ARGENTINE, KANSAS: THE EVOLUTION OF A MEXICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY, 1905-1940

by

Judith Finch Fe Laird
B.A., Winthrop College, 1967
M.A., University of Manchester, 1972

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Chairman

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This study grew out of a chance visit I made to the Argentine district of Kansas City, Kansas, in 1971. My initial contact with Mexican-Americans there sparked my curiosity about the origins and history of the barrio. Casual inquiry gradually gave way to systematic research efforts. I soon discovered two pitfalls which threatened to spell the end to my inquiry: the apparent lack of written records generated by the Mexican-American people and destruction of other local public and private records by a devastating flood which inundated low-lying portions of Argentine in 1951.

Curiosity prevailed and the search for data continued. A lucky break came in the Fall of 1973 when I gained access to Santa Fe payroll records. These records permitted more critical analysis of state census data and enabled me to explore the work life and migration patterns of Argentine's Mexican railroad workers.

In researching and writing this work I received help from many people. I wish to thank C. R. Lake, Secretary and Treasurer of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company, for granting me permission to use Santa Fe payroll records and company materials deposited at the Kansas State Historical Society. J. D. Hinton, Jr., Assistant Secretary
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study examines the development of a Mexican-American barrio, or neighborhood, in the Argentine section of Kansas City, Kansas, in the pre-1940 period. The major characteristics of the Argentine barrio, like those of other Midwestern barrios, were clearly discernible by 1940. The barrio had its own parish church, boasted ownership of several local businesses and received citywide recognition as a respectable Mexican ethnic center. Credit for these accomplishments went to the barrio's earliest immigrants, who came to Argentine after 1905 and began building a community similar to ones they had known in Mexico.

This barrio, known to the immigrants as "Argentina," reached its fullest expansion in the late 1920s and then began to contract as the depression deepened in the 1930s. After 1940 new waves of Mexican immigrants arrived in the barrio. Many came as braceros, or contracted manual laborers, during the 1943-64 period, although illegal aliens also made their way to the barrio. These subsequent waves of Mexican immigrants benefited greatly from the experiences of the pre-1940 arrivals, for by 1940 the immigrants in Argentine had created a cohesive ethnic enclave.

The Argentine barrio serves as a microcosm through
which to examine Mexican immigration and settlement in the Midwest from 1905 until 1940. Argentine lends itself to such an examination for a number of reasons. First, the Argentine Mexican barrio which originated about 1907, persisted through successive waves of migration and changing economic fortunes. It, therefore, provides a continuum for the study of migration, settlement and assimilation. Secondly, Argentine is a geographically distinct area which, throughout its existence, remained somewhat isolated from other parts of Kansas City.

Founded in 1882 as a railroad and smelting center, Argentine maintained a separate political existence until Kansas City, Kansas, annexed it in 1910. Even formal annexation did not destroy the community, for its geographical isolation prevented it from being swallowed up by urban sprawl. It was, in effect, a natural enclave. Located on the winding Kaw (or Kansas) River, Argentine occupies the southern river bank, hemmed in between the river on the north and sharply rising river bluffs to the south. These bluffs cut Argentine off from the rest of Kansas City, Kansas, lying to the east and south, and imposed a geographical barrier which limited the community's expansion, as well as encroachment from other areas.

A third reason for the selection of Argentine as the site for this study is that Mexican relations with a major railroad can be easily examined. The numerical dimension of the Mexican community may be explored without use of complicated and costly computer technology, for its Mexican population prior to 1940 probably never exceeded 1,000 at any
one time. Mexicans in Argentine may also be studied as a relatively homogeneous work force. The Mexican enclave in Argentine, unlike other barrios in the greater Kansas City area, depended almost entirely upon the railroad industry for its livelihood. A small number of males, however, found jobs in the meatpacking and construction industries, and others were self-employed craftsmen or small businessmen.

The history of the Mexican enclave in Argentine is primarily one of the Mexicans' relationship to the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, the industry which dominated the life of the community. Argentine was in essence a "company town" when Mexicans first entered the community to take up jobs in the lower echelons of the railway industry. The town became dependent upon the railroad industry after the smelter shut down in 1901. Earlier, the Santa Fe established Argentine as a division point, or administrative and repair center, on its system. The company maintained railroad car repair shops and other supply and service facilities there. Jobs provided by the railroad industry lured Mexicans to the town in increasing numbers after 1916. From that year onward, Mexicans found many jobs in the Santa Fe repair shops open to them. The period of greatest employment for Mexicans in the Argentine shops was in the 1920s. In that decade, too, the Mexican colonia, or colony, in Argentine reached its fullest development in the pre-1940 period.

The parameters of Mexican experience in Argentine have been largely defined by the needs of the railway industry and by successive waves of Mexican migration to the area.
Argentine provides an excellent environment in which to study both processes—immigration and employment. The role of the Santa Fe is emphasized as the centralizing experience for Mexicans migrating to and employed in Argentine. Few could escape its influence.

A fourth reason for selecting Argentine is for its Midwestern location. As yet there has been little written about Mexicans in the Midwest, especially in Kansas. Despite the fact that most Mexican barrios in Kansas date from the early 1900s, the Mexican communities have been largely ignored by professional historians. There are several master's theses which deal with Mexicans in Kansas. In addition, the unpublished manuscripts of J. Neale Carman, the late Emeritus Professor of French and Italian at the University of Kansas, contain sketches of twenty-nine Kansas barrios. These studies, however, provide only a fragmentary history of Mexicans in Kansas. Intensive research on barrios in Kansas and in the Kansas City, Kansas, and Missouri, area is just beginning. At least one oral history project is underway in the barrios of Kansas City, but detailed monographs describing aspects of the Mexican experience there have not yet appeared.

Problems Inherent in Undertaking the Study

Thus far, all published studies of Mexican-American immigration and settlement suffer from several deficiencies which severely limit their scope. First and foremost among these faults is the failure to analyze in detail the labor
recruitment and distribution system which existed during the period of uncontrolled Mexican immigration to the United States. Most historical surveys of Mexicans in the United States provide a sketch of the migration in its broader outlines. In general, there is a dearth of historical monographs dealing with local, regional and specific aspects of Mexican immigration. There are hundreds of contemporary analyses, studies and reports on various aspects of Mexican immigration and labor. As yet, no comprehensive history of Mexican immigration exists.

The pioneering studies of the 1920s and 1930s, carried out by Paul S. Taylor, an economist with the University of California, and Manuel Gamio, a cultural anthropologist, stand alone as attempts to describe the migration process and the origins of Mexican migrants. Historians of Mexican immigration agree that the bulk of immigrants prior to 1940 came from the northeastern border states (Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo Leon, and San Luis Potosi) and from the states of the mesquite central, or central plateau (Aguascalientes, Distrito Federal, Guanajuato, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacan, Zacatecas, Queretaro and Tlaxcala).

No attempt has been made, however, to trace migration from the village, town or city of origin to the place of settlement in the United States. Recently, urban geographers, sociologists and anthropologists have begun to make contemporary analyses of the process of migration, but few historians have ventured into the field of migration research. Historians began recently to examine the role
of labor employment agencies and the labor markets for Mexicans in U.S. cities. 13

The lack of readily available primary source materials on the history of Spanish-speaking groups in the United States was a primary reason for the paucity of research in that field. Most historians of Mexican immigration history tended to rely upon easily available data such as newspapers, annual reports of government and private agencies and other such secondary data. Few utilized the techniques of oral history, and, for the most part, historians did not ferret out and fully utilize archival materials which shed light on topics in migration history.

Recently private corporations have opened their archives to professional researchers. In the past there were few opportunities for researchers to utilize corporate records. This study makes use of railroad employment data of the Santa Fe Railway to trace geographical and social mobility among the Mexican railroad workers in Argentina. In the past the Santa Fe did not welcome researchers in its archives, but recently railroad executives opened some of their records for scholarly study. In addition, the company donated certain non-sensitive materials to the Kansas State Historical Society in Topeka, Kansas. 14

The Prior Service files kept by the Paymaster of the Santa Fe system proved particularly useful in this project. These files contain vital statistics and employment histories of all employees in active service with the Santa Fe as of August 29, 1935. On that date President Franklin D.
Roosevelt signed into law the United States Railroad Retirement Act. The act as amended in 1937 permitted all railroad employes to claim up to thirty years of service completed prior to January 1, 1937, as credit towards retirement annuity. Federal legislation required all major railroads in the United States to compile Prior Service records upon the request of the employe. Detailed records exist for all railroad employes who attempted to claim service in the industry prior to 1937.

The Prior Service data from the Santa Fe are used here as a raw source for examining Mexican immigration and employment history. The data permit the researcher to obtain detailed information on each worker's migratory and employment history. The wage structure of the railroad industry may be examined, for example, through analysis of Prior Service data. Moreover, since payroll data on the Santa Fe system are organized by division points, the migration and employment patterns of Mexicans in particular communities, such as Argentine, can be analyzed.

A further problem in undertaking this study arises from the domination of the field of Mexican immigration history by the social sciences, and often, by non-professional historians. This domination occurred because professional historians neglected the topic, leaving the study of Mexican immigration and settlement history in the hands of persons outside the formal academic community. The first major survey of the historical process of Mexican migration northward into the United States was the work of a crusading
liberal journalist, Carey McWilliams. In 1949 McWilliams published the book, *North from Mexico*, in which he expounded a framework for understanding Mexican-American history. 16 The McWilliams approach, or *McWilliamismo*, continues to exert so much influence that one historian, Arthur F. Corwin, recently referred to McWilliamismo as standing "like a monolith overshadowing the whole subject of Mexican-American history." 17

McWilliams' focus on the Southwest influenced the approach of other scholars. More recent surveys of Mexican-American history have followed McWilliams in slighting the history of Mexicans in the non-Southwestern area of the United States. McWilliams, for instance, devoted only one sentence to the history of Mexicans in Kansas. A recent updating of McWilliams by Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera, *The Chicanos: A History of Mexican Americans*, continues the pattern. It too, describes the Kansas City situation in one sentence. 18

The traditional emphasis on Mexican-Americans in the Southwest is understandable, for the five states comprising the region contain the majority of Spanish-speaking persons of Mexican descent in the United States. In 1960 these states contained eighty-seven percent of the 3.5 million Spanish-surnamed persons in the United States. 19 Moreover, these states, often referred to as the "Borderlands," or "Spanish Borderlands," contained Spanish-speaking settlers long before either the United States or Mexico came into existence. The area of the Borderlands became part of the
United States with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848) and the Gadsden Purchase (1853). Persons of Spanish-speaking descent whose ancestors settled in the Southwest prior to the acquisition of the area by the United States are referred to as Hispanics. The term does not refer to "pure Spanish" bloodlines, but is merely a designation of the time in which their forefathers settled the area.

The militant Chicano movement in the Southwest in the 1960s and 1970s no doubt reinforced the orientation towards the Southwest by identifying the Southwest with Aztlan, the mythical homeland of the Aztecs. The Chicano movement may have hampered the funding of serious research efforts in Mexican-American history. At least one prominent Mexican-American historian, Joseph Navarro, complained that foundations and government agencies often appeared more eager to appease militant or vociferous groups than to finance sound historical research on Chicano history. However, the National Endowment for the Humanities funded at least one research project on Mexican immigration in the United States.

The United States Bureau of the Census compounded the tendency of focusing on the Southwest by conducting a special enumeration of Spanish-surnamed peoples in these five southwestern states from 1950 onward. A vast body of literature appeared based on these census reports. The best-known works are those published by the Mexican-American Study Project at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA). Leo Grebler of UCLA served as director of the Ford
Foundation-sponsored project throughout its existence, 1964 to 1968. The project issued eleven advance reports and then published a massive compilation of its findings in Leo Grebler, *et al.*, *The Mexican-American People: The Nation's Second Largest Minority*. The study, despite its claim to comprehensive geographical coverage, deals only with the Southwest. Its historical coverage is superficial and is based upon highly selective, often dated sources. It should be noted that no historians were included in the project.

Library resources were another factor causing scholars to focus on the Southwest. The Mexicana and Western Americana archival collections of the famous Hubert Howe Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, attracted numerous scholars to study the Southwest and its Spanish-speaking population. Chief of these scholars was Herbert Eugene Bolton, founder of the "Borderlands" school. By its very nature this historiographical approach focused so heavily upon the Southwest that Spanish-speaking populations in other areas of the United States were virtually ignored.

The tradition established by the Borderlands school spread throughout the United States. In particular, scholars noted the school's emphasis on the pre-nineteenth century period. Students of the Borderlands described the exploits of Spanish explorers, soldiers of fortune and priests. They also examined remnants of Spanish culture such as missions and other architectural achievements.

While the Borderlands school dominated study of the Southwest, the Trans-Mississippi West school of historians...
also conducted studies in this region. These historians tended to emphasize the triumphs of Anglo culture such as the military conquest of the Indians, extension of territorial control, overland transportation and the cattle, mining and farming frontiers. Thus, both major historiographical schools slighted the study of Spanish-speaking groups in the Midwestern and plains states, especially in the twentieth century. Likewise, local, amateur historians ignored Spanish-speaking groups in their midst, for these untrained historians usually did not have the language skills to conduct such research. Moreover, many simply were not interested in these immigrants.

The major works on Mexican immigration, including those by Paul S. Taylor, Manuel Gamio, Carey McWilliams, Victor S. Clark, Leo Grebler and John Ramón Martínez, were not products of either the Borderlands or the Trans-Mississippi West traditions. Although these writers persistently focused on the Southwest region, Taylor also included studies of non-Southwestern Mexican labor centers such as Chicago and the Calumet region and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Quite justifiably, perhaps, most authors felt that those areas with the largest numbers of Spanish-speaking people merited the greatest amount of attention.

Social scientists, however, did not ignore Spanish-speaking immigrants, for the Mexican immigrants arrived during a period of intensive sociological interest in assimilation. Consequently, sociologists included Spanish-speaking people in their studies of urban populations and
assimilation. Social science domination of the field of Mexican immigration and settlement in the United States began in the 1920s. Sociologists in that decade probed Mexican barrios in the fashion of the "Chicago School" of sociology of Robert E. Park and E. W. Burgess. Barrios became urban observatories. Many of these seminal contemporary studies of Mexican life in the United States are now being reprinted to serve as "histories" of Mexican immigration and settlement. 28

No such studies of Mexicans in Kansas City appeared, however, possibly due to the absence of a strong city university with a social science orientation. Researchers from the University of Kansas, such as E. W. Burgess, occasionally penetrated the Kansas portion of the city from their base in Lawrence to conduct social surveys. Such studies, however, seldom mentioned Mexicans. 29

Hence, for many reasons, there are as yet few studies of Mexican immigration and settlement in the Midwest. Social scientists with little or no training in history continue to dominate the field outside the Southwest, and to some extent also within the Southwest. 30 Little is known of the actual experiences and history of Mexican immigrants to Midwestern cities over the past seventy years. There are indications, however, that ethnic studies programs being adopted in many colleges and universities may lead to basic historical research on Mexicans in scattered locations throughout the United States.
The neglect of Kansas City as a site for study may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, there is a general lack of knowledge even in academic circles of the role the twin cities played as a major labor distribution center for Mexican labor and as a refugee center during the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920. Secondly, little historical tradition exists in the city apart from that of local historical societies and antiquarians. Most histories of Kansas City focus on the Missouri portion of the twin cities. The two best histories of Kansas City, Missouri, deal only with the pre-1870 period. Historians and other writers who examined the cities in the twentieth century emphasized the divergent political traditions, rather than the economic, geographical and demographic unity of the twin cities.

Local historians in the twin cities devoted their energies to chronicling civic events and writing sketches of local "blue bloods," buildings, bridges, monuments, streets and highways, real estate enterprises, newspapers, industries, clubs and organizations. Although these historians sometimes noted the presence of European immigrants in the city, they paid little, if any, attention to dark-skinned groups such as Mexicans, Indians and Negroes. For example, the Chamber of Commerce's version of the city's history, released in 1938, devoted a paragraph to Mexican teamsters involved in the city's Santa Fe Trail commerce of the 1850s, but did not mention the large barrios with populations in the thousands which existed in the city in the 1920s. During that period as many as 10,000 Mexicans lived
in the city. 35

The historian of Mexican migration and settlement in
Kansas City has few secondary studies upon which to build.
There are no comprehensive studies of Mexicans in the city,
although short sketches of Mexican life in Kansas City
appeared from time to time. Writers employed by the Missouri
Historical Records Survey under the Works Progress Adminis-
tration produced two short essays on Mexicans in Kansas City,
Missouri, in the mid-1930s. 36 Beginning in the 1950s stu-
dents from the University of Kansas went into the Kansas-
side barrios to conduct linguistic studies. The supervisor
of this research, J. N. Carman, later incorporated his stu-
dents' reports on Mexicans in Kansas City into his manus-
cript history of Mexican barrios in Kansas. 37 The best study
of any of the twin cities' barrios is a master's thesis done
by Paul Lin at the University of Kansas. 38 Although the the-
sis, "Voluntary Kinship and Voluntary Association in a Mexi-
can-American Community," is primarily an anthropological
analysis of voluntary associations and the comosadrazgo,
or kinship system, among the Mexican population, it provides
some historical background on the largest Missouri-side bar-
rio, "Westside."

Kansas City is not alone in its lack of historical
studies of barrios. There are few such studies elsewhere
in the United States. Barrio studies such as Arthur J.
Rubel's Across the Tracks, Mexican-Americans in a Texas
City, and Julian Samora's Mexican-Americans in a Midwest
Metrooolis: A Study of East Chicago, provide some histori-
cal background, but they are primarily contemporary surveys from a sociological and anthropological perspective, rather than in-depth descriptions of barrio development and change over time. Only recently have urban historians begun to explore Mexican-American communities. This is ironic, for many U.S. cities contained large barrios as early as 1920. Moreover, the Mexican-American population became predominantly urban in the late 1940s. By 1960, between eighty and ninety percent of the Mexican-American population in the Southwest was "urban." Mexican-American historians have begun to apply the sophisticated quantitative techniques developed by the urban historians to the study of California barrios. At least two Mexican-American historians, Alberto M. Camarillo and Gilbert A. González, recently conducted historical studies of barrio development.

The techniques and approaches pioneered by quantitative urban historians lend themselves well to research on groups such as Mexican-Americans. This group had a high rate of illiteracy and consequently left behind few written records from the pre-1940 period. Urban historians look to data such as birth and death certificates, parish records, the census, city directories, tax, employment, police and naturalization and immigration records, and marriage licenses to provide information on Mexican barrios and population. Many of these types of data are utilized in the study undertaken here.
Objectives of the Study

This study addresses itself to the problems and deficiencies in the general body of literature dealing with Mexican immigration and settlement. Its primary purpose is to describe the process of change in the Argentine barrio over four decades. Waves of immigration are discussed and details of the immigration process are provided. In particular, the Mexican origins of immigrants to Argentine are examined in light of overall migration streams to other parts of the United States. The workings of the employment system of the Santa Fe and of other private labor agencies are discussed. Throughout, comparisons are made between Argentine’s Mexican population and that of other Mexican enclaves in Kansas City, as well as to Mexican-American barrios elsewhere in the United States.

This study argues that waves of immigration to Argentine varied in composition, largely because of economic conditions, but also because the immigrants’ motives changed over the years. Migration to a community as small as Argentine was a complex, though orderly process. Groups of Mexicans who settled there often displayed a sophisticated ability to manipulate their environment to serve their needs.

Examination of Argentine’s Mexican enclave also includes discussion of the barrio’s role in the assimilation of Mexicans to their Anglo environment. Mexican barrios often resemble Negro ghettos in that, rather than disappearing, they grow into huge urban conglomerations. The dynamics which encourage continued barrio existence are
explored in the Argentine barrio. Some of the factors examined in this discussion of barrio persistence are discrimination, socio-economic levels, and what one writer referred to as the "taste for discrimination," or the apparent proclivity of Mexicans to settle in close proximity to one another.42

It is hoped that historical studies of this nature which examine specific barrios will eventually lead to a new synthesis of Mexican immigration and settlement history. If Argentine may be used as a model for Mexican immigrants' experience with the railway industry, then the conclusions reached here will have broader impact than might be the case, ordinarily, with local histories. Sam Bass Warner in his essay, "If All the World Were Philadelphia: A Scaffolding for Urban History, 1774-1930," argues persuasively for viewing the study of urban U. S. society in a systematic manner, rather than emphasizing "uniqueness" in describing the past.43 Just as Philadelphia served as a microcosm of major transformations in the United States, the Argentine barrio provides the medium through which to view the impact of major economic changes on the relationship between Mexican immigrants and the railway industry. Furthermore, examination of Mexican immigration to one barrio permits the researcher to test theoretical models expounded by sociologists and anthropologists which emphasize the importance of kinship networks and "community" in immigration and assimilation.44

Thus, Argentine serves as a microcosm of Mexican immi-
migration and adjustment to U. S. society. It is hoped that other researchers will test the findings of this study in other barrios throughout the nation. Only through such studies can a systematic study of the Mexican immigrants' experience as migrants and settlers emerge.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

1 Mexican-American is used in this study to refer to the ethnic group of Mexican origin now settled in the United States. "Chicano," as used here, refers to politically-oriented Mexican-Americans who identify with the Chicano movement. "Kansas City, as used in this study, refers to the twin cities, unless otherwise indicated.

2 The bracero program was a formal contract labor program guaranteed by both the Mexican and U. S. governments. It existed in different forms from 1942 until 1965. See Ernesto Galarza, Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story (San Jose, California: The Rosicrucian Press, 1964).


4 Argentine Siftings, January 9, 1886, p. 2. Hereafter, the railroad is referred to as the Santa Fe.

5 The Chicago and Calumet region has been studied somewhat. The Calumet region is the industrial district stretching along the south shoreline of Lake Michigan from South Chicago, Ill., to Gary, Indiana. There are several well-known works on Mexicans in this region. See Anita Edgar Jones, Conditions Surrounding Mexicans in Chicago (San Francisco: R & E Research Associates, 1971); Paul S. Taylor, Mexican Labor in the United States: Chicano and the Calumet Region (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932); and Julian Samora and Richard A. Lamanna, Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis: A Study of East Chicago, Mexican-American Study Project, Advance Report 8 (Los Angeles: Division of Research, Graduate School of Business, University of California, 1967).


7 The first volume of Carman's projected three-volume work appeared as Foreign-Language Units of Kansas, I, Historical Atlas and Statistics (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1962). Volumes II and III of the manuscript are to be produced in microfiche form by the University of Kansas Press. The Kansas Mexican-American communities surveyed are Arkansas City, Chanute, Dodge City, Emporia, Florence, Goodland, Herrington, Independence, Kansas City, Newton, Parsons, Salina, Topeka, Wellington, Wichita and Winfield.

8 In 1974 Sister Carmen Rodrigues of Donnelly College, Kansas City, Kansas, began an oral history project of Mexican-Americans in Kansas City.


11 Since immigration to the United States from Mexico slowed to a trickle during the depression of the 1930s, the migration patterns of the 1920s characterize the pre-1940 period. Studies conducted in the 1920s and 1930s indicate that the immigrants had common regional origins. Robert F. Foerster, The Racial Problems Involved in Immigration from Latin America and the West Indies to the United States (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, Department of Labor, 1925), p. 51, Table 4; Manuel Gamio,

12 The International Migration Review contains many articles on migration theory from a sociological perspective. Historical studies are in their infancy. The Family in Historical Perspective (Spring, 1972), describes several historical research projects now underway.

13 At least one student, Johnny McCain of San Antonio College, is engaged in a study of San Antonio as a Mexican labor recruitment and distribution center. His work is summarized in Arthur F. Corwin, "Mexican Emigration History," p. 20.

14 The staff of the Kansas State Historical Society compiled two indexes to Santa Fe materials. For an inventory of materials housed at the Society, see Kansas State Historical Society, "Inventory, New York Executive Department Files, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway Company" (Typescript.) The Historical Society also made a partial inventory of archives retained by the Santa Fe in Topeka. See Kansas State Historical Society, "Inventory of Santa Fe Railroad Archives" (Typescript.) The latter source indexes the records of the railroad prior to its reorganization in 1895. Most pre-1895 records are open to qualified researchers.


17 Corwin, "Mexican Emigration History," p. 5.


20 Ruth S. Lamb, Mexican-Americans: Sons of the Southwest (Claremont, California: Ocelot Press, 1970), describes the major features of these treaties and discusses their impact on Mexican-United States relations.

22. Arthur F. Corwin of the University of Connecticut is currently heading a research project on Mexican immigration to the United States. He refers to his work in his article, "Mexican Emigration History," p. 24.


29 "Armourdale. A City Within A City," Bulletin of the University of Kansas, XX, No. 12 (June 15, 1919).


31 The dates used here for the Mexican Revolution are arbitrary, for there is disagreement as to when the Revolution began and whether or not it has ended. The dates 1910-1920 are used to indicate the emergence of anti-Diaz forces in 1910 and the establishment of General Obregon's system of law and order in 1920.


Typical histories of the counties (Jackson County, Mo., and Wyandotte County, Ks.) in which the two Kansas Citys are located are, Pearl Wilbur Morgan, History of Wyandotte County, Kansas, and its People (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1911); Grant W. Harrington, Historic Spots or Milestones in the Progress of Wyandotte County, Kansas (Wamego, Kansas: Mission Press, 1935); Carrie W. Whitney, Kansas City, Missouri, Its History and Its People, 1808-1908, 2 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1908).

This problem was not unknown at the national level, for both the Trans-Mississippi West and Borderlands schools suffered from racial biases. See Jack D. Forbes' discussion of this problem in "The Historian and the Indian: Racial Bias in American History," The Americas, XIX, No. 4 (1962-63), 349-62; Kansas City, Mo., Chamber of Commerce, Where the Rocky Bluffs Meet, p. 7.

U. S., Works Projects Administration, Historical Records Survey, Missouri, Kansas City District, Donald P. Beard, "Foreign Colonies in Kansas City, Missouri," April 22, 1936 (Typescript.)--Folder # 6032, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.; and Lee Haney, "Mexican Colony--Annual Fiesta," April 24, 1936 (Typescript.)--Folder # 6038, Western Historical Manuscripts Collection, University of Missouri, Columbia, Mo.

See Carman's manuscript, "Foreign-Language Units of Kansas," Vol. II, Part III, (No. 47.86)—University Archives, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.


Rubel, Across the Tracks. Mexican-Americans in a Texas City (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966); Samora and Lamanna, Mexican-Americans in a Midwest Metropolis. Paul S. Taylor's multi-volume series, Mexican Labor in the United States, contains studies of several urban areas. Taylor provided some historical background, but his work's thrust was contemporary, rather than historical.

Grebler, et al., The Mexican-American People, p. 113. According to the 1960 census definition, "urban" included persons in urbanized areas and in places of 2,500 or more persons outside urbanized areas. An urbanized area consisted of at least one city of 50,000 or more inhabitants and the surrounding urbanized area, whether incorporated or not.


43 American Historical Review, 74 (October, 1968), 26-43.

The first sizeable migration of Mexicans to the twin cities of Kansas City, Kansas, and Missouri, occurred during the first decade of the twentieth century. Between 1900 and 1910 Mexican railroad workers and packing house laborers appeared in scattered locations throughout the city. Their presence in Kansas City reflected a widespread movement of Mexicans into the interior of the United States. The movement of Mexican laborers into the Midwest resulted in part from the policies of railroad companies operating in the Southwest. The Santa Fe, in particular, played a major role in the migration of Mexican peons, or day laborers, throughout the Southwest and, then, into the Kansas City area.

The migration of Mexicans to the United States prior to 1910 stemmed from both "push" and "pull" factors. Two major pull factors were the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and the 1907 Gentlemen's Agreement with Japan. These measures led to the virtual exclusion of Chinese and Japanese laborers destined for railroad, construction and agricultural industries. The railroads attempted to fill the void left in their work forces by shifting to Mexican laborers. This was a logical move since railroad construction was underway in
the Southwest and there were no restrictions on Mexican immigration to the United States. Both the Santa Fe and the Southern Pacific began using Mexican laborers in the Southwest in the 1880s, but not until 1900 did they actively solicit Mexicans at El Paso for use throughout their systems.³

Contrary to popular belief, Mexican immigration to the United States did not begin in 1910 with the Mexican Revolution. Mexican laborers in the border states crossed into Texas in the 1870s to work on sheep and cattle ranches.⁴ A more dramatic migratory movement occurred in the 1890s and first decade of the twentieth century, as peons left the haciendas, or large landed estates, of central and southern Mexico for urban areas such as Mexico City. The northern Mexican states also gained in population as laborers moved to the northern regions of Mexico to serve as railroad construction workers and miners in developing mining enterprises.⁵ In turn, many of these workers moved into the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where the increased cultivation of cotton during World War I created an ever-increasing demand for their labor. By the early 1900s Mexicans also began to work in the sugar-beet industry and as wheat harvesters in the Midwestern and Plains states.⁶ Prior to 1917, however, the major employer of Mexicans in the United States was the railroad industry, which utilized more Mexicans than any other single industry.

Expulsionary forces within Mexico contributed greatly to the emigration of laborers. In particular, overpopula-
tion, low wages, underemployment and lack of sufficient tillable land caused many Mexicans to seek a better livelihood by engaging in seasonal migration to the United States. The major incentive for pre-1910 migrants was a chance for improvement of their economic situation. Many hoped to accumulate sufficient funds to purchase land, machinery, tools or animals back in Mexico.7

Beginning with the Mexican Revolution in 1910, however, Mexicans migrated in search of security, refuge and economic betterment. Many political refugees who feared prosecution by the new revolutionary governments settled temporarily in the United States. Many settled in southwestern cities such as El Paso, San Antonio, Los Angeles and Laredo. Still other refugees sought asylum or chose to wait out the revolution in the environs of Kansas City. A Mexican refugee community existed in the twin cities throughout the duration of the Revolution. During World War I, the refugee community witnessed the arrival of still another wave of Mexican immigrants, lured by attractive jobs in industry. Many of the third-wave immigrants remained in the city. They constituted the first sizeable group of long-term Mexican immigrants to Kansas City.

The Mexican presence in Kansas City, however, pre-dated the arrival of Mexican laborers and political refugees in the first two decades of the twentieth century. The initial entry of Mexicans into Kansas City stemmed from the city's role in the Santa Fe Trail commerce.8 The city itself
was largely a product of the Santa Fe trade. By 1850 it was the principal steamboat landing for westbound traffic. A shift in the course of the Missouri River destroyed the rival steamboat landing at Independence, Missouri, to the east, making Kansas City the major point of departure for participants in the Gold Rush.  

The Missouri River steamboat trade reached its apex in the 1850s. During that period overland caravan and steamboat transportation formed the foundation of the city's wealth. Mexican caravans joined others in the trek from the Southwest to the city during the 1850s. During this colorful era contemporary observers noted the presence of Mexican wagoneers and teamsters on the levee and along the city's streets. One newspaper reporter described the levee area in the 1850s as a

confused picture of immense piles of freight, horse, ox, and mule teams receiving merchandise from the steamers, scores of immigrant wagons, and a busy crowd of whites, Indians, half-breeds, Negroes and Mexicans.  

