

MEXICANS IN THE NORTH CENTRAL STATES

George Edson

A survey of settlements of Mexicans in the industrial cities and the sugar beet country of the north central part of the United States, from the Allegheny mountains to the Missouri river, was made in the fall and winter of 1926-27, for the purpose of ascertaining the approximate number of Mexicans in this region, what they engaged in, their earnings and cost of living and other essential facts. The cities visited for this purpose were Bethlehem, Wilkesbarre, Johnstown, McKeesport, Homestead, Pittsburgh, Sharpsburg and Ford City, Pa.; Cleveland, Lorain and Toledo, Ohio; Detroit, Pontiac, Flint, Saginaw and Kalamazoo, Mich.; Fort Wayne, Decatur, Gary, Indiana Harbor and Hammond, Ind.; Waukegan, Chicago, Joliet, Aurora, Chillicothe, Peoria, Quincy, Galesburg and Moline, Ill.; Milwaukee, Wis; Fort Madison, Davenport, Ottumwa, Des Moines, Mason City, Manly, Sioux City and Council Bluffs, Iowa; Albert Lea, Chaska, St. Paul, Minneapolis and East Grand Forks, Minn; Fargo, N.D.; Sioux Falls, S.D.; Omaha, Neb; and St. Louis, Mo.

To ascertain the number of Mexicans in the above-named places inquiry was made of employers as to the number of Mexicans on their pay rolls, visits were made among the homes, camps and neighborhoods of Mexicans, estimates from well-informed leaders in the Mexican settlements were obtained and the enumerations

This report by George Edson, written in the late 1920s for the U.S. Dept. of Labor, is part of the Paul Taylor Papers housed in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley. The editors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the Bancroft Library in granting permission to publish "Mexicans in the North Central States."

shown in school censuses, and data gathered by commercial, social and religious workers were consulted. The population arrived at through these sources was approximately 63,700. Employers and employment agencies, boarding house keepers, ticket agents and many individual Mexicans had information indicating that during the summer months this number was increased to about 80,000 through an inflow of seasonal and transient laborers from the Southwest.

Mexicans began to come into the north central states in noticeable numbers in 1917. Since 1923 the movement into this section has slowed down, but it has become more tenacious. From a pulling-in it has developed into a pushing-in migration. During the ten years preceding 1910 the number of Mexicans who crossed the international boundary into the United States averaged about 900 a year. In 1910, the beginning of a revolutionary era in Mexico, 17,760 crossed out of that country, and during the next ten years the immigration is unusually large. These figures include only those who entered through the immigration offices. Only about 2,500 a year leave through the same gates. Mexican newspapers estimate that there are now in the United States between 2,000,000 and 3,000,000 of their countrymen.

Perhaps not over half the Mexicans in the north central states left any record when they crossed the boundary. Those now arriving generally carry proof of their legal entry but most of those who came a few years ago have evasive answers in place of documents. There are historic reasons for Mexicans feeling that they have a right to cross into the United States, and the subject leads into a maze of tradition and sentiment. This tradition and sentiment, as much as the inconvenience and expense of complying with our immigration requirements, has prompted many Mexicans to walk over the line without any formality. Employers seem to share the same sentiments, for they seldom ask a Mexican whether or not he was legally admitted into the country. The application of the quota principle, from which Mexicans and natives of most all American countries are exempted, would limit the immigration of Mexicans to 1,557 a year.

The immigrants come from many parts of the republic of Mexico but those in the north are principally from the states of Michoacan,

Guanajuato, Jalisco, Aguascalientes, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosi, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Coahuila. Nearly all of them enter through Laredo, Eagle Pass and El Paso. Those from the states of Chihuahua, Durango, Sonora and Sinaloa generally go to the Pacific states north of the border. Other states are represented in smaller numbers.

