

# **The Unorganizable and the Unrepresented**

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## **The Evolving Relationship of Hispanics and the American Labor Movement**

Daniel Parker Hanson

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Advisor: Dr. Shannon King

Department of History

The College of Wooster

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*The historiography of the Farm Labor Movement, the upsurge in Hispanic farm worker labor organizing in the 1960's and 1970's, emphasizes its historical uniqueness as an isolated social movement. This project is a comparison between the two main exponents of this movement, the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, with a modern campaign by the United Food and Commercial Workers towards organizing the primarily Guatemalan workforce of a Case Farms chicken-processing factory in Ohio. Differences between these three movements lie in the different ethnic composition of the surrounding community, the acceptance of undocumented workers by the labor movement, the nature of employment, and the legal dimensions of American immigration. Changes in these factors occur both between cases and over time, making the extent to which these groups have been able to create lasting campaigns a historical question and narrative. As a three-case comparison, my main sources are newspaper articles and book sections, with interviews and footage being used in the case of the UFCW. The main method is creating a historical comparison based on existing research and scholarship.*

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## **Glossary of Terms and Explanations**

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**Hispanic:** individuals with immediate Latin American ethnic, cultural, and linguistic heritage, especially (for the purpose of this study) first- and second-generation immigrants. Hispanic is used as a more generic term than Mexican or Guatemalan.

**Farm Labor Movement:** the growth of mostly Hispanic-led unions in the 1960's, 1970's, and 1980's that represented unskilled farm laborers. In this study, the two most significant exponents of this movement are the United Farm Workers and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee.

**American Labor Movement:** the progress of major US labor unions and federations since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, such as the AFL-CIO or UFCW. All unions mentioned in this study are part of the American Labor Movement.

**Anglo:** English-speaking people of European descent in the US.

**Labor Peace:** periods of low striking and general agreement between labor and management.

**AFL/ AFL-CIO:** American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations

**IWW:** Industrial Workers of the World

**NFLU:** National Farm Labor Union

**AWOC:** Agricultural Worker Organizing Committee

**UFWOC:** United Farm Worker Organizing Committee

**UFW:** United Farm Workers

**SEIU:** Service Employees International Union

**UNITE-HERE:** Union of Needletrade, Industrial, and Textile Workers, Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees

**CtW:** Change to Win Coalition

This study analyzes workers in farming and meat processing. The Department of Labor defines crop, nursery, and greenhouse farmworkers as the low-skill manual labor sector of agricultural work, comprising 80% of that industry. These workers are responsible for planting, seeding, harvesting, and packing produce, and also may apply pesticides and herbicides. The department forecasts the increasing use of technology to replace this section of the workforce, and the farmworkers described under the UFW and FLOC have little exposure to the tasks mentioned beyond picking and packaging.<sup>1</sup> the department notes the physically strenuous nature of this work, as well as it's seasonality and the subsequent social effects of worker migration and displacement. These workers face low levels of education, and workplace hazards such as exposure to pesticides, weather-related ailments such as sunburn and heatstroke, and repetitive motion injuries. California, the site of the UFW's campaigns, has by far the largest population of farmworkers, followed by Oregon and Washington. In contrast to the Midwestern and Great Plains regions, which produce higher outputs of produce and meat, West coast agricultural production remains heavily reliant on manual labor.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Occupational Outlook, 2010. Farming, Fishing and Forestry Occupations, 616-623.

## Introduction

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In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the growth of the U.S. Hispanic population and the evolution and decay of the predominately Anglo American Labor Movement intersected in historically unique ways. The growing need for representation of first and second generation Hispanic workers from Mexico and Central America in the agrarian sector coincided with the decay of the American manufacturing sector, the traditional bastion of American unions, as well as the Chicano Movement for Hispanic civil rights. In the 1960's and 1970's, these factors resulted in the Farm Labor Movement; a worker organization and civil rights movement lead by unions such as the United Farm Workers and the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, and preceded subsequent efforts by national unions to organize Hispanics in different sectors. While the Farm Labor Movement is typically presented as a unique moment in the American Labor and Civil Rights movements, the response of the Labor Movement to Hispanic workers is an ongoing narrative, determined by similarities and differences between the present day and this original impulse of organizing.

This project is a comparison of two predominantly Hispanic U.S. labor unions prominent in the mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee and the United Farm Workers, with a contemporary campaign of the United Food and Commercial Workers. The prior two cases represent the development of a unique tendency in agrarian labor organizing, due to its intersection of demographic, political, and commercial factors unique to that era. The UFW and FLOC began organizing

primarily Mexican farmworkers in the late 1960's and 1970's, engaging their organization as a social movement.

My contemporary case study in this project is the workforce of a Case Farms poultry processing plant in Tuscarawas County, Ohio since the establishment of the plant in the late 1980's. Several different ethnic and national groups have been represented among this workforce, but since the late 1990's the vast majority of its employees have been immigrants from Guatemala. The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) international union has had an ongoing relationship with the employees of this plant as well as the neighboring Gerber poultry plant since the mid 1990's, which has resulted in the success of a union election but the failure of management to ratify a union contract.

This case represents several units of study for comparison with the history of Hispanic organized labor in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The permanent rather than migratory nature of the workforce changes the nature of the employees' organization, as permanent employees with regular demands rather than "unorganizable" migrant workers. Both the union and the workers it represents contrast with the traditional categories of Mexican-led unions representing just Mexican immigrants. Cultural and personal backgrounds of the Guatemalan employees differ from those of Mexican employees, as the goals of a mainstream multi-ethnic labor union differ from those that is run for and by workers of a particular ethnic group, as with the FLOC and UFW. Given the differences in distribution of company goods, tactics such as striking and boycotting

are approached differently between the contemporary case and the two 20<sup>th</sup>-century cases.

My study is rooted in three successive approaches to Labor History: Institutional labor history, new Labor History, and Transnational Labor History. Institutional Labor History is the traditional approach that engages the working class through its apparatuses of organizational power, such as labor unions, community organizations, and external factors such as the influence of the State and management. This structural approach is reflected by my use of American labor unions as my primary subject of study, as well as the inherent influence of the State on labor and immigration legislation.

New Labor history, exemplified by mid and late 20<sup>th</sup> century authors such as Herbert Gutman, David Brody, and David Montgomery, expanded on the union-focused narrative of traditional labor history by engaging ethnicity, gender, and other common social experiences that created a common “working class” identity or identities among the workers themselves. This approach is intertwined with my institutional analysis, since the goal of this study is to portray the changing relationship of immigrants with unions, as well as acknowledge the agency of Hispanic identity in determining this relationship. By detailing the changing nature of labor done by Hispanic migrants and first-generation immigrants, this study is describing a particular segment of a broader immigrant labor pool.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The niche section of the workforce defined mostly by low-skill manual labor that is heavily represented by first-generation immigrants

As is shown in chapter one, this social category is shown when immigrant workers face tension from native workers for racism or threat of competition, native workers refuse to do the labor performed by immigrants, and management recruits selectively toward immigrant labor markets. Immigrant or Hispanic labor as a category is reflected in the attitudes of labor unions towards undocumented workers, the power and function of labor unions led by Latinos for the main purpose of Latino organization, and the hiring decisions of management that may favor a particular group or nationality. In this sense, this project is also a history of immigrant or Hispanic labor as a social construction.

Finally, this project also reflects the developing trend of transnational labor history, which rejects the singular state as the sole unit for describing the evolution of a particular labor force. Instead of taking the international comparative approach that many historians of this school use, my use of this perspective is contained by factors such as reasons for emigration and international treaties that legislate flow of capital or people.

Contemporary history of the Farm Labor Movement engages it as a social mass movement of the 1960's; a unique and contained moment akin to the Civil Rights Movement. Historiography of the UFW and subsequently the FLOC emphasizes the agency of its leaders, the creativity and moral power of its tactics, and the evolution of independent radical action on the part of laborers that resulted from the previous organizing attempts under other unions. With the literature I engage on the topic, this movement developed as a result of:

1. A national climate of racial and social protest parallel to the Civil Rights Movement,<sup>3</sup>
2. The end of the Bracero Program, which stymied solidarity among farm workers by providing a stream of workers used for strikebreaking and who challenged wage standards,<sup>4</sup>
3. The previous failure of organizing drives led by the AFL and other national labor federations,<sup>5</sup>
4. The unique confluence of leadership and worker/ ethnic solidarity that was resultant from these conditions.<sup>6</sup>

While this study is based on existing scholarship on the history of the Farm Labor Movement, it also responds to sociological and economic data. The American Sociological Review's article "Hispanics and Organized Labor in the United States, 1973 to 2007" by Jake Rosenfeld of the University of Washington and Meredith Kleykamp of the University of Kansas makes several relevant assertions about the evolution of organized Hispanic labor in the US:

1. It takes longer for immigrants to assimilate into the American workforce,<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ganz, Marshall. *Why David Sometimes Wins: Leadership, Organization, and Strategy in the California Farm Worker Movement*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009, introduction.

<sup>4</sup> Ganz, introduction.

<sup>5</sup> Ganz, introduction.

<sup>6</sup> Ganz, introduction.

2. Traditionally, immigrants and minorities were seen as a challenge to worker solidarity in mostly Anglo unions,<sup>8</sup>
3. Minorities typically use labor unions as a means of increasing earnings between generations,<sup>9</sup>
4. Very small Firms, firms with high labor costs and low skill are hard to unionize, while firms with lower labor costs and workforce size with more skilled labor are more likely to be unionized.<sup>10</sup>
5. Contemporarily, the most significant arbiter of union density is not ethnicity by itself, but rather the type of work that is being performed, meaning that discrimination on the part of union organizers does not seem to be a significant factor.<sup>11</sup>
6. Hispanics born in the US are generally more likely to be unionized than the population at large, while immigrants are generally less likely to be unionized.<sup>12</sup>

With respect to this existing scholarship and through my research, I make the assertion that changes between the original Farm Labor Movement and the current efforts at

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<sup>7</sup> Kleykamp, Meredith, and Jake Rosenfeld. "Hispanics and Organized Labor in the United States: 1973 to 2005." *American Sociological Review*. 74. no. 6 (2009): 919

<sup>8</sup> Rosenfeld and Kleykamp, 919.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, 919.

<sup>10</sup>, 921.

<sup>11</sup>*ibid*, 932- 933.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 932.

organizing hispanic workers have more to do with changes in capital and the labor movement as a whole than changes of actors within the Hispanic labor movement, and so this conventional historiography fails to explain the evolution of this movement into its current stage. Many of these changes are external, meaning that the failure of a modern movement akin to the original Farm Labor Movement is less the result of changes in internal leadership, but rather broader historical processes beyond the control of Hispanic workers and activists.

The methodology of this project is orientated towards comparison more than research. While newspaper primary sources highlight all of my work, along with interviews for the more recent case, the primary goal is to create a novel comparison of these movements rather than new research. Given a broader time frame, my project would incorporate more interviews with union organizers and workers in these unions. Formatting issues regarding the horizontal bars used to delineate sections have been persistent, and several bars could not be removed.

## Chapter 1. Hispanic Immigration and Labor

*The first chapter outlines the historical development of niche unskilled labor markets occupied heavily by Hispanics in the United States, and how these groups began to organize themselves for social, political, and economic rights. The relationship of Hispanic workers with the American Labor Movement, a topic described in the following chapter, is resultant from the changing flows of Mexican and other Hispanic immigrants into the U.S. This section will serve as a historical background to the main themes of this study, showing how the immigrant labor market that I am engaging developed since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. The primary subjects of this chapter are the legislative and diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Mexico as well as other Central American states, the geographic dispersal of Hispanic immigrants in the U.S., and how this distribution affects their assimilation into the broader U.S. economy. I divide this chapter into three main eras: the period prior to World War I was defined by low immigration from Mexico and similarly informal enforcement from the U.S., the following period which was defined by the influx of workers under the Bracero agreement, and the changing social and legislative responses to undocumented and documented immigration following the program's termination in 1964.*

## Section 1. Early Hispanic Immigration, 1848-1917

*The continuing development of the category of “immigrant work” is a narrative deeply linked with the economic, legislative, and migratory events. The goal of this section is to analyze how immigrant flows into the US were linked with labor and other outside factors, must be considered when describing the Hispanic role in the American labor movement. The development of a Spanish-speaking immigrant population in the United States began in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, through the US’ westward expansion and subsequent annexations of Spanish and Mexican land in the Southwest. Prior to the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the flow of Hispanics through the U.S. border was scarcely regulated by border patrols, and generally occurred on a minor and mutual level, in contrast to the more regular migratory flows from the south that would develop in subsequent decades.*

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While Spanish speakers have always been present on the U.S., the beginning of the broader migratory processes described in this chapter begin in earnest in the middle and late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The 1848 signature of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American War and annexed a significant amount of previously Mexican land to the U.S., vastly increasing it’s Mexican population.<sup>13</sup> Immigration of this era contrasted with the later forms described in this study, as it predated the modern era of transportation and globalization, leading to more permanent immigration rather than flows of unattached migrant workers. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, northward migration of Mexicans seeking employment in the U.S. began in earnest when the

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<sup>13</sup> Severe, Richard. "The Plight of the Wetbacks." *New York Times*, p. 1, March 10, 1974.

American southwest developed a more labor-heavy regional economy under the control of Anglo-Americans, that featured higher infrastructure for travel and movement of capital. To Rudolfo Acuna, the economic changes of the Southwestern U.S. prefigured the flow of Mexican immigrants, as the region “evolved from a pre-capitalist subsistence economy, where surpluses were used for consumption, to a mercantile capitalist system, in which merchants, freighters, commercial farmers and ranchers, and others made profits from trade and its monopolization.” The evolving economy uniquely affected Mexicans, since “each stage intensified a division of labor in which Mexicans occupied the less skilled and lowest paid jobs.”<sup>14</sup> These trends reflected the development of capitalistic, rather than sustenance-based, agriculture in the region.

## **Section 2. Interwar years and Bracero era, 1917- 1964**

*The two World Wars put a significant strain on U.S. agricultural production, creating an increased need for cheap unskilled labor for farm working, which was satisfied by an increasing flow of Mexican immigrants. This increasing reliance on immigrant labor led to increasing domestic tensions about the role of documented and undocumented Mexican immigrants, and legislation that was alternately supportive to and restrictive of Mexican immigration.*

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The entrance of the US into World War I in 1917 led to a strain on southwestern agriculture due to rationing and labor shortages, notably the Arizona cotton crop. AS a

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<sup>14</sup> Acuna, Rudolfo. *Occupied America: a History of Chicanos*. New York: Longman, 2000.

result, Southwestern farmers saw the need for more liberal Mexican immigration to satisfy the need for day laborers, and petitioned congress to allow 12-month exceptions to immigration quotas for individual migrants. This informal arrangement was continued until 1921. This temporary relaxation of immigration quotas became known as the first Bracero program, from the Spanish “bracero” meaning “manual laborer.” As the demand for Mexican farm labor was made apparent in this era, and the northward migration flow continued almost unabated throughout the decade. During the 1920’s, the US-Mexican border was minimally secured, and border patrols almost nonexistent. In this decade, an estimated 50-60,000 Mexican immigrants were arriving in the US each year.<sup>15</sup>

In 1930, legislation was passed that restricted Mexican immigration to a quota system, allowing just 2,000 Mexicans to immigrate to the US annually.<sup>16</sup> The 1930 quota was immediately declared a success by the State Department, which cited a reduction in yearly Mexican immigration from over 58,000 to less than 8,000 in the first sixteen months of its imposition. The department noted the restrictions on visa allowance to illiterates, criminals, contract laborers, and “mental defectives.”<sup>17</sup>

Following the Great Depression and the entrance of the U.S. into World War II, however, US agriculture once again had a major need for farm labor, and the demographic, legislative, and economic situation of the US and Mexico allowed for the

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<sup>15</sup> “Bill Passed to Reduce Mexican Immigrants.” *The Chicago Defender*, p. 13, May 17, 1930.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> “Rate Drops on Mexican Immigrants: State Department Reports Totals Now Indicate No “Problem” Exists.” *Los Angeles Times*, p. 1., August 5, 1930.

largest era of immigration yet. During WWII, contract labor increased in the Southwest, and an estimated 75,000 Mexican were imported per year between 1940 and 1950 to compensate for wartime labor shortages.<sup>18</sup> This rise in Mexican migration was bolstered by the second Bracero Program, which existed in various phases between 1942 and 1964. Unlike the original Bracero agreement, this program was proactive, actively recruiting Mexican farm workers rather than simply allowing them to stay. Mexican workers passed through recruiting centers at cities in both the US and Mexico, mainly finding work picking cucumbers, tomatoes, cotton, sugar beets, and railroad construction. The program reached its nadir in 1956, when 445,000 Bracero contracts were granted. In total, the second Bracero program brought over 4 million migrants to the American southwest. Many Braceros found disappointment in the new program, finding the guaranteed housing to be unsafe and many of the wages to be withheld. Lee G. Williams, the U.S. Department of Labor officer in charge of the program described the program as a system of "legalized slavery." At the time, many legislators supported the program as an alternative to illegal immigration.

