

The Spanish Redemption: Heritage, Power, and Loss on New Mexico's Upper Rio Grande. By Charles Montgomery. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. xvi, 338 pp.

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[Jeffrey S. Smith](#)

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Excluding a twelve-year hiatus in the late seventeenth century, generations of Hispanos have eked out a living in the semiarid environs of the upper Rio Grande for over four hundred years. Despite having lived under Mexican rule for nearly three decades, the region's long-term Hispanic residents vehemently oppose being called "Mexican." Instead they continue to profess direct ancestral connections to the original Spanish conquistadors and *peninsulares* who initially settled the area. How did such loyalty to Spain become entrenched in the region's collective psyche? Under what circumstances did the identity of Spanish heritage develop? Who played instrumental roles in defining the region's social character by glorifying its Spanish colonial past? Those are the questions that Charles Montgomery sets out to answer.

Beautifully written with compelling prose, *The Spanish Redemption* is a carefully crafted and meticulously researched work; I found very few scholarly...

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