

BOOK REVIEWS

Lynching in the West, 1850-1935. By Ken Gonzales-Day. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006. Bibliography, 52 photographs (16 in color), appendices, index, and notes. xi + 299 pp. \$79.95 cloth. \$22.95 paper.

Reviewed by Clare V. McKanna, Jr., Department of History, San Diego State University.

Beginning with the San Francisco vigilance committees of the 1850s, lynching in California has developed into a popular topic that has been examined by numerous revisionist historians. Early writers such as Hubert H. Bancroft and George R. Stewart defended the actions of vigilantes, suggesting that they were necessary to suppress crime. Other historians, however, believe that they had a negative impact that undermined the established legal system and spread lynch mob activity throughout California. In 1981, David A. Johnson, in an important essay on lynching, used the terms "vigilance committee" and "lynch party" interchangeably because he found little distinction between them. This reviewer concurs with his argument.

In this intriguing study Ken Gonzales-Day has used photography to add another dimension to the history of lynching in California. The author visited lynching sites to photograph some of the trees used to hang victims during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For example, the front cover photograph, entitled "Franklin Avenue," provides an image of an empty tree used to hang three men in Santa Rosa (plate 5) in 1920. These and other images provide the reader with an interesting new approach to examining lynching.

The book includes chapters in which the author surveys the demographics of victims, explores the relationship between capital punishment and "popular justice," interprets the photographs, and discusses infamous Hispanic figures such as Juan Flores, Tiburcio Vásquez, and Joaquín Murieta. The author also has assembled a list of the lynching victims (352 cases) and a selective list of those individuals executed legally. Similar to earlier scholars, the author discovered that Hispanics, whose 132 victims comprised 37.5 percent of all lynching deaths, were the most numerous followed by 129 Anglos (36.6 percent), forty-one Native Americans (11.6 percent), twenty-nine Asians (8.2 percent), and eight African Americans (2.2 percent). Anglos were the largest group in California in this period, followed by Hispanics, Asians, and African Americans, and thus the author correctly notes that ethnic males, especially Hispanics, were over-represented in lynching figures. Their ethnic identity, which marginalized them in the polity and economy, set them apart and made them easy prey for Anglo mobs. Gonzales-Day provides excellent anecdotal examples of the methods employed by mobs to murder their victims and, unlike most studies of lynching in the West, he carries his story of lynching into the twentieth century. As the author explains, many of these hangings occurred despite an established criminal justice system that was available to handle the accused.

During a discussion about the large number of Hispanic, Asian, and Indian victims discovered in historical documents and records the author poses the

rhetorical question: "Were they victims? Or was justice served?" (p. 91). One of the most disturbing mass hangings of Hispanic victims (discovered in my own research) occurred in San Joaquin County. On April 28, 1851, Jacob Bonsal, Robert R. Dykman, Jim Carmichael, and several others placed five Hispanics suspected of cattle rustling on a wagon, tied ropes around their necks, and pulled the wagon out from under them. It is unlikely that the fall broke their necks; it must have been ghastly. Could anyone honestly conclude that justice was served?

Gonzales-Day has used an unusual photographic technique of "erasing the victim" for special effect. From an historian's viewpoint, to take photographs of trees used in the past for hangings is fine; however, to eliminate the victims and the perpetrators from historical photographs alters and sanitizes the history of these dreadful events. The Arias-Chamales lynching image (plate 4) may provide the best example of why we should not erase the actors from the photograph. In this instance what is most compelling is not the disturbing image of the two lifeless bodies obviously posed with their hats on; instead, it is the reaction of the audience examining the victims. Their facial expressions tell a story visually that cannot be adequately conveyed with words. To eliminate from photographs the bodies of the victims and the presence of those responsible for the lynchings is to rewrite history but get it wrong.

I have two minor reservations about the book. First, a reading of David A. Johnson's "Vigilance and the Law" (*American Quarterly*, 1981) would suggest that there were more lynchings than the 352 examined in this book. Johnson uncovered 380 cases of lynching while my own research revealed 388. Suffice it to say that there is no definitive lynching list extant. Second, it was somewhat surprising to discover that Duke University Press's editorial staff failed to detect the misspelling of a significant number of California place names such as Calaveras, San Luis Obispo, Mariposa, Pajaro, Angel's Camp, and Modesto. Nevertheless, employing photography as an historical tool, Ken Gonzales-Day has provided the reader with another dimension for examining lynching in California.

Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American Labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960. By José M. Alamillo. Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. xii + 220 pp. \$25.00 paper.

Reviewed by Jaime R. Aguila, Assistant Professor of History, Department of Applied Arts and Science, Arizona State University, Polytechnic.

