TEXAS MEXICAN DIASPORA TO WASHINGTON STATE:

RECRUITMENT, MIGRATION, AND COMMUNITY, 1940-1960

By

JOSUÉ QUEZADA ESTRADA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts in American Studies

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY
Program in American Studies

MAY 2007

To the Faculty of Washington State University:

The members of the Committee appointed to examine the thesis of JOSUÉ QUEZADA ESTRADA find it satisfactory and recommend that it be accepted.

____
Chair

____

____

ACKNOWLEGEMENTS

First of all, I want to thank God for giving patience, wisdom, and health to finish this work. I am especially indebted to Professors José Alamillo, Linda Heidenreich, and Carmen Lugo-Lugo, who provided detailed notes, advice, and tons of support. These professors inspired me to write, and are role models of the type of instructor I wish to be.

I also want to thank Baldemar Vásquez Diaz, Andy González, Augustina Rodríguez, and Rodolfo Renton Macías for telling me their stories. I specially want to thank Andy González and his wife Elvia, for their cooperation and kindheartedness.

I want to acknowledge the faculty and staff at WSU, who have given me advice and encouragement. Thanks to Rory Ong, John Streamas, Kim Christen, TV Reed, Lisa Guerrero, Rich King, and Jean Wiegnard. I also want to thank to my fellow graduate students who encouraged me to complete my thesis and provided much support. Thanks to Hala Abu Taleb, Margo Tamez, Michelle Jack, Frank King, David Warner, Cheris Brewer, Ayano Ginoza, Xuan-Truong T. Nguyen, Jody Pepion, Sompathana Phitsanoukanh, Lori Saffin, Marquita Beberman, Stephen Bischoff, Martin Boston, Ali Abdul-Aziz, Marisol Badilla, Erika Abad, Lindsey Trimble, Leola Dublin, and Francisco Tamayo. I want to especially thank Francisco Tamayo and Lindsey Trimble, who took time out of their busy schedules to edit and comment on my thesis.

My family has always been supportive of my education, and they are a major reason why I have been able to accomplish this feat. My mother has been there to comfort and guide me through my years of education. My sister's Lorena, Marina, and Raquel have pushed me to study hard and go to college. And much thanks and love to my brother's Ruffo and Miguel, who have kept me grounded. I also want to give thanks

to Roger and Lisa Guzman for their kindness and support. Much love and thanks to Scott, Heather, Kayla, Adrian, Liliana, Cynthia, Nika, Fernando, mi tía Ignacia, mi tío Roberto, mi tía Fidela, Roberto Jr., Oscar, Elizabeth, Lupe, Aurora, Teresa, Rodrigo, Rosalva, and Marta.

Lastly, to my fiancée Amanda, who has constantly been there to offer endless love, advice, and support-I cannot thank her enough. She has been patient and caring throughout this whole process. She deserves more than what I can express here.

TEXAS MEXICAN DIASPORA TO WASHINGTON STATE:

RECRUITMENT, MIGRATION, AND COMMUNITY, 1940-1960

Abstract

by Josué Quezada Estrada, M.A.
Washington State University
May 2007

Chair: José M. Alamillo

This study examines the non-bracero labor of Mexican origin in Washington State, from 1940 to 1960. I argue that research on the Bracero Program has overshadowed the complexity of Chicano/a history in the Pacific Northwest. As a result, limited scholarship on the migration of other Mexican descents exists before and during the program, as well as the role women played in the development of communities in the region. To further expand the discourse of Chicano/a Studies in the Pacific Northwest, I utilize oral history testimonies to examine the displacement and forced internal migration of Texas Mexicans to Washington State. First, I claim that Texas Mexicans in Washington Sate were paid higher wages, had increased employment opportunities, and faced lower levels of racial discrimination and anti-immigrant hostility. By emigrating to Washington State, they also avoided deportation during the 1930s and 1950s, as well as the mechanization of Texas agriculture. Second, unlike braceros, Texas Mexicans who migrated and settled in Washington State, during the 1940s and 1950s transferred their Tejano/Mexicano culture to the area and were pivotal to the establishment of our communities that still exist today. And third, I state that key to the development of these communities in Washington State were Tejana and Mexicana women and families, who labored in the fields, homes, and communities.

LIST OF TABLES

1. Total amount of bags of sugar produced at the Toppenish factory (Utah-Idaho Sugar Company 1937-1950)……………………………………….25
2. Average farm wage rate per hour U.S. and Southwest, 1954-1977……………...89
3. Foreign-born White Mexican population in Washington State by county (1940-1950)………………………………..……...…………....101
4. Mexican-American migrant residents in Walla Walla (1967)………………....104
5. Average daily migrant pay in 1956 per state…………………………………...108

LIST OF ILLUSTATIONS

FIGURES

1. *Padrinos* (Godparents) Carlos and Augustina Rodríguez with author and sister (1990)……………………………………………………………………….49
2. Rodolfo and Christine Macías at their home in West Seattle, Washington (2007)……………………………………………………………………..…60
3. Inadelcio (Andy) González at his home in Brownstown, Washington (2007)…………………………………………………………………....…72
4. Baldemar Diaz Vásquez at his home in Grandview, Washington (2007)……………………………………………………………………...112
5. Spanish Calendar “El Ranchito” (1955)…………………………………..…124

MAPS

1. Cities and towns Washington State where Texas Mexicans resided and labored (1940-1960)…………………………………………………………………19
2. Location of beet sugar factories owned and operated by Utah-Idaho Sugar Company and it processors, 1891-1966……………………………………….26
3. Migrant labor patterns, 1939 (based on Texas State Employment Service, Annual Report of the Farm Placement Service, 1939)……………………………...…44
4. Percentage of Washington State hop pickers from out of state as well as within (1936 & 1937)…………………………………………………………………49
5. From Texas to Washington State migrant patterns……………………………93
6. Washington State Counties…………………………………………………..100

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS……………………………………………………………iii

ABSTRACT………………………………………………………………………........v

LIST OF TABLES…………………………………………………………………vi

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS…………………………………………………………vii

INTRODUCTION
Aztlán en *el Noroeste*:
The Importance of Pacific Northwest Chicano/a Scholarship……………………1

CHAPTER ONE
From Bracero to Texas Mexican Labor……………………..………………...20

CHAPTER TWO
"Vamonos Pa'l Norte:" Texas Mexican Migration..62

CHAPTER THREE
Community Building and Texas Mexican Cultural Production……….………..97

CONCLUSION……………………………………………………………………126

BIBILIOGRAPHY………………………………………………………………..128

Dedication

Para mi familia.
Especialmente para mi mama Celia R. Estrada que la amo mucho.
Y para mis hermanas/os: Ruffo, Lorena, Marina, Raquel, y Miguel.
Thank you all for your love and support,
Josué Quezada Estrada

INTRODUCTION

Aztlán en *el Noroeste*:
The Importance of Pacific Northwest Chicano/a Scholarship

Scholarship in Chicano/a Studies has grown dramatically and continues to grow in the twenty-first century, yet it has expanded irregularly. A large body of work has concentrated on a Southwestern context of Mexican history in the United States (U.S.). A reason for such centralization of scholarship is because demographically, a great number of Chicanos and Mexicanos reside in the Southwest. This trend, however, has major drawbacks because it makes the Chicano/Mexicano experience appear less diverse, since they are studied only through a Southwestern perspective. It also limits Chicano/a research and publications to a single geographical area. This is reinforced by the overwhelming Chicano/a scholarship on the Mexican-United States border, while Chicano/a discourse on the Pacific Northwest has gone mostly unnoticed.

If one examines the evolution of Chicano/a research in the Pacific Northwest as opposed to the Southwest, it is evident that most of the Northern Chicano/a scholarship developed much later. In the Pacific Northwest, Chicano/a scholarship began in the late 1960's and increased in the 1970's. However, by the 1980's, works written by and about Chicanos/as began to slow down and were published mainly in scholarly journals. In the 1990's, the production of Chicano/a scholarship escalated and books began to be more readily published. Currently, more books and articles are being written about Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest, than in the past. The scholarship compiled over the last four decades is very important to Chicano/a Studies, and this discourse needs to be incorporated to provide a "richer comprehension and appreciation of Chicano/Latino

literature."[1] As a result, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the way people of Mexican descent and birth are studied, that further encompasses their experience throughout the U.S., especially in the Pacific Northwest.

The Pacific Northwest region in this study includes the states of Washington, Idaho, and Oregon. These states have had a Mexican presence dating back to late nineteenth century, and a consistent migration from the Southwest and Mexico.[2] This old and steady migration trend shows that Mexicans are settling in other parts of the U.S. besides the Southwest. For this reason, the concept of Aztlán being permanently located in the Southwest needs to be reconsidered, to encompass the Pacific Northwest.

Historically, Aztlán has been geographically bound to the Southwest as it is the mythical ancestral home of the Aztecs. While the exact geographical location of Aztlán is obscure, Chicano folklore has appropriated the name for the land lost by Mexico in the Mexican-American War of 1846. Yet, why should Aztlán be characterized as a physical location? Aztlán should not be bound to a place, but it ought to be defined by the presence of Mexican people. The Chicanos and Mexicanos who came to the Pacific Northwest, many from the Southwest (Aztlán), created a new history of Aztlán by transforming this region into a community of their own. Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest have created a scholarship that is unique but has been overlooked by Chicano/a scholars in the Southwest.

Professor Lauro Flores has described the Pacific Northwest as a "forgotten entity…because we (Mexican/Latino people and scholars) are so far from the mix of

---

[1] Flores, Lauro, ed. "The Pacific Northwest," *The Americas Review*, Texas: Arte Público Press Vol. 23. No. 3-4 (Fall-Winter 1995). pg. 22.

[2] For further examination of the demography of Mexicans, in the nineteenth century, see Guadalupe Friaz, A Demographic Profile of Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest, in Carlos Maldonado and Gilberto García, eds., The Chicano Experience in the Pacific Northwest. Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1995.

things."[3] Flores argues that geographic remoteness creates an alienation of Mexican people in the Pacific Northwest. In effect, this creates what Professor Errol D. Jones has come to call the "Invisible People."[4] Yet these unseen Mexicanos in the Pacific Northwest have a long history in this region that must be included in Chicano/a Studies. This new and emerging Mexican historical scholarship can fully acknowledge the Mexican experience and further develop the political, social, and historical existence of Mexicans in the United States. The plight of Chicano/a writers to produce this knowledge has been tremendously challenging, and it has taken decades to develop.

In the Pacific Northwest, the Chicano/a literary renaissance was started mainly by Chicano/a and non-Chicano/a university students during the late 1960's, and later expanded by other Chicanos/as who came to the region. The focus of early scholars producing scholarship in the 1960s and 1970s revolved around the Chicano/a Movement and labor organizing efforts in the Pacific Northwest. The next wave of scholars was composed of Chicanos/as from the Pacific Northwest and Southwest. In the 1980s and 1990s, their writings centered on issues around Mexican labor and Chicano/a literature and art, while other scholars focused the Spanish/Mexican "explorations" of the Pacific Northwest. In the twenty-first century, scholars have begun to address the experience of Chicanas in the region, and how they have been vital to the development of our current

---

[3] *The University of Washington Daily.* Tuesday, May 21, 1996.
Lauro Flores is a professor and chair of the American Ethnic Studies Program at the University of Washington. In 1996, he was the editor of The Americas Review which dedicated an issue to Latino writers and artists of the Pacific Northwest.
[4] Jones, Errol D. "Invisible People: Mexican in Idaho History." *Idaho Issues Online.* Boise State University. (Fall 2005).
<http://www.boisestate.edu/history/issuesonline/fall2005_issues/1f_mexicans.html> accessed March 2006. Jones is a professor of history at Boise State University and is co-author with Kathleen Hodges of, "The Long Struggle: Mexican Workers in Idaho, 1918-1936," in Jerry García and Gilberto García's, eds., Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest. East Lansing, MI: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005.

Chicano/Mexicano communities. And just as important, scholars have begun to study the establishment of Chicano/Mexicano communities before and after World War II.

The Pacific Northwest's Chicano/a Movement and Chicano/a Studies Scholarship (1970's)

The Chicano/a Movement in the U.S. was not confined to the Southwest. The mobilization of Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest was an "integral part of the nation's Chicano Movement."[5] The social movement in the Pacific Northwest was less intense, but it inspired Chicano/a youth to attain political and educational strength by culturally empowering themselves. The production of Chicano/a scholarship was vitally important in order to achieve their goals. As a result, Chicanos/as began to write themselves into the history of the Pacific Northwest, and in doing so they revealed that Chicanos/Mexicanos were very important to the region.[6]

Despite the activism, in the 1970s, most Chicano/a scholarship of the Pacific Northwest was available only in a small number of masters thesis, doctoral dissertations, and scholarly journals. The works produced were undoubtedly affected by the Chicano/a Movement. For example, Richard Slatta's master's thesis, "Chicanos in Oregon: A Historical Overview (1974)," revealed that the Chicano/a Movement in Oregon led to the foundation of the Oregon State Concilio Chicano. The Concilio was an important

[5] Flores, Lauro, ed. "The Pacific Northwest," *The Americas Review*, Texas: Arte Público Press. 23.3-4 (Fall-Winter 1995). pg. 21

[6] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest: An Historical Perspective," *El Grito* 6 (Summer 1973); and Slatta, Richard. "Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest: A Historical Overview of Oregon's Chicanos," *Aztlán*. 6 (1975).

organization which politically empowered Chicanos/as. Slatta continued to publish his work in the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* (1979) and *Aztlán* (1975) journals.[7]

Jesus Lemos also wrote a notable master's thesis in 1974, and his work aided the Chicano/a scholarship boom of the 1970's. Lemos' thesis, "The History of the Chicano Political Involvement and the Organizational Efforts of the United Farmworkers Union in the Yakima Valley, Washington," disclosed how Chicanos/as influenced by the United Farmworkers Union, successfully boycotted grapes at the University of Washington. He also wrote that many students and faculty from the University began organizing communities in the Yakima Valley. They implemented cultural awareness workshops, voter registration drives, and attempted to unionize farm workers. These texts revealed how the Chicano/a Movement impacted Chicanos/as in this area, yet they remained as unpublished manuscripts.

The most important work of scholarship during the 1970's was written by Antonia Castañeda Shular, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and Joseph Sommers. Their book, Literatura Chicana: Texto y Contexto/Chicano Literature: Text and Context (1972), was one of the first anthologies of Chicano literature assembled at the University of Washington (Seattle). Literatura Chicana was significant because it provided a transnational approach towards Chicano/a-Latino/a literature. The book not only included U.S. scholars but works by Puerto Rican and South American writers were also incorporated. Additionally, Literatura Chicana allowed a space for women to showcase their work. The incorporation of their scholarship was landmark for its time. However, academics have forgotten or are unaware that this anthology was created in the Pacific Northwest.

---

[7] Slatta, Richard. "Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest: A Historical Overview of Oregon's Chicanos," *Aztlán*. 6 (1975); and Slatta, Richard and Maxine P. Atkinson. "The Spanish Origin Population of Oregon and Washington" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. 70 (October 1979).

Still, this book was significant to Chicano/a scholars in the Pacific Northwest because it proved to other scholars, especially in the Southwest, that a "Chicano/a consciousness" existed in this part of the country. Yet since Literatura Chicana was not necessarily about Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest, but rather "composed with the Chicano reader in mind," Literatura Chicana did not become a regional text.[8] Instead, it developed to be a fundamental piece of Chicano/a scholarship that was affected by the Chicano/a Movement in the Pacific Northwest.

Literatura Chicana, with its origins in the Pacific Northwest, created a shift in Chicano/a Studies. It made Chicano/a readers explore the Chicano/a experience through a literary expression. Castañeda, Ybarra-Frausto, and Sommers established that "literature comes out of the imaginative use of language to interpret human experience," and therefore literature can change our experience, challenge life and society, help release agony, strengthen efforts to act, or "it may express a reaction to pain, to beauty, to fear, or what seems contradictory or absurd."[9] This definition of literature enabled Chicano/a writers to create new themes, expressive forms, and an aesthetic language that reinterpreted the Chicano/a experience. Moreover, this book validated the scholarship and presence of Chicano/a writers in the Pacific Northwest.

However, in the following decade Chicano/a writers of the Pacific Northwest were not published in books; instead, their work was confined to scholarly journals. In essence, as the Chicano/a Movement slowed down so did the literary movement in this region.

---

[8] Castañeda, Antonia I, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and Joseph Sommers. *Literatura Chicana: Texto y Contexto*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972. pg. xxi. Literatura Chicana did have work by Chicano poet, Jesus "El Flaco" Maldonado, who was from the Pacific Northwest.
[9] *Literatura Chicana* pgs. xxiii-xxiv.

The Recession of Chicano/a Scholarship in the Pacific Northwest (1980's)

The decade of the 1980s was a very conservative and antagonistic time toward "the social and economic concerns of Chicano constituencies." [10] In the Pacific Northwest, progressive Latino/a and Chicano/a organizations became "Hispanicized." These organizations were no longer radical but monitored by institutions of power. For example, the government combined the Commission of Mexican American Affairs and the Mexican American Federation into the Commission on Hispanic Affairs. The Governor's Commissions of Hispanic Affairs and the political climate certainly affected Chicano/a writers, and it is evident in the works produced during this time.

For the most part, Chicano/a texts no longer dealt with the Chicano/a Movement. Instead, writers concentrated on Mexican labor, and argued Mexicans were not a recent phenomenon to the Pacific Northwest. These two topics dominated Chicano/a scholarship of the 1980's and were mainly produced by Professor Erasmo Gamboa.[11] His work shed light on the Bracero Program and the Spanish/Mexican "explorations" in the Pacific Northwest

Gamboa's article, "Braceros in the Pacific Northwest: Laborers on the Domestic Front, 1942-1947 (1987)," was published in the *Pacific Historical Review* and it explored how Mexican immigrants were a vitally important labor force in the region during World War II. The braceros (literally meaning arms) were contracted workers from Mexico who came to the Pacific Northwest and other parts of the U.S. Gamboa's article was significant because it proved that Chicano/Mexicano history paralleled "the experience of

[10] García, Gilberto and Carlos S. Maldonado. *The Chicano Experience in the Pacific Northwest*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1995. pg. 76.
[11] Professor Gamboa is faculty at the University of Washington, American Ethnic Studies Department.

California and the rest of the Southwest."[12] Moreover, the article established that Mexicans were very important to the economic growth and diversity of the region.

Gamboa published another important work during this decade, his article, "Washington's Mexican Heritage; A View Into the Spanish Explorations, 1774-1792 (1989)," published in the *Columbia Journal*. In this article, Gamboa explained that Mexicans were important to the success of the "Spanish" explorations, since they built and manned the ships which took them to the Pacific Northwest. Gamboa's articles were central to the study of Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest; however, since they were published in journals not aimed at Chicano/a scholars, many did not become familiar with Gamboa's work.[13] Instead, Gamboa's work published in the *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* and *Columbia Journal* targeted historians of the Pacific Northwest and American West in an effort to focus on the Mexican/Chicano experience in the region.

For the most part, Chicano/a scholarship of the 1980's did not create a significant change in Chicano/a Studies. And while Literatura Chicana had been published in the previous decade, Pacific Northwest scholars were still struggling to be acknowledged. As a result, most Chicano/a articles and dissertations of the 1980's did not evolve into books. The need for funding was a reason why this literary scholarship did not get further publication. It is crucially important to note that institutions of higher education in the Pacific Northwest did not fully support Chicano/a Studies programs, and in some cases they were simply placed within Ethnic Studies Departments (like at Washington State University). In addition, colleges and universities in the Pacific Northwest did not actively recruit Chicano/a faculty. Therefore, the lack of recognition of Chicano/a

[12] *The Americas Review*. pg. 22
[13] Also, simply publishing his work in Chicano Studies journals would not guarantee him tenure or promotions.

scholarship (within the region and in the Southwest), funding, and support were reasons why this scholarship remained largely invisible to scholars outside the Pacific Northwest. In the following decade, a paradigm shift occurred and a watershed of Chicano/a scholarship was produced.

The Pacific Northwest's Expanding Chicano/a Discourse (1990's)

Chicanos/as of the Pacific Northwest during the 1990's dramatically increased the amount of Chicano/a scholarship. Their scholarship was no longer bound to scholarly journals but was more frequently published in books. Chicano/a literary works of the 1990's almost outnumbered the texts written over the past two decades. It is important to note that early Chicano/a writers grew up in the Pacific Northwest and tended to write about Chicano/a experience in this region. However, during this time Chicanos/as from the Southwest had also come to the region and begun to do research at different universities in the Pacific Northwest. The first major book published by during this time was by Gamboa, a native to the Pacific Northwest.

Gamboa's book, Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest (1990), was largely based on his doctoral dissertation.[14] As noted above, he had previously written about this subject in the *Pacific Historical Review* (1987). He expanded his argument by not only examining the importance of braceros to the region, but also looking at their life and struggle in the Pacific Northwest. Gamboa wrote of the culture shock and racial discrimination braceros faced. Since they were seen as inferior, braceros were paid low wages and worked under harsh conditions. They resisted by

[14] Erasmo Gamboa, "Under the Thumb of Agriculture: Bracero and Mexican American Workers in the Pacific Northwest, 1940-1950," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington, 1984.

striking against their employers and filing grievances with the Mexican Consul. Additionally, Gamboa explored the social life of the braceros, which was monotonous and isolating. The lack of a Mexican Community, traditional food, and cultural events were missing, creating a deprived society. Lastly, Gamboa argued that the termination of Bracero Program led to the recruitment of Mexican American farm workers into the Pacific Northwest. The farm workers coming to the area were mostly from Southwest, and a great majority from Texas. Gamboa's book was initially published by the University of Texas Press, and only recently republished by the University of Washington Press. Once again, Gamboa's work was vitally important to Chicano /a Studies because it made a connection between the Southwest and Pacific Northwest, through Mexican labor migration.

Braceros in the Southwest had worked in agriculture, mining, and on the railroad during World War II, effectively aiding the United States economy. The same pattern had occurred in the Pacific Northwest; therefore, Gamboa's scholarship, even though it was region specific, could also be used by other Chicano/a scholars outside of the Pacific Northwest. In a sense, this text created a shift in Chicano/a Studies, because it made other scholars look beyond the Southwest in terms of Mexican bracero labor. Works about Mexican labor, such as Gamboa's, were important to Chicano/a Studies because even though Mexicans had helped the United States win World War II, their labor was never fully appreciated, especially in the Pacific Northwest. In spite of the magnitude of Gamboa's book, his work needs to be critiqued for his over reliance on state archives, few oral histories, and cursory treatment of post-1947 period. My thesis also seeks to complicate Gamboa's work. I argue that the migration of Texas Mexicans, not braceros,

were important to the development of communities in the Pacific Northwest. In other words, braceros did not become the foundation of these communities, but it was Texas Mexicans who formed the bedrock of the communities that emerged in the 1940s and 1950s.

The next book published was seeking for Mexican labor, as well as Chicano communities, to be appreciated. Professor Gilberto García, a Chicano from the Southwest, and Professor Carlos Maldonado edited The Chicano Experience in the Northwest (1995). Their book was the first anthology exploring the Mexican/Chicano community in the region. The anthology featured eight authors who wrote about the presence, politics, demographic profile, and agricultural labor of Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest. However, many of the articles were descriptive and encyclopedia-like, with limited explanatory power. And moreover, this anthology like Gamboa ignores the role of Texas Mexican migration to the Pacific Northwest region. Still, there were two key topics that had never been fully explored before; the issue of educating a growing Chicano/Mexicano population and the Chicana experience in the Pacific Northwest.

Ricardo García and Anita Ordoñez addressed the subject of education in, "An Educational Mode for Teaching Chicano Students in the Pacific Northwest," where they argued that teachers and administrators needed to understand and respect Mexican culture. Essentially, the article showed how to better educate Chicano/Mexicano students, but it did not address other factors that were affecting this population, like teenage pregnancy, racial discrimination, and gangs. The second influential subject, Chicanas in the Pacific Northwest, was discussed by Luz E. Maciel Villarroel and Sandra

B. Francher García in their essay "A Cultural Profile and Status of Chicanas in the Northwest." They argued that a lack of information and demographic statistical records existed particularly related to Chicanas in this region. In the Pacific Northwest, the lack of knowledge "about Chicanas [confirmed] the need to publish documents" about their experience.[15] The article raised very important questions but did not examine the long struggle for Chicana representation in Pacific Northwest. Additionally, this article did not use oral testimonies to uncover the history of Chicanas in the region.

The Chicano Experience in the Northwest influenced Pacific Northwest Chicano and Chicana writers to further expand the discourse of Chicano/a scholarship. The forthcoming scholarship attempted to create another shift in Chicano/a Studies. These works addressed the need to increase and complicate Chicana scholarship in the region as well as the U.S. In the decade following the 1990s, two distinguished publications on Chicanas influenced Chicano/a Studies.[16]

Chicanas in the Pacific Northwest (2000's)

Antonia I. Castañeda's article, "Que Se Pudieran Defender-So You Could Defend Yourself (2001)," was one of the first Chicana scholarly works that addressed women in the Pacific Northwest, and was critical of regional histories. Her article challenged

---

[15] Villarroel Maciel, Luz E. and Sandra B. Francher García. "A Cultural Profile and Status of Chicanas in the Northwest," pg. 153. In García, Gilberto and Carlos S. Maldonado. *The Chicano Experience in the Pacific Northwest*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1995.

[16] I also want to mention that Marcos Pizarro's book, Chicanas and Chicanos in School: Racial Profiling, Identity Battles, and Empowerment (2005), was an important work in the 2000s. Pizarro examined the education barriers Chicanos/as faced in the Pacific Northwest. This book attempted to build upon Ricardo Garcia's and Anita Ordeñz's previous article dealing with Chicano/Mexicano student education.

Villarroel and García's essay because Castañeda theorized regional Chicana Studies.[17]

Castañeda argued three main points:

> Chicana migration within the boundaries of the United States challenges current conceptualizations and categories of analysis of U.S. regional history; Definitions of "regions" are contingent on people's sociopolitical and geographical location; and The imposition of regional boundaries distorts the narrative of the experience of women.[18]

These central points were vitally important because they urged scholars in Chicano/a Studies to rethink Chicana history by deconstructing regional and national history. She contended that regional histories were detrimental to Chicana history since they fragmented and further marginalized Chicanas. Therefore, as Castañeda examined Chicana history of the Pacific Northwest, her aim was to connect this region "within the large fabric of national as well as global, economic, social, political, and cultural issue."[19]

Castañeda's text stands out as it was the first text to theorize the Chicano/a history of the Pacific Northwest. Her work was also very significant to Chicano/a Studies and created a shift, to further analyze Chicana history in a different context. Chicana history needed to be explored through a different framework in order to be more holistic. My thesis builds upon Castañeda's critiques of Pacific Northwest regional history. Therefore, I connect Texas and Washington State into one dynamic migratory route, by examining the history of Mexican labor and migration in both states. I attempt to bind regional and national Chicano/a history to expand the discourse of Chicano/a Studies.

---

[17] Villarroel Maciel, Luz E. and Sandra B. Francher García. "A Cultural Profile and Status of Chicanas in the Northwest," pg. 153. In García, Gilberto and Carlos S. Maldonado. *The Chicano Experience in the Pacific Northwest*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1995.

[18] Castañeda, Antonia I. "Que Se Pudieran Defender (So You Could Defend Yourselves): Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 22.3 (2001): 116-142. pg. 117.

