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Historical Review

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Editorial Correction

In Professor Nancy F. Cott’s review of *Becoming Citizens: The Emergence and Development of the California Women’s Movement* by Gale Gullet in the July 2001 issue, the spelling of “Women’s Christian Temperance Union” should be “Woman’s Christian Temperance Union.” I wish to extend my apologies to Professor Cott for introducing the error and to thank her for pointing out the mistake.
IRRIGATION WITH SIPHON TUBES AT SAN FELIPE PUEBLO, NEW MEXICO
For centuries, agriculture was the backbone of the Pueblo Indian economy in New Mexico. Since prehistoric time, crop irrigation was as symbolic of their culture as buffalo hunting was for the Plains Indians. During their historic contact with Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. governments, these nineteen tribal communities resisted most innovations introduced by outsiders and clung to traditional methods of farming and the religious ceremonialism that accompanied it. In the century following the U.S. takeover of the Southwest, Pueblos maintained the agricultural system of their ancestors. Tribal authorities controlled plots of land and doled them out to individual farmers. Pueblo farmers generally farmed these plots—typically irregular in shape—to support a subsistence way of life.

Although the degree to which the various villages held on to ancient practices varied from one group to another, the Pueblos adopted change only when it posed little or no threat to the ways of the past. The exigencies of the depression era, however, weakened some of those ties, for the Pueblos had to boost agricultural production to feed their growing populations. The war years only intensified this tendency; the Pueblos, like other tribes throughout the nation, increased production to support the war effort. Indeed, while
Native Americans expanded cultivated ground by 150,000 acres nationally, Pueblo land devoted to agriculture rose by almost 3,000 acres. Much of this increase was a consequence of land-acquisition programs that also helped them to expand garden and livestock production. Ironically, this dramatic change occurred at a time when one-third of the Indian population across the country had left reservations to serve in the military or work in war-related industries. The Pueblos sent to the armed forces a higher percentage of men than any ethnic group in the country, significantly reducing the number of available farm workers. The increase in Pueblo agricultural production, though uneven throughout their reservations, stemmed from the introduction of modern farm machinery—a trend they had resisted in the past.¹

Thus, modernization edged its way into Pueblo life in the decade before the end of the Second World War, but their traditional subsistence agricultural program faced a greater long-term threat in the conflict’s aftermath. The war opened a different world to the Pueblos and other Native Americans, bringing them new skills, opportunities, and a greater degree of acceptance. Whether they served in the war or worked in domestic industries, Pueblos acquired experience that prepared them for employment in the modern economy. In conjunction with these abilities, some Pueblos utilized the G.I. Bill after the war to prepare them for a different way of life. For many of these people, the search for employment would lead them to cities distant from their homelands.² Those who stayed behind would face an agricultural future far different from the past. For them, a major question surfaced: How could they compete in an agricultural world that was undergoing a technological and economic revolution?

Industrial America underwent dramatic expansion after the war and change in the agricultural sector was even more striking. The dramatic growth in agricultural productivity was the product of rapid mechanization, scientific advancements, increased specialization, modern management, and government subsidies. At an accelerated pace, the traditional family farm began to give way to the new agribusiness that drastically reduced the farm population, greatly increased production, and yielded lower farm prices.³ Commissioner of Indian Affairs William Brophy noted that future Indian agriculture would likewise require larger units of production, the application of scientific and technological innovations, and large investment of capital. He also acknowledged the supreme challenge this presented to Native Americans who generally lacked capital, lived on lands in need of rehabilitation, and faced grave challenges to their water rights.⁴
In many ways, the plight of the Pueblo farmers paralleled that of small farmers nationwide—both eked by against great odds. Government subsidies benefited agribusiness and urban areas offered better wages and job diversification. As a result, farm populations on and off reservations declined dramatically after World War II. While the agricultural revolution created a new kind of rural poverty among poor whites and minorities, its impact was even greater on Native Americans because of their unique historical experience. Indian law and bureaucratic red tape complicated advancement, and traditionally, reservation development lagged behind non-Indian businesses. Many Pueblos, like other Americans, turned to new occupations—mining, Los Alamos jobs, ranching, recreation—while others profited from the growing interest in Native American arts and crafts in society and the marketplace. However, farming still remained important to the Pueblos as their transmission of traditional agricultural knowledge to younger generations was rare among western Native peoples.5

For those who remained on the reservations after the war, the opportunity to succeed in the new economic order dominated by industrial production—even in agriculture—rested on the diversification of the existing reservation economy. Such growth and change presented a tremendous challenge to Pueblo farmers whose traditional methods and religious beliefs hindered economic and agricultural adaptation. But even those willing to utilize the most modern methods available found obstacles to their progress overwhelming. Farmers discovered their small, broken parcels on the pueblos could not compete with the highly mechanized, corporate farms that gradually became the norm in white America. Like other Native Americans, Pueblos lacked adequate machinery, education, money, and, some observers believed, the competitive drive to contend with the forces of modern capitalism that increasingly dominated American agriculture. Like many indigenous people around the globe following World War II, the Pueblos lived in societies generally unstructured and egalitarian but now faced a future shaped by modern corporate capitalism and market agriculture—an economics with which they were unfamiliar.6

However, after decades of resisting American innovations to their ancient traditions, the Pueblos had to embrace modern science and technology and take advantage of a change in government policy toward self-determination before both opportunities slipped away. Uncertain at the time was whether the federal government would catalyze the transition or whether Pueblo leaders would reassert themselves after years of resisting change. The farming
transition would undoubtedly require substantial federal assistance. If these political and economic changes came about, would the Pueblos remain what they always had been—a culture steeped in an agricultural way of life that had defined the core of their existence for centuries?

Soil Conservation

Having sustained themselves for centuries, most Pueblos were fairly independent, but the cost of modern agriculture—flood control, crop irrigation, well drilling, and ever-changing equipment—was staggering. Before those issues could even be considered, however, Pueblo adoption of modern scientific farming methods was essential to the advancement of their agriculture. One method involved practicing soil conservation. Improving Pueblo farmlands was the first step in preserving and strengthening Pueblo agricultural traditions in the postwar years. The deterioration of reservation land was not an uncommon problem, and as Native American farmers emerged from the war, they faced a crisis that had plagued them for decades: almost two-thirds of their reservation acreage were in the arid regions of the West and by 1947 roughly only 8% had undergone necessary soil conservation regimens. Soil erosion was so rampant that by 1949 native farmers had lost 20% of their farmlands to its effects. Commissioner Brophy recognized that if the slow pace of modernization continued, halting the deterioration of Indian land would take well into the next century.7

The agricultural problems facing the Pueblo farmers were outlined in the 1951 Annual Report of the Soil Conservation Operation. Oliver Hole, soil conservationist for the Northern Pueblo Agency (NPA), reported that improper care of agricultural land and irrigation systems had reduced the productivity of Pueblo farms and spawned considerable soil erosion. In fact, soil damage and water shortages had driven farmers to leave fallow a very large section of available farmland. Many farmers had only enough water to sustain perennial crops and raise small gardens. Drought during the previous two years restricted the production of forage, opened fields to wind erosion, and lowered incomes in livestock production. Hole also lamented the Pueblos’ limited management of rangeland and land-distribution practices. Having subdivided their farmland over many years, they grew crops on small tracts scattered all over the reservations and thus limited the income potential of their agriculture. Also coming in for Hole’s criticism were the tribal governments of the nineteen pueblos. Dominated by conservative elders, Hole felt
these political bodies hampered modernization and progress. Pueblo tribal customs, Hole claimed, hindered the development of mainstream education on the reservations although a large number of Pueblos desired the advantages that it offered.  

In 1951, to overcome the so-called backwardness of the Pueblos, the NPA held eight educational meetings attended by 120 farmers. Agency personnel lectured on all phases of soil conservation, crop production, and produce marketing and also developed a farm plan for the Santa Fe Indian School, which had about forty-five acres under irrigation. The school program, which dealt with crop rotation, fertilizer application, soil erosion, and irrigation problems, demonstrated a significant gain in vegetable production. The NPA also administered programs to control large populations of destructive rodents, a particular problem in the Nambe and Pojoaque Valleys. County agents supplied poison grain to eliminate kangaroo rats and prairie dogs, especially focusing on areas around erosion-control structures to prevent rodent damage. The problem was serious enough that rodent-control efforts were mounted in conjunction with non-Indian farmers to limit the populations more effectively.  

Low rainfall, steep topography, and severe overgrazing generated soil erosion and inedible-plant growth, two severe problems in the pueblos. This, in
turn, reduced the value of the rangeland for livestock production, greatly minimizing Pueblo income. Hole felt that proper range management, if followed for a few years, would double carrying capacity. He was pleased, however, that pueblo dikes, diversion dams, and ponds were protecting irrigation systems and spreading excess water over flat areas. Land leveling, although much needed throughout the pueblos to lessen erosion, stirred little interest because of the expense. Wherever possible, the agency tried to encourage contour farming and irrigation to corral the problem. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) reimbursement for NPA conservation work came to over twenty-eight thousand dollars for the fiscal year.  

In 1951 the U.S. Department of Agriculture sponsored a program to demonstrate the benefits of modern conservation methods to farmers and ranchers throughout New Mexico, choosing the Pojoaque Soil Conservation District as a pilot area. Federal, state, and private agencies tried to apply the program district-wide with the hope of extending it—if it proved to be successful—to other regions. The NPA especially benefited from the project, which included approximately one-third of its land. Having worked with the district for the past two years, the NPA embraced the concept of a watershed plan for the entire region. Interested groups met several times to formulate and initiate the plan and made a number of field trips to familiarize themselves with problems and challenges throughout the district.  

Although the Pueblos made some improvements in soil conservation, agents in the early postwar era still faced considerable challenges to modernizing their agriculture. Funding limitations translated into staff shortages at the NPA, which had only one conservationist. The Albuquerque district spared limited engineering help, but such staff loans proved burdensome. A fully staffed agency would certainly advance soil conservation for the northern pueblos, but federal funds were limited. Pueblo tradition and culture—primitive farming methods and religious practices—also remained a roadblock to scientific farming in Pueblo country in Hole’s opinion. Indian school children were learning soil and moisture conservation, but Hole wanted adult education to complement and aid the scientific-farming program.  

By 1954 the NPA enjoyed more cooperation and material assistance from the BIA’s Branch of Soil and Moisture Conservation in reaching the Indians who desired the help. More than in the recent past, the Pueblos demonstrated willingness to accept scientific advice and enthusiasm for soil-conservation practices. Hole attributed the new Pueblo keenness to the attention paid to the Pueblos by other local, state, and federal agencies. The conser-
vation-branch program that had the greatest impact on the Pueblos was the demonstration project. Native farmers witnessed how agricultural improvements could materially increase their income even on small farms or plots. Indeed, progressive Pueblos began to consolidate their lands and apply scientific practices that fit their farms and returned profits. Conservationists hoped that native farmers would adopt additional modern techniques in the coming years. Such advances, however, were offset by Pueblo farmers’ inadequate standard of living. The lack of sufficient farm land forced many Pueblos to support their families by working away from home. This situation frustrated Hole, who saw many hours of conservation work and agricultural improvements lost to farmer absences lasting days or weeks at a time.13

Following the trend of other tribes in the West, individual pueblos initiated local farm-aid associations called Conservation Enterprises. In 1956 Isleta and Tesuque formed their organization, with Nambe and San Juan creating theirs the following year. Tribal councils believed that the new organizations would assist their farmers’ use and development of soil and water resources and create greater interest among individual farmers in their villages. Each Pueblo reservation set up five-member governing committees that acted as vendors for all construction, made equipment available, and furnished improved varieties of seeds and fertilizers to individual farmers. As time went on, the programs included land leveling to expand irrigable areas, lining ditches with concrete, and purchasing modern equipment to ease the burden of local farmers.

Perhaps the most notable success occurred at Isleta, where credit was extended by the Conservation Enterprise to individuals who repaid their loans through increased income from crop production. Encouraged by the Tribal Council, Isleta’s Conservation Enterprise began to lease land in 1960 to bring previously rehabilitated but unfarmed acreage into production. Within ten years 482 acres had been leveled, lined with concrete ditches, and leased to farmers. The two people most responsible for Isleta’s success were John B. Caldwell, the tribe’s soil conservationist for the BIA, and John D. Zuni, who served on the tribe’s first Conservation Services Enterprise and remained actively involved in planning and implementing conservation projects. Caldwell had assisted Isleta since the pueblo began its program in 1956 and worked closely with tribal officials, committee members, and individual farmers. He also maintained a close working relationship with local county officials who ran conservation programs. Embracing modern agricultural techniques, Zuni was the first farmer in the pueblo to line ditches with concrete and one
of the first to lease land that he eventually reclaimed. His innovative approach directly impacted other farmers at Isleta.14

Santa Clara Pueblo also initiated its Soil Conservation Enterprise in 1956, and within three years its farmers were laying irrigation pipe, purchasing seeds, and leveling land. The community's budget for 1960 and 1961 showed a profit from soil-conservation work. However, two years later Santa Clara farmers terminated their original agreement, claiming that the pueblo's Conservation Enterprise did not provide all desired aid programs. The pueblo wanted services expanded to include rangeland conservation and wildlife and recreation development, programs encouraged nationally by the BIA's Branch of Land Operations (BLO).15

By 1961 the conservation program had grown more sophisticated. The BLO was now responsible for the management of soil and water resources. The agency consisted of five sections including Soil and Moisture Conservation, Extension, Irrigation, Range Lands, and Sales. The first group emphasized the introduction of practices new to the Pueblos. Working directly with the farmers, BLO technicians introduced the selection of crop varieties better adapted to the high desert climate, proper fertilization and cultivation, insect and weed control, and more efficient applications of irrigation water. Conservationists also assisted ranching operations with detention and diversion dams that spread water and controlled erosion, ponds that supplied water to livestock, and reseeding programs that improved rangeland grasses. The United Pueblos Agency (UPA), under the BIA, heeded the many calls for additional personnel and supplied six conservationists for eighteen pueblos (Zuni being excluded) with each agent covering two to five reservations in close proximity.16

Fencing Pueblo lands was a common issue throughout the region. Unfenced fields and ranges suffered destruction by the sheep and cattle belonging to non-Indian neighbors. Nambe had started but never completed a boundary fence, while San Ildefonso faced the same dilemma with a very different neighbor, Los Alamos National Laboratories, the United States' primary nuclear-weapons research facility. For three years (1958–1961), the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), the agency that oversaw the laboratory, had been negotiating with the Pueblo officials over the clear separation of government land from areas considered sacred on the San Ildefonso reservation. The AEC wanted a cost-sharing venture because neither side could afford the whole survey and fencing project. Both sides felt aggrieved—the commission wanted to eliminate Pueblo trespass and both groups sought to exclude roaming, destructive livestock. Finally, the AEC agreed to pay ap-
proximately $4,500 for their share and requested that the BIA allocate between $2,500 and $3,000 while the San Ildefonso supplied the labor.\textsuperscript{17}

Taos Pueblo had a similar fencing problem, but its object was to expand rangeland. In 1956 the tribal council passed a resolution requesting federal funding for fence and cattle guards on a portion of the reservation purchased for livestock grazing in 1937. Never used by the Taos, the parcel was annually abused by non-Indian trespassers running stock. The UPA determined that it could produce good range forage, and Taos officials wanted to plant cool-season grass, which, when combined with native warm-season species, would lengthen the grazing season and alleviate overgrazing on other parts of the reservation. Initially, BIA officials balked at this proposal. In the past, reseeding projects on unfenced range had failed, and the Taos’ proposal made no provision for protecting the reseeded area while they were establishing the grass. The Taos council quickly passed a resolution assuring the BIA that the pueblo would seek measures to protect the range in question, and Superintendent Guy Williams gave his support. The reseeding project, protected by new fence, was a success. Five years later, the Taos again expanded ranch land through the replacement of sagebrush with wheat grass. Once more
they requested federal funds to fence the parcel, having already exhausted tribal money to construct additional fence along the state highway.  

Two Pueblo communities, however, were moving away from executing individual small projects to drafting overall operational plans. Following range soil-site and condition inventories by the BLO in 1960, Taos and Laguna Pueblos adopted range-management plans for all or part of their reservations. The United Pueblos Agency was particularly pleased, for the Taos and Laguna efforts were the first plans ever initiated by the agency. Delighted UPA officials attributed the pueblos' eager cooperation to a transformation of tribal procedures, which now ran "counter to century-old traditions deeply engrained in their culture . . . in order for them to compete in [the] modern world."  

The initial steps of soil conservation taken during the 1950s—some heretofore deemed untraditional or unaffordable—served as foundations for future agricultural developments on Pueblo reservations. These first efforts affected land consolidation, land leveling, ditch lining, cooperative planning with state and federal agencies, applying modern science, and developing the first overall operational plans for an entire reservation. Some federal agents and tribal officials believed that the Pueblos had turned the corner toward agricultural modernization. 

For almost a generation following World War II, however, Pueblo agriculture faced problems that were neither new nor easily overcome. The chronic underfunding that had always plagued Indian programs continued to limit overall progress. The Pueblos benefited from small gains in range management, district irrigation, and local conservation, but a shortage of technical assistance kept Pueblo-wide farming and pastoral development to a minimum. Restrictions based on Pueblo religious and governmental traditions still hampered BIA personnel and programs. Moreover, as the farm programs of the Pueblos declined, communal economies clashed with market economies and thwarted progress in general. 

Self-Determination for Pueblo Farmers 

In the 1950s the federal government began the implementation of its termination policy. Designed to sever the ties between federal and tribal governments, termination dealt a heavy blow to agricultural advancement throughout Native America in the United States. Some government officials, recognizing the decline of Indian agriculture and the rise of off-reservation employment af-
ter the war, were already backing away from agricultural programs on the reservations. Indeed, termination was a strong signal to all tribes that the U.S. government had given up the idea of assimilation through agriculture. Land-use programs applied after the war, however, had already helped forge a pan-Puebloism that could combat threats to their traditional lifestyles much as they had done in the past.

Complaints about termination and its devastating consequences echoed across Indian country to the nation’s capitol, but with the election of John F. Kennedy, a new day dawned for Native Americans. The president, dismayed by conditions of poverty throughout the country, including Indian reservations, sought to improve economic development in Native homelands and extend self-determination to Native peoples. Following the theme of the United Nations in pronouncing political independence and economic growth for third-world nations, he sought to extend the goals of economic development and self-determination to Native peoples. In 1961 Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall assembled a task-force report on Indian affairs that emphasized the development of tribal resources, both human and natural. More than a decade would pass before termination ended as a federal policy but the next three administrations would continue to push for the economic advancement and self-determination of Native Americans.

What began as antipoverty programs under Kennedy expanded into the War on Poverty during Lyndon B. Johnson’s administration. The Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO)—created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964—oversaw the programs and encouraged local communities to take on decision-making power. However, intense lobbying by various Indian organizations was needed before Congress extended the OEO benefits to Native Americans with the creation of a special “Indian desk.”

As a result of Johnson’s OEO program, Community Action Projects encouraged tribal councils to develop their own economic programs. Commissioner of Indian Affairs Philleo Nash requested that, with the assistance of local BIA superintendents, all reservations nationwide initiate a ten-year development program to determine the needs of individual tribes. In June 1964 the BIA held a conference in Santa Fe to disseminate information on the program. BIA superintendents in New Mexico were encouraged to inform tribes about available services. Designed to be “people oriented,” the program emphasized community action and cooperation between the BIA and local Indians. Accordingly, the superintendents determined that overall Pueblo goals should include the development of irrigation, range, and arable lands. They
next surveyed each pueblo to learn its specific priorities for new programs and funds.

To combat high unemployment on the reservations, the pueblos listed a number of agricultural goals and priorities. Many cited the need to improve and increase range and agricultural land with better irrigation systems and flood-control programs. Others submitted specific wish lists. Isleta wanted to prepare its remaining 4,100 acres for irrigation and to drill auxiliary wells for specialty crops. Acoma sought irrigation facilities to utilize water from the San José River. Jémez hoped to rehabilitate its entire 2,500 acres of irrigable land and Picuris wanted to do the same with 220 acres in addition to developing over 14,000 acres of rangeland. San Juan’s priority was the improvement of 2,000 acres of irrigable land and the pueblo also hoped to acquire land adjacent to its reservation. Santo Domingo set a target date of 1975 for developing over 3,000 acres of farmland and 66,000 acres of rangeland for nine hundred animals. Taos hoped to add 5,000 more acres of irrigable land and Tesuque 800 more acres respectively to their reservations. Of course, none of these wishes would become reality without funding. Indeed, lack of money would be a major obstacle to Johnson’s antipoverty programs including those in Pueblo country. In spite of the fact that the number of farmers was dwindling proportionally to population growth, the Pueblos, still clinging to their traditional economy, saw expanding agriculture as a way to combat chronic unemployment and poverty in their homelands.

During the 1960s, the federal government began to increase assistance to the development of agricultural resources on Indian reservations. By 1968, to that end, almost half of the BIA’s budget was being pumped into other federal agencies including the Department of Agriculture. Although that department did not administer any specific reservation programs, it did oversee others that benefited Native Americans. For example, many New Mexican tribes participated in soil- and water-conservation projects that aided the Rio Grande Valley.

