

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Pío Pico: The Last Governor of Mexican California.* By Carlos Manuel Salomon. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. vii + 233 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Arnolde De León, Professor, Department of History, Angelo State University.

Although Pío Pico served as the last governor of Mexican California, his life story did not end with the United States' conquest of the region in 1846. His presence in California history actually spanned three sovereignties: born in California in 1801 (and thus a subject of Spain), he acquired political stature during Mexico's rule of California and then went on to leave another mark as an American citizen. His time as governor by itself merits a biography, but his success as an entrepreneur in the American era also deserves due attention, in part because it questions the traditional thesis advanced for the decline of the Californios. Carlos Manuel Salomon relates a story of rags to riches, albeit one that does not end on a successful note. He devotes five chapters to Pico's early life and political career under Mexico and four to Pico's business ventures from circa 1848 to 1891. The work rests on a combination of solid primary sources and the impressive published scholarship on nineteenth-century California.

Pico, a Southern Californian (*sureño*), hailed from San Diego. Born into the lower class the son of an enlisted soldier, he gradually gained upward mobility on account of kinship to influential rancharo brothers-in-law; such connections facilitated entry into the politics of 1820s and 1830s California. His acquisition of Rancho Jamul as a grant from the Mexican government in 1829 elevated his status and drew him further into California politics. Increasingly, Pico became embroiled in political clashes between centralists and liberals, siding in 1831 with the latter element (which sought a semi-autonomous relationship with Mexico) in a rebellion against the centralist governor of California. Henceforth, he emerged as a leader in California politics, resisting the federal government's effort to exert tighter control over the province.

Economic good fortune accompanied Pico's broadening political might during the period of mission secularization in California. Between 1835 and 1840 he served as "*comisionado*" at Mission San Luis Rey, and in that capacity oversaw the granting of secularized mission lands. He personally profited as *comisionado* by building a cattle empire and acquiring Rancho Santa Margarita. His political

activism meanwhile continued uninterrupted, and in a rebellion carried out in 1845, he replaced Mexico's appointed governor. When American forces attacked his homeland in 1846, Pico sought to mobilize the Californios, but then left for Mexico in order to avoid capture and the indignity of surrendering the province to the invaders. The exile returned from Mexico after the war's end to reclaim his Rancho Santa Margarita.

In chapters 6 through 9, Salomon focuses on Pico's career as a Mexican American businessman. The author marvels at Pico's business acumen as the don astutely forged profitable business alliances with *americanos* (and even accommodated himself with the new political order). From the 1850s to the 1870s Pico turned huge profits from the sale of cattle and with returns purchased several ranches throughout Southern California. But, Salomon observes, Pico was prone to taking business risks, many of which produced financial reversals and others litigation. By the 1880s, Pico's economic fortunes began a decline due to the diversification of the California economy, his own business mistakes, and the cost of legal fees. During the last few years of his life (he lived to the age of 93), indeed, Pico experienced deepening financial losses and by 1891 faced indigence.

Several conclusions surface from this informative study on Pío Pico. Mainly, as Salomon contends, the governor's continued participation in California's nineteenth-century political and economic life complicates the standard thesis that disaster followed the war with Mexico because the Californios could not compete in the new milieu. A similar observation of individual perseverance might be made of Mexican Americans in other regions of the conquered Southwest; in Texas, for instance, José Antonio Navarro's political and economic life paralleled Pico's in some ways (according to a recent book by David McDonald). On the other hand, Pico's economic misfortunes (and perhaps that of fellow Californios) cannot be completely attributed to orchestrated efforts among Anglo Americans to victimize the Californios; Pico often brought problems upon himself due to imprudent business decisions. Last, historical figures can often shape history long after their deaths. As Salomon opines, for Mexican Americans today Pío Pico symbolizes ethnic pride and the very embodiment of the maxim that individuals can prosper despite difficult odds.

*Kit Carson: The Life of an American Border Man.* By David Remley. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2011. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and maps. 320 pp. \$24.95 cloth.

Reviewed by David Miller, Lecturer, Department of History, University of San Diego.

