

MEXICAN AMERICANS ON THE HOME FRONT: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS IN ARIZONA DURING WORLD WAR II

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The Mexican American¹ experience in Arizona during the World War II period can be studied from new perspectives and viewpoints. Other than its main importance in the social history of ethnic minorities in the Southwest, it can be placed in the context of United States social history. It can certainly be placed in the context of Mexican American, or Chicano/a history, since World War II was a major turning point for Mexican Americans.

It is generally accepted by Chicano/a historians that World War II provided a variety of opportunities for changing and improving the economic and social conditions of Mexican Americans.² Life outside the barrio during wartime exposed soldiers to new experiences. The G.I. Bill of Rights provided them opportunities for higher education, job training, business and home loans. Other Mexican Americans, however, continued to struggle with the common and prevalent evils of racism and discrimination in their communities. Mexican Americans were still segregated in theaters and restaurants, and barred from public swimming pools, dance halls, and other establishments. Inferior education or lack of educational opportunity for Mexican Americans remained a deep-seated problem in Arizona.

No attempt is made here to analyze the military history of Arizona's role in World War II. Instead, this essay is an attempt to explain how Mexican Americans organized themselves within their own communities to become important, patriotic contributors to the American war effort. It also shows that Mexican Americans in Phoenix and Tucson supported each other's efforts to combat racism while helping win

the war for all Americans. This wartime activism was prevalent in other Mexican American communities throughout the state as well.

There are some problems, however, in writing about Mexican American participation on the home front in Arizona during the war. For example, one cannot build on previous literature, since little has been written on this topic.³ Most Arizona historians or scholars have virtually ignored the history of Mexican Americans during this important period. In essence, they have completely failed to recognize a valid, fascinating, and viable aspect of Arizona history.⁴

Other historians, like Gerald D. Nash of New Mexico, considered the World War II period as a turning point in the Southwest. Nash believes the war transformed the American West from a "colonial economy based on the exploitation of raw materials into a diversified economy that included industrial and technological components."⁵ His contention is that this changed economy encouraged the influx of larger numbers of ethnic minorities in the West, especially Mexican immigrants and African-Americans, thus diversifying the ethnic composition of the region.

Arizona was organized as a territory in 1863 and admitted to the Union as the forty-eighth state in 1912. Its population on April 1, 1940, according to the Sixteenth Census, was 499,261. Three major race classifications were distinguished in the Sixteenth Census tabulations, namely "White," "Negro," and "other races." Persons of Mexican birth or ancestry who were not American Indian or of other non-White races were classified as "White" in 1940. Thirty percent of Arizona's population was represented by persons of Mexican descent. Urban areas such as Tucson and Phoenix reflected a growing trend during this period. The urban population of Tucson in 1940 was 36,818; approximately 12,000 individuals were Mexicans and Mexican Americans. The total population of Phoenix numbered 65,414, of which roughly 15,000 were of Mexican descent.

Mexican Americans in Phoenix at this time lived in the same barrios they traditionally lived in when Anglo-American speculators, carpet-baggers, and entrepreneurs arrived in 1867. This area was near the south side of the Salt River. The land was undesirable to Anglos, mainly because of occasional heavy flooding and its proximity to unsightly railroad tracks. By 1930, the large Mexican barrio had been split into two distinct sections. The poorer district, bounded by Washington, Sixteenth, and Twenty-fourth streets and the river,

contained a shack town of the poorer Mexicans, and a "7-Up Camp," a block of shacks along the north side of the railroad tracks housing hundreds of Mexican families. The second section of this same barrio was located between Second and Fourth Avenues, south of Madison Street.⁷ By 1940, this same large barrio consisted of smaller barrios from within, such as "Cuatro Milpas," "Little Hollywood," and "Golden Gate." Here, Mexicans and Mexican Americans owned small businesses, stores, houses, and built and attended their own churches. They generally lived apart in poverty from the Anglo residential areas and pockets of Anglo growth and business and economic development, which were further north of the barrio. In 1941, the Phoenix Housing Authority built three separate low-income housing projects with a \$1.9 million New Deal grant from the federal government. The developments were the Marcos de Niza Project for Mexicans and the Matthew Henson Project for African-Americans, both located in south Phoenix. The housing project for Anglos, named for the Phoenix flying ace of World War I fame, Frank Luke, Jr., was built in east Phoenix. These housing units were to accommodate six hundred low-income families who lived in sub-standard dwellings in the same area. Segregated housing, however, reflected the thinking of city officials and leaders who were slow to eliminate other forms of discrimination in their town.⁸

The Mexican American community of Phoenix readily supported the war effort almost immediately after war was declared late in 1941. The *Leñadores del Mundo* (Woodmen of the World), an active Mexican fraternal and life insurance society, sponsored the "Diamond Jubilee" to show Mexicano support for the war effort and for President Roosevelt. The festival and dance were held at the meeting hall of the *Leñadores* on the president's birthday, January 30, 1942.⁹

