

BOOK REVIEWS

Becoming Mexipino: Multiethnic Identities and Communities in San Diego. By Rudy P. Guevarra, Jr. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2012. Maps, photographs, tables, notes, and index. 256 pp. \$25.95 paper.

Reviewed by Carlton Floyd, Associate Professor, Department of English, University of San Diego.

Becoming Mexipino: Multiethnic Identities and Communities in San Diego by Rudy P. Guevarra Jr. deftly explores his Filipino and Mexican familial history from its origins in Spanish colonialism to its current Mexipino configurations in San Diego. Addressing a subject that has received little extended critical attention, Guevarra argues that Spain's sixteenth-century colonial enterprises brought Mexicans and Filipinos together in ways that facilitated their intimate interaction. First, they shared or, more aptly, endured enslavement and indentured servitude as well as the interest in surviving these perilous conditions. Second, Mexicans and Filipinos took on a common language and religion: Spanish and Catholicism. Third, they discovered themselves in possession of a similar sense of familial arrangements – in the notions of godparents and in the practice of coming-of-age ceremonies for young women, to cite two examples. These various conditions facilitated intimate interethnic relationships then, and foreshadowed similar intimate interactions centuries later, particularly in the western parts of the United States.

Following a brief history of the impact of Spanish colonization on Mexico and the Philippines, Guevarra details in Chapter One the movement of Mexicans and Filipinos to San Diego in the early years of the twentieth century to work in the defense, agricultural, fishing, and service industries. Chapter Two turns to the racial and largely racist dynamics of the region and the country that grouped Mexicans and Filipinos together and relegated them to living with other non-white identified groups, outside of whites-only designated areas. In Chapters Three and Four, Guevarra discusses the multiethnic civic, political, and social organizations that came together in these areas to fight against discrimination, promote solidarity, and provide opportunities for social and cultural interaction. The heart of Guevarra's work becomes clear in Chapter Five, however, where he focuses on the Mexican and Filipino, or Mexipino, families that emerged in San Diego out of the aforementioned trajectory. Here, Guevarra suggests that intimate Mexican and Filipino alliances were less constrained by the legal and social prohibitions against interracial intimacies that held sway in the United States, legally until 1967 and, socially, even today.

I find myself very drawn to Guevarra's work, not only because of his visible personal investment in tracing the multiethnic associations that led to his birth, community, and sense of identity, but because his study offers a helpful model for thinking about race, ethnicity, and identity more broadly. Guevarra recognizes the fullness of his various ethnic affiliations, which is to say that he identifies as fully Mexican and Filipino, not half and half, but whole and whole. His use of the term Mexipino is shaped by a desire to identify with (and as) all aspects of his ethnic heritage. In so doing, Guevarra joins others that are reshaping language to embrace this way of thinking about identity. Other similarly shaped terms in current use, Guevarra notes, include Blaxican (Black and Mexican), Mexichino (Mexican and Chinese), Blasian (Black and Asian), and Filirican (Filipino and Puerto Rican), to name a few.

Two questions remained with me after I finished this book. First, I wondered about the dualistic shape of the identities – Mexipino, Blaxican, etc. – most prominently presented in the book. Given the century's long trajectory the book covers, I wondered at the possibility of other ethnicities and races also being present in these intimate multiethnic and racial relationships. Closely linked to this question is another. What, if anything, happened between Mexicans, Filipinos, Mexipinos, and other racial and ethnic groups with whom they shared space? For example, African Americans are mentioned on several occasions in the book as cohabitants and participants in the various organizations (social and political) that took shape. They do not seem to become eligible intimate partners, however. This question may be addressed to some extent by Guevarra's claim that Mexicans and Filipinos shared a language, religion, and familial customs that others might not have had. Still, I wonder if these differences might not have been transcended, and even if in some cases they actually existed. Perhaps if Guevarra continues this important work he will take up these inquiries. It is my sincere hope that someone will do so, as his book adds an important dimension to San Diego's history particularly and to multiethnic studies more generally.

Where Minds and Matters Meet: Technology in California and the West. Edited by Volker Janssen. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2013. Illustrations, index, and notes. viii + 391 pp. \$55.00 cloth.

Reviewed by Paul J. P. Sandul, Assistant Professor, Department of History, Stephen F. Austin State University.

In a collection of twelve essays about the twentieth century, the authors of this volume collectively explore the complex interactions between technology and place, focusing on California and, to a lesser extent, the West. The organizing thrust is the duality of technological change whereby “technological change has not only *taken place in California and the West*. It also shaped the place” (p. 3, emphasis original). Underscoring technology’s relation to place are essays that look at technology as an agent in the creation of space, i.e., what spatial theorists, though the volume does not explicitly use such terminology, call second or material space. We also learn about so-called first space in which technology is essential in telling stories about California and the West, shaping the very representations and vocabularies about these places that many people later use to fashion an understanding of them. Finally, in the process, we learn about technology’s continual shaping of the material and mental (minds and matters) landscapes Californians and Westerners negotiate, i.e., third or lived space. The implications of these lines of analyses are intense, moving from understanding how technology shaped California as much as California shaped technology. Not content with a provincial view, however, many of the essays connect the proverbial dots to extend beyond state or regional boundaries to look at the effect of, and affect upon, globalization. This is made clear throughout the volume, but especially in Carlene Stephens’s essay on clocks, which makes certain technologies seem placeless.