According to evidence obtained, the Mexicans in our industrial sections came into the country voluntarily, without special inducements. Some large employers of common labor are interested in keeping the supply sufficient but the Mexicans desire to come and are glad of a chance to earn money. A certain amount of antipathy is being overcome, for it was due to erroneous notions that the Mexicans seldom ventured far into the country.

It was necessary to go through the entire factory districts of these cities and to make a shop-to-shop canvass in order to find where the Mexicans were working, and often it was necessary to go to outlying camps and make individual inquiries. Foremen were asked about their men and wages paid, for in the general offices the clerks seldom know the nationality of the employees merely by looking at the pay rolls. The workers themselves were conversed with in Spanish, and in many cases the Mexican women in their homes were questioned for all possible information. Inquiries were made in their barber shops, pool halls and other places of business, and the writer frequently ate with Mexicans and associated with them intimately.

From information thus obtained the following division as to occupations is compiled:

Employed in major industries	30,827
Employed in minor industries and at casual work	7,843
Employed as clerks, translators, interpreters, etc.	339
Engaged in business	207
Engaged in professions	88
Aged and dependent	368
Women (7,961) and children (16,147)	<u>24,108</u>
	63,780

The following table of wages received by the Mexican workers in the industries in which they are chiefly employed is based largely on information furnished by employers. In some cases this information was taken directly from the pay rolls by the writer; in other cases it was given in a general way by the employers. Mexicans frequently stated that the rate of pay was not as high as here given.

Table 1. Wages of Mexicans Employed in Industry 1926-27. North Central States.

Kind of Employment	Number Engaged	Wages per hour between					Hourly Average
		30-35¢	36-40¢	41-45¢	46-50¢	Over 50¢	
Steel mills & foundries	17,295	0	144	8,632	4,164	4,355	\$0.497
Railroads ¹	7,572	77	7,070	339	60	26	.391
Highways & Buildings ²	3,727	84	3,540	66	35	2	.402
Packing houses	1,011	57	68	692	180	14	.427
Cement & Brick plant	663	41	142	288	190	2	.446
Tanneries	559	0	6	425	115	13	.463
Totals	30,827	259	10,970	10,442	4,744	4,412	\$0.456

¹ Extra gangs employed in summer are not included.

² This number decreased about 90% between October 15 and December 1.

³ Of these there were 13 earning less than 30¢ (ten women earning 20¢, a girl earning 27½¢ and two men).

In addition to the 30,827 in the above groups there were 7,843 working at miscellaneous and odd jobs, many of whom were casually out of work and whose earnings were not ascertained, and 1,002 others, including transients, old men and those unable to work.

The greater number of Mexicans are working eight hours a day. In the steel mills most of them are on the eight-hour shifts, where the common labor rate is 50¢ (an hour), and in railroad work the day is almost always eight hours. A fairly large number of the Mexicans are working in ten-hour periods in the steel mills, where the common labor rate is 44¢. They work the same hours and receive the same schedule of pay as Americans or any other nationality doing the same class of work. The conditions affecting them in matters of employment also affect others. The period of their employment is often irregular, as they are generally hired for short periods or temporary occasions. In some cases they have been idle an entire year, depending on a vague promise of employment again.

Of the 63,780 Mexicans found in this territory—western Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and Iowa—approximately 18,300 were between the ages of 18-25 years, 14,000 were between the ages of 25 and 30, 8,000 were between the ages of 30 and 35, 5,000 were between the ages of 35 and 40, 2,900 were between the ages of 40 and 50 and 900 were over 50 years of age; 10,000 were children under five years old and 4,680 were between five years old and 18 years old.

The age groups show the following percentages:

Children under 5	15%	Adults between 30 and 36 . . .	12%
Children between 5 and 18	7%	Adults between 35 and 40 . . .	8%
Adults between 18 and 25	28%	Adults between 40 and 50 . . .	6%
Adults between 25 and 30	22%	Adults over 50	2%

Half the grown Mexicans are under 30 years of age. The number of children between the ages of eight and 15 years is small, as many of these have been left in the Southwest or in Mexico with grandparents or other relatives. Therefore, the number of children of school age is very small. Practically all the children under six years of age have been born in the United States. Although some of the men over 50 years old are engaged in gainful pursuits, the majority of them have been brought along as dependents.