Other *mutualistas*, such as the *Alianza Hispano-Americana*, the *Club Latino Americana* and *La Sociedad Mutualista Porfirio Díaz* were also active in Phoenix and throughout the state during this period. The *Alianza Hispano-Americana* was a fraternal insurance society that was first organized in Tucson in 1894. Like other mutual-aid societies in Arizona, the AHA offered low-cost life insurance and social activities to its members. Mutual-aid societies provided essential support for Mexicanos in the fight against racism and discrimination. Many proved to be the sources of cultural, social, and religious cohesion in Mexicano communities.¹⁰

The coming of World War II saw the establishment of war-preparedness programs and training schools. The National Youth Administration (NYA) was one such New Deal program. The NYA was initiated on June 26, 1935, and provided for the educational and employment needs of America's youths. Two statewide National Defense training schools were set up under the NYA in Arizona. The training school for boys was in Tempe; the girls school was located in Coolidge. Established in Pinal County in 1926, Coolidge is approximately 30 miles south of Phoenix. Tempe, at this time, was a small farming and livestock-raising community with a population of about 3,000. It was just nine miles east of Phoenix, along the Salt River.

Tempe educators and city leaders were targets of Mexicano opposition to racism and discrimination in three separate incidents in 1912, 1925, and 1946. Mexicanos settled in what is now Tempe in 1865, when the Ft. McDowell military post was established. The early settlement of San Pablo, later known as "Mexican Town" by the Anglos of Tempe, was already firmly established in 1874. The town itself was later incorporated as "Tempe" by the Anglos in 1895. Just after Arizona statehood in 1912, Mexicanos became the center of controversy, when they learned they could not claim title to the lands which they had legally lived on and developed, because their farms and homes were in what was called "Section 16." This area, which under the new Constitution of Arizona and its precedent Organic Act, was a school section, and thus not subject to permanent settlement. Consequently, the Mexicanos lost their land.

From 1914 to 1926, only Mexican children attended the Eighth Street School. In 1915, the Tempe School District made an agreement with the Arizona State Teachers' College (now known as Arizona State University) that allowed them to use Eighth Street School as a University Training School to establish Americanization programs for the segregated Mexican children in the first through third grades. The agreement lasted until 1950-51, when the primary students moved to the nearby Wayne Ritter School. In 1925, Adolfo "Babe" Romo, whose family settled in the area in the 1800s, filed a lawsuit (now known as the "Landmark Case") on behalf of his children who were attending the segregated Eighth Street School. In October 1925, Superior Court Judge Joseph Jenckes ruled the Romo children could attend the Tenth Street Grammar School. The following Monday morning, several Mexican children attended school there. However, the enrollment at

the Eighth Street School was completely Mexican American until 1945. The third racial incident involved the desegregation of Tempe Beach, the city's public swimming pool. Tempe Beach was opened in 1923, and did not admit Mexicans. It was not until 1946 that the Tempe Chamber of Commerce agreed to admit Mexican Americans to Tempe Beach in response to legal pressures from Mexican American veterans from Phoenix who formed the Tony F. Soza Thunderbird Post 41 of the American Legion.¹¹

Another kind of pressure was applied to Arizona's Governor Sidney P. Osborn to integrate the training schools of the NYA in 1941. Led by Vicente Alfaro, a respected member of Tucson's Mexican American community, parents demanded that their children be allowed to participate in the NYA's resident vocational training school programs. The schools in Tempe and Coolidge provided classroom instruction, to develop clerical and library skills among the girls, and enabled boys to learn and improve machine skills and welding techniques. Students also received civil defense training and learned about community safety. The training schools sought boys and girls from nearby communities, and many Mexican American youngsters from Tucson applied.

The training schools brought problems as well as opportunities to Arizona. The problems were racial, and opportunities were denied to the Mexican American youngsters. They were subjected to segregated classes and ethnic slurs. Anglo youngsters refused to interact with them, and they questioned them about their loyalties to America. The Coolidge training school director refused to accept Mexican American girls into the program because "Spanish Americans were not fit for employment in National Defense work," and felt that "it was utterly useless for them to start receiving instruction" there.¹² Alfaro wrote letters to Governor Osborn requesting that he put an end to these biased practices. He cited President Franklin D. Roosevelt's pledge to be a "good neighbor"¹³ with Latin America in order to improve relations between countries as an example for Osborn to follow. In his reply to Alfaro, however, Osborn was not convinced he was the individual who could create change. Instead, Osborn reminded Alfaro that the NYA was a "federal set-up and one with which the governor, or no state official, [*sic*], [had] anything whatever to do. It [was] certainly under the control and management of the United States government."¹⁴ There is nothing in the documen-

tation to show that the matter was ever resolved. However, the Governor did ask Jane H. Rider, the Arizona administrator of the NYA, to investigate Alfaro's complaints. The record, however, is neither clear nor complete, and contains no reply to his request. Nor is there correspondence from the Governor to Vicente Alfaro regarding the incidents of racism in Tempe.¹⁵

