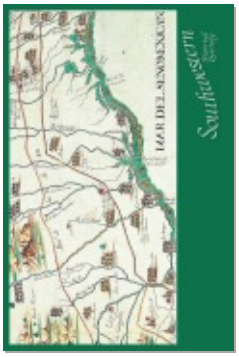
The Sheep Industry of Territorial New Mexico: Livestock, Land, and Dollars by Jon M. Wallace (review)



Michael M. Miller

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The studies on just about every aspect of Tejano history have become numerous, but the author's success in achieving her purpose—recording institutional obstacles to Tejano upward mobility and the efforts launched by Tejanos to overcome those barriers—serves to advance the extant scholarship. Masterfully organized and artfully written, the book sets a standard for all students of the Mexican American experience in Texas to read.

Angelo State University Arnoldo De León

The Sheep Industry of Territorial New Mexico: Livestock, Land, and Dollars. By Jon M. Wallace. (Denver: The University Press of Colorado, 2024. Pp. xiii, 299. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index.)

Extensive sourcing and a fast-paced narrative mark Jon M. Wallace's deep dive into the American sheep business as it developed in New Mexico prior to its statehood in 1912. The Sheep Industry of Territorial New Mexico presents what livestock historians of the "Old West" have long known, but mostly ignored: although overshadowed in history by the wider coverage given the cattle business, sheep came first. The care and feeding of "woolies" never matched the romantic image offered by cowpunchers and cattle. Wallace, however, manages to bring drama to his story. In one example, the boss of a California-bound sheep drive engaged in hand-to-hand combat with a Ute chief to earn passage through their territory.

Wallace's first chapter summarizes the origins and practices of sheep husbandry from its earliest days in the Spanish Empire. Herds of cattle and sheep supported Coronado's expedition in 1540–1542. When the first permanent Spanish settlements came at the end of the sixteenth century, sheep were favored by the colonists in New Mexico due to their superior adaptability to the land. Wallace traces colonial New Mexico's sheep industry through the mission period and the Pueblo Revolt of 1680, which "caused only a temporary setback" to colonization in the region (p. 12).

The return of Spanish authority a decade later brought more secular administration. New class structures formed. A few families gained elite status, earning them substantial land grants for their service to the empire. These rico families intermarried over time, consolidating their commercial activities around the livestock business—primarily sheep. *Meztizos,* mixed race Hispanics, and *genizaros,* Christianized Indians forced from nomadic tribes, formed much of the population, essentially serving as a labor force to the rico patriarchy. Enslaved Indians and Blacks also provided labor needs to the partido system– "basically a sharecropping system" (p. 83).

Some Pueblo people, not eager to come back under the Spanish thumb, fled to Navajo territory, spurring a wool industry among the Navajo that continues to this day. Focused primarily on the elite and classed system that dominated ter-

ritorial New Mexico, Wallace weaves the impact sheep brought to Navajo society and the other Native peoples of the region into his narrative.

An expanding marketplace greeted Mexico's independence in 1821. Americans, too, appeared by then, and an eastern marketplace utilizing the Santa Fe Trail began to replace trade to the south. More Americans began finding their way there. The conclusion of the war with Mexico in 1848 and gold discoveries in California furthered mercantile sheep production in the southwest. Anglos joined with Hispanic *ricos.* Intensive overgrazing, the end of the "open range," and improvements to the traditional churro sheep followed. The sheep business echoed the cattle business of the post-Civil War west and, in some cases, even replaced it after large cattle operators experienced market collapse and weather catastrophes in the closing years of the nineteenth century.

Wallace tells a subtle story of settler colonialism, of the reach of American capitalism and its impact on New Mexico's social and financial landscape. He reveals the role sheep played in New Mexico's long history as a colonial outpost of imperial aspirations. Although sheep no longer occupy the central role they once did there, Wallace affirms that the "West's oldest sheep-growing region . . . became integrated into the . . . US economy . . . under the impetus of the sheep industry" (p. 224).

The Colony Michael M. Miller

Uvalde's Darkest Hour. By Craig Garnett. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2024. Pp. 232. Photographs, notes, index.)

"The police scanner is the exposed nerve of a small-town newspaper," author Craig Garnett writes in the opening paragraph of *Uvalde's Darkest Hour*. On most days, the police dispatcher's voice was crackly background noise in the newsroom of the twice-weekly *Uvalde Leader-News*. But at 11:28 a.m. on May 24, 2022, the dispatcher announced that a truck had crashed behind Robb Elementary and the driver opened fire on civilians who approached. Moments later the voice from the scanner said the shooter was walking toward the school.

At 11:33 a.m., a troubled local high school student armed with AK-style automatic weapons and 2,000 rounds of ammunition walked through an unlocked door into Robb Elementary school where 250 youngsters ages six to twelve sat in brightly decorated classrooms. During the next seventy-seven minutes, the gunman wandered through interconnected hallways and classrooms, taunting, wounding, and killing children and teachers while a crush of 300 sworn law enforcement officers filled hallways and play areas waiting for leadership. During those seventy-seven minutes, nineteen fourth-graders and two teachers lost their lives. Others suffered life-altering wounds.

The first half of *Uvalde's Darkest Hour* tells of that horrifying seventy-seven minutes when parents and bystanders who gathered outside the school begged