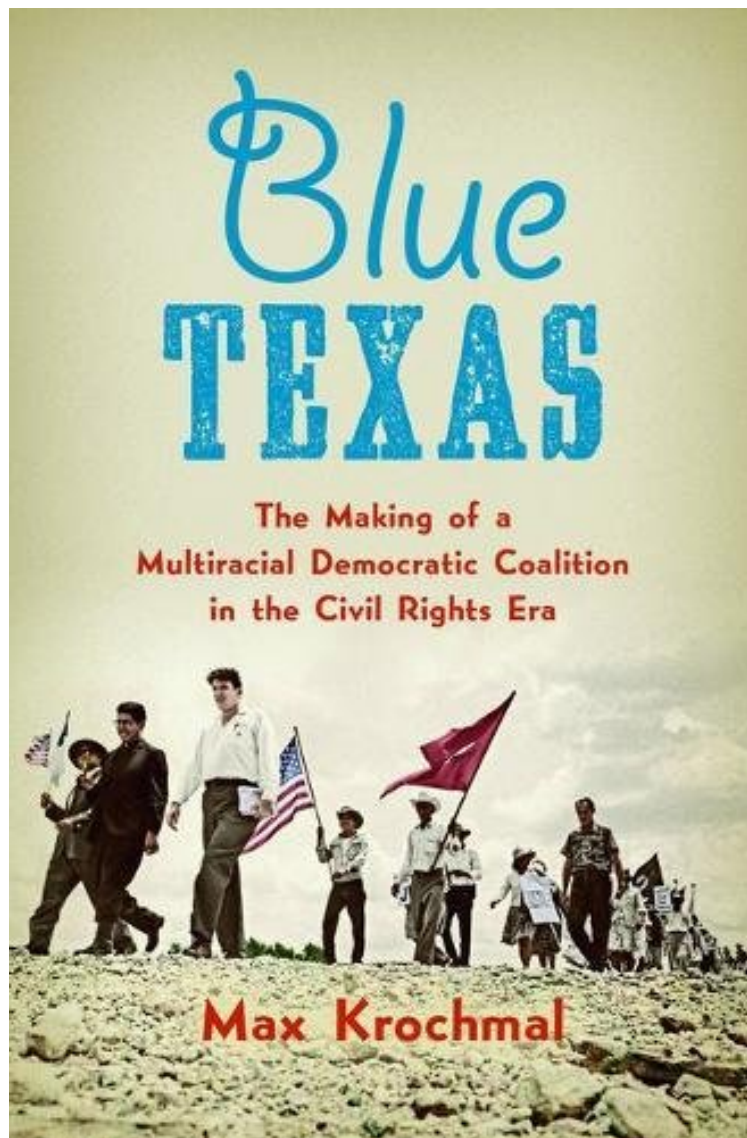


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## Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era (Justice, Power, and Politics)

*Max Krochmal*

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Politics):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Well researched book about progressive Texas political coalitions that crossed ...By Joe WellsWell researched book about progressive Texas political coalitions that crossed racial and economic class lines. A blueprint for a future Democratic coalition that can win political power on behalf of working families.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Blue Texas is a call to action.By TexasbookloverTEXAS HISTORYMax KrochmalBlue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights EraUniversity of North Carolina PressHardcover, 978-1-4696-2675-8 (also available as an e-book), 552 pgs., \$39.95November 14, 2016This book is about the other Texas the hidden Lone Star tradition of community organizing, civil rights, trade unionism, and liberal, multiracial coalition building.Does this Texas sound familiar to you? It doesn't sound familiar to most of us, but it should.In the 1930s, against the backdrop of the Great Depression, and inspired by the New Deal, African Americans, Mexican Americans, and mostly Anglo labor organizers and community activists in Texas began a decades-long journey toward each other. Each group began individually, in their several neighborhoods: the Mexican American pecan shellers striking in San Antonio; Anglo labor striking Ford in Dallas; *Smith v. Allright*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the white primary, was born in Houston. Eventually the separate groups reached tentatively across the color line and found they were stronger together. For most it wasn't about ideology, but about living conditions. This journey culminated in a multiracial coalition able to elect liberal politicians in support of a broad civil rights program.So, what happened?Blue Texas: The Making of a Multiracial Democratic Coalition in the Civil Rights Era by Texas Christian University assistant professor of history Max Krochmal is the latest addition to the University of North Carolina Press's Justice, Power, and Politics series. Employing extensive archival sources and original interviews, Krochmal tells a fascinating story. He is under no illusions about the forces arrayed against further progress, nevertheless his style is infectiously hopeful and inspiring.Krochmal contends we can use history as a blueprint for moving forward, if only we knew the history. What did he learn? The coalition succeeded because it both recognized and transcended racial difference prioritized the needs of its most vulnerable partners. Its most privileged members plunged headlong into the fight for black and brown civil rights. The whites backed up their words with action The more liberal, the more explicitly integrationist, the more militant the tactics, the more effective the coalition became.The process was not smooth; the Cold War (Fun fact: San Antonio put red stamps on the subversive volumes in the public library) threw a wrench into the works and the assassination of JFK almost killed it off. The coalition fought corruption, political machines, bossism, big business, and a toxic white supremacist society which confused privileges and rights. Each step forward was met by the inevitable conservative backlash and breathtaking violence.Krochmal's report of KKK carved into the stomach of a protestor is horrifying; his relation of the desegregation of Crystal City schools is thrilling. As an academic work, Krochmal's tome is minutely detailed, dense with facts, figures, and acronyms. Blue Texas is not an easy read, but it is a fine accomplishment, and an important addition to our understanding of the struggle for the most basic Civil Rights in this state.We are not taught this history in our elementary or secondary schools. There are names we never learned, but should revere: Moses and Erma LeRoy, Albert Pea, G.J. Sutton, Hank Brown, Dr. Hector P. Garcia, B. T. Bonner, George and Latane Lambert, and Emma Tenayuca, to name a mere few. That's not just a shame, it's education malpractice. A history to be proud of, this information belongs in every school curriculum. Blue Texas is a call to action.Originally published in Lone Star Literary Life.1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Three StarsBy Nancy Novackprint is too small for old-time activists

