

## INTRODUCTION

Twelve years ago, in the first volume of *Perspectives*, the editors, Juan R. García and Ignacio García, set out the journal's goals in a short preface. These were to stimulate and promote new research, present new and different viewpoints, and ultimately expand the boundaries of scholarship about Mexican Americans. That original volume was a compilation of articles on Mexican American folklore dating back to 1944. Professor José R. Reyna of California State University, Bakersfield, served as special editor of this introductory issue.

In publishing the work of pioneering scholars such as Arthur L. Campa, Aurelio M. Espinosa, and others who came later, the editors sought to preserve a rich part of a cultural legacy that could inspire and serve as a model to students of Mexican American history. They succeeded. The volume soon went out of print, and its articles are often included in class reading packets at various universities, and routinely cited by scholars. Subsequent volumes have featured articles on a variety of topics—immigration, Chicano film, ethnic identity, education, literary analysis, and children's health to name a few. Two volumes, the first, noted above, and the fifth, sub-titled, "Mexican American Women: Changing Images," were thematic, although a range of subjects were covered in each.

The present volume contains seven articles by several new voices, and by others who have a long list of published works to their credit. They provide us with information of interest, and offer fresh observations of the Mexican American experience. The authors include veterans of *el movimiento*, such as Armando Navarro; experienced scholars such as Elsa O. Valdez, Richard Santillán, and Raymond V. Padilla; and some who are newer on the scene, such as Armando Solórzano, John Hardisty, Jorge Iber and Anne Fairbrother.

In the first article, professors Solórzano and Iber describe the experiences of successive waves of Hispanic miners and their families who moved into Utah in the early part of the twentieth century. These groups included Mexicans, Mexican Americans, and Puerto Ricans. To retain their cultural roots and identities, members of these newly established communities founded patriotic councils, such as the Sociedad Honorífica Mexicana, and mutual-aid societies.

According to the authors, there was a significant amount of conflict between the different Hispanic groups. The relationships between Hispanos, as those who came to Utah from Colorado and Northern New Mexico called themselves, and those of Mexican descent who had preceded them, were strained. Such was the case in Bingham, a mining community southwest of Salt Lake City. There was also friction with Anglo

Latter-day Saints, and with Puerto Ricans, who first came to the Beehive State because of labor shortages during World War II. But conflicts are only part of this rich and complex history. Hispanics also overcame poverty and prejudice, retained their community ties, and made major contributions to the economy and culture of Utah and the nation.

John Hardisty, in "El Laberinto de la Comunidad: A Rural View of Mexico," tells us how he learned about his neighbors in southern California by spending a summer in a small town in central Mexico. As he conducted field research for an anthropologist from the Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, he gained some insight about the increasing presence of foreign manufacturing plants in Mexico. Yet he also discovered the benefits of living in a close-knit, if poor, community. Hardisty earnestly, and sometimes humorously, details the personal connections that are so often invisible in media portrayals of Mexico, *mexicanos*, and immigrants.

Armando Navarro outlines in detail how Chicanos and Chicanas fought for and won political control in the small southern California community of Cucamonga during the late 1960s and early '70s. Chicanos, who made up a large part of the population in San Bernardino and Riverside counties, suffered from unemployment, poverty, and political disenfranchisement. Although there was a 60 percent Chicano drop-out rate in the Cucamonga School District, the conservative school board largely refused to seek readily available federal funds to help alleviate such problems. As was the case in many other schools in the Southwest at the time, there were virtually no Chicana or Chicano teachers or administrators.

These conditions set the stage for the actions that followed in Cucamonga. The success they ultimately achieved was the "Chicano Movement's first political takeover of a school board in Aztlán," Navarro proudly writes. The 1968 takeover and the early years of the "experiment" delineated in this essay, preceded the successful electoral revolts orchestrated by La Raza Unida Party in the Winter Garden area of Texas in April 1970. It was, in fact, the movement's first successful effort at controlling a school board. The well-organized effort brought Chicanos to power, and delivered tangible improvements to the community. In "The Cucamonga Experiment: A Struggle for Community Control and Self-Determination," Navarro shows how idealism, hard work, and political strategy were used to bring about much-needed reform.

