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The Detroit Mexican Colonia From 1920
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THE DETROIT MEXICAN COLONIA FROM 1920
TO 1932: IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL AND
EDUCATIONAL POLICY

By

Louis Christopher Murillo

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

The Detroit Mexican Colonia From 1920
to 1932: Implications For Social and
Educational Policy.

by

Louis C. Murillo

Not much has been written about the Detroit Mexican Colonia although it comprises that city's largest minority group. The history of Mexicans in Detroit has spanned as many as eight decades and includes an event called the Mexican Repatriation Campaign of 1932.

Knowledge of the history of groups contributes to better understanding of the socio-cultural and linguistic uniqueness of peoples. It also leads to better comprehension of the motives for human behavior and those events which influenced social and educational policy.

This historical research focuses on the development of the Mexican colonia in Detroit and the primary influences of its growth during the decade of the 1920s. It also outlines its dramatic decline in the 1930s as a result of the depression and particularly in response to the Mexican Repatriation Campaign of 1932.

Repatriation was officially instigated by the Mexican Government to provide unemployed and underemployed Mexicans

in the United States with an opportunity to become self-sufficient in their homeland and utilize their American-acquired skills and knowledge for the development of Mexico. United States involvement in Repatriation centered around eliminating further competition for low skill jobs and reducing welfare aid to unemployed Mexicans.

Two research methods were used to collect data for the study. On the development of the colonia and the details of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign, documents were examined in the Catholic Chancery of the Archdiocese of Detroit, the Holy Sacrament records of the churches serving the colonia, collections of the Detroit Public Library and Detroit Institute of Arts, local newspapers, (both English and Spanish), and reports from the Immigration and Naturalization Service and Bureau of the Census. Second, to gain personal perceptions of this period of history, eleven Mexicans from the colonia who were not repatriated and who are still surviving, were interviewed in depth.

Inclusion of information on Mexicans and Mexican Americans in Detroit Public School social studies texts is minimal. This research, then, may be used as a resource in studying Michigan history. It is anticipated that this data can contribute to the multicultural awareness of all students.

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by

Louis C. Murillo

1981

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my father, Roman Murillo, who lived through that era researched in the study and who provided me with the motivation to conduct this work.

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Chapter 1

THE RESEARCH, ITS SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Mexicans have lived in Detroit, Michigan, from as early as 1918 when the Ford Motor Company recruited several hundred Mexican students to learn the automobile industry.¹

Throughout the decade of the 1920's, the Detroit Mexican colonia experienced a significant population growth probably reaching its peak in 1929 with a reported 15,000 residing primarily in two distinct barrios.² During the Great Depression, Detroit suffered great economic loss as well as a drastic reduction in its Mexican population.

Problem

The Mexican Repatriation Campaign took place during the Great Depression years of the early 1930's and was designed to voluntarily remove Mexican Nationals and Mexican Americans to Mexico in an effort to ease the financial burden on local and state welfare agencies throughout the United States. Various states with a significant Mexican population took part in the Mexican Repatriation Campaign; Michigan was one of three midwestern states. Mexican repatriation efforts in Detroit, Michigan, were conducted in 1932, and to date, the event has been largely ignored by Michigan historians and textbook publishers.³ Abraham Hoffman, Mexican historian, has stated

that with few exceptions there are no scholarly, documented accounts of the contributions and experiences of Mexican Americans in the United States. A case in point is the repatriation phenomenon.⁴ This study will attempt to fill the information void relative to the establishment of the Detroit Mexican colonia and Mexican Repatriation Campaign in Michigan in 1932.

Repatriation was a significant factor in the economic and general welfare of the Mexican colonia throughout the United States. An omission of this factor in an historic portrayal of the Mexican in the United States distorts reality.

Purpose

Many factors influenced the settlement trends of Mexicans in Detroit, Michigan. The primary factors include the political and socio-economic conditions which existed in Mexico that caused Mexicans to emigrate to the north until the time of the Great Depression and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

The history of the Mexican migrant patterns and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign is a complex one. Economic and nativist pressures affected Mexican population patterns in the United States and Mexico during this era. Likewise, international policy and immigration laws had an influence on population trends between the two countries.

Repatriation efforts of Mexicans in Michigan shows the impact that the Great Depression had upon the colonia in Detroit. The purpose of this study is to investigate the development of the Detroit Mexican barrios and the factors involved in the Mexican Repatriation Campaign as it occurred in Detroit in 1932. To document this, the researcher proposes to develop a chronological history of the repatriation efforts in Detroit and the constellation of factors impacting the movement.

This historical research will provide a better understanding of the early experiences of a significant ethnic minority group in Michigan. It is anticipated that this information will be useful to historians, educators, sociologists, and others interested in obtaining a data base about Mexicans as they became established in Detroit, Michigan.

This research will be especially useful as an educational resource to educators, particularly those teaching social studies. The material may be presented as supplementary information in those classes studying Michigan history, economics, or the depression years. The information aims to raise the multicultural consciousness of students regarding a significant social phenomenon which occurred in Michigan. It may also make the student more aware of the interrelationship of events and racial and ethnic groups in the development of history and their continuous impact on policy issues. This is true especially of events which may be perceived as controversial and may be documented by historians.

This research also raises some questions concerning social policy issues since 1935 regarding the Spanish-speaking. Although it is sometimes difficult to pinpoint cause and effect rationale to historical events, especially those not adequately documented such as the Mexican Repatriation Campaign, one can speculate on the implications which the depression and repatriation may have had on several social policies developed in areas such as immigration, labor relations, and education which have impacted the Spanish-speaking in this state and in the country.

Methodology

The writer used two techniques to collect data for this study. First, all available written documents were examined for material relevant to the development of the Detroit Mexican colonia and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign in 1932. Second, personal interviews were conducted with Mexican residents of Detroit who experienced the Great Depression in order to gain insights into the development of the Mexican community in Detroit as well as to obtain personal perceptions of what transpired during repatriation efforts.

The review of the literature included research in the United States National Archives, the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services, the Detroit Catholic Arch-Diocese Archives, the Burton Historical Collection of the Detroit Public Library and personal documents from community persons in the Detroit area.

All interviews were tape recorded and later transcribed in their entirety. A common set of questions were asked of all persons interviewed. These questions centered on the development of the Detroit colonia and those factors related to the Repatriation Campaign in Detroit. This research technique was used in order to identify the motives which prompted Mexicans to emigrate to Detroit and to reconstruct as accurately as possible the colonia as it appeared from 1920 until the Great Depression years.

Organization and Relevance of Chapters

Chapter II. Factors in Mexican Emigration Patterns to the United States: Mexican emigration to the United States was influenced by key factors which were socio-economic and political in nature. This chapter will focus attention on those factors and their influence on the establishment of the Mexican colonia in Detroit in relation to the growth of industry and agriculture in Michigan.

Chapter III. The Detroit, Michigan, Mexican Colonia--1918-1930: The first recorded influx of Mexicans to Detroit was in 1918 when several hundred were recruited to work for the Ford Motor Company. From that time, their numbers grew in relation to the corresponding need for labor in the many industries of Detroit. This chapter will look at the various facets of the growth of the Detroit Mexican colonia until 1930, or shortly after the start of the Great Depression.

Chapter IV. The Catholic Church and the Mexican Colonia in Detroit: The great majority of Mexicans are of the Roman Catholic faith. As the numbers of Mexicans in Detroit became more significant, their growth warranted the establishment of a Mexican Catholic Church: Our Lady of Guadalupe. This chapter will investigate the influence of the Catholic Church in the Mexican community in Detroit. A testimony to the growth and decline trends in the Mexican colonia during the time period researched will be analyzed from data collected from Holy Sacrament Records of the six catholic churches in the immediate vicinity of the Detroit barrio.

Chapter V. Personal perceptions of the Detroit Mexican Colonia: The history of the Detroit Mexican colonia has not been attempted in a scholarly fashion. To date, the account of the development of the colonia has been largely limited to an oral history contained and circulated among the members of the Mexican community. It is estimated that approximately eleven Mexicans currently living in the vicinity of Detroit were among the first settlers of the colonia. This chapter will report the perceptions of those Mexicans by using the following themes to develop the personal history of the growth and the decline of the colonia and the implications of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign:

- a) Family background and early childhood.
- b) Motivating factors which instigated immigration and migration to Detroit, Michigan.

- c) Life style in the Detroit Mexican community.
- d) Discrimination patterns in Detroit.
- e) The effects of the Great Depression.
- f) The Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

Chapter IV. Factors which Influenced the Mexican Repatriation Campaign: The economic stability of many cities in the United States was greatly affected by the Great Depression. As competition for available employment became keener, the Mexican, because he was willing to work for a lower wage, increasingly became a threat to American working men.

Chapter VI will delve into the sentiments and nativist attitudes which helped to condemn the Mexicans as perpetrators of the economic crisis of the Great Depression. In addition, this chapter will look at printed media and the themes which highlighted the cause of Mexican exclusionists throughout the depression years in the United States.

Chapter VII. Detroit, Michigan, During the Great Depression: The depression greatly affected industrial Detroit. Chapter VII will look at the impact the Great Depression had upon the conditions of employment, and the relief programs which were initiated to ease the economic hardships of the times.

Chapter VIII. The Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign 1932: The Mexican Repatriation Campaign in Detroit involved many principals. This chapter will research the role of those principals, which include: the state government of

Michigan; the Mexican government acting through the Mexican Consul in Detroit; the State Immigration Department; the Public Welfare Department, and the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants. Some historians believe that immigration laws and international policy between Mexico and the United States were predicated to a large degree upon the influence of industrial and agricultural enterprises which looked after their own interests by advocating unlimited access to the United States by job seeking Mexicans. In this manner, industry and agriculture could continue to rely on an abundant and energetic labor supply emigrating from Mexico which was largely unskilled, under-educated, and from an agrarian background.

Chapter IV. Implications of the Study: This chapter will serve to summarize the salient points of the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign. A final focus will be to recommend further research possibilities relative to the issue of Mexican repatriation and the historical development of the Detroit colonia in general.

Limitations of the Study

The Mexican Repatriation Campaign has not appeared worthy of documentation by United States historians. As a result, there clearly exists a void in secondary sources of information such as texts, in dealing with the Mexican Repatriation Campaign, particularly as it occurred in Michigan. Furthermore, the Public Welfare Agency in Detroit has undergone extensive reorganization throughout the years; consequently, many of the records and statistics regarding the Mexican Repatriation

Campaign have been either destroyed or misplaced since the event occurred in 1932.

It has already been determined that a cadre of Mexican and Mexican Americans still remaining in Detroit were living in the area prior to the time of the Great Depression. This number has been estimated to be approximately eleven people. This small number constitutes a major limitation to the study, particularly since as many as five thousand Mexicans may have been involved in Michigan repatriation attempts. In conjunction with this point is the fact that few, if any, repatriated Mexicans found their way back to Detroit following the Great Depression. If a complete picture of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign is to be portrayed, interpretation must be provided by those Mexicans who were repatriated as well as those who elected to stay in Detroit during the Great Depression.

The interview process, although an effective tool for collecting data, has some perceived limitations in this study. The Mexican Repatriation Campaign took place well over forty years ago. The ages of many of the individuals interviewed ranged from the late sixties to the mid-seventies. Some who were interviewed displayed remarkable recall of dates, names, and events; however, in other cases it was difficult for some to recall an accurate account of that period, particularly with respect to the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. In some instances, several interviewing sessions had to be scheduled in order to record all the necessary information. In those cases where married couples were interviewed together, conflicting perceptions of the facts necessitated individual interviewing sessions after the initial meeting.

CHAPTER II

FACTORS IN MEXICAN IMMIGRATION PATTERNS TO THE UNITED STATES

Mexicans have been a part of the development of what is now called the American Southwest long before the Anglo American came to this part of the country. As westward settlements by Anglo Americans became established, they soon posed a threat to the Mexican form of government already in existence. Increasing numbers of Anglo Americans moving into northwestern Mexico resulted in disputes over territorial boundaries between the United States and Mexico and eventually led to a bitter war. Disputes over ownership arose because at this time northwestern Mexico was not considered by Mexicans to be a desirable place in which to live; hence, it was sparsely populated. Much of the land was arid and difficult, if not impossible, to till. On the eve of the Mexican-American War, there were only 75,000 Spanish speaking people living in this region, but they or their forbears had been living there for generations.¹

Although a subsequent agreement between the two countries was established through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Mexico and the United States separated politically but never culturally. Therefore, it may not have been surprising for Mexicans moving north into the newly established United States to feel that they were in an environment geographically,

culturally, and historically familiar. Unlike many other immigrants, Mexicans did not cross an ocean and enter into a new and completely unfamiliar land.

The motives which inspired Mexican immigrants to settle in the United States were not unlike those which brought countless numbers of Europeans to this country. Mexican immigration into the United States was largely dependent upon the socio-political climate which existed in Mexico at various points in its history. An equally important variable was the condition of the economic situation between the two nations. In many cases the results of all these variables created an unmonitored ebb and flow of Mexican immigrants into the United States. Carey McWilliams, noted Mexican historian, describes the phenomenon of Mexican movement into the United States as dependent upon "push and pull factors." Push factors are those that set people in motion, whereas pull factors are those that attract them to a particular place.² These push and pull factors, as described by McWilliams, help explain the dynamics behind the two great waves of Mexican immigration which crossed the border during the two decades from 1910 to 1930.

The industrial and agricultural development of the American Southwest beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century accounted for the gradual increase in

Mexican immigration into the United States.³ One of the most noteworthy developments in agriculture which served as a "pull" stimulus for Mexican immigration was the establishment of sugar beet growing and refining techniques in Watsonville, California, by Claus Spreckles in 1888.⁴ In order to protect and encourage the sugar beet industry in the United States, Congress passed the Dingley Tariff Act of 1897, which placed a heavy duty of 78.87 percent on imported sugar.⁵ The Dingley Tariff Act made the sugar beet industry lucrative in the United States for the first time in agricultural history. However, because the labor required to tend the sugar beets was seasonal as well as backbreaking, many American laborers, shunned having anything to do with this new industry. The sugar beet industry, therefore, became dependent upon a labor force made up of many immigrants, few of whom were white. Japanese, Mexicans, and Filipinos were hired to thin, top, and harvest sugar beets. Mexican workers journeyed north from south Texas communities to work in sugar beet fields in Montana, Colorado, the Dakotas, Michigan, and Ohio.⁶

As the amount of sugar beet acreage increased, a corresponding need for farm labor developed. In 1927, it was estimated that of 58,000 sugar beet workers employed on United States farms, 30,000 were Mexicans.⁷ In Michigan,

Hungarians and Russians were used initially for the sugar beet industry; however, these groups soon gave way to Mexican labor, primarily because contracted braceros and Mexican migrants showed little desire for farm ownership or union organization, as had their predecessors.⁸

Mexican and Mexican American farm labor was highly sought after by Michigan sugar beet farmers. Often illegal aliens were recruited along with legal Mexican and Mexican Americans in Texas border towns to work in Michigan sugar beet fields. At an immigration inquiry in 1918 in Washington, D.C., a Michigan sugar executive was asked why his agents recruited at Laredo. "Because the river is narrower at that point," was his significant reply.⁹ Other border towns, such as El Paso and Brownsville, and San Antonio farther north, also became favorite recruiting places for the enganchistas, labor recruiters, whose impact on labor was felt as far south as Mexico's Mesa Central.¹⁰

It has been estimated that fully half of the workers brought to Michigan during the first two decades of the twentieth century entered the United States illegally. These illegal aliens had either avoided paying the required head tax or had failed to take the mandatory literacy test required of all immigrants entering the United States.

★ In 1915 the Michigan Sugar Company brought the first train loads of Mexicans to Michigan. For the next fourteen

years the Michigan sugar beet industry served as the employment magnet which was to "pull" Mexican labor from Texas. Though exact statistics are not available, it has been estimated that at least 2,000 Mexicans were brought in yearly by the sugar industries between 1915 and 1929.¹¹ Michigan Sugar, which operated eight of the sixty-eight mills in the state, was the largest importer and brought in 635 full and 74 half-fares on its last train load in 1929. According to officials of the company, their annual average was about this number for the fourteen year period. The estimate of 2,000 annually was based on the calculation that approximately 4,000 hands used in the beet fields were Mexicans and that the annual turnover was 50 percent, necessitating constant recruiting to harvest the beet crop.

While the Michigan sugar industry, no doubt, imported the bulk of Mexican labor, at no time did the state absorb more than a fraction of this new immigrant group. Discrepancies exist as to the approximate percentage of Mexicans that ultimately settled in Michigan after leaving jobs in sugar related industries. William H. Wallace, president of Michigan Sugar Company, estimated the amount to be not more than 50 percent, whereas the officials of the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants located in Detroit put the number between 80 and 90 percent.¹² Regardless of the exact percentage of settled out Mexicans in Michigan it can be assumed that there was a

substantial number who were lured or actively recruited for work in the sugar industry. Once in Michigan, Mexican laborers often investigated employment opportunities in other areas of the state. Indeed, Mexican immigrants who came to the United States were gainfully employed in a variety of unskilled or some skilled occupations in all regions of the country.

Cotton, unlike sugar beets, was already an established crop in the deep South and eastern Texas at the turn of the century. The passage of the Reclamation Act of 1902 provided federal funds for the construction of large scale irrigation and land reclamation plans which outlined a development policy for the arid West and, more than any other single factor, had more to do with the economic growth of the Southwest.¹³ Irrigation permitted further expansion of the cotton industry, which became a principal factor in increased need for Mexican labor. Because of the favorable growing conditions, early irrigation farming was highly intensive in the Southwest as compared to other agricultural regions of the United States. In some areas, as in the Imperial Valley and other winter gardens of the Southwest, yields of two and three crops a year were not uncommon. Due to the relative closeness to Mexico and its abundant labor resources, the Southwest agricultural enterprises and their increased needs for farm labor served as a "pull" force which drew Mexicans across the border to tend and harvest crops. Hence, irrigation

and cheap labor became the key ingredients which transformed agriculture in the Southwest into a boom industry in less than two decades.

Two other factors which facilitated the growth of agriculture in the Southwest were urbanization and scientific technology. One of the results of urbanization was the disappearance of the family garden and elimination of much of the traditional home canning process, which in the past had provided the American family with many of its vegetables. Aided by the technological advancement of the refrigerator car, which allowed produce to be transported far beyond the geographic limits previously possible, the Southwest agricultural enterprise had truly come into its own.¹⁴ By 1929 the Southwest was producing between 300,000 and 500,000 carloads of vegetables, fruits, and truck crops or 40 percent of the nation's supply of these products. Mexican labor constituted from 65-85 percent of the common labor used in the production of these crops.¹⁵

Mexicans were employed in a wide range of unskilled labor in the United States besides agricultural work. According to the census of 1930, 70,799 Mexicans were engaged in transportation and communications, mostly as common laborers on the western railroad lines and as maintenance workers on the street car systems of the Southwest. The Santa Fé Railroad, for instance, reported that it was then employing

14,000 Mexicans; the Rock Island 3,000; the Great Northern, and the Southern Pacific 10,000.¹⁶ In Michigan, the Pennsylvania Railroad was instrumental in bringing many Mexicans into the state, and even enlisted some of them on their own home soil.¹⁷ Many of the Mexican railroad labor camps subsequently became small settlements or barrios within established communities where construction or repair work was being conducted. In fact, the Mexican colonias in Chicago and Kansas City developed as an outgrowth of railroad labor camps.¹⁸

The mining industries of the Southwest were yet another facet of United States economy which was affected by Mexican labor. The census of 1930 listed 16,668 Mexicans engaged in the extraction of minerals: 3,880 as coal miners, principally in Colorado and New Mexico; and 12,623 other operators, mostly in the copper mines of the Southwest. It is a fact that the mines of Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona attracted so many Mexican miners from the states of Sonora and Chihuahua that mining interests in these northern Mexican states advertised for Mexicans in the United States to return to the mines in their native states. The Mexican consul at El Paso, Texas, was asked to publicize in his area the need for workers in Mexican mines.¹⁹

The steel industries of the Midwest served as another "pull" factor to attract Mexican laborers. In 1923 the

National Tube Company, an affiliate of U.S. Steel, brought 1,300 Mexicans from Texas to work in its plant in Lorain, Ohio. That same year the Bethlehem Steel Company imported about one thousand Mexicans to work in its plants in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.²⁰ As early as 1916, Mexican laborers began to appear in the Chicago industrial area, in Gary, Indiana Harbor, and the Calumet region of Indiana. These Mexicans were primarily hired as track laborers and later were employed in steel mills, the packing plants, and the tanneries.²¹

There were other related factors which resulted in massive Mexican immigration to the United States. The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, the Gentleman's Agreement with Japan in 1907, and the Immigration Acts of 1917, 1921, and 1924, were all instrumental in helping to eliminate low skill labor competition for Mexicans throughout the United States, particularly in the Southwest and California. These Congressional Acts were designed to establish quota systems on immigration or to stop specific groups altogether from entering the United States. Since this action directly affected the unskilled labor classes which industry and agriculture sorely needed, it resulted in a clear and open invitation for Mexican immigrants to fill the labor vacuum which resulted.

The Chinese Exclusion Act was passed by Congress in 1882 in an effort to stop Orientals from coming to the United States. The Chinese were the first and largest source of agricultural foreign labor used in California. They were recruited by the thousands for work in the gold mines in the 1850's and then on the Central Pacific Railroad in the 1860's. By 1870, the coolies constituted 10 percent of the farm labor. Their numbers had risen to 132,000 by 1882, and by 1886 the Chinese were doing 90 percent of California's farm work.²² Organized labor, unable to compete with coolie workers, kept Californians agitated over the problem, but the farmers, on the other hand, needed large numbers of hand laborers. Several Anti-Chinese riots stimulated enough nationalistic sentiment against the Chinese that Congress subsequently passed the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, which served to reduce greatly their numbers, particularly in California.

To counteract the effects of the Chinese Exclusion Act, Japanese agricultural workers were brought in by farmers to take the place of Chinese farm hand. American farmers after 1900 began to resist Japanese immigration for two reasons: 1) because these Orientals bought up choice farm land and proved to be better farmers than their American neighbors, and 2) because the Japanese tended to farm for themselves and, therefore, were not available as agricultural workers--

the very reason farmers wanted them in the United States.²³ Like the Chinese, the Japanese became the victims of unpleasant occurrences as Americans, particularly in California, attempted once again to quell the threat of the "yellow peril." In 1907 the United States and Japan made a "Gentlemen's Agreement" by which Japan was to self-impose restrictions on her nationals from emigrating to the United States.

The immigration laws of 1917, 1921, and 1924 were intended to restrict immigration from southern and eastern Europe to the United States. Prior to this time the majority of Europeans who came to this country were Protestant and, for the most part, from Germany, Scandinavia, France, the British Isles, and from northern Europe in general.²⁴ New immigrants were usually Catholic and of Latin or Slavic origin and were thought to be less assimilable. Immigration laws had three components: literacy tests, head taxes, and quotas. Although the immigration laws were intended to keep Eastern Hemisphere populations from entering the United States, the literacy test and head tax components of the law drastically influenced Mexican immigration. In 1917 the number of Mexican immigrants to the United States dropped by 25,000 from the 56,000 figure of the previous year.²⁵ This drastic decline can be attributed in part to the imposed literacy test and the \$8.00 head tax as stipulated in the Act.

In 1917 the United States was at war and a large void was left in the labor market of this nation. As the summer of 1917 approached, farm owners issued a plea for labor, as did the railroad and mining industries. Various interest groups succeeded in obtaining modifications in the Immigration Act of 1917, which had blocked sufficient numbers of Mexican laborers from entering the United States. Pressure from agricultural and industrial interest groups subsequently influenced the Secretary of Labor to waive the literacy test, the \$8.00 head tax, and the prohibition of contract labor.²⁶

The 1921 and 1924 Immigration Acts were also designed to impose quota restrictions on European immigration to the United States. These Acts were often called "Percentage Acts" and implied precisely that. In 1921, for example, the Act applied a 3 percent quota using the census enumeration of 1910 as its basis. The 1924 Act applied a 2 percent quota to the census enumeration of 1890 until 1927, at which time total immigration into the United States from quota nations was not to exceed 150,000 per annum.²⁷ To discourage European entry to the United States via Mexico, the residence requirement for immigrants from a nation of the Western Hemisphere was lengthened from one to five years. Also, all immigrants were required to pay a \$10.00 visa fee.

The \$10.00 visa fee only served to increase illegal Mexican immigration. In fact, every new requirement for entrance increased illegal Mexican entry across the international border. Secretary of Labor James J. Davis reported that after the implementation of the 1921 Immigration Act, between 200,000 and 300,000 Mexicans crossed the border illegally in the twelve months from 1922 to 1923. It was Davis' opinion that literacy tests, taxes, and fees would only serve to encourage clandestine entry.²⁸

There were some factions in the United States which advocated more stringent controls on Mexican immigration. Both the Box Bill (1925) and the Harris Bill (1926) were introduced to enforce quota systems on Mexicans not to exceed 1,575 persons.²⁹ The proponents of these bills were labor unions, social workers, and nationalists: however, these groups were defeated by the railroads and, especially, by large agricultural interests who wanted great numbers of peon laborers who could and would return home after the harvest seasons.

If economics played a vital role in supplying the "pull" forces which attracted Mexican labor to the United States, it also provided the "push" force in Mexico which set thousands of emigrants on their way north. The labor conditions in the United States during the first two decades of the twentieth century could not have been totally

successful in causing the massive Mexican immigration that occurred had not some equally compelling force been at work stimulating Mexicans to leave their country in search of better economic opportunities. The most influential "push" factor in Mexico which resulted in a period of violent social-political confusion and unsettled economic times was instigated by Francisco I. Madero when he declared the seventh presidential election of Porfirio Díaz in 1910 illegal. The real issues were social and economic in nature and far deeper and more basic than the contested election. The ensuing ten years, 1910 to 1920, brought on a continuous struggle for political leadership, which resulted in military control, civil uprising, and a significant breakdown of agricultural productivity. The hardships brought on by the Mexican Revolution were instrumental in providing the "push" which resulted in massive emigration to the United States.

