

**EL ORGULLO DE SER
LATINO PUBLIC HISTORY: APPLIED HISTORY
PROGRAMS, EXHIBITIONS AND MUSEUMS.**

by

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OUTLINE OF EL ORGULLO DE SER: LATINO PUBLIC HISTORY, APPLIED HISTORY PROGRAMS, EXHIBITIONS, AND MUSEUMS.

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- C. Serious underrepresentation of Latino professionals as Museums curators, program administrators and as officers of historical and museum funding agencies.
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III. Summary: Achievements, Opportunities, Methods and Means Expanding Latino Public, Applied History Programs in the 1990s.

I. Introductory Statement:

The primary purpose of this paper is to examine the development and assess the status of Latino Applied History Programs. But we must first clarify the terms "Public" and "Applied" History, because of the confusion which exists regarding their meaning. Public History has been viewed by Public historians as applied history, with an historical product being produced which has an impact in society outside of the University.¹ This is as opposed to purely academic historical research which is the traditional domain of the academic historian who primarily publishes in scholarly journals to be read by other scholars.

Public history as defined by Public Historians has also included what has been called "Local History" or "Popular History" which includes history museums, historical societies their public programs, and other types of public historical programs.² Non historians and other historians, however, frequently have the impression that Public History is primarily institutional, that it is the history of government agencies or large corporations. Applied local, regional and ethnic historical programs are as much a part of public history as studies of government. That portion of Public History which emphasizes applied regional, ethnic and local history programs has been steadily increasing during the last twenty years.³

That portion of public history activities which seriously addresses the history and culture of Mexican Americans and Latinos, particularly that produced by those groups is the primary focus of this paper. Most public history programs funded by museums, historical societies and government agencies and conducted by professional historians, and other social scientists from their staffs are not Latino-produced programs. This for the simple reason that most major history museums in the United States have no Latino curators on their staffs. For example, this is the case with the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, which is the third largest in the nation, and which to this day has never had a Mexican American or Latino curator on its staff. This is also the case with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Historical programs regarding the history of the Mexican community do not of course have to be produced by Mexican Americans or other Latinos. Several major historical programs concerning the heritage of Mexican Americans have been directed by Anglo Americans. The best of these programs have employed Mexican Americans as supporting staff and/or as unpaid volunteers. Examples of the best of these programs include, "The Mexican Texans" produced by the Institute of Texan Cultures at the University of Texas, Austin, which was curated by Samuel P.

¹ Righter, Robert. W. "Public History." The Social Science Journal. Vol. 25, No. 4, 1988.

² Mayo, Edith. "Women's History and Public History: The Museum Connection." The Public Historian. Vol. 5, No. 2, 1985. Raymond Starr. "The Role of the Local History Course in a Public History Curriculum." The Public Historian. Vol. 6, No. 3, 1987.

³ Leon, Warren and Roy Rosenzweig. (ed.) History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment. University of Illinois Press, Urbana: 1989. Also see Louis R. Harlan. "The Future of the American Historical Association." Pg. 3, The American Historical Review. Vol. 95. No. 1 February 1990.

Nesmith in 1981; "Tucson from Rancho to Barrio" produced by the Arizona Historical Society and curated by Thomas Sheridan; and more recently "Familia y Fe" now on exhibit in the new Hispanic Heritage Wing of the Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe New Mexico, which was directed by Dr. William Wroth and Dr. Helen Lucero.⁴ Latino scholars are the first to acknowledge the important contributions of Anglo scholars in the study and preservation of our history. Their work, however, neither initiated the study of our history nor can it substitute for the tremendous work of public education regarding our contributions to this society which awaits future generations of Mexican American and Latino scholars and their colleagues of all ethnic and cultural groups.⁵

II. Latino Applied History Programs:

This new applied history must start with the premise of equal respect for all people of all ethnic cultural and gender groups. It is the responsibility of Latino scholars to document their historical and cultural contributions with the greatest respect for and recognition of the interdependency of all peoples. Latino and Mexican American public history must not ape the ethnocentric gender and racial chauvinism of past dominant culture academicians. Latino applied history must actively seek wide public exposure. Latino history must not remain a mystery that is relegated to a tomb-like environment for a necrophilic elite.

The mission of the new Latino/Mexican American public history is to take this history to the community, especially to Mexican elementary and secondary school youth. Despite the hard-won achievements of Mexican American historians, anthropologists and other scholars over the last three decades, the results of this research have hardly begun to enter the public schools. Not even five percent of Mexican American elementary school students have ever taken a course in Mexican American history or even one in which it is a significant component. These young people still receive from their education the implicit and sometimes still overt message that Mexicans, Mexican Americans and Latinos have contributed little or nothing to this society. This contributes to the creation and reinforcement of a false and negative image. This image is also conveyed to young people of other ethnic groups and implicitly reinforces the idea that Latinos are a people without a history in this country and that Mexican Americans are "aliens" of little intellectual ability, who should be grateful merely to breathe this nation's air.

⁴ Samuel P. Nesmith. The Mexican Texans. Institute of Texan Cultures, Austin: 1981.; Thomas Sheridan. From Rancho to Barrio. Arizona Historical Society, Tucson: 1985.

⁵ For example a seminal debate in the development of Mexican American historiography concerns the issue of the continuity of the historical development of the Mexican people in the United States before and after 1900. Dr. Arthur Corwin, a Latin Americanist, argued that "Mexican American History" was invented by Cary McWilliams, author of, North From Mexico. This resulted in a critical response from leading Mexican American historian Dr. Rodolfo Acuna. See Arthur F. Corwin. "Mexican American History: An Assessment." Pacific Historical Review. Vol. 42, August 1973. and Rodolfo Acuña. "To The Editor." Pacific Historical Review. Vol. 43, February 1974.

