

government. Farmers bought their own equipment. There is also a bit of flatness to the Midwestern farm story as presented, which does not acknowledge severe droughts in 1934 and 1936, and the challenges of feeding a family when farm commodities have lost most of their value. Problems such as these make me wonder what other lurking errors are in the text, waiting to be discovered by specialists in other areas of history.

This is an easily read book, filled with numerous good stories and interesting information. The authors have made the sad topic of food in the Great Depression lively. Given some of the problems with the research, I am not sure that I would assign it as a whole to an undergraduate food history class. I might pick and choose chapters to assign, based on my level of comfort that the research behind their story was sound. The book does provide some very good leads to primary source materials, many of which could themselves be used to write lectures or assigned as reading materials for undergraduates. In other words, this book is a useful resource, even if I am not sold on it as completely accurate history.

Iowa State University

Pamela Riney-Kehrberg

Verónica Castillo-Muñoz, *The Other California: Land, Identity, and Politics on the Mexican Borderlands*. Oakland: University of California Press, 2017. Pp. 171. \$70.

In *The Other California: Land, Identity, and Politics on the Mexican Borderlands*, Verónica Castillo-Muñoz makes a convincing case for understanding the development of the U.S./ Mexican borderlands at the grassroots level. Emphasizing how “governments, foreign investors, and local communities engaged in the making of the Baja California borderlands” from 1850-1954 (2), Castillo-Muñoz creates a rich portrait of a region in which, well into the twentieth century, control over land and resources

was far from settled. The major characters in this story—the Colorado River Land Company, Chinese immigrants and their Asian-Mexican families, Indigenous Cocopah villagers, mestizo migrants, and displaced Californios—competed for access to the land and water that made Baja a surprisingly productive agricultural region. Her interpretation of Baja’s history in this period is important to understanding the unique development of the region and is also a fascinating contribution to the field of borderlands history that challenges the notion that along the U.S./Mexico border, the borderlands dynamic characterized by fluidity, contested economic and political control, and increased opportunities for otherwise marginal actors to carve out influential niches gave way to state control and rigid borders in the nineteenth century. In Baja California, as Castillo-Muñoz has shown, that borderlands dynamic persisted deep into the twentieth century.

One of the greatest strengths of Castillo-Muñoz’s book is her creative and fine-grained research, including careful attention to Baja’s census data from the era under study. By examining mestizo migrants, indigenous households, and Chinese immigrant settlement patterns, she is able to challenge the stereotypes of migrant and immigrant “birds of passage” that have painted a skewed picture of life at the household level for Baja California-bound migrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Instead, Castillo-Muñoz’s research reveals extensive intermarriage between mestizo men and indigenous women as well as Chinese men and mestizo women, producing “one of the most diverse communities in northern Mexico” (108). Though in many cases these borderlands actors would struggle against each other as much as they struggled against the powerful forces of capitalist transformation and state control, their insistence on local control of everything from labor activism to land reform shaped a distinct borderlands culture in Baja that profoundly shaped the economic and cultural development of the region.

Castillo-Muñoz is firmly in step with the current patterns in

California historiography which have emphasized the importance of indigenous communities in shaping local economic and political development. Here the Mexicali Valley is no different. Indigenous Cocopah communities incorporated Mestizo and Chinese newcomers into the region through intermarriage and economic cooperation. Through organized political action, Cocopah communities pressed the revolutionary government for effective land redistribution that met the specific needs of Cocopah families, based on Cocopah gendered divisions of labor. Perhaps most interestingly, Castillo-Muñoz highlights the ways Cocopah activists seized the opportunity presented by the Mexican Revolution and the Magonista uprising to push for land redistribution. Joining forces with a multiracial coalition of Wobblies, working class mestizos, and indigenous Paipai and Kiliwa activists, the Cocopah and their allies struck significant fear into the Diaz regime and kept the flame of labor radicalism and land redistribution alive into the postrevolutionary era and culminated in the 1920 Law of Ejidos (communal landholdings) that disproportionately benefited indigenous petitioners. Under consistent pressure from indigenous communities, revolutionary era land reform efforts bore significant fruit in Baja California in the 1920s.

The Other California absolutely belongs in an undergraduate classroom. Veteran teachers of California, Western, and Borderlands history courses at the undergraduate level will appreciate its manageable length and accessible style. The book is approachable and appropriate for undergraduates. Its regional emphasis suggests a fruitful discussion of how Baja California's history intersects with Alta California's (immigration, Chinese exclusion and marginalization, the labor movement) and how, for some borderlands actors, such as land companies and wealthy landowners, the U.S./Mexico border was extremely fluid and Baja California became an extension of Alta California's economic opportunities (and vice-

versa) for both rich and poor when circumstances dictated. *The Other California* is also a fine example of the concerns and methodologies of Borderlands history and would be a welcome addition to historiography or historical methodologies courses.

Middle Tennessee State University

Ashley Riley Sousa