One can imagine the Kit Carson Hollywood blockbuster: ruggedly handsome frontiersman mounts his horse, charges the savage Indians he is swift to dispatch without a flinch of remorse, and rides off into the Western landscape, but not before offering a folksy proverb to the young woman he has saved. Indeed one need not imagine; such is the script of the heroic Carson of numerous dime novels and Westerns. On the other hand, in their quest to debunk the heroic Carson, revisionist scholars have gone to great lengths to portray a much less romantic and ultimately more savage anti-hero. David Remley, who has published two previous books on the Old West, has written *Kit Carson* to remind us otherwise. To Remley, Carson and the mid-nineteenth-century frontier he inhabited were much more complicated, fluid, and nuanced than romanticized memory or recent critical scholarship would permit.

Remley has reconstructed the life of one of the frontier's most mythologized heroes, Kit Carson, in order to answer some basic, but important questions: Who was Christopher Carson? What responsibility did he have for "the important events connected with the history of his time...and what [do these] fact[s] suggest about his character?" (p. xix). Remley identifies the debate around which much of the recent Carson biographies have revolved: Was he ultimately a "great white hero" as portrayed in his own time or "just another damned killer" as portrayed in ours? (p. xxviii). Remley answers plainly, Carson was neither. He was a man of his culture and a product of his time. He was just a man who spent most of his life on the frontier and thus lived a life of complexity, fluidity, occasional violence, and change. Remley concludes that the real Carson was at times "humane and responsible" as well as "violent and aggressive" (p. xxviii).

Remley uses eleven chapters to trace the arch of Carson's life from birth in 1809 to his death in 1868. But precisely because Carson's history is so enmeshed in his myth, Remley must carefully pick apart fact from fiction. He engages the sources, both popular culture and scholarly works, to paint, in this reviewer's mind, a satisfying portrait of the real Carson. The narrative includes two chapters on Carson's childhood and a chapter on his formative years in the frontier West around 1832. In chapter 4 Remley places Carson within the context of Indians in the West and explores Carson's relationship with them while he worked as a

trapper and guide. Chapters 5 and 6 tell the story of Carson's experience with John C. Frémont's first two expeditions, first in 1842 and then 1843-44. Remley devotes a separate chapter to the most mysterious and controversial of Frémont's expeditions, his 1845-46 trek into Mexican California that coincided with the Mexican American War and led to Frémont's court martial. Remley highlights the intimate relationship between Frémont and Carson while untangling the many competing memories of what, exactly, happened in California. The narrative continues with Carson's life as a rancher and sometimes guide in New Mexico in the 1850s, through to the Civil War and his role with Indian Affairs, and to his final years in Taos. Remley succeeds in clarifying Carson's life and character, only to end the narrative abruptly with Carson's death, showing no intent or interest in the significance of Carson as actual historical agent or mythical figure, let alone his legacy as both.

Historians, however, should do more than uncover and recount the past; they should explain causation and interpret the significance of events. Remley does not use the life of Carson to spotlight broader historical events and processes. There is not much new here in terms of our understanding of the nineteenth-century frontier. While historians argue about the "real" Carson versus the myth in a growing body of scholarly biography and western studies, they fail to consider why the myth developed. What purpose did it serve and how did it fit into a larger process of national expansion? And perhaps most importantly, this recent scholarship has not considered the implications of Carson's legacy within the context of a broader set of American attitudes about empire.

But these themes are beyond the scope of the book. Remley's is a biography in its purest form – an attempt to parse out the life of an individual. In this regard Remley succeeds. He separates fact from fiction, demonstrates that Carson "matured intellectually and ethically as he grew older," and will certainly "stimulate more thoughtful writing about him than the cardboard fictions of the nineteenth century or the simplistic negative characterizations of the recent years" (p. xxviii). What Remley does provide is a highly readable narrative of the life of Kit Carson that disentangles myth from reality. It is a story any enthusiast will be sure to enjoy and appreciate.

*The Father of All: The de la Guerra Family, Power, and Patriarchy in Mexican California.* By Louise Pubols. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2009. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. xi + 435 pp. \$44.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Zachary Adams, Graduate Student, Texas Christian University.

In *The Father of All*, Louise Pubols chronicles the establishment of the de la Guerra family as part of California society's elite and explores the efforts of José de la Guerra to maintain that status throughout California's tumultuous history. Pubols argues that the use of patriarchy, in various forms, allowed de la Guerra to preserve his rank in society and accumulate a vast family fortune. Pubols draws convincing connections between the various styles of patriarchy under Spanish, Mexican, and American control of California, pointing to similar goals achieved through different means.