Mexican American youths were targets of racism in the copper mining community of Morenci, located approximately 250 miles southeast of Phoenix. Again, the Governor's lack of action disappointed the Mexican Americans who sought his help. This time, however, several Mexicano leaders from Phoenix, who were active sponsors and organizers of the city's only Mexican American Boy Scout troop, appealed to Governor Osborn in the Spring of 1942¹⁶ to use his power to change the long-standing segregation policy of two Morenci facilities: the Morenci Club, and the Longfellow Inn.¹⁷

Morenci was established as a mining camp in 1884. Bitter labor strikes and racial conflicts involving Mexicano miners and the Phelps Dodge Copper Corporation have occurred in the Clifton-Morenci mining districts since the late 1800s. Morenci is located in Greenlee County in southeastern Arizona, near the New Mexico border. The Morenci Club, owned by the Phelps Dodge Copper Corporation, offered recreational facilities to Anglos only. The Longfellow Inn was a restaurant in the community. Boy Scout Troop 134, with S.A. Morales, William R. Sanchez, S.G. Murillo, and Alberto Montoya as its leaders, planned on attending a two-day Music Clinic at the Morenci Club. Here, the group was to learn about the use of instruments and musical arrangements in the performance of musical events for their communities. Young boys and girls would sing and play patriotic music, and hear various groups perform. But their attendance and participation at the event was called off when the Scout leaders read in a local newspaper publicizing the event that "the Morenci Club and Longfellow Inn are not open to Spanish-American people." The article warned: "Please caution your students on this as we do not wish anyone to be embarrassed."¹⁸ Outraged at such blatant and open racism aimed at the young Boy Scouts—who symbolized the youth and democracy of the United States—the scout leaders sent a signed petition to the governor so that he could respond to their concerns. In the petition they cited the humiliation, embarrassment, and shame felt by the boys in the troop. They

reminded Governor Osborn that these boys were American citizens who were entitled to fair, honest, and democratic treatment in their own state. Scout leaders also asked the governor to issue an official public apology in the form of a statement in the Morenci and Phoenix newspapers in order to expose the shabby treatment of these young boys. The apology never came from Governor Osborn.¹⁹

Despite this racist atmosphere, other Mexican American youths in Phoenix participated in a wartime activity that involved the country at large. When the Standard Oil Company challenged all neighborhoods in July of 1942 to gather much-needed rubber for its war efforts, the youngsters from the Marcos de Niza housing project combed their Phoenix neighborhood for anything made of rubber. Gathering discarded tires and other materials, their final accumulation of rubber totalled more than 2,200 pounds, surpassing what was gathered by other youth groups in the city. Their "prize" for this accomplishment was a picnic/party, where they were treated to pies, sherbet, cakes, candy, sandwiches, and other refreshments. Rogelio Yanez, the U.S. Housing Authority's Mexican American representative for the Marcos de Niza housing project, worked with various mutualistas such as the Leñadores del Mundo, and the Alianza Hispano Americana, to sponsor and pay for the party.²⁰

Other mutualistas such as the Club Latino Americana and La Sociedad Mutualista Porfirio Díaz were instrumental in organizing Mexican American cotton pickers during a drastic shortage of farm labor in the Salt River Valley's cotton fields in Phoenix. This labor shortage served as the catalyst for the Mexican American community to become united with the larger Anglo community in an emergency harvest of cotton. In October 1942 the Victory Labor Volunteers responded to the call.²¹

Long-staple cotton was desperately needed to make parachutes, blimps, and gliders for the troops overseas. These volunteer labor groups organized spontaneously and comprised members of civic clubs, women's social clubs, churches, and garden and veterans groups within the Anglo segments of Phoenix. The volunteers were headed by an informal committee whose sole interest was doing emergency war work whenever it was needed. Citizens throughout the city were encouraged to volunteer for a minimum of a half-day each week to harvest the cotton crop. They were paid three dollars per 100 pounds for long-staple cotton, and \$1.50 per 100 pounds for

short-staple cotton. Volunteers registered with cotton canvassers at the Phoenix Chamber of Commerce office, or at nearby U.S. Employment Service offices.²²

The Spanish-language newspaper in Phoenix, *El Sol*, ran a lengthy advertisement in its October 9, 1942, issue calling for the Mexican American community to participate in a patriotic show of Mexican unity and become cotton pickers.²³ Women and school children were encouraged by various mutualistas to participate in the picking and bagging of cotton, and the Phoenix Union School system permitted students to be absent from classes one day a week to do so. Transportation was provided by the city on a daily basis from various pickup locations within the Mexican American barrios of Marcos de Niza, Golden Gate, Riverside, Cuatro Milpas, and East Lake. Transportation trucks also left from neighborhood locations such as Conchos Grocery, Washington Elementary School, and the Friendly House.²⁴ These trucks carried Mexicanos from residential areas near Fourteenth Street and Henshaw Road; Ninth Street and Washington; and East Lake Park to the cotton fields located in the valley. It was estimated that within a three-week period, 5,000 Mexican American workers—men, women, and children—harvested over 35,000 pounds of long-staple cotton for the nation's war effort.²⁵ Thus, this cotton harvest emergency brought a rare opportunity for Mexicanos and Anglos to share equally in a patriotic, community effort during a tense and difficult labor and cotton shortage.

