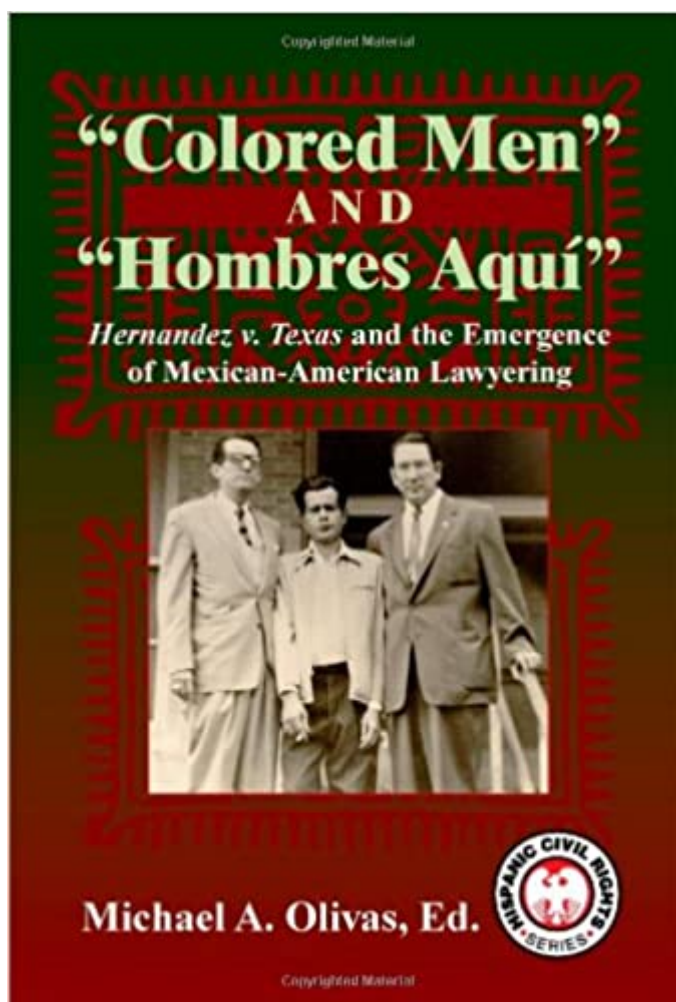


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Colored Men And Hombres Aquí: Hernandez V. Texas And The Emergence Of Mexican American Lawyering (Hispanic Civil Rights Series)





Synopsis

This collection of ten essays commemorates the 50th anniversary of an important but almost forgotten U.S. Supreme court case, *Hernández v. Texas*, 347 US 475 (1954), the major case involving Mexican Americans and jury selection, published just before *Brown v. Board of Education* in the 1954 Supreme Court reporter. This landmark case, the first to be tried by Mexican American lawyers before the U.S. Supreme Court, held that Mexican Americans were a discrete group for purposes of applying Equal Protection. Although the case was about discriminatory state jury selection and trial practices, it has been cited for many other civil rights precedents in the intervening 50 years. Even so, it has not been given the prominence it deserves, in part because it lives in the shadow of the more compelling *Brown v. Board* case. There had been earlier efforts to diversify juries, reaching back at least to the trial of Gregorio Cortez in 1901 and continuing with efforts by the legendary Oscar Zeta Acosta in Los Angeles in the 1960s. Even as recently as 2005 there has been clear evidence that Latino participation in the Texas jury system is still substantially unrepresentative of the growing population. But in a brief and shining moment in 1954, Mexican-American lawyers prevailed in a system that accorded their community no legal status and no respect. Through sheer tenacity, brilliance, and some luck, they showed that it is possible to tilt against windmills and slay the dragon. Edited and with an introduction by University of Houston law scholar Michael A. Olivas, *Colored Men and Hombres Aquá* is the first full-length book on this case. This volume contains the papers presented at the *Hernández* at 50 conference which took place in 2004 at the University of Houston Law Center and also contains source materials, trial briefs, and a chronology of the case.

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Customer Reviews

"A recommended title for law students, ethnic studies programs, and anyone seeking to play an active role in an informed democracy." --REFORMA Newsletter

• Sheds light on an important civil rights case that has been overshadowed by the more compelling case, *Brown v. Board of Education* • Details the first case tried by Mexican Americans before the U.S. Supreme Court • Published as part of The Hispanic Civil Rights Series

I was so glad to find this book! It answered so many questions, including what happened to Hernandez. This book may be added as a required text in my Introduction to Chicano/a Studies classes, if not it will certainly be available in our library at our community college in Colorado. Extremely well-written, full of so much background and information. So glad I found it. :)

I can't believe no one else has reviewed this epic 2006 book. It skillfully covers a very important Mexican-American legal case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court. The year was 1954. Many who follow the Supreme Court as well as many other readers will immediately be drawn to the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision. It was a shattering decision which passed 9 to 0 thanks to the urgent lobbying of Chief Justice Earl Warren. The decision dramatically rejected the "separate but equal" doctrine that had guaranteed educational inequality to so many black and other children for decades. Two weeks earlier the same Supreme Court had decided the Hernandez case which opened the way for budding civil rights for Chicanos. Frequently ignored even among scholars, this book examines this story via a series of thoughtful essays. A Chicano, Pete Hernandez, had been found guilty of capital murder in Jackson County, Texas. His Chicano lawyers challenged the conviction on the grounds that the trial was unfair since he had been convicted by an all-White jury. Further Mexican-Americans were denied the right to sit on juries in that county. Hernandez's lawyers were able to prove that in the previous 25 years not a single Mexican-American had ever served on a single jury even though the county was nearly 16 percent Mexican American. In contrast during that period no less than 6,000 White jurors had been called. The book is thoughtful, not an easy read and as to be expected quite legalistic, but worth the effort.

This is a great read. Young latino men need to become more aware of their experiences (and what challenges to expect in life) in order to have a more positive self-reflection of our place in U.S. society. Not knowing what to expect and what challenges may lie ahead DUE TO our ethnicity is a BIG roadblock in the future of young Latino men...we are not white, not black, we belong to an ethnicity where there's a lack of belonging since many many young Latinos grow up feeling disconnected to their Latino roots...there is a lack of cultural/history classes in schools that do not teach young Latinos who their ancestors are... This book is a great tool to understand part of our history and our struggles while living in a nation that we love, that we are citizens of, that we pledge allegiance to, that we serve in its military...but yet many young Latinos are made to feel like we will always be outsiders...and almost no one bothers to educate us in understanding why this is so. Again, this book is a good read to understand part of that history...to be used for positive (not negative) reflection.

Although this book does cover a simplified version of the story of Hernandez V. Texas. The book is full of the authors biased interpretations and assumptions of the personal life of Hernandez. The obvious idolization of Hernandez in this book immediately Biases the reader into a false assumption that the state was imprisoning an innocent man.

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