Kansas City's growth slowed during the incipient border conflict between anti-slavery and pro-slavery forces after 1854. During the Civil War the city's population declined and commerce stagnated. After the war, however, the city entered a new period of prosperity based upon the railway industry. Mexicans again entered the city to work in river and wagon transportation. They also found jobs as railroad construction laborers when railroad companies built lines into the city in the late 1860s. Some of these laborers became squatters on land along the Kaw River bluffs.
in the Westside area of Kansas City, Missouri. There they erected huts and occupied the land unchallenged until 1900. Few Mexicans settled in the city prior to 1900, for the federal census reported only twenty-seven Mexicans in the twin cities in that year.¹²

It is not surprising that there were so few Mexicans living there before 1900. Despite the connections engendered by the Santa Fe Trail, Kansas City did not have a direct link to Mexico until the mid-1880s. During the 1870s and 1880s railroad building into Colorado and New Mexico opened the city's transportation avenues to the Southwest. The Santa Fe reached El Paso in 1884. During the 1880s the Mexican government also engaged in an extensive railroad construction program in northern Mexico. In 1884 the Mexican Central Railroad reached El Paso where it connected with the Santa Fe.¹³ This link provided a rail connection between Mexico City and Kansas City. During the 1880s other United States railroads reached the border and soon a complex network of spur lines existed. These routes provided the means for Mexican immigration, not only into the adjoining border states, but also into the interior of the United States.

Although Mexicans did not provide a significant portion of Kansas City's work force prior to 1910, other immigrant groups helped shape the city's character during the 1860-1910 period. Initially, "Old Stock" immigrants from Germany, Sweden, England, Ireland and Canada provided the unskilled labor force for the city's industries. These immigrants
settled near the railways which ran through the twin cities and adjacent to the city's developing meat packing industries. Topography determined the locations of these two industries, which emerged as two of the mainstays of the twin cities' economies.\textsuperscript{14}

Kansas City emerged as an industrial and transportation hub because of its strategic location at the junction of the Kaw (Kansas) and Missouri River valleys. Thus, it served as the gateway to the plains. Kansas City also secured the first railway bridge across the Missouri River, thus ensuring her predominance as a railway center. By the time the bridge was completed in 1869, seven railroads utilized the structure. Railroads quickly erected their shops and warehouse facilities along the railway lines in the bottoms. The rail facilities attracted other industries which located in the vicinity of the railroads.\textsuperscript{15}

The city's topography was ideal for the development of industries in the low-lying bottoms. The plains overlooking the converging Kaw and Missouri Rivers rolled gently to the east and west, rarely rising more than five hundred feet above sea level. Thus, the rivers cut wide, shallow paths as they converged at Kansas City and provided water for steamboat navigation and for industries along their banks.

At Kansas City, the Missouri River swings northwestward from the point where it intersects with the mouth of the Kaw River. The Kaw flows from the southwest between the two cities, creating a large alluvial bend. To the south
and east of this horseshoe bend are steep river bluffs thrown up by the Kaw. Kansas City, Missouri, occupies the high eastern bluffs, overlooking the Kaw. Kansas City, Kansas, faces her sister city from the bottom lands and smaller bluffs on the Kansas side of the state line. See Map 1.

The plain created by this horseshoe bend, as well as a narrow alluvial strip between Kansas City, Missouri, and the Kaw, served as ideal locations for the twin cities' meat packing, railroad and auxiliary industries. Included among the latter were hog and cattle marketing and butchering, wheat marketing, flour milling, rendering, soap and glue makers, oil refineries, and agricultural implement dealers and manufacturers. Most of these industries were located in the bottoms between the two cities (the West Bottoms), and along the Kaw on the Kansas side. Meat packers built in this area as early as 1869, although most of these industries appeared during the 1880s and 1890s. Additional industries such as grain elevators, located in the East Bottoms, and along Turkey Creek in Rosedale, south of Kansas City, Kansas.

The industrial boom of the 1880s and 1890s which laid the foundation for many of the twin cities' industries, touched off an accompanying real estate boom. Suburban growth accelerated as the city's population soared, and adjoining areas in Kansas also experienced growth and consolidation. The establishment of Argentine, Kansas, as a railroad and smelting center occurred during this boom. Both the industrial development and the real estate boom
in Kansas City were triggered by the agricultural development of the hinterland.

The modern city of Kansas City, Kansas, emerged during this period of real estate development. The city originated in 1886 from the consolidation of five towns (Kansas City, Wyandotte, Armstrong, Armourdale and Riverview). Prior to 1886 no unified city existed on the Kansas side. The oldest of the five towns was Wyandotte, founded in 1859. Kansas City, Kansas, was not incorporated until 1872, although it had existed as a squatter settlement in the Kansas portion of the West Bottoms since the early 1850s. The towns of Armstrong and Armourdale were established in 1871, and the hillside town of Riverview came into being in 1879. The location of these towns is shown on Map 2, on the following page.

In 1886 local entrepreneurs achieved the consolidation of the five existing towns in hopes of creating a Kansas-side metropolis to rival Kansas City, Missouri. Consolidation of the five towns did not change the city's position vis-à-vis Kansas City, Missouri. Although the majority of the packing houses lay in the Kansas portion of the West Bottoms, Kansas City, Missouri, continued to control the lion's share of the trade, for wheat marketing and financial institutions were located there. Kansas City, Kansas, remained subordinate to its sister city. The creation of a Kansas side city was essentially due to the expansion of Kansas City, Missouri. The artificiality of political boundaries was nowhere more apparent than in the West Bottoms.
Map 2. Historic Boundaries of Kansas City, Kansas.
graphically, the West Bottoms formed a topographical entity; politically, it belonged to different cities in different states.

For Kansas City entrepreneurs the location of the packing houses in the West Bottoms was an ideal arrangement. Waters of the Kaw carried away the unused by-products of the industry, and the existence of the bluffs prevented the stench from overpowering the populace of the twin cities. Geography allowed the unsightly packing industry and odiferous livestock to be out of the sight and the minds of most city dwellers. Only those people who lived or worked in the West Bottoms endured daily contact with these basic industries.

The segregated industrial area in the bottoms contained the city's poorest populace and afforded industrial employment to incoming waves of immigrants. The West Bottoms functioned as the entrepôt for immigrants to the city during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Like other immigrant entrepôts in the United States, the West Bottoms provided a variety of services for the immigrants: jobs, housing, recreation and religion. By the 1880s the West Bottoms was a busy industrial area containing a variety of industries, warehouses, railroad yards, cattle pens, flop houses, hotels, boarding houses, missions, saloons and restaurants. It also contained the city's major passenger and freight railroad station, known as the Union Depot. The West Bottoms and the adjoining North End, the old levee dis-
trict, also contained employment agencies which served itinerant job seekers.\textsuperscript{22}

The pattern of European immigration to Kansas City during the late nineteenth century resembled the process which occurred in other cities. Immigrants arrived in waves roughly corresponding to the well-known division of immigrants into "Old Stock," or northern European immigrants, and the "new immigrants," those from southern and eastern Europe. Successive waves of immigrants passed through the portal area of the city over the years. With the passage of time, the older immigrant groups gradually moved out of the bottoms and into better residential areas.

These settlement patterns of immigrants in Kansas City resulted largely from the demands of the city's industries. During the early phases of the packing house industry in Kansas City, natives of the United States, both black and white, and an assortment of Old Stock immigrants comprised the bulk of the work force. The major groups which entered the city's packing industry were Germans, Irish, English and Swedes. These groups also comprised the bulk of European immigration to the city prior to 1890.\textsuperscript{23}

Mexicans were the last major immigrant group to arrive in the twin cities. Joining with other new immigrant groups such as Croatians, Russians, Poles and Italians in the twin cities during the first decade of the twentieth century, the new groups displaced groups of immigrants from northern Europe in certain low-wage occupations. Many of the northern
Europeans moved to employment outside the packing industry. Indeed, some of the Old Stock immigrants never worked in that industry, but found jobs as railroad workers and in other forms of industrial employment. Many Germans and Scandinavians, for instance, worked in the Kansas Pacific railroad yards south of the bluffs in Kansas City, Kansas. Others worked for the Santa Fe in the small railroad town of Argentine, to the south.  

The newly-arrived Mexican immigrants gave little thought to Kansas City's or Argentine's socio-economic structure. Yet, they too found themselves thrust into the patterns of employment and residence characteristic of recent immigrants to the city. They settled in the least desirable bottom lands where they endured the smells and sounds of the twin cities' heavy industries. They also suffered through floods which periodically engulfed these areas. And, due to their dark complexions, Mexicans often encountered racial discrimination comparable to that experienced by Negroes in the twin cities.  

Early Mexican immigrants to Kansas City, thus, found that they were but one of many new immigrant groups in the city. They joined the other recent immigrants in trying to carve out a niche for themselves in a multi-national setting. They engaged in economic competition with other ethnic groups, occasionally acting as strikebreakers. Unlike most other immigrant groups, though, Mexicans fought a dual battle in their effort to gain a foothold in the city.
Not only did they have to work their way into the city's industrial structure, but they also had to rid themselves of a negative, discriminatory stereotype. A major part of their struggle over the next forty years was to gain recognition as whites, and, in general, as first-class citizens.

Try as they might, Mexicans initially had little success in displacing the more entrenched immigrant groups. They made only small inroads into the meat packing and railroad industries prior to the outbreak of World War I. Some Mexicans entered the packing industry in 1908, but the major influx occurred after 1914. Many of these laborers entered the industry during the war, but lost their jobs during the post-war slump. By 1921 the packing industry in Kansas City, Kansas, employed between 200 and 300 Mexicans.

World War I, rather than Mexican pressure on the job market, created the opportunities for employment which led to the establishment of permanent barrios in the Kansas City area. As long as immigration from Europe continued, however, most Mexican laborers remained transients. A large percentage of these immigrants were young males, or solos, unaccompanied by females or other family members. Some were single, but others left their families behind in Mexico. These laborers engaged primarily in short-term employment, spending six months or so in the United States before returning to Mexico with their earnings. Railroads depending upon seasonal employment of Mexican laborers encouraged this policy.
The Mexican Revolution of 1910 destroyed traditional loyalties which had bound many laborers to the land, and thereby, encouraged migration. The Revolution occurred at a time when the urban labor market in the United States could not absorb the migrants. Consequently, both the migration and the Mexican barrios in the United States reflected the unstable market situation. Since Kansas City's economic structure could not sustain large numbers of Mexicans in the work force as year-round laborers, industries in the area imported Mexican laborers for short-term use. As a result, great fluctuations occurred in the numbers of Mexicans in the area at any one time prior to 1917. This was particularly true of Mexicans who worked for the railroads. The Mexican population in the boxcar encampments swelled and shrank as economic conditions dictated. Moreover, employment tended to be seasonal. The Mexican laborers had work only for seven months of the year, but the railroad companies permitted them to occupy the bunks throughout the year. Some Mexicans used this time to make visits to Mexico. The census reports are unreliable indicators of the volume of Mexican immigration into Kansas City, for the seasonal migration and continual turnover are not reflected in the census. Mexican communities in Kansas have been characterized throughout their existence by a continual coming and going of Mexicans.

Given such conditions of flux, it would seem unlikely
that permanent Mexican settlements could have emerged during this period. Yet, the roots of most of Kansas City's barrios lie in the pre-1914 period. Several conditions helped mitigate the raw operations of the labor market. First, some Mexican agricultural workers did not return to Mexico after the growing season ended in the United States, but "wintered" in cities such as Kansas City. This tendency increased during the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920, because many laborers could not return to their native states due to military operations and fear of impressment into one of the rival revolutionary guerilla bands. Also, some Mexican urban laborers held onto their jobs during the winter. The presence of these Mexicans in the city during the winter months helped ensure the continuation of the barrio as a year-round fixture in Kansas City.

Secondly, the Mexican Revolution caused the flight of a higher-class Mexican group whose migration did not depend on the operations of the labor market in the United States. Included in this group were a large number of families, including children, women and the aged. The population composition of this wave of immigrants was not typical of Mexican immigration as a whole in the twentieth century. A small colony of refugees settled in Kansas City during the Revolution, probably numbering in the hundreds. Members of this Mexican elitist group established a Spanish-language newspaper, El Cosmopolita, to keep their compatriots in the city informed of events in Mexico. They
also co-operated actively with local politicians to achieve improvement of conditions for the Mexicans in Kansas City. Although members of this group occasionally sought remunerative jobs during their stay in Kansas City, they did not engage in agricultural labor. Consequently, Mexicans remained in the twin cities year-round. The barrios did not wither away during the winter months.

Most of Kansas City's barrios originated as railroad yard camps in the pre-1914 period. Many of the inhabitants of these boxcar encampments gradually moved into nearby residential neighborhoods, forming a more permanent Mexican settlement. This was the predominant pattern in Kansas City during the first two decades of substantial Mexican immigration, from 1900 until 1921, although some Mexican laborers also entered the city to take up jobs in other industries and never lived in boxcar camps. Not all of these boxcar camps persisted to form permanent barrios. Many disappeared as the railroad's labor needs changed.

The labor needs of the railway industry to a large extent called the barrios into being. The two principal conduits of Mexicans into Kansas City were the Santa Fe and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific, known as the Rock Island. These two railways also played a role in the establishment of barrios elsewhere in Kansas, notably in towns where the railways located their repair shops. Of the two, the Santa Fe was most important. Stretching from Kansas City
in a southwesterly direction to California, the Santa Fe ran through the states of Colorado, Oklahoma, Texas and New Mexico to the border city, El Paso. That city was one of the major points of labor distribution for Mexican immigrants. The Rock Island line extended into eastern New Mexico, but did not connect directly with El Paso. Nevertheless, it also had ample opportunity to draw upon the Mexican labor supply in the Southwest. Thus, the two railroads were in a good position to obtain and transport Mexican laborers to Kansas City at little cost to themselves.

Mexican laborers who entered Kansas City in the employment of these two railroads sometimes quit in search of higher paying jobs. Railroads were great feeders of Mexican labor to other industries. The packing industry siphoned off some of these laborers, as did other railroads such as the Burlington and the Kansas City Terminal Railway. Probably, though, a substantial number of Mexican laborers remained with the railroads, for the latter guaranteed free passage back to Mexico at the end of a specified period, ranging from six months to a year. 32

In Kansas City the Santa Fe played the central role in importing Mexican laborers, for it maintained extensive repair shops there. The Santa Fe enters Kansas City from the southwest, along the Kaw Valley, and winds its way along the bottom land south of the Kaw River. The company began using Mexicans as track laborers in its Argentine yards south of the Kaw River in Kansas City, Kansas, as early as 1905. By
1907 Mexicans lived in boxcar camps in the Santa Fe yards in Argentine. One newspaper reporter estimated the population of Mexicans in Argentine in 1907 at 600. Three years later federal census takers reported only eighty Mexicans in Argentine.

Soon after the establishment of Mexicans on the track gangs in Argentine, boxcar settlements containing Mexican railroad workers appeared in the railroad yards at the bottom of the bluffs in the West Bottoms and East Bottoms. The next major influx of Mexican laborers into the city came in 1909 when construction companies and railways imported Mexicans to work as construction laborers on the new Union Station project. The relocation of the city's main terminal from the West Bottoms necessitated the laying of tracks into the new terminal. This project alone employed hundreds of Mexicans between 1909 and 1914 when the station was completed.

By 1914 some 600 to 700 Mexicans lived in the twin cities. The locations of the six major barrios are shown on Map 3 on the following page. Kansas-side barrios included the one in the Argentine railroad yards; a railroad camp in the West Bottoms; and another in the old milling town of Rosedale southeast of the Kaw River in the bottoms along Turkey Creek. All of these barrios originated as railroad yard camps. Mexicans in Rosedale lived in an area known as "La Colonia," (The Colony). They worked in the yards of the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad there. These railroads are known respectively as the "Frisco" and "Katy."
The barrio in the West Bottoms gradually spread into the adjacent section known as Armourdale, the broad flat plain formed by the horseshoe bend of the Kaw. Initially, Mexicans were confined to the bottoms industrial district of the West Bottoms and Armourdale. Gradually, the barrio spilled over into the southeastern corner of Armourdale. By 1914 a Mexican business district existed just west of the bottoms industrial area along Kansas Avenue. As late as 1919 social survey investigators found that Anglo citizens of Armourdale pointed with pride to the fact that Mexicans and Negroes were not allowed to live in the district's better residential areas. During the 1920s the Armourdale barrio grew steadily westward and filled in the area east of Seventh Street, between Osage and Kansas Avenues.36

The bottoms district, including areas of the West Bottoms proper and low-lying areas in Armourdale, was a crowded immigrant neighborhood when Mexicans first took up jobs there in the packing industry in 1908. A spokesman for the Bethel Mission, the only social settlement operating in this bottom lands district, described the area as it appeared in 1907:

The west bottoms of Kansas City, our district, contain 5000 or 6000 people—a large boarding-house population, 1000 family homes, overcrowded houses, mixed nationalities, fifty saloons, unusual poverty ... 37

The West Bottoms comprised Ward I of Kansas City, Kansas. Prior to 1890 it was an Irish stronghold, but the incoming new immigrants pushed the Irish group out.38 None of the
other barrios in the twin cities existed in such a polygot area.

On the Missouri side of the state line the Mexican barrios also had close connections with the railroad industry. By 1914 barrios existed in three localities in Kansas City, Missouri. These were an urban barrio in the Westside bluffs area, overlooking the Kaw; a small railroad camp in the yards of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad company in North Kansas City, across the Missouri River from the central business district; and in the Sheffield area along the Blue River. 39

The barrio in the Burlington yards originated around 1911 when the railroad built houses there for its Mexican work force. The railroad was part owner of the North Kansas City Development Company. This company, a subsidiary of the Armour and Swift packing interests, developed the adjacent area of Norhtown as a skilled working-class residential district. The company did not permit Mexicans, Negroes or southern Europeans (Italians) to live in Northtown. This policy continued as late as the 1930s. 40

Spanish-speaking laborers entered the Sheffield, or Centropolis, region of the Blue River Valley as early as 1903, but these may have been New Mexicans. Sheffield lay well to the east of Kansas City, Missouri, proper. It extended southward from the East Bottoms, the flood plain south of the Missouri River, to Eighteenth Street, and easterly from Bennington to Anderson Street. The major infusion
of Mexicans into the region appears to have occurred around 1914-1915. Mexicans in Sheffield were probably railroad laborers, for two railroads passed through the district. By 1919 the size of the Mexican population there led to the establishment of a "Mision Mexicana," or Mexican Mission. The Mision Mexicana was a Protestant evangelical mission which offered classes in English and sewing for Mexicans.

The largest barrio in Kansas City, Missouri, was Westside. This barrio once housed the city's elite and was known prior to 1890 as "Quality Hill." The neighborhood declined rapidly as industrialization transformed the Bottoms. Many Old Stock immigrants, notably Swedish, Irish, English, Danish and German workers, settled in the bluff-side community of Westside to be near their places of employment. As these immigrants moved in, the neighborhood rapidly became a working-class residential area. The various groups did not organize ethnic neighborhoods on a locality basis, although Danes occupied the hill on Twenty-third Street. Westside remained a neighborhood of northern Europeans until Mexicans entered the area around 1909. By 1910 many of the Old Stock groups were again on the move, abandoning their homes and later their churches to the new immigrants from Mexico.

By 1909 Westside stretched south from Sixth Street to Thirtieth Street, and extended easterly from the bluff line to Pennsylvania Street. A barrio appeared in the southern part of Westside, along Twenty-third Street, in 1909-1910. Mexicans who settled Westside were railroad construc-
tion laborers imported to work on the Union Station project. Some of these workers lived in McClue flats at Nineteenth and McGee, but this settlement ceased to exist soon after the station was completed in 1914. Mexican railroad workers continued to live in Westside after 1914. Some worked as track laborers for traction lines, and others found jobs with the Terminal company. At no time prior to 1940 did Mexicans occupy Westside to the exclusion of other groups. Nor did they exclusively occupy any single block. The largest concentration of Mexicans was in the vicinity of Twenty-third Street, from the bluff line to Summit Street.

Throughout the pre-1940 period Westside was the rallying point for Kansas City’s Mexican population. The barrio’s popularity among Mexicans in the city stemmed from its choice location vis-à-vis the city’s railroad and street railway systems. Mexicans also clustered in Westside because of its proximity to places of employment, notably the Bottoms, Armourdale, and downtown Kansas City, Missouri. Westside occupied a strategic position vis-à-vis the new Union Station. It lay just to the southwest of the new facility. Union station became the city’s main passenger and freight railroad depot after 1914. Prior to 1914 Mexicans arriving by rail disembarked in the West Bottoms at the Union Depot. The first Mexican hotels, boarding houses and employment agencies appeared in the vicinity of the old Depot, on Union Avenue, between Mulberry and Santa Fe Avenues. The decline of importance of the Depot after 1914 shifted the balance in favor of Westside. It emerged as the primary...
residential area for Mexicans in the city.

Mexican immigrants soon discovered that a well-integrated street railway system, the Metropolitan Street Railway System, criss-crossed both cities and effectively created a unified urban complex. The physical layout of the network made Westside a central location for all Mexicans in the twin cities. Barrios located in remote area of the twin cities were, in effect, unified by the streetcar system, for streetcars ran into all of the larger barrios and connected them with Westside. A map of the Metropolitan system appears on page 45. The one exception was a small railroad yard camp in the Burlington yards. This barrio, however, was within walking distance from downtown Kansas City.

The main lines of the street railway system extended like radii into Kansas City, Kansas. There was little vertical integration of the lines there, unlike in Kansas City, Missouri. Hence, Mexicans in Argentine could reach Westside and downtown Kansas City, Missouri, far more easily than downtown Kansas City, Kansas. The latter route was circuitous, rather than direct. No through lines connected Argentine to downtown Kansas City, Kansas.

Through lines of the Metropolitan effectively linked the barrios in Argentine, Armourdale and Westside in a linear pattern, for the Metropolitan operated a through line from the westernmost part of Argentine, through the heart of the Armourdale barrio, into the center of Westside, along Twenty-fourth Street, and then into the central business district. Likewise, Mexicans in Sheffield and Rosedale also had easy
access via the streetcar system.

The growth of Mexican business enterprises in Westside and the North End (old levee district) resulted largely from the existing pattern of the street railway network. The Mexican commercial enterprises which appeared in Westside serviced a far-flung Mexican colonia, or colony, in the twin cities. Moreover, Mexicans living in the West Bottoms and in Armourdale could walk to Westside.

The centrally-located barrios of Westside and Armourdale, along with the North End, by 1919 contained the majority of commercial, religious and service establishments catering to Mexicans. A cursory tabulation of Mexican businesses in the files of El Cosmopolita for 1918-1919 reveals the existence of at least thirty-four Mexican-operated businesses which had primarily or exclusively Mexican clientele. Table I enumerates and classifies the businesses which advertised in El Cosmopolita, or otherwise received mention in the paper.

The types of Mexican establishments advertised in the paper closely resemble those found in other cities in the late 1920s by contemporary observers such as Anita Edgar Jones and Paul S. Taylor. The precise tabulations as given on the following page probably are not representative of Mexican business enterprise as a whole. Advertisements provide only a rough estimate of the total number of Mexican businesses which existed. Likely, some firms could not afford to advertise and others, such as guest houses, neighborhood grocery stores and boarding houses, did not need to advertise. Word-of-mouth advertisement of small signs in the win-
TABLE 1
MEXICAN BUSINESSES IN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, AND MISSOURI, 1918-1919

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Business</th>
<th>Westside</th>
<th>Armourdale*</th>
<th>North End*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barber Shop</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cineam</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pool Hall</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trucking</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Exchange</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocery Store</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible Salesman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest House</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing Machine Sales</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fountain-fruit-tobacco</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used Furniture Exchange</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Merchandise</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: El Cosmopolita, 1918-1919.

Notes: The heart of the Westside barrio was Twenty-fourth Street. It contained a Catholic Church (Mexican Parish), two pool halls, a cinema, bakery, several restaurants, two barber shops, and two Protestant churches (Mexican). Mexican businesses in Armourdale were located along Kansas Avenue, from the 300 to 600 block. Mexican businesses in the North End were located on Fifth, Sixth, Missouri and Main Streets in the old levee district.

dows of such businesses probably served their needs.

Noticeably missing from the list, for instance, are saloons. Yet, Mexican saloons flourished prior to the beginning of Prohibition in the Fall of 1919. The most notorious Mexican saloon of the pre-1919 period operated with the cooperation of Kansas City's political boss, Tom Pendergast, at the Hotel Paraíso (Paradise Hotel). Pendergast subleased the five-story brick building to a succession of Mexican
managers. The hotel finally closed in 1916 after a series of police raids revealed the existence of prostitution and disorderly conduct at the hotel. For a short time thereafter the hotel continued to operate as the "Hotel Mexicano" (Mexican Hotel). 51

In addition to serving as the Mexican commercial center, Westside also emerged as the major cultural and religious center for Mexicans in the Kansas City area. It boasted the establishment of the city's first mutualista, or mutual aid society, the Unión Mexicana Benito Juárez, in October, 1914. Earlier that year the barrio also became the site of a Mexican national parish. In July, 1914, the Catholic Bishop authorized Reverend José Muñoz, a Spanish-born priest who fled Mexico in 1913, to establish the parish. From 1914 to 1919 the church operated out of rented rooms and a storefront on Twenty-fourth Street. The storefront church served as the Mexican Catholic Church until 1919 when the parish acquired a permanent church building. 52

Commercial, religious and cultural activities in Westside received the active support of many well-educated Mexican refugees. Some of these refugees worked for El Cosmopolita, published by the refugee community from 1914 until 1919. Other Mexican professionals such as doctors, lawyers and engineers were not licensed to practice in the United States. Consequently, some of these professionals and hacendados (owners of large landed estates) waited out the Revolution in the relative safety of Kansas City. Some of
these refugees formed a Mexican social club, the Casino Mexicano. Over a hundred of the elite Mexicans in Kansas City joined the club. As soon as conditions in Mexico permitted their return, the upper-class Mexicans departed and the Casino Mexicano collapsed.  

Conclusion

By 1920 Kansas City contained at least six Mexican barrios, in addition to many other immigrant-ethnic neighborhoods and a substantial Negro population. Mexicans were the last major group of new immigrants to arrive in the twin cities prior to 1920. In Kansas City Mexicans engaged in economic competition with other immigrant groups, as well as with Negroes. Like other recent immigrants, Mexicans settled in the bottoms in the industrial districts adjacent to the rivers and creeks which ran through the twin cities. In all cases, Mexicans inherited the worst type of housing available in the city. Often this housing consisted of boxcar villages on the side tracks in railroad yards. As the years passed Mexicans moved into housing abandoned by upwardly-mobile immigrant groups.

Three waves of Mexican immigration reached the city between 1900 and 1920. The first wave consisted primarily of transient male laborers who worked under contracts with the railroads and other industries for several months. Few of the original members of this group remained in the city, for they were highly transient. The second wave was com-
posed of refugees who fled Mexico during the Revolution. Many of these refugees remained in the city at least until 1920. The third wave of Mexican immigrants were those who came to the city during the First World War to take jobs in the city's industries. Mexican immigrants who sought permanent jobs in the twin cities, in fact, met with little success until the United States entered the war in 1917. Some Mexican laborers profited from the disruption of European immigration caused by the outbreak of war in Europe in 1914, but the major breakthrough in employment opportunities for Mexicans in Kansas occurred in 1917. The war-related industrial expansion, rather than the immigrants' aspirations, created the avenues of upward occupational mobility for Mexican immigrants.

The remainder of this work is given over to the study of Mexican immigration and settlement in the Argentine barrio of Kansas City, Kansas. In Argentine the process of immigration and barrio formation closely paralleled that of Kansas City as a whole. Argentine may be seen as a microcosm of the Mexican experience in Kansas City. Subsequent chapters explore the Argentine experience in several dimensions. These include analyses of the Mexican origins of the immigrants, immigration waves and settlement patterns, the Mexican immigrants' relationship to the Santa Fe and the process of community or barrio development.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER II

1"Kansas City" refers to the twin cities unless otherwise indicated.


8The Santa Fe Trail was a general pattern of routes connecting Kansas and Central Mexico via Santa Fe, New Mexico. By the 1840s goods from the United States reached as far south as Zacatecas in the central plateau of Mexico. The Santa Fe Trail was a major overland route from its...


25. ibid., p. 894. Carman states that Armour used Mexicans as strikebreakers during the 1921 packing house strike.


29. *El Cosmopolita* was published in Kansas City from August, 1914, until November, 1919.


pp. 39-40; and J. Neale Carman Papers, Box 5, Section 88.03, p. 3—University Archives, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, hereafter cited as Carman Papers.


34 U. S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Thirteenth Census of the United States, 1910: Population, II, 697, Table V.


36 "Armourdale, A City Within a City," Bulletin of the University of Kansas, Vol. XX, No. 12 (June 15, 1919), p. 36; El Cosmopolita, 1914, passim (advertisements); and Peter Earle, "The Mexicans in Kansas City, Kansas," June, 1953 (Typescript.)—University Archives, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.


39 Duncan and Alonzo, Guadalupe Center, p. 8.


42 El Cosmopolita, May 10, 1919, p. 1. The Sheffield barrio gained population during the 1940s when Mexicans

Duncan and Alonzo, Guadalupe Center, pp. 8, 11-15; La Prensa (San Antonio), February 22, 1921, pp. 1, 5; and Carman, "Foreign-Language Units," Vol. II, Part II, p. 520.

Ibid.


El Cosmopolita, August 22, 1914, p. 4; October 1, 1914, pp. 2-3.

For an examination of the Metropolitan Street Railway System's consolidation and operating procedures see, Bion J. Arnold, Report to Hon. William C. Hook, Judge, on the Value of the Properties of the Metropolitan Street Railway System of Kansas City, Missouri. Vol. I: Kansas City Railway and Light Company. Complainant vs. Metropolitan Street Railway Co., et al., Defendants (Kansas City, Missouri, n.p., 1912?), pp. 95-127. Also see an account of the system's history in Morgan, Wyandotte County, I:335-37.


Ibid.


El Cosmopolita, August 22, 1914, p. 1; and April 29, 1916, p. 1. The Hotel Paraiso was located in the Westside district, at Seventeenth and Holly Streets. It contained over 100 rooms, as well as a restaurant, pool hall, barber shops and a saloon.

El Cosmopolita, Oct. 22, 1914, pp. 1 & 4; and Duncan and Alonzo, Guadalupe Center, pp. 28-30.

El Cosmopolita, September 6, 1919, p. 1; and Lin, "Voluntary Kinship," p. 93.
CHAPTER III

MEXICAN IMMIGRANTS TO ARGENTINE

An Overview of Mexicans in Argentine

Throughout the twentieth century successive waves of Mexican immigrants have found their way to the Argentine district of Kansas City, Kansas. Likely, we will never know the exact composition of these waves, nor their numerical dimensions, for many of the Mexicans left little evidence of their passage through the community. Initially, most of the Mexicans who came to Argentine were transients, or seasonal laborers, who worked for the Santa Fe Railway. Few of these individuals, mostly solos, or unaccompanied males, remained in Argentine more than a year.

