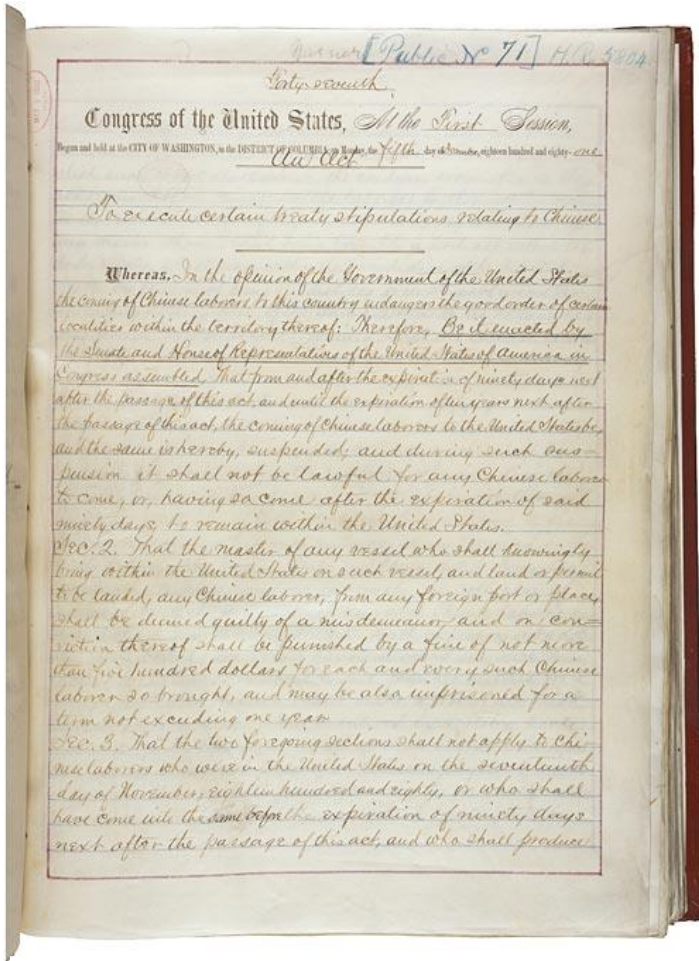


Mexican Immigration in the early 1900s

Compelling Question	What was the experience of Mexican immigrants to the United States in the early 1900s?		
Standards and Practices	<p>Mexican American Studies TEKS</p> <p>3(A) Explain the significance of the following events as turning points relevant to Mexican American history including ... Mexican Revolution; creation of the U.S. Border Patrol</p> <p>6(D) analyze physical and human geographic factors related to Mexican migration from the 1910s to the 1930s</p>		
Staging the Question	<p>Before the Lesson: Assigned Reading - <i>The History of Mexican Immigration to the U.S. in the Early 20th Century</i>. Jason Steinhauer interview with Julia Young, March 11, 2015, Kluge Center, Library of Congress https://blogs.loc.gov/kluge/2015/03/the-history-of-mexican-immigration-to-the-u-s-in-the-early-20th-century/</p> <p>Engage: Connections and observations: Graph of Mexican Immigration as percentage of all immigrants to the US</p> <p>What do students observe on the graph? What connections can students make to the assigned reading?</p>		
Supporting Question 1	Supporting Question 2	Supporting Question 3	
What were push/pull factors that increased Mexican immigration to the United States?	What challenges or barriers did Mexican Immigrants face when coming to the U.S.?	How did Mexican immigrants work to overcome the challenges they faced?	
Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	Formative Performance Task	
<p>Students will complete a T-chart with specific push/pull factors motivating Mexican immigration to the U.S.</p> <p>Major historical developments that increased immigration in this period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Exclusion Act (coupled with demand for Railroad labor) <i>The connection is not obvious in this source, so students will have to use knowledge from prior units</i> • 1910 Mexican Revolution • U.S. Entry into WWI in 1917 	<p>First: Students will engage in a gallery walk with a small group and write observations on Chart paper at their station. Groups will rotate until they have been to all three stations.</p> <p>Task: Students will write a short letter from the perspective of a Mexican immigrant to the U.S. in 1924. They will describe challenges, including specific examples from the sources.</p>	<p>Students will complete a source analysis and answer the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What challenges did the individuals in your source face? 2) What actions did they take to overcome those challenges? <p>Students will share out with 1-2 peers who looked at different sources and answer the same questions.</p>	

