

# ROSITA THE RIVETER: MIDWEST MEXICAN AMERICAN WOMEN DURING WORLD WAR II, 1941—1945

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*Saturday, December 6, 1941, the status of women as workers was one thing, by Monday, December 8, it had acquired a new complexion. War had come to the United States, war with inevitable demand for more men in the military force and the phenomenal need for more workers to turn out fighting equipment. Thus, the importance of women workers was enhanced over a week-end.<sup>1</sup>*

Mary Anderson

Thousands of Mexican American women made significant contributions to the industrial effort during World War II as a direct consequence of an acute labor shortage in the United States. Mexican American women, in both the Midwest and the Southwest regions, labored as riveters, crane operators, welders, assemblers, railroad section workers, roundhouse mechanics, forklift operators, meatpackers, farmworkers, seamstresses, nurses, secretaries, and shipbuilders. They assisted in the critical production of aircraft, tanks, trucks, jeeps, ships, uniforms, tents, medical supplies, small arms, heavy artillery, ammunition, bombs, and communication

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equipment. The industrial work which they engaged in was extremely hazardous and physically strenuous, often requiring lengthy hours with few days off for rest and relaxation during the entire war.

The wartime contribution of Mexican American women was not confined solely to work in defense industries, however. A handful of Mexican American women eventually enlisted in the military service, some of them even serving overseas prior to the conclusion of the war in 1945.<sup>2</sup> The Mexican American community of East Chicago, Indiana, for example, had six of its young women serve with distinction in the military. Meanwhile, thousands of other Mexican American women aided the war effort by assisting in homefront activities such as organizing war bond drives, working with the local Red Cross, cultivating victory gardens, and collecting scrap metal for armaments. Some women also formed social clubs, modeled after the USO, for Mexican American servicemen who were often barred from public establishments because of racial discrimination.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, a scholarly inventory of Chicano publications regarding the World War II experiences of the Mexican American community reveals a largely male perspective.<sup>4</sup> This research has focused primarily on both the impressive war credentials earned by Mexican American servicemen and the new era of post-war social consciousness spurred by returning veterans, which eventually led to the establishment of the National G.I. Forum and both the "Viva Kennedy" and the "Viva Johnson" movements.

Absent from many of these studies are the critical wartime roles played by Mexican American women during this global conflict. As more and more men enlisted in the military service, the social and economic infrastructures of midwestern Mexican American communities underwent fundamental changes because women inherited greater responsibilities as heads of households, wage earners, and community leaders. In retrospect, we see now that World War II triggered a new social period in the evolutionary development of the Mexican community in the Midwest, as both men and women, in a collective effort, helped defeat fascism during the 1940s. It is safe to assume that without the gallant partnership between men and women on the homefront and

battlefield, World War II would have been won less easily and at greater cost in American blood and resources.

Unfortunately, Chicano research has unintentionally promoted the long-held myth that only Mexican American men were socially and politically affected by the war, while Mexican American women were somehow immune from its consequences. The study of the lives and labor of Mexican American women during World War II helps dispel this historical misunderstanding, and, more importantly, contributes deeper insight in our understanding of the social and economic forces which politically reshaped the Mexican American Midwest community in the post-war period of the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In all fairness, Chicano scholars are not solely to blame for this distorted historical interpretation. Mexican American leaders representing state and national organizations have also generally overlooked the wartime contributions and sacrifices of Mexican American women when paying special tribute to the community's historical commitment to the defense of the nation.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Anglo historians who have written about the role of women during the war have almost completely ignored Mexican American women.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, both the U.S. government and the American private sector must share the blame for failing to recognize the considerable contributions of all female defense workers. The vast majority of the labor force has never received formal recognition from either the government or former employers acknowledging their unselfish courage and dedication during the war. The U.S. Government did not award ribbons or medals or sponsor rallies and parades for male and female defense workers, as it did for returning servicemen. Instead, many of these female workers were simply given a two-week notice of termination, without any significant post-war compensation, including the G.I. Bill. This lack of official recognition by the government and defense industry has helped to foster a social climate which unfairly ignores the immeasurable contributions of many defense workers during the war years.

Scholars have disagreed about the long-term impact these wartime experiences had on the lives of women.<sup>7</sup> Some researchers maintain, for example, that the war helped accelerate the women's movement because many females acquired social independence, economic mobility, and permanent job skills, while shattering traditional myths about their inability to do industrial labor. Other researchers disagree with this assessment and claim there was no measurable social impact because many of these women were pressured to return to their pre-war status at the end of the war in 1945.

As noted earlier, this academic dispute has precluded any serious discussion regarding the social and community impact the war had on the lives of Mexican American women. During the past three years, the author has interviewed eighty-seven Mexican American women who worked in a variety of war-related industries in the Midwest between 1941 and 1945. These women were mainly employed in the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Indiana, Michigan, Iowa, and Illinois. With this article, I hope to make up for this past neglect by telling the story of these brave, resourceful, and energetic Mexican American women.

The article, detailing both the wartime and post-war experiences of these women, is divided into three parts. The first section surveys the political and economic forces which shaped and influenced the social attitudes of members of the G.I. Generation during their childhood and adolescence. This generation survived a series of titanic historical events which, unknown to them at the time, prepared them for the social and economic challenges stemming from World War II. This historical backdrop provides a framework that is necessary in understanding more fully the community mindset of the Mexican American in the Midwest prior to December 7, 1941.

The second section describes both the American defense industry in general, and the specific occupations and working conditions of Mexican American women. The majority of Mexican American defense workers were employed in the essential areas of aircraft, steel, ammunitions, railroads, and meatpacking. The final

section examines the impact of the war on the lives of these women.

Not surprisingly, many family members and close friends of these women were not even remotely aware of their defense work and wartime community activities. As a general rule, these women were reluctant, even forty-five years later, to speak about their wartime activities, preferring instead to talk about the contributions of the men. Eventually, however, they provided first-hand accounts of the war and how it affected their lives. This is their story.

The majority of the Mexican American men and women who would eventually fight, work, and organize during World War II were born between 1915 and 1926. This age group of Mexican Americans is often referred to as the G.I. Generation because they lived through a period of extraordinary historical events. The first of these events was the Mexican Revolution of 1910-1917.

