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ANGLO VIEWS OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS: POPULAR PERCEPTIONS AND NEIGHBORHOOD REALITIES IN CHICAGO, 1900-1940

The Ohio State University

Ph.D. 1982

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ANGLO VIEWS OF MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS:
POPULAR PERCEPTIONS AND NEIGHBORHOOD REALITIES IN CHICAGO,
1900-1940

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By
David Stafford Weber, B.A., M.A.

** ** **

The Ohio State University
1982

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LIST OF ETHNIC REFERENTS IN TEXT

Chicano - derivative of Mexicano, usually referring to second-generation, often with political overtones. Used only in English.

Hispanic - derived from Hispano.

Hispano - Spanish-Indian or Mexican descendent.

Latino - Latin American, important self-referent in San Antonio.

Mexicano - self-referent for Hispanics in Southwest.

Spanish American - used in New Mexico, southern Colorado and California to distinguish old settlers from newer immigrants, often with overtones of class status as well.

Tejano - Texas-Mexican, derived from place of birth.
INTRODUCTION

Mexicans and Mexican Americans have had a presence in the United States ever since each nation attained its independence. Trade, travel, and military conflict provided contacts from which ethnic stereotypes could grow, and these stereotypes would form the basis for the attitudes of Anglo-Americans (in the broadest sense of the term) toward immigrants from the south. Mexicans were soon enmeshed in the drive to restrict immigration, and were subjected to the scrutiny of members of the newly emergent social sciences as well. This combination of events resulted in numerous political debates, legislative hearings, magazine articles, and academic studies designed to explain why Mexicans behaved as they did or to persuade people to accept a particular position on the question of Mexican immigration. Nearly all of these expressions shared the view that Mexicans differed from Anglo-Americans, particularly in terms of the cultural attributes which led to success in industrial society, and that the immigrants had to adapt themselves to the ways of the dominant majority in order to assimilate.

While opinion-makers on the national scene expounded their theories about Hispanic characteristics and capabilities, another set of attitudes was emerging in the working class neighborhoods of Chicago. Ethnic residents there reflected contemporary beliefs about Mexicans in their initial reactions to the Hispanic migrants to their city, greeting
them with epithets and violence, but under pressures of proximity, early animosities gradually gave way to grudging acceptance. Several factors figured in this process, among them the presence of a growing black population, which whites in Chicago perceived as a threat to their social and economic standing, the existence of a liberal and well-organized academic and social welfare community, complete with institutions devoted to the goal of "interpreting" ethnic groups to one another, and the emergence of an ethnically diverse political party. By the late 1930s, positive signs of integration existed in each local community area in Chicago with Mexicano residents, and some Mexicans had begun to leave the immigrant receiving areas of the inner city for more suburban environs.

The contrast between printed judgments and those of the neighborhood offers hope to assimilationists, for it clearly shows that personal contacts, if given the opportunity to develop, can break down the barriers of ethnic prejudice. At the same time, this comparison highlights the complexity of American (and human) social relationships, for a primary driving force behind the incorporation of Mexicans into Chicago's ethnic districts was a racism which persuaded local whites that Hispanos were preferable to blacks as neighbors. Having made this initial decision, the whites eventually progressed toward an accommodation with their Mexican acquaintances which completed the isolation of the black community in Chicago while guaranteeing the survival of the Mexican colony during the depths of the Depression.
CHAPTER I

Early Attitudes Toward Mexican Immigrants, 1900-1920

In the early years of the twentieth century, a growing number of Mexicans joined the stream of migrants entering the United States. Less noticed than the more numerous Europeans or the more conspicuous Asians, Mexicans nonetheless became subjects in the debates over immigration and immigration restriction. These people were not spared the usual discrimination which host societies impose upon alien migrants, and they had disadvantages which other ethnicities did not. The conflict between Anglos and Mexicans in the Southwest had already engendered strong feelings in that territory, which Anglo writers relayed to the remainder of the country through books and articles. In addition, the developing stereotypes of the "new" immigrants from southeastern Europe contained much which could apply to Mexicans. Many Americans were in the process of altering their views of the merits of unlimited immigration into this country, and the augmentation of this stream of humanity with Mexicans added fuel to the restrictionists' fire. Until their numbers increased and they obtained the support of well-organized lobbies, however, Mexicans received little attention from restrictionists.

This change occurred during the period of World War I, when Mexican labor proved so valuable that the old image of the worthless peon gave way, in the minds of many, to the vision of a hardworking economic
asset whose addition to the economy, if not to society, had merit. This new viewpoint demanded the development of new descriptions of Mexicans which downplayed or ignored supposed weaknesses while stressing more positive aspects, a task which took some doing in light of the deeply entrenched stereotypes which had evolved during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

I

From the onset of their relationship, Anglos tended to categorize Mexicans in racial terms. The early Anglo settlers of Texas were pre-dominantly from the slave states, and they brought with themselves a sharply defined racial hierarchy, which placed whites above "people of color." The Texans identified Mexicans as mestizos and attributed Mexicano characteristics to the fact that "there is no friendly mixture in the blood of the Spaniard and the Indian." Hispanic miscegenation did not begin in the New World; interbreeding on the Iberian Peninsula had occurred for centuries and that fact supposedly undermined the capacity of even the European Spaniard for progress. Anglo-Americans had long contemplated the Iberians and their culture with disdain, believing in the superiority of the English social, religious, and political systems. When the two groups clashed along the south-western frontier, the relative ease with which the Americans vanquished the original inhabitants seemed to underscore the dichotomy between the aggressive, energetic, and progressive Anglos and the backward, complacent, apathetic, superstitious, and untrustworthy Hispanos.¹

The fact that Mexican Indians did not assimilate European culture was interpreted as one sure sign of their backwardness. One author estimated that 80 percent of the Mexican population was
Indian in culture and temperament, including a large number of mestizos who had not advanced into the modern world. The Mexican Indians showed little evidence of moral or intellectual growth, even after domination by men of higher civilization. They remained unchanged by white rule, essentially barbaric in their mode of thought, and threatened to reestablish dominance over the mestizo. In this view the Indian strain was always just beneath the surface of the mestizo, able to overawe the white heritage of the latter, while a lack of self-control hindered any efforts to transform the Indians of Mexico into civilized beings. The Mexican population manifested this shortcoming in its acceptance of all available temptations, most notably vice, crime, and pauperism. None of these traits held much appeal to employers, and the obvious implication was that such a degenerate race would show little interest in, or aptitude for, the devices of modern industrial civilization.

These thoughts reflected much of the business community's impatience with the customs and values of Mexicans, which seemed antithetical to industrialism. Others also linked the economic underdevelopment of Mexico to the backwardness and inefficiency of the local populace. Employers in Mexico proclaimed the need for an improved labor supply, preferably immigrants from Europe. The Indian was an inadequate laborer because of irregular work habits; most also were too ignorant to operate machinery. A hacendado declared that "the four million Indians who exist in Mexican territory are hardly producers .... The Indians are a burden which Mexico must carry; without education of any kind, they are a hindrance to our
progress, an obstacle to our advance." Another stratum, "though not in the same class as the Indians, ... is still not a productive class."

Walter Weyl, among others, wondered if even Mexican managers were sufficiently intelligent to break old customs and employ profitable techniques. Some Mexican labor was fairly efficient, concluded A.W. Warwick, but for the most part it was very low grade and could not be "keyed up to doing economical work in spite of the low wage rate."

Warwick spurned theories that malnutrition or excessive use of alcohol caused this situation. Those were contributing factors, but the real cause lay in the racial temperament of the Mexican. The well-born Spaniard did not lower himself to manual labor, while the Indian characteristically would produce only that which would fulfill his own needs. "The race formed by the union of Spanish and Indian could hardly have any conception of the innate dignity of labor." ⁴

White authors were not alone in their opinions of Mexican backwardness. The black press had different motives for scrutinizing the Mexican temperament than did the Anglo employers, but various black writers and editors reached many of the same conclusions. After considering the prospects for colonies of American blacks in Mexico, the Philadelphia Tribune declared that the United States should take control of Mexico as it had of Cuba and the Philippines, and bring good government to that country. The Tribune had little positive to say about Mexicans. The peons lacked "mental and physical powers;" Mexicans as a whole were backward and ignorant, with little knowledge of modern agriculture or home economics. Its reporter stated after a trip to Mexico that the natives had a "sullen, unfriendly look which
repels even those who entertain benevolent intentions. Many of them live a lowly, depraved life." Dirty markets and beggars were typical of Mexican towns, where vice was often rampant and no one seemed gainfully employed. Permanent residence in Mexico did not always mellow black opinions. One travel account quoted a black expatriate on his new neighbors: "... most of des poor people are trifling and no account. But what else can you expect of dese yer half-breeds?" Blacks in the Southwest also expressed distaste for Hispanics, in part because of their resentment over distinctions in treatment.5

Contributing to this backwardness was an apathy so widespread that it seemed like a national characteristic. This natural indolence had a number of causes: heat and humidity along the tropical coasts, insufficient oxygen on the plateau, and a mild climate which eliminated preparation for the exigencies of winter. Lower standards of housing, clothing, and diet were possible in Mexico, and this permitted laborers to take a more relaxed attitude toward regular work. Undernourishment and disease contributed their share to Mexican listlessness. Mexicans craved stimulants, which they took in the form of coffee, pulque, and marijuana. These drugs, when combined with a diet of corn, beans, and chilis, were not likely to create a strong and healthy individual. Also debilitating was the effect of illness. Wallace Thompson claimed that venereal disease afflicted some 90 percent of the Mexican men, sapping their strength and perpetuating the number of defectives in the country. When William Carson heard of an influenza epidemic in Mexico, he was not surprised: "the unwashed, filthy living peon is a ready catcher and transmitter of any infectious disease."6
Other writers were less definite about the high proportion of venereal disease among the Mexicans, but their apparent lack of ambition drew frequent comment. The Mexican peon ostensibly demanded little more from life than had his Indian ancestors: an adobe hut or a shelter of branches, a few pots and blankets, cotton clothing, sandals, and a straw sombrero were sufficient as domestic equipment. There was prospect of advancement beyond this primitive level of consumerism, for Hispanic peasants in New Mexico had emulated some facets of Anglo culture by purchasing showy furniture, but Mexicans working in industry seemed satisfied with lower earnings than Japanese or European immigrant workers. Texas-Mexicans in 1890 were "living on a mere pittance, being well-content as long as they have their cigarettes and coffee." The Mexican lack of sustained industry and practicality was a constant irritant to Americans in southern California, as were their mañana habits and slowness of movement. In the old country, peons did not feel the envy of others which made poverty such a danger in some places. Like the Negro in the American South, peons were "a race without ambition." Upper class and landholding Mexicans were sometimes placed in the same category. A California businessman testified that growers in his state had acquired lands through foreclosure and other inexpensive methods. "The original holders, being Mexican, were improvident and really squandered them for riotous living."7 These families undoubtedly lived better than the peons described elsewhere, but they still seemed to lack the economic ambition to invest in and develop their property if that meant deferring their immediate
satisfactions. They thus became game for aggressive Anglos moving into their territory, who justified the massive property transfers on the grounds that the Mexicans would never develop the countryside.

The United States Immigration Commission, sometimes called the Dillingham Commission, corroborated existing views of Mexican apathy and backwardness in its massive report. Mexicans had resided in southern California for years, but only a few owned farms or leased land. The males were deemed good horsemen and often worked as teamsters, a fairly skilled occupation. However "they are generally lazy and lack ambition to rise to higher industrial positions." A more severe criticism was the slow progress of Mexicans and other recent immigrants in learning English. "The Mexican laborers, on the other hand, are notoriously indolent and unprogressive in all matters of education and culture, and evince little desire to speak English." Segregated living quarters, the tradition of maintaining the old language in the home, and employment in labor gangs under the supervision of a countryman were hindrances to the assimilation of these groups. The Commission felt obliged to add low aspirations to the reasons for nonadvancement; this was especially true of Mexicans.  

Progressive Anglos quickly discerned another characteristic of backwardness in Mexicans: poor personal hygiene. Mexicans used water only "when needed," placing them in the same general category as the American Indian or the Chinese coolie. Some believed that Mexicans were dirty and careless about sanitation because they did not consider it worthwhile to put forth the effort to correct the condition. Those who wished to "Americanize" the migrants emphasized training in sanitary, hygienic, and dietary measures. Many probably
agreed with Pearl Ellis that Mexicans did not take easily to such ideas. The Mexican philosophy of life was to follow the lines of least resistance; since it required less exertion to remain dirty than to clean up, Mexicans frequently chose that path. Ellis did not hope for improvement in the first generation, but proper training of the children might secure positive results in the future.  

A final trait often ascribed to Mexicans was criminality, which invoked visions of treachery, cruelty, and cowardice. A long history of apparent intellectual dishonesty reinforced this view. To Mexicans, lying and cheating were simply ways to maintain honor and prestige. Right and wrong had little place in their philosophy and many saw Mexicans as "unnatural" in terms of European or American ethical standards. The popular dime novels published during the 1800s frequently wove their plots around the conflicts between the honest, pure Anglo-Saxons and the guileful, treacherous "yellow bellies"; while Harper's once informed its readers that Mexicans might not riot as European immigrants did, "but make no Mexican your enemy, or else avoid the darkness of night and of shadow, should he be within reach."  

In addition to a national proclivity for dishonesty, Mexicans were said to display a native fondness for cruelty and violence, although they would restrain these urges when it appeared that they might not have the upper hand. Hispanics showed a great deal of disinterested cruelty, combining the Aztec love of bloodshed with the martial ardor of the Spaniards. The race which emerged from this crossing spawned numerous assassins, often resorted to the dagger, and leaned toward such sports as bullfighting and cockfighting.
The frontier society of the southwestern United States offered plenty of opportunities for cruelty and dishonesty to manifest themselves, and the general social and economic predominance of the Anglo often forced Mexicans to resort to extralegal methods of reaching their goals, creating a cycle of violence which became self-perpetuating. Nevertheless, whites interpreted Mexican crimes as a confirmation of their abnormality: depravity was the sort of behavior one expected from a barbaric stock of Spaniards and Indians. Many conjectured that criminality, like backwardness and apathy, was a racial characteristic, and reacted accordingly. Each of these attributes would receive considerable attention in the controversies over Mexican immigration, and Anglo perceptions of each would help to shape the reception which Mexican immigrants encountered in various parts of the United States.  

II

Writers describing the Southwest were not the only Americans with an interest in Mexican immigrants or Mexican Americans. Employers in the Southwest were equally, if not more, concerned with these people who offered to supply the labor necessary to develop a frontier region. Employer attitudes, based on such factors as the real or perceived shortage of labor in the region, the nature of the work involved, and the qualities of the different ethnic groups available, complemented or extended some of the ideas which the more professional authors expressed, modified others, and completely contradicted a few. The business community, even in the Southwest,
was by no means united on the question of Mexican immigration, and its own attitudes underwent an evolution in the early 1900s, as increased immigration brought greater awareness of the value of Mexican laborers.

Mexicans were not significant to the employment picture in the United States before 1900 because very few had entered the country. Those who did went mainly to large-scale agricultural enterprises demanding cheap seasonal labor which traditional sources of European or Asiatic immigration did not fill. As early as 1901 agriculturalists complained of the scarcity of farm hands, especially reliable and experienced ones. In addition, rail construction could upset the equilibrium of the labor market, as occurred in 1906 when corporate competition advanced wages from $1.00 to $1.25 per day. The labor agencies which supplied Mexican workers immediately petitioned the Bureau of Immigration to relax its restrictions against contract laborers. Arguing that Mexico was the only source of railroad track workers, the agencies suggested that section hands could come in under contract because they were skilled and because "labor of like kind unemployed cannot be found in this country." According to the contractors, the well-being of the Southwest rested on the Mexican presence. 12

Important factors in recruiting workers were the nature of the employment and its remuneration. Employers quickly identified certain jobs as "minority" occupations, meaning that the tasks were sufficiently onerous or the pay was sufficiently low that Americanized or white workers would spurn them. This factor often figured in the question of a labor shortage, for those who opposed the usage of a particular
ethnic group usually claimed that better working conditions or improved wages would attract a better class of employee, i.e., whites. Mexicans and Orientals filled these positions in the Far West in the early 1900s, but they followed a path which immigrants all over the country had trod. In Boston, for example, employments which were "repugnant and degrading" became "Irish jobs"; local pressure concentrated the Irish in unskilled occupations or as day laborers until the 1880s. In the West, sugar beet cultivation was another example of this phenomenon. White men would not cultivate beets for the wages offered, but Japanese and Mexicans would, which made beet raising "'Jap' work," a disagreeable chore performed by recent immigrants. From the grower's standpoint, whites were unsatisfactory because they did not work in "gangs" or bring their entire family into the fields, as minorities did. The same situation prevailed in harvesting other California crops. Whites discharged the regular duties around the farm, but temporary or seasonal employees came from the ranks of the recent immigrants: Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, East Indians, Mexicans, Italians, Portuguese, and others. Interestingly, the hottest part of the state, the Imperial Valley, utilized relatively little Mexican labor prior to 1917. The growers themselves, supplemented by American migrants from the cotton belt, handled the harvests.13

The feared labor shortage did not seem to develop in the Southwest until the advent of World War I, although the stratification of jobs into "white" and "minority" categories was well underway before then. As Mexican workers entered the United States in steadily increasing numbers in the early twentieth century, they went into unskilled occupations requiring no English and paying very low wages.
Mexicans, like other ethnic groups "with little aptitude in acquiring ... English," often functioned under the 'padrone' system, which specialized in "pick and shovel" jobs. Labor contractors or speculators met the migrants at the border, signed them up for gangs and advanced them commissary credits. From here they would move to railroad construction or agricultural activities, less frequently into mining or other pursuits.\textsuperscript{14}

Railroad executives evaluating their employees in the early 1900s nearly always professed a preference for the Americanized, English-speaking laborers of earlier years, who were invariably regarded as more efficient than current crews. Several roadmasters declared that five Irishmen could do as much work as eight Greeks, Mexicans, Japanese or Chinese: "good" Americans and Irish were as cheap at $2.00 per day as Mexicans were at $1.00 per day. However, those experienced with Mexicans had favorable reactions, averring that Mexicans were stronger than the Japanese, "suited to the climate," passively obedient, and "without ambition." Mexicans were easily satisfied and did not threaten their employers with concerted action. Complaints usually centered on the inability of many Mexicans to speak English, and on their undependability. "We have to carry about fifty men on the payroll to be sure of thirty to thirty-five men working everyday." The language barrier, which could result in garbled instructions and possible injury or death in the case of improper practices, might explain the statement that "while the Southern Pacific Railway has Mexicans generally on sections, near El Paso where there are dangerous cuts, it employs Italians."\textsuperscript{15}
The key differences between the ethnic groups under consideration did not lie in industry, tractability, sobriety, or muscular strength, although supervisors mentioned each frequently. The difference, rather, lay in the intelligence, experience, adaptability, and knowledge of English which each group displayed. The latter factors reduced supervision and permitted the elimination of interpreters. The newer immigrants, whether Greek, Mexican or Italian, were less desirable because they had not learned the language or become acculturated to a more industrial work pattern. These were not permanent deficiencies. However, both employers and investigators seemed to lose sight of that fact as they attached such descriptions as "without ambition" or "passively obedient" to entire ethnic groups, when at least part of the basis for those judgements stemmed from inability to speak English or a similar drawback. 16

Texans relied on inexpensive Mexican labor to make their farms profitable, despite the myth of the apathetic peon, and they admitted to this fact, although some Anglos also charged the Hispanics with causing the social changes that accompanied the shift from family farms to mechanized ones dependent on transient harvest labor. In any event, Mexicans were linked with cotton picking in Texas, which Texans thought suited them well. It required nimbleness rather than strength; it employed entire families; it entailed migration and outdoor living, which seemed to satisfy the nomadic instinct of the Mexican race; and it paid well. Agricultural employers commonly told interviewers that they preferred to employ whites for all occasions, but they could not secure reliable, steady, and sober men for temporary hand labor. Those whites
who were reduced to seasonal labor were so shiftless that growers
turned to Japanese, Chinese, and Mexicans instead. Prejudice against
Orientals mitigated Anglo opinions toward Mexican workers to some
degree, but most agreed that Mexicans lacked ambition. Gambling
and drinking accentuated their irregularity, but Mexicans still
kept their contracts and employers viewed them as more tractable
than the Japanese. Some Anglos also claimed that the Japanese had
"spoiled" Mexicans, perhaps encouraging them to be more militant. 17

The mining and smelting industry of the Southwest was the third
sector of the economy to employ Mexicans in noticeable numbers in
the early twentieth century. Described as the "scavengers of the
mining industry" because they filled the vacancies of other
workers or supplanted the least skilled and reliable Asians and
Europeans, Mexicans were acceptable for developing a new property
or "rat holing" land which a company wished to exploit cheaply.
Often Mexicans would open a new mine, only to see skilled Americans
secure the best positions if the strike proved valuable. When
comparing employees, mine managers declared that the Mexicans had
their good points but that they could not be trusted, either to
produce without supervision or to report honestly their production
of high grade ore. Another commented that "Mexicans have no heads
and would be very expensive labor if paid anything like the same
wages as whites." 18

The employment picture for Mexicans in the United States in the
eyearly 1900s had some bright spots. In Albuquerque, Hispanics were
entering semi-skilled and skilled lines in machine or repair shops
which had not even hired Spanish-speaking workers a few years previously,
and became boilermakers, carpenters, or journeymen in other fields. Urbanized Mexicans penetrated the building and construction trades, operating such equipment as road-graders and occasionally obtaining union cards. Though the advances were small, some contemporaries cited them as signs of eventual assimilation.19

In a sense, these limited steps up the economic ladder reflected the inconsistencies of employers toward Mexican workers. Employers often verbalized unflattering opinions about Mexican immigrants, labelling them unambitious, physically weaker than Europeans (though capable of considerable endurance), irregular, untrustworthy, docile, incapable of working without close supervision, and cheap. These views paralleled the presentations of Walter Weyl in his articles on Mexican labor in 1902 and 1903. However, Weyl held out some hope for improvement of Mexicans as industrial workers because of their imitative ability and their docility. By promoting Mexicans into semi-skilled and skilled occupations, American employers also displayed some confidence in the potential of Mexican workers, even if they did not express this conviction with much vigor.20

Employers regarded the Mexican reputation for docility as an assurance that the latter would not organize in their own economic defense, an opinion which received a boost from the willingness of some Mexicans to break strikes. Activity in this arena brought confrontation with the union movement, which, like many other observers of the immigration scene, had concentrated its attentions on Europeans and Asians. Southwestern laborites charged Mexicans with "displacing citizen labor at less than living wages" as early as 1910, and attempts to launch an organizing campaign among Hispanics followed. These
efforts were somewhat half-hearted; perhaps union men shared with their employers the belief that Mexicans were too docile to unionize. However, recent scrutiny of the labor movement reveals some activity on the part of Chicano workmen even before 1900. In New Mexico the Hispanic opponents of the enclosure movement connected themselves with the Knights of Labor. Mexican trackmen struck against the Pacific Electric Railway Company in 1903, losing their cause but putting forth the effort nonetheless, while in Morenci, Arizona, Mexican miners perpetrated a job action the same year. These various walkouts received little notice from such sources as the Dillingham Commission, which preferred to report that Mexicans displaced Americans through their willingness to undercut wage levels. Since restrictionists quoted the Dillingham documents for years, the oversight had a long-range impact. When tales of Mexican labor unrest did find their way into the national press, stories often depicted the strikers as amenable to the proper display of power.

III

Americans commonly believed that most immigrants caused social problems; they lived in poor housing; they required an inordinate amount of charitable relief, in part because of their penchant for drinking, gambling and other profligacies; they displayed criminal tendencies with great regularity; and they were difficult to educate and Americanize. It was natural that many writers would contemplate the social aspect of Mexican immigration in such terms. Since many Anglos had acquired similar views of Mexicans still living in their own country it became much easier for them to accept the notion that immigrants from Mexico were a liability when they came to
the United States. Many no doubt agreed that "ten percent of the Mexican problem is north of the border."23

Mexican immigrants displayed a prodigious ability to endure harsh conditions. While most of the men who worked in track maintenance in the Southwest and the West were solos, either single or with their spouse in another locality, over half of the Mexicans in that field indicated that their wives were in the United States, presumably living in the same box cars and tent camps as their husbands.

"The conditions under which section hands live are less uninviting to the Mexican women than to the women of any other race." Urban Mexicans also survived in primitive or unsanitary huts, often without plumbing and amid fields of garbage. As threatening to society as the physical condition of the housing itself was Mexican clannishness and refusal to associate with members of other races. Especially in cities did this colonization appear to be a menace. In Los Angeles housing reform centered around cleaning up or demolishing the Mexican "house courts," which had become a breeding ground for crime and disease and which had attracted a population of non-Mexicans. Some 2000 Mexicans lived in the house courts, where they moulded the general conditions of life for the entire populace. Despite the apparent contradiction between the refusal of Mexicans to associate with other races and their ability to draw others into the house courts where they could "mould the general conditions of life," opponents of Mexican immigration were most forceful in stating the deleterious effect that the Chicanos had on Los Angeles.24

Early writers on Mexican immigrants frequently associated them with the need for public relief. One of the bases for this was the
reputed improvidence of the Mexican lower classes. "Few people in the world take less thought of the future than the Mexican." Unskilled workmen were oblivious to the threat of unemployment. The poorer classes did not save, preferring to invest in immediate pleasures or risk money in games of chance. The system of communal dependence traditional among Mexican peasants complicated the attitude toward saving and individual self-reliance, for the lazy man and the man out of work became accustomed to live off his relatives and neighbors. This had the double effect of discouraging industry on the part of the giver as well as the recipient, for obvious prosperity made one prey to all his poorer relations and acquaintances. The more acculturated might alter this pattern, but the problem was still there. In the United States lack of thrift was combined with a tendency to regard public relief as a "pension," as many Mexican families became public charges during times of depression. The Mexican relief rate in Los Angeles during 1908 was six times its share of the local population, for example. This issue drew quick calls for "more stringent examinations of Mexican applicants for admission to the United States" due to "the amount of dependency and delinquency cases among the Mexicans in the southern part of California, most of which occurs among the most recent arrivals in the country." There was also need for closer patrol of the border to prevent "unnecessary leaks." 25

The Mexican Revolution pushed more potential dependents into the United States. During 1916 large numbers of Mexican aliens entered El Paso, where they proved a heavy burden on local resources. Charity administrators complained that the relief of the refugees
"has become a big problem for El Paso city and county," and that "constructive relief work with them is especially difficult and at best a largely negative process." Upon reflection another view emerged: charitable organizations had given a great deal, but the refugees helped each other as well. The proverbial hospitality of the Mexican was much in evidence as every dinner was shared with neighbors and village acquaintances. Social workers in San Diego made the same observation, finding that Mexican families often spread relief groceries among their even poorer neighbors, regardless of their own needs. The debate over the impact of Mexicans on welfare budgets has continued, but the issue was defined as early as 1908.

Nineteenth-century travelers considered Mexicans apt to steal nearly anything, and the association of Mexicans and crime persisted after 1900. The Dillingham Commission surveyed almost eight hundred Mexican alien prisoners in the course of its study and concluded that Mexicans did indeed have a predilection for wrongdoing. The Commission developed five categories of crimes and then determined the proportionate number from each ethnic group charged with violation in each category. Mexicans were well above the average for all aliens in "Gainful Offenses" and "Offenses of Personal Violence," although they did not rank at the top in either category. The association of Mexicans and crime was so widespread in the public mind that even a Sunday School series on Mexicans included a vignette in which the father of a family of beet workers was arrested because he could not produce the sales slip for a new pair of overalls he was wearing. No interpreter was
available at the trial, so the judge found Señor Sandoval guilty and sentenced him to leave the city or to serve thirty days in jail.27

The Dillingham Commission approach to the issue of immigrant crime had several weaknesses. First, it compared the frequency of incidence of each type of crime to the total committed by a particular ethnic group, rather than considering that group's share of the total number of crimes committed by type of crime. Over 40 percent of the Mexican alien convictions were for crimes of violence, but that did not mean that Mexicans committed over 40 percent of all such crimes. A second problem was that the results did not take into account the tendency, already visible at the turn of the century, to convict an alien, especially a Mexican alien, more readily than a white American. When an Anglo charged with killing a Mexican sheepherder was freed, a Coloradan wrote that "there never has been a case where a Mexican has accused an American of a crime, or where the American committed the crime against the Mexican, but what the American has gone free, and for the same time there has only been one case where an American has accused a Mexican of a crime or the crime has been against an American but what the Mexican has been found guilty and sent to the penitentiary." Similar incidents occurred all over the Southwest, including obvious improprieties on the part of law officers, but Americans rarely admitted their role. Instead, building on pre-existing ideas about Mexican criminality, most authorities simply added this trait to the composite of the Mexican immigrant then in progress.28
Critics of Mexican immigration also raised questions about the ability of this ethnic group to assimilate into American society, for many saw inability to "Americanize" as the very crux of the immigration problem. Early twentieth-century writers on Mexican assimilation usually doubted that such was possible. Not only did Mexico fail to develop her resources at home, but Mexicans residing in the United States had not advanced much either. Only a few Mexicans living in the Southwest were completely Americanized, for many spoke little or no English, lived in adobe houses with clay floors, and ate beans and dry squash. A professional educator later reminded his readers that Mexican immigrants constituted a large and difficult segment of the Americanization problem. A considerable number of Mexicans were already well Americanized, but as a whole, the group lagged in this area.  

As usual, the Dillingham Commission doubted that Mexican immigrants could make much progress along these lines, declaring that "the assimilative qualities of the Mexican were slight." Mexicans had been slow to learn the language, and showed a larger proportion of illiterates among their ranks than any other ethnic group. Only 29 percent of those surveyed with ten years or more of residence in the United States could speak English. The report made clear that language skills for all immigrants increased with length of residence, but the Mexicans seemed to acquire this skill more slowly than the members of many other ethnic groups even though the others also retained their old language for home usage. Cities such as Los Angeles tried to meet the need for language training through special classes that included Mexicans, but many Southwestern municipalities
ignored their Spanish-speaking population. San Diego, for instance, held English classes for Norwegians but did not have a program for Mexicans. Texas school administrators expressed concern about the language and assimilative abilities of their Mexican charges, but all too often refused to do anything constructive toward closing either gap.30

The ultimate test of assimilation of an immigrant was his willingness to naturalize as a citizen of his adopted country. Naturalization was revocable, but it still entailed a deliberate change of allegiance and it at least implied the acceptance of the political ideals of the new home. Very few migrants from Mexico became naturalized citizens prior to World War II, and commentators frequently utilized this fact as further evidence that they were unassimilable. The Dillingham Commission concluded that "because of their strong attachment to their native land, low intelligence, illiteracy, migratory life, and the possibility of their residence here being discontinued, few become citizens of the United States." Finding that less than two percent of the qualified Mexicans who worked in the smelting industry had taken any steps toward naturalization, the Commission added that "the great majority of the Mexicans ... are characteristically indifferent toward the political institutions of this country even when they do not expect to return to their native land."31

Mexicans often responded that it was useless to become American citizens, for their appearance revealed their ancestry and Anglos continued to treat them as Mexicans. The more extreme restrictionists carried this a step further with the argument that Mexican racial
traits made naturalization insufficient for true assimilation. One stated that "the effort at self-government in New Mexico showed what could happen if one attempted to fit one kind of government to a race that had nothing to do with the growth and development of that kind of government." The Hispanics were fine people but "absolute misfits in the body-politic of the republic." Some Texans agreed with this analysis, for Dimmit County adopted a white man's primary that barred both Mexicans and Negroes from participation in the real selection process. The justification was that the "uneducated greaser" was not qualified to rule over white men.32

IV

A final thread in the emerging fabric of attitudes regarding Mexican immigrants was the response of the United States government as expressed by officials responsible for developing and enforcing immigration policy. The Bureau of Immigration frequently ruminated on the newcomers whom its agents processed at the border, its Commissioner-General declaring in 1906 that the source from which foreign blood was drawn "deserves the most careful consideration." Formerly the aliens who entered the United States were people whose racial characteristics and ideals were compatible to those of most Americans. However, the Commissioner warned, no one should assume that more recent arrivals would evolve into citizens as quickly as earlier ones had: "The difference between the origin and history of those races and our own is too great and has extended through too many ages to be overcome, even in several generations, unless under the most favorable conditions." At the turn of the century,
the Bureau was more concerned about the entry of the European or Asiatic representatives of these non-assimilable "races" than it was about Mexican immigration, for its reports focused more on the smuggling of excludable Chinese or Europeans across the border than on Mexican arrivals. The Commissioner-General did consider Mexican immigration, like that from southeastern Europe, to be "induced and artificial," and his agents took steps to ensure that labor contracting remained at a minimum, particularly if the agencies encouraged the workers to leave the border area where their ability to endure extremes of climate made their employment more logical. Immigration agents manifested their attitudes in other ways, as reports of verbal abuse, bribes, and deplorable conditions in the examination stations surfaced in the press or circulated among the migrants.33

These examples indicate the unconcern of the Bureau of Immigration with Mexican immigrants. This attitude also manifested itself in the work of the Dillingham Commission, nine experts whose toils resulted in an investigation of every segment of American life which immigrants might affect. Despite its scientific pretensions, the Commission took as postulate the conclusion that it aimed to prove — that the new immigration was essentially different from the old and thus harder to Americanize. The Commissioners offered the recommendations which logically followed this premise. The government ought to restrict immigration in such a manner as to ease the process of assimilation. There already existed an excess of common labor in the basic industries, so future legislation should reduce the numbers of unskilled entrants. The Commission also called for the adoption of a literacy test,
a quota system based on previous immigration figures, and the exclusion of solos unaccompanied by wives or families. Since Congress wrote these proposals into later laws, the work of the Commission did bear fruit. 34

The Dillingham Commission did not closely investigate Mexican immigration, which was still rather small, but it approached Mexicans with roughly the same biases that it displayed towards south and east Europeans. The Commissioners divided the population into two fairly distinct "race groups": natives, north Europeans and Canadians on the one hand; Japanese, Mexicans, and south and east Europeans on the other. Members of the latter group brought a different attitude toward government, had obtained an inferior education in the old country, and tended to work at gang labor where there were few contacts with the dominant culture. 35 Despite the obvious effects of environment on each group, members of the Commission insisted on termsing observable differences racial in origin.

The Dillingham Commission noted that Mexican immigrants went largely to those sections of the United States which were formerly part of Mexico. Even in 1909, however, some Mexicans were engaged on railroads as far north as Illinois. Most were transients, often returning to their native land. These migrants afforded a supply of common labor in the Southwest which that area was unable to draw from other sources. Employers paid Mexicans the lowest possible wages and substituted them for unskilled members of other races whenever feasible. The authors did not see any danger of a general displacement of other races, however, for Mexicans were without ambition and did not compete in other walks of life. They were "content with the
wage relation and a dependent position," and thus had not achieved the economic progress of the Japanese. In addition, the Commissioners doubted that any great increase in the number of Mexican immigrants would occur under the existing conditions, though higher wages and wider distribution of labor opportunities might stimulate a larger immigration. 36

Of central importance to the Dillingham report was the theory that the newer immigrants held down wages because of their lower standard of living. Mexican track laborers in the Southwest had replaced or displaced other cheap labor, and this constrained wages after 1900. In mining and manufacturing, Mexicans, along with other recent immigrants, earned less than the natives and long-term residents from north Europe. Sometimes Mexican earnings were so low that the Commission could attribute them only to racial discrimination. In fact, the probable explanation for the low levels of wages paid to Mexicans, as well as to other immigrants, lay in the skills which the worker brought to his job in the United States. Crucial to any immigrant laborer was knowledge of English, for that would permit him to serve in supervisory positions, to learn new technical skills, or to apply techniques that were unusable without ability in the language of the country. Any literacy was helpful, for that indicated education in other areas, such as elementary mathematics. If entirely illiterate, the immigrant was bound to remain in unskilled and relatively low-paid employment. 37 Since Mexican immigrants were frequently illiterate when they entered the United States, and did not quickly acquire English, it is not
surprising that their wages were significantly lower, on the average, than those of English-speaking workers. That the Dillingham Commission did not recognize these points was symptomatic of its times. The report had the effect, however, of proscribing Mexican immigrants, along with others of the new immigration, as "cheap labor," and this belief would become another staple in later considerations of Mexican immigration.

The most important event in the early development of Mexican immigration, and perhaps in the development of American attitudes toward Mexican immigrants as well, was the entry of the United States into World War I. With this action, the labor shortage which southwestern business and agricultural leaders had feared became a reality; they demanded access to the closest available source of labor, the Mexican immigrant, and the Mexican lobby was born. Backed by Federal officials most closely concerned with the war production program, this lobby drew from earlier discussions of the merits of immigrant laborers to develop the picture of the ideal transient worker: the Mexican peon. The Department of Labor grudgingly accepted these arguments and authored the temporary admissions program. This opportunity, in turn, opened new vistas for under-employed Mexicans and provided the catalyst for the much greater migration of the 1920s.

The passage of the Burnett Bill in early 1917, demanding that applicants for admission to the United States pass a literacy test and pay an eight dollar head tax, had upset existing movements along the border and necessitated the creation of emergency measures to encourage the entry of migrant workers. Conscription further complicated
matters, for rumors were rife that the government would draft all Mexican aliens, stimulating a sizeable exodus during the spring and summer of 1917. Employers complained that the literacy requirement had halved their pool of unskilled Mexican workers, while immigration officers estimated rejection ratios as high as 75 percent. In response to these comments, the Department of Labor suspended the literacy test, head tax, and contract labor clause to permit the temporary admission of Mexican agricultural laborers, while various Federal agencies sought to calm fears of conscription among braceros to ensure that a sufficient number would take advantage of the lowered restrictions.38

The temporary admission of Mexican workers came amidst calls for the importation of Filipinos, Chinese, Puerto Ricans, French-Canadians and Negroes from the Caribbean and the Bahamas.39 The Department defended its action with the reply that Mexicans represented the least evil choice from among those suggested. Secretary of Labor William B. Wilson declared that "from many sources we were being pressed to encourage the migration of Filipinos, Hawaiians, and other labor of similar character, and to secure the suspension of the Chinese Exclusion Law.... We could not yield to importunities of that kind." Mexicans, on the other hand, seemed to be just right. They were numerous and willing to work for "a very small wage"; unions would not object to the "Hewers of wood and carriers of water class of Mexicans" that would come under the program; and if "desertions" occurred the Mexicans could be "gathered up" and returned to the border. With the exception of Canadian migrants, none of the alternate sources considered were readily removable, a point which cropped up often when restrictionists asked why Mexicans were chosen for the program.40
Once the temporary admissions program was established, it was natural for other business interests in the Southwest to seek extensions in the scope of operations and the length of the stay. Commercial organizations flooded the Department of Labor with requests to bring in Mexicans without any restrictions at all. Herbert Hoover, then serving as Food Administrator, joined in advocating the full utilization of Mexican laborers, as did the United States Employment Service. Hoover advised Secretary of Labor Wilson to broaden the use of Mexican temporaries beyond agricultural labor, and to eliminate the time constraint and the requirement that farmers contract prospective employees in person at the border. Hoover suggested a halt in the practice of deductions from the earnings of the migrants, showing how widespread the idea of Mexican thriftlessness had become: since Mexicans were improvident they would never save enough to pay their way home if their employer did not withhold it for them. Hoover did not want to see the Mexicans return home; he anticipated that their fabled inability to cope with a money economy would strand them in the Southwest where they could continue to perform stoop labor. The Department of Labor disagreed with Hoover's thesis that the United States would need Mexican labor for "years to come," but on June 12, 1918, it issued an order extending temporary admissions to lignite coal mining and railroad maintenance of way, again to government construction work and all types of mining operations, and finally, to sugar beet production. The time limitation became the duration of the war, while deductions from wages were discontinued.

The temporary admissions program was not without its darker side. The Bureau of Immigration and the employers both were concerned
lest the Mexicans "desert" to enter other, more remunerative occupations. Enthusiastic companies like the Spreckels Sugar Company of California sometimes resorted to guards to assure that their Mexican work force was still intact each morning, and the plant manager could not imagine why the Mexicans would complain "unless the guards were mistreating them." The investigator had no suggestions for ways to cut desertions, but he did question the propriety of guarding the camps of the alien laborers.\textsuperscript{43} Virtually every annual report which the Bureau of Immigration issued from 1918 to 1923 fretted over returning the Mexicans to their homeland at the conclusion of their contract. Over 10,600 were unaccounted for in the 1920 report, and twice that in 1921. The bureaucrats were never pleased with the temporary admissions program, calling it "strictly a matter of war policy," and later pointedly criticizing employers for reaping benefits and then showing indifference "in the matter of disposing of these laborers in accordance with the terms of their contract with the Government."\textsuperscript{44} Begun as a means of assuring the success of the war effort, the temporary admissions program ended as a question of the proper "disposition" of the human beings involved.

The temporary admissions program had significance beyond its evidence as another example of the insensitivity of Anglos to their Mexican neighbors. The program broadened the geographical area in which Mexicans had worked and permitted many Mexicans to gain experience in a more regimented social and economic order. It also established firmly the idea that Mexicans could adapt to modern industrial employments and created a larger and more powerful cadre
with an interest in Mexican immigration. While many of the old attitudes towards Mexicans survived into the 1920s and played some role in the debate over restriction, the theory that Mexicans were at best a low-grade and unprofitable source of labor, expressed in 1902 by Walter Weyl and repeated by most commentators until the advent of temporary admissions, found far fewer adherents after the war. Opponents of their entry would have to rework their material to formulate other reasons to exclude Mexicans along with Europeans and Orientals.
CHAPTER II

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE RESTRICTION DEBATE

Americans have always debated the wisdom or propriety of letting others enter the country. Years of discussion culminated with a series of legislative acts between 1917 and 1924 which finally established a generally restrictive immigration policy, based on annual quotas for most alien national groups. Nations of the Western Hemisphere were not covered under the quota provisions of the National Origins Act, however, and for the remainder of the 1920s deliberations continued on the narrower field of Mexican or Western Hemisphere immigration. Advocates on both sides employed stereotypes of Mexicans which had been developed previously, with some modifications. Restrictionists, in particular, revived arguments and images which they had utilized against Oriental and south European immigrants. In 1930, just when it appeared that the restrictionists might carry the day, a combination of administrative restraints and economic disaster curtailed the influx of Mexicans and defused the issue, although not settling the question. The solution hinted at in the temporary admissions program, i.e., adjusting the flow of migrants to meet the economic exigencies of a given situation, in effect became the national policy toward Mexican immigration.
and gave credence to claims that, at least to the Southwest, Mexicans were marginal men whose presence was not desired when other ethnic groups were available to perform the same economic functions.

I

During the nineteenth century, frequent outbursts of prejudice occurred against the different national groups arriving in the United States. These newcomers were mostly unskilled, in poorly paid occupations, with low standards of living. Many saw them as the least desirable members of the host society; practically every ethnic group from the Irish to the Mexicans fell into this category. Contemporaries portrayed each as inferior and unqualified for the same positions and opportunities available to those defined as "Americans." This bias usually grew from two distinct sources. Labor unionists sounded the first alarm because the newcomers accepted low wages when they first entered the market, while cultural and language differences made union organization difficult. As the numbers of aliens increased, upper-class spokesmen began to perceive them as a long-range threat to society: at best tools of ward politicians, at worst anarchists or radicals.¹

Against this backdrop, a restriction movement gathered momentum slowly, beginning with the Chinese Exclusion and Contract Labor Acts of the 1880s, gaining added impetus with the passage of the literacy test in 1917. Providing the intellectual fuel to this drive were eugenical theories which elaborated the distinctions between the "races" of the world, and economic theories which likened
immigration restriction to the tariff on manufactured products—a means to protect the American worker. Despite such potent anti-restriction symbols as the Melting Pot, the restrictionists succeeded in passing quota acts in 1921 and 1924 which reduced access to residents of southeastern Europe and Asia while setting a maximum number for all entries from the Old World.²

More extreme restrictionists sometimes advocated solutions to the immigration question which went beyond the quota acts. Among these were suggestions to close the borders entirely for a given period of time or to establish an unbiased commission to decide the sources, destinations, and volume of immigration. The first proposal would allow for the "digestion" of aliens already in the American system, while the second would rationalize migration and tie it directly to the labor requirements of the country. Variations of the latter scheme would also limit the mobility of the immigrant, holding him to his approved destination until he acquired citizenship.³ These proposals did not specifically mention Mexicans, but the restrictionists undoubtedly meant to include them, for each program addressed some aspect of the so-called "Mexican problem." These ideas also demonstrate how widespread was the tendency to treat all immigrants as factors of production at the expense of civil rights.