The book begins with a young José de la Guerra y Noriega relocating from Spain in 1792 and eventually joining the military in New Spain at age 19. He was posted in California, where he used his Spanish birth to advance faster than other soldiers who were born in New Spain. Within this section, Pubols aptly describes the *sistema de castas* in New Spain and depicts the military and California society as environments where social mobility was still possible. José, through a combination of his birth and his talent, advanced to the position of *habilitado*. He then used his role in gathering supplies for California settlers to establish connections that allowed him to become a successful private trader.

At this point in his life, José began to form the elaborate kinship networks that would become the base of his power and are a recurring theme throughout the book. Besides marriage and birth connections, Pubols describes the intricate system of *compadrazgo*, in which elite families would sponsor one another's children as godparents to create fictive kinship networks. De la Guerra used these networks, along with the presence of commercially isolated missions, to build a fortune acting as an intermediary between missionaries and traders. Mexican independence brought free trade to California and American traders, formerly smugglers, established a much stronger and more visible presence. However, de la Guerra successfully integrated American traders into his kinship networks through the marriage of his daughters and by sponsoring the newcomers' conversions to Catholicism.

In the next section, Pubols describes a generational conflict, as the next generation of California elites matured and sought their place in society. This new generation wished to distinguish themselves politically, embracing liberal ideals and attempting to eliminate the mission system. Yet, these younger male heads of households

continued to use the traditional system of patriarchy through which they distributed political and economic benefits to non-elites. While this maturing process resulted in several confrontations, occasionally with violent consequences, Pubols attributes the minimal bloodshed to the use of a patriarchal system to quash conflict.

The book ends with the annexation of California by the United States. While elites had varied reactions to the presence of Americans, de la Guerra's actions were guided mainly by his desire to maintain his power within California society. He accomplished this by appearing politically moderate and participating in American government, even though he did not recognize its legitimacy and secretly funded the initial resistance efforts against it.

Pubols also studies the role of California's elite women throughout the book. Her portrayal of Angustias de la Guerra, José's daughter, is particularly memorable. Angustias's actions during the resistance to American annexation and involvement in cultural interaction at galas and other society events show an opinionated, strong-willed, clever woman making an impact on American annexation. While Pubols has not set out to write a history of gender in this period, she does not ignore the experiences of women and uses a deft touch to include both the role of the patriarch and his wife in California society.

Pubols relies primarily on sources from the de la Guerra family papers. Her use of correspondence and journals as well as occasional secondary source references allows her to create a narrative of vivid setting and memorable characters. While her primary sources are mainly those produced by the elite, she nevertheless incorporates the stories of a range of actors, and in presenting the experiences of Indians and Hispanics she continues the New Western History's pattern of restoring the voices of those often neglected in traditional historiography. The book is a pleasant read for any interested in California history, and though its topic may be too narrow for use in undergraduate surveys, it is a valuable resource for advanced undergraduates and graduate students.

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*Wheels of Change: From Zero to 600 m.p.h.: The Amazing Story of California and the Automobile.* By Kevin Nelson. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2009. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and source notes. 405 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by John A. Heitmann, Professor, Department of History, University of Dayton.

Histories of the automobile in America often begin with the all-too-familiar observation that “the Automobile is European by birth and American by adoption.” And while that generalization certainly is useful in explaining things to undergraduate students, it rings particularly true in the case of the state of California, where beginning with the car’s appearance on the streets of Los Angeles and San Francisco, late nineteenth-century society and culture were rapidly and markedly transformed into a twentieth-century machine age. Indeed, the automobile is the perfect technological symbol of American culture, a tangible expression of our quest to level space, time, and class, and a reflection of our restless mobility, social and otherwise. It transformed business, life on the farm and in the city, the nature and organization of work, leisure time, and the arts. Further, the automobile transformed everyday life and the environment in which we operate. More specifically, it influenced the foods we eat, music we listen to, risks we take, places we visit, errands we run, emotions we feel, movies we watch, stress we endure, and the air we breathe.

That part of the story seems obvious to anyone who has ever visited the state. A related story, however—namely one of how Californians contributed to the evolution and diffusion of the automobile in American (and indeed global) life—has never been carefully compiled. However, the recent publication of *Wheels of Change* does explore how Californians shaped the larger history of automobiles in American life. For example, Carl Breer, Harley Earl, Frank Howard, and Earle Anthony were critical to the engineering and design of the automobile, notions of planned obsolescence, and the formulation of sales strategies. The business of speed was very much a California enterprise, as witnessed by the work of Harry A. Miller, Leo Goossen, Fred Offenhauser, Stu Hilborn, Mickey Thompson and many, many others. California contributed more than its share of the greatest race drivers of the twentieth century, from Jimmy Murphy, who was the first American to win a European Grand Prix race in 1921, to the late and incomparable Phil Hill. And finally, several generations of Hollywood actors and actresses, to a degree unwittingly, did more to glamorize the automobile than all the Madison Avenue advertising agencies combined, intimately connecting this inanimate and often mass-produced object to wealth, status, and individuality.