Featured Sources		Featured Sources	Featured Sources
<p>Source 1: Chinese Exclusion Act Description and full source</p> <p>Source 2: Congress explains the Political situation in Mexico after 1910 (and demand for ag. labor due to WWI) Original text with adapted text below <i>Scaffolding note</i> – eliminate the second part of this excerpt for time/complexity considerations Full text – pg. 23 of Congressional record</p> <p>Source 3: Work opportunities (Two translated ads from <i>La Prensa, Oct 1917</i>) Page from La Prensa, October, 1917 <i>Teachers’ Note on the highlighted word “Dillingham” in the original page</i> – This is U.S. Senator William P. Dillingham who was behind the Dillingham commission, a study funded by Congress in 1911 to study immigration and build a case for increasing immigration restrictions. Additional reading - History of La Prensa</p>		<p>Station 1: Entering the U.S.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The type of people entering” photo and caption • Delousing procedures: pgs. 424- 427 of U.S. govt. report • Quarantine Certificate Note: This video from Vox provides a comprehensive history of delousing at the U.S. – Mexican border <p>Station 2: Work opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from: “Armies in the Fields and Factories: The Mexican Working Classes in the Midwest in the 1920s.” by Zaragosa Vargas. • Female Cigar packers photo • Laundry Workers Los Angeles photo <p>Station 3: Potential Violence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excerpt from: “Refusing to Forget: History of Racial violence on the Texas-Mexico border” • Texas Rangers with Dead Bandits photo • U.S. Border Patrol created 	<p>A: Letter to the Mexican Consulate 1916 on the conditions of Railroad camps in California</p> <p>B: El Paso Times article on Bath Riots 1917</p> <p>Secondary source with explanation: Handbook of Texas Online “El Paso Laundry Strike”</p> <p>C: Bulletin in El Paso Herald on El Paso Laundry Strike 1919 against unequal pay and working conditions, after two Mexican women were fired for speaking on behalf of their union</p> <p>D: Rusk Settlement photo</p> <p>Secondary source with explanation: “Trailblazers in Houston’s East End: The Impact of Ripley House and the Settlement Association on Houston’s Hispanic Population” Thomas McWhorter Houston History Magazine, Vol 9. No 1.</p>
Summative Performance Task	Argument	Evaluate the experience of Mexican immigrants to the U.S. after 1900. Include examples of opportunities, challenges, and Mexican actions to overcome those challenges. Use specific examples from the sources in the lesson to support your assertion. CLICK HERE TO ACCESS STUDENT WORKSHEET	
	Extension	Read more about the (1) the 1917 Bath Riots, (2) the 1919 El Paso Laundry Strike, (3) the efforts of José Tomás Canales to pass legislation against the Texas Rangers, (4) the Rusk Settlement House (<i>now Ripley House</i>) and have a discussion with classmates.	
Taking Informed Action	Create a Zine that explains one of the events from the lesson/Extension. Zines are small self-published pamphlet of images and text that have roots in political activism of the 1960s. Their purpose is to spread information about special-interest topics.		

Source 1: The Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882 (Renewed in 1892; made permanent in 1902)



First page of the Chinese Exclusion Act, 1882

“Whereas in the opinion of the Government of the United States the coming of Chinese laborers to this country endangers the good order of certain localities within the territory thereof: Therefore,

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled... until the expiration of ten years next after the passage of this act, the coming of Chinese laborers to the United States be, and the same is hereby, suspended; and during such suspension it shall not be lawful for any Chinese laborer to come [to the] United States.”

Adapted Text:

“In the opinion of the government of the United States, Chinese workers coming to the U.S. endangers certain parts of the country. Therefore,

The Senate and House of Representatives pass this law – until it expires in 10 years, there is a pause on Chinese laborers coming to the U.S. It is not legal for any Chinese laborer to come to the U.S. after this law goes into effect.”

Source: National Archives, Chinese Exclusion Act <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act#:~:text=It%20was%20the%20first%20significant,immigrating%20to%20the%20United%20States>

Source 2: Congressional Record, House of Representatives, July 1, 1926

Robe Carl White, Assistant Secretary of Labor, responding to an American who wrote to the U.S. government worried about unlawful Mexican immigration.