The first record of Mexicans in Argentine dates from 1905, although it is possible that Mexicans entered the community earlier. The first Mexican immigrants to Topeka, the state capital, arrived in 1903. In 1905 the Santa Fe Railway imported Mexicans to work as track laborers in Argentine. Some of these Mexicans brought their families along, for a newspaperman reported in April, 1907, that 600 Mexican men, women and children lived in the Santa Fe yards in Argentine.

Thus, by 1907, Mexican family groups appeared in the railroad camp in Argentine. Although some Mexican children
entered school, contacts between the immigrants and local residents remained minimal. The railroad yard camp was largely self-sufficient. Commissary cars supplied the immigrants' needs for food and clothing, so that Mexicans had little need to venture beyond the boundaries of the railroad yards. They lived in converted boxcars on the side tracks near the roundhouse.

Prior to 1910 few Mexicans remained in Argentine more than a year. Turnover of population in the yard camp appears to have been rapid. The majority of the 600 Mexicans observed there in 1907 were not there three years later, for federal census takers reported only eighty Mexicans in Argentine in 1910. The Mexican Revolution caused more long-term residence, for many laborers were afraid to return to war-torn areas of Mexico. Consequently, many secured jobs to tide them over the winter. Others lived through slack winter months on their summer's earnings in the rent-free boxcars which the railroads provided.

Mexicans who emigrated to the United States after 1910 were far more likely to remain there for a period of years than were earlier migrants. Some political refugees, for instance, could not re-enter Mexico. The majority of the refugees who sought refuge in Kansas City did not return to Mexico until late 1919-1920. Mexican laborers continued to work their way into the interior of the United States, alternating agricultural and railroad employment. Some laborers "wintered" in Midwestern urban centers, although others used railroad passes to return to the milder climates of El Paso.
and Laredo. There they were secure from disruptions across the Border while they enjoyed the company of other Mexicans.

With the beginning of the war in Europe in 1914, traditional pools of cheap European labor dried up. Jobs in the meatpacking, construction, steel and automotive industries opened to Mexicans as labor became scarce. These jobs, unlike seasonal agricultural and railroad work, provided the immigrant with a relatively secure, steady job. Meatpacking industries, for instance, operated throughout the year. Mexicans entered the meatpacking industry in Kansas City in increasingly larger numbers during the war. By 1914 the meatpacking and railroad industries provided the major sources of employment for Mexicans in the twin cities.

Mexican immigration to Kansas followed national trends, for Kansas City lay in the mainstream of Mexican migratory movement into the interior of the country. Table 2 shows that the Mexican Revolution and the First World War helped spur Mexican immigration to the United States. The census conducted by the State of Kansas in 1925 asked aliens and naturalized citizens to state their year of immigration to the United States. Table 2 lists these data as broken down and periodized by J. Neale Carman, an early pioneer in the field of Mexican immigration history, for four Kansas cities.

These data illustrate the push-pull nature of Mexican immigration. The rate of Mexican immigration increased after the Mexican Revolution began in 1910, and again, during the World War One boom. Fifty percent of the Mexicans residing
in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1925, entered the United States between 1915 and 1920.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kansas City, Kansas</th>
<th>Dodge City</th>
<th>Newton</th>
<th>Wichita</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898-99</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1901-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-02</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1902-04</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903-05</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1905-08</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906-08</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1909-12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909-11</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1913-17</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912-14</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>1917-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915-17</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>1918-21</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918-20</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>1922-24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921-23</td>
<td>233</td>
<td></td>
<td>1924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924-25</td>
<td>140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Decennial Census of the State of Kansas, 1925.

The data presented in Table 2, although not compiled in perfectly compatible segments, also reveal the relative recency of Mexican immigration to Kansas City. These data show that 969 Mexicans, or 85 percent of the total 1,197 Mexican respondents in Kansas City, entered the United States after 1914. Hereby, it is surmised that the Mexican population in Kansas City was composed of recent arrivals. The majority of these Mexicans entered the United States in the decade prior to 1925 and made their way to the city by direct and indirect routes. Conceivably, the respondents could have been transients, but this is highly unlikely, for the state census was taken on March 1, 1925, prior to the beginning of
igration records show that legal entries from Mexico totalled 2,259 between 1900 and 1904. In the next five-year period, from 1905 to 1909, 21,732 Mexicans entered the United States. From 1910 to 1914, 82,588 entries were reported, and 91,075 Mexicans entered the country between 1915 and 1919. Immigration from Mexico reached record proportions in the 1920s, for the economic situation of most Mexicans deteriorated in that decade due to low agricultural production and the flight of foreign capital. Between 1920 and 1924, 249,248 Mexicans entered the country. During the next five-year period, from 1925 to 1929, 238,527 entries were recorded. From 1925 to 1929 Mexican immigrants comprised 15.68 percent of all immigrants to the United States. This figure was never surpassed, although from 1955 to 1964 the percentage of Mexicans to other immigrants averaged over 15.34 percent.4

The Mexican population in the State of Kansas, likewise, increased rapidly after 1910 as Mexican immigrants spread into the Midwest. The population of Mexicans in the state increased from 71 in 1900 to 8,429 in 1910. By 1920 the foreign-born white population, born in Mexico, totalled 13,568, although within a decade the number fell to 11,166. Although the number of Mexican-born persons in the state declined by 1930, the number of persons of Mexican origin, including immigrants and their offspring born in the United States, increased. By 1930, 19,150 persons of Mexican origin lived in the state.5

Statistical Problems with the Census
The population and immigration statistics given in the state and federal censuses on Mexicans must be used with care, for they often are not accurate. Migration statistics sometimes are erroneous due to deliberate distortion, on one hand, and lack of written records on the other. Illiterate immigrants often made errors in stating their ages and dates of birth. Data compiled by the Santa Fe Railway in its Prior Service Files suggest that Mexicans also, accidently or deliberately, misrepresented their dates of immigration. The majority of the immigrants simply did not supply immigration data to the census takers.

Cross-checking census data on immigration with the payroll records of Mexican employes in Argentine reveals some discrepancies. Only thirty-one of the total sixty-seven Mexican males whose employment records show them to have been employed in Argentine in March, 1925, appear in the state census taken on March 1, of that year. Payroll records of these thirty-one laborers demonstrate the inaccuracy of the dates of immigration supplied to the census takers. Eleven of the thirty-one men reported in the census supplied inaccurate data. Apparently, they deliberately falsified the information supplied to census takers to disguise their actual dates of entry to the United States. Two others gave dates of immigration which differed by only a year from those indicated in the payroll records. These discrepancies could have been honest mistakes. The other eleven, however, gave immigration dates which ranged between four and sixteen years of the year they began working for the Santa Fe in the
United States. The average discrepancy was 7.2 years. These data indicate that Mexican males often worked for a number of years in the United States on a seasonal basis before entering legally for the first time when accompanied by their wives or other family members. In fact, seven of the thirteen males listed the same year of immigration for both husband and wife. The date was probably erroneous only in the case of the males.7

Analysis of the 1925 state census substantiates the pattern of husband-wife immigration suggested above. Only seventeen percent of the Mexican males whose wives lived with them in Argentine in 1925 gave immigration dates which differed from those of their wives. Of the 105 Mexican couples living in Argentine and Rosedale in 1925, who supplied data to the census takers, eighty–seven gave the same year of immigration for husband and wife. Five couples did not migrate directly to Kansas from Mexico. Of the thirteen couples immigrating directly to Kansas from Mexico, who gave different dates of immigration, only three of the wives arrived in the United States prior to their husbands. These couples apparently married after their arrival, or shortly before, judging from the ages and birthplaces of their children. The other ten males preceded their wives to the United States by periods ranging from one to nine years. These eighteen couples probably gave more accurate information than did the first group of eighty–seven.8

The high proportion of family migration indicates that many Mexican males entered the country legally only when
accompanied by their families. If this is true, then the dates of immigration given by Mexicans in the 1925 census probably reflect the date of entrance for purposes of legal, long-term residence, rather than the initial year of immigration. A seasonal laborer may have slipped back and forth across the border for years before entering legally with his family. The joint migration pattern may also reflect the fact that many family units fled Mexico during the Revolution. Some laborers were less prone to leave their families behind in Mexico during the Revolution than at any other time.

State and federal census reports of population also merit suspicion. In particular, aggregate census data on Mexicans and other immigrant, ethnic and racial groups should be used with caution. There is a high probability of an undercount of such groups. The late J. Neale Carman suspected that the 1910 federal census seriously under-enumerated Mexicans in Kansas City, Kansas, but he did not test his hypothesis. That census reported a total of 102 Mexicans in the city. Eighty of these foreign-born Mexicans lived in Argentine, and twenty-two others lived in the bottoms districts.9

Railroad payroll records of Mexicans employed in Argentine afford some basis for estimating the extent of the undercount. Santa Fe payroll records indicate that 211 Mexican males worked for the company in Argentine in May, 1910, a month after the federal census was taken. The May payroll did not reflect a seasonal swell in Mexican
employment, for the company employed 202 Mexicans in November. Winter months were supposedly a "low" period for seasonal employment.\footnote{10} The majority of the Mexican men employed by the Santa Fe probably lived in Argentine within walking distance of the yards and shops. Although some family members accompanied these males, the majority of the laborers were undoubtedly solos. It is unlikely, therefore, that the Mexican population in Argentine totaled more than 300 in 1910, assuming that solos constituted about eighty percent or more of the male population as they did in 1915.\footnote{11}

This evidence suggests that the actual Mexican population in Argentine in 1910 was nearly four times the number reported in the census. Possibly the enumeration of Mexicans in other wards of the city was incorrect in the same proportion. The problem of an undercount is a complex one, and the exact figures of Mexican population in the city will never be known. The census is a poor indicator, for it represented the population as it appeared on one day, every ten years.

The state census conducted by the State of Kansas in 1925 was also amiss in reporting the size of the Mexican population in Argentine. Examination of Santa Fe Prior Service files reveals an undercount of Mexican Santa Fe employees who worked for the company on the census day of March 1, 1925. Thirty-six Mexicans whose employment records indicate they worked for the company in Argentine during March, 1925, were not counted. Of these, twenty-four, or 66.7 percent, worked in the Santa Fe shops. The other twelve
men were section laborers. These thirty-six men constituted thirty percent of the Santa Fe's Mexican shop and section workers that month. The undercount is highly significant in their case, for this group constituted the most stable, least mobile element among the Mexican immigrant population in Argentine. Some probably lived in adjacent neighborhoods in Armourdale or Rosedale, but others consistently listed addresses in Argentine itself, albeit at a slightly later date.

The reasons for the undercount are a matter of conjecture and speculation. Possibly census takers were afraid to enter immigrant housing areas such as boxcar camps. They were undoubtedly ignorant of Mexican living patterns, language and culture. Quite likely, accurate enumeration of a highly mobile, crowded barrio was too much of a nuisance to be taken seriously. Railroad shift changes and extra-gang call-ups also produced problems for the census taker. The possibilities of error were high in boxcar camps. A census taker in Herrington, Dickinson County, in 1905 reported that he was unable to obtain information on a group of boxcar dwellers because of their continued movement in and out. Another possibility which cannot be dismissed is that Mexicans lied to census takers to disguise the presence of illegal immigrants. Mexican immigrants viewed government intruders in the barrio with suspicion and hostility. Such hostility prevented the Mexican government from conducting a census of its nationals in the United States in 1922. Mexicans obstructed the work of the consulate census takers.
Exasperated consuls reported their difficulties to the Mexican government, which reluctantly abandoned the project. Consuls speculated that Mexican immigrants feared the information would fall into the hands of the United States government and would be used for purposes of taxation or deportation of illegal immigrants.  

Throughout the pre-1940 period local authorities, both Anglo and Mexican, continually produced population estimates of Mexicans in the city which differed from the state and federal census reports. Table 4 gives the population of Mexican-born residents of Argentine, Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri, as reported in the state and federal censuses for the period, 1900 to 1940.

Few contemporary observers agreed with these tabulations. Some thought the census under-estimated the number of Mexicans in the area, whereas others felt the census figures were too high. Mexican consuls in Kansas City fell into the latter category. Consuls often appeared ill-informed as to the number of Mexicans in the twin cities. They at times de-emphasized the Mexican presence in the city. During the 1921 recession Consul M. N. Morales of Kansas City took issue with a report in La Prensa (San Antonio) that 900 destitute Mexican families lived in Argentine. Ignoring the 1920 census, Morales cited figures hastily gathered by a Methodist mission in Argentine which he helped establish ten days earlier. A survey by untrained mission workers found a total of 165 Mexicans (men, women and children) in the Santa Fe railway camp.
### TABLE 4

**POPULATION OF FOREIGN-BORN WHITES, BORN IN MEXICO, IN ARGENTINE, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, AND KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI, 1900 TO 1940**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Kansas City, Kansas</th>
<th>Argentine</th>
<th>Kansas City, Missouri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905a</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915a</td>
<td>465</td>
<td>282</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>2,039</td>
<td>535</td>
<td>1,797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925a</td>
<td>1,575</td>
<td>566</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,517 (2,615)b</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,868 (2,984)b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>947</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,012</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: United States Census Reports, 1900-1940; and the Decennial Census of the State of Kansas, 1905, 1915, and 1925.

Data from the Decennial Census of the State of Kansas.

*In 1930 the Federal Census used a special classification of "Mexican" which included foreign-born whites, born in Mexico, as well as their offspring born in the United States (foreign-white stock).*

Although the figure cited by *La Prensa* was based upon reports from United Charities, Kansas City's official charity organization, it was much too high. Morales favored a report which found 370 fewer Mexicans than the federal census counted there a year earlier. It is not clear why Morales favored the mission report. It is possible that he wished to deny reports that large numbers of Mexicans were unemployed and dependent upon charity. Denials, however, could not change reality. Several months later Morales organized a repatriation train to return destitute Mexicans from the Kansas City-Topeka area to their homes in Mexico. Whatever his motives, Morales simply knew little about the Argentine barrio. Not all Mexicans, for instance, lived in the yard.
Although it is impossible to determine the Mexican population in Argentine in 1921, it is likely that the population numbered about 900, including men, women and children. From 1925 until 1940 the director of the Methodist Mexican Mission in Argentine continually referred to a Mexican population of 1,000 in her annual reports to the Kansas Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mexican immigrants who lived in the barrio in 1921 maintain that most of the Mexicans who were repatriated soon returned. If this is true, then the population probably ranged between 900 and 1,000 during the early 1920s. The estimate of 1,000 was not unreasonable, especially if illegal immigrants were included. If Argentine's population in 1920 was about 900 to 1,000, then the census seriously under-enumerated Mexicans in the city. Since the 1920 census listed Armourdale's population at 1,095, it is possible that at least 2,000 Mexicans actually lived in the area.

Other estimates of Mexican population in the twin cities are also at conflict. The 1920 federal census, for instance, was in line with a survey made by the County Assessor of Wyandotte County, W. G. Bird, in 1919. Bird found a total of 1,915 Mexicans in Kansas City, Kansas. Of these, 1,233 were adults and 682 were school children. Bird expressed surprise that his survey revealed the existence of so few Mexicans. He felt his statistics were surprisingly "low" in light of other persistent reports of
between 5,000 and 6,000 Mexicans in the city.\textsuperscript{19}

In 1920 a \textit{New York Times} reporter visiting the city estimated the Mexican population of Kansas City, Missouri, at 10,000. Although that figure was too high for the Missouri portion of the city, it was not an unreasonable estimate of the total Mexican population of the twin cities. Contemporaries assumed that about 6,000 Mexicans lived on the Kansas side, and since the Mexican population in Kansas City, Missouri, was smaller, 4,000 was a fair estimate. The 1920 census reported a combined total of 3,836 Mexicans in the twin cities. Allowing for an undercount of only two and a half times, the population would be 9,590.\textsuperscript{20}

The growing Mexican population in the twin cities in 1920 resulted from the influx of laborers during World War One, and from newly-arriving immigrants. Emigration from Mexico accelerated during 1920 and reached crisis proportions by March, 1920, when the Mexican government tried to stem the tide of migration. During this period \textit{La Prensa} carried reports that entire towns were being depopulated as their inhabitants left for the United States. In April the Mexican Secretary of Agriculture instructed the governors of the five Mexican states which contributed the bulk of the migrants (Michoac\'an, Aguascalientes, Jalisco, Guanajuato and Zacatecas) to prevent further emigration of agricultural laborers. The out-migration of agricultural workers created critical shortages of seasonal labor within Mexico. Kansas City absorbed its share of these immigrants, for the city lay abreast of a major migratory corridor. The existence of
a rapidly-growing Mexican colonia, or colony, in the twin cities between 1918 and 1920 is substantiated by the proliferation of Mexican money exchanges which catered to migrant workers. The establishment of additional branches in Kansas City reflected the growth of its Mexican colonia.  

Mexican consuls in Kansas City paid no attention to such population estimates. One consul acknowledged fewer Mexicans in Kansas City, Kansas, than federal census takers reported. The statistics he provided to the city's Health Department in 1939 differed drastically from the 1920 and 1930 federal censuses. The consul estimated there were 1,510 Mexicans in the city in 1920 and 1,601 in 1930. Thus, he recognized 529 fewer Mexicans in 1920 than found by the census takers, and 1,014 fewer in 1930.

These consular estimates were conceivably based upon the volume of consular transactions and registrations. It is also possible that the consul deliberately distorted the statistics to de-emphasize the number of Mexicans in the city. Other cities, such as Gary, Indiana, and Los Angeles, undertook repatriation drives in the 1930s to rid themselves of their "Mexican problem." Perhaps the consul hoped to fore-stall anti-Mexican movements in Kansas City by disguising the actual number of Spanish-speaking immigrants in the city.

At any rate, census statistics must not be taken at face value. Census data can be used with some reservations as an index to the Mexican population in Kansas City. These statistics reflect overall trends in population movement, even though they do not accurately represent the numerical
and demographic dimensions of the ethnic community. The undercount apparently became less severe by 1920. In March, 1925, census takers found 566 Mexicans (men, women and children) in Argentine. But in the same month, 488 Mexican males worked for the Santa Fe there. Obviously, an undercount again occurred. Since mission workers estimated the Mexican population in Argentine at 1,000, it appears the census takers failed to enumerate roughly half of the Mexican population. Assuming the Mexican population in the 1920s and 1930s in Argentine stabilized at 1,000, then Mexicans comprised roughly one-tenth of the district's population.

A more rewarding data source for the study of Mexican immigration to Argentine are the Prior Service files kept by the Paymaster of the Santa Fe. In compliance with federal legislation, railroads assigned numbers to all employees in active service on August 29, 1935. On that date the United States Retirement Act was signed into law. The act as amended in 1937 permitted railroad employees to claim credit towards retirement annuity up to thirty years of service performed prior to January 1, 1937. In 1941 the Santa Fe sent a letter to all former employees who worked for the company on August 29, 1935, informing them of their rights under the law and requesting them to submit a claim for their prior service with the company.

The Prior Service files are of little use in compiling aggregate data on the numerical dimensions of the Mexican population in Argentine, although they serve as an indicator of error in census counts. They cannot be used as a substi-
tute for census reports. The Prior Service files, however, contain much data on individual employes, which enriches the study of immigration history.

The data contained in the Prior Service files is particularly useful in the examination of migration patterns and employment histories of the Mexican work force. Each folder contains information on the birthplace and date of birth of the employe, as well as a detailed account of that employe's work experience with the company. This data must be used with care, for it contains a built-in bias. Since the files trace the histories of workers employed by the company on August 29, 1935, they contain no information on employes who quit prior to that date, even if they worked for the company for twenty years. Mexicans who transferred to another area of the country to work for the Santa Fe were included if they subsequently requested an annuity.

Prior Service records are used here in spite of their limitations as a raw source for Mexican immigration history. No other such data source is known to exist for Mexicans employed in Argentine, for the devastating 1951 flood which covered the bottoms in Kansas City destroyed the Santa Fe's employment records. The Prior Service files are ideal for studies of persistence of Mexican workers within the railroad industry in Argentine. The files are an index to persistence, i.e., continued employment on the Santa Fe system. Those Mexicans who weathered the worst years of the depression and retained their jobs in Argentine constituted the core group whose records appear in the Prior Service files.
Although some Mexicans who worked for the company in 1935 were recent arrivals to the community, the majority of the Mexicans had worked for the company in Argentine for more than ten years. Hence, these files are particularly useful in examining the immigration patterns of Argentine's long-term Mexican residents. These data are utilized in the discussion which follows.

**Mexican Origins of the Migration**

Little is known of the Mexican milieu out of which the immigrants came, and even less is known about the immigrants' reasons for settling in particular areas. Immigrants to Argentine did not settle there purely by chance, but chose their new homes with some care. Likewise, the emergence of a barrio in Argentine was not merely coincidental.

Although the phrase "migration by drift" has been used frequently in the literature to describe the pre-1940 Mexican immigration, it is not a completely satisfactory term. While it is true that some, perhaps most, Mexican immigrants apparently drifted around from job to job with no particular commitment to their work or the locale, others exhibited a different pattern of behavior. These Mexicans became attached to a particular community and sought to maintain themselves there in spite of adverse conditions. Often family members and other Mexicans from the immigrants' native pueblos lived there too.

Purposeful migration by Mexicans has hitherto been
largely ignored, yet, deliberate, reasoned immigration also occurred. Immigration for permanent settlement involved some degree of decision making on the part of the immigrant. The first Mexicans brought into Argentine by the Santa Fe, however, did not select their work locale, nor did they have any commitment to the community. The decision to settle there came later. Initially, Mexican seasonal workers knew little about the United States, but as they gained knowledge of specific areas, they developed preferences.

The composition of Mexican migration streams into the United States was largely determined by the existing railway network which linked Mexico and the United States. This network distributed Mexicans throughout the United States in distinct diffusion patterns. The composition of Mexican immigration to Kansas City, consequently, was strikingly different from many other regions of the country. Even within the city, migration streams separated into specific sub-groups with locality bases. In particular, immigrants from one Mexican town, Tangancicuaro, Michoacan, settled almost exclusively in Argentine, and worked, almost without exception, as shop laborers.

No researcher can trace the origin and fate of every Mexican who passed through the Argentine barrio, or any other community in the United States. At best researchers of migratory movements must make enlightened guesses as to the probable patterns, dimensions and implications of migration, based upon the evidence left behind. Contemporaries, however, made studies of Mexican migration patterns, and it is
to such researchers that credit must be paid for ground-breaking work in the field.

The three pioneers in the field of Mexican immigration history who attempted to trace the origins of Mexican immigrants were Paul S. Taylor, Manual Gamio and Robert F. Foerster. Taylor and Gamio conducted their work under the auspices of the Social Science Research Council, Committee on Scientific Aspects of Human Migration, in the 1920s and 1930s. Foerster was an employee of the United States Department of Labor. The work of these three men disclosed the existence of regionally-based streams of migration from Mexico into the United States.

Foerster's 1925 study revealed that the majority (or 56.9 percent) of Mexican immigrants came from the central plateau, or mesa central, of Mexico. This region included the states of Aguascalientes, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán and Zacatecas. The second largest contributing area was the border region of the northeast, comprising the states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango and Nuevo León. This region supplied 25.3 percent of all immigrants. The west coast states of Baja California, Sinaloa and Sonora furnished only 7.4 percent, while all the other states combined produced only 10.4 percent of all migrants.

The composition of migrant streams, however, varied from region to region in the United States. The immigration composition in the Imperial Valley of California, for example, differed markedly from that described by Foerster. Taylor's study of Mexicans in the Imperial Valley in 1926–27 revealed
that about half of the immigrants came from west coast states. Nearly one-third of the Mexicans were from the central plateau, and nearly seventeen percent listed northeast border states as their place of origin. About six percent came from all other areas combined. 27

Taylor's study of Mexicans in Chicago and the Calumet region proved that migration streams to those Midwestern industrial centers did not resemble those to the Imperial Valley. Mexican migrants to the Calumet area in the 1919-30 came predominantly (73.7 percent) from the central plateau. Only two percent came from west coast states, although 21.7 percent listed northeast border states as their state of origin. 28

The third contributor to the study of migration patterns was Gamio, a noted Mexican anthropologist. In the late 1920s Gamio undertook a study of postal money orders, which Mexican laborers sent back to their families in Mexico, to trace migratory movements from various states. He compiled statistics for the United States as a whole, as well as for certain states. Gamio interpreted the money order distribution to mean that the northeastern and Midwestern states, especially Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, absorbed a larger proportion of immigrants from the states of Michoacan and Guanajuato than did regions such as Texas and California. 29

None of the studies by Taylor, Gamio and Foerster examined the migration patterns of railroad laborers per se, although railroad workers were included in most of the studies. Since migration into the interior followed rail-
road lines, it is logical to assume that migration along a certain corridor would have been similar in composition. Such a corridor existed between El Paso and Chicago via Kansas City. The major recruitment of Mexicans by railroads occurred at El Paso and Laredo. Various interior labor distribution centers also emerged. Kansas City became a major labor distribution center for Mexican laborers by at least 1914, if not earlier. This transportation hub dispersed Mexican laborers throughout the Midwest into various industries such as the railroads, meatpacking, sugar-beet and construction industries and steel plants.

The existing railroad network provided the basis for the development of a complex labor distribution system. Mexicans migrated along Mexican railways to the border where recruiters from the United States awaited them. In 1918 the Mexican government paid the rail fares of aspirant migrants from their homes to the Border. Although the Mexican government soon reversed its policy, there is little doubt that the arrangement greatly stimulated migration from the interior of Mexico to the United States.

Laborers from the central plateau soon discovered that the areas in the United States adjacent to the border were over-supplied with Mexican labor. Mexicans from the north-east border states predominated in the Borderlands region. Immigrants from the central plateau by-passed these northern groups for locations in the interior. Taylor described the migrants as having "leap-frogged" across other bands of Mexicans to Midwestern locations. Hence, migrants from the
interior of Mexico found their way to Midwestern locations via the railway network. Sub-distribution centers such as Kansas City, Omaha and Chicago further diffused the migrants.

Data contained in the Prior Service files show that Mexican immigrants employed by the Santa Fe in Kansas City prior to 1940 came primarily from the central plateau. Immigrants from that area constituted an overwhelming 87.5 percent of the group. The states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Durango, Nuevo León and San Luis Potosí sent 12.5 percent of the immigrants. The Prior Service files contained no records of Mexicans from any other states. These data are presented in the following table.

**TABLE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State of Origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guanajuato</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michoacán</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zacatecas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jalisco</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aguascalientes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis Potosí</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chihuahua</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coahuila</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuevo León</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>112</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.00%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Santa Fe Railway, Payroll Records, Prior Service Files, Kansas City Division (Argentine).

If the Santa Fe work force was typical of Mexican immigrants in the city, then Kansas City, like the states of Illinois, Indiana and Michigan, received the largest portion
of its Mexican immigrants from the two states of Michoacán and Guanajuato. These two states contributed 57.14 percent of the Santa Fe's long-term work force. Likewise, it is unlikely that Mexicans from the west coast states of Mexico ever constituted a significant portion of immigrants to Kansas City. Some undoubtedly drifted into the city from time to time, but they did not flock to the Midwestern states. In Chicago and the Calumet area they constituted only two percent of the total. 

In spite of the small size of the Prior Service data and the built-in bias towards long-term residents and Santa Fe employees, these data are highly significant. Unlike the data compiled by Taylor and Gamio, the Prior Service files reflect the emerging Mexican-American community. Taylor and Gamio had no way of knowing if the Mexicans whose birthplaces they recorded were transients or semipermanent immigrants. The Santa Fe data, on the other hand, traces the migration histories of immigrants who remained in the Kansas City area for a number of years and often, decades. Perhaps it underrepresents certain states, but it is probable that Mexican railroad workers who remained in the city were fairly representative of Mexican immigrants to the city. The overall composition of Mexican immigration to the city can only be surmised unless better sources are discovered. Some evidence exists, however, which substantiates the patterns of migration portrayed in the Prior Service data. A Mexican labor foreman interviewed by Professor Paul S. Taylor in
Kansas City, Missouri, in the late 1920s maintained that the majority of the immigrants there were from the three states of Guanajuato, Michoacán and Jalisco. An exception to this generalization were the political refugees who came to the city during the Mexican Revolution. Biographies published in *El Cosmopolita* indicate that some of them came from states closer to Mexico City. These included Querétaro, Hidalgo and Vera Cruz.

A further advantage of the Prior Service data is that they can be broken down into geographic and status categories. Table 6 divides these data into groups, corresponding to the higher-status shop laborers and the lower-status track workers in Argentine and to geographically distinct barrios (Argentine and the Westside, Kansas City, Missouri barrio). Shop laborers looked with disdain upon track work. One retired Mexican shop worker interviewed for this study objected to being asked about the character of a section foreman in Argentine, declaring, "I don't know none of them section bosses." The existence of such status differences between types of railroad employment for Mexicans within the small barrio are significant. Just as significant were the divergent patterns of migration of Mexicans into these two types of railroad employment in Argentine. Table 6 shows that immigrants from the central plateau, especially those from Michoacán, dominated shop employment. The Michoacán contingent in the Santa Fe shops was disproportionately large when compared with other categories of Mexican railroad employment in Kansas City. The
barrio in Argentine clearly absorbed a larger percentage of immigrants from Michoacán than did the Westside, Kansas City, Missouri, barrio where the warehouse was located.

The concentration of Michoacanos (people from Michoacán) in the Argentine shops can be explained by the existence of a group of Mexicans from the pueblo (town) of Tangancícuaro, Michoacán. This pueblo over the years consistently contributed a larger number of Mexican immigrants to Argentine than any other community in Mexico. There is no evidence that any of the "Tangas," as people from the pueblo are known in Argentine, sought work in other Kansas City barrios. None worked in the warehouse.