The spirit of cooperation between federal and state agencies was highlighted in 1963 when Secretary Udall signed an agreement with the Pojoaque-Santa Cruz Soil and Water Conservation District in New Mexico. For the first time the Interior Department indicated a willingness to work with a local district on an area development project. Previously, there had been some cooperation between districts and the Agriculture Department, but the Interior Department had disregarded those conservation efforts to concentrate on its own regional initiatives. The National Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts hailed the agreement as a big step toward future cooperation
in developing western land. For the Pueblos, who came under the control of the Interior Department and also fell under the jurisdiction of state conservancy districts, this action meant cooperation between typically conflicting agencies in establishing uniform goals and procedures for conservation projects without any conflicts of interest. 25

Recognizing that federal assistance alone could not solve the region's economic depression, the Pueblos joined their non-Indian neighbors in various Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) projects that were authorized under the Food and Agricultural Act of 1962. Under the leadership of the Soil Conservation Service, the northern New Mexico RC&D work was one of ten pilot projects approved by the secretary of agriculture in 1964. Realizing their common problems, the people of the region, in conjunction with the Soil Conservation Service, the New Mexico State Engineer, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and other local agencies and civic organizations, pooled their resources to combat poverty in their locale. The effort was a perfect example of how local people with a voice in determining their economic future could work with government agencies to accomplish their goals.
Given the untapped resources of the region, RC&D's purpose was the conservation and development of those resources. This included the establishment of facilities for marketing local fruits and other specialty crops, improvement of community irrigation systems and rangelands, and flood prevention. The project specifically focused on developing the overall resources of the eight pueblos in the region. In addition to increasing employment and per capita income, the RC&D hoped to stabilize the agricultural economy through effective land use and conservation practices as well as to increase the value of crops. As a result of the RC&D's work, the BIA reported some impressive accomplishments by the northern pueblos including range and irrigation improvements and watershed protection projects.

As early as 1965 Walter W. Olsen, general superintendent of the UPA, reported that all eight northern pueblos had submitted project proposals under the RC&D work plan and that accelerating regular BIA programs designed to create new jobs and opportunities in the region was spurring forward Pueblo development initiatives. Specifically, San Ildefonso was working with the Pajarito community in lining nine thousand feet of irrigation ditches—a project that was noteworthy in its interracial cooperation. Santa Clara had approved a similar project of thirty-five hundred feet and, with the help of the BIA, installed a mile-and-a-half pipeline that opened a new grazing area on the reservation. Nambe also completed a watershed project in which twelve hundred acres were cleared, seeded, fenced, and fitted out with three livestock water tanks and twelve erosion control dams.

The work of the Soil and Moisture Conservation Service (SMC) went so well that it offered examples for others to follow. In 1963 the SMC allocated over $268,000 for UPA programs, breaking down the sum into land use planning (28%), soil improvement (20%), water management (44%), and operation and maintenance (8%). The pueblos recognized that they could use funds only in areas where proper management practices were followed and that the details of the plan had to be approved by their people. Santa Clara was allocated $27,000 for a showcase project and two years later, in 1965, the conservation service of the pueblo entertained the idea of paying for equipment to level eight acres of land for an experimental farm. In 1966 the BIA set up a conservation-training program for a group of African students who toured the Southwest that summer. They visited Taos, Jemez, Zia, and other pueblos with a special emphasis on conservation.

Thus, the 1960s represented a major shift in emphasis for the Pueblo farming programs. Previously thwarted by the termination program, the pueblos
found a new spirit of cooperation with the federal government. Johnson’s War on Poverty initiatives helped rejuvenate Pueblo agricultural activity, emphasizing the maximum utilization of resources and the cultivation of specialty crops. The new cooperative efforts not only brought together state and federal agencies, but also the Pueblos and their Hispanic neighbors. This new combination of groups saw that they had more commonalities than differences and assisted one another in natural-resource development. More importantly, the voice of local people was now being heard. Progress would be slow, but a new age of self-determination was beginning.

With detailed plans and mutual cooperation, it appeared that authorities needed only to find the human and financial resources to bring the dreams to reality. Still, there were major gaps to bridge. Traditional Pueblo subsistence farming continued to present a major barrier to a full-blown modern agricultural program. More problematic was that maximization of land and water resources required huge capital outlays from federal authorities to a small group of Native Americans who heretofore had been largely ignored. In addition, as the decade of the sixties wore on, tax dollars would shift from the War on Poverty to the war in Vietnam. The policy of “guns and butter” would produce far more of the former than the latter.

Extension Service

The Pueblos’ success in rapidly changing modern scientific farming depended on acquiring an awareness of the latest methods available. As federal policy moved away from termination and toward self-determination, many federal agents believed that the best way to capitalize on the new independence was education at all levels. Created by the federal government, the Cooperative Extension Service provided agricultural education for all American farmers. Initially, the BIA was responsible for providing Native Americans with technical assistance under the Extension Service program, but in the 1960s state universities were contracted to provide the services. New Mexico State University (NMSU) was charged with the responsibility of disseminating information to local tribes. A. E. Trivis, who administered the program until 1971, ran an aggressive program that was administered by local extension agents working directly with tribal members. Similar government programs before World War II were staffed by agents who were typically incompetent, underpaid, and little concerned with the plight of Pueblo farmers. After the war, however, the agents were qualified, full-time employees and provided services aimed at the needs
of the Pueblos. The budgets of the NMSU extension program reflect that, early on, Zuni was more actively involved in the program than all of the other Pueblos combined. The Zunis received 42% of the 1969 budget, compared to 27% for the whole UPA. The money helped finance two agricultural agents while the other Pueblos had none.29

The Extension Service program moved ahead, but with mixed acceptance. By 1975 the Zuni budget increased only slightly, while the Southern Pueblos Agency’s (SPA) budget grew to almost five times what it was for the entire UPA during the six previous years. Participation in the program was strictly voluntary and the eight northern pueblos decided not to receive services. Tribal leaders of the SPA, however, were impressed with the information they received and surprised with the development in local Pueblo leadership, which they hoped would continue. They also wanted future assistance with setting up new farming operations, local crop demonstration plots, and improved water distribution systems. Unfortunately, the national economic recession of the late 1970s undermined the extension program.
Federal budget cuts came at a time when the Pueblos' interest in the Extension Service was peaking. Underfunding, therefore, threatened recent gains made by the tribes. The work of the Extension Service, however, made significant progress in a relatively short time. The program worked so well at Zuni that tribal officials decided to sever ties with the service. By 1981 the Zunis terminated their agreement with NMSU and closed the Extension office. Zuni had always been the most independent of the pueblos (a condition fostered by both geographical isolation and distinctive linguistic traits), and its leaders believed that after fifteen years of Extension assistance, they could competently handle their own business. However, Area Director Sidney Mills found their decision distressing. He was aware that Extension Agent Elmer Allen had helped the Zunis make vast improvements in their livestock program and develop their local leadership, but Mills lamented that the Zunis would sorely miss the extension program in the future.

In addition to the university's program, the Pueblos also received technical assistance directly through the federal government. In 1975 Area Director Patrick L. Wehling contacted all New Mexican Pueblos about their participation in the Agricultural Conservation Program. Working in conjunction with the Soil Conservation Service, the BIA urged interested Pueblo farmers to prepare a conservation plan as a prerequisite. New Mexico officials distributed handbooks that explained the program to interested parties. Along with federal and local authorities, the pueblos established guidelines to facilitate sound resource-management systems through conservation and erosion control. Additionally, Commissioner Morris Thompson of the BIA made natural-resource management a national objective. He believed that establishment of firm policies would improve management of resources that were important to both the federal government and Native Americans. He stressed soil and range inventories, technical education programs, and comprehensive management plans for Indian ranchers. He also wanted to provide a technically trained agricultural specialist to inform Indian landowners about farmland resources, federal cost-sharing programs, and management options. In a short time policies for improving natural-resource management were being implemented at all pueblos. Each agency's highest priority was hiring an agricultural specialist. By 1977 a number of the pueblos made plans to hire a natural-resource manager with command of the native language if possible.

Technical assistance programs elevated the sophistication of Pueblo agriculture to a new level. Tradition-bound farmers held sway for generations.
after the vanguard of American occupation arrived. Not until the New Deal period did the farmers begin to ease their grasp. Basically ignored in the postwar termination era, much Pueblo farming activity remained stagnant and large bodies of resources lay undeveloped. With the advent of self-determination policy, federal officials hoped to increase the economic independence of Pueblo farmers. Nothing was more beneficial in this effort than the work of the Extension Service, whose officials and agents determined early on that the key to unlocking the door of opportunity for native farmers was education. Educational opportunities, however, could only be cultivated through federal funding, which would remain a challenge.

Pueblo agriculture faced a plethora of challenges during the 1960s and 1970s. Beginning with self-determination, the Pueblo voice, idle for so long, was reawakened. Federal bureaucratic policies and dictates remained a constant in Pueblo life, but they were increasingly designed to prepare the Pueblos for the complex future that awaited them. Governmental officials at federal, state, and local levels put a new emphasis on cooperation, although state officials were often less helpful than their federal counterparts. Both ranchers and farmers faced the prospect of mastering a new level of sophistication in their attempts to modernize Pueblo agriculture. The combination of economic planning, resource management, range surveys, and archaeological and environmental laws replaced the rather haphazard modernization programs of the past. Some Pueblos were ready to engage the challenges of the modern world and to gain economic benefits for their people, but as a whole, the Pueblos still rejected ideas and methods that were incommensurate with Pueblo tradition and life.

Pueblo officials, however, still faced overwhelming obstacles: economic development, flood control, and population growth. Each challenge impacted the region's most precious resource — water. Surprisingly, the keenest interest in these threats to Pueblo agriculture occurred at a time when farming was in decline. Farming had long been the hallmark of Pueblo self-reliance, but the forces set in motion after the war were threatening their most traditional occupation.

The Decline of Pueblo Agriculture

The general downward trend of Pueblo agriculture in the postwar years is best measured by observing the change in the number of irrigated acres on individual reservations. A breakdown of these statistics during the New Deal and post–World War II period is provided in the following table.
For most pueblos the decline in irrigated acreage is shocking. The majority shows a loss of more than 60%. Only Isleta, Sandía, Santa Clara, and Zuni demonstrate increases from the first measurement in 1938 to the last, with Isleta, Sandía, and Santa Clara showing a remarkable turn around after decades of decline. The presence of Isleta and Sandía in the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District certainly contributed to their acreage increases. Zuni’s upward trend stemmed more from their expansive ranching than from their agricultural efforts. Still, irrigated acreage for two tribes went down by over 80%, and three others showed losses of over 70%. While the Pueblo-wide percentage of decline from 1938 to 1964 was 32%, if the gainers are subtracted from the total, the loss for the remaining Pueblos at the last time they were measured is 6174 acres or 60%.

The overall decline of agriculture was not unique to the Pueblos in the Southwest. In 1973 the Four Corners Regional Commission’s study on agriculture revealed a similar decline for Anglo, Hispanic, and Indian farmers in the area. Agricultural employment went down from 40,600 in 1970 to 32,300 in 1980, and the agricultural sector was predicted to show the slowest growth
when compared to other economic areas. The shrinking agricultural sector would force many local people (like the Pueblos) to leave their native villages and towns to seek employment elsewhere. Only the Navajo Irrigation Project offered hope for agricultural expansion in the Southwest. In the New Mexico sector of the Four Corners, agriculture’s share of the total earnings dropped drastically from 14.9% in 1950 to 7% in 1970. Adding to the problem was the quality of surface and subsurface water, which contained significant quantities of salt.

Numerous explanations for the slide in Pueblo agriculture have been offered over the years. In 1976, historian Joe Sando of Jemez Pueblo, author of two books on the Pueblos, cited water shortages, soil erosion, and population increases to explain the decline, but he also added the disruptions and upheavals of World War II to his explanatory mix. Pueblo soldiers learned new skills, returned to take advantage of the G.I. Bill, and became skilled workers and professionals. In addition he blamed the soil-bank program that emerged in the 1950s. Under the program, the Pueblos, like other American farmers, were compensated for leaving their lands fallow. Sando observed that by this time, subsistence farming was a thing of the past. Finally, he regretted the introduction of welfare, which, he claimed, “created a new kind of Pueblo person, one who does not work.” Certainly this last remark reflects the drop in centuries-long self-reliance that had long been the backbone of the Pueblo character.

Two years later civil engineers William J. Balch and John W. Clark of New Mexico State University analyzed the forces of agricultural decline in Pueblo country. Their explanations echoed reasons cited immediately following World War II. In their opinion, the transfer of land from one Pueblo generation to the next was the principle cause for declining Pueblo agriculture. Although lands belong to the individual pueblo, their rights of use were inherited and this practice over the generations had left modern farmers with small, widely scattered land holdings. The resulting subsistence farming was on the decline because of the large effort required for a small economic return. Balch and Clark simply reinforced what small farmers throughout the country already knew: they were going out of business because they could not afford the technology employed by larger corporate farms. Balch and Clark also cited a shortage of irrigation water and general decline of interest in farming. However, they did point out that while agriculture was not the dominant way of life it once was among the Pueblos, the indigenous religious ceremonialism connected with agriculture was still an important part of their lives.
A report on Santa Ana by John Baker in 1981 studied trends in its agricultural lands from 1936 to 1980. Farm acreage ebbed and flowed from the late 1930s until 1953 when it dropped substantially from 644 to 460 acres. Over the next twenty-seven years, acreage continued to decline—292 acres in 1962, 215 acres in 1976, and finally 179 acres in 1980. It was hard to pinpoint the exact cause of this decline; certainly, off-reservation work and the high cost of farm equipment attributed to the loss, but water-flow problems also added to the situation, especially siltation, droughts, floods, and usurpation. In his 1983 study of Acoma, Robert R. Lansford of the Southwest Research and Development Company noted that the largest acreage decreases occurred after 1954 but finally bottomed out in 1975. Farm acreage slightly increased in 1980.

Although these scholars help to explain trends for the pueblos in general, they do not clear up why some Pueblo reservations expanded their agriculture while others contracted their programs. In a number of pueblos, there was a shift from a theocratic to a more democratic form of government. The secular governing bodies often stressed economic modernization over traditional ceremonial practices that slowed agricultural change and growth. This pattern was especially apparent at Santa Clara Pueblo. Other pueblos—such as Sandia and Isleta whose farm acreage expanded—could rely on longer growing seasons because of lower elevation and more naturally level land on their reservations. Zuni’s fundamental change from traditional agriculture to livestock, typical for western Pueblos, resulted from a new importance on market economies and the loss of water resources to siltation and salinization caused by clear cutting at higher elevations.

Many of the agricultural losers turned to other occupations. People from Acoma and Laguna were drawn to the lucrative but dangerous uranium mining industry. Jemez, already troubled by an irregular topography, turned to the burgeoning arts-and-crafts industry. Its people also sought, along with other northern pueblos, employment at Los Alamos National Laboratories. Lying near a reservoir, Cochiti moved into outdoor recreation and invested in a housing development plan that failed. A more proximate cause of its declining agricultural program was a high water table created by water leaking under the Cochiti Dam. On the other hand, Santo Domingo, one of the few pueblos to maintain its traditional ways, stressed livestock expansion near the Jemez Mountains.

Certainly the changes wrought by World War II, and the movement of people into the Southwest, put a strain on water use and agricultural lands throughout the Four Corners region. Educational opportunities opened up
to Pueblo youth and, combined with relocation programs, took many of the best and the brightest away from the reservation farms. A new day had dawned for Pueblo farmers dominated by court fights, modern equipment, and fewer people to produce crops. Receding into the past were the days of subsistence agriculture. The new focus would be on cash-producing crops—the biggest change being the replacement of traditional corn with alfalfa as the pueblos’ major crop. If things continued on this course, the oldest continuous irrigation tradition in America would face possible extinction, and the religious ceremonialism that accompanied Pueblo agriculture, the very core of Pueblo existence, would play out against a hollow background.

New Age Pueblos

The idea of focusing in on high market value crops began in 1967 when Domingo Montoya, chairman of the All Indian Pueblo Council (AIPC), contacted Superintendent Kenneth L. Payton of the UPA about the possibility of setting up vegetable demonstration plots in all of the Pueblo villages. The demonstrations were designed to include all phases of gardening—selecting seeds, preparing seed beds, planting, fertilizing, cultivating, irrigating, harvesting, and marketing. Individual pueblos would choose an agricultural leader to guide younger people through the process. In the spirit of economic development, an important adjunct to this plan was to form a Pueblo cooperative that would obtain mechanized farming equipment and assistance for marketing chile and other crops. With large portions of their reservations going fallow, the goal was to interest Pueblo youth in a modernized method of agriculture that would open up new areas of employment.

By the 1980s the Pueblos initiated a movement to return to their agricultural roots under Southern Pueblo Agency guidance. Sandia started a pick-and-grow vegetable operation and San Felipe conducted a trial between traditional and modern farming methods. After years of encouragement from tribal leaders, Picuris began to clear new areas and plant alfalfa, wheat, and garden vegetables with the hope of eventually marketing outside their village. Gov. Bernard Duran and Lt. Gov. Gerald Nailor, however, worked together in persuading members of Picuris, one of the smallest New Mexican pueblos, to turn the clock back and return to their traditional ways. They hoped to make Picuris’ people more self-sufficient and ensure tribal water rights by continuing to use their ancient irrigation systems. Against the tide of shrinking federally funded Indian programs during the Reagan administration, the
eight northern Pueblos were encouraged by a grant from Health and Human Services to create thirty-four jobs designed to put sixty acres of tribal land into crop production.\(^\text{i}\)

The 1990s witnessed an invigorated return to the land by a number of Pueblos. The San Juan Agricultural Cooperative, launched in 1992 by tribal members, was responsible for a revival of farming in the San Juan river valley. Pueblos now farmed land that had been barren for decades, and the cooperative, which also operated a food processing plant, marketed their crops. Funded by the New Mexico Community Foundation, the cooperative hoped to provide a sustainable economic program that would embrace the Pueblo traditions. As manager Jeff Atencio declared, “If we lose our farming, we’re going to lose a big part of our religion.” Their ties to the past were revealed in the name of their product line: “Pueblo Harvest Foods.” Their line included dried green chile and stew, smoked tomatoes, chicos, pozole stew, another of squash, beans and corn, and dried apples, cantaloupe and honeydew melons—all very marketable. They were sold in almost fifty stores in a dozen states including a cooperative in Albuquerque and markets in Santa Fe and Taos.\(^\text{ii}\)

Revitalization of agricultural traditions at Zuni were an important part of its Sustainable Agriculture Project (ZSAP). ZSAP was funded by a grant from the Ford Foundation to bring back agriculture on a big scale under the direction of Donald Eriacho. A component of the Zuni Conservation Project was to restore land and water for future generations and promote family farming and gardening. Another project managed by Zunis was the Zuni Folk Varieties Project designed to identify seeds their ancestors carefully developed for the pueblo’s unique climatic conditions. The village also initiated the Zuni Irrigation Association, education programs, and cooperative research with outside scientists to advance agriculture on the reservation.

Other Pueblos joined the back to the land movement as well. At Tesuque, Clayton and Margaret Brascoupe planted two big fields of corn, beans, and squash—crops historically associated with Pueblo agriculture—as part of a farming project to raise half of their family’s food. Their seeds and methods were more traditional than those advocated in scientific farming. The Brascoupes considered gardening and nature as great teachers that generate “respect and the desire to help others.” Leonard and Elsie Viao of Laguna complemented the return to native tradition by raising corn to cover the shrine during the pueblo’s annual festival.\(^\text{iii}\)
For many people the trek back to the past arose from dissatisfaction with social and political conditions that encouraged and allowed them to stray away from their Pueblo heritage. As Cochiti tribal councilman Marcello Suina stated, "We lost the way we lived." For Cochiti, the return to Pueblo culture began in 1969 when the pueblo leased its land to a California developer who then subleased the property for residential-housing construction. Cochiti's people were lulled into thinking that the housing development would put them on easy street. In 1984 the investor declared bankruptcy and the pueblo bought back the lease, but by then their last alfalfa crop had rotted from water released by the Cochiti Dam seepage. The pueblo became disillusioned and sought to turn things around. Middle-aged Cochiti tribal leaders, armed with college degrees and business experience, attracted the attention of Congress, which authorized a $12 million settlement between the tribe and the Corps of Engineers to fix the damage caused by the groundwater leaking under Cochiti Dam. By 1995 the farmland was dry enough to sow. Unfortunately, many people, especially young ones, had lost interest in farming and the pueblo had to hire a non-Indian, educated in agriculture, to steer its residents back to their agricultural way of life. Still, tribal councilman Andy Quintana believed that many would find their way back to the soil, for there was "always something to learn from the land . . . always some kind of strength to be drawn from it."44

Perhaps no single crop represented the turn toward marketing in the new-age agriculture better than blue corn, a product that had been grown by Indians of the Southwest for centuries. Its color connoting harmony, longevity, and good luck, blue corn was considered a sacred plant by many Pueblos. In the modern era, however, health-conscious consumers, seeking an organically grown crop, encouraged New Mexican farmers to grow almost one thousand acres of blue corn, which produced about half of the nation's supply. Since it contained 20% more protein, 50% more iron, and twice as much manganese and potassium as yellow corn, consumers were willing to pay a premium price for the blue variety.

The Pueblos became attracted to blue corn and even held a seminar at Santo Domingo for farmers who wanted to learn more about its production. Leading the way was Santa Ana, which received a $20,000 grant from the Ford Foundation in 1992 for a project that would combine the revival of traditional farming practices with new economic opportunities. After decades of allowing land to go fallow, the farmers at Santa Ana dedicated one hundred acres to the cultivation of blue corn, alfalfa, and vegetables. They also had a
grain mill that produced blue corn meal, atole, and a salted parched-corn snack food. In the process Santa Ana revived two traditions—farming and self-reliance. The movement away from federal aid and toward economic independence was aided by Santa Ana's effort to attract the attention of a British business known as the Body Shop, which sold skin and hair products at 860 stores in forty-two countries. The English enterprise worked for some six years to help developing communities turn traditional crops into profitable ingredients for its cosmetics. The Body Shop's engagement with Santa Ana led to seven blue-corn items, including moisturizer, soap, and body oil, that were sold in 130 stores throughout the United States.45

The Legacy

What will be the future of Pueblo agriculture? Will the Pueblos continue to embrace two worlds at the same time or become overwhelmed by modernization? As younger generations continue to lose their languages, surf the net, intermarry, watch television, and move into the fast-paced economy of modern America, will they lose interest in their roots so deeply embedded in their native soil? Will gambling casinos, now becoming common on Pueblo reservations, replace traditional occupations? Who will labor in the hot and dusty fields while air-conditioned gaming facilities beckon? More importantly, what will become of traditional religious ceremonialism that has accompanied their farming activities since ancient times?