Elsa O. Valdez studied the political involvement and ethnic identity of Latino students in New Mexico and southern California. The data and information from Chicano and Latino students at New Mexico Highlands University and California State University, San Bernardino, revealed that, among other things, students in Southern California are more likely to identify themselves as Chicano rather than Hispanic, be involved in conflict politics, and engage in some conventional political activities.

In her study, Valdez points to several factors that might be the cause of these behaviors. One of the most likely reasons for political activism among California students is that the sociopolitical and economic climate in California has increasingly become anti-civil rights. Campaigns such as the successful English-only (anti-bilingual) education proposition, and anti-immigrant legislation are causing more young people to become active in politics. In contrast, as she points out, Chicanos and Latinos in Northern New Mexico occupy key governmental and economic positions. Students, therefore, do not see the need to continually engage in conflict politics.

In "Chicano Pedagogy: Confluence, Knowledge, and Transformation," Raymond V. Padilla writes that the border region is one where cultures come together in a "torrential encounter." He sees the region as a place of great energy and possibility, not the site of alienation, as it has been viewed historically. His thesis is that the current educational attainment gap "cannot be eradicated unless a Chicano pedagogy is created that takes into account the historical and cultural realities of the Chicano population along with the North American context in which those realities must be reassessed and transformed."

Padilla proposes a system of transformational education that goes beyond previous affirmational and reformatory models, which have had only limited success. He describes a method by which Chicanos and Chicanas can "collectively analyze and implement solutions to common problems." Although the system he proposes is designed primarily for the college level, Padilla believes it can be applied to the elementary and high school grades as well.

In "Mexicans in New Mexico: The Tri-Cultural Trope," Anne Fairbrother adds her voice to the long-standing discourse concerning the ethnic identity of Hispanos in New Mexico. The discussion—which at times has been heated—began long before the era of *Chicanismo*. For example, Arthur L. Campa, whom Fairbrother quotes, debunked the Spanish-origin myth more than 50 years ago.

Fairbrother reviews and comments on the Mexican and Mexican American history in New Mexico and the history of racial intimidation that fed into the Spanish heritage idea that took root after 1900. She states that many factors, including the move toward U.S. statehood, the economics of the tourist industry, and the works of well-intentioned writers such as Cleofas Jaramillo and Mary Austin contributed to the development of this Spanish Romance. The tri-cultural image, according to Fairbrother, excludes anything that is Mexican and, by extension, mestizo. She takes a close look at that image, and explores concepts of Hispano identity and homeland in order to uncover a more realistic history.

In the final article, "Mexican Baseball Teams in the Midwest, 1916-1965: The Politics of Cultural Survival and Civil Rights," Richard Santillán describes and docu-

ments Mexican American participation in baseball in the Midwestern states that began in the 1920s.

Organizing their own teams, leagues, and associations such as *El Club Deportivo Internacional* of Gary, Indiana, people of Mexican descent created a way for youth and young adults to enjoy physical competition and develop leadership skills. Generations of Chicanos and Chicanas in the Midwest have played on teams, and organized events and clubs. This article is excerpted from a larger manuscript that includes chapters on Chicano participation in other sports. Santillán, using interviews he conducted with former players, adds to the growing history of Chicanos in the American heartland.

The topics covered by the authors in this volume, from sports in the Midwest to small town life in Central Mexico, seem to have little in common except for their focus on Mexican-descent people. However, on closer inspection, one can see that the idea of labor runs like an arroyo through this book. Sometimes it is on the surface. At other times it is a subterranean channel, unseen, but still the reason for the shape and placement of the dry wash above. In some of the articles, the one by Solórzano and Iber, for instance, the hard labor of the various Hispanic groups in Utah and its consequences are readily apparent. In others, such as Padilla's, it is just below the surface, yet is the force that moves teachers to improve the educational lot of Chicanos and Chicanas. They want a better life for future generations, and know that achieving this goal depends on the ability to obtain and perform meaningful work. This is why Mexican Americans and mexicanos organized sports programs in places like Topeka and Kansas City in the 1940s, and why college students in southern California protest anti-Chicano and anti-immigrant policies today.

We are grateful to the authors for their perceptive and insightful essays. We also thank Adela de la Torre, director of the Mexican American Studies & Research Center at the University of Arizona. Her support and encouragement have made this edition of *Perspectives in Mexican American Studies* possible.

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December 2000