Around 1907 the first "Tangas" made their way to Argentine to work for the Santa Fe. Immigrants from the pueblo continued to seek seasonal track employment there until about 1916 when some "Tangas" settled permanently in Argentine. These immigrants initiated a process of chain migration between Tangancícuaro and Argentine. "Tangas" in Argentine lured others from the pueblo, including many family members. This process continued over the decades as new waves of "Tangas" arrived in the barrio. The immigrants from Tangancícuaro attempted to settle in close proximity to one another in the Argentine barrio and the men secured shop jobs. Some "Tangas" who arrived during World War One to work in the shops kept their jobs until they retired or died. Immigrants from other Mexican pueblos also displayed a similar pattern of immigration, although none proved as successful as the "Tangas" in maintaining their Mexican
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Argentine Shops</th>
<th>Argentine Track</th>
<th>Argentine Total</th>
<th>Warehouse, K.C.W.</th>
<th>Kansas City Total</th>
<th>Chicago, Calumet Region</th>
<th>United States, Illinois, Michigan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Jalisco</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>6.45</td>
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<td>7.69</td>
<td>9.82</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>14.7</td>
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<td>Guanajuato</td>
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<td>38.71</td>
<td>29.07</td>
<td>38.46</td>
<td>31.25</td>
<td>17.4</td>
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<td>36.21</td>
<td>16.13</td>
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<td>11.54</td>
<td>25.89</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Zacatecas</td>
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<td>19.23</td>
<td>17.06</td>
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<tr>
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<td>___</td>
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<td>Nuevo Leon</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coahuila</td>
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<td>___</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>7.69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Durango</td>
<td>___</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>11.54</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 100.00  100.00  100.00  100.00  100.00

Sources:  
\(a\): Prior Service Files, Kansas City Division, Author's calculations. (Sample, 112)  
\(b\): P. S. Taylor, Chicago and the Calumet Region, p. 49. (Sample, 3,132)  
\(c\): Manuel Gamio, Mexican Immigration to the United States, p. 13. (Sample, 28,846)  
\(d\): Ibid., p. 19. (Sample, 3,366)  
\(b, c, d\): Percentages are only given for states represented in the Prior Service data.
Although Michoacanos predominated in the shops, immigrants from Guanajuato dominated all other categories of Santa Fe employment in Argentine and Kansas City. Guanajuatenses (people from Guanajuato) constituted the largest single group in the track forces and among the warehouse employees, and they ranked second only to the Michoacanos in the shops. It is likely, also, that they were the largest single group of Mexicans in the city prior to 1940. Guanajuato in 1910 had the second largest population of any of the four major states which made up the central plateau. Moreover, it also had the greatest population density of any of these states, as Table 7 shows. Michoacán ranked second to Guanajuato in the number of inhabitants per square kilometer. It was logical that these two states would contribute a large share of immigrants when economic pressures intensified after 1900.

Thus, the majority of Kansas City's Mexican immigrants came from the central plateau of Mexico. The Mexican Central
Railway serviced the densely populated states of the region and transferred immigrants to El Paso where the Santa Fe conducted them to Kansas City. Other railroads drained away the supply of Mexican laborers at Laredo and Eagle Pass, resulting in a diffused migration pattern in the Borderlands. Victor S. Clark, an employee of the Department of Labor, noted in 1907 that immigrants from the northeast border states (Coahuila, Durango and Nuevo León) moved along the National Railway of Mexico to Laredo. From Laredo railroad lines connected with San Antonio, Ft. Worth and Dallas. Immigrants from Querétaro and San Luis Potosí probably entered through Eagle Pass (Piedras Negras). Immigrants from Jalisco either followed the Mexican Central, or, after 1912, the Southern Pacific to the United States border.

Thus, migration streams followed the existing railway network. Consequently, Mexican immigration patterns were somewhat predictable. Migrants from the central plateau generally leap-frogged across already saturated employment areas in the Border region to the Midwest. Mexican immigrants initially had little choice in their employment locale, but as the years passed, preferences became apparent and the process of chain migration of people from the same Mexican pueblos to specific towns and cities in the United States began. Seasonal workers who returned to Argentine to work yearly, eventually settled there and sent for friends and relatives to join them.
Mexican Donor Communities

Although some researchers examined Mexican immigration patterns, no published studies exist which trace immigrants who settled in specific geographical locations in the United States to their respective pueblos, cities or villages of origin. Although Gamio apparently had access to data on Mexican donor communities, he did not explore the topic. Consequently, there are many questions about the origins of Mexican immigration which remain unanswered. None of the studies conducted by Gamio and Taylor, for example, explored the dimensions of migration to one barrio.

Examination of the Prior Service files reveals that Mexican communities of a particular size contributed a disproportionate share of immigrants to the Argentine barrio. Table 8 lists more than fifty Mexican donor communities which can be identified. These communities are broken down by the number of inhabitants each contained in 1910, on the eve of the Mexican Revolution. The number of immigrants to Argentine is given for each size category of donor communities.

Table 8 dispels notions that the majority of immigrants to Argentine were peons or hacienda laborers. Although the states of Michoacán, Jalisco and Guanajuato contained large numbers of large landed estates, or haciendas, the immigrants sent from those states to Argentine, for the most part, were not born on haciendas or ranchos (small farms), nor were they born in villages. Only three male immigrants listed their birthplaces as identifiable ranchos. The other six immigrants listed in Table 8 as products of ranchos or
Haciendas were arbitrarily assigned to this classification because their places of birth were too small to be located in Mexican directories and on detailed maps.

It is possible that these six immigrants may have been born in rancherías. These are not to be confused with ranchos. The term "rancho" does not equate with "ranch," but more correctly can be described as a small farm property maintained by an independent proprietor, or ranchero, and his family. Rancheros are often referred to as peasant proprietors. Rancherías, on the other hand, were mobile villages formed of semi-tribal groups or extended families who lived collectively in makeshift dwellings throughout Mexico. Rancherías have existed since the Colonial period until the present day. Often, these migratory squatter camps located near haciendas, railway centers and cities to enable the inhabitants to engage in various forms of casual labor. The location of rancherías would not be indicated on maps, nor would they be included in geographical dictionaries. Rancherías of Sonora joined in the gold rush in the 1840s and in the 1880s served as railroad laborers in the Southwest. So, it is reasonable to assume that they also produced migrants in the 1900s as well.

Immigrants from small villages, ranchos, haciendas and rancherías constituted a very small percentage of the long-term immigrants to Argentina. Even when combined with the next group of eleven (see Table 8) who came from villages with populations ranging between 1,000 and 1,999, these twenty-two men composed only twenty-six percent of the total
The next major group consisted of thirty-five immigrants from towns with populations of 2,500 to 5,000. They were the largest single group of immigrants, as defined by community size, to settle in Argentine. They represented forty-three percent of the total. Seven immigrants were born in towns ranging between 6,000 and 10,999 in population, and cities with populations of 12,000 to 19,999 also sent seven. Thirteen immigrants were born in cities with a population of 20,000 or more.

Hence, the donor communities ranged in size from small ranchos to large urban centers. Only twenty-six percent of the immigrants to Argentine examined in this study fell into categories which fit the conventional stereotype of the Mexican immigrant as peasant. Almost seventy-five percent of Argentine's long-term immigrants came from communities with populations of 2,500 or more. As late as 1940 the majority of Mexicans (or 64.9 percent) still lived in villages and hamlets with populations of less than 2,500. Hence, Argentine's Mexican immigrants were not drawn from the least urban populace of Mexico. In 1940 towns with populations of 2,500 to 10,000 contained only 13.2 percent of the nation's population. Forty-nine percent of the Mexicans studied in Table 8 came from communities of this size. Moreover, twenty-four percent (or twenty) came from cities with populations of 12,000 or more.

It is reasonable to classify the pueblos which contributed the largest number of immigrants, those with populations of 2,300 to 5,999, as small towns whose primary indus-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size of Donor Community, 1910</th>
<th>Mexican Donor Communities</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-999</td>
<td>Etzcuaro, Mich.; San Cristobal, Jal.; and 9 ranchos and haciendas</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,000-1,999</td>
<td>Tlazazalca, Mich.; Unión de San Antonio and Poncillán, Jal.; Julimes, Chih.; Mezquital del Oro and San Pedro Piedra-Gorda, Zac.; and Armadillo, S. L. P.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,000-2,999</td>
<td>Patamban, Mich. (2,600)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000-3,999</td>
<td>Tangancícuaro and Parneho, Mich.; Cueraímaro, Gto.; &amp; Nochistlán, Zac. 20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4,000-4,999</td>
<td>San Juan de los Lagos (Unión de los Lagos), Jal.; Cuitzeo de Abasola, Salud de Labitoria, Gto.; Valparaíso and Villanueva, Zac.; &amp; Villahermosa, N. L.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,000-5,999</td>
<td>Tepatitlán and Arandas, Jal.; Yuririá and Romita, Gto.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,000-6,999</td>
<td>Pánuco, Mich.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7,000-7,999</td>
<td>Ciudad Lerdo, Dgo.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,000-8,999</td>
<td>Pénjamo, Gto.; Jerez (Ciudad García Salinas), Zac.; and Ciudad Juarez, Chih.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,000-10,999</td>
<td>La Piedad, Mich.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12,000-12,999</td>
<td>Zamora, Mich.; and Valle de Santiago, Gto.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13,000-13,999</td>
<td>Torreón, Coah.; and Coeneo (Municipality), Mich.</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15,000-19,999</td>
<td>Silao and Irapuato, Gto.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20,000-49,999</td>
<td>Aguascalientes, Ags.; Guanajuato, Gto.; Zacatecas, Zac.; and Catorce (Municipality), S. L. P.</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60,000-80,000</td>
<td>Leon, Gto. (63,263)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100,000+</td>
<td>Guadalajara, Jal. (101,208)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 05

Sources: Prior Service Files, Kansas City Division; and Alberto Leduc and Dr. Luis Lara y Pardo, Diccionario Geográfico, Historia y Biografías Mexicanas (México, D. F.: Librería de la Vda. de C. Bouret, 1910).
The majority of the inhabitants of such towns found employment in agriculture or in agriculture-related enterprises such as milling, blacksmithing and carpentry. Artisans and other self-employed craftsmen in such towns occupied a notch above the lower classes, although it is probably incorrect to refer to artisans and other intermediary groups as members of the middle class.

Indeed, no real middle class existed in these towns by 1900, although the upper and lower classes were well defined. The upper strata of a typical pueblo in Michoacán around the turn of the twentieth century consisted of hacendados, doctors, lawyers, high church and military officials and those from wealthy families. The lower strata included Indians, hacienda peons, day laborers and servants. The middle class was so stratified that it was more a catch-all category, than a real group. Included in this category were lessor church and military officials, teachers, small landholders, lower level bureaucrats, petty merchants, store assistants, muleteers, artisans and self-employed persons.

Some of Argentine's immigrants fell into the middle strata in their native pueblos. Included among the immigrants were artisans such as blacksmiths and shoemakers, as well as small farmers, and possibly, some tenant farmers. Moreover, some of the immigrants attended school in Mexico as children; so, it is reasonable to assume that they were not drawn from the lower strata of these towns. Likely, a substantial number of Argentine's immigrants were small farmers who lived in town and farmed on the outskirts of
the community. Others were day laborers who sought work on nearby haciendas during periods of peak labor demand. Some, also, may have been arrieros (muleteers), for arriero trade flourished between the mestizo hill communities of Michoacán. One Mexican who settled in Argentina came from Purepero, Michoacán, a center of arriero traffic for over a century.41

The assumption that many of Argentina’s immigrants came from small-farm backgrounds can be supported by evidence from the Prior Service files and the Kansas state census. The 1925 state census reported that forty-five percent of all Mexican households in the Argentine barrio, excluding the transient boxcar camp, continued to engage in agriculture to some extent.42 There is also evidence to suggest that some of the immigrants engaged in farming in Mexico and spent varying periods in the United States to earn money to support and sustain their agricultural endeavors. This pattern was commonplace during the Mexican migratory movements in the twentieth century. Mexican Santa Fe employes often took leaves of absence from their jobs in Argentine’s shops to return to Mexico. Often they made such trips during the prime agricultural season there.43

In particular, this pattern of alternating agricultural and railroad work characterized immigrants from Tangancícuaro and other Michoacanos. One shop worker from Coeneo, Michoacán, spent the Spring, Summer and Fall of 1917 and 1919 in Mexico and worked in Argentina in the interim. A "Tanga" worked for two months in 1907, four months in 1909,
and five months in 1911 for the Santa Fe in Kansas and Missouri, presumably returning to Mexico at the end of each work stint. When he re-entered Santa Fe service in 1919 for what was to be an unbroken twenty-two year period in the shops, the worker reported that he farmed for himself in Tangancícuaro from 1913 to September, 1918. Another "Tanga" who entered the Argentine shops in March, 1916, at the age of nineteen, reported he farmed prior to that time. 44

A laborer from Arandas, Jalisco, also exhibited an on-again, off-again pattern of employment characteristic of part-time farmers. He worked as an extra-gang laborer in the Southwest from 1911 to 1917 on a seasonal basis until he located permanently in Argentine. He demonstrated his farm background during the 1921 recession. When he lost his job in Argentine, the man became a self-employed farmer there until the company rehired him some months later. 45 Paul S. Taylor in his investigation of Arandas in 1931-32 found that peasant proprietorships were not at all uncommon in that area. 46 Although this evidence is sketchy, it supports the argument that small peasant proprietors sometimes abandoned their farming enterprises, albeit reluctantly and often after many years of seasonal migratory work, when they were no longer able or willing to make a go of it in Mexico.

The major migratory thrusts from Michoacán and other states in the mesa central occurred during periods of crop failures and other economic disruptions. Marginal farmers succumbed under such duress and many sought to recoup their losses by seeking work elsewhere. Tangancícuaro, for example,
lay on a hilly, sloping land which could best be described as marginal. Uncertain precipitation, erosion and the need to let this infertile land lie fallow after three or four years of cultivation made farming in the area a calculated risk. Droughts and crop failures in the years 1892 and 1907 functioned to spur emigration from Michoacán and other states in the mesa central. In the 1890s many of the uprooted laborers and farmers migrated to Mexico City and to the northern areas of Mexico then undergoing development. By 1895 more than ten percent of the population of the states in the mesa central no longer lived in their native towns. In 1907 migrants followed the rail lines northward into the United States in search of work.47

Hence, push factors played a large role in these migrations. The greatly-reduced production in 1907 resulted in a decline in the need for agricultural laborers. Consequently, many farm laborers also migrated in search of work. Another effect of the subnormal production was a rise in the cost of farm products. Unemployment, coupled with rising food prices, helped spur the migrations in 1892 and 1907.48 In 1907 push factors in Mexico coincided with pull factors in the United States. Railroads in that year solicited Mexican laborers to cut costs during a domestic recession. Thus, conditions in Mexico predisposed agricultural laborers and farmers to migrate in search of work at a time the railroad industry sought a cheap labor supply.

Romero Flores, the noted historian of Michoacán and the Mexican Revolution, described the life of the unemployed
agricultural laborer in this epoch. When work was not available on the haciendas, the laborers accepted handouts of corn and beans or lived by selling firewood and fowls in nearby towns. Some sank into despondency and idleness, while others became petty thieves. Small farmers, too, suffered when even the larger hacendados could not sustain production at the necessary levels. Small farmers made forays into the job market in the United States on a seasonal basis until around 1916-17. Only when the possibility of higher-paying jobs beckoned did these determined farmers pull up stakes. This appears to have been the case with the farmers from Tangancituarco, Coeneo and Arandas mentioned above.

Agricultural calamities were not, however, the only perils which threatened the security of the small farmers. Emigration, especially from Michoacán, continued after the Mexican Revolution due to other push factors. That state continued to be torn by minor rebellions. In 1917-18 the ruthless guerilla chieftain Ínés Chávez García led a revolt against the governor of the state. Influenza, rather than military defeat, ended the life of the diseased-crazed guerilla in November, 1918. This conflict coincided with a bad year for agriculture in Michoacán. By March, 1918, La Prensa reported that the "proletariat class" in Michoacán was desperate due to graja shortages and hoarding by businessmen. Something resembling a mass exodus of "Tangas" occurred in 1918-1919. Six families pulled up stakes and resettled in Argentine in 1918, and other fami-
lies followed in 1919. Fighting between socialists and Catholics shattered the tranquility of the area again in 1921. This conflict presaged the bloody Cristero revolt of 1926-28 which raged in Michoacán and Jalisco. Thus, small farmers and agricultural laborers resorted to migration when widespread economic disruptions caused by crop failures and internecine warfare destroyed their means of livelihood.

The immigrants who found their way to Argentine came primarily from a restricted geographical area of the mesa central, as Map 4 indicates. The numbers on the map correspond to identifiable donor communities. Although more than fifty communities are identified in Table 9, the geographic locations of only forty-two were ascertained. Table 9 lists each community by its corresponding number on Map 4 and indicates the number of immigrants per community. The geographical locations of these pueblos and cities are approximately correct. A more detailed map, Map 5, shows the exact locations of the donor communities clustered in the mesa central of Guanajuato, Jalisco, Michoacán, Aguascalientes and Zacatecas.

Map 4 portrays the railway system of Mexico as it appeared in 1925. This was substantially the same system which existed by 1910. The majority of the donor communities lay along the Mexican Central Railway. This major transportation artery stretched southward from El Paso through Chihuahua, Durango, Zacatecas and Aguascalientes into the heart of the mesa central. Only four communities in Nuevo León and San Luis Potosí relied upon the National
ORIGINS of ARGENTINE'S IMMIGRANTS

Map 4.
TABLE 9
MEXICAN DONOR COMMUNITIES—BY STATE, AS SHOWN ON THE PRECEDING MAP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michoacán:</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.  Tangancícuaro</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.  Paracho</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.  Puriporo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.  Ecuanduero</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.  Zamora</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.  Patambas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.  Tlazazcales</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.  La Piedad</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.  Coeneo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Etácuaro</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jalisco:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Tepatitlán</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Unión de los Laogs (San Juan de los Lagos)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Arandas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. San Cristóbal</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Poncitlán</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Unión de San Antonio</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Guadalajara</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guanajuato:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18. Leda</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Guanajuato</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Cuerramaro</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Yuriría</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Valle de Santiago</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Pénjamo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Romita</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Silao</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Irapuato</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. La Calle--Hacienda</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Cuitzeo de Abasolo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zacatecas:</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29. Jerez (Ciudad García Salinas)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Villanueva</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Nochistlán</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Zacatecas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Mezquital del Oro</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Valparaíso</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>San Luis Potosí:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35. Catorse</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. San Luis Potosí</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Armadillo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aguascalientes:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38. Aguascalientes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Durango:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39. Lerdo</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coahuila:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40. Torredera</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chihuahua:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41. Ciudad Juárez</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nuevo León:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42. Villadama</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>76</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
lines which connected with Laredo. Only in Zacatecas did
the donor pueblos not lie in close proximity to the rail
lines.

As can be seen from Map 5, the emigration from Michoacán, Jalisco and Guanajuato was fairly localized. Migrants
in all cases came from those portions of these states which
lay in the mesa central, a temperate zone. In Michoacán
this region consists of two sub-regions. The lowland zone
includes La Piedad, Ecuandureo, Zamora, Tlazazalca and
Purépero. Parallel to it is the central mountain zone
containing some of the highest mountains in the state.
This zone includes the pueblos of Tangangácuaro, Paracho,
Coeneo and Etécuaro. These two zones are typical of lands
found in the mesa central. This general region, and portions
of Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, San Luis Potosí and Durango,
are noted as producers of cereals. It has been called the
granary of Mexico, as well as the "pedd purveyor." 56

More than fifty ranchos, pueblos and cities in this
area fed the immigrant stream to Argentine. Doubtless,
Mexicans from other communities also passed through Argen-
tine, for Gamio found that immigrants in the United States
in 1926 came from at least 552 Mexican pueblos. 57 The
clustering of immigrants from particular states and communi-
ties in Argentine makes it clear that selective immigration
occurred.

Prior to 1916 few Mexicans settled in Argentine as
permanent residents. Beginning in 1916, however, the influx
of aspirant long-term immigrants quickened. The "Tangas"
established a foothold in the shops. Once entrenched, they expanded the size of the "Tanga" contingent in the shops by helping other "Tangas" secure jobs there. In turn, these new employees sent for wives, brothers, cousins and other relatives. Hence, the presence of a small colony of "Tangas" in Argentine was not coincidental. The immigrants deliberately selected Argentine as a place to build a new life.

The clustering of immigrants from Tangancívaro in Argentine supports the theoretical models of immigration which stress the importance of kinship networks in the migration process. An example of this argument is found in Harvey M. Choldin, "Kinship Networks in the Migration Process." Although the impact of kinship affiliation is somewhat ambiguous, Choldin feels various sociological studies indicate that kinship networks facilitate migration and adjustment of the immigrant in the recipient community. "Tangas" sought to recreate aspects of their native pueblo in Argentine, notably friendship and kinship constellations. As one "Tanga" recently explained, "We try to come here to get together . . . not to be with strange people."

They achieved a partial replication of Tangancívaro in the Argentine barrio, coming eventually to dominate one street. But their achievement was not without struggle and risk-taking. The problems of the work environment and social existence are considered in subsequent chapters. The process of migration often was fraught with danger. Consider the experience of one "Tanga" who left the pueblo
in July, 1919, accompanied by his mother and a brother. After catching a train in nearby Zamora, the group traveled via the National line through San Luis Potosí to Laredo.60

The trip via rail through Mexico in 1919 was indeed perilous, for much of the fighting during the Revolution centered around control of railroads. The train containing this group of "Tangas" proceeded slowly and cautiously through areas of conflict, taking fifteen days to reach Laredo. At one point they encountered the burned-out remains of another train. It was a "very ugly" sight, according to this spokesman, for the charred cars containing animal remains resembled a rendering works. During the trip they also encountered many corpses along the rails, some hanging from telegraph poles. At night, passengers disembarked and slept in the countryside, never knowing if they would survive until morning. Conditions in Tangancícuaro at this time, he remembers, were also very difficult. Townspeople slept in the countryside at night and returned to the pueblo only during daylight hours.61

After such traumatic experiences, immigrants who made their way to Argentine may well have looked upon it as a haven. Life there, while by no means ideal, was an improvement over existing conditions in Michoacán at the time. The continued unrest in that state probably encouraged the persistence of the "Tangas" in Argentine. After all, what was there to return to except insecurity and turbulence?

The numerical dimensions of the Mexican barrio in Argentine are difficult to determine. Probably the barrio
contained several hundred Mexicans prior to 1910, and around 1,000 during the 1920s. Clearly, the majority of the Mexican population in Argentine in 1925 entered the United States after 1914--at least, legally. One wonders, however, whether numerical estimates are all that important. In the long run, it was the cultural impact of these immigrants that affected Argentine.

Factors operative in Mexico to a large degree determined the composition of the immigrant streams to Argentine, although the railway network diffused the immigrants into the interior of the United States. At some point during the migratory process, however, immigrants from particular Mexican towns established a pattern of chain migration between Argentine and their pueblos of origin. Their purposeful immigration and settlement in Argentine dispels notions that Mexican immigrants merely drifted about in search of employment. Determination, courage and a quest for group identity characterized the immigrants from Tancanci¢uar¢. They made the best of a chaotic situation and carved out a new "Little Tancanci¢uaro" in an urban setting.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER III


3 These tables are from J. Neale Carman, "Foreign-Language Units of Kansas," II, Part 3, p. 891 (Typescript.)—University Archives, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.


6 The Prior Service Files are described on pp. 77-79.

7 Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, Payroll Records, Prior Service Files, Kansas City Division, Numbers 7035-7679, and 18623-18711 (Indecks Research Deck, P. S. Files, # 81), hereafter cited as P. S. Files; and Decennial Census of the State of Kansas. Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas (Argentine). 1925 (Indecks Research Deck, 1925 census, compilations and tabulations of # 71).

8 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks Research Deck, 1925 census, tabulations of numbers 33-36). Twenty-four other couples did not supply sufficient information.

Santa Fe Payroll, May and November, 1910.

Kansas Decennial Census, Argentina, 1925 (Indecks Research Deck, # 77). Tabulation of 1915 census data for Argentina revealed that 82.2% of all Mexican males living there boarded as solos with other males or in single-family dwellings.

p. S. Files (Indecks Research Deck, # 85); and Santa Fe Payroll, March, 1925.


"Send Mexicans Home," Kansas City Kansan, June 1, 1921, p. 1; "Send the Mexicans Home," Kansas City Times, June 2, 1921, p. 9; and "Mexicans Back to Mexico," Kansas City Star (Main Edition), June 1, 1921, p. 10.


La Prensa, February 3, 1918, p. 8; March 14, 1919, p. 5; March 20, 1920, p. 1; April 8, 1920, p. 2; April 26, 1920, p. 5; April 29, 1920, pp. 2 & 8; April 20, 1921, p. 5; and May 1, 1921, p. 2.

23 Santa Fe Payroll, March, 1925.


25 P. S. Files, "Letter to Employees."


31 Taylor, Chicago and the Calumet Region, p. 48.

32 Ibid., p. 49.

33 Interview conducted by P. S. Taylor in Kansas City, Missouri, Manuscript # 42-214—Taylor Papers, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California.


35 Interview with Leopoldo Ayala, Kansas City, Missouri, June 20, 1974.


39 Herbert Cline, "Mexican Community Studies," Hispanic American Historical Review, XXXII, No. 2 (May, 1952), 231.

40 Oriol Pi-Sunyer, Zamora: A Regional Economy in Mexico, Middle American Research Institute, Publication 29 (New Orleans: Middle American Research Institute, 1967), pp. 118-121, 128.


42 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks Research Deck, # 2 & 6).

43 Corwin, "Causes of Mexican Emigration," p. 561. The term "visiting in Mexico" appears to have been used euphemistically by Santa Fe bureaucrats to describe this employment pattern.

44 P. S. Files, Employe Numbers 7444, 7633 and 7636.

45 P. S. Files, Employe Number 7587.


49 Romero Flores, Historia de la Revolución, p. 44.


51 "La situación en Michoacán es desperada," La Prensa, March 24, 1918, p. 4.

52 P. S. Files (Indecks Category "L"; and Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks # 75). 

53 La Prensa, May 14, 1921; "Todavía la tragedia," La Prensa, May 22, 1921, p. 6; "Cunden los desordenes de los radicales en el Estado de Michoacán," La Prensa, May 27, 1921, p. 1; and May 28, 1921, p. 1.

54 This map is adapted from Mexico, Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería, Dirección General de Geografía y Meteorología, Carta General de la República Mexicana (Mexico: Secretaría de Agricultura y Ganadería, Dirección General de Geografía y Meteorología, 1962). Scale 1:2000000.


57 Gamio, Mexican Immigration, p. 171.


59 Interview with Leopoldo Ayala, Kansas City, Missouri, June 20, 1974.


61 Interview with Leopoldo Ayala, Kansas City, Missouri, June 20, 1974.
CHAPTER IV

MEXICANS IN A SANTA FE TOWN

The railway industry functioned both as the primary conduit of Mexicans into the interior of the United States and as a channel of limited upward social mobility for the immigrants. The role of railways in the geographical dispersal of Mexicans in the Midwest is well established. Thus far, no studies describe the relationship of Mexican immigrants to the railroad industry. Although contemporary government investigators reported on wage rates and working conditions in the industry, no in-depth studies resulted which gave historical perspective upon the relationship of Mexican immigrants to the railroads.¹

Since the railway industry was one of the major employers of Mexicans during the early twentieth century, the fate of large numbers of Mexicans was closely intertwined with that of the railways. Mexican immigrants who settled in the Argentine barrio of Kansas City, Kansas, in effect lived in a company town. The Santa Fe Railway dominated the economic life of the community and, consequently, most Mexican breadwinners found employment with that company. In 1925 at least seventy-five percent of all employed males over eighteen who lived in the barrio worked for the Santa Fe. Thirty-four
Mexicans who did not work for the Santa Fe included three self-employed businessmen, eighteen "laborers," and thirteen men who worked in other Argentine industries.  

Mexicans living in a company town experienced both formal and informal control by the Santa Fe. Most of the other Argentine industries which employed Mexicans had close ties with the Santa Fe Railway and produced products used by railroads. These companies included an oil refinery, a structural steel company, a railroad wheel manufacturer and a company which produced tank cars for the railroad industry. Inhabitants of the boxcar camp in the Santa Fe yards, in particular, felt the heavy thumb of the company upon them in their day-to-day existence. Commissary agents and labor bosses ruled their lives.

The following discussion explores the dimensions of Mexican employment with the Santa Fe Railway in the Argentine barrio. This exploration of immigrant-corporate relations utilizes Santa Fe payroll records, especially a series of records called the “Prior Service Files” which the company compiled on its employees. These records contain useful insights into the utilization of Mexican laborers by the Santa Fe in Argentina from 1907 to 1940.

The influx of Mexicans into Argentine resulted from the employment practices of the Santa Fe Railway. In particular, the company's policies as elaborated in its western lines determined policy for the whole system. The Santa Fe procured its Mexican workforce through a number of private
employment agencies operating in El Paso and Laredo, notably, the Holmes Supply Company and the Hanlin Supply Company. The Santa Fe divided its business regionally between these two companies. Holmes supplied laborers to the company's lines west of El Paso, and Hanlin, after 1908, monopolized the labor supply business of the Santa Fe east of El Paso to Chicago.

These companies received no payment for labor supply services, but made profits by operating commissary units on the Santa Fe's lines. Since their earnings derived solely from their commissary functions, the companies tended to bear down hard upon the Mexican laborers under their control. Often company agents forced Mexicans to pay exhorbitant rates for necessities and required them to purchase unwanted items from the commissary. Such abuses remained a bone of contention between Mexican laborers and commissary agents for years.

The establishment of formal contractual arrangements with Holmes and Hanlin reflected a major shift in the supply of cheap labor. Since few of the "old" immigrant groups remained in unskilled track jobs by the end of the century, the Santa Fe recruited "new" immigrant groups such as Mexicans, Greeks and Bohemians. Prior to 1905 the Santa Fe employed Mexican laborers principally in New Mexico and Texas. After 1905 the use of Mexicans throughout the Santa Fe system increased rapidly, as Table 10 shows.
TABLE 10

MEXICAN TRACK LABORERS ON THE SANTA FE RAILWAY, 1885-1927

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Mexican Truck Laborers</th>
<th>Percentage of the total Work Force</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>28.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>318</td>
<td>30.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>975</td>
<td>50.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,178</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>5,583</td>
<td>46.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>13,329</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>14,542</td>
<td>81.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>13,512</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>18,930</td>
<td>88.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author's calculations, based upon, J. R., "Outline of Study. Mexican Track Labor on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad," Topeka, Kansas, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, General Offices, August, 1928. (Typescript.)--Taylor Papers, Bancroft Library.

The arrival of Mexican track laborers in Argentine in 1905, thus, coincided with the diffusion of Mexicans throughout the Santa Fe system. By 1903 the company utilized Mexicans as track laborers in the southern and western portions of Kansas. Unlike other immigrant groups who settled in Kansas, Mexicans approached the state from the southwest. They quickly replaced other immigrant groups in the Santa Fe's track forces. By 1910 all divisions of the Santa Fe in Kansas depended primarily upon Mexicans for track maintenance. From 1910 to 1927 Mexicans comprised at least eighty-two percent of all track laborers in the four Santa Fe divisions operating in Kansas.6

The number of Mexicans employed by the Santa Fe in Argentine rose after 1905 and Mexicans comprised an increasingly large proportion of the work force. Table 11 shows the
number of Mexican track laborers employed during the month of June in Argentina from 1905 to 1927 and gives the percentage of Mexicans employed in the track force there.

