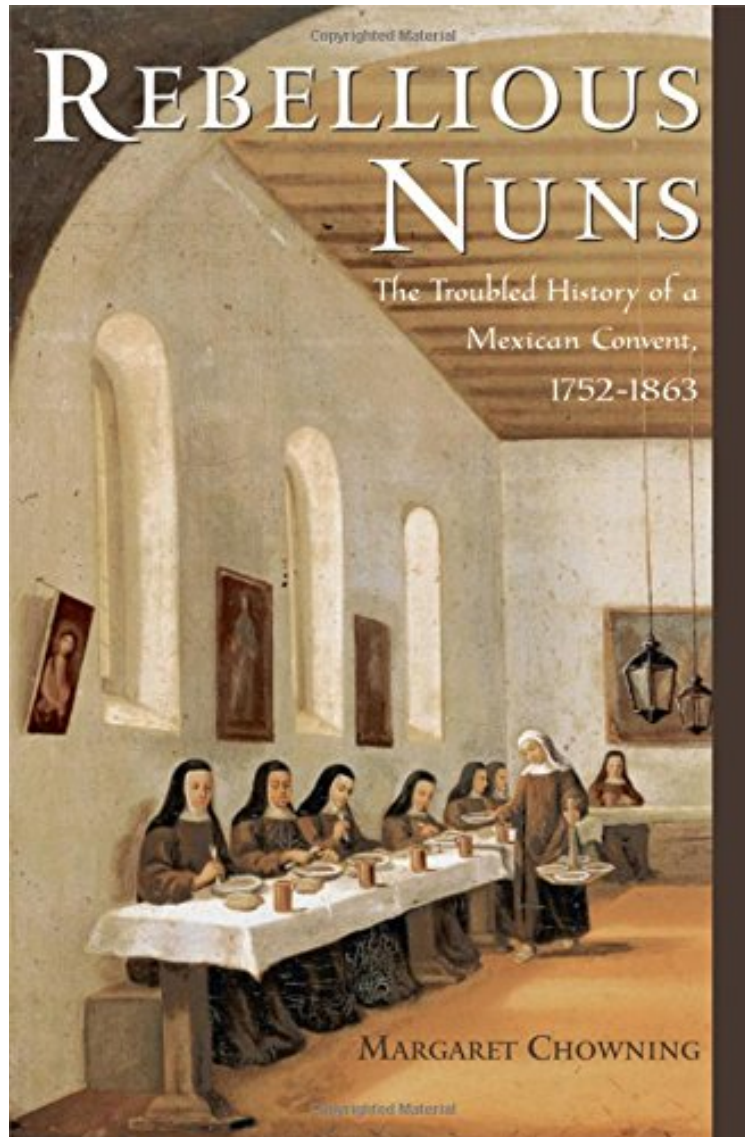


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## **Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-1863**

*Margaret Chowning*

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#1516453 in Books Margaret Chowning 2005-11-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 6.30 x 1.00 x 9.30l, 1.28 #File Name: 0195182219318 pages *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-1863* | File size: 47.Mb

**Margaret Chowning : *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-1863*** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *Rebellious Nuns: The Troubled History of a Mexican Convent, 1752-1863*:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting BookBy Melisa W.I read this book as part of the research I have been conducting for a family history question. I found it to be interesting and enlightening. Despite the title, this is not a "sensational" book. It was thought-provoking and well-written.