However, the program actually furthered the propagation of Mexican immigrants, and led once again to growing political concern over undocumented workers. In California alone, an estimated 120,000 Mexicans crossed the border illegally by 1950. This growing tide of undocumented immigrants was bolstered by low border patrol- 285 agents monitored the section that touched California and Arizona in 1950, out of a total of 900- and raised fears of drug smuggling and communist infiltration. In

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<sup>18</sup> Hill, Gladwin. "Mexicans Convert Border Into Sieve: Job-Seekers, or 'Wetbacks,' Slip Over California Line at Rate of 10,000 a Month." *New York Times*, p. 1., March 27 1950.

response, the Immigration Service began patrols and sweeps of migrant labor camps hundreds of miles north of the border, shuttling undocumented workers back to Mexico by bus. In 1950, a coyote<sup>19</sup> charged \$50 to \$200 to transport Mexicans north of the border. In 1951, the estimated number of undocumented Mexicans in the US was approximately 1 million, and the year previous, an estimated 500,000 undocumented immigrants were deported from the US. In 1951, members of the California Medical Association asserted that Mexican immigrants posed a grave threat to public health as potential carriers of tuberculosis, with an estimated infection rate that was twice that of the general US citizenry. By 1951, Mexican migrant workers were observed in the Midwest, Northeast, and Mid Atlantic regions along with the West.<sup>20</sup> A 1953 estimate placed the legal annual immigration of Mexican farmworkers at 200,000. In 1951, President Truman ordered congress to take action on the “Wetback” situation, amid fears of wage-lowering for legal workers as well as the threat of communist infiltration.<sup>21</sup> In 1965, the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed, which abolished the National Origins Formula that had been in place since 1924, allowing for liberalized immigration for many nationalities, including Hispanics.

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<sup>19</sup> Mexican term for a human smuggler who specializes in carrying undocumented immigrants across the US border.

<sup>20</sup> Hill, Gladwin, “Mexicans Called TB Threat in U.S: California Health Officer Sees Source of Infection Extending Over Half of the States.” *New York Times*, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1951

<sup>21</sup> “President to Hear Plea for Farm Labor Relief: Harvest Crisis in Imperial and San Diego Counties Laid to Stepped-up Wetback Drive.” *Los Angeles Times*, p. A9, September 8, 1953.

### Chapter 3. Late 20<sup>th</sup> century

*In 1980, Hispanics became the fastest growing ethnic minority in the United States, a status they have continued to hold. Hispanics of Latin American origin are both the largest immigrant group in the US as well as the largest census-designated ethnic minority, with 16.3% of the population. Hispanics are also the largest immigrant group, with a current population of approximately 50 million. Among these, an estimated 11.2 million are undocumented as of 2010, a decline from the historical high of 12.0 million in 2007<sup>22</sup>, and by far the largest component of undocumented immigrants in the country. Debate over federal allowance of immigration into the U.S. has become a significant component of modern Hispanic life.*

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As Mexican and other Hispanic immigrants diversified the industries in which they worked from simple agrarian labor to semi-skilled manufacturing and increased in numbers, their methods of entrance to the US became more complex. Successive waves of immigrants that are geographically, socially, or sanguinely linked have made immigration a process highly informed by social connections. Emigrants from Mexico and Central America share information about employment with social kin, moving people from similar geographic and social regions into similar regional labor markets in

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<sup>22</sup> Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010." Last modified February 1, 2011. Accessed January 23, 2012. <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf>.

the United States. The experience of many workers in the Bracero program exemplified this type of social migration, albeit in an institutional, rather than organic, development. Bracero reception centers in both the United States and Mexico were the basis of common access to labor information across geo-socially proximate people, rather than totally private labor recruiters. By 1967, the *New York Times* estimated that migrant farm workers earned an average of \$1.23 per hour and 2,300 per year in 1965. Migrant workers had long been excluded from worker's compensation and minimum wage laws.<sup>23</sup>

Green Cards were a temporary work permits system designed for migrants whose work in the US did not endanger the economic livelihood of native citizens. In 1968, 684,000 Mexicans in the US held Green Cards. In 1967, an amendment in the Immigration and Naturalization Service disallowed holders of Green Cards from strikebreaking, but the following year Coachella Valley grape growers obtained an injunction from the office preventing the law from being enforced during the grape harvest.

Coyotes became the preferred mode of entry for many undocumented workers, often charging exorbitant fees for their services. By 1974, Coyotes charged fees up to \$300 to smuggle immigrants inside cars, often by the engine or under the hood. Tijuana had become the largest port of entry for undocumented workers into the US, for its proximity to San Diego and Los Angeles. These immigrants worked in “foundries, slaughterhouses, or pottery factories” in Los Angeles, and agricultural work as far north

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<sup>23</sup> “Hearing Mirrors Poverty in West: Panel Ends Session in Quest of New Rural Plans,” *New York Times*, January 29, 1967, p. 51.

as Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. By the mid-1970's, an estimated 800,000 to 1 million undocumented immigrants lived in the US, an estimated 500,000 of them Mexican. In 1974, a Hispanic Los Angeles attorney expressed the growing sentiment against illegal immigration: "I understand only too well why they want to leave Mexico, but if we don't put a stop to this, by the year 2000 there will be standing room only."<sup>24</sup>

Undocumented Hispanic immigration became increasingly significant by the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and came to be a major issue of US public policy, leading to legislative sanctions on the movement and employment of undocumented workers. Although precise figures of undocumented immigrants are impossible to calculate, it is estimated that their total population (including Hispanics and non-hispanics) rose from 540,000 in 1969 to 3 million in 1980<sup>25</sup>. During this time, the topic became increasingly prominent in national discourse. In 1983, Senators Alan Simpson and Representative Romano Mazzoli introduced the Immigration Reform and Control act, the first significant restriction on immigration laws since 1952. The act passed in congress in 1986, and served to control the flow of undocumented immigrants into the United States and document many of the current migrant workers already present. Upon the bill's signing into law, Simpson remarked that the "legislation takes a major step toward meeting this challenge to our sovereignty [while it] preserves and enhances the Nation's heritage of legal immigration."<sup>26</sup> In a New York Times editorial, Simpson cited the failure of existing

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<sup>24</sup> Richard Severe, "The Plight of the Wetbacks." New York Times, March 10, 1974, p. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Pro Con.org, "Population Estimates of Undocumented Immigrants in the US, 1969 - 2009." Last modified October 11, 2010. Accessed March 23, 2012.  
<http://immigration.procon.org/view.resource.php?resourceID=000844>.

immigration restriction laws in lowering the incentive of immigration to the US as proof for the need of a supply-side solution. In 1982, Alan Simpson cited the undocumented population as between 3.5 and 6 million.<sup>27</sup> The act offered legal status to aliens who had consistently lived in the United States prior to January 1, 1982, as well as seasonal agricultural workers who had worked a minimum of 90 days prior to May 1, 1986.

The IRCA did not automatically grant legal status, but rather gave those it affected the option of applying for the status of lawful permanent resident (LPR).<sup>28</sup> Among these eligible groups, approximately 3 million applied for legalization under IRCA, of which 2.7 million, 90%, were approved. The largest category of immigrants affected by IRCA were Mexicans, the country of origin for 75% of IRCA immigrants. IRCA had a much greater impact on legalization, rather than naturalization of immigrants. By 2001, approximately 1/3 of the IRCA legalized immigrants had become naturalized citizens of the United States, compared with 56% of non-IRCA immigrants. Mexican-born IRCA LPRs had a naturalization rate that was 3/4<sup>th</sup> that of non-Mexicans (27% vs. 35%), while the comparative naturalization rate for non-Mexican LPRs in this period was 90% of the non-IRCA population (52% vs. 59%).<sup>29</sup> The legalization rates of immigrants under the IRCA do not suggest a notable increase in the naturalization of Mexican workers, nor

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<sup>27</sup> Luis, Christopher. "Overkill' in an Immigration Reform Bill," *New York Times*, Aug 15, 1982. p. E20

<sup>28</sup> Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, "Estimates of the Legal Permanent Resident Population in 2006," Nancy Rytina. Last modified 2006. Accessed January 10, 2012. [www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/.../LPR\\_PE\\_2006.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/.../LPR_PE_2006.pdf), 2.

<sup>29</sup> Rytina, 3-4.

does the act seem to have a significant correlation with the gross number of Mexican and Central American immigrants to the United States.

In the mid- to late-20<sup>th</sup> century, regional shifts from agrarianism to manufacturing and construction in Mexico show the development and maintenance of migration chains among itinerant workers. Indigenous Mexican-Californian union organizer Rufino Dominguez recounts his family's migratory tendencies from their native origin of Oaxaca, beginning with his father:

"At first, many indigenous people went to Veracruz to work harvesting sugarcane... then people went to Mexico City to work on the construction of the Metro. After that, they went to Sinaloa to work on the fields, and then to Sonora and Baja California."<sup>30</sup>

The advent of the Bracero program diverted some of this migration network north of the Mexican border, which drastically shaped the modern state of migratory networking. "Back then, people travelled in stages, first to Sinaloa, then to Baja California, and finally to the U.S. But now... most people come here directly and go back to Oaxaca. Many of us have our families here (in Fresno), or people from the same town. We have a place to go, and someone who pays for travel. That did not exist before." Persistent ties to one's home town or region result from the maintenance of social ties over distance through remittance chains or obligation to bring family members to or from the US. Poverty and migration increased within the broader trend

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<sup>30</sup> Bacon, David, and Carlos Munoz. *Communities without Borders: Images and Voices from the World of Migration*. Cornell: Cornell ILR Press, 2008, 43.

of NAFTA-era free trade policies, manifested in the rise of border region Maquiladoras and massive agricultural estates in Mexico's west coast.<sup>31</sup>

#### **Section 4. Central American Immigration**

*In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Central Americans began to occupy a growing part of the general flow of Latin Americans to the US, which had long been dominated solely by Mexican migrants. Factors influencing flight from worker's native countries include poverty, violence, and, uniquely, warfare. This section will describe the unique experiences of these immigrants, contrasted with the more common narrative of Mexican emigration.*

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The beginning of the wave of migrant workers who arrived in Tuscarawas County in the mid-1990's was predominantly Guatemalan, many of whom were influenced by the ongoing civil war in the home country.<sup>32</sup> The Civil war that lasted between 1960 and 1996 was responsible for initiating the Guatemalan immigration flow to the United States that since the 1990's has been largely because of economic factors rather than violence. According to Guatemala's International Organization for Migration (IOM), the 1990's had an average rate of 40,000 refugees fleeing the country per year, mostly to the United States and Mexico. In 2000, there were approximately 480,000 Guatemalans living in the United States, but the IOM estimates that there are approximately 1 million

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<sup>31</sup> Bacon and Munoz, 54.

Guatemalans currently living here. Most first generation immigrants support their family members back home with remittances, which topped \$3 Billion in 2005. Between 1980 and 1990, there was a notable increase in the non-Mexican portion of Latin American Immigrants to the United States, potentially reflecting the aforementioned push factors unique to Central America or the nature of the IRCA as disproportionately affecting Mexican immigrants. US remittances to Latin America totaled 30 billion in 2003, the largest remittance channel in the world. In Guatemala, 24% of adults are remittance receivers.<sup>33</sup>

Along with the Border States, Florida became a major center of Central American migration in the 1980's. In 1991, Indiantown, Florida had a population of approximately 5,000 indigenous Guatemalans, the apparent largest concentration of Maya in the country. The majority of the residents had emigrated from the town of Huehuetenango throughout the 1980's, achieving legal status under the 1986 provision for family unification for permanent residents. Along with the ongoing warfare that had made many Guatemalans refugees, Indiantown residents also fled the encroachment of their native lands by Hispanics. This group of Guatemalans found work in harvesting sugar, oranges, and cucumbers. Many children in Indiantown had psychological ailments such as muteness or being cross-eyed that doctors attributed to witnessing the violence of the civil war.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Smith, James. Migration information Source, "Guatemala: Economic Migrants Replace Political Refugees." Last modified April 2006. Accessed March 20, 2012. <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?ID=392>.

<sup>34</sup> Rohter, Larry. "In a Florida Haven for Guatemalans, Seven Deaths Bring New Mourning," *New York Times*, October 24, 1991.

The northward flow of Central Americans that passes through Mexico en route to the United States has affected that country as well. In the late 1980's, there was an increase in the enforcement of immigration control along Mexico's southern border with Guatemala and El Salvador. In 1989, Mexican officials say they deported over 50,000 illegal immigrants from the country, most of them Central Americans, a figure that is greater than the previous three calendar years combined. They say that illegal immigration, particularly from Central America, has become a Mexican problem, too. "Those who don't make it to the United States stay in Mexico," a senior Mexican official said. By 1984, Mexico held 46,000 Guatemalan refugees that had fled to the border area since the increase in conflict between the Guatemalan Army and Left-Wing rebels in the country's northern region. This began a major internal debate among the Mexican government as to whether these emigrants were to be considered illegal immigrants or political exiles. This debate ignited after a rise of rebel attacks among these camps.<sup>35</sup> By this era, Guatemalan, Salvadoran, and Honduran immigrants had traveled to almost every state in the US. For example, in 1984, Guatemalan immigrants had made a presence in Vermont, part of a migration chain that called itself the "underground railroad," including 110 churches in the US that offer sanctuary.<sup>36</sup>

Across the border from the Mexican city of Ciudad Hidalgo, the Guatemalan town of Tecun Uman is called "the waiting station" or "Little Tijuana" and grew from 8,000 to 20,000 population in the 1980's, bolstered by the increasing numbers of

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<sup>35</sup> "Mexico Will Move Guatemala: Decision to Shift the Refugees From Border Follows Raid on a Camp by Gunmen," *New York Times*, May 3, 1984.