The Mexican Revolution forced more than one million Mexican citizens into the United States, where they desperately sought both physical safety and gainful employment far away from the bloody civil war.<sup>8</sup> Thousands of these refugees traveled great distances and eventually settled in the Midwest, where job opportunities with railroads, steel companies, auto plants, packing houses, and agriculture existed. Mexican workers were usually assigned to menial tasks which were low-paying and physically dangerous, and which offered minimal opportunity for job advancement. Despite poor working conditions, Mexican laborers had become a vital part of the Midwest economy by the 1920s.

The Mexican-born population in the Midwest, by 1920, had already reached about thirty thousand and nearly 150 satellite communities flourished in this ten-state region, principally in Kansas, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin.<sup>9</sup> These early Midwest Mexican settlements were, in the real sense, "communities," with both Catholic and Baptist churches, mutual-aid societies, fiestas, orchestras, dance, and theatre groups, Spanish-language newspapers, small businesses, and organized sports. Mexican neighborhoods were oftentimes separated from the rest of the city by either railroad tracks or a river. Enduring racial discrimination and prejudice was a way of life for the majority of

these Mexican newcomers—discrimination triggered primarily by job competition and ignorance.

Members of the G.I. Generation were raised in the U.S. Almost all of the children were delivered in the home by midwives, and most were born into a tri-generational household. Large families were very common, ranging between ten and twenty siblings. Infant mortality, caused by childhood diseases, was high.

The concepts of family and community were, in actuality, one and the same thing for the G.I. Generation. As one community organizer recalled:

My generation was raised during a special period in our history when the ideas of family and community were basically the same experiences inside our minds. Most of our families had known each other from the small towns in Mexico, and naturally carried these deep-rooted bonds of friendship with them across the border. We were almost all related in my *barrio* as *compadres*, *commadres*, *tíos* and *primos*. As a child, I saw everyone in the community as one large extended familia.<sup>10</sup>

The G.I. Generation was raised in a bilingual and bicultural environment, with strict rules often requiring that only Spanish be spoken at home. The children usually translated for their parents whenever the occasion required social contact with Anglo society. In addition, the children were encouraged by their parents to participate in the cultural activities of the community, including the *fiestas patrias*. The majority of parents instilled the Mexican culture in their children because they feared that, without such reinforcement, the process of assimilation would eventually destroy altogether their traditional Mexican culture. Many also believed they would eventually return to the old country, and wanted their children to be able to make a smooth transition back into the mainstream of Mexican life. Finally, the fear of deportation served as an incentive for parents to raise their children with the Mexican culture.

For recreation, children of the G. I Generation played the familiar American games of hide-and-seek, jump-rope, kick-the-can, jacks, and tag. Some of the fathers brought home ball bearings

from the company shops to be used as marbles by their young sons. Grandmothers made rag dolls for the girls, while a few of the older brothers made roller skates and ice skates for their younger siblings from old scrap iron during their lunch hours at work.

As the G.I. Generation entered adolescence in the late 1930s, many listened and danced to the music of Benny Goodman, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Glenn Miller, Harry James, and Wayne King. They also danced to the Latin sound of various Midwest-based Mexican orchestras: the Rio Grande Serenaders, the Tampico Boys of Kansas City, the Santa Cruz Band of St. Louis, the Orquesta Ixtliochili of Elgin, Illinois, Frank Rodríguez y Sus Diablos Rojos of Chicago, Los South Chicago Mayans, La Orquesta Travadores of East Moline, Illinois, and Tommy Tamez of East Chicago, Indiana.

These pre-war experiences of young Mexican Americans were tragically overshadowed by a series of distressing events that caused extreme social and economic hardships during most of their formative years. The Depression of the 1930s had a devastating impact, including widespread physical dislocation caused by the repatriation programs and the need of families to seek steady employment elsewhere in the United States. The Depression also ended the educational aspirations of many young men and women who were forced to leave school to help their families during the crisis.

In addition, Mexicans in the Midwest encountered widespread racial prejudice and public discrimination, including the common practice of being restricted to certain segregated sections of restaurants, theaters, schools, and some Catholic churches. As children, they were required to sit in the balcony while watching the Saturday afternoon movies, and they were permitted to swim in public pools only one day during the week. Many Mexican families were forced to live in sub-standard housing, characterized by the lack of hot running water, the discomforts of outdoor bathrooms, inadequate space to accommodate large families, unpaved and unlighted streets, and the frigid cold during the harsh winter months.

To their credit, the majority of midwestern families prevailed against an inhospitable environment of racial isolation, physical displacement, unflattering stereotypes, and unfair accusations of un-American behavior. The social determination demonstrated by the Mexican community in overcoming these political and economic hurdles explains in large measure the deep-rooted spirit of survival and optimism of the G.I. Generation during and after the war. The Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, would again severely test and reaffirm the endurance, courage, and strong sense of community and cultural pride of the Mexican people in the Midwest.

The Mexican American communities of the Midwest, along with the rest of the nation, anxiously sat in front of their Philco and RCA radios and listened as President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked for a declaration of war against Japan. Thousands of young Mexican-descent men and a handful of women soon enlisted or were drafted into all the branches of the military. They registered in their local induction centers in Detroit, Chicago, Des Moines, St. Louis, Toledo, Gary, Milwaukee, Bethlehem, Kansas City, Omaha, St. Paul, and East Chicago. They also came from rural towns such as Sutherland and Hershey, Nebraska; Mason City and Davenport, Iowa; Albert Lea, Minnesota; Silvas, Illinois; Garden City and Emporia, Kansas; Holland, Michigan; Lorain, Ohio; and Kenosha, Wisconsin.

There were many reasons why Mexican Americans rushed to join the military service, despite the fact that most had experienced a great deal of discrimination during their lives. The majority enlisted out of a strong sense of patriotic obligation, most simply feeling it was their civic duty:

We believed, that by joining the service, we could lay to rest the idea that Mexicans were disloyal to the United States. We wanted to prove that while our cultural ties were deeply-rooted in Mexico, our home was here in this country.<sup>11</sup>

As young Mexican American men saw their close friends joining the Army and Navy, they too wanted to be part of the community team. The United States government also offered U.S. citizenship

to all legal residents serving in the military, and some Mexican-born men took advantage of this policy. Ironically, the U.S. government mailed draft notices to young Mexican American men residing in Mexico who had been repatriated with their families years earlier by this same government.

