

***Latinos of Boulder County, Colorado,  
1900-1980***

**Volume I:  
*History and Contributions***

**Chapter One:  
*Setting the Stage***

by

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# Chapter 1

## Setting the Stage

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds have played essential roles in Boulder County, Colorado. Immigrants from Mexico, northern New Mexico, and southern Colorado provided much of the labor that fueled two of eastern Boulder County's main economic activities prior to around 1940: growing and processing sugar beets; and coal mining. Work in the beet fields required men, women, and children to stay in a stooped position, using short-handled tools, for hours at a time, often under a hot sun. The housing provided for agricultural laborers was generally deplorable. Coal miners engaged in physically demanding and potentially dangerous work in dark tunnels, always facing the possibility of cave-ins or explosions. Some of their families lived in camps next to the mines, with company stores where purchases for food and other supplies were deducted from miners' wages. Although Hispanics faced overt racism especially in the 1920s and 1930s—with armed attacks on their unions, threats of violence from the Ku Klux Klan, exclusion from stores and restaurants, and mass deportation orders—they held together in strong families and maintained their faith that life in this region offered a brighter future for themselves and their children. In the decades between 1940 and 1980, access to education and better employment options contributed to ongoing immigration and brought many Boulder County Latinas/os into the wider community, where they continued to make valuable contributions. Returning veterans in the 1940s and 1950s and Chicano civil rights activists in the later 1960s and 1970s took the lead in tackling discrimination. Latino culture expanded the horizons of a predominantly Anglo county.

This two-volume set describes the history of Latinas/os living in Boulder County between 1900 and 1980. The present book moves through those 80 years by sub-periods, highlighting changes over time as illuminated in many different types of primary materials. The

second volume covers aspects of the social, cultural, religious, and educational lives of local Latinas/os, with a greater reliance upon oral history interviews, family biographies, and personal photos.<sup>1</sup> The study focuses upon three Boulder County towns located within 15 miles of each other that display quite different patterns. Longmont was almost entirely dependent upon commercial agriculture and food processing, while coal mining provided the economic basis for the smaller community of Lafayette. Boulder, the county seat, was a commercial center and home to the University of Colorado.

The main part of both books stops around 1980, because after that time the local Latino population became even more complex: immigrants from many different countries and backgrounds joined residents whose families had arrived earlier in the century, and the various groups became more clearly distinguished along economic, educational, and cultural lines. The decades after 1980 will need to be considered fully in a separate work. Each volume has an epilogue, however, which carries us into the early 2010s. The epilogue to this book offers a quick quantitative look at the situation of Boulder County's Latinas/os in that decade, while the second describes the life experiences of the ten young Latino interns who worked with the Boulder County Latino History Project in summer, 2013.

Although these books are local studies, they address broader themes important to historians, sociologists, Chicano/Ethnic Studies specialists, and others who focus on the American Southwest. Among them are issues of migration, labor conditions, racism and discrimination, the impact of war and veterans, and civil rights activity. The volumes also explore four interpretive questions: (1) What were the roles, experiences, and contributions of women? (2) How did people interact within families, looking especially at relations between men and women and between generations? (3) To what extent did Boulder County share patterns with communities that lay closer to the heart of the U.S.-Mexican borderlands or were major cities with large Latino populations; and to what extent was it influenced by a local network that included Denver? (4) How did local Latinas/os define themselves, creating an ethnic identity?

This study is distinctive in several respects. It provides one of the

<sup>1</sup> McIntosh, *Latinos of Boulder County, Colorado, 1900-1980*, Vol. II, *Lives and Legacies* (cited hereafter as Vol. II). The same indexing terms are used in both volumes, to make searching easier.

first detailed examinations of Latinas/os living on the margin of the borderlands that extends from the arrival of the initial immigrants until the later twentieth century. Further, many previous books about Latinas/os in the Southwest deal with major cities or rural communities; within Colorado, attention has generally focused on Latinos living in Denver or in villages in the southern part of the state, tied culturally to northern New Mexico. The present volumes, by contrast, describe residents of small and middle-sized towns and their hinterlands, places located within 30 miles of Denver but displaying their own historical patterns. As case studies, they bring to life the experiences of individual people and communities, complementing more general accounts.

The books draw upon an exceptionally rich body of information: the 1,600 primary sources gathered or produced by the Boulder County Latino History Project [BCLHP] in 2013-2014, one of the largest and most varied sets of material about Latinos in any area of the Southwest. Because most of these sources come from members of the community, local residents are themselves the producers of historical knowledge as they describe their family's histories, tell anecdotes about their own lives, and share photos. Personal sources are supplemented by information from newspapers, school records, listings of local residents with their occupations and employers, and U.S. Censuses.

The books are also unusual with respect to their forms of analysis and presentation. They introduce innovative, interactive maps showing where Spanish-surnamed families lived in each of the three towns once per decade between 1904 or 1916 and 1975. They offer a formal quantitative analysis of changing employment patterns over time, 1926-1975, using standard government occupational headings to facilitate comparison with other places. Virtually all of the primary sources cited in these two volumes are available online.<sup>2</sup> Because a URL or other form of access is given for every reference in the printed format, and all references in the online version of the books are live-linked to their sources, anyone who has access to the Web can view the original evidence, without going to a research library or traveling to archives. The study is therefore a perfect educational tool for K-12 and college teachers, enabling students to see the raw material from which historical work is produced.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Most are on the BCLHP's website ([bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu](http://bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu)), while others are on those of museums or libraries.

<sup>3</sup> The BCLHP's website has a special section for educators, containing Primary Source Sets, Lesson Plans, short clips from interviews and films, and other instructional materials: [teachbocolatinohistory.colorado.edu](http://teachbocolatinohistory.colorado.edu).

This introductory chapter first addresses several questions of definition: what terms to use in describing people from Spanish-language backgrounds, what their biological origins and identities were, and what characteristics marked the three communities studied here. It then lays out the intellectual context created by other historical studies, including the four questions that will be traced across the two volumes. The types of primary sources employed here are surveyed next, while a closing section gives a little background about the nineteenth century.

### A. Describing People and Communities in Boulder County

#### *Terms and origins*

An immediate question that confronts anyone writing about the history of people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds is what terminology to use. The words employed have changed over time, and even now, there is no uniformity in what individual people like to be called. Various groups may prefer to be identified in different ways: people whose families have been living in the Southwest for several generations or centuries, more recent immigrants from Mexico, and arrivals from other countries in Central or South America or Spain itself.<sup>4</sup> The labels “Mexicans,” “*Mexicanos*,” or “Mexican Americans” were common at least into the 1960s, but they were often disliked by families that had lived in this country for a long time because they implied that all Spanish-surnamed people had arrived fairly recently from Mexico. Spanish-speaking people from New Mexico who moved to Colorado might term themselves “*Nuevo Mejicanos*” to make their own roots clear. Immigrants from other Latin American countries also felt excluded by any term referring to Mexican origins. “Spanish American” was another possible label; the U.S. government used the word “Hispanic” for Censuses and other analyses across most of the twentieth century; and some people called themselves “*Hispanos*.” Those words were later rejected by younger people who did not want to privilege the Spanish/European side of their heritage and deny the importance of their indigenous, Native American ancestors.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup>Until around 2000, relatively few people came to this area from the Caribbean islands.