The sporadic insurrections against President Diaz, of Mexico, assumed the form of a general revolution about the year 1910. As the revolution grew in intensity, thousands of Mexican refugees crowded across our border. It was impossible to apply the immigration laws to these refugees, and the immigration officials were instructed to admit all refugees, as well as the wounded, applying for medical treatment. Mexico remained in the throes of revolution for several years. President Diaz abdicated and governments came and went. During most of the years of the revolutions in Mexico our Army was stationed along the border. The National Guard troops were sent to the border from time to time and placed under the charge of General Funston. Due to conditions in Mexico during these years, immigration laws were necessarily inoperative and more or less null and void. To cite one instance, on the return of General Pershing from his punitive expedition into Mexico February 7, 1917, he brought back with him some 524 Chinese and over 2,000 Mexican refugees. They were permitted to enter without regard to immigration laws or Chinese exclusion laws.

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Mexico remained in the throes of revolution for several years. President Diaz [stepped down] and governments came and went. During most of the years of the revolutions in Mexico our Army was stationed along the border. The National Guard troops were sent to the border from time to time... Due to conditions in Mexico during these years, immigration laws were [not enforced]. To cite one instance, on the return of General Pershing from his punitive expedition into Mexico February 7, 1917, he brought back with him 524 Chinese and over 2,000 Mexican refugees. They were permitted to enter without regard to immigration laws or Chinese exclusion laws.

We entered the World War on April 6, 1917. Immediately in response to the demand to "speed up production," representations were made to the department of scarcity of labor in the border States, and a demand made for the admission of Mexican agricultural labor. Basing his action as a war emergency act, and under authority contained in the ninth proviso to section 3 of the immigration act of 1917, former Secretary of Labor Wilson, under date of June 6, 1917, authorized immigration officers on the Mexican border to admit all agricultural laborers, specifically waiving the illiteracy test, contract-labor clause, and the collection of head tax.

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***These are restrictions on immigrants as part of the 1917 Immigration Act**

Source 3: Two advertisements from *La Prensa*, October 1917

La Prensa was founded in San Antonio, 1913 as a Spanish-language newspaper. These two ads appeared on the same page, October 18, 1917.

¡SE NECESITAN MINEROS!
Las Compañías Carboníferas: Texas Coal Co., de Rockdale, Texas y Big Lump Lignite Co., de Big Lump, Texas, necesitan **100 MINEROS MEXICANOS**. Casas gratis, buen salario y trabajo permanente. **VENGASE INMEDIATAMENTE**. Se adelantará el dinero del pasaje de ferrocarril a cualquiera de estos dos lugares, cuando se haga necesario.
TEXAS COAL CO., ROCKDALE, TEXAS.
BIG LUMP LIGNITE CO., BIG LUMP, TEX.

MINERS ARE NEEDED!
The coal companies: Texas Coal Company of Rockdale Texas and Big Lump Lignite Company of Big Lump, Texas, need **100 MEXICAN MINERS**. Free housing, good salary and permanent work. **COME IMMEDIATELY**. Money for railroad tickets to either of these two places will be advanced, if necessary.

USTED
Tiene la idea de mandar dinero a su familia a Mexico **¿POR QUE no lo hace?**
No sabe usted que hasta con un dólar puede enviar dinero a su familia y otros lugares a México, SIN RIESGO NINGUNO PARA USTED?
SU DINERO QUEDA GARANTIZADO
Con nosotros, hasta que no lo reciba en México, la persona a quien Ud. lo envíe. Piense por un momento en el bien tan grande que le hará a su familia una corta suma de dinero y envíelo HOY MISMO. Si quiere Ud. enviar mercancías o ropa, con todo gusto la enviaremos. - Escribanos, y con gusto le daremos informes gratis sobre la manera de hacer sus envíos, por nuestro conducto.
Donde hay mexicanos es conocida nuestra casa
MAYO'S MONEY EXCHANGE
323 E. HOUSTON ST. SAN ANTONIO, TEX.

YOU have the idea of sending money to your family in Mexico.

Why don't you do it? ...

YOUR MONEY IS GUARANTEED

with us, until the person to whom you send it receives it in Mexico.

Think for a moment about the great good that a small sum of money will do for your family and send it TODAY.

If you want to send goods or clothes, we will send them with pleasure.

Write to us, and we will gladly give you free information on how to make your shipments with us.

