

Theresa Delgadillo. *Latina Lives in Milwaukee*. Latinos in Chicago and Midwest Series. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2015. Illustrations. 240 pp. \$95.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-252-03982-9.

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The United States has a rich historical record on Latino/a presence, though it is often focused on the Southwest or concentrated pockets in the states of New York and Florida, and one city in the Midwest, Chicago. However, over the past decade, scholars have been collecting and making public the histories and stories of Latino/a life in the Midwest, from documenting linguistic heritage, festivals, and celebrations, to the much-needed attention of Latino/a students in predominantly white colleges and universities in states like Indiana, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Indeed, the need to make visible and bring attention to a population that has made the Midwest their home for generations is long overdue. Thankfully, Theresa Delgadillo's *Latina Lives in Milwaukee* is a timely contribution to the small but growing body of books that documents Latino/a life in the Midwest.

Latina Lives in Milwaukee dedicates each of its chapters to one participant's story, except for the chapter on the Sandoval family which documents the lives of four women. Delgadillo uses oral history methodology to collect the histories of these women; however, she makes clear that what is presented in this book is not a word-for-word transcript of the interviews. She uses a combination of autobiography and testimonials. Delgadillo notes: "These oral histories do have testi-

monial moments, that is, times in the story when a woman is aware of narrating an experience shared by many ... or instances when a woman relates a particular social or political epiphany she felt at a certain moment in her life" (p. 23). The book is made up of nine chapters, the first of which is an introduction titled "Latinas in Milwaukee," and an epilogue that briefly discusses the challenges Latinos/as face in Milwaukee, such as poor political representation, heightened policing of brown bodies, and problems with access to quality health care. Delgadillo edited and arranged each of the remaining eight chapters according to a main theme. With titles like "Maria Monreal Cameron: On the Shoulders of Women," "Olga Valcourt Schwartz: A Life Dedicated to Education," or "Ramona Arsiniega: My Group of Mexican *Comadres* Made All the Difference," the reader gets a preview of what the chapter focuses on. Additionally, each chapter provides the date of the interview and a list of jobs and professions the participant has held.

The book, as the author affirms, offers a fair representation of *Latinidad* in Milwaukee. Delgadillo presents not only a handful of diverse ethnicities, such as Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Salvadoran American, but also different professional fields, such as education, agriculture, business, and social activism. In fact, the chapters

offer subheadings that point to specific dates, interests, languages, leadership formation, organizing, community relations, family interactions, the condition of women, and the scarcity of ethnic foods (like in Ramona Arsiniega's chapter). The inclusion of personal pictures and copies of periodicals, flyers, and magazines adds a personal touch to these stories, and documents the public presence these women had.

As an example of how the chapters are arranged and the wealth of topics each of the testimonies holds, I will briefly discuss Carmen Alicia Murguía's chapter, titled "It Was Okay to Be Mexican, but I Wanted More." Murguía's story recounts the lives of second- and third-generation Milwaukeeans whose grandparents moved to Milwaukee during World War I. Her story reveals awareness of gender roles as early as elementary school, and what that meant for her as a Mexican female. Even more, realizing at an early age that she was gay heightened her positioning when she accidentally came out during her senior year at a Catholic school when she wrote a love letter to a girl. She remembered coming out to her parents as a traumatic event too: she says, "[My parents] sent me to my room. They were yelling" (p. 190). Murguía also described the composition of the neighborhoods where she lived, including predominantly Latino, black, and Jewish neighbors. She discussed her journey to college and finding religious acceptance when she moved to Minnesota, her awareness of Chicana literature, her later reconciliation with her parents, her growth as a writer, and even the grief of losing friends to AIDS and murder. This chapter, as all chapters in this book, is an invitation to the study of the many facets of Latina life. It is personal, political, and inspirational.

It is important to highlight that *Latina Lives in Milwaukee* unveils interviewees' awareness not only of their specific communities but also of other Latino/a groups. For example, participants used words like "Hispanics" or "Latinas" to refer to

their community, instead of their own distinct heritage. Maria Monreal Cameron, in chapter 4, mentioned the Hispanic Women Conference in which they "discuss issues and challenges facing Latinas—Latinas talking to Latinas" (p. 93). We get a glimpse of how Latinas have come together to support and learn from each other.

Delgadillo's detailed mapping of participants' testimonials/oral histories helps readers focus on specific events, topics, and common experiences to understand Latina lives in the Midwest. It also helps us understand the multiple layers each of the chapters conveys. Certainly, *Latina Lives in Milwaukee* offers a valuable record and examination of women that expands from the 1960s to the 1990s, as recounted by the participants. This book is, indeed, an important contribution to the study of Latinas in the Midwest. The book can be used in such courses as Latino history, cultural anthropology, identity, language and performance, and gender studies, among others.

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