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**Corazón de Dixie:
Mexicanos in the U.S. South since 1910**

Julie M. Weise

Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015

358 pp., \$32.50 (paper)

Published as part of the University of North Carolina Press's New Borderlands History series, Julie M. Weise's *Corazón de Dixie* examines the lives of Mexican emigrants and their descendants in a region outside the scope of traditional borderlands scholarship. Rather than analyze migrants' lives in southern California, New Mexico, or Texas, this work considers those who settled in New Orleans from 1910 to 1939, in Mississippi from 1918 to 1939, in the Arkansas Delta from 1939 to 1964, in rural Georgia from 1965 to 2004, and in Charlotte, North Carolina, from 1990 to 2012. As this brief chapter survey reveals, *Corazón de Dixie* not only gives scholars a fresh perspective on Mexican immigration to a new region; it also pushes the bounds of more focused studies, providing a portrait of race, nation, migration, and competing ideologies in the long twentieth century.

The author principally asks three questions of her sources: what prompted Mexicans to migrate to a particular region in the South, how did they fight for their rights, and how were they received? Weise shows convincingly how varying times and places of immigration into the South resulted in markedly different outcomes for Mexican migrants. For example, landing in New Orleans after the onset of the Mexican Revolution proved much easier than integrating into the polarized world of Jim Crow Mississippi. To retain these finer interregional variations, this study uses chapters as case studies and relies upon them to develop a larger narrative about Mexican expatriate experiences in Dixie.

Between the first and second halves of the book, the author shifts gears methodologically. This is partly due to the chronology of historical sources and the questions that can be asked of them. The first two chapters tackle the emigrant experience largely from above, using census records, published accounts, and archives to understand what happened when Mexicans entered a place that already prized Mexican culture (New Orleans) and what transpired in a rigidly binary black-white culture (Mississippi). These confrontations on the level of ideology become all the more interesting when the author includes Mexican ideas of race that emerged in the late Porfiriato and after the early Revolution. Whereas such ideological discussions and high-level analyses drive early chapters, the last two chapters use personal stories especially well to raise larger questions. What had been a "for example" strategy in chapter 1—giving a name from a census—later turns into a narrative strength that reveals more details of, say, the Robersons in rural Georgia, who shared professional and personal relationships with their Mexican workers. As the author shows, in this case by analyzing photo albums, the relationships between employer and employee were just as nuanced as the answers to this book's larger questions. It really *is* complicated.

As true as that statement is, it remains rather unsatisfying. Readers crave clear answers to explain a complicated world. Yet for Weise to offer anything else would be for her to undercut the surprisingly heterogeneous world of the US South in the twentieth century. And though no conclusion can tuck this history into bed, nice and neat, the fact that the historian is able to raise these questions and explain how the answers depended on place and time constitutes a marked achievement in borderlands literature.

Such fine scholarship prompts an additional question, on borderlands historiography, that falls beyond the book's scope. As chapter 1 discusses, immigrants to New Orleans more often traveled by ship than by rail or road, which led to fewer lower-class laborers making the journey. This hints at a profound divide in borderlands literature—between studies that examine lands along the natural border of the Rio Grande and others that explore the western international border of cartographic imaginations. *Corazón de Dixie* therefore adds (implicitly) a third possibility to the mix: that of steamship migration along the Gulf Coast. Scholars might reconsider how varying degrees of contiguity and impermeability influenced borderlands history between, say, the two Nogaleses (by foot or rail), between Laredo/Nuevo Laredo (by river), and now between Progreso and New Orleans (by ship) and further into the South.

This work will appeal to borderlands and labor historians alike. For instructors who would like to teach this history to undergraduates, a companion website provides a selection of source documents, sorted by chapter, which will allow students to peer into the lives of Mexican migrants in the heart of Dixie.

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