José Alamillo's *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons* assesses the evolution of the Corona, California, lemon industry that emerged in the late nineteenth century as a venture of Midwestern Anglo capitalists whose objective was to create a community "representative of American settlement . . . not composed of foreigners, but of an intelligent, thrifty and cultured class of people" (p. 14). As was the case throughout the West, such views of race contributed to the replacement of Chinese workers by Italian and Mexican immigrants, so that by the end of the 1950s Mexican Americans had become integral elements of the community. The Southern California citrus industry's dependence on Mexican labor limited employers'

abilities to control their workers, so employees maximized their free time as both a recreational outlet and to empower themselves. By the 1940s Mexican Americans exploited specific recreational space such as employer sponsored baseball leagues as a foundation for community activism. Consequently, Alamillo's focus on workers' and employers' struggle over leisure space as well as his skillful integration of the role of women within this study is path breaking.

The migrant labor situation in Corona illustrates the complexities of racial construction. Although Mexican and Italian workers were recruited for different reasons, employers believed with the proper motivation both groups could become acceptable workers and community members. While Mexicans were welcomed as long as they accepted the racial hierarchy that had forced out the Chinese, Italians benefited from their Whiteness. The following quotation from one grower illustrates this social construction: "[t]he first foreigner to come to Corona was an Italian, no objection was made to him. He at least was a white man" (p. 38). Mexican workers on the other hand were accepted because of the need for their labor and the belief that they could be controlled. Italians and Anglos made up the packinghouse and supervisory positions, while Mexicans were relegated to picking lemons. George P. Clements, head of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, advised growers to foster a paternalistic relationship with their Mexican workers in order to ensure a reliable and manageable workforce.

Citrus growers exploited various privileges to create a docile workforce and prevent labor unrest. They held seats on such bodies as the City Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and the School Board, which enabled them to dictate local politics, especially preventing other types of industry from developing, which might lead to competition for labor. Growers also pursued a paternalistic scheme that provided company housing and a company store (p. 12). Such programs were motivated by employers who felt that unsanitary dwellings hurt job production and used company housing as a means to Americanize workers by promoting "better citizenship" and encouraging males to form nuclear families.

Such endeavors were successful prior to World War II, but they also caused some workers to seek more independence by rejecting company housing and living in the Corona barrio. Furthermore, "Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans used certain leisure activities to build ethnic and worker solidarity" (p. 3). Employer-supported baseball leagues acted as both a tool for Americanizing workers and for promoting loyalty to one's company. Such activities not only reinforced purportedly positive American cultural traits, but also deterred illegal recreation such as cockfighting. Baseball leagues offered leadership experience, organizational skills, and opportunities to meet *la raza* in other communities for tournaments. Such experiences for the children of Mexican immigrants who made up the majority of these teams proved instrumental since later in life many became labor organizers and active in city politics. There were also opportunities for women to play softball. Alamillo suggests these softball games were only a novelty attraction, but they nonetheless created highly appreciated opportunities where women were able to form friendships and "gain public visibility outside the home and workspace" (p. 111).

Maybe Alamillo's best work is the fluid manner in which he weaves gender and women's themes with the greater story of Corona's evolution. For example, he demonstrates the complexity and negative aspect of recreational space within

the barrio and Mexican families. Less organized and more traditional pastimes such as saloons and pool halls frequently proved detrimental to the welfare of the community. "Arguments over card games, bets, and women that occurred in saloons frequently turned into violent confrontations with deadly consequences for men and women" (p. 58). Such incidents not only reinforced stereotypes about Mexican culture, but increased violence and "asserted power and privilege over women" (p. 59). However, women's space also grew over the course of this period, which led to employment in packinghouses and ownership of small businesses such as cafés.

Alamillo's appraisal of Corona through the lens of leisure space offers a new model with which to understand the evolution of the Mexican American community and its relationship with other ethnic groups. It has much to offer and my only criticism is that a lengthier study would have allowed Alamillo to explore in greater depth some of the fascinating themes this study brings to light. But this is only a minor quibble for such a well-written piece of history, which I recommend for both Western history and Chicana/o studies courses.

Creating Masculinity in Los Angeles's Little Manila: Working-Class Filipinos and Popular Culture, 1920s-1950s. By Linda España-Maram. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. Notes, bibliography, index, and illustrations. xvi + 252 pp. \$69.50 cloth, \$25.50 paper.

Reviewed by Deborah W. Lou, Ph.D., Sociology. Independent Scholar.

