ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Revisiting the Pueblo Revolt of 1680: the Historiographical Debate
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ABSTRACT: When studying the Spanish occupation of New Mexico during the 17th century, the political and religious strife between the former and the Pueblo Indians who inhabited the area is not easy to delineate. Tensions that had began to build amongst the Puebloans since the Spaniards arrived in 1598 finally erupted in 1680, making the Pueblo Revolt one of the few large-scale insurrections ever seen in New Spain's northern frontier. However, the utter destruction of crucial evidence concerning this event has challenged many borderland historians to accurately represent the Spanish occupation and their subsequent expulsion. As a result the various analyses of the revolt are forced to utilize documents that are sparse and partial, and historians thus have arrived at differing conclusions. Two historians that have published widely varying accounts of the Pueblo Revolt are Ramn A. Gutirrez and Andrew Knaut. From reading When Jesus Came, the Corn Mothers Went Away by Gutirrez and The Pueblo Revolt by Knaut, one is left to question what really evoked such a violent outbreak against the Spaniards. This essay aims to examine the syntheses of Gutirrez and Knaut in order to highlight where their stories converge, where both rely on the same sources to expand on different arguments, and how dissecting their interpretations enhances our understanding of the revolt. We will specifically dedicate our analysis to the process of conversion utilized by Franciscan friars, the nature of Pueblo negotiation with Catholicism, and the ultimate reasons for the Revolt in 1680. What becomes clear at the end of this analysis is that the undeniable biased and scant nature of the source materials explains the polar differences between the conclusions of Gutirrez and Knaut. Furthermore, this essay draws attention to the importance for history scholars to examine a variety of interpretations of a single event in order to avoid completely misinterpreting it. This becomes particularly crucial when the source material available on a subject resembles that of the Pueblo Revolt.