Accurate immigration information is difficult to acquire because of the large numbers of illegal aliens who always managed to cross the border undetected. However, Julio Duran Ochoa made a study of Mexican demography and estimated that 46,491 emigrated in 1910; 73,528 in 1911; and that in 1912 the number reached 98,595.³⁰ Along the border, the American immigration officials reported as early as 1912 that an "inconsiderable number" of Mexicans sought refuge in the United States and promised to return to Mexico after the revolution.³¹

A factor that facilitated accessibility to the United States from Mexico's interior by emigrants was the establishment of the railroad system. One of the important features of the Porfirio Díaz regime was the development of that system of transportation. Railroad construction not only provided much needed employment to low socio-economic classes of Mexicans but also created direct linkages with northern Mexico, heretofore made inaccessible because of the arid wasteland and difficult terrain between the international border and the central mesa zone. The National Railway connected Vera Cruz with the nation's capital; the Central Railway joined Mexico City with the American border at Ciudad Juárez; and several other lines brought Jalisco, Guanajuato, and San Luis Potosí in touch with Mexico City.³²

During the time that Mexico was constructing the railroad tracks in its northern states, it was necessary to continually recruit labor from the interior states. In part, this rapid and excessive turnover was due to the closeness of the United States with its attraction of higher wages. United States railroad construction jobs paid \$1.00 to \$1.25 per day while in Mexico the wage was only half that amount.³³ With the completion of the Mexico railways in the north, the state was set for the mass exodus of emigrants to the United States during the turmoil of the

Mexican Revolution.

Texas usually became the first stop for many Mexican immigrants. Census statistics show a marked increase in Mexicans throughout the Southwest for the years 1910-1920. In many cases, however, Mexican immigrants "leap frogged" from the interior of Mexico to the industrial centers of the Midwest. Dr. Paul S. Taylor, economist, states that these immigrants literally passed through and beyond their compatriots of the Mexican northern border states who had made the shorter migration to the adjacent southwestern United States.³⁴

Detroit, Michigan, fast earning its reputation as the Motor City of the world, attracted many Mexicans during the years 1918-1930. Included in this group were those who "leap frogged" from the central mesa states of Mexico to urban Detroit. Although those interviewed in Chapter V constituted a relatively small number in comparison to the total Mexican population of Detroit during the years 1918-1930, Taylor's "leap frog" theory can in part be substantiated.

CHAPTER III
GROWTH TRENDS AND SOCIAL PATTERNS
OF THE DETROIT MEXICAN COLONIA, 1918-1930

Not all Mexicans came to Michigan to work in the sugar beet fields. Many came directly to Detroit to work in the various auto-related industries. The Mexican Colonia in Detroit first grew to noticeable size in 1918, when several hundred Mexicans came to the city to work in the motor car factories as student trainees. All of these students were at least high school graduates, many of them graduates of the National University of Mexico, who came to Detroit to attend the Ford Trade School as preparation for work in Latin American countries in connection with the Ford enterprises. Competition for these few selected positions at the Ford Trade School was brisk in Mexico, as stated in The Detroit News in a quote issued by Joaquin Terranzas, Detroit's Mexican Consul: "There are literally thousands of young men who want to come to Detroit from Mexico to take advantage of this opportunity."¹ Those eventually selected by the Ford Motor Company split their time between factory work and regular daily hours in the Trade School. When these young men became fully qualified, they were sent back to Mexico to continue under the employment of the Ford Motor Company.

In December, 1920, the colonia was estimated to have 8,000 members, but two months later the total number had dwindled drastically to 2,500 persons. An explanation for this significant decline was offered by sociologist Norman D. Humphrey. "Most of those who left Detroit had worked in the sugar beet fields in the summer and came to Detroit for the winter at the promise of jobs."² It is obvious that the expectation of employment did not materialize for many and subsequently resulted in the departure of large numbers of Mexicans from Detroit. The Mexican government helped the exodus by paying return fares to Mexico.³ However, those who stayed to fill the jobs left empty by Americans serving in the war effort were characterized as "unobtrusive, industrious and patriotic."⁴

The influence of the sugar beet industry cannot be underestimated in providing industrial Detroit with a continuous supply of Mexican labor throughout the decade of the 1920's. Outside of Ford Motor Company's initial effort in 1918, there is no evidence to show that the automobile industry ever recruited Mexican workers along the international border, as did the Michigan sugar enterprise. For the most part, this activity was not necessary because of the large reservoir of willing workers of all nationalities and races eager to work in the Motor City. In addition, the 50 percent turnover in the Michigan

sugar beet fields shunted Mexicans into other areas of labor, namely the auto industry of Detroit, Michigan.

An account of an ex-beet field worker is that of Martin Rosas, who along with other recruited Mexicans, filled twenty railroad coaches coming to Detroit during World War I: "When the beets were picked, we were offered a house and fuel if we wanted to stay in Michigan. The job looked good for the next season. I figured I could get by until spring, so I decided to stay. But when winter came, I found that the house wouldn't stand the cold weather. So I moved to town, and began hunting a job."⁵

Much like Martin Rosas, eighty percent of the Mexicans brought to Michigan were farmers in their own country.⁶ Perhaps many of the agrarian Mexicans would have remained on farm land once in Michigan if it had offered steady employment on a year round basis. With the harvest season completed, some drifted to the cities because they could not find odd jobs to tide them over between crops; others left because they were inadequately housed against the rigors of a Michigan winter.

All Mexicans brought to Michigan for the sugar beet industry had the option of returning to the Southwest at the company's expense or of remaining in Michigan at their own. There is no record that the sugar industry wasted any pressure in persuading their mobile labor force

to return to the Southwest for a very basic reason: if the Mexican laborer returned to Mexico, the company not only lost a worker, but also forfeited the railroad fare to the border, 2000 miles away. If, instead, the Mexican worker remained in Michigan and drifted to the city, the company was still ahead the amount of his transportation.

Mexicans who did drop out of the sugar beet fields to work in the auto industry soon carried the message of high wages and plentiful work to their compatriots in Texas and Mexico. Evidence that the message was, indeed, passed on to others can be seen in the significant growth in the Mexican colonia from the years 1920-1929.

Few statistical sources accurately describe the development of the Mexican colonia of Detroit, Michigan, during its rapid industrial growth. In fact, outside of the southwestern states, Mexicans were not included in the census data of any state until 1930. In 1920, after initially excluding the Mexican from the U.S. Census Bureau Reports, an adjustment was made to more accurately describe this nation's Mexican population. Population adjustments made to enumerate the Mexican were made using the following instructions: "all persons born in Mexico, or having parents born in Mexico, who are not definitely white, Negro, Indian, Chinese, or Japanese, should be returned as Mexican." Using this criteria, the census

bureau estimated that 1344 Mexicans were living in Michigan in 1920; of these, 683 resided in Detroit.⁸ It becomes strikingly apparent that this figure varies significantly from the 8000 Detroit Mexicans that Humphrey quotes for the same year.

There are other examples of conflicting statistics which attempt to describe the Mexican demography of Detroit. A. M. Smith, writing about the colonia in Detroit in 1926, put their number at 5000 with 15,000 others scattered throughout Michigan.⁹ In the same year, Charles D. Cameron estimated the Mexican colony at between 7,000 to 8,000 people; whereas, the Spanish community included a population of 5,000 to 6,000 people.¹⁰ Both of these figures are significantly higher than the 1,946 Mexicans reported in the city-wide census for the previous year, 1925.¹¹

Perhaps part of the explanation behind the wide variance in population reporting lies in the high mobility rate of Michigan's early Mexican labor force. As high as sixty percent of the Mexican immigrants in 1926 were listed as laborers who, as such, were highly adaptable to many kinds of unskilled jobs.¹² If work were not available in one region, Mexican laborers would pursue other jobs in the vicinity or seek out employment in another area. Another factor contributing to the high mobility of this group is that the majority of Mexican immigrants were males.¹³

Young, single males became a transient labor force scarcely adapting to the American way of life.

In many ways the mobile Mexican was a boon to American industries. He was not a permanent problem in any real sense since he journeyed between the United States and Mexico, depending upon the labor demand at the time. For this reason the Mexican colonia fluctuated correspondingly to the need for labor in Detroit's industries.

It is difficult to determine which data for the decade 1920-1929 are most accurate for describing the number of Mexicans in the colonia of Detroit. Suffice to say, the Mexican colony began as a small, closely knit ethnic group among other immigrants in the low rent areas of the city. The group consisted of those who "leap frogged" from the interior states of Mexico to Detroit as well as those who came to Michigan from Texas to work in the sugar beet fields and who subsequently migrated to the Motor City to work in its auto industries. As their numbers increased, more clearly defined barrios became established, and distinct social patterns set the Detroit Mexican apart from other immigrant groups in the city.

By the mid-1920's the Mexican community of Detroit had grown to such proportions as to warrant the establishment of its own Catholic Church. The colonia's social expression and group cohesiveness were promoted

by the many religious, fraternal, and social clubs which were organized during this rapid period of population growth. The many organizations which mushroomed in the Mexican community prompted Detroit reporter Charles D. Cameron to remark that the Mexicans were the best organized national group in Detroit. Perhaps the first recorded festival of Mexicans in Detroit occurred in 1920, el día de la Virgen de Guadalupe, Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which commemorated the apparition of Our Lady to Juan Diego.¹⁴ Mexican Catholics, both in Mexico and in the United States, celebrate this religious occasion on December 12.

One of the oldest organizations in the Detroit Mexican community, outside of religious oriented groups, was the Circulo Mutualista Mexicana, the Mexican Mutual Circle Club, which came into existence in 1923.¹⁵ This organization, which consisted of the elite of the colony, is regarded as the parent club that spawned other social and fraternal groups. From the dissenting membership of the Circulo, a number of colony societies were formed, some of which flourished in later years, others of which disbanded or merged with other groups. Several girls' clubs were formed, but many of these disappeared with the marriage of their members.¹⁶

Although many different organized groups appeared in the colonia during the decade of 1920, the groups had much

in common. Cultural activities of these organizations consisted primarily of two types of festivals: dances or celebrations given by the organizations for their own financial benefit and for the enjoyment of their constituents and the colony in general; and, the formal expression of patriotism by the colony on the occasion of Mexican holidays. The latter holidays were often called the fiesta patrias and consisted of the celebration of the Cinco de Mayo, the 5th of May, in memory of that date in 1862, when the forces of the Republic of Mexico defeated those of Maximilian and his French military support. A second occasion that is celebrated as a holiday is the día de la independencia which commemorates the proclamation of Mexican independence from Spain on September 15, 1810. Organizations carried on a multitude of activities in the colonia; however, it was primarily during these fiestas patrias that the Mexicans demonstrated unity and cooperation of effort for the benefit of the colonia.

The content of the programs was much the same on both of the Mexican holidays. The holiday usually consisted of an open march or parade by various societies and organizations in the colonia, followed by music, songs, dances, and speeches. A highlight of the festival was the crowning of the queen of beauty and patriotism who reigned over many of the festivities. The usual selection process in choosing

a queen was to cast votes through the local Mexican newspaper.¹⁷ This process functioned both to increase newspaper circulation and to arouse interest, as well as antagonism, in the colony.

In 1926, La Comisión Honorífica Mexicana, The Mexican Honorary Commission, was established under the stimulus of Detroit's Mexican Consul Terranzas. The Commission in Detroit was one of many such organizations set up throughout the United States wherever there was a significant group of Mexicans. The organizational objectives of the Commission were self-help, mutual aid, and protection of members of the colonia. In addition, the organization usually planned and carried out activities in the fiestas patrias. The founding officers of the Mexican Honorary Commission consisted of Luis Ramirez, President, and S. Dafau, Secretary. Commission activities were conducted under the direct supervision and control of Consul Terranzas. In the event of controversy within the organization, the consul's decision was final, and no appeal could be made about it. Hence, the decisive role of the consul made his authority in the body more or less autocratic.¹⁸

In 1926, the Mexican Honorary Commission of Detroit held its regular Sunday meetings in a rented hall at the corner of Michigan and Portland Avenues. In addition to their regular weekly meetings, occasional social gatherings,

and consular services, the Mexican Honorary Commission conducted many financially successful fiestas. Another activity of the Commission included an attempt to conduct a census of the Mexican population in Detroit. However, no record exists of this accomplishment.¹⁹

In 1929, the Mexican Honorary Commission had accumulated over \$1,000.00 through the promotion of successful Civic Acts and fiestas patrias and felt the time opportune for the creation of a Mexican temple or colony hall.²⁰ In July of that year Ignacio Batiza had become the new Mexican Consul in Detroit and energetically attempted to unify all factions of the colonia through plans for a colony house called Casa del Mexicano. After he presented his plans to the members of the Mexican Honorary Commission, the group turned over to consul Batiza a sum of \$800.00 to be held in trust, pending official approval of his plan. Batiza, however, immediately appointed a coordinator to develop his plan further. Drawing six dollars a day compensation, plus expenses, for his promotional efforts, the coordinator soon expended most of the funds of the Mexican Honorary Commission as well as that of the Cruz Azul, Blue Cross, a women's organization that provided the Mexican women of Detroit with medical services, also under direct control of the Consul.

Much criticism was heaped on Consul Batiza for poor administration of plans for Casa del Mexicano as well as for his dictatorial manner of making decisions which affected members of the colonia. Prensa Libre, Detroit's first Mexican newspaper and La Prensa, the San Antonio daily sold in the colony, carried editorials which severely attacked Consul Batiza's plan to establish a meeting hall. After a series of rebuttals were exchanged, Batiza eventually dissolved both the Mexican Honorary Commission and Cruz Azul.²¹

With the dissolution of the Mexican Honorary Commission, the promotion of the fiestas patrias, which in depression days had been financially successful, became uncertain in the colony. Many groups and small local societies conflicted over promoting the celebrations for their own financial ends. This chaotic situation was shortlived, however, for controversy was transformed into discussion, and a more democratically organized body came into existence. In 1930 the Mexican Patriotic Committee was formed and placed more responsibility within the community for conducting the fiestas patrias; the consul's role in these affairs was greatly reduced. Any Mexican society could participate in the organization of the Committee which was reconstructed annually and in which society representation varied from year to year. Each component society contributed to the

committee for the expenses involved in renting a hall, and if a deficit was incurred by the fiestas, responsibility for the debts was collective.

Dr. Manuel Gamio, a demographer, conducted research on Mexican immigration during 1926-1927 under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council. In his research, Dr. Gamio mentions that there were more than twenty organizations which existed in the Mexican colonias throughout Michigan. Unfortunately, none of these organizations were listed by name in his publication. Further investigation has shown that none of the early Mexican organizations was established on a formal basis. Research in the Assumed Title Division of the City/County Building, Detroit, failed to uncover evidence of incorporation status for any Mexican organization founded during the years 1920-1930. In addition, interviews with early Mexican settlers in Detroit have established that there were many factions in the colonia. What appeared to Charles D. Cameron to be a highly organized ethnic group in reality was a number of splinter groups founded on an informal basis, usually for the purpose of self-help of the ever-growing colonia in Detroit as well as for the celebration of Mexican holidays. Meetings of many early Mexican organizations were not held regularly and, for the most part, were conducted on an informal basis. Since no

group had incorporation status, financial records and minutes were never filed with the state, nor were they kept in a central location. As elected or appointed leadership changed, records often did not pass from the outgoing to the incoming recording officers of the group.

From 1928-1929 the Mexican colonia of Detroit was clearly at its population peak. Humphrey estimates the Mexican population to number fifteen thousand at this time, due primarily to "unsettled conditions" in Mexico which caused thousands to migrate to the United States.²² One of these conditions was the Cristero Revolt, a religious altercation, which took place in Mexico in the late 1920's.²³ Although this number may be inaccurate, the Mexican colonia did experience rapid and significant growth. By 1929 the Mexicans of Detroit had their first newspaper for the Spanish speaking. The Prensa Libre contained news of various types: international headlines, local coverage, an editorial page, and a gossip column. Printed at 4326 Toledo Avenue, the Newspaper of the Race, as it was called, functioned from the mid-1920's until its financial collapse following the depression.²⁴

In order to meet the particular and sundry needs of the colonia, a variety of Spanish speaking businesses and services were founded in Detroit between 1920-1929. "Did you know that within the past week one-fifth of the Mexican

colony in Detroit ate four cows, six oxen, twenty pigs, and eighteen sheep?" This was the query posed by the Romana Market, one of four Spanish speaking grocery stores which advertised in Prenza Libre on November 2, 1929.

The Surtidora Grocery, on the other hand, advertised over 190 different medicinal herbs for home use in addition to many varieties of dry chili, metates, stone mortars and pestles, sugar cane, pork rinds, black beans, and many other food items from Latin America.

The list of paid advertisements in Prenza Libre for Spanish speaking businesses and services is varied and lengthy in the November 2, 1929 issue.

TABLE 1
SPANISH-SPEAKING BUSINESS AND SERVICES
IN DETROIT, 1929

Business or Service	Number
<u>Casas de Asistencia</u> (Boarding Houses)	4
Grocery Stores	4
Restaurants	2
Movers	2
Medical Doctors	2
Attorneys	2
Bookstore	1
Bakery	1
Tailor	1
Pharmacy	1
Automobile Garage	1
Musical Instructor	1
Printing Press	1
Medical Clinic	1
Oral Surgeon	1
Notary Public	1
Oculist	1

It should be noted that the above list of Spanish-speaking businesses should not be considered a complete compilation. Not all businesses, particularly the smaller ones, may have taken out advertisements in Prensa Libre.

Nonetheless, the reader can see that the list includes a wide range of businesses and services which attempted to meet the needs of people within the colony and compete for its clientele.

To protect the commercial interests of the Spanish-speaking businesses, Prensa Libre advocated the establishment of a Mexican Chamber of Commerce. However, before any progress could be made in this regard, the city of Detroit became engulfed in the economic crisis that affected the entire United States as a result of the depression.²⁵

The majority of Mexicans, as has been noted, had come to the Motor City after the First World War and were not subjected to or influenced by the pressures of strong Americanization movements initiated by the public schools of Detroit. The night schools did little recruiting after the first strong Americanization programs were under way, and Mexicans, with little formal schooling heritage, were not ones to seek out educational opportunities. Monsignor Clement Kern, in speaking about the Detroit Mexican group, put it more succinctly when he said: "We find it very difficult to get the adults whom we want to come out to learn English to come. The achievers, the ones who want to achieve, they'll go to Cass Tech., they'll learn very rapidly and they'll do a job. The tendency of a Board of

Education is to say: we are for those who wish to learn and, therefore, we're designed for the achiever, but we, in the community would rather it be designed for the non-achiever, like the mother of six or the mother of three."²⁶

Education, although highly esteemed by members of the colonia, became a rarely achieved goal by many Mexican adults. The unfavorable attitude that many Mexicans had toward naturalization was carried over to include education, which they viewed as an expected prerequisite for United States citizenship.²⁷ In addition, adult Mexicans often had strong feelings of inadequacy and embarrassment toward the task of late acquisition of education.

Judged by American standards, the amount of formal education possessed by the immigrant Detroit Mexican was abysmally small. The rural school system in Mexico at this time was largely undeveloped, for with the nation in a state of constant revolution, education was not a priority of the government, particularly in areas outside the large cities. In many cases, women in Mexico attended school more often than men because males were usually expected to contribute to the economic welfare of the family. Young males would usually stop acquiring whatever formal education was available once they had reached an age where they were able to help their fathers make a living. Humphrey noted the extreme lack of education in the Detroit Mexican colonia

as evidenced by adults who had difficulty reading that language and rarely acquired expressive command of the language in written form.²⁸

Several attempts were made to develop and maintain educational programs within the colonia. Although the perceived need to establish community efforts for education was felt by many programs rarely succeeded for any length of time. An example of this is Ignacio Vasquez, a former teacher, who attempted to promote and maintain a school for adults in Detroit. He had devised a method whereby he could teach illiterate Mexicans to read and write in Spanish within a period of three months. He opened a school in Dearborn in 1930 which experienced some success but later became defunct. Thereafter on several occasions he conducted classes at the Sociedad de San José Hall, at Bagley and 19th, but in each instance, after an auspicious start, the classes ceased due to decline in membership.²⁹

The Sociedad de Obreros Unidos, Society of United Workers, also attempted to offer language classes. Primarily established for its own members, the Society of United Workers held preliminary meetings to decide the content of language offerings. Before much progress was made, a conflict of interest emerged between the older and the younger members of the society. The older members want to learn "correct" Spanish, whereas the younger members were opposed to it and

wished only to be taught English. The final result was that neither was taught.³⁰

Employment by itself was not necessarily conducive to acquisition of English, since factory work frequently by its nature allowed little opportunity for social interaction. Although limited English may have been learned by Mexicans from their English speaking colleagues at work, the vocabulary was that which was only applicable to the job environment. In cases where the Mexican immigrant found himself assigned to foundry work, normal conversation in English or in Spanish was impossible due to the high noise level associated with this job.³¹ Occasionally, men were delegated work assignments in pairs or small groups where each man spoke a language other than English. When this occurred, the man most familiar with the task would act as the job leader for that particular task, and his dominant language, along with hand signs and signals, would become the medium of communication among the men on the job.³²

The reasons which prompted Mexican adult males not to take advantage of English language programs were not those that kept the adult female from learning English. As dictated by tradition, the woman was not allowed to attend functions without being accompanied by her husband. Since men were usually working a swing shift schedule at the auto industry, regular attendance on his part, or even to

chaperone his wife to English classes, was not possible. Attendance by women at English classes had an additional significance in the Mexican household. By learning English, the woman often paved the way to a less subordinate role for herself in the family. Generally, however, Humphrey notes that Mexican women learned less English than men as a consequence of their more secluded positions and their lack of first hand contact with American culture.

As a result of Spanish speaking home environments, Mexican American children often started school without knowledge of English. At the height of the Mexican population growth trend in Detroit, the great majority of the Mexican American children were attending Pitcher and Houghton Elementary Schools. In 1929 enough impetus was furnished to inaugurate the establishment of special rooms for non-English speaking children of Mexican background at the two schools.³³ Intensive English as a Second Language attention was given to the Spanish dominant children of the school. Houghton School maintained one classroom for kindergarten and first grade students and another room for children who were slightly older and had experienced some schooling in Mexico. The high intensity of the English as a Second Language program can be seen in the eventual placement of Mexican American children. At the end of one year the younger children had learned a sufficient amount of English

to warrant placement in the second grade along with American children. The older children made rapid progress as well, some covering as much as five terms of work in one term.³⁴

English language acquisition on the part of the adults in the Mexican colony was somewhat hastened by the arrival of the depression years. As unemployment affected the lower socio-economic classes of Detroit Mexicans, it forced many to acquire a greater English language vocabulary in order to compete for jobs outside of the auto industry. Likewise, spending more time at home put the Mexican male in closer contact with his children, who were fast learning English as their most common vehicle of communication.

The reluctance of the Mexican colony to enroll in basic educational programs, particularly Americanization programs, which were provided by the Detroit Schools, can be explained, in part, by the widely spread intention among these immigrants to return to Mexico one day.³⁵ Educational programs for adults as well as children, thus, became an important factor in fostering the speed and degree of assimilation of the members of the Detroit colonia.

In speaking of assimilation, Humphrey states that the relative absence of a "race" situation in Detroit with its accompanying discrimination against Mexicans made this group more assimilable than their compatriots in the Southwest.

Humphrey cites that discrimination against Mexicans in the southern and western states was not a factor either in their assimilation rate or in the acquisition of United States citizenship. Detroit Mexicans did not appear to fare better than their compatriots in the Southwest in regard to acquiring citizenship in this country or in learning English.

Mexicans did not normally seek out citizenship status once in Detroit. In fact, of all the ethnic and racial groups for whom records are kept in the United States Immigration and Naturalization Services, Mexicans ranked among the lowest percentage of those who sought American citizenship for the years 1925 and 1930 in Detroit, Michigan.

TABLE 2

CITIZENSHIP STATUS OF DETROIT MEXICANS

Country of Birth	Year	Total	Citizens	1st papers	Alien	Unknown	% Cit.
MEXICO	1925*	1946	270	163	1449	64	13.9
	1932**	471	59	50	321	41	12.5

*The 1925 Detroit City Census. Detroit Educational Bulletin, Vol. IX, No.3, (November, 1925), p. 18.

**U.S. Census Reports, 1930, Population, Vol. II, Washington, D.C., p. 466.

One of the reasons Mexicans in the Southwest displayed aversion to becoming naturalized United States citizens was that to adopt a new country "would be disloyal, unfaithful, and almost treacherous."³⁶ Although not stated in quite the same manner, many of the Detroit Mexicans interviewed for Chapter V gave similar sentiments relative to changing citizenship status once in the United States. Such manifestations of patriotism may be viewed as mechanisms through which the Mexican maintained his integrity in the hostile social milieu of the Southwest.³⁷ Similarly, displays of patriotism were practiced by Detroit Mexicans as evidenced by the citizenship status of Mexicans in the Motor City as well as their reluctance to learn English through Americanization programs.

Assimilation of the Mexican people of Detroit should not be measured by their citizenship status alone. Even though many Mexicans failed to become naturalized citizens, the forces of acculturation were continuously at work in the colonia. Unlike the Southwest where Mexicans were often the majority group living in a land that was once their forefathers, Mexicans in Detroit, were a relatively small minority group in a dominant American culture; whereas the Southwest Mexican had a large population base where his cultural patterns were continuously reinforced, those living in Detroit were engulfed in an entirely different cultural environment. Although the Detroit Mexican fought to keep his cultural identity, through the already mentioned patriotic manifestations, many vestiges of acculturation slowly became evident in housing and household practices.

Initially, the Mexican colony had no well defined boundaries. As their numbers increased, two distinct barrios became identifiable in the Motor City. The boundaries of these settlements were found in the neighborhood of Grand River Avenue, Jones Street, Bagley Avenue; and Abbott Street to Lafayette Avenue, between Cass and Second Avenues. In this neighborhood in 1926 there were about 20 Mexican families, and approximately 300 men, the majority of whom were transient roomers.³⁸

Not all Detroit Mexicans lived within the boundaries of this barrio; however, a great majority probably found haven in this area because of the low rent rates and comradship to be found with other Mexicans living in this part of Detroit.

Housing discrimination against Mexicans was evident in Detroit, but never on the scale practiced in Texas.³⁹

The determinants which dictated housing patterns were usually based on socio-economic status and in the close relationships and kinships which existed among Mexicans in Detroit. To an extent, large scale assimilation patterns were thwarted by the Mexican because of his clanishness; however, changes in the life style and household practices were recorded.

The single most important factor in housing for the Mexican in Detroit was dictated by the income level of the wage earner. Single men usually lived in the casas de asistencia, as they were less expensive than renting an apartment or house. In addition, the casas de asistencia provided well prepared Spanish or Mexican food and packed lunches for factory workers.