This book is about the other Texas, not the state known for its cowboy conservatism, but a mid-twentieth-century hotbed of community organizing, liberal politics, and civil rights activism. Beginning in the 1930s, Max Krochmal tells the story of the decades-long struggle for democracy in Texas, when African American, Mexican American, and white labor and community activists gradually came together to empower the state's marginalized minorities. At the ballot box and in the streets, these diverse activists demanded not only integration but economic justice, labor rights, and real political power for all. Their efforts gave rise to the Democratic Coalition of the 1960s, a militant, multiracial alliance that would take on and eventually overthrow both Jim Crow and Juan Crow.Using rare archival sources and original oral history interviews, Krochmal reveals the often-overlooked democratic foundations and liberal tradition of one of our nation's most conservative states. Blue Texas remembers the many forgotten activists who, by crossing racial lines and building coalitions, democratized their cities and state to a degree that would have been unimaginable just a decade earlier--and it shows why their story still matters today.

It would be hard to find a more timely book about Texas political history than this dive into the coalition-building that brought together African-Americans, Mexican-Americans, Anglo progressives and labor activists.--Austin American-StatesmanA historical blueprint for Texas activists. . . . [This] history of multiracial civil rights movements in Texas offers lessons for progressives in the age of Trump, one of which is that demography is not necessarily destiny.--Texas ObserverTimely because of the parallels that can be drawn from the past to contemporary issues. . . . A wealth of

information for students of social movements and political history. Highly recommended.--ChoiceA springboard for sharing new and desperately needed information. Bubbling over with long-forgotten names, events, and facts, this archive of Texas history will be dog-eared in advance and in hindsight of many elections to come.--Fort Worth WeeklyA fine accomplishment, and an important addition to our understanding of the struggle for the most basic Civil Rights in [Texas].--Lone Star Book s Blue Texas is one of the most interesting books I have read in a long time. A model of clarity, its narrative seamlessly weaves together social movement history, grassroots and high politics, and compelling vignettes of characters who seem almost drawn from a film. The result is a fine contribution to the literature on social movements, politics, and modern U.S. history.--Thomas J. Sugrue, New York UniversityBlue Texas is a compelling account of the multiracial coalition of progressive African Americans, Mexican Americans, liberal whites, and white labor activists. Vividly detailed and painstakingly researched, this book beautifully captures a political movement that fought to empower marginalized racial minorities and workers in Texas.--Lilia Fernandez, author of Brown in the Windy City: Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Postwar ChicagoBlue Texas is not about progressives singing the political blues over the present right-wing domination of state offices. Rather, it has an upbeat message of recapturing the spirit of an earlier Texas--not that long ago--when the state's feisty progressive forces (labor, African Americans, Latinos, community activists, and others) came together to organize, unionize, win elections, and change politics.--Jim Hightower, writer, populist agitator, former Texas Agriculture Commissioner (1983-91), and editor of the Hightower LowdownAbout the AuthorMax Krochmal is assistant professor of history at Texas Christian University.