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Book Reviews

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Book Reviews

WESTPHALL, *The Public Domain in New Mexico 1854-1891*, by Gates 168

PEARCE, *New Mexico Place Names. A Geographical Dictionary*, by Rey 171

THE PUBLIC DOMAIN IN NEW MEXICO 1854-1891. By Victor Westphall. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1965. Pp. xv, 212. Maps, bibliog., index. \$5.00.

SINCE B. H. Hibbard's *History of the Public Land Policies* came out in 1924 there has been an increasing flow of books and articles dealing with public land policies, culminating in the publication of a *Public Lands Bibliography* by the Bureau of Land Management and a series of papers delivered at the one hundredth anniversary celebration of the adoption of the Homestead Act. The *Public Lands Bibliography* includes monographs and articles, government documents and 214 subjects on land questions undertaken as master's and doctor's dissertations, though, it should be added, some were never completed and others were completed but not published. In the anniversary papers—published as *Land Policies and Problems in the United States*—are two efforts to reconsider "The History and Appraisal of U.S. Land Policy to 1862," and "The Homestead Act, Free Land Policy in Operation, 1862-1935." Since there are sharply divergent interpretations and explanations in these essays we may conclude there is little that is definitive in the present state of scholarship on land policies, that many issues remained to be studied intensively, and that there is a growing appreciation of the specialized studies being made.

Hibbard's *History* and two later syntheses—R. M. Robbins, *Our Landed Heritage: The Public Domain, 1776-1936* (1942) and E. L. Peffer, *The Closing of the Public Domain: Disposal and Reservation Policies, 1900-1950* (1951)—good as they are, reveal the need for local studies to determine how the public land laws worked. Many writers have investigated particular aspects of the functioning of the land system, either on a national or regional scale, and their contributions are steps toward an acceptable synthesis. One need only mention the names of Anderson, the Bogues, Dunham, Ellis, Ganoe, Gates, Ise, Jensen, Larson, Le Duc, Overton, Schafer, Silver, and Wirth whose studies are listed in the *Public Lands Bibliography*. But even they, with some exceptions, have based their work largely on congressional discussions, public documents, newspapers, public and private manuscripts, including those of the land grant

railroads, and to some extent on the entry volumes of the various land offices and the correspondence of the Bureau of Land Management (the old General Land Office), and have not researched the conveyance, mortgage, probate and other court records in the 1900-odd counties in the public land states and the Federal court records. One very useful little study that has used to good effect these county records is Robert Diller's *Farm Ownership, Tenancy and Land Use In a Nebraska Community* (1941). It is from such detailed researches that we learn how utterly complex is the story of the functioning of the land laws, how extraordinarily differently the same laws and institutions worked not only in different climate and rainfall zones, but even within the same zones and with the same kind of people as officers of the land bureaus, as seekers after land for settlement, development or speculation. Until we can find some common patterns in local studies we shall need to continue such investigations.

Historians must welcome the state studies of which we now have four in print. The first was by A. E. Sheldon, *Land Systems and Land Policies in Nebraska* (1936). Sheldon knew Nebraska well, had a keen appreciation of the complexity of the many and frequently conflicting Federal policies, was interested not only in the primary but also in the secondary distribution of land ownership and the effects that distribution had on the developing land use pattern. His statistics are particularly useful. R. L. Lokken, *Iowa Land Disposal* (1942), is based on published documents, as is Hibbard, and it offers little that does not appear elsewhere. It shows little awareness of the actual functioning of the land system and the author seems not to have realized that the major beneficiaries were not always the small farmer. Surveying policies and difficulties, some of the issues growing out of the swamp land act and the Des Moines River grant are satisfactorily treated. The third study by Jerry O'Callaghan, *The Disposition of the Public Domain in Oregon* (1960) is based on printed materials, follows the well-trodden path of Hibbard and Robbins, and does not examine effects of the policies. The fourth is *The Public Domain in New Mexico, 1854-1891*, by Victor Westphall.

