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Black Women in Texas History (review)

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11, 2004, at the Thirty-ninth Annual Walter Prescott Webb Memorial Lectures meeting held at the University of Texas at Arlington. The first essay in the publication, "The Invisible Flock: Catholicism in the American West," came from Anne M. Butler, a Trustee Professor (emeritus) at Utah State University. Of particular interest to Texas readers is that she is an expert on Mother Margaret Mary Healy-Murphy, founder of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit in San Antonio. Father Michael Engh, a Jesuit professor and dean of the Bellarmine College of Liberal Arts at Loyola-Marymount University, Los Angeles, wrote the second essay, a brilliant study entitled "From the City of the Angels to the Parishes of San Antonio: Catholic Organizations, Women Activists, and Racial Intersections. 1900-50." This essay contains information of particular interest to Texans on the roles of Robert Lucey, as Bishop of Amarillo and Archbishop of San Antonio, and Verona Spellmire, in founding the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in Texas. The third contribution, "Wherever They Mention His Name: Ethnic Catholicism on an Industrial Island," an assessment of Catholics in eastern Utah, was written by Matthew Pehl. He is a graduate student in American history at Brandeis University. William Issel, professor of history at San Francisco State University, gave us the piece "'For Both Cross and Flag': Catholic Action in Northern California during the 1930s." Gina Marie Pitti, who earned her doctorate at Stanford University and teaches and publishes in the area of Hispanic Catholic history, contributed "Into One Parish Life: National Parishes and Catholic Racial Politics at Midcentury." The final essay, by co-editor and University of Texas at Arlington history professor Roberto Treviño, is titled "Faith and Justice: The Catholic Church and the Chicano Movement in Houston, 1965-72."

This excellent book raises research and writing on the Catholic history of the United States to a higher level, focusing on people and developments rarely before emphasized, but ones key to understanding the story of Catholicism in America.

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PATRICK FOLEY

Black Women in Texas History. Edited by Bruce A. Glasrud and Merline Pitre. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008. Pp. 256. Tables, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9781603440318, \$19.95 paper.)

Following the trailblazing paths set by Darlene Clark Hine and Ruthe Winegarten, professors Merline Pitre and Bruce Glasrud have assembled a chronological survey of the experience of African-American women in the Lone Star State. *Black Women in Texas History* collects eight original essays from a wide range of scholars that span from the age of slavery to the beginning of the twenty-first century. With three essays on the nineteenth century and five covering the twentieth century, the chapters synthesize the important primary and secondary sources while framing the significant issues of each era. The book is a social history that analyzes the evolving process of African-American women "making community." The authors and editors have diligently labored to balance an incredibly bleak saga of privation, bigotry, and violence with a parallel story of

resilience, growth, and accomplishment. One of the great strengths of this work is that all of the scholars have consciously endeavored to connect their social analysis to broader themes that include economics, culture, demography, and politics.

The first three essays, all on the nineteenth century, provide a vivid and compelling picture of the age of slavery, Reconstruction, and the remaining quarter of the late nineteenth century. As circumstances changed from enslavement to emancipation to the rise of Jim Crow over the course of the nineteenth century, African-American women struggled to make and hold together their families, find remunerative and dignified work, all the while trying to fend off an ever-changing cycle of violence and oppression. The use of WPA slave narratives in all three of these articles is impressive and the quotations cited provide a powerful oral testimony to the women who lived through these harrowing times.

The next three essays cover the first third of the twentieth century, the period stretching from the Depression to the dawning of the civil rights era, and the civil rights years from 1954 to 1974. In the face of segregation, lynching, and disfranchisement after the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, black women in Texas organized myriad clubs and organizations to improve all facets of African-American life. By the 1940s and '50s women like Lulu White, Juanita Craft, and Christina White led the NAACP crusade to bring down Jim Crow in Texas. The next generation, led by women like Barbara Jordan, Eddie Bernice Johnson, and Senfronia Paige Thompson, quickly rose to national prominence in the wake of opportunity created by the civil rights revolution. It should be noted that Merline Pitre makes clear in her essay, as well as in her other writings, that Lulu White's heroic work in the Texas NAACP clearly merits White's inclusion into the national pantheon of civil rights heroes.

The last two essays canvass the years from 1974 to 2000. Kenneth Howell and James Smallwood examine the fall of the color line in various fields, important cultural accomplishments, and persisting economic and social challenges, while Jewell Prestage and Franklin Jones catalogue prominent African-American women in the fields of education and politics. Surprisingly, these two chapters fail to address either the influence of the Black Power movement or the feminist movement on African-American women in Texas. Nonetheless, these two essays will be very helpful for those seeking background on research in this era.

Black Women in Texas History is a significant work. The greatest strength of this book, which runs throughout, is the portrayal of the social and economic conditions faced by black women over the course of Texan history and how they lived their lives in the face of these changing circumstances. This book clearly places Texas historiography in the vanguard of the history of African-American women. It provides an excellent overview of the work already done in the Lone Star State, outlines the important themes in African-American women's history, and serves as an important guide for future research.