Where there are Mexicans, our house is known

MAYO'S MONEY EXCHANGE

Station 1 Resources



Mexican immigrants were shown as *“the type of people who are bringing typhus and other diseases into California from Mexico”* by The California State Board of Health Monthly Bulletin, October 1916.

Molina, Natalia. “Borders, Laborers, and Racialized Medicalization Mexican Immigration and US Public Health Practices in the 20th Century”. *Am J Public Health*. 2011 June; 101(6): 1024–1031. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3093266/#bib21> accessed 7/18/24

UNITED STATES PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE
MEXICAN BORDER QUARANTINE

.....191.....

The bearer.....
Male.....
Female..... Age..... has been this day de-
loused, bathed, vaccinated, clothing and baggage
disinfected.

Has children..... under 10 years of age.

.....
Surgeon, U. S. P. H. S.

Source: “The dark history of “gasoline baths” at the border” - Vox.com <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkD6QfeRil8&t=333s>



Fig 1.- Mexicans wait to be bathed and deloused at the Santa Fe Bridge quarantine plant, 1917.



Fig 3. – Clothing Ready for De-Lousing by Steam

Source: U.S. government Public Health Reports, March 23, 1917.
<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hx3bww&view=1up&seq=552>

PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS

VOL. 32

MARCH 23, 1917

No. 12

QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS.

FOR PORTS OF THE UNITED STATES SOUTH OF MARYLAND.

All persons coming to El Paso from Mexico, considered as likely to be vermin infested, are sent through this plant for disinfection.

The men and women are separated, men entering one side of the building and women and small children the other. In suitable rooms all clothing is removed and pushed through an opening in the wall into the disinfecting room, where the bundles are placed in the steam-chamber carriage run out to receive them. Shoes, hats, belts, and other articles injured by steam are dropped through another opening into a large laundry basket, and when necessary are exposed to cyanogen. (Fig. 3.)

* *Cyanogen = toxic disinfectant*

Source: U.S. government Public Health Reports, March 23, 1917.

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hx3bww&view=1up&seq=552>

Station 2 Resources

... Mexicans in the North labored among thousands of workers of different nationalities inside huge factories and were governed by new rules of work discipline which valued efficiency in machine tending. ... in the Southwest [they] worked primarily among other Mexicans and were confined to repressive low-paying work like cotton picking and track maintenance and repair. Working conditions in Texas were especially notorious because they took place in the context of a system of racial segregation... Vagrancy laws in many Texas counties prevented Mexicans from leaving their jobs. Workers who tried to change their place of employment were reported to law officials who apprehended them for deportation to Mexico. ...

The recruitment of Mexicans by northern sugar companies thus produced a seasonal migration from Texas to the Midwest....

Mexican sugar beet workers suffered countless abuses ... For some, the high wages promised by labor agents decreased markedly after sugar companies deducted five dollars for each acre of work to pay for train fares, food, and housing. The workers were also cheated out of their money when sugar companies discharged them just before the harvest season ended in late fall. As winter approached, this loss of anticipated income caused major hardship; without money Mexicans faced being stranded on the farms or in the cities. Another common complaint voiced by sugar beet workers was that they did not earn enough to repay the loans advanced to them by employers. Consequently, this forced them to work beyond the contract period.

... [labor agents] reportedly took advantage of Mexicans who could not read the labor contracts even when the contracts were written in Spanish.

Vargas, Zaragosa. "Armies in the Fields and Factories: The Mexican Working Classes in the Midwest in the 1920s." *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1991, pp. 47–71. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1052027>. Accessed 30 July 2024.



Female cigar packers of Mexican descent at Kohlberg Factory, El Paso, TX. Early 1900s

Source: Photo credit: latinamericanstudies.org. Rabinowitz, Tamar. "Teaching Women's History: The El Paso Laundry Strike of 1919," New York Historical Society: Women at the Center, July 19, 2018 <https://www.nyhistory.org/blogs/the-el-paso-laundry-strike-of-1919>



Women laundry workers inside the Los Angeles Laundry, 1924

Source: "Laundry Workers In Shop", Los Angeles Public Library Photo Collection, <https://maas1848.umn.edu/s/mexican-american-art-since-1848/item/105685> Accessed 29 July 2024

Station 3 Resources

... Border turmoil became the sparks that ignited a brutal period of repression. Scattered attacks on ranches, irrigation works, and railroads by ethnic Mexicans quickly developed into a local rebellion in the [Rio Grande] Valley. They appeared to be the fulfillment of a manifesto entitled the “Plan de San Diego” drafted in South Texas in early 1915. This document called for a “liberating army of all races” composed of Mexicans, blacks, and Indians to kill all white males over age sixteen and overthrow United States rule in Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona and California. The newly-freed territory would form an independent republic, perhaps to rejoin Mexico at a future date. The [rebels] killed only a handful, but prompted indiscriminate [killings in response].