The majority of Mexican American recruits undertook their basic training in the southern states in 1942. What most of these former war veterans vividly remember to this day is not the lack of Mexican food at the training camps or the obscenity-shouting sergeants, but the terrible segregation and mistreatment of Black citizens in the states where the camps were located. Many Mexican American servicemen recall how they sympathized with the Black population, largely because of their own personal experiences with discrimination in the Midwest.

Most Mexican American servicemen briefly returned home to visit their families and friends before being shipped overseas for combat duty. The women of the family nearly always prepared the favorite foods of their departing sons and husbands, and the men typically would sit outside after the meal, drinking beer and reminiscing about the old days in Mexico, especially about the great battles of the Mexican Revolution. After an emotional farewell in the morning, the young servicemen would be driven to the bus or train depot, where another emotional scene often took place. Almost all of the homes of the Mexican communities in the Midwest had silver stars posted on their windows, indicating the number of men and women of that particular household serving in the armed forces. As the war dragged on, many of these silver stars were replaced by gold ones—indicating family members killed in action.

A Mexican American woman defense worker whose brothers saw combat action stated:

We didn't understand the international politics that led to the war. We did know, however, that the Japanese had cowardly bombed Pearl Harbor and had killed hundreds of young American boys—boys who were my brothers' ages. The Japanese had attacked our country. I say our country because I was born here. My generation went proudly

to war because this country, despite the discrimination, had provided my family with a better life than my relatives (had) in Mexico.<sup>12</sup>

Another former defense worker recalled:

It was very depressing when the men went off to war because it shattered our community. Whenever a young man was killed in action, we all felt the same pain because we all went to school together and were close friends. In a strange way, the war brought our community closer together because the war touched all of our lives; and therefore, we had to give more emotional support to one another.<sup>13</sup>

In the early months of the war, the United States government publicly predicted that labor shortages in war-related industries would not be a serious problem because of the high rate of volunteer recruitment. This optimistic forecast had changed by mid-1942, however, when the government announced severe labor shortages in several critical areas of war production, especially the aircraft and munitions industries. Both the president and Congress proposed in 1942 and 1943 the mandatory registration for all women between the ages of eighteen and fifty as a way to resolve this wartime problem.<sup>14</sup> The policy was never implemented, however, mainly because vocal women's groups lobbied against the proposed plan and eventually convinced the president and federal lawmakers that female volunteers were already doing their fair share of work without the need for a mandatory civilian draft. In fact, by 1943, women had become an integral part of the wartime labor force, comprising nearly one-third of all workers and over fifty percent of the workers in the aircraft and munitions industries.<sup>15</sup>

At the outbreak of the war, the vast majority of female workers in defense plants could be accurately characterized as young and single. This demographic profile changed dramatically by 1943 as married and divorced women, women with children, and elderly women swelled the ranks of defense workers.

There are no accurate records on the total numbers of Mexican American women who were employed in the Midwest during the war, especially in the defense industry, because Mexican American workers were simply categorized as "white" as opposed to "non-

white" for company records. A very crude estimate would be approximately five thousand Mexican American women, based on my interviews with former defense workers.

Mexican American defense workers were a diversified group composed of young single women, married and divorced women, including mothers, and women over fifty-five years of age. It was not unusual for single daughters living at home to work prior to the war.

During the Depression, the only jobs available to young Mexican American women were limited primarily to sewing and laundry work, hotel maids, and as domestics. These jobs were both physically demanding and paid very little. When the war broke out, defense jobs were all of a sudden open to us because of the labor shortage with the men off to war. Many of us left these menial jobs into highly skilled occupations with good to excellent pay with overtime. Despite changing our jobs, we were still required to turn over our checks to our parents.<sup>16</sup>

Besides the higher pay, young Mexican American women applied for defense work for other reasons, including the glamor and excitement of such work, and as a means to escape from a rigid upbringing at home. The significant change in these Mexican communities, however, was the number of married women working outside the home. Prior to the war, married women helped supplement the family income by taking in work at home, including washing, ironing, sewing, and taking care of children and boarders. This temporary change regarding married women was rooted in a realistic appraisal of the situation. With so many young men off to war, other family members still had to earn the income for rent and food. Furthermore, Mexican men strongly believed that their wives and daughters could help bring the war to a swift end by working in defense plants, thus increasing the chances that their sons would return alive from overseas.

Some women also recalled that they had sought outside employment as a way to keep themselves fully occupied in order to fight the loneliness of having their sons so far away. Finally, a minority of Mexican women between the ages of fifty and seventy-

five also worked, mainly because they wanted to feel part of the community effort. A daughter of one such woman observed:

It was simply amazing seeing our mothers and grandmothers outside the home working after watching them as housewives for all our lives. Almost none of these women spoke English and for many, it was the first real social contact with the Anglo world. Our mothers and grandmothers worked as cleaning women, carting material to the various shops, and sorting nuts, bolts, and screws. The cultural shock of adjusting to both defense work and the Anglo world was too much for most of these women. The majority quit within six months.<sup>17</sup>

Some of the more traditional Mexican fathers and husbands reluctantly gave approval for their daughters and wives to work once the United States entered war. Despite their cautious approval, a few fathers quickly withdrew it if they learned that their daughter was socializing after working hours:

I remember one day when an angry Mexican father came marching into the plant searching for his daughter whom he had heard was talking to some of the boys after work hours. He found her and quickly escorted her out of the plant. We never saw her working again. Many other fathers waited outside the company gates in order to walk their daughters home after work. Our fathers were simply old-fashioned when it came to their daughters working in a place where there were men.<sup>18</sup>

Most of these women walked to work, since their neighborhoods were often adjacent to the industrial sections of town. Each was issued her own personal locker in which she stored her work clothes and other necessities, including make-up. These women recalled that no matter how dirty the work was inside the plants, they still came to the work floor wearing perfume and make-up. This practice was not done to attract the men, but to remind themselves of their femininity despite the harsh surroundings. Almost all of these women had pictures posted inside their lockers of *La Virgen de Guadalupe* and of their loved ones overseas. Some also confessed good-naturedly to having pictures of Clark Gable or Robert Taylor taped inside their lockers.

