

# Colonial Latin American Historical Review

---

Volume 10  
Issue 2 *Volume 10, Issue 2 (Spring 2001)*

Article 5

---

4-1-2001

## José de la Cruz Pacheco Rojas, Breve historia de Durango

Oakah L. Jones Jr.

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr>

---

### Recommended Citation

Jones, Oakah L. Jr. "José de la Cruz Pacheco Rojas, Breve historia de Durango." *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 10, 2 (2001): 254. <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/clahr/vol10/iss2/5>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Colonial Latin American Historical Review by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

*Breve historia de Durango.* Por José de la Cruz Pacheco Rojas. (México, D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2001. 285 págs. Mapas, cuadros, apéndices, bibliografía. Precio no disponible.)

Formerly director of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH)—Centro Durango, José de la Cruz Pacheco Rojas is presently with INAH in Sinaloa, Mexico. He is an authority on the history of the Mexican state and the city of Durango, as revealed in this comprehensive book that spans from pre-Columbian times to 1940. Also active with the Camino Real de Tierra Adentro project in Mexico, he has attended colloquiums and published/edited research studies on colonial Nueva Vizcaya (of which Durango was the most important part of the Spanish northern frontier).

Pacheco Rojas has written this regional history of Durango with a view toward political, economic, and cultural topics, relating them to

Mexican history. It is part of the series, *Serie Breves Historias de los Estados de la República Mexicana*, sponsored and directed by the Fideicomiso Historia de las Américas and El Colegio de México. The book begins with two general chapters about the diversified geography/natural scenery and the prehispanic inhabitants of today's state of Durango, then continues with six chapters on the colonial period (the last one including the independence era), and five on the national one. These are followed by an epilogue; useful appendices (a chronology and list of governors from the kingdom/province of Nueva Vizcaya, and of the state from 1821 to the present); and an excellent bibliographical essay. Although lacking footnotes or chapter notes, occasional references to sources appear within the narrative.

Noting that "El período colonial ha recibido mayor atención de los estudiosos" (p. 274), and that "Durango fue el asiento de los poderes políticos y eclesiásticos de la Nueva Vizcaya, cuna de la conformación histórica del Norte..." (p. 25), Pacheco Rojas emphasizes colonial Durango, interwoven with Nueva Vizcaya, in about one-half of the text. Each chapter includes an introduction followed by specific topics, some well known, others fresh and new, such as his examination of missions and education of Franciscans and Jesuits in Nueva Vizcaya/Durango, the latter based on his doctoral dissertation at El Colegio de México. He also discusses El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro (pp. 81-85), providing important information about the portion of that route between Mexico City and Durango. Furthermore, Pacheco Rojas introduces controversial topics and corrects misleading views of historians. An example of this is his explanation that the seventeenth-century so-called *siglo de depresión* "no fue de crisis, sino de expansión y consolidación del dominio español que se impuso a la resistencia armada que opusieron los nativos" (p. 72).

Finally, the author's observations about the city of Durango in the latter part of the eighteenth century are thorough and accurate, supported by his sources. The spectacular growth of its population, monumental architectural buildings of the Conde de Suchil and Juan José Zambrano, and the *cabildo*, *caja real*, and *aduana* accompanied cultural advances, consolidation of missions, secularization, return of governors from San José de Parral, mining growth of the province, and development of trade. Indeed, Pacheco Rojas explains the reasons for his observation that "en el primer tramo del siglo XIX, de 1800 a 1820, Durango vivió en el momento de auge económico más importante de la época colonial" (p. 121).

Pacheco Rojas accomplishes his goal of producing a regional history about the city and state of Durango that is valuable for students and general readers. Likewise, he explains effectively his thesis which appears to focus on the diversity of Durango's four regions, its various cultures, economies, municipalities, and historical experiences. Although there have been earlier

published studies of Durango in Spanish and English, this *Breve historia de Durango* is now the most comprehensive, reliable, and current.

Oakah L. Jones, Jr.  
*Historian and Professor Emeritus  
Purdue University*