

Comaker 2611

## Mexicans: Pioneers of a Different Type

The whole race of Mexicans here is becoming a useless commodity, becoming cheap, dog cheap. Eleven Mexicans, it is stated, have been found along the Nueces in a *hung up* condition.

—Galveston Weekly News,  
1855

**T**he Mexican diaspora is at the core of our country's Latino heritage. Not only are two of every three Latinos in the United States of Mexican origin, but only Mexicans can claim to be both early settlers on U.S. soil *and* the largest group of new arrivals. So many Mexicans have come since 1820 that they are now the largest immigrant nationality in our history. No Hispanic group has contributed more to the nation's prosperity than Mexicans, yet none makes white America more uneasy about the future.

Most troubling are the descendants of the Mexican pioneers, for once you admit Mexicans' long history on U.S. soil, you must necessarily accept Hispanic culture and the Spanish language as integral components of our own national saga.

Mexicans, in fact, have lived "here" since before there was a Mexico or a United States. And they have been coming to this country almost from its inception. Since 1820, when the federal government started keeping immigration records, Mexico has sent more people here than any other nation.

Whether or not Mexican immigration continues to surpass all others, as it has in recent decades, depends largely on what happens *below* the Rio Grande. We often forget that Mexico is the most populous Spanish-speaking country in the world. It has 95 million residents, a high birth rate, and desperate poverty. A disturbing portion of its national wealth flows outside its borders each day and into the pockets of Wall Street shareholders. So much of that wealth has been siphoned off in recent

years that the Mexican economy finds it increasingly difficult to feed and clothe its population. If these conditions do not change, Mexico will remain an inexhaustible source of migrants to the United States, which is why Americans need to pay more attention to our southern neighbor than to what is happening in, say, Israel or Palestine, Iraq or Afghanistan.

TABLE 3  
TOP SOURCES OF LEGAL IMMIGRATION TO  
THE UNITED STATES BY COUNTRY  
FISCAL YEARS 1820-2008<sup>1</sup>

All Countries	74,225,320
Mexico	7,476,092
Germany	7,275,320
Italy	5,455,888
United Kingdom	5,405,725
Ireland	4,793,475
Canada	4,686,067
Austria-Hungary	4,390,779

Mexican Americans, meanwhile, face a frustrating identity problem similar to that of Puerto Ricans. They are both native-born and immigrants, pioneers and aliens, patriots and rebels; no matter how far back some may trace their ancestry on our soil, they are still battling to emerge from the obscure margins of official U.S. history, still clamoring to be fully recognized and understood, as we will see in the following story of one pioneer Mexican American family, the Canales clan of South Texas.

José Francisco Canales came to the New World in the 1640s from Reus, Spain. He settled in Monterrey, in what is now northeastern Mexico, and by 1660 he owned one of six stores in the town. His grandson, Blas Canales, was born in 1675 in Cerralvo, just north of Monterrey. Both towns had been founded by Christianized Jews trying to escape the Spanish Inquisition and had become flourishing mining centers on the northern frontier.<sup>2</sup>

In the late 1740s, the viceroy of New Spain authorized José de Escandón, a young army captain from Querétaro, to explore and colonize the

region above Tampico all the way up to the Nueces River. The territory was then home to the Lipan Apaches in the west, Comanches in the north, the Coahuiltecos along the Río Bravo, and the Karankawas along the Gulf Coast.<sup>3</sup>

After some initial exploration, Escandón set out in 1749 with several hundred *criollo*, *mestizo*, and Indian families from central Mexico, all drawn by promises of free land. He quickly established a string of settlements stretching up the Río Grande, and along the river itself he founded the present-day cities of Camargo and Reynosa.<sup>4</sup> One of Escandón's chief aides was Captain Blas de la Garza Falcón, a Canales family member by marriage.<sup>5</sup>

Over the next few years, Escandón returned to start several more settlements, the last of which was the town of Laredo in 1755, thus capping one of the most successful colonizing ventures in the New World.<sup>6</sup> Altogether, the young captain is credited with establishing twenty towns and eighteen missions in less than ten years, all but one of which still exist. The missions he founded logged three thousand Indian converts in their first few years, far more than the Puritans accomplished in their first half century.