Defense workers were often required to purchase their own work clothes and to pay to have their clothes cleaned. The work uniform generally consisted of overalls, slacks, shirt, steel-tip shoes, head covering, safety goggles, and work bib. This type of dress was socially uncomfortable for many of the older women. One woman recalled:

Many of our mothers and aunts who worked in the defense plants never really adjusted to wearing what they considered to be men's clothing. Here were women who had worn only dresses all their lives, and were now required to wear pants and shirts. Many of them were clearly embarrassed, whereas many of us younger women thought that pants and shirts were both very fashionable and chic.<sup>19</sup>

For the Mexican American women who entered the labor force during World War II, the wartime experiences were very difficult, including the constant separation from loved ones, race and sex discrimination, and the physical demands required at work. The majority of women interviewed agreed, however, that the long-term personal and community benefits after the war had far outweighed the social and economic inconveniences.

The initial experience of being torn away from their families was a shattering feeling for women who had been accustomed to being an integral part of a close-knit unit:

I knew women who hated coming to work because of the daily pain of leaving their children at someone's house as they worked in the factory. They couldn't wait for the war to be over so they could return to a normal family life. Some of the women did quit their jobs before the war ended to be home with their families.<sup>20</sup>

Notwithstanding steps by the federal government toward eliminating race and sex discrimination in the work place, a few Mexican American women now look back on the war years and complain that nearly none of them were hired as clerical help in the front offices or promoted to supervisory positions on the factory floor, though they applied and were qualified. Many of the women attribute this to racial discrimination against Mexican Americans.

Some Mexican American women also noted that there was a small segment of Anglo women who believed Mexican Americans were lazy, and initially balked at the idea of working with them. These Anglo women were persuaded by their supervisors to either work with Mexican American workers or face being fired. One woman told of an experience shared by many Mexican Americans at this time:

This German man told me one day to go back to Mexico and I responded by telling him that I was more an American citizen than he was because my family just crossed a river to get to the U.S, whereas he had to cross several countries and a big ocean. No matter how much they taunted us, we would always have the last word.<sup>21</sup>

Black women, on the other hand, were generally assigned to work with Mexican American women because many Anglos refused to work with Blacks in the defense plants. None of the Mexican American women interviewed had any problems working with Black women and noted further that many long-lasting friendships evolved from these partnerships during the war:

Aircraft work generally required a team of two women for riveting—one person working outside the plane and the other person inside. At one particular plant, there were many white women from Missouri who refused to have anything to do with the Black workers. Our supervisor decided to pair several Black and Mexican women together. At first, there was some prejudice on both sides, but as time passed, we became good friends both in and out of the plant.<sup>22</sup>

Another former defense worker recalled:

I remember one day when some new Black workers came to our factory. From the start, some white workers absolutely refused to even say hello. The next day, some of us Mexican women invited the Black women over to our table for lunch. We did so because we knew what it was like to be discriminated against. By the end of the week, several white workers also joined us for lunch. We soon realized that we had to set aside our differences in order to win the war.<sup>23</sup>

As the war went on, many Mexican American women developed good social relations with Anglo women both in the workplace and in the lunch room, and often socialized together after working hours. The war had improved some race relations by dispelling a few of the stereotypes held by these various groups.

The majority of the women interviewed politely declined to speak about the twin issues of sex discrimination and sexual harassment in the work place during the war. One woman did recall, however, that:

Sex discrimination was much worse than racial prejudice because we were constantly harassed on the factory floor by male workers who told us that we should be home taking care of our children and that defense work was not for women. We often complained to our male supervisors regarding our problems with some of the men but nothing was ever done. Sometimes when we were working, one of the men would come by and grab us in a sexual way which made us very angry concerning this ugly treatment of women in the plant. Many women didn't formally complain, however, in fear of possibly losing their jobs.<sup>24</sup>

Women said that the subject of sex was still taboo during the war, and, therefore, few women sought advice from their co-workers and families. It appears that each woman confronted these issues privately.

Defense work, which is often glamorized by the romantic image of Rosie the Riveter, was, in reality, physically exhausting and often hazardous. Women in the defense industry sometimes worked fifty to seventy hours a week, with few days off for relaxation. Many former Mexican American defense workers recalled working several consecutive months of sixteen-hour days, with only one or two days of rest each month:

The company always encouraged—push is a better word—us to work two shifts because of the severe need for war materials. I remember so many days when I could barely stand up at work and wishing I was home with my family. The companies almost always made us feel that if we did not work the extra hours, that somehow we were being unsympathetic to the war effort and letting our men down

overseas. This guilt trip did work on women who felt unpatriotic if they didn't give the extra hours at the plant.<sup>25</sup>

Mexican American women were employed in a variety of war-related occupations, especially in the areas of aircraft, munitions, railroads, steel, and meatpacking. The majority of Mexican American aircraft workers were employed in Missouri, Kansas, Michigan, Ohio, and Oklahoma. In fact, the cities of St. Louis and Wichita were the major centers of the aircraft industry in the United States prior to World War II. Mexican American women worked for Cessna, North American Aviation, Boeing, Beech, Douglas, Pratt and Whitney, Ford, Gibson, Buick, Glen L. Martin, and the Goodyear Tire Company. Most worked as welders and riveters in the production of bombers, gliders, engines, instrument panels, fuel tanks, transport planes, fighters, and interceptors.

Some Mexican American women were successful in bringing their sisters and cousins, who had lower-paying jobs, into the aircraft industry. Mexican American women were particularly in demand in this occupational field because of their small stature, which was an advantage when it came to working in cramped spaces aboard the aircraft. As one aircraft worker recalled:

We tended to be physically smaller and slender compared to both the Anglo and Black women. Some of us weighed only 90 pounds and stood around five feet. As a result of our small size, we were given the responsibility of welding and riveting in the hard-to-get places of the plane, including inside the wings, gun turrets, and both the nose and tail sections of the aircraft. We always did an excellent job despite the tight spaces we had to work with inside the planes. We prided ourselves because our work always passed inspection on the first check.<sup>26</sup>

As in the aircraft industry, women comprised nearly forty percent of the labor force in the production of munitions. Mexican American women worked in many Midwest munitions plants including Kansas Ordinance, Savannah Ordinance, Green River Ordinance, J.I. Case Company, Elgin Watch Company, Hammond Ordinance, Kingsbury Ordinance, Standard Forge, Cushion Motors, Parsons Ordinance, Hastings Ammunition Depot, and Lake City

Ordinance. They helped produce bombs, fuses, timing devices, bullets, machine guns, shell casings, land mines, bomb caps, rifles, cartridge belts, grenades, light and heavy artillery, and rocket launchers.

