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# The Chicana in American History: The Mexican Women of El Paso, 1880–1920—A Case Study

Mario T. García

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ALTHOUGH MEXICAN WOMEN have made significant contributions to the growth of a Chicano working class in the United States, their history has received little attention. Interpretive and historiographical pieces have been written, but no in-depth scholarship on the subject has emerged.[1] One factor that may explain this shortcoming is the absence of female Mexican

The author wishes to thank Ramón Eduardo Ruiz, W. Elliot Brownlee, Mary Brownlee, and Ileana Rodríguez for their helpful comments on this paper.

[1]General and interpretive works based on secondary sources include Martha P. Cotera, *Diosa y Hembra: The History and Heritage of Chicanas in the U.S.* (Austin, 1976); María Linda Apodaca, "The Chicana Woman: An Historical Materialist Perspective," *Latin American Perspectives*, IV (Winter and Spring 1977), 70–89; and Flor Saiz, *La Chicana* (N.p., 1973). For contemporary history based on recent census data, see Laura E. Arroyo, "Industrial and Occupational Distribution of Chicana Workers," *Aztlán*, IV (1973), 343–382; and Rosaura Sánchez, "The Chicana Labor Force," in Rosaura Sánchez and Rosa Martínez Cruz, *Essays on La Mujer* (Los Angeles, 1977), 3–15. On historiography, see Judith Sweeney, "Chicana History: A Review of the Literature," in Sánchez and Martínez Cruz, *La Mujer*, 99–123; and Rosalinda M. González, "A Review of the Literature on Mexican American Women Workers in the U.S. Southwest, 1900–75" (Unpublished paper available in the Chicano Studies Library, University of California, Berkeley). Also, consult the following bibliographies which have sections on history: Roberto Cabello-Argandoña, Juan Gómez-Quinoñes, and Patricia Herrera Durán, eds., *The Chicana: A Comprehensive Study* (Los Angeles, 1975); and Cristina Portillo, Graciela Rios, and Martha Rodríguez, eds., *Bibliography of Writings on La Mujer* (Berkeley, 1976). For interpretive articles on contemporary

American historians. Moreover, Chicano history, like most history, while showing slow but healthy development recently, only now has begun to focus on the role of Mexican American women.[2] A "Chicana" writer finds it "disheartening" to discover scant mention of women in the latest publications on Chicano history.[3] Yet "her history" is an integral part of the Mexican saga in the Southwest. As one scholar has observed, Chicano history without the Chicana would be "false" and "truncated."[4] This study attempts to help correct the omission of women in Chicano history and suggests some of the major research areas that might be explored, using the case study of Mexican women in El Paso, Texas, between 1880 and 1920.[5]

Women of Mexican descent appear early in the story of the Southwest. On the whole, most were wives and mothers, and their story has yet to be told. Wives accompanied their husbands on the long and perilous trek to the United States during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The family, of course, represented the most important institution transferred across the border by Mexican immigrants. The Dillingham Commission report of 1911 on the state of foreign immigration to the United States, authorized by the United States Senate, noted that a high percentage of Mexican laborers in western

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Chicanas, the following sample can be consulted: Noemi Lorenzana, "La Chicana: Transcending the Old and Carrying Out a New Life and Self-Image," *De Colores*, II (1975), 6–14; Jennie V. Chávez, "An Opinion: Women of the Mexican-American Movement," *Mademoiselle*, LXXXII (April 1972), 150–152; and Adal Riddel, "Chicanas and El Movimiento," *Aztlán*, (1974), 155–165. For a more recent and general treatment, see Alfredo Mirandé and Evangelina Enríquez, *La Chicana: The Mexican-American Woman* (Chicago, 1979).

[2]For a discussion of recent publications in Chicano history, see Juan Gómez Quinoñes and Luis Arroyo, "On the State of Chicano History: Observations on Its Development, Interpretation, and Theory, 1970–1974," *Western Historical Quarterly* 1976), 155–185.

[3]Noemi Lorenzana, "Hijas de Aztlán," *De Colores*, I (Summer 1974), 43.

[4]Sweeney, "Chicana History," 99–100.

[5]Besides being the most important point of entry for Mexican immigrants, El Paso also served as a major urban employer of Mexican workers. Mexican men, for example, readily found jobs at the smelter, the railroad yards, in construction, clerical work, and in a variety of other low-skilled occupations. A special El Paso census conducted in 1916 recorded that out of a total population of 61,482, Mexicans represented 32,724 or 54.8 percent of the city's inhabitants. Except for San Antonio, El Paso by 1920 contained the largest urban concentration of Mexicans in the U.S., and the border city was the only southwestern metropolis possessing more Mexicans than Anglo Americans. For more on El Paso and its Mexican population, see Mario T. García, "Obreros: The Mexican Workers of El Paso, 1900–1920" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 1975); and Oscar J. Martínez, *Border Boom Town: Ciudad Juárez since 1848* (Austin, 1978).

industries had brought their wives from nearby Mexico. According to the commission, some 58.2 percent of Mexican railroad workers in the survey reported that their wives were with them in the United States. This figure was much higher than that for other immigrant railroad workers in the West who had arrived from more distant lands, such as southern Europe and Asia, and the commission suggested, although without evidence, that "the conditions under which section hands live are less uninviting to the Mexican women than to the women of any other race."[6] One railroad line, the Santa Fe, by 1910 was encouraging the migration of Mexican families in order to stabilize working conditions. As a Santa Fe engineer put it, hiring married men resulted in better and more productive workers.[7] Investigators for the Dillingham Commission also discovered a similar condition in urban-related work. Sixty percent of Mexicans employed as construction workers by street railways, for example, admitted they had their wives with them.[8]

In Mexico at the turn of the century, the urban working class and rural family appear to have constituted a strong social and economic institution. Ernesto Galarza, in his autobiographical *Barrio Boy*, recalls that his family in rural Nayarit included not only his mother (who divorced Galarza's father prior to his birth), but also his aunt, three uncles, and two cousins. In the Galarza household, the men went to labor in the fields during the day while the women and children remained and performed the housework and cooking.[9]

Leaving Mexico and entering the United States, the Mexican family seems to have remained strong and retained its native character rather than being weakened by the immigration process. The majority of Mexican immigrant families, as revealed in a sample taken from a 1900 El Paso census, were either nuclear or extended (see Table 1). Over half of the immigrant household units were nuclear families living by themselves or in an augmented relationship with nonrelated household resi-

[6]"Immigrants in Industries, Part 25: Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States," 61 Cong., 2 sess., *S. Doc. 633* (1911), Vol. III, Part I, pp. 11–12 (cited hereafter as *Dillingham Commission*).