Escandón called his colony Nuevo Santander. Tightly linked through the family connections of its original land-grant settlers, and isolated from the rest of the colonial Spanish world by barren scrub plains and hostile Indians on either side of the valley, Nuevo Santander became a uniquely self-sufficient and self-contained pastoral community. The colony's life and the commerce of its towns revolved around and were unified by the river. The settlers used the fertile lands closest to the river for crops, and those at the edges of the river valley for livestock.<sup>7</sup> North of the Río Grande, an immense dry plain stretched to the Nueces River 150 miles away. Thick grass grew year-round on that plain, and the countryside was dotted with chaparral and mesquite, ebony and huisache trees. The settlers' herds multiplied so rapidly that within two years the one hundred families in the towns of Camargo and Reynosa owned thirty-six thousand head of cattle, horses, and sheep.<sup>8</sup>

Several Canales family members traveled with Escandón's colonizing expedition. They settled first in Mier, on the southern side of the Río Bravo, but by the early 1800s, one of them, José Antonio Canales Salinas, secured a royal land grant on the northern banks of the river, in present-day Starr County, Texas. His land, which covered about ten thousand acres, was called the Sacatosa Grant and, later, the Buenavista Ranch. Like most of the original land grantees, the Canales family prospered and became members of the region's nineteenth-century elite. José Antonio

Tiburcio Canales, for example, was one of the original signers of Mexico's declaration of independence.<sup>9</sup>

By the 1820s, however, immigrants from the United States, Ireland, and Germany began settling in the region, especially farther to the north, and the Mexicans along the Río Bravo felt increasingly threatened as the Anglos started to dispute their ownership of the grazing land south of the Nueces. It was over the Nueces Strip, in fact, that President Polk engineered the Mexican War. In early 1846, after Texas had joined the union, General Zachary Taylor's army crossed into the disputed territory, provoking a Mexican army attack.

One Canales descendant, General José Antonio Rosillo Canales, emerged a hero of the war, adopting guerrilla tactics against General Taylor's army with devastating results. During February 1847, his band inflicted more than 150 casualties on the Americans, who soon dubbed him the "Chaparral Fox." By the war's conclusion, Canales had become so famous he was elected governor of Tamaulipas.<sup>10</sup>

Once the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo relinquished the Nueces Strip to the United States, however, the inhabitants of Nuevo Santander were shocked to see the very river that had bound them together for a hundred years suddenly turned into its opposite—a dividing line between two hostile nations. The Anglos even changed the river's name, from Río Bravo to Río Grande. Those Canales family members who lived below the river in Mier were now under different sovereignty than those living on the Buenavista Ranch and other small properties on the U.S. side. With the new sovereignty came a host of new laws, especially for land registration, tax, and inheritance. The new codes were promulgated and administered in English—a language the *mexicano* majority did not understand—and by lawyers, sheriffs, and judges who could always count on the U.S. Army to enforce an Anglo's interpretation whenever a dispute arose.

Mifflin Kenedy, a Florida riverboat captain, arrived in the area in the summer of 1846. The army had recruited him to operate a fleet of boats up the Río Grande. Kenedy sent for his longtime pilot, New York-born Richard King, and after the war the two men purchased some of the boats at army auction, so they could transport the swarms of prospectors passing through on their way to the California gold fields.<sup>11</sup> To secure a monopoly of the river transport, Kenedy and King decided to form an alliance with Charles Stillman. The cartel they created was blessed with the friendly assistance of Brevet Major W. W. Chapman, the local army commander, who arranged lucrative army supply contracts for them.<sup>12</sup>

Meanwhile, farther to the north, another Anglo rancher had

discovered his own way of cashing in on the fighting, H. L. Kinney, a notorious smuggler south of the Nueces, secured an appointment as a colonel and quartermaster for General Winfield Scott's troops and turned his ranch into a boomtown of two thousand people. After the war, Kinney founded the city of Corpus Christi on the site of his ranch.<sup>13</sup>

From the start, the Anglo settlers saw the Mexicans in South Texas as an obstacle to progress, and routinely cheated them out of their land. Often it was seized at sheriffs' sales and auctioned for pennies an acre for failure to pay taxes.