There were labor shortages in the munitions industry throughout the war because of low wages and the constant danger of working with explosives. The munitions industry was plagued with mishaps resulting in death and severe injuries.<sup>27</sup> A timing fuse on a bomb, for example, had over one hundred parts which had to be carefully assembled with tiny files, tweezers, and other small tools; with such work to be done, there was always a danger of injury to the people assembling the munitions.

Additionally, munitions work was often done below ground as a way of protecting the plants against possible enemy aerial attacks. Working all day underground, away from sunlight and fresh air, served to discourage many women from volunteering for the munitions industry.

Many munitions workers, including Mexican American women, were housed in company dormitories located inside the company grounds. The housing facilities served as an incentive for both men and women to work two shifts for extra money, since the workers did not have to worry about the time traveling to and from home. As one Mexican American woman stated:

We usually took the bus or car-pooled to the ordinance plant in Parsons, Kansas, where we lived in dorms during the work week. We worked two shifts a day, five days a week, with little time for rest and sleep. Some of us would come home for the weekend to visit our families. The time would go by fast when we were with our loved ones. Before you knew it, it was time to go back to the plant to start another week. Many of us lived this way for three years.<sup>28</sup>

A small percentage of Mexican American women found employment in the forty-one steel mills operating in the major producing areas of Chicago, East Chicago, Detroit, Lorain, Gary, and Bethlehem. These women were employed by the American Steel Corporation, Northwestern Steel and Wire Company, Inland Steel, Cast Armor, Youngstown Steel Company, Great Lakes Steel,

Bethlehem Steel Corporation, and United States Steel Corporation. Only ten percent of all steelworkers were women, compared to forty percent in the aircraft and munitions industries. A number of former Mexican American steel workers remembered the unbearable noise level inside the mills:

What I remember the most after all the years was the noise. It was absolutely terrible working in that type of surrounding where you heard and felt the pounding and grinding of steel being rolled out for the war. It's hard to describe the feeling of your body shaking and your ears hurting because of the vibrations inside the plant. In addition, it was extremely hot because of the ovens melting down the steel.<sup>29</sup>

Despite such hardships, women in the steel industry were still required to do the same type of work as men. Mexican American women, many weighing a mere ninety pounds, worked in the rolling mills, the blast furnaces, and the open hearths, operated fifteen-ton cranes, operated punch presses, and served as painters, loaders, welders, riveters and car dumpers. They assisted in the production of iron and steel for tanks, concertina wire, bullets, shells, jeeps, trucks, and steel beams for military housing.

The railroad system was vital to the war effort because trains transported nearly ninety percent of all military freight and seventy percent of all military personnel. Although women comprised only eight percent of all railroad workers, apparently a significant number were Mexican American women. The explanation for this lies in the geography of Mexican communities, which were often located along the rail lines. Many Mexican American women worked for the Burlington, the Santa Fe, and the Fruit Growers Express, while others were hired to maintain the privately owned railroads of the steel companies, including Inland Steel, and Northwestern Steel and Wire Company. Mexican American women labored as section workers, roundhouse mechanics, drawbridge tenders, train dispatchers, loaders, and as waitresses and tellers in the railroad lunchrooms and ticket offices. One important responsibility of railroad workers was to help clear the tracks during the winter months:

The wintertime was awful. We worked in freezing weather to clear the snow from the tracks in order for the troop and supply trains to travel to their final destinations. We also replaced ties and rails, loaded and unloaded war materials into the boxcars, and loaded heavy chunks of ice for the air-conditioning system for the soldiers during the hot humid summers.<sup>30</sup>

Some Mexican American women served as bilingual translators for the government, working with the large number of Mexican *braceros* who were brought to the United States during the war and used extensively by the railroad companies and farmers in the Midwest:

In addition to our daily work, many of the company supervisors requested our bilingual skills in translating between themselves and the Mexican workers. We also helped many of these men adjust to the American way of life by teaching them basic English. We were never given any extra pay for our translating, but we enjoyed speaking with them because it helped our Spanish, and besides, there were lots of good-looking young men among the *braceros*.<sup>31</sup>

Finally, the meatpacking centers of the United States have been historically located in the Midwest, especially in Omaha, Chicago, Topeka, St. Joseph, and Kansas City—cities with significant Mexican American populations. The meat companies, including Armour, Morrell, Wilson, Swift, and Cudahay, employed a large number of Mexican American women during the war as pork and beef trimmers, butchers and packers. They also helped produce "C" and "K" rations.

One woman recalled the unfavorable conditions inside the packinghouses:

The slaughterhouses were the worst places to work during the war because of the coldness and terrible smell of dead animals everywhere. Many women were constantly suffering from colds and flu as a result of working all day in the freezers and loading refrigeration cars. We also had to be extra careful not to hurt ourselves with the butchering knives and the meat-cutting machines.<sup>32</sup>

Many of the women observed that they were allowed to speak Spanish with each other in the work place and were never discouraged from doing so by their employers. Also, companies during the war years rarely requested proof of citizenship for employment and never used the issue of legalization to intimidate Mexican Americans who were not United States citizens:

Prior to the war, there was a lot of discrimination against Mexican Americans because of the Depression and the dislike of 'foreigners', especially here in the Midwest. Employers before the war would always ask to see documentation in order for us to work. After the war broke out, they stopped asking for proof of legalization because they needed all the workers they could find for the war effort. Even in the aircraft and munitions industries, where one would expect to find tighter security, we were rarely required to provide evidence of citizenship.<sup>33</sup>

The average wage of seventy-five cents an hour for women was low and did not vary significantly from industry to industry. Even with these low wages, the vast majority of male and female Mexican American defense workers purchased war bonds. This, despite the fact that many of the families would have preferred having the additional \$18.50 a month for rent, food, and other important essentials during these rough times.

