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PERSPECTIVES IN
AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY

Making of the American West

People and Perspectives

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Before the American West became a destination for westward-moving Americans, it had been Mexico's Far North for Spanish colonists moving northward from central New Spain. The Spanish colonists, however, did not arrive in an uninhabited area; rather, they entered a region that had long been an American Indian homeland. This indigenous homeland had witnessed various internal migrations of semisedentary and nomadic American Indians who moved in search of food, trade, and seasonal shelter. Before the region became an indigenous homeland, their ancestors had migrated southward into the region after crossing eastward across the Bering Strait. So the American West has long been a destination for eastward-, southward-, northward-, and—ultimately, and only recently—westward-moving peoples. For Spanish-speaking people, the "American West" became a place for settlement beginning in the sixteenth century.

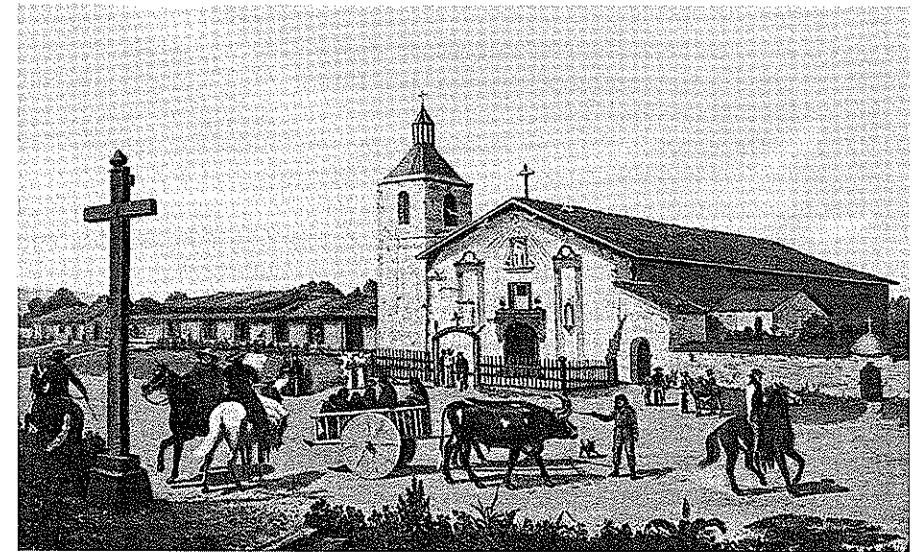
From bases in the Caribbean and central Mexico, Spanish explorers made excursions along the Gulf of Mexico, throughout the Southwest, and up the Pacific coast in search of precious minerals, Indian slaves, and a passage to the Orient. Juan Ponce de León and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca led expeditions into Florida and Tejas, while Francisco Vázquez de Coronado and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo explored Arizona, Nuevo México, and California, giving Spanish place names to rivers, mountains, and towns. Among the first European settlements that these men established were St. Augustine, Florida

NOTE: The terms "Hispanics" and "Latinos" refer to the same group of people, those with ancestry in Latin America. I have chosen to use "Latinos" because it is a term chosen by many of the people to whom it refers, whereas "Hispanic" was chosen by non-Latino government officials. The use of these terms, however, varies with a person's region, class, immigration experience, and educational background. Moreover, there is no historically appropriate term that has been used throughout the history of the United States.

(1565), and San Juan, Nuevo México (1598). These expeditions also led cartographers to create maps of the region and some of the first European-authored written records. No mineral wealth or passages to Asia were found in these initial explorations, but the Spaniards did make contact with various indigenous groups. Through that initial contact, the Europeans introduced deadly diseases to which Native Americans had no antibodies. Soon indigenous nations throughout the Southeast and Southwest began witnessing a dramatic population decline. In addition to coping with the exposure to new pathogens, Indians also began to resist European efforts to enslave them.

The Spaniards established more settlements in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in order to stake a territorial claim and to obtain more subjects for the Spanish Crown. Competition with France, England, and Russia over territory in North America led Spain to promote settlements as a defensive measure. A colony of French Huguenots in Florida alarmed the Spanish, motivating them to send a military expedition to expel the Protestants and to construct a series of presidios (forts) along the peninsula's coasts. In addition to territory Spain sought more subjects, so its expeditions included Catholic missionaries who were responsible for converting indigenous nations. The Jesuit order established missions in northern Florida that were soon abandoned because of conflicts with indigenous nations. Meanwhile, Franciscan clergy began ministering to Nuevo México's Pueblo Indians in the 1590s (three decades before the English colonies of Jamestown and Plymouth Plantation), while Jesuit priests established missions among Arizona's Pima Indians a century later. Responding to French colonization along the Mississippi River and in Louisiana, Spanish officials sent colonists to establish presidios and Franciscan missions throughout Texas in the decade following 1710. From that defensive colonization emerged Arizona's Tubac and Tucson as well as Nacogdoches and San Antonio in Tejas. By the eighteenth century, a rumored Russian invasion of the Pacific Northwest spurred the establishment of a string of protective Spanish settlements in California.

The defensive colonization of New Spain's northern borderlands depended on missions, presidios, and pueblos (towns). The incorporation of Indians into Catholic missions was the result of an approach that could be described as a "frontier of inclusion" policy. The Spaniards believed that Indians who converted to Catholicism could become part of Spanish society. By contrast, the British followed a policy best described as a "frontier of exclusion," which provided little, if any, room for Indians within British, and later Anglo-American, society. In Spanish society, Indians were expected to become loyal subjects, willing laborers, and potential mates, in return for the "salvation" of their souls. To carry out this policy each mission was a combination of a church, workplace, and cultural center. The missionaries prohibited Indians from practicing Native religions. Instead, the priest expected Indians to practice Catholicism, learn the Spanish language, and acculturate to European norms. Accompanying the missionaries were soldiers who provided protection from imperial rivals and hostile Indians. Based in the presidios, the soldiers were also needed to quell uprisings of Indians who rebelled against the imposition of Spanish religion and culture. Among the colonists were civilians who founded Spanish towns while pursuing agricul-



Depiction of nineteenth-century life around Mission Santa Clara de Asis in California painted in the early twentieth century. (Lake County Museum/Corbis)

tural and livestock production. These *pobladores* (settlers) established such civilian communities as Los Angeles, San José, Albuquerque, and Laredo (Weber 1992, pp. 1–270).

Unlike U.S. expansion, in which American colonists eagerly moved westward, New Spain's northern expansion was difficult because of a lack of interest among Spanish colonists. New Spain's northern frontier was unappealing because it was remote from Spanish population centers and dangerous because of the threat of Indian attacks. The high cost of transportation to northern settlements, combined with Spain's mercantilist policy (requiring all trade to pass through official ports), created shortages of goods and raised their value. Straining under such a strict trade policy, northern colonists smuggled goods bought from American merchants. In order to attract colonists northward, Spanish officials made them promises of land, tax exemptions, transportation subsidies, and monetary stipends. Despite such benefits, however, conflicts soon developed among the missionaries, soldiers, and pobladores over control of Indians. The missionaries complained that soldiers stationed in the presidios were abducting and sexually assaulting Indian women, and stealing Indian children to sell as slaves. The soldiers, meanwhile, were selling Indians as slaves to the pobladores, who used the indigenous captives as domestic servants and agricultural workers. The income from the sale of Indian captives was critical for the soldiers, who were rarely paid or supplied with provisions by colonial authorities. Pobladores complained not only that the missions had obtained the best arable lands but also that the missionaries had exclusive control over the Indians' labor. The relationship among the three groups was further complicated by the dependence of the pobladores and missionaries on the soldiers for military protection. To

protect Spanish settlements in the northern borderlands, Spanish officials alternated between a "velvet glove" policy of providing indigenous nations with gifts to buy the peace, and the "iron fist" policy of punishing Indians with military force.

