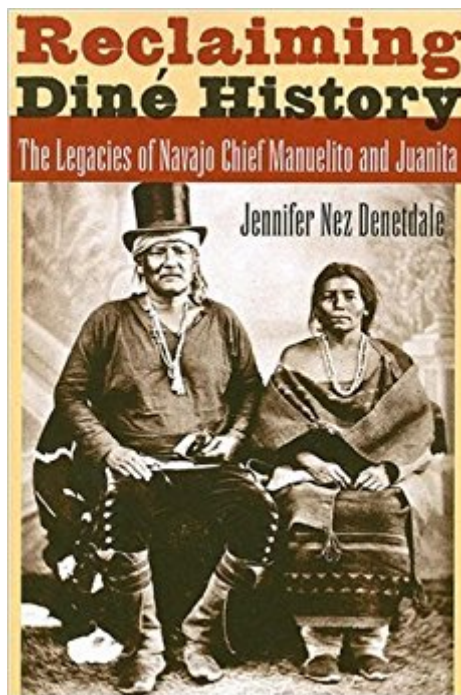




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# Reclaiming Diné History: The Legacies Of Navajo Chief Manuelito And Juanita



## Synopsis

In this groundbreaking book, the first Navajo to earn a doctorate in history seeks to rewrite Navajo history. Reared on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico and Arizona, Jennifer Nez Denetdale is the great-great-great-granddaughter of a well-known Navajo chief, Manuelito (1816â1894), and his nearly unknown wife, Juanita (1845â1910). Stimulated in part by seeing photographs of these ancestors, she began to explore her family history as a way of examining broader issues in Navajo historiography. Here she presents a thought-provoking examination of the construction of the history of the Navajo people (Dinã©, in the Navajo language) that underlines the dichotomy between Navajo and non-Navajo perspectives on the Dinã© past. Reclaiming Dinã© History has two primary objectives. First, Denetdale interrogates histories that privilege Manuelito and marginalize Juanita in order to demonstrate some of the ways that writing about the Dinã© has been biased by non-Navajo views of assimilation and gender. Second, she reveals how Navajo narratives, including oral histories and stories kept by matrilineal clans, serve as vehicles to convey Navajo beliefs and values. By scrutinizing stories about Juanita, she both underscores the centrality of womenâs roles in Navajo society and illustrates how oral tradition has been used to organize social units, connect Navajos to the land, and interpret the past. She argues that these same stories, read with an awareness of Navajo creation narratives, reveal previously unrecognized Navajo perspectives on the past. And she contends that a similarly culture-sensitive re-viewing of the Dinã© can lead to the production of a Navajo-centered history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Denetdale's book meets the rigorous standards of a fine history that reveals to the reader much about Navajo history that has largely been missed. A fascinating page-turner that should be on the must-read list of anyone interested in the history of the American Southwest." "Journal of Arizona History" Jennifer Nez Denetdale's book is a groundbreaking study, relevant for anyone interested in indigenous studies. A stellar example of the excellent work, and personal journey, that can be undertaken when Native scholars engage in "writing our own history." "Journal of Folklore Research"

JENNIFER NEZ DENETDALE is assistant professor of history at the University of New Mexico. Her articles on Navajo history have been published in the American Indian Culture and Research Journal, the Journal of Social Archaeology, and the New Mexico Historical Review.

A must read for all Navajos or Dine'. The author blends into her woven rug personal family history and hard core historical facts of how see ourselves through the white man's eyes. Still reading my book and enjoying every page. I plan to read more of her books. Yolanda Talbert from the Navajo Nation.

Got this twice actually. Physical copy and Kindle download. Not sure how that happened but it is all good.....love Jennifer Denetdale.

The book was deeper than I had expected but was, never the less, a good review of Dine history

An excellent resource written by a Dine woman who has her Ph.D. in history.

Great condition. Thsnks.

Relies, for the most part, on oral history. As we all know distortions can and do creep in to stories repeated over the generations and stories told by Native Americans (oral history) are no different. Sad that no real historical records were left by the Navajos, we are left with either oral history or that written by their enemies. That is always the case when one side of the conflict/equation is literate and the other is not. Nothing can be done about that. The book did bring together most, if not all, of the most important material on Manuelito and Juanita. The use by the author of Navajo names as

compared to the names we are used to made the book that much harder to read.

I bought this book for genealogy. It is written by a Cousin. Since I knew nothing about Chief Manuelito and Juanita, I found it interesting, but dry.

The author, a PhD historian, is a great-great-great-granddaughter of Manuelito, a great Navajo leader before and after the internment at Bosque Redondo, and his "favorite" wife Juanita. The book reads much like a PhD dissertation (chapters tend to start with a summary, when relevant followed by a literature review, then the author's contribution, then a concluding section). As another reviewer said, the text is quite dry. Important parts of the book are 23 photos of Manuelito, Juanita, and their descendants (14 of Manuelito and/or Juanita) and stories of her ancestors that the author collected from her great grandparents. The author discusses the interpretation of the photos of Manuelito and Juanita. The author says that her great grandparents stories about Manuelito and Juanita are important, but the stories contain less detailed information that we would like. This is definitely a Navajo perspective. There are many references to effects of imperialism and colonialism but virtually no facts or data to support these references (presumably the author assumes we agree with her and know the justification for the statements). The author justifies Navajo raids as consequences of slaving raids by other tribes, Hispanics, and Anglos. She ignores the fact that at least northern Plains tribes fought with each other; there is Hopi oral tradition (in Courlander's book) of Navajo raids and an attack; a Jemez elder showed me a place where Navajo attacked a horse herding party and killed some Jemez. The author seems to dismiss the possibility that Navajo learned anything useful (e.g. about agriculture) during Bosque Redondo (I don't know whether they did). Interesting chapters of the book include Manuelito's leadership, including his emphasis after Bosque Redondo on the need to learn from Western education, and the importance of strong women in Navajo culture, with Juanita as an example. The accounts of her accomplishments are especially interesting, including her presence as the only woman in a delegation to Washington D.C.

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