Early debates on restriction had focused on European and Oriental migrations. Local organizations in the Southwest sometimes issued manifestos against their Mexicans, concerning themselves especially with health hazards. The El Paso Medical Association complained that unrestricted immigration of Mexican peons created a danger for the entire country and recommended rigid enforcement of
immigration laws to protect the United States from outbreaks like the bubonic plague which was then striking Mexico. The doctors also urged a one-year ban on all "peon" immigration. Another writer argued that many people whom eastern immigration inspectors would have rejected were admitted along the southern border, creating "evils for the community at large" which overshadowed the desirable qualities of a large Mexican population.4

Such rumblings foreshadowed the real opening of debate over Mexican immigration, which accompanied the temporary admissions program. One leader in the anti-restrictionist camp was Claude Hudspeth, Congressman from El Paso. The war had shaken the belief of many in the fidelity of immigrants, but Hudspeth reported that the Mexicans who came to work in the United States were very loyal to their adopted country. Tejanos and Hispanos had served with distinction in World War I, proving that anti-Americanism was not an expression of the popular will among Mexicans; it was a Carrancista idea. Other south Texas spokesmen supported these claims, pointing out that Mexicans in Laredo had bought Liberty bonds at twice the rate of Anglos, when one considered their ability to buy. In San Antonio education was eradicating the distinctions between Anglos and Mexicans and many had risen into the middle class. Given the chance, Mexicans could become Americanized.5

Many Congressmen feared revolution in 1920 and 1921, and some could not overlook the potential for radicalism in Mexicans. They compared the Mexicans to other ostensibly docile groups, the Russian peasant and the American Negro, and wondered if the Mexicans might not organize for violence as the others had. Even if they did not
charge Mexicans with purveying revolution, restrictionists doubted their capacity to function in a democracy. The matter of vote fraud sometimes appeared, and cynics pointed to government in New Mexico as well as south Texas to support their contentions. Seventy-five years of effort had failed to "Americanize" the Hispanics of New Mexico in "anything but name." Bilingualism in New Mexico was symptomatic of a deeper problem: the Hispanics had not developed any theories of representative government, and were incapable of really internalizing its operation. Anglos in south Texas agreed, declaring that Mexicans did not object to disfranchisement. They lacked interest in politics and would not vote correctly if given the chance, or at best would follow the dictates of a "boss." "If a Mexican votes, he will vote wrong on moral issues, whiskey, etc. He won't vote for the betterment of the community." Anti-restrictionists preferred to avoid the question of political aptitude, stressing instead that Mexicans were apolitical or that they did not even remain in the country. Thus John Nance Garner could argue that while the national character of the Mexicans was not such as to make particularly desirable citizens, 95 percent of the immigrants cared nothing for philosophy or government. "They [do not] know who the President of Mexico is." Political apathy grew in value when compared to the highly publicized activities of immigrant radicals from Europe. Moreover, some restrictionists, like Jeremiah Jenks, refused to consider the Mexicans as immigrants in the strict sense of the word, because they did not enter with any serious intention of becoming citizens. Garner estimated that 80 percent of the Mexicans returned to the old country after the harvest; this not only minimized
any impact on the political structure but relieved the Anglo community of the burden of caring for them. It was for this reason that early analysts doubted that the temporary admissions program would have any real long term social effects on the United States. "The Mexicans have no intention of coming to the United States to reside. The majority of them will probably return to their country again this winter, no matter how much work there is." This tendency was such a problem that some farmers in the Southwest had offered houses to Mexicans as an inducement to stay.7

The permanence of the Mexican immigrants was of particular importance for the future of temporary admissions, since it was an index of how well the government could carry out the program. Administrators interpreted the drift into other industries of contract laborers as unacceptable. It was difficult to keep track of the workers, especially without the cooperation of the companies, which sometimes told the United States marshal that the Mexicans had "escaped" from labor camp. Other observers, considering the poverty of Mexico, doubted whether the Mexicans would go back to their homeland, for conditions were better in the United States. The Bureau of Immigration frequently referred to high desertion rates among the temporary admisses, since 30 percent of the workers imported under the program had disappeared during their sojourn in the United States. While many had returned to Mexico, thousands remained in the States, often in poverty, and they had begun to appeal for aid. Few Americans seemed aware of the condition of Mexican immigrants in 1921, but restrictionists did publicize the desertion rate of the contractees,
emphasizing that any new system of temporary admissions should guarantee that labor importers return their wards to the border at the expense of the contractor. 8

Although concerns about whether Mexicans would desert their contracts were important in determining the fate of the temporary admissions program, the deciding factor may have been the need for guarantees. Opponents argued that the steps necessary for enforcement were so draconian and so contradictory to American traditions that they were more damaging than any labor shortage. Deportation of an individual for leaving his employer smacked of peonage. John C. Box envisioned special police ranging the country to ensure that only farmers had the benefit of Mexican laborers, and Albert Johnson noted that witnesses spoke of treating Mexicans just like cattle. Worse, the importation of Mexicans under contract could have the effect of "making peasants ... of workers in American agriculture." The motivation for this concern was undoubtedly racial, for Box described the immigrants as "the degraded inhabitants of Mexico," but the combination of these arguments, along with the depression of 1920-1921, finally buried the temporary admissions program. Lawmakers might not agree on the qualities of Mexican immigrants, but they did not choose to alter existing immigration laws to permit the legal entrance of illiterate contract workers. Future proposals of this nature were usually tied to suggestions that Mexico receive a small quota of legal immigrants, with contract labor meeting temporary requirements. 9

In 1923 and 1924 it was apparent that the various immigration laws had not reduced net immigration much. Arrivals remained high
and repatriations were less frequent because people feared that they might not have the opportunity to reenter the United States. Finally, immigration from contiguous territory might have been proportionately less without the quota law. Since "the invasion of America by an ever increasing number from Canada and Mexico" threatened to nullify the objectives of a restrictive policy, it is not surprising that Mexicans were included in the discussions that accompanied the passage of the Johnson-Reed Law in 1924. Some who advocated including the Western Hemisphere did so because they believed that all immigration needed restriction; others hoped that incorporating Canada and Mexico into the legislation would stall further constraints on immigration from Europe. All agreed that the admission of Mexicans was inconsistent with the restraint of Europeans, but low visibility, together with references to Pan-Americanism, permitted their exclusion from the quota provisions.10

The American Federation of Labor (A.F.L.) did not abate its efforts to restrict Mexicans, and extensive lobbying of Secretary of Labor James J. Davis brought him to the same position. Davis testified at one point that "these Mexicans were crowding American workmen out of their jobs, because they were willing to take employment at wages which would not permit ... American standards of living." Davis added that his investigations of conditions in South America had convinced him that exceptions in favor of the Western Hemisphere were "most pernicious." Some urban Congressmen also voiced these concerns, asking if their colleagues would "go on record to prove that a Mexican makes a better American citizen than the European immigrant." Others noted some sectional hypocrisy on the question, for western
representatives, whose constituents employed Mexicans everywhere, "refuse to let white men into other ports," but kept the doors open for "the Mexican peon." Restrictionists, who were mainly from the South and West, clearly had more in mind than just the betterment of the American worker.  

Such statements brought forth the response which had been advanced during the hearings over the temporary admissions program, namely, that Mexican immigration was not permanent. Their strong attachment to their homeland and their concentration in seasonal occupations meant that no real accretion to the Mexican population in the United States had occurred. Only a few had gone so far north as Chicago. These statements must have had an effect, for the Senate defeated soundly an amendment to include countries of the Western Hemisphere under the provisions of the quota bill.  

Editorials soon criticized the existing policy, however, claiming that "the fact that the new 'quota' law did not apply to the Western Hemisphere was intolerable." Popular restrictionist Madison Grant declared that the Johnson Act of 1924 was a great piece of legislation, but it was incomplete. Grant thought it illogical to control the number of Europeans, even non-Nordics, while throwing the door open to Negroes, Indians, and half-breeds without hindrance. About this same time the Department of Labor commissioned economist Robert F. Faerster to study the rising tide of immigration from south of the border. Faerster seriously questioned whether Latinos warranted privileges denied to transatlantic migrants. Other nativists simply wished to see Mexicans placed under the limitations of the literacy
test. Proper enforcement of the literacy provisions against
Mexicans, perhaps expecting them to understand what they read,
was the most important work of the 1920s, for this would block out
Mexican replacements for the now excluded cheap European laborer.13

Three particularly virulent attitudes had powered the drive
to restrict European and Oriental immigration in the early 1920s:
a racial superiority based on Anglo-Saxonism, anti-radicalism, and anti-
Catholicism. Each of these ideas would reappear in the discussions
of Mexican immigration which followed the passage of the Johnson-
Reed Act, although the latter two phobias received much less attention
than they had with respect to European migrants. The Congressmen,
and others, continued to argue about the racial aspects of Mexican
immigration, and the related questions of whether the economic value
of the Mexican immigrant outweighed his social cost.14

The portrait of the Mexican as docile and non-radical, which anti-
restrictionists had developed during the post-war hearings, remained much
in evidence. The fact that conditions in Mexico were quieter after 1920
undoubtedly smoothed the way for claims that Mexicans were not inherently
radical. Only when specific outbreaks occurred, such as the 1928 strike in
the Imperial Valley, did restrictionists resurrect the charge that Mexicans
were revolutionaries who might undermine American institutions. The strike
caused John Box to reaffirm that since "Mexico is by far the most bolshe-
vistic country in the Western Hemisphere," Mexicans "constitute a bad
element to have imported into the United States." Conservatives some-
times expressed the belief that Latin America was filled with persons
who were saturated with Socialist-Communist theories, and
that many of those coming into the country from Mexico were trained agitators intent on causing disruptions in the United States. The atmosphere in Mexico made it easy for radicals to convince illiterate peasants that confiscation of private property without compensation for the use of the so-called workers was an acceptable alternative to capitalism. Americans willing to have an unlimited number of Mexicans enter the country were giving unwitting aid to those who sought to destroy them.\textsuperscript{15}

Anti-Catholicism was never a major factor in the struggle over Mexican immigration. In large part this was due to the strength of anti-clericalism south of the border and to the obvious lack of concord between immigrants from Mexico and the Catholic church. Still, religion did enter into the deliberations. Senator J. Thomas Heflin (Ala.) in 1930 claimed that foreign interests were seeking to control the Senate through the influence of Catholic immigrants: "Here you are, bringing in your Mexican peons by the tens of thousands, led by Catholic priests, taking positions and doing work that belongs to American citizens." The Committee on Immigration and Naturalization sometimes heard similar allegations. The continued influx of Mexicans meant more danger from the Catholic vote, which might have elected Al Smith president in 1928. "Real Americans should heave out these Italian and Mexican Catholics or America would be given over to the Pope."\textsuperscript{16}

Protestants also supported an active home mission campaign among Mexican-Americans and Mexican immigrants. "Enlightenment" for the "benighted" alien was one goal of this activity, but the desire to maintain Protestant preeminence in America was another motivation.
"Jesuitism" was a menace to the spirit of civil and ecclesiastical progress which Protestants espoused; with masses of immigrants to back them up, the Roman Catholics would remake the face of America. "If we do not inspire them with our ideals they will degrade us with their ideals." 17 Thus, for many members of the evangelical or fundamentalist sects, containing the flow of Mexican Catholics had important ramifications. Even if they did not fill the stand at committee hearings, their political representatives were undoubtedly attuned to their sensibilities, as Senator Heflin indicated.

If anti-radicalism and anti-Catholicism were less noticeable in the campaign against Mexicans than in the earlier campaign against Europeans, Anglo-Saxonism was not. Racism colored the approach to such problems as who would perform unskilled labor in the extractive economy of the Southwest, whether Mexicans displaced white labor to any extent, and what the attendant social costs of such unskilled immigrants really were. Anti-restrictionists usually prefaced their remarks with statements of their desire to maintain America as a predominately white society, then proceeded to explain why they needed non-white workers, while restrictionists questioned both their premises and the projected results of such policy.

A crux of the immigration problem was common labor, which every one agreed was in short supply because young Americans would not condescend to "pick and shovel" occupations. Southwestern growers opined that white Americans would not work in unskilled jobs, especially hand labor in a hot climate. California, Arizona, and Texas still required access to transient laborers who could chop and pick cotton, and officials in charge of reclamation projects
conceded. Without Mexican immigrants, the cotton industry would wither. No one but Mexicans would do the work – price was not an object but a steady and docile labor supply was. Also, only Mexicans were adapted to "grubbing," clearing underbush from new land, and only they were willing to do the work. Field crops such as cotton, cabbage, spinach, and onions relied on Mexicans for at least 95 percent of their labor force. Mexicans filled a place in the agricultural structure which no other class of immigrant could fill. They were willing to live in the country and to work long hours for less pay than an urban job offered. The nation might have a high unemployment rate, but those people were not going to go out and take farm jobs in any part of the country. "Only the abnormal, the handicapped, and those rejected by industry make a vocation of casual farm labor."18

When pressed about the type of immigrants whom their industries were recruiting, the anti-restrictionists frequently fell back to the pretext that, although Mexicans had their faults, they were preferable to any other ethnic group which might come into the Southwest. Chinese and Japanese were not available, and if they were, they had the flaw of being ambitious enough to want to buy land. Hindus were worthless; Filipinos had been tried and found wanting. Puerto Ricans always expected government aid or charity because they were accustomed to that at home. In fact, any class of unskilled labor had its inadequacies and all created social welfare problems. Because Mexicans were unambitious, docile, cheap, and "homers," the representatives of business who sought their services admitted, but were willing to overlook, the negative aspects of their residence in the United States.19
Restrictionists often credited their fellow Caucasians with a willingness to take menial jobs, despite claims to the contrary. Morgan C. Sanders of Texas declared that whites from his district picked cotton, even migrating into west Texas after the crop. Payment of a proper wage, argued Henry C. Ward, would prove that there was sufficient labor already in the United States. If agriculturalists would offer more, they could not only attract all the white workers they wanted, but they could improve the overall physical well-being of the nation by encouraging unemployed urban workers to take healthful jobs in the country, restoring the balance between the urban and rural sectors of the economy. Finally, West Coast nativists sometimes compared the pro-Mexican agitation with the pro-Chinese or pro-slavery agitation of earlier years, especially the argument that whites would not work and that regional development depended on access to low-cost aliens. Whites would not work beside blacks, Mexicans, or Orientals, but they would farm as share-croppers or pick cotton by themselves. Mexicans were docile and non-revolutionary, but they were "thousands of years away biologically," and the bulk of the American public was "racially opposed" to their entry.

The "displacement" question became sufficiently important after World War I for the Department of Labor to commission a full-scale survey of conditions in the Southwest; the investigators concluded that only a negligible number of Mexicans had replaced white laborers. Anti-restrictionists were even more emphatic in denying that Mexicans could ousted the dominant whites: "Have you ever heard ... of the white race being overrun by a class of people of the mentality of the Mexicans?" Since Mexicans did not remain in the United States,
according to these lights, they hardly disturbed the order of things at all. If anything, Mexicans improved the economic position of the American farmer because they were more profitable than white hobo labor. Supporters of open immigration from Mexico reiterated that they would accept the restriction of people who provided immediate competition to American business or labor. Mexicans simply did not fall into that category. On occasion anti-restrictionists admitted, indirectly, that Hispanics might vie with Anglos for positions, as when a Chamber of Commerce advocated maintenance of the non-quota status for Mexicans on the grounds that they had long been an important source of common labor and were beginning to enter the skilled trades in construction work. 21 It was far more common, however, to find such sentiments coming from restrictionists who perceived that Mexicans might eventually enter the mainstream of the American economy and displace Anglo workers.

Along that vein, Congressmen denounced the exclusion of Mexicans from the National Origins Act on the grounds that Mexican workers were "standing at doors waiting to get places in the factories, the places of those already on the job." Respondents informed John C. Box and Thomas A. Jenkins that Mexicans did indeed work for less even than Negroes, and that they drove both white and Negro labor from the markets which they penetrated. New arrivals in southern California found that Mexicans did the unskilled work in that part of the state, and many had to seek transportation out of the area. Laboring men were "astonished at the thousands of Mexicans, Wopps, Filipinos and what-nots to be seen on the highways and the thousands of American men out of employment." There was more common labor
in the United States than ever in 1928, but more of it was out of work. Not satisfied with charges that Mexicans were aggravating white unemployment, Albert Johnson tried to exploit rumors that out-of-work Mexicans were "loitering on the streets of El Paso" in the spring of 1928. Johnson ordered the Bureau of Immigration to verify that report and wire him collect with its reply.22

Depression in 1929 made the theory that Mexicans had elbowed out or underbid American workmen even more popular as an explanation for widespread unemployment. The Department of Labor proposed the extension of quota restrictions to the Western Hemisphere on the grounds that Mexican immigration, whether legal or illegal, had "far-reaching effects ... wherever workers come face to face at the gates of employment." Citing Chicago as his example, Albert Johnson agreed. "American citizen-workers: barbers, painters, waiters, carpenters, and so on - are being crowded out by the mixed breeds," who were "the greatest menace to American workers." In another speech, William J. Harris pontificated that if Mexicans had not come to the United States in the 1920s, the country would not have an unemployment problem, for those one million Mexicans had displaced an equal number of Americans and had affected the lives of some four million overall. Even when Mexicans did not leave the Southwest to compete for jobs in urban centers, their coming had a negative impact across the country. In the words of J. Thomas Heflin, "the fine Anglo-Saxon cotton producers of the old South" could not match the "low-grade, cheap, dirty, peon labor" of Mexican immigrants.23

Labor leaders admitted that Mexicans often worked for a lower wage than did Anglos, but they denied that this meant any economic advantage for the country. Society at large made up the difference
between the wages paid to Mexicans and the real cost of living. Mexicans, like other minorities, had found that it did not pay to work for the wage offered, and they soon became satisfied to accept the aid of charitable organizations which would not permit them to die on public doorsteps. Where large numbers of Mexicans congregated, the social costs of poorhouses, dispensaries and hospitals rose, and this would worsen as they moved further north. Mexicans undermined the health and sanitary conditions of the community through poverty and ignorance. However, despite sending their children to local schools, where they required special attention and disrupted the normal patterns of education, they failed to overcome this. Since Mexicans were spenders rather than savers they remained common laborers for longer than other ethnics, and were thus more likely to require charitable assistance. 24

Worse than these out-of-pocket costs were what the nativists proclaimed as the long-term costs to American society. Mexicans were "largely of a different race ... and their presence in this country has already created a serious new race problem." Mexicans were "on a par with the lowest class of Orientals" or "to be compared with the Negro," depending on the point of reference of the nativist. In any event, they were not assimilable, and when they died there would remain manifest differences between their children, who were likely to be numerous, and the children of the European stocks who had preceded them. Mexican immigration introduced a dubious racial factor into American life, for none of the different strains in the Mexican-Indian, Negro, mulatto, and mestizo - could ever approach the "race value" of the whites who comprised the dominant stocks in the United States. 25
Complicating the racial issue was the question of Mexican eligibility for citizenship in the United States. Congress had legislated, and the Supreme Court had upheld, the limitation of American citizenship to "white persons," and "aliens of African descent." To jurists Mexicans presented a problem because of their usually obvious Indian ancestry. Despite the confidence of the nativists that the courts would rule "the Indian peons" of Mexico ineligible for citizenship, the Bureau of Naturalization did not oppose the naturalization of Mexicans and the local courts did not inquire into the genealogy of individual applicants. The mass naturalizations of Mexicans in the Southwest as stipulated in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo apparently satisfied the lawyers of the eligibility of Mexican aliens, but the topic received considerable publicity during the 1920s.26

Not everyone accepted the idea that Mexican immigrants exacted a high cost from American society, of course, for any number of counter-claims were presented on that point. However, the underlying opinions of Mexicans which shone through this defense were not markedly different from those which the nativists expressed; it was just that Mexican docility, frugality, and removability all made them less a drain on society than the restrictionists assumed.

Anti-restrictionists admitted that Mexican immigrants came to the United States with practically nothing and did not save much, but despite that they never had to rely on the county for aid or go to the poor farm. The reason: "They can live on less than any people in the world and are seemingly happy." All they required were food and clothing. Mexicans could make enough in three or
four months as harvest hands to live comfortably for the rest of the year in old Mexico. Moreover, Hispanics were law-abiding, especially when faced with authority. They had developed a healthy respect for the law at home because of the summary system of justice, and this carried over into Texas, where the sheriff could make them do anything. El Paso businessmen agreed that Mexicans did not provide a threat to law and order; with Mexicans comprising half of the population of the city, they would not lobby for more immigration if Mexicanos were not an asset. 27

The clinching point for many on this issue was that, as aliens, Mexicans returned voluntarily to their homeland or the government could deport them. In either event, they were not the responsibility of the local community. Texans charged that the Bureau of Immigration systematically under-estimated returns to Mexico and thereby overstated the increase in the alien population by some 80 percent. Others pointed out that Mexicans, as aliens, were "controllable." The excessive indigence which Mexicans displayed in Los Angeles was the fault of the social services organizations rather than the Mexicans themselves, but relief through deportation was readily obtainable. This was not true of Puerto Ricans and southern blacks, the most obvious substitutes for Mexican labor. 28 The proposal to deport Mexicans if they failed to fulfill properly their role as a low-cost, low-maintenance labor source reflects, perhaps better than any other statement, the tenuous position which they occupied in the Southwest even during times of economic prosperity.

Many of the sentiments expressed in the halls of the legislature found their way to the public through the popular press. Although
the Mexican immigration question did not dominate headlines as the National Origins Act had in the early 1920s, a spate of articles accompanied nearly every hearing on the subject. The restrictionist *Saturday Evening Post* led the journalistic opposition to Mexican immigration, just as it had been in the forefront on the agitation against continued immigration from Europe. The *Post* utilized most of the current racial arguments against Mexicans while doing so, and assigned writers from its campaign against the Europeans to cover the Mexican issue. Other journals with a nativist tinge included the *World's Work*, the *Independent*, the *Forum*, and the *North American Review*, although none focused the same attention on Mexican immigration that the *Saturday Evening Post* did. In fact, social welfare and religious publications, such as the *Survey* and the *Missionary Review*, carried more articles on Mexican immigrants, who were potential clients or converts, than did the general press. This underscores the narrowness of the debate over the entry of Mexicans in the 1920s and may offer one reason why Congress never wrote restriction into law: the nativists could not generate a sufficient volume of support for the measure from the public at large, thus leaving the field to the professional eugenicists, the Chambers of Commerce, and the Federal officials who ultimately opted to employ administrative methods to control the flow of legal Mexican immigration. Nevertheless, the popular magazines undoubtedly augmented the spread of negative stereotypes of Mexican immigrants among people with little or no knowledge of Hispanics, predisposing at least some to view their arrival with hostility.\(^{29}\)
While pro- and anti-restrictionists dueled in Congressional hearings and the popular press, lawmakers and pundits advanced a variety of compromise solutions to the problem. These attempted to satisfy the demand for labor while paying at least lip service to those who believed that an undammed flow of Mexicans posed grave dangers to Anglo-American society. Agricultural and business interests, perhaps looking for delaying tactics, suggested that the matter required further study to probe how restriction would affect the labor supply of the Southwest, how rising labor costs might impact on the national standard of living, and whether the substitutes for Mexicans might serve society worse. An investigatory commission could determine the real need for migratory labor each year and the government could arrange for the migrants. Even normally nativist organizations did not escape the urge for investigations; the Secretary-Treasurer of the California State Federation of Labor warned that the campaign against cheap Mexican labor was not as easy as the one for Oriental exclusion: the Grange and Legion were not disposed to engage in such a program without some sort of research. The decision to record Mexicans separately in the 1930 census was one result of this agitation.30

The temporary admissions solution enjoyed something of a resurgence in the late 1920s, as did proposals to set numerical quotas for migrants from the Western Hemisphere. Advocates suggested admitting limited numbers of aliens, sometimes under bond, with the government supervising the program and guaranteeing propitious returns. Quota plans ranged from a moratorium on all immigration to a two percent quota for Latinos based on the census of 1890 to a
maximum number of entries for the Western Hemisphere (without affecting Canadians, however), to restrictions on Mexico alone. Registration of all alien residents, legal or otherwise, and laws prohibiting the employment of persons with visible Indian blood, unless they could prove legal residence, were adjuncts to the quota plans.31

II

The agitation over restriction of Mexican immigration placed the Federal government in a political and diplomatic bind. While most of the bureaucrats in the Departments of Labor and State undoubtedly agreed with the nativists that Mexicans did not offer much of value to the body politic besides their labor, they had to consider both the developmental needs of the Southwest and the national sensibilities of Mexico and the remainder of Latin America.32 After some attempts to rationalize the situation in such a manner as to minimize the damage to all concerned, the Republican administrations of Coolidge and Hoover settled on a policy of restriction through strict interpretation of the various requirements of the Immigration Act of 1917. This rather cynical but successful move all but closed off legal migration from Mexico even before the Depression, but left the government with the ability to increase the flow whenever necessary without seeking enabling legislation from Congress.

The first attempt to secure an administrative solution to the issue occurred in 1920, when Department of Labor investigators studied the southwestern labor market, interviewing a variety of business, labor, governmental, and social service representatives before concluding that the temporary admissions program could endure
with added safeguards such as closer supervision of the border and more thorough inspection of conditions of employment. The report recognized that housing conditions in the rural Southwest were not "altogether ideal," and that the Mexicans were not receiving "adequate remuneration for services performed." Glossing over the point that such factors might have contributed to the labor shortage which its members found, the committee stressed that Mexicans did not displace white workers and warned that if Mexicans were not permitted to perform the "squat" labor of the region the Japanese would, and the latter would eventually take over. 33

The government did not adopt this formal suggestion to retain the temporary admissions program, and the difficulty of enforcing the law in the face of the demands of employers remained vexatious. Strict interpretation of the law brought howls from the business community; when an inspector in Nogales tried to follow correct procedures for admission he touched off such a flood of complaints from the Chamber of Commerce that by the end of the day the Bureau's Central Office in Washington had demanded an explanation of his conduct. Caught between local pressures and legal obligations, the Bureau of Immigration experimented in 1926 with a "gentlemen's agreement" to register illegal aliens with local chambers of commerce, depositing on an installment basis the money for their fees. A registration card would protect the Mexicans from deportation while they were legitimizing their status; when the installments were completed, they would return to the border to formalize their entry. Unfortunately for those who wished to see a stable supply of Mexican labor in the Imperial Valley, Congressional publicity eventually
forced the Bureau away from its association with the plan. Those looking for a solution had to search elsewhere.34

Labor representatives also tried their hand at restriction, when leaders of the American Federation of Labor met with their counterparts from the Mexican labor movement in hopes of hammering out an agreement whereby the Mexican government and the Mexican unions would apply internal restraints to emigration. In turn the A.F.L. would encourage its member locals to accept Mexican "brothers" so that the newcomers could work in union shops and not undermine the union scale. The A.F.L. held officially that if Mexicans were no longer perceived as a threat to Anglo living standards (because of their association in the union), then racial prejudice against them would die out and the whites could judge them on their individual worth. It does not appear that the A.F.L. made any concerted effort to persuade its locals to recruit Mexican members, and shifts in power after the assassination of Álvaro Obregón in 1928 effectively ended the influence of the Mexican union on its government. These two factors combined to relegate the concept of "voluntary self-restraint" to the sidelines as far as the A.F.L. was concerned. Had the program attained any success, it probably would have resulted in cries of Mexican interference in American affairs, as occurred in the 1930s when Mexican consuls assisted labor organizers.35

It was well-known that the Mexican leadership had an ambivalent opinion of the exodus of their fellow nationals into the land of the Yankees, for the press often carried stories designed to dissuade the potential emigree. Tales of stranded families, discrimination,
and mistreatment at the hands of employers or law enforcement
officials circulated widely, along with warnings about forced
Americanization and the inevitable erosion of the national
consciousness of the migrant. Government posters reminded workers
of the stipulations of the 1917 Immigration Act and admonished them
that Mexican consuls could not aid the undocumented, while the
Migration Service experimented with internal travel restrictions in
the 1920s. In early 1928, the State Department requested that
Ambassador Dwight Morrow ascertain whether the Mexican government
really intended to take steps to restrict the movement of its
nationals into the United States. Morrow replied in the negative:
despite the posturing, no one in authority gave the slightest
indication of contemplating any laws or regulations to prohibit
or to restrict Mexican emigration. 36

After an internal survey revealed that less than two percent
of Mexican applications for visas were rejected during a test
period in 1928, the State Department reviewed with its consuls in
Mexico their enforcement of the immigration law relating to the
visa of passports. The American consuls might share some of the
popular stereotypes of Mexican work habits, but they employed
"materially lower" standards than their brethren in Europe when
ruling on admissibility of visa candidates, and the Department wanted
to tighten this up. Its representatives had not exercised sufficient
care to determine whether applicants were "likely to become a public
charge" (L.P.C.) upon arrival in the United States or whether
solicitations of labor agents had inspired prospective migrants.
The consuls should demand proof of the ability of the petitioner to support himself. The Department harked to "reports that Mexican immigrants apply in large numbers to charitable institutions for aid" as proof that too many L.P.C.s were slipping through the border. Within 30 months, this situation was reversed and the consuls were denying some 75 percent of all applications, mainly as L.P.C.\textsuperscript{37}

Even as administrative restriction developed, representatives in Mexico reinforced the belief that a quota restriction would prove more harmful to relations than strict interpretation of the law. Businessmen corroborated these reports, noting that European salesmen sometimes exploited anti-American feelings in Mexico to close out American competitors. The concern over a Mexican or Latino backlash against quota restrictions deepened as business conditions deteriorated after 1929. The Mexican government had not objected to the denial of visas to illiterates, contract laborers, and likely public charges, but a quota would incense the entire hemisphere. Americans had billions invested in Latin America by the 1920s, and exports from the United States to South America had totalled over two and one half billion dollars between 1927 and 1929; any measure which interrupted this commerce would cause more unemployment that it prevented.\textsuperscript{38}

Other factors than a tight visa policy helped reduce the number of documented Mexican immigrants after 1928; economic conditions in the Southwest were not as flush as in some previous years, for example. The Bureau of Immigration reported that many of those debarking at Ciudad Juárez found prospects so discouraging that they returned to their interior, often at government expense. Increased Border
Patrol activity and an act permitting the patrol to jail illegal entrants provided further deterrents. Nevertheless, the State Department trumpeted its program in press releases and at Congressional hearings. The number of visas issued to common laborers, for example, dropped to less than 1200 during the first nine months of fiscal 1930. Since some 40,000 laborers were admitted during the preceding fiscal year, the Department considered this quite an achievement. Periodic publicity reminded the Congress and the nativists that "the problem of new immigrants from Mexico through legal channels would ... appear to be definitely solved."39

Despite the claims of the State Department that it was more politic to handle Mexican immigration at the point of application, and despite the fears of some ethnics that Congress might incorporate a quota for Western Hemispheric countries into the existing 150,000 maximum at the expense of Europeans still seeking entry, the Senate approved in May, 1930, the Harris Bill to apply the national origins principles to Mexico. The original bill had included other Western Hemispheric countries within its scope; when limited to Mexico it passed on a voice vote. As expected, the Mexican government protested the measure. The House chose not to concur on the Harris Bill; if they had Herbert Hoover would probably have vetoed it.40

The Harris Bill was the high-water mark of the nativist campaign against Mexican immigration; with its failure and the deepening of the Depression, interests other than restriction became paramount in the public eye. Even in the 1930s, however, the issue did not entirely die out. Chambers of Commerce and southwestern employers still fretted over the prospect of a labor shortage, despite contrary evidence, nativists still growled about the racial dangers of Mexican immigration,
although with much less frequency than before, and calls for a quota sometimes found legislators ready to comply. 41

The Depression also had multiplied the institutional costs of unemployment relief and other social services to Mexicans about which restrictionists had grumbled during the 1920s. "Why should we increase our unemployment by allowing the unemployed of other countries to come here and take the bread from our mouths?" asked the National Commander of the American Legion. One Senator estimated that the number of employed aliens exceeded 4,000,000 nationwide, while a representative from northwest Indiana declared that it cost his district alone over $100,000 per month to support the Mexicans who had taken jobs from tax paying citizens and then become dependent on charity. "Plugging the leak" and repatriation were important steps toward solving these problems in the future. Publications such as the Saturday Evening Post continued to spotlight the effects of aliens on American society, but other popular magazines failed to join in the assault, and even the Post was less venomous than it had been in the 1920s. 42

Several factors explained this change in the intensity of anti-immigrant sentiment. Broad racial categorizations, so popular during the 1920s, fell before new research. Immigrant contributions received more attention than in the past; and for both political and philosophical reasons the New Dealers of the Roosevelt government showed greater sensitivity to the plight of aliens than had the preceding administration. Congress drew back from the extremely discriminatory bills which sometimes surfaced, while the executive
branch simply shifted its posture when implementing laws. Organized raids on public assemblages ceased, the practices of arrests without warrant and deportation quotas for officers also came to an end, and deportations which might harm the welfare of the American-born members of an alien's family halted, ultimately with Congressional approval. A large number of Mexicans had their deportation for illegal entry stayed as a result of this policy. 43

In the 1930s questions raised during World War I and repeated during the 1920s about the heterogenous nature of American society and the ability of the country to assimilate those with a different physical appearance or cultural background were voiced less often. Of course, the major impetus for this shift in attitudes originated with European ethnics, who were subject to Nazi persecutions in Europe and whose communities in America were coming of political age. In Chicago, with its powerful immigrant communities, efforts were made to include Mexicans among the ethnic groups whose future this different attitude would touch. In the Southwest, where race relations between Anglos and Mexicans had set by the early 1900s, if not before, it would take the impetus of World War II and the Pan-American campaign to bring questions about the role of Mexicans in American society to the forefront, and even then the adjustments in the treatment of Mexicans and Mexican immigrants were often superficial. 44 The long debate over Mexican immigration had not culminated in legislative restriction, but it had reinforced strongly the opinion that Mexicans were peons. Many people in the Southwest would find it difficult to view them in any other light.
Although most of the participants in the debate over Mexican immigration were from the West or Southwest, some Chicago area residents also made their voices heard on the matter. Businessmen with economic interests in the Southwest occasionally testified about the value of Mexican immigration, nativists questioned the costs of the same, and politicians dependent on the votes of European ethnics often assailed the exclusion of the Western Hemisphere from the National Origins Act. The growing colony of Mexicans in the Chicago-Calumet region was sometimes used as an example of what happened to Mexicans once they arrived in the United States, but the Mexican population remained relatively small during the 1920s. Also, the Mexican residences were not concentrated into highly visible slum areas as they were in the Southwest. Finally, the presence of other ethnic groups in the city, particularly blacks and Italians, drew attention away from the incoming Mexicans.

Perhaps the most vocal Chicago restrictionist was Adolph Sabath, who protested the failure to include Mexicans under the quota from 1921 on. Sabath was no nativist; his real goal was less restriction on European migrants. However, if he could not achieve that, he aimed at least to reduce the influx of non-Europeans. In 1920 Sabath offered an amendment to the temporary admissions bill which would permit not only Mexican labor but "the more beneficial white labor from Europe" to enter the United States under the suspension of the literacy test. Whatever objections John Box might have against Mexicans did not apply to the "honest and industrious" European Immigrants of the previous decade. Even the illiterate peasants of
Europe were more valuable than Mexicans. In 1924, 1926, and annually after 1928 Sabath came back to this point, always arguing that the special interests had convinced restrictionists that Mexican immigrants were more beneficial to America than Europeans. Under such circumstances any concern which the nativists claimed for the American laboring man was fraudulent, for Sabath could not believe that Mexican and Canadian workers provided less competition to Americans than Europeans. 45

Another Chicago Congressmen with an obvious interest in Mexican immigration was Oscar De Priest, whose South Side black constituency felt no small amount of economic pressure from the incoming Mexicans. De Priest, himself a black, did not testify before any Congressional committees on the issue, but he kept an eye on it. During a 1931 debate on the temporary suspension of immigration, De Priest demanded assurance that nonquota immigration from the Western Hemisphere was included in the measure. De Priest undoubtedly agreed with the writer in the Chicago Defender who opposed Mexican immigrants on the grounds that they were taking jobs which belonged to American citizens, "white and colored." 46

The size and extent of the Chicago Mexican colony sometimes came into play during Congressional debates, generally as proof that Mexicans had not confined themselves to the Southwest. Countering the claim of one anti-restrictionist that Mexican immigration was purely a southwestern issue, Albert Johnson declared in 1928 that 5,000 Mexicans were unemployed in Chicago at that time. Senator Otis Glenn of Illinois expressed a similar concern when he declared that the National Origins Plan should include the Western Hemisphere: "Why, they are filling the streets of Chicago ...
You see them everywhere, fighting, brawling, quarreling, not fitting into American life at all...." No immigration policy had really taken care of the "great, pressing Mexican problem."\textsuperscript{47}

The files of Federal officials with responsibility for immigration policy contain a scattering of letters from Chicagoans or Chicago organizations. Nativist societies like the Government Club of Chicago and the Illinois Chapter of the National Society, United States Daughters of 1812 came out in favor of restriction, as did business leader Robert E. Wood, president of Sears, Roebuck and Company. Only rarely did business organizations like the Western Fruit Jobbers Association petition against restriction.\textsuperscript{48} The "little people" of the city sometimes expressed their opposition as well, as did John Hammerstein who wrote 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 hardworking men are being thrown out of work because they can't compete with the Mexicans in regards to wages." Mexicans also provided a disproportionate number of patients at Cook County Hospital and the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanatorium. A number of similar letters appeared in the late spring of 1929 in response to a Chicago Tribune article on the National Origins Act. Mexicans were seldom specifically mentioned in these missives, but South Europeans sometimes were.\textsuperscript{49}

The number and tone of these letters were probably an accurate reflection of the popular mood of the city on the matter of Mexican immigration, and it supported the relatively low profile which the elected representatives, with the exception of Adolph Sabath, took on
the issue. Even Sabath's stance was much milder than that of William Schulte of Indiana, John Box of Texas, or Albert Johnson of Washington, all of whom were more ardent than the Chicagoan. As would become more evident during the relief crisis of the 1930s, Chicagoans treated Mexicans with a kind of benign neglect: they did not campaign actively to exclude them from the country, nor would they seek to force their return in hard times.
CHAPTER III

Academics and the Mexican Community, 1920-1940

During the 1920s members of the academic community, particularly those engaged in the fields of psychology, sociology, and economics, "discovered" the Mexican community in the United States as the burgeoning number of immigrants forced themselves into the consciousness of American society as "the Mexican problem." Arriving in the United States just as eugenics and psychological testing had become fashionable, Mexican immigrants and their American-born relations were prime targets for students of such subjects. While the eugenicists who contributed so heavily to the National Origins Act of 1924 never succeeded in persuading the country as a whole to include Mexicans under the provisions of the quota law, they and others in the social sciences proved potent factors in propelling up the stereotype of the Mexican as a docile, cheap laborer whose children were underachievers at school, and whose addition to the "racial stock" of the nation was at best a mixed blessing.

Of course, the eugenicists never completely dominated the academic world, and other explanations of "the Mexican problem" soon appeared. These frequently attributed the apparent failure of Hispanics to assimilate into Anglo society to the social and
cultural baggage which the immigrants carried. In either instance, the Mexican himself was viewed as the root of the Mexican problem: improvements, if indeed any were possible, would come from altering his approach to life. Yet another explanation, based on environmental factors, acquired a considerable following among people who saw the poverty and language problems of the Mexican immigrants as the real source of their failure to integrate into American society. A form of environmentalism developed at the University of Chicago, where faculty and students refused to see Mexicans as a unique or separate segment of the immigration question. Having observed the succession of ethnic groups pass through poverty-stricken, crime-ridden immigrant receiving areas like the Near West Side around Hull-House, Chicago sociologists and social workers concluded that Mexicans were, in the main, similar to the Europeans who had preceded them. Their social pathologies were explicable in terms of residence in delinquency areas and concentration in low-paying, irregular employments, not in terms of racial or cultural traits.

I

Opposition to immigration received a boost in the early 1900s when those who doubted the assimilability of the "new" immigrants discovered an ostensibly scientific foundation for their opinions favoring north Europeans over those from south or east Europe. These were racial theories, which convinced eminent social and biological scientists that races varied greatly in innate intelligence and temperament: "psychological and genetic tests placed this matter beyond all doubt." Fine gradations soon appeared, as eugenicists created elaborate studies purporting to show that physical dissimilarities
in body size or head shape really separated the residents of Europe into definable races: the Nordic, the Alpine, and the Mediterranean. Several races could comprise a given nationality, and these were sometimes rather diverse strains, as in Italy. Racial distinctions extended to intellectual and moral as well as physical traits, for eugenacists believed that such properties were transmitted unaltered from generation to generation. Each race differed noticeably in the relative proportions of good and bad strains. Thus the Alpines were "a race of peasants," submissive to authority; Nordics were "rulers, organizers and aristocrats, ... individualistic, self-reliant, and jealous of their personal freedom." Mediterraneans were inferior in bodily stamina to both Nordics and Alpines, but were intellectually the superior of the latter.¹

The eugenics movement gained prestige in 1916 when the refinement of an apparently accurate intelligence test prompted the prediction that mental testing could appraise racial capacity for social purposes. In this light the results of the United States Army intelligence tests were deemed as proof that immigrants from southeastern Europe, while superior as a whole to blacks, fell far below native-born whites in their mental abilities. Restrictionists could and did readily apply this information to the immigration issue, positing that "the average intelligence of succeeding waves of immigration has become progressively lower," and that "lower and lower representatives" of each race were entering the country. Indeed, if the ratios of subnormal intelligence found among foreign-born draftees held true for the entire foreign-born population,
then there were some six million aliens in the United States with a mental age of eleven years or less. \(^2\)

"Racial mixing" was another aspect of immigration which looked serious to contemporaries, and again, genetics seemed to provide an answer in its warnings against interbreeding. Hybridization caused a breaking-down of the inherent characteristics of each race without any guarantee of improvement, and was most dangerous. In the white melting pot cross-breeding presented the opportunity for a somewhat greater range of desirable features because of similarity in the stocks; still, the intermingling of races with unequal abilities could only result in lowering the quality of the superior race. "Instead of a melting pot, the symbol for race mixture should be the village pound." In addition, eugenics feared that south and east Europeans would crowd out old-line Americans. The solution, of course, was to restrict immigration. The Army tests seemed to demonstrate that the average level of intelligence was on the decline. The country should take steps to preserve or enhance its present intellectual capacity, but science should dictate those steps, not political expedience. The most promising tool appeared to be the mental test, which, unlike a literacy test, rated immigrants according to their innate qualities. \(^3\)

With all this concern over biological matters such as racial differences among Europeans and the prospects of interbreeding, it was natural that eugenics and other academicians would seek to apply their principles to Mexicans also. Analysts agreed that race played a very important part in delimiting the Mexican character.
It was generally accepted that no more than ten percent of the population was of unmixed white blood, with the remainder either full-blooded Indians or mestizos. Negro blood also entered into the picture, either directly from slaves introduced during the colonial period or indirectly via the south Europeans who had colonized the country. Many of the eugenicists questioned the hereditary abilities of the Indians of Mexico. They had succeeded in building up appreciable cultures in the new world, and "there can be no doubt that the Indian is superior to the negro." However, they never developed the technology to support a large population or extended their domination to non-Indian cultures. This school of thought regarded Indians as suited to abide within the bounds of European civilization but almost never competent to advance or even to sustain such a level of society on their own. Even the mestizo population which resulted from mating Indians with Spaniards was no great improvement over the native stock. "Biologists and anthropologists both look with little favor on a violent mixture of races so divergent as some of these Mexican elements are." The problems which beset Mexico, in part, were due to the "character of an unfortunate hybrid race." These ideas were not new, of course, but they enjoyed a resurgence between 1900 and 1930.4

The close link between the attitudes toward Mexicans or Mexican immigrants which members of the general public held and those which the academic community evinced is apparent in the scholarly literature of the 1920s. While some of these authors clearly accepted the beliefs of the eugenics movement about the primary
of race in determining individual characteristics, not all did so. Some also tried to explain the condition of Mexicans in terms of their social or environmental background. Still, there was general agreement that Mexicans were different from other members of American society, that they were docile, improvident, untrustworthy, and unlikely to assimilate into the mainstream of American life. These ideas were the basis for more detailed studies of Mexicans conducted during the 1920s, and their tone made many academic endeavors sound much like essays in the popular press.\(^5\)

Academics agreed that Mexicans were less concerned than other ethnic groups with social or economic mobility. Mexicans in Texas remained largely agricultural, although not as owners. Either as migrants or as sharecroppers, they displaced Negro and white farmers from the land. Mexicans "... being accustomed to low standards, their employers save the expense of providing them with favorable living conditions. This is why Mexican laborers are favored -- they endure hardships uncomplainingly and they ask but little." In rural New Mexico, Hispanic peasants wanted only to spend their days scratching out a living on one piece of soil. Years of isolation in a cultural backwater had left them unprepared for Anglo competition, for they were "notably lacking in initiative and self-reliance."\(^6\)

Even when Mexicans did leave the land and migrate to the city, few regarded them as heedful of their conditions. Housing reformers despaired of progress in the Mexican quarter: "Accustomed to very little in Mexico, the Mexican accepts the very worst in the way of a home that Los Angeles has to offer him, ... an old store building,
an abandoned neglected mill, a tumbled-down house - with these the Mexican is usually content." Anglos were not even certain that Mexicans wanted better homes. Chicagoans agreed that Mexicans were not difficult to handle. Nurses thought them "docile," while teachers declared that they seldom required detention.  

