



Honor and Defiance, A History of the Las Vegas Land Grant in New Mexico

James Bailey Blackshear

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In 1835, a petition for land far from Santa Fe, New Mexico was awarded to "pobladores" (settlers) willing to relocate to the eastern edge of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. Founded along the Gallinas River, the settlement became the Las Vegas Land Grant. The history of this grant is the history of New Mexico. On this 496,000 acre community grant, beliefs about land and faith were intertwined within a system of shared sacredness. In the 1890s, Anglo-American merchants and cattlemen joined with Hispano elites in the first concerted effort to wrest control of this grant from its original owners and heirs. The heart of this book investigates how a rural "nuevo-mexicano" (New Mexican) movement on the Las Vegas Land Grant evolved from burning barns and cutting fences to political activism and success at the ballot box. It also examines the history of New Mexico land grants, Hispano mountain culture, the origination of the town footprint, the boom of Territorial Las Vegas, and the cultural diversity that existed within the two distinct towns that emerged when the railroad came to Las Vegas in 1879. "Honor and Defiance" details the impact of American expansion into a well-established Hispano urban center, and highlights the robust nature of "nuevo-mexicano" spirit, determination, and ingenuity on the Las Vegas Land Grant. The book also includes photographss of Las Vegas, leaders of the period, and the land the land they fought for. JAMES BAILEY BLACKSHEAR received his master's degree in history from Texas A&M and his PhD in history from the University of North Texas. He has won awards for his literary essays, and has been published by the "New Mexico Historical Review" and the "Chicken Soup for the Soul" series. He has spoken about the Las Vegas Land Grant at history conferences in both Colorado and Texas.

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