<sup>5</sup>The Mexican term *mestizo*, referring to a combination of Spanish and Indian backgrounds, has not been used in Colorado.

Especially for people involved in the civil rights movement of the later 1960s and 1970s, “Chicano” became the term of choice.<sup>6</sup> This label, derived probably from the Nahuatl pronunciation of “*Mexicano*,” also implied a commitment to political and social change. As “Chicano” came into use, many older or more conservative people disliked the term, which to them implied a kind of militancy they did not support. They preferred to stay with the familiar labels. Further, whereas Spanish usage had traditionally employed words with masculine endings (like *Americanos* or *Mejicanos*) to refer to both men and women, feminists within the Chicano movement insisted upon a verbal distinction to make the roles of women clear (e.g., Chicana and Chicano). More recently, a spelling of “Xicano” has been adopted by some because it is closer to the Nahuatl pronunciation of the word. To be gender neutral, both “Chicano/a” and “Xicano/a” are sometimes written with the ending @ (e.g., “Chican@” = “o” or “a”).

In Boulder County, people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds have described themselves in a variety of ways. During the earlier twentieth century, many referred to their place of origin, calling themselves “Mexicans” or “New Mexicans.” By the mid-century, the terms “Mexican American,” “*Mejicano*,” or “Hispanic” were widely used. Those words have remained common ever since, even among civil rights activists in the later 1960s and 1970s whom we might label “Chicanos.” In the early twenty-first century, “Chicano” has lost its political implications among most community members and is now used sometimes by people whose families have been living in the U.S. for some time, especially those with long histories in the Southwest, to distinguish themselves from more recent arrivals. “Chicano” or “Chicana” are regularly used, however, by college/university faculty members and students.

The most common collective word in this region in the 2010s is “Latino,” which covers everyone from Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking backgrounds, regardless of their place of origin, length of time in this country, or social/political stance. But that label is not used widely by individuals to describe themselves. In a survey of Spanish-surnamed residents of Boulder County taken in 2001, people used the following terms as ethnic identifiers:

<sup>6</sup> See Ch. 6A below.

Mexican/ <i>Mejicano</i>	31%
Hispanic	30%
Mexican American	19%
Chicano	9%
Latino	7%
Other	4% <sup>7</sup>

In this study, we use several terms to refer to people from Spanish-speaking backgrounds. For the first half of the twentieth century, we describe people generally as “Hispanics” or as having Spanish surnames. When individuals referred to themselves as coming from Mexico, New Mexico, or southern Colorado, we honor those self-definitions. We call people actively engaged in the civil rights movement of the late 1960s and 1970s “Chicanas/os.” When speaking of more conservative people in the 1960s and 1970s and for everyone thereafter, we employ the generic label “Latinas/os,” though we recognize that the word may be somewhat anachronistic when applied to earlier periods. We use “Latino” as an adjective, but when referring to individuals, we talk of a Latina or Latino and of Latinas/os, to emphasize that both women and men are central to our discussion. For English-speaking people from European backgrounds, we usually employ the unspecific label “Anglos,” in preference to the term “whites” that is sometimes used in contrast to “brown” Mexicans.

Uncertainty about terminology (“What do we want to be called?”) is associated with questions about cultural and biological identity (“Who are we, and who were our ancestors?”). While it is possible to define Latinas/os as a distinct ethnic group, based usually on the criterion of having a surname derived from Spanish, it is not possible to categorize them in racial terms. The U.S. government has struggled with this problem since the time of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, at the end of the Mexican-American War. The challenge of placing Latinas/os into a single classification based on race or national origin is illustrated by the various terms used by Census takers in Longmont between 1910 and 1940 when describing people from Mexican or New Mexican backgrounds: Mexican, white, black, Indian, or mulatto.<sup>8</sup> The most recent U.S. Censuses have offered a greater range of racial/ethnic categories for Latinos.

Nearly all the people who moved here from Mexico, New Mexico, other American states, and other Latin American countries are racially and

<sup>7</sup> 2001 Latino Task Force of Boulder County Community Assessment, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Rebecca Chavez, “Making Them Count,” Table 3.



culturally complex. Their forebears may include at least a few ancestors who had moved to the Americas from Spain as well as many indigenous people. Some have African blood, and certain Latino families from New Mexico have Jewish forebears.<sup>9</sup> Until the advent of DNA testing in the past 20 years, most families did not know the actual composition of their biological heritage but relied on stories passed down over time.

A willingness to acknowledge the diversity of one's ancestry has changed over the past few generations. In the mid-twentieth century, some older people in Boulder County whose families had come originally from New Mexico—particularly if they had light complexions and/or blue eyes—stressed their Spanish roots and thought of themselves as “white.” Because of their appearance, they were less likely to face the kinds of discrimination experienced by people with darker skins and more Native American features. The mother of one of the people involved in this project, who had grown up in an economically secure family outside Longmont, generally defined herself as white, Spanish, or from New Mexico. Though she knew that at least one of her grandparents was a Native American, she raised her children to believe that “the lowest creature on God’s earth was an Indian.” She also distanced her family from recent Mexican immigrants, telling her children not to play with those dark youngsters. Cleo Estrada grew up in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, where her grandparents had moved from northern New Mexico. Her parents were aware they had Indian forebears, but when she was a child “there was tremendous disdain about being related to or having native blood in our families, so people just didn’t bring it up.”<sup>10</sup>

In the early twenty-first century, having Native American or Jewish ancestry is more readily accepted and openly discussed by local Latinas/os, in part because of DNA testing. Just as some Anglos who thought that all their ancestors came from Northern Europe have been surprised to learn that they have African American and/or Native American antecedents, so too have some Latinas/os been surprised to realize the extent to which their racial heritage is indigenous, not European. A shift towards

<sup>9</sup> Some Jews or *conversos* (Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity at least nominally) emigrated to Mexico from Spain and Portugal in the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries to escape persecution by the Inquisition. They commonly settled first in Mexico City, but as the Inquisition established itself there and gradually spread throughout New Spain, they moved progressively further north, ending up on the farthest edge of colonial Mexico’s Santa Fé territory. See Ch. 2B below for a fuller discussion and references.

<sup>10</sup> “Estrada, Cleo, autobiographical information.”

interest and pride in the diversity of one's background is illustrated by the number of people interviewed for this project who mentioned their Native American grandparents or great-grandparents or who identified with indigenous culture.<sup>11</sup> David Young is the son of Maria Dora Esquivel, a Chicana activist from the 1970s onwards. But David chose as an adult to define himself as a member of the Genizaro Apache group of Colorado and used his Indian name, Atekipatzin, especially for his work as a *curandero* [traditional healer] who draws upon Native American traditions.<sup>12</sup> Edwina Salazar, who grew up in the San Luis Valley, part of an extended family originally from northern New Mexico, explained that her father's family "is actually of Jewish heritage."<sup>13</sup> His *conversos* ancestors had left southern Spain and come to Mexico, gradually moving northwards to stay away from the Inquisition.