[7]Judith Fincher Laird, "Argentine, Kansas: The Evolution of a Mexican-American Community: 1905–1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Kansas, 1975), 121.

[8]*Dillingham Commission*, Part 25, Vol. III, Parts I and II, pp. 39 and 86.

[9]Ernesto Galarza, *Barrio Boy* (Notre Dame, 1971), 3–71.

TABLE 1
HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, EL PASO, 1900
(PERCENTAGES ROUNDED OFF)

| | Mexican National | Mexican American | Non-Spanish Surname |
|---|---|---|---|
| Nuclear family households | | | |
| Husband, wife and children | 38% (58) | 45% (11) | 29% (65) |
| Husband, wife, no children | 7% (10) | 4% (1) | 10% (23) |
| Broken families | | | |
| Husband and children | 3% (4) | 0 (0) | 3% (7) |
| Wife and children | 19% (30) | 0 (0) | 9% (21) |
| Single-person households | 7% (12) | 4% (1) | 20% (42) |
| Extended-family households[a] | 13% (20) | 16% (4) | 5% (13) |
| Augmented-family households[b] | 11% (17) | 30% (7) | 19% (40) |
| Extended-augmented family households[c] | 0 (1) | 0 (0) | 2% (6) |
| Total Number (393) | (152) | (24) | (217) |

[a] Nuclear family living with one or more relatives.
[b] Nuclear family living with nonfamily members, such as lodgers, in the same household.
[c] Nuclear family living with both relatives and nonfamily members
SOURCE: U.S. *Manuscript Census, 1900.*

dents, such as boarders. In addition, 13 percent were extended families. More Mexican immigrant families lived in nuclear households than did non-Spanish surname families. Perhaps reflecting greater personal mobility, a larger percentage of non-Spanish surnamed individuals resided in single-person households than did Mexican immigrants. On the other hand, more broken homes could be found among the Mexican immigrant population, especially those involving a mother and her children; however, it is possible that in some cases husbands were not recorded due to jobs outside the city. Still considerably more Mexican Americans than Mexican immigrants lived in nuclear families. Many Mexican Americans also apparently took in boarders.[10] Since the 1910 and 1920 manuscript cenuses are not

[10]U.S. manuscript census, 1900, El Paso County, Vols. 35 and 36. There are 3,123 family units included in the 1900 census for the city of El Paso. To acquire a representative sample, every eighth unit was recorded commencing with the second unit of the First Ward (the census encompassed El Paso's four wards). The total number of units in the sample amounted to 393. For sample methodology, see Peter R. Knights, *The Plain People of Boston, 1830–1860: A Study of City Growth* (New York, 1971), 3–10. I wish to thank Carl V. Harris of the Department of History, University of California, Santa Barbara, for his assistance in determining the sample. In a study of the Mexican

yet available to scholars, no comparisons can be made, but it is possible that over this twenty-year period a pattern of chain migration set in and extended-family households grew among Mexican immigrants as other relatives arrived, especially those from the northern Mexican states.

Although some Mexican women in El Paso and throughout the urban Southwest contributed to household incomes by taking in wash or lodgers, no disintegration took place in the traditional pattern of men being the chief wage-earners and women doing household work. The sample taken from the El Paso census of 1900 shows that no mothers and few daughters, most of the latter being too young, in an immigrant family headed by the father worked outside the home.[11] As wife and mother the Mexican housewife was primarily responsible for caring for the Mexican male worker and her family. Under a division of labor which relegated nearly all of them to housework, Mexican women, like most women, had to maintain the male work force as well as reproduce it. Within the family, Mexican males not only found relief from their job alienation, but nourishment for another day's hard work. Consequently, the family, and the women's role in it, performed a significant economic task.[12]

Too poor to afford their own domestics, Mexican women in the border city performed their housework under depressed living conditions. "Chihuahuita," the largest Mexican settlement in El Paso and adjacent to the Rio Grande River border, contained the city's worst and most congested housing. While no legal restrictions prohibited Mexicans from living in the better homes found in American neighborhoods, lack of occuptional

community in Los Angeles between 1850 and 1890, Richard Griswold del Castillo also found that most Mexican immigrants lived in nuclear families. Griswold del Castillo, "La Familia Chicana: Social Change in the Chicano Family of Los Angeles, 1850–1890," *Journal of Ethnic Studies*, III (Spring 1975), 41–58.

[11] *Manuscript Census, 1900.* In a sample of 152 immigrant households, of those with a working father not one unit contained a mother working outside the home and only seven units had working daughters.

[12] For interpretive works on the role of women as housewives and mothers, see Shiela Rowbotham, *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World* (Middlesex, England, 1973); Rowbotham, *Hidden from History: Rediscovering Women in History from the 17th Century to the Present* (New York, 1976); Alva Buxenbaum, "The Status of Women Workers," *Political Affairs*, LII (Nov. 1973), pp. 31–42; and Wally Secombe, "The Housewife and Her Labour under Capitalism," *New Left Review*, LXXXII (Jan.–Feb. 1974), 3–24.

mobility, in addition to race and cultural prejudice, kept Mexicans segregated in *barrios* (slums). Mexicans adjusted to these conditions, however, because of acquaintance with poverty, plus the mistaken belief they would soon return to Mexico with ample savings.

