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*Jewish "Junior League:" The Rise and Demise of the Fort
Worth Council of Jewish Women (review)*

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could display a city that was less isolated and more modern than ever before," whereas "the rowdy crowd that awaited the procession . . . suggested that such a rapid modernization came with many dislocations as well" (22–23).

Fiesta has had to deal with both an imagined South and an imagined West, becoming a cross between Carnival in New Orleans—"the city that care forgot" (9)—and Fiesta de Los Angeles, which shifted its parade and romantic royal court in 1900 to a vaguer Fiesta de las Flores. It would be another half century until San Antonio's Fiesta viewpoint was also broadened, from Fiesta de San Jacinto to Fiesta San Antonio.

San Antonio's Fiesta has never drawn huge numbers of outside visitors. It has remained "a story that San Antonians told themselves, articulating a civic identity involving negotiations among multiple communities" (14). The Fiesta proves to be an ample field to study social dislocations and negotiations over the course of more than a century of disorienting municipal growth. Women took on education and patriotism by organizing the parade while men dealt with practical matters through a separate organization. Conflicts caused by the gradual blurring of women's roles were accompanied by other evolving contradictions. Mexican Americans early on were elevated to social acceptance during Fiesta only to be put down again once the celebration was over. A changing social order finally made Fiesta—and the city—more genuinely multicultural.

The title is a bit misleading. Fiesta evolved in a communal, somewhat disorganized way rather than being "invented" out of whole cloth. Fiesta's growth was overseen by a coordinating body that was negotiated more than forthrightly created. A focused group did, however, create another distinctive city's modern defining essence, described in a book by the same publisher, Chris Wilson's *The Myth of Santa Fe: Creating a Modern Regional Tradition* (1997). Although the two books share similar concepts, this one does not enjoy equivalent benefits of design and editing. Phrases like "performative metaphor" (128) and "dizzying multivocality" (198) jar the reader as surely as unexpected speed bumps on a long highway. And given the vast number of thoughts to sort out, some are likely miss the mark. The San Antonio Conservation Society's founding goal may have been to save the 1850 Market House, but that does not demonstrate that the group "from its beginning was keenly invested in the marketplace" (89). Preserving the Market House's significant Greek Revival architecture alone was the motivation.

Such lapses do not seriously mar the impact of this book. Hernández-Ehrisman dissects her deceptively broad subject thoroughly and objectively, yielding a balanced, perceptive study that will stand as a definitive treatment for many years to come.

San Antonio, Texas

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Jewish "Junior League." The Rise and Demise of the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women.

By Hollace Ava Weiner (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008. Pp. 208. Illustrations, appendices, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9781603440127, \$29.95 cloth.)

In *Jewish "Junior League,"* Hollace Ava Weiner supplies a serviceable history of

the Fort Worth Council of Jewish Women, a sectarian organization pioneered in 1901 by affluent Jewish women alienated by the evangelism of Protestant women's associational culture. In infancy, the Council offered a form of civic engagement that permitted religious distinctiveness while granting access to the cultural mainstream. Like their gentile sisters, members faced public resistance to female public activism; as Jews, they confronted additional pressure from their peers to avoid a homogenizing assimilation process. Successfully balancing femininity with claims to public authority and spiritual traditionalism with modernity quickly became the defining challenges of the Council's organizational life.

Over the next century, the Council's eclectic agenda increasingly reflected an ambition to move moneyed Jewish women into positions of civic influence in Fort Worth, and a determination to exchange ecclesiastical separatism for a westernized, ecumenical ethos. Instructive examples include an "Americanization School," conceived to promote the acculturation of newly immigrated Jews, and a signature book fair, which the Council shepherded after 1957 into a celebrated annual event netting thousands of dollars for Council projects. The event sharpened the members' business acumen, and transformed the Council from a niche organization into a power player able to underwrite ambitious community improvements.

