

2013

New Mexico's Spanish Livestock Heritage: Four Centuries of Animals, Land, and People.

Andrew Sluyter

Louisiana State University, asluyter@lsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/geoanth_pubs



Part of the [Anthropology Commons](#), and the [Geography Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Sluyter, Andrew, "New Mexico's Spanish Livestock Heritage: Four Centuries of Animals, Land, and People." (2013). *Faculty Publications*. 13.

http://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/geoanth_pubs/13

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Geography & Anthropology at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gcoste1@lsu.edu.

economic liberties not necessarily intended by the new regime, this liberal democratic potential grew apace alongside a commercial market economy that lost respect for the allodial tradition and tended rather to see rights inhering in the individual citizen. One more short step and rights-bearing citizens needed to own no land at all.

Slavery, of course, complicated this evolution of unintended consequences. Jefferson's framework treated slaves as personal property (like other chattels) and therefore not constitutive of citizenship. Democratization, however, produced a drift that threatened to marginalize slavery in the structure of Virginia's social framework just as antislavery campaigns in England and elsewhere in the United States marginalized it from the common law and the emerging bourgeois commercial social ideal. Pivoting his analysis around the constitutional debates that followed Nat Turner's rebellion, Curtis spells out how the antebellum master class then moved to insert slave ownership as a new cornerstone of Virginia republicanism.

Readers of *Agricultural History* should read this book. Curtis's treatment is so clear and accessible they will enjoy the ride, and it contains suggestions of profound utility for understanding southern agrarianism before and after the Civil War.

John Lauritz Larson
Purdue University

New Mexico's Spanish Livestock Heritage: Four Centuries of Animals, Land, and People. By William W. Dunmire. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013. 272 pp., \$34.95, hardback, ISBN 978-0-8263-5089-3.

This useful study of contemporary livestock herding practices, social consequences, and environmental impacts in New Mexico also synthesizes the literature on their historical background, from earliest beginnings in the sixteenth century through the twentieth. It thereby provides a resource for those headed to the archive to uncover primary sources that amplify our understanding of the livestock history of New Mexico.

The initial four chapters of the historical synthesis provide essential context. In lucid prose, the author sketches the background to the Spanish colonization of New Mexico and the characteristics of the introduced livestock, from cattle, horses, donkeys, and mules to goats, sheep, and

pigs. The six subsequent chapters focus on livestock herding during each of the major phases of New Mexico's history: the establishment of a Spanish colony in the late sixteenth century through the Pueblo revolt of the late seventeenth century; reestablishment of the colony and the expansion of sheep production in the eighteenth century; the early nineteenth-century transition from Spanish to Mexican rule; the mid-century transfer to the United States; the florescence of open-range cattle ranching in the aftermath of the Civil War and Navajo Revolt of the 1860s; the closing of much of the range by barbed-wire fencing late in the century; and the twentieth century, during which cattle displaced sheep as New Mexico's main livestock. Forty-nine photographs, maps, and original drawings enliven the well-organized narrative.

The synthesis of the historical literature is, however, quite partial. It typically presents only one side of contentious issues, such as whether sheep caused extensive soil erosion in New Spain (27). And it ignores entire areas of the literature, such as the role of people of African origin, whether enslaved or free, in establishing livestock herding in places like South Carolina and more generally (93, 150).

The four chapters and an epilogue that follow the historical synthesis comprise the book's core original contribution. They draw on interviews with shepherds and ranchers as well as the author's longstanding familiarity with New Mexico's landscapes to briefly sketch the continuing social and environmental consequences of livestock. The epilogue, in particular, is a must read for any student of New Mexican livestock. It records the oral histories and contemporary reflections of four New Mexicans of Navajo, Hispanic, Pueblo, and Anglo heritage, albeit not in their own words. Contrasting and comparing their experiences and perspectives provides a fitting end to this engaging book.

Andrew Sluyter
Louisiana State University

The Makers of American Wine: A Record of Two Hundred Years. By Thomas Pinney. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012. 311 pp., \$34.95, hardback, ISBN 978-0-520-26953-8.

Employing short biographies of twelve men and one woman, Thomas Pinney delivers an intriguing history of winemaking in the United States