UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA,
IRVINE

Sol y Sombra: San Bernardino's Mexican Community, 1880-1960

DISSERTATION

submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in History

by

Mark Anthony Ocegueda

Dissertation Committee:
Distinguished Professor Vicki L. Ruiz, Chair
Associate Professor Ana Elizabeth Rosas
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2017

DEDICATION

Para mi mamá y mi papá,
María De Los Angeles Castro y Daniel Ocegueda García
Gracias por tu apoyo, amor, y sacrificio.

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The financial support provided by the University of California and other institutions have been vital to finishing this dissertation. The UC Irvine Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, Dean's Dissertation Fellowship, Public Humanities Fellowship, and UC President's Dissertation Year Fellowship have all allowed me to either finish course work, prepare for examinations, or write this dissertation by releasing me from teaching obligations. It was a pleasure working with Glen Mimura, Gina Anzivino, and Kristen Galvin during the Public Humanities Fellowship year. The California State University Chancellor's Doctoral Incentive Program provided valuable travel funds to several national conferences. I am also honored to have received the UC Irvine Distinguished Public Impact Fellowship. I am extremely thankful for the support provided by UC MEXUS. Their Dissertation Research Grant and Scholars in Residence Program allowed me to explore various archives and facilitated the writing and completion of the vital first chapter of this study. Thank you to the UC MEXUS staff for believing in my work and for welcoming me into their office: Wendy DeBoer, Martha Bernal Ponce, Andrea Kaus, David Kropf, Irene Dotson, Exequiel Ezcurra, Maria LaBarrie, Louise Bachman, Veronica Sandoval, and Dora Baltazar. In addition, I look forward to joining my new colleagues at Sacramento State in a few months. They have been wonderful to me as I approach the beginning of my professional career.

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Juan Carlos González, Chaz Robinette, Cory Kerr Zavala, and Ronny Perez have been my lifelong friends from San Bernardino. Ray Ruíz, Julio Chavez, Fernando Alaniz, Abe García, Sal, Alec Velarde, Eddie Patino, and Robert Furtado are also special people that have helped to fulfill my need for creative expression. I have shared many adventures with all of these dear friends. You have enriched my life and I look forward to sharing many years of laughter and good times.

I have been blessed with two extraordinary parents and for them I reserve my deepest appreciation, respect, and love. At the age of thirteen, my mother left school to work in a factory in Los Angeles. She forged her birth certificate with a typewriter to receive an I.D. card that would permit her to work from 6am to 6pm, six days a week. One year later, she gave birth to my sister and then gave birth to me at the age of seventeen. As a

child in Guadalajara, Mexico, my father also left school in the third grade in order to help his family make-ends-meet by working in the city streets. It is through their sacrifice that I have learned the lessons on the value of school, labor, and the need for access and opportunity in higher education. It is because of them that I will dedicate my life to help meet that need.

When I think of my older sister, Sarah Ocegueda, I find strength in her difficult life journey. I just want you to know that I love you and am proud to be your brother. The birth of my younger brother and sister, Daniel and Karina, changed my life. It has been a pleasure to see them grow up to be the talented and gifted young teenagers that they are now. Daniel is a thoughtful, hard-working, and intelligent young man who reminds me of myself when I was his age. Likewise, Karina's intelligence, humor and sharp wit have lifted my spirits on many occasions. My nephew Eddie has given our family so much joy and we eagerly await to be reunited with Angel, Jacob, and Ray. Until that day happens, we will not be whole.

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Publications

Public History Books

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http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/9781467132282/Mexican-American-Baseball-in-the-Pomona-Valley

Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire. Arcadia Press, 2012.
Co-authored with Richard A. Santillan, professor emeritus of Ethnic and Women's Studies, California Polytechnic University, Pomona.
http://www.arcadiapublishing.com/9780738593166/Mexican-American-Baseball-in-the-Inland-Empire

Book Review

Review of Patterson, Thomas C., *From Acorns To Warehouses: Historical Political Economy of Southern California's Inland Empire*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2014. *Southern California Quarterly*, Vol. 97 No. 3 (Fall 2015): 298-300.

Encyclopedia Entries

"Lerdo de Tejada, Miguel" and "Micheltorena, Manuel" in Military History Series: *Encyclopedia of the Mexican-American War*, edited by Paul Pierpaoli. (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2011)

Textbook Essay

"The Mexican American Historical Connection to the Growing Latino Presence in Major League Baseball." *The American Mosaic: The Latino American Experience*. (Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2015)

Short Publications

"Collaborative Futures Roundtable: Merging Academic Scholarship with Public Work" in *Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life Monthly Newsletter* http://imaginingamerica.org/fg-item/collaborative-futures-a-roundtable-on-publicly-active-graduate-education/

"Ignacio Lopez, *El Espectador*, and San Bernardino's Role in Constructing the Legal Path Toward National Desegregation," in History in the Making, California State University, San Bernardino, vo. 3, Spring 2010.

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History 40C: American Society in the 20th Century. (Spring 2013, University of California, Irvine)

History 21C: World History since 1870. (Spring 2012, University of California, Irvine)

Conference Papers and Presentations

"The Other Field of Dreams: A Discussion on the Latino Baseball History Project," North American Society for Sport History Annual Meeting, Fullerton, CA. May 2017.

The Women On The Mother Road in Southern California," California Humanities and Desert Discovery Center. Barstow, CA. May 2017.

The Women On The Mother Road in Southern California," California Humanities and California State University, San Bernardino. San Bernardino, CA. April 2017.

"The Women On The Mother Road in Southern California," California Humanities and Los Angeles Route 66 Festival. The Palace Theater, Los Angeles, CA. November 2016.

"Camilo Carreon: A Mexican American Pioneer for Latinos in Major League Baseball," Peloteros in Paradise: A Los Angeles Béisbol Story. La Plaza de Cultura y Artes, Los Angeles, CA. October 2016.

"Making Waves: Pools, Pachucos, and the Mexican American Battle to Desegregate Public Space in the Inland Empire," Pacific Coast Branch Conference of the American Historical Society, Waikoloa, HI. August 2016.

"Articul@s Autnom@s: A Critical History Dialogue," Center for Ideas and Society, University of California, Riverside, CA. May 2016.

"La Calle Mt. Vernon: Mexican Merchants, Public Space, and Baseball in West Side San Bernardino," Latinos and Baseball: In the Barrios and the Big Leagues Collecting Initiative in collaboration with the Smithsonian Institute and California State University, San Bernardino. San Bernardino, CA. February 2016.

"Making Waves: Pools, Pachucos, and the Mexican American Battle to Desegregate Public Space in the Inland Empire," UC MEXUS Visiting Scholar Presentation. University of California, Riverside. January 2016.

"The Latino Baseball History Project and Community Collecting," Latinos and Baseball: In the Barrios and the Big Leagues Workshop. Warner Bros. Theater, National Museum of American History. Washington, D.C., October 2015.

"Mexican American History in the Inland Empire," Upland Public Library Lecture Series on Latino Americans. Upland, CA. September 2015.

"*Béisbol, American Exceptionalism, and the Growth of Chicanos/Latinos in Major League Baseball*: Baseball in the Barrios of Southern California," Presenter and Panel Chair. National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies. San Francisco, CA. April 2015.

"'Travel My Way...': Route 66, Urban Planning, and San Bernardino's Mexican American Entrepreneurs," Pacific Coast Branch Conference of the American Historical Society, Portland, OR. August 2014.

"Straight Talk on the Job Search," Panel Chair and Organizer. Professionalization Workshop for Graduate Division, University of California, Irvine. April, 2014.

"Ph.D. to the Tenure Track," Panel Chair and Organizer. Professionalization Workshop for Graduate Division, University of California, Irvine. January, 2014.

"Baseball and Labor Relations," Panel Chair. 'The Neighborhoods of Baseball' Symposium presented by The Baseball Reliquary. Plaza de la Raza, Los Angeles. June, 2013.

'"Travel my way, take the highway that's the best": Route 66, Ethnic Mexican Entrepreneurs, and Steering Racial Landscapes,' University of California Comparative Latino Studies Workshop: University of California, Irvine. May, 2013.

"Humanities Out There and Publicly Active Graduate Education," Imagining American Conference: New York University. October 2012.

"Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire," San Bernardino Historical and Pioneer Society: San Bernardino, CA. September 2012.

"Mexican American Baseball in San Bernardino," Primary Event Organizer, Mitla Café Community Celebration: San Bernardino, CA. August 2012.

"Sabor: Latinos Shaping the Food We Eat," Smithsonian Latino Center Fellows Symposium: Washington, D.C. August 2012.

"Community Outreach and the College Experience," Panel Organizer, Humanities Out There Community Engagement Workshop, Irvine, CA. November 2011.

"Mexican American Baseball in Los Angeles and the Latino Baseball History Project," Panel Chair, National Association of Chicana and Chicano Studies. Pasadena, CA. April 2011.

"Ignacio Lopez, *El Espectador*, and San Bernardino's Role in Constructing the Legal Path Towards National Desegregation," Invited Guest Lecture: San Bernardino Kiwanis Club's City History Bicentennial Celebration Lecture Series. San Bernardino, CA. May 2010.

"Ignacio Lopez, *El Espectador*, and San Bernardino's Role in Constructing the Legal Path Towards National Desegregation," Phi Alpha Theta Biennial Convention: San Diego, CA. January 2010.

"Segregation of Mexican Americans in the Inland Empire: Desegregation at the Regional and National Level," McNair Scholars Conference: University of Wisconsin, November, 2009.

"Segregation of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the Southwest: The Mexican American Role in Desegregation," Oaxaca Summer Institute: Academia San Juan de Letran, 2009.

Community, Media, and Public Engagement

"La Calle Mt. Vernon: West Side Walking Tour," Organizer of a historical walking tour of San Bernardino's west side in collaboration with California State University, San Bernardino and the Smithsonian Institute. February 20, 2016.

"The War in San Bernardino," Interview and historical consultant with Bloomberg News. Originally published on January 31, 2016.
http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2016-01-31/the-war-in-san-bernardino-isn-t-about-terrorism

"Hard Shell Tacos and Political Activism," Interview and historical consultant with National Public Radio's "Latino USA". Originally aired on December 26, 2014.
http://latinousa.org/2014/12/26/mitla-cafe-california/

"California Foodways Stories: Mitla Café and San Bernardino," Interview and historical consultant with National Public Radio's "The California Report". Originally aired on September 12, 2014.
http://www.californiareport.org/archive/R201409121630/c

"Connecting through Baseball" in "Life Connected: Hispanic Heritage Month," Interview with KTLA NBC-4 Los Angeles. Prime time half-hour television program on Hispanic Heritage Month. Originally aired October 6, 2012, 8:00pm. http://www.nbclosangeles.com/video/#!/on-air/as-seen-on/Connecting-Through-Baseball/172833861

"Historic San Bernardino Mural" by Wells Fargo Community Program, Wells Fargo downtown branch, San Bernardino, CA. (Served as the historical consultant, 2013)

Humanities Out There at University of California, Irvine. Graduate Student Researcher. Developed lesson plans/curricula for 11th grade U.S. history courses at Orange High School. Supervised undergraduate UC Irvine students in teaching curricula to 11th grade students. 2011-2013.

"Mexican American Baseball Night & First Pitch Ceremony," Primary Organizer w/ Inland Empire 66ers Single-A Baseball Organization: San Manuel Stadium, San Bernardino, CA. August 2012.

"Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire," Radio Interview with Radio Aztlan, KUCR 88.3FM. June 2012.

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2010	**Research Assistant**, *Mexican American Baseball in Los Angeles*. Arcadia Press, 2011. Authors: Francisco Balderrama (California State University, Los Angeles) and Richard Santillan (California Polytechnic University, Pomona).
2010	**Oral History Interviewer**, John Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino: Latino Baseball History Project, Special Collections Archive.
2009-2010	**Associate Editor**, *History in the Making*, California State University, San Bernardino History Journal. Journal won 3rd place in national Phi Alpha Theta Gerald D. Nash Journal Award for 2009.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sol y Sombra: San Bernardino's Mexican Community, 1880-1960

By

Mark Anthony Ocegueda

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Irvine, 2017

Professor Vicki L. Ruiz, Chair

This dissertation documents San Bernardino's Mexican American people and their quest for civil rights in the day to day. Citrus and Santa Fe railroad workers, as well as Mexican middle class business owners, utilized defense committees, newspapers, baseball teams, *mutualistas*, and the local the Catholic Church, to counter discrimination, especially segregationist ordinances. I argue that San Bernardino's geographical placement as a gateway into southern California solidified the city as an important regional economic hub during the early twentieth century that ultimately nurtured the development of a diverse and distinct Mexican American community. *Sol y Sombra* explores how the city became an important space for the propagation of conceptions of juvenile delinquency and their use to uphold the segregation of public parks and pools. I reveal resistance to segregation through community grassroots mobilization. Led by the Valles family, Puerto Rican newspaper editor Eugenio Nogueras, and Catholic cleric José Nuñez these efforts culminated in *Lopez v. Seccombe* (1944), one of the first successful judicial challenges to racial segregation. I connect how this little known case eventually made waves throughout the region by influencing other important legal challenges, including *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947).

This study also showcases the Mitla Café as a centerpiece of community life and as a site that reveals the untold history of a prosperous Mexican American business community along Route 66. Moreover, this dissertation explores how postwar urban renewal projects, such as the development of the Inland Empire's U.S. 395 freeway contributed to the decline of this vital business district once renowned to travelers along Route 66. Ultimately, this study posits the Inland Empire and the city of San Bernardino as an important contested space for furthering our understanding of U.S. history.

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1945, O'Day Short, an African American refrigeration engineer and active member of the Los Angeles chapter of the NAACP, purchased a five-acre tract of land near downtown Fontana on Randall Avenue and Pepper Street. Soon after, Short began constructing a home on the vacant lot and moved his wife and two children into the half-built house. The land that Short purchased for the family's new home, located south of Baseline Avenue, fell outside of Fontana's designated color lines given that black families primarily lived north of the road. As Short continued construction on the home, two San Bernardino County Sherriff deputies, "Tex" Cornelison and Joseph Glines, visited the residence and warned the family that they were "out of bounds" and should move out of the neighborhood in order to avoid "disagreeableness" with their new neighbors.[1] On December 3, the real estate agent that sold the land to Short delivered a disturbing threat that had been made to the family by the local Ku Klux Klan.[2] "[T]he vigilante committee had a meeting on your case last night," the realtor informed Short, "They are a tough bunch to deal with. If I were you, I'd get [your] family off this

[1] Myra Tanner Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana: The Tragic Story of O'Day H. Short and His Family Pamphlet*, *February 1946*. Box 1, Folder 117, American Left Ephemera Collection, 1894-2008. AIS.2007.11, Archives Service Center, Digital Library, University of Pittsburgh.

[2] Fred Ross along with other activists in the region strongly believed the threats came from the KKK. Fred W. Ross – Hardie training. History – [illeg.] and WRA. [illeg.] and Evacuation. History end of J.A.'s – Beg. Of San Bernardino. Series F. Audio and Transcripts, Audiocassettes, 1976-78. Box 39, Folder 258, B Side. Fred Ross Papers, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.

property at once."[3] The Fontana Chamber of Commerce even went as far as to offer to purchase the home back from the family.

Despite the prospect of violence solely for moving into what some of his new neighbors considered the wrong neighborhood, Short stood his ground. Instead of abandoning the home, he contacted his attorney, notified the black weekly newspaper the *Los Angeles Sentinel*, and even reported the threat to the FBI. The *Sentinel* published the story on December 6, however, the FBI and local law enforcement overlooked the looming danger. Ten days later on the evening of Sunday, December 16, the Short home exploded in flames in a firebombing attack with the family still inside. Neighbors watched in horror as the family made their way out of the home in flames and in agonizing pain. Two neighbors immediately came to the family's aid and drove them to the hospital. Both of the Short children, Carol Ann and Barry, only seven and nine years old, died later that night. Their mother, Helen, died the next day while O'Day clung onto life for five weeks only to succumb shortly after the district attorney informed him of his family's passing.[4] The San Bernardino County Sherriff's department conducted a superficial investigation and officially ruled the fire as an accident. J. Robert Smith, editor of the *Tri-County Bulletin*, a black newspaper based in San Bernardino, criticized the investigation, claiming that the local media and law enforcement colluded to cover up

[3] Weiss, *Vigilante Terror in Fontana*.

[4] After violating the hospital's policy of protecting their patient's from additional trauma, the district attorney received criticism from the NAACP and other groups for hastily informing O'Day Short of his family's deaths. For more on the Short incident, see Mike Davis, *City of Quartz: Excavating the Future in Los Angeles* (New York and London: Verso Books, 2006); and Paul R. Spickard, "Fire in the Night: A 1945 Southern California Hate Crime and Historical Memory," *Southern California Quarterly*, 82 no. 3 (Fall 2000): 291-304.

the murder.[5] Despite considerable protest, the San Bernardino district attorney declined to examine the incident any further.

The Short tragedy mobilized a diverse range of local activists including San Bernardino's Council of Human Rights, an interethnic, multi-faith organization that addressed issues of social inequality. The case also caught the attention of the American Council of Race Relations (ACRR), a national group dedicated to alleviating racial injustice by developing local community programs of racial collaboration. As a result, the ACRR sent their southern California field representative, Fred Ross, to attend a meeting scheduled by the Council of Human Rights to investigate how to help reopen the Short case. In early May 1946, Ross drove from his home in Long Beach and as he approached San Bernardino, he passed through the west side *colonia*. "As I went out there, I had to pass through the barrio," Ross later recalled "I had never been through any barrio except for in the backseat of my father's car as we drove on our way out to the country… [When I arrived in San Bernardino,] I saw the way that the people in that [west side] barrio were living."[6]

As many motorists often did, Ross pulled over to grab a bite to eat at one of the neighborhood's restaurants and curiously took in the sights and sounds that the *colonia* had to offer. In the café, Ross heard angry teenagers shout in Spanish and he asked the waitress about the uproar. According to the waitress, the young men had been denied entrance into a Redlands skating rink the previous night——the evening usually reserved for Mexican youth——due to a scheduled tournament at the rink.[7] While on the west side

[5] Davis, *City of Quartz*, 400-401.
[6] Ross, Audio and Transcripts, Audiocassettes, 1976-78.
[7] Gabriel Thompson, *America's Social Arsonist: Fred Ross and Grassroots Organizing in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016), 63-64.

Ross observed one of southern California's largest Mexican communities, catching a glimpse of the segregation and poor living conditions that many of the residents dealt with on a daily basis.

Once at the Council of Human Rights meeting, Ross listened to a diverse range of community members speak on the Short incident, including NAACP affiliates and their attorney as they outlined strategies for continuing the investigation. A rabbi also spoke and alerted the Council of potential violent attacks by the KKK against Jews and Catholics.[8] Ross eventually concluded that the ACRR did not have much to offer in the investigation as the NAACP took the lead in directing the movement; however, with Ross's experience in the *colonia* still fresh on his mind, he wondered why no Mexican Americans or Catholic clergy had joined the gathering. Ross addressed the council:

> Well if they're doing this to the Catholic Church, how come there's nobody from the barrio here? Practically all of them are Catholic... [Y]ou've been talking about getting the support of Labor, the Negros, the Jews, and several Protestant churches behind this fight… it seems to me [in reference to San Bernardino's Mexican community] there might be others that should be approached.[9]

Upon hearing Ross's comments, a professor from the University of Redlands, Ruth Tuck, chuckled and replied, "I was wondering how long it would take us to get around to that one… believe me Mr. Ross, we've done everything short of violating the Lindbergh Law to get them here!" [10] Tuck spoke fluent Spanish and had lived on the west side while

[8] Thompson, *America's Social Arsonist*, 64.
[9] Book Outline - Bell Town and Casa Blanca, Box 11, Folder 10, Fred Ross Papers, Department of Special Collections, Stanford University Libraries.
[10] Book Outline - Bell Town and Casa Blanca.

conducting research for her recently completed book, *Not With The Fist: A Study of Mexican Americans in a Southwest City*, which documented San Bernardino's *colonia*.[11]

After the Council of Human Rights meeting, Tuck invited Ross to her Redlands home where she educated him on the social and economic conditions of the local Mexican people and their struggles against discrimination. Ross recalled, "By the time the sun came up, and I'm not kidding, we talked all night long, she convinced me that if there was one thing that was more important to do than anything else in this world it was to organize the Mexicans. They were the largest and, in many ways, the most kicked around minority in California."[12] Tuck soon arranged for Ross to meet her close friend Ignacio López, the activist editor of *El Espectador*, a Pomona-based Spanish-language newspaper that served southern California's inland valleys. Though Ignacio López had befriended Tuck, and even wrote the foreword for her book, he remained skeptical of white "experts" who probed too much about the surrounding *colonias* as they often only came to lecture López on what Mexican people should do to better their conditions.[13] To López's surprise, however, Ross asked him about the tactics that he used to organize Mexicans and even requested advice on how to effectively reach their communities. López later confided to Tuck in a letter, "He's the first one, the first Anglo, including you, that's ever asked me that kind of question."[14]

Impressed with Ross, López made arrangements for him to meet with San Bernardino's Mexican business leaders. Apprehensive, Ross asked López how he would sell people behind the idea of organizing. "Well you sold me didn't you?" López told

[11] Ruth Tuck, *Not With The Fist: A Study of Mexican Americans in a Southwest City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946).
[12] Ross, Audio and Transcripts, Audiocassettes, 1976-78.
[13] Thompson, *America's Social Arsonist*, 65.
[14] Ross, Audio and Transcripts, Audiocassettes, 1976-78.

Ross, "You are not going to sell them. You don't have to sell them. They're already sold on the idea of organizing. The person you have to sell them on is you!"[15] López returned with Ross to the west side where he introduced him to several Mexican merchants and workers from the Santa Fe railroad. Afterwards, Ross arranged individual appointments with west side residents to pitch the idea of organizing.

"I'll never forget the first guy that I went to try and organize," Ross described when he appeared at his first appointment the following day, "His name was Mike Ciriza and he had a tortilla factory on Mt. Vernon and was a great believer in neighborhood beautification."[16] At the onset of their meeting, Ciriza did not express much interest in Ross, explaining to the white outsider that he knew the mayor and could talk to him about the neighborhood's needs. Skeptical of the success of Ciriza's relationship with the mayor, Ross asked him why the conditions of the *colonia* had not changed despite his political connections. Ross also told Ciriza that he may have more success when talking to the mayor if he had the support of other groups, such as a national organization like the ACRR. Ciriza's interest grew at the mention of the ACRR because of its status as a national group. After a lengthy conversation, Ciriza told Ross, "Wow, yeah well I can see how it would be if we get together with that kind of backing… I think we [San Bernardino's Mexican merchants] can work with you, now that I see what can happen

[15] Ibid.
[16] Ibid.

and what can be done." Ross, jubilated at Ciriza's positive response, won him over by inspiring hope for future collaboration.[17]

Later in his memoirs, Ross described these series of events in San Bernardino as an important turning point in his life for giving him his first taste at organizing. After leaving Ciriza's tortilla factory, Ross stated, "Boy, I started charging down those streets in that barrio there and said 'Wow! Gee. I am an organizer. I am organizing! I organized a [Mexican]!'"[18] Ross continued to organize in Mexican communities with his work in the Unity Leagues and then by co-founding the Community Service Organization (CSO) with Edward Roybal, who won a seat on the Los Angeles City Council in 1949, the first time a Mexican served on the City Council since 1887.[19] Later, while working with the CSO in the 1950s, Ross met Dolores Huerta and César Chávez, mentoring and training the young activists in the tenets of grassroots organizing.[20] The relationships forged with

[17] Ross's initial attempt at organizing in San Bernardino eventually proved unsuccessful due to Ross describing "merchants" as the wrong group of people to try and organize. The attempt to work with the west side merchants lasted only four months. Ross stated: "It wasn't all that successful... Later on, I called them all together and I got about thirty of them to come out but it wasn't made up of the right people. It was made up of a bunch of business people." Ross, Audio and Transcripts, Audiocassettes, 1976-78.

[18] Ross stated "I organized a Chicano!" in his original recorded speech in 1978. I have replaced "Chicano" with "Mexican" to better reflect the era (1946) in which the meeting took place. Throughout this dissertation, I utilize "Mexican" to include both ethnic Mexican Americans and those of Mexican nationality. When referring to those born in the United States, I will refer to them directly as Mexican American. At times, I use the term Latino to denote people of Latin American heritage.

[19] Roybal won a seat on the City Council with the help of the CSO's initiative to register Los Angeles's Mexican American residents to vote.

[20] Fred Ross, *Conquering Goliath: Cesar Chavez at the Beginning* (Keene, CA: El Taller Grafico Press, 1989).

Huerta and Chávez eventually helped to form the National Farm Workers Association and, ultimately, the United Farm Workers in 1965.[21]

Though the effort to reopen the Short investigation eventually proved unsuccessful, this tragic incident helped to place Ross on lifelong path of pursuing social justice and civil rights, serving as one of the central figures in building Latino political power across California in the twentieth century.[22] Ross later stated that Mexican Americans did not effectively mobilize prior to his arrival in San Bernardino; in reality, however, the west side Mexican community had decades of organizing experience in ways that fell outside of traditional notions of political opposition.[23] As historian Robin D.G. Kelley writes:

> Too often politics is defined by *how* people participate rather than *why*; by traditional definition the question of what is political hinges on whether or not groups are involved in elections, political parties, or grass-roots social movements. Yet the how seems far less important than the why, since many of the so-called real political institutions have not always proved effective for, or even accessible to, oppressed people.[24]

Sol y Sombra: San Bernardino's Mexican Community, 1880-1960 explores *how* and *why* historical agents contested the particular conditions of their own time and place. Prior to

[21] For recent works on the National Farm Workers Association and the United Farm Workers, see, for example, Lori A. Flores, *Grounds for Dreaming: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the California Farmworker Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); Matt García, *From The Jaws of Victory: The Triump and Tragedy of Cesar Chavez and the Farm Worker Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014); Gabriel Thompson, *America's Social Arsonist*.

[22] Ross is widely recognized as one of the most important community organizers in United States history.

[23] For instance, after talking to Ruth Tuck, Ross stated: "She convinced me… that if there was one thing that was more important to do than anything else in this world it was to organize the Mexicans because *they were just not organized*… They had no civic weapons to prevent people from kicking them around." Ross, Audio and Transcripts, Audiocassettes, 1976-78.

[24] Robin D.G. Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: The Free Press, 1994), 9.

Ross's arrival Mexican residents had organized outside of conventional notions of political unity through the Catholic Church, leisure spaces, and unified business interests. Moreover, this study also considers the traditional forms of organization undertaken by San Bernardino's Mexican residents, such as, defense committees, *mutualistas*, Spanish-language newspapers, and other social clubs.

Furthermore, *Sol y Sombra* argues for reimagining southern California Chicana/o history by positing the Inland Empire, in particular San Bernardino, as an important contested space for understanding the historical development of Mexican Americans, civil rights, race, urban renewal, culture, and labor.[25] Agrarian-based *colonias* emerged out of the region's thriving citrus industry in towns such as San Bernardino, Colton, Pomona, Ontario, Corona, Riverside, and Redlands. San Bernardino, however, merits closer inspection as it remained distinct from other inland southern California towns. Many Mexicans in San Bernardino were not solely bound by an agricultural economy as they found work in a critical transcontinental railroad hub. Indeed, the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific converged in San Bernardino where they employed thousands of Mexican workers. Additionally, Route 66 cut through the heart of the Mexican *colonia* along Mt. Vernon Avenue, fostering a dynamic Mexican business district with a powerful

[25] I define the Inland Empire as the San Bernardino Valley, the Pomona Valley, the Palm Desert communities, and Riverside County as far as Corona. The bulk of the Chicana/o Latina/o historiography has centered on Los Angeles, El Paso, San Antonio, and Chicago, providing valuable insight to our field, however, as community case studies develop, smaller scale urban locales like San Bernardino should also be considered as they offer generative lenses to identify how Mexicans confronted local, state, and national forces that attempted to control their lives and communities. Ruth Tuck's *Not With The Fist* (1946) remains the only scholarly monograph published on San Bernardino's Mexican community.

Mexican middle class.[26] *Sol y Sombra* explores how Mexicans built a prosperous community, developed a politically aware merchant class, negotiated their trajectories of resistance, and struggled for civil rights in the day-to-day.

This dissertation's narrative has been partially shaped by analyzing primary and secondary sources from thirteen different national and local archival institutions and libraries. California State University, San Bernardino's microfilm collection of local newspapers as well as the John M. Pfau Library's special collections on Latino baseball have helped shape my analysis of San Bernardino history as related to the Mexican community.[27] Furthermore, the San Bernardino City Archives, San Bernardino County Archives, San Bernardino Railroad Museum, the National Archives and Records Administration in Riverside, the California State Archives in Sacramento, Stanford University Special Collections and University Archives, the UCLA Charles E. Young Research Center, the Library of Congress, the Mario and Esther Montecino family archive, and the California Polytechnic University, Pomona library have provided crucial collections to my analysis of San Bernardino's Mexican community. Moreover, twenty-one various government documents, newspapers, and periodicals have also informed this study.

While I rely on conventional sources such as newspapers, court documents, government papers, and institutional archives, these sources alone cannot recover a deeper narrative. Archival sites and archivists, in fact, have contributed to the historical

[26] This study builds on historical studies on Mexican American entrepreneurs. See, for instance, William Estrada, *The Los Angeles Plaza: Sacred and Contested Space* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008); and Mary Ann Villarreal, "Cantantes y Cantineras: Mexican American Communities and the Mapping of Public Space," Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 2003.

[27] The author serves as an advisor and investigator to the Latino Baseball History Project, a special collections archive at California State University, San Bernardino. For more on this project, see, http://library.csusb.edu/collections/specialcollections.html.

erasure of San Bernardino's Mexican past by neglecting its preservation.[28] For instance, when conducting preliminary research on Mexican segregation in San Bernardino at the Arda Haenszel California Room, one of the archivists casually informed me that "segregation never really occurred in San Bernardino" and that I would not find any materials for my study. This deliberate neglect has had significant negative social and cultural repercussions on San Bernardino's Mexican community, emphasizing the urgency of this study. As explained by Michel Ralph-Trouillot, "the production of historical narratives involves the uneven contribution of competing groups and individuals who have unequal access to the means for such production."[29] *Sol y Sombra* aims to recover the voices of San Bernardino's historical Mexican agents who have been long silenced and integrate them into the larger narrative of American history.

To remedy these omissions and retrieve this community history, I rely on oral testimony and have conducted fourteen oral history interviews. As explained by Vicki L. Ruiz, it "is not a matter of 'giving voice, but rather of situating the spaces in the text whereby narrators and historical subjects reveal themselves in their own words."[30] To calibrate the memories of *Sol y Sombra*'s narrators and to "situate the spaces," I look to Maylei Blackwell's advice on oral history by recording *testimonios* that are inclusive of multiple identities and broaden historians' understanding of the Chicana/o historiography. In the words of Blackwell, I seek to strengthen "methodological questions of voice,

[28] In addition, these forms of erasure, as argued by Vicki L. Ruiz, contribute to the damaging stereotype that "Latinos are people who arrived the day before yesterday…" and thus denied a meaningful past. Vicki L. Ruiz, "Nuestra América: Latino History as United States History," *The Journal of American History*, 93 no. 3 (December, 2006): 655-672.
[29] Michel Ralph-Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), xix.
[30] Vicki L. Ruiz, ed., *Las Obreras: Chicana Politics of Work and Family* (Los Angeles: UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Publications, 2000).

agency, and silence and an understanding of how to read the gaps in dominant and exclusionary subaltern histories."[31] This dissertation accordingly integrates *testimonios* to provide a glimpse into the daily lives——including the struggles and triumphs——of San Bernardino's Mexican residents previously ignored in the official archives.

The first chapter explores how the city of San Bernardino developed into a significant economic and transportation center within southern California. The Cajon Pass played a significant role in this transformation as it served as the natural route that facilitated San Bernardino's growth. Though local Native Americans had trekked the Cajon mountain pass for centuries, it did not emerge as a significant gateway for the movement of people and goods until the mid-nineteenth century. After the U.S.-Mexico War concluded in 1848, an influx of white settlers and speculators arrived into the San Bernardino Valley. By the 1880s, these investors, along with a racialized migrant labor force of Native American, Chinese, and Mexicans, established a booming citrus industry in the region. Additionally, local leaders developed the city as a hub for two transcontinental railroads for the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific. San Bernardino soon became known as the "Gate City," transforming the region into what I have dubbed a "fruitful gateway," both literally and figuratively.

Chapter two explores how a continued influx of Mexican immigrant workers into San Bernardino during the early twentieth century set the foundation for permanent settlement on the city's west side. By 1920, Mexicans defied the idea that they were merely "birds of passage" as they moved out of the Santa Fe railroad's temporary lodging of boxcars and tie houses to plant roots within the neighborhoods along Mt. Vernon

[31] Maylei Blackwell, *¡Chicana Power! Contested Histories of Feminism in the Chicano Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 34-35.

Avenue. Despite encountering racial discrimination and segregation in housing, schools, and public spaces, Mexican residents forged community through mutual aid societies, baseball teams, a Spanish-language press, civic organizations, radio programs, and Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church. In addition, when U.S. Highway 66 was routed through Mt. Vernon Avenue during the 1930s, these Mexican residents continued to craft the character of their community by developing a formidable ethnic business district. Establishments like the Mitla Café, La Esperanza Market, La Tolteca Torillería, and the López Farmacia displayed how Mexican merchants prospered despite racism, repatriation campaigns, and economic depression.

Moreover, San Bernardino's Mexican community operated within a "translocal" world, where Mexican residents networked across other Inland Empire *colonias* to relay information and organize boycotts, *mutualistas*, a chamber of commerce, and general community gatherings.[32] As a result, the inland network of Mexican communities protested racial discrimination across color lines. Their smaller populations and ability to build relationships with whites, including white allies, led to civil rights victories. Historians such as Thomas Sugrue and Andrew Highsmith have similarly shown that smaller communities of color frequently pursued civil rights victories with success throughout the northern United States due to coalitions with progressive whites and for their capacity to reach their communities through civic organizations.[33]

This translocal Mexican network within inland southern California can be

[32] Historian Thomas Sugrue utilizes the term 'translocal.' I similarly use it in order to describe the network of Inland Empire *colonias*. Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in The North* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2008), 174-175.

[33] Andrew R. Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015); Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*.

displayed in chapter three as newspaper editors Ignacio López of Pomona and Eugenio Nogueras of San Bernardino collaborated with the Catholic Church, local merchants, students, and attorney David C. Marcus to sue city officials for their roles in denying Mexicans access to the Perris Hill Park pool and other public recreational facilities. The Valles family took center stage in this struggle as Gonzalo and Jovita Valles fought for the dignity of their children during the summer of 1943. In addition, the so-called "zoot suit riots" that took place at the same time also factored into the push for desegregation as the Mexican community connected the outbreak of such violence to the fact that Mexican youth did not have equitable access to recreational facilities. The ensuing court case, *Lopez v. Seccombe* (1944), became one of the first successful judicial challenges to racial segregation and made waves throughout the region by inspiring other critical legal battles, including the well-known school desegregation case *Mendez v. Westminster* (1947). Indeed, attorney David C. Marcus eventually built on the victory of *Lopez* to further contest desegregation by serving as the attorney in *Mendez*. This chapter also considers World War II's transformative impact on San Bernardino's west side as it catalyzed Mexicans to pursue civil rights more aggressively.

The final chapter of this dissertation further reveals how Route 66 enabled San Bernardino's Mexican community to emerge as a powerful merchant district. By the mid-1920s, the west side encompassed a budding group of Mexican merchants and by the 1950s, this district displayed astonishing economic strength, accounting for over sixty percent of the city's purchasing power. Informed by this and by a "pioneer fantasy heritage," the city's urban architects moved toward the production of San Bernardino as an idealized white postwar city by implementing projects that would redirect business

into the white downtown business corridor. Specifically, I explore how Mexican merchants faced economic calamity when highway officials designed unorthodox left-exiting off-ramps to steer motorists away from the west side. This design stripped motorists of convenient access to the west side's shops and restaurants and eventually played a significant role in gradually fragmenting the Mexican community.

Through oral testimony and archival records, *Sol y Sombra* provides a fresh historical perspective, one that imagines San Bernardino and the Inland Empire as a crucial space for better understanding twentieth century Chicana/o history. In 1946, Fred Ross initially measured this Mexican community as one that did not successfully organize; however, as this dissertation chronicles, San Bernardino's Mexican residents contested social injustices on a daily basis through methods and venues that often went unrecognized. By introducing these new actors into the historical record, we can better comprehend not only Mexican American history in southern California but also attain a more complete perspective of the American experience.

CHAPTER I

A Fruitful Gateway: Citrus, Railroads, and Mexican Migration, 1880-1920

> Radiating like the tentacles of an octopus and holding with the permanency of steel the surrounding country for hundreds of miles in every direction, extend the divers railroad lines, steam and electric, that give San Bernardino the name it holds in the transportation world —— [The Gate City] a railway center of superlative importance, one of the busiest traffic hubs in the United States.
>
> —— *San Bernardino Sun*, 1914.[1]

"Say policeman, wake up that man," blurted out an angry woman annoyed at a Mexican railroad worker at the San Bernardino Santa Fe depot in the early morning of February 2, 1909. The passenger missed the evening train departing to Los Angeles and had to wait overnight for the morning train when a number of Mexican railroad laborers had been sent into the depot's waiting room prior to their relocation between stations. One of the weary workers laid on the floor and dozed off to the displeasure of this passenger. After the officer made no attempt to awake him, the passenger herself finally walked across the station, grabbed the Mexican laborer's hat and began lashing out at him, "Wake up! Wake up here, I say. Your snoring makes my headache."[2] Afterwards,

[1] "San Bernardino Is Center of Railroad Transportation," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 20, 1914.
[2] "Diversion In Wait For Limited," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 3, 1909.

the disgruntled passenger sat down and went on a verbal tirade against San Bernardino. As daybreak rolled in, the woman finally departed to Los Angeles while a disappointed journalist took note of the incident, regretting that Mexican workers had been allowed to wait alongside white travelers.

The reporter's dismay reflected local real estate and tourism boosters' efforts to promote San Bernardino as an idyllic region for future white residents. In the late nineteenth century, for instance, these boosters touted southern California for its sunny, warm climate, lush snow-capped mountains, unparalleled health benefits, and, perhaps most importantly, its prospect of wealth through investment in California's booming citrus industry.[3] As the woman grew aggravated by the Mexican laborer, the journalist described the worker as a "sunburned… servant of toil" who had driven the passenger to say "hard things about our city" and incidentally "licking the whole of" San Bernardino.[4] A few months later, in an article entitled "Cholo Village To Be Moved To A Section Where It Is Less Conspicuous," the *San Bernardino Sun* explained how the Mexican Santa Fe labor camp embarrassed local officials since tourists could see the unsightly dwellings where Mexican railroad workers resided:

> The present location of the cholo quarters, in the wye [sic] at the west end of the yards, is in full view of passengers on all trains leaving or arriving on not only the line to and from Los Angeles but Orange [County] as well, and in

[3] For more on the history of southern California's citrus industry, see, for instance Jose Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006); Matt García, *A World Of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Douglas Cazaux Sackman, *Orange Empire: California and the Fruits of Eden* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005); and Gilbert G. González, *Labor and Community: Mexican Citrus Worker Villages in a Southern California County, 1900-1950* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

[4] "Diversion In Wait For Limited."

> consequence is passed by every train through this city. For years the camp has been an eye-sore, marring the entrance to this city.[5]

On another occasion, the *Sun* described this Mexican labor camp as a series of "disreputable shacks of all sorts, made of dry goods boxes, bits of old blankets and everything else that could be utilized for shelter, the whole reeking with filth."[6] As a result of these complaints over the unattractive Mexican housing, the railroad eventually moved the camp out of the view of incoming passenger trains.

