

A fourlane sear
Of asphalt
Stitched in between wire
Fences and telephone lines,
Running like a scar
Across the flesh
Of an ancient landscape.

But perhaps the most vivid and memorable lines occur in the opening poem, with its consciously Whitmanesque title, "Journey to Myself," as the speaker approaches the confluent qualities of his Native American heritage:

Like figures forming in the moving moonlight,
The far flung roots of my tree
Have been taking the shape of
A lone Pacific salmon.

—Abby H. P. Werlock
St. Olaf College

Christine Oppong, ed. *Sex Roles, Population and Development in West Africa*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988) xiii, 242 pp., \$40.00.

This volume is part of an effort by the International Labour Office to widen the appreciation of salient demographic factors and the role of women as workers in the developing world. As stated in the introduction, it examines issues central to the national planning of four West African nations by focusing on divisions of labor, resources, skills, power and opportunities. Its thesis is threefold: a need for more conceptually rigorous documentation and understanding of social processes on which to base policies and plans; the need to give proper consideration to the diverse and changing roles of women and men; and, that equality of opportunity must be promoted if population policies and plans for national development and individual family well-being are to succeed.

It is divided into four uneven parts: women's work; Yoruba experiences with fertility, parenthood and development; Ghanaian examples with population policies and family planning and family life education; and, government plans and development policies. Six-and-one-half of its thirteen chapters are devoted to Nigeria, four to Ghana, one-and-a-half to Sierra Leone, and one to Mali. Each part begins with a comprehensive contextual examination of the section's theme.

The contributions vary in quality. Oppong's introductions to section one and two and the chapters by Wolf Bleek, Franklyn Lisk and Yvette Stevens, and Renee Pittin are the best. In the introduction to part one Oppong depicts how underestimation of women's activities weakens designing and implementing of local and national programs as well as perpetuates economic and societal weakness of women. Building on a theme which appears in at least four of his earlier works Bleek presents a strong case for making

abortion, contraceptives and counseling, which he calls collectively birth control services, more readily available to the young and unmarried. Lisk and Stevens consider Sierra Leonean policies and programs as well as results from the failure of policy-makers and planners to recognize the active part played by women in the productive process and to incorporate their needs in the planning process. They suggest strategies that would increase the employment and income status of women and enhance appreciation of their contribution to national development. Pittin's essay on Nigerian Hausa women, as do a number of the other contributions, reminds readers that poor questions or premises invariably elicit faulty answers or results, and cautions that census data or other information gathered in a traditional manner should be used with extreme prudence. Pittin shows that Eurocentric terms and concepts might become muddled if applied unmodified to African societies. With the prominent exception of the essay on urban Yoruba mothers by Catherine di Domenica *et al.*, part two is the weakest section of the book. All too often its essays rest on dated sociological and economic data and introduce little new knowledge.

This is a valuable scholarly volume nonetheless. It is well documented with a vast array of footnotes. It is also reinforced by a number of tables and figures and an excellent bibliography. Though directed at planners, policy makers, researchers, and students of demography and development, it should be read by anyone with the slightest interest in social developments and planning in modern West Africa. Students of comparative ethnicity will find its treatment of a number of groups highly useful.

— Ashton Wesley Welch
Creighton University

Américo Paredes. *George Washington Gómez*. (Houston, TX: Arte Publico Press, 1990) 302 pp., \$8.50 paper.

Américo Paredes is a figure quite familiar to anyone who has delved even lightly and briefly into Chicano literature, history, and culture. His long and distinguished career as a teacher at the University of Texas and his excellent scholarly publications have insured that his name is among the first encountered as one begins to examine the writings of Mexican Americans. "*With His Pistol in His Hand: A Border Ballad and Its Hero* (1958) is a landmark study, and his collections, *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (1976) and *Folktales of Mexico* (1979) are significant contributions to the corpus of American folklore.

His *George Washington Gómez* (with the subtitle of "A Mexicotexan Novel") was, according to the introduction provided by novelist Rolando Hinojosa, begun in 1936 and finished in 1940. Hinojosa further states that it "should be seen and appreciated as an historical work, not as an artifact." In