Answers to all of these questions are purely conjectural, of course, but one should never underestimate the power of Pueblo cultural traditions. A half-century ago some experts predicted the demise of Pueblo religion, but these projections have proven to be false. In all probability, farming will never achieve the zenith of the past, but it is difficult to imagine the extinction of Pueblo agriculture. As modern communication links obliterate regional and cultural distinctions, however, so too will the Pueblos become more American and less Native American. But the powerful ties to the past, though stretched thin in the distant future, will remain. Without them, Pueblo religion would lose its meaning and so too would the descendants of prehistoric southwestern farmers who once carved out earthen canals to provide for their very existence.

Notes

1. For Pueblo traditions and change during the New Deal and war years, see James A. Vlasich, "Transitions in Pueblo Agriculture," New Mexico Historical Review 55 (Jan-
For increase in Indian agricultural land and participation in the war effort, see Kenneth William Townsend, *World War II and the American Indian* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2000), 188–89.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid.


15. Marcus Silva, Minutes of Meeting of the Santa Clara Pueblo Soil Conservation Enterprise, 8 August 1959, LR, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe; Santa Clara Soil Conservation Enterprise Budget, 1960, LR, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe; Padnir Gutiérrez, Resolution of Santa Clara Termination, 19 December 1962, LR, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe; Evan Flory to All Areas, 24 October 1960, LR, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe; and Santa Clara Soil Conservation Enterprise Budget, 1961, LR, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe.


17. Dewey Dismuke to L. C. Boldt, 2 July 1951, Letters Received, Office of Rights Protection, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Albuquerque Area Office (hereafter LR or LS [Letters Sent], ORP, BIA, Albuquerque); and William Brophy to Wade Head, 18 December 1961, Letters Received, Natural Resources Records—Branch of Forestry, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Albuquerque Area Office (hereafter LR or LS [Letters Sent], NRR, BIA, Albuquerque).


20. Hurt, Indian Agriculture in America, 233; and Iverson, “Building Toward Self-Determination,” 263. Reactions in the past include the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and their resistance to the Bursum Bill in the 1920s.


23. John D. Dibbern, Ten Year War on Poverty Program, 24 June 1964, frs. 368–84, roll 8, Miscellaneous Records Received of the Superintendent of the Southern Pueblos Agency, Northern Pueblos Agency, and the United Pueblos Agency (microfilm), Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Albuquerque (hereafter MRR or MRS [Miscellaneous Records Sent], PCC, Albuquerque). Zuni had formed its own separate agency by this time.


27. Walter W. Olsen to Pablo Roybal, 14 July 1965, LS, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe.

28. Melvin Helander to General Superintendent of the UPA, 27 September 1962, LR, NRR, NPA, Santa Fe; Alfredo Naranjo, Minutes of the Santa Clara Conservation


32. Patrick L. Wehling to SPA, NPA, and Zuni, 7 October 1975, LS, NRR, BIA, Albuquerque; New Mexico Agricultural Conservation Program, 8 November 1977, LS, NRR, BIA, Albuquerque; and Loyd E. Nickelson to SPA, NAP, and Zuni, 22 November 1977, LS, NRR, NAP, Santa Fe.


MEAT STRIKERS ENDORSE HENRY WALLACE

Striking CIO packinghouse workers line up in front of union headquarters in Chicago to sign a petition endorsing the nomination of Henry Wallace and Senator Glenn Taylor to the presidential ticket of the Independent Progressive Party in 1948. (Photograph courtesy the author.)
In the Years of Darkness and Torment
THE EARLY MEXICAN AMERICAN STRUGGLE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS, 1945–1963
Zaragosa Vargas

World War II was a turning point for Mexican American workers. Their demands for equality in the workplace and in the nation made them major participants in the Mexican American struggle for civil rights. As with their Black working-class counterparts, this heightened civil rights consciousness grew out of the opportunities for political and economic advancement afforded by New Deal labor legislation, the government's patriotic wartime propaganda, the president's Fair Employment Practices Committee (FEPC) hearings on discrimination, and the bloody interracial violence that swept America's cities in 1943. The entry of Mexican Americans into CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations) unions and their fight against shop-floor discrimination was an important catalyst in the unfolding struggle for social and political advancement by this fast-growing, urban working-class population. As always, Mexican American women worked alongside men in mobilizing and

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leading the struggle for civil rights. Defying the postwar atmosphere of anti­
communism and racist antiforeign hysteria, Mexican Americans aggressively
championed the cause of labor and civil rights.¹

To be sure, several developments impeded the Mexican American civil
inghts movement: the rise of the Cold War, McCarthyism, the CIO purge of
left-wing unions (many with sizable minority memberships), and the deporta­
tion frenzy created by the McCarran-Walter Act and “Operation Wetback.”
Progressive labor and civil rights leaders faced growing persecution. Harassed,
imimidated, and denounced as subversives, these men and women paid a high
price for their resolve to fight for Mexican American equality. Meanwhile, tra­
ditional Mexican American civic leaders who shunned direct action were simi­
larly put on the defensive by McCarthyite reactionaries and hard-line civil
rights opponents. The pursuit of respectability and acceptance by these Mexi­
can American public figures made them conservative and cautious; some even
embraced anticommunism and opposed the membership of Mexican Ameri­
cans in organizations and labor unions they deemed radical.²

What follows is an interpretation of the early Mexican American civil
rights movement in the post–World War II years. During this time working-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
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<tr>
<td>FEPC</td>
<td>Fair Employment Practices Committee</td>
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<td>CIO</td>
<td>Congress of Industrial Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>NFLU</td>
<td>National Farm Labor Union</td>
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<td>INS</td>
<td>Immigration and Naturalization Service</td>
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<td>AFL</td>
<td>American Federation of Labor</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Community Service Organization</td>
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<td>CRC</td>
<td>Civil Rights Congress</td>
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<td>ACPFB</td>
<td>American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGIF</td>
<td>American G.I. Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>LULAC</td>
<td>League of United Latin American Citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPWA</td>
<td>United Packing Workers of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mine-Mill</td>
<td>International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers</td>
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<td>ANMA</td>
<td>Asociación Nacional México-Americana</td>
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<tr>
<td>UFWA</td>
<td>United Farm Workers of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Food, Tobacco, Agricultural, and Allied Workers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILWU</td>
<td>International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>USWA</td>
<td>United Steel Workers of America</td>
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<tr>
<td>ILGWU</td>
<td>International Ladies Garment Workers Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPP</td>
<td>Independent Progressive Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACSSP</td>
<td>American Council of Spanish-Speaking People</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAPA</td>
<td>Mexican American Political Association</td>
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<td>PASSO</td>
<td>Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations</td>
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class Mexican American activists helped to achieve equality and civil rights for their national community, the second largest and second most disadvantaged minority group in the United States. The struggle to attain civil rights was not a coordinated national campaign, although national organizations and leaders emerged. Rather, the effort was a locally based movement for social change mobilized by Mexican American working men and women. Those organizations displayed a wide range of objectives, tactics, and ideologies that reflected the aspirations of the participants. In this article, I address several subjects: labor's response to racial issues and civil rights; Cold War ideology that helped to spawn bigoted attacks on American- and foreign-born Mexicans and to foster Operation Wetback; and the goals, strategies, and problems of early Mexican American political activism. Drawing from oral histories and the abundant secondary literature on this subject, I reconstruct a defining moment in the course of the Mexican American struggle for equality in the United States. Hopefully this article will deepen historical understanding of the origins of the Mexican American civil rights movement in the 1960s.

Postwar Mexican America

During the postwar era the Southwest's Spanish-speaking population grew nearly 50 percent from 2.29 million in 1950 to 3.46 million in 1960. Sixty percent of this population expansion took place in California. The internal migration of working-class Mexican Americans from other parts of the Southwest to California contributed to this population growth. Despite the massive relocation to the Golden State, Texas still had the nation's highest density of people of Mexican descent. One and a half million people, or 45 percent of the total Mexican and Mexican American population living in the United States, resided in the Lone Star State. Ninety percent of this population was working class and made up one-fourth of the Southwest's workforce. Although Mexican Americans had made noticeable social and economic inroads since the war, 34.8 percent of the Spanish-surnamed population lived in poverty, the degree of which varied by state and metropolitan area. By 1960, annual incomes averaged less than three thousand dollars. For the relatively advantaged but numerically insignificant Mexican American business and professional classes, the postwar years brought prosperity and upward mobility, but economic segregation limited their mobility as it did that of their Black counterparts.
Continuing a process that had begun during World War II, Mexican Americans were leaving poverty-stricken rural areas to reside in cities. By 1950, 80 percent of Mexican Americans resided in urban centers. The demand for labor during World War II allowed Mexican Americans, Blacks, and women to obtain a moderate share of the well-paying factory jobs formerly held by Anglo men. But the highly modernized industries of the postwar era were no longer able to absorb laborers displaced by the mechanization of agriculture and low-wage labor imported from Mexico. Few Mexican Americans secured jobs in the newer factories located in the suburbs outside high-tax city jurisdictions for they generally possessed little education and few skills and unions blocked their entrance into training programs. Instead, they took low-paying jobs in old industrial-core factories and in the service sector. The new arrivals quickly discovered that discrimination permeated not only the workplace but urban social life as well.4

In 1960, one-third of the U.S. population lived in poverty, and growing racial and economic inequality excluded most Mexican Americans from the economic boom and domestic affluence of the postwar years. Urban renewal devastated and disrupted Mexican American lives. Like Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and poor Whites, they were driven into overcrowded, deteriorating industrial working-class neighborhoods—areas of glaring poverty, physical decay, and increasing abandonment. Federal housing policy, private banks, and “White flight” encouraged racial segregation in site and tenant selection by local authorities, while the nonenforcement of fair housing, equal access, and other antidiscrimination laws limited minority residential mobility. Mexican Americans and other minorities who sought to buy homes in White neighborhoods were refused mortgage insurance. White neighborhood associations and homeowners used regulations and restrictive covenants to exclude minorities and resist integration. For instance, in 1952 a string of anti-Black, anti-Jewish, and anti-Mexican bombings shook Los Angeles and threats of further incendiary terror chillingly promised retaliation against all efforts at residential de-segregation. Despite the dynamic economic growth of the Southwest, Mexican Americans faced confinement to low-paying and unskilled factory work in declining traditional industries like auto, steel, and meatpacking and wretched living conditions characterized by expensive poor-quality housing, educational deficiencies, racial discrimination, and high incidences of crime. One scholar soberly concluded that Mexican Americans were “the only ethnic group for which a comparison of the characteristics of the first and second generations fails to show a substantial intergenerational rise in socioeconomic status.”
Mexican Americans suffered the worst social and economic conditions in Texas—the peripheral South—where nearly half of the nation’s Mexican American population resided. As elsewhere in the South, Anglo Texans united to defend the color line through Jim Crow rule. The separation and control of Mexicans and Mexican Americans was especially acute in the Rio Grande Valley, where they had lived in poverty for generations. The destructive measures and effects of Jim Crow were: low wages and pervasive poverty; residential confinement to rural and urban slums; a tuberculosis rate seven times that of Anglo Texans; a high infant-mortality rate; segregated schools and public places regardless of U.S. citizenship; an average third-grade educational level; and the denial of the rights to vote, serve on juries, and own real estate in racially restricted areas.6

In an article published by *The Nation* in 1959, novelist John Rechy, himself a Mexican American from Texas, revealed the dreadful plight of many of his people. Rechy had grown up in the grinding poverty of postwar El Paso where working-class Mexican Americans were crowded into the Southside and Eastside, two of the city’s harshest neighborhoods. Rechy recalled several examples of anti-Mexican and anti-Mexican American racism: Anglo Texans disparagingly referring to them as “greasers”; signs announcing, “We Do Not Serve Mexicans, Niggers, or Dogs”; and Anglo Texans declaring matter-of-factly that they never touched their food in the presence of their servants. The writer also remembered movie houses that used segregated seating. Recalling his own working-class roots and that of many other Mexican Americans in Texas, Rechy wrote of his consciousness of “the ever-present tinge in belonging to a group largely comprising of maids and laborers who must mouth ‘sir’ and ‘ma’am’ to others, while they themselves are invariably called by nicknames.”7

As in many sectors of the southern industrial labor market, the Anglo work force (and managers) in Texas believed in White supremacy. The consequence was that non-White working people, segregated from White laborers, worked in separate departments, punched different time clocks, visited their own pay windows, and used separate drinking fountains, bathrooms, and bathing facilities. Some union locals protested such common workplace discrimination. However, given the virulent backlash against civil rights among Anglo union members (who often held membership in White Citizens’ Councils or belonged to the Ku Klux Klan) and labor’s weakened civil rights advocacy position, most union locals negotiated labor contracts that included company-segregated job categories and work areas. Rechy astutely observed
that Jim Crow wore a sombrero in Texas and much of the Southwest in the
postwar era, and rendered Mexican Americans second-class citizens. More­
over, the growing presence of Mexican contract labor challenged the mean­
ing of Mexican American ethnic identity and citizenship. The alarmingly
high influx of illegal Mexican labor, particularly in the ten-year period from
1944–1954 (referred to as “the wetback decade”), helped to foment and exac­
erbate a hostile antialien environment.8

Mexican Americans comprised the bulk of cheap labor in the increasingly
mechanized agricultural sector. Most toiled as migrant workers whose pov­
erty bred dreadful living conditions and poor hygiene and who were ren­
dered undesirable by Anglo racism. More than 100,000 Mexican American
farm workers migrated within Texas and an additional 58,000 migrated to
other states; approximately 70,000 Mexican Americans harvested crops in
Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming; and Mexican Americans made up more
than 70 percent of the 150,000 field laborers in California. Farm workers’
dismal plight was the same everywhere: entire families worked long hours at
stoop labor for low pay. Shacks, tents, and even stables served as “home.”
Appalling living conditions triggered epidemics of diphtheria, dysentery,
tuberculosis, and other so-called totalitarian diseases. Among this migrant
population, death rates soared from 125 to 250 percent above the national
average. Rootless, uneducated, and politically impotent, the Mexican Ameri­
can migrant worker was also invisible to the rest of the United States. Al­
though the President’s Commission on Migratory Labor issued its lengthy
report in 1951, the U.S. public only discovered the plight of Mexican Ameri­
can farm workers and other poor Americans in 1962 with the publication of
Michael Harrington’s The Other America: Poverty in the United States.9

Braceros, Mojados, and Operation Wetback

Throughout crop-growing areas in the South and West, the National Farm
Labor Union (NFLU) and later the Agricultural Workers’ Organizing Com­
mittee supported farm workers’ labor struggles. In battles against large-grower
interests, Mexican American workers tried to obtain social security, housing,
health care, and educational benefits. However, the presence of legal and
illegal labor from Mexico undermined the working conditions and labor
organizing of Mexican Americans, whose unionization efforts were already
crippled by the migratory nature of their labor. Their biggest obstacle was
competition from contracted Mexican labor imported to the United States
under the auspices of the Bracero Program, originally a short-term solution to agricultural labor shortages during World War II. However, over the next twenty-two years approximately five million Mexicans entered the United States for seasonal agricultural employment primarily in Texas, Arizona, and California. With little congressional oversight, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) developed and administered the Bracero Program. Upon the expiration of their work contracts, the INS returned the braceros to Mexico.  

Additional competition for Mexican American workers came from the huge numbers of Mexican mojados ("wetbacks" or undocumented workers), who with braceros eventually performed almost all field labor and part of the unskilled labor from the Lower Río Grande Valley to the West Coast. For example, there were between 100,000 to 500,000 mojados in Texas alone, and in 1950, 21,000 crossed into California every month. These workers from Mexico endured unsanitary living conditions, were denied medical treatment, and suffered police brutality and other abuses. They performed arduous labor-intensive fieldwork at starvation pay, which widened the gap between farm and industrial wages by 60 percent. The small gains made by Mexican Americans in Texas during the war years were wiped out by the mojado invasion. The influx of cheap labor combined with the existing discrimination based on language and skin color made the economic situation for Mexican Americans even more hopeless. The endless flow of mojados from Mexico also undermined the farm-labor and civil rights movements. Unions and civic organizations consequently turned their attention from organizing agricultural workers to campaigning aggressively against the Bracero Program.  

"[California] was flooded with braceros while we were on strike, and before and after [a] strike," recalled the consummate labor organizer, Ernesto Galarza. As an organizer for the NFLU, he participated in twenty California strikes between 1948 and 1959, working against powerful adversaries in corporate agriculture and the federal government. His organizing strategy was to move into areas with large numbers of braceros and mojados. When business interests pressured the U.S. Border Patrol to avoid apprehending mojados, NFLU members made citizen's arrests of these illegal workers and guarded border crossings to stop their re-entry. Outraged by NFLU intervention, the grower-government alliance countered by bringing in braceros to replace the removed mojados. Time and again, illegal immigrants were
immediately legalized or "dried out" by federal agents who put the strikebreakers to work.\textsuperscript{12}

The complacent American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the grower-government alliance hindered the efforts of Mexican American labor organizers. Facing their stiff resistance, the frustrated Galarza began to rethink his organizing strategy. For the remainder of his farm-labor activism, he stressed terminating the Bracero Program and bringing attention to the problem of illegal labor. Galarza's widely published findings documented violations of the guest-worker program and the intrinsic corruption and scandal that accompanied it. However, his enemies had the final say. Like others who attempted to restrict employers' access to bracero labor, Galarza was smeared as a communist conspirator. His wife Mae, a teacher in the San Jose public school system, was perniciously red-baited.\textsuperscript{13}

The development of large-scale agriculture in northern Mexico and the U.S. Southwest produced this large flow of low-cost labor. Northern Mexican agribusinessmen brought large numbers of Mexicans to the border to offset the equally great numbers of Mexican workers who, drawn by the higher American wages, crossed clandestinely into the United States. Each year, between 100,000 and 400,000 entered Texas illegally and an equally large number crossed into California's Imperial Valley. The lucrative smuggling and trafficking of mojados was another factor contributing to the growth of illegal entry into the United States.\textsuperscript{14} Eventually, the large surplus of mojado labor compounded the dearth of employment opportunities for Mexican Americans in Texas, who were already handicapped by the low-wage structure, the absence of well-paying jobs, Anglo union resistance, and seasonal agriculture employment. Unable to provide for their families, many Mexican Americans in border communities migrated out of the state to search for work, many relocating to urban slums in the West and Midwest. Work-starved mojados, wading, swimming, or rowing across the Rio Grande, replaced those Mexican Americans.\textsuperscript{15}

In the economic recession of the mid-1950s American unemployment doubled. Pressured by labor unions, the U.S. Department of Labor finally intervened to offset the massive flow of mojados into the United States. On 9 June 1954 the department initiated Operation Wetback, a nationwide deportation drive directed at illegal Mexican aliens. The McCarran-Walter Act served as the legal foundation of this effort. Through this massive endeavor organized by the INS and with the full cooperation of county and state authorities, the United States deported over one million illegal Mexican work-
ers, or the equivalent of nearly two Mexicans per minute, twenty-four hours a day in 1954.

The INS launched the military-like Operation Terror shortly after midnight on 17 June 1954. During this second deportation campaign the Mexican American community was subjected to blatant violations of human rights. Massive raids using low-flying airplanes, armed motorized patrols, and well-timed sweeps deployed into agricultural fields and cities in northern and southern California. However, in California Operation Terror focused on the Mexican community of Los Angeles. Without search or arrest warrants, flying squadrons of nearly a thousand federal immigration agents and temporary personnel swept through factory districts and hunted down Mexicans. Government agents also invaded homes, business districts, and places of entertainment. In the Midwest, the INS established a “Chicago-to-Mexico airlift” to expedite the deportation drive. The raids especially targeted labor and community activists who were long-time residents of the United States but not U.S. citizens. In the context of the nationwide anticommunist fervor, Mexican American labor and civil rights activists were also exposed to the terror and subject to deportation.

The Community Service Organization (CSO), the Civil Rights Congress (CRC), its offshoot American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born (ACPFB), and progressive labor unions spoke out against the raids at meetings, union gatherings, and organized mass protests. In Los Angeles INS agents prepared a detention camp at Elysian Park near the Los Angeles Police Academy to detain Mexicans for processing and shipment to Douglas, Arizona. While trade unionists set up a picket line, the CRC distributed an English-Spanish pamphlet, “Stop the Deportation Drive ... Know your Rights.” Thousands of Mexican immigrants and their American citizen families were processed for deportation without hearings or access to legal counsel. According to civil libertarians, the Gestapo-like apprehension of Mexicans resulted in the greatest coerced mass movement of people in America’s history. At a time when Americans were increasingly concerned about race, class, and ethnic divisions and in the same year of the monumental Brown v. Board of Education decision, Operation Wetback silenced the nation’s second largest racial minority group. The two nationally based Mexican American civil rights organizations, the American G.I. Forum (AGIF) and the conservative League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) at first endorsed the arrests and deportations. While the former protested the widespread government suppression, the latter group remained
a relatively passive observer to the persecution of Mexican American citizens caught in the dragnet. The federal deportations dovetailed with the ongoing crusade to drive suspected Mexican American communists out of the labor movement. The expulsions were an important element of the government's crackdown on subversives and fed off the antialien prejudices Mexican Americans suffered in the postwar years. The domestic intelligence-gathering apparatus of the FBI, the INS, and other government agencies collaborated to target labor activists and community leaders for surveillance. In 1954 Anna Correa Bary and her husband, Colorado Communist Party chairman Arthur Bary, along with four other party members were indicted and tried for violation of the Smith Act. The daughter of Mexican American labor organizer Jesús Correa, Anna was a member of Local 21 of the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA). During the nationwide UPWA strike against the large packing companies in 1948, Anna and other workers defiantly laid down on the railroad tracks to prevent the company from moving meat products. The CRC contacted over 140 lawyers to find someone to take the Correa Bary case; all refused to defend her. Her bail was set at twenty-five thousand dollars. The federal indictment of the six party members relied on the testimony of four paid witnesses who joined the party at the request of the FBI to spy, make reports, and furnish evidence to convict the defendants.