The nineteenth century would usher in dramatic changes for colonists in New Spain's northern borderlands. In 1810 insurgents in New Spain launched an independence movement that would last eleven years, resulting in the creation of the independent nation of México. The long independence struggle left the nation's infrastructure in shambles, the economy devastated, the population decimated, and the treasury bankrupt. Few colonists in the northern borderlands witnessed or participated in the independence insurgency, but they experienced the dramatic effects of the nation's devastation as Mexico lost any control of its northern borderlands. No longer able to pay its soldiers in the north or to send money to the missions and civilian governments, Mexico's central government abandoned its velvet glove and iron fist policies. The northern colonists were left to fend for themselves. The lack of military protection emboldened indigenous nations like the Comanches and Apaches to increase their attacks on Spanish settlements throughout the northern borderlands. Ironically, Spanish colonialism had introduced the horses that had made these indigenous nations highly mobile in the American West. The Apaches and Comanches became excellent equestrians, and they used their mobility to raid for additional horses and livestock and traded those products with Spanish and Anglo-American colonists. The threat of Indian attacks further isolated Mexicans in the northern borderlands from Mexico's central government and led them to develop additional commercial ties with Anglo Americans. As more and more Anglo Americans moved into Mexico's Far North, their presence upset the tenuous balance previously established between Mexican settlements and indigenous nations. Anglo-American settlements forced Indians off Native lands and raised the level of competition over territory. Indians took advantage of the presence of Americans by establishing trade ties and decreasing their dependence on Mexican colonists for manufactured goods. Indian raids on American and Mexican settlements increased as indigenous nations traded with one group of colonists to raid another group. The increase in trade with American merchants and decrease in communications with the newly independent Mexican nation created ambiguous loyalties for the Spanish-speaking residents of Mexico's Far North (Weber 1982, pp. 83-146).

Mexico's independence transformed Spanish subjects into Mexican citizens but failed to promote national unity. Political struggles between centralists and federalists in Mexico led to more instability. The centralists favored a strong central government, while the federalists sought a more diversified system of power-sharing among the states. Most residents of the northern borderlands favored increased regional autonomy, which meant support for the federalists. In place of an attachment to the nation, Mexican citizens in the Far North felt a stronger attachment to their region. But that regionalism was localized. Few residents shared a sense of belonging to California or to New Mexico. Instead, residents expressed an attachment to a town or a series of towns. Residents of southern California became known as *los*

abajefios, while those in northern California were *los arribeños*. Similar divisions developed across Mexico's Far North. Because colonists in each region interacted with different groups of indigenous nations, each region created distinct treaties and trade arrangements. In the aftermath of Mexican independence, a mixture of policies toward indigenous nations in Mexico's Far North emerged as the central government failed to promote a singular policy. The main factors uniting colonists separated by thousands of miles were a shared religious linguistic background (Gonzales 1999, pp. 58-65).

One of the most dramatic developments resulting from Mexico's independence was the secularization of the missions, or the transfer of control over the missions from missionaries to secular (or parish-supported) clergy. California serves as a good example of the effects of this policy's implementation. The long independence struggle cut off financial support for the missions and introduced economic pressures to secularize the missions. Colonists in the northern borderlands advocated secularization because they wanted to obtain control of the missions' land and indigenous labor force. In theory, secularization was designed to return the missions' land to their Native inhabitants. The reality that materialized was quite different as politically connected military officials and elite Californios expanded their landholdings. Secularization enhanced the existing class divisions by enlarging the elite's wealth. The missionaries lost control of Indian labor, while the Indians lost the land they were promised. More than 90 percent of the mission land ended up in the hands of wealthy rancheros. Without the missionaries nominally looking out for the Indians' interests, elite rancheros had more freedom to punish Indian laborers. Consequently, the rancheros imposed harsher treatment on indigenous laborers than had the missionaries.

Mexico's independence liberalized commerce in the northern borderlands, as illustrated by New Mexico's burgeoning new trade. Shortly after independence, U.S. traders from Missouri and other nearby states arrived in New Mexico and established a lucrative commercial enterprise. The increase in trade with U.S. cities led to the creation of the Santa Fe Trail. Nuevomexicanos preferred commerce with Americans than with Chihuahua merchants (who had previously supplied most of their goods), because American merchants could provide less expensive items and a greater variety of merchandise. In exchange for blankets, furs, and livestock, Nuevomexicanos acquired manufactured clothes, furniture, and weapons. This lucrative trade attracted still more Americans and created a wealthy class of middlemen among Nuevomexicanos. Wealthy landowners took advantage of their access to capital to compete with U.S. merchants and the Chihuahua traders in Mexico. Soon families such as the Armijos and Chávezes became the most prominent merchants along the Santa Fe Trail and the Chihuahua Trail. A new trade route, the Pacific Trail, through Utah and across California to the Pacific coast soon opened (Weber 1982, pp. 147-241).

With the nation's independence, Mexican officials seized on a colonization plan as the way to solve the scarcity of Spanish settlements in Texas. The colonization plan (officially enacted in 1824) followed the policy of Spanish colonial officials who had allowed Americans to settle in East Texas. Spanish officials had planned to make Texas a buffer zone for settlements

in the Mexican interior. Moses Austin secured an agreement to bring 300 Catholic families from Louisiana to settle in Texas. After his death, his son Stephen F. Austin led the settlement of U.S. immigrants in central Texas. Mexico's officials wanted to increase the population of non-Indian settlers in Texas to protect old settlements from Indian attacks and to guard against the encroachment of foreign powers (principally the United States). The colonization plan offered settlers land, security, and tax exemptions. Mexican officials targeted Europeans and Americans with this plan, but Americans became the main colonists. Mexican officials allowed American settlers to enter Texas with their slaves, even though Mexico had outlawed slavery in 1829. In exchange, the colonists were to become Mexican citizens and obey the nation's laws. In order to be allowed to immigrate into Texas, colonists needed to ask Mexican officials for permission. American immigrants from Louisiana and other Southern states quickly flooded into the state, bringing their slaves with them. The colonization plan was so successful in attracting American immigrants to Texas that soon the first "illegal immigrants" entered the state, without bothering to secure permission. By 1830 the more than 7,000 Americans easily outnumbered some 3,000 Tejanos (Texas Mexicans) residing in Texas (De León 1999, pp. 7-34).

In addition to their numerical superiority, Americans' practices worried Mexican officials. Americans neglected to become Mexican citizens, failed to learn the Spanish language, and ignored many of the nation's laws. Alarmed by this development the Mexican government restricted further immigration, outlawed slavery in the territory, and imposed some taxes. These restrictions antagonized Americans, who lobbied to reverse them. Several prominent Tejanos, including Lorenzo de Zavala and Juan N. Seguín, successfully urged Mexico to rescind the immigration restrictions. In the meantime, however, the flood of immigrants continued unabated. By 1834, Texas was home to close to 21,000 Americans and their slaves. The following year, approximately 1,000 Americans were entering Texas every month. With such overwhelming numbers, Americans were soon plotting to launch a separatist revolt. When the centralists assumed power of Mexico's national government, they took steps to gain greater control by eliminating the autonomy previously enjoyed by the states. Americans in Texas seized on this attempt to reduce their autonomy as the opportunity to launch their separatist revolt. Joined by Tejanos, the Texas separatists lost the infamous battle at the Alamo but later obtained retribution with the defeat of the Mexican Army and capture of Santa Anna at San Jacinto. The separatists forced Santa Anna to sign the Treaty of Velasco, recognizing the independence of Texas. Mexico never accepted the legitimacy of this treaty, and it would attempt to recapture Texas on several occasions throughout the nine-year existence of the breakaway republic (Acuña 1988, pp. 25-53; Meier and Ribera 1993, pp. 53-68).

