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## The Pueblo Land Grants of the Rio Abajo, New Mexico

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THE PUEBLO LAND GRANTS OF THE "RIO ABAJO," NEW MEXICO  
 by Herbert O. Brayer, U.C. ...  
 ... the first white settler entered New Mexico and built his home, there has been an unending stream of controversies and litigation over ownership of the land. Conflicts with the Pueblo Indians began almost as early as the first settlement. Hardly a decade has passed since the entrada of Don Juan de Oñate in 1598, that has not had at least one major land dispute involving one or more of the Indian pueblos. Throughout the Spanish period the governors, alcaldes and even the audiences in Mexico were called upon to provide justice for the subjugated Indian. In the period of Mexican control, from 1821 to 1848, the disputes were multiplied, and the basis for literally thousands of others, which were to arise in the American period, were laid.

Almost a year and a half has passed since we first began a systematic survey of the land development of each New Mexico Indian pueblo. During this time we have come to realize the difficulty of any form of research connected with the Pueblo Indians. Documents of the Spanish and Mexican periods relative to the Indians are to be found in Mexico City, Spain, Washington D.C., France, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Austin and New York City. As though this did not serve to complicate matters sufficiently the records of the United States, relative to the Pueblo Indians are to be found in the Surveyor General's Office, Santa Fe; Office of the Land Commissioner, Washington D.C.; Office of Indian Affairs, Washington D.C.; Land Agents' Office, United Pueblos Agency, Albuquerque; archives of New Mexico, School of American Research, Santa Fe; Historical Society of New Mexico, Santa Fe; and, in each of the pueblos of New Mexico. To make the point more conclusive there are individual pueblo records in each county of New Mexico in which a pueblo is situated. After one has fully digested all of these sources he may then turn to the records of the county courts of Bernalillo County, Sandoval county, Valencia county, Taos county, Rio Arriba county and Santa Fe county. The records of the Territorial Supreme Court, the United States District Court, the Circuit Court of appeals and in over a half-dozen cases the United States Supreme Court, contain important additions to the history of the land situation among the pueblos.

After a year and a half of this procedure we are just half finished. Under the title, The Pueblo Indian Land Grants of the "Rio Abajo," New Mexico, an attempt has been made to portray the development of the land policy of Spain, Mexico and the United States. The historical development of the pueblos of the Rio Grande valley is far from the dry treatise one might expect after reading abstracts of title and musty old records. The story is full of life and interesting incidents. Take the pueblo of Laguna for example. The Lagunas for many years based their claim to the pueblo land grant upon a document dated 1698 and signed by governor Domegno Jironza Petriz de Cruzate. This document proved to be a bombshell when closely studied. First, although we knew Laguna was not founded until 1699, the document is dated 1689! Secondly, the signatures of the governor, secretary of war and other officials are all in the same handwriting, although an attempt was made to vary the writing. Thirdly, almost an entire paragraph was "lifted" word for word from Antonio B. Arreiro's Ojeada sobre Nuevo Mexico, printed in 1832! Fourthly, the writer of the document misspelled the name of the Governor, secretary of war, making it "Guitara", instead of "Guivara". This bit of active work soon led to the challenging of the other 1689 land grants given to ten other pueblos. Without exception each of these "Cruzate"