Mexican intelligence was another subject of frequent comment, and here again the academicians had their doubts. Early devotees of the mental tests noted that borderline intelligence quotients (in the 70–80 range) and mental ages two or three years below chronological ages were "the level of intelligence which is very, very common among Spanish-Indian and Mexican families.... Their dullness seems to be racial, or at least inherent in the family stocks from which they came." Even accounting for the language handicap, the average Mexican child was far below black or white children in abstract intelligence and often lacking in curiosity as well. Adult immigrants knew that English was beneficial to their economic position, but they were "mentally lazy." They attended classes "just long enough to learn the use of a few most commonly used words."  

Since the best reason most people could find for importing Mexican immigrants was economic, scholarly writers considered the productivity of the newcomers. The peon did not possess the drive to accumulate large amounts of property, rather being content with employer paternalism and a semi-communism which excluded the concept of private property. Mexicans did not have the same initiative that American workers did; "overwork" did not cause ill health in Mexicans as it did in Americans. A tendency toward alcoholism
compounded problems. Giving a Mexican a raise just made him want another in short order; it did not instill the determination to work harder, for "a few dollars in the Mexican's pocket may be his signal for a vacation." Others simply would not work when they did not want to do so because the "ambition for a leisurely life was so deeply entrenched that economic incentives will not budge it." Surveys of employers on the industrial behavior of Mexican immigrants resulted in a personality profile that placed them at or below the level of the average white laborer.\(^9\)

Mexican improvidence further marred their value as workers. Equal remuneration was sufficient to draw Mexicans away from the farms into the city, with never a thought about the increased cost of living. The city-bound Mexican knew that they could find more excitement in town. Employers thought that "Mexican labor as a class [was] notoriously improvident." Residence in the warmer climate of Mexico or the Southwest had made planning less essential for survival than it was in the North; the system of deferring payment until the end of season, common in beet labor and migratory harvesting, further accustomed the Hispanics to credit and encouraged the binges mentality. Dependence was so deeply ingrained that a Mexican employee would regard his employer as "a potential source of all things needed." Unscrupulous employers found this tempting, while municipal governments sometimes discovered that they were the new patrons.\(^10\)

With their poor reputation as workers and savers, it was natural to attribute a high degree of untrustworthiness and even criminality to Mexicans and Mexican immigrants. Academics credited Mexicans in Texas with an abnormally large proportion of delinquents in that state.
Mexicans sometimes showed a predilection for violence, but most of their crimes fell into the category of disorderly conduct, such as drinking or assault and battery, not those requiring careful calculation. Furthermore an Anglo could never be sure that the Mexican was leveling with him: "for making promises — and breaking them — he had no peer." Lying was regarded as an "outstanding Mexican characteristic," something which was general throughout the population. Rather than destroying honor, lies often preserved it, and apparent spontaneity was not a reliable gauge of true feelings.\footnote{11}

Of course, the portrait of Mexican immigrants that emerged from the halls of academia during the 1920s was not entirely dark, though even the more positive essays sometimes dealt in stereotypes. Mexicans had much native talent in painting, drawing, and music. Personally they were "sociable, friendly, approachable, charitable," with a grace and appreciation of beauty which seemed endangered in the more aggressive and business-minded United States. Far from being mentally or physically lazy, Mexicans were "intelligent and indefatigable workers" when put in the proper position. Ranchers who knew Hispanics preferred vaqueros; they had not become "drugstore cowboys." Evidence indicated that Mexicans could acquire skills similar to those of workers of other nationalities. Mexican unemployment came because there were more men than jobs, not because they preferred to live on relief. The costs of a life of migratory labor, not inborn improvidence, forced dependence on credit and charity.\footnote{12}
Popular stereotypes did color the academic efforts of the 1920s, but intellectuals entered into numerous studies of the "Mexican Problem," which was defined, in effect, as the social consequences of Mexican immigration. Thus academics and social agencies gathered data about Mexican delinquency, illiteracy, housing conditions, wages and rates of disease. According to many of these studies, the Mexicans lacked leadership ability, personal discipline, and community organization; they displayed little thrift or enterprise; and their children consistently fell below Anglos on intelligence tests. In partial defense of the early students of Mexican immigrants, one should remember that stereotypes of a minority or subordinate groups were based to some extent on observable characteristics. Prejudice permeated them, but they still reflected a certain amount of observable truth concerning the subordinate group. Further, studies of Mexicans differed very little from those of other newer immigrants. After the 1920s, stereotyping in studies of Mexicans was less blatant, but like the essays in the popular press which depended on them for "scientific" data, these early analyses of the "Mexican Problem" helped to affix the image of inferiority on Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

The 1920s saw much controversy over questions of mass education, including the ability of some ethnic groups to learn at the same rate as Anglos, the desirability of integrated schools, and the advantages of vocational education for members of the lower economic orders. There was widespread agreement among educators of all ranks that
the newer immigrants, Mexicans included, caused difficulties for the school systems which were to accommodate them. "The Mexican child has always been a problem in the public schools and will continue to be one of the problems that our schools must face."

Attendance, retardation, and language were all aspects of this issue in the eyes of school officials. 14

Non-attendance of Mexican school children elicited much interest during the 1920s because many saw it as an indicator of the desire of Mexicans to learn. However, in rural areas the families needed their children out in the fields earning money rather than in the classroom; local leaders concurred in this, for they did not wish for school attendance to interfere with the progress of the harvest. The migratory nature of Mexican employment removed children from one district to another as the crops ripened, requiring extra capacity in rural schools which might be utilized only a few weeks of the year and disrupting normal classroom procedures during their residency. Truancy in urban areas like Chicago was less frequent than in rural districts, but it still seemed greater than for other ethnics, such as the Italians. California in 1921 instituted a system of classes for migrant children to permit some continuity in their training, but enforcement proved a challenge as landowners made known their opinion that instruction for migrants was an unnecessary expense, an outlook manifest elsewhere in the Southwest, where the debate was less over segregation or specialized education than it was over exclusion. 15

Attendance at schools in the United States was only part of the Mexican educational problem: once the children were enrolled, it
quickly became evident that they did less well than Anglo children in many academic subjects. Language was an obvious obstacle; but some educators wondered if the question did not go beyond the Mexicans' trouble with English. Latins showed a greater propensity for educational retardation than did North Europeans, did poorly on standard tests, and tended to have a high chronological age for their grade. Tests of Spanish and American children in New Mexico pointed to relative equality in rote memory, visual memory, and interest in numbers. Whites, however, were decidedly superior in tests involving comprehension, judgment, and associative processes. The average intelligence quotient (I.Q.) for Mexican children was 85, well below the average for Americans and Hebrews, but above that of Slavs, Italians, and Negroes. California teachers made similar estimates of the abilities of Latins and non-Latinos, with the Latins at approximately 5/6 of the American performance level. This "constituted proof of the decided inferiority, ... of the Latin stocks to the American group studied."¹⁶

These studies, while presented as conclusive, did not still the nagging thought that Mexicans and other new immigrants performed as they did because they understood English less well than native-born white Americans. One approach to this problem was the non-verbal intelligence test, designed to be completely independent of language. Mexicans, south Europeans, and Negroes did poorly on many of the non-verbal tests, leading to speculation that inferior intellectual ability retarded the acquisition of English. Tests which attempted to trace I.Q. development as the ethnic group progressed through the
educational system also discounted the language factor. Language ability had an impact in the lower grades, but "intelligence, as measured by the group test, is closely associated with the degree of retardation, particularly of the Mexican pupils." The elimination of the language factor permitted many to posit that Mexican educational problems were racial in nature: "in the case of the Negroes and Mexicans we find evidence which, if followed up, might tend to support the often repeated claim that colored races experience at adolescence a retardation in mental growth which persists through later years." Variability in scores of both Negroes and Mexicans was probably due to the intermixture of white blood. The results of these studies verified what many, especially in the Southwest, already knew about Hispanics, that "they have an inferior intellect even if they become well educated," or that "the Mexican is born with a slower tempo for life, and ... it's [not] fair for our educational system to make the same demands on him." The psychological tests buttressed ideas already in the air. 17

Even in the 1920s some scholars moved away from the racial explanation for Mexican educational retardation toward the recognition that language differences or environment deterred the Spanish speaking from attaining the same level on mental tests as their Anglo classmates. It was possible to have enough language to succeed on a formal test without fully comprehending everything in class, for example, and translation of tests into Spanish and instruction in Spanish upgraded test scores for the Mexican children. Other factors affected test results, such as health, home conditions, school attendance, and cultural traditions. For example, Mexican folk culture did not
prepare Mexican children to think in scientific or pragmatic terms, while truancy resulted mainly from poverty. These studies recognized greater school retardation and less acceleration on the part of Mexicans, but they offered an environmental rather than a racial explanation for these variations. Rural Mexicans might rank below rural whites in their test results, but urban Mexicans outperformed rural whites.\footnote{18}

While there was some controversy among social and behavioral scientists on the exact cause of the low Mexican scores on intelligence tests, there was little disagreement that public educators should take these results into consideration when planning programs for the Mexican children in their charge. Most studies contended that their test results revealed the need for special programs of some sort to bring the Mexicans to the level of Anglo children or to equip them for future productivity if the former were unattainable. Roughly speaking advocates of the first goal supported segregated schools, at least in the early grades, while champions of the second goal backed vocational education as the means to prepare Chicanos for life in the United States.\footnote{19}

In most of the Southwest de facto if not de jure segregation of Mexican school children existed by the 1920s. Wherever a large Mexican population existed the call went out for separate schools, based on concerns over health and morals or simply on racial consciousness. In the words of a south Texas farmer: "If they separate in school the children will learn the difference and they won't mix with the Mexican." Segregation seemed to have pedagogical benefits in addition to its perceived role in social control. The inability of most Mexican children to speak English led to restiveness and Anglo ridicule.
Segregation gave Mexican children a better chance of surviving in school and advancing beyond the primary levels by promoting a more positive classroom image. Finally, teachers could offer more individual instruction and could tailor the textbooks and subject matter to the specific needs of their students in an all-Mexican school. Los Angeles publicized the fact that its separate schools for Mexicans were really "special schools," with day nurseries, penny lunches, and playground instructors after hours, all with the aim of achieving better education for the Chicano generation. 20

Educational facilities in Chicago were never formally segregated on racial grounds, although there was evidence even in the 1920s that Negroes were "steered" to disproportionately black schools. The Commission which studied the 1919 race riot in Chicago noted 22 elementary schools located in districts more than ten percent black. In 17 of these schools the percentage of Negroes in the schools exceeded their proportion in the district, in some instances even doubling the ratio. However, only one of these schools reported any Mexican enrollment in 1926. Chicago teachers subjectively rated Mexicans equal to or above the second-generation Italians and Poles with whom they shared classes. The suggestion of special schools or special classes for Mexicans, unlike blacks, evidently was not even considered. 21

Many studies of school retardation concluded that Chicano children, for whatever reason, required "special courses in reading, English, manual training, domestic arts, music, and social studies." Furthermore, the courses should "be planned for their mental capacities," taking into account "the need of preparation of the children for their proper economic life activities in accordance with their abilities."
In other words, some educators recommended, on the basis of mental tests, that schools track Chicano children into courses geared toward blue collar occupations because Mexicans as a race were incapable of higher attainments. Given the almost pervasive racism of the time, scientific and otherwise, it is easy to assume that advocates of vocational education for Mexicans intended to train them into perpetual servitude. Undoubtedly many Anglos had just such a motive. This explanation overlooks another major trend in American thought, however, the belief that thrift, industry and manual skills could lead to economic independence and material success. In this view industrial arts aided the rise of the laborer. Vocational education offered an alternative to apprenticeship, often closed to members of minority groups, as an escape from unskilled jobs. There was always a danger that manual training would restrict its graduates to the working class, but it could also contribute to the individual advantage of minority workers.22

Social theorists joined the psychologists and administrators in proposing greater emphasis on vocational course-work for Mexicans. Hispanics in New Mexico left school unaware of fundamental husbandry, for "high school graduation, usually in academic curricula, is no open sesame to social reconstruction." There was a "crying need" for procedures which could relate school instruction to economic life. Parents often told the missionaries that they wanted their children to learn "practical things and a trade." Mexicans had little preparation for the tasks they would perform in an industrial society, so they naturally started out as common laborers. "The provision of technical training for the newly arrived immigrants might prepare many of them
for more remunerative and satisfying jobs." From the perspective of the patria, the "education in agriculture and industry which thousands of people now receive in the United States," would help Mexico flourish when these persons returned to the homeland. Manuel Gamio saw the United States as a giant trade school, in which workers could secure the rudiments of modern procedures.23

A second issue which promoted academic attention in the 1920s was the ability of Mexican immigrants to assimilate into American society. Here again a close tie between popular attitudes and scholarly opinion was evident, no doubt because much of the material for these studies was gathered through personal interviews. Studies of Mexican assimilation usually began with the premise that the Mexican immigrant had to alter his culture, personality, and outlook on life in order to fit into American society. Mexicans had to learn to desire a higher standard of living in order to become Americanized, to work harder and to save for the material accouterments of American society. Otherwise they would remain locked in the lower classes. For example, Mexican agricultural workers often turned down the opportunity to become sharecroppers for American farmers, perhaps because they were unable to carry out operations that did not have a direct relation to immediate wants. Mexican women likewise did not plan for the future in the same way that American housewives did, failing to preserve food for the winter. Ironically, Mexicans spent "all they make," thus inhibiting their upward mobility in that manner. The explanation for this lack of initiative was generally a cultural one. Peonage had encouraged a mentality which tolerated ill-treatment,
while the communal tradition of the Indian had crushed individual initiative. They knew that one did not have to work to live, and conversely that hard work did not bring advancement. Further, as representatives of a folk culture, Mexican immigrants had no real concept of modernization or progress, and often reacted to the unknown in emotional ways, leaving them unable to comprehend the diverse facets of American society.24

These and other characteristics made the Mexican immigrants a challenge to assimilationists or "Americanizers," but if the traits were cast in cultural terms there was some hope of eventual behavior modification. While some social theorists doubted that any adult immigrant to any country would ever totally assimilate, later generations might, and some Mexicans in Texas had progressed in that direction. However, social distance studies indicated potential for acceptance in the future. Aversions would not necessarily become prejudices because Americans did not perceive the Mexicans as competitors for anything which they valued highly. Some 77 percent would accept Mexicans as co-workers, giving them one of the higher positive correlations in this category. (12th out of 40). Responses suggested that spatial proximity and economic necessity could suffice to overcome negative publicity. Some scholars disagreed, but whites seemed willing to co-exist with Mexicans in limited contacts.25 In Chicago experience would prove these studies essentially correct, as neighborhood relations between Mexican immigrants and other ethnics settled into patterns of co-existence after initial hostilities.

Economists and sociologists in the 1920s also pondered the role which Mexican immigrants played in the American economy, taking into
consideration the factors which drew Mexicans to the United States as well as the types of jobs which the immigrants filled. Many of these studies were based on interviews with employers, and to some extent reflected their biases. The data gathered for these and other studies, like the statistics on Mexican repatriation, often surfaced during the debates over restriction, no matter how aloof from partisanship the scholars might wish to remain. 26

There was widespread agreement in the academic community that economics instigated Mexican migration. Dislocation had occurred in the Mexican economy before 1900, but the cost of living more than doubled between 1910 and 1920, with basic necessities rising even faster. By 1926 food alone ate up some 67 percent of the average Mexican agricultural worker's wages, and the purchasing power and consumption of the Mexican worker was only one-fourteenth of that of the laborer in the United States. In the face of such conditions neither Mexico nor the United States could deter immigration. Demand for workers in the United States complemented low wages as a pull factor. Truck and cotton farming in newly irrigated areas of the Southwest, both labor intensive activities, emerged just at a time when native American farm workers were leaving for the cities in droves. Employers, quite aware of this situation, encouraged both legal and illegal immigration of Mexicans to fill these gaps in their work force. 27

Once in the United States, Mexican workers gained the opportunity to work in the beet fields "at satisfactory wages but with a small annual income from this one source." "High wages" prevailed on the farms of south Texas - $4.00 to $5.00 per day when one figured in
the value of housing and commodities which the grower provided. Incomes of $12.50 to $20.00 per week were feasible in the factories of the North. Wherever they went, Mexican immigrants found themselves charged with undercutting the established wage scale, and some of the early surveyors marshalled evidence to support such claims. Businessmen admitted paying Mexicans less than the going wage for common labor if they would accept less; if not, employers paid the same. Mexicans were not invariably relegated to the lowest categories when they entered the urban job market, but "some employers did offer Mexicans ... salaries that were almost discriminatory." When all was said and done at the end of the year, many Mexicans living in the United States could not make ends meet: 46 percent reported to one survey that their expenditures exceeded income during the test period. 28

Of particular import to the debate over Mexican immigration was detailed information about the exact occupations which the immigrants filled in the United States, since this could provide a basis by which to determine whether or not Hispanics displaced Anglo-American workers. Census figures did not classify employees according to country of birth, but they did at least identify the numbers of foreign-born whites in each job grouping. Since Mexicanos accounted for nearly 80 percent of the foreign-born white population in Texas, Arizona, and New Mexico, it was safe to say that they were undoubtedly responsible for doubling the proportion of foreign-born white agricultural laborers in Texas between 1900 and 1920. At the same time there appeared an increase in foreign-born merchants, probably another result of Mexican immigration. In California and Colorado, Mexican
immigrants also remained in unskilled agricultural jobs or as tenants, although changes in employment patterns were evident all over the Southwest. Some Mexicans had taken jobs with railroads and construction companies or as clerks in stores in Texas, while in California a significant percentage of industrial firms reported Hispanic employees. Efforts to encourage the usage of Mexicans as year-round general farm laborers, which would have stabilized the work force, were rarely successful; however, surveys of urban Mexicans pointed to some upward mobility, with about half of the respondents classified as semi-skilled or above. Fears remained that Mexicans would displace natives through an ability to survive on minimal earnings, and some evidence of that phenomenon was available.29

Not until they reached the Midwest did researchers find solid evidence of any economic advances on the part of the Mexican immigrants. Relatively few northern companies employed Mexicans in the 1920s and many industrial managers were reluctant to talk about the ethnic make-up of their work forces. However, Mexicans did enter a variety of occupations in the Chicago-Calumet region, often beginning as track workers, then jumping into better-paying or steadier lines of employment, a pattern which black and Italian migrants also displayed. Mexicans were particularly popular with steel companies, where they seemed quite capable of rising above common labor. Absenteeism was much lower among Mexicans than among south Europeans in the mills, despite the fact that the pay was substantial, thus discrediting claims that Mexicans would work only when desperately poor. Agreement was not universal, but in the Calumet region, as in
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Mexican immigrants were proving their capacity in industry. 30

A final area which caught the interest of social scientists in the 1920s was the relationship between Mexicans and crime. The idea that Mexicans had criminal tendencies remained during the early waves of migration. Michigan residents perceived their Mexican neighbors as prone to drinking and fighting, while in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, the Mexican habit of carrying a knife and using it in fights perpetuated their dangerous reputation. Mexicans continued to provide a sizeable proportion of those arrested in the Southwest. In Los Angeles, Hispanic delinquency rates soared above population share, and California penal institutions reported that Mexicans accounted for as high as 28 percent of their inmates, again well above their actual percentage of the population. Some local arrest figures gave Mexicans the highest rates for crimes such as rape, homicide, and aggravated assault, as well as less violent crimes like burglary and robbery. These figures might have been distorted because of the problems of counting a mobile immigrant group, but they still offered "some food for thought." 31

Prejudice on the part of the local gendarmes had something to do with the higher arrest statistics. One Mexican Consul complained that the police treated Mexican working people like thieves instead of like honest men. False arrests were common, and police reflected community prejudices toward minorities, especially when they were second-generation representatives of the ethnic groups which the minorities were displacing, often the case in the Calumet region. Furthermore, law enforcement officials magnified the number of crimes
attributed to Mexicans through the medium of selective memory. This was not necessarily deliberate: Mexicans were conspicuous and hence more easily remembered. An official could forget the number of Anglo cases while the Mexicans stood out. Investigators noticed this phenomenon all over the Southwest.32

While crime among Mexican immigrants did not approach the levels ascribed to them, it still required explanation. Sociologists generally settled on a cultural or environmental interpretation as their answer. In Chicago a higher proportion of Mexican than white Americans were convicted on charges of "disorderly conduct," "inmate of a disorderly house" and assault or weapons violations. This was explicable in terms of the abnormal age and sex composition of the local Mexican population, which consisted largely of young male solos. Drunkeness and vagrancy, subcategories of disorderly conduct, stemmed from the different attitudes which Mexicans held toward drinking and to the chronic underemployment of Mexican males. The fact that Mexicans came from a pre-industrial culture which condoned fighting and physical correction of the wife and children contributed to the frequency of aggravated assault. Finally, the disorganization and dislocation which accompany any migration were general underlying causes. Adjusting to the new social situation either resulted in disintegration of the old habits and mores or a court appearance over traditional resolutions. This last situation was particularly common when Mexican girls adopted American customs in the face of parental opposition. Urban gangs, notably in Los Angeles, were another adaptation to the new environment. Though apparently organized,
these activities did not represent any crime wave or any real attempt at entrepreneurial crime. Unlike Italian gangs, in which second-generation criminals utilized crime as a vehicle for upward economic mobility, the Pachuco gangs represented an effort to create a satisfying peer group in an essentially hostile environment. 33 Much the same could be said for other examples of Mexican criminality in the 1920s and 1930s.

III

During the middle and late 1920s, members of the academic community produced a number of studies designed to analyze, to interpret, and even to solve the problems which the Mexican immigrants seemed to bring in their trail. Prior to that time scholars had ignored Mexicans in the United States, and this gap became evident when the debate over a Mexican quota reached its crescendo. As one author put it in 1925, "something more than the traditional American approach to immigration is needed - more than careless laissez-faire, hasty emotion, or unthinking prejudice." The situation called for a careful, thorough examination of the economic and social status of the Mexican in the Southwest, weighing the positions of political and economic interests, social and charitable organizations, and existing ethnic groups. 34

A number of writers would attempt to meet this goal during the next several years. What they wrote and the solutions they proposed were further evidence of the strength of racial theories and the proximity of the academic and popular mind on the Mexican question. The scholars did not denounce the Mexicans with the fervor of Kenneth Roberts, but they tended to see the social and economic
aspects of Mexican immigration through the same clouded glass, and many wondered, just as seriously as the Saturday Evening Post, whether the United States could continue to assimilate people whose culture and appearance were so different from that of the dominant majority.

Although Mexicans had not received much attention from academic researchers before the 1920s, by 1930 Paul Taylor noted that immigration from Mexico had become a factor of major significance in the historical development of the United States. It had coincided with political and economic insecurity in Mexico, with the wartime labor shortage, with restricted European immigration, and with the expansion of intensive agriculture in the Southwest. Numerically it compared with the entry of Irishmen after the potato famine; in terms of racial, cultural, and class factors it was more important because Mexicans were less easily assimilated than were the nineteenth-century Irish. This was one of the ironies of the quota law: designed to reduce the heterogeneity of the United States it had stimulated a compensatory movement from Canada, Mexico, and the American overseas territories, which might cause serious racial problems. Mexicans comprised less than 0.1 percent of the arrivals prior to 1900, but in the years 1924 to 1928 legal Mexican immigrants made up 16.1 percent of the arrivals. Immigration from Europe had dropped, and Mexicans substituted for peoples from southern or eastern Europe, often with the encouragement of industrial concerns.35

Academics concurred that the amount of Mexican immigration had increased since the application of the quota in 1924, but
that was just about the extent of their agreement. Social scientists were no more certain than politicians about how many Mexicans were permanent residents of the United States, but most recognized that Mexicans did remain in larger numbers than anti-restrictionists admitted. Mexican quarters were springing up all over the country, with families joining the earlier solos. And while European immigrants had repatriated themselves in large numbers, Mexicans and Canadians were less apt to do so. Thus restriction did not necessarily reduce net immigration. Closer investigation in the Southwest unearthed evidence that Americans had vastly overestimated the international migration of seasonal laborers from Mexico during the 1920s. Mexicans migrated all right, but a check of postal money orders which Mexicans purchased revealed that almost 90 percent were remissions to other cities in the United States, not to Mexico.36

The character of the Mexican immigrants came under scrutiny in scholarly writing during the 1920s as social scientists presented their views on the immigration question. Though links between poverty and racial traits were not completely absent, many academics recognized that the gap between Mexican and American standards was cultural, not racial. Early studies of the geographical sources of Mexican immigration discovered that most migrants came from Jalisco, Guanajuato, and Michoacán, states with an acute agrarian situation and an excess population of landless peasants. These people were from the lower classes, unaccustomed to saving, to observing modern health regulations, or to any of the other requirements of modern American society. In fact, the immigrants
did not even represent the typical Mexican, coming as they did from such a low cultural level.37

The lower standard of living which this cultural level represented, and the horizontal mobility of the migrants, made some observers wonder about their effect on the labor market. Those firms with Hispanic employees considered them at least satisfactory, which, coupled with their comparative permanency as residents, meant that Mexican workers offered even sharper competition to American labor than had the Europeans. In the Southwest "Mexican laborers, living on a scale below that of their black competitors and rendered amenable to discipline by a tradition of peonage," had displaced Negroes "in the main occupations open to both." Negroes and Mexicans substituted for whites in midwestern industries, most notably railroad maintenance of way, steel, and packing. Black sociologist Charles Johnson argued that Mexicans actually improved the position of black workers by filling jobs at the bottom of the economic pyramid, which pushed the blacks up one level, but statistical evidence and interviews with industrial managers disputed his contention.38 That Mexicans seemed to displace blacks to a greater extent than whites may have had relevance to the debate on restriction: white politicians were probably less concerned about competition between minority groups than they would have been if Mexicans had clearly threatened the status of white workers.

Scholars questioned the overall cost of Mexican immigration as sharply as the popular press. The racial problem was potentially explosive, especially in Texas, where the tradition of Anglo violence was strongest, because the majority had no technique for dealing with
other races except isolation or subordination. Anglos expected Mexicans to accept the same treatment as Negroes, but they refused. Some doubted that speeding up the rate of economic development was worth the creation of another social and racial problem in the Southwest. Yet even as Texans worried about how to handle the strain of a multi-racial society, researchers in the North found much less racial antagonism toward Mexicans, and one compared the attitude of a Midwesterner toward a Mexican with that of a Kansan toward a Missourian.39 Academics were far more willing to recognize the real source of Mexican social dependency than were many others, but they still tended to regard Mexican immigrants as a drain on society. Their preindustrial culture was part of the problem, but this did not alter the fact that Mexican aliens produced a disproportionate number of cases of poverty, crime, and dependency. Constant migration made constructive social contacts difficult, but the social agencies also complained that they were unable to develop programs for the newcomers because they were so bogged down in trying to assist the hopelessly inefficient or "shiftless" in confronting modern society. Adding to the dilemma were American charity methods, which provided groceries and rent rather than personal rehabilitation and so dampened the economic initiative of the alien. Finally, the economic condition of the Mexicans was so bad that they could do little to help themselves, a fact which shifted at least some of the burden for any social costs to the business and political leadership.40

Potential health hazards were a final aspect of Mexican immigration. Witnesses often alluded during the restriction debates to the poor
health of the Mexican immigrant. Studies in Chicago verified that Mexicans suffered from such communicable diseases as tuberculosis at a far higher rate than did native-born Americans, white or black. In the most extreme instance Mexicans had a tuberculosis rate 13 times the average for the city as a whole. The author extrapolated from these results that Mexicans in Chicago were a "serious social liability" which would worsen as immigration increased. Since the health records of imported livestock were prerequisites for entry, the same should hold true for immigrants. 41

Naturally, differences of opinion existed in academic circles on the wisdom of restricting Mexican immigration, but the majority seemed to believe that some restrictions were necessary, if only to improve the position of Hispanics already in the United States. According to this view, the crux of the problem was not the people who were in the process of assimilating middle-class values from their Anglo neighbors, but the flow of "fresh" immigrants who would undermine the small gains which earlier arrivals had eked out. Paul Taylor, probably the most knowledgeable of the students of Mexican immigration, became involved in the restriction debate only peripherally, but his studies bared the prejudice, discrimination, and unsatisfactory conditions of life facing Mexican immigrants in the Southwest, and thus provided grist for the restrictionists' mill. Taylor did seem to have a penchant for exploding anti-restrictionist arguments, as he did with claims that Mexicans were docile and well-suited to work in the hot climate of the Southwest, for example. If pressed, Taylor probably would have preferred to improve the opportunities for the
extant Spanish-speaking community of the United States rather than to continue importation of less acculturated residents of old Mexico. 42

Other restrictionists from the academy reached their conclusions on grounds less favorable to the Mexican population, for these authors believed that the immigrants from south of the border constituted a real menace to American institutions. Mexican traditions of feminine subservience threatened American women almost as much as Mexican tuberculosis rates threatened national health, while the racial and cultural differences between Mexicans and Americans were too great to overcome. The ostensible intellectual inferiority of Mexicans encouraged one scholar to propose admission of the first 200,000 applicants who could pass an intelligence test designed to screen out undesirables, a suggestion which promised to reduce Mexican entries in dramatic fashion. 43

Academic anti-restrictionists posited that the economic advantages of Mexican immigration outweighed any social disadvantages which might accompany the appearance of the migrants. Whites were not suited for the back-breaking work which the foreign groups were willing to do, higher wages in the agricultural sector would still not draw in sufficient labor to meet the needs of the Southwest, and other minorities might create even worse racial problems than Mexicans. Finally, there was the question of enforcement: the geography of the border made restriction impractical, if not impossible. Unenforceable regulations made little sense from any standpoint. 44
IV

In their early studies of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans and in their approach to the restriction debate, the scholars had remained in general agreement with popular conceptions of the characteristics and capabilities of Mexicans as an ethnic group. The environmental and cultural theories developed in the late 1920s to explain the difference between Anglos and Mexicans became more widely accepted during the 1930s, as researchers began to dismantle racial hypotheses, particularly in the field of psychological testing. To a certain degree research on Mexicans followed revisionistic trends established with respect to other ethnic groups. In literature this recognition became most common as authors turned to Mexican culture to provide a foil for the shortcomings they perceived in Anglo society. Social scientists did not emulate the litterateurs in praising Mexican traits and the general public modified its attitudes even less quickly, but those who believed in the innate inferiority of Mexicans had less scholarly data to back up their statements than in earlier years.45

Educational testing was one field in which some notable attacks on racial characteristics occurred during the 1930s. Researchers examined and discarded many of the racial attributes earlier identified as peculiarly Mexican, while perfecting other theories to explain performance differentials between Anglo and Mexican children. Bilingualism, a harsh environment, and cultural background were explored as reasons behind the lower results among Spanish-speaking testees. Some educators also advocated caution in the use of
mental tests as a measure of intelligence: at best the examinations were supplements to other evaluations of the performance of a child or a group. At the worst, uncritical reading of the data could lead to the conclusion that Spanish-speaking children were dull, borderline cases unfitted for any but the simplest tasks. Bilingualism, especially, was recognized as an obstruction on group mental tests. Language in the tests was more complicated than Anglos realized; furthermore, the bilingual child probably used English only at school. He might read in English but he thought and spoke in Spanish. Translating tests from English to Spanish resulted in an average rise in I.Q. of 7.6 points for Spanish-speaking children tested in both Spanish and English, with dramatic improvements in comprehension as well.46

Achievements of Mexican children on non-language tests supported the emerging thesis that bilingualism was a harmful factor on intelligence tests while contradicting other traditional views of Mexicans. Scores from performance tests, when computed as approximate mental ages, were favorable to Mexican children, with improvements averaging as much as ten points in one application. Mexicans achieved at a higher rate of efficiency than white children on arithmetic computation tests and other non-language examinations, and Mexicans and whites overlapped noticeably on tests designed to measure mental fatigue. When considering performance differentials, the authors were "not willing to say that race is the determining factor." In neither drawing nor musical ability did it seem that Mexicans were unusually talented, thus discounting the belief among many observers that "Mexican children are gifted in drawing and handwork" or as musicians.47
Commentators noted frequently environmental handicaps other than language which Spanish-speaking children in the United States had to overcome. Studies of the effect of the socioeconomic environment on white children indicated that continued residence in a poor environment brought about a considerable loss of I.Q., often sufficient to drop a child from the "normal" level to the "dull" or even "borderline." Transition from a poor to a good environment stimulated large increases in I.Q., sometimes as much as 30 to 40 points. At the same time, statistics showed that the mean score of children in the lowest economic class was 20 points lower than the mean score for children of professionals. As long as no one proved otherwise, it seemed reasonable to apply these conclusions to the situation which Hispanos faced. Tests of Mexican siblings revealed that mere exposure to school brought about a rise in the average I.Q. of the older child, a result not matched in the performance of the non-Mexican control group. Experience at school, so different from "his primitive life at home," was sufficient for improvement.

Compounding the problem of a home environment which was less than conducive to Anglo-style education was the fact that Mexican children still had to work to supplement family income which often fell below $300.00 per year, thus reducing their opportunities to attend class. Employers often encouraged truancy, pointing out that "work in beets is very convenient for families ... inasmuch as all members 14 years old and over are able to take part in the work." More than 25 percent of the children of beet-laborers in Colorado had missed 45 days of school or more in 1934; in south Texas about
25 percent of the Mexican children aged seven to thirteen did not attend school at all. California educators, aware that migrant children spent part of their day in the fields, "carefully make no inquiry about hours."49

The Mexican child who surmounted all these obstacles found more when he reached the schoolhouse: substandard facilities, often staffed by inadequate instructors. The tendency of the dominant group to educate minorities separately to keep them "in their place," left Mexican schools with smaller budgets, antiquated equipment, and teachers whose desire was to be elsewhere. In the counties with the largest proportions of Hispanics, school terms were shorter, teachers were less well prepared and likely to underestimate the capabilities of their Hispanic students, and the physical plants were inferior to those elsewhere. "Educational opportunity decreases as the percentage of Spanish-speaking population increases."50 These conditions were not new to heavily Hispanic areas in the Southwest, but recognition was.

A final theme, described recently as "cultural determinism," also emerged in the literature on Mexicans in the 1930s. Although many non-racists attributed failures in education and assimilation to cultural conflict, the development of a deterministic view of cultural differences may in fact have begun as an offshoot of the old racial theories of the 1920s. The terminology in the two schools of thought was rather similar, and some eugenicists incorporated cultural rather than environmental factors into the fabric of their thinking as older racial theories fell from favor. Thomas Garth,
for instance, admitted that the Binet test was a valid measure of group intelligence only if the groups tested shared a common cultural environment. Skin color prevented the Negro from attaining this level, but color did not handicap the Mexicans. Instead, "the social status ... of the Mexicans in the United States is largely of their own choosing." Spanish-American students were handicapped because their entire pattern of life differed greatly from Anglo-Americans. Language was definitely a problem, but the real question was whether the school curriculum "should be modified to include more racial customs and ideals of the Spanish-American people." The strength of their culture was so great that Mexicanos reverted to old patterns even after attending American schools. Thus it appeared to the determinists that even when Mexicans had the opportunity to acquire an education and inculcate Anglo ideals or standards, they were held back by a cultural tradition that was antithetical to those mores. Perhaps the progress made in the direction of establishing a realistic understanding of the conditions facing Mexican immigrants and their American-born offspring in the 1930s was more imagined than real.

Attitudes toward Mexican health problems also received an environmental or cultural tinge during the 1930s. Their migratory, seasonal existence exposed them to temporary shelters and inadequate sanitary facilities, which Anglo owners refused to maintain or improve. Superstition and primitive medical practices did not help matters, but none of these factors were racial. Current History showed how far the pendulum had swung away from racial interpretations when it
criticized eugenicist C.M. Goethe for implying that an outbreak of plague in the Mexican quarter of Los Angeles was evidence of Mexican inferiority and undesirability. "Of course, he does not cite contributory causes that outweigh bodily infirmity, such as slum housing, improper diet, insufficient knowledge, or medical neglect." 52

There were even scattered references to the assimilation and integration of Mexicans into American life in the 1930s. In southern California, where some had deplored the danger of "Mexicanization," Mexicans and Americans were learning from one another. Mexican immigrants were showing some tendencies toward adopting American consumer patterns and learning a little about saving as well. In the work force the Mexican occupied a position midway between that of the European and the Negro, but his development was akin to that of the European. Mexicans had become acclimated to life in the United States: in Detroit Mexican workers imitated other ethnic groups by moving to Dearborn (the Ford Company hired new employees from Dearborn's relief rolls) or joining the "Liberty Legion," as means of maintaining their positions. The application of Fair Labor Standard Act provisions to pecan shelling in San Antonio did not result in absenteeism due to higher wages. Mexicans improved their language skills as they left "gang labor" for operations demanding English, and American traits such as individualism grew at the expense of the more traditional communalism. One could also find examples of assimilation through intermarriage. Again, this was more noticeable in the North, but even in Los Angeles Mexicans intermarried with Anglos and foreign-born whites. 53
All of these points countered, either implicitly, or explicitly, such supposedly Mexican characteristics as docility, laziness, and inability to assimilate. Where they did not contradict the old stereotypes, the environmentalists at least ascribed the traits to factors which were non-racial and which might be treated in some manner. Wider recognition of the environmental difficulties facing Mexicans in the United States was a necessary precondition for change, even if by itself it was not a sufficient one, and more academic writers by the 1930s were willing to grant that recognition.

V

Instructors and researchers affiliated with the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930s pioneered an "ecological" theory of sociology to describe the urban landscape which surrounded them. In this view the metropolitan region consisted of a large number of local communities, characterized by the predominant usage of land in each: business, residential, or "in transition" between the two. Competition for desirable land correlated institutions and individuals to their ability to pay for such resources, with nationality groups moving from slum to suburb as their economic status improved. Finally, in keeping with the ecological/environmental orientation of this theory, Chicago researchers determined that the extremes of poverty, disease, and pathological behavior observable in slum populations were in fact products of social disorganization rather than low genetic quality. Each racial or national group which poured into Chicago slums experienced severe disorganization, the symptoms
of which declined with prosperity and migration into more stable residential districts. The significance of this theory for Mexican immigrants was that Chicago academicians viewed their arrival and related social problems within the context of the history of other ethnic groups in the city rather than as a new and unique proposition. 54

Sociologist Ernest W. Burgess introduced the concept that city growth occurred in a series of concentric circles, with the process of expansion accounting for the usage of each area. Particularly important was the zone of transition created where commercial and industrial operations invaded residential territory. The appearance of businesses lent a speculative value to the land while simultaneously depressing rental values. Buildings became dilapidated as owners deferred renovations in hopes of eventual sale for commercial purposes. The combination of its undesirability to established groups and its low rent made the "zone of transition" or slum an ideal place as the area of first settlement for immigrants or the "undesirable." Located in the path of an expanding business district, the slum was convenient to potential employment, a vital factor for a poor immigrant. Finally, absentee slum landlords offered less resistance to the invasion of people with a lower standard of living or an alien culture, preferring to collect their rent however they could. 55

The ecology of the immigrant districts was similar no matter which ethnic group occupied the area. There were significant numbers of middle or rear buildings and basement or cellar apartments. Toilet facilities were definitely sub-standard, many being located in halls,
basements, porches, yards, or under sidewalks. Overcrowding was common, both in the rooms and on the lots. Streets were often unpaved, and rubbish collection was nil.56

Ethnic hostilities split many neighborhoods and accentuated the unpleasant physical conditions. In the heavily Slavic stockyards district a "lack of cordiality" between Poles and Lithuanians resulted in a "marked tendency" to segregate within the neighborhood. In the "Bush" area of South Chicago ethnic groups also went their separate ways, while the Near North Side seethed with conflicts over the years: Irish versus Italians, Persians versus Syrians, and ultimately, Italians versus blacks. Fights erupted in the parks, at the beaches, and around the schools; "the fights were chiefly nationality gang fights." With all this evidence of ethnic antagonism, Chicago academics were hardly surprised to find Poles and Mexicans vying for supremacy on the city's southwest side, for example, where Mexicans had to attend public bathing facilities in gangs.57

Intergroup hostilities, along with the natural desire of racial or national groups to live among their own kind, resulted in ethnic concentrations in different parts of the city. Since the "areas of first settlement" were rather limited, the immigrants piled up in the slums, put their own stamp of individuality on a neighborhood ("Littly Italy," "Pilsen," "The Ghetto"), and then gave way before the next poor ethnic group to enter the city in large numbers. Isolation was never complete among white ethnics, but Irish, Swedish, German, Italian, and Negro colonies developed on the Near
North Side; Irish, Bohemian, Italian, Greek, and Jewish settlers passed through the Near West Side; and Poles, Serbs, Russians, and Italians displaced the Irish, Germans and Swedes of South Chicago. When Mexicans, as the newest immigrants with the lowest economic status in the city, also landed in the slums, they simply followed a well-established pattern.58

One of the more significant features of the ecological theory of urban development was the idea of delinquency areas, those sections of the city with the highest ratios of truancy, delinquency, and adult crime. Delinquency areas appeared in the zones of transition, where disintegration of the conventional neighborhood culture and organization translated into a deterioration in community influence over deviant behavior. Once established, the delinquency patterns were transmitted socially in the neighborhood like any other cultural trait; in effect deviancy became the norm. Researchers noted that the rate of delinquency in these areas remained constant over time despite marked shifts in rationality. The succession from German and Irish to Italian to Greek and Mexican on the Near West Side had not altered the proportion of criminals emerging from the district. The numerical extent of juvenile delinquency in a given group increased while the group resided in the delinquency areas of the city and decreased as the group moved away to outlying residential communities.59

Mexican immigrants to Chicago did not fit absolutely into the theoretical framework of delinquency areas, for they and their children showed a surprisingly low rate of criminal activity during most of the 1920s and 1930s. The closer ties and stronger parental
authority traditional in the Mexican family may have deterred the development of deviant patterns; the relative isolation of Mexicans from other ethnic groups may have had a like effect. Isolation was never total, however, and in the mid 1930s Mexicans in South Chicago exhibited an increasing tendency toward crime, often in alliance with Polish cohorts, with recidivism appearing as well. Mexican gangs operated on the Near West Side throughout the 1930s, stealing cars and "terrorizing the neighborhood." These gangs evolved from juvenile play groups, occasionally turning to violence as a defense against other gangs, at other times simply adopting the behavior patterns of their Polish and Italian neighbors. At no time, however, was it charged that criminality was a "Mexican trait."