In the aftermath of the Texas revolt, race relations between Anglo Texans and Tejanos deteriorated. The political alliance with Tejanos disintegrated as Anglo Texans sought revenge for their defeats at the Alamo and Goliad during the Texas revolt. Not willing to distinguish Tejanos from Mexicans, Anglo Texans turned their anger at Mexican officials into violence against Tejano

civilians. Throughout central Texas, vigilantes attacked Mexicans, stole their cattle, and appropriated their land. Because their settlements were close to the American colonies, Tejanos living along the San Antonio and Guadalupe rivers experienced the worst retributions. Angry Americans destroyed Goliad, while chasing Tejanos from Victoria and Refugio. The violence extended into East Texas, where vigilantes forced more than 100 Tejano families to abandon their homes and lands. Many elite landowners, like the family of Martin De León in Victoria, fled to New Orleans for safety. However, most escaped toward the heavily Tejano region between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers or continued into Mexico. Even prominent Tejanos who had allied with Anglo Texans were not immune from the violence. As the mayor of San Antonio, Juan Seguín attempted to help fellow Tejanos who asked for protection from Anglo Texan vigilantes. "At every hour of the day and night," wrote Seguín, "my countrymen ran to me for protection against the assaults or exactions of those adventurers." For defending Tejanos, Seguín earned the enmity of Anglo Texans. Ruminating about his decision, Seguín asked, "Were not the victims my own countrymen, friends, and associates? Could I leave them defenseless, exposed to the assaults of foreigners who, on the pretext that they were Mexicans, treated them worse than brutes?" The vigilantes quickly forgot Seguín's heroic feats during the Texas revolt and issued death threats against him. To protect his family, Seguín resigned as mayor and left for Mexico.

Tensions between the Republic of Texas and Mexico remained high during its nine-year existence. Mexico's refusal to recognize the independent republic contributed to the bad relations, but so did the expansionist designs of Texas leaders. In an attempt to gain control of the Santa Fe Trail trade and obtain much needed income, Texas sent an expedition into New Mexico that suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Mexican Army. In retaliation, Mexico's troops attacked San Antonio, raised the Mexican flag, and retreated to the Rio Grande after holding the city for a few days. Several months later the Mexican Army again captured San Antonio but was forced to retreat under pressure from Texan troops. Furious at what they considered an invasion of Texas soil, the Texas government sent an expedition to the Rio Grande. After seizing the river towns of Laredo and Guerrero, some Texans attempted to capture Mier. The Mexican Army defeated the Texans at Mier, executed several prisoners, and forced the remainder to travel to Mexico City. The attacks on San Antonio and the so-called Mier Expedition became the subject of lurid accounts, describing Mexicans' supposed brutality and hatred. Most Tejanos attempted to remain neutral during these attacks and counterattacks, but some were forced to take sides. One of those was Seguín, the former Texas patriot and San Antonio mayor, who had fled to Mexico and then was forced to join the Mexican Army or face imprisonment. As a member of the Mexican Army, Seguín took part in the capture of San Antonio in 1842. The diplomatic tensions exacerbated the racial animosity that Tejanos experienced in the aftermath of the Texas revolt. Tensions would escalate into military conflict again when the United States annexed Texas in 1845. Considering that action a prelude to war, Mexico broke off diplomatic relations with the United States. The war began the following year after the

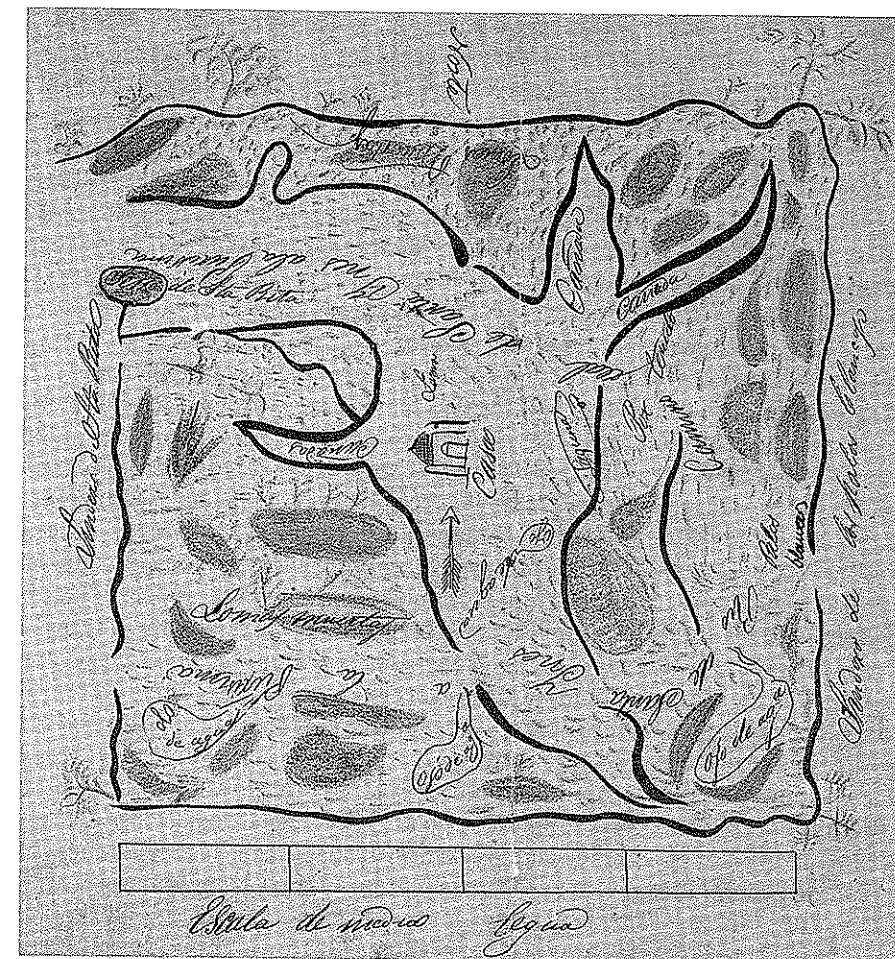
United States sent its troops into the Nueces Strip (land between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers), which was claimed by Mexico, and provoked a skirmish with Mexican troops (De la Teja 1991, pp. 1–70).

Conquerors Become the Conquered

The U.S. victory in the Mexican-American War (known in Mexico as the War of North American Aggression) transformed the United States into a continental nation by absorbing the territory known today as the "American West" into the nation. With the end of the war in 1848 and the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the Mexicans living in the annexed territories had to make a choice about their citizenship. They could retain their Mexican citizenship by moving south into Mexico, or they could become U.S. citizens by remaining on their lands. Only 2,000 Mexicans moved south, while close to 100,000 stayed put and became U.S. citizens. In addition to guaranteeing all rights accorded to other U.S. citizens, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo also promised annexed Mexicans that the United States would respect their property rights. Those promises, however, were unfulfilled. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Mexican Americans lost political power, social standing, and economic control as their citizenship rights were repeatedly denied. While westward-moving Americans viewed this period as one involving rugged "pioneers" following wagon trails in search of the nation's "Manifest Destiny," American Indians and Mexicans viewed the same period as one of conquest and dispossession.