Boulder County Latinas/os whose families came from Mexico often emphasized their national heritage, referring to themselves as Mexicans or Mexican Americans even if their family had lived in this country for multiple generations. Candace Arroyo, interviewed in 1977 when she was a student at the University of Colorado, said that when she was growing up in Boulder, "I always said I was a Mexican, because that's what my family always told me I was. That's what I felt I was, because that's the way our family traditions and the culture was for me. . . . My father always raised us to be independent and proud of what we are and what we can do just as human beings, but most of all proud of the fact that we are Mexicans."<sup>14</sup> She did not identify with the term "Chicano" until she went to the university.

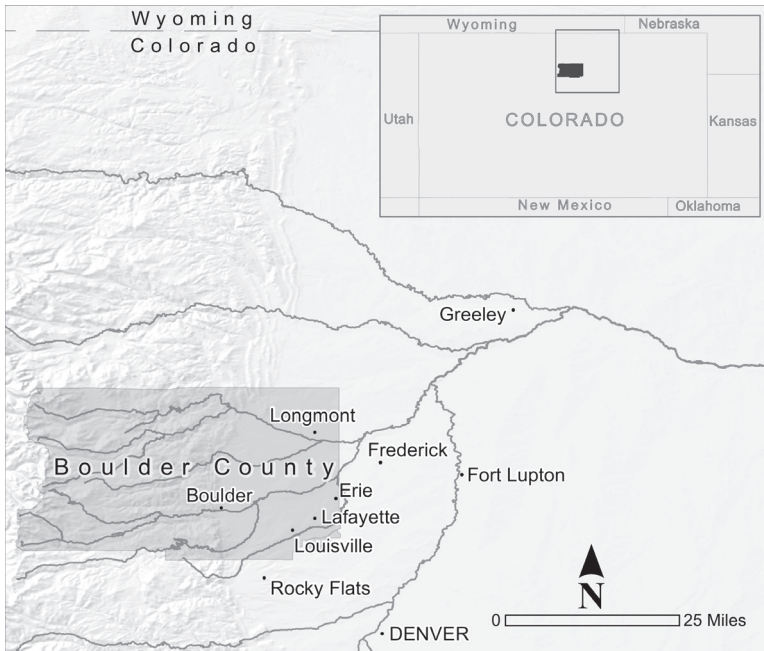
The question of whether Latinas/os were "white," "brown," or "red" could be significant at the community level. During the racist 1920s and 1930s, light-complexioned Latinas/os in Longmont generally avoided ill treatment. The little towns of Lafayette and Louisville were superficially similar coal mining communities lying just a few miles apart from each other. Both had many residents who had immigrated from Italy as well as ones from Mexico/New Mexico. Yet over the course of the twentieth century, racial/ethnic definitions diverged. In Lafayette, Hispanics came be grouped with Italians, and the neighborhood where they all lived

<sup>11</sup> See Ch. 2B below and Vol. II, Epilogue.

<sup>12</sup> Young, David Atekipatzin, interview, 2013. For *genizaros* (abducted Native American children who were raised in Spanish-speaking families), see Ch. 2B below.

<sup>13</sup> Salazar, Edwina, interview, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> Arroyo, Candace, interview, 1977.



**Map 1.1.** Boulder County, showing places mentioned in the text

was integrated. In Louisville, however, the dominant social groups categorized Mexicans as “brown”—unlike the “white” Italians (who came generally from southern Italy and might be quite dark skinned)—and Hispanics faced greater segregation and racism.<sup>15</sup>

### *Three Boulder County communities*

The three towns examined in this book—Longmont, Lafayette, and Boulder—fall within the same geographical region and are separated by only 15 miles. As Map 1.1 shows, they are located on the plains, at the western edge of the American high prairie. They lie just to the east of the Rocky Mountains, with their 14,000-foot peaks; the Continental Divide defines the western boundary of Boulder County. The histories of the little mountain towns, based initially on “hard rock” mining for gold and other minerals, and the county’s other small communities will not be considered here.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Perez, Arthur, interview, 2013. In a similar situation in a southern California citrus area, immigrant Italian workers were structurally positioned by the 1930s as “white,” while Mexicans were defined as non-white and faced greater discrimination (Alamillo, *Making Lemonade*, pp. 6 and 38).

Despite the similarity of their setting, our three towns had quite different economic foundations and social features. They were chosen because of those divergences, which allow this study to be compared to other communities in Colorado and the Southwest. Longmont's dependence upon commercial agriculture and food processing was made possible by its location on a major railway line running north from Denver to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Longmont was founded in 1871 by investors from Chicago, who laid out a formal plat and then sold memberships. Nearly all of the early residents came from German, Swedish, or other northern European backgrounds. The town had no more than around 6,000 residents until 1940, though the population grew rapidly from then on, reaching 43,000 by 1980.<sup>16</sup>

Most Longmont residents fell into one of two categories prior to the mid-1960s. The leading group consisted of farmers who owned the land used to grow crops for sale, local businessmen, and people who ran the plants that processed food, most of which were owned by larger corporations. Some of these elite families were descendants of the original settlers of the town, and they controlled its economic, political, and cultural life. They were all white and spoke English at least by the second generation. Separated from that dominant group by quite a large gap were the many unskilled workers in the sugar beet fields and processing plants. Although the initial beet workers came from diverse national backgrounds, by the 1920s and 1930s they were primarily Mexicans or New Mexicans.<sup>17</sup> That economic and cultural separation contributed to an unusually high and overt level of racism in Longmont from the 1920s until at least the 1950s, including segregated seating in theaters and signs on some businesses that said "White Trade Only."<sup>18</sup>

Lafayette relied on coal mining. Founded in the 1880s by Mary Miller, who had homesteaded in the area with her husband, the little town was immediately adjacent to several of the early mines and not far from many of the later ones. It housed a mixed population of mining families, mainly Italians and Hispanics, though some of the earlier miners had come from eastern/southeastern Europe. Many of its residents had moved into town from the camps that provided housing next to individual mines. Lafayette had no more than around 2,000 residents until 1950 and only

<sup>16</sup> For the total population of each town, 1900-2010, see App. 1.1.

<sup>17</sup> See Ch. 3A below for the nationality of beet workers over time. For minimum numbers of Latino residents, 1900-1975, see App. 1.2.

<sup>18</sup> See Chs. 4B and 5C below.

9,000 in 1980. Social interactions in Lafayette were less economically and ethnically divided than in Longmont and Boulder. The town contained very few people with any wealth; its few stores were locally-owned and small. Miners had to work together and rely on each other for safety when underground, and some of their unions were integrated. That sense of comradeship apparently carried over into their families' lives and the interactions between neighbors.<sup>19</sup>

The town of Boulder had contrasting features. As well as being the home of county government, it was a commercial center, providing supplies for people living and working in the mountains and in nearby communities on the plains. Moreover, from 1876—the year when Colorado achieved statehood—Boulder was the home of the University of Colorado, the major public institution of higher education in the Rocky Mountain region. Boulder was usually about twice the size of Longmont, with 6,000-13,000 residents between 1900 and 1940. Growth increased thereafter, especially in the later 1960s and 1970s, reaching 77,000 by 1980.