These two examples of Mexican American participation in Anglo-dominated activities may provide insight into how Mexican Americans created their own separate support systems in times of crisis, while co-existing with Anglos in meeting a larger demand. A national wartime emergency required and enabled these two groups to organize within their own communities and work together towards a larger common goal. The goal was met, even though the two groups stayed within their own social boundaries and worked separately. The tremendous responses to these critical emergencies also showed how the war briefly united Phoenicians, who crossed ethnic lines in order to meet economic challenges. In these examples, each group contributed equally to a vision of American unity and American victory, but did so separately, a point which should be emphasized.

In the early stages of the war, several military installations and air bases were established in the Phoenix area. Latino cadets undergo-

ing training nearby were welcomed and honored by the Mexican American community with testimonial dinners, dances, social gatherings, and community meetings between February 17 and March 10, 1942.²⁶ These cadets came from Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. They symbolized Latin American friendship and support of the United States in wartime. Mexican American alumni from the Spanish Club of Phoenix Community College, "*Los Ositos*," helped in sponsoring and arranging dinners, receptions, and honoring the cadets throughout the Mexican American community.²⁷ The cultural ties that the community shared with these cadets reinforced feelings of ethnic and cultural pride.

Mexican Americans in Phoenix participated in other war-related community projects. American citizenship classes were taught by the bilingual staff of the Friendly House,²⁸ a social service center formed to provide for the needs of the Mexican and Mexican American community. Classes on the Constitution were held on a daily basis at the Friendly House, and were also available in the evening. Members of the Spanish-speaking community felt they were helping in the war effort by studying to become American citizens. Obtaining American citizenship may have been an accepted way for Mexicanos to show their patriotism and loyalty to the United States and the war effort. It was, therefore, a unique opportunity for the Mexican American community to be accepted into the larger American society that still maintained racist policies and traditions.

Mexican American boys were encouraged to become involved in Boy Scout activities. Since it was felt that the American character was formulated and developed through the scouting organization, Mexican Americans believed that their youths could be molded into productive, patriotic, and loyal Americans, eager to support their country in times of war.²⁹ Early enrollment numbered over 25 boys who became active in Troop 47, the only Spanish-speaking troop in Phoenix.

When the ministers of the Phoenix Ministerial Alliance of Spanish Speaking Churches met in the Mexican Presbyterian Church in February of 1943, they adopted a resolution that urged the Mexican American community to participate in war-related activities. The Alliance encouraged its members to take an active interest in city politics, and to register to vote in city elections.³⁰ Since the nation was at war, it was believed that Mexican Americans would become

more interested in their community's political issues. Their votes would thus become a key factor in supporting the war effort abroad.

Another patriotic gesture involved public donations from the Phoenix Mexican American community in August of 1943. The editor of *El Sol*, Jesús Franco, and a prominent physician in the community, Dr. A.G. Del Valle Lugo, organized a drive to collect money for the purpose of purchasing cigars and cigarettes for American soldiers overseas, regardless of their ancestry or place of birth.

Mexican Americans took advantage of this opportunity to donate whatever amount of money they had for such tobacco purchases. Individuals were encouraged through various advertisements in *El Sol* to take their contributions to the newspaper's offices on Third Street and Washington. The patriotic fever infected the entire community. The cigarette drive began in mid-August and was scheduled to end on September 10. In spite of the wartime hardships imposed upon the community, the donations remained steady and consistent.

This patriotic gesture was lauded in issues of *El Sol* throughout the duration of the tobacco drive, and the names of those who contributed were acknowledged and printed in the newspaper. By the end of the drive in mid-September, almost \$300 had been collected from the Mexican American community. Most of the donations were small.³¹ The money was deposited in a local bank by the drive's treasurer, Miguel G. Robles, who later presented the money to a military representative on behalf of the Mexican American community of Phoenix. No newspaper accounts were found to indicate that the Anglo community also participated in this drive.³²

The Mexican American community of Tucson also did its share to help win the war. Mutual-aid and benefit organizations such as the Alianza Hispano-Americana and the Leñadores del Mundo sold war bonds. Religious organizations within the Mexican Catholic parishes, such as *El Centro Club* and the *Club San Vicente* added their support by collecting scrap metal. Social and service clubs such as the *Club Latino*, *Club Treinta*, and *Club Anáhuac* also supported the Allied cause in various ways.³³ Usually, the clubs were either all male or female-male. Individual Mexican American women in Tucson also played an important part in the war effort. Through the efforts of Rose Rodriguez, a secretary at Tucson City Hall, the organization known as the *Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas*

(the Spanish American Mothers and Wives Association) was formed in 1944.³⁴

The functions of the *Asociación* were similar to those of any other patriotic organization during this period. Yet, the Mexican American women of Tucson also had some unique and distinct goals from the Anglo women who had formed their own social clubs and ladies' auxiliaries. One of their specific goals was to boost the morale of the Mexican American soldiers who were away from the Tucson area. Another goal was to build a recreation center for the exclusive use of Mexican American soldiers.