New Mexico land policies and problems have not heretofore been neglected. Best studied have been the land claims granted by predecessor governments and vastly increased beyond their original intent by skillful lawyers and corrupt politicians, sometimes with the tacit approval of land officers, given legal sanction by Federal judges bemused by their anxiety to protect inchoate, incomplete, and even questionable property rights. H. H. Dunham's "New Mexican Land Grants with Special Reference to the Title Papers of the Maxwell Grant," *New Mexico Historical Review*, vol. 30 (1955), was one of the first of these studies. H. O. Brayer, in his

William Blackmore: *The Spanish-Mexican Land Grants of New Mexico and Colorado* (1949), tried to unravel the complicated legal tangles of their history. Earlier, Brayer had written on the *Pueblo Indian Land Grants of the Rio Abajo, New Mexico* (1938). Finally, W. A. Keleher, S. F. L. Crocchiola and J. B. Brown have traced the story of the Maxwell land grant in *Maxwell Land Grant* (1942), *The Grant That Maxwell Bought* (1952), and *The Maxwell Land Grant* (1961), making it one of the best known grants. Also investigated is the land grant of the Santa Fe Railroad by Sanford Mosk and William Greever in *Land Tenure Problems in the Santa Fe Railroad Grant Area* (1944), and *Arid Domain. The Santa Fe Railway and Its Western Land Grant* (1954). With all these investigations it was time that an effort be made to present an overall picture of public land policies in New Mexico and this Victor Westphall has done for the period before 1891.

With such an extensive literature on public land policies in existence, any student today knows that he has to tread a lot of ground that has already been covered by others. Dr. Westphall handles this problem nicely by letting the facts about the unadaptability of the land system to New Mexico climate and soil speak for themselves instead of belaboring the issue as many writers have done. He is the first to show how important the office of surveyor general was not only in the award of contracts but in determining which areas were to be surveyed. It was in the exercise of this power, as he shows, that the officer could favor interests with which he was associated in a private capacity. When the surveys were completed, cattle men could acquire water sites of a few hundred or thousand acres and by their ownership control the grazing on ten and twenty times as much land, thereby keeping out competing interests. The account of the surveyors general, the decline of the public morality of the men appointed to the office, the way they used its authority to aid interests they favored, and the approval they gave to questionable claims is an important contribution to our understanding of public land administration. It makes necessary reconsideration of the role of the surveyors general elsewhere. The Donation Act of 1854 allowed every white male citizen or one who intended to become a citizen, 160 acres free, as did the Homestead Act, and in New Mexico, as elsewhere, the latter act was seriously abused and the abuse made possible by the unnecessary extension of surveys.

When Homestead was adopted and since, it has generally been assumed that public land sales, or at least new offering of lands for sale would thereafter be discontinued, and the remaining public lands suitable for settlement would be reserved for homesteaders. But we learn that lands in 65 or more townships in New Mexico—elsewhere found to be

1,644,000 acres—were offered for sale in unlimited amounts in 1870. The explanation for public sales in other states was that they were confined to timbered sections that would shortly be pillaged of their valuable resources and should be sold before that happened, but this did not apply in New Mexico and we are left without an explanation. A meaningful map reveals how the sale permitted cattle companies to gain possession of land along streams, the ownership of which permitted them to dominate grazing in much greater areas.

The story of public land disposal in New Mexico is a sad one for it is largely an account of perversion, corruption, fraud and deceit, mitigated only by the efforts of George W. Julian, an old line abolitionist congressman from Indiana, who had long been a land reformer and now was attempting through the office of surveyor general to reverse the wholesale errors of his predecessors. Changes were made but the guilty parties seem to have gotten off scot free with the swag. Westphall has done a fine job in reconstructing the story from a variety of previously unused sources, and in not pulling his punches. I could wish that he had carried his researches farther, using or preparing ownership maps to show the pattern that was developing. I also wish he had carried his story beyond 1891 but perhaps we may hope for a sequel in some future time. Not the least valuable feature of the book is the detailed maps showing the extension of surveys, the location of the donation, timber culture, desert land and homestead entries; and the public offering for cash sale. Equally valuable are the tables giving by year the acreage surveyed and the amount of land entered under the various laws. The book illuminates many features of the Federal land system in a semi-arid, intermountain state. Both author and publisher deserve much credit for a notable work of scholarship presented in good form.

Cornell University

PAUL W. GATES

NEW MEXICO PLACE NAMES. A GEOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY. Edited by T. M. Pearce. Assisted by Ina Sizer Cassidy and Helen S. Pearce. Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, 1965. Pp. xvi, 187. Bibliog. \$6.00.