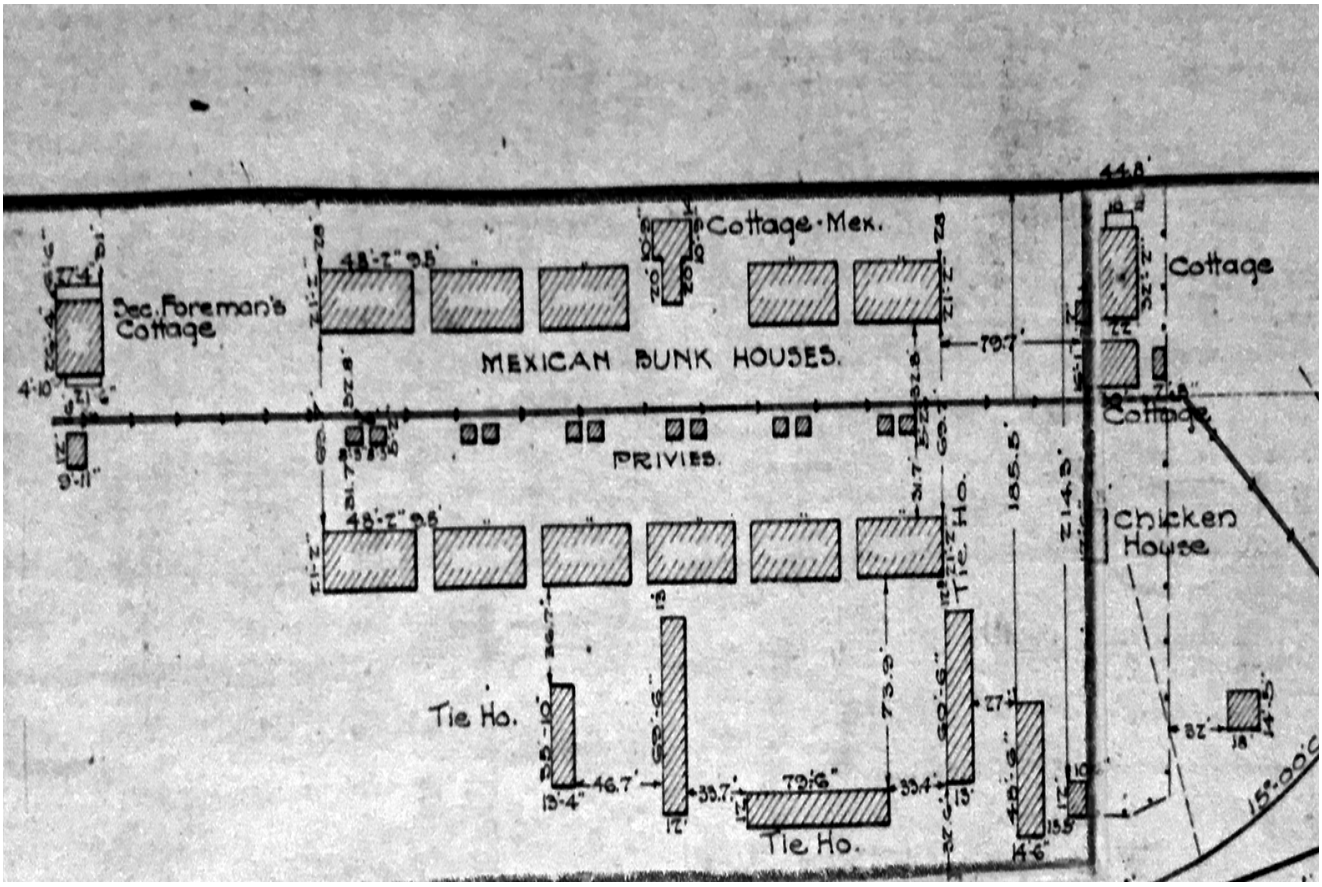

Figure 1: A 1909 Santa Fe railyard map shows the bunks and tie houses of San Bernardino's Mexican railroad laborers.[7]

[5] "Stakes Set For Mexican Camp," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 5, 1909.
[6] "Renovation Of Dirty Cholo Camp," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 3, 1905.
[7] "Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad: San Bernardino Station Grounds," California State Archives, Secretary of State Records, Box 11, 178-40-42.

Such press coverage reflected how local officials, especially city boosters, developed a keen awareness about the importance of presenting the model "white" citrus belt community to tourists and potential white residents. This attitude dated back to the 1870s when the citrus industry emerged in the inland valleys of southern California and agricultural promoters offered a romanticized history of the region, filled with a Spanish fantasy past and idyllic sunny landscapes. Conspicuously absent from these representations, however, were the laborers, including Native Americans, Chinese, and Mexicans, who helped build the industry as fruit pickers, packers, and railroad workers. [8] As historian Devra Weber explains, railroad and "[a]gricultural workers themselves, as producers of basic commodities in an economically strategic industry, were and are a vital part of the United States working class, and their history is an essential component of working-class history."[9] This chapter, in part, builds on the work of similar Chicana/o labor historians and explores how these workers, especially Mexicans, provided the labor for the creation of the citrus empire.

This chapter also examines how San Bernardino emerged as an important economic hub within this citrus empire. Nestled at the foothills of the San Bernardino Mountains and at the mouth of the Cajon Pass, the city served as the first natural geographic entry point into the southern California basin for those travelling from the Southwest and eastern United States. Geographers Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois, and Brian Slack explain geographic gateways as regions that offer "accessibility to a

[8] To a lesser extent, Japanese, Filipino, and Korean migrant workers also contributed to the development of the citrus industry, especially after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. This chapter places particular emphasis on the role of Mexican citrus and railroad laborers in San Bernardino.

[9] Devra Weber, *Dark Sweat, White Gold: California Farm Workers, Cotton, and the New Deal* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 3.

large system of circulation of freight, passengers, and/or information."[10] In addition, urban studies scholar Genevieve Carpio describes the inland southern California gateway as a central "global nexus connecting the United States, Western Hemisphere, and Pacific Rim through agricultural export" and thus making the region an "especially critical lens through which to view the relationship between place, mobility, and race."[11] Indeed, this gateway city was home to two transcontinental railroads by 1886 and grew into a hub for the national distribution of citrus products. The city's population surged along with its economic growth as investors and migrant workers made their way into the San Bernardino Valley in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By the 1920s, as a result of its natural geographic placement, San Bernardino emerged as the center of economic activity within the Inland Empire and developed a racially stratified class of migrant workers.[12]

The Emergence of the Gate City

Native Americans had relied on the Cajon Pass for centuries; however, it gained greater significance as a gateway for the movement of goods and people in 1776 when Francisco Garcés, a Franciscan friar, crossed from the Mojave Desert in order to reach

[10] Jean-Paul Rodrigue, Claude Comtois, and Brian Slack, *The Geography of Transport Systems* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 262.
[11] Genevieve Carpio, "From Citrus Belt To Inland Empire: Race, Place, and Mobility in Southern California, 1880-2000," Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 2013, 4-5.
[12] Environmental historian William Cronon describes Chicago as a gateway city that grew out of its natural environment. Cronon explains that the city "drew its life from the natural world around it…" and that "it concealed its long-standing debts to the natural systems that made it possible." This chapter similarly considers the Cajon Pass as one of the natural systems that facilitated San Bernardino's growth. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1991).

the San Gabriel Mission.[13] Differing from the coastal regions of California, Franciscan friars did not establish a centralized mission in the San Bernardino Valley due to persistent attacks and raids by local Native American tribes.[14] A half-century after Garcés traversed the Cajon Pass, Jedediah Smith, later celebrated by pioneer societies as the first "white" man to cross overland into California, made his way through the Pass in 1826 with a band of hunters and fur trappers. Antonio Armijo, a merchant, followed three years after Smith when he led a trading convoy from Abiquiú, New Mexico into San Bernardino. Over the next several decades, a variation of the paths traveled by Garcés, Smith, and Armijo eventually became branded as the Old Spanish Trail and effectively linked New Mexico to southern California.[15]

In 1842, Mexican governor Juan B. Alvarado approved a land grant to brothers José María Lugo, Vicente Lugo, and José Carmen Lugo, who established Rancho San Bernardino along with various adobe homes, over 4,000 cattle, and a small colony of settlers.[16] The Lugos developed business partners in New Mexico through the Old

[13] Richard A. Weaver, "The 1776 Route of Father Francisco Garcés into the San Bernardino Valley, California: A Reevaluation of the Evidence and its Implications**,"** *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, 4 no. 1 (Summer 1982): 142-147.

[14] Franciscan missionaries attempted several times to establish a mission, however, they abandoned their efforts after the constant attacks. Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 106.

[15] Smith, "A History Of The County School Administration of San Bernardino County, California," 31-32. San Bernardino County Archives, County Schools Records, Accession 606, R 379.153; J.M. Guinn; "Captain Jedediah S. Smith: The Pathfinder of the Sierras," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California, Los Angeles*, 3 no. 4 (1896): 45-53.

[16] The land grant rancho period emerged after the so-called "Mexican era" when Governor José Figueroa, under Mexican President Antonio López de Santa Anna, commenced the secularization of California missions in 1834. In total, more than six hundred land grants were given out until the mid-1840s. Kevin Starr, *California: A History* (New York: Random House Inc., 2005), 48-49.

Spanish Trail that depended on the trade of grain as well as hide and tallow.[17] As a result of the continued attacks by the area's Indian tribes, the Lugos convinced some of their New Mexican trading partners to settle on their rancho along the banks of the Santa Ana River in exchange for defensive services against Native Americans and other marauders.[18] These settlers, which consisted of eighteen New Mexican families, established the colony known as San Salvador where they had small bountiful farms and raised their cattle on communal pastures.[19] According to historian Albert Camarillo, the "Salvadoreño" community differed from other southern California pueblos in that they "comprised primarily of Mexican-Indian settlers of New Mexican stock…" and class stratification was virtually non-existent. Moreover, aside from some white settlers who had intermarried into the San Salvador community, the "social atmosphere was thoroughly Mexican."[20]

After the U.S.-Mexico War concluded in 1848, California underwent a drastic transformation as Californio families lost their large land possessions to white squatters and speculators. The discovery of gold in California's Sierra Nevadas during that same year initiated a wide-scale influx of immigrants into the region and opened the door for California's conquest. In 1849 alone, approximately 100,000 people "rushed" to the state in hopes of striking it rich. From this figure, an estimated 80,000 white "Yankee"

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[17] The Lugos also traded with other local ranchos. For more on the hide and tallow trade during the California rancho era, see, for instance, Douglas Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers: The Making of Mexican Culture in Frontier California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

[18] John R. Brumgardt, "San Salvador: New Mexican Settlement in Alta California," *Southern California Quarterly*, 59 no. 4 (Winter 1977): 354-364.

[19] San Salvador was located in what is now the present city of Colton. Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 106-107; Smith, "A History Of The County School," 31-32.

[20] Camarillo argues that the white San Salvador members had come from a small group of white "pioneers" that assimilated into the Mexican society that Salvadoreños had established. Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society*, 107.

migrants arrived while 8,000 Mexicans, 5,000 South Americans, and several thousand Europeans ventured to the diggings.[21] Vastly outnumbered, Californios and Latin American immigrants along with the Chinese became targets of racial prejudice.[22] Californios, for example, were steadily stripped of political and economic influence when newly arriving state officials disregarded their land titles and placed an overwhelming amount of debt on rancho owners by imposing new tax regulations and attorney fees. A series of southern California floods during the 1860s and an ensuing drought also crippled the rancho economy as many cattle died, especially in San Bernardino. Adding insult to injury, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo extended citizenship rights to the Mexican inhabitants who chose to remain in the United States after the U.S.-Mexico War; however, after one year the federal land commission invalidated two hundred of the state's ranchos, including some of its largest.[23] These events collectively crippled the rancheros' wealth and their status as propertied-elite.

Fortunately for the Lugos, the Public Land Commission validated the Rancho San Bernardino grant in 1852 but only after the brothers had already decided to sell their landholdings to Mormon colonists a year earlier. The Mormons arrived to San Bernardino in 1847 after a battalion under the direction of Captain Jefferson Hunt had been deployed to southern California during the U.S.-Mexico War. However, when the

[21] Leonard Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios: A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846-1890* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 48-53.

[22] An example of such racial prejudice came in the form of violence against Latin American miners and the Foreign Miner's Tax in 1850. Pitt, *The Decline of the Californios*, 60-62.

[23] On the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as related to land grant rights, see, David G. Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 13-25; For the Land Law of 1851, see, Thomas C. Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses: Historical Political Economy of Southern California's Inland Empire* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2015), 102-103.

battalion arrived they found that the war, as far as it concerned California, was essentially over. Captain Hunt and his battalion subsequently spent their time obtaining trade prices of local livestock and grain from various local ranchos until they reported back to Utah in November 1847.[24] After returning to Salt Lake, Mormon President Brigham Young realized the importance of the route that Captain Hunt had taken through the Cajon Pass and directed him to return in order to gather more information on trade and to test the practicality of the sustained use of the route.[25]

After three successful trips to and from California, including the first recorded wagon expedition through the Cajon Pass; and with Hunt's detailed accounts about the most efficient route to take, Brigham Young called for the formation of a Mormon colony in California. In 1851, after failing to purchase their preferred land in Rancho Chino, Brigham Young authorized apostles Amasa Lyman and Charles Rich to buy Rancho San Bernardino from the Lugos for $77,000.[26] Initially, approximately five-hundred Mormons set out to San Bernardino where they replicated Salt Lake City's street grid and built Fort San Bernardino to protect themselves from Indian attacks.[27] The colony proved to be short-lived, however, and only lasted until October 1857 when Brigham Young reassigned apostles Lyman and Rich to Europe and recalled San Bernardino's remaining three-thousand Mormon residents to Salt Lake City.[28] Though most returned to Utah,

[24] Brigham Young viewed southern California as a supply source for Salt Lake City and Captain Hunt collected trading prices in hopes of developing trading partnerships in southern California.
[25] Smith, "A History Of The County School."
[26] The Lugos were one of the few Californio families that profited from their land after U.S. conquest. Nine years prior to selling Rancho San Bernardino to the Mormons, they had received the land in exchange for $800 in hide and tallow to the Mexican government. $77,000 is roughly equivalent to $2.2 million in 2017.
[27] For a more detailed account on the establishment of Mormon outposts from Salt Lake City through the Pacific Coast, see, Milton R. Hunter, "The Mormon Corridor," *Pacific Historical Review*, 8 no. 2 (June, 1939): 179-200.
[28] Smith, "A History Of The County School," 31-55.

some decided to forsake the Church and stay in San Bernardino because of the fertile farm land.[29] Despite the brief lifespan of their colony, these Mormon settlers helped define a route through the Cajon Pass that helped to facilitate an influx of numerous white settlers into the inland valleys in the ensuing decades.[30] Furthermore, this route helped the citrus industry ascend to greater economic power when the Santa Fe built its transcontinental railroad through the Cajon Pass in the 1880s.

After the Mormon recall, joint stock companies and other business firms looking to establish citrus farms as well as railroads gradually acquired the land formerly owned by Mormon settlers.[31] Furthermore, by the 1880s, the rancho-era had concluded and the inland economy shifted from cattle trading and grain production to a well-developed citrus industry aided by innovations in irrigation, the completion of transcontinental railroads, venture capitalism, and the labor of Native Americans, Chinese, and Mexican workers.[32] As explained by historian Jose Alamillo, with "the exception of Rancho San Pedro, all the ranchos extending from San Diego to Santa Barbara were subdivided and lost to American capitalists who set out to convert the land to orchards."[33] Although citrus cultivation can be traced to the early nineteenth century when several trees were planted on a six-acre plot of land at the San Gabriel Mission, rigorous citrus farming did not develop until the 1870s when colonists in Riverside introduced approximately seven

[29] Edward Leo Lyman, "The Rise and Decline of Mormon San Bernardino," *Brigham Young University Studies*, 29 no. 4 (Fall 1989): 43-63.
[30] For a discussion on white settlement in inland citrus belt communities, see, Carpio, "From Citrus Belt To Inland Empire."
[31] Thomas C. Patterson argues that a new class of owners took over in southern California. Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses*, 104-105.
[32] Alamillo, "Bitter-Sweet Communities," 37-38. For an historical account of railroad labor by immigrant workers, see, Jeffrey M. Garcilazo, *Traqueros: Mexican Railroad Workers in the United States, 1870 – 1930* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2012).
[33] Alamillo, "Bitter-Sweet Communities," 37-38.

thousand trees, establishing the foundation for a prosperous citrus industry. By the end of the decade, Riverside growers expanded their citrus ranches by forming societies that brought farmers together to share the latest information on citrus cultivation. In addition, they held annual citrus fairs and attracted visitors from throughout southern California.[34]

Climate also proved to be a key element for the success of citrus in southern California.[35] Writing about the citrus belt's climate in the 1890s, journalist Charles Dudley Warner described, "this land of perpetual sun and ever-flowing breezes, looked down upon by purple mountains… is our Mediterranean! Our Italy!" He continued, "From San Bernardino and Redlands, Riverside, Pomona, Ontario, Santa Anita, San Gabriel, all the way to Los Angeles, is almost a continuous fruit garden."[36] Descriptors of the region as a Mediterranean "Eden" of endless citrus trees intensified as boosters utilized these images to promote the region at the national level.[37] Indeed, San Bernardino boosters explained, "though so varied are the soil and climate that within the bounds of the great San Bernardino [V]alley we produce almost every staple indigenous to both the sub-tropical and temperate zones… Our citrus fruits are the best known in commerce and beat the world in competition at New Orleans and Chicago [fairs]."[38]

The development of irrigation during the 1880s also catalyzed the growth of the citrus industry. Canadian Matt Gage, for example, invested in acquiring water and land

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[34] Gonzalez, *Labor and Community*, 18-19.
[35] For instance, the land's proximity to the Pacific Ocean, position along the foothills of the San Gabriel and San Bernardino Mountains, and the fertile soils produced by plentiful water supplies all contributed to an ideal semi-tropical climate necessary for citrus production. Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 29-30.
[36] Charles Dudley Warner, *Our Italy* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891), 15-18 as quoted in Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 29-30.
[37] The implementation of these images helped sell the region to potential investors, citrus wholesale buyers, and potential future residents. Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 29-30; Alamillo, "Bitter-Sweet Communities," 27-28.
[38] "General Features," *The Daily Courier*, April 8, 1887.

rights in Riverside in order to build a twenty-mile canal. The distribution of water to Riverside's citrus farms through the Gage Canal helped the colony thrive and within a few years of its completion in 1886, Riverside had expanded drastically from 7,000 citrus trees to over 200,000 trees. The Gage Canal eventually extended to Corona and provided water to more than four thousand acres of orange and lemon groves.[39]

San Bernardino similarly followed suit after the California legislature passed the Wright Act in 1887, which permitted the formation of irrigation districts with the ability to issue bonds, taxes, and condemn property for the purpose of water distribution. Irrigation districts in San Bernardino derived their water from sources like the Santa Ana River, the San Bernardino Mountains, and local artesian wells. The Bear Valley Company, for example, distributed water from these sources by building over one hundred miles of canals and pipelines to Redlands, East Highland, San Bernardino, and Perris. By 1893, this company had acquired an estimated five million dollars in property and San Bernardino's promoters praised the irrigation projects for the county's growth, citing that the population had increased from 4,000 in 1870 to 24,000 in 1890.[40] Irrigation developments such as these helped to lay the foundation for the citrus industry's remarkable growth in the following decades.

The growth of the railroad developed alongside wide-scale citrus cultivation and irrigation improvements. As noted by historian Richard White, nineteenth century railroad expansion into the western United States linked the region to national and global

[39] Gage borrowed from the Riverside Banking Company in order to begin purchasing land, water rights, and to pay for the construction of the canal. Gage then formed the Riverside Trust Company when he entered a partnership with an accounting firm based in London in order to complete the canal's construction. Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses*, 140-142.

[40] In addition, the Arrowhead Reservoir Company had acquired a capital stock of one million dollars. "Irrigation," *The Daily Courier*, August 8, 1893.

markets. Likewise, they represented "the epitome of the modern in the late nineteenth century."[41] After the Civil War, the U.S. Congress legislated transcontinental railroad construction with The Pacific Railway Act of 1862 and on May 10, 1869 the Central Pacific Railroad Company completed the country's first transcontinental railroad.[42] Southern California boosters anticipated exponential growth once the transcontinental railroads connected the citrus belt to markets across the United States. San Bernardino local leaders, fully aware of the powerful socio-economic implications of the railroad, hoped to lure one of the major transcontinental companies into their city.[43]

In 1875, the Southern Pacific sparked excitement in southern California's inland valleys when they decided to build the first transcontinental railroad to pass through the Inland Empire.[44] In an attempt to extract money from railroad hungry communities, Southern Pacific representatives frequently demanded large payments in order to build through specific towns. For instance, the Southern Pacific requested $100,000 of concessions from San Bernardino officials in order to lay track and build a station in their city. Offended by the request, city leaders declined to pay what they considered to be an excessive sum of money.[45] In response, the Southern Pacific built the railroad company

[41] Richard White, *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2011), 507.
[42] White, *Railroaded*, 37.
[43] See local historian Nick Cataldo's essays on railroads in San Bernardino. Nick Cataldo, "When San Bernardino and Colton Almost Went To War," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 9, 2010; "Backbone of San Bernardino County," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 24, 2014.
[44] Southern Pacific officials sought to extend its line from Los Angeles through the San Gorgonio Pass and were fully aware of the appeal that such a railroad would bring to local governments and their economies.
[45] Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses*, 126-127.

town of Colton just south of San Bernardino that included a station, maintenance facility, and ice plant.[46]

In 1883, San Bernardino received another opportunity to acquire its railroad when the California Southern Railroad planned to extend its line from San Diego. Fred T. Perris, a surveyor and civil engineer who had settled with the Mormons during the 1850s, persuaded California Southern executives to choose San Bernardino as one of the sites to extend their line.[47] Perris, determined to bring the California Southern to the city, convinced the company's representatives that San Bernardino would be the right fit for the line due to its centrality within the citrus industry. After the completion of this line, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe purchased the California Southern in October 1884 with plans to extend the tracks to their Barstow railyard in order to link its new acquisition with the rest of the country.[48]

Not coincidentally, Fred T. Perris served as one of the primary engineers for the new project and decided to construct the line through the Cajon Pass. Perris almost certainly used his knowledge of the Pass from his initial travels on the Mormon trail during the early 1850s when he charted out the California Southern's route through the Pass's lower summit. When completed in 1885, this line linked the second transcontinental railroad passing through the San Bernardino Valley, and a year later,

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[46] Colton was named after the Southern Pacific's vice president, David Douty Colton. Reacting to the Southern Pacific's disregard of San Bernardino, city officials boycotted the company's freight until the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe established a route through the city in 1886. Cataldo, "When San Bernardino and Colton Almost Went To War."

[47] Luring railroads to build through certain communities proved to be a fierce political battle in southern California. Only after much persuasion of California Southern officials, and by circumventing other competing interests' attempts at blocking Perris's meeting with these executives, did San Bernardino secure the railroad. Larry E. Burgess, "Fred T. Perris: Pioneer and Energizer," San Bernardino City History, accessed April 15, 2017, http://www.ci.san-bernardino.ca.us/about/history/fred_t_perris.asp.

[48] Ibid.

Perris secured a deal with the Santa Fe to construct railroad shops, a depot, and a major west coast divisional department in the city.[49] In return for their new railroad station, San Bernardino officials provided land to the Santa Fe in the city's Mt. Vernon district. As will be demonstrated later in the chapter, the construction of the railroad relied heavily on the labor of Chinese and Mexican workers.

These series of events fundamentally transformed San Bernardino into a major railroad and transportation center on the west coast and brought competition to the Southern Pacific's freight services. The two companies immediately engaged in a price war when the Santa Fe slashed freight and passenger prices. For instance, in the early-1880s, the Southern Pacific normally charged California-bound passengers from the eastern U.S. anywhere from sixty to one hundred dollars. For a few days in 1886, due to steep price decreases stemming from competition, passengers found that they could buy a transcontinental trip for as low as one dollar.[50] Carey McWilliams noted that these wage wars eventually led to a mass immigration, explaining that in "1885 hordes of tourists and prospective settlers came to California."[51]

The Southern Pacific and Santa Fe also played to the advantage of citrus farmers looking to distribute their products nationally. In January 1887, the Santa Fe launched an eastbound "orange special" train complete with refrigerated boxcars that protected the fruit from spoilage. This train ran from San Bernardino to Kansas City in only four days

[49] Building through the steep and mountainous landscape presented several challenges, however, Perris decided to build along the Mojave River in Hesperia leading into one of the Cajon Pass's lower summits. Ibid.
[50] Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses*, 126-128.
[51] Carey McWilliams, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 73.

and to Chicago in a little over five days.[52] From these locations, the citrus products then reached other distribution points including Denver, Wichita, St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, and other areas. Moreover, the railroad price wars enabled farmers to reach new markets at substantially lower costs than ever before. A local newspaper, *The Daily Courier*, proclaimed, "The management of the two railroads seem to fully realize the magnitude of the fruit-shipping business here, and shippers will undoubtedly be benefitted by the [railroad] rivalry."[53]

The transcontinental trains thus set the stage for unprecedented growth. According to historian Douglas Sackman, the orange industry had not fully matured in the early-1870s but by the time the transcontinental railroads arrived, "this orange industry infant would jump out of the cradle in no time."[54] Freight shipments of goods from California throughout the United States increased from approximately 100 million pounds in 1880 to 800 million pounds by 1890.[55] Indeed, the citrus industry owed much of its growth to the transcontinental railroad. The inland citrus industry proved so prosperous that in 1893, Riverside boasted the highest per capita income in the United States.[56]

Once the Southern Pacific and Santa Fe linked the inland citrus industry to the rest of the nation, they took steps to promote it in their periodicals and advertisements. Local chambers of commerce, for instance, often sponsored advertisements in publications with the orange taking center stage. In one advertisement that appeared in

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[52] "Railroad Notes," *The Daily Courier*, January, 20, 1887.
[53] "Fruit Trains," *The Daily Courier*, January 20, 1887.
[54] Sackman, *Orange Empire*, 30-31.
[55] *Annual Report of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, 1882-1893* as found in White, *Railroaded*, Appendix, Chart E: Through Shipments To And From California By Rail, 1873-1891.
[56] Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses*, 121.

The Santa Fe Magazine, the San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce described the city as "The Commercial Center of the Largest Orange Growing District in the World" with pure and abundant cheap mountain water.[57] In December 1915, *The Santa Fe Magazine*, also promoted San Bernardino's National Orange Show, the largest national citrus fair that showcased the industry's fruits.[58] The magazine article described the host city as "not only the center of a vast horticultural region but it is an industrial city." "Every point in southern California… is within a two-and-a-half hour journey by any of four railroads or by automobile."[59]

Boosters and citrus companies also attached decorative citrus labels onto the wooden crates that carried their oranges and lemons across the country. These vibrant and attractive labels served as one of the most successful marketing campaigns for the citrus industry as farms vied for the attention and business of national wholesalers. In addition, citrus farms played into the popularity of Helen Hunt Jackson's 1884 novel *Ramona*, broadcasting a romanticized version of California history that glorified its Spanish past.[60] Sunny landscapes, Spanish-style architecture, *vaqueros*, majestic mountains, and ceaseless rows of oranges and lemon trees all served as common themes.[61] Through these images the citrus industry sold a Spanish fantasy history, a salubrious climate and setting, and of course, millions of oranges and lemons.

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[57] *Santa Fe Magazine*, volume 10, December 1915.
[58] The initial Orange Show took place in 1889 when fifteen exhibitors from throughout the county displayed their citrus products in San Bernardino. The fair's success led to the Orange Show to expand as a National fair in 1911.
[59] "National Orange Show To Be More Beautiful Than Ever," *Santa Fe Magazine*, volume 10, December 1915.
[60] The novel facilitated the rise of southern California as a popular tourist destination as different locales throughout the region attempted to highlight their relationship to *Ramona*, even if the area had no factual connection to Jackson's novel. For more on the *Ramona* myth, see, for instance, Margie Brown-Coronel, "Beyond the Rancho: Four Generations of del Valle Women in southern California, 1830-1940," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 2011.
[61] Alamillo, "Bitter-Sweet Communities," 50-59.

Moreover, these promotional methods aimed to solidify white social, cultural, and economic power in the inland citrus belt. By the start of the twentieth century, the citrus industry had done exactly that as the population and economy of the region grew by leaps and bounds. By 1915, San Bernardino had transformed from a scarcely populated rancho to a thriving semi-urban transportation center with a population of nearly twenty thousand people who enjoyed modern hotels, street lighting, theaters, railroads, and paved streets.[62] In a 1914 article entitled "San Bernardino Is Center Of Railroad Transportation," the *Sun* described the city as "the transportation hub of the west… only next to Los Angeles as a freight center" within southern California.[63] However, despite the vast promotional material by local chambers of commerce, boosters, railroad magazines, and citrus farmers, actual workers remained conspicuously absent from such depictions.

[62] Shortly after the Santa Fe's completion in 1886, construction on the Arrowhead Hotel began. Located directly under the city's arrowhead landmark, this hotel capitalized on the natural hot springs in the San Bernardino Mountain's foothills. The resort eventually became a well-known travel destination throughout the region. *The Daily Courier,* January 20, 1887.
[63] "San Bernardino Is Center of Railroad Transportation," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 20, 1914.

Figure 1.1: A label for the Gold Buckle Association's "Arrowhead Brand," located in East Highland, a few miles northeast of San Bernardino.[64]

[64] Arrowhead Brand, Goldbuckle Association, East Highland. Citrus Crate Labels, 0027-CA, John M. Pfau Library Special Collections, California State University, San Bernardino.

Figure 1.2: An advertisement that hoped to lure potential residents and citrus farmers into the San Bernardino Valley.[65]

[65] *Santa Fe Magazine*, volume 10, December 1915.

Labor and Mexican Migration

The earliest laborers for inland citrus colonies consisted primarily of local Native Americans, such as the Cahuilla and Serrano Indians, who picked crops and excavated irrigation canals along the Santa Ana River.[66] These Native people, whose communities had been long devastated by land theft, disease, and genocide, made up forty percent of the California's wage-earning workers in 1870 and acted as harbingers of what would soon become a stratified, racialized labor force.[67] As the citrus and railroad industries grew, Native Americans could no longer fulfill the demand for labor. As a result, employers looked to other sources of labor, such as Chinese and Mexican immigrants, to meet the need for a larger workforce. The so-called "coolie trade" imported Chinese laborers, predominantly men from China's Guangdong Province, into the western United States where their population steadily increased.[68] For example, from 1870 to 1880, 138,941 Chinese immigrants entered the United States.[69] These Chinese workers helped to complete the transcontinental railroads and, as explained by Carey McWilliams, "with the growth in fruit acreage after 1870, the Chinese soon assumed a dominant role as farm laborers."[70]

The construction of the transcontinental railroad was rife with intense racial and labor competition. According to historian Jeffrey Garcilazo, Chinese immigrants, and to a

[66] Carey McWilliams mentions that much of the orchard labor during the 1870s was done by Cahuilla Indians from the San Bernardino Mountains. McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 54-55.
[67] Alexander Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy: Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), 11; For more on California's Native American genocide, see, Brendan C. Lindsay, *Murder State: California's Native American Genocide, 1846-1873* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012).
[68] The Chinese coolie trade imported hundreds of thousands of Chinese workers into the Americas during the nineteenth century. See, for instance, Erika Lee, *The Making of Asian America: A History* (New York: Simon & Schuster Paperbacks, 2015).
[69] Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 90.
[70] McWilliams, *Factories in the Fields*, 66-67.

lesser extent Mexicans and whites, graded, laid the track, and constructed trestles for the California Southern route through the Cajon Pass during the 1880s.[71] As California's white workers searched for economic mobility, they turned to unionizing and anti-coolie clubs to push for higher wages. In fact, the Chinese faced fierce agitation from working white men who feared that the "coolies" would depress their wages. In part, this led to the movement for the exclusion of Chinese workers and Sinophobia based on white supremacy.[72] Historian Erika Lee describes that racism against Chinese immigrants stemmed from an "American Orientalist ideology that… defined the West and the East in diametrically opposite terms, using those distinctions to claim American and Anglo-American superiority."[73]

Inland Chinatowns formed as a result of the influx of Chinese workers in places like San Bernardino, Redlands, and Riverside. San Bernardino's Chinatown, for instance, emerged along 3rd Street and Mountain View Avenue with various Chinese owned stores and saloons. A resident of this community, Wong Nim, estimated that the enclave had a population of about five-hundred and recalled that many, in addition to laying track, found work as fruit pickers in the southern section of town.[74] While touring the San Bernardino Chinatown in 1889, a journalist for *The Daily Courier* declared, "It is a wonder to a white man how a human being, even a heathen, can exist in such vile, foul

[71] Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 31.
[72] See, for example, discussions on Denis Kearney and the formation of the Workingmen's Party. Patrick Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines: Border Enforcement and the Origins of Undocumented Immigration, 1882-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), 28; Lee, *The Making of Asian America*, 90-92; Saxton, *The Indispensable Enemy*.
[73] Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 25.
[74] "Chinatown, Once Inhabited by 500 Dwindles to 20 as Youths Hie to City to get 'Soft Jobs,'" *San Bernardino Sun*, June 28, 1928.

smelling quarters and yet the Chinamen prefer them to fresh, well ventilated rooms."[75] Such descriptions reveal that newspapers often reinforced the racist attitudes held by whites by depicting the Chinese in disparaging terms. In addition, racist rhetoric often accompanied violence as Chinese workers were often targeted by their white counterparts. In one incident, while laying track in the Mojave Desert town of Dagget, Joseph Sullivan killed one of his Chinese coworkers by shooting him in the head when the man refused to let him borrow one of his tools. *The Daily Courier* described Sullivan as someone who "certainly does not look like a man who would murder anyone," and went so far as to justify his actions by stating that "Chinamen… are said to be rascally and traitorous."[76]

In another incident in the nearby town of Redlands, agitated white workers terrorized the Chinese by breaking into their camps and robbing them. The violence continued a few days later when the white workers set fire to several of the Chinese buildings and looted their businesses. Violence descended into chaos as the National Guard stepped in to help control the unrest. Redlands companies that hired Chinese laborers objected to the violence and claimed that they only hired them because they could not "pay the wages demanded by the whites."[77] Eventually, the anti-Chinese sentiment that engulfed California culminated in a series of restrictive immigration legislation in the form of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the McCreary Act of 1893.

[75] "A Trip Through Chinatown," *The Daily Courier*, August 23, 1889.
[76] "In For Murder," *The Daily Courier*, July 10, 1888.
[77] For a description of this incident, see, McWilliams, *Factories in the Field*, 74-76.

The effect of these laws combined with anti-Chinese sentiment effectively diminished the Chinese as a labor force in California.[78]

After the Chinese population gradually declined, citrus and railroad officials hired Japanese and Koreans, to replenish the labor pool; however, their numbers paled in comparison to the large numbers of Mexican immigrant workers who came to dominate the California citrus and railroad industries by 1920. For example, the population of Mexican immigrants in the Southwest increased from 66,000 in 1880 to 100,000 in 1900. Moreover, by 1930, Mexican workers eventually made up almost two-thirds of the railroad labor force in the Southwest and Midwest.[79] As noted by historian Camille Guerin-Gonzales, employers in these industries did not consider Mexicans a threat to whites since they viewed them as docile sojourners. Moreover, employers preferred Mexicans, claiming that they "would work cheaply and were 'birds of passage' who would not remain in the U.S. permanently."[80]

San Bernardino's Santa Fe railyard served as one of the company's major hubs on the west coast and thus numerous Mexican railroad workers were hired to help with track laying and grading. Mexicans were often given the most dangerous jobs and often suffered injuries or death. For example, in 1909, while inspecting a track at the San Bernardino depot, an incoming train hit and killed Pedro Negrete. Belying the image of docile labors, Mexicans often protested to improve their conditions——even if it meant losing their jobs or facing deportation. In 1908, they protested against a foreman at his

[78] These exclusionary immigration laws provided a framework to racialize and exclude undesirable aliens. Lee, *At America's Gates*, 30.
[79] Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 32-39.
[80] Camille Guerin-Gonzales, *Mexican Workers and American Dreams: Immigration, Repatriation, and California Farm Labor, 1900-1939* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), 25.

section home located in the Cajon Pass. Two of the *mexicanos*, Francisco Bernardo and E. Geraldo, brawled with the foreman and his son before the foreman fired a shotgun to scare the workers off. Bernardo and Geraldo were arrested the following day for this incident. In another case, Mexican shop workers at the Santa Fe went on strike for an eight-hour day and requested a twenty-five cent raise to their daily two-dollar wage. The Santa Fe, however, refused their demands and fired the workers.[81] Though more sporadic than organized, Mexican railroad workers in southern California confronted their exploitation.

Figure 1.3: A section gang works on the Santa Fe's tracks in the Cajon Pass. Though taken in the 1940s, this image offers a sense of the strenuous nature of railroad work.[82]

[81] Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 76; 92-93.

[82] Delano, Jack, photographer. *Cajon, California. Indian section gang working on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad track*. Cajon California San Bernardino County, 1943. Mar. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed April 24, 2017, https://www.loc.gov/item/owi2001023576/PP/.

During the 1910s, the Santa Fe double-tracked its line from New Mexico to California and Mexican migrants, many escaping the violence of the Mexican Revolution, continued to fill the labor demand as *traqueros* and citrus workers. Throughout the nineteenth century, constant wars and political instability devastated Mexico, failed to unite the nation, and contributed to a faltering economic system. In addition, during President Porfirio Díaz's presidency (1876-1911), agrarian reforms and foreign investment that privileged the hacienda system and U.S. capitalists left nine and a half million people, or ninety-six percent of Mexican families, without land.[83] Dispossessed and without food, hundreds of thousands of Mexicans joined the movement northward into the United States in order to survive.[84]

For many of those escaping the chaos of the Revolution, crossing the U.S.-Mexico border served as an initial step in an often long and dangerous journey. Manuel Delgado explains his grandmother's migration story:

> During… the revolution of 1910, Mexico was a dangerous place, especially for beautiful young women, so *Mama Lupe* was sent to live… with friends in the United States. She came first to Albuquerque, New Mexico… and, in 1921, moved to San Bernardino's Mt. Vernon district.[85]

Indeed, migrants who ultimately ended up in San Bernardino usually traveled where contractors offered them work, such as on the railroad circuit, in the fields, or in western

[83] Weber, *Dark Sweat*, 50.
[84] George Sanchez explains the factors that pushed Mexicans northward into the United States. George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press 1993), 20; Though estimates of Mexican migration during this time vary greatly, some have estimated that over the next decade and a half, approximately 2 million Mexicans had migrated to the United States. Weber, *Dark Sweat*, 52.
[85] Manuel Delgado, *The Last Chicano: A Mexican American Experience*, (Indiana: Authorhouse Publishing, 2009), 2-3.

mining towns. Ramona Arranda describes her father Lorenzo Arranda's experience of working multiple positions before settling in California, "The system was called *reenganche*. He came through El Paso where [labor contractors] were recruiting... Some ended up in Arizona mines, others in agriculture in Texas. My father, he went to the mines first but ended up in California where there were jobs at the cement plant in Oro Grande [near Victorville, California]."[86]

Though some women, such as *Mama Lupe*, arrived to the United States not yet married, many others crossed the border after their husbands had earned enough money to pay for their voyage. For example, Jovita Valles arrived in San Bernardino at the age of thirteen with a four-month old child after her husband had earned enough money as a citrus fruit picker to pay for their trip.[87] As explained by historian Vicki L. Ruiz, once in the United States, "Mexicanas claimed a space for themselves and their families building community through mutual assistance while struggling for some semblance of financial stability…"[88] Women like Gregoria Sosa, a Colton railroad worker's wife, helped their family to survive by earning money through occupations such as sewing, laundry, and even wet-nursing infant children. Domitila Dominguez and her young son, made money by baking and then selling pan dulce door-to-door in San Bernardino.[89] Indeed, many *mexicanas* found that food provided an avenue for earning money and creating community. The absence of an ethnic food market meant that certain Mexican food staples had to be prepared within the home. Celia Cuevas, the mother of a Santa Fe shop

[86] Interview with Ramona Arranda, May 5, 2016, conducted by the author.
[87] See the migration story of Gonzalo and Jovita Valles in chapter three.
[88] For an extensive examination of the "border journeys" of Mexican women, see, Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out Of The Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 7.
[89] Ruiz, *From Out Of The Shadows*, 23-25.

worker, for instance, made vats of chorizo and recruited the help of the entire family and neighboring comadres to finish the sausages. This food-making process helped to reinforce Mexican ethnic identity and familial bonds while allowing women to earn extra income.[90]

In fact, food proved to be especially important for Mexican track workers as railroad companies often hired Mexican chefs to prepare fare such as *albondigas*, *enchiladas*, and other Mexican staples in order to keep track workers from walking off the job. In 1918, for example, San Bernardino's Santa Fe Harvey House employed Luz Negrete for three years as one of their chefs to meet the demand for Mexican meals. Some white railroad workers, such as J.C. Davis of Devore, tasted these Mexican meals and literally sang their praises. In 1911, Davis wrote a song entitled "¡Tortillas con Chile!" and the *Santa Fe Magazine* published the song for their English-speaking employees:

¡Tortillas con Chile!

Mucho trabajo for Don Jose,
On the ferro-caril del Santa Fe;
Mucho dinaro he saves, for oh!
His Corazon is in Mejico!
Now pesos are his, to pay the priest
And to buy the ring and the wedding feast;
Happy Jose! More rich than a king!
Gayly he answers the larks that sing:
"*Tortillas con chile!*"

Now, poco tiempo, Jose must go
To bring his Dolores from Mexico.
(Pobrecita! She'd die of fright
on that passajaro alone at night!)
Passes has he from the boss *padrone* —

[90] Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 142-146.

One that "goes," for himself, alone;
One that goes — but two that "come back" —
For they need Jose on the railroad track!
What a wonder the *pajaritas* call,
Loud and clear, from the chaparral:
"*Tortillas con chile!*"

A small tie casa, as white as snow,
Awaits the *chiquita* from Mexico;
And her teeth will gleam, and her eyes grow wide,
When she sees the *estufa* that stands inside;
And the *grande cajon*, whereon, each day,
She will roll *tortillas* for Don Jose —
Tortillas buenos, so fine and thin
You may plainly see, through their mellow skin,
The chile con carne, as hot as sin,
And red *frijoles*, rolled up within!
How the lark-song rings from the sagebrush gray!
A silver chime, through the golden day:
"*Tortillas con chile!*"[91]

In this song, Davis described the food and revealed white workers' perceptions of Mexican family life, gender roles, and common beliefs that Mexicans happily tolerated their poor living conditions in boxcar and tie houses.[92]

[91] The misspellings are from the original publication. Ibid.
[92] Ibid.

Figure 1.4: Luz Negrete worked at San Bernardino's Harvey House as a chef from 1918 through 1921, preparing Mexican dishes for the company's Mexican workers.[93]

[93] Courtesy of the San Bernardino History and Railroad Museum, San Bernardino, CA.