While I do not want to slight any of the contributions made in this volume, three chapters are worth special consideration. First, for readers of this journal, L. Chase Smith’s essay about the Panama Exposition in San Diego in 1915 will surely please. While the exposition is not a lost story in the annals of San Diego or even California history, Smith masterfully places the theme of narrative story telling about place within the gross prisms of race, imperialism, and the saga of social progressivism, while anchoring it all, deftly, to local boosterism in service to capital. Second, two essays by Matthew W. Roth and Linda Nash, I think, capture the essence of the volume itself. (So does the well-done introduction by Janssen, which, I cannot emphasize enough, is not an easy task to perform for a collection of essays).

In "Los Angeles's Major Traffic Street Plan of 1924," Roth traces the creation of storied space, of Los Angeles as an automobile metropolis via a cohort of local elites and professionals who essentially lied about the consensus of local enthusiasm and support, thereby establishing it as popular fact. With Nash, yet again, we get a powerful piece of scholarship. She tackles the twin themes of technological change and place and places it all squarely within a spatial context, reminding us that the environment, i.e., the non-human world, is a relevant actor in shaping the human world and our approach to, and success with, technology. She looks at the place-based experiences of the builders of the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington in the 1930s and their and others' subsequent attempts to build in Afghanistan. In short, place mattered, such that any project has "to be renegotiated in each place over time" (p. 153), taking into account local conditions before "transferring" or "diffusing" technological change. Therefore, with these chapters in mind, the volume's focus on the interaction between place and technology, of first and second space as well, shine through, and on a global scale to boot.

That this volume is the result of a conference held at the Huntington Library under the auspices of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West (ICW) is no surprise. Certainly, any student of California and the West already knows to expect a certain amount of quality from the ICW's Western History Series, guided by editor William Deverell's expert hand. While I do not want to slip into unseemly hagiography here, this recent contribution is a welcomed addition not just to California and the West, but also to the history of science and technology, nicely marrying the fields so that those with any bias toward one will find comfort in familiar territory and excitement wading through new waters. Obviously, Janssen's role as editor is impressive in this regard. Worth mentioning in closing is the ability of all these authors to place names and faces on real historical actors. Too often, as scholars of the history of science and technology know, when discussing technology, paradigms, scientific methods, and jargon, the people behind it often get lost, or become caricatures. This is not the case with this volume. The people, and the places in which they operate, take center stage.

BOOK NOTES

Crabgrass Crucible: Suburban Nature & the Rise of Environmentalism in Twentieth-Century America. By Christopher C. Sellers. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012. Figures, maps, appendix, notes, and index. 374 pp. \$42 cloth. *Crabgrass Crucible* argues that mid-twentieth-century suburbanites played a leading role in the rise of environmentalism. These suburbanites, eager to protect the vestiges of nature that had attracted them to the edges of urban America, led grass-roots movements against such threats as industrial encroachment and dangerous chemicals.

Hollywood Left and Right: How Movie Stars Shaped American Politics. By Steven J. Ross. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. Photographs, notes, and index. xi + 500 pp. \$21.95 paper. University of Southern California historian Steven J. Ross examines the political activism of influential Hollywood figures from Charlie Chaplin and Harry Belafonte (on the left) to Ronald Reagan and Arnold Schwarzenegger (on the right). According to Ross, while many commentators accuse the motion picture business of liberal bias, figures on Hollywood's political right have wielded tremendous influence over both their own industry and electoral politics at large.

Land of Smoke and Mirrors: A Cultural History of Los Angeles. By Vincent Brook. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2013. Photographs, notes, and index. 288 pp. \$27.95 paper. This monograph examines the various images of Los Angeles that have defined the city. Brook suggests that these images have been written and revised repeatedly over Los Angeles's history, as both natives and outsiders have attributed ever-changing meanings to the region. Drawing on literature, film, architecture, and other cultural forms, the book explores such tropes as the Spanish fantasy past, *noir* in fiction and cinema, and Los Angeles as a multicultural metropolis.

The Only One Living to Tell: The Autobiography of a Yavapai Indian. By Mike Burns. Edited by Gregory McNamee. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012. Photographs, map, notes, and references. xii + 175 pp. \$17.95 paper. United States military forces murdered the family of eight-year-old Mike Burns in 1872 in the Skeleton Cave Massacre, a brutal attack that resulted in the deaths of up to seventy-six Yavapai Indians. Gregory McNamee has edited Burns's memoir, which spans the orphaned Yavapai's childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood and recounts the massacre, his adoption by an American army captain, and his journeys in the American West.

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Plague, Fear, and Politics in San Francisco's Chinatown. By Guenter B. Risse. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012. Illustrations, map, notes, and index. xii + 371 pp. \$39.95 cloth. Risse's book focuses on the outbreak of bubonic plague in San Francisco at the turn of the twentieth century. Drawing on both English- and Chinese-language sources, Risse examines the quarantine of Chinatown, how ethnic Chinese and Anglo Americans differed in their assessments of disease, and how the city's Chinese community reacted against the racialized assumptions of white public health officials.

Planning Los Angeles. Edited by David C. Sloane. Chicago: American Planning Association, 2012. Notes and references. x + 325 pp. \$34.95 paper. The American Planning Association has begun publication of a series of volumes on American cities. This collection on Los Angeles brings together dozens of scholars whose essays are collected in six thematic chapters (plus one introductory chapter) focused on the history of planning, demographics, land use and environmental politics, infrastructure, parks and public space, and economic development.

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