NEW MEXICO PLACE NAMES has been many years in the making. It was one of the undertakings of the New Mexico Writers' project in the 1930's and the materials collected by its workers remained for years in the files of the project. In 1948 the New Mexico Folklore Society, under the presidency of Mrs. Ina Sizer Cassidy, agreed to sponsor the *Dictionary*, and collectors began to send in new materials. Three *Collections*

containing some 700 items were published in mimeographed form between 1949 and 1951. Dr. Pearce was elected by the Society as editor of *New Mexico Place Names* in 1950 and under his guidance and with the collaboration of many people, and grants-in-aid from the University of New Mexico, the work was brought to a successful completion. The long lists of collaborators are listed in the introduction and at the end of the volume.

New Mexico Place Names is more than a geographical dictionary; it is a treasure house of information on the history, folklore and characteristics of New Mexico. It is arranged in alphabetical order, containing more than five thousand individual items with the counties in which they are located. Its closest model would be *Arizona Place Names* by Will C. Barnes, revised and enlarged by Byrd H. Granger, published by the Arizona University Press, Tucson, 1960. In this excellent work the material is arranged alphabetically by separate counties. We prefer the method adopted by Dr. Pearce; when a name occurs in more than one county we only have to look it up in one place. This also makes unnecessary extensive indices at the end of the volume as is the case in the Arizona work, a more elaborate and luxurious edition than ours. It contains several illustrations and maps. We miss a map of New Mexico showing the counties where the places named are located.

The linguistic variations are similar in both sister States, as both have a common history. New Mexico is richer in place names, for its Indian life was richer in pre-colonial times and Spanish colonies were planted in New Mexico earlier and more extensively than anywhere else in our Southwest. Not too many Indian pueblos have survived with their original names. Acoma, Taos, Tesuque, Zia, and Zuñi have preserved their approximate Indian names from the time the Spaniards with Coronado first saw them in 1540. Many Indian pueblos were given Spanish names when permanent colonies were established after 1598 by Don Juan de Oñate and his successors. Often missions and churches were built and their names were extended to the pueblos and their original Indian names forgotten. Such was the case of San Juan, Socorro, Santo Domingo and San Felipe among others. Some Indian pueblos like Isleta and Laguna received names descriptive of their locations. During the Indian revolt of 1680 many missions and pueblos were destroyed and not rebuilt at their old locations when De Vargas resettled the territory in 1692. Important pueblos of colonial times such as Jemez, Pecos, Picuris and Pojoaque are now just ruins, of interest to archaeologists.

The American occupation of the territory and the building of railroads filled the land with anglo names. Railroad loading stations, many of which developed into towns, received names reminiscent of people or incidents

connected with the activities of the new settlers. Some places were named after land speculators, ranchers, or promoters; occasionally names were drawn from local lore or community whims. Spanish and Indian names continued to dot the New Mexico landscape even in the modern era: Las Cruces (1854) Santa Rosa (1890), Las Vegas (1849), Raton (1879), and Tucumcari (1902). As an example of humorous names we have Belly-Ache Mesa. There is also a Shakespeare ghost town.

The place names are listed under one heading, followed by their subdivisions: CIBOLA—pueblo, lake, mountains, etc. Their etymologies and history are explained in detail. Many names have gone through changes before reaching the present forms; some of these changes are old, others quite recent. The Rio Grande is known in the old chronicles as Guadalquivir, Rio del Norte and Rio Bravo; the Pecos river is the Salado in Castaño de Sosa's narrative. Carlsbad was renamed in 1889; Truth or Consequences in 1950 as a result of a radio program stunt. New Mexico itself was first known as Kingdom of Saint Francis (Fr. Marcos), Cibola, Quivira (Coronado), Nueva Andalucía (Espejo).

Dr. Pearce and his associates have done a splendid job in editing such a vast amount of material gathered during a period of many years by people with varied interest and preparation. The work makes pleasant and informative reading. The lore and history of New Mexico are presented in a lively style despite the accurate details such a study entails. Their labors have been blessed by careful printing and presentation, with few misprints or errors. The only one we would point out is the listing of Juan (p. 66) instead of Francisco Vázquez de Coronado as the explorer who sought for Quivira in 1540-1542. Juan Vázquez de Coronado, brother of the explorer, became adelantado of Costa Rica, but there is no record that he ever set foot in New Mexico.

The New Mexico Folklore Society, Dr. Pearce and his collaborators deserve our gratitude for making available such a useful volume with its closing bibliography.

University of Arizona

ACAPITO REY

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