While *Wheels of Change* is author Kevin Nelson's first work dealing specifically with automobile history, it demonstrates the author's surprising command of the topic. Harnessing a considerable variety of sources, Nelson skillfully spins a tale that centers on individuals but weaves these figures together almost seamlessly. And with each of the figures, Nelson develops fabulous and at times humorous stories and adventures, as these characters come alive on the page. Further, the narrative moves at a fast pace. Nevertheless, there always seems to exist a context bigger than the automobile and California, as Nelson reminds the reader at several junctures of concurrent events nationally and globally. In terms of chronology, the story is strong and comprehensive to the late 1960s. However, it then falls off as almost every auto history does, perhaps because of the end of the automobile's Golden Age, perhaps because it is easier to write enthusiastically of its positive virtues than the critiques and problems that followed Oil Shock I in 1973. Yet the 1970s are now forty years removed from us, and historians need to conduct more work on this recent past.

While my overall evaluation of this book is most positive—I would argue that it would be a great addition to an undergraduate course reading list in 20th century history, the history of technology, or California history, it does have its shortcomings. Most significantly, *Wheels of Change* reconstructs an expected past. By drawing so much from newspapers and journalistic literature, this story is one that has been told in various places far and near, but it does not probe beyond the largely known. Nelson provides a wonderfully readable synthesis, but there are no surprises or new insights. Second, the citation format of this book is awkward to say the least. Source notes exist in the back of this book, but conventional footnotes or endnotes would have been more helpful to this reader. Placing these criticisms aside, however, *Wheels of Change* is a great read that makes the history of the automobile come alive with human interest and a rare energy.



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*Los Angeles in the 1930s: The WPA Guide to the City of Los Angeles.* By the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration. Introduction by David Kipen. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011. Bibliography, illustrations, maps, and photographs. lxviii + 433 pp. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Theodore A. Strathman, Lecturer, Department of History, University of San Diego.

The currently stagnant job market has prompted some politicians to call for a modern-day equivalent of the Works Progress Administration, the New Deal agency that employed millions of Americans during the Depression. While it may not sway conservatives from their opposition to federal work relief programs, this recently published volume is a valuable testimony to the high quality of work produced by the WPA. The researchers and writers of the WPA created guides to each of the states and a number of major American cities. These books were travel guides, surveys of leading economic activities, and local histories. Fortunately for researchers and aficionados of Los Angeles history, the University of California Press has released the WPA's 1941 guide to Los Angeles with a new introduction by critic David Kipen.

The guide's opening section contains Kipen's introduction, the original preface, and listings of accommodations, attractions, and annual events. There follows a general survey of Los Angeles, including a brief history of the region and sections on the arts, religion, education, and recreation. Part 2 highlights points of interest in the city itself, and as Kipen observes, the guide then spirals outward, examining neighboring cities in part 3 and the "Country Around Los Angeles" in part 4. This section is one of the book's most intriguing: it directs readers on seven tours from Los Angeles to outlying destinations including Palm Springs, Catalina Island, and Santa Monica. Each tour offers precise directions, mile-by-mile accounts of towns and attractions, and passages describing local history and industry. With guide in hand, the present-day reader could follow one or more of these routes for a fascinating journey through seven decades of change in Southern California.

Yet the volume finds its real value not as a guidebook (one cannot assume that Deadpan Maxie still features at Slapsy Maxie Rosenblum's Café) but as a rich primary source. The narrative sections reveal a great deal about what Angelenos and outsiders in 1940 thought Los Angeles was and what it might be. The section on the history of the region, for instance, offers a more-or-less celebratory account of the rise of a major American metropolis where once stood a "primitive village" of Gabrieliño Indians (p. 24), and accepts rather uncritically such assessments of

the Hispanic pueblo as James O. Pattie's observation of Californios who "sleep and smoke and hum Castilian tunes while nature is inviting them to the noblest and richest rewards of honorable toil" (p. 32). Such cultural chauvinism aside, the authors of the guide did in fact identify some of the themes that have dominated Los Angeles historiography in the last seventy years: the decline of the Californios (even if the authors here downplay the clash between Hispanic and American legal traditions and overstate the Californios' personal failings as landowners); the struggle to develop infrastructure (although the duplicity of Los Angeles in acquiring Owens Valley water rights is omitted); the spectacular (and often speculative) growth of the 1880s and 1920s; and the industrial boom of the interwar years. Meanwhile, the lengthy section on the motion picture industry reflects the perception that Hollywood *was* Los Angeles.