TABLE 11

WEXICAN TRACK LABORERS IN ARGENTINE (KANSAS CITY DIVISION), 1905 to 1927 (JUNE SAMPLE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Mexican Employes</th>
<th>Total Number of Employes</th>
<th>Percentage of Mexican Track Laborers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>803</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>429</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>349</td>
<td>87.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>91.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In Argentine the Santa Fe first utilized other nationalities such as Greeks and Bohemians before it shifted to hiring Mexicans around 1905-1907. Although the company continued to hire individuals of other nationalities such as Greeks, Italians and Japanese, Mexicans comprised the bulk of the track forces after 1907. The first major shipment of Mexicans to Argentine occurred in early 1907, for by Spring of that year 600 Mexican men, women and children lived in the Santa Fe camp. 7

Mexicans lived in Argentine from 1907 onward on a year-round basis, although a continual turnover of population occurred. Early arrivals did not remain there for over six to twelve months. Most signed contracts with the company which guaranteed free passage back to the border for the
worker and his family at the end of a year's service. The Santa Fe also granted a reduced rate of one-half cent per mile to Mexicans who worked at least three months. Other railroads which operated closer to the Mexican Border, required shorter periods of contract, ranging from three to six months. A study conducted by the Immigration Commission in 1910 found that only forty percent of the Mexicans employed by the Santa Fe worked for a full year. The Mexican population in Argentine remained fairly stable in 1907. No mass exodus occurred with the arrival of cold weather. In May, 1907, 133 Mexicans worked for the company there; and in November, 125 remained. Contractual agreements which specified cheap return travel and the presence of Mexican family members helped reduce the potential shrinkage of the work force.

The arrival of this group in 1907 marked the origin of the barrio, for included in this group were the first long-term immigrants. It appears that immigrants who arrived first in the community obtained preferential treatment afterwards from the company. The Santa Fe encouraged employee loyalty and sought to bolster the morale of its Mexican work force by hiring friends and relatives of the workers. It may, also, have encouraged group migration. The Topeka barrio, for instance, owed its origin to the arrival of a group of Mexicans from the town of Silao, Guanajuato, in 1907. The Santa Fe hired these immigrants in El Paso. Many immigrants from the town of Tangancícuaro, Michoacán, settled in Argentine.
It was not unusual for inhabitants of the same communities in Mexico to migrate together. Santa Fe payroll records and manuscript census data document migration of relatives and in-laws. Another study of Mexicans in Kansas revealed that beetworkers who lived in Garden City and saltworkers in Lyons came from the same pueblos. Depopulation of Mexican communities occurred to some extent in the 1920s as their inhabitants joined the migration northward.\textsuperscript{10}

The Santa Fe's growing reliance upon Mexicans in Argentina resulted from a need to cut labor costs during the 1906-1907 recession. Other railroads throughout the Southwest and Midwest turned to Mexicans as a source of cheap labor in the same period. By 1912 Mexicans comprised the major portion of the track forces on railroads located to the south and west of Kansas City. They also worked in sizeable numbers in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois.\textsuperscript{11}

The Santa Fe found that Mexican workers performed their jobs well when they received good treatment. Santa Fe bureaucrats did not fall prey to simplistic views of their Mexican employes, for they often distinguished between individuals and sought to pacify disgruntled workers. The Santa Fe supervisors did not lump all Mexicans together as peasants. R. A. Rutledge, Chief Engineer of the Santa Fe system in the 1920s, pointed out to an investigating committee that the immigrants were "not all peons."\textsuperscript{12} This view led Santa Fe officials to improve living and working conditions for its Mexican employes.
After 1907 the Santa Fe evolved policies and practices to accommodate its Mexican workforce. One of its first concerns was to feed, house and supply Mexican track laborers in the Midwest. Most track laborers worked in "extra gangs," or "floating gangs," so called because of their peripatetic work pattern. These mobile units moved along the tracks in boxcar villages, building and repairing track facilities. The size of these gangs ranged from fifty to two hundred men. The arrival of such gangs in Argentine and other Santa Fe towns, thus, temporarily swelled the Mexican population there and overburdened the town's boarding accommodations.

In 1908 the Santa Fe entrusted the Hanlin Supply Company of Newton, Kansas, with the responsibility of supplying these boxcar encampments throughout the Santa Fe system. The company began operating commissary units in Kansas in 1906-1907. The inauguration of the Hanlin-operated camp in Argentine occurred around 1908. The Santa Fe yard camp, located inside the main railroad yards in Argentine, housed track laborers and some shop workers until around 1929. The heyday of boxcar life in Argentine occurred in the mid-1920s when an Anglo commissary agent and his wife lived in the camp to administer company policy. Between 1910 and 1929 the number of boxcars ranged from fourteen, to twenty, to forty at any given time, depending upon the Santa Fe's need for manual laborers in the Kansas City area.

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Payroll records indicate that the Santa Fe paid Hanlin a flat rate per Mexican for board. The Santa Fe supplied
bunk cars for the laborers, and Hanlin operated a kitchen. Likely, only transients availed themselves of Hanlin's services. More settled workers brought their wives along to cook; or, if they were unmarried or solos, unaccompanied males, laborers often took meals with a Mexican family or with relatives.  

Around 1910-1911 the Santa Fe made another major policy change to improve the living conditions of its Mexican workforce. Reliance upon solos proved less than satisfactory because unattached males seldom remained on the job for more than a few months. This rapid turnover in section crews, in particular, led to a reconsideration of Santa Fe policy. Section hands, unlike extra-gang workers, were not highly mobile in their jobs. They lived in dwellings alongside the tracks and patrolled a ten-mile section of track. Often, all workers assigned to care for yard tracks lived together in a building called the "section house." Because section workers required more training than did extra-gang laborers, the company sought to reduce the turnover in this category of work.

In 1911 the Santa Fe Division Engineer attempted to reduce the rapid rate of turnover among Mexican section workers by adopting new guidelines. To stabilize the section forces the company provided more attractive, comfortable living quarters and encouraged workers to bring their families along. Hiring married men, the engineer explained, produced a "better trained and steadier class of laborers." Although contemporary observers noted the presence of Mexican
families in Argentina by 1907, the company apparently did not systematically attempt to recruit married men accompanied by their families until 1911. 16

Better housing for Mexican workers and their wives was also a top priority of the Santa Fe in 1911. Prior to that year, Mexican section workers in Kansas lived in shacks or dug-outs they built themselves. Some laborers built houses of railroad ties and mud, similar to adobe houses in the Southwest. The first rains caved in these mud structures, and the Mexican section hands left in disgust. After that experience, the Santa Fe began to erect two types of housing along its Kansas lines. The better type of house, built along the main line, utilized old bridge ties, horizontally laid, chinked with mud or concrete. Houses built along branch lines consisted of old rails set on end. The roofs of these structures were of sheet metal, and the floors were either earthen or concrete. Usually, section houses contained two rooms. As in the past, the company ordered Mexican laborers to build their living quarters. 17

These two basic house types were typical of housing along the Santa Fe line from Chicago to the West Coast. Section houses of such construction existed in the Santa Fe yards in Emporia until 1929. In other Kansas towns such as Dodge City, section houses of this vintage still existed as late as 1950. The Santa Fe was not the only major railroad to utilize boxcar and railroad tie housing. Other railroads which passed through Kansas, such as the Missouri Pacific
and the Rock Island, also erected such structures. Other Kansas industries, such as the sugar beet, salt mining and meatpacking industries, also provided company housing of a crude nature to house Mexican workers, as well as other unskilled groups.  

In Argentine, section houses did not appear until 1929. Prior to that time track laborers lived in the Santa Fe boxcar camp or in barrio housing. In 1929 the company constructed three buildings, referred to as the "Mexican tenements," at the Ballway Ice Plant west of Argentine. These accommodations housed laborers employed at the ice plant. There is so indication that the Santa Fe utilized extra gangs in Argentine after 1929. Father Gabriel Perez, a retired parish priest, remembers that the tenements contained no running water. All of the Mexican families who lived in the tenements shared one toilet. These structures were larger than the typical section houses and may have been converted coaches or other Santa Fe equipment. The tenements, as well as a group of huts used by section workers located underneath the Forty-Second Street bridge, disappeared in the flood waters in 1951.

Boxcar and section housing at the ice plant and under the bridge accommodated only a small portion of the Mexican employees of the Santa Fe. For the most part, only track laborers and unskilled shop workers opted to live in these types of housing. Many shop laborers, for instance, never lived in company housing. Others resorted to such arrangements as a temporary expedient and moved out as quickly as
possible. In the early 1920s Mexicans began to purchase houses in areas adjacent to the shops. The movement of Mexicans into rental property in Argentine began a decade earlier.20

Having made some efforts to improve Mexican housing conditions, the company in 1913 moved towards improving wages and working conditions of its Mexican employes and to improve the morale of its work force. In 1913 the company abolished its bonus, or efficiency, system to make shop wages more competitive with other railroads. This action probably resulted from an investigation made by the Russell Sage Foundation in 1913 of conditions in the Santa Fe's Topeka car shops. The survey revealed that Santa Fe shop workers received lower wages than their counterparts employed by rival railroads operating in Kansas, Iowa and Missouri. Investigators laid the blame for low wages paid in the Santa Fe shops to an ill-conceived bonus system which was not based upon what they held to be "generally accepted principles of efficiency engineering." The bonus system, in operation in the shops since 1905, led to the demoralization of shop workers and to a lowering of wages. Only a few Mexicans in Argentine benefited directly from this decision. In the long run, as they entered shop jobs in increasing numbers, the absence of an efficiency system made working conditions more pleasant.21

Mexicans were the direct beneficiaries of another Santa Fe policy decision in 1913. In that year the company moved to bridge the language barrier existing between its labor foremen (bosses) and the Mexican laborers by issuing
Spanish-English dictionaries to its track foremen. The company received much criticism from its Mexican workers because the Santa Fe foremen did not, as a rule, speak Spanish. Rival railway advertisements often emphasized that their foremen spoke Spanish. The Santa Fe bowed to public pressure and from competition from other railroads in this action. No doubt any such action improved job performance and efficiency. Although a company spokesman claimed in 1913 that all Santa Fe foremen spoke a "sort of Mexican lingo," the company obviously deemed the linguistic limitations of its foremen to be a significant problem in dealing with the Mexican laborers. Language barriers, indeed, created a trying situation for both laborers and foremen. The first groups of Mexicans to arrive in Kansas to work for the company communicated with their bosses by sign language. The dictionaries did not revolutionize the situation, for in 1915 the Santa Fe employed the English-speaking children of the Mexican workers as interpreters and waterboys.  

The Santa Fe's attempts to improve working and housing conditions did not end the continuing erosion of its Mexican work force, nor did its policy changes pacify aggressive, vociferous critics. The rapid turnover of track laborers continued and was a serious problem for years. In 1907 the Santa Fe lost thirty percent of its Mexican track laborers in southern Kansas during wheat harvest. As late as 1928 the Holmes Supply Company confidentially estimated its rate of turnover at 150 to 200 percent.  

22  

23
The Santa Fe's problems in retaining its labor force stemmed in part from information disseminated by Spanish-language newspapers, notably La Prensa (San Antonio) and El Cosmopolita (Kansas City, Missouri). A labor agent interviewed by Paul S. Taylor in the late 1920s estimated that twenty percent of Mexicans living in railroad camps subscribed to La Prensa. Most railroads and other businesses soliciting Mexican labor advertised in these papers. At times the editorial staffs of these newspapers supported claims made by various companies, often at the expense of the Santa Fe. During prime migration periods, nearly every issue of these papers carried advertisements by other railroads promising better conditions and higher wages than offered by the Santa Fe. El Cosmopolita was rabidly anti-Santa Fe. Upon occasion it urged Mexicans to desert the Santa Fe for jobs with other railroads hiring labor in Kansas City.

Editors of El Cosmopolita often criticized the Santa Fe and compared it unfavorably to other railroads in Kansas City. In April, 1916, the paper printed a report that Mexicans employed by the Santa Fe were mistreated. The Santa Fe believed it was the "owner, body and soul," of its Mexican employees and treated them like "caged animals," the paper charged. Mexicans complained that the bosses and agents of the Hanlin Supply Company acted like "Jefes Políticos," or political bosses. The paper continued its attacks on the Santa Fe throughout 1916, accusing it of behaving like a "dictator" towards its Mexican employees.
Other railroads quickly followed up such attacks with lists of advantages offered by their company, in contrast to the Santa Fe. In response to charges that the Santa Fe charged Mexicans for coal and stoves used in their boxcar habitats and provided filthy boxcars, various companies promised clean cars, higher wages, garden plots, free stoves and coal and year-round jobs. The Burlington's guarantees outdid all the others. It also maintained a free employment service, as well as a complaint department.26

Competition between railways was not only a matter of rhetoric. Railroads operating in the Kansas City area openly pirated Mexican laborers brought into the area by the Santa Fe. There was no need for agents to invade the Argentine barrio, for Mexicans who lived there could reach the Mexican business district of Kansas City, Missouri, by paying five cents to ride the streetcar. Once there they had access to various private labor agencies which proliferated in nearby industrial and commercial districts. These specialized agencies procured Mexican laborers for a variety of industries throughout the Midwest and Plains states.

Competition among rival employment agencies led to some illegal recruiting in Mexico, a practice forbidden by the Alien Contract Labor Law of 1885. Labor agents who testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1919-1920 emphatically denied that their companies advertised or recruited in Mexico. During House hearings in 1928, E. E. McInnia, General Solicitor of the A.T. & S.F., denied that
the Santa Fe or the Holmes Supply Company ever engaged in
illegal importation of Mexicans. 27

Disclaimers notwithstanding, there is some evidence that
the Santa Fe recruited openly in Mexico. There is no indica-
tion that it did so systematically, over a long period of
time. A farmer interviewed by Paul S. Taylor in Arandas,
Jalisco, in the 1930s told of a Santa Fe agent who visited
the area to recruit in 1913. The laborers traveled with the
agent by automobile and train to the Border. Reportedly,
other railroad and mining representatives also criss-crossed
the state during the same period. 28

Apparentlv railroad companies resorted to extensive
illegal recruitment during the 1906-1907 recession. V. S.
Clark, a Labor Department investigator, reported accounts of
illegal recruiting in that period, although he did not per-
sonally witness such activities. Clark qualified his account
of illegal recruiting with a reminder that a "large part" of
the immigrants received no inducement to immigrate and that
there was an increasing tendency for laborers to cross the
Border "freely and spontaneously" as word spread through Mexico
of the opportunities available in the United States. 29

Apparentlv illegal recruiting increased during World
War One, for the Mexican government attempted to curtail
out-migration from states in the central plateau by ordering
the governors to end the activities of labor contractors
from the United States. One U. S. company reportedly raided
Carranza’s army of 1,400 soldiers for use in the California
sugar-beet industry. It is not known whether this was an isolated incident or whether it represented a generalized pattern of illegal hiring in Mexico. The Mexican government assumed there was a connection between emigration and labor recruiting within its boundaries.

After 1917 reports of illegal hiring continually surfaced, but much of this recruitment consisted of smuggling willing immigrants across the border. A class of professional smugglers, called coyotes, appeared in border towns as early as 1910. Their job was to arrange clandestine trips across the border for Mexicans who wished to avoid legal entry.

Although there is some documentation of illegal recruitment, this area remains largely unexplored. The documented case of Santa Fe recruitment in Jalisco may have resulted from an over-zealous agent desirous of a large commission. Word-of-mouth advertising by returning, enthusiastic migrants probably sufficed to supply sufficient laborers except in periods of labor shortages. Push and pull factors determined the size and character of the migratory flow. After agents made an initial contact, they could be assured of a continued migration from that area. Immigrants from Tangancicuaro followed others from that pueblo to Argentine after 1907.

Argentine's Mexican railroad laborers readily admit that they encouraged others from their own pueblos to join them in the barrio. The more settled residents provided housing and meals for the newcomers and helped them find jobs. Railroad records give several examples of mutual assistance
among Mexicans, and local newspapers also commented upon this phenomenon. The sick, the unemployed and the unemployable, orphans and dependent adults, often moved in with friends, relatives and even strangers. 32

Relatives and those linked through compadrazgo (a formal kinship system) often moved in with railroad laborers to share the rent-free boxcar accommodations. Anita Jones in her study of Mexican boxcar camps in Chicago noted the importance of such kinship ties and group solidarity among Mexicans. In periods of economic recession and during winter months when work was slack the boxcar camps became severely overcrowded. 33

This pattern of mutual assistance was also observed in the Argentine barrio during the 1921 recession. As unemployment in the Santa Fe shops and yards mounted, Mexicans who retained their jobs divided their salaries among the whole Mexican work force. In this way, many unemployed laborers managed to survive being laid off. 34

The Santa Fe had an edge over other Midwestern companies which relied upon Mexican labor. Not only did it have a direct rail link to El Paso, but it also had strong financial ties to the Mexican Central Railway. At one time the Santa Fe, through its branch line, the Sonora Railway, shared a president with the Mexican Central. Santa Fe engineers and labor foreman worked in the company’s Mexican lines during the 1880s, and many remained in Mexico after the company relinquished formal control over the Sonora Railway.
At least one Mexican worked for a Santa Fe foreman in Mexico prior to arriving in Argentina.  

Other Mexicans chose the Santa Fe over other railroads because of the religious symbolism the name conveyed. Santa Fe means "sacred faith." Moreover, the symbol used by the Santa Fe on its rolling stock resembled a cross. Some Mexicans felt they would receive better treatment from a company which displayed the "cross." For devout Catholics, in particular, the company's name may have symbolized institutional paternalism and secular catholicism. Moreover, the company's name was easy to pronounce, even for the most untutored immigrant. The Santa Fe, thus, symbolized a linkage or bridge between two cultures.

Despite its "natural" advantages vis-à-vis Mexican laborers, the Santa Fe suffered a critical shortage in its maintenance of way department in 1917. Other major railroads also experienced labor shortages in that year. This severe shortage of track labor resulted from economic factors, as well as government policy. During 1914-1915 railroads cut back their maintenance of way expenditures because of financial reversals. By 1916, however, business revived as a result of Allied spending, and railroads were hard-pressed to find sufficient laborers. Railroads re-examined their labor policies in order to retain and attract laborers.

The major areas of dissatisfaction among track laborers were the unethical practices of private employment agencies, poor housing accommodations and irregular, spasmodic employment
characteristic of that type of work. To solve these problems railways began establishing their own employment bureaus. The Burlington pioneered in this area. It was also one of the first railways to offer steady, year-round employment to Mexican track laborers. Labor-saving machinery also became more widely used. Although eastern roads began using motor cars, locomotive cranes, rail-laying machines and pneumatic tamping machines to reduce the numbers of men required for rail-laying and track maintenance, the Santa Fe and other western lines continued to be labor intensive in their operations, for ready supplies of Mexicans were available. The Santa Fe also hired women as unskilled shop laborers during the war, and the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway used women as track laborers in its Kansas City yards.37

An immediate result of the labor shortage was a dramatic rise in wages paid to unskilled and semi-skilled railway laborers, especially in the area west of Chicago. Prior to 1917 Mexican track workers hired by the Santa Fe in Argentine earned $1.50 per day for a ten-hour day. By 1917 they earned $2.25 per day, or 22.5 cents per hour. Some roads paid as high as $3.00 for a ten-hour day. Usually, wage rates for track laborers increased in proportion to the distance from the work locale to the Mexican Border. To compete with rising wages the Santa Fe in July, 1917, announced a bonus for its non-union employees earning less than $5,000 per year. The bonus consisted of ten percent of their wages for the last
The increasing scarcity of Mexican labor and the rising wages paid to track laborers by U. S. railways were direct results of the new immigration law passed by Congress in February, 1917. This law imposed a literacy test and an eight dollar head tax upon immigrants from Mexico. No severe labor shortage occurred until the United States declared war on Germany in April, 1917, and announced a draft. The outcry from agriculturalists who claimed they were unable to maintain production for the war effort without the use of Mexican laborers led to a temporary waiver of the restrictions in June, 1917. This waiver applied only to agricultural workers. Railroads and other industries such as mines and factories continued to agitate for a waiver to permit entry of Mexicans destined for certain non-agricultural sectors. Not until June, 1918, did the government extend the waiver to include workers in these industries. Railroads and mines began to recruit Mexicans at a more frenzied pace than ever before.

The entry of Mexican workers for war-time use received a further boost a month later, in July, 1918, when the United States government assured Mexicans that they were not subject to the draft. Agitation by railroad and agricultural lobbyists led to a further extension of the waiver through March, 1921. During this period the United States and Mexican governments co-operated to facilitate the immigration of Mexicans. President Carranza offered free rail transportation to aspirant Mexican immigrants. The United States virtually threw
open the border to all Mexicans who agreed to sign contracts to work in designated war-related industries.

This period of relaxed border control attracted immigrants who remained in their new habitats to put down roots. Many of Argentine's long-term immigrants arrived during the war to take up jobs with the Santa Fe. The 1921 recession temporarily curtailed hiring of Mexicans in the Argentine shops, but additional laborers entered the shops during the shopmen's strike in 1922-1923.

Those Mexicans who secured jobs at these critical junctures slipped through an otherwise impenetrable barrier. Only two Mexican Santa Fe employes from the Argentine barrio who later retired with the Santa Fe did not secure their jobs during a war or a strike. This does not rule out further retirements among the younger generations of immigrants who entered the work force in the 1930s or later. This data bears directly upon the older generation who entered Santa Fe employment prior to 1937.

Events in the United States, such as wars and strikes, as well as the "cultural baggage" of the immigrant, determined an individual's chance of survival as a member of the Santa Fe work force. Members of certain pueblos who arrived in Argentine had an ample life-support system awaiting them. They could wait patiently until a job opening occurred and be assured of a hearty recommendation from their friends and relatives employed by the Santa Fe. Mexicans from the pueblo of Tangancícuaro, for instance, exhibited this kind of mutual assistance pattern.
Apparently, literacy somewhat affected an individual's chance of holding onto a job with the Santa Fe, for eighty percent of the Mexicans employed by the Santa Fe in 1925 were literate. For the barrio as a whole, sixty-five percent of all males over eighteen were literate. Sixty-six percent of all married females were literate. In the long run, literates were somewhat more successful in retaining their jobs than were illiterates. By 1940, twenty-eight percent of all literates and nineteen percent of the illiterates present in 1925 remained in the community. Although literacy in the Spanish language did not necessarily affect job performance, it may have influenced an immigrant's ability to adjust to U. S. society. 42

A more important determinant of job stability was the type of work performed by the individual. Of the twenty-two Argentine Mexicans who retired from the company as of 1971, only four were section workers. The rest were shop laborers. None worked on extra-gangs in Argentine, although nine started their work careers as section hands. Extra-gang work offered no job security, and section work afforded Mexicans a small chance of occupational stability. Even shop work afforded a life-long occupation with retirement for only a small fraction of the Mexican shop employes from the Argentine barrio. Less than one-fourth of the Mexicans employed in the Argentine shops in August, 1935, kept their jobs with the Santa Fe until retirement, as of 1971. 43
Few Mexicans entered the Argentine shops until 1917 when curtailment of European immigration and the draft created vacancies. Labor shortages caused a rapid rise in wages. By 1917 Mexicans who came to Argentina to work for the Santa Fe found they could earn enough money to consider remaining in the United States as permanent residents. Semi-skilled shop workers earned about eighty dollars per month, although most shop and track laborers' monthly incomes averaged between forty and fifty dollars. Prior to 1917 few Mexicans earned enough money to remain in the United States. Migratory workers usually returned with some savings to Mexico where the money would go further.

The dramatic increase in wages earned by lower echelon railway employees resulted in part from government ownership of the railways. Shortly after the government takeover in late 1917, the Railroad Administration under William G. McAdoo issued a series of General Orders establishing wage rates and defining working conditions throughout the nationalized industry. When the government returned the railroads to private control on March 1, 1920, the United States Railroad Labor Board assumed responsibility for establishing standard wage rates in the industry.

Ironically, demand drove prices up in advance of government proclamations. Wages paid Mexican laborers in Argentine rose rapidly after 1917 until the recession of 1921. Non-unionized Mexican laborers consistently received a higher minimum hourly wage than that specified by the Railroad Labor Board. Argentine's track laborers received a higher wage.
prior to 1921 and afterwards than did Mexican track laborers employed by the Santa Fe in other parts of the country. No doubt the proximity of Kansas City's vast labor market played a role in fixing the wage rates in Argentine.

Mexican shop laborers benefitted more than did track laborers from the rising rates of pay after 1917. By July, 1921, Argentine's sixty-four Mexican shop laborers earned between $ .40 and $ .77 per hour. The lowest-paid laborers in the shops, including jaaitors, received a higher hourly wage than did section and extra-gang laborers. Semi-skilled shop laborers could earn as much as $154 per month. The average salary range for unskilled shop laborers was between $79 and $109 per month. The disproportionate rise in wages paid shop laborers continued in the 1920s, although the wage rate per job classification in the shops fell after 1921, as Table 12 shows.

Even though the wage rate for a particular job did not change substantially during the 1920s, higher-paying jobs opened to Mexicans after 1921. This sudden movement of Mexicans into higher-paying positions was a direct result of a nation-wide railroad shopmen's strike which began on July 1, 1922. Union members and sympathizers walked off the job in protest over a reduction in hourly wages ordered by the Railroad Labor Board.

The shopmen's strike caused violent fluctuations in employment throughout the railroad industry's mechanical department. The dislocations in employment caused by the strike created new opportunities for Mexicans in the shops.
# TABLE 12

**WAGE RATES OF MEXICAN LABORERS IN ARGENTINE, 1921-1935**

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<td>Locomotive Painter</td>
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Source: Atchison, Topoka and Santa Fe Railway, Payroll Records, Kansas City Division (Argentine), 1921-1935.
Hitherto, the company employed only one Mexican in a skilled shop job. During the strike the number jumped to thirteen. In addition, Mexicans who remained at their jobs received higher wages, albeit only temporarily. Car laborers, for instance, received a wage of sixty-three cents per hour, rather than the thirty-five cents they earned previously.50

The Santa Fe continued to hire Mexican laborers at all levels of skill throughout the duration of the strike. Although the general strike of shopmen collapsed in 1922, the Santa Fe shopmen held out until December 1, 1923. In order to obtain more skilled workers, the company promoted many of its Mexican employes to higher-paying skilled or semi-skilled jobs. Mexicans who had worked for years in unskilled jobs suddenly found themselves catapulted into positions such as Boilerwasher, Machinist Helper and Locomotive Painter Helper, while some section workers secured unskilled shop jobs.51 Many of these "promotions" occurred in July, 1922. The total number of Mexican shop laborers increased roughly by one-third during the first month of the strike. By August, Mexicans comprised eight percent of all Argentine shop employes.52

Not all Mexicans employed in the shops remained on the job. One fourth of the eighty-five Mexican workers did not show up for work during the first two weeks of the strike. It is difficult to understand why any of the non-unionized immigrants struck in support of Anglo unionists since none of the craft unions admitted Mexicans to membership. Perhaps community pressure encouraged some of the Mexican laborers...
to strike. During the first week of the strike, ninety-seven percent of all shopmen employed in the city's thirteen railroad mechanical shops joined in the walkout. Only 150 shopmen out of 6,000 employed in the twin city's railroad shops remained on the job. 53

Many of the sixty-four Mexican non-strikers were unskilled coach cleaners, locomotive laborers and engine wipers. Since these men worked primarily in gangs composed of other Mexicans, they had little contact with Anglo shopmen and therefore were not personally involved in the strike. Helpers and supplymen, on the other hand, who worked in close company with skilled Anglo workers were divided in their attitude towards the strike. Some struck and remained out for months, while others remained on the job. Conceivably, Mexican helpers struck when the workers they assisted joined the strike. All three Mexicans employed in skilled jobs struck, one for two weeks and the other two for a month. 54

Some Mexicans benefited from the strike by accepting promotions and temporary raises, but others struck. Most Mexican shop workers in Argentine returned to work in August, although a large group of Anglo shop workers fought on until December, 1923. A local newspaper claimed that ninety percent of the shopmen employed in the Santa Fe system abandoned the strike in early August. 55 In Argentine, several hundred strikers refused to join the newly-organized company union and continued their struggle.

Initially, in July, 1922, the Santa Fe did not import
strikebreakers to crush the strike, but attempted to hire locally. The Santa Fe hired a handful of Mexicans during the strike, but could not resort to wholesale importation of Mexican workers due to the hostility of non-striking Anglo shopmen. Elsewhere in Kansas, notably in Newton and Wellington, the company relied more heavily upon Mexicans as strikebreakers, creating an hostility which persisted for decades in those towns. In Argentine the Santa Fe imported Anglo farm laborers by the trainloads from western Kansas to break the strike. Some 200 workers arrived in one train. These rural laborers knew nothing of shop work, but the Santa Fe trained them to replace the strikers.

Although hiring of strikebreakers occurred throughout July and early August, no trouble ensued in Argentine until late August. On August 22, police dispersed a crowd of 500 strikers and sympathizers who attacked a group of non-strikers as they attempted to board a streetcar south of the Santa Fe yards. It is not clear if the non-strikers were Mexicans or Anglos.

Table 13 shows the impact of the shopmen's strike on employment patterns of Mexicans in the Argentine shops. The major change was an increase in the number of Mexicans who held skilled jobs. Most Mexicans who secured promotions to skilled positions during the strike kept their jobs until the depression.

Four analytical categories are utilized in Table 13 to examine the changing wage pattern of Mexicans employed
### TABLE 13

**WAGE PATTERNS OF MEXICAN SHOP EMPLOYEES, ARGENTINE, 1921-1935**

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<th>Rate Per Hour</th>
<th>Number of Mexicans Employed</th>
<th>Rate Per Hour</th>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Source: Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, Payroll Records, Kansas City Division, 1921-1935.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Included in this figure were twenty-four wipers, employed temporarily at this rate. Only ten workers earning 49 cents per hour were actually "helpers."
in the Argentine shops from 1921 until 1935. These categories; Unskilled, Helpers, Semi-skilled and Skilled, do not correspond to the terminology used by the Santa Fe. In 1913 the Santa Fe classified shop workers into three divisions: journeymen, handymen and helpers. Unskilled workers were not included in the classification system. Santa Fe payroll records did not classify workers into broad categories, but list each job title separately by department. Table 13 organizes the work force on the basis of the degree of skill required and responsibility entailed in performing the job, which generally determined wage rates. Occasionally labor scarcity dictated a temporary rise in the wage rate—as was the case in August, 1922, for helpers.

The majority of Mexicans employed in the Argentine shops in the 1920s were unskilled laborers and helpers. The Santa Fe hired these laborers in a buyer's market. Although wages for skilled and semi-skilled workers advanced steadily from 1922 to 1935, wages of unskilled workers remained low. Track laborers earned only $.37 per hour. The wage paid unskilled shop laborers never climbed above $.43\% per hour. This increasing disparity between wages of skilled and unskilled workers characterized the wage structure of the United States in the two decades following the First World War.

The sharp break between wages paid unskilled workers and helpers (double parallel lines in Table 13) widened after 1921. Wage rates did not rise proportionately across the board. In July, 1921, helpers earned about seven cents more
per hour than unskilled workers. By August, 1935, the spread was fifteen cents. Wage rates of the three highest-paid groups in the shops rose substantially, as the cost of living increased, while unskilled workers received the same hourly rate in 1935 as they did in 1921, before the dramatic drop in wages during the 1921 recession.