While there had already been a sizable population of Mexicans in San Bernardino before the newcomers arrived, the continued influx of Mexican immigrants contributed to the development of a permanent, self-contained Mexican *colonia*. Between 1890 and 1900, San Bernardino's census recorded 69 foreign-born Mexican residents; however, by 1910 the city experienced significant growth and recorded 888 foreign-born Mexicans living within the city.[94] The following decade would see the arrival of several thousand new Mexicans entering the city. A white resident living in San Bernardino during this period of growth described the influx:

> I was working near the [Santa Fe] depot on a grading job and I used to see them getting off the cars. I'd seen Mexicans all my life but these sure looked different. Half of 'em had blankets on and sandals on their feet. Some of 'em wore funny big hats and some wore funny little ones. There were women with their arms full of babies and bundles. They'd mill around and jabber all excited, for a while, and then they'd stand still and look scared… there were a lot of them! I said to my partner, 'Looks like Mexico's moved in!'[95]

Though several generations of Mexicans had lived in San Bernardino, dating back to the establishment of Rancho San Bernardino and the San Salvador colony, the statement above indicates that white attitudes toward the existing population of Mexicans were shaped by the large entry of new immigrants. In the eyes of this particular white worker, Mexicans not only represented a non-white population but one distinctly foreign.

[94] García, *A World of Its Own*, U.S. Census figures Appendix, 263.
[95] Ruth Tuck, *Not With The Fist: A Study of Mexican Americans in a Southwest City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946), 38.

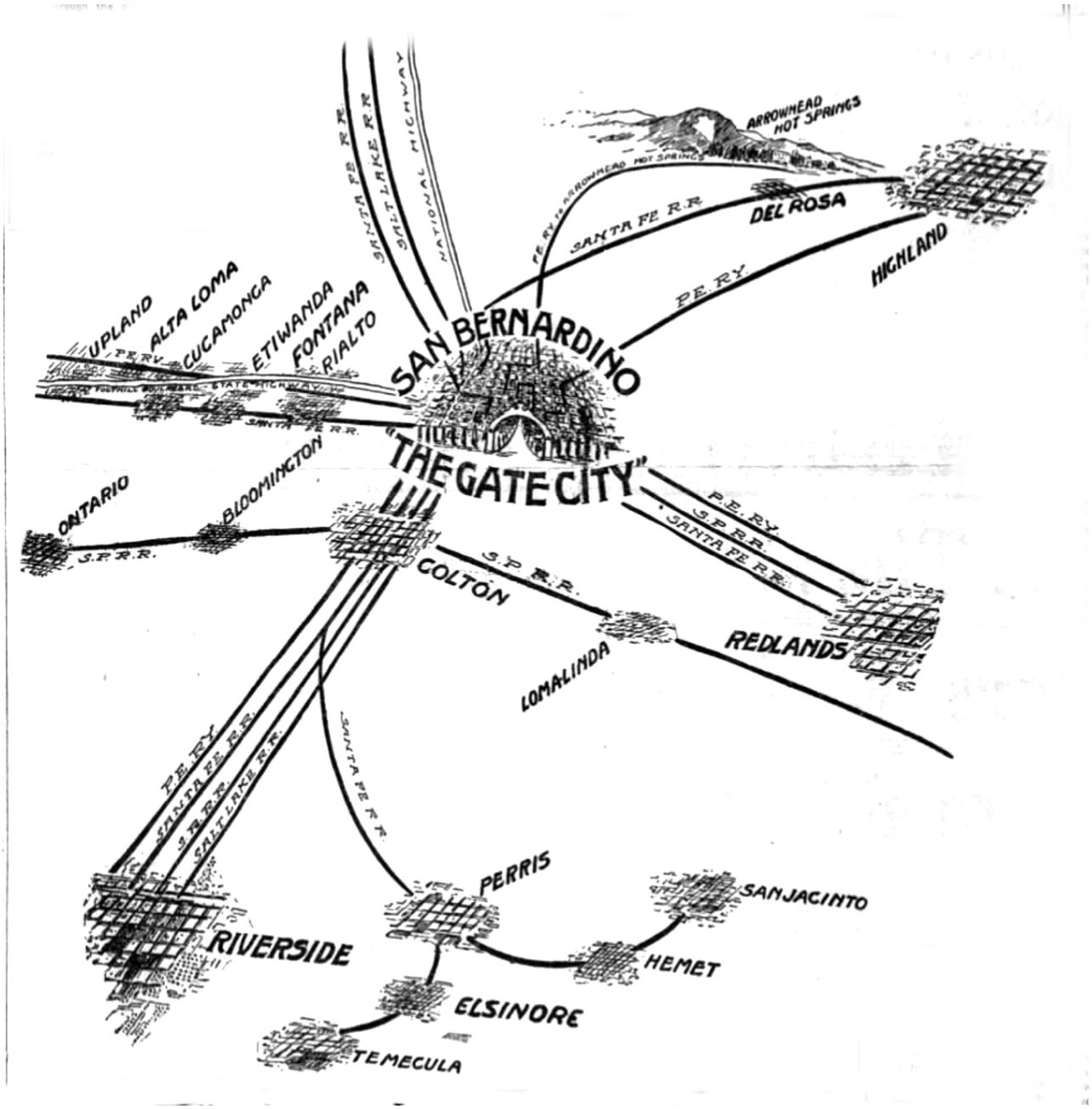

Figure 1.5: San Bernardino adopted the nickname "The Gate City" in order to associate itself with the Cajon Pass gateway and to distinguish itself from other surrounding agricultural colonies. City officials took pride that the city served as major transportation hub with a semi-urban character.[96]

[96] "San Bernardino Is Center of Railroad Transportation," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 20, 1914.

Conclusion

San Bernardino emerged as inland southern California's leading economic center and transportation hub by the start of the twentieth century. The city not only served as a hub for the citrus empire but also boasted two transcontinental railroads in the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific. Through these industries, a racialized labor force developed and Mexicans took low wage jobs as citrus pickers, packinghouse workers, and railroad yard and shop maintenance hands. Industry officials exploited these laborers as they endured low wages, dangerous work, and dilapidated housing conditions. Boxcar settlements, for example, were established on the premises of San Bernardino's Santa Fe depot as means of controlling Mexican labor.[97] Moreover, the city's position as an important gateway into southern California facilitated economic growth and settlement ever since the nineteenth century rancho-era. This distinct placement within the Los Angeles basin, along with the movement of presenting a romanticized history of the region, informed boosters' decisions about how the city should be presented to incoming passengers and potential white residents. As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, San Bernardino boosters disdained the fact that Mexican bunkhouses tarnished the entrance to their city and they eventually organized to remove them out of sight from incoming passenger trains.

Though employers viewed Mexican immigrants as "birds of passage" who would eventually return to their native country, these workers soon dispelled the illusion that they were sojourners as they planted roots in the city. As the next chapter demonstrates, a large Mexican *colonia* emerged on the city's west side during the 1920s. The residents of this Mexican enclave, although certainly reliant on the citrus and railroad industries for

[97] Garcilazo, *Traqueros*, 111-112.

work, proved to be distinct from other inland *colonias* in that Mexican residents were not solely dependent on these industries. A number of *colonia* residents opened small businesses along Route 66, which ran directly through the *colonia* along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Serving as the city's primary north-south corridor, Route 66 provided these Mexican entrepreneurs with a high-volume customer base and would help shape the character of their community.

CHAPTER II

Forging Community: San Bernardino's Mexican West Side, 1920-1945

During the 1930s, Lucy Reyes recalled driving to San Bernardino's west side from her family's chicken ranch in nearby Devore to deliver eggs to various Mexican-owned businesses along Mt. Vernon Avenue. "We would come to Mt. Vernon because there were at least four Mexican markets and a lot of different little restaurants. So we would come and deliver our eggs to these businesses. There were also a lot of [Mexican] people that would come to the west side on Route 66 from places like Victorville and Barstow because at that time they did not have Mexican markets over there so they would come, do their shopping for the week, and then go back."[1] Reyes' grandparents arrived from Chihuahua, Mexico in 1902 when her grandfather followed railroad work into town. After many years as railroad workers, her grandfather and an uncle decided to buy a chicken ranch in Devore and eventually supplied eggs for the lively Mexican businesses that had emerged along Mt. Vernon Avenue in the 1920s. In part, this chapter explores how this Mexican community developed from boxcar settlements into a long-lasting Mexican community by the 1920s. Moreover, it investigates how Route 66 facilitated its rise as a significant community of Mexican merchants. Indeed, Lucy Reyes' anecdote reveals that by the 1930s, San Bernardino's west side contained various Mexican-owned businesses along the iconic highway.

[1] Interview with Lucy Reyes, January 29, 2015, conducted by the author.

Mexican Settlement and Segregation

As mentioned in the previous chapter, during the late nineteenth century San Bernardino became an important trade center within southern California with the establishment of two transcontinental railroads. The Santa Fe, one of the primary employers of Mexican migrants making their way into the city, created temporary bunk houses for these workers as they anticipated they would only live in these lodgings until they decided to return to their native country. By 1920, however, Mexican workers defied that idea as they began to permanently settle into housing tracts directly north of the railroad grounds. In the early-1920s, the Leonard Realty and Building Company sold lots and homes to Mexican workers along Mt. Vernon Avenue between 5th Street and 9th Street.[2] As agribusiness and the Santa Fe expanded their operations, they contracted more Mexican workers and they soon planted their roots, forming a nascent community by purchasing homes in this western end of the city.

Alarmed by the growing Mexican population and at the prospect of residing next to them, white home owners north of 9th Street moved to bar Mexicans from moving any closer to their neighborhoods. In November 1923, for example, city council member S.L. Combs and seven white property owners formed a committee to request a racial zoning ordinance from the city council in order to keep Mexicans south of 7th and 8th Streets on both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue. The committee argued that the Leonard Realty and Building Company sought "to sell property to an inferior class of Mexicans" in their

[2] This realty company placed sales announcements in *The San Bernardino Sun*. On December 3, 1922, they announced the sale of three different homes and tracts to Pablo González, Jose Sancelo, and Mascerio Medina. "Lot is Sold," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 3, 1922. In January 1923 the company also announced the sale of more tracts of land to J.M. Carillo, Frank García, J.R. Lechuga, Trinidad Díaz, Julio López, and Jose Rosales. "Fourth Street Sales Outstanding Features In Realty Activities," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 21, 1923.

neighborhoods north of 9th Street. According to the committee, the potential creation of this new Mexican subdivision disregarded white home owners' interests as it threatened to decrease their property values by thousands of dollars.[3] Moreover, the group asked the city council to help increase the value of their homes by improving water, sewage, sidewalks, and curbs in order to prevent Mexicans from affording homes in their neighborhood.[4]

Realtor W.E. Leonard responded to the home owner's committee in an open letter, stating that the Mexican workforce accounted for twenty-five percent of the city's population and the Santa Fe's expected growth meant that they could reach one-third of the population in five years. "We must have these people for our cheap labor," affirmed Leonard, "Many lines of business could not function without them… [and] a new [housing] section must be established for them… If this district or some other is not established at once these people are going to become scattered all over the city."[5] Leonard went on to reassure the committee that he would not go against their wishes and would support their efforts to make white neighborhood upgrades. He also pledged not to sell homes to Mexicans in their neighborhoods, especially if they gathered signatures from other home owners in their district. Moreover, his letter reinforced the notion of Mexicans as undesirable neighbors by arguing that a new concentrated subdivision would prevent them from "scattering" themselves throughout town. The city council eventually resolved the matter by agreeing to white neighborhood improvements and passing an ordinance restricting Mexican residency along Mt. Vernon Avenue south of 9th Street.

[3] "Protest Against Plan for Tract," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 16, 1923; "Mexican Tract Is Opposed In West District," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 17, 1923.
[4] "Mexican Tract Is Opposed In West District;" "An Open Letter by W.E. Leonard," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 17, 1923.
[5] "An Open Letter by W.E. Leonard."

Such local political alliances facilitated the development of the west side into a full-fledged Mexican *colonia*.

The partnership between white homeowners and the city council not only represented a case of restrictive housing covenants but also continued a "barrioization" process of the Mexican district by disregarding the basic prerequisites for sanitation.[6] For instance, the city promoted poor living conditions on the Mexican west side by failing to provide proper sewage, lighting, paved roads, and sidewalks. Indeed, as the case throughout the Southwest, city officials took no substantive measures in improving Mexican housing while at the same time chiding Mexicans for their living conditions.[7] In October 1929, San Bernardino city officials conducted sanitation surveys that eventually concluded that Mexicans were the sole cause for their living conditions. Mayor John C. Ralphs Jr. commented on the inspection, "Scores of the Mexicans live in extreme poverty, with scarcely any furniture in their homes, but that is their standard of living and it is difficult to change except by years of education."[8]

Though sanitation inspections did not occur on a regular basis, the survey in October 1929 took place due to the school board's concerns over an upsurge in Mexican enrollment after Fall registration figures showed that Mexican children accounted for twenty-one percent of the student population. Assistant Superintendent Hollis P. Allen

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[6] For more on the "barrioization" of Mexican communities in southern California, see, Albert Camarillo, *Chicanos in a Changing Society: From Mexican Pueblos to American Barrios in Santa Barbara and Southern California, 1848-1930* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2005).

[7] For example, the Los Angeles City Housing Commission conducted surveys during the 1910s and 1920s that noted dilapidated Mexican residences, suggesting that the homes they lived in, according to historian Natalia Molina, boiled down to "cultural preferences that led Mexicans to live in inferior housing." Natalia Molina, *Fit To Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006), 166.

[8] "Sanitary Law Enforcement Survey Begins," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 18, 1929.

believed that the increase in Mexican enrollment stemmed from an unfounded claim that Mexicans preferred San Bernardino over other cities because of the town's refusal to enforce health codes. Allen decried, "San Bernardino's lack of insistence upon sanitary regulations for Mexicans… have drawn a poorer and more ignorant and more shiftless type of Mexican to this city than have communities where the regulations are enforced."[9] Citing Claremont as one of the Los Angeles County towns that enforced strict sanitation codes, Allen argued that they got rid of their "undesirable" Mexicans who refused to comply with their health regulations. As a result, Allen argued that San Bernardino took them on as a social and tax burden. Eventually, through scapegoating Mexican residents and in order to avoid paying for their neighborhood improvements, health inspectors determined that the Mt. Vernon district only needed minor plumbing upgrades and continued with standard enforcement procedures.[10]

Though health inspectors and school board members assumed that Mexicans willingly accepted dirty conditions as a cultural preference, in reality, many took considerable pride in living as clean as possible in the face of poverty and the lack of sanitation services. "Saturday was our clean-up day and bath day," recalled Ramona Arranda about growing up during the late 1920s, "We could only bathe once a week because we did not have tubs or running water." In order to wash-up, her mother boiled water in a metal bucket over a stove, tempered the water down, and, as Arranda describes, "We would then shampoo our hair, soap up our bodies, and rinse ourselves off." When it came to doing laundry, she stated "My mother would take a big wooden

[9] "School Chiefs See Mexican Problem Solution: Enforcement of Sanitation Code is Urged," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 13, 1929; "Healthy Board To Inspect Mexican District," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 16, 1929.
[10] "City Mapping Sewer Lines," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 22, 1929; "Mexican Families Complying with Sanitation Measures," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 2, 1929.

stick and stir the clothes in a boiling tub and they would come out sparkling white! It was a lot of work but we made it."[11] Cruz Nevarez similarly recalled, "In those days we would have to boil the water over a wood stove and wash every piece of clothing by hand."[12] Such laborious acts demonstrate the measures Mexicans took to maintain their dignity despite abject poverty.

The school board's concerns about the rise of Mexican student enrollment in 1929 reflected a decade long anxiety on how to deal with the so-called "Mexican problem." The primary way that the San Bernardino school district attempted to control Mexican students was through racial separation.[13] In 1920, the Superintendent of Schools reported that Mexican children had "outgrown the facilities at Fifth Street School" and that "one-third of the enrollment at Mt. Vernon school were Mexican."[14] Moreover, the superintendent worried that Mexican children could ruin the appearance of a newly constructed building for Mt. Vernon School. The Board of Education outlined the answer for the perceived over-population of Mexican students, "Either segregate the Mexican pupils in the old Mt. Vernon [school building] where proper facilities can be provided for the type of education they need; or allow Mexicans to attend the new Mt. Vernon [building] and conduct both schools as mixed schools. The board feels it is a matter of common sense and justice to segregate the races and thus give both classes better

[11] Interview with Ramona Arranda, May 5, 2016, conducted by the author.
[12] Interview with Cruz Nevarez, May 8, 2010, conducted by the author.
[13] School segregation in the Inland Empire can be traced as far back as 1874 when newly arriving whites in Riverside created the Trujillo School District to serve the Mexican community of "La Placita." The Riverside School Board maintained that all children must attend the school in the attendance precinct in which they lived, a response to the increasing Mexican immigrant families settling in La Placita and who worked the line crews of the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific. National Park Service, "Five Views: An Ethnic Historic Site Survey for California (Mexican Americans): A History of Mexican Americans in California: Casa Blanca School," accessed March 1, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/5views/5views5h10.html.
[14] "Districting of Schools Is Announced for Coming Year," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 5, 1920.

facilities."[15] The board decided to segregate the Mexican children into the old building, renaming it Ramona School.

School Board members segregated Mexican children by embracing racialized stereotypes that considered Mexicans as inferior and less intelligent. Ruth Tuck documented this sentiment, observing:

> [San Bernardino] was immediately convinced… that no immigrant group had ever been so 'low' or so 'dumb… The [Mexicans] were uniformly low intelligence… (Poorly used testing devices, applied to bi-lingual school children were later to give this estimate a great air of 'scientific' validity, but it doubtless would have been made anyway.) They lived like animals, produced too many children, wasted their earnings on drink, and never took thought of the morrow.[16]

Indeed, these opinions reflected school administrators' educational policies. In 1920, for instance, a San Bernardino teacher stated that segregation of Mexican children resulted from public opinions "based largely on the theory that the Mexican is a menace to the health and morals of the rest of the community."[17] Moreover, school administrators implemented intelligent quotient (IQ) testing on Mexican children to justify racial

[15] Ibid.
[16] Although Ruth Tuck's work was written in the 1940s, this passage of her work describes San Bernardino's white community's attitude toward Mexicans during the 1920s. This passage was meant to show a response to the influx of Mexican immigrants during the 1920s. Ruth Tuck, *Not With The Fist: A Study of Mexican Americans in a Southwest City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946), 38.
[17] Grace C. Stanley, "Special Schools for Mexicans," *The Survey* 44 (September 15, 1920), 714 as quoted in Gilbert G. González, *Chicano Education in the Era of Segregation* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1990), 24.

separation on scientific grounds despite various challenges that questioned the testing's validity.[18]

Numerous professional educators argued that segregation served to better educate both white and Mexican children. For example, Chaffee Union Superintendent, Merton E. Hill, advocated for segregation by arguing that Mexican children "advance more rapidly when grouped by themselves," and thus profited "most by the instruction offered in such classes."[19] Grace Stanley, a 1920s California educator, argued that Mexican children appeared happier and more productive in segregated classrooms. When observing a San Bernardino classroom with both Mexican and white children, Stanley described that the Mexican students appeared "dull, stupid, and phlegmatic," but when placed in an all-Mexican classroom, the students "radiated joy" and "had thrown off the repression that held them down when they were in school with other [white] children." Moreover, Stanley also noted that Mexican students "are primarily interested in action and emotion" and were not fit for courses that underscored "book study and seat work."[20]

When it came to developing curriculum at these "Mexican" schools, educators reflected these sentiments and emphasized vocational training in the classroom. For many school officials throughout the country, vocational courses seemed appropriate for Mexican pupils since they believed that the children did not aspire for much more than

[18] Educators, such as, George I. Sánchez, opposed the implementation of IQ testing for its flaws, however, many school representatives continued the practice of IQ exams well into the 1930s. Miroslava Chávez García, *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012), 62-64.
[19] Merton E. Hill, *Development of An Americanization Program* (Ontario, Calif.: Union High School District, 1928) as quoted in González, *Chicano Education*, 24.
[20] Grace Stanley, "Special School for Mexicans," 714 as quoted in Charles Wollenberg, "Mendez v. Westminster: Race, Nationality, and Segregation in California Schools," *California Historical Quarterly*, 53 no. 4 (Winter 1974), 320.

agricultural or domestic work.[21] One San Bernardino resident commented that "there is a drift toward vocational training for Mexican children not as a matter of discriminating… but better fitting them for their future activities… Not one in a thousand is interested in an educational career that includes [the] university. These children therefore need to be given the advantage of an education that will train them for something definite in early life."[22] In 1926, San Bernardino's School Board constructed a new building for Ramona School and intended to use it as a vocational training facility.[23] School officials celebrated the site and believed the vocational instruction offered to the Mexican students would instill "habits of thrift and industry, and [with] the ability to make necessary contacts with the industrial world."[24] As a result of this type of thinking, by the mid-1930s, roughly eighty-five percent of school districts in the Southwest segregated Mexican students.[25]

The board also argued that the new Ramona School benefitted Mexican children because they were "retarded in academic subjects" and "vocational opportunities [might]

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[21] Vicki L. Ruiz, "Tapestries of Resistance: Episodes of School Segregation and Desegregation in the Western United States," in Peter Lau ed., *From Grassroots to the Supreme Court: Exploration of Brown v. Board of Education and American Democracy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 56-58. For more on Mexican segregation in schools, see, Laura K. Muñoz, "Desert Dreams: Mexican American Education in Arizona, 1870-1930," Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, 2006.

[22] "Problem of Proper Schools for Mexicans," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 17, 1929.

[23] Only two years after the construction of the new building for Ramona School, the building was deemed as dangerously unsafe. After an inspection, a representative from George Herz and Co. stated that the school "is in a very dangerous and unsafe condition, and that it is liable to collapse in the event of a comparatively slight earthquake." "Herz Asserts Schoolhouse Very Unsafe," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 10, 1928.

[24] Annie Reynolds, "The Education of Spanish-Speaking Children In Five Southwestern States," U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Education, Bulletin 1933, no. 11 (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1933) as quoted in Carlos E. Cortes, ed., *Education and the Mexican American* (New York: The Arno Press, 1974), 53.

[25] Gilbert G. González, "The System of Public Education and Its Function Within the Chicano Communities, 1910-1930," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1974 as quoted in González, *Chicano Education*, 20-21.

open [them to] become interested in remaining in school in order to make furniture or cook and sew."[26] These attitudes reveal that the education of Mexican students primarily served to replenish a semi-skilled labor pool. Indeed, by the time students reached Alessandro Junior High School, the vocational education that they had received since early childhood school engraved a "worker" mentality. For example, when signing each other's yearbooks in 1939, some students concluded written messages in the following manner: "Dear Lin, Best of luck and success in high school and I hope you make the team. – Paul Flores, Orange Picker." Another student wrote, "Lin, Keep up the fine sports ability and you will succeed in high school. – A friend and apricot picker, Cruz Nevarez."[27] These messages reveal how some students may have internalized messages about their function in the workplace.

Encouraged by Americanization programs and the promise of the "American dream," some students believed that "hard work" would bring social recognition and the possibility of a college education.[28] For instance, Benny Nuñez, editor of *The Wasp*, the student newspaper at Alessandro Junior High School, wrote:

> Mexican youth, in order to do away with the ill-put slogan of "A Mexican hasn't a chance" — You must show your willingness to work, and your ability to do anything, and you will prove the statement a false one. Many of our national descendants have already achieved high respective honors. For heaven sakes! Don't let this old slogan leave you in the midst of discouragement… By constant work — securing a good education, not only a

[26] Annie Reynolds, *The Education of Spanish-Speaking Children In Five Southwestern States* as quoted in Cortes, *Education and the Mexican American*, 53.
[27] "Recuerdos de Alessandro Yearbook, 1939," Mario and Esther Montecino Personal Family Collection.
[28] Ruiz, "Tapestries of Resistance," 58.

> high school but a college one or a higher educational course, you will attain your desires.[29]

Nuñez's editorial reflected the aspirations of some of the young Mexican children even if many of their educators perceived them to be inferior. Despite the ambitious dreams of some of these Mexican youths, educators placed significant obstacles in their paths. In the words of Vicki L. Ruiz, "[i]n abstract, education held out hope, but in practice it trained students for low-status, low-paying jobs."[30]

Another justification for Mexican segregation dealt specifically with language. In 1929, the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools adopted a "pre-primer" English track that mandated all non-English speaking students to complete remedial courses in order to be allowed back into their standard elementary classes.[31] Outrage followed when San Bernardino's Mexican consulate relayed news of this policy back to Mexico City. According to the *San Bernardino Sun*, students and educators from Mexico City protested the "pre-primer" courses in a letter to U.S. Ambassador Dwight W. Morrow, claiming that the idea discriminated against Mexican children. In response, County Superintendent Ida M. Wells stated, "There is no discrimination in our schools because of nationality [and that] the course is greatly to the advantage of the foreign speaking children" and in agreement with "California school law."[32] However, George I. Sánchez, a prominent Mexican American academic, noted that whites believed "that a

[29] Editorial by Benny Nuñez, *The Wasp*, Volume 3, No. 14, May 5, 1939. Mario and Esther Montecino Personal Family Collection.
[30] Ruiz, "Tapestries of Resistance," 58.
[31] "Mexico Protests Discrimination in Schools," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 15, 1929; "Alien Pupils' Work Will Be Investigated," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 4, 1929.
[32] "Educations To Discuss Alien School Issue," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 24, 1929; "Mexico Protests Discrimination in Schools;" "Problem of Proper Schools for Mexicans," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 17, 1929.

foreign home language is a handicap [and] that somehow children with Spanish as a mother tongue were doomed to failure——in fact, that they [believed they were] less than normally intelligent."[33] Despite claims that the policy did not discriminate, the English-Spanish language barrier issue held deeper underlying racial meanings.

Figure 2: Ramona School First Grade Class Photograph, 1947.[34]

[33] George I. Sánchez, *History, Culture, and Education* as quoted in Julian Samora, ed., *La Raza: Forgotten Americans*, (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1966), 15; For the most extensive study on George I. Sánchez, see, Carlos K. Blanton, *George I. Sánchez: The Long Fight for Mexican Integration* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).
[34] Courtesy of Felix Holguin.

Nativism, Repatriation, and Forging Community

Increased Mexican immigration into San Bernardino during the late-1920s fueled fears about Mexican students, housing, and sanitation. By 1930, San Bernardino County's Mexican population had increased by three-hundred percent since 1920 with an estimated twenty-thousand living in the county and nine-thousand of those residing in San Bernardino.[35] In part, the passage of the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act in 1924, which placed a national origins quota on immigrants, helped shift some people's attitudes about Mexicans. This piece of legislation was created in large part over anxieties about eastern European anarchists and established quotas on immigrants from certain nations deemed as less 'desirable.' Mexican immigration, however, surged since countries from the Western Hemisphere were exempt from quotas and legislators did not seem concerned about Mexicans given the low-cost labor that they provided in the agricultural farming industry.

As the Mexican population grew in San Bernardino and throughout the Southwest, xenophobic attitudes followed.[36] In 1928, Congressman John Box insisted on exclusion of Mexicans because they were "a mixture of Mediterranean-blooded Spanish peasant[s] with low-grade Indians who did not fight to extinction but submitted and multiplied as serfs."[37] Moreover, in 1929, articles in *The Saturday Evening Post* warned

[35] A 1930 U.S. census figure showed 6,839 Mexicans living in San Bernardino; however, a different study in the *San Bernardino Sun* claimed that 9,000 resided in the city. "Business Men Hope To Curb Influx," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 25, 1929.

[36] The nativism and xenophobia that emerged during this era served as making of Mexican migrants as the "prototypical illegal alien." For more on the creation of "illegal alien" and on the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, see, Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 3; 93-95.

[37] John Box. "Congressman John Box Objects to Mexican Immigrants, 1928," as quoted in Jon Gjerde, ed., *Major Problems in American Immigration and Ethnic History* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), 287.

of an alleged "mongrelization" of the country, "The very high Mexican birth rate tends to depress still further the low white birth rate. Thus a race problem of the greatest magnitude is being allowed to develop for future generations to regret and in spite of the fact that the Mexican Indian is considered a most undesirable ethnic stock for the melting pot."[38]

Echoing national anti-Mexican sentiment, many of San Bernardino's white leaders also resented Mexicans as well as the agribusiness and railroad industries that employed them. As one San Bernardino reporter complained, "The cost of education of the Mexican children runs into a huge sum" and "[l]ittle of this money is contributed by the Mexican people themselves."[39] Criticizing agricultural companies that employed Mexican workers, one school official stated that "if one figures the full cost to the community of carrying these [Mexicans], the so-called 'cheap labor' furnished to the orange growers and vineyardists really is expensive to the community as a whole."[40] Furthermore, at the onset of the Great Depression, other critics began to plead to agribusiness companies for an organized effort to give "the American a chance" by hiring "American fruit pickers."[41] Despite such requests to hire white workers, a survey conducted by the Associated Chambers of Commerce of San Bernardino determined that the hot inland weather made fruit picking "distasteful to the white man, and as a consequence a large proportion of this work is done by Mexicans."[42]

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[38] George Horace Lorimer, "The Mexican Conquest," *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 22, 1929 as quoted in Vicki L. Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 28.
[39] "Mexicans Prefer Their Own Customs," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 18, 1929.
[40] "Tax Burden Is Borne by City," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 13, 1929.
[41] "Is This County To Become Peonized?", *San Bernardino Sun*, October 15, 1929; "Hire American Fruit Pickers County Urges," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 6, 1933.
[42] "C. of C. Plans Own Survey Of Foreign Labor," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 28, 1928.

In one case, San Bernardino's Chamber of Commerce appointed a special committee chaired by James A. Guthrie, a managing editor for the *San Bernardino Sun*, to investigate the increase in Mexican migration and its effect on the city.[43] Guthrie and the committee lobbied for immediate immigration restriction, alleging that Mexicans "as a whole [are] unassimilable" and that they "accounted for one-third of felonies committed and welfare cases in the county."[44] In response to a shortage of cotton pickers in Yuma, Arizona, the committee went on to state that they would "gladly" offer five-thousand Mexican laborers if the cotton growers furnished transportation. They declared that the Mexican workers "would not be missed" since they posed a "detrimental effect" on "America's future from a racial point of view."[45] Chairman Guthrie, who at the time served as vice-president of the *San Bernardino Sun*, also influenced popular opinion by publishing rousing stories with headlines such as "Chamber of Commerce Board To Ask Ban On Mexican Invasion."[46] As chronicled in chapters three and four, Guthrie's destructive influence in the city's Mexican community would be felt for decades.

As the economic depression intensified, anti-Mexican rhetoric led to policy changes as the federal government, in collaboration with local governments, embarked on repatriation campaigns to remove Mexicans. From 1931 to 1934, over 500,000 Mexican people, an estimated one-third of the U.S. Mexican population, were deported to Mexico

[43] Guthrie would eventually come to serve as chief editor and owner of the *San Bernardino Sun* in 1937.
[44] The committee formed in order to attend an immigration conference in Ogden, Utah in October 1929 meant to inform national immigration policy. "Business Men Hope To Curb Mexico Influx," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 25, 1929; "Chamber Board To Act On Mexican Issue," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 27, 1929.
[45] "Yet Some Want More Mexicans!," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 27, 1929; "Mexicans Available Here, Labor Council Tells Arizona Growers," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 4, 1929.
[46] "Chamber of Commerce Board To Ask Ban On Mexican Invasion," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 28, 1929.

despite the fact that U.S. citizens made up approximately 60 percent of those removed.[47] Moreover, as projected by historians Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, over one million Mexicans were removed from the country by the end of the decade and accounted for 46.3 percent of those deported despite accounting for less than one percent of the U.S. population.[48] Repatriation campaigns struck terror in the hearts of southern California *colonias* as Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officials collaborated with local law enforcement to conduct mass indiscriminate raids and arrests.[49]

San Bernardino's Mexican population was not immune to the repatriation campaigns as an estimated twelve-thousand people from San Bernardino and Riverside Counties had returned to Mexico by train or automobile by the end of 1931.[50] In fact, the proximity of the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific railroads made the area the most logistically efficient space in the Inland Empire to round up Mexicans for deportation. For instance, repatriates from the towns of San Bernardino County would be sent directly to Colton's Southern Pacific depot where they would board "special trains" headed to the border towns of El Paso or Nogales and then redirected onto other trains destined for various regions in Mexico. Once at the depot, repatriates received a departure card with their name, birthplace, and place of residence in the U.S. and their intended final destination in Mexico. INS officials and county welfare associates struck deals with the railroad companies to transport Mexicans at $10 per person. Some white observers dismissed the traumatic experiences of repatriates, commenting that they often made

[47] Ruiz, "Tapestries of Resistance," 58.
[48] Francisco E. Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal: Mexican Repatriation in the 1930s* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006), 67.
[49] Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 67.
[50] "More Mexican Jobless Sent Back Home," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 5, 1931.

"pathetic scenes" when parting with family members at the train station; however, once "two hours out of San Bernardino" they "all fell asleep" and "seemed contented" to return home.[51]

The initial targets of these campaigns were "indigents," or unemployed Mexicans considered to be social burdens; however, others eventually left the United States, including independent merchants, farmers, artists, musicians, and property owners. Feeling the impact of deportation and repatriation, some Mexican merchants hoped to avert economic disaster by selling their holdings in the U.S. and returning to Mexico.[52] For example, Juan Caldera, a successful Colton grocer, made a deal with the Mexican government through the local consulate to liquidate his residential and business properties valued at over one-hundred thousand dollars in exchange for a five-thousand-acre ranch in Baja California.[53] To Caldera's disappointment, he found that Yaqui Indians claimed the Mexican property and when attempting to make improvements to this land, including building a fence around it, the Yaqui made violent threats against him. Caldera eventually returned to Colton after this botched agreement and recovered some of his previous property and reclaimed his business. This disastrous agreement reflected some of the early resentment and mistrust by the Mexican community toward the Mexican consulate.

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[51] "Repatriation Has Taken 84 Families Out," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 16, 1932; "Southern Counties Will Extend Relief Program Of Deporting Mexicans," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 12, 1932; "Contingent of Mexicans Will Depart Today," *San Bernardino Sun*, July 7, 1932; "1400 Mexicans Leave Country for Homeland," *San Bernardino Sun*, July 7, 1932; "Mexican Train Notice Given," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 5, 1932; "Aliens With No Jobs Face Repatriation," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 1, 1935.

[52] Balderrama and Rodríguez, *Decade of Betrayal*, 136.

[53] "Juan Caldera Says Mexican Problem Huge," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 24, 1932.

Despite segregation in housing, schools, and repatriation campaigns, the Mexican community withstood this discrimination and, in some cases, even managed to prosper as entrepreneurs. The population growth of San Bernardino's west side through the 1930s and the routing of U.S. 66 through Mt. Vernon Avenue allowed Mexican merchants to thrive despite deportation and economic depression. For instance, Juan Enciso founded La Esperanza Market in Colton in 1929 and two years later opened additional La Esperanza stores, including one on Mt. Vernon Avenue and 6th Street and another located in the San Gabriel Valley town of Azusa.[54] By 1936, Enciso's grocery store empire expanded to seven markets that stretched throughout the Inland Empire and even went as far north as Fresno. By establishing these chains of markets, Enciso cemented his status as a well-off, influential member of the community.[55]

In 1931, a series of events surrounding Enciso displayed the organizing abilities of the west side's Mexican residents. In early December, while traveling to Mexico to visit his mother with his eight-year-old son, Mexican authorities pulled Juan Enciso off of his train while entering Nogales, Sonora and arrested him for allegedly conspiring against the Mexican government. According to information obtained by the *San Bernardino Sun*, Mexican authorities apprehended Enciso for criticizing Mexico's policies against the Catholic church and for allegedly inciting Mexican nationals in the United States against their homeland. Reports detailed that Enciso, along with Jorge Prieto Laurens, a Spanish-

[54] "Friends Rally To Aid of Man Under Arrest," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 8, 1931.
[55] "Three Westside Neighbors Make Success a Tradition," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 6, 1983.

language radio broadcaster in San Bernardino, had supposedly conspired to spread inflammatory remarks against the Mexican government over the airwaves.[56]

The arrest of Enciso transpired within the context of the Cristero Rebellion, when Catholics revolted against the Mexican federal government in 1926 for its anticlerical policies. After the Mexican Revolution concluded in 1917, for example, the revolutionary government nationalized Catholic church property, secularized matrimony and education, and banned public worship in an attempt to dismantle the church's wealth and power that played a significant role in shaping pre-revolution Mexican society. In addition to this initiative, the government expelled foreign clergy and mandated that all priests be licensed through the state. Catholic clergy were also banned from holding civic positions, creating political parties, and from commenting on or distributing information concerning the activities of state officials. Due to these measures, tensions increased and violence eventually broke out in 1926 between the devoted followers of the Catholic Church, known as Cristeros, and the Mexican federal government.[57]

The violence between federal soldiers and Cristeros continued for years and the conflict eventually extended into the United States as many Mexican Catholics sought refuge in southern California *colonias*. In 1926, for instance, Father Jose R. Nuñez, fled from Mazapil, Zacatecas in order to avoid religious persecution, and eventually served as

[56] Mexican authorities reported that Enciso, while under surveillance, plotted against the Mexican government and met with persons that 'disliked' Mexican policies against the Catholic church. See, for instance, "Fears Quieted As Word From Enciso Heard," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 13, 1931; "Mexican Daily Tells 'Inside' Enciso Story," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 14, 1931; "Enciso Freed, Message Says," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 18, 1931; "Juan Enciso, Prominent Valley Grocer, Makes Unexpected Safe Return Home From Old Mexico," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 20, 1932.

[57] Monica Perales, *Smeltertown: Making and Remembering a Southwest Border Community* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 176-178.

a priest for Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Bernardino.[58] As Mexican clergy arrived in *colonias* north of the border, the church-state dispute once again came to the forefront as the Church battled the Mexican consulate for the hearts and minds of *mexicanos de afuera*. Father Gabriel Pérez, for instance, defied the Mexican consul's anti-clerical policies by planning a procession honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe. In response, Hermolao Torres, the vice-consul from the city's Mexican consulate office, discouraged Mexican citizens from participating in the planned public display. Torres lobbied members of Masonic lodges, and with their support, asked the city council to cancel the parade permit. Though the vice-consul's effort to withdraw the permit did not succeed, Mayor William Seccombe assured him that the procession would be stopped if anyone displayed signs that insulted the Mexican government.[59]

Vice-consul Torres took further steps in his attempt to silence the Church by publishing a statement in *El Sol de San Bernardino*, the *colonia*'s weekly newspaper, encouraging Mexicans not to attend the parade. Mexican Catholics reacted by confiscating copies of the issue and publicly burning them. Unyielding, the vice-consul took out another newspaper announcement the following day and secured radio airtime to spread his views and request a boycott of the parade. Scholars Gilbert G. González and Raul A. Fernandez argue that Mexican consulates had several responsibilities toward Mexicans living across the border: maintain their memory and love for Mexico, remind them of their duty to their native country, and to serve as bridges between U.S. *colonias*

[58] Monsignor Joseph R. Nuñez File, Archival Records at The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego.

[59] Historian Francisco E. Balderrama provides a detailed account of vice-consul Torres' clash with San Bernardino's Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. Francisco E. Balderrama, *In Defense of La Raza: The Los Angeles Mexican Consulate and the Mexican Community, 1929 to 1936* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1982), 73-83.

and the Mexican government.[60] In fulfilling such duties, Torres informed Mexicans that participation in the procession would be an unpatriotic display against their country and even went as far as to equate Father Pérez's supporters to the Mexicans who refused to defend their country during the U.S.-Mexico War. Torres concluded his message with a warning, "Those participating in the protest demonstration will receive the anathema which bad sons of the country deserve."[61]

Torres' crusade to stop the parade ultimately failed as the procession honoring Our Lady of Guadalupe took place, attracting nearly three thousand people. Torres convinced Mexican members of Masonic lodges and Pedro Samano, a Mexican Baptist minister, to shadow the parade on his behalf in the event that marchers displayed signs that slandered the Mexican government. The parade went off without a hitch and no such protest occurred, but the episode deepened the chasm between the consulate and Mexican Catholics. The vice-consul's actions created serious questions about the consulate's function in the *colonia* and led to accusations that the office had exceeded its role by interfering with the right to religious freedom. The Church, joined by a local newspaper, *The Independent*, unsuccessfully demanded that Torres be removed from his post.[62]

Given the mistrust between the Mexican consulate and residents of the *colonia*, when news arrived of Juan Enciso's arrest, San Bernardino's Mexican community went into action. On the morning of December 9, 1931, 1,200 Enciso supporters gathered at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church to discuss the incident and placed blame on Consul Ferdinand Alatorre, who they accused of informing Mexican authorities of Enciso's trip

[60] Gilbert G. González and Raul A. Fernandez, *A Century of Chicano History: Empire, Nations, and Migration* (London: Routledge, 2003), 150-153. See, also, Balderrama, *In Defense of La Raza* for the history of Mexican Consulates.
[61] Balderrama, *In Defense of La Raza*, 81.
[62] Ibid., 82-83.

across the border.[63] The disgruntled crowd intended to march to the consulate's office in downtown and demand that Alatorre arrange for Enciso's safe return. As the meeting unfolded, Consul Alatorre reported to the police that threats had been made against him, resulting with law enforcement guarding his office and the dispatch of "officers armed with tear gas guns and bombs" to the gathering at Our Lady of Guadalupe.[64] Fears of a possible riot quickly spread throughout the city as police chief, William H. Baldwin, urged Enciso's supporters to "preserve the peace" and to abandon their plans to march to the consulate's office.[65] Soon after Baldwin instructed *colonia* residents to disburse and return to their homes. Later that day, Juan Enciso's supporters formed a committee, headed by his wife, Maria Guadalupe, and appeared before Consul Alatorre to petition for Enciso's release.