Mexican American and Latino public history programs have challenged these stereotypes through the creation of programs which document the historical contributions of Mexicans to the United States and the world. Obviously they are not the only such efforts by Latinos. Mexican American film and television professionals, in association with academic historians and social scientists, have led the way in producing video and film programs which document our history. This paper does not discuss Mexican historical film programs because they have usually originated outside of the public history sector.⁶ Also film programs cannot by themselves fully cover or document the history of Mexicans and other Latinos in the United States.

Similarly this paper does not emphasize programs which focus exclusively on Mexican or Latin American history and culture within the present territory of Mexico or Latin America which do not examine the contributions of Mexican Americans and Latinos in the United States.⁷ It must be stated here that many of the same problems cited here also apply with equal force in public history programs with a Mexican or Latin American focus. The reason for not examining these programs is that treatment of Mexican or Latin American history without an examination of the history of Mexicans and Latinos in the United States, conveys the idea that we have no history in this country. It also reinforces the false idea that Mexicans and Latinos in the United States have contributed little or nothing to either Latin America or the United States.

The focus here is upon the efforts over the last two decades by Mexican Americans to create Mexican American and Latino public history programs where none have existed. This will be done through the examination of several types of successful public programs or activities produced by Mexican Americans during the 1980s. These programs include presentations of multimedia exhibitions which have displayed photographs, artifacts with a narrative text, historical site surveys, the commemoration of community people who have been participants in historical events, and a border history fair.

The production of historical exhibitions and traveling exhibitions have been important because this is a major media utilized by museums and historical societies which are either public institutions or which receive major public funding. Mexican American and Latino taxpayers pay an increasing share of the support costs of these institutions, yet they receive little positive benefit compared to dominant ethnic-social groups.

⁶ For a discussion of Chicano film makers and films with historical significance see Gary D. Keller (ed.) Chicano Cinema: Research, Reviews, and Resources. Bilingual Press, Tempe: 1984.

⁷ An example of an exceptional historical and cultural exhibition is the 1985 display of the Mexican theatre exhibit, "El Pais de las Tandas," produced by the Museo de Culturas Populares in Mexico City. This exhibit which depicts the Mexican teatro de revista, is the counterpart of Nicolas Kanellos "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the United States." The 1985 exhibition was also exceptional in that a significant effort was made to show the very real linkages of the teatro de revista in Mexico and in the Mexican and Spanish speaking communities of the United States. Dr. Carlos Vasquez, coordinated the presentation of "El Pais de las Tandas" in Los Angeles, was instrumental in establishing the Mexican, Mexican American linkages.

III. The Hispanic Historic Site Survey, 1980, California Department of Parks and Recreation:

The more traditional dimension of public history -- that of public historical and cultural agency -- continues to be of great potential importance for the development of Latino applied history. An important aspect of traditional public history has been the identification, and interpretation of national, state and local preservation historic sites. Because of the five centuries of Latino historical presence within the territory of the United States, there are a tremendous number of both official and unrecognized Latino historic sites in the nation. The best-known officially recognized sites are those which have been related by officials to either Spanish colonization and or the United States' westward movement. Typically, until recent times, interpretation of these sites has reflected a institutional and Eurocentric cultural bias which in many cases has denied, minimized or distorted the history of Mexican Americans. The working assumption in the recent past was that Mexican Americans were an alien immigrant group with little or no connection to the pre-1900 period, much less to that prior to 1848. A widespread view among curators, agency officials and others concerned with sites was that the descendants of early Spanish-speaking settlers in the Southwest had almost entirely assimilated into the Anglo American majority. The history of the contemporary Mexican American community was viewed as of slight significance, and with few if any recognizable historic site associations.

During the last twenty years this situation has improved slightly. Better trained and culturally sophisticated Anglo curators and agency personnel have developed better site interpretation which is beginning to recognize the lengthy history and multiculturally diverse nature of Mexican Americans. For example, the interpretation at the Coronado National Monument outside of Bernalillo, New Mexico contains a mural and commentary which depicts the extensive presence of Mexican Indian allies-the "españoles Mexicanos" and mestizos who often formed the majority of the colonizing entradas into the north. Indian capitanes de guerra and their gente are depicted alongside the European Spaniards.

In California the Department of Parks and Recreation is responsible for the identification, preservation, and interpretation of state historic sites. This includes the administration of several Hispanic historic parks such as "Old Town" in San Diego and San Juan Bautista, and until recently "El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historic Park."⁸

⁸ The transfer of the former El Pueblo de Los Angeles State Historical Park to the City of Los Angeles was engineered by Los Angeles Councilman Richard Alatorre. The transfer itself and the continuing process for development at the park have sparked controversy between Mexican American merchants on Olvera Street organized in the Olvera Street Merchants Association, various groups who are concerned with the type of preservation and historical themes at the park, and potential concessionaires aligned with Councilman Alatorre who seek to develop various segments of the former state historic park. Mexican American historian Rodolfo Acuña has written periodically in the former Herald Examiner, and more recently in the Los Angeles Times regarding the concern that the park is being gutted to enrich developers and that the Mexican heritage theme there is threatened. See Rodolfo Acuña. "In '88 Latinos Must be Vigilant, and Not Forget." Pg. A 15, Los Angeles Herald Examiner. January 1, 1988.

