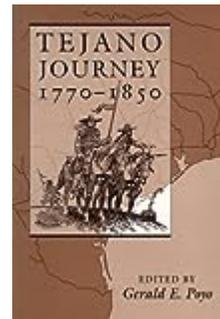


# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



**Gerald Poyo, ed.** *Tejano Journey, 1770-1850*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996. xvi + 186 pp. \$24.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-292-76570-2.



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The subject of this edited volume is the historical experience of Tejano (Mexican settler) communities in Texas from about 1770 until 1850, shortly after Texas became a part of the United States and the conclusion of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848). The following is a list of the essays contained in the volume:

1. Gerald Poyo, Introduction and Conclusion;
2. Gerald Poyo, "Community and Autonomy," which examines the relationship of the San Antonio de Bexar municipal council to regional and national officials during the late colonial period;
3. Jesus F. de la Teja, "Rebellion on the Frontier," the Mexican independence struggle of 1810-1821 and Texas;
4. Andres Tijerina, "Under The Mexican Flag," which discusses Texas under Mexican rule;
5. Stephen Harden, "Efficient in the Cause," the role of Tejanos in the Texas Revolution;
6. Timothy Matovina, "Between Two Worlds," Tejanos during the Texas Republic (1836-1845), including the issue of religion;
7. Paul Lack, "The Cordova Revolt," an 1838 revolt in Nacogdoches against the Texas Republic led by a locally prominent Tejano;

8. Ana Carolina Castillo Crimm, "Finding Their Way," on the Tejanos of the Victoria area.

As is the case with some edited collections of essays, this volume is uneven in quality, and in general presents only a general overview to a number of issues. Several contributors to the volume have already published longer monographs (De la Teja, Lack, Tijerina, Hardin, and Matovina), and in those studies provide a more detailed analysis of general patterns described in the present volume. However, it is my view that most non-specialists will be more inclined to read a shorter overview such as this volume, and the contributors should perhaps have provided additional examples to substantiate the points being made. Moreover, on balance the essays in this volume focus more on politics and the impact on Tejano communities of the Texas Revolution (1836). I was disappointed that other areas such as demography and social structure, land tenure, and patterns of economic development and change did not receive more attention. For example, how many Tejanos were there during the period being studied? What specific changes in land tenure occurred following the Texas Revolution?

Another problem with some of the essays is the lack of background on the larger historical context of the topics being examined. It is particularly troublesome to read discussions of Texas that are largely devoid of

background on contemporary Mexico and almost view Texas within a vacuum. Poyo's article on the importance of political autonomy for the leaders of San Antonio de Bexar would have benefited from a broader discussion of municipal politics and the role of municipalities within Spanish colonial institutions, and especially frontier politics and institutions. Tijerina's essay would have been stronger with more discussion of changes in the frontier military system at the end of the eighteenth century, and of Mexican liberalism within the context of post-independence political developments and the liberal connection to Texas. The essay on Texas and Mexican independence by De la Teja, on the other hand, does examine the Texas experience within the larger Mexican context.

One essay that I had problems with was Hardin's expose on Tejanos and the Texas Revolution. His use of terms can be confusing or misleading. He introduces the term "Anglo-Celtic" with no explanation or justification. I assume that Hardin, correctly, may want to differentiate between whites of English and Irish or Scottish descent, but this is never made clear. Moreover, his insistence on identifying the opponents in the Texas Revolution as "Centralists" and "Federalists" tends to minimize the complexities of the politics of the Texas Revolution, and the different motives for supporting one or another side at the different stages of the conflict. Centralism vs. Federalism certainly was an issue at the beginning, but

as Paul Lack has shown in his recent study of the revolution [1], the Anglo-Texans were divided into different factions that did not nearly conform to Hardin's "Federalists" category.

These criticisms and concerns aside, *Tejano Journey* provides a useful introduction to the state of studies of the Tejano population, and is a companion to an earlier volume co-edited by Gerald Poyo.[2] *Tejano Journey* shares another characteristic with this earlier volume: the inclusion of line drawings executed by two different artists. *Tejano Journey* does not contain any illustrations other than the line drawings, which I personally did not like. Historical maps, photographs, or period illustrations would have been more appropriate.

#### Notes

[1]. Paul Lack, *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1992).

[2]. Gerald Poyo and Gilberto Hinojosa, eds., *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991).

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