These women did not purposely segregate themselves from the other kinds of wartime activities organized by the Anglo women. Rather, they felt the need to reinforce the cultural, emotional, and traditional sentiment commonly shared among Mexican Americans whose loved ones were away at war. Through their own organization, these women sought to unite Mexicanos and Mexicanas in their community, and help them deal with the hardships caused by the war.

Women in the *Asociación* had sons, husbands, brothers, or other family members in the military, many of whom were serving overseas. They were young and old, and came from differing socio-economic backgrounds. Many were young homemakers, others were working-class women who toiled as section hands on the Southern Pacific Railroad. Some were secretaries or sales clerks, and still others were much older women who maintained households. Membership was not strictly limited to married women or to the mothers of servicemen. All women who wanted to participate in the group were encouraged to do so.

The early activities of the *Asociación* focused on the sales of war bonds and war stamps. Mexicanos and their families considered it a privilege to buy war bonds. They believed that through such sales their men serving abroad would never be without military armaments needed to defend themselves in battlefield situations.³⁵ In the period from April 1944 to July 1945, the association sold more than one million dollars worth of war bonds and war stamps. The purchase of these bonds and stamps were made by individuals in the Mexican community in Tucson.

The Mexicanas of Tucson experienced war's daily trials and took on the home-front responsibilities. They collected clothing for the Red

Cross to be sent to war-torn, devastated countries. They also sent clothing to social service agencies in Mexico.³⁶

The women combed their neighborhoods for scrap metal. They saved foil from candy, gum, and cigarette wrappers, and turned in large quantities of the foil to collection centers. The homemaker became just as important to the war effort as the women who worked in defense jobs. Mexicanas planted their own "victory" gardens. They learned to bottle and preserve vegetables and fruits. They saved waste fats and turned in their collections of fats and grease, which yielded glycerin for high explosives. They collected tin cans, which went into armaments and cans for the soldiers' "C" rations.

Mexicanas also maintained their household equipment in efficient shape and decreased fuel consumption. With an increasing demand for paper by the government, the supply at home was reduced. They salvaged old magazines and newspapers. They made things last, or else did without. The Asociación offered in-home child care services for mothers who were performing war-related services, such as donating blood and making bandages for the Red Cross, gathering food for the U.S.O., or performing duties required of them as air-raid wardens. Clearly, the Mexicanas proved their resourcefulness in the home.³⁷

During the height of its activity, the Asociación was incorporated into a non-profit entity, and it purchased land on which to build the recreation center it so eagerly sought to erect for the Mexican American soldiers. The money to pay property taxes for the land came from the treasury and from sales of their community newspaper, the *Chatter*.³⁸

By August 1945, however, many Mexican American soldiers began to return home. This signaled the steady decline of the Asociación. Some of the group's most active women soon resigned their memberships, as their families reunited. Husbands, sons, and brothers were home. With the war over, there was no longer a need for the mass distribution of the *Chatter*. There were also no more war bonds and stamps to sell at community events or gatherings.

Nevertheless some of the women kept the organization active, despite its decreasing numbers. Their goal remained the same—that of building a recreation center for Mexican American soldiers. The women also remained busy helping families adjust to postwar life.

In August 1945, the Asociación had \$2,700 in its treasury.³⁹ While interest in the Asociación decreased in the post-war years, the activity of its leaders remained constant. Eventually, the demands of the Asociación on the few remaining members became too numerous. In 1964, twenty years after the Asociación was organized, the Arizona Corporation Commission revoked the group's non-profit certification, citing inactivity for the action. Members had at times neglected to submit annual reports. But the Asociación struggled along, continuing its effort to remain a viable and strong organization by helping the needy within their community. In 1971, they filed their reincorporation papers with the Arizona Corporation Commission with the intention of raising funds to spend on providing for the needs of the elderly. In 1976, the four remaining members of the Asociación, Lucía M. Fresno, Dolores C. Delgado, Luz M. López, and Juanita L. Loroña⁴⁰ voted to dissolve the organization.

Records do not show why the recreation center was not built after the war. It may have been too expensive to do so, or perhaps the treasury had been depleted by the property taxes the Asociación had to pay on the land it owned. Or perhaps the members no longer felt the center was necessary. The veterans were too preoccupied with finding jobs and putting their lives back together to be concerned about a recreation center. Other factors were to account for the inactivity of the Asociación over the years. As the members grew older, illness and perhaps a lack of mobility kept them from being as active in the organization. Death also took its toll on the group.⁴¹

In the war years, Mexicanos and Mexicanas in Arizona united their communities and committed themselves to fighting an *American* war, *their* war. And as they fought on the home front, they also struggled to retain their own unique ethnic identity. They strengthened the cultural bonds among themselves in order to reaffirm their own brand of American identity.