[19] Castañeda, Antonia I. "Que Se Pudieran Defender (So You Could Defend Yourselves): Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 22.3 (2001): 116-142. pg. 118.

Much like Chicana history, the overall history of the Pacific Northwest needed to be (re)examined in depth and studied in the context of United States history. Gilberto García and Jerry García, editors of Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest (2005) have attempted to study Chicano/a Pacific Northwest history in connection to the Southwest. The links they utilized to unite these two regions were Mexican migration and labor. These are one of many ties between the Southwest and Pacific Northwest which strengthens the relationship between the two regions, and fulfills Castañeda's goal of studying Chicanos/as through a more holistic framework. Moreover, the book examines the complex role of Chicanas as home and community makers, laborers, union and church organizers. Still, the book does not provide a comprehensive history of Chicanos/as in the Pacific Northwest. And for the most part, the García and García anthology completely downplays the important significance of Texas Mexican migration and community formation in the Pacific Northwest (with the exception of Mario Compean and Carlos Maldonado). My thesis differs because I argue that Texas Mexican families were pivotal to the creation of these communities. They rooted themselves and their culture before braceros arrived in the area, and therefore their migration and labor cannot be ignored. Still, the book did provide the framework to examine the Chicano/a experience beyond the traditional conceptions of Aztlán.

Chicano/a Scholarship in *el Noroeste* de Aztlán

The Chicano/a scholarship that has evolved over the past four decades in the Pacific Northwest has, without a doubt, affected Chicano/a Studies. Chicano/a scholars

of this region have greatly contributed to the expansion and further development of the Chicano/a experience in the United States. The development of scholarship and migration of people to the Pacific Northwest "represents an acrisolamiento, a convergence of diverse groups and cultures which, together, come to compromise a microcosm of the true *Latino* experience of the USA: diversity within diversity."[20] It is the cultural and literary diversity that benefits Chicano/a Studies and must not be glossed over. Moreover, a comprehensive Chicano/a experience and scholarship can help Chicano/a academics understand why Aztlán should not be bound to a geographical area. Scholars need to recognize that Aztlán is also an important political and ideological organizing tool, which can greatly serve to benefit the Chicano/Mexicano communities in the Pacific Northwest.

The Pacific Northwest and the Southwest both symbolize Aztlán because they are connected through a socioeconomic and historical relationship that continues in contemporary times. In these two parts of the United States, Mexicanos/Chicanos have struggled for political representation, economic and social equality, as well as educational empowerment. The scholarship presented has dealt with these issues, and I believe if Chicanos/Mexicanos in different regions of the United States face these same problems, they are also part of Aztlán. Aztlán should represent the people and their struggle, and not be confined to a geographical space.[21] To further expand the discourse of Chicano/a Studies and the geography of Aztlán, I examine the migration of Texas Mexicans to Washington State.

---

[20] *The Americas Review.* pg. 13

[21] Therefore, it is necessary for Chicano/a scholars to study *el Noroeste de* Aztlán in other places like Canada and Alaska.

As Antonia Castañeda writes in "Que se Pudieran Defender," we must understand the history of Mexican people, in the U.S., is a history of displacement and forced internal migration. Castañeda claims Chicanos were the first group "to migrate internally within the United States as mobile seasonal laborers…They were Californios, Tejanos, Nuevo Mexicanos, and native-born U.S. citizens made exiles, aliens, and foreigners in their native land."[22] As a result, in analyzing the migration of Texas Mexicans into Washington State, it also imperative to consider the factors that forced these people to migrate out of Texas.

I argue that racial discrimination, depressed wages caused by Mexican contract labor and undocumented immigration during World War I (1920s), the New Deal (1930s), the Bracero Program (1947-1964), and Operation Wetback (1954) created an influx of undocumented workers and braceros in Texas. These factors forced Texas Mexicans to relocate and settle in other parts of the U.S., like Washington State.

I claim that better wages, available housing, less discrimination, better job opportunities, and a greater opportunity for social mobility prompted Texas Mexicans to settle indefinitely in the Washington State. My work examines the period prior to the Bracero Program but before the Chicano/a Civil Rights Movement in Washington State (1940-1960). It is important to mention that research on Bracero Program has overshadowed the complexity of Chicano/a history in Pacific Northwest. As a result, limited scholarship on the migration of other Mexican people exists before and during the program, as well as the vital role women had in the development of communities in the region. The migrants who came to the area developed our current communities, by transferring their Tejano/Mexicano culture to Washington State. The new space they

[22] Castañeda, Antonia I. pg. 120.

created enabled our past and present communities to blossom in Washington State. I want to note that the migration of Mexican Americans/Mexicanos from California, Arizona, Wisconsin, Colorado, Montana, and New Mexico was also important to the creation of community in Washington State. However, Texas Mexicans were the largest population to migrate and permanently settle in the area. And moreover, many Texas Mexicans fled to these states to escape the low wages and discrimination in Texas. In other words, some Mexican Americans/Mexicanos who came from the Southwest and Midwest to Washington were originally from Texas, but then spread out to these areas.

The use of oral histories is critically important to my study of Pacific Northwest Chicano/a history. The lack of traditional sources that document the presence of Mexican origin people in the Pacific Northwest, make it necessary to utilize the memories of Texas Mexicans. Devra Anne Weber writes, oral narratives "provide some answers to fundamental questions about life and work, culture and cultural change, women's perceptions, values and consciousness which are unavailable from traditional sources."[23] As a result, oral sources enable people to hear and record the history that is absent from familiar historical accounts. They also allow us to preserve recollections and spoken memories of people of Mexican descent, especially the voices of Mexicanas and Tejanas, since they have been suppressed by the dominant discourse of U.S. history.[24]

I understand there are problems with oral sources. At times, people's memory can be inaccurate and incomplete. Also, the use of oral histories can be problematic if

---

[23] Weber, Devra Anne. "Mexican Women on Strike: Memory, History, and Oral Narratives," in Del Castillo, Adelaida R, ed. *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana/Chicana History.* Encino, CA: Floricanto Press, 1989. pg. 2.

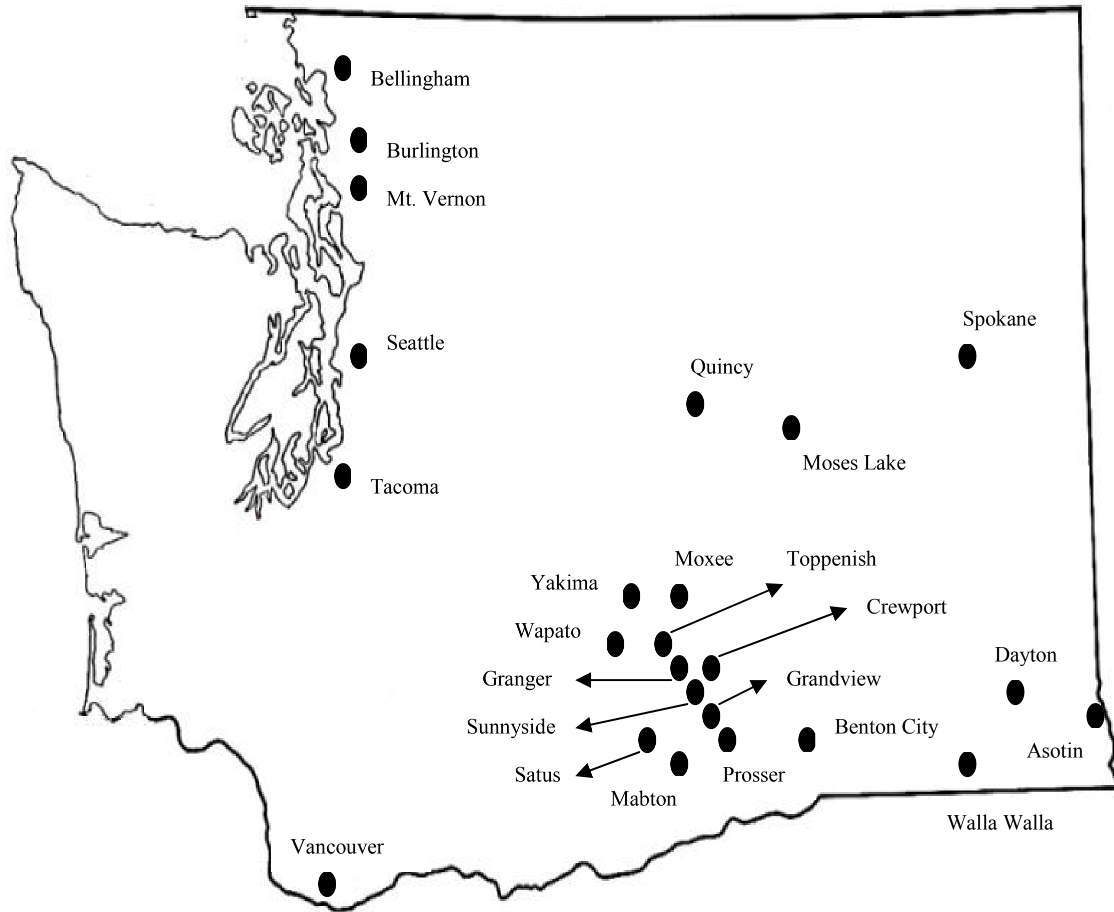
[24] Goldsmith-Rubio, Raquel. "Oral History: Considerations and Problems for its Use in the History of Mexicanas in the United States," in Del Castillo, Adelaida R, ed. *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana/Chicana History.* Encino, CA: Floricanto Press, 1989. pg. 163.

not used with a critical analysis. Therefore, in using oral narratives, I will interpret and place them in a historical framework utilizing supplementary material. Besides testimonies, I will also use newspapers, archival materials, and secondary sources.

In this study, I use various definitions to identify people of Mexican descent. The term Mexican nationals, is referring to people who are citizens of Mexico but are residing in the U.S. I will use Tejano/a in writing about people of Mexican origin, citizens of the U.S., who live, or lived, in the State of Texas. The terms Chicano/a and Mexican American will be used interchangeably, and refer to U.S. citizens of Mexican descent living in the U.S., notwithstanding their time of residence. Lastly, I utilize Texas Mexican as an umbrella term to include Tejanos/as and Mexican nationals who were born, or lived in Texas. I recognize both groups are divided along citizenship status, but they have in common a Texas culture and migrant experience.[25]

[25] To better understand the multifaceted dimensions within each group, and how their experience has varied in the United States, see David G. Gutierrez, Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Map 1: Cities and towns Washington State where Texas Mexican resided and labored (1940-1960)



CHAPTER ONE

From Bracero to Texas Mexican Labor

The Growth of Washington State's Agricultural Industry

From the 1880s to the 1920s, the Pacific Northwest's economy grew dramatically as the construction of the railroads facilitated the exploitation of the areas natural resources and agriculture. The railroad system was vitally significant to the Pacific Northwest because it linked the secluded region to the rest of the country, and transformed the dormant frontier into "a center of extractive industries and a mecca for transient laborers."[26] Due to Washington's growing economic market, the state required an ample low-skilled and seasonal work force to meet the demands of the areas rapidly expanding labor-intensive economy. The early migrant workers who fulfilled the Pacific Northwest's arduous manual labor were white American-born males as well as "African Americans, Native Americans, Latin Americans, Pacific Islanders, and men…from a wide variety of Asian and European Countries."[27] The major employer for these workers was the lumber industry, which between 1889 and 1929 "provided more than 50 percent of all manufacturing jobs in the region."[28] Also, during this time, fish canneries in the Pacific Northwest provided thousands of jobs for migratory and foreign workers. Canneries like the Seuferts Cannery (which began operating on the Columbia River in 1886) relied on Chinese labor but by "the 1930s white women, as well as Japanese,

---

[26] Boag, Peter. *Same-sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest*. Los Angles, CA: University of California Press. pg. 17.
[27] Boag, Peter. pg. 19.
[28] Boag, Peter. pg. 17

Mexican, and Filipino workers, began to replace Chinese men."[29] The domestic U.S. migratory and foreign workers created a unique mix of ethnic/racial laborers in the Pacific Northwest.

The Pacific Northwest's economic development became largely dependent on extractive industries, which required a large labor force creating a tremendous population boom.[30] In 1880, the total population of the Pacific Northwest including British Columbia was about 332, 000, but "[f]ifty years later the population was more than ten times that."[31] The population growth was mostly male because female migrants were not readily hired in the backbreaking jobs of the Pacific Northwest. Also, U.S. immigration and miscegenation laws limited the migration of women to the area, especially women of color.

By the 1920s and 1930s, technological advancements such as gasoline powered tractors and saws made the harvesting of timber faster and highly productive, requiring less manpower.[32] Moreover, greater timber production adversely affected the fish cannery business because logging activity harmed streams, ravished spawning sites, and increased water temperatures. Increased timber productivity and excessive fishing (especially of salmon) proved to be devastating to Pacific Northwest canneries. The decline in cannery jobs also contributed to high unemployment levels during the Great Depression. Yet by the late 1930s, "there were voices urging caution, greater care, and stewardship in managing the region's timber wealth" and preserving the salmon

---

[29] Barber, Katrine. *Death of Celilo Falls.* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005. pgs. 45-36.
[30] Barber, Katrine. pg. 31.
[31] Boag, Peter. pg 18
[32] Robbins, William G. *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000.* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2004. pgs. 164-165.

population.[33] To protect the regions natural resources, and provide jobs to the growing population of Washington State an economic shift emerged in the Pacific Northwest. The region and its boosters moved "to increase and broaden its extractive industries, with an emphasis on extending its irrigated lands to provide another 3.5 million acres of new farms."[34] The ultimate goal was to create an economic shift from relying solely on depleting natural resources, to creating an expansion of Washington State's agricultural industry. This financial move was possible because of the regions geography and climate.

The Cascade Mountain Range "splits Washington State lengthwise from North to South across central Washington, and divides the State into two major climatic zones."[35] On the Westside of Washington, the Pacific Ocean brings more precipitation while on the other side of the mountain range a more semi-arid climate exists. Since the weather is different on the Eastside of Washington, the "volcanic soils in this region are generally rich in mineral nutrients and produce exceptional crops." This natural advantage made Washington State an ideal location for agricultural production.[36] However, the agricultural advancement of the region was only possible with extensive development of the regions infrastructure. The construction of the railroad decades earlier, guaranteed farmers were going to be able to transport their crops out of Washington State. Yet, Washington State's agricultural economy depended heavily on various irrigation works, including the Yakima Irrigation Project (1906) and the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project

---

[33] Robbins, William G. pgs. 47 and 148.
[34] Robbins, Williams G. pg. 43.
[35] Maldonado, Marta Maria. "Harvesting the Fruits of Color Blindness: Racial Ideology in Employers' Discourse and the Everyday Production of Racial Inequality in Agricultural Work." Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University, Dec. 2004. pg. 9-10.
[36] Maldonado, Marta Maria. pg. 10.

(1942).[37] The construction of dams on the Columbia and Snake Rivers made these irrigation projects possible, and converted more than "one half million acres of sage covered lands...into one of the richest areas in the nation."[38] Moreover, Washington's Yakima Valley proved to be a ripe agricultural area because of the

> excellent farm products (especially apples), competing railroads, dependable national and international markets (including Seattle, regional mining camps, and Asia), extensive irrigation projects…, enterprising inhabitants (who were 'far above the average intelligence'), and mild weather.[39]

Grower's access to urban centers and global markets created tremendous economic prospects prompting farmers to end subsistence farming, and to begin farming commercially. By 1941, the infrastructure necessary to increase Washington State's agricultural production was more than ready. Between 1940 and 1950, the acreage of hops, asparagus, sugar beets, and mint all grew considerably, with the Yakima Valley as the prime producer.[40]

The agricultural boom and irrigation projects not only benefited the Yakima Valley, but also the Grant, Benton, and Kittitas Counties. After the proper infrastructure, Washington State's hops, asparagus, potatoes, mint, green beans, wheat, and sugar beet industries grew significantly. Initially however, hops, potatoes, asparagus, and sugar beets were the most important labor intensive row crops that supplied many migrants with jobs in the area. These crops were introduced in Washington State during the late

---

[37] Jerry García in "The History of a Chicano/Mexicano Community…" writes that the "Columbia Basin Irrigation Project played the most significant role in bringing Mexicanos/Chicanos..." to Washington State. See García, Jerry. "The History of a Chicano/Mexicano Community in the Pacific Northwest Quincy, Washington 1948-1993." Masters Thesis, Eastern Washington University, Fall 1993. pg. 19.

[38] "Yakima Irrigation Project." Bureau of Reclamation Homepage <http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/projects/washington/yakima/history.html#Yakim> accessed February 2006.

[39] Edwards, Thomas G. "The Yakima County Agricultural Boom of 1905-1911." *Pacific Historical Review* Vol. 56 (August 1987): 76-89. pg. 78.

[40] Gamboa, Erasmo, "Mexican Labor into Washington State: A history, 1940-1950," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 72.3 (July 1981): 121-131. pgs.126-7.

nineteenth century and proved to be successful in the state. For example, hops were introduced to the area around 1860.[41] And early on, the Puyallup Valley became "the center of hop production in the state."[42] However, the success of the hop industry in these areas was short-lived due to insects that plagued the crop. Yet in the Yakima Valley, hop production exceeded the expectations of growers. And by 1890, hops were the central crop in the Yakima Valley. In the 1920s, alcohol prohibition decreased the amount of hops produced but in the 1940s and 1950s, hops once again continued to be a major crop in Washington State. Moreover, Washington State hops also became tied to a global market. U.S. hop growers met the global call for hops which led to the growth of the brewery industry, leading to the international trade of hops. To meet the growing demand for hops, hop production increased greatly in Washington State. For instance in 1940, Washington hop growers produced 27.8 percent of the total amount of hops in U.S, and by 1950, they produced 33.0 percent.[43]

While hops were being introduced into Washington State, sugar beets were also being planted in the state. Sugar beet growers specifically came to the Yakima Valley, where Utah-Idaho Sugar Company "officials saw the region as a 'comer,' and as potentially one of the finest sugar beet regions in the nation."[44] To no surprise, the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company built sites in North Yakima (Union Gap: 1917-1925), Sunnyside (1919-1925) and Toppenish (1919-1925; 1937-1966), Washington.[45] Unfortunately for

---

[41] Yakima Golding Hop Farms. *Illustrated Presentation of Yakima Golding Hop Farms, Dedicated to Consumers of Hops Everywhere*. Yakima, Washington: Republic publishing Co., 1940.
[42] Gamboa, Erasmo. "A History of Chicano People and the Development of Agriculture in the Yakima, Valley, Washington." Master Thesis, Seattle, University of Washington, 1973. pg. 10.
[43] Hollands, Harold F., Edgar B. Murd, and Ben H. Pubols. "Economic Conditions and Problems." Washington State Experimental Station Bulletin No. 414, July 1942. pg. 14.
[44] Arrington, Leonard. J. pg. 118.
[45] Arrington, Leonard J. *Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1966.

the sugar company, all three plants closed in 1925 due to tariffs and a "plant blight which caused severe damage."[46] Nevertheless, the company was determined to capitalize on the fact that sugar beets in Washington had great purity and sugar content. It was not until 1938 that a significant increase in sugar beet production occurred in the state (see table 1).

Table 1: Total amount of bags of sugar produced at the Toppenish factory (Utah-Idaho Sugar Company 1937-1950)

1937	1938	1939	1950
231,161	466,746	642,828	1,184,353

Source: Arrington, Leonard J. Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1966. Appendix B pg. 199.

The production of sugar grew so dramatically that the company reopened its Toppenish factory in 1937, and also another refinery in Moses Lake (1953-1966). Map 2 shows all the locations of the sugar factories in Washington, as well as the factories in near by states. The map also demonstrates the tremendous expansion of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company.

pg. 182-199 Appendix B. The Utah-Idaho Sugar Company later built an operating site in Moses Lake (1953-1966), Washington drawing a migration out of the Yakima Valley into the Columbia Basin. For more on the Chicano experience in the Columbia Basin see: García, Jerry. "The History of a Chicano/Mexicano Community in the Pacific Northwest Quincy, Washington 1948-1993."

[46] Gamboa, Erasmo. "A History of Chicano People and the Development of Agriculture in the Yakima, Valley, Washington." Master Thesis, Seattle, University of Washington, 1973. pg. 14.

Map 2: Location of beet sugar factories owned and operated by Utah-Idaho Sugar Company and it processors, 1891-1966

Source: Arrington, Leonard J. *Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1966. Appendix A, pg. 181.

Asparagus and potatoes were also labor intensive crops that were introduced during the late nineteenth century. These crops required a large workforce, but the demand remained minimal until the 1930s. But by the 1940s and 1950s, asparagus and potato production increased dramatically with asparagus being the central vegetable in the Yakima and Walla Walla County.

The tremendous production of hops, asparagus, potatoes, and sugar beets amplified the need for seasonal laborers which "attracted many migratory workers to the

region."[47] During the 1920s, the sugar beet business pulled labor from different parts of the U.S. into Washington State, by recruiting the earliest Mexican/Mexican American migrant workers from Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho.[48] However, by the 1930s, the majority of migrant workers coming to the Pacific Northwest were from Oklahoma (Okies) and Arkansas (Arkies). These migrants were displaced by an amalgamation of factors including mechanization, dust storms, dearth of rainfall, and the depression, which forced many dispossessed families to migrate to the Pacific Northwest.[49] Yet, the region's agricultural growth required more laborers because by the 1920's and 1930s "increasing urbanization, as well as emergence of other industries, prompted massive white flight away from the hard and poorly remunerated work of the fields."[50] The flight of white farm workers prompted growers to seek a cheap racialized work force. This type of labor referred to by some social scientists as a "segmented labor market or a colonized labor force," was a vital necessity for the rise of the Pacific Northwest's agricultural economy, especially in the Washington State.[51]

Native Americans were one of the first colonized labor forces to toil the land of the region. From 1890 to the 1930s, Native Americans "were the most reliable labor force available" in Washington State.[52] And they were "an important group in the hop

---

[47] Compean, Mario. "Mexican American and Dust Bowl Farmworkers in the Yakima Valley: A History of the Crewport Farm Labor Camp, 1940-1970," in García, Gilberto and Jerry García, eds. *Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest.* Michigan: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005. pg. 154.

[48] Ybarra-Frausto, Tomas. "Report of Toppenish Project." Special Collections, University of Washington. Accession Number 4339, Box Number 1, Folder 15. Also see: Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 128.

[49] See: Compean, Mario. pg. 154 and Foley, Neil. pg. 161.

[50] Maldonado, Martha. pg. 21.

[51] Zamora, Emilio. *The World of the Mexican worker in Texas.* Texas: A&M University Press College Station, 1995. pg. 15.

[52] Gamboa, Erasmo. "A History of Chicano People and the Development of Agriculture in the Yakima, Valley, Washington." Master Thesis. Seattle, University of Washington, 1973. pg. 25.

picking process," and they came from "as far way as Montana and British Colombia" as well as from Washington State reservations.[53] By the 1930s, Marta Maldonado argues that "Native Americans began to be perceived as alcoholics and as problematic and unreliable workers."[54] For example, during 1937 hop harvest, some growers remarked that after "unsatisfactory experiences" they were to "take no steps to secure them (Native Americans) in the future, partly because of the expense of securing them and partly because the Indians lose time attending various 'Pow Wows' which take place during the season."[55] To supplement the work of Native Americans, Asians were recruited to perform the manual labor.

During the time Native Americans labored, a Japanese working class also existed in Washington State. Early Japanese immigrants worked on the railroad and later joined the increasing migrant steam and began to toil in the state's growing agribusiness. However, the Japanese steadily began to own farms and other businesses as opposed to being agricultural workers on White farms. White farmers and citizens became threatened by Asians upward mobility and supported discriminatory laws such as the Anti-Alien Land Law of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924.[56] These laws limited Japanese's ability to own land and immigrate into the U.S, and effectively disenfranchised Japanese farmers. In 1941, to further exacerbate their situation,

---

[53] Reuss, Carl F., Paul H. Landis, and Richard Wakefield. "Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast: With Special Application to Problems of the Yakima Valley, Washington." State of College of Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station. Pullman, Washington. Bulletin 40. 363. August, 1938. pg. 39.
[54] Maldonado, Marta. pg. 22.
[55] Reuss, Carl F., Paul H. Landis, and Richard Wakefield. "Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast: With Special Application to Problems of the Yakima Valley, Washington." State of College of Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station. Pullman, Washington. Bulletin 40. 363. August, 1938. pg. 39.
[56] For more information on U.S. immigration laws and policies see:
Daniels, Roger. Guarding *the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882.* New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2005.

animosity toward Japanese reached a boiling point with the bombing of Pearl Harbor. In April 3rd, 1942, "the *Toppenish Review* and the *Yakima Daily Republic* announced the removal of all Japanese from the Yakima Valley and the transfer of their land to white American farmers."[57] The forced removal of the Japanese and stereotyping of Native Americans required another exploitable workforce to labor in Washington State's agriculture.

By the 1920s, single-male Filipino workers were recruited to continue the expansion of Washington State's agricultural empire. Filipino workers initially were not affected by laws that disenfranchised Japanese and other Asians, but they were excluded "because the Philippines were a U.S. territory following the Spanish-American War in 1898."[58] During this decade, the Filipino population grew steadily. Professor Erasmo Gamboa writes that in the 1920s, "[h]undreds of Filipino laborers were brought into the [Yakima] Valley by labor contractors."[59] However, by the 1930s, a growing hostility against Filipinos developed because they were seen as "disorderly and cause [of] moral and health problems."[60] Additionally, Filipinos were "strongly union-organized by the C.I.O (Congress of Industrial Organization)" and were able to get slightly higher wages, another factor contributing to the rise in violence and resentment toward Filipino workers.[61] Moreover, "the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1935 changed the

---

[57] Maldonado, Marta. pg. 24.
[58] Maldonado, Marta. pg. 26.
[59] Gamboa, Erasmo. "A History of Chicano People and the Development of Agriculture in the Yakima, Valley, Washington." Master Thesis. Seattle, University of Washington, 1973. pg. 33.
[60] Reuss, Carl F., Paul H. Landis, and Richard Wakefield. "Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast: With Special Application to Problems of the Yakima Valley, Washington." State of College of Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station. Pullman, Washington. Bulletin 40. 363. August, 1938. pg. 38.
[61] Reuss, Carl F., Paul H. Landis, and Richard Wakefield. "Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast: With Special Application to Problems of the Yakima Valley, Washington." State of

status of Filipinos from 'nationals' to 'aliens,' and placed an annual quota of fifty on Filipino migration."[62] By 1937, Filipinos were not able to own land because the modification of Washington State's alien land law. As a result, mounting antagonism toward Filipinos in the area and discriminating laws began to exclude their labor by the early 1940s. This decade experienced a grave labor shortage due to World War II (WWII) and once again a different racialized cheap labor force was required. Mexican Americans/Mexicanos, particularly from Texas, were recruited and Mexican contract workers (known as braceros) were imported to the area to replace the previously oppressed workers. However, it is necessary to mention that people of Mexican descent were not a historically new population to the area.

Mexican People in the Pacific Northwest

The Mexican presence in Washington State dates back to the late 1700s, as they built and manned the Spanish ships that came to the Pacific Northwest.[63] While their stay in the region was short lived, in the 1800s, Mexicans once again entered the Pacific Northwest. Erasmo Gamboa writes that "[t]he first Mexican and Mexican American came to Idaho at the start of the 1800s…as single men, trappers, and adventures."[64] However, very little scholarship exists on this population because of the lack of historical evidence. It was not until the mid-1800s, that concrete documentation of the Mexican

---

College of Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station. Pullman, Washington. Bulletin 40. 363. August, 1938. pg. 38.