Basement apartments and attics often served as quarters for Detroit Mexicans.⁴⁰ Because these kinds of accommodations were not originally designed as living places, only a few persons at a time could occupy them without giving rise to overcrowding, a situation which had been noted as common

among Mexicans in several cities in the United States.⁴¹ Roomers were often kept by married couples in an attempt to keep rent at a minimum and in many cases the roomers were the single brothers of either of the married pair. It became economically feasible and also helped maintain kinship ties when several related families shared a house together.

Overcrowded conditions and makeshift housing can further be exemplified by considering the sleeping conditions of some of Detroit's colonia. Many different sleeping arrangements were practiced because of the lack of space in some of the dwellings. Large households or extended families in some cases required persons to sleep on the floor.⁴² The Detroit Department of Public Welfare cited many examples of usual sleeping facilities, which included: sleeping on the springs of a bed without the benefit of a mattress; tiny infants sleeping in carriages and in hammocks; or using cots as a bed in a basement.⁴³ It should be noted that all of the above descriptions of sleeping facilities were cited from public welfare case workers' records and should be presumed to be extreme situations practiced by the lower socio-economic classes of Mexicans in Detroit.

Early Detroit Mexican households seemed void of furniture, compared to American standards. The barren interior of Mexican houses in the early years of the colonia

was partially a consequence of the retention of the Mexican value system, which stressed useful and inexpensive household objects.⁴⁴ However, it was also a result of the economic insecurity of life in Detroit, which could have meant immediate evacuation, that prevented acquisition of American articles, even though they had come to be viewed as desirable. Ever present in Mexican households were such objects as religious images and candles, family photographs, and statuary. With more adjustment to American customs and increased economic stability, Mexicans in Detroit practiced greater cleanliness, bought more quantities of furniture, and more American household objects came to fill the house.⁴⁵ Some of the more common household items which first appeared in early Detroit Mexican families were radios, dressers, and sewing machines.

The dietary habits of the Mexican colonia were another aspect of the culture which underwent change. In 1928, Mexicans were regarded as largely maintaining their own food habits based mainly on pinto beans cooked in lard, supplemented by the tortilla.⁴⁶ Since the tortilla, a thin round bread, could not be prepared on the ordinary top of a gas stove, Mexican women, on occasion, gathered in groups at the home of someone who possessed a wood burning stove and made a supply which would last several days.

In spite of the Spanish speaking grocery stores which catered to the specific dietary needs of the colonia, it often

became difficult to obtain quantities of Mexican food. In the absence of traditional Mexican foods, it was often easier to succumb to American dishes.⁴⁷ This practice was often facilitated by the immigrants' American-born children, who acquired new food tastes and passed them on to the older generations within the colonia.

For various reasons, diseases often plagued the Mexican colony in its early formation. Most prevalent among the communicable diseases contracted by inhabitants of the colonia was tuberculosis, due primarily to crowded sleeping conditions and to the general lack of sanitation in the transitional areas in which they lived.⁴⁸ One of the chief causes of death for Mexicans, in fact, was tuberculosis.⁴⁹ Infantile deaths were also exceedingly high.

As has already been stated, the Cruz Azul often attended to the health needs of the Mexican women in Detroit. In some cases this may have involved delivery of children in the home through the use of midwives. In Mexico most children at the time were delivered in this manner, particularly in rural areas void of medical facilities. As Detroit's Mexican expectant mothers became exposed to better medical practices, more use was made of the Pre-Natal Clinic of the Detroit Board of Health.⁵⁰ However, one of the deterrents to wide use of scientific medical attention by many Mexicans was their retention of religious

beliefs and folk thinking regarding illness and medical cures.

Marriages, as well as birth rates, increased drastically during the latter half of the 1920's.⁵¹ Although the vast majority of Mexican immigrants who came to Detroit were young males in the "prime of life," they usually married after coming to this country.⁵² The usual pattern for the unmarried Mexican male was to secure employment in the auto industry and live in a casa de asistencia. On regular occasions he would send money home to help support whatever family he may have had in Mexico. If after saving money he was fortunate enough to meet an eligible woman, he would marry and begin his life in Detroit as part of a family unit. Usually, his wife was also a Mexican immigrant or another Latina. Some men married into other ethnic groups, although this practice was a rare occurrence. Other men sought a woman who would conduct herself in the "traditional" ways. It was not uncommon, therefore, for men to return to their homeland to marry.⁵³ Eventually, some of these new family units found their way back to the colonia in industrial Detroit.

The role of the father as head of the traditional family had two major aspects: food provider, and family judge and protector.⁵⁴ In the peasant Mexican family, the roles of all family members were clearly defined in varying

degrees of subordinate and superordinate statuses among its members. The concepts of correct and accepted family behavior were at first retained by Mexican immigrants to Detroit. As with other immigrant groups, outside influences of the dominant American culture forced the traditional family structure of Detroit's Mexicans to undergo a transformation. Through the years Mexican families living in Detroit began to change the traditional roles as practiced in Mexico. Gradually, individual behavior patterns and the role-status of each member of the family unit assumed a new meaning and function.

American-born children of Mexican immigrants took on a more meaningful role in the changing family structure. It should be remembered that Mexican parents rarely took advantage of Americanization programs to learn English. Because many adults usually dealt in a Spanish speaking environment, either in the home or with their fellow compatriots, they generally did not master the English language to any degree of proficiency. Subsequently, on those occasions when it was necessary to communicate in English, the Mexican-American child took on the role as translator and interpreter for his parents, a function that placed the child in a position of superiority over them, especially when compared to the traditional patriarchal role of the father as practiced in Mexico.⁵⁵ Also, the

seasonal character of work and the periods of unemployment affected the status and role of the breadwinner in relation to the rest of the family.⁵⁶ Humphrey further states that the loss of status attendant on lack of employment was further accentuated if the family head demanded complete subordination from his wife and oldest son.

The educational and linguistic dominance of the children over their parents sanctioned a slightly new balance in the typical partriarchal family structure. On the other hand, the child, in his function as spokesperson with the English speaking world, may have created cultural conflict within himself and the accommodation of a wholly new role which may have resulted in second generation native culture rejection and a more rapid assimilation process into the dominant American culture.

The traditional role of the Mexican woman was to remain subordinate to her mate, to be a protector of her female children, to maintain religious practice, and to be the general all around homemaker for the family.⁵⁷ Several factors were responsible for the transformation of the woman's role in the Detroit colonia. Usually, when the wife was considerably younger than the husband, or when the wife was of Mexican derivation but American born, the family structure took on new meaning in favor of the woman.

Much has been written about the Mexican family structure and behavior patterns in Mexico, and to a lesser degree about Mexicans residing in the Southwest. Norman Daymond Humphrey, Wayne State University sociologist, did much to advance social research of the Mexican colonia in Detroit. His research is some of the earliest and, in many cases, the only work available on the many social aspects relative to the Mexican immigrant who came to Detroit. One of the most interesting investigations conducted by Humphrey is a study of the stereotype and social types of Mexican American youth of Detroit, Michigan (refer to Table III). Humphrey points out that there are many factors involved in the development of a social type. The social forces which operate within the youth's environment, as well as the degree to which he participates in his culture, lead to the formulation of a social type. Humphrey contends that individual and biological factors are to be considered as constant in discussing personality types.

TABLE 3

**THE STERBOTYPE AND SOCIAL TYPES
OF MEXICAN AMERICAN YOUTHS OF DETROIT**

Type	Physical Characteristics	Social Characteristics
1. Mexican born Mestizo Adolescent Boy	Indian features	-Subservient to parental authority. -Attends colony social events exclusively. -Parents influence choice of girl friends. -Associates with Mexican immigrants or second generation Mexican girls re-tiring in nature. -Looks for employment when legal age reached. -Contributes willingly to family support. -Male associates usually Mexican -Assimilation of American culture-small.
2. Mexican born Mestizo pre- Adolescent Boy	Indian features	-Conflict with Mexican codes marked. -Contributes grudgingly to family support. -Social activities center primarily, but not exclusively, in the colony. -Mingles with youths of other derivations. -Sufficiently accepted to attend "Polish" and "Hungarian" parties.

Type	Physical Characteristics	Social Characteristics
3. Mexican American Boy	Dark skinned Mestizo Derivation	-Most prevalent "Mexican" in Detroit. -Quits school after reaching puberty. -Male and female associates are of non-Mexican derivation. -Dislikes Maltese and Italian descent boys of his own age. -Preference for Irish and Polish male companionship. -Adept at using a pocket knife. -Detests work, usually does manual labor. -Resentful of parental authority. -Tolerant toward younger brothers. -Payment to parents, usually room and board. -Protects sister in his tough guy role. -Talks exclusively in English even to parents. -Boasts of conquests over "blondes". -Mexican food and music alone remain essential.
4. Mexican Boy	Dark skinned Mestizo Derivation	-Subservient to parental authority. -Modest and unaggressive -Attempts to finish school, joins sports, R.O.T.C. -Musically inclined. -Associates are of similar cultural background. -Recreation consists of cultural activities in colonia. -Marries second generation Mexican who is retiring and conservative.

Type	Physical Characteristics	Social Characteristics
5. Mexican American Boy	European Features, light skinned	-Possesses athletic ability. -Displays <u>savoir faire</u> with girls. -Tends to assimilate completely. -Likely to have attended high school. -Usually employed as a clothing salesman. -Good dancer. -Looks for blond, slightly used, older American women for means of support. -Associates with Americans often.
6. Mexican Girl		-Retiring and home centered. -Not quite as docile as mother because of American influence. -Social activities closely scrutinized by parents, chaperoned on dates.
7. Mexican-American Girl		-Independent and free moving. -Flaunts freedom around other Mexican girls. -Usually allowed to work.

Data for Table III extracted from information provided in Norman D. Humphrey, "The Stereotype and Social Type of Mexican American Youths," The Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 22, (1945), pp. 69-78.

It is difficult to assess the accuracy of Humphrey's stereotype and social types of Mexican American youth. Given a variety of subjects to investigate for social behavior, it is questionable whether any one individual could be classified in only one of the social characteristic cells in Table III. Suffice to say, behavior patterns of Mexican American youth did deviate from traditional roles as practiced in Mexico. Furthermore, social influences caused deviation in behavior for all members of the family unit.

In general, the structure of the Mexican family in Detroit changed in three ways: the status-role and the corresponding self-concept of the father declined relative to that of the women and children; the wife tended to retain her previous status-role position through the greater retention of Mexican meanings and understandings, although in some instances the wife came to occupy a position of social superordination; the status-role of the children largely reversed itself, especially in the case of the oldest boy, who played an entirely new role as mentor to later born siblings and a position in the family hierarchal structure equal to that of the father.⁵⁸ The transformation of the family structure was not a short term phenomenon. On the contrary, the assimilation of new roles within the family was a gradual process which usually escaped the

immediate attention of those affected.

There is little doubt that by 1930 some Mexican families had already been in Detroit for as many as ten years. The colonia began as another emerging immigrant group and mushroomed to its peak in 1929. The U.S. Census Reports for 1930 indicates there were 6,515 Mexicans living in Detroit. Although not quite a 100 percent increase from the 1920 census, the 1930 figure should be considered low, for it does not account for the illegal aliens or for Mexicans from Texas who were in Detroit at the time.

In spite of the drastic increase in Mexicans in the ten year span, the growth trends were already being reversed. As economic depression gripped the city, Mexican immigration to the Motor City ceased. Soon a gradual, but steady, population decline began to take place and ultimately culminated in the Mexican Repatriation Campaign of 1932.

CHAPTER IV

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE DETROIT MEXICAN COLONIA

The Roman Catholic Church has long been considered a strong influence among the Mexican people. It has been conservatively estimated that the Roman Catholic Religion has a following of about sixty percent of the population in Mexico many of whom are women, the aged, the lower classes, and the old patrician families.¹ As Mexican immigrants came to various parts of the United States, they often sought membership in the Catholic parish of their community. In some cases, Mexican colonias were instrumental in developing their own parish. Such was the case with the Mexicans of Detroit, Michigan, during the early 1920's. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was originally founded as a mission by the Most Rt. Rev. George Caruna, a mission priest and later to become an archbishop in San Juan, Puerto Rico.²

On November 14, 1919, the Right Reverend Michael J. Gallagher, Bishop of the Archdiocese of Detroit, was successful in recruiting the first Mexican priest for Detroit. The priest's name was Rev. Juan Pablo Alanis y Gomez', born in Santiago, Nuevo Leon, Mexico, in 1879. He was ordained in San Luis Potosi on October 18, 1909, and served this Mexican city until the time he went to Detroit, Michigan, to assume the duties of Rev. Caruna.³

The Mexican colonia in Detroit did not have a Catholic Church of its own; instead, it used one of the halls of St. Mary's School as a chapel. It was here that Rev. Alanis celebrated mass on Sundays and met the spiritual needs of his growing congregation of Mexicans.

On July 26, 1920, the Catholic Church Extension Society of the United States of America contributed a sum of \$500 toward the construction of a Mexican Catholic Church in Detroit.⁴ This action may be interpreted as testimony to the growth of the Mexican colonia in Detroit at the time. However, the transient, unstable nature of the colonia prompted the Rt. Rev. Msgr. F.C. Kelley, administrator to Bishop Gallagher, to recommend to the Catholic Church Extension Society of the United States of America an extension of the time line to erect a church. " . . . because of the continued hard times and unsettled conditions among our Mexican people, the Rt. Rev. Bishop has deemed it advisable to postpone our undertaking until such times as our Mexicans may be able to assist financially in the erection of the church." A subsequent extension was granted by the Catholic Church Extension Society to the Detroit Diocese with the stipulation that the \$500 contribution be used by July, 1922.⁵ Further delay postponed construction of the Mexican Catholic Church in Detroit even more. Finally, in a letter dated July 25, 1923, Fr. Juan P.

Alanis notified Bishop Gallagher that the facilities at St. Mary's School could be used only until August, 1923. Furthermore, he attested to the financial support of the Mexican congregation to erect a Mexican Catholic Church. Current funds available at the time amounted to \$6,500.00 plus an additional \$1,000.00 in building fund pledges. Fr. Juan P. Alanis requested permission to purchase a one story frame building at 5484 Roosevelt, near Hudson, for \$7,500.00. The letter also hinted at a fear Fr. Alanis had of keeping his 3,000 to 4,000 Mexican congregation, mostly illiterate, intact unless something was done soon about building a new church.

Final agreement of terms for property purchase was reached on August 25, 1923.⁶ The lot was located at 5321 Roosevelt Street and Kirby Street and carried a purchase price of \$1,150.00. The terms of the final agreement between the seller and the Archdiocese of Detroit included a \$500.00 deposit with the right to build a church structure on the vacant lot. Immediately after the purchase of the lot, construction of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was begun.

Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe--Our Lady of Guadalupe--was built by the parishioners. It was a small white frame structure without a foundation. This structural flaw would later cause the church to take a precarious lean which required extensive architectural modification in 1937.⁷

The steady growth of the Mexican congregation at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church can be seen in the sharp increase in the number of recorded baptisms, marriages, and deaths from 1923 to 1924. The number of baptisms, for example, increased more than two-fold from twenty-nine in 1923, to a recorded sixty-seven in 1924. The majority of the Spanish surnamed children baptized at Our Lady of Guadalupe were born in the city of Detroit. The number of marriages, likewise, rose sharply between the years 1923-1924 for Spanish surnamed people. Table V shows the marked increase from four marriages of Spanish surnamed people in 1923 to fifteen in 1924. And, Table VI indicates the increase in recorded deaths for the same years from eight in 1923 to twenty-six in 1924.

The rapid growth of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church necessitated its expansion within the year. On March 11, 1924, Fr. Juan P. Alanis requested permission from Bishop Gallagher to construct a frame structure next to the church to house the Holy Name, The Altar Society, Young Ladies Sodality, and Sunday School.⁸ On September 27 of the same year, Fr. Juan P. Alanis made another request to expand the pavilion on the church grounds. A 20'x50' structure was needed to cover the club house, which was used for various functions, such as card parties, and also contained the church piano. Projected cost of the construction was estimated at \$600.00.⁹

Fr. Juan P. Alanis remained at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church until the early spring of 1926. Rev. Gabriel Ginard expressed his desire to serve the "8,000 Mexicans and 2,000 Spaniards of Detroit" to the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fr. Van Antwerp, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Detroit once Fr. Alanis departed.¹⁰ However, preliminary arrangements were already being made to appoint another pastor to Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. During the time that a new pastor was being considered for the Church, Rt. Rev. Msgr. Stephen S. Woznicki was given temporary charge of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church's bank account at the Wayne County and Home Savings Bank by Bishop Gallagher.¹¹ The Mexican colonia was left once again without a Spanish speaking priest. With the departure of Fr. Alanis, Rev. James J. Gore was appointed the new pastor of the colonia's Catholic Church. Although Our Lady of Guadalupe Church continued to function under the leadership of Rev. James J. Gore, in early 1927 it was obvious to the Detroit Archdiocese that the Mexican colonia desired a Latino pastor for its church.¹² On June 9, 1927, a petition containing approximately 150 names was presented to Bishop Michael J. Gallagher on behalf of the Comite Patriotico Mexicano, located at 3304 Baker Street, in support of a Latino priest as pastor at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The petition called for the appointment of Rev. Luis Castillo, a recently

ordained priest from Caracas, Venezuela, as the new pastor of the church. The petition further charged Rev. James J. Gore with "having no feeling for the people of the parish." The 400 Mexicans who attended mass regularly on Sundays at Our Lady of Guadalupe, indeed, expected action by the Rt. Rev. Michael J. Gallagher, Bishop of Detroit.¹³

Rev. Luis Castillo had been ordained at the Detroit Cathedral on February 13, 1927, and assigned to serve as an assistant to Rev. James J. Gore. It may be speculated that, perhaps, Bishop Gallagher intended to orient the newly ordained Castillo for a time before giving him full administrative responsibilities as pastor. Regardless of the intentions of the Rt. Rev. Michael J. Gallagher, it is obvious that the petition circulated by the Comite Patriotico Mexicano had some influence upon the bishop's ultimate decision regarding Rev. Luis Castillo. On July 13, 1927, the Mexican Committee sent a Western Union Telegram to Bishop Gallagher expressing their gratitude for the appointment of Fr. Castillo as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The Mexican colonia again had a Latino to serve their spiritual needs.

In spite of the appointment of Fr. Luis Castillo as pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the church was not without problems of one kind or another. Less than one month after Fr. Castillo assumed his duties as pastor, another petition

was sent to Bishop Gallagher. This time the petition was circulated by the St. Joseph Society of the church and contained approximately 80 signatures in support of Fr. Castillo's work at Our Lady of Guadalupe. Dated July 24, 1927, the petition alluded to negative remarks and rumors which were being directed at Fr. Castillo. Although the source of the negative comments was never divulged in the petition, it was clear that the appointment of a Latino pastor at the Mexican Catholic Church had not placated all the parishioners.

The source of discontent within a faction of Our Lady of Guadalupe may have stemmed from the fact that Rev. Luis Castillo was not a Mexican. This sentiment was expressed in later years in a letter sent to Bishop Gallagher.

"Two trusted observers, one a Mexican, estimate the number of Mexicans in the city at 2,800; of this number twelve families attend church, most of the others objecting to a pastor who is 'South American' and not Mexican."¹⁴ Further indication of community unrest was provided still later in a special publication commemorating Our Lady of Guadalupe Day: "Ever since Father Alaniz(sic) left for Mexico, all has not been well in the little Mexican Temple of Our Lady of Guadalupe, which he founded. Wherever the fault may be, it is a fact that the colony has been in dire need of a spiritual leader who speaks the language of the people.

And not only their racial language, but that of their heart."¹⁵ Despite the motives which inspired the petition by the St. Joseph Society of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church or other commentary, for that matter, the years 1927-1929 were marked by unprecedented growth in the Mexican Catholic Church of Detroit.

While the Mexican Catholic Church was experiencing rapid growth in the late 1920's, there were, undoubtedly other churches which served the colonia. Mission Bautista, located on Jones Street, served Mexicans who were inclined toward the Protestant faith. Their services included Sunday School in the afternoon, preaching services in the evening, a Wednesday evening prayer meeting, and a free class in English on Saturday evening.¹⁶

There are two types of congregational structures in the Roman Catholic Churches of Detroit. A territorial church has logistical boundaries and serves only those parishioners who live within its established territory. A national parish has no defined physical boundaries and to a large extent serves people of a particular ethnic or racial group. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was an example of a national church. Most of the Catholic Mexicans living in Detroit during the 1920's would naturally tend to be members. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church was officially established in 1923 but became responsible for recording

baptisms, marriages, and deaths as early as 1920, when it shared the facilities of St. Mary's School. The fact that Our Lady of Guadalupe, either as a mission or a parish, served the Mexican people does not preclude the fact that the Mexican people did indeed attend other Catholic churches. In a few cases, perhaps Mexicans attending other Catholic churches were reminded or made aware that Our Lady of Guadalupe was their national church and were directed to seek services there. This procedure was followed in instances where national groups were attending churches not of their specific ethnic heritage.

The tables on the succeeding pages are testimony to the growth of the Mexican colonia in Detroit, Michigan, during the 1920's. It should be noted that the data collected are inclusive of all Spanish surnamed people and cannot be broken down into more specific Latino sub-groups, except in the case of some marriage records. Data collected include records of all baptisms, marriages, and deaths in the six Roman Catholic churches in the vicinity of the Mexican barrio for a fifteen-year period from 1920 through 1935. The churches include:

1. Our Lady of Guadalupe Church
2. St. Boniface Church
3. St. Anne's Church
4. Most Holy Trinity Church

5. St. Vincent de Paul Church

6. Holy Redeemer Church

The data shown in the tables do not provide the reader with a specific number of Mexican Catholics but do serve to show the growth and decline trends in the colonia of Detroit, Michigan. Rapid decline in the number of Mexican Catholics is most noticeable in the records from Our Lady of Guadalupe Church beginning in the year 1930, immediately after the Great Depression.

Many assumptions can be drawn from the drastic decline in both baptisms and marriages at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church after 1929. The most obvious assumption, perhaps, lies in the fact that the onset of the Great Depression impacted all people in Detroit, delivering the greatest setback to those who were already in the lower socio-economic stream of Detroit society, many of whom were minority groups such as Mexicans. Because of the economic crisis, it is feasible that Mexicans had fewer children, thus resulting in the lowered baptism rate. The records of baptisms at Our Lady of Guadalupe show a declining trend for the years 1929 to 1932. The total number of Spanish surnamed children baptized at Our Lady of Guadalupe, for example, dropped from 228 in 1929 to 62 in 1932. Three other parishes, St. Anne's, Most Holy Trinity, and St. Vincent de Paul show increases in their baptism records for these

years but not enough to account for the drastic decline which took place at Our Lady of Guadalupe. To further emphasize this point, the decline at Our Lady of Guadalupe indicates a reduction of as many as 166 baptisms from 1929-1932; however, the total increase for the three churches which experienced growth in baptismal rates amounts to only 16 from those previously recorded at those churches.

Marriages, on the other hand, could have been postponed, cancelled, or overlooked in favor of other living arrangements. A significant trend to note in Table V is the sharp decline in marriages from 1929 to 1932. Numbers of Spanish surnamed people married at Our Lady of Guadalupe went from an all time high of 48 in 1929 to 9 in 1932. The data in the other Catholic churches does not suggest that other parishes were conducting an increased number of marriages at this time to absorb the loss at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Another assumption worth considering is that because of the economic hardships brought on by the Great Depression many people, in addition to Mexicans, did not marry. Mexican marriage statistics in Detroit may in fact mirror that which was occurring for other populations throughout the country.

It should be noted that the Mexican Repatriation Campaign took place during the latter part of 1932.

However, the reversal of Mexican population growth is particularly obvious in the years 1930 and 1931, which is prior to the managed repatriation campaign conducted in Detroit, Michigan. It may have been that recently immigrated and young Mexican families, feeling the bitter effects of the Great Depression, left first because of their inability to cope with financial insecurity, even before the Mexican Repatriation Campaign unfolded. Furthermore, it should not be beyond the realm of possibilities to consider yet another assumption. As Mexicans became more established in Detroit, they widened the boundaries of the barrio. In fact, some Mexicans who aspired to middle class status moved outside of the Mexican barrio altogether.¹⁸ Mexicans who moved outside of the barrio may have sought and received entry into other territorial parishes in Detroit, thus dropping their membership at Our Lady of Guadalupe or any other Catholic church close to the Mexican barrio.

It is doubtful whether one can directly correlate the drastic decline in baptism, marriages, and even deaths of the Spanish surnamed people to the Mexican Repatriation Campaign of 1932. One fact, however, remains evident. The Mexican colonia was a rapidly growing population during the 1920's, worthy of recognition by the Catholic church, and was ultimately diminished drastically in numbers during the Great Depression.

The church data depicted in Table IV, V and VI were extracted from records kept by the six Catholic churches in the immediate vicinity of the Mexican barrio from 1920-1935. The information collected is not meant either to dispute or corroborate data from the Census Bureau, but rather to show growth and decline trends of Spanish surnamed Catholics in Detroit, Michigan.

Permission to investigate the holy sacrament record books was granted by the pastor of each respective parish. Those parishes which are now defunct gave custody of their holy sacrament record books to the nearest church at the time of their closing. Such was the case with Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, whose records are now kept at St. Leo's Church, and also St. Vincent de Paul, which has its records housed at St. Boniface Church. In two cases the pastor of the church felt that it was in violation of parishioners' confidence in the church to permit the writer to research the holy sacrament record books. Some data in records may be considered confidential information and, for this reason, not deemed public information. In these cases the pastor, or his designee, assisted in the collection of the needed data. This was the procedure used at Most Holy Trinity Church, and also at Holy Redeemer Church. The writer found the data collection process in these cases was somewhat limiting and felt that, to some extent, the accuracy of the

data reported in the above mentioned tables may have been affected. In all other cases the writer had free access to record books.

All Spanish surnames were tabulated from baptism, marriage, and death records of the six churches. In some cases, such as marriage records, birthplace or national origin information was recorded, thus revealing the numbers of specific Latino sub-groups married for that year. However, not all record keeping was consistent in this regard, thus, any attempt to tabulate data for specific Latino sub-groups was considered futile and likely to result in inaccuracies.

Tabulating the sacrament records was, in some cases, a tedious task. In all cases the records were kept in ledgers and were entered in script writing by the priest presiding at the sacrament. Some churches kept records in Latin, whereas other parishes used the language of their particular national church. Such was the case at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church which used Spanish as the recording medium and French in the case of St. Anne's Church.

