

“Novohispano Novenas: Patriotic Texts of Creole Promotion,” paper presented for *Historicizing Colonial Texts*, Conference of the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, Flagstaff, Arizona, USA, April 12, 2008.

In this paper I analyze the way seventeenth-century novenas from New Spain were used as texts of creole patriotic promotion. Novenas are small pocket-sized books of devotion dedicated to a saint or the Virgin Mary that contain short origin stories, ritual instructions, prayers, and meditations for nine days. These spiritual aids were written to cultivate Christian devotion in the hearts of the faithful and were used by devotees to ask the Christian god for particular favours. In general, novenas have been neglected in historiography on colonial Latin America because of their devotional character and seeming lack of significance beyond the study of the church and ‘popular’ religion. A more complex picture of these devotional tracts emerges, however, in the writings of the Floridian Jesuit Francisco de Florencia (1620-1695). In the late 1680s and the early 1690s the Jesuit Father imaginatively constructed an iconic map of New Spain by textually historicising a series of novohispano miraculous images throughout the viceroyalty. He attached novenas to the majority of his devotional histories and used them as a tool to promote a creole consciousness in late seventeenth-century New Spain. Novenas, then, are important correlative texts to colonial histories and the relationship between the two has not been adequately studied.