However until the early 1970s the Department placed little emphasis upon service to California's Mexican American population and other ethnic populations. At the end of the 1970s, because of pressure from African Americans, Asian Americans, Mexican Americans, and culturally sensitive people, the California State Legislature took action requiring the California Department of Parks and Recreation to improve minority-group cultural representation in its programs.⁹ The department, in part, responded to this pressure by developing several projects to enhance its service to California ethnic groups, including Mexican Americans.

One of these projects was the "Interpretative Handbook of California Ethnic Groups" to be used by the Department in the interpretation of California historic sites and parks. This was developed under the editorship of Dr. Carroll Purcell, public historian of the University of California, Santa Barbara, but was left unpublished when the liberal Jerry Brown administration was followed by the conservative one of George Deukmejian.

Another project was an ethnic historic sites survey of previously unrecognized sites of significance. The Department of Parks and Recreation contracted with Mexican American historian Dr. Jose Pitti, to coordinate the Mexican American component of the survey. Antonia Castaneda conducted the actual site survey, which included an extensive description of each site, while Dr. Carlos Cortes participated by writing an accompanying interpretive essay on Mexican American History in California.¹⁰

Castaneda conducted an extensive survey in which she contacted leading Mexican American historians, scholars and community members throughout the state of California. A major effort was made to reflect all periods of the community's history and the participation of Mexicanas in shaping the history. Publication of the results of the survey was delayed until 1988 due to the more conservative political climate prevailing in the state.

The survey appeared as part of the publication "Five Views." Chapter V. authored by Castaneda, listed a total of ninety-nine sites surveyed.¹¹ Thirty of the site descriptions are published in the book. These California Hispanic historical sites span the entire period of the state's Mexican history and include all geographic areas of significance. Representative sites include the Sociedad Católica Regional Guadalupeana (Guadalupeana Hall) in Richmond, Contra Costa County.; KGST Radio Station, Fresno County; La Opinion Newspaper, Los Angeles; Regeneración newspaper, Los Angeles; and Chicano Park-Logan Heights, San Diego. The survey also assesses the potential for either preservation or damage to the sites.

The California Hispanic historic survey is an important example of how Latino public historians can begin the process of ensuring that Mexican American historic sites will be effectively and equally preserved and interpreted for the public in the future.

⁹ See the introduction to , California Department of Parks and Recreation. Five Views. Sacramento, California: 1988.

¹⁰ Ibid. Jose Pitti, Carlos Cortes, Antonia Castaneda. "A History of Mexican Americans in California." in California Department of Parks and Recreation. Five Views. Sacramento, California: 1988.

¹¹ Castaneda, Antonia. "Sites" In Five Views. op.cit.

IV. Multimedia Historical Exhibitions:

The mainstays of historical museums are their permanent collections, permanent exhibitions, and major temporary and or traveling exhibitions. When people think of historical museums they usually think of exhibitions. There are, however, few major museums which contain a major exhibit on any aspect of Mexican American history, in fact, Mexican American history is not even considered to be part of their mission. Awareness of Mexican Americans in major United States historical museums can be compared to that of Universities in the 1950s. How could it be otherwise when these institutions are primarily staffed by Anglos at the professional level?

Obviously, major southwestern state museums include treatment of the Spanish and Mexican periods in their historical exhibitions. However, with few exceptions, these exhibits treat Mexicans as objects only to be mentioned when encountered by white men. Historical interpretation typically reflects a forty-year-old Borderlands school perspective. There is virtually no continuity of treatment of Mexicans into the late nineteenth and twentieth century. Implicitly, the view conveyed to the visitors is that nineteenth century Mexicans all assimilated and the present Mexican community is composed of immigrant workers with no history. This of course is contradicted by the last twenty years of research in Mexican American history and culture by the work of both Mexican American and Anglo scholars.

The development of Mexican American and Latino historical exhibitions and public history programs has been a difficult and uneven process. The public history establishment has given little if any support to these efforts. Major historical museums continue to make virtually no effort to employ Mexican American historians and social scientists. At least in the 1950s they had the excuse, lame even then, that there were no qualified Mexican American professionals to fill these positions. At the beginning of the 1990s there are no longer any excuses for failure to expand both curatorial staff and exhibition programs.

A handful of Mexican American scholars and community members have struggled against the mountain of inertia to research, plan, produce, curate, and present museum quality historical programs on Mexican American history to the community and the general public.¹² While institutions have provided little support for such programs,

¹² See Rios-Bustamante, Antonio. "What the California Museum of Latino History Can Do and Why." La Red/The Net. Vol. 1, No.2. ; Rodolfo Acuña. "Power Grabbers Threaten Dream of Latino Museum." Pg. A 15, Los Angeles Herald Examiner. January 28, 1988. Antonio Rios-Bustamante. "California Museum of Latino History: Feasibility Report." Prepared for the State of California, Los Angeles: April 1986. Ford Foundation. "Black and Hispanic Museums." New York: 1990.

The effort to develop Mexican American public history programs has also included the Organization of Latino Museums. Several of the Latino museums now being created include plans to develop both cultural and historical programs. These include the Mexican Museum in San Francisco, and the newly organized Museo Chicano in Phoenix. The Mexican Museum has existed for over a decade and has developed exhibits of Mexican folk art. The Museo Chicano was developed by Chicanos Por La Causa, a community development organization, and is housed in a new 10,000-square-foot facility at the El Mercado Mall in

encouragement and support has come at times from Anglo museum curators and other professional staff. Unfortunately, museum and agency professional staff who sympathize or support Latino public history exhibitions are seldom in decision-making positions. Those having control over museum purse strings are, as individuals, generally the least likely to consider Mexican American history worthy of support.

