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Joseph P. Sanchez, *Between Two Rivers: The Atrisco Land Grant in Albuquerque History, 1692-1968*

Richard Griswold del Castillo

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from the world they operated in and helped create through their actions. Graubart offers an outstanding study that will interest experts and students.

Leo J. Garofalo
Department of History
Connecticut College

Between Two Rivers: The Atrisco Land Grant in Albuquerque History, 1692-1968, by Joseph P. Sánchez. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008. xvi + 235 pp. Maps, notes, bibliography, appendix, index. \$34.95 cloth.)

On 6 November 2006, after years of controversy, the shareholders in Westland Development Corporation based in Albuquerque, New Mexico, voted overwhelmingly to sell their business to Sun Cal Companies, a developer from Irvine, California. As part of the final sale, Sun Cal agreed to contribute one million dollars a year to the Atrisco Heritage Foundation. This event was the most recent twist in a three-hundred-year history of the Atrisco Land Grant, a Spanish settlement that lay between the Río Grande and Río Puerco in New Mexico, comprising a portion of western Albuquerque and thousands of acres of land potentially rich in oil and natural gas. As argued convincingly by Joseph Sánchez, the real wealth of the Atrisco land grant has been its cultural and economic history and the struggles of the people who have participated in the development of New Mexico. This land grant's long and complicated story reveals the *nuevomexicano* people's tradition of involvement with the Spanish, Mexican, and American legal systems, and their role in shaping the key events in western history. Their cultural identity has been bound to the land, and they have fought to maintain both.

This study offers an in-depth analysis of the complexities of everyday life in colonial New Mexico. With its origin in 1692 as a land grant to reward Fernando Durán y Chaves for his help in the reconquest of New Mexico, the Atrisco grant preceded the founding of Albuquerque in 1706. The land grant settlers were a vital part of the founding and colonial history of that important town. Within the Atrisco grant lay another grant, that of the Río Puerco, further to the west. For more than a hundred years, the *atrisqueños* were key players in the many struggles to expand and preserve the Hispano presence in the region. They fought with the Spanish governors and officials to keep their land grant. They fought among themselves contesting inheritances, new land claims, and competing contracts. They defended the inclusion of the Río Puerco grant as part of their children's inheritance. And they fought against Indian attacks as well as the intrusion of unjust Mexican authority.

For anyone wanting a window into the workings of the Spanish colonial legal system, Sánchez's book offers a clear and well-documented summary and interpretation, using the many legal cases fought by the

atrisqueños among themselves and with outsiders. Sánchez is an internationally-recognized authority on Spanish colonial research and, through his use of the rich archives in Spain, Mexico City, Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and elsewhere, provides a firsthand view of the details of colonial life in New Mexico. One chapter, for example, examines the *partido* system in New Mexico, the contract system of having sheep herders manage the flocks of large land holders in exchange for a percentage of the increase in wool and animals. This is done by examining the legal case of María Ignacia Lucero de Godoy against Efigenia Durán y Chaves in 1768. Besides showing that women were deeply involved in legal matters in colonial New Mexico, it shows how a disagreement over the number of sheep that were owed led to a prolonged and complicated juridical dispute involving petitions to the governor, scores of depositions, many investigations, appeals, and judgements, all of which were meticulously documented by scribes and officials. This example and others certainly point to the level of legal sophistication, not to mention sensitivity to property rights, that existed among the colonial *nuevomexicanos*.

About half of this book deals with the colonial and Mexican history of the *atrisqueños*. The rest of the work broadens the scope to discuss the way in which the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was ignored in the struggles to maintain lands in New Mexico, how the U.S. government failed to justly adjudicate the land claims of many *nuevomexicanos*. The Atrisco grant survived because of the tenacious legal traditions of the Hispano settlers who had been trained during countless legal skirmishes in the Spanish period. Indeed, the Atrisco grant was one of the few large land grants from the Spanish period to remain in one piece in the American era. The *atrisqueños* adjusted to the new realities by incorporating the land as the town of Atrisco and later by forming the Westland Development Company, which distributed shares to the heirs of the original settlers. Conflicts over the disposition of shares in the company continue to this day and are part of the continuing legal history of the land grant.

Between Two Rivers is an important scholarly work that connects the Spanish colonial history of New Mexico to the present. It is a book that should be read by all those who want to really understand the political and legal culture of the *nuevomexicanos* as well as those who wish to continue the struggle to regain the land of their communities.

Richard Griswold del Castillo
Professor Emeritus, Chicana/o Studies
San Diego State University