Mexican Americans in Phoenix and Tucson needed their own heroes and heroines who could personalize and simplify the larger wartime struggle. The Mexican Americans in these communities proved themselves to be such homefront heroes and heroines, meeting the challenge to advance the Allied cause, while retaining the morale of their communities through social and cultural activities.

In spite of the culture clashes with Anglos, and the prevalent racism and prejudice against them, the Mexican Americans shared with the

larger society the intent to win the war abroad. Unfortunately, however, this shared goal of victory during wartime was not enough to break all the existing racist barriers. The Mexican American soldiers fighting overseas for democracy left behind those in their hometowns to struggle for this same goal in Arizona. Mexican men, women, and youths in Phoenix and Tucson created their own separate American home front activities in their own communities. They left behind a legacy which is manifested in a cultural and ethnic pride that can be defined simply as "Mexican Americanism."

This form of nationalism, pride in one's ethnicity and cultural history, coupled with the patriotism of Mexican Americans, convinced many of them that racism was un-American and unpatriotic. These individuals took on the responsibility of eradicating it from this country.

The Mexican American soldier was the cultural and historical symbol of Americanism and social equality. At home, the Mexican Americans were the brave patriots who remained loyal to America as they sacrificed their loved ones for freedom and democracy. Such a sacrifice is the legacy the Mexican Americans of the 1940s leave behind for the rest of us to acknowledge and remember.

NOTES

¹ The term "Mexican American," as used in this paper, literally means a combination of both Mexican and American. I use it in a generic sense to include *Mexicanos*, *Latinos*, Spanish-Americans and the *Hispanos* who lived in the southwestern states of Arizona, California, New Mexico, Texas, and Colorado. I may use the terms interchangeably in order to reflect the terminology used during the World War II period in the Southwest. Mexican Americans also used these terms interchangeably to identify themselves, and the terms are found throughout Spanish-language newspapers during this period. The terms group together those who speak Spanish, and imply a cultural, linguistic, and social bond which unites the Spanish-speaking in the Southwest.

² The role of the Mexican American in World War II in Chicano/a history has been interpreted by Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 2nd edition, (New York: Harper & Row, 1981); Ralph C. Guzmán, "The Political Socialization of the Mexican American People," (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1970); Carey McWilliams, *North From Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking*

- People of the United States* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968); Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera, *The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972); Robin Fitzgerald Scott, "The Mexican-American in the Los Angeles Area, 1920-1950: From Acquiescence to Activity," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1971). The work by Raul Morin, *Among the Valiant: Mexican-Americans in WW II and Korea* (Alhambra, Calif.: Borden Publishing Co., 1966) stands out as the definitive work which cites the military participation and outstanding heroism of the Mexican American soldier on the battlefield. Mario T. García expertly defines and examines the rise of the Mexican American generation in Los Angeles in his article, "Americans All: the Mexican American Generation and the Politics of Wartime Los Angeles, 1941-45," *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 65, No. 2 (June, 1984), 278-289; Christine Marín, "Chicanos in World War II Phoenix" (Paper presented at the National Association of Chicano Studies 10th Annual Conference, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ, 25-27 March 1982).
- ³ Contributions made by Mexican American women in Tucson have been documented in: Christine Marín, "La Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas: Tucson's Mexican American Women in World War II," *Renato Rosaldo Lecture Series Monograph*. Vol. 1, (Tucson: Mexican American Studies & Research Center, The University of Arizona, 1985), 5-18.
- ⁴ Harry T. Getty, *Interethnic Relationships in the Community of Tucson* (New York: Arno Press, 1976) provides a social analysis of Tucson's Mexican American community during the period between 1945 and 1947. The prominent Spanish-language newspapers of Phoenix and Tucson, *El Sol* and *El Tucsonense*, should be considered primary sources of vital information on the wartime activities of Mexican Americans.
- ⁵ Gerald D. Nash, *The American West Transformed: The Impact of the Second World War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), vii.
- ⁶ U.S. Bureau of the Census. Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. *Population. Second Series. Characteristics of Population. Arizona*. (Wash., D.C.: USGPO, 1941), 3; 36; Nash, *The American West Transformed*, 110.
- ⁷ Michael J. Kotlanger, "Phoenix, Arizona: 1920-1940," (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, Tempe, 1983), 427-428.
- ⁸ It is common knowledge that racism and discrimination towards ethnic and racial minorities prior to and during World War II was prevalent in Phoenix. See: Michael J. Kotlanger, "Phoenix, Arizona: 1920-1940," (Ph.D. diss., Arizona State University, Tempe, 1983); Herbert B. Peterson, "A Twentieth Century Journey to Cíbola: Tragedy of the 'Bracero' in Maricopa County, Arizona, 1917-1921," (Master's thesis, Arizona State University, 1975); Christine Marín, "Patriotism Abroad and Repression at Home: Mexican Americans in World War II." Unpublished Manuscript, 1977; James E. Officer, "Arizona's Hispanic Perspective" 38th Arizona Town Hall, May 17-20, 1981 (Phoenix: Arizona Academy, 1981); Bradford Luckingham, "Urban Development in Arizona: The Rise of Phoenix," *Journal of Arizona History*, Vol. 22, No. 2, (Summer, 1981), 197-234; Shirley J. Roberts, "Minority Group Poverty in Phoenix," *Journal of Arizona History*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (Winter, 1973), 347-362.