Among the Mexicans in the north central states, not over two percent are natives of the United States, according to the personnel records kept by employers to show the state or country of birth and the information furnished by the Mexicans and their organizations. Generally the maximum length of time they have been in the country is eight years. The average for those in the eastern part is about two years, according to well informed Mexicans and others. In Illinois and Iowa the average time in the country runs considerably longer. Those now living in the older settlements represent the shifting of many thousands, and many are now on their second or third trip to the north. The following table, compiled from exact records of packing houses in South St. Paul and South Omaha, shows the length of residence in the United States of one of the steadiest groups of Mexican workers.

Table 2. Average Length of Time in the United States. Mexicans Employed in South St. Paul and South Omaha Packing houses.

Place	Variation in time	Number of	Years	Months	Days
South St. Paul	½ to 18 years	36	7	0	20
South St. Paul	2 to 38 years ¹	26	11	2	23
South St. Paul	2/3 to 19 years	28	6	6	0
Omaha		34	6	6	0
Omaha		21	8	0	0
Omaha		36	7	0	0

¹Of these 26 men four were born in the United States.

Duration on Job

In the eastern portion of the territory comprised in this report the duration of a Mexican on a job was relatively short, although the employers generally expressed satisfaction with the labor turnover. In their judgment the Poles and other immigrants of former years were better stayers and more efficient workers, but these are no longer obtainable. The Mexicans were said to be

preferable to certain peoples of southwestern Europe, but these (Europeans) were not regarded as desirable. About a fourth of employers thought that Mexicans meet the requirements for unskilled labor, and half of this fourth seemed rather optimistic about the ability of the Mexicans to progress. The other three-fourths were undecided or non-committal.

Mexicans had been regarded formerly, in 1915 to 1918, as undependable, quitting a job at any time they were offered even a slight increase elsewhere, but in recent years they have shown a tendency to settle down and stick to certain employers. They were originally brought in as supernumerary laborers during emergency activity, and men without family ties were preferred, but now the personnel managers are beginning to want men with families. The return of many Europeans to their home countries during the war and the absence of later immigrants seeking common labor jobs has left an opening for the Mexicans. To cultivate a supply of them their employers are disposed to encourage their remaining in a locality.

The men employed in building, bridge and highway construction have the poorest record of continuous service. Their jobs are usually of short duration, subject to weather changes and the seasonal demand for extra laborers. Railroad track workers are next in order as short-term stayers. Their average is lengthened, however, by the long periods of service of some regular section hands who have worked steadily for ten or 15 years, particularly in Illinois and Iowa. In different steel mills in the Pittsburgh region the average duration of Mexican laborers on the pay roll varied from five months in one mill to 17 months in another. The variation found in different factories was due to personality of the employment office, selection of applicants and fluctuation in demand. Some plants cooperate with others to give the Mexicans a little employment to keep them available, especially in the sugar beet country, and this fact tends to shorten the term of service and send the men back and forth.

The following table shows the records of several groups of Mexican workers in the middle west, as copied from employers' records. These figures take no account of the men who have gone to work and quit again during the past several years, for even the

most efficient labor departments do not preserve employment records more than two years, and of the hundreds who have come and gone no trace remains.

Table 3. Average Duration on the Job. Mexicans on Payrolls in February, 1927, in Certain Midwest Cities.