Boulder had just a few dozen Latino residents until the 1960s. The modest homes of these families were initially concentrated in a small area lying between “University Hill” and downtown, alongside the river and railroad tracks.<sup>20</sup> Their lives were quite isolated from the rest of the community: they had little contact with the university except as employees, or with the business world except as customers. Until the 1950s, the town was racist and elitist, with no place in its self-image for working people. In the 1960s and 1970s, however, the number, diversity, and educational level of Boulder's Latino population increased markedly. This development when joined with greater discomfort about segregation among some white residents served to open opportunities with respect to employment and housing.

## **B. The Intellectual Context and Primary Sources**

*Historical works that provide an intellectual context for this study*

By setting this work of local history into a broader intellectual framework, we can identify aspects of the story that resemble patterns observed elsewhere as well as elements that are atypical. The general

<sup>19</sup> See Chs. 3B and 4B below, and Vol. II, Ch. 2B.

<sup>20</sup> See Vol. II, Ch. 2B for this neighborhood.

context for this study comes from the fine work done by scholars in two arenas: (1) the history of the Southwest, including Colorado; and (2) the experiences of Chicanos/Latinos. Among geographically defined studies, David Weber's work on the Southwest provides a solid understanding of the generations before around 1900.<sup>21</sup> Histories of Colorado and adjoining regions published between the 1950s and 1970s, including those prepared by LeRoy Hafen, the State Historian for 30 years, feature lively accounts; the *Colorado Magazine* (now *Colorado Heritage*) and *New Mexico Historical Review* include articles on a wide range of topics.<sup>22</sup> Whereas work done on Colorado's history before around 1980 generally paid relatively little attention to women, people of color, or workers, the best recent studies are far more inclusive.<sup>23</sup>

The extensive body of work on Chicanos/Latinos is more directly relevant to this study. Two examples illustrate the contributions and some of the approaches taken by Chicano scholars. Rodolfo Acuña's textbook *Occupied America*, first published in 1972 and revised repeatedly since then, exemplifies the blending of solid academic research and social commitment that characterizes much work in Ethnic Studies. Acuña's book provides a clear narrative structure and thoughtful analysis based—especially in its earlier editions—upon a model of “internal colonialism.”<sup>24</sup> Like many works published in the opening stages of the development of the field of Chicano Studies, the initial versions of *Occupied America* were criticized by Chicana scholars for privileging male voices, ignoring women's contributions to the movement, and excluding topics such as families and sexuality.<sup>25</sup> Manuel Gonzales's book, *Mexicanos*, reflects a somewhat different social/political position. Unlike scholars raised in the *Movimiento* tradition of the 1960s and 1970s, Gonzales paints a sympathetic picture

<sup>21</sup> E.g., Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, The Spanish Frontier, and Foreigners in Their Native Land*.

<sup>22</sup> E.g., Hafen, *Broken Hand*, Hafen, ed., *The Mountain Men*, Hafen and Hafen, *The Colorado Story*, and Lecompte, *Pueblo, Hardscrabble, Greenhorn*.

<sup>23</sup> E.g., Montoya, *Translating Property*, and Andrews, *Killing for Coal*.

<sup>24</sup> That approach argues that Chicanos living in the southwestern U.S. were a colonized group, brought by military force (the Mexican-American War) under the control of an Anglo-dominated society and government; Latinos' economic resources, primarily their labor, were then utilized to the benefit of American capitalism. For criticisms and alternative definitions of this model, see, e.g., Gilbert Gonzáles, “A Critique of the Internal Colony Model,” and Barrera, *Race and Class in the Southwest*, pp. 174-219.

<sup>25</sup> E.g., Segura, “Challenging the Chicano Text,” and Deena Gonzáles, “Gender on the Borderlands.”

of the emerging Mexican American middle class during the 1940s and 1950s and of groups willing to make certain accommodations to Anglo culture, such as LULAC [the League of United Latin American Citizens].<sup>26</sup>

Some valuable work has been done on the history of Hispanics and Latinas/os in Colorado. Two collections of descriptive essays were published in 1976, the year of Colorado's Centennial celebration. *Hispanic Contribution to the State of Colorado*, edited by José de Onís, and *Hispanic Colorado*, edited by Evelio A. Echevarria and Jose Otero, focus on southern areas of the state settled initially by New Mexicans or people coming from Spain: the San Luis Valley, on the western side of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains; and Huerfano and Las Animas Counties to the east of that range. The authors are especially interested in the Spanish/Mexican/New Mexican presence prior to the early twentieth century and in the survival of traditional folklore, art, and religious practices. The essays edited by Vincent de Baca in *La Gente*, published in 1998, extend through the twentieth century, and some offer a more theoretical approach. Jody and Gabriel Lopez's *White Gold Laborers* describes Latinas/os in the town of Greeley, not far from Boulder County, and a recent collection edited by Arturo Aldama and others, *Enduring Legacies*, brings together historical studies and sophisticated cultural analyses of Colorado's people of color.

The four interpretive questions explored throughout this volume and the next build upon more specialized scholarly work. For the first topic—women's experiences—Vicki Ruiz offers a useful conceptual framework and comparative information. Ruiz argues that a key feature of Latinas' lives was their ability to integrate activities within the home, work, and community.<sup>27</sup> She stresses mutual assistance among Latinas, with relatives, *comadres*, and neighbors, and introduces the concept of "cultural coalescence" to describe how Latinas "navigate across cultural boundaries," though limited by racial and ethnic prejudice.<sup>28</sup>

Closer in geographic focus to the present study is Sarah Deutsch's examination of Spanish-speaking people from New Mexico who settled in southern Colorado in the decades after 1880. Between 1900 and 1940, some of them moved northwards to the South Platte Valley, including a small part of Boulder County. Deutsch shows how New Mexicans attempted to maintain the village economies and social and

<sup>26</sup> Manuel Gonzales, *Mexicanos*, esp. pp. 181-190 and 224-225.

<sup>27</sup> Ruiz, *From Out of the Shadows*, pp. xii-xiv and 4-6 for this and below.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiv.

cultural traditions brought from their home communities. She argues that women suffered a loss of status and social integration when they came to northern Colorado, whether their families were temporary workers who lived in the area only during the agricultural season or had settled here year-round. Whereas Hispanic women had been at the center of village life in New Mexico and were still active participants in the settler communities in southern Colorado, they became “isolated and peripheral” when living on Anglo-owned farms or in Anglo towns in the north.<sup>29</sup>

A second issue addresses relationships within Latino families, especially between husbands and wives and between elders or middle-aged people and their younger relatives. It thus examines both gender-based and generational components of family life. For these topics, we have some important studies of more recent families, especially those struggling with economic and/or migration-related challenges, but they lack a historical perspective.<sup>30</sup> Conversely, several analyses of young Latinas/os in the past pay only secondary attention to their family relationships.