"Many [Mexicans] didn't know how to read or write," said Santos Molina, a Canales family descendant who lives in Brownsville. "They didn't understand their rights and those of their grandparents. Anybody could tell them, 'your grandfather lost his land, sold it,' and they couldn't prove otherwise."<sup>14</sup>

Violence against Mexicans became commonplace. "The whole race of Mexicans here is becoming a useless commodity, becoming cheap, dog cheap," wrote the Corpus Christi correspondent for the *Gabveston Weekly News* in 1855. "Eleven Mexicans, it is stated, have been found along the Nueces, in a *hung up* condition. Better so than to be left on the ground for the howling lobos to tear in pieces, and then howl the more for the red peppers that burn his insides raw."<sup>15</sup> Lynching of Mexicans continued into the early 1900s, with Canales family members witnessing one as late as 1917.<sup>16</sup>

Whole communities were driven from the towns of Austin, Seguin, and Uvalde. A scant six years after Texas independence, thirteen Anglos had gobbled up 1.3 million acres in "legal" sales from 358 Mexican landowners.<sup>17</sup> Among them was Scottish immigrant John Young, who opened a general store in Brownsville after the war and married Salome Ball, member of a prominent Mexican land-grant family, thus gaining control of her family's estate. Edinburg, seat of Texas's Hidalgo County, is named after Young's native city in Scotland. After Young died in 1859, his widow married his clerk, John McAllen. By the 1890s, the McAllen and Young ranches measured 160,000 acres, and the onetime clerk, following in the footsteps of his old boss, had his own town, McAllen.<sup>18</sup>

Merchants Stillman, King, and Kennedy soon joined the land rush as well. Stillman gained control of the giant Espiritu Santo Land Grant by buying up fraudulent squatters' titles and outlasting the real Mexican owners in the courts. He founded Brownsville on part of the estate and turned it into the gambling, saloon, and prostitution center of the region.<sup>19</sup> While Stillman concentrated on the land around Brownsville, his steamboat partners King and Kennedy turned their attention to cobbling

together cattle empires in the northern countryside. Stephen Powers, the sharpest land lawyer in the region, was their able assistant in that effort. Like Young and McAllen, Kennedy got his start by marrying a wealthy Mexican. In his case, her name was Petra Vela de Vidal.<sup>20</sup> The Kennedy Ranch, "La Para," eventually stretched to 325,000 acres and employed three hundred ranch hands, virtually all of them Mexican.<sup>21</sup> As for King, by the time he died in 1885, his ranch encompassed 500,000 acres, employed more than five hundred people, and even contained its own town, Santa Gertrudis.

"The Santa Gertrudis ranch house," recalled former Texas Ranger George Durham, in a chilling insight into life on the Nueces Strip, "was more like an army arsenal inside. In one big room there were eighty stands of Henry repeating rifles and maybe a hundred boxes of shells. Two men stood in the lookout tower day and night, and there was always a man at the ready for each of those rifles."<sup>22</sup>

That arsenal was there for a reason. Many of the new land barons rustled cattle from one another and from the herds of the *tejanos*. Richard King, an infamous cattle thief, was said to have turned the Texas Rangers into his own private security force. "His neighbors mysteriously vanish whilst his territory extends over entire counties," wrote a newspaper correspondent for the *Corpus Christi World* about King in 1878. "Fifty cents a head is paid to Mexicans for branding cattle on the plains with the King monogram, and somehow no one's herds can be induced to increase but those of the future cattle king."<sup>23</sup>

Mexicans who dared challenge the Anglo encroachment were often branded as bandits and outlaws. The most famous "bandit" of them all, Juan "Cheno" Cortina, was another Canales ancestor.

In July 1859, Cortina, whose mother owned the Rancho del Carmen, shot a Brownsville marshal after witnessing him whip a drunken Mexican. He then rode into town with fifty followers, raised the Mexican flag, and shot to death the local jailer and four other whites who had been terrorizing Mexicans. The town's whites dispatched a militia and a company of Texas Rangers to capture him, but Cortina raised an army of twelve hundred Mexicans and routed them. He then declared a war against the Anglo settler minority.

For the next two decades, Cortina's band launched sporadic guerrilla raids into Texas from safe havens on the Mexican side. Neither the Rangers nor a contingent of federal troops dispatched to the territory, and commanded by Colonel Robert E. Lee, was able to capture him. Accused of cattle rustling and indicted for treason, Cortina became the most feared Mexican American in Texas. Mere rumors that he was in the

vicinity panicked whole towns.<sup>24</sup> The only respite from his attacks occurred between 1862 and 1867, when Cortina declared a truce with the United States and turned his guns on the French army, after it occupied Mexico and installed the Austrian archduke Maximilian as emperor. One of Cortina's top officers during the resistance to France was Servando Canales, a veteran of the Mexican-American war and son of General José Antonio Canales. Like his father, Servando Canales went on to serve as governor of Tamaulipas. Cortina, however, remained the most powerful politician in the region until he was arrested in 1875 by President Porfirio Díaz at the request of the United States and thrown into jail in Mexico City.