Two long-time Spanish-speaking labor activists tracked down by INS agents were Refugio Martínez of Chicago and Humberto Silex of El Paso. Martínez was a staff member of the UPWA. During the late 1930s he had been a member of El Frente Popular Mexicano (The Mexican Popular Front) and the communist-led Vicente Toledano Club. Originally from Nicaragua, Silex served as secretary, treasurer, president, and national delegate of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (Mine-Mill) Local 509. Both Martínez and Silex were supporters of the left wing Asociación Nacional México-Americana (ANMA). The Police Labor Detail of Chicago arrested Martínez for his involvement in the UPWA, which was organizing the Wilson, Armour, and Swift plants in that city. A twenty-seven-year resident of the United States, Martínez was deported under the McCarran-Walter Act because he had joined the Communist Party in 1932.

Silex fared no better in the crackdown. He had legally entered the United States, served in the United States Army, and had six American-born children. On 6 June 1946 the INS arrested Silex during a strike at the El Paso Phelps Dodge refinery on the charge of aggravated assault. During his de-
Portation hearing, the INS never questioned Silex about the crime with which he was charged. Instead, all questions probed Silex’s union activities and his alleged membership in the American or Mexican Communist Parties. Such draconian measures reinforced the government’s vise-like control over Mexican labor and undermined attempts at unionization. As one observer noted, the threat of deportation “served as a very effective weapon to keep the Mexican people as a whole in bondage. . . . As soon as a leader arises . . . deportation proceedings are immediately used to remove [them] from leadership.”

Despite red-baiting, Mexican American and Anglo members of the ACPFB and the CRC fought against the government’s deportations. Under government investigation for alleged communist ties, these organizations, along with the American Civil Liberties Union, defended over two hundred individuals charged under the Walter-McCarran law for membership in the Communist Party or left-led unions and various antifascist organizations such as the League Against War and Fascism mobilized in the 1930s. According to the ACPFB, these deportation cases were part of a nationwide campaign to harass and intimidate union activity among the foreign-born, many of whom were war veterans, and to create a smoke screen behind which reactionaries hoped to pass antilabor legislation.

The right-wing suppression of progressive organizations and persecution of alleged subversives were poignantly summed up by Anita Alvarez, a leading voice in the ACPFB:

In a land founded on freedom and justice, a mother of a war veteran is aroused in the morning and torn from her home. A father of a dead war hero is waylaid on his way home from work and snatched away from his family. . . . What is their crime? Where is the evidence? The accusation is “You believed—you thought—you spoke.”

The federal deportation campaign demonstrated that labor rights and civil rights were inseparable in the Mexican American struggle for social justice.

The Struggle for Mexican American Labor Rights

Embroided in jurisdictional disputes, AFL and CIO affiliates provided little assistance to Mexican American union organizers in industries such as the railroads, packinghouses, steel mills and foundries, and auto plants. The national federation allowed some AFL locals to bar Mexicans from membership.
For example, the constitution of the New Mexico Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen contained the following passage: "[Members] shall be white . . . no less than sixteen years of age, and be able to read and write the English language and understand our constitution. Mexicans or those of Spanish extraction are not eligible." Mexican American and Black working men were confined to hard, unskilled, and dead-end jobs regardless of seniority. Anglo workers and union leaders were indifferent to these racist conditions or put up stiff resistance to minority bids to change them. The exceptions were the left-led unions—the United Electrical Workers Union, the United Furniture Workers of America (UFWA), the Food, Tobacco, Agricultural and Allied Workers Union (FTA), and Mine-Mill. These progressive unions, some with large minority membership, upheld their reputations for effective bargaining and for promoting civil rights. The Taft-Hartley Act of 1947, however, impeded Mexican American union organizing. Reflecting the rise of business influence in the first Republican Congress since 1930, Taft-Hartley outlawed the closed shop, jurisdictional strikes, secondary boycotts, and national-emergency strikes. The act also required union officials to file affidavits swearing that they were not communists. 24

During the purge of left-led unions within the CIO and the mass blacklisting that marked the postwar Taft-Hartley years, Mexican American unionists and civil rights activists took great personal and political risks in the struggle for social justice. Red-baiting was a special hazard. The federal government attempted to link communism to illegal Mexican immigration and the organizing work of the CIO along the U.S.-Mexican border. As in the cases of Anna Correa Bary, Refugio Martínez, and Humberto Silex, an important weapon against the left-led unions was detaining and interrogating leaders about so-called subversive activities promoted by the Communist Party. Leaders suspected of embracing the iron law of class struggle paid the price of denaturalization and deportation. Despite this state-sponsored corporate assault on labor, Mexican American labor leaders continued to struggle. They contested job and wage discrimination and demanded seniority provisions, a key issue in their fight to achieve economic parity with other American working men. Their immersion in unionism and the day-to-day struggle against shop-floor exploitation and racism instilled in these leaders the intrinsic belief that unionism would advance social equality and empower their followers. Moreover, the ardent unionists clearly understood that civil rights issues were economic ones as well. These men and women were staunchly committed to bettering the lives of their fellow Mexican Americans. 25
In the metal industries of the Southwest and Mountain states, Mexican Americans constituted nearly half the work force. Because of racially prescribed custom, they received lower wages than Anglos, were denied access to higher-paying jobs, and used separate facilities. Mexican Americans comprised 15 percent of the membership of the independent Mine-Mill union and served as leaders of their locals. Mine-Mill registered Black voters in Alabama, fought segregation in the North, and championed the civil rights cause of downtrodden Mexican American labor in the Southwest. The union was eventually successful in breaking the so-called "Mexican wage scale." This progressive organization’s campaign to eliminate the notorious two-tiered wage system included pressuring the government for equal job opportunities. Mine-Mill secured hearings on anti-union conditions before the National Labor Relations Board, and remedied grievances and won compensation on behalf of its Mexican American members through appeals to the director of conciliation in the Department of Labor.

In Bayard, New Mexico the predominantly Mexican members of Mine-Mill Local 890 engaged in one of the most famous struggles for labor and civil rights in the 1950s. In 1950, amid a climate of growing conservatism and union-busting in the United States labor movement, and as Mexican Americans once again found themselves over-represented in combat units in the unfolding Korean War, the members of Local 890 waged a hard-fought but successful battle against the segregation and discrimination in working and living conditions of the Empire Zinc Company. The film Salt of the Earth chronicled the fifteen-month strike of these New Mexican mine workers. Harassed by the FBI and the INS, the film crew and cast, as well as union leader Juan Chacón and other Mexican Americans drawn from the community completed Salt of the Earth with great difficulty. The Hollywood film industry blacklisted director Herbert Biberman, producer Paul Jarrico, writer Michael Wilson, and actor Will Geer, and the federal government deported Mexican actress Rosaura Revueltas. Distributors avoided Salt of the Earth, but the film attracted its own audience outside commercial movie houses at private screenings such as those held in New York’s Black Harlem. The success of Salt of the Earth, however, reflected more the individuals who made the film than the militant mine worker’s struggle. Notwithstanding, the strike action received considerable help from progressive Mexican American and Anglo unionists as well as from Mexico’s Miners’ Union in the form of fundraisers, political rallies, and leafleting.
Mexican American workmen also made inroads against job and wage discrimination through their respective locals of the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union (ILWU), the United Steel Workers of America (USWA), and the United Auto Workers of America. On the other hand, the attitude of Anglo rank and file toward civil rights was rooted in years of racial competition and conflict. In the postwar years, they remained reluctant to commit themselves to civil rights for minorities and women. Because of the fine line between their job consciousness and race consciousness, Anglo workmen sabotaged the hiring and promotion of Mexican Americans and other racial minorities. When unions forcibly desegregated lunchrooms, bathrooms, and other company facilities, Anglo workers branded this action a communist conspiracy. In the backlash, Anglo workers staged wildcat strikes and some all-White locals separated from international unions. Some Anglo workmen even withdrew from union activities altogether. The contracts that the CIO bargained and signed with employers excluded civil rights provisions. Racial divisions in the workplace limited job opportunities for Mexican Americans and Blacks, and they were the first to lose their positions whenever jobs were mechanized.28

The Struggle for Mexican American Civil Rights

The postwar era witnessed grassroots efforts by Mexican Americans for voter registration as well as desegregation of schools, housing, and public facilities. These activists also forged alliances with Blacks and with other Latinos to achieve these goals. The CSO and newly formed Mexican American political and civic organizations aided the cause by launching voter education and registration drives. Fighting job discrimination was an important contribution of these organizations, whose support of Mexican American unionists garnered them political support. Mexican American workers and local union leaders put to use wartime experiences with community activism in their challenges to Anglo privilege in the workplace. Mexican American unionists in southern California like Bert Corona from the ILWU, María Durán and Hope Mendoza Schecter from the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), and Mexican American members of the UFWA and the USWA—all worked with progressive organizations for universal education, fair housing, restoration of civil rights and civil liberties, and labor-related issues. East of Los Angeles and in California's rural areas, Mexican American blue-collar workers, many of them war veterans, formed Unity Leagues with
the assistance of the American Committee on Race Relations. They launched voter registration drives to elect Mexican Americans or progressive Anglo candidates to office and dealt with local problems such as installing street lights, paving streets, and building sidewalks. In New Mexico coalitions of Mine-Mill unionists formed alliances with other Mexican Americans to help re-elect U.S. Senator Dennis Chávez. Broad-based coalitions in Arizona led by Mine-Mill exercised their political power in four victorious campaigns for state governor. 29

Working through the California-based CSO—an offshoot of Saul Alinsky’s Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council—Mexican Americans from Boyle Heights in East Los Angeles undertook a voter-registration campaign to elect Edward Roybal to the Los Angeles City Council. Although Roybal lost the campaign (by only three hundred votes), the CSO embraced numerous community issues and helped nurture a well-organized grassroots political movement among working-class Mexican Americans in Los Angeles, and in Chicago and the Calumet area in the Midwest. After launching a nonpartisan voter registration campaign that gained fifteen thousand new voters and created seventeen new precincts, organizers from the CSO aided Roybal’s second bid for a council seat, which he won in 1949. Crucial to Roybal’s success were the dozens of Mexican American women who spearheaded this door-to-door organizing drive. While holding down full-time jobs and caring for their families, women organized meetings, made phone calls, and distributed campaign literature during their days off work, in the evenings, or on weekends. During the campaign the climate of McCarthyism menaced CSO members: police shadowed them; their homes were ransacked; canvassers received threatening phone calls; their car tires were slashed; and fliers and posters were torn down. On election day Mexican American voters were harassed at the polls with taunts such as “Mexicans go home” and “aliens can’t vote”; in some cases they were prevented from voting altogether. Above all, CSO organizers exhorted Mexican Americans to “vote for whomever you please, but register to vote.” Labor’s support for Mexican American political equality through the national CIO Political Action Committee (PAC), the ILGWU, and the USWA was undoubtedly instrumental in securing Roybal’s election victory. 30

The early Mexican American civil rights struggle for equality drew enthusiastic support, financial aid, and political assistance from Jewish Americans and their organizations. African Americans also cooperated with Mexican American labor and civil rights activists. In 1948, for example, striking CIO
Mexican American and African American meatpacking workers in Chicago came out in support of the third-party campaign of Henry A. Wallace despite opposition from the national union office. In 1955 the local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Alianza Hispano Americana from El Centro, California filed a class-action suit in federal court to end school segregation in California. In 1958 the all-Black Democratic Minority Conference organized and funded a successful three-month voter-registration drive among African Americans and Mexican Americans, resulting in thirty-five thousand new registered voters. At its 1960 national convention, the AGIF passed a resolution in support of the sit-in demonstrations organized by Black college students and spreading across the South. During the 1960s Mexican Americans and African Americans continued to cooperate in the civil rights movement, antiwar activism, and the broad-based fight for Black, Chicano, and Third-World liberation movements. Toward decade’s end both minority groups rejected the integrationist approach that marked the earlier civil rights period.

The CSO’s Mexican American working-class movement also tapped nonresident Mexican workmen for community action. CSO leaders from the labor movement supported a minimum wage, unionization, and medical service for migrant workers. In this effort, the CSO personnel established the Labor Relations Committee to educate the Spanish-speaking community about the importance of union organizing, in particular the campaign for a permanent FEPC. The CSO encouraged migrant workers to stand behind union activities by donating money and food to striking workers and by buying union-produced goods. Mexican American workers applied their experience in voter registration drives to other struggles for civil rights, such as the fight against restrictive housing practices, school segregation, jury exclusion, and police brutality against both Mexicans and Mexican Americans.

During the 1940s and 1950s the CSO strove to protect the rights of Mexican migrant workers. Mexican American trade unionists worked through the CIO’s Committee to Aid Mexican Workers to secure their access to employment in the defense industries and accommodation in federal housing projects. Working to obtain U.S. citizenship for Mexicans was an important CSO activity in the postwar years. The CSO’s Immigration Committee organized this effort following attempts by the Japanese American Citizenship League to include a section in the McCarran-Walter Act permitting U.S. residents of more than twenty years to become naturalized in their own language. The Immigration Committee helped Mexicans with five or more
years of residence in Los Angeles County acquire the necessary documenta-
tion. The CSO had established 450 citizenship classes in California by 1955
and had helped over forty thousand Mexicans become U.S. citizens by 1960.
Mexican Americans in the CSO were also active in municipal issues such as
neighborhood improvement and the protracted defense of working-class
housing from destruction by urban renewal and freeway construction proj­
ects. These battles against urban development were not always successful.
For example, in Los Angeles, after the defeat of the Proposition 10 public-
housing referendum, the ethnically mixed working-class districts in Bunker
Hill and Chávez Ravine were torn down to make way for corporate offices
and the new Dodger Stadium. In Chicago, construction of the Dan Ryan and
Eisenhower Freeways led to the displacement of thousands of Mexicans and
Mexican Americans from the city's Near West Side, the location of the larg­
est barrio in the Midwest. Hundreds of blue-collar Mexicans and Mexican
Americans lost their homes in Southwest Detroit to urban renewal and the
construction of the Fisher Freeway.

After World War II, hundreds of experienced Mexican American union
members worked tirelessly to mobilize their communities for social change.
These men and women were a major force in the early Mexican American civil
rights movement and also worked in electoral politics. In 1948 Mexican Ameri­
can workers supported the social democratic vision promised by third-party
presidential candidate Henry A. Wallace of the Independent Progressive Party
(IPP). Under the banner "Amigos de Wallace," Mexican Americans from
Mine-Mill, the UFWA, the FTA, and the UPWA, along with leftist commu­
nity activists, helped organize the IPP. This coalition ran the grassroots cam­
paign for Wallace and other candidates running on the IPP ticket. Wallace
spoke out against racism and called for integrated housing and education.
Wallace’s advocacy of the FEPC and the Good Neighbor Policy was well
received by Mexican Americans who were just as concerned with U.S. for­
eign policy in Latin America as they were with equality in the workplace.
Support for Wallace was strong among blue-collar Mexicans in southern
California. A "Wallace for President" rally in Lincoln Park in East Los An­
geles drew ten thousand Mexican Americans. Although Wallace lost the
election in part because of persistent red-baiting from the Democratic Party,
President Truman, the media, and CIO leaders, his campaign politicized
many Mexican Americans. The left-led unions that stood behind Wallace’s
prointegrationist stance and opposition to U.S. foreign policy drew the wrath
of the national CIO leadership. In January 1948 the CIO executive council
passed a resolution rejecting Wallace's presidential candidacy. Soon afterward, the council called for the expulsion of the left-led unions from the CIO. The national organization even took away the charters of the California and Los Angeles CIO councils. This action, combined with raids by newly chartered union rivals, destroyed the progressive base of the left-led CIO unions.34

The IPP received considerable support from the ANMA, a progressive organization at the forefront of the early Mexican American civil rights struggle. Founded in 1948, the ANMA had four thousand members by 1950, mostly trade unionists led by veteran union organizer Alfredo Montoya. Dedicated to civil and economic rights for Mexican Americans and advocating women's equality, the ANMA built coalitions with other racial and ethnic minorities and with progressive organizations like the ACPFB, the Progressive Citizens of America, and the CRC. In Phoenix and Denver, the ANMA joined the CRC in the drive for a local FEPC and in the battle against police brutality against Mexican Americans, Blacks, and Native Americans. In Denver, as part of “Bill of Rights Week” during the busy 1950 Christmas shopping season, fifteen African American, Mexican American, and White members of the CRC dressed as minutemen. To fife and drum, they carried American flags and paraded through that city's downtown streets with banners declaring, “Repeal the McCarran Act.” In Los Angeles, the ANMA and the CRC also fought police brutality against Blacks and Mexicans, who were routinely stopped and searched without cause, and then arrested on false charges. The two progressive organizations also protested the Los Angeles Examiner publishing articles that falsely blamed “rat-packs” and “pachucos” for a crime wave in that city.35

Despite charges of communism and other forms of red-baiting, the ANMA provided funds and clothing to Mine-Mill Local 890 strikers at Bayard, New Mexico. The organization also supported agricultural workers' right to form unions and earn a minimum wage of one dollar an hour. Although critical of the Bracero Program, the ANMA helped organize bracero workers in strike actions. In 1951 the organization appealed to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to investigate workers' miserable plight as the rented slaves of growers. The ANMA protested the mass deportations of legal and illegal Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans under the McCarran-Walter Act. The progressive body encouraged an international consciousness in its work with industrial unions and workers, for its leaders believed that
Mexican Americans and Latin Americans should unite to fight their common enemy, the North American capitalist.

The ANMA also advocated change in the foreign policy arena. The organization criticized U.S. intervention in Guatemala and support of dictatorships in Latin America and the Middle East. The ANMA declared its solidarity with the Cuban revolutionary movement of Fidel Castro and sought an alliance with Puerto Rican nationalists struggling for an independent Puerto Rico. Becoming part of the peace movement, the ANMA opposed the worldwide nuclear proliferation, joining the Stockholm Peace Appeal initiated in the late 1940s by leaders of various progressive church and civic organizations.

In light of the anticommunist fury and domestic suppression, the ANMA came under increasing government scrutiny. The House Un-American Activities Committee investigated the ANMA's allegedly subversive activities, which included criticizing U.S. foreign policy and opposing the Korean War. Paid informants infiltrated the ANMA and provided the FBI with membership lists and background information on officers and members. The U.S. Attorney General's Office labeled the ANMA a subversive organization with ties to the Communist Party. By the mid-1950s the ANMA was silenced and virtually destroyed by the anticommunist crusade.36

The nation's largest Mexican American civil rights organizations had a different strategy for political action. In contrast to the ANMA's direct-action protest linked to national and international struggles, the AGIF and LULAC followed more moderate paths to achieving equality, including voter registration drives and court litigation. The AGIF was an organization of World War II and Korean War veterans based in Texas. LULAC's civil rights activities focused on legal responses instead of community action. LULAC represented the interests of the small Mexican American middle class, which valued conformity in the pursuit of the American way of life. The organization also prided itself on the professional composition of its membership and their ability to speak English. LULAC supported the federal government's anticommunist and anti-immigrant campaigns because they did not want to risk losing the modest economic gains made by its middle-class membership.37

The AGIF and LULAC undertook numerous court actions to eliminate discrimination against Mexican Americans, starting a wave of litigation that, after 1951, was coordinated by the Texas-based American Council of Spanish-Speaking People (ACSSP). The purpose of the short-lived ACSSP was to gain remedy through the courts for the violations of Mexican Americans'
civil rights. These cases confronted many of the problems that Mexican Americans faced in the 1950s: public housing desegregation in Texas; school desegregation; the *Hernández v. State of Texas* jury exclusion case; police brutality in San Antonio and Los Angeles; the deportation of an alleged communist alien in California; and public facilities desegregation in Arizona. From 1955 to 1957 the ACSSP funded school desegregation cases in Carrizo Springs, Mathis, Kingsville, and Driscoll, Texas. While weakening de jure segregation, court cases and other judicial interventions failed to undo the prevailing de facto racism Mexican Americans faced in the postwar years. In Texas the AGIF later shifted its focus to the political arena. In 1955 and 1956 it launched, with the AFL-CIO and the Texas Brotherhood of Railroad Workers, “Get out the vote” and “Pay your poll tax” drives to register Mexican American voters in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy counties in the Río Grande Valley. In this region Mexican Americans made up three-fourths of the population.

These two organizations fell victim to the racist anticommunist climate of the Southwest during the 1950s. Despite its status as a patriotic veterans’ organization, the AGIF failed to escape the wrath of the enemies of social change. Anglo Texans smeared the forum as a subversive organization and vehemently condemned its leader, Dr. Hector García, as a red-tinted agitator. In the climate of extreme right-wing backlash in Texas following the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling, many White Texans labeled efforts to protect civil rights efforts “communist inspired.” As civil rights scholars maintain, the *Brown* decision collapsed southern racial opinion into two poles, integrationists and segregationists. By the end of the 1950s White Texan segregationists mobilized resistance against integration, a reflection of White southerners’ anger toward federal government interference in race relations in the South. The national office of LULAC became quiet on civil rights issues, apparently to retain what remained of the patronizing good will of the larger Anglo Texan society.

As the civil rights movement erupted into U.S. society, LULAC atrophied. Petty feuding ensued, membership in the organization dropped off, and those who remained were drawn to the organization wholly for social activities. During the 1960s LULAC continued its drift away from the larger Mexican American community. Like organized labor, LULAC had been put on the defensive by the rhetoric of McCarthyism. In Texas, a LULAC stronghold, McCarthyism had unfurled an assortment of southern-style, radical right-wing patriotic committees formed to guard against communists, athe-
ists, and integrationists who threatened the "American Way of Life," which was reserved for Whites only. Despite the efforts of these two Mexican American organizations, their goals remained unfulfilled: the Mexican American vote had yet to be mobilized; only seventy-five school districts in Texas had been desegregated by 1957; and segregation still reigned in privately owned public facilities. 