<sup>36</sup> "Officials May Overlook Caravan of Refugees," *New York Times*, March 22, 1984, p. A16.

immigrants using the town as a port of entry into Mexico, and late the United States. The Suichate river is the site of much of the migration, with hundreds of shoppers and vendors crossing it by inner tube and other clandestine watercrafts. By the 1990's, it was estimated that each year saw 50,000 seasonal Guatemalan workers employed exclusively in Mexican agrarian work go through the less-policed southern border.<sup>37</sup>

The far greater distance between Guatemala and the United States makes the trip for its immigrants much different from those who come from Mexico. Miguel Gonzalez, a Case Farms employee from the southwestern Guatemalan city of Totonicapan, describes the month-long trek through Mexico by foot: "We started out and had like maybe 40 in our group. By the time we crossed [the US-Mexican border], it was maybe like 20 that made it and didn't get caught or lost in the desert." Like many employees of Case Farms, Gonzalez pursued seasonal migrant work in cities such as Houston, Chicago, and Denver.

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<sup>37</sup> "Mexico's other Border Dashes Dreams of Desperate Immigrants," Los Angeles Time, March 30, 1997.

## Section 5. Hispanics Today

*The development of a large Hispanic immigrant population in the United States corresponds with the creation of a niche labor market. This section will describe the positions and industries most heavily represented by Hispanic immigrants, and how the legal, demographic, and economic changes of the past two decades have affected the contemporary experience of Hispanic Americans.*

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The economic expansion of the 1990's brought a stronger flow of immigrants into the United States. By 1999, economists and commentators observed that the United States was suffering from a shrinking labor pool in the midst of a then-growing economy. While the late 1990's job market was growing by an estimated 200,000 jobs each month, a pool that was absorbed by increasing hispanic immigration. In this period, as was common throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, much of the excess jobs were absorbed not by long-term residents, but by the undocumented migrant workers who may move across the border temporarily for short-term employment opportunities such as seasonal agrarian work or construction projects. "You have a construction contract and the work doubles," said Harley Shaiken, a labor economist at the University of California at Berkeley.<sup>38</sup>

While Hispanics represent 14.3% of the entire US labor force, they represent 38.1% of the workforce in animal processing and slaughtering, significantly higher than

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<sup>38</sup> Uchitelle, Louis. "As Labor Pool Shrinks, A New Supply Is Tapped: Women and Immigrants Are Filling the Void," *New York Times*, December 20, 1999.

the labor market share of whites (30.5%), African Americans (19.5%), and Asians (8.6%). The representation of Hispanics in the meat processing sector outweighs their presences in the traditionally Hispanic agricultural sector, in which they occupy 35.5% of jobs classified as “support activities for agriculture and forestry”, as well as 30.6% of the workforce categorized as “crop production”. The only sectors more heavily Hispanic than animal processing are carpet and rug mills (49%), landscaping (41.5%), and employment by private households such as housekeeping (39.8%). Notably, there is a significant distinction between the Hispanic presence in the animal processing sector and the animal production sector, which is only 12% Hispanic. In 2010, foreign born Hispanics earned on average 74% of their native-born Hispanic-American counterparts, a drastically larger gap than is seen in comparisons between native and nonnative whites, blacks, and Asians, which have near income parity.<sup>39</sup> Hispanic adults have a generally higher rate of participation in the labor force (70.8%) than the general rate of all American adults (64.7%)<sup>40</sup>. The population of both immigrant and non-immigrant Hispanics has moved increasingly into rural areas in the past three decades, eclipsing the growth rate of all other ethnic demographics in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in the past ten years for which figures are available.

The Immigration Service, though, counts many more heads. "What that 5 million does not include is the significant number of people on our northern and southern

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<sup>39</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, "FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2010." Last modified May 27, 2011. Accessed March 23, 2012. [http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn\\_05272011.pdf](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/archives/forbrn_05272011.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics.

borders who come to the United States and work for a year, and return home and then come back," said Robert Bach, the Immigration Service's executive associate commissioner for policy and planning. Crossing the border is not easy, he said, "but there are certainly ample ways to enter the United States without documents or with fraudulent documents or by abusing documents, such as a tourist's visa.

In contrast to Kandel and Parrado's theory of greater labor mobility with increased legalization post-IRCA, new immigrant populations in the meat processing industry tend to be undocumented or non-naturalized. The greatest proportional increases in net immigration from these regions occurred after 1986, as has the geographic expansion of the undocumented Hispanic labor market. Among IRCA immigrants, there is a notable cessation in intra-United States geographic mobility, showing that these immigrants did not use their newfound legal status to explore new labor markets as Kandel and Parrado suggest.<sup>41</sup>

The effect of the new sanctions against employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers has been one of the most salient effects of the IRCA. In 1999, Immigration and Naturalization Service initiated Operation Vanguard, a project aimed at reinforcing sanctions against employers who hired undocumented immigrants, and also deporting some workers. The operation specifically targeted the meatpacking industry in Nebraska and Iowa, following an audit of 24,310 worker records, of which 20% were considered suspicious.<sup>42</sup> The stated rationale was to prevent the undermining of wages

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<sup>42</sup>Elliot Blair Smith. "INS cracks down on meatpackers." *USA TODAY*, April 13, 1999.

and working conditions offered to legal residents. To many Hispanic labor leaders in this sector, the effect of Operation Vanguard was not primarily felt by capital but rather by the immigrant workers. However, IRCA affected Hispanic immigrants disproportionately. Much of the border security and other preventative measure affected Mexican migrants more greatly than Latin American ones.

## **Section 6. Contemporary shifts in Hispanic population**

*The geographic dispersal of Hispanic immigrants has shifted in recent years, outside of the 5 Border States and major metropolitan areas. This section will engage different explanations for this shift.*

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As this population continues to grow, a larger component of it has shifted outside of the 5 traditional Hispanic southwestern states of Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, California, and Texas in the past ten years.<sup>43</sup> By the late 1990's, the growth of the Hispanic population has been more rapid in rural areas than in metropolitan areas of the united states in every state except Hawaii. Despite the broadness of this trend, the distribution of Hispanic across semirural and rural areas has been relatively concentrated, with a third of this population clustered in just 5% of the nation's nonmetropolitan counties.<sup>44</sup> As of 2010, Hispanics represent a greater segment of the

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<sup>43</sup> "Restructuring of the US Meat Processing Industry and New Hispanic Migrant Destinations," William Kandel and Emilio A. Parrado, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Sep., 2005), p. 447.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, 448.

foreign-born workforce (49.9%) than the native born workforce (8.2%). Compared with the census data for that year regarding gross Hispanic population

William Kandel and Emilio Parrado suggest two explanations for the shift of Hispanics towards the country: Immigrant populations are moving away from the inner city, and the varied effects 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). IRCA has had two very different consequences for Hispanic immigrants, but with similar results for their geographic redistribution. First, the granting of legal status to 2.7 million migrants of formerly illegal status gave them the freedom to explore new labor markets. Second, the increase in border security has made the travel costs of entering the United States greater, incentivizing migrants who would be day laborers to penetrate the US border more thoroughly and permanently for a one-time. Some immigrant populations have left inner cities or avoided entering them due to the saturation of the labor market, cutting of social services, and increasing crime rates.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Kandel and Parrado, 447.

## Chapter 2. Hispanics and the American Labor Movement

*The evolution of the Hispanic labor force in the United States has paralleled the development of the American Labor Movement, and throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century Hispanic workers have increased their presence in American unions. Following a long era of discrimination from major unions, Hispanic migrants found representation in new farm labor unions in the 1960's and '70's, and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century a new movement of service-oriented unions that actively recruit Hispanic workers. This chapter will describe the long-term historical evolution of the Hispanic role in the American Labor Movement.*

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## Section 1. Early History of American Labor Movement

*The roots of the American Labor Movement lay in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the first large scale unions were not formed until the end of the century. This section will describe how early major labor unions prior to the great depression responded to Hispanic immigrants.*

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While smaller professional organizations had existed in various forms throughout American history, the Knights of Labor was the earliest worker's organization with chapters across the United States, founded 1869 by members of the Philadelphia Tailor's Union. The union's greatest period of growth came under President Terrence Powderly, elected in 1879, who encouraged the membership of blacks, Hispanics, and women. Like many unions of the time however, The KoL opposed immigrant labor, supporting both the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Contract Labor Law of 1885. The KoL embraced the anti-immigration sentiment of the era, viewing foreign workers as potential strikebreakers or a force to lower wages for those it represented<sup>46</sup>. Likewise, the majority of early labor unions had a strongly oppositional attitude towards immigrant workers.

A unique example of early Hispanic labor organizing occurred when a moderate wave of Cuban-Spanish immigration to southern Florida occurred in the late 19<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> "Terence V. Powderly and Disguised Discrimination." Herman D. Bloch, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Apr., 1974), pp. 145-160

century, following the relocation of many cigar manufacturers to that state. The centers of manufacturing in Key West, and later Tampa and other cities further north, absorbed up to 20,000 Cuban immigrants by 1900. As with other immigrant groups of the era, the relationship between the Cuban cigar workers and organized labor was highly exclusionary. During an 1890 visit to a heavily Cuban cigar factory in Jacksonville, a representative of the Cigar Maker's International Union noted that "[the workers] are all opposed to all American institutions...[and] got no use for the International union"<sup>47</sup>.

Mutual mistrust on an ethnic and economic level proved to segregate the immigrants from the mainstream forms of labor organization. However, cigar workers initiated their own culture of organizing and activism, with Key West-based labor newsletters such as *El Republicano* and *La Huelga*, and eventually an all-Cuban union in the *Union de Tabaqueros*.<sup>48</sup> This internally-led organization prefigured the Farm Labor Movement, in which external unions had failed to organize workers.

Samuel Gompers, himself a member of the Cigar Makers International Union, carried some of this prejudice over to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which he founded in 1886. The AFL, which responded to disaffected elements of the KoL, became the largest labor organization in the United States by 1910. Although membership declined throughout the 1920's, in the wake of the Wagner Act of 1935, the AFL regained it's momentum. The AFL began a close association with the Democratic Party during this era, and became the vehicle of "mainstream" forms of skilled, primarily

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<sup>47</sup> "The Impact of Cuban and Spanish Workers on Labor Organizing in Florida, 1870-1900." Gerald E. Poyo, *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Spring, 1986), p. 46

<sup>48</sup> Poyo, 49.

white labor. In rejection of the more radical ideology of industrial unionism, the AFL represented trade unionism, maintaining the option of exclusivity towards ethnic minorities and especially immigrants.<sup>49</sup> Low-skill agricultural labor performed by Hispanics was entirely excluded by the union.

The high-labor plantation-style farming that is the focus of this project developed in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the result of the privatization of public lands following the boom in homesteading, leading to large farming operations in California and other Southwestern states. In California, which has consistently held more agriculture than neighboring states, these farms, which transitioned from cattle to mostly fruit and vegetable crops, were worked by Japanese and Filipino men for much of the 1900's and 1910's. In these decades, there were sparse attempts at organizing by the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and the AFL. However, both of these unions ultimately failed to produce lasting union recognition among these workers. The IWW attempted organizing campaigns based on its revolutionary socialist ideology and praxis among the 1,500-worker Durst ranch in 1913 as well as Largely Italian workers near Fresno in 1917. While both campaigns held temporary successes for wage increases, the onset of World War I in 1917 halted further organizing efforts by the deeply radical union.<sup>50</sup>

The AFL as well as its affiliate the California State Federation of Labor (CSFA) had their own organizing initiatives among these workers. In contrast to the IWW's anti-

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<sup>49</sup> Industrial Unionism refers to attempts at organizing broad segments of the working class, as opposed to Craft Unionism, which only organized workers along their particular positions.

<sup>50</sup> Ganz 24-28.

racist industrial unionism, the AFL organized using its more traditional trade unionism. Likewise, these campaigns engaged the immigrant workers as aliens to be segregated from the white workforce rather than an oppressed minority. The CSFL supported a Japanese laborers' strike in 1902, for the goal of "preventing scabbing [jobs] from whites." The failure of these organizers to reach out to the ethnic organizations that represented these workers and the general mutual mistrust with the workers led to the failure to long-term union contracts.<sup>51</sup>

In 1927, the AFL endorsed restriction of emigration by the Mexican government, in contrast to unions such as the United Mine Workers and the California and Arizona State Federations of Labor that sought a quota-based restriction to Mexican immigration applied by the United States. Citing the rise in Mexican presence in Pennsylvania coal mines, UMW president C. J. Golden claimed that the "worst threat to American labor is the influx of Mexican labor."<sup>52</sup>

In 1928, the Mexican Mutual Aid Society, a social organization representing Mexican-Americans in California, was asked to represent cantaloupe planters on strike in the Imperial Valley. While the strike was broken by immigrant strikebreakers, the organization did draft a labor contract that would influence the California Department of Industrial Relations' policy for farmworkers, prefiguring the legislative goals of subsequent farmworker unions.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Ganz, 26.

<sup>52</sup> "Mexican Labor Ban to be Topic of Conference," *Los Angeles Times*, 1927, September 30, p. A2.

<sup>53</sup> W .K. Barger, and Ernesto Reza, *The Farm Labor Movement in the Midwest Social Change and Adaptation among Migrant Farmworkers*, (Austin: University of Texas, 1993). 45.

During the great depression, Mexican labor was challenged by the influx of displaced Midwestern farmworkers known as “Okies”. Partially due to competition between these groups, an estimated 400,000 Mexicans were deported from the Southwest in the 1930’s. The relationship of Hispanic migrants and immigrants with organized labor during this era has historically been complicated by the use of Hispanic workers to break strikes. Hispanic strikebreakers were used heavily during the Bracero program as labor during strikes by anglo farm workers, despite the official ban on Bracero workers’ involvement with labor disputes.<sup>54</sup> Despite these setbacks, this period saw a moderate in Mexican labor organizations in the US. In 1933, the Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union led a strike of largely Mexican-American workers in the San Gabriel Valley who struck over the reduction of wages. The union succeeded in increasing hourly wages from 9 to 25 cents an hour. Throughout the 1930’s and 1940’s, there were occasional union successes in the Southwest, including groups affiliated with the AFL and CIO.

Following the labor peace of the World War II era, unions failed to reclaim the militancy of the 1930’s due to the tide of anti-communist legislation, including the Taft-Hartley act of 1947. The AFL-affiliated Southern Tenant Farmers’ Union (STFU) would be the impetus for new migrant organizing, when the union’s leader H.L. Mitchell approached national AFL head William Green in 1946 about organizing farmworkers in the Southwest. With the intention of embarking on an entirely new organizing campaign, Mitchell rebranded the union as the National Farm Labor Union (NFLU). The

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<sup>54</sup> Barger and Reza, 26.

traditional base of the STFU was white sharecroppers in the Southeast, but the new goal of the NFLU was to target migrant Midwestern farmworkers (“Okies” left over from the Dust Bowl) working the fruit plantations of Southern California. The NFLU found initial success in its first year of organizing, and created its first major campaign in organizing the 2,500 workers of the Digorgio Ranch, a major fruit and vegetable producer in the Central Valley. The strike, which occurred at the peak of the grape harvest season in early October, collapsed primarily due to ethnic tensions between the Anglo majority and the minority Bracero workers, who at management’s behest were expelled from the farm.<sup>55</sup> The NFLU joined many other AFL-affiliated unions in condemning the growing flow of undocumented immigrants in 1952, stating that the US government had done little to stop the flow of migrants into the Southwest.<sup>56</sup>

In 1959, former United Auto Worker (UAW) organizer and AFL-CIO member Norman Smith formed the successor to the NFLU, the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). The AWOC largely followed the organizing model of the NFLU, refusing participation by Mexican workers and limiting organizing to just creating a union contract. Operating largely in the Stockton Valley, the AWOC created a wave of over 150 strikes between 1959 and 1960, securing significant contractual support for the improvement of wages and working conditions among Anglo and Filipino farmworkers.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ganz, 51.