It is not clear if these four categories reflected status differences among the shop force. Most likely such differences were minimal, for unskilled shop laborers sometimes advanced to the rank of helper, and occasionally, after a period of years, occupied semi-skilled, skilled and supervisory positions. "Car Inspector," for example, was a position held by a Mexican in Argentine in 1925. The ultimate success of Mexican shop employes, defined as retirement with annuity, bore little relationship to their earning capacity in any given year. In August, 1935, for instance, the nineteen Mexican shop laborers who retired as of 1971 were scattered across all four categories. Two were skilled, two were semi-skilled, six were helpers and nine were unskilled.64

The most crucial status separation among the Mexican work force in Argentine was between track laborers and shop workers. Shop employes shunned the boxcar camps, preferring to rent houses in the area near the shops. Many shop laborers began their work careers as track laborers, notably in Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma and Texas.65 Of the sixty-two Mexican shop employes whose records appear in the Prior Service Files, thirty-two listed track work as a previous job held with the company. Of these, only three spent the bulk of their prior
work careers as members of extra-gangs. The majority, or twenty-nine, worked primarily as section laborers throughout their pro-shop employment careers. Hence, Mexicans who kept shop jobs during the depression did not exhibit a haphazard employment pattern. They tended to return to the same place to work every season, or, occasionally, to the same geographical area. There was some exchange of workers between Topeka and Argentine.

Twenty-five shop workers entered the shops without any previous work experience. The influence of kinship and friendship is apparent in this case, for most of these workers came from the same pueblos as those immigrants who arrived earlier to take up shop jobs. Six of the twenty-five men who secured shop jobs immediately upon arriving in Argentine were from Tangancícuaro. Mexicans from that town arrived in Argentine around 1907 and worked there on a seasonal basis until some settled there during the First World War. Contingents from other Mexican communities also followed in the footsteps of others from those pueblos to Argentine. The pattern of direct migration to the shops was the least random of all occupational and geographical routes followed by Mexican immigrants to Argentine. Cultural influences were clearly at work in the barrio.

Mexicans as a group comprised the lowest-paid strata in the Santa Fe job hierarchy, for these new immigrants accepted low-paying, dirty, repetitive jobs which few native-born workers sought. Thus, the difference in income between
Mexicans and Anglos did not result from wage discrimination. Examination of the Santa Fe Payroll records for the 1907-1935 period revealed only two discrepancies in wage rates paid Mexicans and non-Mexicans for the same job. Usually, all employees who occupied a certain position received the same rate of pay. Two discrepancies appeared in the July, 1925, payroll. Two Anglo ear painters worked at sixty-seven and seventy-four cents, respectively, while a Mexican earned fifty-one cents per hour. An Anglo boilerwasher earned eight cents per hour more than a Mexican. These were rare exceptions.

The amount of discrimination against Mexicans which existed in the Santa Fe system is difficult to determine. There is little evidence that the Santa Fe discriminated against Mexicans in the distribution of apprenticeships prior to 1940. During the pre-1940 period few Mexicans met the requirement for apprenticeship which specified eight years' schooling. Since a Spanish-surnamed man born in Texas received an apprenticeship in 1929, it appears that the educational requirement, rather than overt discrimination, kept Mexicans out of the program. No other Mexicans in the shops met the schooling requirement. A few immigrants, notably those from Tangancícuaro, attended grade school in Mexico, and others later obtained grade-school educations at the Americanisation school, but immigrants with an eighth grade education were rare. Moreover, it is not clear if the Santa Fe recognised Mexican degrees.
Whether or not the educational requirement was discriminatory in effect because it was not needed for job performance is another issue. Clearly, skilled painters were no less skilled with less than eight years of formal education. The stipulation of eight years' formal education appears to have been applied uniformly, without the intent, at least, of discriminating against Mexicans as a class.

The form of discriminatory behavior most prevalent throughout the Santa Fe structure (shops and track) was personal intimidation and informal coercion. There are several documented cases of coercive measures used by Santa Fe bosses and commissary agents to control the Mexican work force. *El Cosmopolita* voiced the complaints of Mexican Santa Fe laborers against the company as early as 1914. That paper often advised Mexicans how to avoid being exploited by railroad bosses. The paper claimed that disabled Mexicans were often tricked into signing statements relieving the company of responsibility for an accident.

By far the most offensive outward manifestation of coercion was forced name changing, or Anglicizing, of Mexican surnames. Railroads often encouraged their Mexican employes to adopt Anglo names which the bosses could pronounce. The process of Anglicizing given names was well underway in Argentine by 1907. "Frankle, Felix, Joe and John" were common among the Mexican track laborers. While this practice may not have seemed particularly objectionable, since it facilitated working arrangements, it nonetheless represented a
a subtle reminder of the power of the boss. This power, arbitrarily used, is demonstrated by the example of a Mexican who arrived in Argentine in 1911 to work on the section. The boss and timekeeper refused to use the man's name, but invented one more to their liking. In 1949 the man attempted to set the record straight in order to secure retirement benefits. His explanation appeared in a letter from the Argentine Superintendent to the Santa Fe Treasurer:

I tried to make the Boss put my right name on the lists, but timekeeper said "Aguilera Santillan" was too long, and he was going to call me "Pablo Garcia." The man did not object to the procedure, since he wanted the job. The farce continued for decades, and when the man's two sons started to work for the Santa Fe, they used his alias surname, for the section foreman knew them as the sons of "Pablo Garcia." Likely, the company's managerial staff knew little of the every-day abuses which their Mexican employees endured. Retired Santa Fe Mexican employees speak in glowing terms of the company, but with hostility and disgust when referring to the labor foremen. All the bosses were uniformly "malas" (bad), or as one worker expressed his sentiments, "All them bosses--cut with same sissors." Former employees swear by the company, but curse the bosses.

Such abuses did not exist without an accompanying reward system. Those who "played ball" with the bosses secured steady work. A hierarchy existed even on the section gangs. Usually, one or more Mexicans consistently received
more work opportunities than did those farther down the list. Mexicans occupying the first six or seven positions on each section gang were assured of more regular employment, and, hence, higher earnings, than section workers as a whole enjoyed. Often, the highest-ranking Mexican laborer on the gang occupied a quasi-supervisory position as a "straw boss." The Argentine Roadmaster, W. Ganley, explained how he used this technique among his Mexican workers. 76

The story of the Mexican railway workers in Argentine cannot be told in charts and tables. These are merely useful indicators of the parameters within which Mexican laborers operated. Although the Santa Fe attempted to accommodate Mexicans within its system, it could not offer steady, permanent employment to all the Mexican immigrants who sought jobs in the track and shop departments. The size of the Santa Fe track forces fluctuated erratically, for the law of supply and demand determined its size.

The company turned to Mexican workers because of demographic and economic factors beyond its control. The economic and industrial development of the Southwest coincided with a decline in traditional sources of cheap unskilled labor. At the same time, conditions in Mexico encouraged the exodus of unprecedented numbers of Mexican laborers and farmers. Mexicans became the new industrial reserve army for some U. S. industries, especially transportation and agriculture. Mexicans formed the backbone of the Santa Fe's track forces. Few Mexicans gained entry to shop employment, although those
who did fared better than their compatriots who spent the bulk of their work careers as track laborers.

The Santa Fe served as a very limited channel of upward social mobility for Mexican immigrants. It absorbed only a small proportion of its Mexican work force. The fate of the individual immigrant depended upon such factors as his prior work experience, time of arrival in the United States, the pueblo of origin in Mexico, economic cycles in the United States and Mexico, and resultant structural dislocations within the railway industry. Well-connected Mexicans who could depend upon kinship and family ties to tide them over during slack periods could survive even when unemployed.

Prior to unionisation of the Mexican shop employes in 1940-1941 there were no job guarantees. The ability to develop a thick skin against insults leveled at the worker from Anglo workers and bosses, coupled with sheer luck, enhanced the immigrant's chances of keeping his job. Those who retained a job of some kind with the company through the depression of the 1930s found themselves in a fortunate position when the economy revived during World War II.

In the end, the desire to sink down roots, to remain in the community or barrio, exercised a powerful influence over an individual's ability to survive in Argentine. Luck also played a part. Those who secured their jobs at crucial junctures had fate on their side. A few slipped through during the First World War and others arrived during the shopmen's strike. For these immigrants, especially those who migrated
with friends and relatives, abuses and discrimination could be endured because rewards also existed.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER IV


2 Kansas, State Board of Agriculture, Decennial Census of the State of Kansas, Kansas City, Kansas (Argentine), 1925 (Indecks Research Deck, tabulations of "j" and "k").


6 Author's calculations based upon, J. R., "Outline of Study, Mexican Track Labor on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad," Topeka, Kansas, Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, General Offices, August, 1928. (Typescript.)—Taylor Papers, Bancroft Library.

7 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1895; "Murder in the Greek Camp," Argentine Republic (Argentine, Kansas), June 29, 1905, p. 1; Topeka Daily Capital-Herald, April 12, 1907, Clipping, in the Kansas State Historical Society.
Wyandotte County Clippings, Vol. II, pp. 138-41; and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, Payroll Records, Kansas City Division, May, 1905. Hereafter, Payroll Record are cited as Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, with the appropriate month and year.

*R* Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, May, 1907, and November, 1907: Immigration Commission, Immigrants in Industries, Pt. 25:1, p. 28.


13 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, November, 1907; Argentine Republic, August 4, 1910, p. 4; Kansas Centennial Census, Argentine, 1925. "Santa Fe Yards Camp;" and interview with Leopoldo Ayala in Kansas City, Missouri, June 20, 1974.

14 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, November, 1910; July, 1921; and March, 1925.


17 Lawton, "Mexican Laborers' Houses."


20Interview with Leopoldo Ayala.


23Clark, "Mexican Labor in the United States," p. 472; and "Outline of Study, Mexican Track Labor on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad."

24Interview conducted by P. S. Taylor in Kansas City, Missouri, # 102-273, Taylor Papers, Bancroft Library.


32 The 1925 state census revealed the existence of many dependent adults among the Mexican population in Argentine. See the discussion of the census in Chapter V. The papers of Governor Arthur Capper contain letters documenting the case of Santa Fe employes befriending a tubercular compatriot. See Papers of Governor Arthur Capper (1915-1919), Numerical File, General, 1915, # 574 (four letters) -- Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.


35 Railway Age, XLIV, No. 23 (Dec. 6, 1907), 802; and Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, Kansas City Division, Prior Service Files, Employe Number 7444. Hereafter these records are referred to as the P. S. Files.

36 Rutter, "Mexican Americans in Kansas," p. 86.

37 "The Maintenance of May Labor Problem," Railway Age, LXII, No. 25 (June 22, 1917), 1314-19; "Women in Rail Yard Work," Kansas City Kansan, June 1, 1918, p. 1; Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, December, 1917.

38 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, July, 1915, and December, 1917; "Arrest the Deterioration of Railway Track," Railway Age, LXIII, No. 9 (August 31, 1917), 372; and "New Santa Fe Bonus," Railway Age, LXII, No. 2 (July 13, 1917), 76.

39 Martínez, Mexican Emigration, pp. 27-28; Avery Turner, "Deterioration of Railway Track," Railway Age, LXIII, No. 11 (Sept. 14, 1917), 449; and "Los Trabajadores Mexicanos ten--

40 Martinez, Mexican Emigration, pp. 23, 42, 54.

41 P. S. Files (Indecks Research Deck, # 82), Author's tabulations.

42 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentina, 1925 (Indecks Research Deck #s 61-60, 107 and categories "j" & "k").

43 P. S. Files (Indecks Research Deck, # 82); and Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, August, 1935.

44 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, December, 1917.

45 Hertel, History of the Brotherhood, pp. 84-96.

46 Ibid., p. 105; Kansas City Times, May 18, 1921, p. 1; Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, 1917-35; and Immigration Commission, Immigrants in Industries, 404-407.

47 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, July, 1921.

48 Hertel, History of the Brotherhood, pp. 98-102; Railway Age, LXXV, No. 26 (Dec. 29, 1923), 1222; and LXXV, No. 23 (Dec. 22, 1923), 1179. The Santa Fe organized a company union in its shops during the strike. See Railway Age, LXXVIII, No. 25 (May 23, 1925), 1297; and Kansas City Times, August 4, 1922, p. 1.


50 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, July and August, 1922.

51 P. S. Files (Indecks Research Deck, # 68, # 70); and Railway Age, LXXV, No. 26 (Dec. 29, 1923), 1222.

52 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, August, 1922; "Estimates 150 at Work," Kansas City Times, July 7, 1922, p. 2. The number of Mexican shop employes rose only slightly during the rest of the decade; and Mexicans constituted roughly ten percent of the total work force until the depression.


54 Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, July, 1922.

56Railway Age, LXXV, No. 26 (Dec. 29, 1923), 1222.

57Interview with Leopoldo Ayala.


59Interview with Leopoldo Ayala.


63Ibid., p. 138.

64Author's tabulations, P. S. Files (Indecks Research Deck, # 82); and Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, August, 1935.

65This pattern of upward occupational mobility was wide-spread in the railway industry. Most new immigrant groups such as Mexicans, Chinese, Italians, Japanese and Greeks who secured jobs in railway shops began their work careers as track laborers. See Immigration Commission, Immigrants in Industries, pt. 25:1, p. 42.

66P. S. Files, Employe Numbers 7633 and 7288.

67P. S. Files (Indecks Research Deck, # 88).

68Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, July, 1925.

69P. S. Files, Employe Number 7305.

70"Study Your Apprentice Boys Carefully," Railway Age, LXV, No.1 (July 4, 1913), 7-9.

72 El Cosmopolita, January 1, 1914, p. 4; and Santa Fe Payroll, Kansas City Division, November, 1907, and November, 1910.

73 P. S. Files, Employe Number 18656. The names have been changed due to an agreement with the Santa Fe Railway Company not to use actual names of employes in this study.

74 Ibid.

75 Interview with Leopoldo Ayala.

76 W. Ganley, "Characteristics of the Mexican," Railway Age, LIII, No. 12 (Sept. 20, 1912), 529.
CHAPTER V
THE ARGENTINE BARRIO AS AN URBAN VILLAGE

The Argentine barrio in Kansas City, Kansas, can best be described as an "urban village," an ethnic enclave in which Mexican immigrants attempted to adapt their institutions and culture to United States society. This adaptation proceeded in an orderly manner and did not entail the extreme cultural dislocation generally assumed by earlier historians of immigration. Mexican immigration and settlement in the Argentine barrio bore little resemblance to the "uprooting" experience which Oscar Handlin depicted as characteristic of European immigration. Indeed, continuity, rather than alienation, marginality and social disorganization, characterized Mexican immigration to Argentine. The Argentine experience was more akin to the analysis of Italian immigration set forth by Rudolph J. Vecoli which demonstrated that cultural dislocation was not necessarily a by-product of urban immigration.

In Argentine, as in Vecoli's Italian settlements in Chicago, settlement patterns fostered continuance of the life style the immigrants knew in their home-country. The Mexican life styles transferred to Argentine were so pervasive that they dictated where immigrants would live and with whom they would associate. Immigrants from a particular
pueblo in Mexico, for instance, came ultimately to settle along the same street in the barrio and took up jobs in the same industry. They effectively re-created their native environment in the quasi-rural Argentine setting. This replication of village life in Argentine did not occur immediately, but evolved between 1910 and 1940. To some extent, then, barrios were willful creations.

This chapter describes the process whereby Mexican immigrants consolidated the barrio and made it a permanent ethnic enclave, or "urban village." The term, "urban village," is used here to describe the function of the Argentine barrio. This does not infer that Mexican immigrants came from small Mexican villages. Indeed, this was not usually the case. Mexican immigrants to Argentine came primarily from towns and cities with populations of 2,500 and more.

Initially, the immigrants interacted in a very limited way with their environment. Their world centered around their work, family life and religion. Consequently, their allegiances and commitments were to the Catholic Church, the Santa Fe Railway and their families. During the first two decades of settlement in the barrio the Mexicans relied primarily upon one another to accomplish their goals. The first mutual-aid societies, or mutualistas, appeared in this period. But as the years passed, the immigrants began to look beyond the narrow confines of the barrio. They became more actively involved in local, non-barrio institutions, such as the public school system. Gradually, the walls of
their protective barrio became more permeable. The outside world came increasingly to impinge upon the immigrants and lured them into greater interaction with United States society.

One of the major functions of the barrio as an urban village was to accommodate newly-arrived immigrants. Throughout its existence the Argentine barrio served as a processing center for successive waves of immigrants. Initially, from 1905 to 1916, the barrio was little more than a migrant labor camp where Mexican laborers procured seasonal or short-term employment with the Santa Fe Railway. The nature of the barrio began to change in 1910 when the Mexican Revolution began. During the period of the Revolution Argentine received a more mixed Mexican population than previously. This wave contained many political refugees and other displaced persons, in addition to manual laborers. Argentine's barrio underwent a third transition in 1917. When higher paying jobs opened and wages rose in the railway industry, some Mexicans dropped out of the migratory stream and settled in Argentine. A few found steady jobs with the Santa Fe prior to 1916-17, but the majority of permanent settlers arrived after 1916.

Movement through the barrio was extremely rapid. Between 1915 and 1925 the barrio underwent a nearly total turnover in population. Only six of the 219 Mexican males living in the barrio in 1915 remained there in 1925, according to state census data. Santa Fe employment records, likewise, contain few examples of laborers who remained in the
barrio over the decade. These records contain only five examples of workers not included in the census reports who lived and worked continuously in Argentine from 1915 to 1925.  

The composition of the population changed appreciably after 1915. In 1915 77.7 percent of the barrio's population of 262 were males. Few family units existed, and women of all ages constituted 22.3 percent of the total population. Although their numbers were small, the presence of women and children was significant. In 1915 women headed seven of the twenty-seven single family housing units in the barrio. By contrast, in 1925, only one female householder existed. The high incidence of women householders present in 1915 was a direct consequence of the Mexican Revolution, for women constituted an atypically large proportion of the immigration during those years.  

After 1915 the Mexican population spilled out of the yard camp into adjoining housing, although the bulk of the immigrants still lived in the yard camp until the early 1920s. By 1925 the majority of the immigrants no longer lived in the Santa Fe yard camp. The main barrio contained 398 immigrants, and the yard camp, 175. A smaller cluster of Mexicans lived in the town of Rosedale, located about two miles southeast of the Argentine barrio. In 1925 the Rose-dale barrio contained 148 persons.  

The proportion of children to adults increased dramatically in these settlements between 1915 and 1925. In 1915 children under eighteen constituted 15.3 percent of the total
Mexican population in Argentine. In 1925 the proportion of children to adults in Argentine was 44.5 percent, and 56.9 percent in Rosedale. Mexican communities in other Kansas towns also experienced a similar transformation in this decade. The proportion of children to adults in Kansas City, Kansas, Wichita and Topeka increased from five percent in 1915 to forty percent in 1925. The federal census revealed a similar increase in Mexican family life in Kansas, from eighteen percent in 1920 to forty-two percent in 1930. As the number of family units grew, the number of boarders declined precipitously. Male boarders in Argentine's barrio in 1915 totalled 180, or 82.2 percent of all Mexican males in the barrio. In 1925, only nineteen men listed their status as "boarder." Thus, family life in Argentine's barrio grew rapidly after higher-paying jobs offering year-round employment became available in the Santa Fe shops. The increase in population and family units did not result from the procreative energies of Mexican couples who lived in the barrio in 1915. Since there was very little population persistence between 1915 and 1925, the barrio's population in 1925 was composed of relative newcomers.

The arrival of the third wave of immigrants after 1915 gradually changed the shape of the Argentine barrio. No longer was it primarily a migratory labor camp. It was on its way to becoming a stable community. Social institutions soon emerged and the immigrants began to identify proudly with "Argentina," as they called the barrio. In previous
years, however, other Mexicans in the city had referred con-
descendingly to "Argentina" as an area in which to conduct charitable work at Christmas. Prior to 1919 Mexicans in the barrio relied upon the larger "Westside," Kansas City, Missouri, barrio for their entertainment, "handouts," and patriotic celebrations. In 1919 this changed somewhat as Mexicans in Argentine organized a baseball team (with three Anglo members) to play their compatriots from Westside. They also split off from the unified Westside-Armourdale Sixteenth of September celebration (Mexican Independence Day) and staged their own well-attended event.

The Argentine barrio continued to rely heavily upon the resources and services available in other barrios in the twin cities, but it had begun a slow evolution into a strong ethnic enclave which afforded more than housing and jobs. The development of social institutions in Argentine's barrio marked its transition from a work camp into a community. Increasingly, the barrio provided an environment which nurtured and supported immigrants during their adaptation to United States society.

It would be a mistake, however, to portray a complete break between the pre-and post 1917 barrio. Earlier immigrants, such as the seasonal workers who contracted with the Santa Fe for varying periods of time, paved the way for Mexicans who followed. They made the first inroads into the rental housing market around 1910-11 and established minimal contact with the Anglo population through the public school system. Even these highly transient laborers assisted, albeit
unknowingly, in the construction of the barrio.

These earlier immigrants also performed an important role in directing streams of migration to the barrio. Although they did not remain in Argentine as permanent residents, other members of their families apparently followed the beaten path to Argentine. Santa Fe employment records and census reports reveal the repetition of many distinctive and relatively uncommon surnames, suggesting consecutive migration of relatives. There is no question that chain migration from certain pueblos in Mexico to Argentine occurred. It is not known, however, to what extent this migration rested upon family units and consecutive familial chain migration.

Mexican immigrants did not migrate as atomistic beings, but as members of a distinct social system and culture which they carried with them into their new environment. During the course of their migratory wanderings Mexicans maintained close economic ties with their families, and, through them, to their native pueblos. They accomplished this feat through the system of banking houses which appeared during the Mexican Revolution in both the United States and Mexico. These companies co-ordinated the banking and shipping needs of the immigrants during the period of revolutionary upheaval when mail services were disrupted. Through these companies Mexicans sent giros (money orders) and packages of clothing and other articles to their families in Mexico. These Mexican-owned companies maintained offices in the major labor distribution centers throughout the Southwest and Midwest.
The largest and best-organized of these companies was the Los Angeles Mercantile Company (LAMC). Between 1918 and 1920 it maintained paid agents in over two hundred Mexican towns at any one time. Based in Los Angeles, the company had branches in San Antonio, Kansas City, El Paso, Laredo and Calexico, California. Other companies frequently used the LAMC money orders in their businesses.

Kansas City had its share of these banking companies, but Mexicans in the Argentine barrio did not have to travel to the city to obtain these money orders. By 1918, if not earlier, an Argentine Anglo bank sold the LAMC money orders, payable in Mexican silver or gold. Many other Anglo banks throughout Kansas also sold the LAMC money orders. Thus, Argentine’s immigrants functioned within a tightly-integrated system of communications with their native towns, for they had a direct link with their homes through this network of private banking firms. In 1918-1920, for instance, the Los Angeles Mercantile Company had representatives in over two-thirds of the Mexican communities which sent immigrants to Argentina during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

The success of these companies was due in part to the personal ties they generated. The LAMC readily supplied the names of its agents and lists of persons who had transactions with the company for any town in Mexico. This was particularly important during the Revolution. Persons known to the immigrant might appear more likely to transmit funds to waiting family members. Money orders were the umbilical
cords which stretched between the immigrant and his parent culture. The importance of this phenomenon cannot be overemphasized. So strong was this practice among Mexicans in Kansas in 1930 that critics complained that Mexicans sent too much money back to Mexico and did not sufficiently support the United States economy.

Relocation, likewise, did not destroy the cultural allegiances of the Mexican people. It might be said, instead, that certain environments nurtured the cultural traditions of the immigrants. Argentine's immigrants settled in a quasi-rural environment in the midst of the industrialized bottoms along the Kaw River. Relocation in this case meant the preservation of a long-standing work pattern. Back in Mexico, most males worked as laborers in either rural or urban enterprises, lived in a small town, and engaged, to varying degrees, in agricultural endeavors. The move to Argentine did not entail a fundamental change in this pattern. The men took up jobs as manual laborers, mostly with the Santa Fe, and most women remained in the home. Few Mexican women worked outside the home prior to the depression. In 1925 two women worked as laundresses, probably at home. During the depression women began to work as domestics in Anglo homes in Argentine, and one widow operated a store out of her home.

The small-town environment of Argentine facilitated retention of close ties to the land. The laborers' interest in agriculture did not wane. Some Mexicans alternated between farming and railroad employment, taking up farming
when they could not find other work. Unpredictable, recurrent lay-offs in the railroad industry further encouraged this pattern among the unskilled laborers. One Mexican who lost his job during the 1921 recession stayed on to farm until he regained his job some months later. Agriculture, however, was not merely an alternative to unemployment. Many Mexican families continued to farm on a small scale. Forty-five percent of all Mexican housing units, excluding the railroad yard camp, were listed in the "agricultural" category of the 1925 census. In the Rosedale barrio, forty-four percent of the Mexican households carried on agricultural enterprises. Probably these consisted of small backyard gardens where the families grew vegetables and herbs for their own consumption.

Because they lived in a compact barrio in the company of other Mexicans, the residents of the Argentine barrio gave up little of their accustomed interaction patterns. In 1925 the barrio occupied the northeast corner of Argentine. A small cluster of Mexican houses lined Thirty-ninth and Fortieth Streets, south of the Pennsylvania Car Company, but the majority of Mexicans lived in the main barrio, located on both sides of the railroad yards between Twenty-fourth and Twenty-seventh Streets. A smaller group lived in the yard camp in the Santa Fe yards, adjacent to the main barrio. (See Map 6). Interspersed with the Mexican population were "poor whites" and Blacks, especially in "North Argentine," that portion of the barrio north of the Santa Fe tracks.
In this setting Mexicans functioned more or less as did small-town dwellers in Mexico. The institutions of the family, the kinship system (compadrazgo) and the Catholic Church continued to hold the allegiance of barrio dwellers. Continued migration during the 1920s, both legal and illegal, reinforced these basic institutions and social-interaction patterns. Mexican males returned to their native pueblos to marry and brought their brides to Argentine. Illegal immigrants blended in with their compatriots. The barrio was a cultural haven, for it absorbed illegals and sheltered the immigrants from the complexities of the Anglo world.

Mexicans in the barrio lived in a world apart. The pervasiveness of Mexican culture in Argentine is dramatically illustrated by the lack of need for the English language. When Santa Fe officials interviewed Mexicans from the barrio in 1942, they discovered that two of their employees could not speak, read, write or understand English. One man, an unskilled shop laborer, had lived in Argentine for thirty-four years. The other, a twenty-two year veteran with the company, resided in the barrio for the last fourteen years. Hence, workers could spend the bulk of their adult working life in Argentine without knowing even the rudiments of English. Further evidence of this lack of familiarity with English among the older members of the Mexican-American community is contained in a report by city planners, based on a study conducted there in the late 1960s. City planners found that two-thirds of the Mexican-American who were sixty-
five years of age and older spoke no English. Of the total population, twenty-two percent of the Mexican-American respondents spoke no English, while 19.4 percent spoke broken English. This high percentage of Mexican-Americans who spoke little or no English resulted from continuing immigration of Mexicans to the barrio. 25

The Catholic Church remained a vital force among the barrio's residents. Mexicans who settled in Argentine after 1915 continued to move within the orbit of Catholicism. From 1914 onward they had access to a Mexican national parish pastored by native Spanish speakers. The first organized Mexican parish in the twin cities originated in 1914 when two refugee priests, Rev. Jose Muñoz and Rev. Cirilo Corbato, established a storefront church in the heart of the Westside, Kansas City, Missouri, barrio. 26 In October, 1919, this parish became the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe when it secured a permanent church building. This was the only Mexican national parish in the twin cities for nearly a decade. Rev. Muñoz remained at the pastorate until 1927 when he resigned to conduct mission work among Mexicans in Kansas, Illinois, Pennsylvania and Michigan. He died in Newton, Kansas, in 1941. 27

Itinerant priests appeared in the twin cities from time to time from 1913 onwards. In 1915 a priest, Father Gutierrez, lived in an Argentine rooming house and worked for the Santa Fe. It is not known whether or not he conducted an active ministry among the railroad workers there. Even high officials of the Mexican Catholic Church
visited the city for special occasions. In recognition of
the fact that many Mexicans in the Kansas City-Topeka area
came from the state of Michoacán, the Archbishop of that
state paid a visit to the area in 1919. Thus, Catholi-
cism accompanied the immigrants to the city.

Not until 1923 did the Catholic Church establish a
Mexican national parish in Kansas City, Kansas. This parish
originated as Our Lady of Guadalupe Mission, housed in the
basement of the Church of St. Thomas on Osage Street in
the Armourdale barrio. Eighty-five Mexican families from
Argentine and Armourdale joined to form this parish. The
Augustinian Recollect Order took charge of this parish and
dedicated itself to the ministry among the Spanish-speaking
people in Kansas City, Kansas, from 1923 onward. The Fran-
ciscan brotherhood had charge of that ministry in the West-
side.

In 1924 the Augustinian Order initiated a fund-raising
drive to erect a permanent Mexican church building in Armour-
dale. The completion of this church, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel,
in 1925 owed much to Argentine's Mexican railroad workers.
When the Mexican parish fund-raising society, the "Sociedad
Benefice del Nuevo Templo," failed to raise sufficient funds
for the new building, the priest established an Anglo women's
society, the Guadalupe Guild, to assist in the effort. Iron-
ically, the husband of a prominent Guild officer was none
other than the Argentine Roadmaster, M. Ganley. Ganley
supervised the track forces in the Kansas City Division
(Argentine and Kansas City). In this capacity, Ganley, a
devout Catholic, forced all Mexican parish members employed by the Santa Fe to donate one dollar out of each paycheck to the building fund. This amounted to two dollars monthly, per worker. A Catholic historian later deplored this high-handed technique, but justified it because, he rationalized, Mexicans would only spend it foolishly anyway. 30

Mt. Carmel served as the principal parish for Mexicans living in Argentine until 1937 when the Bishop of Leavenworth designated Argentine as the site of the second Mexican national parish in Kansas City, Kansas. Prior to 1937 some Mexicans also attended Our Lady of Guadalupe or the Sacred Heart Church in Rosedale. The Argentine parish church, dedicated as St. John the Divine, helped unify the barrio still further, for it was now a cultural and religious center. This church still exists, although Mt. Carmel was destroyed in the flood of 1951. Many Mt. Carmel parish members adhered to St. John the Divine after the flood. 31

Mexicans in Argentine remained, for the most part, outwardly loyal to the Catholic Church. Indeed, Argentine become known as one of the most religiously conservative parishes in the twin cities. The creation of a national parish in Argentine, moreover, strengthened the barrio, for it was no longer necessary for Mexicans to leave the barrio to worship. Since they were not welcome in the local Anglo Catholic Church, Mexicans joined parishes in Armourdale and the Westside prior to the creation of the Mexican national parish in Argentina. This enforced segregation of Mexicans into separate parishes promoted the continued use of Spanish
among the parishioners, for Spanish-born Augustinian Fathers staffed the new church, as well as the parishes in the Westside and Armourdale.  

Although some Mexican families in Argentina joined local Protestant churches, the majority of the immigrants remained at least nominally Catholic. Methodists, in particular, attempted to win Argentine's Mexicans away from the Catholic Church by offering social services, religious training and Americanization classes at a mission in North Argentine. The mission met with a notable lack of success in converting adults to the Protestant camp, for most Mexicans looked to the Catholic Church to sanctify major events in their lives: baptisms, marriages and deaths. For nearly two decades, however, Methodists proved much more energetic in providing social, recreational and educational programs in the barrio. 