In the absence of financial support for Latino public history programs from museums, Latino exhibition producers have successfully and unsuccessfully sought support from Mexican American studies programs, libraries, the National Endowment for the Humanities, humanities councils, community college districts, school districts, private foundations and corporations. The quality and popularity of large Latino public history exhibitions during the 1980s clearly demonstrates the tremendous need among Latinos, especially Mexican American youth, for such programs on a regular and continuous basis. However, it is clear that the establishment of large ongoing Latino public history programs will require either public and private support for Latino historical museums or a drastic change in priority within existing public historical museums.

Multi-Media Historical Exhibitions: The Social and Cultural History of the Los Angeles Mexican Community

We will examine four successful Mexican American multimedia historical exhibitions of the 1980s. The first of these, "The Social and Cultural History of the Los Angeles Mexican Community, 1781-1981" was conceived and developed by Dr. Antonio Rios-Bustamante at the time of the Los Angeles Bicentennial celebration of the founding of Los Angeles.¹³ Impetus for the project came from the disturbing realization that while exhibitions commemorating the heritage and contributions of several other ethnic groups to Los Angeles were planned, there was no such exhibition planned to commemorate the City's Mexican heritage.

The exhibition, conceived and produced by Dr. Antonio Rios-Bustamante, Salvador Martinez and Ernesto Collosi at the Mexican American Studies and Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles was directed by Dr. Juan Gomez-Quinones. The exhibition also received important cooperation from the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History, the Huntington Library and the Bancroft Library, which allowed the reproduction of visuals from their collections. Mr. William M. Mason, history curator at the Los Angeles County Museum of Natural History also participated as a co-principal investigator in the research phase. An advisory council of nationally recognized Mexican

Phoenix. The California Museum of Latino History has been producing exhibits since 1984. It has led the effort to create a state-supported museum program comparable to the 60,000-square-foot Afro-American Museum at Exhibition Park in Los Angeles.

¹³ Escalante, Virginia. "Photo Exhibit of L.A.'s Latino Legacy." Los Angeles Times. Wednesday, September 16, 1981. Also see Antonio Rios-Bustamante. "The Photo History of the Mexican Community of Los Angeles, 1781-1981." Caminos. September 1981. Antonio Rios-Bustamante. "The Once and Future Majority." California History. Vol. LX. No. 1, April 1981.

American historians also functioned as a review board and provided consultation in specific subject areas.

The initial development of the project was supported by the Chicano Studies Research Center of the Los Community College District and by private donors. The exhibition depicted the two-hundred-year history of the Los Angeles Mexican community through photographs and a narrative text illustrating the themes of community, work, family, culture and relations with other groups, including Indians, African and Anglo Americans. The exhibit comprised one hundred and ten four by eight foot panels and photographic enlargements, accompanied by a bilingual narrative text in Spanish and English. Between September 1981 and 1984, the exhibition was shown at four major sites in Southern California and at Rutgers University in New Jersey.

The California exhibition sites included East Los Angeles College; John Wooden Center, University of California, Los Angeles; The Los Angeles County College District Administrative Offices Plaza de la Raza; and California State University, Dominguez Hills. It is estimated that in excess of two hundred thousand visitors viewed the exhibit at these sites, with about eighty percent of the visitors being Mexican Americans. It is further estimated that at least one million other persons read or heard about the exhibition through the media. Numerous articles were published, numerous media announcements made in both the English-and Spanish-language media. Since the establishment of the California Museum of Latino History in 1984, the museum has acquired the rights to further develop and expand this exhibition for the future.

Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest: A Multi-Media Exhibition:

This important multi-media historical exhibition is a significant prototype for historical cultural exhibitions dealing with dramatic and literary genres. "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest: A multi-media exhibition." was conceived and produced by Dr. Nicolas Kanellos as a result of many years of scholarly research for his dissertation and other numerous publications.¹⁴

The exhibit depicts through visuals, artifacts, a narrative text and public programs the development and genres of Spanish- language theatre among Mexicans in the Southwest. It also demonstrates the artistic and intellectual connections which linked the Mexican communities of the Southwest with Mexico and the Spanish Speaking World.

This exhibition was, importantly, the first large-scale historical exhibition produced by Mexican American scholars to receive funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The NEH had previously funded exhibitions with Hispanic themes but these were produced and directed by Anglo American scholars. This marked an important breakthrough for Mexican American and Latino public history exhibitions. It marked official recognition for the first time that Mexican American scholars could produce Museum quality historical programs.

¹⁴ Kanellos, Nicolas. "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest." in Nicolas Kanellos (ed.) "Mexican American Theatre Then and Now" Revista Chicano-Reguena. Ano. XI. No. 1, 1983. Nicolas Kanellos. (ed.) Hispanic Theatre in the United States. Arte Publico Press, Houston: 1984. Nicolas Kanellos. Mexican American Theatre: Legend and Reality.

Another important achievement was that this was the first historical exhibition produced by Mexican Americans to tour extensively to multiple sites as part of a single national tour.

From February through August 1982, the exhibition toured seven sites: Houston Public Library, February 5-26, ; The Institute of Texan Cultures (San Antonio) March 7-26; El Paso Centennial Museum, April 3-30; Albuquerque Museum, May 14-31; Arizona Historical Society (Tucson) June 5-30; California State University at Los Angeles, July 10-30; The Mexican Museum, (San Francisco) August 7-27, 1982. The tour was coordinated by project coordinator Francisco Blasco. The exhibition was viewed by several hundred thousand visitors in seven cities, and more than a million persons were reached through media coverage. Later, a booklet was published documenting the content of the exhibition. "Two Centuries of Hispanic Theatre in the Southwest" is thus an outstanding model program for Latino public history exhibition.