As well-written as the narrative sections are, it is the guidebook's listings of accommodations and facilities that may prove most useful for social historians. The sections on restaurants, amusements, night clubs, and recreational facilities provide great insight into the fascinating mix of leisure activities in pre-war Los Angeles. The *mélange* of high culture ("symphonies under the stars" at the Hollywood Bowl) and "lowbrow" amusements (midget auto races and "very ripe" burlesque shows featuring "seminude girls" (p. xlvii)) suggests something of the schizophrenic nature of leisure and culture in what was even then a bustling and diverse metropolis. These listings are potential gold mines for scholars who are interested in mapping the recreational terrain of Los Angeles.

Scholars and writers have indeed mined the WPA guides for decades, but in publishing *Los Angeles in the 1930s* the University of California Press has done a great service in making this guide available to a new generation. The liveliness of the prose and the inclusion of dozens of evocative black and white photographs will attract many non-scholars. The new introduction is humorous and engaging as well, but professional historians may desire more contextualizing and analysis than what Kipen provides. Kipen is especially interested in the great assemblage of literary talent in Los Angeles in the late 1930s, and he uses the introduction to consider what the WPA guide tells us about the social and economic environment that surrounded the likes of Raymond Chandler and Nathanael West. Yet Kipen is absolutely correct when he notes that this book "exists to preserve not just the memory of a great city, but also the attitudes round and about it—the received wisdom of the time" (p. xxviii). In these capacities it will be a welcome addition to many bookshelves.

*Fire, Chaparral, and Survival in Southern California*. By Richard W. Halsey. San Diego, CA: Sunbelt Publications, 2005. Second Edition, 2008. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. xxiv + 192 pp. \$19.95 paper.

Reviewed by Philip R. Pryde, Professor Emeritus of Geography, San Diego State University.

There are some books that really do belong on everyone's bookshelf. If you happen to live in coastal Southern California, *Fire, Chaparral, and Survival in Southern California* by Richard Halsey is one of those books. It will not only inform and educate you, but under the frightening onslaught of periodic wildfires, it might also save your life. The intent of the book is to familiarize southern Californians with the most salient characteristics of our dominant land-cover, chaparral, examine certain misconceptions about chaparral that the author believes exist, and help us all minimize the chances of losing our homes (or worse) in major wildfires such as those that occurred in San Diego County in 2003 and 2007.

The new edition is not significantly changed from the first edition. Both are richly illustrated and highly informative. The main change is in the introduction, which has been increased from three and a half pages to fifteen. If you have only one hour to spend with this volume, read the introduction, which is an excellent summary of the author's main points. But for the reasons stated above, it is worthwhile to read the whole book.

A major objective of the book is to dispel what the author considers myths about chaparral and chaparral fires, such as the belief that old growth chaparral is a significantly greater fire threat than younger stands. His conclusions are based on both published studies and his personal experiences in the field as a professional firefighter.

Halsey makes frequent use of the disastrous southern California fires of 2003 as examples to bolster his main theses. The book was published shortly after the equally destructive fires of October 2007 and there are brief references to these later fires as well. One important lesson from these two fire episodes is the highly damaging effects to chaparral ecosystems from fires that burn the same area only a few years apart. One new addition, Figure 4.5, shows the many overlapping burn areas from the 2003 and 2007 San Diego County fires.

One of the best-written chapters is the last, in which the author appeals for the creation of a personal connection to nature, and in particular to Southern California chaparral. The book blends the exhortations of John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Henry David Thoreau (and, in the epilogue, San Diego's now-famous Richard

Louv as well) to urge the readers to enhance their lives by connecting more with the therapeutic attributes of nature.

