



The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition

Chris Wilson

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A wave of publicity during the 1980s projected Santa Fe to the world as an exotic tourist destination--America's own Tahiti in the desert. The Myth of Santa Fe goes behind the romantic adobe facades and mass marketing stereotypes to tell the fascinating but little known story of how the city's alluring image was quite consciously created early in this century, primarily by Anglo-American newcomers.

By investigating the city's trademark architectural style, public ceremonies, the historic preservation movement, and cultural traditions, Wilson unravels the complex interactions of ethnic identity and tourist image-making. Santa Fe's is a distinctly modern success story--the story of a community that transformed itself from a declining provincial capital of 5,000 in 1912 into an internationally recognized tourist destination. But it is also a cautionary tale about the commodification of Native American and Hispanic cultures, and the social displacement and ethnic animosities that can accompany a tourist boom.



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