**The Hispanic Southwest for Abreu: Interpretive Notes**

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 Feel free to email or message on Twitter any questions you may have over the summer, or any insights into the camps and roles that you play.

Much of the Anglo understanding of Latinos in the southwest is tainted by what is known as the Black Legend. This stems from English/British understanding of the Spanish in the Americas as both brutal and foolish: that they were hard on Indian populations and were of a more superstitious, medieval mindset. Much of this is an exaggeration and served English, and later Anglo-American, purposes. It has been a constant source of prejudice against Latinos in this country. When the U.S. declared war on Mexico in 1846, Black Legend language arose in Congress; the same for the Spanish-American War in 1898. The delay of statehood for New Mexico and Arizona until 1912 was part of this; they remained territories administered by Washington far longer than eve the “problem” territories of Utah and Oklahoma. Utah was dominated by the LDS church (Mormon) and had the limited practice of polygamy. But after the church disavowed the practice after 1890 it quickly became a state in 1896. Oklahoma was Indian Territory until 1889, and moved to statehood in 1908 after the area was opened to white settlement. But New Mexico and Arizona were territories far longer.

Having said that, New Mexico proved to be a territory and later a state in which Latinos found greater opportunity. Miguel Otero was territorial governor in the last 1890s and early 1900s, and New Mexico was a place that embraced multiculturalism early on due to the diverse population.

The historical background on Abreu is quite well done. The point is made that life, politics, and law were different in New Mexico based on the background of the Spanish.

As in other areas of life, the Maxwell Land Grant shaped the area profoundly, especially under the direction of the Maxwell Company.

The context of the Progressive Era is significant; this was a time of great reform as contested by many groups in the U.S.. But the overriding concept was of taking the country back from big corporations through the expansion of democracy. In part, this meant making sure Latinos in New Mexico had full voting rights (as in contrast to the South, where progressives sought to disfranchise African-Americans).