The following day, Enciso's arrest made the front page of the *San Bernardino Sun* with the headline "Police Guard Mexico Consul In Demonstration."[66] The Mexican community quickly denied rumors that their protest had been violent. Father Gabriel Pérez pointedly defended his parishioners:

> In regard to the so-called violent demonstration made by the Mexican people yesterday, I wish to state the following facts: Juan Enciso, a prominent business man of this vicinity, known and respected by Mexicans and Americans alike, a worker in Mexican welfare and a defender of the rights of his people, was imprisoned at the Mexican border under the pretext that he had been guilty of conducting seditious meetings against the Mexican government. Upon hearing of his arrest and imprisonment, his many friends and admirers resolved to present a petition through the consulate of this city asking the president of Mexico to release Mr. Enciso… As pastor of this

[63] "Mexican Leader Who Returned Home Safely Avers Firing Squad," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 21, 1932.
[64] "Friends Rally To Aid of Man Under Arrest," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 8, 1931.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

> church and being acquainted with the intentions and purposes of Mr. Enciso's work, I wish to state that there has never been any intention of violence against the consul here, or any seditious demonstration against the Mexican government. As for any violent demonstration at such a meeting yesterday, I can testify that everything was conducted in a respectful and peaceful manner.[67]

The incident received considerable media coverage and even garnered the attention of Mexican President Ortiz Rubio, who declared through Consul Alatorre that Enciso would receive a fair trial.[68] Mexican residents even gathered over one-thousand signatures for a petition sent to President Herbert Hoover. The case also received attention from Governor James Rolph, Jr., who instructed the California Bureau of Investigation to look into the arrest.[69] Finally, after much controversy, Mexican authorities released Enciso ten days following his apprehension.[70]

Juan Enciso's return from his eventful trip to Mexico gave cause for celebration and the *Sun* reported that news of his homecoming "spread like wildfire throughout the Mexican districts of Colton and San Bernardino." When interviewed about the incident, Enciso stated that Mexican authorities did not mistreat him and that his standing as a respected businessman played a significant role in securing his return. *The Sun* described that "[w]ere it not for [Enciso's] influential standing… he would have been ordered to face a firing squad, instead of being allowed to return unharmed and in good health."[71]

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[67] "Enciso To Get Fair Hearing, Rubio Pledges," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 9, 1931.
[68] Ibid.
[69] "Juan Enciso, Prominent Valley Grocer, Makes Unexpected Safe Return Home From Old Mexico," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 20, 1932. The case also received attention from Governor James Rolph, Jr., who instructed the California Bureau of Investigation to look into Enciso's case. "Fears Quieted As Word From Enciso Heard," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 13, 1931
[70] "Enciso Freed, Message Says," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 18. 1931.
[71] "Juan Enciso, Prominent Valley Grocer, Makes Unexpected Safe Return Home From Old Mexico."

Moreover, during Enciso's captivity, many of Enciso's white business partners came to his aid by writing testimonials regarding his good character.[72] Enciso's financial resources also came in handy as he paid a $575 bail for his release.[73] Enciso also confirmed the Mexican community's suspicion of the Mexican consul by stating that his arrest was "traceable to [the consulate's] office."[74] The Enciso incident reveals the story of one successful entrepreneur among many in the Mexican merchant community that had come to shape their financial and social fortunes through business. In addition, the community's response to the consulate in this case demonstrates their capacities to organize through the Catholic Church, newspapers, radio, and even in the form of unified business interests.

As the decade passed, Mexican businesses along Mt. Vernon Avenue continued to grow, especially once Route 66 linked onto the road.[75] In 1937, Lucía Rodrigúez founded the Mitla Café, just across the street from La Esperanza Market on the northwest corner of 6th Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue. Lucía and her husband at the time, Vicente Montaño, arrived in San Bernardino from Tepatitlan, Jalisco in 1928 where Vicente found work at the Santa Fe railyard.[76] Lucía, searching for supplemental income during the Depression, started the restaurant using her own original recipes that included Mexican staples, such as, tacos, menudo, chili verde, and enchiladas. Lucía's first

[72] "Mexican Leader Who Returned Home Safely Avers Firing Squad," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 21, 1932.
[73] $575 in 1931 converts to nearly $8,400 in 2017. "Family Reunion Joyous Affair For Leader of Valley Mexicans," *San Bernardino Sun*, January, 22, 1932.
[74] Ibid.
[75] U.S. 66 linked onto Mt. Vernon Avenue in 1934. I thank Michael Ballard for his highway expertise and for information regarding as to when U.S. 66 was routed through Mt. Vernon.
[76] Lucía's first husband, Vicente Montaño, worked at the Santa Fe railroad. Vicente passed away sometime shortly after the founding of the Mitla Café and is credited with naming the restaurant. Lucía remarried to Salvador Rodríguez after the death of Vicente. Interview with Patty Oquendo, January 21, 2015, conducted by author.

customers could purchase tacos at ten-cents each and a bowl of menudo for twenty-five cents.[77]

In order to ensure that the Mitla succeeded, Lucía rose at 4 a.m. every day and headed to the restaurant to prepare for the early morning rush when Santa Fe workers dropped in for breakfast. At times the café even stayed open twenty-four hours and Lucía regularly slept at the back of the restaurant.[78] Her daughters, Teresa, Vera, and Helen, proved instrumental to the family's success as they ran the restaurant as the main cooks and servers. Lucía applied a stern but loving upbringing for her daughters and expected them to have the same tireless work ethic. When recalling Lucía's relationship with her daughters, one family member recalled that "she was not very warm or very nurturing with her daughters. She was actually very rough on them when it came to work. They were not allowed to go out, date, or socialize much. Everything revolved around their work."[79] Lucía's second oldest daughter Vera, for instance, started working at the restaurant shortly after it opened, dropping out of junior high school to work full time with her mother.

[77] "Pillars Of Our Culinary Heritage," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 5, 1995.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Patty Oquendo interview; When describing the relationship between Mexican mothers and daughters during the 1920s and 1930s, historian Vicki L. Ruiz states that the "most serious point of contention between an adolescent daughter and her parents regarded her behavior toward young men." Vicki L. Ruiz, *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987), 11.

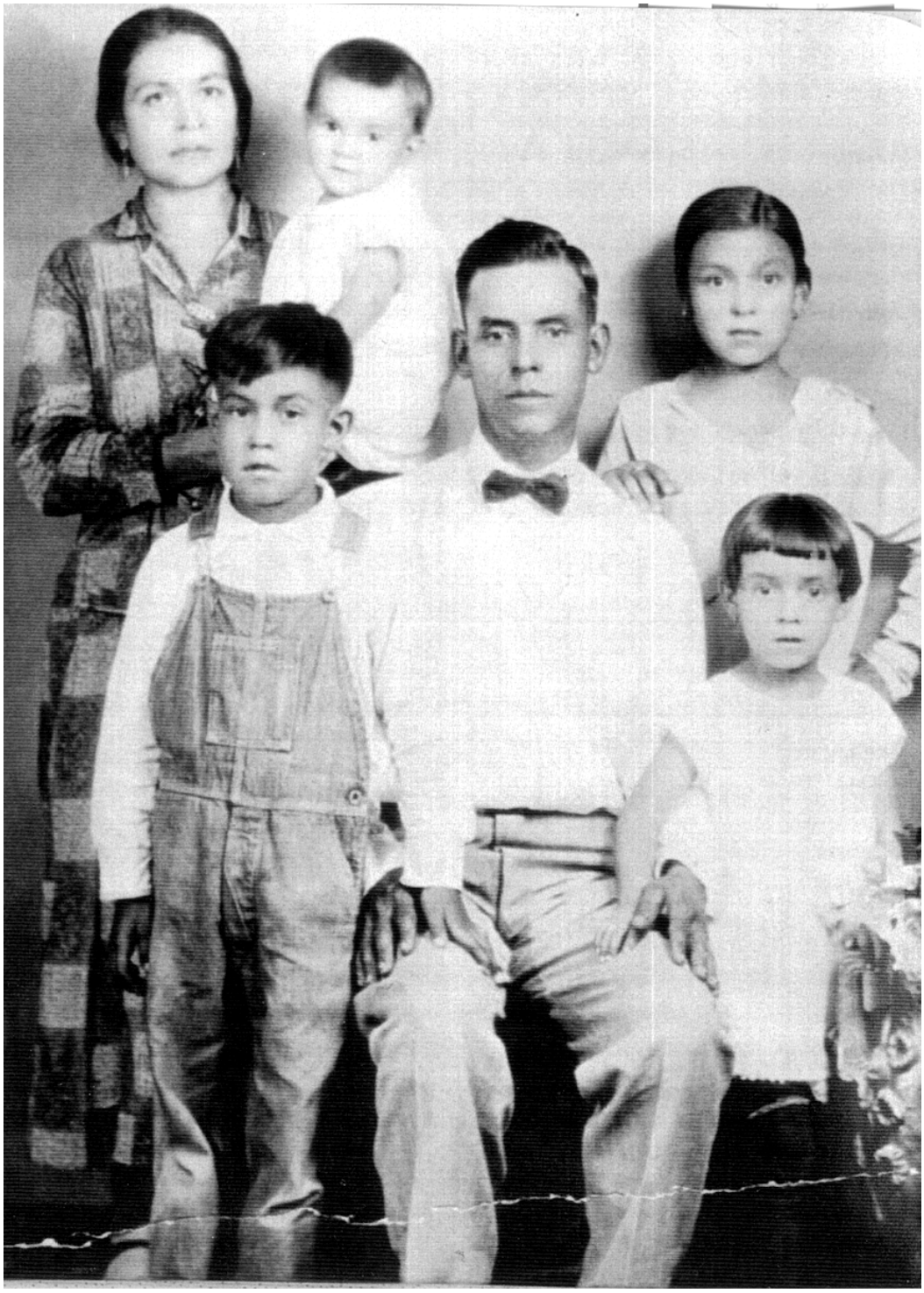

Figure 2.1: Lucía and Vicente pose for a family portrait during the late-1920s.[80]

[80] Photograph courtesy of Steve and Patty Oquendo.

The Mitla Café soon became an anchor of community life. The restaurant, located only a couple of block from the Santa Fe railyard, served as an entry point for Mexican immigrants working at the railroad and facilitated their transition from Mexico to the United States by providing access to a network of Spanish-speaking people and food that reminded them of home.[81] "Her recipes are Mexican soul food," described Steve Oquendo, great-grandson of Lucía, "I always hear from a lot of new and old customers, that when they taste her food they will say something like 'That's just how my abuelita used to make it.' I think it is comfort food that reminds people of their roots."[82] Lucía and her daughters created a traditional Mexican atmosphere by playing popular Mexican music and wearing traditional dresses. As historian Natalia Molina explains, ethnic entrepreneurs, similar to Lucía Rodrigúez, possessed the ability to transform their work spaces into something more by acting as "place-makers who provided a social and recreational space where their customers… could imagine their lives outside of the strict confines of being a 'worker.'"[83]

The Mitla Café, though serving the Mexican community, also drew customers from outside of the neighborhood. By the mid-1940s, during Route 66's heyday, the Mitla Café built a reputation as a "go to" restaurant for motorists passing through the city. "The Mitla Café was a landmark for that time," recalled Steve Oquendo, "Famous people would stop here every now and then because they were on their way to Lake Arrowhead

[81] Natalia Molina similarly argues for the Echo Park Mexican restaurant, El Nayarit, as an entry point for Mexican migrants Natalia Molina, "The Importance of Place and Place-Makers in the Life of a Los Angeles Community," *Southern California Quarterly*, 97 no. 1 (Spring 2015): 72-73.
[82] Interview with Steve Oquendo, January 13, 2015, conducted by author.
[83] Molina, "The Importance of Place and Place-Makers," 72.

and other mountain resorts."[84] Indeed, Hollywood entertainers, such as, Clark Gable, Carole Lombard, and Errol Flynn were photographed along Mt. Vernon and later celebrities such as Dick Clark, Rosemary Clooney, and Sammy Davis, Jr. also frequented the Mitla Café, often stopping to eat while driving to their weekend getaway destinations.[85] By 1949, the restaurant even gained the approval of well-known food critic, Duncan Hines, who praised the tacos, enchiladas, chiles rellenos, and other combination platters.[86]

Furthermore, Salvador Rodrigúez, whom Lucía married in 1938 after Vicente passed away, served as the Mitla Café's ambassador. An outgoing Santa Fe employee, Salvador encouraged his coworkers, including white colleagues, to eat at the restaurant for breakfast and lunch. Building bonds of friendship and community through hospitality, Salvador often sat by the restaurant's entrance to personally greet each customer as they arrived. "[Salvador] was not one of the founders of the Mitla but he brought the people from the railroad, especially the white people," described Steve Oquendo, "He would meet them at the door, give the children candy… he was the face of the restaurant." Patty Oquendo described Salvador, "I feel that Salvador offered a public voice for Lucía because [she] didn't speak English and she tended to keep to herself. He became the face

[84] Steve Oquendo interview, January 13, 2015. Prior to commercial airline travel, weekend getaways to Lake Arrowhead, Palm Springs, the Arrowhead Hot Springs Hotel, and other San Bernardino mountain resorts were common for southern Californians, especially Hollywood entertainers. Dick Clark, in an interview with a reporter for *The Press Enterprise* once stated "There's no place I would rather be than Lake Arrowhead." See, "The Inland Empire Was Dick Clark's Favorite Getaway," April 18, 2012, *The Press Enterprise*. Furthermore, the 1945 film *Mildred Pierce* displays the popularity of weekend getaways to Lake Arrowhead when Bert Pierce takes his and Mildred's two daughters on a short weekend vacation to Lake Arrowhead.

[85] "Mt. Vernon Avenue's Leg of Route 66 Was Turning Point For Many," *Inland Empire Community Newspapers*, September 13, 2012.

[86] Marian Clark, *The Route 66 Cookbook: Comfort Food from the Mother Road* (San Francisco: Council Oak Books, LLC, 1993), 206; The Mitla Café also used the Duncan Hines recommendation in their local newspaper advertisements through the 1950s, see, for instance, the advertisement section, page 4, in the *San Bernardino Sun*, November 7, 1954.

of the restaurant while Lucía was the heart."[87] Indeed, Salvador served as an intermediary between white patrons and the local Mexican population.

The emergence of the Mexican business district did more than just provide individual *colonia* residents with additional financial means, it played a crucial role in sustaining community life. Merchants supported *fiestas patrias*, beauty pageants, radio shows, newspapers, and baseball teams. For instance, *El Sol de San Bernardino*, a Spanish-language weekly founded in 1926 served the Mexican west side's need for relevant news not found local English-language newspapers.[88] *El Sol* initially circulated five-thousand copies every week and two years later it grew to publish twenty-thousand copies every Friday, eventually becoming one of the most significant presses for Mexican residents in San Bernardino and the Inland Empire.[89] During the early-1930s, Eugenio Nogueras, a Puerto Rican resident of the west side, took over as head editor of *El Sol* and utilized the weekly as a venue to broadcast important information regarding civil rights, discrimination, and other news relating to the *colonia*. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, Eugenio Nogueras utilized *El Sol* as a means to achieve a significant civil rights victory during World War II.

Mexican merchants also developed community by creating recreational spaces and supporting Mexican baseball teams. Businesses, for example, often provided the financial resources to purchase uniforms, equipment, and at times, maintain community

[87] Patty Oquendo interview.
[88] *El Sol de San Bernardino* was founded by Roberto Isaias in 1926, apparently in a publishing partnership with the *San Bernardino Sun*, who anticipated advertisers to purchase advertisements in *El Sol* in order to reach the city's Mexican population. "El Sol Announcement," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 24, 1926; "New Spanish Paper Makes Appearance in San Bernardino," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 30, 1926; "El Sol Plays Important Role Among County's Spanish Speaking Peoples," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 5, 1928.
[89] There is no known archive that holds copies of *El Sol de San Bernardino*.

baseball fields. The support of *colonia* baseball teams proved especially critical during the era of segregation in which Mexican people were denied access to municipal parks, pools, and other public spaces. For example, Juan Caldera, utilized his wealth to provide recreational spaces for Mexicans in Colton and San Bernardino. In 1924, for instance, he bought land on Congress Street to create a baseball diamond that eventually came to be known as Cubs Park. This baseball field served as the home for the San Bernardino-Colton Centrales team which played against clubs from other inland *colonias*. As several years passed, Caldera expanded the site to eight acres and eventually incorporated a swimming pool, two dance halls, and a boxing gym, naming this multi-use recreational facility El Corralón (the Corral).[90]

Baseball touched the lives of people in Mexican communities throughout the United States like no other sport. During Porfirio Díaz's presidency from 1876 to 1910, the sport's popularity increased throughout Mexico as American railroad and mining companies introduced the game to their Mexican workers. Porfirian officials and U.S. investors embraced baseball as they believed that it would help to modernize Mexico by instilling values of teamwork and self-discipline to the country's working class people. As historian Jose Alamillo demonstrates, during the 1920s and 1930s, railroad and agricultural companies across the border similarly sponsored teams in order to increase productivity and company loyalty from their Mexican workers.[91] During World War I and the interwar era, labor unions developed influence over Mexican migrant workers and companies responded to this threat by offering recreational programs, such as

[90] "Committee Is To Confer On Mexican Park," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 17, 1936.
[91] Jose Alamillo, "Peloteros in Paradise: Mexican American Baseball and Oppositional Politics in Southern California, 1930-1950," *Western Historical Quarterly,* 34 no. 2 (Summer 2003): 192-193.

company ball clubs, in hopes of discouraging unionizing. For example, Sunkist executives advocated for sports clubs in order to prepare workers for their arduous labor. As Sunkist's Industrial Relations Department director wrote, "In order to produce the desired workers, they have to become a member of a local society or baseball team… to increase their physical and mental capacity for doing more work."[92]

Santa Fe employers in San Bernardino faced considerable threat of striking Mexican workers as early as 1917 when various labor groups pushed them to demand for increased wages.[93] The company attempted to calm workers by sponsoring baseball teams and hosting games on company grounds. These teams, such as the Santa Fe Tigers and San Bernardino Centrales, usually played on Sundays in front of large Mexican crowds who cheered on family members and neighbors as they competed against other clubs from nearby *colonias* or all-white teams from throughout the city. In some cases, the Santa Fe grounds hosted international games as visiting teams from Mexico stopped by to play their fellow compatriots living across the border. For example, On November 24, 1938, an all-star team from Cordoba, Veracruz played against the Centrales. On another occasion, Las Aztecas de Mexico, a professional Mexican all-star team touring the Southwest, stopped at the company field to play an exhibition game against the Los Angeles Angels of the Pacific Coast League.[94] Yet despite allowing their Mexican

[92] Alamillo, "Peloteros In Paradise," 193.
[93] "Rumors of A Strike Among Mexicans of Santa Fe Shops Quieted," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 6, 1917.
[94] Mark A. Ocegueda and Richard Santillan, *Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 86-87. For more on Mexican American baseball, see, Samuel O. Regalado, "Baseball in the Barrios: The Scene in East Los Angeles Since World War II," *Baseball History* (Summer 1986): 47–59; and Richard A. Santillan, "Mexican American Baseball Teams in the Midwest, 1916–1965: The Politics of Cultural Survival and Civil Rights," in Perspectives in Mexican American Studies, VII (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000), 132–151.

workers to play on their facilities, Santa Fe officials still discriminated in the work place by implementing segregated bathrooms and even categorized their Mexican workers as "Class 3" laborers. "Class One" and "Class Two" received sick leave and health insurance benefits while "Class Three" received no benefits and limited opportunities for promotion.[95]

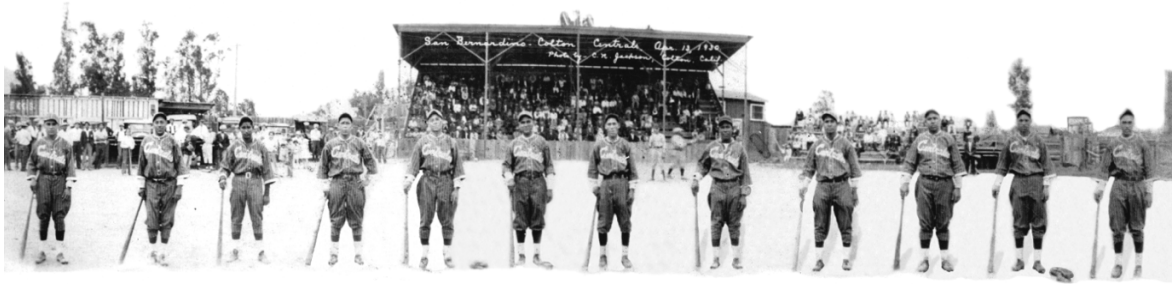

Figure 2.2: The San Bernardino-Colton Centrales pose at Cubs Park located at El Corralón in Colton, 1930.[96]

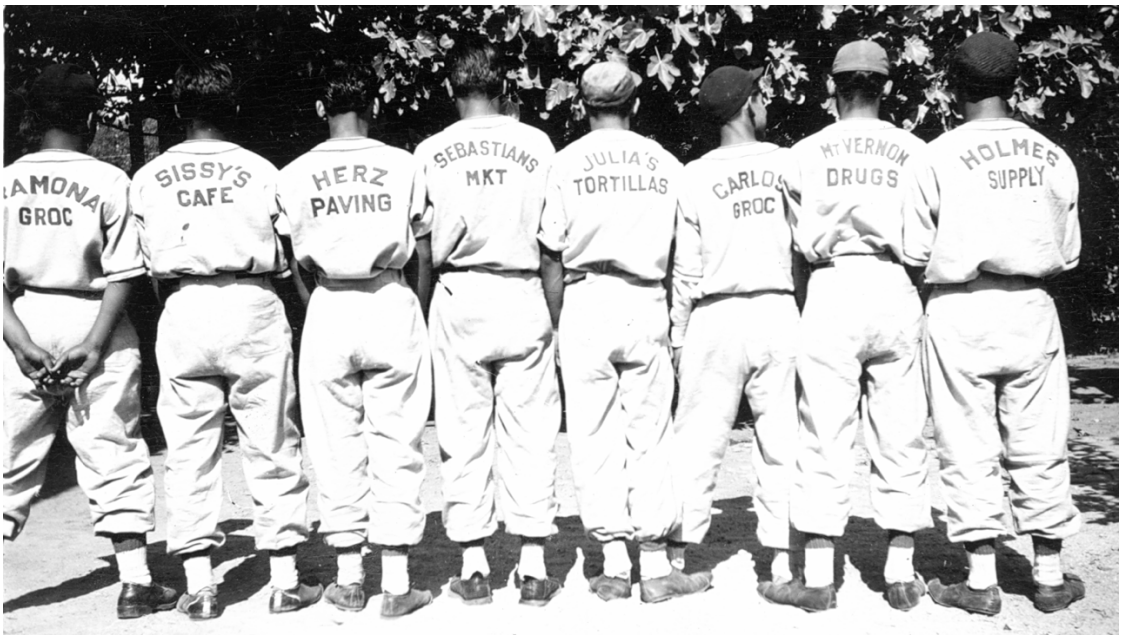

Figure 2.3: This youth baseball team from the mid-1940s proudly display their Mexican business sponsors on the back of their uniforms.[97]

[95] Manuel Delgado, *The Last Chicano: A Mexican American Experience* (Bloomington: Authorhouse Press, 2009), 9.
[96] Courtesy of the Latino Baseball History Project, John M. Pfau Library Special Collections, California State University, San Bernardino.

Aside from playing on company facilities, *colonia* residents also created their own baseball fields on the west side. By the early 1940s, Mexican residents had fashioned and maintained a community field on the corner of Mt. Vernon and 7th Street.[98] Chevo Martinez partnered with Tommy Richardson, a community activist and employee from the city's Parks and Recreation department, to transform a vacant lot into a field. Chevo Martinez and Tommy Richardson eventually recruited and organized Mexican teams to play at the field. For instance, in 1940, La Posada Café Aztecas became the first team to enter the San Bernardino City League. The Aztecas encountered considerable ridicule during their first year of play as the players wore blank shirts with handwritten "A"s to identify themselves since they were the only team in the league without uniforms. Despite not having proper uniforms, the Aztecas competed and outplayed many of their opponents, eventually winning the city league championship. Later that year, the team also won the Southern California Mexican Athletic Association title by ousting the Macy's Cubs and Santa Monica Aztecas at White Sox Park in Los Angeles. Each member of the team received a popsicle and a watermelon for winning the tournament.[99]

Chevo Martinez worked full time as a machinist at the Sante Fe; however, his love for baseball compelled him to manage local teams on the weekends, eventually becoming one of the Inland Empire's most decorated managers. For instance, while coaching the Mitla Café team, Chevo led the club to three consecutive City AA League championships (1947-1949).[100] The team consisted of players like pitcher Johnny

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[97] Ibid.
[98] Interview with Robert Carrasco, March 9, 2010, conducted by author.
[99] Ocegueda and Santillan, *Mexican American Baseball in the Inland Empire*.
[100] Interview with Steve Martinez, June 10, 2011, conducted by author.

González and the Botello brothers who helped dominate many of the team's opponents. González quickly developed a reputation as one of the most unhittable pitchers in the league, often throwing shut outs and even striking out a remarkable 144 batters in nine games. The Botello brothers, Joe, Ralph, and Lin, provided much of the offense for the team and Lin won the City AA batting title in 1947 with a .500 batting average. During an era of segregation and discrimination, the baseball diamond allowed these players to display their athletic talent to their white counterparts, challenging notions of white supremacy through physical competition. The Mitla Café team impressed one local newspaper so much that they dubbed them "the kings of the San Bernardino AA league."[101]

Salvador Rodrigúez of the Mitla Café believed that baseball provided an important source of community entertainment. For example, when the Mitla team played at the Mt. Vernon and 7th Street ballpark, they often drew over four-thousand spectators. Some of the more enthusiastic supporters often arrived early and lined the outfield with their cars and honked their horns whenever players hit homeruns. Furthermore, Salvador also praised the sport for keeping the young players out of trouble as well as for helping them develop organizing and leadership skills. Cruz Nevarez, a member of the Mitla Café team during the 1940s, credited baseball as one of the activities that helped him acquire leadership and academic abilities. Indeed, he eventually went on to earn his bachelor's degree from the University of Redlands and a graduate degree from the Claremont Graduate School. Nevarez became one of the city's first Mexican American school teachers, teaching Spanish at San Bernardino High School. Moreover, Nevarez later

[101] Untitled Column, *San Bernardino Telegram*, Date Unknown. Mario and Esther Montecino Personal Family Collection.

created San Bernardino's chapter of the Community Service Organization where he served as president.[102]

Women played on softball teams with names such as the San Bernardino Cherokees, Colton Mercury Señoritas, and the Our Lady of Guadalupe Raiderettes. In 1936, twelve-year-old Carmen Lujan began playing with the Colton Mercury Señoritas with other players like Luz Arredondo, Chita García, Mary Soto, Stella Pimental, and Ramona Arranda. Gabe Castorena, a player for the Colton Mercuries, served as the Señoritas coach, often inviting his male teammates to help teach the girls how to field and hit the ball. As Jose Alamillo argues, women's baseball "differed from the meaning it held for male spectators and team promoters;" however, "it allowed women to form female friendships and gain public visibility outside the home and workplace."[103] Indeed, Ramona Arranda recalled the public visibility of baseball, "I met my eventual husband at the ballpark because he knew all of the boys in La Paloma barrio. He would come out and join them when they helped us practice."[104]

The women's teams often opened up before the men played on Sunday afternoons and even joined them on the road to play teams from other *colonias*. The church-sponsored Our Lady of Guadalupe Raiderettes practiced with priest "Beto" Villa on the church's parking lot on 5th Street and Pico Avenue. Armida Neri-Miller of the Raiderettes recalled, "Truckloads of girls would come from places like Riverside, Meadowbrook, and Corona. Their coach would talk to our coach and then we would play a game. The priest would bring gloves, bats, and balls and bless them before the game. Our uniforms consisted of our older brother's jeans. We would wear them and roll them up. Our white

[102] Cruz Nevarez interview.
[103] Alamillo, "Peloteros In Paradise," 195.
[104] Ramona Arranda interview.

gym shirts from school completed our uniform."[105] Ultimately, baseball served as a unifying force for the west side and demonstrated the importance of the Mexican merchants in forging community.

Figure 2.4: Our Lady of Guadalupe Raiderettes pose for a team picture. At times the girls could not escape baby-sitting duties so they would bring their younger siblings to the field.[106]

[105] Interview with Armida Neri-Miller, May 18, 2011, conducted by author.
[106] Courtesy of the Latino Baseball History Project, John M. Pfau Library Special Collections, California State University, San Bernardino.

Though the Mt. Vernon business district consisted primarily of Mexican business owners, it also reflected the diversity of surrounding ethnic neighborhoods that bordered the Mexican west side. For instance, a few Japanese stores stood along Mt. Vernon in the early-1930s as Japanese families resided several blocks east of the road. When Joe Neri arrived from Guanajuato, Mexico, he asked one of the Japanese grocers for a job and soon found himself working as a delivery boy. While working at the store, Neri quickly learned the ins and outs of the grocery trade and decided to open up his own market on 5th Street and Roberds Avenue. When Neri told his Japanese boss of his plan to leave the market to start his own, he gave Neri a few sacks of potatoes, rice, and beans to wish him well.[107] Neri called the store "Mi Tienda" but quickly changed it to "Neri's Market" after non-Spanish speaking customers frequently referred to him as "Mr. Mitienda." Neri's business served as an important community market and often made generous donations to Our Lady of Guadalupe. In one case, the Neri family gave the church their first pipe organ.[108]

In addition, a small Italian community had established themselves just northwest of the *colonia*. Much like their Mexican counterparts, a number of Italian immigrants fled their native country during the early twentieth century due to economic and political turmoil and settled in inland towns like Riverside, Corona, and San Bernardino.[109] Italians similarly found work in the agricultural industry, especially in inland citrus companies and vineyards. Several formed businesses as well, such as Eligio Zanone who

[107] Armida Neri-Miller interview.
[108] Ibid.
[109] Most of these Italian immigrants migrated from Sicily. Jose Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons: Mexican American labor and Leisure in a California Town, 1880-1960* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 33-35.

opened Zanone's Market along Mt. Vernon Avenue in 1929.[110] Zanone made friends with his Mexican customers and neighboring Mexican market owners, often trading goods and services when needed.[111]

While some Italians and Mexicans generated conventional business partnerships through trading products and services through their grocery stores, others collaborated in the black market, especially in booze trafficking schemes. Mexicans workers entering San Bernardino during the early twentieth century, for instance, were almost immediately been linked to criminality. The enactment of the Volstead Act in 1920, which established and enforced the prohibition of alcohol, eventually extended the debate about criminality to include the production and trafficking alcohol. For instance, on the morning of August 25, 1921, police searched the home of Sarah López and Raphael Mora and confiscated a twenty-gallon jug of homegrown wine. The report on their arrest indicated that the two sold the wine at pre-prohibition prices of ten-cents per water tumbler, so low that local journalists described it as "an insult to any bootlegger."[112]

According to historian Nick Bravo, this liquor bootlegging market "offered lucrative material gains, and for some autonomy, but demanded adaptability as bootleggers balanced profit and risk."[113] Indeed, for Sarah López and Raphael Mora, the production and selling of wine provided a way to make-ends-meet but proved to be a costly risk. López described making the wine out of recently harvested grapes from the local vineyards and the police even complimented her wine-making skills, branding it as

[110] Zanone's Market was a long-standing grocery store on Mt. Vernon Avenue. *San Bernardino Sun*, September 27, 1929.
[111] Other Italian merchants along Mt. Vernon included Same "Duke" Bonanno, Salvatore Corsello, and Pete Mercandante. Delgado, *The Last Chicano*, 11.
[112] "Booze Sellers May Be Deported," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 26, 1921.
[113] Nick Bravo, "Spinning the Bottle: Ethnic Mexicans and Alcohol in Prohibition Era Greater Los Angeles," Ph.D. diss., University of California, Irvine, 2011.

"knock out stuff."[114] She explained that she had only lived in the United States for less than a year and only sold the liquor to raise money to bring her five children across the border to live with her in San Bernardino. Judge S.C. Lawrence arranged for López and Mora to be deported the very next day, stating, "We've got enough Mexicans of questionable character in the United States."[115]

While this case reveals how Mexicans produced and sold liquor on a small scale, Italians and Mexicans collaborated for much larger vice operations in the city. For instance, as an orphaned twelve-year-old child, Domenico Levitico migrated from Sicily to the United States in 1912. Levitico lived with foster parents in Riverside's Casa Blanca *colonia* and eventually settled in San Bernardino's west side where he adopted the alias Johnny Russo.[116] By 1925, Russo made a reputation for himself as a bootlegger by working with local Mexican liquor traffickers and importing alcohol from Tijuana.[117] By 1940, Russo developed the reputation as the city's "vice king" and ran one of the largest prostitution and gambling rings on the west coast. At his height, Russo operated two brothels at the Park Cavern Bar in downtown and at the El Patio Motel on the corner of Mt. Vernon Avenue and 5th Street, catering primarily to *colonia* residents and, apparently, Route 66 travelers.[118]

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[114] The police officers tasted the wine after López and Mora's arrest. "Booze Sellers May Be Deported."

[115] Judge Lawrence criminalized López as another Mexican with "questionable character." For López, however, the acts that she committed meant survival and hope for reunification with her family. "Mexican Woman Claims She Was Gathering Funds to Get Children," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 26, 1921; "Seeing San Bernardino in Five Minutes," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 27, 1921.

[116] "Russo's Hearing Reopens Today," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 14, 1951.

[117] Delgado, *The Last Chicano*, 7; "Russo's Hearing Reopens Today."

[118] "Bartender Held for Violation of White Slave Act," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 4, 1948; "Johnny Russo Fed Up," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 12, 1949; "Police Chief To Investigate Moral Character of Russo," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 8, 1949; "Council Gives Dozier License," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 22, 1949.

Russo's notoriety as local mobster grew as he ordered his associates to carry out violent beatings and assassinations against his adversaries. For instance, Russo ordered the brutal beating and stabbing of Edgar J. Beall, a local politician and journalist who published stories about Russo and sought to dismantle his vice operations.[119] In a separate incident, Russo spat in the face of Ruth Stockslader in a downtown street since the elderly evangelical woman led a public moral crusade against him.[120] In 1951, when prosecuted on prostitution charges, the Immigration and Naturalization Service ordered Russo to be deported back to his native Sicily as an "undesirable alien" under terms of the Internal Security Act. Russo reportedly returned to Sicily with over one-hundred-thousand dollars in cash, stocks, and bonds. Moreover, he left his San Bernardino estate to his fiancée, Mary Louisa González, a Mexican woman whom Russo had met in San Bernardino's *colonia* and with whom he had a daughter.[121] The wealth generated by Russo on the black market reflected the more sinister underpinnings associated with money making. Nonetheless, his story reflects the ethnic diversity of the west side and the wide-range of its business district.

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[119] "Recent Beating Blamed On Three Russo Thugs," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 10, 1949.

[120] Evangelist leaders in the city pushed for the arrest and prosecution of Russo. Ruth Stockslader publicly voiced her disapproval of Russo. "Russo Will Face Court On Tuesday," *San Bernardino Sun*, December 7, 1949; "Evangelist Calls For Stern Move Against Russo," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 6, 1951.

[121] The properties had a worth of another one-hundred-thousand dollars. In a last ditch effort, Russo attempted to return to the United States through Mexico, however, the Mexican government denied Russo's request to enter the country. "Russo Arrested, Pending Hearing," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 31, 1951; "Story of Vice Activities At Russo Tavern Unfolded," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 4, 1951; "San Bernardino Tavern Owner Gives Up Right Of Defense," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 15, 1951; "Russo Said Seeking To Enter Mexico," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 15, 1951; "Many Wills Of Johnny Russo Spur Court Battle For Estate," *San Bernardino Sun*, July 3, 1960. Italians and Mexicans, given their similar immigrant experiences and shared Catholic backgrounds at times married amongst one another. See, for instance, the marriage of Carmelita Toledo and Antonio Corselli of Riverside. Alamillo, *Making Lemonade Out of Lemons*, 33-34.

By 1940, the west side had a dynamic business district that reveals that the Inland Empire possessed more than just a series of rural agricultural citrus communities, as traditionally viewed in the Chicana/o historiography. Carmen Dominguez-Nevarez reflected on the urban character of San Bernardino's west side. After moving to San Bernardino from the citrus belt town of San Dimas, she recalled:

> [In San Dimas] we lived in a little housing tract for citrus workers. It was about twenty houses for families and two lines of barracks for the citrus workers. This was our little *colonia*… We had a little store, a church, and we were given a small clinic to take care of the workers. San Bernardino was different. It had a placita, a lot of stores, a lot of restaurants, and they had places to dance, nightlife, bars, and even a theater. Over in San Dimas, we didn't have much of that. San Bernardino even had a [Mexican] chamber of commerce as well. It had everything.[122]

Carmen remembered the district as urban and lively, containing businesses and entertainment that could scarcely be found in other inland Mexican communities. Moreover, Ruth Tuck, during the 1940s, described the city as "a unit mid-way between the small town and the large city [that] is free from the unwieldy complexities of the latter, yet displays the characteristics of an urban community."[123] This revelation offers historians a fresh perspective on southern California's inland Mexican communities, one that imagines the region as more than just a set of rural agricultural towns.

As Mexican business owners gained financial prosperity, they also attained social and political power within the city. As evidenced by the Juan Enciso incident, these merchants already held significant political clout by 1931. Moreover, by March 1939, David M. López, owner of La Farmacia Mt. Vernon, ran for the fifth district seat on the

[122] Interview with Carmen Dominguez-Nevarez, September 3, 2014, conducted by author.
[123] Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, xvii.

city council. *El Espectador* and *El Sol* supported López in his city council bid, describing him as "a cultured pharmacist possessing a deep familiarity of the barrio's needs and problems… We hope that all voters of Mexican descent in San Bernardino support this intelligent and able compatriot."[124] Moreover, López hoped to reach Mexican voters by placing advertisements in Alessandro Junior High School's *The Wasp*, encouraging Mexican children to tell their parents to vote for him. Though ultimately unsuccessful at the polls, López's candidacy pointed to the growing influence of west side Mexican merchants. As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, this group of merchants continued to grow in influence and would eventually organize in order to pursue Mexican American civil rights.

[124] *El Espectador* reported: "David M. López, culto farmacéutico y líder de la colonia mexicana de este lugar, ha lanzado su candidatura para el Consulo de la Ciudad, por el 5º Distrito. El Sr. López conoce a fondo las necesidades y problemas de su barrio y se espera que todos los votantes de descendencia mexicana respalden a este inteligente y hábil compatriota…" Translation by author. "David M. López Entra A La Politica," *El Espectador*, March 3, 1939.

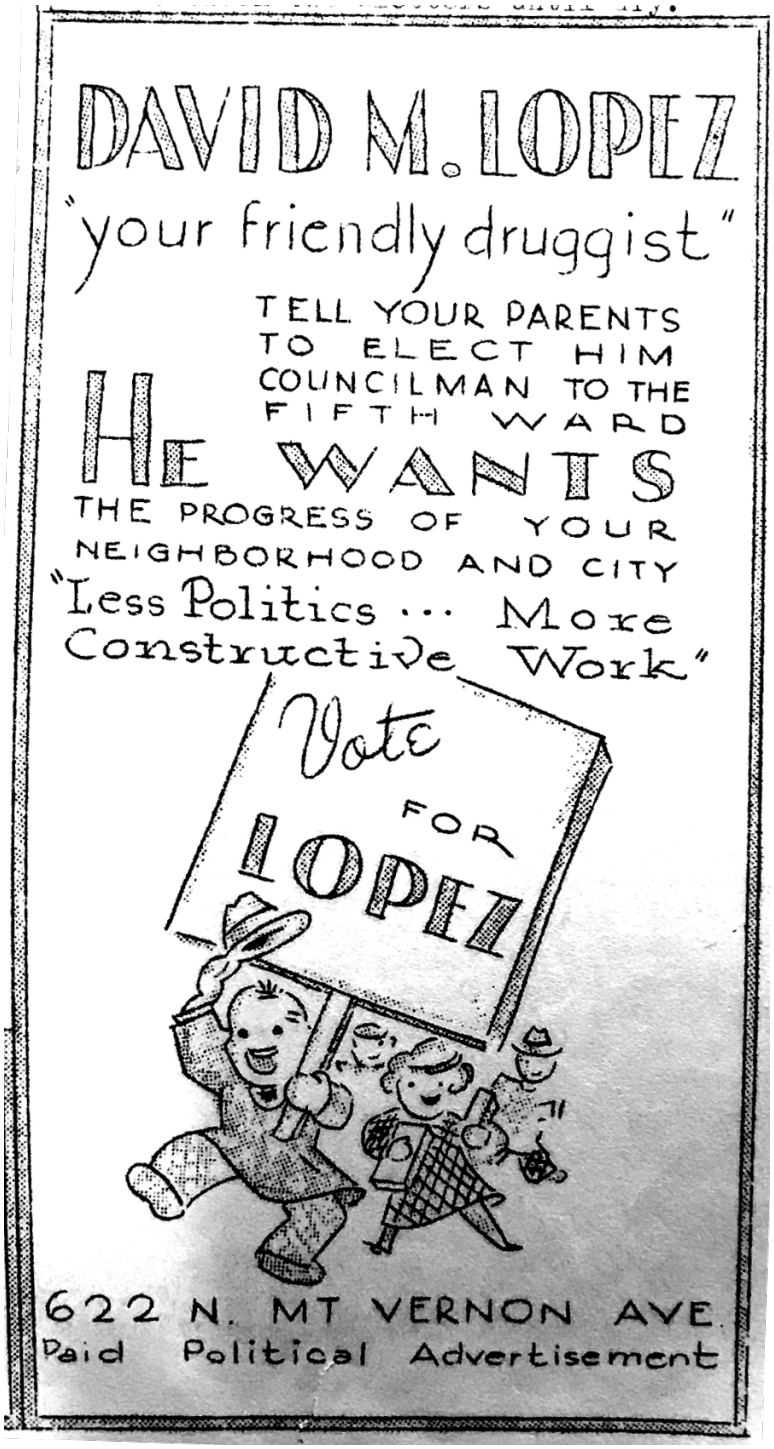

Figure 2.5: David M. López took out an advertisement in Alessandro Junior High School's *The Wasp*.[125]

[125] *The Wasp*, Volume 3, No. 14, May 5, 1939. Mario and Esther Montecino Personal Family Collection.