Unfortunately, the adjustment of Mexicans left them open to exploitation and neglect by landlords and city officials. Due to their small wages, Mexican workers had to live in *jacales*—adobe homes—with dirt floors. Reporter Lewis Gilbert of Missouri noted in a visit to El Paso in 1900 that the huts, home to the Mexicans, had from one to three rooms. In sharp contrast to their adobe houses, the Missourian observed, Americans built their structures of bricks. For heating and cooking, the Mexicans gathered firewood from timber that flowed down the Rio Grande. Some resorted to stealing coal from nearby railroad cars. Tragically, the burning of these fuels often led to fires which destroyed the jacales. Furthermore, little sanitation existed in the Mexican barrios. Since they did not own property, except for their huts, Mexicans found it difficult to acquire municipal services paid by local property taxes. American property owners in Chihuahuita, who rented land to Mexicans, delayed improvements by claiming they could not afford increased taxes. Unlike the American sections, for example, the Mexican districts contained few sidewalks or paved streets. In 1897 the Spanish language newspaper, *El Monitor*, complained about poor street conditions in the Mexican area where rubble and latrines could be found. Already crowded, the addition of new immigrants and refugees, especially during the Mexican Revolution of 1910, only increased the high population density of Chihuahuita. Jacales at times housed two or three families. Although tenements had replaced some of the huts by 1916, the new buildings quickly became congested and unsanitary due to the Mexican's poverty, continued immigration, and neglect by landlords.[13]

Under these conditions, Mexican housewives did the hard manual labor which allowed immigrant families to live on husband's and sometimes childrens' limited earnings. Mexican

[13]*El Paso Times*, Jan 9, 1900, p. 6; *El Monitor*, Oct. 31, 1893, p. 3. Also, see chapter 5, "Chihuahuita: The Making of a Barrio," in García, "Obreros," 212–260.

women had to haul water for washing and cooking from the river or public water pipes. To feed their families, they had to spend time marketing, often in Cuidad Juárez across the border, as well as long, hot hours cooking meals and coping with the burden of desert sand both inside and outside their homes. Besides the problem of raising children, unsanitary living conditions forced Mexican mothers to deal with disease and illness in their families. Diphtheria, tuberculosis, typhus, and influenza were never too far away. Some diseases could be directly traced to inferior city services. Charity official, Mrs. E. Kohlberg, complained in 1909 that much of the increase in tuberculosis among the Mexican population could be blamed on the sanitation department which swept the streets of Chihuahuita without first sprinkling them with water, "thus scattering dust in every direction and releasing millions of germs." As a result, Mexican mothers had to devote much energy caring for sick children, many of whom died. The *El Paso Times* commented later in 1909 that out of thirty-six deaths during the previous week, twenty involved children less than three years of age. Almost all were Mexicans. "Death seems to be a frequent and common visitor in the homes of the Mexican element," the newspaper remarked. Lack of sewers, water, paved sidewalks, and streets plus overcrowded homes made housework one of the most arduous jobs in the Mexican settlement.[14]

The Mexican housewife, although oppressed under a sexual division of labor, helped sustain the family's male workers and indirectly El Paso's economy which grew and prospered from the labor of Mexicans. Without the woman's housework, Mexican men could not have adjusted so easily to an American urban environment. "If we are to understand the lives of the working class," one scholar stresses, "we must look at the lives of the women as well as those of the men, in the household as well as in the workplaces."[15]

[14]García, "Obreros," 238–244; *Times*, Nov. 24, 1909, pp. 1–2, and May 13, 1910, p. 4.

[15]Susan J. Kleinberg, "Technology and Women's Work: The Lives of Working Class Women in Pittsburg, 1870–1900," *Labor History*, XVII (1976), 58. Interpreting the modern role of housewives as a result of industrial capitalism, Ann Oakly writes that "the work of women has received very little serious sociological or historical attention. Their unpaid work in the home has scarcely been studied at all." Ann Oakly, *Women's Work: The Housewife, Past and Present* (New York, 1976), 3–78.

Besides their roles as housewives, Mexican women guarded Mexican cultural traditions within the family. Not only did the family represent the most fundamental institution brought by Mexican immigrants, but it proved to be the most resistant barrier to American assimilation.[16] Due to a lack of economic options, much Mexican popular culture in El Paso and throughout the Southwest centered on family activities. It is difficult with the scarcity of documentation on Mexican families to present an accurate picture of family life in El Paso, but anthropologist Manuel Gamio noted certain customs being practiced during the 1920s by Mexican immigrant families in El Paso as well as other Mexican settlements throughout the United States. Gamio observed that while Mexican immigrants accepted American material goods, they also retained earlier customs. These included folklore, songs and ballads, birthday celebrations, saints' days, baptisms, weddings, and funerals in the traditional style. Because of poverty, a lack of physicians in the barrios, and adherence to traditional customs, Mexicans continued to use medicinal herbs. Immigrant women interviewed by Gamio acknowledged that for the most part they cooked "Mexican style."[17] Mexican folk customs both inside and outside the family also included a variety of oral traditions. These involved *cuentos* (Mexican tales), children's stories, legends, ghost and goblin stories, such as "La Llorona" (The Weeper) and *dichos*—sayings and proverbs. Perhaps the most popular form of oral literature were the songs and ballads called *corridos* which were based on the Spanish romance and which the Mexicans sang in Spanish with their families and fellow-

[16]Ernesto Galarza, "Mexicans in the Southwest: A Culture in Process," in Edward H. Spicer and Raymond H. Thompson, eds., *Plural Society in the Southwest* (New York, 1972), 276–277.

[17]Manuel Gamio, *Mexican Immigration to the United States* (New York, 1971; originally published Chicago, 1930), 76–83, and Gamio, *The Life Story of the Mexican Immigrant* (New York, 1971; originally published Chicago, 1931), 82–83, 161–166. The existence of such folk traditions emphasizes what Emilio Willems discovered in his study of the German Rhineland town of Negle: the persistence of earlier preindustrial cultural practices within a modernized society or what sociologist Herbert J. Gans refers to as an "urban village." See Emilio Willems, "Peasantry and City: Cultural Persistence and Change in Historical Perspective—A European Case," *American Anthropologist*, LXXII (1970), 528–543; and Herbert J. Gans, *The Urban Villages* (New York, 1962). Also, see Herbert G. Gutman, *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America* (New York, 1976), 3–78.

workers. Singing in the family involved songs sung by mothers to their children or while doing housework. According to one folklorist, singing formed part of the evening's entertainment along with prose narratives, riddles, and games. All family members participated in these evening performances and the singing ranged from *corridos* to children's songs.[18] In addition, Mexican women instilled in their children faith in Mexican Catholic beliefs and practices. Although Mexican culture in El Paso and along the border changed over the years as Americanization modified various customs and values, Mexican housewives must nevertheless be credited with helping to keep alive native culture, thus making it easier for Mexican immigrants to adjust and work in the United States.[19]

While housework formed the most important work activity for Mexican women, some in El Paso also found jobs outside the home. El Paso, for example, had one of the earliest concentrations of Mexican female wage workers in the United States. Mexican women, as other women, worked either to augment the earnings of male family members or due to the loss of the male breadwinner. As one scholar correctly observes, "work was not a choice but a necessity."[20] A sample of 393 El Paso households taken from the 1900 manuscript census reveals that almost a fifth (17.11 percent) of Mexican households contained a working woman. American women also had to enter the labor

[18] Américo Paredes, *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (Urbana, 1976), xvii, xix–xxii; and Gamio, *Life Story*, 218.