Just as Catholicism remained a strong force in the barrio, so did regional identities and allegiances. Immigrants from certain Mexican pueblos deliberately settled in barrios which contained members from their old home towns and shunned those which did not. Moreover, the immigrants attempted to live in close proximity with others from their native towns. For example, immigrants from the pueblo of Tangancicuaro, Michoacán, eventually became concentrated along Twenty-fifth Street in the heart of the barrio. This process of concentration began in the 1920s. Initially, the "Tangas," as they are known in the barrio, took up whatever housing was available. In 1925 they lived primarily on South Twenty-
fourth and South Twenty-fifth Streets, although some lived north of the tracks. No "Tangas" lived in the yard camp. These immigrants moved in with other "Tanga" families until other housing became available.

All "Tangas" who did not live on Twenty-fifth Street in 1925 moved at least once and sometimes twice between 1925 and 1940 in their attempt to secure housing in the heart of the barrio. This area contains small bungalows and cottages and the houses are neat in appearance. Many have well-kept lawns and flower beds and are fenced. The photographs in Figure 1 show a typical tree-lined street and neat bungalows. Not all "Tangas" succeeded in their quest to move into this area. Interestingly, none of the "Tanga" householders who lived on Twenty-fifth Street in 1925 changed residence between 1925 and 1940. This was atypical of the barrio population, for there was great geographical mobility within the barrio, as well as through the barrio.34

Flux, rather than stability, characterized the Mexican population in the Argentine barrio. Many inhabitants of the railroad camp, for instance, moved into housing in North Argentine in the late 1920s, although others relocated in section housing underneath the Forty-second Street bridge or at the Railway Ice Company tenements. Other renters frequently changed location within the barrio, moving north and south across the tracks which divided the barrio. It was not unheard of for a family to change residence two or three times between 1925 and 1940. Often families moved only a few houses away, perhaps to adjust their housing needs.
Figure 1. Photographs of the Argentine Barrio, taken in 1974.
to their expanding family size.  

An examination of residential patterns of forty Mexican male householders who remained in the community from 1925 until 1940 reveals that more of them moved at least once than remained in the same house between 1925 and 1940. Twelve families did not move residence, but twenty-four moved at least once, and three moved at least twice. Hence, nearly one-third of the barrio's most stable population kept the same residence. Male householders in the railroad camp in 1925 who remained in the barrio in 1940 usually did not move about after their initial relocation outside the camp. Eleven remained in the same house after leaving the camp. Only three men moved a second time prior to 1940. 

This evidence should be considered in light of Howard P. Chudacoff's findings on ethnic residential dispersion in Omaha in the 1880-1920 period. Chudacoff, seeking to find evidence to support the view that homogeneous static ethnic ghettos did not exist in Omaha, traced population samples longitudinally through city directories over seven intervals for the period 1880 to 1900. He found that only about ten percent of the sample population stayed at the same address for as long as ten years. Chudacoff suggests that lateral mobility may have increased socio-economic mobility, i.e., that the ability to change residential location is in itself "good." 

Tentative findings from the Argentine barrio suggest that Chudacoff's analysis is faulty on several counts.
Clearly, all geographic mobility cannot be lumped into a "desirable" category. Evictions, loss of job, illness and other conditions which necessitated residential moves did not necessarily promote upward social mobility. Relocation under such circumstances was a great drain upon already-strained finances. Also, if another variable, such as homeownership is included, there appears to be no positive correlation between geographical mobility per se and social mobility. Indeed, homeowners in the Argentine barrio tended to move less than did the group as a whole. Nine of the twenty-two Mexican males who became homeowners between 1925 and 1940 remained in the same house in 1940, while seven of the group moved once and two moved more than once. Four homeowners were no longer listed in the city directory by 1940. If homeownership and persistence through the depression of the 1930s can be used to define "success," then permanence, rather than frequent moves, proved more beneficial.

A third factor to consider when comparing Chudacoff's findings with other cities is racial discrimination and residential segregation. Chudacoff admitted that ghetto entrapment and consequently, lack of lateral mobility, characterised Blacks in Omaha. Perhaps Mexicans, too, were an exception since they also experienced housing discrimination and enforced residential segregation as Blacks did in Omaha and elsewhere.

A major theoretical problem in the study of the Mexican-American group is to determine to what extent barrios
exist because the group preferred to settle in the company of other Mexicans. A geographical study of Mexican-Americans in Texas describes the tendency for the group to cluster out of preference. Such clustering occurred in Argentine, especially among the "Tangas." During the 1940s and 1950s, as "wetbacks" and braceros poured into the community, the concentration of "Tangas" continued. They settled primarily along South Twenty-fifth Street. The retired parish priest, Father Gabriel Peres, states that "Tangas" constitute about thirty-five percent of all Mexican families in the parish at the present time. The Argentine experience shows that the "Tangas" succeeded to a remarkable degree in replicating their native pueblo. Housing selection was not random. The "Tangas" deliberately located adjacent to or within a block or two of close friends and family members.

Ironically, the creation of this strong ethnic enclave resulted from the pattern of residential segregation by custom which existed in Argentine until 1951. The devastating flood which demolished North Argentine in that year helped eradicate traditional housing barriers. More recently, urban renewal projects further dispersed the population, and Mexican-Americans began to relocate outside of the barrio proper. Prior to 1940, however, Mexicans and their offspring lived apart from the Anglo community in a neighborhood sprinkled with "poor whites" and Blacks. Even within this area poor whites attempted to halt Mexican residential expansion northward in North Argentine. They failed in this attempt, but elsewhere, the boundaries of the barrio remained
In the pre-1940 period Mexicans and their United States-born children never completely dominated the barrio, nor did they completely occupy any one block to the exclusion of non-Mexicans. The Spanish-speaking group comprised between fifty to seventy-five percent of the total population of the area throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Indeed, the barrio became more homogeneously Mexican over the years. In 1936 Mexican housing units outnumbered non-Mexican units by only a slight margin on South Twenty-fifth Street, north and south of the tracks. Mexicans occupied 51.3 percent of all houses available for occupancy. Presumably, the Mexican population ranged over fifty-five percent of the total, since Mexican families were larger than Anglo families in Kansas City during the period.

The pattern over the decades from 1920 to 1950 was for the Mexican population in Argentine to become more separated from the rest of the community and more concentrated in the barrio, between Twenty-fifth and Twenty-seventh Streets. In 1925, as Map 6 shows, Mexicans lived primarily in the area adjoining the railroad yards, although some lived outside the barrio proper. The small cluster of houses on Thirty-ninth and Fortieth Streets contained laborers employed by the Pennsylvania Car Company, a company which constructed railroad tank cars. The area southeast of the barrio proper where some Mexican families lived contained large numbers of Negroes, as did North Argentine. Mexicans
Map 6. Distribution of Mexican Housing in the Argentine Barrio, 1925.
(Each dot represents a Mexican Dwelling Unit.)
lived in areas adjoining industrial sites and in racially-mixed areas.

North Argentine grew rapidly in the late 1920s, a period in which the Argentine community experienced a housing boom. By 1936, as Map 7 shows, the shape of the barrio had changed somewhat. North Argentine's Mexican population increased as Mexican families purchased lots and built houses in the area. Almost all of the inhabitants of the boxcar camp who remained in the community in 1940 lived in North Argentine, as did many other Mexican Santa Fe employes.

Mexican housing, particularly in North Argentine, resembled that described by Professor Paul S. Taylor in the Imperial Valley in 1927. Mexican lots in North Argentine often contained more than one dwelling per 25 x 120 foot lot. Mexican lot owners often erected temporary buildings in which to live while they built their houses. Later, they rented out these rear dwellings to other Mexicans. Occasionally, married children moved into these units. In 1936 the Argentine barrio contained at least seven rear houses occupied by Mexicans. The actual number of lots containing at least one rear unit was around thirty, according to representations on the 1931 Sanborn Insurance Map of the area. The Mexican population declined somewhat in the 1930s, leaving many of these rear shacks and huts vacant. Moreover, there were also some vacant houses in 1936 along Twenty-fifth Street.46

Home ownership among the Mexican population in the
Map 7. Distribution of Mexican Housing in the Argentine Barrio, 1936.
(Each dot represents a Mexican Dwelling Unit.)
barrio grew rapidly after 1925. In that year Mexicans owned only fifteen of the 106 housing units occupied by Mexicans, or fourteen percent of the total. The 106 units included sixty-eight units in the main barrio and thirty-eight in the yard camp. Mexicans, then, owned twenty-two percent of the non-Santa Fe Mexican housing units. Houses owned by Mexicans lay on both sides of the railroad tracks which bisected the barrio, along Twenty-fifth, Twenty-sixth, Silver and Metropolitan Streets, and in West Argentine, near the tank car company. By 1936, however, the number of homes owned by Mexicans in the barrio had tripled. The immigrants owned fifty of the ninety-four houses occupied by Mexicans, or fifty-three percent of the total. Not included in this tabulation were Santa Fe housing units underneath the Forty-second Street Bridge and at the Railway Ice Company. These properties housed Santa Fe laborers and their families.

The barrio achieved its fullest expansion in the late 1920s and then began to contract. It gained additional population during World War Two, but suffered a setback when the flood of 1951 demolished much of the barrio. Flood damage was severe because the barrio occupied a low-lying bottoms area, below the bluffs thrown up by the winding Kaw River. Mexicans never rebuilt the North Argentine portion of the barrio. In 1969 only two Mexican families lived in the area which once contained between forty and sixty families. Economic setbacks and flood damage stunted the barrio's growth. As late as 1969 Mexicans still owned only fifty
of a total of ninety housing units occupied by the group, and population declined to 443.50

The decline of the barrio after 1936 resulted from natural attrition, economic cycles, flood damage and out-migration of Mexican-Americans. Some Mexican-American families displaced by the flood resettled in the Westside barrio, but it, too, declined in the 1950s and 1960s as urban renewal projects and highway construction destroyed the neighborhood. Moreover, in recent years the housing market in the Kansas City area opened somewhat to Mexican-Americans and caused the further dispersion of Mexican-Americans into other areas of the twin cities. 51

Prior to 1940, however, residential segregation of Mexicans by custom characterized the twin cities. Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans had little choice in the housing market. Consequently, they remained in tight clusters near friends and family members in industrial areas. This enforced clustering, often mistaken by Anglo observers as mere "clannishness," in some ways proved beneficial to the Mexican immigrant community.

This close settlement pattern encouraged the retention of traditional Mexican values, customs, and institutions, especially the extended family. Although the extended family as a social institution was widespread in Mexico, few immigrants successfully transferred the institution with them, intact, to Argentine. The 1915 census revealed the existence of few extended families. Only three multi-family households existed, and of these, only two were extended
families, having representatives of more than two consecutive generations present in the same household. Census data did not indicate that other extended families lived in the barrio, occupying adjacent housing or other dwelling units. Two nuclear families shared a third dwelling. Only two other households reported relatives present.  

The paucity of relatives present in 1915 reflected the highly transient nature of the barrio. Seventy-eight percent of the barrio’s population were males. Men between the prime working ages of eighteen and forty constituted 88.1 percent of the male population, and eighty-nine percent of all males eighteen years of age and over lived in boarding houses. Although children under eighteen constituted 15.3 percent of the barrio’s population, only three of the forty-three children were born in Kansas or any other state in the United States. These demographic patterns suggest that the twenty-nine families were relative newcomers to the United States and had not had time to sink down roots.

The number of extended families living under one roof grew only slightly during the next decade, although the number of houses with relatives present increased considerably. By 1925 nine extended families lived in Argentine. A few other extended families occupied adjacent buildings such as rear houses, in preference to crowding together in one house. Mexican families in the Imperial Valley in the 1920s also exhibited this clustering pattern. Paul S. Taylor noted that families often occupied separate housing units on
the same or adjoining lots. In Argentine an assortment of twelve adult relatives, including mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, cousins, etc., lived in the extended family units. In addition, eighteen other adults lived with relatives in single family housing units in the barrio. 54

By 1925 the Mexican family system was alive and flourishing in the barrio. Nineteen housing units contained at least one dependent adult, other than an immediate family member. These constituted eighteen percent of all housing units. 55 The presence of dependent adults among the barrio's population confirms the existence of a strong extended family system. It also suggests that Mexicans in Argentine successfully preserved their traditional social and cultural values. The cohesive, largely self-contained barrio of Argentine functioned as a cultural haven for newly-arrived immigrants.

Over the years from 1925 to the present, the strong family orientation of the barrio continued. Immigrants moved in with relatives until they could find work and become familiar with United States culture. As parents became aged and widowed, children incorporated the elderly into their households, or vice versa. In this fashion, houses were passed down through the family from generation to generation. Researchers who conducted a community study in the Argentine barrio in the late 1960s remarked upon the phenomenon of consecutive generational occupation of housing units and pointed to this as evidence of the continued strength of the extended family system. Further evidence
of the continued viability of the family system in the barrio is seen in the high percentage of dependent adults living there in 1969. Over fourteen percent of all Mexican-American families in the barrio contained at least one dependent adult, as compared to 4.9 percent of Anglo-American families in Argentina.\(^{56}\)

Argentina was, in the fullest sense, an "urban village," an ethnic enclave where Mexican traditional values and institutions held sway over a period of generations. Immigrants and the children of immigrants lived as a community apart, sheltered from the complexities of Anglo-American society. Their social interaction with the larger Anglo society remained minimal.

Mexican immigrants did not abandon cultural values and familial interaction patterns when they migrated. Many never intended to remain in the United States permanently and assumed they would one day return to Mexico. This concept of "the return" exerted a strong influence in the barrio. Even today, many of the barrio's long-term residents talk of returning to Mexico. But one immigrant who arrived shortly after the end of World War One pointed out recently, "They don't want to go back with empty hands."\(^{57}\) Immigration did not involve great commitment for the immigrants, and consequently they remained ambivalent in their attitude towards their new environment.

Their relative isolation within the barrio buffered the immigrants from contacts with Anglo culture. Even a
railroad camp in the middle of an urban area functioned as a womb for the migrants. As barrios developed into real communities, they became sub-systems which enabled the immigrant to function more or less as a Mexican would in a small Mexican town. Continued migration to the barrio reinforced the Mexican identity and retention of the Spanish language.

Argentina remained a Mexican cultural island, although contacts with Anglo-American society, mediated through institutions which reached into the barrio, led to some acculturation, or cultural assimilation. One criterion often used to measure the degree of integration of an immigrant group into the recipient society is acquisition of citizenship, or naturalisation. Few Mexicans in the twin cities filed for citizenship prior to 1940, and those who did from the Argentine barrio can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Ironically, even though concerned public officials genuinely wished to "Americanize" the immigrants, socio-economic conditions under which Mexicans lived did not encourage naturalisation. The traditional pattern of isolation that characterized Mexican-Anglo relations in Argentina, in fact, retarded naturalization among the Mexican people. Outspoken Mexican critics of naturalization in the twin cities argued that the status of Mexicans did not change when they became citizens. Mexicans continued to experience discrimination in housing, education, jobs and in their social life. Mexicans who sought citizenship found themselves objects of ridicule and harassment. Mexican consuls, too,
attempted to thwart naturalization attempts because they felt continued Mexican citizenship afforded better protection to the immigrant than naturalization.59

Because Mexicans felt naturalization would not change their chances of success in the job and housing markets, and in the political and civic arena, few became citizens prior to World War II. A federal court official in Kansas City, Kansas, complained in 1919 that naturalization of Mexicans "virtually is an unheard of proceeding." He estimated that only two Mexicans per year applied for their first papers in the city.60 Not until 1930 did the naturalization rate increase somewhat among Mexicans in Kansas City, Kansas. Since only citizens qualified for federal relief, Mexicans sometimes sought citizenship to secure federal aid during the depression. The rate of naturalization quickened during World War Two as Mexicans sought to show their loyalty. Also, some undoubtedly became citizens in hopes of securing jobs in the defense industry.

Table 14 shows the naturalization dates for Mexicans who filed with the Clerk of the District Court in Kansas City, Kansas, from 1859 to 1947. No Mexicans became citizens through the federal court prior to 1923. A veteran of World War One became a citizen in that year, and nearly a decade lapsed until a second proceeding occurred. As the unemployment rate soared in the late 1930s, fourteen Mexicans obtained their citizenship papers. Eighty-nine percent of all Mexicans who became citizens between 1923 and 1947
did so during the 1940s. 61

### TABLE 14

**NATURALIZATION OF MEXICANS IN KANSAS CITY, KANSAS, FROM 1859 TO 1947**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Per Year</th>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>132</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>

**Source:** Naturalization Index, 1850-, Clerk of the District Court, Kansas City, Kansas, Wyandotte County.

Forces in Kansas City, Kansas, promoting naturalization of Mexicans and other immigrants first concentrated their energies on the Armourdale district, the major immigrant settlement area in the city. Chamber of Commerce statistics collected in 1918 showed that twenty-two Mexicans, or 6.5 percent of the district's Mexican population of 342, were citizens. Only Greeks and Russians exhibited naturalization rates lower than Mexicans. 62 Yet, Armourdale's rate of naturalization of Mexicans in 1918 compared very favorably
with the naturalization rate of Mexican immigrants in the United States as a whole who became eligible for citizenship between 1959 and 1966. In that period, only 2.4 to 5.0 percent of all Mexican immigrants who qualified became citizens, as compared to twenty-six to thirty-five percent of all non-Mexican immigrants.

Armourdale's relatively high incidence of Mexican naturalization probably was not typical of the rate in other barrios in the twin cities. Apparently, only a dozen Mexicans in Kansas City, Missouri, had become U. S. citizens by 1919. In Armourdale the public schools boasted a flourishing "Americanization" program. This program, sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce and the University of Kansas, sought to prepare Mexicans, Jews, Croatians and Poles in the city's largest packing houses for citizenship. No doubt this night school for immigrants had some impact on the Mexican naturalization rate.

Not until 1921, however, did Americanization classes begin among the Mexican population in Argentine. In that year the Methodist Mexican Mission began its work in the barrio. A constant feature of this mission throughout its existence was its Americanization program. The tangible results of that program were negligible during the 1920s and 1930s. The 1925 census listed only one young Mexican couple as naturalized citizens. Only two other Mexicans from the barrio became citizens prior to 1940, in 1936 and 1939, respectively. Twelve Santa Fe Mexican employees received
their naturalization papers in the 1940-47 period.65

The reluctance of Mexicans in the Argentine barrio to become U. S. citizens sprang both from their own ambivalent attitudes and from the treatment they received in the United States. Segregation was the rule in Argentine, as well as in other barrios in the twin cities. In particular, Mexicans resented racial discrimination of various kinds which occurred in the twin cities. Mexicans found themselves excluded from restaurants, theatres, churches and swimming pools throughout the city. They particularly resented being assigned to Negro wards or sections of hospitals in the twin cities. For a time Mexicans in Kansas City, Missouri, were buried in Negro cemeteries. A mayoral proclamation in 1916 procured by the Mexican consul ended assignment of Mexicans to Negro hospital wards and cemeteries in Kansas City, Missouri.66

Kansas City, Kansas, issued no such proclamations. As late as the 1930s dark-complexioned Mexicans from the Argentine barrio were assigned to Negro wards at Bell Memorial Hospital (the University of Kansas Medical Center), although cemeteries did not require segregated burial practices. Discrimination against Mexicans on the Kansas side continued after 1940. A number of restaurants and cafes barred Mexicans and movie houses segregated them until 1951.67 Most Argentine businessmen welcomed Mexican business, and consequently, few Mexican businesses appeared in the barrio. During the 1920s and 1930s Mexican businesses consisted of barber shops, local neighborhood grocery stores, and an ice
Most of these appeared after 1925.

The most flagrant example of racial discrimination which occurred in Argentine was the establishment of a segregated Mexican elementary school. From 1907 until 1924 Mexican children attended the local Anglo school, Emerson, west of the barrio or enrolled in parochial schools. With the increase of Mexican population in the barrio in the early 1920s, local school and civic officials sought to prevent the entry of additional Mexican children in the public school system.

The Mexican elementary school in Argentine, named Clara Barton, began operation in 1924 with an enrollment of 150. The school owed its origin to the efforts of civic and P.T.A. groups in Argentine and Armourdale who favored segregated schools for Mexicans. The Spanish Club of the Argentine district, composed of Anglo patrons of the Clara Barton school, raised funds for the new building. The one-room stucco building, located in North Argentine at 2500 Cheyenne Avenue, contained grades one through eight. A staff of three oversaw the school's operation. As the Mexican-American population grew in the late 1920s and early 1930s, two additional rooms were added. A photograph of Clara Barton school appears on the next page. Note the "Spanish" style motif. Mexican grade school children attended the Clara Barton school until 1951 when flood waters demolished the building. The flood effectively ended segregation of Mexi-
Figure 2. The Clara Barton Mexican Grade School, c. 1930.
Segregation of Mexican children throughout Kansas City, Kansas, became the rule in 1924. Mexican children attended school in basement rooms, special annexes and at separate schools. In Rosedale Mexican children were not permitted to attend the newly-constructed Major Hudson School, but were assigned, instead, to the former school building, designated the Major Hudson Annex. In this case, the school board bowed to Anglo protests in refusing to sanction continued Mexican attendance in the Rosedale school system. Elsewhere in Kansas City, Kansas, Mexican children attended school in segregated rooms in both public and parochial schools. The creation of segregated facilities for Mexican children also occurred throughout the state, notably at Ottawa, Chanute and Wichita, in the same period. Kansas City, Missouri, however, did not segregate its Mexican grade school pupils.

Thus, school board officials, civic groups and P.T.A. organizations implemented a tri-racial school system in Kansas City, Kansas: white, black and Mexican. Blacks attended segregated elementary and high schools after 1905. The "separate but equal" doctrine which supported school segregation did not produce equal facilities and personnel for Mexican students. The Mexican grade schools were clearly inferior to all other schools in the city. When city health department inspectors conducted a survey of the city's schools in 1939 they found that both Clara Barton and Major
Mudson School Annex had substandard toilet facilities. The report stated that the schools had "toilet facilities of the poorest and worst type." These consisted of poorly constructed out-door privies which were infested with flies. Not until 1949 did the city install sanitary facilities comparable to those at the city's other schools. 73

Although conditions at the school were bad, Mexican children from the Argentine barrio were not permitted to attend school elsewhere, as the school superintendent explained to a Mexican Methodist minister in 1938:

Mexicans have no business moving or living away from the Mexican school. We would rather pay their transportation to the Mexican school than let them attend any other school in the city. 74

Thus, the school administration strongly supported discrimination towards Mexicans. Prejudice and discrimination against Mexicans permeated the school system and discouraged school attendance and achievement of Mexican and Mexican-American children. Few Mexicans attended high school prior to 1940, despite efforts in the late 1920s by Mexican leaders in the barrio to open Argentine High School to Mexican youths. 75 Although at least one Mexican youth gained entry to Argentine High School as a result of that campaign, few Mexican children stayed in school beyond the eighth grade. In 1939 the number of Mexican children attending school in Kansas City, Kansas, totaled 604. Roughly one-fifth of these children attended parochial schools. Only three children were in grades nine through twelve and all three attended parochial school. No Mexicans were enrolled in junior
The long-range impact of school segregation in the barrio is difficult to assess. Clara Barton produced at least two students who later obtained college degrees. Both students graduated in 1925-26, however, and thereby spent no more than two years at the school. Previously, they attended a non-segregated Anglo school in Argentine. Since school records boast of no other upwardly-bound scholars, it can be assumed that segregation did not facilitate educational achievement. The depression in the 1930s also made such advancement more difficult.

Mexicans in Argentine were not totally successful in their efforts to end discriminatory practices against Spanish-speaking people in the twin cities. Perhaps, if the economy had remained sound, the Mexican population might have continued to make progress in this area. The economic depression of the 1930s, however, took its toll in the barrio. Severe economic hardship sapped the strength of the immigrants.

Argentina's Mexican immigrants were not unaccustomed to hard times, for they had endured the recessions of 1919 and 1921. The 1919 recession primarily affected packing house laborers, but the 1921 crisis left few barrios untouched. By February, 1921, *La Prensa* (San Antonio) carried a report that 1,500 Mexicans were starving in Kansas City. Lay-offs in the packing, railroad and construction industries thrust the laborers into desperate conditions. Particularly hard-hit was the Westside barrio, which had a more transient
Mexican population than other barrios. A soup kitchen opened to feed the unemployed laborers who sought shelter under huts, bridges and viaducts. More affluent members of the barrio held bazaars, raffles and benefits to raise funds for their indigent compatriots. 79

In Kansas City, Kansas, Mexicans crowded into the office of the United Charities, the city’s official charity agency, rapidly depleting its funds. In late March, 1921, La Prensa reported that 900 Mexican families in Argentine needed help, but most probably, 900 Mexican immigrants, including family units, lived in the barrio. Upon several occasions Mexican railroad laborers in the Argentine barrio divided their salaries among their unemployed friends. Yet, these efforts proved insufficient, and local governments found themselves hard-pressed to deal with the crisis. To compound the situation, the Railroad Labor Board slashed wages of railroad track and sectionmen by eight and a half percent on June 1, 1921, thereby further constricting the flow of money into the barrio. 80

The Mexican government intervened to alleviate the welfare problem by organizing repatriation trains from major U. S. cities to Mexico. The first train which left Kansas City, Missouri, on June 1, 1921, carried over 800 repatriates. Two other trains followed, containing Mexicans from the Kansas City and Topeka barrios. The Mexican government and the Kansas City, Missouri, Chamber of Commerce shared the cost of the repatriation trains. Each paid $15,000 for the first train. 81 By October, 1921, the Mexican government claimed
It had repatriated 50,000 of its nationals from the United States. The official repatriation program existed from early May to October under the direction of the Special Department of Repatriation (Departamento Especial de Repatriación). At least two hundred of the repatriates were from Argentine, Armourdale, Rosedale and Turner, a small Santa Fe town just west of Argentine. The Methodist Mexican Mission, established in March, 1921, at 1044 S. 26th Street in North Argentine, processed all the repatriates from the area. An old-timer from the barrio maintains, though, that all the repatriates from the Argentine barrio soon returned.

Founded to improve conditions in the barrio during the 1921 recession, the Methodist Mexican Mission served as an important social service agency in the barrio until 1951. Throughout the 1920s it provided food, clothing, medical services and funds (through the Associated Charities) to Mexicans in the barrio. The mission also conducted educational, recreational and religious activities. It operated a day-care center and a night school and offered courses in sewing, cooking and homemaking. It also supported a band with other seventy members which performed at church and civic functions, and sponsored organizations such as the Camp Fire Girls and a 4-H Garden Club.

The work of the mission intensified during the depression of the 1930s when the federal government began channeling funds through the mission to barrio residents.
ning in 1931, W.P.A. workers directed recreational and educational activities at the mission under the W.P.A. Recreation Program of the Kansas Emergency Relief Corporation. W.P.A. workers also organized programs for Mexicans and Mexican-Americans at the parish house in Argentine, at Ward High School and at other community centers in Armourdale.85

The Mexican barrio in Argentine could not have endured such a prolonged economic depression and unemployment without assistance. Economic help came to the barrio through the auspices of the federal government, in co-operation with local welfare and health agencies. More often than not, the Methodist Mexican Mission played an important role in co-ordinating and distributing services and goods in the barrio. It maintained close ties with various government and social agencies such as charitable organizations, the Visiting Nurse Association, the Department of Health, hospitals, the county welfare department and with the Clara Barton School.

The mission served as an intermediary between health and welfare agencies and the barrio's population, in the fashion of a patrón (patron). These agencies, in turn, used the mission as a base of operation in the barrio. In 1935-36 the health department expanded public health services to include a maternity and post-natal clinic, a tuberculosis control program and two venereal disease clinics. The mission's staff transported Mexicans to and from these clinics. In 1936-37 the mission transported 587 Mexicans from the barrio to these clinics, and took another fifty-two
to hospitals for surgery. Public health nurses also conducted a well-baby clinic at the mission once a month in the late 1930s. 86

Federal funding, thus, enabled the public health department of Kansas City, Kansas, to expand its services among the Mexican population. Disease control became an important aspect of its work. The incidence of T. B. among the Mexican population from 1920 to 1939 in Kansas City, Kansas, was six times greater than that among whites. The health department discovered that the Mexican population had "astoundingly high death rates" from T. B. The death rate in the city from 1920 to 1939 was fifteen times greater for Mexicans than for whites. The T. B. death rate among Mexicans from 1930 to 1939 ranged from 187.5 to 555.0 per 100,000, as compared to less than 35.8 per 100,000 for whites. Likewise, the incidence of syphilis among the Mexican population was much higher than for whites. In 1939 the Mexican syphilis rate in Kansas City, Kansas, was 1,188 per 100,000, as compared to 401 for whites. The syphilis rate among Blacks was 3,042 per 100,000. 87

The impact of federal support for public health services can be seen clearly in the increase in the number of Mexicans admitted to the state T. B. sanatorium in Norton. From 1922 until 1934 the number of Mexican patients at the sanatorium ranged from two to eleven for each two-year period. The reports for 1934-36, 1937-38, and 1939-40 showed thirty-two, sixty-one and fifty-eight Mexican patients, respectively. 88 The rise in the number of Mexicans admitted
to the sanatorium reflected better health care, not an increase in the T. B. rate among the Mexican population. In Kansas City the number of Mexican T. B.-related deaths declined after peaking in 1924 at a rate of 750 per 100,000. 

Increased health services were accompanied by a more systematic relief effort. Prior to the depression Mexicans appealed to the Associated Charities and to other private charitable institutions for assistance. In the 1930s new agencies appeared in the city to alleviate economic distress. Some Mexicans found jobs with Wyandotte County Relief and with federal programs such as the W.P.A., although few Mexicans qualified for the latter. Others received direct financial assistance from the county. 

The Santa Fe Railway also interceded on behalf of its Mexican railroad employes in Argentine when a public clamor arose in 1930 to fire the aliens and "hire American." Public hostility towards Mexicans in Kansas began to increase in the late 1920s. The Labor Department of the Kansas Public Service Commission published strong statements in 1927 and 1929 opposing the use of Mexican laborers by Kansas industries. Because Mexicans worked for low wages, the Department felt they were the "worst menace" to Kansas labor. The department director also submitted written testimony to House Immigration Committee hearings in 1928. He stated that Mexican agricultural workers wintered in Kansas cities where they became heavily involved in petty crime. His report
stated that Mexicans had the highest percentage of misdemeanors, such as petty thievery and liquor violations, than any other nationality.\textsuperscript{92}

After the Crash, as unemployment in the state rose, this latent hostility became tied to a policy promoted by Governor Clyde M. Reed to "hire American." This policy originated as a request from the Southwest Regional Director of President Hoover's emergency commission on unemployment. Governor Reed urged the six major railroads operating in the State of Kansas to dismiss their Mexican work forces to provide jobs for U. S. citizens. Most railroads promised to hire non-Mexican laborers in the future, but the Santa Fe maintained that most of its remaining Spanish-speaking work force were permanent residents with many years standing with the company. The President of the Santa Fe, M. B. Storey, claimed that the company's Mexican employes were "for the most part" United States citizens, "having come from the State of New Mexico."\textsuperscript{93}

The Santa Fe's statements about the citizenship status and place of origin of the Mexicans it employed in Kansas were erroneous, for neither the Kansas Decennial Census, nor the Santa Fe's own records support these claims. Almost all of the Spanish-surnamed laborers in Argentine came directly from Mexico, and this pattern of migration also prevailed in other Kansas towns such as Topeka, Hutchinson and Emporia. Further, few Mexicans in Kansas became citizens prior to World War II.\textsuperscript{94}
President Storey apparently deliberately misled the Governor of Kansas to shelter the Santa Fe's remaining Mexican employees. The company adopted this protection policy at a time official repatriation movements were underway in other U.S. cities. Many Mexicans from the Kansas City area voluntarily returned to Mexico in this period, and still others were repatriated. It is not known whether organized repatriation drives similar to those which occurred in Gary, Indiana, or Los Angeles took place in Kansas during this period, but Argentine remained immune from such activities due to the support of the Santa Fe Railway and the Methodist Mexican Mission.