[62] Maldonado Marta. Pg. 27.

[63] For more information on the early Mexican presence in the Pacific Northwest see:
Cutter, Donald D. *Malaspina and Galiano: Spanish Voyages on the Northwest Coast*. Seattle University: University of Washington Press, 1991; and Gamboa, Erasmo. "Washington's Mexican Heritage; A View Into the Spanish Explorations, 1774-1794," *Columbia* 3 (Fall 1989).

[64] Gamboa, Erasmo. *Voces Hispanas/Hispanic Voices of Idaho: Excepts from the Idaho Hispanic Oral History Project.* Idaho: Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs and Idaho Humanity Council, 1992. pg. 2.

presence in the Pacific Northwest was established as mule packers, fur trappers, and miners.[65] At the turn of the century, Mexican migration to the area increased allowing for the creation of early communities. By the end of the 1920s, an "increasing number of Mexicans worked on the railroad maintenance crews in the region," in places like Pocatello, Idaho.[66] During this time, the labor intensive sugar beet industry "attracted more Mexicans to Oregon and Washington," as well as Idaho and Montana.[67] The Great Depression, however, limited Mexicanos migration into the Pacific Northwest. Yet in the 1940s, Mexican migration into Washington State continued because World War II (1942-1945) and the hop, asparagus, and sugar beet industry brought a substantial amount of Mexican contract workers and Texas Mexicans to the area, soundly making their presence know.

WWII allowed for Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans to enter the Pacific Northwest, in larger numbers than previously recorded. During WWII, their labor became a significant part of Washington State's economy and agricultural production. To provide the much needed manual effort, braceros and Texas Mexicans were recruited to fill the labor vacuum in the Washington State's agriculture industry generated by WWII. Yet even before the U.S. entered WWII, a labor crisis developed in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.[68] The war also created a population shift from rural to urban

---

[65] See: Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Mule Packers and Oregon's Second Regiment Mounted Volunteers, 1855-1856." *Oregon Historical Quarterly*. 92 (Spring 1991): 41-55; and Gamboa, Erasmo. "The Mexican Mule Pack System of Transportation in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia." *Journal of the West*. 29 (January 1990): 16-27.
[66] Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos—4th edition.* California: California State University at Northridge, 2000. pg. 205. To learn more about Mexicans in Pocatello, Idaho see: Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican American Railroaders in an American City: Pocatello, Idaho." *Latinos in Idaho: Celebrando Cultura.* (2000) 35-42.
[67] Acuña, Rodolfo. pg. 205.
[68] Gamboa, Erasmo. *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947*. Austin: University of Texas, 1990. pg. 23.

centers. It was mostly white ethnic migrant farm workers who obtained jobs in wartime industries. The labor shortage was felt throughout the United States, and it threatened the multi-million dollar agricultural economy of the Pacific Northwest, especially Washington's Yakima Valley. Washington State growers had already begun to recruit Texas Mexicans before WWII, but there numbers were not sufficient to meet the increased agricultural production needed to win the war. To supply more laborers, the government was forced to import braceros to work in the fields of the U.S., including the Pacific Northwest.

On April 4th, 1942, the U.S. and Mexico government signed into law the Bracero Program (Public Law-45), a contract labor agreement that allowed braceros to work in the U.S. The program was believed to be necessary because the U.S. government and Southwestern growers feared that there might be a shortage of laborers to pick crops during the war. To quell their worries, between 1942 and 1947, 220, 200 Mexican braceros entered the U.S and approximately 47,000 of these workers were sent to the Pacific Northwest.[69] And while Public Law-45 (PL-45) was to be a temporary wartime relief project set to end in 1947, the program was continued by Public Law 40 (PL-40). The new law stated that U.S. growers were responsible for all transportation costs and had to personally go to Mexico to recruit workers.[70] This meant that the U.S. government was no longer directly involved. Thus, the growers "rather than the federal government [were] responsible for fulfilling the agreements in the contract."[71]

---

[69] Scruggs, Otey M. "Texas and the Bracero Program, 1942-1947." *Pacific Historical Review*. 1963 32(3): 251-264. pg. 251. and Gamboa, Erasmo. "Braceros in the Pacific Northwest: Laborers on the Domestic Front, 1942-1947," *Pacific Historical Review* 56.3 (August 1987): 378-398. pg. 378.
[70] Acuña, Rodolfo. pg. 27.
[71] García, Juan R. pg. 45.

For most Washington State growers, PL-40 became economically unfeasible to continue, because they had to pay all the fees required to bring braceros to Washington State. In fact, the "round-trip expenses per worker to Washington farms amounted to $162.95."[72] The cost was considerable given that most growers employed a large number of workers. U.S. growers in other parts of the country were not as affected by the modified contract, especially those in the Southwest. The cost to import braceros to the Southern U.S. was significantly less. And moreover, Southwestern growers benefited from undocumented Mexican immigration, which was hardly restricted until Operation Wetback in 1954.

In 1947, the Bracero Program ended in the Pacific Northwest because of the high cost to import braceros into the area. However, in the Southwest, the bi-national agreement lasted twenty-two years from 1942 to 1964. During the duration of the program, about 4.5 million workers were imported into the U.S.[73] The majority of braceros were contracted to labor in Texas and California, while a smaller number entered the Pacific Northwest.

Still, economically powerful growers, like the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company in the Washington State had already established a migrant stream of Texas Mexicans, even before the U.S. entered into WWII. And while the sugar beet industry also utilized bracero labor after the war ended, they continued to import Mexican nationals while contracting Texas Mexicans. Other growers in Washington State formed organizations like the Walla Walla Beet Association, the Oregon-Washington Pea Association, the Northwest Growers Association, and the Northwest Agricultural Labor Association to

---

[72] Gamboa, Erasmo. *Mexican Labor and World War II.* pg. 122.
[73] García, Juan R. *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980. pg. 23.

pay for the importation of workers from Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Bahamas. Washington growers also recruited Native Americans from various part of the United States.[74] Moreover, growers in certain counties shifted sooner than others to Texas Mexican labor.

Walla Walla County growers were probably the most reluctant to recruit domestic workers because they preferred foreign laborers. The Walla Walla Union Bulletin blatantly expressed, "Domestic Labor Use Not Satisfactory."[75] R.T. Magleby, manager of the Pea Growers Association and secretary for the Northwest Farmers Association, stated that the majority of the domestic workers were "'bundle of stiffs' and 'winos,' who usually work one shift or half a shift then walk off the job."[76] On the other hand, the Yakima County by the late 1930s had already developed a steady migrant stream of Texas Mexicans. The county's early employment of Texas Mexicans created a faster transition away from foreigner labor. Yet after Washington growers could not afford to continually pay to import foreign workers into the Pacific Northwest, Washington growers opted to almost exclusively recruit Texas Mexicans to work on their farms, promising them high wages, stable work, housing, and expanded job opportunities.

Texas Mexicans were an ideal labor force for Washington State growers and had clear advantages over hiring braceros and other foreigner workers. First, by employing Texas workers Washington State growers avoided "any preconditions of employments."[77] On the other hand, braceros by the 1942 agreement were guaranteed four principles:

> First, Mexican contract workers would not engage in any United Sates military service. Second, Mexicans entering the United States under provisions of the agreement would not be subjected to discriminatory acts of any kind. Third, they would be guaranteed transportation, living

[74] *Walla Walla Union Bulletin.* Sunday, June 19, 1949.
[75] *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*. Sunday, July 20, 1947.
[76] *Walla Walla Union Bulletin.* Sunday, July 20, 1947.
[77] Gamboa, Erasmo. *Mexican Labor and Word War II*. pg. 124.

> expenses, and repatriation along the lines established by Article 29 of the Mexican federal labor laws. Fourth, Mexicans entering the agreement would not be employed either to displace domestics or to reduce their wages.[78]

These four principles served as a general guideline for the Bracero Programs twenty-two year history, but the rules were almost always violated by growers in the Pacific Northwest and Southwest. Yet, by hiring Texas Mexicans, growers did not have to go through the bureaucratic system of contracting braceros and having to obey the principles of the agreement. Second, Texas Mexicans were free wage earners under no contact. Consequently, they were treated and paid as the growers pleased because there was no governmental intervention. Third, these workers were "in plentiful supply in other agricultural areas in the nation."[79] Once Washington State growers recruited and tapped into this workforce, they benefited from this supposed cheap labor. Moreover, the increased mobility of migrants to travel and labor-intensive crops resistant to mechanization facilitated the Texas Mexican Diaspora to Washington State. Texas Mexicans were the first large population of Mexican-descents to establish a permanently settled community in Washington State. Texas Mexicans were recruited before braceros, effectively replace them, and made the long journey from Texas to Washington State. And for the most part, Texas Mexican settled in mainly agricultural areas like Yakima County, but others rooted themselves in urban areas like King County.

There are many reasons why Texas Mexicans migrated and then permanently settled in Washington State. A great number of Texas Mexicans fled Texas attempting to escape the racial discrimination, poverty, and depressed wages caused by Mexican contract labor and undocumented immigration during World War I (1920s), the

[78] García, Juan R. pg. 24.
[79] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 127.

displacement caused by the New Deal (1930s), the Bracero Program (1947-1964), and Operation Wetback (1954). It is then, vitally important to analyze the historical background, political, economic, and societal climate of the sending state of Texas.

The Colonial Empire of Texas

In 1848, the Mexican-American War ended giving the United States control over one third of Mexico's territory. The early pioneers who entered into Texas were the "'GTT's,' as the adventures, pretty speculators, and outlaws who had 'gone to Texas.'"[80] Some of these early settlers learned the Mexican way of living, riding horses, and herding steer. The cattle industry remained scarcely intact by the 1880's, because excess production, overgrazing, drought, and the enclosing of land due to barb wire; all these aspects seriously affected the livestock business. Additionally, Midwesterners by the turn of the century were seeking large lots of farming land, and their invasion created even more problems for cattle ranching. Farming had become possible in the semiarid Southwest because agricultural advancements such as, "dry farming techniques, irrigation systems, and the refrigerated rail car."[81] The economic power of the cattle industry ended in Texas by the early 1900s, and commercial agriculture came to dominate the economy. Texas was no longer run by hacendados and their working vaqueros; instead, these figures were supplanted by commercial growers and migrant workers. The newly developed farm society changed the economy and "increased the demand for Mexican

[80] Montejano, David. pg.15.
[81] Montejano, David. pg.103.

labor," which also significantly transformed the relationship between Mexicans and Anglos.[82]

The agricultural transformation of Texas swept rapidly through the state and became highly dependent on Mexican labor. More importantly, the Mexican worker provided the manpower that initiated the agricultural revolution by constructing the infrastructure that "connected the region to the national market, cleared ranch lands for farming, and dug irrigation canals."[83] Yet, their contribution to the economic growth of Texas went largely overlooked. Instead, what emerged in Texas society was a colonial empire.[84]

The high yielding fertile earth of area had made commercial growers economically wealthy, and they used their financial influence to gain political power. With their economicand political clout, these large commercial growers, while few in number, exercised power far beyond their size. They came to be self-governing and exceedingly individualistic who

> [l]eft pretty much to themselves these men, along with many of the [Rio Grande] Valley residents, had developed their own identity and value system. Included in this scheme of values were contempt for authority exercised by outsiders, a strong resistance to any change that threaten their social and economic status, and the belief that white, English-speaking people were superior to others.[85]

The commercial grower's Euro-centricity and power placed them as colonizers in the colonial empire because the colonial authority simultaneously gained privileges, and

[82] Acuña, Rodolfo. pg. 65.
[83] Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. pg. 129.
[84] Leonard, Olen E. and Lyle Saunders. *The Wetback in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Occasional Papers VII.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951. pgs. 49, 65, 85.
[85] García, Juan R. *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980. pg. 206.

benefited from the oppression of the colonized Mexican worker. One must also recognize that the entire Southwest was a colonized space. The indigenous of people the U.S. Southwest were conquered by the Spanish. Then the Spanish, Mestizo, Mexican, and Indigenous people, were through violence, tyranny, and denigration, subjugated by the United States.[86] As a colonized subject, the Mexican worker in the Southwest, particularly in Texas, was denied his human rights by being historically restrained through violence. The Mexican worker through colonialism was kept in a state of desolation and ignorance that Marx fittingly described as living in a subhuman condition.[87] The Mexican worker as a colonized entity was then completely under-the-thumb of the colonial rule (the commercial grower). This was evidently true, as the commercial growers decided how much to pay, the amount of work he/she labored, whether he/she voted, regulated his/her mobility, and even controlled who his/her engagement in physical contact, there by which manipulating the very intimacies of the Mexican worker.

Ann Laura Stoler in, Haunted by Empire, argues "that matters of the intimate are critical sites for the consolidation of power, that management of those domains provides a strong pulse on how relations of empire are exercised, and that affairs of the intimate are strategic-driven states."[88] By using Stoler's insight, the Mexican worker as a colonized subject becomes more complex as the body also became an exploitation resource used by Southwestern commercial growers, for the U.S.'s imperialist expansion and empire

---

[86] For more on Spanish and United States colonization of the Southwest see:
Chávez-García, Miroslava. *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770's to 1880's*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2004.

[87] Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Expanded Edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991. pg. xxiv.

[88] Stoler, Ann L., ed. *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of intimacy in North American History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006. pg. 4.

building. Therefore, the study of "empire does matter...[i]nsofar as the U.S. transnational mode of hegemony is acknowledged" because it allows people to comprehend the U.S.'s dependence on Mexican laborers and origins of their migration into the U.S, and the Pacific Northwest.[89]

The Creation of the Mexican-working Class in Texas

The commercial farmer's colonial empire greatly influenced the political and economic spheres of Texas, which resulted in very little restrictions against undocumented Mexican immigration. For the most part, Mexican labor moved across the international border without much control until the early twentieth century. And the "economic conquest" of Mexico forced Mexicans to migrate to the U.S. which included the "Porfirian policies, the 1910 revolution, low wages, and surplus population."[90] Gilbert González and Raúl Fernández argue that the aforementioned causes for Mexican migration may be seen as "push factors," while the "pull factors" were the U.S.'s high wages and employment opportunities. They claim this binary must be critiqued to acknowledge that this is a form of forced migration caused by economic conquest. As a result, scholars must consider:

> first, the building of Mexico's railroads by U.S. companies; second, the investment of U.S. capital in mining and smelting; third, the effects of the above modernization projects on Mexico's agriculture; and fourth, the displacement of large segments of Mexico's peasant population as a consequence of the foreign-induced modernization.[91]

---

[89] González, G. Gilbert and Raúl Fernández. "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 71:1 (February 2002): 19-57. pg. 23.
[90] González, G. Gilbert and Raúl Fernández. pg. 26.
[91] González, G. Gilbert and Raúl Fernández. pg. 31.

Therefore, the economic conquest of Mexico created the mass migration of poor Mexicans into the U.S. The displacement of Mexican people greatly benefited the U.S., particularly the Southwest. Undocumented Mexican immigration was necessary because it provide growers with a "cheap" labor force since laborers from Asia and European were restricted from entering the U.S. The Chinese Exclusion Act (1882, 1892, and 1902), the Gentlemen's Agreement (1900 and 1917), and National Origins Act (1921 and 1924), limited Asian and European immigration.[92] As consequence, Mexican immigrants became the new exploitable workforce, and they worked in all sectors of the economy of the U.S. including mines, clearing land, the railroad, and agriculture in the Southwest. But it was the First World War's (1914-1918) labor shortage in the U.S. that created the conditions for Mexican contract labor, which for the first time brought a large number of Mexican immigrants into the agricultural market of the U.S. Neil Foley writes that "to meet the growing demand for agricultural labor, an entire industry of private employment agencies and individual labor agents or contactors developed" to import workers.[93] The contracting of Mexican workers was greatly supported by Southwestern growers as they sought to benefit the most from imported labor. Furthermore, the government pressured by these growers,

> suspended the head tax payment, the literacy test, and the contract labor provision of the immigration laws to allow the importation of Mexican workers to meet the alleged shortages in Texas, Arizona, California. This policy of admitting Mexican laborers without restrictions continued until 1921. During this time 72, 862 Mexicans were allowed to enter the country.[94]

---

[92] Acuña, Rodolfo. pg. 163.

[93] Foley, Neil. *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture.* Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997. pg. 45.

[94] Coalson, George. O. "Mexican Contract Labor in American Agriculture," *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 31.31 (1953):228-238. pg. 229.

The increased Mexican population in the U.S. did not necessarily end with WWI. After this war, an influx of undocumented and legal migration continued to enter the U.S. because the agricultural growth offered more job opportunities. During this time, Texas growers shifted from small to medium family-size owned farming to large scale commercial farming. Commercial farming made a handful of growers economically wealthy and financially influential in the political arena of Texas. With their economicand political power, large commercial growers while few in number exercised power far beyond their size. Also, by the 1920s, the agricultural economy assumed a uniquely migratory nature. As migrant streams developed, landless workers along with their families now "followed the seasons of cotton, fruit, and vegetable crop on a year-long search for work at wages as low as a $1.50 a day."[95]

The migrant stream of agriculture attracted vast numbers of Mexican immigrant laborers to Texas. From 1921 to 1930, an average of 460,000 legal Mexicans and 900,000 without proper documentation entered into the U.S., with a great majority coming to Texas.[96] The government attempted to curve undocumented Mexican immigration but the power of the commercial growers whose colonial empire influenced representatives in Congress, effectively kept the wave of undocumented Mexican labor free flowing. However, in 1924, pressured by public opinion the government founded the Border Patrol in an attempt to monitor undocumented Mexican immigration. But "[i]nterestingly enough the targets of this action were not the Mexicans, but the

[95] Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005. pg. 131.

[96] Figures for Mexican undocumented immigration from Ngai, Mae M. pg. 131, and figures for legal from Coalson, George pg. 229.

Europeans and the Asians who were entering the United States via Mexico."[97] Since Mexicans were not being targeted, undocumented Mexican immigration to Texas continued largely unabated through the 1920's. However, as more undocumented Mexican laborers entered the U.S. an unfavorable attitude toward Mexicans developed.

In the next decade, the Great Depression ended the mass migration of Mexicans and caused the repatriation of over 400,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans. [98] However, this does not suggest that no Mexicans labored in the Southwest, but the number was significantly smaller. With the deportation of Mexicans, Texas growers hired domestic Mexican and Anglo laborers to fulfill the high number of agricultural jobs left vacant. But in the early 1940s, as the U.S. prepared to defend the nation, farm workers again left the farms to work in higher paid war industries. Once the U.S. entered World War II, a massive shortage of agricultural workers occurred prompting the creation of the Bracero Program (1942-1964). The labor program in Texas was initially blacklisted from 1943 to 1947, because of "its preference for hiring 'illegals,' its early and blatant violation of bracero contracts, and its discriminatory practices against people of Mexican descent."[99] Texas growers and their colonial empire at first "boycotted the program in 1942," but in 1943 they requested laborers reluctantly.[100] By 1947, the Mexican government allowed Texas growers to contract braceros, but they continued to hire undocumented workers undermining the Mexican government. In effect, the

[97] García, Juan R. pg. 107.
[98] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 135.
[99] García, Juan R. pg. 40.
[100] Cavazos, Sylvia. "The Disposable Mexican: Operation Wetback 1954, The Deportation of Undocumented Workers in California and Texas." Masters Thesis, University of Texas-Pan American, August 1997. pg. 18.

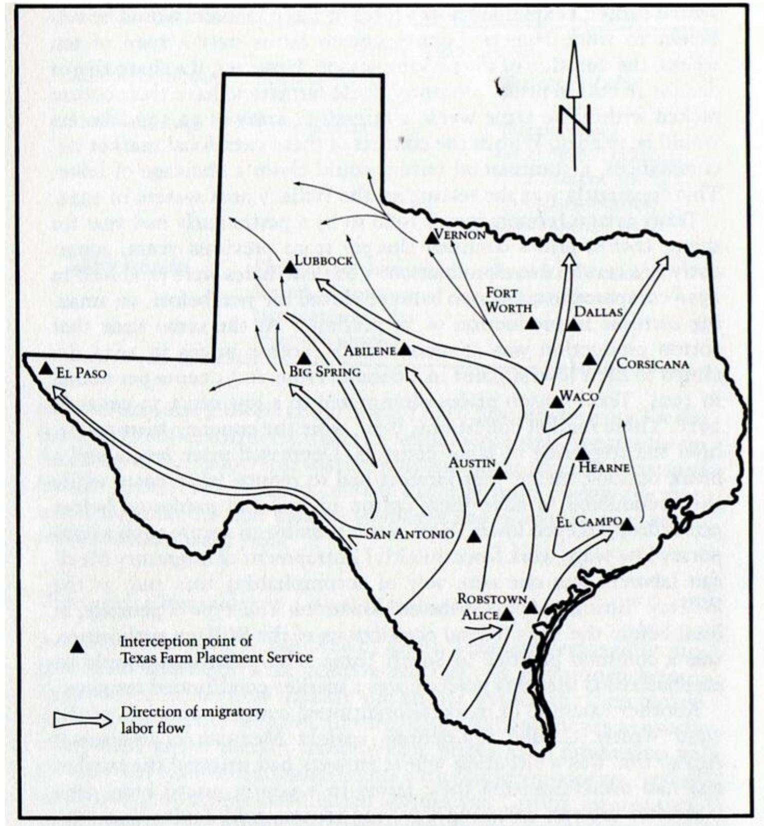
Bracero Program created the dramatic increase of undocumented Mexican workers to the Southwest, especially in Texas.

By 1954, growing public concern of undocumented immigration caused the development of Operation Wetback, a quasi-military move to reduce the undocumented population in Texas. The program was considered a success, as it deported more than one million undocumented workers. However, it was only a short-term solution to the problem created by the U.S. government. Braceros continued to be contracted in Texas, and undocumented workers (the preferred workers in state) continued to be hired readily.[101] The economic conquest of Mexico, the agricultural expansion of Texas, the restriction of Southern European and Asian immigration, private employment agencies and individual labor agents, relaxed immigration policy toward Mexicans, and the Bracero Program all contributed to the formation of Texas' Mexican working class society. Yet, the Mexican proletariats under the colonial rule of Texas growers were exploited socially, economically, and politically, forcing them to migrant internally in the U.S.

Texas Mexicans began migrating within and out of Texas as early as the 1920s. By the next decade, the blatant discrimination as well as the lack of social, economic, and political change in Texas had reached a breaking point creating a flight of Mexican workers, expediting the Diaspora of Texas Mexicans. Texas Mexicans in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas were the most effected and thus became the largest group to migrate within Texas. Map 3 shows the different locations Texas Mexicans in the Rio Grande Valley fled to, as a result of the socio-economic conditions in the Valley.

[101] García, Juan R. pg. 44.

Map 3: Migrant labor patterns, 1939 (based on Texas State Employment Service, Annual Report of the Farm Placement Service, 1939)



Source: Montejano, David. *Anglos and Mexicans: in the making of Texas 1836-1986.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987. pg. 216.

The forced internal migration generated a labor shortage in Texas because by the 1930s, "over 66,000 Texas Mexicans were leaving the state annually to find work."[102] To further aggravate their migration, the onset of World War II, threaten once again to displace domestic Mexican from Texas. Texas Mexicans were forced to migrate to other states and undocumented Mexicans who resided in Texas also left. The migration out of Texas created a greater influx of undocumented Mexicans and braceros, sufficing the grower's demands. Thus, Texas developed to be an ideal location for Washington growers to extract labor from. The conditions were perfect, an abundant and "cheap"

[102]Montejano, David. pg. 217.

labor forces existed (which continued to grow), they were tractable laborers continuously migrating throughout the U.S., and they performed stoop labor (the type of labor most required in Washington). All Washington growers needed was the proper incentives to lure migrant workers to the area.

Recruitment: From Bracero to Texas Mexican Labor

Goodbye State of Texas
with all you fields,
I have your land
so I won't have to pick cotton.
"El corrido de Texas-recorded in San Antonio 1929" [103]

As early as the 1920s, "[l]arge sugar beet groups and companies in California, Michigan, and Colorado began recruiting Mexican labor in San Antonio and several border towns."[104] Recruiters also began to contract Texas Mexicans mostly out of the Rio Grande Valley to West Texas to pick cotton. The cotton industry was very significant in the 1920s because it extracted labor out of Texas with higher wages. For example, a Texas cotton worker "received a daily wage of $1.75. In Arizona the Mexican cotton picker received $2.75; in California, $3.25; in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, $4.00."[105] The wage differentials by state, clearly demonstrates that Mexican workers had the power to market their labor to the highest bidder by becoming migrant workers. However, the opportunity to gain better wages rested on their ability to travel. To restrict their mobility, Texas growers utilized labor coercion, vagrancy laws, false labor contractors, and debt to immobilize migrate Texas Mexican workers. These factors did not prevent Mexicans from exercising their lawful privilege to market their labor. In fact,

[103] Quoted in Montejano, David. pg. 218.
[104] Foley, Douglas. pg. 84.
[105] Montejano, David. pg. 199.

Mexican workers opted to leave Texas and find jobs outside of the state, or in urban Texas cities.

By the 1930s and 1940s, Texas Mexicans began to be recruited in states, like Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Washington State. During the 1930s, a significantly smaller population of Texas Mexicans came to Washington State than in the 1940s. Some early Texas migrant families were the Garza-Moreno and Sánchez-Rodríguez, who came to the Washington's Yakima Valley during the late 1930s.

Ambrosio González Moreno was born in Mexico on December 7, 1902. At the early age of 12, in 1914, he received a green card and was admitted into United States. Moreno traveled alone leaving his family to work on the railroad industry. On August 30, 1934, he married Herminia Sarabina Garza in Austin, Texas. By the late 1930s, they started migrating to the Yakima Valley from Georgetown, Texas. Once they returned to Texas, they began telling their brothers and sisters. They encouraged their relatives and friends to migrate to the Yakima Valley. As 1942 came and the U.S. became involved in WWII, the Garza-Moreno family settled permanently in the towns between Wapato and Toppenish, Washington. They settled with eight other families that had come with them to Washington State, including the family of State Representative Phyllis Guitérrez-Kenny. In Washington, the Moreno-Garza family worked growing their own agricultural products, but sold their equipment and invested in buying trucks. They became truck drivers and transported a variety of goods including green beans, potatoes, hops, and sugar beets. Unfortunately, Ambrosio passed away in 1967 and Herminia the following

year.[106] Yet, they left behind a family legacy in Washington State that is now in their 5th generation. The Sánchez-Rodríguez family was another family with a long presence in Washington State.