[19] While Mexican women aided in the retention of cultural traditions within the family, it should also be pointed out that such traditions maintained the woman in a subordinate position within the family. For sociological, anthropological, and psychological views on the Mexican family in the United States, see Maxine Baca Zinn, "Chicanas: Power and Control in the Domestic Sphere," *De Colores*, II, no. 4 (1975), 19–31; Zinn, "Political Familism: Toward Sex Role Equality in Chicano Families," *Aztlán*, VI (1976), 13–26; Miguel Montiel, "The Social Science Myth of the Mexican American Family," *El Grito*, III (1970), 56–63; Miguel Montiel, "The Chicano Family: A Review of Research," *Social Work*, XVIII (March 1973), 22–31; Robert Staples, "The Mexican-American Family: Its Modification over Time and Space," *Phylon*, XXXVII (1971), 179–192; Nathan Murillo, "The Mexican American Family," in Carrol A. Hernández, *et al.*, eds., *Chicanos: Social and Psychological Perspectives* (St. Louis, 1976), 15–25; Peter Uhlenberg, "Marital Instability among Mexican Americans: Following the Patterns of Blacks?" *Social Problems*, XX (Summer 1972), 49–56; Betty Garcia-Bahne, "La Chicana and the Chicano Family," in Sánchez and Martínez Cruz, *La Mujer*, 30–47; and Leo Grebler, *et al.*, eds., *The Mexican-American People* (New York, 1970), 350–377.

[20] Apodaca, "The Chicana Woman," 71.

force and the census sample indicates that 11.21 percent of American households had a female worker. Mexican women who worked, according to the census, were either unmarried daughters, mothers with no husbands, or single women. Of the 31 Spanish surnamed households in the sample with a working female, 17 had daughters or other young relatives with jobs while the remaining 14 contained working mothers with no husbands or single women. On the other hand, married Mexican women, both foreign and native born, within a nuclear or extended family, did not work. The sample revealed no instance of a woman with an employed husband having a job.[21] Age and fertility help explain this condition. In the 1900 sample, 41.08 percent of married Mexican immigrant women were between fifteen and thirty years of age, a period when women generally give birth. Moreover, 38.44 percent of married Mexican immigrant women were between thirty and forty, a period when most women had children at home. Indeed, 77.44 percent of all married Mexican immigrant women in El Paso had children twelve years of age or under or children listed as attending school; of these 39.93 percent had children five years of age and under.[22]

If age and fertility worked against Mexican women finding jobs outside the home, so too did Mexican cultural traditions. Mexican men resented women, especially wives, working or wanting to work for wages. Most males believed their work a man's duty and that woman's consisted of raising children and keeping house.[23] As one working class newspaper in Mexico during the age of Porfirio Díaz emphasized: "To be a wife is to be a woman preferably selected amongst many other women, for her honesty, for her religiousness, for her amiability, . . . for

[21] *Manuscript Census, 1900.*

[22] *Ibid.* Virginia Yans-McLaughlin in her study of Italian immigrant families in Buffalo also discovered a preponderance of married immigrant women of child-bearing age who did not work outside the home. See Yans-McLaughlin, *Family and Community: Italian Immigrants in Buffalo, 1880–1930* (Ithaca, 1977), 180–217. Most married women of child-bearing age in the United States in the early twentieth century did not work. Valerie Kincade Oppenheimer, *The Female Labor Force in the United States* (Berkeley, 1970), 1–63.

[23] For attitudes of Mexican men toward wage-working women, see Paul S. Taylor, "Mexican Labor in Los Angeles Industry" (unpublished manuscript, Paul S. Taylor Collection, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley), part 2; and Gamio, *Life Story*, 46.

her industriousness, [and] for her docility. . . ."[24] Despite such attitudes, the Mexican family in the United States did not remain static. Over the years more Mexican women, especially daughters, became wage-workers to augment the family income. Also, as the economy expanded, especially during the "Roaring Twenties," El Paso and southwestern industries and services began to recruit more Mexican women workers. Mexican men may have more easily accepted their daughters working outside the home than their wives, but the cultural challenge and adjustment that resulted from wage-working women within the traditional male-dominated Mexican family represents a little understood and important topic for future research.[25]

The increase in Mexican female wage-workers in El Paso by 1920 can be seen in census figures for that year. The census reported that 3,474 foreign-born females, almost all Mexicans, ten years of age and older were engaged in a gainful occupation. Foreign-born female wage-workers represented half of all females ten years and over who held jobs in El Paso. Most female workers in El Paso (3,112 females or 45 percent of all employed women) did "women's work." The two largest occupations were servants (1,718) and laundresses (710)—jobs familiar to women in Mexico—where the majority of Mexican working women could be found. Due to deficiencies in skills and schooling, as well as prejudice against them, few Mexican women, unlike their American counterparts, were in such skilled professional occupations as teaching, nursing, or office work.[26] Table 2

[24] As quoted in Margaret Towner, "Monopoly Capitalism and Women's Work during the Porfiriato," *Latin American Perspectives*, IV (Winter–Spring 1977), 93. Like Mexican men, most males in the United States did not look with favor on women, especially married ones with children, working outside the home. Oppenheimer, *Female Labor Force*, 40–42.

[25] McLaughlin points out in her study of Italian immigrant families in Buffalo that acculturation, including women working outside the home, did not necessarily lead to a breakdown of traditional male authority in the family. See McLaughlin, "Patterns of Work and Family Organization: Buffalo's Italians," in Michael Gordon, ed., *The American Family in Social Historical Perspective* (New York, 1973), 140. A recent study suggests that increased numbers of married Mexican women are now working. See Rosemary Santana Cooney, "Changing Labor Force Participation of Mexican American Wives: A Comparison with Anglos and Blacks," *Social Science Quarterly*, LVI (1975), 252–261.