The Latino Olympians: A History of Latin American Participation in the Olympic Games, 1896 to Present.

The largest and most ambitious Mexican American, Latino multi-media exhibition to date is "The Latino Olympians: A History of Latino American Participation in the Olympic Games, 1896 to Present."¹⁵ The concept for the exhibit was developed by Dr. Antonio Rios-Bustamante and Mr. William D. Estrada in 1982, and the design concept by Mr. Ernesto Collosi. The development of the Latino Olympians exhibit was a direct outgrowth of the success of the 1981 exhibition "The Social and Cultural History of the Los Angeles Mexican Community" which demonstrated the tremendous need of the Mexican American community for positive information regarding its historical contributions to the United States.

The producers had been deeply moved by the strong positive effects of the earlier exhibit upon elementary and secondary school children. A particularly moving incident involved one of the producers overhearing a young Mexican American boy delightedly exclaim to a friend, "That's my brother" regarding a man whose picture was on display in the large photographic panel in front of him. In reality, the man was nineteenth century Los Angeles newspaper editor and postmaster, Francisco Ramirez. Other incidents involved the discovery by senior citizens of aunts or uncles in such photographs as a 1931 photo of a formal ball held by the mutualist organization, the Alianza Hispano Americana.

The 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games appeared to the producers to offer a unique opportunity to research and create a large-scale exhibition depicting Latin American

¹⁵ Liebman, Gary. "Exhibits to Spotlight Minorities' Olympic Role." Pg. 1 Part V, View Section. Los Angeles Times. December 29, 1983. Virginia Escalante. "Exhibit to Commemorate Contributions of Latino Athletes on U.S. Olympic Teams." Pg. 1 Part V, View Section. Los Angeles Times. June 6, 1984. Antonio Rios-Bustamante and William D. Estrada. The Latino Olympians: A History of Latin American Participation in the Olympic Games, 1896-1984. Sponsored by the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee: Los Angeles: 1984. Also forthcoming, Antonio Rios-Bustamante and William D. Estrada. The Latino Olympians: A Pictorial History, 1896-1990. Floricanto Press, Encino.

participation in the Olympic Movement. Preliminary research had been undertaken which revealed an extensive history of Latin American and United States Latino, including Mexican participation in the games. The Olympic Games were also a unique international, cultural and civic event which would affect the entire Los Angeles community. Already in 1982, lengthy newspaper articles described the Olympic organizers' concern that the African American and Mexican American communities would be alienated from the games because of widespread economic privation in these communities.

A related although usually understated concern of Los Angeles civic leaders was that the impoverished inner city barrios and ghettos would prove an eyesore that would alienate affluent visitors to the games. The Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) expressed its intention to develop community projects which would involve African American and Latino youth and their communities in Olympic Sports.

The producers of the Latino Olympians exhibit realized the intentions of the Olympic Organizing Committee, and the special nature of the event created unique opportunities to fund and produce a large-scale Latino multimedia exhibition. The greatest obstacle to achieving funding was general ignorance of the history of Latino participation in the games. The first reaction of potential funders, including representatives of the LAOOC, was that Latinos, especially Mexican Americans, simply did not have enough achievements or a history long enough to be worth depicting. This attitude was gradually overcome as a result of prior research which showed a long history of Latin American amateur sports, Latino participation in the Modern Olympic Games going back to their inception in 1896, and Mexican American participation on the U.S. Olympic Team going back to 1924. Boxer José Salas won the silver medal for the United States at the Paris Olympic Games.

After a long and difficult process, the producers finally secured funding from the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee and a partial matching grant from the California Council for the Humanities. The site of the exhibition was the large ten thousand square foot ground floor of the Pico House, a partially restored 1867 hotel which had been built by Alta California's last Mexican Governor, Pio Pico as a civic statement. It was an especially appropriate site, which Pico, himself an ardent sportsman, would probably have appreciated. The three-story Pico House fronted on the Los Angeles historic placita and Olvera Street, where the City was founded in 1781.

The exhibit was designed in consultation with the producers by Mr. Ernesto Collosi. Since structural reconstruction of the Pico House in the 1960s had left the main room with only a dirt floor, a temporary floor had to be constructed for the exhibition. The exhibit consisted of two hundred mounted visuals; six hundred trilingual text placards in English, Spanish and Japanese, and two specially commissioned murals depicting the history of Latin American amateur sports. A total room and exhibit environment was designed which used the five Olympic colors, blue, yellow, black, green, and red. Sets of five to ten panels alternated in the Olympic colors, for a total of two hundred four by eight foot panels.

The exhibit was organized in four subdivisions, these were: A History of amateur sports in Latin American civilization from pre-Columbian to modern times. This was symbolized by the two large decorative murals which depicted the history of Latin American amateur sports and the lead photographic panel which paralleled the original Olympic Rings which appear on the altar of Apollo on the island of Delphi, and a Mayan disc from Chichén Itzá depicting a ball player. The next section depicted the history of the games and Latin American participation Olympiad by Olympiad from 1896 to the present.

The next section depicted official Latino participation in the Olympic Movement and in the 1984 Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee. Another section depicted the Latino members of the United States 1984 Olympic Team. Decorative sections honored outstanding Olympians of all nations, and a decorative center piece displayed the Olympic Flag and the Flags of the United States and Latin American nations.