See also the newspaper articles: "¡Que Hay Discriminación y Segregación de los Mexicanos en Arizona!," *El Sol*, 4 Feb. 1943; "Hay Escandalosa DISCRIMINACIÓN: Valientemente se enfrenta a ésta situación el Diputado Francisco Robles y J.C. Carreon," *El Sol*, 11 Feb. 1943; "Perdónalos Señor," [Editorial] *El Sol*, 18 Feb. 1943; "Advertancias acerca de la discriminación," *El Sol*, 13 March 1942; "Discriminación Mexicana en Phoenix," *El Sol*, 18 June 1943; "Afrentosa discriminación en Phoenix," *El Sol*, 2 July 1943; "Phoenix will rot . . . unless it integrates, says a controversial report," *New Times* (Phoenix), 19-25 Dec. 1984; "Racial ban common in deeds in Valley, attorney maintains," *Arizona Republic* (Phoenix) 1 Aug. 1986, sec. A.

⁹ "Grandioso Baile," *El Sol*, 23 Jan. 1942.

¹⁰ See: Kaye Lynn Briegel, "Alianza Hispano-Americana, 1894-1965: A Mexican American Fraternal Insurance Society," (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1974); James D. McBride, "Liga Protectora Latina: An Arizona Mexican-American Benevolent Society," *Journal of the West*, Vol. 14, No. 4, (October, 1975), 82-90; James E. Officer, "Sodalities and Systemic Linkage: The Joining Habits of Urban Mexican-Americans," (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1964); José Amaro Hernandez, "The Political Development of Mutual Aid Societies in the Mexican American Community: Ideals and Principals," (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Riverside, 1979). See also the newspaper accounts: "Resurgiran los Latinos," *El Sol*, 3 April 1942; "Los Mexicanos en Esfuerzo de Guerra," *El Sol*, 16 Oct. 1942.

¹¹ *Governor's Files: George Wiley Paul Hunt*. Box 3. File Folder #29: "Schools, Segregation in." Arizona Department of Library Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona; Ruby Haigler, "Tempe, the Center of the Garden Spot of Arizona." Unpublished Manuscript, 1914. Arizona Collection. Hayden Library. Arizona State University, p. 7; "Historical and Architectural Survey. Prepared for the City of Tempe Neighborhood Development Program." Vol. 1. Prepared by a Joint Venture, CNWC Architects and Gerald A. Doyle & Associates. Unpublished Manuscript. 1976. Arizona Historical Foundation. Hayden Library. Arizona State University, p. 19; "Obituary: Rose Frank," *Tempe Daily News*, 8 Feb. 1985, *Tempe School District No. 3. Centennial History*. (Tempe: Tempe Elementary School District, 1977), 1; Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*. 2nd edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1981), 330.

¹² See the correspondence from Vicente Alfaro to Governor Osborn, July 31, 1941, and August 8, 1941, in: *Governor's Files: Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing 1940-1946*. Box 19: "National Youth Administration for Arizona, 1940-1942." Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona.

¹³ In his 1933 inaugural address, Franklin D. Roosevelt pledged to be a "good neighbor" to Latin America in order to improve diplomatic relations. This approach improved hemispheric relations and paved the way for cooperation and security during World War II. See: Edward O. Guerrant, *Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy*. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1950).

¹⁴ *Governor's Files: Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing. 1940-1946*. Box 19: "National Youth Administration for Arizona, 1940-1942. Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records, Phoenix, Arizona.