[26] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920: Population* (Washington, D.C., 1923), IV, 263; U.S. manuscript census, 1900; and Carlos B. Gill, "Mascota: A Mexican World Left Behind" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1975), 127.

TABLE 2
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF SPANISH-SURNAMED DOMESTICS AND LAUNDRESSES, 1889, 1910, AND 1920

| Year | Number | Percent of Total Workers (Mexican and American) |
|---|---|---|
| | DOMESTICS | |
| 1889 | 61 | 49.73 |
| 1910 | 447 | 65.37 |
| 1920 | 1528 | 76.18 |
| | LAUNDRESSES | |
| 1889 | 40 | 34.90 |
| 1910 | 220 | 64.48 |
| 1920 | 516 | 92.17 |

SOURCE: El Paso city directories for 1889, 1910, and 1920. The 1890 city directory was not used because no copies for that year could be found. The discrepancy between the 1920 census figures and those of the city directory is probably the result of a more limited survey by the compilers of the city directory.

shows the number and percentage of Spanish-surnamed women listed as domestics and laundresses in the city directories of 1889, 1910, and 1920.

Victor S. Clark, a Bureau of Labor inspector, noted in 1908 that Mexican "immigrant women have so little conception of domestic arrangements in the United States that the task of training them would be too heavy for American housewives."[27] Yet domestic work proved to be the most readily available source of jobs for Mexican women. Clark correctly recognized that women from preindustrial cultures might have difficulty adjusting to the new electrical devices of middle-class American homes, although he failed to understand that the employment of Mexican maids saved southwestern housewives from having to buy the new appliances. Mexican domestics did their work by hand. Elizabeth Rae Tyson, who grew up in El Paso, remembered the extensive use of Mexican maids by American families. "Owing to the large Mexican majority," she recalled,

. . . almost every Anglo-American family had at least one, sometimes two or three servants: a maid and laundress, and perhaps a nursemaid

[27]Victor S. Clark, "Mexican Labor in the United States," *U.S. Bureau of Labor Bulletin No. 78* (Washington, D.C., 1908), reprinted in Carlos E. Cortés, *et al.*, eds., *Mexican Labor in the United States* (New York, 1974), 496.

or yardmen. The maid came in after breakfast and cleaned up the breakfast dishes, and very likely last night's supper dishes as well; did the routine cleaning, washing and ironing, and after the family dinner in the middle of the day, washed dishes again, and then went home to perform similar service in her own home.[28]

Mexican women, besides working as servants, found other employment opportunities. Many worked as washerwomen, either in American homes or in their own as well as in the various laundries of El Paso. In laundries, they learned such other skills as the use of sewing machines and received from $4 to $6 a week. In 1917 the El Paso Laundry, the largest in the city, employed 134 Spanish-surnamed workers out of a total of 166 employees, and Mexican women, mostly doing collar and flatwork, composed what appears to have been over half of the Mexican employees. That same year the Elite Laundry had 76 Spanish-surnamed female workers out of a total of 128 employees. Another of the larger laundries, the Acme, employed 75 Spanish-surnamed females out of 121 employees in 1917. The same pattern prevailed in the smaller laundries. For example, the Post Laundry had 33 Spanish-surnamed women in their work force of 49. While many of these laundresses lived in El Paso, some came from Cuidad Juárez. The daughter-in-law of Frank Fletcher, who owned the Acme Laundry, remembers that when she arrived in 1926, a laundry truck picked up the Mexican women at the border, took them to work, and returned

[28]As quoted in Mary Wilson Barton, "Methodism at Work among the Spanish-Speaking People of El Paso, Texas" (M.A. thesis, University of Texas, El Paso, 1950), 15. Some Mexican women also worked as maids in office buildings. See Pay Roll, Mills Building, Sept. 1, 1911, in H. Stevens Collection, No. 761, University of Texas, El Paso, library. The continued employment of Mexican domestics after 1920 in El Paso suggests that the use of new household technology by middle-class Americans did not lead to a total displacement of Mexicans as domestics. It appears that Mexican women, many of them commuter workers from Ciudad Juárez, learned the use of the new technology and at the same time continued to receive low wages. The 1970 census for El Paso lists 1,394 women as private household workers out of a total Spanish-language or Spanish-surname working population of 54,789 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Population, 1970—Character of the Population*, Part 45: *Texas* [Washington, D.C., 1973], Sect. 1, p. 714). The persistence of Mexican women as domestics in El Paso and along the border goes counter to the national trend of the new household technology replacing domestics. See Ruth Schwartz Cowan, "The 'Industrial Revolution' in the Home: Household Technology and Social Change in the 20th Century," *Technology and Culture*, XVII (1976), 1–23.

them in the evening to the international bridge. The use of nonresident Mexican women limited already low wages.[29]

In addition to service jobs, some Mexican women labored as production workers, especially in El Paso's early garment factories. In 1902 Bergman's factory, which turned out shirts and overalls, reported that it had three American women and a large number of Mexican females. Yet, according to a newspaper account, Bergman concluded that he could get more and better work out of his Americans and consequently paid them $10 to $14 a week while the Mexicans received no more than $9 a week. Several years later, in 1919, the El Paso Overall Company advertised in a Spanish-language newspaper that it needed Mexican women for sewing and for general work. Mexican women likewise worked in the Kohlberg cigar factory. Although the exact nature of their work cannot be determined, 22 Mexican women out of 113 employees labored in the plant in 1917. Some women also found jobs as clerks and sales personnel in the downtown stores. An *El Paso Times* ad in 1905 read: "Wanted - 5 experienced American and Spanish salesladies." The Mexican newspaper, *El Día*, in 1919 praised Panchita Salas for her "work and charm" at the El Globo Department Store run by the Schwartz family. That same year, the White House Department Store, one of El Paso's largest, publicized in *La Patria* that it needed young women clerks in all its departments. Still other Mexicans worked as cooks or dishwashers in restaurants. In more unfortunate cases, Mexican women sold food on the streets of Chihuahuita.[30]

Finally, as in other societies, some women inhabited the saloons and gambling halls of the red-light district. The *Lone Star*, an early El Paso newspaper, in 1885 expressed shock over a twelve-year-old Mexican girl's activities. "It is rumored," the newspaper sermonized, "that she is a prostitute and most any hour of the day she can be seen in the streets with different men." When the city government enforced an ordinance in

[29]*La Patria*, Sept. 12, 1919, p. 4; *Labor Advocate*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 4; *El Paso Herald*, June 23–24, 1917, p. 7; July 28–29, 1917, p. 16; May 26–27, 1917, p. 15; Dec. 15–16, 1917, p. 4; and telephone interview with Mrs. Frank Fletcher, Jr., El Paso, Aug. 15, 1975.