On the question of the ultimate assimilation of Mexicans into the social fabric, Chicago academicians were hopeful but reserved. An early discussion of "culturally undeveloped material" within the borders of the United States had identified Mexicans and Spanish-Americans as part of that mass; yet all the Hispanos needed was "to have the burden of their isolation lifted" in order that they might become more productive and useful. Mexicans were active in night school classes, displaying an interest in courses beyond basic English. Intermarriages with non-Mexicans were evident as early as 1924, when the colony was still new, and informal relationships in the neighborhoods were on the increase. Mexicans did not display any greater enthusiasm for naturalization in Chicago than they did elsewhere in the United States, but they had progressed well
in industrial relations. "Since past prejudice against immigrant groups has been overcome eventually, perhaps the same will hold true for the Mexicans."61

It is difficult to assess the impact which Chicago academics had on the reception that Mexican immigrants met during their first two decades in the city. Certainly they had no influence in the ethnic neighborhoods where the street-fighting occurred. However, there were close ties between such academic luminaries as Ernest W. Burgess and the Abbott sisters and the best-known social workers of the city, women like Jane Addams, Adena Miller Rich, Mary McDowell, and Mollie Ray Carroll. These people in turn affected the popular mind of the city through their access to publicity, their appointment to official and quasi-official positions in the city, especially with regard to philanthropy and relief, their acquaintance with the influential, and last but not least, the very policies which they set at the institutions they dominated.62 Sociologists and social workers in Chicago believed in the ultimate assimilability of the immigrant ethnic groups into the mainstream of American life, in notable contrast to many of their colleagues in the Southwest. They sought to practice these beliefs with respect to the Mexicans, the newest arrivals. Their success was not complete, but the fact that they tried no doubt eased the transition of the migrants into citizens of the Midwest's largest metropolis.
CHAPTER IV

Mexicans and the Color Line: Residential Patterns and Ethnic Conflicts; 1920-1940

The theories of social scientists and the statements of politicians and businessmen were the most visible expressions of Anglo-American attitudes toward Mexican migrants, but they were not the only ones. Despite the harangues and hypotheses, Mexicans continued to enter the United States during the 1920s. Where they lived and how their new neighbors received them were also valid indicators of their place in society and of their potential for eventual assimilation. In the Southwest the immigrants found established Mexican communities which were bounded by railroad tracks, in many instances, and walled in by a century of Anglo hostility. In the urban Midwest, however, they discovered a different divarication of society. The railroad tracks and the hostility were there, but this time the pariahs were black. Mexicans settled among European ethnics in Chicago and other cities in the North, and while certainly not greeted with open arms, they managed to remain. Competition over jobs and women exacerbated traditional ethnic and racial hostilities in the zones of transition, but gradually these conflicts abated to the point that, by the 1960s, Mexican-Americans often stood visibly with their white neighbors along Chicago's color line.
Residential isolation of Mexicans and Chicanos in the Southwest has a very long history. Mexicans arriving in the frontier farming areas of south Texas established their homes apart from the white domain, and the two groups were still separate in the late 1920s. Elsewhere, "every village, town, and city within 200 or 300 miles of the border has its distinctive Mexican settlement," occasionally likened to the Jewish "ghetto" of the Middle Ages, where prejudice and discrimination forced a "vertical segregation" within the colony.¹ When Anglos came to such erstwhile Mexican towns as Santa Barbara or El Paso, they left the old Mexican district to its original inhabitants. New construction, whether residential or commercial, drove those Chicanos living beyond the barrio into the Hispanic portion of town. Renewed migration after 1900 sometimes brought about new developments, but physical concentration remained apparent. In 1890 over 90 percent of Santa Barbara's Chicanos resided in the original Spanish quarter; in El Paso 91 percent of the Mexican draft registrants lived in the barrios of that city, and "residential segregation appears to have been fairly complete."²

Mexicans were naturally less than enthusiastic about such confinement, and some at least sought to break into Anglo neighborhoods. Young Chicanos in the 1920s tried to buy or rent in middle-class communities when they could afford the higher costs, and it was not uncommon to find the wife in such an upwardly-mobile family out working to raise the funds necessary for better lodgings.
Having the means for expensive property did not guarantee access, however, as Mexicans quickly learned. Restrictive covenants or sales agreements forbidding sales of property to or any other type of occupancy by non-Caucasians became popular in the Southwest in the 1920s. Covenants in California rarely specified Mexicans, preferring the broader term "non-Caucasians," but Texans were less bashful, listing Mexicans as well as Negroes in these pacts. Pressure also took the form of letters and threats to realtors who did business with Hispanics, and many real estate agents simply steered Mexicans back into their own provinces when they tried to rent in "American" districts.³

In addition to Anglo-imposed limitations on where they might reside, Mexican immigrants in the Southwest often had to endure harsh conditions when they did find a home, such as overcrowding, poor sanitation, and high rents. Before the turn of the century Texas-Mexicans dwelled in houses of sticks and clay, patched with old pieces of blanket or wagon covers, and roofed with flattened tin cans. In 1910 the El Paso health department found some 2500 Mexicans "living in houses not fit for animals." The Los Angeles Housing Commission unearthed filth and squalor throughout the Mexican section in 1908, describing "unsanitary and anti-social living conditions as bad as in any New York tenement." Mexicans, of course, were the most numerous of the nationalities represented in the house-courts, and they occupied the worst units. Down the coast in San Diego some 3000 or so Mexicans, unable to secure cheap rents elsewhere, crowded into old houses and shacks along the waterfront.⁴
Neither rural nor urban Mexicanos in the Southwest enjoyed much improvement in their housing conditions after World War I. Sugar-beet growers related proudly that almost every Mexican laborer in Colorado had a house, although most were without either water or sanitary facilities. Although small, "the evil of overcrowding is mitigated by the exceptionally favorable climate of the Rocky Mountain country during the season of occupancy," for open doors and windows afforded a partial remedy to congestion. The State of Colorado regulated dairy barns, but it made no such provision for the housing of migrant workers. In Arizona, housing in labor camps was "primitive"; while California migrants "were lucky indeed" to get a structure with four walls. Farmers sometimes admitted that the shelters they offered to migrants were substandard, but fell back to the justification that the Mexicans would abuse better facilities. Besides, argued the Anglos, "the Mexicans are satisfied to live anywhere."

Urban Chicanos likewise remained in dire straits. The Los Angeles colony had advanced somewhat during the war years, but 55 percent of the housing units were still characterized as poor or bad in 1921, and 32 percent still lacked lavatories. The Mexican district of Pasadena consisted of section houses, boarded-up shacks, renovated barns and garages, tents, and shelters of tin and lumber scraps; other poor Mexicans lived in two-room wooden structures "which were little more than hovels" and "decidedly dreary." Even when household equipment was available, the inexperience of the immigrants with modern conveniences sometimes resulted in the employment of bathtubs
as coal bins or garbage cans. The Mexican quarter in San Antonio contained "one of the most extensive slums to be found in any American city." Some 90 percent of the dwellings lacked indoor plumbing as late as 1938; overcrowding, deterioration, and isolation from the dominant community were the norm here as elsewhere in the Southwest. All in all, living conditions "among peons fresh from Mexico" who were without supervision or advice were "uniformly bad," although the situation improved somewhat in districts where more Mexicans owned their homes.⁶

Perhaps the one redeeming feature in this picture was the fact that Mexicans paid a comparatively low rent for their habitations, although this was not always true. In 1909 Mexicans spent an average of $4.58 per month for a rental unit, less than any other ethnic group examined except blacks. In 1916 a two-room apartment in a house-court went for $6.00 per month, while on the eve of the Depression San Diego Mexicans paid below the local average of $20.00 per month for a relatively decent workingman's home. The size and quality of these dwellings were not always ideal, but at least the cost was somewhat in line with the value received.⁷ Even taking this factor into account, it is not surprising that many Mexicanos chose to travel further from the border in hopes of improving their lot.

II

Chicago has always had the reputation as a town where one could land a job without difficulty, and this reputation attracted Mexicans as it had men of so many other nationalities. Probably few of the
migrants thought to consider another aspect of life in the metropolis: survival in slums which, in terms of crowding and sanitation, were nearly as bad as the conditions they had left behind.

Immigrants arriving in Chicago had to take up residence wherever they could find space available. Often they landed in the "zones of transition" near the major business or industrial areas of the city, where land use patterns dictated low rents and the social disorganization of the community mitigated to a degree the usual hostility which accompanied invasion by aliens. As the neighborhood acquired a particular ethnic character, it became more attractive to others of that group, who could function among their countrymen with little or no English, or perhaps acquire a measure of status which the larger society would not confer, thus moderating the break between the old world and the new. Perhaps even more important from the standpoint of the workingman was the proximity of otherwise unlovely neighborhoods like "Packingtown" or "Steeletown" to the factories in which they toiled. Long hours and low wages made the time and money saved by not commuting important parts of the family budget. For the laborers who "could and would live only near the site of their employment," and whose circumstances forced them to survive in the cheapest manner possible, it would have been worse to be excluded from the industrial slums where jobs and cheap houses were than to be trapped in them.
Figure 1 Chicago Community Areas
The working class districts in which the immigrants settled were not garden spots. "Filthy, unpaved streets and alleys," interspersed between semi-business streets crowded with tobacco-stands, saloons, old-iron establishments, and factories marked the Near West Side around Halsted and Taylor Streets. The small businesses and factories produced sanitation problems as well as economic opportunities: butcher shops, poultry markets, and junk stores brought pollution and litter; factory smoke made "bad light and air." The populace was "noticeably undersized and unhealthy ... mortality among children is great, and the many babies look starved and wan."¹⁰ The Stockyards district, another area of first settlement, was so neglected that it was sometimes regarded as unsuitable for investigation. "Back a' the Yards" improved somewhat after the turn of the century, but the very locality, "with its constant reminders of death and destruction, had a demoralizing impact on the character of the people and the conditions under which they lived." In South Chicago the newcomers met an eerie sight: "high paling fences surrounding huge mills whose chimneys belched forth clouds of smoke which left a pall over the neighborhood and polluted the atmosphere." Across from the mills began a succession of small frame cottages, "frequently dilapidated, uninviting, and monotonous."¹¹

High population density, dilapidation, and poor sanitation were all hallmarks of the immigrant neighborhoods. The West Side contained the six most thickly populated wards in the city in 1911, averaging 70 persons per acre, with individual blocks much higher.
Rear tenements, dwellings built or moved to the back of a lot to maximize land use, were very common on the Near West Side by 1900, with an obvious impact on the availability of light, air, and space for all concerned. Alley buildings were less noticeable in South Chicago and the Stockyards districts because they were farther from the central city and land values were not as high, but the tendency to take in lodgers preserved room overcrowding as a serious problem. Over 17 percent of the buildings examined in one survey were dilapidated or worse, but in the immigrant districts along Halsted the proportion reached 25 percent. Almost half of the rooms rated "dark or gloomy," and about the same ratio fell below the legal minimum of 400 cubic feet of air space per occupant. Some 15 years later a resurvey showed 34 percent of the buildings in bad repair, with rotting wood, unpainted walls, rickety stairs and porches, and other signs of general neglect visible everywhere. Mounds of decaying garbage, stable refuse, and yard "closets" completed the scene, except where buildings were "overcome with bugs and rats."12

The disadvantages of living in such areas were at least partially compensated by the fact that rentals were among the lowest in the city. In 1900 new immigrants paid rents averaging between $4.92 and $8.28 for an apartment. Millworkers in South Chicago had to pay slightly more rent than West Siders, but families Back of the Yards paid less. Commentators did not rule out discrimination as an explanation for the higher rates charged to some ethnic groups, but the inexperience of the newest arrivals played a major role.
"It almost uniformly happens that the families which are the most foreign are the most exploited in the matter of their housing situation. They pay the highest rents for the poorest apartments, and they seem quite unable to understand that they have a right to insist on needed repairs or a decent standard of cleanliness."

These words described Lithuanians and Poles living Back of the Yards in 1910, but they could as well describe the Mexicans who encountered similar difficulties some 15 years later. 13

The situation in the immigrant districts paled, however, when compared to the nascent Black Belt already emerging along State Street south of Harrison. The City Homes Association excluded the Black Belt, like the Back of the Yards, from its review because it was not "representative" of the city. Buildings there were "badly overcrowded with colored people," many of whom lived in cellars and basements near overflowing privies. Alleys were dark and strewn with garbage. Poor blacks faced additional hazards which poor ethnics did not, however, for the physical status of their structures was dramatically worse than that of buildings in the immigrant districts: in 1912 only 16 percent of the residences inhabited by blacks were in good repair. Conversely, 71 percent in one Polish district and 57 percent in a Bohemian district were in good repair, and even around the Stockyards more than half of the houses were rated acceptable. Only the Maxwell Street "Ghetto" approached the heart of the Black Belt in terms of dilapidation, but the consistent refusal of landlords to maintain property with black tenants opened the gap between those two districts. And while
the immigrants lived in squalor but paid relatively little in rent, blacks averaged $2.00 to $4.00 per month more for a four room apartment than did a white living in "Polonia."\(^{14}\)

The quality of life for white immigrants in Chicago improved somewhat during the 1920s, but many of the old problems remained. Italians from the Near West Side moved into newer subdivisions west of Morgan Street, where the one-and-two-family detached houses contrasted favorably with the tenements they vacated, and Jews abandoned Maxwell Street for the greener pastures of North Lawndale. In the mid-1920s rents stabilized, then dropped slightly, particularly in the Near West Side and Stockyards districts, although the cost of units at the bottom of the scale was still rising. Even when landlords raised the rents in such ethnic slums as the Maxwell Street "Ghetto," they remained among the lowest in the city. Tenants simply took in more lodgers to compensate for the advance.\(^{15}\) Households with lodgers also declined, but sizeable numbers were still present in Polish, Italian, Lithuanian and Mexican households. Furthermore, in newer districts like South Deering and Burnside, sanitary facilities were much better than those in the older receiving areas, for over 85 percent of the units in both communities had inside toilets, as compared to about 70 percent in Bridgeport and less than 50 percent in the Near North Side Italian community. Sanitation in the Stockyards district also progressed in the 1920s.\(^{16}\)

The populace of these working class districts was multiethnic, even in the 1920s, and it was an often volatile mixture. Many Americans in the 1920s undoubtedly shared the view that there were
"huge masses" of aliens, living in colonies or ghettos, where they
"perpetuated their racial-mindedness, their racial character, and
their racial habits." Where the immigrants could not control a
given territory, they at least sought to fill "an entire tenement
house with the people from one village," through "chains of emigration"
in which early arrivals would send back to the old country for
friends and relatives. In either case some segregation and cultural
isolation occurred, which the actions of the older residents often
reinforced. In fact some very small precincts were given overwhelmingly
to one nationality, most often because of recency of arrival and
educational attainments rather than cultural differences between
the newcomers and the native population. However, such enclaves
were scattered among districts occupied by the native population
rather than concentrated in a single "ghetto" for all foreign groups.17

Popular writers may not have realized how diverse in population
the immigrant slums were, but the social workers who inspected
tenement conditions recognized this fact. In 1895 the residents of
Hull-House identified 18 nationalities in one-third of a square
mile; the number had risen to 29 in 1914. A tendency to drift
into little colonies was observable, but tenants from many different
countries might occupy rooms or houses on the same lot. Large
numbers of Germans, Irish, and Bohemians, along with scattered
Greeks and Austrians, resided on the Near West Side even when the
area was known for its Italians and Jews. The Stockyards was
heavily Slavic in 1911, with 834 Polish families out of 1562
recorded in a 12 block section. However, Lithuanians, Bohemians,
Germans, Slovaks, and Irish lived in the same vicinity, along with 77 "others." By 1928 visible numbers of Russians and Mexicans had joined the other six nationalities "Back a' the Yards." South Chicago, like the Stockyards district, was strongly Polish in the early twentieth century, but Germans, Hungarians, Irish, Magyars, "other" Slavs, and Swedes all resided in one seven block section, along with the newest arrivals from Mexico.\footnote{18}

In the 1920s house by house inspections of several immigrant neighborhoods further delineated both the mixed ethnic nature of these communities and the tendency of the ethnic groups to cluster. In seven blocks in South Chicago resided 520 family heads, 259 of whom were Polish. Although the Poles resided on each of the seven blocks, their proportion ranged from 89 percent to 17 percent. Exactly 90 percent of the Slovaks lived on three of the seven blocks, the remainder on two others. Another researcher found a six block section "Back a' the Yards" with 779 families and 17 ethnic groups. Every block included at least six different nationalities, but 332 of the 396 Polish families lived on three blocks and 221 of the 231 Lithuanian families lived on the three other blocks.\footnote{19} European ethnics set the style in workingmen's neighborhoods: they settled in clusters, but they never totally excluded one another. The Mexicans who penetrated these communities in the 1920s simply followed the same pattern.

Many different peoples lived in close proximity in the immigrant slums, but only an optimist would have compared the Near West Side or Bridgeport to the peaceable kingdom. As late as
the 1930s one analyst declared that language barriers and racial feelings kept Halsted Street "a cauldron bubbling with racial suspicion and antipathy." Greeks "invaded the Italian section and drove the Italians out of their homes" in Chicago as they had in other American cities. West Side Italians, for their part, had been hostile to the Jews for years: in 1895 Hull-House residents reported that both groups were rarely in the same tenement house. "Lofty disdain" and "scornful contempt" marked each side's opinion of the other. Jane Addams later declared that it was "difficult to describe" the hostilities between her neighbors. Italians had their fruit-carts upset because they were "dagoes" and Russian peddlers were stoned because such attacks were "a code of honor" in local gangs. When one settlement house tried to integrate some Italians into a Jewish boy scout troop its leaders discovered, "as had been found again and again," that Italians and Jews did not mix very well. The "vibrant anti-semitism" which had emerged when Jews controlled the housing and economy of the West Side did not die after their departure. 20

Italians did not limit their dislikes to Jews. Settled Italians, who often happened to be from the north of Italy, were not fond of the newer arrivals from the "South," whom they viewed as only slightly more tolerable than immigrants from Russia, Greece, or Mexico. Even South Italians had little affection for Sicilians; as one put it, "we regard the Sicilians as a different people altogether." The Italians around Armour Square gave way before the incoming tide of Sicilians, who pushed the former down the west side of Wentworth
Avenue past 25th Street in the 1920s. Many of the older Italian residents on the West Side also left their old neighborhoods as a result of these pressures from below, but some were expected to make a "last stand" against the waves of newcomers, especially the Mexicans. The Italians themselves did not fare well in their relations with other ethnic groups in the city. When they succeeded in gaining a foothold on the Near North Side, the earlier residents, mainly German and Irish, moved as soon as possible. Those who remained behind were aloof: "even the children did not play together."

Anthony Sorrentino later recalled that in the 1920s his clothes and language set him apart from his contemporaries, both on the Near West Side and in the wider arena of Chicago society. Finally, at about the same time that the West Side Italian colony was trying to repel the Mexican encroachment, Italians in South Chicago sallied into the predominately north European East Side and encountered stiff resistance from the Scandinavian and German residents there. A long-time resident of the Southeast Side related that "about the only time they [the Swedes] present a united front is when their neighborhood is invaded as it has been by the Italians."21

Conflict swirled around the Slavic inhabitants of Chicago as well, sometimes directed at one another, sometimes at outgroups like the Irish or Italians. In the Canaryville section of Fuller Park, east of the Stockyards, the Irish had fought off a Polish invasion "with violence and intimidation," and that spirit was still evident, according to local sources. North of Canaryville along Halsted Street the Irish were less successful in blocking
the entry of Lithuanians and Poles, so the Celts who could not afford a loss on their homes remained, "stranded among people with whom they have nothing in common and with whom they have few dealings." Irish-Polish feuding sometimes exploded into murder, as when Hurley Kelsey killed Alexander Jarecki. (Kelsey was not indicted because the coroner allegedly refused to call Polish witnesses who heard the Irishman threaten Jarecki.) In districts where the Poles yielded numerical superiority to the Italians, they found themselves unable to utilize even supposedly neutral facilities like settlement houses. Residents at the Chicago Commons lamented that "the Italian boys ... dominated the class and made things quite miserable for the Polish lads," who would get along better if they had the gym to themselves. When Commons workers tried to mix Italian and Polish girls, "a large part of the conversation ... had consisted of 'Dirty Polacks!' from Italians to Poles, and equally uncomplimentary remarks from Poles to Italians." The only solution was segregation on an ethnic basis.22

Dissension between the different Slavic nationalities was another source of tension. When fires broke out in "Packingtown" west of the stockyards during the 1919 riots, suspicion for the arson settled on Negroes. The burned houses all belonged to Lithuanians, however, and the plant superintendent of Swift and Company testified that "there was as much friction between the Poles and Lithuanians ... as between the Negroes and the Whites." In Bridgeport Polish and Lithuanian gangs were still in "open conflict" in 1925. This "lack of cordiality" between the two nationalities was
credited with inspiring the tendency of each to cluster in its own little segment of the neighborhood, with Poles complaining that "Lithuanians are sore; Mexicans are not so bad." Years after the riots, another observer commented that the apparent harmony of the Slavic groups on the Lower West Side was only on the surface. The various subgroups – Poles, Croats, Czechs – actually held themselves aloof from one another. They patronized the stores of countrymen, retained old-world habits, attended national parishes, and displayed feelings of superiority toward the others. Fraternization was limited by "sharp demarcations in national feelings."

In sum, relations between white ethnics in the slums were never completely cordial. Part of this separation may have been due to the fact that most of the nationalities came to Chicago from peasant societies, where community life was organized on the basis of the extended family. In the United States this took the form of a "peer group," a combination of family and peer relationships (which usually had an ethnic orientation). Beyond the peer group and a small array of ethnic institutions lay the rest of the world – the out group. The assumption that in times of trouble one's countrymen would unite to protect the group against outsiders reinforced this bifurcated world view. The reverse of this was the implication that the other ethnic group would also coalesce during an emergency. Spatial unity could overcome ethnic differences in extreme instances, such as black invasion, but under normal circumstances social relationships were conducted along ethnic lines.
This system made it unlikely that members of any outside group, whether Mexican or European, would find wide or ready acceptance in a new neighborhood. However, as long as entry was permitted, the opportunity for assimilation remained. The important point was that, despite all of the outward signs of hostility, white ethnics never excluded one another from their domains, and their treatment of Mexican immigrants in the 1920s and 1930s did not deviate from this pattern.

III

The Great Migration of blacks into Chicago during the first three decades of the twentieth century presented white ethnics with just the sort of challenge to stimulate cooperation. Slavs and Irish and Italians might quarrel among themselves over control of territory, but they joined together with steely determination to maintain their white neighborhoods. During and after the riots of 1919 the immigrants succeeded in establishing a color line around the Black Belt which has never been broken, even though the boundaries have changed. The riots themselves are a grim reminder of the position of the Negro at the bottom of the social scale and offer a stark example of the effective proscription of an entire people. Occurring as it did at the beginning of the Mexican migration to Chicago and engulfing some of the same territory into which the Hispanics settled, this drawing of the color line provides an interesting contrast to the reception given the Mexicans, for it indicates that Chicagoans had the capability to institute a segregated system if they so desired.
The working class districts of Chicago, poor, multiethnic, and volatile, had one final common feature: they were almost uniformly white. The inquiries of Adams and Miller in the early 1920s tabulated 16,555 heads of households on 20 blocks all over the South Side of Chicago. They encountered 13 families of blacks during these investigations, all of whom were confined to one block in South Chicago. When the Department of Public Welfare reviewed housing conditions in 1928, its people deliberately avoided sections covered earlier. In its canvass of portions of Wards 20 and 26, on the Lower West Side, the Department reported that Bohemians, Slovaks, Poles and Croats predominated in the population of 16,752. There were seven families of Mexicans but no Negroes in this district. South of these wards, across the Chicago River, lay Bridgeport. Here Poles, Lithuanians, Germans, and Irish had united to keep the district white: "not a single black family lives in the whole ten blocks, despite the fact that only a short distance west and south there are many colored families who have recently moved in from other neighborhoods." Burnside, another industrial community on the South Side, was also all white. Twenty-two different nationalities, Mexicans among them, shared the Burnside "Triangle" in 1924, but "the Negroes now employed [in the Illinois Central car shops] are all residents in the Negro district..., on the Near South Side."25

The working class white neighborhoods did not change much during the two decades following the riots. A few blacks lived in South Chicago, but they were restricted to The Strand, where "the neighborhood
is in advanced physical deterioration." Managers at the steel mills did not try to employ blacks, and the observer concluded that Negroes were "practically non-existent in South Chicago." Residents of the University of Chicago Settlement House, mingling with their neighbors, noted that "very few Negroes were found in the district, although large numbers work in the Yards." School principals in New City listed at least ten different ethnic groups among their charges, including Mexicans, but "no colored child was found in any of these [nine] schools." In 1931 a proposal for a research project on juvenile delinquency named the Stockyards district as a likely site for the study. It was mixed ethnically, but "the eastern boundary of Union Avenue excludes practically all the Negroes living near the stockyards." A final recanvass of tenement zones in 1935 revealed that none of the 20 districts in which foreign-born whites predominated contained enough Negroes to include the latter as a major racial factor, although one Chicago marketing organization considered blacks a significant force on the Italian Near North Side. 26

There was a good reason why so few blacks lived in white ethnic enclaves in the 1920s and 1930s: the whites had exerted strenuous efforts to keep them out. These ran from restrictive covenants in the better neighborhoods to threats and outright violence in the poorer ones, but the idea was the same and nearly everywhere the resistance was successful. In the few instances where it was not, the whites simply abandoned the territory en masse. The ideal alternative, an adjusted neighborhood in which the two races coexisted in peace, was rare indeed.
The worst outbreak of racial violence in Chicago history occurred in July, 1919, when an incident at 29th Street Beach triggered nearly a week of beatings, shootings, and arson, with whites initiating most of the action. Mob violence was particularly virulent in instances where families had succeeded in escaping the confines of the Black Belt. Gangs like Ragen's Colts, the Shielders, the Wigwam Club, and the Murderers patrolled the railroad and "el" embankments that walled off the black community from the immigrant domain, doing "terrible things" to any black they happened to find. Such white violence persuaded upwardly mobile blacks living around Lafayette and 57th Streets, several miles beyond the limits of the main black community, of the advisability of organizing their own defensive association. They felt "hemmed in on both sides by white people who were quite hostile to them," and they were far from the safety in numbers which residency in the Black Belt afforded. Whites living along the western boundary of the Black Belt later justified these excesses as "a matter of preservation of the community." A local Polish editor, while admonishing his readers not to participate in the riots, pointed out that blacks deserved the treatment they got for "attacking white women" and taking white jobs. Eventually some Negroes "dribbled" past the New York Central railroad embankment which had separated them from the whites in the mid-1920s, and local observers thought that they would soon push further west, although not "without resistance [from] the Croatian community." Croatians were not the only South Side ethnics manning the "line;" white pressure remained strong in 1940, when a Federal mortgage
expert remarked that the Armour Square community still excluded Negroes. Armour Square abutted some of the oldest portions of "Bronzeville," but "there are no colored people, Wentworth Avenue being the barrier to colored infiltration. The Irish would not let them across."28 The 1919 riot had proven to be the shape of things to come as far as race relations in Chicago were concerned.

Black-white tensions were greatest on the South Side because that was where the Black Belt developed and because of the entry of blacks into the work forces of the packing plants. However, violence against blacks was not limited to the South Side, nor did it disappear from the city after the rioting subsided. The movement of Negroes into the Italian district on the Near North Side brought racial fighting, "black hand" threats, an occasional murder, and expectations that a major riot was in the offing. On the Near West Side Negroes did displace Jews along Maxwell Street. The Jews sometimes resisted, but their opposition was minor when compared to that of the Italians. Mexicans were also part of this population shift on the West Side, but it was the Negroes who encountered a "solid wall of Italian resistance" along Roosevelt Road which prevented any further mobility. A school principal reported that "the Italians make it so uncomfortable for them that they never stay for more than a week. They break their windows, and if this does not move them, they threaten them with worse violence." Worse violence included burning down a small Negro church on the night before its first service, and warnings to landlords that their houses would go up in smoke if they rented to blacks. When black families living
south of Roosevelt Road tried to enroll their children at St. Joseph School in the Holy Family parish (located at Roosevelt Road and May Street), the Italian-dominated parish responded sharply, at first forcing the school to close in 1931. The Jesuits opened an auxiliary black school after two years and St. Joseph's remained white until the 1950s. Ironically, despite this animosity the Riot Commission described both Italian districts as "adjusted neighborhoods" in which blacks and whites lived in comparative friendship. 29

Negroes were also less than welcome west of the Stockyards, although that area contained a large Mexican population by the mid-1920s. A union organizer declared that feelings between the races had improved since the early days of the labor movement, but Negroes were still timid about attending meetings in that part of town because "the Polish boys were inclined to be rough with them." As one of the Polish boys explained it, "you very seldom see the Negro here; he is not liked. If he tries to move in, he usually is stored or threatened in some way or other to keep him out." Conditions had not changed all that much since a packing executive declared in 1921 that "it goes without saying that there isn't a colored man, regardless of how little brains he'd have, who would attempt to go over into the Polish district and set fire to anybody's house over there. He wouldn't get that far." 30

A second method of ensuring that blacks stayed in their place was the restrictive covenant. The white South Side was quickly covered with documents which forbade their signers to sell to Negroes. Nearly 99 percent of the covenants applied only to blacks,
defined as persons with one-eighth part or more of Negro blood, rather than to "non-Caucasians," as was the case in the Southwest. Most of these agreements appeared in the better subdivisions like Hyde Park or Woodlawn, where owners had the resources and sophistication to fabricate legal restrictions as well as extralegal ones. Woodlawn residents lobbied for improvements in their district, such as additional "el" stations, in hopes that rising real estate prices might drive out their few black neighbors. Locals warned grocers not to deliver to black customers, threatening letters became common, and ultimately the Woodlawn Property-Owners Improvement Association came into being, organized to insure that the Negro portion of Woodlawn remained "quite well marked." Working class whites also held meetings or wrote letters to protest the dispersion of blacks from the ghetto, but they usually relied on less genteel tactics to achieve their ends.31

When neither violence nor legal paperwork could stem the influx of blacks, the whites fled to districts which were beyond the reach of the minorities. In the 1920s blacks moved into the Maxwell Street district and the Jews departed, "the exodus ... undoubtedly conditioned by this most recent change of population." Elsewhere a black family related the process of "succession" in their block on the South Side. They had moved into their house in 1909, when "all these buildings were white." In the 1920s the mother related that "the last white family moved from here about six years ago...." It became apparent in the early 1930s that the total population of the Black Belt had declined because the non-Negro
population had dropped sharply. The whites were moving out, and only Negroes would replace them. Even members of the "other races," including Mexicans and Asians, would not enter the Black Belt.32

The result of all of these actions by the white population was predictable. During the 1920s residential segregation in Chicago increased dramatically. The proportion of Black Chicagoans living in census tracts which were over 90 percent Negro rose from 0 percent in 1920 to 63.6 percent in 1930 and to 75.5 percent in 1940. At the same time the proportion of non-Negroes living in almost exclusively non-Negro areas rose from 85.2 percent in 1920 to 90.1 percent in 1930 and 91.2 percent in 1940. The old Black Belt eventually became so crowded that "colored persons were unable to find any place to live and so tended to overflow into the adjoining regions," which of course soon turned black as well.33 Forced to look for housing in strictly defined parts of the city, Negroes were more at the mercy of the landlord than any other ethnic group in Chicago. Blacks paid a higher rent than whites did for comparable space, and were less likely to obtain needed repairs. Streets and alleys were strewn with garbage and filled with pot-holes as city departments ignored their obligations. Those few who escaped into other districts almost invariably had to accept the most neglected housing in the "poorest sections of the neighborhood," as was the case on the West Side. Finally, the fact that the Black Belt was removed from most of the industrial areas of the city subjected its residents to the expenses and vagaries of the Chicago transit system, thus
exposing the black commuters to assaults by white hoodlums as they ventured to work.34

IV

Recent descriptions of the early Mexican colonies in the Chicago area have tended to focus on the negative aspects of life in the city. According to these writers, Mexicans were segregated within their neighborhoods, isolated from other ethnic groups, physically abused, and overcharged for substandard living quarters. Some authors do recognize, in passing, that white ethnics seemed to prefer Mexicans to blacks, but they stop short of a thorough examination of the interrelationships and similarities of experience between the Europeans and the Mexicans.35 Hispanic settlers did suffer mistreatment in Chicago, just as other ethnics did, but they persevered, settling in the same communities as poor white workers, moving out of the slums as their economic status improved, and ultimately segregating themselves from blacks almost as thoroughly as the whites had.

The Mexican immigrants who arrived in Chicago in the 1920s generally located in the immigrant receiving areas near the Loop or other major employment centers in the city, following the established ethnic pattern of living as cheaply and as near to their work as possible. Despite such rumors as the story that Mexicans assisted Negroes in the manufacture of bombs and grenades during the 1919 riots, the entry of the Mexicans into the city was so gradual and so scattered that "few residents of Chicago are familiar with their presence in our midst."36 This latter view was something of an exaggeration, for
The ethnics knew that Mexicans were in town. They had not generated the same publicity that accompanied the black migration, however, and they entered the same areas which so violently refused admittance to blacks. Perhaps that was the inspiration of the statement.

Mexicans were evident in the vicinity of the stockyards as early as 1921, when Mary McDowell commented that Mexicans, like the Lithuanians before them, were being introduced to American standards "by living in the worst part of the community and in deteriorated houses left by former immigrants." The older nationalities made efforts to keep the Mexicans out, charging higher rent, for example, but failed to do so. Reports of housing discrimination surfaced periodically in the 1930s and into the 1940s; even so the colony continued to grow. With nearly 1600 residents in 1934 it was the sixth largest ethnic enclave in Packington. 37

The Mexican residential pattern in New City was not dissimilar to that of their European neighbors. They tended to cluster around the first streets to which they gained access, but they did not come to predominate on any of them. In 1929, just before the Depression would induce many from the colony to return home, Mexicans comprised 32 out of 300 households on South Marshfield between 42nd and 47th Streets. Several addresses had more than one Mexican resident, but no multiple-unit buildings were entirely Mexican. Mexicans displayed a great deal of mobility, often moving every year or two, just as other poor urban residents did, but researchers discovered more stable elements in the population as well. By 1934 the Mexicans had broken past Ashland Avenue and had begun
to utilize public facilities in that area more frequently. Finally, some Mexicans joined the home-owning ranks in the early 1940s, as real estate agents began to direct more attention toward them. 38

East of the stockyards along Halsted Street were Bridgeport and Fuller Park, two tough ethnic communities which prided themselves on their role in maintaining the color line along Wentworth Avenue. Mexicans settled into these areas in the early 1920s, taking places in the 600 block of West 24th Place, the 2700 block of South Wallace, and the 700 block of West 51st Street, among others. The Irish made life hard for the Mexicans, as they had for the Jewish and Greek shopkeepers who also stayed in the area, sometimes isolating them socially from the remainder of the community. Real estate agents maneuvered Mexicans into deteriorated buildings, often demanding a month's rent in advance and evicting with little compunction. However, "even if the rent is smaller, [than that paid by the Irish] they are reasonably certain to get it." Paul Taylor thought that the Irish would succeed in repelling the Mexicans as they had the blacks, but over 700 remained in 1934. About half were in contested tracts between Wentworth Avenue and the Rock Island tracks, the rest were deeper in the community. By that time they also had attained access to some local institutions. 39

South Chicago and its satellite communities were home to many of the men who toiled in the steel mills of the Calumet district, and Mexicans were no exception. Also multiethnic, this region witnessed an influx of Hispanics during the 1920s as the newest wave of millworkers gravitated to the cottages around the plants. Mexicans lived in the poorer parts of South Chicago in 1926,
and conditions there were very bad, "but no worse than when Austrians
and Poles were dwelling there." Up in "the Bush" and over in
Burnside the Germans, Poles, Ukrainians, and other unskilled workers
gave Mexicans grudging entree into their neighborhoods.40 Mexicans
had a particularly bad reputation in these environs because of
their role as strike-breakers in the years after World War I,
and their early identification with blacks along The Strand did
not help their cause. Stories of rent-gouging and violence were
rife, but within a matter of a few years the Mexicans started to
drift into the better neighborhoods away from the mills and into
more comfortable quarters, often "the most desirable flats in the
building." One stretch of Burley Avenue, several blocks west of
the poorest sections by the mills, and beyond the limits set for
Negroes in that region, already had 51 Hispanic heads of households
in 1929. The Mexicans resided on eight of the ten blocks between
83rd and 93rd Streets, where they lived among families with names
like Nagy, Keri, and Muszynski.41

The largest and probably most visible Mexican colony in the 1920s was
on the Near West Side around Hull-House. Again, observers noted that as the
newest residents, Mexicans often got the poorest facilities in the area,
houses that are in the last stages of deterioration, houses that have an
alley for a front yard." The buildings were old, crowded and in poor repair.
However, all of the housing around Hull-House was bad. Moreover, the rents
were low, there was a variety of industries nearby, and transportation
to other manufacturing districts was readily available. "The same
reasons which led other nationalities to settle in this quarter led the
Mexicans to do likewise."42
Harsh as was life on the West Side, Mexicans were not trapped there as blacks were in the Black Belt. "The hopeful thing about this neighborhood is that Mexicans do not stay in it long. The schools and settlements report a huge turnover in their classes and clubs. As soon as the families become established, they move to better quarters in more desirable neighborhoods." If Italians found the territory west of Morgan Street more inviting than Halsted Street, Mexicans undoubtedly felt the same way. Small numbers of them had already made that move by 1923. Those remaining behind in the older neighborhoods mixed with the Europeans on nearly every block, as they did on Newberry Street between Taylor and Roosevelt, where Spanish surnames headed 13 of the 156 households, or on Forquer Street between DesPlaines and Halsted, where 8 Spanish-surnamed householders were mingled with about 50 Italian families. Individual buildings displayed the same tendency: Casper, Gocek, Guadalupe, Handusky, Pisena, Salvatore, and Skabt were all listed at 613 Bunker Street.43

Mexicans colonized Brighton Park around Pershing Road and Kedzie Avenue in the early 1920s, where they lived among Polish and Jewish neighbors. One of the locals reported that in 1924 Mexicans had not moved east of Kedzie because of community opposition. "An Italian who had bought real estate east of Kedzie in Brighton Park had faced considerable neighborhood antagonism, so Mexicans did not even try." Jewish tailors accused their Hispanic counterparts of trying to undersell them, while a realtor claimed that Mexicans had to pay more per flat than the Europeans. Mexican
poolrooms and groceries were visible already in 1924, and the
restriction of Mexicans to the west of Kedzie did not hold long.
Anita Jones found nearly 90 Mexican students at Davis School, 3014
West 39th Place, and she noted Mexican families scattered between
Western Avenue and Central Park Avenue, well beyond the boundaries
claimed in 1924. Some still remained in the midst of the Depression.
"In many ways these are the most desirable blocks in which Mexican
laborers live."\(^{44}\)

Small numbers of Mexicans resided in other parts of Chicago
outside the three main colonies. In 1916 about 50 were identified
in ward 21; a few years later some were living on the North Side
between Clark Street and the Chicago River, in another port of
entry for new immigrants, where their compatriots included Italians,
Japanese, Chinese, and Assyrians. Upwardly mobile groups of Mexicans
lived around the Clybourn/Fullerton/Halsted triangle and near
Wilson and Broadway, both well north of the Loop and beyond the
usual immigrant receiving areas, and some Spanish surnames had
made the further marches of the North and Northwest Sides by the
end of the 1930s. Others lived on the Near South Side and around
Armour Square, where they succeeded Italians and Croats, intermingling
with a "mixed population of French, Austrians, Germans, [and] Irish."
A few Hispanics were out in the suburb-like portions of the Southwest
Side by the mid-1930s, in such communities as Garfield Ridge, West
Elsdon, Gage Park, Ashburn, and the Clearing District, along with
the East Side and Hegewisch, in the far southeastern part of the city.\(^{45}\)
This obvious ability of Mexicans to gain entry into predominantly white ethnic neighborhoods is significant, for it counters the belief that racial characteristics rather than economic circumstances dictated the residential patterns of Hispanic migrants in Chicago, and it certainly separates the Chicano experience in Chicago from that in the Southwest. Paul Taylor reported that occasional proposals to segregate Mexicans emanated from the business community in the Calumet region, but he also noted that none ever came to fruition. Taylor did not specify from which portions of the Calumet region these proposals sprang, and the real source may have been East Chicago and Gary, whose residents treated Mexicans considerably more roughly than Chicagoans did. The East Chicago Chamber of Commerce issued a vitriolic report on local conditions, which advocated the segregation of Mexicans and blacks to minimize "the untoward influences of these persons." As long as blacks and Mexicans enjoyed access to the entire city, "East Chicago would never be a good place to live." Investigators for the Home Owners Loan Corporation later described one portion of East Chicago as a "good neighborhood 20 years ago; overrun by Mexicans and Negroes." Segregation in public schools never extended to Mexicans as it did to blacks in East Chicago, but the local community found other ways to express its distaste for Hispanics, such as the repatriation campaign of the 1930s.46

Mexicans moving to Chicago objected to any identification with blacks for the same reasons that white ethnics had. They also wished to avoid the stigma which the dominant society attached to black
skin. The presence of the blacks permitted the new immigrants from Europe to be white, despite nativist hostility, and that same presence allowed Mexicans to assimilate more readily into white society in Chicago than they had in the Southwest, as their colonial press early realized.  

The first Hispanics in Chicago did sometimes associate with Negroes. Mexicans and Negroes lived in the same buildings or on the same lots along The Strand in South Chicago, perhaps fearing that whites would not rent to them elsewhere. Sociologist Robert Redfield doubted that Mexicans would heed those who advised them to leave the Negro streets, and Mexicans joined the Negro invasion of the Maxwell Street district in the middle and late 1920s, although in small numbers. Others frequented Negro dance halls, such as the one at 47th and Grand Boulevard in the Black Belt. However, when a concessionaire at the 12th Street Beach refused admission to Mexicans and blacks, the colony lodged a protest through the Mexican Consul, and achieved access to the swimming area. Mexicans on the Near West Side were aware of Italian dislike for them, but they were also attuned to community attitudes toward the Negro. Anxious for social acceptance, Mexicans avoided blacks whenever possible. Manuel P., a member of the second generation, perhaps summarized the feelings of his compatriots. Manuel preferred living in an all white society to his existence at an integrated school. Young blacks beat him up and they "lied a lot." 

