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Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought For Racial, Sexual, And Political Freedom (The David J. Weber Series In The New Borderlands History)



Synopsis

In this book, Mireya Loza sheds new light on the private lives of migrant men who participated in the Bracero Program (1942–1964), a binational agreement between the United States and Mexico that allowed hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers to enter this country on temporary work permits. While this program and the issue of temporary workers has long been politicized on both sides of the border, Loza argues that the prevailing romanticized image of braceros as a family-oriented, productive, legal workforce has obscured the real, diverse experiences of the workers themselves. Focusing on underexplored aspects of workers' lives--such as their transnational union-organizing efforts, the sexual economies of both hetero and queer workers, and the ethno-racial boundaries among Mexican indigenous braceros--Loza reveals how these men defied perceived political, sexual, and racial norms. Basing her work on an archive of more than 800 oral histories from the United States and Mexico, Loza is the first scholar to carefully differentiate between the experiences of mestizo guest workers and the many Mixtec, Zapotec, Purhepecha, and Mayan laborers. In doing so, she captures the myriad ways these defiant workers responded to the intense discrimination and exploitation of an unjust system that still persists today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

An essential purchase for any serious collection on labor, social, and migration history, and should be included within any course or curriculum related to gender studies, human rights, oral

testimonies, public history, or Latino/a studies.--American Historical ReviewAn exceptional addition to the historical literature on braceros. . . . A highly accessible and necessary work for anyone wanting to understand the long, complicated history of Mexican laborers in the United States.--Arkansas Historical QuarterlyThis book offers an excellent example of a qualitative research project for methods courses. Highly recommended.--Choice

Defiant Braceros is unique in that it both signals original arguments concerning the diversity of the bracero population and demonstrates how the effort over the last twenty years to create the 'ideal bracero' has sanitized and shaped the public memory of the program and its workers. In examining the 'deviant' nature of this diversity, Loza brings the braceros into full view where one can see that these workers were often defiant in the face of intense discrimination and exploitation as transnational workers without a country looking out for their well-being and security.--George Sanchez, University of Southern CaliforniaAn accessible, original, and deeply researched analysis of the Bracero Program, written by the most accomplished oral historian of braceros in the United States and Mexico. Loza builds upon, and goes well beyond, recent studies, advancing a portrayal of braceros as 'deviants' who pushed against expectations and challenged the governmental logic surrounding the program from the 1940s into the early twenty-first century. This is the best book written on the topic.--Stephen Pitti, Yale University

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Great Book and easy read!

Excellent!

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