

activity in the Mexican-origin community in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Historians, political scientists, and other scholars are documenting and interpreting the causes and consequences of this movement on the Mexican American community and American society in general. Mario T. García provides a sensitive and engaging oral history—a *testimonio*—of Sal Castro, one of the most important leaders of the Chicana/o student movement. Implicit in this book is García's notion that Castro played a determining role in the walkouts, although Castro states that he was only one of many.

Castro, a charismatic public school teacher at Los Angeles's Lincoln High School, is credited with inspiring and encouraging students to protest the terrible conditions of the schools by walking out of them. These walkouts in turn led to the emergence of the Chicano movement during the late 1960s and inspired countless others to fight for a better America. This oral history traces Castro's life from his upbringing in the 1940s to his retirement from teaching in the early twenty-first century. Five of the eleven chapters discuss the factors influencing Castro's outlook on life and his educational philosophy. Four chapters focus specifically on the role he played in the school walkouts of the late 1960s. The final two chapters emphasize the continuing role he played in criticizing the public schools for the next two decades.

This book is a significant contribution to the literature of the Chicano/a movement for two major reasons. First, we hear from Castro himself, one of the most important individuals of this period. His *testimonio* is in keeping with some of the autobiographies of key leaders involved in the movement, such as José Ángel Gutiérrez, César Chávez, and Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez. It captures the essence of his actions as it relates to political mobilization in the late 1960s and the passion that motivated him to speak out on school reform.

Second, García incorporates an innovative methodology to get at Castro's life history. This methodology is based on the *testimonio*, an approach that allows Castro to reflect on his actions under the direction of García as interviewer. At certain points in the book, the *testimonio* is complemented by

the comments of students, parents, and others. This book goes beyond being a mere *testimonio*; it is partly a collective memoir that uniquely blends several collective voices in making the narrative. This approach adds additional personal touches to the narrative and at times significantly enriches the story line.

The life history approach, while important, also makes this book problematic. Because it is an oral history of Castro's life, there is much information that relates little to the walkouts. The section on the walkouts, however, is extremely insightful, informative, and illuminating. Also, because it is a *testimonio*, the reader may have difficulty at times figuring out who is actually speaking. This is especially the case in the chapters on the student walkouts. Is it Castro or García who is speaking out on the issues?

Several audiences would be interested in this book, including activists, college professors, and students. The content and the writing style, especially when Castro is talking about the role he played in the walkouts and how he assisted and encouraged student mobilization, is likely to reach a broader audience. His pre- and post-walkout activities are not as inspiring and insightful as those dealing with the walkouts. This book could probably be used in high school classes as well as undergraduate classes in Chicano studies, Latino studies, ethnic studies, post-World War II U.S. history, and social movements.

Guadalupe San Miguel Jr.
University of Houston
Houston, Texas

doi:10.1093/jahist/jar383

A Strange Stirring: The Feminine Mystique and American Women at the Dawn of the 1960s. By Stephanie Coontz. (New York: Basic, 2011. xxiv, 222 pp. \$25.95, ISBN 978-0-465-00200-9.)

A Strange Stirring documents the circumstances of middle-class American women in the early 1960s and the impact of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Stephanie Coontz makes it clear that although Friedan, and many observers since, have

exaggerated the book's role in launching the second wave of the feminist movement, thousands of women were profoundly affected by it.

Coontz begins with a stark look at the circumstances facing women in the early 1960s, including legal discrimination and widely held cultural beliefs about women's nature and proper role. Educated women were expected not only to focus their aspirations on their domestic duties but also to find those duties enjoyable and fulfilling. No wonder so many women felt isolated and guilty for wanting more out of life. Quotes from these women, drawn from letters to Friedan and interviews, provide poignant testimony to the impact of *The Feminine Mystique*.

Coontz illuminates Friedan's attack on Freudian assumptions about gender and sexuality, and her call for women to embrace opportunities to change their lives. She also points out the book's limitations, including rampant homophobia. She notes that the book is a call for individual action, not political organizing. Coontz also includes a chapter on the book's relevance for African American and working-class women. Although most of those women did not experience the "feminine mystique" in the ways that affluent and educated middle-class white homemakers did, some of them responded to its message nonetheless.

The book ends with a chapter on the circumstances of women today. Despite the gains of the feminist movement, gender expectations still limit women's possibilities. Coontz describes the "hottie mystique" facing adolescent girls that encourages them to cultivate sexual allure. She also describes the "supermom mystique" that requires mothers to plan every minute of their children's lives and demonstrates how women's lifetime earnings and career possibilities are diminished when they have children. Compared to many European countries, public policies and private industries in the United States remain unfriendly to families and make it difficult for men as well as women to combine parenthood with a career.

A Strange Stirring provides a concise synthesis of scholarship on women, families, and feminism, and challenges popular assumptions

about the 1960s, Friedan, and *The Feminine Mystique*—all in fewer than two hundred pages. Coontz's balanced evaluation of Friedan and her work offers an excellent complement to Daniel Horowitz's biography, *Betty Friedan and the Making of The Feminine Mystique* (2000). As with all of Coontz's work, this book is beautifully written and is intended for students, scholars, and nonacademic readers. It is ideal for classroom use. The book includes a helpful and comprehensive bibliographic essay at the end, instead of footnotes or endnotes, although this reviewer wished there were specific citations and other readers may feel the same. Nevertheless, *A Strange Stirring* is one more example that shows Coontz to be both an outstanding social historian and a major public intellectual.

Elaine Tyler May
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota

doi:10.1093/jahist/jar453

A Bomb in Every Issue: How the Short, Unruly Life of Ramparts Magazine Changed America. By Peter Richardson. (New York: New Press, 2009. 247 pp. Cloth, \$25.95, ISBN 978-1-59558-439-7. Paper, \$17.95, ISBN 978-1-59558-546-2.)

Peter Richardson's highly engaging story of the life and influence of *Ramparts* magazine fleshes out an important chapter in the story of the 1960s and the life of the critical independent media in the United States. Enlivened by a generous sampling from the magazine as well as the reflections of a wide range of editors, writers, and 1960s folk, the book traces the magazine's trajectory from its 1962 birth as a "forum for the mature American Catholic" through its turbulent peak years (1967–1968) to its financially strapped demise in 1975 (p. 1).

Along the way, Richardson pays ample attention to the crucial roles and distinct approaches of key figures in the magazine's evolution—most notably Edward Keating, Warren Hinckle, Robert Scheer, Dugald Stermer, Peter Collier, and David Horowitz. In addition, the pages of *A Bomb in Every Issue* bristle with the important political exposés, heated debate, and often-inflammatory rhetoric that graced