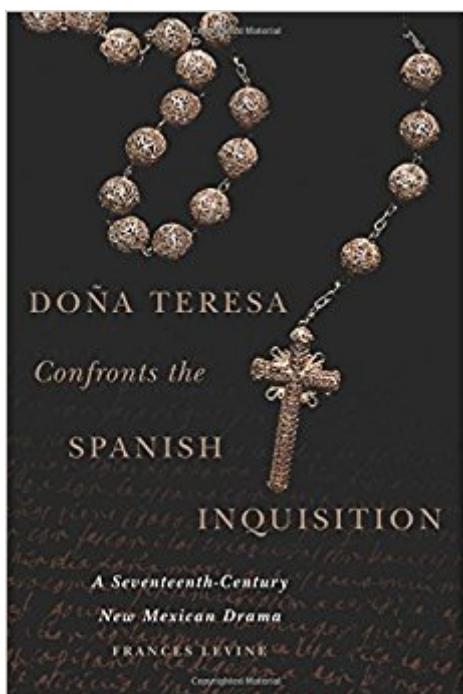


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# Doña Teresa Confronts The Spanish Inquisition: A Seventeenth-Century New Mexican Drama



## Synopsis

In 1598, at the height of the Spanish Inquisition, New Mexico became Spain's northernmost New World colony. The censures of the Catholic Church reached all the way to Santa Fe, where in the mid-1660s, Doña Teresa Aguilera y Roche, the wife of New Mexico governor Bernardo Lápez de Mendizábal, came under the Inquisition's scrutiny. She and her husband were tried in Mexico City for the crime of *judaizante*, the practice of Jewish rituals. Using the handwritten briefs that Doña Teresa prepared for her defense, as well as depositions by servants, ethnohistorian Frances Levine paints a remarkable portrait of daily life in seventeenth-century New Mexico. *Doña Teresa Confronts the Spanish Inquisition* also offers a rare glimpse into the intellectual and emotional life of an educated European woman at a particularly dangerous time in Spanish colonial history. New Mexico's remoteness attracted crypto-Jews and conversos, Jews who practiced their faith behind a front of Roman Catholicism. But were Doña Teresa and her husband truly conversos? Or were the charges against them simply their enemies' means of silencing political opposition? Doña Teresa had grown up in Italy and had lived in Colombia as the daughter of the governor of Cartagena. She was far better educated than most of the men in New Mexico. But education and prestige were no protection against persecution. The fine furnishings, fabrics, and tableware that Doña Teresa installed in the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe made her an object of suspicion and jealousy, and her ability to read and write in several languages made her the target of outlandish claims. *Doña Teresa Confronts the Spanish Inquisition* uncovers issues that resonate today: conflicts between religious and secular authority; the weight of evidence versus hearsay in court. Doña Teresa's voice "set in the context of the history of the Inquisition" is a powerful addition to the memory of that time.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Frances Levine provides a rare glimpse into the society of Spanish colonial New Mexico as seen through the eyes of Doña Teresa Aguilera y Roche, wife of Governor Bernardo Lápez de Mendizábal. No other body of documentation reveals as much about the period before the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 as does Levine's examination of the couple's trial by the Inquisition. Levine deftly recounts Doña Teresa's passionate and poignant defense against her accusers. A rare example of the writings of a highly literate woman living in seventeenth-century Mexico, Doña Teresa Confronts the Spanish Inquisition also makes an important contribution to scholarship on women in colonial Latin America.

Rick Hendricks, New Mexico State Historian and coauthor of *The Spanish Missions of New Mexico: Before 1680*

Frances Levine provides a comprehensive, coherent, and "above all" sympathetic account of the sufferings endured by Doña Teresa at the hands of the Inquisition, highlighting her spirited defense, written, as was most unusual for the time, in her own hand. Thoroughly informed and based on the best historical materials available, Levine's work dramatically illuminates a crucial period in the history of colonial New Mexico.

Jerry R. Craddock, editor of *Zaldivar and the Cattle of Cibola: Vicente de Zaldivar's Report of His Expedition to the Buffalo Plains in 1598*

Frances Levine, President of the Missouri Historical Society and Museum in St. Louis, is author of *Our Prayers Are in This Place: Pecos Pueblo Identity over the Centuries* and coeditor of *Telling New Mexico: A New History* and *Battles and Massacres on the Southwestern Frontier: Historical and Archaeological Perspectives*.

Well researched book. Some of the writing is a little dry, but there is a wealth of information about what happened in an Inquisition trial, and what clothing and household items of the period were like. Excellent resource for anyone doing research on the Inquisition in New Mexico. A time period with some truly terrible happenings.

INTERESTING, BUT CONSTAQNTE REPEATING OF INFORMATION

What a wonderful book and quick seller!

A very lucid exposition on a long-neglected aspect of the troubled relations between the civil governors and the Roman Catholic Church in 17th-century New Mexico!

Got here very fast, made a good Christmas present.

Just wonderful

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