The Cortina wars slowed but did not stop the Anglo expropriation of Mexican wealth. In 1850, property in Texas had been pretty evenly divided between the two groups. That year, according to the U.S. Census, *tejanos* comprised 32.4 percent of the workers in the state and owned 33 percent of its wealth. Over the next twenty years, however, things changed drastically. By 1870, *tejanos* were 47.6 percent of the workforce but possessed only 10.6 percent of the wealth.<sup>25</sup>

In South Texas, where Mexicans remained the overwhelming majority, one-third of the ranches and all the large estates were in Anglo hands by 1900. Only the smaller *tejano* farmers clung to their titles. Among the diehards was Luciano Canales, who ran the family's Buenavista Ranch. Because of Luciano's determination, Fiaco Salazar, his great-grandson, still retains title to two hundred acres of the old ranch. "They had to protect it with guns," Salazar, a San Antonio army engineer, recalled in a 1992 interview. "Any poor fellow who didn't, lost it."<sup>26</sup> Even as thousands lost their land, though, other Mexicans kept migrating into the Southwest. More than a million arrived in the region between 1900 and 1930.<sup>27</sup>

By the 1920s, the Rio Grande Valley was as segregated as apartheid South Africa. Mexicans comprised more than 90 percent of its population, but the white minority controlled most of the land and all the political power. Imelda Garza, a retired public school teacher who was born in the town of Benavides in 1923 to Gervasio and Manuelita Canales, never met an Anglo until she was thirteen. "Not too many whites, either, just a few workers, pure rednecks," Imelda said. "I met a black person for the first time when I moved to Kingsville to teach at Herrel Elementary School."

Her brother-in-law, Santos Molina, admits to "having seen Anglos

around" during his childhood in Brownsville, "but I only got to meet them when I went to Oiltown high school."<sup>28</sup>

The first organized attempt to break down that segregation came in 1929, when seven Mexican organizations met in Corpus Christi to found the League of United Latin American Citizens. LULAC's goal from its inception was the complete assimilation of Mexicans and their acceptance as equal citizens by Anglo society. To accomplish that, LULAC made its chief goal teaching Mexicans to master English.<sup>29</sup>

Once the Great Depression hit and unemployment surged among whites, though, not even Mexicans who spoke fluent English escaped the anti-immigrant hysteria. More than 500,000 were forcibly deported during the 1930s, among them many who were U.S. citizens. One of the few areas of the country spared the hysteria was the Rio Grande Valley, where Mexicans were able to find safety in numbers.

"There were no jobs, but the land took good care of us," recalled Canales family member Santos Molina, now a San Antonio high school teacher. "We planted corn and grain and watermelons, calabazos and beans. We had four or five milk cows. We hunted rabbits and deer. Goats would cost you about a dollar then, so we had plenty to eat."<sup>30</sup>

The onset of World War II brought yet another reversal in U.S. policy toward Mexican immigrants. Three months after President Roosevelt declared war on the Axis powers, the United States and Mexico reached agreement on a new program to import Mexican workers. As many as 100,000 Mexicans a year were soon being contracted to work here. It was called the *bracero* program, and it would last in one form or another until 1965. While it did, it brought millions of migrants into the country for seasonal work, and each year after the harvest a good portion of them found a way to stay in the country illegally. Not that most Americans cared. Until the 1960s, few paid attention to the human traffic along the border, least of all the inhabitants of the area, for whom the international demarcation line was more a fantasy of the politicians in Washington than an everyday reality.<sup>31</sup>

But World War II did something else. It transformed the thinking of a whole generation of Mexican American men who served in it, just as it did to Puerto Ricans. More than 375,000 Mexican Americans saw active duty in the U.S. armed forces, many in critical combat roles. From Texas alone, five *mexicanos* were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. In the Battle of Bataan, as many as a quarter of the wounded were Mexican American.<sup>32</sup>

Santos Molina and Manuel Garza were two Canales family members who served in combat, in the same army so many of their ancestors had

fought against. Molina enlisted in 1940 and was assigned to an airborne unit of the Seventh Infantry Division, where he led a squad onto Normandy beach on the second day of the Allied invasion of France. Nearly all his men were killed or wounded that day, and while Molina survived unscathed, he was severely wounded by machine gun fire later in Germany. When the war ended, the Mexican American veterans returned home to much of the same discrimination and racism they had left behind, only this time they refused to accept it.