During the 1950s Catholic organizations provided some political leadership to Mexican Americans, largely due to the work of a few Anglo parish priests trying to retain the loyalty of their Spanish-speaking flocks. However, the prejudice and discrimination of most Anglo clergy and parishioners forced Mexican American Catholics to attend de facto segregated congregations throughout the postwar years. Bishop Patricio Flores of San Antonio recalled that many Catholic churches in the Southwest at this time had signs reading "Mexicans not allowed" or "The last four benches reserved for Mexicans." Other churches did not permit Spanish-language masses or the use of parish halls by Mexican Americans; if a facility was loaned to Mexicans, it would later be "fumigated to deodorize it of the . . . Mexican odor." The Church was one of many powerful American institutions that had embraced the anticommunist consensus on foreign and domestic policy, joining its fight against the labor movement to its protracted and effective holy war against domestic communism. The Catholic hierarchy attacked Mexican American labor activists involved with progressive unions such as Mine-Mill, the FTA, and the ILWU. To help maintain the loyalty and control of the Mexican American community, the Church called for the promotion of its parishioners' religious, cultural, and political rights. Nonetheless, the growing turn to social activism by individual parish priests made the Catholic Church a base for recruiting Mexican American community and farm labor organizers. Despite resistance by some Catholic officials, Mexican Americans in Texas, through the Bishop's Committee for the Spanish Speaking, took up public housing and health issues, the unionization of bus drivers, and the plight of migrant workers. Framing social issues in terms of Christian morality, priests encouraged Mexican Americans to become involved in the affairs of their respective communities. In this way, the Catholic Church figured prominently in forging a new identity among elements of the Mexican American working classes.

The Church's influence was especially evident during the 1960 elections when Mexican Americans, organized through the Viva Kennedy Clubs, helped fellow Catholic John F. Kennedy win the tight presidential race. In
fact, Kennedy could not have won the Lone Star State without the Mexican American vote, despite the presence of a Texas favorite son, Lyndon Johnson, on the ticket. Civil rights leaders viewed Kennedy as the least attractive of the five candidates for the Democratic nomination, for his national priorities focused heavily on Cold War foreign policy matters, tax cuts, and Medicare. During his administration, Kennedy did not advocate enduring civil rights legislation and the Justice Department failed to challenge the civil rights violations of Mexican Americans. Nonetheless, Mexican American workers benefited from the administration’s enforcement of antidiscrimination laws aimed at federal contractors through the creation of the president’s Committee on Equal Employment Opportunity. Until his assassination, Kennedy would continue to see civil rights primarily in terms of conflicts between Whites and Blacks.\(^4\)

Despite a series of reversals for Mexican Americans within organized labor in the late 1950s, the union movement contributed to the advancement of civil rights. The 1955 merger of the AFL and CIO subdued the drive for interracial unionism and helped White union members regain their privileged position in the American labor movement. Furthermore, the 1959 Landrum-Griffin Act, expanding Taft-Hartley restrictions on union mobilization, imposed additional restraints on labor activism. While the antilabor policies of corporations and the federal government silenced the progressive elements within the labor movement and while Anglos continued to cripple integration efforts, Mexican Americans embarked on a strategy for political change and blue-collar workers played a prominent role. In 1959, Mexican Americans in California founded the Mexican American Political Association (MAPA). In the following year activists in Texas formed a counterpart to the California MAPA, the pro-Democratic Mexican Americans for Political Action, and the Political Association of Spanish-Speaking Organizations (PASSO). The latter group, a more inclusive organization, sought to attract other Latino groups besides Mexican Americans. Although soon overshadowed by the *Viva Kennedy* experience, these political groups educated Mexican Americans on political issues, registered them to vote, and began to pressure the major political parties to nominate Mexican Americans for office or as advisors to elected officials. Despite resistance from White union local members, much of this electoral politics initiative came from state CIO councils through the CIO PACs. In factories and in workshops CIO PACs educated Mexican American working people on industrial relations and
democracy and helped pioneer the way for the 1960s Mexican American civil rights movement.

Mexican American political organizations enjoyed some electoral success in the early 1960s. In 1961 MAPA helped elect Henry B. González of San Antonio to the U.S. Congress. The following year Mexican Americans in California aided by MAPA helped secure Edward Roybal's election to the U.S. Congress and won the election of two other Mexican Americans to the California state legislature. In 1963 Mexican American and Anglo unionists from the Teamsters and the state CIO, assisted by PASSO, mobilized cannyery and farm workers in Crystal City, Texas, to elect five Mexican Americans to the city council. Despite intimidation by the Texas Rangers, Jim Crow obstacles to non-White voting, and other forms of repression, Crystal City's Mexican Americans went to the polls and voted. With the assistance of organized labor, which viewed local community conflicts as civil rights issues, Mexican Americans gained control of city hall for the first time since 1910. Mexican American voters strengthened the Democratic Party, but the party failed to capitalize on this infusion of veteran union and civil rights activists. Just as it did with African Americans, the Democratic Party defaulted on its promises to Mexican Americans as long as it remained in the control of White southern Dixiecrats.  

Conclusion

During the early postwar years Mexican Americans mobilized to fight for political control of their communities and higher goals of social justice. They embarked on a major struggle to free Mexican Americans from the burden of oppression—namely rampant poverty, illiteracy, high crime rates, increasing unemployment, and other social maladies caused by racial discrimination. Many activists were workers who came out of the CIO union movement, which during World War II had served as a center and training ground for civil rights activism. These deeply committed union activists and other Mexican Americans created civil rights organizations such as the ANMA or transformed others into stronger political actors. These groups employed several strategies to pursue a broad range of labor and civil rights: grassroots electoral politics, civil lawsuits, and support for inclusive unionism. These efforts flourished in the postwar years, but the anticommunist and antialien climate engendered by McCarthyism stifled them. Nevertheless, this early Mexican American civil rights struggle sowed the seeds for the activism of the
1960s and early 1970s, when Mexican Americans built a larger movement for social change throughout the Southwest and Midwest. Militant Mexican American youth would be at the forefront of the new multifaceted movement for civil rights, which included the farm workers' struggle, educational reform, third-party politics, antiwar activism, and the forging of a new social identity. Like their predecessors of the postwar years, the predominant body of these participants in the broad Chicano alliance came from working-class Mexican American backgrounds.

Notes


3. Juan Gómez-Quinones, Mexican Labor, 1790–1990 (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1990), 170–71, 204; and Guzmán, "Politics of the Mexican-American Community," 358–60. Mexicans accounted for 11 percent of the Southwest's population in 1950 and 12 percent ten years later. In Texas border cities the Mexican population increase averaged 75 percent. El Paso's Spanish-speaking population increased 112 percent from 130,485 residents in 1950 to 276,687 in 1960. Leo Grebler, Joan Moore, and Ralph Guzmán, The Mexican American People: The Nation's Second Largest Minority (New York: Free Press, 1970), 107. One contemporary observer noted, "The Mexican American business or professional man . . . must depend on his own group for his income. If he (or she) is a teacher, it is for a 'Mexican school.' If he operates a store, it is for Mexican-Americans; if a newspaper, it is for them, too . . . doctors and lawyers find their most dependable source of income among their own group. . . ." From Ruth Tuck, Not with the Fist (New York:
Data from the 1960 U.S. census showed that Mexican Americans held a lower percentage of professional and managerial positions as well as lower-paying positions within these occupational categories. "Symposium: Minority Rights," California Law Review 63 (May 1975): 722. This and other primary evidence for the period under examination strongly challenges the assumptions of some Chicano historians who argue for the existence of a flourishing Mexican American middle class.

4. Gómez-Quinones, Mexican Labor, 170–71; Camarillo, Chicanos in California, 76–78; and Nancie L. González, The Spanish Americans of New Mexico: A Heritage of Pride (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1967), 125–26. For example, the 1960 census reported that one of every twenty-eight Mexicans in Los Angeles were on relief and lived in segregated and substandard housing. In the predominantly Mexican community of Boyle Heights, absentee landlords owned 70 percent of the houses, three-fourths of which had been built before 1939. Arturo S. Almanza, Mexican-Americans and Civil Rights (Los Angeles: Commission on Human Relations, 1964).


Walls and Mirrors: Mexican Americans, Mexican Immigrants, and the Politics of Ethnicity (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).


19. Horne, Communist Front?, 320; Bary v. United States, 248 F2d 201 (10 Cir 1957); Bary v. United States, 292 F2d 53 (10 Cir 1961); Rick Halpern, Down on the Killing Floor: Black and White Workers in Chicago's Packinghouses, 1904–1954 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 227–28; Morgan, Shame of a Nation, 22–23; and Gómez-Quinones, Mexican Labor, 174. The Smith Act, or the Alien Registration Act of 1940, required the annual registration and fingerprinting of aliens, made it a criminal offense to impair the morale of the armed forces, and outlawed advocating the overthrow of the U.S. government. See Fried, Nightmare in Red, 53–54.


25. García, Mexican Americans, 176, 182; and García, Memories of Chicano History, 175. For example, in March 1946 in El Paso labor negotiations with ASARCO and Phelps Dodge collapsed, triggering a three-month-long strike by eleven hundred smelter workers, 80 percent of them being nonresident Mexicans. INS officials questioned many of the men about their citizenship status. Over a two-year period the Justice Department tried to deport strike organizer Humberto Silex because of a half-hour visit he made across the border. Silex won his case for citizenship in the Federal District Court in Texas. García, Mexican Americans, 186–89.

26. García, Mexican Americans, 186–89.


Donahoe, Resolving Discriminatory Practices Against Minorities and Women in Steel and Auto, Los Angeles, California, 1936–1982 (Los Angeles: Center for Labor Research and Education. Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, 1991), 9–26; Kibbe, Latin Americans in Texas, 161; Draper, Conflict of Interests, 102–3; and Honey, Southern Labor and Black Civil Rights, 277.


32. Apodaca, “They Kept the Home Fires Burning,” 39, 72; Rose, “Gender and Civic Activism,” 182, 185–86. The CSO also held English and citizenship classes for Mexicans who were non-U.S. citizens, and it later worked for legislation granting Mexicans who were non-U.S. citizens eligibility for old-age assistance. Briegel, “Alianza Hispano-Americana,” 167–69; and Gutiérrez, Walls and Mirrors, 172. Anglo law enforcement violence against Mexicans was a time-worn experience. In Los Angeles, police officers posed a threat to Mexican Americans, routinely beating them after arresting them. Among the numerous incidents of bad police practices was the savage beating of seven Mexican American youths on Christmas Eve by twenty-two Los Angeles police officers during a drinking party at the Lincoln Heights police substation. In 1951 the CSO undertook an investigation and civil rights violation suit for police brutality. Camarillo, Chicanos in California, 78; and Mendoza Schecter, “Activist in the Labor Movement,” 80. For similar instances of police violence against Mexicans in Chicago at this time, see Valdés, Barrios Norteños, 156.
33. Guzmán, “Politics of the Mexican-American Community,” 377; Mendoza Schecter, interview, 59, 81; Gutiérrez, Walls and Mirrors, 170; Rose, “Gender and Civic Activism,” 192-93; Cuéllar, “Politicization of Mexican Americans,” 151–52; Gómez-Quinones, Mexican Labor, 201; Valdés, Barrios Nortenos, 183–84; and Camarillo, Chicanos in California, 63–65, 81.


38. Romo, “George I. Sánchez and the Civil Rights Movement,” 342–44; Ramos, The American GI Forum, 60–61, 74; Don E. Carleton, Red Scare! Right-wing Hysteria, Fifties Fanaticism and Their Legacy in Texas (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1985), 276, 284; Klarman, “How Brown Changed Race Relations,” 84, 90, 97, 102, 117; and Ramos, The American GI Forum, 8, 82–83. The 1954 alien deportation case involved Van Camp Sea Food cannyery worker Robert Galvan of San Diego, California. Galvan was a thirty-six-year resident of the United States, with an American-born wife, four American-born children, and a stepson who served in the Army overseas during World War II. Galvan was being deported because of his past membership in the Communist Party, which he joined in 1944. Deciding that he no longer wanted to belong to the party, Galvan got out in 1946. Witnesses testified that Galvan had attended meetings in support of the FEPC. Attorneys for the ACSSP won the case when the federal judge ruled that Galvan was a “law-abiding man, a steady worker and family man and loyal to the United States.” Galvan v. Press, Officer in Charge, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 201 F2d 302 (10 Cir 1954). Remark ing on LULAC’s growing apathy in the late 1950s, a former LULAC president re-
called, "We had a good number of queen contests, dances, social gatherings, [and] dinners." Another LULAC member remembered, "Too many [of our] resources went into social events. . . . At our national convention, I planned a series of seminars on employment education, poll taxes, etc.[.] so members could get informed and enthused. I was disappointed that many of the members spent more time in the hospitality room than in the seminar rooms." Quoted in Márquez, LULAC, 58. For examples of the disappointment in LULAC among many Mexican Americans in the Midwest, see Valdés, Barrios Norteños, 170–71.


THE KEY FIGURES IN THE INDEPENDENT PRODUCTIONS CORPORATION ON LOCATION DURING FILMING OF SALT OF THE EARTH, 1953.
Extreme left, Paul Jarrico; center in front of rooftop camera, Herbert Biberman; lower right, Michael Wilson. (Collections of the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.)
In Grant County, New Mexico, a lonely corner of a forgotten place, events of the 1950s dramatized the anticommunist hysteria of the early postwar era. In 1950 the Bayard, New Mexico, Local 890 of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (Mine-Mill) struck against the Empire Zinc Corporation over economic, social, and safety issues. In this small worker community far from the modern industrial city, the union took steps to influence the definition of community and the pattern of gender relations in ways that would alter the social structure and challenge the distribution of power in the emergent corporate state. The union also wrote the first page in a story that ended in a sharp challenge to the freedom of expression guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

*Salt of the Earth* (1954), the strikingly modern film based on the Empire Zinc strike, stands as a celluloid document of struggle on the part of courageous men and women who questioned prevailing gender and racial rela-
tions and who built better lives for themselves and their families through the medium of socially conscious unionism. The suppression of both the motion picture that depicted the Empire Zinc strike and the left-led union that cosponsored the film reveals the intense fear generated by postwar anticommunism and the dark side of the social settlement that by the 1950s had locked business unionists and corporate hegemons in a grim embrace.

Although scholars have investigated the story of the film’s production, they have paid less attention to the comprehensive boycott against the movie. This essay explores how industry figures, patriotic organizations, and conservatives in the mainstream labor movement conspired to prevent Salt from achieving commercial success. This study also documents the crucial role of Mine-Mill and other sympathetic unions in promoting the film’s distribution in the Rocky Mountain West.

With a focus on the film’s reception in Denver and the West, it is possible to demonstrate that director Herbert Biberman, screenwriter Michael Wilson, and producer Paul Jarrico used union linkages as part of their marketing strategy. Moreover, by focusing on the conflict between the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) and the industrial unions, this study reveals the damaging influence of militant anticommunism on a labor movement already divided by conflict between left-wing and mainstream unionists. IATSE’s open warfare against the film demonstrates the complex interunion politics that constituted a serious obstacle to worker solidarity behind one of the strongest prounion films ever made.

Republican congressman Donald Jackson of California drew the outlines for the confrontation over Salt of the Earth in 1953. He alerted movie industry and West Coast labor leaders to the production of Salt of the Earth while it was under way in the New Mexico desert. Jackson denounced the work of Biberman, Wilson, Jarrico, and other blacklisted artists. Their Independent Productions Corporation (IPC), allegedly infested with communists, was producing a film that would aid the Soviet Union by damaging the image of the United States in Latin America. Jackson urged Hollywood leaders and unionists to take steps to prevent the completion and marketing of the film.

Jackson’s attack struck a responsive chord with IATSE international representative Roy Brewer, a veteran of the 1945–1946 studio strikes and a staunch anticommunist. By 1954 Brewer had become a key figure in the Hollywood movie colony through his involvement in the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPA), the Motion Picture Industry Council (MPIC), and the American Federation of Labor (AFL)
Film Council. Alarmed by Jackson's allegations, Brewer worked to align his union against the film. As a result, by 1954 director Biberman and producer Jarrico faced an IATSE boycott in New York, where union technicians refused to participate in the final processing of the film. IATSE had "passed the word" to its locals that "no one was to work on [the film]," which persuaded Biberman that a "knock down and drag out fight" was in the offing.2

To counter negative publicity, Biberman and the IPC followed a dual-track strategy. The union held New York previews for labor groups and progressive audiences while negotiating bookings at first-run theaters. The response from both left-wing and mainstream labor groups encouraged the IPC. At a special Carnegie Little Theater preview for three hundred representatives of twenty New York unions, audiences broke out in "spontaneous applause," which Mine-Mill president John Clark termed "stupendous." Clark reported that many unionists committed themselves "to support the showing of this picture so it will be seen all over the country." Stressing Salt's realism, Clark told Mine-Mill members that once they saw the film, they would immediately "understand the impact of this picture" as well as the "fight of reaction to bar its showing."3

While Mine-Mill progressives and mainstream unionists momentarily edged towards rapprochement, internal disagreement surfaced within IATSE over the contradiction of a labor union boycott of a prolabor film. On 17 February 1954 Biberman privately expressed optimism about the IATSE situation, which, he was convinced, had been handled well. As a result of IPC's careful diplomacy, Biberman thought it likely that any precipitous action by President Richard Walsh of the IATSE would divert antilabor sentiment towards his organization. Moreover, Variety reported that many representatives in the movie industry expressed reservations about any action that focused on the film's content. Such action, they feared, would constitute "a worrisome precedent." Based on these reported fears of censorship, Biberman speculated that IATSE might simply "ease itself out of the leading position here and try to have the good old reliable American Legion," one of the nation's most outspoken anticommunist groups, lead the fight against Salt.4

Walsh and IATSE were also increasingly concerned about the publicity and costs associated with a high-profile lawsuit. Biberman observed that IATSE leaders "know they have to tread on eggs . . . and are doing so." On 22 February, anticommunist labor columnist Victor Riesel reported a shift in IATSE's official position: the union decided to permit its projectionists to run the film for preview performances. Denouncing Mine-Mill as "notorious,"
Riesel defended Walsh’s reasoning, which justified projecting the film to avoid the greater danger of “labor censorship over a means of communication and expression.”

Despite the ongoing conflict with IATSE, Biberman and the IPC premiered the film in New York without serious incident. Walsh’s decision to authorize a union projectionist eased the tension and persuaded Biberman and Jarrico that they had won the battle over the showing of Salt. Before long, however, their failure to crack the midwestern market would demonstrate that “victory” was illusory. Political reality soon set in when an American Legion–IATSE campaign of suppression resulted in a complete blackout of the film in Detroit and Chicago markets. IPC’s failure was especially ominous in view of the Midwest’s strong union base. In a later retrospective, Biberman noted that when those two engagements were “summarily broken,” he knew IPC and Salt “were through” in midwestern markets and that only a “miracle” could reverse the “heavy, heavy damage that had been inflicted.” By summer of 1954, Biberman was in no position to produce a miracle.

While Biberman fought a losing battle in the Midwest, the West at first glance promised a more sympathetic field of reception for the Salt story and its cinematic recreation. Not only was the subject of the film rooted in the western economic and social experience, but the Rocky Mountain West was also the home base of the militant Mine-Mill union. If the film failed in Mine-Mill country, its prospects elsewhere were dim indeed.

For months Mine-Mill’s international officers had prepared to make Salt of the Earth an organizing tool, especially in the Rocky Mountain area. A key dimension of the union’s plan was to use its annual wage policy conference in Denver to showcase the film and energize Mine-Mill locals to promote wider exhibition. Biberman recommended that Mine-Mill secretary Maurice Travis acquaint the conference delegates with the film and the union’s success in New York. He told the Mine-Mill officers that the film would go first to those communities that had organized well. By all union accounts, the conference screening was an unqualified success. The delegates responded to the preview with a resolution that embraced the film and praised its producers, screenwriter, director, actors, and technicians for a “wonderful job.” On 6 April 1954 John Clark informed Biberman that the conferees had gone on record in favor of an “all out fight for public showing in all Mine-Mill local areas.” Salt’s “best promoters,” Clark reported, would be the rank-and-file delegates, who had been “tremendously moved by the
film.” Publicity man Morris Wright characterized the screening as the “high point” of the entire conference.  

After consulting with screenwriter Michael Wilson, Travis and the Mine-Mill leadership moved quickly to implement the conference resolution. Recalling the “warmth” and “great pride” that the conference presentation stimulated, Travis informed local unions of the obstacles that the IPC had overcome in New York. He pilloried industry executives and corporate leadership for the “contemptible” methods they used to prevent production and distribution of Salt. To bring these events closer to home, Travis noted that six Denver theaters, capitulating to industry executives and corporate leaders, had refused to screen the picture for the Mine-Mill conference. And he acknowledged that “every enemy” of the union movement would continue to fight to silence “this dramatic and effective weapon of organized labor.”

In words that echoed Biberman’s 25 March letter, Travis warned that only through diligent organization could Mine-Mill ensure that the film was shown to a wider audience. He urged union locals to secure theaters and organize a “guaranteed audience.” Never underestimating the resistance the union faced, he exhorted members to use their cinematic weapon to promote the “message of democracy and unionism.” Simply stated, Travis said, “the picture is Mine-Mill and everything we stand for.”

