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## **Review of Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Histories of Resistance and Struggle in Texas ed. by Max Krochmal and J. Todd Moya**

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in the form of racial justice. One Harding College professor, for instance, could proclaim in the 1940s that “the racial prejudices which are abroad in our land today are un-Christian” (28), but could also actively resist integration by privileging social stability over racial justice and, arguably, theological consistency. Others gave themselves over fully to White supremacy. When some White church members began attending Black churches to hear Marshall Keeble—not only a popular Black preacher, but for a time perhaps the most popular preacher in the entire denomination—church leaders such as Texan Foy Wallace Jr. were indignant that White women, in particular, had not only attended, but had actually shaken the popular evangelist’s hand afterward.

By capturing the voices of Black leaders and church members, Key further exposes the contradictions of the Church of Christ’s theological commitments to spiritual equality. Key, for instance, provides a fascinating comparison of O. B. Porterfield, a White Montgomery pastor who ardently defended White supremacy, and Fred Gray, a Black civil rights attorney and Church of Christ pastor who worked with civil rights activists in Montgomery. Gray’s spiritual commitments sustained his civil rights activism, but, in Porterfield’s hands, the denomination’s restorationist theology only served to chastise activists, who, Porterfield argued, should have given up their freedom songs, marches, and criticisms of White politicians and not troubled themselves with worldly matters. They should have simply prayed, privately. “The Church of Christ deals with Godly things in Godly ways,” he preached (115).

By critically yet empathetically examining a religious world committed to both spiritual equality and worldly segregation, Barclay Key has written not only a valuable denominational history, but also a useful entry point into the long and tangled history of race and religion in the United States.

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*Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Histories of Resistance and Struggle in Texas.*

Edited by Max Krochmal and J. Todd Moye. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2021. Pp. 469. Illustrations, appendices, notes, index.)

“Decades after the events, stories of past atrocities and resistance, of movements built and battles fought, remained seared in the minds of African American and Mexican American civil rights activists” (15), writes Max Krochmal in the introduction to *Civil Rights in Black and Brown*, adding that “their memories anchor” the chapters in this volume (15). Based on extensive oral history interviews undertaken in 2015 and 2016 by the Civil Rights in Black and Brown Oral History Project, led by Krochmal and Moye, W. Marvin Dulaney, José Angel Gutiérrez, and Maggie Rivas-

Rodriguez, this book is an important contribution to the history of White supremacy and the unremitting struggle against it in mid-twentieth century Texas. Over two summers, graduate students conducted interviews with and recorded the stories of some 530 people who had participated in civil rights activism in Texas. Importantly, all of the interviews are available at no cost to the public through websites hosted by Texas Christian University and the University of North Texas.

No short review could do justice to this wide-ranging book and the many important stories in it, which reveal the struggles of African Americans against the state's Jim Crow laws that suppressed them and those of Mexican Americans against segregation practices that, informal as they often were, restricted them to the lowest echelons of Texas society. The chapters address a wide range of stories, including activism at a historically Black university (Prairie View A&M), segregation and activism among Blacks in East Texas, movements for educational equality among Mexican Americans in Uvalde, and organizing among African American and Mexican American activists alike against police brutality in Dallas. The book pulsates with energy and showcases exciting new scholarship from talented academics with varied perspectives. In addition, the book addresses not only the biggest cities, like Austin, Dallas, Houston, and San Antonio (venues for so much previous scholarship), but also small towns and cities like Hereford, Mansfield, Marshall, Odessa, Port Arthur, and Weslaco, which have received much less attention.

Despite its considerable merits, *Civil Rights in Black and Brown* does replicate some of the earlier scholarly conventions that it seeks to dismantle. For instance, part III, "Coalitions and Control," directs its attention almost entirely to the building of interracial coalitions in the largest cities in the state, despite the collection's stated interest in small towns and cities. In addition, African American and Mexican American stories are divided into separate sections in parts I and II, when the spirit of the book might have suggested a more thematic or comparative approach. Nevertheless, in a book and larger underlying project as ambitious as these, there are bound to be contradictions; they do not detract from the energy and excitement that animate this work.

In addition to the book's importance and the excellence of its essays, its true legacy and that of the oral history project is the massive new trove of interviews that scholars and laypersons alike can draw from to continue the work of cataloguing stories of the freedom struggle activists who fought against overwhelming odds to create a fairer, freer, and more democratic Texas. This work deserves a wide readership.