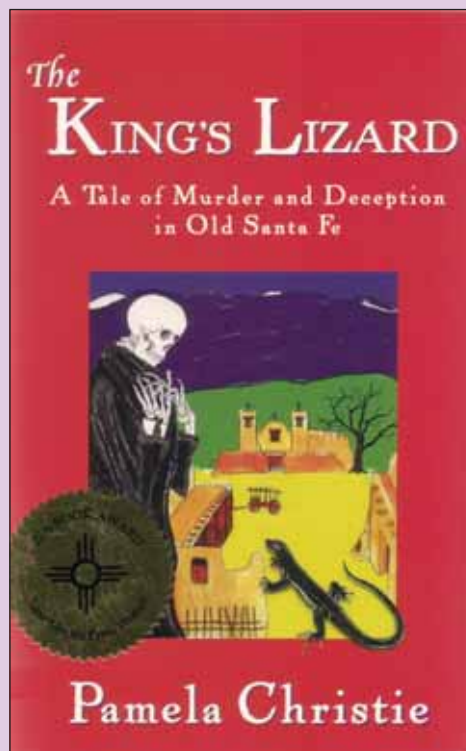


New Mexico needed an examination of its capital punishment process, especially during the territorial period, 1846–1912. Former State Historian Robert Tórréz does just that. The first chapter examines the lynching and legal hangings that occurred in New Mexico. Surprisingly, during the colonial and Mexican periods, capital punishment was rarely meted out, and even after American law took over, Mexican juries were hesitant to condemn prisoners to death, much to the frustration of prosecutors and judges.

In chapter two, Tórréz dispels many of the myths of how “frontier justice” was practiced in New Mexico. The following eight chapters describe actual cases of hangings from 1846 through 1912, including the case of Paula Ángel, who may have been the only woman hanged in New Mexico. Tórréz addresses various questions in these chapters, among them: Did “hanging judges” exist during this era? Was stealing horses a capital offense? Who gave the order for the hanging to take place? Was race a factor in whether a person received the death sentence? The last chapter describes the building of the old penitentiary, that fortresslike structure that some of us remember from our youth that stood on the present-day corner of Cordova and St. Francis in Santa Fe.

I highly recommend this informative book; it adds to our understanding of the territorial period and capital punishment without the morbidity often sensationalized in western movies and novels.

The King's Lizard: A Tale of Murder and Deception in Old Santa Fe. By Pamela Christie. Lone Butte Press, Santa Fe, 2005, 340 pages.

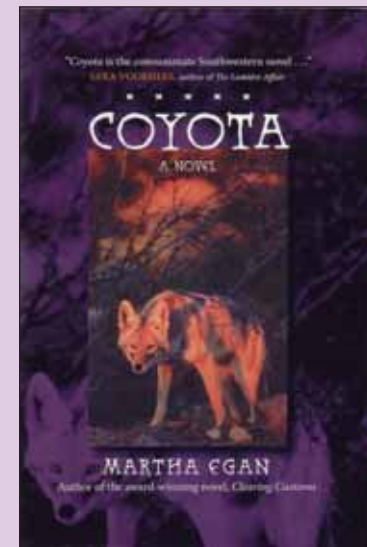


This engaging tale of intrigue and murder, winner of the New Mexico Press Women’s 2007 Zia Book Award, is set against the backdrop of Gov. Juan de Anza’s initiative to achieve peace with the Comanche Nation in 1782. In true mystery genre fashion, seemingly unrelated events and characters arise—the murder of a soldier on the Plaza, the citizen militia beginning to desert, a friar gone mad and brutal attacks on the Aguilar family—until Nando Aguilar, the King’s Lizard, an undercover spy for the government, begins to piece the mystery together. Nando is a mestizo whose mother, Nana, was a Ute slave in the Aguilar household. Nana has gone back to her people, and Nando is raised in his Spanish father’s home and considered a sibling by the family.

Themes of the plot include the slave trade, which though illegal was still a profitable business in the late 18th century; intrigue among the nomadic tribes battling the Spanish colonists as well as against their neighboring tribes; the peace sought by Governor Anza and the hardships suffered by the New Mexico colony.

There is good character development, with even the terrain of northern New Mexico figuring as character in the story. The author occasionally slips into modern-day idiomatic expressions, but this novel is an enjoyable page-turner.

Coyota: A Novel. By Martha Egan. Papalote Press, Santa Fe, 2007. 173 pages.



Nena Herrera-Casey, the protagonist, is the *coyota*, the youngest in her family, who has an affinity for the coyotes that appear from time to time to protect her. As the story develops, she needs their protection and the help of others. Two renegade drug enforcement agents (DEA) realize Nena has overheard their conversation regarding a murder while picking up a shipment of South American sweaters for her small import business. At first Nena is not sure what she heard, but it becomes clear once her house is broken into and she realizes she is being followed.

During the Christmas break from her part-time job teaching Spanish at the University of New Mexico, Nena takes a trip to Mexico to visit relatives and to introduce her friend Cal to Mexican culture. It starts off as a fun trip but turns into a nightmare. The DEA agents and their Mexican cohorts have followed her, and she soon realizes she is in grave danger. Cal, for his part, nearly gets them arrested due to his lack of judgment and ethnocentrism. The pace of the novel accelerates and it is helpful for Nena that her Mexican *familia* comes on the scene.

It is apparent that author Martha Egan, who is an importer herself, is very familiar with Mexico and its culture and the Hispanic culture of the Southwest, of which she writes without sentimentality or clichés. *Coyota* is highly recommended for its vividness and well-crafted plot.

Adrián Bustamante was born in Pecos, N.M., and raised in Santa Fe, N.M., where his family has lived for almost three centuries. He received his doctorate from the University of New Mexico in American studies. He spent 34 years in higher education in New Mexico and southern Colorado.