<sup>56</sup> Ganz, 47.

<sup>57</sup> Ganz, 58.

## Section 2. The United Farm Workers

*The formation of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee in the late 1960's was the formative moment in the development of the Farm Labor Movement. This section will show how the UFWOC took advantage of unique apparatuses of power to create a new social movement.*<sup>58</sup>

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Cesar Chavez, a former migrant worker from Arizona, had been active since the 1950's in local community activism in his home of San Jose, California. In that time, he became involved in the local Community Service Organization, a civil rights community activism group campaigning on behalf of Mexican-Americans. In 1962, Chavez co-founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) with fellow former migrant Dolores Huerta. In 1964, the cessation of the Bracero program allowed for a new opportunity to organize migrant farmworkers, who had long been used as strikebreakers and low-wage labor pool.<sup>59</sup> In September 1965, the NFWA joined a strike lead by AWOC at the DiGiorgio Corporation's Sierra Vista Ranch in Delano, California. This strike, along with the subsequent boycott of table grapes produced by DiGiorgio and other firms, would become the formative action of what would become the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC).

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<sup>58</sup> While the UFWOC changed it's name to the United Farm Workers in 1972, this section is only engaging the years during which the union used it's original name.

<sup>59</sup> Jones, David. "Farm Union Pins Its Hopes on Victory in Coast Grape Strike," *New York Times*, October 2, 1967, page 43

On March 17<sup>th</sup> 1966, the NFWA began La Peregrinacion (pilgrimage), a 300-mile march from Delano to Sacramento. The march, which used the slogan “Peregrinacion, Penitencia, Revolucion,” (Pilgrimage, penitence, revolution) intentionally corresponded to the Catholic observance of Lent. Chavez organized the march with outreach to social justice organizations across the state, seeking support not only from farm worker leaders, but also from other civil rights and religious groups.<sup>60</sup> The Peregrinacion was held in response to the intentional spraying of striking farmworkers by growers in Delano, and was held to raise awareness for the plight of farmworkers and secure a contract with the Schweppes beverage company, which was a patron of DiGiorgio and other grape growers. The Perigrinacion invoked Catholic imagery to win the support of Mexican-Americans and other religious observers, including a massive poster of the Virgin of Guadalupe that was often kept at the front of the march. The march proved to be successful, as popular pressure caused the leadership of Schenley to allow a general contract for its workers.<sup>61</sup> The boycott won endorsements from the United Church of Christ, the United Auto Workers, and the Indiana Council of Churches.<sup>62</sup>

Later that year, the NFWA merged with the AWOC to form the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC). The UFWOC soon affiliated with the AFL-CIO, and in the next five years continued it’s activism against DiGiorgio and other growers through strike and boycott. Between 1965 and 1967, more than 200 families were on

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<sup>60</sup> Chavez, Cesar. "Letter from Cesar Chavez to Friends regarding Peregrinacion." Print.

<sup>61</sup> United Farm Workers, "History." Last modified 2006. Accessed March 5, 2012. [http://www.ufw.org/page.php?menu=research&inc=research\\_history.html](http://www.ufw.org/page.php?menu=research&inc=research_history.html).

<sup>62</sup> Jones, David. “Farm Union Pins Its Hopes on Victory in Coast Grape Strike,” *New York Times*, October 2, 1967, page 43.

strike against 32 California grape growers. The boycott spread to 34 cities and 15 chain stores with 13,000 locations by October 1967.<sup>63</sup> In August 1966, workers at a farm owned by DiGiorgio in Borrego Springs, California voted for the union's representation, despite the efforts of the rival Teamsters to secure a contract there. On September 2, the UFWOC won a contract among grape pickers at the Sierra Vista Ranch, another DiGiorgio farm in Delano, California. The Teamsters' Farm Workers' Union represented a small number of workers at the Delano grape farm, but lost their partial representation during the election by a margin of 530 to 331, with 12 workers voting for no union representation.<sup>64</sup> The UFW became the first major Hispanic-led labor union to make labor rights for migrant workers a national issue, culminating in 1966 senate hearings on their conditions, held by senator Robert Kennedy.<sup>65</sup> Schenley Industries, DiGiorgio Fruit Corporation, E. and J. Gallo Winery, Almaden Vineyards, Novitiate of los Gallos Winery, Christian Brothers Winery and A. Pirelli-Minetti and sons had all signed UFWOC contracts by 1967.<sup>66</sup> In 1968, the UFW began a relationship with the ACLU for legal protection.<sup>67</sup> The successes of the UFWOC in Delano and other vineyards for wine and table grapes inspired organization of farmworkers in Texas, Wisconsin, New York,

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<sup>63</sup> Jones.

<sup>64</sup> *Washington Post, Times Herald*, September 3rd, 1966, page A3

<sup>65</sup> United Farm Workers, "History." Last modified 2006. Accessed March 5, 2012. [http://www.ufw.org/\\_page.php?menu=research&inc=research\\_history.html](http://www.ufw.org/_page.php?menu=research&inc=research_history.html).

<sup>66</sup> Farm Union Pins Its Hopes on Victory in Coast Grape Strike, *NYT* oct. 2 1967, page 43, David R. Jones.

<sup>67</sup> "Farm Union Spurs new ACLU Drive," *New York Times*, June 9, 1968.

Oregon, and Arizona. A health clinic and credit union were formed for the mutual aid of UFWOC members.<sup>68</sup>

In early 1967, representatives of the UFWOC and the rival Teamsters held talks to end competition over representing farm workers. Tensions between the two unions began over their mutual attempts to organize DiGiorgio workers, and deepened when the Teamsters signed a contract with the Perelli-Menetti corporation, which the UFWOC had struck. This led the AFL-CIO to endorse a boycott of Perelli-Menetti products, and in response the Teamsters boycotted Schenley, a corporation with an UFWOC contract. Leaders of both unions criticized their respective organizing methods, with the Teamsters attacking the propensity of the UFWOC towards social protest, and the UFWOC claiming that the Teamsters farm labor division acted with the interests of the union and the growers, rather than the workers themselves.<sup>69</sup> In 1973, growers abandoned UFW contracts for the teamsters, resulting in a strike and boycott which ended in 1977 when the Teamsters agreed to hold canning jobs while leaving farmhand organizing to the UFW.<sup>70</sup> This feud had a significant effect on the 1975...

In 1968, undocumented migrant workers were used as strikebreakers when the UFWOC attempted to extend their strike and boycott against table grapes. The following year, a 150-person group voted unanimously to march to the border to dissuade temporary "green-carders" from strikebreaking. The UFWOC discouraged Mexicans

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<sup>68</sup> Jones.

<sup>69</sup> Bernstein, Harry. "Hopes to end feud of Farm Workers, Teamsters Rising," *Los Angeles Times*, January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1987 pg. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Chavez, Cesar. "Letter from Cesar Chavez to Friends regarding Peregrinacion." Print.

from working in the Coachella Valley through radio advertisements, while the growers distributed leaflets to migrants along the border to encourage migrant workers. That year, much of the strike's energy was put into supporting the campaign of Robert Kennedy, the most prominent supporter of the strike and its nascent union, and an avowed opponent of "green Carders." James D. Givens, the president of the Texas AFL-CIO and the El Paso Central Labor Union stated that "the number one problem is the Green Carder," estimating 25,000 migrants going between South Texas and Juarez, Mexico. Many affiliated unions threatened migrants who joined with revocation of their Green Cards. In 1974, Cesar Chavez stated his opposition to illegal immigration, noting that "[illegal immigration] is a problem that is out of control. These illegal workers will accept 30 per cent to 50 per cent less than the Chicanos." Chavez estimated that undocumented workers held 20 per cent of the 250,000 farm jobs in California.<sup>71</sup>

The height of the UFW's membership was in the mid-1970's, when the union could count 109,000 dues-paying members, when conditions and wages for contract workers were at their highest. By the early 1990's, however, the UFW represented just 20,000 workers. Cesar Chavez died in 1993 at the age of 66, of natural causes following kidney damage sustained by hunger strikes.

The primary factors that affected the UFW in the first ten years of its existence included the cessation of the Bracero program resulting in the relative paucity of

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<sup>71</sup> [\(The Flight of the Wetback, NYT 1974\)](#)

immigrants to be used as strikebreakers, the continued illicit entry of undocumented workers to be used as strikebreakers and lower worker wages, the use of the boycott as a mass social action that paralleled the strike as the main worker action, portraying the struggles of workers as a social movement, the invocations of religious and cultural identity to spread the popularity of the social movement, the cooperation of the union with religious and social organizations, and the rivalry of the union with the Teamsters.

### Section 3. Farm Labor Organizing Committee

*The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC) developed contemporaneously with the UFW in the mid-1960's. Started by activist Baldemar Valazquez as an effort to organize farmhands in Toledo, Ohio, the union's first major campaign was the boycott of Campbell's soup that began in 1978, and resulted in major corporate concessions for living wages and benefits to be paid to planters in 1985. The union is now an affiliate of the AFL-CIO, and has 23,000 members, almost entirely in the Midwest.<sup>72</sup>*

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The Farm Labor Organizing Committee developed contemporaneously with the UFW, resulting from the organizing efforts of Baldemar Velazquez, a Texas-born Mexican migrant farmworker who began labor organizing in Ohio in the late 1960's. Velazquez formed the nascent FLOC in 1967, beginning as an activist group comprised of several farmworkers and family members. Like Chavez and the UFW, the FLOC's goals and organizing ideology were informed by Velazquez' deep Catholic faith and admiration of the nonviolent tactics of Mohandas Ghandi and Martin Luther King. Velazquez had been involved with the mostly African-American civil rights organization Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), reflecting again the close relationship of the Farm Labor Movement and the broader Civil Rights Movement.<sup>73</sup> In 1968, the FLOC held its first strike among Tomato pickers in Lucas County, Ohio, amidst threats and intimidation

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<sup>72</sup> FLOC, "About Us," <http://supportfloc.org/aboutus.aspx>

<sup>73</sup> Barger and Reza, 57.

from growers and law enforcement alike. Despite this apparent victory, the early years of the FLOC saw great resistance from the farming conglomerates that most Mexican laborers in the region worked for, as well as the company-sympathetic local press and largely Anglo communities. In contrast to the large corporate ranches organized by the UFW, the farms organized by the FLOC were mostly run by local growers under contract of major companies, with both parties denying responsibility for the well-being of the workers. Due to this apparent gridlock in negotiating with employers, Velasquez geared the FLOC as a broad and eventual community activism effort, spending eight years gathering experience with farm workers.

In 1976, the FLOC saw its first major success as a union with a strike of cannery and farm workers in Warren, Indiana. Citing discrimination, poor working conditions, random deportations by the INS, and pay below the promised rate, the FLOC represented the spontaneous strike. While a federal district judge upheld the farm's restraining order against strikers and organizers, press coverage of the strike eventually swayed the growers to approve higher pay, work and housing conditions for cannery and farm workers. The union found external support through local catholic churches as well as local chapters of the Communications Workers of America and the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees.<sup>74</sup>

In 1978, FLOC representatives requested that representative of Tomato growers for Campbell Soup and the Libby company met with farmworkers and union representatives to discuss working conditions. The companies sparsely attended the

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<sup>74</sup> Barger and Reza, 59-60.

meeting, and 2,300 farmworkers in northwest Ohio voted to strike the companies, beginning the most significant event in the FLOC's development. Picketing and demonstrations against the companies' fields and canneries began that spring, and the union also held hunger strikes to drum up public awareness. That summer, the companies offered more money to the growers to pacify the strikers, but the growers refused to use this to increase wages. This highlighted the FLOC's tripartite contract system, and the need for three-way negotiations.<sup>75</sup>

The strikers faced heavy opposition from both growers and the local Anglo community, including police brutality, assaults, and racial intimidation.<sup>76</sup> In spring 1979, Campbell decided to mechanize their harvests rather than increase labor costs. This proved to be a turning point in the strike, and Cesar Chavez offered his support and guidance to the union, suggesting a large-scale boycott of Campbell and Libby products.<sup>77</sup> In the next five years, support for the boycott grew. Many unions and religious groups came to back the union's struggle, while Campbell began to show signs of receptiveness to the vast social pressure.<sup>78</sup>

By 1984, the FLOC began a new tactic: having owners of Campbell stock bring up the issue of worker treatment at corporate meetings, and staging boycotts of related

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<sup>75</sup> Barger and Reza, 60-62.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 64.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 69.

companies.<sup>79</sup> By 1985, the profits of Campbell had dropped 6%. That January, the company agreed to meet with Velazquez and other leaders, agreeing to create a mediation board between growers, the company, and the striking workers.<sup>80</sup> In February 1986, FLOC signed a three-year contract with Campbell's Ohio growers, as well as Vlastic pickles in Michigan.<sup>81</sup> The success of the Campbell boycott shows some similarities and differences with the UFW's grape boycott. Instead of a smaller contingent of supporters working in the short term, the longer time frame of the boycott meant that the turnover of supporters in the union was constant, with few supporters working towards the strike for all seven years. When management mechanized the company's farms, the movement was again shown to be more of a boycott than a strike of workers. With the union's three-way contract system, the FLOC showed how the strike-boycott hybrid was a novel form of economic warfare, supported by the social power held by sympathetic labor and church groups. The early racism of the surrounding community was a major stumbling block, as was the obstinacy of the growers.

Some Midwestern food companies with FLOC contracts have curtailed the union's efforts by reducing acreage in Ohio and relocating their crops elsewhere. Vlastic, for example, has reduced its Ohio acreage %30 in 1991, but the same year increased its cucumber production by %50 in North Carolina, the state with the lowest union density. Velazquez says "Processors are starting to shift production from one area to

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<sup>79</sup> Barger and Reza, 77.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, 78.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid, 79.

another...we shouldn't just have contracts with Heinz and Vlastic and other processors in Ohio, but wherever the processors grow food- North Carolina or Wisconsin." By 1991, FLOC represented 3,600 members in Ohio and Michigan working for Campbell's, Heinz, and Vlastic. Look up dean foods contract.<sup>82</sup> In 1996, the FLOC filed an injunction against the Ohio State Highway Patrol for allegedly discriminating against Hispanics in highway stops. The FLOC alleged that patrol officers singled out hispanic drivers without reason for arrest other than harassing them about their immigration status.<sup>83</sup>

By 1996, employees at FLOC contracted farms had improvements in working and living conditions, and received the status of hourly workers with wages above the federal minimum. In 1996, 25% of Ohio migrant labor camps had been renovated. In 1996, the FLOC sued the Ohio Health Department for failing to provide adequate oversight for migrant working conditions. Velazquez has been arrested more than 30 times in his organizing career, beginning with the distribution of immigrant newsletters on private farm property.<sup>84</sup>

In the first ten years of organizing after its first contract with Campbell's, the FLOC recruited 6,000 workers in Ohio and Michigan. Velazquez has frequently made public appearances at political and cultural events on behalf of migrants and Hispanics.<sup>85</sup> The FLOC became the only AFL-CIO affiliate devoted to farm labor when the UFW left

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<sup>82</sup> Weiss, Mitch. "Migrants face slim pickings," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 14, 1991.

<sup>83</sup> "Patrol Abuses Hispanics, Suit Says injunction Request Hit Immigration Questions" *Columbus Dispatch*, Nov 22, 1996. p. 06.