Conclusion

On the morning of December 8, 1941, the day after the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Service bombed Pearl Harbor, Cruz Nevarez stood alongside his friends on the auditorium steps of San Bernardino High School, listening intently as President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked the United States Congress for a declaration of war.[126] Like hundreds of thousands of other Mexican Americans throughout the country, Nevarez and his friends soon received draft letters and left their barrios to fight in World War II. Nevarez reported to boot camp in 1942 and trained as a combat medic for the U.S. Army. He eventually served in Europe where he received his U.S. citizenship while stationed in Lichfield, Staffordshire, England on August 23, 1943 and eventually participated in the D-Day Invasion of Normandy the following year. When Nevarez left San Bernardino to fight abroad he would not return until 1945, discovering that the *colonia* that he had left had been transformed by the war. Though incidents like the Short assassination in 1945, as mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation, signaled that much of the discrimination that people of color in the Inland Empire experienced persisted, the war catalyzed the west side community to demand civil rights with greater force.

As the next chapter reveals, as the progeny of San Bernardino's Mexican residents went to battle overseas, merchants like David M. López, Juan Enciso, Miguel Ciriza, Trino Negrete, and Gonzalo Valles formed the Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas, a mutual-aid society that organized community events alongside the Mexican consulate.[127] Through their organizing in the Confederación, these merchants supported

[126] Cruz M. Nevarez Collection, (AFC/2001/001/56830), Veterans History Project, American Folklife Center, Library of Congress; Cruz Nevarez interview.
[127] David M López served as president for the Confederación in 1940. "La Conferencia de Sociedades Mexicanas y El Consulado Celebran las Fiestas," *El Espectador*, August 23, 1940.

the home front effort during the war by holding war bond drives. Moreover, Mexican women helped in the effort by working at the Santa Fe railroad and at local defense industries. When zoot suit rioting broke out in 1943; however, the community would organize to protect Mexican children from violence and discrimination. Though individuals like Fred Ross perceived that San Bernardino's Mexican community had not been politically mobilized, events demonstrated in the following chapter proved the effectiveness of Mexican grassroots organizing.

CHAPTER III

Making Waves: Pools, Pachucos, and the Mexican American Battle to Desegregate Public Space During World War II

On May 30, 1943, Gonzalo and Jovita Valles received a phone call from the United States Air Corps at 2 a.m. informing them that their son, Juvenal Valles, had drowned when his canoe capsized in a park lagoon during a military exercise in Des Moines, Iowa. Only nineteen years old, Juvenal, an Army Air Corps cadet, did not recover after two hours of medical attention.[1] For Gonzalo and Jovita, news of their son's death marked the beginning of a turbulent summer, as they soon found themselves fighting for the dignity of their children and defending them from racial discrimination. The Mountain View Cemetery denied Juvenal Valles' burial due to his Mexican background; and in late-July, only two months after Juvenal's death, workers at the Perris Hill municipal swimming pool denied entry to their thirteen-year-old son, Mike Valles. In response, the Valles family, well-known and respected west side residents, organized an extensive community effort to protest these forms of discrimination, drawing support from the local Catholic Church, Spanish-language newspaper editors, students, and activists.

Their struggle for equal access to San Bernardino's public space culminated in 1944 with *Lopez v. Seccombe*, one of the earliest court cases that successfully invoked the

[1] "Ex Football Star Drowned: Gonzalo Valles Dies In Canoe Accident," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 31, 1943.

Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments to desegregate public facilities.[2] In addition, *Lopez* assumed national significance through its connections to the much more celebrated *Mendez v. Westminster* ruling that helped to desegregate California public schools in 1947.

The week following Juvenal's death, racial tensions throughout the United States exploded as violence broke out between nonwhite youth and military servicemen in Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, and other urban areas, including San Bernardino.[3] In California, the clashes of June 1943, commonly referred to as the "zoot suit riots," involved assaults by servicemen on youth of color who donned the zoot suit, characterized by their high-waisted draped pants and distinctive long and wide lapelled coats. The violence intensified popular discourse about Mexican youth and their alleged proclivity toward juvenile delinquency.[4] In San Bernardino, violence between pachucos

[2] This chapter builds on previous work on the *Lopez v. Seccombe* case. Lopez v. Seccombe, 71 F. Supp. 769 (S.D. Cal. 1944). See, for instance, Mark Ocegueda, "Lopez v. Seccombe: The City of San Bernardino's Mexican American Defense Committee and Its Role in Regional and National Desegregation," *History In The Making*, 3 (2010): 1-32.

[3] For an analysis on zoot suit culture see, for example, Luis Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot: Youth Culture and Resistance During World War II* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008); Elizabeth Escobedo, *From Coveralls To Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Edward Escobar, "Zoot Suiters and Cops: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department During World War II," in Lewis A. Erenberg and Susan E. Hirsch, eds., *The War in American Culture: Society and Consciousness during World War II* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); and Catherine Ramirez, *The Woman In The Zoot Suit: Gender, Nationalism, and the Cultural Politics of Memory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).

[4] The history of nonwhite youth's stigmatization as children prone to "juvenile delinquency" certainly did not begin in the World War II era. While much of the historiography has centered on WWII-era zoot suiters and the juvenile delinquency debates that emerged during this era, ideologies and practices employed by state institutions, through the application of pseudoscientific research, classified Mexican children as degenerate as far back as the late nineteenth century. The stories of pachucos and pachucas, while telling of racism, sexism, and of violence placed on Mexican American youth, tell only part of the story. For an in-depth study on conceptions of juvenile delinquency and its relationship to youth of color, see Miroslava Chávez García, *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012).

and servicemen stationed at Norton Air Force Base reinforced white justifications for racially restrictive covenants, and conversely, rallied the Mexican community to pursue desegregation through legal means.

Moreover, the Inland Empire's network of Mexican communities became centers of protest against racial discrimination, partially due to their smaller populations and ability to forge relationships with whites, including white allies, in ways that could not be done in metropolitan areas. As demonstrated in chapter one, agrarian-based *colonias* emerged out of the region's thriving citrus industry, dotting the inland valleys with orange and lemon groves in towns such as San Bernardino, Colton, Pomona, Claremont, Ontario, Cucamonga, Corona, Riverside, and Redlands. In his analysis of northern civil rights movements, historian Thomas Sugrue argues that smaller locales often pioneered civil rights victories throughout the North during the World War II era due to black alliances with progressive whites and for their ability to reach a town's entire black population through civic organizations.[5] Similarly, Mexican communities in the towns of the Inland Empire consisted of small, tightly-knit populations connected through work, the Catholic Church, small businesses, baseball teams, and Spanish-language newspapers, such as the Pomona-based *El Espectador* and the San Bernardino-based *El Sol De San Bernardino*.

As a result, a 'translocal world' emerged as Mexican activists forged networks across their respective *colonias*, relaying information and organizing boycotts,

[5] Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in The North* (New York: Random House, Inc., 2008), 174-175; This is also the case in historian Andrew Highsmith's study of Flint, Michigan. Highsmith demonstrates that African American civil rights activists in Flint formed alliances across the color line for strategic purposes. Andrew R. Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

mutualistas, and general community gatherings.[6] Mexican relations with white people was not limited to experiences of discrimination as this 'translocal world' allowed Mexicans to collaborate directly with whites by organizing city sponsored events, campaigning for the election of white officials, and nurturing partnerships within the workplace. This network of Inland Empire Mexican communities, and their experiences of conflict and collaboration within this 'translocal world,' aided Mexican communities in their campaigns for desegregation.[7]

This chapter explores the transformative impact of World War II on the west side of San Bernardino. The domestic social and political climate during the summer of 1943, especially with the outbreaks of so-called zoot suit rioting within San Bernardino, intensified concerns about juvenile delinquency and its connection to segregated recreational spaces. The zoot suit violence, combined with a heightened sense over the Mexican contribution to World War II, especially through military service, catalyzed the Mexican community. The Valles family stood at the forefront when the Mountain View Cemetery denied Juvenal burial and when municipal plunge workers denied Mike Valles access to the Perris Hill swimming pool. Their experiences mobilized not only San Bernardino's Mexican community, but also the inland network of *colonias* to create and support a Mexican American Defense Committee in order to pursue desegregation through the courts.

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[6] I borrow the term 'translocal' from Thomas Sugrue in order to describe the network of Inland Empire *colonias*. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, 175.

[7] Historian Vicki L. Ruiz has argued along similar lines, albeit through focusing on the intimate spaces of the workplace. Mexican American working women in southern California, through their proximity to white women in the workplace allowed them greater room for interethnic collaboration to demand union representation and rights as women. *Cannery Women, Cannery Lives: Mexican Women, Unionization, and the California Food Processing Industry, 1930-1950* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).

Ultimately, in a class action lawsuit, Jose Nuñez, the local parish priest, Eugenio Nogueras, editor of *El Sol de San Bernardino*, Ignacio López, editor of *El Espectador*, along with students Virginia Prado and Rafael Muñoz, sued San Bernardino's mayor, city council, city attorney, park superintendent, and police chief for their roles in denying Mexicans access to the municipal pool. David C. Marcus, a Los Angeles-based attorney affiliated with the Mexican consulate, represented these petitioners in the *Lopez* case and emerged as an integral figure in Mexican civil rights battles in southern California. When accepting on the *Lopez* case, for instance, Marcus had just secured a legal victory in *Doss v. Bernal*, a case in Orange County that eliminated housing covenants for Mexican Americans. This case occurred in 1943, when Alex and Esther Bernal decided to purchase a home from Joe and Velda Johnson in a residential tract in Fullerton known as the Sunnyside Addition. The Bernals secured a mortgage from the First National Trust Bank and made a down payment of $750. When the Bernals obtained the home in 1943, the Sunnyside Addition consisted entirely of lower middle class white residents, who promptly filed suit in hopes of having the court enforce racial restriction and dismiss the Bernals from their home. The Bernal family refused to leave in the face of considerable harassment and hired Marcus to defend them, eventually defeating their white neighbors in the Sunnyside Addition.[8]

Marcus's most celebrated work, however, came with the widely recognized *Mendez v. Westminster* case that desegregated schools in the Orange County school

[8] For more on *Doss v. Bernal* see Robert Chao Romero and Luis Fernando Fernandez, "*Doss v. Bernal*: Ending Mexican Apartheid in Orange County," UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Report, no. 14 (2012), accessed May 4, 2017, http://www.chicano.ucla.edu/files/RR14.pdf; and Gustavo Arellano, "Mi Casa Es Mi Casa," Orange County Weekly. May 6, 2010, accessed May 4, 2017, http://www.ocweekly.com/2010-05-06/news/alex-bernal-housing-discrimination.

districts of Westminster, Santa Ana, Garden Grove, and El Modena. In recent decades, the *Mendez* case has gained wide recognition for its connections to the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. The case has been celebrated for exemplifying that Mexicans in southern California played a significant role in desegregation at the national level by spearheading some of the earliest national legal efforts to desegregate public schools. For the most part, scholars have considered *Lopez*, *Doss*, and *Mendez* as separate entities; however, this trio of cases, when considered in relationship to one another, assume national significance and occupy a unique place in the annals of Chicana/o and U.S. history as they expose a larger argument about the sweeping legal process to dismantle *Plessy v. Ferguson*'s 'separate but equal' doctrine. These legal challenges also expose that the campaign for desegregation involved a multiracial effort. Finally, Our Lady of Guadalupe's Jose Nuñez's role in the case reveals the Catholic Church's important position in combating discrimination against Mexicans. San Bernardino's role in this important narrative, however, begins by unraveling the Valles's story of migration and the family's ascent to prominence within the city's *colonia*.

Migration and the Rise of a Mexican Mason

Orphaned at a young age while living in Santa Rosalía de Camargo in the Mexican state of Chihuahua, Jovita López eventually found herself living under the care of a Catholic orphanage outside of Mexico City during the 1910s. Gonzalo Valles, orphaned as well, lived in the state of Durango with an older sister and met Jovita when she visited an uncle who lived near Gonzalo's family ranch. Jovita and Gonzalo married

soon afterward at the tender ages of thirteen and fifteen, respectively.[9] Searching for economic independence and for a way to escape the upheaval brought about by the Mexican Revolution, Gonzalo migrated to the United States, following an uncle into railroad employment in El Paso and Chicago. Eventually his uncle transferred to the Santa Fe rail yard in San Bernardino, bringing Gonzalo along, where he secured work by picking oranges in nearby citrus groves.[10] Although growers offered unskilled low-wage work to Mexican laborers, the pay proved to be substantially better in comparison to economic prospects in Mexico.

About a year after leaving Durango, Gonzalo managed to save enough money to bring Jovita to San Bernardino. Pregnant when Gonzalo left for the United States, Jovita arrived with their six-month infant in tow, compelling Gonzalo to find a better paying job. Eventually, Gonzalo left the groves and found employment as a merchandise stocker at the Holmes Supply Store on Mt. Vernon Avenue and Spruce Street. A Santa Fe company commissary, the Holmes Supply provided goods, groceries, furniture, clothes, and other provisions to Santa Fe employees and deducted the money from their salary. Over the next decade, Gonzalo worked his way up at the Holmes Supply, from stocker to clerk, eventually becoming general manager. Earning this position did not come easy, however, Gonzalo rose through the ranks as he taught himself to serve as a broker between Mexican workers and white Santa Fe managers. Teaching himself to read and speak English, Gonzalo studied persistently at his home reading aloud newspapers and any other pieces of literature that he could find. For Gonzalo, language acquisition provided better opportunities for his family.

[9] Interview with Judith Valles, January 29, 2015, conducted by author.
[10] Interview with Mike Valles, January 30, 2015, conducted by author.

Gonzalo Valles' first battle against segregation came in the late-1920s when officials from Mt. Vernon Elementary did not allow his son, Antonio Valles, to enroll at the school.[11] As demonstrated in the previous chapter, in 1926 Ramona Elementary served as the designated Mexican school while Mt. Vernon Elementary mostly enrolled white students. "My father wouldn't have it," recalled Mike Valles. "They usually only spoke Spanish at Ramona and my father said that we would not succeed like that. When the school told him that we could not go to Mt. Vernon Elementary, my father said 'Fine, then they won't go to school at all!' His protest eventually worked as they let us attend Mt. Vernon Elementary School. I was one of the few Mexican kids at the school."[12]

Jovita, though not an English speaker, participated in organizations such as the PTA. "I remember walking with her to every meeting," recalled her daughter Judith, "on the way back, she would always ask me, *'¿Que dijieron?*' [What did they say?]. So I would tell her what they talked about… after about the tenth PTA meeting or so she asked '*¿Que dijieron?*' once again. So I told her '*¿Si no entiendes porque vienes?*' [If you do not understand then why do you come?]. My mother told to me that the only thing they know [in reference to the teachers and parents] is that 'I am here and that I am your mother.'" A strong sense of family in Mexican households, according to historian George J. Sánchez, "enabled Mexican immigrants to survive in a hostile American environment."[13] Jovita's efforts to advocate——and, to a certain degree, acculturate——for a better life for their children, despite her lack of understanding of issues discussed at

[11] Gonzalo represents just one example of a long history of Mexican American resistance to segregation within public schools. See, for instance, Tempe, Arizona's *Romo v. William E. Laird, et al.* (1925) and Lemon Grove, California's *Alvarez v. the Board of Trustees of the Lemon Grove School District* (1931).
[12] Mike Valles interview.
[13] George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 149.

PTA meetings, along with Gonzalo's dedication to English-language learning, reveal the Valles' dedication to both family unity.

A devout Catholic, Jovita regularly attended the *colonia*'s Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. On the other hand, Gonzalo belonged to a local Masonic lodge. Typical for many Mexican migrant families, women attended church, usually Catholic, while most men found church less appealing and stayed home.[14] Under the watch of Father Jose Nuñez, Our Lady of Guadalupe served as the heart of community life as most Mexican residents gathered there each Sunday. A stern public figure, Father Nuñez exercised considerable influence over his parishioners, even expressing political opinions at mass. Nuñez paid particular attention to issues regarding the rights of Mexican workers and their efforts to unionize, dilapidated housing conditions within the west side, and the discrimination that his parishioners faced.[15]

Born in 1894 in Zacatecas, Mexico, Father Nuñez studied at the local seminary during his teenage years and early adult life. When revolution broke out during the 1910s; however, Nuñez studied at home in order to avoid persecution from "Pancho" Villa's henchmen.[16] In September 1922, Nuñez was ordained and sent to Mazapil, Zacatecas until 1926 when he fled the country to escape religious persecution and Cristero violence.[17] For the next thirteen years, Nuñez would be assigned to several parishes from San Diego, to Baja California, and to several inland towns until he received

[14] Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 165-166.
[15] Ruth Tuck, *Not With The Fist: A Study of Mexican Americans in a Southwest City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946), 154.
[16] After the revolution, when people asked Father Nuñez what seminary he had studied at, he often replied, "At the seminary of 'mi casa.'" Monsignor Joseph R. Nuñez File, Archival Records at The Roman Catholic Diocese of San Diego.
[17] See chapter two for more on the Cristero Rebellion.

a permanent assignment at Our Lady of Guadalupe in San Bernardino in 1939.[18] Bishop Charles Buddy of the San Diego Diocese assigned Nuñez in San Bernardino as part of a larger effort to address what he believed to be the "burden" of having to minister such a large Mexican Catholic community in his diocese.[19] Though beloved in the community, many remember Nuñez as a harsh disciplinarian who did not hesitate to stop mass to reprimand parishioners if they entered church with inappropriate attire or to pull on the ears of children that did not behave properly.[20]

Though a self-professed Mason, Gonzalo struck a close friendship with Father Nuñez based on their common goal of improving conditions on the west side. Gonzalo and Father Nuñez collaborated by organizing weekly *quermesses*, or church bazaars, in order to raise money to pay off the church mortgage and to raise funds for Mexican civic organizations.[21] "Business and political interests were the unifying threads of their friendship," recalled Mike Valles, "I used to peep through the keyhole and see my father and the priest having a beer together and smoking cigars."[22] This unlikely friendship between a Mexican Mason and the local parish priest proved pivotal in the *colonia*'s effort to pursue desegregation within the city.

[18] Nuñez File, 7-9.
[19] Alberto López Pulido, "Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: The Mexican Catholic Experience in San Diego." *Journal of San Diego History*, 37 no. 4 (Fall 1991): 236-254.
[20] Interview with Lucy Reyes, January 29, 2015, conducted by the author.
[21] Judith Valles interview.
[22] Mikes Valles interview.

Figure 3: Jovita and Gonzalo Valles.[23]

By the mid-1940s, the Valles family were recognized as one of the most prominent families in the west side. Gonzalo had become a successful manager, civil rights advocate, promoter of Mexican artists, and radio show host. He also held elected offices in Mexican civic organizations, including the Cámara de Comercio [Mexican Chamber of Commerce], the Alianza Hispano Americana, and the Confederación de

[23] Courtesy of Judith Valles.

Sociedades Mexicanas.[24] Valles also began a Spanish-language radio program on KFXM entitled *Melodías Mexicanas* that showcased Mexican music and upcoming Mexican artists scheduled to perform in San Bernardino. For example, Valles booked Mexican artists such as Pedro Infante and Cantinflas at the municipal auditorium in downtown San Bernardino, negotiating with white city council members to set the dates and terms for the events.[25] Valles and other Mexican community members, including the Mexican consul, Mike Ciriza, and Eugenio Nogueras, worked with city leaders to bring numerous Mexican events to downtown, displaying forms of interethnic cooperation between the city and the Mexican community.

When the U.S. entered World War II, the family also patriotically dedicated themselves to the war effort. Antonio and Juvenal, the two oldest sons, volunteered to serve in the U.S. Air Force, while Gonzalo contributed to the domestic front by holding war bond drives, even encouraging his children to save their coins to buy bonds. For instance, eleven-year-old Ruth Valles bought a twenty-five-dollar bond after saving money for almost a year.[26] Despite the Valles family's patriotism, when Gonzalo and Jovita received news of Juvenal's death, managers at the Mountain View Cemetery rejected his burial because of his Mexican ancestry. Moreover, only two months later, Perris Hill Park workers denied Mike Valles entry into the municipal pool.

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[24] The Alianza Hispano Americana was founded in Tuscon, Arizona in 1894 and was known to advocate for Mexican American education and civil rights. For more on the Alianza, see, for example, Thomas Sheridan, *Los Tusconenses: The Mexican Community in Tucson, 1854-1941* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1986).

[25] Judith Valles interview and Mike Valles interview; see, also, "Fed. Of Mexican Org. To Use Auditorium," August, 16, 1943, Minutes of the Mayor and Common Council: January 1, 1943 to December 20, 1944, K-11, City of San Bernardino.

[26] "Sister Of Victim Of War Invests Her All," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 17, 1943.

Figure 3.1: Ruth Valles is pictured here with a hammer ready to crack open her piggy-bank in order to purchase a war bond. Left to right: C. Edward Heaton, loan war worker, Ruth Valles, Gonzalo Valles, and Miguel Ciriza.[27]

[27] *San Bernardino Sun*.

Figure 3.2: Juanita Martinez Hernandez is shown here cleaning roller bearings at the Santa Fe shops in 1943. Mexican women contributed to the war effort by working at railroads and defense industries.[28]

[28] Delano, Jack, photographer. San Bernardino, California. Juanita Martinez Hernandez cleaning roller bearings at the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad locomotive shops. San Bernardino, 1943. Mar. Photograph. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, accessed April 24, 2017, http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/owi2001023558/PP/.

When Juvenal's body arrived in San Bernardino, Gonzalo Valles made funeral arrangements at Mountain View Cemetery. Initially, employees permitted Gonzalo to select a plot and did not question his racial background. According to Mike Valles, the cemetery allowed Gonzalo to make preparations due to his lighter skin:

> [W]hen my brother Juvenal was brought home for burial, my father went to Mountain View Cemetery. He selected a place at the cemetery with no questions asked because of his lighter complexion. He would often be mistaken for an Italian and this was the case when he went to buy the plot. When he brought my mother to see the plot, the people that worked at the cemetery saw that she was dark complexioned and asked if they were Mexican. So my father said "Yes, we are." Well they told my parents, "Oh we can't bury your son here. Mexicans and blacks have to go to a different cemetery." So my father said, "Well wait a minute. What's going on here? Why can't he be buried here? He gave his life for this country and he can't be buried here? They even gave us a flag for his burial!"[29]

Gonzalo apparently avoided the cemetery's racially restrictive covenants because he 'passed' the visual markers of racial difference; however, Jovita's darker skin tone aroused suspicion from cemetery staff. The revelation of their Mexican background led to the sudden, unexpected decision to cancel Juvenal's burial only one day before the funeral.[30]

Gonzalo's network of colleagues, including Eugenio Nogueras, Ignacio López, and Father Jose Nuñez all openly resisted the cemetery's stance. López and Nogueras, for instance, reported about the incident, stating that "In this 'friendly city,'" sarcastically jabbing at one of San Bernardino's nicknames, "not even in the tomb can one escape

[29] Mike Valles interview.
[30] Juvenal's body arrived on June 2, 1943 and scheduled for burial at Mountain View Cemetery on Friday, June 4, 1943. Juvenal's body would not be buried until June 10, 1943, nearly two weeks after his death. "In The Shadows: Gonzalo J. Valles," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 3, 1943 and "In The Shadows: Gonzalo J. Valles," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 4, 1943.

racial prejudice. Whoever had said that death eliminated differences had never dealt with the Mountain View Cemetery."[31] López, along with Gonzalo and Nogueras, met with the owners of the cemetery to demand Juvenal's burial, and they even had the owners acknowledge that their practices were anti-democratic and unchristian. Despite this admission, the owners asserted that they could not go against white public opinion.[32]

Gonzalo also appealed to U.S. Congressman Harry Sheppard to solicit support for Juvenal's burial.[33] Sheppard's respectable standing in the Mexican community and within the Spanish-language press made him a likely ally in this battle. In fact, *El Sol de San Bernardino* and *El Espectador* had endorsed Sheppard for years. Nogueras, for example, campaigned for Sheppard in November 1938, writing that the Mexican community should re-elect him due to his integrity in serving the community and for his work in constantly upholding human and democratic rights.[34] After Gonzalo asked for the congressman's support, Sheppard joined the effort and contacted the cemetery owners about allowing Juvenal to be buried on their grounds. The U.S. Army Air Corps eventually intervened and offered to fly Juvenal's body to Arlington National Cemetery for burial. Jovita declined as she wished to have him buried close to home.

Fathers Jose Nuñez and Francis Ott, another local Catholic priest, also condemned the cemetery's actions. Ironically, Ott and Nuñez held a mass requiem at Mountain View Cemetery in memory of war casualties only two days after Juvenal's death, yet, in spite

[31] Mario T. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960* (London: Yale University Press, 1989), 89.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Judith Valles interview.
[34] Nogueras lauded Sheppard's integrity for not being driven by personal and political gain. "El Director De 'El Sol' De San Bernardino Respalda A Harry R. Sheppard," *El Espectador*, September 30, 1938.

of this ceremony, the cemetery denied Juvenal's burial.[35] Meanwhile, Juvenal's body rested in the Valles home throughout the entire ordeal. Judith Valles recalled, "My brother's body was in our living room for what seemed like a very long time, it must have been about two weeks, but there he was in his coffin in our living room. The coffin would be open at times and people would even come to see him."[36] Finally, after extensive collaboration with the Spanish-language press, the Catholic church, and through the support of white allies like Congressman Sheppard, the Valles family broke through in their battle against the cemetery's policies and arranged for Juvenal to be buried at the cemetery.

Juvenal's funeral became a significant community gathering as more than two hundred vehicles joined the funeral motorcade from Our Lady of Guadalupe to Mountain View Cemetery. Reverends Francis Ott and Jose Nuñez spoke at the service, declaring that the Catholic Church would not tolerate any forms of discrimination toward Mexicans, especially during a war where so many Mexican American men had died in the fighting abroad. Fidencio Mejia of the Alianza Hispano Americana performed the organization's funeral ritual. Eugenio Nogueras also spoke at the funeral on behalf of the Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas and Union Patriotica Beneficia Mexicana Independiente. The gathering concluded as an honor guard performed full military honors for Juvenal and delivered the United States flag to Jovita Valles. The Catholic priests' statements about discrimination and Mexican American sacrifices reflected a growing Mexican American political consciousness as well as the Church's stance on discrimination. Indeed, the war opened up space for Mexican American activists, like

[35] "Catholics Plan For Requiem Mass: Churches Join For Service At Cemetery," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 30, 1943.
[36] Judith Valles interview.

those involved in desegregating the cemetery, to make claims to civil rights with greater success and with the inclusion of Catholic clergy and white allies.[37]

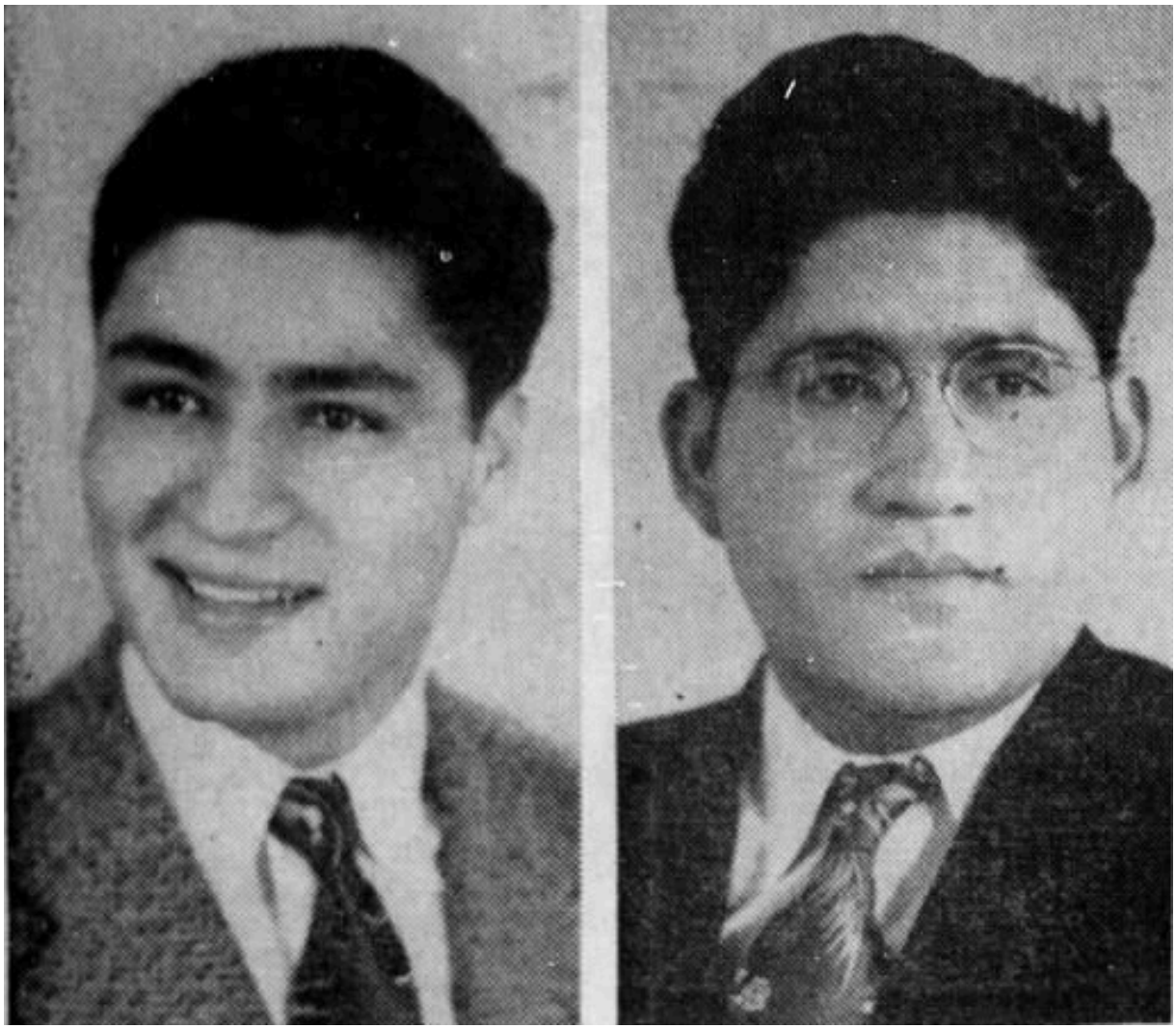

Figure 3.3: Juvenal Gonzalo Valles (left) and Hanibal Antonio Valles (right) both served in the U.S. Air Force during World War II.[38]

[37] For more on the Catholic Church's impact on claiming civil rights with greater success, see, Mario T. García, *Católicos: Resistance and Affirmation in Chicano Catholic History*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008; Matt García, *A World Of Its Own: Race, Labor, and Citrus in the Making of Greater Los Angeles, 1900-1970* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 226-228.
[38] *San Bernardino Sun*.

Meanwhile, as the difficult ordeal to have Juvenal buried unfolded, the Mexican community experienced another crisis with the explosion of violence between Mexican American zoot suit youth and military servicemen from the city's Norton Airforce Base. The violence struck cities nationwide as zoot suit youth of color and military servicemen and law enforcement clashed.[39] The mainstream press racialized juvenile delinquency as a "Mexican problem," implementing racist rhetoric to construct Mexican youth as criminal, sexually deviant, and 'animal-like.'[40] Furthermore, the press exacerbated physical violence through sensationalist claims that zoot suiters threatened home front stability.[41] Indeed, the *San Bernardino Sun* played a role in fanning the flames of violence and hysteria as it published daily articles about the alleged "Mexican juvenile delinquency problem." In mid-May 1943, two weeks before physical clashes escalated in the city, the *Sun* published an article with a sub-header that read "San Bernardino Mayor Calls Conference To Talk Curbing Of Evil," that described Mexican zoot suiters as violently 'rampaging' through the towns of San Bernardino, Colton, Redlands, Upland, Ontario, and Chino.[42]

Anthropologist Ruth Tuck explained that the newspaper and its owner, James A. Guthrie, published exaggerated stories that effectively created a "riot psychology" among

[39] The bulk of the historiography has centered on the violence that occurred in Los Angeles, especially with the widely-studied Sleepy Lagoon murder trial. More recently, Luis Alvarez has focused on urban centers throughout the nation, including analyses of African American, Mexican, and Japanese American zoot suiters in Los Angeles, New York, and Detroit.
[40] Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, 43.
[41] Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot* ,181-182.
[42] "City Officers To Discuss Problem of Youth Gangs: San Bernardino Mayor Calls Conference To Talk Curbing Of Evil," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 12, 1943.

the dominant community.[43] For instance, in the summer of 1944, several *Sun* articles described that a "gang" of twenty-five Mexican zoot suiters had indiscriminately attacked servicemen at Pioneer Park, ending with sailor, Kenneth Barton, suffering a stab wound to the wrist. Seeking vengeance for the stabbing, nearly one-hundred-fifty servicemen gathered to "clean out" the zoot suiters by marching into the Mt. Vernon Mexican district. As a result, San Bernardino's police chief declared a ten-day state of emergency within the city and, in an effort to control the unrest, the military command at Norton Air Force Base denied soldiers leave from their station and increased military police presence throughout the city. The *Sun* went onto to described the incident as "touch[ing] off a citywide war between servicemen and San Bernardino's pachuco element."[44]

The police arrested fifteen-year-old Edward Cardenas for the stabbing of Kenneth Barton, confiscated his belongings, and described Cardenas' jacket as "streaked with blood of the sailor and [contained] a clasp knife with a razor-sharp, four-inch blade."[45] Officers eventually arrested six other teenage boys involved in the brawl, including Frank Navarrete, Ralph Martinez, Jose Martinez, Angelo Jimenez, Adrian Arriola, and Edmundo Lopez. These young pachucos received misdemeanor charges for disturbing the peace and fighting; however, Cardenas faced more serious consequences, receiving a felony charge of assault with a deadly weapon.[46] When confessing to the stabbing, Cardenas blamed the servicemen for starting the fight, stating that they had harassed six

[43] Tuck explains that the *San Bernardino Sun* in general kept "in exact step with the prejudices and biases of the communities it serves——or, more exactly, with the points of view held by the powerful groups in those communities… This, its editors sincerely believe, is reflecting public opinion." Ruth Tuck, *Not With The Fist: A Study of Mexican Americans in a Southwest City* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1946), 216-217.
[44] "Boy, 15, Held For Knifing Sailor," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 2, 1944.
[45] Ibid.
[46] It is unclear what type of sentence Edward Cardenas received due to the stabbing. "Youths In Brawl Before Courts," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 3, 1944.

Mexican girls who had decided to leave a dance that was held across the street at the Municipal Auditorium. Cardenas and the other boys took notice of the girls as they objected to the harassment and decided to confront the sailors. A fight ensued, and as the servicemen and the pachucos exchanged blows, Cardenas took out his knife and cut Barton on the wrist. The *Sun* described that Barton "nearly bled to death from a severed artery" and that he only lived through the placement of an emergency tourniquet on his arm. [47]

Meanwhile, the *Sun* decried the "lawless pachucos" and the "loss of liberties" that the servicemen incurred due to this incident. The newspaper published an interview with Lonnie Brannan, president of the Fathers of Fighting Sons Organization, who stated that it "is not right that our sons are denied the right to freely walk the streets of the country for which they are fighting, while criminals and lawless elements [like the pachucos] are permitted to roam at large at all hours."[48] Moreover, the *Sun* published the name of every zoot suiter that the police arrested along with their home addresses, making no retractions even when those apprehended were cleared of any involvement.[49] Mexican residents pleaded to the *Sun* editor, James A. Guthrie, to retract the names and addresses of the youths accused of fighting for fear of direct attacks on west side homes.

These reports, however, only told half the truth. As Ruth Tuck later revealed, the majority of the Mexican youth involved in the fight "were in no sense" pachucos, with most having good school and employment backgrounds.[50] Tuck further explained that the

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[47] "Youth Surrenders Bloodstained Jacket And Four-Inch Knife," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 2, 1944.
[48] "Group Demands Elimination of Lawless Gangs: Fathers Of Fighting Men Deplore Their Loss Of Liberties," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 1, 1944.
[49] Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 218.
[50] Ibid.

colonia did not have any entrenched pachuco gangs and that the number of youth involved in zoot suiting was actually quite low.[51] Nevertheless, the newspaper's inaccurate reporting gave way to rumors across the city, including one that Barton had died from the stab wound. Another rumor entailed that that the six alleged pachuca girls had formed a pact to seduce and murder the sailors and had hid knives in their pompadours. Other stories spread that a Mexican American youth had been found hanged and that armed pachucos from throughout the region intended to march on San Bernardino as retaliation.[52] After the incident passed, the *Sun*, according to Tuck, abandoned previous positive articles about the Mexican community and "annulled much of its courageous stand on slum-clearance and improvement of conditions in the west end."[53]

Law enforcement also attempted to regulate the bodies of Mexican youth and subject them to local authority. In May 1943, Superior Court Judge Charles Allison ordered Cruz Martinez and Victor Cruz to six months in jail and mandated, under terms of their probation, that they be banned from wearing the zoot suit for two years. Furthermore, Judge Allison instructed San Bernardino County Sherriff, Emmett L. Shay, to cut their hair military style, as their duck-tailed haircuts allegedly represented "badges of an organization reputed to have semi-criminal tendencies."[54] Police officers also

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[51] Tuck noted that the actual numbers of pachucos within the west side "were blown up by press and police" and that that at the height of the zoot suit hysteria, San Bernardino "never had more than twenty-five boys who might be considered" zoot suiters. Tuck, 140-141.

[52] Women zoot suiters during World War II challenged social norms, both familial and communal, and raised new questions about what it meant to be a Mexican American woman during the war. See Elizabeth Escobedo, *From Coveralls To Zoot Suits*.

[53] After the barrage of slanderous reporting, Tuck also quoted white residents of San Bernardino as saying "Why give those [Mexicans] anything? They're criminals and foreigners and generally low!" Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 216-219.

[54] "Judge Orders Car Thieves To Discard 'Zoot Suits,' Cut Hair," *San Bernardino Sun,* May 18, 1943.

played a role attempting to control the physical bodies of zoot suiters, regularly acting in vigilante patrols to round up pachucos and cut their hair. "The cops used to get into it with the pachucos and they were real mean" recalled one *colonia* resident, "they would get them, take them to the wash, and shave their heads!"[55] The decision to target the bodies of zoot suiters reflected how they were marked "as acting outside the boundaries of proper male behavior."[56] As historian Luis Alvarez explains, some "observers considered male zoot suiters as overly feminine for their constant attention to dress, hairstyle, and appearance, further marking them as a gendered other."[57]

The *San Bernardino Sun* further reinforced the marking of male zoot suiters as gendered others by focusing on their alleged attacks on white women. During the first week of June 1943, for example, the paper reported two different attacks on white women. One account reported that a "heavy-set, zoot-suited pachuco" with a dark "swarthy" complexion and "unmistakably Mexican accent" attacked a "matron" on Spruce Street. The story alleged that the zoot suiter waited for Mrs. W.B. Branstetter to step out of her home and attacked her from behind, only to flee when Branstetter's dog came to her aid.[58] Another report described a separate incident where a "dark-skinned zoot suiter" ran up behind Kit Clauson as she walked home late one night and grabbed her by the throat, forcing her onto a schoolyard lawn on Mountain View Avenue. Clauson, described as a "pretty [twenty-one] year old air depot employee," bit the zoot suiter's hand and yelled loudly causing her attacker to flee. As the incident unfolded, two nearby soldiers heard Clauson's screams and chased after the zoot suiter, cornering him

[55] Mike Valles interview.
[56] Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, 105.
[57] Ibid.
[58] "Matron Tells Attack Attempt By Zoot Suiter," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 7, 1943.

on Arrowhead Avenue and 6th Street. The two soldiers beat the pachuco and then left to attend to Clauson. The soldiers stated that they believed the zoot suiter to be unconscious when they left to attend to Clauson, however, when they returned they discovered that the attacker had fled.[59] The *Sun*'s descriptions of pachucos as "sneaky," "dark-skinned," and "predatory" toward white women indicated a racialized gendered element in the way that the *Sun* presented Mexican youth to the general public. In addition, by describing white women with descriptors such as dignified "matrons" and "pretty" depot employees, the newspaper offered gendered descriptions of white women as demanding protection from heroic white men in uniform.[60]

Throughout the wartime media frenzy, the *Sun* not only engaged in written descriptions to shape public perception of zoot suiters, but also relied on visual representations to malign them. In June 1943, the paper printed a popular cartoon by Dorman H. Smith that presented axis enemies Hideki Tojo, Adolf Hitler, and Benito Mussolini in zoot suits accompanied by the caption, "Vell, Vy Not, Ain't Ve Hoodlums, Too?"[61] Published only two weeks after the so-called "zoot suit riots," the cartoon emphasized that Mexican youth represented domestic criminality and were a threat to the war effort as enemy agents. By painting pachucos as anti-American antagonists who had connections with Nazi and fascist satellite groups, the *Sun* inflamed and even justified the violence against pachucos by law enforcement and men in uniform. In fact, newspaper publishers dedicated more ink to the defamation of pachucos than to the hundreds of

[59] "No Clues In City's Search For Zoot-Suiter: Pretty Depot Employee Assailed," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 11, 1943.
[60] The *San Bernardino Sun* stereotyped Mexican pachucos in fashion similar to popular images forced on black men in the south. For instance, novels like Thomas Dixon's 1905 *The Clansman* promoted popular images of black men as sexual predators that targeted helpless white women.
[61] Dorman H. Smith drew for the Newspaper Enterprise Association. *San Bernardino Sun*, June 20, 1943.

thousands of Mexican Americans who enlisted in the armed services or those who worked in home front factories, shipyards, and fields.

