

*Valor**The American Odyssey of Roy Domínguez*

By Rogelio "Roy" Domínguez as told to James B. Lane

(Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012. Pp. ix, 271. Illustrations. \$38.00.)

The gist of Rogelio "Roy" Domínguez's autobiography is best summarized in historian Ronald Cohen's cover blurb: "A rags-to-riches story of a Mexican American who overcame many hardships to become the sheriff of Lake County, after a stellar career as a state trooper, attorney, and local political figure." Domínguez grew up in a migrant family that was first based in Texas, but eventually settled in Northwest Indiana, or "The Region" as it is popularly known. He grew up in Gary, acquired a B.A. degree while working in local industries and then became an Indiana state trooper while earning a law degree. While practicing law in Lake County, the heart of Northwest Indiana, he acquired prominent state-level bureaucratic positions and made an unsuccessful bid for Lake County Sheriff in 1994. Learning from this defeat, he ran again and won in 2001, and served until 2011. Making his achievement even more laudable is the fact that, for much of this time, Domínguez faced the debilitating Guillain-Barré syndrome. His is truly a "rags-to-riches" story, but this book's account of his social and political mobility is not its most appealing part.

Instead, it is Domínguez's upbeat and even optimistic outlook on the capacity for lasting reform in The Region that proves his most important contribution. Like the city pessimis-

tically presented in Charlie LeDuff's *Detroit: An American Autopsy* (2013), much of industrial Northwest Indiana seems a dramatic example of Rust Belt decay. When I lived in The Region in the mid-1970s, three major steel mills still operated, as well as numerous other manufacturing complexes. My young family and I enjoyed the friendliness of the area's diverse population. But even then, many prognosticated that The Region would follow along Detroit's trajectory.

Unfortunately, they were right: most of the manufacturing facilities in Northwest Indiana did close down. A seamy side of electoral politics and unionism, long in the making, came to seem an organic and accepted aspect of public life. When I lived in East Chicago I could only imagine a Serpico-type figure taking on the bigwigs from the bottom up. But according to this autobiography, challenges to local corruption occurred at the highest level of law enforcement authority—Domínguez himself. The book details his numerous efforts to rectify corruption, inefficiency, and poor administration in various bureaucratic units for which he was responsible, but there are no indications of whether reform was permanent.

Disappointingly, Domínguez's account of life in The Region stays on a fixed path of personal experiences, thus depriving readers of broader in-

sights into the social context of the era that his story envelops. We deserve to know, for example, that Domínguez and his family are at the heart of a movement of Texas migrants of Mexican descent (*tejanos*) in the Chicago area in the late 1940s and early 1950s. *Tejanos* further enriched the Latino cultural foundation formed by recently arrived Puerto Ricans, as well as by Mexican immigrants and their descendants, who settled in the area during the 1920s. During the period in which the story takes place, moreover, a new wave of Mexican immigration took place, further modifying The Region's Latino zeitgeist. The author seems not to find these contrasts as important as I, and I suspect other researchers, would.

None of these points takes away

from Roy Domínguez's achievements or his ability to serve as a role model. Certainly the book deserves a reading for its account of these accomplishments alone. In the years following the appearance of Alex Haley's *Roots*, many accomplished Hispanics attempted to publish their memoirs or biographies, most with little success. In contrast, Domínguez's partnership with IU-Northwest historian James B. Lane, who wrote the actual text in an "as told to" manner, might have paved the way to not only have his story published, but to have it appear under the imprint of a press of international prominence.

F. ARTURO ROSALES is Professor Emeritus of History at Arizona State University.



Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America

By Jon Gjerde

Edited by S. Deborah Kang

(New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012. Pp. xviii, 273. Illustrations, index. Paperbound, \$99.00.)

Based on Jon Gjerde's nearly completed manuscript and published four years after his death, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America* is a nuanced examination of how Catholic and Protestant leaders' disagreements over a range of issues shaped antebellum society and how the lack of victory by either side shaped national identity long afterward. The book succeeds in

demonstrating that religious identity played as fundamental a role as race, ethnicity, class, and political ideology in shaping Americans' understanding of family, community, and nation.

Editor S. Deborah Kang has taken Gjerde's completed introduction and six chapters and added a thoughtful preface and epilogue. In the latter, Kang draws on the author's partial manuscript for a final chapter to