A third question concerns the southwestern borderlands and the extent to which experiences of Boulder County’s Latinos—living on the northern edge of that area—resembled those of people in more heavily Latino communities. A narrow geographical definition of the borderlands, including only those states of the U.S. and Mexico that adjoin the national boundary, would of course exclude Boulder County entirely: it lies 650 miles north of the Mexican border and 300 miles north of New Mexico. But “borderlands” is a term open to many meanings. Some analyses of the Southwest consider how this region has developed distinctive, dynamic, and often transnational characteristics in such areas as economic activity, demographic patterns, social institutions, and cultural life.<sup>31</sup> The borderlands were

<sup>29</sup> Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge*, p. 12 and ch. 6.

<sup>30</sup> E.g., Zambrana, *Latinos in American Society*, Angel and Angel, *Hispanic Families at Risk*, and Falicov, *Latino Families in Therapy*. For below, see Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits*, Alvarez, *Power of the Zoot*, and Muñoz, *Youth, Identity, Power*.

<sup>31</sup> For studies using a more inclusive definition, see, e.g., Cadava, *Standing on Common Ground*, Castañeda, ed., *Gender on the Borderlands*, Foley, *Mexicans in the Making of America*, Hernández, *Working Women into the Borderlands*, Martin, *Borderlands Saints*, and Martínez, ed., *U.S.-Mexico Borderlands*. Especially during the 1960s and 1970s, the borderland states acquired yet another meaning for some Spanish-surnamed residents, who regarded the area they termed *Aztlán* as their homeland (John Chávez, *The Lost Land*, pp. 1-5 and ch. 7).



also a region of unusual intercultural contact, ethnic or racial mixing, and hybridization. Using a broader definition, Boulder County in the twentieth century was situated on the far northeastern margin of a socio-cultural region that extended through New Mexico and in some respects down into Mexico itself.<sup>32</sup> It was also influenced to some extent by participation in a more localized network that included the Latino population in Denver, some 30 miles to the south, and a small agricultural community in Fort Lupton, 10 miles southeast of Longmont.<sup>33</sup> How, then, did Boulder people resemble or differ from people living in predominantly Latino areas of states like New Mexico and Texas and the *barrios* of major cities?

The final topic examined here is how Boulder County's Latinos defined their ethnic identity, how they described themselves and their relationship both to the Anglo world around them and to their own cultural heritage. During the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s, many Hispanics elsewhere in the Southwest sought to characterize themselves and their culture.<sup>34</sup> As part of what is sometimes labelled "the Mexican American generation," they wanted to create their own identity rather than accepting the generally negative descriptions imposed upon them by Anglos.<sup>35</sup> Some urban and largely middle class, educated Mexican Americans believed that Latinos would benefit from selective adoption of Anglo approaches, rather than defining themselves as part of an entirely distinct culture and then having to deal with the resulting alienation and discrimination. Many of these people were active in moderate political or social organizations that worked for the general betterment of all Hispanics, such as LULAC. In another response, young Mexican Americans in some of the major southwestern cities—both men and women—dressed in "Zoot Suit" or *pachuco* clothing and strutted their stuff on the streets and in dance halls and jazz clubs.<sup>36</sup> By forming their

<sup>32</sup> Deutsch refers to a Hispanic "regional community" that stretched across New Mexico and Colorado in the early twentieth century (*No Separate Refuge*, pp. 9-10), Acuña presents the histories of New Mexico and Colorado as intertwined (*Occupied America*, e.g., p. 191), and the editors of *Enduring Legacies* assume that Colorado forms part of the borderlands (pp. 1-20).

<sup>33</sup> For examples of interactions within this network see Vol. II, Chs. 4B and 5A.

<sup>34</sup> E.g., John Chávez, *The Lost Land*, ch. 6, esp. pp. 113-114 and 126-127, and Gutiérrez, *Walls and Mirrors*, chs. 4-5, plus the references in notes 35 and 36 below.

<sup>35</sup> E.g., Rosales, *Chicano!*, ch. 6, and Manuel Gonzales, *Mexicanos*, pp. 181-190, for this and below.

<sup>36</sup> Alvarez, *Power of the Zoot*, pp. 2-10, and Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits*, ch. 4; cf. Ch. 5C below.

own groups that were visually distinguished from the mainstream, they defined themselves as separate and claimed dignity in a society that did not accept them. As we shall see, concern about identity in Boulder County took different forms.

### Sources

In describing the history of Boulder County's Latinos and investigating the issues described above, we are fortunate to have an unusual array of primary sources.<sup>37</sup> Several clusters of material were generated by previous initiatives but recovered, converted into modern formats, and put online by the BCLHP in 2013-2014. A project called "Boulder's Chicano Community: Where Is It?" tape-recorded 13 interviews in 1977-1979, mainly with older people, and made 2 movies.<sup>38</sup> In the summer of 1979, Latino teens from migrant worker families conducted 12 interviews with local people, took photos, and prepared a booklet called *El Aguila*. A group led by Oli Olivas Duncan set up the Longmont Hispanic Study [LHS] in the late 1980s. Duncan published a little book called *We, Too, Came to Stay* in 1988, with transcripts of interviews with 10 local people, photos, and some information about the history of Mexico and Latinas/os in the Southwest.<sup>39</sup> The LHS also gathered 600 photographs from members of the Latino community and converted them into slides for use in presentations about their findings.<sup>40</sup> Duncan later interviewed or

<sup>37</sup> Primary sources are defined as those produced by people living at the time they describe or by people who have been given first-hand accounts by relatives or friends about their experiences. Such sources may include interviews, written descriptions, photos, physical objects, or newspaper articles that are contemporary with the events they report. Primary sources may be personal and qualitative, like oral history interviews and family biographies, or listings that lend themselves to quantitative or numerical analysis, such as records about school children and their parents, or City Directories giving the names and occupations of residents. Secondary studies are written after the period they describe, drawing upon primary sources to create a composite picture. General histories of Colorado and textbooks are examples of secondary studies.

<sup>38</sup> In 1991, one of the movies was shown to a community group, followed by a panel discussion about what had changed in the intervening 15 years. Audio tapes of the original interviews had been stored at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History in Boulder, and individual local people had kept copies of the two films and a home movie of the 1991 discussion. The BCLHP translated/transcribed those interviews that had previously not been done and made DVDs of the films.

<sup>39</sup> That title refers pointedly to the standard history of Longmont, called *They Came to Stay*, which pays scant attention to Latinas/os.