Manuel Garza, who served in a field artillery unit with the Special Forces in Europe, returned home to Kingsville, the nerve center of the King family ranch and one of the most racist towns in South Texas. "In town, the White Kitchens chain had cooks and busboys who were Mexicans, but they wouldn't let the Mexicans come in to eat," Garza recalled. "One day a bunch of us in uniform just walked in and forced them to serve us. The same thing with Kings Inn. It was in a neighborhood of pure Germans. Those people never let us in there. When we came out of the army, we started making a whole lot of noise and they let us eat. Today, they have more Mexican customers in Kings Inn than anything else."

Similar protests erupted throughout the Southwest. When Brownsville's Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Sergeant José Mendoza López, was denied service at a local restaurant, it touched off a furor among *mexicanos*. Middle-class organizations like LULAC, and the newly formed American GI Forum, pointed with pride to the war records of their members and demanded equal treatment.<sup>33</sup>

For the first time, the Mexicans even dared to challenge the Anglo minority's monopoly of political power. While working as a Kingsville trainee officer in the 1950s, Nerio Garza, Manuel Garza's brother, became so angry at the Anglos' racism he decided to run for office. He roused the town's Mexican population against the lack of paved streets and lights and sewers on their side of town, and handily won his first race for town commissioner, where he remained for most of the next thirty years.

Despite Garza's victory in Kingsville, and a few others in Los Angeles and San Antonio, the cry for equality and respect from the generation of World War II went largely unheard, and segregationist policies against Mexicans persisted into the 1960s.

"The first time I was made to sit on the sidewalk for speaking Spanish I was six years old," recalled Sandra Garza, the daughter of Imelda and Manuel Garza. "I got caught because I was speaking to the janitor. He was *mexicano* and my next-door neighbor."<sup>34</sup>

By the 1960s, the majority of students at nearby Texas A&M were Mexican Americans. For the first time, they ran a slate that won control

of the student government. They began calling themselves Chicanos, turning the slang word that had always been used among the poor in the Southwest to describe those born north of the Rio Grande into a badge of pride. The moniker became a way for young people to connect culturally with the Mexican homeland, in much the same way that the change from "Negro" to "black" had affected the civil rights movement in the South.

Some Chicanos even started referring to the Southwest as Aztlán, the name Aztec historians in the Codex Ramírez (1583-1587) gave to the area north of Mexico from which their ancestors had come. Reacting to the decades of Anglo racism, they now quixotically saw Aztlán as a historic homeland in which Mexicans would eventually become the majority again, recovering their land from the white settlers.

South Texas was emerging as the center of Chicano unrest. When a slate of five working-class Mexican Americans won control of the Crystal City council in the Rio Grande Valley in 1963, the victory electrified Chicanos throughout the Southwest. Shortly afterward, a strike at La Casta Farms by César Chávez's United Farm Workers union stirred young Chicanos with visions of recapturing majority rule—at least in South Texas.

One of the most influential groups to arise during the period was the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO), founded in San Antonio by Willie Velasquez, a young community organizer for the Catholic Bishop's Committee on the Spanish Speaking, and Crystal City's José Ángel Gutiérrez. Gutiérrez and Velasquez, both sons of Mexican immigrants, would end up symbolizing two trends within the new movement. Gutiérrez, whose father fought with Pancho Villa in the Mexican revolution, was a charismatic college-educated radical. He proselytized throughout the Southwest for an independent political party of Chicanos to counter the Democratic and Republican parties, both of which he saw as racist.

Willie Velasquez, whose family also fled Mexico during the revolution, was more pragmatic. His parents had grown up in the Chicano *barrio* on the West Side of San Antonio, where his father became a meatpacking worker after returning from World War II.<sup>35</sup> One of Willie's classmates at St. Mary's College in San Antonio was a tall, gangly Chicano named Henry Cisneros. Velasquez was never comfortable with the more revolutionary ideas of Gutiérrez. This may have been due in part to his Catholic education or to the influence of Congressman Henry González, the local hero who paved the road to power for Mexican Americans through mainstream electoral politics, or to his longtime friendship with Cisneros. Whatever the reason, Gutiérrez and Velasquez eventually parted ways. Gutiérrez went on to found the militant Raza Unida Party,



while Velasquez started the far less confrontational Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project, and turned into the foremost advocate of Hispanic voting rights in the county.

