

MEXICAN AMERICANS WITH MOXIE

A Transgenerational History of El Movimiento Chicano in
Ventura County, California, 1945–1975

FRANK P. BARAJAS

“Youth, elders, liberals, militants, Mexicanos, and Chicanos all populate these pages, a tribute to the multifaceted nature of the Chicano movement. In the end, the book stands as a valuable testament to the enduring *coraje* (the courage and anger) of *los de abajo* (the suppressed) to fight for justice.”—Lorena Oropeza, author of *The King of Adobe: Reyes López Tijerina, Lost Prophet of the Chicano Movement*

“[This] is an impressive reassessment of the Chicano and Chicana movement through a trans-generational approach that beautifully captures the shift in political consciousness of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. . . . This book is a refreshing reminder that both generations can learn from each other to make a better world for all.”—José M. Alamillo, author of *Deportes: The Making of a Sporting Mexican Diaspora*

“Frank Barajas mixes the best of labor history, social and ethnic history, and solid storytelling to explain how Mexican workers, students, and other activists sought a piece of the good life in one of California’s most important agricultural counties.”—Josh Sides, author of *Erotic City: Sexual Revolutions and the Making of Modern San Francisco*

In *Mexican Americans with Moxie* Frank P. Barajas argues that Chicanas and Chicanos of the 1960s and 1970s expressed politics distinct from the Mexican American generation that came of age in the decades prior. Barajas focuses on the citrus communities of Fillmore and Santa Paula and the more economically diversified and populated rurban municipalities of Oxnard, Simi Valley, and Ventura, illustrating Ventura County’s relationship to Los Angeles and El Movimiento’s ties to suburbanization, freeway construction, and the rise of a high-tech and defense-industry corridor. *Mexican Americans with Moxie* devotes particular attention to cross-cultural dynamics that transcended space and generation. The residents of Ventura County became involved with national issues such as the Vietnam War, school desegregation, labor, and electoral politics. The actions of Black students at the community colleges of Moorpark and Ventura and other area universities inspired Mexican American youth of Ventura County to assess their own activism.

Mexican Americans with Moxie situates the Chicana-Chicano movement within the nation’s struggle to achieve social justice. From this history, readers will gain a new appreciation for how leadership development spans generations and contributes to the identity formation of communities.

Frank P. Barajas is a professor of history at California State University Channel Islands. He is the author of *Curious Unions: Mexican American Workers and Resistance in Oxnard, California, 1898–1961* (Nebraska, 2012).

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