The union’s experience promoting the film in Denver, home of Mine-Mill, was characteristic of the struggle unionists faced in the West. From the beginning of his search for a theater, Wright encountered obstacles. The owner of the World Theater backed out of his agreement to preview the movie for the conference after he was warned that screening Salt would put him out of business. The theater owner feared red-baiting in the press, whispering campaigns, and problems with distributors. Another reluctant exhibitor told Wright that an IATSE operator had objected to running the film on instructions from his business agent. The manager of the Cameron Theater, Walter McKinney, also feared complications with IATSE. However, a telephone call from a Denver AFL official, who appealed to him on the basis of free expression, moved McKinney to relent at the last minute. The Denver conference showing went ahead.

Encouraged by the successful screening, McKinney next consented to a commercial run starting in May, but he soon reversed himself under renewed pressure from IATSE business agent Charles Webber. If McKinney showed the film, Webber warned, there would be red-baiting in the press. Webber also promised to enforce union rules to obstruct weekend showings...
at the Cameron. A citywide union committee that supported the film promised heavy attendance to counter the pressure. McKinney next consulted the Denver Post concerning its editorial position on the film. Although the Post respected freedom of expression, the editors informed him that any proceeds paid to IPC would “go to the Communist Party” and be used to “aid the enemies of our country in their effort to destroy us.” Under such “heavy pressure,” McKinney canceled showings at his theater and in mid-May Wright resumed his search for a Denver venue.\textsuperscript{10}

From the Cameron negotiations emerged a novel nuance in IATSE policy. The union’s latest strategy was to harass, obstruct, persuade, and threaten exhibitors, while avoiding the outright refusal to furnish an operator. Webber told McKinney that he had nothing against Salt and that he personally opposed censorship. However, the international union ordered him to “do everything possible to prevent showing the film.” If all else failed, on the other hand, he was to “give in and handle it.”\textsuperscript{12}

As the struggle wore on, Denver-area exhibitors refused to negotiate with Wright, for various reasons. Some exhibitors feared negative publicity; others feared the IATSE treatment; and still others confronted pressure from distributors who threatened to deny future bookings of any films. For example, the manager of the Welton, a downtown burlesque house, was interested in showing Salt, but knew that if he ran the film the “distributors would run [him] out of town.”\textsuperscript{13}

Angered by the blackout, the Colorado state AFL spoke out in support of free expression. After seeing the film, Colorado Labor Advocate editors attacked the “anti-Red hysteria” that had produced a “black silence of fear.” Salt was “not Communist propaganda,” but simply “good social commentary and good movie-making.” Without endorsing Mine-Mill, the state AFL defended the union’s right to produce a film expressing its point of view. Moreover, the Labor Advocate insisted that the film be “judged on artistic ability and content rather than on its producer.” Some Denver exhibitor, the newspaper declared, ought to “take his courage in his hands (and in the current hysteria courage [was] needed) and show the film.”\textsuperscript{14}

Other liberal organizations joined the protest. Both the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) wanted Salt of the Earth to be “widely shown.” The ACLU’s Colorado branch worried that private groups and “possibly government agencies” had exerted pressure intended to intimidate exhibitors and “suppress the movie.” Incensed over the denial of the “right to see,” the
ACLU criticized Denver theater owners for creating a new criterion for exhibition—"movie orthodoxy"—and challenged them to accept their obligation to screen controversial films. Indignant about the rising pressures to ban the film, Allie Jay, owner of the Arvada Theater in the Denver suburbs, took the chance. Although warned by her son that the distributors would cut her off, she insisted on honoring her contract because she "did not like censorship of any kind." Besides, playing *Salt* was a business proposition and she needed revenues. After a successful four-day run at the Arvada, *Salt* closed in Denver.

Confronted by formidable odds, Mine-Mill proceeded with its promotional effort. On 18 April, Wright and Biberman met to discuss strategies for a sweeping public information campaign to boost the film. At this point they

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Juan Chacón as Ramón Quintero threatens violence against Esperanza (Rosaura Revueltas). (*Collections of the Wisconsin Center for Film and Theater Research.*)
still hoped for substantial commercial exposure in the Denver area. Biberman advised Salt's promoters to rely on personal contacts with opinion leaders and major organizations. Responding to the IPC legal counsel's suggestion, Biberman also recommended greater emphasis on Salt's entertainment value at the expense of the narrower focus on labor and suggested that promoters stress the film's attempt to grapple with the problems of Mexican Americans and women. In the Southwest, he argued, stressing the film's positive reception in Mexico was especially important. The successful previews in Mexico, according to Biberman, indicated the film's potential contribution to "the understanding of our country" as well as "our own understanding of the Mexican people." Finally, the film would require union support, and Biberman was sure that Salt could "do more to win friends and community support than anything else ever put in Mine-Mill's hands."

What Biberman could not control was the ongoing collusion between the IATSE and distributors to close off access to theater space. In the face of such intimidation, no public relations program was likely to succeed.

In contrast to the sputtering Denver campaign, Mine-Mill mounted an impressive publicity effort in Silver City, New Mexico, where local reaction was likely to be volatile. While Local 890 union leader Juan Chacón's role in the film had been exploited elsewhere, Silver City was his home territory and he worked hard to promote the showing. Chacón's description of the production process was widely disseminated throughout Mine-Mill. Focusing on the role of Mexican Americans in Local 890's filmmaking venture, the actor emphasized their activism in artistic decision-making and the importance of the union community's capacity for accurately portraying its members' lives. Eventually, some unionists in Local 890 grumbled that Chacón had "been called out too often" to promote the film, often at the local's expense. Mine-Mill later defended its use of Chacón, a "valuable asset to the film company and the promotion of the film," as worth the sacrifice.

Local 890's internal disagreement was insignificant, however, compared to the community disruption occasioned by Salt's Silver City premiere. Mine-Mill organizer Arturo Flores later asserted that the film raised issues that some local citizens preferred not to discuss, including the Mexican American drive for equality and the women's struggle for respect within the union family and the larger community. Local critics attempted to divert public attention away from the film's critique of these social conditions, alleging that there was communist influence within Mine-Mill and in the film. One important adversary was Reverend Sidney M. Metzger, the Roman
Catholic bishop of El Paso, who bitterly attacked communist leadership in the union: he denounced Chacón and Local 890 on many occasions. It was not surprising, therefore, that Metzger opposed the film or that priests in nearby Santa Rita and Hurley urged parishioners to boycott *Salt* when it played in Silver City. Although one priest in Bayard bucked the trend, recalled Virginia Chacón, most church officials opposed Local 890 and its efforts for political reasons: “We were Communists. How were they going to support us?” Similar concerns about communists persuaded local theater owners E. W. Ward and Tom Wallace not to book *Salt* when it became available. Ward’s own local poll convinced him that “the best interests of the community would be served by not exhibiting [the film].” But H. D. McCloughan, owner of the Silver Sky Vue Drive-In theater, read the numbers another way. Despite pressure from the local Chamber of Commerce,
American Legion, Cattlemen's Association, and Silver City officials, McCloughan concluded that 90 percent of Grant County residents wanted to see the film. His decision to show Salt reflected both a perception of widespread local interest and personal friendship with the Chacóns and other Local 890 members. No blackout fell over Silver City.

Although the self-styled Hollywood "cultural workers" chose not to attend the 5 May opening in Silver City, they sent a telegram commending the local people who had "inspired the film and worked so hard to make it." The whole world, the filmmakers reminded the union community, now knew that they were indeed the "salt of the earth." From the Hollywood Hills, they "embraced [them] all." Perhaps the message from Rosaura Revueltas, Salt's female lead, was more meaningful to the people of Silver City. Although unable to secure a visa for the Silver City premiere because of Immigration and Naturalization Service obstructionism, the deported star of the film expressed "joy in knowing that this motion picture will bring us together" and declared that the future belonged to "the kind of people depicted in this film." She lauded Salt as a "flag of friendship above the confusions that surround us." A disconsolate Virginia Jencks, Anglo organizer and wife of Mine-Mill International representative Clinton Jencks, saw IPC's failure to send a delegation to Silver City as a "bad mistake of appreciation and evaluation," that communicated a lack of enthusiasm for the entire project. She observed that there was "bitter feeling against Paul and Herbert," who had gone to showings in other cities, but "nobody came here."

Despite local disappointment in the IPC, the Silver City opening was a smashing success. In the community that had reviled the production company a year earlier, cars were lined up for blocks, their owners waiting for an opportunity to see the results of the IPC–Mine-Mill collaboration. The local press underplayed the film's appeal. The Silver City Daily Press attributed large crowds to "local curiosity" while the El Paso Herald Post insisted that audiences were "not inspired" by a picture that presented a "false" impression of mining conditions in New Mexico. To counteract these assertions, Local 890 took to the airwaves, using its regular radio broadcast to underscore the impressive turnout for Salt and to cite favorable reviews from the national press. The reality was that Salt played to capacity crowds at the Silver Sky Vue Drive-In. An audience of 5,000 people—a remarkable turnout for a county of 15,000—watched the film during six days of exhibition, which eventually returned more than one thousand dollars to IPC.
**SILVER SKY VUE DRIVE-IN THEATER PLAYBILL, SILVER CITY, N.MEX., MAY 1954.**

(Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries, Clinton Jencks Collection.)
This success led IPC to seek Local 890’s assistance in promoting the film’s exhibition elsewhere in New Mexico and the Southwest. In a report to Chacón and the local executive board, the filmmakers emphasized their progress against great odds, which had enabled one hundred thousand people to see the picture. The filmmakers claimed, somewhat disingenuously, that union pressure on behalf of *Salt* had broken the IATSE boycott and begun to open the market. With Mine-Mill backing, they argued, the “same thing [could] be done in New Mexico.” To achieve this goal, IPC persuaded the reliable liberal activists Craig and Jenny Wells Vincent to handle distribution in the state, assuming Local 890 approval. Within ten days the local union consented to the arrangement and the Vincents were on board as coordinators of New Mexico distribution. Although Local 890 was prepared to work with the Vincents to bring “more power to *Salt of the Earth,*” they never implemented the distribution plan.22

The IPC made other plans to screen the picture in New Mexico, Texas, Arizona, and elsewhere in the Southwest. The company advanced ambitious publicity programs, often in connection with Mine-Mill organizing drives or representation elections. In most instances such plans failed as the conspiracy of suppression spread throughout the region. For example, from El Paso, Mine-Mill international representative Alfredo Montoya reported that exhibitors were intimidated into “refusing to discuss the matter.” At least one theater owner reported that his chain office in Mexico City had advised him not to handle the film. Instead of commercial exhibition, Montoya showed the film to several union audiences, and he launched plans for screenings in Ciudad Juárez. Meanwhile, in Denver, Walter McKinney, who had originally proposed booking *Salt* throughout Colorado and New Mexico, reneged on his agreement. As an alternative, the film was shown to Mine-Mill audiences in Clifton, Morenci, Bisbee, Miami-Globe, Ray, and Hayden-Winkelman, Arizona; Bayard, Miniturn, and Carlsbad, New Mexico; and Laredo, Texas. Despite demonstrable enthusiasm in these mining towns, heavy pressure from the major distributors and intimidation by community organizations such as the American Legion effectively contained commercial distribution in the Southwest. Union stewards promoted *Salt* among workers, ad hoc worker committees “interviewed” exhibitors, and Mine-Mill officers sponsored public screenings, but in the words of Mine-Mill activist Lorenzo Torres, “even sympathetic theater owners could not withstand” threats, harassment, and intimidation from civic organizations and public institutions.23

Beyond Colorado and the Southwest, the story was depressingly similar in the northern Rocky Mountain area, Mine-Mill’s other major field of activity.
The International’s assigned coordinator, William Gately, reported broken commitments in Helena, Butte, and Anaconda, Montana. Theater owners in some of these places cancelled showings after a distributor in Salt Lake City warned of possible future discrimination against them. In Helena, Gately observed, one prospective distributor “completely reversed himself” when he was told that Salt was controversial and “dangerous.” Although IPC’s Sonja Dahl wondered “who belong[ed] to that long arm” from Salt Lake, Jarrico knew the force behind the ban: major studios had told distributors, “If you play that film, you’ll never get another.” By June, Gately was convinced that IPC faced a “tough fight to get the picture shown in these communities.” The Northwest was no different. No Seattle theater owner would “take a chance on booking Salt of the Earth.” When one theater manager dared to express interest in showing the film, he was deluged with ominous phone calls urging that he “stay away from it.” These developments persuaded him that it would be “dangerous for him to show this picture.” Gately concluded that “they’ve put a hammer on him”; in his view Seattle was the “worst town we’ve hit.” The Northwest was a closed market by late summer. The IPC showed the film in noncommercial settings, but the company’s prospects for a wider audience quickly diminished.

The IPC experience in the Rocky Mountain West matched the difficulties Salt had encountered throughout the United States as the conspiracy against the film expanded. The pressures that the movie’s foes exerted in Detroit and Chicago reappeared in altered form in the mountain West and on the Pacific Coast with similar consequences. Confronted by such insurmountable obstacles, Hollywood’s “cultural workers” and Mine-Mill unionists failed to forge a cross-class link in promoting a film that told a workers’ story and challenged the prevailing consensus behind corporate values and business unionism. From the beginning the filmmakers relied upon Mine-Mill and other unionists to publicize and promote the free exhibition of Salt. Like its adherence to progressive unionism, Mine-Mill’s endorsement of an important revolutionary film was unwelcome in Cold War America.

Despite IPC’s losing struggle in both the West and the national market, Salt of the Earth remains a landmark cinematic portrayal of American labor and worker culture. The film broke the Hollywood mold by presenting the struggle and the perspectives of militant Mexican American unionists. Moreover, the movie effectively depicted the pivotal role of women in the worker community, as well as the ambivalent male response to these assertive women who established their claim to parity. Equally significant was the film’s depiction of working men and women as active agents liberated by democratic unionism.
For unionists, Mexican Americans, Hollywood leftists, and mainstream liberals, the *Salt* controversy was a call to conscience in the battle for civil liberties. The *Salt* group stood firmly against thought control and censorship in a period of grave constitutional peril, and its members courageously advocated freedom of expression and challenged the forces of political conformity. Moreover, their attempt to create a labor-based cross-class alliance in defense of artistic freedom holds meaning for modern activists who seek to build a bridge between the wider liberal community and the labor movement. The 1950s were years of conservative hegemony, and unionists and other progressives could ill afford the luxury of internal division. *Salt*’s supporters articulated a sweeping conception of community and solidarity that, though unattainable in the context of Cold War culture, provided a model for advocates of social and economic justice in subsequent years. The *Salt of the Earth* proponents’ goal of progressive unity has yet to be realized as a new generation faces an assault on workers in downsized America, but their vision survives in a cinematic work of enduring value.

**Notes**


3. Mine-Mill Union, 4 January and 1 March 1954; and Biberman to Dear, Dear and Dearest, 30 January 1954, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, Box 4.

4. Biberman to My Dears, 17 February 1954, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, Box 4; Biberman, *Diary*, 10 and 17 February 1954, Michael Wilson Papers (hereafter Wilson Papers), Special Collections, University of California Los Angeles Arts Library, Los Angeles, Box 51; and *Variety*, 17 February 1954.


6. “What Kind of Film Was This?” Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, Boxes 51, 5.


8. Maurice Travis to All Local Unions, 20 April 1954; Maurice Travis to Wilson, 15 April 1954, IUMMSW Papers, Box 129; and “An Account of Unsuccessful Efforts to Arrange for Commercial Showing of ‘Salt of the Earth’ in Denver in 1954,” 12 October 1956, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, Box 28.

9. Maurice Travis to All Local Unions, 20 April 1954, IUMMSW Papers, Box 129.


15. “Statement,” American Civil Liberties Union, Colorado Branch, ca. May 1954, IUMMSW Papers, Box 129; and “Dear Member of the Arvada Community,” ca. May 1954, Biberman-Sondergaard Papers, Box 28.


17. “Notes on Meeting with Herbert Biberman,” 18 April 1954, IUMMSW Papers, Box 129.

19. Unidentified clipping, 1 April 1954, Juan Chacón Papers, Salt of the Earth Clippings File, Western New Mexico State University, Silver City; Virginia Chacon, interview by author, Faywood, New Mexico, 27 March 1997; Silver City Press and Daily Independent, 6, 11, and 13 February 1954; and Arturo and Josefina Flores, interview by author, Rio Rancho, New Mexico, 28 March 1997.


When the Civil War erupted, the U.S. Army had five mounted regiments—a combination of dragoons, cavalry, and mounted riflemen. Within four months all of these regiments had lost their original names through reorganization. To this day only one, the Second U.S. Cavalry (originally Dragoons), has inspired an appropriate, published regimental history, now out of print for more than 125 years. Even more neglected in these antebellum horse units are most of their early colonels, who prosecuted the frontier campaigns. Some were great leaders; all were colorful lions. While the lives and military careers of Philip St. George Cooke, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Robert E. Lee have, of course, been well covered, others like

David E. Twiggs, Edwin V. Sumner, William W. Loring, and William S. Harney are barely known to us, and only then through a few specialized journal articles and three valuable but unpublished doctoral dissertations.

Now to the rescue come George Rollie Adams, the president of Rochester's Strong Museum, and Edward G. Longacre, one of the nation's foremost authorities on the nineteenth-century cavalry. Adams has provided a first-rate biography of Harney while Longacre has revived the rare, extraordinary regimental history of the unit that Harney led during 1836–1858. With this fortuitous coincidence, students of the U.S. Army's frontier campaigns have a fresh opportunity to learn about army leadership, soldiering, and campaigning during the crucial middle third of the nineteenth century.

Rollie Adams's book retrieves Harney from the shadows of ill-deserved neglect induced by the passage of time, his truncated Civil War role, and a paucity of personal papers. The result is a sterling biography that revives the exploits of an important but deeply flawed military leader who was the veritable Forrest Gump of the mid-century frontier. Harney was everywhere prior to the great, climactic Indian campaigns that began on the Plains in the 1870s. The terse inscription on his monument in Arlington National Cemetery ("Gen. William S. Harney – 2nd Dragoons – 1800–1889 – Commissioned 1818 – Black Hawk – Seminole – Mexican – Sioux – War of the Rebellion") is far from complete. Adams not only provides valuable accounts of these campaigns but also illuminates Harney in additional, eclectic roles as Andrew Jackson's protégé, Wisconsin Territory peacekeeper, Texas Indian fighter, arbiter of federal authority in Bleeding Kansas and Mormon Utah, and the catalyst of the Pig War in the Pacific Northwest.

Perhaps the greatest strength of Adams's book is its skillful, forthright portrayal of Harney as a mixed bag of behaviors and talents. In the process, Adams provides general readers and military specialists with a case study in the quarrelsome, litigious, and self-indulgent leadership that wracked the U.S. Army at mid-century and that did little to help steady a nation already embarked on a decades-long slide toward the blood bath of disunion.

Adams lays the thoughtful and skillful Harney, who served effectively in both Florida and Kansas, alongside the impulsive and short-sighted Harney, who charged disastrously into northern Coahuila at the beginning of the Mexican War and mishandled the volatile political scene in Missouri at the outbreak of the Civil War. Harney was a religious man capable of great kindness to both animals and humans, yet he was a husband and father long estranged from his own family. Prone to losing control when crossed, Harney
displayed volcanic temper, profanity, and violence. A tall, athletic man, Harney beat (or was himself thrashed by) army enlistees, teamsters, and other civilians. Clearly the most tragic victim of his violence was a female household slave whom Harney pummeled to death in St. Louis during 1835. Small wonder that Mrs. Harney and their three children subsequently emigrated to Paris or that during the winter of 1855-1856 at Fort Pierre, Nebraska Territory, a band of Sioux dubbed Harney “Mad Bear.”

The army reacted to this vicious behavior by relieving Harney of command repeatedly and by court-martialing him on four different occasions. A Missouri civil court brought him to trial a fifth time for the slave homicide. Notwithstanding this record — appalling by today’s standards and unusual even then — Harney still managed to thrive within an antebellum army tolerant of brutality and desperate for leaders with energy, aggressiveness, organizational skill, and personal valor, military virtues that he displayed on disparate frontiers when at his best. By the late 1850s Harney’s impressive record in dealing with the native tribes of Florida, the Upper Midwest, Texas, and the northern Plains had made him the preeminent Indian fighter of his time. The combination of his military record, personal luck, and political manipulation allowed Harney to trowel over his significant liabilities. By 1846 — with the promotion of Twiggs — Harney was made colonel of the Second Dragoons at an age when many of his contemporaries were still captains. With the onset of the Civil War, Brigadier General Harney was an army officer junior only to Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott and Brig. Gen. John E. Wool.

His professional career and political prestige came crashing down while he was commander of the Department of the West in St. Louis, a post to which he had been returned in 1860 following his ignominious role in the Pig War. When civil tensions and then war came to Missouri, Harney was beset simultaneously not only by border military maneuvering but also by political forces of overwhelming complexity, ambiguity, and duplicity. In June 1861 President Abraham Lincoln reluctantly relieved Harney of his command and instructed him to await further orders that never came. In 1863 Harney was unilaterally retired; two years later he was promoted to brevet major general for long and faithful service.

In the late 1860s Harney returned to active duty for several years to serve with the postwar commissions designed by Congress to negotiate peace with the Plains tribes. In this — his final military role — Harney performed credibly while commanding a patent respect and even affection from his former tribal adversaries unthinkable for the government’s other, more senior military and
civilian emissaries. Here again Harney displayed the ambivalence and behavioral crosscurrents so pronounced throughout his long career. In this instance it took the form of an ability to understand, respect, and even lobby for tribes whom he had earlier vanquished while acquiring the nickname "Squaw Killer." In 1889 Harney at age eighty-eight died in Florida—the theater of his earlier campaigns against the Seminoles. He left this world nursed by a second wife decades his junior and estranged from his children whom he had vindictively disinherited in a property dispute.