The exhibit opened on July 26, 1984 in a gala opening on the placita. The program was opened by well-known film star Eddy Olmos, the producers, political leaders and community representatives from all walks of life. The official ribbon cutting ceremony for the exhibit was performed by two leading Mexican Americans Olympians, Mr. José Salas, the 1924 Silver medal winner at the Paris Olympics and 1956 United States Winter Olympic team member Mrs. Catherine Machado Grey. Interestingly both José Salas and Catherine Machado are descendants of the Mexican founders of Los Angeles. So much for the myth of lack of historical continuity which has for so long denied the real historic achievements of Mexican Americans.

The Latino Olympians exhibition at the Pico House took place from July 26 to September 30, 1984, during the Los Angeles Olympic Games, and was one of the official programs of the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee Community Relations Program. A second major component of the Latino Olympians Program was a twenty-seven page history booklet "The Latino Olympians: A History of Latin American Participation in the Olympic Games." Funded by the LAOOC alone, the booklet was published in an edition of 50,000 copies and distributed free of charge to students in the Los Angeles Unified School District and Los Angeles schools.

The exhibition was viewed as an outstanding success and fully fulfilled its objectives. An audience of over two hundred thousand persons visited the exhibition. It is estimated that over two million persons were exposed to the exhibit in print and electronic media, and that up to two hundred and fifty thousand persons were reached by the free distribution of the history booklet. In 1988 a smaller version of the exhibit was displayed through the sponsorship of the Eastman Kodak Company at the convention of the National Hispanic Chamber of Commerce in Washington D.C. It is estimated that it was viewed by twenty thousand persons in the nation's capital.

The Latino Olympian exhibit further demonstrated the potential of museum quality Latino public history exhibitions in educating Latinos and the general public about important aspects of the 500-year history of Mexican Americans and Latinos. The success of Latino Olympians exhibition and the Two Hundred Years of Hispanic Theatre exhibit also demonstrated the need for both Latino history museums and the substantive inclusion of Mexican American history as part of the mission of the large regional and national historical museums. A direct by-product of the Latino Olympians exhibition was the incorporation of the California Museum of Latino History in December 1984.

The Life and Legacy of Dr. Ernesto Galarza, 1905-1984.

Most Latino leaders and scholar experts regarding Latinos in the United States recognize a tremendous need to overcome longstanding myths and stereotypes regarding Mexican Americans and Latinos. An important aspect of overcoming stereotypes is through the correction of historical inaccuracies. Biographies of important Mexican American contributors to American culture is a major part of this process.

Because of the preponderant influence of anti-Latino stereotypes in United States popular thought, Mexican Americans are rarely considered as a people who exercise intellectual leadership. Yet there is a significant tradition of intellectual leadership in the Mexican American community.¹⁶ The Mexican American and United States Latino communities produce women and men of high intellectual potential. Tragically, these abilities have and continue to be ignored by society.

Yet outstanding Mexican American men and women have, nonetheless, continued to excel. One of the most outstanding of these was a man born in great poverty who was to become an intellectual giant among the women and men of his generation. This was Ernesto Galarza, Doctor of Philosophy in History and Political Science from Columbia University, an alumnus of Stanford University and of Los Angeles Occidental College, founder of the National Council of La Raza, adviser to the Ford Foundation, founder of MALDEF (the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund). Ernesto Galarza was also a "barrio boy," (the title of the biography of his youth) a young Mexican immigrant who worked in the fields from childhood to support himself.

Galarza's life was an ideal theme for a biographical multi-media historical exhibit which would demonstrate his numerous inspiring contributions as a scholar, educator, labor organizer and elder statesmen in the Mexican civil rights movement and student movement.¹⁷ The opportunity arose, during the centennial of Occidental College, for an exhibition produced by the officers of the California Museum of Latino History which would be part of a commemorative program about Galarza's life and legacy. The exhibit was the concept of and was produced by Mr. William D. Estrada and Dr. Antonio Rios-Bustamante. The exhibit was designed and constructed by Mr. Ernesto Collosi.

The exhibition was produced with the cooperation of the Galarza family, who graciously consented to be interviewed and to loan numerous artifacts which had belonged to Dr. Galarza. The exhibit opened with a commemorative program produced by Mr. Estrada. The exhibition was in the library, and a special feature of the opening of the exhibit was the dedication of a special "Ernesto Galarza Room" and the installation of a heroic bust of Galarza in the room.

The exhibit depicted Galarza's life and legacy in a series of forty segments, and included both mounted photographic enlargements and numerous items which belonged to Galarza, such as his typewriter, eyeglasses, serape, and awards. The exhibit was on display from April through May 1987 at Occidental College. During this time it is estimated to have been viewed by ten thousand visitors to the Occidental Centennial. Additionally another two hundred thousand persons were exposed to media publicity regarding the exhibition. Several thousand copies of a commemorative program booklet were also distributed free of charge. The Galarza exhibition is an important example of a biographical multi-media exhibition regarding an outstanding Latino contributor to our society.

¹⁶ For a discussion of this tradition see Mario Garcia. Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology, and Identity, 1930-1960. Yale University Press, New Haven: 1989.

¹⁷ William D. Estrada and Antonio Rios-Bustamante. "The Life and Legacy of Dr. Ernesto Galarza: 1905-1984." California Museum of Latino History, Los Angeles: 1987.