Guiérrez's new group, however, caught fire much more with the young Chicanos. It won a series of election victories in 1969 in a bunch of small Texas towns, including Crystal City and Kingsville. In Kingsville, a small Texas state led by the party's state chairman, Carlos Guerra, and aided by Chicano students from Texas A&M, sought to capture control of the city council. Their slate challenged both the white ranchers and the older generation of established *tejanos*, among them Nerio Garza. Many of the militants regarded Garza as too accommodating to the white establishment. Their attack against him divided entire families, including the Canales, and the bitterness engendered by those battles remains to this day. Sandra Garza joined the militants against her uncle Nerio, while Nerio's daughter, Diane Garza, defended him.<sup>36</sup>

"We had shithheads like that Guerra," recalled Diane Garza, a longtime administrator in the Brownsville public schools, during an interview decades later. "Those sons of bitches were instilling 'Burn the *gringo*, hate the *gringo*,' but yet in turn their girlfriends were all *gringas*. They came here and instilled all this drop-out-of-school bit, but their radical ways were not in the best interests of the town."<sup>37</sup>

The conflict even turned violent.

"I was teaching here in Brownsville," recalled Diane Garza, "and I received a phone call that they were planning on lynching my dad. I still remember the night vividly. I call them 'La Raza Sumida.' They had gasoline cans in their hands. We had to call not only the highway patrol but the Texas Rangers. They couldn't even begin to break the crowd of idiots. We had locked my dad in the house. They were saying things like 'Nerio is a coconut.' But at gut level everyone knew who Nerio Garza was. He stood up to the ranch, to the big guys and the little ones, it didn't make any difference."

Carlos Guerra's group, some of its supporters conceded years later, pitted Mexicans against one another unnecessarily. "They thought my uncle was a *vendido*," recalled Sandra Garza. "But it was just the old blood not understanding the new. If you look at it now, they could have worked well together."

After the Kingsville election, Sandra Garza, who never forgot her parents' accounts of the Canales family legacy, or their stories of the land the *gringos* had taken from them, threw herself into the Chicano *movimiento*. For the next decade, she moved from town to town in the West and Southwest, as a teacher and community organizer, trying to

reclaim those lost lands and that cultural tradition. She worked in Colorado with Corky González's Crusade for Justice, in northern New Mexico with Reies López Tijerina's Alianza Federal de Pueblos Libres (Federal Alliance of Free Towns), then in California and Texas with labor unions organizing Latino workers. When I first interviewed her in 1992, Garza was a staff organizer in El Paso, Texas, with the Union of Industrial Needle Trade Employees (UNITE).

The Canales story has been repeated over and over in the Southwest by other Chicano families. It is sometimes difficult for white Americans to understand how deep the roots of Mexican Americans are in that part of the country. Most whites who live in the region, after all, only arrived there during the last fifty years. At best, their migration story goes back a few generations, hardly comparable to that of the old Mexicans. Farm-worker leader César Chávez's family, for instance, moved to Arizona in 1880, long before it was a state. The family owned land there until the Great Depression bankrupted them and forced them to move to California as migrant laborers. López Tijerina, who was born in Texas in 1926, often recounted the story of how his great-grandfather was killed by Anglos who stole the family's land.

Even many recently arrived Mexican immigrants can usually point to long historical ties to the Southwest. In a study of the old Mexican neighborhood of Lemon Grove in San Diego, for instance, ethnographer Robert Alvarez documents nearly two hundred years of a migratory circuit between Mexico's Baja California and our own state of California by the same extended families of miners and farmers. Family members would travel back and forth between the two territories in response to economic conditions. The two Californias, Alvarez maintains, have historically been one in geography, economics and culture. Only in the last fifty years did the border become a barrier to those ties. Furthermore, Mexican family networks and solidarity were actually strengthened through the migratory circuit as individual family members relied increasingly on the remittances of distant relatives for survival.<sup>38</sup>

Mexican labor. The Mexican market. Mexican music and food. Mexican television and radio. Mexican names of cities, states, rivers, and mountains. Anglo America continues to deny how much the social, cultural, political, and economic reality of the West and Southwest has been shaped by Mexicans. They have been part of its creation and they will form an even bigger part of its future. That undeniable Mexican heritage will haunt the rest of us until we accept it as our own.