The potential of cultural analysis, according to historian George Lipsitz, lies in its ability to show how everyday practices embody larger social and ideological meaning. Linda España-Maram's book fulfills this promise with its thorough, complex, and engaging study of the lives of working class, immigrant Filipino men in Los Angeles's "Little Manila" from the 1920s to the 1950s. Using oral histories, existing scholarship, archival materials, and other texts, the author crafts a cultural history of Filipino Angelenos to show how these men used leisure and popular culture to lend meaning to their lives, form community, and challenge the constraints they faced as working class laborers, immigrants, and ethnic minorities. One of the book's important achievements is that it draws from the previously neglected transcripts of the "Racial Minorities Survey: Filipinos" conducted by the Federal Writers Project during the 1930s. The book benefits from these invaluable first-hand accounts, thus revealing the everyday struggles and joys of Filipino immigrants in a way that few other studies have been able to do.

The author examines the ways in which Filipino Angelenos defined themselves both through and against their work, created connections that surpassed time and distance through the ethnic press, derived pleasure, brotherhood, and masculinity through the so-called vice industry, and constructed definitions of masculinity through taxi dance halls and living the "sporting life." In exploring these issues, España-Maram questions the assumption that leisure activities, the consumption of popular culture, and other forms of recreation were merely escapist pursuits. Far from being wasteful, irrational, or self-defeating, such behaviors as spending

hard-earned money on fancy “McIntosh” suits, taxi dance halls, gambling, and betting on boxing matches were actually ways in which Filipino men could construct dignity, autonomy, and self-respect. Most importantly, *España-Maram* illustrates how such leisure pursuits allowed these men to form a collective masculine identity based on youth, race/ethnicity, and heterosexuality.

The ability to define themselves and to form a collective identity was especially important because of Filipinos’ economic status. Their relationship to the labor market, and especially their employment in seasonal jobs in fields like agriculture and canning, dictated a largely migratory and unstable existence. *España-Maram* notes that the ethnic press provided a way in which Filipinos in Los Angeles, and throughout the West Coast, could communicate with each other and construct a shared consciousness and identity in spite of their spatial mobility. Newspapers and other printed materials connected men across time and space and gave them a common language and experience. They provided the means with which Filipinos formed a “portable community as a way to call itself into being, wherever it was” (p. 10).

The vice industries of Los Angeles’s Chinatown figured prominently in the lives of Filipino men. Filipinos typically frequented the gambling houses and played the lottery. Not only did Chinatown’s gambling halls serve as places of rest and recreation for migratory workers, they were also an alternative way to gain economic well-being. While more affluent groups, social reformers, and other agents of social control (both white and non-white), viewed Chinatown’s attractions as depraved and wasteful, *España-Maram* argues that activities like gambling provided a much-needed respite from the hopelessness brought on by the Great Depression. The winnings, which were more than a Filipino could earn in the same amount of time in legitimate work, were sometimes so large that they made a significant difference in the gambler’s life.

For the largely young, single, and male population of Filipinos, taxi dance halls were significant in enabling these men to socialize with women, enjoy their hard-earned money, and show off their sense of style in expensive McIntosh suits. Perhaps more than in any other form of leisure activity, dancing in these halls represented resistance against the grind of daily survival. Taxi dance halls were also important in that they were one of the few places outside of the Chinatown vice industry that welcomed Filipinos (and other men of color). Because taxi dance halls typically employed working-class white women to dance with male patrons, the halls played a large role in shaping identities around race, gender, sexuality, and class. Whites, and social reformers especially, feared that brown men were corrupting their daughters. Accounts from women revealed that their interactions with the Filipino patrons were often mutually rewarding, in part because these women saw these men as talented dancers, suave yet gentlemanly, and impressively dressed. The pleasure that Filipino men derived from the dance halls allowed them to take ownership of their bodies outside of the wage-labor system and define on their own terms what it meant to be heterosexual, masculine, Filipino men.

Prizefighting was another leisure activity important in shaping Filipinos’ identity and community. Filipino men were so avid about the boxing ring and the Filipino boxers that they would readily travel all night to attend a fight. More than simply another form of gambling and entertainment, boxing, and the “sporting life” as a whole, was a means by which Filipinos challenged stereotypes that depicted them as lazy and unmanly. Because Filipino pugilists were often paired against white boxers,

Filipinos experienced prizefighting as a mythology of heroism, one that shaped a group consciousness among men who collectively identified with the underdog struggle characteristic of boxing.

The author succeeds in showing how leisure pursuits allowed Filipino Angelenos to construct a masculine and ethnic identity. By defining themselves away from, and against, the world of labor and the drudgery, condescension, and emasculation that came with much of their work, Filipinos achieved a measure of self-respect, honor, and dignity. España-Maram makes a convincing case that participating in popular culture contains tremendous potential for resisting the suffering wrought by racism, poverty, marginalization, and the transitory and unstable nature of immigrant labor. Another valuable contribution is that the book documents the experience of a people that, due to their outsider status, was not usually present in official history. By examining popular culture, the author is able to construct a fuller and more nuanced picture of the Filipino-American experience.