Nuns are hardly associated in the popular mind with rebellion and turmoil. In fact, convents have often been the scenes of conflict, but what went on behind the walls of convents was meant by the church to be mysterious. Great care was taken to prevent the "scandal" of factionalism in the nunneries from becoming widely known. This has made it very difficult to reconstruct the battles fought, the issues debated, and the relationships tested in such convents. Margaret Chowning has discovered a treasure-trove of documents that allow an intimate look at two crises that wracked the convent of La Pursima Concepcin in San Miguel el Grande, New Spain (Mexico). At the heart of both rebellions were attempts by some nuns to impose a regimen of strict observance of their vows on the others, and the resistance mounted by those who had a different view of the convent and their own role in it. Would the community adopt as austere a lifestyle as they could endure, doing manual labor, suffering hunger and physical discomfort, deprived of the society of family and friends? Or would these women be allowed to lead comfortable and private lives when not at prayer? Accusations and counteraccusations flew. First one side and then the other seemed to have the upper hand. For a time, a mysterious and dramatic illness broke out among the rebellious nuns, capturing the limelight. Were they faking? Were they unconsciously influenced by their ringleader, the charismatic and manipulative young women who first experienced the "mal"? *Rebellious Nuns* covers the history of the convent from its founding in 1752 to the forced eviction of the nuns in 1863. While the period of rebellion is at the center of the narrative, Chowning also gives an account of the factors that led up to the crises and the rebellion's continuing repercussions on the convent in the decades to follow. Drawing on an abundance of sources, including numerous letters written by the bishop and local vicar as well as nuns of both factions, Chowning is able to give us not just the voices but the personalities of the nuns and other actors. In this way she makes it possible for us to empathize with all of them and to appreciate the complicated dynamics of having committed your life not only to God but to your community.

"Historians of colonial and modern Mexico, as well as students, will delight at a book rich in descriptive detail. The care with which Chowning treats her subject and the complex and nuanced assessment of this convent's life offer a treasure of issues and topics for further discussion and debate."--Martin Nesvig, *The Historian*"This book is a great resource for undergraduate students learning about historical research as well as for advanced scholars. Chowning brings the reader along in her interpretive process, explaining how sources such as letters, testimonies, and reports of nuns, bishops, and vicars were produced and paying attention to different perspectives and multiple possible interpretations of events. The result is a narrative of historical research that operates alongside the narrative about La Pursma. These arcs unite to present a fascinating picture of a group of women whose fortunes were intertwined with that of San Miguel and its region, and whose story illuminates the history of late colonial and early national Mexico for readers today."--Joan Bristoo, *Journal of Social History*"This is a beautiful little piece of research. Chowning has done an excellent job." --Church Times"This work offers a rare insight into the lives of cloistered nuns in late eighteenth century Mexico. Using conflict within the convent of La Pursima Concepcin in San Miguel el Grande Chowning reveals the complex fabric of human relationships pulsating behind its walls. A debate on observance, carefully documented in hundreds of letters and private ecclesiastical sources, introduces the modern reader to the spectrum of interests, passions and machinations that plagued La Pursima for several years. An engaging narrative style, a judicious economic analysis and attention to detail recommends this study to historians of late colonial provincial society as well as historians of women and the church."--Asuncin Lavrin, author of *Women, Feminism, and Social Change in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, 1890-1940*"This superb book combines sophisticated scholarship with an entertaining story. Tracing the turbulent history of a Mexican convent from its foundation until the exclaustation of its nuns during the Reforma, *Rebellious Nuns* captures the texture of daily life inside the convent and the personalities of the strong-willed women who inhabited it. Chowning skillfully places her case study in the broader historical context to illuminate significant changes in women's roles, Catholic piety, and Church-State relations over a difficult century. This highly readable work will appeal to a wide audience of scholars as well as students in Latin American Studies and Women's Studies classes."--Silvia Marina Arrom, author of *The Women of Mexico City, 1790-1857*"In this beautifully written book, a talented historian brings to life a memorable cast of characters: an Adam Smith-loving archbishop, a reform-minded abbess and her resistant charges, a provincial city in the throes of change. Her well-wrought narrative of a convent rebellion grounds sophisticated insights into key political, economic, and gender relations of the century she tackles. This extraordinary episode and its subsequent reverberations has found its rightful historian."--Pamela Voekel, author of *Alone Before God: The Religious Origins of Modernity in Mexico*"Chowning's work is a fine regional study of a broader phenomenon, convent rebellion, which illuminates larger trends. It will be required reading for those interested in women's convents, the economic history of the late colony and early nation, and the processes by which so-called Enlightenment thought penetrated even remote reaches of Mexican society." --American Historical "One of the most revealing glimpses inside a Mexican convent yet written.

Just as impressively, the book situates the story of La Purisima within broad religious, political, and economic transformations, without blunting the nuance and historical idiosyncrasies of the convent and the nuns themselves." -- Colonial Latin American Historical About the Author Margaret Chowning is Professor of History at the University of California, Berkeley. She is the author of *Wealth and Power in Provincial Mexico: Michoacan from the Late Colony to the Revolution* (1999).