[30]*Times*, Sept. 26, 1902, p. 8; *La Patria*, Oct. 30, 1919, p. 4; *Herald*, June 9–11, 1917, p. 15; *Times*, Dec. 19, 1905, p. 7; *El Día*, Feb. 18, 1919, p. 3; *La Patria*, Oct. 30, 1919, p. 4; *Times*, Dec. 8, 1903, p. 7; and *Herald*, Aug. 1, 1916, p. 14.

1903 to move the district further from the center of El Paso, the *Times* reported that many of the prostitutes "propose to go across the river, among the number being the Mexicans, which include the dance hall girls." Two years later when Lou Vidal attempted to open his dance hall, police raided the establishment and arrested his employees, which included dance hall girls María González, Josefa González, Lola Beltran, and Senida García.[31]

Not only did employers hire Mexican women for jobs characterized as "women's work," but they paid them the lowest wages in the city. Although it appears that poor wages for Mexican women can be partly explained by their work inexperience and initial low productivity, employers nevertheless used such arguments to maintain wage differentials between Mexicans and Americans and to insure profits for themselves. As a result, persistent low wages for all Mexicans, men and women, whether for economic or racial reasons, or both, served to support job and educational discrimination against Mexicans in El Paso, which kept them in a state of restricted economic mobility and near poverty.[32]

Specific attention to the wages of Mexican women in El Paso occurred as the result of hearings held in the border city in November 1919 by the Texas Industrial Welfare Commission. During three days of testimony by employers as well as female employees, the commission discovered that Mexican workers in the laundries and factories of the city received less pay than American women in other industries. The Mexicans also obtained less than the salaries of laundry and factory workers in other Texas cities who performed similar work but did not face Mexican competition. According to the commission, these differences made it more difficult to set a minimum wage throughout the state. The reason for the problem, the commission stated, could be found in the Mexican's lower standard of living,

[31] *Lone Star*, Aug. 22, 1885, p. 3; *Times*, Feb. 4, 1903, p. 2; Feb. 3, 1905, p. 3. For information on El Paso's redlight district, see C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North* (El Paso, 1968), 277–304. In 1910, the city government abolished the red-light district.

[32] On occupational and educational differences between Mexicans and Americans in El Paso, see Mario T. García, "Racial Dualism in the El Paso Labor Market, 1880–1920," *Aztlán*, VI (1975), 197–218. For a recent theoretical treatment of race and class, see Mario Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest: A Theory of Racial Inequality* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1979).

"and that is a condition which, it seems, cannot be remedied." The members of the commission concluded, although without evidence, that "the Mexican workers find it possible to 'live comfortably' on a wage that Anglo workers would regard as 'starvation wages.' "[33]

Despite the commission's conclusions, Mexican women who appeared before it refuted those who claimed that Mexicans did not need higher wages because they had a lower standard of living. One group of laundry workers who had gone on strike for higher wages testified that the laundries had paid them $4 to $5 a week. Manuela Hernández, who had worked for several years at the Acme Laundry, told the commission in Spanish that she received $11 a week. While her wages made her the highest paid Mexican woman in the plant, American women averaged $4 to $6 more, although it is not clear if the Americans performed the same work. "I find it difficult to live on my wages," Hernández commented, "which I turn in to the family budget." She estimated that it would take $16 a week for her family to live "comfortably." María Valles testified that she worked at the Elite Laundry and received $4.50 a week. She lived with her family and supported a nine-year-old daughter. "I have to support her and myself," she stated, "but I have to make great sacrifices, some days going without food, for lack of means." She believed she could live well on $15 a week. Mexican women employed in the El Paso Overall Company also testified before the commission about their need for higher wages. The *El Paso Herald* described one of these workers, Daniela Morena, as "a woman along in years," who stated that she made $7 to $8 a week and supported her mother and two children. She believed that she required at least $15 a week, "but if alone might get along with $8 or $9 a week, as she 'dressed very humbly.' " Other garment workers gave similar testimonies. The Mexican women's arguments, unfortunately, had little impact. Low wages for Mexicans, both men and women, continued to characterize the El Paso economy.[34]

[33] *Times*, Nov. 20, 1919, p. 5.

[34] *Ibid.*, and *Herald*, Nov. 20, 1919, p. 10. For a more thorough discussion of the Texas Industrial Welfare Commission's hearing in El Paso, see García, "Racial Dualism," 201–206.

In addition to their roles as housewives and wage workers, a third major activity of Mexican women in the United States was their participation in labor unions and labor strife. Though relatively few women were active in unions or labor protests, Mexican women nonetheless were involved in some of the largest and most important labor strikes in the Southwest.[35] In El Paso, the laundry strike of 1919 is illustrative of the numerous class conflicts of the post-World War I years in the United States.[36] Unlike domestics who worked alone, the Mexican laundresses labored in close physical proximity in the same plant. Consequently, a sense of community developed in the laundries that helped promote the organization of workers who demanded higher wages and union recognition. In October 1919 some of the Mexican women, together with state and local American Federation of Labor organizers, established the Laundry Workers' Union. The union then began to organize workers, almost all Mexican women, in the Acme Laundry of El Paso. When this plant refused to accept the union and fired two of the organizers, Isabel and Manuela Hernández, the rest of the almost two hundred workers went on strike demanding that the employers rehire their co-workers. "We asked for the reinstatement of the two girls . . . ," Acme employee Francisca Sáenz told a meeting of the Mexican strikers. "Isabel Hernandez," she explained, "is a marker, sorter and inspector getting $11 a week with four years experience and Manuela is getting the same wages as marker and sorter and started in six years ago." F. B. Fletcher, the president and manager of Acme, denied any knowledge of a union and claimed he had dismissed the two workers for other reasons. According to Fletcher, one of the women had been fired because "she had made talk about the laundry that was not to his liking. . . ." As for the other,

[35]The two most significant strikes involving Mexican women are the San Antonio Pecan strike in 1938 and the more recent Farah strike in El Paso in the early 1970s. Seedon C. Menefee and Orin C. Cassmore, *The Pecan Shellers of San Antonio: The Problem of Underpaid and Unemployed Mexican Labor* (Washington, D.C., 1940); Harold A. Shapiro, "The Workers of San Antonio, Texas, 1900–1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, 1952); and The San Francisco Bay Area Farah Strike Support Committee, *Chicano Strike at Farah* (San Francisco, 1974).