The Great Black Way: L.A. in the 1940s and the Lost African-American Renaissance.
By R.J. Smith. New York: Public Affairs, 2006. Notes, acknowledgments, and index, ix + 321 pp. \$26.95 cloth.

Reviewed by David Kenneth Pye, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of History, University of California, San Diego.

In this important book about black culture in Los Angeles before the era of racial integration, R.J. Smith traces the experiences of the black masses in what was then their enclave. Smith, a senior editor at *Los Angeles Magazine*, demonstrates great appreciation for black culture while managing to avoid portraying black life in segregated Los Angeles as some sort of glorified ghetto experience. Indeed, readers will come away from this book with deeper respect for black commoners who faced experiences that white authorities and black elites often could not appreciate. To tell this story, Smith focuses on two threads interwoven throughout the book: the reactions of the black masses to a racially discriminatory environment; and, the difference between the legal Jim Crow system of other regions and the ever present, yet unwritten, segregation of the City of Angels.

Segregation in the South was characterized by Jim Crow laws explicitly informing the races where they could and could not go. In contrast, Los Angeles presented an outward image of racial harmony, while the reality was less than perfect. Smith takes the reader on a tour of naval shipyards, Hollywood studios, and employment offices where blacks faced discrimination. To counter these negative experiences blacks, once at home along Central Avenue, dressed well, partied hard, and resisted the restraints imposed by whites and elite blacks. It was on Central Avenue that they wore Zoot suits and shattered the illuminated sign that hung above Golden State Mutual Insurance Company, an elite black bastion. In this black environment, the masses created the world the mainstream society sought to deny them. Smith implies black Los Angeles was a land of freedom within the constraining influence of a racially discriminatory world.

This freedom was always paradoxical and fleeting, however. Smith makes

certain that readers do not miss this point. The novelist Chester Himes best illustrates the issue. Himes moved to the city fully expecting to enjoy a less restrictive lifestyle but became disenchanted. In Los Angeles, Himes found, racism caught him unaware; he had to learn through painful experience where blacks were not wanted. But, ironically, as Smith demonstrates well, it was this same lack of definite boundaries between blacks and whites that allowed artists such as Himes to produce the work that serves as a precursor to much contemporary urban culture. It was the unfulfilled promises of Los Angeles that aided in the creation of this oppositional culture.

Unlike the elite blacks of New York City who self-consciously led the Harlem Renaissance, blacks in Los Angeles acted with more spontaneity. In Harlem, leaders such as Dr. W.E.B. DuBois of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) chose to use artistic expression as a means to prove the ability of black Americans to succeed in society. In Los Angeles, especially along Central Avenue, the black masses responded to their situation in many ways. Always, however, as Smith is sure to emphasize, there was no concerted effort by mainstream black leaders to harness this expression as a form of protest. Instead, blacks sought to enjoy their time on Central Avenue. A good example of this desire to enjoy cultural productions is the jazz jam session. In these after-hours informal settings musicians played for free, much to the consternation of the unions. But to get paid would defeat the purpose of the jam session by relegating it to the status of work, which is what the musicians wanted to avoid.

This book should be read and enjoyed by both scholars and lay people. Smith has done quite a bit of research, both in archives and, perhaps more importantly, through oral history interviews of the people who lived in black Los Angeles. Though there are some sections where Smith spends a lot of space discussing larger political issues with somewhat tangential links to black Los Angeles, the book overall is a lively read.

¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!: Chicano Protest and Patriotism During the Viet Nam War Era. By Lorena Oropeza. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005. Bibliography, illustrations, index, and notes. ix + 278 pp. \$22.95 paper.

Reviewed by José M. Alamillo, Associate Professor, Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies, Washington State University.

Lorena Oropeza has produced a well-researched and beautifully written study on the Chicano Movement's opposition to the war in Viet Nam. *¡Raza Si! Guerra No!* deals with more than protest and patriotism. It focuses on how the war forced Mexican Americans to reconsider their relationship to American citizenship and foreign policy, their position within the racial hierarchy, and their understanding of manhood and military service.

Oropeza begins with the familiar history of Mexican American participation in World War II and the civil rights battles led by returning veterans who strongly believed their wartime sacrifice abroad should merit equality at home. Many of these veterans demanded some of that postwar prosperity that came with being

racially “white,” a citizen, and anti-communist. But by the mid-1960s President Lyndon Johnson escalated the Viet Nam War, creating new divisions over support for the war within Mexican American families, organizations, and communities. As the war accelerated a new generation of activists who identified themselves as “Chicano” or “Chicana” became frustrated with the accommodation politics of the earlier generation and turned to a “politics of confrontation” that included marches, walk-outs, boycotts, and protests.