The introduction of a new system of government was partly responsible for the loss of political power, because aspiring officeholders needed to be knowledgeable of U.S. laws and increasingly fluent in the English language. But a more significant cause was the outright denial of the right to vote. Throughout the American West, Mexican Americans encountered harassment and intimidation when they attempted to vote. In Texas, newspapers and Anglo vigilantes threatened ranch owners who encouraged Mexican-American workers to exercise the franchise. Violence was also responsible for their loss of property as vigilantes and squatters drove landowners off their land. Some Mexican Americans lost land after neglecting to pay property taxes (a new legal requirement unknown in the Mexican legal system). Others attempted to obtain legal title to their lands through U.S. courts but lost property to their lawyers, who demanded payment in land for their services. Juan Cortina, a south Texas land grant descendant, described the process in a proclamation: "These [vile men], as we have said, form, with a multitude of lawyers, a secret conclave, with all its ramifications, for the sole purpose of despoiling the Mexicans of their lands."

As their political and economic influence decreased, the social standing of Mexican Americans diminished. Some returned to Mexico "as strangers to the old country to beg for an asylum," in Cortina's words, while others became increasingly marginalized in the new society and soon realized that the promises of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo were "but the baseless fabric of a dream." The loss of political power made Mexican Americans and



Diseño of Rancho Santa Rosa in Santa Barbara, California, around 1842. A *diseño* is an informal map that was used in Alta California to demarcate land claims. Under the Land Law Act of 1851, California rancheros were required to appear before a commission to prove rightful land ownership. Many landowners were unable to afford the costly litigation and lost their land. (Landcase Maps Collection, Land Case Map D-1342, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley)

other Latin Americans more vulnerable to discriminatory laws. One such law was enacted during California's Gold Rush, which brought immigrants from all over the world to the Golden State. Joining Americans were French, Chinese, Chilean, and Mexican miners. Competition for precious gold diggings degenerated into violence against people of color. Because law enforcement was minimal in makeshift towns and mining camps, vigilantes preyed on miners who looked "foreign." Self-appointed vigilante committees of Anglo-American miners targeted Mexicans and Chileans suspected of petty crimes for hangings and whippings. Nativism, an antiforeigner sentiment, became widespread among U.S. miners, who successfully lobbied the state's legislators to pass the Foreign Miners' License Tax in 1850. This law required foreign

miners to pay a prohibitive fee, twenty dollars a month, for the "privilege" of mining for gold in California. Targeted by this new tax were Latin American and Asian miners, and to a lesser extent French immigrants. The state legislature repealed the law within a year of its passage, but the damage had been done. The law had a devastating effect in Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa counties, where more than two-thirds of the 15,000 Mexicans left the area. Most returned to urban centers in southern California or crossed the border into Mexico. The Foreign Miners' Tax and a subsequent law passed in 1852 are examples of Anglo-American efforts to use the government to eliminate economic competition from nonwhite and immigrant populations.

In response to the ethnic tensions in the postwar period, some Mexican Americans resisted their displacement by engaging in banditry. The most famous bandit during California's Gold Rush was Joaquín Murrieta. Drawn from Sonora, Mexico, to California's southern mines, Murrieta and his family left productive mining claims because Anglos violently evicted them. Anglo vigilantes raped Murrieta's wife, Rosa Felíz de Murrieta, lynched his brother, Jesús Carrillo Murrieta, and whipped Joaquín. After leaving the mines, the Murrietas survived by running a gambling table until they encountered more persecution from the Anglos. Eventually, Murrieta and his friends turned on their enemies. They began stealing gold and livestock; some accounts claim that Murrieta targeted only his persecutors, while others argue that he attacked indiscriminately. Soon reports of attacks by Joaquín Murrieta and his gang spread throughout the Southern Mines, and newspapers reported that Anglos were under siege. Murrieta sightings were so widespread that some wondered if more than one gang was responsible for the attacks. The state governor offered a reward for Murrieta's capture, and eventually a team of rangers killed several Mexican suspects. The rangers beheaded several of the men, one of whom they maintained was Murrieta, and claimed the reward. Officials placed one of the severed heads in a jar and exhibited the "head of the renowned bandit Joaquín" throughout the state. Murrieta's death was also controversial, because his friends and descendants claimed that he died of natural causes (Johnson 2000, pp. 28–53).

At around the same time, Tiburcio Vásquez and his friends became the main suspects in the death of a constable at a fandango in Monterey in northern California. When a vigilante committee caught and hanged one of the Mexican suspects, Vásquez fled and joined a band of cattle rustlers. Over the next two decades, Vásquez committed various robberies and landed in several jails. Ultimately, the state legislature offered a reward for his capture, which occurred in Los Angeles. After being found guilty of various crimes, Tiburcio Vásquez met his end in the noose of the state's hangman. While outlaws of various ethnic backgrounds operated throughout the state, most Anglos claimed that the bandits were predominantly Mexican Americans. Murrieta and Vásquez gained widespread notoriety for their attacks against Anglos, but they also became heroes to the dispossessed Californios who believed that such violent resistance was justified (Gonzales 1999, pp. 89–90; Rosenbaum 1981).

Mexican Americans' loss of political and economic power varied by region and depended on their ability to remain a majority of the population.

A sharp increase in Anglo-American migration overwhelmed the native Californio residents of Los Angeles by the 1860s. With less than a fifth of the city's population, Mexican Americans quickly lost most political offices. Californios' political fortunes were much different farther north in Santa Barbara, where they maintained a numerical majority throughout most of the nineteenth century. In addition to their majority status, the practice of bloc voting helped Mexican Americans secure city and county offices. With the strong support of the Mexican-American electorate, Californio elite politicians, such as Pablo de la Guerra and Nicholas Covarrubias, repeatedly defeated Anglo-American politicians. The Californio political machine continuously battled Anglo-American political aspirants and successfully drove the *Gazette*, an anti-Californio newspaper, out of town by orchestrating a boycott. De la Guerra was such a strong political powerbroker that he was able to lead Mexican Americans to switch from the Democratic to the Republican party to prevent an Anglo American from winning elected office. Mexican Americans' control of politics in Santa Barbara began to decrease in the 1870s as the Anglo-American population rose and they established coalitions to defeat Californio politicians (Camarillo 1979, pp. 53–78).

In Arizona, Mexican Americans held onto some key political positions even as they lost some elected offices to Anglo newcomers. Estévan Ochoa, a prominent businessman, served as an Arizona territorial legislator, city councilman, and Tucson mayor. Ochoa supported the public school system, lobbied the legislature to remove language restrictions from jury service, and sought to have all laws published in English and Spanish. Hispanos in New Mexico had even greater political success. They managed to hold on to more elected offices than in any other region because of their numerical majority. Nuevomexicanos, such as Donaciano Vigil and Miguel Otero, captured local offices and elected fellow Hispanos to both houses of the territorial legislature (Sheridan 1986, pp. 41–54).