When the University of Nebraska Press first released *General William S. Harney*, its ad copy contained a typographical error that rendered a key word in the book's subtitle as "Dragon" rather than "Dragoon." The irony is that Harney's career-long behavior was such that either term would have been appropriate. Not only has Rollie Adams successfully presented the complexity of William Selby Harney's personality and leadership style, he has done so in prose that is uncluttered and direct. The book's fourteen chapters are models of clarity. Each begins and ends with an unobtrusive summary that— together with adequate maps—helps the reader to retain the significance of Harney's cross-country and Mexican assignments. Chapter 10 ("Civil Unrest in Kansas and Utah") is an especially well-researched, insightful description of Harney's Herculean efforts to organize and launch the Utah Expedition on short notice against his own advice. The book is well-made with high quality paper and a well-chosen textual font. Displaying running heads and page numbers at the bottom of each page frees the reader from the visual distractions of more traditional layouts.

If *General William S. Harney: Prince of Dragoons* has a shortcoming, it is that Adams has missed several opportunities to illustrate more compellingly the point that he makes aptly throughout his biography—that Harney's volcanic displays of temper and even insubordination (he once preferred charges against Winfield Scott, the general in chief) took place within the cultural context of a notoriously prickly officer corps. The book also bypasses the fact that Scott had himself been court-martialed and suspended from duty for a year, and that Twiggs—Harney's mentor and superior in the Second Dragoons for ten long years—was court-martialed twice and ultimately dismissed from the army on the eve of Lincoln's inauguration. Adams does note tension and long-standing enmity between Harney and Col. Edwin V. Sumner of the First Cavalry, Scott's protégé, but he misses Harney's role in Sumner's two 1857–1858 courts-martial as well as his vindictive attempts to try Sumner a third time. These incidents were not just minor, colorful peccadil-
loes; they were examples of self-indulgent, disruptive emotionalism that cascaded from the antebellum army's highest ranks downward into its very core at a critical and volatile time in U.S. history.

Within the Second Dragoons alone, Twiggs's petulant behavior set an unfortunate long-term example for Harney and other regimental officers. An observer of both officers in the 1850s, Capt. Parmenas Taylor Turnley later wrote, "Harney's lack of brains and anxiety to ape a superior, made him a willing student... yet nature had given Harney a less cold and obdurate heart than Twiggs possessed." Philip St. George Cooke, Harney's executive officer and successor, observed and absorbed the behavior of both commanders at oppressively close quarters. Accordingly, Colonel Cooke pelted both the secretary of war and general in chief with petitions about promotion procedures on the eve of the Utah Expedition and pursued his professional vendettas against Capt. Henry Hopkins Sibley and Col. Albert Sidney Johnston during the campaign, the most daunting forced march in his regiment's history. Although Adams chronicles Harney's long list of medical problems, he chose not to speculate on the cumulative impact of fevers, wounds, and venereal disease on his subject's emotional health during nearly nine decades of life.

Perhaps the most unfortunate omission from Adams's biography is an account of Harney's telegraphic cudgeling of Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan. On 30 August 1861, several months after Harney had been relieved in St. Louis, McClellan, acting out of respect for Harney and in response to reports that Harney desired to return to active field service, offered him the command of a division in the Army of the Potomac. Now envisioning himself as the national savior, McClellan added, "I feel sure that in the present emergency you will waive all consideration of previous rank & will cheerfully give to this army the prestige of your name & presence." Indignant at Little Mac's presumptuousness, Harney immediately wired back: "Your telegraph is just received. I consider your conduct to say the least of it exceedingly impertinent." Later that night a stunned McClellan replied, "I was much surprised and grieved when I received a few moments since, your telegram... Supposing that you wished to serve in the field I embraced the earliest opportunity to offer you the highest position in my gift, and took no little trouble to accomplish this purpose. You have chosen to pursue a very extraordinary course—your telegraphic message is, to say the least of it, difficult to explain. . . . I do not feel that you have any longer any claim upon me as a fellow soldier—though I was this morning very anxious to see you." And so Bill Harney spent the rest of the Civil War on his St. Louis veranda. Lost in the
acrimonious exchange with McClellan was Harney’s ticket out of military oblivion and his exceptional combat prowess, which his country desperately needed in its hour of greatest peril.

Harney served half his antebellum career with the Second United States Dragoons, whose exploits Theophilus F. Rodenbough recounted in From Everglade to Canyon with the Second United States Cavalry. Edward G. Longacre, a historian not easily given to hyperbole, describes the book as “the finest depiction of the service life of any regiment in the nineteenth-century American army” (p. 7). Longacre and the University of Oklahoma Press have done a great service by reprinting in paperback a classic whose single edition has been out of print since 1875. Heretofore available only in research libraries, Rodenbough’s From Everglade to Canyon has recently been commanding one thousand dollars or more on the antiquarian book market.

Three years after Harney was promoted out of the Second Dragoons and a month before the fall of Fort Sumter, Rodenbaugh entered the regiment from civilian life rather than West Point. Although Rodenbaugh never rose above captain while campaigning with the Second, he did serve as the regiment’s commander for most of the Civil War—a direct reflection not only of officer shortages in the Union Army but also of the valor that earned him four brevets (including that of a brigadier general), the Medal of Honor, and loss of an arm. With the disbandment of the volunteer regiments and the great postwar contraction in the regular army, Rodenbaugh was mustered out of the volunteer Pennsylvania cavalry regiment that he then commanded and reverted to the grade of captain in the Second Cavalry until appointed major in a regular infantry regiment. In 1870 he retired for medical reasons as a colonel and brevet brigadier general. Afterward, Rodenbaugh enjoyed an active managerial and writing career until his death at age seventy-four in 1912.

troops. Chief Bugler William D. Drown's 1857 journal of the Second's twelve-hundred-mile march to Utah in blizzards fifty degrees below freezing—probably the longest, most arduous winter march in U.S. military history—is alone worth the price of the book. *From Everglade to Canyon* constitutes an extraordinary primary source about several generations of the Old Army's mounted service.

One only wishes that Rodenbough had continued his history beyond 1875, that Longacre had somehow been allotted the space to carry it down to today's Second Armored Cavalry Division, and that Rollie Adams had been able to keep Bill Harney on the psychiatrist's couch a bit longer. But these are the seductive fantasies of a reviewer who needs to be wary of projecting his own wish list onto the work of accomplished historians who have dealt admirably with their subjects and material. We are indebted to Adams, Rodenbough, and Longacre (as well as to their publishers) for rescuing the Second Cavalry and at least one of its early leaders from a fate that Brig. Gen. Delos B. Sacket, a veteran of the Second, once described as the likely lot of a dragoon officer serving on the frontier: "To be killed by an Indian, buried in a ditch and have your name spelled wrong in the newspapers."

**Notes**

3. Aphorism attributed to Sacket is quoted in Samuel Wragg Ferguson, "The Expedition in 1857, under General Albert Sydney Johnston to Salt Lake City, to Install Governor Cummings," typescript narrative, Ferguson Papers, Special Collections, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.
Book Reviews


Frank Vandiver noted in *The Southwest: South or West?* (1975) that “a haunting feel of home, or place,” suffused southern life. “Place is a vital touchstone to the understanding of Southerners” (pp. 12-13). Historian Dan Flores is the foremost writer on sense of place for the Plains region, an expanse of land that stretches hundreds of miles into the states bordering the Texas Panhandle, an area he calls the “Near Southwest.” *Horizontal Yellow* takes its name from the Navajo term for the sea of yellow grass that stretches to the horizon in all directions. The book’s essays on the past and present and on the personal meaning of the area tackle “myth, wilderness, wolves, horses, deserts, mountains, rivers, and human endeavor from Cabeza de Vaca to Georgia O’Keeffe” (jacket).

Lively, vivid, and intensely personal, *Horizontal Yellow* fills a gap in American environmental historiography, which has largely bypassed the plains of Texas and New Mexico. *Horizontal Yellow* is one of the best and most evocative books in the burgeoning literature about place. Flores shares his love of a land that most see through car windows on their way to someplace else, expressing his passion through his desire “to go native,” “to develop a sense of place centered in the fundamental world,” “to imagine [himself] a part of the natural community of plants and animals and the regional forces around” him (p. 141). The book in part constitutes an elegy for the lost beauty of the landscape the Indians knew before whites arrived to divide it up and wring a profit from it, a landscape Flores wants to restore and protect.

Something of a sequel to *Caprock Canyonlands: Journeys into the Heart of the Southern Plains* (1990), *Horizontal Yellow* revisits many of the same subjects. Flores is at his best in chapters that weave together history, natural
history, and personal history around subjects like the annihilation of wild horses or wolves. Few authors come to mind who could handle these topics as successfully. Those readers who like their history straight will balk at his most ambitious chapter, a fictional report from an imagined 1806 exploration up the Red River that Flores creates from later accounts. If its Jefferson-era tone proves difficult to sustain, and the changing ecology of the Plains casts doubt on his use of sources from fifty and seventy years later, the essay remains nevertheless an interesting attempt to imagine the Plains inhabitants and wildlife before White settlement.

*Horizontal Yellow* both succeeds and raises questions as a first-rate contribution to the literature of place, and few know the region as well as Flores, who has traveled it and explored much of it on foot. But in a surprising, ironic twist, alienated by Texans’ unshakable conservatism, the author, in the end, lights out for the mountains of Montana. Flores’s westward-looking sense of place collides head-on with Vandiver’s southern feel of place. One hopes that the deep love of the land and vision for its restored ecological health that pervade *Horizontal Yellow* and *Caprock Canyonlands* will one day bridge the two views. The author has much to teach and wisdom to share, if we will listen.

*Mark Stoll*

*Texas Tech University*


Law professor Debra Donahue has contributed a multifaceted and well-documented argument against livestock grazing on public lands in the arid West. Like a prosecuting attorney, she indicts ranchers for using taxpayer subsidies to prop up a lifestyle that is otherwise economically unsustainable. She tracks the roots of this dependency to the willingness of the government and general public to support the myth of cowboy culture as developed in literature and film. Building upon her university training and professional experience in wildlife biology, range ecology, and the law, Donahue consults an impressive array of sources to support her arguments.
Professor Donahue's book makes a convincing economic and social case that public-land livestock grazing as historically practiced often was (and is) a mistake. Livestock grazing frequently degrades the quality of western lands for other public uses such as recreation, and soil and water conservation. In the more arid parts of the West, grazing usually requires an economic subsidy to survive. Ranching contributes little to world or U.S. food production, and benefits only a select few—the permittees—at the expense of many who value public lands for alternative uses.

The book's argument that grazing reduces biodiversity proves less compelling. The sections supporting this argument suffer from heavy reliance on secondary sources compounded by selective referencing of research that supports the author's views. Although heavy, continuous grazing, evenly distributed across the landscapes, admittedly may reduce biodiversity, numerous scientific studies (largely unreferenced in the book) have shown that grazing in many cases elevates rather than reduces biodiversity. Biodiversity often increases with spatially patchy grazing, with woody-plant proliferation caused by grazing, and with grazing-induced increases in prairie dogs and some other rodent populations. The truth lies in the details.

Consider the variety of large grazers such as the prehistoric bison, horses, camels, and mammoths that roamed the West to the end of the Pleistocene ten thousand years ago. They grazed the same grass species that exist today. Since the Pleistocene's end, bison grazed many western ranges, often heavily, until their demise in the late 1800s. Donahue's vision of the "natural" seems to fall in that anomalous interlude between the fall of large native grazers and the rise of domestic ones.

The value of Donahue's book lies not in its scientific rigor but in its wide-ranging assembly of information on a controversial topic. On the one hand, it is clear that her analysis is biased against livestock grazing on public lands, and this hinders the science. But this bias does not make her case against the economic and social costs of public-lands ranching any less valid. It seems enough for her to show that the majority of Americans gain little and lose much when privately owned cattle intrude upon public landscapes at taxpayers' expense, but she weakens her case by suggesting that grazing as an ecological phenomenon has no place on the western range.

Joe Truett
Turner Endangered Species Fund
Glenwood, New Mexico

The cattle industry is widely written about by historians, particularly because of its central role in the American West. It is not as frequent, however, that we hear from participants in more than a passing manner. Retired Canadian rancher and now Montana resident Sherm Ewing provides one of these opportunities in The Ranch, taking the reader through an organized account of major issues in cattle management and breeding in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. The book begins by discussing “The Way Things Were” in the early twentieth century. Ewing then shifts his analysis to an “Age of Growth” when innovators and scientists begin to improve cattle genetics and performance. A third section moves the focus from western Canada and the United States to Mexico to discuss the diseases inherent to Mexican cattle breeds and the positive attributes of these breeds. Ewing also describes the Mexican cattle breeds’ slow diffusion northward into the United States. The last portion of the text examines recent breeding issues and the presence of exotic animals on North American ranches since the 1960s.

The Ranch is based on the same format of his first book, The Range (1990). That work, a concise overview of grasses and range management issues, has become a widely accepted text for range managers and students. In similar fashion, The Ranch introduces a new text on the development of cattle breeds in the United States during the twentieth century. This specific area has not been previously written about, except in the rarely found American Cattle Breeders Hall of Fame: Some of the Men Who Contributed the Most, and Produced Some of America’s Finest in Each Cattle Breed (1978).

The strongest feature of Ewing’s book lies in its compilation and narrative of the experiences of seventy-five ranchers and scientists to construct the story. This “Register of Characters” is briefly profiled at the end of the book. Copies of the interviews he conducted (over one hundred) are archived in both Montana and Alberta for future researchers to consult. One weakness of the book is the lack of references to other secondary works, particularly historical studies, and the absence of citations from other texts the reader might consult. There is a small bibliography, but many of the works are very specific primary works or dated secondary histories. To place the stories from The Ranch in a larger context, one should consult Terry Jordan’s North

Historians of New Mexico, the West, and the Borderlands will find limited value in this book, although it can serve as an additional resource for specific breeds or issues, such as the aftosa (foot-and-mouth disease) crisis in Mexico during the 1950s. The Ranch will be of greater interest to general readers and those in the cattle industry as a wonderful collection of homespun remembrances and history of cattle breeding and ranching.

Cameron L. Saffell
New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum
Las Cruces, New Mexico


A short review cannot do justice to the breadth and depth of the scholarship that comprises Writing the Range, a title that plays smartly on the goals and accomplishments of the collection. With it, Jameson and Armitage have crafted a volume that is exemplary in many ways. Their thoughtful and clear introductions to the book, its topical sections, and its individual articles lead the reader, whether scholar or student, through the complicated yet intellectually critical terrain created when issues of race, class, and gender are incorporated into the history of the American West. In doing so, they construct their own powerful argument for what they call “inclusive history” while inviting the reader to invest the time to read each of the twenty-nine individual contributions.

The articles, a combination of previously published and additional new pieces, indeed write the range across time, race, national origin, and sexual preference, providing the reader with constantly changing and intellectually challenging vistas. While Sucheng Chan transports her reader to Korea, Alicia I. Rodriguez-Estrada places hers behind the silver screens of Hollywood in the 1920s and 1930s. Using sources as diverse as advice columns (Valerie Matsumoto), Japanese tanka (Gail M. Nomura), and court records (Coll-Peter Thrush and Robert H. Keller Jr.), the authors provide imagina-
tive new insights into women's lives in the American West. They raise the possibilities offered by theoretical approaches to race, class, and gender (Marian Perales) as well as their limitations (Ramona Ford). Most importantly, the entire collection demonstrates convincingly the editors' argument that inclusive history is necessarily collaborative history.

The notion of collaborative history, like much of this volume, reaches well beyond traditional understandings. What *Writing the Range* presents is not just a successful effort on the part of two editors and multiple authors. Taken as a whole the collection shows that history cannot be fully understood without both the historical collaboration that took place then and historiographical collaboration that reveals it now. That lesson emerges as clearly from the collection as the powerful messages of individual essays. For both reasons, this book will be useful equally to scholars and students who will learn a great deal about researching and writing history. Everyone who reads the book will come away with new insights into the entire range it writes: the meaning of race, class, culture, gender, and the West.

*Janice L. Reiff*

*University of California, Los Angeles*


In 1979 the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe published the first major study of Spanish American weaving to accompany an exhibition, *The Spanish Textile Tradition in New Mexico and Colorado* (1994). This major work was the result of many years of research in archives and national museum collections. Previously, Hispanic weaving had been little appreciated. Navajo weaving had been the main interest of collectors, dealers, scholars, and museums. Led by the Museum of International Folk Art, contemporary weavers in northern New Mexico were given a new respect for the work of their forbears. Among other demonstrations, the museum gave workshops on dyeing with traditional and often forgotten plants. This recognition of traditional Hispanic weaving in turn led to an expansion of weaving not only for utilitarian floor or bed covering, but as a truly creative art form. Weavers composed highly indi-
individualized textiles that were more like paintings, and in turn these works of art were sought out by collectors and museums.

*Chimayó Weaving*, the first major book on Hispanic weaving since 1979, is devoted to the period from 1870 to the present but also includes a lucid description of the history and culture of the Southwest. Chimayó is the largest of the traditional Hispanic villages in the valley between Española and Taos. With its miraculous healing clay, the Santuario de Chimayó has been a center of pilgrimage for centuries. Hispanic weaving from the late nineteenth century onward has been known as “Chimayó,” even if it is made at one of the smaller neighboring villages and brought into the larger center for sale to pilgrims and tourists.

Perhaps the most fascinating section historically is the extensive discussion of the work and importance of the two Santa Fe traders, Jake Gold and J. S. Candelario. Both were instrumental in marketing Hispanic and Indian arts at the end of the nineteenth century. In an effort to popularize Hispanic weaving they deliberately confused it with Navajo weaving in the minds of buyers. This confusion has continued among most Americans to this day.

The history of weaving in the early to mid-twentieth century has not often been explored, but this book fills in this long neglected gap. The book ends with the stories of three important weaving families: the Ortegas, who were major brokers of local weaving in Chimayó, the Trujillos of Chimayó, and the Martínez of Mendanales. Their stories are illustrated with historic family photographs and illustrations of their work. In fact all illustrations in this book are superb, especially the color plates. At last Chimayó weaving, which had stood second place to Indian weaving, has achieved a place of honor with a book that is both history and art.

Marian E. Rodee
Santa Fe, New Mexico


Sixty years ago, Angie Debo first established the land swindle as a central and tragic theme in the history of American Indian-White relations. Although American Indian history has blossomed in quantity and quality since
then, the legal turpitude involved has not faded. *The Dispossessed* provides a detailed account of the duplicitous mismanagement of the American Indian estate at the local level during the late twentieth century. Unlike the several important studies published so far about the federal Indian-policy era known as "Termination," Nielson cogently argues that the government's attempt to release the Ute tribes from their status as legal wards resulted not only in the loss of property but also in the loss of an inimitable cultural world. A narrative that interweaves the politics and processes initiated by the Ute Termination Act of 1954, the voices of Uintah Ute mixed-bloods who were adversely affected, and the author's own legal and personal familiarity with the problems resulting from the policy, lends credibility to this argument.

*The Dispossessed* begins with a cursory overview of how the Uncompahgre, White River, and Uintah bands came to live on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in the nineteenth century. The termination era then became a nebula of cultural misunderstandings and purposeful acts that duplicated the failings of earlier settlements and events for the mixed-blood Utes. The book's middle chapters explore the dynamics of political life and personal struggles with the restrictions newly created by the 1954 law. The explicit termination of 490 mixed-bloods as federally recognized members of the tribe instigated a nascent factionalism within the Affiliated Ute Citizens of Utah (AUCU) as well as intense political discord with the larger Ute tribe. The AUCU's federally appointed attorney and an assortment of Indian agents, full-bloods, and even non-Indian used-car salesmen played varying yet prominent roles in the disintegration of mixed-bloods' legal entitlements as Indians. The last two chapters then build on this political morass with the author's survey of the courts' bungled judicial rulings as the AUCU attorney attempted to recover AUCU members' rights after the policy of termination had been repudiated by the federal government.

Nielson capably illustrates how the conundrum of legalisms created by the Ute Termination Act intentionally fostered the mixed-blood community's dissolution. A strict racial designation of Indianness—a conscious legal construction—severed mixed-bloods' cultural ties to the Ute community. Thus, the implicit argument—an important one—is that the blood quantum requirement, imposed by congressmen rather than by the reservation community, determined the mixed-bloods' bleak economic and cultural prospects. Nielson integrates individuals' experiences into the larger legal framework to emphasize how mixed-bloods were bereft not only of land but of safe cultural space as well. The termination policy left them between disparate rural-urban and
Indian-White social environments. To the author, the entire process resulted in cultural genocide. This fairly compelling argument would be enhanced by a more precise explanation of how a distinct mixed-blood identity and culture emerged before termination.

The Dispossessed is recommended to students and scholars of twentieth-century American Indian law and policy and Utah state history. Although the book needs a map of the reservation and an appendix of central figures to clarify the many places and people it discusses, its insider perspectives and compassionate arguments about the workings of termination outweigh these flaws.

Luke C. Ryan
University of Arizona


The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) is one of the leading pan-Indian organizations in the United States. Founded during the closing years of World War II, the NCAI remains active in Indian affairs today. Despite its prominence and historical importance, the NCAI has not received the scholarly attention it deserves until now. With the publication of The National Congress of American Indians: The Founding Years, Thomas W. Cowger has remedied this scholarly neglect. His monograph is a welcome addition to the growing literature on American Indians during the post-World War II era.

Cowger used the NCAI papers and other archival sources to complete his study. He also had the good fortune to participate in a 1993 seminar at which NCAI founders, including John Ranier and Helen Peterson, reflected on the organization's history. Using these sources, Cowger provides an overview of the NCAI's first twenty years, beginning with its founding in 1944. He ends the period of his study in 1964 for several reasons, not the least of which being the unavailability of post-1964 NCAI records while he conducted his research.

Cowger focuses on the political activities of the NCAI. As World War II drew to a close, politically able American Indians such as Charles E. J. Heacock, D'Arcy McNickle, and Archie Phinney recognized the need for a pan-Indian organization dedicated to securing the gains American Indians
had made during the war. Those benefits included an improved standard of living and wider acceptance by non-Indians, many of whom were impressed by Indian contributions to the war effort. Among the concerns of the NCAI was the establishment of an Indian Claims Commission to adjudicate Indian land claims. During the 1950s the NCAI took part in the battles to allow Indian communities the right to hire their own attorneys. The NCAI also played an important role in opposing the termination policy that framed federal Indian policy during those years. Cowger explores these issues in detail, providing insight into the internal activities of the NCAI and an overview of a turbulent period in federal Indian affairs.