11. Gerald Meyer, *Vito Marcantonio: Radical Politician, 1902-1954* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989), 27-29, gives an in-depth look at Marcantonio.
12. Author's interview with Eugenio Morales.
13. See interview with Teodoro Moscoso, former head of industrial development for Puerto Rico in documentary *Manos a La Obra: The Story of Operation Bootstrap*, Center for Puerto Rican Studies of the City University of New York.
14. Juan Gonzalez, "The Turbulent Progress of Puerto Ricans in Philadelphia," *Bulletin of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies (CPRS)* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1987-1988): 34-41; and Eugene Rivera, "The Puerto Rican Colony of Lorain, Ohio," *Bulletin of CPRS* 2, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 12-14.
15. Frank Santiana was a teenage Puerto Rican gang member who made front-page headlines in 1955 when he murdered a white boy. Facing the electric chair if convicted, he pleaded guilty to second-degree murder and was sentenced to twenty-five years to life. See "Gangster, 17, Admits Slaying Model Boy, 15," *New York Daily News*, May 2, 1955. Likewise, Salvador "Capeman" Agron was captured after a sensational manhunt, and subsequently convicted for the fatal 1959 stabbing of two white boys in a gang fight in the Hell's Kitchen area of New York. Agron, who was eventually pardoned by Governor Nelson Rockefeller after spending nearly two decades in jail, was the subject of a controversial and short-lived Broadway musical by Paul Simon. See "Slew Two 'Because I Felt Like It,' Says Capeman," *New York Daily News*, September 3, 1959.
16. Richie Pérez, "From Assimilation to Annihilation: Puerto Rican Images in U.S. Films," *Centro Bulletin* 2, no. 8 (Spring 1990): 8-27.
17. Fortunato Vizcarondo, *Dinga y Mandinga* (San Juan: Baldrich, 1942); Toni Morrison, "On the Backs of Blacks," *Time* 142, no. 21 (Fall 1993): 57.
18. While the definitive account of Puerto Rican involvement in the 1960s upheaval and how it affected the overall society has yet to be written, those interested in that period, and especially the Young Lords, should see Alfredo López, *Puerto Rican Papers: Notes on the Re-Emergence of a Nation* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1973), 321-39; and Michael Abramson, *Palante: Young Lords Party* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).
19. Author's interview with Eddie Palmieri.
20. The film *The Battle of Algiers* was regularly shown by the Young Lords in education classes within the organization and in street showings to the community.

#### CHAPTER 5: MEXICANS

1. *1996 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service* (October 1997), 28.
2. Conan T. Wood, "Cerralvo as the Mother City of the Lower Rio Bravo Valley," in *Selections from the Collected Papers of the Lower Rio Bravo Historical Society: 1949-1979* vol. 1 (Halingen, Tex.: Lower Rio Bravo Valley Historical Society, 1982). Wood presented this talk to the society on October 28, 1964, 1-3.
3. J. B. Wilkinson, *Laredo and the Rio Bravo Frontier* (Austin: Jenkins Publishing Company, 1975), 11-12.
4. Florence Johnson Scott, *Historical Heritage of the Lower Rio Grande* (San Antonio: Naylor, 1937), 8-21; *Royal Land Grants North of the Rio Grande, 1777-1821* (Rio Grande City: La Retama Press, 1969), 1-17.