Figure 3.4: A popular cartoon by Dorman H. Smith published during the height of zoot suit hysteria in the summer of 1943.[62]

[62] *San Bernardino Sun*, June 20, 1943.

In response to the violence between servicemen and Mexican youth, Ignacio López published a scathing critique of law enforcement, servicemen, and the local media in a rare English-language editorial entitled "Grist For The Mills Of The Axis," stating:

> The servicemen, in taking the law in their own hands, were only the instrument of certain officers of the law, that tacitly approved and blessed the assaults, while serving as guides through Mexican [neighborhoods]… to the sport-bent sailors, soldiers and marines, who had been egged on to mob violence by the inflammatory articles of a biased press and radio. Our purpose is not to defend the so-called zoot suit gangs… our purpose [is] to throw light and point out the evils that made possible the unfortunate and sad occurrences of the past eight days… Pachuquísmo has its roots deeply entrenched in the economic and social discrimination practices inflicted on the minorities by the dominant groups of our nation. [In regards to pachucos and] the assertions that [they] may be indirectly encouraged by the Axis propagandists… the responsible agencies of the Federal Government charged with the task of unearthing their activities have little or nothing to offer as proof of a definite link between the pachuco gangs and the sinarquistas… or any other of the Nazi-Fascist satellites.[63]

As this quote reveals, López held social and economic discrimination responsible for the zoot suit violence and came to the aid of pachucos in regards to the media's representation of them as anti-American agents.[64] He did not, however, fully defend the zoot suiters, blaming them for negative stereotypes of Mexican people and often referring

[63] Other prominent activists, such as, Carey McWilliams, Josefina Fierro de Bright, and Luisa Morena came to the aid of the young zoot suiters during this time. "Grist For The Mills Of The Axis," *El Espectador*, June 11, 1943.

[64] Some other Spanish-language newspapers, like the more conservative *La Opinión*, condemned Mexican zoot suiters and accepted mainstream arguments regarding their alleged criminal tendencies. For example, *La Opinión* and its editor Ignacio Lozano, went as far to publish some of the most "seething attacks on the immoral and violent threats allegedly posed by Mexican American youth at the same time that it lauded the efforts of… police to stem the tide of youth crime." *La Opinión* even claimed that "Mexican American women were sex fiends who demeaned their cultural identity as Mexicans." Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, 54-55; 105.

to them as "hoodlums."[65] López strategically published his essay in English, as he hoped to reach white readers and contribute a critical voice to the larger public discourse surrounding the alleged juvenile delinquency problem.[66]

Eugenio Nogueras, who worked closely with López, at times mentored him on the newspaper trade and even published guest editorials concerning Mexican American civil rights under the heading "Sol y Sombra."[67] In one of these columns, Nogueras echoed López and the reactions of Mexican residents in regards to the zoot suit violence. For instance, when Nogueras addressed the issue, he denounced the police, the press, and public school teachers by stating, "The police have targeted Mexicans as people prone to suspicious activity. The newspaper columns constantly demean and degrade Mexicans when describing any of their activities. School teachers, even in graduation exercises, advise Mexican students to not aspire toward attending colleges or universities."[68] Ruth Tuck further recorded the west side's reaction to the *Sun*'s tabloid features as one Mexican resident stated, "Oh, we didn't pay any attention [to what] the city papers said

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[65] López often referred to the pachucos as "hoodlums" in published articles and public appearances. Historian Matt García argues that López demonstrated conflicting views toward Mexican zoot suiters by frequently castigating them but tempering his criticisms by acknowledging the deeper discriminatory causes of juvenile delinquency. García, *A World Of Its Own*, 230.

[66] López similarly strategically published in English in his "Wooing In The Dark" article, addressing discrimination practiced on behalf of white people toward Mexicans in southern California. García, *A World Of Its Own*, 232.

[67] When López took a position in Washington D.C. as a media analyst for the Office of War Information in 1941 and 1942, Nogueras took over editorship of *El Espectador*. When perusing through *El Espectador* during Nogueras's tenure as editor, it often read strictly as a San Bernardino city newspaper, indicating that he most likely utilized the same content from *El Sol* for *El Espectador*.

[68] The following has been translated by author: "La policía en varias ocasiones han dado a entender que el mexicano siempre es un elemento de sospecha. Los periódicos en sus columnas constantemente establecen divisiones degradantes y denigrantes cuando se escriben historias de sus actividades. Los maestros en las escuelas durante ejercicios de graduación han aconsejado a los jóvenes mexicanos a que no continúan aspirando a llegar al colegio." *El Espectador*, June 11, 1943.

about Mexicans during the zoot suit riots, those things are just lies. You know, it's like murders and the doings of movie stars——the editor [James Guthrie] has to make something big of it even if he lies."[69]

On some occasions, Mexicans boldly confronted police officers over their constant harassment of Mexican children. Ralph Laguna, for instance, who ran the Richfield Service Station on Mt. Vernon Avenue, received a visit by the mayor and several officers requesting his help in reporting illicit pachuco activity in the neighborhood. Laguna replied, "I will do my best but there is one thing I want you people to know. If I see a policeman beating a young Mexican kid. Will you give me the power to report the cop as well?"[70] Laguna even took practical measures helping the juvenile delinquency issue by often employing pachuco youth at the service station in hopes of keeping them preoccupied with work and out of the streets.

On a separate occasion, Laguna remembered when a teenage pachuco by the name of Danny Rangel stopped by his station after being harassed by a police officer. Rangel angrily vented to Laguna, "Those cops think they are so big and bad because they have a gun! You know, I would like give them a punch right in the mouth." Shortly thereafter, police officer Ross, the same officer that had hassled Rangel, arrived at the service station to further question the boy. In his rage, Rangel yelled at the officer and told him that he wanted to take a punch at his face. The policeman reacted by taking off his gun and badge and saying, "Oh, you do? Come over here and try." Rangel proceeded to knock the officer down and Ross eventually went towards his gun when Laguna told him, "Ross, you are not a police officer anymore. You took your badge off and provoked

[69] Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 166.
[70] Interview with Ralph Laguna, September 29, 2016, conducted by author.

the kid." When the officer continued still toward his weapon, Laguna pulled out his own .38 caliber gun and told officer Ross that if he tried to shoot the child that he would retaliate and shoot him as well.[71] After that, Rangel and the officer left the station without further incident. Laguna's standing as a well-respected merchant and member of the community most likely allowed him to get away with such a bold act. Furthermore, his actions in protecting neighborhood pachucos reveal that some Mexicans took direct measures to help the children in the face of danger, even if it meant placing their own lives at risk.

As the turmoil began to subside in late-June 1943, San Bernardino entered one of its hottest summers on record and municipal plunge officials expected over forty thousand swimmers to visit the pool at Perris Hill Park, located in a white neighborhood near Highland and Valencia Avenue.[72] For the month of June alone, the plunge averaged 563 daily patrons and regularly had over one thousand visitors on Sundays.[73] Indeed, as demonstrated by historian Jeff Wiltse, municipal pools during this time functioned as some of the most popular recreational outlets. "They attracted thousands of people at a time and, unlike at most public spaces, the social contact was sustained and interactive. Swimmers spent hours, often the entire day, at pools——playing games, sunbathing, and chatting."[74]

By the end of July, as record-setting temperatures hit the city at 114 degrees, thirteen-year old Mike Valles and Bobby Daste, his Cuban American friend, decided to

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[71] Ibid.
[72] "Municipal Plunge Opens Saturday," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 8, 1943.
[73] "Biggest Season At City's Pool: Perris Hill Plunge's Crowd Tops Last Year," *San Bernardino Sun*, July 8, 1943.
[74] Jeff Wiltse, *Contested Waters: A Social History of Swimming Pools in America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 89.

escape the blistering heat by sharing a bicycle to the Perris Hill plunge. During the five-mile trek, Mike and Bobby switched off from pedaling while the other rode the bicycle's handlebars. When they arrived at the plunge, they approached the entrance to purchase tickets. Recalling the incidents of that day, Mike stated:

> When you would go up to the entrance [the workers] would ask if you were Mexican, and I said 'Yes, I am.' Well they said, 'Today is not your day to swim. You need to come back on your day to swim.' It was the same thing for black people. They only allowed you to swim on the day before they cleaned the water. So they asked my friend Bobby if he was Mexican. He said 'No, I am Cuban.' So they sold him a ticket and he was darker than I was! I was at the chain link fence outside watching him in the pool. I felt like shit. I was being ostracized just because I was Mexican.[75]

Typical of most communities throughout the United States, people of color could not swim at public pools except for one day out of the week, usually the day before the pool's scheduled draining and cleaning. By the mid-1920s, southern California public pools were racially segregated. Many Mexicans, however, found alternatives to public pools during this era by carving out recreational outlets in nearby washes. San Bernardino's Mexican residents, for example, swam in the nearby Santa Ana River wash partially due to exclusion from public pools.[76] West side Mexican leadership had lobbied for a west side pool given the segregation at the Perris Hill plunge and the park's distance from the

[75] Mike Valles interview.

[76] For Mexican American alternatives to swimming during the era of segregation, see Daniel Medina, "Life at Marrano Beach, The Lost Barrio Beach of the San Gabriel Valley," KCET, accessed May 1, 2017, http://www.kcet.org/socal/departures/san-gabriel-river/life-at-marrano-beach-the-lost-barrio-beach-of-the-san-gabriel-valley.html.

colonia; however, the city postponed any construction of recreational facilities on the west side despite frequent promises that such facilities would be built.[77]

The fact that Perris Hill workers denied Mike Valles entry into the pool based on his Mexican heritage, and not based on skin complexion, as his friend Bobby Daste entered while having darker skin; and given that Juvenal was rejected burial only after cemetery workers inquired about the Valles family's Mexican heritage when noticing Jovita's darker skin, reveal that ambiguous designations existed for segregating at public spaces. For instance, at Ganesha Park in Pomona, Carmen Dominguez-Nevarez explained circumventing the pool's policies due to her light skin. After Carmen's sisters were denied entry to Ganesha Park's pool due to their darker skin complexions, the sisters planned to get Carmen into the pool based on her lighter complexion. Carmen recalled:

> My older sisters Vera and Rosemary said, "Well, we are going to fool them. Carmen, *tu eres güerita* [you are light skinned]. Go to the pool and put your dime down and walk in." So anyway, we got to the pool and I said, "Okay, I will try it." I went and put a dime on the counter and the workers said "Go on, what are you waiting for?" So I jumped into the pool and my sisters were clinging to the chain-link fence cheering me on. On that day, I thought to myself, "No way, this is not fair. How can they do that to human beings? [speaking in regards to segregation]" I ran out and said "Adios, adios!" I felt a victory for us kids and against the system. They knew that we had fooled them. I let them know when I said "Adios!"[78]

[77] John Milor noted that the city had funds for construction of west end recreational facilities but continually stalled any serious attempts to build a pool. "Mexicans Feel Discrimination, Says Educator: Milor Cites Need For More Recreation For West End District," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 12, 1943.
[78] Interview with Carmen Dominguez-Nevarez, September 3, 2014, conducted by author.

Carmen's story reveals a less visible form of daily resistance by navigating the ambiguous racial designations in place for restricting access to pools.[79] Since park employees, cemetery workers, and school officials all enforced racially restrictive policies, the production of race not only existed within courts and law but also at the bureaucratic level as well since these municipal officials were expected to enforce racial restriction on a daily basis.[80] The fact that *Lopez v. Seccombe* eventually targeted not only San Bernardino Mayor William Seccombe, but also city council members, the city's police chief, the city attorney, and the city superintendent of parks, reveals that the case aimed to target the daily gatekeepers of white supremacy working within the municipal bureaucracy.[81]

According to Wiltse, some of the most direct reasons for racial segregation at public pools revolved around gender integration and the "eroticization" of swimming pools. Indeed, an underlying fear that men and boys of color would make sexual advances toward white women in the intimate erotic space of a pool informed the decision to segregate. Moreover, segregation also enabled white men to restrict white women's social and sexual agency by restricting their opportunities to meet men of

[79] On how people of color navigated through urban color lines, see, Albert M. Camarillo, "Navigating Segregated Life in America's Racial Borderhoods, 1910s – 1950s," *Journal of American History*, 100 (December 2013): 645-662.

[80] Peggy Pascoe demonstrates that marriage license clerks upheld white supremacy and produced race through enforcing miscegenation law. According to Pascoe, marriage license clerks "designed procedures that made race classifications appear to be simple common sense rather than scientific nonsense." Peggy Pascoe, *What Comes Naturally: Miscegenation Law and the Making of Race in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 5; Historian Andrew Highsmith also provides similar analysis and terms this form of Jim Crow in Flint, Michigan as "administrative segregation." Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress*.

[81] The *Lopez* case listed Mayor William Seccombe and city council members Leslie Case, William Roberts, George Shafer, Howard Holcolmb, and Timothy Sheehan as defendants. Other defendants also included Chief of Police James Cole, City Attorney H.R. Griffin, and Superintendent of Parks Owen R. Bristow.

color.[82] Exposing the male body in these spaces represented a potential threat of undermining white men's alleged racial superiority as powerful and muscular physiques from men of color could conspicuously challenge white supremacy.[83] As one San Bernardino resident stated, "[integrated swimming' will lead to intermarriage, and we don't want racial mixture."[84]

Figure 3.5: A group of Mexican teenage girls swimming at the Santa Ana River wash during the mid-1930s.[85]

[82] Wiltse, *Contested Waters*, 124-125.
[83] For more on the connection between manhood and racial dominance, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).
[84] Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 51-52.
[85] Courtesy of Cecilia Vasquez.

Figure 3.6: A typical afternoon crowd gathers at the municipal plunge at Perris Hill Park in July 1943.[86]

When Mike returned home and told his parents of the incident at the Perris Hill plunge, Gonzalo grew angry at the continued discrimination that his family experienced, especially after the sacrifices the family had made for the war.[87] He immediately organized a community meeting in an effort to desegregate the Perris Hill plunge. On August 1, an estimated three hundred people gathered at Our Lady of Guadalupe's San Jose Hall to listen to several speakers address segregation at city pools and parks, including noteworthy activist Eduardo Quevedo, president of El Congreso de Pueblos de Hablan Española (Spanish-Speaking People's Congress) and president of the Citizens

[86] *San Bernardino Sun*.
[87] Antonio Valles, the eldest son of Jovita and Gonzalo, was serving in the war and prior to leaving for the service, participated in the Alianza Hispano Americana, which bought war bonds to show Mexican American support during the war effort. "Compra Bonos De La Defensa A Nombre De La Sociedad," *El Espectador*, June 5, 1942.

Committee for Latin American Youth (CCLAY); Father Jose Nuñez, Eligio Romo, president of the Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas; Francisco Murguia, president of the Patriotica Mexicana Lodges of California; John H. Milor, principal of Alessandro Middle School; Alex Rogers, director of adult education at San Bernardino city schools; and Harry Smith, president of San Bernardino's Kiwanis Club.[88]

John H. Milor, principal of Alessandro Junior High School, where the majority of Mexican students attended middle school, spoke at the meeting and advocated for recreational facilities on the west side. Milor frequently lectured throughout the city in regards to the relationship between recreational access and juvenile delinquency. For instance, speaking to the Argonaut Club in March 1943, an influential white civic organization, he pointed out that Mexicans were not permitted to use the Perris Hill plunge and that anywhere from "8,000 to 10,000 [residents] or about one-sixth of San Bernardino's population is Mexican and they are being kicked around."[89] With an intimate knowledge of Mexican youth, Milor directly blamed the lack of recreational facilities for the "outbreak of zoot suit gangs."

Indeed, many white allies and social reformers, such as noted author Carey McWilliams, blamed the lack of proper recreational facilities when discussing the causes of Mexican American juvenile delinquency.[90] Civic and youth organizations, churches,

[88] El Congreso was a national organization dedicated to combating the economic, social, and racial injustice of Spanish-speaking people. Eduardo Quevedo, along with prominent activists Luisa Moreno, Josefina Fierro de Bright, and Bert Corona helped organized El Congreso's landmark convention in Los Angeles on April 30, 1939. García, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity*, 146-153.

[89] "Mexicans Feel Discrimination, Says Educator: Milor Cites Need For More Recreation For West End District," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 12, 1943.

[90] After the Sleepy Lagoon arrests in 1942, Carey McWilliams noted that Mexican youth gang problems stemmed from lack of recreational and educational facilities. Alvarez, *The Power of the Zoot*, 67.

Parent Teacher Associations, educators, and city leaders, for the most part, all agreed that more recreational outlets would curb the alleged juvenile delinquency problem.[91] Despite all of the talk surrounding recreation as a solution, Ruth Tuck found that no city-sponsored recreational program had ever appeared and that city leaders preferred to "keep delinquency as a conversation piece."[92]

When Gonzalo spoke at the assembly, his story brought members of the packed hall's audience to tears.[93] Gonzalo and the others in attendance resolved to form a Mexican American Defense Committee (MADC) and accepted the "Valles Initiative" as a primary objective, which sought to raise financial resources to combat discrimination through legal means and electoral politics.[94] The executive members of the committee included Eugenio Nogueras, Father Jose Nuñez, Gonzalo Valles, Miguel Ciriza, Eligio Romo, and Ignacio López. They promptly drafted a letter addressed to Mayor William

[91] The *San Bernardino Sun* ran articles addressing the juvenile delinquency problem and its association to recreational access on an almost daily basis. For examples, see *San Bernardino Sun* May through June 1943: "Social Problem Group To Meet: Coordinating Council Calls Discussion," May 2, 1943; "Home Of Neighborly Serive Youth To Give Program Today," May 2, 1943; "P.T.A. Council Discusses Child Care Problem," May 9, 1943; "City Officers To Discuss Problem Of Youth Gangs: San Bernardino Mayor Calls Conference To Talk Curbing Of Evil," May 12, 1943; "Leaders Of Valley Cities Hold Conference On Youth Problems," May 13, 1943; "Commission To Meet Demand For Recreation: Extensive Program Of Supervised Play Will Be Provided," May 23, 1943; "Y To Operate Two Mountain Camps For Boys: One Exclusively For Mexican Boys; Site Near Jenks Lake," May 27, 1943; "Selection Of City Recreation Leader Ordered: Commission Moves To Cope With Growing Delinquency Problem," May 27, 1943; "More Thorough Juvenile Court Work Is Urged: Redlands Interests Urge County Handle Big Youth Problem," May 27, 1943; "Mexican Boys To Form Y Clubs" May 30, 1943; "Juvenile Problems" May 30, 1943; "States Juvenile Delinquency In Alarming Gain: Investigator Tells Startling Results Of Six-Month Probe," June 3, 1943; "City Wants 12 Men In Recreation Posts," June 4, 1943; "Kiwanis Club Will Hear of Delinquency," June 9 1943.

[92] Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 216.

[93] Genevieve Carpio, "Unexpected Allies: David C. Marcus and His Impact on the Advancement of Civil Rights in the Mexican-American Legal Landscape of Southern California as found" in Bruce Zuckerman, George J. Sanchez, and Lisa Ansell, eds., *Beyond Alliances: The Jewish Role in Reshaping the Racial Landscape of Southern California*, (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2012), 16.

[94] Eugenio Nogueras presided over the meeting and issued a statement to the *Sun* about the outcomes of the meeting. "Latin Americans Back Program: Move To Eliminate Discrimination Gains," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 2, 1943.

Seccombe and the city council, demanding that racial restrictions be lifted at the Perris Hill plunge on grounds that a "true democracy" should recognize the rights and privileges of its citizens, especially those "serving honorably and patriotically on different battle fronts." The document also acknowledged Mexican Americans' contributions to the war effort by "enlisting in the armed forces, paying their share of taxes, buying bonds, serving as nurses, working in defense units, participating in community drives, and helping in the election of public officials." The MADC even jabbed at San Bernardino's moniker of "The Friendly City" by concluding their letter, "It is beyond belief that in our 'friendly city' we should, voluntarily or otherwise, deprive citizens of their legal rights for the only reason that they don't look the way we want them to look."[95]

Mayor Seccombe and the city council's lackluster response to the letter provoked a call for a second public assembly with an invitation to the mayor and other regional politicians, educators, and community activists.[96] This time, over five hundred people jammed into San Jose Hall and denounced Mayor Seccombe when he failed to show up.[97] Eduardo Quevedo criticized city officials by declaring, "Neither the mayor of this city, the governor of California, not even the president of the United States, can help our people. It is up to all Mexicans… to organize ourselves into one large organization, select honest leadership, and then act as one, economically and politically."[98] The decision to

[95] See appendix for letter.
[96] Receipt of the letter by the mayor and council was recorded on August 16, 1943 and filed as to "be taken under consideration." Minutes of the Mayor and Common Council: January 1, 1943 to December 20, 1944, K-11, City of San Bernardino.
[97] The *San Bernardino Sun* listed prominent community members that attended the assembly, including Ruth Tuck, Ignacio López, Eduardo Quevedo and Manuel Ruiz, but made no mention of the mayor's presence. See, "Meeting Called On Use Of City Plunge By Mexican Residents," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 23, 1943; and "Public, Labor Speakers Address New Mexican-American Group," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 2, 1943.
[98] "Public, Labor Speakers Address New Mexican-American Group," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 2, 1943.

pursue legal action came as a natural next step for the MADC as the city ignored their requests to desegregate the city pool.

Initially, Gonzalo searched for local legal counsel but could not find a San Bernardino attorney willing to take the case.[99] Mike Valles recalled, "my father initially wanted an attorney from San Bernardino… [to] sue the city but nobody around here wanted to do it" because they did not want to risk their reputations.[100] Attorney David C. Marcus, fresh off the heels of securing legal victory in the *Doss v. Bernal* case in Fullerton, caught the attention of Ignacio López, who subsequently contacted him on behalf of the MADC to sue the city of San Bernardino for denying Mexicans access to the plunge. The fact that civil rights attorney Manuel Ruiz, Jr. of the CCLAY, an active speaker at MADC meetings, attended the University of Southern California's Law School during the same time as David C. Marcus may have also factored into the decision to contact him for the pool case.[101] The son of Jewish immigrants, Marcus worked for the Mexican consulate in Los Angeles and San Diego throughout his career and frequently handled cases involving Mexican citizens.[102] Marcus's work with the Mexican consulate gave him bonafides in representing Mexican and Mexican American communities.[103] Furthermore, his interest in defending Mexican civil rights can also probably be

[99] Mike Valles interview.
[100] Ibid.
[101] It is unclear why Manuel Ruiz, Jr. did not take on the case himself. Carpio notes that Marcus was a peer of Manuel Ruiz, Jr. at the USC Law School. Fellow USC graduates from this time period, according to Carpio, including Marcus, Ruiz, Jr., You Chung Hong, and Carey McWilliams, all worked as allies for civil rights causes. Carpio, "Unexpected Allies," 3.
[102] Mark Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed: How Racial Diversity Shaped Civil Rights Reform in California 1941-1978* (Oxford and New York: The Oxford University Press, 2010), 63-64.
[103] See, also, David C. Marcus' role in providing legal counsel for Sara Rosas García. Alexandra Minna Stern, "Remembering Sara Rosas García," in Process: A Blog For American History, accessed May 1, 2017, http://www.processhistory.org/sara-rosas-garcia/.

attributed through his own experiences of anti-Semitism and his marriage to Yrma Maria Davila, a Mexican citizen who had migrated from Mexico during the late-1920s.[104]

On September 17, Father Nuñez, Eugenio Nogueras, Ignacio López, and David C. Marcus appeared before federal court Judge Léon R. Yankwich, asking for a restraining order to halt city workers from denying Mexican Americans entrance into the pool. Marcus filed the suit on behalf of the eight thousand Latino residents of the city, arguing that as tax payers and United States citizens, Mexican Americans were entitled to use parks and recreational facilities within the city, and to deny access was unconstitutional under the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments.[105] Marcus then listed Ignacio López as lead plaintiff, most likely due to his reputation as a civil rights activist and his post at the Office of War Information.

After Marcus made his initial case, Judge Yankwich signed an order instructing Mayor Seccombe, the city council, the park superintendent, and city attorney to show cause for the pool's segregated facilities. The *San Bernardino Sun* reported on the court appearance the following day with a subtitled headline, "Mayor Asserts Latins Admitted When Clean." Attempting to explain the plunge's admission policy, Seccombe stated that cleanliness and hygiene served as the primary admission qualification and that no racial ban ever existed while he had been mayor. Seccombe insisted that the "plunge manager ha[d] been instructed that this [cleanliness] rule must be enforced impartially" and that "in some cases the city felt that it should demand a medical certificate from prospective plunge users" prior to entering the pool. Mayor Seccombe continued on to state that some

[104] Carpio, "Unexpected Allies," 2-11; and Brilliant, *The Color of America*, 63-64.
[105] *Lopez v. Seccombe*. Records of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of California, RG 21. Southern California Central Division (Los Angeles). Civil Case Files 1938-1969. National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Region, Box 578, Folder Title 3158.

"members of the Spanish or Mexican race have been using the plunge" and that it "is equally true that some have been refused [entry] but as far as the city is concerned our [cleanliness] policy is impartial."[106]

Mayor Seccombe's comments regarding hygienic qualifications reflected much larger race-based fears that integrated swimming posed a threat to public health. From 1900 through the 1940s, California played home to one of the most vibrant eugenicist movements in the world, specifically in regards to the development of sterilization programs and psychometric research aimed at children of color. Lewis S. Terman, former principal of San Bernardino High School, became one of the most prominent psychologists of the twentieth century as he pioneered psychometric intelligence testing. By the 1920s, Terman's work established intelligence quotient tests (IQ) in dozens of school districts throughout the state and helped to establish the California Bureau of Juvenile Research.[107] As Alexandra Minna Stern describes, "IQ testing offered a putatively scientific reason for" segregation within schools and justified "the channeling of Mexican children into vocational instruction," since these exams frequently placed Mexican children into categories such as feebleminded, moronic, and idiotic.[108] Sterilization programs also targeted Mexicans, African Americans, and Asian Americans.[109] John A. Reiley, medical superintendent at San Bernardino's Patton Hospital, stated that the "benefit of sterilization" was "improving the standard of the

[106] "Mexicans Claim Plunge Use Ban," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 18, 1943.
[107] Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in Modern America*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 2005), 18-19.
[108] Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, 96.
[109] African Americans and Mexicans were operated on at rates that exceeded their proportion to the population. For instance, although Mexicans only made up about four percent of California's population in 1920, Mexican men and women constituted for seven and eight percent, respectively, of those sterilized. Ibid., 111.

human race" and that occasionally denying parenthood was a "small consideration as compared with the vast benefits accruing to society in the prevention of the propagation of the unfit."[110]

The common acceptance of eugenicist theories throughout the United States during the early twentieth century played a role in shaping segregationist policy not only within public schools but within municipal recreational facilities as well. As Jeff Wiltse explains, white people not only objected to swimming with black people, but also "feared coming into contact with water that had ever touched black skin."[111] In the case of public swimming pools, some scientists proclaimed that pools posed the greatest threat to public health as typhoid fever, dysentery, and gonorrhea could easily be transmitted through water in pools.[112] Indeed, health officials produced influential racialized knowledge in southern California since the early-1900s that exacerbated fears of Mexicans as disease carriers. Natalia Molina argues that southern California health officials, on the foundation of scientific objectivity, widely circulated constructed classifications of Mexicans as dirty, ignorant of rudimentary hygienic practices, and hosts for communicable diseases.[113] This pseudoscientific knowledge certainly influenced pool policy in San Bernardino.

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[110] Ibid., 103.
[111] Wiltse, *Contested Waters* 148.
[112] Ibid., 73.
[113] Race was an organizing principle for many theories of public health and shaped conceptions that citizenship was bound to whiteness. Natalia Molina, *Fit To Be Citizens?: Public Health and Race in Los Angeles, 1879-1939* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 2006), 69. Molina also uses the term "racial scripts" to describe the manners in which racialized groups had been acted upon by institutional forces and everyday people. In the case of San Bernardino, the racial scripts invoked included scientific justifications to demonize Mexican children as biologically inferior and thus unfit for access to the municipal plunge. Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2014), 6-14.

Eugenio Nogueras and Ignacio López expected such public health arguments, having heard them in their campaigns against discrimination at public pools for years. In July 1942, for example, Nogueras wrote about Colton's policy of demanding medical certificates from Mexicans at public pools when no such policy existed for white swimmers. Edmundo González, the San Bernardino-based Mexican Consul, even intervened in the affair by asking Colton officials to cease the discriminatory pool policies.[114] Nogueras eventually interviewed Colton Mayor W.F. Sharp regarding the procedures for pool admittance. The mayor told Nogueras that he felt that Consul González had overstepped his boundaries by speaking in favor of, not only his Mexican nationals, but for U.S.-born Mexican Americans. When Nogueras reminded the mayor that Mexican Americans had the right to enjoy public recreational facilities as U.S. citizens, Mayor Sharp retorted by stating that while Mexicans were within their rights to use municipal parks and pools, they should consider strictly using swimming facilities located within the Mexican community.

The park and pool located in the Mexican community in Colton, however, were not part of the city's public recreational facilities. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, these facilities were owned by Juan Caldera, a Mexican merchant, who transformed a vacant lot into a multi-use recreational facility for Mexicans. [115] Moreover, in June 1942 in the nearby city of Riverside, when Mexican children were refused entry into the Fairmount Park pool, the Mexican Consul wrote a letter to Riverside's mayor requesting that the pool be desegregated. In this instance, the Mexican community

[114] "Toman Carta en Asunto de Discriminación en Colton: Sigue La Campaña Contra Los Prejuicios Raciales," *El Espectador*, July 17, 1942.
[115] "El Alcade de Colton, W.F. Sharp, Hizo Amplias Declaraciones a Este Periodico el Pasado Martes: Prefiere Que Los Mexicanos Usen Su Alberca y Su 'Park,'" *El Espectador*, August 7, 1942.

succeeded as Riverside park officials lifted their ban on Mexicans.[116] Mayor Seccombe, on the other hand, ignored the precedent set in Riverside and instead utilize public health reasoning to defend pool policies; however, these arguments did not catch the MADC off-guard as they anticipated such rhetoric from past experiences.

David C. Marcus's most significant challenge in *Lopez* was to prove that segregation based on Latino descent had indeed transpired at the Perris Hill pool. H.R. Griffin, San Bernardino's city attorney, argued in court that the city charter gave the city council legislative "authority to acquire, own and maintain public libraries, common museums, gymnasiums, parks and baths" and that no city ordinance had ever been adopted that denied admittance to any of these public facilities based on Latin descent.[117] In fact, some residents, including the mayor, believed the Mexican community's legal action against the city was nothing more than petty retaliation for delaying the construction of a west end pool until the conclusion of the war. Displaying feigned patriotic overtones, some white residents described the Mexican community's efforts as distasteful and detrimental to the war effort. These individuals, however, did not acknowledge that Mexican Americans bought war bonds, served in the military, paid taxes, and participated in electoral politics.

Oddly enough, despite arguments that casted the Mexican community's complaints as unpatriotic and distasteful, the city began excavating a lake in downtown in the fall of 1943. The lake meant to serve as the anchor for a new twelve-acre city park

[116] "Eliminan la Discriminacion En Los Parques de Riverside: El Alcalde de Dicha Ciudad Dice Que No Existen Las Ordenanzas Prohibitivas Contra Mexicanos," *El Espectador*, June 19, 1942.
[117] *Lopez v. Seccombe*, Defense, paragraphs I-III, 3. Records of the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of California, RG 21. Southern California Central Division (Los Angeles). Civil Case Files 1938-1969. National Archives and Records Administration Pacific Region, Box 578, Folder Title 3158.

with mayor Seccombe handpicking the site himself. Seccombe chose the location since he enjoyed duck hunting at the Garner Swamp, a small body of water that would later be converted into the lake where city residents envisioned themselves fishing, boat trips, and enjoying family picnics. As excavation began, many locals lauded the future downtown lake as a site that would provide greater recreational access to city residents and later named it Seccombe Lake Park, an unbecoming title given the mayor's role in upholding recreational segregation.[118]

Reacting to the mayor's assertions that the plunge did not segregate based on race; the MADC conducted an experiment with Father Nuñez and several Mexican children. The committee made sure that the children were neatly dressed and clean before arriving to the pool in order to negate a possible rejection based on claims of cleanliness. Predictably, park officials refused the children entry into the pool and made no reference to the children's hygiene as the basis for non-admission.[119] López witnessed the incident and reported, "Last Tuesday afternoon Reverend J.R. Nuñez and three of the Mexican children of his parish were refused admittance to the San Bernardino Municipal Plunge because they were Mexicans. They were refused the use of a swimming pool which displays a bronze plaque that says 'no one is to be refused admittance because of race or color,' and which was built with WPA money."[120] Through this test, the MADC effectively dismantled Mayor Seccombe's "hygiene" reasoning for admission. As

[118] "Big Recreation Center May Be Opened In City," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 10, 1943; "City Continues Excavating For Recreation Lake," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 5, 1943; "Business, Professional Leaders Of City Pay Tribute To Seccombe," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 5, 1947; "Seccombe Lake Park In San Bernardino: A Window Into City's Decline," *San Bernardino Sun*, January 30, 2013.
[119] "Spanish Editor Asks Willkie To Aid In City Plunge Suit," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 22, 1943.
[120] "Wooing in the Dark," undated column, as quoted in Garcia, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity,* 88.

demonstrated by Genevieve Carpio, the liberal legal community followed the case closely as "a ruling in favor of *Lopez* would represent a huge step in redressing cases of discrimination of Latinos, whereas a ruling in favor of *Seccombe* would be devastating to future cases by providing a legal sanction for Latino segregation——even where no explicit city policy against Latinos existed."[121]

In October, federal judge Léon Yankwich issued a temporary injunction restraining city officials from barring Mexican Americans from municipal recreational facilities and, on December 28, 1943, the MADC tasted victory as Judge Yankwich issued the injunction permanently. *El Espectador* celebrated the ruling, describing it as a "triumph of democracy" and of "our community" and urged Mexican residents to pursue civil rights through democratic participation.[122] The victory reflected a community-wide effort, exemplified by the Valles family, who, by the end of October, with the help of Father Nuñez, had raised over five hundred dollars by contributions from over eighty individuals.[123] Nuñez frequently made announcements at mass about the ongoing situation regarding the pool and urged his parishioners to contribute to the cause. In addition, the fact that most of the leaders of the defense committee also owned businesses along Mt. Vernon Avenue allowed them to utilize their own personal money to help pay for legal fees and spread the word to customers about the case.

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[121] The *Open Forum*, a liberal legal law review, even followed the case as the ruling would determine whether *de facto* segregation rather than *de jure* was subject to scrutiny in federal court. For an analysis on David C. Marcus and *Lopez v. Seccombe*, see Carpio, "Unexpected Allies," 19.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Gonzalo Valles, treasurer, assigned different persons within the community to acquire donations for the Mexican American Defense Committee. "Estado Financiero Del Comite De Defensa," *El Espectador*, October 22, 1943. Much of the fundraising also came through Father Jose Nuñez's influence by encouraging parishioners to donate money to cause. Tuck, 156.

The defense committee praised federal judge Léon R. Yankwich for defending civil rights. A Romanian immigrant, Yankwich arrived to the United States in 1907 at the age of nineteen and received his J.D. in Oregon. In 1927, Yankwich joined the Los Angeles Superior Court and then served on the U.S. District Court of the Southern District of California from 1935 until1964. Yankwich's experience as an immigrant most likely informed his views on social justice. In 1939, Yankwich wrote a lecture entitled "Americans All," stating, "I see tolerance as the essence of the spirit of America. And yet, there have been, and are now amongst us, persons who would undermine this spirit. For a nation of persons of various national, racial, and religious antecedents, living in amity, under the common bonds of the things that are noblest in the spirit of America, they would substitute a nation of groups arrayed against one another. They would introduce prejudices foreign to our spirit… America, the product of diversity of national groups, should stand forth as the embodiment of tolerance."[124] Indeed, Yankwich's views on tolerance and diversity could certainly be reflected in his decision to grant Mexican children access to San Bernardino's public pool.

The *Lopez* case mitigated discrimination beyond municipal parks and recreational facilities. One public official commented, "You have to be careful with the West End now. They're organizing, they're getting out the vote, [and] they know how to hire a

[124] Judge Yankwich also reflected and wrote about issues of race in the United States. In 1934, Yankwich authored another lecture entitled "Racialism As Dogma" where he condemned Nazi Germany for its racism against Jews. In 1948, California State Senator Jack Tenney brought Yankwich before the California Committee on Un-American Activities (Tenney Committee) and accused Yankwich of communist activity due to the content of the "Racilaism As Dogma" lecture. Labor organizer Luisa Moreno and social critic Carey McWilliams were also investigated by the Tenney Committee. See, for instance, "Americans All" and "Racialism As Dogma" by Léon R. Yankwich, Léon R. Yankwich Papers (Collection 538, Box 30 and Box 33). Department of Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles.

good attorney and fight."[125] Shortly after Judge Yankwich's injunction, the city anticipated the MADC's next step of targeting restaurants that refused service to Mexicans. As a result, the city council passed an ordinance as a preemptive measure against the MADC, requiring businesses to remove "White Trade Only" signs from storefronts.[126] The city also received pressure from military officials to take action on this issue as local cafes and bars frequently denied service to African American servicemen at Norton Air Force Base. On November 3, 1943, United Service Organization Director W. Burdette Hocaday, Red Cross representative John T. Long, and Reverend J.L. Boyd appeared before the city council to demand action on removing white trade only signs. This effort on behalf of the black community paralleled the Mexican American desegregation case and eventually culminated in the removal of such signs. The council approved ordinance no. 1704 on December 17, 1943, stipulating that any business discriminating along lines of "color or race" would be subject to a $100 fine and/or imprisonment.[127] The following summer when the plunge opened its doors, the Mexican community enjoyed the cool water without incident.

Father Nuñez's involvement as a plaintiff, in fundraising to pay Marcus' legal fees, in providing the church as a community meeting space, and his role in leading the admittance trial at the Perris Hill plunge highlights the Catholic Church's direct role in confronting white supremacy. Father Nuñez, acutely aware of the juvenile delinquency problem in the *colonia*, had also organized church-sponsored baseball teams since the

[125] Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 164.
[126] Eugenio Nogueras praised the city's "democratic action" and commented that it had "given solution" to one of the MADC's next projects. "El Concilo De San Bernardino Pasa Ordenanza Contra Rotulos Raciales: Felicitase A La Ciudad Por Su Firme Actitud," *El Espectador*, December 10, 1943.
[127] Minutes of the Mayor and Common Council: January 1, 1943 to December 20, 1944, K-11, City of San Bernardino.

early-1940s in order to provide a recreational space for Mexican children in the face of segregated parks. Nuñez continued the sports program for Mexican youth even after the *Lopez* case in the hopes of combating zoot suiting. The image below, taken in 1947, displays Father Nuñez's political power within the community as he poses next to William Seccombe's successor, Mayor James E. Cunningham (center), and City Attorney T.C. Perry, alongside five Guadalupe Angels teams.

Figure 3.7: Father Nuñez poses with the mayor and city attorney alongside the Guadalupe Angels.[128]

[128] Courtesy of the Latino Baseball History Project, John M. Pfau Library Special Collections, California State University, San Bernardino.

Conclusion

One year after the case, Eugenio Nogueras, in an editorial entitled "Si, Mi Compadre, La Democracia Existe," or "Yes, My Friend, Democracy Does Exist," nostalgically recalled the incidents surrounding the pool as a victory in enjoying wider democratic participation for Latinos.[129] Nevertheless, even though the Mexican American Defense Committee fought against structural exclusion, some businesses continued to discriminate even after the *Lopez* decision and the city ordinance. Business owners developed techniques to circumvent the city ordinance by giving excuses that their "tables are filled," or that it "just happens to be the restaurant's club night" and a club card was required for service. Furthermore, if any other customers were let in before Mexican American patrons who were waiting to be seated, restaurant employees usually explained that it was because they had made prior reservations.[130] These examples demonstrate that the *Lopez* case did not constitute as a total victory in ending segregation in the city but at least represented a victory for the Mexican community in advancing the cause for ending *de jure* segregation.

