



# The Spanish Language in New Mexico and Southern Colorado

*Aurelio Macedonio Espinosa*

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From the Preface: This article has been written at the request of many of my New Mexico friends and at the request and personal desire of the president of the New Mexico Historical Society, for a popular presentation of the subject, the Spanish language in New Mexico and Colorado. I have attempted, therefore, to avoid all philological discussion, and endeavored to treat the matter not from the view point of the specialist. The points which I hope I have made clear, are the following:

1st. The Spanish language as spoken to-day by nearly one quarter of a million people in New Mexico and Colorado, is not a vulgar dialect, as many misinformed persons believe, but a rich archaic Spanish dialect, largely Castilian in source.

2nd. The indigenous Indian elements are unimportant, and only the Nahuatl of Mexico has exercised an important influence, being the language of a semicivilized nation.

3rd. The influence of the English language on the Spanish of the entire South-west is one of the greatest importance, and of the most intense interest to the philologists and ethnologists.

4th. The Spanish language in New Mexico and in the entire South-west has had a great influence on the English vernacular of these regions, and its study is of the greatest importance.

5th. The State school of laws of the South-west, should make the study of Spanish possible in the public schools, for the benefit of the Spanish speaking children of these regions, who have no opportunity to learn to read their native tongue. To learn English no one has to forget Spanish or any other language.

6th. The scientific and comprehensive study New Mexican Spanish folklore should be encouraged in every legitimate way by the learned Societies and educational Institutions of New Mexico.

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