<sup>84</sup> (advocate, 1996)

<sup>85</sup> (celebrate, 1996)

the federation in 2005 for the Change to Win Coalition. By 1999, the FLOC had obtained 61 contracts with growers and processors in Ohio and Michigan. Velazquez was the first labor leader ever to win the MacArthur fellowship.

In 1999, the FLOC began a campaign to boycott Mount Olive Pickle Co. in North Carolina and organize their 7,000 cucumber harvesters. This campaign succeeded in 2004, when the employees achieved a collective bargaining agreement following the FLOC's campaigning. As a result, more than 6,000 registered Mexican guest workers were brought under the agreement, initiating ties between the union and workers in Mexico. In 2010, the union began sending organizers as well as members to tour several cities around Mexico, with the intention of educating workers who regularly migrate to the US, particularly those working at the Mt. Olive plantation, about the benefits offered by union membership, their legal rights as H2A guest workers, and the structure of the union itself.<sup>86</sup>

Since the 1990's, both the FLOC and the UFW have placed a strong emphasis on guiding national legislation regarding immigration and worker safety. The UFW is the main author of the Agricultural Job Opportunities, Benefits, and Security bill (AgJOBS), which would make many undocumented immigrants and H2A guest workers eligible for temporary "Blue Card" immigration status and allow them to become legal citizens after several years.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> FLOC, "About Us."

<sup>87</sup> Farm Worker Justice.org, "What is AGJOBS," <http://www.fwjjustice.org/what-is-agjobs>.

## Section 4. U.S. Labor Unions and Hispanics Today

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In 1989, the SEIU undertook a heavily publicized and ultimately successful campaign to organize custodians in southern California under the local 399 chapter. The custodians, who worked for various local custodial firms, were almost entirely Hispanic, with some African-Americans. The project involved the participation of Justice for Janitors, an activist organization that aids labor unions in their campaigns for custodial employees. In the union's effort to organize Century City custodians, Justice for Janitors members used highly visible tactics such as street theatre and public demonstrations to bring further attention to the movement. The following year, a large demonstration of workers striking against International Service Systems for a union contract was met with violent resistance from the LAPD, although this did not prevent the eventual ratification of a union contract.<sup>88</sup>

This campaign would foreshadow a new direction in the labor movement that emphasizes the organization of service sector employees and minorities to make up for the loss of union density in the American manufacturing sector. More specifically, it prefigured the SEIU's strong endorsement of the organizing model, which emphasizes increasing union membership as a radical action.

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<sup>88</sup> <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/los-angeles-justice-janitors-campaign-economic-justice-century-city-1989-1990>

As Hispanics increase and diversify their presence in the American workforce, they have slowly increased their presence in major trade unions, outside of the traditional manual labor unions such as the UFW or FLOC. In 2011, about 12 percent of U.S. union members are Latino, up from 10 percent a decade ago. As the unionized workforce in America continued to decline, some federations began to place a greater emphasis on Hispanic organizing as a new membership pool.

Internal debates among organized labor about the role of immigrants in American unions have continued among some major labor federations into the present day, and in the past ten years major labor unions have begun to increase their focus on organizing working-class Hispanics. Between 1999 and 2000, there was heated controversy inside the AFL-CIO over the federations' response to organizing the rapidly growing Hispanic population. The conflict occurred between more progressive factions that advocated organizing immigrant workers and campaigning on their behalf, and the more traditional factions that viewed immigrants as a threat to American manufacturing jobs. This debate resulted in the broader acceptance of immigrants into affiliate unions, and an endorsement of immigration reform after decades of consistently opposing amnesty, showing the broader trend of reforming attitudes towards immigration among the labor movement.

In 2005, a set of unions in the AFL-CIO including the SEIU, UFW, UNITE-HERE, and United Food and Commercial Workers ended their relationship with the parent union to form the Change to Win (CTW) federation. The primary objection of these groups to the AFL-CIO's model was its apparent preference to aid political campaigns

over expanding its membership base. The CTW unions formed around the “Organizing Model,” which puts the organization of more workers and the representation of their immediate needs as the primary goal. Hispanic and other immigrant workers have played a major role in the rise of the CTW unions, including UNITE-HERE which re-merged with the AFL-CIO in 2009.

Since 2001, SEIU’s membership has grown 60% by focusing on the heavily Hispanic and immigrant low-wage sectors in the service industry and public sector, showing a stark contrast to the broadly declining membership rates in almost all major unions. This focus on organizing a growing segment of the workforce (service and public sector Hispanics and minorities) rather than a declining one (traditional blue-collar manufacturing) is reflected in the relative youth of the SEIU. With 23% Hispanic membership, the union has a median age of 41, in contrast to the 8% Hispanic United Steelworkers, which has a median age of 52. To Gary Chaison, a professor of industrial relations at Clark University, the SEIU “really models itself after a new civil-rights movement.” UNITE-HERE made organizing immigrant workers in the textile, service, and hotel industries its primary focus upon being founded in 2004 as a merger of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE) with Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE). The change in attitudes by these unions towards Hispanic immigrants in general and undocumented workers in particular shows a major shift in the direction of the United States labor movement

## Chapter 3. Case Farms

*The United Food and Commercial Workers' attempts at organizing the employees of the Winesburg Case Farms factory should be viewed in the context of the broader labor history outlined in chapter 2, the increase of migratory and manual immigrant labor among Hispanic groups described in chapter 1, and the actual experiences of the workforce itself. This chapter will describe this final dimension of my study by analyzing the demands of the workers and the responses of management to the demands of the labor force. The narrative contained in this chapter combines the corporate history of Case Farms (within the broader history of American poultry processing) with the arrival of several waves of immigrant and non-immigrant workers (within the broader narrative constructed in the first chapter) and the attempts of the United Food and Commercial Workers at unionizing them. This chapter serves as the primary case study for this project, showing how the subject of study, the American labor movement as represented by the UFCW, responds to the unit of study, which is the arrival of different immigrant groups, their relationship with the US labor market, and their relationship with civil life and the US and local legal systems.*

## Section 1. Regional History and Demography

*The region of described in this case includes Tuscarawas and Holmes Counties in northeastern Ohio. This section will describe the history of this region, including the contemporary rate of Hispanic immigration since the 1990's.*

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Tuscarawas County was founded in 1808, with the county seat at New Philadelphia, while Holmes County was established in 1824 with its county seat at Millersburg. The original settlers of this region, Holmes County in particular, were almost entirely Pennsylvania Dutch, Amish, and Mennonite groups, a heritage still reflected in the strong presence of Pennsylvania Dutch in the region today. During the Civil War, the majority ethnic German population endured minor civil strife given that group's heavy support for the Democratic Party and its opposition to military conscription. Winesburg was settled in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and opened its post office in 1833. Currently, Winesburg is currently an unincorporated community in southwestern Paint Township, in Holmes County. The Tuscarawas county towns of New Philadelphia and Dover were founded in 1808 and 1802 respectively, all three areas reflecting patterns of early German and Pennsylvania Dutch settlement.

The present population of New Philadelphia and Dover is a combined 30,000. These two communities have absorbed the majority of the approximately 1,000 Guatemalan immigrants that came seeking work at the Winesburg factory. Since 1990, the Hispanic population of Winesburg and surrounding Tuscarawas county has increased at a rate well above the national average. In this time, the census-recorded Hispanic population of the county has increased by 550%, compared to the general

national increase during that time of 213% Hispanic population (table 1)<sup>89</sup>. The majority of immigrants residing in the region have arrived between 1995 and 2000, a proportional increase from the previous years that is reflective of general trends of immigration throughout the state. 53% of the immigrant population of the county has United States citizenship.<sup>90</sup>

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## **Section 2. History of Chicken Processing Industry**

*In the past 30 years, major firms requiring low capital and high labor have dominated the chicken processing industry. The specialization of poultry production into the separate fields of chicken farming and processing has followed the rise in public demand for chicken, specifically the pre-cut chickens most often sold wholesale and in restaurants. This section will describe the development of Case Farms as the result of rational changes by chicken producing firms.*

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Since the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the United States poultry industry has enacted vast structural change from being rooted in various small independent firms to being controlled by more concentrated, specialized, and corporatized operations. Prior to this

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[http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/files/Internet\\_Hispanic\\_in\\_US\\_2006.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hispanic/files/Internet_Hispanic_in_US_2006.pdf)

<sup>90</sup> City Data.com, "Tuscarawas County, Ohio." Last modified 2010. Accessed March 23, 2012.

[http://www.city-data.com/county/Tuscarawas\\_County-OH.html](http://www.city-data.com/county/Tuscarawas_County-OH.html).

era, poultry production was largely a rural cottage industry produced in small quantities by informal means. Entrepreneurs such as Arthur Perdue, who founded his eponymous firm in 1920, introduced more mechanized processing techniques. Local growers, feed providers, and egg hatcheries were consolidated under the same corporate control. Since 1920, the number of American poultry farms has consistently decreased, while production per farm has risen almost proportionately. This trend shows the deepening consolidation of capital in the poultry industry, as opposed to the small and broadly dispersed firms that had been common previously.<sup>91</sup> The increased production of tender broiler and fryer type chickens was prefigured by increased demand by the restaurant industry, and necessitated regularity for size and form in the processing process, requiring both mechanization and an expanded labor pool.<sup>92</sup> This corporatization of the poultry industry has been especially prominent among the production of young “broiler” or fryer-type chickens, the most dominant segment of the retail poultry market.<sup>93</sup> Beginning in the 1940’s, firms began to segregate the production and processing sectors, and consolidate these facilities.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> The shift from informal production on a local level to production on the massive commercial level by corporate firms is shown in table 1.

<sup>92</sup> Fink, 12.

<sup>93</sup> “Corporatization” refers to the consolidation of originally separate production, distribution, and processing schemes under a small number of larger companies, as well as their growing domination of the poultry market.

<sup>94</sup> These firms grew out of feed companies that began to contract hatchery construction and other production and processing infrastructure to growers.

In this era, this process of corporatization led to the relocation of many hatcheries to areas closer to the processing facilities. In this new arrangement, the center of chicken production becomes the processing plant rather than the hatchery.<sup>95</sup> Corporatization has caused production to be more clustered geographically and by factory, and the center of chicken production has been moved primarily to the southeast, which was largely prompted due to those regions' lower wages and union density: by the end of the 1990's, most chicken processing has been concentrated in Alabama, North Carolina, Georgia, and Arkansas.<sup>96 97</sup>

These factors, along with the unskilled and manual nature of factory positions, have caused poultry firms to target migrant and immigrant Hispanic populations as sources of labor. Likewise, William A. Kandel and Emilio Parrado suggest that rural-based firms in the meat processing industry intentionally sought out longer-term employees when their firm had a high turnover rate among native workers, a need that is often filled by the immigrant labor pool.<sup>98</sup> Between 1988 and 1993, Hispanic workers shifted from representing 10% of the chicken-processing workforce to 25%.<sup>99</sup> National Chicken Council vice president Bill Roenigk estimates that about half of the country's estimated 220,000 poultry workers are Hispanic. Labor attorney and Case Farms

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<sup>95</sup> David Griffith, "Consequences Of Immigration Reform For Low-Wage Workers In The Southeastern U.S.: The Case Of The Poultry Industry" *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, Vol. 19, No. 1/2, Immigrants in U.S. Cities (SPRING-SUMMER, 1990), pp. 155-184

<sup>96</sup> Fink, 12.

<sup>97</sup> Fink, 11.

<sup>98</sup> "Restructuring of the US Meat Processing Industry and New Hispanic Migrant Destinations" William Kandel and Emilio A. Parrado, *Population and Development Review*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Sep., 2005), p. 447-471

<sup>99</sup> Fink, 13.

advocate Richard Renner has stated, "The food industry is dependent upon immigrant labor. In meat processing... immigrant labor is a substantial part."<sup>100</sup> By 1998, the US Department of Labor found 30 percent of chicken processors engaged in remote recruitment of workers, and noted that many of the contractors failed to provide safe transportation and housing to employees as they had promised.<sup>101</sup> The survey found that the placement of traditionally seasonal labor pools, such as migratory Hispanic laborers, into long-term positions posed a potential challenge to the nature of immigration and labor laws.

In December 1986, Thomas R. Shelton founded Case Egg and Poultry, a firm primarily based in chicken raising and processing. Shelton had been in the poultry industry for 23 years, and the company was formed by the purchase of a small family-owned poultry operation. The following year, Case Farms processed an estimated 135,000 chickens per week with 140 employees, and a gross production of 22 million pounds of Poultry, based in it's chicken hatchery in Strasburg, a processing plant in Winesburg (both Tuscarawas county), and a shipping center in Akron<sup>102</sup>. In 1988, Case Farms purchased Breeden Poultry and Egg, a chicken processing operation in Morganton, North Carolina that included a processing plant, hatchery, and feed mill. In 1993, Case Farms moved it's corporate headquarters to Troutman, North Carolina, and

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<sup>100</sup> Ashraf, Aroosh. "2000 Miles North." Recorded 2007. DVD

<sup>101</sup> Remote recruitment refers to recruiting employees outside of the company's immediate region.

<sup>102</sup> Case Farms, "About Us." Last modified 2010. Accessed February 20, 2012. [www.casefarms.com/about/](http://www.casefarms.com/about/)

in 1998 the company purchased another firm in Goldsboro, North Carolina known as WLR Foods. In 2009, Case Farms completed a new chicken hatchery outside of Kidron.

Case Farms has primarily specialized in the chicken processing industry rather than chicken production, a distinction reflected in the gap between chicken production in Tuscarawas county and the chickens processed in Case Farms. Tuscarawas has the 4th highest rate of chicken output in Ohio, a rank it has held since 1992. There is a clear peak in chicken production in the late 1990's that trails in gross quantity and number of farms before and after. However, there has been a regular increase in the productivity of these plants, reflecting a trend of specialization in the poultry industry.<sup>103</sup>

### **Section 3. Creation of Case Farms Labor Pool**

*The evolving group of employees that operate the various positions in the Winesburg Case Farms factory is the result of demographic change, worker preference, and recruiting by management. This section will describe how the factory became worked almost entirely by Guatemalan immigrants from the perspectives of both labor and management.*

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Case Farms' two plants based in North Carolina have very similar workforce patterns to the Winesburg factory due to the commonalities of both labor and management in both cases. Common recruiting practices targeting mostly Central

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<sup>103</sup> Case Farms.

American immigrants and the social and economic aspects of immigration create a demographically similar workforce at the three Case Farms factories.

The Winesburg plant accumulated its labor force from the Case Farms factory in Morganton, North Carolina. Since its establishment in 1988, the factory had mostly employed minorities, such as the existing Mexican residents, African-Americans, and cambodian Hmong refugees. Along with these minority groups, the workforce was comprised of what Leon Fink called “employees of last resort”, which included mental patients and alcoholics at the original case farms plants in Morganton North Carolina, and was later replaced with immigrant labor.<sup>104</sup> By 1989, the plant began to struggle to maintain a consistent labor force, given the high rate of turnover among employees. Many locals were unwilling to tolerate these conditions, in which repetitive motion led to an extremely high rate of work related injuries. Carpal tunnel syndrome has been especially high among the workers, along with injuries such as mangled fingers and general repetitive strain injuries.

In the early 1990’s, the factory hired workers that were largely Amish or Mennonite, along with local White and African-American lower-income people. In the mid 1990’s, El Salvadoran migrants who were displaced by civil strife in their home country became the first wave of Hispanic immigrants to be employed at Case Farms in Winesburg. For the most part, these refugees were attached and unattached males with or without family members in the area, the native country, or another part of the United States. Like the later wave of Guatemalan immigration to the area, these immigrants

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<sup>104</sup> Fink, 11.

largely used illicit means of human smuggling- type migration processes to itinerant labor sources throughout the US. Since this era, these groups have ceased to be represented in the plant's workforce, with many Salvadorans moving to employment in other service and manufacturing industries.