While Mexican Americans throughout the American West had difficulty maintaining control of their land after U.S. annexation, the loss of land occurred unevenly. In areas with a large influx of Anglo Americans, like northern California and central Texas, landowners suffered a rapid loss of property to speculators and squatters. However, in areas such as southern Arizona and southern Texas, Mexican Americans remained a majority of the population, and some managed to maintain control of their property throughout the nineteenth century. The rancheros of Hidalgo county, in southern Texas, are illustrative of Tejano landowners in the region. The state of Texas certified the majority of Spanish and Mexican land grant titles of those landowners. In subsequent years the rancheros took an active part in the commercial ranching operations, including the sale of wool from sheep and trade in cattle, horses, and mules. Unlike the large landowners of neighboring Webb and Cameron counties, most rancheros in Hidalgo held smaller plots of land. The majority of these rancheros owned less than 200 head of cattle. These landowners eventually experienced a gradual loss of land through a combination of social and economic factors. As ranching became increasingly commercialized and dominated by corporate concerns, rancheros who owned smaller plots of land as a result of partible inheritance practices lost ground.

Latinos, Marriage, and Divorce in the American West

Before westward moving white settlers viewed the American West as a land of opportunities, Spanish colonists and later Mexican citizens traveled northward into the same area for new social and economic possibilities. Once Mexico's Far North became the American West, Mexicans continued to see the area as one that offered certain advantages. In the nineteenth century, the liberal divorce laws of Western states attracted many Americans trapped in bad marriages. The practice of moving west to obtain a divorce was so popular (Western states routinely topped the list of states granting the highest number of divorces), that it became known as the "interstate divorce trade." Soon after American annexation, Mexican Americans throughout the American West also took advantage of these laws. For Mexican-American women the liberal marriage and divorce laws of Western states provided new opportunities not available under

the Spanish and Mexican legal system. Among Mexican Americans, the practice of securing divorces acquired international dimensions as some couples who had married in Mexico, later divorced in the United States.

Four years after U.S. annexation, a Mexican-American couple who lived in Carrizo, Texas, crossed the Rio Grande to be married in Guerrero, Tamaulipas. Antonia Díaz married Felipe Cuellar in the Mexican border town because it was the site of the nearest Catholic Church and the home of their relatives. Only four years had passed since this area of South Texas had been annexed to the United States at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), and no Catholic Church existed in their community on the U.S. side of the border. Once married, the couple returned to Texas to establish a home. Felipe and Antonia lived in Carrizo for the next seven years. The marriage fell apart in 1859, when Felipe abandoned Antonia and

returned to Mexico. Had she lived in Mexico, Antonia would have had little recourse but to turn to relatives for assistance because a legal separation was all but impossible. However, since Antonia lived in the United States, she immediately filed for divorce in a district court. Their marriage had been troubled for some time, according to Antonia, because Felipe "was guilty of excesses, cruel treatment, and outrages toward her of such a character as to render their living together insupportable" (*The Ranchero* [Corpus Christi, Texas], May 12, 1860, p. 2).

Abandonment and cruel treatment were common reasons for obtaining a divorce in the American West. Many men (and a few women) left their spouses to find work but never returned. Recognizing this common practice, Western legislators passed laws with liberal divorce rules based on abandonment. In Texas, a wife could file for divorce based on abandon-

ment even if the initial separation had begun while the couple lived outside of the state. But the abandoned wife had to wait three years before filing for divorce. During this time, the woman and her children might sink into poverty because her husband continued to control their property even while absent from the home. By filing for divorce based on cruel treatment, however, Antonia could initiate the proceedings immediately. Texas law was vague about what constituted "cruel treatment," so judges could interpret this provision liberally. Most divorce petitions based on cruel treatment were quickly granted, including in Antonia's case (Valerio-Jiménez 2001, pp. 306-384).

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Valerio-Jiménez, Omar S. "Indios Bárbaros, Divorcées, and Flocks of Vampires: Identity and Nation on the Rio Grande, 1749-1894." Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 2001.

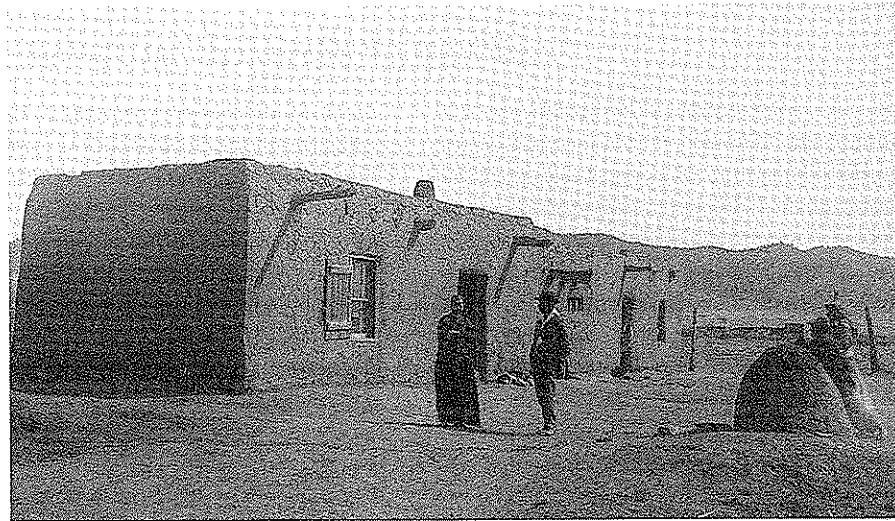
In addition to the increased competition, rancheros had limited access to the credit that was needed to weather periods of drought and environmental devastation. By the end of the nineteenth century, many displaced rancheros had migrated into the cities or accepted jobs with larger ranching operations (Alonzo 1998, pp. 161-181).

In New Mexico, Mexican Americans also remained the majority of the population and managed to maintain control of the territory throughout the nineteenth century. When the United States annexed Mexico's northern territories, there were some 60,000 Spanish-speaking residents living in New Mexico, more than lived in California and Texas combined. Before the U.S. takeover, Hispanos (the name preferred by New Mexicans) had developed close trade ties with Americans. The Santa Fe trade (which had begun with Mexico's independence in 1821) funneled U.S.-manufactured goods from Missouri through New Mexico into Mexico's northern provinces. In exchange, U.S. traders obtained mules, wool, and other livestock products. This lucrative trade led to sharp class divisions among Hispanos, with a few elite merchants profiting from the trade while the poor were excluded. Among the most successful in exploiting the new merchant capitalism was Gertrudis Barceló, a widow who ran a very profitable gambling hall. Originally from Sonora, Barcelo had received an education, married into an established Hispano family, and become business savvy when the American

merchants began arriving in New Mexico. Her gambling hall served to familiarize the new arrivals with the Spanish language, Mexican customs, and music. Employing her business acumen, Barcelo invested her earnings in the U.S. trade and before her death became one of the wealthiest residents of New Mexico (González 1999, pp. 39-78).

Negotiating Social Changes

U.S. annexation did not lead only to negative changes. It also brought some unexpected opportunities for Mexican-American women throughout the West. The change in jurisdiction from Mexican to U.S. courts allowed women greater freedom in marital relations. In the former Mexican territories, U.S. civil authorities gained control over marital concerns from Mexican religious officials. Couples wishing to marry enjoyed more options than they had in Mexico, where the only avenue was the Catholic Church. Under U.S. jurisdiction, couples could marry through a variety of Protestant churches, the Catholic Church, or a Jewish synagogue. They could also avoid a religious ceremony altogether by marrying in a civil ceremony before a justice of the peace or a county judge. This development helped interfaith couples who wished to marry without forcing one of the parties to convert. The option to



Mexican adobe house near Las Vegas, New Mexico, ca. 1875. (Denver Public Library, Western History Collection, Z 8832)

marry outside of the Catholic Church also led to an increase in the number of interethnic marriages, because non-Catholics could now marry Mexicans (who were predominantly Catholic at the time).