The fact that restrictive covenants in the Chicago area almost never proscribed Mexicans eased their entry into the white neighborhoods.
In districts without covenants, "where Negro families are excluded, Mexicans are tolerated." The Greater Pullman Property Restriction Association forbade the entry of Negroes into that segment of the far South Side, but its existence did not prevent Mexicans from living there. On the Northwest Side local spokesmen told social workers that a Negro invasion would excite "violent feeling against it," but the few Mexican families already in the district "seem to be accepted on the same basis as anyone else." A West Side realtor claimed that Mexicans had an even worse effect on property values than blacks did, but the residents of white neighborhoods did not agree. Members of "neighborhood improvement associations" (a euphemism for signers of restrictive covenants) in Chicago and Detroit were almost unanimously against having blacks as neighbors (85 percent), and about one-third disapproved of Orientals in their community. More opposed Jews, however, than Mexicans (11.7 percent to 9.9 percent). 49

The greater tolerance of white ethnics toward Mexicans in their communities, along with the evident desire of Hispanics to avoid black neighborhoods, effectively completed the isolation of blacks in Chicago as even the newest of the new immigrants spurned them. In 1920, at the height of the postwar housing crisis, and only a year after the race riots, the Bureau of the Census recorded the presence of 71 Mexicans (out of 1265 in the city) in the 30 census tracts that formed the heart of the Black Belt. Approximately 90,000 Negroes lived in those same tracts. In 1934, the special census provided another look at the demographics of the city. Mexicans (as well as native-born and foreign-born whites) lived
Table 1

Residential proximity of blacks and Mexicans in Chicago, 1934, by tracts with greatest population of each ethnic group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRACT</th>
<th>MEXICANS</th>
<th>BLACKS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>866</td>
<td>1439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>652</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>563</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
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<td>483</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>436</td>
<td>417</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>666</td>
<td>403</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>399</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>701</td>
<td>397</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>671</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>783</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
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<td>259</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>TRACT</th>
<th>MEXICANS</th>
<th>BLACKS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>8765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
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<td>586</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>neg.*</td>
<td>7024</td>
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<td>601</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5270</td>
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</table>

*Negligible refers to totals for tracts in which the number of "other foreign-born," the category in which Mexicans were recorded, was less than 10. No breakdown according to nationality were given in such instances. All data are from Charles Newcomb and Richard 0. Lang, eds., Census Data of the City of Chicago, 1934 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), Table 4, passim.
in tracts in which succession was taking place, but they still avoided the Black Belt. In the 47 census tracts which had become 90 percent or more black, the census takers found only 132 Mexicans, with 149 more residing in the 20 tracts which were between 70 and 90 percent black. Fewer than 300 Mexicans, out of the more than 12,000 in Chicago, were compelled to live in the most heavily segregated zones of the city. Conversely, Mexicans occupied 81 census tracts in which the Negro population was one percent or less. They numbered about 6400 persons, or just over half of the colony. Another 21 tracts, in which blacks comprised between one and ten percent of the population were home to about 2700 Mexicans. Thus around three-quarters of the small Mexican colony inhabited census tracts in which the population was at least 90 percent white. This was below the white segregation index, 97 percent in 1930, but it was still a solid indication of the inability or disinterest of the white community in driving the Mexicans into the sharply defined ghetto area.\(^5\)

The years after 1940 did not bring any significant alteration of residential separation from black Chicago. Census tract 442, on the Near West Side, is an illustration of the progress of succession from white to black, but it is also an example of Mexican mobility. In 1920 this tract was about one percent black. The proportion was 43 percent in 1930, 65 percent in 1940, and over 90 percent in 1950. In 1934 there were over 450 Mexican residents in tract 442, some 19 percent of the population, and black social scientist W.S. Taylor identified it as an area where considerable Negro-Mexican "amalgamation"
had occurred. Taylor was just visiting when he made his observations; in 1941 local social workers commented upon the decreasing number of Mexicans around Maxwell Street. Mexicans remained on the Near West Side, close to the old Maxwell Street "Ghetto," but in the 1960s the two sections with the highest concentration of Negroes showed no record of a Mexican population. The blacks comprised over half of the population of the Near West Side in 1960, but they lived in their own corner of the community, apart from the Italians and Mexicans.51

The industrial far South Side further exemplified this separation. In 1934 Mexicans inhabited Chatham, Burnside, South Chicago, Calumet Heights, Roseland, South Deering, East Side, and West Pullman; in almost every instance they lived in all-white tracts. In 1970 a University of Chicago sociologist went into South Chicago for field work. He observed significant numbers of Mexicans residing in five of the ten distinct neighborhoods of the area (not census tracts), with a few blacks located in only one of the ten districts. This resembled a representation made in 1948, when a community leader informed the Chicago Welfare Council that "Negroes lived in greater numbers in one section, Mexicans in another, etc. This is purely a matter of choice and available vacancies." The observer was not totally correct: riots in the 1950s at Trumbull and Calumet Parks would reaffirm that blacks had fewer options as to where they lived in South Chicago than did either whites or Mexicans.52

So completely did Mexicans internalize white racial attitudes on segregated housing that another student discovered no differences in opinion between long-time Mexican residents and their Czech,
Irish, Lithuanian, and Polish colleagues on such questions as integrated neighborhoods and interracial marriages. The community in question bordered on the Black Belt, so naturally local residents considered integration a pertinent issue. The Mexicans fell in the middle between the Czechs and the Poles and Lithuanians, in their unwillingness to accept black neighbors. Despite differences in cultural background, recentness of immigration, and experiences in American society, the five ethnic groups questioned revealed a "striking similarity" in their racial sentiments.53

The ability of the Mexicans to stay on the white side of the tracks in Chicago had an obvious importance for their life in the city. From their very advent in the metropolitan region, most Hispanics had lived in the poorer districts. Advertising and marketing people considered the Near and Lower West Side communities lower-class, with annual incomes between $900 and $1,000, low rentals, and few amenities such as refrigerators, while investment analysts described the same area as "hopeless without the further erection of projects like the Jane Addams homes," because "most of the buildings should be wrecked." Rents were low, however, well below the median for Chicago as a whole, and Mexicans tended to live in the lower rent units. Tract 441, which had the largest number (866) of Mexican residents in 1934, reported a median rental of $13.40 in 1940, while tract 436, which had the highest proportion of Mexicans (25 percent) in 1934, showed a median rental of $13.37 in 1940.54
The various South Side communities in which Hispanics were
evident received generally higher ratings than those on the West
Side. South Chicago was mainly middle class in 1934, although
the Mexican district was probably lower-middle class. The annual
income was almost $2200, levels of homeownership were higher, as
were rentals. South Deering, Brighton Park, and New City ranged
from low to lower-middle and middle-class in their characteristics,
with annual incomes at or above those on the West Side, and higher
rates of homeownership as well. Each district "had the advantage
to the class of people residing there of being close to industry."
The Back of the Yards had the added advantage of "good schools,
churches, and play yards." Mexicans in these areas did not match
the standards of living which their white neighbors attained,
displaying more frequent tenancy, greater crowding, and a distinct
association with physically deficient houses, but they also paid
lower rents than did the whites, at least in South Chicago. 55

The matter of rents is important, for it was widely reported
that landlords from other ethnic groups gouged their Mexican tenants
"because they were newcomers and because they were Mexicans."
Polish and Irish proprietors advanced the rents when they learned
that their prospects were Hispanic; in one block of South Chicago
the median rental was more that $5.00 per month higher than on any
other block studied, a fact which the student attributed to the
presence of black and Mexican families on that block. Taylor
believed that rents were outrageous in terms of space and conditions
(and he was correct on that point). Such problems remained visible into the 1940s.\textsuperscript{56}

As is often the case, there was another side to the question. The charge that Mexican housing was substandard was true beyond the shadow of a doubt. However, it was well-documented that the housing of most new immigrants in Chicago was dismal, and that the cost often exceeded the value received, so Mexicans did not differ from their white predecessors on that score. Because they could live in white ethnic neighborhoods, Hispanics were far less circumscribed in where they could look for housing, and this was ultimately reflected in how much they paid. The block in South Chicago, with its extraordinarily high median rental, did not represent the whole picture for Mexican tenants in Chicago. Mexicans resided on practically every block canvassed in the South Chicago study, and nowhere else did they appear to force up housing costs. In South Deering a large number of Mexican tenants occupied the block with the lowest median rental, and some Mexicans were domiciled on the least expensive blocks in Pullman. When the United Charities of Chicago queried aid recipients about their living costs, its researchers learned that Mexicans most commonly paid between $3.00 and $4.00 per room per month, below the level of $5.00 to $6.00 per room per month which non-Mexicans reported. In fact, Mexicans spent a lower proportion of their income on rent than any other wage-earning group in Chicago. Over 77 percent of the Mexicans questioned expended 20 percent or less of their income for rent. Around 65 percent of the non-Mexican foreign born were in this category,
but only 23 percent of the Negroes were. This situation has persisted through the years: in 1970 the Spanish-speaking population of Chicago paid a lower gross rent and spent a lower proportion of their monthly income for housing than did the non-Spanish-speaking.57

Once more a comparison with black Chicago is appropriate. The community of Douglas, which stretched along Federal Street in the heart of the Black Belt, had a median rent of $35.28 per month in 1930, about $9.00 above the median on the Near West Side, $11.00 more than the median for Fuller Park, just across the Wentworth Avenue line, and about $13.00 over the median in New City. The gap closed somewhat by 1940, but it still cost a black more to live in Douglas than it did a Mexican, Pole, Italian, Czech, or Irishman to live in any of the other communities. In the black districts "competition for housing" forced up prices. So as far as Negroes were concerned, "the market favored the landlord much more than the tenant." The "competition for housing" evident in the Negro districts stemmed from white pressures toward segregation; because whites never applied the same force on the Hispanics, the latter were able to make their way into the less expensive ethnic communities and gradually secure better conditions denied to the blacks.58

V

The entry of Mexicans into European immigrant neighborhoods, a tacit admission that Mexicans were potential allies of the ethnics in their struggle to maintain their own vision of an acceptable society (i.e., a white one), presented the Hispanics with both problems and opportunities. Mexicans had to develop suitable
religious and economic institutions for their new homes; they had to resist the aggression of local gangs to establish territorial rights; and, because of the juxtaposition of job performance and street life in working class communities, they had to prove themselves both good workers and amenable to the goals of their fellow employees. The progress made in each of these areas in the 1920s and 1930s reinforced the tendency of the European ethnics to view the newcomers in individual rather than racial terms and paved the way for their ultimate acceptance. The road was neither smooth nor straight, for the almost continual arrival of new, and often illegal, immigrants complicated matters for the earlier generations, just as the influx of poor Italian peasants prior to 1924 retarded assimilation of that ethnic group, but progress was apparent.

The disinterest of local Roman Catholic parishes in Mexican communicants has received frequent comment. In addition to recognizing the difference between the more ritualistic Catholicism of the Mexican and the less emotional version of the Irish-dominated American Church, recent writers have noted that ethnic parishes often excluded Mexicans from their services. Contemporary evidence of hostility toward Mexicans on the part of the national parishes is not lacking. This seemed especially true in New City, where the attitude of local Catholics ranged from neglect at St. Rose of Lima to active opposition in the Polish parishes. St. Francis Assisi, on the Near West Side, likewise did not extend itself immediately to draw Mexicans into the fold. Language was a problem, for few of the churches retained a Spanish-speaking priest, but ethnic prejudice no doubt contributed to this treatment as well.
It is important to remember once again the context of the times. Ethnic conflicts were not purely secular; they flourished in the religious life of the local community as well. For example, Italians invading the Hull-House region were unwelcome in the West Side parishes. They commuted to the Church of the Assumption on the North Side during the 1890s, or else Italian priests came to hold mass in storefront halls. Not until 1899 did Guardian Angel open as an Italian parish. St. Wenceslaus, in the same vicinity, retained its Bohemian flavor. Italians in turn later prevented blacks from using Holy Family Church, also on the West Side.61

Ethnics agitated for the creation of national parishes with considerable success through the early 1900s. The Poles were particularly vehement, sometimes threatening to join the schismatic Polish National Church if their wishes were not granted. A local Polish paper expressed the depth of Slavic sentiment when it declared that Irish domination of Chicago Catholicism had created parochial schools in which Polish children were "systematically and purposely deprived of their Polish soul," until they finally yielded to "Irishization." Archbishop George Mundelein sought to stem the development of the ethnic parishes, but those established before his regime remained intact and in 1930 the national parishes still contained over half of the Catholic communicants in the city.

These facts help to explain why Mexican parishioners were rebuffed in many Catholic institutions in the 1920s and 1930s. In a national parish ties of language, culture, and ethnic pride would combine to keep any newcomers at a distance, not just Mexicans. Ironically, members of the Mexican parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe (O.L.G.)
displayed similar tendencies when they had the chance. Location of the National Shrine of St. Jude at O.L.G. in South Chicago attracted a sizeable non-Mexican attendance at the church. The local Mexican congregation resented the American presence, fearing that they would lose control of their church to Anglos.\textsuperscript{62}

In actuality the hierarchy in Chicago was aware of the Mexican community at a very early date. The first Spanish-language services occurred in 1918, and recommendations for an expanded program soon followed.\textsuperscript{63} In the 1920s Mundelein began to recruit Spanish-speaking clerics to man facilities in the Mexican colonies, while the \textit{New World}, published by the archdiocese, editorialized about the duty of the Church to provide for the spiritual needs of these latest migrants.\textsuperscript{64} The Archbishop broke with his established policy of discouraging national parishes to sanction the construction of Our Lady of Guadalupe, whose original funding came largely from an acquaintance of Mundelein's. His approval of the project may have been a tacit admission that the Slavs of South Chicago were unlikely to incorporate the Mexicans into their churches, but it also aimed to combat Protestant proselytizing and to provide a more satisfactory social center for the immigrants than the commercial entertainments of The Strand. Construction of the new church took place during 1928, and the Catholic press gave the topic considerable coverage. The new pastor, Father James Tort, vocally advocated Americanization and assimilation, and both the groundbreaking and the dedication ceremonies were multiethnic events, with the Ancient Order of Hibernians and various Holy Name Societies marching beside Mexican children.\textsuperscript{65}
The West Side colony eventually obtained its own parish at St. Francis of Assisi, when the local priest offered it as an alternative to a proposed new building at the corner of Polk and Morgan Streets. St. Francis had made an earlier transition from German to Italian, so this move simply recognized another shift in the local populace. St. Francis maintained a more extensive social program than other parishes, motivated in part by the presence of Protestant missions and settlements on the Near West Side. Priests from St. Francis travelled to the Back of the Yards for about 10 years to minister to Mexicans in that part of town; the Stockyards colony finally established its own church in 1947. On the West Side, as in other immigrant sections, the tradition of the national parish lingered. An investigator in the early 1960s noted that "each church in the area serves a specific ethnic community - none of them bring together different ethnic groups."66

Of considerable importance to the establishment of a viable ethnic community is the presence of social and economic institutions which "belong" to a specific group, i.e., businesses or clubs in which members of the group are accepted and to which they can relate through ties of culture or language. Ethnic businesses began as a means of filling a need which the dominant society did not meet, the more successful ones grew and tapped the larger non-ethnic market. Virtually no Mexican businesses had reached that stage in 1940, although a few were in such a position by the 1970s.67

The bulk of the early enterprises were those which appealed to highly mobile solos, especially pool rooms and restaurants,
followed by grocers, tailors, and other service-oriented ventures. These had several advantages: they required little capital investment; they provided a congenial meeting place for the scattered residents of the colony; and they offered very necessary services to men on their own in a city. Pool halls, for example, often included barbering facilities and their proprietors served as bankers for those who distrusted Anglo financial institutions. These budding entrepreneurs met with resistance from vendors of other nationalities, as when pushcart operators along Maxwell Street kept away Mexican stands for several years. Sometimes Italians and Greeks did patronize Mexican establishments, however, and the little stores took root. For example, a quarter of the shops along Ashland Avenue between 43rd and 45th Streets were Mexican-owned by 1928.

Many of the Mexican ventures were ephemeral, opening, closing, reopening later at a different address or with a different name. Robert Redfield identified 18 Mexican-operated establishments during a tour of the South Chicago colony in 1925. Three years later at least 26 Mexican-oriented businesses served the region, sometimes with Mexicans in apparent partnership with non-Hispanos, as at the barber shop/billiards hall which Gregory Davila and Nicholas Svetoff ran at 9001 Green Bay (perhaps the same "Billar Mexicano" noticed by Redfield in 1925). Across the street Al Horosetos and Sam Guerrero shared another barbering and billiards facility. Anita Jones recorded 19 Mexican-owned businesses west of the stockyards in 1928. Only six survived in 1934, when settlement workers canvassed New City, although replacements may have retained the old clientele. The United Tea Store at least did, after taking over
for La Tienda Colorado at 4526 S. Ashland. Court documents indicated that Victor Martínez, who went bankrupt in 1940, owed $19.00 to the United Tea Store, a debt he acquired when he cosigned for a Mr. García, no longer in the city. Attrition among Mexican businesses was less severe on the Near West Side: Jones enumerated 38 shops in 1928; six years later a Burgess student counted 31 stores in the same neighborhood. The latter source did not list the names and addresses of the businesses, but the overall decline of 18 percent indicates a fair degree of economic resilience, considering the effect of the intervening depression.69

Sample work histories relate how Mexican immigrants drifted from wage laborer to proprietor and back to laborer, sometimes in a matter of months. Encarnación Martínez arrived in Chicago in 1923, where he opened a boarding house. Four years later he turned to the retail grocery trade. This lasted for five months, after which he resumed his connection with boarding houses, giving three different addresses in eight years. Another immigrant, Raymond Rodríguez, ran a restaurant in Detroit before switching to the steel industry as a bricklayer in East Chicago. These cases illustrate the narrow margin on which Mexican businessmen survived; the distance between restaurant owner and steel worker was not great.70

The Mexicans who migrated to Chicago also had to carve out territorial rights in their new neighborhoods. In the 1920s Mexicans in each of the larger colonies faced frequent assaults from the more established ethnic groups. Young Poles living Back of the Yards "would pounce upon a Mexican on the street and beat him without provocation," while Slavic children chased their Chicano counterparts.
A most dangerous incident occurred in 1926 when a Mexican shot a Pole in self-defense and local toughs decided to "clean out" the district. In this instance the police took prompt action, dispersing gangs along the street before they could start trouble. New City remained tense for several years, but Mexicans gained and maintained access to the facilities at both the Davis Square and Cornell Square field houses, in stark contrast to the problems Negroes encountered when they tried to use similar structures in Fuller Park or Armour Square. Fights often broke out at Seward School, but sources there did not consider the situation anything more than the ordinary reaction to newcomers. In 1942 some 80 percent of the Mexicans queried indicated that their relations were "mostly" with other Mexicans, but nearly 20 percent reported friendship ties "mostly" with non-Mexicans. 71

South Chicago witnessed its share of inter-ethnic conflicts also, where three "nations" of gangs existed, held together by a "chronic state of warfare." Polish gangs beat up Mexican boys for no reason at all, and occasionally the fights engulfed the adults of the community, as in the instance of a melee between blacks and Mexicans in 1928. Early residents of South Deering recalled that Mexicans had to prove their fighting ability against the Serbs and Italians, just as members of those nationalities had to "battle the Irish on the corner of 106th and Torrence" during their own early days in South Chicago. The Polish antagonism toward Mexicans stemmed, in the mind of one spectator, from their own social and economic insecurity. Mexicans were the only available
group whom they could treat as inferiors. Blacks would have met this need, perhaps, had any lived around Russell Square in the 1930s. None did, so the Poles vented their feelings on the Mexicans. Progress, however, was visible in the 1930s. Lines had blurred somewhat between Mexican and Polish gangs, and multiethnic groups emerged. In 1934 a local resident objected that Poles monopolized facilities at Bessemer Park. "Aside from the Mexicans, other organizations have difficulty in obtaining permits for the use of ball fields and halls." Young Chicanos occasionally participated in activities under the sponsorship of the Russell Square Community Committee, and settlement workers considered tensions in the 1940s the result of gang conflict rather than racial or cultural differences. 72

The initial relations between Mexicans and European ethnics around Hull-House were mixed. Poles showed an immediate dislike for the newcomers, bullying the children on the streets and occasionally attacking older family members also. This "latent" antagonism resurfaced in the late 1930s, at that time instigated by Mexican gang activity. Italians at first were friendly, inviting the newcomers into their homes to visit and defending them against the Poles. Later in the decade the Mexican press reported numerous Italian assaults, but some of this seems to have been purely criminal activity rather than racially-motivated attacks. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence of hostility remained into the 1940s to stimulate the comment that "their neighbors plainly show by words and actions that they [the Mexicans] are not wanted." 73

The Mexicans did not leave the Near West Side or any of the other neighborhoods, of course, so pressures against them may
have been less sharp than some authors suggested. The second
generation in each community showed signs of breaking down the
"race-consciousness" of the adults. Bars against interaction were
not rigid, and some Mexicans crossed ethnic lines to join
non-Mexican gangs, evolving with them from play to criminal activities.
The hardcore delinquents in the early Mexican colonies were almost
always those who had penetrated multiethnic groups, where they
internalized gang culture. Whether the play groups grew into
gangs or not, the entry of Mexican youth into their activities
paved the way for the more complete acceptance of Mexicans in the
ethnic communities. 74

The interspersion of Chicanos and Europeans in the vicinity
of the steel mills and the packing house encouraged interethnic
contacts on a large scale. Just as personal acquaintance helped
children to overcome prejudices, the fact that work and community
life intertwined in these neighborhoods permitted people to judge
their fellows on a more intimate basis, and allowed them to tran-
scend ethnic stereotypes, an opportunity which segregation in the
Black Belt denied to black workingmen. Mexican cooperation in
union organizing drives and other forms of working class protest
in the 1930s revealed their identification with their colleagues
and helped to overcome earlier antagonism based on fear of economic
competition. 75

The fact that other ethnicities viewed Mexicans as a threat to
their often precarious economic position in the industrial world
of Chicago lay beneath much of their original hostility. Many
of the first arrivals had come to the Calumet region as scabs in the tumultuous years after World War I. The Europeans conveniently forgot that they or their parents had often traversed the same route. What was significant was that Mexicans, because of their lower standard of living and their apparent ability to undercut current wage levels, were getting jobs which Europeans thought were rightfully theirs, and this complicated neighborhood relations. Mexicans also seemed willing to accept discrimination on the job; such as bad assignments, poor equipment, or blatant company exploitation, and that further eroded their status in the eyes of the Anglos.76

Mexicans did not remain satisfied with their position in the plants, however, and in the 1930s they participated actively in the campaign to organize the steel mills, although they were less active in the packinghouses. It sometimes seemed like Mexican colonies were deserted during organizational drives. Club and recreational activities drew small crowds: "many of the members were not present because they attended a meeting of the Steel Workers in South Chicago." Around 200 Mexicans belonged to the United Steel Workers by late 1936. Their participation on picket lines was so enthusiastic that word went out among the strike-breakers to "watch out for the Mexicans." Actions like this put to rest rumors that Mexicans were immune to unionization, improved their prestige among neighbors and coworkers, and won tangible benefits such as union support in conflicts with employers.77

Hispanos engaged in another form of direct action against employers in the 1930s when they joined with other laborers in a
battery of occupational injury cases. Men like Louis Pérez, Toney García, Emiliano Durán, and Francisco Figueroa sued for damages after contracting tuberculosis as a result of working in dusty surroundings without proper warning or equipment. In several instances, when the men became too ill to perform the company in question discharged them. None won their case, but the fact that they tried further discredited the popular belief that Hispanics were tractable, as an executive at a Waukegan asbestos plant had claimed in the mid-1920s.78

Residential proximity enhanced the opportunity for interethnic marriage, the step which sociologists considered the final one before true assimilation. Mexican solos facing the wrath of Polish men might not have agreed that intermarriage meant assimilation, because competition for women was almost as furious as competition for jobs. Polish women in particular took to Mexicans, a fact which had "put the Polish gentlemen in a bad humor." Dances at Hull-House drew a large number of non-Mexican girls from different ethnic backgrounds, including Italians, Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Irish, Greeks, and French, as well as the aforementioned Poles, and Taylor cited instances of intermarriage between Mexicans and members of each of these nationalities. Longevity and assimilation made Mexicans more acceptable to the Anglo and European population in the 1930s and after, and the rate of intermarriage increased over that of the early days of the colony.79

The question of Chicano assimilation in Chicago remains. Some writers note a surface similarity between the Mexican experience
and that of white European ethnics, but argue that the generation coming of age in the 1940s still found it difficult to obtain skilled jobs or move freely throughout the city. Instead of assimilating into Anglo society, the older Mexicans were overwhelmed in the flood of new immigration after World War II. 80 It is true that the large number of Mexican migrants since 1945 has served to keep the economic standing of the colony as a whole below that of Anglo society, but this view overlooks the gains which the descendants of the pioneers have made, and it totally ignores the willingness of whites to countenance Mexicans in their neighborhoods. Because of this fact, established residents in the older settlements have been able to enter into primary or peer group relations with members of other ethnic groups, an achievement which is nearly impossible for blacks even when they live in or near the white community. At the same time Mexicans in these white ethnic subdivisions have almost completely adopted the racial mores of their compatriots. 81 The violent division of Chicago society into black and white, while not a meritorious circumstance, is nevertheless a fact of life, and despite their inauspicious beginnings in the 1920s, the original Mexican migrants and their descendants found that the social dynamics of neighborhood life would ultimately lead to their acceptance and integration. On the basis of this experience, one would have to expect that the more recent arrivals, documented or not, will gradually attain the same status.
CHAPTER V

Mexican Immigrants and the Settlement Movement: "Americanization" and Assimilation on the Urban Frontier

During the early years of the twentieth century settlement houses, almost alone among American institutions, retained a positive attitude toward the problems and potentialities of the immigrant population. The settlement movement, which sought to "Americanize" the newcomers and to assist in their adjustments to life in a new environment, was strongest in the urban centers of the Northeast and Midwest; despite the obvious need for such services in the Southwest, settlements in that region were few and far between. In Chicago, settlement practices simulated neighborhood life: white ethnics fought each other to control the facilities, and sometimes forced house personnel to organize clubs along nationality lines, even though integration was the ultimate goal. Blacks usually were excluded from the settlements just as they were from the surrounding blocks. Mexicans, on the other hand, found themselves in a situation similar to that of the Europeans. There was an open door at the settlement, community hostility, some separation, and ultimately some integration. The settlement movement was not a panacea for all of the problems which Mexican immigrants faced, but the houses and their workers offered at least some succor in an alien environment and so eased the transition.
The settlement ideal, as it originated in England, posited that the university-educated should reside in the poorer sections of town to influence the people there toward better local government and a wider social and intellectual life. The institution should serve as a rallying point from which intellectuals and laborers could promote social reform and should enhance the possibility of social justice through more complete understanding of both ends of society. The new enterprises were experimental, but permanent, their caretakers unconventional and sympathetic with the poor and oppressed. When transplanted to the United States the settlements retained these attitudes to a certain degree; Mary McDowell expressed them to colleagues in Hyde Park when she noted that because the university community benefited from its position in the city, "as a group they should have some definite work for the welfare of Chicago."¹

The English model of neighborhood work was not directly transferable to the New World, however, where "the clannishness of nationality or race" complicated traditional slum problems of poverty, morality, lack of sanitation and healthful recreation, and the scarcity of means for self-improvement. The settlements found themselves mediating between "races" as well as between classes, trying to acquaint aliens, especially the less assimilable Italians, Armenians, Poles, and Greeks, with American institutions. At the same time they engaged in the "more hazardous undertaking" of interpreting the immigrants to Americans as they sought to draw out and retain contributions from the traditions and culture of the newcomers.²
Cultural pluralism was a major tenet of the settlement credo, and establishments like Hull-House and the University of Chicago Settlement House pursued this policy with vigor. The settlements wished to preserve and illuminate the varied achievements of the many ethnic groups in their districts, working in particular with the educated immigrant to conserve "higher values in family life" or to foster educational or cultural development. This goal necessitated contacts between the migrants themselves as well as between the ethnics and the settlements. It was possible in this manner to turn a source of conflict into a common heritage and binding factor. Such activities as orchestra programs, in which nationality musical ensembles performed for the entire neighborhood, and intergroup councils, which offered the opportunity to cooperate against common problems, were examples.  

Cultural pluralism was one goal of the settlements, but it was not always immediately obtainable. Interethnic conflicts sometimes forced separations, as occurred at Chicago Commons. Settlement leaders regretted this fact, but most of the houses came to believe that "homogeneous ethnic groups" were valuable adjuncts to the transition from alien to American. Hull-House, Henry Booth House, the Marcy Center, and the Jewish People's Institute all followed this practice extensively, but most of the settlements had at least a few divisions along nationality lines. Occasionally institutions like the Marcy Center went to the extreme of migrating with its members to a new community, but most remained at the original location and adapted their programs to the replacement population.
Settlements in Chicago endeavored to offer benefits to their clients more concrete than cultural recognition. Residents of Hull-House very early adopted the role of go-between for their neighbors and the various institutions of the city, securing support for deserted women, damages for injured workers, or insurance payments for beneficiaries. At the Association House staff members went beyond the minimum goal of affording educational and recreational facilities for members and tried to "mend matters" in cases of domestic difficulties. The University of Chicago (UC) Settlement was slower to take up this type of activity, preferring "to show the social needs of the community, ... to focus attention upon conditions which should be changed." This was in accord with Mary McDowell's belief that settlements should arouse interest in civic affairs, encourage active citizenship on the part of the neighborhood, and then "turn over to civic authorities the functions of the Settlement as soon as possible." However, in the mid-1920s the UC Settlement added a case worker and a neighborhood visitor to its staff, who guided foreigners to the proper agencies and verified the status of those requesting assistance. The settlement provided some legal advice and its administration hoped to acquire a full-time employment counselor. The UC Settlement was following the lead of other Protestant institutions in this endeavor, for "a large portion of the Protestant worker's time was given over to 'protective work,' such as securing employment."

The Immigrants Protective League (I.P.L.), while not a settlement per se, was an agency which assisted aliens in adjusting to life in
the United States. The I.P.L. exerted its influence to unite families separated because of difficulties with the immigration authorities, investigated exploitation by police, lawyers, and employers, and advised on education and citizenship, often resorting to the foreign-language or colonial press to reach those with problems. The League also gathered information about immigrants in order to make the wider society more aware of the newcomers' values and heritage, perhaps in this way reducing the ethnic and religious divisions so noticeable in Chicago. All of these aims were very much in line with the settlement ideal.  

Recreational facilities were another feature of settlement programs, because games taught "fair play, clean hands, and clean speech," and permitted the social workers to redirect time into activities significant to the personal and social development of their clients. Settlement dances, designed to instruct the second-generation immigrants in the niceties of middle-class conduct, provided an outlet for youthful energies as well as a constant source of tension between neighborhood standards of "fun" and social worker standards of decency. Country outings, an integral part of nearly every summer schedule, exposed tenement children to a part of America they had never seen, while libraries and manual training supplied other entrees into middle-class worlds.  

Even under normal circumstances legitimate recreation was scarce in the working class neighborhoods; during the Depression the need became greater and the opportunities fewer. The settlement workers hoped that they could proffer an alternative to delinquency
and give the unemployed something to do to help either themselves or someone else, to "keep their self-respect." Community volunteers supplanted middle- and upper-class supporters as one result of this situation, in addition to occupying people's time it gave them a deeper sense of participation in their own affairs. The Depression also underscored the demand for other traditional settlement practices. The houses did not have many funds for direct relief, although they generally gave whatever aid they could, but they did spend an increasing amount of time assisting their clients in confrontations with government forms, relief agencies, the law, and similar predicaments which economic disaster accentuated. The settlements could and did provide space for health centers, infant welfare stations, and classes in English or civics, to name a few, with Federal work relief projects like the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration often contributing personnel to the settlement staffs.8

The hardships of the 1930s often stimulated grassroots associations like the Unemployed Workers' Councils or the Workers' Committees on Unemployment, and in Chicago, at least, the settlements were ready to nurture such organizational endeavors, as long as they were not too radical in nature. Residents at Hull-House, for example, debated the wisdom of permitting the Mexican "Frente Popular" to meet on their premises, finally deciding that the group was better off at Hull-House than elsewhere. Members could cultivate leadership potential under the watchful eye of the residents, who "could probably make them understand that they couldn't plan any riots, etc."
At Chicago Commons the Workers' Committee on Unemployment took shape as a "direct effort" to force responsibility upon legislators and congressmen and to agitate for redress from relief agencies on points of misunderstanding or apparent injustice. The UC Settlement also looked for opportunities to foster participatory democracy among its clients, encouraging both inter-club cooperation and increased membership involvement in planning and running events. These policies, of course, followed the original settlement plans for better government and a wider neighborhood social life; they also could lead to improved ethnic understanding as locals collaborated for common ends. Thus the settlement ideal remained vibrant in Chicago into the 1930s. It was certainly strong enough during these years to have a significant impact on the Mexican immigrants who arrived in the city in the interwar period.

The settlement ideal had its advocates all over the United States, and some of the most consistent publicists of Mexican virtues came from the ranks of the social and religious workers. While not unanimous in their opinions, they were more willing than most Anglos to attribute to cultural or environmental causes the problems which followed in the wake of Mexican immigration. Their critiques of Mexicans sound like cultural imperialism to later generations, but at least many tried to assist those Mexicans with whom they came into contact. Like many Americans, social workers were not averse to commenting on the faults of their Mexican clients, whose presence in the Southwest challenged Anglos to "raise their standard of living, improve sanitation, and control
disease." The newcomers lacked ambition, a sense of "real business responsibility," an interest in integration into American life, or any real concern with formal education or other methods for their own advancement, at least according to some of their critics. 10 Mexicans also had trouble acquiring the habits of thrift which marked so many European ethnic groups, a result both of the oppressive social and economic system in their old country and the migratory pattern of life in their new one. All of these traits, when added to the pervasive opportunism which church and state in Mexico had encouraged, meant that Hispanics could present serious problems to their host society. 11

These accounts did not ignore the brighter aspects of the Mexican personality, for the latter could boast of a good sense of humor, courtesy, and gratitude; charity was universal among them. Chicanos might not have the same standards of honesty which Anglos maintained, but they would answer truthfully when questioned directly. Hispanics were notably good-natured, with "a marked ability to get along happily in very poor surroundings." For example, migrants in Chicago brought their own candles to light up their night school at the Santa Fe railroad camp and requested four class sessions per week instead of two, as originally scheduled. Caseworkers at a medical facility found that their Mexican patients had "unusual native intelligence," which, with their other qualities, made them "a very desirable addition to our American mixture." 12 The social workers were realistic in their appraisal, admitting that Mexicans would not forget their homeland, just as no other immigrant would, and that the volume of Mexican immigration was difficult to absorb.
Despite these concerns, they saw great potential within the Mexican population. The immigrants were energetic and moved by high ideals. As they settled into the community the "hovels and shacks" of the early colonies gave way to more substantial dwellings and large numbers were "made over ... into clean-living, efficient, and devout Americans." The swing to prohibition and the support for the war among Hispanics in the Southwest was further evidence that the Spanish speaking had "as great potentialities for good as any other race."\textsuperscript{13}

Such hopeful signs notwithstanding, the social work approach to the Mexican question never played a significant role in the Southwest, for a number of reasons. The rural and migratory nature of their life made it difficult to establish or to sustain institutional contacts, and social welfare establishments were not prevalent even in places with a stable Hispanic population. Funding was always short, and, unlike in Chicago, the settlements, missions and other Americanizing agencies in the Southwest did not emphasize assimilation with the other ethnic groups in their programs. Mexicans could acquire English, receive advice or assistance with problems, and perhaps learn a trade, but they were not pushed to interact with their non-Spanish-speaking neighbors to the same degree that they were in Chicago. This was perhaps because "barricdization" had already ensured that Mexicans had relatively few non-Hispanic neighbors; the social workers also doubted whether native Americans would "mingle with Mexicans and other foreigners."\textsuperscript{14} Like their counterparts in Chicago, social workers in the Southwest could not divorce
themselves or their institutions totally from public opinion, and they avoided integrating Mexicans in much the same way that Chicago settlements would overlook blacks.

II

Chicago settlement workers were cognizant of the appearance of Mexicanos in their neighborhoods, and most institutions made arrangements to draw the newcomers into their programs. Occasionally directors and residents debated the wisdom of such a move, not infrequently based on their reading of local conditions. Nearly all opted to accept Mexican clients, except for those with a strong ethnic orientation, like the Jewish People's Institute. Mexicans often had to utilize the facilities in the guise of nationality clubs, but this was analogous to the Italians, Bohemians, Poles, and other ethnics whose settlement activity generally followed the lines of their own nativity. Chicanos gained much from this situation: they confronted the Europeans on fairly neutral grounds where each might learn to know the other and eventually begin to dismantle the mutual barriers to understanding; they had an expanded horizon for intraethnic events; and they acquired the support of highly visible allies who could and did proclaim publicly that Mexicans differed little from their neighbors. Thus settlement activities reinforced the integration of Hispanos into the white ethnic enclaves even as they denied that opportunity to blacks.

The Immigrants Protective League displayed an immediate interest in the problems of Mexicans in Chicago, supplying to the infant
Illinois State Immigrants Commission the services of a part-time Mexican visitor (case worker) in 1920, along with Lithuanian, Polish, Italian, and Hungarian workers. The state eliminated its appropriation for the Commission after 1921, but by 1922 Mexican braceros in the Midwest had discovered the agency on South Halsted Street, placing fourth among nationalities requesting assistance. Questions about naturalization and deportation vexed the Mexican migrants, who also suffered from a bad press in Chicago. According to Adena Rich, director of the League, the social and economic hardships of the colony stemmed from the "newness of the Mexican immigrants," not from any of their supposed racial or cultural characteristics.¹⁵

Mexicanos on the Near West Side found doors open at many area institutions. At Hull-House, Jane Addams thought that Italians at first received the Mexicans "almost as a group of their own countrymen," which, considering the rifts between north and south Italians, may not have been any favor. Membership in the Latin Club was multiethnic for a time, but relations deteriorated within a few years. The Italians thought the Mexicans overly friendly with the Negroes who were also penetrating portions of the West Side, and they were conscious as well of the darker skin of the Hispanos. The Latin Club split into nationality components, and some Italians threatened to boycott Bowen Hall, often used as a community center, if Mexicans continued to have access to it.¹⁶ Hull-House remained available to the Hispanos, however, despite the machinations of the local Italian populace.

Situated just down the street from Hull-House at 818 Gilpin Place was Firman House, a settlement with ties to the Presbyterian Church.
The Presbyterians had maintained a storefront mission for Mexicans since 1913; in the 1920s Firman House gradually refined its stance on "Mexican work" until 1928, when it chose to promote an exclusively Mexican program. Firman House and St. Paul's Methodist Church emphasized the goal of cultural understanding between Hispanics and their ethnic neighbors, encouraging friendly contacts through such means as summer camping. The Marcy Center, another West Side settlement which had focused its attention on the Jewish "Ghetto" around Maxwell Street, added Mexicans to its agenda in 1924. The Reverend William O'Neill, an early advocate of social and religious enterprises for the Chicago Mexican colony, lobbied the Marcy Center Board of Directors for the opportunity to conduct such activities in their building. The Board discussed the matter, but agreed with head resident Anna Heistad that "the time was ripe for this work." O'Neill held Spanish-language services for several months at Marcy before transferring to an Italian Methodist Church which was closer to the heart of the Mexican community north of Roosevelt Road. O'Neill's departure did not terminate the Mexican work at Marcy Center, for residents included Hispanics on the list of recipients for Christmas baskets in 1924 and later incorporated them into other Center functions.17

Other settlements in the Calumet region annexed Chicanos into their programs with varying degrees of fanfare. The Katherine House in East Chicago sponsored union meetings conducted in Polish, Spanish, and English as early as the summer of 1924, while Mexican youth clubs, prayer groups, and English classes met regularly on the premises.
The International Institute in Gary held "international lunches," festivals, folk singing and dancing, and similar affairs. The South Chicago Community Center (S.C.C.C.) and the South Chicago Neighborhood House (S.C.N.H.) both had a Mexican enrollment by 1928, and the South Chicago Y.M.C.A. presented English classes for Spanish-speaking members of the community, as did the Brotherhood House on the West Side. Chicago Commons, not near any major Hispanic enclave in the 1920s, nevertheless reported some Mexican attendance, along with Czechs, Irish, Roumanians, Armenians, Germans, Jews, Poles, and the predominant Italians.18

The widespread interest of settlement houses in Mexicans netted them tangible benefits even in the 1920s, marshalling community resources to their advantage. Health care and English classes brought Mexicanos into friendlier contacts with Poles, Greeks, and Italians than street life afforded. According to instructors, "the immigrants want to come here," and "the spirit is better." At least occasionally the classmates carried that spirit with them beyond the settlement walls. Multiethnic women's groups met to learn about simpler forms of misbehavior and to detect potentially serious disfunctions. "Understanding but diffident" Mexican mothers sat in these sessions with Irish, Italian, Greek, German, Polish and Russian women. The Mary Crane Nursery School at Hull-House, split about 50-50 between Mexicans and Italians, offered meals, medicine, naps, physical examinations, and a regular educational program. A weekly meeting of mothers and social workers improved parental cooperation and gave the Italians and Mexicans a further basis for interaction. Settlement workers helped also
to steer Mexicans through the maze of social agencies in Chicago, for employees at the Central Free Dispensary discovered that about 60 percent of their Mexican patients came after referral by social or settlement workers. Mexican patients appearing at the Dispensary for the first time had spent a shorter period of time in the United States than had European-born patients paying their first visit. The Mexicans seemed to have a greater awareness of available resources because of their settlement contacts, although the social workers were quick to point out that they did not abuse the welfare system, returning to self-sufficiency after removal of the immediate disability.\textsuperscript{19}

The Chicago settlements also proved congenial places for social and confraternal activities. Hull-House was home to the Benito Juárez Fraternal Society, the Spanish-American Society, the Mexican Athletic Club, the Mexican Art Theater, and the Azteca and Cuauhtemoc Societies. All held meetings or programs at the Halsted Street structure, as did the Greek Olympic Athletic Club and numerous Italian societies. The Mexican colony in East Chicago celebrated New Year's Eve at Katherine House in 1927, and they continued to use the building during 1928, along with Polish and Roumanian associations. Cultural organizations like the Mexican Band of South Chicago also practiced or performed on settlement premises. Many of the Mexican societies were short-lived, but they contributed to community life, with help in turn from the settlements.\textsuperscript{20}

Finally, the Mexican colony obtained the assistance of and at least some protection from Anglos with experience in solving economic or legal problems. Mexicans lacked the network of job contacts
in Chicago which European ethnics had created, so the I.P.L. tried to
direct them to employment opportunities whenever possible. This
activity comprised 38 of the 186 Mexican cases before the League
in 1925. More and more Mexicans recognized their need for adult
education, and the I.P.L. made arrangements for a night school at
the Santa Fe railroad camp near Brighton Park, negotiating with the
Board of Education for an instructor and with the Archdiocese for
entry to the passenger car which served the camp as a temporary
church. Both acceded and classes were soon under way. Mexicans
were not unlike other Chicago migrants in their dealings with
the local police and courts, both of whom believed that the "new"
immigrants, from southern Europe as well as from Mexico, were
"inherently inferior" and suffered little from arrest and conviction,
even at the expense of their civil rights. To combat this situation
the League exposed examples of bias, urged the city to retain
competent interpreters and public defenders, and maintained legal
services for its foreign-born clients.21

The Immigrants Protective League aided the Mexican community
in another way in the 1920s. A privately-funded organization, the
League publicized its activities, the plight of the immigrants, and
their positive characteristics to potential contributors, a fact which
may have helped to moderate attitudes toward Mexicans during the
relief crises of the 1930s. In any case, the I.P.L. frequently
stated its need for a full-time trained Mexican visitor to pursue
its expanding operations in that field.22 To fill the void, both
Jane Addams and Adena Rich approached the Julius Rosenwald Fund for a
special grant to underwrite a Mexican program. Rosenwald did not question the value of the project, for his assistants had already analyzed the League's performance vis-à-vis Mexican immigrants, but he preferred to provide a general donation rather than one earmarked for a specific end. The League did get money, however, and it was able to preserve its staff, though not at an ideal level.  

The Depression of the 1930s did not ease the difficulties which the Mexican population in Chicago faced, with such matters as relief, repatriation, and naturalization added to the normal demands of life in the big city. Social workers detected a change in the type of questions they fielded from their Mexican clients. Now better assimilated, Mexicanos could learn by themselves about medical services, night school, or the best place to live, although that type of request did not disappear. Instead, Mexicans required documentation for the immigration service, such as statements that they had never been a public charge or that they had no arrest record. The League continued to grapple with Mexican unemployment, their Spanish-speaking case worker placing a "substantial number" during 1930, in lieu of the Illinois Free Employment Agency, which usually seemed "quite unable" to find jobs for Mexicans even in periods of prosperity. When it was simply not possible to find jobs at all, unemployed councils such as the one at Hull-House strove to rally whatever resources they could for the community.  