<sup>40</sup> In 2013, these slides, which were not labeled or identified, were loaned to the BCLHP, which digitized them, gave them simple descriptive titles, and held a viewing session with Longmont seniors, who were able to name some of the people shown.

obtained short family biographies from another 10 people for a planned second edition of *We, Too, Came to Stay*; she had prepared rough transcripts of those materials and generously given them to the BCLHP before her death in fall, 2013. In 2012 the Boulder Hispanic Families project collected family photos and biographies for an exhibit at the Boulder Public Library and prepared a house-by-house map showing where Latino, Italian, African American, and other families lived in the Water + Goss Streets neighborhood in 1955.<sup>41</sup>

Other organizations were meanwhile gathering additional information. The Maria Rogers Oral History Program at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, part of the Boulder Public Library, and an oral history project in Lafayette interviewed 14 other Latinas/os between 1975 and 2013, for which tapes, videos, or transcripts were preserved. In 1989, the Lafayette Historical Society, directed by James Hutchison, published a volume as part of the community's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.<sup>42</sup> The group solicited family biographies and wrote up brief accounts of important events by year. Twenty-eight of the biographies were about Latino families, and the annual descriptions described some others. Meanwhile, the Longmont Museum was building a fine collection of photographs, many of which are available on its website; the Lafayette Public Library likewise acquired some old photos, including ones from the local Miners Museum, and is putting them online.

Volunteers with the BCLHP produced a good deal of new material in 2013-14. They conducted interviews with 41 Latinas/os and transcribed them. Those interviews plus previous ones yield a total of 100, a large number for Latinas/os living in one relatively small county. Further, they cover an unusually long time span. Some of those done in the late 1970s were with elders born around 1900; some of those from 2013 were with high school and college students born in the 1990s. The interviews thus span three or even four generations.

Because much of the information presented in this study comes from oral history interviews or biographies written by family members about their earlier relatives, we face the question of the reliability of such sources.<sup>43</sup> An interviewer's questions and responses can affect what

<sup>41</sup> For this neighborhood, see Vol. II, Ch. 2B.

<sup>42</sup> *Lafayette, Colorado: Treeless Plain to Thriving City*.

<sup>43</sup> For a convenient introduction to the extensive literature on the benefits as well as the drawbacks of such material, see Perks and Thomson, eds., *Oral History Reader*.

speakers say, and interviewees' memories are by no means infallible. Descriptions of one's own life or those of relatives are sometimes shaped by nostalgia or—whether consciously or not—a desire to present people in the most favorable light, perhaps leading to exaggeration of achievements or exclusion of potentially embarrassing material. Historians may not have an opportunity for direct confirmation or refutation of statements made by one person in a situation remembered by someone else.<sup>44</sup> We must therefore always remember that statements made by individuals about themselves or their families should not be accepted simply at face value.

As scholars who rely upon oral history have noted, the best way to address the potential flaws with subjective personal sources is to set such narratives against other types of evidence, as this study does. If people's individual impressions can be checked against more neutral sources, differences sometimes emerge.<sup>45</sup> To produce a broader narrative and correct for individual variation, the BCLHP combed through microfilms of early newspapers, finding hundreds of useful articles. Scans of slides made by the LHS plus 225 new photos loaned by local people in 2013 resulted in a total of 825 visual images stretching from the early twentieth century to the early twenty-first.

Particularly interesting—because less often used in local studies of people of color—is the quantitative information generated by the BCLHP. Volunteers spent hundreds of hours plowing through sources that lend themselves to numerical analysis, pulling out information about people with Spanish surnames and entering into it spreadsheets. They used three main types of evidence: (1) U.S. Census records, 1900-1940, which describe where all local residents were born, their age and family position, and what kind of work they did; (2) *Polk's City Directories* for our three towns, 1904-1975, which list the names and addresses of adults in each household, street by street, and in some cases give their occupations and employers; and (3) annual School Census books, 1905-1964, which provide the names, year and place of birth, address, and

<sup>44</sup> An interesting example from this study concerns the description given by an older participant about the type of work she did for a particular company five decades before. A younger relative who read her account commented that she often tended to inflate: actually she held a much lower level job, not the skilled position she claimed.

<sup>45</sup> See, for example, the common belief among Longmont residents that housing was traditionally segregated along ethnic lines between the east and west sides of the town, a pattern not entirely supported by quantitative evidence about where people actually lived in various decades (see Vol. II, Ch. 2B).

grade level for children and sometimes information about their parents. The resulting quantitative analyses as presented in tables in this and the second volume are therefore based on extensive but almost certainly incomplete data. The original listings may have missed some people, and the BCLHP's volunteers perhaps failed to recognize certain surnames as Latino; Latinas who married men with non-Latino surnames will also have been omitted, though marriage across ethnic lines appears to have been uncommon in Boulder County until around 1970.

The BCLHP prepared material in other media too. A young filmmaker worked with long-term residents to produce a video for each of the three towns, describing sites that have been of historical importance to Latinas/os. A local songwriter and performer re-recorded two of his songs that were emblems of the Chicano student movement in the 1970s but had not been preserved in audio form. The interactive town maps are a unique contribution of this project. *Polk's City Directories* have been employed to generate information about where each Latino-surnamed family lived, displayed as markers on street maps of the three towns, one per decade between 1904 or 1916 and 1975.<sup>46</sup> By clicking on one of the markers, viewers are given the street address, names of adults, and sometimes their occupations and employers. College students are identified separately. Hence it is possible to see where individual families lived and to trace the changing location and density of Latino neighborhoods over time.

### C. Some Nineteenth-Century Background

Before we begin a detailed examination of Boulder County Latinas/os after 1900, it will be helpful to survey briefly some features of nineteenth-century history in the regions of Colorado discussed here.<sup>47</sup> Around 1800, the part of Colorado lying on the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains was used seasonally or occasionally by some Utes, Lakotas, and other indigenous peoples; by around 1820 the central section of

<sup>46</sup> See [bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu](http://bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu), under Interactive City Maps. The Boulder maps start in 1904, the other two in 1916. The idea of creating these maps came from Emmanuel Melgoza, one of the interns with the BCLHP in summer/fall, 2013; he also did the initial work on the databases that underlie them.

<sup>47</sup> General information will not be referenced; for fuller accounts, see, e.g., Abbott et al., *Colorado*, and Ubbelohde, Benson, and Smith, *A Colorado History*.

that area was the base for many Arapahos and Cheyennes. Over time, as Spanish-speakers moved north from New Mexico and as Anglos arrived from the eastern or mid-western U.S., many Native Americans were killed by disease, starvation, or warfare. Those who remained were evicted from their traditional hunting grounds and sent to reservations in the later nineteenth century, despite the many treaties signed—but then broken—by the U.S. government that guaranteed their right to certain territories.

Utes were the primary indigenous group active in the areas of southern Colorado that were settled initially by New Mexican immigrants. (The Utes consisted of many distinct bands, some of which dominated western sections of this state and parts of Utah and far northern New Mexico as well.) The series of treaties between leaders of the various bands and the U.S. government provides a painful illustration of the step-wise removal of Indians from land that was coming into demand for privately owned ranches and farms or mining.<sup>48</sup> The year after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo of 1848, seven Ute groups signed a peace treaty with the victorious Americans. In 1863, some of their leaders were persuaded (or forced) to abandon their claim to the San Luis Valley, in south-central Colorado, which had previously been a major hunting area. Five years later, another treaty required them to relinquish their right to that part of Colorado Territory that lay east of longitude 107° west (a line running north-south about 30 miles west of the San Luis Valley). In return, their right to all of Colorado west of that line was affirmed. But that guarantee was likewise violated. In 1878 a treaty created two reservations in the southwest corner of the state for those Utes who were still in Colorado—one for the Southern Ute bands, the other for the Mountain Utes—but they were obliged to give up their claim to all other land. The new reservations offered scant economic resources and for many Utes were far away from their previous hunting regions. The final stage came with the defeat of the White River band by the U.S. Army in the Ute War of 1879, leading to the dispossession and forced removal of the White River and Uncompahgre Utes to reservations in the Utah desert and a reduction in the size of Colorado's Southern Ute reservation.

