

LATINOS AT THE GOLDEN GATE: CREATING COMMUNITY AND IDENTITY IN SAN FRANCISCO. By Tomás F. Summers Sandoval, Jr. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2013. 256 pp. ISBN 978-1-4696-0766-5

Tomás F. Summers Sandoval's *Latinos at the Golden Gate* is the first book length historical study of San Francisco's Latin American population. The book's primary focus is the unification of the city's Latin Americans from the California Gold Rush to the Post-World War II era. Summers Sandoval argues that "a diverse population of mostly Spanish-speaking immigrants coalesced to express panethnic solidarity and identity rooted to the geography of the city" (p. 2). This pan-Latin American unity and identity—what the author terms *latinidad*—crossed lines of national origin, immigration status, and often class. Summers Sandoval is able to construct this groundbreaking community history of San Francisco's Latin Americans through thorough archival research, census records, as well as insightful, and humanizing oral histories.

Latinos at the Golden Gate follows a clear chronological organization. The first chapter, "But Things Will Soon Take Change," documents the growth of San Francisco as an urban metropolis that attracted distinct groups of Latin Americans like Chileans, Peruvians, and Mexicans via previously set communication, trade, and migration routes during the Gold Rush. With great detail, Summers Sandoval discusses how as Euro-Americans perpetrated "racial violence...an assortment of Latin American elites promoted cohesion and unity" (p. 49). Hence, Latin American elites employed the community's linguistic and religious commonality to unify Latin Americans in order to challenge oppression. To extract early pan-Latin American community formation, Summers Sandoval skillfully uses census records from the 1840s to the 1860s, materials from the Bancroft Library, and timely newspapers such as *The Alta California*.

For Chapter Two, "El Esplendor, Brillantez e Influencia de Nuestra Raza," the author draws from more census records and various newspapers like *La Bandera Mexicana*. Joining such sources with parishioner letters and petitions from the Archives of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, Summers Sandoval ably details how Latin Americans came together to build their own parish, which became a cultural space that further united the community from the late nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. "We Can't Go Home" covers the mid-twentieth century and the growth of the Latin American population to include Central American and Puerto Rican people. Latin Americans remained

unified through the Catholic Church along with mutual aid societies centered in the Mission District. This chapter relies on extensive archival material and government documents. Most significantly, though, are oral histories that allow the voices of San Francisco's Latin Americans to emerge. Thus, Summers Sandoval adds a powerful, personal touch to the book's narrative.

Chapter Four, "All Those who Care about the Mission, Stand Up with Me!," explores the rise of the grassroots Mission Coalition Organization from the late 1960s into the 1970s. The organization "helped create an environment where all its [Latin American] members could begin to understand their common interests as well as realize the power of their common efforts" in order to assure urban renewal, or gentrification, did not destroy their community (p. 145). Chapter Five, "¡Basta Ya!," remains in the 1960s and 1970s, but here Summers Sandoval takes into account the actions of the radical Latin American youth of San Francisco, and at times the whole Bay Area, "that expressed their own version of *latinidad*" (p. 151). The author bases Chapters Four and Five on wide-ranging sources that include moving oral histories of community activists, government documents from the Archives of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, community organization documents from the personal archives of Mike Miller, and activist publications such as *!Ya Basta!* from which Chapter Five derives its title.

Summers Sandoval takes a sympathetic tone towards Latin Americans and People of Color in general. This is made clear in Chapter Five when he writes about "[t]he *murder* [italics added] of Matthew Johnson" by a Euro-American police officer (p. 163). Yet, describing the killing of a Euro-American police officer in an altercation with Latin American youths, the author only cites him as being "shot to death" (p. 176). Clearly, *murder* is a much more powerful and accusatory word than "shot to death." However, this reviewer did not find Summers Sandoval so overly biased as to completely omit any wrongdoing by Latin Americans or rifts within the Latin American community. A sympathetic tone towards Latin Americans and other People of Color is not surprising if one considers that the author asserts he "ha[s] a close relationship with" San Francisco's Latin American community (p. 10). Summers Sandoval, originally from Southern California, goes on to elaborate on his personal connection to the community: "the cultural composition of the Mission allowed me to feel at home" in the Bay Area while attending graduate school at University of California, Berkley (p. 11). It must be noted, however, that the author's close relationship with the Latin American community allowed him to conduct oral histories and gave him access

to private document collections that greatly enrich the book's research base and narrative.

Moreover, Summers Sandoval also seamlessly incorporates nine visual sources throughout the book that the reader is able to more directly interpret for herself or himself. These visual sources include maps, illustrations, and pictures. The latter two originated from the author's archival research as well as personal images lent to him. Each visual source helps the reader imagine the daily lives of San Francisco's Latin Americans amidst the struggles of racial violence and poverty along with the triumphs of the community in organizing itself. In particular, the maps are indispensable in demonstrating the physical space Latin Americans have occupied to those unfamiliar with San Francisco's geography.

Summers Sandoval succeeds in creating an innovative monograph that illustrates how San Francisco's Latin Americans built a panethnic identity and community through self-organizing as they intermingled in their new cosmopolitan home. *Latinos at the Golden Gate* emerges out of a strong research base. The detailed References section of the book lists seven Californian archival collections, seventeen oral histories conducted by the author and others, twenty-two newspapers, government publications (federal, state, and municipal), films, and numerous secondary sources that include unpublished manuscripts and dissertations. One can hope this book serves as an inspiration for scholars to chart other yet to be historicized Latina/o communities.

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