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### THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF JOAQUÍN MURIETA

## Foreword

My father loved Zorro. He also identified strongly with another Hispanic outlaw-hero, Speedy Gonzales, the Warner Bros. cartoon mouse with ADHD who ran rings around authority. Reading this book, I kept wondering what he would have thought of Joaquín Murieta.

My dad was the youngest of thirteen children born to a New Mexican dirt farmer (hence the expression “dirt poor”). His first language was Spanish, and—having been born in 1930—he experienced a fair amount of discrimination, like most “Mexicans”\* at the time. When

\* “Mexican” is an odd designation. Sometimes it has the traditional meaning: a person who either lives/lived in Mexico or is directly descended from the people(s)—note that plural—of Mexico. Most often in present times in the US, it’s a catch-all term for any person of Hispanic descent (even though a great many such people come—especially in recent years—from places like El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Chile; also Cuba, but Cubans are geographically localized and have a strong community with a distinct identity).

For what it’s worth, my nine-times great-grandfather traveled from Toledo, Spain, to Mexico City in 1679. His two sons traveled north to Santa Fe and settled there in 1705, and the family pretty much stayed in that area for the next 250 years. So . . . in 1679, Mexico (the entire territory, which included most of present-day New Mexico) was (politically) New Spain, and its inhabitants (whatever their genetic makeup) were citizens of Spain.

They stayed Spaniards until the end of the War of Mexican Independence, in 1821. At this point, my paternal ancestors became Mexicans—for the next thirty years, at which point the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (1848) ceded the New Mexico Territory to the US, and we became