Furthermore, if women faced domestic disputes, they could appeal to the courts to punish abusive husbands. U.S. tribunals were more willing to punish husbands for mistreating their wives than were Mexican courts. The primary goal of courts in Mexico was to reconcile the couple and preserve the marriage. U.S. courts also permitted women to obtain divorces more easily than Mexican tribunals. Throughout the American West, states passed liberal divorce laws in an effort to attract westward-moving migrants. The number of divorces in the United States rose sharply in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the American West continued to be a magnet for couples wishing to get an easy legal separation. Under Mexican jurisdiction women who faced troubled marriages had attempted to secure a divorce, but religious authorities made the process long and difficult. Once U.S. courts began operating, Mexican-American women took advantage of liberal divorce laws to gain a legal separation from abusive or neglectful husbands. By securing a divorce, women could regain control of their property, custody of their children, and use of their maiden name. Most important, a divorce allowed women to remarry in the civil courts. The possibility of remarriage was significant, because life on the frontier was much easier for a married couple than for a single parent. Ultimately, the changes in legal jurisdiction over marriage gave Mexican-American women more independence from the control of the Catholic Church and from male partners (Valerio-Jiménez 2001, pp. 306–384).

Although Mexican-American women gained some legal advantages in negotiating marriage and divorce, they faced considerable new obstacles in

their attempts to hold on to their property. Under Spanish and Mexican laws, women had specific property rights that gave some significant independence. Adult women could own their own property and could retain ownership even after marriage, in order to safeguard their economic status if their husbands died or encountered financial difficulties. Spanish and Mexican courts did not hold wives accountable for their husbands' debts. Inheritance laws stipulated that widows receive a portion of their spouse's estate, and also required that daughters receive the same amount of property as sons. After the U.S. takeover in 1848, several Southwestern states adopted portions of Spanish and Mexican laws that gave specific, but limited, rights to women. In California and Texas, for example, women could retain ownership of separate property when married, and they gained an equal interest in community property amassed during the marriage. A few widows used these specific rights to maintain control of their property into the late nineteenth century, and some women married to Anglos used their husbands' legal knowledge and connections to retain control of their property. But the majority of Mexican-American women lost their real estate and personal property throughout the second half of the nineteenth century to lawyers, land speculators, and local governments. The U.S. conquest took its toll disproportionately on Mexican-American women as they fell into deeper poverty than their male counterparts (González 1999, pp. 10, 79–106; Chávez-García 2004, pp. 123–150; York Enstam 1999).

Hispanos in New Mexico also accommodated to the U.S. takeover, but they used trade ties with U.S. merchants in addition to exploiting family links. As the Santa Fe trade brought more Americans into New Mexico, it facilitated intermarriages between American men and elite New Mexican women. While the percentage of Hispano women who married the newcomers was small, these unions helped to establish intercultural ties and allowed American men to adapt to Hispano society. Conversely, these marriages also gave elite Hispanos familial links with U.S. merchants. The U.S. takeover led to changes in the patterns of inheritance. Under Mexican rule, parents distributed property equally among sons and daughters. After 1848, Mexican-American women increasingly left their property to their sons, in an effort to keep the land within the family. Although weary of the U.S. takeover, residents quickly adapted—especially the elite merchants whose trading opportunities expanded. Unlike Texas, where Anglo-American migration overwhelmed the Tejanos, New Mexico was not a popular destination for American migrants for the first two decades after U.S. rule. With few Americans vying for political office, New Mexicans easily captured local offices, and they consistently elected Mexican Americans to the territorial government. Miguel Otero won three consecutive elections to the U.S. House of Representatives beginning in the 1850s. After leaving politics, Otero established several business ventures and became director of the Maxwell Land Company and vice president of the Santa Fe Railroad. His family's political influence remained strong into the late nineteenth century, as evidenced by the appointment of his son, Miguel II, as the territorial governor (González 1999, pp. 79–106; Griswold del Castillo and De León 1996, pp. 50–51).

The Civil War, Land Struggles, and Armed Rebellions

The Civil War split the Mexican-American community into opposing camps, much as it did the rest of the nation. Most of the 9,900 Mexican-American soldiers, principally troops from California and New Mexico, fought for the Union. Led by Salvador Vallejo, some 450 Californios in the Native California Cavalry patrolled the Mexican border and lent assistance to New Mexico's Union Army. Approximately 5,000 Hispanos volunteered in New Mexico to keep Texas's Confederate troops from taking over the state. Although Confederate forces occupied Albuquerque and Santa Fe for a time, Union troops under the command of Manuel Chávez forced their withdrawal to Texas. A Confederate draft in Texas ensured that the majority of Tejano soldiers (2,550) fought for the Southern cause. Several Tejano Confederates, like Santos Benavides from Laredo, had actively supported slave owners by capturing runaway slaves in Mexico and returning them to Texas. Other Tejanos had sought to weaken the "peculiar institution" by helping runaway slaves escape across the Rio Grande to obtain freedom in Mexico. When the Civil War erupted, some 960 Tejanos joined the Union Army. Led by Octaviano Zapata, Juan Cortina, and Cecilio Valerio, most Tejano Unionists enlisted in the South Texas border region along the Rio Grande. That region played a critical role in the war because both sides fought to control the border, over which the Confederacy transported cotton across the Rio Grande for shipment to foreign markets through Matamoros (Thompson 1977, p. 26; Thompson 1986, p. 43).

Competition over land in New Mexico increased as American immigration to the region rose. An increasing number of Americans began arriving after the Civil War and the completion of the railroad. Among the arrivals were former Civil War soldiers, miners, and land prospectors. This migration would hasten the demise of Hispano ownership as some 80 percent of land grantees lost their property. One infamous example of how political corruption led to dispossession was the Santa Fe Ring, a Republican political machine consisting of Anglo lawyers and businessmen allied with elite Hispano families. Using their political connections and legal expertise, members of this corrupt ring acquired land inexpensively at forced auctions. Officials auctioned property at sheriff sales to pay for outstanding debts or back taxes. By influencing legislation and winning favorable court decisions, ring members obtained millions of acres of land, including the Tierra Amarilla Grant (some 600,000 acres). In addition to enriching themselves, the Santa Fe Ring allied themselves with other land companies whose property acquisitions would generate intense turmoil among Hispano villagers.

The dispossession of Hispanos created enough discontent to fuel several rebellions. One uprising began after the Maxwell Land Grant and Railway Company of England acquired some 2 million acres of land in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado. Several Anglo miners and ranchers as well as Hispano settlers had claimed a right to live on what they considered public domain land as homesteaders and squatters. When the company attempted to remove the Hispano and Anglo settlers in the 1880s, both groups fought

back to defend their way of life. They began to attack law-enforcement officers, steal the Maxwell Company's livestock, and destroy its property. After company agents offered compensation to the settlers for their improvements on the land, most of the Anglo ranchers gradually accepted the company's offers. Hispano villagers, however, continued to harass company agents, destroy fences, and ignore eviction notices. The company eventually secured agreements from the Hispano settlers by allowing them to lease the land for a share of their agricultural production. As the Maxwell Land Grant Company was obtaining the agreements from settlers, several disputes over land erupted in Lincoln and San Miguel counties.