In spring 1998, Case Farms human resources manager Norman Beecher responded to the dearth of willing employees with a tip that he had heard from other poultry processing professionals. Plants throughout the south, often guided by church groups seeking to integrate refugees into the local economy, had been using Guatemalan labor. The first wave of Guatemalan workers at Case Farms began with ten men in the Florida citrus industry who had been out of work since the harvest season had ended. After interviewing the men through a local church and arranging work permits, Beecher drove the ten up to the NC plant in a pickup truck. After their arrival, "those ten went to work and were doing good, and the supervisors came to me saying 'hey we need ten more'." After several groups of workers arrived, entirely single men, Guatemalan immigration increased drastically in Morganton. Unattached itinerant workers, both in the US and Guatemala, began to pour into Morganton, becoming the plurality of the plant's workforce within two years. The company provided minor accommodations for this new group of employees, such as a revamped trailer park and abandoned hotel, as well as van services to bring them to work.

The original movement of Guatemalan workers brought to the area by Case Farms began a continued stream of workers from their home country. To one community activist, "those Guatemalans who came brought their families...more and

more people came, brought their friends, their families, used their network like any job seeker.”<sup>105</sup> In the mid 1990’s, the beginning of the Guatemalan migration to the region, most of the original immigrants were single men, who came without their families. One Guatemalan migrant who arrived during this era describes his original trip: “I left in December 1996, just walked out without telling anyone so that they wouldn’t worry about me. I walked (along with other single migrant men) 7 hours to the border of Guatemala and Mexico, where we rested for a day, and then the trip from Mexico to US took 30 days.” This first wave of migrants following the original group transferred from Morganton left alone, but built a strong chain of remittances to family members in Guatemala. This follows the stereotypical model of migration chains in the United States: networks are began by single migratory men, and are expanded when their family members and friends follow.

The main forms of immigration from these groups are clandestine human trafficking style methods. Groups of Guatemalan and Mexican undocumented immigrants have been intercepted entering Tuscarawas and neighboring Holmes County in a scheme to smuggle Guatemalan immigrants from Delaware into nearby Millersburg by van for menial work on Amish farms.<sup>106</sup> The migrant group primarily primarily

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1. <sup>105</sup> Ashraf, Aroosh. "2000 Miles North." Recorded 2007. DVD

<sup>106</sup> [http://0-infoweb.newsbank.com.dewey2.library.denison.edu/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p\\_product=AWNB&p\\_theme=aggregated5&p\\_action=doc&p\\_docid=0FDBF2000CB7226A&p\\_docnum=2&p\\_queryname=3](http://0-infoweb.newsbank.com.dewey2.library.denison.edu/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p_product=AWNB&p_theme=aggregated5&p_action=doc&p_docid=0FDBF2000CB7226A&p_docnum=2&p_queryname=3)

employed in Tuscarawas and neighboring Stark county at Case Farms and other positions has been primarily Guatemalan since the 1990's.<sup>107</sup>

The motives of the employees for seeking work at the Winesburg factory represent the motives of many immigrant groups: finding a standard of living better than that which they had experienced in their home country. Mullins has stated that the company recruited workers from the mountainous regions of Guatemala due to the low pay and education available in the area. The vast majority of Case Farms employees send a portion of their wages to kin in Guatemala, where the purchasing power of seemingly meager US wages is vastly higher. One worker cited the importance of these remittances, noting, "That's the reason I'm here. I have to fight for my family and get ahead." The apparent desperation of the immigrants and the poor working conditions has made Case Farms heavily connected to undocumented workers, what Richard Renner calls a "black market" labor pool: "There's just such a desperate need for the ability to work and the legal system is not able to provide it. And when that happens a black market arises."

Legal barriers affect the relationship of worker, management, and union. The IRCA requires an additional I-9 form requiring employers to attest to the legal status of their employees. However, heavily undocumented workplaces such as Case Farms prove that the level of enforcement and requirements of employers to check residency papers has been lax. This has caused the need for workers to obtain fake identification in order

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<sup>107</sup> Sherrel Rieger, personal communication, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2012.

to find employment. One worker at Case Farms recalled paying \$600 to buy a fake Visa in Alabama.

## Section 4. Social Conditions

*As with any social movement, especially including the Hispanic farmworker movements mentioned in chapter 2, the motives of the workers for organizing and the reach that the union movement has towards these workers is a result of their social experience, including language, education, and modes of community engagement. This section will describe the social challenges experienced by the Case Farms workforce in their communities.*

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Language is one of the most significant social barriers to Hispanic immigrants in general. The majority of the Guatemalan immigrants speak an indigenous dialect as their first language. While the majority of these individuals have learned Spanish in their home country, activist Sherrel Rieger notes that on occasion, there remains a language barrier among non-hispanophones, especially women, reflecting broader linguistic trends among Hispanics in the United States. The majority of the children speak English, if entered into primary school at a young enough age. Since the growth of the local hispanic community, there has been a growing need for translators to help hispanophones utilize various social services. The role was original filled by community volunteers, but is increasingly being held by paid translators at services such as healthcare providers, law enforcement, and education.<sup>108</sup> Non-english speakers have had particularly challenging experiences with the local medical system, as an estimated .5 % of Dover hospital patients do not speak English.

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<sup>108</sup> Sherrel Rieger, phone interview, January 21, 2012.

Reiger says that the reception of the immigrants has been mixed but mostly positive in the area, noting, “most of the grumbling probably goes on behind closed doors... I don’t want to say that there haven’t been instances, because there have been instances of people attacking people or assaulting people in an alley, but overall I think that it has been fairly positive.” The experience of anti-Hispanic prejudice has been spotty. A notable hate crime occurred during the 2008 UFCW strike at Case Farms, in which residential shacks built by the workers near the factory grounds were burnt down, with a nearby graffito that read “Go home you fucking Mexicans.” Mullins expressed disappointment with the tepid reaction of local law enforcement, noting the failure of the local sheriff’s office to pursue an investigation, and the apparent racism of the officers.<sup>109</sup>

Barriers of culture, education, and language compel many Hispanics to make Emergency Room visits for otherwise menial illnesses, especially in children. To a local doctor, “some of them are just so afraid that something is going to happen to them they go to the ER.” Hispanics typically lack the medical insurance to access urgent care facilities as well as a primary care physician, and have endured the experience of losing a child to illness in early childhood.

A local non-profit organization known as Miguate caters specifically to the Guatemalan population in the area. The group offers services such as transportation, translators, and classes for subjects such as English language, computer proficiency, and guitar lessons. Miguate offers social outings such as summer trips to the local swimming

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<sup>109</sup> Tim Mullins, phone interview, January 15, 2012.

pool for children, and coordination of traditional Guatemalan Christmas celebrations. Miguate has also been involved with the union campaign, offering their premises as a space for meetings and deliberation between Union representatives, workers, and management. This service is offered to any local labor disputes as well, including the UFCW campaign at Gerber Poultry.

The local educational system has had mixed success accommodating the children of immigrants. Primary and secondary schools have made up some of the social safety net taken up by churches and community activists. The headstart program holds monthly dinners with parents, as well as childrearing classes for teenagers, reflecting the frequent absence of parents working long work shifts. One problem noted by schoolteachers is the challenge of integrating immigrant children into a school system that does not correspond to their level of learning at a given age: peasant children in Guatemala may only have access to a few years of primary education by the time they are older teenagers, making it challenging to place them in either high school or elementary school.

Local churches have been the primary center of social and civic life for the region's hispanic community. St. Joseph's Catholic church in Dover has become one of the centers of social life for the Guatemalan community, offering regular Spanish-language masses, and bilingual services at Christmas and Easter. In addition to the traditional Catholic identity of the immigrants, five Pentecostal churches in the region have begun offering Spanish mass and further outreach into the Hispanic community.

Recently, local teachers have begun to use these churches as sites for weekly tutoring and outreach to low-English students, with provided transportation.

## **Section 5. Organizing Case Farms**

*This section will outline the actual process of the UFCW's attempts at organizing the case Farms factory in Winesburg, in tandem with their continued efforts to organize the nearby Gerber poultry processing factory.*

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Tim Mullins, an organizer for the local chapter of the UFCW, noted that the heavy presence of the Amish and Mennonite orders was a major impediment to organizing efforts early in the decade, citing the apparent cultural foreignness of worker organization. Mullins had worked briefly at the factory in 1994 to attempt to initiate this campaign.

The UFCW had gotten repeated calls from employees at Gerber Poultry during the late 1990's and early 2000's, but found that whenever the union attempted to follow up on complaints from these employees, they had been fired. (source) Illegal firings for union activity at both Case Farms and Gerber have been common since attempts at unionizing began, and have continued since the victory of the election in (2004). Mullins noted that the company "would rather pay millions in legal fees than stop these violations." The UFCW says that workers have cited reasons including low

payrate, working conditions, interactions with management, and privileges such as breaks during the job as reasons for unionizing. The paucity of workbreaks amidst the rapid pace of line work was a frequently cited problem amongst the employees. Meal breaks during the 10-hour shifts were scarce, inviting massive overcrowding during brief periods in the break room. During the morning, workers typically had one ten-minute break, and then a half-hour break at 11:30 for lunch for all employees. Some employees are said to have been so frightful of taking unauthorized bathroom breaks that some voluntarily urinated on themselves to avoid dismissal.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Chapter 880 began to reach out to the workers of the Winesburg factory in the early 1990's, as well as the nearby Gerber Poultry plant in Kidron. The union has made slow progress in winning employee elections, and the ongoing process of agreeing on a union contract with the Case Farms management. This relationship began in 1994, when Tim Mullins, a current organizer for UFCW 880 and former meat processor, gained employment at the factory in an effort to begin an effort to drum up employee support for a union campaign. At that time, Mullins noted that the heavy presence of the Amish and Mennonite orders was a major impediment to organizing efforts early in the decade, citing the apparent cultural foreignness of worker organization. This early attempt at organization failed to gain heavy support among employees.

The UFCW had gotten repeated calls from employees at Gerber Poultry during the late 1990's and early 2000's, but found that whenever the union attempted to follow up on complaints from these employees, they had been fired. Illegal firings for

union activity at both Case Farms and Gerber have been common since attempts at unionizing began, and have continued since the victory of the election in 2008. Mullins noted that the company “would rather pay millions in legal fees than stop these violations.” The UFCW says that workers have cited reasons including low payrate, working conditions, interactions with management, and privileges such as breaks during the job as reasons for unionizing. The paucity of workbreaks amidst the rapid pace of line work was a frequently cited problem amongst the employees. Meal breaks during the 10-hour shifts were scarce, inviting massive overcrowding during brief periods in the break room. During the morning, workers typically had one ten-minute break, and then a half-hour break at 11:30 for lunch for all employees. Some employees are said to have been so frightful of taking unauthorized bathroom breaks that some voluntarily urinated on themselves to avoid dismissal.

At both Gerbers and Case Farms, management had instituted a quota system that applied to most line workers in which employees were required to process a certain quota of chickens each day. While workdays have come to correspond to a single day-long shift, workers have been required to fill a particular quota of chickens processed rather than a specified number of hours worked per day. The Winesburg Case Farms production line includes a myriad of different positions, including separate stations for chicken skinning, deboning, quartering, and packaging, along with the separate positions such as custodial and chicken handling. However, the general payrate among all employees has been largely consistent. Workers have noted that pay raises have come at a much slower rate than what had been promised by management. In 2004,

one worker noted, "I was working at a factory where they started us at 6.90 an hour. I was working without a raise for four years." Union officials noted that employees in similar positions as the case Farm workers earn low wages compared to unionized meat processing firms.

In December 1997, Texas Rural Legal Aid Incorporated filed a lawsuit against Case Farms on behalf of 24 employees for breach of worker contract. The suit regarded the alleged hiring procedures used by Case Farms, who was accused to heavily recruiting immigrant workers in southern Texas with the promise of housing and transportation along with the position. In contrast to the firms' claims, workers who migrated to Winesburg met "squalid, substandard and overcrowded housing and unsafe and unreliable transportation," and those who could not pay for these services had the charges docked from their paychecks. The suit also alleged that Case Farms withheld but did not report taxes from the employees, resulting in a salary below minimum wage.<sup>110</sup> Between 1994 and 1997, the plant had two separate legal actions by Immigration and Naturalization Services for their hiring of illegal immigrants. The legal status of the majority of the workforce has been a (point of contention in other areas) The UFCW claims that managers at the plant have regularly used the threat of calling immigration services to stop employees from unionizing. Since 2006, community and union activists have noted that the topic of illegal immigration enforcement has become more prominent in the communities of heavy Hispanic settlement. Mullins notes that this has

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<sup>110</sup> [http://0-infoweb.newsbank.com.dewey2.library.denison.edu/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p\\_product=AWNB&p\\_theme=aggregated5&p\\_action=doc&p\\_docid=0F80CE974C8B06BA&p\\_docnum=7&p\\_queryname=1](http://0-infoweb.newsbank.com.dewey2.library.denison.edu/iw-search/we/InfoWeb?p_product=AWNB&p_theme=aggregated5&p_action=doc&p_docid=0F80CE974C8B06BA&p_docnum=7&p_queryname=1)

been a manifestation of a national change in immigration policy, since the border with Mexico has become a more significant political topic. Prior to this time, Mullins says, the threat of ICE crackdowns in the community was only a rumor. Since then, however, multiple undocumented families have “had their doors kicked down” in immigration raids.

The relationship of the UFCW with undocumented workers is unique given the longer history of the labor movement. In contrast to the FLOC and UFW during their formative periods, UFCW has liberal policies and stances toward undocumented workers. Representatives state that this has been a recent shift in the union’s history, formally opposing discrimination against undocumented workers since the mid 1990’s. Like many other modern unions, the UFCW has begun in recent decades to publicly support immigration reform and liberalizing anti-immigration laws. Mullins describes this shift as parallel to changes of broader feelings of resentment over immigrant labor “taking US jobs” within the American labor movement. In contrast to the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, in which the feelings of foreign competition in the job market led the Teamsters to compete against the legal immigrants campaigning with the United Farm Workers.

In 2001, Mullins attempted to restart the original campaign at Case Farms, after the ethnic composition of the workplaces had become almost entirely Guatemalan and El Salvadoran. He attributes his failed attempt to seek employment there as a result of management’s strong preference towards immigrant Hispanic workers. The ongoing campaign revolved around the affiliation of the Case Farms plant with the local 880

chapter of the UFCW, which presents approximately 23,000 food and grocery industry employees in Northeastern Ohio.

According to activist Sherrel Rieger, the exposure of many Guatemalan migrants to the political violence of that country has influenced their preferences towards working organization by associating any ostensibly left-wing causes with the possibility of violent state reprisal.<sup>111</sup> Between these experiences and the possibility of arrest by immigration services, migrant workers' preferences towards unionization is potentially dissuaded by state forces both in the US and their native countries. Both CF and Gerber's hired anti-union "labor consultants" in order to dissuade employees from unionizing. The Law Firm Cruz and Associates were hired to dissuade employee opinion. One consultant was sent to socialize with the employees to convince them to vote against unionizing. The consultant ingratiated himself to the workers as "Tio Fernando," who is remembered as a friendly, uncle-like presence. Tio Fernando convinced those he spoke with that unionizing would result in a raid by Immigration and Naturalization Services, owing to the undocumented status of almost all employees. He also told them that fellow UFCW workers would be deployed to the factory to replace all of them at their jobs.