The Role of the Rangers

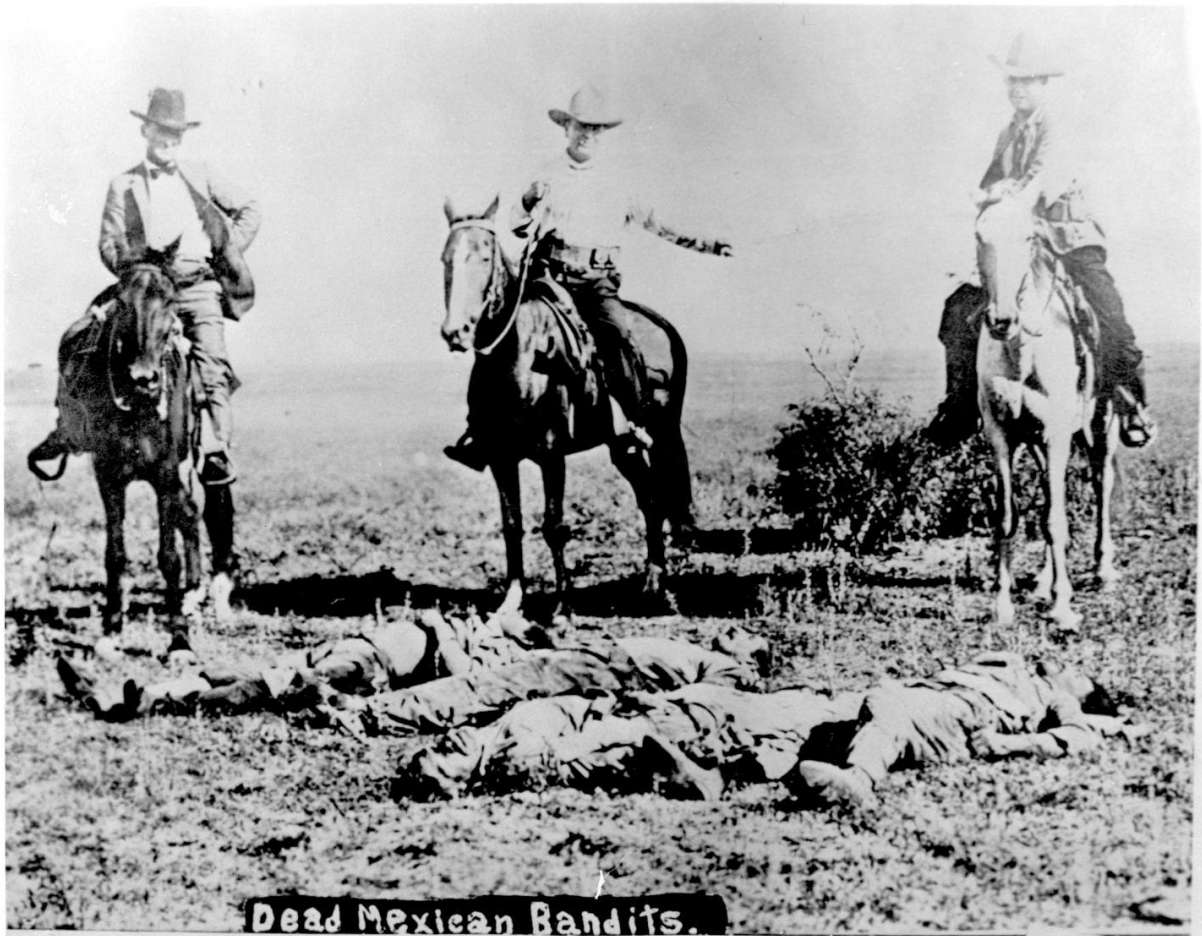
Texas Rangers played a key role in these atrocities. On September 28, 1915, for example, after a clash with about forty raiders near Ebenoza, Hidalgo County, the victorious Rangers took about a dozen raiders prisoner and promptly hung them, leaving their bodies in the open for months. Several weeks later, on October 19, after a dramatic attack derailed a passenger train heading north from Brownsville, Rangers detained ten ethnic Mexicans nearby, quickly hanging four and shooting four others. Cameron County sheriff W.T. Vann blamed Ranger Captain Henry Ransom for the killings. Vann took two suspected men from Ransom and placed them into his custody and likely saved their lives. Both proved to be innocent of any involvement.