Place	Kind of Work	Number	Years	Months	Days
Galesburg, ILL	Foundry	36	2	3	3
Fort Madison, IA	Roundhouse & Shop	61	6	3	22
Moline, ILL	Steel Mill	26	1	8	10
Silvis, ILL	Roundhouse & Shop	40	2	5	2
Silvis, ILL	Railroad Stores	31	4	11	22
Mason City, IA	Cement Plant	39	3	4	27
Mason City, IA	Packing House	66	0	8	4
South St. Paul	Packing House	36	1	10	0
South St. Paul	Packing House	26	0	5	0
South St. Paul	Packing House	43	2	7	7
Omaha	Packing House	34	4	0	0
Omaha	Packing House	21	2	3	0
Omaha	Packing House	36	3	6	1

Mexicans in Sugar Beet Fields

Mexicans are largely replacing the Belgians and German-Russians formerly used as laborers in the sugar beet fields of Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota and now comprise from 75 percent to 90 percent of this class of agricultural worker. The Belgians and German-Russians who remained throughout the war have been drifting into trades and small businesses in the cities or have become land renters or owners, often in competition with their former employers. When the shortage of field laborers became acute in 1917 and 1918 the producers of sugar beets followed the example of the Colorado growers and shipped in a force of Mexicans. Year by year the number of Mexicans coming into the beet country increases as the number of other nationalities decreases. A large proportion of the Mexicans are hired in San

Antonio and Fort Worth, Texas, at the agencies of the large sugar producing companies. Others are picked up in Kansas City, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and other cities by representatives of these companies.

The sugar refining company makes contracts with farmers to raise a specified number of acres of beets at a certain price and subject to the supervision of the company, which agrees to furnish the necessary labor to tend the crop. Contracts are then made with Mexicans by the sugar company but as if by the farmer individually. The farmer agrees to prepare the ground, drill the beet seed and cultivate the plants to within three inches of the middle of the row, furnish a house for the laborers and to transport them and their luggage to and from the nearest railroad station. The Mexican signing the contract agrees to block and thin the beet plants, keep the rows hoed and free from weeds and to pike and top the beets at harvest. Nothing is said in the contract about anyone helping the Mexican, but before the contract is signed a representative of the company is assured that the Mexican can muster sufficient help. This help usually consists of his wife and children, and lacking sufficient children, he assumes guardianship of other children who, in the great majority of cases, are related to him. It is the custom among Mexicans to assume responsibility for orphaned grandchildren, nephews and nieces and even second or third cousins. The blocking is done by a grown man, using a wide hoe to strike out the plants to hills from ten to 12 inches apart. The women and children on their hands and knees pull out the weeds and superfluous plants, leaving one vigorous plant in a hill. The hoeing is performed by persons able to handle a hoe. When the beets are harvested the plowing out is done by the farmer, and the adult Mexicans strike off the tops and tails with a topping knife, throwing the beets in piles.

The rows are hoed as often as deemed necessary by the field man employed by the sugar company, and usually two or three hoeings are sufficient. The Mexicans arrive about April 15 or May 1. Whenever the crop is clean the workers are at liberty to do outside work, earning current wages at gathering tomatoes, picking sweet corn, shocking grain, making hay, topping onions, husking corn or doing whatever work is offered at the season. From August

1 to September 15 the beet worker generally has an opportunity to do other work to earn extra money, outside of his contract. Industrious workers are able to earn \$75 or \$100 in this way.