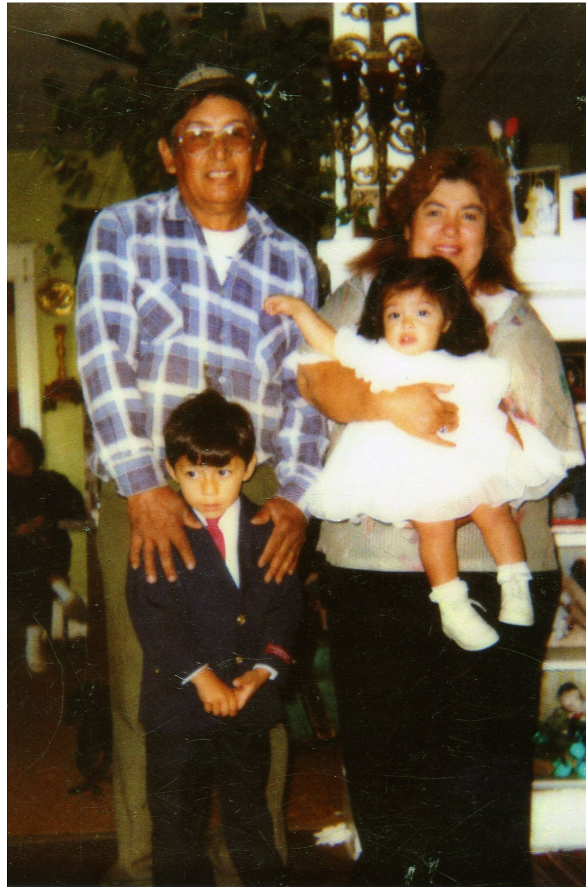
Augustina Garza Rodríguez was born in Edinburg, Texas on March 12, 1937. She recalled that, in 1941, her mother Luisa Garza Sánchez (born in Progresso, Texas, on July 9, 1908) and stepfather Vicente Sánchez had permanently relocated the family by train to Satus, Washington. During the late 1930s, Don Sánchez had come to Washington State and received year-round employment working at the Ritchie Ball Hop Farm. She explained that the farm was associated with the Yakima Chief Farms, one of the largest hop farms in Washington State. Rodríguez was not exactly sure how her stepfather heard of Washington State, but thought the Galavisa family had encouraged him to come to the area. Rodríguez remembered the Galavisa family was already established before they settled in 1941. She recalled the farm provided workers with homes and a store where they could purchase food. In the spring and summer, the family worked planting and weeding the hop fields and when the fall came around, they harvested the hops. As for the winter, Rodríguez's stepfather was in charge of making the stakes that were planted into the ground, which held the string in place, where the hop vine grew on. Busy throughout the year, the family hardly left the farm except on a few occasions when they went to Toppenish, to purchase additional necessities. In terms of the workers present, she recalled that initially the majority of the workers were Native American. She noticed that as soon as more Texas Mexicans began to settle, she started to see fewer Native Americans in the fields. Rodríguez also attended school in Granger

[106] The history of the Moreno-Garza was written by Jessie Garza, Jr., a Director for the Yakima School District. See: *El Sol de Yakima*. June 26, 2006; *El Sol de Yakima*. July 13, 2006; and *El Sol de Yakima*. July 27, 2006.

and Toppenish but only to the third grade. However, she dropped out to help her mother take care of her younger brothers and sisters. She also worked on the hops at times when men, after a long night of drinking, could not make it to the hop fields. When this occurred, she got on the back of the flatbed trucks that took them to the fields, and worked picking hops. After working for many years at the hop farm, the family moved to Sunnyside and worked in the sugar beets. In 1953, she left to Texas and got married but returned to Washington with her husband, Carlos Rodríguez, to labor once again in Washington State. When I asked why she came back to Washington, she said that all her family was in Washington.[107]

[107] Augustina Rodríguez, interviewed by author, March 18, 2007, Grandview, Washington.

Figure 1: *Padrinos* (Godparents) Carlos and Augustina Rodríguez with author and sister (1990)

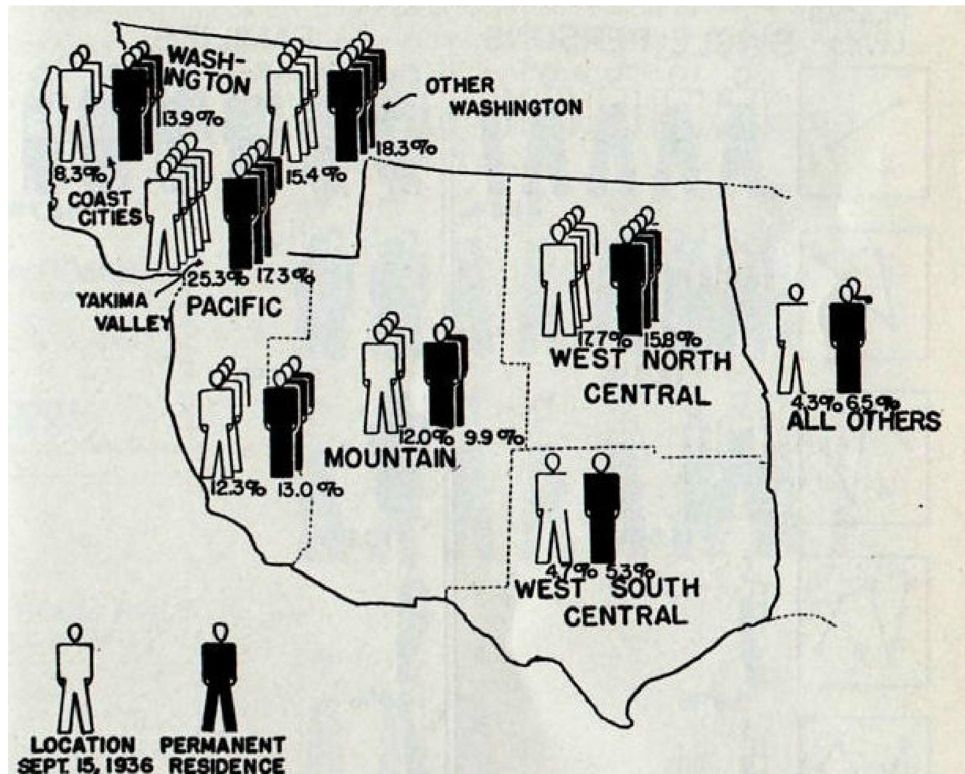


Source: Author's collection

The stories of the Garza-Moreno and Sánchez-Rodríguez families are important for many reasons. Their narratives confirm that Texas Mexicans settled in Washington State before WWII started. Therefore, Texas Mexicans are not a post-1947 phenomenon. They also show that women were an important part of the labor force. Moreover, these stories reveal that hops were an important agricultural industry which employed the earliest Texas Mexicans in Washington State, during the 1930s. Map 4 illustrates that 5.3 percent of hop pickers lived permanently near the Texas region, but migrated to Washington's Yakima Valley to harvest hops. While this map does not examine the

ethnicity or race of the hop pickers, it is possible that many were of Mexican origin. Since oral interviews attest to their presence, in the hop fields of the Yakima Valley.

Map 4: Percentage of Washington State hop pickers from out of state as well as within (1936 & 1937)



Source: Adapted from Reuss, Carl F., Paul H. Landis, and Richard Wakefield. "Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast: With Special Application to Problems of the Yakima Valley, Washington." State of College of Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station. Pullman, Washington. Bulletin 40. 363. August, 1938. pg. 33.

Additionally, the narratives reveal that Texas Mexicans were using their own social networks to recruit their relatives and extended family members, to come to Washington State. Therefore, I can argue that braceros and Texas Mexicans worked side-by-side in the fields of Washington State. For example, during the 1944 harvest of asparagus in Walla Walla County, the Blue Mountain Canneries "had brought in 100

domestic Mexicans" to pick asparagus.[108] Yet, the company still expected braceros arrive. During WWII, "domestic Mexicans" were a safety valve for growers, to make sure all their crops were harvested in time while braceros were transported to the region.

War industries also hired Tejanos like José Castañeda from Crystal City, Texas.[109] In 1944, Castañeda was contracted by a shipbuilding company in Vancouver, Washington. However, he did not return to Vancouver, but migrated in 1946 with his family to labor in agriculture. The Castañeda's permanently settled in Toppenish, Washington. The move away from the war industries was probably because only adults were hired, where as on a farm children were allowed to work. Therefore, all members contributed to the income of the family.

Additionally, the military in Washington State also recruited Texas Mexicans. Texas Mexicans and other Mexican Americans were stationed at Fort Lawton, Seattle, WA (King County); "Fort Lewis in Tacoma, WA (Pierce County); Fort Lansen in Moses Lake, WA; Ephrata Air Terminal in Ephrata, WA; and Fairchild Air Base outside of Spokane, WA (Spokane County)."[110] After being stationed in Washington State, GIs encouraged their family members to come to the area.

Still, the majority of Texas Mexicans were recruited by Washington's growing agriculture. To entice Texas Mexicans to come to the area, recruiters "described the Northwest as a utopia."[111] Washington recruiters offered workers better wages, steady work, available housing, credit, advice on "how to acquire ration stamps, proper license

---

[108] Washington Extension Service. Emergency Farm Labor Reports, 1944 Vol. 5. Box #14, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.
[109] See: Castañeda, Antonia I. "Que Se Pudieran Defender (So You Could Defend Yourselves): Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 22.3 (2001): 116-142.
[110] Maldonado, Carlos. "Mexicanos in Spokane, 1930-1992." *Revista Apple.* 3.1-2 (Spring 1992). pg. 120-121.
[111] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 128.

plates for vehicles, gasoline…tires," and explained that Washington growers were "generous toward Mexicans."[112] Basically, the recruiters attempted to eliminate any impediments that might prevent a laborer from coming to Washington State. To no surprise, the recruitment of Mexican American and Mexicanos from Texas was very successful. Nevertheless, the workers motivation to leave Texas was prompted by the dreadful living and working conditions in Texas. Emigration was one way Texas Mexicans attempted to flee Texas society but there "were, of course, other responses-abortive strikes, attempts to political organization, instances of violence," but out of Texas migration was the prevailing reaction.[113] The laborers who left Texas and entered Washington State mainly performed stoop labor in the area, harvesting asparagus, hops, potatoes, green beans, mint, and sugar beets. These crops were resistance to mechanization and labor intensive.

As the Bracero Program ended in 1947, Washington growers began to prepare for the recruitment of domestic migrants. Even before the program ended, Pacific Northwest growers realized that they needed to rely more on migrant labor "because of the absence of prisoners of war and the reduction in importation of Mexican nationals."[114] To aid growers, the state government utilized the Washington State Extension Service. A branch of the extension service was the Emergency Farm Labor Service which created the Women's Land Army and the Victory Farm Volunteer Program.[115] The Women's Land Army was composed of mostly housewives who harvested all types of crops. Some

[112] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 128.
[113] Montejano, David. pg. 218.
[114] *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*. Sunday February 2, 1947.
[115] See: Annual Narrative Report of Emergency Farm Labor Program. State of Washington, 1945. Agricultural Extension Service. Box #15, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.

women, especially teachers, were in charge of youth farm laborers. These youth were contracted by the Victory Farm Volunteer Program. Both programs were intended to supply Washington growers with an adequate labor force, but they were also created to instill a "patriotic desire for every able-bodied citizen in the State to work for his country."[116] While these programs were to extent certain successful, the agricultural production and acreage of Washington was expanding extremely fast. The Emergency Farm Labor Specialist soon realized that after the Bracero Program ended, there was not going to be enough domestic workers to supply growers with an ample workforce. The labor specialists urged growers to recruit domestic workers. Some growers took the advice and "sent buses to Spokane, [Washington], Seattle, [Washington], or Portland [Oregon] during harvest times to recruit workers, not only for picking, but also packing, sorting, and grading the fruit."[117] The growers encouraged domestic workers to take the jobs by providing them with kitchens and served meals. However, even though the buses returned to the farms full, "many of the transient workers were alcoholics who couldn't handle the demand of work, and often the buses were almost as full on their trip to the cities as they had been on their trips to orchard country."[118] Therefore, the labor shortage after the war could not be solved by hiring domestic workers or by programs under the Emergency Farm Labor Service, so a national recruitment effort was required.

Since Washington growers relied a great deal upon bracero labor, they were initially reluctant to actively recruit Texas Mexicans. However, the Emergency Farm

---

[116] Annual Narrative Report of Emergency Farm Labor Program. State of Washington, 1945. Agricultural Extension Service. Box #15, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.
[117] "Migrant Workers in Washington State: A Boon to the Tree Fruit Industry." < http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/SCORE/mice/migartcl.html> accessed February 2006.
[118] "Migrant Workers in Washington State: A Boon to the Tree Fruit Industry."

Labor Service had already begun scouting Texas as early as 1946, and sent Emergency Farm Labor Specialist Walter E. Zuger to College Station, Texas to learn about the undocumented Mexicans crossing the border in Texas. He was told that about "60,000 Mexicans migrate each year with about 45,000 of them leaving the State of Texas." He stated in his report that Mexicans "apparently worked quite satisfactory," and he hoped that some "Northern farmers will take so much advantage of [these] Mexican workers."[119] Zuger encouraged Texas growers to begin the recruitment of undocumented Mexicanos and Texas Mexicans. After 1947, the Emergency Farm Labor Specialists made it absolutely clear that Washington State growers needed to begin to recruited agricultural workers, especially from Texas. Washington counties like Yakima had by 1947 already established a steady and growing stream of Texas Mexicans, and continued to recruit more Texas Mexicans. However, other counties in particular Walla Walla initially refused to accept the recommendation of the farm specialists.

On February 21 through 22, 1947, farm specialist Zuger "advised [Walla Walla growers] that they make every opportunity to contact Texas Mexicans as their first source of supply, and let the Extension Service remain in the background making up the extra workers needs from the Mexican nationals."[120] Zuger's recommendation was never followed through because on May 2, 1947, farm specialist Robert H. Pelley once again warned the Walla Walla growers. He stated in his report that

> we (the Emergency Farm Labor Service) have strongly advised both the [Walla Walla] pea growers and beet growers to make every effort to set up housing from domestic workers and that it would be advisable for them to look into the recruitment of Texas Mexicans for the season. To this date,

[119] Washington State Extension Service, Annual Reports. Emergency Farm Labor Specialist, 1946. Box#16, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.
[120] Washington Extension Service. Specialist Report, 1947. Vol 3. Box#17, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.

> the beet growers have done absolutely nothing. When reminded of this…but they still hope there would be sufficient Mexican nationals to do the job for them.[121]

For the 1947 season, sugar beet and pea growers in Walla Walla refused to use domestic and Texas Mexican labor because they were "reluctant to place their entire faith in the domestic since they are free agents and can come and go as they please."[122] From 1947 to the early 1960s, Walla Walla growers recruited foreign workers, domestic laborers, and Texas Mexicans. For example, in 1947, the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* stated, "[t]here are quite a number of domestic and Texas Mexicans in the area at present [time] and these[sic] are easily mistaken for Mexican nationals…These workers will do mostly stoop labor in the Walla Walla and Dayton area."[123] After 1947, the newspaper reported that Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Bermudan workers were imported into Walla Walla County. However, once the cost of transporting these foreign workers became a burden on the growers. They began to recruit mostly Texas Mexicans. Yet, Walla Wall growers also recruited Mexicans Americans from Southern California, Arizona, and New Mexico as well as Native Americans (Chippewa, Cree, Umatilla, and Yakima).[124]

Texas Mexicans were recruited to come to Washington State by a variety of ways. The first form was through advertising campaigns. Washington State growers broadcasted their need for labor in public announcements in "Spanish-language radio programs, published in newspapers, and posted in public places like dance halls and

[121] Washington Extension Service. Specialist Report, 1947. Vol 3. Box#17, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.
[122] Washington Extension Service. Specialist Report, 1947. Vol 3. Box#17, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.
[123] *Walla Wallla Union-Bulletin*. Sunday April, 5, 1947.
[124] *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin.* Sunday April 11, 1948; and *Walla Walla Union Bulletin.* Sunday May 17, 1948.

stores in Texas and California."[125] For example, Rodolfo Rentón Macías, a Tejano, who settled in West Seattle in 1946, remembered he used to read newspapers advertisements in Laredo, Texas wanting people to go to Seattle. He stated, "in the *Laredo Times* they used to have on the ads…[about] needing people here in Seattle, Washington. Shipyards and Boeing…everybody needed people from outside because they didn't have enough people here in Seattle to do the jobs."[126] His testimony explains that Texas Mexicans through this recruitment form were hearing about Washington State.

A more successful method was to send representatives or contractors, to recruit laborers for Washington State growers in Texas. There were two types of labor contractors, a formal and informal contractor. A formal contractor was a representative of a large agricultural company (like Del Monte) appointed to represent the business and hire laborers on the spot. A contract was usually established for the laborer to work for a certain amount of time, and transportation from Texas to Washington State was provided if necessary. At times, formal contractors provided Texas Mexicans with money in advance to pay for food and other necessities along the trip. The loaned money was often suspended if the worker completed the contract. Tomás Villanueva's testimony reveals how he was recruited by this method but only later realized of this kind of contract.

Villanueva was born in Monterey, Nuevo Leon Mexico on December 21, 1941. His father was Celestino Tristian Villanueva a mason, and his mother Eva Ayala a homemaker. His mother spoke no English albeit she was born in the U.S. because during the 1930s she was repatriated back to Mexico. It was not until September 1955, that the

[125] Gamboa, Erasmo. Mexican Migration to Washington State. pg. 127.
[126] Rodolfo Renton Macías, interviewed by author, March 10, 2007, West Seattle, Washington.

Villanueva family had enough resources to immigrate to the U.S. In 1956, a contactor took them to Ohio to work in the sugar beets, but on

> March of the following year (1957), the contractor said he wanted for us to come over this time to Washington, to work in the asparagus. The commitment was to work for three years, straight with him. So we drove over to the State of Washington. He loaned us, fifty dollars for the gas, I didn't know until later that the company, which they used to call it Cal-Pac, the California Packing Company, which is now Del Monte, they used to give thirty dollars per worker for travel expenses to come over. And if you finished half the season, you didn't owe anything. [But] if you finished the season, they gave you another thirty dollars per person so you can go back to Texas. But the contractor never told us. He just loaned us fifty dollars, which was deducted from our first pay check. There were five workers in just our family to work. We should have received one hundred and fifty dollars to travel to Washington and another one hundred and fifty to return to Texas, but as I mentioned the contractor kept all the travel money.[127]

Villanueva's testimony reveals that while a legitimate labor contract was created, he was not aware that an informal contractor had negotiated the agreement. Therefore, the money that was supposed to be given to the Villanueva's was actually stolen by the informal contractor. Thus, the informal contractor operated like an independent recruiter who brought Texas Mexicans to the grower, sometimes without any guarantee of an available job. The recruited workers never established a legally biding contract but it was more verbal. This form of labor contracting was risky because informal contractors at times promised work, but lied to economically exploit them. For instance, Irene Castañeda who came with her family to Washington in 1946, from Texas remembered:

> [w]e heard the tale of Washington-that there was lots of money, that they paid real well, and we thought about coming to Washington. We didn't have a car to travel in, and this man, a *contratista* [labor contractor] used to contract people, and we came with him. We didn't have much money; we paid him $25 for us and $15 for the five children. This was the first time we had traveled. This man said he had housing and everything for

[127] Tomas A. Villanueva, interviewed by Anne O'Neill and Sharon Walker, April 1l, 2003 and June 7, 2003, Toppenish, Washington.

> the people, but it wasn't true…He didn't have housing-nothing-all lies he told us. He finally found some old shacks, all full of knotholes, in Brownstown-about 20 miles outside of Toppenish-and he placed all the people in tents. It was bitterly cold, with stoves and wet wood.

The informal contactor, who brought the Castañedas to Washington State, is a prime example of how Texas Mexicans were subject to the abuse of contactors. The contactor had the ability to control the movement of people. Therefore, they became dependent on the contractor to find employment. However, it should be made clear that not all informal contactors were bad. There were some contratistas like Julian Ruiz who wanted to make sure his workers had secure jobs.

Julían Ruiz was born in Asherton, Texas, and he worked as a contractor bringing Tejano families from Asherton, Texas to Oregon. He states that he did want to "misinform people about coming from Texas to work in Oregon."[128] By reading his oral history, one can get a sense that he truly wanted to help his fellow workers. However, his testimony presents contactors as if they were on the side of the farm worker, completely opposite from the Castañeda experience in dealing with contractors. In testimonies, informal contractors are ambiguous figures. Many migrants "saw contratistas as Mexicanos who turned on their own kind and became rich off the sweat of La Raza."[129] Others saw the contratista, as an individual who gave them an opportunity to leave their economically poor situation in Texas. And at times, the contractor was to "pretend to hate the boss for the workers, and to hate the workers for the boss."[130] Therefore, the informal contactor existed as both good and bad individual.

---

[128] Maldonado, Carlos. "Testimonio de un Tejano en Oregon: Contrastista Julian Ruiz," in García, Gilberto and Jerry García, eds. *Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest.* Michigan: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005. pg. 221.
[129] Foley, Douglas. pg. 86.
[130] Foley, Douglas. pg. 86.

The last and most successful form of recruitment was through kin and family networks. *Compadrazgo* also was an important cultural tie that linked families together and also acted as a social web, connecting Washington families to Texas. The majority of Texas Mexicans, who came to the area, knew a relative or a friend who had gone to or was living in Washington State. Rodolfo Rentón Macías was one of many Texas Mexicans who was recruited by family already residing in Washington State.

Rodolfo Rentón Macías was born in Laredo, Texas in 1924. He learned about Washington State through his older brother, Nicolás Macías, who was stationed at Fort Lawton, in Seattle, Washington. Nicolás' twin brother Napoleón Macías was also in the army but stationed in Oregon. His brother Nicolás convinced him to spend a few weeks in Seattle. Macías agreed. He took the train to Seattle and planed to spend a quick vacation in the area. Once in Seattle, he noticed the beautiful waterfront scenery and appreciated the cool weather. In Seattle, he was told of the numerous jobs available in city, which he had already read about in the *Laredo Times*. In less than one week, Macías was hired at Bethlehem Steel. He loved his job, the weather, and Seattle so much that he ended up staying in Washington. Macías remembered seeing very little Spanish-speaking people during his early years in Seattle, but remarked that eventually more began to settle and they formed a Latino club. The club was a social organization formed by the growing number of Spanish-speaking families in Seattle. Macías went on to retired from Bethlehem Steel after working over 44 years with the company.[131]

---

[131] Rodolfo Renton Macías, interviewed by author, March 10, 2007, West Seattle, Washington.

Figure 2: Rodolfo and Christine Macías at their home in West Seattle, Washington (2007)

Source: Author's collection

Macías' testimony demonstrates how social networks connected Mexicans/Mexican Americans, in Texas and Washington State. In Macías' case, his brother was the main reason why he traveled to the state, because his was stationed in Seattle. The military then, was another important factor that influenced the migration of Texas Mexicans to Washington State.[132] His story is also relevant because it explains that Texas Mexicans also established themselves in urban centers. In places like Seattle, Texas Mexicans did not work in agriculture but were employed in industrial jobs. Moreover, "Seattle ranked as one of the top three sites in war contracts per capita, and Washington State ranked as one of the top two states for war contracts per capita."[133] Therefore, it was no problem from Don Macías to acquire a job in Seattle. With a good

[132] To read more about how Mexican GIs were brought to Washington State read: Maldonado, Carlos. "Mexicanos in Spokane, 1930-1992." *Revista Apple.* 3.1-2 (Spring 1992).
[133] "Park History: Military Base Reuse in Seattle." Seattle Parks and Recreation Homepage. <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/history/military.htm> accessed March 2007.

paying job and family in Seattle, he established himself in Washington State and helped to create "a Mexicano community uniquely different than Mexicano communities in Washington State's Yakima Valley, where a trend of Mexicanization--significant influx of Mexican nationals—[was] quite evident."[134] The delayed development of Mexicano/Chicano communities in urban areas had to do with the fact that most Texas Mexicans, who came to Washington, were mainly agricultural workers.

In essence, the recruitment of Texas Mexicans was not solely done by the agricultural industry in Washington, but social networks, the military, and war-time industries also played an important role in recruiting Texas Mexicans. Once they were recruited, Texas Mexicans had to migrate either by automobile or train, to one of the most northernmost part of the U.S. Bags packed and trucks loaded, Texas Mexicans fled to Washington State after being promised better jobs and higher wages.

[134] Maldonado, Carlos. "Mexicanos in Spokane, 1930-1992." *Revista Apple.* 3.1-2 (Spring 1992). pg. 121.

CHAPTER TWO

"Vamonos Pa'l Norte:"Texas Mexican Migration

The forced internal migration of Texas Mexicans to a distant place like Washington State was a major decision, especially if they had children. The long trip from Texas to *el norte* was daunting for families because accidents, illnesses, and other unexpected troubles occurred on the road. In spite of the unforeseen future, families took to the road as a tactical form of survival to escape their living conditions in Texas. Such is the story of Antonia Castañeda's parents, José and Irene Castañeda, who in the 1946 were forced to migrate out of Texas.

Irene Castañeda was born in Texas and raised there. Her husband José was a "Tejano whose family roots in the South Texas dated to the early eighteenth century."[135] However, after their living situation in Texas worsened the Castañeda's told their children "*[a]ndale, subete, ya nos vamos pa'l norte*."[136] The phrase "vamos pa'l norte" (were going north) must have been common due to the large number of Texas families who began migrating to Washington State. Yet, *el norte* was not only the State of Washington but for some families "el norte could be anywhere from Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, to Colorado, California, Montana, [and] Idaho."[137] For the Castañeda's, their sojourn to *el norte* began "with five other families from the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas to the Yakima Valley of eastern Washington in the Pacific Northwest." The traveling communities migrants formed were a vital part

---

[135] Castañeda, Antonia. pg. 127.
[136] Castañeda, Antonia. pg. 127.
[137] Castañeda, Antonia. pg. 134.

to the success of live on the road, because as another Tejano explained "nobody got left behind…because we all helped each other."[138]

Before examining the internal migration of Texas Mexicans, it is important to analyze how this way-of-life developed. In others words, what were the social, political, and economic factors affecting both Texas and Washington State that created this migratory lifestyle. One can argue that regional histories do not develop in a vacuum but are continent upon each other. Additionally, linking regional histories allow scholars to distort regional boundaries. In reading history this way, Antonia Castañeda argues regional histories are rethought and challenged to create a less fragmented history of Chicano/as in the U.S., especially Chicanas.[139]

In Washington, the expanding agricultural economy, informal and formal contractors, better wages, and more job prospects were aspects that reinforced and perpetuated the internal migration of Texas Mexicans. But it was various factors in Texas, which created the internal migration of Texas Mexicans. Mexican Americans, legal U.S. Mexican residents, and undocumented Mexicanos in Texas, were being pushed to migrate to Washington for several reasons including: racial discrimination, Mexican contract labor and undocumented immigration during World War I (1920s), the New Deal (1930s), the Bracero Program in Texas (1947-1964), Operation Wetback (1954), and low wages caused by the influx of braceros and undocumented Mexicans in Texas. The aforementioned factors will be further examined in the following section.

Legacy of Racial Discrimination in Texas

---

[138] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author, February 3, 2007, Brownstown, Washington.
[139] See: Castañeda, Antonia I. "Que Se Pudieran Defender (So You Could Defend Yourselves): Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 22.3 (2001):116-142.

The racial intolerance toward Texas Mexicans began before Texas became in a state in 1845. After the colonial system of Texas developed, racism against Mexicanos increased because agricultural development dramatically boosted the migration of Mexicans into Texas. Moreover, the colonial economy favored the migration of Mexican laborers as it reduced the cost of labor.[140] Once Mexicans entered Texas, they become colonized laborers who were exploitable, accessible, and supposedly "accustomed to harsher working conditions in Mexico and demanded less of their employers in the United States."[141] However, ethnocentric and prejudice politicians, teachers, and worried citizens "warned that Mexicans were the cause of political corruption and fraud, the destruction of homogenous rural communities, labor problems, crime, and disease, among other social problems."[142] Also, poor Anglo workers "in the rural areas and insecure unionized and non-unionized worker in cities" felt threatened by Mexican immigration.[143] Yet, growers believed that the Mexican problem could be solved by simply limiting the undocumented migration of Mexicans. The end result was to keep Mexicans in an inferior position and hinder their upward mobility, through racism, violence, and segregation.