V. The San Diego Tijuana International History Fair:

Another important and innovative type of applied history program is the history fair. The best example of this type of exhibition, is the San Diego Tijuana Border History Fair.¹⁸ It is important to emphasize that the San Diego Tijuana International History Fair is an international public history program. It is discussed here because it involves both Mexican Americans, and Mexicans, as well as other groups.

The Tijuana fair also provides an important example for other border communities, and also a model for regional history fairs. It was initiated in 1983 as a binational program which would involve junior and senior high school students. Its goal has been to develop awareness of the regional heritage and develop future leaders.

The fair is organized by a national coalition of organizations which include the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California (UABC), San Diego State University; the San Diego Historical Society, and the San Diego and Tijuana schools. The fair is currently administered by the Institute for Regional Study of the Californias at San Diego State University in cooperation with the Centro de Investigaciones Historicas de Tijuana.

The fair provides students from San Diego and Tijuana with the opportunity to develop historical projects, conduct research, build historical models, scenes and present their findings in competition with other student projects at a three-day exhibition. The students have an opportunity to develop original research projects on themes which include the "history of individuals, families, neighborhoods, events, institutions, businesses, and communities in the greater San Diego-Tijuana region."

History fair research projects have included table-top displays, audiovisual presentations, essays, and even dramatic and musical performances. Every year an overall theme is chosen for the fair, but projects can be done on any theme of the students choice. In 1990 the fair exhibition was held on March 1-3 at the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California. The 1990 fair theme was "Ecological Changes and Technological Developments in the San Diego-Tijuana Region. There are two age levels of competition: Junior, for students in grades 7-9; and Senior, for students in grades 10-12.

There are also seven categories of competition, these are: 1) Individual research paper. 2) Individual exhibit. 2) Individual audiovisual presentation. 5) Group audiovisual presentation. 6) Individual historical performance. 7) Group historical performance. The organizers of the fair have prepared a Spanish and an English "student guide." These publications provide a description of the fair, the rules of competition, and a fair schedule.

The San Diego-Tijuana International History Fair thus provides a truly outstanding

¹⁸ Information was provided by Dr. Paul Ganster, Director, Institute for Regional Study of the Californias. See Institute for Regional Study of the Californias. San Diego-Tijuana International History Fair: Student Guide. San Diego State University: 1990. Institute for Regional Study of the Californias. Instructivo para Participantes. San Diego State University: 1990. Mark Arner. "San Diego, Tijuana Students Gain Cultural Knowledge in History Fair." Pg. B 7. The San Diego Tribune. March 3, 1988. Anthony Millican "Students Breathe Life into History in Campus S.D.-Tijuana Exhibit." Pg. B 1, San Diego Union. March 4, 1988. Fernando Romero. "Student Projects Build Border Ties." Pg. B 1, The San Diego Tribune. March 5, 1989. Barbara Valois. "Students Discover a Fair Exchange." Los Angeles Times. Pg. 1. San Diego County Section. February 25, 1988.

model for the organization of international and regional history fairs. The fair has been very successful, and annual attendance has included the participation of over seven thousand students, two hundred teachers, one hundred and fifty community volunteers, and eleven thousand visitors. The fair is an important model for Latino applied history programs.

VI. National Reunion of Veterans of the Mexican Revolution. College of the Mainland, Texas City, Texas. 1988.

The National Reunion of Veterans of the Mexican Revolution is an outstanding example of an oral history project and commemorative program.¹⁹ The project began fifteen years ago when Dr. Manuel Urbina II, Professor of Latin American History at the College of the Mainland, in Texas began to collect information and conduct oral history interviews regarding experiences of individuals alive during the Mexican Revolution. Dr. Urbina states that the original idea for the oral history occurred to him when he was writing his doctoral dissertation about the Mexican side of the Texas revolution and could find no living persons to interview. He realized that there were still a significant number of veterans of the Mexican Revolution.

As his research and interviews continued, Dr. Urbina began to locate Mexican men and women who had not only experienced the revolutionary period but who had been actual combatants in the various armies. Dr. Urbina's research was conducted not only in Texas but throughout the United States and in Mexico, where a cooperation was established the oral history program at the Universidad de Morelos in Cuernavaca.

The idea of a reunion occurred to Urbina when he organized a regional event in August 1987 which brought two veterans of the Mexican Revolution together in Houston. This generated major public interest and attracted national press coverage. The strong positive public interest stimulated Dr. Urbina to develop the idea of a national reunion.

Dr. Urbina successfully sought support from the President and other officers of The College of the Mainland in Texas City (located in the greater Houston metropolitan area). As a result of his continuing research Dr. Urbina had, by 1988, located and interviewed eleven Mexican veterans of the revolution, who resided throughout the United States. Scattered from New York City to Los Angeles, these men and women ranged from 88 to 91 years of age. Besides the veterans themselves Urbina had also established contact with the daughters of Generals Francisco Villa and Emiliano Zapata.

Planning for the National Reunion of Veterans of the Mexican Revolution included contact with the Mexican Council General in Houston to secure the participation of a Mexican Government representative in the event. The event was scheduled for November 20, 1988. Due to illness only seven of the eleven veterans were able to plan to attend the

¹⁹ Information for the National Reunion of Veterans of the Mexican Revolution was provided by Dr. Manuel Urbina III. See Program for the National Reunion of Veterans of the Mexican Revolution, November 20, 1988. Elizabeth Hudson. "A Few who Were There Recall Mexico's Revolution." The Washington Post. November 21, 1988. Jan Ried. "Compadres de la Revolucion: Five Veterans of Mexico's Bloody Struggle Recall Riding Through the Whirlwind of History with Villa and Zapata." Pg. 122, Texas Monthly. November 1988.

reunion. Ultimately only four veterans were actually able to attend. Tragically one suffered a heart attack the night before the event.