In Chapter 3, appropriately titled “Branches of the Same Tree,” Oropeza shows how Chicano movement activists drew parallels between Chicanos and the Vietnamese. For example, the bombing of Viet Nam reminded activist Manuel Gomez of the United States’ invasion of Mexican land. For Valentina Valdez the displacement of Vietnamese peasants from their land and red-baiting of their defenders was reminiscent of the dispossession of her ancestors from land grants and the branding as “communist” of those Alianza members who tried to reclaim these lands. Elizabeth “Betita” Martinez, who visited North Viet Nam as part of a delegation, saw striking similarities between rural Vietnamese and Mexican *campesinos*. In effect, opposition to the Viet Nam War allowed Chicano and Chicana activists to see how they, like the Vietnamese, were victims of U.S. imperialism. Developing a critical anti-imperialist discourse was easier, however, than challenging a long-standing tradition of military service and manhood, both within the Chicano Movement that promoted the “male Aztec warrior” image and within a capitalist patriarchal American society.

For many Chicano movement activists, the Viet Nam War exposed structural problems at home that left many Mexican American youth with little options but to enlist. *¡La batalla esta aquí!* became the resounding slogan to mobilize the Chicano community against local problems such as a poor educational system, lack of job opportunities, a degrading welfare system, and police brutality. Chapter 4 profiles two college student activists, Rosalío Muñoz and Ramsés Noriega, who led an anti-draft campaign across the country; they staged conferences, conducted workshops, screened films, and founded a short-lived organization. However, the anti-draft movement marginalized Chicanas, especially those who launched early anti-draft campaigns and those who offered an alternative vision of military manhood. Disappointed with the national peace movement’s failure to address Chicano issues, Muñoz and Noriega turned to work closely with Chicano Movement organizations. But divisions over tactics, sectarian politics, and cultural nationalism threatened this fragile unity. However, according to Oropeza, the “war in Viet Nam, ironically, temporarily provided a neutral ground for diverse factions within the Chicano Movement” (p. 144). These divisions were temporarily suspended for the largest anti-war demonstration by Chicanos and Chicanas held on August 29, 1970. The last chapter chronicles the National Chicano Moratorium march and rally, and the brutal murder of Ruben Salazar by Los Angeles police officers. In effect, the federal government and local law enforcement declared war against the Chicano Movement, thus making “the battle is here” slogan a bloody reality.

This book offers a new understanding of the Chicano Movement. First, it situates the Chicano Movement within an international context. Chicanos and Chicanas drew upon a shared history of colonization and imperialism with the Vietnamese, but when faced with state repression at home, they had to confront the limitations of such metaphors and comparisons. This experience suggested

that a more sustained international solidarity effort with Third World peoples was needed. Oropeza, along with George Mariscal's *Brown-Eyed Children of the Sun*, contributes to a better understanding of the "Chicano/a internationalism" present during the Viet Nam War era. Second, the book uncovers the important role of Chicana opposition to the Viet Nam War. Through their behind-the-scenes work, writings, anti-draft activism, and international solidarity efforts with Vietnamese women, Chicana activists challenged U.S. foreign policy. In addition, Oropeza's gendered analysis exposes the Chicano tradition of "military masculinity" that sent Chicano men to fight and die abroad. Even though Chicana activists sought a more community-oriented vision of "Chicano masculinity," it remained elusive.

The author's background as a newspaper journalist shines through in her crisply written narrative and skillful contextualization of oral histories of Chicano movement participants. *¡Raza Si! ¡Guerra No!* is a well researched and innovative work that will appeal to Chicano/a studies, ethnic studies, and gender specialists, as well as United States historians interested in the connection between civil rights and foreign policy.

DOCUMENTARIES

The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon. By John Carlos Frey. Prod. Jack Lorenz. DVD. Gatekeeper, 2006.

Reviewed by Gail Perez, Associate Professor, Departments of English and Ethnic Studies, University of San Diego.

Filmmaker John Carlos Frey is best known for his award winning feature film, *The Gatekeeper* (2003). In that film, Frey explores the plight of Mexican migrants in Southern California through the eyes of a self-hating Mexican American border patrol agent—the gatekeeper. His new documentary, *The Invisible Mexicans of Deer Canyon* (2006), provides a vehicle for the voices of the migrants themselves, again on Frey's home turf, the canyons and arroyos of San Diego County where the mostly undocumented workers of Rancho Penasquitos and other toney neighborhoods find shelter. Perhaps the power of this new film is driven by some of the same autobiographical themes addressed in *Gatekeeper*—Frey's own biracial identity and, as he put it in an interview with *La Prensa San Diego* (October 20, 2006), his own early anti-Mexican feelings: "I had little study of Mexican history. There were no role models." Just as the gatekeeper undergoes a change of heart, so Frey's new documentary seeks to transform the perspectives of viewers similarly "educated" in the current wave of anti-Mexican sentiment. While the low-budget seams sometimes show through in *The Gatekeeper*, *Invisible Mexicans* brilliantly and at times unbearably captures the texture of the migrant workers' daily struggle to survive. In addition, the lonely oboe of the musical score by Scott Ryan Johnson focuses our attention on the excruciating minutiae of just getting by.