In southern Lincoln County, a similar dispute focused on land use and water rights among Hispano sheep raisers, Anglo land speculators allied with the Santa Fe Ring, and newly arrived Texas livestock producers. Violent attacks left scores dead on both sides, but eventually the Hispanos lost control to a land company and a coalition of Texas ranchers and livestock companies. A more organized resistance movement developed in San Miguel County among Hispanos fighting land companies over rights to grazing lands considered community property. Under cover of darkness, a secret organization of Hispano settlers carried out fence-cutting expeditions while concealing their identities behind white masks (from which the movement obtained its name, *Las Gorras Blancas*). In addition to cutting fences around land they considered community property, *Las Gorras Blancas* attacked railroad lines, destroyed crops, and threatened railroad employees. They expanded their targets to include timber companies, and they allied with the Knights of Labor to demand an end to the unequal pay scale for Anglo and Hispano workers. Led by former Knights of Labor members, Juan José Herrera and his brothers, the group won support from *La Voz del Pueblo*, a Spanish-language newspaper based in Las Vegas, New Mexico. Members of *Las Gorras Blancas* also enjoyed widespread community support, as witnesses refused to testify and juries failed to convict several groups of men arrested for fence cutting. Members of the group organized a political party known as *El Partido del Pueblo* (the People's Party), which won several elected offices throughout the 1890s (Rosenbaum 1981; Montoya 2002, pp. 78–156).

Immigration in the Twentieth Century

Economic developments throughout the American West during the last two decades of the nineteenth century drew immigrants to the region as decreasing opportunities in Mexico encouraged Mexicans to head north. With the assistance of federally funded irrigation projects, large-scale agribusiness concerns gradually replaced subsistence agriculture. Commercial farming operations became "factories in the fields," producing large quantities of citrus, nuts, grains, and vegetables. Mining operations shifted from silver and gold production to coal and copper to supply the demand from industrial markets in the eastern United States. Using modern technology, mining companies were able to extract minerals from previously untapped natural deposits in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico. Railroad companies

also profited from the largess of the federal government via tax breaks, loans, and deeds of land. Both agribusiness and mining production benefited from the completion of the continental railroad, which enabled them to transport their products to markets in the eastern United States and to ports for export to world markets. Technological improvements affected agribusiness as well, because the advent of refrigerated railroad boxcars made it possible for agricultural companies to ship perishable produce to distant markets.

Mexico continued to exert an influence in the American West, as its rapid economic development was fueled by the labor of Mexican Americans and recent Mexican immigrants. Mexicans became the main source of labor as the supply of Asian laborers decreased with the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) and the Gentlemen's Agreement (1907). As land developers forced small Mexican-American property holders off their ancestral lands, the displaced workers migrated to urban centers or became wage workers for agribusiness, mining operators, or railroad companies. Joining them were Mexican immigrant workers attracted to the United States by the abundance of jobs, long-standing ties of family and friends in the region, and the existence of Mexican settlements. Mexican immigrants not only added to the native-born population of Mexican Americans but also reinforced Mexican cultural traditions. Railroads throughout the American West made transportation inexpensive and convenient for these immigrants. The most popular destinations were California and Texas, but Arizona mining operations and railroad construction throughout the region also attracted recent immigrants. Mexican immigrants offered industrial concerns a steady supply of inexpensive and convenient labor, since their journey to the United States was relatively short. American labor recruiters even traveled into Mexico to attract additional workers for expanding Western industries.

The great demand for laborers in the American West coincided with several economic and political developments in Mexico that forced many laborers to leave for the United States. During the last third of the nineteenth century, Mexico also experienced a rapid modernization under the leadership of dictator Porfirio Díaz. His administration sought foreign investors to "modernize" the nation, promoted the consolidation of large landed estates, and eliminated many communal landholdings. Díaz's policies left many Indians and poor peasants landless at the same time that the nation was experiencing a population boom. The mechanization of agriculture and industry further displaced workers. In addition to unfavorable economic policies, workers faced repression from a dictator intent on quashing dissent. Ultimately, widespread unemployment and the lack of land pushed many Mexicans into the United States, where jobs were plentiful. Díaz promoted an ambitious railroad construction plan that ultimately connected major Mexican cities to the United States and its extensive railway network. These railway lines facilitated the importation of U.S. manufactured goods and the exportation of raw materials and produce. They also helped displaced workers move to the United States. While U.S. investments and technology transformed Mexico during this period, Mexico also exerted significant influence on the United States by sending its raw materials and many immigrants to shape the American West (Gutiérrez 1995, pp. 39–68; Sánchez 1993, pp. 17–37).



Mexican laborers picking cotton in a Texas field in 1919. Mexican labor was essential to the boom in western agriculture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (Bettmann/Corbis)

The influx of Mexican immigrants led to significant changes within the Mexican-American community. Recent arrivals helped to reinforce Mexican culture in urban neighborhoods and rural settlements by increasing the number of Spanish-speakers and of the practitioners of Mexican customs. The immigrants commemorated the traditional *fiestas patrias* (September 16 and Cinco de Mayo), established Spanish-speaking literary and theatrical organizations, and added to the number of fraternal societies. The large number of recent immigrants also generated tensions with native-born Mexican Americans. The native-born and recent arrivals competed for jobs and housing. This competition led some Mexican Americans to resent the recent arrivals and to begin distinguishing themselves from recent immigrants by claiming a "Spanish" ancestry and downplaying their Mexican heritage.

While immigrants reinforced Native traditions, Americanization efforts and consumer culture continued to transform Mexican culture. Mexican-American children absorbed American customs and learned the English language in public schools. In addition, Catholic and Protestant schools sought to instill American values and traditions in the children. The spread of U.S. manufactured goods helped to change Mexican-American adults as they adopted new appliances, clothing, and machinery. Mexican-American families began accepting American food and holidays as the English language seeped into their everyday conversations.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Anglo tourism boosters in the American West promoted the region's "Spanish" past of quaint adobes and romantic missions, while denying the region's Mexican heritage. Encouraged by Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* novel, Californians

enthusiastically staged elaborate mission plays celebrating the state's constructed Spanish "fantasy heritage." Throughout the U.S. Southwest, tourism officials emphasized this "fantasy heritage" by celebrating a romantic Spanish colonial past while neglecting the region's Mexican heritage. At the same time, the *Los Angeles Times* sponsored a competition in which it invited readers to submit "Spanish" recipes, which would eventually be published in a cookbook. City leaders also organized the Fiesta de Los Angeles to showcase the region's "Spanish" past. Ironically, these celebrations coincided with the increasing marginalization and repression of Mexican Americans. Unlike the celebrated Spanish settlers of the region, who were accepted posthumously by Anglo society, Mexican Americans struggled with residential segregation, political exclusion, and low-paying jobs. Throughout the American Southwest, tourism officials promoted monuments to a "Spanish fantasy past" as they simultaneously whitewashed the Mexican present (McWilliams 1948, pp. 43–53; Deverell 2004, pp. 1–10; Chávez 1984, pp. 85–106).