In some instances there was some question as to the legitimacy of a Spanish surname. When this situation occurred, the names of the parents, godparents, or witnesses, were consulted to verify the name in question. In cases where records were not complete, tabulation of Spanish

surnamed people was omitted altogether, rather than present inaccurate or misleading data.

Record keeping may vary from one church to another; however, it was found that the six churches included in this study identified baptized children in much the same manner. For instance, the birthplace of baptized children was not identified in the sacrament books. The usual practice for churches was to enter the birthplace of the child only when born outside of Detroit. It is interesting to note that only 15 out of a total of 1734 Spanish surnamed children baptized during the years 1920 to 1935 were identified as having been born outside of Detroit. In the case of St. Boniface and St. Anne's Churches the parish priest thought it worthy to identify the first few Spanish surnamed children baptized in those churches as "Mexican." No other written comment appears in the record to explain these entries.

The marriage and death records at the six Catholic churches were also kept in ledgers and recorded in script form. From 1920 to 1928 the records at Our Lady of Guadalupe reflected the place of origin of either spouse. During this time span, only 16 of the 174 people involved in marriage ceremonies were not from Mexico. The records at the other five parishes are of little significance, numerically, when compared to Our Lady of Guadalupe.

The number of marriages at these churches totaled 30 and involved 16 Spanish surnamed people who were not of Mexican origin.

The death records of all six churches simulates much the same growth and decline trends which occurred in the baptism and marriage data. It is important to note that there exist more discrepancies in the death records compared to other data researched. For instance, death records for the years 1920 and 1921 at Our Lady of Guadalupe were either not kept or were misplaced. Also, the records from 1931 to 1935 were inconclusive. Deaths and burials at Our Lady of Guadalupe, during this time span, were recorded as "date unknown." The death records for Most Holy Trinity church for the year 1921 was also missing and all death records for St. Vincent de Paul were not available. St. Boniface Church identified its first Spanish surnamed person in the death records as "Mexican." Another comment worthy of speculation was an entry which pointed out that the person was "shot by policeman by mistake."

TABLE 4

Baptism Records of Spanish Surnamed Children 1920-1935

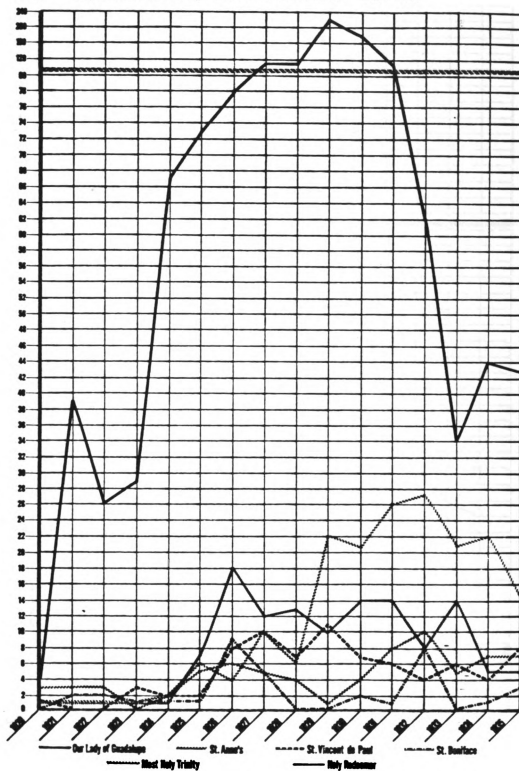


TABLE 5

Marriage Records of Spanish Surnamed People 1920-1935

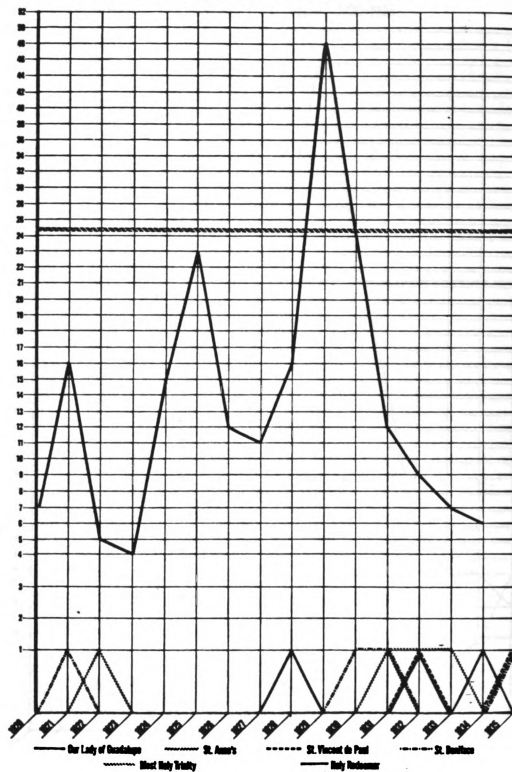
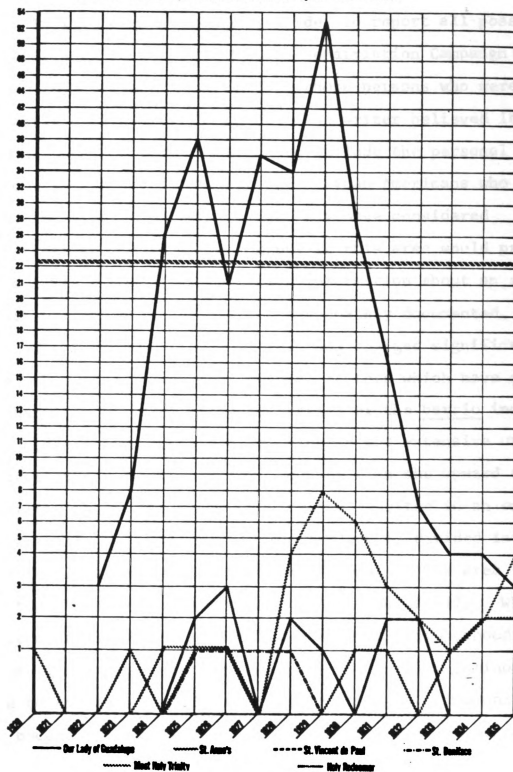


TABLE 6

Death Records of Spanish Surnamed People 1920-1935



CHAPTER V

PERSONAL PERCEPTIONS OF THE DETROIT MEXICAN COLONIA

It was determined that in order to report all possible aspects dealing with the Mexican Repatriation Campaign it would be essential to include those persons who were directly affected by the event. The writer believed it would enhance the scope of the study to include the personal perceptions of those Mexican and Mexican Americans who took part in campaign efforts, or who may have considered repatriation. Also further study in this area would provide an alternate means for gathering information about an event which historically has not been adequately documented.

The Latino barrio of Detroit has changed significantly over the years. Two environmental factors which have caused a change in the geographic boundaries of the barrio include the construction of the Fisher Freeway and extensive urban redevelopment. These factors coupled with the upward social mobility of the Mexican community has resulted in an expansion of the colonia further to the west which is divided into two distinct settlements by the Fisher Freeway. The area to the west of Grand Avenue has changed most dramatically. What was once a predominantly Polish and Hungarian neighborhood has since given way to the establishment of a solid Latino barrio. Due to the ever changing make-up of the Latino community, it became a major task to determine the number of Detroit

Mexican residents who experienced the Mexican Repatriation Campaign during the Great Depression. A cross-reference sociometric technique was used to identify the older Mexican residents of Detroit for this part of the study.

The local Catholic churches have remained one of the focal points of involvement for many of the older Mexican residents of the Detroit colonia. The church maintains social and religious outlets for all age groups, however, it became apparent during the course of this study that the older Mexican residents have remained devout and have actively participated in church affairs. In order to identify the oldest Mexican residents of Detroit, the writer asked the pastors of each of the six Catholic churches within the Latino colonia to name those who were thought to have lived in the area during the depression years. The names which were referred to were then cross validated with various social outreach agencies and several Latino leader in the colonia to confirm their presumed authenticity. To further substantiate the accuracy of the list of names, all those people identified in this study as long-time residents of Detroit were queried to see whether they might add to the list of names already collected. Invariably, the same names kept reoccurring during this information retrieval system. The list of names which was ultimately gleaned in this cross-reference

procedure yielded eleven persons. All eleven people lived in Detroit during the depression years and had knowledge regarding the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

It should be noted that the Mexican Repatriation Campaign was an event that took place in 1932, well over forty years ago. Many Mexicans who may have experienced the depression years have since passed away, moved to other regions of the country, or moved to Mexico as was the original intent of many Mexicans who came to the United States during the era in question. Although the list of names ultimately arrived at was considerably smaller than expected, the information which was generated by interviewing each person proved to be interesting and insightful. These data served to give the Mexican Repatriation Campaign a more personal perspective when compared to written documentation. The event in question still remains vivid in the memories of Latinos interviewed.

Each person identified in this aspect of the study was contacted by telephone to arrange a personal interview. In many cases, those interviewed were past retirement age, but were still living in the Mexican barrio of Detroit. A few had moved to suburban areas of Detroit to live with a son or daughter. In one case an interviewee had moved to Lansing, Michigan to live with a son. The interview process usually took place over a three hour session. In those situations where it was impossible to arrange a lengthy

interview session at one time, it was necessary to schedule several shorter interview talks.

In most cases, those that were interviewed were queried on a one-to-one basis. This process proved to be the best overall method to use when collecting data that spanned a long time period. Initially, some people were interviewed in the company of their spouse or children. This procedure was not always an efficient means to facilitate the interview.

Second party coercion regarding dates, people, and other facts forced the interviewer to insist that all subsequent interview sessions involve only that person who experienced the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. In some situations it was difficult to operationalize this protocol. When isolating the interviewee became an awkward task, the writer curtailed the interview session and made arrangements to follow up at some other time under more private conditions.

Nine of the eleven interviews which took place were conducted in the Spanish language. Telephone calls and pre-interview visits were made prior to each interview session. The purpose for this was to determine interview time, dates, and logistics. Furthermore, these early discussions determined whether the interview session should be conducted in English or Spanish. Although all of the interviewees could understand English, it became obvious

during early discussion whether they were more at ease in one language or another. In one situation, the interview was conducted bilingually, English and Spanish. It was the opinion of the writer that the interview session should be conducted in the dominant language of the interviewee as this would facilitate communication and result in a more detailed description of events and other pertinent information important to this study.

Whenever possible all persons were interviewed in the privacy of their home. The writer believed that the comfort and familiarity of the home environment would prompt greater discussion and perhaps increase recall of specific details. It was possible to interview nine of the eleven people in their home. Other interview arrangements had to be made in two situations. In one case, the person was still actively employed as the vice-president of a graphite company in what is called the down-river region of Detroit. Since it was impossible to structure an interview session with this person outside of his work day it was necessary to speak to him in his office. In another situation, the person was retired and spent a considerable amount of time in a social outreach agency for retired Latinos. Arrangements were made to interview this person at the agency which is located on Porter and 25th Streets.

All interview sessions were tape recorded. Later these tapes were translated and transcribed into English. This process was used because it was essential to effectively record all aspects of the dialogue which took place during the interview process. This allowed the interviewer to focus his attention on the discussion rather than become immersed in writing notes and otherwise preoccupied with small details. At the onset, some of those persons interviewed demonstrated some reluctance to speak before a tape recorder, however, as the interview ensued, most developed a comfortable disposition to the recorder and, in fact, appeared to ignore its presence.

The interview process was one which the writer structured according to an outline of questions. The chronological scope of questions began with the early family background of those that were interviewed. Also, for a more complete sociological profile of those who came to Detroit prior to 1930, questions were included in the interview process addressing those motivating factors which prompted relocation of Mexicans from their homeland to Detroit. The next line of questioning was an attempt to compose a more accurate description of the day-to-day life of the Mexican living in Detroit prior to and including the depression era. Finally, the interviewee was asked to recall those events directly related to the

Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

Specifically the following themes were developed to document the personal history of the growth and decline of the Detroit Mexican colonia, and the implications of the Great Depression and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

- a. Family background and early childhood.
- b. Motivating factors which instigated immigration and migration to Detroit, Michigan.
- c. Life style in the Detroit Mexican Community.
- d. Discrimination patterns in Detroit.
- e. The effects of the Great Depression.
- f. The Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

It is important to note that those persons included in this aspect of the study rejected the alternative to return to their homeland as many of their compatriots had elected to do during the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign. Instead, this select group decided to stay in the United States and survive by whatever means available to them at the time. Some of those that repatriated to Mexico ultimately returned to Detroit when plans to reassimilate into the mainstream of Mexican society failed. Unfortunately, repatriated Mexicans who eventually found their way back to Detroit were not located for the purpose of this study.

General Background of those Interviewed

The eleven people interviewed for this study were between the ages of 60-74 years of age. There were five women and six men and with the exception of two of the males, all were retired from jobs, but still considerably active in the community or church affairs. Three males and one female were without a spouse as a result of death and one female was divorced. All of those interviewed originally came from Mexico. Most settled in Detroit via the "leap frog" migratory trend described earlier in this study, however, a few of those interviewed lived in other regions of the country prior to coming to Michigan. Each person had a wide variety of life experiences, but essentially had similar motivating influences which initiated their relocation and ultimate settlement in the Detroit area.

None of those interviewed were considered to have a background of affluence. On the contrary, most indicated they had come from an agrarian life style in Mexico before conditions during the Mexican Revolution forced their migration northward toward the United States. For most, the trek north took place between 1915 and 1925. With the social and economic havoc which surrounded the revolution, Mexicans saw little future in Mexico and instead opted to cast their fate in the direction of the United States. As has been mentioned, push-pull factors were influential

in attracting Mexicans to this country. It was apparent that the promise of employment in the United States and escape from hard times in Mexico were the two most important factors in the proliferation of the Detroit Mexican colonia from the years 1920 to 1929. Although the move northward was initially perceived by all as a temporary measure, some would later discover they had little desire to return to Mexico. This was particularly true during the difficult era of the Great Depression.

The names of those interviewed for this chapter were changed to protect their privacy and opinions.

Early Youth

There is no singular description which can depict the early youth of those interviewed for this study. Suffice to say, most came from what can be considered a large family by United States standards. Eight attended school in Mexico with the exception of two females who were not allowed to attend because of their work obligations around the home. Typical of early childhood experiences is that of Miguel Perez, oldest of six children born to his parents in Guadalajara, Mexico.¹ While Miguel was still quite young, his father passed away leaving him with major responsibilities as the head of the household. At the age of fifteen, Miguel Perez quit school in order to devote more time to work so he could more adequately provide for his family. Although Miguel Perez quit school at a relatively early age,

he considers the education which he received in Mexico superior to that offered in the schools of this country. He adds that this is particularly true of the public municipal schools of Mexico rather than those located in the rural sections of the country. Perez claims that advanced science and mathematics concepts are introduced in the early grade levels in Mexico and that most schools offer English grammar. In fact, he studied English in elementary school, but admits it was little help to him when he came to the United States since it did not prepare him adequately for conversational communication.

Pedro Garcia also came from a large family.² One of eight children, Pedro attended the local grammar school in a small town in the state of Michoacan, Mexico. Garcia, his four brothers and three sisters were fortunate to complete escuela primaria which is commensurate to an eighth grade education in the United States. The father was an accomplished artisan and established a reputation as a woolen craftsman. His specialties were blankets and sarapes.

Garcia can reflect on his early childhood and earmark those activities which he considers turning points which would greatly affect his adult life. An early interest in drama and dance developed through his involvement with the asociacion de juveniles catolicos. Association of Young Mexican Catholics, a group of young Mexicans who belonged to the local Catholic church. It was also through the

asociacion that Pedro was introduced to what would become his occupational career choice--the printing trade.

One of Pedro's friends in the asociacion was an apprentice to one of the local print shops. On occasion, Pedro would accompany his friend and wait quietly while watching the activity in the shop. From 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon Pedro would observe the various aspects of the printing trade. Lunch break was from 12:00 noon until 3:00 p.m. and it was during this time that Pedro and his apprentice friend would spend the greater portion of that time looking at the shop windows, talking, or playing in the street with other friends. Later, Pedro would return to the print shop to wait while his friend worked until 7:00 p.m.

It was during one of Petro's many visits to the print shop that he was approached to assist on a job by the maestro of the shop. This he accomplished in short order after convincing the maestro that he could read and write in Spanish. From that time on, Pedro was paid 18 centavos per day which was soon increased to 25 centavos per day. It was at this shop that Pedro learned the printing trade which would subsequently provide him with the skills necessary to publish one of the few Spanish speaking newspapers during the early development of the Detroit colonia.

Perhaps the most stereotype early childhood story is that of José Fernandez, born in Urecuado, Michoacan, Mexico, in 1900.³ He was the youngest of fifteen children born to parents who were farmers. José Fernandez was fortunate enough to attend school at a seminary, however, his parents were forced to withdraw him from school due to the high cost of this private education. His mother approached this action philosophically indicating that there was a time and need for everyone in this world. Dropping out of school did not particularly faze Jose Fernandez very much and he accepted the fact that his father needed him more to work on the farm and that education, at least for then, would have to wait. Further education never materialized for Fernandez and, as a consequence, he only learned to read and write Spanish in a limited way.

One of the few people interviewed who did not typify an agrarian background was Mrs. Marta Ponce.⁴ Born in the central mesa zone of Morelia, Michoacan, Mexico, Mrs. Ponce's father was a merchant who sold rice, sugar, spices, lard, watermelons, as well as a wide variety of other food stuff. He would travel to Mexico City to make purchases and then return to Morelia to market his merchandise. The merchandise business was lucrative for the family; however, during the revolution, the high risk involved in transporting wares and food often placed the merchant's life in extreme danger.

Revolutionary followers of Emiliano Zapata and other political groups would converge on trains, warehouses or the merchant's wagon to loot anything that would contribute to the existence of the troops. Merchants were in constant danger when traveling to and from their sources of supply. Law and justice during that time was not quick enough to respond to the needs of the people.

Marta Ponce received what she perceives to be an adequate education in Mexico. Although her education was interrupted by the immigration of her family to the United States, she was able to finish the eighth grade. Later she would have an opportunity to compare the educational systems of the United States and of Mexico as she enrolled in a succession of schools during her family's migration from San Antonio, Texas, to Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, and finally to Detroit.

The Trip Northward

All those interviewed agreed that the Mexican Revolution was the chief factor which caused them to emigrate to the United States. The Mexican Revolution caused socio-political friction among the many groups seeking control of Mexico during the early part of the twentieth century. As a result, the masses of working people and peasant groups became vulnerable to the ruling classes and various factions vying for political power. Many people became innocent victims

of revolutionary groups like Zapatistas and Villistas while others sought refuge by fleeing to the relative tranquil political atmosphere of the United States. The economic uncertainty which resulted as a consequence of the Mexican Revolution reinforced in many the notion that they should look to the United States for employment.

The men who were interviewed for this study indicated they arrived in the United States through their own efforts as young single men. This fact corroborates the data presented by Humphrey in an earlier chapter that a significant number of Mexicans living in Detroit's colonia during its period of most rapid growth were young and unmarried. While those men who migrated to Detroit tended to be single and in their late teens or early twenties, two men indicated they came to the United States as children and part of a family unit. In all cases, the women interviewed came to this country with their immediate family or as recently married brides whose husband had already spent some time in the Motor City. It was not unusual for single men of this era to return to their homeland, marry, and subsequently bring their new bride to this country.

Miguel Perez claims he came to the United States to quench his desire to travel. He recalls that conditions were such in Mexico that there was little else to do. Therefore, at the age of nineteen and as the sole provider

of the family, Miguel Perez decided to venture to Detroit to live with a cousin who was already working in the Ford Motor Company. Although his mother was reluctant to allow Miguel to come to the United States, she eventually relented once he promised he would live with his cousin and communicate with her regularly. Perez came directly to Detroit once he crossed the international border at Laredo, Texas.

This can be said to fit Paul S. Taylor's description of the "leap frog" phenomenon in which many Mexicans virtually by-passed Texas or other border states in the Southeast and went directly to the industrial centers of the Midwest.

Most of the men interviewed went through the same "leap frog" migration pattern as described above. Pedro Garcia came northward via Vera Cruz to Laredo, Texas, and then to San Antonio. After spending one week in Texas, Pedro became determined to seek employment elsewhere and came to Michigan upon the encouragement of some friends and relatives who were preparing to come as migrant workers. While Garcia did some intermediate stops at Mt. Pleasant and Saginaw with his traveling companions, his ultimate destination was Detroit. Once in Detroit, he assumed much the same life style as the other Mexicans in the community.

José Fernandez is another example of the typical migration patterns of Mexicans coming to the United States. In his first trip to the United States, Fernandez stayed briefly in Texas where he became acquainted with a person who was a mechanic by trade. Together they pooled their resources and came directly to Detroit, making a brief stop in Chicago to visit the mechanic's relatives. Upon his arrival to Detroit, José Fernandez managed to secure a job at Michigan Steel Foundry. The year was 1920. By 1925 he had saved some money and decided to return to Mexico to visit friends and relatives and to marry.

Jesus Hernandez first entered the United States in 1926 at El Paso, Texas.⁵ He traveled with older brothers a long time and discovered that to remain in the Texas border town would mean fierce job competition with other relocated Mexicans. Every day more and more Mexican men crossed the international border eager to work. The overabundance of workers caused the pay scales to drop. Hence, the brothers spent approximately one month in El Paso after which time they then decided to go their separate ways. Jesus and his brother Manuel eventually came to Detroit after hearing that the Ford Motor Company was hiring people. The other brothers went on to California, but did not remain there long, returning to Mexico after spending less than one year there. One of these brothers ultimately came to Detroit, but he too

returned to Mexico to join the rest of the family.

Crecencio Diaz had determined he would go directly to Detroit from his hometown of San Luis Potosi.⁶ He made his decision in 1927, a year in which employment was not readily available where he lived. Diaz had written a letter to his brother-in-law who had found a job in a tire shop in Detroit and was also planning to open a restaurant once the lease arrangements could be made.

Crecencio Diaz packed all his belongings in a steamer trunk and made his way to Detroit only to discover to his chagrin that it was mid-January and his wardrobe did not include a winter coat.

Adán Martínez came to Detroit from his home state of Jalisco in 1924 after hearing of employment opportunities in factories of the Midwest industrial cities.⁷ He spent several weeks with an uncle who lived in San Antonio, but quickly left because he felt he was imposing. Adán Martínez found a job in a tool manufacturing shop shortly after his arrival in Detroit. From here he went to work in the Ford Motor Company where he soon met many other Mexicans from his home state.

Some of those interviewed did not migrate immediately to Detroit once in the United States. A far more popular migration trend for Mexicans was to cross the international border in the Southwest and remain there where they had easy

access to friends and relatives in Mexico. Usually, these new Mexican immigrants would seek employment in agriculture, the railroad industry, or in mining.

Tony Carvajal was born in Mexico, but at a very early age came to the United States along with other members of his family.⁸ The father found a job in the copper mines of Miami, Arizona, where he remained employed for several years. The uncertainty of the copper industry caused the family to move to the Midwest. It was sheer happenstance that the family finally arrived in Detroit after many other attempts to relocate. Once in Detroit, the father found employment and all the children enrolled at St. Anne's Catholic Elementary School. The Carvajals were the first Mexican children to enroll in the predominantly French-Irish Catholic School. Tony Carvajal hypothesizes that because he, his brothers and sisters were light complected and had blue eyes, they never encountered particularly harsh treatment for being a minority in the school. In fact, he speculates that it may have been beneficial to have been in a predominantly English speaking educational environment. This situation forced him to use English whenever he talked with other students. He, along with the other siblings in the family, learned English very quickly. Moreover, they learned English without an accent which allowed them the social ability to assimilate more readily than those Mexican children who not only spoke with

an accent, but also were easily identifiable because of their Mexican-Indian physical characteristics.

Although Tony Carvajal indicated he could have assimilated into the dominant society without difficulty, he never wanted to pay the price of losing his Mexican culture as he had observed others do.

Carlos Ortiz is another example of an early Detroit Mexican settler who lived in other areas prior to coming to Michigan.⁹ Ortiz first settled in Laredo, Texas, having arrived from Mexico at the age of twenty-one. Unmarried, Ortiz became one of the many Mexicans disposed by the revolution who sought employment in the United States. Although he rarely earned enough during his stay in Laredo to live comfortably, Ortiz often sent money to his family in Mexico, as was the practice of many Mexicans working in this country. It should be noted that Manuel Gamio, sociologist and an early demographer of Mexican immigration, utilized money order receipts issued by post offices throughout key areas of the United States to identify the Mexican population in this country during the first three decades of the twentieth century. These data are considered to be perhaps the most accurate attempt to assess the Mexican population for that time period, particularly since the Census Bureau did not attempt a census count for Mexicans until 1930.

Carlos Ortiz stayed in Laredo, Texas for over two years. During this time he had a variety of unskilled jobs, but found he had to compete with the steady stream of newly arrived Mexicans for available employment. He eventually became cognizant that he would have to leave the border town in order to make an equitable salary. In the spring of 1929, Carlos set out for Michigan with several companions who, like himself, had heard of abundant employment opportunities in the Midwest. Ortiz was particularly interested in working in the sugar beet fields because he was most familiar with farm work. Instead, his companions coerced him into going to Detroit to seek employment at the Ford Motor Company. Ironically, of those who came with Ortiz, he was the only one who remained in Detroit. The others ultimately returned to Mexico during the depression or rejoined families once they had accumulated substantial savings. Ortiz vividly recalls that one of those who accompanied him from Laredo to Detroit was killed in an altercation with the police in what was reported to be a case of mistaken identity. Carlos Ortiz did return to Mexico twice during his early days in Detroit. The first time was to attend his father's funeral which was held in San Luis Potosi. A year-and-a half later he returned again, this time to make the final preparations for an arranged marriage. After spending a month honeymooning, Carlos

Ortiz returned to Detroit with his new bride to resume a life style which, admittedly, was fast becoming comfortable for him.