After a hard day of work, the women workers would shower in company facilities before heading home to care for their families and to write letters to their loved ones overseas. One Mexican American woman outlined a typical day in her life during the war:

I woke up early and prepared both breakfast and lunch for my two boys, who were of school age. I walked them to school before returning home to do my domestic chores, including grocery shopping, purchasing ice for the icebox, washing dishes, ironing, and washing clothes by hand, because we could not afford a washing machine. I would take a nap in the afternoon before going after my children in school, and have their dinner ready. I tried to help them with their school work before leaving for work on the night shift. My neighbor took care of my children while I was working at the machine shops for the Santa Fe.<sup>34</sup>

The problem of child care for female workers was never resolved by the government during World War II. It established only three thousand child care centers for women workers, accommodating a mere 130,000 children, despite the fact that female defense workers had a total of some 4.5 million children under the age of fourteen.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, government fees for each child prevented many poor minority women from using the centers that did exist. As one Mexican American defense worker remembered:

Our child care service was our own families. Our mothers, aunts, and even our younger sisters helped with the children while we were busy working. We could not afford private child care and none of the companies offered child care to their female workers. Not being able to spend time with our sons and daughters was often mentally harder on us than the physical demands at the plant.<sup>36</sup>

Mexican American women confronted a host of other problems, including budgeting their ration stamps for large families and overcoming the loneliness that came with their men away at war. Nevertheless, these economic and social difficulties were always overshadowed by the grim possibility that, at any time, they could be notified that a loved one had been killed in action:

I remember a few times during the war when I was working and all of a sudden (there would be) a loud scream followed by uncontrollable crying of a woman who had learned that her husband or son was dead. We all feared that moment when we, too, could be requested to go to the front office and find a representative of the military with an attache case tucked under his arm with a letter for the next of kin. The workers would always collect a fund for these women.<sup>37</sup>

Several other women recalled the fear of reading the casualty list in the local newspapers and of seeing the Western Union messenger riding his bicycle through their neighborhood, praying that he was not coming to their door with an official notification from the War Department. Many young Mexican American women in the Midwest were tragically left widowed with children as a result of World War II.

All of the Mexican American women interviewed vividly remembered where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news that the war had finally ended. As one woman recalled:

I was welding some material together for a part of a tank when all of a sudden I noticed lots of commotion on the work floor as women were hugging and crying. I turned off my torch gun and heard the company whistle tooting and tooting. One of my friends ran up to me and told me that the war was over. I remember sitting down on a workbench, placing my hands over my face, and crying. All of the emotion which had been locked up for all these four years was released. All I could think of was that our boys would be finally coming home to be reunited with their families.<sup>38</sup>

During the next several days, Mexicans throughout the Midwest streamed into their local churches to pray and thank God for sparing the lives of their loved ones. Ironically, some of these same churches still maintained segregated sections for Mexican Americans. The segregation in some of these churches was the initial clue that the wartime contributions of the entire Mexican community had not helped completely erase public discrimination. Both men and women of the G.I. Generation became increasingly indignant with the continuation of pre-war practices of social and economic discrimination by most public offices and private businesses. They strongly felt that they had earned the right to be treated as first-class citizens, since they had fought and worked side-by-side with Anglos on the battlefield and in the defense plants. One veteran recalled:

We fought for the American ideals that our parents had taught us as children and we believed that our misfortune was merely a way of life. After the war, we clearly realized that these deplorable conditions only existed because of racial discrimination. We were no longer afraid like our parents to confront the local officials regarding these terrible problems. Our battle for eliminating social discrimination was less frightening when compared to the horrors of war we had recently experienced overseas.<sup>39</sup>

A former defense worker noted:

During the war, there was a lessening of discrimination by some public places only because they needed our money, with so many Anglos in the service. After the war, some restaurants, stores and taverns again refused to serve us on an equal basis with whites. We knew this was totally unfair because we had worked hard to win the war. My generation realized then that we had to do something to change this condition, not only for ourselves, but for the next generation. We didn't want our children to experience the social and economic hardships we did during the Depression and the war.<sup>40</sup>

The G.I. Generation brought these serious grievances to the immediate attention of the Mexican leadership represented by the long-established mutual-aid societies. They became quickly frustrated because these *mutualistas*, while sympathetic, had limited themselves primarily to promoting cultural activities and providing death benefits. This, in part, made them organizationally inflexible in confronting the post-war challenges against local authorities.

To provide more effective leadership, the G.I. Generation formed several associations in the Midwest, including the Latin American Veterans, the Mexican American Servicemen's Association, the G.I. Forum, the Latin American Ladies' Clubs, and the Mothers of World War II. The establishment of these post-World War II organizations signaled a new era in the Mexican community as the mutual-aid societies reluctantly relinquished their community leadership to the management of the G.I. Generation.

These post-war organizations were instrumental in skillfully abolishing the vestiges of overt public discrimination, eliminating the unfair poll tax and literacy requirements, ending the practice of excluding Mexican Americans from serving on juries, and legally challenging the educational segregation of Mexican American children. The leadership also promoted voter registration drives, sponsored political forums, and encouraged naturalization. These activities led directly to the election of a handful of Mexican American candidates during the 1950s and early 1960s in the Midwest. The G.I. Generation eventually would dominate and

influence the Midwest community agenda and political philosophy until the emergence of the Chicano Movement in the late 1960s.

The war years unquestionably modified the social and political attitudes and behavior of many Mexican American defense workers regarding their roles in the home and the community. It appears that the war served as a social and economic apprenticeship for these women at a time when most of the men were in the service. Many women believed the war was an historical turning point in their lives and the community's because it provided them with a rare opportunity to develop political awareness, social independence, grass-roots leadership, and economic self-reliance—personal strengths which greatly enhanced the post-war civil rights movement in the Midwest:

All of us were definitely changed by the four years of defense work. Prior to the war, we were naive young women with few social and job skills. But the war altered these conditions very quickly. By the end of the war, we had been transformed into young mature women with new job skills, self-confidence, and a sense of worth as a result of our contributions to the war effort. Just as the war had changed boys to men, the same thing happened to us girls.<sup>41</sup>

Another defense worker also drew a parallel with the men:

When our young men came home from the war, they didn't want to be treated as second-class citizens anymore. Deep in their hearts, they firmly believed their wartime contributions had entitled them to better social opportunities. We women didn't want to turn the clock back either regarding the social positions of women before the war. The war had provided us the unique chance to be socially and economically independent, and we didn't want to give up this experience simply because the war ended. We, too, wanted to be first-class citizens in our communities.<sup>42</sup>

