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Martha Menchaca. *The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California.* Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1995. xvii + 250 pp. $40.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-292-75173-6; $21.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-292-75174-3.

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In this well-researched and clearly written monograph, Professor Martha Menchaca details the many forms of prejudice and discrimination which the Mexican-origin people of Santa Paula, California, a small agricultural community located 60 miles northeast of Los Angeles, have suffered since the end of the nineteenth century. While Menchaca is not the first to argue that Mexicans in southern California suffered considerably as a result of Anglo American racism [1], her use of ethnographic and historic sources both strengthens and broadens our understanding of the ways in which racist and discriminatory practices emerge and over time become institutionalized. More important, Menchaca considerably adds to our understanding of racism against Mexicans in southern California in more recent times, since a considerable part of her book (Chapters 5 to 9), concentrates on the experience of this particular Mexican community in the post-World War II period.

The chronological organization of the book allows the reader to clearly follow the forms which discrimination in Santa Paula took in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the first Anglo settlers arrived in Santa Paula, and how they were transformed throughout the next century. In chapter one, Menchaca describes the various, often illegal, ways Mexicans lost their lands to Anglo Americans. According to Menchaca, the loss of land was so complete that, "by the turn of the century, only six Mexicans owned property in Santa Paula" (p. 19). The loss of land, the author persuasively argues, in turn, led to loss of political power.

In the second chapter Menchaca demonstrates that by the turn of the century Anglos in Santa Paula, as elsewhere in California, were rationalizing segregation of Mexicans in a variety of social settings, including churches. They argued that Mexicans were "inferior" and "immoral" to justify their segregation and exclusion. These racist views even allowed Anglos to justify violence against Mexicans. In this chapter the author also demonstrates that the Ku Klux Klan was not a phenomenon of the South and that its hatred was not directed only at African Americans. Racism in this community was so pervasive that Menchaca concludes that by the 1920s, "Although KKK activity was criticized by some individuals...there is overwhelming evidence indicating that the majority of the Anglo Americans in Santa Paula approved of the Klan" (p. 51). Visible and public KKK activities in the community finally ended in the mid-1930s when the citrus growers, who controlled the community politically, realized that KKK activities were frightening their workers and decided to launch a political attack against the KKK (p. 57).

In chapter three and part of chapter eight, Menchaca describes the inferior education which Mexican students received in Santa Paula. Mexican students have usually been segregated in their own schools. Moreover, these schools have always had less resources than the schools for Anglo students. In addition, even when Mexican students have been allowed to attend schools outside of the

East Side of Santa Paula, where much of the Mexican population lives, they continue to be segregated in "Mexican" classrooms. School officials argued that Mexican students had special cultural and language needs, but these rationales are unconvincing since even English-speaking Mexican students were forced into segregated classrooms (p. 68).

In chapters four and six Menchaca discusses the troubles of Mexican workers in their efforts to unionize. Their early efforts at labor organizing were unsuccessful because the big citrus growers imported workers from Mexico, particularly during the Bracero Program. In the 1960s and 1970s, despite the help they received from organizations such as the United Farm Workers (UFW), Santa Paula's Mexican agricultural workers also failed to form a union because the community's two largest employers were able to divide the labor force. The workers who held the well-paying jobs with benefits and good housing saw no need for unions; therefore, they did not support their less fortunate brethren who had lower wages, bad working conditions, and no benefits.

In chapters five and eight Menchaca demonstrates the various ways in which Mexicans have been segregated on the East Side of the community since the beginning of the century. Although at one point Menchaca states that by 1970 "Residential segregation had completely broken down" (p. 122), she nevertheless later states that "Today [1980s], 95 percent of the Anglo American residents live on the West Side, and 68 percent of the Mexican origin population continues to reside on the East Side" (p. 181).

Perhaps the most interesting and thought-provoking part of this book is chapter 9, which discusses how Anglo American racism influences the relations between different groups within the Mexican-origin community. It is in this chapter where Menchaca's insight as an anthropologist and her ethnographic research become most evident. The author effectively demonstrates how the two main sectors of the community (native-born and immigrants) remain segregated from one another except during periods of crisis when they must join together to defend themselves against attacks from the Anglo American community. Native-born Mexicans often believed themselves to be superior to immigrants and saw them as culturally backward. Immigrants, on the other hand, saw themselves as the hard-working part of the Mexican community and viewed the native-born individuals as lazy and as part of an emergent drug culture. Unfortunately, her discussion of the differences between the two groups of Mexicans is limited to the contemporary period. It would have been interesting to discuss these differences within the Mexican-origin community during earlier periods and to follow how they changed over time.

Throughout this book Menchaca ingeniously brings together ethnographic and historic evidence to support her arguments. The topics, such as residential segregation or the loss of land, are first introduced using evidence from interviews. These subjective accounts are then tested against historical documents. Thus when Menchaca is told about residential segregation, rather than accept a person's statement as truth, she also examines property tax records and census data for verification of these subjective experiences. In addition to the 94 open-ended interviews which she conducts with many members of the community, Menchaca also employs a number of primary sources which include tax records, newspapers, photographs, church records, court cases, and genealogies (p. xvii).

While Menchaca's book is rich with data and will be a welcome addition to the literature on Chicano/a Studies, her preoccupation with enumerating the ways in which the Mexican-origin people were marginalized and discriminated against has led her to ignore discussing other developments within the Mexican community of Santa Paula. For example, while she mentions the publishing of the first Mexican community newspaper, "La Voz," in 1932 and later also discusses the founding of various community organizations such as La Casa del Mexicano and the Latin American Civic Organization, she only discusses how these institutions played a role in fighting against school segregation, desegregation, and other forms of discrimination. There is often little, and sometime no, discussion of the ways in which these newspapers and organizations contributed to community cohesiveness and ethnic pride. There is also little elaboration of cultural practices within the Mexican community. Although in chapter seven Menchaca presents photographs of "Three views of a Catholic celebration blessing the Mexican colonias" (pp. 166-167), the text does not discuss the significance of this ritual or its historic origins.

Menchaca's study appears to be working within the them-versus-us paradigm of doing history.[2] This way of writing history sometimes makes us ignore discussing issues of importance and it also often leads us to view Mexicans as lacking in agency and living life only in reaction to oppression and discrimination. Unfortunately, this is how Menchaca appears to view the history of the Mexican-origin people in Santa Paula, and the concept

of "social apartness" which she develops for this analysis seems to confirm this perception. Menchaca writes that social apartness "refers to a system of social control in which Mexican-origin people are expected to interact with Anglo Americans only on Anglo American terms. Anglo Americans determine the proper times and places in which both groups can come into contact" (p. xvi). A dialogue with other scholars and students of Chicano history, particularly George Sanchez and David Gutierrez, would have significantly contributed to Menchaca's analysis.[3]

All in all, this well-researched and well-documented study will make a significant contribution to the growing literature of Mexicans in the United States. It clearly demonstrates that in small agricultural towns, as in great metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, Mexican-origin people have had to fight against discrimination and marginalization in order to make a decent life for themselves and for their children.

[1] See Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), Richard Griswold del Castillo, *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), and Ricardo Romo, *History of a Barrio: East Los Angeles* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983).

[2] For a discussion of this issue and for an excellent essay on the development of field of Chicano history up to the late 1980s see Alex M. Saragoza, "Recent Chicano Historiography: An Interpretive Essay," *Aztlan: A Journal of Chicano Studies* 19:1 (Spring 1988-1990): 1-77.

[3] See George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), and David G. Gutierrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995). The dissertations from which these books originated were finished in 1989 and 1988, respectively, at Stanford University.

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