Even as the Council secured its reputation as a vehicle for the elite, its membership struggled to shed a rigid confessional identity. Immigrants fleeing Russian pogroms, the calamity of the Holocaust, and subtle, if infrequent, local expressions of anti-Semitism offered stark reminders of their heritage that sharpened the divisions between the modernized Council members and their orthodox counterparts, and catalyzed additional maneuvers toward a more homogenized cultural milieu. After reaching its high-water mark around 1980, the Council suffered a steady decline before disbanding in 2002. The organization was, in many ways, a victim of its own manifold successes; by the 1980s, Fort Worth women enjoyed multiple paths to public life—a byproduct in part of the durability and dedication of the Fort Worth Council. The Council, moreover, stubbornly rejected sea changes in American life after 1960 that saw the advent of the feminist movement and the emergence of identity and interest politics. Ironically, the failure of an organization once grounded in modernity to adapt to changing conditions for American womanhood facilitated the Council's collapse.

As an organizational history, Weiner's account would deservedly belong in the growing catalogue of work treating female associational life in Texas. The author, however, hunts larger game here. She infuses the narrative with ambitious subtexts illuminating the skill and savvy with which Council women carved cultural space amid extremes that constantly tasked their identities. Facing constraints as women and Jews, Council members sought middle ground on questions of class, gender, assimilation, and religious orthodoxy. Success was uneven; the Council never shook accusations of socioeconomic elitism that dogged it for much of its existence, nor could it shed public accusations of bias toward a westernized, Reform theology—charges that ultimately hastened its decline.

Weiner's unsatisfying commentary on the Council's position toward woman suffrage and her silence on the temperance movement, both of which climaxed in Texas in the 1910s, mar an otherwise worthy effort. Given the Council's puta-

tive function as "a vehicle for acculturating and integrating Jewish women into the city's upper strata," some exposition of members' views on the most compelling women's issues of the age seems appropriate. (82) Beyond this, Weiner provides useful insights into Jewish women's associational life in the state, and sheds needed light on the intrepid tactics through which Texas women blazed new paths to public visibility, influence, and equality.

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Memories and Migrations: Mapping Boricua and Chicana Histories. Edited by Vicki L. Ruiz and John R. Chávez. (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2008. Pp. 248. Illustrations, notes, index. ISBN 9780252032387, \$60.00 cloth; 9780252074783, \$20.00 paper.)

For more than a century and a half, Latinas have been informed and guided by their myriad migration travails. *Memories and Migrations* illustrates the importance of how societal forces such as gender, class, and region shape and shift among Latinas from generation to generation. This work places timely emphasis on region as a means toward developing a greater understanding of twentieth-century women. Ranging from Boricuas in Hawaii to Chicanas in Chicago, far too many interpretations of Latinas have been historically misunderstood, manipulated, marginalized, and misguided. Although extensively researched within the boundaries of Latino/a Studies, the aforementioned subgroups, which comprise seventy-five percent of all Latinos/as, have had a disproportionate number of ethnographic and historical accounts produced that directly or indirectly mute the meaningful voices of women. Indeed, co-editor John R. Chávez, professor of history at Southern Methodist University, pursued the publication of this manuscript in part to make up for his failure to notice female perspectives in past scholarship.

This work is a fascinating and important study that offers valuable insights into the ways in which Puerto Rican and Mexican-American women have sought inclusion in an intolerant American environment that previously negated their existence. By focusing on the significance of a given regional context, the audience is bound to appreciate the differential construction and reconstruction of ethnic/racial identity among and between gender relationships. Edited by Chávez and distinguished historian Vicki L. Ruiz, the book is divided into eight essays in three parts. Chapter one examines the impact of Mexican-American women in Colorado with an eye toward coal-town life in the pre-Great Depression era. The chapter serves to remind the reader that, all across the Southwest, Mexican Americans were reviled and only valued as an asset for cheap and pliable unskilled labor. Chapter two is a welcome contribution largely because of its concentration on a Tucson community. As the least-known history among the five southwestern states with the largest Mexican-American populations, this Arizona case study explored through the agency of Alva Torres is sorely needed.

Chapter three looks at the youthful nature of Mexican immigration from 1900 to 1940. In doing so, it tactfully touches on child labor practices in Texas. Chapter