A Mexican contracts 15 or 20 acres if his family consists of himself and wife and only small children, but if there are several adults in his crew he can tend as many as 30 or 40 acres. An able Mexican cares for about eight acres, but some with considerable experience and unusual speed can undertake 15 acres. In case of continual wet weather and rapid growth of weeds the task is increased. The contract price is \$23 in the Michigan territory and \$24 an acre in the North Dakota and northern Minnesota country, payable in three installments. The first payment is made after blocking and thinning is finished, \$8 per acre. The second payment is made about August 1, when the final hoeing is finished, \$7 per acre. The Michigan and Ohio sugar companies deduct \$5 an acre to repay them for the cost of transportation, taking out \$1.50 an acre from the first payment, \$1.50 from the second and \$2 from the last. The Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota company absorbs the cost of transportation but holds back \$1 an acre from the first payment and \$1 an acre from the second as a forfeit in case the contract is not completed by the Mexican, returning this \$2 an acre with the final settlement. The fairness of this deposit is justified on the ground that the Mexican is likely to drift away during the season when he is offered good wages at other work, and the company will have to pay another man a premium to get the beets harvested, and that sometimes the Mexican will fail to keep his fields clean and the farmer will have to hire extra help. A number of Mexicans who have become expert toppers wait until a worker has given up his field and then finish the work at good wages, occasionally making \$10 or \$15 a day. To a man who pays his own way to the beet fields and makes a contract locally, the Minnesota company pays an additional \$1 an acre or the equivalent of his traveling expenses.

To equalize the compensation in case the crop is heavy the sugar companies pay a bonus of 75 cents a ton for every ton of beets produced over 9.2 tons per acre. This bonus is not paid until the following January, when bonus checks are mailed to those contractors whose fields yielded an excess tonnage. Practically all

the checks are mailed to addresses within the United States. About half the beet workers leave for the border states about November 1. Most of the others go to the cities to get work in foundries and shops, but of these a number drift to Texas before spring. A small number remain in the beet country, some obtaining a little work from farmers and on railroads, and others living on their summer's earnings. One large sugar company is experimenting with a plan of encouraging their workers to stay in the locality, with the idea that this will help them familiarize themselves with the language, laws and customs of the people, give their children a chance to attend school and save the company the expense of recruiting and transportation in the spring.

The following table shows the earnings and number of Mexicans engaged in tending sugar beet fields during the season of 1926 in the territory covered in this report.

Table 4. Contract Earnings of Mexicans in the Sugar Beet Fields of the North Central States during the Season of 1926. Compiled from data furnished by Sugar companies.

Territory	No. of Workers	Acres Tended	Price per acre	Contract Earnings	Bonus Received	Total Received	Average per Person ¹
Michigan	26720	42000	³ \$23.00	\$966000	*\$966000	\$143.75
Ohio and Ind.	3264	20400	23.00	469200	469200	143.75
Minnesota	1506	9375	23.00	215625	\$5620	221245	146.90
North Dakota	1270	7960	24.00	191040	2340	193380	152.27
Iowa	2018	12460	23.00	286580	11550	298130	147.73
Totals	14778	92195	\$23.08	\$2128445	\$19510	\$2147955	\$145.34

¹Four persons constitute an average family

²Of this number 3,048 were shipped from Texas by one company.

³\$5 is deducted for transportation, leaving \$18 net.

⁴Exclusive of any outside earnings.

⁵About 5,000 of these returned to Texas after the harvest was finished.

Food and Cost of Living

A two-thirds fare is obtained from the railroad companies by the sugar companies for their Mexicans departing from the beet territory in the fall, in gangs of ten, to any one destination. Not half the Mexicans apply for these rates.

The principal foodstuffs of the Mexicans are tortillas, pinto beans, eggs, lean beef, pork, tripe, sausage, tomatoes, onions, chile peppers, rice, vermicelli, chickpeas, carrots, artichokes, squashes, green corn, sweet potatoes, coffee and chocolate. Tortillas should be made of corn but the cooks usually have to use wheat flour. Many spices are used in their cookery, and cinnamon bark is steeped to make a drink that is used extensively in place of coffee. Grocers and meat retailers seem to value the patronage of Mexicans and practically all asserted that the latter were particular eaters and demanded good food. A large proportion of the Mexicans, particularly eastward, board with others. The average charge for meals is about 30 cents. In commissaries and employer-owned lodging houses the charge for board and lodging is \$1.10 in the Pittsburgh region and \$1 a day at Chicago and westward, with a variation of five or ten cents a day in a few instances. The cost of board and lodging averages about \$35 a month.