The film is driven by the impending eviction of about 150 migrants from their shacks or *chantes* in Deer Canyon (McGonigle Canyon). McGonigle Canyon is perhaps the most photographed acreage of suffering in San Diego County – the

subject of prize winning photos by *Los Angeles Times* photographer Don Bartlett and of such documentaries as *Rancho California* (2003) by John Caldwell. *Invisible Mexicans* belongs with films by Paul Espinosa such as *Uneasy Neighbors* (1989) and *In the Shadow of the Law* (1991) that explore the lives of undocumented workers embraced by San Diego employers and persecuted by hate groups and “decent” citizens alike. The fact that the camp is so well known only points to the general complicity over the years of local growers, homeowners, and law enforcement in maintaining this pool of super-exploited workers. As John Caldwell theorizes in *Rancho California*, the camp is quietly managed from just those wealthy enclaves that purportedly despise it so that what is left of North County agriculture has access to cheap labor. In fact, the periodic demolitions of the campsites has had the effect of driving out women and children (in the mid-nineties 700 men, women, and children lived there) and leaving an increasingly young, male, and indigent population – the ideal work force. One of the themes of *Invisible Mexicans* is the end of agriculture in the area as the men trudge off to the few remaining fields.

Frey’s film, however, focuses less on economic analysis and more on the spiritual crisis that the suffering of the men generates, a crisis embodied by the chapel in the canyon that Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Church has supported for decades. In *The Gatekeeper*, the agent smashes a statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe in a fit of self-hating rage. The essence of *Invisible Mexicans* seems to be in restoring the compassion towards the transient and the poor that she represents. Frey accomplishes this restoration by long slow shots of the beauty of the canyon and by lengthy interviews with the workers—Pedro, Aron, Jose, Raul, and Carlos. Only by visiting the canyon for a year was Frey able to win the trust of the workers and follow them through their daily routine as they wash in the agricultural runoff, cook on propane stoves, and do laundry in the same polluted stream. Close ups of the men emptying a can of *posole* in a pan or buying pink sandals for a daughter back home give these material items a kind of luminosity, a human aura that will endure after they are driven out and their few belongings smashed. A quick cut to the walled pseudo-mansions and “nature preserve” that are squeezing them out indicates that space for growing food and for affordable housing will not be part of the city’s future planning.

During the film, the men we come to know are moved out and pushed deeper into the chaparral where they build smaller and more invisible shelters. But as their material existence shrinks, their spirituality and humanity grow as Frey questions them about faith and the meaning of their suffering. Since most of them easily find work in agriculture or in the homes of the wealthy, they are mystified by the hate they endure. “I don’t understand,” Carlos says, “why they want to chase us out. I don’t have anything bad in here.” Pedro also understands the economic contradictions that drove him to the canyons; NAFTA caused his wages on a Mexican coffee plantation to plummet. Of his life in the canyon he says, “I pray to God I will forget ever living in California, because I have suffered.” When his shack is vandalized, he assumes it is “vicious kids.”

Frey lingers over the chapel and a trail-side altar that invokes the divine protection promised by Psalm Twenty Three. He questions the men who visit the chapel about the ways that they give meaning to their suffering. They reject the notion that God is punishing them and view their hard lives as a challenge “to see what we will choose” and as a way to become better people. Far from being

simplistic, their migrant theology endorses the idea that the reward for their sacrifice is faith itself. The trail-side altar inspires these reflections from Carlos: "If I ask for wealth, God can't give it to me, nor will he give me poverty. I know he will always give me my daily bread. It must be working because no harm comes to me." As they lose even their toiletries, stoves, and bikes, it becomes clear that they are stoically laying down their lives so that the next generation in Mexico will have the capital to start a business there and not have to migrate. At one point Carlos does lose faith; Frey finds him in his new shack, drunk at nine in the morning, accompanied by a fresh-faced couple of newlyweds. They are precisely the generation the men want to save.

Perhaps the theme of the film is best conveyed by the series of images of the men superimposed over the "restored" nature reserve of the canyon. The face of each man fades out and we come to understand that our definition of nature does not include the very people who provide our natural needs – like picking our food. Nor does it include village people who actually can survive in nature (migrants cope with snakes, spiders, and fleas in ingenious ways) and are much closer to it than the local suburbanites and their "nature reserve." In a similar way, the men have disappeared from the city's agenda. Will Carless, a reporter from *Voice of San Diego*, camps out with Frey in the canyon and recounts the history of a failed attempt to build shelter for the workers. The practice of demanding undocumented labor without the inconvenience of the humans that provide it continues, and it is Frey's intention to sear their human traces on our memories.