- ¹⁵ *Ibid.* Osborn letter to Jane Rider, August 8, 1941.
- ¹⁶ *Governor's Files: Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing. 1940-1946.* Box 20: "Race Prejudice, 1941-1942." Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona.
- ¹⁷ See Joseph F. Park, "The History of Mexican Labor in Arizona During the Territorial Period," (Master's thesis, The University of Arizona, 1961); Roberta Watt, "History of Morenci, Arizona," (Master's thesis, The University of Arizona, 1956); Michael E. Casillas, "Mexicans, Labor, and Strife in Arizona, 1896-1917," (Master's thesis, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, New Mexico, 1979), 82-105; James Ward Byrkit, "Life and Labor in Arizona, 1901-1921: With Particular Reference to the Deportations of 1917," Ph.D. diss., Claremont Graduate School, 1972; James R. Kluger, *The Clifton-Morenci Strike: Labor Difficulty in Arizona, 1915-1916* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1970); A. Blake Brophy, *Foundlings on the Frontier; Racial and Religious Conflict in Arizona Territory* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1972); James B. Allen, *The Company Town in the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966), 43-49, 103.
- ¹⁸ *Governor's Files: Sidney Preston Osborn. Listing. 1940-1946.* Box 20: "Race Prejudice, 1941-1942." Arizona Department of Library, Archives and Public Records. Phoenix, Arizona.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ "Los niños Mexicanos de Phoenix triunfaron en el certamen de hule," *El Sol*, 4 July 1942.
- ²¹ For lengthy accounts of the achievements by the Mexican American "Victory Labor Volunteers," see the following newspaper articles: "Los Mexicanos en Esfuerzo de Guerra," *El Sol*, 16 October 1942; "Constituye un Mayúsculo Mérito para los Mexicanos que se han sumado a los Voluntarios de la Victoria," *El Sol*, 23 October 1942; and "La Pizca del algodón," *El Sol*, 30 October 1942.
- ²² See the newspaper accounts: "Canvassers to seek cotton field army," *Arizona Republic*, 28 September 1942; "Labor Volunteers reach 3,476 total," *Arizona Republic*, 30 September 1942; "Arizona cotton-picking project needs 2,500 more workers," *Arizona Republic*, 3 October 1942; "Victory labor drive sparks city's greatest community effort," *Arizona Republic*, 4 October 1942.
- ²³ "Muy Importante," [Advertisement], *El Sol*, 9 October 1942.
- ²⁴ The Friendly House was one of the agencies that grew out of the Americanization Movement. It was founded in 1921 through the efforts of the Phoenix Americanization Committee. Plácida García Smith, a former teacher from Conejos, Colorado, and director of the Friendly House from 1931 through 1963, was active in the Mexicano community and became dedicated to helping in the Americanization of Mexican immigrants in Phoenix. For an excellent account of the Friendly House and the Americanization Movement in Phoenix, see: Mary Ruth Titcomb, "Americanization and Mexicans in the Southwest: A History of Phoenix's Friendly House, 1920-1983" (Master's thesis, University of California at Santa Barbara, 1984).

- ²⁵ See: "La Pizca del algodón," *El Sol*, 30 October 1942 and "Victory Labor drive sparks city's greatest community effort," *Arizona Republic*, 4 October 1942.
- ²⁶ See the following: "Bolítn de la Comunidad Marcos de Niza," *El Sol*, 17 February 1942; "En la comunidad Marcos de Niza," *El Sol*, 20 February 1942; "Homenaje a los Cadetes Latinos," *El Sol*, 23 February 1942.
- ²⁷ "El Junior College festeja a los cadetes Hispano-Americanos," *El Sol*, 10 March 1942.
- ²⁸ "Se darán clases de Constitución," *El Sol*, 4 February 1943.
- ²⁹ "Boy Scouts, Tropa 47 del Corazón de María," *El Sol*, 11 February 1943.
- ³⁰ "Vote is urged by ministers," *Arizona Republic*, 23 February 1943.
- ³¹ For various accounts of this cigarette drive, see the following articles: "¡Para Los Soldados!" *El Sol*, 20 August 1943; "Se formaliza la campaña de colección de fondos para envío de cigarros a los soldados," *El Sol*, 27 August 1943; "La Colecta para cigarros," *El Sol*, 10 September 1943; "¡Nuestra colecta para los cigarros!" *El Sol*, 1 October 1943.
- ³² "¡Para los Soldados!" *El Sol*, 20 August 1943.
- ³³ For a social analysis of the Mexican American community in Tucson, Arizona, between 1945 and 1947, see Harry T. Getty, *Interethnic Relationships in the Community of Tucson*. The newspaper, *El Tucsonense*, is a major primary source of important information that reveals much about the wartime activities and concerns of the Mexican American community. See also Chapter 14, "Mexicans in Tucson on the Eve of World War II," in Thomas E. Sheridan's *Los Tucsonenses: The Mexican Community in Tucson, 1854-1941* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1986), 235-248.
- ³⁴ See: Christine Marín, "La Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas," 5-18.
- ³⁵ Rose Rodríguez Caballero, interview with author, Tucson, 18 January 1985.
- ³⁶ *Chatter*. (Tucson). 20 August 1944.
- ³⁷ Rose Rodríguez Caballero, interview with author, Tucson, 18 January 1985.
- ³⁸ "Old 'Little Cart' Lives On," *Arizona Daily Star*, 24 June 1976, sec. C.
- ³⁹ *Chatter*. (Tucson). 17 August 1945.
- ⁴⁰ "Old 'Little Cart' Lives On," *Arizona Daily Star*, 24 June 1976, sec. C; Rose Rodríguez Caballero, interview with author, Tucson, 18 January 1985.
- ⁴¹ Some of the information used in this history of the *Asociación* has been published. See: Christine Marín, "La Asociación Hispano-Americana de Madres y Esposas," 5-18.