5. Ana Josefa de la Garza, a relative of the captain, married a son of Blas Canales Jr., José Antonio Canales, in 1755.
6. A Canales family member, José López, founded Lopeño, which still exists just outside Mier, according to family members and a Texas State Historical Society marker at Lopeño.
7. Wilkinson, *Laredo and the Rio Bravo Frontier*, 17-27; also Johnson Scott, *Historical Heritage of the Lower Rio Bravo*, 8-21; also Robert J. Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest* (Austin: University of Texas, 1981), 33-39.
8. Johnson Scott, *Royal Land Grants North of the Rio Bravo, 1777-1821*, 7.
9. José Joaquín Canales, great-grandson of the original pioneer, served as a town councilman in Monterrey for more than thirty years and as mayor three times. His cousin, Rev. Manuel María Canales, founded the area's first public school in 1812, led the citizens of Monterrey in publicly swearing allegiance to the new Mexican government after independence, and later represented the city in the national legislature. See Israel Cavazos Garza, *Diccionario Biográfico de Nuevo León*, vol. 1, A-L (Monterrey: Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 1984), 70-71.
10. John S. D. Eisenhower, *So Far from God: The U.S. War with Mexico, 1846-1848* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 103. Originally a Federalist who had twice rebelled against the tyranny of President Santa Anna and even welcomed Texas adventurers in his army, Canales made peace with the Mexican government by the mid-1840s and received a colonel's commission in the army. Soon after, along with the notorious General Ampudia, he turned back one invasion by a group of Texas filibusters at the Battle of El Rosillo in Mier. During that battle, Ampudia and Canales captured 250 Anglo prisoners and executed 17 of them on orders of President Santa Anna. The victory earned Canales a promotion to general.
11. John C. Rayburn and Virginia Kemp Rayburn, *Century of Conflict, 1821-1913: Incidents in the Lives of William Neale and William A. Neale, Early Settlers in South Texas* (Waco: Texian Press, 1966), 57-61.
12. Pat Kelley, *River of Lost Dreams* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986), 46-71.
13. Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 43.
14. Author's interview with Canales family member Santos Molina.
15. *The Tejano Yearbook: 1519-1978: A Selective Chronicle of the Hispanic Presence in Texas*. Compiled and edited by Philip Ortego y Gasca and Arnoldo De León (San Antonio: Caravel Press, 1978), 41.
16. Imelda Garza, who was born in 1923 and is the great-granddaughter of Gervacio Canales Sr., recalls one lynching her older brothers, Flavio and Fernando, told her they witnessed in 1917. "They were walking in the fields between two ranches," Imelda said, "and they came across a Texas Ranger who they'd never seen before. They watched from hiding as the Ranger stopped a *mojito* [wetback or illegal immigrant] and just hung him from a tree." Author's interview with Imelda Garza.
17. Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 28.
18. Johnson Scott, *Royal Land Grants North of the Rio Bravo, 1777-1821*, 62-67.
19. Judge J. T. Canales, "Juan N. Cortina Presents His Motion for a New Trial," in *Selections from the Collected Papers of the Lower Rio Bravo Valley Historical Society, 1949-1979*, vol. 1, 78-79.
20. Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 41.

21. *Ibid.*, 79.
  22. George Durham, *Tanning the Nueces Strip: The Story of McNelly's Rangers* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962), 29.
  23. Charles W. Goldfinch, *Juan N. Cortina, 1824-1892: A Re-Appraisal* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1949), 33.
  24. The U.S. government accused him of being a cattle thief and smuggler, but a Mexican Commission appointed by President Benito Juárez, which also investigated the conflict, concluded that while some men he recruited did engage in cattle rustling, Cortina had not promoted the stealing and was in fact the victim of a smear campaign by powerful Texans. The Mexican commission went on to accuse major Texas landowners King, Billy Mann, and Patrick Quinn of directing extensive theft of cattle on the Mexican side of the river. See Gabriel Saldivar, *Historia Compendiada de Tamaulipas* (Mexico: Academia Nacional de Historia y Geografía, 1945), 197-98.
  25. Arnoldo De León, *Tejanos and the Numbers Game: A Socio-Historical Interpretation from the Federal Censuses, 1850-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), 42-43.
  26. Author's interview with Fiacro Salazar.
  27. McWilliams, *North from Mexico*, 152.
  28. Author's interview with Imelda Garza.
  29. John Chavez, *The Lost Land: The Chicano Image of the Southwest* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984) 113-15.
  30. Author's interview with Santos Molina.
  31. McWilliams, *North from Mexico*, 309-17.
  32. *Ibid.*, 232.
  33. Chavez, *The Lost Land*, 121-24.
  34. Author's interview with Sandra Garza.
  35. Author's interview with Mary Velasquez.
  36. Ignacio García, *United We Win: The Rise and Fall of La Raza Unida Party* (Tucson: Mastro, 1989), 161-64.
  37. Author's interview with Diane Garza.
  38. Robert R. Alvarez, Jr., *Familia: Migration and Adaptation in Baja and Alta California, 1800-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).
- CHAPTER 6: CUBANS
1. Alejandro Portes and Alex Stepick, *City on the Edge: The Transformation of Miami* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 129.
  2. Morrimo, *The Immigrant World of Ybor City*, 63-77.
  3. Richard R. Fagen, Richard A. Brody, and Thomas J. O'Leary, *Cubans in Exile: Disaffection and the Revolution* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 17.
  4. The disparity in wealth between those who left and those who stayed was enormous. According to one study, at a time when 60 percent of Cuba's employed males earned less than \$900 a year, only 7 percent of the heads of households among the refugees earned less than \$1,000, while half earned more than \$4,000. And this study probably understates the disparities, since the richest Cubans did not even pass through refugee centers on arrival and thus were never surveyed. See Fagen, *Cubans in Exile*, 21-22.