In Boulder County, the main native peoples in the mid-nineteenth century were the Arapahos and the Cheyennes, who had formed a lasting

<sup>48</sup> Abbott et al., *Colorado*, pp. 87-93, and "Ute People," Wikipedia, accessed Oct. 6, 2014.

alliance around 1811 before the latter moved into this region. In the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, U.S. government officials affirmed the right of the Arapahos and Cheyennes to a large expanse of territory on the great plains between the North Platte River and the Arkansas River; that area included most of what is now Boulder County. As the number of white trappers, prospectors, and settlers increased, however, especially after the discovery of gold in Colorado in 1858-9, conflict between newcomers and native people increased. The number of Arapahos and Cheyennes dropped markedly, due to disease, battles between Indian warriors and U.S. army troops, and the take-over by whites of land formerly used for hunting.

In what became known as the Sand Creek Massacre of 1864, some 700 Colorado Territory militiamen attacked a village and camp led by Southern Arapaho Chief Niwot (“Left Hand”) and Southern Cheyenne Chief Black Kettle, who had gathered for what they had been told was a peaceful meeting. By the end of the battle, 170 to 200 Indians had been killed and often mutilated, two-thirds of them women and children, some raped or shot for sport.<sup>49</sup> The last major battle in Colorado between the Arapaho-Cheyenne and U.S. forces was fought in 1869. The remaining Northern Arapahos were relocated to the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, the Northern Cheyennes to a reservation in southern Montana, and the Southern Arapahos and Southern Cheyennes to a reservation in Oklahoma.

Because native peoples had been almost entirely removed from Boulder County by around 1900, they appear in this study only in passing. Some later Latino residents of this area had indigenous forebears, though not from this immediate region, and we encounter a few references from Spanish-speaking communities in southern Colorado in the early twentieth century.<sup>50</sup> But this project found no mention of native people interacting with Latinas/os in Boulder County itself after 1900. Their absence should not, however, absolve us of the obligation of remembering that this region—whether used by Latinas/os or Anglos—was taken by force or duplicity from its original inhabitants.

The history of Spanish-speaking people in Colorado dates back to explorers from Spain or Mexico who began to enter the area that has

<sup>49</sup> Abbott et al., *Colorado*, p. 86.

<sup>50</sup> See Ch. 2B-C below.

become the southwestern U.S.—including this state—in the 1540s.<sup>51</sup> They were followed by settlers, who over time reached the northern part of what is now New Mexico and a piece of southern Colorado. Northern New Mexico was first colonized by Don Juan de Oñate, who created the Province of Santa Fé de Nuevo México in 1598, part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. The town we know as Santa Fé was founded in 1607 by New Mexico’s second Spanish governor, Don Pedro de Peralta; three years later, he made it the capital of the province. Santa Fé therefore has the longest history of any state capital in the U.S. It should be noted that this activity took place 13-22 years before the English “Pilgrim fathers” arrived in Massachusetts!

On the basis of grants from the Spanish crown, colonists moved north from central Mexico and created new villages on land taken from Pueblo or other indigenous peoples. After Mexico achieved independence from Spain in the war of 1810-1821, the northern reaches of the old empire became part of the new republic. The area under Mexican control was defined in 1819, when the U.S. government formally abandoned its claim to land south and west of the Arkansas River, including some of the San Luis Valley and adjacent parts of southern Colorado. Over the next few decades, the Mexican government awarded additional grants of land in those areas.

When the United States annexed Texas (which had always been part of Mexico) in the mid-1840s and invaded Mexico to secure its new state, it triggered the Mexican-American War of 1846-1848. In the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that concluded that conflict, Mexico ceded New Mexico and the southern edge of Colorado (as well as Texas down to the Rio Grande, Arizona, and parts of Nevada, Utah, and California) to the United States. People living in those areas could either move further south to remain in Mexico or stay where they were, becoming Americans. Hence New Mexicans sometimes comment that they did not cross the border to come into the United States: the border crossed them. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo also said that those Mexicans who wished to remain in the new country would have full rights as American citizens.<sup>52</sup> The government made some effort to follow through with that promise, such as instructing U.S. Census takers to count people of Mexican/New

<sup>51</sup> The summary in this and the next three paragraphs is drawn from Echevarria and Otero, eds., *Hispanic Colorado*, de Baca, ed., *La Gente*, and Aldama et al., eds., *Enduring Legacies*.

<sup>52</sup> That was rather surprising. Few non-whites were eligible for U.S. citizenship at the time, yet many Mexicans had a mixed racial ancestry.



Mexican background as “white” between 1850 and 1920. But nominal citizenship by no means ensured equal treatment in practice.

The Treaty also stated that the U.S. government would respect the previous land grants (*mercedes*) made first by the Spanish crown and later by independent Mexico, though none of those three countries recognized the sovereignty of indigenous peoples. Some of the Spanish and Mexican awards were communal, made to an entire village, while others went to wealthy individuals who then brought in settlers. Five to seven of the grants included land in what was to become Colorado.<sup>53</sup> Most lay to the west of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains—in the San Luis Valley or immediately to the south of it—but the huge Vigil and St. Vrain Grant (comprising 97,000 acres) was located to the east of the Sangre de Cristos, containing the later counties of Las Animas and Huerfano.

By the mid-nineteenth century, settlers from New Mexico and occasionally from Spain were starting to colonize regions of southern Colorado that lay within those grants. They generally tried to recreate familiar patterns of village layout, architecture, and community life in the new settings.<sup>54</sup> At the southern end of the San Luis Valley, the towns of San Luis de la Culebra and San Acacio were founded in 1851 and 1853.<sup>55</sup> On the eastern side of the Sangre de Cristos, New Mexican family groups settled the town of Aguilar and the adjacent valley of Trujillo Creek beginning in the 1860s.<sup>56</sup> The town of Trinidad was named after the daughter of Don Felipe Baca, who with Don Pedro Valdez and 12 other families founded the town in 1861.<sup>57</sup> By 1870, 90% of the 6,400 residents of Las Animas and Huerfano Counties had either been born in New Mexico or were the children of New Mexicans.<sup>58</sup>

But the protection of earlier land grants offered by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was not realized on the ground. As Anglo settlers began to move into New Mexico and southern Colorado, they joined a few wealthy Hispanics in going to court to establish their own claims to property. U.S. courts demanded written documentation that met the requirements of American law, not of Mexican law. Because few people

<sup>53</sup> Abbot et al. say five (*Colorado*, p. 34); Charles Vigil, “Mexican Land Grants,” and Tushar, *People of “El Valle,”* pp. 9-18, give larger figures.