Developments in the 1930s showed that Mexican immigrants had widened sources of information for medical services. By 1937 the Henry Booth House had its program for Mexicans in full swing;
health and birth control clinics were part of the agenda. Even before
that A.L. de Guevara, director of the Mexican Health Center on South
Halsted Street, had notified the staff of the newly-established Old
town Boys' Club of the existence of his clinic. The Mexican Health
Center addressed itself primarily to tuberculosis, but it always
did a Wassermann test as well. The medics would direct Mexicans
to the proper source of treatment for whatever ailed them. Paul
Taylor interviewed a Mexican mother in Chicago who underscored
this recognition of available resources: "I like the United States.
If my babies are sick the Welfare takes care of them. I can go to
the dispensary." While not calculated to reassure any who thought
that Hispanics already had too great a penchant for charity, such
examples point out the broadened opportunities for basic care which
existed in Chicago.

The settlements and welfare agencies aided Mexican immigrants
on another important matter, the question of naturalization.
Mexicans in the Calumet region had been slow to acquire citizenship,
with only about 600 taking out final papers prior to 1940. Both
Illinois and the United States restricted the fields open to aliens
in the 1930s, with Illinois having its first alien registration
bill introduced in 1935. Hull-House and the Immigrants Protective
League responded to this situation, with Hull-House opening a
Department of Citizenship and Naturalization to complement its adult
education program. The Mexican worker at Hull-House made home
visits to encourage Hispanics to attend the classes, which, along
with placards, publicity releases in the foreign-language press,
and letters to churches or fraternal organizations, succeeded in
drawing some interest on the part of the Mexican colony.\textsuperscript{26} The I.P.L.
continued these efforts during World War II, seeking special arrange-
ments in some instances for Mexican parents whose children were
citizens by birth, and obtaining grant money to operate a larger-
scale naturalization service for Latinos. That extra money helped
to finance an experimental branch office in South Chicago where busy
millworkers could make inquiries about citizenship without venturing
into "Big Chicago."\textsuperscript{27}

While League officials encouraged Mexican aliens to take out
citizenship papers whenever possible, they never lost sight of the
fact that naturalization was a choice. The I.P.L. was quick to
protest any untoward action on the part of business or government
which threatened the rights of an alien. Caseworkers intervened with
overzealous employers whose production did not include sensitive
defense orders, argued over rigid regulations with bureaucrats,
sponsored meetings to explain the situation to those most affected,
and publicized miscarriages of justice. Officers of the I.P.L.
realized that many Mexicans had come to trust the agency, and they
reminded one another on occasion not to jeopardize that relationship
through excessive pressures in favor of naturalization.\textsuperscript{28}

The subject of citizenship was a major interest of the Immigrants
Protective League during the early 1940s, but the League maintained
a watchful eye on other aspects of immigrant life in the city. This
encompassed periodic inspections of \textit{bracero} labor camps, sponsorship
of programs for the temporary laborers, registration of complaints
and solicitation of mobility waivers from agencies like the War
Manpower Commission, and occasional mediation between the braceros
and members of the Chicago colony, who resented the newer immigrants
and who feared that the newcomers might take jobs or alienate the
affections of servicemen's wives. 29 The League could not resolve
every issue which Mexicanos faced in Chicago, but its existence,
its experience in dealing with the power centers in the city, and
its obvious willingness to intervene ameliorated some of the
vicissitudes of Mexican life in the Second City.

Not everyone in the Mexican enclaves took advantage of the
social institutions in Chicago, of course. Some ascribed this
disinterest to timidity or to a distaste for mixing with other
nationalities on the part of the Mexican populace; others attributed
it to the Hispanic suspicion of the more liberal social mores which
the settlement embodied. Conservative parents did not wish to permit
their daughters to frequent social functions with boys, and settlement
residents sometimes had to gain the consent of mothers before staging
a party. A study of boys attending institutions in one small section
of South Chicago (roughly census tract 670) determined that while
about 27 percent of the non-Spanish-surnamed youth had some contact
with social agencies, only about 11 percent of the Spanish surnames
did the same. 30

Nevertheless, Hispanos did utilize settlement facilities
during the 1930s, sometimes in fairly large numbers. The South
Chicago Community Center reported a total Mexican attendance of over
9100 for 1935. Some 4400 of these went to English and Americanization classes, but the "Pro-México Club" drew over 2200 to its meetings and the Mexican fiesta added another 700. Some analysts suspected the organization of massaging its figures for the benefit of donors, but Mexicans were the most active group, dominating enrollment in 1938 with 160 of 340 enrollees in the winter program and 212 of 400 in the summer program. The S.C.C.C. had experimented with open access to its game room in 1937, but none of the ethnics (Slavs, Germans, and Mexicans) would associate with the Negroes; in 1938 the plan was to schedule each group on a separate night. Ethnic separation also occurred at the Katherine House in East Chicago, as Polish, Armenian, Roumanian, Hungarian, and Mexican groups all had special nights for meetings or programs; however, there was a multi-ethnic calendar as well, particularly for events religious in nature. 31

The West Side colony had a number of establishments from which to choose in the 1930s, not only Hull-House and Firman House, but also the Newberry Avenue Center and the Old Town Boys' Club (O.T.B.C.) both of which appeared during that decade. Hull-House hosted regular meetings of the "Populaire Fronte" [sic], the "Club Recreativo," and the "Mexican Youth." Residents there worried over the lack of cooperation between conservative and radical Mexican elements, but finally achieved some progress in 1937 when all of the Chicano organizations at the House collaborated in a fiesta. 32 This followed the example set by the Newberry Avenue Center, whose shift from Jewish to Mexican work in the early 1930s had resulted in a "Mexican fiesta" at First Methodist Church in Evanston, run entirely by the Hispanic members of the settlement. The Near West Side Mexican community was
supposedly the most disorganized in the city, but several groups
had grown up spontaneously at the Newberry Avenue Center. The Mexican
Mothers' Club had begun with a mutual interest in needlework, but
it evolved into the Mexican Council of Neighbors, which met bi-monthly
to discuss such common concerns as raising children in a delinquency
area. Other groups had spun off from the Council of Neighbors,
including one with a strong interest in current affairs. In
short, Hispanics displayed both initiative and cohesion in their
activities at Newberry Center.

One other institution on the West Side maintained an extensive
program for Mexicans in the 1930s, and its development is a particularly
significant reflection of the role which Mexicans were coming to play in
Chicago. This was the Old Town Boys' Club, originally a project of the
Old Town Association, whose leadership was decidedly anti-black.
(The Association would later lobby for Federal funds to rehabilitate
part of the old "Ghetto," describing black inhabitants there as "the
lowest, most primitive type imagined.") From its very inception, however,
the Old Town Club aggressively pursued a Mexican enrollment. One of
the first gymnasium workers was a West Side Italian, who "should
help us handle the Mexican situation in good style." The O.T.B.C. soon
received advice to hire an erstwhile Firman House employee, who was
acquainted with the Italian and Mexican boys living north of Roosevelt
Road, where the club had had difficulty recruiting. Robert C. Jones,
a former student of Ernest Burgess at the University of Chicago,
finally received the appointment as "Mexican Worker." Jones was
fluent in Spanish, and his duties included writing publicity articles
for the local Mexican press, organizing teams, arranging benefits, and maintaining community contacts through home visits.\textsuperscript{34}

It was an ambitious program, but it paid dividends in the eyes of O.T.B.C. workers. An early membership roster recorded 92 Mexicans out of a total of 295, with Jews, Italians and Slavs providing the remainder. Individual teams or clubs were usually constituted along rationality lines, although examples such as the Rinky Dinks, led by Chris Plagakies and Ted Mendoza, were also visible. Mexicans participated in early camp outings, held orchestra practice at the facility, and won national recognition at a 1931 crafts exhibition in Washington, with the Old Town Club as their sponsor.\textsuperscript{35}

The settlement ideal retained the goal of interpreting the various "races" to one another as well as encouraging intraethnic cooperation or personal development. Progress continued in this field also, building on earlier attempts, not always fruitful, and culminating with noticeable recognitions of the Mexicano presence, which even occurred outside the realm of the settlements. Jane Addams consistently espoused interethnic harmony, and the Hull-House Yearbook stressed examples of the same whenever possible. Women's groups at Hull-House, like most of the others, followed racial or ethnic lines. However, the women mixed at monthly socials and special events.

Firman House, which had concentrated on "Mexican work" in the late 1920s, preserved much of its Mexican flavor, but after 1938 again admitted Italians on an equal basis. In the "Bush" area of South Chicago, north of the mills, Mexicans were integrated into a largely Polish
constituency at the South Chicago Neighborhood House. The only purely Hispanic group was the Mexican Mothers' Club, which enjoyed a strong support from its members. Summer camps, often a barometer of social status, were also open to Chicanos before World War II. The Chicago Boys' Clubs reported an "interracial experience" in 1938, "with 55 Mexican boys housed with our regular [white?] members. The result was gratifyingly successful, as far as fellowship between the regular members and the Mexican boys was concerned."36

Anglos displayed an interest in Mexican culture in the 1930s, which the settlements fostered in part. The Mexican Village at the Century of Progress may have gone bankrupt, but the Mexican folk troupe brought down the house at the Chicago Park District's Labor Day celebration in 1936. The Works Progress Administration program "Chicago Tours for Chicagoans" kept the West Side Mexican colony on its agenda after 1938, featuring discussions of Mexican life in Chicago, visits to Mexican shops, and a stop at the Church of St. Francis of Assisi on Roosevelt Road. The Immigrants Protective League would seek to build on this foundation during the war years with press releases which lauded Hispanics as a "cultured, hard-working, attractive people."37 This publicity had a definite propaganda value, and there is no proof that the readers of the Przedruk z Dziennika Chicagoskiego (Polish Daily News) were overly receptive to such information, but it was a solid advance toward ethnic harmony when contrasted to the statements about blacks which the Polish colonial press printed during the 1919 riots.
Signs of thawing relations on the West Side emerged in the 1930s. At Chicago Commons, James Cortez served as a volunteer group leader in 1936, drawing responsibility for the Vagabonds Club, a tough gang of second-generation Italians. Later that same year a staffer in the Commons' Boys' Department commented that his young charges came from widely divergent national backgrounds, "Italian, Greek, Polish, Mexican, etc." No ethnic group dominated any situation, however for "all were absorbed in the different [play] groups." Other gestures appeared from the Near West Side Community Committee (N.W.S.C.C.), which assimilation-minded Italians had originated under the auspices of the Chicago Area Project (C.A.P.). A contemporary remarked that membership in the committee was open to all in theory, but in reality non-Italians were excluded. Anthony Sorrentino, prominent in the N.W.S.C.C. from its inception, argued that this was justified on the grounds that Italians were most prevalent in that community, so they should have control. The Italians did not totally ignore their Mexican acquaintances, however, for the N.W.S.C.C. participated in the Mexican Independence Day festivities in 1940 and distributed Christmas baskets to needy Hispanics that same year.

More important than Christmas donations or parade groups was interethnic dialogue, and the committee provided a forum for that as well. Local Mexican leaders joined the N.W.S.C.C. and presented their viewpoint about life along Halsted Street. Their address was a reminder that the Mexicans still felt isolated both politically and socially (although spokesman Peter Rodríguez admitted that their own lack of initiative was partially to blame.) Sorrentino promised
that his colleagues would extend themselves to get into a closer
relationship with the Mexican people and to bring to the attention
of the Hispanics any services which the N.W.S.C.C. could render.

The Italians revived the discussions at the next meeting, when one
complained about the "Mexican problem" in his neighborhood, where
young hoodlums calling themselves the "Sharks" were creating a
great deal of trouble. The committee proposed to divert the
delinquents through a recreation center, and in fact did eventually
integrate Chicano children into its summer camp program. The camp
project opened contacts and facilities to Mexicans, and parents
and community leaders viewed it with approval.40 Many of these
were small steps, but they started the Hispanic community in the
Hull-House area down the road toward local acceptance.

III

Once again, a comparison of the Mexican experience with that
of black Chicagoans is worthwhile. The blacks who arrived in Chicago
during or immediately after the Great Migration needed the moderating
influence of the settlement houses just as much as the Mexicans or
the Italians did. They also had to make an adjustment from rural
to urban life; and they faced an environment at least as harsh and
unyielding as that in the Mexican colony. Unemployment or under-
employment were sufficiently high in the Black Belt to render the
"protective work" of the settlements valuable for blacks as well as
Chicanos or Poles could benefit from employment services, manual
training, and adult education classes. Leaders like Jane Adams
and Mary McDowell might believe personally in racial equality, but they and most other settlement residents stopped short of actually practicing it in their institutions. Activities in the centers mirrored the life in the streets which surrounded them, and blacks were no more successful in utilizing the houses than they were in living on those blocks.

The lack of recreational accommodations for Negroes was noticeable well before the 1919 riots. Blacks and whites clashed at parks and recreation areas as early as 1913, with whites initiating the action whenever Negroes sought to penetrate territories which were de facto white. Violence flashed at Armour Square, Washington Park, and Beutner Playground, all of which bordered black enclaves during the war years. A park district official commented that the trouble originated in the actions of the local populace: "They absolutely took the stand that as long as they could keep the colored people away they were going to do it. They used every means they could ...." At Armour Square field house the white population was so antagonistic that Negroes comprised less than one percent of the daily attendance, despite the proximity of the park to the Black Belt. Much the same was true of many of the beaches on the South Side.41

The black population of Chicago exceeded 230,000 in 1930, but a private survey revealed that only one community center, several progressive churches, and a few departments of community-wide agencies (Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., Boys' Clubs, Scouts) served the black community. The most striking fact, perhaps, was the small
percentage of private philanthropy directed toward Negroes in any form. Settlements and centers in white areas did not always refuse service to Negroes, for example, but neither did they encourage participation, and blacks rarely attended. Preventive types of social work, such as recreation centers, which might counteract the effects of residency in a "delinquency area," were conspicuous in their absence, as were day nurseries, dispensary services, and cheap lodgings for transients.  

Mere location clearly removed some settlements from the debate over Negro attendance: the new Marcy Center, out in North Lawndale, was far from the black district in the 1930s; the University of Chicago Settlement was a considerable distance from Negro domiciles, although it was near a major employer of blacks. To a certain degree, these houses did not need an explicit policy on race. UC Settlement segregated its program anyway, admitting children to its camp with "practically no restrictions except in the case of negroes and epileptics." Where institutions were sufficiently close to black residences to expect a black presence, many chose to define their boundaries so as to exclude the black geographical area from service. Hull-House and Chicago Commons took this step, as did lesser known centers like Chase House; Fellowship House, House of Happiness, and the Halsted Institutional Church, all of which claimed a shortened territory in the direction which abutted a black district. In part this reflected neighborhood realities, for blacks were unlikely to cross many of these boundaries even had they wished to attend some function at the center.
The Chicago Commons offered some striking examples of tacit disregard for the black entrants into its precincts. Negroes began to filter into the vicinity of Chicago Commons in the late 1920s; annual reports mentioned sporadic black and Mexican attendance or usage of house services (especially the Department of Neighborhood Work) even before 1930. The black colony grew slowly during the early 1930s, for the special census of 1934 recorded 75 blacks in census tracts 313-320, which immediately surrounded the settlement, an increase of 21 since 1930. There were about 70 Mexicans listed in the same tracts. Just beyond these boundaries, both to the west (tracts 289-291) and to the south (tracts 415-417), lived about 900 more Negroes, virtually all of them poor. The Commons Association rarely acknowledged the presence of these enclaves, however, consistently gearing its programs, "attended by more people than ever ... from the Italian, Polish, Greek, and Mexican groups about us," to its white ethnic neighbors who resided just slightly closer to the facility.

Other settlements did not have that option, however, and many elected to keep Negro involvement at a minimum. The South Chicago Community Center permitted some black enrollment at its main center, but it also maintained a Branch Center for the "colored." Described as "unsafe, unhealthy, and unsanitary," the S.C.C.C. Branch consisted of a room and a cleared lot with horseshoe pegs and a basketball hoop. The Girls' Director at the S.C.C.C. complained to interviewers that she had lost her best group of Negro girls because they had been "ordered to go to the Branch Center." Representatives of the
Council of Social Agencies recommended closing the Branch Center "unless further survey of the community shows the necessity of a separate center for the Negroes." A few blacks did participate in the regular program at the S.C.C.C., and their overall number in the community was too small "to warrant special treatment."

Up in "the Bush" the South Chicago Neighborhood House struggled desperately to plant a Baptist program in fields of east European Catholics. Negroes might have provided a logical source of membership for a Baptist settlement, but a S.C.N.H. staffer reported that the settlement was doing its part to "make the Bush white." There were virtually no blacks on S.C.N.H. rosters. The South Chicago Young Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A.) closed its swimming pool to blacks throughout the 1930s, because "cognizance has been taken of racial barriers" in the operation of individual subunits, according to the Y.M.C.A. Board of Directors. Only the Wabash Avenue and Maxwell Street "Ys" were open to Negroes; all others, including South Chicago quickly adopted these local mores. When Our Lady of Guadalupe parish built a gymnasium in the 1940s, the priest decided to keep it open after school hours because neighborhood facilities were so limited. However, Negroes would not be encouraged to attend or guaranteed use of the building.45

The Near West Side, one portion of which was already undergoing Negro succession in the 1920s, was still home to a number of all-white or predominatly white institutions. Firman House (Mexican) and Madonna Center (Italian) refused service to blacks; the "Jane Club," a self-governing group of young women who boarded
at Hull-House, voted for segregation until the late 1930s. Henry Booth House sat amidst a heterogeneous population of blacks, Mexicans, Jews, and Lithuanians, but "the bulk of the negro work is done by the Maxwell Street Y.M.C.A. Booth House works with the Mexican people for the most part." The West Side Branch of the Y.W.C.A. also discriminated against Negro girls, barring them from the swimming pool. In 1938 a new policy granted "colored members of predominantly white groups" permission to swim if other members of the group agreed. The "Y" spokesman admitted that this was a theoretical distinction, and that "practically there was little change."

Finally, the Near West Side Community Committee received a chiding from Hull-House in 1940 about its tendency to exclude blacks from its functions. The N.W.S.C.C. reported that its people preferred to socialize "among their own kind."†46

The formative days of the Old Town Boys' Club were further evidence of the unwillingness of white social workers to think in terms of biracial service. The Club had begun when several West Side businessmen wanted a vehicle for neighborhood work with local boys. Executives from the Chicago Boys' Clubs rebuffed their first overtures on the grounds that the Near West Side was saturated with welfare agencies. A representative from the national headquarters of the Boys' Club Federation scoffed at this concern, telling one Chicagoan "John, you're just timid, there are white boys here enough for a 2500 membership." If one added enrollments from parochial schools to the 40 percent white population in the public schools and jumped into the Slavic area south of the railroad embankment
at 16th Street (which meant breaking the "racial" barriers between white ethnics), "conservatively speaking, there were 1700 to 2000 white boys" in the territory which the Old Town Club would serve. 47

This sort of attitude at the top was a portent of the future at the Old Town Club, where the racial situation remained tense until at least 1945. The Urban League inquired periodically about the status of race relations there, as did the Council of Social Agencies. In 1937 investigators caught the Old Town Club referring blacks to the Newberry Avenue Center (where their reception was not much warmer), or to the Maxwell Street Y.M.C.A., rather than instating them at the O.T.B.C. The club had an active Mexican registration from its beginning, but Negro participation ranged around 15 to 20 percent even in 1944 and 1945. Some activists claimed that the club discriminated against both blacks and Mexicans. In fact, social workers thought that the trouble stemmed from the anti-black actions of the Mexicans, whose antagonism was responsible for the reluctance of Negroes to use the facility. "Social intercourse between the Negroes and the Mexicans was definitely limited at that time, in fact, almost non-existent." An investigator reported that other centers, not charged with discrimination, also had encountered difficulties in mixing Mexican and Negro individuals within their programs. "Each group therefore tended to center in certain agencies. 48

Chicago Area Project activities frequently split along racial lines, a not surprising development in light of its goal of "reliance upon the participation of local residents" in its various programs. On the Near North Side (an "adjusted" community), the black Near
North Neighborhood Council sponsored a "colored" group, while the white North Side Civic Committee backed the Italian work. Inspectors found that club houses were designated as "white" or "colored," and that the public considered the project essentially "colored." Later the C.A.P. itself approved a project for "a selected area in the colored section to develop activities as had been done in the three areas already sponsored by the Chicago Area Project."*49

The approach taken the least often was the development of a multiracial program; the few centers which aspired to do this generally found it a traumatic experience. The South Side Survey found only a handful of private agencies which served both blacks and whites. These included Hull-House, the Henry Booth House, Elizabeth Marcy Center (later the Newberry Avenue Center), Eli Bates House, and the two South Chicago centers. Only the Marcy Center devoted a ratio of its resources to Negroes that approximated their proportion in the neighborhood, and Marcy Center still had 60 percent white attendance in 1931. Booth House put less than seven percent of its budget into Negro work, and it drew "mostly Mexicans." Hull-House, whose neighbors were "not as tolerant of blacks as they could be," held its allotment for blacks to below three percent.*50

Prior to 1940 Hull-House workers had shown little stomach for breaking down the racial barricades on the West Side, at least as far as blacks were concerned. A small group of black women met for years at Hull-House, and they brought their children to the nursery on meeting days. Their picture appeared in the Hull-House Yearbook, with the comment that they often confronted "minor difficulties in the schools,
[and in] questions of health and housing." However, the women were not on any Hull-House mailing list, and they did not join in any of the activities of the general community. Residents simply assumed that the Italians would not permit the Negroes to engage in any such proceedings, so no one even alerted them about the house calendar. Publicity photographs, which consistently stressed interethnic cooperation, virtually never pictured blacks and whites together in any kind of social setting.  

Workers at other settlements in the Calumet region sometimes confronted the issue of racial integration, but before World War II their efforts netted few results. At the Katherine House in East Chicago, for example, minutes of staff meetings indicate an awareness of racial tensions but little real willingness to challenge white standards. In 1925 the workers decided to admit blacks into the building to "a Game Room for the colored children." It would not receive any public designation in the program, however. When the house opened a "Free Bath" program, staffers agreed that "no colored children were to be given permission to participate." Blacks sometimes attended segregated classes, but even this came to a halt in early 1933, when the staff ruled that "because of feelings toward colored people in older groups, ... any desiring to come to Katherine House after Junior age be discouraged and sent to their churches." The residents reaffirmed this decision in the fall of 1933. Throughout this span the minutes contained notations about Mexican programs at the center, including their residence in apartments which the house owned.
Events at the Marcy/Newberry Center further illuminated the dissimilarity of Mexicans and Negroes in the eyes of Chicago social workers, and reflected their position in the view of white Chicago as well. Blacks had entered the Marcy Center neighborhood in the early 1920s, attracted by lower rents and a comparatively calm social setting. The enclave spread between 14th Street and Roosevelt Road from Canal Street west to Lincoln Street. The Marcy Center was directly in the path of this movement, and the staff contemplated it with alarm. Head Resident Anna Heistad feared that anti-Negro violence would recur, and neither she nor Bishop Nicolson of the Methodist Church really desired to incorporate blacks into the Marcy program. The Center commissioned an examination of the residential succession in the neighborhood, which highlighted the existing black population and projected an eventual Jewish flight from the "Ghetto," "it being the disposition of Hebrew property holders to rent to such people as the Negroes." Having digested the report by their next meeting, the Board of Directors recommended that Marcy Center also move to Lawndale.53

It remained for the Marcy staff to fashion a program which might reach the blacks (the workers did consider themselves missionaries) without disturbing the status quo. These plans included vacation Bible school in a small building on Miller Street, away from Marcy Center proper, segregated hygiene classes for black girls, and the eventual inauguration of Monday as "colored day" at Marcy. The limitations on access were meant to keep blacks from trying to come "at all hours, all days, and all times," as whites could do. Workers
held a special Christmas service for blacks; "all of our own people had been asked to remain at home ... so our colored friends were left free to follow out their program unamoyed [sic]." 54 Marcy residents took affront at the fact that the Lake Geneva resorts where the Center took summer campers refused to admit Negroes or Hebrews. After a struggle, they persuaded the hotels to modify their ruling, and "Hebrew Christians" could join in the outings with the white Methodists. Years later Arlington Smith lamented that Newberry Avenue Center (so named in 1935) still could not find camp openings for the large number of blacks who used the building, but "there was ample space available for the Mexicans, and they always got the registration." Even the question of service for blacks received secondary attention: the Board would not rule without approval from higher-ranking Methodist officials, and they apparently procrastinated on a decision through most of the 1920s. 55

In 1929 the structure in Lawndale was nearly complete, and the Board again considered Marcy Center's place on the Near West Side. The question was: "How far do we want Marcy to go with the colored work?" The Board gave no definitive answer, but it resolved to retain the property on Newberry Avenue for another year. It also elected to extend its policy of segregation. Blacks and whites would again have separate vacation Bible schools, for "it is not advisable to have the colored with the whites ..., especially if the whites are in the minority." The tendency of every ethnic group to look down upon the Negro made it difficult to serve all racial groups under one roof. The growth of the black population
below Roosevelt Road was enough to justify the creation of an institution for Negroes in that vicinity. One of the budding social workers at the University of Chicago agreed with this assessment, noting that "the new Negro district of the Near West Side seems to present an important and probably a fruitful field for any Settlement wishing to turn its attention to that group." Neither the workers in the field nor the theoretician in Hyde Park (who actually had spent some time at Hull-House during his training) apparently considered integration as a serious option.56

Despite the size and obvious needs of the Negro section along Maxwell Street, the Marcy Center stalled in opening its doors to blacks, then accepted them on a distinctly inferior basis. Mexicans in the neighborhood found a different greeting. When missionaries applied for space at Marcy Center to conduct Mexican services, the Board disposed of the matter in one meeting. The group needed only to negotiate time, place and overhead expense, and it could have access to the building. The number of Hispanics availing themselves to the facilities on Newberry Avenue grew during the 1930s, and the community tensions visible at the Old Town Club bubbled up at Marcy also. In early 1935 the situation became so serious that the Center had to close its game room. It reopened with blacks and Mexicans coming on alternate nights. Mexican girls displayed a marked aversion to mixed groups, dropping out whenever Negro girls attained majority status. Staff members grasped at any manifestation of lessened friction between the two races; such signs were reported as major breakthroughs.
Despite these glimmers of biracial accord, many of the clubs were aimed mainly at Mexicans. The neighborhood continued to change, with Negroes clearly predominating by 1941. However, the Newberry Avenue Center still mingled the racial groups only when "it was natural to do so."  

Social workers themselves were in the habit of incorporating Mexicans into the white ethnic population whenever they described a settlement house program, as Lucy Carner of the Council of Social Agencies did in 1940. Her report listed Hull-House, Henry Booth House, Newberry Avenue Center, and South Chicago Community Center as agencies open to Negroes and whites. The Old Town Branch of the Chicago Boys' Club was white only. All of these institutions served Mexicans in 1940, of course, but Carner chose not to record them separately from the "white" category. The Chicago Commons followed this pattern when grouping its clients according to nationality. Five Mexicans were among the 1909 ethnic enrollees in 1938; on a separate line at the bottom were the Negroes, who brought total membership to 1914. Taylor and Carner were only reflecting the reality of Chicago life in their accounts, a reality which the Newberry Center also confronted in the late 1930s. Newberry employees had escorted their young wards to shore outings at 17th Street Beach on the Near South Side for several summers. As long as Mexicans predominated in these groups, there was no trouble, even if two or three black children were present. When Negro registration rose to the point that blacks were a majority in the beach parties,
the situation changed, with the white patrons at the beach becoming "most disagreeable." Newberry Center halted the program rather than subject the children to such hostility. 58

Despite the intentions of many settlement workers to assist in the problem of social adjustment, they found themselves stymied if whites refused to follow their lead. Officials could not determine policy in a vacuum; they had to respond to the feelings of their clientele. Whites simply did not accept the presence of blacks in the settlements, any more than they did in the neighborhoods or on the beaches. Insistence on equal treatment of Negroes might have destroyed the settlements as effective organizations, and thus would have served no useful purpose. 59 In nearly every instance the white social workers backed away from the issue and respected local opinion. That they did not have to do so with Mexicans during the same time period is one more example of the different reception accorded to the Mexican colony in Chicago.

IV

Even as the leadership of the Marcy Center wrestled with the question of whether to engage in "colored work," Mary McDowell and her colleagues confronted the question of minority participation at the University of Chicago Settlement "Back a' the Yards." McDowell herself was an integrationist, having successfully protested against the color line during organizational drives in the packing plants and chairing Chicago's Interracial Co-operative Committee, which introduced "the better representatives of the two races to each other."
Her neighbors were less enthusiastic about such matters, and blacks did not attend the UC Settlement in the 1920s or 1930s, although two of the servants at the house were "colored." Virtually no other blacks lived in "Packingtown" in the interwar years. McDowell and her successors had better fortune in their dealings with the Mexicans who penetrated the Stockyards district after 1919, but this was only because the populace was more amenable to contacts with the Hispanos. The UC staff followed the general precepts of the settlement approach, trying to understand the customs and traditions of the Mexicans, then seeking to induct them into neighborhood life via house affairs. Antagonisms persisted, but residents noted more frequent instances of mingling as time passed, and Mexicans were well integrated throughout the clubs and other activities before the outbreak of World War II.

The UC Settlement staff did not need to debate any more than the Marcy staff did on whether or not to engage in Mexican field work. The answer was automatic: as early as 1921 McDowell wrote that "we have come into touch with a few [Mexican] families, but they are difficult to reach since they have not yet learned to speak English." As the number of Chicano residents increased, so did their contacts. As strangers to Chicago, the newcomers had already begun to come to the settlement for answers to their questions; settlement workers organized a social in 1923 which attracted a sizeable number. So many returned with their friends for English classes that staffers held sessions in bedrooms rather than turn anyone away. The employees observed with pleasure the great decorum of the
Mexicans who utilized their facilities. When the Mexican Club sponsored a dance, the only evidence of drinking was among the Poles who attended.

The UC Settlement residents tried whenever possible to allay suspicions or counteract rumors which circulated in "Packingtow," keeping "their ear to the ground" to learn about neighborhood concerns. The arrival of Chicanos at the packing plants coincided with a general wage reduction from 45 cents to 42 cents per hour. The Poles were convinced that the influx of Mexicans had caused the decline. When McDowell's workers investigated in 1925, they learned that only about 150 Mexicans toiled in the Yards at that time. Corporate consolidation, not the deliberate importation of cheap labor, had instigated the decrease. The settlement also had a hand in defusing the community after the Carl Kroll incident in 1926, when members got word of Polish plans for retribution against local Mexicans after a Hispano had killed a Slav in apparent self-defense. Settlement workers warned the police, and that time officers of the law protected the minority group, breaking up street corner gangs and deterring further bloodshed. In a similar vein residents helped to prosecute local hoodlums who beat up an inoffensive Mexican, winning the judgment against the whites. Much remained undone in the field of human relations "Back a' the Yards," but the settlement staff could take a certain justified pride in their efforts to help each new national group "to adjust to local conditions and to its more or less hostile neighbors."

Mexicans had come to the UC Settlement for several years before workers set up an organized program for them. Mary McDowell in 1927
and 1928 told interviewers that a real change for the better had occurred in the attitude of Poles toward the Mexicans, but the staff was more circumspect about this in their internal communications. Duane Ramsey, in charge of the Boys' Department in 1929, recommended a continuation of separate clubs for Mexicans because it removed them from harsh treatment at the hands of the other boys and increased the respect of each group for the other. The house could encourage mixing if the Mexicans wished to do so, and should certainly work them into competition with the other boys on a supervised basis. Hull-House observers reported a similar inability to integrate Mexicans into activities with other ethnics; Mexicans appeared particularly sensitive to threats and name-calling on the part of juvenile boys. This antagonism, of course, was not unusual in the immigrant neighborhoods, where one group or another might try to incorporate a social institution into its domain, employing verbal and physical abuse in the process. More important, perhaps, was the fact that Mexicans remained capable of using settlement facilities despite Polish hostility. 63

The UC Settlement officially opened a Mexican Department in 1929, when Mr. and Mrs. M.R. Ibanez acquired full-time responsibility for Spanish-speaking groups. That year McDowell raised over $1100 earmarked solely for the purpose of Mexican work, much of it from the packers. Other local philanthropists, like Julius Rosenwald, also received literature from McDowell. 64 The Ibanez family did home visiting and supervised the groups of Mexicans in the house, which
by 1930 included two for boys, two for girls, and the "Club Cultural Latin American," plus health education, interpreters, English classes, relief and employment assistance, and a basketball team. Mexican enrollment rose to about 200, roughly 11 percent of the total, making them the fourth largest ethnic group in the house, after Poles, Lithuanians, and Bohemians, while attendance for all activities broke the 5,000 mark. Danéz speculated that Mexicans came to the settlement because they felt that doors in the private sector were closed to them even if they could afford the cost of a hall, but the dances, parties, musical and theatrical performances under the patronage of the "Club Cultural" provided the necessary fellowship "which made ordinary living palatable." In short, "the University of Chicago Settlement was a vital part in the life of the Mexicans living around it."65

The Great Depression hit all members of the Stockyards community hard, although Mexicans were often closer to the brink of poverty than many of their neighbors. In the crisis many turned to the settlement for information, assistance, or simply as a place to go. The UC Settlement reaffirmed its desire to encourage the various ethnic groups residing "Back a' the Yards" to adjust to one another; it also maintained its interest in Americanization and the development of local leadership. Mexicans extended their usage of house facilities, and jobless Hispanics banded together into worker's action groups, which cooperated with the Polish and Bohemian clubs at the settlement and with other ethnics at citywide functions. All of this gave the different nationalities the chance to cooperate and to know one another better. Mary McDowell's statements about declining hostility turned out to be premature, not false.
One casualty of the Depression was the special funding for Mexican work which McDowell had cajoled from local industrialists. Contributions which had run as high as $1350 per year dropped to $850 in 1933, necessitating the shift from a full-time to part-time Mexican worker. The Board of Directors added nearly $300 to close the deficit in that year, but further erosion of the special monies occurred in 1934, when the Board had to assign a portion of the general fund arbitrarily to the Mexican Department. At the end of the year "Mexican work" disappeared as a specific appropriation in the agency budget. To a certain extent, this mirrored the evolution of Mexicans in the institution, for while distinctly Chicano organizations remained, more Mexicans had entered the mainstream of house activities. Moreover, some of the earlier programs had taken hold and had generated some of the grass-roots leadership which settlement residents hoped to cultivate. "Mexican work" as a separate entity was less of a requisite than it had been even five years before.

Residents at the UC Settlement always concerned themselves with developing whatever traits could ease the assimilation of Mexican immigrants into urban life. Duane Ramsay believed that his Chicano charges required manual arts training because "their heritage was so poor and deficient" for life in an industrialized society that they needed all the help they could get. The "citizenship" teacher proposed that an "Americanized" Mexican interpreter actually teach his fellow Hispanics rather than parrot the statements of the Anglo instructor. This might impress upon people that
"they must share more fully in the community life." From there they could gradually swing into more active cooperation with others for the common good. Examples of the latter included planning meetings, producing programs, and taking a larger role in house events. The Adult Department was always on the lookout for individuals with leadership potential around which it could build clubs.67

Unemployment eclipsed nearly every other problem in the lives of working class people after 1930, and those in the Stockyards district were no exceptions. The UC Settlement continued to offer what tangible assistance it could in locating employment or directing clients to the proper agency, just as it had in the 1920s.68 The 1930s also saw the development of a grass-roots unemployed workers movement, and settlements all over Chicago quickly incorporated this added dimension to their programs. Mexicans living "Back a' the Yards" installed their own chapter of the Chicago Workers' Committee on Unemployment (C.W.C.U.) in 1932, with 87 signed members and meeting attendances as high as 115. The central C.W.C.U. contributed speakers who presented ideas and suggested solutions on the subject of unemployment, while the locals formed standing committees to deal with the day-to-day aspects of the matter. The Mexicans formulated three such units: Grievance, to help them secure appropriate relief; Legislation, to encourage productive political action; and Recreation, to promote functions for the men and their families. Developments in the last area particularly pleased the social workers, who noted that "Mexican groups had begun to see the value of a constructive program," rather than selecting activities which merely passed the time.
These included classes on child care, handicrafts, and sewing, as well as a barter system in which craftsmen cobbled shoes, cut hair, repaired or replaced garments, and otherwise directed their skills toward ameliorating the Depression in whatever ways possible. 69

Language barriers frequently precluded the first-generation immigrants from banding together into a single entity, so the unemployed clubs were nationality-based at the UC Settlement, as they were elsewhere in the city. Poles, Ukrainians, and Mexicans all maintained separate units around the stockyards. Ethnic differences were visible at the beginning of the experiment, but headworker Mollie Carroll proudly noted that "striking changes" had occurred in local attitudes as cooperative activities broke down the barriers. One example of this came in 1933 when the Polish women voted to accept Mexicans as members. Representatives from the settlement sometimes attended city-wide meetings, where they had to deal with other ethnics and handle themselves in English. 70 The unemployed clubs fit nicely into the overall scheme of the UC Settlement, not only providing an opportunity to foster indigenous leadership and an aura of self-sufficiency, but also building a bridge between hitherto hostile people.

In part as a result of their experience with the unemployed clubs, Mexicans in "Packingtown" became more willing to seek redress in other areas, particularly in matters pertaining to the police. The "Unemployed Men's Club" initiated this with a series of lectures on American law designed to reduce inadvertent violations. Another Mexican group soon gathered at the settlement; calling itself "Unification for Defense," its members met regularly to try
"to interpret the Mexicans and the Chicago police authorities to one another." Concern over the police resurfaced from time to time, as in 1936 when the "Frente Popular" directed a committee to urge the officers to extend themselves more in solving a recent murder, and again in 1942 when yet another liaison committee formed to contact police about intra-colony conflicts.\textsuperscript{71} These efforts were not always capped with success from the standpoint of the local populace, but their very existence substantiated settlement claims that Mexicans were adjusting to their life in Chicago.

Relations between the UC Settlement and its Mexican neighbors were not invariably smooth, especially in instances when the Mexicans moved away from the mainstream assimilationist polices which the social workers espoused. Settlement workers worried about the "Frente Popular," for example, whom they suspected were communists using the collections taken at each meeting "for their personal motives." The "Frente's" stated goal of returning all Mexicans to the old country because of unfair treatment in the United States did not sit well with Hull-House residents, but they decided to permit the group to remain. The early contacts with the "Frente" at the UC Settlement were more positive than those at Hull-House. The Mexicans began with avowals that they were joining together to "strike for a higher level of life in a real and practical way toward the common good of our Mexican colony," certainly nothing to which the settlement would object. Plans called for scholarships for study in Mexico, libraries of Mexican books for the colony, cooperation with the Mexican government to transmit Mexican culture
to the younger generations coming of age in the United States, and protection of repatriates. To instruct internal leaders the club changed presiding officers at each session.72

Conflicts soon surfaced, however, as observers noted the same tendencies that the residents of Hull-House had: anti-Americanism, partisan politics, communist speakers, high pressure collection tactics, and domination by a small clique. Perhaps worse, members did not accept the leadership of the settlement. The headworker finally had to request that the "Frente" cease using the house, privately speculating that another "more broadly based" group with wider responsibilities for individual members would emerge under the direction of staff members.73

The settlement workers remained convinced of the ultimate assimilability of the Mexicans, and they were much more comfortable when they could relate examples of successful assimilation. Reports and memoranda from the 1930s were full of such references, although they often hinted at countervailing trends beneath the surface. Clubs with a definite ethnic orientation operated well into the 1940s, but integrated programs were the norm by the end of the decade. Far from having to close their facilities or limit racial or ethnic groups to specific times when they could enter by themselves, as houses with black constituents had to do, UC Settlement workers found a growing feeling of mutual acceptance between the Mexicans and their neighbors which even carried beyond the walls of their building.

In 1931 the settlement staff still noticed a "marked prejudice" against Mexicans among the children of the neighborhood, but there was evidence that sentiment was shifting somewhat. Interethnic play
groups were seen on the streets "not infrequently," and Mexican girls belonged to regular classes at the settlement instead of their own segregated organization. "The girls are less emphatic in their discrimination." The boys were not totally insensitive, however, for the non-Hispanos displayed an "increasing desire" to be included in such activities as handcraft classes. Mexican worker D.S. Howard thought that "gradual inclusion" of the more interested Polish boys into the Mexican groups would help to "interpret" each to the other. By 1933 a mixture of Mexican and Polish women could associate freely in a settlement-sponsored beauty class, while citizenship classes offered other contacts. Workers still could not predict when mixed groups would turn out well and when they would culminate with insults and hurt feelings, so they monitored such events with special concern. More and more often they seemed to turn out well.

Such special occasions as sporting matches and cultural programs served to introduce the better side of each ethnic group to the others in the neighborhood, and Mexicans regularly participated in these occurrences. Mexicanos helped to dedicate the settlement gymnasium at its opening in 1932, along with Poles, Lithuanians, and Bohemians. Hispanic presentations at community night programs were "apparently appreciated as much by the Polish people as by the Mexicans," and the Poles had sufficient perception to know that the Mexicans were outdoing them in a creditable way, along with the honesty to admit the fact. The evening benefits retained their multiethnic flavor throughout the decade, and were received with approbation.

Sports have often proved a means of introduction for newcomers, and this was true for Mexicans residing in Chicago. Skill in athletics
was a sure route to prestige and community recognition in South Chicago, according to Jackson Baur, and it had the same result back of the Yards. Gym classes at the UC Settlement had comprised an important part of the Mexican program from its inception, and Mexican teams competed in the Inter-Club basketball league in the 1930s against teams of European ethnics. Conduct among all concerned was excellent, but in 1937 a series of boxing matches highlighted the attitudinal shifts which had transpired over the previous decade. The fights sometimes pitted Mexicans against Poles, but the crowd gave no unfavorable response to such announcements. When a Mexican boy emerged victorious he received a big hand from the spectators. This spirit was evident into the 1940s as athletic groups emphasized recognition for individual skill rather than ethnic identity.76

The residents retained a sensitivity for the potential misunderstandings which existed in the community, particularly those stemming from the language barriers which demarcated nationality lines. Staffers tried to draw the less articulate Mexican women into discussion groups or to engage in acts which did not demand verbal communication as a means of surmounting this difficulty, but the mere fact that the women had become better acquainted during the course of the activities contributed equally to reducing this tension.77 Mexican clubs hosted multiethnic affairs; individual Mexicans won elections in non-ethnic clubs and camped with Poles and Italians at all-white Camp Farr. Even children seemed to ignore nationality distinctions when left on their own.78 Individuals attended settlement programs because they were attracted to what the
club had to offer, and did not mind "in the least" the ethnic complexion of a particular enterprise. "There seems to be no stigma in the relationship between the two foreign groups." 79

Settlement workers stressed assimilation and Americanization during the 1930s, but they did not lose sight of "the needs of the people in the neighborhood." Citizenship and English classes, health instruction, and industrial arts training all endured as part of a program designed to provide information valuable to immigrants adjusting to Chicago as well as performing an Americanizing function. As business conditions improved and more people returned to work in the Stockyards, the house even began a consumers education class and a cooperative buying club. None of these were specifically aimed at Mexicans, but Hispanics partook of all of them and benefited as well. 80

The staff at the UC Settlement, like residents at other settlements across the country, were subject to criticism for trying to impose their own standards on the community or for developing routine or regularized activities in lieu of seeking a primary relationship with their charges, and sometimes such comments were justified. However, they also had a benifictent effect on the Hispanics in the Stockyards district, for some 90 percent of the Mexicans interviewed in 1942 related that they would turn to the settlement house when they needed assistance. 81 It is doubtful whether any survey in black Chicago or in the barrios of the Southwest would have yielded comparable results for any community institution.
In sum, the settlement ideal of introducing and interpreting different ethnic groups to one another eventually worked *vis-à-vis* the Mexicans even as it ignored or excluded blacks. The danger that white ethnics would abandon a facility if confronted with persons different from themselves, often cited as a justification for *de facto* institutional segregation, simply did not hold for Mexicans as it did for Negroes. The settlements welcomed the former, maintained faith in their ultimate integration, and provided a conduit for them into the working class neighborhoods. Initial antagonisms gradually cooled under the benign gaze of the settlements, reminding once again that Mexicans could enter places in Chicago where blacks (at least in the 1920s and 1930s) feared to tread.
Mexican Immigrants During Hard Times: Relief and Repatriation

Mexican immigrants in Chicago found themselves the beneficiaries of a different attitude on the part of Anglo society in another vital area during the 1920s and 1930s. This was the question of alien relief and the subsidiary issue of repatriation of non-citizen public charges. Mexicanos in the Southwest faced frequent harassment from welfare agencies and from the public at large when they sought to obtain assistance during the Depression. Economic hardship accelerated the tendencies of Europeans as well as Mexicans to return to the old country, and thousands of immigrants from all over the United States, including Hispanos, repatriated themselves voluntarily, continuing a trend visible almost since the beginning of the migration. Such voluntarism did not always satisfy local officials, who added encouragements of their own to persuade Mexican aliens to move back to the homeland. Repatriation fever was strongest in the Southwest, especially in southern California, but Midwestern cities like Detroit and East Chicago, Indiana also arranged to return local Hispanos to the border. Chicago remained aloof from this activity, however, and although Mexicans did leave the Second City on their own, neither public nor private agencies threatened them with
loss of relief benefits if they stayed in the North. Social agencies refused to cooperate with the Bureau of Immigration in its efforts to uncover potential deportees and protested any activities which violated the civil rights of the aliens. Thus the Mexican colony emerged from the Depression baffeted but essentially intact.