In the late 1930s the mission flourished as never before. In the fall of 1935 it organized a Methodist Church on the premises. This move exacerbated a long-standing rivalry between Methodists and Catholics in the area. Since 1922 all public schools in Kansas City, Kansas, released children for religious instruction each week. The mission moved quickly into the arena and spurred the Catholic Church to establish a Week-Day Religious School in North Argentine in 1924. Competition between the rival religious groups intensified in 1935 with the founding of the Methodist Church at the mission. Within two years the Catholic Bishop designated Argentine as the site of a second Mexican national parish in the city.

In its 1938 report the mission boasted that it had helped find jobs for all unemployed heads of families in the
Although several more years of depressed conditions lay ahead, Mexicans had powerful advocates in the Methodist Mexican Mission, the Santa Fe Railway and the Catholic Church. As the depression lifted, wages in the railway industry rose rapidly, and the Mexican workers benefited greatly.

The depression experience did much to alter the immigrants' attitude towards the federal government. In the past Mexicans feared outside government interference. Now, they welcomed federal welfare workers and programs. The barrio benefited directly and indirectly from the infusion of federal monies into Kansas City. Many Mexicans no longer viewed the federal government with hostility and no longer hesitated to swear allegiance to such a powerful body. By 1940 the mission staff noted a "decided increase" in enrollments in Americanization classes at the mission. Many Mexicans, the staff reported, were working towards citizenship.

The depression also changed Anglo attitudes towards Mexicans throughout the twin cities. A sign of the growing acceptance by the Anglo community came in 1941 when a "Spanish Queen," a young Mexican-American woman, rode proudly with two Anglo queens in Argentine's "Silver City Jubilee" parade. The Mexican consul in Kansas City, Missouri, reported to his government that there had been a decided decrease in cases of racial antipathy towards Mexicans in the twin cities since 1933. He attributed the change to the "Good Neighbor" policy and to the decline in the size of the
transient or floating Mexican population. The consul attributed the decline in the transient population to stricter immigration laws and to employment opportunities which opened to residents and citizens during the 1930s. Many Mexicans, he claimed, established residency in order to secure public works jobs.

As economic opportunities and access to social services opened to the Mexican immigrants in Argentine, acculturation and integration of the immigrants and their children into United States society speeded up. They perceived that citizenship conferred opportunities and advantages—at least during the "New Deal" period. The barrio retained its strong Mexican cultural orientation and sense of "peoplehood." Certainly, acculturation occurred to some extent, but total assimilation did not.

The depression experience altered the barrio's relationship to the outside world. During the late 1920s and early 1930s Mexicans in the barrio sought to alleviate economic hardships by group effort. Many of the Mexican railroad employes joined the mutual aid society, Sociedad Morelos (Morelos Society), paying one or two dollars per month in return for sick, unemployment and death benefits. The Mexican government listed the Sociedad Morelos as one of the Comisiones Honoríficas (Honorary Commissions) established throughout the United States in the 1930s as adjuncts to the consulates. The first Comisiones Honoríficas appeared during the 1921 recession. Their function was to
promote "Mexicanization" and to help alleviate economic
distress among the Mexican population in the United States.
In Kansas City, the Sociedad Morelos and other mutual aid
societies also engaged in pressure group activities, such
as school desegregation drives. The Sociedad Morelos
agitated to get Mexican students accepted in Argentine
High School in the late 1920s.\textsuperscript{101}

The Sociedad Morelos proved insufficient to cope with
the economic problems of the barrio's residents, although
it continued to exist as late as 1936.\textsuperscript{102} Mexicans did not
turn eagerly to government agencies for assistance, but did
so as a last resort, after other attempts to alleviate
distress had failed. In the early years of the depression
professional social workers did not believe that the Mexican
people in Kansas needed large infusions of aid. State social
workers reported in 1932 that they had made practically "no
provision" for the care of dependent Mexican children. They
argued that no programs were needed because Mexicans adhered
faithfully to their vows as godparents and frequently adopted
orphans.\textsuperscript{103}

Mutual aid in the form of mutual aid societies, the
family system and the compadrazgo network proved insuffi-
cient as the deepening economic crisis disrupted the barrio's
economy and threatened to destroy the community the immi-
grants had built. During the 1930s the immigrants in the
Argentine barrio turned increasingly to government agencies
for assistance in their efforts to preserve the barrio. The
Methodist Mexican Mission served as a co-ordinating agency
for many city, county and federal programs aimed at the
Mexican population in Kansas City.

Concomitant with their greater interaction with non-
local institutions came a greater awareness of the national
government and their relationship to it. The naturalization
rate among the Mexican population in the city rose dra-
matically during the early 1940s, for immigrants began to
perceive themselves as part of a larger society. They
retained their cultural distinctiveness and their institu-
tions out of preference, but they also became more sophis-
ticated in their conceptualization of the barrio's relation-
ship to the rest of United States society. They learned
that the federal government functioned as did a patrón back
in Mexico. Mexicans who bore obligations and duties to the
patrón (the federal government personified in Franklin D.
Roosevelt) could expect certain rewards and support. The
strongly pro-Democratic Party sentiments still expressed
in the Argentine barrio originated during this period.

By 1940 Mexicans in Argentine had survived the depres-
sion with their barrio intact. Some acculturation had
occurred, but the basic institutions and values of the immi-
grants remained sound. They remained staunchly Catholic
and continued to rely heavily upon the kinship and family
systems. The continuing viability of Argentine as an ethnic
enclave through the vicissitudes which befell it after 1940
speaks to the strength of the immigrant culture. It put
down sound, strong roots in the two decades preceeding
the depression. This cohesive community created by the immigrants did not collapse under the weight of economic hardship and outside intrusion. The Mexican immigrants who settled in Argentina are a prime example of a people who refused to "melt," to surrender their cultural identity.
FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER V


2See Chapter III, pp. 91 - 95. Data are based on the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, Kansas City Division Prior Service Files, Numbers 7035-7679, and 18623-18711; and Alberto Leduc and Dr. Luis Lara y Pardo, Diccionario Geografico. Historia y Biografia Mexicanas (Mexico, D. F.: Libreria de la Vda. de C. Bouret, 1910). Hereafter, this Santa Fe record group is cited as P. S. Files.

3Kansas, State Board of Agriculture, Decennial Census of the State of Kansas, Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas (Argentina), 1915 (Indecks Research Deck, 3-01); and 1925 (indecks # 80), hereafter cited as Kansas Decennial Census: and P. S. Files, Numbers 7635, 18650, 18679 and 10706.


6Kansas Decennial Census (Ward 7). 1925.

7Ibid.. Argentine, 1915 and 1925.

9 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks, # 69).


12 See Chapter III, pp. 87-89.

13 La Prensa, Feb. 2, 1918, p. 6; March 2, 1918, p. 8; March 8, 1919, p. 10; and April 4, 1919, p. 8.

14 Ibid.

15 La Prensa, Feb. 3, 1918, p. 8.

16 La Prensa, 1918-1920; and P. S. Files.

17 La Prensa, April 4, 1919, p. 8.

18 See, especially, Manuel Gamio's assessment of the importance of money orders in Quantitative Estimate. Sources and Distribution of Mexican Immigration into the United States (Mexico: Talleres Gráficos Editorial y 'Diario Oficial,' 1930).

19 Letter to Governor Reed of November 28, 1930, in Papers of Governor Reed, 1929-31, "Unemployment and Mexican Labor" File—Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

20 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925; and Polk's Kansas City (Wyandotte County, Kansas) Directory, 1936 (Kansas City, Missouri: R. L. Polk & Co., 1936); and interview with Mrs. Betty Soulen, Baldwin, Kansas, June 26, 1974.

21 P. S. Files, Employe Number 7587.

22 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks # 2 & # 6).

23 Ibid., Rosedale, 1925 (Indecks # 3 & # 6).

24 P. S. Files, Employe Numbers 8587 & 18685.

26 El Cosmopolita, Dec. 26, 1914, p. 1; Catholic Register, Nov. 26, 1914.

27 John T. Duncan and Severiano Alonzo, Guadalupe Center: 50 Years of Service (Kansas City, Missouri: John T. Duncan and Severiano Alonzo, 1972), pp. 22-23.

28 La Prensa, March 15, 1919, p. 7; and Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1915 (Indecks, house # 209).


31 Eastern Kansas Register, August 4, 1939, p. 1; and interview with Father Gabriel Perez, St. John the Divine Catholic Church, Argentine, March 15, 1973.

32 Berger, "Catholicity in Kansas City, Kansas."  


34 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks # 75, 190, 107); and Polk's Kansas City (Kansas) City Directory, 1910 (Kansas City, Missouri: R. L. Polk & Co., 1940).

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

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33 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks 7 & 8); and Polk's Directory, 1936 and 1940.


42 Interview with Leopoldo Ayala, Kansas City, Missouri, June 20, 1974.

43 Argentine Neighborhood Analysis, p. A-34.

44 Tabulations based upon Polk's Directory, 1936.

45 By 1919 the average Mexican family size in Kansas City, Kansas, was 4.08, as compared to 3.52 for whites and 3.57 for Blacks. See Kansas City Kansan, August 20, 1919, p. 1. Fifty years later the Mexican-American family size in Argentine was 4.51, as compared to an Argentine average of 3.97 and a city-wide average of 3.00. See the Argentine Neighborhood Analysis, p. A-34.


47 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925 (Indecks 7-12).

48 Polk's Directory, 1936. In 1973 Rev. Perez, the retired parish priest, estimated that fifteen families lived in the huts beneath the bridge in the late 1930s. The tenements at the ice plant also contained Mexican family units. Interview with Father Gabriel Perez, St. John the Divine, Argentine, March 15, 1973.

The following discussion accepts the interpretation of acculturation as behavioral or cultural assimilation, as expounded by Milton Gordon in *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 70-71.


Immigrants could petition for citizenship after five years continuous residence in the United States. To become naturalized they had to show knowledge of the English language and of the basic history and principles of the United States government.

This table does not reflect the naturalization proceedings conducted by the state court system. Prior to 1932 applicants could file either at the U. S. District Court in Kansas City, Kansas, or in the state common pleas courts. After 1932 the District Court in Kansas City had jurisdiction over all naturalization proceedings. See, U. S., Department of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Naturalization, 1920* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1920), 14-18; and U. S., Department of Labor, Bureau of Naturalization, *Directory of Courts Having Jurisdiction in Naturalization Pro-
62 "A 24 Hour Church," Kansas City Kansan, June 8, 1918, p. 1.


64 "La Americanización," El Cosmopolita, October 11, 1919, p. 2; "KCK Night School to Hold Commencement," Kansas City Kansan, April 16, 1919, p. 1; and "A Program of Americanization for Kansas City, Kansas, under the Direction of the Kansas City Public Schools, the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and the University of Kansas" (Mimeographed)—Kansas State Historical Society.

65 Naturalization Index, 1850 –, Clerk of the District Court, Kansas City, Kansas, Wyandotte County; Kansas Decennial Census, 1925 (Indecks "J"); and P. S. Files, # 7035-7679, 18623-18711.

66 "Soberano Triunfo en favor de los Mexicanos," El Cosmopolita, Jan. 1, 1916, pp. 1 & 4. The proclamation's effect was short-lived. In the 1920s Mexican immigrants acting through a mutual aid society, the Union Cultural Mexicana (Mexican Cultural Union), again sought to end discrimination in the General Hospital and in schools, swimming pools and restaurants. They won this battle in 1920 with the assistance of the Mexican consul and Mexican ambassador. See Lin, "Voluntary Kinship," pp. 103-04.


68 Kansas Decennial Census, Argentine, 1925; and Polk's Directory, 1936.

69 "Clara Barton School Notes," Kansas City Kansan, Nov. 30, 1924, p. 16-A; and Nellie McGuinn, "The Kansas City, Kansas, Public School System," pp. 358, 463 (Typescript.)—Kansas City, Kansas, Board of Education; and, Kansas City, Kansas, Board of Education, "School History, March 16, 1920" (Mimeographed.)—Kansas City, Kansas, Board of Education.

70 McGuinn, "School System," pp. 379, 463; and "Solves Racial Problem," Kansas City Kansan, Sept. 17, 1924, p. 10. In the 1920s Mexicans enlisted the aid of the Mexican Cultural Union of Kansas City, Missouri, in their efforts to end segregation of Mexican children in Rosedale. See Lin,


74 Franco, "Mexican People," pp. 54-55.

75 Interview with Leopoldo Ayala, June 20, 1974: Apparently this action by members of the Kansas City, Kansas, based mutualista, the Sociedad Morelos, was part of a city-wide campaign supported by the Mexican Cultural Union of Kansas City, Missouri, to end school segregation of Mexicans. The secretary of the Sociedad Morelos was a self-employed shoemaker who lived in the Argentine barrio. Mexico, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Memoria, II (Mexico: Imprenta de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1931), p. 1780.


77 "School History."


Reports on the numbers of repatriates on the trains ranged from 700 to 1300. For detailed, often contradictory, reports on repatriation from the Kansas City and Topeka area, see "Repatriación de los Mexicanos que estan sin trabajo en Kansas City, Missouri," La Prensa, March 11, 1941, p. 4; "Un tren con mil repatriados sale de Kansas City, Missouri," La Prensa, June 3, 1921, p. 1; La Prensa, June 5, 1921, p. 1; "Send Mexicans Home," Kansas City Kansan, June 1, 1921, p. 1; "Mexicans Back to Mexico," Kansas City Star, June 1, 1921, p. 10 (Main Edition); "Send The Mexicans Home," Kansas City Times, June 2, 1921, p. 9; and "Unemployed Mexicans in Topeka Get to Go Home," Topeka Daily Capital, May 8, 1921, p. 8B.


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93 Kansas, State Labor Department, Annual Report of Labor and Industry, for the year ending 31 Dec. 1930 (Topeka: Kansas State Printing Plant, 1931), pp. 63-64; and Letter of November 22, 1930, from M. B. Storey, President of the A.T. & S.F. Railway to Governor Clyde M. Reed, Governor, State of Kansas, in the Papers of Governor Reed, 1929-31, "Unemployment and Mexican Labor" File--Kansas State Historical Society. In the same file are other letters supporting and criticizing Governor Reed's proposal.


97 Methodist Episcopal Church, Kansas Conference, Woman's Home Missionary Society, Yearbook, 1938, p. 30.

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101 "La situación de los braceros Mexicanos," La Prensa, March 25, 1921, pp. 1 & 5; and Mexico, Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, Memoria, II (Mexico: Imprenta de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores, 1931), pp. 1777-1780.

102 Interview with José M. García, Topeka, August, 1974.

CONCLUSION

The evolution of the Argentine barrio of Kansas City, Kansas provides many insights into Mexican immigration and settlement in the twin cities, for it was typical of other railroad barrios during the 1907-1940 period. Most Kansas City barrios originated as railroad yard camps in the pre-1920 period. As Mexicans moved out of these camps during the first two decades of the twentieth century, they inherited the housing and neighborhoods of other immigrant groups who preceded them. In Argentine Mexicans followed a succession of Bohemians and Greeks as Santa Fe extra-gang laborers. All of these "new immigrant" groups initially moved into jobs at the lowest levels of the city's industries. For railroad workers these jobs consisted of unskilled manual labor on the tracks or in the shops.

Since Argentine was the primary entrepôt for Mexicans brought into the city by the Santa Fe Railway, it served as the processing center for successive waves of Mexican immigrants who sought jobs with the Santa Fe. Throughout the history of the barrio, the fortunes of its Mexican population were closely intertwined with those of the Santa Fe. Changing economic conditions affected the Santa Fe's labor needs and thereby dictated the size, activities and composition of its work force. The law of supply and demand swelled and con-
tracted the Mexican work force in concert with economic
trends. Consequently, the size of the work force grew
during World War One, when labor shortages plagued the rail-
way industry, but sagged in 1919 and 1921 as recessions
caused lay-offs and wage cuts. The majority of Santa Fe
Mexican employes prior to 1940 were unskilled manual labor-
ers and helpers. Some Mexicans also held semi-skilled and
skilled jobs during the 1907-1940 period. A few obtained
these higher-paying jobs during the 1922-23 shopmen's strike.

Those immigrants who arrived in Argentine at a time of
great labor scarcity and rising wages fared better than
those who arrived during periods of contraction and reces-
sion. Virtually none of the immigrants who arrived prior
to 1915 remained with the company over ten years. Many of
those who secured shop jobs during World War One and during
the post-war boom, however, kept their jobs and stayed with
the company until retirement.

Conditions prevailing in the railroad industry during
peak periods of Mexican immigration did not permit great
upward social mobility. The Santa Fe simply could not pro-
vide steady, non-seasonal work to all unskilled or semi-
skilled immigrants who sought jobs with the company, for its
labor needs for that type of labor were not constant.
Increased mechanization of rail maintenance work further cur-
tailed the size of construction and maintenance crews.
Consequently, the railroad industry afforded a route of
upward social mobility for only a minuscule portion of the
Mexican immigrants who signed on with the company in Argen-
tine during the 1907-1935 period.

Mexican laborers served as a reserve labor supply, migrating seasonally until economic conditions permitted permanent relocation. Increased wages paid to unskilled shop and track laborers during World War One resulted in an improvement in the standard of living of Mexican railroad workers. No longer were the majority consigned to boxcar habitations. Increasingly they moved into houses in areas adjacent to the railroad yards. As wages rose after 1916, more family units appeared in the barrio. Although Mexican laborers brought their families along as early as 1907, the proportion of children to adults increased about thirty percent in the decade after 1915.

Utilization of Santa Fe employment data obtained from the company's Prior Service files permitted an examination of the Mexican origins of Argentine's immigrants. These data revealed that the majority of Argentine's long-term immigrants came from towns and cities with populations of 2,500 and more. Only one-fourth of these railroad workers listed their birthplaces as small hamlets, villages, ranchos (small farms), or haciendas (large landed estates) with populations of less than 2,500. These data suggest that immigrants who lived in towns were more likely to immigrate to the United States than those from small villages and hamlets. Those from small towns, large towns and cities proved more successful in holding onto their jobs and wrenching themselves forever from their native roots than did immigrants from more rural backgrounds.
The Argentine experience casts doubt upon the common assumption that most Mexican immigrants who settled in the United States from 1910 to 1920 were illiterate agricultural workers. About sixty-five percent of Mexican males eighteen and over who supplied information to census takers in Argentine in 1925 were literate. About sixty-six percent of the married Mexican women living in Argentine who supplied information on literacy were literate. Clearly, Mexican immigrants cannot be dismissed as illiterates. Nor is the "agricultural" classification entirely satisfactory, since this term usually implies peon, or a tradition-bound hacienda laborer. Argentine's immigrants do not fit into that category, for most were born in towns, not in hacienda villages. Moreover, included among the immigrants were small farmers, blacksmiths, artisans, manual laborers and, possibly, some muleteers. Although Argentine's immigrants may have occasionally sought work on local haciendas, as some surely did, they were not, as a lot, victims of debt peonage.

Another assumption which suffers in light of the Santa Fe data is that Mexican immigration occurred as if by "drift." While it is true that some migrants merely drifted about, taking up one job after another, this was not the only type of immigration pattern which existed. Migration was not entirely random. Immigration and settlement in Argentine proceeded in an orderly manner. A disproportionate number of immigrants in the barrio were from Michoacah. Many of the Michoacanos were from Tangancibuarro, a small agricul-
natural town located about twenty miles southwest of Zamora.
The "Tangas," as immigrants from the town are known in the Argentine barrio, exhibited a pattern of chain migration to Argentine. For over fifty years "Tangas" have made the trek from Tangancícuaro to Argentine and back. Friends, brothers, sons, cousins, and other relatives followed in their footsteps. Many of the "Tangas" brought their families along with them to Argentine and put down new roots in the transplanted "Tanga" community there.

The "Tangas" and other Mexican immigrants in Argentine carried their institutions, religious beliefs and cultural practices with them to the barrio. They did not experience extreme anomie, alienation and loneliness in migration and resettlement in their new environment because they migrated as part of a community. They maintained close economic ties to their families in Mexico, even when engaged in seasonal work, and moved within the orbit of others from their native communities. Their ties to the Catholic Church remained strong, for Spanish-speaking priests, fleeing the Revolution in Mexico, accompanied the immigrants. The Augustinian Recollect Fathers ministered to the spiritual needs of the Mexican Catholic population in the twin cities. Eventually, they established a Mexican national parish in Argentine.

The Argentine barrio grew in stages corresponding to the needs of the Santa Fe Railway and the resulting composition of its Mexican work force. While the Santa Fe offered only seasonal employment to the majority of its Mexican workers, it attracted transients who engaged in short-term
employment, alternating between living in Mexico and the United States. Usually, these workers hired on at border towns with the Hanlin Supply Company or other Santa Fe agents and worked in Argentina for periods ranging from three months to a year. During this period, roughly from 1903 to 1916, the majority of the Mexican population were adult males. Many were solos, unmarried men or married men who left their families behind in Mexico. Few Mexican families lived in the Argentine barrio during this period, although the barrio gained a more mixed population during the Mexican Revolution as family units fled to the safety of U. S. cities.

A transformation occurred in the barrio during World War One as more stable Mexican immigrants arrived to put down roots. In less than a decade these immigrants transplanted their social systems in Argentina. By 1925 the barrio contained a number of formal extended families, having three or more consecutive generations present in the same dwelling. There were also a large number of family units containing at least one dependent adult. These living patterns testify to the strength of family and kinship systems among the Mexican population in Argentine. Blood ties and the highly-ritualized kinship system (compadrazgo), thus, helped unify members of the barrio, especially the "Tangas." The Catholic Church sanctioned these kinship ties in its baptismal ceremonies, for godparents stood as sponsors for the new-born children. Thus, religion increased the bonding between members of the parish and within the barrio. The arrival of each new child added yet another formal linkage
to bind the barrio together. Usually, parents selected others from their native towns to act as god-parents, thus preserving the community spirit of the particular group.

Mexican immigrants attempted in various ways to improve their working, living and housing conditions. They were avid in their efforts to become home owners. The immigrants owned over fifty percent of all housing units occupied by Mexicans in the barrio in 1936. Even this achievement resulted from concerted group effort. Family members and friends shared housing to enable the principal occupant to purchase the dwelling, while the other householder either saved to do likewise or bought a lot upon which to erect a house. Families also threw up shanties as rear buildings on their lots until they could afford to build a permanent dwelling.

Such family ties proved invaluable on innumerable occasions. Unemployment was not necessarily a disaster for those workers who lived in close proximity to others from their native towns. In extreme cases, such as in the 1921 recession, Mexican railroad workers in the Argentine barrio divided their salaries with their unemployed compatriots in their effort to preserve the barrio. They also formed a mutualista, or mutual aid society, to provide accident and unemployment insurance for themselves. This mutualista, the Sociedad Morelos, also functioned as a pressure group in a school desegregation struggle.

Mexican immigrants also exhibited a group or community spirit in their work environment in the yards and shops.
system, regional and local loyalties, the compadrazgo sys-
tem and even their work patterns to Argentine. Rather than
being "at sea" in the Argentine-Kansas City environment,
the immigrants quickly constructed a cohesive, largely
self-contained barrio which preserved their Mexican cultural
identity. Continued immigration, both legal and illegal,
during the 1920s and after the depression, reinforced local
and regional loyalties as braceros and "wetbacks" joined
friends and relatives in Argentine.

The Argentine barrio remained in a state of flux,
especially during peak immigration periods. Population turn-
over was rapid, and residential relocation within the barrio
was commonplace. There was always much coming and going,
in and out of the barrio, as residents returned to Mexico
for visits, often to find a bride. During such times the
workers took leaves-of-absence from the Santa Fe, usually
returning to their jobs within three months.

Continued population turnover and erratic employment
patterns made it difficult for census takers to make a
correct enumeration of the barrio. Census reports must
not be taken at face value, for they are but relative indi-
cators of Mexican population at any particular time. Santa
Fe employment records indicate that a sizeable undercount
of the Mexican population occurred. This undercount, obser-
vable in both the state and federal census returns, resulted
from language difficulties, population instability and,
most probably, Mexican hostility to government intruders.
It can also be assumed that some Mexicans deliberately misled
the census takers to hide the presence of illegal aliens in a household.

Hence, the Argentine barrio was a refuge for illegals, as well as a supportive social environment for its residents. To the extent that the barrio was a willful creation by the Mexican immigrants, it served a useful function. It nurtured its Mexican inhabitants while they began a long process of adjustment to the U. S. environment.

The barrio experience was not entirely positive for the Mexican immigrants, though, for it also represented segregation of Mexicans from the larger Anglo world. Since their arrival in the twin cities, Mexicans encountered discrimination and prejudice as members of a brown-skinned group. Dark-complexioned Mexican immigrants and those with distinctive Indian physiques and features, in particular, often found themselves classified as Negroes. Throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century Mexican immigrants and political refugees who resided there during the Mexican Revolution sought to end discriminatory practices which segregated Spanish-speaking persons into separate schools, churches, hospitals, cemeteries, neighborhoods, restaurants, and so on.

Segregation in Argentine manifested itself in residential, educational and social arenas. Anglo community pressure confined the immigrants to the northeast corner of Argentine, adjacent to the railroad yards and other industrial sites. "Poor whites" and some blacks lived in this area when Mexicans first arrived there around 1905. Resi-
ential segregation encouraged other discriminatory practices, as well. Social barriers remained rigid. Mexicans were not welcome at the local Anglo Catholic Church in Argentine, nor in most Protestant churches. Even mission workers who staffed the Methodist Mexican Mission in North Argentine maintained a social distance from their charges.

Exclusionary social behavior led to school segregation in Argentine and elsewhere in Kansas City, Kansas, as the Mexican and Mexican-American population grew in the early 1920s. When it became apparent that the Mexican community in Argentine was becoming a permanent fixture, local Anglo groups helped finance the construction of a segregated Mexican grade school. Elsewhere in Kansas City, Kansas, similar movements occurred, and Mexican children uniformly began attending school in special annexes, basement rooms and segregated classrooms.

Segregated educational facilities discouraged contacts between Spanish-speaking and Anglo children, for the Spanish-surnamed children attended school within the confines of the barrio. Thus, contact with non-Spanish-speaking youths was haphazard, not institutionalized. This situation reinforced the use of Spanish and did not promote educational achievement among the Spanish-speaking population. As late as 1940 Mexican and Mexican-American children remained virtually excluded from the city's high schools. Segregation initiated a vicious cycle. Mexicans could not move outside the barrio even when they desired to do so; and they remained locked within an ever-tightening circle.
Their exclusion from participation in institutions and activities enjoyed by the Anglo community encouraged the barrio to turn inward, to seek within itself the benefits and rewards of community life. This inward focus explains the low rate of naturalization among the Mexican population in Argentine. The immigrants justifiably felt no compunction at not becoming citizens of a country which segregated them as an inferior racial group. Moreover, federal authority appeared as coercive and restrictive to Mexican immigrants prior to the "New Deal" days. Never had they experienced government as a positive force working towards their over-all betterment. To them government was synonymous with customs officials, police, judges and census takers.

Mexican suspicion of government dissipated somewhat during the New Deal era as the immigrant community came into contact with federal relief programs. Federal assistance reached the barrio in the form of W.P.A. recreational workers at the Methodist Mexican Mission in North Argentine and through improved health and welfare services made available by federally-assisted local and county agencies. Naturalization among Mexican aliens in Argentine and elsewhere in the city increased in the 1940s, partially as a result of the immigrants' changed perception of the U. S. government. They could identify proudly with such a government, particularly because of its "Good Neighbor" policy towards Latin Americans, manifested both in Argentine and abroad.
Initially the Mexican barrio in Argentine sustained itself through mutual self-help efforts of an informal kind, such as family and kinship ties. During the late 1920s, as they sought greater participation in non-barrio institutions, these groups proved insufficient to deal with the barrio's problems. As a result, Mexicans from the barrio joined with others from Kansas City, Kansas, to form a mutualista which sought to improve the barrio's position through promoting greater educational opportunities and self-help.

Mutualistas no doubt aided those Mexican families which did not experience long periods of unemployment, but workers who lost their jobs during the depression soon exhausted their benefit payments and turned to public and private charity. The Mexican community received help from religious groups, notably the Methodist Mexican Mission, and from their principal employer, the Santa Fe Railway. That company sheltered its alien Mexican work force by a clever subterfuge. The company's President informed the Governor of the State of Kansas that most of the company's Spanish-surnamed employes were U. S. citizens from the State of New Mexico. This deception apparently helped preserve the Argentine barrio and other Mexican enclaves throughout the state, for other railroads in Kansas phased out their Mexican employes. Such assistance from the Santa Fe and local and private welfare agencies helped preserve the Argentine barrio.

Throughout the pre-1930 period Mexicans in Argentine had not adjusted rapidly to the U. S. environment. They
lived in a largely self-contained, transplanted Mexican environment. Argentine's Mexican population, moreover, had access to other Mexican barrios in the twin cities by the street railway system. The Westside and Armourdale barrios in Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas, respectively, contained many Mexican commercial, religious and recreational establishments. Thus, even though Mexicans lived in Kansas City, they operated within a Mexican subculture.

The persistence of a strong ethnic community in Argentine owed much to the formative period in which basic interaction patterns appeared. Acculturation proceeded slowly due to the occupational, educational, religious and social isolation of the Spanish-speaking population in Argentine from the Anglo world. The continued strength of the extended family system and the high percentage of persons over sixty-five years of age in the barrio in the late 1960s who spoke no English testify to the viability of the barrio as an ethnic enclave, or "urban village."

The creation and preservation of this strong ethnic enclave in Argentine occurred almost in spite of local hostilities to Mexicans. The Santa Fe and the federal government came to the aid of the immigrants at a critical juncture. With the inclusion of Mexican railroad workers in the Railroad Retirement and Social Security programs after 1935, the foundation of the barrio became firm. For the first time the immigrants received some guarantee of a future in the community, and as new waves of immigrants poured into the
community after 1910, the ground rules were well-established. The Anglo community grudgingly acknowledged the barrio’s existence, but two socio-cultural systems remained side by side, interacting only infrequently, and then, in formal settings.
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