The final sequences of the film cause us to experience the almost unbearable loneliness and vulnerability of the men. The stereotype of Mexican workers is that they do not suffer like "we" do. No one who views this film will ever believe that alibi for exploitation again. A priest who ministers to the workers notes that getting sick is potentially cataclysmic for those who live in the shadows. Their lifeline is the daily arrival of the lunch truck that brings them *telenovelas* (Mexican soap operas) on a battery operated television, a line of credit, and an occasional helping hand. Frey's camera stays at eye level in order to capture the claustrophobia of their green prison, even dropping to knee level to zoom in on a skinned rattlesnake. One of the few panoramic shots evokes the will and intense isolation of a minute worker trekking across a muddy tomato field on the long walk to work, or the hope of work. The film concludes with the prospect of yet more evictions, but we know that the men will "keep going and going," improvising survival within what is a true suburban plantation.

As the agricultural workforce in San Diego and indeed in the entire state increasingly resembles the subjects of Frey's film, it is hard not to think of the words of Kumeyaay elder Delfina Cuero. In her autobiography, she recounts being pushed out of Mission Valley around 1910: "Later on white people kept moving into more and more of the places and we couldn't camp....We went farther and farther from San Diego looking for places where nobody chased us away." While we may feel superior to such past cruelty, similar measures are being taken at this very moment in our county against migrant workers of color. Frey's film might be too long or too slow moving for wide distribution, yet it is precisely these acts of "disappearance" that he wishes to document, forcing us to linger over every human trace – from a lost work boot to messages carved in the trees – left behind. While this level of oppression pushes the migrants to the existential brink, it becomes evident that those really suffering the spiritual crisis are the people of San Diego. It should be noted that the

chapel in the canyon was torn down in February, 2007. Future migrants will never know that this fleeting gesture of humanity was ever made.

Maquilapolis: City of Factories. Produced by Vicki Funari and Sergio la Torre. California Newsreel, 2006. In Spanish with English subtitles and English with Spanish subtitles. 68 minutes.

Reviewed by Kathryn Kopinak, Senior Fellow, Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California, San Diego.

The fact that workers played a central role in creating this film makes it unique among several depicting production for export in factories (*maquiladoras*) along the U.S.-Mexico border. The filmmakers gave cameras to *promotoras*, women maquila workers who advocate for themselves and their communities, to record their lives. The film was made in Tijuana during the maquila crisis from 2000 and 2004, a period of recession which left many unemployed, among them some of the *promotoras*. Even though Tijuana has more *maquiladoras* than any other Mexican city, this crisis was very hard on the population due to the lack of diversity in the area's economy.

The film highlights four coordinating *promotoras* and thirteen collaborating ones, with five groups listed as organizing partners. These organizations, composed of a small number of dedicated people, have worked for years to help educate and support the knowledgeable and articulate women factory workers featured in the film. While the *promotoras* first met in their own houses to learn labor law and organize, they later acquired an office in their neighborhood, as the group progressed "little by little." While the film is a testament to what can be achieved by committed people in such organizations, (e.g. Environmental Health Coalition and the Chilpancingo Collective for Environmental Justice), it should not be assumed that they are strong institutional supports for the maquiladora workers. Since the film was made, one of the organizations, *Grupo Factor X*, has closed while another, the Workers Information Center (Spanish acronym CITTAC), endures a precarious existence due to inadequate funding. The *promotoras* are well aware that they are not protected by unions because the companies pay "ghost unions" that favor employers and because the government, in the form of the Labor Board, will not reinstate workers fired for trying to organize unions.

Many *promotoras* have lived all their lives in the neighborhood of Chilpancingo, which lies below the mesa on which the city built Otay Industrial Park, one of the largest such parks in the region. *Metales and Derrivados*, the worst brownfield site on the US-Mexico border, is within view of their homes, which are downwind and downstream from lead and other toxic waste. The *promotoras* are representative of many in the Tijuana maquiladora work force in that several are migrants from other parts of Mexico and single mothers who built their own houses out of whatever material they could afford, such as garage doors discarded in the United States. The film has great aerial shots of the landscape illustrating how the factories occupy the tops of mesas with workers' homes close by below. These shots are artfully interspersed with the *promotoras* silently repeating the hand movements they use at work. The video diaries of the *promotoras'* family life and

their communities are amazing first hand accounts of their analysis of exploitation and their determination to struggle to defend their rights as women and workers.