Life Style in the Detroit Mexican Colonia

During the decade of 1920-1930 Detroit was growing to be one of the largest Latino populated cities in the Midwest. The lifestyle for Latinos in Detroit was distinct from other minority groups in the city. Many of the social and cultural activities which took place in the colonia centered on the Catholic Church. Since much of the Latino population at that time were young adults, who more often than not were single, boarding houses became the popular abode of many. Others may have chosen to live in small apartments or even rented houses. Rarely did Mexican families purchase their own homes. Permanent residency in the United States for many Mexicans living in Detroit was not a goal, therefore, few thought it worthwhile to own property. For others, it was not financially feasible to buy a house. Although many families ultimately developed a sense of belonging in Detroit, the plan of most Mexican immigrants was to work, save money, and subsequently return to Mexico to start a business or buy property. The passage of time and the assimilation of Mexican immigrant's children quite often prohibited those from

Mexico to achieve their desired goal.

The establishment of Mexican and other Latino grocery stores during the time of the colonia's most rapid growth in Detroit preserved many of the dietary habits of the Mexican community. The food aspect of the Mexican culture in essence remained intact. However, due to the American influence and the expanded cultural horizons of the Mexican children diets and family menu plans were often supplemented to accommodate the desires of children.

The social patterns of Mexicans also reflected the adoption of American customs. While many in the colonia clung to their ethnic life styles within their social environment others often transcended to experience other aspects of Detroit. A common social attraction for many was the dance hall.

Detroit, like other metropolitan communities during the 1920's had several dance halls. Those interviewed indicated that rarely did single Mexican girls or married Mexican couples attend the dance halls. Unmarried Mexican girls were often forbidden to attend social functions without a family chaperone. Their social activity was limited to church functions, house parties, or other events where the entire family attended. Dance halls in particular offered young unmarried Mexican males an opportunity to become familiar with other cultural dimensions of the city

that were not uniquely Latino. They frequented the dance halls in pairs or accompanied groups of non-Mexican acquaintances whom they met at work or school. When female companions were taken they were usually first generation Americans of Polish, Armenian, or Italian heritage.

Pedro García provided a very vivid picture of the dance halls of Detroit. Not only did he frequent these establishments as a young man in Detroit, but he also attempted to make a livelihood during the depression years as a professional dancer. The reason the single young Mexican males did not date Mexican girls was that they were not allowed to be seen in these places. Those who could attend usually had to be accompanied by a younger sister or brother which often resulted in an abbreviated evening of fun. It was primarily for these reasons that Mexican males sought the companionship of Polish, Armenian or Italian American girls. These girls lived in the same neighborhoods in which the Latinos lived. For the most part, there was very little discrimination experienced when dating across these cultural lines.

Garcia indicates that discrimination was always a factor in the life style of the Mexican living in Detroit. Some discrimination was manifested at the dance halls. He recalls an experience in which he, his friends, and their dates were refused admittance into a dance hall in Detroit. When asked

why, the ticket teller replied that Mexicans were not allowed in the establishment. Instead of making an issue of this situation, the group decided to return to their regular neighborhood dance hall where they knew they would not have problems.

Tony Carvajal recalls a similar incident in which a Mexican friend was refused admittance into a dance hall. When Carvajal attempted to intercede on his friend's behalf, the security policeman was called to the scene whereupon he threatened to arrest them both unless they left the premises. Carvajal remarked that Mexicans who had darker complexion and Indian features often endured the same social discrimination as blacks during that time. Light-complected Mexicans who could pass for whites sometimes did and as a result were not persecuted as much as other Mexicans of color.

Crecencio Diaz points out that the abundant labor market during the decade prior to the depression attracted many racial and socio-economic types to the city of Detroit. Among those who came were Mexicans from small rural areas who had neither the basic education nor the acceptable social skills to blend into the mainstream of society in Detroit. Moreover, this particular agrarian background group often possessed an extreme sense of patriotism which Diaz notes induced a further recess into isolation. In many cases

these Mexicans lacked the social background to dress decently or to practice acceptable personal hygiene habits. These Mexicans were of the low social class in Mexico and had much difficulty adjusting to metropolitan life in Detroit. Francisco Diaz is of the opinion that many of the negative stereotype perceptions which were formed of Mexicans during this time were perpetuated by the lower class Mexicans who came to the United States ill prepared or motivated to address the acculturation process.

Discrimination against Mexicans also manifested itself in the manner in which the police treated them. The relationship between many Mexicans and the police was often very strained. Jesus Hernandez attributes this situation to the fact that Mexicans often had a suspicious attitude towards the police in the United States. Complicating matters more was the fact that in most situations a language barrier was involved between those of the colonia and the police. Mexicans who could not speak English were not able to adequately explain themselves. Hernandez states that the Latino community was without Spanish speaking legal counsel until 1927. It was then that Charles C. Benjamin, a black Panamanian, began practicing law in the Latino community of Detroit.

Mr. Benjamin recalls that his law practice was predominantly Latino during his early professional career.¹⁰

The majority of the cases which he handled involved translating the charges to his client in which a misdemeanor was involved.

On several occasions Benjamin recollects that there was discrimination toward the Spanish speaking people of Detroit. However, he refrained from stating specific cases.

In order to orient the Spanish speaking community to legal issues, Charles Benjamin translated into Spanish a booklet which described the most often violated laws. This booklet received wide distribution within the city and subsequently increased his clientele. Another contributing factor to the professional growth of Benjamin's practice were the advertisements which he placed in the Spanish speaking newspapers in Detroit.

Boarding houses were a very popular means of accommodation especially for unmarried Mexican men. Usually two or three men shared a single room at a boarding house to cut down expenses. Two of the most popular Latino boarding houses in Detroit at the time were Casa Paloma and Casa Española. Adán Martínez emphasizes that since the majority of the Mexicans at the time were young and single, there was a premium placed on being admitted into a boarding house, particularly if it was operated by a Latino. Competition was brisk for available rooms at all boarding houses, but especially at those establishments

operated by the Spanish speaking. Martinez recounts an experience he had while searching for housing with other friends shortly after his arrival in Detroit. As he and his friends were negotiating with the landlady for a room she happened to ask them their nationality. Before Martinez could issue a response, one of his friends replied that they were all from Argentina. Upon further questioning, the landlady soon discovered they were Mexican and angrily reprimanded them for denying their cultural heritage. Martinez and his friends later discovered that the woman, although an American, was raised in Monterrey, Mexico, and had married a Mexican. The woman spoke fluent Spanish as did her children. The men had encountered such discrimination in their search for housing that day, they thought it best to conceal the fact they were Mexicans. Martinez remarks that he was embarrassed by the predicament and never again denied his cultural background under any circumstances.

The Great Depression and the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign

The Great Depression caused many hardships among the people of the colonia. Enrique Muniz, although only a teenager at the time, recalls that many of his Mexican friends returned to Mexico rather than face the uncertainty brought on by the depression.¹¹ Others interviewed for this study also recall going to the train station to say goodbye to

friends and relatives who had decided to return to their homeland as part of the repatriation campaign. Many others had made arrangements to depart months before managed repatriation activities began during the later part of the summer of 1932.

Tony Carvajal recalls that the famous muralist from Mexico, Diego Rivera, was actively supporting repatriation in the colonia. However, Carvajal notes that because Diego Rivera was a communist, the young people of the colonia were not allowed to attend the rallies to discuss the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. The rallies often contained political overtones and included speeches and rebuttals regarding the question of repatriation.

Pedro Garcia provided a more expanded account of Diego Rivera and his relationships to the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign. Compared to others interviewed for this study, Garcia appeared to take a more active role in the community. He remembers the reception which was given in honor of Diego Rivera upon his arrival in Detroit to paint a mural. Garcia not only followed the daily progress of Rivera's mural, but also attended several meetings where the muralist spoke against the capitalistic system and denounced the way in which the big industries of the United States used Mexican labor while not according them the human rights of other working class people. Garcia does

not recall whether Rivera attended many repatriation rallies. However, he suspects that the media account of Rivera's role in the Mexican Repatriation Campaign in Detroit were largely exaggerated. He notes that Rivera was above all an artist on commission to complete a work of art at the Detroit Institute of Arts. The artist was totally immersed in his task, throughout extensive hours, for six and seven days a week. It is questionable to assume that Rivera had either the time or the energy to sustain the role of advocate in the Repatriation Campaign. Garcia does speculate however that Rivera did finance the community efforts to propagandise his political views and to urge his countrymen to return to their homeland. Rivera's central focus fluctuated from the evils of capitalism to the hard times which would befall the Mexican community during the depression if they chose to remain in Detroit during the ensuing Winter months.

The Mexican Repatriation Campaign may have gained greater credence because of the association of Rivera's name with the movement. At any rate, if Rivera and other Mexican community leaders provided the emphasis for those in the colonia to consider repatriation, it was the work of the welfare department and other social agencies which incorporated the process to make the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign a reality.

Miguel Perez recalls that he asked for and received welfare assistance once during the depression years. Although he was never asked to consider repatriation by social workers, he did hear about others who were subjected to case review in which repatriation by social workers was pressing. Perez was fortunate in that his father-in-law was able to employ him as a tobacco salesman and cigar manufacturer during the depression years. Once the worst of this era had passed, Perez once again began to work for his old employer.

Adán Martínez, like many others, lost his job in November of 1931. He considered returning to Mexico, but remained in Michigan after hearing that employment conditions in Mexico were actually worse than in the United States. Martínez had a succession of odd jobs which provided him with just enough money so that he never had to ask for public assistance. This was the case with most of those interviewed for this study.

Those Mexicans living in Detroit during the depression who could find some kind of employment usually managed to make enough money to refrain from seeking welfare aid.

CHAPTER VI

DETROIT, MICHIGAN, DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The decade beginning in 1920 saw much industrial growth in Detroit, due primarily to its auto manufacturing plants. The economic stability of the Motor City was often correlated to its auto production figures. By 1920 the auto industry had reached its production peak for the era by manufacturing 4 million automobiles. The ultimate effects of the stock market crash in October and November of 1929 and its influence on business and industry were to have a profound impact on Detroit's auto enterprises. By 1932, economically the low ebb of the depression, car production had fallen to 1,250,000.¹ It is estimated that two-thirds of those employed in automobile manufacturing had little or no work and, subsequently, little money to pass on to landlords, grocers, clothiers, and other creditors.² Detroit, like other midwest industrial centers, was faced with attempting to do something about low industrial production, increased unemployment rates, and establishing support systems for its needy.

In the fall of 1930, the city of Detroit elected Judge Frank Murphy, of the Records Court, as its mayor. Democratic mayor Frank Murphy, who later became Governor of Michigan and Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, was faced with the difficult task of

designing and initiating relief programs to deal with the city's vast number of unemployed and underemployed citizens. By 1930, the city of Detroit had reached a population of 1,500,000 and had earned the distinction of being the "automobile city of the world." In addition to the many people once employed in the manufacture of automobiles, Detroit also had other industries of significant size which had employed many of its residents. In the throes of financial crisis, the industries began large scale cutbacks in their labor force.

In order to better diagnose the financial ills which befell the city, Mayor Murphy instituted the Mayor's Unemployment Committee. The Committee was composed of one hundred people from many walks of life, including professional men, social workers, industrialists, ministers, educators, labor leaders, and society women. One of the first tasks the Committee was charged with was to assess the extent of Detroit's unemployment. More than 100,000 persons were listed, including men and women, single and married.³

There is little reason to doubt that those who felt the immediate effects of the depression were the lower socio-economic groups, the recent immigrants, and those people with large and extended families. Various subcommittees of the Mayor's Unemployment Committee were

organized to plan and develop immediate relief programs to assist the needy of the city. Detroit's mayor had by that time issued a statement that it would take care of all of its needy and assist the less fortunate in every way possible.

As economic conditions throughout the state became increasingly depressed, the governor issued an invitation to various municipal governments in the state to discuss possible emergency employment and relief measures. On October 12, 1931, the chairman of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors received a telegram from Governor Wilbur M. Bruckner requesting his presence, as well as that of the chairman of the Finance and Unemployment Committee, at a meeting scheduled for 1:30 p.m. on October 16, 1931, at the Executive Office in Lansing.⁴ As a result of this meeting, a State Unemployment Commission was established in the Capitol Building in Lansing to act as a clearing house for governmental and state agency information dealing with relief programs throughout Michigan. R. Wayne Newton, Secretary of the State Unemployment Commission, was responsible for maintaining a liaison with city governments in Michigan in order to keep abreast of the economic state of the area. William J. Norton became chairman of the Emergency Relief Committee of Detroit; it was his responsibility to

communicate information regarding relief programs from state government to Mayor Frank Murphy.⁵

The Emergency Relief Committee, located at 303 Detroit Savings Bank Building in downtown Detroit, functioned as a clearing house for financial information to city and county government agencies. Employment and relief programs were carried out by the Mayor's Unemployment Committee of Detroit. Their central headquarters office was located at 176 East Jefferson Avenue with several branch offices scattered throughout Detroit. The Committee is credited with establishing three programs which attempted to deal with the high unemployment rate during the years 1931 and 1932.

One of the first programs to be developed by the Mayor's Unemployment Committee was the City Free Employment Bureau. The purpose of this program was to actively seek out available work in Detroit and match employees to fit the jobs. The results of the City Free Employment Bureau were so successful that within six months time the program was assumed by the Department of Public Welfare.⁶

The Detroit Thrift Garden Program was not as successful as the City Free Employment Bureau and, in fact, received much criticism from many factions. In 1931, for example, a total of 4,369 gardens were planted at a cost to the city of \$17,837.86. The price tag for this program brought complaints from the city officials, who charged

that the project was too expensive to operate. The contention was that the production cost of the Thrift Gardens was only slightly less than merchandise available in markets. Nonetheless, the program continued for the year 1932 when a total of 6,200 gardens were planted at a cost of \$17,570.38⁷

A slightly more successful program by the Mayor's Unemployment Committee was the management of the Apple Vendor's Association. This program managed to support 250 families in 1932 as a result of apple sales in the streets of Detroit.⁸

In spite of municipal relief measures, unemployment figures remained high for the years 1931-32. Various financial data collected by city officials indicated that Detroit was in the worst financial crisis of its history. In November, 1932, Mayor Frank Murphy announced that the city was then extending aid to more than 150,000 people.⁹ In reports prepared for the mayor, it was disclosed that 5,350 men were receiving medical attention at Eloise infirmary. In spite of the relatively high number of patients, the report indicated that Eloise still had the capacity to accommodate 1800 more patients. McGregor's Mission House reportedly was housing 350 men daily, whereas the Volunteers of America were feeding 1,200 persons on a day to day basis.¹⁰ In addition, a conservative

estimate of 1,617 men and 2 women were classified as "homeless wanderers" in a survey conducted by the Detroit Police Department. Most of these people would live around the docks and old sheds along the riverfront.¹¹

In the summer of 1932, Detroit hosted a Conference of Mayors of the United States. The purpose of the conference was two-fold: first, to seek a direct and immediate federal relief amendment to assist financially periled cities, and second, to encourage the establishment of prosperity loans and other job plans for creation of employment at the local level.¹²

Altogether, thirty-one mayors, city managers, and municipal representatives attended the two-day conference. A committee of four mayors was selected to follow-up on several of the recommendations which were made at the conference. The follow-up Committee consisted of: George Welsh, Grand Rapids, Michigan; John T. O'Conner, Knoxville, Tennessee; S.F. Snively, Duluth, Minnesota; and John F. Herron, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

It is difficult to measure the impact of the Conference of Mayors of the United States. Missing were several municipal leaders from the larger urban areas. Those who were in attendance voted in favor of action on three recommendations: 1) establishment of a \$5 billion dollar Prosperity Loan Fund for federal projects and immediate

employment; 2) immediate enactment of such relief legislation as may be necessary to conserve the welfare of the American people during the industrial depression; and 3) a recommended amendment to a congressional act incorporating the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to permit such a corporation to invest its assets in notes, debentures, bonds, or other faiths and credit obligations of cities for public welfare, to provide money for delinquent tax obligations, and for the refunding of bonds to insure proper operation of municipal government.¹³ The passage of Reconstruction Finance Corporation funds was to assist many municipalities in recouping financial and employment stability.

President Herbert Hoover had recognized the importance of a fund such as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation if his administration was to succeed in overcoming the effects of the depression. Two years of deepening economic crisis had made the Hoover Administration aware that reliance on private effort and public support of individual efforts to control the depression were not enough. Therefore, on December 8, 1931, in his annual message to Congress, Hoover proposed the Reconstruction Finance Corporation.¹⁴

It was the opinion of the Hoover administration that the Reconstruction Finance Corporation was just another emergency agency, one which might not have to be used extensively. In fact, the original plan was to liquidate

the funds in two years. It was hoped that the very existence of available funds would strengthen municipal and state government confidence during the depression era.

The bill was subsequently passed by both Congressional houses on January 16, 1932, and signed by the President, on January 22 of the same year.¹⁵ Hoover made the announcement that Eugene Meyer would be chairman of the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and Charles G. Dawes, President, to coordinate administration of a \$300 million advancement established by the Government. In addition to the fund, the corporation was allowed to borrow up to \$1.5 billion in government guaranteed, tax-free obligations which could be extended for ten years.¹⁶

Disbursements of Reconstruction Finance Corporation monies were made to the several states and territories to be used in furnishing relief and work opportunities for needy and distressed people and in relieving the hardships resulting from unemployment. Not more than 15 percent of the total corporation funds were available to any one state or territory.¹⁷ The governor of any state or territory was authorized to make application for funds under the act and in each request was to certify the necessity for such funds. In addition, each application for funds had to provide a financial statement of monies available at the time which clearly indicated inability

to meet relief needs.¹⁸ Detroit, like other cities in financial distress, put in its bid for funds under the Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act. These monies provided employment opportunities and relief for Detroit's needy. Economic relief through the use of corporation funds began to be felt in the fall of 1932.¹⁹

Availability of municipal funds prompted an upsurge in employment opportunities for the people of Detroit. By and large, the public works of Detroit hired many heretofore unemployed and created competition for jobs. Ethnic and racial minority groups, as well as non-citizens of the United States, came to be viewed by some as obstacles for full employment of American men unemployed during the depression. Pressure to dissolve the competition was exerted by the Board of Supervisors of Wayne County in a resolution presented by Board member Frank H. Steel on October 4, 1932.²⁰ Mr. Steel contested that it had come to his attention that public funds of Wayne County were being expended on public contracts on which persons who were not citizens of the United States, or for that matter, who have never been legally admitted, were being employed, thus denying job opportunities to American citizens. Supervisor Frank H. Steel resolved that supplies or materials to be used in the fulfillment of a public contract with Wayne County had to be produced by citizens

of the United States.²¹ Furthermore, Supervisor Steel urged that public contracts entered into by Wayne County should not employ aliens unlawfully residing in the United States.²¹ This resolution was referred to the Ways and Means Committee of the Wayne County Board of Supervisors and subsequently passed in a modified form.

Local pressure on illegal Mexican aliens, as well as movements throughout the Southwest and California to return Mexicans to their homeland, in an effort to ease the financial burden on municipalities, stirred the first hints of repatriation in Detroit. Los Angeles, California, by that time, had organized Mexican repatriation efforts through the Comite Mexicano de Beneficio, the Los Angeles County Welfare Department, and the Mexican government.²² In Detroit, one of the large automobile industries had already gone on record as saying it would give preference to United States citizens in all cases where Mexican mechanics and laborers were removed from their payroll by reason of the repatriation movement.²³ The fall of 1932 saw the emotional and social forces come together to initiate repatriation efforts for Mexicans in Detroit. Funds allotted to the Welfare Department of the State by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation further served as rationale to institute the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign.²⁴ By October of 1932, intergovernmental arrangements were already under way to transport Mexicans from Michigan to the international border at Laredo, Texas.

CHAPTER VII

FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED THE MEXICAN REPATRIATION CAMPAIGN

Prior to 1930, Detroit Mexicans had experienced significant growth and had established a colonia which included not only Latino businesses and services but also people in professional capacities as well. With the depression the colonia was to experience a transformation which was to result in the dramatic loss of its population, the demise of its businesses, and the creation and reinforcement of nativist attitudes toward the Mexican throughout the United States.

Norman D. Humphrey states that one significant reason for the relative lack of discrimination in the north compared to the Southwest was the comparatively small size of the Mexican group residing in northern states. He further says that because of their small numbers, Mexicans in the north were not a threatening factor to the economic position of the dominant American group.¹ This posture, although accurate during abundant employment and good economic times, did not apply during the crisis of the Great Depression. As economic conditions worsened throughout the country, a strong nationalist undercurrent developed, urging that something be done about the vast number of Mexicans in this country who were causing employment competition and forcing many to join

the ranks of the unemployed. Chief among those that perpetuated nationalist sentiments were the working classes of Americans, who, because of the depression, were placed in a position where they worked fewer hours, received reduced salaries and were fortunate if they could rely on their own efforts to maintain their households. Mexican laborers often became the cause and effect factor during this time of depression. Mexican immigrants were often willing to work for lower wages than their American counterparts. For this reason, industry and agriculture welcomed this eager labor force and encouraged policies which would insure its abundance. This situation created a threat to the American majority group which had not, heretofore, been present during the boom years.

The President, the U.S. Labor Department, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service, and Congressmen received a barrage of letters from embittered United States citizens seeking an immediate remedy to the Mexican problem. Typical of the correspondence that was directed to the President was: "I suppose you don't know of the hardships that are being caused in Chicago by the coming of the vast hordes of cheap Mexican laborers to this city. Thousands of hard working men are being thrown out of work because they can't compete with the Mexicans in regard to wages."² Another letter from Gary, Indiana, stressed

much the same set of circumstances with regard to labor conditions; "Because they will work cheaper than an American will, that's the reason why there is so many out of work. The American has to walk the streets and a Mexican is working, that's not justice toward the American citizen."³

The "leap frog" migration phenomenon and its implication on transformation of cultural patterns in the colonia have already been discussed in an earlier chapter. It should be noted that this particular migration pattern manifested itself in industrial cities primarily in the Midwest. The greatest and most common migration pattern, however, was the influx of Mexicans to the border towns of Texas and, eventually, into cities further removed from the international border or perhaps to other Southwestern states in search of employment. When the latter migration pattern occurred, Americans of Mexican descent or legal Mexican aliens were forced to compete for the same variety of jobs with large masses of Mexicans quite willing to do the job for a cheaper wage. When this situation manifested itself, the alternatives were not particularly favorable for the Mexican American. He either worked for the same low wage paid the Mexican peon, lost his job because of his unwillingness to become the buffer in the negotiations for a fair wage, or migrated to other parts of the state or country in search of better employment

opportunities.

The Great Depression served to stimulate some Mexican Americans to voice their concerns about the Mexican immigration issue. A petition postmarked Laredo, Texas, asked where justice was in this situation. "The business men[sic] of this City. . . are employing Mexicans[sic] men whose conduct is unknown and we the undersigned are being removed from our places just because the Mexicans work for little or nothing. . . contract men, builders, etc, prefer to employ men from Mexico instead of giving us the preference."⁴ From Palms, California, in a letter dated February 4, 1930, further concern was expressed on behalf of Mexicans who were likewise against "cheap peon labor" obstructing competition for equitable wages.⁵

While a great bulk of correspondence was job oriented, blaming Mexican laborers for working on jobs rightfully belonging to Americans, or lashing out at business and industry for perpetuating the economic situation to favor Mexican workers; many letters emphasized racial characteristics in describing the dilemma and portrayed the entire problem in terms of "civilization" as opposed to "barbarism." An example of this particular attitude follows: ". . . nor are they [referring to the American people] going to stand by and watch the Southwest taken over by Mexican peons, the majority of whom are colored,"⁶

or, ". . . withdrawal of this servile race, a harmless class of humanity, will destroy completely the sugar beet industry in the United States."⁷ Another commented, "No one who does not live in this country can realize the social and moral ravages in a white civilization made by such a horde of semi-barbareous[sic] Indians. . . Do we wish to re-convey to Mexican barbarism. . . and thereby submerge and . . . destroy for all time, white civilization. . .?"⁸ Later, as repatriation drastically reduced the number of Mexicans in Arizona, the same individual praised the President's efforts and included this comment: "Continued Mexican immigration would have uprooted and destroyed white civilization in this Southwest. . ."⁹

Many who expressed nativist sentiments advocated a quota system on Mexican immigrants to the United States or their removal to allow American citizens to resume work. Republican President Herbert Hoover was not an advocate of quota limit systems for the Western Hemisphere and, subsequently, fell into disfavor with many concerning this policies for controlling Mexican immigration. The Hoover administration was attempting to carry through with a Latin American Good Neighbor Policy, initiated under the previous presidential leadership of Calvin Coolidge, which would have enhanced the promise of greater American business and industrial development in Mexico, as well as Central and

South America. To actively support quota restrictions for Mexicans would have seriously endangered Hoover's designs on improved international relations between Latin America and the United States. Instead, Hoover's solutions were much in line with the previous administration and were administrative, rather than legislative, in nature. Essentially, his policies entailed two strategies to control Mexican immigration. First, the Border Patrol stepped up its activities, and more illegally entering Mexicans were apprehended and turned back at the international border. Second, in September, 1930, the State Department, acting in the name of President Hoover, instructed the American Consulate in Mexico to increase the rate at which visas were being denied.¹⁰

The Harris Bill came before the 71st Congress in 1930 in an effort to extend the quota limit system to Mexico. The bill was one of several that was considered by committees of both the House and the Senate, however, the Harris provision was the only one that passed the Senate and brought to the attention of the 71st Congressional session.¹¹ The Department of State was openly and vigorously opposed to any restrictive legislation and, instead, advocated the present administrative measures to hold Mexican immigration in check.