I

Remigration or repatriation of immigrants has long been an important part of the overall migration process, but it has received less attention than the flow into the United States. Mexicans moving north before World War II often became part of this circuit, particularly during the Depression when local relief agencies encouraged their departure. Neither the Mexicans nor their fellow migrants always needed special stimuli to retreat to their homeland; however, far more did so of their own volition than under threats of deportation or removal.

Many of the foreign-born arriving after 1860 saw themselves as temporary workers, and planned to retire home in comfort when they had earned enough money to do so. Italians, for example, displayed this tendency, often leaving their families in Italy when they came. Those who stayed in America had unforeseen circumstances befall them, otherwise they would have fulfilled their dreams of reappearing at their native village to make improvements on the family property. One such individual later recounted that his compatriots were totally disinterested in any aspect of American life except earning money. The number of remigrants was so great that one writer declared in 1909 that "there is not a town or village of any size between Naples
in Italy and Warsaw in Russia, ... to which a larger or smaller group of emigrants had not returned." Americans believed that the old world profited from the exchange, for the European peasants lost their inclination "to lead an easy life" under the pace and regimen of industrial society. The Italian government, for one, agreed, abetting both phases of the cycle in its emigration policy; as a result, over 1,000,000 Italians returned to the old country between 1900 and 1910.¹

Italians were not the only ones to retrace their route across the Atlantic. Slavs, Greeks, Hungarians, Poles, Croats, Finns, Portuguese, and Spaniards all left the United States in sizeable numbers. In the fiscal year 1927, emigration to much of southeastern Europe actually exceeded immigration from the same territory. During the 15 years preceding the passage of the National Origins Act in 1924 repatriates reduced net immigration by one-third. The break-up of the old eastern European monarchies attracted many whose nationalistic feelings had lain dormant in the New World. Chicago social workers predicted in 1919 that hundreds of thousands of Europeans were ready to depart, adding that "the Austrian Poles will go first." On the North American continent a similar pattern existed between the United States and Canada, where the backflow of Canadians amounted to about 147,000 during the years 1925-1927.²

While many eventual repatriates originally intended to stay only temporarily, the stream of remigrants contained many others whose return did represent a failure of sorts. Thousands of Swedes and Britons went back before 1900, for even in the 1820s and 1830s skilled or professional immigrants found it difficult to ply their craft. Many had to accept unskilled labor, often in the agricultural
sector. Personal and psychological disabilities were also factors, but "the New World was swarming with unwanted and unneeded industrial and clerical workers." Italian immigrants faced a similar situation, compounded of course by the language barrier. Surplus doctors, lawyers, teachers, and scholars found themselves reduced to manual labor or living a life of penury ministering to the needs of the colony. The common laborers did not have full-time employment either, some managing to survive the off-season on their savings, others picking up casual jobs like shoveling snow, yet others repatriating themselves during the winter or during cyclical depressions to take advantage of lower living costs in the old world.³

The "birds of passage" did not always fly voluntarily, for industrialists sometimes discharged east European or other minority employees and financed their return trip to avoid the cost of their support during hard times. Whether forced or not, some contemporaries believed that remigration relieved pressure on employment and freed the community from caring for people who had made scant provision for idleness. Among the "push" factors which encouraged the departure of the ethnics were the spread of such restrictive legislation as blue laws and prohibition and the revival of intolerance toward non-Anglo-Saxons, both evident before World War I. The economic hardships of the Great Depression persuaded many aliens to abandon their domicile in the United States for the hopefully greener pastures of their former homes, with the receiving government offering financial assistance to the returnees.⁴

Mexican immigrants often arrived in the United States with goals that were strikingly similar to those of Italian and other temporary
migrants, and throughout the 1920s the Mexican government maintained a posture on emigration not unlike that of Italy prior to 1914. A great many Mexicanos did not plan to settle north of the border, and an American consul reported that only 18 percent of his visa applicants declared their intention to reside permanently in the United States. About 22 percent had already journeyed north at least once during the past five years. Higher wages were the major lure for these men, whose only aim was "to make and save there a sufficient amount to return to Mexico and display his acquired wealth to his friends and countrymen who have been left behind." Upon exhaustion of his funds, he repeated the process. Other border watchers, usually anti-restrictionist in their outlook, consistently argued that Mexicans preferred to reside where the cost of living was lower during the off-season and that national feeling provided another strong incentive for return. Restrictionists staunchly disagreed with this point of view. Statistical evidence was incomplete; but the migration did appear to have some seasonal orientation. Even before the beginning of depression in 1929, sizeable numbers of laborers moved south each November at the end of another agricultural year.  

Just as many Mexicans resembled the Italian golondrinas, so the policy of the Mexican government toward emigration had certain parallels to the Italian model. The revolutionary leaders were not willing to admit openly the need for a "safety valve" of employment in the United States for their impoverished subjects, but some Mexicans believed that temporary service in the Yankee economy developed better discipline and working habits, provided exposure
to new technology, encouraged saving, and taught both self-reliance and co-operation to participants. The value of remittances as a source of foreign exchange was not overlooked. Every administration in Mexico from 1920 to 1940 did proffer some assistance to expatriated nationals on the grounds that their homecoming would entail material benefits to the patria.6

The Dillingham Commission noted as early as 1911 that the Mexican population of Los Angeles "fluctuated with available work," as when 2700 left in the month of January 1908. World War I caused another reversal in the flow, with over 50,000 exiting through the ports of the El Paso immigration district alone. The recession of 1921 induced the departure of 111,979, but another 109,786 left in 1924, and no fewer than 60,000 recrossed the border every year for the remainder of the decade. By 1928 the total migration picture indicated that returns to Mexico exceeded departures to the United States. The State Department calculated that many of these reputed repatriates were repeaters; figures were often imprecise because of conditions on the border, but the number of Hispanic backtrailers, while smaller than the anti-restrictionists believed, was still significant well before the relief crisis of the 1930s.7

A final component in the immigration cycle was deportation, either voluntary or involuntary. At least 200,000 aliens departed from the United States under these procedures during the 1920s, many of whom were Mexicans (42 percent of the total in 1929). Voluntary departure allowed the alien to apply for immediate readmission, and frequently it counterbalanced the legalization of Hispanic migrants
in the Southwest. An important aspect of the law was the provision which allowed for removal, at government expense, of any alien who became a public charge within three years of his entry into the United States. The unstable nature of Mexican employment made them vulnerable to this facet, a point which often arose during the restriction debate.8

Proposals to deport Mexicans en masse surfaced from time to time during the 1920s, and while the Federal government never acted upon any of them, their very circulation was probably unsettling to the various Mexican communities in the United States. The suggestion to transport indigent Mexicans back to their homeland could emanate from otherwise responsible sources, such as the Red Cross or the Director of Institutions in California. Utilizing claims which would find much favor during the Depression, W.D. Wagner drew attention to the cost of supporting an inmate and to the fact that the patients would probably prefer to stay among their countrymen. Authorities in Arizona likewise sought to deport institutionalized Mexican aliens "as far as possible from Arizona." It was too easy and desirable for them to reenter the United States otherwise. The Federal bureaucrats denied each of these requests, with lack of funds often as major a consideration as civil rights, but it was obvious that a congenial climate for such propositions existed, at least in the Southwest.9 When the full fury of the Depression hit in the early 1930s, people in other locales would adopt similar schemes.
Relatively few immigrants were well prepared to weather hard times. As a whole immigrants were concentrated in the lowest paid, unskilled jobs, entry into the professions or the proprietary sector of agriculture or commerce was limited, and language handicaps and inexperience prevented economic mobility. Mexicans did not break this general pattern in the 1920s, for those who escaped migratory field labor usually moved horizontally, remaining among the ranks of the unskilled. Private employment agencies in California reported placing 40 percent of their Mexican clients as railroad laborers and almost 27 percent as general laborers. Wage rates varied from as high as $7.00 to as low as $1.50 per day. Low even by American standards of the day, these amounts still brightened considerably when compared to figures from old Mexico, which were often well below $1.00 per day.\footnote{10} The Depression did nothing to improve matters as wages collapsed from 30 or 35 cents per hour to as little as $7.20 per week for entire families in the cotton fields. The income of settled Hispanics also declined, forcing some into the migratory labor stream for the first time in the 1930s. In short, although an improvement over life in the old country, the economic condition of most Mexicans in the United State left them scant reserves with which to face protracted unemployment.\footnote{11}

The early approach to relief of Mexican indigents owed much to the traditional view that charity weakened the character of the recipient, and that workers would slip into idleness if necessity
did not force them to produce. This attitude materialized in both popular and scholarly thinking on the subject. A Texas onion grower declared that "the Mexican is getting paid about four bits too much. He should get about $1.00 a day ... just enough to live on." Otherwise one could not rely on him to perform when needed. As another sage put it, if Mexicans could earn enough during the summer to support themselves in style during the winter, others would want their positions. The challenge was to keep them poor enough to accept "short-end jobs" and yet not have them become a social burden. One solution was an Americanization program to instill ideals of thrift and planning, instructing Mexicans to survive on their daily income of $2.50 to $3.50 so that when "a day of adversity" came, there would be "less suffering and fewer county charges."

This was preferrable to simple charity, which would throttle economic initiative and would exacerbate traits of laziness and shiftlessness which centuries of peonage had left as a residue. Despite these and other warnings, some thought that "insufficient investigation" on the part of charity workers had allowed Mexicans to obtain aid so readily that they complained when they received less than expected.  

Hard evidence on Mexican dependency was scarce during most of the 1920s, and available facts were often quoted out of context. Opponents of Mexican immigration marshalled statistics which made it appear that Mexicans drained American charitable institutions and provided an excessive number of social misfits. Figures on aid to dependent children, juvenile delinquency, and felony cases all encouraged the belief that Mexicans obliged a disproportionate
share of assistance, without which they would menace the health and welfare of the community. This did not mean that local governments always spent a disproportionate amount on Mexicans, however, for the Los Angeles Bureau of Outdoor Relief routinely gave Hispanics a 20 percent smaller allowance for food than it provided for Anglos, and dispensed inequitable rent vouchers as well. Thus the Bureau managed to keep the share of its allotments to Mexican relief below the level which their numbers might seem to demand well before the Depression would inspire further cuts through repatriation of indigent aliens. Even when obvious inequities were present, participants in the debate over restriction bolstered their claims that Mexicans drained charitable resources by emphasizing the disproportionate numbers under care in some regions.¹³

However, the long-apparent generosity of Mexicanos did not go unnoticed; relief bureaucrats who automatically reduced allocations for Mexicans probably cherished this trait in their clients. In 1908 Victor Clark had observed that Hispanics seldom became public dependents because they helped each other so much. Later writers were less certain of the source of this characteristic, attributing it variously to fear of deportation, a fatalistic acceptance of misfortune, or suspicion of Anglo institutions. Many acts of charity were made on an individual basis, but towns with sizeable Mexican populations sometimes had formal organizations, such as clinics or community chests. The anti-restrictionist chorus sang the praises of this selflessness before Congressional committees throughout the 1920s, pointing out that while Mexicans might exact
a certain amount of social service assistance, they were certainly
no more of a public liability than any other nationality. In Los
Angeles money spent on indigents went to Mexicans; similar recipients in
New York were Italians or Jews. Any city with an immigrant working
class would have the same expenses. 14

Detailed examination of Mexican dependency in the Southwest
revealed that the anti-restrictionists were correct on this point:
Mexicanos did derive less public support as a rule than their population
share would seem to require. In the Imperial Valley Mexicans handled
an appreciable segment of relief themselves. Mexican cases in Weld
County, Colorado, barely exceeded the proportion of their off-season
population, and certainly fell below their overall numbers. In the
Nueces County area of Texas the difference was dramatic, particularly
when one considered that the Tejanos were primarily laborers whose
margin of existence was precarious. Here Chicanos comprised about
one-half of the school census, but less than one-third of those
whom the Red Cross aided. As in California, south Texans allotted
more for an Anglo than for a Hispano. "The Mexicans can get along
on less than the whites and don't demand as much as the whites,
whose standard of living is higher." 15

The 1920s thus contained several indicators of what might lie
ahead for impoverished Mexican immigrants and their families.
Perhaps most important was the widespread, though false, opinion
that Mexicans absorbed a disproportionate share of relief. The
differential between Mexican and Anglo allowances reduced the dollar
outlay somewhat, but the philosophical justification for the latter
action, that Mexicans could survive on less, was equally damaging. In the crises of the 1930s administrators could and would build a case for clearing relief rolls of Hispanics from just such conceptions.

Southwesterners viewed with enthusiasm theories that Mexicans constituted an added social burden during the Depression. Statistics collected in Los Angeles continued to indicate excessive unemployment, welfare, and public health cases among local Mexicans there, and relief officials estimated that the bill for assistance to Mexicans ran as high as $3,000,000 per year, despite the fact that benefits were sometimes less than 50 percent of Anglo allocations. About two-thirds of those receiving aid were aliens. Some 50 percent had spent at least one year on relief, and nearly eight percent had put in five years or more "under care." In 1935 Mexican aliens still comprised about 12 percent of the total relief cases in Los Angeles, a fact which encouraged proposals to eliminate them from relief rolls.

Many Anglos shared the notion that large numbers of idle Mexicans survived quite comfortably on the dole. J.C. Brodie, a Democratic committee chairman in southern Arizona, bombarded Federal officials with claims that because of the "wholesale Relief [sic] extended aliens, hordes of foreign indigents" had crippled the capability of the country to aid Americans. Brodie stated that aliens who lived so well on the "dole" would advise relatives in Mexico to come to the United States. Immigration authorities disliked Brodie's tactics of directing his correspondence to highly-placed politicians, but they conceded that he reflected "general sentiment" along the border.
Southwestern residents gave credibility to tales that aliens exploited the exchange rate by taking their relief payments into Mexico to purchase supplies at lower cost, and that so many received assistance that they would never return to their homeland. In San Antonio, where the largest private charity confined its work mainly to non-Mexicans, the Hispanos found themselves highly dependent on public assistance. The Mexican Consul there protested as early as 1933 that local committees were mistreating unemployed Mexican aliens, demanding steps toward citizenship as a precondition for aid. Researchers later concluded that about 50 percent of the Mexican families in San Antonio relied at least in part on Federal programs like the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A.) and surplus commodities, which were a little less subject to manipulation by city or county politicians. The non-Mexican population still resented this fact, perhaps in part because W.P.A. wages were much higher than those prevailing in much of the private sector of south Texas. In any event, fact and fantasy combined to maintain perceptions of Mexican dependency - and dissimulation.

Fewer Mexicanos were on relief rolls in the Midwest and Mountain states, but they still attracted considerable attention. In Denver the Bureau of Public Welfare contacted as many beet-workers as possible in the rural portions of Colorado, "advising ... of the critical relief situation" in the city. When the beet season opened each spring, agencies removed from eligibility all persons with Spanish surnames on the grounds that they must be field workers; continued public aid might detain them from their
rural calling. Colorado was also one of the leaders in the drive to
close state boundaries to transients, beginning with Mexicans.
In Detroit relief authorities "encouraging" returns to the old
country reduced the numbers of Mexicans considerably. Those who
stayed resorted to Federal work programs for their survival, especially
the Civil Works Administration (C.W.A.) and the W.P.A. Smaller towns
in beet-growing areas were not exempt from the dilemma of what to
do with unemployed Mexicans during the off-season; their placement
on relief rolls often brought howls from white workers. For example,
in Billings, Montana, Anglos denounced the addition of Hispanics to
W.P.A. projects and charged that this threatened American jobs and
homes. Rumors that the sugar companies had dumped Mexican aliens
in Iowa, where local boards certified them for government employment
ahead of needy Americans, stimulated the United States Attorney
to investigate. The charges turned out to be groundless, but the
fact that they surfaced even in areas with relatively small Mexican
populations was a reminder that economic competition during hard
times could set nerves on edge anywhere a minority existed. 18

Persistent reports of discriminatory treatment of Hispanics in
matters of relief and employment circulated south of the border,
and American diplomats grew concerned about the effects of such stories
on international relations. Consuls relayed tales of wholesale
firings of Mexican workers in favor of Anglos in California and
Arizona, while Texas charities were believed to favor citizens over
aliens in issuing relief (which in fact they did). The State
Department pressed the Bureau of Immigration for evidence of discrimination, but the latter denied any serious trouble. At the national level the Roosevelt administration did oppose discrimination in hiring for Federal relief projects, even eliminating questions relevant to race, religion, or politics from reporting forms. This did not prevent local officials from effecting unequal treatment of minorities, and the fact that local managers had considerable leeway in processing, certifying, and assigning relief applicants permitted abuses by those so inclined. For example, local boards in the South and Southwest sometimes adopted the stance that refusal to accept the "prevailing" wage of $1.00 per day for field work would jeopardize relief status. Nevertheless, Congress eventually decreed it illegal to deprive anyone of W.P.A. work or benefits on account of race, creed, or color, and that became the official stand of the government.19

Even as the government sought to moderate the effects of prejudice against racial and religious minorities, the public mood dictated an increasingly hard line against aliens who had remained unable or unwilling to alter their citizenship status. By the mid-1930s observers noted a movement to exclude non-citizens from relief, building on already prevalent occupational restrictions which were so severe at times that only unskilled or migratory labor was accessible to aliens. Pressure mounted, and Congress successively, proscribed the right of work relief to illegal aliens (1936), to those who had failed to file a declaration of intention for naturalization (1937), to those whose declaration did not precede passage of the law (1938), and finally to those who were not
actually citizens (1939). After several attempts Congress likewise passed a bill to provide for removal at government expense of aliens in financial distress who applied for return to their native countries. These trends obviously had an impact on Mexicans residing in the United States, even though they did not single out any single ethnic group, and Mexicans sometimes joined with other ethincs in protesting bitterly. The laws remained, however, and problems with relief haunted Mexicans until the onset of World War II.20

III

Years of denunciations of the affinity of Mexicans for charity culminated in the early 1930s with a series of forced repatriations of unemployed Mexican aliens. As mentioned, Anglo sentiment in this direction was strongest in the Southwest, but organized repatriations also occurred in midwestern cities like Detroit, St. Paul, and East Chicago/Gary. In nearly every instance local authorities cooperated with the Mexican Consul, who lent the influence of the Mexican government to the movement - the Cárdenas regime, for example, agitated for the return of its expatriated citizens until the late 1930s. Despite the blessing of the Mexican government, and the obvious desire of many individual Mexicanos to depart from the United States, most of the repatriation drives were predicated on prejudice and were carried out with strong-arm tactics which were yet another example of the hostility of Anglos toward their neighbors from south of the border.
Business depression after 1929 accentuated the reverse movement of Mexicans which had existed throughout the 1920s. In 1929 nearly 80,000 Mexicans officially remigrated to their homeland, and another 70,000 followed suit the next year. State Department representatives began to volunteer reports on this phenomenon in late 1930, when the Consul at Laredo informed his superiors that thousands of Mexicans had passed over the international bridge during October and November. The Consul remarked that advertisements of the Mexican National Irrigation Commission attracted some of the returnees, but about 80 percent had come, occasionally from as far away as New York and Massachusetts, because of lack of work. Most of those departing along the Texas border seemed to harbor hopes of eventual restoration of their life in the United States, for they took steps to establish their residency, a precondition for recrossing in the future. Repatriates would do this even during the worst days of the Depression.21

The idea that Mexican aliens displaced American citizens from employment, a viewpoint which restrictionists advanced during the 1920s, gained wider currency after 1929 when economic slowdown constricted job opportunities, as did the belief that aliens were a drain on welfare resources. The Hoover administration accepted both theories and in 1931 it launched a series of deportation drives designed to flush out illegal aliens of all nationalities. These consisted of sweeps to apprehend deportable individuals, accompanied by publicity to unnerve those who remained outside the net. Another facet was the implementation, on a large scale, of financial
assistance to repatriate aliens who had become public charges. Such policies encouraged people to treat aliens as scapegoats for contemporary problems; while not completely rational, this theme would recur in nearly every locality which organized the removal of Mexican aliens. 22

Officials in Los Angeles were quick to seize upon the idea of transporting indigent aliens away from the region at public expense. Estimated variously at from 6000 to 10,000, alien Mexican welfare recipients could cost as much as $2,400,000 per year in relief expenses. To achieve their removal, the Citizens Committee on Coordination of Unemployment Relief for Los Angeles enlisted the aid of the Bureau of Immigration and the President’s Emergency Committee on Employment. The Federal government would detail to Los Angeles several special immigration inspectors as a "gesture"; newspaper publicity and propaganda would magnify their activities and "scarehead" great numbers of aliens (mostly Mexicans) out of the country without even the necessity of warrant procedures or hearings. Local police and sheriff's officers would assist in the roundup and would turn over all illegal aliens to the immigration officers for examination, thus keeping the spotlight on the drive. Since many immigration agents in the field were known to have as their goal a maximal number of deportations, such pronouncements would likely strike a responsive chord among aliens. 23

The special inspector assigned to the Los Angeles deportation program doubted whether the scheme would succeed, for he did not think that the illegals would abandon their position in the United
States so easily. Press notices announced that government agencies planned to initiate "drastic action" against deportable aliens, and foreign-language papers in the area soon carried the story in translation. Instead of sending the aliens pell-mell out of the United States, the news simply caused many to vanish or to avoid their normal haunts, while others carried their documentation with them so as to thwart any detention. Despite a "fertile field" for activity toward the expulsion of deportables, special inspector W.F. Watkins concluded that the publicity had made it more difficult, not easier, to locate large numbers of "contraband aliens" for interrogation. The barrage of anti- alien statements in the press continued, however, with the Chamber of Commerce adding its weight to the campaign.  

Watkins was incorrect about the exercise, for the scare tactics had worked to a degree. C.P. Visel declared that alien deportation was "quietly efficient," with "constructive results obtained," which included "savings in city and county welfare." Further, "the exodus of aliens deportable and otherwise who have been scared out of the community has undoubtedly left many jobs which have been taken up by other persons (not deportable) and citizens of the United States and our municipality." The New York Times soon corroborated Visel's assessments, reporting that Hispanics were deserting southern California at a rate of 10,000 per month. A variety of factors provoked the migration, among which were the renewed activities of immigration agents and other outbursts of anti-Mexican sentiment, such as discriminatory employment practices.
and the introduction of a bill in the California Senate proposing public school segregation for Mexican children. 25

Los Angeles was not the only community to invite the departure of impoverished Mexicanos. Santa Barbara embarked on such a program in 1926, even before the Depression, when county authorities cooperated with immigration agents to remove the Mexicans who burdened local welfare agencies. Inspectors received lists of welfare recipients, which provided a ready source of deportable "public charges." During the 1930s settlement workers from the East Side Social Center also aided the immigration officers in persuading Mexicans to accept offers of transportation. San Diego encouraged repatriation as well, with the city council resolving in 1930 in favor of alien deportation. The council helped to keep anti-Mexican attitudes in the public eye with its approval of the Har- vis Bill and by petitioning Congress to fund local repatriation efforts. Organized remigration occurred from border towns like Calexico and Superior, sometimes with the assistance of the Mexican-American community, other times with aid from the Mexican government. There was no shortage of advocates for such plans even in communities which did not actually engage in them. 26

Repatriation fever also struck parts of the Midwest. Minnesota, Michigan, Indiana, and Iowa, as well as California and Texas, abetted the transportation of indigent Mexicans; Detroit and East Chicago/Gary rivaled Los Angeles in the ferocity of their campaigns. 27 Anti-alien sentiment was high in Michigan during the early 1930s; Detroit attracted national attention when its city council voted to discharge all alien city employees. This movement spread to the automotive
factories where release slips read "discharged to make jobs for American citizens." The situation cooled off slightly, but the Michigan legislature soon passed an alien registration act which prohibited any employer from hiring unregistered aliens, whether their entry into the country was legal or not. The law also provided for prosecution of unregistered aliens and their ultimate delivery to the Bureau of Immigration for deportation. By 1931 Michigan authorities were utilizing the public charge clause of the immigration law to return aliens to their native land at government expense, resurrecting a program employed in 1921 which had transferred Mexicans back to the southwestern border. 28

Drastic as these measures were, none of them had singled out the Mexican community. That changed in late 1931, when the first organized repatriation group left Detroit. For the next 18 months or so the local Bureau of Public Welfare supported the removal of about 1500 Hispanics, some naturalized, many with American-born children. A "Mexican Bureau" handled most of the transactions, and contemporaries frequently commented on the harsh tactics of the authorities. Social workers honed the stereotype of the "lazy Mexican" in case reports and public pronouncements, and threatened the loss of rent money or other outside relief for families which were "uncooperative." The city and state finally enlisted the good offices of the Mexican Consul, who issued a statement that repatriation was for the good of Mexican residents in the United States, and the Bureau of Immigration, which looked upon it as something of a pilot program. The Bureau approved the involvement of its local representative, who accompanied the train to the border
to ensure proper treatment of the returnees. When problems developed at the border, Inspector John L. Zurbrick seemed less concerned about the Hispanics who had to travel in box cars than about the possibility that bad publicity might smother the movement in its infancy. If things went smoothly, he hoped, a large number might apply for repatriation.29

Mexicans wishing to remigrate from northwestern Indiana, the East Chicago/Gary region, also received plenty of encouragement, often more than they might want. Like Detroit, the Lake County, Indiana area entered the Depression with a well-established anti-alien tradition. In 1929 the Bureau of Immigration established a sub-office in Gary, with the city providing free space, so that inspectors could investigate the large number of complaints about aliens emanating from the area. Business was so good that the District Director in Chicago tried to triple the number of agents at Gary in 1930, his current staff having conducted 658 investigations in only nine months. In the 1931-1932 fiscal year the same unit ran 1165 investigations and "intensively worked" the territory for the purpose of locating deportable aliens.30

The private relief sector was equally unfriendly toward transients or aliens. Residents at the Katherine House, at the behest of the East Chicago Chamber of Commerce, tried to determine out-of-town agencies with responsibility for transients or short-term residents seeking employment. The head resident chided the Associated Charities of Wheeling, West Virginia, for its disinterest in a stranded family, declaring that "we have more of our own
families than we can adequately care for and it is not in the least considerate of you or your city to apparently adopt this attitude toward the Ford family here." Perhaps sensing this attitude, about 1050 Mexicans departed from Lake County in the last half of 1930, generally on their own but sometimes with the assistance of private organizations like the International Institute of Gary. The Institute provided resources for European remigrants at the same time, as did the Emergency Relief Association of East Chicago. 31

With this background it is not surprising that a groundswell of opinion favoring the removal of Mexican indigents eventually surfaced in northwest Indiana. Under the joint leadership of the local American Legion post and the Emergency Relief Association, the community decided that the most effective way to lighten its burden was to eliminate all of the "rationalists," especially the Mexicans, who were under public care. The Emergency Relief Association inquired about the deportability of the aliens, but when the Department of Labor found too few illegals to make a campaign worthwhile, East Chicago prepared to make arrangements of its own. These included obtaining reduced fares from railroads, attracting funds in the form of tax advances from manufacturers, and contacting the Mexican government through its Consul in Chicago. According to spokesmen for the program, no one was sent without "clearance" from the Consul. 32

The repatriation movement in Lake County peaked in late 1932; about 230 families, with 1117 members in all, were still on relief rolls in East Chicago in February 1933. Efforts to generate more revenue for the program were unsuccessful, as neither Federal nor
state officials would release public money on the grounds that the
line between voluntary repatriation and deportation was a thin
one. As in Detroit and Los Angeles, relief agencies pressured the
Mexicans to accept the ride home, using tactics like dropping people
from welfare if they were employed for even a few hours a week
or simply making applicants "feel like something slimy." The drives
did serve to lighten the relief rolls, and they drew unexpected
supporters like Oswald Garrison Villard of the Nation, but they
also exacted human costs that counterbalanced any fiscal savings
achieved.33

The peak months of the repatriation movement occurred in October
through December of 1931, which happened to coincide with massive
nation-wide Bureau of Immigration campaigns against illegal aliens.
Late in 1932 a tapering-off trend appeared: remigrants numbered
34,882 in 1933, 24,840 in 1934, 16,196 in 1935, 12,599 in 1936,
and only 8,037 in 1937. The improved economic conditions and the
adoption of the national unemployment relief program in 1932 combined
to retard the outflow. A New York Times correspondent declared in 1933
that it had become difficult to locate Mexican families willing to
accept the "lure" of tax-free land in the old country; apparently
many preferred to live in the United States even if not self-supporting.34

Los Angeles attempted to rekindle enthusiasm for repatriation
in 1934 when county representatives proposed a colonization scheme
to the Mexican government. Los Angeles would pay transportation
and sundry expenses to the point of origination in Mexico, where the
returnees could live in subsidized agricultural colonies while they
reestablished themselves and applied their skills to the benefit of the Mexican economy. The Chamber of Commerce of Mexico had already endorsed the plan, offering its support if the government went along with the program, and the Secretary of Agriculture and Public Works expressed agreement in principle. The county managed to find another trainload of repatriates in the spring of 1934; immigration officials expected the practice to continue "so long as it is necessary to deal out charity to this class of aliens," and at least some individuals continued to advocate such a strategy. The Bureau of Immigration did not relent in its search for deportable aliens in the Southwest, the public broadened somewhat its list of undesirables, and consular officials reported spasmodic repatriations as late as 1937. Still, the intensity of interest seemed lower among all concerned, Anglos as well as Mexicanos.

Federal involvement in repatriation also declined under the Roosevelt administration even though Congress tightened restrictions on alien relief. The Department of Labor maintained a low profile on the question of repatriation after flirting with the Los Angeles program, doing all it could "to ease the movement of Mexican aliens by permitting some choices of route" for the trip to Mexico, for example. Emergency relief funds were available to repatriate Mexican citizens in cooperation with the Mexican government, but only after "careful individual case work" determined the proper course of action and only if there were no hint of pressure. This policy was probably the basis for rejecting the requests of Indians for assistance in removing Mexicans from East Chicago. By 1936 the
Commissioner-General of Immigration opposed massive deportation of aliens, including Mexicans, "simply because they were on relief," citing as reasons the expense entailed and the suffering involved, particularly for the American-born offspring of the alien. Presumably the Commissioner-General extended this to repatriation as well, since it sometimes had the same results in human terms as deportation.  

The repatriates did not always find themselves treated more warmly in their old homeland than in their new one. Diplomatic reports cited resentment toward the migrants in various portions of Mexico. Local charities in Saltillo and Monterrey tried to assist transients with meals and temporary accommodations, but there was also an obvious desire on the part of the municipalities "to hasten their departure from the city." Other forces opposed the repatriation of Mexicanos on the grounds that it would merely add to the economic ailments of the country, or that their disparate cultural outlook would prove divisive. Villagers alleged that erstwhile Californians put on airs; the repatriates themselves became impatient with bureaucratic delays or inadequate equipment at their new ventures, having grown accustomed to the more highly developed American business operations.  

The paramount policy of the Mexican government, however, encouraged all who wished to return; Consuls directed repatriation activities in most American cities, or at least advised on procedures. Later in the decade the Consuls would actively recruit prospects from among their compatriots in the United States, often making all of the necessary arrangements for the journey. The central
government offered fee and tax exemptions to those who actually made the trip, permitting the remigrants to bring in all of their possessions duty free and discounting consular certifications and other document charges. Another scheme which won some praise was an attempt to develop an exchange of properties between Mexicans with assets in the United States and Americans with resources in Mexico who feared further nationalizations. The government appealed to employers to find jobs for returnees, maintained immigration restrictions against non-Mexican workers who might compete in the labor market, redistributed land to those in agricultural occupations, and in extreme instances dispatched naval vessels to transport destitute nationals from neighboring countries. Although not responsible for instigating repatriation, Mexico did not officially hinder it and sought to entice its expatriates home whenever possible.

The program to divest relief rolls of their Mexicano or other alien recipients did not meet universal approbation. Even at the nadir of the Depression some businessmen worried about the long-term effects of any significant reduction in the Mexican population. Who would perform field or shovel labor was one question, for the Mexicans might not obtain entry to the United States in the future, creating the possibility of social and economic dislocations. The loss of potential consumers bothered others; at a time when the country had a glut of goods on hand it made little sense to drive away buyers. Civil libertarians also voiced concerns about the excessive enthusiasm for repatriation, one remarking that "care must be taken lest bureaucrats force aliens off relief rolls and
then into compulsory departure." Even an insinuation was often enough to start a panic. Family separations, the difficulty of gaining reentry if once transported, the civil rights of people caught in police sweeps, and the sheer unfairness of hustling home someone whose low-cost labor was no longer in demand troubled other liberals. The Los Angeles Bar Association, unhappy about detentions without warrants, for example, was among the few to protest anti-Mexican activity in southern California after the 1931 deportation drive. Such expressions were the exception rather than the rule, however, for the decisive factor in the formulation of policy on the matter of relief and repatriation was usually fiscal, not moral.

IV

Like their brethren in the Southwest, the Mexicans who moved to Chicago found themselves near the bottom of the economic pyramid. This comparison was relative, however, for in absolute terms the move to the Second City was usually advantageous. Hispanics toiled in steel mills, at packing plants, and on the railroads, frequently performing the lowest grade of labor in each organization. Employment was often irregular, and very hard to find in the winter, but Mexicans migrated to Chicago despite warnings from their Consul not to do so. The migrants must have sensed the opportunities available in the Calumet region, and some quickly attained a measure of success. As early as 1925 surveyors discovered that a higher percentage of Mexican families reported incomes above $250.00 per month than any other ethnic group among the working poor, despite the fact that a smaller portion of Mexicans than blacks or foreign-born whites were listed
in the work force. While nearly everyone questioned was at or near the poverty level, after less than five years residence in Chicago the Mexicans had placed proportionately three times as many representatives in the top bracket as had the blacks. Later in the decade Paul Taylor detected Hispanics moving out of the ranks of common labor into semi-skilled positions in the plants which had employed them the longest, another sign that conditions were not static in the Midwest.  

The Depression interrupted this occupational mobility, as nearly two-thirds of the Mexicans were still considered unskilled in 1935, with about one-third on relief in that year. In 1942 a study of Mexican families in "Packingtown" recorded 14 percent on relief; most of those who gave an occupation did so in broad terms - meat packer, railroad worker, etc. - which suggested rather low status. Weekly earnings in the stockyards approximated relief levels in the late 1930s: $20.00 to $25.00 per week, but subject to seasonal layoffs. The Immigrants Protective League also noted the concentration of Mexicans in the lower reaches of the economy, very few having become skilled workers or supervisors even after ten to twenty years of experience. Of course, exceptions existed in every industry, and Mexicans had surpassed the blacks in general throughout the job market, suffering a lower unemployment rate, for example. As the I.P.L. stated in its report, "they were not identified in any way with the Negroes." 

Limitations on upward mobility, which forced disproportionate numbers of Mexicans into unskilled, poorly-paid activities, should
have encouraged the emergence of a myth of minority dependency within the dominant society, as it had in the Southwest. The ubiquitous Paul Taylor did interview people who described Mexicans as profligate and a social liability, but they never received consistent support from those whose proximity to welfare administration would have rendered their declarations authoritative. The social workers and settlement house residents in Chicago rarely played upon Mexican poverty as their counterparts did in the Southwest. The exceptions were most noticeable in the field of health care, where hospital administrators broadcast the high rates of tuberculosis in the Mexican community. Others issued dire predictions from time to time, as when Gertrude Rom of the United Charities told questioners that she anticipated greater charitable attention to blacks and Mexicans, both of whom "were very receptive to social agencies." It was more common to hear from the Chicago social work community that "charity does not pauperize the Mexicans; they get away from it as soon as they can," or that Mexicans were more self-reliant as a group than the Poles, who often looked for help from institutional sources. 44

Mexicanos did have to fall back upon charitable resources occasionally, beginning at least in 1909 when the Dillingham Commission recorded a single Mexican charity case in Chicago for that year. After World War I the growth of the colony almost necessitated some increase in supplicants. The United Charities reported fewer than 100 cases each year through 1924; in 1921-22 and 1922-23 Mexican cases came to less than one percent of the total for the agency. Most of these came from the West Side colony around Hull-House, the traditional receiving area for impoverished immigrants. The
winter of 1920-21 was hardest for the newcomers, whose plight prompted the Chicago office of the Bureau of Immigration to examine their condition. The agent reported that the evils were "more apparent than real" among the Mexicans, especially in the railroad camps where coal and rent were free. Those needing relief had received it, and none of the migrants "appeared to be subjects for further action" by the service. ⁴⁵

The number of Mexicans requesting care remained small during the 1920s. Records of the United Charities showed a peak of 112 cases, or slightly over three percent of their total, in 1927. By 1929 Mexicans were the fourth largest group of aliens on the rolls of the United Charities, but they still comprised less than three percent of the overall load. Employment of a Spanish-speaking case worker had brought greater contact in some districts, and settlement residents provided direction to charitable agencies, but the Hispanos did not seem to return after the departure of their interpreter or after the solution of the original problem. Mexican migrants gradually found their way to other city institutions, such as the Municipal Lodging House, which offered meals and overnight facilities to transients, the Catholic Charities, and the Cook County Department of Outdoor Relief. "Going to the county" was a last resort, because it had the potential for eventual deportation as a public charge. Still, about 100 Mexicans turned to this source in 1925-1926 and double that number in 1926-1927. ⁴⁶

Mexicans in Chicago lost little time in establishing a charitable structure of their own. The Benito Juárez Society entered the field of life and health insurance in the early 1920s, and other societies
contributed to burial costs whenever necessary. The colonial press issued frequent calls for more such action in the latter part of the decade. The creation of a community center, for example, might keep Hispanics away from public charity. When the Depression really hit in 1930, clubs like La Cruz Azul Mexicana and La Brigada de South Chicago rallied what resources they could to the assistance of the colony. 47

The Chicago economy, with its emphasis on heavy capital goods and transportation, was particularly vulnerable to dislocation during periods of business decline, and the years of the Great Depression were no exception. Chicago dropped dramatically after 1929 in terms of workers employed and wages paid; the city never reached levels recorded during the base line year of 1929 in either category throughout the 1930s, and it was consistently below the performance indicators for the entire country during the same time span. Even in 1940 the outlook was grim, with nearly 400,000 unemployed in Cook County, large portions of whom were common laborers or semi-skilled workers whose prospects seemed dim. Mexicans, of course, generally were unskilled or semi-skilled, and were frequently employed in steel or transportation, two of the industries which were hit the hardest, so they were among those with bleak prospects. 48

Relief costs in the city soared to astronomical proportions as lay-offs and business closings ricocheted through the economy. Yearly expenditures were $2,700,000 in 1929 and $3,500,000: in 1930, but by November of 1931 monthly outlays exceeded $2,300,000, and
daily assistance hit $150,000 in October of 1932. The number of idle
workers topped 600,000 in 1931 and 700,000 in 1932. Administrators
met the crisis as best they could, transferring unemployment relief
cases from private to public funds whenever possible so as to reduce
demands on private agencies, utilizing tax anticipation warrants
to acquire additional revenue, and eventually eliminating rent
payments to landlords for all families on assistance. The situation
became so desperate that Edward Ryerson, Chairman of the Governor's
Commission on Unemployment and Relief, and a long-time Chicago
philanthropist, once inquired about a distribution of proceeds
from the 1931 Army-Navy football game. Ryerson had heard rumors
that the money might become available to private agencies with cash-
flow difficulties. 49

Such circumstances obviously dictated a wide-ranging search
for solutions, and the humanitarians weighed all sorts of approaches
to their dilemma. To their credit, they consistently opted to
seek new sources of revenue wherever possible before cutting back
expenditures. When forced to slash costs, they generally did so
in a non-discriminatory manner. The dual system of payments, openly
practiced in the Southwest, was not advocated in Chicago, nor was
systematic elimination of benefits to aliens or to non-resident
transients given much consideration, although the state of Illinois
had enacted residency requirements. Various public and private
agencies did offer transportation from the city, but allocations were
so small that the program probably had a rather minimal effect on
the mass of alien welfare recipients.
One of the harshest proposals to deal with the relief crisis was also one of the first: in the fall of 1930 the Governor's Commission on Unemployment and Relief issued guidelines for local relief organizations to follow. The most important, perhaps, was registration of all unemployed so that social service people could track the beneficiaries of relief. Special work programs were open only to Illinois residents, not "transients seeking newly created welfare jobs," and local communities should watch closely incoming trains, freight yards, and hitch hikers to prevent a flood of ineligibles from the outside. This warning did not seem to affect the Chicago agencies, for on September 16, 1931, the Committee for Homeless Men reported that it had just opened an eating place for transients to accompany its existing lodging facilities, while recommending the expansion of these operations. Shortly thereafter other Chicagoans proposed the development of a national program to house transients in converted Army barracks. Chicago remained one of the two major cities in the country to maintain any sort of program for unemployed transients (ironically, in view of its treatment of Mexican repatriates, Los Angeles was the other), and Commissioner of Relief Leo M. Lyons criticized stringent eligibility requirements which had the effect of freezing potential migrants in communities where they might not exploit their own talents productively. Only rarely did any welfare group suggest removal of aliens from relief rolls; one such proposal emerged in 1936 as an alternative to consider if all else failed to balance the budget. 50

Chicago benefactors instead turned to alternative funding, and, as would befit men from one of the major business centers in the
country, improved administration of the program to make ends meet. Ryerson was not the only person to search outside the city for financing. Joel D. Hunter, superintendent of the United Charities of Chicago, recommended transfer of unemployment cases to the Joint Emergency Relief Service and an increased share of the burden for the Cook County Bureau of Public Welfare. Even oversubscribed fund drives could not meet the needs of the city, and in February, 1932 the state began to funnel money into Cook County through the Bureau of Public Welfare. In less than a month the Council of Social Agencies was looking to Washington for aid; Springfield could not even provide enough. Such fund raising efforts coincided with attempts to direct assets to the essential tasks of feeding and sheltering the destitute. Agencies cut child care, health education, recreation, and even assistance to the elderly in order to provide for the hungry. The Chicago Association of Commerce later recommended the use of experienced business managers and a more efficient governing body to smooth lines of authority and to rationalize the multiplicity of functions and offices. Trained social workers should analyze applicant requirements to ensure proper allocation of resources. All of these proposals essentially resurfaced in 1936 in the report of the Council of Social Agencies' Joint Committee on Costs of Relief.  

