

# Colonial Latin American Historical Review

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Volume 2

Issue 3 *Volume 2, Number 3 (Summer 1993)*

Article 10

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6-1-1993

## Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispanic Homeland*

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### Recommended Citation

Ramírez, Carlos Brazil. "Richard L. Nostrand, *The Hispanic Homeland*." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 2, 3 (1993): 379.  
<https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr/vol2/iss3/10>

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Drs. Encinias, Rodríguez, and Sánchez have provided a real contribution to our understanding of the first successful Spanish settlements of northern Mexico.

Franklin G. Smith  
*El Paso, Texas*

*The Hispanic Homeland.* By Richard L. Nostrand. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992. v + 281 pp. Maps, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$29.95 cloth.)

In this work the historical geographer Richard L. Nostrand traces the expansion and contraction of what he terms the "Hispanic Homeland" of the Hispanic people of New Mexico, from the Spanish conquest to 1980. He views the New Mexican Hispanos as "culturally distinct" from other Hispanos in the southwestern United States in that they shaped, and in turn were shaped by, the geography of the region, and by their interactions with indigenous ethnic groups, Pueblo and nomadic, and later with Anglo-Americans.

Nostrand's main thesis is that the New Mexican Hispanos differ in two distinct ways. First, their ancestors arrived earlier and more directly from Spain and therefore, they have managed to preserve "certain archaic Iberian cultural forms" not found readily among Hispanos in other parts of the southwest. The second reason he cites is that they managed to develop in relative isolation while their numbers increased.

In supporting his thesis, Nostrand mentions a number of cultural attributes that he maintains set New Mexican Hispanos apart from Hispanos who came into the Borderlands later. These cultural attributes include their distinctive Spanish language, names, folk plays, *santos*, their love of chile in food, and their nonobservance of Mexican holidays. By the 1920s, these and other attributes had led to the creation of "...a general ethnic identity with overtones that were cultural and racial."

Nostrand takes the position that the New Mexico Hispanos are predominantly a mestizo people despite claims to the contrary, and that they differ in a "racial sense" from Mexican Americans in that they

intermingled more with nomadic tribes. In his view, the Hispanos' identity with their Spanishness sets them apart from other Hispanics. This Spanish identity coupled with their characteristic cultural attributes makes their homeland an "ethnic island" in the continental United States.

In developing his position, Nostrand lays out his argument in ten well-researched and well-written chapters. In the first chapter he discusses the distinct nature of the Hispanos of New Mexico and their demographic clout in the region which led to the creation of their homeland. The next eight chapters are used to document how this process occurred: the Spanish conquest and colonization of New Mexico; the relationships established between the Hispanos and the Pueblo and nomadic indigenous people of the region; the expansion of the Hispano population into areas that are today parts of contiguous states; the Anglo-American penetration, conquest, and settlement in the homeland; the spread of Hispanos into peripheral areas; the impact of Mexican immigration on the Hispanos; the depopulation of the villages; and the urbanization process and its effect on Hispano culture.

He concludes by discussing the contemporary Hispanic homeland, predicting that the Hispano "ethnic island" will not last, but will continue to constitute a "cultural region" because of the distinctive culture, numbers, and geographical concentration of the area.

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*By Force of Arms: The Journals of Don Diego de Vargas, 1691-1693.* Edited by John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1992. xvi + 668 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. \$32.50 cloth.)

This edited volume by John L. Kessell and Rick Hendricks is the second in the planned multi-volume documentary series to present the journals, letters, and official government records of Don Diego de Vargas's tenure as governor in New Mexico from 1691-1697 and 1703-