To insure that personal interests were met, groups and individuals voiced their opinion on proposed legislation regarding restriction of Mexican immigration. "The agriculturalists of the Southwest are in united opposition to this [Harris] bill, and if you see fit to veto it when it comes to you for your signature, you will be doing exactly what we want you to do."¹² Others were more to the point and threatened a change in political allegiance if their concerns were not accommodated by the present administration: "For generations my family has voted the Republican ticket, but if this [referring to the Harris Bill] is the way the Republican administration is going to act in the face of public opinion and common sense, a change is needed."¹³ A letter from Alhambra, California, did not limit the alternative of political change to the traditional two party system in the United States, as this writer's comments inferred: "Such situations make Americans see red and damn the administration, and it's no wonder we hear bolshivek[sic] talk on all sides!"¹⁴

Various units of state and local government also joined the movement to curtail or end Mexican immigration. For example, Arizona passed legislation requiring that at least 80 percent of the workers in any occupation must be American citizens; however, the United States Supreme Court held the law to be unconstitutional.¹⁵ In 1930, the Arizona

legislature passed a resolution supporting the Box Bill, which was another bill before Congress designed to place Mexico under the quota system.¹⁶ The resolution charged that Mexican peons were in direct competition with American men and women, thus making it extremely difficult for native born citizens to secure jobs. An over supply of labor at the discretion of agriculture and industry prompted the reduction of wages. Furthermore, the resolution implied that Mexicans were hired at wages which permitted the purchase of only the bare necessities for a temporary existence, thus filling towns and cities during the greater portion of the year with a large and growing army of unemployed, who reportedly drained charities, filled penal institutions, and many of whom were affected with infections and diseases, and thousands of whom were saturated with Bolshevik doctrine.¹⁷ The Arizona Legislature, thus, urged Congressional action to curb Mexican immigration and reduce the potential danger to institutions and government. Other state legislatures, including California, Oregon, and Georgia, also passed resolution calling on Congress to enact legislation limiting immigration from Mexico.¹⁸

Numerous political interest groups joined the movement to restrict or terminate Mexican immigration. Among the many groups who responded to this issue before the 71st Congress were the American Federation of Labor, The American

Legion, The California Joint Immigration Committee, The Immigration Restriction League, Lions Club of Los Angeles, East Los Angeles Republican Club, Georgia Federation of Labor, American Eugenics Society, and the Mission Canyon Chapter of D.A.R. Santa Barbara.¹⁹ By and large, these interest groups advocated restricted immigration from Mexico to eliminate the Mexican as employment competition for United States citizens.

Other groups interested in maintaining positive diplomatic relations with Mexico opposed restrictive immigration legislation which would place the Western Hemisphere under a quota system. Furthermore, influential interest groups in business and industry did not want to see a halt to the seemingly limitless supply of cheap labor which was available from Mexico. In a hearing before the House Immigration Committee, the Chamber of Commerce of the United States added testimony to protest on behalf of the Southwest against restrictions of Western Hemisphere immigration.²⁰ Harry Chandler, publisher of the Los Angeles Times, outlined in an editorial the disadvantages of the quota systems and limitations to Mexican immigration on United States industries.²¹

The Mexican government also raised protest against restrictive immigration measures by the United States. The proposed immigration legislation was considered by

Mexico to be discriminatory. Its enforcement would greatly harm the increasingly friendly relations and mutual confidence developing between the United States and Mexico. Mexico's Ambassador to the United States, Manuel Tellez, was instructed to file an official protest against the restrictive immigration measures which had been introduced into the House.²² Incoming President Ortiz Rubio visited the United States prior to his inauguration in the spring of 1930 in an effort to enhance intergovernmental relations between Mexico and the United States.²³ Rubio was accorded diplomatic courtesy by President Hoover and his administration; however, the House had already approved the provisions in the Harris-Box immigration proposal, and it was on its way to the Senate.

Further reaction was voiced by the media in Mexico. La Prensa commented that it recognized the right of the United States to legislate according to its taste and judgement, but, the newspaper added, Mexico had a reciprocal right, in case of necessity, to reject collectively all products of United States origin.²⁴ Furthermore, La Prensa reminded its readers that Mexico occupied a very prominent place in the foreign markets of the United States. The newspaper stated that Congressional support of restrictive immigration measures was a symptom of future aggravations in the policy of economic conquest by the United States of

the weaker peoples of the American continent. Although La Prensa recognized the right of the United States to pass laws in accordance with its best interests, the newspaper took offense against the American people who categorized the Mexicans as an inferior race. Finally, the newspaper article spoke to the manipulation of Mexican laborers as dictated by the economic conditions within the United States. This was a strategy perceived to ignore the labor contributions of this group which had much to do with the establishment of a sound economic structure in agriculture and industry and yet had received few benefits for their efforts.

In the final analysis, industrial and agricultural interest groups provided the political influence needed to block Congressional enactment of amendments to immigration acts which would have imposed quota restrictions on Mexico. The Hoover administration continued its policy to solve the problem of excessive Mexican immigration through administrative, rather than legislative, procedures. This action did not serve to placate all interests groups concerned with the situation; however, it did appease three political groups important in the eyes of that administration: Latin Americans, Southwestern agricultural growers, and industrialists.²⁵ Cutting Mexican immigration through visa denial was preferable to these interest groups because it

was less likely to be a permanent policy. It was anticipated that once the current economic crisis had subsided, administrative policies relative to Mexican immigration could be easily relaxed or eradicated altogether, thus re-establishing the linkages with Mexico which provided the cheap labor needed by United States industries. Restrictive measures through amendments to the Immigration Acts would have provided a much more permanent solution, one not as easily reversed as an administrative policy. By invoking administrative policy rather than legislative quota restrictions, the Hoover administration found a partial solution to the Mexican situation which was more or less acceptable to all interest groups except the exclusionists who advocated stricter controls on Mexican immigration. A factor which helped precipitate nativist sentiments of this group throughout the nation during the depression was the influence of the printed media, some of which took up the cause of Mexican restriction. Often the titles of articles were enough to reflect the attitudes which were beginning to manifest themselves as a result of the economic depression at the time. "The Menace of Mexican Immigration,"²⁶ "Perils of Mexican Invasion,"²⁷ and "Peons Need Not Apply,"²⁸ were articles published during the time Congress was considering immigration quotas for Mexicans and reflected their theme in the titles.

From 1928 through 1930 the Saturday Evening Post, with a weekly circulation of 2,750,000 presented its readers with a number of articles dealing with Mexican exclusion themes. One of the earliest Saturday Evening Post articles on the issue of Mexican immigration cast Mexicans as "undesirable" and "unassimilable."²⁹ Later, Kenneth L. Roberts wrote a three part article delineating the pros and cons of Mexican immigration and ultimately coming to the conclusion that an exclusionary quota system for Mexico, in addition to using intensified Border Patrol tactics to keep out illegal Mexican immigrants, was the only way to safeguard labor opportunities for the American working class.³⁰ Numerous references to the dark skin of the Mexicans were made in Roberts' articles; moreover, he indicated that Mexicans would biologically weaken the white race through intermarriage with Americans. Roberts concluded that Mexicans were a "constant menace" to American Society.³¹

In the issue of the Saturday Evening Post that contained the last of the three part series written by Roberts, Charles C. Teague, President of the California Fruit Growers' Exchange and Vice-President of the California Development Association, expressed his views in defense of Mexican immigration. Teague argued that Mexican immigration was justified by the crucial need for temporary farm labor at harvest time. Furthermore, Teague admitted

that Mexicans were less desirable than white workers, but whites refused to do heavy field work in hot climates; indeed, white workers were constitutionally unsuited for such labor, whereas the Mexican could withstand the high temperatures and was more adapted to field conditions.³²

A year later, the Saturday Evening Post published an article by journalist Garet Garrett which highlighted many of the points Roberts had made in his series. Critical of government inaction in dealing with the Mexican immigrant situation, Garrett presented a brief summary of immigration history and likened Mexicans to the post-1880 immigrants from eastern and southern Europe; both were claimed to be unassimilable and, therefore, undesirable. Garrett stated that the Mexican was only useful for his willingness to do squatting labor for small pay and that the Mexican was far below the average American intelligence and posed a liability to all the social and political institutions in the United States.³³ Furthermore, Garrett theorized that, should the United States enact stricter regulations regarding Mexican immigration, American technology and new machinery would soon overcome any temporary losses to American agricultural interests, such as the sugar beet industry, which depended on cheap Mexican labor.

The Saturday Evening Post became the forum for yet another writer to express his views on the Mexican immigration issue. Roy L. Garis, a professor of economics at Vanderbilt University, further articulated sentiments of the exclusionists. In his article, "The Mexicanization of American Business," in the February 8, 1930, issue of Post, Garis criticized the farming and industrial interests which lobbied for continued immigration from Mexico when there was sufficient labor in the Southwest to meet their needs.³⁴ In his second article, "The Mexican Invasion," Garis praised the restriction of European and Asian immigration but openly criticized the irrational nature of United States policy on Mexican immigration. It made little sense, Garis argued, to exclude more desirable European immigrants, while admitting thousands of unskilled, illiterate Mexicans, who posed serious problems of racial assimilation in the United States, filled American penal institutions, and burdened the public welfare system.³⁵

By 1929, it appears that the Saturday Evening Post had become the voice for those advocating stricter Mexican immigration legislation. Not only did contributing writers continue to focus attention on this issue, but editorials began to appear in support of the exclusionists. In an editorial dated June 22, 1929, the Saturday Evening Post admitted it had taken up the cause of restricting the entry of Mexicans. Such measures were necessary, as indicated in

in the editorial, because Mexicans were unassimilable, "an undesirable ethnic stock for the melting pot."³⁶ Less than a year later, Post re-emphasized its position on the Mexican immigration issue. This editorial stated that Mexicans reportedly brought a lowering of American standards, caused lamentable criminal conditions, and ultimately failed to assimilate.³⁷

The views put forth by the Saturday Evening Post editorialists and other writers continued to find expression in the magazine as late as 1936. For example, a series of articles by journalist Raymond G. Carroll rearticulated the views of the exclusionists of the depression period. Blaming unemployment and high relief costs on aliens and recent immigrants, the Carroll articles alleged that Mexicans contributed to the problems the United States experienced during the depression.³⁸

It is difficult to assess the impact exclusionist rhetoric had upon the American public and the extent to which it influenced political interest groups responding to the Mexican immigration issue. By the latter part of 1930, it became apparent that the Hoover administration was moving ahead with its non-legislative plans to control Mexican immigration to the United States. The solution of the Hoover administration did not, however, deal with the issue of the large number of Mexicans who had already

entered the United States illegally.

As the economic conditions became worse throughout the United States, a series of events began to unfold in several cities in the Southwest which affected the Mexican population living in this country. Without the involvement or sanction of the national government, several communities began to make arrangements to repatriate Mexicans rather than support them through public assistance programs during the depression. Similar economic conditions soon prompted Mexican repatriation efforts in other parts of the United States. In the Midwest, Chicago, Illinois, Gary and East Chicago, Indiana, and Detroit, Michigan, ultimately developed plans to conduct a Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

CHAPTER VIII

THE DETROIT MEXICAN REPATRIATION CAMPAIGN, 1932

Of the sixteen million immigrants who came to the United States from Europe in the three decades after 1900, almost four million repatriated within the same year that they arrived.¹ It is estimated that during this time of relatively inexpensive ocean crossing, many European immigrants may well have drifted back and forth again and again, lured by prosperity and high wages in some years, pushed back to their homes by recessions and unemployment in others.² Because accessibility to the United States became increasingly more difficult after passage of the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924, excessive European repatriation ended shortly thereafter. Since quota restrictions were never imposed on Western Hemisphere nations, however, the number of Mexicans continued to fluctuate across the international border, depending upon the economic conditions within the two countries at the time.

Repatriation prior to the depression was always a voluntary action on the part of the immigrant. In some cases, voluntary removals were handled under Section 23 of the Immigration Act of 1917, which stipulated that in those cases where immigrants requested repatriation because of their inability to support themselves, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service would assume

financial responsibility to return those involved to their respective homeland.³ This provision was often referred to as the LPC --liable to become public charge--stipulation of the Immigration Act. With the emergence of the Great Depression and talk of Mexican Repatriation Campaign being waged in various states, Section 23 came under scrutiny by immigration officials.

There were many principles involved in the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign. As in other cities that waged similar campaigns, cooperation was first established by the Mexican government, through the local Mexican Consul and the state and municipal agencies wishing to conduct repatriation efforts. The primary instigation for the program of Mexican repatriation in Detroit, in fact, had come through overtures from representatives of the Mexican government. The Mexican Consul in Detroit at the time was Ignacio L. Batiza. It should be presumed that he acted like other consuls on behalf of the Mexican government in seeking cooperation and local coordination of repatriation efforts to the international border at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.

In addition to national governments, local and state agencies were also involved to a large extent. The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services Agency, Detroit District, as well as the city and state Public Welfare Departments, were likewise assisting in repatriation efforts.

Although many were involved in the managed programs to return Mexicans to their homeland during the Great Depression, perhaps no one person had as much impact as Diego Rivera in making these efforts a reality for the city of Detroit. Diego Rivera, a famous Mexican muralist, arrived in Detroit, Michigan, on April 21, 1932, with his wife Frieda and a small entourage, including: Clifford Wight, sculptor from California, and his wife; Lord Hastings, scion of the ancient house of Plantagenets, and heir to the Earl of Huntington, with his wife.⁵ Diego Rivera had returned from New York and with his associates intended to begin work on murals at the Detroit Institute of Arts, which had commissioned his services two years before. The murals were being made possible by an appropriation from the Edsel Ford Fund of the Detroit Museum of Art Founder's Society.⁶ Diego Rivera was to remain in Detroit painting his frescoes on the walls of the indoor garden court of the Detroit Institute of Arts through March 13, 1933.⁷ During this time, the painter not only completed a controversial work of art, as commissioned, but also became the catalyst which inspired the Mexican colonia to mobilize efforts to return to their homeland.⁸

Diego Rivera was a known communist and, as such, was not an advocate of the United States' capitalistic economic system. Much of Rivera's political philosophy was

transferred into his art work whenever possible.

"Mexico is a most terrifying but beautiful example of the struggle between one class and the other classes. All the expression of the people's art comes from this struggle."⁹ It was this philosophical statement which Rivera transposed onto the walls of the Detroit Institute of Arts, drawing various comments from the city's clergy, art critics, and the general public. The figures of the murals were Indian, or the red race representing iron ore; Negroid, or the black race representing coal; Oriental, or the yellow race representing sand; and the white race representing limestone. In between the figures, huge hands were raised from the earth showing its treasures.¹⁰

The eleven months Diego Rivera spent in Detroit completing his murals were filled with personal illness, family tragedy, and community involvement in the colonia which ultimately led to an organized movement referred to as the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. The artist was a big man, weighing well over three hundred pounds. He had arrived in Detroit pale and recovering from a severe illness.¹¹

Through the months of June, July, and August, during which time Rivera accomplished much of his preliminary work on the murals, it was not unusual for the artist to begin work early in the morning, along with his associates. Utilizing portable scaffolds, Rivera would

work all day, close to the ceiling skylight, which only served to magnify the heat of the day. Working in summer temperatures in excess of 100 degrees, Diego Rivera would usually take a lunch break, which consisted of grapefruit juice and fresh vegetables, and perhaps a break at midafternoon. His work schedule often meant working late into the night. So engrossed in and intense about his work did Rivera become that he is reported to have shed over 100 pounds during the summer months.¹² To add to his concerns, his wife Frieda suffered a miscarriage on July 3, 1932, which resulted in a period of hospitalization. In spite of these dilemmas, Diego Rivera still found time to respond to the colonia as its champion of the people's cause.

Although specific documentation is unclear, Diego Rivera is credited with helping establish the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants, which was the liaison organization between the members of the Mexican colony and state and city agencies attempting to carry out the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.¹³ Rivera felt that Mexican repatriation would not only ease unemployment in the United States, but that the men, having learned a great deal in this country, would also make productive citizens for Mexico.¹⁴ Rivera found that to return to Mexico was the one hope gripping the hearts of all of them.

On October 14, 1932, officials from the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants met at the Public Welfare Department of Detroit to discuss repatriation plans with the following people: William S. Carpenter, Director of Public Welfare of the State and his aides Roy H. Olson and Arthur Webster; John F. Ballanger, Director of Public Welfare for the city; and Ignacio L. Batiza, Consul for Mexico.¹⁵ The round table discussion thoroughly detailed the manner of voluntary and organized return sought by the Mexican community to the international border. Other aspects of repatriation, such as those possessing cars or trucks to make the trip, as well as the Mexican infirmed, were also discussed at the meeting. Charles C. Benjamin, Detroit attorney, long a legal representative of the Spanish speaking in Detroit, was acknowledged as successfully assisting in the collaboration between the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants and the city and state agency officials.¹⁶ The conclusion of the meeting saw tentative time lines established for the first train load of repatriates to leave the Motor City.

On the day prior to the meeting with state and city agency officials, Consul Ignacio L. Batiza had already prepared the colonia for the Mexican Repatriation Campaign by issuing the following statement in a circular dated October 13, 1932.

As winter approaches, life in this region becomes more and more difficult for persons without work. All of the circumstances which produce the crisis still prevail without possible hope of amelioration in the near future; for which reason this consulate reiterates its call to our Mexican residents that for their own interest they accept this opportunity which is offered them by the Government of Mexico for their repatriation and return to our country. The Mexican Government, within its power, is disposed to aid these repatriates that they may later make themselves important factors in our national economic structure.¹⁷

Those interested in securing further information were urged to go to 4326 Toledo Avenue, near Clark Street, where the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants had established its headquarters. The officials of the organization included Luis G. Gasca, Secretary General; Martin Rosas, Secretary of Exterior; and Pedro Mariscal, Secretary of Organization and Propaganda. These men, along with other members of the organization, kept their offices open from 9:00 a.m. until midnight to circulate repatriation information and register those who expressed interest in returning to Mexico.¹⁸

Within the first several weeks after its establishment, the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants registered approximately 850 Mexicans in Detroit and several others throughout the state.¹⁹

On October 14, 1932, the governor of Michigan, Wilbur M. Bruckner, instructed William S. Carpenter, Director of the State Welfare Department, to represent him in making personal contact with the district immigration officer and

seek that department's cooperation in returning Mexicans to their country.²⁰ In a follow up letter to District Immigration Officer, John L. Zurbrick, the governor recognized the enormity of the problem before them and pledged full cooperation from the State of Michigan to assure success of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.²¹ Within one month's time, all of the elements of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign would be in place to dispatch its first cargo of people to the international border at Laredo, Texas. By this time, approximately 4,000 people had registered with Consul Batiza's office or with the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants for the repatriation campaign, a situation which was anticipated to alleviate unemployment rates in Detroit.²²

The Detroit office of the District Director of Immigration felt that voluntary removal should be stressed, rather than the deportation feature, in order that the Mexican community not get the notion that this was a deportation movement. Furthermore, if the first train load of Mexican repatriates completed its destination without incident, it was anticipated that further impetus would be generated in the colonia to increase the number of those already pledged to the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

The District Director of Immigration noted that the elimination of as many as 5000 alien Mexican laborers and mechanics would work a tremendous benefit to the economic situation in the state of Michigan, insofar as it concerned welfare expenditures, and would remove from the economic field a group able to get first consideration in employment in the industries of this country because they were willing to work for lower wages. With their removal, job openings would subsequently be left for citizens of the United States.²³ Acting Commissioner General of Immigration Edward J. Shaughnessy authorized the District Director of Immigration to proceed with haste and extend every possible cooperation to the state officials assisting in the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. He further noted that final arrangements should be confirmed with the Mexican government to insure smooth transfer of the repatriates at Laredo for transportation into the interior of Mexico.²⁴

Special transportation arrangements for the Mexican Repatriation Campaign were handled by the Central Passenger Association of Chicago, Illinois. Initially, the Department of Public Welfare of the State had estimated the cost of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign at \$15.00 per head for fare and half-fare passengers; however, the railroad fare from Detroit to Laredo was actually based

on \$20.00 for full fare and \$10.00 for half-fare, including food provided by the railways.²⁵ Because of the inaccurate \$15.00 estimate, the Department of Public Welfare soon found it had accumulated a deficit of \$230.00 after the departure of the first train load of repatriates.²⁶ In order to alleviate further deficit spending, all other transportation movements by rail were computed at an adjusted rate of \$17.00 per individual.²⁷ Because the Mexican Repatriation Campaign was being underwritten by funds from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, special fares were requested in order to get a 25 percent governmental reduction for individual fares. However, the Central Passenger Association denied this request.²⁸ Despite these last minute misunderstandings, though, the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign proceeded as scheduled.

The first party of individuals to depart from Detroit assembled at the Wabash Railroad Station on the afternoon of November 15, 1932. Among the officials present at the train station were John Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration; Ignacio Batiza, Mexican Consulate; Martin Rosas, representative of the Mexican government; John Ballenger, Director of Public Welfare for the city; A.J. Webster, Director of Public Welfare for the state; and H.L. Pigott, general passenger agent for the Wabash Railroad.²⁹ It was their responsibility to inspect the train and make sure that the passengers were settled and

comfortable for the long journey which lay before them.

The one dignitary who received a fair share of attention was Diego Rivera, who had come to the station with his wife to bid their compatriots a safe and happy journey home.³⁰

The Mexican artist and others there wishing a final farewell to those departing were greeted with guitar music, which filled the twelve-coach train bound for Mexico.

Amid last goodbyes, the first train containing twelve coaches of Mexican repatriates left Detroit at 5:00 p.m. bound for its first destination; St Louis, Missouri. Aboard the Wabash Railroad cars were 442 persons, 311 full-fare passengers including 2 deportees, 64 half-fares, and 67 children.³¹ En route to St. Louis, the train encountered a heavy snowstorm, which delayed their arrival by 3 hours and 30 minutes. Once there, the repatriates were transferred from one train to another which was to carry them to their next scheduled stop at San Antonio, Texas.

There was considerable delay on November 16th due to the insatiable thirst of the children which required water-coolers in the coaches to be refilled five times. Each refill demanded a five minutes delay per coach whenever the train had to stop that day. In addition to these unscheduled stops, the train was further delayed on three separate occasions in order to wire ahead to arrange for a doctor to meet the train. This situation caused Mr. Rosas,

Mexican government official on the train, to express his dissatisfaction with the lack of medical provisions. It had been his understanding that the Welfare Department had agreed to provide a doctor during the trip, because of the fact that several of the Mexican passengers had been taken from the Eloise Infirmary shortly before departure. This shortcoming was reported to officials coordinating the Mexican Repatriation Campaign in Detroit, and subsequent medical services were made available at each stopping point for the next train leaving Michigan for the Mexican border.³²

The first train load of Mexicans bound for Laredo encountered still another unanticipated irregularity. It appears there was a misunderstanding about the food services for the Mexican repatriates on their two-day journey. Originally, the Welfare Department and passenger agent had estimated that the train leaving Detroit at 5:00 p.m. on the 15th would arrive at Laredo at 11:00 a.m. on the 17th, making it necessary to provide four meals; instead, the many delays caused the train to arrive at the San Antonio station at 2:00 p.m. on the 17th, requiring an extra meal to be served to the passengers.³³ In addition, the train also had to provide 51 extra meals each feeding time for the 67 children on board under the age of five. In the original planning, no provisions were made for

feeding these children. Instead, it was anticipated that the youngsters would only consume an allotted three pints of milk per day. Harry G. Yeager, Immigrant Inspector accompanying the train, noted that a pint of milk three times a day was not sufficient nutrition for a child three-and-a-half to five years of age, thus necessitating a call for extra meals to be prepared.

The remainder of the trip from San Antonio to Laredo was completed without further difficulty. At 9:00 p.m. on October 17, 1932, the first party of Mexican repatriates passed through the Laredo port and transferred to the Mexican side of the international border. Obligations and commitments entered into by Michigan authorities with the Detroit Mexican colonia and the Mexican government had been met. The total cost for the first phase of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign amounted to \$7,280.00.³⁴

Although the initial phase of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign had been deemed successful by Michigan officials, negative sentiments had already begun to stir in the colonia relative to the treatment of Mexicans by welfare case workers. Rumors began to circulate about the unpleasant conditions which the first party of repatriates encountered after crossing the international border.

In an attempt to clarify the issue of Mexican repatriation, the Public Welfare Department of the State

issued a brochure on the subject and explained the meaning in the following manner: "In technical language Repatriation refers to the alien who by reason of his age or physical condition is unable to become rehabilitated in the economic situation today. . . . With steady increase in the county relief lists, the problem of adequate care is becoming harder to solve; and it is obvious that any reduction in the relief load effective through repatriation service will be a significant factor toward the solution."³⁵ The United States Immigration Service, Detroit District, had attempted to downplay as much as possible the deportation features of the Repatriation Campaign; however, it soon became obvious that resistance to repatriation in the community was at work.

A group calling themselves the International Labor Defense arose to the occasion to criticize the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign in a circular entitled "Down With Diego Rivera."³⁶ Distributed in the streets of Detroit's colonia, the printed leaflet denounced Diego Rivera as a communist renegade deceiving the Mexican community with lies about food and parcels of land with farm implements available in Mexico to repatriates. The circular further attempted to stir antagonistic sentiments in regard to the Mexican Repatriation Campaign by labelling this effort "a gigantic project of deportation."

The Mexican community was asked to unite to oppose further repatriation efforts and to join in the struggle for bread against hunger by accompanying the National March to Washington.³⁷

Further agitation was caused when rumors of the harsh conditions which the repatriates encountered once in Mexico began to find their way back to the Mexican Community in Detroit. The basis of the rumors was the alleged mistreatment of the first party of returning Mexicans by officials handling arrangements on the Mexican side of the international border. Some repatriates complained to United States officials that once the train arrived in Mexico, the engine was turned off and the people were required to remain on board all night without light or heat and that no arrangements had been made by the Mexican railways to furnish food the next day when the repatriates were sent on to the interior of Mexico in box cars.³⁸ Further rumors indicated that there were insufficient facilities to handle the baggage of all the repatriates. The term baggage had been interpreted rather loosely by some of the passengers, as indicated by the appliances and three barber chairs which were part of the cargo carried to Mexico by some repatriates.³⁹ Those Mexican repatriates who were forced to dispose of personal possessions and excess baggage soon sent word of their dissatisfaction over these conditions

to their friends back in Detroit.⁴⁰

Feeling that rumors of mistreatment of returning Mexicans would pose a possible threat to the future success of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign, the District Director of Immigration in Detroit began a quiet inquiry further into the matter. On November 23, 1932, a letter was sent to the inspector in charge of repatriation efforts at the Laredo U.S. Immigration Service, urging him to make a "very discreet inquiry" to ascertain just exactly how these people had been treated by Mexican officials.⁴¹ In his letter, Zurbrick emphasized the conditions which the Mexican government had promised to furnish the repatriates. He further stressed the importance of carrying through with comfortable circumstances for all repatriates to eliminate all possibilities of rumors. Should the next train load of repatriates arrive at its destination incident free, it was anticipated that there would be a greater surge of interest to repatriate by others in the colonia, but in the event that the rumors were correct, it was unlikely there would be further applications forthcoming.⁴²

In order to eliminate possibilities of mistreatment of returning Mexicans, Zurbrick also asked the cooperation of the Mexican Consul to look into the alleged occurrences.⁴³

Batiza responded by requesting an investigation be conducted by the Mexican Consul at Laredo, Texas, as well as by the General Agent of National Railways of Mexico at Chicago, Illinois.⁴⁴ In a return telegram message to Batiza, the Mexican Consul at Laredo, Texas, Martinez, responded that all members of the first party of the repatriates arrived safely from the United States and had departed for their ultimate destination without difficulty.⁴⁵ G. Hawley, General Agent of the National Railways of Chicago, Illinois, notified Batiza that his agency was doing everything possible within the limits of its facilities to transport repatriated Mexicans safely. If delay or discomfort had indeed occurred, it may have been due to the "scantiness of equipment."⁴⁶ To insure that further complications would not occur, Hawley wired the traffic manager at Laredo, Texas, so that the necessary equipment would be sent to the border in order to accommodate all of the repatriates without delay on the second train scheduled to leave from Saginaw, Michigan. To insure a smooth transfer at the border, Hawley requested notification of each departed train of Mexicans from the Detroit Consulate so that he could make the required arrangements upon its arrival at Nuevo Laredo, Mexico.⁴⁷ At the moment, it appeared that every precaution had been taken to insure that further repercussions would not occur.