Cowger also examines some ethnohistorical issues involving the NCAI, including the group’s role in the ongoing development of a pan-Indian identity. He points the way to future studies such as the nature of factionalism within the organization and the important role that women played in NCAI activities. Instructors can use Cowger’s study to introduce students to post-World War II American Indian concerns, especially issues such as pan-tribalism and the termination policy.

Thomas Clarkin
San Antonio College


This book is the definition of an academic monograph: limited in scope, precise in its methodology, and, though it lacks a startling argument, a contribution to knowledge. American Indian Population Recovery in the Twentieth Century skirts the great pre-Columbian population debate. Repeatedly asked what the Indian population amounted to in 1492, Shoemaker formulated a stock reply: “I don’t know, but today there are about two million Indians in the United States” (p. 99). That figure, set against a 1900 estimate of approximately 250,000 Indians in the area of the United States, sums up her argument and her own demographic investigation. At the same time, it skirts another issue. In his influential monograph, American Indian Holocaust and Survival: A Population History Since 1492 (1987), Russell Thornton concluded that Indian population recovery in the twentieth century was unargu-
able but also that Indians as a distinct population might disappear since their numerical recovery was based on increasing intermarriage with other racial groups. What are we counting when we count North American Indians?

Shoemaker acknowledges the “ambiguity” (p. 5) at the heart of any demographic study of American Indians, noting that today a one-quarter Indian blood quantum is commonly required for tribal enrollment, though the federal government beginning with the 1960 Census has accepted self-definition as its sole criterion. Noting that any population increase must be the result of fertility, mortality, and migration, Shoemaker points out that migration, save in the sense of a shift to the melting pot of urban centers, does not apply to an indigenous population. But there has been a decided blurring of racial lines, which necessarily affects fertility and mortality data. Since recent discussion of Indian population decline has been predicated on a catastrophic increase in native mortality after contact with Europeans, it follows that enhanced life expectancy accompanied by some upswing in fertility have together “fueled the population recovery in the twentieth century” (p. 13).

The bulk of Shoemaker’s book consists of five case studies that underline the fluid nature of tribal definitions. Between 1890 and 1980 (Shoemaker does not use the unreliable 1990 data) national census counts show the Cherokees increasing from 25,015 to 232,080, and the Navajos from 17,204 to 158,633 — totals that may be inflated judging from a limited local study of the Red Lake Ojibwas and the comparisons between census figures and reservation counts provided for the Senecas and the Yakamas. Shoemaker examines variables in mortality and fertility and notes economic and cultural factors particular to each group. Intermarriage, for example, was more common among the Cherokees than the Navajos and thus cannot explain both population increases. Indeed, “particularities” undercut demographic generalization: “There is no single explanation for why these Indian tribes had different mortality, fertility, and rates of population increase” (p. 73).

That statement leaves the reader with a fact—rapid Indian population increase after World War II — but no simple way of accounting for it. Still, Shoemaker’s table showing “Indian Intermarriage with Other Races, 1940–1980” (p. 87) is compelling. In 1940, 87.8% of Indian men and 84.8% of Indian women were married to other Indians; however, in 1980, the rates had fallen to 47.3% and 45.9%. Almost this entire differential is accounted for by marriage to White women and men. While Shoemaker, like Thornton before her, believes that identity politics can still carve out a distinctive place for American Indians in the face of “rising homogeneity” (p. 98), the 2000
Census will almost certainly confirm the ongoing difficulty in counting such phantom constructs as race.

Brian W. Dippie  
University of Victoria, British Columbia


This book will not have an audience beyond literary scholars, Native American specialists, and university graduate students trying to remain on the so-called “cutting edge” of their discipline. The volume contains some heady ideas, but the author’s dense prose style, jargon-filled language, and tendency to obfuscate rather than clarify leave little room for the uninitiated to comprehend what should be a popular and interesting topic—how to see, interpret, and judge the oral storytelling qualities (“orality”) of contemporary American Indian literature.

As with many other recent scholars, the author, who teaches literature at Bradley University, is seeking to reach beyond postmodern literary theories to critique American Indian literature, including storytelling. She introduces what she calls “conversive” strategies to examine literature, again including Native American oral traditions, and defines the term as conveying “both senses of conversion and conversation in which literary scholarship becomes a transformative and intersubjective act of communication” (p. 1). She wants scholars to pay greater attention to the oral qualities of Native American literature or, in her words, to become listener-readers.

The book examines the work of such well-known authors as N. Scott Momaday, Leslie Marmon Silko, Sherman Alexie, and Luci Tapahonso. It also explores some less well-known but also gifted writers. The study is not as simple as that might sound, however, for the author uses the ideas and theories of Ludwig Wittgenstein, an early-twentieth-century Viennese poet-philosopher, to guide her approach. Wittgenstein wanted to avoid externally imposed theoretical approaches of knowing; he did not want to use long-familiar Western traditions of literary criticism. Partly as a result, the author provides through her conversive strategies a fresh approach to reading and understanding poems, novels, and short stories from Native American writers, an
approach she believes comes to grips with the inadequacies in both traditional and postmodern analysis.

The work might serve as a college text for contemporary North American Indian literature courses, but only specialists will find use for it on their bookshelves.

Paul H. Carlson
Texas Tech University


During the early eleventh century A.D., large masonry pueblos were occupied along the major river drainages in southwestern New Mexico. These large Classic Mimbres communities dominated the arid landscape and were characterized by a naturalistic and geometric black-on-white painted pottery tradition that was distinct from the ceramic wares found in the neighboring Mogollon regions. However, by the mid-twelfth century, most of the people who had occupied these large, aggregated pueblos had left. At the same time, ceramic styles underwent change and, as a consequence, the region was now more stylistically similar to its neighbors.

Traditionally, this twelfth-century settlement and ceramic shift has been viewed as the abandonment or collapse of the Classic Mimbres communities, a decline followed by out-migration and/or cultural discontinuity in the region. These interpretations have been grounded in the simplistic, direct equation of particular ceramic traditions with specific human groups and in a basic insensitivity to the complexities of spatial scale. Consequently, a decline in the size of specific large sites was viewed as representative of a total and “mysterious” regional abandonment or major cultural disjuncture.

In this volume, Margaret C. Nelson brings a fresh perspective, grounded in an exhaustive cross-cultural review, to this indigenous southwestern episode. Drawing primarily on survey and excavation findings from the eastern Mimbres region, Nelson argues that the early-second millennium A.D. shift in the Mimbres region of New Mexico represented neither a major break in cultural affiliation nor even a dramatic subsistence change away from agricultural resources. Rather, she interprets the twelfth-century depopulation
of large sites as having been tied to an episode of demographic dispersion in which small eleventh-century farmsteads increased in size and number at the expense of their more aggregated neighbors. By expanding her analytical time frame both before and after the focal shift of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Nelson also places that episode of dispersion into a longer sequence of regional mobility. She portrays this episode as part of a long-term strategic acclimation by farmer-gatherer-hunters to an arid landscape.

To her credit, the views advanced by Nelson are richly grounded in architectural, settlement-pattern, and subsistence data. Alternative interpretations are outlined and weighed carefully. I personally might have preferred to see a fuller treatment and evaluation of sociopolitical and macroregional factors in these discussions. Nevertheless, I have the strong feeling that those issues will be tackled more completely by the author at a future date when the empirical underpinnings and the theoretical tools available rise to meet the high standards of care and scholarship demonstrated in this analysis.

Gary M. Feinman
The Field Museum
Chicago, Illinois


Listening to Salsa is an ambitious attempt to map the politics of Latin music and make sense of the complex meanings the genre holds for its multiple audiences. Describing her project as simultaneously an “act of love” and a “declaration of war” (p. xi), Aparicio engages in a familiar, post-nationalist ethnic studies project of locating cultural resistance and affirmation in popular culture while critiquing the gender politics that make popular culture a site for the oppression of women. Not only does she analyze the communal role salsa plays in the lives of Latinos/as, she critiques the sexism in its song lyrics and the larger masculine discourse that informs them. Aparicio’s fundamental concern, however, is how Latinas listen to salsa, i.e., how, as socially situated subjects, they are active participants in creating meanings around this music.
Aparicio’s approach is impressively interdisciplinary, drawing from literary studies, ethnomusicology, cultural studies, feminist theory, and other fields. First, she situates the discursive field surrounding salsa in late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century literary and musicological representations of its musical antecedents, the danza and the plena. In this instance she is particularly concerned with how commentators racialized and feminized these musical forms (as elite “White lady” and “sensual mulatta”) when they contemplated their viability as expressions of Puerto Rican national identity. Keeping in mind these modes of interpretation, Aparicio next examines the role salsa plays in ethnic identity formations in contemporary Puerto Rico, New York, and other places. She pays attention to the working-class, oppositional cultural politics of salsa and shows how its commodification and appropriation by middle-class Latinos/as and non-Latinos/as complicates and, at times, depoliticizes and “whitens” this music. Aparicio then turns her attention to women listening to salsa. She charts the dialogic meanings produced by the representations of women in salsa texts and the active engagement with these texts by female subjects. Aparicio also analyzes the work of female composers and vocalists and the ways they negotiate, transform, and provide alternatives to sexist lyrics. The author concludes her book with a small ethnographic study in which she interprets the ways men and women of different class positions make sense of salsa, with particular attention paid to how Latina listeners “rewrite” patriarchal and misogynistic lyrics.

One of the unique dimensions of Aparicio’s book is her use of readings of literary texts as a means of understanding the cultural discourses that inform salsa lyrics. Although valuable to understanding the complex meanings in this music, historically-minded readers and some fans may wish that Aparicio had devoted more attention to the historical development of the music and to a wider range of contemporary salsa texts. Such a discussion most likely would have allowed her to build upon the points she makes through her literary readings and would have simultaneously given her readers more information about the hemispheric and, indeed, global significance of the music itself. Still, Listening to Salsa succeeds in its sophisticated take on the politics of salsa, and it remains an indispensable book for those interested in critical assessments of Latin music and the intersection of race, gender, and contemporary popular culture.

Eric Porter
University of California, Santa Cruz

The collaborative undertaking by Sell and Schwaller of uncovering, transcribing, and translating Bartolomé de Alva’s Confesionario resulted from serendipitous events that led the two scholars to cross paths in their special field, namely Nahautl studies. In the first of three scholarly treatises on Alva’s Confesionario, Schwaller constructs a detailed, informative biography in which he traces Alva’s maternal Spanish and Nahautl heritage. Schwaller then turns to the person of Bartolomé de Alva and describes him as a capable Nahautl linguist and a competent mestizo cleric who successfully supported himself with the profits generated by resources inherited from family and family friends. Schwaller then discusses the rationale of the Confesionario, suggesting that Alva provided queries designed to assist the Nahautl Indian penitent in making an examination of conscience. Knowledgeable of both Nahautl and Old World cultures, Alva used his insights in probing the Christian spiritual life of the Nahautl Indian, identifying vestiges of indigenous religious practices that he considered unacceptable and dangerous. Undoubtedly, he believed that unchecked practices led to backsliding, challenged Spanish religious orthodoxy in the colonies, and ultimately threatened Spanish hegemony.

As part of his contribution to the book, Sell appraises Alva’s Nahautl manuscript in relationship to the works of the latter’s contemporaries who also wrote highly acclaimed compositions in Nahautl. Not only was the Confesionario addressed to the penitent, but it was also designed to assist the confessor in systematically bridging the cultural disparity between the Indian penitent and Western Christianity. One might conclude that the clergy surreptitiously used the instructions contained in the Confesionario as a formidable tool to extirpate indigenous religious practices.

In the third treatise preceding Alva’s Confesionario, Lu Ann Homza presents an excessively detailed historical survey of the sacrament of confession. In the course of her presentation, however, she misses a salient opportunity to examine Tridentine influences on the sacrament of penance that reached the Spanish colonies as part of the Counter Reformation, which took place less than seventy-five years before Alva published his Confesionario.

Aside from complementing and advancing the study of Nahautl texts, Alva’s Confesionario renders evidential materials relevant to the dynamic
interior life of the colonial church, a topic beckoning critical exploration and assessment. The parallel, side-by-side Spanish–English and Nahuatl–English format of the *Confesionario* makes for easy and enjoyable reading of the text. Indeed, the editors’ scholarly efforts bear much fruit.

*Alfred A. Bricta López, O.P.*
*Dominican University of California*


Editor Richard O. Davies has assembled fourteen newly researched and written biographical essays on prominent individuals seen to be representative of the “New Nevada,” a term he uses to refer to post–World War II Nevada. Davies himself contributes a brief historical overview as well as a balanced and thoughtful review of the hotly controversial career of Jerry Tarkanian, former basketball coach at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Davies acknowledges the assistance of an informal group of scholars and public leaders who put forward an extensive list of prospective subjects from which he made the final selection based upon “substantial impact upon the economic, cultural, social, and political development of the New Nevada” (p. x). The final list is a fairly balanced one geographically, important in a state with pronounced North-South differences. Occupationally, the list is less representative. Three gaming colossi (William Harrah, Moe Dalitz, and Steve Wynn) seem about right, but the five politicians of state and national stature are excessive here however worthy the individuals. The remaining six slots are thinly spread to include men and women noted for literary endeavors, ranching, education, journalism, sports, and leadership in the civil rights movement. For approximately half of the subjects represented in *Maverick Spirit*, there already exist book-length monographs, biographies, autobiographies, and/or oral histories.

Taken on its own terms, the collection succeeds admirably well. The lives and careers of the subjects are intrinsically interesting, and the writing is never worse than capable. Some of the writings are scintillating, as in Don D. Fowler’s absorbing essay about rancher/writer Molly Flagg Knudtsen and James W. Hulse’s graceful tribute to educator Maude Frazier. Generally, the
articles are thoroughly researched, and the authors have provided extensive and useful commentaries on their sources. They have traced their subjects' lives, at least briefly, from before their appearance on the Nevada stage and explicated the historical context of their appearance. In a noteworthy example, Michael S. Green expertly weaves a great deal of pertinent Las Vegas political and journalistic history into his treatment of crusading newspaper publisher Hank Greenspun.

Do we have a greater understanding of the New Nevada from this collection? Well, yes and no. There is a welcome bit of overlap in the stories of the fourteen subjects, as characters make cameo appearances in other chapters. Given Nevada's small population and very personal politics through much of the era, this is to be expected. On the other hand, it would be a bit of a stretch to say that this creates a coherent view of the last half-century. This is partly due also to one somewhat disturbing element underlying the collection: all of the subjects are consciously "prominent." That characteristic has led to an adulatory, sometimes even fawning tone creeping into many of the essays. None are completely uncritical, but surely there is more than a whiff of sulfur surrounding the lives of the historical figures—the politicians and gamblers especially—covered in this book. I eagerly await a follow-up volume on less prominent New Nevadans, one done by the same or an equally talented group of writers.

Frank Wright
Nevada State Museum and Historical Society


Beyond Cloth and Cordage: Archaeological Textile Research in the Americas. Edited by Penelope Ballard Drooker and Laurie D. Webster. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000. xi + 339 pp. 60 halftones, maps, charts, tables, appendix, notes, bibliography, index. $60.00 cloth, ISBN 0-87480-662-3.)


News of the Plains and Rockies, 1803–1865: Original Narratives of Overland Travel and Adventure Selected from the Wagner-Camp and Becker Biography


Remembering the Presbyterian Mission in the Southwest: Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Menaul Historical Library. Edited by Jane Atkins Vásquez and Carolyn Atkins. (Albuquerque: Menaul Historical Library, 1998. 130 pp. 63 halftones, maps, tables, index. $15.00 paper, NO ISBN ASSIGNED.)


People
This past August, Professor Virginia Scharff inaugurated the new Center for the Southwest in the History Department at the University of New Mexico. The Center for the Southwest seeks to act as a home and clearinghouse for a community of scholars arrayed across departments, disciplines, and colleges, engaged in research within the Southwest region at the University of New Mexico; to introduce specialists on the region and their work to each other and to a broader local, state, and regional public; to foster and disseminate innovative and public-spirited research; to sponsor public programs on the prehistory, history, cultural accommodation and resistance, politics, economy, environment, and creative energy of the region; and to address the challenges and prospects facing the Southwest. For more information contact Cindy Tyson, (505) 277-7688, or write Center for the Southwest, Department of History, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131, e-mail: cntrsw@unm.edu.

Grants, Fellowships, and Awards
The Western Writers of America announces its fifty-eighth annual awards competition for 2002. The Western Writers of America recognizes excellence in the categories of western novel, novel of the West, original paperback novel, best first novel, nonfiction historical, nonfiction contemporary, biography, poetry, and other categories. Entries are solicited through 31 December 2001 for works published this calendar year. Contact W. C. Jameson, Awards Administrator, 386 Hwy 124 West, Damascus, AR 72039, (501) 335-8056.

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Public Programs announces the 2002 application deadlines for museums and historical organizations. The Division of Public Programs at the NEH supports projects that involve diverse public audiences in the exploration of important ideas in the humanities. Grants are available for museums, historical organizations, and
The Historical Society of New Mexico continues to sponsor two scholarships of $1,000 each to be awarded annually to an undergraduate student and to a graduate student currently enrolled in any of New Mexico’s colleges or universities: The Albert Schroeder Scholarship for Undergraduate Students and the Myra Ellen Jenkins Scholarship for Graduate Students. The scholarships will be awarded on the basis of a competition for the best scholarly research papers dealing with or relating to New Mexico history in the Spanish, Mexican, or American periods. The deadline for submission is 10 December 2001. For additional information contact the Chairman of the Scholarship Committee at the Historical Society of New Mexico, P.O. Box 1912, Santa Fe, NM 87504.

The William P. Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern Methodist University offers the William P. Clements Prize for the Best Nonfiction Book on Southwestern America, to promote and recognize fine writing and original research on the American Southwest. The competition is open to any nonfiction book, including biography, on any aspect of southwestern life, past or present, with a 2001 copyright. The author and publisher will each receive a certificate; in addition, the author will receive $1,000 and an invitation to give the annual Clements Prize Lecture at Southern Methodist University. Submissions must be postmarked by 21 January 2002. For additional information contact David Weber, Director, Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX 75275-0176, (214) 768-1233, dweber@mail.smu.edu.

Archives, Exhibits, and Historic [Web] Sites

The Online Archive of New Mexico (OANM), a database of historical source materials in New Mexico, is now available at http://eLibrary.unm.edu/oanm. The database contains information on over one thousand archival collections and materials covering more than four hundred years of New Mexico history. The website database describes holdings at four major repositories: Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico General Library, Albuquerque;
Fray Angélico Chávez History Library, Palace of the Governors, Santa Fe; New Mexico State Records Center & Archives, Santa Fe; and Río Grande Historical Collections, New Mexico State University Library, Las Cruces. The OANM provides detailed descriptions of the materials in these collections along with four hundred facsimiles of documents and photographs.

The National Hispanic Cultural Center (NHCC) presents *Low ‘n Slow: Lowriding in New Mexico*, an exhibition of photographs by Jack Parsons that document and celebrate the tradition of low rider vehicles in their local environments. The exhibition will run through 9 December 2001.

The Cerro Grande Prescribed Fire Board of Inquiry Final Report was recently made available in PDF version from the National Park Service website: www.nps.gov/band/fire.htm.

**Calendar of Events**

1 December: Deadline for paper and panel proposals for the April 2002 Western Social Science Association conference to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The contact person is Professor Daniel J. McInerney at Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-0710, (435) 797-1283 phone, (435) 797-3899 fax, e-mail: danielj@hass.usu.edu.

1 December: Deadline for proposal submissions for the April 2002 Rocky Mountain Council on Latin American Studies (RMCLAS) conference in Portland, Oregon. The conference will be held at the downtown Portland Marriott 10–14 April. Friedrich Schuler is the contact person at the Department of History, P.O. Box 751, Portland State University, Portland, OR, 97207-0751, (503) 725-3988 phone, (503) 725-4882 fax, email: friedrich@ch2.ch.pdx.edu.

15 January: Deadline for paper and panel proposals for the August 2002 American Historical Association Pacific Coast Branch conference in Tucson, AZ. The program chairs are Hal Rothman, History Department, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, NV 89154, rothman@nevada.edu or Jessie Embry, Charles Redd Center, 5437 HBLL, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602, (801) 378-4048, jle3@email.byu.edu.

24–25 January: The Department of History at the New Mexico State University and the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Museum are cosponsoring a
World War II home front symposium on the wartime labor emergency in the Southwest. Topics include the Bracero Program, the mobilization of school children, Women’s Land Army, and POW labor. The symposium will coincide with the opening of “To Get the Job Done: Employing Prisoners of War in N.M. Agriculture during World War,” at the museum. Dr. Jon Hunner is the contact person at New Mexico State University, (505) 646-2490, jhunner@nmsu.edu.

13–17 February: Twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Southwest/Texas Popular Culture/American Culture Associations, Albuquerque, New Mexico. The conference theme is “Atomic Culture in the Nuclear Age.” The conference web site is www.SWTexasPCA.org.

20–23 March: American Society for Environmental History conference, “Producing and Consuming Natures,” Denver, Colorado. Christopher Sellers is the contact person at the Department of History, State University of New York at Stony Brook, Stony Brook, NY 11794, (631) 632-7514, csellers@notes.cc.sunysb.edu.

11–13 April: The New Mexico–Arizona Joint History Convention, Las Cruces, New Mexico. Bruce Dinges is the contact person at the Arizona Historical Society, 949 East Second Street, Tucson, AZ 85719, (520) 628-5774, or visit the Arizona Historical Society web site, www.arizonahistory.org.
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Compiled by Patricia A. Hughes

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