Lopez v. Seccombe became a part of a larger legal movement in southern California that sought to dismantle racial discrimination. News of David C. Marcus' victory in the pool case made waves throughout the region's Mexican communities and eventually caught the attention of Henry Rivera, a produce truck driver. One of Rivera's stops along his route included the farm of Gonzalo and Felícitas Mendez. After hearing of a recent struggle that the Mendez family experienced, Rivera informed the Mendez

[129] "Si, Mi Compadre, La Democracia Existe," *El Espectador*, December 29, 1944.
[130] According to Ruth Tuck, Mexican American customers were still frequently denied service at many of the city's restaurants. Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 200.

family of the *Lopez* case and of David C. Marcus.[131] The Mendez family subsequently contacted Marcus and hired him to represent them. On March 2, 1945, Marcus filed another class action lawsuit, this time on behalf of Gonzalo and Felícitas Mendez, four other families, and approximately five thousand people of Mexican and Latino descent against four Orange County school districts.[132]

In the *Mendez* case, Marcus utilized the legal strategy devised in *Lopez* and *Doss* by arguing that the Westminster School District's stance on educational segregation based on racial background violated constitutional rights protected by the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments. The defendants justified segregation on grounds that Mexican children required separate schools due to their poor English language abilities and alleging that they had an inferior capacity to learn at the pace of white children. Moreover, similar to Mayor Seccombe in the *Lopez* case, the defendants in *Mendez* also referenced Mexican children's hygiene in their defense of segregation. When Marcus questioned James L. Kent, Garden Grove Superintendent of Schools, on Mexican pupils' hygiene, Kent indicated that Mexican children were not properly instructed in cleanliness causing them to have "lice, impetigo, [and] tuberculosis" and that "generally" they had "dirty hands, face[s], neck[s], [and] ears."[133] In court, Marcus strategically called on professional social scientists to testify against the school boards' justifications for segregated schools.

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[131] There are conflicting narratives as to how the Mendez family found out about the *Lopez* case and of Marcus. According to a conversation with Sylvia Mendez, the family heard about the case through an article in the Los Angeles Times and decided to contact Marcus based off of the article, Author Correspondence. For the Henry Rivera narrative, see Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed*, 64.

[132] Plaintiffs included Gonzalo Mendez, William Guzman, Frank Palomino, Thomas Estrada, and Lorenzo Ramirez.

[133] Trial transcripts, examination of James L. Kent by David. C. Marcus. *Mendez v. Westminster*, 161 F.2d 774.

The decision in *Mendez* came in February 1946 when Judge Paul McCormick ruled that separate schools for Mexican children were unconstitutional and his decision would be upheld in 1947 by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. In the concurring decision for *Mendez*, Circuit Judge William Denman cited the *Lopez* ruling as precedent for *Mendez* despite not specifically mentioned in the case. Denman critiqued the court for not citing *Lopez*:

> I concur in what is said in the court's opinion but cannot agree with the omission of the consideration of *Lopez v. Seccombe*, so widely discussed in the profession…What our decision here does is to follow the precedent of Judge Yankwich's decision in the *Lopez* case… the priest and the two editors, suing for themselves as American citizens and eight thousand (8,000) other San Bernardino persons of Latin descent, [who] sought an injunction against the mayor, councilmen, chief of police and park superintendent for such discriminatory exclusion. The case was tried by Judge Yankwich who ruled, as in the instant case, that such discriminatory barring of the class of Latin descended people violated the due process and equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[134]

Furthermore, in April 1947, Judge Denman wrote to Governor Earl Warren urging him to desegregate all public schools in California through legislative measures based on the rulings in *Lopez* and *Mendez*.[135] Denman insisted that segregation not only wronged thousands of Mexican children but also undermined the rhetoric of the Good Neighbor Policy. Governor Warren agreed with Denman's assessment and pressured Senator Herbert Slater, chair of the Committee on Education, to move for a desegregation bill.[136] On June 14, 1947, Earl Warren, future U.S. Chief Justice who presided over *Brown v. Board of Education*, signed the Anderson Bill to desegregate California public schools.

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[134] Concurring decision by Circuit Judge Denman. *Mendez v. Westminster*, 161 F.2d 774.
[135] Phillipa Strum, *Mendez v. Westminster: School Desegregation and Mexican-American Rights* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2010), 146.
[136] Two years prior, a similar bill was introduced and failed to pass. Warren neglected to support the bill but due to cases like *Lopez* and *Mendez*, movement for desegregation legislation gained steamed. Brilliant, *The Color of America Has Changed*, 83.

During the past two decades, historians have only recently begun to comment on *Mendez*'s national significance in overturning the "separate but equal" doctrine as outlined in *Plessy v. Ferguson*.[137] According to historian Vicki L. Ruiz, the *Mendez* case assumes national significance due to Thurgood Marshall's involvement in *Mendez*, as he coauthored an amicus curiae (friend of the court) brief. Moreover, Marshall followed the *Mendez* legal strategy of introducing social science expert testimony and education research as key evidence.[138] *Lopez*, however, when considered with *Mendez*, exposes a larger effort to dismantle white supremacy on a broad and interconnected scale. Despite such a movement, historians have paid scant attention to the *Lopez* case. One reason for the omission highlights how the early Chicana/o historiography has tended to focus on labor, politics, and education and neglected the role of public leisure spaces. This chapter thus argues for the examination of such venues as contested sites for Mexican American civil rights.[139]

Moreover, the Inland Empire's 'translocal world' of tightly knit *colonias*, where Mexican activists networked across their respective communities by relaying information, organizing boycotts, *mutualistas*, and general community gatherings, successfully pursued desegregation through the courts in ways that historians less often recognize. Grassroots organizing by dedicated activists like Gonzalo Valles, Eugenio

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[137] See Gonzalez, *Chicano Education*; Vicki L. Ruiz, "South by Southwest: Mexican Americans and Segregated Schooling, 1900-1950," *Organization of American History Magazine of History*, 15 no. 2 (Winter 2001): 23-27; Vicki L. Ruiz's discussion on *Mendez v. Westminster* and *Perez v. Sharp* in "Nuestra America: Latino History as United States History," *Journal of American History*, 93 (December 2006): 655-672; Vicki L. Ruiz, "Tapestries of Resistance: Episodes of School Segregation and Desegregation in the U.S. West," in Peter Lau, ed., *Grassroots to the U.S. Supreme Court: Exploration of* Brown v. Board of Education *and American Democracy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 44-67; Philippa Strum, *Mendez v. Westminster: School Desegregation and Mexican-American Civil Rights*, and Brilliant, *The Color of America*.

[138] Ruiz, "Nuestra America," 670.

[139] I thank Jose Alamillo for this observation.

Nogueras, Ignacio López, and Reverend Jose Nuñez, and their collaboration with allies such as Harry Sheppard, John Milor, and David C. Marcus established a foundation in helping break segregationist legal doctrine.

The *Lopez* case also sheds new light as to how historians can view the World War II zoot suit narrative that has been written about so extensively. Many historians have focused on the Los Angeles Sleepy Lagoon murder trial and the subsequent formation of the Sleepy Lagoon Defense Committee that featured high profile activists such as Bert Corona and Josefina Fierro de Bright. The *Lopez* case, however, has received little analysis when considering the history of zoot suiting youth in southern California. The fact that the *Lopez* case gained steamed from conversations surrounding juvenile delinquency's connections to recreational access; and aided by the formation of the Mexican American Defense Committee that featured support from southern California activists such as Eduardo Quevedo and Manuel Ruiz, Jr., attest to the importance that the case had with southern California Mexican American and civil rights advocates. Moreover, the *Lopez* case had ramifications beyond recreational sites as it impacted the desegregation movement in public schools.

Gonzalo Valles passed away at the relatively young age in 1951, however, he passed on his lifelong dedication to helping his community to his children that he and Jovita fought to protect. Mike Valles eventually went onto a life-long career in government as a political advisor in Sacramento. Meanwhile, Judith Valles went on to become the first Latina President of a California Community College and served as mayor of San Bernardino from 1998 to 2006. Valles became the first Latina in U.S. history to serve as mayor for a city with a population larger than one hundred thousand

people. While the *Lopez* case represented a significant victory for San Bernardino's Mexican community, the post-war era would present new challenges in the form of urban renewal and the construction of the U.S. 395 freeway.

Figure 3.8: "Letter from the Mexican American Defense Committee to Mayor Seccombe and City Council"[140]

We appeal to you again that as mayor of the city of San Bernardino and presiding member of the city council, you exercise your duty as such and lift the restriction against our citizens of Mexican descent to enjoy their privileges of using the municipal plunge at Perris Hill park.

We do so base this appeal on the principles of true democracy, on the demarcations of sections 51 and 53 of the civil code of California, on the distinctive fact that we are all good Americans, citizens and residents of a truly friendly city, on the belief that Mexican American boys are serving honorably and patriotically on the different battlefronts… Rights and privileges of our citizens go hand in hand with the duties and obligations. The citizens of our city and of our country are doing their duty, enlisting in the armed forces, paying their share of taxes, buying bonds, serving as nurses, working in defense units, participating in community drives, and helping in the election of public officials.

In the past Mr. Mayor, we have been informed by you and by other members of your official family that if the doors of the municipal plunge were opened freely to all, repercussions of protest and discord would emanate from the so-called 'white element' of the community.

It is beyond belief that in our friendly city we should, voluntarily or otherwise, deprive citizens of their legal rights for the only reason that they don't look the way we want them to look.

[signed]

Eugenio Nogueras, Gonzalo Valles, Rev. Fr. Jose Nuñez, Miguel J. Ciriza, Eligio Romo, and Ignacio López.

[140] Letter pieced together by author from the following articles: "City's Mexican Residents Ask Use Of Plunge: Council Studying Request Submitted By Committee," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 19, 1943; "Meeting Called On Use Of City Plunge By Mexican Residents," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 24, 1943.

CHAPTER IV

"No Approaches West": Route 66's Mexican Merchants, Urban Renewal, and the 'Unusual Methods' in Designing San Bernardino's Freeway

Few symbols in twentieth century United States history have captured the American imagination like Route 66. Prior to World War II, the highway assumed national cultural significance with John Steinbeck's 1939 novel *The Grapes of Wrath*, coining the term the "Mother Road" and portraying the fictional Joad family's experience on the highway as Dust Bowl migrants, making their way from Oklahoma to California. During the 1940s, Route 66's cultural importance heightened as unprecedented automobile ownership gave rise to the most mobile generation in U.S. history. A golden age of tourism resulted as people motored down Route 66 to experience the Southwest's many cafes, restaurants, motels, Indian trading posts, and other tourist destinations.[1]

In 1946, Nat King Cole recorded Bobby Troup's *(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66*, quickly registering as a hit single on Billboard Magazine. The song served as musical cartography, taking the listener on the over two-thousand-mile long journey along the highway from Chicago to Los Angeles, reciting famous stops along the way, and

[1] A number of books and websites have been dedicated to documenting Route 66's tourist sites and historical development. See, for instance, Arthur Krim, *Route 66: Iconography of the American Highway* (Santa Fe: Center for American Places Press, 2005); Peter D. Dedek, *Hip To The Trip: A Cultural History of Route 66* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007); Spencer Crump, *Route 66: America's First Main Street* (Corona Del Mar: Zeta Publishers Company, 1994); Susan Croce Kelly, *Route 66: The Highway and Its People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988); National Parks Service, "Route 66: Discover Our Shared Heritage," accessed September 6, 2016, http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/route66/listofsites66.html; Guy Randall, "California Route 66," accessed August 3, 2016, http://www.theroadwanderer.net/route66CA.htm; History of Route 66, National Historic Route 66 Federation, accessed November 12, 2016, http://national66.org/resources/history-of-route-66/.

eventually concluding the listed towns with San Bernardino.[2] Nat King Cole's hit record reflected the rapid growth in mobility during the postwar era and served as a national cultural expression that demonstrated San Bernardino as a familiar Route 66 landmark:

"(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66" by Bobby Troup

If you ever plan to motor West
Travel my way, take the highway that's the best
Get your kicks on Route 66
It winds from Chicago to L.A.
More than two thousand miles all the way
Now you go through Saint Louis
Joplin, Missouri, and Oklahoma City looks mighty pretty
You see Amarillo, Gallup, New Mexico, Flagstaff, Arizona
Don't forget Winona, Kingman, Barstow, *San Bernardino*
Won't you get hip to this timely tip
And take that California trip?
Get your kicks on Route 66

Bobby Troup, when recalling why he concluded his song with San Bernardino despite the road concluding in Santa Monica, mentioned that the city served as the first impression of California for Route 66 travelers. "I could have put in those other cities, but it would have made the song too long," Troup stated, "I thought San Bernardino was a good place to end it. I remember my first trip out to California, when I came down through the Cajon Pass and saw San Bernardino, this beautiful city with green hills and orange groves, and I thought, 'Wow, I'm in California now.'"[3]

[2] Bobby and Cynthia Troup wrote the lyrics for (*Get Your Kicks On) Route 66* while traveling cross-country along the highway in 1941. Kelly, *Route 66: The Highway and Its People*, 148-149.
[3] "San Bernardino Route 66: Crossroads of History," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 17, 2010.

As mentioned in chapter one, the Santa Fe and Southern Pacific railroads staked claim in San Bernardino, which served as a natural gateway into the Los Angeles basin. When established in 1926, U.S. Highway 66 roughly paralleled the Santa Fe railroad routes from the Midwest into California, passing the Mojave Desert, and ultimately leading into southern California through the Cajon Pass. After crossing the Pass, Route 66 motorists arrived into San Bernardino and, like Troup, caught their first glimpse of the state's celebrated landscapes and weather. In 1908, for instance, Antonio Scarfoglio completed one of the first transcontinental automobile trips from New York to Los Angeles, and on the final leg of his journey, following the eventual path of Route 66 through the Cajon Pass, he marveled at San Bernardino's natural splendor, stating:

> Behold the Land of Promise! It came to meet us this morning across the mountains with arms full of flowers, opening out to view the sweetest, greenest, most fertile landscape that ever delighted the human eye. The desert came to an end, cut off clean by a wave of trees and leaves which advanced from Los Angeles towards San Bernardino, into which the road plunged like a thirsty man into a spring of fresh water.[4]

After passing the Cajon summit, many travelers followed Route 66 on Cajon Boulevard, Mt. Vernon Avenue, and eventually continued westward on 5th Street and Foothill Boulevard towards Los Angeles. Troup and Scarfoglio's comments about San Bernardino

[4] Antonio Scarfoglio, *Round the World in a Motor-Car* (London: Grant Richards, 1909) as found in Krim, *Route 66: Iconography of the American Highway*, 48-50.

and the lyrics for *(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66* reveal the significant visibility that the city gained from Route 66 travel.[5]

Despite the fascination with Route 66 as an iconic symbol of American culture, the history of the diverse people and communities that shaped the highway have received little scholarly attention. The Route 66 narrative generally consists of the experiences of white motorists, Dust Bowl migrants, and business owners while often overlooking the contributions of people of color and women.[6] Moreover, even though San Bernardino emerged a well-known site along the "Mother Road," no historical work has focused on the important Route 66 Mexican community that emerged on the city's west side. Route 66 served as San Bernardino's principal north-south traffic corridor and ran through the heart of San Bernardino's Mexican community along Mt. Vernon Avenue, fostering a thriving Mexican business district as early as the 1930s. For Mexican merchants and residents, the highway shaped their fortunes, while they in turn simultaneously shaped the experiences of Route 66 travelers. Motorists poured into Mexican-owned service stations and cafes to tune-up their cars and recharge with a meal until their next destination. For some of these travelers, this layover proved to be the first time they would interact with Mexican people and experience Mexican culture. In return, Mexican merchants gained a valuable source of income not available to them by working in the region's citrus and

[5] In 1951, actress Jane Russell similarly mentioned San Bernardino in the film *His Kind of Woman* with a song entitled "Five Little Miles from San Berdoo." In this tune, Russell excitedly mentions the familiar views when twisting down the Cajon Pass by railroad before entering San Bernardino.

[6] For a history of African American motorists on Route 66, see, for instance, Candacy Taylor, "The Roots of Route 66: Why Black Americans Are Not Nostalgic for Route 66," *The Atlantic*. November 3, 2016. For history of women on Route 66, see, Katrina Parks' Route 66 website and oral history project. Katrina Parks, "The Women On The Mother Road," accessed January 24, 2017, http://www.route66women.com.

railroad industries. By the 1940s, Route 66 transformed this community and accelerated the economic success of these merchants.

The construction of the I-215 freeway through San Bernardino during the mid-1950s (referred to as U.S. 395 until 1982) marked a critical moment for the city as it cut off motorist access to the west side's shops and restaurants. During the initial planning stages of the freeway, local leaders and California highway engineers designed the freeway with unorthodox left-exiting off-ramps that did not allow motorists to conveniently enter the west side. This redirection of traffic caused a drastic drop in commercial activity along Mt. Vernon Avenue. Moreover, by luring motorists away from the west side, Mexican leadership also suffered and gradually declined. Ultimately, as a result of this freeway, quality of life deteriorated for west side residents as businesses failed, Mexican civic groups wavered, and blight followed.

The decision by urban renewal architects to steer motorists eastbound served not only to strengthen downtown's economic power but also to bolster San Bernardino's image as an idealized white California city. In southern California, for example, postwar urban renewal presented an opportunity for urban architects to reconcile spatial and racial organization that had been disrupted during World War II.[7] During the war, southern Californians experienced racial turmoil through Zoot Suit hysteria, Japanese internment, and a surge of African American migration as black people sought to escape the Jim

[7] For critical works on the importance of race in urban history, see, for instance, Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006); Andrew R. Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress: Flint, Michigan, and the Fate of the American Metropolis* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2015); Lydia R. Otero, *La Calle: Spatial Conflicts and Urban Renewal in a Southwest City* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010); and Thomas J. Sugrue, *The Origins of the Urban Crisis: Race and Inequality in Postwar Detroit* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

Crow south.[8] At the conclusion of the war, however, white southern Californians sought a return to racial normalcy and, as historian Eric Avila argues, freeways became a way to reach that goal.[9] For San Bernardino's urban planners, the U.S. 395 freeway represented a mode in which to offer white tourists access to a racialized spatial fantasy, including a vital element of the modern postwar city——a white downtown business district.

In part, this chapter argues that San Bernardino's urban architects, including highway commission members, the *San Bernardino Sun*, and local historical societies contributed toward the construction of San Bernardino as an idealized white space. Though intensified during the postwar era, the promotion of San Bernardino as a white city can be traced back to the late nineteenth century through the development of a "pioneer fantasy heritage."[10] Ruth Tuck described the "glorification of… pioneer history" by San Bernardino's white residents as a means to promote "a theory of [white] superiority."[11] Specifically, a group known as the Native Sons of the Golden West, founded in 1875, worked to craft California's early historical narrative by lauding a "white pioneer" past and by identifying and preserving sites related to "pioneer" history. The Native Sons only admitted California-born white men into their organization and

[8] Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 31-32.
[9] Ibid., 31-33.
[10] Historian Lydia Otero utilizes the term "Anglo fantasy heritage" when analyzing how Tucson's image makers developed a local history that accentuated the city's Anglo and western past. I substitute the term "Anglo" for "pioneer," a term frequently used by local historical organizations to promote a white supremacist narrative of California history. For more on Tucson's "Anglo fantasy heritage," see, Otero, *La Calle*, 8-9.
[11] Tuck specifically states "North European superiority," however, the meaning can be certainly read as "white superiority." Ruth Tuck, *Not With The Fist* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1946), 12.

obtained significant political clout by the early twentieth century as many politicians joined to underscore their Californian heritage.[12]

White San Bernardino residents established their own parlor of the Native Sons in 1888 and pressed their members to preserve California as "the White Man's Paradise."[13] In 1931, in a letter to the editor of the *San Bernardino Sun*, Donald E. Van Luven, Chairman of Public Affairs for San Bernardino's parlor, upheld the Native Sons' exclusionary vision for California by calling for the restriction of Filipino and Mexican migration, describing their influx as "two problems of vital importance particularly to California and the West."[14] These sentiments extended into the postwar era, as freeway builders included "Native Sons" who sought to extend their pioneer heritage through urban renewal. The development of the U.S. 395 thus served as an extension of San Bernardino's "pioneer fantasy heritage." From the 1930s through the 1950s, as motorist traffic through San Bernardino increased by leaps and bounds, city boosters lamented the fact that the west end *colonia* served as the first impression that tourists received when entering the city. Moreover, they resented the economic advantage that the Mexican business community had gained through increased traffic within their neighborhoods.

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[12] Jim Newton, *Justice for All: Earl Warren and the Nation He Made* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2006), 73-75; Ruth Tuck also described San Bernardino's members of the Native Sons as follows, "The implication that being a native son outweighed all other considerations in ability to speak for one's community was reinforced by a state and local organization of native sons, which exercised great influence in the political and economic scene. To belong to this organization gave one the comfortable assurance of having attained, through birth, a status which [newcomers to San Bernardino] could never hope to have. It also gave one a powerful organizational device for holding fast to whatever material advantage had accrued from early arrival. Tuck, *Not With The Fist*, 9.

[13] The Native Sons of the Golden West were organized into "parlors," a term favored by the group instead of "chapters." Arrowhead Parlor no. 110 was founded on January 21, 1888. "Old San Bernardino Pioneers, Long May They Be With Us," *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, September 8, 1907. The Native Sons of the Golden West also promoted anti-miscegenation and anti-Asian rhetoric within their monthly newsletters. *The Grizzly Bear*, March 1920 as found in Newton, *Justice for All*, 73-75.

[14] "Natives Take Firm Stand On Immigration," *San Bernardino Daily Sun*, November 9, 1931.

The Mexican Merchants of Route 66

The Mitla Café, as noted in chapter two, served as one of the primary Route 66 roadside attractions during the highway's peak. In 1945, the Mitla underwent renovations to expand their building and white business partners placed a full page advertisement in the *San Bernardino Sun* to wish them well. The ad described the restaurant as "a fairyland of fine Mexican food… prepared by expert Mexican chefs whose main ambition is to serve a culinary cuisine unexcelled in Southern California."[15] Indeed, by 1942, the west side business district served as a venue where interethnic encounters fostered goodwill between Mexican and white merchants.[16] As Eugenio Nogueras reported in *El Espectador*:

> As the years have passed, we have enjoyed seeing that many of our endeavors and residents have successfully progressed. Colonia residents have seen advancement, from a time where disgraceful signs donned businesses that denied us entrance, to the present, where in the hearts of the city's merchant [white merchant] and in the Mexican there only exists a spirit for goodwill and a desire for cooperation. For all of that and more, we are content.[17]

The description of the Mitla Café as a "fairyland" alluded to it as part of a fantastical Spanish past and signaled the restaurant as an accepted space for white consumption for white tourists.[18]

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[15] *San Bernardino Sun*, October 21, 1945.

[16] This ad also demonstrated an effort on behalf of white business to participate in the Good Neighbor Policy during World War II. See chapter 3 for more on the Good Neighbor Policy.

[17] Original report reads: "Y… hoy --- al deslice de los años hemos gozado al ver que muchos de los proyectos y muchos de nuestros hombres han beneficiado y progresado. A la colonia hemos visto desde los tiempos de los bochornosos cartelones en las ventanas del negocio en donde se les negaba entrada hasta el tiempo de hoy cuando en el corazón del comerciante en la ciudad y en el del mexicano sólo existe el espíritu de la buena voluntad y el deseo de cooperación. Por todo eso y por más nos alegramos." "Sol y Sombra," *El Espectador*, April 24, 1942.

[18] See, for instance, William Deverell, *Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

Moreover, in 1944, Worsham U-Drive Truck Company, a white-owned business in San Bernardino, placed an advertisement in *El Espectador* extending friendly gestures toward their Mexican counterparts by stating "[o]n behalf of U-Drive Truck Company, congratulations to all Mexicans and Spanish-speakers in the west side district."[19] While the Mitla Café and other Mexican businesses along the Mt. Vernon corridor invited white customers into their establishments; several white downtown businesses, including restaurants and theaters, continued to deny admittance to Mexican residents despite claims of a cordial relationship between both communities. As historian Vicki L. Ruiz argues, "[p]reference for another's cuisine does not necessarily translate into egalitarian attitudes or even empathy."[20]

Although some local white businesses and residents supported and frequented Mexican-owned establishments, the city of San Bernardino did not assist the Mexican community in developing the west side commercial district. In fact, the city neglected developing the district in nearly every aspect. For example, in 1947, more than 650 residents signed a petition for more stop signs and traffic lights along Mt. Vernon Avenue because of accidents that resulted in deaths of neighborhood residents.[21] In January 1948, one concerned citizen wrote to California Governor Earl Warren about the dangerous conditions along Baseline and Mt. Vernon Avenue, stating, "I have lived in this [neighbor]hood for the past eighteen years and have seen a lot of accidents… This spot is a dangerous place and I fully believe with your help we can have something done to

[19] The advertisement originally read: "Felicitaciones a los mexicanos y a todos que hablan español en este distrito de parte de Worsham U-Drive Truck Company," *El Espectador*, August 18, 1944.
[20] Vicki L. Ruiz, "Citizen Restaurant: American Imaginaries, American Communities," *American Quarterly* Vol. 60, No. 1 (March, 2008): 6.
[21] Untitled Column, *El Espectador*. May 23, 1947.

make it more safe."[22] Furthermore, in 1944, when G.E. Carlson ran for City Council in the Fifth Ward, he commented on the city's neglect:

> The… district needs more police and fire protection. The merchants and responsible people of that area want it. Mt. Vernon is a main artery of transcontinental traffic and lacks adequate police protection. We have a problem of juvenile irresponsibility in this ward. Restrictive measures alone will not cure it. This problem deserves solving at its source——that is adequate recreational and other facilities to take care of excess energies of young people. Where is the plunge that was promised this ward?[23]

Indeed, city administrators ignored the area through various means, including, lack of street signs, refusal to provide recreational facilities, and a failure to provide adequate police and fire protection. Merchants along Mt. Vernon desired appropriate development that would protect their safety as well as bolster their businesses. The fact that city officials chose to ignore west side residents and merchants speaks volumes about their racial attitudes. It was one thing to enjoy a meal at the Mitla Café but quite another to address neighborhood needs.

Despite the inattention to the west side's needs, the 1940s marked a decade of prosperity for Mexican merchants. In 1942 alone, at least twenty-six Mexican-owned businesses operated along a half-mile stretch on Mt. Vernon Avenue between 9th Street and 5th Street. These businesses offered a diverse range of products and services, including numerous restaurants, grocery stores, tortilla factories, automobile gasoline and

[22] Letter from Mr. F.C. Godfrey to Governor Earl Warren. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1. San Bernardino County Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1948-1949.
[23] "G.E. Carlson Runs for City Council," *San Bernardino Sun*, 1944.

service stations, a beauty shop, a flower shop, a corset shop, and a funeral home.[24] By the early-1950s, one California State Highway Commission survey recorded an average daily traffic of 16,800 vehicles passing through the Mt. Vernon Avenue traffic corridor.[25] Moreover, one 1953 study found that the west side accounted for 62 percent of the purchasing power in the city, a figure that demonstrates its astonishing economic strength.[26]

By 1940, entrepreneurs like David M. López, Juan Enciso, Miguel Ciriza, Trino Negrete, and Gonzalo Valles formed the Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas.[27] Within a few years, the Confederación morphed into the *Cámara de Comercio Mexicana*, a chamber of commerce for west end Mexican businesses. "[These merchant leaders] decided that they needed to form a *Cámara de Comercio* so that they could have a

[24] These businesses included El Charro Café, Mitla Café, El Bohemio Café, The Sissy Café, El Cometa Café, Santos Grocery, La Esperanza Market, La Colmena Grocery, La Posada Café, La Tolteca Tortillería, Julia's Torillas, El Teatro Azteca, Tafolla Service Station and Gasoline, Ramona's Grocery, Lena's Mt. Vernon Beauty Shop, Farmacia Mt. Vernon, Alma's Corset Shop, Sebastian's Market, Santos Grocery, Roller's Super Station Auto Shop, Funerario Tillie and Salazar, Florería Eden, Cano's Café, La Popular Grocery Store, Richfield Service Station, and Garage Gutierrez. While much more than twenty-five Mexican establishments existed in 1942 along this stretch of Mt. Vernon Avenue, I use a conservative estimate of twenty-five businesses based on documentation in various newspaper articles and advertisements for that year. See, for instance, "Merchant Advertisements, *San Bernardino Sun*, May 3, 1942; "Participating Merchants for San Bernardino's Popular Baby Election," *San Bernardino Sun*, May 20, 1942; "Cuca Aburto Abre Floreria en Edificio Propio en la Avenida Mt. Vernon," *El Espectador*, June 5, 1942; "Fallecio el señor Aureliano Rodriguez," *El Espectador*, July 3, 1942; "Muda Su Salon de Belleza," *El Espectador*, July 3, 1942; and "Estos amigos comerciantes votan por Ofelia Martinez deseandole buena suerte en el Concurso para Reina," *El Espectador*, September 4, 1942.

[25] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

[26] Testimony by Senator James E. Cunningham. Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

[27] David M López served as president for the Confederación in 1940. "La Conferencia de Sociedades Mexicanas y El Consulado Celebran las Fiestas," *El Espectador*, August 23, 1940.

stronger voice within the city," explained Mike Valles. "They had to do this because of the emerging business competition in downtown San Bernardino," Judith Valles explained, "There had to be unity and cohesiveness so that they could all be on the same page in terms of competing with other businesses."[28] Most *Cámara de Comercio* meetings took place either at Juan Enciso's La Esperanza Market or the Mitla Café. Esther Estrada, a former employee of La Esperanza remembered, "I would see Salvador Rodriguez, Miguel Ciriza, and other business people walk into the back of the market. I would see them preparing carnitas and taking a twelve-pack of beer for the meeting [laughter]. They would discuss business affairs, political issues, and what politicians or congressional candidates they would support."[29] In 1945, the *Cámara de Comercio* achieved a major milestone by constructing their own cultural center along Mt. Vernon known as "La Casa de la Colonia," where west side organizations met and held community programs.[30]

[28] Interview with Mike Valles, January 30, 2015, conducted by the author; Interview with Judith Valles, January 29, 2015, conducted by the author.
[29] Interview with Esther Estrada, January 21, 2015, conducted by the author.
[30] *El Espectador* lauded La Casa de la Colonia as a grand building ("magno edificio") encompassing several lots between 6th street, Garner Avenue, and L Street. The newspaper also displayed an initial building sketch of the building. "El domingo es el dia de la gran funció que presentara la confederación en el auditorio," *El Espectador*, April 13, 1945.

Figure 4: *Cámara de Comercio Mexicana* meeting at the Mitla Café c. late-1940s.[31]

[31] Courtesy of Patty Oquendo.

Miguel Ciriza, a founding member of the *Cámara de Comercio*, held significant influence in the community. Ciriza received a bachelor's degree from Arizona State Teacher's College (now Arizona State University) and a master's degree from Mexico City Normal School. When arriving to San Bernardino, he possessed several years of experience as a professor at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM), the premier Latin American university, and previously worked for the Mexican Secretary of Education, helping to establish schools in rural Mexican villages.[32] In 1936, Ciriza arrived in San Bernardino and founded La Tolteca tortillería on Mt. Vernon Avenue. "He started selling tortillas at the time because there was the need for it," recalled his son Michael Ciriza, "It was an ethnic food that wasn't readily available so he filled that need."[33] After a few months in business, Ciriza relocated to a larger building because of the tortillería's success, and a few years later, Ciriza built a large tortilla factory for which he received much praise. *El Espectador* described him as an honorable man who "embraces progress" and that the building possessed fine details of modern architecture, "meeting all hygiene requirements for the state of California."[34] By describing the building as "modern" and hygienic, *El Espectador* revealed the pride Mexican merchants took in their places of business, especially during a time when Mexican barrios were characterized as dirty slums.

In addition, Ciriza developed an atmospheric burning three-pass oven with automated rollers and cutters to mass produce tortillas during the 1940s. "My brother and I invented this [machine]," recalled Ciriza in a 1971 interview, "I made [it] with a

[32] "Exchange Club Plans to Honor Miguel J. Ciriza," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 25, 1968; "Obituaries: Miguel Ciriza, Rialto," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 11, 1972.
[33] Interview with Michael Ciriza, December 16, 2015, conducted by the author.
[34] Ciriza received his own profile-piece in *El Espectador*. *El Espectador*, April 24, 1942.

hacksaw, a chisel, and a wrench. I figured it out. We could put out about 200 dozen [tortillas] in an hour."[35] Thanks to Miguel Ciriza's creation of the automated tortilla maker, La Tolteca matured from a neighborhood tortilla supplier to a full-scale manufacturer and distributor of Mexican foods throughout California, expanding to eight factories in San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, Oxnard, Azusa, and two cities in northern California.[36] By 1950, La Tolteca served the entire Inland Empire, as far as Pomona and Barstow and to Calexico and Blythe, producing an amazing 1,500 dozen tortillas, 200 dozen enchiladas, and 150 dozen tamales daily for this region alone. In the same year, La Tolteca expanded nationwide when Ciriza received a distribution contract from a national food manufacturer.[37]

Given the tremendous success of their businesses, many of Route 66's Mexican merchants had the trappings of upper middle-class success that afforded them 'respectability' and the opportunity to enter the political arena. For instance, due to La Tolteca's growth, Ciriza moved his family out of their west side home on 8th street into an upscale area in the nearby city of Rialto. Miguel Ciriza's son recalled, "I remember as a child, we used to get a brand new car every year. My father even moved us to a twenty-five-acre ranch in Rialto with thirty horses. There we would grow our own alfalfa and had several chicken coops."[38] In 1953, Ciriza became the first Mexican American appointed to the San Bernardino County Grand Jury and was elected to Rialto's City Council. Shortly thereafter he even served as mayor pro tem for Rialto.[39] Ciriza

[35] "Hot Tacos Set Sights On The King," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 14, 1971.
[36] "Mexican Food Supplied To Large Areas By La Tolteca Factories," *San Bernardino Sun*, November 26, 1950.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ciriza interview.
[39] "Exchange Club Plans to Honor Miguel J. Ciriza," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 25, 1968

continued his service to the community, assisting as a court interpreter for local braceros in judicial hearings, representing as many as four-hundred braceros per year until the program ended in 1964.[40] Michael Ciriza recollected, "My father was very politically oriented and seemed to know everyone in both San Bernardino and Rialto. I remember he would regularly have lunch with attorneys, judges, and sheriffs."[41] For Ciriza, and like other many Mexican merchants, his humble beginnings along Route 66 paved a road to financial prosperity, social mobility, and political power.

Figure 4.1: Los Charros de San Bernardino pose at their practice grounds at the Santa Fe Railroad Depot.[42]

[40] The Bracero Program, a bi-lateral labor agreement between the United States and Mexico from1942 to 1964, approved millions of Mexican laborers to enter the United States to work on short-term contracts. See, the Bracero History Archive, accessed January 17, 2017, http://braceroarchive.org. For recent historical studies on the bracero program, see for example, Mireya Loza, *Defiant Braceros: How Migrant Workers Fought for Racial, Sexual, and Political Freedom* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2016); and Ana E. Rosas, *Abrazando El Espíritu: Bracero Families Confront the US-Mexico Border* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2014).
[41] Ciriza interview.
[42] Courtesy of Armida Neri-Miller.

As noted in chapter two, west side merchants provided vital resources to community life by sponsoring baseball teams, beauty pageants, parades, and other public events. Formed as early as 1936, *Los Charros de San Bernardino* became a significant community organization comprised of Mexican business owners.[43] A popular sport among elite-landed haciendados during nineteenth century Mexico, charrería promoted national identity and remained popular in post-revolution Mexico. The pastime eventually developed a following in Mexican communities in the United States when films featuring stars like Jorge Negrete popularized imagery of gallant Mexican horsemen.[44] According to anthropologist Olga Najéra-Ramirez, charros reinforced Mexican notions of class, labor, and gender among primarily urban businessmen that sought to present themselves as 'middle class.'[45]

In fact, evidence shows that charro membership was synonymous with prosperous Mexican merchants. For example, in 1946 a west side baseball team dubbed themselves the "Merchant Charros," demonstrating the strong link between the charro and local business owners.[46] Indeed, to participate in charrería one needed substantial financial resources to afford horses and well-tailored, eye-catching outfits. San Bernardino's charros rode success in their saddles as they savored the opportunity to present

[43] I trace the formation of San Bernardino's charros to 1936 as there existed a west side baseball team called "Los Charros Posada" during this year. "Mexican Nine Win Over Policemen, 16-9," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 28, 1936.
[44] For more on Mexican charros, see, Kathleen Mullen Sands, *Charrería Mexicana: An Equestrian Folk Tradition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993); and Olga Najéra-Ramírez, "Engendering Nationalism: Identity, Discourse, and the Mexican Charro," *Anthropological Quarterly*, 67 No. 1 (January 1994): 1-14.
[45] Najéra-Ramirez, "Engendering Nationalism."
[46] "Donkey Baseball Tonight: Merchant Charros vs. San Bernardino Outlaws," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 2, 1946.

themselves in their elaborate outfits and publicly display their ethnic middle class identity.[47]

Los Charros also frequently performed in public view by participating in *fiestas patrias*, community parades, and sporting competitions, such as Mexican rodeos known as charreadas. *Los Charros* also frequently performed at the National Orange Show, one of southern California's largest and most well-attended exhibitions on the region's citrus industry. In 1958, for instance, they participated in a parade from downtown San Bernardino to the National Orange Show. The following year, the *San Bernardino Sun* described the group as "one of the major attractions for the 1959" fair.[48] Indeed, *Los Charros* attracted a following among white audiences for performing dazzling roping techniques and executing impressive horse-riding maneuvers. The Mexican horsemen typically opened the formal charreada with a parade, saluting both the U.S. and Mexican flags, and by playing La Marcha de Zacatecas, considered by many charros to be Mexico's second national anthem.[49] These public displays weaved Mexican history, middle class status, and loyalty to both the United States and Mexico, and in the process performed Mexican American merchant respectability.

In addition to supporting charro clubs, these business owners also sponsored beauty pageants centered around Mexican Independence Day festivities. In September 1942, for instance, Mexican merchants supported Ofelia Martinez in her bid to become

[47] To wear a charro outfit often meant to present yourself in the confines of middle class respectability. Kathleen Mullen Sands argues that "social inequity [was] shed with street clothes and the donning of [charro] costumes." Mullen Sands, *Charrería Mexicana*, 211.
[48] "Set For Orange Show," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 14, 1959. See also, "Today's Parade Line of March," *San Bernardino Sun*, April 20, 1958 and "Rodeo Parade Winners Listed," *San Bernardino Sun*, March 23, 1964.
[49] Olga Najéra-Ramírez, "The Racialization of a Debate: The Charreada as Tradition or Torture," *American Anthropologist*, 98 No. 3 (September 1996): 505-511.

"La Reina de las Fiestas Patrias" and placed a full-page advertisement in *El Espectador* to garner votes for her candidacy.[50] Thanks in large part to merchant support, Martinez won the pageant and served as the queen for the community's Mexican Independence Day parade, receiving an incredible thirty-seven thousand votes.[51] As explained by historian Mike Amezcua, such public activities represented 'beautiful urbanisms,' or the actions undertaken by Latina/os "to beautify ——both in aesthetic and experiential terms—— their urban neighborhoods through cultural and commercial enterprises…"[52] Moreover, undertakings at cosmetically enhancing storefronts also represented 'beautiful urbanisms.' The Mitla Café's owners, for example, painted a striking mural on the southern exterior of the restaurant during the late-1940s. This mural meant to beautify the building as well as attract neighborhood residents and Route 66 motorists. In addition, When Fred Ross first met Miguel Ciriza in 1946, he noted Ciriza's enthusiasm for neighborhood beautification initiatives.[53] Such actions illustrated how Mexican merchants were "active agents in shaping their own form of urbanism——or their own way of living in their built environment at that time."[54]

[50] The headline read, "These friendly merchants vote for Ofelia Martinez and wish her good luck in her bid for queen," translation by author. "Estos amigos comerciantes votan por Ofelia Martinez deseandole buena suerte en el Concurso para Reina," *El Espectador*, September 4, 1942
[51] "Ofelia Martinez Es La Reina: Paulita Diaz se quedo atras aplastada por una pluralidad de 37,354 votos," *El Espectador*, September 11, 1942.
[52] I thank Mike Amezcua for early access to his forthcoming article. Mike Amezcua, "Beautiful Urbanism: Gender, Landscape, and Contestation in Latino Chicago's Age of Urban Renewal," *Journal of American History*, (June 2017).
[53] See the introduction of this dissertation.
[54] Ibid.

Figure 4.2: Vera Montaño poses in front of the Mitla Café during the late-1940s. Mt. Vernon Avenue (Route 66) is shown in the backdrop.[55]

[55] Courtesy of Steve Oquendo.

Mexican business owners' transformation of Mt. Vernon Avenue into a prosperous commercial quarter despite city neglect was remarkable in that they found ways to attract motorists to stop and spend money. At a time when severe underdevelopment plagued barrios throughout the Southwest, these merchants charmed Route 66's motorists just enough to have them pull over, rest, eat, and/or service their vehicles. Mexican merchants prided themselves in presenting clean storefronts and utilizing decorative art on some of their buildings to attract business. Some merchants made modest earnings while others built unheard of wealth for Mexicans during the time. These Mexican merchants made a name for themselves along the iconic "Mother Road" as their businesses became familiar stops for motorists. Moreover, Mexican business owners contributed to community building by supporting public events. Indeed, as evidenced in the previous chapter, this Mexican middle class even achieved a pivotal victory in desegregating public recreational spaces for Mexican Americans during World War II.