Historian Emilio Zamora argued that the negative representation Mexican workers vindicated and perpetuated their exploitation, which provided racial definition to social status.[144] Zamora's argument makes two points clear. First, maintaining a social order that placed Mexicans as nonwhite quelled Texas Whites fear "that Mexicans would

---

[140] Memmi, Albert. pg. xxiv.
[141] Zamora, Emilio. pg. 35.
[142] Montejano, David pg. 179.
[143] Zamora, Emilio. pg. 53.
[144] Zamora, Emilio. pg. 30.

destroy white civilization."[145] Therefore, they were racialized as not white enough to take advantage of whiteness, but white enough to escape the worst aspects of racism in Texas. [146] Yet, Mexicans in Texas were still victims of mob violence and lynching. The lynching of Mexicans was particularly unique in Texas because the legal operating system also participated in the slaying of Mexicanos. The "most systemic abuse of legal authority was by the Texas Rangers," who were like state-sanctioned terrorists. It is estimated that Texas Rangers murdered hundred and even thousands of Mexicanos.[147]

Second, growers felt they were entitled to Mexican labor and their proper place in Texas society was as farm laborers. To perpetuate Mexicans place in society and continue the grower's use of Mexican labor, Anglos utilized Jim Crow segregation. It is important to note that all Mexicans suffered from Jim Crow regardless of their U.S. citizenship status. Mexicans were regarded by Anglos as foreigners, which "was a racialized concept that adhered to all Mexicans, including those born in the United States, and carried the opprobrium of illegitimacy and inferiority."[148] The labeling of Mexicans as foreigners removed their right of belonging to the Southwest, even though they were to native to the area. Foreignness proved to cripple the power of citizenship because Tejanos were purely symbolic citizens.

Jim Crow, during the 1920s and 1930s, reflected the farmer's objective to socially, economically, and politically segregate the Mexican population from Anglos, to keep Mexicans in an inferior working-class position. The social cost of segregation

---

[145] Foley, Neil. pg. 40.
[146] Foley, Neil. pg. 41. For more information on possessive investment in whiteness see, Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.
[147] Carrigan, William D. and Clive Webb. "They Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 To 1928." *Journal of Social History*. 37.2 (2003): 411-438. pg. 416.
[148] Ngai, Mae M. pg 132.

affected various aspects of Mexican life. In terms of education, Mexicans were forced to attend separate schools which were poorly equipped and generally substandard to Anglo schools.[149] Consequently, "[v]ery few blacks or Mexicanos were able to use schooling as a way of improving their socioeconomic position."[150] José Flores a Rio Grande Valley, Texas, migrant worker during the Jim Crow Era recalled,

> in the schools they always tried to have them [Mexicans] separate…in our [Farm Security Administration] camp there was about 100 children that used to be going to the American school. So in 1931, they just thought they could get rid of the Mexican greaser, [so] they built a school separate for [them]…the Mexican people. So they just went ahead and built a school, just to have them in a separate school. Even though the [American] was big enough, they just wanted to put them in a separate school.[151]

In his testimony, José Flores explained his frustration with the rampant racial discrimination in Texas and challenged Anglos to "treat Mexicans like American Citizens…[and] I know they will make good citizens if they're just treated the right way."[152] Yet, farmers were not concerned with the fair treatment of Mexicans. Instead, they indirectly and directly opposed the education of Texas Mexicans. For the most part, Texas growers believed that educating Mexicans was removing them from the fields and dirt.[153] In others words, growers wanted to make sure that future Mexican generations were bound to the land. Furthermore, by building separate schools and racially discriminating Mexicans, the white growers in Texas reinforced their white supremacy

---

[149] See: San Miguel, Guadalupe Jr. *"Let all of them Take Heed:" Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.
[150] Foley, Douglas, Clarice Mota, Donald E. Post, and Ignacio Lozano. *From Peones to Politics: Class and Ethnicity in a South Texas Town.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988. pg. 36.
[151] José Flores, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas." <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?toddbib:2:./temp/~ammem_rpxF:: > accessed February 2005.
[152] José Flores, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas."
[153] Montejano, David. pg. 193.

and birthright to conquer the West and Southwest, through Manifest Destiny.[154] Additionally, Mexicanos and Tejanos in Texas were refused services in restaurants, drugs stores, swimming pools, and attended segregated theaters. If they were permitted to enter these facilities, it was only on certain days and to specific spaces. Flores remembered the discrimination in theaters. He said,

> for example in the theater, they [Mexicans] go to the theater…there's always a middle isle and two side isles and their not permitted to sit in the middle isle. They have to sit in the side isles just because they are Mexican.[155]

Segregation not only affected Mexicans from entering theaters and other social spaces, but Jim Crow also politically disenfranchised Mexicans in Texas.

In Texas, Mexican people were subject to "poll tax laws and 'grandfather clauses' restricting [their] voting" rights. These barriers institutionally limited their political formation.[156] Furthermore, poll taxes in a number of Southern Texas counties restricted Texas Mexicans from voting, which kept them outside the polity.[157] With little political power, Texas Mexicans were unable to democratically challenge Jim Crows laws, or the meager wages paid by the growers. The lack of political influence also prevented Texas Mexicans from challenging the commercial grower's political clout. It is evident, that segregation was an important factor which led to the social, economic, and political alienation of Texas Mexicans. Thus, growers perpetuated a cycle of peonage and "insure continued Euro-American control and domination."[158] In other words, farmers kept Mexicans in state of servitude and bound to agricultural labor, by restricting their upward

---

[154] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 94.
[155] José Flores, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas."
[156] Foley, Douglas. pg. 18.
[157] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 132.
[158] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 131.

mobility. At the same time, the Anglo growers reinforced their white supremacy and their "inherent right to the use of illegal" Mexican labor.[159] It is important to note that while segregationalists were concerned with the influx of undocumented Mexican immigration, they had little power to go against the commercial grower's exploitation of undocumented labor. A common excuse to justify their employment of undocumented Mexican laborers is explained by a Texas grower who claimed:

> I prefer Mexican labor to other classes of labor. It is more humble and you get more for your money. The Mexicans have a sense of duty and loyalty, and their qualities that go make a good servant. They are the best labor we have.[160]

Still, grower's use of Mexican workers was not because they were the "best labor," but Mexicans were the cheapest, most dispensable, and readily available workforce.

By the 1940s and 1950s, the effect of past discrimination against Texas Mexicans was clearly evident as most remained laboring in low-paying agricultural jobs. Moreover, racism toward Texas Mexicans continued as more undocumented Mexicanos and braceros entered Texas. To escape this discrimination in Texas, Texas Mexicans and undocumented Mexicanos decided to migrate to states like Washington. The Castañedas were one family who took to the road, to flee the racial injustice in Texas.

In 1946, Irene Castañeda (born in Texas during the 1920s) migrated with her husband and children to Washington State from Crystal City, Texas. She stated that in her time:

> Mexicans had neither a voice nor vote; many injustices were committed against them. On the one hand, they didn't understand the language, and whites didn't want to learn it-that way they couldn't defend themselves. In Crystal City, Mexicans were not allowed in restaurants. Those who worked in white people's homes had to eat outside or go hungry. They

---

[159] García, Juan R. pg xvi.
[160] Montejano, David. pgs. 183-4.

> hated Mexicans in Texas. Well, we were Tejano and Lipan Apache too, from way back, when Texas was a Spanish colony. But that made us Indians, as well as Mexicans. Of course, they hated Indians. Then again, they didn't like the Japanese, or the Black people *tampoco* [either].[161]

Castañeda's testimony demonstrates the blatant discrimination toward Texas Mexicans, where failing to understand the English language made the victims of racial discrimination. Her oral narrative also reveals the racial mixing of Mexicanos in the Southwest, which became another pretext for racial hatred. The Castañeda's never returned to Crystal City, Texas leaving behind "that God-forsaken *pueblo mugroso*, where Mexicans had to step off the side walk, or be thrown off, to let white people pass."[162] For these reasons, in 1946, the Castañeda family migrated and permanently settled in Toppenish, Washington. Tejano Roberto Luna also experienced the effects of racial segregation in Texas.

Roberto Luna was born in Catulla, Texas in 1936. His family like many other migrant families traveled to different states in the U.S., looking for better paying jobs as well as fleeing the racial divisions in Texas. Luna recalled in Edinburg, Texas, that when he

> was in grade school it was a mixture of Anglo and Mexican children. It was different at the high school level because they had the Anglos and Mexican segregated. In Edinburg most of the businesses were open to all individuals. It was further north and west that you would see signs not wanting Blacks or Mexicans to shop in their stops. There was one incident I recall in north Texas. When we entered a grocery store the owner made us all get out and then allowed only two Mexicans at a time to enter.[163]

Luna's oral narrative explains how of segregation operated in the schools and grocery stores, and also explains that racism varied in different areas of Texas. His testimony

[161] Castañeda, Antonia. pg. 130-131.
[162] Castañeda, Antonia. pg. 131.
[163] García, Jerry. pg. 49.

illustrates that in north and west Texas, racism was more severe than in the southern part of the state. This is important to consider because Texas Mexicans had to travel through west and north Texas, in order to reach their destination in *el norte*. Yet the Luna family undaunted by the racism on the road, traveled from 1945 to 1948, to harvest sugar beets in Montana. Then, in 1948, they ventured to Ohio and Michigan to "pick cherries and work in the sugar beets, and tomato fields."[164] That same year the Luna Family made their first trip to Washington State, and settled permanently in Quincy, Washington in 1964. They decided to stay in area because it "provided much more available work. Due in part to the multiple crops grown in the state."[165] The variety of crops in Washington State definitely created more job opportunities and proved to be an important factor in drawing labor from Texas. However, before the Luna's reached Washington State. They were encountered racism on the road. This added factor made the already hard journey even more difficult. Lilia Villarreal who immigrated to Washington State from Corpus Christi, Texas, remembered the discrimination on the road.

Lilia Villarreal's family came to Washington State in 1944. Before the Villarreal settled in the area, they had migrated internally in Texas to pick cotton. And later, they migrated to Montana to work in the sugar beet industry. Once they found their way to Washington State, they initially settled in Status, Washington, at the Golden Gate Hop Ranch. Afterwards, the family permanently relocated to a labor camp near Granger, Washington called Crewport. Crewport was a migrant labor camp from May 1941 to December 1968, and was a permanent place of residence for many Texas Mexicans.[166]

---

[164] García, Jerry. pg. 49.
[165] García, Jerry. pg. 49.
[166] Compean, Mario. "Mexican American and Dust Bowl Farmworkers in the Yakima Valley: A History of the Crewport Farm Labor Camp, 1940-1970," in García, Gilberto and Jerry García, eds. *Memory,*

As soon as the camp opened in 1941, Texas Mexicans lived at the camp to meet the shortage of agricultural laborers in the Yakima Valley. The labor camp also housed Okies and Arkies "creating an ethnic mix of white dust bowl and Mexican American migrants who lived side by side and interacted with each other."[167] And by 1951, "the residents at Crewport were solidly Chicano migrant families. In April, Guy Peterson, camp manager, described the population of 730 as 'practically all Mexican labor.'"[168]

To get to Washington the Villarreal family may have traveled the same route as the Luna family, but regardless of their path racism on the road was inevitable. Villarreal remembered such an experience:

> I remember my dad, when we stopped at this restaurant…I don't know where it was at…he went to get some hamburgers, and the owners said they couldn't. Well, they were giving him the hamburgers and mamma stepped down and walked into the restaurant. And then they told my dad that they couldn't serve him because he was a Mexican. I remember my daddy getting upset and throwing the hamburgers at him. Yeah…those were some of the things that you remember, when we were traveling from Texas.[169]

Villarreal's narrative reveals the harsh reality of Texas Mexicans on the road. Since they were Mexican, migrant families were denied services and treated negatively. The anger by Villarreal's father must have been felt by other fathers who were unable to feed their families. To avoid racism, many migrants refused to stop in Texas towns for food and other basic necessities. The oral history of Indalecio (Andy) González makes it clear that

---

Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest. Michigan: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005. pg. 156.

[167] Compean, Mario. pg. 160.

[168] Erasmo, Gamboa. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 129.

[169] Lilia Villarreal, interviewed by Dan Grooves, Mario Compean, and Susan Bolton, March 2000, Granger, Washington.

racism on the road made Texas Mexicans hurry out of the state. And since they could not stop in certain areas of Texas, they made do with what they had.

Andy González was born in Donna, Texas on December 12, 1946, but he spent his childhood in Bischoff, Texas. His father was born in Mercedes, Texas, while is his mother was born in Nuevo Leon, Mexico.

Figure 3: Inadelcio (Andy) González at his home in Brownstown, Washington (2007)

Source: Author's collection

The grandfather of González served as a lieutenant under the command of the revolutionary leader Francisco (Pancho) Villa during the Mexican Revolution. At this time, Andy González's grandfather immigrated to the U.S. In the 1910s and 1920, his father and grandfather worked "in el desenraize" clearing land in Texas, to make way for the expansion of agricultural. His family later worked in various crops in Texas, but the family mainly picked cotton. They first migrated to *el* West Texas to pick cotton, but then began migrating to Arizona. The González heard of Arizona through their friends from *el barrio* in Bischoff, who told them that there was lots cotton in Arizona.

However, their migration to Arizona was cut short due to the mechanization of cotton in the area. In the following year of 1952, the González family did not migrate to Arizona but they decided to come to Washington State. On the road to Washington State, in their 1946 Chevy pick-up, González recalled:

> that our experience traveling [were] a little tough. I remember we used to stop on the road…to go fill our thermos'…you know we had coffee thermos' and all we wanted was coffee. And as we were walking into this restaurant they told us, "we don't serve Mexicans here move on." So we had to work with our own way of survival. So we would stop on the side of the road build a fire and make our tacos, make our coffee, fill our thermos'…everybody would get together…or we would do the sandwich thing. So we had to travel as fast as we could, but in those days you didn't have freeways it was all two-way.[170]

Even though businesses denied services to the González, they were unfazed in their goal to reach Washington State. Families like the González, survived the trip by planning ahead of time realizing that food and water needed to be purchased early, or food needed to be brought that "did not spoil quickly with out refrigeration, such as tamales, tortillas, and boiled eggs, potatoes, poultry, and meats."[171] To not run out of provision on the three to four day trip, required that they move fast, especially out of Texas. As the González family eagerly awaited their first sight of Washington, they realized it was very different from Texas. González explained that while he attended school in Washington, Tejanos were not segregated.

In Texas, González remembered the school and town was:

> divided…it was segregated into different communities. All the Westside of Bischoff were the Hispanics. The north side of our area were all Blacks. All the eastside, all the fancy area of the town belonged to Whites. And we used to go to school there and the school system was different…it was very segregated. The Hispanics were considered White…but I wasn't treated like a White. In my birth certificate, they

[170] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author. Brownstown, Washington. February 3, 2007
[171] Erasmo, Gamboa. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 128.

> were claiming I was white but I was never given…the rights that the Whites had. So in the school system, we were in the same class room as the Whites [and] all the front of the class were Whites, and their used to be like a walkway [that divided the students]…and all the back of the class were the Hispanic kids. Now the Blacks had to go to a totally different side of town…where they lived. [And] their buildings were on stilts, like they were off the ground, almost like houses but smaller and they were painted white but that was about it. The schools we went to were made out of brick.[172]

Back in Texas, his town was divided along racial lines. And even though legally "White," as a young children González recognized he was not equal to other White students. By simply looking at the differences in schools, González realized that he lived in an ethnoracial middle group.[173] González did not attend the Black school, but in the White school he continued to be discriminated against. The racial discrimination and prejudice that Texas Mexicans experienced in Texas and on its roads, forced many to leave the state to seek places with less inequality based on race. However, social stratification based on race was only one factor that created the internal migration of Texas Mexicans. The growing number of Mexican contract laborers and undocumented Mexicans in Texas also created conditions that led to the Texas Mexican exodus out of the state.

Conflict among Mexican contract workers, Tejanos, and undocumented Mexican workers became more noticeable during World War I (1914-1918). The U.S. entered WWI in 1917, and a shortage of agricultural laborers developed throughout the country. And in 1917, the U.S. Department of Labor announced an order to permit Mexican contract workers to enter the U.S. to fulfill the labor shortage. The importation of Mexican laborers was possible because "the Secretary of Labor, William B. Wilson

[172] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author. Brownstown, Washington. February 3, 2007.
[173] Foley, Neil. pg. 41.

temporarily suspended the literacy test and [$8] head tax to Mexican migratory workers."[174] The exemption of the literacy test and head tax to Mexican nationals remained in effect from 1917 to 1921. During this four year period, "72, 862 Mexicans crossed the border without documents. The influx of undocumented workers continued as long as jobs in the United States were plentiful." From the 1920s until the 1930s, large farmers who were "well represented in Congress, successfully kept this supply of cheap labor flowing into the country, regardless of its effect upon the domestic labor force."[175] The large and unabated migration of Mexican contract workers and undocumented laborers into the U.S., and the presence of Tejanos created a division in Texas based on legal status.[176] In the 1920s, the Mexican population in Texas was composed of citizens as well as permanent legal, temporary and illegal residents. While wages were depressed by the immigration of Mexican contact workers and undocumented immigrants during the 1920s, ethnic solidarity and union organizing were also affected.

Neil Foley stated that

> [t]he impact of Mexican immigration to Texas created divisions between newcomer immigrants and Texas Mexicans (Tejanos). For Texas Mexicans wished to become recognized as American and white, Mexican immigrants reinforced stereotypes that Mexicans in general were poor, dirty, and politically radical, especially since Anglos rarely distinguished between Texas Mexicans and Mexican immigrants.[177]

In the racialized Texas society, Tejanos wanted to separate themselves from undocumented Mexicans and braceros, in order to claim their American rights and privileges. Some Tejanos believe that if they accepted U.S. values and traditions, they

[174] Cavazos, Sylvia. pg. 10.
[175] Coalson, George. pg. 220.
[176] Valdes, Dennis N. "Legal Status and the Struggles of Farmworkers in West Texas and New Mexico, 1942-1993. *Latin American Perspectives*. Issue 84, 22.1 (Winter 1995): 117-137. pg.117.
[177] Foley, Neil. pg. 59.

were to be no longer labeled as second-class citizens. However, white Americans viewed Tejanos as a mixed race unfit for assimilation. Tejanos efforts to assimilate only disrupted the ethnic solidarity among Mexicans, while the clear beneficiaries were the growers who exploited the Tejanos situation. They reduced the wages of all Mexicans regardless of their legal status and thus were forced to relocate further away from the border. Yet, the Texas Mexicans who chose to stay faced another problem caused by Mexican contract labor and undocumented immigration-union organizing.

During the 1920s, Texas Mexicans faced an uphill battle in their attempts to organize. To prevent union organizing, Texas grower utilized Mexican contact labor and undocumented workers to undermine Texas Mexicans efforts to collectively organize. A grower explained that Tejanos "'[t]hey strike, they don't like the water, etc. Every Monday morning they want to know if they aren't going to raise the price. They have anarchists-agitators-who go around and tell them what the price to pick for."[178] To avoid any union organizing, Texas growers routinely hired undocumented workers and Mexican contact labors to keep wages low and squash union activity. For the most part in the 1920s, the friction between Mexican contract laborers, Tejanos, and undocumented Mexicans created conditions that forced Texas Mexicans immigrant to migrate to other parts of the U.S. It is important to note that Mexicans under contract labor were unable to contest the low wages they received by moving to another state. As a result, in the 1920s, Texas Mexicans began to migrate out of Texas to resist the meager wages caused by union busting activity. And also avoid any conflict interests among Mexican contract laborers and undocumented Mexicans, in regards to wages and unionization. Texas Mexicans were pushed to live a migrant lifestyle in order to seek better social and

[178] Zamora, Emilio. pg. 36.

economic living conditions. The sugar beet industry took advantage of growing Mexican population in Texas, and started recruiting their labor. For example, during the 1920s and 1930s, the Utah-Idaho Sugar Beet Company began to increasing rely on Mexican labor.[179] Texas Mexicans were contracted by sugar beet companies in Michigan, Ohio, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Minnesota. Moreover, Rodolfo Acuña writes that "[m]ost of the beet workers came via Texas and from there spread out to the rest of the southwestern fields and then throughout the Midwest."[180] Mexican/Mexican American sugar beet workers also came to the Pacific Northwest.

In the 1920s, Mexican/Mexican American sugar beet laborers, who traveled to Washington State, had previously migrated to Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana.[181] Their numbers were small, but these early migrants created a migratory pattern into Washington State, that Texas Mexicans used in the next decade. During the 1930s, the migration of Texas Mexicans to sugar beet states continued but the Great Depression did limit their migration into Washington State. And for the Texas Mexicans who escaped repatriation, they had increased job opportunities in Texas. The domestic Mexicans used the labor shortage in the country to contest the low wages and working conditions. Still, Texas Mexicans continued to leave the state because of the ineffectiveness of government programs which minimally aided Tejano agricultural workers.

A Raw "New Deal" for Farm Workers

---

[179] Arrington, Leonard J. pg. 134.
[180] Acuña, Rodolfo. pg. 208.
[181] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 128.

In the 1930s, the repatriation of over 400,000 Mexicans exposed the plight of the domestic agricultural worker.[182] The domestic workers both Mexican American and Anglo were tremendously affected by undocumented and imported contract labor. Yet, the government did little to alleviate the domestic workers from further economic alienation. For example, in general, the New Deal farm policy

> did not support [domestic] agricultural workers. The central farm program of the New Deal, the Agricultural Adjustment Act (AAA), assisted the largest farmers and encouraged the further consolidation of landholdings through programs that accelerated mechanization and paid benefits to farms to restrict production.[183]

President Franklin Roosevelt's AAA of 1933 was established "to reduce the supply and raise the process of certain commodities," to quell the economic depression affecting millions of Americans.[184] Those who were especially affected by the Great Depression were farm workers. However, acreage reduction, increased mechanization, and a growing undocumented Mexican population led to large-scale farming, which significantly decreased the number of tenant farmers and sharecroppers.[185] These domestic tenant farmers and sharecroppers were displaced and forced to leave Texas. Also, the commercial growers influence over Congress representatives made the domestic agricultural workers ineligible from attaining social and labor legislation rights. As a result, domestic workers were not entitled to coverage by the National Labor Relations Act (1935), the Social Security Act (1935), or the Fair Labor Standards Act (1938). These acts provided workers with the right to unionize, granted social insurance

---

[182] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 135.
[183] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 136.
[184] Foley, Neil. pg. 164.
[185] See: Foley, Neil. pgs. 174-176.

for the elderly, and a minimum wage. The domestic worker without any federal or social legislation, continued to work in the commercial grower's colonial empire.

The only program that attempted to aid the situation of the domestic worker was the AAA's program called, the Farm Security Administration (FSA). The FSA constructed camps for migrant workers with "'minimum facilities' for health and safety."[186] Nonetheless, the FSA camps did little to help Tejano domestic farm workers because the FSA selected mainly white migrant communities to run their project. The reasoning for such actions by the FSA was because "they presented a conservative, docile image to the public."[187] While White migrants received sympathy, the FSA failed to address the low wages farm workers were being paid. As a result, FSA camps throughout Texas became sites of struggle as Tejano workers went on strikes to contest the meager wages they were paid.

Augustus Martínez living at an FSA camp in Rio Grande Valley, Texas, during the 1930s, remembered the workers that coordinated a strike. Martínez stated they organized to form a solid front knowing that

> if the growers beat us we'll be in the same peon state for about ten more years [where] we have been all the time. In those ranches, it got to be where if we talked back or sang in the orchard, or talk[ed] with somebody else picking around there…the boss would come up to us and tell us you better shut up! Your not suppose to sing, your not suppose to whistle, your not suppose to do anything, like peons! And for my part it's a question not so much [about] wages but of the reaction of the way the bosses treated the people, that's most of it.[188]

---

[186] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 136.
[187] Ngai, Mae M. pg. 136.
[188] Augustus Martinez, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl:
The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection,
1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas."
< http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?toddbib:2:./temp/~ammem_sTxY::> accessed February 2005.

Martínez's testimony explained the reason for striking was not only to contest the low wages, but also to resist the slave-like working conditions and to gain a fair treatment by the growers. As a reaction to the strike, Martínez said the FSA camp threaten to close the camp if the workers did not end the strike. The FSA's intimidation made Tejanos feel uneasy because they believed the "government was also against them."[189] The lack of support from the administration only served to further disenfranchise and displace domestic Mexican workers in Texas. Having no choice but to migrate, Texas Mexicans continued to contract their labor to sugar beet businesses, like the Utah-Idaho Sugar Beet Company. In Montana, the Utah-Idaho Sugar Beet Company established a factory from 1925 to 1953, in Chinook, Montana.[190] The company's sugar beet fields in Montana were one of many states that contacted Texas families like the Sánchez-Treviño and González.

Dora Sánchez -Treviño was born on March 29, 1947, in Uvalde, Texas. Her father Abel Sánchez was born in Piedras Negras, Mexico, and her mother Ignacia was born in Texas. She recalled that her father talked:

> about the family migrating back in the 1930s. Half of my family was born in Montana and the other in Texas…It was around the early 1930s that my father began to farm in Montana. During this time period our family would just go from Texas to Montana and back…Our family would leave from [Texas] in April until October when the sugar beet harvest ended. In between those months we would thin and weed the sugar beets. We would do this several times until the beets were ready to harvest. My father used to tells us they cut the beets back in those days. They used a short cutter and blocked the beets, and they were loaded into sacks to trucks…It was

[189] Augustus Martinez, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas." < http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?toddbib:2:./temp/~ammem_sTxY::> accessed February 2005.
[190] Arrington, Leonard. J. pg. 197.

> not until the late 1950s that our family actually stayed put for any duration.[191]

The Sánchez -Treviño oral narrative reveals the sugar beet migration pattern from Texas to Montana. Also, the testimony demonstrates that Montana was an important place not only for work, but also a place of birth for many of Dora's siblings. In 1963, Dora Sánchez-Treviño and her family settled in Quincy, Washington. The story of the González family from Texas is similar to that of the Treviño's, but they came to Yakima Valley as opposed to the Columbia Basin.

Pete González was born in Jalisco, Mexico in 1889. His wife, Cholita González, was born in Chihuahua, Mexico in 1910. And in 1920, they both immigrated into the U.S. Their son Jesse González was born in Luddock, Texas in 1929. He recalled that his

> family traveled to Montana for the first time in 1935. They left Texas during the summer and spent approximately seven months thinning, pulling, and blocking sugar beets. They also worked thinning corn and beans. From Montana they traveled to Wyoming and performed the identical work. In 1941, when World War II began, the González family came to Toppenish, [Washington] for the first time. Through word of mouth they came to Toppenish, because they had been told there was a lot of work in the hop and sugar beets.[192]

González's oral narrative disclosed that sugar beet work was a labor intensive task, but it provided constant employment for many months. The González through their social network found out about Washington, most likely from the already established migratory pattern of Mexican Americans from Wyoming, who had travel to Washington State in the 1920s. Another interesting aspect of the González testimony was that his parents were Mexican nationals who escaped repatriation. For some Mexicanos like the mother of Tómas Villanueva, who "was born in Corsicana, Texas, USA, but…was taken to Mexico

---

[191] García, Jerry. **"**Chicana in northern Aztlán: An oral history of Dora Sanchez Treviño." *Frontiers***.** Boulder: 19.2 (1998):16-37. pgs. 18-22.
[192] García, Jerry. pg. 29.

during the Depression of the 1930s, so she was raised in Mexico."[193] Because his mother was deported, the Villanueva's were not able to enter the U.S. until 1955, when they finally had enough resources to enter back into the country. For the Villanueva's, it was until 1957 that they finally reached Washington and settled in Toppenish. What these three narratives revealed was that migration saved some Texas Mexicans from being repatriated, as they distanced themselves away from the border in places like Montana. However, many Texas Mexicans migrated to *el norte*, to escape poverty and deportation in Texas. In the following decade, World War II, the Bracero Program, and Operation Wetback in Texas, intensified the plight and out migration of Texas Mexicans.

