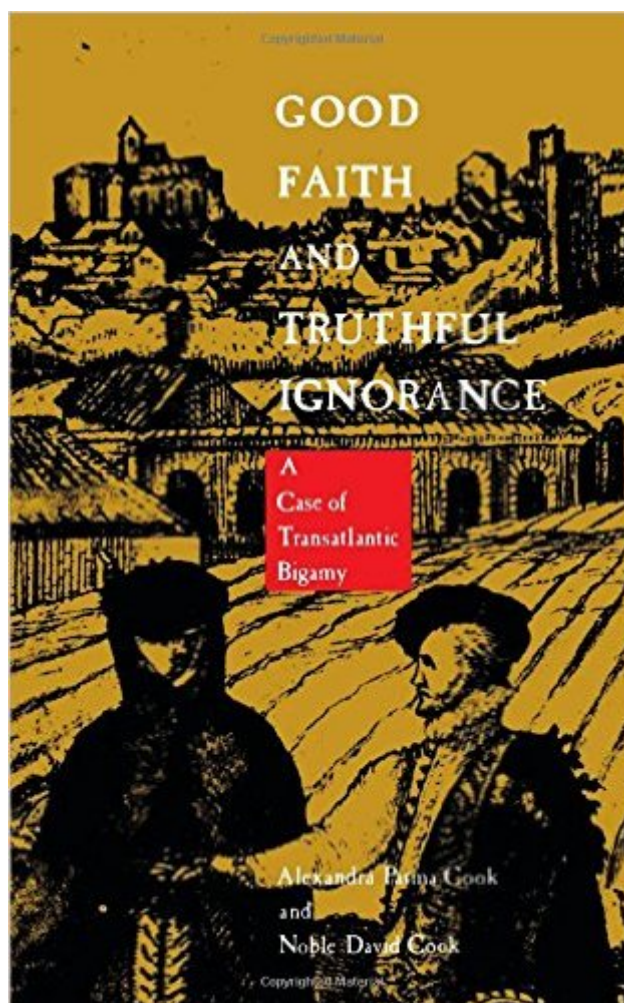


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Good Faith And Truthful Ignorance: A Case Of Transatlantic Bigamy



Synopsis

Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance uncovers from history the fascinating and strange story of Spanish explorer Francisco Noguero de Ulloa. In 1556, accompanied by his second wife, Francisco returned to his home in Spain after a profitable twenty-year sojourn in the new world of Peru. However, unlike most other rich conquistadores who returned to the land of their birth, Francisco was not allowed to settle into a life of leisure. Instead, he was charged with bigamy and illegal shipment of silver, was arrested and imprisoned. Francisco's first wife (thought long dead) had filed suit in Spain against her renegade husband. So begins the labyrinthine legal tale and engrossing drama of an explorer and his two wives, skillfully reconstructed through the expert and original archival research of Alexandra Parma Cook and Noble David Cook. Drawing on the remarkable records from the trial, the narrative of Francisco's adventures provides a window into daily life in sixteenth-century Spain, as well as the mentality and experience of conquest and settlement of the New World. Told from the point of view of the conquerors, Francisco's story reveals not only the lives of the middle class and minor nobility but also much about those at the lower rungs of the social order and relations between the sexes. In the tradition of Carlo Ginzberg's *The Cheese and the Worms* and Natalie Zemon Davis's *The Return of Martin Guerre*, *Good Faith and Truthful Ignorance* illuminates an historical period—the world of sixteenth-century Spain and Peru—through the wonderful and unusual story of one man and his two wives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Two worlds collide from across the Atlantic Ocean when a well-respected man is charged with the dishonorable crime of bigamy. The defendant, Francisco Noguero de Ullua, is a true man of his time striving from humble beginnings to shake off the weight of his birth and claim glory in the Americas. His crime is the consequence of unfortunate circumstances of miscommunication, strained familiar relationships, and the resurrection of a dead wife. The Cooks chronicle these true events providing a peek into 16th century Spanish life and culture in the New World with commentary that is helpful and revealing. This book is crafted in a light that truly makes the events of 400 years ago come to life-an excellent choice for students of Latin American history, legal history, or social history. Maps, glossary, and a chronicle of events included.

Not difficult to read, provides a look at many aspects of life in the Colonies and Iberia. Useful (especially for those who don't speak Spanish) references and maps in the back. I didn't give it five stars, however, because I think it was a bit choppy in the writing, jumping from place to place. I also think--even though I could be totally off the wall on this one--that the authors tried too hard to hide their bias for one of the women. I'm not much of a social historian, I'm much more of a structuralist, so I do recognize my own bias while reading this.

I noticed another college student felt this book was a waste of their time, but I want to disagree. First off there is much to be learned about the Spanish legal system by reading this biography, and this book was on a recommended reading list our professor gave us for writing a mini-research paper for a colonial Latin American history course. Anyone who wants to learn more about Transatlantic communication in colonial Latin America would be interested in this volume, there is a lot to glean from it. This might not have been a book I would have discovered on my own, but it is certainly a book I enjoyed since the authors use descriptive detail and realism to bring long gone people to life. There are other books I have read for courses that might not have been enjoyable, but I always learned something. One big thing you can learn from reading this book is just how miscommunication often occurred as little as a hundred year ago, when people had to rely on letters for correspondence. Even though there is some evidence Noguero may have known his first wife Beatriz was still alive after he married dona Catalina, for the most part he only had the letters his sisters wrote him to go upon. Today we live in a world where we are inundated with text messages and the 24/7 news cycle, so I believe people can learn a lot by realizing just how sparse and precarious communication was in the not so distant past.

Based on a true case, it was a very interesting tale of bigamy and history's of Latin America and Spain. I love the sense of honor and title and get the feeling that this book allows us to see that women did have a way to voice their concerns and get their way, in this case. Fun to read and in three parts.

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