The accounts of health problems due to toxins in the factory and in their neighborhoods as well as the lack of infrastructure will outrage many viewers. Especially devastating is an account of children being electrocuted in the street. However, the viewer also witnesses two of the *promotoras'* most important victories. The first is their creation of enough international media attention to get governments on both sides of the border to clean up the *Metales and Derivados* brownfield site. The film justifiably depicts this as a struggle in which a David-like committee of five women who present themselves as "only housewives" overcame the Goliath of governmental and corporate interests. The second victory is the success of the *promotoras* in forcing Sanyo to pay their legally required severance payments when the company moved their jobs to Asia. There is no unemployment insurance in Mexico, and severance payments are essential in an environment where industries may close and move away overnight. Large multinationals such as Sanyo and Sony set the informal rules by which all maquila companies operate in Tijuana. Sanyo, in collaboration with the government's Labor Board, wanted to give the workers only a small portion of what they were legally owed to set a precedent. The footage of some of the negotiations at the Tijuana Labor Board office provides a fascinating glimpse into these efforts.

One of the strengths of the film is its ability to convey a sense of optimism while not losing sight of the persistent social problems related to transnational capitalism. It is clear that the *promotoras* understand how their status as single mothers as well as large-scale forces like globalization prevent them from realizing their dreams immediately. However, they do not give up hope and are determined to provide the best lives they can for their children. Thus the film succeeds in raising awareness of the plight of those who labor in maquiladoras while suggesting the power of hope and community action.

BOOK NOTES

Beyond Cannery Row: Sicilian Women, Immigration, and Community in Monterey, California, 1915-99. By Carol Lynn McKibben. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006. x + 159 pp. Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, and index. \$40.00 cloth, \$18.00 paper. Drawing on extensive interviews with residents of Monterey's Sicilian community, McKibben examines how women used their experiences in the canneries to forge identities and position themselves politically. This study also traces the emergence of a transnational community in Monterey, as migration between Sicily and California helped reinforce ethnic identity.

First Families: A Photographic History of California Indians. By L. Frank and Kim Hogeland. Berkeley: Heyday Books, 2007. xvii + 282 pp. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, and index. \$23.95 paper. Frank and Hogeland examine the history and culture of California Indians by compiling photographs from the family albums of tribal members. Each of the volume's seven chapters discusses the Indian tribes of a particular region of the state.

From Texas to San Diego in 1851: The Overland Journal of Dr. S.W. Woodhouse, Surgeon-Naturalist of the Sitgreaves Expedition. Edited by Andrew Wallace and Richard H. Hevly. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2007. xl + 357 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, and index. \$45.00 cloth. Samuel Woodhouse was a physician who accompanied Lorenzo Sitgreave's 1851 exploration of the southern portion of the Four Corners region. His journal, published here for the first time, contains his observations of the flora, fauna, and topography of this portion of the territory newly acquired by the United States.

Janitors, Street Vendors, and Activists: The Lives of Mexican Immigrants in Silicon Valley. By Christian Zolniski. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. Illustrations, tables, notes, references, and index. xiii + 249 pp. \$18.95 paper. By examining the lives of undocumented workers employed in low-wage work at the epicenter of California's high-technology industry, Zolniski highlights one of the great contradictions of the state's twenty-first century economy.

Reworking Race: The Making of Hawaii's Interracial Labor Movement. By Moon-Kie Jung. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006. Photographs, tables, notes, bibliography, and index. xi + 292 pp. \$47.00 cloth. Moon-Kie Jung explores the development of an interracial labor movement among sugar, pineapple, and longshore workers in Hawaii. Portuguese, Filipino, Japanese, and Chinese workers, Jung argues, came together in the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, in the process forging a working-class identity and politics that did not abandon concerns revolving around racial marginalization.

San Francisco's International Hotel: Mobilizing the Filipino American Community in the Anti-Eviction Movement. By Estella Habal. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2008. Illustrations, notes, and bibliography. 262 pp. \$64.50 cloth, \$24.95 paper. In the 1970s, owners of the International Hotel planned the demolition of the structure located in San Francisco's Manilatown and inhabited primarily by elderly Filipino bachelors who had migrated to the United States in the 1920s and 1930s. Residents and community activists waged an ultimately unsuccessful battle to fight the eviction of the hotel's manong tenants. Estella Habal, a professor at San Jose State University, draws on her experience as a worker for the I-Hotel Tenants Association to recount the anti-eviction movement.

Letter to the Editors:

Frank W. Stevenson was the chief architect of the Naval Training Center, rather than Lincoln Rogers, as noted in the Spring 2008 issue of the *Journal*. It was, in fact, that job which brought him out from Indiana in the 1920s. Lincoln Rogers oversaw the military correspondence portion of the project. Stevenson designed several important buildings in San Diego including the Army/Navy YMCA, the Mission Beach Plunge and St. Agnes Catholic Church in Point Loma.

Mari Hamlin Fink, granddaughter of Frank Stevenson.