The proportion of families is not over 10 percent at Pittsburgh, according to calculations made by leading Mexicans and by employers, but increases steadily until at Omaha 85 percent or 90 percent of the Mexicans live in their own households. The new arrivals from Mexico are generally unaccompanied by a wife or family, and they usually put up at a boarding house. Although some remain for a year at a company-owned boarding house, nearly all of them find accommodations in a Mexican home within a few weeks.

As a typical average, a Mexican works about 250 days a year, earning \$4 a day. A family of five spends hardly \$2 a day for food, 30 cents for rent, 25 cents for clothing and ten cents for other expenses. Railroad workers earn less but spend less for rent.

The Mexicans occupy the same class of houses and neighborhoods as the Europeans whom they are displacing in the steel mills and foundries. An average rent for the type of houses they live in is between \$20 and \$30 a month: in the large majority of instances a Mexican family has the use of only a part of a house, sub rented from a tenant of another nationality. In some of the midwestern towns they occupy small houses costing \$7, \$10 and \$15 a month.

Not one in a hundred owns his own home, nor are they interested in buying property, as they say they cannot depend on steady employment, cannot spare the money and cannot dispose of property without loss. In a number of cities they build temporary shacks out of scrap material on railroad or factory ground and consider them as personal property.

Nearly every railroad throughout this region has Mexicans on its section crews. The lines which run into the west, (such) as the Santa Fe, the Rock Island, and the Burlington, have a number of Mexicans doing the simpler work in roundhouses and shops. Many of these railroad workers live in old box cars demounted from the trucks and set on the ground along the tracks. The Burlington charges a rent of 75 cents a month in the summer and \$1.50 a month in the winter for each car or each family. For men earning over 50 cents an hour, the Burlington charges a rent of \$7 a month in summer and \$8 a month in winter for these identical car bodies. Several railroads charge nothing for these quarters. The Santa Fe charges no rent for car bodies to section men but it has tile flats in which \$1 per room is charged.

The Mexicans, as a rule, wear good clothing. They avoid articles of dress which might distinguish them from people in general. Many of the younger Mexicans buy automobiles. In the beet country employers oppose their men buying used cars, particularly when bought on credit, for they say that often a Mexican will spend for an old car the money which he needs to keep him through the winter.

The statements of charitable associations affirmed that a very few Mexicans ask for help, as they help one another. Social workers have observed that the Mexicans have a willingness to share their means with any of their unfortunate countrymen and

a marked reluctance to ask for public assistance. The information given by bankers revealed that many of the Mexican laborers have a habit of saving, notwithstanding the rather heavy remittances of money to Mexico. A few savings accounts run as high as \$500 and there are many from \$100 to \$250, mostly started within the last two years. In some places a fourth of the wage-earning Mexicans have savings accounts, but generally not over a tenth and in some places, less. It was also shown that many Mexicans hoard money in their homes. Investments in securities are rare, only five or six men in a thousand putting their money into interest-bearing paper.

The amount of money sent to dependents in Mexico varies with the proportion of families. In the cities where many single men work the amount of money remitted averages a fourth of the earnings, but in the smaller centers where many of the men have their families with them the amount sent away is from 10 percent to 15 percent of the wages received. The bulk of this money goes to the support of dependent relatives; some is in payment of loans extended to obtain passage, and some is to be saved until the emigrant's return home. Some of the beet workers who do not understand that work in the winter time is scarce sometimes send home so much of their money that they become penniless before spring. A Mexican in Fort Madison, Iowa, is taking care of a household of 30 persons.

The proportion of Mexicans who engage in business is small, and those in professions are exceedingly few. Most of the professional men connected with aggregations of Mexicans are Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Filipinos, South Americans or Spaniards. Eating houses, barbershops, pool halls, tailor shops, bakeries and printing offices are the most common of their undertakings. There are in Detroit, Chicago, Indiana Harbor and some other places some creditable businesses run by Mexicans. Several professional men in Chicago, as dentists and doctors, are succeeding in their sphere. A monthly magazine is published in Detroit called "el Eco de la Patria," and a daily newspaper is published in Chicago. A weekly newspaper in Spanish is edited by a Mexican in the latter city.