Avoiding Deportation

As the U.S. prepared to enter WWII, another lack of agricultural workers developed as domestic Anglos and some Mexicans entered into war industries. To solve the demand for manual laborers, the Bracero Program was created in 1942. However, in Texas the program was banned because

> Texas had a bad reputation among Mexican officials and Mexican citizens in general because its preference for hiring 'illegals,' it's early and blatant violation of bracero contracts, and its discriminatory practices against people of Mexican descent. These activities had led to Mexico to blacklist Texas from 1943 to 1947, but even after Texas was removed from the list and was permitted to contract, word had gotten out about the conditions there.[194]

It is important to understand that even though braceros were not allowed to be contracted from 1943 to 1947, Texas growers routinely hired undocumented Mexicans (referred to

---

[193] Tómas A. Villanueva, interviewed by Anne O'Neill and Sharon Walker, April 1l, 2003 and June 7, 2003, Toppenish, Washington.
[194] García, Juan R. pg. 40

as wetbacks).[195] After Texas came off the blacklist and was able to contract braceros, commercial growers continued to employ undocumented Mexicans and Tejanos. These three groups all competed for jobs, suffered from racial discrimination, and depressed wages. They were divided not along racial or ethnic lines; instead, their division was based on legal status. As a result, Tejanos attempted to use their citizenship to separate themselves from undocumented Mexicans and braceros, by calling attention to their situation. They pleaded to government officials that it "seemed particularly outrageous that braceros, who were aliens, enjoyed privileges and guarantees that eluded domestic workers who were citizens."[196] These feeling of animosity toward braceros were not directly aimed at them, but more at the growers and government, since some Mexican Americans realized that their parents

> were in pretty much the same position as the braceros, a generation ago…But look at what the program is doing to us. We're trying to climb our way up the social ladder…It's hard enough, at best. The braceros come along, and hang on to the tail of our shirts. We can't brush them off, because that wouldn't be human. But their weight is dragging us down.[197]

Braceros without a doubt, limited the economic mobility of Tejanos but at the same time they recognized that braceros shared similar interests with them. Both groups were trying to improve their living conditions, in an extremely racialized society. Other groups who opposed the Bracero Program and undocumented immigration were "labor unions, small farms, and religious groups who believe that the undocumented Mexican worker was a threat to social, political, and economic stability of the country."[198] Still, the group who

---

[195] The term wetback is a derogative term used to describe undocumented Mexicanos.
[196] Ngai, Mae N. pg. 159.
[197] Ngai. Mae. M. pg. 159.
[198] Cavazos, Sylvia. pg. 24.

suffered the most discrimination and limited upward mobility was the undocumented Mexican worker.

Undocumented workers gained preference over braceros and Tejanos because they were not subject to

> specific guarantees of wages, working and housing conditions, a period of employment, or a grievance mechanism. Furthermore, employers took advantage of the workers' weak legal status to intimidate or deport them when they complained or expressed interest in unions.[199]

As an undocumented worker, Mexican nationals were more susceptible to exploitation because deportation always loomed over their heads. Also, without a labor contract, they were not protected by rights guaranteed to braceros, which meant that at times undocumented workers earned a lower pay than the "prevailing wage." And while undocumented Mexican immigration, was curtailed in the 1930s by the "early 1940s ranchers had already begun to lure undocumented Mexican workers across the Rio Grande 'in considerable numbers to seek agricultural employment." Despite the increased number of undocumented immigrants, the U.S. government did little to prevent the hiring of undocumented workers and "[b]etween 1947 and 1949, 142,000 undocumented workers were certified, whereas only 74,600 braceros were hired by contact from Mexico."[200] After by mid-1940s, it soon became apparent that immigration officials were doing very little to stop the massive wave of Mexicans from crossing the border. The Border Patrol in charge of detaining "illegal" immigrants was greatly influenced by large Texas growers, and was basically mandated to allow the free flow of undocumented immigration. For instance in 1948, immigration officials opened the border "from October 13 to October 18, [and] approximately 5,000 braceros were

---

[199] Valdes, Dennis. N. pg. 119.
[200] Acuña, Rodolfo. pg. 288.

allowed to enter the United States 'illegally.'"[201] This blatant disregard of immigration policy was called the "El Paso Incident," and undercut the power of the Mexican government to control the immigration of Mexican workers into the U.S.

The Bracero Program created a U.S. dependence on Mexican workers and served as a catalyst for undocumented immigration. From 1951 until the Bracero Program ended in 1964, over four million Mexican workers entered the U.S., a large portion of laborers being contracted in Texas. The number of undocumented immigrants must have parallel the number of braceros, because by 1954 "a large segment of the seasonal labor force was composed of illegal Mexican workers."[202] The number of undocumented Mexicans also had to be high because Texas growers preferred "illegal" labor, and their interests affected the power of Border Patrol's ability to control undocumented immigration. However, by 1954 "[g]overnment officials, employers of undocumented workers, and their elected representatives could no longer openly sanction or encourage illegal immigration without arousing the public and the media."[203] What resulted was a drastic movement to curve undocumented immigration.

In 1954, the U.S. government planned Operation Wetback a quasi military operation which did not involved the armed forces of the US, yet was headed by ex-military lieutenant general Joseph M. Swing. The operation was established to deport undocumented immigrants, but it was exclusively designed to target undocumented Mexicans in Texas and California. The operation was supported by the media who portrayed undocumented workers as filthy, diseased, criminals, and generally unfavorable

---

[201] García, Juan R. pg 76.
[202] Rooney, James F. "The effects of Imported Mexican Farm Labor in a California County." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology.* 20.5 (October 1962): 513-521. pg.515.
[203] García, Juan R. pg. 154.

people. The negative portray of undocumented Mexican workers quickly ignited a concern by the press and public, who wanted a fast solution to the "wetback" problem. Their worries were quelled by the eventual molding of Operation Wetback which called for the massive deportation of undocumented immigrants. The government only seriously supported the program after the U.S. was no longer significantly dependent on undocumented Mexican labor. In 1954, Operation Wetback deported over 1 million undocumented workers, but about 300,000 braceros were contracted to work in the U.S.

In Texas, Operation Wetback faced harsh opposition from and growers, because they felt it was their right to exploit the labor of undocumented Mexicans. Reluctantly Texas growers, especially from Rio Grande Valley (who received an unlimited supply of undocumented workers because of the geographical distant between Mexican and the U.S.), hired braceros but it was only temporarily. After Operation Wetback ended, "Rio Grande Valley growers returned to their traditional hiring practices."[204] In contrast, the deportation program in California was supported by politicians and growers. This was a strategic move by California growers because they "did not want to endanger the image of the honest dirt farmers," or jeopardize the Bracero Program in the area.[205] In the end, Operation Wetback did not solve the immigration problem, but only slowed down undocumented immigration without providing a permanent solution. The clauses created to penalize employers who hired undocumented Mexicans were plagued with loopholes and lenient laws, which did little to prosecute employers who broke the law.

Operation Wetback failed to permanently solve the problem of undocumented immigration, but the program did accomplish to drive undocumented Mexicanos out of

[204] Cavazos, Sylvia. pg. 89.
[205] García, Juan. R. pg. 185.

Texas to avoid deportation. To shun immigration officials, some undocumented Mexicanos selected Washington because it was nowhere near the U.S-Mexico border. Therefore, apart from fleeing Texas because of racial discrimination, undocumented workers came to Washington State to avoid deportation campaigns like Operation Wetback.

Operation Wetback succeeded to create more fiction between braceros, Tejanos, and undocumented immigrants. The massive deportation of undocumented Mexicanos reaffirmed the suspicion that Mexican people were only welcomed in the U.S., when their labor was necessary. Operation Wetback further alienated and shattered ethnic unity, as well as fostered the distrust of White Americans and the U.S. government. In general, World War II, the Bracero Program, and Operation Wetback gave rise to an array of conditions which forced Mexican labor to leave Texas. Moreover, the issue of wages was a major factor that caused the displacement of Texas Mexicans and undocumented Mexicanos, forcing them to emigrate into Washington State.

Wages and Mechanization

During the 1940s and 1950s, Texas growers benefited greatly from a large labor pool made up of braceros, undocumented workers, and Tejanos, which they used to lower wages. For the growers, a surplus of laborers effectively kept wages low and divided workers along legal status. Therefore, many Texas Mexicans and undocumented Mexicans fled Texas, especially the Rio Grande Valley. A research study by President Truman (1951) stated

> …agricultural wages in the [Rio Grande] Valley are undeniably lower than elsewhere in Texas. For example, at a time (1947) when daily wages

> for chopping cotton in the Valley were about $2.25, in the northeast Sandy Lands of Texas they were $3.00, in the Corpus Christi and Coast Prairie areas they were $4.00, in the Rolling Plains $5.00, and in the High Plains $5.25. For regular farm work on cotton farms, when the typical daily rate in the Valley was $2.25, in these other areas of Texas they were from $3.50 to $5.00. When tractor drivers earned $3.00 per day in the Valley, they earned from $4.00 to $6.00 elsewhere in Texas. Rates of picking cotton ranged from $.25 to $.50 per pound higher outside the Valley than in it.[206]

The statistics of wages in the Rio Grande Valley makes it clear that Texas Mexicans and undocumented Mexicanos, who lived in the area, were paid lower wages than in any other part of the state. Thus, Texas Mexican in the Rio Grande Valley fled to other states, like Washington.

In Washington, in 1947, Walla Walla growers paid farm worker 75 to 80 cents an hour, tractor divers 85 cents an hour, and truck drivers 75 cents an hour.[207] This trend of higher wages in other parts of the country continued through the 1950s and 1960s. For instance, in Texas from 1954 to 1964, the average farm wage rate per hour was 86 cents (see table 2).[208]

---

[206] The Congressional Record, XCVII (July 13, 1951), pg. 8332-8333. From Coalson, George O. pg. 236.
[207] *Walla Walla Union Bulletin.* Saturday, February 8, 1947 and *Walla Walla Union Bulletin.* Sunday, May 18, 1947.
[208] Jones, Lamar B. and G. Randolph Rice. "Agricultural Labor in the Southwest: The Post Bracero Years." *Social Science Quarterly.* 61.1 (1980): 86-94. pg. 89.

Table 2: Average farm wage rate per hour U.S. and Southwest, 1954-1977

Year	U.S.	California	Texas	Arizona	New Mexico
1954	$0.81	$1.06	$0.68	$0.81	$0.72
1955	0.82	1.08	0.72	0.84	0.77
1956	0.86	1.13	0.72	0.85	0.79
1957	0.88	1.13	0.75	0.85	0.82
1958	0.92	1.15	0.77	0.90	0.80
1959	0.95	1.18	0.80	0.95	0.81
1960	0.97	1.23	0.78	0.97	0.85
1961	0.99	1.27	0.80	0.99	0.87
1962	1.01	1.29	0.83	1.00	0.89
1963	1.05	1.32	0.88	1.02	0.91
1964	1.08	1.35	0.91	1.06	0.92

Source: Adapted from Jones, Lamar B and G. Randolph Rice. "Agricultural Labor in the Southwest: The Post Bracero Years." *Social Science Quarterly.* 61.1 (1980): 86-94. pg. 89.

Table 2 shows that the hourly wages, in Texas, compared to Arizona and New Mexico were not particularly higher. However, in comparison to California and the U.S., Texas had a significantly low hourly wage. In the Pacific Northwest, the wages were also a lot higher. For instance, during 1957 "the most common hourly wage in Oregon and Washington ranged from $1.00 to $1.50 an hour."[209] The menial wages (caused by the Bracero Program and the influx of undocumented workers) were an important factor that expedited the Texas Mexican migration to Washington. However, it was not only Texas Mexicans, but braceros also challenged the meager wages they were paid. Bracero "skipped" their contracts and work as undocumented workers. As an undocumented laborer, they were not bound to any contract. Therefore, undocumented Mexicanos had the opportunity to be mobile, like Tejanos, which "meant that [they] could work for the highest bidder for their labor."[210]

[209] Rooney, James F. pg. 519.
[210] Montejano, David. pg. 200.

For instance, in February 1947, Guadalupe González and Victor González were charged in Toppenish, Washington with "concealing and harboring a Mexican alien."[211] They were also "accused of bringing a truckload of 31 Mexican laborers from Mexico to the [Yakima] valley early in January."[212] The workers the González's brought to Washington State may have been braceros who skipped their contracts and went back to Mexico, but returned to the U.S. as undocumented workers. This incident proves that undocumented Mexicans were entering Washington State, attempting to escape the low wages of the Southwest, particularly Texas.

Additionally, the mechanization of agriculture also pushed Mexican labor out of Texas. The mechanization of Texas agriculture began in the 1930s, and gained speed with the Great Depression and postwar periods. Even though Texas suffered from constant labor shortages, mechanization and scientific farming techniques kept agricultural production high. And while the number of farm workers declined from the 1930s to the 1940s, the number of tractors "increased from 98,923 unites in 1940 to more than 250,000 in 1951."[213] The mechanization of Texas agriculture was another factor that contributed to the internal migration of Texas Mexicans into Washington State.

The Texas Mexican Diaspora to Washington State started before the 1930s, but grew after World War II. Moreover, the Bracero Program, Operation Wetback, and the Mechanization of Texas agriculture, served to expedite the migration of Texas Mexicans into Washington State. It is important to mention that the majority of Texas Mexicans came to Washington State after 1947, when braceros no longer were employed in the area.

---

[211] *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin.* Saturday, February 1, 1947.
[212] *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin.* Saturday, February 1, 1947.
[213] Montejano, David. pg. 273.

The Migrant Experience on the Road

The flight of Texas Mexicans "was a virtual 'underground railroad,'"[214] because farmers used various methods to entrap the laborers to work under slave-like conditions. Therefore, "Mexican truck divers…loaded with their cargo of Mexican laborers, usually drove at night, through back roads."[215] By driving at night, drivers avoided immigration officials and escaped the harassment of Texas police officers, who used any pretext to prevent their journey out of the state. The underground railroad represented an opportunity to achieve social mobility outside of Texas. And Washington State for some became the ideal place to live a better life. But in order to gain greater prospects, Texas Mexicans had to live a migratory lifestyle, never settling but always moving from place to place.

The migrant life style of Texas Mexicans was for some an adventure and an opportunity to make a better living. A migrant worker explained:

> [l]ife wasn't so bad. It was good too. I mean, the whole family was together. We worked side-by-side. We did things together more. There was much love…even though we got pretty dam mad when somebody wouldn't go to sleep or something. Things were not so bad. We made pretty good. Lots of us did, and we raised a little hell up there, man, do you know what I mean? We had a little fun, too.[216]

Indeed, migrant workers struggle to survive brought them closer and strengthened the family unity. Texas migrant families traveled, labored, and shared almost every moment together creating very little independence. However, the migrant way of life was not perfect. And "[i]t is also important to remember that many Mexicanos did not succeed

---

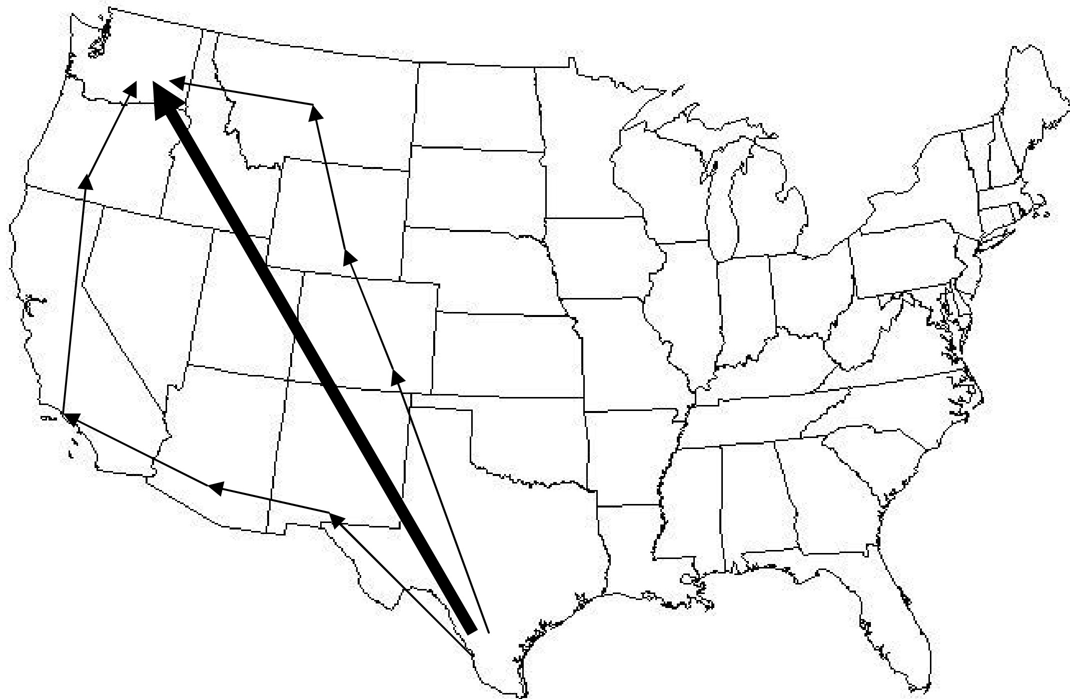
[214] Montejano, David. pg. 219.
[215] Montejano, David. pg. 219.
[216] Foley, Douglas. pg. 89.

economically through migration."[217] Many reasons can explain this predicament. At times, migrant became dependent on the growers and contactors, who limited their mobility and ability to accumulate any savings. Furthermore, migrant life was dreadful for many families because they lived in unsanitary living conditions, were housed in dilapidated homes, performed labor-intensive work, always migrated, and faced racial discrimination on their travels. For many migrants, the road experience was something that they clearly remembered because the trip was unpredictable, dangerous, and tiresome. The most common way migrants traveled was on flatbed trucks with boards on the sides, and a carp to cover the rear area.

For some Texas migrants' coming to Pacific Northwest, Washington was simply another stop on the road. The migrant streams varied from family to family, and depended on the agricultural products they were accustomed to harvesting, and previously established networks. Map 5 illustrates some migrant patterns traveled by Texas Mexican farm workers.

[217] Foley, Douglas. pg. 90.

Map 5: From Texas to Washington State migrant patterns



Source: Texas Mexican oral interviews and U.S. Depart of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards

The oral interviews used in this study revealed that Texas Mexicans came to Washington State through different migrant patterns. A number of testimonios explain that they stopped to work in other states before coming to labor in Washington State. Some traveled through the southwest to pick cotton, and then entered California and Oregon to pick vegetables and fruits. Others traveled to Wyoming, Colorado, and Montana to harvest sugar beets. And some Texas Mexicans came to Washington State directly, as illustrated by the bold arrow (see map 5). These migrant traveled through New Mexico, Utah, Colorado, and Idaho before entering Washington. The 2000 mile trip

from Texas to Washington State took 3 to 6 days, and it was not an uneventful experience but always filled with challenges.

Irene Castañeda reminisced on her migrant experience to Washington State. She recalled that they:

> left on the thirteenth of March of 1946 and arrived in Toppenish on the eighteenth. On the road, the truck broke down-who knows how many times. In Utah we had to stay overnight because the road was snowed in, and we couldn't travel-we all slept sitting up with the little one in our arms because we had no money to rent a motel. We were about twenty-five people in the truck, plus the suitcase and blankets and a mattress spread out inside, and some tires. We were packed in like sardines. Then a heavy wind came, and the tarp of the truck tore in half. They tied it as best they could. And the snow was falling. We finally got out of the storm, and then the driver lost his way. We almost turned over. But God is all powerful, and He watched over us. [But] we finally got to Toppenish.[218]

Castañeda's oral history explains that sometimes trucks were not well prepared to travel the long distance to Washington State. Also, the weather conditions proved to be dangerous as most drivers were unaccustomed to winter conditions. Space was also a problem because it was minimal and "only essential household good, clothes, and cooking utensils were permitted."[219] And yet, through hazardous road conditions, trucks malfunctions, and minimal space, migrants were not fazed but continued to travel.

Andy González remembered that their journey to Washington State was never uneventful, but always filled with obstacles. While confronted with impediments on the road, they found innovative ways to keep moving. González recalled his migrant experience saying that there were no rest areas:

> but thank God for Montgomery Award and Sears Catalog that people would take and use as their toilet paper. Or you would use what was available on the way…rocks, [or] leaves. And again there you had to be

[218] Castañeda, Antonia. pg. 128.
[219] Erasmo, Gamboa. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 128.

> aware of where you were going because there were rattlesnakes, scorpions, and animals that were around. So you kind of went in little groups and scooped out your ground. I [also] recall the time that my uncle got a flat. Normally we fixed our own tires, our own tubes, we had all the stuff to do that with but how would you air it up, there was no pump...no way to air the tire. And they took that tire…they took it off, opened it up and took the tube out because we didn't want to mess the tube up. And we filled all that empty space with clothes…all of it, as tight as we could get it in there. And we continued down the road until the next town. We had to buy another tire but we weren't suck out there. We made it work. I also remember on one of the trips back from Washington, we ran into snow [in Cortez, Colorado]…and one of my uncles was really afraid of the snow. He didn't want to move anymore, and I remember my dad and my uncles…we made kind of a little train, a wagon train. We tied all these cars together, from the bumpers with coat hangers. And they tied and tied together…three cars. And when one was slipping the other one was pushing and we managed to get out of there. So people were very good using their minds and trying to survive. We were devising things and inventing things along the process. I remember that fan belts would break…it [wasn't] the end of the world….we'll fix it. A broken belt was not going to stop them. They didn't have drills but they had a hammer and nails. And they would hammer a hole in each side of the belt and put the coat hanger in there…and they would tie it at the top and it had the circle still. And you would put it on there and you would continue on.[220]

The González testimonio explains that migrants overcame various obstructions along the way by working with their minds and everyday items. Indeed, unprecedented troubles occurred on the road that caused serious accidents and illness, but Texas Mexicans took their chances to reach Washington State. Their lives were sometimes at risk but having no other choice; they had to learn survival tactics on their trek to Washington State, having been forced to migrate away from Texas. Some families traveled back to Texas for many years, and others migrated only a few times or only once, before deciding to permanently settle in Washington State. Most sooner or later realized that settlement was a better option than migrating. There were many reasons why Texas Mexicans settled in the area including: permanent year-round work, available housing, better paying jobs,

[220] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author. Brownstown, Washington. February 3, 2007.

already established communities, and increase opportunities in general for themselves and their children.

CHAPTER THREE

Community Building and Texas Mexican Cultural Production

latitude 47°

schizoid state of
parched east
and wet west
northernmost point of
raza migration

Westside

brown faces slowly
bleach in gray
Seattle drizzles
pale winter suns
sip their color
bit by bit they
grow pale

then burn in
one day's summer
eastside

tejanos rooted in Yakima soil
bake brown
in endless fields
ties stretching
from valle to valle
strengthened by
sun earth
west of the mountains

barrio bare
no urban scene feeds rural
roots weakened with
ceaseless washing

Seattle

brown eyes watch your
displays of grays and
daydream head east
and south

Brownsville
San Anto
El Paso
Cristal
Houston
Laredo

Sunnyside

Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano
May 15, 1976
Seattle[221]

Texas Mexican Settlement in Washington State

Once Texas Mexicans were recruited and made the choice to migrate to *el norte*, they began to root themselves in Washington State. Yarbro-Bejarano's poem reveals that while they planted themselves in places like the Yakima Valley, others also settled in urban centers like Seattle, Washington. Yarbro-Bejarano points to the different weather conditions on the Westside and Eastside of the state. In the rainy City of Seattle, Texas Mexicans became too familiar with the gray skies and lack of sun, literally bleaching their skin white. On the Eastside, in places like the Yakima Valley, Texas Mexicans experienced the occasional but not rare above 100 degree weather, which most definitely caused the baking of their brown skin as they toiled under the Washington sun. While both these groups lived in a different climate zones and labor markets, they shared the same experience of leaving Texas. Another commonality was that they both called Washington their home. As a settled population, they were no longer bound to the life on the road needing to travel from place to place. Their place of residence was Washington State.

[221] Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, "Latitude 47,°" in *Metamorfosis.* University of Washington, Centro de Estudios Chicanos. 1 (1977). pg. 4.

In the documentary series Chicano!, Rodolfo Acuña stated that as a migrant worker

> you are very vulnerable, especially if you are living from hand to mouth. There is very little integration…when you are constantly moving. You never form a sense of place. You are constantly worrying if you'll have enough money to pay for the gas, or if your going to have enough money to pay for the food. It is a tremendous feeling of isolation and fear. Where a rancher can do almost anything they want to you.[222]

Acuña's statement demonstrates why the settlement of Texas Mexicans was a crucial factor, to achieve stability and create community. As migratory workers, Texas Mexicans were dependent on the grower for their living wages. A paternalistic relationship was created where the worker's economic mobility was controlled by the grower. And some Texas Mexicans became reliant on the labor contractors to take them to different jobs, essentially regulating their mobility and limiting their power to search for better wages.

But once Texas Mexicans settled permanently in Washington State, they established communities to have a sense of belonging and independence. And while many Texas Mexicans did improve their living situation in Washington State, they did not necessarily gain significant economic and political power. Their move was more geographical because in Washington they continued to be economically and politically exploited and continued to be affected by racial discrimination, although to a lesser degree than in Texas. A large part of their economic and political powerlessness was largely due to their inability to unionize in Washington State. Unable to form unions, they concentrated on strengthening their communities through culture in a predominately white society. The fact Texas Mexicans did not establish themselves in an area with a

[222] Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. Video. NLCC Educational Media, 1996.

previously settled Mexican community, made it necessary for them to come together and form bonds. Yet, before examining how Texas Mexicans created a community and transferred their Texas Mexican culture to Washington State, it is important to show where this population settled and why they decided to call Washington State home.

Map 6: Washington State counties

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The U.S. Census recorded between 1940 and 1950, a substantial growth in the number of Mexican people in Washington State. In the 1940s census, the population of Mexicans was 406. In the next decade, the census reported an increased figure of 1,546. In 1940, the counties with the greatest number of foreign-born Mexicans were King, Pierce, and Yakima County.

Table 3: Foreign-Born White Mexican population in Washington State by county (1940&1950)*

1940

Benton County	Clark County	King County	Piece County
17	4	114	77

Spokane County	Walla Walla County	Whatcom County	Yakima County
17	13	6	93

Total Mexican Population for all counties= 406

1950

Benton County	Clark County	King County	Piece County
29	16	185	154

Spokane County	Walla Walla County	Whatcom County	Yakima County
33	66	14	929

Total Mexican Population for all counties= 1,546

*The counties selected had the greatest number of foreign-born White Mexicans.
Sources:
United States Census, Characteristics of Population, Vol. 3, Part 7. 1940. pgs. 344-345.
United States Census, Characteristics of Population, Vol. 2, Part 47.1950. pg. 92.