To meet the challenges facing the community, Mexican Americans created new social and cultural organizations. The large number of Mexican immigrants spawned the creation of *mutualistas* (mutual-aid societies) and a surge in the number of Spanish-language newspapers. Mutual-aid societies were fraternal lodges that immigrants established to help them adjust to life in a new country without family networks. Named after Mexico's national heroes like Benito Juárez and Ignacio Zaragoza, the mutualistas provided poor immigrants with health insurance, death benefits, and other social services. Although many mutualistas catered to recent immigrants, several included Mexican-American members. Some mutual-aid societies, such as the Alianza Hispano-Americana, included businessmen as well as laborers and strove to defend the civil rights of its members. Mutualistas also sponsored schools and Spanish-language newspapers. While most newspapers focused on reporting local events and society activities, others promoted a spirited defense of the Mexican community's civil rights. Among the most famous newspapers were Tucson's *El Fronterizo*, published by Carlos I. Velasco, which criticized the land dispossession and violent persecution suffered by the local community. Velasco and the editors of *Las Dos Repúblicas* found common cause in promoting cultural pride and denouncing negative characterizations of Mexicans that appeared in the English-language press. Both the Spanish-language press and the mutualistas became precursors for the various civil rights organizations that would emerge at the beginning of the next century (Gonzales 1999, pp. 82–112; Griswold del Castillo and De León 1996, pp. 39–58).

Mexican immigration accelerated with the start of the Mexican Revolution. After ousting Díaz, the insurgents engaged in a long civil war that devastated the nation and sent many northward. Some moved to the United States to escape the violence, while others fled the increasing joblessness in Mexico caused by the revolution. From 1890 to the late 1920s, from one to one-and-a-half million Mexicans, about a tenth of Mexico's population, immigrated to the United States. Such a massive influx transformed many Mexican-American communities and further exacerbated preexisting tensions as many Mexican immigrants competed with Mexican Americans for

jobs, housing, and political influence. As nativist sentiment grew during the 1920s, the press and politicians accused Mexican immigrants of contributing to an increase in crime, a drop in educational achievement, and the decay of cities. Despite the anti-immigrant sentiment, agricultural employers lobbied for exemptions in the Quota Acts (1921 and 1924), to allow continued entry for immigrants from Latin America and to ensure a steady supply of labor. Jobs continued to pull Mexican immigrants to the U.S. Southwest until the Great Depression, when a reverse migration began (Gutiérrez 1995, pp. 39–68).

In the 1930s, the Department of Labor, in cooperation with state and local government agencies, subjected Mexicans to a repatriation and deportation campaign. Employing the Immigration Act of 1929, federal officials imprisoned and fined undocumented Mexican immigrants. As jobs decreased during the Great Depression, state and local officials joined federal authorities in targeting Mexicans for forcible repatriation. Government officials were concerned that Mexican immigrants competed with native-born workers over scarce jobs, and that Mexicans were allegedly over-represented among the unemployed and among those seeking aid with relief programs. Accompanying the immigrants who "voluntarily" repatriated were those who were encouraged to leave the country because of increasing hostility against immigrants and by officials who denied immigrants access to relief agencies. More than 400,000 Mexicans left the United States for Mexico during the 1930s, including the immigrants' Mexican-American children, who had never been in Mexico. These children experienced culture shock when they were uprooted from their schools and friends in the United States and sent to a country that was familiar to their parents but strange for them (Gonzales 1999, pp. 146–150).

In the 1940s, Mexican immigrants once again entered the United States as the nation faced labor shortages caused by World War II. Agribusiness interests persuaded Congress to institute the Bracero Program in 1942 to import temporary guest workers from Mexico. An overwhelmingly male labor force participated in this program, which provided a three- to six-month contract to work mainly in agriculture (although some laborers worked in railroad construction). The Bracero Program prohibited the contract workers from organizing unions, obtaining citizenship, or bringing their families. Despite these setbacks, approximately 4.8 million Mexicans participated in the program during its twenty-two-year existence. Mexican workers became braceros because wages in the United States were still higher than those they could obtain in Mexico. Most braceros worked in Texas, California, the Pacific Northwest, and the Midwest.

One of the unintended consequences of the Bracero Program was the growth of undocumented immigration, as some Mexican workers circumvented the limitations of the guest-worker program. Armed with knowledge of U.S. labor market conditions from former braceros, many undocumented workers relied on social networks of friends and family to gain employment. As the number of apprehensions of undocumented workers by the Border Patrol increased throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, xenophobia increased, as did pressure on Congress. Responding to this pressure, the Immigration and Naturalization Service launched "Operation Wetback" in

1954 to deport undocumented workers. Within several months, the INS had deported more than 1 million undocumented Mexican workers. The need for agricultural workers continued unabated, however, so the Bracero Program was extended. Although the Bracero Program was originally intended to fill World War II labor shortages, its importance for agricultural concerns led to pressure to renew the program several times until it finally ended in 1964. With the end of the Bracero Program, undocumented immigration once again grew as the transnational social networks and labor recruitment continued attracting Mexican laborers (Gutiérrez 1996, pp. 45–85).

Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Central Americans joined Mexicans as immigrants in the second half of the twentieth century, increasing the Latino population and adding to its diversity. Although Cuban exiles immigrated to the United States as early as the late nineteenth century, most Cuban immigrants arrived after the 1959 Cuban revolution. The first large wave of immigration was composed of middle- and upper-class Cubans opposed to Fidel Castro's government and attracted by the economic opportunities in the United States. Subsequent waves in the 1970s and 1980s included many political refugees, but also some immigrants motivated by the attraction of greater employment opportunities. Because of its political opposition to Castro's government, the U.S. government has considered most Cuban immigrants as political refugees. The refugee designation has given Cuban immigrants many advantages (such as access to government aid) not available to immigrants from other parts of Latin America. Although most Cuban immigrants settled in Florida and the East Coast, some migrated to Los Angeles and other West Coast cities.

Puerto Ricans began moving to the United States in large numbers after they obtained U.S. citizenship in 1917. Large-scale migration from Puerto Rico began in the 1940s, encouraged by the loss of agricultural jobs and U.S. labor recruiters. In the 1960s, the island's economic restructuring spurred more outmigration as capital-intensive industries replaced labor-intensive ones and led to steep drops in employment. Puerto Ricans have long participated in circular migration that shuttles them between the U.S. mainland and Puerto Rico. Among the western destinations for Puerto Ricans are Hawaii and Los Angeles. Immigration from Central America began increasing in the 1960s as the region experienced agricultural modernization that displaced peasants. This immigrant flow increased substantially in the 1970s as right-wing dictatorships in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua began systematically repressing dissent. The friendly relations between these dictatorships and the U.S. government prevented U.S. officials from identifying most Central American immigrants as political refugees. The lone exception was the wave of Nicaraguan immigrants during the 1980s, who were considered political refugees when the leftist Sandinista government held power. Central American immigrants settled throughout the United States, but a sizable portion made their new homes in Western cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Houston, and Dallas (Romero, Hondagneu-Sotelo, and Ortiz 1997, pp. 81–114, 135–153).

The American West continues to be a destination for Latinos in the twenty-first century. Once predominantly Mexican, the region today includes

Latin American immigrants from the Caribbean, Central America, and South America. These new arrivals have not only increased the ethnic diversity of the nation's population but also helped to highlight the internal diversity within Latino communities. Although politicians and advertisers describe a homogenous Latino (or Hispanic) community, the Latino population is extremely heterogeneous. From musical tastes to preferences for sports, and from religious identification to political affiliations, Latinos exhibit a wide variety of opinions. Educational levels among Latinos also vary according to the population's socioeconomic status. They are increasingly gaining political influence because more immigrants are registering to vote and becoming involved in local and national political contests. As more Latino students enter college, join the professional ranks, and become involved in politics, they will not only continue to shape the future of the American West but will also increasingly influence the direction of the nation as a whole.

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