The second phase of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign left Saginaw, Michigan, on the 22nd of November, 1932, at 5:40 p.m. Aboard were a total of 430 repatriates; 267 full-fares, 78 half-fares, 83 non-fares (children under 5 years of age) and 2 voluntary removals under the Immigration Act of 1917.⁴⁸ Unlike the maiden repatriation journey, the second trainload of passengers encountered little difficulty enroute to the border. U.S. Immigration Inspector R.W. Gangewere, accompanied the train and noted that the equipment provided proved ample to afford reasonable comfort to the repatriates. The train was well heated, and everything possible was done by those on duty on the train to make the trip as pleasant as possible.⁴⁹

A slight inconvenience was encountered when it became evident that the train would not arrive in St. Louis, Missouri, in time to serve breakfast on the morning of November 23rd. As no arrangements had been made to serve breakfast until the transfer had taken place in St. Louis, it appeared that some would suffer discomfort because of this untimely delay. Inspector Gangewere quickly made a survey among the passengers and found that practically all of them had brought sufficient food for another meal, with the exception of a few of the single males who had exhausted their supply. To insure that none of the children would be deprived of milk for too long a period, one of the passenger agents bought a small quantity of milk at Decatur,

Illinois and distributed it among the youngsters.⁵⁰

The transfer at St. Louis to the Missouri Pacific Railroad was made in twenty minutes, and by 12:27 p.m. the train was again on its way. The dining car had been strategically placed in the middle of the ten coach-train to provide easy accessibility to all aboard at meal time. A total of four meals was served enroute to Laredo. Gangewere commented that the meals were well prepared and served in liberal portions; furthermore, all requests for milk for the children between meals were promptly met in generous quantities.

Although there were two invalids among the repatriates, no illness requiring medical attention developed among the passengers during the trip. Inspector Gangewere credits much of the success of the journey to the two workers assigned to each car, who gave assistance to the passengers whenever necessary. The Missouri Pacific Railroad had assigned an additional working crew of twenty people to insure that the journey from St. Louis to Laredo was comfortable for its passengers.

As the train was approaching San Antonio, about a dozen of the repatriates requested permission to leave the train at its scheduled stop at that city. The repatriates were advised by railroad agents that they had no authority to grant such a request. Undaunted by this refusal, two young men jumped through the window at Laredo, Texas, and

disappeared. Both were found in the railroad yard the next morning by U.S. Immigration officers from the Laredo port of entry and were subsequently returned to Mexico.⁵¹

At 4:31 p.m. on November 24, 1932, the second repatriation train from Michigan arrived at its destination in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. Immediately upon arrival, the Mexican Public Health Authorities started to vaccinate the passengers. As soon as this precaution was taken, the passengers were removed from the train in an orderly manner and escorted to the depot. Little more than an hour after their arrival, all the passengers and their baggage had been removed from the train, and the American equipment was ready to be returned to the United States. Once the repatriates were inside the depot, Mexican officials began issuing tickets for dispatching them to the interior of Mexico on the first available facility. The passenger agent of the Mexican National Railways assured Inspector Gangewere that all repatriates would be on their way to their ultimate destination by November 25th or, at the latest, by the morning of the 26th.⁵² The two day delay in serving some of the returning Mexicans was attributed to the difficulty the railways encountered at times in determining the exact destination of some of the passengers.

Phase three of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign departed from Detroit on December 6, 1932, at 4:30 p.m. Aboard were 282 persons, including 190 full-fares, 44 half-fares, 47 non-fares, and one voluntary removal under the Immigration Act of 1917.⁵³ Two weeks later, the fourth and last party of Mexican repatriates left Detroit with 133 passengers. This last group of returning Mexicans was attached to a regular passenger train since their small number did not warrant running a special train.⁵⁴

The entire Mexican Repatriation Campaign in Detroit consisted of 1288 persons: 850 full-fares, 215 half-fares, and 223 non-fares for children under 5. The writer projects that the total cost of repatriation efforts for the Public Welfare Department was approximately \$21,716.00, based on an average charge of \$17.00 per individual, plus \$3.00 per coach to enter Nuevo Laredo from the United States. The total number of actually repatriated Mexicans fell far short of the anticipated 5000 which had originally shown some interest in the Campaign. In spite of the relatively low number of repatriated Mexicans, many were of the opinion that the Mexican Repatriation Campaign had been a success. A number of individuals and agencies had spent a great deal of time making arrangements for the movement of returning Mexicans. Consul Batiza was optimistic about

the adaptability of those repatriated to their homeland.

"The Mexican Colony of Detroit is young. The majority of the 15,000 Mexicans have not been in the United States more than five years. They have not yet adapted themselves to the American ways and have been hit hard by the current depression."⁵⁵

The exact cause for the disparity between real and anticipated repatriation totals can be explained, in part, by some of the personal perceptions of the Mexican colonia as described in Chapter V. More explicitly, the two main reasons for the significant decrease in these numbers were the demeanor and tactics used by public welfare caseworkers to counsel Mexicans for repatriation, and the lack of perseverance on the part of the Mexican government to comply with its plans to relocate and provide for the repatriates.

As stated earlier in this chapter, one of the organizations which greatly hastened the early stages of the Detroit Mexican Repatriation Campaign was the League of Mexican Workers and Peasants under the coordination of Diego Rivera. The Detroit Department of Public Welfare also established a special office to aid in the repatriation movement. The Mexican Bureau was set up under the auspices of the city's Department of Public Welfare for the purpose of counseling Mexicans about

repatriation efforts.⁵⁶ Located at 1422 First Street, the Mexican Bureau became the second phase of a two-part system used by the Welfare Department to identify and register Mexicans for repatriation. The initial phase was the formally expressed policy of the Detroit Department of Public Welfare to be conducted by caseworkers in all districts of the city and consisted of identifying and sending heads of all Mexican families to the Mexican Bureau.⁵⁷ Caseworkers were obliged to comply with this mandate no later than November 15, 1932, to better prepare arrangements for the repatriates' transportation to Mexico. Records show that the voluntary aspect of repatriation soon gave way to coercion on the part of the caseworker.

Although no case can be considered typical of the range of situations which led to Mexican repatriation, welfare records exist which illustrate how force was exerted in many instances to get the desired results. Since all welfare cases had a social worker assisting in family counseling, it was this person who would attempt to persuade Mexicans to return to Mexico. In one recorded instance, a family did not wish to return to Mexico and stated this attitude to the caseworker on a initial visit. Two months later the family head was advised to go to the Mexican Bureau, where the family once again stated that they did not wish to leave the United States, since they had lived here for the past fourteen years.⁵⁸

Other Mexicans showed ambivalence about returning because of the nebulous information which was available about work and living conditions in Mexico. In one caseworker's records a Mexican family was reported to have had all of their relatives living in Mexico. Despite this fact, the parents were unwilling to return there because they desired the best possible education for their children. This, they felt, was possible only in this country. Notwithstanding this attitude, the family was referred to the Mexican Bureau, whereupon the family refused since they had already stipulated they would not return unless the authorities could promise the family land on which to live.⁵⁹

In yet another case, a family indicated that they would like to return to Mexico but were in need of financial assistance. The father of the family indicated to the caseworker that he was ashamed to return to his homeland with nothing to show for his whole life.⁶⁰ Most of the children in this particular family had been born in the United States with no other relatives in Detroit on whom to rely for aid during this time of need. Both parents impressed upon the caseworker that if the family was to leave for Mexico it would require enough funds to sustain them for at least two or three weeks, until such time as the father could find employment.

Needy families during the depression were given various types of financial assistance. A particularly common form of welfare aid was to pay the rent for those families whose breadwinner was unemployed or underemployed. Also, the welfare department often assisted in finding suitable living quarters for families living in substandard accommodations. In other instances, families were counseled into moving to living quarters more attuned to the physical and financial needs of the family. Humphrey again notes the coercion on the part of the public welfare department relative to payment of rent. In one example, a caseworker supervisor refused to pay the rent of the family, for they had refused to cooperate with the welfare department and return to Mexico. Furthermore, the caseworker noted, the family had never been able to prove their residence and were being carried as a county case.⁶¹

Another coercive measure used by the welfare department was to keep families on the cafeteria list rather than give them a grocery order which other welfare families received.⁶² The cafeterias were strategically located throughout Detroit where the needy, as identified by the welfare department, were fed. This type of welfare assistance was usually housed in a public building and

did not provide the less fortunate with the anonymity they sought. Grocery orders, as a means to receive food, would have been much preferred over the cafeteria service, as they afforded more privacy and made the distraught less conspicuous. Families who were thought to be contemplating returning to Mexico were placed on the cafeteria list, rather than the grocery order list, by the welfare department in an effort to encourage quick departure through the humbling process of communal feeding.⁶³

After initial contact by the department of public welfare caseworker, heads of Mexican households were referred to the Mexican Bureau. At the Mexican Bureau discussion would ensue which was designed to evince a forthright declaration of the intentions of the Mexican family head regarding his return to Mexico.⁶⁴ In many cases, coercive tactics were used to elicit registration for the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. Persons who were naturalized citizens, and children who were American born citizens, were also subjected to inquiry for purposes of repatriation. Before long, much resistance developed from Mexicans refusing to go to the Mexican Bureau.

The second reason that the number of repatriated Mexicans fell far below that which was anticipated, was the fact that Mexico was unable to fulfill promises

of land grants for agricultural use for the repatriates. It should be remembered that the economic depression affected not only the United States but also other countries. At that time, jobs had become just as difficult to secure in Mexico as they were in this country. General Juan José Ríos, the Minister of the Interior, called on Mexican employers to do their utmost to find work for those returning, but his appeals seemed to have little effect; jobs remained scarce.⁶⁵

Much verbal propaganda had been circulated in the United States about the arrangements which the Mexican government had made for the repatriates. One of the efforts made by Mexican officials was the establishment of several resettlement camps which were to house returning Mexicans. In gratitude for the efforts of Diego Rivera, one of these resettlement camps was named in his honor. The Mexican government had also made land tracts available to Mexican repatriates to encourage them to grow their own food; however, this land seldom came with enough water to support even the subsistence agriculture.⁶⁶

Much of the coordination for the relocation of repatriated Mexicans was facilitated by the Mexican National Repatriation Committee. The National Repatriation Committee, as it was called, included as its members: Andres Landa y Pina, Chief of the Migration Services; Alfredo Levy, National Chamber of Commerce, and

representatives of the Red Cross, the Department of Public Health, and the Ministry of the Interior.⁶⁷ Also active in the creation of the Committee was José Gonzales Soto, a citizen of Spain who held extensive investments in Mexico.

One of the chief activities of the National Repatriation Committee was to raise funds to establish colonies for the repatriados. At first glance, the Committee's efforts may have been viewed as a patriotic gesture, however, the real intentions may, in fact, have been self-serving. Manuel Gamio states there may have been at least three distinct reasons for establishing the relocation colonias.⁶⁸ First, skills acquired by Mexicans in the United States were lost to the Mexican economy if the the repatriates upon their return, scattered to all parts of Mexico. Second, by being sent to colonies deep in the country's interior, the repatriates would find it difficult to return to the United States, after having enjoyed free transportation and relief assistance from the Mexican government. A third reason was that the isolation of the colonies would effectively remove the repatriados from competition with other Mexicans for jobs.

Colonization plans became a reality by mid April, 1932, when two colonies were organized, the first being designated Colony Number One, at El Coloso, Guerrero, not far from Acapulco.⁶⁹ It was at this location that approximately twenty repatriados from Detroit, Michigan arrived in

December, 1932. Labeled a social experiment, the colony at El Coloso never realised the early expectations many had envisioned. By May, 1933, the planned colonization effort was declared a failure.⁷⁰

Because of the many difficulties involved in the colonization efforts, most repatriates returned to their country's villages and small towns. Ultimately, only five percent went to repatriation settlements, and eighty percent returned to villages because only the most resourceful were able to readjust to the big cities within a reasonable length of time.⁷¹ Very few repatriates made their way to the new agricultural tracts set aside by the Mexican government.

Thus, the relief and subsistence many repatriates sought in the homeland never materialised. Victims of the Great Depression, and often faced with employment discrimination in both the United States and their country, Mexican repatriates made whatever living they could. In some cases, they were reported back in United States soon after discovering that the haven they sought in Mexico was not there.

CHAPTER IX

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

The Mexican Repatriation Campaign was implemented in various communities in the United States primarily as an economic strategy to reduce public assistance being extended to Mexican and Mexican Americans during the depression years. Lured by the promise of employment, Mexican laborers had become essential to industrial and agricultural growth during the boom decade of 1920. Large scale social, economic, and political upheaval as a result of the Mexican Revolution had given further impetus for immigration to the United States. Once in the country, Mexicans often assumed those jobs considered less desirable by American citizens. All too often, Mexican immigrants worked also for lower wages than their American counterparts. During prosperous times Mexicans became an often overlooked dimension on the labor market; however, during economic recession and particularly the Great Depression of the early 1930's, Mexicans were considered an economic threat to the American working classes. At the time, the Mexican Repatriation Campaign was a logical plan of action to voluntarily return Mexicans to their homeland, thus making jobs available to American citizens and reducing the welfare aid provided to the needy. Coupled with the broad ideas of social welfare by the Mexican government,

repatriation appeared the best avenue to financial relief for many municipalities in this country. The Mexican Repatriation Campaign allowed most city and state public welfare departments to realize a net profit computed over the money necessary to support Mexicans on relief programs.

History has shown that, when an economic crisis occurs in the United States, a scapegoat is often sought in order to appease those seeking cause and effect factors. During the Great Depression, President Herbert Hoover and his administration drew much of the blame for the economic condition of the depression. Likewise, big business and industry were also blamed for large scale unemployment and a low production. The Mexican laborer also became a scapegoat, drawing blame for perpetuating the economic conditions which prevailed during the time.

It has been mentioned that the Midwest Mexican did not encounter discrimination as did his compatriots in the Southwest. The fact that in most cases the Mexicans in the northern industrial centers did not impose an economic threat to the dominant American groups, further reduced the chances for discrimination. However, the Great Depression changed the perception of many toward the Mexican. Instead of being viewed as part of the great number of victims which the depression had attributed to economic insecurity, the Mexican was often identified as

part of the cause of the economic crisis at hand.

Blaming the Mexican as the perpetrator of hard times became legitimized by many when printed media fanned the emotions and opinions of nationalists and exclusionists, who felt that getting rid of the Mexican laborer would alleviate the unemployment situation of many in the United States. The Mexican, thus, found himself in the same situation as the Chinese and Japanese whose usefulness as a cheap labor force had over extended into eras of poor economic conditions. Unlike Orientals, however, the Mexican did not suffer immigration restrictions through Congressional Acts. Instead, industry, agriculture and the railways lobbied for, and successfully achieved, administrative, rather than legislative measures to curb the influx of Mexicans entering the United States. Administrative policies on immigration were favored over Congressional Acts by particular interest groups because these were easier to rescind during better economic times.

It was anticipated that when the effects of the depression had worn off, agriculture and industry would once again need an abundance of cheap Mexican labor. Labor recruitment efforts would be greatly facilitated without quota restrictions placed on Mexico. Administrative policies on Western Hemisphere immigration greatly reduced the influx of Mexicans to the United States. When municipalities

in the Southwest began in a large scale the Mexican Repatriation efforts financed through local monies and sanctioned by the Mexican government, a way to alleviate the problem of Mexican labor already in this country was reached.

Efforts for repatriation in Detroit's Mexican colonia were clearly initiated by the Mexican government acting through the consulate assigned to the city. Many Mexicans never intended to remain in Detroit, and the repatriation only served to hasten their dream to return to their homeland. For others, the dream to return home had been attenuated by the roots which had been established over a 5-10 year span in Detroit. Children often served as the chief influence to remain in Detroit rather than to repatriate to uncertainty and to assume a life style which, for many, had changed considerably. Many were undoubtedly influenced to remain in Detroit by negative rumors relative to the treatment and opportunities for repatriated Mexicans. Others may have been daunted by the tactics implemented by some Detroit caseworkers intent on complying with the public welfare department's order to counsel Mexicans to return to their homeland.

It has already been established that most Detroit Mexicans sought neither citizenship in this country nor the development of English speaking ability. Because many

Mexicans had not become United States citizens and had not learned English, they may not have been viewed as legitimate residents of the community. On the other hand, managed repatriation efforts may have further served to reinforce, for many in the Mexican community, their temporary status in Detroit. Added to this is the fact that the Spanish speaking community had few spokespersons outside of the Mexican Consulate. The Mexican colonia was a socially isolated and culturally clannish group set in an industrial city in the lowest financial ebb of its history, seeking alternatives for its economical survival.

As a money saving effort, the Mexican Repatriation Campaign may well be viewed as a successful endeavor. However, when viewed through other perceptual lenses, the program of repatriation in Detroit may have fallen short of success.

It is difficult to measure the psychological impact the Mexican Repatriation Campaign had upon the colonia. Too many years have passed since the event took place. Furthermore, the make up of the community has changed so extensively that an accurate assessment cannot be conducted. Another factor to consider is that the relatively small number of Mexicans who remain in Detroit would not yield valid information relative to the

psychological and sociological implications the Mexican Repatriation Campaign had upon the community.

Over 1,000 Mexican and Mexican Americans were repatriated from Detroit in 1932 through the cooperation of local and county agencies and the Mexican government. Many others can be assumed to have left of their own volition prior to organized repatriation efforts because they were not able to cope with the financial strains of the depression.

At most, interethnic relations between Mexicans and Americans in Detroit may have been influenced, particularly in the keen competition which developed for available employment. Also, many in the colonia may well have withdrawn further into ethnic isolation by the coercive tactics used by some members of the public welfare department. It is possible that some may have been forced into an accelerated pattern of assimilation into the dominant culture in order to escape Mexican identity and its attendant discrimination.

The Mexican Repatriation Campaign was judged a success by the public welfare department of Michigan. Although the projected estimate of 5,000 repatriates was not reached, 1,288 Mexicans were returned to their homeland. In addition to those hindering factors already mentioned, the anticipated number of repatriates identified early in the campaign may have

been attained had social and employment conditions in Mexico been conducive to the returning Mexicans. With the news received by word of mouth and through letters, illusions of a better life in Mexico gave way to suspicion and disinterest by the Mexicans of Detroit in the repatriation campaign.

Recommendations For Further Study

One of the most interesting and difficult aspects of this study was the organization of Chapter V. The writer found he had to limit much of the information gathered through interviews to include only a systematic sequence of events relevant to the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. As has already been stated, there exists very little historical documentation on Mexicans in Michigan. Oral history in the colonia, however, holds much potential for historical development. It is recommended that Mexican history can, and should, be developed. By and large, the interview technique, as used in this study, is a viable way to retrieve information about the historical aspects of Detroit's colonia.

A most disappointing limitation to this study was the fact that the writer was not able to identify members of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign who ultimately returned

to Detroit after the Great Depression. Hence, a thorough account of repatriation by those involved was not possible. It is assumed that repatriates are living in Mexico at this time. A recommendation which would highlight attempts made in this study on repatriation would be to conduct further investigation of this event by gathering information from repatriates living in Mexico. Due to financial and time restrictions, this aspect of the Mexican Repatriation Campaign was not included in this study.

The Detroit Catholic Archdiocese Archive provided much useful information about the Mexican colonia during the time period 1920-1935. Historically, the Catholic Church had kept accurate records of its parishioners. An aspect worthy of study in the area of religion would be to conduct research on the non-Catholic segment of the Mexican colonia in Detroit. Although it may be assumed that the great majority of the colonia were Catholics, the Protestant churches attended by Mexicans may have recorded their congregational growth patterns as did the Catholic churches. Since the United States Census Bureau did not categorize Mexicans as a population group until 1930, the most accurate demographic data on the Mexicans during 1920-1932 may well be the compilation of available statistics of the religious sectors of the Detroit colonia.

Other communities in Michigan conducted repatriation efforts during the Great Depression. Port Huron, Saginaw, Grand Rapids, Blissfield, Adrian and other towns also entered into agreements with local Mexicans to finance their return to Mexico. A suggestion for further study in this regard would be to investigate the Mexican Repatriation Campaign of these municipalities.

Because of the drastic changes which have occurred in the welfare organizational structure on the state, county and local levels, it is difficult, and in some cases impossible, to locate and collect written information on the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. Welfare Board minutes, policies, and other important documentation during the years 1930-1932, could not be located for purposes of this study. However, it may be that smaller communities which took part in repatriation efforts have retained this type of information of the event in question.

Perhaps the two major reasons which facilitated the repatriation of the large number of jobless Mexicans during the depression were: 1) as a foreign ethnic group, they rarely sought American citizenship status, and 2) they did not become proficient in the English language. Also, the fact that few had formal schooling in the homeland, and did not possess marketable skills, kept the Mexicans relatively isolated as an ethnic group. They may have

created and maintained an aura of suspicion about their legitimacy as residents of Detroit.

Citizenship status, the acquisition of English language, as well as education achievement, are often considered factors which aided the assimilation of the other foreign groups into the mainstream of American Society.

A recommendation for further study regarding the Repatriation Campaign would be conducted as a comparison between the 1930 Mexican population, and the present, relative to the assimilation process. The current population of Latinos in Detroit is reported to be well over one hundred thousand. Much of this population lives within the boundaries of the colonia and, for the most part, retains its cultural identity. It is apparent that the social practices in the colonia have had an effect on assimilation patterns. The focus of investigation in this recommended area of study, would be to determine whether the Latinos, especially the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, have differed significantly over the past forty years regarding their American citizenship status, English speaking ability and their educational achievement.

Many Mexican cultural and fraternal organizations, currently in existence in Detroit, had their inception

from the Circulo Mutualistico Mexicano and Cruz Azul.

These two groups were perhaps the first Mexican organizations established in Detroit which were not directly affiliated with the Catholic Church.

Much of the cultural history of the Detroit colonia has been somewhat influenced by the organized groups which sought to promote the celebration of Mexican holidays and religious events. Although the writer found little evidence of written documentation about the organization of early Mexican groups, it is felt that a study worthy of further research would be the investigation of the cultural and fraternal Mexican organizations in Detroit and the influence this aspect of the colonia had upon the repatriation campaign.

A related study would be to investigate the history of Detroit's Mexican social outreach agencies which have aided the colonia. It has already been mentioned that the primary purpose of the early Mexican organizations was to provide assistance to the needy in the colonia, as well as perpetuate cultural activities for the group. Church organizations also provided aid to those less fortunate. While many contemporary social outreach agencies in the city of Detroit currently offer a variety of assistance to Latinos, the early organizations provided a much

needed public service during a time period when the barrio was experiencing its most rapid growth.

There were many attempts to establish a Spanish media in the colonia. Perhaps the most common form of communication was the Spanish newspaper. However, due to the lack of widespread distribution as well as the poor financial support from business concerns, the longevity of any particular Spanish newspaper in Detroit was short lived. This was particularly true for the years between 1920 and 1935.

In addition to international news, the media included local news dealing with the Detroit's Spanish speaking population and was often the only means of relating events taking place within the colonia.

A study worthy of further investigation would be to look into the history of the Spanish speaking newspaper in Detroit. During the course of this study, the writer was able to research a few issues of Prensa Libre published in 1932. These back issues belonged to the persons interviewed for Chapter V.

There is no record of Spanish newspapers in the public libraries of Detroit. Therefore, this particular study would entail an exhaustive survey of the Spanish speaking community for appropriate data dealing with newspapers.

Little has been written about the historical development of the Mexicans of Detroit. What evidence the writer did secure in this study was essentially contemporary in nature, and usually dealt with the socio-political dynamics of the city's Latino population. Humphrey, oddly enough, stands alone as one who documented the sociological aspects of the Mexican people in Detroit during its early and gradual expansion. Because of the information gap existing regarding the Detroit Mexican and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign, the writer feels there is a potential for many historical studies in addition to those already mentioned.

Recommendations for the Social Science Teacher

As indicated in the first chapter a primary purpose of conducting this research was to provide educators, particularly social science teachers, a resource to include Mexicans as part of what is studied in Michigan history. History curricula must be developed from a multiethnic approach if students are to get an accurate perception of events and phenomenon important to the area in which they live and to the country in general. A multiethnic approach may also heighten the cultural awareness of students of other ethnic or racial groups and how their history is an integral part of all history within the development of the state.

In order to be used as an instructional tool, the social science teacher may want to use this research as a supplemental resource to texts of Michigan history, economics,

or the depression years. In addition, the following activities are recommended:

1. Investigate the oral history of other ethnic and racial groups in the community.
2. Review local church records for data on the growth patterns of local ethnic communities.
3. Compare and contrast the economic conditions which existed just prior to and during the Great Depression with those today.
4. Compare and contrast assimilation patterns of ethnic groups that arrived in Michigan during different periods in history.
5. Through assimilation replicate what may have happened during the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. Analyze the results from different perspectives.
6. Analyze other significant events which occurred in history but not included in texts such as the Japanese Internment Camps during World War II. What similarities, if any, can be drawn between these events and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.
7. Review literature which may exist on local ethnic and social groups in local libraries.

Recommendations For Investigation of Policy Issue.

As stated earlier it is difficult to speculate cause and effect rationale to events such as the Great Depression and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. Some areas worthy of

analysis and speculation, however, focus on certain areas such as:

1. Labor Relations: As stated in the research the immigration patterns that existed between the United States and Mexico centered on the economic conditions prevalent in both countries. Although many Mexicans were evacuated during the depression by managed repatriation efforts in the 1930s the United States involvement in World War II soon brought about a call for cheap farm labor to replace those serving in the armed forces or those taking better paying jobs in defense plants.