Organizations are numerous among the Mexicans. The most widely known is the *Comisión Honorífica*, fostered by the Mexican consuls and composed usually of the most intelligent Mexicans in

each colony. Its purpose is to teach the Mexicans how to get along in their new environment, to reflect credit on their nationality, to retain the homeland in their affections and to aid those who get into trouble. The president of the society in each colony is, ex officio, a representative of the consul. In some cities the membership is as high as 100 but in most places it is only a half dozen or so. *La Cruz Azul Mexicana* (The Mexican Blue Cross) is a charitable organization having chapters in New York City, Detroit, Indiana Harbor and other cities. The membership is open to men and women and represents the better element in Mexican society. There are many minor and local associations based on fraternal, social, educational, recreative, artistic, literary and patriotic motives, with membership varying from 150 in a few cases to 50 and even ten or less. In Indiana Harbor there is a religious-labor organization of considerable strength and prestige, one of whose purposes is to build a Catholic temple for Mexicans. The organization publishes a periodical called *El Amigo del Hogar* (Friend of the Fireside). Several colonies have musical organizations and uniformed bands.

Ninety-seven percent of the Mexicans in the north central region of the United States are Roman Catholics. Their religious sentiments have an historic background and are apparently closely allied to their love of their native country. The efforts of Protestant missions and social workers is regarded by many Mexicans as an unfair attempt to undermine their nationalism. Although in a number of cities the Mexicans are good attendants at classes for foreigners and they show ability and zeal equal to others, not two in a hundred become American citizens. This is revealed by statements of the teachers, the Mexicans and employers.

Mexicans show an indifference to learning the English language. This was apparent to the writer in numerous conversations with the Mexicans. Employers and others dealing with Mexicans have noted it. Most of the American-born and a small number of others, not exceeding two percent of all, speak English fluently, about 15 percent speak it well and about 15 percent can make themselves understood. The other 65 percent are unable to converse in the language and make no effort to learn it. A fairly large proportion of them can sign their names—a proportion far above the Europeans and the average Americans working at common labor

according to employers, bankers and others. School teachers very generally stated that the Mexican children are studious, apt and of good deportment, although a few teachers said they were dirty, irregular in attendance and untruthful. The fact that the families move about a good deal, especially those in beet work or with railroad gangs, is a hindrance to regular attendance.

The Mexicans are victims of the afflictions common to poor immigrants. Infant mortality is high, generally due to intestinal disorders. The women are subject to consumption, and their resistance to illness is low. The men, although not muscularly as strong as northern Europeans nor as active and big, show a greater endurance at work in extreme heat, disagreeable odors and nerve-wrecking noises than most other races. Instances were noted of men working continuously, without a day off in a year, in iron foundries where men of other nationalities would not stay a month. In Minnesota Mexican section hands work outdoors when the temperature is 20 degrees below zero. In tanneries they often have to work with their clothing wet, and in cement and asbestos plants their places are usually in the dust. Some of them said that they did not like the work which endangered their health, and employees in foundries declared that the gases were very injurious to their lungs.

An investigation into the police records and personal habits of the Mexicans indicated that they are not regarded as particularly vicious. The great majority of the offenses of which they are guilty are generally classed as disorderly conduct. Their murders are nearly always among their own race. A few Mexicans are addicted to the habit of smoking *maribuana*, a drug derived from a plant grown by Mexicans. The idea is very general among the Mexicans that they are abused in this country.

This report includes only certain facts and conditions found in the portion of the United States visited. Whether or not the same circumstances may exist in the country as a whole this report does not attempt to indicate.