The reunion itself consisted of a six-and-a-half-hour program with official representatives present from Mexico and the State of Texas. A photographic display created by Dr. Urbina about the history of the revolution was also on exhibit. The honorees include veterans who had fought in the armies of Francisco Villa, Emiliano Zapata, Venustiano Carranza, and Victoriano Huerta. Also present was Doña Alicia Villa, a daughter of General Francisco Villa and her mother.

The program attracted one thousand persons, including six hundred Mexican Americans, three hundred and fifty Anglo Americans and fifty African Americans. Three hundred and fifty of the attenders were students and six hundred and fifty were community people. The main session was held in the college auditorium. The reunion attracted outstanding media coverage, major stories were carried in four local Houston daily newspapers, and on four local television stations. On the national level, the story was carried by the AP, UPI, Reuters, and ran in the Washington Post and the Wall Street Journal. Also, the story was carried by Excelsior in Mexico City and in the Mexican and Central American media.

VIII. Other Public History Programs:

We have examined a cross section of the various types of successful Mexican American applied public history programs of the last two decades. Almost all mentioned are from the 1980's. It is important to mention at least in passing other programs and projects of direct or related significance. It is also important to call for the awareness and support of Latino history programs and scholars by public history institutions and professionals.

A particularly significant project has been that developed by Dr. Denise Segura and other Latina scholars in the organization Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social. This group of Latina social scientists has developed a slide show on the history of Mexican American and Latina women, which has been shown in the Northern California area and that past conferences of the National Association for Chicano Studies. The project is an important prototype which needs to be extensively duplicated. Numerous other Latino local slide and small-scale photographic exhibitions have been developed nationally and need to be systematically surveyed with copies placed in a central archival site. Some minor efforts have been made in the fine arts to create an archive of Chicano/ Latino art, including murals.

Another significant area for Latino public history is family history and genealogy. A number of regional genealogical societies which have a significant Mexican American involvement already exist. Among these are the Hispanic Geological Society of Houston, Texas; Los Bexarenos, San Antonio, Texas; the Spanish American Museum, Albuquerque; New Mexico Genealogical Society; Los Descendientes, Tucson, Arizona; Los Californianos, California. The existence and sometimes extensive genealogical documentation programs of those organizations reflects the tremendous potential interest in Latino family history and genealogy. Professional genealogists, some affiliated with the Utah Genealogical Society have done much to stimulate this interest and even more to make available records of genealogical and historical value in documenting the Mexican

American heritage. Among these genealogists are George Rykamp and Dr. Lyman Platt.

There is a tremendous need for the establishment of regional and family history programs. University libraries, such as the University Santa Barbara's Mexican American Studies Library, have made important contributions in creating archival repositories for late nineteenth and early twentieth century Mexican American documents that have been largely ignored by publicly funded Museums.

One new program which combines regional and family history is the "Mexican American Regional and Family History Program" of the University of Arizona, Mexican American Studies & Research Center, in Tucson, Arizona. This program seeks to network with both scholarly and community groups to collect, preserve and document the Mexican American heritage of Arizona. Important aspects of the MASRC Regional and Family History program are its Alianza Hispano Americana, and Mexican American Mining Communities projects. These projects seek respectively to document the history of the largest Mexican American fraternal society of the early twentieth century, and the important contributions of Mexicans to the mining industry. At the University of New Mexico, affiliated with the Southwest Hispanic Research Institute is the Barelaz project which seeks to systematically document Mexican American community history in the Albuquerque barrio of Barelaz.

A similar effort is much needed at the national level with an appropriately funded program at the National Museum of American History and the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institute. Only token efforts have been made to date such as the National Museum of American History hiring one or two highly qualified Latinos in the area of public programs. The expanded hiring of Latinas/Latinos needs to be in the curatorial staff and in that portion of the executive staff charged with development and approval of program content. The Smithsonian and other major museums need to have executive staff who are not merely aware of the existence of Mexican Americans and our history, but who actually have professional knowledge of that history.

Unfortunately most museums and public history programs either ignore through ignorance the contributions of Mexican American and other Latinos, or distort our history through elitist interpretations which follow a historiography and ethnology forty years out of date. Such programs emphasize institutions, institutional elites and European colonizers or vendido accommodationists over the history of the majority of Mexicans. A museum and public history profession which has not even begun to seriously incorporate Mexican Americans on its staffs beyond the level of groundkeepers or maids is neither aware of or able to incorporate the last twenty years of historical and cultural research produced by Mexican American scholars.

Those who support Mexican American history must above all recognize that Latino Public history programs are programs produced and created by Latino professionals regarding Latino historical themes. Such programs incorporate the body of historical knowledge which has been accumulated in and by the Latino community. This information has been made available through the research of Mexican American and other Latino professionals.

With the rapid approach of the Columbian Quincentennial or to put it more accurately the Enquentro, Latino History in the United States, including that of Mexican Americans, is receiving increased official and institutional attention. This attention has even been reflected in a minute increase in the hiring of Latinos to work in and coordinate some Quincentennial programs such as the one at the Office of Public Programs of the National

Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. A modest series of official public historical programs about the Latino heritage are also receiving support.

It is now time for a real change, for the recognition of Mexican American and Latino applied history programs as important and worthwhile in the field. The public history profession and the executive offices of museum programs must recognize that their siesta is over as far as Latino applied history is concerned.

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