A key policy question worthy of investigation is the labor relations policy of the Bracero Program which existed from 1942 until 1964. It is estimated that 4.8 million braceros came to the United States along with more than 5 million illegal aliens during the life of the Bracero Program.¹ It is inevitable that some of the farm labor advocates who supported administrative controls on Mexican immigration over legislative mandates years earlier were supporters of the Bracero Program in spite of the increased number of illegal aliens crossing the border. One can see the same "push-pull" factors in effect during the years of the Bracero Program. The two most compelling reasons for the illegal immigration that accompanied the Bracero Program was the demand for cheap labor in the United States and the tremendous population increase occurring in Mexico.

Part of the investigation of the development of labor policies which were negotiated during the Bracero Program should include an analysis of the political influences exerted by the farm labor lobby groups. It should be remembered that these groups were one of the chief influences that impacted decisions regarding Mexican immigration quotas during the Great Depression era.

2. Immigration Laws: There are many who suggest the great increase in illegal aliens came about because of the influence of the Bracero Program. Although there may be some truth to this, the fact remains that Mexican economy, even though it has made significant strides, has not been able to provide sufficient employment, schools, income, and services for its increasing population.²

For decades there has been and continues to be arguments over stricter immigration control along the 2000 mile border at Mexico. As yet there has not been a sustained effort to substantially control the flow of illegals coming into this country from Mexico. Certainly a policy issue worthy of further research would be the investigation of the political influences involved since major immigration laws have been implemented which have determined immigration patterns from Mexico.

3. Educational Policy: Several policy questions arise regarding the Spanish speaking and education: This is specially true of bilingual education programs instituted under ESEA, Title VII, and migrant education programs begun under ESEA, Title I during the mid 1960s. Other policy issues in the field of education which should be analyzed are Americanization programs (adult education), English as a second language program, multiethnic curriculum development, and Teacher training program.

SUMMARY

The writer believes this study will provide a data base on the Mexican and Mexican American population of Detroit during its period of most rapid growth. During the first two decades of this century, Detroit had more Latinos than any other midwestern industrial city. Furthermore, Latinos comprise the second largest minority group in the city of Detroit. Yet little has been written about the history of this significant group.

The research submitted herein represents the only scholarly attempt to date to document the historical factors regarding the establishment of the Detroit Mexican colonia and the Mexican Repatriation Campaign.

The information presented in this research can be useful to social scientists and especially teachers of Michigan history. History often lacks development from an ethnic perspective. This perspective is considered essential in order to provide the student with a more objective and in-depth analysis of historical events.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

¹A. M. Smith, "20,000 Mexicans Find Michigan Land of Opportunity," The Detroit News, August 1, 1926, p. 7.

²Norman D. Humphrey, "The Migration and Settlement of Detroit Mexicans," Economic Geography, Vol. 19, (1943), p. 360.

³The writer assessed all the secondary United States history textbooks adopted by the Detroit Public Schools, as well as United States history textbooks designated as secondary material in the 1974 Michigan Social Studies Textbook Study, and found that a total of twenty-two texts did not mention the Mexican Repatriation Campaign. For a complete listing of the textbook list, refer to Appendix A.

⁴Abraham Hoffman, "Mexican Repatriation: Research Needs and Perspectives," The Journal of Mexican American History, Vol. III, (1973), p. 165.

Chapter II

¹Carey McWilliams, The Mexican in America (New York: Teachers College Press, 1968), p. 4.

²Ibid.

³Carey McWilliams, North From Mexico, (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1949), p. 163. In later years Mexican immigration was to increase significantly so that by the turn of the century nearly 10 percent of the population had left Mexico.

⁴John R. Martinez, "Mexican Emigration to the United States." (Published Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1957), p.2.

⁵Ibid., p. 2.

⁶McWilliams, loc. cit., p. 168.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., pp. 180-181.

⁹S. L. A. Marshall, "Mexican Labor Leaving Michigan for Homeland." The Detroit News, November 9, 1932, p. 6.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Martinez, loc. cit., p. 3.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁵McWilliams, loc. cit., pp. 185-186.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 168.

¹⁷Marshall, loc. cit.

¹⁸McWilliams, loc. cit., p. 168

¹⁹El Excelsior, December 25, 1918, p. 1.

²⁰McWilliams, loc. cit., p. 184.

²¹Ibid.

²²Carey McWilliams, Factories in the Field, (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1944), pp. 66-68.

²³The frugality and tenacity of the Japanese to become landowners can best be illustrated by looking at the land lease and ownership statistics for the ten year period 1909-1919. In 1909 Japanese owned only 1,816 farms in the United States, which totalled 99,000 acres and grossed \$6,000,000. But by 1919 they owned 6,000 farms with a total of 458,000 acres and grossed \$67,145,230. Martinez, loc. cit., pp. 130-131.

²⁴U.S. Immigration And Naturalization Service, Annual Report, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1923), p. 16.

²⁵Martinez, loc. cit., p. 17.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷U.S. Department of Labor, Annual Report, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1924), pp. 50-52.

²⁸U.S. Congressional Record, Secretary of Labor, James J. Davis to Congressman Cyrenus Cole, 67th Congress, 4th Session, 1923, Vol.64, part 2, 1595.

²⁹John H. Burma, Spanish Speaking Groups in the United States, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1954), p. 42.

³⁰Martinez, loc. cit., p. 10.

³¹U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services, Annual Report, (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1912), p. 41.

³²Martinez, loc. cit., p. 4.

³³Ibid., p. 5.

Chapter III

¹A.M. Smith, "20,000 Mexicans Find Michigan Land of Opportunity," The Detroit News, August 1, 1926, p. 7.

²Norman D. Humphrey, "The Migration and Settlement wo Detroit Mexicans," Economic Journal, Vol. 19, (1943), p. 358.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵S.L. A. Marshall, "Mexicans left Fields for Jobs in Factories," The Detroit News, November 10, 1932.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸U.S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteen Census of the United States: 1930 Population, II, p. 27.

⁹A. M. Smith, loc. cit.

¹⁰Charles D. Cameron, "Our Spanish and Aztecs," Saturday Night, (Detroit), October 16, 1926.

¹¹"The City Wide Census," Detroit Educational Bulletin, Vol. IX, no. 3, (November, 1925), p. 14.

¹²Humphrey, loc. cit.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴The Detroit News, December 11, 1920.

¹⁵Norman D. Humphrey, "The Integration of the Detroit Mexican Colony," American Journal of Economics and Sociology, Vol. 3, (January 1944), p. 161.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁸Descriptive data on Mexican Honorary Commission obtained from: Cameron, loc. cit., and Smith, loc. cit.

¹⁹Humphrey, loc. cit., p. 159.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Humphrey, Economic Journal, p. 358.

²³Abraham Hoffman, Unwanted Mexican Americans in the Great Depression, (The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1974), p. 120.

²⁴Information gathered from back issues of Penza Libre.

²⁵Luis G. Gasca, ed., Prenza Libre, November 2, 1929, p. 3.

²⁶Loren H. Houtman, "Response of Detroit Public Schools to Immigrant Groups," (Unpublished Ed. D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1965), pp. 185-187.

²⁷Norman D. Humphrey, "The Education and Language of Detroit Mexicans," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 17, (May, 1944), p. 536.

²⁸Ibid., p. 535.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 536.

³¹Interview with José Fernandez, retired, 2867 Fisher Freeway Drive, Detroit, Michigan, June 25, 1975. Although Mr. Fernandez lived and worked in predominantly English-speaking areas in Hamtramck, for a number of years he never

learned English as a second language. He accounts for this by reflecting on his job, which never gave him an opportunity to speak to fellow workers. Even if he had wanted to do this, the noise level was such that the only way to effectively communicate was through a series of hand signs and whistles.

³²Interview with Mr. Pedro Garcia, retired.

Coordinator, Latino Senior Citizens Center, 25th and Porter, Detroit, Michigan, June 12th, 1975. Mr. Garcia recalls a situation early in his work career at Ford Motor Company when he was assigned to work along with a Pole. Since his work partner was familiar with the job assignments and was essentially a non-English speaker as well, Polish became the language through which directives were given. After much time working with this particular man, Mr. Garcia states that his Polish vocabulary became more extensive than the few English words he knew.

³³Humphrey, loc. cit., p. 541.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Norman D. Humphrey, "The Detroit Mexican Immigrant and Naturalization." Social Forces, Vol. 22, (March, 1944), p. 334.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸A. M. Smith, loc. cit.

³⁹Humphrey, loc. cit., p. 333.

⁴⁰Norman D. Humphrey, "The Housing and Household Practices of Detroit Mexicans," Social Forces, Vol. 24, No.4, (May, 1946), p. 433.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 434.

⁴²Ibid., p. 433.

⁴³Ibid., p. 435

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 436.

⁴⁶Norman D. Humphrey, "Some Dietary and Health Practices of Detroit Mexicans," Journal of American Folklore, Vol. 58, (July, 1945), p. 258.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 257.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 257.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Verified through holy sacrament records of the six Catholic Churches in the vicinity of the Detroit Mexican colonia.

⁵²Humphrey. loc. cit., p. 257.

⁵³Humphrey, Social Forces, Vol. 22, (March, 1944), p. 335.

⁵⁴Norman D. Humphrey, "The Stereotype and Social Types of Mexican American Youths," The Journal of Social Psychology, Vol. 22, (1945), pp. 69-78.

⁵⁵Norman D. Humphrey, "The Changing Structure of the Detroit Mexican Family: An Index of Acculturation," American Sociological Review, Vol. 9, (1944), p. 624.

⁵⁶Ibid, p. 622.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 624-625.

Chapter IV

¹Vernon Monroe McCombs, From Over the Borders: A Study of the Mexicans in the United States, (Council of Women for Home Missions and Missionary Education Movement of the United States and Canada, 1925), p. 128.

²"Mexican Exiles in Detroit Returning to Home Land," The Detroit News, January 26, 1931.

³Biographic information taken from records of the Catholic Chancery, Archdiocese of Detroit, 1234 Washington Street, Detroit, Michigan.

⁴Letter from Fr. Rt. Rev. Msgr. E. B. Ledvina, Vice-President and General Secretary of the Catholic Church Extension Society of the United States of America, 180 North Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Illinois: to the Rt. Rev. Michael J. Gallagher, D. D. Bishop of Detroit, July 26, 1920.

⁵Letter from Fr. Rt. Rev. Msgr. E. B. Ledvina, Vice-President and General Secretary of the Catholic Church Extension Society of the United States of America, 180 North Wabash Ave., Chicago, Illinois to the Rt. Rev. Juan P. Alanis, Our Lady of Guadalupe, 4800 Grand River Ave., Detroit, Michigan, N.D.

⁶Copy of property settlement between the Right Rev. M.J. Gallagher and Cyrus and Susie Johnson, transacted by C.A. Robinson, Attorney, Detroit, Michigan, August 25, 1925.

⁷Telephone Interview with the Rt. Rev. Msgr. Eugene Paddock, Past Pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, 645 Woodland, Birmingham, Michigan, June 13, 1975.

⁸Letter from Fr. Juan P. Alanis to Bishop M. J. Gallagher, March 11, 1924.

⁹Letter from Fr. Juan P. Alanis to Bishop M. J. Gallagher, September 27, 1924.

¹⁰Letter from Fr. Gabriel Ginard to Rt. Rev. Msgr. Fr. Van Antwerp, Vicar General Arch Diocese of Detroit, April 10, 1926.

¹¹Letter from Bishop M.J. Gallagher to Wayne County and Home Savings Bank, Detroit, Michigan, January 6, 1972.

¹²Letter from Chancellor John Doyle to Rev. James J. Gore, April 10, 1927.

¹³Letter from Comite Patriotico Mexicano, 3304 Baker Street, to the Chancery Building, 1234 Washington Street, Detroit, Michigan, June 9, 1927.

¹⁴Letter from H.B.S. to Rt. Rev. Bishop M.J. Gallagher, September 31, 1935.

¹⁵Cultura Mexicana, Volumen 1, Numero 1, Diciembre 12 de 1939.

¹⁶The Detroit News, August 1, 1926.

¹⁷Interview with Fr. Joseph Swastek, Archivist, Detroit Archdiocese, 1234 Washington, Detroit, Michigan, June 30, 1975.

¹⁸Interview with Miguel Perez, Past President Cummings-Moore Graphite, 1646 Green Ave., Detroit, Michigan, March 6, 1975.

Chapter V

¹Interview with Miguel Perez, Past President, Cummings Moore Graphite Company, 1646 Green Avenue, Detroit, Michigan, February 28, 1975.

²Interview with Pedro Garcia, Coordinator, Latino Senior Citizens Club, Porter at 25th Street, Detroit, Michigan, June 12, 16, 19, 1975.

³Interview with José Fernandez, retired, and wife Maria, 2867 Fisher Freeway Drive, Detroit, Michigan, June 28, 1975.

⁴Interview with Marta Ponce, retired, Lansing, Michigan, March 5, 6, 1975.

⁵Interview with Jesus Hernandez, retired, 1550 McKinstry, Detroit, Michigan, May 13, 15, 1975.

⁶Interview with Crecencio Diaz, retired, 24396 Powers, Dearborn Heights, Michigan, June 2, 3, 7, 1975.

⁷Interview with Adán Martinez, retired, 1320 18th Street, Detroit, Michigan, June 12, 16, 1975.

⁸Interview with Tony Carvajal, retired, 2792 Carson Street, Detroit, Michigan, July 15, 1975. (Mr. Carvajal was recently retired. The day of the interview he and his friends were moving furniture to a moving van, for he had recently sold his house and was in the process of moving to Mexico.)

⁹Interview with Carlos Ortiz, retired, 1004 North Dragon Street, Detroit, Michigan, June 19, 21, 28, 1975.

¹⁰Interview with Charles C. Benjamin, retired attorney, 1830 Church, Detroit, Michigan, June 7, 12, 1975.

¹¹Interview with Enrique Muniz, Proprietor, Ainselie Varnish Company and wife Santos, 14014 Hubbard Street, Livonia, Michigan, July 14, 15, 1975.

Chapter VI

¹Arthur Pound, *Detroit Dynamic City*, D. Appleton-Century Company (New York, N.Y.), p. 334.

²Ibid., p. 335

³Information on Mayor Frank Murphy and the Mayor's Unemployment Committee were obtained from reports, files, and correspondence from The Mayor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

⁴Telegram from Wilbur M. Bruckner, Governor, to Chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Wayne County, October 12, 1931, Mayor's Papers, 1931, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

⁵Reports and correspondence from The Mayor's Papers, 1931, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

⁶Letter from Dr. Frank D. Adams, Chairman, Mayor's Unemployment Committee to Senator James Couzens, Birmingham, October, 1932. Mayor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit Michigan.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Letter from Frank Murphy, Mayor, to August Bastuba, November 4, 1932, Mayor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁰Letter from John F. Ballanger to Mayor Frank Murphy, October 18, 1932, Mayor's Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

¹¹Reports from lieutenants of Detroit's four police precincts to commanding officers, October 15, 1932, Mayor's Papers, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

¹²Agenda: Conference of Mayors of the United States, Mayor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

¹³Proceedings: Conference of Mayors of the United States, Mayor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁴Broadus Mitchell, Depression Decade, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, (New York, N.Y., 1947), p. 76.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 77

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Copy of Reconstruction Finance Corporation Act from Office of the Auditors of Wayne County, Detroit, Michigan, Mayor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Resolution by Supervisor Frank H. Steel, Wayne County Board of Supervisors, October 4, 1932, Board of

Supervisors, October 4, 1932, Board of Supervisor's Papers, 1932, Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library, Detroit, Michigan.

²¹Ibid.

²²George Kiser and David Silverman, "Mexican Repatriation During the Great Depression," The Journal of Mexican American History, Vol. III, (1973), p. 150-151.

²³Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director, U.S. Department of Labor Immigration Service, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C. November 8, 1932, National Archives, Record Group 85, File 55639/616.

²⁴Ibid., File 55784/585.

Chapter VII

¹Norman D. Humphrey, "The Detroit Mexican Immigrant and Naturalization," Social Forces, Vol. 22, (March, 1944), p. 336.

²Letter from John Hammerstein, Chicago, Illinois, July 21, 1929, National Archives (hereafter cited as N.A.) Record Group 85 (hereafter cited as R.G.), file # 55639/616.

³Letter from Albert Banaski, Gary, Indiana, September 5, 1930, N.A., R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

⁴Letter from Roman Herrera, Laredo, Texas, October 29, 1929, N.A., R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

⁵Letter from J. C. Krien, Palms, California, February 4, 1930, N.A. R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

⁶Letter from Guy L. Burch, New York City, New York, June 5, 1930, N.A. R.G. 85, #55639/616.

⁷Letter from L.R. Bent, San Francisco, California, June 29, 1931, N.A. R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

⁸Letter from J. C. Brodie, Superior, Arizona, September 28, 1930, N.A. G.G. 85, file #55639/616

⁹Letter from J. C. Brodie, Superior, Arizona, June 24, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

¹⁰George C. Kiser and David Silverman, "Mexican Repatriation During the Great Depression," The Journal of Mexican American History, Vol. III, (1973), p. 147.

¹¹Congressional Record, 71st Congress, 2nd Session, Part 7, (1930), p. 6843.

¹²Letter from Fred H. Bixby, Long Beach, California, June 19, 1930, N.A., R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

¹³Letter from Guy I. Burch, New York City, New York, June 5, 1930, N.A., R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

¹⁴Letter from H.D. Beatty, Alhambra, California, September 12, 1932, N.A., R.G. 85, file #55639/616.

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¹⁶Ibid., p. 7225.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 6843.

¹⁹Kiser and Silverman, op. cit.

²⁰New York Times, January 25, 1930, p. 17

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., May 21, 1930, p. 11.

²³Ibid., May 29, 1930, p. 10.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Kiser and Silverman, op. cit., p. 148.

²⁶Remsen Crawford, "The Menace of Mexican Immigration," Current History, Vol. 31, (February, 1930), pp. 902-907.

²⁷S.J. Holmes, "Perils of the Mexican Invasion," North American Review, Vol. 227, (May, 1929), pp. 615-623.

²⁸C.M. Goethe, "Peons Need Not Apply," World's Work, Vol. 59, (November 1, 1930), pp. 47-48.

²⁹"Protection for Unskilled Labor," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 200, (January 7, 1928), p. 32

³⁰Kenneth L. Roberts, "Wet and Other Mexicans," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 200, (February 4, 1928), pp. 10-11, 137-138, 141-142, 146; "Mexicans or Ruin." Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 200, (February 18, 1928), pp. 14-15, 142, 142-146, 149-150, 154; "The Docile Mexican," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 200, (March 10, 1928), pp. 39-41.

³¹_____, "The Docile Mexican," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 200, (March 10, 1928), p. 40.

³²Charles C. Teague, "A Statement on Mexican Immigration," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 200, (March 10, 1928), pp. 169-179.

³³Garet Garrett, "Government by Tumult," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 201, (February 8, 1930), pp. 46-51, 178, 181-182.

³⁴Roy L. Garis, "The Mexicanization of American Business," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 201, (February 8, 1930), pp. 46-51, 178, 181-182.

³⁵Ibid., Vo. 202, (April 19, 1920), pp. 43-44.

³⁶"The Mexican Conquest," editorial, Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 201, (June 22, 1929), p. 26.

³⁷"Present and Future," editorial, Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 202, (March 15, 1930), p. 28.

³⁸Raymond G. Carroll, "The Alien On Relief," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 208, (January 11, 1936), p. 17;
"Alien Workers in America," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 208, (January 25, 1936), pp, 86, 89; "Aliens in Subversive Activities," Saturday Evening Post, Vol. 208, (February 22, 1936), p. 10.

Chapter VIII

¹Oscar Handlin, "Immigrants Who Went Back," Atlanta, CXVIII, (July, 1956), p. 70.

²Ibid.

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⁵Detroit News, April 22, 1932.

⁶Ibid.

⁷George F. Pierrot & Edgar P. Richardson, The Diego Rivera Frescoe: A Guide to the Murals of the Garden Court, (People's Museum Association, Detroit, 1933), p. 18.

⁸Ibid.

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¹⁰Detroit News, July 31, 1932.

¹¹Detroit News, April 22, 1932.

¹²All information on Diego Rivera collected from Detroit Institute of Arts Scrap Book consisted of publicity photographs and personal queries by Institute officials, Detroit, Michigan.

¹³Detroit News, October 9, 1932.

¹⁴George F. Pierrot and Edgar P. Richardson, The Diego Rivera Frescoes: A Guide to the Murals of the Garden Court; (People's Museum Association, Detroit, Michigan, 1933), p.18.

¹⁵"Yesterday Definite Arrangements Were Made For Repatriation," Prensa Libre, October 15, 1932, p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ignacio L. Batiza, Consul for Mexico, "To the Mexican Colony," October 13, 1932, Detroit, Michigan.

¹⁸See Appendix for official registration form.

¹⁹Humphrey, op. cit., pp. 501-502.

²⁰Letter from Wilbur M. Bruckner, Governor of Michigan, to John L. Zurbrick, District Immigration Officer, October 21, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

²¹Ibid.

²²Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Secretary of Labor, Washington, D.C., October 24, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

²³Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C. October 20, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

²⁴Letter from Edward J. Shaughnessy, Acting Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C. to John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, October 27, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

²⁵Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C., December 5, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

²⁶Ibid.

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²⁹"Guitars Strum as 400 Mexicans Start Home," The Detroit Times, November 16, 1932.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Information of repatriation train from Detroit to Laredo from Report by Harry G. Yeager, Immigrant Inspector. To John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, November 21, 1932, N.A., R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

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³³Report by Harry G. Yeager, November 21, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

³⁴Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C., November 16, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

³⁵"Repatriation," Public Welfare Department of the State, Lansing, Michigan, 1932.

³⁶Bulletin: "Down With Diego Rivera," The International Labor Defense, 1343 East Ferry, Detroit, Michigan, N.D.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to U.S. Immigration Service, Laredo, Texas, November 23, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

³⁹Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to U.S. Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C., N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴⁰Interview with Maria Perez, retired, Lansing, Michigan, March 5, 1975.

⁴¹Letter from John L. Zurbrich, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to U.S. Immigration Service, Laredo, Texas, November 23, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴²Letter from John L. Zurbrich, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to U.S. Immigration Service, Laredo, Texas, November 13, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴³Letter from John L. Zurbrich, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Mexican Consul, Detroit, Michigan, November 23, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴⁴Letter from Ignacio L. Batiza, Consul for Mexico, Detroit, Michigan, to District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, November 25, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴⁵Telegram from Consul Martinez, Laredo, Texas, to Mexican Consul, Detroit, Michigan, November 22, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴⁶Letter from G. Hawley, General Agent, National Railways of Mexico, Chicago, Illinois, to Consul for Mexico, Detroit, Michigan, 11/22/32, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Letter from J.L. Zurbrich, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C., 11/23/32, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁴⁹Information on repatriation train from Saginaw to Laredo from Report by R.W. Gangewere, U.S. Immigrant Inspector, to John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C., December 9, 1932, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁵⁴Letter from John L. Zurbrick, District Director of Immigration, Detroit, Michigan, to Commissioner General of Immigration, Washington, D.C., December 22, N.A. R.G. 85, file 55784/585.

⁵⁵Norman D. Humphrey, "Mexican Repatriation From Michigan: Public Assistance in Historical Perspective," Social Service Review, XV, (September, 1941), p. 501.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 502

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Humphrey, op. cit., p. 507

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 510.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 511.

⁶²Norman D. Humphrey, "Mexican Repatriation From Michigan: Public Assistance in Historical Perspective," Social Service Review, XV, (September, 1941), p. 501

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 507

⁶⁵Neil Betten and Raymond A. Mohl, "From Discrimination to Repatriation: Mexican Life in Gary, Indiana During The Great Depression," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. XLII, No.3, (August, 1973), p. 386.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Abraham Hoffman, Unwanted Mexican American in the Great Depression. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona, 1974, p. 137.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 139.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Neil Betten and Raymond A. Mohl, "From Discrimination to Repatriation: Mexican Life in Gary, Indiana, During the Great Depression," Pacific Historical Review, Vol. XLII, No.3, (August, 1973), p. 386.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter IX

¹"When Guest Workers Last Came to U.S.," U.S. News and World Report, August 3, 1981, p. 43.

²Los Mojados: The Wetback Story, by Julian Samora, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre-Dame, 1971., p. 9.

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- Personal interview with Marta Ponce, retired, Lansing, Michigan, March 5, 6, 1975.
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APPENDIX A

TEXTBOOK LIST FOR TABLE I

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APPENDIX B

CITY OF _____ COUNTY OF _____
 Length of Residence _____ years _____ months Length of Residence _____ years _____ months

I, _____ is asking for help from

El que suscribe, solicita ayuda de la Beneficencia Pública para él y su familia, describe en la siguiente forma:

The Department of Public Welfare for himself and dependants, as follows:

NAMES (NOMBRES)	AGES (EDADES)	OCCUPATION (OFICIO)	HEALTH CONDITION (ESTADO DE SALUD)
Father (Padre)			
Mother (Madre)			
Names of Children (Nombres de los niños)			

FUNDS AND MEANS OF WORK (ELEMENTOS DE TRABAJO)	MEANS FOR LIVING (RECURSOS DE VIDA)	PLACE OF BIRTH (LUGAR DE NACIMIENTO)
		Place of Entry U. S. _____
		Date of Entry U. S. _____

DESTINATION (LUGAR DE DESTINO)	PERSONAL EFFECTS - Baggage (MENAJE DE CASA - Efectos) Cubic Feet and Weight Peso Cubitos y Peso	CHARACTER (CALIDAD) REGISTERED OR SETTLER (Registrado o Colon)	RAILWAY OR GASOLINE FERROCARRIL O GASOLINA

Date _____, 193____

STATE WELFARE DEPT.

Am yo Kachor of the Ethnic Welfare and Personal League?
 So el Estado de la UCA de Etnicos y Campesinos Mexicanos

(Signed) _____

Supervisor.

I, THE UNDERSIGNED, do hereby affirm that I have truthfully stated my case to the representatives of the Department of Public Welfare; that I am in need of relief as transportation to Mexico from the Department of Public Welfare, and that I have no money, bonds, savings or other deposits in any bank; that I have no property or income from property other than what I have described to the representatives of the Department of Public Welfare, and that I have no possibility of income from benefit organizations, lodges, insurance companies, or compensation, except such items as I have declared.

Witness _____ (L. S.) _____

Date _____, 193____

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