However, these figures can be misleading and very problematic. For example, from 1940 to 1970, the United States Census did not adequately account for the Mexican population "in a way commensurate with their numbers."[223] During this period, the common policy of the U.S. Census Bureau was to classify people of Mexican origin as white, and "who were not definitely Indian or of other nonwhite race."[224] The other problem was that

[223] Boswell, Thomas D. "The Growth and Proportional Redistribution of the Mexican Stock Population in the United States: 1900-1970." *Mississippi Geographer*. 6 (Spring 1979): 57-76. pg. 57.
[224] United States Census, Characteristics of Population, Vol. 2, Part 47.1950. pg. xvi.

throughout this time period, the U.S. Census did not effectively record the number of Mexican American in the U.S. The census only registered the Mexican foreign population. The Mexican people who were included in the foreign-white born category were not only people born outside the U.S., but also those who were "native[s] of the United States but one or both of his[/her] parents were foreign born."[225] As a result, a reliable approximation of Mexican people in Washington State is difficult to analyze, since the "Mexican foreign-born or foreign parentage populations are only partially reflective of the entire Mexican population" in the state.[226] To supplement the U.S. Census, Pacific Northwest historian Erasmo Gamboa used of the Diocese of Yakima Baptismal Records.

Gamboa revealed that between 1940 and 1950, the baptismal records in the towns of Sunnyside, Toppenish, and Wapato reported an increased number of people baptized with a Spanish surname. In 1940s, the total number of people baptized with a Spanish surname was 91, but in 1950, the total figure added up to 160.[227] The baptismal records confirmed that a rising number of Spanish-speaking people were living in the Yakima Valley. However, the baptismal records also do not fully reflect the total population of Mexican people in Washington State. Because some Texas Mexican families continued to migrate back to Texas. Therefore, instead of baptizing their children in Washington State, families postponed this religious ceremony until the harvest was done and they were back in Texas. Even though, the U.S. Census and the baptismal records do not

---

[225] Boswell, Thomas D. "The Growth and Proportional Redistribution of the Mexican Stock Population in the United States: 1900-1970." *Mississippi Geographer*. 6 (Spring 1979): 57-76. pg. 57.
[226] Hernandez, José, Leo Estrada, and David Alvirez. "Census Data and the Problem of Conceptually Defining the Mexican Population. *Social Science Quarterly.* 53 (March 1973): 671-687. pg. 673.
[227] Gamboa, Erasmo. "A History of Chicano People and the Development of Agriculture in the Yakima, Valley, Washington." Master Thesis. Seattle, University of Washington, 1973. pg. 47.

accurately represent the actual number of Mexican people in Washington, they do give evidence of a rapidly growing population. The baptismal records and the U.S. Census both show that Yakima County had the most dramatic increase of Mexican people. This county has been described by Chicano Pacific Northwest scholars as an agricultural hub and "magnet for migratory workers."[228] In Yakima County, a large number of Texas Mexicans toiled in the labor intensive row crops such as: hops, potatoes, sugar beets, mint, peas, asparagus, tomatoes, and onions among others. They also worked on orchards and picked apples, pears, and plums. The diversification of crops was "able to afford a longer period of employment and thus attract a larger labor supply."[229] With a great variety of crops, Yakima County became an ideal place but Texas Mexicans also settled in other agricultural areas. They established themselves in other farming areas like Benton, Walla Walla, and Whatcom County.

Benton County did not have the variety of crops as Yakima. However, Prosser, Washington became place of residence for some Texas Mexicans because of the towns' proximity to the lower Yakima Valley. Their presence is confirmed by the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin* which stated that in 1946, "30 domestic Mexicans from the Prosser area were brought here by the [Inland Empire] cannery during the peak of the asparagus season and these[sic] were housed at the at the Walla Walla camp."[230] The newspaper did not state Mexican nationals but "domestic Mexicans," which explains that these workers were not braceros but Mexican Americans who were settled in Benton County.

---

[228] García, Jerry. "The history of a Chicano/Mexicano Community in the Pacific Northwest Quincy, Washington 1948-1993." Masters Thesis, Eastern Washington University. Fall 1993. pg. ii.

[229] Annual Narrative Report of Emergency Farm Labor Program. State of Washington, 1945. Agricultural Extension Service. Box #15, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University. pg. 30.

[230] *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin.* Sunday Progress Edition, February 22, 1947.

Moreover, Walla Walla County was also an agricultural area but the main crop was wheat. Yet, growers in the area also produced secondary crops such as: sugar beets, spinach, asparagus, onions, and green peas (freezing, packing, and processing). These secondary crops provided Texas Mexicans with numerous jobs which contributed to their establishment in the area.

In Anne Majorie Brunton's doctoral dissertation, "A Decision to Settle: A Study of Mexican American Migrants," her study of migrants in Walla Walla recorded the first settlement of Mexican Americans in 1946. Brunton wrote that they "were isolated nuclear families. Then, beginning around the 1950, other nuclear families began to settle."[231] Her dissertation also revealed that by 1968, 64% of the Mexican residents in Walla Walla emigrated from Texas and the remaining came from Oregon, Mexico, Washington, and California (see table 4).

Table 4: Mexican-American migrant residents in Walla Walla (1967)

State	Percent	State	Percent
Texas	64	Mexico	6
California	18	Washington	7
Oregon	5		

Source: Adapted from Brunton, Anne M. "The Decision to Settle. A Study of Mexican-American Migrants." Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University, 1971. pg. 34.

[231] Brunton, Anne M. "The Decision to Settle. A Study of Mexican-American Migrants." Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University, 1971. pg. 48.

The Texas Mexicans who settled in Walla Walla County harvested similar crops like in Yakima County, but there was less variation which created less job prospects. Thus, the population of Mexican people in Walla Walla County grew slower than in Yakima County. Whatcom County also had a gradual growth of Mexican population than other agricultural areas.

In Whatcom County, the northernmost part of the state, Texas Mexicans picked an array of berries, vegetables, tulips, and worked on dairy farms. In places like Bellingham, Washington, most Texas Mexicans picked strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, cabbage, and peas. In the neighboring county, during WWII "braceros were brought to Skagit County from Mexico in large numbers to help harvest the hay and pea crops, important to the dairy industry for fodder. The braceros camp at Burlington was the largest mobile camp in the United States."[232] Once braceros could not be contracted in Washington State, Texas Mexicans replaced braceros and began to settle in Whatcom and Skagit County. However, the population growth was moderate because many of the crops in the area had a short harvest period. Therefore, many Texas Mexicans from the Yakima Valley migrated to these northern counties during the spring months, and headed back in the early fall to harvest hops or sugar beets. Yet, some Mexican people did settle in Whatcom and Skagit Counties as both the 1940 and 1950 census indicate. The other counties with a significant number of Mexican People were Piece, King, Clark, and Spokane County.

In the 1940 and 1950 census, King and Pierce County had the greatest amount of Mexican population second only to Yakima. Clark and Spokane County also reported a

---

[232] Humanities Washington. "Skagit County-Thumbnail History." Historylink.org. <http://www.historylink.org/essays/printer_friendly/index.cfm?file_id=5663 > accessed March 2007.

sizable figure of Mexican people. The aforementioned counties were unique places for Texas Mexicans to settle because the majority established themselves in agricultural areas because these counties did not have extensive agricultural developments. The labor markets in these counties during the 1940s and 1950s revolved around industrial jobs, which required skilled and semi-skilled workers. Some obtained jobs in "construction, medical technology, industrial plants, hotel related service jobs, real estate sales, teaching, military, civil service, and a host of other non-agricultural occupations."[233] An important factor that allowed Texas Mexicans get these kinds of professions was the military, which brought GIs from all over the Southwest, including Texas, to the Pacific Northwest. Having learned a skill in the military Texas Mexicans did not labor in rural agricultural areas. And as a result, urban Texas Mexicans had a uniquely different Washington experience than those who settled in rural counties, like the Yakima.

In examining where Texas Mexicans settled, it is evident that different agricultural counties had an assortment of crops that determined the amount of people that settled in the area. The greater amount of diversification in crops, led to more employment prospects and a larger settled population. In nonagricultural counties, a range of job opportunities existed, but the lack of social networks in urban centers may explain why Texas Mexicans did not root themselves in these locations. Another reason was that the majority of Texas Mexicans coming from Texas to Washington State were mainly agricultural workers. They most likely did not have industrial skills which may have discouraged Texas Mexicans from settling in urban cities. Yet, regardless of whether they settled in agricultural or nonagricultural parts of Washington State, the

---

[233] Maldonado, Carlos. "Mexicanos in Spokane, 1930-1992." *Revista Apple.* 3.1-2 (Spring 1992). pgs. 120-121.

choices Texas Mexicans made to settle permanently are also critically important to analyze.

The Choice to Settle

There are many deciding factors that explain why Texas Mexicans decided to settle in Washington State. From the oral interviews used in this study, I will name some reasons why Texas Mexicans established themselves indefinitely in the state. Their choices were influenced by: higher wages, permanent jobs, available housing, tired of traveling, others previously settled, climate, children, and lower levels of racial discrimination. The main factors which convinced Texas Mexicans to settle in Washington State were the higher wages and permanent jobs available in the state.

As explained in Chapter 2, wages in Texas were extremely low and especially in the Rio Grande Valley, which had the lowest wages in the Southwest. The average daily wage in Texas during 1947 was about $2.25.[234] In Washington during the same year, the average daily wage amounted to almost $6.00.[235] By 1956, the daily wage differential between Washington State and Texas continued with significant discrepancies (see table 5).

---

[234] The Congressional Record, XCVII (July 13, 1951), pg. 8332. From Coalson, George O. pg. 236.

[235] *Walla Walla Union Bulletin.* Saturday, February 8, 1947; and *Walla Walla Union Bulletin*. Sunday, May 18, 1947.

Table 5: Average daily migrant pay in 1956 per state

State	Average Daily Earnings	State	Average Daily Earnings
Arizona	$10.70	Ohio	$6.84
California	8.84	Michigan	6.64
Washington	8.39	Idaho	6.20
Illinois	7.84	Colorado	5.35
North Dakota	7.75	Texas	5.14
Minnesota	7.34	Other States	5.76
Wisconsin	7.16		

Source: Source: Adapted from Brunton, Anne M. "The Decision to Settle. A Study of Mexican-American Migrants." Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University, 1971. pg. 21.

In 1956, the table indicates that Texas out all the states noted had the lowest daily earnings with $5.14. The figure for Washington was definitely higher at $8.39. The higher wages in Washington State had a definite impact on Texas Mexicans decision to settle. Moreover, oral interviews support this claim. For example, in 1953, Ruben D. García left Texas and explained: "[m]y father decided to come to Quincy because of the work available and better pay. When we left Texas (1953) my father was making 35 cents per hour. In Washington his wages jumped to one dollar per hour."[236] The significant increase in wages was possibly because growers needed to entice Texas Mexicans to stay in the area. After settling in the area, they began to learn different trades that provided Texas Mexicans with year-round jobs.

Indalecio (Andy) González stated that when they came in to Washington in 1952, his family mainly harvested sugar beets, asparagus, and hops. However, after 1956, they

[236] García, Jerry. "The history of a Chicano/Mexicano Community in the Pacific Northwest Quincy, Washington 1948-1993." Masters Thesis, Eastern Washington University, Fall 1993. pg. 38.

worked as mechanics, tractor drivers, sprayers, truck drivers, irrigators, and land cultivators.[237] They left as González explained the basic labor market or hard labor, and entered into less arduous and permanent job market. The family later was able to rent several hundred acres of land to harvest alfalfa and hay, as well as raise cattle. Therefore, acquiring year-round employment and less labor intensive jobs were also important reasons why Texas Mexicans settled in the region.

The availability of housing was definitely important to the settlement of Texas Mexicans. Most of the interviewees explained that housing was easily obtainable because the farmers usually provided this necessity. In fact, Yakima growers "developed the most active housing program in the State," which undoubtedly contributed to the large population of Mexican settlement.[238] The state also provided permanent and temporary housing for Texas Mexicans. In 1944, Washington Extension Service had 21 labor camps all over Washington State.[239] It is important to note these federal camps were used primarily to house braceros, but after the Bracero Program ended in 1947 Texas Mexicans began to use these camps. The labor camp sites with the most number of Texas Mexicans were located in Yakima (Ahtanum), Granger (Crewport), Toppenish, and Wapato. The labor camps in Walla Walla and Dayton, also housed a good number of Texas Mexicans.[240] Easy access to housing provided by growers and state was another factor that explains why Texas Mexicans relocated to Washington State.

---

[237] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author, February 3, 2007, Brownstown, Washington.

[238] Annual Narrative Report of Emergency Farm Labor Program. State of Washington, 1945. Agricultural Extension Service. Box #15, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University. pg. 31.

[239] Washington Extension Service. Emergency Farm Labor Reports, 1944. Vol. 5. Box #14, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University. pg. 7.

[240] These camp sites were important because they became the foundation for the establishment of Texas Mexican communities in Washington State.

Others migrants established themselves in Washington State because they were tired of traveling. For example, Augustina Rodríguez settled in Satus, Washington, in 1941. She stated that many Texas Mexicans stayed because they were tired of coming and going to Texas. The 3 to 4 day trip, she explained was long and tiresome because traveling in the back of flatbed trucks made the trip very dangerous and uncomfortable.[241] Other families like the Rodríguez also became exhausted of traveling back to Texas, so they settled in the area. And while some families dreaded the road, it was the winter months that forced families to leave Washington.

Andy González recalled that many Texas Mexicans did not settle in the Washington State because they "had a fear of the winter…because people would say that it would snow 2, 3, or 4 feet. And we saw ourselves dying in the stuff [because] of the cold. And we would say how can you stick around in this place?"[242] The González, unsure of how to survive the winter climate and not knowing of available jobs during the cold months, migrated back to Texas. However, their *compadre* named José Nares advised the family on how to endure the cold weather of Washington State.

He told them that jobs existed but there were few. For food, he explained they needed to store flour to make tortillas. They also needed to gather potatoes, and can fruits and vegetables, and store meat in refrigerators. These preparations were to be done in the early fall. Nares advised the González to raise rabbits and chickens during the summer. The rabbits were to be slaughtered during the winter months for fresh meat, and the chickens needed to be spared to produce eggs. Meat needed to be collected throughout the year. The meat gathered had to be stored in cold storage lockers, since

[241] Augustina Rodríguez, interviewed by author, Grandview, Washington, March 14, 2007.
[242] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author, February 3, 2007, Brownstown, Washington.

many migrant homes did not have refrigerators. At times, several families bought a steer and divided the meat. Lumber was to be gathered throughout the year to keep warm during the winter months. All these survival techniques were passed on to the González family by José Nares, an already settled individual in the area. As a result, the settlement of other Texas Mexicans in the Washington State was another important reason why Texas Mexicans planted themselves. The establishment and advice of previously settled Texas Mexicans, gave others hope that they could survive the harsh winter months in Washington State. And while some Texas Mexicans feared the cold winters, others actually preferred the cooler climate.

Rodolfo Rentón Macías settled in West Seattle, Washington, in 1946, and stated that the main reason he decided to stay in the area was the climate. Don Macías said,

> well you believe it or not when I came here it was already starting to cool [down]…the weather. And I still used to use short sleeves and remember people telling me…neighbors, you going to catch a cold and get sick. I said no, this is what I love here the cold weather. I didn't care about the [Texas] hot weather. To me here it was nice and that is why I [settled].[243]

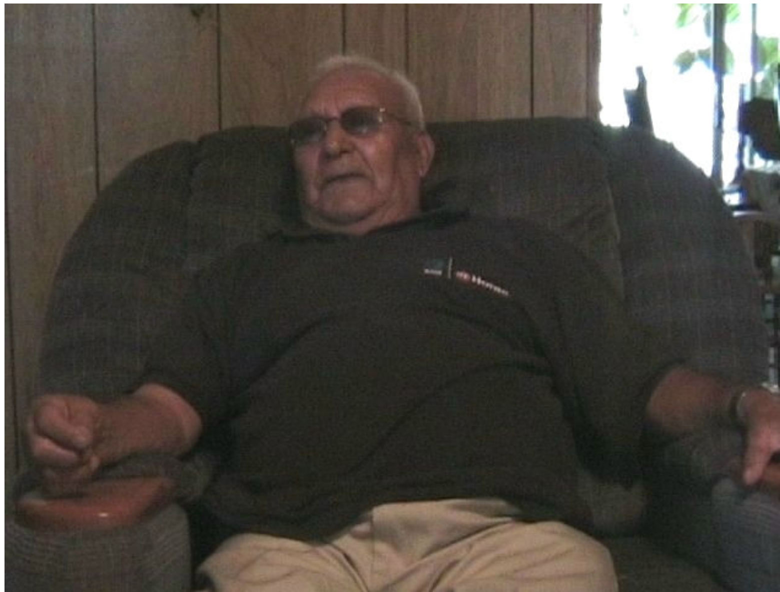
To Don Macías, his decision to settle was not based on economics or any other previously mentioned factor but it was the climate. And while his choice to establish himself in Washington State, was dependent on something that may seem insignificant. Many Texas Mexicans did prefer the cooler temperature in Washington than the heat in Texas. Another reason why some Texas Mexicans settled in Washington State was their children.

---

[243] Rodolfo Renton Macías, interviewed by author, March 10, 2007, West Seattle, Washington.

Baldemar Vásquez Diaz was one of many Texas Mexicans who settled in Washington State because they wanted to give their children an opportunity to obtain an education. Don Diaz was born in Matehuala, San Luis Potosi, Mexico in 1915.

Figure 4: Baldemar Diaz Vásquez at his home in Grandview, Washington (2007)



Source: Author's collection

Growing up in Mexico he was not able to finish school, but he had to work at the local steel factory to support his parents. So when he came to Washington State in 1956, he made the choice to stop migrating in 1959, for the sake of his children's education. Don Diaz said,

> we stayed here in Washington because my children began to have family here. But primarily because they entered school and they were more comfortable [in Washington]. Before they struggled because when we went back to Texas, they were only there for about a-month-and-half in school, then we went to the [Yakima] Valley and with all the relocating they lost a lot of school. And after we settled, they began to do good and able to concentration more [in school]. And then they began to go to college and became professionals.[244]

[244] Baldemar Vásquez Diaz, interviewed by author, March 19, 2007. Grandview, Washington.

For some families like the Diaz, the education of their children was very important. Instead of seeing their children struggle going from one school to another, they decided to settle in Washington State. Diaz wanted to give his children the chance to leave the migrant life style, to pursue a career outside of agriculture. In the case of Don Diaz, many of his children became teachers and directors of programs in Washington State.[245] Therefore, a child's education also played a part in Texas Mexicans choice to remain in Washington State. The last factor that influenced Texas Mexicans to live permanently in the area was that they faced lower levels of discrimination.

As examined in the previous chapter, overt racial discrimination and prejudice in Texas society was an aspect that encouraged many to flee the state. In Washington, Texas Mexicans were not immune to discrimination, but it was not as flagrant as in Texas. For example, Andy González remembered that Washington was very different in many ways, especially the racism.

The first memory González recalled of Washington was the Columbia River. He vividly remembers the Interstate 82/395 Bridge at Umatilla, Oregon was not yet constructed, so they had to cross the river on a ferry. After they came across the river and entered into the Yakima Valley. The González family worked for the Labby's, a small farmer, who offered them housing in Brownstown, Washington. And once in Washington he recollected that:

> [Mexicanos] were treated a little better. We didn't see the discrimination as heavy. You had areas that had those signs. In Texas, where there was no Mexicans, no Blacks, [and] no dogs. Over here there were no Mexicans, no Blacks, no Indians, and no dogs. So they included another one…[Indians]. They didn't cater to you. So you had those [signs]…but there was just few scattered around.[246]

[245] Ironically, his son Charlie Diaz was one of my elementary school teachers.
[246] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author, Brownstown, Washington. February 3, 2007.

González explained the level of discrimination was different in Washington State. He noted that in Washington State, they no longer experienced the obvious racial intolerance. Still, in some areas Mexicanos were not fully accepted. Another important comment González makes, was that Native Americans in the area also were discriminated against. He explained in his testimony that in White Swan, Washington, no Blacks attended the school only Native American children attended. And González found it to be interesting that these children did not live with their parents, but lived in a boarding house in White Swan. The removal from their families was something González felt was very wrong. The sad reality was that Native American children were being forced to assimilate and give up their cultural traditions. In Washington State, González was not segregated as a Tejano but Native American students continued to be discriminated against. His oral narrative attested to the fact that racial inequality continued to affect Texas Mexicanas and Native Americans, but these new settlers still felt Washington was better than Texas. Some Texas Mexicans experienced more discrimination and some faced none at all. In all probability, most Texas Mexicans experienced some degree of discrimination but some may have experienced less overt discrimination in Washington State.

For example, Tómas Escobar a resident at Crewport recalled that "while holding class one of his high school teachers made several disparaging 'racist' comments about Mexicans."[247] He reacted by getting into a confrontation with the teacher and hurling him out the window. Escobar was arrested but the charges against him were "dropped after several students, Mexican American and White, testified that the teacher had made

[247] Compean, Mario. pg. 163.

‘racist’ comments several times prior to the incident with Escobar.”[248] Escobar’s incident is a clear example that racism was still a problem in Washington State, however, others like José Treviño and Dominga Cantú have different stories.

José Treviño from Anton, Texas came to the area in 1958. The following year the entire family settled in Crewport, Washington. He remembered that in Washington State he:

> got along good. In Texas is where I had some problems. I raised my family at $25.00 per week, at seven day a week; and sometimes I would work day and night. If I ever asked for anything from a White person, they would get a glass of water and dump it on the ground, and they would give you the empty glass.[249]

In a similar response, Dominga Cantú, who also settled in Crewport, in 1959, stated that she suffered from no discrimination in Yakima Valley towns. She said “in Texas is where there was a lot of discrimination, not here [in Washington].”[250]

The varying response by interviewees’ reveal that while some faced blatant discrimination, others did not experience the severe discrimination like in Texas. An explanation for there being less discrimination was that Texas Mexicans were seen as an integral part of the agricultural success of the region. In a region far from the U.S.-Mexico border, growers did not want to risk their crops by racially discriminating their labor force away. Ultimately, I claim that while racial intolerance existed in Washington State, the racial discrimination and prejudice was not perceived to be as extreme as in Texas. However, after the settled, Texas Mexicans realized that Washington State was

[248] Compean, Mario. pg. 163.

[249] José Treviño, interview by Tomás Escobar, Mario Compean, and Edgar Rosas, May 2000, Toppenish, Washington.

[250] Galdino and Dominga Cantu, interview by Tomás Escobar, Angela Ornelas, and Mireya Esqueda, May 2000, Granger, Washington.

not a perfect society, but a place of settlement with far less racial stratification than in Texas. Therefore, lower levels of discrimination prompted many to root themselves indefinitely in the state.

The choices Texas Mexicans made to settle in Washington State were many. Of course, there were more deciding factors than what I have mentioned and some had more of an impact than others. Also, their decision to settle in Washington State was not made on a single factor but a combination of reasons. Yet once settled, they produced and changed the State of Washington with their culture.

Community Building and Cultural Production

In Washington State, Texas Mexicans radically transformed the non-Spanish speaking communities with their food, music, cultural celebrations, and religious ceremonies. Texas Mexicans never left their culture behind, but produced their Texas Mexicano culture to Washington State. This societal change did not occur overnight, but it took years for permanent Tejano/Mexicano communities to develop in Washington State.

In the 1930s, Texas Mexican migrants were single men. *Solos* in the new region they were detached from their Mexican cultural practices and especially from their family's in Texas. Alone in the region, their estrangement was exacerbated by "[t]heir social, political, and economic alienation from the established…communities [which] only served to increase the need for their own cultural activities."[251] As a result, they went back to Texas but returned to Washington with their families as well as with other immediate and extended family members. The rooting of Texas Mexicans in Washington

[251] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration into Washington State." pg. 130.

State was heavily dependent on the role of the family. The family allowed for the continuation of culture, and filled a crucial element missing from the Texas Mexican men in Washington State.

While acknowledging the importance of *la familia*, I do not want to ignore the gender politics of power and patriarchy. We must understand that a central part of the family was *la mujer*. Additionally, we cannot neglect how women's work and family roles were intertwined with racial, economic, and patriarchal impediments.[252] Tejana and Mexicana women in the Pacific Northwest were not immune to the double day labor that forced them to work all day in the fields, and then in home. In Washington State, like in the Southwest, Tejana and Mexican struggled to claimed space for themselves and their families.

Tejana and Mexicana women were significant to the development of communities in Washington State, for many reasons. Women not only took care of the home and children but also worked in the back breaking fields of Washington State. These women were not passive, naïve, or weak but they were strong working class women who labored in the fields, factories, as well as did the cooking, cleaning, washing, and sewing. Tejana and Mexicana women in Washington State were not the typical docile Mexican women portrayed by dominant U.S. history. For these women, working was not an option but a necessity.[253] Tejana and Mexicana labor and contribution to community formation have for the most part been ignored by Pacific Northwest Chicano historians. However, their role to social production and labor power were crucial to the formation of

[252] Ruiz, Vicki L. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. pg. 15.
[253] Apodaca, Maria L. "The Chicana Women: An Historical Materialist Perspective." *Latin American Perspectives.* 4.1-2 (Winter-Spring 77): 70-89.

Mexicano/Chicano communities in Washington State. Women's economic power provided another source of income for families to survive in the area. And in the home, Tejana and Mexicana women passed on cultural traditions to their daughters and sons. As a result, these mothers/women were vital to the Tejano/Mexicano cultural production in Washington State. Tejana and Mexicana women not only worked for wages and nurtured families, but they also participated in community events, especially within the Catholic Church.

In the 1950s, Mexican people witnessed the "arrival of the first Spanish-speaking Catholic priests in the [Yakima] valley," and in other places like Walla Walla and Othello.[254] The church not only provided a place of gathering and worship, but allowed for the continuation of cultural traditions. For Tejana and Mexicana women, participation in the church was how they "claimed a public space through expressions of religious faith."[255] As Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama stated, "[w]herever we went, if there was Catholic Church, we went to church."[256] For women like Mendoza de Sugiyama, who grew up in Washington, the church was a place to dance, tell stories, and celebrate events like the Day of the Dead. The church also represented a place where women could legitimately organize and congregate, to engage in developing

[254] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Migration Into Washington State." pg. 131.
For more information on the involvement of the Catholic Church in the Mexican community see: García, Gilberto. "Mexicanos and the Catholic Church," in García, Gilberto and Jerry García, eds. *Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest.* Michigan: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005.
[255] Ruiz, Vicki L. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. pg. 24.
[256] Mendoza de Sugiyama, Margarita. "Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama," in Evans, Sara M. ed. *Journeys That Opened up the World: Women, Student Christian Movements, and Social Justice, 1955-1975.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2003.

themselves.[257] In Washington State, the involvement and presence of women in the church, led to the celebration of *bautismos*, *quinceañeras*, and *bodas*. The aforementioned events allowed for the prolongation of *el compadrazgo/comadrazgo* in the region, and created another reason for Texas Mexicans to settle permanently in Washington State.