In 2004, the UFCW held a union vote at the Gerber Poultry plant in Kidron. The drive failed, and the vote was a 120-77 loss. When the Wlnesburg Case Farms factory held a UFCW vote, which failed by 15 votes out of the 240 cast by employees. To Labor attorney Richard Renner, the failure of union drive was due to the efficacy of threats of

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<sup>111</sup> Sherrel Rieger, personal communication, February 2011.

firing workers: “for an uneducated immigrant workforce, those measures were sufficiently effective.” UFCW filed injections against authenticity of results. The National Labor Relations Board cleared Case Farms, but found that Gerber Poultry had violated federal Labor law as union supporters received unfavorable performance reviews, transfers, and threats of physical violence. The current status of UFCW 880 at the Case Farms factory in Winesburg has changed little in the previous five years, with regular negotiations between the UFCW, workers, and management to draft a contract.

## Conclusion

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The UFCW and similar modern unions<sup>112</sup> take different approaches to organizing Hispanic workers than those in the original Farm Labor Movement, given differences in the unions' ethnic identity<sup>113</sup> and the sectors and industries represented, while all three unions share a common change in their receptivity towards undocumented workers.

The demands and working conditions of migrant farmworkers since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century are generally similar to the needs of the workforce at Case Farms. A significant commonality between these two groups is their access to housing, which is usually provided by the company. Case Farms workers are typically housed by the company in accommodations such as repurposed trailers and mass-leased hotel rooms, and have also created clandestine lodgings such as shacks for short- or long-term habitation. These arrangements are very similar to those experienced by migrant farm workers throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Reflecting their migratory nature, Mexican farm laborers have typically occupied crude on- or near-site housing, a tendency that has not changed significantly since the 1960's. The common reliance of these two groups on workers on rudimentary housing provided by the company shows the near-migrant status of the Case Farms workers: the workers have no existing attachment to the place of employment, and lack permanent housing upon finding work. This contrasts with the

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typical description of non-migrant minority or immigrant workers who are defined by attachment to housing and self-sustained permanent residency.

The primary reasons cited by UFW and FLOC members for seeking union protection include a union wage, protection from job hazards, and decent housing. Hazards unique to farm labor cited by representatives of these unions include exposure to pesticides, excessive heat, crop-related ailments such as tobacco sickness<sup>114</sup>, and repetitive motion strain. Much like the demand of Case Farms workers to lower the speed and efficiency of the production line, these demands would presumably result in increased labor costs and lowered productivity of the firm. However, the ways in which the FLOC and UFW fought for these protections for workers differs from the approach of the UFCW. In recent decades, farm labor unions have fought for the legal codification of these protections, resulting in legislation controlling allowable heat indexes farm workers can be exposed to as well as their protection from dangerous pesticides. While the agrarian farm labor movement represents a broad class of workers with similar interests, inter-trade unions such as the UFCW generally must focus on issues within a specific workplace that are more likely to be represented by that workplace's contract or specific legal actions on its behalf. The common demands shared by the Case Farms workforce and the broader Farm Labor Movement are engaged differently by their respective unions.

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<sup>114</sup> Nausea and sweating induced by repetitive exposure to Nicotine through harvesting tobacco.

The organizing methods of the Farm Labor Movement are vastly different than the UFCW campaign, and the difference in their structure and agency is the result of changing relationships between labor unions and Hispanics, the nature of the low-skill agrarian sectors, and the ability of workers and union leaders to create an effective movement that appeals to management as well as the broader population.

The fundamental difference between the Farm Labor Movement and contemporary organizing efforts among Hispanics is the differences of internal rather than external agency: the UFW and FLOC were basically internal movements led by Hispanic workers, while the UFCW's organizing efforts with Case Farms show the organization of Hispanic workers by an external primarily Anglo union. To Ganz, the main factors leading to the prominence of the Farm Labor Movement included a national climate of social protest, the cessation of the Bracero program, the failure of previous external union campaigns, and the unique confluence of leadership and organization among these unions. Using the cases described, these assertions by Ganz as well as those by Rosenfeld and Kleykamp outlined in the introduction can be interpreted as historical units, which have changed over time.

Ganz and other sources emphasize the role that the cessation of the Bracero program had in determining the early successes of the Farm Labor Movement, and the leaders of these unions themselves stated their opposition to organizing temporary and undocumented workers. While temporary and undocumented workers were clearly a block to unions of this era, these stances show a remarkable contrast with the positions that both these and mainstream non-Hispanic oriented unions have taken in the past 20

years. Mainstream Anglo-dominated unions such as the UFCW, the CtW coalition, and the AFL-CIO currently have vastly more liberal stances on undocumented immigration than even the ostensibly Chicano social justice-oriented unions of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. This macro-level shift of mainstream labor unions on the issue of immigration is a major dimension of the externalism of contemporary cases of Hispanic organization, as represented by the UFCW at Case Farms.

The regionality of these movements seems to play a role in their ability to build ethnic-based coalitions. The UFWOC in heavily Hispanic California was able to create a highly visible social movement that achieved relatively rapid organizing successes between 1965 and 1969 due partially to the ability of the union to invoke ethnic, cultural, and religious appeals to the local population. The Chicano- Catholic imagery of the Peregrinacion showed the organization appealing to a broad audience sharing similar interests and identities.

The FLOC, with its Aztec eagle logo and motto “*hast la victoria,*” openly invoked Hispanic cultural tropes from its beginnings, but was not able to parlay them into a mass social movement as rapidly as the UFWOC. While the group was able to build coalitions with church and social justice groups, it was less able to build a movement based heavily on cultural identity, as shown by the often violent and racist responses from the Anglo community in the early years of its existence. The FLOC boycott of Campbell products was broadly similar to the UFWOC’s table grape boycott, but as a social movement failed to capture its immediacy, taking seven years to create a contract with a single entity. The usefulness of the boycott as a parallel measure to

striking does have direct relevance to the nature of Case Farms as a company: as a wholesale supplier of processed chicken, Case Farms products are most often sold to restaurants rather than being sold in retail outlets with the company label.

Ganz emphasizes the unique leadership power of Cesar Chavez in describing the success of the UFWOC. Although the role of personal agency and charisma in these movements is challenging to quantify, Velazquez and Chavez do share several qualities that would improve their leadership abilities in a union movement. With the CSO and CORE, both leaders had direct and relevant experience with social justice-oriented community activism prior to the formations of their unions. While the CSO was a community organization that catered to Hispanics, making it contemporary with the Chicano Movement, CORE was a direct product of Civil Rights Movement-era student activism. Both leaders' emphasis on ethnic solidarity and nonviolent reform also reflects the popular forms of social mass movements during the 1960's. While there is no lack of community organizations today that cater to minority and worker rights, Chavez and Velazquez were able to lead movements that reflected the popular atmosphere of political and social unrest of the 1960's. These early experiences with activism contrast with those of the Case Farms workforce, many of whom had experienced violent state repression of left-wing causes. The personal experiences of the participants of these three movements are therefore shaped by both the historical moment and their national origin.

The process of assimilation of migrants and immigrants into the broader U.S. workforce is apparently more uniform among farm laborer rather than poultry

predecessors: while the farm labor movement represented long-term migrant workers who are linked with farm labor on a systemic level, the creation of the Case farms workforce is the result of tactical recruitment of new migrant and immigrant groups by the firm.

The challenge of ethnic and national minorities to the solidarity of organizing workforces is a significant factor in the UFWOC and Case Farms. While the most significant racial fissures occurred among the early AWOOC and AFL farm worker campaigns, temporary residents and Braceros were seen by the UFWOC as a major block to organizing. While this was the result of economic demands rather than ethnic prejudice, the exclusion of immigrants still shows the “foreign” group challenging union solidarity. This tactic was more explicitly used by management of Case Farms, in its deliberate recruitment of different ethnic groups since the beginning of worker organizing there.

All three cases show a minority group using union representation to create economic mobility, but Rosenfeld and Kleykamp’s theory that their use generally strengthens social mobility between generations cannot be answered in the scope of this project.

While Rosenfeld and Kleykamp suggest that the possibility of organizing a workforce increases proportionately with skill level and inversely with the cost of labor. While none of these three cases are skilled labor, there are changes in apparent cost of labor. While the farm labor movement in general occurred among farms with high need for manual labor, the apparently low cost of labor was actually a major obstacle in the

FLOC's campaign against Campbell, when the company mechanized its crop production. This shows a broader historical change in the agricultural sector away from manual production and towards greater mechanization. The U.S. Agricultural Census' 2011 Agricultural Outlook suggests that rates of technological innovation in the field of agriculture production have continued to increase since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding to a decreasing need per capita for manual labor. The 15-year gap between the table grape boycott and the Campbell boycott would suggest a general decrease of mechanization costs for growers, meaning that it was likely easier for Campbell to mechanize its farms in 1982 than it would have been for DiGiorgio to do so in 1966. The modern poultry industry has a different dependence on manual labor than the large-scale produce farms organized by the Farm Labor Movement, whose dependence on labor has changed significantly since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the shift from sustenance-based to capital-based agriculture dramatically increased the need for farm labor in the US Southwest in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the persistent mechanization of agriculture has since reduced the need for increased labor with increased farm production. This is reflected in the trend of farm numbers decreasing while productivity per farm has increased since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>115</sup> Given that corporate farming requires comparatively simple physical processes (for example, picking, sorting, and washing produce) to create output, agriculture in general is more given to mechanization than poultry processing, which requires a more complex system of cutting and packaging meat. It follows that modern corporate farms in general hold

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<sup>115</sup> 2007 Agricultural Census, U.S. Census Department

their labor pool less dear than they would have between 1960 and 1985, when the farm labor movement was at its apex. Human capital is also less important to agriculture than the modern poultry industry, which is still reliant on a higher level of manual labor<sup>116</sup>.

While the pre-UFW union campaigns described in the Southwest certainly exhibited prejudice towards Hispanics, the role of racial prejudice among many contemporary unions, notably those in the CtW coalition, seems to have turned significantly. Despite the strong linguistic and cultural identity of the Case Farms workforce, UFCW representatives emphasize that their goal is to organize workers with similar interests (hence Tim Mullins' background in the meat processing industry) rather than workers of a particular national origin. This change is another possible explanation for the externalization of Hispanic organized labor, as the Farm Labor Movement developed partially in response to the prejudice of previous farmworkers unions.

Rosenfeld and Kleykamp's final suggestion that Hispanics in general and immigrants are respectively more and less likely to be unionized than the general U.S. workforce is a quantitative sociological question, but can be engaged structurally with these subjects of historical analysis. The low-skill fields of poultry processing, cannery and fieldwork are shown to be heavily represented by Hispanic migrant and immigrant workers in this study. The question of how likely a Hispanic worker is to join a union relates to the nature of the work (the previous premise) as well as the abilities of the workforce to create an internal impulse of organizing, secure a sympathetic and

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<sup>116</sup> 2007 Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor, 618-619.

effective external impulse of organizing, and the methods that that impulse can take to secure union representation.

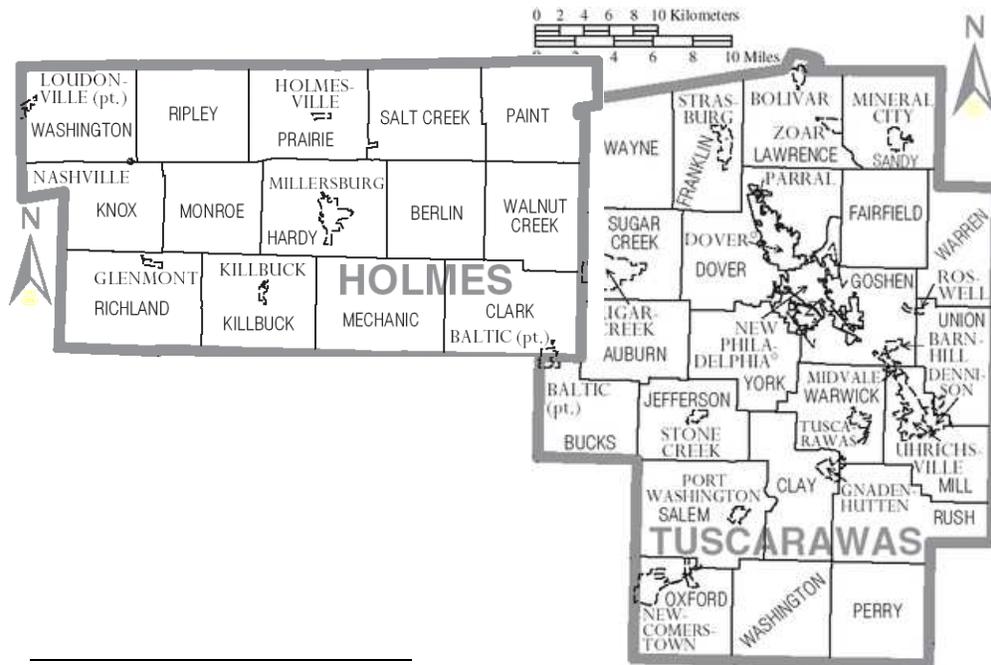
As this history proves, the role of Hispanic laborer and the nature of their work has both stayed the same and changed significantly in modern American culture as the labor movement evolves and new waves of immigrants and migrants become assimilated into our society and workforce. One of the most remarkable transitions among these workers is their shift from builders of native labor unions for their exclusion by the broader labor movement to recruited participants in mainstream unions.

## Appendix

Location of Tuscarawas and Holmes Counties in Ohio<sup>117</sup>



Holmes and Tuscarawas Counties<sup>118</sup>



<sup>117</sup> Self-made

<sup>118</sup> Composite of images from Wikimedia foundation

Table 1. United States Hispanic Population and Union Density<sup>119</sup>

Year	% Hispanic, U.S.	% Union members, U.S.
1968	3	29
1973	4.5	28
1978	5	25
1983	6	21
1988	7.5	17
1993	9	16
1998	10	13.5
2003	12	13
2008	15	12

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<sup>119</sup> Rosenfeld and Kleykamp, 918.

Table 2. Chicken processing and consolidation of capital<sup>120</sup>

Year	# of poultry farms in USA	Full-grown chickens	% of population per farm
1920	5.84	359.54	.000000171
1930	5.37	378.88	.000000186
1940	5.15	337.95	.000000181
1950	4.21	342.46	.000000237
1959	2.20	369.87	.000000454
1969	471,284	371.16	.000002122
1982	215, 812	362.464	.000004634
1992	88,235	351,31	.000011333
2002	98,315	334.43	.000010171
2007	145,615	349.77	.00000687

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<sup>120</sup> United States Agricultural census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

Table 3. Tuscarawas County Chicken production<sup>121</sup>

Year	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007
Number of farms	29	43	53	33	24
Number of birds	273,103	517,229	943,456	652,350	569,765
Productivity	9,417	12,028	17,801	19,768	23,740

Table 4. Case Farms Productivity by year and site<sup>122</sup>

	Chickens produced per week	Annual poultry output, lbs.	Employees
Winesburg Factory, 1987	135,000	22	140
Winesburg Factory, 2011	425,000	150	600
Morganton Factory, 1988	475	75	450
Morganton Factory, 2011	600	220	825
Goldsboro Factory, 1998	635	168	750
Goldsboro Factory, 2011	800	245	1025
Case Farms in total, 1987	135,000	22	140
Case Farms in total, 2011	180,000	600	2500

<sup>121</sup> United States Agricultural census, U.S. Census Bureau, 2010

<sup>122</sup> Case Farms, "About Us."