This was not Ransom’s first such action: a month before, on September 24, he casually shot Jesús Bazan and Antonio Longoria as they rode by the site where a raid had occurred. Ransom left the bodies exposed, shocking Rancher Sam Lane (himself a former Ranger) and young Anglo ranch hand Roland Warnock, who helped to bury Bazán and Longoria several days later. That fall, Ransom made a habit of running ethnic Mexicans out of their homes as he patrolled the countryside. At one point he casually reported to Ranger headquarters in Austin that “I drove all the Mexicans from three ranches.”

Source: “The History of Racial Violence on the Mexico - Texas Border” Refusing to Forget, 2023
Accessed 29 July 2024

<https://refusingtoforget.org/the-history/>

Texas Rangers with Dead Mexican Bandits – August 8, 1915



Photographer Robert Runyon took at least 12 other similar photographs to sell. Notice how this photo is staged and the message the photographer is trying to send.

Some scholars estimate that as many as 5,000 Mexican and Mexican Americans were killed during this period, starting in 1915. Historians refer to this period as “La Matanza” – the Massacre.

Source: Runyon, Robert. Texas Rangers with Dead Mexican Bandits, photograph, August 8, 1915; (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph43198/m1/1/>; accessed July 30, 2024), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Cattle Raisers Museum.

Labor Appropriations Act of 1924 (*creation of the U.S. Border Patrol*)

TITLE IV - DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION

... Regulating immigration: For enforcement of the laws regulating immigration of aliens into the United States, . . . all to be expended under the direction of the Secretary of Labor, \$4,500,000: Provided, That at least \$1,000,000 of this amount shall be expended for additional land-border patrol of which \$100,000 shall be immediately available...

Summary: Immigration within the American hemisphere remained uncapped until 1965 but in 1924 Congress authorized funding for the **Border Patrol** to regulate crossings occurring between immigration stations on both the northern and southern borders.

Source: "Labor Appropriations Act of 1924" The Immigration and Ethnic History Society. <https://immigrationhistory.org/item/labor-appropriations-act-of-1924/>

Source A

F. Vaiz et al. to Mexican consul, October 17, 1916, Foreign Consulate Records for Los Angeles, Archivos Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores [Secretary of Foreign Relations], Mexico City

Dear Sir:

Due to the difficult circumstances we find ourselves in this foreign country, we look to you asking for help in this case. We are enclosing a copy of the severe law that the railroad line has imposed on us Mexicans who work on the track, which we do not see as a just thing, but only offensive and humiliating. When we crossed the border into this country, the health inspector inspected us. If the railroad line needs or wants to take such precautions it is not necessary that they treat us in this manner. For this, they would need health inspectors who assisted every individual with medical care and give us 2 rooms to live, one to sleep in and one to cook in, and also to pay a fair wage to obtain a change of clothes and a bar of soap. This wage they set is not enough for the nourishment of one person. Health comes from this and these precautions are the basis for achieving sanitation.

Health we have. What we need is liberty and the opportunity to achieve it. We need a bathroom in each section of camp and that the toilets that are now next to the sleeping quarters be moved. Many times their bad smell has prevented us from even eating our simple meal. Furthermore, we can disclose many other details which compromise our good health and personal hygiene. With no further ado, we remain yours, graciously and devotedly, your attentive and faithful servants. We thank you in advance for what you may be able to do for us.

Felipe Vaiz,
José Martínez,
Felipe Martínez,
Adolfo Robles,
Alejandro Gómez,
Alberto Esquivel

Context: There had been a Typhus outbreak in California, starting in June 1916. Typhus is an infectious disease but is not contagious – it is spread to humans through lice and tick bites. The government of California passed regulations and pressured the railroad companies to enforce these rules to contain the outbreak. All of the regulations related to personal hygiene. They did not require the railroad companies to improve living conditions in their labor camps. In all, 5 Mexican laborers died from this outbreak.