Furthermore, with all these church celebrations, traditional Texas Mexican music was heard and food was prepared. The music they brought was called *conjunto*.[258] The *conjunto* style is produced by an accordion, drums, guitar, and the *bajo sexton* (a twelve-string guitar). This type of music was important to Mexicano and Tejano communities because it was not only used to dance and celebrate, but the music helped "maintain their connection to one another, to experience significant lifetime events as a large extended family to come together" as Mexicans and Mexican Americans.[259] In this sense, conjunto music acted as a bond that brought Mexicans and Tejanos together to form community. Moreover, Mexican food was also vitally important to community because it represented another traditional element that brought communities together. All these factors contributed to the formation of Tejano/Mexicano communities in Washington State. The Catholic Church, *la familia*, and presence of Tejana and Mexican women can not be overstated in the formation of communities in the Washington State. Doña Belen Pardo is one of many women who helped transform and root Texas Mexicans in one of the northernmost states of the U.S.

---

[257] Ruiz, Vicki L. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. pg. 138.
[258] To read more about Texas conjunto music see: Peña, Manuel. *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto: History of a Working-Class Music*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.
[259] Ragland, Cathy. "Introduction," *Gritos del Alma*: *Chicano/Mexicano Music Traditions of Washington State.* Olympia: Washington State Arts Commission, 1993.

Doña Pardo was born in Matehuala, San Luís Potosí, México on February 29, 1907. In 1917, her family immigrated to the United States and came to Edinburg, Texas. She then married Eusebio Pardo in 1924. The couple had 10 children and she recalled that "Texas was very beautiful. I have many memories from there. All my children were born there, except Gloria, who was born in Granger, [Washington]. I left my *metate* and *molcajete* in Texas."[260] It was her son Raúl who informed the family about Washington State. Raúl had migrated earlier to the Yakima Valley and explained that it was beautiful with mountains and hills. With Raúl's encouragement, the family left Texas and began to work in the hops, sugar beets, potatoes, and asparagus. Doña Pardo remembered that they

> came for many years, and tried of coming and going we settled. We established ourselves during Word War II. The food was rationed, the sugar, the coffee, [and] the meat. They gave coupons to everybody, it was like food stamps. You could not buy more than what you were given.[261]

Doña Pardo's testimony explained that they had come to Washington State many times and eventually settled during the WWII. It is possible that Raúl came in the late 1930s, and then the family followed and settled in the early 1940s. The time of settlement makes the Pardo's one of the early Mexicano families that came to Washington via Texas. The Pardo's first place of settlement was Moxee near Yakima, Washington where they lived in tents and stayed for a year. The following year they relocated to Crewport and then in 1953, the Pardo's purchased a house in Granger, Washington. From her early memories in Washington State, Doña Pardo recollected that their were few Mexican people in the area but by the 1950s she recalled

---

[260] *!Viva!* Thursday, August 31, 2006.
[261] *!Viva!* Thursday, August 31, 2006.

> the dances at the beginning were done out in the open, later there was a dancehall where the train station is at now. In that time, a group formed called Los Mutualistas. All the members were Hispanic, and between them they bought a dancehall and held dances. They even rented the hall out for *weddings*, *quinceañeras*, and family celebrations. Spanish Mass was done in a hall, and they had missionaries that came every eight days. Later they fixed the old church…they left it really beautiful. We [also] went to the movies at the Granger Theater and they played lots of movies in Spanish.[262]

Even though Doña Pardo left her *metate* and *molcajete* in Texas, her presence along with other Mexicanas and Tejanas in Washington State assisted in creating a Washington State Mexicana/Tejana identity away from Texas. Her testimonio reveals how Texas Mexicans reproduced their culture in Washington State. She explained that they created social organizations like Los Mutualistas. It is important to mention that Los Mutualistas was an all male group. Yet, the group was important because it act as both a multi-functional group and mutual-aid-and-benefit organization. The creation of Los Mutualistas and other community-based groups were crucial because Texas Mexicans forged necessary social networks to survival in the isolated Pacific Northwest region. Moreover, Doña Pardo's testimonio revealed that people were organizing and working together to have a place of worship. And the presence of Mexican films in lower Yakima Valley towns, demonstrated that they were still connected to resources available in Texas and Mexico. The creation of social clubs, continuation of cultural/religions events, and the introduction of food and music was a way Texas Mexicans were claiming space, not to separate themselves but to become part of Washington State.

In the process of claiming and transforming space, Texas Mexicans influenced the culture and economy of Washington State. Their presence contributed to the first Spanish-language radio station in 1951. The KREW radio station in Sunnyside,

[262] *!Viva!* Thursday, August 31, 2006.

Washington was operated by Herminia Méndez who "first came to Sunnyside, Washington from Eagle Pass, Texas in 1943…Initially the Spanish radio station broadcast ran only ½ hour every Tuesday and Thursday."[263] The broadcast was later expanded and remained for a while as the only Spanish station on the air. Dancehalls also opened up in Washington State during the 1950s, especially in the Yakima Valley, like "the Baile Grande in Sunnyside as well as La Puerta Negra in Toppensish."[264] These dance halls became "important touring stops for Texas-Mexican conjunto stars like Tony de la Rosa (y su conjunto, Little Joe (y la familia), and Roberto Pulido (y los classicos)."[265] They also provided places for local band to perform such as the "Guzmanes, Conjunto Rangel, and Los Astros del Norte who kept the music alive and flowing on a daily basis."[266] The dancehalls became big businesses and conjunto groups made lots of money traveling to Washington State. Dancehalls and conjunto groups were so popular in the Yakima Valley, that Seattle Texas Mexicans traveled to the Yakima Valley to attend the dances. Or else as Rodolfo Rentón Macías stated, the Latino Club he belonged to hired conjunto groups to play at their festivities in the West Seattle.[267] The Latino Club in Seattle was a social organization that sponsored cultural events, and was created by several Mexican American families on the Westside.

Food was also an important form of cultural production that allowed for the establishment of Mexican stores and restaurants. Initially, Mexican products were no

---

[263] García, Gilberto and Carlos S. Maldonado, eds. *The Chicano Experience in the Pacific Northwest*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1995.

[264] Erasmo, Gamboa. "Notes on the Music of the Yakima Valley's Mexican American Community," *Gritos del Alma*: Chicano/*Mexicano Music Traditions of Washington State.* Olympia: Washington State Arts Commission, 1993.

[265] Ragland, Cathy. "Introduction," *Gritos del Alma*: *Chicano/Mexicano Music Traditions of Washington State.* Olympia: Washington State Arts Commission, 1993.

[266] Ragland, Cathy. "Introduction," *Gritos del Alma*: *Chicano/Mexicano Music Traditions of Washington State.* Olympia: Washington State Arts Commission, 1993.

[267] Rodolfo Renton Macías. Interviewed by author, March 10, 2007, West Seattle, Washington.

where to be found in Washington State. This was a problem many Texas Mexicans faced once they arrived in Washington because they lacked the cooking ingredients to make their traditional foods. Before businesses carried Mexican products, families had to bring cooking ingredients from Texas. Or else, they grew their own gardens and planted vegetables that were not available in Washington like *calabacitas* and *jalapeños*. Meats to make *menudo* (which required cow stomach), *pozole* (which required pig's feet), or *tacos de cabeza* and *lengua* (which required the head of a cow) were not available at the local grocery stores. Therefore, families like the González went to slaughter houses and asked for these cattle and pig parts. The meat Texas Mexicans wanted was at first thrown away by Whites in the area, so the people at the slaughter houses gave them these "unwanted" animal parts. Yet, when more Texas Mexicans began to request parts like the head of the cow and stomach, slaughter houses started to charge for these items.[268] But once Mexican stores and restaurants opened up, Mexican ingredients and food items were more readily available. Restaurant businesses like El Ranchito (which began to operate in 1951), made a great deal of profit selling tortillas, Mexican food, and cooking supplies in Zillah, Washington (see figure 5).

[268] Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author, February 3, 2007, Brownstown, Washington.

Figure 5: Spanish Calendar "El Ranchito" (1955)

Source: Washington State Historical Society, Tacoma.

El Ranchito's presence in the Yakima Valley made it possible for Texas Mexicans to get food and cooking ingredients that were previously not offered in Washington State.[269] Moreover, the opening of El Ranchito was another statement to the dominant White culture that Mexican people were becoming an integral part of Washington State

---

[269] Interestingly enough however, the restaurant was not owed by Mexicanos but by T.W. Clark. It is important to note that both Mexican and White business owners did exploit Texas Mexicans by charging Mexican people considerable amounts of money for their services, because owners had a virtual monopoly in the area.

society. Before, Mexican people were seen as transient workers who came for the harvest months and then left Washington State. However, through Catholic celebrations, Spanish radio and films, dancehalls, music, and Mexican stores as well as restaurants, Texas Mexicans were settling and more importantly establishing community.

It is important to point out that a double standard occurred with the increased emigration of Texas Mexicans, during the 1940s and 1950s. On one hand, Texas Mexican emigration strengthened the developing communities and led to the further entrenchment of cultural enclaves and markets in Washington State. Yet on the other hand, more emigration of Texas Mexicans created a "plentiful and inexpensive source of labor that helped make possible increased and sustained farm production."[270] In other words, the growing number of Texas Mexicans helped to keep wages low while Washington State growers continued to profit off their supposed cheap labor. However, by the 1960s and 1970s, the Chicano/a Movement in the Washington State developed to challenge the status quo and the power of Washington growers.

[270] Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican labor in Washington State." pg. 131.

CONCLUSION

During the 1960s and 1970s, Texas Mexicans continued to emigrate into Washington State. This time however, young Tejanos/as also brought the Chicano/a Movement from Texas. By bringing their activism from Texas to Washington State, it strengthened the political and ethnic unity in both locations. Moreover, Chicano/a leaders from Texas like José Angel Gutierrez and Mario Compean, who traveled to Washington, influenced Washington State Chicano/a activists like Lupe Gamboa, Tómas Villanueva, and Rosalinda Guillen.[271]

In Washington State, as in Texas, revolutionary Chicanos/as challenged the unequal relationship between the grower and worker. After growing up and experiencing the struggle in the fields of Washington State, young Chicanos/as attempted to create social change by means of political and educational reforms, and through the unionization of farm workers. But as the Chicano Movement came to a conclusion in Washington State during the 1970s, like in other parts of the U.S., the migration of Texas Mexicans also decreased due to major social, political, and economic restructuring in Texas. Texas Mexicans no longer emigrated from Texas because they gained access to better jobs, faced lower levels of discrimination, and had increased educational

[271] See: Estrada, Daniel and Richard Santillan. "Chicanos in the Northwest and the Midwest United States: A History of Cultural and Political Commonality." *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies*. 6 (1997): 194-228; Gutiérrez, José Angel. *The Making of a Chicano Militant: Lessons from Cristal*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998; Maldonado, Carlos S. *El Colegio Cesar Chavez, 1973-1983: A Chicano Struggle for Educational Self-Determination*. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000; and Cuevas, Maria. "As Close to God as One Can Get": Rosalinda Guillen, a Mexicana Farmworker Organizer in Washington State," in García, Gilberto and Jerry García, eds. *Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest.* Michigan: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005.

opportunities. Likewise, in Washington State, Texas Mexicans also began to gain some political and educational power leaving behind agricultural work.

The Texas Mexicans, who came to Washington during the 1940s and 1950s, fled because the economic, social, and political situation in Texas displaced and forced them to internally migrate. Having been pushed out, they migrated to Washington State and found higher wages, better jobs, lower levels of discrimination, and in general greater prospects to achieve upward mobility. Texas Mexicans were crucial to the development of our current Chicano/Mexicano communities in Washington State. And key to the formation of these communities in the area were women and families, who greatly contributed to the Tejano/Mexicano cultural production in Washington State.

The history of Texas Mexicans, who were recruited, and made the decision to migrate, formed dynamic communities in Washington States. However, scholars have paid little attention to Texas Mexican migration. Instead, scholarship has focused on the importation of braceros during the 1940s. Braceros are credited for developing our Mexicano/Chicano communities, but Texas Mexicans were settling and establishing communities well before braceros entered into the Pacific Northwest. As a result, scholars must continue to research the experience of Texas Mexicans in order to fully understand the Chicano/Mexicano experience in the Pacific Northwest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Annual Narrative Report of Emergency Farm Labor Program. State of Washington, 1945. Agricultural Extension Service. Box #15, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.

Washington Extension Service. Emergency Farm Labor Reports, 1944. Vol. 5. Box #14, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.

Washington State Extension Service, Annual Reports. Emergency Farm Labor Specialist, 1946. Box#16, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.

Washington Extension Service. Specialist Report, 1947. Vol 3. Box#17, Item A86. Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), Washington State University.

Reuss, Carl F., Paul H. Landis, and Richard Wakefield. "Migratory Farm Labor and the Hop Industry on the Pacific Coast: With Special Application to Problems of the Yakima Valley, Washington." State of College of Washington. Agricultural Experiment Station. Pullman, Washington. Bulletin 40. 363. August, 1938.

Ybarra-Frausto, Tómas. "Report of Toppenish Project." Special Collections, University of Washington. Accession Number 4339, Box Number 1, Folder 15.

INTERVIEWS

Augustina Rodriguez, interviewed by author, March 18, 2007, Grandview, Washington. Texas to Washington State Oral History Project.

Baldemar Vásquez Diaz, interviewed by author, March 19, 2007. Grandview, Washington. Texas to Washington State Oral History Project.

Indalecio (Andy) González, interviewed by author, February 3, 2007, Brownstown, Washington. Texas to Washington State Oral History Project.

Rodolfo Renton Macías, interviewed by author, March 10, 2007, West Seattle, Washington. Texas to Washington State Oral History Project.

Augustus Martinez, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas." Library of Congress, American Folklife Center < http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?toddbib:2:./temp/~ammem_sTxY::> accessed February 2006.

Galdino and Dominga Cantú, interview by Tomás Escobar, Angela Ornelas, and Mireya Esqueda, May 2000, Granger, Washington. Sueños de Un Pueblo: An Oral History Project of Crewport Washington < http://www.ccrh.org/comm/crewport/> accessed February 2006.

Guadalupe Gamboa, interviewed by Anne O'Neil, Olympia, Washington, April 9, 2003. University of Washington: Harry Bridges Labor Studies, United Farm Workers in WA <http://depts.washington.edu/pcls/ufw/index.htm> accessed February 2006.

Julia Saenz, interview by Mario Compean, Tomás Escobar, Angela Ornelas, and Susan Bolton, April 2000, Zillah, Washington. Sueños de Un Pueblo: An Oral History Project of Crewport Washington < http://www.ccrh.org/comm/crewport/> accessed February 2006.

José Flores, interview from "Voices from the Dust Bowl: The Charles L. Todd and Robert Sonkin Migrant Worker Collection, 1940-1941, Rio Grande Valley, Texas." Library of Congress, American Folklife Center <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?toddbib:2:./temp/~ammem_rpxF:: > accessed February 2006.

José Treviño, interview by Tomás Escobar, Mario Compean, and Edgar Rosas, May 2000, Toppenish, Washington. Sueños de Un Pueblo: An Oral History Project of Crewport Washington < http://www.ccrh.org/comm/crewport/> accessed February 2006.

Frank González, interviewed by Dan Grooves and Wade Decoteau, May 2000, Ellensburg, Washington. Sueños de Un Pueblo: An Oral History Project of Crewport Washington < http://www.ccrh.org/comm/crewport/> accessed February 2006.

Lilia Villarreal, interviewed by Dan Grooves, Mario Compean, and Susan Bolton, March 17, 2000, Granger, Washington. Sueños de Un Pueblo: An Oral History Project of Crewport Washington < http://www.ccrh.org/comm/crewport/> accessed February 2006.

Tómas A. Villanueva, interviewed by Anne O'Neill and Sharon Walker, April 11, 2003 and June 7, 2003, Toppenish, Washington. University of Washington: Harry Bridges Labor Studies, United Farm Workers in WA <http://depts.washington.edu/pcls/ufw/index.htm> accessed February 2006.

NEWPAPERS

El Sol de Yakima. Thursday, June 26, 2006.
El Sol de Yakima. Thursday, July 13, 2006.
El Sol de Yakima. Thursday, July 27, 2006.

The University of Washington Daily. Tuesday, May 21, 1996.
!Viva! Thursday, August 31, 2006
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. Saturday, February 1, 1947.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Sunday February 2, 1947.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Saturday, February 8, 1947.
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. Sunday Progress Edition, February 22, 1947.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Sunday, May 18, 1947.
Walla Wallla Union-Bulletin. Sunday April, 5, 1947.
Walla Walla Union-Bulletin. Sunday April 11, 1948.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Sunday May 17, 1948.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Tuesday, May 2, 1949.
Walla Wall Union Bulletin. Monday, June 6, 1949.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. February 16, 1951.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Tuesday, April 10, 1951.
Walla Walla Union Bulletin. Sunday, May 3, 1952.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Acuña, Rodolfo. *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos—4th edition.* California: California State University at Northridge, 2000.

Apodaca, Maria L. "The Chicana Women: An Historical Materialist Perspective." *Latin American Perspectives.* 4.1-2 (Winter-Spring 77): 70-89.

Arrington, Leonard J. *Beet Sugar in the West: A History of the Utah-Idaho Sugar Company, 1891-1966*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1966.

Barber, Katrine. *Death of Celilo Falls.* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2005.

Boag, Peter. *Same-sex Affairs: Constructing and Controlling Homosexuality in the Pacific Northwest*. Los Angles, CA: University of California Press.

Boswell, Thomas D. "The Growth and Proportional Redistribution of the Mexican Stock Population in the United States: 1900-1970." *Mississippi Geographer*. 6 (Spring 1979): 57-76.

Carrigan, William D. and Clive Webb. "They Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 To 1928." *Journal of Social History*. 37.2 (2003): 411-438.

Castañeda, Antonia I, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and Joseph Sommers. *Literatura Chicana: Texto y Contexto*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972.

Castañeda, Antonia I. "Que Se Pudieran Defender (So You Could Defend Yourselves): Chicanas, Regional History, and National Discourses." *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*. 22.3 (2001): 116-142.

Chávez-García, Miroslava. *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770's to 1880's*. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2004.

Coalson, George. O. “Mexican Contract Labor in American Agriculture,” *The Southwestern Social Science Quarterly* 31.31 (1953):228-238.

Cutter, Donald D. *Malaspina and Galiano: Spanish Voyages on the Northwest Coast*. Seattle University: University of Washington Press, 1991.

Del Castillo, Adelaida R, ed. *Between Borders: Essays on Mexicana/Chicana History.* Encino, CA: Floricanto Press, 1989.

Daniels, Roger. Guarding *the Golden Door: American Immigration Policy and Immigrants since 1882.* New York: Farrar Straus & Giroux, 2005.

Edwards, Thomas G. “The Yakima County Agricultural Boom of 1905-1911.” *Pacific Historical Review* 56 (August 1987): 76-89.

Estrada, Daniel and Richard Santillan. “Chicanos in the Northwest and the Midwest United States: A History of Cultural and Political Commonality.” *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies*. 6 (1997): 194-228.

Flores, Lauro, ed. “The Pacific Northwest,” *The Americas Review*, Texas: Arte Público Press. 23.3-4 (Fall-Winter 1995).

Foley, Douglas, Clarice Mota, Donald E. Post, and Ignacio Lozano. *From Peones to Politics: Class and Ethnicity in a South Texas Town.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.

Foley, Neil. *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture.* Berkley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1997.

Gamboa, Erasmo. “Braceros in the Pacific Northwest: Laborers on the Domestic Front, 1942-1947,” *Pacific Historical Review* 56.3 (August 1987): 378-398.

Gamboa, Erasmo. “Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest: An Historical Perspective,” *El Grito* 6 (Summer 1973).

Gamboa, Erasmo. “Mexican American Railroaders in an American City: Pocatello, Idaho.” *Latinos in Idaho: Celebrando Cultura.* (2000): 35-42.

Gamboa, Erasmo. *Mexican Labor and World War II: Braceros in the Pacific Northwest, 1942-1947*. Austin: University of Texas, 1990.

Gamboa, Erasmo, “Mexican Labor into Washington State: A history, 1940-1950,”

Pacific Northwest Quarterly 72.3 (July 1981): 121-131.

Gamboa, Erasmo. "Mexican Mule Packers and Oregon's Second Regiment Mounted Volunteers, 1855-1856." *Oregon Historical Quarterly*. 92 (Spring 1991): 41-55.

Gamboa, Erasmo. "The Mexican Mule Pack System of Transportation in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia." *Journal of the West*. 29 (January 1990): 16-27.

Gamboa, Erasmo. *Voces Hispanas/Hispanic Voices of Idaho: Excepts from the Idaho Hispanic Oral History Project.* Idaho: Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs and Idaho Humanity Council, 1992.

Gamboa, Erasmo. "Washington's Mexican Heritage; A View Into the Spanish Explorations, 1774-1794," *Columbia* 3 (Fall 1989).

García, Gilberto and Carlos S. Maldonado, eds. *The Chicano Experience in the Pacific Northwest*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1995.

García, Gilberto and Jerry García, eds. *Memory, Community, and Activism: Mexican Migration and Labor in the Pacific Northwest.* Michigan: Julian Samora Research Institute, Michigan State University, 2005.

García, Jerry. **"**Chicana in northern Aztlán: An oral history of Dora Sanchez Treviño." *Frontiers***.** Boulder: 19.2 (1998): 16-37.

García, Juan R. *Operation Wetback: The Mass Deportation of Mexican Undocumented Workers in 1954*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1980.

González, G. Gilbert and Raúl Fernandez. "Empire and the Origins of Twentieth-Century Migration from Mexico to the United States," *Pacific Historical Review* 71:1 (February 2002): 19-57.

Gritos del Alma: *Chicano/Mexicano Music Traditions of Washington State.* Olympia: Washington State Arts Commission, 1993.

Gutierrez, David G. *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Gutiérrez, José Angel. *The Making of a Chicano Militant: Lessons from Cristal*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998.

Hollands, Harold F., Edgar B. Murd, and Ben H. Pubols. "Economic Conditions and Problems." Washington State Experimental Station Bulletin No. 414, July 1942.

Hernandez, José, Leo Estrada, and David Alvirez. "Census Data and the Problem of

Conceptually Defining the Mexican Population. *Social Science Quarterly.* 53 (March 1973): 671-687.

Jones, Lamar B and G. Randolph Rice. "Agricultural Labor in the Southwest: The Post Bracero Years." *Social Science Quarterly.* 61.1 (1980): 86-94.

Leonard, Olen E. and Lyle Saunders. *The Wetback in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, Occasional Papers VII.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1951.

Lipsitz, George. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.

Maldonado, Carlos S. *El Colegio Cesar Chavez, 1973-1983: A Chicano Struggle for Educational Self-Determination*. New York: Garland Publishing, 2000.

Maldonado, Carlos. "Mexicanos in Spokane, 1930-1992." *Revista Apple.* 3.1-2 (Spring 1992).

Mendoza de Sugiyama, Margarita. "Margarita Mendoza de Sugiyama," in Evans, Sara M, ed. *Journeys That Opened up the World: Women, Student Christian Movements, and Social Justice, 1955-1975.* New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 2003.

Memmi, Albert. *The Colonizer and the Colonized*. Expanded Edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1991.

Metamorfosis. University of Washington, Centro de Estudios Chicanos. 1 (1977).

Montejano, David. *Anglos and Mexicans: in the making of Texas 1836-1986.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

Ngai, Mae M. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Peña, Manuel. *The Texas-Mexican Conjunto: History of a Working-Class Music*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985.

Pizarro, Marcos. *Chicanas and Chicanos in School: Racial Profiling, Identity Battles, and Empowerment*. Texas: University of Texas Press, 2005.

Ruiz, Vicki L. *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth Century America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

San Miguel, Guadalupe Jr. *"Let all of them Take Heed:" Mexican Americans and the Campaign for Educational Equality in Texas, 1910-1981*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

Scruggs, Otey M. "Texas and the Bracero Program, 1942-1947." *Pacific Historical Review*. 1963 32(3): 251-264.

Slatta, Richard W. "Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest: An Historical Overview of Oregon's Chicanos," *Aztlán*. 6 (Fall 1975).

Slatta, Richard and Maxine P. Atkinson, "The Spanish Origin Population of Oregon and Washington" *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*. 70 (October 1979).

Stoler, Ann L., ed. *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of intimacy in North American History*. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

Robbins, William G. *Landscapes of Conflict: The Oregon Story, 1940-2000.* Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2004.

Rooney, James F. "The effects of Imported Mexican Farm Labor in a California County." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology.* 20.5 (October 1962): 513-521.

Valdes, Dennis N. "Legal Status and the Struggles of Farmworkers in West Texas and New Mexico, 1942-1993. *Latin American Perspectives*. Issue 84, 22.1 (Winter 1995): 117-137.

Yakima Golding Hop Farms. *Illustrated Presentation of Yakima Golding Hop Farms, Dedicated to Consumers of Hops Everywhere*. Yakima, Washington: Republic publishing Co., 1940.

Zamora, Emilio. *The World of the Mexican worker in Texas.* Texas: A&M University Press College Station, 1995.

DISSERTATIONS

Brunton, Anne M. "The Decision to Settle. A Study of Mexican-American Migrants." Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University, 1971.

Cavazos, Sylvia. "The Disposable Mexican: Operation Wetback 1954, The Deportation of Undocumented Workers in California and Texas." Masters Thesis, University of Texas-Pan American, August 1997.

Gamboa, Erasmo. "A History of Chicano People and the Development of Agriculture in the Yakima, Valley, Washington." Master Thesis, Seattle, University of Washington, 1973.

Gamboa, Erasmo, "Under the Thumb of Agriculture: Bracero and Mexican American Workers in the Pacific Northwest, 1940-1950." Doctoral Dissertation, University of Washington, 1984.

García, Jerry. "The history of a Chicano/Mexicano Community in the Pacific Northwest Quincy, Washington 1948-1993." Masters Thesis, Eastern Washington University, Fall 1993.

Lemos, Jesus Jr. "A History of the Chicano Political Involvement and the Organizational Efforts of the United Farm Workers Union in the Yakima Valley, Washington." Master's Thesis, University of Washington, 1974.

Maldonado, Marta Maria. "Harvesting the Fruits of Color Blindness: Racial Ideology in Employers' Discourse and the Everyday Production of Racial Inequality in Agricultural Work." Doctoral Dissertation, Washington State University, December, 2004.

Slatta, Richard W. "Chicanos in the Pacific Northwest: An Historical Overview of Oregon's Chicanos," Master's Thesis, Portland State University, 1974.

FILMS

Chicano! History of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement. Video. NLCC Educational Media, 1996.

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS

United States Census, Characteristics of Population, Vol. 3 Part 7. 1940. pgs. 344-345.

United States Census, Characteristics of Population, Vol. 2, Part 47. 1950. pg. 92.

WEBSITES

Jones, Errol D. "Invisible People: Mexican in Idaho History." *Idaho Issues Online.* Boise State University. (Fall 2005). <http://www.boisestate.edu/history/issuesonline/fall2005_issues/1f_mexicans.html> accessed March 2006.

Humanities Washington. "Skagit County-Thumbnail History." Historylink.org. <http://www.historylink.org/essays/printer_friendly/index.cfm?file_id=5663 > accessed March 2007.

"Migrant Workers in Washington State: A Boom to the Tree Fruit Industry." < http://www.sdcoe.k12.ca.us/SCORE/mice/migartcl.html> accessed February 2006.

Salas, Elizabeth. "Mexican Women in Washington State." HisoryLink.org < http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=5629> accessed March 2006.

"Park History: Military Base Reuse in Seattle." Seattle Parks and Recreation Homepage. <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/history/military.htm> accessed March 2007.

"Yakima Irrigation Project." Bureau of Reclamation Homepage
<http://www.usbr.gov/dataweb/projects/washington/yakima/history.html#Yakim>
accessed February 2006.