[36]On the numerous incidents of class strife in the United States in 1919, such as the steel strike and the Seattle general strike, see Jeremy Brecher, *Strike* (Greenwich, Conn., 1972), 133–180.

Fletcher alleged that she had been working at another laundry while insisting she had been sick and claiming pay from the Acme.[37]

When three other laundries attempted to do the work of Acme, the Mexican women at those plants joined the strike. Owners of two more laundries at first agreed to recognize the union, but then changed their minds. The women at these places also struck. In a few days somewhere between 300 and 575 workers, including some men, had gone on strike against all of El Paso's laundries. At a meeting of the Central Labor Union where representatives of the A. F. of L. addressed the laundry workers, the Mexican women unanimously agreed to stand by the union. "Truly this was a sight that would do the heart of any one good to see these girls and women," the *Labor Advocate*, the A. F. of L. organ in El Paso, reported. "[S]ome of them hardly in their teens and some of them bent with age, standing up and solemnly promising that no matter what may come or what may happen, they would stand together for the mutual good of their fellow workers."[38]

Besides the workers' own solidarity, the A. F. of L.'s support proved important in maintaining the strike. The Central Labor Union not only endorsed the action, but various locals raised funds for the women strikers. The *Herald* reported shortly after the work stoppage that the machinists of both the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad and the Galveston, Houston & San Antonio Railroad had gathered $400 for the laundry union in addition to $100 donated by the carpenter's local. Other unions which contributed included those representing plumbers, iron-workers, bricklayers, electrical workers, sheetmetal workers, freight handlers, musicians, plasterers, painters, and taxi drivers. The Central Labor Union also organized a committee headed by William J. Moran, the *Advocate*'s editor, to negotiate a settlement with the laundries. The A. F. of L.'s willingness to organize and assist the Mexicans, however, did not represent a departure from Samuel Gompers' policy of excluding alien

[37] *Advocate*, Oct. 24, 1919, p. 1 and Oct. 31, 1919, p. 1; *Herald*, Oct. 27, 1919, p. 4; and *Times*, Oct. 28, 1919, p. 3.

[38] *Advocate*, Oct. 24, 1919, p. 1 and Oct. 31, 1919, p. 1; *Herald*, Oct. 30, 1919, p. 4; *Times*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 8; and *La Patria*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 8.

workers. "The strike of the Laundry Workers in our area is somewhat unique," the *Advocate* editorialized, "for often we have taken it for granted that these workers were practically all Mexicans, hence we gave but little concern, but this is not the case. True it is, that they are nearly all of Mexican origin but they are by no means all of Mexican citizenship. The large majority are residents of El Paso and citizens of the nation, but nevertheless, let us look at the facts that are fundamentally the cause of this strike." Besides the nonrecognition of the union by the laundries and the dismissal of the women organizers, the strike concerned the low wages paid to the workers. These ranged from $4 to $6 a week. In comparison, laundry workers in Fort Worth, Dallas, Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio averaged $14 a week. "[T]here is no question," the *Advocate* stated, "but that the treatment of the laundry workers of El Paso has been disgraceful and disgrace rests upon the laundry owners."[39]

The laundry workers obtained further assistance from various Mexican social organizations in El Paso, composed of both Mexican Americans and Mexican nationals. *La Patria*, the city's major Spanish-language newspaper, expressed its support of the Mexican women and called upon other Mexican groups to do likewise. Although it did not usually favor strikes, believing them to be counterproductive as well as the work of radicals and agitators, *La Patria* believed the laundry workers' struggle was a just one: "[I]f our congenial women compatriots deserve praise," *La Patria* emphasized, "so too does the Central Labor Union and other American unions who have provided unselfish assistance as well as moral support." A delegation of twelve women and four men from the laundry union also received the endorsement of the influential mutual society, the Círculo de Amigos, which had been organized by Mexican American city employees. In a letter to all Mexican societies, Círculo officials expressed their support of the strikers "who are giving an example of character, strength and racial solidarity." Believing it important not to abandon the women in their hour of need, the Círculo called on

[39]*Herald*, Oct. 30, 1919, p. 4; *Advocate*, Oct. 27, 1919, p. 4; *Times*, Oct. 28, 1919, p. 1; *Herald*, Oct. 27, 1919, p. 4; *Times*, Oct. 28, 1919, p. 1; *Advocate*, Oct. 24, 1919, p. 1 and Oct. 31, 1919, p. 1.

all other Mexican organizations and the Mexican community to attend an informational meeting on how best to "help our sisters." To raise funds for the workers, the Círculo sponsored a dance.[40]

Hearing of the laundry strike, some Mexican workers outside El Paso voiced their support. José L. Payen of Local No. 84 of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers of Metcalf, Arizona, stressed at an El Paso strike rally the need for unionization and justice for workers. Payen, however, put forth a class ideology which went beyond the more limited union consciousness of the Mexican women and the Central Labor Union:

> Comrades in arms, we, who through our labor turn our sweat into gold, should be united, especially in these times when it appears the world is going to encounter a terrible catastrophe. We should be united to demonstrate to the capitalists that our religion is our Union and our weapon is the strike and our sights a brilliant future created through the honorable medium of our labor, and if anyone dares to destroy our sacred ideals, then they will pay the price, and we will be satisfied that we have done our sacred duty.[41]