Social independence had different meanings among Mexican American women in the post-war period. For the majority of single women, personal freedom was primarily limited to the newfound liberties of smoking, wearing pants and make-up in public places, having the latest hair style, and dating without a chaperon. Married women, on the other hand, defined social independence in a much

broader perspective, including an equal voice in the decision-making at home, the right to pursue educational goals, and the freedom to participate in community organizations and to seek outside employment:

In general, Mexican American women as daughters, mothers, and wives have always sacrificed themselves for their families. My working and traveling experiences during the war exposed me to a whole new world of opportunities that I didn't know existed before in my life. My point of view is that my family responsibilities are important, but at the same time I feel that I have the right to achieve my goals as well.<sup>43</sup>

Other women pointed out that the social latitude they experienced during the war helped prepare them later when they were widowed or divorced:

We always thought women who hadn't worked during or after the war were very lucky. We have recently noticed, however, that working women seem better prepared to emotionally cope with death or divorce than non-working women. The main reason for the difference is we learned during the war how to survive without depending on a man.<sup>44</sup>

Mexican American women as a group had mixed feelings about post-war employment. It seems that a woman's decision to continue working was strongly determined by both her wartime occupation and marital status. Many women in the munitions and railroad industries were laid-off, while a significant number of women in the meat, steel, and aircraft industries were asked to continue working as these companies began slowly converting their wartime operations to peacetime production. Furthermore, many Mexican American women who were married or engaged looked forward to raising a family on a full-time basis. Women who continued to work or to seek employment after the war were generally single, divorced, or widowed. There were, nevertheless, some married women who were employed outside the home after 1945.

Naturally, some men expressed serious reservations regarding the increasing numbers of women joining the labor force in the late 1940s and early 1950s:

We could sense that the older men didn't agree with us regarding the right of a woman to work outside the home, especially a married woman with children. They still believed in the old-fashioned notion that a woman's duty was to her children and her husband. Don't get me wrong. We loved and admired our elders and never showed them disrespect, but some of us women felt that the times were changing for women.<sup>45</sup>

The economic recession during the early part of the 1950s, however, forced many men to reconsider their objections concerning the role of married women in the workplace. It became obvious that a single paycheck could no longer provide the income needed to raise a family comfortably. Over time, men slowly came to accept the fact that their upward social mobility was, in some measure, dependent on the income generated by their wives.

This growing economic importance of women also helped to change slightly the political attitudes of men toward women. There was, for example, a group of influential Mexican American men who supported wider civic participation of women. These men understood that their political aspirations were intertwined with the emerging voting power of women, because men were numerically insufficient to achieve elected office alone.

During the war, many of us registered to vote for the first time and later marked our ballots for FDR for President. We were active with the fiestas, volunteering for the local Red Cross, and USO, and working with our church groups. All of these community experiences helped us develop our organizational skills and develop networks among the women. As it turned out, these skills and networks were valuable for our community after the war.<sup>46</sup>

The war served as a training ground for women regarding leadership and organizational development. As a consequence of these wartime experiences, women were very active with political campaigns on behalf of Mexican American candidates after the war.

They walked precincts, helped with fund-raising, encouraged voter registration, and mailed campaign materials.

The political and economic forces in the immediate post-war period enhanced the status of women in the labor force and community affairs. It appears that some of the traditional male attitudes about the roles of women in the Mexican American community took a backseat to these economic and political realities after the war.

A few men, nevertheless, raised the larger concern that the new attitudes and behavior of women would undermine the Mexican culture and represent the first step toward total "Americanization":

Some men blamed our Anglo co-workers for 'brainwashing' us during the war. They said that we were acting like white women because we wanted to work and participate in the community. Yet, some of these same men were speaking more English than Spanish, had more Anglo friends than we did, and were not participating as much with the fiestas. It was true that we were less Mexican than our parents, but so were the men our age. We felt we could be Mexican Americans and have equal rights as women.<sup>47</sup>

In conclusion, the traditional view of the G.I. Generation has been that it was simply an interregnum between the Mexican and Chicano generations. The past few years, however, have witnessed renewed scholarly attention regarding both the major contributions and the influence the G.I. Generation had on subsequent generations. This new research is dispelling many of the myths which have unfairly portrayed the G.I. Generation as one that promoted cultural assimilation and accomodationist political attitudes. In reality, the G.I. Generation represented a broad spectrum of organizations which advocated conflicting ideologies and strategies.

Also, contemporary research on the G.I. Generation continues to focus primarily on the male viewpoint. This narrow outlook ignores the critical contributions women have made to the social and political development of Mexican Americans during the post-war period. Thus, more research is needed in order to ascertain the role of women in community activities during the war; the war's impact on women who served in the military and how this

experience compared with that of defense workers; the wartime contributions of Mexican American women in the Southwest; the role of Mexican American defense workers during the Korean War and how this experience compared with World War II; and an investigation of company records for an accurate account of Mexican American defense workers.

Unfortunately, the G.I. Generation is slowly fading from the community landscape of the Midwest and Southwest. Scholars must act quickly to interview, document and preserve the precious information before it is lost. In this way, the G.I. Generation will be guaranteed its rightful place in the history of Mexicans in the United States.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In Chester W. Gregory, *Women in Defense Work During World War II* (New York: Exposition Press, 1974), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Interviews with Marge Villanueva Lambert, Lincoln, Nebraska, June 3, 1987; Gloria C. Fraire, East Chicago, Indiana, May 18, 1987; and Romana Acosta Sinclair, Kansas City, Missouri, May 27, 1988. Lambert served with the Women's Army Air Corps (WAAC) while both Fraire and Sinclair enlisted with the Women's Army Corp Service (WACS).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with Hazel Gómez, Topeka, Kansas, February 9, 1987. Gómez stated that: "Many public places in Kansas including dance halls, bars, and restaurants, did not allow Mexican American soldiers inside their businesses. Some of us young women formed a group called Las Señoritas, an extension of our local YWCA. We raised funds in order to sponsor dances and other cultural activities for our young men. It was nice seeing them have a good time and forgetting about the war for a while."