The book is enhanced by two sets of photos, and the pictures in both sets are well chosen and photographically very instructive. The first set illustrates types of chaparral, chaparral fires, and post-fire effects. The second, near the end, depicts some key plants and animals of the chaparral community. The sixty plant photos would serve quite well as a beginning field guide for identifying the most common chaparral plants.

The only topic that seemed to be somewhat skirted was an overview of the pros and cons of the “defend in place” option, where homeowners under very specific sets of conditions might be allowed to defend their homes instead of evacuating. This is a controversial topic which many fire professionals quickly dismiss for liability reasons, but a case can be made for its limited and narrowly defined use.

The book has been well edited, and is virtually free of typographical errors. A few minor glitches were noticed: the illustrated invertebrate in the second edition is the ceanothus silk moth, but a different insect is named in the text (page 135). The common name of *Adenostoma sparsifolium* is red shank (not pluralized). Also, his description of the wren’s song (“a descending whistle”) seems incorrect; that’s more the call of another chaparral songbird, the canyon wren. A small suggestion: on page 25 he might change the starting year of the nineteenth-century drought from 1862 to 1863. 1862 is well recorded as possibly the wettest year in California history. Another suggestion for the third edition (I hope there will be one) might be to expand the “Animals” section of chapter 1. It overlooks many key species, and also doesn’t note that almost all of the mammals (except ground squirrels and rabbits) are nocturnal.

Finally, the epilogue by Anne Fege (pp. 173-174) presents a good introduction to the many benefits and values of nature, but a future edition could profit the reader by summarizing the importance of current research in the fields of ethnobotany and biomimicry. Next to tropical rain forests, chaparral might have the most to teach us in these emerging research areas, which will be increasingly important to our common human future.

## BOOK NOTES

*The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of Los Angeles*. Edited by Kevin R. McNamara. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Appendix, notes, and index. xxii + 211 pp. \$24.99 paper. This collection of essays on Los Angeles literature is organized chronologically and thematically, exploring such topics as the literature of the Californios, the traditional detective fiction, environmental change in Los Angeles writing, and the city in Asian American, Latino, and African American literature.

*For Both Cross and Flag: Catholic Action, Anti-Catholicism, and National Security Politics in World War II San Francisco*. By William Issel. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009. Photographs, notes, and index. viii + 208 pp. \$40 cloth. William Issel, a leading historian of twentieth-century San Francisco, focuses on the story of Sylvester Andriano, an Italian American Catholic leader investigated by state and federal legislative committees for supposed fascist sympathies before and during the Second World War.

*A Gift of Angels: The Art of Mission San Xavier del Bac*. By Bernard L. Fontana. Photographs by Edward McCain. Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2010. 376 pp. \$75 cloth. Anthropologist Bernard Fontana provides a history of the mission (completed in 1797 outside present-day Tucson) and its art and artifacts. Nearly 200 color photographs accompany the text.

*Mexicans in California: Transformations and Challenges*. Edited by Ramón A. Gutiérrez and Patricia Zavella. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009. Illustrations, charts, tables, notes, bibliography, index. vii + 255 pp. \$65.00 cloth, \$23.00 paper. The ten essays in *Mexicans in California* focus primarily on contemporary issues and are grouped into four parts: Work and Poverty, Education and Achievement, Culture and Self-Representation, and Culture and Violence.

*Private Women, Public Lives: Gender and the Missions of the Californias*. By Bárbara O. Reyes. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009. Illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, and index. xi + 231 pp. \$50.00 cloth, \$25.00 paper. Reyes uses the stories of three women of different class and ethnic backgrounds in Baja and Alta California to examine how women functioned within the constraints of the mission system.

*Sacred Sites: The Secret History of Southern California.* By Susan Sontree. Foreword by Gary Snyder. Introduction by Lowell John Bean. Photographs by Juergen Nogai. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010. xxiii + 291 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, and bibliography.

\$34.95 cloth. In this inventive book poet Susan Sontree explains the origins of Southern California's environment and people in two parts: the first an account of the area according to Western science, the second based on myths and songs from the region's indigenous people.

*Vegas at Odds: Labor Conflict in a Leisure Economy, 1960–1985.* By James P. Kraft. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. Illustrations, index, and notes. x + 273 pp. \$55 cloth. *Vegas at Odds* examines labor conflicts in Las Vegas during a key time in American economic history, as manufacturing jobs increasingly gave way to service sector employment. With an economy highly dependent upon workers in this sector, Las Vegas provides an important case study of the implications of this shift for unions, employers, and employees.

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