Most local writers considering long-term solutions to the Depression adopted equally moderate stances. The City Club of Chicago recommended shorter hours, elimination of child labor, retirement provisions, and minimum wages as its answer to unemployment, while the City Comptroller proposed a massive resumption of housing construction,
where much still remained undone, as the pump-primer to restore full employment. Others added job sharing and the development of gardens for the unemployed as paths out of the economic bog in which society found itself. Private citizens could and sometimes did complain about the number of aliens, including Mexicans, who crowded the welfare lists, but officials rarely seemed to play on those sentiments.52

Outlays for transportation provide a final indicator of the low priority given to removal of indigents from Chicago. References to this program are scattered, but they do permit some insight. In November 1931, at a time when the private sector still dominated relief, and very shortly after the Bureau of Immigration had conducted major deportation raids, the United Charities allocated $1823 for transportation. This included $174 spent in the Mary Crane District (based at Hull-House on the Near West Side) and $164 in the South Chicago District. A year later the Cook County Bureau of Public Welfare reported $11,105 devoted to "relief at large," a catch-all which included medical expenses and deportation costs, among others. The Bureau had institutionalized this program by 1931 as the Transportation Service of the Field Services Division, which took responsibility for "emergency care," a process that could entail transportation to the place of legal residence of all non-resident dependents who came to the attention of the Bureau. Reports did not provide any budgetary breakdowns for the service, which lasted at least until 1940, nor were there many indicators of total numbers or nationalities involved, although a study run during the winter of 1938-39 showed that only 13 of 450 non-resident men
accepted the offer of transportation to their place of legal residence. Agencies detailed some Federal monies to this task also, but again the amount was small. Illinois received $55,443,721 from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation between July 1932 and May 1933. Of that total, $589.91 was devoted to Mexican repatriation, which accountants categorized under "Private Shelters." 

It appears, then, that authorities in Chicago applied relatively little pressure on aliens or transients to take themselves elsewhere, or else they advertised such pressures very little. In either event, the city differed markedly from places like Los Angeles, Denver, Detroit, and East Chicago/Gary, all of which did exert pressure on alien welfare recipients, accompanied by a publicity campaign designed to create a multiplier effect which would flush out those beyond official reach. The economic climate was ripe for an anti-alien campaign, because relief organizations teetered on the brink of disaster for years, but the political and social matters were not, and no storms of protest developed. Although Mexicans did not inspire this more moderate position toward the question of alien relief, it did have an effect on them.

All of this is not to imply that the Mexican community in Chicago sailed through the Depression unscathed, for such was not the case. Mexicans lost their jobs in large numbers and often exhausted their savings before seeking aid. Fear of deportation as a public charge was evident in the colony, as were individual instances of discrimination (usually from employers, not social agencies). Some Mexicans joined with other Americans to protest these conditions, and some ultimately turned to such legal means as bankruptcy or
naturalization as their solution to economic problems. By and large, however, Mexican indigents in Chicago faced hard times in much the same manner as other Chicagoans, at least without artificial hindrances of the nature seen in other Mexican communities in the United States.

Like many of their neighbors, the Mexican residents of the Calumet region began the Depression decade on the borderline of dependency even when they had not actually sought out service agencies. One study of Stockyards district families indicated that only 10 percent (5 of 50) had had contact with relief agencies prior to their bout with unemployment after 1930, but despite that fact there were few family resources available to help weather hard times. Again there is a notable similarity to the Europeans, for Mexicans also entered the 1930s with a good record for avoiding dependency, helping one another whenever possible. In 1935 the Hughes Survey found that nearly 22 percent of its Hispanic respondents had not held a non-relief job since 1930, but the South Chicago office of the Chicago Relief Administration had fewer than 20 Mexican families under care in early 1930, and only 30 in 1931, hardly enough to warrant concern. Also in 1931 a sampling of birthplaces of men at a Salvation Army facility revealed 28 Mexicans in a field of 962 men. Another agency for transients, the Service Bureau for Men, reported that their Mexican-born clientele ranged between 100 and 230 during the early 1930s. Whether viewed in terms of the Mexican population in Chicago or in comparison with the total number of relief recipients, none of these figures seemed to justify the
remarks of Municipal Judge Thomas Green, who charged in 1931 that "we are having a great deal of trouble with vagrant Mexicans, who require watching." 54

As the Depression deepened, more and more Hispanics turned to welfare as their only means of survival. Robert C. Jones, erstwhile "Mexican Worker" at the Old Town Boys' Club, later estimated that 9000 Mexicans were on relief in Chicago in 1935, but he may have confused his numbers with those for the entire state, for the Cook County totals were 7078 in 1935. Researchers for Ernest Burgess located 4272 Mexicans receiving aid in October of 1933, approximately 33 percent of the colony, according to the 1934 census. Despite their reputation for dependency, two of the three major Mexican enclaves showed relief rates below the proportion of their surrounding communities (South Chicago and Back of the Yards), while the rate for Hispanics on the Near West Side was slightly above the ratio for the same district. 55

From these statistics it would not appear that Mexicans suffered any serious disability in obtaining relief in Chicago. Repatriation undoubtedly removed some of the unemployed from the Calumet region, and fear of deportation as a public charge perhaps reduced the number of eligible applicants somewhat, as Jane Addams believed. However, the fact that one-third of the Mexicans in the city were actually receiving assistance at the same time renders questionable the "chilling effect" that the Immigration Service may have had on any decision to apply for public subsidy, as does the longevity of some of the relief cases. Perhaps more accurate in this instance than Jane Addams
was the University of Chicago Settlement worker who reported that "few of our Mexican neighbors have gotten jobs, but nearly all of them are getting relief." At the end of the Depression another study underscored the fact that Chicago did not discriminate against its Mexican residents, at least as far as welfare was concerned. A sample of underprivileged children disclosed that 90 percent of the Mexican children interviewed were on total relief, compared to 67 percent of the black children and 50 percent of the white children, evidence that at least one sector in Chicago did not deny Hispanics their due.56

The settlements remained in the vanguard of the effort to assist the Mexicans in this field, as in most others. Settlement workers did home visitations to evaluate need and submitted recommendations to the disbursing agencies. By late 1931 the relief commissions accepted these analyses without question. Settlement staffs provided budget instructions to encourage better money sense, and sometimes offered a little in the way of direct relief, particularly to people caught in disputes between the Catholic Charities, which only accepted those in good standing with the Church, and the public agencies, which sometimes rejected Catholics on the grounds that they could obtain succor for the religious funds.57

The settlements could also generate publicity favorable to their clients, and they continued to do so during the Depression. The Old Town Boys' Club prepared capsule descriptions of needy members to solicit donations for a winter clothing drive; among its examples were John Romanik, Russell Mendoza, and Lupe Coronado.
Foreshadowing the later comments of relief commissioner Lyons, the Immigrants Protective League blasted residency requirements which stifled the mobility of ambitious types like José Ceja, a Mexican section hand who had lost his savings in a bank failure. Ceja had moved to Chicago in search of better educational opportunities for his children, who remained in school despite the family's poverty. When questioned about the Mexicans who turned to the Mary Crane District of the United Charities for help, superintendant Clea Kemble commented that they were "gentle ... not given to quarreling and never excited about their condition." Kemble also remarked that the Hispanics were not homesick for their native land despite the cold weather of Chicago. The pictures painted in these and other releases reminded readers that Hispanics differed little from themselves in terms of problems or aspirations, and in this manner possibly helped to prevent the emergence of major anti-Mexican campaigns like those in Detroit or Los Angeles.

Mexicans in Chicago did not fail to take what steps they could to surmount their economic hardships, again disproving the mariachi myth. Adena Rich of the I.P.L. commented that Hispanics did not give up the hope that they might find some way to earn a legitimate living, for even at the end of 1932 most inquiries had to do with employment opportunities. After nearly seven years of depression, speakers at a meeting of the "Frente Popular" urged their audience to organize for self-help because "relief kills the spirit of progress" and "acceptance of relief lowers mores." Perhaps this same spirit moved the Mexicans who joined various rallies to protest what they and many of their working class neighbors considered inadequate
relief. Hispanics paraded with hunger marchers in 1932, demonstrated for an expanded public works program in 1933, discussed the coordination of work stoppages on W.P.A. projects with other members of the Illinois Workers Alliance, and sought the means to cut through bureaucratic procedures at welfare offices. These people might not agree that "acceptance of relief" lowered their moral standing, but they had no intention of tolerating anything short of fair treatment.

A few Mexicans, perhaps more Americanized than their fellows, took legal recourse to relieve their impoverished condition and declared themselves bankrupt, as did about 30,000 other Chicagoans between 1929 and 1940. Their records, in the form of schedules of assets and liabilities, offer a glimpse of the life of an immigrant laborer in the 1930s and reflect the degree to which some Hispanics had assimilated. Steelworker Jose Torres, who estimated his income at $200.00 in 1938 and $500.00 in 1939, had debts totaling about $400.00 when he liquidated his estate. The law permitted Torres to exempt certain personal property, and he withheld household furniture, appliances, and clothing for a family of five—valued at $150.00. Torres was a wealthy man in comparison with Gerónimo Mendoza, whose debts exceeded $400.00 at a time when his household goods, etc., were listed at $25.00. Mendoza's schedule of unsecured claims included the notation "signed some papers but do not know what they were." Medical expenses overwhelmed Vincent Reyes, accounting for $730.00 of his $921.00 in debts. Reyes had no furniture whatever, only $25.00 worth of clothes and some uncollected wages.

Finally, the case of Victor Martínez illustrated how some of the Mexicanos had adapted to the credit economy of the United States.
Martínez was a stockyards laborer who placed his wages at $1000 in 1939; although he figured his personal property at $32.60 (bed - $5.00, stove - $5.00), and he had $0.09 cash on hand, he owed $361.00 on an automobile, $182.00 on a lady's fur coat, and nearly $50.00 on another clothing account. At least some Mexicans in Chicago were able to enjoy the finer things in life, if only temporarily, even in the midst of the Depression.

The final, and perhaps hardest, legal step for many Mexicans to take in confronting their position in America was naturalization. The gradual limitation of opportunities open to aliens, both in terms of employment and relief, brought to a head the emotional conflict over national loyalty which many immigrants encountered. The denial of W.P.A. jobs and assistance to non-citizens affected Mexicans after 1938, as did the restriction of aliens to non-confidential, non-restricted (i.e., non-defense) employment. Mexican aliens were traditionally unwilling to switch allegiance during their sojourn north of the border, although settlement workers saw a reversal of that trend in the early 1930s. The balance shifted more toward naturalization in the late 1930s: as many Hispanos opted to acquire United States' citizenship rather than remain ineligible for W.P.A. or defense jobs. In a sample of 150 Mexicans who filed their declaration of intention to become American citizens between 1938 and 1940, 24 percent (35) were unemployed. Almost 40 percent (59) gave their occupation as laborer, about 26 percent were either semi-skilled (20) or skilled (19), while only 2 owned a business. These declarants rated better economically than the
field Elizabeth Hughes had surveyed in 1935, which revealed that nearly 60 percent of the Mexicans receiving relief were unskilled, with another 14 percent unknown. The higher ratio of unskilled workers in the 1935 study was probably due to the fact virtually everyone examined was unemployed, and unskilled workers were more apt to be unemployed than skilled ones. Both surveys indicate that Mexicans remained in the lower levels of the economy, but some, at least, were positioning themselves for an advance.

V

Faced with the prospect of long-term unemployment and often relegated to unskilled labor even during prosperous eras, many Mexicans in Chicago chose to repatriate themselves during the 1930s. The social and relief agencies of the city contributed what assistance they could to this movement, but there is little evidence that Chicago repeated the pressures which marked the reverse migration of Mexicans in other portions of the country. Instead, private organizations maintained their tradition of protecting immigrants and the rambunctiously anti-alien Chicago media did not develop a strong position on the issue. The generally moderate tone of the commentary about Mexican repatriation may be seen as another sign that immigrants were coming of age in Chicago; Mexicans did not cause this phenomenon, but they found it to their advantage, just as were other developments in the city.

The remigration of Mexicans from Illinois began quite early, with departures occurring in both 1910 and 1911. Thoughts of the homeland remained in the minds of many, either as the ultimate goal
of their travels or as a haven from economic storms. During the 1921 recession the Mexican Consul in Chicago appealed to the city for funds with which to return stranded and destitute Hispanics to the border, whereupon the government of Mexico would assume responsibility. Consul Francisco Pareda admonished the mayor that Chicago would profit from this repatriation, which would eliminate the danger of thefts by the hungry workers, while union men added that the Mexicans enhanced unemployment. The city refused to finance the transportation, and the Mexicans themselves denied any connection with labor recruiters, which might have gained them a ride back at the expense of the Department of Labor. Ironically, in their first contact with organized repatriation, Chicago authorities received criticism for not underwriting the evacuation of Mexican charity cases. When public funds were not forthcoming, the Hispanic community sometimes sponsored a trip home for the unfortunate.62

Repatriation was not a major issue in the Chicago colony during the 1920s. Researcher Mario Bueno believed that the solos planned to return home as soon as their spirit of wanderlust had diminished and their lot had improved. Many believed that they were merely transients and that sooner or later they would resume their life in Mexico. Messengers from home fed this attitude. José Vasconcelos delivered his "passing through our Egypt" speech to a Chicago audience in 1926 and president-elect Pascual Ortiz Rubio later promised Chicago listeners that his administration aimed to stabilize conditions in Mexico so that the expatriates could return without economic sacrifice. Within a year Mexicanos in Chicago were anxious to see whether their country could fulfill that promise. In the words of
Adena Rich, "those who could get back to Mexico strained every effort to do so." Interest was so great that repatriation scams appeared, with impostors who claimed to represent the Mexican government purporting to schedule special trips for a fee.  

Enough Mexicans departed from Chicago during 1930 to make Illinois the second greatest source of remigrants passing through the "port" of Nuevo Laredo. During the second half of that year 2940 Mexicans mentioned Chicago as their last place of residence in the United States when they entered Nuevo Laredo, with another 453 reporting residency elsewhere in Illinois. Overall, 14,436 Mexicanos left Illinois for the old country between 1930 and 1932, approximately 50 percent of the 1930 population, according to census figures. Not everyone travelled individually, for the newspaper El Nacional announced the availability of group rail rates to the border (quoting the same price which the Emergency Relief Administration of East Chicago had negotiated) with the prediction that "many of our countrymen will take advantage of this opportunity." Contemporaries variously described carloads and trainloads of repatriates from Chicago in 1932 and 1933, but the watchdog Immigrants Protective League did not issue any protest about the nature of these activities. The examples of forced repatriation with which the I.P.L. illustrated its reports normally involved Europeans or Orientals, almost never Mexicans. By 1935-1936 Mexicans did not even rank among the top 15 nationalities requesting assistance from the League for emigration, although they provided the eighth largest number of cases for the agency during the same period.
Remigration remained a goal to which many Mexicanos in Chicago at least paid lip service in the late 1930s. The topic surfaced often in the meetings of the "Frente Popular," which as an organization generally favored the program. Speakers relayed instructions from the Mexican government on how to register with the consulate in order to initiate proceedings, and debaters often lauded the advantages of returning. Later in the decade the Cardenas regime sent a repatriation recruiter to Chicago to generate candidates for back-trailing. About 140 families expressed a desire to accept this offer, but only a few actually went. Since some of the early repatriates had already ventured back to Chicago after residing in Mexico during the early stages of the Depression, this disinterest is not surprising. Mexicans might wish to retire south of the border, especially once old-age benefits were removable to another country, but most preferred to stay in Chicago during their employable years. The important point, however, was that they retained the choice to follow either path. The dominant society did not attempt to force them away.

The lack of an orchestrated anti-Mexican drive in Chicago did not mean that the city was unfamiliar with such methods for dealing with unwelcome minorities. Interesting as a comparison to the treatment afforded Mexicanos was the greeting which blacks received during the Great Migration. The Illinois Federation of Labor forecast anti-black rioting unless the movement ceased, and most Chicagoans probably hoped that the newcomers would withdraw to the South. The Tribune encouraged a reversal of the flow, offering in 1917 to reward financially any Negro who left Chicago. The Chicago Association of
Commerce later telegraphed its southern counterparts with word that Chicago possessed a "large surplus" of black laborers and urged that southern representatives come to Chicago to interview Negroes for relocation in the South. This attitude, while perhaps not a direct stimulant for the 1919 riots, certainly reflected the ambience toward blacks which dominated the city, visible in Loop offices as well as the immigrant receiving areas of the South Side. 67

The year 1926 saw another outburst of anti-minority feeling, directed this time primarily toward Italians. The publicity centered around a drive dedicated "to the job of purging Chicago of alien terrorists." With popular opinion outraged at a series of spectacular gang murders and by the apparent alliance between crime and politics, newspapers called for the intervention of Federal officers who had no connections with the Italian-dominated gangs. Headlines screamed such messages as "U.S. Aims Blow at Chicago Crime" and "Sweep Haunts of Gangsters; U.S. Holds 21," while texts detailed the program as the "deportation of alien gunmen campaign" and estimated that Chicago alone harbored 50,000 deportable aliens. The police pulled men from cafes or pool halls, detained them, often under horrendous conditions, and released them if they could meet the bond requirements. As many as 121 aliens fell into the dragnet in a single day, and many more apparently left town as quickly as possible, much to the delight of the police and the editors. 68

The devotion of the authorities to law enforcement soon came under scrutiny. Observers commented that raiders often ignored vice, gambling, and bootleg activities upon which they stumbled during their search for deportable aliens. A more telling criticism soon emerged:
only "everyday" people were taken. "Old men, doctors, lawyers, anyone; but only good people, no criminals, because the police were afraid to take the bad ones." The single-minded pursuit of Italians did not go unnoticed, either, as Jane Addams joined with the Italian Consul to protest that the assault was discriminatory. "It admittedly is directed at a single nationality." To alleviate this situation the immigration officers extended their forays to include Greeks and Mexicans, but only after Consular objections. In early March, nearly three weeks after the press had kicked off the drive, incursions into the Stockyards district gathered up nearly 100 Mexicans.

The local police carried out the deportation drive and ensuing detentions with little regard for the civil rights of their subjects. The lawmen often lacked specific warrants; instead they seized whoever was available in hopes of finding someone deportable. Indiscriminate apprehensions clogged facilities. Conditions in Chicago jails were never the best, and under the crush of mass arrests they deteriorated even further. Beatings, overcrowding, lack of heat or blankets, bad or non-existent food, a paucity of interpreters and abnormally high bonds all accentuated the normal difficulties of custody. The police seemed to mistreat everyone equally, however, for interviews in the Italian and Mexican colonies unearthed similar stories about post-arrest arrangements, which followed existing patterns of both the Chicago police and the immigration authorities. Howard Ebey, supervisory agent for the Bureau of Immigration, did take the novel approach that the detentions inflicted no undue hardship on the Mexicans because most were solos without any families to support. The Mexican
Consulate seemed to agree, at least tacitly, for it did not issue any complaint over the incidents, nor did its representatives display any great concern. 70

The raids died down after about four weeks of intense activity, but that did not still cries for the deportation of criminal aliens from Chicago. Correspondence to that effect occasionally appeared in the files of the Bureau of Immigration, and newspaper accounts linked Sicilians, crime, and deportability during another series of stories in the summer of 1930. The I.P.L. suspected that the arrests and publicity were a smoke screen to obscure the repeated misfires of the police in their fight against crime. Interestingly enough, the process of identifying Italians with crime in Chicago spared the Mexicans from similar attention. In testimony before the Senate Committee on Immigration, a railroad executive declared that the Mexicans living in Illinois were no worse than any other group, in part because the press did not connect them with wrongdoings, as it did the Sicilians and Italians. 71 The media did not marshal opinions to expel the Mexicans as it did the Sicilians, either.

Chicagoleans were well aware of the theories which linked alien employment to American unemployment. Late in 1930 business leaders from the Union League Club and the Association of Commerce collaborated to establish the Special Committee on Immigration and Citizenship, with offices on LaSalle Street. This group expressed a belief that aliens who had entered the United States illegally were a major cause of the economic troubles of the time. Blue-collar employees, men like Albert Banaski, Robert O. Clark, and Otto Warnosky, also warned that
aliens menaced the American worker; Warnosky interjected that he was laid off while scores of "foreigners" remained on the payroll at Republic Steel. These men did not always include Mexicans specifically among the aliens who so disrupted employment patterns, but newspaper articles sometimes did. The Tribune editorialized that colonization plans for Mexicans had a positive aspect, for they were a means to take Mexicans out of the American labor market and to increase American exports at the same time. The Federation News, official organ of the Chicago Federation of Labor, kept its readers abreast of the repatriation movement in southern California, sometimes calling "deportation the way out" of the unemployment problem. Neither paper really mounted a campaign against Mexicans, however, although one might have expected either to do so.  

Tensions did flare during 1931 when Chicago experienced its own deportation drive as part of the Department of Labor's anti-alien program. News of mass arrests and interrogations appeared from time to time in the Mexican press, although not necessarily in conjunction with violations of the immigration laws. Special investigative teams moved into the city during the fall of 1931, and the newsmongers covered their actions intently. The investigators stressed that "large smuggling rings" were at work in Chicago, whose activities demanded a rein... To achieve this end the immigration service raided the Mexican, Chinese, and Greek colonies. The most spectacular publicity accompanied the raids on Chinatown, which the Tribune awarded front-page treatment; more Chinese were questioned and detained than any other nationality. This echoed the concerns of the local
immigration office, whose director had declared in 1929 that "an aggressive and experienced Chinese Inspector is a necessity in this District." Not until the summer of 1932 did the Chicago District request or receive the services of a Spanish interpreter even on a temporary basis; prior to that time the unit retained staffers with fluency in Polish, Lithuanian, Hebrew, German, and Scandinavian and saw people with competency in Greek or Italian as its real deficiency. While they did not totally ignore Mexicans, neither the press nor the Bureau of Immigration in Chicago gave Hispanics the same degree of attention that their counterparts in Los Angeles or Detroit did.

Numbers might explain the difference in Los Angeles, but they are less helpful for Detroit, whose Mexican colony was smaller than that of Chicago. One possible explanation was the strength of the social service community in Chicago. Each of the anti-alien drives found itself faced with the vocal opposition of the Immigrants Protective League, which sent its own people into the field to determine the facts and to raise questions about official misconduct. I.P.L. staffers wondered in 1926 if the highly publicized raids were not simply intended to divert attention from deeper sources of trouble and to arouse an "emotional release" in those who followed the story. The League raised the same issues in 1930, while looking as well for deportation cases in which it could intervene as a friend of the immigrant.  

The reaction which the 1931 deportations provoked was perhaps the best example of the way the social workers rallied against threats to the Mexican community. The director of the Common Ground
Settlement first notified the League of the large-scale sweeps. The South Chicago Community Center sent an interpreter to the police station to translate for the Mexicans and to observe the proceedings. The Hull-House Attorney pressed the authorities for information and presented a reminder that immigrants had someone behind them. Of course, the I.P.L. had an investigator on the scene to follow the action. Within a week, Abel Davis, president of Chicago Title and Trust, had protested to the Secretary of Labor, condemning the raids as discriminatory and un-American in spirit. Davis also warned that they could stimulate adverse political sentiments.

The League examined deportation proceedings of those who were actually arrested in October 1931; over one-third were released after I.P.L. intervention and each of the eventual deportees was guilty of illegal entry. Since no hardships developed from these cases, the League did not contest any of them. Its actions left little doubt where it stood, however.

Voluntary repatriations, if executed under proper supervision and with careful preparation, were more acceptable to the social service agencies in Chicago. These caveats were significant, however, for they underlay the markedly different approach to repatriation which emerged in the Second City, where repatriations occurred on a case by case basis. The Immigrants Protective League was attuned to the needs of potential repatriates from the beginning of the Depression, when it wired an employment agency in south Texas that it could "ship 500 Mexican families immediately if secured transportation and work." Solicitations for the winter of 1930-1931 informed
potential donors that expenses had risen, in part because of the popular movement toward repatriation among the foreign born, who were convinced that they could subsist on less in their native land. In the spring of 1931 the League opened an experimental repatriation program, with financing from the state Commission on Unemployment and Relief. The appropriation was only $1000, and was not renewed. The League never again directly administered repatriation funds, although it coordinated expenditures from other social agencies which were assisting client departures, sums which totalled $13,000 in 1935.76

The I.P.L. recognized the latent danger that relief agencies might use repatriation as a means to clear aliens from their rolls; together with other social workers it successfully resisted the efforts of immigration officers to view case records of alien relief recipients, a major variation from practices in other cities. I.P.L. staff members developed guidelines to guard against both forced and ill-advised departures. Case workers interviewed clients to establish their circumstances in the United States and to estimate their prospects for survival abroad. Standard procedure demanded contacts with international social agencies, such as the International Migration Service, the National Catholic Welfare Conference or similar organizations. Social workers examined recent letters from relatives overseas to determine if they could provide support, reminded their clients that the action was irreversible, and warned them that their American-born children might have no rights in the other country even if the parents did. If it appeared that repatriation was the
proper policy, the League would attempt to raise funds. Sources included the repatriate's church, lodge, employer, or friends and relatives, as well as the Bureau of Public Welfare (for aliens on relief) and other relief agencies. The final step was to notify the Internal Revenue Service to ensure compliance with tax laws for the repatriate. 77

This service was available to Mexicans, of course, and many undoubtedly took advantage of the opportunity. League reports mentioned the fact that Mexicans frequently requested assistance in this area, and the agency provided the means for a considerable number. Statistics on the exact number of Mexicans whom the League assisted do not appear to have survived, but the total for all nationalities in 1932 was 1219, up from 531 the preceding year. Even special studies of the remigration process overlooked Mexican cases, however. A graduate student examining the problems of Chicago-area immigrants selected 25 repatriation cases for detailed discussion: among them were four Bulgarians and four Swedes, but no Mexicans. Moreover, when the Illinois Emergency Relief Commission tested a program for voluntary departure in 1934-1935, it reported no Mexican cases. And while La Defensa commented that social agencies had paid the way for many Mexicans returning to the border, it did not identify the program with threats or coercion. 78 Apparently neither the Mexican community nor the Anglo social agencies perceived any danger in the direction of the Chicago repatriation movement. Since neither group had hesitated to object in other instances of malfeasance, it seems probable that the repatriations of Mexicanos from Chicago were managed
so as to inflict the minimum possible social damage on those who went, even if some hardships undoubtedly remained.

In all of these activities the Immigrants Protective League was carrying out its stated mission as a special intermediary between immigrants and the government, generally to the advantage of the immigrant. Whenever possible the League conducted its own investigations of deportation orders, petitioning for a stay in proceedings or a withdrawal if the evidence suggested that something was amiss. Its representatives directed seminars on deportation or repatriation practices, thus extending its influence beyond the limits of membership or mailing lists. The decision of the Cook County Bureau of Public Welfare to reject demands from the Bureau of Immigration for access to the files of alien relief cases, for example, was in part due to the liberal attitudes toward immigrants which the League fostered.79

The influence of the League extended into the Federal bureaucracy, for despite the fact that case workers and immigration agents often regarded one another as adversaries, the Department of Labor at one point requested that the I.P.L. submit recommendations for revisions in the naturalization and citizenship law. Some I.P.L. involvement in deportation matters even occurred at the instigation of the Bureau of Immigration, which esteemed the agency as one of the leaders in its field.80 The opposition of such a well-known institution to anything which hinted at forced removal, particularly in conjunction with the refusal of welfare agencies to divulge the names of alien clients, must have dampened the enthusiasm for expulsion from Chicago
of Mexican indigents. Not designed specifically to aid Mexicans, the I.P.L., like the other agencies in the city, still did its utmost for them when their paths crossed.

A final point is worth considering when contemplating the different treatment which Mexican immigrants received across the country, and that is the local political climate. The east and south European immigrants were coming into their own politically in Chicago in the 1930s, and they found the Democratic Party receptive to their interests. While large numbers of these first- and second-generation ethnics were American citizens, many friends and relatives remained unnaturalized. Any blanket condemnation of aliens on relief would have engendered complaints from those who had already adopted citizenship, and such protests did appear from time to time as reminders of their concern.81

Again, the Mexicanos did not create this situation, for only a handful were eligible to vote, but local politicians generally refrained from assaulting any alien group. This deprived those who would establish an anti-alien atmosphere of an important forum, and it made Chicago very unlike Detroit and Los Angeles, for example, where elected as well as appointed officials participated in the drives against Mexicans and other aliens. With neither political or relief executives interested in directing assaults on the Mexican community, hostility toward the newcomers remained inchoate and much less harmful than in other parts of the country.
CONCLUSION - PERCEPTIONS AND REALITIES

Examination of the experience of Mexican immigrants in Chicago between 1920 and 1940 offers some interesting insight into the effect of published opinions on both intergroup and individual relationships. A large body of generally negative stereotypes already existed in Anglo thought when the first waves of Mexicano immigrants arrived in Chicago after World War I. During the 1920s the research of scholars in the Southwest and the publication in various forms of the political debates over restriction of Mexican immigration did little to dispel such attitudes. Mexicans were castigated as a racial menace, a social liability, a political danger, and a potential threat to the economic status of American workers; in sum they were unassimilable. Those who argued in favor of continued Mexican immigration usually took the position that other ethnic groups posed even more serious problems to American society than the Mexicans. Even the social work community was divided on the question, although they would prove the most consistent source of positive statements about the abilities of Mexicans to integrate into American life until the development of the environmental theories on social disorganization in the 1930s. It did not matter that logical cultural, psychological, or economic explanations existed for many of the stereotypic Mexican characteristics, in the Southwest the weight of popular myths kept the Hispanos in a clearly subordinate position until well after World War II.
In Chicago, the presence of a sharp anti-minority sentiment, which had culminated in the riots of 1919 and the establishment of a clearly defined black residential district, should have made local residents most receptive to the popular myths about Mexicans and should have resulted in their exclusion from the white neighborhoods and institutions of the city, just as blacks were. This sequence did not occur, however. The academic community in Chicago largely rejected racial stereotyping in favor of "ecological" social theories which attributed immigrant disorganization to cultural conflict, economic hardship, and life in the slums. Having established their theories through observation of the "new" immigrants from southeastern Europe, Chicago academicians simply adapted them to include Mexicans after 1920. The large and active settlement movement in Chicago drew much of its inspiration from these ideas (and contributed as well to their development), and settlement staffs also refused to see Mexicans as different from their other clients. Thus the doors of the settlement houses in Chicago were opened to Hispanics at an early date, and the social workers fought throughout the 1920s and 1930s to ensure that Mexicans received the fairest treatment possible from employers, the legal establishment, and relief authorities. While the settlement ideal did not totally prevail, in each of these areas the Mexican experience in Chicago was much more positive than it was in the Southwest or even in other northern cities.

The real key to this divergence lay in the immigrant neighborhoods of Chicago, whose residents, after initial wariness, gradually came to accept their new acquaintances as individuals rather than stereotypes.
There was irony in this, for their basic reason was similar in its foundation to the theories of the anti-restrictionists at the national level: they perceived the Hispanics as less objectionable than the blacks who were also pouring into the city. However based in prejudice this decision may have been, without it further steps toward association were impossible. Mexicans settled in the white portion of disputed territory, and through their ensuing contacts with their neighbors in the social, recreational, and economic institutions of the community they became aware that they shared many of the same goals and interests. Thus the halting process of assimilation got underway, nurtured wherever possible by the settlements, but never forced by the latter, who were very cognizant of their inability to press their clientele on such matters. Prejudice existed and acts of discrimination occurred against Mexicans as against other ethnics, but the color line never excluded the Mexicans as it had the blacks, and this fact underlies the adjustments which have transpired so far. It also points toward the ultimate assimilation of those who have arrived since 1940, even though the task is not yet complete. Neighborhood realities can overcome popular perceptions when given the opportunity.
ENDNOTES

Complete publication datum for each source is provided only upon first citation in the endnotes. Short citations are used thereafter, with full citations also appearing in the bibliography. In addition, the following abbreviations will be employed throughout the endnotes:

Chicago FARC - Chicago Federal Archives and Records Center.
CFLPS - Chicago Foreign Language Press Survey.
CHS - Manuscripts Division, Chicago Historical Society.
CR - Congressional Record.
ECHS - East Chicago Historical Society.
RG - Record Group.
LCRC - Local Community Research Committee, University of Chicago. History of Chicago Communities.
NA - National Archives Building.
NCSW - Proceedings of the National Conference of Social Work.
UCL - Special Collections Division, University of Chicago Library.
UHC - Urban Historical Collection, University of Illinois at Chicago Library.
WNRC - Washington National Records Center.
CHAPTER ONE


6Weyl, "Labor Conditions in Mexico," 12-14; Winter, Mexico and Her People of Today, pp. 185-86; Thompson, People of Mexico, pp. 104-8; Carson, México, Wonderland of the South, p. 314.


9. Thompson, People of Mexico, pp. 303-4, 312-13; Pearl I. Ellis, Americanization through Homemaking (Los Angeles: Wetzel Publishing Co., 1929), pp. 64-65. The perception of Mexican uncleanness gave rise to the appellation "greaser." Some authors connected the term with early Mexican occupations in the hide and tallow or sheepshearing trades; others utilized it as a general description of the Mexican population. Robinson, With the Ears of Strangers, pp. 36-37; Carey McWilliams, North from Mexico; the Spanish Speaking People of the United States (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Co., 1949), p. 115; Frances McLean, "Passage to Texas," Survey 25 (November 19, 1910): 285-86.

10. Thompson, Mexican Mind, pp. 36-38, 165-66; Robinson, With the Ears of Strangers, pp. 25-26; Harby, "Texas Types and Contrasts," 239.


37 U.S., Department of Commerce and Labor, Annual Report (1910), pp. 270, 276-77; Robert Higgs, "Race, Skills, and Earnings: American Immigrants in 1909," Journal of Economic History 31 (June 1971): 424-27. Higgs argues that while racial and ethnic prejudice certainly existed in 1909, most American employers preferred profits to discrimination. In this view, competition for labor would prevent employers from exploiting minority workers by paying them less than the actual value of their labor services. Any employer profiting from such a situation would soon find rivals willing to pay a little more to lure his workers away. These free market actions would eventually equalize wages at the actual value of the labor. The value of language in upward mobility remained after 1909. In 1931 the ability of native-born Tejanos to speak English "was worth $5 per week to them on the average." Max S. Handman, "San Antonio: The Old Capital City of Mexican Life and Influence," Survey 66 (May 1, 1931): 165.


39 Guy W. Livingston to Duncan U. Fletcher, June 12, 1917; W. J. Hotchkiss to J. F. Lucy, June 7, 1917; E. B. Varney to John A. Weeks, June 14, 1917; all in 54261/202A, RG 85, NA; NYT, January 13, 1918, II, p. 4:7, 8, and October 6, 1918, II, p. 3:2.


41 Dwight B. Heard to William B. Wilson, March 19, 1918, and Herbert Hoover to William B. Wilson, April 2, 1918, 54231/181; Herbert Hoover to Felix Frankfurter, June 4, 1918, 54261/202; Waco Chamber of Commerce to Department of Labor, July 26, 1918; Port Arthur Board of Trade to Department of Labor, July 25, 1918; Kleburg County Commercial Club to Department of Labor, July 25, 1918; all in 54261/202A; Memorandum, M.C. Coykendall, July 5, 1918, 54261/202A; Memorandum, F. W. Berkshire, July 8, 1918, 54261/202; all in RG 85, NA.
CHAPTER TWO


9. Senate, Committee on Immigration, Emergency Immigration Legislation, 66th Cong., 3rd sess., 1921, pp. 223-26, 229-31; House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Temporary Admission of Illiterate Mexican Laborers, 66th Cong., 2nd sess., 1920, pp. 160, 298, 301-2; Idem, Hearings on Admission of Mexican and Other Alien Laborers into Texas and Other States, 66th Cong., 2nd sess., 1920, pp. 3-5.


16. CR, 71st Cong., 2nd sess., 1930, 72:7326; Eva Martin to Albert Johnson, n.d. [1928]; and H.K. Montgomery to Albert Johnson, November 18, 1929; HR70A-F14.3, Correspondence of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Records of the United States House of Representatives, RG 233, NA.


28. George P. Clements to Phil D. Swing, December 27, 1927; A.B.C. Dohrmann to Florence P. Kahn, December 30, 1927; Morris Sheppard to Albert Johnson, May 5, 1928; all in HR70A-F14.3, RG 233, NA. However, settlement workers questioned 1021 Mexican immigrants about their intentions and found that 982 expected to remain in the United States. None was in the habit of wintering in Mexico. Robert N. McLean, "A Dike against Mexicans," New Republic, August 14, 1929, p. 336.


33 "Results of Admission of Mexican Laborers, under Departmental Orders, for Employment in Agricultural Pursuits," Monthly Labor Review 11 (November 1920): 1095-97; Senate, Committee on Immigration, Emergency Immigration Legislation, pp. 64-72.


36. Memorandum, June 26, 1926, 52903/66, RG 85, NA; Corwin, "Causes of Mexican Emigration," p. 604; Wilbur J. Carr to Dwight Morrow, February 8, 1928, 812.561/18B; Dwight Morrow to Secretary of State, February 10, 1928, 812.561/19; Alexander Waddell to Secretary of State, April 20, 1925, 812.564; Charles F. Yeager to Secretary of State, September 29, 1926, 812.56/8; all in "Records of the Department of State Relating to the Internal Affairs of Mexico, 1910-1929," RG 59, National Archives and Records Service Micropublication M274, roll 204; William Dawson to Secretary of State, November 13, 1928, 811.111 Mexico Reports/10, Decimal Correspondence File, Visa Division, Mexico, RG 59, WNRC.

37. CR, 71st Cong., 2nd sess., 1930, 72:7114-115; Memorandum, M.B. Davis, October 20, 1928, 811.111 Mexico Reports/84; Memorandum, A. Dana Hodgdon, March 23, 1931, 811.111 Mexico Reports/36; both in RG 59, WNRC; Frederick E. Farnsworth to Secretary of State, February 14, 1933, 311.125/40, RG 59, NA; Cavanaugh, Immigration Restriction at Work, pp. 44-45.


48. R. E. Wood to Albert Johnson, December 20, 1928; Lulu Snodgrass to Albert Johnson, February 21, 1928; both in HR70A-F14.3, RG 233, NA; Western Fruit Jobbers Association, HR70A-H3.3, Petitions and Memorials File, RG 233, NA; House, Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Immigration from Western Hemisphere, 70th Cong., 1st sess., 1928, p. 752.

49. "Shall We Apply the Quota to Our Nearest Neighbors?" Literary Digest, August 27, 1927, p. 12; John Hammerstein to Herbert Hoover, July 21, 1929, 55639/616; Henry Hoffer to Herbert Hoover, May 21, 1929, 55639/576A; both in RG 85, NA. File 55639/576A contains numerous other missives from Chicagoans to their political representatives regarding the National Origins Act.

CHAPTER THREE


41 Holmes, "Argument against Mexican Immigration," 22-23; Jacob J. Mendelsohn, "Tuberculosis in Mexicans," Illinois Medical Journal 53 (January 1928): 64; Benjamin Goldberg, "Tuberculosis in Racial Types with Special Reference to Mexicans," American Journal of Public Health 19 (March 1929): 274, 276, 278-81. The controversy over tuberculosis rates generated an example of how different interests interpreted "facts." The newspaper México was incensed that Goldberg had singled out its people as objects for restriction. However, the Mexican community in Chicago did have a tuberculosis rate "slightly above" the city average. México, October 20, 1928, CRPS, roll 62.


Woofter, Races and Ethnic Groups, p. 163; Young, Minority Groups in Depression, pp. 206-7; Manuel, Education, pp. 68-72; Sánchez, Forgotten People, pp. 3, 75; Guy A. West, "Race Attitudes among Teachers in the Southwest," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 31 (October 1936): 331-37. As usual, Paul Taylor was able to summarize Southwestern attitudes with a single quote from a school board member: "We will give them a high school without a laboratory if they will accept it, and if not, we will buy them some equipment." Taylor, Mexican Labor in Dimmit County, p. 377.


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Essays in the History of Group Survival in Chicago and the Midwest, eds.
Melvin G. Holli and Peter d'A. Jones (Grand Rapids: William B.

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"Restrictive Covenants," pp. 34-35; Frazier, Negro Family in Chicago,
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Otis Dudley Duncan and Beverly Duncan, The Negro Population of Chicago: A Study of Residential Succession (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp. 11, 95-97; Alice Quan Rood, "Social Conditions among the Negroes on Federal Street between Forty-fifth Street and Fifty-third Street" (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1924), pp. 6-7; Commission on Race Relations, Negro in Chicago, pp. 135-36. The Federal government followed the local color line until the 1940s. Negro war workers had to reside in trailers because private units had not been constructed. When the Brooks Home Project on the Near West Side opened in 1943, it was "a 100 percent Negro housing project." Louis Levine to Regional Manpower Director, Region VI, December 2, 1943, ILL.533.141, Central Correspondence Files, Records of the War Manpower Commission, RG 211, Chicago FARC; Minutes of meeting of the Newberry Avenue Center Board of Directors, March 10, 1943, Newberry Avenue Center Papers, UHC.


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63. Francis C. Kelley to George W. Mundelein, April 4, 1918, 5-1918-M-272; Francis C. Kelley to George W. Mundelein, December 18, 1918, 5-1918-M-280; John B. Sprengel to E. F. Hoban, September 5, 1919, 5-1919-M-209; B. Caldeney to George W. Mundelein, October 8, 1923, 7-1923-M-258; all in Chicago Archdiocesan Archives (CAA), St. Mary's of the Lake Seminary, Mundelein, Illinois.


68. Taylor, Mexican Labor in the Calumet Region, pp. 166-69, 171; Haydon, "Juvenile Delinquency among Mexicans," p. 10; Gaddis, "Conflict between Mexicans and Poles," pp. 8-9; both in Burgess Papers, UCL.

69. Redfield, "Journal, 1924-1925," January 25, 1925, pp. 86-88, 106, Redfield Papers, UCL; Polk's Numerical Street Guide, 1928, pp. 90, 96-97, 332, 535, 523-24, 832, 847; Jones, "Mexicans in Chicago," pp. 118-20; "Survey of Stores and Businesses, District 61," 1934, McDowell Papers, CHS; Haydon, "Juvenile Delinquency among Mexicans," p. 9, Burgess Papers, UCL; Petition and Schedule of Assets and Liabilities, January 8, 1940, In re Victor Martinez, 72195 Bankruptcy, Bankruptcy Case Files, Records of the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division (N.D.I./E.D.), RG 21, Chicago FARC. In the 1960s Gerald Suttles identified 257 businesses in the "Addams Area" on the Near West Side. Only 44 of these enterprises catered to Mexicans, and only 14 of those were actually owned by Mexicans. However, in the 1960s the Near West Side was no longer the most important Mexican colony, as it had been in the 1930s. Urban renewal, expressway construction, and black invasion south of Roosevelt Road all combined to reduce the Mexican population there. Suttles, Social Order of the Slum, p. 48.
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31. Richard F. Boyce to Secretary of State, January 8, 1931, 311.1215/18, RG 59, NA; Director of Katherine House to Associated Charities of Wheeling, West Virginia, April 21, 1930; File on Township Relief during the Great Depression, Katherine House Papers, ECHS; Howard Landon to Paul Kelly, February 18, 1935, American Legion Repatriation File, ECHS; Betten and Mohl, "From Discrimination to Repatriation," 381; Mohl and Betten, "Ethnic Adjustment," 375.
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34 NYT, November 12, 1933, Sect. IV, p. 6:6; James B. Stewart to Secretary of State, September 17, 1937, 811.111 Mexico Reports/141; James B. Stewart to Secretary of State, November 8, 1938, 811.111 Mexico Reports/142; both in RG 59, WNRC; Robert E. Cummings to Secretary of State, August 4, 1933, 311.1215/42; Rex Thomson to Alejandro V. Martinez, January 29, 1934, enclosure in Edward J. Shaughnessy to Secretary of State, July 2, 1934, 311.1215/65; Ivan B. White to Secretary of State, September 18, 1936, 311.1215/90; all in RG 59, NA.

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62. U.S., Department of Commerce and Labor, Reports of the Department of Commerce and Labor (1910), pp. 188-191; Idem, Reports of the Department of Commerce and Labor (1911), pp. 186-87; John F. Hart to W. W. Husband, April 13, 1921; Francisco Pareda to William Hale Thompson, April 25, 1921; John A. Richert to Secretary of Labor, May 5, 1921; Harvey R. Landis to W. W. Husband, May 6, 1921; all in 5509/16, RG 85, NA; Redfield, "Notes," November, 15, 1924, Redfield Papers, UCL.


64. Richard F. Boyce to Secretary of State, January 8, 1931, 311.1215/18; Richard F. Boyce to Secretary of State, March 9, 1931, 311.1215/21; both in RG 59, NA. Paul Taylor estimated that Indiana had lost 69 percent of its Mexican population and Michigan 64 percent, based on 1930 population figures. Taylor, Mexican Labor: Migration Statistics, p. 45.


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