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Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Corazon de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910* by Julie M. Weise

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part of organic as a movement, but many of the strongest proponents of scientific evidence come from the tillers, who often question the science the spreaders use to compromise about organic standards.

Some of the most interesting history in this vein is how these two groups struggle within the National Organic Standards Board. In my own work, I have described this group as one of the most civic and participatory components of American government today. On the other hand, the democratic aspect of this committee—charged to advise the USDA National Organic Program on the creation and maintenance of organic standards—is constantly under attack: the current conventional owners of organic food companies seek to weaken the standards to fit organic into the industrial business model. Conventional firms often appeal to the values of consumers for health and convenience rather than maintaining organic as a process based on a particular scientific approach to soil.

The one thing missing from Obach's story is the West Coast, where the founders were different. Green Gulch Farm and Alan Chadwick—seminal to West Coast organic agriculture—are absent here. It would have been wonderful if Obach had spent more time interviewing the farmers who emerged from this other organic transition. Perhaps he will in his next book.

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*Corazon de Dixie: Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910.* Julie M. Weise. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016. 344 pp., \$32.50, paperback, ISBN 978-1-4696-2496-9.

Julie M. Weise's award-winning book challenges the idea that the US South was isolated from global forces in the nineteenth and twentieth century by recovering and recounting the invisible history of *Mexicanos* in New Orleans (1910–1939), the Mississippi Delta (1918–1939), the Arkansas Delta (1939–1964), rural southern Georgia (1965–2004), and the exurbs of Charlotte, North Carolina (1990–2012). Weise's comprehensive text documents encounters between southerners of different economic positions and Mexicanos to identify the responses to and experiences, perceptions, and aspirations of the newly arriving Mexican nationals, Mexican Americans, and Tejanos. The author examines the specific aspirations that led them to migrate, work, and

struggle for rights in the US South, and describes how the newcomers pursued their goals by leveraging “the power within their grasp locally, nationally, and internationally, within families, communities, or distant bureaucracies” (6).

The book presents information collected from historical sources like newspapers, church records, census reports, and government documents from a number of archives in the United States and Mexico. Additionally, the author uses oral history interviews and photo albums, particularly in the chapters that focus on the last two decades, which makes this book ideal for an interdisciplinary audience interested in race, labor, migration, citizenship, transnationalism, neoliberalism, and globalization. Weise’s research successfully argues that encounters between southerners and Mexicanos were affected by location, economic status, and political ideology. The expectations of immigrants differed, the responses of African Americans and whites varied, and therefore racial exclusion was not uniform throughout the region.

In Chapter One, for example, the process of racialization and incorporation into the social and racial hierarchy was different than in other parts of the United States. The immigrants who arrived in the 1920s were mostly middle class, and Weise presents US Census data revealing that Mexicanos were not pigeonholed into particular employment categories. The highest number of Mexican immigrants arriving in New Orleans performed white-collar jobs. This was a particular historic moment when Latin American trading partnerships were sought, and so the language of the time emphasized that this port city was the “gateway” to Latin American trade. These factors contributed to and explain why these middle-class Mexicanos “lived as white people during the 1920s” and were perceived as European-style white immigrants (14). As a result, they did not have the same experiences of segregation and discrimination evident in housing, marriage patterns, and occupational status that were present in her comparative case study in the Arkansas Delta, for instance. In the Delta, Mexican cotton workers were successfully able to resist Jim Crow-style exclusion due to the Mexican consulate’s ability to blacklist employers that paid less than the wage stipulated in their contracts. Still, white southerners in the Delta perceived these immigrants as inferior racially and economically.

One of the strengths of the book and of particular interest to migration scholars is the author’s unique ability to capture place-specific experiences over the course of more than ten decades. *Corazon de Dixie* has a companion website that includes a number of primary sources

from the text (<http://corazondedixie.org>). The book is a must read for students and academics from a number of disciplines including history, anthropology, sociology, American studies, Latin American and Latino studies, and southern studies.

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*Of Forests and Fields: Mexican Labor in the Pacific Northwest.* By Mario Jimenez Sifuentez. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016. 264 pp., \$27.95, paperback, ISBN 978-0-8135-7689-3.

Mario Sifuentez's *Of Forests and Fields* examines the roles that ethnic Mexican laborers played in turning the Pacific Northwest into a veritable agricultural cornucopia from the World War II era to the present. Building on the work of a smattering of previous historians such as Erasmo Gamboa, Sifuentez provides a fairly comprehensive analysis of the contributions made by ethnic Mexicans in this far-flung agricultural world that became an important center of labor migration over a more than seventy-year period.

Sifuentez begins during the World War II era, noting that braceros in the Pacific Northwest differed from their counterparts in other US regions in their on-the-job militancy as well as the range of occupations in which they found employment. One of Sifuentez's more interesting contributions is his tracking of braceros from their origins in Mexico, such as Juan Contreras, whom he follows from the Mexican state of Chiapas through his migratory patterns north. Next, the author chronicles the arrival of Tejano migrants in the region, noting their citizenship and English-language skills (both of which emboldened them to attack labor and racial oppression head on), their adaptation to year-round employment in food processing, and their generally positive relationships with Japanese farm owners in the region, who provided housing and a sense of permanency. One of the most appealing elements of Sifuentez's narrative is his seamless transition between migration, labor, and activism, all the while giving each phenomenon careful and thoughtful consideration. In Chapter Three, the author transitions into the founding of the Willamette Valley Immigration Project (WVIP), which worked to protect tree planters and farmworkers against raids by federal agents, especially during the early years of the Reagan administration. Contractors hired undocumented workers to displace