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Review of *The Mexicans in Oklahoma* By Michael M. Smith

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The Mexicans in Oklahoma. By Michael M. Smith. Newcomers in a New Land. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980. Illustrations, maps, bibliographical essay, notes. 78 pp. \$2.95.

Because so little is known about the Mexican-American population living outside the Spanish-Mexican borderlands, this short introductory survey of the Mexican experience in Oklahoma adds to our knowledge of one state's "invisible minority." The book comprises nine chapters, a bibliographical essay, and four pages of notes. An index is lacking, but the ten photos illustrating the text add to the attractiveness of the work. Sources used by the author include secondary works, interviews, census reports and other U.S. government publications, newspaper articles, and three theses.

The first chapter is a readable and interesting summary of the distant relationship between Oklahoma and Mexico. It includes such topics as the Mexican cowboy's influence on his American counterpart and the equestrian revolution that made the Indians of the southern plains such formidable warriors. The second chapter traces the historical antecedents to the Mexican migration of the twentieth century. The last four chapters discuss immigration and distribution patterns, the role of Mexican immigrants in the economic development of the state between 1900 and 1945, social and cultural adjustments of the Mexican-born up to

World War II, and the Mexican experience since 1945.

The book is clearly written and a useful contribution. However a number of statements may be questioned. Eric Wolf, mentioned in the bibliographical essay, denies the author's assertion that "the Church succeeded only in providing a thin veneer of Catholicism over deeply ingrained and conservative Indian religion" (p. 11). Also, what evidence exists that "one of the most significant differences between the Mexican community of Oklahoma and those of the American Southwest was the overwhelming degree of assimilation which the second—and most assuredly the third—generation would undergo in the postwar years" (p. 62)? Leo Grebler notes that in 1963 about 25 percent of all marriages of Spanish-surnamed persons in Los Angeles County "involved a person who married a spouse outside the ethnic group." Does this also hold true for Oklahoma?

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