Source of letter and information for context: Molina, Natalia. "Borders, Laborers, and Racialized Medicalization Mexican Immigration and US Public Health Practices in the 20th Century". *Am J Public Health*. 2011 June; 101(6): 1024–1031.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3093266/#bib21> accessed 7/18/24

Source B

"Order to Bathe Starts Near Riot..." El Paso Times, January 29, 1917

ORDER TO BATHE STARTS NEAR RIOT AMONG JUAREZ WOMEN

AUBURN-HAIRED AMAZON AT SANTA FE STREET BRIDGE LEADS FEMININE OUTBREAK

Rumor Among Servant Girls That Quarantine Officers Photographed Bathers in the Nude Altogether Responsible for Wild Scenes.

Street Cars Seized and Detained for Hours and Conductors and Motormen, One With a Black Eye, Are Escorted Back to El Paso

Juarez women, [outraged] at the American quarantine regulations, led a riot yesterday morning at the Santa Fe bridge. From the time the street cars began to run until the middle of the afternoon thousands of Mexicans thronged the Juarez side of the river and pushed out to the tollgate on the bridge. Women ringleaders of the mob hurled stones at American civilians, both on the bridge and on the streets of Juarez. Four street cars which crossed into Juarez early in the morning were sealed, and the eight members of the crew sent, afoot, back to El Paso, one of them bringing a black eye and bruised face as a memento. A [Pancho] Villa sympathizer who started a diversion during the excitement by shouting "Death to Carranza! Viva Villa!" was promptly shot by a Carranza soldier. Four bullets took effect, killing him instantly.

Mounted Men Disperse Crowd

Toward the middle of the afternoon, when the excitement had died down somewhat, mounted men dispersed the crowd on the Juarez side of the bridge. American soldiers also forced back the Mexicans on the bridge to the international line at the middle of the river, the Mexicans having previously pushed as far as the tollgate, where they hung over the railing to jeer their compatriots who entered the bathhouse to comply with the regulations.

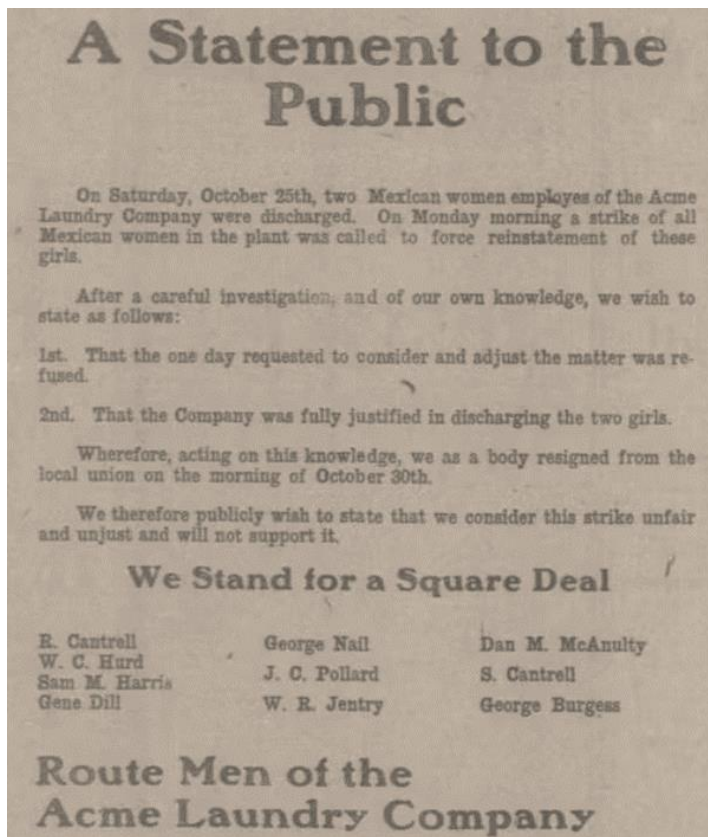
Context: On January 28, 1917, Carmelita Torres, a 17-year-old, led a group of Mexican women to protest against the quarantine measures targeting all Mexicans crossing into the U.S. The quarantine involved a toxic delousing procedure – men and women had to remove their clothes to be sprayed with a kerosene-based chemical. Previously, Mexicans had been able to cross into the U.S. without the limitations that were put on other groups in the 1917 Immigration Act.