By the end of the 1930s, the automobile took over as the principal means of transportation in San Bernardino as in other metropolitan areas throughout the United States.[56] The "automobilization" of southern California eventually crowded highways beyond capacity, spurring the movement for freeway and parkway development. In 1937, the Automobile Club of Southern California's *Traffic Survey* reported one of the first major proposals for a comprehensive freeway system. The report's letter of transmittal stated that "streets and highways … are daily becoming more difficult and hazardous to travel" and that "the only permanent solution is to provide facilities [freeways] for the

[56] David Brodsly, *L.A. Freeway: An Appreciative Essay* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 91.

exclusive use of motor vehicles…"[57] Eric Avila explains that a major assumption within the report was the "unquestioned acceptance of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation in southern California" and that the future economic growth of the region "depended on the unrestricted flow of automobile traffic."[58]

The selection of James A. Guthrie, owner and editor of the *San Bernardino Sun*, to the California Highway Commission in August 1943 marked one of the most significant commission appointments in developing the state's postwar freeway system. Guthrie served on the commission for over two decades, spanning seven terms and reappointed by three different California governors.[59] At the time of Guthrie's selection to the newly created highway commission, Governor Earl Warren described the organization's function as determining policies for postwar freeway development, including determining the acquisitions of rights-of-way and supervising the allocation of the twelve-million-dollar postwar highway planning fund.[60] Guthrie exercised considerable influence in the planning of the U.S. 395 in San Bernardino. For instance, in June 1950, various highway commissioners toured southern California with State Highway Engineer George T. McCoy to assess future highway development. As the tour concluded, the group dined at The Chalet in Lake Arrowhead to discuss plans for Riverside and San Bernardino counties and included local leaders such as San Bernardino Mayor George Blair. At the banquet, Guthrie praised the commission for "its great work in educating the people of California on the necessity for highway programs" and urged

[57] Automobile Club of Southern California, *Traffic Survey*, Letter of Transmittal, as quoted in Brodsly, *L.A. Freeway*, 98.
[58] Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 196.
[59] "Veteran Editor J.A. Guthrie Dies," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 24, 1966.
[60] "Guthrie Named to California's Highway Board," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 1, 1943; "Supervisors Commend Choice of Guthrie on Highway Commission," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 8, 1943.

its members to start planning on "a north-south freeway through Colton, San Bernardino, and the Cajon Pass…"[61]

Indeed, the State Highway Commission followed Guthrie's advice as the Highway Division initiated several studies during the early-1950s on a north-south freeway through San Bernardino. In the process, the Division of Highways interviewed "all motorists leaving and entering the San Bernardino-Colton area on all roads, State highways, County roads, and City streets, to determine factually how the freeway should be positioned to best service motorists."[62] Researchers recorded the location of origin and destination of 128,000 motorists in order to determine the best route for the future freeway. Eventually, the Highway Commission considered three sites, including two western routes through Rancho Avenue and Mt. Vernon Avenue, and one route located east of the Santa Fe railroad along I street. The Rancho Avenue design faced protest from local residents as it bisected directly through the eastern end of the much smaller town of Colton. Furthermore, highway engineers and local leaders deemed the west end route through Mt. Vernon Avenue as too expensive to build as it required relocating the Santa Fe railyard a few miles west. San Bernardino Mayor George C. Blair estimated that the relocation of the Santa Fe would cost approximately ten million dollars.[63] This left the proposed I street freeway line as the primary site endorsed by local leaders and Division of Highways officials.

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[61] Public Works- Director's Office. Highway Financial Files; Roadside Beautification Files; Signage Files; Central Valley Flood Files; Highway Tour Files; Public Works Files. 1943-1957. Box R386.008-R386.013, California Highway Tour Folder 69-150, 6/13.
[62] Ibid.
[62] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.
[63] Ibid.

In 1953, a San Bernardino town hall meeting at Sturgis Junior High School took place in order to discuss the proposed route of U.S. 395, including its potential benefits and pitfalls. Speakers, including commissioner James A. Guthrie, Senator James Cunningham, and Clyde V. Kane, District Engineer of the Division of Highways for District VIII, endorsed the I street route as the "best" for the city in that it would facilitate economic growth, reduce drive times, and ease congestion on city streets. One spokesman proceeded to show photographs of the Mt. Vernon district and stated, "This is a picture on Mt. Vernon Avenue, near 5th Street showing traffic congestion, motorists unhappy, pedestrians having difficulty getting across the street, and all other ills."[64] For the highway commissioners, the high volume of traffic along city streets, including Mt. Vernon Avenue, provided a major reason to build a north-south interstate since it could ease traffic congestion in the west side of San Bernardino. However, highway engineers and commissioners failed to note that the alleged "ills" of pedestrians and motorists could be explained, in part, by a lack of development on the west side in the form of street lights and sign improvements.

The line "travel my way, take the highway that's the *best*," taken from Nat King Cole's *"(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66,"* serves as a provocative metaphor within the context of San Bernardino's freeway planning. Committee members at this town hall meeting argued that the design of the new interstate provided a "freeway route that *best* serve[d] traffic… [and] *best* serve[d] the cultural, social and economic life of the

[64] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

community since vehicular transportation is vital to all of them."[65] Political scientist James C. Scott has sketched various ways scholars can critically think about urban planning. Scott states that state-initiated social engineering projects usually develop with an 'abstract citizen' in mind as these plans are committed "to meeting the basic needs of its citizens…. and to making the amenities of a modern society available to all." What was "best" in the minds of the highway engineers and planners; however, did not take into consideration the interests of non-white communities. The 'abstract citizen' thus held exclusionary meanings that did not consider Mexican Americans, African Americans, and other people of color. California Highway Commission documents show that the construction of the U.S. 395 offered promises of economic growth for the communities of San Bernardino; however, although not explicitly stated, the economic promises were meant for the "abstract citizens" (the white community) of the city.[66]

[65] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

[66] Italics added by author for emphasis. The 'abstract citizen' provides a useful methodological tool for approaching sources where direct mention of Mexican Americans and other non-white communities rarely occur. James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State*: *How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 345.

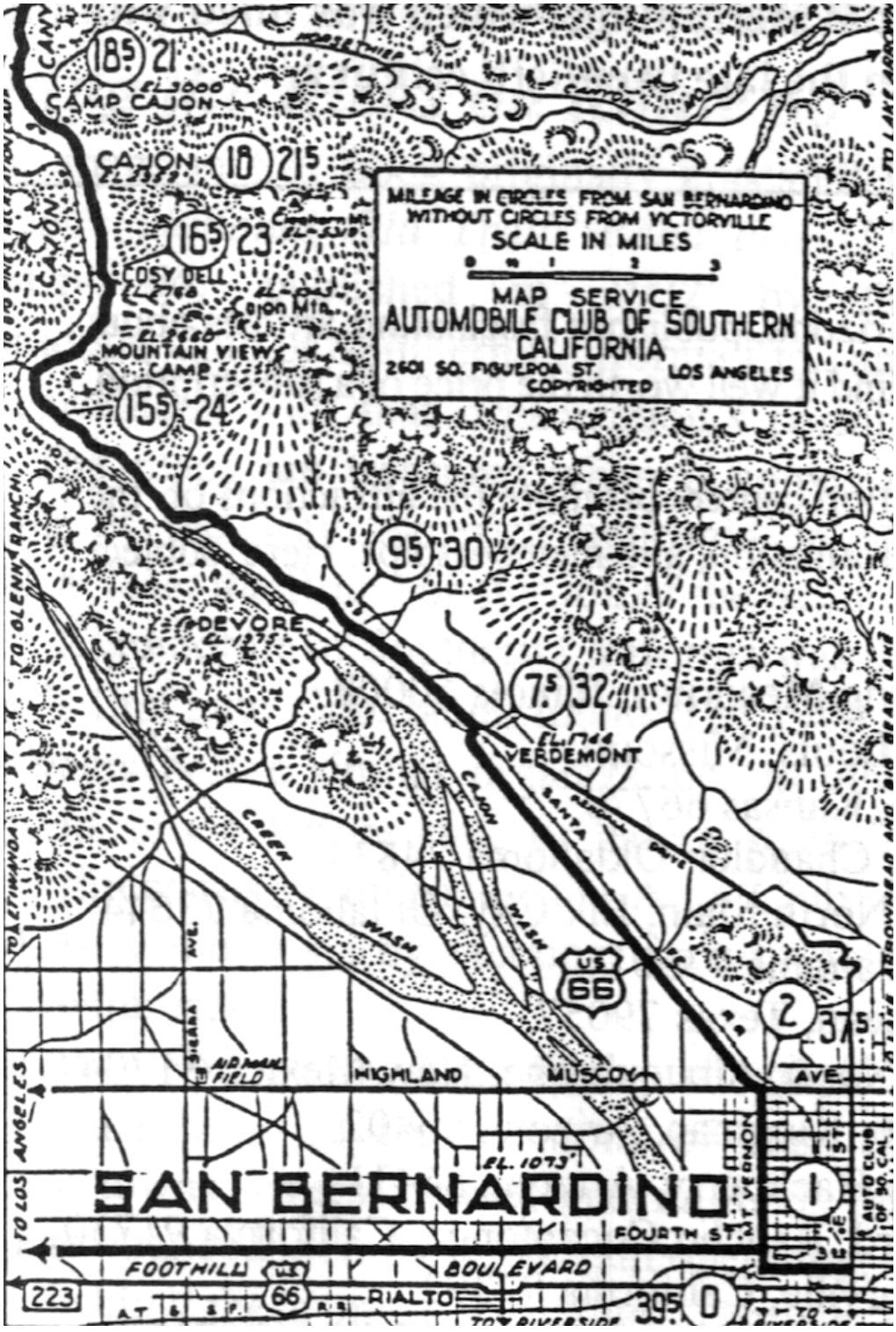

Figure 4.3: The bold route in center displays U.S. 66 winding down the Cajon Pass into San Bernardino, merging onto Mt. Vernon Avenue, and eventually heading west along 5th Street/Foothill Blvd. toward Los Angeles.[67]

[67] Automobile Club of Southern California.

Figure 4.4: A typical traffic jam along Mt. Vernon Avenue (U.S. Highway 66) circa late-1940s. Mexican businesses can be seen on both sides of Mt. Vernon Avenue, including El Teatro Azteca on the top-right corner.[68]

[68] Courtesy of Steve Oquendo.

The traffic on city streets, described as a nuisance by highway engineers, was anything but for west side merchants who equated traffic with business. Ralph Laguna, owner of the Richfield Gas Station on Mt. Vernon recalled fondly, "Traffic was terrific all of the time, even on Monday. It was very funny because usually business on Mondays were very good. The reason for that was that travelers, if [they] went to Las Vegas or Lake Arrowhead, they wanted to avoid the Sunday rush going back home so they waited until Monday to return. But so many people did this that when they came back down on Monday there was traffic like mad. Mt. Vernon was really busy."[69] In fact, by 1959, the 5th Street and Mt. Vernon Avenue intersection served as the busiest in the county with 34,000 vehicles regularly entering the junction daily.[70]

One north end business owner, A.L. Wilkins, attended the town hall meeting and vigorously opposed the freeway route for diverting traffic away from the northern and western sections of the city into downtown. Wilkins went as far to accuse the freeway project as a scheme by downtown businesses to strengthen their own establishments. In his words:

> Now, as to this route here, it looks to me like a gigantic plan of the downtown interests trying to swipe business… Now you talk about traffic. Traffic is what we want. If you don't have traffic, you don't have a business... What is going to become of our [businesses] if you are going to divert everything downtown on this freeway? … You gentlemen of the Highway Commission know --- you haven't told the people about it --- but you know you can't build a good freeway... If a man living on the west side of the freeway there, if he lives out at [Mt.] Vernon, wherever he may live… [h]e has got to cross over one of the ramps on 3rd Street or Baseline. You will say that I am talking through my hat when talking about building the ramps and things for every street [but] *[t]here is no approaches west*. He has got to go over one of those overpasses and circle around the various streets there and find your way. People living here will soon do that but out of town people [will] get lost and to get over there

[69] Interview with Ralph Laguna, September 29, 2016, conducted by the author.
[70] "Traffic Check Tells More Than Statistics," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 26, 1959.

> you got to drive up over this ramp north and drive up over that and drive down and get onto that lane and get onto that lane from the wrong side. There is no other way, and you people know it. I say it is the wrong place to build the freeway. We want the traffic in the town. The downtown people… are figuring to cop the business, to centralize the business right there, unload them from Baseline, unload them on the east side… that is exactly what they are figuring on doing and I am strictly opposed to it… [U]s people along on the various highways, on Mt. Vernon Avenue, on "E" street, on Highland Avenue, we have got our investments there and if we don't have traffic [then] we don't have business. We want traffic. When I see a lot of cars… it makes me happy. This thing of trying to shoot the traffic downtown to one little central area, I am strictly opposed to it… I am asking the gentlemen of the highway commission to consider this before they consider these few special interested parties downtown that are trying to pull this thing over.[71]

Other west end business representatives chimed in at the public hearing. The San Bernardino Motel Owners Association, a group of motel owners along Mt. Vernon Avenue, wrote a letter to the Highway Commission stating their support for the north-south route only upon the condition that "adequate signs be placed at strategic locations along said route directing traffic to the motel areas and that proper access to [Mt.] Vernon Avenue and Foothill Boulevard be provided."[72]

Despite such pleas to direct traffic toward Mt. Vernon, the only assurance provided by highway engineers to west side businesses was that motorists could access the west side via street routes and eventually turning on overpasses headed west. "[I]t appears that perhaps our interchanges or design are only to take care of the portion of San Bernardino east of the tracks," stated District Engineer Clyde Kane, "[but] in running the

[71] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

[72] San Bernardino Motel Owners Association Letter. Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

freeway alongside the [Santa Fe] railroad we had to resort to unusual methods … we cannot bring the ramps out on the other side because of the proximity of the railroad. If we had brought the ramps heading to the west, it would mean you had grade crossings again. That is the very thing we are trying to get rid of. So we brought the ramps all out to the east side, but arranged them so that service would be given to the west side of town by right hand turns. Those right hand turns… make use of city streets."[73]

Clyde Kane and other Highway Commission members argued that the left-exiting off-ramps presented the only option given the proximity of the railroad to south-bound lanes. A.L. Wilkins, however, scolded the commission for their decision to use "unusual methods" to construct the abnormal left-exiting off-ramps. Despite such objections from concerned business owners, the Highway Commission rationalized their decision with lengthy research and statistics to justify the puzzling design. Two primary reasons given by the commission included that the construction of right-exiting off-ramps would create a "no-man's land" between the freeway and railroad tracks and prove to be too expensive for local tax payers. Eric Avila demonstrates that by "emphasizing the priority of the data, planners were able to sidestep the political implication of their work and downplay their active role in the shaping of public policy."[74] Through the use of such statistical data and with support of local downtown businesses and politicians, the Division of Highways eventually adopted the I street route for the U.S. 395 freeway and began construction in 1955.

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[73] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

[74] Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 197.

At a glance, the town hall meeting appears to have provided a practical venue for local residents and merchants to voice their concerns over the proposed routing. The impact of these forums, however, as noted by historian Francesca Russello Ammon, usually served as nothing more than window-dressing rather than substantive ventures.[75] When recalling 1950s interstate town hall meetings, journalist Grady Clay described that "from some personal observation I am forced to conclude that the public hearing is a carefully staged performance designed to show the audience why the route officially agreed upon in private cannot change."[76] One highway engineer from Ohio confirmed Clay's observations:

> When we went to a hearing, we all really basically knew what we were going to do, because we knew what it was the public needed. And they didn't… And we'd go through this [town hall] exercise, but unless they showed us something that we had forgotten, because we were so intelligent they rarely do, we are going to go ahead and build a straight line between A and B, basically. Clearly speaking. And that wasn't quite right.[77]

Indeed, in the case of San Bernardino's freeway, oppositional voices to the proposed route at the town hall meeting proved to have little influence on informing the engineers' decision to proceed with the I street route. Though some engineers throughout the United States later claimed to be unaware of the injustices brought upon by their actions, they claimed that the march toward progress justified the means.[78]

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[75] Francesca Russello Ammon, *Bulldozer: Demolition and Clearance of the Postwar Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 209.
[76] Grady Clay, "The Tiger Is Through The Gate," *Landscape Architecture*, Winter 1958-1959: 80-81 as quoted in Ammon, *Bulldozer,* 210.
[77] Leon O. Talbert et al. (Ohio SHD), interview by Mark Rose and Bruce Seely, transcript, 1989, 36-37, AASHTO IHRP as found in Ammon, *Bulldozer*, 210.
[78] Ammon, *Bulldozer*, 211-212.

As the construction of the freeway unfolded, city leaders and the San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce anticipated a significant increase in downtown's commercial activity and subsequently planned to accommodate more automobiles. For instance, in 1956 the *San Bernardino Sun* reported that downtown parking structures needed to be built in order to foster "San Bernardino's position as the principle shopping center in the Inland Empire."[79] The Chamber of Commerce also created a Parking and Traffic Committee that sought to reorganize downtown transportation by shifting streets to a one-way traffic scheme "in connection with the San Bernardino freeway being built through the city."[80] The Chamber also created a Beautification Committee that made recommendations to the Division of Highways, such as banning billboards on the freeway.[81] A year prior to the freeway's grand opening, the *Sun* celebrated the charm and attractiveness that it would bring to the city and praised the Chamber of Commerce and the Division of Highways for planting 50 palm trees, 265 Arizona cypress, and 13 olive trees along the freeway. The olive trees were planted along the western edge of the freeway in order to protect motorists driving "inbound to downtown San Bernardino from the blinding glare of outbound train headlights."[82] By removing the Mexican west side out of plain sight with left-exiting off-ramps and olive trees, the Beautification Committee used the freeway to extend the city's obsession with its pioneer heritage.

Furthermore, through these methods, San Bernardino's urban architects also implicitly endorsed a public ignorance of the "other." Writing about Los Angeles freeways, Carey McWilliams noted:

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[79] "Where's the Parking Space?: Lack of Parking Said Posing Threat to City as Shopping Center," *San Bernardino Evening Telegram,* January 17, 1956.
[80] "Chamber Takes No Action On One-Way Street Plan," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 1, 1955.
[81] Ibid.
[82] "Freeway Travelers Face Trees, Not Billboards," *San Bernardino Sun*, June 22, 1958.

> Los Angeles is the city of sprawl. To sprawl is to relax and feel comfortable. For most residents, Los Angeles is a comfortable city, psychologically as well as physically, because the unpleasant can be kept in its place—–at a safe distance from most of the people. By accident more than design, Los Angeles has been organized to further the tendency toward social indifference. The freeways have been carefully designed to skim over and skirt around such eyesores as Watts and East Los Angeles…[83]

Indeed, a similar process of removing the Mexican community out of public view occurred with the U.S. 395 freeway. City and state leaders understood the significance of promoting San Bernardino as a "white city" because it would be the first impression that many travelers had of southern California. Freeway systems, according to Avila, "implemented a new efficiency in the movement through urban space and processed the smooth flow of traffic across the city's variegated social landscape. Gliding over or sunken below the surface of the urban landscape, the freeway mediated the new view of the metropolis..."[84]

In fact, white residents had taken measures to welcome motorists entering the city for decades. In 1936, the Argonauts Breakfast Club, with the support of the Chamber of Commerce and approximately one-hundred business owners, built a series of signs greeting incoming tourists. Placed at the mouth of the Cajon Pass along Cajon Boulevard, one of these signs read, "Stay Awhile in San Bernardino, the Friendly City—–Center of a 20,000 Square Mile Playground" with illustrations of local attractions such as the desert, mountains, fishing, swimming, golf, and citrus fields.[85] At times, the local Ku Klux Klan

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[83] Carey McWilliams, "Watts: The Forgotten Slum," *The Nation*, August 20, 1965, 89-90 as quoted in Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 212.
[84] Avila, *Popular Culture in Culture in the Age of White Flight*, 186.
[85] "City Leaders Join With Argonauts in Dedication of New 'Friendly City' Welcome Sign on Cajon Highway," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 4, 1936.

even participated in welcoming tourists into the city with their own privately constructed signs displaying painted the letters "KIGY" signifying "Klansmen, I Greet You." Some local leaders winced at KKK signage, as one resident stated, "the people of San Bernardino do not care to have the impression go abroad that this city is operated by the Ku Klux Klan, for it is not."[86] In fact, the Klan attempted to make automobility exclusive to white motorists. Along Route 66, KKK-friendly businesses coded their names with three "K"s in the title, such as the Kozy Kottage Kamp or the Klean Kountry Kottages, and only served whites.[87]

As motorist traffic increased by the 1930s, the idea of presenting a pristine city also grew in importance. In 1930, R.H. Mack, secretary for San Bernardino's Chamber of Commerce, touted the importance of presenting a beautiful city:

> A city's aim nowadays should be to give the visitor a favorable impression, whether he stops or not. Then, when he gets wherever it is he's going… he's going to think about that city… [M]aybe he'll talk about it and if he does much traveling the chances are he will come back and give it a closer look. And therein lies the advantage of attracting tourist travel. We are fortunately situated here in San Bernardino and we should make the most of it. Inasmuch as the transcontinental motorist almost has to visit us whether he wants to or not we should do our best to show him a beautiful city and maybe he'll come back again and bring his friends.[88]

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[86] Attracting business and future residents proved to be the underlying concerns about these signs given especially given the perceived negative influence of the Klan on Anaheim's economic development. One resident described that "Anaheim has a [s]tate-wide reputation of being a city largely operated by the Klan. The effect has not been the best. Business has been retarded, persons who do not approve of the Klan are not seeking business locations or homes in Anaheim…" "Those Klan Signs," *San Bernardino Sun*, August 30, 1924.

[87] For black motorists traveling along Route 66, potential danger lurked at every stop. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*, created in 1936, served as a travel guide for these motorists by directing them to black-friendly businesses along U.S. highways. For more on this history, see, Taylor, "The Roots of Route 66: Why Black Americans Are Not Nostalgic for Route 66."

[88] "Gate City at Center Point in South Land," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 16, 1930.

This sentiment reverberated well into the 1950s as freeway planners sought to present San Bernardino as a model "white" city. The development of the U.S. 395 served to extend the presentation of San Bernardino as such.

Finally, on October 24, 1959, after over a decade of planning, approximately 400 people gathered on the 9th Street overpass to mark the grand opening of the final link of San Bernardino's new freeway. James A. Guthrie spoke at the event, commending Clyde V. Kane for "supervising design and construction of the freeway" and concluded his remarks by stating "[w]e are standing astride one of the great crossroads of America." Hal H. Lewis, president of the San Bernardino Chamber of Commerce, lauded Guthrie for his work and predicted that the new freeway would "funnel millions of trucks and cars into the area which is bound to increase prosperity." To end the ceremony, Da Vida Godfrey, described as the descendent of a "pioneer" family, arrived at the center of the overpass in an elaborate two-horse buggy and dressed in turn-of-the-century clothing. Miss San Bernardino, Millie Eskew, arrived shortly thereafter in an open convertible dressed in a stylish dark suit. The two honorary representatives of the past and present posed for photographs with Guthrie and then tossed flowers from the overpass into the new freeway to signal its opening.[89]

City leaders used this elaborate opening ceremony not only to celebrate the freeway but also as an opportunity to showcase its "pioneer" identity. The freeway represented a "great crossroads" in more ways than one as it served as an intersection where San Bernardino's pioneer identity met the postwar ideal. Da Vida Godfrey represented the city's pioneer past——a glorified narrative that celebrated whiteness and its perceived triumphs in settling and civilizing the city——while Miss San Bernardino

[89] "Highway Hailed As a Crossroad of the Nation," *The Sun Telegram*, October 25, 1959.

encapsulated postwar modernity. Not surprisingly, no west side Mexican leaders were present or invited to this ceremony as the pioneer fantasy heritage made no room for them in the vision for San Bernardino. After all, as historian Lydia Otero has contended, "historical claims to a pioneer identity or ancestry gave Anglo[s]… the right—–and the authority—–to govern, to write history, and to publicly bestow upon themselves recognition for 'civilizing' the area[s]" in which they claim this identity.[90]

Figure 4.5: Da Vida Godfrey, California Highway Commission Vice Chairman, James A. Guthrie, and Miss San Bernardino pose before tossing flowers from the 9th Street overpass to celebrate the freeway's grand opening.[91]

[90] Otero, *La Calle*, 156.
[91] *San Bernardino Sun*.

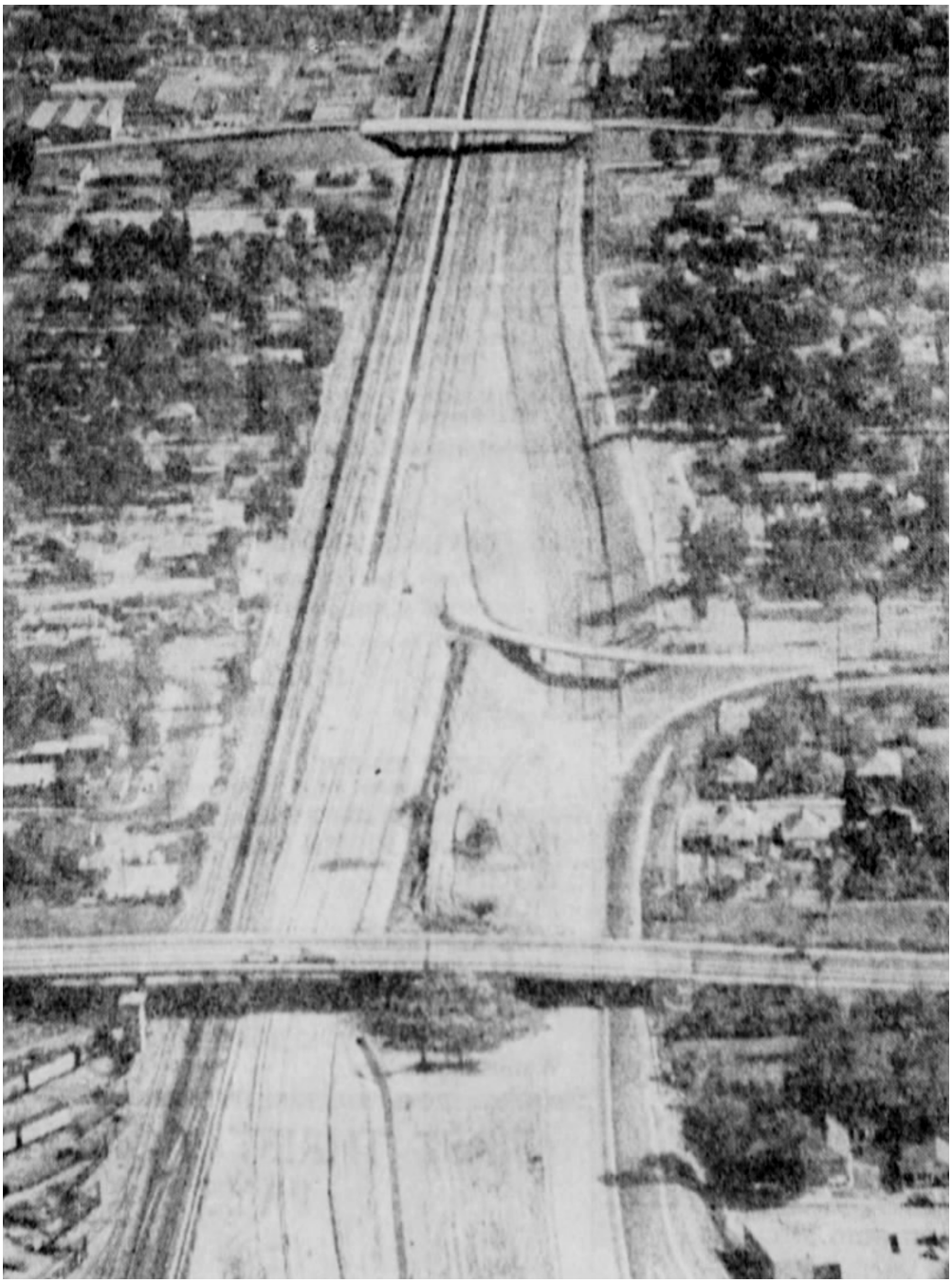

Figure 4.6: Pictured here, facing north, is the final San Bernardino freeway link in July 1959, a few months prior to its opening. The 5th Street overpass is pictured at the bottom with the left-exiting off-ramp (center) directly above it. In the foreground is the 9th Street overpass. Automobiles heading south exited east off of the center off-ramp into downtown San Bernardino.[92]

[92] *San Bernardino Sun*.

After the freeway opened, west side businesses steadily declined and the community has still not recovered from its effects. When asked about the influence of the freeway on the Mt. Vernon community, Armida Neri-Miller recalled:

> Going south, they built the freeway so that all the off-ramps go to the east to keep all the business in the eastern part of town. Not on the west side. No off-ramps going to the west side because they wanted all the business to go over into the east end. That was a terrible freeway because the off-ramp was off the fast-lane and the on-ramp was getting onto the fast-lane. They used to bring [urban planners] from all around the world to show them how *not* to build freeways. It really destroyed our businesses.[93]

Some longtime Mexican residents even refer to it as San Bernardino's "Berlin Wall" for creating a physical barrier between white and non-white communities.[94] As Alfredo Enciso recalled, "When the freeway was completed, it effectively divided San Bernardino into two parts, isolating the west side. To make matters worse all the exits led east. In the blink of an eye… business was replaced by blight. You can count the businesses that are left now with your hands."[95] During the freeway's initial development stages, highway commissioner Clyde V. Kane tried to sidestep this issue, arguing, "It is thought by some that a full freeway along "I" street would create a barrier in addition to that presently created by the Santa Fe railroad. This is definitely not true. The construction which we

[93] Interview with Armida Neri-Miller, May 18, 2011, conducted by the author.
[94] Many west side residents have utilized this term in oral histories and in newspaper publications. Manuel Delgado, *The Last Chicano: A Mexican American Experience* (Bloomington: Authorhouse Press, 2009), 1.
[95] "Leader Has Hopes For West Side," *San Bernardino Sun*, February 27, 1987.

propose will not increase the barrier presently existing."[96] One journalist when studying the freeway's influence; however, confirmed west side residents' sentiments about the freeway's effect in dividing the city, stating, "[The freeway] is draped across the city, north to south, like a wound that won't heal."[97]

For some merchants, the freeway's destruction was felt almost immediately, while other businesses did not feel the impact until decades later. Ralph Laguna's Richfield Service Station suffered in the immediate years, forcing Laguna to close his business in 1965. "Everyone suffered because of the freeway," stated Laguna, "I felt bad about losing the business but there was no more traffic on Mt. Vernon. It was a bad time but then some of the hurt went away when I received a union job at Kaiser Steel in Fontana."[98] The freeway's restructuring of city traffic patterns wrecked Laguna's service station and within twenty years most businesses along Mt. Vernon felt the sting. While Mexican establishments survived city neglect and underdevelopment from the 1930s through the 1950s due to Route 66, the continuing effect of freeway devastation during the 1960s and 1970s brought these businesses to their knees.

In 1979, a local real estate developer surveyed the Mt. Vernon district and described the area as "blighted" and "in a rapid cycle of physical decay."[99] The report concluded that over 60 percent of commercial buildings in the district fell under the

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[96] Public Hearing of the California State Highway Commission Regarding Routes 41 and 43. Meeting held on August 11, 1953 in San Bernardino. Records Related to the Division of Highways- District 8, Public Works-Director's Office, 1943-1955. Box R386.046-R386.049, Folder 69-150, 32/1.

[97] "Skin Deep: A Study of Minorities," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 7, 1980; Such urban renewal also hardened lines of racial segregation in other places throughout the country. See, for instance, Highsmith, *Demolition Means Progress*.

[98] Ralph Laguna interview.

[99] The survey was conducted by Dukes-Dukes and Associates Inc. "Mt. Vernon Avenue: San Bernardino's Melting Pot," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 7, 1980.

category of "deteriorated" with an additional 12 percent classified as "dilapidated." Moreover, in 1980, a *San Bernardino Sun* study revealed that 65 percent of thirty-five surveyed Mt. Vernon business owners believed they would thrive in the predominantly white northern end of the city. Nearly 75 percent of those business owners also reported that their profit margins ranged anywhere from breaking even to in-the-red. Perhaps most revealing was that 71 percent of west side merchants polled believed that off-ramps leading into the west side would bring more customers into their business district.

Many owners also blamed the freeway for the poor housing conditions on the west side. By 1979, the San Bernardino Redeveloping Agency classified at least one-third of all west side housing as substandard. When describing the freeway, one merchant declared, "The [w]est [s]ide is a declining slum ghetto part of town. It was designed that way. The Mexican Chamber of Commerce has been saying it well about the off-ramps… [and] it was intended to make this a non-part of town. The people just do not exist."[100] Moreover, the once successful Mt. Vernon motels transformed from comfortable motorist lodgings into transient rentals by the late-1970s. The Troupes, an unemployed family living in one of these motels, described the conditions: "During the first week, [we] caught twenty-five mice. It seemed like every twenty minutes we'd hear a trap going off in the place... [R]oaches ride piggy-back [here]…This place has no towels, no pillows, nothing. You don't get anything here but a hard time." Another tenet described one of the motels as a set of "fantastic little hovels overrun with cockroaches and mice." [101]

In addition to disrepair, the motels also played host to their share of crime. "The first week we were here there were two stabbings," one renter explained, "a girl was

[100] "Skin Deep," *San Bernardino Sun*, September 7, 1980.
[101] Ibid.

kicked around by her boyfriend and ended up with a broken arm, and to top it all off, a body was found in one of the rooms. It had been there for a while before the neighbors noticed a lot flies around the windows." The crime and vandalism affected neighborhood business as well. Raul Montaño, owner of a west side record store took several precautionary measures to stop theft, including installing wrought iron bars to his store windows. "It looks like a jail out front," Montaño stated, "We are in a rough, rough area. But I wouldn't move my business."[102] Montaño's insistence on keeping the store in the neighborhood reflected the determination of west side merchants in attempting to keep the Mt. Vernon business district alive; however, the freeway's devastating consequences proved to be too powerful to overcome as stores continued to close and vacant lots and empty buildings took over Mt. Vernon Avenue.

For some west side residents, the freeway's ramifications went beyond financial devastation and urban blight. Former San Bernardino Mayor Judith Valles explained that the freeway served as a contributing factor in crippling the powerful Mexican leadership that had existed during the 1940s and 1950s. "That really dynamic group of business leaders was not as strong as it used to be," stated Valles, "The leadership started eroding and I think we lost something to rally the troops and keep us united."[103] Indeed, many of the Latino civic organizations that once thrived alongside Mt. Vernon establishments began to disappear from the community as businesses struggled. To add insult to injury, after the completion of the freeway, city planners eventually rerouted U.S. 66 off of Mt. Vernon Avenue onto the freeway and into downtown San Bernardino in celebration of

[102] Ibid.
[103] Judith Valles interview.

the city's important role in the highway's history. This move, in part, contributed to the historical erasure of the Mexican community from its ties to Route 66.

Though many power brokers collaborated in the design and construction of the freeway, the collective memory of west side residents holds James A. Guthrie accountable for the harmful effects brought on by the freeway. As Mike Valles explained:

> All of the Mexican merchants from the Mt. Vernon area met regularly and organized for the improvement of the community. Eventually the owner and editor of The Sun Company [James Guthrie] was appointed to the highway commission and he's the one that diverted the business into downtown. He helped to divide the west side. He knew that the Mexican businesses were flourishing and downtown was suffering. It was dog-eat-dog when they designed the freeway. They wanted some of the business. The freeway went into downtown and before that happened the cars would run through the Mt. Vernon area, the original Route 66. There was nothing [we] could do because of the power that city leaders had and the influence of The Sun Company. Even so, how can you protest something that you are not aware is happening?[104]

Moreover, remembering the freeway, Ralph Laguna stated, "My brother blamed it on Guthrie. He would say that [Guthrie] was working to reroute a way out of Mt. Vernon because [we] had taken a lot of business from downtown. Businesses really suffered because of what [Guthrie] did. At the time, I didn't know what was going on but I said to myself 'Is it true? I wonder. I know he is powerful. If it's true that Guthrie was responsible for what happened, then he is a son of a gun.'"[105]

As noted in the previous two chapters, James Guthrie's reputation as an inflammatory newspaper editor did not endear him to the Mexican west side. Moreover, his position as a prominent California highway commissioner meant that he played an

[104] Mike Valles interview.
[105] Ralph Laguna interview.

influential role in the design of San Bernardino's freeway. California State Senator Stanford C. Shaw went as far as to call Guthrie as one of the most crucial figures in "providing leadership in the shaping of highway policy in the state."[106] Though no archival documents indicate that Guthrie or his colleagues specifically cited San Bernardino's Mexican merchants as undesirable in their vision for the city, by the 1950s, white power brokers did not need to use explicitly racialized rationales. Historian David M. P. Freund explains, "Zoning law and zoning science provided a useful language with which a mobile, increasingly affluent, and fast-growing white middle class could explain its desires for certain kinds of exclusion without invoking the ideologically loaded language of race."[107] In other words, institutionalized racism at a broad systemic level had permitted leaders like James A. Guthrie, Clyde V. Kane, chamber of commerce members, and other city officials to isolate the Mexican community while maintaining the appearance of non-discrimination.

[106] "Praises Guthrie," *San Bernardino Sun*, October 25, 1959.
[107] David M. P. Freund, *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 216 as quoted in Otero, *La Calle*, 8.

Figure 4.7: The 5th Street left-exiting off-ramp is shown here on the southbound lane of the I-215 freeway in 2002. This off-ramp led motorists into the eastern end of the city with no convenient access into the west end of San Bernardino. Route 66 would later be re-routed into downtown off of Mt. Vernon Avenue, obscuring the west side's ties to the iconic highway.[108]

[108] Courtesy of Michael Ballard.

Figure 4.8: The final left-exiting off-ramp is destroyed in February 2012.[109]

[109] Courtesy of San Bernardino Associated Governments.

Figure 4.9: A local artist remembers the west side and its Mexican owned businesses.[110]

[110] Courtesy of Tudy García.

In 2005, nearly fifty years after the freeway's completion, the city of San Bernardino broke ground on a $723 million venture to widen and revamp the interstate in order to accommodate for future population growth and to solidify the Inland Empire as the national leader in distribution fulfillment.[111] West side city residents immediately met the project with a mixture of hope and skepticism given the freeway's damaging history on their community. In a 2008 interview with the *Press Enterprise*, Esther Estrada, city council member and a lifelong west side resident, criticized the freeway's design for its disastrous role on Mexican businesses and emphasized that the new project presented "an opportunity to finally do something for the west side of the city... and to hopefully undo the harm that the last fifty years has created."[112] As the widening project developed, Estrada recalled demanding new off-ramps, "From the very onset, we demanded off-ramps leading into the west side. We told them "Do not even show up if those designs do not have those off-ramps! We demanded that the east-west 5th Street corridor needed to be the top priority for the freeway."[113] With support from council member Estrada and former Mayor Judith Valles, the city of San Bernardino finally adopted plans for west-exiting off-ramps. In February of 2012, construction crews tore down the 5th Street left-exiting ramp without any media coverage of the event.

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[111] The freeway widening project is a partnership between San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), Caltrans, the city of San Bernardino, and the Federal Highway Commission (FHA). The FHA contributed $128 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds towards the I-215 widening. More information regarding the Interstate 215 freeway project can be found on SANBAG's official website, accessed November 2, 2015, http://www.sanbag.ca.gov/215/index.html. SANBAG has also described the freeway as a crucial necessity for goods movement in and out of the Inland Empire. For more on the Inland Empire as the nation's largest logistics hub, see Thomas C. Patterson, *From Acorns To Warehouses: Historical Political Economy of Southern California's Inland Empire* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2014).

[112] "With Fifth Street Bridge Reconnecting San Bernardino, Councilwoman's Vision Starting to Take Shape," *The Press Enterprise*, November 30, 2008.

[113] Esther Estrada interview.

San Bernardino currently stands at a crossroads as it has been ravaged by unemployment, poverty, drug abuse, violence, home foreclosures, and political corruption, and a 2012 bankruptcy that made it the second largest city in United States history to file bankruptcy. In the past fifteen years, the city has constantly ranked among the most dangerous cities in the country and in 2010 ranked as the second poorest in the United States. Vacant buildings make up most of downtown and the west side. The city often turns into a ghost town as soon as municipal and county workers leave their downtown offices. Whether or not the recent freeway improvements will promote economic growth on the west side remains to be seen; however, some business owners feel discouraged with the city's vision for economic growth. Steve Oquendo, owner of the Mitla Café, expressed his frustrations, "For a city that's in bankruptcy and for a city that's looking for an image and you have the free marketing and free power of Route 66 right here, for them not to utilize it, I don't think they've done enough. I don't know why the city is not utilizing those aspects as stepping-stones to build a better city image. We have the Santa Fe depot right down the street. We have everything over here and they refuse to do anything. Why do you start off thinking that you have to develop Commerce Center or Hospitality Lane——everything away from the west side? You have your own little old town. Your own Plazita Olvera right here."[114] Despite the city's recent struggles, the Mitla Café has remained opened and celebrates its 80th year of operation in 2017. One of the few remaining businesses that remain from the heyday of Route 66, the Mitla Café is a reminder of the former vibrancy of the Mexican merchant community and carries on the community's historical legacy.

[114] Interview with Steve Oquendo, January 13, 2015, conducted by the author.

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