Also see Christine Marín, "La Asociación Hispano-Americano De Madres y Esposas: Tucson's Mexican American Women in World War II," *Renato Rosaldo Lecture Series Monograph 1* (Tucson: University of Arizona Mexican American Studies & Research Center, 1985).

<sup>4</sup> Raúl Morin, *Among the Valiant: Mexican Americans in World War II and Korea*, (Alhambra: Borden Publishing Company, 1966), Carl Allsup, *The American G.I. Forum: Origins and Evolution*, (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 1982); Henry A.J. Ramos, *A People Forgotten, A Dream Pursued: The History of the G.I. Forum 1948-1972* (Washington, D.C.: American G.I. Forum); U. S. Defense Department, *Hispanics In American's Defense* (U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense, Pentagon, 1984).

<sup>5</sup> As far back as the 1950s, the motion picture *GIANT*, starring Rock Hudson and Elizabeth Taylor, depicted, for example, the combat death of a Mexican soldier portrayed by Sal Mineo. The decades of the 1970s and 1980s have seen several films including *Hero Street USA* and *The Men of Company E*, which highlight the wartime contributions of Mexican American men. Finally, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) hosted a national banquet in Los Angeles, California in 1982, recognizing Mexican American servicemen who had earned the Medal of Honor.

<sup>6</sup> A general review of the literature reveals only one book which discusses in detail Mexican American female defense workers. Sherna Gluck's study examines the lives of several Mexican American aircraft workers who were

employed in the Los Angeles area. Some of the publications do discuss the role of Black women in defense work. (See bibliography)

- <sup>7</sup> For an excellent summary regarding this debate, see the introductory section of Maureen Honey's book entitled *Creating Rosie the Riveter: Class Gender, and Propaganda During World War II*, (Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1984).
- <sup>8</sup> Lawrence A. Cardoso, *Mexican Immigration To The United States 1897-1931*, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press), p. 38.
- <sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population 1850-1970* (Washington, D.C.).
- <sup>10</sup> Interview with Jesse Villapando, Sr., East Chicago, Illinois, 14 October 1988.
- <sup>11</sup> Interview with Anthony Navarro, Davenport, Iowa, 21 June 1986.
- <sup>12</sup> Interview with Victoria (Vicki) Quintana, Parsons, Kansas, 9 March 1987.
- <sup>13</sup> Interview with Juanita Vásquez, East Chicago, Indiana, 18 May 1987.
- <sup>14</sup> Op. Cit., *Women In Defense Work During World War II*, p. 7.
- <sup>15</sup> Between 1940 and 1945, the female labor force grew from 12 million to 19 million, with female employment in defense-related jobs increasing by 460 percent. Nearly 50 percent of all U.S. adult women were employed some time during the war. See Susan M. Hartman, *The Homefront and Beyond: American Women in the 1940s* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982).
- <sup>16</sup> Interview with Felisa Ruiz, Kansas City, Missouri, 24 February 1987.
- <sup>17</sup> Interview with Aurora F. Gonzalez, East Chicago, Indiana, 18 May 1987.
- <sup>18</sup> Interview with Ann Antilano, Sterling, Illinois, 25 March 1987.
- <sup>19</sup> Interview with the Women of SOY, East Chicago, Indiana, 18 May 1987.
- <sup>20</sup> Interview with Esther Beard, Ecorse, Michigan, 16 May 1987.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview with Ventura Tellez, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, 13 July 1988.
- <sup>22</sup> Interview with Carmen Caudillo, Wellington, Kansas, 16 July 1988.
- <sup>23</sup> Interview with Antonia Molina, Flint, Michigan, 5 May 1987.

- <sup>24</sup>This woman requested anonymity. Author's personal files.
- <sup>25</sup>Interview with Julie Gutiérrez, Humbolt, Kansas, 14 June 1987.
- <sup>26</sup>Interview with Theresa Rocha, Kansas City, Missouri, 24 February 1987.
- <sup>27</sup>In the year 1943 alone, in all jobs, there were 2,414,000 workers who suffered temporary disabilities, resulting in 56,800,000 lost days of production. In this same year, there were 18,400 work-related deaths, 108,000 cases of permanent partial disabilities, and 1,700 workers suffered permanent (total) disabilities in the workplace in 1942 and 1943. The final figures of deaths and injuries between 1941 and 1945 are considered undercounts, and thus misleading, because a significant percentage of companies never reported these statistics to the proper federal agencies. See *Monthly Labor Review* (November 1944): 905.
- <sup>28</sup>Interview with Aurora Gutiérrez, Humbolt, Kansas, 14 June 1987.
- <sup>29</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Esther Beard, 16, May 1987.
- <sup>30</sup>Interview with Julia Padilla, Aurora, Illinois, 25 April 1987.
- <sup>31</sup>Interview with Natividad (Nattie) Escamilla, Omaha, Nebraska, 1 June 1987.
- <sup>32</sup>Interview with Angelina Rocha, Omaha, Nebraska, 2 June 1987.
- <sup>33</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Felisa Ruiz, 24 February 1987.
- <sup>34</sup>Interview with Leonecia Vásquez, Topeka, Kansas, 25 May 1988.
- <sup>35</sup>*Op. Cit.*, *The Homefront and Beyond*, p. 84.
- <sup>36</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Women of Soy, 18 May 1987.
- <sup>37</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Margaret Villanueva Lambert, 3 June 1987.
- <sup>38</sup>Interview with Ermelinda G. Murillo, East Chicago, Indiana, 16 October 1987.
- <sup>39</sup>Interview with I.C. Plaza, Omaha, Nebraska, 16 June 1986.
- <sup>40</sup>Interview with Jenny Perales García, Omaha, Nebraska, 2 June 1987.
- <sup>41</sup>Interview with Victoria Morales, Topeka, Kansas, 11 February 1987.
- <sup>42</sup>Interview with Eva Hernández, Hutchinson, Kansas, 21 March 1988.

<sup>43</sup>Interview with Irene García, Garden City, Kansas, 14 January 1987.

<sup>44</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Women of SOY, 18 May 1987.

<sup>45</sup>Interview with Antonia Flores Alonzo, Chanute, Kansas, 10 June 1987.

<sup>46</sup>*Op. Cit.*, Women of SOY, 18 May 1987.

<sup>47</sup>Interview with María García Hero, St. John, Indiana, 17 February 1988.