Despite organized labor's support and that of the Mexican societies, the laundry workers faced considerable opposition. El Paso newspapers, with the exception of the *Labor Advocate* and *La Patria*, carried reports favorable to the laundry owners. A *Herald* reporter, after a visit to the Acme Laundry, noted that the entire plant appeared to be clean and well-ventilated. Besides sanitary toilets and cooking facilities, the *Herald* writer informed his readers that he had found "a Victrola in the upstairs main room where Mr. Fletcher says the girls have dances each noon." Interviewed by the *Herald*, Fletcher denied that the average wage given laundry workers amounted to $5.50 a week. Acme, according to Fletcher, paid an average of $9 a week for a nine-hour day and a fifty-four-hour week. Fletcher, however, neglected to tell the reporter what he would testify before the Texas Welfare Commission less than a month later: that the $9 average resulted from paying Mexican workers an

[40] *La Patria*, Nov. 1, 1919, pp. 3–4; Nov. 3, 1919, p. 2; and Nov. 11, 1919, p. 3.
[41] *Ibid.*, Nov. 11, 1919, p. 2.

average of $6 per week and American workers $16.55 a week. Although the *Herald* believed that workers, especially foreigners, needed to be awarded "fair pay for a fair day's work," it also agreed with New Mexico Governor O. A. Larrazolo, who warned that "reckless agitators [from] within were foes more dangerous to the United States than any foes without."[42] The *Herald* did not specifically link the Mexican women with radicalism, but the newspaper's concern with class agitation could not help but influence public opinion against the Mexicans.

To emphasize growing class conflict not only in the United States but also along the U.S.-Mexican border, both the *Herald* and the *Times* carried reports during the strike that literature printed by the Industrial Workers of the World had been seized by El Paso border officials. Some of the literature, claimed the newspapers, had been printed in Spanish and had been distributed to Mexican workers in the United States. The newspapers observed that the "Wobblie" pamphlets advocated nationalization of all industries and land in Mexico, free love, and the overthrow of existing governments. While no evidence exists of I.W.W. influence in the laundry strike nor among El Paso workers, the *Herald* nevertheless warned citizens:

> That the I.W.W. has advance guard going about the country blazing the trail for the main body and the city of El Paso has already been so blazed is the interpretation placed by some to the presence on the wall of a men's rest room in El Paso of the following lines of mystery:
>
> W
> J T N G E T N G No. 2
> I WW
> TEX[43]

While hurt by unfavorable newspaper publicity, the laundry workers' main problem concerned the owners' ability to hire strikebreakers as well as retain some of their employees. F. Ravel, proprietor of the Excelsior Laundry, refused to sign a union contract because his operation had not been seriously hampered by the strike. "Some of my Mexicans quit," he told a

[42] *Herald*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 3; Nov. 20, 1919, p. 10; and Oct. 30, 1919, p. 6.
[43] *Ibid.*, Nov. 17, 1919, p. 1; and *Times*, Nov. 18, 1919, p. 13.

reporter, "and I put Americans in their places. In a few weeks every workman in my shop will be American." Ravel contended that American labor proved to be more productive and efficient than Mexican. Besides hiring unemployed Americans, the laundries also found it easy to hire numerous Mexican workers both in El Paso and Cuidad Juárez. The *Advocate* pointed out that even though 486 women and men had gone on strike, hundreds of other Mexicans were asking for work in the laundries. How many of these were citizens and how many were not is impossible to determine. Frustrated, the strikers verbally attacked their replacements by calling them "scabs" and labor leaders demanded that the city government stop the laundries from employing other workers. The city attorney, however, ruled that no municipal ordinance prohibited employers from hiring whom they pleased.[44] Unfortunately for organized labor and the Mexican women, the A.F. of L.'s own refusal to organize or support Mexican alien workers only added to the availability of Mexican strikebreakers.

To compound their problems, the laundry workers failed to maintain the laundry drivers' support, despite an initial endorsement by the Laundry Drivers' Union. "As the first blow in a fight against Bolshevism," the *Herald* noted, "the American Legion endorsed Friday the action of the ten drivers for the Acme Laundry who withdrew from their union and stood by their employers." Unlike the laundry workers, all of the truck drivers were Anglo-Americans. The Mexican women received an additional setback when an ad appeared in the *Herald* signed by thirty-four workers, including twenty-seven Mexicans, who had remained on the job at the El Paso Laundry. Addressed "To the Public," the notice stated that the undersigned "old employees" of the laundry "have at all times been treated in a most considerate manner, and our welfare has never been neglected; . . . we are not in sympathy with the laundry workers' unfair strike and positively will not support it."[45]

El Paso's laundry strike continued until the end of 1919, but it had been lost almost from the start. The existence of a large

[44] *Advocate*, Dec. 19, 1919, p. 1; *La Patria*, Nov. 1, 1919, pp. 1 and 4; and *Herald*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 5.

[45] *Times*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 8; *Herald*, Oct. 31, 1919, p. 3; and Nov. 4, 1919, p. 8.

pool of surplus Mexican labor both in El Paso and across the border proved to be the decisive factor. Although no doubt irritated by the strike, and by the fear of class disturbances in the city, laundry owners simply hired other workers, both Mexican and American. Hampered by El Paso's large number of Mexican aliens, plus its refusal to organize or support them, the A.F. of L. assisted as best as possible the laundry workers, but could not overcome organized labor's liabilities along the border. As for the Mexican women who went on strike, it appears most never regained their jobs. Their struggle, however, represents one of the earliest displays of union consciousness and ethnic solidarity among Mexican female workers in the United States. The fact that many of the women apparently were Mexican Americans rather than Mexican nationals must also be seen as a major factor in the laundry workers' ability to organize. More permanent, knowledgeable, and secure in their rights as American citizens, unionization of Mexican American workers symbolized a process of acculturation to an industrial and urban culture.[46] Hence, the laundry strike of 1919 stands as an example of Mexican women workers in the United States actively resisting class exploitation and in the process forging their own history.

This case study of Mexican women in El Paso between 1880 and 1920 has attempted to demonstrate some of the major research themes on women that might be pursued in Chicano history. The general topics of Mexican women as housewives, as wage workers, and as participants in unionization and labor strife constitute the most important activities that have affected Mexican women in the United States. An investigation of them by historians of the Chicano experience will contribute not only to an understanding of the history of Mexican American women, but to the history of all Mexicans north of the border. The history of Chicanos, especially Chicano workers, is only half complete without an appreciation of the contributions Mexican women have made. As one Mexican American woman has concluded: "History is filled with the activities of the Chicana."[47]

[46] For a treatment of industrialization's impact on early women factory workers, see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1963), 413–417.

[47] Apodaca, "The Chicana Woman," 88.