The rumor that women were being photographed while naked sparked resistance to the humiliating quarantine procedure. The protests became known as the "Bath Riots" and shut down the El Paso border crossing for 2 days. However, they only put a temporary pause on the delousing. U.S. continued to enforce delousing procedures as part of the Bracero Program (1942-1965).

Sources: El Paso Times, published online October 8, 2008 <https://www.elpasotimes.com/story/news/history/blogs/tales-from-the-morgue/2008/10/08/order-to-bathe/31515757/> **Context:** Khanmalek T. "Wild tongues can't be tamed": Rumor, racialized sexuality, and the 1917 Bath Riots in the US-Mexico borderlands. *Lat Stud.* 2021;19(3):334-357. doi: 10.1057/s41276-021-00324-5. Epub 2021 Jun 18. PMID: 34177377; PMCID: PMC8211937.

Source C

“A Statement to the Public” El Paso Herald, October 31, 1919.



On Saturday, October 25th, two Mexican women employes of the Acme Laundry Company were discharged (*fired*). On Monday morning a strike of all Mexican women in the plant was called to force reinstatement (*re-hiring*) of these women.

After a careful investigation and of our own knowledge, we wish to state as follows:

1st. That the one day requested to consider and adjust the matter was refused.

2nd. That the Company was fully justified in discharging (*firing*) the two girls.

Wherefore, acting on this knowledge, we as a body resigned from the local union on the morning of October 30th.

We therefore publicly wish to state that we consider this strike unfair and unjust and will not support it.

* Route Men = delivery drivers

Context: “On October 27, 1919, nearly 200 Mexican and Mexican American women, all laundry workers from El Paso’s Acme Laundry, went on strike after Acme’s president and manager, Frank B. Fletcher, fired two co-workers, Isabel and Manuela Hernández, and refused to rehire them. The two women, along with other Mexican women laundry workers, had established a local of the International Laundry Workers’ Union (ILWU), with the help from local leaders of the Central Labor Union, on October 23, 1919. Within a few days of the initial walk-out, the strike intensified when competing steam laundries had their employees do Acme’s work and those employees joined Acme’s strikers in solidarity and frustration. The union, through spokesperson Francisca Saenz, demanded an increase in pay, end to the dual-wage system, better working conditions, union recognition, and reemployment of Isabel and Manuela Hernández. Within four days nearly 600 women laundry workers and laundry wagon drivers, who had their own union, were on strike. It was one of several laundry strikes in a wave of labor activity in 1919.”

dual-wage system: Mexican and Mexican-American women were paid \$4-6 per week, less than half of what Anglo women made in other Texas cities. High-skilled jobs, which paid more, were almost exclusively to Anglo women.

Source: Mia Gomez and Katherine Kuehler Walters, “El Paso Laundry Strike,” Handbook of Texas Online, accessed July 29, 2024, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/el-paso-laundry-strike>.

El Paso Herald Image: “Teaching Women’s History: The El Paso Laundry Strike of 1919,” New York Historical Society: Women at the Center, July 19, 2018 <https://www.nyhistory.org/blogs/the-el-paso-laundry-strike-of-1919>

Source D

Rusk Settlement House – 1920s



Hispanic and Anglo American children pose with their Easter baskets on the steps of Rusk Settlement House in the 1920s.

Context: Originally founded in 1908 to help European immigrants assimilate to America the focus changed when as the Mexican population of Houston’s 2nd Ward began to grow after 1910.

“...[In 1919] the board of the Rusk Settlement determined that classes in English literacy for both adults and children represented one of the most crucial services it needed to offer. The Settlement Association also set about the creation of a job placement program and expanded its daycare services. ...

Rusk Settlement served the newly arrived Mexican community in other capacities as well. The Settlement organized groups of “Attendance Officers” to visit the homes of pupils who had ceased attending school. Rusk Settlement formed multiple all-Mexican Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops. It also offered free shower facilities to those pupils and residents who did not have running water or sanitary service in their homes. The lack of such fundamental services demonstrated a common problem in the area at the time.”

Source: McWhorter, Thomas. “Trailblazers in Houston’s East End: The Impact of Ripley House and the Settlement Association on Houston’s Hispanic Population” *Houston History Magazine*, Vol 9. No 1 <https://houstonhistorymagazine.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/mcwhorter-Ripley-House.pdf>