## Appendix of quotes

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“I don’t like the way we get treated. You have to work under threat or fear of losing your job.”

“I think we’re doing the job more out of necessity. That’s why we struggle. Sometimes we’ve gotten really hard work, but we’ve put up with it because we want to be here and make a few cents to sustain ourselves. There have been some American that have come here, but they stay two or three days, and they can’t take it, so they get out.”

“You had to be there until [the daily quota] was filled, regardless of what you needed to do after work.”

-Anonymous Case Farms workers, 2000 Miles North

“These guys don’t want to miss work. Unfortunately, they live paycheck to paycheck. Most of the Hispanic guys that I see come in who are injured really won’t let me write them off of work. And I know if I do write them off of work, they won’t turn that work excuse in, because they need the money.”

“I asked some Gerber workers what they would make back home, and they said 40 [dollars] a week was good. It may have gone down since then. The plan is usually come here, work 3 or 4 years, make money, and go back home.”

-Tim Mullins, 2000 Miles North

“It was just the working conditions...to my understanding there’s not much difference in pay between it and the local furniture factory. Would you rather go into a place that’s clean and dry or wet and bloody and cold all day long?”

-Community Activist Danny Hughes, 2000 Miles North

“People did the same kind of work in the 80’s and made more than [the current non-contract pay at Winesburg].”

“[After the original campaign,] I thought in my mind if I could do it, then I went back to my normal job for a while then I got hired by the union to be an organizer. And I applied to case farms to go in and salt myself, but they wouldn’t hire me, they would only hire Hispanics.”

“It was in the neighborhood of 95-96, when I was working there, there were no Guatemalans. There were el Salvadorans who had fled the violence going on there. And some real poor Americans there. But Case Farms has a plant in North Carolina, and they started contracting and bringing workers from Florida to the plant there and they really like the work they were doing and I know guys who started driving them from NC to OH.”

-Tim Mullins, personal interview

“Some of them are not capable of making the decision if they should take their child to wait a few days, take them to a doctor, take them to stat-care, or take them to the emergency room. Because some of them are just so afraid that something is going to happen to them they go to the ER.”

-Local Doctor, 2000 Miles North

## Interviews

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*All interviews are done over the phone with consent of the subject to be recorded.*

### **Tim Mullins, UFCW representative**

*First of all what is your position in the UFCW?*

Mullins: I'm an organizer for the local 880, for like 12 years.

*What workplaces does your chapter represent?*

Mullins: We have in the neighborhood of 23,000 members, the vast majority are in the major grocery chains.

*How did you and your chapter first become involved with Case Farms?*

Mullins: I was a meat cutter for 30 years and a union member and an active union guy and I used to help the union on organizing campaigns, stuff like that. And I actually went and worked at case farms back in 1994, just to try and get a campaign started there. I worked there for about two months, and the conditions were just amazing, like the Jungle or something like that. And I thought in my mind if I could do it, then I went back to my normal job for a while then I got hired by the union to be an organizer. And I applied to case farms to go in and salt myself, but they wouldn't hire me, they would only hire Hispanics. This was in about 2001. There was an election before my time probably in 93 or 94, and the company was small and at that time there were a lot of Amish workers and I'm not even sure if there was an election or not, but there was definitely a campaign. It failed because all the Amish voted against the union; it's just not part of their culture. Then they wouldn't hire me, so I went to Gerber poultry in Kidron, and stayed there about a month just to stir things up and I ended up staying there about two years. And we went to an election there for the union and we lost. This was in 2003. But during that campaign, I went to most of the homes of most of the workers at Gerber, and the way the Guatemalan workers live, anytime there would be three or 4 guys who worked at case farms at the same house, so when I went to talk to one or two people at Gerber, I ended up talking to 6 or 8 people from both places, and the case farms workers ended up listening. The day after we lost the election at Gerber in October 2003 we had a meeting the next day at St. Joseph's church and 80 case farms workers showed up to sign union cards and that campaign went really quick. We took a vote I think March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2004 and lost by 15 votes.

What is the current status of the UFCW at case farms?

Mullins: The saga continues, we started a second campaign at gerber because most of the people just believed what the company says and then a year later they realize they were lying and then they're ready to try again. But we didn't go to a vote at gerber, and many of the same people, the same workers at case farms called on me to come over and try it again. So like 2007, we started another campaign at case and went to another election in May 2007 and won the election 2 to 1. We won, the representative of the workers immediately began conversations with case farms to try and get a contract. And it's been nearly 5 years, we've met almost 80 times we have a lot of tentative agreements, but they have no interest in ever signing a contract and it's a waste of time, so that's where we are right now. Malarkey!

*What was the response of management?*

Mullins: A long list of firings, a super long list of unfair labor practices, back pay for fired workers, reinstatement things like that. In 2008 the HR department sent two guys to pr to recruit people to break the union. They brought two waves of workers from pr, they payed for their airfare, put them in a hotel for two weeks, and put them to work.

*How does the UFCW reach out to Hispanics?*

Mullins: Just talk to them in their homes about the conditions at their plant and those at union plants. For them it's a big deal to get a break, it's a big deal to go to the bathroom. Just like another world than what I was used to, wasn't real hard to convince people that the place was really messed up.

It's changed dramatically since I've been here as much as one of the leader rights now pushed for immigration reform, and before we stayed out of that and most people in the union would say that the immigrants are taking our jobs, international president joe hanson makes me proud he still to this day one of the biggest advocates for immigration reform because these people aren't taking our jobs they're taking jobs none of us would do. But we don't zero in on latinos, we target industry, and our union represents the meat and poultry industry.

*How did employees at the onset feel about union?*

Mullins: Like anywhere, some are gonna take the lead positions, some are gonna lay back, some are gonna oppose. I think like anywhere, the vast majority wanted to make improvements, like any ethnic group, has a lot of fear of losing their job, and the biggest part of our campaign was getting people past that fear. Most are very cautious given their immigration status.

I wish I could say that all at the union felt okay with illegals, but probably not. The leadership and the agenda is that these workers are protected under the nlr and they are guaranteed rights at works just like you or i. we aren't organizing undocumented workersd, we're organizing employees.

*Have there been interactions with ICE?*

Mullins: They consistently use that threat prior to 2006 it wasn't a big issue but since then it's just incredible what has happened in the change of immigration enforcement. Police officers will stop anyone for being brown, and if you're illegal you haven't got a license, and they may call immigration for that.\

It just changed nationally, I really had hopes when kennedy and mccain had the conprehensive package, and it didn't make it and was pushed away, but at the same time the republicans were pushing for more border enforcement and to get rid of these 12 million people here and with bush in office, even he wanted some sensible reform instead of just arresting everybody, but the powers that be all just went towards more enforcement. I mean I had only heard rumours of ICE knocking down doors before that, and now I have friends whose houses are kicked in by ICE.

*When did the immigrants first come?*

Mullins: It was in the neighborhood of 95-96, when I was working there there were no Guatemalans. There were el Salvadorans who had fled the violence going on there. And some real poor americans there. But cf has a plant in NC, and they started contracting and bringing workers from florida to the plant there and they really like the work they were doing and I know guys who started driving them from NC to OH. They come here if they have family here they cross the border this is the destination.

*What factors make them come?*

Mullins: Just the opportunity to make what would be considered really good money in Guatemala. I asked some Gerber workers what they would make back home, and they said 40 a week was good. It may have gone down since then. The plan is usually come here, work 3 or 4 years, make money, and go back home. Still some Salvadorans in the region, but they have all gone on to better paying jobs, like any factory work, constructions. But there' not a large group of them.

*What is the rate of employee turnover?*

Mullins: Among Guatemalans, many stay for 10 years or more, and it's just such a threat of being deprted, many don't make that. But Americans, the turnover is phenomenal,

like 400% a year. They work one or two days and walk away. But the Guatemalans stay there, mostly because of overtime.

*What are the working conditions like at the factory?*

Mullins: Break, they had very little break time, with 300 people crowded in a room trying to heat up something to eat or use the bathroom. Just going to the bathroom is a huge issue, people get fired for. Some workers urinate in their pants instead of going to the bathroom, they're so afraid. That and general poor treatment, supervisors screaming at them and disrespecting them. The incredible line speeds that go with that work, and it all added up to people being mad enough to do something about it.

*What are the hours and pay rate like?*

Mullins: Workweek has fluctuated til 2006, since then steady 55 hours a week, 6 days a week, 9-10 hours a day. The payrate just leaped up, first raise in 4 years, it's now 830 and hour, 3 dollars worse than the union industry average.

*What other nationalities are represented in the workforce?*

Mullins: For a year and half, they have hired no Guatemalans. They hired an HR guy from Cuba to break the unions, and had a bunch of worker to come in and break the union with a decertification petition. Basically any other Latino, he has it in his mind that all Guatemalans are union people, which is not true. He is one of the biggest racists I've ever met, and totally hate Guatemalans and wants to get rid of them all.

A few Mexicans, a few Puerto Ricans, a few Cubans, but they hire Americans they just don't stick around. So they start going to the int'l institute in Akron and started hiring refugees from Burma and Thailand, starting like a year ago. More recently, they hire strictly people from Nepal. They're refugees, they don't have the language, they can only work in limited places, but also it keeps the workers separated. The Burmese can't speak the spanish, the Guatemalans can't speak Burmese, and the English speakers can speak to nobody. So it's that whole tactic of dividing people by their language and nothing else.

Factory is expanding, it's up 25% since the election, and they've talked for 4.5 years of a second shift that would double the amount of workers, but haven't made that step yet. Currently, all the line workers work on the same shift, but you have the custodians and the chicken catchers who work at night or have a different schedule.

*What positions are there?*

Mullins: There's a lot, what they do is raise the chicken for the sole purpose of boning out the whole chicken,. And the chickens are 8-9 lbs, running down the line in various departments to take of the skin and yank out the bones, and bag them. It's all sold to places like Taco Bell, Pizza Hut, KFC. There's a lot of different jobs for us. It's different positions in one assembly line.

*What other anecdotes about your experience with this workforce would you like to share?*

Mullins: Highlight of my life was after a year of really ridiculous surface bargaining where someone shows up and just says no. We voted on the company's contract proposal, which was a really terrible proposal with just a 15 cent an hour raise, and the workers voted 289-12 against it and gave authorization to the committee to go on strike. July 2008 we went on strike for 9 months and the first day of the strike there was a large group of community supporters, church people, and close to 200 people walked out at 10 in the morning. By the end of the strike in April 2009, there were about 300. That time, when the economy tanked, they were bringing Guatemalans from all over the country, lining up to work (as strikebreakers). And that was just a really bizarre experience, a lot of solidarity amongst them.

During the strike we built three shacks across the road, and all three were burned down. They were set on fire, and it was pretty pathetic, we tried to get Holmes county involved because one night they burned they house down and in red spray paint in the middle of the road there it said go home you fucking Mexicans. And a couple clown sheriffs were they saying it was a blooming hate crime, this is pretty scary stuff. they torched our shack. And you know, it was a pretty sturdy thing, kept them warm when it was 0 degrees. They would not go anywhere with it. A couple sheriffs that were assigned to that area were huge racists in my opinion and did not sympathize with the union or the strikers. So nothing legal came from that.

But as far as the labor part, there has been nonstop unfair labor practice charges, and last year a federal judge got involved and ordered some workers back to work that had been fired, with an injunction. We won a huge decision in may last year. We're constantly winning cases of them firing people intimidating and threatening people. And they would rather spend just millions of dollars on attorney fees than have a contract. This weekend me and a labor attorney are going down to Holmes to take on the latest bunch of charges, so it's just ongoing.

What is your relationship with Case Farms employees?

I have been a volunteer and an advocate for the Hispanic community for 22 years, I help anyone in the community who doesn't speak English, needs help with doctors appointments, et cetera. I am not directly involved with the union campaign at Case Farms, but I do overhear people talking about work.

How long have you lived in Tuscarawas County?

I have lived here my whole life, and all of that activism has been in this area.

What nationalities are represented in the local Hispanic population, and how has this changed?

They are mostly Guatemalans; although I have helped people from the Dominican Republic, Mexicans, Hondurans, but the majority is Guatemalan. The origins are about the same, but when I started there was about one family, over the years more women, more families, more Hispanics in general. Late 90's- like 2k people, now like 7k people.

Are the people you work with mostly migrant workers, or do they hold stable jobs?

The people I work with have stable permanent jobs, most of them work at chicken plants, or Freshmark in Masillon. They work year round, not migrants or seasonal workers.

Why do most of them come to this region?

The biggest reason there are no jobs for people in their country, they are very poor, most are unable to get an education in their rural areas, come here thinking there are better lives, make enough money to send back home for kin to have better lives as well. When the first people came, they told their relatives that there is work here. We have families, we have entire villages where everyone of working age has come here, where maybe just the children, the elderly and a few men and women stay behind to care for their children. I think anybody who is able to work and can make the journey comes here.

Are most of the residents documented or undocumented?

I can name 5 or 6 families that are documented, among the people I know, the vast majority are undocumented. I don't ask, because that's not my business.

What language do most of them speak?

I would say most of them, their first language is a [indigenous] dialect, then their second language is Spanish, that's the language that I communicate with them in, and then their third language is English. The children for the most part know English and that's

what I use to communicate with them. In a few cases, there are women who only speak a dialect, so we have to have an interpreter, usually the husband.

How do these people engage their community life?

we have at last count, we have the Catholic church here in Dover, St. Joseph, is very very active, they have Spanish mass every other Sunday, and for four or five years bilingual mass at Christmas and Easter. I would say there are five evangelical churches that have a large Hispanic following. I would say the evangelicals are mostly Hispanic, and usually have Spanish mass. To go back to your original question about activities, they love soccer. In the summertime they have their own soccer league, their own soccer teams etc.

Another program we have is every Thursday me and another teacher take maybe 20 high school students with low English, go to a church and arrange for transportation, and we tutor the kids, help them with homework etc. that started last year, and we are continuing it this year. So that church has reached out in a large way. Also the Head Start schools reach out to the families they have parent's night once a month where the parents come in, they have a meal, and high school students are taught to take care of the children, education about childrearing.

Local social and civic services have been increasingly proactive in their response to the hispanic community. The police department hires officers that know Spanish. Along with the hospitals, all the agencies like that around here have hired interpreters.

What role has Miguete played?

One of the things Miguete has done is when Christmas time comes around, they provide transportation, interpreters, things like that, they deliver the food baskets. They offer computer classes, English classes, guitar classes. I have a summer program where we take the kids swimming. 2 things they do most- interpretation for those going to court/ doctor etc. When the union is having a meeting, they provide a place for them to meet. Mullins often uses Miguete premises to have meetings, hold information sessions. They help with anything to do with labor, not just case farms.

How do Hispanics children assimilate into the educational system?

As a teacher, I think we have come a long way in offering educational services to the immigrants' children. But we have a long way to come. One thing we need to go further with is there are children who come who are maybe 15 years old and have had only a 3rd grade education in their native tongue, it's very difficult to find a place for them in the public schools. It's very difficult to pass them into the middle school or high school level to learn that content when they haven't had the chance to learn at that level.

Has the rate of immigration to the region changed in recent years?

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Even though the job market is very tight, there are people coming. It may have cooled down a bit, but there are always new people in town looking for jobs. It's hard but they keep coming.

Is there prejudice in the community against Hispanics?

I think that my community overall has reacted in a positive way to the immigrants, but at least in my experience I thought any grumbling goes on behind closed doors. I don't want to say that there haven't been instances, because there have been instances of people attacking people or assaulting people in an alley, but overall I think that it has been fairly positive.

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