

CHAPTER 11

THE SOUTHWEST

JAMES F. BROOKS


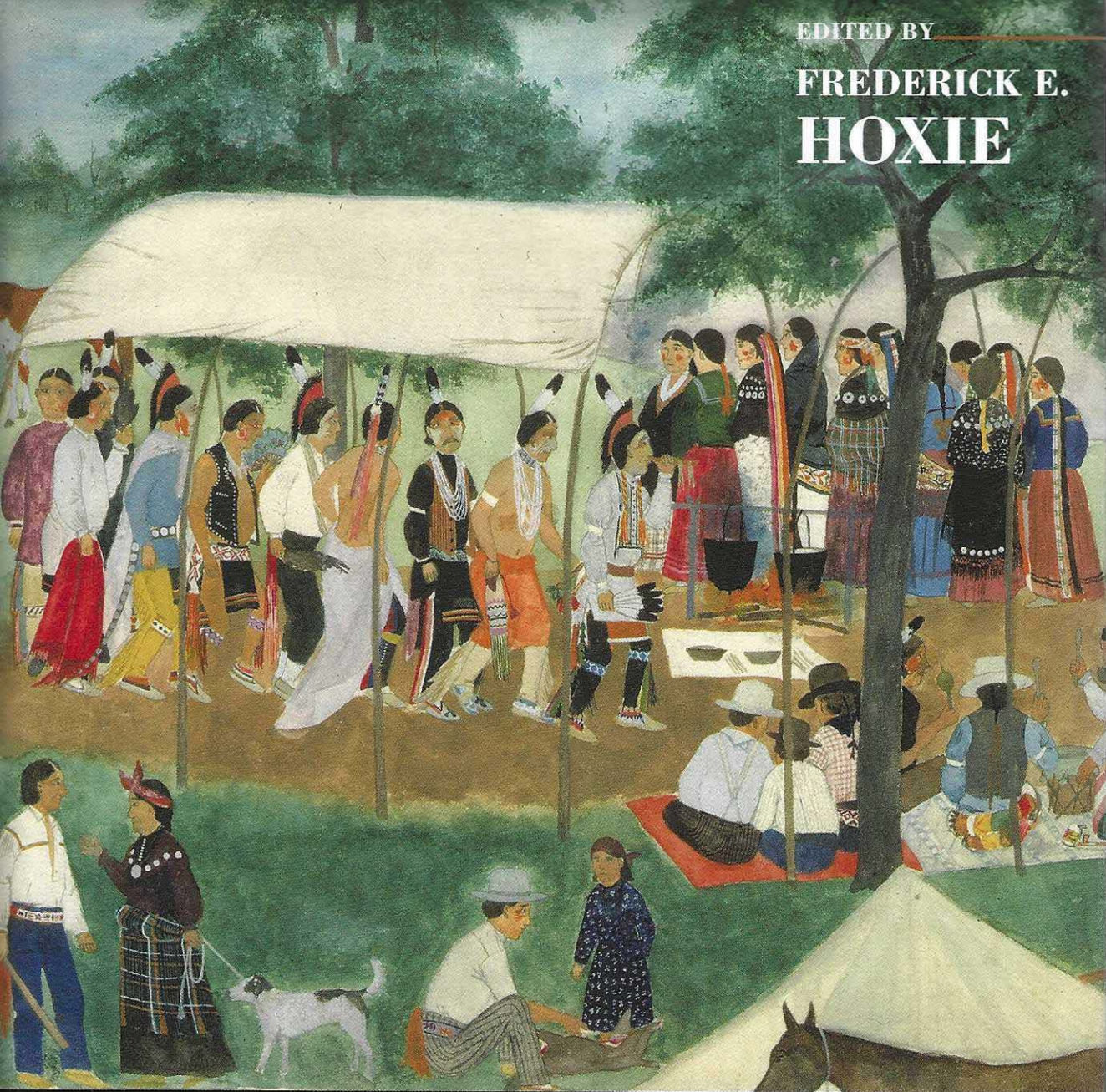
A WORLD OF MOVEMENT

ARTIST Georgia O'Keeffe's beloved Ghost Ranch lies amid spectacular cliffs and mesas along the Chama River, some sixty miles northwest of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Thousands of O'Keeffe devotees visit the ranch and her studio each year, traveling the "blue highway" that links the rural Chama to the urban corridor of the Rio Grande valley. Her paintings, and the stunningly beautiful landscape that inspired them, often provide visitors their first experience of the profound visual appeal of the greater Southwest.

Few travelers realize that they are also traversing one of the most significant American Indian migration and settlement corridors in the Southwest, a well-watered and fertile floodplain that served to link peoples of the southern Rocky Mountains and the San Juan River to those of the Jemez range and Sangre de Cristo Mountains, and the Rio Grande, across some 300 miles. Drivers may stop at Bode's store for gas and a red chili and chorizo breakfast burrito, or tour O'Keeffe's Abiqufú village residence, yet never realize they are strolling around a community whose forebears include peoples who today are located as far away as the Hopi mesas in Arizona and Utah's Great Basin. Three miles down the road they will pass by the slopes of an alluvial terrace, atop which lies Poshuingue village, a fourteenth-century Tewa town home to some 600 people at its height. Poshu, as it is locally known, was only one of some dozen major Tewa settlements along the Chama River and its tributaries, ranging in time from the mid-thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries.

These Pueblo villages are ancestral to the six modern Tewa settlements along the Rio Grande that have sheltered their people for the last 600 or so years—Ohkay Owingeh, Santa Clara, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Pojoaque, and Tesuque. The great migrations that brought them down the Chama likely began in today's Four Corners region, where we see earlier forms of Tewa life at Mesa Verde National Park, Hovenweep National Monument, Canyon of the Ancients National Monument, and the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado.¹

HOXIE



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