<sup>54</sup> Lucero, “Aguilar and Its Western Valley,” and Atkins, *Human Relations in Colorado*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>55</sup> Tushar, *People of “El Valle,”* pp. 14-15.

<sup>56</sup> Lucero, “Aguilar and Its Western Valley.”

<sup>57</sup> LARASA, “Contributions of the Spanish Surnamed American,” p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Abbott et al., *Colorado*, p. 35.

living on the previous grants had sufficient proof of their rights, they were vulnerable. Even if they were able to hold on to the agricultural land at the center of their grants, they commonly lost the right to graze animals and take wood from nearby hills or mountains, provisions necessary to their economic survival. Over the course of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these problems led to the impoverishment of many villagers and eventually contributed to their migration to other areas, including Boulder County.<sup>59</sup>

Until around 1900, a few Hispanic settlers with large ranches in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties prospered. They were also active in Colorado's emerging state government. Casimiro Barela, who had moved from northern New Mexico to the Trinidad region, became one of the richest stockmen in Colorado Territory and was a director of the Trinidad and San Luis Railroad.<sup>60</sup> Barela served in the territorial and later the state legislature from 1867 to 1912, representing Las Animas County; throughout his career, he worked to preserve Hispanic culture and fight discrimination, helping to guard Spanish-speaking people from the "strange bureaucracy" of Anglos.<sup>61</sup> In the Legislative Assembly of January, 1876, when Colorado became a state, Barela was joined by 12 other Spanish-surnamed legislators, all representing southern areas.<sup>62</sup>

Economic success and political participation remained possible for a few decades longer. Tomás Aquino Rivera, 1849-1916, was the son of a shoemaker from Barcelona, Spain who had emigrated to Santa Fé.<sup>63</sup> Tomás or his father acquired land in Huerfano County, and he prospered as a rancher. In 1882 he was elected to the Colorado Legislature as a representative from Huerfano, Las Animas, and Costilla Counties. But as the number and power of Anglo settlers increased, Hispanics lost out. By 1915, only three men with Spanish names served in the state legislature, and by 1921 there was only a single one, representing Las Animas County. That decline was due in part to loss of land and the increasing socio-economic gap between Anglos and Hispanics; it was compounded by the problems faced by all ranchers and farmers in the region as the result of drought. In Huerfano County, most Hispanic landholders gave

<sup>59</sup> See Ch. 2B below.

<sup>60</sup> LARASA, "Contributions of the Spanish Surnamed American," p. 13. Whether that railroad actually operated is unclear.

<sup>61</sup> Abbott et al., *Colorado*, p. 39

<sup>62</sup> Charles Vigil, "Spanish-Surnamed Americans."

<sup>63</sup> "Salazar, Jose Benito and Isabelle, biography."

up farming during the first few decades of the twentieth century, many of them taking jobs in or associated with coal mines in that area.<sup>64</sup>

Apart from the regions of southern Colorado that had formed part of Mexico, the rest of the future state was part of the expanding United States. In a history well known from standard accounts, traders established regular patterns of exchange with native people during the first half of the nineteenth century, focusing on fur and buffalo hides. Among the stockades built to protect that commerce was Fort St. Vrain, located at the junction of the St. Vrain and South Platte Rivers, slightly to the northeast of Boulder County.<sup>65</sup> The discovery of gold, silver, and other precious metals in the mountains starting in the 1850s led to rapid immigration from elsewhere in the U.S. and other countries. During the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, after the deaths and forced removals of Indian peoples, the plains of eastern Colorado were gradually settled by Anglos, through individual homesteading or planned colonies.

We have no specific evidence that Hispanics lived or worked in Boulder County prior to around 1900. The first Spanish-named person to own land in what is now the town of Longmont was José Maricio Varos, a teamster who had fought in the New Mexico Militia and was awarded 160 acres in 1864 under the Military Bounty Land Grant Act.<sup>66</sup> But Varos sold the property to an Anglo the following year, without ever seeing it. Some of the trappers and traders who frequented Fort St. Vrain probably had Spanish-speaking wives.<sup>67</sup> In the western mountains, the prospectors who sought their fortunes beginning in the 1850s were mainly from European backgrounds, but use of the *arrastre* technique for processing ore may have been introduced by Mexican or New Mexican miners.

We turn now to the historical account. The first three chapters deal with the decades between 1900 and 1940, looking at immigration patterns, the contributions of Hispanics as workers, and the conflict, racism, and violence that shook the 1920s and 1930s. Chapter 5 explores the years between 1940 to 1965, while the next two examine the era of

<sup>64</sup> See Ch. 2C below.

<sup>65</sup> Ceran St. Vrain, a leading trader in this area, spent much of his life in New Mexico, married a Latina, and self-identified as Mexican-American, though his father was a Frenchman living in St. Louis.

<sup>66</sup> Duncan, "Hispanic History," p. 4.

<sup>67</sup> LARASA, "Contributions of the Spanish Surnamed American," p. 6.

Chicano identity and activism, 1966-1980. An epilogue takes us briefly into the twenty-first century.

# Sources

## Explanations

Most of the items listed below are hyperlinked to their original online sources. They can be viewed by clicking on the underlined blue text at the end of each entry.

**BCLHP Collection, Carnegie Library.** Materials collected by the Boulder County Latino History Project, 2013-2014. Deposited at Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library.

**BCLHP references.**<sup>1</sup> These provide the ID number for items accessible on the Boulder County Latino History website, [bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu](http://bocolatinohistory.colorado.edu). It contains hundreds of other sources, which can be searched in various ways.

If a given item contains multiple pages on the website, only the initial ID number is shown here; the following pages are linked to that one.

**Carnegie Library.** Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library.

**LM.** Longmont Museum.

**LPL.** Lafayette Public Library.

**MROHP.** Maria Rogers Oral History Program, Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder Public Library.

**Valdez Papers.** Materials preserved by Euvaldo Valdez concerning two organizations in the 1970s: Mexican Americans of Boulder County United (MABCU); and the Boulder County Council of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC). University of Colorado at Boulder Archives, Norlin Library.

Information cited as from a conversation with Marjorie McIntosh on a stated date has been confirmed in writing and approved for use in this study by the authors of those statements.

All websites listed below were last accessed November 10-18, 2015.

<sup>1</sup> For entries with a BCLHP reference:

- Items labelled as FP are family photographs loaned by community members and digitized by the BCLHP. The photographers are unknown unless specified.
- Items labelled as LHS are photos loaned to the Longmont Hispanic Study in 1987-8 by a relative or descendent of the people shown. They were converted into slides by Oli Olivas Duncan for use in public presentations associated with the 1988 publication of *We, Too, Came to Stay: A History of the Longmont Hispanic Community*, which she edited. In 2014, the BCLHP was given permission to make digital copies of the slides, many of which showed unidentified people. The dates, locations, and photographers of these photos are unknown unless specified.

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