

erately exaggerated the fecundity of their animals in hopes of motivating more Spanish stockmen to emigrate.

Robert H. Claxton uses secondary sources, chronicles, and published documents to compile useful tables listing recurrences of drought for selected locations throughout colonial Latin America. His data confirm the commonly held assumption that the eighteenth century was significantly drier than the previous two centuries. Newcomers to the field will profit from John Frederick Schwaller's brief overview of the ecological, demographic, and economic factors influencing hacienda formation in the Valley of Mexico in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Specialists familiar with the work of Francois Chevalier, Woodrow Borah, Charles Gibson, James Lockhart, and their numerous scholarly descendants, however, will find little that is new.

The remaining essays offer comparative insights that may interest Latin Americanists. Dennis Kehoe and Anthony Galt examine, respectively, the economic strategies of landowners and tenants in Italy during the early Roman Empire and the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries. Thomas Fox explores land tenure in the Hesse-Kassel region of Germany in the eighteenth century; Ronald Janke surveys the effects of Indian land policy in the United States, with special emphasis on the Lac du Flambeau Reservation in Wisconsin; and John P. Resch documents the transformation in political culture and land tenure in Peterborough, New Hampshire, from 1750 to 1800.

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Petty Felony, Slave Defiance, and Frontier Villainy: Crime and Criminal Justice in Spanish Louisiana, 1770–1803. By DEREK NOEL KERR. New York: Garland Publishing, 1993. Maps. Tables. Figures. Appendixes. Notes. Bibliography. Index. xx, 365 pp. Cloth. \$81.00.

This nearly verbatim publication of a 1983 Tulane University doctoral dissertation forms part of a Garland series on African American history and culture. The author has performed considerable original research in investigating crime and the administration of criminal justice in Spanish Louisiana. White notables, he finds, usually sought redress outside the system. Upper-class white women hardly ever lowered themselves by appearing in court. The most oppressed members of society were those most likely to find themselves before Spanish magistrates. Thus, the underutilized records of these proceedings, the most important of which are in the archives of the Louisiana State Museum, contain a rich lode of information on lower Louisiana's resident slave population, whose labor was beginning to transform a frontier into a plantation economy.

Spain acquired Louisiana as compensation from France during the Seven Years' War. This vast territory appeared ideally located to serve as a buffer between Spain's far more precious possessions to the southwest and England's restless

colonists to the east. With limited resources, Spanish governors based in New Orleans tried to extend Spanish laws and institutions to Louisiana's unruly Indian, French, and African inhabitants. Spanish authority, however, weakened with distance from the center, and most of the outlying post commandants continued to practice a less formal, personalistic rule that tended to reflect the interests of the French-speaking elite in their districts.

After describing the structure and function of the seven Spanish courts that replaced the French Superior Council, Derek Kerr analyzes the criminal records. He distinguishes three categories of crime: against persons, property, and public order. The last, which covered everything from slander to slave rebellion, kept prosecutors the busiest by far. Baron Carondelet's rule during the French and St. Domingue revolutions produced the greatest number of serious crimes or, perhaps better said, more serious repression of the lower classes, as evidenced by the number of cases handled by the governor's court itself. In the 1790s, two slave conspiracies were uncovered in the plantation district of Pointe Coupée. More frequently, the court records document individual acts of illegal slave behavior, such as murder, poisoning, theft, possession of firearms, desertion, and arson. New Orleans, as the only sizable North American port between Veracruz and Charleston, also attracted a rowdy transient population that mixed with people of color and with many of the miserable common soldiers who garrisoned the city. Indeed, recruits from Louisiana's regiments competed with slaves for space in the jailhouse.

Few of Kerr's conclusions relating Spanish Louisiana's crimes and criminals to its socioeconomic conditions will surprise specialists. Several tables and lengthy appendixes identifying criminal cases in select districts and naming Spanish Louisiana's *alcaldes*, *regidores*, *síndicos*, *comisarios*, and *comandantes* do make this volume a handy reference and heuristic tool. It complements two excellent recent books on colonial Louisiana, by Daniel Usner on the frontier economy [*Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783*, 1992] and Gwendolyn Midlo Hall on the development of African slavery [*Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*, 1992].

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Two Hearts, One Soul: The Correspondence of the Condesa de Galve, 1688–96. Edited and translated by MEREDITH D. DODGE and RICK HENDRICKS. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. xv, 272 pp. Cloth. \$27.50.

Meredith Dodge and Rick Hendricks have brought together a fascinating and challenging collection of 27 late seventeenth-century letters of doña Gelvira de Toledo, condesa de Galve. These letters are housed in the Sección Osuna of the Archivo